

## The Birds of Ethiopia

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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:

Lorena Gardener, OKC

**Zach DuFran will be the speaker for our February 19 meeting. He will present a program new to our society, "The Birds of Ethiopia." Also covered will be an introduction to that country and its culture.**

Zach is a naturalist living in Norman, Oklahoma, and works as a Software Engineer for the National Weather Service's Radar Operations Center. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Meteorology from the University of Oklahoma.

He has been birding since 2015 and has had some great opportunities to see birds while traveling abroad for work and family vacations. He is also crazy about moths and has been working to expand the knowledge of moth species and distributions in the state of Oklahoma.

He enjoys tending to his native pollinator garden and all of the insects that are attracted there. He loves traveling to state parks with his wife and two kids on weekends, and much farther abroad during extended vacations. His two children are both adopted from Ethiopia, where he has visited 6 times.



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

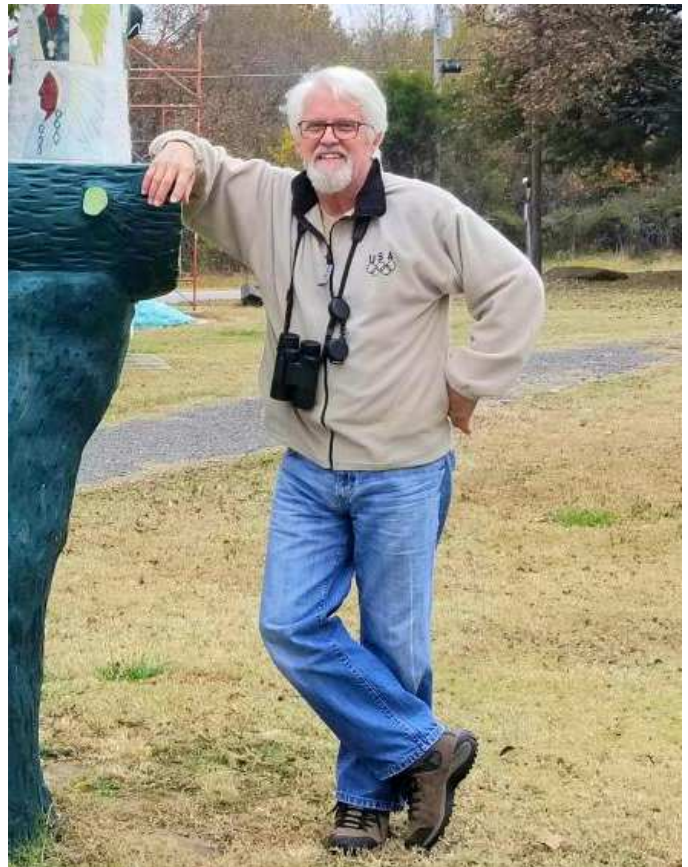
So it's February...again. It's my 3<sup>rd</sup> February writing these notes for OCAS. I've just reread those for the past 2 years. While I'm not going to get into politics here (I don't think a Birding Society/Club/Group is a place for that). I can't help but point out the obvious—the political scene seems to be about the only topic in the news or of conversations/discussions/arguments. No matter which side of any issue one finds themselves, things are a mess! Everyone seems to have “the only solution” yet it seems that no one actually has a solution. So...now what does that have to do with birding and OCAS? A lot!—sort of.

There's nothing quite like taking a day (or more) to just take off somewhere and search for some birds. February, surprise, is actually a great month to look for birds. Critters tend to show up in the most unusual places which means that most any place will do as long as it has natural cover and food to protect birds from the weather and give them something to eat. We can bundle up to fit the current weather conditions, take a deep breath, grab our gear, and head out to our favorite spots or in search of new spots. We can let the cold winds and rain, sleet, or snow blow away and wash away all our pent up frustrations, troubles, and yes, even angers—all that pollution society (“civilization”) keeps throwing at us. And see birds. We might see something special, something new, something exciting. We might only see a few chickadees or a cardinal or a sparrow we're not sure of what species. We might only see a crow or hear a blue jay or even, of all the bad luck, just a starling.

Yet, at the end of the day (or days) when we return we feel cleansed, refreshed, able to face realities again. Often I find it actually difficult to return, I'd just as soon stay out there, just leave all those things and noises that clutter our minds and lives behind. Birds have a way of doing that to me, to us, if we allow them. I think that is largely why I love birding and nature in general. And while some might disagree, I think that is what God intended for us in the first place.

So it's February...again...enjoy!

