

June 21, 2021:

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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:

Branislav & Maggie Schifferdecker, OKC
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Gayle Snider, OKC

For up-to-date Oklahoma City Audubon news visit:
OKC-Audubon.org

Explore the Birds of Ecuador



Mary Lane and Steve Davis joined Oklahoma City Audubon in 2009 and enjoyed birding in Oklahoma City and surrounding areas for several years. After they both retired, they joined a group of birders from Arkansas on a trip to Panama in Central America that got them hooked on birding in the Caribbean.

In 2018, they had an opportunity to go to Ecuador, South America, for the first time, with another group from Arkansas. They flew into Quito, the capital city, and

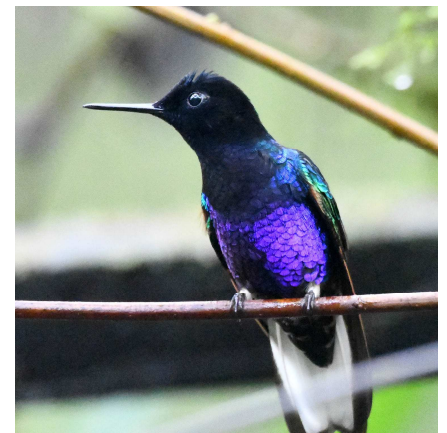
spent six days at several locations and altitudes in the north and west part of the country at the foot of the Andes. They saw some (though certainly not all) of the 1,651 species of birds that have been identified there, including a variety of hummingbirds, and even a few birds that migrate through Oklahoma.

Mary and Steve will offer a pictorial tour of the region of Ecuador they visited, and a sample of the birds they saw, when OCAS meets again on June 21, 2021.

Our meetings are held September through June on the third Monday of each month (with the exception of January, when the meeting is held on the fourth Monday). 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. The Oklahoma City Audubon Society is neither a chapter of, nor affiliated with, the National Audubon Society.



President's Perspective

Long Lost Life Bird

I got started birding around age 15 or so due to some interest in all aspects of nature. I lived on a small family dairy farm in central Pennsylvania, some 80 acres, with 1/3 wooded and the rest farm buildings and fields. This was a farm just big enough for our family to have 2-3 cows, some hogs, chickens, and a big family garden. Because of its small size, we dubbed it "Almosta Farm."

My dad was a real nature lover and hunter. He introduced me to and helped me learn about all of nature: trees, flowers, bugs, snakes, astronomy, and birds.

Then the Scouts had (and still do) a merit badge for birds (Bird Study). Doing that scout merit badge really got me hooked on birds. I had to keep a list of bird sightings, along with notes on date, time, weather, location, etc. I had to accumulate a list of at least 40 birds, also requirements like bird ecology, and build several bird houses and follow them through a season.

My first bird book was the *Golden Nature Book of Birds*, but I soon found a *Peterson Bird Guide for Eastern Birds* in the library. Then I bought my own Peterson Guide so I could write notes in it. My bird list grew ever so slowly over the year that it took me to do all the requirements. That list of my first 40 birds actually has several unusual birds of the area (in about a 50-mile circle around State College in central Pennsylvania). It included Scarlet Tanager, Bobolink, Baltimore Oriole, Red-eyed Vireo, American Goldfinch, Ruffed Grouse, Crow, Blackburnian Warbler, Turkey Vulture, Wild Turkey, Screech Owl, Brown Creeper, Evening Grosbeak and a Snowy Owl that winter.

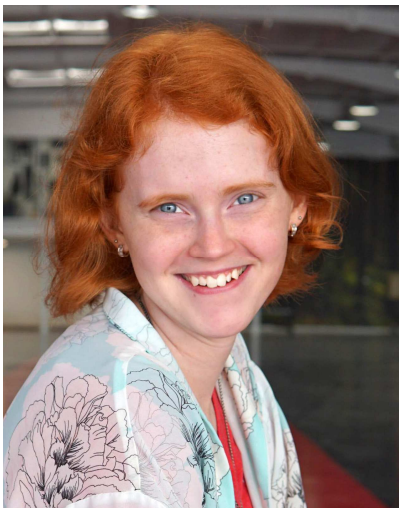
In 1961 I took a Scout canoe trip to Algonquin Provincial Park, Quebec Province, Canada in early August. We paddled, hiked (portages and camped) for 10 days in the park. Naturally I was interested in all the new flowers, especially the pitcher plants and sundews. Big game animals, too, like moose and wolves calling at night. I made a list of the birds that I saw as well. Most of that list was duly noted to my growing bird list when I returned home.

