

Big Year Birding

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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:

Brooke Blessed, OKC

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On January 18, Dr. Doug Wood will be presenting about his 2021 Bryan County Big Year.

Instead of traveling during the global pandemic, he decided to bird locally and challenge himself to do a county big year. His presentation will discuss strategy, monthly birding outcomes, reconnecting with local birds, and will include pictures from the big year attempt.

Douglas R. Wood, Ph.D. Bio

Dr. Doug Wood is a Professor of Biological Sciences at Southeastern Oklahoma State University and has taught there since 2001. He originally hails from Lawrence, Kansas, but his academic wanderings earned him his BA in Biology from Boston University, MS in Zoology from Eastern Illinois University, and Ph.D. in Forestry and Wildlife Ecology from Mississippi State University. Currently, Dr. Wood teaches a wide variety of classes including Ornithology, Field Ornithology, Zoology, Mammalogy, Wildlife Management, Conservation of Natural Resources, and Bioethics. Dr. Wood is an ornithologist and has published >50 research papers on a wide variety of topics including brood parasitism, migrant stopover ecology, and the ecology of cavity nesting species ranging from Red-cockaded Woodpeckers to Prothonotary Warblers to Tree Swallows. Plus, whatever his graduate students wish to study which has included Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Prothonotary Warblers, Lark Sparrows, Eurasian Collared-Doves, and the impacts of habitat management strategies on prairie nesting birds.

Dr. Wood is an avid birder and amateur photographer. He has birded in >30 countries prior to the Covid pandemic and has observed 4764 of the world's bird species.

Meeting Location:

Our meetings are held at the Will Rogers Garden center, located at the intersection of NW 36th Street and I-44. The Oklahoma City Audubon Society is neither a chapter of, nor affiliated with, the National Audubon Society.



IMPORTANT NOTICE: Due to scheduling conflicts at the Will Rogers Garden Center, the January meeting will be held on **TUESDAY January 18. We will meet in the CONSERVATORY.** There is a parking lot on the south end of the center that gives easy access to the Conservatory.

President's Perspective

The night after accepting this position I woke up around midnight in a bit of a panic. What have I gotten myself into? But then my mind began to wander back through history (well at least nearly 75 years of it anyway) to my early years and my beginnings in the world of birding. I thought of how would I answer the question "Why go birding?" Parents generally give their kids the answer to whatever question they ask "Because." For this question, that might indeed be the only answer for most of us but it shouldn't be.

My mother used to tell of my riding in the car as a toddler and spotting birds soaring a long way off--I don't recall that but I do know I had a very early interest in birds, even before I realized they all had names--official names, not just made up local names. About the age of 12 my brother (age 9) and I took a trip to the Amazon side of Peru by ourselves (that's another story) and came back with a dozen birds: 6 periquitos, a Paujil, a Chiricles, a Carpintero, a pair of tucanes and some other one I've long forgotten. It wasn't till I was 14 and back in the USA that I learned from a summer school teacher (Mr Axel) that birds had official names, that one could make a list of all seen, that it could be fun to use binoculars, etc... in other words birding could be fun. And I was hooked. I discovered that the "periquitos" were actually Canary-winged Parakeets, the "paujil" was actually a Razor-billed Curassow, the "chiricles" was a Black-headed Parrot, the carpintero was a Yellow-tufted Woodpecker that used to sit on my shoulder and eat food off my tongue.



Bob Holbrook on the Essequibo River, Guyana

I still have the little booklet Mr. Axel had us make to keep our list in that summer of 1960 in Lincoln, Nebraska. When I look at it fun memories come floating back. Today I have a whole bookcase full of bird books with notations from some 96 countries and the birds I've seen. I've traveled so much I no longer can tell you when I was where but I can look at my bird lists and I can tell you what I saw, when, and where and perhaps a few of the other fun things that happened along the way. So, "Why go Birding? Because".

—Bob Holbrook, *alias Inca Tern*

**MASKS ARE
REQUIRED
AT THE
OCAS
MEETING!**



Save the Date!

The 25th annual Great Backyard Bird Count will be held **Friday, February 18, through Monday, February 21, 2022**. Please visit the official website at birdcount.org for more information and be sure to check out the latest [educational and promotional resources](#).



