



Oklahoma City Audubon Society

MARCH 2019

The Sport of Kings

Oscar Pack, a veteran falconer and resident of Oklahoma City, will be the speaker at our March 18 Audubon meeting. This is what he says about his life with falconry:

Most bird lovers can't pick a point in their lives an interest in birds occurred. When first learning of them as a child, they were fascinating! Then the second phase hit me, a hawk, so majestic and noble in appearance I had to know more. When I heard of falconry, actually a hands on relationship with a raptor, I was hooked. I trapped and trained my first Red-tailed Hawk in 1971. Since then, I have been privileged to have worked with many hawks, falcons and eagles.

Of the many different birds available to falconers, for me



Mali (West Africa) postage stamp featuring J. J. Audubon and Oscar Pack with a Golden Eagle.

the beauty of the flight of a falcon is my favorite. Their graceful flight, speed and

mastery of their surroundings as they fly around me is just captivating. Today I have two falcons, one captive bred peregrine two years old, and one under a year old caught wild. This wild caught falcon will be the bird you will see with me at your March Audubon meeting.

As for me, I have worked as a mechanic most of my adult life and am now retired from the Kenworth truck dealership in OKC. Some of you might remember my speaking to the Oklahoma Audubon Society a number of years ago with the Golden Eagle I flew for a number of years. I will enjoy speaking with you again.



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.

Minutes, February 18, 2019

Meeting was called to order by club president Betsy Hacker.

Guests introduced were Taylor Muller, Pat Kirsch (sic), Geoff Bolding

Club business:

January minutes were approved without additions or corrections.

Treasurer Nancy Vicars reports \$5893 in the account after purchasing six bluebird houses.

The February 16 field trip to Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge featured cold windy conditions but lots of birding fun.

The Will Rogers Garden Building display case will be soon decorated with shorebird information by Brian Muzny.

Sue Woodson passed around the refreshments signup sheet and filled it into the fall schedule.

Project Bluebird is scheduled to begin at Martin Park Nature Center this Saturday February 23 at 10 am. Volunteers are expected to be finished with the project by noon.

Prothonotary Warblers are expected in the Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge and Lake Overholser areas, and there was brief discussion of warbler houses being provided in the future.

Nathan Kuhnert has organized a "Lights Out" project to cover the spring migration season of April and May. Requests will be sent for managers of the tall, downtown buildings to turn lights off between midnight and six in the morning, peak hours historically for migrating birds to injure and kill themselves crashing into the transparent windows. Discussion included past experience from attendees who have familiarity with similar programs in other cities, getting the word out to the Chamber of Commerce and public service announcements in the media.

Upcoming events:

Warren Harden will lead a field trip to the Iowa Nation Eagle House near Perkins on Saturday March 23rd. Further information will be on the website.

The spring OOS Meeting will be held May 3-5 at Lake Wister in SE Oklahoma. Poteau is the nearest town with amenities. Cabins in the park can be reserved while available. Former

Nature Conservancy wildlife expert Jona Tucker will be the featured speaker and trip leader.

The business meeting was adjourned in order to start the evening program. Warren Harden assembled several birders to present general descriptions of woodpeckers and peculiarities of those found in Oklahoma. Unfortunately Janiece Gratch was unable to be present, so Warren presented the topic of Downy Woodpeckers on her behalf.

Grace Huffman discussed Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Nancy Reed the Hairy Woodpecker, Esther Key presented the Northern Flicker, Nancy Vicars presented the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Martha Hordinsky the Pileated Woodpecker, Patti High the Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Patti Muzny the Red-headed Woodpecker (with illustrations by son Brian). The presentations were concise, informative, entertaining, and had excellent complementary audiovisual content.

There were forty-six attendees at the meeting. The next meeting will be March 18, at 7:00 PM.

Recorded by Club Secretary Sharon Henthorn

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
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
	Bob Holbrook	496-1731
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

Partly because it is found over most of the United States at one time or another, and often in large numbers, the **Canada Goose** (*Branta canadensis*) is a very well-known species. Most people are familiar with this species' honking calls and (often) wedge-shaped flying

formations. Such formations make flying more energy efficient for trailing birds, due to different and beneficial wind turbulence from the preceding bird. The lead bird, however, has no such advantage, and he is relieved periodically at the front point of the formation by another strong flyer.

