



Oklahoma City Audubon Society

APRIL 2019

Shorebird Ecology and Conservation: Dealing with Droughts and Deluges on the Southern High Plains



Craig A. Davis, a professor in the Natural Resource Ecology and Management Department at Oklahoma State, will be the guest presenter at the April 15 meeting.

Craig received his B.S. in natural resources with distinction in wildlife management from Ohio State University in 1988 and his M.S. in wildlife biology from Iowa State University in 1991 where he studied the ecology of wet meadow invertebrates and sandhill crane foraging ecology. He completed his Ph.D. from Texas Tech University in 1996 where he studied the ecology and management of shorebirds in the Playa Lakes Region of Texas.

Following his Ph.D., Craig spent a year as a temporary faculty member at the University of Rhode Island and four years as the avian ecologist for the Platte River Whooping Crane Trust in central Nebraska.

Craig is currently Professor and Bollenbach Chair in Wildlife Management in the Natural Resource Ecology and Management Department at Oklahoma State University. He has published 80 peer-reviewed articles in a wide variety of journals including *Ecological Applications*, *Journal of Applied Ecology*. In 2013, Craig co-edited a three volume book on *Wetland Research Techniques*.

Craig's research has focused on several research areas including the response of grassland birds to fire-grazing interactions, assessment and classification of wetlands, wetland bird ecology, aquatic and terrestrial invertebrate ecology, and upland gamebird ecology and management. Craig currently teaches two undergraduate courses (Wildlife Management Techniques and Wetland Ecology and Management) and one graduate course (Wetland Wildlife Ecology).

Our meetings are held September through June on the third Monday of each month (with the exception of January, when the meeting is held on the fourth Monday). Meetings begin at 7 p.m. Visitors are always welcome.

Meeting Location:

Our meetings are held at the Will Rogers Garden center, located at the intersection of NW 36th Street and I-44.



President's Perspective

What attracts people to birding?

In her book, *The Genius of Birds*, award-winning science writer, Jennifer Ackerman, travels the globe to explore the extraordinary feats and unique qualities of some very interesting birds. Her bird

stories are entertaining and made me to wonder if it was my curiosity about birds, their habits, and capabilities, that drew me to birding. It's a good read and I highly recommend it.

Last week while birding in Martin Park with 6 fellow enthusiast, we spotted the head of a red-bellied woodpecker peering out of its nesting hole. Even without binoculars you could see the expression on it's face. As we watched a number of people stopped to see the woodpecker re-positioned it's eggs and then again peer out of its nesting hole while brooding the eggs. I wondered if it was also watching us and only wished I'd had my camera so I could have posted a video on YouTube!

Bird Walks The Park has offered us use of one of their electric carts and asked OCAS to take people on bird "walks." Volunteers are needed!

Project Bluebird

Will Rogers Park: Good news, one or two of the boxes at Will Rogers Park are home to nesting bluebirds! If you have time, come early to the next meeting and walk out to observe the bluebird houses!

Martin Nature Park: The weather has not cooperated in putting up the 6 houses in Martin Nature Park and the park manager has agreed to put them up in the next few weeks. I noticed on last Saturday's bird walk, the absence of bluebirds at the many already established bluebird houses in the Park. This may be due to the grass areas being recently burned to reduce invasive weeds.

Prothonotary Warbler Boxes In past years, OCAS put up prothonotary warbler houses at the Stinchcomb Wildlife Preserve and the coffer dam at Lake Overholser. John Shackford has given me a few old boxes. If anyone has the skill to build new ones, the old boxes could be used as a pattern.

Respectfully, Betz Hacker



Logo

Last month the membership voted on a new logo for OCAS developed by Grace Huffman. This Logo will be used on our letter head, cards and newsletter. OCAS also agreed to allow Nathan Kuhnert to use it on his "lights-out" letter.

Garden Fest, May 19

OCAS will have a tent and tables available at this year's Garden Festival. It is an opportunity to interact with the community, let them know about OCAS, provide information on birds, and possibly raise money for our club that could be used to fund future projects and speakers.

The Booth will be set up at 8am and taken down at 4pm. OCAS will need volunteers throughout the day to manage the booth space. Because we were the first to sign up, the garden club is providing us with a tent. Yay, shade!

