

## Pine Warbler

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### Welcome to OKC Audubon

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### Welcome back:

Jerry Vanbebber, Edmond, OK  
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*For up-to-date Oklahoma City  
Audubon news visit:*

### Bird of the Month

*by Grace Huffman*

Last month I spent a day birding in southeast Oklahoma, in the Tupelo area. We had quite a few species that day, but probably my favorite was Pine Warbler. And not just because he let me take quite a few good photos of him.

Pine Warblers summer as far north as southeastern Canada, and winter in eastern Texas & Louisiana. However, in a large portion of their southern range, you can find



© Grace Huffman

them year round. Here in Oklahoma they are generally found in the eastern part of the state, and especially in the south-east. Where they migrate, they may return as early as February and start breeding in late April. True to their name, you are most likely to find them in pine forests, high up in the trees where they may be hard to

spot. Also difficult to spot are their nests, usually built out of items like grass, pine needles, twigs, and caterpillar silk. The female lines the inside of the nest with soft materials like feathers, and then lays 3-5 eggs. The male often escorts the female while she is building the nest, but doesn't usually take part in construction himself. It takes about 3 weeks for the eggs to hatch and the young to fledge, and they may raise a second brood after the first one. After breeding season, when the migratory Pine Warblers move south to join the resident birds, they are known to form large flocks of up to 100 or more.

Pine Warblers are the only warblers that regularly eat seeds. Therefore, they may show up at birdfeeders in the wintertime to eat items like millet and sunflower kernels. Year-round they eat pine seeds as a part of their diet. Studies show that birds that ate more seeds had a different digestive tract than those that ate more fruit.

That particular day in early March we stopped in an area where there were lots of pine trees, and sure enough, he was there. He flew over us and began singing, letting me get some amazing photos. Pine Warbler populations are doing very well, so hopefully the next time you travel to southeastern Oklahoma you will get one!

# President's Perspective

## Warblers! Warblers! Warblers!

April and May are Spring migration times and that means warblers are coming north. Seeing (and hearing them) when they are passing through is the challenge. Modern technology helps for sure. Reports from birders to our south and across the state alert us. Here in Central Oklahoma only a few pass through or nest here. Most of the warbler migration is more in eastern third of the state.

Over the last 20 plus years since I have lived here I have visited the Red Slough area near Idabel for the Red Slough Birding Convention five (5) times with wonderful results, as each time 22-26 warbler species were seen. Unfortunately the COVID pandemic has resulted in that festival being cancelled in 2020 and 2021. BUT the warblers still come!

Other great "warbler watching" areas in OK are Sequoyah NWR, Oxley Nature Center & Northwoods (Tulsa), and Pathfinders Parkway in Bartlesville.

So, journey out to these fabulous warbler areas and if you are like me and can not hear most of them any longer go with birders who can still hear them. I just checked my National Geographic Bird book and I can only HEAR seven (7) of the 50+ warblers.

That has not stopped me from getting to see these "beautiful little jewels" of spring as they come to Oklahoma or just pass through! I revel in the thought of seeing them every spring and just maybe I'll get to see one of the 5-6 that add to my life list of North American warblers!

We leave on May 1 for Idabel! AGAIN !

*Hal A. Yocum*



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## In-Person Meetings resume May 17!



Would you like to tag along on a safari with Nancy Vicars and Warren Harden to Africa? Come to the Oklahoma City Audubon Society meeting at **7:00 pm, Monday, May 17**, at the Will Rogers Garden Center. They will share their dream destination to that continent before they both or the big animals disappear!

Join us! More info in May's newsletter. Masks required; no refreshments served.



## Chirpings and Such

April 20, 2021  
By Patti Muzny

Just when I dared to think Ma Nature could possibly have exhausted her amazing repertoire of tantrums, she rears back and rapid-fires another round at us! I am a gardening enthusiast and I've been growing things in Oklahoma almost since red dirt. Even though I purchased a few tomato and pepper plants, I deliberately procrastinated a bit and only actually planted a few plants in the garden spots. The remaining collection has been languishing on the back patio until I felt like it would be



safe to plant. Well, sure enough Ma Nature has one last chilly tantrum to throw and my gardens look like a bucket graveyard on the eve of a threatened freeze. The remaining collection has migrated to the house, where it will remain until next



week. I will keep the buckets handy, because there is always the possibility of that icy stuff that makes an appearance a few times a year.

