



Oklahoma City Audubon Society

OKC-AUDUBON.ORG

JANUARY 2018

January: Can they hear each other now?

Claire Curry, the guest presenter at the January 22 Oklahoma City Audubon Society meeting, will talk about noise and its effects on birds in the Canadian prairies and elsewhere.

Anthropogenic (human-caused) noise is a pervasive pollutant that alters the behavior of wildlife that use sound to communicate.

Some species can adjust their songs or calls in noisy environments. She'll outline what is currently known about effects of human noise pollution on animals, and in particular go over her post-doctoral research on two species: Savannah Sparrow and Baird's Sparrow. She compared how they adjusted their songs in the presence of oil extraction infrastructure noise and tested in Savannah Sparrows whether the adjustments they made to their songs improved communication. Claire will talk about what our results mean for our ability to mitigate human noise pollution.

Claire M. Curry is a Post-doctoral Research Associate at the Oklahoma Biological Survey at the University of Oklahoma. Her research particularly focuses on the effects of both natural and altered environments on behavior and distribution. She got her Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma working on titmouse hybridization in Texas and Oklahoma, spent 2.5 years in Canada at the University of Manitoba working on anthropogenic noise pollution's effects on grassland songbirds, and returned to the University of Oklahoma to work on species distribution models, animal tracking databases, and data processing.



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.

DUES NOTICE

It's time once again to renew your annual membership for 2018. 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.

President's Perspective

By Betsy Hacker



It is indeed an honor to be asked to follow Bill Diffin as your president in 2018, which co-incidentally is the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This Treaty which now protects 1,025 birds, would not have come to fruition if not for the passionate founders of Audubon Society, which was established in 1896. It may have begun as a movement to stop the commercial slaughter of birds for the fashion

industry but today it is a national organization with hundreds of local chapters.

I often wonder why people become interested in birding. I'm not sure what sparked my interest. Maybe it was that girl I met in scout camp who imitated bird songs. When she called, out of nowhere birds would appear. In 2002, I began writing a monthly column called "Birds of the Palmer Divide" for a local Colorado newspaper. This opportunity motivated me to explore areas of southern Colorado to observe the birds I featured in my column. The publisher's goal for my column was to generate interest in preserving wildlife corridors and habitat in what was and continues to be one of the fastest growing areas of the country. I continue to remind my readers, I am enthusiastic but not an expert on birds.

As your president, I have established four goals to help guide our organization in this year of change. At this point, these goals are very general but in the coming months, I hope to refine and possibly expand them as I learn more about my role and the interests of our membership.

Goal 1: Monthly meetings. Thanks to our board members who serve in various capacities, our club is vibrant. We have an outstanding website and newsletter, our meeting topics and speakers are diverse and interesting, meeting minutes are written well, our treasury is healthy, and members provide delicious refreshments at every meeting.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated and talented board and my goal is to keep them happy so they will continue their fine work! I have the easy job of preparing meeting agendas.

Goal 2: Meeting Space. I've committed to working with the Council of Garden Clubs to insure that OKC Audubon is able to meet at the Will Roger's Garden Center at a discounted rate in exchange for volunteer hours. While I'm

not entirely sure what this means, I am excited about the new goal of the Park's management to establish a plan to attract birds into the gardens. More on that in the near future.

Goal 3: Field Trips. The field trip subcommittee has established 2018 field trips. The big sits and Christmas Bird Count are well organized and continue to be a mainstay of our organization. Members have suggested increasing the number of monthly field trips and I will work to accomplish this.

Goal 4: Membership: Today, bird watching is a rapidly growing sport and hobby. I'm excited that our membership continues to grow but I worry about the effect of the digital age on the future for organizations like OKC Audubon. With that in mind, I would like to establish a subcommittee to explore methods to attract new people to our organization.

To celebrate their "Year of the Bird," National Geographic is featuring a series of essays by Jonathan Franzen on "Why Birds Matter." Biologist and conservationist Thomas Lovejoy, who introduced the term "biological diversity" says, "If you take care of the birds, you take care of most of the big problems in the world." Maybe the real reason people become birders is because birds really do matter!