Oklahoma City Audubon Society

Officers 2019

President	Elizabeth Hacker	638-6210
Vice President	Grace Huffman	388-7369
Secretary	Sharon Henthorn	521-9958
Treasurer	Nancy Vicars	831-1945
Parliament	Valerie Bradshaw	664-6956
Programs	Warren Harden	596-2759
Recorder	Esther M. Key	735-1021
Conservation	Dave Woodson	601-622-3467
Field Trips	Nancy Vicars	831-1945
	Jimmy Woodard	365-5685
	Hal Yokum	819-4852
	Bob Holbrook	496-1731
Newsletter Editor	Patricia Velte	751-5263
Publicity	Doug Eide	495-8192
Historian	Vacant	
Refreshments	Sue Woodson	601-622-3467
Webmaster	Patricia Velte	751-5263

The Oklahoma City Audubon society is neither a chapter of nor affiliated with National Audubon.

*For up-to-date Oklahoma City Audubon news visit:
OKC-Audubon.org*

Bird of the Month



By John Shackford

Tufted Titmice (*Baeolophus bicolor*), according to Reinking (2004, *Oklahoma breeding bird atlas*) are common birds over most of the counties in the main body of Oklahoma, with this qualifier: in the southwest corner of the state the very similar Black-crested Titmouse

replaces the Tufted Titmouse and was not split from the Tufted Titmouse until 2002, after the survey work for the Oklahoma breeding bird atlas had been done for southwestern Oklahoma. To confuse the situation, the Black-crested Titmouse has off and on been classified either as a full species or then again as a subspecies of the Tufted Titmouse—back and forth between the two at least twice. Currently (since 2002), the Black-crested has been classified as a full species, separate from the Tufted Titmouse. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the two species will interbreed.



In reading Bent (1964, *Life histories of North American jays, crows, and titmice*) I was particularly drawn to a quote by M. P. Skinner who reported that in North Carolina, from January to March, “the favorite food of Titmice is the acorns supplied by the innumerable shrub oaks, post oaks and turkey oaks.” Skinner confirmed that the titmouse makes use of oaks by eating acorns. He saw titmice either picked acorns up by the stem or speared them directly with their bill, then fly to a tree with the acorn, hold it down with its feet, punctured the acorn, peeled off the exterior of the acorn, then eat the interior in small pieces. I was not surprised that oak trees were a favorite habitat of the Tufted Titmouse, but I was completely surprised to hear that acorns were a significant food source for it!

In our neighborhood here in the cross timbers ecoregion of central part of Oklahoma, the trees in our yards are mostly Blackjacket and Post oaks. Although the Tufted Titmouse is a common permanent resident in Oklahoma and is found over most of the main body of the state (Reinking, 2004,

Oklahoma breeding bird atlas). It has not been found in Harper County or anywhere in the Panhandle—the range of most oak species give out before they reach into the Panhandle. I once was hopeful of finding the first record of the Tufted Titmouse for the Panhandle, an interesting distribution point I ran across while making a checklist of bird species for the Oklahoma Panhandle. I had a grove of trees just barely inside the very east end of the Panhandle where I was hopeful I might find a Tufted Titmouse, but eventually I had to admit I just could not come up with a Panhandle Tufted Titmouse. Maybe someone in our club will be the first person to come up with such a record.

Now, as I write this in late March, the Tufted Titmouse is about the most common bird call I am hearing as I walk my neighborhood—“peter-peter-peter-peter” or “peet-peet-peet-peet”. As a nesting species, the Tufted Titmouse is a single brooded bird; it does not excavate its own nest hole but makes its home in the holes of other birds like woodpeckers, or in other cavities like nest boxes, pipes, etc. Nests can range from about 3-90 feet above the ground. It adapts to nesting possibilities by filling in excess areas of a cavity with materials brought in to shore up imperfect nesting sites. In building a nest, this species often includes a snakeskin; furthermore they have been known to pull pieces of fur or hair from live animals, even humans, when they will land on someone’s head and try to pull out hair. Titmice lay 4-8, but usually 5-6, eggs that are white and speckled with small spots, dots, etc. Brooding birds sit very tightly, sometimes having to be lifted from their nests to see the eggs. After the young have fledged, they will follow the adults for months. As one of our most common bird species in central Oklahoma, it obviously has been very successful in working with man as we have made major habitat alterations.