Our back yard continues to host an entertaining variety of feathered friends. For several weeks we've been feeding two pairs of mallards. They are very tame and have even landed in the back and proceeded to march up onto the patio and peek in the back door into the house to make sure I come out and put out the bird seed. When I come out they escort me down the length of the patio toward where I store the seed, quacking and waddling beside me. One afternoon I was sitting outside and watched as they flew in and landed on the concrete drive rather than the grass. This landing was anything but graceful – orange feet shining, they slid a few feet, but didn't crash into the side of the house!

I kept hoping one of the pairs (Things get "Western" when both pairs are visiting at the same time!) would nest in the

yard. One day I looked out the front window of our bedroom and could see Ma Duck curled up under the boxwood hedge. She would appear to be nesting there part of each day for about 4 days. On Sunday I didn't see her, so I carefully felt under the leaves and there were no eggs and she still has not returned. Perhaps some of our many "furry tailed tree rats" raided the nest, or perhaps she was just faking me out?

We also are hosting two families of Chickadees in our back yard bird houses. One house is feeding babies and the other has eggs. But sometime on Sunday afternoon, some winged predator zeroed in on a Chickadee for snack. I found the feather puddle. On Monday I saw the pair with the babies carrying food, so the unfortunate meal was not the "patio Chickadees," and I haven't been able to determine if one of the "carport Chickadees" is missing. Our Purple Martins returned and I think we have 3 or 4 pairs this season. Carolina Wrens are nesting somewhere nearby and a Brown Thrasher has been singing every song he knows for about 3 weeks. So fun to have him back.

The hummingbirds have been visiting my feeder off and on for almost 2 weeks. Some of my sage and the coral honeysuckle have bloomed and I'm thrilled that the severe cold didn't seem to damage them. For the past several days, the yard has been hosting from 25 to 30 Chipping Sparrows. A few times, I've seen some hop up onto the patio. They are just such pretty little birds! Large waves of various and assorted blackbirds keep coming through and I really wish they would go away! There are w-a-y more Brown-headed Cowbirds than I would prefer to look at.

Nancy Vicars and I have continued to monitor Bald Eagle nests in several counties when weather is not extremely hostile. It was easy to confirm the presence of eaglets before leaves began to hide some of the nests. My son, Tim, works for a trucking company that hauls crude oil in several states, and has access to remote oil lease sites.

He has excellent observation skills and has spotted eagle nests, either near the site or on the road. His latest find was around Hennessey, where he



was investigating an accident near the tank battery. He told us he thought it had at least one eaglet. Well, when Nancy and I went there to document the nest for our records, we watched two rather large, dark eaglets as they flapped their wings and

*(continued on page 4)*

# Uncommon results from a common bird

By Paul Baicich & Wayne Peterson, *The Birding Community E-Bulletin*

This month, we will just highlight one simple outcome of carefully examining a common, yet interesting bird and the potential surprising outcome.

It was a Ring-billed Gull, just one among hundreds of thousands on the shores of Lake Erie. But as birder/photographer Chuck Slusarczyk scanned the blizzard of gulls by the Coast Guard Station in Cleveland, this bird caught his eye.

What Slusarczyk found was a Ring-billed Gull with a metal leg



**Credit: Chuck Slusarczyk Jr.**

band, clearly a bird that had been part of a banding project. Chuck figured that if he could read the tiny numbers on the band, he could discover more about this gull. He took multiple photos of the bird's leg-band, piecing together the sequence of numbers to read them all. After a total of five different attempts to photograph the numbers, he succeeded.

When he sent his results to the USGS Bird Banding Lab, he was surprised. The bird had been banded as a chick in Toronto. This was no big deal, but the date was. This bird was banded on 18 June 1992, which makes this Ring-billed Gull the *oldest* one on record. Yes, according to the U.S Geological Survey and Canadian Wildlife Service, the banded Ring-billed Gull Chuck Slusarczyk documented was 28 years and 9 months old.

This is proof that you never know what you're going to discover while birding. Just apply some curiosity... and persistence!

