



# Oklahoma City Audubon Society

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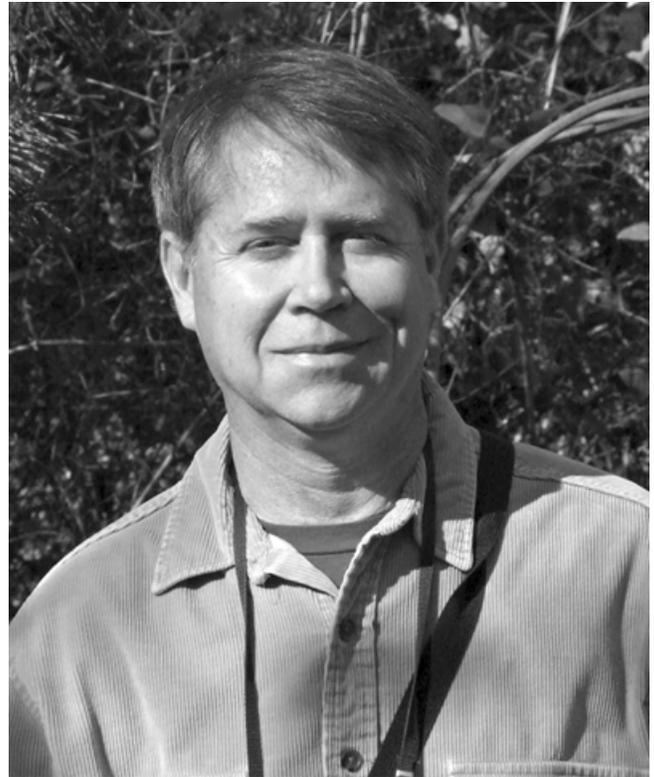
June 2013

## Understanding Avian Diversity

At the June 17 meeting, Oklahoma City Audubon Society president Bill Diffin will present a program titled, **The Phylogeny of Birds — Understanding Avian Diversity**.

There are about 10,000 bird species in the world more than half of which are contained in only one of the 29 bird Orders, the Passeriformes. The entire class, Aves, contains more species than any other class of land vertebrates. Therefore a good subtitle for the program is: *Where did all those species come from and how are they related?*

The word "phylogeny" has a very similar meaning to the word "genealogy." A phylogeny represents the ancestral relations among a set of species the same way that a genealogy represents the ancestral relations among a set of people. For many years scientific efforts to create a phylogeny for birds were beset by some vexing problems. The similarities in birds frustrated attempts to formally compare groups in such a way as to reveal their same or different ancestries. The problems in determining the detailed relationships of birds from physical comparisons proved to be so intractable that scientists turned to comparisons of DNA sequences as their primary approach, a method known as molecular phylogenetics.



The initial effort, the Sibley-Ahlquist DNA-DNA hybridization studies, produced results that were both revolutionary and controversial. The technology of DNA sequencing and of transforming the sequences into reasonable phylogenetic trees have steadily advanced over the past 20 years aided considerably by advances in computing capability. The result has been a series of ever more precise phylogenetic studies. In the June meeting program the birds of Africa will be used where possible for the source of specific examples of avian diversity. This will give the program a regional theme while keeping the scope contained for a one-hour talk.

Bill Diffin received his education in Chemical Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and later earned an MBA from Oklahoma City University. His career was in various research and development, engineering and supervisory roles in the gas processing, oil and gas production, lubricants and inorganic chemicals industries. Bill has been studying the phylogenetics of birds for clues to bird identification since taking up the birding hobby.

Come out for an exciting evening of warm camaraderie. And bring a friend and a young person. Our meetings are held September through June on the third Monday of each month. They begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Will Rogers Garden Center, I-44 and NW 36th Street. Visitors are always welcome.

