



# Oklahoma City Audubon Society

OKC-AUDUBON.ORG

May, 2013

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## An Introductory Comparison of Avian Species Australia and the USA

The speaker for the May 20 program of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society will be OCAS member Gavin Small, a specialist in conservation management. A native of Australia, Gavin is now a resident of Midwest City. After retiring from the Royal Australian Air Force as a wing commander, he earned a Master of Wildlife (Habitat) Management degree at Macquarie University, Sydney. He currently manages private land held under conservation covenants with State and Federal authorities where he is involved in all aspects of conservation management including pest control, management of contractors, wildlife survey and reporting.

Gavin will be presenting taxonomic data from each country (Order, Family, Genera and Species) and looking at similarities and significant differences. The presentation will include photos of his favorite Australian species and others of selected species that are common to both nations.

Our meetings are held September through June on the third Monday of each month. They begin at p.m. at the Will Rogers Garden Center, I-44 and NW 36<sup>th</sup> Street. Visitors are always welcome.



Golden-shouldered Parrot, Australian endemic.

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### Welcome

The Oklahoma City Audubon Society welcomes new members, Patricia Norris, OKC and Brain Marra, OKC

### Cookie Patrol

Refreshments for the May 20th meeting will be provided by: Betz Hacker, Doug Eide and Sue Woodson.



# President's Perspective

By Bill Diffin



In last month's Perspective we reviewed the vocalizations of members of the Sylvioidea superfamily in the United States. The characterization we gave to the group as a whole was that the vocalizations were simple, repetitive and easily recognizable. This month we will listen

to vocalizations of the sylvioid birds in the Old World and see how well they were represented by their New World relatives. To organize the effort we will use the phylogenetic tree at ToL, <http://www.tolweb.org/sylvioidea>. The tree contains an intimidating list of 22 groups, but we won't consider the nine groups in italics, which are single genera often containing just a single species. At the top of the page is a clade of three families, Stenostiridae, Paridae (titmice and chickadees) and Remizidae (Verdin). Back in March's Perspective we listened to some parids from the Old World which sounded very similar to New World chickadees. Last month we listened to the Verdin of the southwestern US in family Remizidae, but consideration of an Old World representative still awaits us. So let's begin with the Penduline Tit, *Remiz pendulinus*, whose distribution in Europe and western Asia can be seen here, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/species/Remiz-pendulinus>. The short video at the following link shows a male calling while perched on a pendulous nest, the usual nest form for the family, <http://ibc.lynxeds.com/video/eurasian-penduline-tit-remiz-pendulinus/male-singing-while-perched-nest>. Following is a recording of two countersinging males. It starts with the bird in the foreground making several high-pitched, descending whistle calls followed by the song, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/35975>. I was amazed by how similar some of the song phrases sound to our local birds.

The recording could be described as follows where I have given the number of different song phrases in parentheses: calls, Carolina Wren (1), Junco (2), Cardinal (3), Pewee (4), Cardinal (3), Phoebe (5), Carolina Wren (1), Cardinal (3), Pewee (6), calls, Carolina Wren (7), calls, Carolina Wren (1), White-eyed Vireo (8), Junco (2), Cardinal (3). This is a lot of vocal flexibility compared to the birds we listened to in April, but it is not exceptional when compared to Tufted Titmice who also use different song phrases but sing them in longer series of repeats. The

Stenostiridae is a group of birds whose relationship to each other and to the Paridae+Remizidae was just recently discovered using DNA. An example is the Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, *Culicicapa ceylonensis*, whose range in south Asia can be seen here, <http://ibc.lynxeds.com/species/grey-headed-canary-flycatcher-culicicapa-ceylonensis>. The song intermixes simple whistles typical of the three-family clade with "chittt" rattles, <http://ibc.lynxeds.com/sound/grey-headed-canary-flycatcher-culicicapa-ceylonensis/sweet-whistles-chittt>. Note that the foregoing site has the bird in the Muscicapidae family which was the old placement for many of the stenostirids.



