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

The Oklahoma City Audubon Society Welcomes:

Kelly Ryan, Edmond

Tall Tales Telling

“Tall Bird Tales” will again highlight our annual December meeting on December 19, accompanied by holiday culinary delights and camaraderie.

Bring yourselves and your anecdotes and yarns to regale fellow members with your wonderful, beautiful, harrowing or death defying birding experiences.

Great birds have shown up in Oklahoma some truly great birders have had truly great times with those and many other birds.



Come out for the fun and friendship and sharing. A good time will

This Black-naped Pigeon has been documented by scientists for the first time since its 1882 discovery and has been captured on camera for the first time ever. The bird only lives on Fergusson Island, a rugged island in the D’Entrecasteaux Archipelago off of eastern Papua New Guinea.

be had by all. We gather in the round to relate a birding story or other personal event of interest and/or humor for the entire group. So, get your story straight, true or otherwise, and regale us on Monday night, December 19.

Refreshments: Everyone is encouraged to bring something to share.

Our meetings are held September through June on the third Monday of each month. Meetings begin at 7 p.m. Visitors are always welcome.

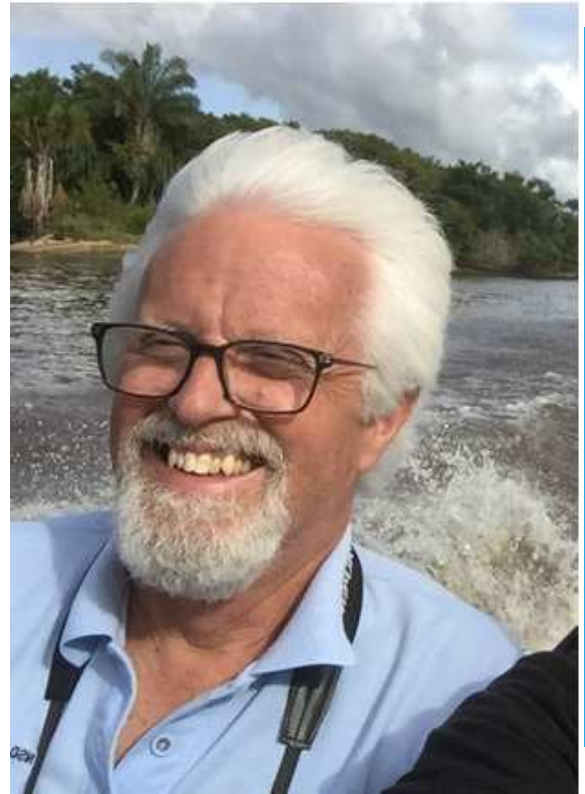
Meeting Location:

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

NOTICE: Due to scheduling conflicts at the Will Rogers Garden Center, the **January meeting**, will now be held on the **third TUESDAY (January 17) in 2023.**

President's Perspective

Which is your "Most Wanted" winter bird? Winter generally means a bit of a slowdown in birding. Our feeders are packed full of choice morsels we hope will attract at least the cardinals and chickadees and perhaps a few others (I've been getting a Red-breasted Nuthatch now for the last couple winters and he's back again already)--then we can always hope for that unique, special, rare feathered friend--one of our "Most Wanted". Perhaps it's a Northern Shrike or a Bohemian Waxwing or one of those silly Crossbills. But most of us will be content to just stay indoors, enjoy a hot cup of chocolate and watch whatever shows up. We're not too inclined to get out and freeze our back porches off actually trying to find something special. For a very long time, my "Most Wanted" was a Snowy Owl. We lived near Chicago--as far west as we could get (Bolingbrook) and still claim Chicago. Every winter a Snowy managed to show up somewhere in northeastern Illinois and every winter, I somehow managed to miss it.



Bob Holbrook on the Essequibo River, Guyana

Then the winter of '86 came. A Snowy showed up in downtown Chicago along the lakefront. I called my cousin (a birder living up just north of us in Glen Ellyn. He came down with his van, my son, Hans, and I joined him for the hunt. We drove down to Lakeshore Drive. It was December 27. Cold, blustery, snowy. We parked the van near the Aquarium and walked...all day...out around the Planetarium, along the fence at Meiggs Field, out along the Miracle Hedge (which is awesome for Spring migrants, hence its name), stared across the road towards Soldier Field (it had been seen sitting high up on the walls). We ate a cold sandwich for lunch and kept walking, searching, freezing our toes and fingers. We searched the entire length of the rock breakers areas, every bush, every open soccer field, every frozen over picnic area, the tops of every outhouse/restroom. It was getting late, the lights had come on, and we had nothing to show for all the cold miserable day...again! We reluctantly trudged back through the snow to our van and got to within 15-20 feet of it when we looked up at the light post we had parked under and there sat that pesky OWL staring down at us with an expression that said: "So where on earth have you guys been all day! I was just about to give up and fly away to a more cozy place for the night! OK, so now you saw me, check me off your cotton-picken' list and I'm out of here!!!"