CBC Report

Fifty hearty souls participated in our December 16, 2017 CBC. It was very windy throughout the day with sustained southerly winds of 15-20 mph (gusts approaching 30 mph). Temperatures were mild with a morning low of 32 degrees and an afternoon high of 61 degrees. Expectations were not high due to the wind but they were sure exceeded once the 21 count teams started reporting - **we tallied 127 species** (71,881 individuals) through 127.25 collective party-hours (walked 46.33 miles, drove 327 miles) and 1.5 hours of owling.

An immature Snowy Owl was found at Lake Overholser on the bank (far NW corner) and likely was a different owl than the ones recently found at Lake Arcadia and Will Rogers Airport! Other rare birds include two Black-bellied Whistling Ducks (Myriad Gardens), Red-necked Grebe and Pacific Loon (Lake Hefner), American Bittern (little wetland near the Oklahoma River), Neotropic Cormorant (Lake Hefner), Northern Goshawk (near Oklahoma River), Inca Dove (OKC Zoo) and a flock of 40 Red Crossbills in a hedge of Arborvitae at the OKC Golf and Country Club.

Noteworthy birds we're getting a bit spoiled by finding them more on a regular basis include nine Great Egrets, 29 Black-crowned Night-Herons, one Peregrine Falcon
(continued on page 7)

Bird of the Month



By John Shackford

When discussing the **Snowy Owl** (*Bubo scandiacus*), a good place to start is on its breeding grounds, in the high arctic; it is circumpolar, and after its breeding season, many move southward in both Eurasia and North America.

The owl lays from 3 to 13 eggs, but usually about 6 or 7. Like many birds of prey, the owls will stagger egg laying (laying a new egg about every day and a half), and incubation starts immediately after the first egg is laid. This means the older eggs hatch first and these nestlings have a better chance of survival than the smaller, younger ones.

Food for the nesting owls is usually lemmings, small rodents that undergo boom and bust cycles about every 3-4 years; arctic hares, another food, also cycle in the high arctic. As these lemming/hare cycles peak, Snowy Owl populations also tend to peak. But when the lemming/hare populations crash in the far north, the owls may end up searching for food far south of their usual wintering grounds in Canada, sometimes coming all the way south to Oklahoma and Texas. This winter seems to be another invasion year of Snowy Owls in Oklahoma, with several owls already reported.

Up until about 1974 Dr. George M. Sutton believed that most or all of the Snowy Owls showing up in the state did not survive the winter; this opinion was based on the fact that most Snowy Owl records in Oklahoma before 1974 were in early winter, with very few, if any, records in late winter, suggesting poor survival of the owls in late winter. But then the winter of 1974-75 arrived, with the largest invasion of Snowy Owls ever recorded in Oklahoma; that winter there were thirty some sightings, and Dr. Sutton felt these represented at least 20 different owls.



Of the three specimens found dead that winter, Dr. Sutton noted none "had obviously died of starvation, nor had any of the living birds appeared to be in poor condition" (J. S. Shackford. 1975. The snowy owl in Oklahoma, Bulletin of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society 8: 29-34); thus I believe Dr. Sutton softened his position somewhat on Snowy Owls being able to survive the winter in Oklahoma.

Nonetheless, Nathan Kuhnert's caution seems wise: that most of these birds likely show up in Oklahoma quite stressed for food and energy and thus observers should be extremely careful to not "push" them.

On 10 December 1974, I was driving to Norman to visit Dr. Sutton. Along Interstate Highway 35, near the Norman Airport, I saw a large, light breasted bird dead on the side of the road. I thought it might be a Ferruginous Hawk; imagine my surprise when it turned out to be a Snowy Owl. I immediately took it to Dr. Sutton who prepared a beautiful skin; he found the bird to have a gangrenous right leg, but otherwise in nearly perfect feather.