*Bob Holbrook  
President*







## Bird of the Month: Red Crossbill

*By Grace Huffman*

If you happen to be near a stretch of pines this winter, keep your ears open for a ringing kip! kip! You may just be in the presence of **Red Crossbills**.

Red Crossbills are finches, getting their name from the very tips of their bills, which as the name suggests is cross. This special adaptation allows them to open up tightly closed



pinecones and access the seeds inside. Males are the name-sake red, with females being much more olive and dull. You can find these birds year-round in a large portion of Canada, Alaska, and the mountainous west, as well as some in the far northeastern US.

Females build bulky cup nests well hidden in foliage, and can be as high as 70 feet off the ground. Most of the time this is done like normal birds, in the summer. But if they can find a good food supply in the winter they have been known to nest even then.



Here in Oklahoma, we are inside their winter range that extends over much of the US, but numbers vary year to year as if food is plentiful they will stay closer to their year-round range. This winter seems to be a good one for finding them here in the state, as they have been reported in even far southern Oklahoma, as well as places closer to the metro like Norman and Stillwater, and farther north and east near Keystone dam.

One other interesting fact about these birds is that scientists group them by call types. There are several recognized groups that can be separated by call, but they are all identical in plumage. So if you're curious about what group you are seeing, try and get a recording!

Red Crossbill populations are overall steady, but they have had a slight decline. Negative effects on an area of pines, like fires or beetles hurt them as they will have to look elsewhere for food. They are also at risk from vehicles, as well as possibly the chemicals used to de-ice roads, as they gather grit from the road. But this winter they seem to be in Oklahoma in good numbers, so keep your ears and eyes peeled!



# Recorder's Report

## January 2024

January was full of ups and downs, wasn't it? Several of the domestic ducks at Will Rogers Gardens didn't make it (some fish too) through the cold temps but whether it was weather or run off from ice melt is uncertain. Hal Y spotted



Guyla Mayo

a flock of around 1,000 mixed geese in Canadian County on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Not in our area, but interesting, Jim A reported 241 Common Loons, 4 Red-throated Loons and 3 Pacific Loons at Lake Tenkiller on the 31<sup>st</sup>. David Arbour at the Red Slough has had interesting finds including 3 Vermillion Flycatchers. Happily, they left before the cold temperatures hit. There has been good birding reported at Northeast/Zoo Lake Park. Definitely worth checking out! If you did not see this article from the Washington Post's Climate Lab on bird decline, I recommend reading it. It echoes what many are saying.

## January Sightings

### Oklahoma County

Pacific Loon 1/3  
Lake Hefner Grace H, Steve S, Trina A;

Turkey Vulture 1/4  
MWC

Jimmy W;  
Crown Heights  
Sharon H

Pine Warbler 1/4  
Martin Nature Park  
Nu P; (C)

Spotted Sandpiper 1/7  
Lake Overholser  
Jacob C, Grace H, Brian M

Long-tailed Duck 1/8  
Lake Overholser Dam  
Nancy V, Trina A, Jerry V



White-winged Scoter 1/11  
Lake Hefner  
Jimmy W, Trina A, Grace H, Jerry V, Steve D, Steve S (C)

Iceland Gull 1/13  
Lake Hefner  
Bill C; 25<sup>th</sup>

Tundra Swan 1/16  
Lake Hefner  
Chase M, Steve S, Jerry V, Cole P, Steve D, Trina A, Brian M, (C)

Western Grebe 1/17  
Lake Hefner  
Michael K



### Payne County

Short-eared Owl 1/4  
Orlando  
Aaron S

Yellow Warbler 1/5  
OSU Botanic Garden  
Clay B

Spotted Sandpiper 1/10  
Lake Carl Blackwell  
Clay B

Prairie Falcon 1/13  
Orlando  
Mike Y

Iceland Gull 1/14  
Boomer Lake  
Scott L, Landon N

Glaucus Gull 1/15  
Lake Carl Blackwell  
Scott L



### Cleveland County

Fish Crow 1/29  
Lake Thunderbird  
Grace H, Brian M



## Canadian County

Eared Grebe 1/1  
Lake Overholser  
Sarah R

Short-eared Owl 1/18  
Lake Overholser  
Matt R

Long-tailed Duck 1/6  
Lake Overholser  
Michael M

## Logan County

Trumpeter Swan  
1/30  
Cedar Valley Golf  
Club  
Jerry V, Mary & Lou  
T, Steve S