Bird of the Month - Shrikes!

By Grace Huffman

Bird of the Month - Shrikes!

This month's article is about 2 birds since I couldn't narrow it down to just one. Shrikes are fascinating birds. Unlike other

passerines (songbirds), shrikes behave more like raptors, catching and killing lizards, birds, small mammals, & insects. They'll kill prey as large as themselves, and then impale it on a thorn or barbed wire for easier eating since they don't have strong talons like hawks do.

Typically when you find a shrike here in Oklahoma, it's a Loggerhead Shrike. They can be found year round all over the state on fence posts, power lines, and dead branches in open spaces.

They're small gray birds with black and white wings, a black tail, and a thick black mask. The females build a cup nest out of items

such as twigs and bark, and lines it with softer materials like fur and moss. They have 1-2 broods each year, and usually lay 5-6 eggs each time.



Loggerhead Shrike, adult © Grace Huffman



Northern Shrike, juvenile ©Grace Huffman

However, this winter has me double checking every shrike I've come across, as we've had several Northern Shrikes in the state lately. Northern Shrikes are a little larger, with a longer bill, thinner mask, and fine barring on the chest that's strongest on immature birds (and adults can have no barring at all). Northern Shrikes also have white above the mask and on the forehead, whereas a Loggerhead will be dark gray on the forehead. Northern Shrikes are also much rarer. They breed in Alaska & northern Canada, and typically winter in Canada & the northern US. This winter several have been reported here in Oklahoma. While they may sometimes perch out of sight, they do set up winter territories. I think this is why several birds have been reliably relocated more than once or even ongoing, with at least one being reported at Drummond Flats since early November.

Next time you're out and see a shrike, take a closer look. It might be a rare one!

Chirpings

January 2022

By Patti Muzny

We closed out 2021 with the Oklahoma City Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count. Sometimes the weather cooperates and more often than not, it throws a few challenges into our comfort zone. December 18, 2021, was in the challenge category! This year my crew was Brian Muzny, Esther Key and me. Our count territory was Crystal Lake and part of the Oklahoma River Trail system around SW 15th and MacArthur.



Forty years ago, bitter cold and a howling and relentless north wind that must have been blowing directly from a glacier somewhere up north, would not act as quite the deterrent it did for this CBC. But, we bundled up and headed along the east side of the lake, hoping to locate the Northern Shrike that had been seen near the NE portion of the lake. We tried very hard, but anything with any sense at all was NOT out hiking around a lake with single digit wind-chills. As a kid, our family made homemade ice cream and the kids were always the first in line for a big bowl of the delectable summer treat and nearly always took a huge bite and were hit with an "ice cream headache!" The wind early in the morning on count day did much the same thing and certainly was not as enjoyable!

We plodded onward and hiked all around the lake, with very few birds seen or heard. We did find some Harris's Sparrows, a Field Sparrow, a few Song Sparrows and a few Cardinals and blackbirds, a Mockingbird, grackles, House Sparrow, Rock Pigeons, a Towhee, a few Ring-billed Gulls, a few American Goldfinches, a few Starlings, a few Crows, a fly-over of Geese, one lone Collared Dove, a Kingfisher, a large flock of Robins, and a few Cormorants. Esther spotted one Mourning Dove and that was our total for the day. We didn't spot the Northern Shrike, but someone else did find it that day.

I must say that from the parking lot the trail around Crystal Lake doesn't look that long. From putting one foot in front of the other in hostile weather, it's w-a-y longer than it looks. But, we did it – somewhere around 10,000+ steps all together, which felt like 20,000.

The Bald Eagle we hoped to find was not seen by us, but Warren Harden and Nancy Vicars found it while they were covering the lake near the Amazon facility and dump. They also found four White-tailed Hawks soaring over the dump. These birds definitely didn't read the field guides!

