

April Night Moves

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The Oklahoma City Audubon society is neither a chapter of nor affiliated with National Audubon.

Welcome

The Oklahoma City Audubon Society welcomes:

Richard Stillinger, Edmond, OK

Lilly Escobar Withey, Ninnekah, OK

Cindi Tennison, Mustang, OK

Welcome Back:

Patricia Rickey, OKC

Our speaker for our April 15 Audubon meeting will be Matthew Broadway, Ph.D. student at Oklahoma State University with his presentation entitled “April Night Moves: How Eastern Whip-poor-wills and Chuck-will's-widows Respond to Landscapes, Lunar Conditions, and Each Other.”

In Matt’s words, nocturnal insectivorous birds such as the Eastern Whip-poor-will (*A. carolinensis*) and Chuck-will's-widow (*A. vociferus*) have experienced steep population declines across North America since the mid-20th century. Unfortunately, these species are represented by a narrow scope of monitoring and research effort. . . . we will discuss the influence of environmental conditions (lunar periods) on behavior, the effects of landscape characteristics on presence/absence, and the interactions between both Eastern Whip-poor-will's and Chuck-will's-widows.



Matthew has a Bachelor’s degree from Auburn University and a Master’s degree from the University of Wisconsin-Steven’s Point. He has taught at Indiana University’s School of Environment and Public Affairs and plant taxonomy and ecology in the Appalachian Mountains and Smokey Mountain National Park. As a receiver of multiple scholarships, grants and speaking opportunities, he has published papers covering a wide variety of interests and expertise, served on various committees and supervised numerous research projects.

Come out and join us for a nighthawk evening of birds and camaraderie.

Our meetings are held September through June on the third Monday of each month. 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.

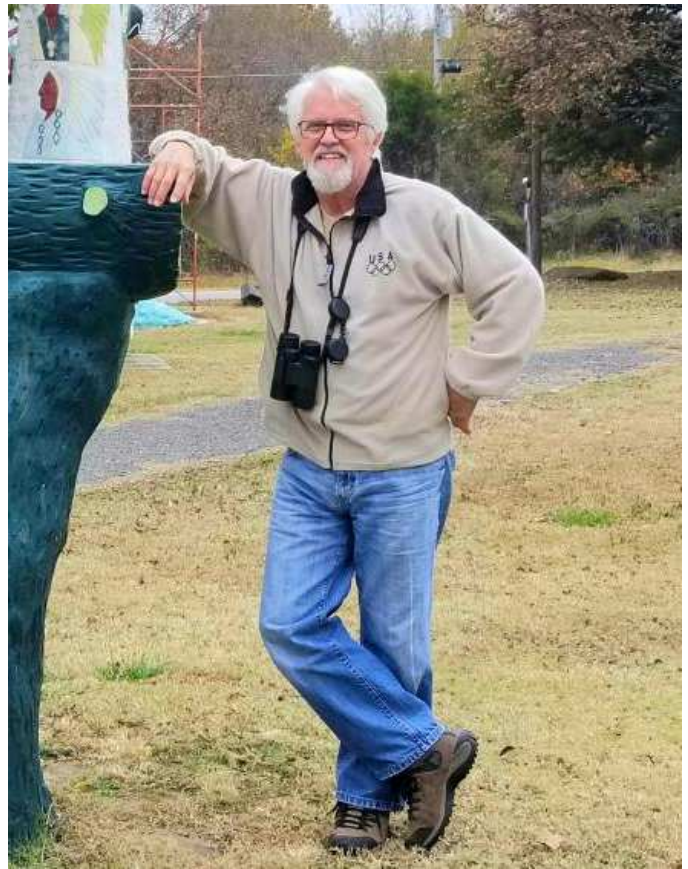
Have you paid your 2024 Dues?

See page 6.

President's Perspective

Dawn came early, warm, and damp that March 30th, 1974. I woke up in a strange bed in a new land excited for new experiences. We had arrived the evening before on the last flight of the day from Lima to Iquitos, Peru and my new assignment with our church administrative offices for what was called the East Peru Mission. (I was to be the only foreigner in the office; we were to be the only English speaking family there.)

The bedroom was simple with just a double bed, an armoire, and a couple chairs. The humidity had to be about 90%, temperature was around 80 degrees, no air conditioning, no fan. It was a corner room in the house of my new Peruvian boss (a former student of my father), 2 large screened windows for air (and moisture). But I was excited! 2 reasons: 1) I had always wanted to return to the Amazon since my last visit when I was 12 years old and now I was here with my own wife and 2 year old son. 2) I wondered what my first bird was going to be in this exotic tropical jungle directly across the street from the mighty Amazon River.



