



# Oklahoma City Audubon Society

OKC-AUDUBON.ORG

April 2015

---

## Ravens and Wolves

Phil Henderson and his friend and our special guest, his Grey Wolf "Wylie" will present the program at the April 20 meeting of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society. Ravens and wolves share many things in common, both being quite social and both being heavy predators. Also, they share a misconception in the human world of being characterized as evil, although they both do not for the most part deserve notoriety. Neither is the harbinger of bad events as portrayed in literature and folklore of western societies. Wolves have been hunted due to their considering domesticated livestock as prey items and, as a result, have suffered extirpation across their wide range. Range and habitat loss have also affected ravens, but not to the extent of that encountered by wolves.

Wolves and ravens are known to play with each and help each other find food. If an elk is sick or wounded, ravens will sound the alert which wolves recognize and follow. When wolves go on the hunt, ravens recognize the behavior and follow, realizing that a feast will follow a wolf kill.



Phil Henderson is a long-time wildlife rehabilitationist and wildlife professional in fisheries, biology and biological research. His work for the Department of Health brought him back to Oklahoma. For many years Phil gave programs to the public with an albinotic Red-tailed Hawk that he traded for a Golden Eagle named Ebony, a marvelous Golden Eagle that was known widely and featured at a program for the Oklahoma City Audubon Society. Along with Wylie, the wolf, Phil currently has a herd of wild mustangs and is the owner of Bob's Pig Shop, a popular barbeque restaurant in Paul's Valley. Phil and Wylie will be the stars of our April 20 meeting. Phil will do the speaking for Wylie and the wolves. Warren Harden will provide the raven portion of the program.

Come out, bring a friend and enjoy the ravens and wolves and the usual camaraderie. We will begin at 7 p.m. at the Will Rogers Garden Center, I-44 & NW 36th Street.

---



### Refreshments

Refreshments for the April meeting will be provided by Hal Yocum, Doug Eide, and Nancy Vicars.

### Welcome!

The Oklahoma City Audubon Society welcomes new members John McBride of Shreveport, LA, and Bradley Nickell of Ada, OK

---

---

# President's Perspective

By Bill Diffin



The leadership of Hal Yocum, Nancy Vicars and Larry Mays has resulted in a great start to the Weekly Birder's program this spring. All three members have led weekday trips recently, Hal to Mitch Park, Nancy to Yukon City Park and Larry to Lake Overholser. Both Nancy's and Larry's groups had some outstanding sightings, very

much in accordance with a superstition I hold that the birding is better in groups. Mother Nature likes us to appreciate her, and the more at one time the better. Nancy's group observed nesting Yellow-crowned Night Herons and nesting Cooper's Hawks. Then the next day Larry's group sighted a male Cinnamon Teal and a male hybrid Cinnamon x Blue-winged Teal. Larry is very good about immediately posting any unusual finds to OKbirds and eBird. He provides a great example of how birders can make use of modern communications technology. Thanks to Larry's post on the teal I saw them just a few hours after the initial sighting, the first time I'd seen Cinnamon Teal in OKC, and the first time I'd seen the hybrid ever.

Nancy was the Pied Piper of the Tuesday Birders until she had to take a long break to care for some family members. She hasn't lost a bit of her magic though judging from the enthusiastic participation on her trip. Weekday trips attract a different group of birders than most of those who attend our weekend trips. The club members who are still employed during the week can only attend weekend trips. Conversely the retired folks are often busy on the weekend with non-birding activities which have been scheduled to suit the working members of their families and communities. Hal, Nancy and Larry have made a good start with leading weekday trips, but that doesn't mean that others can't get involved. The more the merrier. If you have a favorite birding spot you know well, consider leading a weekday group there. Contact Mark Delgrosso to schedule the trip, even on short notice if necessary. A day or two before the trip will work.

