



Oklahoma City Audubon Society

OKC-AUDUBON.ORG

JUNE 2018

The Wildlife of Southern Chile, Falkland Islands and Antarctica



Marion Homier and John Cleal will be the presenters at the June 18 meeting of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society.

Marion and John visited Southern Chile, the Falkland Islands, Tierra del Fuego and Antarctica in January 2018. They spent two weeks on a small Russian Antarctic research vessel sailing the infamous Drake Passage – around Cape Horn to Antarctica, and back. The passage included the Antarctic peninsular (the “banana belt”), crossing the Antarctic circle and making multiple landings to walk among many species of nesting penguins, and Russian and Ukrainian exiles... !

They will present some of their photos of the birds and other critters they saw.

John is increasingly befuddled and confused since he was constantly in search of polar bears. Marion keeps John flyin’ right in the face of the desperate challenges he presents her. Being the only smart person in the family, she alone put the trip together and dealt single

handed with the emergencies that arose.

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

Summer

It's been a busy spring and I'm looking forward to two months of quiet reflection. Although I plan to take some much needed personal time, I'll be working on organizing field trips for the fall and if anyone would like to volunteer to lead a field trip, please contact me with the date and location.



In addition to organizing OCAS monthly meetings, Warren Harden tests our birding skills by showing us various feathers. Sometimes it's apparent but more often it's not. After we all give our opinion as to what bird the feather belongs to, Warren tells us and gives a brief explanation on how these feathers are unique to the particular species. Now that Warren has me hooked on feathers, I plan to read *Feathers: Displays of Brilliant Plumage* by wildlife photographer Robert Clark. Clark's mission is to provide readers with a study into how form meets function on the microscopic surface of a feather. In addition to taking time to read Clark's photographic essay, I hope to learn how to use my new Canon camera, a surprise Mother's Day gift from my wonderful son. But who knew a little camera could be so complicated and as much as Wes knows about photography and technology, he's left it up to me to figure out how to use this little computer called EOS. Scratch quiet reflection!

6/2 National Trails Day, Martin Nature Park

OCAS joined with the National Parks and other local environmental organizations in celebrating the 50th anniversary of our Country's National Trail System. Matt



Whitney of the Nation Park Service along with decedents of the Red Sticks from the Creek Nation, and many park users, took part in rededicating the Red Stick Trail, a National Recreational Trail in Martin Park. A big thank you to Dave Woodson, Hal Yocum, and Melissa

Cunningham who volunteered to set up and talk to attendees on this very hot day!

5/19 Garden Fest, Will Rogers Garden Park



Garden Fest was a day full of birds, flowers, and music. Does it get any better than that? Thanks to Marilyn and Jerry Taylor, Sharon Henthorn, Brian Muzny, and Dave Woodson for volunteering. Brian spotted a gray catbird and for those who know Brian, not many birds escape his observation.

6/9 Summer Picnic

Our annual summer picnic was well attended and everyone enjoyed delicious food and some delightful birding. Our thanks to Keith and Terri Underhill who graciously rolled out the red carpet and put on the Ritz. As those who were there can attest to, Terri's yard is a birding mecca. It would be impossible to give a prize for the best food entree but perhaps the most inventive was Nancy Reeds' fruit salad all dressed up to look like an owl.



Thanks to all who attended and contributed to a wonderful day of celebration.

A big thank you to all who have contributed to making OCAS a club that attracts and welcomes local birders. I hesitate to start naming contributing volunteers because inevitably I'll miss one or two. But you know who you are, and a big THANK YOU!

I wish you all an enjoyable summer. Following our meeting on June 18, we won't meet again until September 17. However, check the website and watch for emails for possible unscheduled field trips.

Bird of the Month



By John Shackford

One of the few warblers that nests in the Oklahoma City area is the **Black-and-white Warbler** (*Mniotilta varia*). J. E. Holloway (2003. *Dictionary of Birds of the United States*. Timber Press, Inc. Portland Oregon.) states that *Mniotilta* means "moss plucker" which "came from the belief that

moss was consistently used in the nests," and *varia* which means "two or more contrasting colors."