Birds we had a very difficult time finding were Blue Jays. We had gone until after lunch before we found one. Woodpeckers were VERY scarce – we only had 3 Downy Woodpeckers and one Red-bellied Woodpecker. Because of the relentless wind, and the always-changing riverbed, we came upon a nice area of sand bars that were sheltered from the north wind. There we found three Wilson's Snipe, some Least Sandpipers, a few Killdeer, one White Pelican, a lone Bufflehead and one Mallard. One Herring Gull among several Ring-billed Gulls was also found in that area. Only one Eastern Bluebird and only one Yellow-rumped Warbler could be found. We managed to ferret out 41 species, which might be a record low for my team.

I was disenchanted to find continued destruction of city property and numerous homeless encampments along the west side of Crystal Lake. This portion of the lake and farther along the river bike trail has become an area where it may not be prudent to hike alone.

After the OKC CBC, Nancy, Brian and I had planned to welcome the New Year with birding and participate in the Cleveland County CBC on January 2, 2022. Well, this report won't take long to complete! Earlier in the week an unwelcome head cold set up housekeeping in my head and, not wanting to spend another bitter cold day sneezing on my friends and family, I spent the day curled up in the recliner and keeping my backyard bird feeders filled. Oh, well...there's always next year!!

January 6th was another bitterly cold and inhospitable day, but it did bring a lot of birds to our OKC yard. At one time, I counted 16 Cardinals at the feeder and in the tulip tree beside it. The heat lamp was hooked up on the patio and the Mockingbird, more Cardinals, Juncos, Carolina Wren and House Finches took advantage of a heated patio on which to feed. And of course, when you feed the birds, the predators visit as well. A beautiful Cooper's Hawk visited for a while and the day before we had a Sharp-shinned Hawk.

REFRESHMENTS

The following folks will be providing refreshments for the Tuesday., January 18 meeting:

SNACKS: Betz Hacker, Larry Mays, Marilyn & Jerry Taylor and Jimmy Woodard

ICE/DRINKS: Mary Lane & Steve Davis

Recorder's Report:

December 2021

As 2021 ends, each county's tally of the number of bird species seen is finalized and ranked from the county with the most species seen to the county with the least species seen. How did the central Oklahoma counties rank?

On November 27th Caleb McKinney added LeConte's Sparrow near Alex in Grady County. On December 1st Megan Miguez found Redhead at a pond near Stroud in Lincoln County; Cody Delano recognized Merlin at Lake Stanley Draper – Draper Trail; Zach DuFran tallied Brown Creeper in Norman; Bill Diffin detected Bonaparte's Gull, and Common Loon at Lake Hefner Prairie Dog Point; Jimmy Woodward came across Wild Turkey, Red-breasted Nuthatch in Midwest City; and Scott Loss heard Lapland Longspur flyover his yard in Stillwater. On the 2nd Robert Merideth verified White-breasted Nuthatch at Joe B. Barnes Park in Midwest City; and Bill Diffin spotted Greater Yellowlegs, Field Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Savannah Sparrow at Crystal Lake in OKC.



Hairy Woodpecker

On the 3rd Jason Shaw counted Barred Owl and Hairy Woodpecker at USAO Habitat in Grady County; Brian McLaughlin had American Pipit at Bluff Creek Trails; Steve Davis photographed Gray Catbird and Forster's Tern at Lake Hefner; Blayne Housh got Wood Duck at Myriad Botanical Gardens in OKC; and Scott Loss viewed Pine Warbler and Red-breasted Nuthatch at Lake Carl Blackwell. On the 4th Deanne McKinney saw Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and White-winged Scoter at Lake Overholser; Joe Grzybowski observed Lesser Black-backed Gull and Ross's Goose at Lake Thunderbird – Twin Bridges; Nancy Reed recorded Pine Siskin and Fox Sparrow in Norman; Leah Speno located Pine Siskin in Central State Park in Edmond; and Sneha Dharwadkar identified Orange-crowned Warbler at Sanborn Lake in Stillwater.