At the fall OOS meeting, the leader of the Oklahoma Bird Records Committee, Joe Grzybowski, presented research he had done which showed some obvious errors in the eBird data for some states. One of the primary examples was the many sightings of Song Sparrows in Texas during the late spring after Song Sparrows have gone back north. The source of the ID confusion Joe believes is Lincoln's Sparrows. Our winter sparrows are notoriously difficult to ID, but it is still surprising that the error rate is so high on this particular

ID problem. Yet I can recall one time in particular when I initially misidentified some Lincoln's Sparrows as Song Sparrows. The birds were perched high on some tall grass stalks, and they looked bigger and more elongated in that position. I only got the ID correct after carefully taking note of all the markings, which was difficult in that instance because the birds were backlit by a bright sky. When the Lincoln's breast is seen clearly, the buffy wash is an obvious identifying feature. Usually the breast streaks on a Lincoln's are thinner than the coarse streaks on a Song. However a few Lincoln's show relatively coarse streaks, and a few Songs show fine streaks. The dark, lateral throat stripes on a Lincoln's are usually thinner than the usually coarse throat markings on a Song, but here again there is some overlap in the middle range. Many Songs have a dark spot in the middle of the breast which is often large and messy, but the spot is variable and may be missing entirely. And some Lincoln's also have a dark, central spot. The eye stripe and the moustache stripe are usually thin on Lincoln's and usually thick on Songs, but once again there is a middle ground with some overlap between the species. On the upper back of the bird, the black streaks on a Lincoln's are thin compared to most Songs, but here once again there are exceptions with some Songs being lightly marked. The bottom line is that without a good look at the breast allowing the birder to check for the buffy wash, it is a tricky ID on many intermediate-looking birds. On such birds the ID can only be made confidently if several field marks all



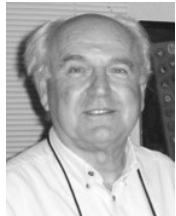
point in the same direction. Preparation in the form of study or review ahead of time is key. Following are some links to sites which enable comparison of Lincoln's to Song, <http://goo.gl/xkOed8>, <http://goo.gl/oAHqt5>, <http://goo.gl/ZyFAM7>, <http://goo.gl/NtKTfJ>, <http://goo.gl/8vW58M>.

Hopefully you were able to see the Evening Grosbeaks at Hollis Price's home in Jones as well as enjoy her wonderful hospitality. Bill Adams's photo of the male Evening Grosbeak is here, <http://goo.gl/0gC7J5>. For the past three months in this space we have examined several cases where bill shape correlates very well with membership in a particular group of birds. Prior to that we had already established the connection between the deep conical bill and membership in the Passeroidea superfamily. So it should be readily accepted that the bill of the Evening Grosbeak is a good indicator of its kinship to the other passeroids. I've run out of room for this month, but next month we will expand the discussion of passeroids from American birds to the rest of the world.

---

## Bird of the Month

By John Shackford



The Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipixcan*) is with us, almost exclusively, during migration. It is on the small side for gulls—about 15 inches—and is one of the black headed gulls. During spring migration its full head is black, but during fall migration only the back half of the head is black. Of the other black headed gulls we might see, the Laughing Gull, normally a coastal bird, is an outside possibility, while the Bonaparte's Gull, black-headed in breeding plumage, does not have the back half of the head black in winter. In summer or winter, if you should see any other black headed gull than the Franklin's, Bonaparte's, or Laughing gull, you need to tell someone—quick! Other points of identification for the Franklin's Gull are wing tips that are largely white: the Laughing Gull wingtips are mostly black; also bill size is smaller in the Franklin's Gull than the Laughing Gull. Immature Franklin's are similar to adult Franklin's but have a black tail band, while immature Laughing have a quite brownish cast to the mantle.

The Franklin's Gull breeds well north of us in the northern prairie states and southcentral Canada—Saskatchewan and Alberta primarily—so it is definitely not a seabird in the breeding season. It winters far south of us “on the west coast of South America, from northern Peru...to Patagonia and southern Chile...” (Bent, 1963. Life histories of North American gulls and terns). A few winter as far north as the Gulf of Mexico coast in Louisiana. According to Sutton (1967. Oklahoma Birds), the Franklin's Gull comes through Oklahoma primarily “in mid-September to mid-November, and in April and May” (Sutton, 1967. Oklahoma Birds). There are a few records of nonbreeding birds both in summer and winter, but these are exceptions, not the rule.

