



# Oklahoma City Audubon Society

OKC-AUDUBON.ORG

January 2014



## Amazon Expedition

**Our program during the January 27 meeting of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society (note: meeting is on 4th Monday this month) will be an Amazon Expedition. Join Valerie Bradshaw & Gregory Mayberry of Shawnee as they relive their Amazon Expedition during the summer 2013!**

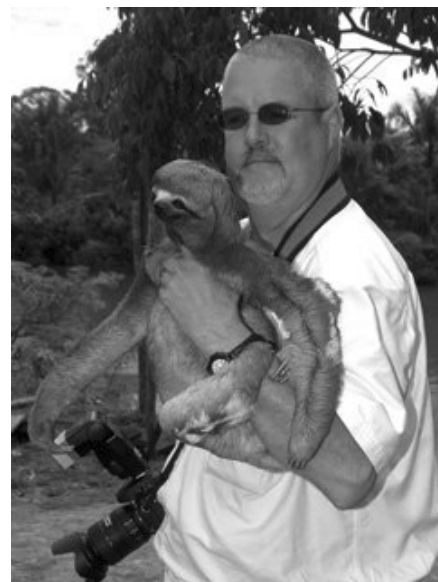
They share a passion for hiking and exploring adventures within nature. Their thirst for scientific knowledge, and deep-seated curiosity about traditional medicine, would inevitably lead them into the jungles surrounding the Rio Amazon. What better way to bring all these together than by hiking through the Amazon rainforest, investigating both science and culture and uncovering the stories that lie within the jungle.

Valerie Bradshaw has more than seven years of experience teaching life sciences at Shawnee Public Schools. In 2011, she was

SHS Teacher of the Year and awarded Rising Star Teacher of the Year for the state of Oklahoma. She is currently teaching AP Biology, Pre-AP Biology and a General Biology course and is the science department chair at the high school. Her passions include exploring nature, hiking and especially enjoys birding.

Gregory Mayberry taught life sciences for Shawnee Public Schools for over 34 years. He would rather be outdoors than indoors any day, any time! His hobbies are nature photography with an affinity for Nikon bodies, lenses & strobes. He also enjoys kayaking, hiking, entomology and herpetology (especially amphibians). Greg is an active volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America.

Our meetings are held September through June on the third Monday of each month (with the exception of January). They begin at 7 p.m. at the Will Rogers Garden Center, I-44 and NW 36th Street. Visitors are always welcome.



## DUES NOTICE

It's time once again to renew your annual membership for 2014. OCAS dues are \$15 per household and may be paid at the monthly meetings, online at our website <http://www.okc-audubon.org> or mailed to Nancy Vicars, Treasurer, 24 SE 57th St., OKC 73129.

**Refreshments:** Carla Brueggen, Carol Enwall and Rich Taylor will provide refreshments for the January meeting.

## Welcome!

The Oklahoma City Audubon Society welcomes:  
Madeline Benham, OKC  
Arman Riaz, Edmond  
Garland Hines, OKC  
Sara Blocker, OKC

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## President's Perspective

By Bill Diffin



At the end of last month's Perspective article, some background was presented on acoustic sonograms. This month's article will use acoustic sonograms to explain some basic things about bird vocalizations. First let's examine the acoustic sonograms of a singing and calling male Canyon Wren. The song and sonogram are at the following link, click on the arrow to start the song, [http://www.xeno-](http://www.xeno-canto.org/102261)

[canto.org/102261](http://www.xeno-canto.org/102261). Note that the vocalization starts with a series of descending whistles, and then there are a couple of harsh, buzzy, notes. On the sonogram the whistles are represented as narrow curving lines whereas the harsh buzzy notes are represented by sections of the chart that look painted with gray. Click on the red "Canyon Wren" link above the sonogram. Then find XC102261 in the last column and click on [sono] in the third to last column. This sonogram has a sound frequency scale on the left side which ranges from 0 kHz to 15 kHz. Note that kHz is an abbreviation for kilohertz or thousands of hertz. Hertz is the scientific unit of frequency, 1 Hz being equivalent to one cycle per second. The top end of the sonogram scale, 15 kHz, is therefore

equivalent to 15,000 sound waves per second. The normal range of hearing in young healthy people is 20 Hz to 20 kHz. However hearing ability decreases with age especially in the high frequency range above 10 kHz. In vocal music the note known as high C is approximately 1 kHz. OSHA hearing tests measure in the range 500 Hz to 6 kHz (see footnote for more info on OSHA regulations on hearing protection and the implications for the high frequency hearing which is useful in birding).

