



Oklahoma City Audubon Society

OKC-AUDUBON.ORG

MARCH 2018

March: Costa Rica – In Search of Quetzal

Mike Mather will be the guest speaker at the March 19 meeting of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society.

Costa Rica is a Central American country where volcanos and earthquakes are common and is well-known for its diverse bird fauna (over 900 species). Its varied topography of Pacific and Caribbean lowlands, dry and wet forests, a mountainous backbone separating Pacific and Caribbean flora and fauna make it a hot-spot for birders. The people are outgoing and friendly, and in most places, know enough English to make communication possible. The guides go through state sponsored training in history, natural history and English and are licensed by the state in their profession. The country's "Pura Vida" attitude is infectious.



Mike Mather with a species that doesn't look avian

Mike Mather is Professor Emeritus from the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma in Chickasha. He has a Ph.D. in herpetology from Texas A & M University. His research has included studies of lizards in South Texas and Mexico and freshwater mussels and terrestrial snails in Oklahoma along with a passion for insects and fishing. He has been a birder, off and on since pre-school. Retirement has allowed further pursuit of birding and photography. Getting a good photo is a goal but not at the expense of disturbance of the bird or birders. If obtaining an image isn't convenient, the mental image suffices.

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 FINAL NOTICE

Don't let your membership lapse? Pay today!!
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

One of the reasons I am drawn to birding is to meet with other like-minded people who enjoy talking birds and getting out to see them. One such example was Tuesday, March 13. It was a sunny but windy day and if truth be told, I didn't really want to be outside. I'd scheduled a morning meeting for the Will Rogers subcommittee and an afternoon field trip to Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge. I was questioning my sanity but as it turned out, it was a remarkable day.



In the morning, the Will Rogers subcommittee met with City Parkmanager Scott Copelin and local park managers Jim Woolly and Kenton Peters. I think we were all surprised to see how excited the parks department was to our ideas. While we are still in the early stages of putting together a long range plan to attract more birds into the garden areas, the management is anxious to get things rolling and we have been given the go-ahead to put up **6 bluebird houses** on Saturday, March 24. Details will be discussed at the March meeting.

After an exciting but wind whipped morning, I really wasn't looking forward to an afternoon field trip with predicted 40+ MPH winds. I convinced myself that once we got to Stinchcomb and didn't see any birds, everyone would give up and go home. My first surprise was to see 12 eager birders waiting for me at Route 66 Donuts. My second surprise was the number of birds!

Top on the list for the day were the Sandhill Cranes that we observed flying in a tight V-shaped formation as they descended in the direction of Rose Lake. According to the National Park Service, V-shaped formations help birds conserve energy, since each bird flies slightly ahead of the other, there is less wind resistance. To keep things fair and maintain a high level of speed, birds take turns being in the front with each bird moving to the back when they get tired.

I find that being president of OKC Audubon is a little like flying in a v-shaped flock. Although the president may get the credit for leading the club, it's actually the members who maintain its high standards. I get tremendous energy from those who step up to volunteer to lead field trips, provide educational programs, keep records, put out the

newsletter, update the website, bring refreshments, attend meetings, and stay involved in the many aspects of our organization. An organization is only vibrant when it's members are engaged. The following are a few opportunities for members who would like to be more involved.

2018 Earth Fest, Martin Nature Park: Volunteers will set up a booth, hand out information and puzzles to children, talk about birds, and interact with the public. It's great fun.

2018 Garden Festival in the Park, Will Rogers Gardens. May 19.

Set up a booth and interact with the public. This could be an opportunity to sell things to raise money for the club.

Field Trip Chair: This position is an opportunity to plan trips in the spring and fall to both local and out-of-town locations. Chair doesn't have to lead all the trips.

Bluebird Houses in Will Rogers Park: Join the park staff on Saturday, March 24 to put up 6 bluebird houses. Someone needs to monitor the houses and clean them out in the fall.