It nests in large colonies, and selects breeding areas where aquatic vegetation like reeds grow; to this and other aquatic vegetation it anchors its nests; the cup of the nest is above the waterline. Because the nests are usually hinged to growing vegetation, this allows for the nest to rise and fall with changing water levels. Sometimes these nests break loose from their mooring and will float out into deeper water, a situation in which nesting birds may well abandon the nest. This gull lays 2-3 eggs, usually 3.

During springtime I once had a wonderful moment when I realized that 1 bird of a flock I was watching flying over had a very strong pinkish “bloom” on its white breast that made it stand out from the other birds in the flock. For some reason I had failed to remember (or did not know) that at least some birds in breeding plumage could have this feature. It was a very pleasant moment of discovery. So as you watch these birds migrating over us in the next several weeks, watch for this feature—a pinkish bloom—you will enjoy seeing it. And for some of you photographers, it would be a beautiful feature to try to photograph. Flocks of this species are the ones that are very prone to follow right behind a tractor that is plowing a field, where the gulls eat up the worms and grubs turned up by the plow.



In reading about Franklin's Gull in Bent (1963) I found it interesting that at least one observer of this species, around 1900, thought the huge flocks of these gulls were sometimes reminiscent of the huge flocks of Passenger Pigeon that once moved over the eastern U.S. It even has a common names reminiscent of this resemblance—“prairie dove”.

From “The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds” (Terres, J.K. 1980. Knopf, New York) I found an interesting history of the naming of the Franklin's Gull. In 1832 one was collected in Saskatchewan, Canada, and given the names Franklin's Gull (common name) and *Larus franklini*, (Latin name). It was named after Sir John Franklin, an English explorer of the Arctic. But later it was discovered that the bird had first been described a year earlier, in 1831, from a site in Mexico and been given the Latin name *Larus pipixcan*. Scientific protocol is for the earliest description to override later descriptions, so *pipixcan* it was. The word *pipixcan* is believed to be an Aztec word implying Mexico. The Latin name of this gull was thus changed, but the Franklin's Gull common name survives.

---

## Mitch Park Field Trip

The Mitch Park field trip on April 7th was lead by Hal Yocum and attended by 4 others: Steve Davis, Elizabeth Hacker, Patti High and Nancy Vicars. We had a cool start but it warmed quite a bit by finish time at 11:30. We had sightings of 40 + species and the better sightings included: 5 sparrows including Lincoln's and Lark; many Blue-gray Gnatcatchers; several Brown Thrashers with 2 of them singing at treetop, Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers; Bewick's - a pair nesting in a bluebird box and Carolina Wren- pair ; Bobwhite Quail; Scissortailed-

---

## Mitch Park (continued)

Flycatchers; E. Meadowlark- singing; E. Phoebe; Louisiana Waterthrush -pair in the creek at the bridge. They made themselves very available, singing and posing for photos at as close as 20 feet.

Flyovers included; Red-tailed , Red-Shouldered and Cooper's Hawks; Barn Swallow; Purple Martins( very high flyers); Turkey Vulture; Crow; Mourning Dove; G.T.Grackle; Pigeon; Starling; Canada Goose, Great Blue Heron; I think we saw one of the last remaining Juncos. We also have at least one "voice only" bird; Spotted Towhee.

As we arrived back at the cars Patti ,who had left the group 1 hour early, was there calling a tow truck as her car battery was dead and "jumpers" did not work. We assisted her getting the car to the auto shop in mid town Edmond and delivered Patti to her house. A good birding day was had by all.

---

## Minutes of the Meeting

March 16, 2015

Minutes were approved for the February 16th meeting.

