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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:

Cindy McIntyre
Lawton, OK

Northern Saw-whet Owls

The speaker for our March 20 meeting will be Laura Hulbert with a presentation entitled "Northern Saw-whet Owls in Oklahoma. Whooo knew?"



Her program will begin with a brief overview of the history of Northern Saw-whet Owls in Oklahoma, followed by a deeper dive into the last six years of their capture, banding and study by biologists at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah. Her talk will end with where this project is going over the next two years, and what they hope to gain from all their data.

Laura Hulbert is a current graduate student at Northeastern State University studying the autumnal migration of the Northern Saw-whet Owl. She first became interested in

birds at a young age with influence from her family starting with her great grandmother. Laura is very passionate about ornithology, and her enthusiasm is contagious when sharing that passion with others. Previously Laura has conducted point count surveys at a nature preserve in Costa Rica and worked as a wildlife rehab technician in the Florida Keys. She hopes to become an environmental consultant where she can actively work to help safeguard our native protected birds.

Our meetings are held September through June on the third Monday of each month. Meetings begin at 7 p.m. Visitors are always welcome.

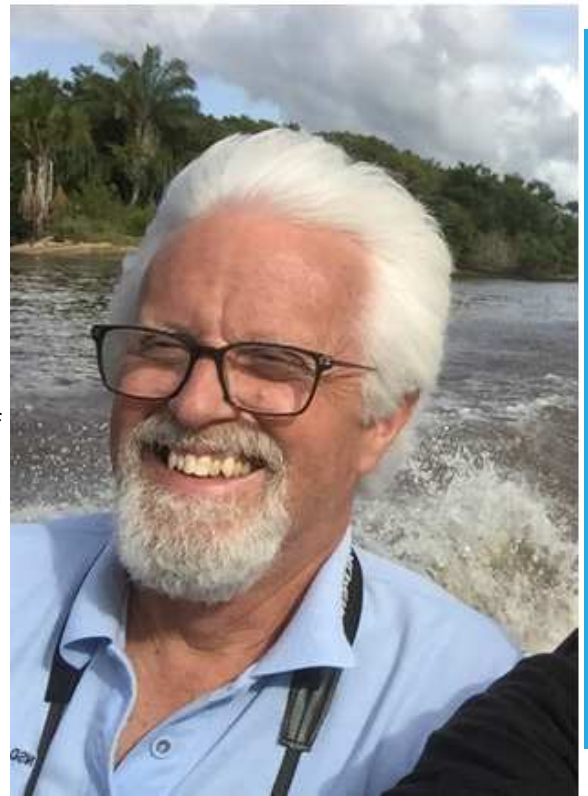
Meeting Location:

Our meetings are held at the Will Rogers Garden center, located at the intersection of NW 36th Street and I-44.



President's Perspective

I noticed in my recent issue of the ABA Birding Magazine that this year's "Bird of the Year" is the Belted Kingfisher. It brought back memories of some of the kingfishers I've seen in Africa, India and especially in South America. They are actually divided into 2 families with most of the Old World species in one and all the New World Species (6) in the other family (plus 3 Old World species). Depending on the taxonomist there are about 75 species in all with the Asia-Pacific species being among some of the most outlandishly colored of any bird--I have yet to see most of them. I have only seen 23 total so far including all the ones found here in the America's. Of course, my first Kingfisher was the Belted up in Nebraska back in the summer of 1960. It wasn't until 1973-75 that I was able to see the rest of them in Peru while living along the upper Amazon. It was the last one that completed my list for the Americas that taught me a lesson about analyzing carefully and remembering details if I was to be very successful in this passion of Birding. I had seen all but one: Belted, Ringed, Amazon, Green, and Pygmy in such exotic places as Huicungo, Soritor, Ucayali River... but I was stumped when it came to the last one: Green-and-Rufous. Months went by and nothing.



Bob Holbrook on the Essequibo River, Guyana

We lived on the shores of a horseshoe lake called Yarinacocha made by the Ucayali River, one of the main tributaries of the Amazon and about 10 miles out from the town of Pucallpa. One morning (May 21, '75) before heading into town to my office on my motorcycle, I took a few minutes to look at my Birds of South America by De Schauensee. I happened to open it to the kingfishers. No, no pictures worth anything, just very brief written descriptions for each species, a few black and white pictures, mostly heads. As I mentioned already, I already had seen all except #5--the Green and Rufous. (Number 6 which I had already seen almost exactly one year before, on May 15 of '74 has the following BRIEF description: "Miniature replica of 5 but center of belly white." That's all. No description for the female. So, I was looking for a "Above dark oily green, wings and tail spotted with buffy white. Throat buff, deepening to ferruginous on belly. ♀: Similar but with green and white breast band." Key might be that no "white on belly" and a bit larger at least.

