

September 20, 2021:

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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:

Paula Murphy, OKC

Lou Ann Polk, OKC

Keetah Simonds, OKC

Benjamin Cook, OKC

For up-to-date Oklahoma City Audubon news visit:
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Birding in Southeast Arizona

Mike and Jeanne Mather, emeriti faculty of the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, will present the program at the **September 20, 2021** meeting of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society. They have been birders for many years but are not considered “rabid” birders. They both are mostly interested in getting the good photo but not at the expense of just seeing the bird or interfering with other birder’s opportunities. Because of that, a lot of good bird photos are missed.



The Mathers have birded in many places around the U. S. but have also been to sites in Mexico, Costa Rica, Cuba, Trinidad, Tobago, Spain, and Portugal. Academically, Jeanne’s specialty was math and teacher education. Mike considers himself a general naturalist but concentrated in herpetology and malacology. They will present a program on their experience birding in southeast Arizona with Jerry Davis, a well-known birder and wildlife biologist in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

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 Debate over Renaming Birds (that are named for a person)

This is for me a most interesting topic. It appears to have been started because of a concern that some of the people for whom some North American bird species were named after (usually for their eminence in the ornithological world of the 1700s-1800s, friendship with those at the forefront of ornithology, or perhaps for submitting a previously unknown specimen, after a friend or relative of the collector or even outstanding scientists in other fields) were found to have been slave holders, held racist views or been involved in the new field of eugenics in their times and lives.

Recent articles about this concern have appeared in many bird periodicals and have been the topic of lengthy discussions at the highest level of the American Ornithological Society (AOS). I have read that at least one species, McCown's Longspur, has been renamed the Thick-billed Longspur. I suspect some of us wonder how far this may go. There are 149 bird species with a name of a person in the Birds of North America and Central America. Many are very common birds — Wilson's Warbler, for example. Others are rarer birds: Kirtland's Warbler. Likely you wonder just who these people were. Once good source for such information is the *Birdwatcher's Companion to North American BirdLife* by Christopher W. Leahey (2004, Princeton Press). Google may work as well.

I found that many North American birds were named for British or European scientists such as the Blackburnian Warbler and Rivoli's Hummingbird. An interesting and similar concern exists for bird names that actually tell us nothing about the bird, for instance Colima, Kentucky, Nashville, and Connecticut Warblers. Others, like Mourning Warbler, are not much help either.

Some of the discussion is supported by several eminent birders and authors of birding books and guides. They suggest uniquely descriptive names for each bird may be a better option. Examples: Yellow Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler and Common Yellowthroat. Even Barred Owl and Great Horned Owl are pretty good.

Just for fun and for some good brain exercise, each of you might try to come up with good, rather unique, descriptive names for Lewis's Woodpecker (or any of the many warblers with a person's name).

Good birding and "what's the new name for that bird,"

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 - Least Sandpiper

By Grace Huffman

Migration is in full swing, with birds on their way south from their breeding grounds. From warblers to shorebirds, they are all headed to where they'll spend the winter. One of the most common shorebirds migrating through is the Least Sandpiper.

Least Sandpipers are small, rather plain looking shorebirds belonging to the genus *Caldaris*. Collectively a lot of birds in this genus are referred to as "peeps." They are all similar in size & coloration, with a few difficult field marks to tell each species apart. Least Sandpipers are no exception, although in good lighting the easiest way to tell them from other peeps are their yellow legs. They are a little brighter colored for the breeding season, but they are still largely brown with a white belly.

Despite being the smallest sandpipers in the world, Least Sandpipers have a very big range. They breed all the way up in Alaska & northern Canada, and winter in parts of northern South America. They nest in the tundra on the ground, with the male making several "scrapes" in the ground and the female choosing one of them to refine further and create a cup out of dried grass. The female lays her eggs and incubates them for around 3 weeks until the young hatch. The young are precocial, meaning they are able to move about and feed themselves shortly after hatching, but the male will often stay with them for some time to help keep predators at bay.

