



# Oklahoma City Audubon Society

OKC-AUDUBON.ORG

October, 2013

## Prairie Chickens and Wind Energy

**Jay Pruett, Director of Conservation for The Nature Conservancy of Oklahoma, will discuss the potential impacts of wind energy development on lesser prairie chickens at the October 21 meeting of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society.**

Jay was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and grew up in Oklahoma City. He graduated from Rice University in Houston, Texas, with a major in Biology. He initially worked in pollution control for a government agency, but then began a long career in environmental affairs for an electric utility company. In 2003, he joined The Nature Conservancy as the Director of Conservation for the Oklahoma Chapter and continues that role today. He is responsible for development and



implementation of conservation initiatives for the state program and oversees the management of TNC preserves there. He acts as TNC's representative to federal, state and local conservation agencies and organizations. He is also involved with wind energy and electric transmission siting issues with regard to wildlife habitats at state and national levels.

Jay enjoys hiking, birding, nature photography, and collecting natural history books, antique natural history prints, wildlife art and tribal masks.

## Welcome

The Oklahoma City Audubon Society welcomes new member, Chad Ellis of Oklahoma City

## Cookie Patrol

Refreshments for the October 21 meeting will be provided by:  
John Shackford, Jimmy Woodward, and Kristi Hendricks.



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# President's Perspective

By Bill Diffin



Hi, Members.

It is election season again for our society. At the upcoming meeting the Election Committee will be formed from volunteers who answer the call to serve in this critical, constitutionally mandated capacity. At the November meeting the Election Committee will announce a slate of candidates for officers and committee chairpersons. The actual election of officers will be conducted at the December meeting. The recommendations for committee chairpersons are approved by the newly-elected president with the advice of the other officers and chairpersons. I hope you will consider serving as an officer or chairperson in 2014. If there is a role you would like to serve in, you should speak to me, to John Shackford, or to the incumbent about taking on the position. Or please consider serving on the Election Committee. It is a great way to contribute to our organization and doesn't take much time.



As of last month our ongoing exploration of the passerine order had completed the treatment of the Sylvioidea superfamily. This month we will move on to another supergroup, the Muscipoidea, <http://www.tolweb.org/Passerida/29223>. The Muscipoidea were the model for the subdivision of the passerines into ten supergroups which is the organizational basis for this series. We have already dealt with muscipoid plumages in December 2011 and muscipoid songs in January 2012. However we have not yet examined their calls, so let's do that now. The ToL phylogenetic tree for the Muscipoidea shows seven families and two genera, <http://www.tolweb.org/Muscipoidea/67307>. Only four of the families contain many species, the Turdidae (thrushes), Muscicapidae (Old World flycatchers and chats), Sturnidae (starlings and mynas) and Mimidae (mockingbirds and thrashers). In the Muscipoidea there are four call themes which

occur frequently. Examples are linked below.

## Chip/Chak/Chup

Turdidae:Hermit Thrush, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/72223>

Turdidae:Eastern Bluebird, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/70120>

Mimidae:Brown Thrasher, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/111139>

Mimidae:Northern Mockingbird, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/34771>

Muscicapidae:Bluethroat, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/109136> (with whistles)

Muscicapidae:European Pied Flycatcher, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/147929>

Sturnidae:European Starling, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/91167>

Sturnidae:Chestnut-tailed Starling, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/116467>

## Growl/Whine

Turdidae:Hermit Thrush, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/14210> (similar to Spotted Towhee)

Turdidae:Townsend's Solitaire, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/65773>

Mimidae:Brown Thrasher, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/5788>

Mimidae:Northern Mockingbird, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/109398>

Muscicapidae:European Pied Flycatcher, <http://www.xeno-canto.org/146728>



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# Bird of the Month

By

Steve Hamilton

*(We have a guest author this month. Steve Hamilton lives at Lake Esperanza on N. May just north of NW 150<sup>th</sup>. Bird of the Month is the Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*). Lake Esperanza is birdwatcher friendly; call Steve for details—405-359-1948. J. S.)*

Well, it's been a quiet week at Lake Esperanza, my home place. Quiet is not unusual here but there has been some unusual bird behavior. Most impressive has been the frequent visits by hummingbirds this fall: I have had more hummingbird visits during one week this fall than in all my previous 30+ years in Oklahoma City combined, 12 of these years at Lake Esperanza. I do not know how to account for the rise in numbers. Perhaps it was some way related to the cool, wet, relatively windless days of last summer.