Off I went riding down a dusty track--it was the dry season, hence I could ride my motorcycle, wet season I had to take the local "bus service canoes" called Peke-pekes. There are a couple log bridges over small streams to cross (I tell a crazy story about one of them to kids around a campfire). Working my way across the first log bridge slowly so as to not slip off, I suddenly caught a quick sight of a small green flash just off to my left. I stopped on the log, held my balance with a foot on another log and stared for no more than 2-3 seconds at a rather small green and ferruginous bird that had stopped just 10-15 feet away. My first instant reaction--NO white on the belly! And it was gone. Yes! Finally my Kingfishers were complete. had I not just read that detail a few minutes before, I might still be looking for my Green-and-Rufous Kingfisher.

The moral of the moment was: Know what you are looking for! Since then as I travel, I spend a lot of time carefully selecting my target birds and then memorizing exactly what they look like. I spend most of my time in the airplanes pouring over the field guides to my destinations. I ask "Which are the endemics? Which are the rare ones? Which are those common ones I've seen other places and don't need to spend time on and how are my target birds different from all the rest. It takes time and concentration but the rewards are great!

Bob Holbrook, Pres.

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

Recorder's Report

February 2023

There were several exciting sightings for February in Central Oklahoma! Swans, American Woodcocks and Sandhill Cranes might top the list but there were other interesting finds too!



Guyla Mayo

On the 9th, Dan R saw 13 Trumpeter Swans east of Bartlesville. On the 11th, Jim B reported that 2 Trumpeter Swans are regularly seen west of Woodward. Franny P spotted 3 lounging in a field north of Nash.



Sandhill Cranes

upward and your ears open as they begin moving north more each week.

Sandhill Crane migration has begun with sightings here and there. Kent A spotted 10 on the wing in Payne County on the 19th. On the 20th, the Wee Explorers saw one at Purcell Lake. An anonymous birder reported one near Norman on the 25th. Jim B noted several flocks flying north over Woodward on the 25th. Keep your eyes

Nancy V and Warren led an OKC Audubon group on a Woodcock Watch at Lake Stanley Draper. They heard but didn't see any Woodcocks. Landon N had 3 displaying at Lake Carl Blackwell on the 5th. Bethany L listed 1 on the 18th in Oklahoma City. On the 26th Elaine S spotted 1 in Ripley in Payne County. Not really Central Oklahoma but definitely within driving distance, Woodcocks have also been reported at Oxley Nature Center and Sequoyah NWR.

In Cleveland County on the 25th, James H had a goose bonanza with 5 Snow Geese, 1 Ross, 1 Greater White-fronted, and 70 Cackling Geese.

A Pacific Loon was listed by Devin B at Lake Hefner on the 3rd and again on the 11th. On the 11th, there were 3 along with a Red-throated Loon! Bill C also reported a Red-throated Loon

on the 13th. All at Lake Hefner.

A Black-crowned Night-Heron was reported by Trina A on the 22nd and Steve S at the Zoo Lake Park in on the 25th.

Bald Eagles have begun nest building and mating and seem to have survived the storms of the 26th. A pair that built a nest near the Oklahoma River (aka the North Canadian River) survived the winds. Bald Eagles are listed in 7 of the 12 counties of Central Oklahoma!

A Virginia Rail was listed by Andrea E at Summit Lake on February 15. Not Central Oklahoma, but David Arbour included 5 King Rails in his Red Slough bird survey on the 28th!

A Baird Sandpiper was spotted by Don P in Oklahoma City on the 18th. A Dunlin was seen by Esther W on the 5th at Yukon City Park.

California Gulls, an Iceland Gull and a Slaty-backed Gull were all reported at Lake Hefner. Clay B saw a Lesser Black-backed Gull at Boomer Lake on the 16th. A Black-legged Kittiwake was reported by Devin B and Trina A listed a Forster's Tern on the 24th also at Lake Hefner.

A Crested Caracara was spotted by Zach P on the 25th. A Merlin was reported by Cody D in Cleveland County on the 21st and by Grace H at Crystal Lake in Oklahoma County on the 25th.



Crested Caracara ©Jerry Vanbebber

Eastern Bluebirds were seen in 8 counties with Scott L seeing 2 Mountain Bluebirds in Payne County on the 21st.

