

October 18, 2021:

Natural History Musings of Istanbul during a Pandemic

Nathan Kuhnert will present the program at the October 18, 2021 meeting of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society.

Officers

President	Hal Yocum
Vice President	Grace Huffman
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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:

Susan Worsham, Edmond

Jerry Vanbebber, Edmond

Robert and Liz Meridith,
Midwest City

Ann Kelly, OKC

Cathy Chernausek, OKC

Stephen Parker, OKC

Haifeng Ji, OKC

Nathan is a long-time member of our club, is the Christmas Bird Count compiler and leads a monitoring program of bird-window collisions in downtown OKC. In March of this year, Nathan took a trip of a lifetime to Istanbul, Turkey to meet up with family for the first time. Nathan will offer pictures and perspectives of his week-long trip that left a strong

impression on him. From Sultans of the Ottoman Empire to Turkish coffee, the program will focus on many natural history aspects of Istanbul and the region that touches on geography, commerce, hydrology, food, religion and of course a little on birds.

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 third Tuesday). 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

The Things We Will Do to See a Bird

This year so far I have been able to get my Binocs on 332 birds (year birds 2021). I was thinking about what we do just to see another bird. I have birded in the winter when was so cold that no matter what I had for gloves was not enough. My hands and fingers were so cold and numb they were really painful. I could barely use the focus wheel as I could not "feel it."

In the spring and summer I traveled to Tulsa, to Idabel and the Red Slough, to Kenton in the panhandle, on to Red River, NM, to Southeast Arizona with all of its deserts and canyons, to Colorado and Rocky Mountain National Park, to Hackberry Flats, to the Wichita Mountains (three times).

I have birded in 100 degrees, the rain, at 1/2 hour before sunrise where I couldn't "see nor hear" any birds. I have



gotten ticks and chiggers. I have a few episodes of "warbler neck."

However, this summer I did something new. I call it "survival thinking." I was intent on seeing as well as hearing the Sulfur-bellied Flycatcher while in Ramsey Canyon, SE Arizona. The trees were over 100 ft. tall - giant cottonwoods. The trail was rather steep. As a last resort I birded "from the ground up." See accompanying photo!

Hal A. Yocum



NOTICE: Due to scheduling conflicts at the Will Rogers Garden Center, the January meeting, usually held on the 4th Monday, will now be held on the third TUESDAY (January 18) in 2022.



Bird of the Month - Eastern Bluebird

By Grace Huffman

I love bluebirds. Probably because blue is my favorite color, but I'm always happy to see or hear one. This winter was unfortunately very hard on the bluebirds, with as much as 80% of the population perishing during the bitter cold back in February. It's been very hard to find them here in the Oklahoma City area, even in areas where I used to see them every time I went out there. Thankfully I've seen some signs that they are slowly starting to recover, and hopefully it won't take too long until they are all over the place once again.

Bluebirds are thrushes, belonging to the same family as robins. There are three bluebird species: Eastern, Western, and Mountain, with Easterns staying in the state year-round and Mountains visiting the western part of the state in the winter. Western Bluebirds are very rare in the state. Eastern Bluebirds are partially migratory, breeding in south-central Canada and wintering in Arizona, with a wide area inside their range where they are year-round, including here in Oklahoma.

Eastern Bluebirds are cavity nesters, using old woodpecker holes or nest boxes that people have put up in hopes of attracting them. They will fill the bottom of the cavity with items like dried grasses & pine needles, then line the nest with even finer materials, as well as feathers. They will often raise more than one brood, with the young of the first brood helping to feed their younger siblings. The parents will often stay together for several seasons, although it is believed that some eggs in a brood may have a parent that isn't one of the pair.