Besides the Tufted Titmouse, found over most of the main body of the state, and the Black-crested Titmouse, found in southwestern Oklahoma, a third titmouse species in Oklahoma—the Juniper Titmouse—is found in the Black Mesa area (very northwest corner) of Cimarron County in the Oklahoma Panhandle.

Chirpings

By Patti Muzny



For the past 29 years, I have mostly observed spring migration from my offices at the beautiful Oklahoma State Capitol Building. I have watched the changes in the landscape and the birds that migrate through Oklahoma City, but have not until now, been privileged to simply soak up, at my leisure, spring and spring migration from our SW OKC home and our Byars property.

And what a blessing it has been!

We chose not to spray the weeds in our yard, so I've watched as a flock of migrating Chipping Sparrows, along with a few Clay-colored and Lincoln's Sparrows, descended upon the plentiful dandelion seed heads and loaded their little beaks with tasty morsels as fast as possible. This was a beautiful sunny early morning after a rain the night before. Along with these feisty migrants, was added the song of our returning Brown Thrasher, Purple Martins, Titmouse, Chickadee, Carolina and Bewick's Wrens, Robins (who are using downspouts again to nest.)

On April 3rd, Nancy Vicars and I spent our first day of this week at Byars. On the way, we drove by Lake Purcell, where we found Greater Yellowlegs, Great Blue Heron, Blue-winged Teal, Coots, Great Egret, Cormorant, and my first Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. Along the highway we

saw Black and Turkey Vultures.

Two goals were on our agenda: Morels and birds!

We had a great day of birding and searching for morels, but perhaps the most fun was

the second trip to our Byars cabin in mid-week. Morels and birding are great, but when two of my favorite

friends can join me, it just "ramped up" the fun. Nancy Vicars and Nancy Reed and I spent April 5th hiking up and down the hills and finding a few migrants and nesting permanent residents...and MORELS!

We put on our waterproof boots and began along the creek. Morel stalking is not for sissies, at least not on our place. The most enticing mushrooms seem to grow under a tangle of greenbriers. Add in a few critter holes, downed tree limbs, honeysuckle and wild grape vines, wild plum bushes, poison ivy and poison oak, locust trees, and slippery creek banks, and the fun begins. Actually the fun is sautéing up a "batch" for culinary enjoyment!

Nancy R. managed to take a slippery shortcut from the top of the creek bank and complete her journey with a muddy backside! No real harm done. Each of us tangled with a few briars and we are wearing the scratches to prove it, but the reward was a nice sack of morels. With two more good friends to peruse the ground, we find more.

As we walk through the woods with our heads down, we use our ears to bird. The creek area had singing White-eyed Vireo's and Louisiana Waterthrushes. Brightly dressed Yellow-rumped Warblers were foraging through the woods and the ubiquitous Carolina Wrens seemed to be everywhere, as were the Tufted Titmice and Chickadees. The Black and White Warblers and Blue Gray Gnatcatchers were back as well. In checking a few bird boxes, we found Chickadees, Eastern Bluebirds and Titmice already incubating eggs. At the feeder, we added Juncos, White-throated and Lincoln's Sparrows. Nancy V. also found a female Purple Finch in the woods. When we arrived, we flushed a Wood Duck from the pond. Our "Porch Phoebe" is once again nesting on the porch light. Total species for our day was 30.

Welcome

Oklahoma City Audubon Society welcomes

Taylor Olmsted, OKC

Linda Lynn, Edmond, OK

Ravi Sawh, Edmond, OK

Diane Basing, Moore, OK



Meeting Minutes

Meeting was called to order by Vice President Grace Huffman. Guests in attendance include Dr. Ravi Sawh, a friend of Hal Yokum; Jack and Jackie Crow, friends of Doug Eide; Kim and Cheryl McKinnis, friends of Cheryl Allen; and Steven, friend of Grace Huffman.

Club business:

February minutes were unanimously approved.

Treasurer Nancy Vicars reported the February Cash on Hand in the amount of \$6,186.67.