On the 5th Kenny Nichols noticed Red-tailed Hawk along I-40 near Seminole; Bryan Box reported Cackling Goose at Shannon Springs Park in Grady County; Deanne McKinney photographed Horned and Eared Grebe at Lake Overholser west side; Jimmy Woodard turned up Winter Wren in OKC; and Mike Yough encountered Least Sandpiper at Cushing WTP. On the 6th Bill Diffin had Lesser Black-backed Gull at Lake Hefner;

Branden Farris detected Yellow-bellied Sapsucker near Lake Hefner; and Brian Marra discovered Orange-crowned Warbler at Lake Hefner – Prairie Dog Point. On the 7th D&D Norris confirmed Golden-crowned Kinglet at Kairworks Garden in Logan County; and Nancy Reed had Spotted Towhee in Norman. On the 8th Jack Olson tallied Belted Kingfisher and Northern Harrier near Calumet in Canadian County; Cody Delano spotted Iceland Gull at Lake Hefner; and Brian Marra found American Tree Sparrow and Swamp Sparrow at Bluff Creek Trails.

On the 9th Joe Grzybowski recognized Ferruginous Hawk along Ladd Road in McClain County; Megan Miguez came



Winter Wren

across Canvasback near Stroud; and Brian Marra verified Winter Wren, Hairy and Pileated Woodpecker at Stinchcomb WR West. On the 11th Zach DuFran added Pileated Woodpecker and Cedar Waxwings at

Newcastle in McClain County; Joe Grzybowski observed Prairie Falcon at Ten Mile Flats in Cleveland County; Abdul Dominguez counted Eastern Bluebird in Norman; Brian Marra identified Marsh Wren, and flyover Lapland and Smith's Longspur. On the 12th Jennifer Vibderwekk got Bald Eagle along I-40 near Paden in Seminole County. On the 14th Cory Gregory recorded Northern Harrier near Hennessey in Kingfisher County; and Deanne McKinney saw Eastern Screech Owl in her OKC yard. On the 15th Joe Grzybowski viewed Eastern Screech Owl at Lake Thunderbird – Marina; and Bill Diffin described Iceland Gull at Lake Hefner – Lighthouse area. On the 16th Larry Mays located Bewick's Wren in Newcastle.



Northern Shrike © Grace Huffman

On the 17th Grace Huffman documented Northern Shrike at Crystal Lake; and Mike Yough confirmed Smith's Longspur along East Airport Road in Stillwater. On the 18th Jack Olson noticed Northern Flicker in Kingfisher County; Amanda Tichacek reported Bald Eagle near El Reno in Canadian County; Bill Diffin discovered White-winged Scoter at Lake Hefner –

Dam; Scott Loss photographed Black Scoter and Winter Wren at Laker Carl Blackwell; and Caitlin Laughlin encountered Greater Roadrunner in Stillwater. On the 19th Megan Migues photographed Purple Finch and Rusty Blackbird near Stroud in Lincoln County; Grace Huffman turned up Wilson's Snipe at Lake Overholser – Route 66 Park; and Brent Barnes photo-

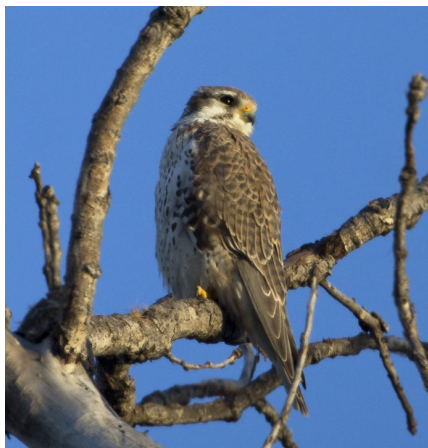


graphed a light brown Eastern Screech-Owl in Warr Acres. On the 20th Laurie Harper Abney spotted and photographed a **Snowy Owl** along OK-77 in McClain County and in Garfield County east of Enid Steve Metz also photographed a Snowy Owl.

On the 21st Cody Delano photographed a dark morph Ferruginous Hawk on Hwy 77 south of Purcell in McClain County; Steve Davis added Red-

Snowy Owl © Laurie Harper Abney

headed Woodpecker and Loggerhead Shrike at Wayne in McClain County; and Simon Walker detected Northern Harrier near Coyle in Logan County. On the 22nd Mike Yough documented Tundra Swan at Lone Chimney Lake in Payne County. On the 23rd Simon Walker found American Kestrel at Paul's Valley in Garvin County; Hal Yocum came across Eastern Towhee at Mitch Park in Edmond; and Aaron Mechem recognized Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in Warr Acres. On the 24th Aaron Short spotted Barred Owl near Washington in McClain County and Orange-crowned Warbler near Mulhall in Logan County; and Mike Yough tallied Northern Bobwhite in NW Payne County.