## Chirpings, cont.

moved around the nest with the female eagle standing guard. Right before we left, I took one last look at the nest and discovered a third eagle head had popped up! This was our first nest with triplets! That would be one major full time job for the parents.

The ironic part of this story is that as a youngster, Tim barely tolerated all of our camping trips that included good birding locations. Brian and I were the birders and he managed to build up a passing avian education mostly through osmosis. I put up with his rock throwing, water splashing, loud noises and eye-rolls and he put up with the birding. Now, as an adult, and with his move to a ranch environment near Stillwater, he and my daughter-in-law are becoming pretty proficient birders. It does make me smile. It helps that there is a small lake on the property where Bald Eagles can be seen perched and fishing, all from Tim's and Amy's bedroom and kitchen windows! We know there must be a nest somewhere in the vicinity, but none of us have been able to find a nest closer than about 6 miles away. He also found a nest that fledged one eaglet on the edge of the Cimarron River, not far from Langston.

On one of our visits to the eagle nests on the Canadian River below the dam at Lake Eufaula, we watched an adult Bald Eagle fly toward its nest with a rather large, long bodied fish. Gar, maybe? Apparently the eagle's catch was much heavier than its muscles could handle, because it landed well below the nest in a nearby tree. It sat there and rested for a while and made another attempt. This time he just landed in the pasture. After a few more minutes on the ground, he struggled to take flight and managed to land in the nest tree, but again well below the high nest. He flapped and struggled and made several attempts, but after observing him for about 45 minutes, we had to move on and we don't know if he ever made it to the nest with his weighty catch.

Nancy and I have already made a few visits to our Atlas blocks in conjunction with another of The Sutton Center's latest projects. We've made initial visits to a McClain County block and another around Lindsey, and some in and around Kingfisher County. We were excited to be assigned two blocks in the Stigler/Eufaula area that included two of our Bald Eagle nests. More to come!!

Yes, we do continue to be out and about, but with precautions toward our health and that of any other human we might happen to encounter, including our vaccinations. With binoculars, masks, snacks and an ongoing curiosity, we eagerly look forward to many more birding excursions.

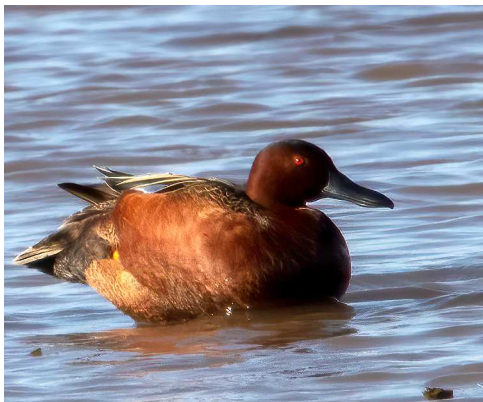


# Recorders Report

March 2021

Here they come !! Neotropical Migratory Birds, shorebirds, egrets, as well as those wintering in southern North America are beginning to arrive: Some to stay; others to continue north. Of the returning birds by the end of March, Barn Swallow have been found in 9 counties and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in 6 counties. 13 more species have now been reported in all 12 counties bringing the total reported in all 12 counties to 35. Who are the new ones?

On the 1<sup>st</sup> Simon Vickers noticed **Barn Owl** at Heindrick's Park in Stillwater. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Branden Farris added **Long-billed Dowitcher** at Bethany-Warr Acres WTP in Oklahoma County; and Sharon Henthorn described **Barn Swallow** flying over the Lake Hefner Dam. On the 10<sup>th</sup> Brian Marra detected Long-billed Dowitcher at Stinchcomb WR West; **Neotropic Cormorants** were located in Oklahoma City at Lake Hefner by Steve Stone; at Lake Overholser by Jimmy Woodard; and in Stillwater at Boomer Lake Park by Scott Loss. Hal Yocum drove by the Bald Eagle nest in eastern OKC and found an adult Eagle feed-



ing an eaglet bite by bite. On the 11<sup>th</sup> Steve Davis recorded **Osprey** at Lake Hefner; and at Lake Thunderbird SP John Tharp spotted Barn Swallow, **Lesser Yellowlegs**, and Cody Delano viewed **Cinnamon Teal**. On the 12<sup>th</sup> the Ornithology Class-OU verified Purple Martin and **Tree Swallow** at Lake Thun-

derbird SP—East Sentinel; and Matt Jung counted Yellow-headed Blackbirds along the Mustang Road.



