



NEWS FROM THE FLOCK

October 2024 / Issue 2

OFFICERS

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Secretary
Steve Ford
Treasurer
Liz Mangile

BOARD SUPPORT

Newsletter Editor
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cford@pittstate.edu

Web Master
Bob Mangile
sperry-galligar.com

Membership
Diane McCallum

Next Program

Thursday, 7:00
October 24
Yates 102

Pittsburg State Univ

“Protecting our Planet:

Environmental Initiatives of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma”
by Kristi Laughlin.
Find out what our neighbors to the South are doing to protect natural resources and health of people, air, water, and land.

***** **NOTICE** *****

October Meeting: Oct. 24, 7:00 p.m.
A week earlier than usual—due to Halloween

Kansas Birds Breeding Species for Crawford County

by Kathy Fox

In a post last month on the Kansas Birding Facebook page, I submitted pictures of a couple of cedar waxwing fledglings waiting to be fed by a parent! (Crawford County, 9-21-24). Chuck Otte, a retired county extension agent, birder, and a member of the Kansas Bird Records Committee, sent a thank you for these photos and information. This record is the first confirmed breeding record for Crawford County (was only a probable record previously!) Waxwings are one of our latest nesting species. Nesting is often not initiated until June (and clearly later!).

After reading his comment, I couldn't stop smiling. How lucky was I to have seen these fledglings and to get picture documentation! I was also very lucky they happened to be in the button bush close to the front porch where I sit most mornings drinking my coffee! (Little effort, fun result!)

This also led me thinking: What other species need to be confirmed and not just be a probable record for our county? So, I went to the Kansas Birds page and found the species list for Crawford County. <E:\MyFiles\Documents\County Checklists\Crawford.wpd> (ksbirds.org) And then I went to the Kansas Breeding Bird Atlas criteria page that was sent to me by Mr. Otte, which can be found at: <https://ksbirds.org/kbbat/KBBATcriteria.htm>

We as members of our Audubon group can look through the list and possibly confirm other species that are only listed as “probable breeding”. Mr. Otte mentioned to keep in mind that they are only adding confirmed breeding observed as well as an approximate location. They include all that send updates to please include the date and what criteria were records to the county checklists. And if you want to include information in their databases, updates may be sent to: cotte@twinvalley.net

Who knows, maybe we can mark off a few more species as being confirmed breeding and not just probable! Like the White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Parula...Download the list, look through your sightings and pictures! It may take a little effort, but what a great event to document!

(See Kathy's photos on next page.)

Board Minutes...Steve Ford

The board meeting was attended by a group of particularly attractive members, fit and tan after a summer on the world's beaches: Wayne Bockelman, Megan Corrigan, Cindy Ford, Steve Ford, Kathy Fox, Andy George (President), Elizabeth Mangile, Robert Mangile, Diane McCallum.

September minutes were approved.

We have a new \$15,000 CD held at Arvest Bank. Interest rate 5.1%. The checking account is \$4,556.63.

Megan has good programs on tap, but speakers are playing footsie with dates so the schedule is in flux. April is nailed down: Bill Warnes - Purple Martins of the Amazon. Because of Halloween the October meeting will be a week early: October 24. Please contact Megan if you have an idea for a speaker. The burden should not be all on her.

Next bird walk will be with Andy George, Oct. 5, Wilderness Park, 8:00 a.m.; 7:30 if carpooling from Yates.

Huzza to Kathy and crew for the fine photo display at Root during September. She will send a Thank You card to Andra and Brad at Root and see that the photos get to their owners. We will think about a similar effort next year, at Root or maybe somewhere else.

Bob reported a local company (who wishes to remain anonymous) will donate "all the wood we need" for the Gabe McClain/Sperry-Galligar Chapter prothonotary warbler project, saving us a lot of money. Many logistics still to be worked out, but the project is afoot. Bob is the official chapter schmoozer for snagging this windfall!

Time to renew chapter memberships. Discussion on means of paying dues in addition to cash and check. Wayne will check on Venmo.

Thanks to Andy for the cat-herding exercise we call the board meeting.