The amount of daylight when Snowy Owls hunt is an interesting question. Because it nests in "the land of the midnight sun," it must be able to hunt in daylight, especially when there is a nest full of hungry young. Then, in winter, birds staying far to the north would need to be able to hunt at night, because of little or no sunlight

at that time of year. Thus, the species must be flexible in the amount of sunlight it has when it hunts.

From 6 January to 14 February 1975, a very white, small, and therefore an adult male Snowy Owl was found in Canadian County, far northwest Oklahoma City, by Henry Walter, and J. S. Robert, former members of our club. This owl I followed almost daily from 22 to 29 January, being careful, I believe, not to force the owl to fly unnecessarily. I found the owl had a preferred field in the center of its range, a short grass field where I suspected a good population of cotton rats. The owl's overall territory seemed to cover grass and wheat fields in an oval about

(continued on page 8)

OKC CBC 2017

By Patti Muzny

After 2016's bone-chilling, eye-watering, overpowering north wind and generally totally disagreeable weather conditions that descended upon participants in the Oklahoma City Audubon Society's 2016 Christmas Bird Count (CBC), Mother Nature took pity on us and blessed us with perfect birding conditions on December 16, 2017. The morning was just a little chilly, but the afternoon found us shedding a layer or two.



For many years, Brian Muzny and I counted birds in far Northwest Oklahoma City. Each year we would arrive on our territory to find more and more land that had been scraped clean of vegetation and more new homes were being built. Grassland birds and birds of prey became more and more scarce and the traffic increased in this area. Still, we persevered, but enjoyed it less. House Sparrows don't even choose to live in new, sterile neighborhoods.

We reside in south OKC, closer to the North Canadian River than the Northwest Expressway, so we opted to change territory for 2016. We now count around Crystal Lake (SW 15th and MacArthur) and the new and wonderful biking/hiking trail along the river. We skulk around a mountain of trash near the dump and a large auto salvage yard. We also cover a bit of downtown Oklahoma City and points in between.

Crystal Lake usually hosts large flocks of gulls and the usual Coots and a few ducks. This year there were only a few gulls and no Coots or ducks. We began hiking along the edges of the lake, where there are cattails, weeds, cedars and various trees and shrubs. Anywhere there were weeds with seed heads, we would find Song and Harris's sparrows, along with Goldfinches, House Finches and a Spotted Towhee or two. We also flushed a Great-horned Owl and found a Winter Wren.

We picked up the bike trail at the NW corner of the lake and hiked there for about ½ mile. The great thing about the bike trail is the access it provides to areas previously off limits to pedestrians and bike riders. It's currently smooth in this area and allows wandering around and

looking for birds without watching your boots so closely. Although, one must pay attention to the fast moving "serious" bicycle riders, especially on a beautiful winter day!

We finished hiking around Crystal Lake and picked up the bike trail on the south side of SW 15th Street, along the east side of Riverside Salvage. This is a great area with trees, bushes, and tangles that borders the north side of the river. Hikers are able to leave the paved trail and walk along the banks of the river. This year we didn't find large numbers of birds here because the weather was good and the wind wasn't strong enough to make birds seek shelter against the high banks of the river, but we did find a few Kingfishers, a few ducks and a Greater Yellowlegs and some Double-crested Cormorants. But the most amazing find was an immature Northern Goshawk! We had seen a Northern Harrier, a Red-tailed Hawk and a Red-shouldered Hawk in the area, but this guy was certainly none of the above. Its powerful flight was awesome to watch during the brief look we had when it left its perch in a tall tree along the river.

From here we drove to SW 15th and Council Road and drove east where the road ends and there is a small lake on the north side of 15th Street. There is no bike trail here, but we could park and walk to the south edge of the lake. As we approached a weedy ditch that fed into the lake, it would be difficult to determine whether this absolutely unexpected American Bittern or the two humans would have been the most startled! I jumped and the bird jumped and we received a comprehensive dressing-down as the bittern flew out of the cattails. Bitterns are not easy to find in the warmer months, but to find one on a CBC is bizarre!