# President's Perspective

By Bill Diffin



In May's Perspective we heard songs for non-US representatives of half of the clades in the Sylvioidea superfamily, <http://www.tolweb.org/Sylvioidea/67276>. The plan for this month is to hear representatives for the other half. We had covered the two families in Acrocephalidae-

+*Donacobius*+Megaluridae but not *Donacobius*. There is only one species in *Donacobius*, *D. atricapilla*, and it lives in South America. The image comparison to Little Rush Warbler in Megaluridae here [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-capped\\_Donacobius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-capped_Donacobius) is convincing concerning the correct placement of *Donacobius* in the current clade. There is no obvious similarity between the mimid-like songs of the examples heard last month and the song of the *Donacobius*, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/84033>. The next clade has six members,

swallows+bulbuls+bush warblers+long-tailed tits+green hylia+leaf warblers. In April we listened to the Barn Swallow, Purple Martin, Bushtit and Arctic Warbler. Let's listen to the Red-whiskered Bulbul here, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/35512>. The individual song phrases are short and variable and don't repeat immediately. The Grey-cheeked Bulbul (photo,



<http://ibc.lynxeds.com/photo/grey-cheeked-bulbul-alophoixus-bres/individual-perched>) sings a long phrase which is repetitive except for a short, variable ending, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/29588>. Bulbuls (family Pycnonotidae) tend to be generalist feeders. The following page has a nice photo collection, <http://creagrus.home.montereybay.com/bulbuls.html>. The bush warblers (family Cettiidae) are small, insectivorous birds of the Old World somewhat convergent with New World wrens. Following is a compilation of four song recordings of Cetti's Warbler, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/40195>. On the following page the first four recordings of another cettiid, the Chestnut-headed Tesia, sound similar but not identical, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/species/Cettia-castaneocoronata>. The two bush warbler examples can be seen in photos at <http://creagrus.home.montereybay.com/cettids.html>. The leaf warblers, family Phylloscopidae, are another group of small insectivorous birds. To get an appreciation of the variability in the song of the Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler, listen to the first, fourth and fifth recordings, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/species/>

[Phylloscopus-ruficapilla](http://www.xeno-canto.org/137850). The Common Chiffchaff has a simple but variable song which can be heard here, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/137850>. There is no generalization which conveniently sums up the songs in the entire swallows+bulbuls+etc. clade under discussion, but songs made up of simple whistles are common. The next Sylvioidea clade, the family, Cisticolidae, consists of 110 species of small, drab Old World warblers found in grassland or scrub. Most species live in Africa. Our first example is the Singing Cisticola (photo, <http://ibc.lynxeds.com/photo/singing-cisticola-cisticola-cantans/singing-loudly-lower-bush>). Listen to the first five seconds of the first half dozen or so recordings here to gain an appreciation of the rather liquid sounding song, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/species/Cisticola-cantans>. Each of the birds just heard was singing a different song. The Whistling Cisticola can be heard here, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/126587>, the Trilling Cisticola can be heard here, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/107544>, the Rattling Cisticola can be heard here, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/107589>.



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## Oklahoma City Audubon Society

### Officers 2013

President	Bill Diffin	722-3778
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	Carla Brueggen	495-3259
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Refreshments	Sue Woodson	601-622-3467
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The Oklahoma City Audubon society is neither a chapter of nor affiliated with National Audubon.

For Oklahoma City Audubon news between newsletters and meetings visit:  
**OKC-Audubon.org**

## Bird of the Month

By John Shackford



The **Great-tailed Grackle** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) has an interesting history. It was lumped with the Boat-tailed Grackle in 1910 and only split in 1983. The species has spread wildly since it showed up in the Oklahoma in 1953 as the Boat-tailed Grackle. The first Boat-tailed record for the state was reported by Sutton (1967, *Oklahoma Birds*), et al: they saw a female “with several Common Grackles on the lawn of

Central State Hospital, Norman, Cleveland County,” on 28 April 1953. What a difference from today. I can think of only one other species that might have spread more rapidly and in such numbers over the state—the Eurasian Collared-Dove.

