



# NEWS FROM THE FLOCK

April 2026 / Issue 7

## OFFICERS

President  
Andrew George  
Vice President  
Megan Corrigan  
Secretary  
Steve Ford  
Treasurer  
Wayne Bockelman

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[sperry-galligar.com](http://sperry-galligar.com)

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## Next Program

Thursday, 7:00  
April 30, 2026  
102 Yates Hall, PSU

“Pollinator Pop-up Gardens” by Peyton Kessler, Oswego.  
Pop-up native gardens are like convenience stores for pollinators. Join us to learn what native plants grow well together and what you can plant to support those pollinators.

## IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME Cindy Ford

Spring brings a rush of plant growth, particularly with the rains followed by warm sunlight. Changes occur each day in the garden outside of our house. My garden is a canvas of native and horticultural plants selected for pollination and seasonal interest. The area is three-season green texture with scattered flowers. I enjoy the textures and colors throughout the year.

In turn, the community of plants quicken the activity in the garden. Insects use the garden by incorporating plants that serve as food sources and camouflage. For example, New England asters bloom in the late summer and serve as butterfly magnets with nectar, dill and fennel attract black swallowtail butterfly caterpillars, and common milkweed is famously connected to monarch butterflies for egg laying.

The composition and structure of the garden was designed to encourage birds to spend time near the house. When native columbine, red buckeye, and orange tubular honeysuckle all bloom, ruby-throated hummingbirds are close to arriving in the area. The trunk of a crabapple is a favorite for a sapsucker, evidenced by the

horizontal rows of holes in the bark.

Squirrels find the garden irresistible for traversing branches, nipping vegetables, and scolding. On the ground I make small fences in the garden to protect new shrubs from rabbits. They find many places to hollow out nests as well as to sample abundant and emerging plants near the nest.

I get pleasantly surprised occasionally by the sudden movements of snakes, like discovering a rough green snake lounging in a shrub. A few days ago I was watching a rabbit running in zigzags through the vegetation. All of a sudden a snake flipped into the air. The rabbit was chasing the snake away from its nest—a sight I had never seen before.

I have found that a garden is much more than petunias and tomatoes. What a way to attract wildlife and get a free show!



## Board Minutes...Steve Ford

March 26, 2026, Heckert-Wells 3rd floor lounge.

Attending: Mavis Benner, Cindy and Steve Ford, Kathy Fox, Diane McCallum

\*\* In lieu of the extreme formality of our usual meeting the board assumed the aspect of a leaderless box of cute and wiggly puppies. It was recognized that according to the constitution there should be a slate of officers presented to the general membership to be voted on at next month's (April) meeting, but, not unlike the current federal government, the constitution was kind of kicked aside, and no slate was developed. In our defense we did throw around names, most of whom had previously been approached and invited to join the board and/or run for office. None acquiesced. People are busy. That led to questioning who among us would be willing to continue their current assignments. Cindy agreed to stay on as newsletter editor, Diane as Membership czar, and Steve—God bless him—as secretary. President Andy George, Vice President Megan Corrigan, and Treasurer Wayne Bockelman were not in attendance, but their names and positions were discussed. Suggestions were made, but obviously no "slate" was arrived at given we didn't know these people's wishes. Kathy made herself available. Further discussion was tabled until the April board meeting.

\*\* Cindy and Steve will pick up chicken from Walmart for the May picnic in consultation with the Mangile's.

\*\* Meeting was adjourned when folks wandered off or visited the restroom and didn't come back.

## Treasurer Report...Wayne Bockelman

No report.

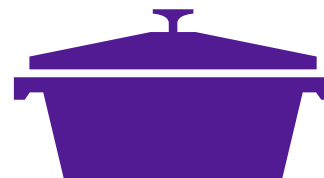
### Annual May Picnic

The Sperry-Galligar Audubon Chapter Annual Picnic will be held Thursday, May 28th at 6:00 p.m. The dinner will be held at Homer Cole Community Center, northeast of Walmart on Joplin Street.

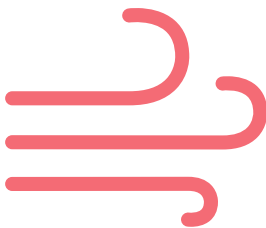
Fried chicken and iced tea will be provided by the chapter. To fill out the meal, bring a side dish of vegetables, salads, or desserts. Please bring a serving spoon for your side dish. Also please bring your own plate, glass, and silverware.

