



# Oklahoma City Audubon Society

OKC-AUDUBON.ORG

OCTOBER 2018

## Attract Birds To Your Back Yard With A Water Garden

**Susan and Bill Schmidt will present the program at the October 15 meeting of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society.**

There's nothing like the look and sound of a water feature to cool your thoughts in the midst of an Oklahoma heat wave. Birds rely on a close and reliable water source year-round. Join Susan and Bill Schmidt on October 15, to see photos of their extensive backyard renovation which is centered around an easy care pond with easy care landscaping. With the right selection of shrubs, trees, ornamental grasses, perennials, annuals, and compost/mulch, you can perform the majority of your landscape maintenance in the cool spring and fall. Avoid mowing entirely. The rest of the time you can spend watching birds, butterflies, dragonflies, and other wildlife enjoying your backyard.

You will see how the right selection of plants that remain green year-round and hardscapes like rocks and statuary ensure all-season enjoyment. Nellie Stevens Hollies provide a dark green backdrop. Birds enjoy the red berries which ripen in late winter and drink and bathe in the shallow waterfall. We located our pond next to the patio and can look into it from the bathroom window and breakfast nook. It's a treat early each day to check

on the pond; see how the fish are doing and if any birds or other creatures are getting a morning drink. We can even tell at a glance when we need to run the "Predator" pump/filter through its cycle, approximately every two weeks in the summer. We built a stain glass window shutter to make it easy for a quick peek. Sunlight filtered through a stain glass window is a treat worth seeing; especially when it opens into your backyard wonderland.

Our meetings are held September through June on the third Monday of each month (with the exception of January, when the meeting is held on the fourth Monday). Meetings begin at 7 p.m. Visitors are always welcome.

### **Meeting Location:**

Our meetings are held at the Will Rogers Garden center, located at the intersection of NW 36th Street and I-44.



## President's Perspective

By Betsy Hacker

### Fall Migration in "The Year of the Bird"

As I opened my computer to write this message, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's "Live Bird Migration Map" popped-up and there was a green dot over OKC! Despite the cool rainy weather, as soon as I finish my message and send it on to Pat Velte, I'm checking ebird and grabbing my binoculars! I invite of you to do the same and share your findings.



In 2018, the centennial of the most powerful and important bird-protection law ever passed, Cornell Lab, along with the National Audubon Society and more than 100 other organization around the world have joined to celebrate the "Year of the Bird." The Live Bird Map is one of the initiatives to emerge from this collaborative.

These efforts to heighten public awareness are so important because birds symbolize nature's interconnectedness and the importance of caring for our shared planet. OCAS also has participated in this effort by working with the park staff at Will Rogers to install and maintain bluebird boxes, make landscape changes to attract pollinators, reduce mowed areas of the park, lead public bird walks, and organize the display case in the Garden Center.

Can OCAS carry this momentum into 2019? One idea discussed at the last meeting was putting up prothonotary warbler houses next spring but it's also important to continue to engage the public. I welcome your ideas and volunteer time to implement them.

There is a new field trip committee! Thanks to wonderful volunteers including Nancy Vicars, Hal Yocum, Jimmy Woodward, and others, OCAS will be offering more field trips. If you are not on the field trip email list and would like to be, please email me a request. Also, often check our website for up coming field trips.

Sunday, September 23, was a great day for birding at the Myriad Botanic Gardens. Nancy Vicars organized a last-minute field trip. Of the 23 birds I logged, there were 5 warblers, one being the Wilson's warbler, a life-bird for John Cleal. Like all warblers, it is a busy little bird but we managed to get good views of it.

(Because I'm not a photographer, I often illustrate the birds I write about in my column. To indicate how fast this Wilson's Warbler moves, I blurred the background.)



Wilson's Warbler: illustration by Betz Hacker

Sadly, on the same day, in his regular search for birds lost to downtown buildings, Nathan Kuhert found a Virginia rail. It is a bird that is difficult to see in the wild let alone to find in Downtown OKC. When I saw this lifeless rail in Nathan's cap, it highlighted the importance of studies like Nathan's to find architectural solution to prevent bird collisions and initiatives like Will Rogers Park to convert urban parks into environments that will attract and provide habitat for birds.