After being in decline in the early 1900's due to competition with non-native species for nesting sites, bluebirds have actually been increasing in population. While Oklahoma's bluebirds are now down significantly, there are things you can do to help them recover and attract them to your yard! Put up bluebird boxes that face open areas to encourage them to nest, and keep an eye out in case House Sparrows or European Starlings try to take over the nest box. They are non-native and unprotected, so it's okay to remove their nesting material. However, if a wren or other bird decides your box is a good place to nest, you'll just have to enjoy them while they're there, as it's illegal to remove the nest of a native bird. You can also offer mealworms at your feeders to attract bluebirds! I hope you get to see one soon!



Eastern Bluebird © Grace Huffman

Chirpings

By Patti Muzny
October 2021

Yippee! It's finally fall. Not a fan of hot summer. We're enjoying the cooler temperatures and rain that finally brought some relief. It also brought in a few migrants. Our backyard attracted a Nashville Warbler, a Phoebe and a busy and vocal House Wren, along with the usual raucous

Crows and Blue Jays and flocks of Robins. After the harsh winter temperatures, our Mockingbird was not heard in the yard, but for the past two weeks, one has been singing and chasing off any other trespassers.

So what does a birder who has spent the winter and spring months monitoring Bald Eagle nests and working on the Sutton Center's Atlas project do in between projects? Well, for one thing a productive garden takes quite a bit of time from seeds through harvest, especially the okra patch. Being in Oklahoma, one must grow okra and in my case, when the okra finally took off, it took off with vigor and my friends, family and neighbors probably thought about not answering the door when I appeared with another bag of okra. And, it's STILL blooming! I won't even talk about the tomatoes that still demand picking every day. I'm already missing the cucumbers!!

One advantage to an okra patch that's taller than me is that during the first "fallout" of the season, I was in the patch and dwarfed by the plants and moving slowly. A few Orange-crowned Warblers flew into the plants and began their search for food and didn't seem to notice me as I hid in the foliage. Yes, it's a little itchy to hide in an okra patch, but it was a treat to have one of these birds practically land on my head!

Enough about okra...I really am over the okra thing until next summer. There is another adventure that I will blame on my dear friend, Nancy Vicars. This one didn't involve a very long road trip...like from her house to mine – less than three miles. She has a butterfly garden and among her plants was some tropical milkweed and Hairy Balls, a.k.a. Balloon Plant, Giant Swan Milkweed. Latin Name: *Gomphocarpus physocarpus*. I have grown Hairy Balls milkweed for several years and have given others starts and seeds. Monarch butterflies love it and it's an interesting plant.



The summer progressed and soon she had monarch caterpillars that very quickly ate all of her milkweed! She also had several chrysalises hanging under the eaves of her house. I had not found any monarch caterpillars, although I had an abundance of Hairy Balls plants. Nancy also purchased a Monarch butterfly enclosure so the caterpillars could be raised inside away from the dreaded Tachnid fly. That's another unpleasant story!

Now there are numerous caterpillars that have no more milkweed and they are not ready to morph into butterflies yet. Not to worry! She went to several nurseries and tried to buy more plants. Guess what? The enterprising Monarchs find the milkweed plants in nurseries and all she could find this late in the growing season were stalks that were stripped of leaves. She then went to visit Nancy Reed, who dug up one of her plants for her. That quickly became stalks. Uh, oh!!

What does a dedicated foster parent for Monarchs do to turn this disaster into a triumph? For several days, Nancy made one or two trips to my house and we pruned my Hairy Balls plants and her Monarchs munched their way through several bouquets of milkweed and are now healthy and in chrysalis form, awaiting the next phase of their journey south.



Part two of this saga: While Nancy's Monarchs found her milkweed a couple weeks before mine; soon I began to find caterpillars and eggs on my milkweed. Why not join in the fun? I had a mesh food tent that could do double duty as a Monarch raising enclosure, so I began to bring caterpillars into my tent. There are several stages these fascinating little creatures go through before they can successfully emerge as a beautiful Monarch, and it's extremely interesting to follow them along their journey. As of October 13th, I have 16 chrysalis, one in the "J" stage (nearly ready to form a chrysalis), and one caterpillar that's still munching, although it looks large enough to go to the "J" stage. I've watched three emerge and fly away. Of course, the two from the cage emerged while I was not at home to hover! The second I opened the flap, they drifted off into a beautiful, cloudless fall day!!

