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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:

Michael McCoy, Edmond

History of Ornithology in Oklahoma

The speaker for our May 15 meeting will be member Joe Grzybowski. His presentation: *History of Ornithology in Oklahoma: from Early Expeditions to Modern Birding*

As birders or naturalists, many of us contribute our experiences to the knowledge of wild birds. For Oklahoma, both the information and interest in that knowledge has a record, a history going back several 100 years. Whether we think about the remarkable times when European settlers first explored Oklahoma or the current period of study and mega-data, the words and feelings that come to mind become WOW, or Wowwww or OMG!!!! Joe Grzybowski will take us on a journey of this history from the early explorers to the current cutting edge and beyond--a TIME TRAVEL experience of past, present and the future knowledge of Oklahoma birds.



Joe has had an interest in Oklahoma ornithology for a long while. He created a Bibliography of Oklahoma Ornithology 1984. Retired, he is still a Research Associate with the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History. His personal experiences began in western New York and covered the period of the "old-school" ornithologists. Early mentors were individuals like Harold Axtell and Stephen Eaton during a time focused of natural history studies. Coming to Oklahoma, he became acquainted and interacted with George Sutton, an icon of Oklahoma Ornithology, and many of his students. He has conducted field work on wild turkeys, grassland birds, population biology and recovery of black-capped vireos, cowbird parasitism, raptors, etc. and has been associated with the upcoming breed of ornithologists in the State. With Sutton's passing, Joe continued Sutton's record-keeping pattern with the formation of the Oklahoma Bird Records Committee, and has written accounts on the birds of the Southern Great Plains for *American Birds*, now *North American Birds*, since the late 1980s. He is also a Fellow in the American Ornithological Society (formerly American Ornithologists' Union). So come and become Wide-Eyed to a Time-Travel of Oklahoma Ornithology.

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

Two recent items brought to my memory some events from a long time ago. I suspect the same might be true with those of you who have been birding for more than a few decades. The first such memory jogger was an article in my latest ABA *Birding* issue that has a chart and the bold letters "2.9 billion birds gone since 1970"; the second was a conversation with my son a few evenings ago. I had mentioned that our Red-headed Woodpeckers are back at camp again this year--2 pairs using our Bluebird nest boxes. He told me that there has been a sharp decline in Red-headed Woodpeckers over that past few years and no one is sure exactly why.

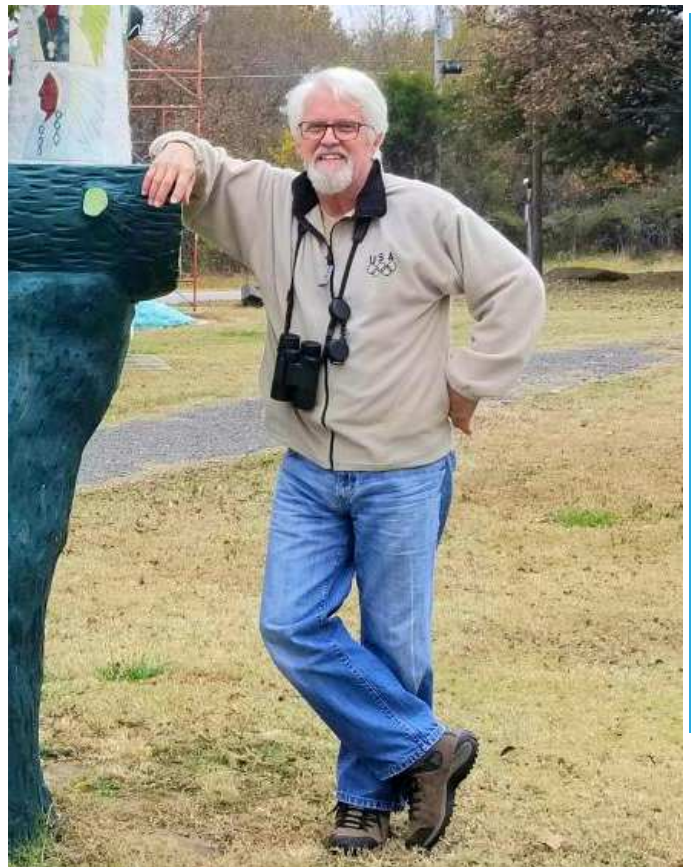
My memories went back to my youth living in Lincoln, Nebraska not long after my family had returned from living in Peru, South America. I remember standing outside of our house out on the prairie edges of town on a Fall day and watching a mixed flock of Grackles and Blackbirds fly over. The train was a good "several inches wide as measured against the sky," extended from horizon to horizon and lasted what seemed like at least half an hour. I remember heading over to the Nebraska-Iowa State line near Nebraska City and seeing geese of at least 3 different species both on the ground and flying around by what must have been millions--the sky was full in every direction; the ground appeared to have just as many. In recent years, yes, I've seen large flocks of blackbirds/grackles and large flocks of geese for sure but never in the magnitude of those days back in the early '60s.

