



Oklahoma City Audubon Society

MAY 2019

Birding the Pan-American Highway

Speaking at the May 20 OKC Audubon Society meeting will be Dr. Jeff Cox of Tulsa on his birding trip to the southern end of the northern section of the Pan-American Highway in southeastern Panama.

Canopy Tower and Canopy Camp are famous birding areas with uniquely designed ecolodges located in some of Panama's most biodiverse areas. Canopy Tower is a former radar installation near the Panama Canal; Canopy Camp is a deluxe camp, located in the Darien region of far eastern Panama. This tropical forest which extends into neighboring Colombia holds, indeed, one of the



greatest ornithological diversities in the world. Jeff visited both lodges in 2017 for birding and general nature study. Come learn about the fascinating birds and other wildlife of Panama.



Jeff has been watching birds since he was 11 years old. He earned a PhD in Zoology from the University of Florida in 1984, but spent the next 30+ years working as a software analyst. After retiring 2 years ago, he has been travelling and spending more time with the birds.

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

The Birds are Back!

For the past few weeks, I've seen numerous reports and photos of migrating birds. Nancy Vicars led bird walks in Norman and at Joe B. Barnes Park resulting in lists with more than 60 bird species.

Marion Homier and John Cleal hosted a Little Sit and listed 35 birds. Grace Huffman organized a Big Morning on the east side of the Stinchcomb Preserve to coincide with Cornell Lab's Big Day resulting in a list of 58 birds. I'm looking forward to seeing the lists from both OOS and the Red Slough Festival.

Scientists have long wondered why birds go through the hardship of annual migration. It is estimated that worldwide every year, billions of migrating birds die from hunger, thirst, and sheer exhaustion. Today they face additional challenges due to habitat loss, climate change, pesticides, wind turbines, power lines, illegal hunting, and roaming domestic and feral cats. Their determination to survive is truly remarkable. Birders who submit their lists to ebird are participating in Cornell's study of birds, and these lists contribute to their research. Together we can make a difference.

Annual OCAS Picnic

Every year OCAS hosts a summer picnic. This year, the Underhills are hosting the picnic and your president will cook a picnic ham, provide a few delicious vegetarian options, buns, and condiments. Members are invited to bring salads, sides and deserts. There is always plenty of fabulous food and it's guaranteed to be fun because you will all be there to greet the special avian guests Terri will have invited to join us.

Date: June 15
Time: 2:00 to 6:00 PM
Place: Terri and Keith Underhill, 4401 Rock Canyon Rd, Edmond, 73125.

Project Bluebird

Will Rogers Park:
Neil Garrison has reported a family of bluebirds in box 3 at Will Rogers Park.

Garden Fest, May 18

Volunteer hour at this event contribute to our meeting room rental.

OCAS will have a tent and tables available at this year's Garden Festival. It is an opportunity to interact with the community, let them know about OCAS, and talk about birds.

The Booth set up is at 8am and taken down at 4pm. OCAS will need volunteers throughout the day to manage the booth space. Because we were the first to sign up, the garden club is providing us with a tent. Yay, shade!

Bird Walks The Park has asked OCAS to lead a bird walk. Volunteers are needed!

Respectfully, Betz Hacker



Oklahoma City Audubon Society

Officers 2019

President	Elizabeth Hacker	638-6210
Vice President	Grace Huffman	388-7369
Secretary	Sharon Henthorn	521-9958
Treasurer	Nancy Vicars	831-1945
Parliament	Valerie Bradshaw	664-6956
Programs	Warren Harden	596-2759
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Conservation	Dave Woodson	601-622-3467
Field Trips	Nancy Vicars	831-1945
	Jimmy Woodard	365-5685
	Hal Yokum	819-4852
	Bob Holbrook	496-1731
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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



Chirpings

April and early May
2019

By Patti Muzny

Spring migration is just too much fun! I've always enjoyed spring migration, but spring migration 2019 has been even more fun because I've been able to *soak* it up much more thoroughly since my retirement in March. And this year,

I didn't use this verb randomly. Our migrants surely must have a much more difficult journey to their nesting grounds. So. Much. Rain!! But on the other hand, the frequent rain seems to have initiated some interesting "fallouts."