Little did I know until recently when reading through the 60-year-old "Canoe Trip Log" again that there was a grouse-like bird seen in the park but I had not added to the list. However, my trip log notes described it perfectly. It was a "grouse" I had never seen in Pennsylvania. I had a perfectly detailed description of a then unknown grouse.

Now I instantly recognize the description as a Spruce Grouse. So now I can add that "long-lost and forgotten unknown grouse" to my life list. The Spruce Grouse in my life list bird number 624!



Good birding.
Hal A. Yocum



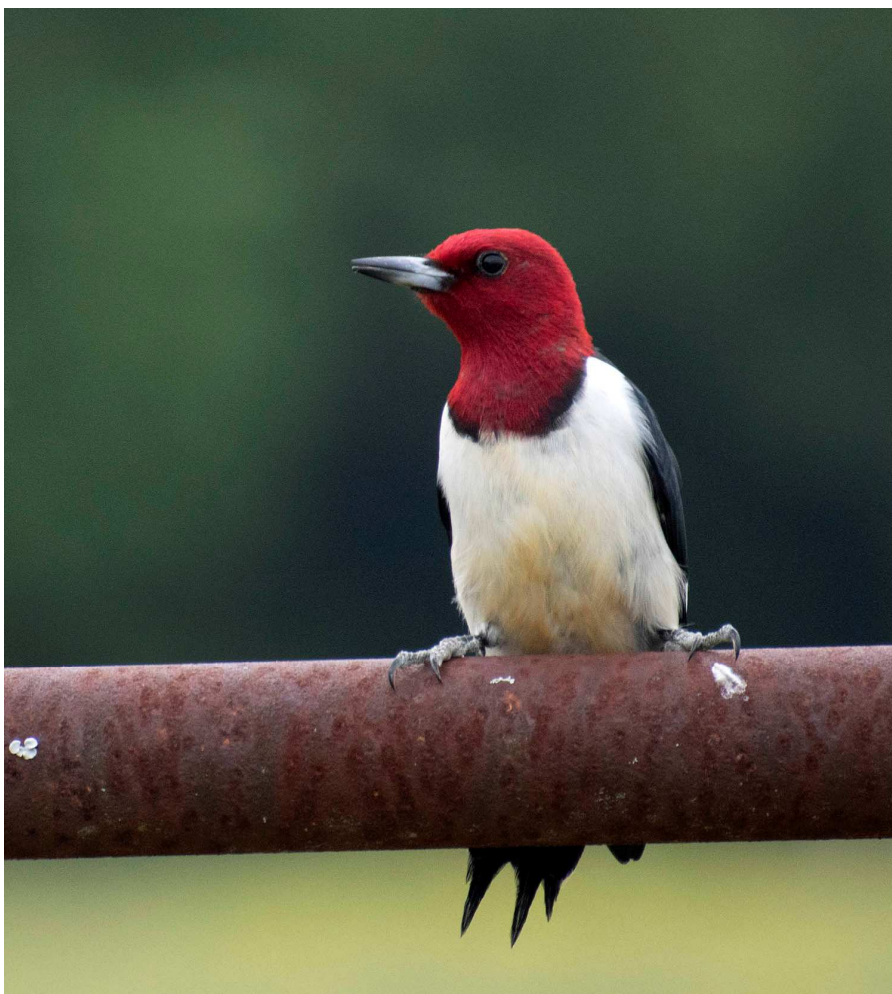
Bird of the Month - Red-headed Woodpecker

By Grace Huffman

This month I wanted to talk about one of my favorite birds. I'm not sure I could pick just one species to be my absolute favorite, but Red-headed Woodpeckers are up there. While not as common as some of our other woodpecker species, I've still seen them all over the state, from the panhandle to Red Slough, and especially in the Wichita Mountains. Locally I've had the most success finding them at Arcadia, Lake Stanley Draper, and Lake Thunderbird.

