



NEWS FROM THE FLOCK

February 2026 / Issue 5

OFFICERS

President
Andrew George
Vice President
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Secretary
Steve Ford
Treasurer
Wayne Bockelman

BOARD SUPPORT

Newsletter Editor
Cindy Ford
cford@pittstate.edu

Web Master
Bob Mangile
sperry-galligar.com

Membership
Diane McCallum

Next Program

Thursday, 7:00
February 26, 2026
102 Yates Hall, PSU

“How Birds became
Dinosaurs and Vice
Versa” by Megan
Corrigan, VP Sperry-
Galligar Audubon.

Discover key
advances in
understanding bird
evolution that
convinces many
scientists that birds
did not evolve from
dinosaurs. They are
actually living
dinosaurs flying
among us today.

A LATE WINTER'S WALK

Steve Ford



The lingering snow cover of late January reminded me of my youth in northern Indiana wherein the first respectable snow of winter would likely last the entire season due to low temperatures and renewing snows. I took advantage of our white landscape while it lasted by walking nearly every day along the trails of our farm west of Pittsburg. Even snow of moderate depth changes one's stride, so that muscles and joints that don't normally complain too loudly raise their voices, and deep breathing frosts one's glasses, lungs, and facial hair. Nonetheless, it's nice.

Retreading the same paths would seem to foster boredom, but there's usually something unique if one looks

and considers. Newly fallen snow brings animal tracks and signs from last night—coyotes, deer, rabbits, squirrels, mice, tracks of small birds and occasional primary feather stories from larger birds such as red-shouldered hawks and barred owls. Admittedly I've lost a step or two in interpreting the behavior of all this fervent winter life.

If the snow remains due to steady cold and there is no more snow fall, the tracks naturally grow in number because the same animals make new enduring tracks with every step. After a few days it seems as if the woods are overwhelmed by a jailbreak at the zoo. Favorite animal trails become more obvious, but I don't actually see my usual numbers of deer. Old snow becomes crusty, making my own crunching footfalls noisy so that deer hear me sooner and slink away. I may not see them, but it becomes difficult to walk without stepping on their tracks with every stride.

Birds are still. For most it's far from breeding season and the snow cover and cold bring food-finding to high priority. An exception to the quiet was a large flock of Canada geese flying low, honking—a sound I love. I suspect they are trying to find open water. Good luck.

(Cont. on Page 5)

Board Minutes...Steve Ford

Present were Mavis Benner, Wayne Bockelman, Megan Corrigan, Cindy and Steve Ford, Kathy Fox, Andy George, Diane McCallum. Bob and Liz Mangile not in attendance due to Liz's recent illness. Call to order by President Andy at 6:00 pm.

- ** Minutes of Dec. 4, 2025 approved.
- ** Treasurerer Wayne reported a balance of \$2,826.88.
- ** Audubon of Kansas report from Steve and Cindy included upcoming Lek Trek prairie chicken festival near Hays, Apr. 9-12. Kenn Kaufman will be the keynote speaker.
- ** Diane, Megan, and Wayne reported on updates with membership reporting and online payments. Cindy will revise information on the back page of the newsletter. After considerable discussion we decided it was too confusing dealing with both National and two categories of local memberships. We voted for a single category of local membership combining single and family at \$20 (instead of the previously considered \$15 single \$20 family). Those wanting a National membership (and therefore receiving the Audubon Magazine) will have to subscribe directly wth National. Diane will try to provide email addresses from National members. Be sure to provide the Sperry-Galligar code J-10 in order to receive our newsletter. The new \$20 local fee will begin at next year's first meeting in September.
- ** Pittsburg's public library now has Audubon backpacks (binoculars, birding guides) available for checkout. Purchased via a grant for "Library of Things."
- ** Burroughs Audubon will have prothonotary warbler webinar with Gabe McClain, Frb. 28.
- ** Greenbush is interested in inviting SG Aud in April to do an outreach event, maybe a birdwalk.
- ** Attendance at several area CBCs was down this year, including our Minedland count.
- ** Speakers: Jan: Climate Change Surveys in National Parks, Dr. Delia Lister; Feb: formerly scheduled speaker, Davis Penning, Herps, canceled. Megan will reschedule him. She may fill in herself with a bird-dinosaur talk; Mar: Pupal Forteresses—Defenses Against Predation by Jamie Phelps; Apr: open; May picnic: National Park tour by Dr. Jackie Augustine, AOK.
- ** Vote to adjourn.