I hope to see you all at the next OCAS meeting.  
Respectfully, Betz Hacker: [eowl321@yahoo.com](mailto:eowl321@yahoo.com)

## 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
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	Jimmy Woodard	365-5685
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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**



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## Bird of the Month



By John Shackford

**Sprague's Pipit** (*Anthus spragueii*) is a rarely-observed migratory and wintering species in central Oklahoma. A lot of what I present below is new information I am just learning; perhaps this is true for you too.

How the Sprague's Pipit got its name is interesting, both historically and geographically. In 1843, John James Audubon, with Isaac Sprague (1811-1893) (primarily a botanical artist) and Lewis Squires, left from St. Louis to explore the upper reaches of the Missouri River; their main goal was not to study birds, but rather quadrupeds (4-footed animals, especially hooved ones).

During this trip Sprague's Pipit "was discovered by Audubon on the Upper Missouri and named for one of his companion, Isaac Sprague, who shot the first specimen near Fort Union on June 19, 1843" (Bent, A.C.; 1965; *Life histories of North American wagtails, shrikes, vireos and their allies*; Dover publ., inc.; New York, N.Y.). Ft. Union was in the upper reaches of the Northern Great Plains on or near the current state line between North Dakota and Montana, and not far south of the Canadian border. At the time, it was the most important fur trading post in that region of the country.

Confirmation of a Sprague's Pipit is not easy, because it is a nondescript, uncommon, somewhat wary species that prefers medium-height grasslands. The most helpful "preliminary" ID trait has to do with this pipit's flight pattern. Watch small birds that you might flush up in grassland. After that bird flies around for a while, then makes up its mind to land again, usually somewhere in the same field, observe whether that bird plummets almost straight down to the ground from a surprising height, maybe 25-35 yards high or more. If it does, you are almost certainly dealing with a Sprague's Pipit; thus begins the difficult task of making a confirmed ID of this pipit.

The Sprague's Pipit is about the same size as a Horned Lark or American Pipit. With a decent look it can be separated readily from the Horned Lark by a different face pattern, the lark having a much stronger and darker face, over all, than the pipit. Separation from the American Pipit is somewhat more difficult. One of the best clues is the light-colored legs of the Sprague's; the American Pipit has dark legs. Both pipits have white outer tail feathers, but the dorsal surface—back and top of head-- of the Sprague's Pipit shows a black scaly-look or stripes interspersed with much lighter, straw colored plumage; the American Pipit has a much more uniformly colored back and head that shows dark grey, but no black.

When Warren Harden had his banding permit many years ago, some of his crew was successful at catching a few Sprague's Pipits here in central Oklahoma. The way we managed to do this was with a very long mist net, one that was 100 feet long if I remember correctly. We would stretch this mist net out horizontal to the ground and hold it about chest high, with one person holding the poles at either end of the net. When we jumped up a bird in appropriate Sprague's Pipit habitat we would watch that bird for its next landing. If it plummeted to earth, as described above, we would think aha, almost surely a Sprague's Pipit, and go after it. It was easy to determine a direct line from where we originally stood to where the bird landed. But the distance as to how far out the bird landed from us was much more difficult to ascertain. The way we attacked this problem was to take the long net to one side of the line where the bird had landed, and then, coming in from the side, we ran over the ground where we guessed the bird had landed, then drop the net. If we were lucky, we would have judged the distance correctly. We would band and photograph any birds we caught. Other than these netted birds I can remember definitely seeing only one other Sprague's Pipit in my life!

Dr. Sutton gives records from fall, through winter, until the next spring; his winter records are sparse but do exist [1982, *Sutton Summaries of Oklahoma bird species*, unpublished data]. His earliest record in the fall for all of Oklahoma is on 19 September 1971, a bird seen near the Norman airfield by no less an expert than Warren Harden! Winter records are from December 21 until March 20, and spring records from March 22 until April 23.



# Jim Vicars

Jul 12, 1938 - Sep 30, 2018

By Patti Muzny



Jim Vicars. Jim is a subject that really cannot be described in one writing. Most of our birding friends know that Nancy and Jim Vicars have been a treasured part of my life for close to 40 years. There are many, many fond memories that have been bouncing around in my head since Jim passed on

September 30, 2018.

