

Birding the SW Pacific Coast Region of Costa Rica

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Mary Lane and Steve Davis have been members of Oklahoma City Audubon for the past 15 years. Before retiring, Mary conducted medical research at the OU Health Sciences Center and Steve administered



program evaluations at Oklahoma state agencies. While they both had interests in nature, the environment, birds and other creatures for years before that, they only started more-than-casual, backyard bird watching after joining OCAS.

Besides taking field trips with OCAS members in Oklahoma and surrounding states, in the past 10 years, they have had the opportunity to participate in guided birding trips to Central and South America. In February 2023, they traveled to Costa Rica for the fourth time, visiting the southern Pacific coast, as well as central parts of the country.

Over 900 species of birds have been identified in Costa Rica, including about 50 species of hummingbirds. Mary and Steve saw over 270 of those birds on their 8-day 2023 trip. During their presentation at the May 20 OCAS meeting, they will discuss their experiences and share photos of some of the birds they saw during their time in Costa Rica.

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.

The Oklahoma City Audubon society is neither a chapter of nor affiliated with National Audubon.

Welcome

The Oklahoma City Audubon Society welcomes:

Lizzie Sheehan,

Ron & Nancy Scoggins
Nichols Hill

Alison Cladinos, Edmond

President's Perspective

I really should keep better, more complete checklists. I know I always tell myself that but I never actually get at it and do it.

Basically, my State lists consist of a simple checkmark next to each species I see in any given State, if it's a bird I've already seen umpteen times in other places. I tend to make a checkmark with additional information only for those really rare, out-of-range birds that show up so very unexpectedly or if it happens to be a "life bird." So there's only a checkmark for that Common Grackle I saw in Idaho. The top birder in the State told me he had never seen one—oops, I saw it at a cattle feed lot, no big deal, I thought, just one more state bird among the measly 129 my tally says. And so on it goes.

For May, here in Oklahoma, I have a Cave Swallow here at We-woka Woods, May 5, 2022. That's all the info I have (well, at least I have that) since I already had 2 down at the Red Slough back in 2012. Talk about lazy, sloppy records! I looked over my OK list to see if I had any others for May specifically noted at least for a May date—none. I know I see many good birds during May and my State list is getting pretty good (331) even though I long since gave up chasing specific rarities. But I must admit to being lazy when it comes to specific data. Not a good sign, for sure. Or is it?

Maybe I've reached the point where I just enjoy birding for birding sake. It has gotten much harder to add anything to any of my various lists, and by harder, I mean expensive and time consuming neither of which I have much of anymore. I enjoy sitting out in our patio and listen to the arrival of the first Orioles, the Cardinals staking their territories and arguing over the delineation of perimeters, the Carolina Wren trying so hard to be the very loudest bird in the neighborhood, the happy "jeep" of the passing Night Hawks, excited as they head to their nesting grounds...then something comes along that makes me stop and listen more carefully, "Oh, cool! One of those _____." And back to just enjoying listening to that incessant White-eyed Vireo...

Change of topic: We just returned from a week out on Cape Cod where we were visiting my son and his family. We had a great time visiting museums, lighthouses, beaches, fancy restaurants, and along the way a little birding (my Massachusetts list is now over 200). My son, Hans, seems to always see the rarities, first State records, and more—and he gets proof by excellent photos so there's never a question as to his truthfulness. Along the trails, we chatted about his "luck." People always ask him how it is that he finds so many unique birds in such a consistent manner. Here's a pointer that can help most anyone from beginner to advanced birders—He's always birding. He keeps binoculars, scope, and camera in his car 24/7. No, he's not actually birding 24/7. He takes his kids to and from school, he makes grocery runs, he refuels his car, he does remodeling jobs, in short, he's out and about just like all the rest of us, doing the same things all the rest of us might do. But he's in a constant "birding mode." His ear is on a constant alert, his eyes are constantly in focus to any movements, his cell phone has both ID and bird call apps, he routinely posts on I-naturalist (often several times per day). He gets up around 5:30 and spends an hour in his back yard "waking up" with a cup of coffee, his camera, and a pair of binoculars, then it's breakfast time, and the day gets under way. He seldom actually chases after a sighting. Most of us (at least me) "go birding" at certain times and the rest of the time we/I are oblivious to birds and whatever else might be out there. He is simply in a birding mode at all times, in all situations and it pays off royally. My life list might be impressive to some and it is certainly much larger than his ever will be, but he's by far and away a better birder than I can ever imagine to be. A "birding mode" instead of "going birding" ...Hmmm