Red-headed Woodpeckers are striking birds. Like their name suggests adults have a bright red head, as well as bold black and white wings with a white belly. Juveniles have a brown head and some markings in the white patches on their wings. They are about the size of a robin, and unlike most woodpeckers they are adept at catching bugs out of midair like flycatchers. They also like acorns and nuts, and may visit your suet feeder or eat fruit if you provide any for the birds. Outside of Oklahoma they breed as far north as southern Canada, as far west as Montana, and as far south as Texas. In the northern parts of their range they move south after the summer. This includes the Oklahoma panhandle, but you can find them year-round in the rest of the state. They nest in dead trees or trees with large dead branches where there is a lot of open space around the tree. They also nest in telephone poles, but have a higher success rate in older poles vs. newer poles. The reason for this is thought to be the creosote used to preserve the poles. They will have 1-2 broods in a year, and it takes over a month and a half for the babies to fledge. Red-bellied Woodpeckers have also been known to re-use nest sites for several years.

Red-headed Woodpeckers are considered a watch species. They are not currently endangered, but have experienced a 70% population decline from 1966-2014. This is largely due to habitat loss & loss of food sources. Management of dead trees & snags can be very beneficial to this species. They certainly seemed to be thriving down near Red Slough earlier this spring, as they were everywhere one evening! This one stayed very close allowing me to get some great photos from the car. Happy birding!



(Sources: allaboutbirds.org, Sibley, & Wikipedia)

Recorder's Report: May 2021

May was a beautiful spring month with 28 different warbler species traveling through central Oklahoma. It is surprising how many different counties reported Bobolinks, Common Nighthawks, White-rumped Sandpipers and Eastern Wood-Peepees. No not all of the counties reporting Bobolinks are in the first two paragraphs. You will have to look further to find all of the fantastic sightings of May from Black-headed Grosbeaks to Black-bellied Whistling Duck.

On April 28th John Tharp noticed **Common Nighthawk** in Norman. On April 29th Mike Yough encountered **Eastern Wood-Pewee** at Couch Park in Stillwater; Branden Farris saw Common Nighthawk in Edmond; and Mike Yough observed Chuck-will's-widow, and Clay-colored Sparrow at



© Brian Marra

Dover in Kingfisher County. On April 30th Braden Farris spotted **White-rumped Sandpiper** at NW 63rd/ Kilpatrick Turnpike in Canadian County; Steve Stone found Yellow-throated Vireo at Martin Park Nature Center in OKC; Brian Marra photographed a singing **Prairie Warbler** at Lake Stanley Draper; and Megan Migues counted

Bobolink near Stroud in Lincoln County.

On the 1st in Cleveland County John Tharp detected White-rumped Sandpiper at Ten Miles Flats and Sedge Wren along South Jenkins Avenue; and at Lake Stanley Draper Bill Diffin discovered **Olive-sided Flycatcher**. In Payne County Landon Neumann recognized Bobolink at Cushing Water Treatment Plant; Scott Loss heard **Black-throated Green Warbler** at Boomer Lake Park, Blackpoll Warbler at Couch Park; and Mike Yough came across **Yellow-breasted Chat** at McPherson Preserve.

On the 2nd Valerie Boudreaux identified Painted Bunting in Yukon; John Tharp reported



© Mike Yough

Lazuli Bunting in Norman; Mike Yough verified **Black-billed Cuckoo** at Ghost Hollow in Payne County; Chad Ellis tallied Bobolink in Jones; Les Calger got Spotted Sandpiper at Elmore City in Garvin County; Jacob Kirkland confirmed Broad-winged Hawk and Grasshopper Sparrow in Grady County; and Megan Migues added Yellow Warbler at Stroud.



© Mike Yough

On the 3rd Jonalyn Yancy located Chimney Swift near El Reno; at Lake Thunderbird SP



© Cody Delano

Lindell Dillon recorded Tennessee Warbler and Cody Delano turned up American Redstart; in Stillwater Jake Hennig had Yellow-throated Vireo at Boomer Lake Park and Caleb McKinney viewed Peregrine Falcon. On the 4th at Lake Thunderbird SP John Tharp noticed **Western Tanager**; also possible sightings of Laughing Gull and Arctic Tern

were had by Randy S., Cody D., and John Tharp. At Lake Hefner Calvin Rees encountered **Sanderling**; and at Couch Park Landon Neumann observed **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**. **Black Terns** were spotted at Lake Thunderbird SP by Someone, and at Lake Carl Blackwell by Scott Loss.