From the time I participated in my first Oklahoma City Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count (CBC) until now, there has been a drastic change in our count numbers for this species. In the early 1960s we sometimes totally missed seeing Canada Geese; now they are one of our most common CBC bird species (numbers on our last 4 CBCs were 34,778; 13,692; 37,246; and 13,574).

What happened, I wonder. I read in Bent (1987, *Life histories of North America wild fowl*, part 2, page 217, Dover public. Inc.) that "Toward man and other animals it [the Canada Goose] shows remarkable sagacity in discriminating between harmless friends and dangerous enemies..." Bent goes on to cite that even Audubon noticed this ability to tell friend from foe, what we might call a "tameness" trait. On top of this, Harrison (H.H., 1975, *Field guide to birds' nests*, page 23, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston) says that "Extensive stocking by man has made it difficult or impossible to distinguish between ranges of wild and semi-domestic birds. And in the new populations (where man does not threaten them due to the Migratory Bird Act, common sense, etc.) large brood size likely has quickly elevated the population: the number of eggs per nest vary from 4-10, but are commonly 5-6.

The current tameness of Canada Geese on urban and agricultural landscapes does not come without its problems. Flocks of this goose species deposit a lot of "guano" where they hang out in their "tame" locations. One such example

involved a relative of mine who has an acreage with a small farm pond; a flock of about 12-15 Canada Geese took to standing on his small short pier, with resulting droppings problem. On one occasion my relative shot toward the geese with a paint gun, not actually trying to hit them, just frighten them away. Early one morning sometime later, U. S. Fish and Wildlife personnel showed up at his front door accusing him of illegally shooting at the geese. It turns out a neighbor of my relative had reported him as "shooting" at the geese. Everything was settled peacefully, with no charges being filed. And the geese did move on as well, so everyone ended up happy.

In talking about the Canada Goose with my wife Melissa, she brought up the point of large bird strikes with airplanes. Remembering the plane that went down in the Hudson River in New York City due to strikes with large

birds, I checked into this event further.

The plane, a twin-engine jet (an Airbus A320), took off from LaGuardia Airport on 15 January 2009.

Shortly after takeoff the plane encountered a flock of large birds, at least some of which were ingested into the two jet engines, stalling both engines. Captain

Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger III ditched the plane in the Hudson River. Miraculously all 155 passenger and crew survived, partly because ferry boats in the area hurried in to pick up all the passengers. This incident became known as the "Miracle on the Hudson". Airplane crash Investigators, working with the Smithsonian Institution, Feather Identification Lab, determined that a total of three large birds had been ingested into the two jet engines. Further, from bird feathers taken from the two engines, investigators determined that two female and one male Canada Goose were the birds ingested into the jet engines. It was then determined that these three geese were from "wild" migratory flocks of Canada Geese that had moved into the area from the north, rather than from local "non-migratory" flocks. This struck me as quite detailed sleuthing by the Smithsonian Institution and airplane investigators! Airports are now attacking the problem of large birds on and near their runways by using large birds of prey, loud noises, shooting, grassland manipulation, water management, etc. to try to decrease the frequency of large bird strikes with potential problems like the Canada Goose.



Chirpings

By Patti Muzny



Since I retired from my “real job” of 29 years at the Oklahoma House of Representatives, I’ve been doing a little purging of papers in our home. We all know we are supposed to be living in a paperless society. Yeah, right! In this digging through “stuff,” I found a **Chirpings** article from the past – 1994 to be exact. I enjoyed going back in time and I

thought others might find it interesting:

Vicars & Company Find a “Lifer”

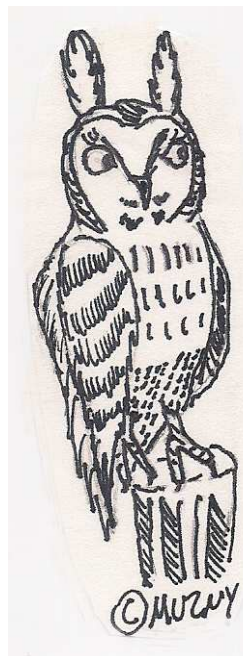
Tuesday, January 10, 1994, just hours before the newsletter deadline, my phone rang at home and a very familiar, but breathless voice began an animated conversation with, “I found a lifer today!!!” My response was, “Did you go to Purcell?” I had related Brian’s and Mike’s account of the Tundra Swan on Sunday, so I thought perhaps Nancy Vicars had found her new bird there.