Guests include Patti High from Edmond; Eli Bridge from Norman, and Elizabeth Ross from Norman.

Field Trips: Members were reminded to check the website or contact chairman Mark Delgrasso if they would like field trip reminders emailed to them.

Sightings: Woodcocks have been sighted near Lake Stanley Draper and Hal Yocum sighted woodcocks at Oxley Park in Tulsa. An active nest of Great Horned Owls has been seen near Stillwater. Bald eagles have been seen between Midwest Blvd. and Douglas on NE 63<sup>rd</sup> St. north of the bridge.

Recent activities: Marion Homer and John Cleal gave a slide presentation of their trip to the Galapagos Islands to the residents of Epworth Villa Retirement Center. Warren Harden reported on the February 17 fieldtrip to the Potawatomie Eagle Sanctuary. Bill Diffin and Terri Underhill led a birding tour at Martin Nature Park last week for a group of homeschoolers.

Upcoming activities: March 17 the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History will present "All about Birds" at 11:00 and 1:30. March 26 Dave Woodson will present his slide show of Oklahoma birds in Enid. Nadine Varner will lead a fieldtrip to the Oklahoma City Zoo on Saturday, April 25.

Steve Davis presented the program on his birding visit to Panama in December 2014.

Sharon Henthorn, secretary

---

## Yukon City Park Field Trip

By Nancy Vicars

The dawn's early chorus included Carolina Wren, Northern Cardinal, American Robin, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eurasian Collared-Dove and Carolina Chickadee. Blue Jays, a Brown Thrasher, Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned Warblers and a flock of Cedar Waxwings got our list off to a great start.

Very few waterfowl including Mallard, Gadwall and Northern Shovelers along with a dozen or so sunning Red-eared turtles and one Ring-billed Gull occupied the pond.

The path beginning just north of the dam provided the highlights of the day. A pair of very vocal Cooper's Hawks were busy building a nest. Next were a pair of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons also building a nest. They displayed their beautiful breeding plumes providing the perfect "Kodak" moment and of course no one had a camera#%\*\*. The next nest was occupied by an American Crow.

One forlorn Tufted Titmouse sang repeatedly. In a small brush-pile along the creek one Harris' Sparrow and a Lincoln's Sparrow were welcome additions.

This outing was my first in six years and I enjoyed sharing it with birding friends, Elizabeth Hackler, Diane Newell, Marilyn & Jerry Taylor, Jeanette Schoof, Virginia Anderson & daughter Vicki and Bill Diffin.

---

## Oklahoma City Audubon Society

### Officers 2015

President	Bill Diffin	722-3778
Vice President	John Shackford	340-5057
Secretary	Sharon Henthorn	521-9958
Treasurer	Nancy Vicars	831-1945
Parliament	Ted Golden	354-3619
Programs	Warren Harden	364-3491
Recorder	Esther M. Key	735-1021
Conservation	Dave Woodson	601-622-3467
Field Trips	Mark Delgrosso	403-5655
Newsletter Editors:		

	Pat Velte	751-5263
	Carla Brueggen	495-3259
Publicity	Doug Eide	495-8192
Historian	Vacant	
Refreshments	Sue Woodson	601-622-3467
Webmaster	Pat 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 log onto:  
**OKC-Audubon.org**

---

# Birding Ethics

By Nathan Kuhnert

I'd like our club to begin the process of vetting birding ethics and eventually adopting principles similar to the [ABA Principles of Birding Ethics](#), see link at end of this article. With migration upon us and resident birds already establishing territories and in some cases nesting, now is a good time to start thinking about this issue as we get out in the field.

Bad etiquette can pale in comparison to the perils of habitat degradation/removal, climate change, outdoor cats, etc. This may be especially true in areas around OKC that aren't considered heavily birded. But why not try to lead by example and further reduce disturbance that is truly elective, thoughtless and totally unnecessary. Plus, birding with a "kid gloves" approach can be very rewarding and actually build skills.