On the 5th in Cleveland County John Tharp counted Eastern Wood-Pewee and **Acadian Flycatcher** along Little Jim Road; Randolph King detected Stilt Sandpiper at Ten Mile Flats; Zach DuFran and Mary & Lou Truex described **Philadelphia Vireo** at Lake Thunderbird SP. **Northern Waterthrush** were reported by Mary & Lou Truex at Lake Thunderbird and Landon Neumann at Couch Park. At Lake Hefner Braden Farris had White-rumped Sandpiper; and at her feeder in Dell City Andrea Johnson photographed **Black-headed Grosbeak**. On the 6th along Morgan Road in Yukon Trina Arnold described Black Tern; around Ten Mile Flats John Tharp recognized **Dunlin**; Joe Grzybowski came across **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**; and at Lake Thunderbird SP Someone had **Black-bellied Plover** and Yellow-breasted Chat.

At Arcadia Lake Rod Lusey identified **Whimbrel**; in Logan County Brad Rose reported Bobolink in Guthrie and D&D Norris verified Swainson's Thrush at Kairworks Garden. In Stillwater Scott Loss had the best spring migration day for Payne County in the 8 years living here. Along the Kameoka trail north of Boomer Lake he detected a possible female Black-headed Grosbeak, plus Chestnut-sided Warbler; at Couch Park with Landon Neumann **Mourning Warbler**; at The OSU Botanic Garden with Caleb McKinney **Alder Flycatcher**, **Bay-breasted Warbler**, and Palm Warbler. **Ovenbird** was heard along South Jenkins by John Tharp and at Boomer Lake by Scott Loss. On the 7th John Sterling tallied Bobolink east of Paul's Valley; LaDonna Evans confirmed Baltimore Oriole at Tuttle; Bill Diffin added House Wren, Grasshopper Sparrow in Guthrie; Braden Farris located Common Nighthawk, Chuck-will's-widow, Swainson's Thrush at Prairie Prime Ranch in Lincoln County; Sean Washington recorded Common Nighthawk along Morgan Road in Yukon; Steve Stone turned up Bell's Vireo at Bluff Creek Trails in OKC; and Jerry Vanbeber photographed **Veery** and described **Magnolia Warbler** at Lake Thunderbird.



© Cody Delano

Yellow Warbler, Warbling Vireo, and Orchard Oriole at Liberty Lake in Logan County; and Braden Farris recognized Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Peregrine Falcon, Least Flycatcher, Gray Catbird, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Blackpoll Warbler in his Lincoln County BBA.

On the 9th Chad Ellis heard Bobolink at Okarche in Canadian County; William Boyes came across Least Flycatcher in Stinchcomb WR west; Someone identified Bay-breasted Warbler at Lake Thunderbird-Little River Marina and Cody Delano reported Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Lake Thunderbird SP; Mike Yough verified Buff-breasted Sandpiper and White-rumped Sandpiper at Meridian Technology Center Pond in Stillwater; and Braden Farris tallied **Least Tern** at Lake Hefner. On the 10th in Payne County Scott Loss got Acadian Flycatcher at Coyle and Caspian Tern at Lake Carl Blackwell; at Lake Hefner-Stars and Stripes Park Braden Farris confirmed Northern Waterthrush; at Ninnekah in Grady County Caleb McKinney added Black-chinned Hummingbird, Least Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Orchard Oriole, and Yellow Warbler. On the 11th Jason Shaw located **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** at Shannon Springs Park in Grady County; Basha Hartley recorded Gray-cheeked Thrush in Norman; and Braden Farris turned up Philadelphia Vireo at Stinchcomb WR East.

On the 12th Hal Yocum had Blackpoll Warbler and Summer Tanager at the Educational & Conservation Area at Lake Arcadia; Jason Shaw had Common Yellowthroat at the USAO Habitat Area; Randolph King viewed Sanderling at SW149th Street Sod Farm and Bell's Vireo at NW 63rd/ Kilpatrick Turnpike; John Tharp described Common Tern at Lake Thunderbird; Joe Grzybowski noticed Least Tern at Ten Mile Flats; Mike Yough had Willow Flycatcher at Teal Ridge Wetland; and at Stinchcomb WR east Chad