On the 13<sup>th</sup> Joe Grzybowski saw 12 Black-backed Gulls mostly at the Kirkpatrick Turnpike borrow pit. Most were first-winter Lesser Black-backed Gulls but one was a **Great Black-backed Gull**. It stayed around at Lake Overholser long enough for several other birders to see and some to photo-

graph it. Meanwhile, K Dean Edwards came across Tree Swallow at Lake El Reno, Jennifer Kidney heard Brown Thrasher singing in her pecan tree in Norman; and Landon Neumann confirmed Cinnamon Teal, Pectoral Sandpiper and Tree Swallow at Cushing Water Treatment Plant in Payne County. On the 14<sup>th</sup> Sean Washington discovered **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** at Woodland Park in Oklahoma County; and Randolph King had **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** at Crystal Lake in Oklahoma County. On the 16<sup>th</sup> Bill Diffin got **Baird's Sandpiper** at the Yukon Parkway.



On the 17<sup>th</sup> Abigail Hobbs encountered **Pectoral Sandpiper** at the Big Wewoka Creek Site 11 Reservoir in Seminole County; at Lake Overholser Bill Diffin identified Barn Swallow and Braden Farris observed Tree Swallow, and at the Meridian Technology Center Pond in Stillwater Scott Loss recognized Baird's Sandpiper. On the 18<sup>th</sup> Lori Beasley documented Pyrrhuloxia in Edmond. On the 19<sup>th</sup> Joe Grzybowski flushed **Sprague's Pipit** at Ten Mile Flat in Cleveland County; and Braden Farris tallied Pectoral Sandpiper at North Yukon Parkway. On the 18<sup>th</sup> Steve Davis reported Blue-winged Teal along Drummond Road in Kingfisher County. On the 19<sup>th</sup> Cinnamon Teal were found by someone at Stinchcomb WR west and Randolph King at Lake Hefner – Prairie Dog Point. Northern Rough-winged Swallow were located by the Ornithology Class-OU along South Jenkins, and Scott Loss at Boomer Lake Park.

The 13 additional species reported in all 12 counties are Mourning Dove, American Coot, Killdeer, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Eastern Phoebe, Carolina Wren, European Starling, House Sparrow, House Finch, White-throated Sparrow, Spotted Towhee, and Common Grackle. Purple Finches were reported in all counties except Kingfisher.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> John Tharp identified **Black-and-white Warbler** and **Cliff Swallow** at Lake Thunderbird SP – East Sentinel; Brian Marra saw Osprey at Stinchcomb WR West; and Deanne McKinney spotted **Cattle Egret** at Rose Lake in Canadian County. On the 21<sup>st</sup> Landon Neumann reported Barn Swallow and Long-billed Dowitcher near Hennessy in Kingfisher County; Brian Marra discovered **Lark Sparrow** and **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** at Arcadia Lake; Someone located **Louisiana Waterthrush** near Lexington in



© Clay Billman

Cleveland County; and Lesser Yellowlegs were found by Braden Farris at Bethany-Warr Acres WTP; and Bill Diffin at NW 63<sup>rd</sup> & Kilpatrick Turnpike. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> Clay Billman flushed an **American Bittern** at Teal Ridge Wetland; Braden Farris counted **White-eyed Vireo** at Lake Stanley Draper; Joe Grzybowski noticed Pectoral Sandpiper at Ten Mile Flats and Baird's Sandpiper at SW