In no particular order is a list of practices that can have an adverse effect on the bird:

- 1.) "Tromping" through grassland birds' nesting or wintering territories
- 2.) Flushing owls and other birds repeatedly that are trying to rest or forage
- 3.) Driving too fast for conditions and not focusing enough on the road
- 4.) Approaching ground nesters to photograph, etc. that can attract predators
- 5.) Misusing playback or similar attractants
- 6.) Divulging the locations of roosting/nesting birds susceptible to disturbance via the Internet

I consider myself a good player and yet I've been guilty of most of these practices. Plus, I've often tried to justify my actions (e.g., it was in a seldom-birded area). And when it comes to playback, it can be tricky as there are some situations perhaps where playback/attractants may offer a less disruptive way of seeing a bird. Please see Sibley's thoughtful and holistic way of weighing the pros and cons of playback at the fourth reference link below. Adopting principles will be challenging but the process can be rewarding.

To help get started, I've listed some web addresses that are relevant to this discussion:

ABA Principles of Birding Ethics -- <http://goo.gl/Qqw16t>

Atlanta Audubon Society adopted similar Ethics Principles -- <http://goo.gl/yV3ZU7>

ABA ethics proposal to address smartphone apps -- <http://goo.gl/YNp5yE>

Sibley's thoughtful approach to weighing the pros/cons of playback -- <http://goo.gl/MW0NdR>

Laura Erickson's responsible way of doing a Big Year by tallying the number of miles traveled in a vehicle and making a donation to some of the organizations that have been most instrumental in protecting some of her most treasured species in addition to posting about those organizations too -- <http://goo.gl/IGi47L>

---

## Lake Overholser Field Trip

By Larry Mays

Six intrepid birders showed up at the berm on Lake Overholser behind the Lake Patrol Station on April first. Nancy Vicars, Larry Mays, Aaron Mechem, Karl Mechem, Sharon Henthorn and Mike, whose surname shall, for the time at least, remain lost in space.

It was interesting to witness the changing suite of birds that switch with the season's progression. We noticed that the winter duck numbers were down. Some all the way to zero. A few Redheads were harbingers of the massive numbers we should see in the coming weeks. Blue-winged Teal were beginning to make their numbers known. We always watch the teal numbers because as they peak we can expect Peregrine Falcons to make their appearance. No falcons this trip.

Among the ducks this trip were a couple of very nice visitors—a Cinnamon Teal and a Blue-winged Teal x Cinnamon Teal hybrid. The hybrid was the first this writer has ever seen, and it was an odd duck for certain; body of a Cinnamon, head of a Blue-wing, and a cinnamon red eye. Very nice bird.

After birding from the berm, we sort of split our numbers. Four of us walked the roll-over dam road on the north side of the lake where we managed to strike a nice conglomeration of mixed winter sparrows. Nancy spotted a female Eastern Towhee there. First of year Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was noted. That area needs a good massive rain event so it will once again be attractive to Prothonotary Warblers. Been dry for several years now.

We tallied 45 species for about three hours work there.

After Nancy departed we worked our way towards Rose Lake and the adjacent roads. Nothing spectacular here. Rose Lake has good water right now, so it will be an interesting destination as migration heats us. We did twitch three Northern Rough-winged Swallows there. I think we had 16 species for that area. Franklin's Gulls, another of those species we are seeing only the first small wave of a big push in coming weeks, were feeding in a stubble field on 50<sup>th</sup>.

We adjourned around noon. Good morning of bird chasing. Wish you all had been there.

---

# Recorders Report

April 2015

## Exploring the Birding World

At last the snow is gone and spring has arrived along with many migrants and a few rain showers, but the drought continues. With the low lake levels, shorebirds are stopping, along with swallows, Eastern Phoebe and maybe a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. Which counties will report these birds and which ones are missing reports? Furthermore what adventures are our Oklahoma county explorers and the Birds Without Borders Reporter having this month?