The answer was, “Yes, but we didn’t find the Tundra Swan.” Now I was confused! Nancy and Jim Vicars had gathered Marie Shepherd on the afternoon of January 10th and drove out by Draper Lake. With only a Pied-billed Grebe and a few coots, Draper failed to hold their attention, so after lunch in Norman, they continued to Lake Purcell.

First stop was the south end of the lake where Nancy spotted three Wilson’s Snipe and several Canvasback, Gadwall and Shoveler Ducks. From this vantage point, they drove across the dam. They had noticed that a flock of crows apparently had “something” cornered in a large cedar at the edge of the dam. Birders know that if the Jays and Crows are agitated, it’s always interesting to try and investigate.

They drove closer and expected “something” to fly from the tree. Nothing flew but the harassing crow

population. Finally Jim decided to get out of the car and peer into the center of the cedar. Much to his astonishment, he found himself face-to-face with a beleaguered LONG-EARED OWL!!



© Brian Muzny

Nancy and Marie wasted no time scrambling out of the car, while Jim is trying to get to his camera before the bird flushed. In spite of all of the avian and human activity, Mr. Long-Ear just flattened himself up against the trunk in the center of the cedar and sat tight. The three watched as the crows continued to harass the owl, but it refused to come out. They even went to the opposite side of the cedar to hopefully gain a better vantage point and still the bird wouldn’t move. That bird knew it was a “lifer!” Jim mentioned that he might have captured an ear and an eyeball on film, but the

center of a dense cedar does not provide the most ideal of photography situations.

February 2019 in the Muzny backyard— we’ve been enjoying a few predator sightings of the avian type. We have had Sharp-shinned, Cooper’s and most recently a Red-shouldered Hawk visit the fence beside our bird feeder. While the squirrels seem to mostly ignore the Cooper’s and Sharpies, when the Red-shouldered Hawk swooped down to perch on the fence, not a furry-tailed beastie was to be found. My favorite visitors to the feeder are the Cardinals. I’ve counted as many as 9 males at one time when the weather is more inhospitable. Our White-winged Doves are back. For some reason, we’ve been seeing several crows that tend to walk up and down my little raised bed garden. Sometimes I find onion sets uprooted and I’m not sure if it’s the crows or the squirrels.

Welcome

Oklahoma City Audubon Society welcomes

Becca Bornstein, OKC

Fantasy Birding!

If you're familiar with fantasy football or baseball, Fantasy Birding will be easy to understand. You make strategic choices in advance, then get points based on real-world results. In Fantasy Birding those results come from real checklists submitted to eBird.

In this Big Year game, you choose each day's birding location on the map a day in advance. Then, all birds reported to eBird on that day get added to your list.

To help you plan your trips, you can see where rarities have been reported recently, search for target birds, and peek at where your competitors are currently birding.

Your newsletter editor knows absolutely nothing about fantasy sports but I found it easy to sign up (it's all FREE) and get started. As I write this article, I have planned to (fantasy) bird tomorrow in McAllen, TX, where a Yellow Grosbeak has been spotted. All the birds that are reported tomorrow on eBird for that hotspot will be added to my list.

The ABA-area Big Year and the Global Big Year games started on January 1, 2019 and end on December 31, 2019. There's little chance that I'll be competitive but I'm happy to just give this a try and see if I can learn more about rare bird sightings.

<http://www.the-pigeon.org/fantasybirding/index.php>

10 Most Awesome Bird Names in the World

By George Armistead, ABA Blog

10. **Prince Ruspoli's Turaco** (Ethiopia)
9. **Lazy Cisticola** (Africa)
8. **Siamese Fireback** (Southeast Asia)
7. **Akiapola'au** (Hawaii)
6. **Sandy Gallito** (Argentina)
5. **Satanic Nightjar** (Sulawesi)
4. **Greater Pewee** (Oxymoronic)
3. **Firewood-gatherer** (South America)
2. **Invisible Rail** (Asia)
1. **Oleaginous Hemispingus** (South America)

Meet Cisco



Cisco is a mature Golden Eagle that came to the Grey Snow Eagle House near Perkins from Utah in 2012. He had an injury to his left elbow that left him unable to fly. He has a unique white marking on his right shoulder called an "epaulette."

Cisco and many other Golden and Bald Eagles can be seen during the OKC Audubon field trip to Grey Snow Eagle House on March 23rd. See page 8 for information and directions.

