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

*The Oklahoma City Audubon Society Welcome Back:  
Kent Bynum, OKC*

# Birding and Dragon Hunting: A Match Made in Heaven

**The speaker for our September 19 program will be Brenda D. “Bee” Smith of the Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory, a program of the Oklahoma Biological Survey at the University of Oklahoma presenting “Birding and Dragon Hunting: A Match Made in Heaven.”**

Oklahoma, with its 176 known species, is in the top ten U.S. states for diversity of Odonata (damselflies and dragonflies). Though our knowledge has grown immensely in recent years, we still have much to learn. Birders can be key to expanding our knowledge. In this presentation, we will review the history of regional odonatology and examine the hows and whys species are where they are. We will also discuss how you can be both avid birder and keen dragon hunter.



**Bee leads the [Oklahoma Odonata Project](#) (OOP) and is a conservation biologist. She is a former anthropologist, historian, and ornithologist, who found a love of dragonflies almost 30 years ago. Her love of biology and history culminated in her recent book titled, *Dragonflies at a Biogeographical Crossroads: The Odonata of Oklahoma and Complexities Beyond its Borders*, which ties together natural history of dragonflies in our region and beyond while delving into regional human history and how that has shaped the landscapes dragonflies inhabit today. Brenda’s other projects include the [Tiger Beetles of Oklahoma and the southern plains](#) and the [Oklahoma Frosted Elfin Project](#).**

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

Welcome Back! Hope you had an enjoyable summer of birding, added perhaps a new bird you've never seen before and enjoyed the time spent with your favorite birds.

An article in a recent *Audubon* magazine got me to thinking about just what is in a name, especially bird names. Taxonomy is a very fickle science even when it comes to scientific names. That has been made very apparent to me over the past few years especially as I've had to completely overhaul my entire mollusk collection at the nature center here in Wewoka. But when it comes to common names, I have a difficult time understanding the constant ebb and flow of names. After all, a "common name" implies that it is the name most used by non-scientific persons--in other words, "the Common Person"--Me .

In my collection of books about birds I happen to have Studer's "Popular Ornithology: The Birds of North America." It was copyrighted in 1881. Just a quick perusal gives one some very interesting birds to be found here in North America! There's the White-headed Eagle for example. Then I see one called "The Rail." The write-up on this one says: "The Rail, or as it is called in Virginia, the Sora, and in South Carolina, the Coot." Virginia won that one so South Carolina had to settle for a different bird to call the Coot. I see we have a Gold-wing Woodpecker which Studer informs us is known also as "High-hole," "Hittucks," "Yucker," "Piut," and "Yellow Hammer." Someone somewhere called it a "Flicker," he doesn't say where but in the end that name stuck. (He does say that "formerly, it was classed among the Cuckoos, which was an absurdity.")

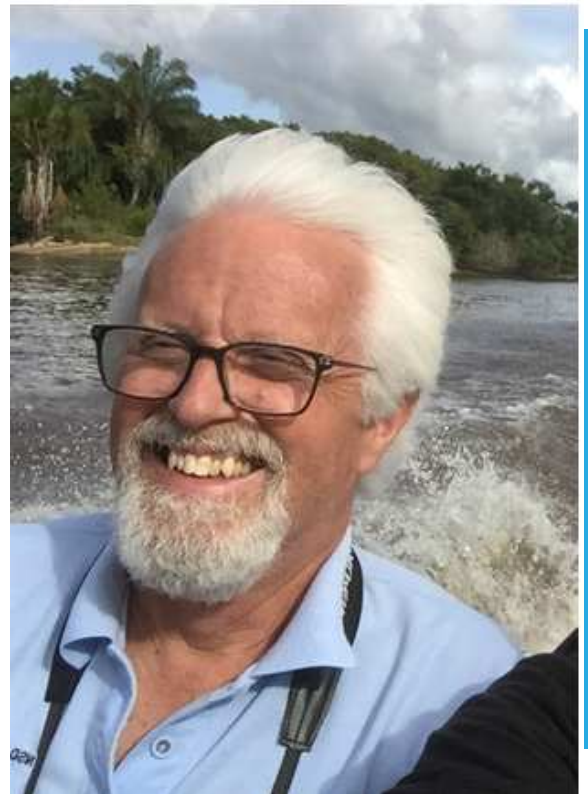
Next I come across "The Wandering Falcon, Mountain Falcon, Rock Falcon, Duck Hawk, or Great-footed Hawk." I recall as a boy I called it the Duck Hawk as perhaps some of you did too--for the Peregrine Falcon. Others go by names like "Summer Duck," "Yellow-shanked Snipe," "Tell-tale," "Cardinal Grosbeak," "Red-winged Starling," "Blue Yellow-backed Warbler," "Esquimaux Curlew or Dough-bird," and they go on.