© Jeremy Ross

On the 8th Jeremy Ross and John Tharp documented **Cape May Warbler** at Lake Thunderbird SP; Bill Diffin noticed **Gray-cheeked Thrush** and Mourning Warbler at Zoo Lake Park; Kathleen Tucker encountered Black Tern at Lake Overholser East; Jake Kraft saw Caspian Tern at Lake Hefner; and Brian Marra observed **Wil-**

low Flycatcher at Arcadia Lake. Near Maud Logan Carter spotted Cattle Egret in Seminole County and Cliff Swallow in Pottawatomie County. Larry Mays found Dickcissel near Paul's Valley; Burton Farris counted Northern Rough-winged Swallow in Edmond, and Joe Grzybowski detected Western Kingbird and Blue Grosbeak at Goldsby Sod Farm in McClain County. Bill Diffin discovered White-eyed Vireo,



© Dan Hays

Ellis encountered Yellow-breasted Chat and Brian Marra saw Ovenbird, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. On the 13th while bicycle birding in Newcastle Larry Mays observed Chimney Swift, Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler. Meanwhile, John Tharp described Golden-winged Warbler at Lake Thunderbird SP; Robert Har-

dinger spotted Eastern Wood-Pewee in Harrah; and at Couch Park in Stillwater Mike Yough counted Gray-cheeked Thrush and Landon Neumann found **Blackburnian Warbler**.

On the 14th Alex Phelps detected Least Tern at Rose Lake; Brian Marra discovered Blackpoll Warbler at Stinchcomb WR West; Scott Loss recognized **Wood Thrush** at Legendary Lane in Payne County and Mike Yough came across Olive-sided Flycatcher at McPherson Preserve. Jeremy Cohen identified Cattle Egret along I-44 near Chickasha; Bill Diffin reported Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-eyed Vireo, and Summer Tanager at Liberty Lake. On the 15th Braden Farris verified Swainson's Hawk along I-40 in Pottawatomie County; John Tharp heard Alder Flycatcher, and Mourning Warbler at Lake Thunderbird SP. At Martin Park Nature Center Bill Diffin documented a female



Scarlet Tanager eating mulberries; Chad Ellis tallied Golden-winged Warbler; and Grace Huffman photographed Blackburnian Warbler. Later she got Black-necked Stilt at Bethany-Warr Acres WTP; and Nancy Friot had Chestnut-sided Warbler in Edmond.

©Brian Marra

On the 16th in Grady County Caleb McKinney confirmed Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Common Nighthawk at Ninnekah and American Bittern, and White-faced Ibis at Alex Marsh. On the 17th Caleb McKinney heard **King Rail** and Bank Swallow at Alex Marsh and Red-eyed Vireo at Taylor Lake in Grady County; Michael King added Chimney Swift in Guthrie. Alder Flycatcher



were located by Bill Diffin at Liberty Lake, and Brian Marra at Arcadia Lake. Caleb Frome recorded Cape May Warbler and Alder Flycatcher at Lake Thunderbird. On the 18th Bill Diffin turned up Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and Blackpoll Warbler at Liberty Lake; and described **Ruddy Turnstone** at Lake Overholser Route 66 Park. On the 20th Trina Arnold photographed Marbled Godwit at Lake

Hefner Prairie Dog Point; and Mary & Lou Truex had Swainson's Thrush at Purcell Lake in McClain County. On the 21st Joe Grzybowski viewed Hudsonian Godwit, White-rumped Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, and Yellow-

crowned Night-Heron on Highway 9 near Riverwind in McClain County; while Brian Marra noticed **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** at Crystal Lake in Oklahoma County.

On the 22nd Ben Baranowski encountered Chuck-will's widow in south Canadian County; Scott Loss saw Least Tern at Lake Carl Blackwell; Caleb McKinney had Eastern Wood-Pewee at Ninnekah; Jacob Crissup had Common Nighthawk in Logan County; Joe Grzybowski observed Yellow-billed Cuckoo at McClain County Sod Farm. For the month of May Bobolinks and Common Nighthawks were reported in 6 counties and White-rumped Sandpipers and Eastern Wood-Pewee were reported in 5 counties. On the 23rd Coleman Sanders spotted Purple Martin south of Wanette in Pottawatomie County; Richard Duin found Western Kingbird at



© Braden Farris

Tecumseh; Caleb McKinney counted Louisiana Water-thrush in Ninnekah; Valerie Boudreaux had Eastern Wood-Pewee in Yukon; and Braden Farris detected **Laughing Gull** at Lake Hefner. On the 26th Frank Walker discovered Black-chinned Hummingbird in Union

City. On the 30th Jacob Crissup and Katie Morgan recognized Horned Lark and Dickcissel along OK#33 in Kingfisher County. Now it is time for summer birding from Breeding Bird Atlas studies, to ??? surprise rarities.