As of May 7th, the White-crowned Sparrows in our OKC backyard were still feeding at our feeder and on the dandelion seeds in the yard. Their white crowns couldn't be any whiter. It's as if they have all just had an appointment with a crown-bleach touchup artist! I will miss them when they move on.

Moving on to our White-winged Doves. For most of the winter, the most numerous dove was the Eurasian Collared Dove. Now we have more White-winged Doves. One day while I was curled up on the back patio watching the feeder, a pair of White-winged Doves landed on top of the privacy fence. The female faced south and the obviously enamored male turned toward her and began a series of moves that should have charmed her and anything else nearby. He bowed and he cooed and he danced and he flared his tail, then rewound and repeated the entire process several times. She continued to gaze into space and ignore his advances. I thought sure he was going to hyperventilate and fall from his perch! All of a sudden she simply flew off. He was apparently so surprised by her rejection; he just perched there as if he was trying to figure out what the heck had just happened!

Another bizarre (for my neighborhood) sighting in the front yard and in several neighbors' yards has been two hen turkeys! For many of you and for our Byars property, this would be no big deal, but we live near SW 85th and Western in OKC!!! I-240 is less than a mile north of our home. So where did these audacious gals come from? We do have a few undisturbed parcels of

land around, but a turkey would be one of the last species I would have expected. And then one evening the sound of heavy wing beats got my attention in the back yard and when I looked out toward the large pecan tree at the back of our yard, I saw a turkey fly up to roost there. None of us in the neighborhood has seen a Tom Turkey, so we have no idea if these are two liberated ladies found a fella and might raise a family.

Raising a family of ground nesters would be tricky here because we do have predators, such as the neighborhood fox that I happened to see streaking down the middle of South Olie one afternoon, before ducking into another neighbors' back yard. I seem to have missed a lot of activity before my retirement. I'm certainly not bored!

This has also been a great spring for Baltimore Orioles. I was walking past the east windows and looked out at the feeder to see one male Baltimore Oriole at the feeder. I was so excited, because I had not seen any here in quite some time. Then...I kept watching and saw not one, but two males and a female! What a treat! We also have a pair of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds coming to the feeder.

We really enjoyed Marion's and John's recent "little sit." I was only able to participate in part of the day's birding, but while I was there we got to see and hear a Northern Parula and their highlight may have been a Lazuli Bunting, which visited their feeder just before I arrived. Their yard is awesome and it was such a treat to bird there on a beautiful Saturday! Thank you, John and Marion!

Our Byars property was attracting migrants everywhere on May 4th and 5th. It had been much too long since we've been able to spend more than just a Sunday afternoon there. My preferred sleeping spot has always been the screen porch so I can hear things. Yep...I heard things... all night! It was an incredibly still night – no wind. Sound carries quite far in the country. Traffic has increased on Highway 59, and didn't let up much until after the wee hours of the morning.

And the neighbors behind our property have cattle that were obviously not sleeping through the night! Somewhere in the distance there was a quite vocal donkey. Add the Chuck-will's Widows, dueling Barred Owls and a bullfrog down at the pond, and moisture dripping from the roof down onto the deck, because it was very humid, the yipping foxes and howling coyotes and a barking dog about ¼ mile east of us. Yes, I did sleep – some.

Late on Saturday evening, we saw something swimming across the pond and at first thought the otters had found our pond again. *(continued on page 8)*

"Big Morning" at Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge 05-04-2019

By Grace Huffman

Despite the mud because of all the rain, we had a nice turn out. The morning got off to a great start with Common Yellowthroat, Barn Swallow, and Northern Cardinal. but the morning really got started when Nathan Kuhnert released an Indigo Bunting back into the wild. Nathan had rescued it downtown where it had been stunned by colliding into a window, and he wanted to release it in a much safer area.