For several years, we banded the nestlings of Great-tailed Grackles in cattails at Rose Lake. This was probably in the 1970s. Warren Harden, who had the permit that allowed us to band, once chased down a chick that had flown about a quarter of a mile from its nest. Warren sent the data to the Bird Banding Laboratory in Patuxent, Maryland, and put the bird down as a “flighted” bird. The Banding Lab sent back word that Warren should have put this down as a “non-flighted” bird. Warren begged to differ, but the Band Lab declared the bird “non-flighted.” We have laughed a lot about how this bird could not fly. Incidentally, when banding Great-taileds, there is such a size difference between the larger male and smaller female of this species that males—including young males in the nest—require a bigger band than females.

Sutton (1967, *Oklahoma Birds*) noted that Boat-tailed Grackles nested in “willows, cattails, or bulrushes over water,” but that they also nested in a variety of tree species well away from water. A few years after our banding in cattails at Rose Lake we started noticing this grackle nesting in town. In particular, we noticed that they were nesting in ornamental Bradford pear trees. This pear blooms and leafs out a couple of weeks earlier in the spring than most other trees. This, I believe, gives

the Great-tailed a head start on their breeding season. I speculate that it also allows them to complete, on average, more nestings per year than cattail-nesting birds, which do not gear up for nesting until new growth on cattails makes them strong, about June. We also began noticing that the birds were also found in an area where there were fast food and mall parking lots. Perhaps these fast food places provided them with most of the food they required—french fries, burger buns, etc., plus grasshoppers pried out of the grill of cars.

When studying a species I find it useful to pay particular attention to three types of habitat—nesting habitat, food habitat and escape habitat. I find this especially interesting when talking about our “citified” Great-taileds: Bradford pears provide nesting habitat; food habitat is



provided by McDonald’s, Burger King, mall parking lots, etc.; some escape habitat is provided by Bradford pears because they are a relatively safe roosting tree for the grackles, while the Migratory Bird Act, which prevents the hunting of most bird species, decreases the actual need for escape habitat in the first place. Thus, the Great-tailed now has its main types of habitat covered (even “improved,” perhaps, by Bradford pear) in the middle of towns. I have not been watching very carefully if this grackle still nests frequently in cattails (if anyone knows I would very much like to hear about it), but I suspect a major shift in all or most of their

populations, toward a “citified” species. I have even toyed with the idea of studying the proximity of Bradford pears, McDonald’s (and similar other fast food opportunities), and Great-tailed populations to support or refute this possibility.

This possible major shift, “citification,” in the behavior of at least some Great-tailed Grackles raises another question: will the citified grackles evolve into a new species? Warren Harden has told me about Temple Swallows in India that now will only nest in man-made temples. Does anyone know of a Chimney Swift that has not nested in a man-made chimney? It will be interesting if one day the name of the Great-tailed is changed to Bradford or McDonald’s Grackle because of the evolutionary changes that occurred as they moved to cities.

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## Chirpings

By Patti Muzny

In the aftermath of the devastating May storms, it's so incredibly amazing to observe the healing, not only from those generous human spirits who are helping their communities to rebuild their homes and their lives, but also Mother Nature's role in this saga.



The last tornado skipped right over our south Oklahoma City home, leaving only a few twigs scattered in the yard, but we lost power from Friday evening to Sunday around noon. Without electricity there were not a lot of projects I could do, and the weather was beautiful, so I did a lot of recharging on the back patio.

Saturday morning dawned cool and very soggy but the spirits of our backyard birds were not dampened. I had sprinkled some pecan bits on the patio table and our Bewick's Wren immediately claimed them and in between singing his little beak off, he stuffed himself on pecan crumbles. The Cardinals soon followed suit and added a bit of cheerful color to the soggy landscape. Another visitor to the pecan stash was the Mockingbird. So I added picking out diminutive native pecans to my list of duties I could do without electricity! Cracking pecans seemed to be good emotional therapy after the storms.