In the Central Oklahoma area during May, **217** species were reported with **39** new species which brings the year's total to **297**. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds. Information is accessed at: ebird. 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 May 30 & 31, 2021); occasionally from Facebook, and the OKBIRDS List. I can be contacted at emkok@earthlink.net. Esther M. Key, Editor.

Breeding Bird Survey Fun

June 2021

By Patti Muzny

After a year's hiatus, the US Fish and Wildlife Service gave their volunteers the much-anticipated green light to resume conducting breeding bird surveys. For those of us who have participated in these surveys for many years, this was indeed welcome news!!



Nancy Vicars and I have counted birds on two routes in Beckham and Roger Mills Counties in Western Oklahoma, since 1995. A BBS route consists of 50 timed 3-minute stops, ½ mile apart, on a 25-mile pre-determined route. The fun begins 30 minutes prior to sunrise and we're usually finished by around 10:15 – 10:30 AM. The designated bird identifying person calls out the birds he/she sees and hears in the 3-minutes.

Thirty minutes before sunrise is pretty early for most of us retired folks, but there are advantages. Western Oklahoma is usually pretty quiet along the Oklahoma/Texas line and over the years, we have witnessed some breathtaking sunrises. Over the past 25 years, we have also seen many changes, even in our far western counties, where there are few farms and ranches. Prior to the latest energy boom, the county roads could present quite a challenge and if it had recently rained, the roads were mostly impassible. A bridge over the North Fork of the Red River north of Erick, OK, was in such bad shape, you said a quick prayer and scooted across as quickly as possible! Then one year it washed out and a low water crossing was installed. That was not too bad, but when it washed away and until it was replaced, we had to drive up to the river, turn around and go several miles out of our way and find the road that led to the river from the north side.

Enter the gas and oil wells and the need for better roads. The old bridge is now a modern concrete bridge that's home to hundreds of Cliff Swallows. And speaking of...we have seen Cliff Swallows expand their range to nearly every bridge we cross. The roads are almost all very well built all-weather gravelled roads and the old rutted roads are gone.

Now enter the wind turbine industries. They have sprung up nearly all over our BBS routes. Yes, this industry has also helped improve the roads and add to the tax base, but in so doing, the old fencing has been replaced with new 5-strand barbed wire fences and the roads were raised and widened. With the old fences went the shrubs and trees along the fencelines and with these went the habitat that attracted Bell's Vireo's and other edge nesting species. And in an area where the county road was very sandy and is no longer, the horned lizard has also disappeared. These wind turbines are actually quite striking against one of our beautiful Oklahoma sunrises with the green pastures, wildflowers and thickets of shinery, but have you ever been close to one and tried to hear birds? Change is inevitable, and we move forward, but our species list has certainly changed.

On June 9th and 10th, Nancy, Brian and I drove out to Erick, checked out the first route, checked into a motel and headed back to Elk City for the highlight of our trip west – dinner at Simon's Catch, located south of Elk City. We could have happily eaten there twice a day! There is "all you can eat" catfish dinner and the best fried shrimp on the planet! They also prepare steaks, but we go for the catfish and shrimp. Couldn't possibly be a better way in which to start our adventure. Oh, yes...we did go to count birds!

Along the routes, we did see and hear several Bobwhites. They are now so very difficult to find. We saw coyotes and deer early in the morning. In spite of the habitat changes, we managed to locate a few Bell's Vireos. We also saw a few Bullocks Orioles. A Kingfisher also flew across the road and they are not a species we expect to find. We did find some Common Nighthawks, but hawks were very scarce, as were Eastern Bluebirds and wrens. We found no Carolina Wrens and only one Bewick's Wren. It's always pretty cool to see a Roadrunner perched on a fence post.

It was so good to be back in Western Oklahoma again and we birded and ate our way through the countryside and connected with one of my dear friends, who lives in Sweetwater and operates an airbnb duplex in Elk City, where we spent one night. We enjoyed delicious burgers in the small town of Cheyenne, where we were totally surprised to see OKC Audubon members Neil Garrison and Becky Simpkins walk in to M's Cafe for lunch. They were celebrating their 34th anniversary. Congratulations Neil and Becky!

