



Oklahoma City Audubon Society

JANUARY 2019

Seabird Ecology and Restoration on the California Channel Islands

Join us January 28, 2019 when Samantha Cady will be our guest presenter.

Because of their natural lack of land predators, the California Channel Islands are critical nesting habitat for many seabird species. However, the islands have endured multiple threats to their nesting seabird population including invasive rats, rabbits, cats, and plants. In 2001, the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program initiated a multi-faceted approach to seabird restoration.



This talk will describe those efforts, with specific focus on the rat eradication from Anacapa Island for Scripps' Murrelet, native plant restoration on Santa Barbara Island for Cassin's Auklet, and artificial habitat on Santa Cruz Island for Ashy Storm Petrels. The project has had unique challenges but has been met with equally unique solutions.



Samantha is currently a PhD student at Oklahoma State University studying bird responses to global change in the Great Plains. Before her PhD endeavor, Samantha has had the opportunity to work in many diverse ecosystems, including the Ozark Plateau, California coastal sage scrub, the Mojave Desert, the rocky intertidal zone, and Pacific kelp forests. Notably, Samantha spent two years working with seabirds on the California Channel Islands, where she studied 5 species of seabirds and participated in a long-term habitat restoration project.

She is a native of Ventura, California and earned a bachelor's degree in aquatic biology at the University of California at Santa Barbara. She then earned a master's in natural resource ecology and management from Oklahoma State University where she will complete her doctorate.

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

Meeting Location:

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

President's Perspective

By Betsy Hacker

It is indeed an honor to be asked to serve as OCAS president for a second year. If 2019 is anything like last year, OCAS has an exciting year ahead. I would like to thank everyone for their help in making 2018 a banner year. It is the contribution and enthusiasm of members that make an organization viable and strong,



As your president, it is my job to set goals for the year and try to ensure that they are fulfilled. Last year OCAS not only met these goals but exceeded them. With your help, we will do it again.

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. Last year this included three public events, putting up six bluebird houses and monitoring them in Will Roger's Park. We have been asked to put up more houses in the Martin Nature Center. More on these activities in a future meeting.

Goal 3: Field Trips. The field trip subcommittee has some great ideas for 2019. 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 we will work to try 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 join OCAS.

Goal 4: Continuity Outreach: In 2018 Robert Medley, reporter for the Oklahoman wrote two articles about what OCAS does that generated interest. He is an avid outdoors

man and is interested in writing more. Recently he saw the all the pelicans at Lake Hefner and wants to write about them. This is one form of outreach but there are others that it would be fun to explore. Some have suggested offering a birding classes, starting a blog, and I'm sure there are other ideas that we might explore.

My son gave me a book entitled "Birding is My Favorite Video Game" by Rosemary Mosco. She is a dynamic writer, cartoonist, and speaker who offers a very unique take on birding that is witty and funny that has cross generational appeal. Reading it was fun and it stuck me that her approach could motivate someone to pick up a pair of binoculars and go look for birds!



Respectfully, Betz Hacker

Oklahoma City Audubon Society

Officers 2018

President	Elizabeth Hacker	638-6210
Vice President	Grace Huffman	943-3296
Secretary	Sharon Henthorn	521-9958
Treasurer	Nancy Vicars	831-1945
Parliament	Valerie Bradshaw	664-6956
Programs	Warren Harden	596-2759
Recorder	Esther M. Key	735-1021
Conservation	Dave Woodson	601-622-3467
Field Trips	Nancy Vicars	831-1945
	Jimmy Woodard	365-5685
	Hal Yokum	819-4852
Newsletter Editor	Patricia Velte	751-5263
Publicity	Doug Eide	495-8192
Historian	Vacant	
Refreshments	Sue Woodson	601-622-3467
Webmaster	Patricia Velte	751-5263

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

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

Bird of the Month



By John Shackford

For such a small bird, the **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** (*Regulus calendula*) has a bunch of charisma. According to Joel E. Holloway (*Dictionary of birds of the United States*, 2003, Timber press, Inc., Portland, Oregon, p. 179) *Regulus* comes from Greek, which means “a king

ruling over a small territory, a king’s son, a little king,” plus *calendula* which means “little lark” in Greek.