At camp our woodpeckers are back, again this year but hasn't always been that way. When I first came to Oklahoma in 2006 we had Red-headed Woodpeckers nesting at camp. Then about 3 years later they disappeared and have been gone except for an occasional Spring migrant that might stop by for a day or two, until Summer before last when a pair showed up and took over one Bluebird box. Last summer was the same--one pair, same box. During those interim years, Bluebirds were occupying nearly all of our 11 boxes then a super nasty cold winter hit as y'all might recall 3-4 years ago and we lost our Bluebird colony entirely. That next summer we had zero nesters. This season now we apparently are back up to 2-3 pairs--I'll know better in the next few weeks exactly how many.

This writing is a bit frustrating because I cannot end it in a great positive note. I remember some time ago we had a presentation about bird fatalities in the heart of OKC and what was being done to reduce them. But in the broad picture it is really a drop in the bucket--Yes, I know a drop is better than nothing for sure! But I ask myself (and by extension everyone else) "What can I do? What can we do?" My son mentioned that he was checking his Bluebird box after the winter months and found a dead Downy Woodpecker in it. How did that happen? Why? Had it been sick? too cold? got in and couldn't get out? One small bird...just another bird among those 2.9 billion. My feeders are heavily visited during the worst weather, I have proper decals on my windows. But my neighbor feeds stray cats, we've talked, my windows still account for a half dozen deaths of birds that didn't read the guidelines of where not to fly when a cat jumps our fence. So I lose another half dozen each winter out of that 2.9 billion.

Frustrations, food for thought, every bird adds up. I've heard of solutions which when carefully analyzed, are not so simple as they might appear, so I/we do what I/we can as far as my/our limited resources allow and realize that Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* may yet be one day but I hope I don't ever see it in person.

Bob Holbrook
President





Bird of the Month: Swainson's Warbler

By Grace Huffman

May is peak migration season, and warblers are on the move. While there are tons of warblers moving north, some arrive here and stop for the summer. One of our summer breeding warblers doesn't have much in the way of looks, but it has a loud and beautiful song that will give away its presence.

Swainson's Warblers are on the larger end as far as warblers go, and very drab. Mostly brown all over, they have a reddish tinged crown and a long bill as the highlights of their appearance. What they lack in looks they make up for in

sound, with a beautiful song of slurred whistles that are very clear. Usually this is what you'll end up catching, as they are usually very secretive and hard to spot.

They breed across a large part of the south-east United States in wet woodlands, especially mature woodlands in bottom lands with lots of leaf litter. Wintering grounds are in places like Cuba and southern Mexico. Males on their breeding grounds are very territorial, and will fiercely defend it from other males. Females build a large messy nest in vines or the under-story, and then line the cup with finer materials like hair and Spanish moss. They are usually monogamous, and the pair will feed near each other. While the female is incubating the eggs, the male will bring her food, and both will feed the young ones.

Here in Oklahoma, they are reliably found only in McCurtain county, where Dr. Mia Rebels has done extensive research on this species. You can find more on her research here: [Swainson's Warbler – Sutton Center](#). The past 3 years (including this year) one has shown up at Mohawk Park in Tulsa, where I got to see and photograph it this year.

Swainson's Warbler is considered least concern with populations possibly increasing, so if you're in McCurtain County, keep an ear out for these fascinating warblers.

Other references include allaboutbirds.org



Swainson's Warbler © Grace Huffman

Recorder's Report

April 2023

Migration is in full swing and there have been many interesting sightings in Central Oklahoma.

Total species count was up by 63 species to 230. We added 15 species of Shorebirds and 9 species of Warbler. There were several early reports of hummingbirds, both Black-Chinned and Ruby-throated. On April 28, Devin B had a 'Migration Spectacle' at Lake Hefner when he recorded 100 species in 4 hours. Jimmy W reported a similar experience.