*Bob Holbrook
President*



Bird of the Month: Worm-eating Warbler

By Grace Huffman

May is migration, which means birds are moving north towards their breeding grounds. This includes many warbler species, but not all go beyond the Oklahoma state line. Some breed here in the state, including this month's bird, the Worm-eating Warbler.

Worm-eating Warblers aren't particularly bright or flashy, but they are pretty nonetheless. Olive overall with an orange-tinged face with a black eyeliner & crown stripes, they are fascinating little birds. Across the United States, they breed from Wisconsin & Massachusetts south, and just far enough west where their range just barely extends into eastern Oklahoma. They prefer hilly areas with dense forest, and the type of forest can vary

depending on which part of their nesting range they are in. Sensitive to habitat fragmentation, they need patches of over 50 acres of proper habitat in order to nest. They are territorial on both their wintering and breeding grounds, with the same birds returning each year to those areas. Females build the nest out of leaves, and line it with finer materials like grass and moss.

To find one, you'll need to go east. One was reported at Mohawk park in Tulsa, but farther east in the state is more typical. I photographed this one in McCurtain County earlier this month. When trying to identify them by sound, beware. When singing they sound almost identical to Chipping Sparrows. eBird even has an option to include a "Worm-eating Warbler/Chipping Sparrow" because they are so hard to tell apart! Their call notes are a bit different though. I prefer identifying one by seeing it, so I know for sure I got a warbler.

Overall Worm-eating Warbler populations have remained relatively stable for nearly 60 years. Habitat loss can be disruptive, but they seem to be somewhat adaptable in that regard. Certain insecticides can cause harm, as well as window collisions. Being birds that forage lower to the ground, feral cats are an issue as well.

Next time you're in eastern Oklahoma, I hope you get to see one!



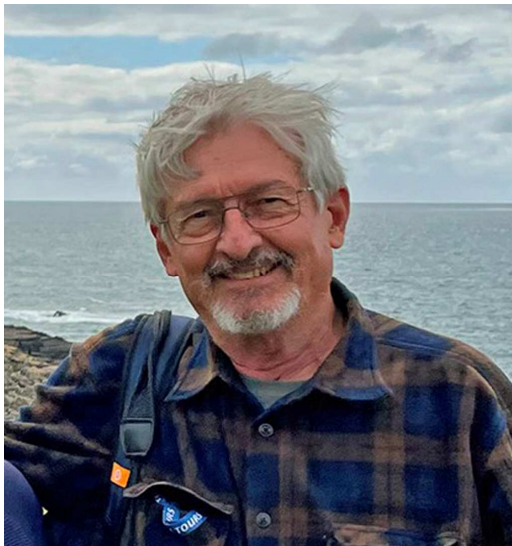
Worm-eating Warbler ©Grace Huffman

NOTICE: The June meeting will be held on **TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 2024** due to the Garden Center closing.

Visit to the Bird Range of the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History

Sunday, May 19, 2024

Joe Grzybowski will lead tours of the Bird Range at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History on the University of Oklahoma campus in Norman on **Sunday 19 May 2024**. Times are **1:00PM and 3:00PM for separate groups**.



The Bird Range houses collections of some 30,000 bird specimens, some dating back well over 100 years. The bird collection is one of the largest in the central United States. Many are of Oklahoma birds, but also from a series of other sources, and continues legacies established by Margaret Morse Nice, George M. Sutton and Gary D. Schnell. The tour will allow visit to the range and viewing, with explanations of the collections, their storage and past and present uses and associated resources.

Because only a limited number of individuals can go in at any time, Nancy Vicars has created sign-up sheets for the two time slots available. Some may have placed their names for the times already. Please contact Nancy (nancy.vicars@sbcglobal.net) to see if spaces are available.

