

Adventure into the heart of Africa

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Refreshments	Nadine Varner
Webmaster	Patricia Velte
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The Oklahoma City Audubon society is neither a chapter of nor affiliated with National Audubon.

Welcome

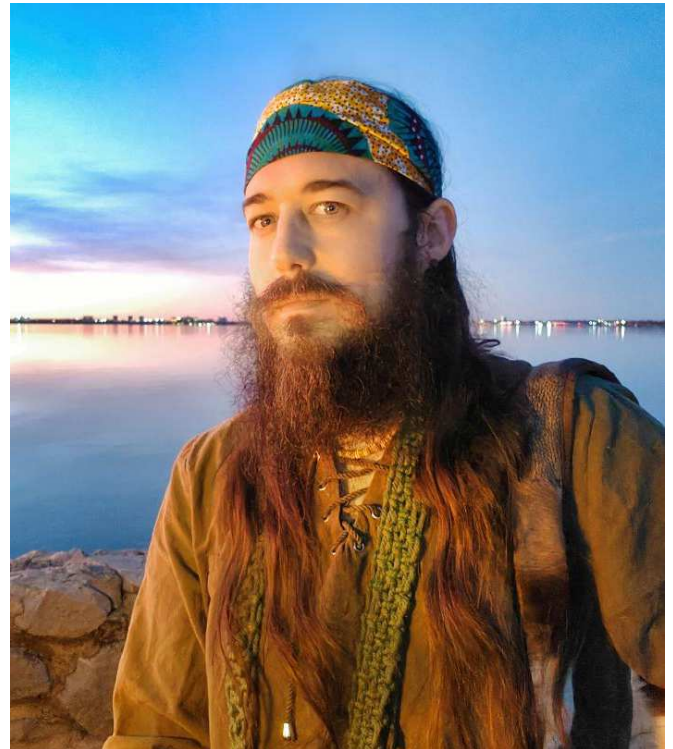
The Oklahoma City Audubon Society welcomes:

Philip Brown,
Yukon

Andrea Johnson
Oklahoma City

The speaker for our **Tuesday, January 21** program will be our club Secretary Cole Penning sharing his experiences with the Birds, Wildlife, and Culture in the Heart of Africa.

Embark on a virtual journey to Botswana, one of Africa's premier safari destinations, through the eyes of an avid birder and photographer. This presentation will showcase Botswana's stunning landscapes, diverse wildlife, and vibrant birdlife, including the Okavango Delta and the Kalahari Desert, along with its rich history. The trip was organized by the Oklahoma City Zoo, where Cole volunteers as a photographer. Join us to experience the magic of this unforgettable adventure into the heart of Africa.



Cole Penning is the Secretary of the OKC Audubon Society, the President of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society (OOS), and volunteers on the Bald Eagle Survey Team through the Sutton Center. Although he has been birding for only a few years, Cole has already traveled extensively for the hobby, including to California, Arizona, Hawaii, Brazil, South Africa, and Botswana. For Cole, birding is about more than just the birds—it's about discovering new places, experiencing different cultures, meeting new people, and seeing other wildlife. When he's not birding, Cole serves as the President of Central Oklahoma Mensa, contributes to NASCAR photography, and is an avid fan of both sports and music. He works professionally in computer science and software management.

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.

IMPORTANT: The January Meeting will be held on TUESDAY, January 21, 2025

President's Perspective

Welcome, birders, to the new year and its upcoming activities. I am Sharon Henthorn, your new Club President for 2025.

My history in birding began in the 1980s with simple binoculars and my Golden Book Field Guide. It was all I needed as a new birder to identify the common everyday birds around me.

Nowadays there are numerous tools on our bookshelves, computers and on our smartphones to enhance our knowledge and enjoyment.

Though I often do my birding alone in local Hot Spots, participants in guided field trips can learn from others more familiar with the birds and locations visited.

So join me in our collective journey this year with birders and the birds we see and hear.

— Sharon Henthorn



A 74-year-old bird lays an egg!

Wisdom, a Laysan albatross, laid an egg on November 27, 2024 at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge in the Pacific Ocean. The egg was her first in four years and was laid with her new partner, Akeakamai.