On the 1<sup>st</sup> Zack Poland spotted an American Tree Sparrow in Logan County. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Nadine Varner, Valerie Bradshaw, Patti High, Zach Poland and Jimmy Woodward assembled at Lake Stanley Draper to watch the displaying American Woodcocks. On the 6<sup>th</sup> Sydney Everett noticed a Northern Harrier in Lincoln County. On the 7<sup>th</sup> Joe Grzybowski identified a Glaucous Gull at Lake Overholser and **Baird's Sandpipers** at Lake Hefner, while along South Jenkins John Tharp heard a **Fish Crow**. A Red-Breasted Nuthatch was seen at Couch Park by Zachary Hemans, and on the 8<sup>th</sup> by Jason Shaw in Chickasha.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> a **Common Redpoll** showed up at Dala Grissom's feeder until the 16<sup>th</sup>. On the 10<sup>th</sup> Dick Gunn noticed a shift in bird species along South Jenkins, the beginning of spring. At Martin Park Bill Diffin watched Cedar Waxwings eating soapberries and heard an Eastern Phoebe singing near the bridge. On the 11<sup>th</sup> Jerry Taylor discovered **Blue-winged Teal** at Lake Hefner and this species' arrival was reported in 6 counties.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> Dr. Chris Butler located the first **Purple Martin** at UCO and later they were reported in four other counties. On the 13<sup>th</sup> at Lake Hefner Zach Poland identified **Pectoral Sandpiper**, and John Shackford had a pair of Carolina Wrens building a nest on a robin nesting shelf attached to their house. On the 14<sup>th</sup> an Eastern Phoebe was located by Larry Mays at Lake Elmer in Kingfisher County and Jimmy Woodard in Pottawatomie County leaving only 2 counties with no reports. On the 15<sup>th</sup> Valerie Bradshaw discovered **Rusty Blackbirds** near the Canadian River in Oklahoma City.

Finally, on the 17<sup>th</sup> Bill Hopping checked an area near Seminole State College and located Canada Goose for the last county report. In Cleveland County at Riley Park Rachel Wrenn noticed a **Northern Rough-winged Swallow**. A **Vesper Sparrow** was found along South Jenkins by John Tharp and at Lake Carl Blackwell by Corey Riding. At Lake Hefner Joe Grzybowski was surprised to find an early arriving **Semipalmated Sandpiper**. On the 18<sup>th</sup> Scott Loss identified an **Eared Grebe** at Boomer Lake Park. Phil Stepanian saw a

**Barn Swallow** at Lake Thunderbird.

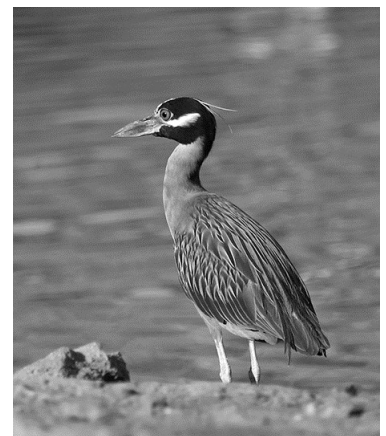
On the 20<sup>th</sup> Zach Poland identified a **Black-and-white Warbler** and Sandhill Cranes in Logan County. At Lake Thunderbird T K noticed a **Snowy Plover** and **Tree Swallow** and at Little River State Park John Tharp had a Purple Martin. In McClain County Joe Grzybowski located a Ferruginous Hawk at the Goldsby Sod Farm and an **American Golden-Plover** at the Adkins Hill Sod Farm. At Lake Hefner Heather Shaffery found **Lesser Yellowlegs**. At Lake Carl Blackwell Eric Duell had Baird's Sandpipers, and east of Stillwater Evan Tanner spotted Short-eared Owls. On the 21<sup>st</sup> in Logan County Andrew Schofield spotted a Great Egret which has only been reported in 5 counties.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> Lou and Mary Truex made a report on their county listing project. Starting in July 2011 their goal is to count 100 bird species in every Oklahoma County. A week ago they had 10 counties left and so off they went birding. Now they only have 4 counties left under 100 species and in these they have already seen 80+ species. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> at Lake Thunderbird Phil Stepanian spotted **Cliff Swallows**. In Kingfisher County Kent Turner birded a wooded area near Hennessey and observed a **Swainson's Hawk** which has only one other county report, and **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** which have been located in 8 counties.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> Dan Cowell spotted Blue-winged Teal near Lake Konawa in Seminole County. At Timber Lake Estates in Norman Rick Farrar had a **Louisiana Waterthrush**. Sharon Henthorn heard a Black-and-white Warbler at Lake Stanley Draper, and Jimmy Woodward found a **Snowy Egret** along the Canadian River. Oscar Pack reported Sandhill Cranes and one **Whooping Crane** west of Minco.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> Zach DuFran saw a **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** in Norman. At Mitch Park, Hal Yocum had three returning sparrows: Lincoln, Chipping and Vesper. In Norman on the 26<sup>th</sup> Jane Boren discovered a **Lesser Goldfinch** at her feeder and Jennifer Kidney heard a **House Wren** singing near her yard. On the 27<sup>th</sup> T K identified **Long-billed Dowitcher** at Lake Thunderbird's Alameda Bridge. Steve Davis and Mary Lane drove around the dam at Lake Hefner and saw 15 Common Loons as well as Pied-billed Grebes.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> Larry Mays saw a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** in Garvin County along I-35. In Canadian