Refreshments

Refreshments for the March 18th meeting will be provided by

Snacks - Hal Yocum & Mary Lane/Steve Davis

Drinks and Ice - Ann Sherman

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

January 2019

During February winter was in full swing with several events of ice and snow. Quite a number of people participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count. Even so did all central Oklahoma counties have reports?

On the 3rd Chase Moxley came across Virginia Rail at Lake Hefner Prairie Dog Point. On the 4th Steve Welborn viewed Great Blue Heron at Maud Wetlands in Seminole County. On the 6th Ben Sandstrom located Hooded Merganser and Brewer's Blackbird at Bell Cow Lake. On the 8th Bill Carrell identified **Neotropic Cormorant** at Lake Hefner. On the 9th Logan Dickinson saw Wild Turkey near Tuttle and Aaron Mechem recognized Bald Eagle at Lake Hefner. On the 10th Dennis Cooke reported **Ferruginous**



Hawk near El Reno. On the 11th Jimmy Woodward heard American Woodcock near his yard in Midwest City. On the 13th Bill Diffin found Brewer's Blackbird at Fort Reno; and Calvin Rees

detected Long-tailed Duck and Common Goldeneye at Lake Hefner Prairie Dog Point.

Great Backyard Bird Count

On the 15th at Shawnee in Pottawatomie County Kay Watson added Downy Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch and White-crowned Sparrow. At Ninnekah in Grady County Connie Taylor did four counts at her Outdoor Classroom and encountered House Finch, Harris's Sparrow, and Swainson's Hawk. In McClain County near



Blanchard Laura Madden identified Cedar Waxwing and Field Sparrow, while near Newcastle Larry Mays observed Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Pine Siskin.

In Logan County at South Muhall, Bridger Arrington recognized American Goldfinch and Red-bellied Woodpecker; at Kairworks Garden D&D Norris spotted White-throated Sparrow and Yellow-rumped Warbler; and at

Cottonwood Creek. Christie Stoops viewed Double-crested Cormorant, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Brown Creeper. In Canadian County at Lake Overholser Roy McGraw counted Horned Grebe, Red-breasted Merganser and Redhead Duck.



In Oklahoma County at Lake Hefner Matt Jung got Lesser Black-backed Gull and Bald Eagle.

On the 16th in Pottawatomie County during a four-hour count on Bangus Road near Tecumseh Kevin Kastler recorded Wood Duck, **Eastern Screech-Owl**, and Red-breasted Nuthatch. At Ninnekah in Grady County Caleb McKinney turned up Loggerhead Shrike and Yellow-rumped

Warbler. In Lincoln County at the Grey Snow Eagle House Drew Sinnes added Turkey Vulture and Red-shouldered Hawk and in Chandler Jonathan Navarro got Cedar Waxwing. At Guthrie in Logan County Van Cordray identified Northern Flicker and Bewick's Wren;



Melinda West noticed Red-breasted Nuthatch and Fox Sparrow; Van Cordray detected Downy Woodpecker; and in a more rural area Zach Poland confirmed Ring-necked Duck, Gadwall, and Great Horned Owl. At Edmond in Oklahoma County Brad Rose photographed **Lark Sparrow**. In Canadian County in Surrey Hills Wyndi Bradley found Red-breasted Nuthatch; and in Piedmont Summer Thiele observed Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. In Oklahoma County at Mitch Park in Edmond Melinda Droege came across Field Sparrow and Spotted Towhee.

At the Oklahoma City Zoo Rebecca Snyder spotted Northern Shoveler, Canvasback, and Black-crowned Night-Heron; and Sharon Henthorn reported Greater Roadrunner and Ruddy Duck.

On the 17th in Grady County at Tuttle LaDonna Evans saw White-breasted Nuthatch and Pine Siskin. In Lincoln County at Stroud Mark Sykora had Mourning Dove and Carolina Wren. At the Kingfisher Library Tracie Verkler discovered House Finch and Common Grackle. In Cleveland County on a ranch in the southern area Robert Karges counted Ferruginous Hawk; and at Lake Thunderbird C. Sledge encountered Pileated Woodpecker and Golden-crowned Kinglet. In Payne County at Stillwater Scott Loss recognized American Woodcock. In Oklahoma County at Lake Hefner Bill Diffin documented Yellow-billed Loon and Caleb Frome – CC located Black Scoter and Horned Grebe.