Happy Birding!

Reflections of a Native birder: The one Indian killer bird name I really have trouble with

(excerpt of blog article by [Stephen Carr Hampton](#))

Editor's Note: At the American Ornithological Society (AOS) Congress on English Bird Names on April 16, 2021, a host of prominent organizations and individuals endorsed "bird names for birds", a widespread effort to rename eponymous or honorific species names with more descriptive names, focusing on their physical or ecological attributes.

As a citizen of Cherokee Nation and a birder for nearly fifty years, I offer these thoughts on the burgeoning discussion to re-name birds that are named after people.

On a typical morning walk from my home in the Pacific Northwest, I tally Steller's Jay, Hutton's Vireo, and Bewick's Wren on my smart phone eBird app without much thought. But there is one bird's name that hits me in the gut, takes my breath away, because it's personal: Scott's Oriole.

If I was birding with you, as a friend, as a field trip leader, as a guide, and we came across this beautiful oriole, I'd have trouble saying its name. At some point, maybe right then, maybe later in the day walking back to the car, I'd go off.

In addition to having a constitution and territorial boundaries (confirmed by the US Supreme Court), the Cherokee Nation had a capitol, a bi-cameral legislature, a museum, a printing press, a newspaper (the *Cherokee Phoenix*, still in press today), our own alphabet (called a syllabary), and a literacy rate (90%) that was higher than that of the white settler population in Georgia.

But the people of Georgia wanted our land. In 1830, Andrew Jackson became president and signed the Indian Removal Act, one of the most contentious pieces of legislation ever debated by the US Congress. My great-great-great-great grandfather George Wilson was one of the many Cherokees who had fought with Jackson and saved his life at the Battle of Horse-shoe Bend two decades earlier.

When Georgia passed a law forbidding "Indians" from bearing witness in court, the Cherokee were subjected to all manner of depredations by white pioneers trying to drive them out. My family's homes were robbed and looted. Men were beaten on the roads. Livestock were stolen. Mothers were raped while their children watched from the bushes. In 1832, Georgia divided Cherokee lands into parcels and held a lottery, awarding them to white settlers. This allowed the pioneers to specifically target our "properties".

As a result of these hardships, some of the Cherokees "removed" early to Indian Territory (Oklahoma). These included many on my grandfather's side—the Thomases, Copelands, and Wilsons.

Most of those on my grandmother's side – the Parks, Taylors, Thompsons, and Walkers – decided to stay and hope the Jackson Administration would end, the tide of anti-Native sentiment would pass, and the Cherokee Nation would continue to thrive on its homeland.

They outlasted Jackson, but President Van Buren called in General Winfield Scott to "remove" the Cherokee. On May 26, 1838, his soldiers started going door to door, house to house, farm to farm, rounding up the Cherokees and putting us in stockades. In the chaos, families were separated. White pioneers raided our homes within hours, stealing clothes, furniture, and livestock.

All told, I have dozens of ancestors who "removed early" to Indian Territory, dozens more who were forced onto the Trail of Tears, and others who were able to stay behind because they were married to a white person. These are my people.

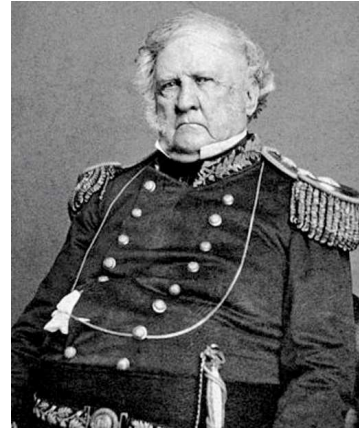
In dire poverty in Indian Territory, the Cherokee Nation re-constituted itself, literally. My great uncle Richard Fox Taylor was a signer of the new Cherokee Constitution of 1839 and became Assistant Chief in 1851.

Three years later, somewhere in the desert Southwest, Darious Couch of the US Army "rediscovered" (the oriole originally named the species *Icterus parisorum* by Charles Bonaparte) and named it in honor of General Scott, probably because the oriole's range closely matched the land the US had just taken from Mexico in the Mexican-American War. Couch was a career US Army officer at the time and a naturalist on the side, so he named the bird after his boss. In the late 1830s, when Bonaparte first described the oriole, Couch was in Florida trying to ethnically cleanse it of Seminoles.