On the 25th Trina Arnold counted Prairie Falcon in Midwest City; Bruce Mast identified Vesper Sparrow at Crystal Lake; and Dick Gunn heard

Prairie Falcon

Western Meadowlarks along South Jenkins. On the 26th Tracy McCarthy located Brewer's Blackbird and Horned Lark along Richland Road near Tuttle in Grady County; D&D Norris verified Pine Warbler and Red-breasted Nuthatch at Kairworks Garden; Megan Migues stepped into her grandfather's barn

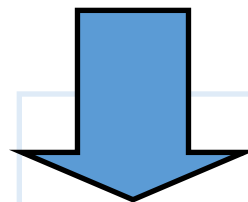
in Lincoln County and saw two Barn Owls; and Braden Farris heard Sedge Wren at Prairie Prime Ranch in Lincoln County. On the 27th Tracy McCarthy observed Common Merganser at Lake Overholser west side; Rosario Douglas viewed Hermit Thrush at George M Sutton Wilderness Park in Norman; and Dustin Lynch recorded Ring-billed Gull at Wewoka Lake in Seminole County. On the 29th Joe Grzybowski documented Rock Wren at Lake Thunderbird Dam. On the 30th Jason Shaw saw Sharp-shinned Hawk in Chickasha and Tracy McCarthy discovered Ferruginous Hawk at Tuttle in Grady County.

At the end of the year the number of bird species seen in each of the 77 Oklahoma counties shows Seminole ranked as 75th with 89 species; Garvin as 74th with 93 species; Pottawatomie as 61st with 118 species; Kingfisher as 51st with 135 species; Grady as 37th with 148 species; McClain as 36th with 154 species; Logan as 34th with 157 species; Lincoln as 30th with 165 species; and then the big jump; Canadian as 9th with 230 species; Cleveland as 4th with 251 species; Payne as 3rd with 263 species and Oklahoma as first with 275 species.

What new birding adventures and new areas can you explore next year? eBird encourages daily bird reports from your yard and other locations you visit during your daily activities. The results will surprise you.

www.ebird.org

In the Central Oklahoma area during December **139** species were reported with **1** new species which brings the year's total at **311**. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds. Information is accessed at: ebird.org. 2021 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 December 27th, 28th & 31, 2021); and occasionally from Facebook, and the OKBIRDS List. I can be contacted at emkok@earthlink.net.



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, 24 SE 57th St., OKC 73129.

Minutes of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society Meeting

December 20, 2021

The meeting was opened at 7:00 PM at the Will Rogers Garden Center by outgoing President, Hal Yocum. Treasurer Nancy Vicars presented a treasurer's report and distributed copies. Cash on hand as of December 20, 2021, was \$8,423.68. The minutes of the November 15, 2021, meeting were approved as published in the December newsletter.

The next meeting will be held at the Will Rogers Garden Center on Tuesday, **January 18, 2022**, at 7:00 PM. The meeting will be on Tuesday due to the holiday on Monday.

The slate of officers was accepted by those present. The new president is now Bob Holbrook. All other positions will remain the same.

The December program was, "Tall Tales," presented by members. Tales were told and members enjoyed numerous birding experiences. Refreshments were provided by several members.

The January program will be presented by Doug Wood. Please note we will be reverting back to meeting in the smaller meeting room, beginning in January 2022.

Nancy Vicars reported that she will be scheduling some birding field trips after the CBCs are completed. Black Mesa and Cleveland County will conduct their CBCs on January 2, 2022.

A Snowy Owl has been reported and photographed near the town of Wayne.

After a lively and entertaining sharing of stories, the meeting was adjourned by President Hal Yocum.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Muzny
Secretary

Christmas Bird Count Summary

A cold front swept through the metro area prior to sunrise on December 18 and quickly dropped unseasonably warm temps back down into the low 30s, coupled with a northerly wind gusting up to 25 mph. Temps did creep back up into the low 40s by early afternoon but by then, several count teams had packed it in for the day. Central Oklahoma is also in the middle of a moderate La Nina cycle which had produced relatively dry and above-average temperatures leading up to the count.