We will have an interesting program on personal experiences of Jackie Augustine, Audubon of Kansas Executive Director, who visited several national parks.

There will be a sign-up sheet for attendance at the upcoming meeting or call Bob Mangile to make a reservation. Need count for chicken.



The May picnic will be the last meeting until September. Enjoy birding over the summer.



Please consider joining the  
Sperry-Galligar Chapter Board.  
We meet at 6:00 p.m. before each  
monthly meeting. You would be  
very welcome.

## MARCH PROGRAM SYNOPSIS. Steve Ford



Dr. Jamie Phelps, an instructor in PSU's Biology Department, presented "Pupal Fortresses: Defenses Against Predation". There is nothing more fascinating in field biology than the relationships among organisms and their environments, which include other organisms.

Jamie noted that among all the animals, 60% are insects, of which some 180,000 are butterflies and moths, second most numerous in species only to the beetles. Each butterfly, like all other living species, has a unique way of relating to everything around it, which is a breathtaking concept, isn't it?

Jamie's tiny slice of that concept—her Ph.D. work at Louisiana State University— focused on how butterflies in the relatively inert and vulnerable *pupal* stage of development (egg—larvae or caterpillar—*pupa*—adult), have evolved to avoid being eaten. One way is camouflage—hiding. She noted that part of her study experimented

with a pigment called melanin. Some pupae, and other forms in the developmental line, use melanin to make themselves lighter or darker (same species) so as to blend in with their immediate background. Camouflage is aided in some species by a toxin, so if a predator does find the pupa and eats it, it will get a dose of yuck, and will not do it again. Other species' pupae may do just the opposite. Rather than try to hide, they will advertise their toxicity with bright colors—like a coral snake. The owl butterfly's pupa looks like the head of a snake, thus scaring off a potential predator. The *Yikes!* factor.

One of my favorites is the ant-lovers. These butterflies have a pupa with a chemical that ants like. The ants will "adopt" a pupa, defend it and care for it until the butterfly emerges and flies away.

Dr. Phelps provided a diversity of beautiful photos and diagrams to illustrate a myriad of chemical, morphological, and behavioral tricks that butterflies use in their various stages to avoid being dinner. Nature: its intrigue is too good to miss.

## Audubon of Kansas State Chapter News Steve Ford

The National Audubon Society, according to a recent Audubon of Kansas Zoom meeting attended by Steve and Cindy Ford, has initiated a program wherein local chapters can partner with specific groups in other countries to initiate bird conservation/education activities. For example, the Burroughs Audubon chapter (Kansas City) is partnering with a city in Colombia where many prothonotary warblers spend the winter. These warblers are of particular interest to us in eastern Kansas, including the Pittsburg area, because Sperry-Galligar Audubon is invested in a prothonotary nesting study here. You'll recall our chapter built 260 nest boxes for graduate student, Gabe McClain's, work in our strip-mined areas, and have helped him place the boxes in some of his field sites. It may be some of "his" birds end up at the site in Colombia. Ann Tanner from Burroughs has been taking the lead in keeping track of Kansas prothonotaries, and has initiated contact with Colombia. The specifics of conservation/educational efforts with Colombia are forthcoming, but perhaps might involve helping them conserve their coastal mangrove trees or sending them Adventure Packs (with binoculars, field guides, etc.) Sperry-Galligar could join her (Burroughs) efforts or find our own partner (via National) with whom to coordinate. The species of bird or birds, the specific country with whom we might want to partner, and just what that partnership might entail is to a large extent up to us. It would involve some financial investment from us. If anyone is interested in this international conservation/education program, and would be willing to assume a local role, let someone on the SG Audubon board know and we'll get in touch with Ann.

# Carly's Travels . . . . . Carly Rowton

My family traveled to Carlsbad Caverns National Park, White Sands National Park (sledding down the sand was so much fun!!), Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Smokey Bear Museum (history is interesting), and stayed a few days in Ruidoso, New Mexico.

On an ATV ride in Ruidoso, NM I got to see my first ever greater roadrunner. It did, as its name says, run across the road in front of us and then pause in the ditch.

In Ruidoso, NM we hiked by a lake. I was lucky to get to see many new types of ducks to add to my list. A mallard is not new for me but I was struck by how vibrant the green feathers were.