Right as we started on the trail we saw Swainson's Thrushes, and it wasn't often that we couldn't hear their drip calls. Great Crested Flycatchers were calling every where, and it didn't take us long to hear our first Painted Bunting. In total we walked through at least 4 different



Painted Bunting territories. The White-eyed Vireos were also very vocal, and one gave us the opportunity for some great photos. Thanks to Nathan's knowledge of bird calls we added birds like Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warblers, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Blue Grosbeak.

Sharon Henthorn had great eyes and spotted almost every Ruby-throated Hummingbird we saw.

Because of the mud we didn't make it all the way to the end of the trail, but we still had quite a few birds on the way back to the parking lot, including Green Heron, Baltimore Oriole, and House Wren. We also saw one of the hummingbirds doing his courtship display flight. Back in the parking lot, we added a few more species such as Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Osprey, and Marsh Wren. All together we had 58 species.

Thanks to everyone who came out!

Field Trip Updates

Thursday, April 25th we visited Joe B. Barnes Park in Midwest City, OK. Jimmy Woodard had reported finding a Hood Warbler there on Wednesday so we wanted to see it for ourselves!



Alas, no Hooded Warbler sighting for us but we did find a BLACKPOLL Warbler and Steve Davis captured a great photo of it!!

Nashville, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warblers, White-eyed, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Swainson's Thrush, Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers, Western, Eastern and Scissortail Flycatchers were soon added to our growing list.

Black-crowned Night-Heron, Green Heron, Fish and American Crows, Red-shouldered Hawk, Harris and Clay-colored Sparrows, Baltimore Orioles and American Goldfinch plus the usual resident species concluded a very nice outing indeed..

Friday, April 26th was a beautiful morning for birding on S. Jenkins in Norman, OK.

We found numerous "First of the Season" birds including Yellow-throated Warblers, singing almost constantly, plus Bell's Vireo, Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak and Northern Rough-winged Swallows.

Pileated and Hairy Woodpeckers, Great and Snowy Egrets, Green Heron, Common Yellow-throated Warbler, Chipping, Grasshopper and Lincoln's Sparrows, Swainson's Thrush

Why Do Shovelers Spin?

By Ted Floyd, on April 9, 2019, blog.aba.org

[excerpt] Birds do things. Northern cardinals embellish their songs with squirrel-like chatter; American crows patrol parking lots in their quest for whiskey; sagebrush sparrows flip their long tails expressively, as if they were tiny roadrunners; and American dippers do it all.

Ducks, being birds, do things too. They sit pretty on duck ponds, the drakes sporting their nuptial finery, their hens dutifully in tow.

I'm joking. That's a caricature. Spend just five minutes at the proverbial duck pond, and you'll be amazed at the diversity of behaviors exhibited by the different species of waterfowl. Take the northern shoveler, for example, known to science as *Spatula clypeata*. It's a curious name. Have you ever tried to shovel water? *Spatula*, the Latin word for spoon, works a bit better, and *clypeata*, deriving from the word for shield, well describes the shape of the bird's ginormous beak. Okay, the shoveler doesn't really shovel or spoon water, but the basic idea is solidly in place: It does something with that oversized schnoz.

A superior name for this duck might have been snarfer or scarfer. The bird feeds voraciously, constantly scooping up food just under the water's surface. Something you'll surely notice is that the bird is spinning as it snarfs and scarfs. Phalaropes famously do the same thing. And there's something else about phalaropes: According to the literature, phalaropes in the wild almost always spin counterclockwise.

Phalaropes get all the attention, and it is indeed mesmerizing to watch an entire pond practically percolating with frenetic phalaropes. But I'm not aware that pairs of phalaropes synchronize their spinning in the manner of shovelers.

A shoveler is 10–20 times more massive than a phalarope, and you can of course double that figure for a couplet of spinning shovelers. Which has gotten me to thinking about something: Do shovelers and phalaropes spin according to different physical processes?