This warbler usually nests on the ground. As of 1982 G. M. Sutton [Sutton *Summaries of bird species*, Sam Noble Okla. Museum of Nat. Hist. Norman, OK] had recorded only two records of actual nests in Oklahoma: the first in Caddo County (central Oklahoma) on May 26, 1954, "nest (4 small young) found 'under grass tussock along canyon rim'"; and one in Delaware County (northeastern Oklahoma) on May 12, 1956, "nest (several young, just leaving) found at foot of steep slope near head of Lower Spavinaw Lake".

I have been lucky enough to find a nest of the Black-and-white Warbler in the Oklahoma City area at Draper Lake. I and others were doing research to try to save a small population of Black-capped Vireos there. On 22 May 2003, I followed a male vireo into a small wooded ravine and began looking for a vireo nest (most of the research aimed at removing any Brown-headed Cowbird eggs found in vireo nests). After standing still in the small ravine for perhaps two minutes looking and listening for Black-capped Vireos, I suddenly saw a female Black-and-white scurry along the ground about 6 ft. in front of me and then run for a total of about 9 ft. before flying. Suspecting a nest, I looked at the area she had come from and saw three clumps of little bluestem grass. One of these clumps held the nest; the nest opened at the side, toward the west. In the nest were four large nestlings; I did not hang around long, trying to minimize the chance of my leading predators to the nest.

Five days later (27 May) the nest was full of very large nestlings, and I realized these undoubtedly were four cowbird chicks (the first report of cowbird parasitism of the Black-and-white Warbler in Oklahoma). Also on this date I watched the nest from 15 ft. away as the male came to feed

the young; he invariably would land about 6-8 in. up on the trunk of a 3-in. diameter small oak about a foot from the nest, walk down the trunk to the ground and enter the nest; the female would bring in food nearby but would not approach the nest.

On May 29 I returned with a big camera lens to photograph the birds, but the young had already fledged. There were two unhatched eggs in the nest and a third broken egg, no doubt warbler eggs. These eggs, apparently the first of this species to be found in Oklahoma, were deposited in the avian collection at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History at OU (OMNH # E-2674). For more

information on this nesting see Shackford (J.S. 2004, *Black-and-white Warbler nest in habitat also used by Black-capped Vireo*, Cleveland County, Oklahoma. Bulletin of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society 37: 17-22).



It is interesting that two of the three Black-and-white Warbler nests that have been found in Oklahoma were during studies of the Black-capped Vireo. The 1954 nest in Caddo County was found during research Jean Graber did for her doctorate, her work still the definitive work on the Black-capped Vireo, while my 2003 nest was also found during Black-capped Vireo research. It leads one to suspect (although this is a vanishingly small sample size) that

many nesting habitat requirements for the Black-capped Vireo are also good nesting habitat for Black-and-white Warblers.

As to the fate of the Black-capped Vireo colony, it finally failed. Black-caps nest where both grassland and very shrubby trees are intermixed. Our study area was about 25 acres of post and blackjack oaks habitat that had burned over several years before. As the oaks grew taller, acceptable habitat for the vireos continued to be lost.

Back to the Black-and-white Warbler: one thing I really like about them is their ability to run both up and down tree trunks. The only other U. S. species I know that can do this are the nuthatches. Virtually all this warbler's diet is "animal," not "vegetable." Early on in the spring, Black-and-white Warblers, because they can eat "bugs" gleaned primarily from tree bark before leaves emerge, can find food earlier than most other spring migrants, which depend more on bugs found later on emerging tree leaves.

Chirpings

By Patti Muzny

May / June 2018

The Muzny OKC back yard continues to provide various forms of nature-inspired entertainment for us. It's so interesting to see how the whims of nesting species differ from season-to-season. Our large back yard provides a variety of nesting habitats, from bird boxes and potted plants, a raised bed veggie garden to large trees to shrubs and tangles. Some might view some of our "edges" as a little messy and unkempt. There is a method to my madness.

The Robins that previously nested over the back door and under the patio on flat surfaces did not choose these sites for 2018, but instead built their nests on downspouts. One family is feeding newly hatched babies on the front porch downspout and two other downspouts have nests, but nobody is using them at this time.