Our cabin in Ruidoso, NM had many acorn woodpeckers flying throughout the trees. They were fun to watch.

As we were leaving Carlsbad Caverns National Park, I noticed Barbary sheep up high on a rock ledge. I Googled them and found out they are not native and were introduced to that area in the 1940-50s.

At Guadalupe Mountains National Park, I spotted a canyon towhee.



Ring-necked Duck



Canyon Towhee



Barbary Sheep

# PHOTOGRAPHERS' NOTEBOOK

Kathy Fox Photos

Spring has arrived at Kathy's home.



Eastern Tailed Blue Butterfly



Red-banded Hairstreak Butterfly



Mantled Baskettail Dragonfly



## Happenings in Southeast KS

### Sightings...



#### Close Call

Steve Ford

Dr. George brought his bird class on a field trip to our little corner of the county the other day. For the benefit of the students assembled in the driveway we proffered a brief expose of how many thousands of dollars and hours on trees we've spent and planted to turn this old farm and strip mined land into a wildlife area—not a few of those dollars, hours, and trees mis-planted in actuality or metaphorically. Given enough time Mother Nature would have done it for free. We just didn't have the time; only one lifetime.

After they suffered this white-haired, Grant Wood-like old couple's blather, off they trekked down our mowed trails, perhaps a bit more appreciative that they did not have to swing machetes to gain access to our birds. I told these young-bloods—who by the way indeed do get younger every time a new group shows up, which makes sense since time passes only linearly, and MY age never changes. (The day will come when we'll be addressing crawling babies.)—that they are welcome any time, but please to leave their frizzbies and dirt bikes at home.

Andy later reported seeing some early spring species, such as parula warblers along Limestone Creek—I'd heard them a day or two earlier—but additionally he noted spotting a yellow-crowned night heron in what Cindy has named the "Butterfly Marsh," so-called because from the air it vaguely resembles the wings of a butterfly. To me it less vaguely resembles Dolly Parton, if you get my drift, but she, Cindy, doesn't cotton to the label "Dolly's Marsh." I didn't realize she'd become such a Puritan, especially because she used to be one of those free range Methodists. Regardless, we do see yellow-crowned night herons there occasionally, although they are not common, and I was glad one was wetting its feet in Dolly's Butterfly Marsh.

For me wetlands are special places in a natural landscape, places of high species diversity and exceeding productivity and dynamism. The ringing calls of American toads and the comically strident belches and bleats of frogs—leopard, chorus, and tree—are highlights of the natural year. Herons and egrets are a particularly welcome addition to a wetland—cherries on the sundae. Night herons, both yellow-crowned and black-crowned, are beautiful, grayish, mid-sized herons that, as their names imply, are most active nocturnally, although we can see them feeding on crayfish during the day as well. On our place we see more yellow-crowns than black-crowns, even though the yellows are more solitary than the gregarious black-crowns. Both roost and nest in trees, which is why I don't get too concerned about a few willow trees invading Butterfly Marsh, even though the trees may discourage some kinds of ducks.

Lately I had been including a stroll around the marsh in my daily spring sojourns through the farm, but other than the ubiquitous great blues I had not seen herons—Andy's yellow-crowned may have just dropped in from migration. The following day I looked carefully for it when I startled a deer that evidently had bedded down among the reeds in one of the drier areas. I watched it bounding toward the levee when either it or I flushed the heron just in front of the deer. They both seemed to startle the other, as both abruptly changed directions. The deer ran on over the levee and the heron flew to a more distant part of the marsh.

More often than not I see deer on my walks, usually in the form of white flags waving bye-bye, singles or by the half-dozen. Occasionally I spot an uncommon bird. Never have I witnessed a near collision of both. Of course this event took but a few seconds, but such scenes press indelible images on my brain. Which add up to pure joy.



## Application for Membership Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society

For **FIRST-TIME** 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.

### Native Plant Sales

Visit some native plant nurseries to create your own pollinator garden.

**Peyton's Potting Shed**  
peytonspottingshed@gmail.com

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**Shoal Creek Conservation  
Education Center, Joplin  
May 23  
10:00 - 2:00**



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

Next submission date:  
**MAY 10.** Send to:  
[cford@pittstate.edu](mailto: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.