Guyla Mayo

Seminole County

Northern Parula
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
4/15 Heidi R - Seminole
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-throated Warbler
Summer Tanager
4/29 Anne B - Prague

Pottawatomie County

Northern Rough-Winged Swallow
4/10 Michael S - Shawnee
Broad-winged Hawk -
4/27 Michelle S - Shawnee

Grady County

Broad-winged Hawk
4/6 Joe G - SW of Blanchard
Warbling Vireo
4/23 Jason S - Shannon Springs Park

Garvin County

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
4/22 Don P - Flood Control Lake

Kingfisher County

Pectoral Sandpiper,
Wilson's Snipe
Lesser Yellowlegs
4/9 George Z - Cimarron

Lincoln County

Osprey
4/7 Ed B - Lincoln
Eastern Bluebird
4/30 Braden F - Bell Cow Lake
Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers
4/30 Megan M

Logan County

Yellow-throated Vireo
4/15 D&D N - Kairworks
Black-and-white Warbler
4/26 D&D N - Kairworks
Common Nighthawk
4/30 Kevin W - Orlando
White-faced Ibis
4/30 Jimmy W - Liberty Lake
Dickcissel
4/30 Douglas W - Guthrie Lake

McClain County

Wilson's Snipe
4/12 Kathy M and Eric J - Purcell Lake
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
4/19 Larry M - Home

Canadian County

Pine Siskin
4/3 Esther W - Yukon City Park
Ruddy Duck
4/4 Calvin R - Stinchcomb
Upland Sandpiper
4/16 Elizabeth & Tim P - Calumet
Baird's Sandpiper
4/17 Jake G - Lake Overholser
Least Tern
4/19 Trina A - Lake Overholser
Semipalmated Plover,
Least, Pectoral, Solitary Sandpipers
4/26 Eric S - Lake Overholser

Cleveland County

Nashville Warbler
4/4 Stephen O - Indian Point
Northern Waterthrush
4/7 Louis Cueto
Black-bellied Whistling Duck
4/8 Grace H - Pebblebrook Park
Yellow-throated Vireo
4/13 Stephen O - Indian Point Trail
Black-chinned Hummingbird
4/13 Stephen O John H. Saxon Park