Quaint, funny but...they were "common names." And I guess, that's my point. With time, field guides came out that helped standardize the names by picking from among the many local names, that which the authors used due to where they lived or some other reason. Authors like Reed, Hoffmann, Booth, Putnam, Cruickshank, others, and finally Peterson, by publishing small easy to use guides that had wide circulation they spread what really became "common names."

However, recently, it seems that "common names" are to be determined not by common usage but by a small group of "experts" making decisions being sure no one might be offended or because a historical figure is no longer known or "I want something different." My humble opinion is that most of the current penchant for changes is nothing more than an effort to create "new updated editions" that, of course, everyone has to buy to be sure and keep up--we would never want to get caught "behind the times." And, that makes money for the "inventors," makes an easy way to achieve fame and importance, and, keeps food on the table.

Oh well, enough blowing off steam. Anyone see a "Bull-bat" this summer? How about a "Sqawk"?

—Bob Holbrook, *alias Inca Tern*



Bob Holbrook on the Essequibo River, Guyana



## Bird of the Month: American Avocet

*By Grace Huffman*

It's still warm outside, but the days are slowly cooling down and getting shorter. Which means it's once again fall migration! Shorebird migration actually started in July, but even now you'll still find lots of them coming through into late fall. One of my favorite shorebirds migrating through right now (and easy to identify) is the American Avocet.

American Avocets are large shorebirds, easy to spot with their black and white wings. When they come through in the spring, they have beautiful rust colored heads. If you see one now, they are likely to have a pale gray head. In all plumages, I find them very elegant.

Here in Oklahoma, you can find them across most of the state in shallow wetlands or on a lake shore during spring and fall migration, but they do breed up in the northwest part of the state and the panhandle. Here in Oklahoma City I usually find them at places like Lakes Hefner or Arcadia during migration, using their long, slightly upturned bills to feed along the shore.

They lay their eggs directly on the ground, with the female making a scrape in the ground at several locations before settling on one. Interestingly enough, these birds have been known to practice brood parasitism, meaning they lay eggs in the nest of another to be raised by the other bird. Typically a female will lay an egg in the nest of another female, but avocet eggs have been found in Short-billed (Mew) Gull nests. Avocets themselves sometimes fall prey to brood parasitism, as Black-necked Stilts or even Common Terns have laid eggs in Avocet nests! Avocet babies are precocial, and can leave the nest to walk around within 24 hours of hatching.



American Avocet © Grace Huffman

American Avocets currently have a stable population. Like many shorebirds, loss of suitable habitat in shallow wetlands can affect them, as do chemicals that may contaminate their preferred habitat.

Hopefully next time you are out at the lake you will be able to find some of these beautiful birds!

References: [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org) and Sibley's (range map)



# Recorder's Report

## Summer 2022

Summer was hotter this year with an extended drought, but birds continued nesting in June and started migration in July and August. A sand bar appeared at Lake Hefner which attracted terns and arriving shorebirds. Several new birds were documented this summer in Central Oklahoma and finally in August temperatures dropped below 100°F and rains appeared in some areas.