After hiking nearly the entire bike trail from west of MacArthur to Portland, we had logged 6.75 miles and were ready for a few more car miles, so we drove to the Boat-house District and through downtown to near the OKC Police Department and Devon Tower. Someone had told us a "hawk" had been seen chasing pigeons around OKCPD offices. The "hawk" word got our attention, because in the past Peregrine Falcons have been seen in the downtown area.

Hal Yokum had spent around 3 hours downtown and he did not see any falcon chasing anything. Brian and I drove past the OKCPD offices, turned east and I looked up – w-a-y up – and spotted a bird of prey chasing a little flock of pigeons! Both of us got it in our binoculars and to our delight, the bird of prey turned out to be a Peregrine Falcon!!

Felt pretty good about our day of birding, but we weren't done yet. We went back to Crystal Lake, where we parked along SW 15th Street to watch hundreds of Robins and various blackbirds fly into the dense cedars on the south side of the street.

Minutes: December 18, 2017

Meeting was called to order by President Bill Diffin.

Treasurer's report: Nancy Vicars reports account includes \$5475.99 after monthly receipts and expenditures.

Upcoming field trips are the Black Mesa CBC to be performed December 31, 2017 in the panhandle and the Ft. Gibson CBC in northeast Oklahoma on December 20th.

Finalization of 2018 slate of officers: a voice vote approval was obtained that retains all current club officers. Betz Hacker is welcomed as the new club president after the long-deserved retirement of Bill Diffin, who assumes additional duties with the Oklahoma Ornithological Society.

Nancy Vicars encouraged members to step up for hosting local or distant birding walks. Midweek as well as weekend trips are both requested, to provide variety for all interested birders. Coordination can be accomplished through the OCAS website OKC-AUDUBON.ORG by contacting Patricia Velte. The regional communication through University of Oklahoma's chat room for birders can also bring to light updated information. That site can be entered through registration at website LISTS.OU.EDU.

Sue Woodson reminded the group that she will be only intermittently available for coordinating refreshments for the next few months and may ask for volunteers if needed.

Interesting bird sightings recently include several snowy owls, which are experiencing an irruption into areas south of their usual wintering areas.

The business was concluded and after a snack break; the entertainment provided was the annual Tall Tales gathering. The attendees shared stories from near and far, recent or past, and true or hypothetically true. Participation was nearly 100%.

Next meeting of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society will be January 22, 2018, which is the fourth Monday of the month. All other meetings for the year are on the third Mondays. OCAS meets at 7:00pm-9:00pm at the Will Rogers Park Exposition Building.

Recorded by Sharon Henthorn, Club Secretary

OKC AUDUBON SOCIETY Financial Report for 2017

CASH ON HAND 12/31/2016	\$5,226.75
INCOME:	
Membership dues	1,607.62
Checking Acct. interest	21.70
Donations	116.00
Car Sticker sales	<u>41.53</u>
	1,786.85
	<u>+1786.85</u>
	7013.60
EXPENSES:	
Meeting room rent	210.00
Newsletter (copies & Postage)	748.54
Contribution	100.00
Membership dues	15.00
Summer social	114.78
Speaker honorarium	<u>155.00</u>
	1,343.32
	<u>-1,343.32</u>
CASH ON HAND 12/31/2017	\$ 5,670.28

Oklahoma City Audubon Society

Officers 2018

President	Elizabeth Hacker	638-6210
Vice President	John Shackford	340-5057
Secretary	Sharon Henthorn	521-9958
Treasurer	Nancy Vicars	831-1945
Parliament	Ted Golden	354-3619
Programs	Warren Harden	596-2759
Recorder	Esther M. Key	735-1021
Conservation	Dave Woodson	601-622-3467
Field Trips	Mark Delgrosso	403-5655
Field Trips	Betz Hacker	638-6210
Newsletter Editor	Pat Velte	751-5263
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 visit:
OKC-Audubon.org*

Recorders Report December 2017

A Snowy December

December was a very exciting month. Besides interesting Christmas Bird Counts, several **Snowy Owls** were discovered in the state. How many is not certain, but three were seen on one day and owls were spotted elsewhere. eBird has now confirmed two rare birds in Central Oklahoma. On February 19th along I-40 in Seminole County John Hurd identified **Golden Eagle**, and on April 14 south of Lake Thunderbird Joe Grzybowski documented **Golden-crowned Sparrow**.