According to Bent (A.C., 1964, *Life histories of North American thrushes, kinglets, and their allies*, p. 409) “kinglets are tiny, plump little birds clad in olive and buffy gray plumage.” To distinguish Ruby-crowns from Golden-crowned Kinglets look for the crown patches of the two birds; a ruby on the crown or no colored on the crown at all identifies the kinglet as a Ruby-Crown, because both sexes of the Golden-crown have a lemon-yellow crown patch. If the kinglet has an eye ring instead of an eyeline, it is a Ruby-crowned. To distinguish the Ruby-crowned kinglet from small flycatchers, look for the wing-flitting of the kinglet: some small flycatchers do bob their tails, but this is not the frequent wing-flitting motion the Ruby-crowned makes.

Something I find interesting—there is some debate as to the Ruby-crowns taxonomic placement in relation to the very nondescript, and morphologically similarity, old world warblers. So far, tests have tended to indicate that the separate placement of the Ruby-crowned from the old world warblers is probably justified.

Another thing I find interesting is that a few small bird species seem to have a relatively small frame of reference—space-wise—when compared to most other small bird species, including hummingbirds. For example, the Ruby-crowned Kinglet often will come quite close without seeming too concerned about their own safety. And after deciding that an observer could be a threat, they retreat a little way, but can still be seen flitting fairly nearby, while most other small birds just disappear by moving further away rather quickly. Last year, on our 2017 Christmas Bird Count, Warren Harden and I ran into a Ruby-crowned at close

range. It was almost surely a male, because he erected his ruby crown, a beautiful sight (I hedge here a little because some ornithologists admit that they do not yet know for sure if some older females might not have a ruby crown). Anyway, the bird Warren and I saw was quite bold in our presence, the bird feeding and flitting actively near us for maybe a minute or two. Another indication of this birds constricted frame of reference is that they often will approach quite nearly when one imitates their rather raucous, raspy call of chut-chut. This call is raucous enough that one might think it comes from a larger bird. When I try to imitate this chut-chut call, the ruby-crowns are usually quite obliging by coming close, still calling and feeding.



In our part of the North American continent, the Ruby-crowned winters north to the southern border of Oklahoma while the Golden-crowned winters north to the Canadian border. This suggests that the Ruby-crowned is less hardy than the Golden-crowned Kinglet. In mild years we seem to get a decent number of Ruby-crowns on our CBCs, while in somewhat harsher winters we seem to get more Golden-crowns, sometimes with few or no Ruby-crowns.

For our recent CBC (2018) we reported 22 Ruby-crowns and 5 Golden-crowns, perhaps indicating milder weather up to the time of our count (thanks for this info, Nathan!).

The nesting range of the Ruby-crown extends northward in North America even to cover most of Alaska. This is considerably farther northward than the Golden-crowned Kinglet nests. The Ruby-crown usually nests in coniferous trees, and can lay from 5-11 eggs, but the number is usually 7-9 (again from Bent, A.C., 1964, *Life histories of North American thrushes, kinglets, and their allies*, p. 402). As an exercise in how close the Ruby-crowned comes to nesting with us here in Oklahoma, the *Second Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas* (2016, Lynn Wichersham ed., at: <http://www.cobreedingbirdatlasII.org>.) shows a confirmed nesting near Trinidad, Colorado, in Las Animas County, southeastern Colorado, about 75 miles west of the Black Mesa area of Cimarron County, Oklahoma. Although there are no nesting records for Oklahoma, we can share something of the breeding season—the Ruby-crowned’s breeding song. Sutton [G.M., 1982, *Sutton Species Summary*, unpubl. data] reports the song being reported several times, especially in the spring, from the last week of March to the first week of May.

2018 OKC CBC Results

By Nathan Kuhnert, CBC compiler

Near-perfect weather (sunny skies, light northerly breeze turning calm by early afternoon, high in the mid-50s). Perhaps it was a bit too nice from a listing perspective - birds seemed spread out and a bit inactive. However, as additional parties (19) continued to report after our compilation dinner, we (45 skilled and dedicated volunteers) still managed to tally a respectable 110 species including a total of 154,981 birds!

On the local scale, significant reduction of mudflats around the area lakes due to above-average yearly rainfall coupled with further reduction of habitat (i.e., developments, grubbing/clearing of vegetation on public lands) likely is reflected in our data.



No major rarities although we logged some birds that should not be expected on an annual basis including Black Scoter, Glaucous Gull and Short-eared Owl. Also, Snow Goose, Lesser Black-backed Gull (3) Great Egret,



Black-crowned Night-Heron (8), Horned Lark, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Tree Sparrow (15) Purple Finch are noteworthy.

Several teams reported large murmurations of starlings and Red-winged Blackbirds coming off roosts. In fact the Sterling team estimated

approximately 100,000 blackbirds at Lake Overholser! We may have set an all-time high count of American White Pelicans (415). The Woodson team found 146 American Goldfinches bringing the group count to 268 and Winter Wrens (15) also made a strong showing.

