



# NEWS FROM THE FLOCK

March 2025 / Issue 6

## OFFICERS

President  
Andrew George  
Vice President  
Megan Corrigan  
Secretary  
Steve Ford  
Treasurer  
Liz Mangile

## BOARD SUPPORT

Newsletter Editor  
Cindy Ford  
[cford@pittstate.edu](mailto:cford@pittstate.edu)

Web Master  
Bob Mangile  
[sperry-galligar.com](http://sperry-galligar.com)

Membership  
Diane McCallum  
[dmccallum11@cox.net](mailto:dmccallum11@cox.net)

## Next Program

Thursday, 7:00  
March 27  
Yates 102

Pittsburg State Univ

“Re-establishing the Ozark Chinkapin Oak” by Jeff Cantrell, MO Dept of Conservation. Once a dominant tree species in the Ozarks, follow the efforts of several organizations to build back the Ozark chinkapin oak forests. Find out how this was done over a 15 year period and how you can contribute to the success of this important tree species.

## A Quick Fierce Face?

Steve Ford

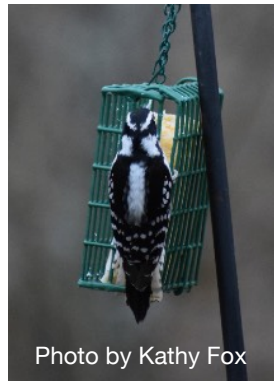


Photo by Kathy Fox

If you don't mind the greasy hands that come with charging them, a suet feeder is great for a bird feeding station. Mine is on a chain over the edge of the porch. I like to note not only which species visit, but as well their behavior, trying to equate that behavior to possible activity in the wild. Although we've attracted many species, the fact that our feeder swings keeps many larger birds away and attracts particularly the smaller, acrobatic types: chickadees for example.

The stars are the little downy woodpeckers. At first they are slow to visit if I'm sitting on the porch, flitting around on the wing and eventually on the tree limbs near the feeder. It may take them five minutes to find the nerve to jump to the far side of the twisting suet, only to pivot their heads at me left, right, left, right . . . their nervousness makes ME nervous, but I'm flattered they think I have enough lightning to pounce on them. Ask my friends, there's no lightning. They eventually realize that, and settle down.

I've noticed something about them, especially the females, that I've overlooked before. When the back of their head is facing me directly I see a face - that is, the black stripes of their crowns and cheeks converge at the back to look like a pair of large black eyes and a central large beak. The bird flicks its head quickly, and when that flicking results in suddenly presenting the back of the head, it's rather startling. I suspect it might be a bit off-putting for a second to a potential predator such as a sharp-shinned hawk or even a kestrel. This "face" is not so vivid on the male, but of course he has a bright red spot that may serve the "startle factor" (as well as a reproductive and pair-bonding function).

Eye spots on the backs of small falcons, owls, butterflies and other small animals are well known, but I don't recall a face being noted on downy woodpeckers. Maybe it's my imagination. Downys are quick for sure, but certainly not as quick as the smaller chickadees and titmice, which do not have posterior "faces." Perhaps the latter species are too quick to need them. Woodpeckers necessarily have to turn their backs on the world, making them vulnerable for short periods of time, so a quick, fierce face might give a predator just enough pause for the downy to escape.



## Board Minutes...Steve Ford

The meeting was called to order by President Andy George at 6:00 pm, in the third floor lounge of Heckert-Wells Hall, PSU. All board members attended except Megan Corrigan who was attending to family matters in Baltimore: Mavis Benner, Wayne Bocklelman, Cindy and Steve Ford, Kathy Fox, Bob and Liz Mangile, and Diane McCallum.

\*\* Minutes were approved.

\*\* Treasurer's report (Liz): \$4745.24 in checking.

\*\* Cindy and Steve reported on the Audubon of KS Zoom meeting of Feb 19. The ensuing discussion took up much of the board meeting. Ann Tanner from Burroughs Audubon in KC spoke at the Zoom meeting about her experience with the AOK Adventure Pack program and reaching beginning birders in the KC area. The Adventure Packs consist of a sturdy backpack, one pair of adult binoculars, two pairs of kid's binoculars, natural history brochures, and natural area maps for the relevant counties. The Packs are made available to communities via participating libraries. Ann reported the library boards of three of the four counties in the greater KC area chose to participate. Long story short, the packs were deemed quite successful. Ann discussed the various "hands on" events in her area designed to entice communities into birding. Many of these were relatively short programs at libraries (AOK can provide a Beginning Birding video) followed by outside field trips around the libraries to spot birds or car pooling to natural areas. Other centers were involved as well, retirement homes for example. The indoor presentations and outdoor field trips were led by area Master Naturalists (from a K-State University program). There are a number of Master Naturalists in the KC area. Attendance at the birding programs was high. Burroughs Audubon contributed \$6,000 last year to purchase Adventure Packs for the libraries. Ann had suggestions as to initiating such a broadly-based community effort.