On the 1st John Tharp counted Common Loon at Little River State Park, and Bill Diffin viewed Swamp Sparrow at OKC's Crystal Lake. On the 2nd Bob Ellis noticed Green-winged Teal on Lake Thunderbird Dam; Scott Loss spotted Great Egret and Hermit Thrush at Sanborn Lake; and Brian Stufflebeam watched Dunlin at Bethany-Warr Acres Water Treatment Plant. On the 3rd Caleb Frome-CC located Prairie Falcon and LeConte's Sparrow at Wiley Post Memorial Lake while Larry Mays and Emily Hjalmarson confirmed Red-breasted Nuthatch and Red Crossbill in Newcastle. Eared Grebes were found by Brian Marra on Lake Overholser and John Moyer at Lake Thunderbird Dam. On the 4th Robert Harding tallied Eastern Bluebird at Meeker Lake in Lincoln County.

On the 5th Caleb Frome-CC added several birds to the Kingfisher County list including Bufflehead, Wilson's Snipe, Smith's Longspur, Vesper Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Hairy Woodpecker and at Lake Elmer Hooded Merganser, Golden-crowned Kinglet and American Tree Sparrow. David Hoekman had Barred Owl in the Yukon area, and Bill Diffin saw Pileated Woodpecker at Stinchcomb WMA East. On the 8th Austin Jones turned up an Inca Dove at the Oklahoma City Zoo. On the 9th Zach Poland observed American Pipit in Logan County, and Brian Marra encountered LeConte's Sparrow at Bluff Creek Trails.

On the 9th on the roof of his house Jim Gebhart discovered and photographed a **Snowy Owl**, and later that day another Snowy Owl was spotted on Hwy 177 by Aaron Short. About two weeks earlier a Snowy Owl had been



photographed north of Covington. On the 10th Bill Diffin rediscovered Jim's Snowy Owl on the dam at Lake Arcadia HQ area and several people were able to see and photograph it. Staff at Lake Arcadia reported the Owl stayed around for several days.

On the 11th Deanne McKinney had Eastern Screech-Owl at her OKC home; Jim Arnett verified Prairie Falcon and Clay-colored Sparrow at Regatta Park and Greenway in OKC; and Jerry Chen identified Western Meadowlark at Lake Overholser Park south of the main dam. On the 13th in Grady County Caleb McKinney found Golden-crowned Kinglet in Ninnekah and Jimmy Woodward witnessed Green-winged Teal and Bonaparte's Gull at Taylor Lake. Meanwhile, around the 14th, it was rumored the media reported a Snowy Owl at Will Roger's Airport. On the 15th Emily Hjalmarson confirmed Barred Owl at Woodcreek Park in Norman; and Joe Grzybowski recorded Red-necked Grebe at Lake Hefner. On the 15th Zach Poland located Pine Siskin, Cedar Waxwings, and Fox Sparrow at Lake Elmer.

On the 16th Dala Grissom added Pied-billed Grebe and American White Pelican at Shawnee in Pottawatomie County; and Robert Harding got Great Blue Heron and Double-crested Cormorant at Bell Cow Lake in Lincoln County. According to OKC CBC compiler, Nathan Kuhnert, unusual species detected were Red-necked Grebe, Neotropic Cormorant, Pacific Loon, American Bittern, Northern Goshawk, Inca Dove, Red Crossbills and a surprise Snowy Owl at Lake Overholser. On the 17th Ben Sandstrom encountered Hairy Woodpecker and White-breasted Nuthatch at Mineral Wells Park in Guthrie; and Brian Marr reported Common Yellowthroat at Lake Hefner Prairie Dog Point. On the 19th Joe Buck recognized Spotted Sandpiper, Brown Creeper, and Orange-crowned Warbler at Arcadia Lake.