I have only had one that fell victim to the larvae of the Tachnid
(continued on page 6)

Recorder's Report: September 2021

As the long hot days of summer began to cool down for the approaching fall, interesting birds were being found in Central Oklahoma. Warblers and shorebirds from northern areas are passing through as they were returning to their southern wintering grounds while many of our summer birds are beginning to leave. This can often reward birders with new and interesting species.

On the 1st Bill Diffin described Least Flycatcher at Crystal Lake; Joe Grzybowski came across Bell's Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo and White-eyed Vireo along South Jenkins in Norman; D&D Norris found Brown Thrasher, Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Wren at Kairworks in Logan County; and Branden Farris viewed Bank Swallow at Prairie Prime Ranch in Lincoln County. On the 2nd Deb Hirt spotted Black-throated Green Warbler at Boomer Lake Park – Heron Cove in Stillwater. On the 3rd Braden Farris observed White-faced Ibis at Lake Hefner – Prairie Dog Point; Brian Marra detected Prothonotary Warbler at Spring Creek Trail; Grant Dick encountered White-eyed Vireo and Yellow Warbler at McCloud in Pottawatomie County; and Braden Farris reported Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Prairie Prime Ranch.



Short-billed Dowitcher © Mike Yough

On the 4th Mike Yough photographed **Short-billed Dowitcher**, and **Red-necked Phalarope** at the Cushing Water Treatment Plant in Payne County; and Bill Diffin documented Willow and Least Flycatcher at Stinchcomb WR east.

On the 5th Mike Yough added Eastern Wood-Pewee at Lake Carl Blackwell; Steve Stone recognized Olive-sided Flycatcher at Martin Park Nature Center; Michael McCoy identified Log-headed Shrike and Wilson's Warbler at Mitch Park; Joe Grzybowski discovered Caspian Tern at Lake Thunderbird – Twin Bridge; Nancy Reed watched Summer Tanager and Painted Bunting in Norman; Bill Diffin recorded Stilt Sandpiper and Warbling Vireo at Stinchcomb WR west; and Brian Marra confirmed Osprey, Forster's Tern and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Bell Cow Lake in Lincoln County.

On the 6th Scott Loss counted American Redstart at The Botanic Garden at OSU; Rachel Overturff got Black-and-white Warbler at Edmond; Ryan Minton had Blue-winged Teal, Lesser Yellowlegs at Riverwind Casino in McClain County; and Seth Kastner spotted Upland Sandpiper, Northern Harrier, and Eastern Bluebird at Cashion in Kingfisher County. On the 7th Scott

Loss located a Mourning Warbler at Teal Ridge Wetland in Payne County; Braden Farris noticed Black-necked Stilt at Lake Hefner – Stars and Stripes Park; Curtis Stewart verified American Avocet at Lake Hefner – Water Treatment Ponds; and Abdul Dominguez saw Green Heron at Pebblebrook Park in Norman. On the 8th Scott Loss tallied Olive-sided Flycatcher and Prairie Warbler at Sanborn Lake; Michael Reichert described Chestnut-sided Warbler in Stillwater; and Cody Delano detected Least Tern at Lake Thunderbird – East Sentinel. On the 9th Jimmy Woodard spotted American Redstart at Myriad Botanical Gardens; and Daniel Mitev viewed Great Egret along I-40 in Seminole County.