Treasurer Report...Wayne Bockelman

AUDUBON OF KANSAS (AOK) Opportunity

Become more involved in protection of wildlife, including birds, and the habitats that support them by joining the Audubon of Kansas Board.

This state-wide organization's mission is to advocate for conservation of land and animals in order to give Kansans special places to be able to visit and to sway legislation to protect species.

There is an opening on the board currently for a representative from the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Chapter. If you are interested, please contact

Dr. Jackie Augustine, Executive Director of AOK
jackie@audubonofkansas.org

For more information, talk with Steve Ford at the meeting who served temporarily on the board.

Spring Bird Event:

Kansas Lek Treks Prairie Chicken Fest

Sponsored by Audubon of Kansas

April 9 - 12, Hays, KS

- ** Participate in Tours to view prairie chickens
- ** Attend Presentation by Kenn Kaufman, author of Kansas bird books
- ** Meet like-minded bird watchers

For more information and to register:

Visit [Audubon of Kansas website](#)



JANUARY PROGRAM SYNOPSIS

Steve Ford



Former Sperry-Galligar President and Director of PSU's Nature Reach program, Delia Lister, spoke to a good crowd of 32 on a cold January night. Her talk centered on a segment of her recent Ph.D. studies, called "Bridging Science and Story: Communicating Climate Change in Two Iconic National Parks."

Science researchers often do good work seeking answers to troubling and important questions, but often are not as effective in communicating their findings to the general public, the same public who not only is seriously affected by the problems studied, but who has funded many of the studies in the first place. Public pressure on legislators and other decision-makers is lacking when a public distracted by a myriad of modern concerns does not "get" the message. Trust in Federal government institutions has suffered in the recent political climate. That said, the National Park Service still retains public respect, even if some of its messaging regarding climate change is weak, and even though the ongoing results of climate change are obvious to visitors and park officials.

Delia and her colleagues interviewed visitors and rangers in Joshua Tree and Glacier Bay National Parks about their views of how climate change is affecting these beautiful spaces. Most people were concerned that, for example, the Joshua trees would mostly be gone in that park in just a few decades, as will the desert tortoise, a keystone species, if current climate directions continue. Stories that personalize concerns help get people's attention. One story is that of singer Gram Parsons' death near the park. His friends transported his body into the park, lit it on fire in a (failed and quite illegal) attempt to cremate it in order to dramatize the park's ecological woes. *GramFest* continues annually towards that end.

Joshua Tree NP is just east of Los Angeles, and is highly visited. Glacier Bay NP in the coastal rainforest of southern Alaska is hard to get to, and is relatively lightly visited. Just as the namesake trees of the former park are headed for a memory-only future, the glaciers of Glacier Bay are headed for extinction. Origin stories of the indigenous Tlinkits are centered around the glaciers. Legendary conservationist John Muir's Alaska writings focus on his hair-raising exploits on these glaciers.

Both parks—and by extension all parks—have the public's trust and perhaps love. They have opportunities via their tremendous landscapes and the tales they engender to capture the public's attention and movement to action regarding the climate change that quite likely is going to devastate them (and other less spectacular aspects of our lives). Dr. Lister's study recognizes the importance of park administrators seizing their opportunities for communication about climate change.

*A note. Need we say Delia's photographs of these great national parks were the most breathtaking we've seen this year?