### JUNE

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cody Delano found Mississippi Kite in Seminole; Cody Delano spotted Acadian Flycatcher at Norman; and in Lincoln County Megan Migues tallied Northern Rough-winged Swallow at Stroud; and Braden Farris added Forster's Tern at Bell Cow Lake. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Esther Yeygant came across Northern Bobwhite at Mustang in Canadian County. On the 4<sup>th</sup> Larry Mays detected Common Night-hawk and Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Newcastle in McClain County. On the 5<sup>th</sup> Emily Miller noted White-winged Dove at Stroud; and Grace Huffman recognized Least Bittern at Lake Overholser. On the 6<sup>th</sup> Trina Arnold counted Northern Parula and Little Blue Heron along Fish-market Road at McCloud in Pottawatomie County.



Common Gallinule

On the 9<sup>th</sup> Jake Gerlt identified Black-bellied Whistling-Duck at Yukon City Park in Canadian County; while Someone recorded

**Common Gallinule**, heard Least Bittern and photographed Black-necked Stilt, and Black-bellied whistling-Duck at Dover Marsh in Kingfisher County. On the 11<sup>th</sup> Robet Merideth had Common Yellowthroat and Wood Duck at Pocasset in Grady County; and Hal Yocum located Black-bellied Plover at 10 Mile Flats in Norman. On the 12<sup>th</sup> Dailee Fagnant observed Least Tern at Lake Stanley Draper; Landon Neumann recorded Yellow-throated Vireo at Coyle in Payne County; and Jason Shaw got Brown Thrasher at Chickasha in Grady County.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> Jake Henning saw Bell's Vireo at Mulhall in Logan County. On the 18<sup>th</sup> Ted Wolff viewed Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Summer Tanager at Lake Konawa and Great Egret at Maud Wetlands in Seminole County. On the 19<sup>th</sup>

Ted Wolf verified Warbling Vireo and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Purcell Lake in McClain County and Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Lake Louis Burttschi in Grady County. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> Samuel Cox confirmed Greater Roadrunner and Summer Tanager at Wynnewood in Garvin County. On the 26<sup>th</sup> Jake Gerit noticed Black Vulture at Mustang in Canadian County. On the 27<sup>th</sup> Douglas Wood discovered Summer Tanager, Orchard Oriole and Cassin's Sparrow at Lake Elmer in Kingfisher County. On the 30<sup>th</sup> John Hurd encountered Orchard Oriole at Wes Watkins Lake in Pottawatomie County.

### JULY

On the 1<sup>st</sup> Megan Migues reported Eastern Wood-Pewee at Stroud in Lincoln County. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Matthew Thompson turned up Purple Martin at Shawnee; Caleb McKinney watched Bewick's Wren at Ninnekah in Grady County; while in McClain County Greg Overall had Chuck-will's Widow at Blanchard; and Tracy McCarthy spotted Red-eyed Vireo at Tuttle. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Braden Farris heard Chuck-will's-widow at Prairie Prime Ranch and Megan Migues



Green Heron ©Megan Migues

photographed Green Heron at Stroud. On the 7<sup>th</sup> Sam S had Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Wynnewood in Garvin County; and Scott Loss documented Laughing Gull at Lake Carl Blackwell.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> Scott Loss discovered **Mexican Violetear** and



Mexican Violetear

Black-chinned Hummingbird in Stillwater. On the 11<sup>th</sup> Michelle Spacek photographed Yellow-throated Warbler at Pink in Pottawatomie County. On the 12<sup>th</sup> Jay Rand found Cattle Egret at Guthrie. On the 16<sup>th</sup> Rhett Raibley described **Ring-necked**