Yup, December 27, 1986, Chicago, Illinois a Snowy Owl. That's what my list says. One more bird for my Illinois State list, my Lower 48 List, my ABA Area List, my AOU Area-North List...just one more bird, equal among many others when it's a checkmark. But when I remember the rest of the story, I still recall that entire day, I can still feel my frozen fingers and

toes and how we all three of us bust out laughing at the crazy moment.

Ahhh, got to love Winter Birding!

—Bob Holbrook, *alias Inca Tern*



Bird of the Month: Verdin

By Grace Huffman

This month's bird is small and cute enough to be an ornament on your Christmas tree, but is a challenge to find here in Oklahoma.

The Verdin is a small, largely gray songbird with reddish shoulder patches and a bright yellow face. They might look somewhat similar to chickadees, but are actually the only member of the old world family of Penduline Tits that can be found in North America.

They are birds of the southwest deserts, ranging from California to Texas and down into Mexico. Occasionally they have been reported in SW Oklahoma. Verdins largely eat insects, but have also been known to add some variety with nectar and even occasionally visiting hummingbird feeders in their range.

Verdins build a fascinating nest. In fact, they build more than one! While they obviously build one to raise their babies in, they also build nests to roost in. It's a small, spherical nest with the entrance hole in the bottom. It is very thickly lined with soft materials like hair and feathers, while the outside is constructed with thorny sticks. Summer nests are constructed in such a way it's thought to allow for cooling airflow, while winter nests have better insulation for cold desert nights. Outside of breeding season though, these birds are largely solitary.

If you go looking for one in the southwest US, they like scrublands and arroyos (gullies formed by fast moving water) in the desert. I photographed this bird in the parking lot by the visitor's center in Bosque Del Apache, NM. It was very noisy and I heard it before I saw it, and gave us wonderful views. At one point it was almost in arm's reach it was so close! To find them in Oklahoma however, they are much harder. Most records in Oklahoma are located near Eldorado, which is in the far southwest part of the state. I've been down there a couple times and have yet to find one in state, but hopefully someday!



Verdin © Grace Huffman

Like with so many birds, these birds are in significant decline due to habitat loss. They are still considered least concern however. Hopefully in your travels to southwest Oklahoma or beyond you are able to find one of these adorable birds!

Reference: allaboutbirds.org.

Recorder's Report

November 2022

As the weather continues to cool down, winter birds are arriving including some first ever for the central Oklahoma area. The bird count for the year is now over 300 species for central Oklahoma. A magnificent feat accomplished by vigilant birders all over the area.

On October 13 Tabitha Olsen documented an **Arctic Tern** at Lake Hefner – Hobie Point in OKC. On November 1st D&D Norris spotted Red-breasted Nuthatch and Dark-eyed Junco at Kairworks



Arctic Tern © Tabitha Olsen

Garden in Logan County; Scott Loss described Grasshopper Sparrow in Payne County; and Steve Stone came across Hermit Thrush and American Pipit at Lake Hefner. On the 2nd Michelle Spacek detected Brown Creeper and American Goldfinch at Pink in Pottawatomie County; Nancy Reed

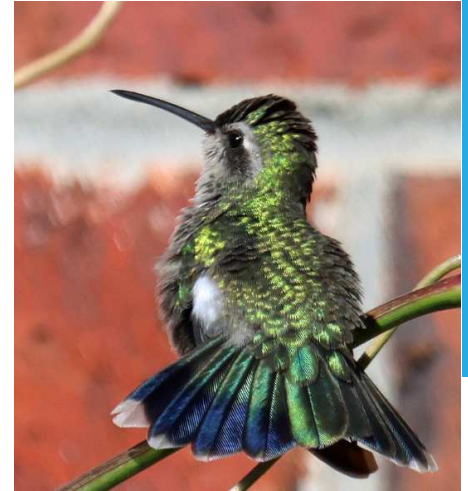
found White-throated Sparrow and Spotted Towhee in Norman; Scott Loss heard a Purple Finch flyover at Sanborn Lake in Payne County; and Brian Marra noted Surf Scoter at Lake Hefner. On the 3rd Steve Stone added Western Grebe at Lake Hefner.