Will Rogers Garden Center Display Case: OKC Audubon has been given the opportunity to occupy the large display in the lobby of the Garden Center. It will need to be changed every 3 months.

Historian: This position has been vacant for sometime and maybe it's time to revive it.

Looking at Longevity

The US Geological Survey keeps track of longevity records for banded birds that are reported after recapture, sightings or found deceased. Take a look at the **Piping Plover**, a small bird that logs a lot of miles. The highest longevity record of 17 years 4 months belongs to a bird banded and later sighted in Cuba. The highest record for Canada is 16 years 0 months. And for the US, a Piping Plover was banded in NY in 1957 and was later trapped in a banding operation in NY in 1968 (11 years 11 months). All of these plovers were released to possibly live even longer lives!



Bird of the Month



By John Shackford

The Barred Owl (*Strix varia*) starts its own conversation: “Who cooks for you, who cooks for you ALL?” which is perhaps the best rendering of a bird call in the English language (maybe it does not beat out “Chick-a-dee-dee” or “Kill-deer”?). The owl’s call is fairly easy to imitate. Once,

when there was a bird meeting—probably a spring OOS meeting—at Methodist Canyon in Caddo County there were birders on the top of the canyon and several of us walking the floor of the canyon. We heard “Who cooks for you, who cooks for you All?” coming from the rim of the canyon. Several of us said “Barred Owl,” after which we heard some snickers from people on the rim of the canyon. I am not sure if this particular “Barred Owl” was reported for the meeting!

Once, on an Oklahoma City Christmas Bird Count I was trying for Barred Owl as the first bird of the day—this was before the species became more or less regular on our count. I was sitting under a bridge in northeastern Oklahoma City. It was very early in the morning and I was cold and drowsy—half asleep really. It was just getting a little light and I had squeaked several times to no apparent effect and had surrendered much hope of seeing or hearing a Barred Owl that day. Suddenly I was startled by one loud “ALLLLLLLLLL” almost directly over my head and very nearby. It was the last note of the Barred Owl’s call, something I have never heard given as a solo part before or since. By the time I peeked out from under the bridge the owl had already flown away. In thinking things through as I sat there, the only thing I could figure was that my squeaking had brought the owl in to perch on a telephone pole that was just out of my line of vision and only about 20 feet from my ears! Count day was off to a good—If startling—start! I was now awake!

The history of the Barred Owl in the Oklahoma City area is

interesting. I tried to search records on our Christmas Bird Count (CBC), but was not totally successful. I did find one early record, about 1955, on our count, but difficult computereeze (for me) beat me out of the records for all our CBCs. From recollection, I remember that we have been reporting the species with increasing regularity for maybe 12-15 years. With a nasty weather CBC day we still can get skunked on this species once in a while.

About the late 1970s we had a member named Georgie Edwards; he was about 12 years old and told us that he had seen Barred Owls in his family’s woodlands along Deep Fork Creek in northeastern Oklahoma City. We in the club received his report with perhaps more skepticism than deserved, because WE could never find the owls there.

Georgie is now George Edwards, full grown and running his own environmental company. He invited us to survey his family property on the last two CBCs: Betz Hacker and Bob Holbrook birded with George two CBCs ago; it was good to reconnect with him after so many years! And we no doubt owe him an apology for not being more trusting in his Barred Owl sightings of long ago! So here’s to you George!



Behind our house is a wooded ravine. When we first bought the property, I figured I would be doing considerable birding along the ravine, but I evolved into allowing birds there to do whatever they wish, generally away from my prying eyes. We have heard Barred Owls call from the ravine—and around our home—for several years. Last year the owls almost surely nested either on our property or very nearby; we heard at least

three owls calling for much of the spring/summer, sometimes apparently from our deck and roof. We had been having a few mice that had made their way into the house and we were having trouble catching them. It may have been mere coincidence, but one day our mouse problem was solved. We had no more mice and it was not we who had caught them! Another good possibility was the Barred Owls. We just heard one of the owls nearby the other day—early March. We welcome them again for a number of reasons, including mouse control.

