

During/After the Glacial Period

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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:

Morgan Day, OKC

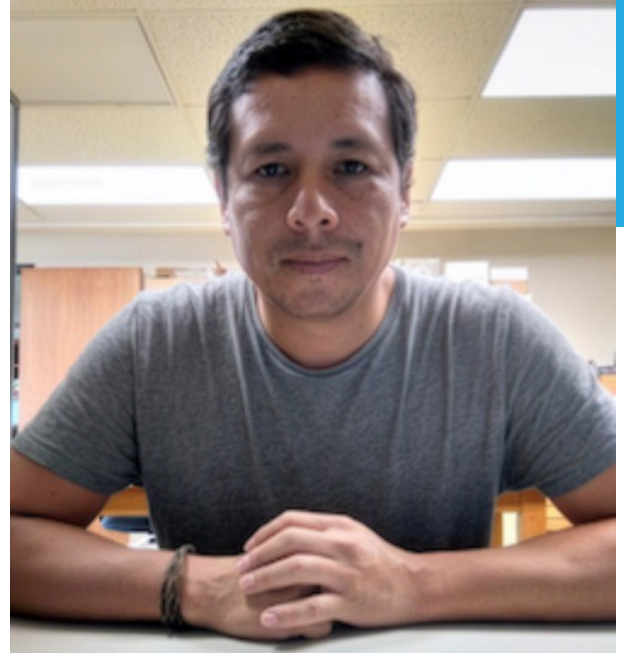
Anita Williams, OKC

Kelvon Viney, OKC

The Monday, February 16, OKC Audubon Society meeting's speaker will be Luis

Cueto, Luis is a native of Peru and who has done extensive research on birds in the Andean and low-land regions of South America as well as the arctic.

His talk is entitled "During and after the glacial period." Pleistocene glacial cycles profoundly shaped the distribution and demographic history of species across both boreal and tropical regions. Here, we investigate how these glacial pulses influenced the demographic trajectories of five species within the boreal bird family Calcariidae, and how repeated cycles of climatic change structured the present-day distribution of a tropical Andean wren confined to isolated mountaintop "islands."



Luis is a Ph.D. Candidate at the School of Biological Sciences of the University of Oklahoma. Luis holds a bachelor's degree in biology from the National University of San Agustín in Arequipa, Peru. He has participated in numerous ornithological expeditions to the Amazon and the tropical Andes of Peru, with the Field Museum of Chicago, the University of Kansas, the University of Oxford, and Louisiana State University, among others. These expeditions gave him the opportunity to complete a fellowship at the Field Museum's DNA Lab, where he participated in two projects. After that, Luis worked as the director of ARCAmazon's new research station on the Las Piedras River in Madre de Dios, one of the most biodiverse areas of the Peruvian Amazon. Later, Luis worked on establishing the molecular biology laboratory at the National University Toribio Rodríguez de Mendoza in Amazonas, northern Peru, where he installed and commissioned the first Illumina NextSeq sequencer in Peru. Following this, Luis entered the doctoral program at the University of Oklahoma and is currently co-advised by Jeremy Ross and Katharine Marske.

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.

President's Perspective

Hello fellow bird enthusiasts,

My name is Cole Penning, and I'm stepping in as the new president of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society. I want to use this first article to introduce myself a bit.

Compared to many of our members, I'm a relatively new birder. I've always been an animal lover and an outdoorsman, but I didn't really start paying close attention to birds until 2022. A few years before that, I bought my first camera to take with me on hikes. After all the deer and squirrel photos I could handle, I decided to turn my lens toward birds for a variety of reasons. They're challenging to photograph, incredibly diverse throughout the seasons, and can be found just about everywhere.

I started off by identifying the local species that I photographed, then someone I met on a hiking trail introduced me to eBird and Merlin. I was instantly hooked and joined the Audubon Society shortly after. Before long, birding became the primary way I explore new places. I probably fall squarely into the "lister" category now. I love chasing lifers, especially in new locations. Since becoming a "proper birder," I've traveled extensively across the continental U.S., as well as Hawaii, Brazil, and Botswana (some of you may have seen my presentation last year.)