The trend of more Red-breasted Mergansers than Common Mergansers continued. Also, the upward trend of Eastern Phoebe was demonstrated with a total of 14 birds.

A few misses as always and this year Greater Scaup, White-winged Dove, American Pipit and Common Yellowthroat were not counted. Golden-crowned Kinglets (2) and Cedar Waxwings (65) seemed way down.

I was impressed that the Diffin team found a light-phase Harlan's Hawk which demonstrated attention to detail. And speaking of detail, I was so impressed just reviewing all of the checklists and taking note of the individual styles and organizational skills that went into the tallying efforts.

We had several long-standing members back counting again which was special but we missed a few this year due to unavoidable conflicts. Also excited to have several first-time CBC participants that hit the ground running.

A special thank you for your time (118.45 party-hours and 2.5 owling hours) and effort Bill Diffin, Jeff Tibbits, Carla Bruggen, Feodora Steward, Neil Garrison, Mark Howery, Sharon Henthorn, Dave Woodson, Sue Woodson, Ted Golden, Bob Judd, Patti Muzny, Nancy Vicars, Brian Munzy, Hal Yocum, Andy Feldt, Brian Marra, Deanne McKinney, Betz Hacker, Robert Holbrook, Jerry Taylor, Marilyn Taylor, John Sterling, Larry Mays, Aaron Mechem, Morton Payne, Matthew Payne, Johnson Hightower, Ted Cassidy, John Cleal, Marion Homier, John Shackford, Warren Harden, Jack Tyler, Terri Underhill, Jimmy Woodard, Mark Delgrosso, Val Bradshaw, Patricia Velte, Keith Green, Janiece Gratch, Roy McGraw, Chase Moxley, Jennie Brooks and Nathan Kuhnert.

Our final results will be entered into the National Audubon CBC Portal and then sent to our region's new compiler, Gene Young. The complete official list is below, it is also available on the OCAS website at <http://okc-audubon.org>. I will also provide a summary at the January 28th meeting.

Minutes, December 17, 2018

The meeting was called to order by President Elizabeth Hacker. The minutes were approved by the attendees.

Treasurer Nancy Vicars reported \$5705 in the bank account.

Guest visitor was Lou Flanagan.

President Hacker again thanked John Shackford for his 20+ years of service as the club vice president. He has decided to retire, and Grace Huffman has agreed to take on that challenge.

Other officers from 2018 have all accepted another year of duty: Elizabeth Hacker- Club President, Nancy Vicars-Treasurer, Sharon Henthorn-Secretary, Valerie Bradshaw—Parliamentarian. Warren Harden will continue to provide an excellent roster of speakers for our meetings. Currently the office of Historian is available for volunteers.

Other business: In coordination with the OKC Parks and Recreation Department, there is continued progress on the placement and monitoring of additional bluebird boxes. An additional location would be Martin Park Nature Center, and there is consideration for placing nesting boxes for prothonotary warblers at Lake Arcadia.

Elizabeth is spearheading plans for a raffle in the spring to include prizes such as the beautifully carved bluebird box that was donated to the club.

Nathan Kuhnert reported on the recent Christmas Bird Count done on December 15 for the OKC count circle. Fifty participants submitted bird lists, with a preliminary total of 109 species recorded. The evening was capped by dinner and desserts at Johnnie's. Upcoming Christmas Bird Counts are Black Mesa December 30, Fort Gibson December 27.

After the business meeting, the twenty-four participants formed a circle and told all forms of tales regarding our interactions with birds both in our recent and distant pasts. Great fun was had by all, and many had more than one story to tell. Refreshments and drinks were shared along with the camaraderie.

The next meeting of the OCAS will be from 7-9 pm on the fourth Monday of January, which is January 28th, 2019. The usual third Monday meeting time is supplanted by Martin Luther King Holiday, and the Garden Building will be closed on that date. Third Monday meetings will resume February 18th.

Sharon Henthorn, Club Secretary.

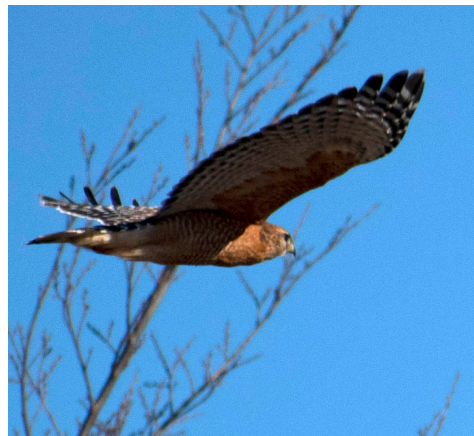
Field Trip Report: Arcadia Lake

On Saturday, January 5th, a group of us met at Pop's before heading to Arcadia Lake for the annual eagle watch. We had a nice turnout of about 10 people.