Warren Harden presented a Pelican band that was passed around for all to observe. The banding lab reported the Pelican to be 14 years and 9 months of age. The Pelican was found at Lake Eufaula entangled in fishing line.

Warren also brought an artificial Eagle egg the exact size and weight of a real Eagle egg. The artificial egg was used by the Sutton Center Research Center. Some of the Eagle eggs were brooded by bantam hens. The artificial eggs were introduced to the bantam chicken and then replaced with Bald Eagle eggs.

Committee Reports:

The OOS Spring meeting is scheduled for May 3-5 at Lake Wister. The registration form for the Spring meeting is available online at the OOS site.

Warren Harden will lead a field trip to the Iowa tribe Eagle House near Perkins on Saturday March 23.

Nancy Vicars reported for Terri Underhill. Terri has baby owls. She is planning a watch party in May to see the owlets. Also, the annual OKC Audubon Society picnic will be hosted by Terri on Saturday June 15.

Nathan Kuhnert is conducting the 8th season of monitoring bird collisions in downtown Oklahoma City. Nathan is working with downtown building owners to manage night light reduction in their buildings during migration season. The goal is to reduce bird deaths by 30%. This same effort has been adopted by many cities across the United States in a national campaign called Lights Out.

Conservation Chairman Dave Woodson stated there are no new active programs in Conservation. He would like for any new ideas to be submitted to him.

Grace Huffman brought three different logo selections for our letterhead. Each member can vote for one of the logos by placing a line on the preferred page. The page with the most lines will be our new logo.

April 6 is Environmental Day at Martin Park Nature Center. Activities start at 8:30. Volunteers are needed to support this activity. The Garden Party at Will Rogers Park is May 18 from 8:00am to 4:00pm. We can have a display table to sell items for our fundraiser. In addition, we need leaders to demonstrate how to use binoculars and to conduct bird walks. If anyone would like to volunteer or have items to donate for sale contact President Elizabeth Hacker.

Both Kurt and Sharon Meisenzahl were recognized for reaching their 700 count of life birds. Congratulations!

Oscar Pack and his Peregrine Falcon presented a fascinating exhibit to our meeting.

Warren Harden advised our April speaker will be Dr. Craig Davis from Oklahoma University.

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Reed for Sharon Henthorn, Secretary



Refreshments

Refreshments for the April 15th meeting will be provided by

Snacks: Valerie Bradshaw and Nancy Vicars

Drinks and Ice: Cheryl Allen

Recorders Report March 2019

March started with the coldest day this winter on the 4th and continued cold throughout the month. Still birders were out recording the spring migration. Some birds are leaving; some are passing through and some will stay for the summer. How interesting it is to see and hear the changes whether in your backyard or out and about.

On the 1st John Sterling counted Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Fox Sparrow and Pine Siskin east of Paul's Valley in Garvin County; Scott Loss found **Franklin's Gull** at Boomer Lake Park in Payne County; and Bill Diffin detected Lesser Black-backed Gull and Black Scoter at Lake Hefner-Prairie Dog Point. On the 2nd Logan Dickinson heard Western Meadowlark near Tuttle in Grady County; and Zach Poland recognized House Wren, Winter Wren and Fox Sparrow at Lake Elmer in Kingfisher County.



On the 3rd Ben Sandstrom located Franklin's Gull and Bald Eagle at the NW 63rd/ Kilpatrick Turnpike in Canadian County. On the 4th Steve Davis photographed **Cinnamon Teal** at the playa area west of Rose Lake.

On the 5th Christie Stoops had Brown Creeper and Ruby-crowned Kinglet at Cottonwood Creek in Logan County; Zachary

Hemans observed Pied-billed Grebe and Northern Flicker at Liberty Lake in Logan County; and Matt Jung saw 12 Black-crowned Night Herons at the Lake Hefner inlet. On the 6th Bill Diffin spotted Ross's Goose, White-fronted Goose, and Common Merganser around Dover in Kingfisher County; while Larry Mays and Jimmy Woodward flushed Smith's Longspurs at the Embassy Suites field in Norman. On the 7th Joe Grzybowski recorded **Fish Crow** at UCO in Edmond.