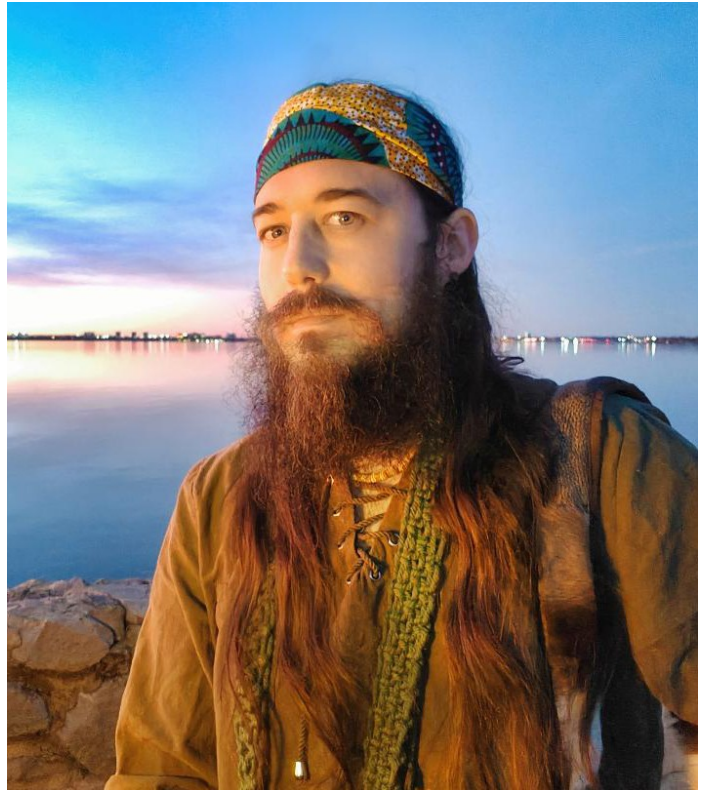
Volunteering has also become a big part of my involvement in the birding community. I'm currently president of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society and a member of the Bald Eagle Survey Team (BEST) with the Sutton Center. I'm also on the Oklahoma City Zoo's photo crew, where I focus a lot on their birds.

Professionally, I work remotely as a database administrator, which has granted me the flexibility to travel and pursue birding more seriously. Outside of that, I enjoy cooking, music, running, martial arts, and just about any kind of game or puzzle.

Please feel free to reach out about birds, ideas for the Audubon Society, or anything else. I'm always happy to talk to or go birding with new people!

Looking forward to another great year of birding,

—Cole Penning



IMPORTANT NOTE:

It's time to pay your 2026 Membership Dues!

[Click here to pay online](#)



Bird of the Month: Horned Grebe

By Grace Huffman

While it's wintertime here in Oklahoma, you can visit just about any lake and you'll find small gray and white birds swimming around - Horned Grebes in nonbreeding plumage!

Horned Grebes are small, diving birds that you'll often find in groups or pairs,

swimming and diving in the water. Here in main body of Oklahoma we typically just see them in non breeding plumage, as mostly gray birds with a bright white face. This stark contrast helps to separate it from the similar eared grebe, who has a darker face and neck overall. And while they spend a lot of time in the water and vaguely resemble ducks, they don't have webbed feet. Instead, they use their lobed toes to swim around! If you are fortunate, you'll catch one who molted before migrating, and they are striking. Overall dark browns and black, with a bright stripe of a golden yellow eyebrow that extends all the way to the back of the head.



Horned Grebe © Grace Huffman

Horned Grebes winter across both coasts, and across a large chunk of the southern US. They breed in the far northern regions of the Lower 48, as well as Alaska and Canada. Nests are a floating mound built of aquatic plants, and once the eggs hatch, the babies are capable of swimming inside of 24 hours. The parents often carry the young ones on their backs while swimming, and even sometimes while diving! They grow up fast though, and are independent about a month after hatching.

Despite locations like Lake Hefner having good numbers, they are classified as vulnerable. Populations are currently considered to be more stable, but they have declined by Over 50% in the last 50 years. Threats to these birds include fishing nets and water pollutants, including oil.

Next time you venture out to the lake, keep your eye out for these adorable divers!

References: allaboutbirds.org & audubon.org

Minutes of the OKC Audubon Society Meeting January 20, 2026

Meeting was called to order by Cole Penning, interim club president.

He opened with a discussion of recent nominations and the election process. The Nominating committee had contacted 2025 officer about serving again in 2026.