Here in Oklahoma they can be found most of the year, but they are the most common in migration and winter. If you want to see one, they are easily located anywhere from the lakeshore to a pond in a cattle field. Just give them a little bit



Least Sandpiper © Grace Huffman

of water or mud and a lot of shore, and they're good to go! They are listed as Least Concern, but are declining somewhat, especially in the east. This is thought to be due to habitat loss on their migration & wintering grounds. Next time you're out birding near water, take a close look at the shore for small sandpipers, and they might just be Leasts!

Ketchums & Colorado 2021

By Patti Muzny with Nancy Vicars
August 2021

After traveling for many miles throughout Oklahoma this past year in pursuit of our favorite pastime – watching, counting, monitoring birds from eagles to hummingbirds and everything in between, we found ourselves in between projects back in mid-August. That situation could be remedied for sure! So, we got in touch with longtime friends, Leonard and June Ketchum, former Oklahoma residents and currently still OKC Audubon members, who now make their home tucked in the mountains near the town of Westcliffe, CO. I guess one could say we pretty much invited ourselves to come and visit for a few days.

We left Oklahoma City on August 18th and drove directly to almost jacket weather from the heat and humidity of summer in Oklahoma. Normally the grasslands in Western OK and Texas are pretty dry by this date, but this area had seen



more rain than usual and there were several playas to attract a few birds, although ducks were practically non-existent. At a rest stop east of Capulin, Nancy's sneakers picked out a very pale Hog-nosed Snake, and we also found a Say's Phoebe, a Western Kingbird and Barn Swallows feeding young. We had been searching hard for Golden Eagles and finally found a couple in the valley

south of the town of Westcliffe. The real fun began when we reached the Ketchum property.

June and Leonard have multiple hummingbird feeders out and it's almost a full time job for her to keep the feeders filled. Dozens of Broad-tailed Hummingbirds kept the air well circulated with their feeding frenzies. And there was an occasional Rufous Hummingbird as well. When they are not chasing each other from feeder to feeder, they are investigating the many beautiful flowers June has in pots and in the flower beds. We had seen a Calliope Hummingbird on other visits, but did not see one this trip.

There were several Black-headed Grosbeaks and Woodhouse Jays and Pinyon Jays at the seed and suet feeders. After we left on Sunday, June told us the grosbeaks left with us. We also got to see juvenile Spotted Towhees. By the time they arrive here in the fall, we see them in adult plumage. They had towhee profiles and were towhee sized and scratched for food like a towhee, but they sure looked

strange to us. Mountain Chickadees finally made an appearance and the Hairy Woodpecker was a regular visitor. We also saw a Western Tanager and Pine Siskins at the feeders, along with Stellar's Jays. And another treat was a pair of Golden Eagles flying over the house.

Hanging out in the den and on the deck is always quite entertaining, but we finally decided to take a couple of drives in the area, among them Lake DeWeese, which is outside of the town of Westcliffe. Below the dam and spillway is a hiking area where we found a couple of Pygmy Nuthatches as well as White-breasted Nuthatches, Yellow-rumped Warblers, a Peewee, Cliff Swallows, Violet-green Swallows, Junco's and a Townsend's Solitaire. Another treat was a Tassel-eared Squirrel.

June had mentioned that she sometimes heard a Poorwill at the house. One evening after dark she stepped out on the back deck and heard one call. We ran upstairs and were able to hear it, too. That was a exceptional treat for us.

Although we were only gone five days, it was so good to get to spend time with June and Leonard, after not being able to travel out of state during 2020. The smoke from the fires in the NW had restricted the view and polluted the air just before we arrived, but the jet stream shifted and we enjoyed unrestricted views of the "fourteeners" in the distance and watched a full Blue Moon come up. Mother Nature even granted my wish for some thunder and lightning as long as it didn't catch something on fire up there!