A Carolina Wren built a nest at the base of my scruffy looking Christmas cactus plant, but apparently Mama Wren didn't approve of her mate's choice, because there are no eggs and currently I don't see them on the patio. There is loud singing from the back portion of the yard, so I guess maybe that's where they are actually nesting. The neighborhood continues to attract a good number of Mississippi Kites and I love to watch them soar and hunt above our yard! Eurasian Collared Doves are always in the yard and calling from the roof of our home. Their incessant calls waft down the vent pipe for my stove, so I



hear them in the house! This year we have several White-winged and Mourning Doves as well. And we're treated to an occasional visit by a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. In late May, we got to see the male doing his courtship display for his chosen lady!!



A family of three Blue Jays fledged on June 2nd from their nest at the edge of my potting shed. On Friday and early Saturday I noticed the three juveniles were perching on the edge of the nest and doing much wing exercising. We were gone a while on Saturday afternoon and when we returned, empty nest syndrome had arrived! On Sunday morning I heard the jays doing a major amount of fussing and soon I saw the neighborhood Cooper's Hawk being chased across the lawn with a Jay literally on its tail! The saga of survival goes on.

Our lone pair of Purple Martins is now feeding young and it's amazing to observe how those adults managed to land on the martin house without bashing their brains out on the opening! They approach the box at what I consider a much too high rate of speed, but I've never seen either adult miss their mark!

A family of Brown Thrashers has left the nest out near our storage shed and I think they might be working on brood #2. The Great-tailed Grackles nested across the street and thankfully didn't choose to nest in our yard. I'm just not a fan of all that screeching! We also have Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers coming to the feeder.

A surprise visitor this past week was an Eastern Bluebird. It's been several years since they built a nest in our yard. Somewhere nearby is a Great-crested Flycatcher. Every evening it lands in the pecan trees in back and makes sure everyone in the area knows he's around, but I haven't found where they've nested.

Our fly-over bird list is pretty entertaining, due to the many trips over the yard made by residents of the heron rookery near Southeast Central and just south of the Boathouse District. Apparently they fly south and west from the river area to feed. Another surprise that Brian heard last week was a Fish Crow.

At Byars the migration feeding frenzy has passed and its back to seeing and hearing the nesting species. The "usuals" are: Painted and Indigo Buntings, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Pewees, Phoebe, Carolina Bewick's Wrens, Titmice, Chickadees and White-breasted Nuthatches, Summer Tanagers, Cardinals, Gnatcatchers, Kentucky and Black and White Warblers, Barn Swallows, Bluebirds and Red-bellied Woodpeckers. Last weekend we found White-eyed, Red-eyed, Yellow-throated and Bell's Vireos. The Blue Grosbeak and Scissortails were quiet, as were the Pileated Woodpeckers, so we missed those species.

Minutes May 21, 2018

The meeting was called to order by President Elizabeth Hacker. Minutes of April meeting were approved without corrections or additions.

Treasurer's report. Nancy Vicars reports extra expenses for the Garden Festival, leaving \$5815.41 in the account.

Conservation chairman Dave Woodson reports this is the time to think about protection from ticks when birding.

Old Business: The spring meeting of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society met in eastern Oklahoma from April 26-29 with field trips to Lake Tenkiller, Dwight Mission, and Greenleaf Park.

Zack Poland led a group to the Myriad Gardens in downtown OKC. Highlight migrant was an Ovenbird vocalizing and playing hide and seek with the onlookers.

Nathan Kuhnert led a group on a Norman area field trip last week during a very active migrant weekend.

Will Rogers Park welcomed the annual Garden Festival on May 19. Our booth was well-placed in an entry area centrally located within a shady tent. Betz Hacker manned the booth most of the day, and other volunteers were Marilyn and Jerry Taylor, Dave Woodson, Brian Muzny, and Sharon Henthorn.

Project Bluebird at Will Rogers Park update: No nesting birds have yet been noted, and Neil Garrison removes paper wasps when he checks the nest boxes.

Display Case in the Garden Exposition Building carries information on our club, and will be changed out for new material later in the summer. Ideas are welcome.

New Business: Martin Park Nature Center will host National Parks Trail Day on June 2nd from 10-1:00. Volunteers are welcome and Dave Woodson will provide some handouts.

The Summer Picnic for the club will be June 9th at the property of Terri Underhill. The menu theme will be Italian food, and entrees will be supplied by Betz Hacker.

Betz will lead a field trip tomorrow June 22 in Will Rogers Park at 8:00am.

Guests were introduced and welcomed: Donna Albright of Choctaw and Chris Eckart of Midwest City.