Treasurer Report...Liz Mangile

October 2024

Beginning Balance \$ 5922.06

Credits: Memberships

Ending Balance \$ 4479.32

CD not included in report

Sperry-Galligar Chapter DUES

Time to pay your local chapter dues for the year. Local Chapter Individual or Family dues are \$15.00. National dues are \$20.00.

Be a part of Sperry-Galligar Audubon.

(Cont. from page 1)



Cedar Waxwing Fledgling (New Confirmation of Breeding in Crawford County) Photo by K. Fox

September PROGRAM SUMMARY by Steve Ford



Our inaugural meeting of the 2024-25 season, attended by over fifty people, was a good one entitled “Snakes of the Genus *Pituophis*,” by Cameron Kruse. Mr. Kruse, recently retired from law enforcement in Neosho County, Missouri, has had a fascination with snakes since he was a very small child, and his enthusiasm was on display at Thursday night’s meeting. The group *Pituophis* includes the gopher snakes, bull snakes, and pine snakes. They are non-venomous, mostly quite large as adults - seven to eight feet - and are

strikingly beautiful, although those struck were only children and as of this writing are expected to pull through with but minor permanent scarring.

Cameron is a breeder of these snakes, and discussed a wide-ranging array of information including the proper care of captive snakes, behavior in captivity and in the wild, geography, form, and many a fun fact including that snakes have two lungs, but only one is relatively large and functional, the fact that the tail begins at the vent (anus), not at the head, and some snakes (not *Pituophis*) retain evolutionary vestiges of hind limbs. Of course the many kids at the program went crazy at the chance to handle the big snakes and have their picture taken. They (snakes and kids) were well-behaved and in fact did not offer to bite (neither snakes nor kids).

Snakes are one of those animals some people love to hate, so it was gratifying that Cameron was such a great ambassador of their value and beauty and it was fun to watch the kids take to them. Grace Quintana assisted Cameron with the snakes. She did a good job.

September Sperry-Galligar Audubon Bird Walk

Our sightings from our Wilderness Park bird walk on October 5, 2024! We had five adults and heard or observed the following 19 species, 70 individuals -

26 Double-crested Cormorant, 2 Turkey Vulture, 1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 1 Red-headed Woodpecker, 2 Red-bellied Woodpecker, 2 Downy Woodpecker, 4 Northern Flicker, 3 Blue Jay, 1 American Crow, 1 Carolina Chickadee, 3 Tufted Titmouse, 1 White-breasted Nuthatch, 5 Carolina Wren, 4 European Starling *, 2 Gray Catbird, 5 American Robin, 1 American Goldfinch, 5 Northern Cardinal, 1 Indigo Bunting

Report by Kathy Fox

AUDUBON ARTISTIC NOTEBOOK

Emmett Sullivan Photo

**Pale Purple Coneflower
Photo taken in Labette
County, May 27, 2024**



Kathy Fox Photo

**Confirmed sighting of
breeding Cedar Waxwing
in Crawford County**



Diane McCallum Photos

Rough Green Snake



Question Mark Butterfly





REWILDING WITH HERBIVORES

It's been so lousy hot this summer I've not been inclined to sink my butt into the tractor seat to mow trails, but rather have inclined it into an easy chair, surrounded by my spoiled air-conditioned dogs, to read books. Some of my reading has wandered into the realm of what is being called "rewilding," a term that has picked up steam in the British Isles. Its premise is that in trying to re-establish land to its natural state, one that is rich in species diversity, we have to mimic the Ice Age landscape, south of the glaciers of course. Why? Because we need to reduce—eliminate really—the influence of people. And what was that early influence? We killed off most of the large herbivores which kept the landscape diversified. The deep, dark, closed-canopy forest primeval is a myth to which I once subscribed. Rather it was largely a mix of, yes, big trees, but also lots of sunny openings with small trees, shrubs, forbs and grasses, plus bare and uprooted ground, and plenty of standing and downed timber. All this maintained in a dynamic flux due primarily to large plant-eaters, plus the occasional kiss of lightning, and influenced by annual rainfall. Wildlife paradise. Nature pre-Adam, if you like.