Early on Sunday morning we were gathering up our belongings in the lower level of their home, when I looked out to see some mule deer with very impressive velvet antlers as they fed at the edge of the yard. About that time the Ketchum canines woke up and noticed the intruders and the last thing we saw was rumps and tails!

June's "B&B" is one of our favorite places to hang out and we so enjoyed the weather, the camaraderie, the birds, the antics of their weimaraners and terriers, the cats, the kittens and the delicious food.

On the way home, we stopped at Capulin Volcano National Monument in NE New Mexico, to grab a quick picnic lunch and enjoy breathing the almost mountain air at one of our favorite places.

We were nearing Elk City and it was getting hot and we were hungry, so I mentioned to Nancy that it was too bad our very favorite haunt for fantastic meals, Simon's Catch, in Elk City, was not open on Sunday. Her reply was, "Oh, but it IS!" Well, needless to say, we didn't get home before dark, but we arrived home with another wonderful meal to remember and a catfish dinner for Brian's dinner on Monday!

Recorder's Report: Summer 2021

JUNE

On the 1st RJ Baltierra saw Mississippi Kite at Sasakwa in Seminole County. On the 4th Joe Grzybowski came across Summer Tanager, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Common Nighthawk in Pottawatomie County. On the 6th Tim O'Connell recognized Eastern Wood-Pewee on his BBA plot in Lincoln County. On the 11th Bill Diffin located Bell's Vireo near Guthrie. On the 12th back on his BBA plot Tim O'Connell added Green Heron. On the 15th Bill Diffin encountered Snowy Egret at Guthrie Lake in Logan county. On the 17th Carol Manning noticed Northern Bobwhite taking a dust bath in Spencer. On the 18th Larry Mays confirmed Belted Kingfisher and Wood Duck in Blanchard in Grady County. On the 20th Braden Farris identified Chimney Swift at Prairie Prime Ranch in Lincoln County; and Mike Yough reported Red-eyed Vireo, Orchard Oriole, Bell's Vireo, and White-eyed Vireo at Dover in Kingfisher County.

After the unseasonably strong cold front passed through northern Oklahoma on the 21st, Scott Loss spotted Willet at



Mechem turned up Great Crested Flycatcher in his Warr Acres yard.

Probably related to the abnormal midsummer cold front and heavy rains/flooding on the 27th, in Stillwater Scott Loss counted some interesting mid-summer/early fall migrant shorebirds of American Avocets at Boomer Lake, and at the Meridian Tech ponds Stilt Sandpiper and a rare-for-midsummer Yellow-headed Blackbird. Meanwhile, Jacob Crissup detected Eastern Wood-Pewee at Crow's View Farm in Logan County; Brian Marra observed Common Nighthawk at Okarche and Mike Yough got Chimney Swift at Hennessey in Kingfisher County. On the 28th Devin Bosler spotted Common Loons on the northeast corner of Lake Hefner, and on the 30th he observed Caspian Tern foraging along the Lake Hefner dam. During June 141 species were reported in the 12 central Oklahoma counties.

Lake Carl Blackwell; and Brent Barnes described Black-bellied Whistling-Duck on a pond in OKC. On the 22nd Caleb McKinney verified Snowy Egret at Taylor Lake in Grady County. On the 23rd Gaynell Perry tallied Lark Sparrow at Paoli in Garvin County. On the 26th Caleb McKinney found Black-crowned Night-Heron at Shannon Springs Park in Grady County; and Aaron

JULY

On the 4th in Pawnee County Jerry Vanbebber photographed two Cave Swallow on a power line; but when Scott Loss went out to find them, he documented two **Cave Swallows** 1.5 miles west of where Jerry found them just inside the Payne County line. On the 6th RJ Baltierra detected Red-headed Woodpecker at Crescent in Kingfisher County; and on the 7th he photographed a Red-breasted Nuthatch at the Lexington Wildlife Management Area in Pottawatomie County. On the 11th



Cave Swallow © Jerry Vanbebber

Don Pearson got White-eyed Vireo near Elmore City in Garvin County. In Seminole County on the 10th Jerry Vanbebber spotted Dickcissel in Seminole; on the 12th Sharon Turk counted Red-headed Woodpecker at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center; and on the 14th Rondi Large added Greater Roadrunner at Sportsman Lake.