---

County at the John Nichols Scout Ranch Chad Ellis located Fish Crow, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Chipping Sparrow. At Lake Thunderbird Caleb Frome spotted an **American Bittern** and Lesser Yellowlegs while at Ten Mile Flats Joe Grzybowski finally flushed some **Sprague's Pipits**. On the 29<sup>th</sup> Joe located a **Yellow-throated Warbler** along South Jenkins. In Grady County at Taylor Lake Bill Adams discovered an **Osprey** and Purple Martins.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> Jeff Tibbits saw a Barn Swallow at Lake Konawa. Rachel Wrenn spotted a **Lark Sparrow** at Little River State Park. In McClain County, Larry Mays located a Louisiana Waterthrush. In Canadian County along Morgan Road James Hubbell noticed a **Grasshopper Sparrow** and at Stinchcomb east gate a **White-eyed Vireo**. At Lake Overholser Esther Key



saw **American Avocets** on the west side, and Cliff Swallows nesting at the dam. On the 31<sup>st</sup> Jerry Taylor reported an Orange-crowned Warbler in the Yukon City Park. Jimmy Woodward spotted a **Cattle Egret** in northeast Oklahoma City, and the Evening Grosbeaks are still being seen at Hollis Price's house in Oklahoma City.

For March 2015, in the Central Oklahoma area **170** bird species were reported with **37** new species bringing the year's total to **178**. Because of the early February newsletter deadline several interesting reports were missed including 11 species now reported in all 12 counties. In March another 11 species were added for a total of 32 species out of the 178. Meanwhile, in South America Noah ends March with year-to-date total at 1,871 bird species seen. 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.

---

## Informal Meeting Launches

Nathan Kuhnert and Bill Diffin organized a new informal meeting for OCAS members to serve as a social get-together and brainstorming session, outside the constraints of our regular meeting format.

The first meeting was held on March 10 at the Boulevard Cafeteria. Sixteen people attended and participated in a lively discussion on topics ranging from recent sightings, meeting format and location options, website enhancements and birding hot spots to our OCAS birding checklist.

Many of the participants indicated a desire to continue with these informal meetings.

## Chirpings

by Patti Muzny

Late March, Early April 2015

When I'm attempting to enjoy peace and quiet at our cabin at Byars, OK, there is inevitably something or someone who will shatter my solitude with various and assorted interruptions. Usually it's my hubby or son with a chain saw, leaf blower or tractor. Sometimes it's something really cool.

On March 29th, I was curled up on the screen porch reading and my guys were away from the cabin and the "local" birds were embracing spring with song.