Birds Like Fresh and Healthy Food Too

By Susan Schmidt

Last winter we put out lots of sunflower seeds in the feeder. This spring we suspected the volunteer plants springing up near the feeder must be sunflowers. That wasn't an attractive location for an eventual forest of 5 foot tall sunflowers but we left them anyway to see what would happen. Rather than thin the seedlings, we allowed the plants to grow close together. Boy, are we glad we did. It has been a real treat to watch the birds, especially the House Finches, hang upside down and every which way to pluck freshly dried sunflower seeds right off the down-turned heads. A thick stand of sunflowers allowed birds to perch on one plant to more easily eat off another.

We learned Mother Nature is pretty smart. When a sunflower starts drying, the heads hang down with the seeds pointing toward the ground. I wondered about that until I looked at the sunflowers during one of our heavy summer rainstorms. The rain hit the back of the head and just poured off the edges while the seeds stayed relatively dry under nature's umbrella.

To grace us with their presence, birds need food, shelter, nesting materials, and water. Bird food is healthier, more nutritious, and cheaper when you grow your own. Be it flowers for the Humming Birds, holly berries for the Blue Jays and Cedar Waxwings, grapes for the Mockingbirds, and sunflower seeds for the House Finches, FRESH is BEST. When you grow the food your birds need, the plants provides shelter, nesting materials, sap, and flowers which attracts insects and spiders to feed the baby birds.

Our ponds already provide birds water for bathing and drinking. This fall might be a good time to plant some trees, shrubs, and vines that will provide years of nourishment and shelter for our feathered friends. Then you will be providing birds with truly five star luxury accommodations.

Oh, baby! At 67, Wisdom the albatross is a mom again

Most people retire at 67.

Good thing Wisdom is no mere human. The albatross is the world's oldest known breeding bird in the wild.

And on Feb. 6, at 67 years young, she became a mother again.

Papahānaumokuākea officials announced the news, and said Wisdom and mate Akeakami welcomed their new chick on Midway Atoll.



(Image: NOAA)

Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge and Battle of Midway National Memorial in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument are home to over three million seabirds. They return to Midway Atoll each year to rest, lay eggs, and raise their chicks.

A single egg is laid and incubated for a little over two months. And after the chick hatches, it will still be another five months before it will leave the nest.

And over the course of her lifetime, scientists believe Wisdom has successfully raised more than 30 albatross chicks. Wisdom and her mate [welcomed their last chick into the world in 2017](#).

The Midway Atoll refuge is home to the largest albatross colony in the world.

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Oklahoma City Audubon Society Welcomes New Members

SueAnn Nicely, OKC
Diane Pedicord, OKC
Abbas Seyedolali, OKC
Chase Moxley, OKC
Angie Precure, Meridian

REFRESHMENTS

Refreshments for the March 19 meeting will be provided by:

Snacks: Terri Underhill and Amy Atkinson

Ice & Drinks: Nancy Vicars

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	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

Minutes February 19, 2018

Meeting was called to order by President Betz Hacker. Guests were introduced: Denise Caudill of OKC, Kate Burger of Moore, Holly and Kevin Byorkstrom of Edmond, and Becca Bornstein of OKC.

Treasurer's report: Nancy Vicars reports cash on hand of \$5,773.09 after expenses.

Meeting minutes of January were clarified, naming nine members of the volunteer task force regarding Will Rogers Park, meeting with park officials to assess and assist in making the park more bird-friendly. These are Diane Newell, Nancy Reed, Terri Underhill, Janice Gratch, Cheryl Allen, Hal Yocum, Marion Homier, Nadine Varner, and Betz Hacker.

New business and upcoming events: A birding expedition of the Wichita Mountains will be led by Kurt Meisenthal on March 3rd.

Earthfest will be April 7th at the Martin Park Nature Center and volunteers are needed to welcome prospective birders.