The Museum is located at 2401 Chautauqua St. in Norman. One can take the Chautauqua St. exit off Hiway 9 from the south, OR exit I-35 at Lindsey St. East, then travel towards the OU campus and turn right when reaching Chautauqua St. Signage at these points and in town direct you towards the Museum. Ample parking is available. We will meet at the separate entrance on the northeast side of the Museum (to the left of the main entrance when facing the museum). Joe will be available to direct individuals inside as they arrive.

Field Trip Updates

Mollie Spencer Farm, Yukon, OK on April, 27, 2024

We had another fun outing to the farm this morning with 22 potential new birders. A few highlights included Swainson's Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Chimney Swift, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Little Green Heron and Great-crested Flycatcher.

South Jenkins, Norman, OK on May 3, 2024

Upon leaving Edmond, I drove in a dense fog until reaching the outskirts of Norman where the sky was perfectly clear. Many spring migrants were expected and we were not disappointed. Great-crested, Scissor-tailed and Least Flycatchers, Eastern Wood Peewee, Red-eyed, Bell's and Warbling Vireos, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Yellow-breasted Chat, Baltimore Oriole, Nashville Warbler, Painted and Indigo Buntings and Blue Grosbeak were found.

Mississippi Kites, Northern Rough-winged Swallows, Great & Snowy Egrets, Dickcissel and Chipping Sparrows had returned also. The resident Pileated Woodpeckers are always fun to see and hear. Just a few misses included Yellow-throated Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush and Wood Ducks

Wichita Mountains WLR, Medicine Park, OK on May 10, 2024

This is another favorite destinations for me and many other birders and it did not disappoint. Our first stop at Elmer Thomas Dam yielded Rock Wren, Rufous-crowned Sparrow and a Black-capped Vireo!!

At a recently restored building on the road near the Visitors Center, we found nesting Cave Swallows!! We found, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Phoebe, Red-eyed, Bell's, Warbling and White-eyed Vireos (5 Vireo Day) Blue Grosbeak, Indigo and Painted Buntings, Summer Tanager, Great-crested, Least and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers.

Jimmy Woodard & Terry Mitchell got to see the Zone-tailed Hawk but it did not show up for the rest of us later in the afternoon!! We also saw a Broad-winged Hawk, White-breasted Nuthatch, Yellow and Black & White Warblers, Hairy Woodpecker and a Swainson's Thrush.

This refuge should be on everyone's bucket list and most all of the sites are easily accessed and does not require long walks.

New 12,345-acre nature preserve will be convenient to Tulsa, OKC

By [Kelly J. Bostian of Oklahoma Ecology Project](#) / [The Nature Conservancy](#)

Nestled in the gentle hills of Creek County lies the **Pearl Jackson Crosstimbers Preserve**, the newest among The Nature Conservancy in Oklahoma's (TNC) portfolio. This milestone is made possible through the vision and generosity of Bob and Andie Jackson, who donated their family ranch to TNC. Named after Bob's grandmother, the Pearl Jackson Crosstimbers Preserve is an ideal specimen of the crosstimbers ecoregion. It features open tallgrass prairie and woodlands of post and blackjack oak—some which are 200 to 300 years old.

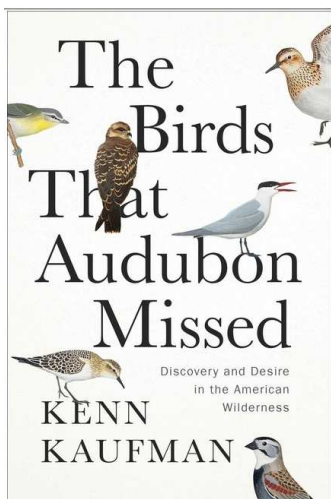
Bob inherited his grandparents' land in the 1980s. Although he lived in St. Louis, where he practiced law, he continued operating the ranch. As he became increasingly involved in managing the ranch and his love grew stronger, he was distressed to think that it might be developed. saying, "I don't want anyone to pave it over." The family's donation of their 12,345-acre ranch in Creek County creates The Nature Conservancy's largest wildland preserve, conveniently located between the state's major metropolitan centers.