Jim was a perpetual jokester who was rarely serious and enhanced the lives of those who knew him with his amiable, carefree attitude. Even while immobile at home, he would still make remarks during the course of conversations that would make us laugh, either with him or at him.

I know he was mostly an ornery kid at heart. He loved celebrations and he loved Halloween. Nancy said he had an entire container of Halloween costumes that he always wore when calling on the doctors and medical facilities to which he sold medical supplies. And he had the most unusual collection of interesting neckties for every occasion. Each one had a story.



On birding field trips, we all knew that Jim could be counted on to have numerous varieties of

snack food in his car and in his pockets. He would have the up-to-the-minute foods and drinks and was always

willing to share. He took a lot of teasing about his snack collection, and enjoyed every minute of it.

When I decided to embark on the journey to run for state representative in 2004, Jim and Nancy were on the campaign trail with me nearly every day, and up into the night! For months, Jim would drive us and Nancy and I would walk door-to-door, talking to constituents and handing out campaign literature. Some of the neighborhoods we walked were not exactly the most serene in Oklahoma City. Jim was prepared. With a feisty grin, he pulled out his wallet. Well, it "looked" like a wallet, but once opened, a lethal little "Saturday Night Special" appeared! Then there was the first night (and last night) we tried fat-free ice cream!



Through his lengthy illness, he kept his sense of humor and always commented on how well our Nancy took care of him. We will all miss Jim very much. Let us all celebrate his life, because that is what Jim Vicars would want us to do. Rest in Peace, my friend.

## Celebration of Jim's Life

***Nancy has announced that a Celebration of Jim's Life is planned for Friday, October 26, 2018 at the Will Rogers Garden Center at 2:00 PM.***

## Add a Hot Spot

The OKC Audubon Society's website contains a collection of 20 reports on local birding hot spots. Written by volunteers who are familiar with each location, our reports are used by birders all over the country.

Do you have a favorite place to bird? Or information that makes access easier and birding more successful? Then how about writing a Birding Hot Spot?!

Send an email to [pvelte@cox.net](mailto:pvelte@cox.net) and let her know you're interested!

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## Minutes, September 17, 2018

The September 17, 2018 meeting was called to order by President Elizabeth.

Visitors and new members were introduced: Julie Ahrens of Edmond, Angela Hill of Edmond, Kristin Cox of Edmond, and Don and Shirley Maas of Mesa, AZ and Choctaw, OK.

Treasurer Nancy Vicars reports \$5736 in the bank.

Minutes of June meeting were approved without corrections or additions.

**Old Business:** Neil Garrison is monitoring the bluebird boxes at Will Rogers Park and clearing them of insect pests, and keeping them cleared of other bird species.

Jimmy Woodard reminded us of the fall meeting of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society to be held October 18-21 in Edmond at UCO. Professor Chris Butler will introduce the technical session, and field trip will also be included.

**New Business:** September 22 the OCAS will host a group of novice birders who signed up for the Saturday walk. Binoculars will be provided. If rained out, the session will be inside the building and include use of the binoculars for bird ID.

A committee is being formed to choose a field trip co-ordinator. So make sure field trip reminders will be available through e-mails for those interested.

Displays in the Will Rogers Park exhibition building from the OCAS are being updated. Terri Underhill will produce an owl display and Bob Holbrook will display his bird stamps collection.

Potential locations for future birdhouses include Lake Arcadia — Mark Howery suggested a warbler box; Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge and the coffer dam at Lake Overholser — Prothonotary Warbler birdhouses were suggested.

The meeting was adjourned and followed by a brief snack break.

The presentation for the evening was by Steve Davis regarding the birding adventure that Steve and Mary Lane attended with an Arkansas field trip group in March 2017. They visited several sites in the country of Belize, formerly British Honduras.

Beautiful photography and stories of local culture enthralled the audience that filled the entire meeting room. The landscape is mostly dense subtropical jungle as well as barrier islands known as cayes (or keys). Despite the fairly small geographical boundaries of Belize, there was a wealth of avian fauna.

Next meeting will be Monday, October 15 at the same time and location: Will Rogers Park Garden Center building from 7:00 to 9:00 pm.