149<sup>th</sup> Sod Farm; Bill Diffin verified Cliff Swallow at Lake Hefner; and Kent Andersson had Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Stillwater.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> in McClain County Randolph King added Northern Rough-winged Swallow at Purcell Lake and Barn Swallow at Goldsby Sod Farm; Larry Mays detected Sprague's Pipit at Newcastle Park; Someone came across **Whooping Crane** standing around a waterhole



in the wheat field near the Cimmaron River north of Guthrie in Logan County; and Zach DuFran got Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Norman. On the 25<sup>th</sup> John Tharp tallied Osprey at Lake Thunderbird – Dam. Dick Gunn encountered **Yellow-throated Warbler** and Tree Swallow along South Jenkins. On the 26<sup>th</sup> Trina Arnold described Osprey at Sportsman Lake in Seminole; and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were observed by Brian Marra at Stinchcomb WR East; and Rachel Wrenn in Norman. **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers** were confirmed by Megan Migues near Stroud; Zach Poland along the Cimarron Turnpike; Zachary League at Boomer Lake Park, Tim O'Connell near Calvary; and Abdul Dominguez at Summit Lake in Cleveland County.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> Alex Harman recorded Barn Swallow and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher along I-35 near Paul's Valley in Garvin County; Steve Stone viewed Barn Swallow along I-44 south of Chickasha

in Grady County; Braden Farris had Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Louisiana Waterthrush and Black-and-white Warbler at the Prairie Prime Ranch in Lincoln County. White-eyed Vireos were noticed by Chad Ellis at Konawa in Pottawatomie County and John Tharp in Norman; and Randolph King saw Cattle Egret at SW 149<sup>th</sup> Street Sod Farm in Cleveland County. In Payne County Scott Loss detected Louisiana Waterthrush at Couch Park in Stillwater, and Stan Laughlin recognized Black-and-white Warbler at Ghost Hollow. In Oklahoma County Mathew Kugel added Lark Sparrow at Stinchcomb WR west; and Larry Mays spotted Baird's Sandpiper and Pectoral Sandpiper at Bethany/Warr Acres WTP.



On the 28<sup>th</sup> Alenka Weinhold discovered Scissor-tailed Flycatcher along the HE Bailey Turnpike near Cement in Grady County; Jerry Vanbebber came across **Northern Parula** at

Lake Thunderbird SP—East Sentinel; Braden Farris identified **Swainson's Hawk** in Oklahoma County; and Brian Marra reported Black-and-white Warbler at Arcadia Lake. On the 29<sup>th</sup> Caleb McKinney observed Black-and-white Warbler at Ninnekah in Grady County; Allen Coddling encountered **Solitary Sandpiper** at Bethany-Warr Acres WTP; Bill Diffin had Louisiana Waterthrush at Mitch Park; and Scott Loss recognized Cliff Swallow at Boomer Lake Park.

May 8<sup>th</sup> brings us Global Big Day with eBird. Can you help all 12 counties participate?

In the Central Oklahoma area during March, **162** species were reported with **28** new species which brings the year's total to **196**. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds. Information is accessed at: [ebird](https://ebird.org/region/US-OK?yr=all). 2021 eBird: An online database of bird distribution and abundance [web application]. eBird Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York. Available: <https://ebird.org/region/US-OK?yr=all>. (Accessed: March 29 & 30, 2021); occasionally from Facebook, and the OKBIRDS List. I can be contacted at [emkok@earthlink.net](mailto:emkok@earthlink.net). Esther M. Key, Editor.



# Global Big Day May 8

By eBirding this past year you've helped to build a powerful global resource for birding, science, and conservation. Thank you. Next month, join birdwatchers around the world and take eBird to new heights simply by eBirding on Global Big Day—8 May 2021.

Global Big Day is a celebration of birds that anyone can be a part of. During [last year's Global Big Day](#) more than 50,000 people across 175 countries collectively reported a record-setting 120,000 eBird checklists. Can we set new records this year, together? All you have to do is spend a few minutes birding on 8 May and eBird what you find.

Here are three easy ways to make the most out of your Global Big Day:

**Brush up on local birds.** Knowing what birds you could spot makes finding them on the big day more fun. Download the free [Merlin Bird ID](#) app and start exploring species in your area today.

**Use eBird Mobile.** eBird's free app has features such as Mobile Explore and [Quick Entry](#) that make it easier to find and share the birds around you. [Try eBird Mobile.](#)

**Make birding's biggest team even bigger.** Do you have a friend or loved one with a growing interest in birds? Encourage them to join the Global Big Day fun.