**Pheasant** at Mar-

shall in Logan Coun-

ty. On the 21<sup>st</sup> Frank Walker spotted **Rufous Hummingbird** at Bethany. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> Nu Perera tallied Painted Bunting and Blue Grosbeak at Konawa in Seminole County;

and Joe Grzybowski documented **Short-billed Dowitcher** at Lake Thunderbird. On the 24<sup>th</sup> Larry Mays counted Black-and-white Warbler at Newcastle; and Landon Neumann came across Common Gallinule at Cushing WTP in Payne County.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> Matt Jung reported a sand bar had developed at the inlet on Lake Hefner and noted a nice assortment of

birds including White-faced Ibis, Least Sandpipers, American White Pelicans and terns. On the 28<sup>th</sup> Joe Grzybowski described Laughing Gull at Lake Thunderbird; and Scott Loss identified Snowy Plover at Lake Carl Blackwell. On the 29<sup>th</sup> Abdul Dominguez located Rufous Hummingbird in Norman.



Yellow-bellied Flycatcher © Scott Loss

On the 30<sup>th</sup> Amanda Boyle observed Broad-winged Hawk at Lima in Seminole County; Grace Huffman saw Common Nighthawk at Paul's Valley in Garvin County; and Scott Loss documented **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** near Coyle, Cinnamon Teal at Cushing WTP and heard Alder Flycatcher at OSU Botanic Garden in Payne County. On the 31<sup>st</sup> Curtis Stewart viewed Black Tern and Little Blue Heron at Dover Marsh in Kingfisher County.

## AUGUST

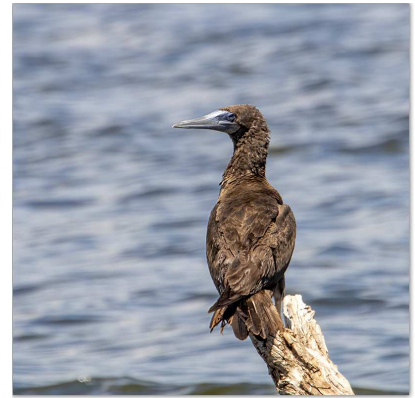
On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chad Ellis discovered **Long-billed Curlew** and Marbled Godwit at Lake Hefner – Prairie Dog Point. Lesser Black-backed Gull and Laughing Gull were also reported there by several birders.



Long-billed Curlew

On the 5<sup>th</sup> Braden Farris found Solitary Sandpiper at Prairie Prime Ranch in Lincoln County; and Jacob Kirkland had Willet, Yellow Warbler and Caspian, Black, Least and Forster's Terns at Prairie Dog Point. On the 7<sup>th</sup> Matt Jung spotted an adult and current hatch year Little Blue Heron at Prairie Dog Point. On the 9<sup>th</sup> Sharon Henthorn had Pied-billed Grebe and Belted Kingfisher at Zoo Lake in OKC. On the 11<sup>th</sup> Chase Moxley photographed Piping Plover at Prairie Dog Point. On the 10<sup>th</sup> in Logan County Aaron Short tallied Green Heron at Liberty Lake, Solitary Sandpiper at Guthrie and Black-crowned Night-Heron at Cimarron Bridge.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> Braden Farris noted Yellow Warbler at Prairie Prime Ranch in Lincoln County and Alder Flycatcher at Lake Hefner. On the 16<sup>th</sup> Brian Marra detected Black-throated Green Warbler at Lake Overholser – Coffey Dam. On the 17<sup>th</sup> Braden Farris photographed Western Sandpiper at Lake Hefner;



Brown Booby



Red-necked Phalarope ©Joe Grzyboedki

Michael Reichert described Brown Booby at Boomer Lake Park in Stillwater; and Joe Grzybowski identified **Red-necked Phalarope** at Lake Hefner – Prairie Dog Point. On the 21<sup>st</sup> Lucas

Bobay located Bank Swallow and White-

eyed Vireo along Hiwassee Road In Logan County; Cody Delano observed Black-necked Stilt at Lake Thunderbird; and Scott Loss verified Common Tern at Lake Carl Blackwell in Payne County. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> Joe Grzybowski heard **Inca Dove** along South Jenkins in Norman. On the 25<sup>th</sup> Braden Farris recorded American Redstart at Lake Hefner – Stars and Stripes Park. On the 29<sup>th</sup> Joe Grzybowski confirmed Western Sandpiper at Lake Thunderbird. And now it is time for October Big Day on October 8<sup>th</sup>.