Before going further, I want to first pay a huge tribute to a loyal CBC participant, Miss Feodora DeGrasse Steward, who passed away back on October 18 at the age of 93! Kudos to Carla Brueggen who usually took Feodora out with her. Feodora was dearly missed for this year's count!

Even with the cold and wind, coupled with drier conditions, 21 count parties comprised of 44 counters that walked an amazing 66 miles still managed to log **108 species and 16,925 birds!**

The most amazing bird(s) seen on count day were by Warren Harden's team - four White-tailed Hawks! Warren provided a very thorough documentation but unfortunately the birds moved on the very next day. The next best bird was actually a count week bird which was a Northern Shrike, discovered by Brian Marra out at Crystal Lake.

We seemed to have a good distribution of both species of kinglets as well as American Goldfinches. Getting spoiled with multiple Lesser Black-backed Gulls (6). Eastern Phoebe numbers were down as were wrens but a big factor likely was the uncomfortable birding conditions for the morning. American White Pelicans (171) were also significantly lower this year.

The Crissup team found two Smith's Longspurs and a Ross's Goose. The Mays team found a White-winged Scoter for the second year in a row and the Garrison team managed to get two uncommon American Tree Sparrows. Additional count week birds include American Pipit, Orange-crowned Warbler and a Lapland Longspur.

As always, please check our Club's webpage at <https://okc-audubon.org> for any updates to the CBC list. Thank you for everyone that braved the inclement weather this year! (recap on pg. 8)

—Nathan Kuhnert, Compiler

CBC Recap (cont.)

Participants include John Cleal, Marion Homier; Steve Davis, Mary Lane, Terri Underhill; Bill Diffin; Neil Garrison; Mark Howery, Sharon Henthorn; Patti Muzny, Brian Munzy, Esther Key; Hal Yocum; Cheryl Allen; Brian Marra, Grace Huffman, Steve Stone; Betz Hacker, Robert Holbrook; John Sterling; Larry Mays, Aaron Mechem; Morton Payne, Matthew Payne, Johnson Hightower, Steve Parker; Warren Harden, Nancy Vicars; Jimmy Woodard, Mark Delgrosso, Emily Muns; Nathan Kuhnert, Susan Prescott, Allison Jones, Nathan Jones, Kaye Jones; Kathleen Tucker; Jacob Crissup, Katie Crissup; and Jerry and Marilyn Taylor.

2021 Species	Number				
Cackling Goose	33	Cooper's Hawk	5	Golden-crowned Kinglet	7
Canada Goose	808	Red-shouldered Hawk	6	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	17
Ross's Goose	1	Red-tailed Hawk	27	Eastern Bluebird	24
Wood Duck	10	White-tailed Hawk	4	Mountain Bluebird	15
Gadwall	173	American Kestrel	10	Hermit Thrush	1
American Wigeon	197	American Coot	307	American Robin	971
Mallard	647	Killdeer	10	Northern Mockingbird	29
Blue-winged Teal	1	Least Sandpiper	7	Brown Thrasher	2
Northern Shoveler	240	Wilson's Snipe	6	European Starling	2547
Northern Pintail	2	Bonaparte's Gull	171	American Pipit	CW
American Green-winged Teal	24	Franklin's Gull	1	Cedar Waxwing	33
		Ring-billed Gull	2994	Orange-crowned Warbler	CW
duck sp.	2	Herring Gull	29	Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle)	33
Canvasback	23	Lesser Black-backed Gull	6	Spotted Towhee	3
Redhead	41	Forster's Tern	6	American Tree Sparrow	2
Ring-necked Duck	44	Rock Pigeon	323	Field Sparrow	3
Greater Scaup	26	Eurasian Collared-Dove	69	Savannah Sparrow	10
Lesser Scaup	399	White-winged Dove	10	Fox Sparrow	11
Bufflehead	96	Mourning Dove	123	Song Sparrow	40
Common Goldeneye	225	Great Horned Owl	1	Lincoln Sparrow	1
Hooded Merganser	208	Belted Kingfisher	6	Swamp Sparrow	4
Common Merganser	17	Red-bellied Woodpecker	29	White-throated Sparrow	40
Red-breasted Merganser	535	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2	Harris's Sparrow	204
Ruddy Duck	49	Downy Woodpecker	32	White-crowned Sparrow	25
White-winged Scoter	1	Hairy Woodpecker	3	Dark-eyed Junco	310
Wild Turkey	9	Northern Flicker	26	Lapland Longspur	CW
Common Loon	12	Eastern Phoebe	1	Smith's Longspur	2
Pied-billed Grebe	78	Northern Shrike	CW	Northern Cardinal	156
Horned Grebe	37	Blue Jay	69	Red-winged Blackbird	2309
American White Pelican	171	American Crow	207	Eastern Meadowlark	15
Double-crested Cormorant	700	Horned Lark	28	Western Meadowlark	12
Great Blue Heron (blue form)	61	Carolina Chickadee	105	Common Grackle	183
Great Egret	3	Tufted Titmouse	19	Great-tailed Grackle	81
Black-crowned Night-Heron	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	3	Brown-headed Cowbird	59
Turkey Vulture	1	Brown Creeper	1	House Finch	42
Bald Eagle	1	Carolina Wren	27	American Goldfinch	97
Northern Harrier	2	Bewick's Wren	3	House Sparrow	71
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	Winter Wren	2		