Surf Scoter

On the 4th Megan Migues photographed Loggerhead Shrike near Stroud and Braden Farris tallied Cooper's Hawk, Lincoln's Sparrow and Ruby-crowned Kinglet in Lincoln County; while Stephen P made the last report of the Reddish Egret at Lake Hefner. On the 5th Larry Mays recognized Yellow-rumper Warbler, Greater Scaup, Hooded Merganser and Ruddy Duck at Lake Overholser. On the 6th Michael Reichert counted Belted Kingfisher at Hall Park in Norman. On the 8th Cody Delano had Merlin at Lake Stanley Draper. On the 10th Rhett Raibley got Snow Goose and Ross's Goose at Mulhall in Logan County; and Calvin Rees identified Red-breasted Merganser at Lake Overholser.

On the 11th Scott Loss located Hermit Thrush at Boomer Lake Park; and Jesse Pine documented a **Limpkin** in Cleveland County when the bird was brought in to Wild Care deceased most likely from a collision with a power line. On the 12th Trina Arnold viewed Snow Goose, Sandhill Crane, and Least Sandpiper in Kingfisher County; and Rhett Raibley saw American Tree Sparrow at Crescent in Logan County. Clay Billman spotted a **Short-eared Owl** circling over Lake Hefner and was able to hastily photograph it. In Edmond Marcia Palmer first reported a **Broad-billed Hummingbird** had been coming to their backyard feeder since October 8th. It continues to be seen into December.



Broad-billed Hummingbird © Joe Grzybowski

On the 13th Rondi Large noticed Gadwall and Ring-necked Duck near Seminole; Michelle Spacek confirmed Red-headed Woodpecker at Pink; and Mike Yough verified Vesper Sparrow at Orlando in Payne County. On the 14th Nancy Reed encountered Pine Siskin in Norman; while Joe Grzybowski discovered Common Loon at Lake Overholser in Canadian County and California Gull at Lake Hefner. On the 16th Aaron Milligan turned up Green-winged Teal at Macomb in Pottawatomie County; and Aaron Short had Sandhill Crane at Guthrie in Logan County. On the 17th Joe Grzybowski watched American Kestrel and about 20,000 European Starlings swarming and swirling at the Goldsby Sod Farm in McClain County. On the 18th Joe Grzybowski described two Trumpeter Swan as they flew over Lake Thunderbird – Twin Bridges.

On the 19th CJ Eckart witnessed Canvasback and Hooded Merganser at Lake Konawa in Seminole County; Jason Shaw came across American Kestrel at USAO Habitat area in Grady County; Braden Farris detected Smith's Longspur, Tufted Titmouse, White-crowned Sparrow and Spotted Towhee in Lincoln County; and Richard Rice found American Woodcock in Midwest City. On the 20th Mike Yough described a Rough-legged Hawk while it was flying along I-35 near

Guthrie. On the 21st Michelle Spacek photographed Western Meadowlark at Shawnee in Pottawatomie County; Joe Grzybowski documented **Pacific Loon** at Lake Hefner – Hobie Point; Jason Shaw spotted Hairy Woodpecker at Taylor Lake and Northern Shoveler at Rush Springs Sewage Lagoon in Grady County; and Andrea Edwards tallied Rusty Blackbird at Deer Creek in Oklahoma County.

On the 22nd Ric Rose noted Trumpeter Swan at the Cedar Valley Golf Club pond in Logan County. On the 23rd Michelle Spacek photographed Greater Scaup at Shawnee; and Jarod Hitchings added Northern Flicker at Adkins Hill Sod Farm in McClain County.



Ring-necked Pheasant

On the 24th Calvin Rees recognized Purple Finch at Lake Hefner; and Megan Migues counted Belted Kingfisher near Stroud. On the 25th Jacob Miranda observed Ring-necked Pheasant south of Guthrie along I-35 in Logan

County; Sam S had Horned Lark, American Pipit and Savannah Sparrow in southern Garvin County; Carole Rose heard Smith's Longspur flying overhead at Mitch Park in Edmond; Brian Marra got Horned Grebe, Swamp Sparrow and Savannah Sparrow at Lake Stanley Draper; and Carole Rose identified Smith's Longspur at Mitch Park in Edmond.