On the 10th Jerry Vanbebber documented **Canada Warbler** at Myriad Botanical Gardens; and Megan Migues came across American Kestrel at Stroud. On the 11th Seth Kastner added Black-throated Green Warbler at Stinchcomb WR east; and Someone encountered



Canada Warbler © Jerry Vanbebber

Northern Waterthrush on West Britton Road in Canadian County. On the 12th Bill Diffin described Herring Gull at Lake Hefner – Water Treatment Ponds north of the dam; Brian Marra observed Blue-headed Vireo, and Blue-winged Warbler at Stinchcomb WR east; Jason Shaw reported Red-bellied Woodpecker in Chickasha; and Zac Hemans recognized Pileated Woodpecker in Guthrie. On the 13th Bill Diffin identified Least Tern and Black Tern at Lake Hefner – Water Treatment Ponds; and Brian Marra recorded Broad-winged Hawk at Bluff Creek Trails.

On the 16th Brian Marra saw Ovenbird at Myriad Botanical Gardens; and Bill Diffin tallied Blue-headed Vireo, Mourning Warbler and Nashville Warbler at Stinchcomb WR east. On the 18th Brian Marra verified Sora Rail at Lake Hefner – Bert Cooper Trails. On the 19th Bill Diffin noticed Lesser Black-backed Gull at Lake Hefner – Water Treatment Ponds. On the 20th Scott Loss watched a Peregrine Falcon fly over his yard in Stillwater. On the 21st Scott Loss photographed a hatch year Rose-breasted Grosbeak at The Botanic Garden at OSU; and Bill Diffin had Pectoral Sandpiper at Stinchcomb WR west. On the 22nd Scott Loss got Philadelphia Vireo at Babcock Park in Stillwater. On the 24th Alex Franzen confirmed Olive-sided Flycatcher, Common Yellowthroat and

Yellow-throated Warbler at Oliver Wildlife Preserve in Norman; and Megan Migues discovered Common Nighthawk in Stroud.

On the 25th Mike Yough counted Spotted Towhee and Wilson's Warbler at Lake Carl Blackwell; and Trina Arnold turned up Swainson's Hawk at Hennessey in Kingfisher County. On the 26th Brian Marra recognized Sharp-shinned Hawk at Stinchcomb WR east; William Radke counted American Avocet along Sara Road in



American Pipit

Yukon; Kate E Magoon found Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and White-breasted Nuthatch at J&L Pecans in Garvin County; and Christie Stoops watched Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Cottonwood Creek in Logan County. On the 27th Brian Marra spotted American Pipit at Lake Hefner. On the 28th Robert Merideth discovered Chimney Swift and Black-throated Green

Warbler in Yukon. October 9th is October Big Day, what will birders find then and during the rest of the month?

In the Central Oklahoma area during September **176** species were reported with **3** new species which brings the year's total to **303**. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds. Information is accessed at: [ebird](http://ebird.org). 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 September 29 & 30, 2021); occasionally from Facebook, and the OKBIRDS List. I can be contacted at emkok@earthlink.net. Esther M. Key.

Okra & Monarchs, cont.

fly; one that had some sort of viral issue and one that died of unknown causes. Next season we will both plant more milkweed!

I should have a good supply of seeds that I will share. We have learned that the seeds for this milkweed must experience winter temperatures outside. I am planning to bury some of my seeds now and see what happens. I always have them come up in the flower beds in the spring and they transplant easily. Bustani Plant Farm in Stillwater usually carries the plants in spring, but they run out early.

Important information for OKC Audubon members and friends

By Nancy Vicars

I am planning to lead a fieldtrip to The Great Salt Plains Wildlife Refuge in the near future, hopefully, when the Whooping Cranes stopover for a visit.

While talking with the assistant refuge manager, I learned that this refuge **DOES NOT** require a Conservation Passport but the adjacent state-park **DOES** require a state parking pass.

As of June 15, 2020, a large majority of Oklahoma State Parks require an **annual** parking pass whether you are camping or just visiting.

You should contact TravelOK.com and click on "State Parks," then "Getting a Park Pass" to get complete details, including which parks require the pass and the costs involved.