On the 16th Matthew Van Den Broeke observed Willow Flycatcher at Teal Ridge Wetland in Payne County; and at Lindsay in Garvin County Jackson Cox had Western Kingbird. On the 18th Grace Huffman and Brian Marra photographed and described Least Flycatcher at Lake Hefner – OKC docks; and Braden Farris identified Snowy Egret along the Turner Turnpike near Wellston. On the 20th Braden Farris located Chimney Swift at Prairie Prim Ranch. Meanwhile in Kingfisher County Luella Fickle found White-winged Dove and Green Heron at Bull Foot Park in Hennessey and Purple Martin in Dover; and Mike Yough confirmed White-eyed Vireo, Bell's



Vireo, and Painted Bunting around Dover and Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Orchard Oriole, and Blue Grosbeak around Hennessey.

On the 22nd Kimberly Harper spotted Red-eyed Vireo and Ruby-throated Hummingbird in Newcastle. On the

23rd Matt Jung discovered two Bald Eagles staking out Rose Lake; and Ethan Wells confirmed Northern Bobwhite at Lake Stanley Draper. On the 24th Braden Farris noticed Cattle Egret at Dover and Eastern Kingbird, and Baltimore Oriole at Lake

Elmer near Kingfisher. On the 27th Adrianh Martinez Orozco tallied Summer Tanager near Okarche in Canadian County; and Mike Yough verified Chimney Swift in Hennessey and Common Nighthawk at Okarche. On the 28th Bill Diffin added Wood Duck and Great Horned Owl at Liberty Lake in Logan County. On the 29th Someone observed Black-bellied Plover at Lake Thunderbird SP. In July 135 species were reported in the 12 central Oklahoma counties.

AUGUST

On the 3rd Scott Loss documented an apparent first record for Payne County of **Blue-winged Warbler** at the OSU Botanical Garden; and Bill Diffin came across Field Sparrow, Northern Bobwhite, Red-eyed Vireo and Dickcissel at Liberty Lake in Lincoln County. On the 4th Bill Diffin recognized Least Flycatcher and Solitary Sandpiper at the NW 63rd & Kilpatrick Turnpike area in Canadian County. On the 5th Scott Loss located Pine Warbler, Northern Parula, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo at The Botanic Garden at OSU; John Tharp and Rachel Wrenn found Marbled Godwit at Lake Thunderbird SP East Sentinel in Cleveland County. On the 6th D&D Norris had a visiting blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Kairworks Garden. On the 8th at John H Saxon Park in Cleveland County Rosario Douglas heard Northern Bobwhite singing and confirmed the ID with Bird Net.

On the 11th Joe Grzybowski encountered Western Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, Black Tern and Forster's Tern at Lake Thunderbird - Twin Bridges. On the 13th just ahead of the cold front Caleb McKinney identify Common Nighthawk and two large migration flocks of Western Kingbird at Spencer's Grocery Store in Chickasha; and Andrew Core noticed Blue Grosbeak at Tryon in Lincoln County. On the 14th Joe Grzybowski reported Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Upland Sandpiper and Broad-winged Hawk at the Bentley Turf Farms in McClain County; and Michael McCoy recorded Chuck-will's-widow at Mitch Park in Edmond. On the 15th Robert Merideth spotted Forster's Tern at Meeker Lake in Lincoln County; and Esther Key had Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at the Riverwind east parking lot wetland in McClain County. On the 16th Bill Diffin heard Sedge Wren and Fish Crow at Prairie Dog Point on Lake Hefner.