On the 26th Jarod Hitchings located Sharp-shinned Hawk at Goldsby Sod Farm in McClain County. On the 27th Joe Grzybowski recorded Ross's Goose and Loggerhead Shrike in Mustang at SW 15th Street; at Arcadia Lake in Edmond Brian Marra saw Merlin along Spring Creek Trail; and Rod Lusey verified two Surf Scoter. On the 28th Stephen Ofsthun discovered Winter Wren at Lake Thunderbird; while during the week Krish Muralidhar photographed a Red-breasted Nuthatch coming to his feeder in Norman. It is time for the Christmas Bird Count in various locations in Oklahoma. Which one will you be able to participate?

In the Central Oklahoma area during November **151** species were reported with **5** new species which brings the year's total at **304**. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds. Information is accessed at: [ebird](http://ebird.org). 2022 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 November 29 & 30, 2022); and occasionally from Facebook, and the OKBIRDS List. I can be contacted at emkok@earthlink.net. Esther M. Key, Editor.

Minutes of the Nov. 21, 2022 Oklahoma City Audubon Society Meeting

The meeting was opened at 7:00 PM at the Will Rogers Garden Center by President Bob Holbrook. Nancy Vicars presented a treasurer's report distributed copies. Cash on hand as of November 21, 2022, was \$7,509.30. The minutes of the October 17, 2022, meeting were approved as published in the newsletter.

The next meeting will be held at the Will Rogers Garden Center on Monday, December 19, 2022, at 7:00 PM.

There were no visitors. The club welcomed two new members since our last meeting.

Oklahoma City Audubon Society's annual CBC will be held on Saturday, December 17, 2022. Nathan Kuhnert is the Compiler and will be reaching out to members to confirm their participation within the next few days. Details are in the November newsletter.

Jimmy Woodard reported that Kurt and Sharon Meisenzahl need help with the Stephens County CBC, which will be held on December 29, 2022. Kurt can be reached at meisenzk@sbcglobal.net. Jimmy also asked for help with the Black Mesa CBC, which will be held on January 1, 2023. Jimmy can be reached at j.woodard@cox.net.

Jimmy also reported that the present officers have agreed to continue serving in their respective positions. The slate of officers will be officially accepted by a vote of members at the December 19, 2022, meeting.

Warren Harden had asked for volunteers to form a team of two or three persons to secure eight program speakers each year and this team consists of: Steve Davis, Nancy Vicars, Bob Holbrook and Jimmy Woodard.

Patti High asked for volunteers to provide refreshments for our future meetings.

The program for December will be presented by members who wish to share birding experiences. Refreshments will also be provided by members who attend. Bring your favorite snack food to share.

Hal Yocum reported about his recent birding trip to the Rio Grande Birding Festival, where he saw several rare birds.

Our November program was presented by our own Nancy Vicars and Patti Muzny. Nancy and Patti shared some of their 35-year adventures and misadventures while monitoring and counting birds across Oklahoma.

Respectfully submitted,
Patti Muzny
Secretary

Christmas Bird Count

Quick follow-up on our CBC for Saturday, Dec 17th! We have received a strong interest in participation from long-standing members as well as new members (about a dozen)!

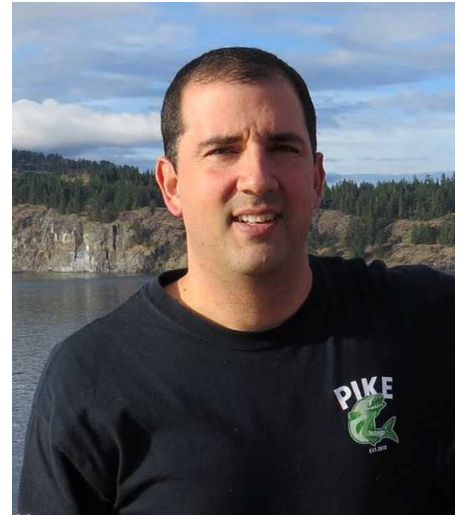
Count week starts on Wed (Dec 14) and ends on Tue (Dec 20). Please log down birds of interest during this period if found inside our count circle (available on our website at <https://okc-audubon.org/oklahoma-city-christmas-bird-count-area/>). It's going to be cold (morning starting out in the mid-20s and afternoon highs maybe reaching 40)!

I will lead a bird walk starting at 10 am on the southeast corner of Myriad Gardens that is designed to recruit especially members for which we weren't able to find individual territories. We'll probably also mosey up the block or two to look for urban dwelling birds and conclude around noonish with maybe some hot chocolate and/or lunch.

And as a reminder, we will tally our lists after dinner at Johnnie's Charcoal Broiler at 2652 W Britton Road, OKC. The list reading commences at 6:30 and the room is reserved starting at 5:30. Bring a desert if you want but no obligation! Thank you for your interest and good luck on Saturday!