What the Canyon Wren sonogram is telling us is that the initial whistles are dominated by sound at a single frequency at any one point in time. The dominant frequency is represented by the series of dark traces low on the chart starting at 6 kHz and decreasing to 2 kHz. Note however that there is a lower energy harmonic at twice the frequency of the dominant frequency represented by a fainter series of traces higher on the chart. Single frequency sound is called pure, and the Canyon Wren's whistles can be described as relatively pure sounding. On the other hand the buzzy notes



at the end of the song, represented by the painted swaths, consist of a blend of frequencies. The blend consists mostly of frequencies from 7 kHz down to 1 kHz at the beginning of a note, but as time goes on the frequencies above 7 kHz play an increasing role. The broad spectrum of frequencies which compose the sound is what gives the note its harsh, buzzy texture. Think of a large room with a lot of people talking at once. Their voices are all pitched at different center frequencies, some high and some low, i.e. sopranos, basses and everything in between, and the pitch of each voice varies as the speaker intones the sounds that make up words. The blend of all those different and varying frequencies produces what we call crowd noise. The standard for noise is something called "white noise". You may have heard this term. Basically it consists of equal amounts of every audible frequency. It is called "white" by analogy with white light which contains all the frequencies in the visible light spectrum in equal amounts.

As we have been going along in this series articles, we have been taking note of the fact that many songbirds have harsh, buzzy call notes. At the links that follow, you have the option of actually listening to the harsh buzzy sounds produce by each certhioid bird, or you can just look at the sonogram and see how it sounds: Carolina Wren, <http://goo.gl/3jK9nf>; Marsh (continued on page 5)

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## Oklahoma City Audubon Society

### Officers 2014

President	Bill Diffin	722-3778
Vice President	John Shackford	340-5057
Secretary	Sharon Henthorn	521-9958
Treasurer	Nancy Vicars	831-1945
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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**

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## Bird of the Month

By John Shackford



**Part 1:** Recently, I had a request to give some history of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society (OCAS) and I have decided to include some in this column. As I look around I see that I am one of the oldest members, and thus in a position to discuss some history of the club that others may not know. I would like to tie club history and the problems of misidentifications all together through an embarrassing misidentification I made over 50 years ago.

We have probably all been there—misidentifying the species of a bird. My mistake related to a Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*).

In 1958, at the age of 16, my family moved to Oklahoma from North Carolina. And not long after the move, Irene and Ed Martin found out I was interested in birds. I do not know firsthand the history of the founding of the club, but this is what I have heard. It was 1947 and Irene and Ed Martin, Dr. Sam Moore, and Vic and Alma Vacin were birdwatching at Rose Lake. Apparently, on the spot, while birdwatching at Rose Lake, these five started the Oklahoma City Audubon Society and also designated Sam as the new, and first, president. Once I was well acquainted with our club, by about 1962, I was very familiar with three of the five founding members of the club—Irene and Ed Martin, and Dr. Sam Moore, now all deceased. (Dr. Moore died recently at the age of 100 years.)

For a quick superficial description, Irene Martin might strike some as the fabled “little old lady in tennis shoes,” with binoculars around her neck. But Irene was much more—she was a spark plug of a person, and her husband Ed quietly supported her. I feel very confident she was the one at that meeting at Rose Lake in 1947 to insist on forming OCAS. When I knew her, she, along with help she recruited, had the club doing many fun things throughout the year—Audubon Screen Tour Lectures, picnics, field trips, and the biggie -- the annual Thanksgiving Safari to Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on the Texas coast to see the Whooping Cranes. But there were many other planned activities on the Safari that kept everyone happy, and hopping as well.

The year I remember best was about 1962 and Irene had rounded up two greyhound-sized busloads of people for the trip. Irene would tell you that you just had to go, the implication being that if you didn't go you would be missing the op-

portunity of a lifetime; when Irene said you just had to go, not going was not an option. The trips were always great fun. That year (1962 I believe), and the rest of their lives, Ed and Irene Martin, who had no kids, almost literally “adopted” me: we never signed any papers and I already had wonderful parents, but the Martins treated me like a son.