Bryan S. Obst and colleagues, in a fascinating 1996 paper on phalaropes (*Nature* 384: 121), believed that “[t]hese very small birds are the only vertebrates that spin” and that “[l]arger birds probably could not spin fast enough to upwell prey.” Obst et al. found that phalaropes do not create a bounded vortex with

central upwelling, contrary to expectation, but I wonder if maybe that's what the larger shovelers are doing. In my experience, spinning shovelers are restricted to shallow water, unlike the deepwater phalaropes; so maybe shovelers actually are capable of pulling up prey in a bounded vortex. Presumably, the ingenious methods of the Obst team could be applied to a study of spinning shovelers?

Meanwhile, what about the direction of spin? Do shovelers exhibit handedness, or, I suppose, footedness? If so, are social interactions mediated by footedness? Is the coupling cooperative, as I've been assuming, or could it be parasitic? And, in any event, is there some role for the Coriolis Effect, a.k.a., the Toilet Bowl Effect, whereby toilets flush counterclockwise in the northern hemisphere, in all of this?

Acknowledgments: I thank ur-naturalist Steve Jones for putting me onto whole phenomenon of shoveler kinematics. Steve framed the question a bit differently from how I have, but the basic idea arose from a fascinating email he sent me awhile back. I am also grateful to ornithologists Margaret Rubega and Chris Elphick for patiently explaining bird-generated upwelling to me. I probably still got some of it wrong, but that's not their fault!



Refreshments

Refreshments for the May 20 meeting will be provided by

Snacks: Patti High and Betz Hacker

Ice and Drinks: Nancy Vicars

Recorders Report

April 2019

A Major Migration Month

On March 10th Caitlin Rottler came across **Burrowing Owl** in Canadian County. On March 28th Rachel Wrenn detected **Louisiana Waterthrush** in Cleveland County and Steve Davis tallied **Osprey** in Oklahoma County. On March 29th Larry Mays spotted **American Golden-Plover** in Cleveland County and Rachel Wrenn located **White-eyed Vireo** in Cleveland County. On March 30th Chase Moxley recognized **Swainson's Hawk** in Canadian County; and **Baird's Sandpiper** were found by Scott Loss in Payne County and Bill Diffin in Oklahoma County. On March 31st Joe Grzybowski documented **Yellow-throated Warbler** and **Sprague's Pipit** in Cleveland County.

On the 1st Jack Olson confirmed **Snowy Egret** in Oklahoma County. On the 2nd Laura Stanfill got **Yellow-headed Blackbird** in Oklahoma County. On the 4th John Tharp had **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** in Cleveland County; and **Broad-winged Hawks** were seen by Steve Davis in Cleveland County; Corey Riding in Payne County; and Brian Marra in Oklahoma County. On the 5th Larry Mays reported White-eyed Vireo in McClain County; and Tim O'Connell noticed Louisiana Waterthrush in Payne County.

On the 6th Samuel Petrie encountered **Green Heron** in Cleveland County; and Yellow-throated Warbler were seen by Scott Loss in Payne County and Larry Mays in Oklahoma County. On the 7th Zach Poland discovered **Upland Sandpiper** in Logan County; Joe Grzybowski added Baird's Sandpiper in McClain County; Jimmy Woodward observed **Little Blue Heron** in Canadian County; Mike Yough identified **Prothonotary Warbler** in Payne County and in Cleveland County Rachel Wrenn recorded **Black-chinned Hummingbird**; and Zach DuFran counted **Northern Parula**.

On the 8th Austin Jones saw **Chimney Swift** in Oklahoma County. On the 9th Scott Loss viewed Chimney Swift and **Nashville Warbler** in Payne County. On the 10th Michelle Townsley came across Osprey in Lincoln County and Deb Hirt detected **Warbling Vireo** in Payne County. On the 11th Calvin Rees spotted **Semipalmated Sandpiper** in Cleveland County; and Scott Loss documented **Bank Swallow** in Payne

County. On the 12th John P. Hogan located Tree Swallow and Lark Sparrow in Seminole; Deanne McKinney recognized **Cattle Egret** and **White-faced Ibis** in Canadian County; Zach Poland had Broad-winged Hawk in Lincoln County and Black-chinned Hummingbird in Logan County; while **Eastern Kingbird** were found by Deb Hirt in Payne County and Jimmy Woodard in Oklahoma County.