The larks (unrelated to meadowlarks) in the family Alaudidae are next on the ToL tree. The Horned Lark is our sole local representative. Worldwide there are 96 species, 80 percent from Africa. We listened to the high, thin, rising, tinkling song of the Horned Lark last month. The Skylark, *Alauda arvensis*, is widely distributed in Eurasia, strays to the US and is a famous singer. The first

several recordings here demonstrate the incredible energy and variety of phrases in the Skylark's singing, [http://www.xeno-canto.org/browse.php?species\\_nr=&query=alauda+arvensis](http://www.xeno-canto.org/browse.php?species_nr=&query=alauda+arvensis). The varied song phrases suggest mimicry like a mockingbird or thrasher. Here we have another example of vocal flexibility within the Sylvioidea.

The clade Acrocephalidae+*Donacobius*+Megaluridae are mostly drab birds of open woodland, marsh and tallgrass habitats. The family Megaluridae contains around 40 or 50 species in *Bradypterus*, *Locustella*, *Megalurus*, and several small genera. Members of *Megalurus* exemplified by the Striated Grassbird, <http://ibc.lynxeds.com/photo/striated-grassbird-megalurus-palustris/dorsal-view-bird-tree>, have simple songs like, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/124419>. Members of *Locustella* like the Grasshopper Warbler sound like locusts, <http://ibc.lynxeds.com/video/western-grasshopper-warbler-locustella-naevia/singing-meadow>. The family, Acrocephalidae, contains about 35 species of *Acrocephalus* plus 18 species in four other genera. An example is the Marsh Warbler, <http://ibc.lynxeds.com/photo/marsh-warbler-acrocephalus-palustris/male-singing>, which has a varied song made up of very simple repeated elements, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/132770>, which sound like mimicry similar to a mockingbird's. We will finish up with the sylvioids next month.

# "Bird" of the Month

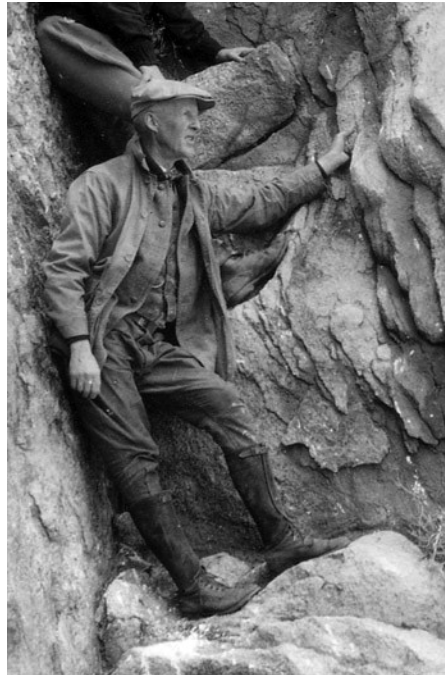
By John Shackford



This month I want to do something a little differently—the "Bird" of the Month will be **Arthur Cleveland Bent**. In these monthly columns I often cite from one of the volumes in Bent's "Life Histories of North American Birds." I began

wondering just who this dedicated ornithologist was. From a brief biographical sketch drawn from an internet site, at <[asteria.fivecolleges.edu/findaids/umass/mums413\\_bioghist.html](http://asteria.fivecolleges.edu/findaids/umass/mums413_bioghist.html)>, I have gathered most of the following: it begins, "A life-long resident of Taunton, Massachusetts, Arthur Cleveland Bent (1866-1954) was only six when his mother died and when a concerned father began to bring his 'sickly son' on nature walks to improve his health. Bent's passion for birds began with these walks." He attended "Harvard University and graduated in 1889 with honors." He entered business and "The apex of his business career came in 1892 when he and John Scott purchased the Plymouth Electric Light Company from General Electric..." Well and widely respected, he sat upon a number of boards of directors and was active in a variety of civic and religious organizations." He married Madeleine Vincent Godfrey on January 20, 1914.

But "It was his avocational interest in ornithology...that came to define his life." He was an avid hunter of birds for study skins, nearly 3,500 in his collection (this was at a time when ornithology was done with a gun) and bird egg collector, some 30,000 eggs. In 1910, at the request of the Smithsonian Institute, Bent began to work on the life histories of North American birds, volumes of which were published from 1919-1942. The next to last one was published in 1954, after his death, and the 21<sup>st</sup> and last volume was edited and published after his death. He drew his information on birds from his own experiences and from correspondence with some 800 other ornithologists. He also served as President of the American Ornithological Union (AOU) from 1935-37, and was a member of, or influential in, many other bird-related associations.