In 1886, the American Ornithological Union codified "vernacular" names, and "Scott's Oriole" appeared in their first checklist. It remains there today, a bird that unwittingly honors conquest and colonization.

There are other Indian killer bird names, such as Abert's Towhee, Clark's Nutcracker, and Couch's Kingbird, or Indian skull collector names like Townsend's Warbler and Townsend's Solitaire.

At the [American Ornithological Society Congress on English Bird Names](#) earlier in 2021, David Sibley said "changing these bird names would allow people of all backgrounds to have simple and uncomplicated conversations about the pleasure of watching birds."



Minutes of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society Meeting

May 17, 2021

By Patti Muzny, Secretary

The meeting was opened at 7:00 PM at the Will Rogers Garden Center by President Hal Yocum. Treasurer Nancy Vicars presented a treasurer's report and distributed copies. The Treasurer's report showed the bank balance was \$8,026.42

There were 37 members and guests present at the May meeting. We welcomed new members, the Branislav and Maggie Schifferdecker.

President Hal Yocum gave a brief report on the Bluebird houses in Will Rogers Park. Neil Garrison has been responsible for maintaining the houses. Members were encouraged to plant bird-friendly plants in our personal gardens.

Patti High asked for volunteers to provide refreshments for future meetings. A sign-up sheet was circulated.

Results of the survey regarding the upcoming club picnic were discussed. The 21 participants in the survey voted to have the picnic at Keith and Terri Underhill's home, by a vote of 19 to 2. Date will be June 5th with an alternative "rain" date of June 12, 2021. The Underhills will prepare the hotdogs and hamburgers. Attendees are asked to bring a side dish to share. Members are asked to let Terri know who will be there.

Unusual area bird sightings were discussed, including Lazuli Bunting, Blackburnian, Golden-winged, Bay-breasted and Cape May Warblers.

The program was presented by Nancy Vicars and Warren Harden, who traveled on a fascinating safari to Africa in 2019. The June program will be presented by Steve Davis and Mary Lane on their trip to Ecuador.

The next meeting will be held at the Will Rogers Garden Center on June 21, 2021, at 7:00 PM.

Refreshments

Patti High, refreshment chair, reports that goodies will once again be served at in-person meetings. Although we don't yet know who will bring them to the June meeting, rest assured you'll be able to enjoy snacks!

Birds and the Surprise of the Common

By Frank Izaguirre, aba.org (excerpt)

A few weeks ago, my wife, Adrienne, quizzed me. **"There's a new study on what the four most common bird species in the world are...want to guess? One is pretty hard I think."** These four birds are the only wild bird species estimated to have populations above one billion.

I played it fairly cautious, taking time to think about what some counterintuitive possibilities might be. I did get European Starling right away, and although I hesitated on House Sparrow, since I know they are uncommon in some of their original range, I got that pretty quickly too. I had some missteps—one of my wrong guesses was Wilson's Storm-petrel, since I remembered a friend once provocatively suggested to me that they might be the most common global species—but I eventually picked up the world's third most common bird, and the only non-songbird in the one billion club, the Ring-billed Gull.

But, of course, Adrienne was right: the fourth was hard, and it took me time even with some clues. One clue was that all four species could be seen near our home here in Pittsburgh, PA. Hm.

And then, while thinking about which Eastern Hemisphere birds on the National Geographic poster over my desk could also be seen in the Western Hemisphere, I got it.

"Barn swallow!"

Who knew? It's a common enough bird, sure, but Top 4 worldwide?

Then I started thinking a bit on my most dramatic barn swallow encounters: the heat wave—blurred flocks on the Dry Tortugas, drifting in on ocean breezes to swirl around snoozing noddies, and in Guanacaste, Costa Rica, when hundreds streamed past me on a sea turtle nesting beach. Plus, I knew there were various subspecies globally—eight it turns out, and any splits would certainly knock them out of the billion bird club. Ok, it was starting to make sense in my mind.

The idea of surprise is a funny thing in birding, because we expect to be surprised—that's a big part of why we play. We like being surprised, and we aren't exactly surprised when we're surprised.

And if, like me, you didn't successfully guess the Top 4 globally most common bird species, at least not with your first four guesses, you probably enjoyed that too. Maybe now, you'll see your next barn swallow a little differently, not just as a split-tailed beauty, but as a global champion of perseverance and adaptability. I will.