I heard a bird calling in the huge orchid and bromeliad laden tree right outside those windows—it sounded vaguely familiar but it couldn't be—I was on the Amazon after all! I quickly got dressed, grabbed my binoculars and stepped outside. A quick search through the tree revealed the singer—a Yellow Warbler in full breeding plumage. My very first bird in my new life—an old friend from the northlands bidding me farewell as he headed north to just where I had come from. I was to be greeted by the locals later.

Migrations. They began last month, at first, in a slow trickle, then gradually building up through this month until they will reach full swing in the next couple weeks after you read this. Those Yellow Warblers and all their cousins, aunts, uncles, more distant kin, all heading back up here and beyond to sing, nest, sing some more, then turn around and head back down south, each species to their favorite nook in some jungle, marsh, prairie, mountainside, or where ever. I know there are many conclusions, theories, theoretical facts as to the reason for all this but I always seem to find every concept couched in certain basic assumptions, suppositions, or simply “educated” guesses. The only real fact is They Do. Lots and lots of research has been done studying destinations, routes, possible reasons and they all seem to make sense, yet they are—at least to me—a fascinating mystery. I'm never satisfied with any of the reasons given; I always seem to find stuff that just doesn't add up. Perhaps it's just that I'm too skeptical or too questioning but I always seem to find unanswered questions in my mind. Migrations simply are never a nice simply wrapped up package and it fascinates me.

My little Yellow Warbler friend? I've met it in every South American country I've been in; a beautiful little tyke that reminded me every time of home. For them it's a risky trip taken every year, yet no permits, passports, check points, TSA inspections, visas, baggage handling ever needed. They just sing, catch a worm or two along the way, change out their feathers to meet the occasion, and warm my heart. Is that why, my friend? Migration, got to love it!

*Bob Holbrook
President*



Bird of the Month: Black-legged Kittiwake

By *Grace Huffman*

This month's bird caused quite a stir earlier this month when it showed up at Lake Overholser! Calvin Reese discovered this Black-legged Kittiwake March 31st, and it was seen by several birders over the next few days.

While there is no such thing as a "seagull," Black-legged Kittiwakes are about as close as you can get to that. Breeding on steep cliffs in Alaska and Canada, they winter in the oceans. They get their name from their call, a loud "kittiwake" repeated.

Breeding adults have a bright yellow bill, gray wings with black wingtips, white everywhere else, and their signature black legs. In the winter they have a black collar or ear smudge on the back of their neck. Young birds have both the ear smudge and the black collar, a black bill, and lots of black in the wings. This black shows up as a bold M in flight, but beware: juvenile Bonaparte's Gulls also have a black M, although it is less bold and they lack the black neck collar of the juvenile kittiwake. As they get older, the black bill will start to turn yellow and the collar and smudge will gradually disappear as they reach their first spring and second winter.

Nests are built on cliffsides, of things like mud and vegetation. Males will return first every year to reclaim the nest site, and they are typically monogamous, with males and females returning to breed together every year. They share the duties of raising the chicks until they are old enough to leave the nest and fend for themselves. Once breeding season is over, they usually go back to the sea.

Sometimes though, they show up inland, like this 1st winter bird did. It's always a treat to see one here! They are currently considered of low concern, but in the rest of the globe they are in steep decline, with warming oceans thought to be a cause. I hope you are able to see one of these beautiful birds someday!



Black-legged Kittiwake ©Grace Huffman

References: allaboutbirds.org

Birds lost their teeth?!

A new fossil, named "Attenborough's strange bird" after naturalist and documentarian Sir David Attenborough, is the first of its kind to evolve a toothless beak. It's from a branch of the bird family tree that went extinct in the mass extinction 66 million years ago, and this strange bird is another puzzle piece that helps explain why some birds -- and their fellow dinosaurs -- went extinct, and others survived to today.



An illustration of the fossil skeleton of the new bird species *Imparavis attenboroughi* and a reconstruction of what the animal would have looked like in flight. © Ville Sinkkonen

No birds alive today have teeth. But that wasn't always the case -- many early fossil birds had beaks full of sharp, tiny teeth. In a paper in the journal *Cretaceous Research*, scientists have described a new species of fossil bird that was the first of its kind to evolve toothlessness; its name, in honor of naturalist Sir David Attenborough, means "Attenborough's strange bird."

All birds are dinosaurs, but not all dinosaurs fall into the specialized type of dinosaurs known as birds, sort of like how all squares are rectangles, but not all rectangles are squares. The newly described *Imparavis attenboroughi* is a bird, and therefore, also a dinosaur.

Scientists previously thought that the first record of toothlessness in this group was about 72 million years ago, in the late Cretaceous. This little guy, *Imparavis*, pushes that back by about 48 to 50 million years. So toothlessness, or edentulism, evolved much earlier in this group than they thought.

OOS Spring Meeting 2024 Schedule

The Oklahoma Ornithological Society will host its Spring meeting at Salt Plains State Park from April 26 to 28. All activities are free except the dinner event on Saturday evening.