Usually a single bird is spotted in spring and then no activity until fall, when a few sightings have occurred. After I first noticed an increase in hummingbird visits this fall a male Ruby-throated hummingbird claimed my yard. He guarded the two feeders and chased—in all directions—what I think were 2 female or young hummingbirds who had enjoyed relative peace the previous week. The male would confront rival hummingbirds and even hummingbird moths when they stopped to feed, but the hummingbirds did not seem to challenge wasps at the feeder. After several days of being

challenged by the male, the female or young birds seemed to have departed. Perhaps they realized they could be in Costa Rica for all the flying around my yard; their departure was just about the time I noticed 2 additional male ruby-throats enter, which could also have been a factor. Also, there was a small brown butterfly with a prominent white wing stripe topped by a yellow spot that seemed to like joining in the hummingbird dance.

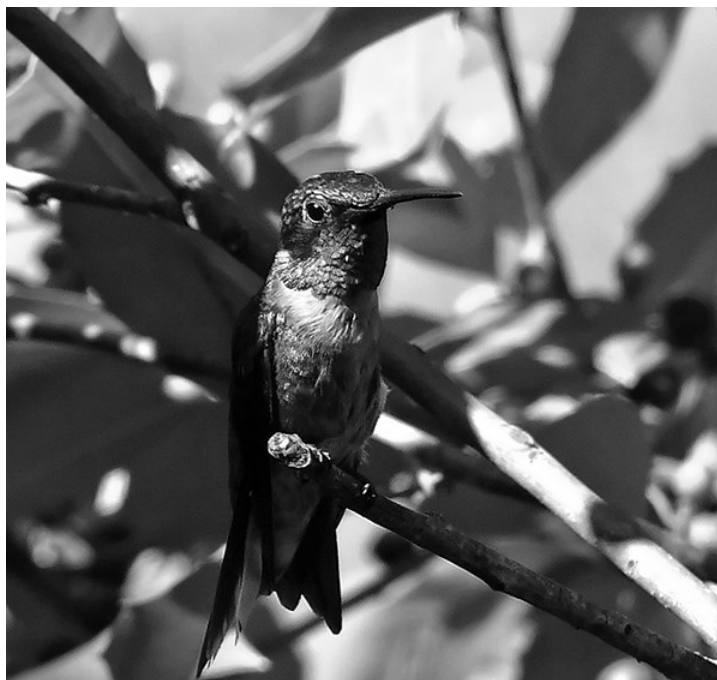
I have worked rather hard to have a yard that is attractive to birds. Susan Chambers of Rose Rock Landscaping and Design, Inc. has provided invaluable help with implementing a much more

natural yard landscape. The shore line, while “developed,” has been stabilized with the help of Victoria Gonzales of Sanctuary Water Gardens. The primary plant for the lake stabilization, replacing an over abundance of cattails, is water willow.

I also encourage Purple Martins and Barn Swallows by providing housing, because I enjoy these 2 species, not

because I think they will eat enough bugs to keep me from needing bug spray. Nothing brings me more joy than seeing the Barn Swallow colony take the fledglings on their first flight. I have placed Barn Swallow cups in my portico and this year a second breeding pair built their own nest in a back porch providing me with the long desired “colony.” It has been a good couple years for Barn Swallows.

That's the news from Lake Esperanza, where all the women are strong, all the men are good looking and all the birds are above average.



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## Minutes of the Meeting

Monday, September 16, 2013

President Bill Diffin called the meeting to order.

Minutes of June 2013 were approved as written in the newsletter.

Treasurer Nancy Vicars reports \$6003 in the bank account.

Field Trip Committee chairman Mark DelGrosso reports upcoming opportunities for birding.

October 5 at Nancy Reed's home in Norman beginning 9am, come and go.

October 12 at Jimmy Woodard's home in Midwest City for a Big Sit, seeing how many species are identified from the participants during the day.

Nadine Varner reports that the OOS fall meeting will be held in Broken Arrow October 18-20, and an early booking discount applies. Field trips planned include Mohawk Park and Lake Yahola, as well as an optional Sunday trip to Redbud Valley.

Conservation Committee:

Dave Woodson explained the upcoming Crystal Lake children's event September 27-28. Volunteers are requested to help introduce the children to birding.

Sharon Henthorn encourages everyone to participate in the Lake Hefner Prairie Dog Point cleanup this Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>. Meet at the north parking lot at 8am. Reaching tools and trash bags will be provided.

Further information regarding this August's viewing of the South Polar Skua at Lake Overholser was discussed. Terri Underhill's video is bringing new insights to the experts at Cornell regarding this rarely seen and usually pelagic (oceanic) species.