There will be an unofficial "Big Sit" at the home of John Cleal and Marion Homier near Choctaw on April 21st. Birds will be observed and counted from their yard throughout the day.

Spring Oklahoma Ornithological Society (OOS) meeting will be April 27th-29th near Sallisaw, OK. Included field trips will be Lake Tenkiller and the Sequoyah Wildlife Management Area.

The annual Red Slough birding convention will be May 4th-8th in Idabel, OK. This southeast Oklahoma wetland is home to large numbers of regional and migrating birds.

Terri Underhill has volunteered again to host this year's June club picnic.

The meeting was adjourned and after a short snack break, the night's presentation followed.

Professor Doug Wood entertained us with stories and photos of his birding travels in Papua New Guinea. As usual, Doug provided a lively presentation, much-enjoyed by the attendees.

Submitted by club secretary Sharon Henthorn
Next meeting will be Monday, March 19th at 7pm at the Will Rogers Park Garden Exposition Building.

This report was completed by the club secretary Sharon Henthorn

Recorders Report February 2018

Backyards and playgrounds

While February is a quiet month with a continuation of winter birds, an exciting late winter species appeared in several places. And one never knows what special bird will show up at the neighborhood playground. With the Great Back-yard Bird Count, reports were received from all counties this month including three counties with over 100 species and two other counties close behind. Can all 12 counties pass the 100 species mark?

On the 1st Christie Stoops found Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Cottonwood Creek in Logan County; Bill Diffin had Ruddy Duck and Horned Grebe at Lake Overholser in Canadian County; and Austin Jones identified Red-necked Grebe at Lake Hefner. On the 3rd John Hurd saw Belted Kingfisher and Bald Eagle at Tecumseh Lake in Pottawatomie County; Zach Poland observed American Wigeon and Ring-necked Duck at the N2890 Rd Marsh in Kingfisher County; and Tim O'Connell turned up Hermit Thrush at Sanborn Lake.



On the 4th Roy McGraw spotted Pileated Woodpecker and White-breasted Nuthatch at Mineral Wells Park in Guthrie; and Brian Marra discovered Winter Wren, and American Pipit at West Stinchcomb WR. On the 5th Steve Davis reported Snow and Ross's Goose at Lake El Reno; and John Hurd recognized American Pipit at Prairie Dog Point. On the 7th Jimmy Woodward counted American Goldfinch at Meeker Lake and Hairy Woodpecker at Prague Lake City Park in Lincoln County. On the 8th Steve Davis noticed **Wild Turkey** at Wes Watkins Lake; Eastern Phoebe at Shawnee Reservoir in Pottawatomie Country; and Eastern Bluebird at Meeker Lake.

On the 9th John Tharp added Bufflehead at Little River State Park, Least Sandpiper at Lake Thunderbird North Sentinel; and Steve Davis detected American Tree Sparrow at Lake Elmer in Kingfisher County. On the 10th William Oakley verified Pine Warbler in Norman. On the 11th Jerid Patterson located a Hooded Merganser and Ruddy Duck at Taylor Lake in Grady County; and Josh Anderson viewed Least Sandpiper at Boomer Lake Park. On the 12th Mary &

Lou Truex encountered Lincoln's Sparrow and Green Wing Teal at Taylor Lake in Grady County. On the 14th Scott Loss got Winter Wren and Golden-crowned Kinglet at Babcock Park; and Jimmy Woodard and Nadine Varner documented **Surf Scoter** and Pacific Loon at Lake Hefner. On the 15th Roy McGraw tallied American Wigeon at Bluff Creek Trails.