It's nesting season for Terri's Great Horned Owls!



Lil' Guy, the single Great Horned Owl for 2024, at Terri Underhill's nesting barrel. He continues to grow and stay active while his parents keep a watchful eye on him from their perches in Terri's yard.

Terri's webcams can be viewed at <http://okiebirdcam.com>

The Owl Videos:

<https://youtu.be/Sd96bdolLL0?si=IfAvAuzRZnw-66ux>

FINK PARK

This small park is located in central Edmond across from the entrance to University of Central Oklahoma entrance on Second Street in Edmond.

Parking is limited to 10 spaces but the park does not get a lot of car traffic. Rather it is a park that is mostly accessed by the students attending the University on foot or bicycle. Free parking.

Length: approx. 1/2 mile long paralleling Second Street east to Bryant Street. At most 100 yards wide but much of it is only a 1/4 mile wide or less. There is

a small creek running through it. Walking path is paved and has only slight ups and downs. Generally downhill as one goes east from the parking area.

Environment and Ecology: Mostly wooded along the creek with large trees . There are open areas at each end.

Safety: Excellent, as there is a lot of foot and bike traffic.

Birds: This varies with the season. However, it attracts most common birds and many migrants and wintering birds. Spring; warblers, Summer Tanager (many mulberry trees), Eastern Phoebe, Swainson's Thrush. Summer : local common birds. Fall: migrants and common birds. Winter: resident hawks and owls (barred and great horned have been seen), kinglets, nuthatches, sparrows, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Eastern Phoebe,

Submitted by: Hal A. Yocum



Upcoming Field Trip

Saturday, April 27, 2024

8:00am to 10:00am

This field trip to Mollie Spencer Farm in Yukon, led by Nancy Vicars, will be a public outing.

Location: 1001 Garth Brooks Blvd. (NE corner of Garth Brooks and Vandament St. in Yukon). Parking is located at the school parking lot on the north side. Do NOT park in the meadow inside the farm.

Leader: Nancy Vicars, nancy.vicars@sbcglobal.net

The farm is not open to the general public outside of regularly-scheduled events hosted at the farm.

Minutes of the OKC Audubon Society Meeting March 18, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 7:02PM by President Bob Holbrook. Attendance: 57 (including 8 guests)

Treasurer's report for March from Nancy Vicars was approved as read.

Guyla Mayo would like feedback on her monthly bird reports. Please read March's "President's Perspective" and reach out.

Oklahoma Native Plant organization would like someone knowledgeable on the connection between plants and birds to speak at one of their meetings. Please reach out to Terri Underhill.

Oklahoma Ornithological Society (OOS) spring meeting is April 26 - 28 at Salt Plains. All are welcome, and activities are free except for Saturday dinner (can purchase on OOS website.) Cabins are filled, but RV and tent sites are available through OK State Park Website.

Mollie Spencer Farms in Yukon is hosting their annual public bird walk April 27. Please contact Nancy Vicars if you would like to assist.

No upcoming field trips planned yet, but possibly Mitch Park with Hal Yocum in April. Keep an eye out for emails.

Raptor Keep's Dennis Smith, along with three assistants, gave a talk on falconry, raptors and conservation, and showed off their live birds including vultures, hawks, and owls.

The next OKC Audubon Society meeting will be held on Monday, April 15, 2024.

—*Cole Penning, Secretary*

Flaco, the Eurasian eagle-owl whose escape from the Central Park Zoo and [life on the loose](#) captivated New York, had enough rat poison and pigeon virus in his system to kill him even if he had not died after apparently striking an Upper West Side building last month.

The finding, from a necropsy conducted by Bronx Zoo pathologists after [Flaco's death on Feb. 23](#), validated widespread concerns about the hazards he faced living as a free bird in Manhattan for just over a year. He would have turned 14 this month.

"Flaco's severe illness and death are ultimately attributed to a combination of factors — infectious disease, toxin exposures and traumatic injuries — that underscore the hazards faced by wild birds, especially in an urban setting," the Wildlife Conservation Society, which operates the Central Park and Bronx Zoos, said in a statement.

Initial necropsy findings released the day after what on-lookers described as a deadly building strike suggested Flaco had sustained an acute traumatic injury to his body, with signs of substantial hemorrhage under his sternum and in his back near his liver.

DUES NOTICE

It's time once again to renew your annual membership. OCAS dues are \$15 per household and may be paid at the monthly meetings, online at our website <http://www.okc-audubon.org> or mailed to Nancy Vicars, Treasurer, 2341 NW 160th St., Edmond, OK

Refreshments

Thanks to the April Refreshment Volunteers:

Snacks: Larry Mays, Scott Jantz, Patti Muzny, Jimmy Woodard

Ice/drinks: Steve Davis & Mary Lane.