Oklahoma residents 62 years of age or older, and their spouses: 100% discount with eligibility verification by Oklahoma State Parks. For verification, a driver's license with an Oklahoma address is acceptable. Applicants will also need to provide vehicle tag and registration information for multiple vehicle use and send to: opscustomerservice@travelok.com or Call Patricia Gulley/Customer Service Specialist at 405-522-9604

What is an Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Passport?

An annual passport costs \$26 per person for use of the wildlife managements for the entire calendar

year. **Anyone with a valid Oklahoma fishing or hunting license can access the areas without buying a passport.**

[List of Oklahoma Wildlife Management Areas - Wikipedia](#)



Minutes of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society Meeting

September 20, 2021

The meeting was opened at 7:00 PM at the Will Rogers Garden Center by President Hal Yokum. Treasurer Nancy Vicars presented a treasurer's report and distributed copies. Cash on hand as of September 20, 2021, was \$8,201.04. The minutes of the June 21, 2021, meeting were approved as published in the September newsletter.

The next meeting will be held at the Will Rogers Garden Center on October 18, 2021, at 7:00 PM.

We welcomed new members Robert and Liz Merideth, who have recently moved to Oklahoma from Tucson. Don Maas and his wife were attending as guests.

Patti High circulated the refreshment list for members to sign up for future meetings.

Volunteers were asked to participate in a bird walk at Mollie Spencer Farm in Yukon on Saturday, October 9, 2021. The facility will be open to the public for bird walks led by members of OKC Audubon Society.

Jimmy Woodard invited members to his home in Midwest City for a "Little Sit" on Friday, October 8, 2021, from 9:00 AM until 5:00 PM. Participants may bring a snack to share and Jimmy and Nadine will provide a light lunch.

Nancy Vicars spoke about a possible trip to the Great Salt Plains at the end of October. This event will last all day and participants should bring lunch and make sure they have a parking pass for the state park area.

The Merideths reported seeing 100 Scissortail Flycatchers in the Midwest City area and Hal Yokum had spotted a Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a Nashville Warbler at Mitch Park.

The program was given by Mike and Jeanne Mather on their birding trip to Southeast Arizona.

At the conclusion of the program, the meeting was adjourned by President Hal Yokum.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Muzny
Secretary

Field Trip Report - Mollie Spencer Farm in Yukon

We finally were able to do a couple planned familiarization field trips to Mollie Spencer Farm in Yukon on Sept 28 and Oct 5 for our OCAS members.

That was followed by a Public Birding offering by this nice 35 acre private NPO on Oct. 9th with OKC ACAS members assisting all the public attendees in beginning birding. The Mollie Spencer Farm provided light snacks, water, and a beautiful bird check list for all attendees. (on all 3 days).

On the 28th of Sept. 11 members participated, and on Oct 5 there were 15 who showed up. On the member birding days we had 20-21 sightings each day. The best included: late Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Northern Flicker, Red-shouldered Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Red-tailed Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Carolina and Bewick's Wrens, Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and several warblers: Yellow, Orange-crowned, Nashville and Black-throated Green. Other common birds seen included: Northern Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, House Finch, European Starlings, American Crows, two dove species and a flyover Turkey Vulture.

On the day the public came, 15 attended of which 4 were children. We had 6 OCAS members attend to help them. We split the attendees into 3 groups with 2-3 OCAS members in each group to assist them with locating birds. We had opportunities to mention the OCAS, talk about bird apps, bird sounds and birding by both sight and by hearing their various calls. Also questions about binoculars and the wonderful varied habitat available at Mollie Spencer Farm.

We plan to continue cooperating with the Farm in the future on field trips in all four seasons.

Hal Yokum , OCAS President.