At 74 years young, Wisdom is the world's oldest known wild bird. She has been studied by six decades of biologists, survived countless ocean journeys, and raised over 30 chicks in her lifetime.





Bird of the Month: Western Bluebird

By *Grace Huffman*

Oklahoma is home to a large number of Eastern Bluebirds year round. During the winter, Mountain Bluebirds can often be found in the western parts of the state. Sometimes though, a third bluebird species visits the state. That would be the Western Bluebird! They look very similar to Eastern Bluebirds, but males have a solid blue throat and rust extending some onto the back, and blue on the belly. Females are overall duller, with a gray throat.

As their name implies, these birds are typically found in the western US, from southwestern Canada to Mexico. I've seen them on trips out west to Colorado and New Mexico, but they can be found all the way to California.

In their range, they can often be found in places like woodland edges, going after insects from lower perches. They nest in tree cavities and nest boxes, like our Eastern Bluebirds. The female builds a cup nest inside, taking up to 2 weeks to construct it. Once the eggs hatch, the breeding pair may have helpers who assist in raising the young. Interestingly, these helpers are often adult males. The pair may have up to 3 broods, with the female building a new nest for each brood.

Western Bluebird populations are doing quite well, but some threats do remain. The biggest challenges these birds face are loss of habitat and breeding spaces, and competing with invasive species like House Sparrows and European Starlings.

This bird here was one of a flock of 10 originally found by Larry Mays at Foss Lake on January 2nd. They also show up in the panhandle on occasion, and there have been a couple of reports in the Wichita Mountains in recent years. Next time you head out west, keep your eyes peeled!

References: allaboutbirds.org.



Western Bluebird © Grace Huffman

OKC AUDUBON SOCIETY

Financial Report for 2024

CASH ON HAND 12/31/2023		\$8,361.67
INCOME:		
Membership dues	1,128.59	
Checking Acct. interest	307.85	
Donations	10.00	
Car decals	<u>34.20</u>	
	1,480.64	<u>+1,480.64</u>
		9,842.31
EXPENSES:		
Meeting room rent	420.00	
Speaker honorarium	250.00	
Membership dues	<u>25.00</u>	
	695.00	<u>-695.00</u>
CASH ON HAND 12/31/2024		\$9,147.31

2024 Christmas Bird Count Recap

Well, the final results of the 2024 OKC CBC are tabulated. We had 109 species totaling 24,908 birds. We also had one exotic species, 8 Mute Swans and 5 subspecies noted and other genera like gull sp, sparrow sp, and passerine sp.

We had about 41 counters broken up into 19 count teams. Update on party efforts on count day:

Party miles on foot.....54.5 mi.
Party miles by car.....306 mi.
Party hours by foot.....70 hours.
Party hours by car.....48.5 hours.
Party hours by boat.....1 hour.

The OKC checklist with our species and numbers on it appears on page 6.

Thanks to all who participated.

Jimmy Woodard,
Midwest City
2024 OKC CBC compiler

Minutes of the OKC Audubon Society Meeting December 16, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Bob Holbrook.

Attendance: 17 members

Treasurer's Report: Nancy Vicars presented the November report, which was approved as read. Cash on hand: \$9,048.20.

Officer roles for 2025 were confirmed:

President: Sharon Henthorn

Vice Presidents: Cathy Chernausek & John Eagleston

Secretary: Cole Penning

Treasurer: Nancy Vicars

A big thank-you to Nadine for stepping up as the new refreshment chair as well!

The Oklahoma City Christmas Bird Count was a success! Jimmy reported 105 species recorded by 44 participants across 16 teams. Additional CBCs continue statewide through December and January—details are available on the National Audubon website.

The December holiday party was also a success! Bob Holbrook earned the unofficial title of "biggest liar." Sharon Henthorn gave a wonderful Turkey impression. Cathy and John performed a hit duet about the extremely rare "Santa Catalina" Island Jay. Finally, Warren's incredible limericks closed out the night with huge laughs.

Next meeting will be TUESDAY, January 21, 2025, where I'll share highlights from my safari trip to Botswana, including its history, culture, wildlife, and birds.

