

A Return to Churchill

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

Welcome

The Oklahoma City Audubon Society welcomes:

Ji Haifeng, Oklahoma City

November's speaker for OKC Audubon will be Nancy Vicars speaking on A Return To Churchill, Manitoba, Canada. Her talk will include a slide show with original 35 mm slides taken by her husband Jim.

Churchill is a town on the western shore of Hudson Bay, Canada, about 60 degrees latitude north on the border between tree line and the arctic tundra. Combined with Being at the mouth of the large, northward flowing Churchill River and the shore of Hudson Bay, this ecological crossroads is a birder's paradise: Golden Plovers to King Eiders, Hawk Owls to Smith's Longspurs, tree-nesting Franklin Gulls to Redpolls. The town and cape area to the east are known for being probably the best Polar Bear watching area in the world.

Winter tours in tundra buggies are available from local operators. In the winter, tours to see the Northern Lights are popular. The center of town is the community building housing under one roof the hospital, dental clinic, public schools, library, restaurant, cafeteria, city offices, gymnasium, ice skating rink and curling rink, allowing people to not need to go into the sub zero weather in winter. A military base east of town shares a runway with commercial air travel. A two-day train ride from Winnipeg is also available. If any visitor is bored in Churchill, it is that person's own fault.



Nancy Vicars (l) and Warren Harden in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada, June 1989. Photo: Jim Vicars

Join in the camaraderie and bring a friend.

Our meetings are held September through June on the third Monday of each month with the exception of January. 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

November is probably my favorite month of the year for birding and in general. The days are cool, the storms are over and mosquito season is quieter. Sitting outside in a jacket is most appealing.

This week at Zoo Lake the birdlife is everchanging. My first Lesser Scaup, Blue-winged Teal and Canvasbacks appeared. The Bald Eagle flies over frequently; the Ruddy Ducks and Double-crested Cormorants are regulars.

In the woods and trails I've seen and heard several Spotted Towhees and a Brown Thrasher; the Red-shouldered hawk has returned. Yesterday I saw a smaller hawk fly over that I couldn't distinguish between Sharp-shinned or Cooper's. A flock of Common Grackles flew overhead. Warblers and sparrows were scarce.

I turned my attention to Lake Hefner dam in search of loons with no luck.

Your club's president Sharon Henthorn



2025 Christmas Bird Count Schedule

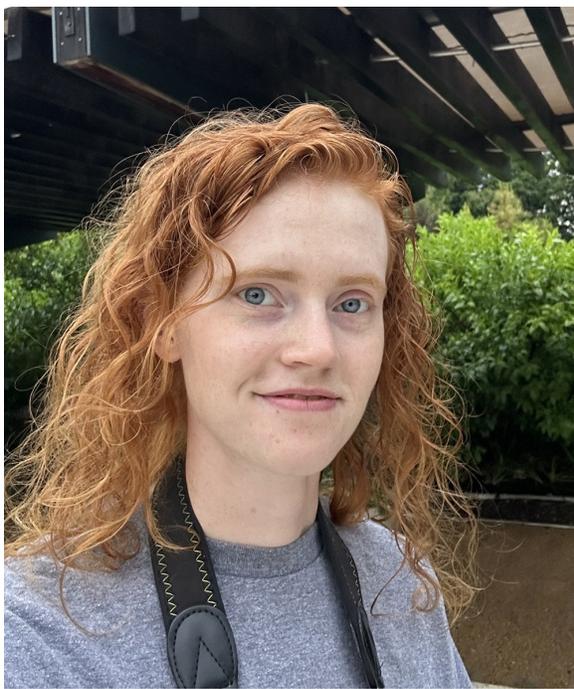
This year's Christmas Bird count (CBC) window runs from December 14 to January 5. As your OKC Audubon Society compiler I've chosen Sunday, December 14 as our count day.

I ask that everyone who has participated in the past continue to cover their same areas as last year. Since I live in Tulsa now, I can't really make the OKC Audubon meetings easily. I will be attempting to contact everyone via email or phone to confirm participation and assignments but I ask everyone to attempt to contact me as well. J.woodard@cox.net or 405-365-5685.

As with last year, I have reserved a room at Johnnie's on Britton Road (OKC) for that evening for our compilation dinner.

Jimmy Woodard
5918 E 4th Terrace
Tulsa, OK 74112





Bird of the Month: Northern Mockingbird

By Grace Huffman

A very common bird across much of the US, and definitely across the entire state, you will usually hear a Northern Mockingbird long before you see one. Turn on the [Merlin](#) app when a mockingbird is in the vicinity and it is likely to tell you there are all sorts of birds in the area, when in fact it is just one very good mimic.

Northern Mockingbirds are overall a very plain gray,

with white flashes in the wings and tail. The males will sing on and on, and in the summer I often find them singing on the top of trees and telephone poles, jumping up and showing those white flashes in a display. Single males will often sing far into the night compared to those who have found a mate, especially during the full moon. They will also sing during the fall too, and even the females will sing, although nowhere near as loud or as frequently as the males.