## McClain County

Franklin's Gull 1/1  
McClain, Ladd Rd  
Joe G

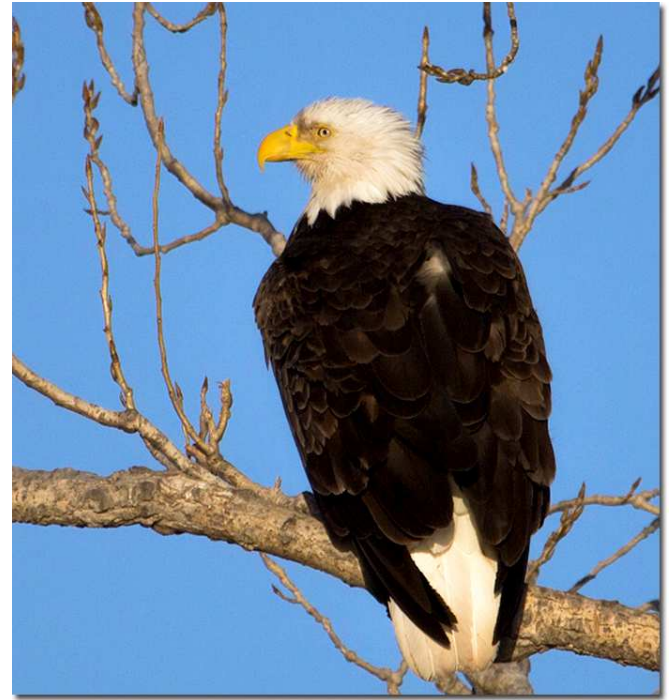
*As usual, any errors are mine and you can contact me at [guyla1mae@gmail.com](mailto:guyla1mae@gmail.com) to address them. Info gathered from eBird, ABA, and Oklahoma List Serve on January 31.*



**GRAMMY Award Winner** for Best Boxed or Special Limited Edition Package, **For The Birds: The Birdsong Project**.

## 'Boots on the ground' help keep eagles high in the sky.

By Neil Garrison Special to The Oklahoman  
January 24, 2024



A common misconception is that bald eagles are associated with snow-capped mountain peaks. Nothing could be further from the truth. Bald eagles are fish-eaters, and central Oklahoma is much to their liking. Each year at about this time, Oklahoma's bald eagles get a jump start on their nesting activities.

Conservation officials are curious as to how many bald eagles are nesting here in our state. Research data are also needed as to how many young eagles are successfully produced from these Oklahoma nests.

Therein lies the rub.

Budget funds are limited. Only so many scientists can be hired to carry out these tasks. The solution to this problem is to mete out many of these "boots on the ground" tasks to volunteers (i.e., "citizen scientists"). These dedicated birdwatchers go out into the field and spy on the occupants of the eagle nests. The data is entered into research record sheets, and the results are forwarded to the G.M. Sutton Avian Center in Bartlesville.

It's a "win-win" solution that benefits everybody, and Oklahoma's bald eagles get the help they so desperately need.



# Christmas Bird Count Recap

December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 CBC another success as temps ranged from 35F at sunrise to 51F by the end of the afternoon although a NE wind with gusts to 16 mph had a little bite to it. Other than a few minor cold snaps, winter really hadn't showed up. We outdid last year's count by two species and logged 27,254 birds comprised of 115 species! Equally impressive were 21 count parties and 41 participants including a new birder, Mollie Bryant that jumped in by herself and logged over eight hours of birding. We once again had several dozen participants show up at Johnny's for a nice count tally/dinner!

Candidate for most unexpected bird was a **White-faced Ibis**, earlier reported on e-Bird, that the Mays team found foraging near the canal inlet, possibly injured/sick although several birders had seen it flying. Lost track of its status and whether it was still hanging around when the polar vortex barreled down into the state on January 14<sup>th</sup>.

Other high-quality birds include a **Red-throated Loon** and two **Western Grebes** (Mays team), **72 Franklin's Gulls** (Woodard and Marra teams), and one **Fish Crow** (Tucker team). Also, 13 Great Egrets, Four Turkey Vultures, five Bald Eagles, six Black-crowned Night Herons, and 12 Lesser Black-backed Gulls all impressed me too although arbitrary as there were many other impressive birds just as noteworthy.

The list is published on the last page of this newsletter and, as always, please check our Club's webpage at <https://okc-audubon.org> for any updates to the CBC list that Pat Velte has posted. Thank you for everyone that made this count very special and making a commitment to sacrifice an entire day near Christmas!