On the 18th in Pottawatomie County at Shawnee RE Carlberg counted Purple Finch and Harris's Sparrow and along Old Hwy 18 Hope McGaha found Song Sparrow and Brewer's Blackbird. In Grady County at

Pocasset Terri Moorman's class observed House Finch, Purple Finch and Lincoln's Sparrow. In McClain County at Purcell Lake Zach DuFran noticed Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Pied-billed Grebe. In Payne County in Stillwater Angela Herron heard Eastern Screech-Owl; Tim O'Connell came across a Rusty Blackbird while walking his dog; at Boomer Lake Park Deb Hirt had Pied-billed Grebe and Herring Gull; and at Lake Carl Blackwell Shane Sherwood



spotted American Wigeon and Canvasback. In Oklahoma County at Bluff Creek Trails north of Lake Hefner Roy McGraw reported Belted Kingfisher and Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and in Edmond Chad Scott added Ferruginous Hawk. At the end of the GBBC ten out of twelve central Oklahoma counties participated.

On the 19th near Marshall Shane Sherwood got Northern Pintail and Great Blue Heron; in Norman Rachel Wrenn confirmed Song Sparrow and Eastern Bluebird; and in Edmond Hal Yocum discovered Brown Creeper and Pine Siskin. On the 22nd in Norman John Tharp documented American Woodcock; and at Ten Mile Flat Laurie Ireland located Wilson's Snipe and Canvasback. On the 23rd at Arcadia Lake Brian Marra reported Wood Duck, Barred Owl, and Eastern Towhee; and in Kingfisher County at Hennessey Jennifer Knutson saw Savannah Sparrow, Northern Harrier and Barred Owl and at Lake Elmer Zach Poland encountered Wilson's Snipe, Bald Eagle and Fox Sparrow.



On the 24th in Garvin County along I-35 Abbie Valine detected Black Vulture and Red-tailed Hawk; and in Lincoln County at Bell Cow Lake Roy McGraw confirmed Pileated Woodpecker and Northern Flicker. On the 25th George Ross recorded **Blue-winged Teal** at Lake Hefner; and Deanne McKinney identified Eastern Screech-Owl in Oklahoma City. On the 26th in Seminole County Steve Davis noticed Loggerhead Shrike and Swamp Sparrow at Wewoka Lake and Red-headed Woodpecker at Sportsman Lake; and in Logan County at Liberty Lake Zachary Hemans documented Blue-winged Teal and Belted Kingfisher. On the 28th in Norman Jennifer Waters spotted Orange-crowned Warbler; and at Boomer Lake Park Caleb McKinney found Lesser Black-backed Gull and Northern Flicker. Will March weather get warmer? When will spring migration start and where?

During February of 2019 in the Central Oklahoma area **138** species were reported with **5** new species bringing the total for the year to **148**. 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: February 28, 2019). And occasionally from Facebook and the OKBIRDS List. I can be contacted by e-mail at em-kok@earthlink.net. Esther M. Key, Editor.

Oklahoma City Audubon Society
c/o Patricia Velte
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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.

March 23, 2019 – Grey Snow Eagle House

Leader: Warren Harden warhar@yahoo.com

We can meet at the Oklahoma highway visitor center on the southwest corner of I-35 and north 122nd in OKC at 8:45 am to leave elephant-style car train by 9:00 am via I-35, Rt. 66 and Hy 177 to arrive at 10:00am. The Iowa Nation's [Grey Snow Eagle House](#) is located near Perkins – 335588 E 750 RD, Perkins, OK 74059

April 27, 2019 – Little Sit

Marion Homier and John Cleal will be hosting their annual Little Sit (an informal “sit” with no rules of any sort) in Choctaw at our home at 3626 Santa Fe Drive on **Saturday, April 27th** from 9:00 a.m. until dusk. We'll provide modest snacks plus sodas. Attendees should feel free to bring their favorite snacks to share, and definitely bring folding/camp chairs if you have them. The rain date will be May 11th, but in case of inclement weather on April 27th, call and check with us regarding status as we may bird that day from indoors through the windows as we did last year when the weather brought in a male Baltimore Oriole for great views and a total of 26 species.

Notification of attendance is always appreciated: phone (405) 390-2001 or email at mhomier@yahoo.com Come-and-go or come-and-stay, we hope you'll join us. See <http://okc-audubon.org> for directions