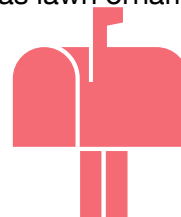
Cindy and I had a large plant-eater visit us a while back. My neighbor's young bull found its way through its fence, and thought it would see a bit of the world and have some fun. It walked across the road, took umbrage at our mailbox, hooked it off its post, and stomped it so flat it took a crowbar and foul language to pry it open enough to retrieve our mail. Our neighbor was embarrassed, but we thought it was funny. A couple of days later the bull saw more of the world than he had anticipated via a one-way trip to market. Two days after that I discovered that after he had finished with our mailbox he'd ambled a short way down the road to where a friend was keeping two (inactive) bee hives. One was stomped to angel-hair pasta, but the other I could salvage. I'm thinking about converting it to a funky bed-side table. My friend is not happy about it, but there it is.

My point is, if my now "extinct" visitor caused this much disruption, think what a small herd of bison, mastodons, and ground sloths did. I could open a whole furniture store of bee hive-based furniture.

Fall has been making it cool enough recently I've been able to dust off the ol' Kabota and go amowin'. (Why I'm talking like a hillbilly I don't know.) It has been refreshing to hit the trails again. It seems as if there are more downed trees and large limbs over the trails than I've been used to. Most I can push aside with the bucket, but a few are too big and have to be chain-sawed. Some of the trees that we planted over 30 years ago, especially some pines, are dying and falling, which in turn is making our woods, once bare ground, more mature and diverse. Our own efforts at a form of rewilding, minus the large herbivores—unless you want to count deer—are very slowly materializing. As my reading has suggested however, on smaller properties such as ours, the big herbivores, or their proxies, have to be substituted by human effort—mowing, burning, cutting, etc., which is tiring and not inexpensive. Perhaps a few selected cattle, and other kinds of livestock, once an anathema to a nature preserve, might bear consideration.

My neighbor has two new bulls. They're a different breed called miniature African brahmas, or something like that. Evenings they bawl like screaming babies, of which I'm not fond. (Babies that is. The screaming's OK. It adds mystery to the night, as in "Now what the hell is that!?") I asked his wife, Darci, of what use are the bulls? She said they're best used as lawn ornaments. I'm waiting for a sale on mailboxes. I'm thinking I'll need a supply.

Steve Ford



**Application for Membership
Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society**

For first-time National Audubon membership: send \$20.00 and become a member of both organizations, receive 4 copies of Audubon Magazine annually and 8 copies of Sperry-Galligar Newsletter. Please make your check to: National Audubon Society.

_____ Yes, I wish to become a **FIRST-TIME** member of National Audubon and Sperry-Galligar Audubon. (\$20.00)

For only local renewal membership, send \$15.00 for membership in Sperry-Galligar Audubon and receive the 8 newsletters per year informing you of all our local activities. Please make your check to: Sperry-Galligar Audubon.

_____ Yes, I wish to become a **RENEWING** member of the local chapter. (\$15.00)

Future National Audubon renewals: Send Audubon mailer forms directly to National Audubon Society.

Please print and mail to:

**Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society
816 E. Atkinson Ave.
Pittsburg, KS 66762**

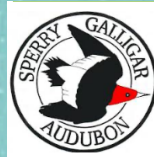
Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Phone _____

e-mail _____



EVENTS & ETC.

**Remember to Pay
Chapter Dues**

See Liz Mangile at our next meeting to pay your annual chapter dues.



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Help Needed

If you are interested in helping construct bird boxes which will be used to attract prothonotary warblers, please contact Steve Ford at (620)632-4280

Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

Meetings are held the last Thursday of the month...7:00 p.m. to 9 p.m., Room 102, Yates Hall, PSU Campus, Pittsburg, KS.

No meetings in June, July, or August. (November/December meeting date to be announced.)

Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society
816 E. Atkinson Ave.
Pittsburg, KS 66762

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS. Pay membership dues in September. Please consider paying local membership dues. Our chapter receives 100% of the local dues only. You can subscribe to both local and national. Either way you get the newsletter.