21 Rusty Blackbirds were listed by Scott L at Lake Carl Blackwell on the 16th. One Yellow-headed Blackbird was spotted by Steve D on the 23rd in Oklahoma County. An anonymous e-birder listed 3 Rusty Blackbirds in Norman on the 27th.

The information for this report was collected from eBird, ABA Bird News, and the Oklahoma List Serve on February 27 and 28. Any errors are solely mine. Please feel free to contact me with questions or suggestions at guyla1mae@gmail.com

Owlets hatch in Edmond nest

By Terri Underhill

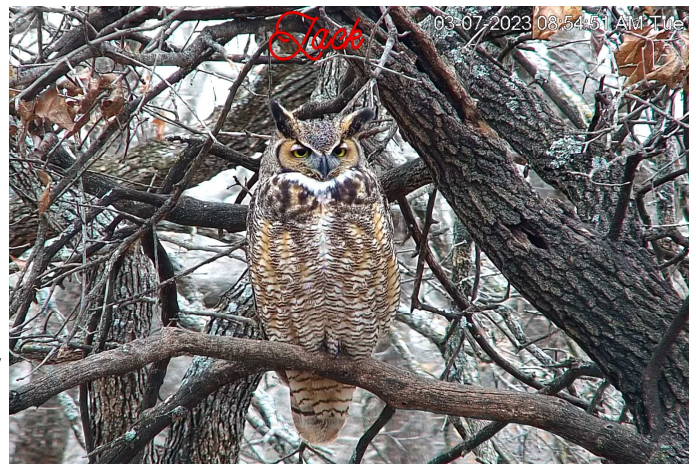


The first Great Horned Owl owlet hatched on March 3rd at 34 days. The second hatched on March 6th at 34 days as well. Carol and Jack, the parents, are doing a wonderful job caring for their owlets. During this next month the owlets will become livelier and start to move around more on their own. Once they get big enough to tell them apart I will name them. I always assume there will be one of each sex and will name them accordingly. The owlets are getting really big and doing their wing exercises when Carol is off the nest. They aren't opening their eyes yet but I am sure it will be any day now.

I don't think Jack is having success at finding prey as quickly as Carol would like. The last few days Carol has been leaving the nest for an hour or two at a time going hunting. The owlets are fed only by Carol; Jack is not bringing prey to the barrel. When he has prey for her and the owlets he calls to Carol from the far roosting tree to get it. They prefer rabbit and I think there aren't as many with the loss of habitat.

During the day there is loud construction noise the nest cam cameras' microphones are picking up from two doors away. Carol doesn't seem to be bothered by all the loud noise but Jack is not hanging out at his regular roosts. I think he is staying closer to the creek where my camera cannot see him. When I can locate him roosting I try to get my 360 camera on him.

My next video will be about the owlets first 14 days. I will be adding it to my video page tonight. I hope you enjoy watching my owl family this season. They are such a joy and blessing. Here's my videos page: <https://www.youtube.com/@okiebirdnerd/videos> and my live cams: www.okiebirdcam.com



Feds propose Wood Stork delisting



On February 14, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced a proposal to remove the Wood Stork from the federal list of endangered and threatened wildlife. The bird is the only species of stork breeding in the United States. The Wood Stork faced extinction when listed in 1984 under the Endangered Species Act. The population decreased from 20,000 nesting pairs in the late 1930s to fewer than 5,000 pairs in the 1970s, primarily nesting in south Florida's Everglades and Big Cypress ecosystems. Today, the Wood Stork breeding population has doubled to 10,000 or more nesting pairs and increased its range. If the stork is delisted, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Clean Water Act, and state environmental regulations will continue to protect the species and the wetland habitats it depends upon. The ESA requires FWS to implement a post-delisting monitoring plan for a minimum of five years to ensure the species remains stable.

Minutes of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society Meeting

February 20, 2023

By Patti Muzny, Secretary

The meeting was opened at 7:00 PM at the Will Rogers Garden Center by President Bob Holbrook. Nancy Vicars presented a treasurer's report distributed copies. Cash on hand as of February 20, 2023, was \$8220.78. The minutes of the January 21, 2023, meeting were approved as published in the newsletter.

The next meeting will be held at the Will Rogers Garden Center on Monday, March 20, 2023, at 7:00 PM.

There were two visitors. Three new members have joined OKCAS in the past month.

Nancy Vicars reported a welcome sighting in her Edmond yard – Eastern Bluebirds! This sighting prompted a trip to purchase a bluebird house, mealworms and all of the trimmings. Guyla and Frannie found Trumpeter swans on a recent trip to the Salt Plains.

Patti High asked once again for volunteers to provide refreshments for our future meetings and passed around the sign-up notebook.