On the 13th Corey Riding confirmed **Willet** in Payne County; Dick Gunn got **Yellow-throated Vireo** in Cleveland County; and Brian Marra notice **Clay-colored Sparrow** in Oklahoma County. On the 14th Chris Butler had White-eyed Vireo in Pottawatomie County; Joe Grzybowski reported **Solitary Sandpiper** in Cleveland County; and William Radke encountered **Swainson's Thrush** in Oklahoma County. On the 15th Todd Katz added Swainson's Hawk in Garvin County; Deb Hirt recorded Green Heron in Payne County; in Canadian County Steve Davis counted Eastern Kingbird and Joe Grzybowski identified Bank Swallow. On the 16th Zach DuFran observed **Chuck-will's-widow** in Cleveland County; and in Logan



County Zachary Hemans saw Swainson's Hawk; and Lindi Lagman viewed Cattle Egret.

On the 18th Bridger Arrington came across Yellow-headed Blackbird in Logan County; in Canadian County Roy McGraw detected **Black-necked Stilt**; Steve Davis spotted **Marbled Godwit**, and in Payne County Scott Loss recognized **Baltimore Oriole** and **Grasshopper Sparrow** while Corey Riding confirmed **Western Kingbird**. On the 19th Chris Butler tallied Northern Parula and **Indigo Bunting** in Pottawatomie County; Logan Dickinson discovered **Great Crested Flycatcher** in Grady County; Brian Marra added Marbled Godwit and **Stilt Sandpiper** in Canadian County; **Red-eyed Vireo** was seen by John Tharp in Cleveland County and Scott Loss in Payne County plus Scott had **Summer Tanager**. On the 20th Van Cordray observed Chimney Swift in Logan County; Scott Loss documented **American Bittern**, **Sedge Wren**, and Sprague's Pipit in Payne

County; and Prothonotary Warbler were seen by Caleb Frome in Cleveland County and Brian Marra in Oklahoma County.

On the 21st Roy McGraw counted **Wilson's Phalarope** in Canadian County; Tricia Brown got Summer Tanager in Cleveland County; and Steve Davis noticed **Gray Catbird** in Oklahoma County. On the 22nd Caleb McKinney located Grasshopper Sparrow and Nashville Warbler in Grady County; Jack Olson encounter **Western Sandpiper** in Canadian County; and Scott Loss recorded California Gull, **Kentucky Warbler**, **Yellow-breasted Chat**, and **Orchard Oriole** in Payne County. On the 23rd Lee Western saw American Avocet and Willet in Grady County; and Scott Loss identified **Yellow Warbler** and **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** in Payne County.

On the 24th Bill Diffin reported **Peregrine Falcon** and **Dickcissel** in Canadian County; Rachel Wrenn spotted **Blue Grosbeak** in Cleveland County; in Payne County Zach Roy added Chuck-will's-widow; Corey Riding discovered Long-billed Dowitcher and Jimmy Lovett observed **Bell's Vireo**; in Oklahoma County Bill Diffin found **Tennessee Warbler**; and Sharon Henthorn came across Summer Tanager. On the 25th Linda Zempel recognized Snowy Egret, Cattle Egret, and Eastern Kingbird in Lincoln County; Rachel Wrenn tallied Yellow Warbler in Cleveland County; in Payne County Jimmy Lovett detected Swainson's Thrush and Scott Loss confirmed **Painted Bunting**; in Oklahoma County Clarissa Sharp counted Peregrine Falcon; and Nancy Vicars documented **Blackpoll Warbler**.