PHOTOGRAPHERS' NOTEBOOK



Gray Squirrel ... Kathy Fox Photo



Blue Jay ... Kathy Fox Photo



Winter Moon ... Kathy Fox Photo



Happenings in Southeast KS

Sightings...



(Cont. from Page 1 – “A Late Winter’s Walk”)

The snow and lack of leafy foliage makes prominent a limestone crag on a point south of Limestone Creek. The rocky outcrop is at the edge of a hill (called a *cuesta*) in the Osage *Cuesta* Physiographic Province. I’m walking just on the north side of the creek in the Province called the Cherokee Lowlands. To my knowledge there are no Osages or Cherokees left in our area, only Republicans and Democrats, but I have found chert projectile points and a hand-sized scraper (I’m calling it) near the creek. Standing atop this prominence in winter one can see for some three miles. At one time we considered building our house near it, but we’re glad we decided to just leave it alone within the relatively unmolested, forested Ozarkian-type landscape. This snowy scene overlooking the creek could be a postcard. I hope the Osages and Cherokees enjoyed it while they could.

I decided to split my walk. The first half was my usual trek through the trails of woods and field edges, but then I passed through a gate onto a gravel county road, a little over a mile of easier walking if one avoided the slippery strips. It was late in the afternoon, and quite cold. A kindly postmistress driving by stopped, saw my icy white beard and moustache and a wad of flying hair from under my sweatshirt hood and no doubt thought “this monkey’s escaped his hibernating hole.” But I explained I was just enjoying a winter walk, and where the hell was my monthly *Garden and Gun* magazine? (Come on, I’m joking). I smiled and thanked her for her courtesy. She smiled, locked her door, and drove on.

Eventually I turned the corner and was not far from home when I heard another car. I turned to see it was still a distance away, but coming fast, raising a great cloud of dust. I stepped off the road and well into the ditch. It was a Jeep racing down the gravel at some 50 mph, maybe more. I was very glad my two dogs were not with me. I thought, “Wow, this guy’s got a big emergency,” but at the same time saw another billowing vehicle, this one with a siren and flashing red lights. It roared past, a sheriff’s car. Then another siren and another sheriff. Altogether five screaming police vehicles including one from Parsons, all within less than a minute. None stopped to ask if I wanted a ride. Their dust was still hanging when I turned into my driveway. I never learned the circumstance of this high-speed chase, but did learn they caught the culprit.

I got home to some hot coffee from Cindy, and a yet another story of a late winter walk.



Application for Membership Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

For National Audubon Society membership, send \$20.00 online or by mail directly to National Audubon Society. You will receive 4 copies of the Audubon Magazine annually and 8 copies of the Sperry-Galligar Audubon Chapter Newsletter.

Be sure to include the code, **J-10** on your check to indicate in which Audubon chapter you belong and your **e-mail**.

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For local membership ONLY pay \$15.00 to Sperry-Galligar Audubon Chapter and receive 8 newsletters per year informing you of all our local activities. You may pay in person at a meeting by cash or check or send a check by mail or online through Paypal.

Be sure to include the code, **J-10** on your Paypal transmission. Find Paypal on the Sperry-Galligar website or Facebook page.

.....Cut Here.....

To mail a check, please print and send to:

Sperry-Galligar Audubon Chapter
205 W. Euclid
Pittsburg, KS. 66762

_____ Yes, I wish to become a member of the local chapter. (\$15)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____



Sperry- Galligar Audubon Society

Meetings are held the last Thursday of the month:
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Room 102 Yates Hall
Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, KS.

November/December meeting dates combined typically the first week in December. No meetings in June, July, or August.

EVENTS & ETC.

NOTE CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP

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If you want to join National Audubon Society, with magazine for \$20, please contact National Audubon Society online with your check.



Please submit articles or photos to the newsletter editor by the 10th of each month.

Next submission date:

March 10. Send to:
cford@pittstate.edu

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 Sperry-Galligar Newsletter.