On the 21st Brett and Lareina Niland verified Lapland Longspur, Brewer's Blackbird, and Wild Turkey at Rose Lake and then they documented the continuing Snowy Owl at Lake Overholser. Roy McGraw saw Marsh Wren at Lake Overholser Coffey Dam and Red-breasted Nuthatch at Lake Arcadia; and Larry Mays recorded Brewer's Blackbird in Jones. On the 23rd in Grady County Caleb McKinney recognized a Short-eared Owl; in Lincoln County Joe Buck discovered Barred Owl; at

Rose Lake Mike Hudson identified Green-winged Teal; at Meridian Technology Center Pond Roy Zach confirmed Eared Grebe; and at the OKC Zoo Jason Shaw located Wood Duck and Black-crowned Night-Heron.

On the 24th Jerry Chen tallied Wood Duck and White-winged Dove at McClain County's Crystal Lake; Katrina Hucks noticed Great Egret at Lake Overholser west; and Zach DuFran saw White-breasted Nuthatch and Fox Sparrow at Lake Thunderbird Chapel. On the 25th Susan Thompson observed Brown Creeper and Chipping Sparrow in Shawnee; and Jack Olson recognized Pine Siskins and Snow Goose in El Reno. On the 26th Susan Thompson had Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hermit Thrush, Spotted Towhee and Fox Sparrow in Shawnee; Zach Poland reported Herring Gull at Liberty Lake in Logan County; and Rachel Wrenn discovered Greater Yellowlegs and Pileated Woodpecker at Lake Thunderbird North Sentinel.

On the 27th Nick Varvel got Cackling Goose along I-35 in Garvin County; Ben Sandstrom encountered Greater Yellowlegs and Golden-crowned Kinglet at the Dolese Sand Pit in Guthrie; Roy McGraw had White-fronted Goose at Guthrie Lake; Zach Poland observed Wood Duck, Pied-billed Grebe and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Liberty Lake in Guthrie. On the 28th Larry Mays recognized American Wigeon on the Newcastle 16th Street pond; Rachel Wrenn verified Canvasback and Common Goldeneye at Summit Lake; and Roy Zach documented American Tree Sparrow and Pine Siskin at Sanborn Wetland. Meanwhile, Paige Stevens turned up Great Horned Owl at Teal Ridge Wetland; Wilson's Snipe at Whittenberg Park; White-throated Sparrow at The Botanic Garden at OSU, and Wood Duck at Lake Carl Blackwell.

On the 29th Sarah Toner noticed Smith's Longspur in Norman; and Ed and Ginny Blair detected Ruddy Duck and Rusty Blackbird at Lake Overholser. On the 30th Tim O'Connell saw Cedar Waxwings at Cedar Isle Lake; Corey Riding observed Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser and Brown Creeper at Lake Carl Blackwell; Robert Harding found Hairy Woodpecker in Harrah; and Brian Marra spotted Cedar Waxwing at Martin Park Nature Center. On a bitterly cold and windy 31st at Lake Hefner Bill Diffin reported Lesser Black-backed Gull while Cleveland County had their CBC and Joe Grzybowski identified LeConte's Sparrow, Hermit Thrush, Long-billed Dowitcher and Winter Wren. On January 2nd Larry Butler had Will Rogers Airport Operations drive him to a grassy location between the two north/south runways where they viewed a first year male Snowy Owl. So how many Snowy Owls were in Oklahoma this year?

During December of 2017 in the Central Oklahoma area **140** species were reported with **3** new species which increased the year's total to **281**. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds by making reports at <http://ebird.org> and I can also be contacted by e-mail at emkok@earthlink.net. Esther M. Key, Editor.