Discussion at our board meeting centered around localities for beginning birding programs/field trips, focus of the programs, and recruiting volunteers to do them. Localities forwarded included PSU's Natural History Reserve and the Crawford County Museum. Pittsburg's public library can accommodate indoor programs (as they have in the past), but there are no natural areas around it for field trips. It was noted that a

## Treasurer Report...Liz Mangile

beginning birding program including a field trip might be a way to refuel Andy's monthly field trips and possibly gain SGA a few new members, but there was some skepticism. We've tried things like this in years past, and although they initially seemed to be successful, the long-term benefits were questionable. Recruiting new active members to a relatively small chapter like SGA is a perennial challenge. Discussion will continue.

AOK Zoom meetings are open to any interested member. Kathy will contact Jackie about potentially putting future meeting schedules and topics on Facebook. The March 19 meeting will feature using iNaturalist. April 16 using eBird.

\*\* The March program will be Ozark Chinkapins by Jeff Cantrell. April: Purple Martins of the Amazon by Bill Warnes. We're still seeking a speaker for the May picnic.

\*\* Andy will head up the Kansas Ornithological Society Conference at PSU Oct 3-5. More news to come.

\*\* Gabe McClain is starting to get prothonotary warbler boxes in the field. A Missouri Master Naturalist group has already built 50 more boxes (with our lumber) to support his study and promises 50 more, so Gabe will have at least 300 boxes in the field. Maybe more. Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks (KDWP) has donated several old T posts. Andy is applying for a grant from KDWP to help pay Gabe and an assistant. A doner will fund several geolocators.

## February PROGRAM SUMMARY by Steve Ford

### **Protecting Our Planet: Environmental Initiatives of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma by Kristi Laughlin.**

### **The Environmental Programs of the Wyandotte Nation by Kathleen Welch.**



Kristi and Kathleen offered wide-ranging perspectives on the environmental programs undertaken by these two neighboring tribes to our South as well as a bit of history. Both oversee their respective tribes' programs. They and their staffs are busy folks.

Kristi noted that the Shawnees were moved from Ohio to Oklahoma in 1832 as part of the famous "Trail of Tears." There are nine separate tribes in the state, but they all work together on various projects. The Eastern Tribe (there are three Shawnee tribes) have jurisdiction over 22 square miles, most of which the tribe has purchased over the years. Her department is involved in restoration activities in the Tri-State Mining District and Tar Creek Superfund Site. Water quality monitoring (including Spring River), land management activities (including tree planting and other forestry activities), testing fish and mussels for heavy metals, prevention of non-point source pollution, restoration of stream banks, and even septic system installation and the building of rain gardens fall within the purview of Kristi's programs. The tribe has a robust recycling effort as well, including an annual weekend of tire collection wherein some 4,000 tires are collected from anyone (non-commercial) who needs the service. It's advertised on TV. The tribe works closely with the EPA, securing grants and being involved in strategic planning.

Kathleen's involvement with environmental activities is similar for the Wyandottes, and includes the monitoring of wells for bacteria and other pollutants, a free service for tribal and non-tribal members alike. The tribe has recently undertaken major stream bank restoration.

We had a good crowd of 38 people to hear about the ambitious activities of these two tribes, including several people we haven't seen before, indicative I think of a diversity of interests. They had lots of good questions.



# AUDUBON ARTISTIC NOTEBOOK

## Emmett Sullivan Photo

### White Bison

“White buffalo” are spiritual with many native American tribes. Emmett shot this photo near Downstream Casino at the Kansas/Oklahoma border where a herd of bison are maintained.



## Kathy Fox Photo

### Brown Thrasher

Welcome to spring. This brown thrasher showed up in Kathy’s yard on March 8th. They like to “thrash” around in brushy habitat. They are not related to thrushes, but instead related to mockingbirds and catbirds.





## Happenings in Southeast KS

## Sightings...



*The group of sparrows can be challenging for novice birders because most of them are brown in color. Noting the patterns and subtle shapes of tails and size of the bird can help in identification. Recognizing the habitat can also help to distinguish some species.*



Song Sparrow



Swamp Sparrow

### Comparison of Two Similar Sparrows

Can you detect the differences between these two sparrows?

(Thank you, Kathy Fox,  
for sending these photos.)



**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**

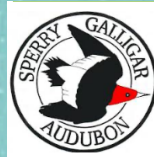
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_



**EVENTS & ETC.**

.....  
**Want to attract more birds to  
your yard?  
Establish native plants!**  
.....

**Mark your calendar for a  
native plant sale:**

Shoal Creek Conservation  
Education Center, Joplin

Saturday, May 24  
10:00 to 2:00



**Purple Poppy Mallow**

**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.