In the Central Oklahoma area during the summer **179** species were reported with **9** new species which brings the year's total at **290**. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds. Information is accessed at: [ebird](https://ebird.org/region/US-OK?yr=all). 2022 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 June 30, July 30 & 31, and August 30 & 31, 2022); and occasionally from Facebook, and the OKBIRDS List. I can be contacted at [emkok@earthlink.net](mailto:emkok@earthlink.net). Esther M. Key, Editor.



# Nesting Owls Make Early Appearance

by Terri Underhill

Nesting Great Horned Owls Jack and Carol successfully fledged two owlets, Bubo and Uki, this spring. They were last seen and heard from our property on June 3, 2022. Uki has not been seen or heard since then and I hope she is at peace.

I hadn't heard any crows mobbing this summer until August 20. The crows started going nuts along the creek at the west side of our property. When the Blue Jays joined in, I was excited and hoped it meant my owls were back. I grabbed my binoculars and as I got closer to the creek an owl flew over my head. I could hear Jack's deep "hoot" and could see crows swarming him on the other side of the creek. Within a few steps, I spotted an owl perched on a dead branch. As we locked eyes, I heard Jack and Carol hoot from opposite direction. In that moment time stood still as I talked to the perched owl. As my eyes started to tear up, he flew off. It had to be Bubo because Jack always flies as soon as we lock eyes. It was so good to see Bubo looking healthy. I felt a connection for a split second with him and feel certain he remembers me and my wild red hair.



Jack and Carol will soon encourage Bubo to move on and find his own territory. The adults have started their morning and evening hooting and on September 2, 2022 Jack came into the nest and called to Carol to join him. She came into the nest then perched on the edge and hooted to Jack. I think they are claiming their nest early.

Their nesting tree has not fared well and is slowly dying. It is leaning towards our house and has a large hollow area along the base of the tree. As much as I would love for them to be able to use the tree again this year, I think it might not be safe. I am preparing a new barrel for a new nesting site about 60' away. I will put a camera above the new nest and monitor it and see if it gets their attention before I remove last year's barrel. I could not live with myself if the tree fell with the owlets. My owls are a gift and I want to be a good steward for them.

When Carol starts roosting I will have my cams on live view again. If you want to watch my videos from past seasons you can go to- <https://www.youtube.com/user/okiebirdnerd/videos>. If you subscribe you will be notified of any videos I add. I hope this year is as good as the last.

I give a hoot! Terri Underhill, Edmond OK

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## Fieldtrip Schedule:

### Save the Date:

Nancy Vicars will lead a field trip at Will Rogers Gardens and Arboretum on **Saturday, October 15, 2022** from 8-10 AM.

Contact: Nancy Vicars, 405-831-1945

## Refreshments

The following folks will be providing refreshments for the Monday, September 19 OCAS meeting:

**SNACKS:** Marie Bohlier, Nancy Reed, Mary Lane and Guyla Mayo

**ICE/DRINKS:** Randy and Sharon Henthorn

## JUNIOR DUCK STAMP WINNERS



A creative young artist from South Dakota, 15-year-old Madison Grimm, took top honors at the National Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest this summer month. Her image of a male Green-winged Teal will appear on the 2022-2023 Junior Duck Stamp. That program raises funds to educate and engage youth in wildlife and wetlands conservation and outdoor recreation. This is Madison's third national win.

