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Refreshments	Patti High
Webmaster	Patricia Velte
Public Relations	Terri Underhill

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

Welcome

The Oklahoma City Audubon Society welcomes:

Philip Brown,
Yukon

TALL TALES

Tall Bird Tales will again highlight our annual December meeting on December 16, 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 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 16.**

Refreshments: Everyone is encouraged to bring something to share.

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



Known as the Yellow-crested Helmetshrike, or *Prionops alberti*, the species is listed as a 'lost bird' by the American Bird Conservancy because it had not been seen in nearly two decades. University of Texas at El Paso scientists made the discovery during a six-week expedition to the Itombwe Massif, a mountain range in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Credit: Matt Brady / The University of Texas at El Paso

IMPORTANT: The January Meeting will be held on **TUESDAY, January 21, 2025**

President's Perspective

My, my...Been 3 years since this chapter in my life began and this is now my final "notes". It's been fun.

I didn't expect to be the OCAS President this long when Jimmy Woodard called me one day and asked if I'd be willing to carry the title. He said it would be easy, just preside the monthly meetings and write up something about birding for the newsletter once in a while. Well, I've managed to preside nearly all the meetings with only a couple exceptions and managed to write something for every newsletter in spite of the fact that I really do not like to write. Fortunately one or two members were kind enough along the way to tell me they actually enjoyed what I wrote about—those comments came at opportune moments and were the words that I needed to keep me going.

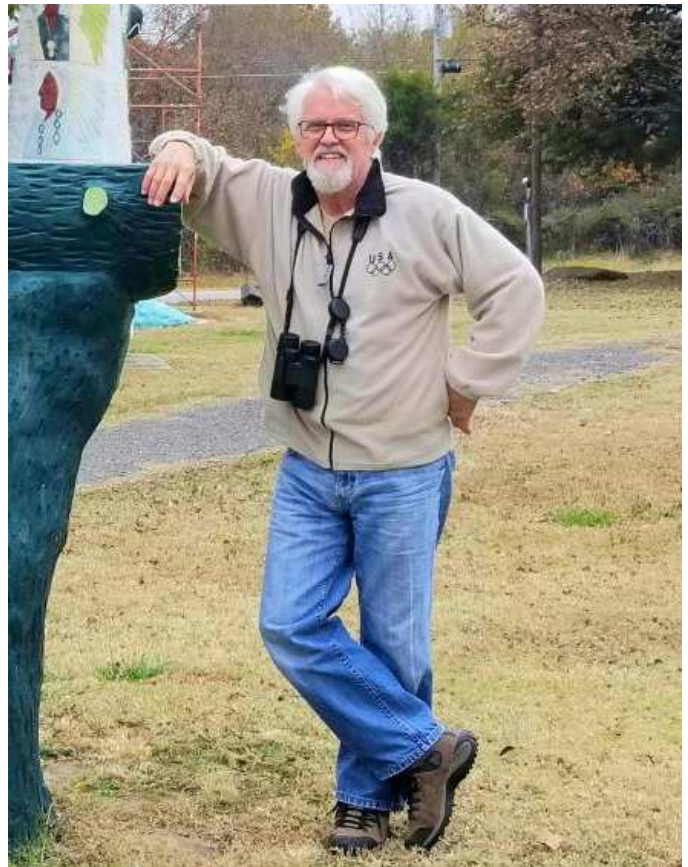
Along the way, I had hoped to get a couple new ideas going but was thwarted by circumstances beyond my control and living over an hour east of OKC certainly didn't help matters any. But since birding is way more than a hobby for me (actually more like some terminal disease), I must say that it has been a fun ride and I happily turn over the responsibilities to our new President, Sharon Henthorn, I wish you the absolutely very best.

Every now and then someone asks me about my birding—my favorite, my nemesis, the rarest I've seen...The answers haven't been as easy as one might expect. For a long time, my favorite depended on what country I was in and who it was asking the question. Its best to be at least a bit politically savvy so I think of a really cool bird in whatever country I was in at the moment—nothing wrong with that, there are so many really cool birds out there that it's hard to pinpoint one specific on out of over 10,000 species. Well, that is, until I spent a couple days a hotel in Costa Rica and had those Fiery-throated Hummingbirds buzzing around me just a couple feet away. Hummingbirds in the Americas and Sunbirds in Africa have always been top of the list for me anyway, so I finally had to settle on one—and that was it.

My nemesis? How to define that...does the number of times I go to its "guaranteed spot" and still miss it count as a way to determine that? Then the Mountain Plover for my Oklahoma State list ranks way up there and its not even a life bird since I've seen it elsewhere but that rascal evades me every time I head up into the OK panhandle!!!!

Rarest one? Rarest can mean out of range rare like a first State record, geographically found in just a dot on the map, thought extinct for decades but relocated, last known specimens in the wild...and so on. I've seen some that fit every one of those definitions.

What might be your answers for each of these questions? That might even be an interesting topic for a December meeting...



Minutes of the OKC Audubon Society Meeting November 18, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by President Bob Holbrook.

Attendance: 31 with no guests or new members

Treasurer's report for October from Nancy Vicars was approved as read. Cash on hand is \$9,073.85.