Snowy Owls Aren't Starving

Excerpt: Cornell University Lab of Ornithology,

By Erica Cirino

Every year Snowy Owls descend out of the Arctic, sometimes in smatterings, sometimes in massive irruptions, to spend winter in southern Canada and the Lower 48 states.

It's also common for some people to feel anxiety over the snowies, believing them to be hungry vagrants. Last January, when Snowy

Owls were being sighted in Michigan's Upper Peninsula (as they are every winter), a local TV station reported that the owls' southern travels were "linked to food supply" and that "Snowy Owls often arrive in Michigan weakened and starving." That first statement is often true, but the second is generally not true, according to recent research.

University of Saskatchewan scientist Karen Wiebe's findings are backed up by Snowy Owl wintertime studies elsewhere. At Logan International Airport in Boston, Norman Smith of Massachusetts Audubon says he's banded more than 700 snowies since 1981. He has not experienced a single year where hatch-year owls have showed signs of starvation due to lack of food. Early data from Project SNOWstorm, a research initiative begun in 2013 that has banded snowies from North Dakota to Maine and is tracking them via GPS, suggests the same.

It appears that when these owls irrupt and appear in large numbers in the U.S., it's due to a bumper crop of young snowies during a very good breeding season—not a lack of food. This is where the common explanation that Snowy Owl movements are "linked to food supply" comes from. And the explanation is correct—it just doesn't mean the owls are starving and in some cases can mean the opposite.

Even though wintering Snowy Owls tend to be eating well on average, inevitably some Snowy Owls are found in starving condition every winter, contributing to a perception that many owls are going hungry. These starving owls tend to be males. Wiebe's research also analyzed the records of 103 thin or emaciated snowies admitted to wildlife rehabilitation and veterinary clinics in Saskatoon, Calgary, and Winnipeg between 1992 and 2015, and 63% were male.



Field Trip Report: Mitch Park

Hal Yocum led a field trip to Mitch Park in Edmond on January 11, 2022.

Twelve birders participated including Neil Garrison, Hollis Price, Allen Codding, John Eagleston, Cathy Chernansek, Nancy Vicars, Pete Austin, Sharon Henthorn, Aaron Mechem.

Weather was clear, chilly at 8:30 start and nearly 50 at 11:30 finish

There were 28 species sighted.

Mallard
Canada Goose
Red-shouldered Hawk
Ring-billed Gull
Rock Pigeon
Downy Woodpecker
Red-breasted Woodpecker
American Crow
Blue Jay
Carolina Chickadee
Titmouse Titmouse
Carolina Wren
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Brown Thrasher
American Robin
Eastern Bluebird
European Starling
Harris's Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Spotted Towhee
Northern Cardinal
House Finch
American Goldfinch
Yellow-rumped Warbler