When we got to the lake office there were falconers handling an American Kestrel and a Red-tailed Hawk, allowing us to get amazing up-close views.

After checking in at the office we walked out to the viewing area, where we found our only Bald Eagle of the day. It was on the opposite side of the lake so we didn't have great views, but we were able to see it. We also saw Eastern Phoebe, Double-crested Cormorants, and a Least Sandpiper.

Next we walked towards the dam and partially across it, we saw Song Sparrows, Northern Cardinals, Red-



shouldered Hawk, Forster's Tern, American Coot, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and large group of about 13 Great Blue Herons. Before leaving for Spring Creek Park we also

picked up Dark-eyed Junco and Red-bellied Woodpecker.

We arrived at Spring Creek Park in hopes of getting a better view of the eagle, but it had taken off. We search the area and some of us even went a couple more spots to search, but we never saw the eagle again. Still, we ended the day with over 30 species.

DUES NOTICE

It's time once again to renew your annual membership for 2019. 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.

Recorders Report December 2018

The year ended with quite a few interesting species arriving to spend the winter bringing individual county counts up. Four counties ended the year with over 200 species recorded, seven counties had over 100 species reported and only one county had less than 100 species. This is a great report for the year and thanks to the birders that ventured out to explore new areas.

On the 1st Scott Loss confirmed **Glaucous Gull** at Boomer Lake Park in Payne County; and Zach Poland found Red-



headed Woodpecker, Hooded Merganser and Swamp Sparrow at Wes Watkins Lake in Pottawatomie County. On the 2nd John Tharp located Smith's Longspur in Norman; Zach Poland observed Loggerhead Shrike and White-throated Sparrow at Lake Elmer in Kingfisher County; and Deanne McKinney spotted

Marsh Wren and Lincoln's Sparrow at Rose Lake. On the 5th Bridger Arrington added Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at South Muhall in Logan County. On the 8th Emily Hjalmarson had Ruddy Duck at Kevin Gottshall Memorial Park in Norman; and Deb Hirt detected Smith's Longspur at Boomer Lake Park.

On the 12th Caleb Frome – CC came across Fox Sparrow and American White Pelican at Wiley Post Memorial Lake in McClain County; and Jimmy Woodward encountered American Woodcock and Purple Finch at Soldier Creek Industrial Park Recreational Trail in Midwest City. On the 15th Bill Diffin discovered Golden-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, and Eastern Towhee at Stinchcomb WR Gate 3 in Canadian County; Natalie Hamilton counted Orange-crowned Warbler at Lake Stanley Draper; and Sharon Henthorn got White-breasted Nuthatch and Marsh Wren at Northwest Zoo Lake Park.



On the 16th Roy McGraw saw Spotted Towhee at Mineral Wells Park in Guthrie; Garrett H had Wilson's Snipe at Teal

Ridge Wetland; and Brian Marra had Wood Duck at Northeast Zoo Lake. On the 17th Roy McGraw viewed Brown Creeper and Red-headed Woodpecker at Prague Lake City Park in Lincoln County. On the 21st Chad Ellis recognized Long-tailed Duck at Lake Hefner - Prairie Dog Point. On the 22nd Zach Poland noticed Hermit Thrush, Greater Yellowlegs and Pileated Woodpecker at Liberty Lake in Logan County.

On the 23rd Ben Sandstrom verified Common Loon at Lake Overholser; and Zach Poland detected Winter Wren, Rusty Blackbird, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Northern Bobwhite at Lake Elmer. On the 24th Dustin Lynch had Greater Roadrunner at Dover Marsh in Kingfisher County. On the 25th Zach Poland observed Bald Eagle and Canvasback at Guthrie Lake in Logan County. On the 27th Mike Hudson found Green-winged Teal at NW 63rd and Kilpatrick Turnpike in Canadian County. On the 29th John Tharp and Rachel Wrenn documented **Lesser Goldfinch** in Norman; and Corey Riding spotted Least Sandpiper and Northern Bobwhite at Lake Carl Blackwell.