For that Thanksgiving Safari, they went so far as to give me a money changer's “billfold,” the type that bus drivers used to use to make change for people getting on a bus. And the Martins did not forget to put spending money in it. We saw the Whooping Cranes, and on the way home we stopped in Sinton, Texas, to bird at the Welder Wildlife Refuge. At one point most of us were out of the buses looking for a Cinnamon Teal. After viewing through scopes some ducks out a way, I said, “There's one!” When I pointed out the spot I was seeing the “Cinnamon Teal,” most everyone started asking where was it from the shoveler? As I tried to explain,



fewer and fewer people seemed to “care” about finding a Cinnamon Teal: I was, of course, looking at the cinnamon side of a male shoveler and not a Cinnamon Teal. I don't know when I realized my mistake, but suffice it to say there were several people present who did not trust any of my unusual sightings for many years. After about 51 years, I am hoping there are at least some who have let the horrendous misidentification lapse under the Statute of Limitations.

In my very weak defense of the misidentified shoveler, I got pretty good at identifying warblers in North Carolina where I lived until age 16—we had bunches of them to work with in spring and fall migration in the Appalachian Mountains. But in North Carolina I'm not sure I ever saw a wild duck; besides being rare, I also had no “wheels” to go look for ducks on bodies of water. Also, birding has come a long way since 1962 when Peterson Field Guides were the only guides, and digital photography was a long way away. But even so, I still should have known the difference between a shoveler and a Cinnamon Teal.

I have always liked John Newell's take on misidentifications: if someone claims that they have never made an identification error, you better scrutinize very closely what that person claims to have seen.

Next month I will talk more about club history, misidentifications and Northern Shovelers.

## Preliminary Report on Our 2013 CBC

Thanks to everyone who participated on this year's Christmas Bird Count (CBC). There was almost total agreement that the weather was really tough and bird numbers were down. Cold weather (31 degrees much of the morning) and very strong winds (25-30 mph) from the north made it a miserable day for humans and, no doubt, birds alike. In the 50+ years I have been doing the count, I do not recall a more bone chilling day for counting. This opinion may have something to do with my age and perhaps slightly insufficient clothing for the day (?—I had on my heavy down jacket), but still...

So far we have 111 species reported, a remarkable showing for such a raw day. Some of the highlights were Red-throated Loon (count week), Franklin's Gull, Thayer's Gull, Ferruginous Hawk, Greater Roadrunner (2), Bald Eagle (4), Hairy Woodpecker, Hermit Thrush, Eastern Towhee, White-winged, Evening Grosbeak (count week) and McCown's Longspur. Some of the missed birds that were most likely within our count circle were Barred Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Brown Thrasher and Western Meadowlark.

We had 42 people in 21 parties participating in the field, 3 people in 3 parties who were feeder watchers only, and 1 person who contributed during count week.

We especially want to thank Diane Newell and Sally Coates who hosted the day-ending Count Party. Diane's home was beautifully decorated, the food was wonderful, especially Cheryl Allen's famous chili, and it was so pleasant just to sit by the warm fireside after a difficult, cold day of birding.

A couple of quick stories. Ted Goulden and Bob Judd weren't allowed to enter Stinchcomb Refuge from the northwest—a bunch of no parking signs had been put up at the entrance to the roadway they usually enter and I think police showed up to tell them they couldn't enter the refuge there (this sounds like something we may need to discuss with the city about changing). Neil Garrison, who retired from running Martin Park several years ago, showed up at the park about 7 am and couldn't get into the park until it opened at 9 am; Neil used to have a huge ring of keys to open everything at the park, but no longer. He was frustrated by the delay but while he was waiting for the park to open, an adult Bald Eagle flew by overhead—not a bad consolation prize!

Again, thanks to all you hearty souls who contributed to this year's tough count. I appreciate each of you!



## South Texas Christmas, part 1

*By Jimmy Woodard*

On Christmas Day, four Okie birders (Bill Carter, Mike Duggan, Doug Wood and myself), hit the road for a birding vacation in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas.

We spent Christmas night in Refugio so we could visit Aransas NWR the following morning. The drive over was wet and cool with rain and temps in the 40s. We saw White-tailed Hawks and Crested Caracaras on the way. At the refuge, there were lots of birds including ducks, shorebirds and herons. We enjoyed seeing two adult Whooping Cranes from the observation tower. We also saw Painted Redstart, Roseate Spoonbills and Harris' Hawks.