On the 16th Jason Shaw noticed Barred Owl at USAO Habitat Area; Marissa Buschow recorded Fox Sparrow at Lake Louis Burtzsch in Grady County; Robert Karges came across Great Horned Owl at Triple Heart West Ranch in Cleveland County; Zach Roy determined **Blue-winged Teal**, Prairie Falcon and Ross's Goose at Meridian Technology Center Pond in Stillwater; and Elaine Stebler added Greater Roadrunner and White-throated Sparrow in Ripley. On the 17th Phil Floyd had Savannah Sparrow and Double-crested Cormorant at Purcell in McClain County and Purple Finch at Edge of the Earth Road in Cleveland County; Esther Key watched White-breasted Nuthatch at Sportsman Lake in Seminole County; Ben Sandstrom found Red-billed Woodpecker at Taylor Lake; Joe Grzybowski confirmed American Tree Sparrow along Wagner Road in Yukon; Roy McGraw discovered Orange Crowned Warbler along South Jenkins; Zach DuFran saw Sharp-shinned Hawk in Norman; and Mike Yough counted Northern Bobwhite at his home in Payne County;

On the 18th Jason Shaw located a Northern Shoveler at Shannon Springs Park in Grady County; Laura Madden viewed White-throated Sparrow at Spring Haven in McClain County; Jeff Dosser detected Red-headed Woodpecker at Bindbole Wood in Norman; Mark Howery verified Red-breasted Nuthatch in Norman; Deb Hirt got Great Horned Owl along North Husband Street in Stillwater; Hutch Todd observed White-crowned Sparrow at The Botanic Garden at OSU; and Jimmy and Nadine confirmed American Woodcock near the SCIP Recreational Trail in Midwest City. On the 19th Bridger Arrington reported Prairie Falcon at South Mulhall in Logan County; Doug Wood identified Common Loon and Lesser Black-backed Gull at Prairie Dog Point Lake Hefner; Marion Homier tallied Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Choctaw; and at Boomer Lake Park Heidi Vicker encountered Field Sparrow; Jessi Parsons recorded Snow Goose; and Madysen Jefferies recognized **Sandhill Crane**.

On the 21st Larry Mays determined Pine Siskin at his home in McClain County; Jim Malcom turned up Common Loon and Greater Scaup at Boomer Lake Park; and Robert Harding came across Purple Finch at Harrah in Oklahoma County. On the 23rd John Hurd had Greater White-fronted Goose at SW 149th St Sod Farm in Cleveland County; Brian Stoffebeam documented **Black-crowned Night-Heron** at Lake Hefner. On the 24th

Brian Stufflebeam confirmed Red-breasted Merganser and Herring Gull at Lake Overholser Canadian County; Emily Hjalmarson discovered **Common Yellowthroat** along South Jenkins in Norman; and John Hurd reported Bewick's Wren and Sharp-shinned Hawk at Crystal Lake. On the 25th Michael Kane added Ruddy Duck and Canvasback at the Northeast Zoo Lake; Esther Key photographed American Pipit and Cedar Waxwing at the Elmore City Lake in Garvin County; Deanne McKinney located Greater Yellowlegs along Morgan Road in Yukon; David Hoekman reported American White Pelican and White-winged Dove at Yukon City Park; Robert Harding found Western Meadowlark and Common Merganser at Arcadia Conservation Education Area; and Patti Muzny watched 4 Spotted and 1 Eastern Towhee at their feeder near Byres in McClain County. Brian Muzny heard two American Woodcocks doing their display at Byres; and Scott Loss confirmed Woodcocks displaying over his yard near Whittenberg Park in Stillwater.

On the 26th Rachel Wrenn watched American Woodcock in Norman; Zach Poland noticed Wood Duck, Eastern Phoebe and Greater White-fronted Goose at his home in Logan County; Brian Marra encountered Merlin at Tinker AF Hope Gate. On the 27th Roy McGraw got Northern Shoveler at Rose Lake in Canadian County; Cale Corley had Lincoln's Sparrow at Teal Ridge Wetland in Stillwater; and Chris Butler spotted Fox Sparrow, and Western Meadowlark at Mitch Park in Edmond. While watching her children at the Chitwood Park playground in Edmond, Karen Stefansen came across Red Crossbills. Since then numerous people have seen and sometimes photographed them.