Common Black Hawk © Brian Marra

On the 18th Larry Mays described a **Common Black Hawk** four miles northwest of Hennessey in Garfield County just half a mile north of the Kingfisher County line. Later several other birders were able to view the bird. Surely it flew south a bit so it

can be counted on the Central OK list. Dan Cowell discovered Common Yellowthroat and Spotted Sandpiper at Purcell Lake in McClain County; and Scott Loss verified an Alder Flycatcher at the Teal Ridge Wetland in Payne County. On the 21st in Kingfisher County Martinez Orozco observed Red-headed Woodpecker, Orchard Oriole, and Yellow Warbler in Ames; Jacob Crissup and Katie Morgan saw Eastern Wood-Pewee and Loggerhead Shrike while weaving roads near the Cimarron Bird Farm. Meanwhile, in Lincoln County Michael King turned up White-winged Dove at Guthrie; and at Rose Lake in Canadian County Deanne McKinney got Bald Eagle.

On the 25th Donna Yates detected Black-throated Green Warbler at Arcadia Lake – Edmond Park. Along South Jenkins in Norman on the 27th Dick Gunn spotted a fly-by Peregrine Falcon; and on the 29th Brian Marra counted Yellow-throated Warbler and Nashville Warbler. On the 30th Cody Delano recognized Semipalmated Plover and Semipalmated Sandpiper at Lake Thunderbird – East Sentinel; Abdul Dominguez located White-eyed Vireo and Carolina Wren at Pebblebrook Park in Cleveland County; Brian Marra found Willow Flycatcher, Black-throated Green Warbler and Mourning Warbler at Bluff Creek Trails in OKC; and at Martin Park Nature Center in OKC Brian McLaughlin confirmed Mississippi Kites and Chimney Swift and Bill Diffin identified Eastern Wood-Pewee and Orchard Oriole. In August a total of 147 species were seen in all 12 central Oklahoma Counties.



Mourning Warbler © Brian Marra

In the Central Oklahoma area during the Summer **165** species were reported with **3** new species which brings the year's total to **300**. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds. Information is accessed at: 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 June 29 & 30; July 30 & 31, and August 30 & 31, 2021); occasionally from Facebook, and the OKBIRDS List. I can be contacted at emkok@earthlink.net. Esther M. Key, Editor.

Minutes of Oklahoma City Audubon Society Meeting June 21, 2021

The June meeting of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society was called to order by President Hal Yocum at the Will Rogers Garden Center.

At this time restrictions requiring face masks in the Garden Center facility have been lifted.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the minutes of the May 17, 2021, meeting as posted in the newsletter.

Treasurer Nancy Vicars presented a Treasurer's Report indicating that as of May 17, 2017, cash on hand was \$8,026.42. There were no disbursements. Membership dues and bank interest netted \$223.86, leaving a balance of \$8,250.28, as of June 21, 2021. Report accepted as presented.

Visitors were Paula Murphy, Maggie and Chip and Abbey.

Patti High distributed a sign-up sheet for future snacks and drinks for upcoming meetings.

There were no field trip reports. Hal Yocum mentioned that he will be taking a trip to Kenton/Black Mesa area and will also be birding with Mark and Lela Sullivan in Red River.

Recent notable sightings included a Lark Bunting reported by Sharon Henthorn at the Girl Scout facility near the zoo. Jerry and Marilyn Taylor reported a wild turkey in their yard. At Lake Hefner, a Caspian Tern, Laughing Gull and Ruddy Turnstone were reported. There were also eight Willets at Sanborn Lake in Stillwater. Cheryl Allen noted five Mute Swan signets near Bel-lini's at NW 63rd and Pennsylvania in Oklahoma City.

Patti Muzny and Nancy Vicars shared experience with dueling Yellow-breasted Chats on one of their Atlas blocks near Stigler, OK.

President Yocum informed members of the possibility of staffing a booth at the upcoming outdoor adventure show at Scissortail Park on July 24-25, 2021. Details of what will be required of members and Oklahoma City Parks personnel were incomplete.