We hurried south under drizzling skies but traffic was light. We checked into Casa Santa Ana near Donna, which would be our home for the next three nights. This B&B is literally a few hundred yards from the NWR of the same name. We went into McAllen to enjoy Green Parakeets coming to roost along with thousands of grackles and starlings at a busy intersection in town.

Friday morning, we hiked around Santa Ana refuge. The trails were quite muddy as we slogged over to Pintail Lakes. Doug spied four Groove-billed Anis in some brush. Birding was slow but we managed to pick out specialties such as Altamira Oriole, White-tipped Dove, Gray Hawk, Verdin, and Clay-colored Thrush.



After lunch, we wandered over to Frontera Audubon's preserve in Weslaco. The dreary day kept activity down except for one small flock of woodland birds including Nashville Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler and Blue-headed Vireo. We drove over to Estero Llano Grande where the birding was better and the rain slacked off. There were Common Moorhens, both night herons, White Ibis, Anhinga, Couch's and Tropical Kingbirds. We hiked to Alligator Pond to find a Parakee on a day roost. Eagle-eyed Doug

came through again; he found not one but two of these birds cryptically camouflaged in the leaf litter next to the trail! They were just a few feed from us!

Saturday found us travelling to Brownsville and Sabal Palm Sanctuary. En route we saw White-tailed Kite and two flyover Red-crowned Parrots. At the sanctuary, changes were very noticeable. A section of border fence has been built which you have to pass through to the refuge. Also, the old mission house is now the headquarters although it is still being remodeled. You have to wear pullover booties on your shoes to enter to keep the mud and dirt out. (Part 2: next month)



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## President (cont.)

Wren, <http://goo.gl/amlp8C>; Sedge Wren, <http://goo.gl/m23TbN>, Rock Wren, <http://goo.gl/IRJGJh>, Cactus Wren, <http://goo.gl/3lksHw>, Musician Wren, <http://goo.gl/r5L5tg>; Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, <http://goo.gl/EkZqe1>; Tropical Gnatcatcher, <http://goo.gl/dkJGLg>; Long-billed Gnatwren, <http://goo.gl/LfP5sX>; White-breasted Nuthatch, <http://goo.gl/mZ5nfd>. What do you think a pish would look like on a sonogram? A pish is broad-spectrum sound, the same as the foregoing bird calls. Bursts of broad spectrum sound are recognized by all birds as something they need to pay attention to and investigate. It is a universal bit of language among birds. Apparently that is why pishing works.

Note on OSHA hearing protection: The hearing that OSHA regulations are designed to protect is the ability to hear and understand ordinary human speech. The highest frequency that OSHA regulations attempt to control in work environments is 10 kHz. Frequencies above that level are considered ultrasound. There are regulations to control ultrasound if it is present to a significant extent, but the control is designed to "prevent possible hearing loss caused by the subharmonics of the set frequencies, not by the ultrasonic sound itself." As a consequence the sound pressure allowed in the upper range of hearing, 10-20 kHz, is much higher than the pressure allowed for lower frequency sound. The special treatment of ultrasound is engineered by incorporating large reduction factors for ultrasound frequency bands in the A-weighting network used for measurement while at the same time setting especially high limits for the allowable A-weighted ultrasound pressures, ref. <http://goo.gl/OwO4uB>.

## Minutes of the 12-16-13 meeting

Called to order by President Bill Diffin. Minutes of November meeting were discussed and approved.

### Committee reports:

Nancy Vicars reported the treasury contains \$5656.00. Conservation committee and Field Trip Committees: nothing new was discussed.

**Old business:** The Christmas bird count was completed Saturday December 14<sup>th</sup> and John Shackford will submit the final tally.

**New business:** The nominating committee has asked each officer for intention to serve again in 2014. All have agreed to serve if elected. A quorum of 23 members was present at the meeting, and a motion passed to approve the slate as written. Final election will be at the January 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. The January meeting will be held on the 4th Monday due to holiday closing of the Garden Center.

Visitor attending: Hal Yocum of Edmond.

In lieu of a speaker, the attendees shared birding stories, all of which were reportedly true.

*Sharon Henthorn, Secretary*

## In Loving Memory:



**Samuel Turner Moore III, MD**  
**March 30, 1913 - December 28, 2013**

Dr. Samuel Turner Moore III died peacefully on Friday, December 28, at his home in Oklahoma City. He was 100 years old. Dr. Moore was born on March 30, 1913, in Fulton, Missouri, to Samuel Turner Moore II and Mary Merle McMahan Moore. A bird watching enthusiast, he was the founding president of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society; he also compiled a life list of over 1000 species of birds on his travels to over 100 countries.