I was so ecstatic to see that our Martins were not harmed by the fierce wind, rain and hail. We'll never know how that flimsy Martin house managed not to blow down. The Phoebe was up early and calling and the Mockingbird was adding its songs to the chorus. The first Yellow-crowned Night Herons of the season flew over the yard and scolded anything and everyone who was within hearing range. The Mississippi Kites soared overhead and even landed in one of our pecan trees for a little romantic interlude. Immediately after the storm, our Robin pair began to rebuild their nest. An 8-inch rain does not do good things to the robin's mud-based nest. Where do these fragile feathered creatures go when the weather becomes so brutal? Life definitely does go on and for that I am grateful.

Later in the week I saw and heard a Brown Thrasher singing its beautiful twice-repeated songs. Love those birds! House Finches were singing and of course, the English Sparrows were alive and well.

Hopefully we will all have a beautiful summer, stay safe and enjoy our feathered friends.

## Arctic Terns Taking the Long Way

by Nate Swick, ABA, [blog/aba.org](http://blog/aba.org)

The epic planet-spanning migration of Arctic Terns is among the most famous of all bird species. While they seemed to lose the title of "longest migratory route" to the Sooty Shearwater - whose 40,000 mile trek around the Pacific was



documented in 2006 - for a time, a recent study looks to hand that title back to the bird that for many is the textbook example of avian endurance.

We've known for a very long time that Arctic Terns breed in the high latitudes of the Arctic in the northern hemisphere summer before traveling to the other pole to spend the southern hemisphere summer foraging in the productive waters around Antarctica, but a team of researchers tagging breeding Arctic Terns with geolocators in the Netherlands has shown in the journal *Ardea*, that there's much more to that oversimplified route.

The tracked terns spent on average  $273 \pm 7$  days away from The Netherlands, and visited known staging areas in the North Atlantic and the Benguela Current, on both the outward and return journey. Similar tracks were observed in the terns from Greenland.

However, hereafter the terns from The Netherlands moved to a previously unknown staging area in the central Indian Ocean, between  $20-40^{\circ}\text{N}$  and  $65-100^{\circ}\text{E}$ , and spent most of the non-breeding season in the Southern Ocean between  $35-150^{\circ}\text{E}$ . One bird migrated as far as New Zealand.

Eventually, all five birds spent the Austral summer in Wilkes Land, Antarctica, before flying back to the breeding colonies with a small detour to the same North Atlantic staging area they visited on their southward migration. The total travel distance in the course of the non-breeding period was  $\sim 90,000 \pm 2000$  km, which substantially exceeds previous estimates for this species. For the non-metric among us, 90,000 km is on the order of 56,000 miles. Truly remarkable.

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## Conservation Report: Crystal Lake

By Dave Woodson, Conservation Chairperson

On May 29, Bill Diffin and I had a good meeting with Mr. Greg Webb, Crystal Lake program coordinator, to gather information, exchange ideas and determine mutual interests. In a recent e-mail, Bill wrote to Mr. Webb, "I enjoyed meeting you last Wednesday. I am impressed by your commitment to promoting an interest in nature, wildlife and birds within the community, particularly the youngsters."



Last November I provided some ideas to Mr. Larry Bross, my neighbor and Director of City Care, regarding Oklahoma City Audubon Society's possible interest in helping promote habitat conservation for birds, via signage along birding trails around Crystal Lake. These were discussed during our meeting with Greg Webb and he drove us around the lake pointing out the facilities and discussing the ongoing and future programs focused on "serving the needs of Oklahoma City's less fortunate." They have planted trees along the drive toward a large fishing dock, built a pavilion and restroom facilities near the lake, and have an archery range which is a growing sport in OKC schools. There is a road around the lake which will be part of the "River Trail" and they cleared brush on the NW side of the lake for group recreation needs. There are large trees and brush around the lake as well as reeds along the shoreline which provide good habitat for birds. While there we saw, Great and Cattle Egrets, Little Blue Heron, flycatchers, swallows, Dickcissels, a Baltimore Oriole, and a Greater Roadrunner with a snake in its mouth.