—Cole Penning, Secretary

DUES NOTICE

It's time once again to renew your annual membership. OCAS dues are \$15 per household and may be paid at the monthly meetings, online at our website <http://www.okc-audubon.org> or mailed to Nancy Vicars, Treasurer, 2341 NW 160th St., Edmond, OK 73013

Citizen Science

By Sharon Henthorn

February is the month that ALL birders can help collect data for study of bird populations.

Each year the Cornell Lab and National Audubon Society team up to conduct the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC).

This year the event is February 14-17 and the event has easier participation rules than in past year.

For more info, search [GBBC 2025](#) on your computer or smartphone. Join the birding world in sharing your observations with the experts.

CornellLab 


Audubon


BIRDS CANADA
OISEAUX CANADA



Refreshments

Refreshment volunteers for the January 21 OCAS meeting:

Snacks: Evelyn and Marvin Green, Patti High, Patti Muzny, and Sue Woodson.

Ice & Drinks: Hal Yocum

2024 Christmas Bird Count

Snow Goose	4	Bonaparte's Gull	41	Yel.-bellied Sapsucker	3	House Sparrow	325
Cackling Goose	48	Ring-billed Gull	5504	Red-headed Wood.	1	American Pipit	8
Canada Goose	1454	Amer. Herring Gull	17	Downy Woodpecker	43	House Finch	90
Mute Swan	8	Les. Black-backed Gull`	3	Hairy Woodpecker	5	Purple Finch	1
Wood Duck	1	Iceland/Thayer's	1	Pileated Woodpecker	2	Amer. Goldfinch	101
Northern Shoveler	68	Gull sp.	20	Norther Flicker	62	Lapland Longspur	2
Green-winged Teal	215	Forster's Tern	1	American Kestrel	26	Field Sparrow	7
Canvasback	119	Pied-billed Grebe	57	Eastern Phoebe	3	Amer. Tree Sparrow	2
Redhead	14	Horned Grebe	16	Blue Jay	95	Fox Sparrow	1
Ring-necked Duck	14	Eared Grebe	3	Amer. Crow	263	Dark-eyed Junco	235
Greater Scaup	5	Common Loon	7	Carolina Chickadee	157	Slate-colored Jun.	4
Lesser Scaup	234	Double-crested Cor.	1712	Tufted Titmouse	32	White-crowned Sp.	29
Bufflehead	111	Bl-cr. Night Heron	7	Horned Lark	1	Sparrow sp.	7
Common Goldeneye	57	Great Egret	4	Ruby-crowned King.	38	Harris's Sparrow	191
Hooded Merganser	203	Great Blue Heron	61	Gold.-crowned King.	23	White-throated Sp.	44
Common Merganser	12	Amer. White Pelican	151	White-br. Nuthatch	1	Savannah Sparrow	6
Red-br. Merganser	910	Black Vulture	3	Brown Creeper	11	Song Sparrow	82
Ruddy Duck	35	Turkey Vulture	2	Winter Wren	1	Lincoln's Sparrow	4
Blue-winged Teal	5	Sharp-shin. Hawk	6	Carolina Wren	93	Swamp Sparrow	1
Rock Pigeon	905	Cooper's Hawk	12	Bewick's Wren	4	Spotted Towhee	22
Eur. Collared Dove	44	Bald Eagle	10	European Starling	6220	Eastern Towhee	1
White-winged Dove	17	Red-shoul. Hawk	20	Brown Thrasher	5	Meadowlark sp.	7
Mourning Dove	124	Red-Tailed Hawk	48	North. Mockingbird	81	Eastern Meadowlark	75
American Coot	146	Hawk	1	East. Bluebird	52	Red-winged Blackbird	422
Killdeer	107	East. Screech Owl	1	Hermit Thrush	1	Passerine sp.	20
Greater Yellowlegs	5	Great Horned Owl	6	Amer. Robin	893	Br.-headed Cowbird	17
		Barred Owl	2	Cedar Waxwing	496	Common Grackle	373
		Belted Kingfisher	30			Great-tailed Grack.	413
						Yel.-rumped Warbler	50
						North. Cardinal	324