Sincerely,

Nathan—405.496.2077—nrkuhnert@hotmail.com



Biodiversity Conference

by Ann Sherman (research : NYTimes)

2022 Montreal Biodiversity Conference (COP15) began on December 7 and continues through December 19. Governments are meeting to negotiate a new agreement to address staggering declines in biodiversity.

There are 8 billion people on earth now. The human population has doubled since 1970. Land has to be converted for agriculture, clearing forests to graze cattle or to plant crops. Other wild habitat is turned into cities, towns and roads.

Plants, invertebrates and ocean species are declining at rates unprecedented in human history. A million species are threatened with extinction, many within decades.

Nations are meeting in Montreal to chart a different path. They are working on a new 10 year agreement to tackle biodiversity loss under a United Nations treaty called the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The last agreement failed to meet a single target at the global level. Its not only wildlife that will suffer. Ecosystems collapse threatening humanity's food and water supplies. Climate change and the biodiversity crisis go hand in hand. One can't be solved without the other because they are interconnected.

Countries in the global south are experiencing the most dramatic biodiversity losses right now, Europe and the United States went through their own severe declines hundreds of year ago. 100% of forests were lost in most parts of Europe. We did a pretty good job of cutting down ours as well.

Countries that are poor economically but rich in biodiversity argue that they need help from wealthier countries if they're going to take a different route. They are looking at funding from redirecting subsidies that presently support fossil fuels and harmful agricultural practices. Currently, most governments spend far more on subsidies that are destroying nature than they do on financing conservation. Surprised? I didn't think so. Here is another not very surprising fact. The United States is the only country besides the Holy See that isn't a party to the convention. We will attend the meeting but it will be participating from the sidelines.

The plan that gets the most attention seeks to address habitat loss head on. It's called 30x30 and it's a plan to safeguard at least 30% of the planets land and oceans by 2030. More than 100 countries back the proposal. We can set up protected areas but that doesn't deal with the fact that the whole reason you had habitat loss in the first place is because of demand for land. If they don't tackle the underlying drivers they are only dealing with half the problem. According to Pamela McElwee an environmental anthropologist at Rutgers.

Study: Being around birds boosts mental health

Published by Bird Watching, November 8, 2022

New research from King's College London has found that seeing or hearing birds is associated with an improvement in mental wellbeing that can last up to eight hours. This improvement was also evident in people who were diagnosed with depression — the most common mental illness worldwide — indicating the potential role of birdlife in helping those with mental health conditions.

Published in *Scientific Reports*, the study used a smartphone app called Urban Mind to collect people's real-time reports of mental wellbeing alongside their reports of seeing or hearing birdsong.



“There is growing evidence on the mental health benefits of being around nature, and we intuitively think that the presence of birdsong and birds would help lift our mood,” says lead author Ryan Hammoud, from the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN) of King's College London. “However, there is little research that has actually investigated the impact of birds on mental health in real-time and in a real environment. By using the Urban Mind app, we have for the first time showed the direct link between seeing or hearing birds and positive mood. We hope this evidence can demonstrate the importance of protecting and providing environments to encourage birds, not only for biodiversity but for our mental health.”

The study took place between April 2018 and October 2021, with 1,292 participants completing 26,856 assessments using the Urban Mind app, developed by King's College London, landscape architects J&L Gibbons, and arts foundation Nomad Projects. Participants were recruited worldwide; the majority were from the United Kingdom, the European Union, and the United States.

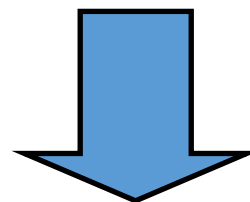
The app asked participants three times a day whether they could see or hear birds, followed by questions on mental wellbeing to enable researchers to establish an association between the two and to estimate how long this association lasted.

The study also collected information on existing diagnoses of mental health conditions and found hearing or seeing birdlife was associated with improvements in mental wellbeing in both healthy people and those with depression. Researchers showed that the links between birds and mental wellbeing were not explained by co-occurring environmental factors such as the presence of trees, plants, or waterways.

The study provides an evidence base for creating and supporting biodiverse spaces that harbor birdlife, since this is strongly linked with our mental health. In addition, the findings support the implementation of measures to increase opportunities for people to come across birdlife, particularly for those living with mental health conditions such as depression.

Refreshments

Everyone attending the December 19 meeting is asked to contribute a food or drink item to share. Plates, bowls, cups and cutlery will be provided.



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 73013