Dr. Moore attended the University of Oklahoma and married Elisabeth Sims Moore in 1937 (d. 1996). Dr. Moore served as a Captain and Flight Surgeon in the U.S. Army Air Corps in WWII from 1942-1945. His time overseas was chronicled in his memoir, Flight Surgeon.

Dr. Moore opened a private orthopedic surgery practice in 1945. He was on staff at six Oklahoma City-area hospitals, held teaching appointments at the University of Oklahoma and remained in active practice until 1991. In 1997, Dr. Moore married Helen Galloway (d.2007). His only son David predeceased him (1946-2012).

Throughout his life and career, Dr. Moore was active in the local community and completed medical missions in Jordan, Vietnam and the Dominican Republic. He was a long-term member and former president of the OU Medical Alumni, Oklahoma City Audubon and the Oklahoma Orchid Societies. His love for wildlife and nature deepened as a board member at the Oklahoma City Zoo.

# Recorders Report –December 2013

## An Icy Month

Not one but for two weekend ice storms arrived in central Oklahoma and sent birds and waterfowl searching for food in a frozen world. How would this frigid weather affect the Christmas Bird Counts, both counters and birds? Would all the birds leave the state for warmer weather?

Late Reports: A **Common Poorwill** was reported on October 31<sup>st</sup>. On November 11 Mary and Lou Truex birded Lincoln County and added over 15 new species to the county list. On November 28 at Couch Park in Stillwater John Couch photographed a flycatcher he found hanging around the base of a large eastern red cedar. From the photos David Arbor and others identified it as a **Cordilleran Flycatcher** aka Western Flycatcher. On the 29<sup>th</sup> Terri Underhill and Bala Chennupati explored the Purina Fields in Edmond and flushed Smith's Longspurs; on the 30<sup>th</sup> Kristi Hendricks was surprised to locate three Loggerhead Shrikes in the Amber area and Calvin Rees located Harris's Sparrow in Lincoln County.

On December 1<sup>st</sup> John Hurd located a Merlin and a Lesser Black-backed Gull at Lake Hefner. Joe Grzybowski made it down to South Jenkins in Norman and discovered a surprise **Ferruginous Hawk**, Gray Catbird, Common Yellowthroats and Marsh Wren. In Midwest City, Jimmy Woodard had a Brewer's Blackbird. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> at Lake Hefner's Prairie Dog Point Bill Diffin spotted an adult Thayer's Gull. On the 5<sup>th</sup> Elton Williams reports Pied-billed Grebe, Ruddy Ducks and Canvasback on Cypress Lake in Norman. Then the hail and sleet started and stayed several days.



On the 6<sup>th</sup> Christie Stoops added Common Merganser to the Logan County list. On the 7<sup>th</sup> John Polo spotted a small flock of Rusty Blackbirds in Babcock Park in Stillwater. On the 8<sup>th</sup> Jimmy went around Lake Stanley Draper and reported Wood Duck and **Eastern Towhee**; near Yukon Jack Hurd photographed a Loggerhead Shrike with a Sedge Wren; Jennifer Kidney had an American Tree Sparrow in her Norman yard; and T K had Rusty Blackbirds at Lake Thunderbird's Little River Marina.

In Kingfisher County on the 10<sup>th</sup> John Hurd discovered Lapland Longspur and Barred Owl. In Canadian County near Lake Overholser's north side Larry Mays had a Winter Wren. On the 11<sup>th</sup> Joe and Vic Fazio visited Lake Hefner and saw a Red-throated Loon and Great Egret. Lake Overholser was largely frozen but had a few open patches