We are still in need of someone (or multiple people) to volunteer to take over as refreshment chair. The main responsibility is passing around the refreshment signup at each meeting and confirming those who did sign up before each meeting.

The Molly Spencer Farm public birding walk was a success! Over 30 people showed up despite a chilly morning. Thank you to the members who helped lead groups and Nancy for helping organize event.

OOS Fall Meeting was also a success! One of the highlights was the Norman North Birding Club students who are petitioning their school to add bird-friendly glass to help prevent window collisions.

The Spring 2025 OOS meeting will be April 12 + 13 at Lake Murray near Ardmore.

Jimmy is organizing the Christmas Bird Count for Oklahoma City, and Esther will continue helping. It will take place Saturday, December 14 with a post-survey dinner at Johnny's at Britton and May. There are also additional CBCs around the state throughout December and January. Contact Jimmy or Nadine for more information.

The main speaker for November was Christina Kolbmann, OU PhD student researching American Woodcocks, focusing on their courtship performances. Her presentation included her methods doing fieldwork, anatomical analysis of Woodcocks, her relationship with hunter-banders, and sharing real wing specimens.

The next OKC Audubon Society meeting will be held Monday, December 16, 2024, where we will have our annual holiday event. Everyone is encouraged to bring a refreshment to share, as well as a birding story (how true/exaggerated it is up to you!)

—Cole Penning, Secretary

Citizen Science

By Sharon Henthorn

The OKC Christmas Bird Count is held on December 14; however the Count will continue in other areas through January 5. Additional locations and instructions can be located at the National Audubon Society website. Novice birders can also be helpful by spotting birds that other participants may not see.

Another upcoming opportunity for a special field trip is explained below in a letter from Dr. R. Kannan of University of Arkansas.

BELIZE NATURE TOUR FUNDRAISER FOR THE ARKANSAS AUDUBON SOCIETY TRUST (12-20 May 2025—dates tentative)

Folks, for several years, we have had successful fund raising nature and birding tours for the Arkansas Audubon Society Trust. We have raised nearly \$20,000 for the trust doing these tours. Many AR-birders have enjoyed these tours. So, please consider joining us for some great food and fun in a tropical paradise.

I hereby announce this year's family-friendly and relaxing tour to Belize. Itinerary below. Price will be \$2,000 plus air, including a donation to the AAST. Participants must be avid birders or naturalists and must be in good health for field trips in hot and humid conditions. Travel insurance is strongly recommended. If interested, please contact me offline at ragupathy.kannan@gmail.com.

Refreshments

Refreshment volunteers for the December 16 OCAS meeting:

Everyone is encouraged to bring refreshments to share with the group. Randy Henthorn has volunteered to bring drinks/ice.

VIRTUAL FENCES ARE A POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY OPTION FOR RANGELANDS



GPS collars let ranchers set virtual fence boundaries for grazing, which new research suggests will help improve grasslands' vegetative ecosystem. Credit: Timothy Olsen.

GPS cattle collars with programmable boundaries can lead to more gradual grazing patterns and vegetation changes in rangeland, creating healthier habitat for birds and pollinators

Fences are an effective stationary method of corralling livestock, but their sharp borders can create sudden changes in native grassland vegetation and the pollinators and birds that live there. Virtual, GPS-based fences may be the nature-friendly future of fencing, creating more natural grassland habitat, finds new research to be presented at the American Geophysical

Union's 2024 Annual Meeting in Washington, DC.

In the new study, researchers at **Oklahoma State University** investigate how virtual fencing technologies could ease ecological impacts on grassland vegetation. The phrase "virtual fence" might evoke images of those invisible dog fences in backyards, but there are some key differences. There is no buried fence line, and the boundaries can be changed easily with a computer. As cows wander toward the fence, they receive an auditory warning from their collar. If they ignore this and move closer to the fence, they receive an electrical stimulus similar to one from an electric fence.

Previous work on virtual cattle fences focused on their efficacy for containing livestock, such as excluding the animals from sensitive ecosystem areas that are being restored, said Timothy Olsen, a natural resources masters' student at Oklahoma State University and lead author of the study. Olsen and coauthor Bryan Murray wondered how virtual fences might affect the vegetation structure and heterogeneity of grassland in grazed areas.

Previous studies showed that continuous grassland habitat is more beneficial for supporting bird and pollinator diversity and abundance than fragmented habitat. The researchers hypothesized that the warning from the collar as cattle approached the virtual fence would prompt the animals to graze more randomly, rather than forage right up to a physical fence -- making the ecological boundary between grazed plains and natural grassland more gradual.

To test that, the researchers set up six 1,000-square-meter study sites at the Oklahoma State University Bluestem Research Range. Within the grassland pasture, the team created linear boundaries, with three plots with physical fences and three having virtual fence lines. The cattle grazed in the study sites during the spring and summer seasons.

Using drone imagery, the researchers surveyed the six sites and created height models of the vegetation. They then compared the vegetation heights in the traditional fence and virtual fence with ungrazed rangeland. They found the virtual fence created a gradual transition more than 15 meters (50 feet) from the fence, changing from native grassland to fully grazed grass. Additionally, in the virtual fence areas, the researchers found a greater variation of vegetation heights compared to the fenced rangeland. This transitional zone could help increase native habitat for pollinators and birds.