

Officers

President	Bob Holbrook
Vice President	Grace Huffman
Secretary	Patti Muzny
Treasurer	Nancy Vicars
Parliament	Vacant
Programs	Warren Harden
Recorder	Guyla Mayo
Conservation	Ann Sherman
Field Trips	Nancy Vicars Jimmy Woodard Hal Yocum Bob Holbrook
Newsletter	Patricia Velte
Publicity	Doug Eide
Historian	Vacant
Refreshments	Patti High
Webmaster	Patricia Velte
Public Relations	Terri Underhill

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

A visit to Antarctica

Our speaker for our October 16 OKC Audubon meeting will be John Sterling, our member from Paul's Valley.



His presentation will be narrated photos from his time spent stationed at McMurdo Station showing the station, the environment, the south pole, and the wildlife on the coast of the Antarctic Ocean. Highlighted will be penguin colonies and predators, sea ice with seals, leopard seals and orcas. For those of you familiar with John's birding winter wardrobe, he perhaps obtained his being oblivious to winter weather from his Antarctic days.

During his time there the record low temp during the summer was -127F with a straight wind record of about 200 mph with 100 mph being common.

John was raised on a farm east of Wynnewood and was always interested in wildlife. He and his mother kept track of the Whooping Cranes coming through. At Oklahoma State University he majored in biology and roomed with Ken Riddle, now a famous biologist, and Mike Brewer, a fellow birder of Paul's Valley. John joined the Navy in 1967, was stationed in Spain before he was assigned to Antarctic Squadron 6 as a photographer's mate. After five months in the Antarctic John acquired a zoology degree from Oklahoma State University and worked for a newspaper before earning a master's degree in environmental science from the University of Oklahoma and working for the Oklahoma State Department of Environmental Quality. Now retired, he stays involved with civic and church activities and is always ready for a spontaneous trip to see good birds.

Join us for a cool Antarctic experience and camaraderie with birding friends. Our meetings are held September through June on the third Monday of each month. Meetings begin at 7 p.m. Visitors are always welcome.

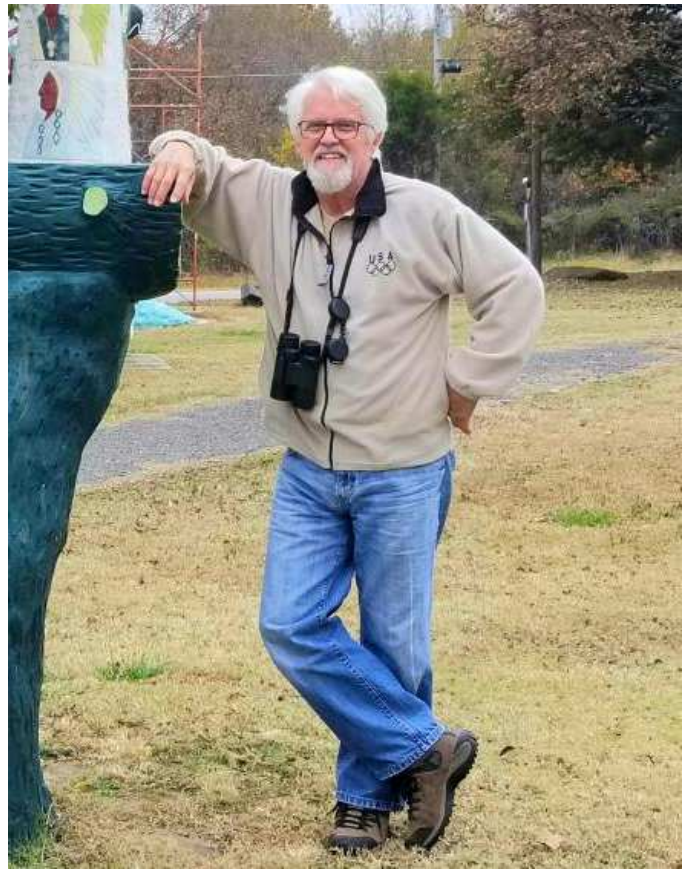
Meeting Location:

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

President's Perspective

The fun of Birding. If someone asks you why do you spend time looking at/for birds? Can you give a sensible coherent answer? I've often been asked that question. In fact that question has haunted me ever since I was the only birdwatcher in high school (at least if there were others, they also tried to keep it a secret).