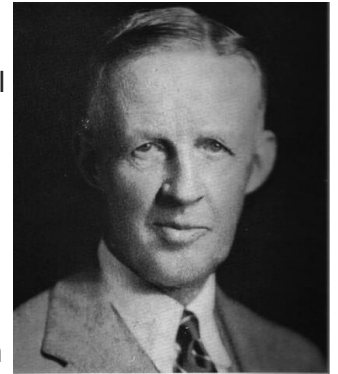
It is amazing what this non-professional ornithologist achieved. So if you think all science comes from people with Ph.D.s, take heart—it does not. Incidentally, The Bulletin of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society is an excellent place to submit important, but non-professional, information on birds; of course, professionals also have this avenue for dispersing important information too.

I have nearly a full set of Bent's Life Histories, accumulations of a lifetime of buying, gifts, awards, etc. Individual copies of the Bent series cover specific closely related birds, such as thrushes, and cost in the neighborhood of \$12-16 dollars a book, so if you are a lover of woodpeckers, say, you can cover the cost of life histories of all breeding N.A. woodpeckers for about \$15.00.

Other prior writers of life histories were Alexander Wilson (1766-1813), "father of North American ornithology," and John James Audubon (1785-1851), who subsequent to publishing his large paintings of North American birds, also wrote a life history for each bird painted.

There is an excellent new series of life histories entitled "Birds of North American," Senior Managing Editor, Alan F. Poole. Each species of bird in this series—716—nests in North America, and the writing of each account was turned over to an expert or experts on that particular species. There is, however, one serious hitch. The costs for most of the species accounts is \$7.50 each, plus handling and postage. Thus to own the entire series of accounts is prohibitive for most people. But if you have one or

several species you are particularly interested in, they can be bought through Buteo Books for which you can get pertinent information at <<http://www.buteobooks.com/CONT.html>> or phone them directly at 434/263-8671. By comparison, however, individual books of Bent's Life Histories are still a great bargain for home use—and very readable!



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## Minutes of the Meeting

April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Called to order by President Bill Diffin.

Treasurer report: Nancy Vicars reviewed the report and we have \$6052.70 in the account.

Field trip report: Mark Delgrosso reports multiple trips and nature events will be available this spring during migration season.

April 20<sup>th</sup> to Hackberry Flat.

April 20<sup>th</sup> at the Pontotoc Ridge Preserve.

April 20—Big Day for Payne County Audubon Society OOS spring meeting will be April 26-28 at Red Slough near Idabel.

April 27<sup>th</sup> Earthfest at Martin Park Nature Center

May 18—Will Rogers Park Garden Festival  
Memorial Day weekend—Quivira Wildlife Refuge in Kansas. Mark may be able to lead this trip.

Conservation: Dave Woodson reports there will be a Lake Overholser cleanup day on Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>. Sharon Henthorn reports that trash grabbers are available for checkout by members of the group, for helping maintain the appearance at Lake Hefner 's Prairie Dog Point.

No new business or old business was discussed. Program was on Radar, Weather and Migration, presented by Dr. Phil Chilson of the School of Meteorology and Advanced Radar Research Center at OU in Norman.

The meeting was adjourned. Next meeting will be Monday, May 20<sup>th</sup>.

*Sharon Henthorn, Secretary*

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## Conservation Issues

I was drawn to the statement Kenn Kaufman wrote in his book "Field Guide to Advanced Birding" – "Birding can thrive only as long as we have thriving bird populations. Birds and their habitats face many threats today, and it is imperative that the modern birder must be a conservationist also...As birders, we have a responsibility to be aware of the issues that impact our birds, to support the organizations that are doing good work, and to make our voices heard whenever there is public debate on questions that will affect the future of bird diversity."

As your Conservation Chairperson I urge each of us while out in the field enjoying our birds to more aware of potential treats to our feathered friends. I will be happy to hear from you on the issues you've discovered.