CBC Report (Cont.)

(chasing pigeons in the downtown business district), two Lesser Black-backed Gulls, 22 Forster's Terns, 12 Eastern Phoebes and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher below Lake Overholser.

Also, it was a bonus to get Blue-winged Teal, Eared Grebe, Ferruginous Hawk (dark phase), Merlin, Greater Yellowlegs, Least Sandpipers, Greater Roadrunner, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, House Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Chipping Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow and small flocks of Rusty Blackbirds and Purple Finches.

A small covey of six Northern Bobwhites at Stinchomb Wildlife Refuge was an excellent find and sure uplifting considering their recent decline.

We missed Loggerhead Shrike, Lapland Longspur which is highly reflective of grasslands/agricultural fields that have been converted to development. We also failed to get lucky on Barn Owl as it had been previously found in red cedar (now removed) at Martin Park. We did manage to still log a Tree Sparrow (retreating southern range).

The number of Herring Gulls (13) seemed a bit down but two teams working both Lake Hefner and Lake Overholser tallied two hundred Red-breasted Mergansers (just two Common Mergansers). Another team worked hard to catch 25,000 Red-winged Blackbirds coming off roost.

We also had a couple of noteworthy Count Week birds (found three days on either side of the Count) including 5-6 swans, Red-throated Loon, Townsend's Solitaire and a Vesper Sparrow.

We had a very festive compilation dinner (Johnny's Charcoal Broiler) where kudos were given to John Shackford for his efforts in being the Count compiler/leader for over 10 years while recognizing Bill Diffin's outstanding leadership (outgoing president) and welcoming our new president, Betz Hacker. Also, appreciation was given to Pat Velte for providing invaluable technical support and to Diane Newell and Patti Muzny for being gracious hosts on previous count parties.

Lastly, many thanks to our counters: Nathan Kuhnert, John Muller, Kathleen Tucker, Steve Davis, Mary Lane, Esther Key, Patricia Flanigan, Neil Garrison, Mark Howery, Sharon Henthorn, Dave Woodson, Sue Woodson, Tracy Franco, Ted
(continued on page 8)

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

CBC Report (Cont.)

Goulden, Bob Judd, Patti Muzny, Brian Muzny, Hal Yocum, Larry Mays, Zach Poland, Aaron Meachum, Diane Newell, Brian Stufflebeam, Carole Sullivan, Marion Homier, John Cleal, Bob Holbrook, Betz Hacker, Bill Diffin, Jerry Taylor, Marilyn Taylor, Jimmy Woodard, Valerie Bradshaw, Mark Delgrasso, John Shackford, Warren Harden, Janece Gratch, Jack Tyler, Doug Eide, Charles Douglas, Cody Barnes, Terri Underhill, Brian Marra, Deanne McKinney, Pat Velte, Betsy Hacker, Morton Payne, Matthew Payne, Johnson Hightower and Steve Parker. We were missing several regulars too as they were attending to family members in need or were sick/injured themselves. And apologies in advance if I missed anyone as I will be sure to make this correction as soon as possible!

The complete official list will be provided in the February newsletter in addition to <http://okc-audubon.org/2017-cbc/>

Snowy Owl (cont.)

3.5 miles long and 1 mile wide; from its preferred field, the bird went north in the daytime, then apparently southward from that field at night. I spent a lot of time in the daytime just watching the bird. I learned that this owl, so lethargic during daylight hours, became a very active, strong hunter about half an hour before sunup and likewise in the evening after sundown, often hover hunting its preferred field quite methodically. I have never seen such an abrupt change in behavior in any other owl species.

Oklahoma City Audubon Welcomes New Members:

Aaron Mechem, Warr Acres, OK
Jay & Isa Spoonheim, Oklahoma City, OK

Refreshments for January 22, 2018 will be provided by

Snacks :
Mary Lane/Steve Davis and Marion Homier
Ice and Drinks: Patti High