*Club Secretary Sharon Henthorn*

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*"Be like the bird who, pausing in her flight  
awhile on boughs too slight, feels them give  
way beneath her, and yet sings, knowing she  
hath wings." —Victor Hugo*

## Oklahoma City Audubon Society Welcomes New Members

Seth Kastner, OKC

Deborah & Mark Langley, Choctaw (welcome back)

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## REFRESHMENTS

Snacks - Marion Homier and Nancy Vicars

Ice and Drinks - Steve Davis and Mary Lane



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# Recorders Report

## September 2018

### Some are arriving: Some are leaving

Birds previously reported during the year are **Inca Dove** and **Short-eared Owl** by Emily Hjalmarson in Norman.



On August 31<sup>st</sup> Ben Sandstrom recognized **Canada Warbler** at the Yukon City Park. On the 1<sup>st</sup> in Canadian County Bill Diffin reported Black-and-white Warbler and Yellow Warbler in Yukon City Park and at Rose Lake Common Yellowthroat; while Brian Marra verified Laughing Gull at John Marshall School Pond in Oklahoma City. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brian Marra discovered Canada Warbler at Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge; Jerry Taylor counted White-

breasted Nuthatch in his yard in Oklahoma City; and Katrina Hucks noticed White-faced Ibis at John Marshall School Pond.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Roy McGraw counted White-faced Ibis at Mineral Wells Park at Guthrie in Logan County; and Joe Grzybowski found Peregrine Falcon at Goldsby Sod Farm and Swainson's Hawk along Ladd Road in McClain County. Meanwhile, Canada Warblers were identified by John Tharp along South Jenkins in Norman and Zach Poland at Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge in OKC. On the 4<sup>th</sup> Rugger Collier located a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at OU; Jimmy Woodard spotted Purple Martin at Joe B Barnes Park in Midwest City; and Bill Diffin noticed Louisiana Waterthrush at Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge. On the 5<sup>th</sup> Jason Shaw viewed a Mourning Warbler at Austin Hall in Grady County; and Ryan P. O'Donnell recorded Green-winged Teal and Orchard Oriole at Prairie Dog Point.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> Emily Hjalmarson came across Northern Waterthrush and Mourning Warbler in William Morgan Park in Norman. On the 7<sup>th</sup> Corey Riding detected Great Horned Owl on Devin Lea Street in Stillwater. On the 8<sup>th</sup> Brian Marra encountered in Seminole County at the Maud Wetlands Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Cattle Egret; at Lake Konawa Bell's Vireo and Bewick's Wren and in Pottawattamie County at Tecumseh Lake Green Heron; at Shawnee Reservoir—Lower Section Wild Turkey, and at Little River Wetland Bald Eagle. Meanwhile, Emily Hjalmarson got Caspian Tern at Lake Thunderbird in

Cleveland County; Chad Ellis observed a Western Sandpiper at John Marshall School Pond in Oklahoma City; and Chase Moxley saw Loggerhead Shrike at Lake Hefner Prairie Dog Point.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> Roy McGraw discovered Summer Tanager and White-breasted Nuthatch at Wes Watkins Lake in Pottawattamie County; Zach Poland located Olive-



sided Flycatcher, House Wren, Upland Sandpiper, and Wilson's Warbler at his home in Logan County; John Tharp determined a **Common Tern** and Black Tern at Lake Thunderbird; Joe Grzybowski observed American Redstart in

Norman; and Steve Davis recognized Least Tern at John Marshall School Pond. On the 10<sup>th</sup> Joe Grzybowski saw Northern Parula in Norman; and Daniel Martin viewed Common Nighthawk at the Metro Service Station in Oklahoma City.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> Ian Hearn had Mississippi Kite at Lake El Reno; and Bill Diffin counted Caspian Tern and Black Tern at John Marshall School Pond. On the 10<sup>th</sup> Cody Barnes documented **Magnificent Frigatebird** at Lake Carl Blackwell in Payne County where Scott Loss also saw one in June; and Dustin Lynch had a Common Nighthawk at his home in Grady County. On the 13<sup>th</sup> Jimmy Woodard saw American Goldfinch and Eastern Meadowlark at Lake Stanley Draper. On the 14<sup>th</sup> Deb Hirt confirmed Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Boomer Lake Park.