collecting waterfowl and gulls. Bill Diffin checked out Jim Bates' report of a Thayer's Gull at Crystal Lake and discovered 2 of them plus a Lesser Black-backed Gull. Matt Jung walked Prairie Dog Point and discovered a Wilson's Snipe and Solitary Sandpiper.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> Larry Mays had an Eastern Towhee and Hermit Thrush at Lake Louis Burtshi in Grady County; a Ross's Goose on Purcell Lake and a Ferruginous Hawk and Bald Eagle at the Lindsay Prairie Dog Town in McClain County. On the 14<sup>th</sup> during the Oklahoma City CBC Patti and Brian Muzny discovered a Ferruginous Hawk. On the 15<sup>th</sup> Larry Mays discovered a Greater White-fronted Goose and Lapland Longspurs at Lake Hefner. On the 16<sup>th</sup> at Lake Hefner, John Hurd had a Black-crowned Night Heron. On the 17<sup>th</sup> Joe Grzybowski felt that there was a strong possibility that he had a **Kumlien's (Iceland) Gull** Lake Hefner; Chad Ellis caught a glimpse of an Evening Grosbeak at Lake Hefner's marina; and David McNeely saw a Red-breasted Nuthatch at his feeder.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> it started raining, turned cold in the evening and by morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> all the vegetation was covered in beautiful ice unless you were a bird looking for food. On the 21<sup>st</sup> Jim Bates was at the corner of Portland and SW 89<sup>th</sup> Street around 1630 watching several Northern Harriers floating above the frozen grass, when he looked up and saw 6 Short-eared Owls taking over the night shift. On the 24<sup>th</sup> Susan Thompson located a Pine Warbler south of the Shawnee Reservoir. Jimmy birded Seminole County and added 12 species including a Golden Eagle, and in Pottawatomie County a Bald Eagle, and Cackling Goose.



On the 26<sup>th</sup> Jim Arterburn and Ken Williams photographed a **Little Gull** among the Bonaparte's Gulls off Prairie Dog Point. Earlier with Joe they identified Red-throated and Pacific Loons, an adult Thayer's Gull and 2 Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Bill Adams reported the Lewis's Woodpecker

continues to be seen at the campground at Taylor's Lake. On the 28<sup>th</sup> Tim O'Connell saw a Prairie Falcon and Le Conte's Sparrow at Lake Carl Blackwell. On the 29<sup>th</sup> Andrea Green reported a winter female **Long-tailed Duck** on the west side of Lake Overholser. At the Cleveland County CBC Joe found another Little Gull and Melynda's team added Vesper Sparrow. On the 31<sup>st</sup> in McClain County Jimmy noticed a Black Vulture.

For December **142** bird species were reported and with the late reports 7 new species were added which brought the 2013 year's total to **285** 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.

# Chirpings

By Patti Muzny

Christmas Bird Counts for the 2013 counting season are now an assortment of statistics in participants and compiler's records. Those statistics do not reflect the memories and the experiences that are an integral part of a CBC. My son, Brian, and I have been participating in CBC's for over 35 years. We began with the Oklahoma City Audubon Society's CBC and later counted with the Audubon Society of Central Oklahoma in the Arcadia area. From there we expanded to the Cleveland County Audubon Society CBC in the area on the west side of Lake Thunderbird, the Washita National Wildlife Refuge CBC, our longtime favorite, and for the past two years, the Stephens County CBC, which we conduct with Leonard and June Ketchum on Ketchum Ranch. So many CBC's...so little weekends!!



Our CBC season began with the OKC Audubon Society's count on December 14, 2013. It was not the best omen when I heard the wind hammering against our house long before 6:00 AM, when we planned to pile out of the warm beds. But...we did it. Packed up a thermos of hot tea, dug out the serious longjohns, coats, hats and scarves, and drove to our area, which is the far NW quadrant of our count circle. Saw a field peppered with a large number of Cackling Geese. Tried to stand outside to look for anything different, but the wind slammed us on the back and chased us back into the truck. By mid-afternoon the sun tried to make an appearance and a little bit of the ice had melted and we finally found a few ducks. Grassland birds were another story. The wind kept everything low to the ground and out of site. We tried extremely hard and drove around 80 miles in a diligent effort to find *something* to count! We were rewarded with a great look at a beautiful Ferruginous Hawk and a flock of Horned Larks.

Our next CBC was December 29, 2013, at Lake Thunderbird. Mother Nature was really in a snit that day! The highest temperature was 29 and most of the day it was 27... BUT...the north wind howled and most of our count area was downwind off of the water. Esther Key, Jeremiah Ables, Brian and I spent quite some time out of the vehicle, but only when we could get down in a ravine or put a hill or some trees between us and the wind.

Being crazy birders does have its rewards. We had pulled up at a parking area to access public hunting areas, when Esther began to yell, "Ow, Ow! I spun around to see what part of her body she had injured, only to see her pointing

to a Great Horned OWL that had pounced down into grass onto a meal, only a few yards from our truck!