Recent bird sightings include Red Crossbills at Nancy Reed's yard; Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are appearing, and Cave Swallows have been seen nesting.

The meeting concluded with a refreshment break and the speaker followed.

Our own avid birder Warren Harden described the highlights and benefits of bird-banding programs through the years. Discovery of previously-banded birds helps scientists better understand migration patterns and longevity of monitored birds. Banding is one occasion when a birder gets literal "hands-on" experience up close and personal with the birds, which is especially rewarding with small songbirds which can so easily be hidden from view in the trees.

Next meeting will be our final spring session -- June 18 at 7:00 pm at the Will Rogers Park Garden Exposition Building. No meetings are held in July and August and we'll be up for another fall migration season in September.

Reported by Club Secretary Sharon Henthorn

Oklahoma City Audubon Society Welcomes New Members

Neil Garrison, Oklahoma City

REFRESHMENTS

Snacks: Sharon Henthorn and Terri Underhill

Ice & Drinks: Steve Davis and Mary Lane

Recommended Viewing:

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology hosts nine live webcams on its All About Birds website.

Nancy Vicars suggests the Panama Fruit Feeders and the West Texas Hummingbird camera.

To visit the cams go to:
<http://cams.allaboutbirds.org/>

Recorders Report May 2018

Where was spring? April was recorded as the second coldest in Oklahoma history and then May turned around to be the hottest recorded in 125 years. Many parts of the state are lacking in rain. How are the birds handling these extremes? And the birders. Well the birders were very busy checking out every central Oklahoma County except Kingfisher. And Oklahoma and Payne Counties have both recorded 233 species to date for the year. Wow !!!

On the 1st Chris Butler confirmed four Red Crossbills stopped by his bird feeders in Choctaw; Caleb McKinney found Gray Catbird at Shannon Springs Park in Grady County; Ben Sandstrom had Bobolink at the Goldsby Sod Farm in McClain County; and Bill Diffin noticed **Blackpoll Warbler** on Overholser Road in Canadian County. On the 2nd Hans Holbrook birded Wewoka Woods Camp in Seminole County and recorded **Gray-cheeked Thrush**, **Black-throated Green Warbler**, **Yellow-breasted Chat** and **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**; Bill Diffin detected Stilt Sandpiper and **Chestnut-sided Warbler** at Stinchcomb WR West in Canadian County; and Zach Roy viewed Gray-cheeked Thrush at The Botanic Garden at OSU.

On the 3rd Rachel Wrenn got **Common Nighthawk** in Norman; Scott Loss verified **Laughing Gull** and **White-rumped Sandpiper** at Lake Carl Blackwell; Zach Poland heard **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** at his home in Logan County and Emily Hjalmarsen had one in Riley Park as well as Black-throated Green Warbler while Caleb Frome-CC counted Gray-



cheeked Thrush there. On the 4th Jeff Tibbits added **Chuck-will's-widow** and Summer Tanager at Broadway and Simmons in Logan County; and Rachel Wrenn observed **Acadian Flycatcher** and **Northern Waterthrush** near the Little Axe Community Center. On the 5th Jason Shaw spotted Northern Bobwhite and Dickcissel at the USAO Habitat Area in Grady County; and Joe Grzybowski tallied White-rumped Sandpiper along Ten Mile Flats.

On the 6th John Hurd located White-rumped Sandpiper at

NW63rd east of Rose Lake; Cody Barne encounter Common Nighthawk at Sanborn Lake; Scott Loss discovered Northern Waterthrush and Blackpoll Warbler at Lake Carl Blackwell; Bill Diffin determined **Ovenbird** at the Myriad Botanical Garden in downtown OKC; William Radke recognized Common Nighthawk in Edmond; and Brian Marra reported Yellow-billed Cuckoo and **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at Arcadia Lake. On the 7th Emily Hjalmarsen identified **Wood Thrush** at McKinley School in Norman and Blackpoll Warbler along Ten Mile Flats while Larry Mays documented Blackpoll Warbler at Arcadia Lake; and Brian Marra reported Red-headed Woodpecker at Tinker AFB. On the 8th Joe Grzybowski saw Yellow-headed Blackbird and Orchard Oriole at the Goldsby Sod Farm; and Zach Poland verified Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Yellow-breasted Chat at Stinchcomb WR west.