I was asked that in college—by my roommate, no less. I was going out most every Sunday morning early, binoculars, Peterson Field Guide, note pad and pen in hand, and coming back just in time for my afternoon “cat lab”, or my part-time job, or whatever else was for the day. The only answer I could give was “Join me next week.” (That's all it took, and he was hooked for life—not bad for one who had been a farm boy out of Beaver Crossing, Nebraska and didn't know a sparrow from a heron.) But honestly, I've never really been able to come up with a sensible coherent answer to such a question.



Why do I go out and spend time looking for birds? Most often the same birds I saw last time I went out and will see again the next time I go out, and the next, and the next.... I toss my binoculars in the car, grab my field guide, notepad and pen, and out the door I go. I write down the same birds: Cardinal, Chickadee, Nuthatch, White-crowned Sparrow, Goldfinch, Mallard... And I hope to not have to add house sparrow, starling, morning dove... in order to reach that magical 50 or maybe 100 for the day. Who knows, there might be 1 “better bird” on the list but hardly ever one that could be a “life bird” or even just a “state bird.” So why?

I look around a bit...Why do fishermen go out and sit all day along a pond bank and maybe catch one measly fish yet they go out again, and again... or a golfer goes out and bangs a small hail-sized ball around knowing full well he will wrap that “stupid club” around a tree because it was that lousy miserable club's fault the ball sliced off onto the opposite fairway... again!

Maybe I just answered that question. There's something—a very powerful magnet—that pulls me—all of us—out into nature that is so strong I cannot resist. A combination of the fresh air, quiet, escape from the realities of life, a chance to process my thoughts away from the hectic pressures of life, to hear the pleasant chirping, twittering, singing of little creatures that bespeak of Someone much greater than ourselves. “Nature's 10,000 voices sing His praise.” And I somehow manage to return to my life refreshed, relaxed, ready to face reality again.

Food for thought: Why DO you go birding? What does spotting or hearing that wren again do for you? It's Fall, birds are coming through, I got to get out there and see them.

Bob Holbrook
President



Bird of the Month: Cooper's Hawk

By Grace Huffman

If you have a bird feeder, there's a good chance you have had one of these raptors disrupt your visitors at least once as they try to catch an easy meal. Cooper's Hawks are also relatively common elsewhere as long as there are trees, but bird feeders are a big draw for them.

Cooper's Hawks are medium-sized raptors and can be found all over the lower 48 and somewhat into southern Canada. In the winter, the northernmost ones migrate south, and their winter range extends into Mexico and Central America. Here they can be found year round, just about anywhere with enough trees bordering it.

As we approach the winter months here in Oklahoma, Sharp-shinned hawks are arriving and like similar habitats. They are extremely similar but overall smaller, with a more rounded "ice cream scoop" head and tiny bill. Adult Sharp-shinned also have a darker nape where a Cooper's has more of a darker gray cap and paler nape. Cooper's Hawks also have a longer and more rounded tail. Both species have an orangey chest.

Cooper's Hawk's nests are built high up in trees, almost entirely by the male out of sticks and bark. He is also responsible for feeding the female while she is sitting on their brood of eggs and will also provide the vast majority of the food for the young once they hatch. Young birds are much browner and retain this plumage for their first year. They are best told apart from young Sharp-shinned Hawks by size, head and bill shape, rounded (Cooper's) vs square (Sharp-shinned) tail, and finer streaking on the front of a young Cooper's.