On the 28th Roy McGraw identified Cedar Waxwings at Guthrie Lake, Great Blue Heron at Liberty Lake and Fox Sparrow at Mineral Wells Park in Guthrie; Tricia Brown observed Green-winged Teal and Hooded Merganser at Farmer Olive's Pond in Cleveland County; Corban Hemphill viewed Brewer's Blackbird in Northern Stillwater; David Hoekman found Great Egret at Lake Hefner; John Hurd detected Field Sparrow at Lake Stanley Draper; Zack Poland counted White-throated Sparrow at Myriad Botanical Gardens in OKC; and Jimmy Woodward located Wood Duck, Barred Owl, Brown Creeper and Golden-crowned Kinglet during the Field Trip at Soldier Creek Industrial Park in Midwest City.

During February 2018 in the Central Oklahoma area **129** species were reported with **6** new species bringing the total for the year to **145**. 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.

Field Trip Report

Kurt Meisenzahl led 20+ birders on the March 3rd Wichita Mountains field trip. Many of the birders did not see all of the birds listed below because of the size of the group. However, thanks to a large group we were able to flush LeConte's sparrows and Chestnut-collared Longspurs.



LeConte's Sparrow ©Jennie Brooks

An incomplete list follows:

Pied-billed Grebes	Downy Woodpecker
White Pelicans	Northern Flicker
Double-crested Cormorants	Eastern Phoebe
Great Blue Herons	Cedar Waxwings
Canada Geese	Carolina Wren
American Wigeons	Bewick's Wren
Gadwalls	House Wren
Shovelers	Mockingbirds
Ring-necked Ducks	Eastern Bluebird
Common Goldereyes	Carolina Chickadees
Buffleheads	Tufted Titmouse
Black Vultures	Blue Jays
Turkey Vultures	Crows
Osprey	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Northern Harriers	Spotted Towhees
Red-tailed Hawks	Field Sparrows
Golden Eagle	Savannah Sparrows
Kestrels	LeConte's Sparrows (2)
Wild Turkeys	Fox Sparrows
Sandhill Cranes	Song Sparrows
Coots	Harris's Sparrows
Killdeer	Juncos
Ring-billed Gulls	Chestnut-collared Longspurs (about 80)
Rock Doves	Cardinals
Morning Doves	Red-winged Blackbirds
Kingfisher	Eastern Meadowlarks
Red-bellied Woodpeckers	Western Meadowlarks
Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers	

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

Upcoming Field Trips

MARCH

17: Saturday, Mitch Park, Edmond: Time: 7:30 am – 11:00. Location: Old School Bagel Cafe at 775 W. Covell Road, Edmond. Hal Yocum drhal2@cox.net

27: Tuesday, Red Rock Canyon State Park. Afternoon walk: Location: Meet at 2:00 pm at the north end of the Kohl's parking lot behind IHOP on 7708 Northwest Expressway (or if you choose to drive to the park, 2:30 in the parking area). RRC is approximately an hour drive. We can car pool or drive separately. We'll bird from about 2:30 till 5:30 and you will arrive back around 6:30. Betz Hacker 321eowl@yahoo.com

APRIL

3: Tuesday, Lake Overholser. Morning walk: Meet 8 am in the parking lot on the East Overholser Drive (across from the Boat House). We will drive to various areas around the Lake. Betz Hacker (321eowl@yahoo.com)

7: Saturday, Lake Thunderbird: Not confirmed. Watch the website and your email for details.

21: South Jenkins, Norman: Meet at Rudy's BBQ (3450 Chautauqua Ave, Norman) at 8:15; walk will begin at 8:30. Nathan Kuhnert will lead a walk on Jenkins Road in Norman. This is a great time of the year to see spring migrants! (nkuhnert@hotmail.com)

21: Spring Big Sit: this laid-back birding event will take place on the property of John Cleal and Marion Homier. Times and directions will be provided closer to the event. Marion Homier (mhomier@yahoo.com)

28-30 Oklahoma Ornithological Society spring meeting: weekend: More information to follow