John Cleal gave a riveting slide show and discussion of the Galapagos adventure shared by him and Marion Homier.

The meeting was adjourned.

*Sharon Henthorn, Secretary*

## Do you know who I am?

You may have seen me at the September meeting but do you know my name? Our meetings are full of energy and enthusiasm which can make it difficult to learn new members' names... and for new members to learn the names of long time members. For this reason, Terri Underhill purchased and has maintained durable name tags for all our members. Her generous volunteer project was doing great until the June meeting when she had to leave early. Someone picked up the name tags to store them for the summer but Terri doesn't know who that was and we're at a loss to figure out who stored the name tags and bumper stickers (another of Terri's volunteer projects).

Someone probably put the box in their trunk and has forgotten it's even there! So, we're asking members to join in our detective work and try to remember what happened at the end of the June meeting (when Bill Diffin gave the presentation) and what might have happened to the name tags. Are they in your trunk? Let us know so we don't have to be strangers!

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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
Parliament	Ted Golden	354-3619
Programs	Warren Harden	364-3491
Recorder	Esther M. Key	735-1021
Conservation	Dave Woodson	601-622-3467
Field Trips	Mark Delgrosso	445-2300
Newsletter Editors:		

	Pat Velte	751-5263
	Carla Brueggen	495-3259
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 Oklahoma City Audubon news between newsletters and meetings, be sure to log onto:*

**OKC-Audubon.org**

# Members Support a Rainy Crystal Lake Expo

Dave Woodson, Conservation chairperson



Heavy morning rain water was almost ankle deep in the designated area when a few of us arrived at the Crystal Lake. By late morning, nine members of our Society had gathered

under the new shelter on higher ground to wait the forecasted clearing skies. Our program didn't go as planned, we didn't get all our displays out and Bill Diffin didn't give his presentation, but it was not a complete "washout." As the sun came out in the afternoon, so we did talk with people interested in birding. For me, the highlight of the day was when I overheard several youth get excited as they looked through the scope.

There were few birds and the attendance was low yet the people from City Care gave us a warm thank-you and seemed interested in us helping promote Birding at Crystal Lake in the future. Members present were: Jim Bates and John Bates, Bill Diffin, Chad Ellis, Nathen Kunhert, Brian Muzny, Nadine Varner, Jimmy Woodward, and myself. Terri Underwood provided posters.

The following are comments in an e-mail from Bill Diffin: "There are many things to consider in assessing the changes at Crystal Lake. From a

birding standpoint it is a bit of a negative that some of the wild habitat has been removed to make the shoreline more accessible and to create the archery range. Weighed against this are some very positive factors. It is now possible to drive all around the lake without danger of getting stuck in a mud hole or bottoming out in a deep rut. For walkers the improved road makes a very nice trail. The removal of all the junk from the sides of the road will allow better, more natural habitat to take its place. The addition of a security guard will prevent the kinds of events that drive the public away, especially its more vulnerable members. Aesthetics and safety are important considerations in attracting city dwellers to a park where they can have experiences with nature in the first place. Crystal Lake in its current form is probably about as nature-friendly as could be hoped in a multi-purpose park devoted to enjoyment of a variety of outdoor pursuits. I believe that visitors to the park will be usefully convinced and reminded of the beauty and importance of natural areas. The City Care people are to be congratulated for their work."

"We have had nice turnouts from our membership at events like the Expo recently. This is a great thing to see. Our organization, birding and the general appreciation of nature are put in a very nice light when so many friendly, enthusiastic and intelligent people step forward in public to support them."

## Number of bird species reported each month by county in 2013 according to eBird

	Sept	Aug	May	April	Mar	Feb
Lincoln	078	078	058	058	049	046
Kingfisher	082	081	046	042	034	021
Seminole	086	073+9*	071	062	037	011
Garvin	094	093	076	064	053	051
Grady	111	110	096	079	058	051
Pottawatomie	118	112	092	080	065	055
Logan	136	113	104	091	070	065
McClain	143	142	135	115	075	067
Canadian	196	188	160	142	103	093
Oklahoma	214	209	195	169	121	113
Cleveland	216	215	209	193	146	119
Payne	219	216	214	193	131	112