Then I heard something walking beside the cabin through the crunchy leaves, while making a soft one-note "drip" noise that sounded a little like the sound my cell phone makes when I press a key. It took me a minute to associate the "drip" sound with the scratching.

I very slowly stood up and carefully looked down to see a pair of hen turkeys scratching and strolling toward the back of the cabin, where we have the bird feeder. I then crept into the cabin and looked out the back window. The hens were not that skittish and allowed me to watch as they scratched around the feeder before they heard Sam coming down from the barn.

They simply walked up the trail and disappeared into the woods. Quite the unexpected treat!

At our OKC home on April 6th, somewhere a little after 9:00 PM, I opened the patio door and heard our Great Horned Owls calling from our neighbor's large oak tree beside our house. I walked out to the edge and looked up just as Owl #2 joined Owl #1 for an early night serenade. They hooted together as a duet; they hooted separately, and they hooted together. I must have stood there 3-4 minutes and enjoyed their conversations very much. Brian had said he heard the calls of fledglings earlier in the week. We still have no idea where they nested, but since we've seen no nest in any trees nearby, they may have nested in one of the neighbors' outbuildings.

Before dawn every morning I hear our Cardinal singing near the bathroom window. Our Eastern Bluebirds did not stick around and their house was appropriated by English Sparrows. Our Martins were rather tardy in our back yard this year and we still don't have them every day, but a couple of pairs have at least checked out the Martin house.

Although we are much too close to the notorious "Tornado Alley" in Moore, we had no storm damage at the end of March and my garden and shrubs survived that round.

Oklahoma City Audubon Society  
c/o Carla Brueggen  
8010 NW 32  
Bethany, OK 73008

## 2015 FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

Check with Mark Delgrosso at: [markdelg94@gmail.com](mailto:markdelg94@gmail.com) or the website/ newsletter for updates and final scheduling/cancellations.

**April 25 In/around OKC Zoo:** Meet on east side of zoo parking lot at 7 am. After birding around the zoo lake, Nadine will take groups of 10 at a time for a "behind the scenes" tour. *Leader:* Nadine Varner, [gallinuleofpurple@yahoo.com](mailto:gallinuleofpurple@yahoo.com)

**May 2 Backyard birding:** Member Nancy Reed has invited interested birders to her property in Norman for spring migration. Her extensive property hosts a diversity of habitats that should make for a productive and exciting morning of birding. *Leader:* Mark Delgrosso ([markdelg94@gmail.com](mailto:markdelg94@gmail.com))

**May 16 Mitch Park (Edmond):** meet at 8am Old School Bagel Café (@N Kelly and Cowell, Edmond) *Leader:* John Shackford ([johnsshack@aol.com](mailto:johnsshack@aol.com))

**MAY** [Memorial Day weekend]: Quivira Nat'l Wildlife Refuge: on to Kansas and Quivira for possible breeding Black Rails- possible side-trip to Cheyenne Bottoms. *Leader:* Mark Delgrosso (405 445 2300/[markdelg94@gmail.com](mailto:markdelg94@gmail.com))

**JUNE:** Club Picnic

---

**The 7<sup>th</sup> annual Red Slough Birding Convention** will be held in Idabel, McCurtain County, Oklahoma on May 9-12, 2015. This year our keynote speaker will be Dr. Jay Huner who is a bird and agricultural wetlands researcher and active birder from southern Louisiana. Our other speaker will be Dr. Jeff Kelly, director of the Oklahoma Biological Survey. The convention's daily tours include morning birding trips to the Red Slough WMA, Little River NWR, and the McCurtain County Wilderness Area. There are afternoon tours to see dragonflies and butterflies, prairie wildflowers, and state champion trees. Our expert guides will show you rare birds to Oklahoma such as Purple Gallinules, King Rails, Swainson's Warblers, and Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. We usually average around 150 species of birds seen during the convention. For more information visit our website: <http://www.redsloughconvention.com/> .

---