Meeting was adjourned for refreshments and a beautiful and informative presentation by Steve Davis and Mary Lane on their trip to Ecuador.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Muzny
Recording Secretary

Upcoming Field Trips



The Oklahoma City Audubon Society has arranged for two special field trips and a public event hosted by OCAS at Mollie Spencer Farm in Yukon.

September 28. 7:30 am—9:30 am—Field Trip

October 5. 7:30 am—9:30 am—Field Trip

October 9. 8:00 am—10:00 am—Public bird walk guided by OKC Audubon.

Molly Spencer Farm, 1001 Garth Brooks Blvd. (NE corner of Garth Brooks and Vandament St. in Yukon). Parking is located at the school parking lot on the north side.

The farm is not open to the general public outside of regularly-scheduled events hosted at the farm.

Refreshments

The September refreshments will be provided as follows:

Snacks:

Marilyn Taylor, Mary Lane, Patti Muzny and Patti High

Ice/drinks:

John Eagleston & Cathy Chernauek

Jimmy's Little Sit

Jimmy Woodard is planning another Little Sit in his Midwest City backyard. The Sit is an informal come-and-go event and is always a popular place to enjoy the company of other birders, snacks and excitement as birds are sighted.

The Little Sit will be held **8 October 2021**. Watch for email notices with street address and other helpful info!

Splits and Lumps

Northwestern Crow *Corvus caurinus* is lumped with **American Crow** *Corvus brachyrhynchos*

Restricted to the Pacific Northwest of the United States, the Pacific Coast of Canada, and southeastern Alaska,

Northwestern Crow has always been a controversial entity, especially at the southern margins of its range where it is believed to hybridize extensively with American Crow. New genetic data highlight the extent of that hybridization, suggesting that Northwestern Crow does not warrant species status and should be lumped with the widespread American Crow.



Split of Sedge Wren

(*Cistothorus stellaris*) Sedge Wren
(*Cistothorus platensis*) Grass Wren*

The non-migratory Neotropical populations of Sedge Wren are now treated as a different species. Grass Wren is resident from central Mexico south to South America.

Split of Mew Gull

For North American birders the most consequential change in the 2021 AOS Checklist supplement is the split of Mew Gull into two species – Short-billed Gull and Common Gull. For most birders this simply means changing the name of the species on your list from Mew Gull to Short-billed Gull. The North American population, common along the Pacific coast, is now known as Short-billed Gull.

eBird's Big Day

Mark your calendars for [October Big Day](#)—**9 October 2021!** Big Days are a 24-hour opportunity to celebrate birds near and far.

Wherever you are on 9 October, take a few minutes to join the world of birding on October Big Day. By taking part in October Big Day you're also joining the second-ever [Global Bird Weekend](#) and celebrating [World Migratory Bird Day](#). Be a part of the global team, and help set a new record for birding.

We recognize that COVID-19 continues to impact our communities. Even if your local conditions have improved, we always encourage everyone to put safety first, follow local guidelines, and [bird mindfully](#). You can bird from home and still participate in October Big Day!

How to participate

- **Get an eBird account:** eBird is a worldwide bird checklist program used by millions of birders. It's what allows us to compile everyone's sightings into a single massive October Big Day list—while at the same time collecting the data for scientists to use to better understand birds. [Sign up here](#). It's 100% free.

- **Watch birds on 9 October.** It's that simple! October Big Day runs from midnight to midnight in your local time zone. You don't need to be a bird expert, or go out all day long. You can report birds from anywhere in the world—even 10 minutes in your backyard will help.

- **Enter what you see and hear on eBird:** You can enter your sightings [via our website](#) or—even easier—download the [free eBird Mobile app](#). The app allows you to keep and submit lists while you're still out birding, explore nearby Hotspots, and will even track of how far you've walked so you can focus on watching birds. Please submit your eBird checklists before 13 October to be included in our initial results announcement.

- **Watch the sightings roll in:** During the day, keep an eye on how the lists are growing in different parts of the world. Follow along with reports from more than 160 countries. Stats will be updated in real-time on the [October Big Day page](#).