On the 8th Jake Rowland added Barred Owl at Shawnee in Pottawatomie County. On the 9th Ben Sandstrom identified **Sandhill Crane** in SE Kingfisher County; Miles Newman noticed a Great Egret fly over Guthrie; Joe Grzybowski reported Western Meadowlarks at Goldsby Sod Farm and Chestnut-collared Longspurs at McClain County Sod Farm; Zach Poland encountered American Tree Sparrow at Lake Elmer in Kingfisher; and in western Garvin County Phillip Ables watched **Barn Swallow** checking out the nesting area on his porch. On the 10th **Purple Martin** were discovered by Zach Poland in

Logan County; and by Scott Loss at Boomer Lake Park in Payne County; while Sharon Henthorn came across Hooded, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers around the Rose Lake area in Canadian County.

On the 11th Zach Poland confirmed Sandhill Crane and Barred Owl in Logan County; Larry Mays detected Purple Martin at South Lakes Park in Cleveland County; and Chase Moxley observed Long-tail Duck along the Lake Hefner Dam. On the 12th Matthew Van Den Broeke reported Fish Crow at Couch Park in Payne County. On the 14th Jimmy Woodward tallied in Seminole County at Sportsman Lake Carolina Wren and Spotted



Towhee; at Wewoka Lake Bald Eagle and Black Vulture and in Pottawatomie County at Tecumseh Lake Northern Pintail. Scott Loss identified **Tree Swallow** at Lake Carl Blackwell in

Payne County; and watched a flock of Sandhill Crane cross from Logan County into Payne County.

On the 15th Ben Sandstrom counted Pied-billed Grebe, and Purple Martin at Lake R.C. Longmire in Garvin County; Roy McGraw found Song Sparrow and White-breasted Nuthatch at Mineral Wells Park in Logan County; and Patti Muzny noticed Purple Martins in Oklahoma City-Cleveland County. On the 16th Ben Sandstrom recorded Blue-winged Teal and Pileated Woodpecker at Taylor Lake in Grady County;

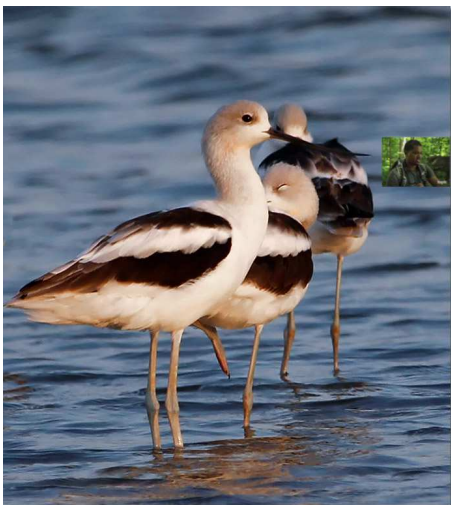
Joe Grzybowski added Tree Swallow at Lake Thunderbird SP-Little Axe Area; Dick Gunn had American Pipits along South Jenkins in Norman; and at Lake Hefner Hal Yocum had



Black Scoters and Common Loons while Bill Diffin recognized Yellow-billed Loon. On the 17th Joe Grzybowski encountered **Long-billed Dowitcher** and **Pectoral Sandpipers** along Ten Mile Flats in Norman; Brian Marra discovered Tree Swallow at Arcadia Lake in Edmond; and Jimmy Woodward got Pine Warbler in Midwest City.

On the 18th Ben Sandstrom located Red-headed Woodpecker and Ruby-crowned Kinglet at Lake Louis Burtsci in Grady County; and Bryan Zvolanek came across Horned Lark, Brown Creeper and Vesper Sparrow around Dover. On the 19th Ben Sandstrom spotted **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** at Stinchcomb WR – West; Brandon Alarcon saw Purple Martin at Martin Park Nature Center; at Lake Hefner Joe Grzybowski documented Cinnamon Teal while Bill Diffin and Stephen Lynch turned up Long-tailed Duck. On the 20th Joe Grzybowski confirmed Barn Swallow at Lake Thunderbird SP-Alameda Dr. Bridges. On the 21st Scott Loss recorded **Sora Rail** at Lake Carl Blackwell. On the 22nd Zach Poland found Fish Crow, Tree Swallow, and Rusty Blackbird at Bell Cow Lake in Lincoln County; also Bill Diffin heard Fish Crow at Stinchcomb WMA. On the 23rd Eric Duell located Pectoral Sandpiper and **Lesser Yellowlegs** at Meridian Tech Ponds in Stillwater; and Brian Marra observed Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Hobie Point at Lake Hefner.