*Dave Woodson, Conservation chairperson*

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## Chirpings

Spring, 2013

*By Patti Muzny*

This spring most certainly brought many challenges to the birds and to those who watch the birds. One morning I use the heater on the way to work, but by the time afternoon commute arrives, I've switched to the air conditioning. How do our feathered friends know whether to continue migrating or lie low until yet another cold front or rain and hail storm sweeps across the plains? They seem to have managed. I seem to have managed.

But the birds cooperated quite nicely and that day we had an impressive total of 56 species on our 80-acre refuge.

A happy White-eyed Vireo accompanied me along my quest for morels and birds and the Broad-winged Hawks were back.

Brian spotted a flock of about 200 American White Pelicans, some Franklin's Gulls, a Peregrine Falcon a Harrier, Barn Swallows,



*(Continued on page 5)*

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## Oklahoma City Audubon Society

### Officers 2013

President	Bill Diffin	722-3778
Vice President	John Shackford	340-5057
Secretary	Sharon Henthorn	521-9958
Treasurer	Nancy Vicars	831-1945
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Programs	Warren Harden	364-3491
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Conservation	Dave Woodson	601-622-3467
Field Trips	Mark Delgrosso	242-2759
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	Pat Velte	751-5263
	Carla Brueggen	495-3259
	Doug Eide	495-8192
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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 Oklahoma City Audubon news between newsletters and meetings, be sure to log onto:*

**OKC-Audubon.org**

## Chirpings, continued

Lark Sparrow, Gnatcatcher, some Rusty Blackbirds and an Orange-crowned Warbler. There was even a Western Meadowlark.

On April 14th, it was very warm and we found quite a few Chipping Sparrows. They were coming to the feeder behind the cabin and it was fun to watch these tame little birds pecking away at the seed offerings. The mid-week ice storm did not seem to affect their activities. There were a few Yellow-rumped Warblers around and the Kentucky and Black and White Warblers were singing along with the Louisiana Waterthrushes. Swainson's Hawks were moving overhead and we even found three in the neighbor's pasture on the ground. Throughout that week several people told me about seeing a large flock of "some kind of hawks" in various places. Most likely Swainson's. Cool birds. Our Juncos had moved on and I miss them.

Wild Turkey have begun to visit and we've heard and seen them since early April. Otter tracks along the pond tell another tale. Our catfish-snatching little furry friends have been feasting again, although I don't there was much left on which to feast. While our land has had adequate moisture to make things grow nicely, there has been little runoff and our ponds are still very low.

Discovered something else pretty yummy about early spring – Poke Salit. OK, that's a good old Okie term for those tasty wild greens. When they mature and the berries ripen, many fruit-eating birds love them, but people can eat the tender young leaves. The first time I was served some about 30 years ago it was a disaster and that's all I am going to say right now. Now when one does know how to prepare them, they make tasty eating indeed. The fire that came through our property a couple of years ago created great habit for pokeweed to flourish. Needless to say, I've enjoyed some delicious servings of Poke Salit and even dug some up and planted them in our OKC back yard. Quite yummy with an omelet or frittata for breakfast.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of April we heard our first Chuck-will's Widows. The first Grasshopper Sparrows had arrived and some migrating Savannah Sparrows were seen and we found a Winter Wren. Great-crested Flycatchers, Scissortails and Purple Martins were back as were the Summer Tanagers. We even had a pair of Wood Ducks in a little swamp across our creek. Sounds like spring, indeed! And we found more

morels in spite of the chill. In fact, we had some for me and some to share.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of April, our bird checklist really lit up. We found a total of 58 species in one afternoon and evening. Among the notables: Yellow-breasted Chat, Warbling Vireo, Prothonotary Warbler, Lark Sparrow, Nashville Warbler, Painted Bunting, Western Kingbird, another Winter Wren and a Roadrunner.



Our OKC yard served as a home for a family of Bewick's Wrens. They used one of our bird boxes. On the evening of one of our hail/wind/rain storms, at least three feisty fledgling wrens chose to leave their nest. Sam had gone to close the garage door and found one of them perched on my truck. It saw us and flew over to the side of the garage and hid behind some "stuff" on a high shelf. I got on a ladder and gently moved the stuff and it then flew over the top of the garage door to the other side of the garage and hid behind some more "stuff." In the meantime we could see the greenish clouds and hear the rumble and the wind had begun to gust. We turned out the garage light and I moved the stuff and we were so relieved when it flew OUT of the garage and headed toward our privacy fence. That little bird could fly, but if it were to receive a grade for its efforts, I think it was around a C-minus. With juvenile wings flapping as hard as they could flap, it thought it was tough enough to fly high enough to get over the fence. Not! When it bounced off the fence it didn't appear injured because it had not gained much speed, but we stood there and laughed at the hapless little character. The adults were frantic, so we kept our distance. (And ran into the house before the hail hit.)