It's thought that male mockingbirds will start several nest sites for the female to pick one and then finish the nest. It's usually a cup nest made with finer materials like grass and leaves, but they will incorporate trash too. Males will often take on the duties of a single father once the babies fledge, while the female starts another nest at a different location.



Northern Mockingbird © Grace Huffman

Mockingbirds have experienced a population decline after they were captured and sold as caged in the 19th century, but some areas have rebounded. And just to prove how hearty and adaptable these birds are, this particular individual I photographed seems to be doing quite well despite having almost no bill due to injury or genetics. Happy birding!

Reference: allaboutbirds.org

Recent N.A. Rare Bird Sightings



Establishing a new First State Record for New York, a Common Cuckoo has been observed by many lucky birders on Long Island (photo by Tammy McQuade).

CANADIAN RECORD

First Canadian Record **Little Bunting** – Roberts Creek, British Columbia

STATE & PROVINCIAL RECORDS

First State Record **Common Cuckoo** – Riverside, New York

First Provincial Record **Little Bunting** – Roberts Creek, British Columbia

First State Record **European Golden Plover** – Wallops Island, Virginia

First State Record **Black Phoebe** – Gooseberry Falls, Minnesota

Second Provincial Record **Grace's Warbler** – Algonquin

Park, Ontario

Second State Record **Oriental Greenfinch** – Farallon Islands, California

Third State Record **Olive-backed Pipit** – Fullerton, California

Third Provincial Record **Spotted Redshank** – Delta, British Columbia

Fourth State Record **Costa's Hummingbird** – Lincoln, Nebraska

Sixth Provincial Record **Siberian Pipit** – Haida Gwaii, British Columbia

Seventh Provincial Record **Rustic Bunting** – Haida Gwaii, British Columbia

Seventh Provincial Record **Gray Kingbird** – Rimouski, Quebec

Fifth State Record **Little Blue Heron** – Bateman Island, Washington

Tenth Provincial Record **Gray Kingbird** – near Bradley, Ontario

REALLY RARE BIRDS

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher – Miami, Florida

Rufous-backed Robin – Moreno Valley, California

Pink-footed Goose – near Lake View, New York

Broad-billed Hummingbird – Riverhead, New York

Varied Thrush – New York, New York

California Gull – St. Johns, Newfoundland

CONTINUING REALLY RARE BIRDS

Steller's Sea Eagle – Newfoundland

Yellow-headed Caracara – Texas

Roadside Hawk – Texas

Mottled Owl – Texas

Gray Gull – Florida

American Flamingos – Texas, Florida

Refreshments

Refreshment volunteers for the Nov. 17, 2025 meeting:

Snacks: Chris Pratt, Marilyn Taylor, Mary Lane / Steve Davis and Terri Underhill

Ice & Drinks: John Eagleston/Cathy Chernausek

Minutes of the OKC Audubon Society Meeting October 20, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Vice President Cathy Chernausek.

Attendance: 27, including 3 new members

Treasurer's Report: Nancy Vicars presented the report, which was approved as read. Cash on hand: \$9,785.45.

September minutes were read and approved. Nancy has new membership rosters available.

We are looking for a new Refreshments Chair. Please considering helping out!

Cleveland County Audubon is hosting a field trip Saturday, Nov 1.

Mark Howery is hosting a Salt Plains field trip Saturday, Nov 1.

Molly Spencer Farm Public Bird Walk will be held Saturday, Nov 8. Reach out to Nancy if you would like to assist.

Jimmy Woodard is running the Christmas Bird Count again this year on Sunday, December 14. Please contact him if you would like to participate.

The speaker was Joe Grzybowski, who gave a great presentation on his trip to Thailand and the interesting birds they saw.

Our next meeting will be Monday, November 17, 2025, where Nancy Vicars will give a talk on birding around Hudson Bay in Canada.

-Cole Penning, Secretary



Plants colonizing a lava field on Surtsey Island. Credit: Pawel Wasowicz

Birds brought life to Iceland's youngest island

When the volcanic island of Surtsey emerged from the North Atlantic Ocean in 1963, it presented scientists with a rare natural experiment: a chance to watch life begin on untouched land. For many years, ecologists assumed that plants reached remote islands mainly through special traits that allowed long-distance travel.

A recent study in *Ecology Letters* has upended this long-accepted theory. Researchers from Iceland, Hungary, and Spain discovered that most of the 78 vascular plant species found on Surtsey since 1965 lack any of the typical features linked to long-distance seed dispersal. Instead, the main agents of colonization appear to be gulls, geese, and shorebirds, which carried seeds in their digestive systems or droppings. Through their movements, these birds transported a surprising diversity of plants to the island, helping form the base of its young and growing ecosystem.

Dr. Andy Green of the Estación Biológica de Doñana (CSIC, Spain), who co-led the research, notes that the findings have wide-reaching implications for ecology and conservation. "...As migration routes shift under a warming climate, birds will play a vital role in helping plants move and adapt to new environments."

Source: *Náttúrufræðistofnun*. "[Birds, not wind, brought life to Iceland's youngest island](#)." *ScienceDaily*. *ScienceDaily*, 4 November 2025.