Participants starting first with new members bolded: Trina Arnold; **Mollie Bryant**; Cole Penny; John Cleal, Marion Homier; Steve Davis, Mary Lane, Terri Underhill; Larry Mays, Bill Diffin, Jerry Vanbebber, Aaron Mechem; Jacob Crissup; Neil Garrison; Morton Payne, Johnson Hightower, Steve Parker; Warren Harden, Nancy Vicars; Jimmy Woodard, Nadine Varner; Patricia Velte; Nathan Kuhnert, Susan Prescott, Allison Jones, Nathan Jones, Kaye Jones; Kathleen Tucker, Esther Key, Valerie Kepler; Hal Yocum, Pat McGaugh; Brian Marra, Grace Huffman, Steve Stone; Jerry Taylor, Marilyn Taylor; Patti Muzny, Brian Munzy; and John Sterling.

Nathan Kuhnert, Compiler

## 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

## Refreshments

Thanks to the February Refreshment Volunteers:

**Snacks:** Steve Davis/Mary Lane, Pat McGaugh, Hal Yocum and Mike McCoy.

**Ice & Drinks:** Cole Penning

Species	#birds	Species	# birds	Species	#birds
Greater White-fronted Goose	1	American Coot	364	Hermit Thrush	2
Snow Goose (white form)	CW	Killdeer	62	American Robin	607
Cackling Goose	56	Greater Yellowlegs	42	Northern Mockingbird	42
Canada Goose	1287	Least Sandpiper	10	Brown Thrasher	2
Ross's Goose	1	Wilson's Snipe	1	European Starling	6527
Wood Duck	27	Bonaparte's Gull	270	American Pipit	3
Gadwall	230	<b>Franklin's Gull</b>	<b>72</b>	Cedar Waxwing	57
American Wigeon	3	Ring-billed Gull	7536	Orange-crowned Warbler	28
Mallard	472	Herring Gull	174	Common Yellowthroat	1
				Yellow-rumped Warbler	
Northern Shoveler	404	Lesser Black-backed Gull	12	(Myrtle)	72
Northern Pintail	2	Forster's Tern	36	Spotted Towhee	22
American Green-winged Teal	45	Rock Pigeon	715	American Tree Sparrow	1
Canvasback	57	Eurasian Collared-Dove	31	Field Sparrow	16
Redhead	23	White-winged Dove	13	Savannah Sparrow	1
Ring-necked Duck	78	Mourning Dove	218	Fox Sparrow	26
Lesser Scaup	86	Greater Roadrunner	2	Song Sparrow	23
Bufflehead	56	Eastern Screech-Owl	1	Lincoln Sparrow	1
Common Goldeneye	66	Great Horned Owl	4	Swamp Sparrow	12
Hooded Merganser	94	Barred Owl	CW	White-throated Sparrow	41
Common Merganser	9	Belted Kingfisher	22	Harris's Sparrow	222
Red-breasted Merganser	293	Red-headed Woodpecker	5	White-crowned Sparrow	9
Ruddy Duck	40	Red-bellied Woodpecker	33	Dark-eyed Junco	143
Pacific Loon	CW	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	Lapland Longspur	CW
Common Loon	13	Downy Woodpecker	37	Northern Cardinal	194
<b>Red-throated Loon</b>	1	Hairy Woodpecker	3	Red-winged Blackbird	440
Pied-billed Grebe	75	Northern Flicker	60	Eastern Meadowlark	62
Horned Grebe	32	Pileated Woodpecker	CW	Rusty Blackbird	10
<b>Western Grebe</b>	2	Eastern Phoebe	6	Common Grackle	8
American White Pelican	1209	Blue Jay	122	Great-tailed Grackle	187
Double-crested Cormorant	2957	American Crow	225	Brown-headed Cowbird	26
Great Blue Heron (blue form)	84	<b>Fish Crow</b>	1	House Finch	116
Great Egret	13	Horned Lark	3	Pine Siskin	15
Black-crowned Night-Heron	6	Carolina Chickadee	104	American Goldfinch	74
<b>White-faced Ibis</b>	1	Tufted Titmouse	16	House Sparrow	91
Turkey Vulture	4	White-breasted Nuthatch	2		
Bald Eagle	5	Brown Creeper	1		
Northern Harrier	3	Carolina Wren	55	<b>Number of birds counted</b>	<b>7856</b>
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	Bewick's Wren	10		
Cooper's Hawk	9	House Wren	CW		
Red-shouldered Hawk	21	Winter Wren	6		
Red-tailed Hawk	69	Marsh Wren	3		
American Kestrel (Northern)	17	Golden-crowned Kinglet	5		
Merlin	2	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	27		
Prairie Falcon	CW	Eastern Bluebird	7		