\*Not reported in eBird

## Recorders Report – September 2013

If you can't travel internationally;  
then watch international traveling birds

During September golden patches of Sunflowers and Goldenrod beckon butterflies and bugs for pollination so they can create the seed that feed the soon to arrive winter birds. Flocks of Southern migrating shorebirds, Purple Martins, Mississippi Kites, Mourning Doves and Scissortail Flycatchers are found along the wires as they begin their travels southward while migrating warblers pass through the state and a few winter residents begin arriving.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> Dave and Martha Evans found a wide variety of shorebirds including Black-necked Stilts and White-rumped Sandpipers at the West Wagner Road Playa in Yukon. James Hubbell had an Olive-sided Flycatcher and Orchard Oriole along Morgan Road. At Rose Lake he saw a Prothonotary Warbler. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> John Hurd was photographing a Sora Rail along NW 50<sup>th</sup> Street. As he got down near the bird to get some eye level shots, the bird calmly walked over to him and used him as a perch!! Later he had a Mourning Warbler at Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge. In Grady County Bob Nieman located 30 Mississippi Kites near McDonalds in Chickasha, and at Shannon Springs Park he discovered Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler and Baltimore Oriole.



On the 4<sup>th</sup> Ken Williams and Jim Arterburn were in Kingfisher County and saw two groups of migrating Mississippi Kites. On the 5<sup>th</sup> Chad Ellis found Rose Lake Road covered with shallow water

and various waders including Tricolored Heron, White-faced Ibis, American Avocet, and several Sandpiper Species. On the 6<sup>th</sup> in Grady County at the Goldsby Sod Farm Joe Grzybowski noted Northern Rough-winged Swallows. On the 7<sup>th</sup> in Stillwater Tim O'Connell discovered a Stilt

Sandpiper at the Teal Ridge Wetland. On the 9<sup>th</sup> at Dolese Youth Park Chad Ellis had a Black-throated Green Warbler and Wilson's Warbler.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> in Kingfisher County John Couch was driving east from Dover and saw a couple of hawks on the ground, but a closer look showed there were at least 36 Swainson's Hawks in the pastures. On the 11<sup>th</sup> Chad Ellis found a Least Tern and Buff-breasted Sandpiper along Wagner Road, while at Rose Lake John Hurd had an Alder Flycatcher. At the Teal Ridge Wetland Kinsey Winters saw a Peregrine Falcon.



On the 13<sup>th</sup> Chad took his lunch at Dolese Youth Park and located an American Redstart, and John Cleal spotted a pair of Pied-billed Grebes on the pond at Westwood Park Golf Course in Norman. On the 14<sup>th</sup> Dave Woodson checked out Martin Park and discovered Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Phoebe, and Chimney Swifts; and at SW 149<sup>th</sup> and McArthur Sharon Henthorn had Buff-breasted Sandpipers.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> Jimmy Woodward visited several locations in Seminole County. At Lake Konawa he discovered a Peregrine Falcon, **Trail's Flycatcher**, and Lazuli Bunting; at Wewoka Lake a Red-headed Woodpecker; and at Sportsman Lake a Black Vulture, and Broad-winged Hawk. Later at home in Midwest City he found Bell's Vireo and Blue-headed Vireo. In Garvin County Esther Key heard an Upland Sandpiper and saw eight Great Blue Herons fly overhead.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> James Hubbell noticed an American Bittern at Rose Lake. On the 17<sup>th</sup> Alex James stopped by Teal Ridge Wetlands and located American Golden Plover, Wilson's Snipe and many Common Nighthawks. On the 18<sup>th</sup> John Hurd had an Eastern Screech Owl in his Oklahoma City yard. On the 19<sup>th</sup> John Raeside and Dick Gunn walked along South Jenkins and saw a Bald Eagle.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> while John Hurd was traveling in far western Canadian County he discovered a **Say's Phoebe**, **Common Ground Dove**, Yellow-headed

Blackbird and Magnolia Warbler. On the 21<sup>st</sup> Jennifer Kidney joined Joe Grzybowski along South Jenkins and experienced a mini warbler fallout including Northern Parula, Nashville Warbler and Yellow Warbler. On the 21<sup>st</sup> Jimmy Woodward and Nadine visited Pottawatomie County and found at the Shawnee Reservoir Sanderlings, a Bank



Swallow and Dickcissel; at Tecumseh Lake, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, White-eyed Vireo and Eastern Bluebirds; and at Wes Watkins Lake, American White Pelicans, White-faced Ibis and Red-headed Woodpecker.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> in Logan County John Hurd checked Dolese Sand Pit and located Gadwall, Redhead, **Red-necked Phalarope**, and Black Tern, and on Cottonwood Creek Christie Stoops discovered an Eared Grebe. In Grady County at the USAO Habitat Area Jason Shaw discovered a Wood Duck, Green Heron, and Chimney Swift. On the 27<sup>th</sup> Dick Gunn reports several Sora Rails along South Jenkins, and Nancy Reed had a Summer Tanager in her yard in Norman.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> Jimmy took an 80 mile birding trip in Logan County. In some fields just north of Twin Lakes he counted over 95 Swainson's Hawks. His best birding was along Indian Meridian Road up to the settlement of Meridian although caution is advised in traveling the road. At the Dolese Sand Pits he had a **Philadelphia Vireo** and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Other birds he saw on the trip were Merlin, Northern Harrier, Orange-crowned Warbler, House Wren, Gray Catbird, Clay-colored Sparrow, and Blue Grosbeak.