© Mike Fuhr / TNC

The center of the new preserve, northwest of Sapulpa, is a mere 24 road miles from downtown Tulsa and a straightforward journey up Highway 44, a little over 90 miles from downtown Oklahoma City. Thus, the Pearl Jackson Crosstimbers Preserve is poised to become one of the Nature Conservancy's more sought-after wilderness escapes.

The Preserve is a stone's throw from the state's largest population centers. However, preparing it for regular public traffic will take some time. Scouting and surveys are underway.



NEW BOOK BY KENN KAUFMAN:

Renowned naturalist Kenn Kaufman examines the scientific discoveries of John James Audubon and his artistic and ornithologist peers to show how what they saw (and what they missed) reflects how we perceive and understand the natural world.

Raging ambition. Towering egos. Competition under a veneer of courtesy. Heroic effort combined with plagiarism, theft, exaggeration, and fraud. This was the state of bird study in eastern North America during the early 1800s, as a handful of intrepid men raced to find the last few birds that were still unknown to science.

The most famous name in the bird world was John James Audubon, who painted spectacular portraits of birds. But although his images were beautiful, creating great art was not his main goal. Instead, he aimed to illustrate (and write about) as many different species as possible, obsessed with trying to outdo his rival, Alexander Wilson. Despite this intense competition, a few species—including some surprisingly common songbirds, hawks, sandpipers, and more—managed to evade discovery for years. Here, renowned bird expert and artist Kenn Kaufman explores this period in history from a new angle, by considering the birds these people discovered and, especially, the ones they missed.

Minutes of the OKC Audubon Society Meeting April 15, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by President Bob Holbrook.

Attendance: 21 (including 2 new members)

Treasurer's report for April from Nancy Vicars was approved as read.

Oklahoma Ornithological Society (OOS) spring meeting is April 26 - 28 at Salt Plains. All are welcome, and activities are free except for Saturday dinner (can purchase on OOS website.) Cabins are filled, but RV and tent sites are available through OK State Park Website.

Mollie Spencer Farms in Yukon is hosting their annual public bird walk April 27. Please contact Nancy Vicars if you would like to assist.

Upcoming field trip to view Sam Noble Museum's Avian Collection will be Sunday May 19th. As space is limited, Joe Grzybowski has set up two sessions, one at 1PM and one at 3PM. Please contact him with your preferred time slot.

The next OKC Audubon Society meeting will be held on Monday, May 20, 2024.

—Cole Penning, Secretary

Refreshments

Thanks to the May Refreshment Volunteers:

SNACKS; Marilyn Taylor, Terri Underhill, Michael McCoy and Patti High

ICE & DRINKS: Randy Henthorn

OKC Audubon Picnic

Date: **Saturday, June 8, 2024**

Time: Between 3:00 and 6:00 pm (open house) Dinner around 4 p.m.

Place: Terri and Keith Underhill, 4401 Rock Canyon Rd., Edmond

The Underhills will provide the hamburgers, hot dogs, plates, napkins, plastic ware, condiments, water and beer. Bring a pot luck side dish or dessert if you'd like.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

There are plenty of chairs on the patio, so bring your binoculars and drinks, but no need to bring a chair. If it is hot outside, there are 20+ chairs inside if you are more comfortable indoors.

Watch your email for additional information and a map to the Underhill's

Will Rogers Park Garden Festival

A colorful poster for the Garden Festival in the Park. The top features the text "34th Annual" and "OKC PARKS" with a logo. The main title "GARDEN Festival" is in a mix of serif and script fonts, with "IN THE PARK" below it. The date "Saturday, May 18th" is prominently displayed, with "9:00 AM" and "3:30 PM" indicating the time. Below the date, it lists "FOOD TRUCKS • CRAFTS • KIDS ACTIVITIES". At the bottom, it says "OVER 50 Flower & Plant VENDORS" in a decorative font. The background is decorated with various flowers and leaves.

34th Annual
OKC PARKS

GARDEN
Festival
IN THE PARK

Saturday, May 18th 9:00 AM
3:30 PM

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