The storm hit and the hard rain and hail hit, but we didn't get any damage to anything but a few hosta leaves and tender tree leaves. The next day Brian found two of the young wrens chirping and flapping about the yard. Whew!

I think we've also raised a brood of Chickadees and the Robin has a nest in a tree in the front flower beds and the Mockingbird hangs out near a clump of greenbriers in the corner of the back yard. Cardinals come to eat cracked pecans and Jays squawk and visit the feeder along with the Clay-colored and Chipping Sparrows. There is a neighborhood Phoebe, but I haven't found their nest yet. The Mississippi Kites are back in their trees along South Walker at SW 85<sup>th</sup> Street. Yep...I will concede that spring has officially arrived. Now I have to get the garden planted!



## Recorders Report – April 2013

### Frosty Feathers

WOW !!! Two new birds were arriving almost daily while the weather rained, hailed and frosted. With a mild winter we were ready to start our gardens, but another frost came, and another and another until on May 3<sup>rd</sup> it tied for the latest frost. But that didn't stop the birds. Unfortunately many interesting bird sightings had to be deleted from this report. You will just have to go out and see for yourself all the bird diversity in central Oklahoma during spring migration.

On March 31<sup>st</sup> Tim O'Connell suspected he heard a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** in his yard in Stillwater. On April 1<sup>st</sup> along South Jenkins Dick Gunn added a **Grasshopper Sparrow** and a **Solitary Sandpiper**, while in Kingfisher county Jack Olson saw a Greater Roadrunner. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Jim Bates went to the sod farms at SW149th and MacArthur and found an American Golden Plover and a single **Swainson's Hawk**.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> along Midwest Boulevard at the North Canadian River Bridge Jim located an **Eared Grebe** and south of 63<sup>rd</sup> he had three **Upland Sandpipers**. On the 6<sup>th</sup> Joe Grzybowski finally tracked down **Sprague's Pipits** at the Embassy Suites on the North Base in Norman. Jimmy Woodward and Nadine saw two **Cattle Egrets** in a field near SW89th and Sara Road, and Cassandra Cullin found a **Snowy Egret** along Lake Overholser. Christie Stoops had Blue-wing Teal and Ruddy Duck at Cottonwood Creek in Logan County, and T K discovered a **Peregrine Falcon** at Lake Thunderbird, NW.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> male **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** were



sighted by Jimmy Woodward at his kitchen window feeder in Mustang and Matt Jung at Stinchcomb WMA west. Jimmy discovered **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** in Grady County, and James Hubbell located a **Western Sandpiper** at Lake Overholser. On the 8<sup>th</sup> John Polo found an **Osprey** in Logan

County just off I-35 near Guthrie Lake, and Larry & Jan Kraemer discovered a Loggerhead Shrike near Dover in Kingfisher County. On the 9<sup>th</sup> Joe made a quick pass by Lake Hefner and noticed a **Western Grebe**. In Tuttle in Grady County Kristi Hendricks