On the 24th Jake Rowland had Field Sparrow at Lake Konawa in Seminole County; Brian Marra confirmed Fish Crow at Chandler Lake in Lincoln County; Zachary Hemans reported Purple Martin in Logan County; and Laura Madden counted three pairs of Purple Finches at her feeders in McClain County. Mike Hudson and Ashley Dudek spotted Lesser Yellowlegs at NW 63rd/Kilpatrick Turnpike; and Tree Swallow at Rose Lake. Scott Loss had **Black-and-white Warbler** along West Richmond Road in Payne County; Cody Barnes located **American Avocet** at Meridian Technology Center Pond in Stillwater; and Joe Grzybowski identified **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** at the OU campus in Norman.



Black-and-white Warbler, Barn Swallow and Fish Crow along South Jenkins in Norman; and Andrea Johnson got Yellow-crowned Night-Heron along South Sooner Road in Oklahoma County. At Boomer Lake Park Makayla Carver detected **Cliff Swallow**; and Corey Riding encountered **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**. On the 28th Ben Sandstrom discovered **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** at Lake Overholser-String of Pearls Park.

During March of 2019 in the Central Oklahoma area **157** species were reported with **19** new species bringing the total for the year to **167**. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds. Information is accessed at: [ebird](http://ebird.org). 2019 eBird: An online database of bird distribution and abundance [web application]. eBird Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York. Available: <http://www.ebird.org/subnational1/US-OK/region>. (Accessed: March 28 & 29, 2019). And occasionally from Facebook and the OKBIRDS List. I can be contacted by e-mail at emkok@earthlink.net. Esther M. Key, Editor.

Birds of North America video series



Jason Ward has been an avid birdwatcher since he was a kid growing up in the Bronx, where he spotted a peregrine falcon eating a pigeon on a ledge outside his bedroom window. In the first season of Topic's new series, the avian advocate and father of two travels around the Northeast, from Cape May, New Jersey, to Maine, delighting audiences with his contagious curiosity about the natural world—and the creatures within it. Those creatures include those of the human variety, too, with guests such as comedian Wyatt Cenac, Dr. Drew Lanham of Clemson University, “The Birdist” Nicholas Lund, the American Museum of Natural History’s Paul Sweet, and the Feminist Bird Club. (Plus Jason’s younger brother Jeffrey, a fellow birder and formidable opponent in the brothers’ annual bird count competition.)

The brief videos (2—7 minutes each) include topics such as “Peregrine Falcons at Cape May” and “Warbler Migration in Central Park.”

The series can be viewed online at <https://www.topic.com/birds-of-north-america>, on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZVnnAt5_5lbqaQNNg-LEPwdrBj_nf5hU

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

Upcoming Field Trips:

Fieldtrips may need to be canceled or postponed due to weather or other unforeseen conditions. It is always best to notify the leader that you plan to attend in case of delays or cancellations. Participants should always bring snacks and beverages to all outings. In some cases, a sack lunch for all day events.

April 27, 2019 – Little Sit

Marion Homier and John Cleal will be hosting their annual Little Sit (an informal “sit” with no rules of any sort) in Choctaw at our home at 3626 Santa Fe Drive on **Saturday, April 27th** from 9:00 a.m. until dusk. We'll provide modest snacks plus sodas. Attendees should feel free to bring their favorite snacks to share, and definitely bring folding/camp chairs if you have them. The rain date will be May 11th, but in case of inclement weather on April 27th, call and check with us regarding status as we may bird that day from indoors through the windows as we did last year when the weather brought in a male Baltimore Oriole for great views and a total of 26 species.

Notification of attendance is always appreciated: phone (405) 390-2001 or email at mhomier@yahoo.com Come-and-go or come-and-stay, we hope you'll join us. See <http://okc-audubon.org> for directions