On the 15<sup>th</sup> in Canadian County Bill Radke detected Olive-sided Flycatcher at Rose Lake; Elizabeth & Tim Pratt had Black-crowned Night Heron and Osprey at Lake El Reno; Bill Diffin reported Eared Grebe and Olive-sided Flycatcher at Rose Lake. Elsewhere, Joe Grzybowski watched Caspian Tern and Forster's Tern at Lake Thunderbird; Kathy McAnally spotted Great Crested Flycatcher and Little Blue Heron at Lake Carl Blackwell; Brian Marra tallied Tree Swallow at Arcadia Lake; and William Radke had Eared Grebe at Lake Overholser. On the 16<sup>th</sup> Deanne McKinney found Greater Roadrunner, House Finch, and American Goldfinch at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Garvin County.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> Scott Loss got Pine Warbler, Summer Tanager, and Yellow-headed Blackbird at Lake Carl Blackwell. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Goldsby Sod Farm Joe Grzybowski encountered a Pectoral Sandpiper, Yellow-headed Blackbird; and Zach DuFran identified White-faced Ibis, and Least Sandpiper.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> Dala Grissom tallied a Cattle Egret and Osprey in Shawnee; Esther Key added White-faced Ibis at Maysville and Loggerhead Shrike at Foster in Garvin County; Christie Stoops saw a Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Cottonwood Creek in Logan County; Deanne McKinney documented a Northern Harrier at Rose Lake; and Bill Diffin identified Orange-crowned Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, and Common Yellowthroat at Myriad Botanical Garden in downtown OKC. Around Norman John Tharp verified a Chestnut-sided Warbler, Yellow Warbler, and Yellow-throated Warbler along South Jenkins; Emily Hjalmarson confirmed Wilson's Warbler at Griffin Community Park; and Joe Grzybowski discovered Blue-headed Vireo and Orange-crowned Warbler in his neighborhood.



On the 24<sup>th</sup> Rachel Wrenn reported House Wren, White-eyed Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Nashville Warbler in Norman. On the 25<sup>th</sup> Jason Shaw found a Barred Owl at the USAO Habitat Area in Grady County; and Michael Kane has Warbling Vireo at Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge. On the 26<sup>th</sup> Caleb Frome-CC had Pied-billed Grebe at the George M. Sutton Wilderness in Norman; John Tharp viewed Broad-winged and Swainson's Hawks along South Jenkins; and Lindell Dillon encountered Black Vulture at Lake Thunderbird. Scott Loss reported Wilson's Warbler at Sanborn Lake in Payne County; Caleb McKinney noticed Chimney Swift at Shannon Springs Park in Grady County. Ben Sandstrom recognized at the Yukon City Park Blue-headed Vireo; and at Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge House Wren, Nashville Warbler, and Gray Catbird; and John Hurd had Marsh Wren at Dolese Youth Park in OKC.



During September of 2018 in the Central Oklahoma area **162** species were reported with **3+2** new species bringing the total for the year to **277**. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds by making reports at <http://ebird.org> (an online database of bird distribution and abundance from Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York.) Data for this report was accessed in eBird on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and at various times on Facebook and the OKBIRDS List. I can also be contacted by e-mail at [emkok@earthlink.net](mailto:emkok@earthlink.net). Esther M. Key, Editor.

## Make a new friend

Meet Nicky Fijalkowska, a birder in the UK. Beginning to



bird when she was young, she once claimed membership in the Young Ornithologists Club and kept careful track of her sightings. "When I was a teenager I stopped birding as I thought it wasn't cool," she said, "but then when I had my

daughter I took it up again, to teach her about birds and share lovely days out in nature."

Nicky found a way to connect her love of birding with knitting, a craft her grandmother taught her when she was young. The result is a collection of patterns featuring colorful birds that might be the answer to cabin fever on a rainy weekend.

Nicky adds, "This year I've also designed a knitted curlew for the RSPB to promote their Curlew Recovery Program, and a knitted sandpiper for the Net Loft in Alaska, for their Birds By Hand project, to raise awareness of the Cordova migration flyway."



Oklahoma City Audubon Society  
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