Another very informative program on the subject of bats was presented by Dr. Jason Shaw.

The topic for the March 20th program will be Saw-whet Owls, presented by Laura Hulbert.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Muzny
Secretary

Refreshments

Refreshment Volunteers for Mar. 20, 2023:

Snacks: Guyla Mayo, Nancy Reed, Chris Eckart, Patti Muzny

Ice & drinks: John Eagleston and Cathy Chernausek

Thank you, Cheryl, Brendan, Wesley, and Lizzie Petticrew

The Petticrew family made a donation of \$100.00 to the Oklahoma City Audubon Society in memory of

Mary Sue Petticrew.



Eurasian Woodcocks have the brightest white feathers ever measured

The mainly brown Eurasian Woodcock uses its bright white tail feathers to communicate in semi-darkness, reflecting 30% more light than any other known bird.

These surprise findings, by a team led by an Imperial College London scientist, suggest there is much to learn about how birds that are most active at night or at dawn and dusk communicate.

Birds that are most active during the day often have colorful plumages, which they use to communicate information with each other. Birds that are most active at dawn and dusk or at night ("crepuscular"), such as nightjars and woodcocks, tend to have less showy plumage.

They used specialized microscopy to image feather structure, spectrophotometry to measure the light reflectance, and models to characterize how photons of light interact with structures inside the feather. They were surprised to find the reflectance measurements showed the feathers reflected up to 55% of light – 30% more light than any other measured feather. The results were published March 1 in Royal Society Interface.

Field Trip Report: Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge

By Larry Mays

On Monday, March 6, I had the honor of escorting 12 intrepid birders; including a couple, Susan and Warner Jarnagin, from New Jersey, to the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge north of Lawton in Comanche County.

We rallied the troops at the local (for me) Newcastle WalMart at 7:00, and we began birding at Robison Crossing (Lawtonka Acres) around 8:30 or so. There is a nice little bottomland area near there, and I had hoped to scrounge up some woodpeckers, but they just weren't cooperating. There were plenty Cardinals to go around though. We then proceeded into the little resort village there to check the several feeders. I had hopes for an Inca Dove, as they've been fairly cooperative in recent years. No incas, but we got Mourning Dove, Eurasian Collared Dove and White-winged Dove there as well as a small flock of Cedar Waxwings and a single Red-breasted Nuthatch.

It was here, alongside the lake that we managed to see a few Harris's Sparrows, towhees, and a possible Audubon's race individual of Yellow-rumped Warbler. From there we began to work our way around Lake Lawtonka, and had several nice birds including Horned and Eared Grebes and an early Osprey.



Loon (sp.) © Cindy McIntyre

We stopped briefly at the Lake Elmer Thomas dam hoping for a Rock Wren and getting one, along with a couple of very cooperative Rufous-crowned Sparrows. One other thing of note: today Cindy McIntire, of Lawton, who was with the group, sent me a couple of photos of a very interesting flyover bird which she couldn't quite identify. She took the shot at the dam while the rest of us were looking at the wren and the sparrow. I posted the pics on the "What's This Bird" page on Facebook, because it is obviously a loon, but I can't say for certain which. Maybe some of you could have a look and give it your two cents.

My plan was to then hit a spot where I'd hoped to maybe get a LeConte's Sparrow, but the damage to that grassland by feral hogs put a stop to that. Our next stop was just

past the Meer's Turnoff at the little prairie dog town. Everyone got out and we began walking the grass there in hopes of possible longspurs or maybe a ...LeConte's Sparrow. We jumped at least one, and finally managed to surround the same or another bird, and slowly began tightening the circle. We finally got the bird to move up into the branches of some sand plums there and a lot of folks got great looks and photos of this elusive little bird.

Lunch was at the Holy City where they've installed some nice new, very clean picnic tables. We did a quick check of the dog town, but didn't turn up much, though we now had both species of meadowlark calling. I then led everyone to the west side of the refuge where we circled a few gravel roads in hopes of maybe seeing Mountain Bluebirds or Ladderback Woodpeckers, but dipped on both species. We did get a Loggerhead Shrike there, but the birds were scarce.



LeConte's Sparrow ©Cindy McIntyre

From there we went back onto the refuge and made stops at Sunset, the trail to the Narrows and Lost Lake. Passerines everywhere were few and far between. At the Narrows trailhead we managed to get everyone onto a Townsend's Solitaire.

At Lost Lake we finally got onto some woodpeckers--three Red-headeds, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and a Northern Flicker or two. Did we get a downy? Can't recall.

I think the final tally was 46 species plus the loon.