photographed a Lark Sparrow. Meanwhile, Jimmy reported **Nashville Warbler** at Yukon City Park and **Broad-winged Hawks** were viewed by Dick Gunn along South Jenkins and Jimmy at Lake Stanley Draper. On the 11<sup>th</sup> along South Jenkins Dick saw an **Eastern Kingbird** and **Indigo Bunting**.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> Matt Jung discovered **Wilson's Phalaropes** at Lake Overholser. In Norman David Durica was checking his feeders and after closer examination he identified a possible **Golden-fronted Woodpecker**. In Seminole County Esther Key had **Horned Larks** at Wewoka Lake and a Yellow-throated Warbler at Sportsman Lake. On the 13<sup>th</sup> T K observed **Black-necked Stilts** and Red-eyed Vireo at Lake Thunderbird NW, and in Pottawattamie County at Shawnee Twin Lakes Dala Grissom reported an Osprey.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> at Lake Carl Blackwell Tim O'Connell and his Ornithology class located Red-breasted Nuthatch and Greater Scaup. **Northern Parulas** were also found by them and by John Polo at Couch Park. Meanwhile, on South Jenkins Dick Gunn, Brian Davis, Chase Swyden, Jackson Helms and Anais Starr-Raeside reported a **Prothonotary Warbler**, **Western Kingbird**, Brown Creeper, and Yellow-throated Warbler, while Joe discovered a Hermit Thrush. John Grellner had a Grasshopper Sparrow near Okarche, and Donna Mackiewicz observed **Chimney Swift** over her home in Logan County.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> Carol Enwall and Dick Gunn saw a **Little Blue Heron** and **Green Heron** on South Jenkins. In Logan County Donna Mackiewicz identified a **Great Crested Flycatcher** and Christie Stoops spotted a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. On the 16<sup>th</sup> near Lake Overholser's Dam Matt Jung located a **White-faced Ibis** and **American Avocet**; at Trosper Park Jim Bates discovered a **Yellow-throated Vireo**; and at Lake Hefner Joe viewed a Lesser Black-backed Gull and a Red-throated Loon.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> at the Yukon City Park Jimmy Woodward noticed two **House Wrens**; along South Jenkins Dick saw **Clay-colored Sparrows**, and Joe heard a **Warbling Vireo**. On the 19<sup>th</sup> Matt Jung watched a **Willet** at Lake Overholser, while in Stillwater Julie Hufnagel saw a **Summer Tanager**. On the 20<sup>th</sup> in McClain County southwest of Newcastle Larry Mays discovered American Pipit and Cattle Egrets, while at Purcell Lake Mary and Lou Truex had a Baird's Sandpiper and Ruddy Duck. Later in Garvin County near Lake



Longmire's Boat Ramp they found a Wood Duck, Northern Harrier, and Tree Swallow.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> in Arcadia a male **Painted Bunting** showed up at Alicia Riddle's feeder, and at the Yukon City Park Jimmy found **Baltimore Oriole** and **Wilson's Warbler**. Sharon Henthorn drove around Lake Overholser and discovered four Black-necked Stilts and a flock of Wilson's Phalaropes. In Grady County in Chickasha Jason Shaw reported a Red-breasted Nuthatch. Meanwhile, T K had a **Yellow Warbler** at Lake Thunderbird's Indian Point Marina; in Norman Jim Magovern heard a **Chuck-will's-Widow** and John and Anais Raeside had a **Gray Catbird** in their yard.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> Jimmy Woodward located an **American Bittern** at the wetlands near east Stinchcomb WMA. Jason Shaw had a Mississippi Kite in Chickasha, but Brian Davis reported an unusually early **Mississippi Kite** in March. T K found an **Orchard Oriole** at Lake Thunderbird's Indian Point. Abbey Ramirez discovered a **Dickcissel** in her backyard in Stillwater. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> Hollis Price viewed a **Blue Grosbeak** in his yard NE of Jones. Tim Boland discovered a Pileated Woodpecker in Southwestern Canadian County near Cedar Lake located between El Reno and Hinton.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> at South Jenkins Dick spotted a Winter Wren, **Red-eyed Vireo**, several shorebirds including a **Stilt Sandpiper** and T K's **Semipalmated Plover**. In Norman a late Purple Finch visited Jennifer Kidney's yard, and William Kaempfer located a **Blue-headed Vireo** near Andrews Park in Norman. Feodora Steward reported the Red-headed Woodpecker at Eldon Lyon Park has returned, while Jim Bates went to Crystal Lake and identified a **Swainson's Thrush**, Wilson's Warbler, and White-throated Sparrow. In Lincoln County at Grey Snow Eagle House Kinsey Winters noticed an American Kestrel.