On the 26th Deanne McKinney encountered Common Loon and Indigo Bunting at Lake Konawa in Seminole County; Austin Jones got Swainson's Hawk in Kingfisher County; in Cleveland County Ben Baranowski noticed **Mississippi Kite**, Anais Starr recorded Gray Catbird, Baltimore Oriole, and Tricia Brown identified Painting Bunting. On the 27th Zach Poland located Warbling Vireo and Dickcissel in Kingfisher County; and Justin Agan found American Golden-Plover and Gray Catbird in Payne County. On the 28th Zach Poland discovered Western Kingbird in Kingfisher County and Yellow Warbler and **Common Yellowthroat** in Lincoln County; Peter Osenton reported Stilt Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, and Long-billed Dowitcher in McClain County; Caleb McKinney tallied Kentucky Warbler in Payne County; and **Least Flycatcher** were seen by Brian Marra in Canadian County, and John Hurd in Oklahoma County.

On the 29th Zach Poland spotted Swainson's Thrush, Louisiana Waterthrush in Logan County; Ben Sandstrom added Swainson's Hawk in McClain County; Joe Grzybowski detected Buff-breasted Sandpiper and Dickcissel in Cleveland County; Caleb McKinney counted **Eastern Wood-Pewee** in Payne County; and Michael Kane documented **American Redstart** in Oklahoma County. On the 30th Brent Barnes confirmed **Common Nighthawk** in Oklahoma County; White-faced Ibis were observed by Zach DuFran in Cleveland County; and Corey Riding in Payne County; while also in Payne County Nic McMillan came across **Caspian Tern**; and Jared Elmore recognized Blackpoll Warbler.



During April of 2019 in the Central Oklahoma area **207** species were reported with 66 new species bringing the total for the year to **233**. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds. Information is accessed at: [ebird](http://www.ebird.org). 2019 eBird: An online database of bird distribution and abundance [web application]. eBird Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York. Available: <http://www.ebird.org/subnational1/US-OK/region>. (Accessed: May 1, 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

Pamela Rains, Lexington, OK

Rebecca Bond, OKC

Will Daugherty, OKC

Jill Dewbre, Nichols Hills, OK

Christopher Eckart, Midwest City, OK

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

Chirpings (cont.)

If the dark mammal was an otter, it was a very lethargic otter! The dawdling swimmer turned out to be a beaver, much to our chagrin! We like our large trees a lot! It was bittersweet – interesting to watch it, but we really don't want them there!

We tallied 56 species from Saturday afternoon to Sunday evening. Parulas were singing most of the time on Sunday. The Roadrunner, Scissortails, Cuckoos, Summer Tanagers, Painted and Indigo Buntings, Hummingbirds, Black and White and Yellow Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrush, Blue Grosbeaks, Bell's, Yellow-throated, Red-eyed and White-eyed Vireos were back as well.

One more fun birding day was enjoyed by six retired birding friends at Joe B. Barnes Park in Midwest City on Friday, May 3rd. Nancy Vicars, Nancy Reed, Jane Boren and three of her birding friends and I met at the park around 9:00 AM. Rain was once again threatened for the day, but the morning was only cloudy, so we decided to see how much spring migration we could absorb. We leisurely hiked and birded along the hiking/biking trail and back. Some of our favorite sightings: a male Redstart, Eastern Kingbirds, Eastern Bluebirds, Red-Headed Woodpecker, bathing Yellow Warblers, American Goldfinches and Lincoln's Sparrows, A Yellow-crowned Night Heron perched above its nest above the trail, and a pair of Baltimore Orioles ingeniously building their nest directly above the same trail at only about 7-8 feet from the ground! Had Ma Nature not decided about then to see how fast we could put on our rain gear and/or run (Yeah, right!) for our vehicles, it would have been fun to stand back and watch them construct their work of art. Total species was 50 for three hours of birding.

Our wonderful three hours of birding ended on a damp note, but as all birders can attest, growling stomachs can entice us to take a break, and we all headed for Cheddar's for lunch. By the time we were ready to leave, the streets were running curb deep and liquid sunshine was coming down in sheets. No worries – I went home and took a richly deserved nap! Happy Spring, birding friends!