Piping Plover

4/23 Cody D - Lake Thunderbird

Red Crossbill

4/24 Lindell D - Lake Thunderbird

American Golden-Plover

4/28 Jerry V - Ten Mile Flats

Lazuli Bunting

4/30 Michael R - Little River SP

Rose-breasted Grosbeak

4/30 Grace H - Lake Thunderbird

Grasshopper Sparrow

4/30 David G - Ten Mile Flats

Payne County

Black-chinned Hummingbird

4/7 Sara and Scott L - Stillwater

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

4/8 Michael R - Lake Carl Blackwell

Neotropic Cormorant

4/15 Landon N - Boomer Lake

Cassin's Sparrow

4/20 Anna N and Scott L - Boomer Lake

Hooded Warbler

4/25 Michael R, Scott L, Lucas B - OSU Botanic Gardens

Oklahoma County

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

4/3 Hal Y - Home FOS

Black-chinned Hummingbird

4/7 Allen C - Edmond

Black-bellied Whistling Duck

4/11 Cole P - Twin Lakes

Pacific Loon

4/12 Jacob C and Josh L - Lake Hefner

Piping Plovers

4/14 Brian M, Grace H, Steve S - Lake Hefner

White-rumped Sandpiper

4/20 Grace H - Lake Hefner

Common Nighthawk

4/23 Cole P - Prairie Dog Point—Lake Hefner

Yellow-throated Vireo

4/23 Cole P - Lake Hefner

Dark-eyed Junco -

4/24 Steve S - Myriad Botanical Gardens

Blue-headed Vireo

4/29 Devin B - Martin Park Nature Center

Mississippi Kite

4/29 David B - Oklahoma County

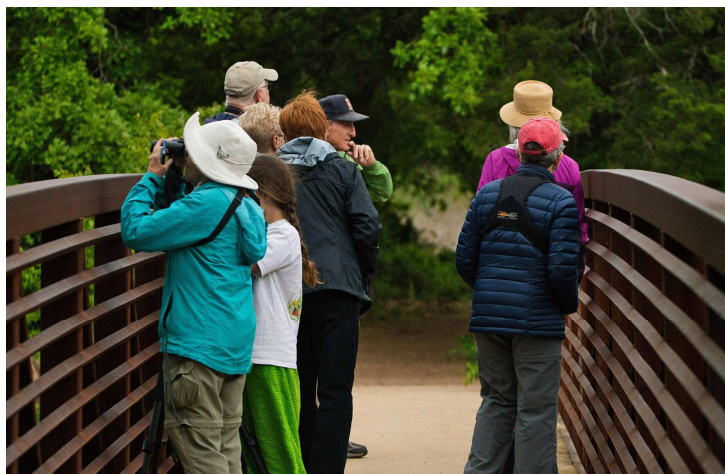
The information for this report was collected from eBird, ABA Bird News, and the Oklahoma List Serve on April 29 and 30. Any errors are solely mine. Please feel free to contact me with questions, suggestions, or complaints at guyla1mae@gmail.com.

Field Trip Update:

Wichita Mountains Nat'l Wildlife Refuge

About a dozen birders from the OKC Audubon Society met on May 3rd for a day in the Wichita Mountains. Despite the rain early on, we managed to find 76 species.

We started at the Sunset area, on to Lost Lake, back to Sunset and then to the Quanah Lake area.



© Cole Penning

The hot spot for the day was the Lost Lake area where the following birds were seen:

Blue Grosbeak

Rose-breasted Grosbeak

Black-headed Grosbeak

Lazuli Bunting

2 Roadrunners heard

The Sunset area produced a Philadelphia Vireo and many Black-capped Vireos heard but only seen fleetingly. The Zone-tailed Hawk was seen with a lizard on the return trip to Sunset.

At Quanah Parker Lake we saw:

38 Willets

Green Heron

Sora

Black-capped Vireos were heard here but were hard to see.



Zone-tailed Hawk © Cole Penning

Quinn's Miraculous Comeback before Branching out

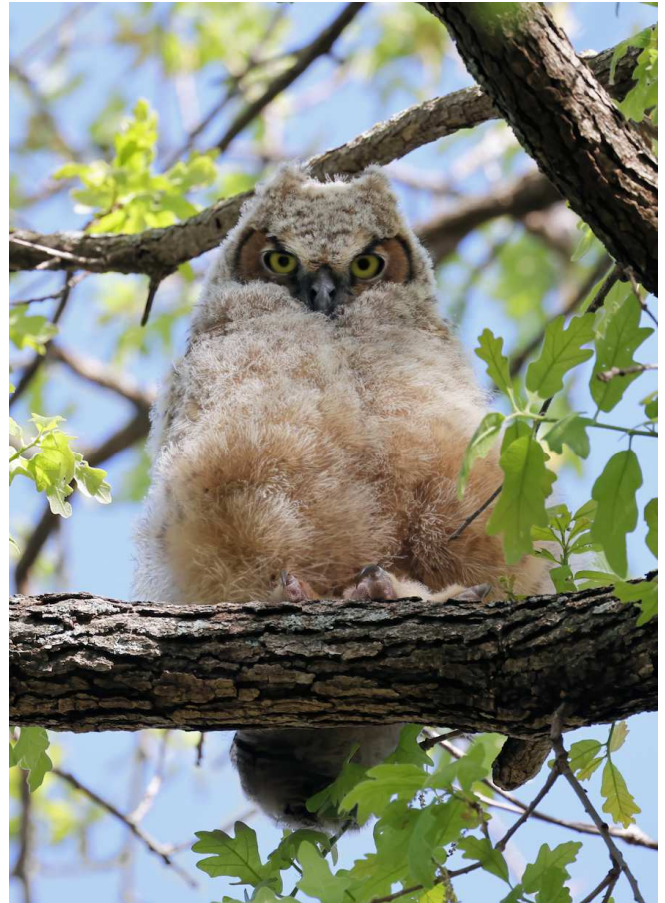
By Terri Underhill

On April 8th Quinn was returned by WildCare to our Great Horned Owl nest and for almost a week I watched Quinn not even try to get prey when Carol came in to feed. I was concerned he might not make it. I even sent a video to WildCare sharing my concerns. I was afraid the way he was fed at WildCare was too different from real life. Quinn didn't know how to put effort into feeding and taking turns. I don't think he knew what it meant to be hungry since he was fed regularly.