During September **140** bird species were reported with **5** new species which brought the 2013 year's total to **271** 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.

## TOP 25: MANDARIN DUCK (*Aix galericulata*)

By Mark Delgrosso

**FAMILY:** Anatidae

**RANGE:** native to far east Asia, breeding in eastern Siberia, northeast China, and Japan; however feral populations well-established in Britain and continental Europe

**HABITAT:** wetlands with forest edges

**STATUS:** threatened due to habitat loss particularly in its Russian and Chinese territory; less so in Japan

Alright. I admit – this one's a no-brainer. This species may be on anyone's short list of the most gorgeous ducks in the world. Maybe also among the world's most beautiful *birds*. It's almost more pheasant than waterfowl. And, as usual, it's the male that catches the eye. And it doesn't get more catchy in the waterfowl family. A striking red bill, orange hackles about the lower face giving it an almost side-burned look, flanks of dull orange with the most delicate of vermiculations, a dark purple breast and – unique among ducks – two bright orange 'sails' rising from the rear of the flanks - need I say more. The female, alas, looks much like a female Wood Duck.

In fact, the Mandarin and the Woodie are very close cousins – members of the same genus (*Aix*). Indeed, they share traits that set them apart from most, if not all, other waterfowl. They are tree-cavity nesters. And these trees tend to be far enough from the nearest water body to make the ducklings' first swim something of a journey, and an adventure. And then there's that great leap-of-faith from the nest hole to the ground. It's amazing these species' don't have exceptionally high infant mortality.

Seeing this bird in a wild state is an adventure, too. Probably the most easy- of- access locale in its range would be Japan, as eastern Siberia and China are unlikely (though fantastic) birding destinations. However, this species has established itself as a feral population in Britain, much like Chukars here in North America. In fact, there may be more of them in Britain than in all their home range. But just to enjoy its beauty you may find it at closer-to-home zoo aviaries as it is quite a 'prize' in captivity.

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

## Field Trip Schedule 2013

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

**DEC.7: Pre-CBC Scouting Trip:** reconnaissance trip to Lake Overholser the weekend prior to the Christmas Count. *Leader:* John Shackford [Johnsshack@aol.com] *Meet at 8am, west side of Overholser dam*

**DEC. 14: Annual Christmas Bird Count:** *Organizer:* John Shackford [Johnsshack@aol.com]

**FEB.8: Sooner Lake:** plenty of wintering waterfowl and possible eagles on this trip. Meet at 8am at the McDonald's at 15<sup>th</sup> exit off I-35. Since this trip will take place in a 'limited access' area participants must, on their own, email Cyndie Browning so that they can be put on the official visitation list. Her email is: vermillion\_\_flycatcher@yahoo.com. *Leader:* Jim Bates [Jim-Bates@ouhsc.edu]

**APRIL: Yukon City Park** : join Jimmy Woodard on a birding tour of his (former) stomping grounds. *Leader:* Jimmy Woodard [j.woodard@cox.net]

**early MAY: Tulsa birding hotspots:** *Leader:* Jimmy Woodard [j.woodard@cox.net]

**MAY [Memorial Day weekend]: Quivira Nat'l Wildlife Refuge:** on to Kansas and Quivira for possible breeding Black Rails. *Leader:* Mark Delgrosso (405 445 2300/markdelg94@gmail.com)

**Spring (APRIL or MAY): McGee Creek WMA/McCurtain County Wilderness:** two productive, birdy areas with many specialties, the most notable of which is OK's sole population of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. Also on the menu are Prairie Warbler, Bachman's Sparrow, Brown-headed Nuthatch, and abundant Chuck-wills-widows. Because of the distance from OKC this trip will be planned for a [2 or 3 day] weekend. *Leader:* Mark Delgrosso (405 445 2300 or email at: markdelg94@gmail.com) - *details and dates TBA*

**June: Club Picnic**

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