On the 9th Jimmy Woodward confirmed **Black Tern** at Rose Lake; and Robert Harding spotted Rose-breasted Grosbeak at his home north of Horseshoe Lake. On the 10th Emily Hjalmarsen saw Yellow Warbler and Northern Rough-winged Swallow at the Goldsby Sod Farm; and Bill Diffin detected **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** at Stinchcomb WR west. On the 11th Nancy Reed noticed Red Crossbills, Lazuli, Painted and Indigo Buntings in her yard in Norman; and Patricia Velte found **Tricolored Heron** at Arcadia Lake. On the 12th Emily Hjalmarsen viewed Yellow-breasted Chat at the Cherry Creek Park—River Trail in Norman. On the 13th Caleb McKinney viewed Common Nighthawk and Pine Siskin in Ninnekah in Grady County; and Laura Madden recorded Painted Bunting in Blanchard. On the 14th Ben Sandstrom documented Neotropic Cormorant and Summer Tanager at Lake Louis Burtzchi in Grady County.



On the 15th Caleb Frome—CC came across **Willow Flycatcher** along South Jenkins and Rachel Wrenn had Ovenbird at Riley Park. On the 16th Andrea Johnson photographed a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at Sportsman's Lake in Seminole County; Zach Poland

verified **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** at Mineral Wells Park in Guthrie; John Tharp identified **Least Tern**, Black Tern and **Scarlet Tanager** at Lake Thunderbird – Alameda Dr. Bridges; Zach Poland heard **Alder Flycatcher** at Lake Hefner – Prairie Dog Point; and Larry Mays recognized **Mourning Warbler** at Joe B. Barnes Park. On the



17th Roy McGraw reported Red-headed Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Painted Bunting and Orchard Oriole at Bell Cow Lake in Lincoln County; and Chad Ellis watched **Whimbrel** at Lake Hefner – Prairie Dog Point. On the 18th Lee Hoy got Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Noble.

On the 19th Elizabeth and Tim Pratt counted Brown Thrasher in Paul's Valley in Garvin County; and Austin Jones discovered Least Tern at John Marshall School Pond. On the 20th Scott Loss added Least Tern along the Cimarron River and Alder Flycatcher at Boomer Lake Park; and Brian Marra had Yellow-breasted Chat at Arcadia Lake. On the 22nd Zach Poland encountered **Mag-nolia Warbler** at Myriad Botanical Garden. On the 23rd Deb Hirt located Willow Flycatcher at Boomer Lake Park. On the 24th Larry Mays tallied Yellow-billed Cuckoo in Newcastle. On the 27th Sam S had Common Nighthawk and Lark Sparrow in Garvin County. On the 28th Emil y Hjalmarson birded an area in Pottawattamie County near OK-102 and Coon/Sand Creek northwest of Macomb and observed Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Bell's Vireo and Black-and-white Warbler. On the 29th Bill Diffin determined **Dunlin** at Stinchcomb WR west. On the 30th Calvin Rees detected Willow Flycatcher at Rose Lake. As the list of new species for the year fades, welcoming and watching the nesting and newly fledged birds of the next generation begins.

During May of 2018 in the Central Oklahoma area **216** species were reported with **28** new species bringing the total for the year to **268**. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds by making reports at <http://ebird.org>. I can also be contacted by e-mail at emkok@earthlink.net. Esther M. Key, Editor.

2018 Picnic Pics

Photos courtesy Ginny Green



Oklahoma City Audubon Society
c/o Patricia Velte
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Field Trip Recaps

5/11 Myriad Botanic Gardens with Zach Poland. Wow...who knew there were so many birds in the center of downtown OKC! Thanks Zach.

5/12 Norman and beyond. Nathan Kuhnert lead a field trip on Jenkins Road and along HWY 9 to some very interesting locations. Due to all the foliage, it was an opportunity to bird by ear. Still, we did see many interesting birds including a white breasted nuthatch, a summer tanager, great crested flycatcher, indigo bunting, eastern kingbird, dickcissel, and a few more. Thanks Nathan.

5/22 Will Rogers Park. I lead a group of birders who walked the garden/arboretum (north-side) of the park. We logged 28 species and while many were common, there were a few surprises including a yellow-crowned night heron, a yellow-billed cuckoo, nesting flickers, nest building Mississippi kites, and many eastern phoebes.