## Who Am I?



*Leucistic Lark Sparrow photographed by Betz Hacker in SW OK on April 11, 2021.*

What is Bird Leucism . Bird Leucism: Is a genetic mutation that results in a total or partial reduction of color in a bird's plumage. The reduction of color in the bird's plumage is due to an inadequate deposition or fixation of pigments only in the bird's feathers. Other parts of the bird's body have normal coloration.

## Field Trip Report: Soldier Creek Industrial Park Trail (SCIP)

*By Jimmy Woodard*

Ten participants walked the new section of mountain bike trails running north along Crutch Creek from NE 23rd Street on April 7, 2021. Weather was a bit cool at first but warmed quickly when the clouds broke up. It was windy the whole morning. Forty species were sighted. We found an immature Bald Eagle, Swainson's Hawk, White-wing Dove and Yellow-headed Blackbird which were all new for the SCIP eBird list.

Participants included Fuki Burns, Steve Davis, Jenny Elton, Sharon Henthorn, Calvin Rees, Dave and Sue Woodson, Hal Yoakum, and myself.

## Field Trip Report: Mitch Park

*By Hal Yocum*

The second 2021 Spring Field trip of the OKC Audubon Society was held Wednesday April 14 at Mitch Park, Edmond - lead by Hal Yocum. Six (6) others attended: Jimmy Woodard, Hollis Price, Nancy Vicars, Grace S., Ruth B., and Marie.

We had good weather with little sun, but no rain and little wind during the 8:30-Noon walk.

We counted 47 species. The more interesting findings included: hummingbird (glimpse only-but previously identified and photographed as a Back-chinned; Eastern Phoebe; Fish Crow; Barn & Cliff Swallows; Red-breasted Nuthatch (seen and heard); White-breasted Nuthatch (heard); Bewick's Wren; Brown Thrashers (many singing), 7 sparrows: Field, White-crowned, White-throated, Lincoln's, Harris's, Lark (FOS in the park), and House; Spotted and Eastern Towhee; Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warblers; Pine Siskin; Scissor-tailed Flycatchers; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Louisiana Waterthrush (heard).

Stay tuned to our website for more for more field trips.

# OOS SPRING MEETING: SEQUOYAH STATE PARK

By Jimmy Woodard

Approximately 50 birders met at Sequoyah State Park for the 2021 Spring OOS meeting on April 16-18. We followed COVID restrictions such as wearing masks, social distancing, and mostly meeting outside.

Friday evening, we had walk up registration, arranged Silent Auction items, and socialized at the group camp near the entrance to the park. Some folks birded on their own around the property.

## ***Saturday, we had three field trips:***

**Zac Poland** led about 8 birders to the McClellan Kerr WMA just south of Wagoner. They left at 7AM. They also visited Vann's Marsh wetlands very nearby. Highlights were Anhinga, Whooping Crane, Marsh Wren, and Sora.

**Mark Howery** led a good size contingent to the Sequoyah WMA on the west side of Ft Gibson Lake. I did not hear a bird report from their trip. They left at 8AM.

**Bill Diffin** led a small group of eight participants to stay close and bird inside the state park. We drove around a few places and walked a trail near the nature center. Highlights for this group were Tree Swallows, House Wren, Summer Tanager, Broad-winged Hawk, Warbling and Red-eyed Vireos, Prothonotary Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, and Eastern Kingbird.

After the field trips, everyone got lunch on their own. Several folks enjoyed the food at Swadley's Foggy Bottom restaurant at the lodge. There was a board meeting at the group camp that met from 1PM to about 3PM. Everyone was welcome to attend as they discussed various subject and committees. At 3:30, there was a kid's walk at the Nature Center.

The new OOS president-elect is Angelina Stancampiano, a naturalist at the state park nature center. In her OOS position, she is responsible for conducting our spring and fall meetings for the next two years. She also produced and recorded our virtual speaker, Oklahoma birding legend Jim Harman. He has been a naturalist and

refuge manager most of his life. He is now 95 and retired for many years. He told several wonderful stories and filled us in on his life working for the environment.

After the video presentation, Zac Dufran showed us moths that gathered on screens under his lights. It was quite interesting. A few folks gathered around a fire and had some s'mores as the evening waned to a close.

Overall, even though the weather was less than cooperative being cold, windy and showery; I think the meeting was generally a success by all accounts. My personal list was 102 species.



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