Refreshments

The October refreshments will be provided as follows:

SNACKS:

Maggie & Branislav Shifferdecker, Cheryl & Gene Allen, Nancy Reed, and Jimmy Woodard

ICE/DRINKS:

Nancy Vicars

Conservation Report

by Ann Serman

The US Fish and Wildlife service released a report in June that identifies 269 species of conservation concern, including the snowy owl, red-headed woodpecker, American white pelican, and Vaux's swift. Species of concern include 54% of grassland birds, 53% of shorebirds and 48% of seabirds. I'll wait a moment while you reread that.



Due to climate change our bird population has been struggling. According to Our Daily Planet industry kills an estimated 450 million to 1.1 billion birds. I'm not sure how they came up with that number but I do know the future is grim. I'd like to say things will improve with the reestablishment of the 102 year old Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Trump weakened and took consequences out of the law. Biden rolled back the roll back and reestablished the law. Who can say the next president won't roll back the roll back of the roll back. Sorry. It is as awful as that.

With all that said here are things we can control and help with. Lights out. I know we have a program locally that works to turn the lights out in large structures so the birds that fly at night aren't confused. Do something about reflective surfaces such as windows. Use bird friendly tape. Stop using balloons and setting them free.

Make your yard friendly for birds. Use native plants in your yard. Add a water feature to your landscape. Toss a solar powered water mover into your bird bath. Encourage I was watching a video of a young woman who put native seeds in a cheese shaker and she rode all over town on her bike shaking out seeds in fallow areas. Around trees in sidewalks. In the grassy areas next to streets. I will probably do it on foot but what a lovely idea!

If you have the space create a brush pile in your yard. I have feral cats in my neighborhood. My bird bath is 8 feet in the air. The feeders are nearly as high. And I have a brush pile. I can not count the number of times I have seen birds take shelter in there. It's a bit messy but it is in the back of the garden behind a flower bed and I really don't mind...the birds love it.

Bird feed has gotten outrageously expensive. Anyone else notice? If you have any good ideas on how to feed the birds for less I would like to hear it. I'll see if I can come up with enough good ideas and I will let you know if I do. annspho-to4@gmail.com

Jimmy's Big Sit

by Jimmy Woodard

We had 21 participants on our annual OKC Audubon Big Sit held Friday October 8th. The weather was windy from 10-20mph. Temps ranged from 63 to 93. There was limited cloud cover during the day. We found 43 species (see list below).

Participants were Steve Stone, Nancy Vicars, Warren Harden, Steve Davis, Cathy Chernansek, John Eagleston, Tabitha Olsen, Susan Prescott, Patti Muzny, Larry Mays, Don Maas, Hal Yokum, Robert and Liz Meredith, Nancy Reed, Sharon Henthorn, Mike Alexander, Bill and Susan Schmidt.

We had a fun day of food, birds, and good conversation.

Canada Goose 2
Blue-winged Teal 2
Wild Turkey 5
Eurasian Collared-Dove 12
Mourning Dove 8
Chimney Swift 3
Killdeer 1
Great Blue Heron 1
Black Vulture 12 Actual count. Birds coming off the NE 36th Street dump.
Turkey Vulture 90
Sharp-shinned Hawk 1
Cooper's Hawk 1
Red-shouldered Hawk 2
Red-tailed Hawk 5
Great Horned Owl 2
Red-bellied Woodpecker 4
Downy Woodpecker 4
Northern Flicker 3
American Kestrel 1
Eastern Phoebe 2
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher 6
Blue Jay 55
American Crow 25
Carolina Chickadee 8
Tufted Titmouse 6
Barn Swallow 1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1
Carolina Wren 7
Bewick's Wren 2
European Starling 20
Gray Catbird 1
Brown Thrasher 1
Northern Mockingbird 4
American Robin 35
House Sparrow 18
House Finch 11
Dark-eyed Junco 1
Lincoln's Sparrow 1
Eastern Meadowlark 1
Great-tailed Grackle 8
Nashville Warbler 2
Yellow-rumped Warbler 2
Northern Cardinal 36