Cooper's Hawks hunt by using stiff wing beats and glides to chase birds around the forest. Their long tails make excellent rudders. Not to say chasing birds through the forest isn't without hazards, studies of some skeletons revealed they had healed over fractures in chest bones! If one has been hanging around your feeders a little too often, take your feeders down for a couple of days. The hawk should move on once your feeder birds disperse.



Cooper's Hawk © Grace Huffman

Cooper's Hawks are of low conservation concern, and have rebounded from the side effects of DDT. Today the vast majority of casualties are still caused by humans however, with things like window and vehicle collisions. While some people aren't a fan of them, I love watching these predators work.

References: allaboutbirds.org

Recorder's Report

September 2023

Migration is happening! BirdCast estimates that 1,793,500 birds crossed Oklahoma County the night of October 9! Remember to dim or turn off outdoor lights to assist our feathered friends on their journey.



Guyla Mayo

The importance of habitat was brought home to me recently. My next-door neighbor had a large, old and diseased oak tree removed from her yard. This tree was home to many birds and squirrels. I had hoped everyone would find new homes in trees in mine and neighboring yards, but it didn't work that way. They're gone. The cardinals, blue jays, house finches, and doves that called that tree home as year round residents are simply gone. We have a few birds left but when we go outside the constant singing and chattering we've known for over 20 years is no more. Even the American Crows no longer come by. My feeders remain full. Hopefully, with time the bird population will rebalance itself.

Limpkins have been sighted at Lost Lake in the Wichita Wildlife Management Reserve and Oxley Nature Center in Tulsa.

Some Oklahoma birders successfully chased the Long-tailed Jaeger that made an appearance at Fort Supply Lake.

The most recorded Warblers for eBird in September for Central Oklahoma were Nashville Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Yellow Warbler. Clay-colored Sparrow was the most recorded Sparrow.

September Sightings

Oklahoma County

Neotropic Cormorant 1st
Hobie Point Lake Hefner Trina A
Kentucky Warbler 1st
Myriad Gardens Hal Y

Pine Warbler 2nd
Choctaw Creek Park Matt R
Ovenbird 4th
Myriad Gardens Chase M
Gadwall 6th
Lake Hefner PDP Trina A, Brian M
Black-chinned Hummingbird 10th
Crystal Lake Brian M, Chase M, Grace H
Lesser Black-backed Gull 12th
Lake Hefner Dr Steve S
Yellow-throated Warbler 13th
Lake Hefner Brian M
Pine Warbler 15th
Myriad Gardens Brian M
Orange-crowned Warbler 18th
Martin Nature Park Brian M
Magnolia Warbler 18th
Martin Nature Park Brian M
American Redstart, Nashville, Mourning Warblers 23rd
Myriad Gardens Hal Y
Black-necked Stilt 24th
Crystal Lake Brian M, Grace H
Spotted Towhee 27th
Spring Creek Trail Brian M
American Redstart 29th
Myriad Gardens Grace H

Canadian County

Yellow-billed Cuckoo 12th
Morgan Road Trina A

Payne County

Blue-headed Vireo 4th
Sanborn Lake Maria B
Neotropic Cormorant 6th
Lake Carl Blackwell Scott L
Pine Siskin 7th
Lake Carl Blackwell Scott L
Red Crossbill 11th
Boomer Lake Scott L, Lucas B

Orange-crowned Warbler 15th
Sanborn Lake Landon N

Sedge Wren 16th
Cushing WTP Restricted Access Mike Y

Ovenbird 15th
Sanborn Lake George Z

Black-headed Grosbeak 18th
Sanborn Lake Landon N

Swallow-tailed Kite 24th
Stillwater Landon N

Yellow Warbler 27th
Boomer Lake Scott L

Cleveland County

Painted Bunting 28th
So Jenkins Joe G

Logan County

Painted Bunting 23rd HWY 74 Dustin L

Virginia Rail 27th Residence Celia L

Lincoln County

Yellow-billed Cuckoo 4th
Kairworks D&D N

Savannah Sparrow 23rd
Choctaw Walmart Parking Lot Caleb S

Garvin County

Swallow-tailed Kite 2nd
I-35 near Wynnewood Jacob K

Refreshments

Refreshment Volunteers for Oct. 16, 2023:

Snacks: Nancy Reed, Hal Yocum, Jimmy Woodard and Steve & Mary Davis.