It was learned that The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Expo will not be held at the Lazy E in Guthrie this year. Instead a "mini-Expo" is being planned at Crystal Lake on 28, 29 Sep 2013. Greg asked if our Society would like to participate and suggested a "hands-on" project such as building bird houses or some other activity aimed at elementary and junior high school students. We also discussed the possibility of our Society helping plan bird sites around the tree line that would contain a water drip for relaxed bird watching and photography. We suggested the tree line on the East side across the road from the pavilion. Greg was encouraged by our suggestion.

I encourage any member who has interest to step forward with ideas for resources that could help in pursuing any of these efforts.

## May 20, 2013 Meeting

Due to weather concerns, the meeting was abbreviated and lightly attended.

Minutes of April meeting were approved without corrections.

Treasurer Nancy Vicars was absent, but President Bill Diffin reports that about \$6000 is in the account.

Conservation Committee: Dave Woodson was not in attendance, but Sharon Henthorn reported that there are trash grabber tools available for member use for litter pickup.

The USGS Breeding Bird Survey is still hoping to fill some vacant survey routes in Oklahoma this spring; a knowledge of local birds by sight and sound is required.

Field Trip Committee: Marc Delgrosso was absent, and no news was reported about upcoming trips.

Old Business: none

New Business: The annual club picnic will be June 15th at Patti Muzny's home. Details will follow in subsequent notifications.

Scheduled for this meeting was conservation management specialist David Gavin, with An Introductory Comparison of Avian Species Australia and the USA. Due to the limited attendance, the talk will be rescheduled.

The meeting was concluded with discussion of recent birding events: OOS meeting in Tishomingo, the Lesser Prairie Chicken Festival in Woodward, and the Red Slough Birding Convention in Idabel. Attendees reported good attendance and well-organized events.

Bob Holbrook spoke of his upcoming season leading birding tours at the Questatino Jungle Lodge in Brazil. He also has some deeply discounted coupons for Alpen Optics products, and recommends the company for quality and value.

The meeting was adjourned.

*Sharon Henthorn, Secretary OCAS*

## Recorders Report – May 2013

### Beauty and the Beasts

Half of the new reports were colorful warblers plus some interesting shorebirds. But as migration slowed down and nesting season begin, it was rudely interrupted by more rain and hail, severe thunderstorms and then tornados hit multiple locations in central Oklahoma. In spite of the devastation, resident birds hatched their first batch of babies, nests were rebuilt, and the warm season plant communities finally begin growing and blooming.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> James Hubbell saw a Green Heron at Lincoln Park in Oklahoma City. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Jason Shaw found a Wood Duck at the USAO Habitat Area near Chickasaw. In Logan County along Cottonwood Creek just north of West Waterloo Road, Christie Stoops had a Tree Swallow; Katrina Hucks had a Nashville Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush at Martin Park Nature Center; Evan Tanner located a **Worm-eating Warbler** in Stillwater; and Joe Grzybowski discovered a **Northern Waterthrush** at South Jenkins in Norman.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> Joe Grzybowski visited the Goldsby Sod Farm and located Buff-breasted Sandpipers, American Golden-Plovers, Horned



Lark and Savanna Sparrows, and Brian Davis had a Northern Harrier at South Jenkins in Norman. In Stillwater John Polo birded Couch Park and discovered a Blue-headed Vireo and Swainson's Thrush. Then he went over to the riparian area of Babcock and was watching

American Goldfinches and Chipping Sparrows when something jumped up from the forest floor just inside the vegetation to an open spot in the midstory – an **Ovenbird!**

On the 5<sup>th</sup> Jennifer Kidney was surprised with a visit by a Rose-breasted Grosbeak and the arrival of her favorite bird, the Gray Catbird. Kent Andersson located a Sora Rail at the Teal Ridge Wetland; Maire Johnson discovered a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** in Stillwater; and James Bates had a **Yellow-breasted Chat** and Summer Tanager at Lake Stanley Draper.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> Phil Floyd located **Bobolinks** on 84<sup>th</sup> Street out of Lexington about three miles south of Highway 39,

a few hundred yards south of the horse stables confiscated by the FBI from one of the leaders of the Mexican cartel. In Oklahoma City Dora Webb had a White-winged Dove at her feeder and Dave and Sue Woodson were sitting outside being entertained by 6 species of sparrows: Harris's, White-crowned, Chipping, Clay-colored, Savanna and House. At Lake Hefner Jonathan Lautenbach located a **Caspian Tern** and a Horned Grebe.