President Sharon Henthorn has asked to step down from presidential duties for personal reasons and Cole Penning agreed to serve as the new club president. This move created a vacancy for the secretary position and Sharon will now take on that role.

The remaining officer list consists of Cathy Chernausek and John Eggleston as co-vice presidents and Nancy Vicars as club treasurer. Meeting attendees agreed to accept the officer slate as recommended.

There were 33 attendees at the meeting. Guests included Tracy Wohl and the return of long-time member June Ketchum.

Cheryl Allen will continue as refreshments chairman and Warren Harden as program director, both voluntary positions.

Terri Underhill asked the name tag distribution be the duty of each member and that tags be brought from home for each meeting. She will continue to make name tags as needed for new members.

Nancy asked the members to renew due for 2026 at \$15 per household. The Treasurer's report showed \$9903 in December and \$9978.95 in January.

Spending Time at a Wildlife Reserve

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Human Dimensions Branch recently shared the first national-level results from the National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Survey. This survey is a cooperative effort involving the USF&WS, university partners (The Ohio State University, University of Washington, and Clemson University), and American Conservation Experience (ACE).

Over 20,000 visitors responded to the voluntary survey, allowing the Service to better understand visitor demographics, satisfaction levels, trip characteristics and planning, spending for the visits, and how management or ecosystem changes might impact future recreation participation.

There were 141 National Wildlife Refuges that participated in this survey, and results are available at the individual refuge level as well as for the Refuge System as a whole. Here are some revealing figures on the Refuge visitors and the activities that are most often engaged in – with clear activity overlaps - by these visitors:

Wildlife Observation	59%
Hiking/Walking.....	56%
Bird Watching.....	46%
Photography	39%

Pumas are back in Patagonia and Penguins are paying the price

Should conservation efforts focus on protecting one iconic species if that protection may harm another, especially in landscapes still recovering from human activity? This question lies at the center of a growing conservation challenge at Monte Leon National Park on Argentina's Patagonian coast.

After cattle ranching ended in southern Argentina in 1990, pumas gradually began reclaiming parts of their historic range. Their return brought them into contact with Magellanic penguins for the first time in modern history.

The penguins had previously moved from offshore islands to the mainland, taking advantage of the absence of land predators. With few defenses against large carnivores, they became easy prey once pumas arrived. Until recently, however, scientists did not know how much this new interaction was affecting penguin population numbers. Using carcass counts, the researchers estimated that more than 7,000 adult penguins were killed during the 2007-2020 study period. Many of the birds were only partially eaten or not eaten at all, indicating that the killings were not solely for food. This figure represents about 7.6% of the adult population (around 93,000 individuals).



THE GBBC EXTENDED WEEKEND

Now's the time to participate in the 2026 Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), an annual birding event that will take place from Friday, February 13th through Monday the 16th. Birders can spend time at their favorite places watching birds – for 15 minutes or a couple hours – whenever, or wherever, for as long as they wish.

Identify the birds you see, count them, and submit your counts to help researchers better understand and protect birds. (If you already use eBird or Merlin, your submissions over the four days will count toward the GBBC.)

The GBBC is an inter-organizational and cooperative effort run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, National Audubon Society, and Birds Canada.

Which Bird Won the Super Bowl?

Yes, the Seahawks won this year's Super Bowl... but just what is a Seahawk? The Seattle Seahawks were named through a fan contest in 1975, where "Seahawk" was chosen from over 20,000 entries for its strong, predatory image fitting the new NFL team, connecting to the Pacific Northwest's coastal environment and local Indigenous art. In the end, there were 153 fans who submitted the winning entry that was chosen, and the team became the Seattle Seahawks.

Refreshments

Refreshment volunteers for the February 16, 2026 meeting:

Snacks: Terri Underhill, Scott Jantz, Chris Eckart and Patti Muzny

Ice & Drinks: Cathy Chernausek and John Eggleston



Taima

The term "seahawk" has no biological significance. Before every home game, the Seahawks release a trained augur hawk named "Taima" to fly out of the stadium tunnel and get the crowd excited about the game. Taima is a 21-year-old (as of April 2026) Augur Hawk that serves as the live mascot for the Seattle Seahawks, traditionally leading the team out of the tunnel at Lumen Field. Based in Spokane, WA, with handler Dave Knutson, this falconry-trained raptor has performed for over 20 seasons, featuring a 4.5-foot wingspan and a signature pre-game flight.

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