Then on April 16th out of the blue Quinn decided to start fighting for his share of the prey. That night when Jack came in with prey, Quinn grabbed it and fought with Owlsha for over ten minutes. I think if he'd lost the fight, he'd given up. But thankfully he won and from that moment on, he showed his strength. On April 17th Quinn & Owlsha had their last prey in the barrel. That day both owlets walked up the slanted branch and never came back down. Two times Carol brought prey to the barrel and neither owlet would come down to her. I saw Carol take the prey to Owlsha a minute later, and Jack took prey to Quinn. This is the first year Carol hasn't been able to coax the owlets back to feed together. And I think Quinn finally figured out if he was alone, he got all the prey for himself.

April 23rd was the last time I was able to locate both owlets. I found Quinn on the 360 camera at 6:30 AM when Jack brought him prey.

About five minutes later I saw him fly about 15' out of sight. 6:00 PM that evening I located Owlsha. She flew about 6' but didn't maintain altitude like Quinn did.



Once we started getting so much rain and the trees leafed out I lost sight of them however, I still hear the crows mobbing them daily. They seem to stay along the creek where the trees are much denser. On May 3rd I heard what sound like an owlet learning how to hoot. Then I heard Carol.

This has been a wonderful year for Jack and Carol. Especially with the return of Quinn. Owlsha and Quinn fledged earlier than any of the past year owlets. Quinn in 45 days and Owlsha in 42. This is about a week to 10 days earlier than prior years. The Mighty Quinn has proven himself and beat all the odds. I think it is a miracle he made such strong come back. Many thanks to WildCare OK for saving Quinn from what should have been a deadly respiratory infection. I hope I am privileged enough to have another year with Jack and Carol. I wish all the best for Owlsha and Quinn. Jack and Carol will continue to feed them through September. At that time they will move to their own territory and start their own family. Thanks to everyone that followed my owl family this year. I am always sad for them to go. They bring me so much joy. I would love to write a children's book about the miracle of The Mighty Quinn and his miraculous comeback. I am so blessed to have them return every year. I would be lost without them. I give a hoot about owls!

Here's my last video on youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJdj6Uom5RY>

My YouTube videos: <https://www.youtube.com/@okiebirdnerd>

Minutes of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society Meeting

April 17, 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 and distributed copies. Cash on hand as of April 17, 2023, was \$8,506.54. The minutes of the March 20, 2023, meeting were approved as published in the newsletter.

The next meeting will be held at the Will Rogers Garden Center on Monday, May 15, 2023, at 7:00 PM. Visitors and new members were welcomed.

President Bob Holbrook presented more information as the variety of ideas for items to consider presenting to future speakers. He also mentioned that OCAS's newsletter was well done.

Nancy Vicars related information for the upcoming field trip to the Wichita Mountains, which will be led on May 3 by Kurt Meisenzahl. Participants should bring lunch and will meet at 8:30 AM at the Love's. A field trip to South Jenkins is coming up soon. Also, the Molly Spencer staff has asked for volunteers to help with a field trip. There will also be a field trip to the Crystal Lake area.

OOS meeting will be held in Bartlesville on May 12-14, 2023.

Nancy Vicars reported that she and Patti Muzny found a Canada Goose had appropriated an unused Bald Eagle nest near Dewar in Eastern OK.

Hal Yocum reported that Hackberry Flat is mostly dried out. He found Barn Owls in an unused Silo in SW Oklahoma.

Terri Underhill told the group that the Underhills will host the club picnic either the first or second weekend of June. Details to come.

Nancy Vicars also reported that a new membership roster will be available soon.

The group enjoyed another very fascinating program by our president Bob Holbrook on North Coastal Peru.

Our May program will be presented to our own Dr. Joe Grzybowski on the subject of the History of Ornithology in Oklahoma.

Respectfully submitted,
Patti Muzny
Secretary

Field Trip Updates

Molly Spencer Farm

The spring visit to Molly Spencer Farm was held on Saturday, April 29. The spring migrants present included Nashville and Orange-crowned Warblers, Swainson's Thrush, Red-eyed and White-eyed Vireos, Eastern Kingbird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Brown Thrasher, Green Heron, Barn Swallow and a fly-over Great Egret.

A beautiful Yellow-rumped Warbler in spring plumage was quite a treat and the resident Cooper's Hawk made a brief appearance. Last year we were able to watch this hawk building a nest.

It was a calm, clear and cool morning for the 28 fledgling birds in attendance.