Second place winner was Catheryn Liang, 15, from Texas, with an acrylic painting of Canada Geese. And third place went to 17-year-old London Peterson from Oklahoma who entered with a Common Goldeneye painted in acrylic.

## Eastern Meadowlark Split

(from *American Ornithological Society blog*) It's time to add a new species of meadowlark to your checklist. The



Chihuahuan Meadowlark © Ginger Spinelli / eBird

AOS's North American Classification Committee (NACC), the official authority on the names and classification of the region's birds revisited a proposed split in meadowlarks that was last considered in 2016. This year, Johanna K. Beam, now a Ph.D. student at Pennsylvania State University, based her proposal ([Proposal 2022-C-2](#)) to split Chihuahuan Meadowlark (*Sturnella lilianae*) from Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) on new evidence from her undergraduate research at the University of Colorado. She employed a quantitative vocal analysis and whole genome sequencing for individuals of Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*), Eastern Meadowlark, and the populations that are being split into Chihuahuan Meadowlark. "The genetic data show that Eastern Meadowlark and this new meadowlark, which were previously lumped as the same

species, are actually not each other's closest relatives," NACC chair Terry Chesser of the U.S. Geological Survey explains, adding, "Eastern and Western Meadowlarks are more closely related to each other than to the newly split Chihuahuan Meadowlarks." Additionally, the quantitative vocal analysis in Beam's new study showed differences between vocalizations of Eastern and Chihuahuan meadowlarks. Both the genetic and vocal analyses indicated that the Chihuahuan Meadowlark includes two subspecies: *lilianae*, whose breeding grounds are primarily in Arizona, New Mexico, and northern Mexico, and *auropectoralis*, which occurs further south in western Mexico.

# Minutes of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society Meeting

June 21, 2022

By Nancy Reed, Acting Secretary

The meeting was opened at 7:00 PM at the Will Rogers Garden Center by Vice-President Grace Huffman. Nancy Vicars presented a treasurer's report and distributed copies. Cash on hand as of June 21, 2022, was \$7,868.88. The minutes of the May 16, 2022, meeting were approved as published in the newsletter.

No meetings will be held during the summer months of July and August. The next meeting will be held at the Will Rogers Garden Center on Monday, September 19, 2022, at 7:00 PM.

Visitors were introduced and welcomed. Six new members joined OCAS.

Grace reported seeing a Prothonotary Warbler at Stinchcomb and Nancy Vicars has a Mississippi Kite nesting in her neighborhood. Jimmy Woodard reported a Barn Owl with chicks in Beaver County.

Ann Sherman, a great speaker and photographer, entertained us with life stories and photos.

There was no old or new business.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Reed  
Acting Secretary



Mark your calendars for [October Big Day](#)—8 October 2022! Big Days are a 24-hour opportunity to celebrate birds near and far. Last October, more than 32,000 people from 195 countries submitted 78,000 checklists with eBird, demonstrating the power of birds to bring people together.

Wherever you are on 8 October, take a few minutes to join the world of birding on October Big Day. Participate from anywhere—even home! By taking part in October Big Day you're also celebrating [Global Bird Week-end](#) and [World Migratory Bird Day](#). Be a part of the global team and help set a new record for October birding.

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## Bird facts that sound fake but are true

**The average man would have to eat around 285 pounds of meat per day to maintain your weight if you had the metabolism of a hummingbird.**

According to the National Park Service, hummingbird metabolisms are pretty intense across the [over 330 species found in the Americas](#). Of course, if you were a hummingbird, you would also have a significantly shorter lifespan of just three to five years.

**Chickens and ostriches are the closest modern relatives to Tyrannosaurus rex.**

Although a link between dinosaurs and modern birds had long been suspected, in 2008 research was published in the journal Science that [found molecular evidence](#), according to Smithsonian Magazine.

It's worth noting that chickens and ostriches aren't that closely related themselves, so there's certainly more information to be discovered.