On the 30th Brian Marra added in McClain County at Wiley Post Memorial Lake Wild Turkey, Yellow-bellied



Sapsucker and Swamp Sparrow; in Garvin County at Paul's Valley Lake Swamp Sparrow and Hermit Thrush; and at Elmore City Lake Savannah Sparrow and Hairy Woodpecker. In

Logan County Dustin Lynch confirmed American Tree Sparrow; and in Norman at Summit Lake John Tharp discovered Common

Goldeneye and Hooded Merganser. On the 31st at Lake Hefner Bill Diffin counted White-winged Scoter, Grace Huffman reported Black Scoter, and Dustin Lynch came across Horned Grebe and Common Loon.



In Newcastle Larry Mays located Greater Roadrunner, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Bewick's Wren; and at Meridian Technology Center Pond Scott Loss identified Common Merganser. And now it is time to start a new year and a new list. Can we improve our reports in areas less birded?

During December of 2018 in the Central Oklahoma area 135 species were reported with **2** new species bringing the total for the year to **284**. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds. Information is accessed at: [ebird](http://ebird.org). 2018 eBird: An online database of bird distribution and abundance [web application]. eBird Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York. Available: <http://www.ebird.org>. (Accessed: January 1, 5 & 8, 2019). And occasionally from Facebook and the OKBIRDS List. I can be contacted by e-mail at emkok@earthlink.net. Esther M. Key, Editor.

Welcome

Oklahoma City Audubon Society welcomes these new members:

Gaylynn Boice, OKC
Nina Borden, OKC
Stephany Dowd, OKC
Indiana Rubino, OKC
Debra Zink, Edmond



Visit Sutton Eagle Cam:

<https://www.suttoncenter.org/live-bald-eagle-nest->

Refreshments for the meeting will be provided by:

Snacks - Marion Homier and Neil Garrison
Ice and Drinks - Nadine Varner

Field Trip Report: Lake Hefner

By Bill Diffin

Ten birders met January 12 at the Lake Hefner OKC docks at 8:30 am on a cloudy, 35 deg F day with wind 20 mph from the north.

Nancy Vicars quickly spotted the female White-winged Scoter which has been using the area behind the jetties as home base all winter. The male Common Merganser which has been resident at the lake since last winter was in place with the Mallards just west of the Police Station.

The adult Lesser Black-backed Gull staying around the docks this winter was spotted a little farther south by Brian Marra. Also seen around the docks were Bufflehead, Pied-billed Grebes and a Horned Grebe. The usual gulls were also present, Bonaparte's, Ring-billed and Herring.



Participants got to view a representative large number of American White Pelicans (60) and Double-crested Cormorants (300) which have been roosting on the jetties. We

made a detour from the lake to view the canal between MacArthur and the lake road. Four Great Egrets, a couple of Great Blue Herons, at least 30 Hooded Mergansers and a male Common Merganser made an interesting collection. Seeing the Hooded Mergansers flying along the canal was a memorable sight, their buzzy flight blurring their wings. Most participants got at least a brief glimpse of a Bald Eagle that was spotted at the canal inlet.

While surveying the lake from along the dam nine Common Loons were seen, five of which were in close proximity to the shoreline. Otherwise the lake viewable from the dam was relatively empty of birds, just 10 Common Goldeneye and a few gulls and some Gadwalls. The water treatment ponds had Ring-necked Ducks, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead and Hooded Mergansers. At the east dam parking area about 20 Herring Gulls were in flight over the lake or resting on the water.

Stars and Stripes was not as heavily populated with waterfowl as usual, but there were two seasonally scarce Redheads there, and Brian Marra spotted the adult male Black Scoter which has been more consistently resident around Prairie Dog Point for a couple of weeks. We had 38 species for the day, good considering the conditions. Participants were Nancy Vicars, Grace Huffman, Hal Yocum, Holly Bjorkstrom, Brian Marra, Roy McGraw, Susan Prescott, Aaron Meacham, Sharon Henthorn and Bill Diffin.

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

Upcoming Field Trips:

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

January 26, 2019—Canton Lake

Leader: Larry Mays larrymays1949@gmail.com

Meet at the IHOP at 7708 NW Expressway. We will leave precisely at 7:00AM. Try to carpool if you can. Larry has room for 4 besides himself. We will stop by Lake Elmer north of Kingfisher. This is a state Wildlife Management Area so you will need either a hunting or fishing license or a Conservation Pass (available from WalMart). We will be back before 7:00 pm. Bring snacks and/or a sack lunch although we'll hit a couple convenience stores for other stuff.

February 16, 2019—Wichita Mountains NWR

Leader: Kurt & Sharon Meisenzahl meisenzk@SBCGLOBAL.NET

Additional information TBA