On the 25<sup>th</sup> at their feeders Hollis Price NE of Jones saw two Pine Siskins, while in Norman Nancy Reed noticed a **Lazuli Bunting**. Kent Andersson viewed a **Sora Rail** at the Teal Ridge Wetland in Payne County, and Maire Johnson discovered a **Tennessee Warbler** in Stillwater. On the 26<sup>th</sup> Chad Ellis spotted a Peregrine Falcon at Martin Park Nature Center. On the 27<sup>th</sup> Bill Diffin found the Western Grebe along Lake

Hefner's dam; T K located a **Bell's Vireo** at Lake Thunderbird's Indian Point Marina; Andrew West had a Barn Owl east of Stillwater; and Dana Cole sited a **Bank Swallow** at the Teal Ridge Wetland.



On the 28<sup>th</sup> near Stillwater Tim O'Connell reported Northern Bobwhite; Maire Johnson saw a **Least Flycatcher**; and Kent Andersson found a **Common Nighthawk**. Joe visited the sod farms in McClain County and was surprised to find **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** with some Upland Sandpipers. Along South Jenkins, T K discovered a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**, and Joe had a **Sedge Wren**. So which of the 13 Central Oklahoma counties in this report so far this year has recorded the most species and which the least?

During April **195** bird species were reported with **64** new species which brought the 2013 year's total to **233** species in the Central Oklahoma area. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds and can be contacted by e-mail at [emkok@earthlink.net](mailto:emkok@earthlink.net).

*Esther M. Key, Editor.*

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## Awesome binocular offer

Did you ever want to upgrade your binoculars to something really nice but never felt you could afford it? Now's your opportunity! Alpen Optics Co. has sent me 3 special certificates worth 60% discount on any of their optical equipment—that's binoculars and scopes—to use as fund raisers for our Nature Center at Wewoka Woods Youth Camp. That means that you can have that awesome pair of bins worth \$2038.00 MSRP for only \$815.00 or a scope worth \$1824.00 MSRP for only \$730.00. (In other words at 40% of the price!!) Or you can choose any of their other less expensive yet top quality, life-time guarantee optics still at only 40% of the normal cost. Their guarantee is no questions or hassles—I know—I've already put them to the test with my scope. I expected a repair job, instead I got a brand new one within just a few days. How can you get one of these certificates? Three highest bidders get them and the bid goes to help out our nature center at camp. Call me at 496-1731 or e-mail me at: [incatarn@msn.com](mailto:incatarn@msn.com) and I can deliver your certificate at our May 20<sup>th</sup> club meeting. —Bob Holbrook



Oklahoma City Audubon Society  
c/o Carla Brueggen  
8010 NW 32  
Bethany, OK 73008

## **TOP 25 : Wrybill ( *Anarhynchus frontalis* )**

*By Mark Delgrosso*

**FAMILY:** Charadriidae

**RANGE:** New Zealand only (breeds on S Island; migrates in [austral] winter to N Island)

**HABITAT:** large rivers and coastal areas

**STATUS:** considered '**vulnerable**' [IUCN] due to restricted range and relatively small population

Now here's a bird with a twist (pun intended). From the land of the *Lord of the Rings* comes one more enchanting life form - the Wrybill. At first glance it looks like an ordinary, Killdeer-ish plover. But it is equipped with a feature unique among birds: a twisted - or more accurately bent, bill. 'But, many birds have "bent" bills', you say. Surely - there *are* birds with bent *down* bills (flamingoes, thrashers, the bentbills of tropical America ) and bent *up* (avocets) but nothing quite like the Wrybill for its bill is bent *to the side* and, amazingly, always to the right. It is hypothesized that this feature is an adaptation for feeding: the turned bill allows for probing of the underside of large river cobbles to which are clinging larvae and eggs of various river creatures.

If it weren't for the bill the Wrybill would be a typical, almost quotidian, plover. Its resemblance to half a dozen or more plover species, especially our Wilson's, is remarkable. It even does a Killdeer-like display to lure predators from nest and fledglings.

And like any good plover it will leave its breeding grounds after the summer. However, being a denizen of the southern hemisphere, it will migrate *north* during the austral winter (which, of course, is coincidental with our northern [boreal] summer). Its migration is not epic: breeding only on certain rivers on New Zealand's South Island, it heads to North Island when breeding is over.

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## **Field Trip Schedule 2013**

Check with Mark Delgrosso or the website/ newsletter for updates and final scheduling

**late May [Memorial Day weekend]: CANCELLED Salt Plains and Quivira Nat'l Wildlife Refuges:**

**June: Club Picnic at Draper**

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