The lake was not frozen, so we had a few ducks and several gulls, including Esther's big surprise, a Little Gull! Again, our species numbers were w-a-y down, as were the species numbers for the entire Cleveland County CBC participants.

We had a week to regroup and on Friday, January 3, Brian and I joined Esther Key and her grandson, Jeremiah, and we headed to Taylor Lake, near Rush Springs, to look for the Lewis's Woodpecker that has been seen there. Within about 45 minutes we found the woodpecker, which was a life bird for Esther.



We were not done yet. The Stephens County CBC was the next day – Saturday, January 4, 2014. We arrived at the ranch, settled ourselves into our cabins and shared a pot of beef stew and conversation with the Ketchums. The wind howled all night and at daylight their lake was white-capping and the eye-watering and the quivering binoculars began anew.

Sometime before noon the wind calmed down a bit and the temperature was somewhere around 50 and we had welcome sunshine! It was fun to see several Northern Harriers and several parties of Cardinals and Juncos. We found a few Black Vultures, but were astonished to round a curve and see 14 Black Vultures feeding on the rather ripe carcass of a wild pig. One of their lakes had a few hundred geese and we had a few thousand Brewer's Blackbirds. Esther and Leonard found a pair of Prairie Falcons on their route.

New Year's Day – 2014 was a beautiful day for being outside. Two windy, chilly CBC's were behind us. Brian and I made a quick trip to try to find the Thunderbird Little Gull, which we did not get to see on our CBC, although Esther had seen it. As we arrived at the Twin Bridges area of Little River State Park, we were joined by Terri Underhill and Pat Velte, who had decided to start their New Year just as we did.

A flock of Bonaparte's Gulls was resting out of good viewing range on the other side of the cove, so Pat and Terri drove directly across, and with cell phones in hand, began the stalk. Very soon I had a call from Pat. They found the gull! Brian and I quickly drove to their location and we all got good looks at a life bird for Brian and for me. A great way to begin another year – birding with good friends!! Happy 2014 birding to all of our birding friends. May your year be filled with memorable experiences with our feathered friends.

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

## Field Trip Schedule:

**FEB.8: Sooner Lake:** plenty of wintering waterfowl and possible eagles on this trip. Meet at 8am at the Braum's at 15th exit off I-35. Since this trip will take place in a 'limited access' area participants must, on their own, email Cyndie Browning so that they can be put on the official visitation list. Her email is: [vermilion\\_\\_flycatcher@yahoo.com](mailto:vermilion__flycatcher@yahoo.com). Leader: Jim Bates [[Jim-Bates@ouhsc.edu](mailto:Jim-Bates@ouhsc.edu)]

**APRIL: Yukon City Park :** join Jimmy Woodard on a birding tour of his (former) stomping grounds. Leader: Jimmy Woodard [[j.woodard@cox.net](mailto:j.woodard@cox.net)]

**early MAY:** Tulsa birding hotspots: Leader: Jimmy Woodard [[j.woodard@cox.net](mailto:j.woodard@cox.net)]

**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))

**Spring (APRIL or MAY): McGee Creek WMA/McCurtain County Wilderness:** two productive, birdy areas with many specialties, the most notable of which is OK's sole population of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. Leader: Mark Delgrosso (405 445 2300 or email at: [markdelg94@gmail.com](mailto:markdelg94@gmail.com)) - details and dates TBA

**June: Club Picnic**

## Blue Thumb Program

Water is what sustains life on our planet; as Oklahomans, we should take more responsibilities to protect the quality of water in our State.

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission's Blue Thumb Program offers free training programs to introduce volunteers to Oklahoma's watershed and how to help protect this valuable resource. The training will introduce participants to stream ecology and cover topics such as water chemistry, pollutants, environmental education, volunteer responsibilities and more.

Two-day training classes are held in various locations. The Norman class will be Friday and Saturday, January 24-25, 2014 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (both days) at the Cleveland County Fairgrounds, East Room, 615 E. Robinson Street, Norman, OK

The Stillwater class will be March 29-30, 2014 (location and time TBD)

For registration and detailed information (i.e., what to bring) for these classes contact:  
Kim Shaw: 405-627-3787

[kim.shaw@conservation.ok.gov](mailto:kim.shaw@conservation.ok.gov)

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