On the 8<sup>th</sup> in Grady County near Tuttle Larry Mays located a Bewick's Wren, Lark Sparrow, and Orchard Oriole. Dana Cole had an American Bittern at the Teal Ridge Wetland in Stillwater. On the 9<sup>th</sup> Dick Gunn bumped into Joe Grzybowski along South Jenkins and Joe promptly showed him a Sedge Wren. Later they picked up an **Alder Flycatcher** and **White-rumped Sandpiper**. At the Goldsby Sod Farm, Joe Grzybowski had **Hudsonian Godwit** and more White-rumped Sandpipers. In Pottawatomie County, Dala Grissom had an American Avocet and Forester's Tern at the Shawnee Reservoir, and Valerie Bradshaw had a Western Kingbird and Yellow-rumped Warbler at the Shawnee High School.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> Matt Jung reports from Eldon Lyon Park that the Red-headed Woodpeckers have returned as well as the Great-crested Flycatcher, and Mississippi Kites. In Bethel Acres Dala had a late Harris's Sparrow; Larry Mays had a House Wren in Newcastle; and Chad Ellis had a Common Nighthawk over the Yukon PetSmart Parking Lot. On the 11<sup>th</sup> Grace Huffman spotted a Common Loon at Lake Hefner, and T K had **Black Terns**, Snowy Plover and **Black-bellied Plovers** at Lake Thunderbird's Indian Point Marina.



On the 12<sup>th</sup> in Seminole County Matthew Daw located a Warbling Vireo, Swainson's Thrush, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Michael Beilfuss found a **Willow Flycatcher** at Lake Carl Blackwell. On the 11<sup>th</sup> Garey Harritt checked Cushing Lake and located a female Common Yellowthroat. In Kingfisher County at the Okarche sewage lagoon Larry

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## Recorder's Report (continued)

Mays located Eared Grebe, Ruddy Duck and Clay-colored Sparrow. On the 12<sup>th</sup> in Logan County Donna Mackiewicz heard a Chuck-will's-widow and Chimney Swift. Tim O'Connell had a **Magnolia Warbler** at the Noble Research Center, and on the 16<sup>th</sup> he discovered a **Kentucky Warbler** at Lake Carl Blackwell.

On the 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Bill Diffin birded Lake Overholser and located an adult **Tricolored Heron** and on the 20<sup>th</sup> a subadult Tricolored Heron. On the 19<sup>th</sup> Torre Hovick and John Polo visited the area near where Hwy 108 crosses over the Cimarron River



and noticed a **Mourning Warbler**. Later John stopped at Couch Park and discovered an **American Redstart** and **Chestnut-sided Warbler** while Tim O'Connell saw a Pied-billed Grebe at Boomer Lake in Stillwater. On the 20<sup>th</sup> Sharon Henthorn saw a Yellow-headed Blackbird in Edmond near the Dog Park.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> Jim Bates checked the Canadian Valley Sod Farm at North Midwest Blvd and East Wilshire Blvd and located Stilt Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Buff-breasted Sandpipers, and White-rumped Sandpiper. In Choctaw John Cleal announced they have had Red Crossbills in their yard for a week. Dick Gunn reports that B. Gunn located a **Wood Thrush** in their Norman neighborhood. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> Larry Mays tracked down an unfamiliar high-pitched little warbler call and found a beautiful male **Blackburnian Warbler**. Later Brian Moyer discovered an **Eastern Wood-Pewee** and Caspian Tern at Lake Overholser while Daniel Whalen located an Inca Dove at Choctaw Park.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> Jason Shaw located an American Kestrel at the USAO Habitat Area, and at the Kessler Atmospheric and Ecological Field Station Matthew Furst noticed Indigo Bunting, Baltimore Oriole, Field Sparrow, and Yellow Warbler. On the 25<sup>th</sup> T K saw a Black Vulture at the Lake Thunderbird Indian Point Marina, and on the 28<sup>th</sup> Judy Wilbur discovered Black Terns, White-faced Ibis and Black-necked Stilts at the Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge.