S. Jenkins, Norman, OK

We hit the Mother Lode on our outing to S. Jenkins in Norman, OK on Monday, May 1. The air was absolutely filled with bird songs. A Yellow-throated Warbler, as usual, was the first bird heard upon our arrival and was soon followed by a Northern Waterthrush! Other Warblers included Yellow, Tennessee, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped.

First of the year sightings included Indigo and Painted Buntings, Dickcissel, House Wren and Northern Parula Warbler, Swainson's Hawk, Northern Harrier, Snowy Egret, Northern Rough-winged Swallows and a Lark Sparrow.

The flycatchers included Eastern Phoebe, Great-crested, Scissortail, Western and Eastern Kingbird. The vireo family was well represented by Bell's, Warbling, Red and White-eyed.

There were thousands of Franklin's Gulls resting along the river plus 10 Forster's Terns.

The Bonus Bird of the day was a very cooperative Barred Owl! It was perched out in the open for all to see and did not seem at all disturbed by the gun fire coming from the nearby police shooting range!!!

I think our combined checklists were well over 60 species.

Refreshments

Refreshment Volunteers for May 15, 2023:

Snacks: Scott Jantz, Terri Underhill, Drew & Landon Gilbert and Doug Eide.

Ice & Drinks: Hal Yocum



Chirpings

By Patti Muzny

Being a fan of those 70's rock and roll songs, the old Creedence Clearwater Revival song, "Lookin' Out My Back Door," flitted into my wandering outdoor mind the past few beautiful Oklahoma spring days. Beautiful spring days are not always all that beautiful, but every day dawns with surprises thrown in with the "normal" and "expected." We have had tornadoes (screaming much too close to my back yard and those of friends), rain, wind, hail, double rainbows, awesome sunrises and sunsets and what draws me outside – migration!! We won't discuss the condition of my office or flowerbeds.

Every year I so look forward to the flocks of Clay-colored and Chipping Sparrows that are usually accompanied by White-crowned, Lincoln's and Field Sparrows. This year was no exception. These feisty little migrants love to graze on my abundant crop of dandelions and various and assorted plants (weeds to those who are not enlightened). It was also interesting to watch the Harris's Sparrows as they acquired their breeding plumage. I keep a suet feeder hanging on the edge of the patio cover and it's been especially entertaining to watch a pair of Downy Woodpeckers visit. Of course, this snack also attracts Starlings, House Sparrows, House Finches, Cowbirds and Bewick's Wrens.

The hummingbirds quickly found the feeder, hung around for a few days, disappeared and are now pairs are back on a regular basis. One day last week I walked around to the front flower beds and flushed a larger mostly all brown bird from the hedge. It landed in the neighbor's yard, so I crept over to their yard and it flew to land on their gate. It was not a Common Nighthawk and too small for a Poorwill, so I called it a Chuck-will's widow! A lifer bird for our OKC yard.

A pair of Brown Thrashers nested in a shrub at the back of the yard and eggs were laid, but alas, when I checked on it about 10 days later there was no sign of any hatchlings, and the nest was intact. Hate when that happens! At the end of the patio, there is a chickadee-sized birdhouse and although the chickadees first claimed it, the winner was a pair of Bewick's Wrens and at this time it's full of pin feathered, ravenous hatchlings. The Great-crested Flycatchers frequently visit, and sometimes we have a Phoebe and we've even had one Eastern Bluebird.

The rookery in the area west of I-35 and near SE 15th, is active and every day the airspace above the yard is stippled with egrets and night herons as they venture to the south in pursuit of food. We've heard Nighthawks in the evenings and we often see Chimney Swifts hawking insects. One of my very favorite summer yard birds is the Mississippi Kites. Finally, after nearly acquiring eyestrain from looking, on May 6th, above the house soared a pair of these beautiful predators!

One day this past week, I was standing at the corner of the patio when I heard heavy wingbeats at my back and almost thought I might need to dive for cover! A pair of Mallard Ducks sailed into the yard and began quacking for food. It's been a while since we had "duckie-ducks" in the yard, but it was fun to have them back. We've had one to three Purple Martins check out our martin house, but they don't stay and I really miss their chortles.

So until the back yard entertainment winds down, I am considering this my mantra:
Bother me tomorrow, today I'll buy no sorrows, Doo, doo, doo, looking out my back door!
(Reading a book, sipping coffee and watching my dandelions grow!!)