Ice/drinks: John Eagleston and Cathy Chernausk

Upcoming Field Trips

Potawatomi Eagle Aviary

The Oklahoma City Audubon Society will have a field trip led by Warren Harden on Saturday, November 4, 2023, to the Potawatomi Eagle Aviary just southeast of Shawnee. We will meet at the aviary at 10:00 am. The address to input into your location finder is 1 Aviary Lane, Shawnee, OK 74801. We will



be hosted by tribal members and aviary directors Jennifer Randall and Bree Dunham who will explain their mission and the operation of the aviary. Beside the Bald Eagles, they also have a few other species of raptors that might be on display. Feel free to bring family and friends.

Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge



Nancy Vicars will be leading a fieldtrip to the Salt Plains National Refuge on Saturday, October 28, 2023. This will be an all day outing, weather permitting. Plan to bring snacks and lunch. Meeting place will be at McDonald's located on the corner of Northwest Highway & Council Road at 6:30 AM. Please contact Nancy if you plan to attend, nancy.vicars@sbcglobal.net or 405-831-1945.

WELCOME BACK, WESTERN FLYCATCHER AND AMERICAN GOSHAWK

The American Ornithological Society released its 2023 North American bird checklist supplement in July, and the update to the ornithological community's official list of recognized species has a decidedly retro feel to it.

A headliner of the new update is the splitting of



Northern Goshawk into two species—American Goshawk and Eurasian Goshawk. The split follows the recommendation of George Sangster, a researcher at the Naturalis Biodiversity Center in the Netherlands,

who documented genetic and vocal differences among goshawks in North America and Eurasia. “American Goshawk” represents the return of a species name that was previously recognized from the 1880s to the mid-20th century.

The latest checklist supplement also turned back the clock on a yellow-olive *Empidonax* flycatcher, by lumping Pacific-slope Flycatcher and Cordilleran Flycatcher into a single species called Western Flycatcher. The lumping reverses an AOS North American Checklist Committee decision in 1989 that split the Western Flycatcher.

Myriad Botanical Gardens

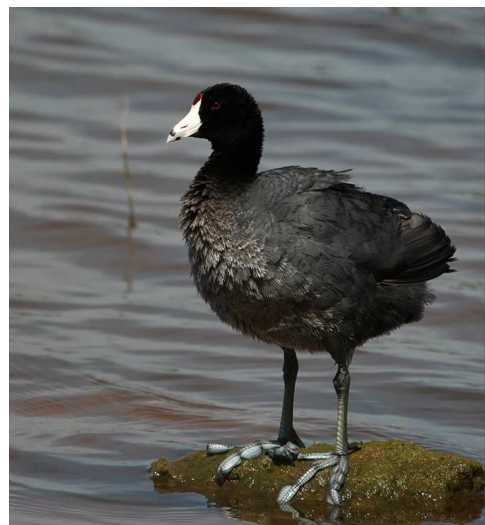


The weather was cool and overcast with sporadic raindrops on Sunday, September 24, but the hardy crowd of birders braved the elements.

Gray Catbird, Ovenbird, American Redstart, Nashville and Orange-crowned Warblers, American Robins, Carolina Wren, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and a White-winged Dove were found in the Meinders Garden area.

In the children's playground area, we added Brown Thrashers, Northern Cardinals, more Nashville & Orange-crowned Warblers and a Common Yellowthroat.

Flyovers included 33 Chimney Swifts, Mississippi Kites, at least one American Kestrel, Turkey Vulture and a Red-headed Woodpecker. A Red-tailed Hawk was observed perched very high on the Devon Tower.



There has been an American Coot living in the pond for some time now and it afforded a few of us great looks at its green, lobed toes!

The collective bird list for the morning ranged between 23-28 species.