As of May 29<sup>th</sup> **187** bird species were reported with **22** new species which brought the 2013 year's total to **255** species in the Central Oklahoma area. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds and can be contacted by e-mail at [emkok@earthlink.net](mailto:emkok@earthlink.net). Esther M. Key, Editor.

## Central Oklahoma by the numbers

Number of bird species, by county, reported to eBird.

	May	April	Mar	Feb
Kingfisher	046	042	034	021
Lincoln	058	058	049	046
Seminole	071	062	037	011
Garvin	076	064	053	051
Grady	096	079	058	051
Pottawatomie	092	080	065	055
Logan	104	091	070	065
McClain	135	115	075	067
Canadian	160	142	103	093
Oklahoma	195	169	121	113
Cleveland	209	193	146	119
Payne	214	193	131	112

## President's Perspective (cont.)

An example of the *Apalis* genus is the Chestnut-throated *Apalis*, <http://www.oiseaux.net/photos/patrick.l.hoir/chestnut-throated.apalis.1.html>, which can be heard here, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/71443>. Songs with a relatively simple structure seem to be the norm for the *Cisticola* clade, but the variability among the Singing *Cisticola* recordings suggests that different songs can be learned by some species. The babblers, *Timaliidae*, are the bottom clade of the ToL *Sylvioides* tree. The single US example is the Wren-tit which we heard in April. In the ToL tree, the *Sylvia* warblers are included in the clade. Our first example is the Eurasian Blackcap song, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/135518>, sounding like a continuous series of mimid-like imitations. A second example is the song of the Striated Laughingthrush, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/80016>, which is a rising, slightly trilled whistle followed by some shorter pure whistles. The latest on babbler systematics is explained here by Don Roberson, <http://creagrus.home.montereybay.com/babblers.html>.

Our most surprising finding with respect to the songs of the Old World sylvioids is that there are a number of birds, and by implication whole clades, which have very complex songs consisting of many different phrase elements which sound like mimicry. Examples of this complexity from last month are Penduline Tit, Skylark, and Marsh Warbler. The one outstanding example from this month is the Eurasian Blackcap. But even setting these highly complex singers aside, most of the birds we listened to this month had a significant amount of variability in their songs. The conclusion is that the complexity of song in the Old World sylvioids is perhaps hinted at but not fully represented in the sylvioids of the New World.

Oklahoma City Audubon Society  
c/o Patricia Velte  
1421 NW 102nd Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73114



## Annual Picnic

The date for our annual picnic this year is **June 15**, and the location is the back yard of the Muzny residence at 8516 S. Olie Avenue. As usual the club is supplying hamburgers and hot dogs, charcoal, buns, paper plates and cups, napkins, tablecloths, plasticware, salt and pepper, soda and ice. Participants will make a meal contribution also. The size of the contribution should approximate the cost of a picnic meal for the attendees in your party. Visit our website at <http://okc-audubon.org> to view the sign up list which shows what others plan to bring and how many people will be attending. The official start time for the picnic is 5 pm. That is when we will start cooking the hamburgers and hot dogs. As usual you may arrive at 4 pm to set up your chairs, lay out your dish, relax, socialize and watch the cooking crew get ready to charcoal the hamburgers.

## Vacation!

The Oklahoma City Audubon Society suspends meetings, newsletters and fieldtrips during July and August. Meetings, newsletters and fieldtrips will resume in September.

## Cookie Patrol

Refreshments for the June meeting will be provided by Terri Underhill, Bill Diffin, and Sue Woodson.