



Oklahoma City Audubon Society

OKC-AUDUBON.ORG

February 2010

Eagle Preservation

Speakers for our February 15 meeting will be Bill Voelker and his cohort Troy who will enlighten us about Sia, their non-profit organization located in Cyril, OK, addressing issues of eagles and Comanche culture. Featured will be live birds of prey --- EAGLES! The mission of Sia (Comanche for "feather") is "Preservation through cultural understanding of the Eagle in History, Science and Spirit." With support from various sources including the Federal Government, their organization houses live birds of prey, preserves cultural artifacts, and educates the public about eagles and their associated natural and cultural worlds.

Bill is a member of the Ohnononuh band of the Numunuh (Comanche) and, along with Troy, co-founded Sia in 1999. Bill has three decades of research and experience with native eagles and raptors of historic cultural significance to the Numunuh. He is the first Native American to hold federal permits for the care and propagation of Bald and Golden Eagles and the only individual to have successfully produced offspring of both species in captivity via artificial insemination. In 1982 one was the world's first Bald Eagle produced via artificial insemination. His expertise involves more than 20 eagle species from five continents as well as the ethno-ornithology of the indigenous cultures of each non-native species of eagles. Bill serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Comanche Nation NAGPRA & Historic Preservation Programs.



Troy is an adopted member of the Ohnononuh band of Numunuh and has nearly three decades of hands on experience with native and non-native eagle and raptor field studies as well as captive behavioral and artificial propagation research. Troy is a practitioner of holistic medicine and indigenous spirituality of multi-cultural persuasions. This unique background is vital in the ethno-botanical and ethno-ornithological perspective that is key to the indigenous cultural aspect of Sia research and historic documentation. Troy's specialty is sharing the message of the eagle with our younger audiences.

Come out for a soaring good evening with eagles and Comanche people. And bring a friend.

Our meetings are held September through June on the third Monday of each month (the fourth Monday in January). They begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Will Rogers Garden Center, I-44 and NW 36th Street. Visitors are always welcome.

2010 Calendars reduced to sell

The beautiful 2010 fund raising calendars are on sale. You can purchase one at the February meeting for **\$2.50** or you may order online or by mail. Yes, you can now purchase your calendar(s) from your home computer — visit the Oklahoma City Audubon site at <http://www.okc-audubon.org>. The mailing cost will be \$2.50 plus \$1.50 per calendar. This is the only source of revenue other than our membership dues.



President's Perspective

By Bill Diffin

Where are the young birders?

Young birders need convenient access to birds. Access to wild birds and other small scale nature experiences is more difficult now than it was 40 or 50 years ago. In those days, more people lived in rural areas. Of those who lived in the developing suburbs, more lived near undeveloped fields and woodlands or agricultural land. The suburbs tended toward a patchwork of separate developments rather than a continuous residential community. Typical lots were bigger allowing for more space around dwellings.

My early experiences with nature were close to home. At the age of six or seven, I was catching toads and Box Tortoises on our lawn in a small subdivision in rural northeastern New Jersey. Green Frogs and bullhead catfish populated a little pond in a vacant lot down the street. Me and my friends often climbed into the Chokecherry trees that surrounded our subdivision to get an elevated perspective. I frightened the wits out of my Aunt with a big Daddy Longlegs caught near the house. The aquarium in our living room was taken over by a giant goldfish from a pond along the road into town. The year my brother was born, me and my sister went to a nearby summer camp where Red Efts were captured on hikes through the woods. I learned to swim without fear in the black water of the camp's pond and the equally black water in the municipal swimming pond in the town park. A Hog-nosed Snake tricked me into thinking it was dead, and a swarm of Yellow Jackets chased me out of the woods near my home. The big Woodchuck that decided to dig a burrow under the foundation of our house one spring left as mysteriously as it came. So did the Barn Owl that sat atop our roof one morning.

At age ten my family moved to Phoenix, Arizona. In the undeveloped lots around our block of condos, dead palm leaves and stones could be flipped over to find Ring-necked Snakes and Black Widow spiders. Green Anoles climbed in the landscape trees and Fence Lizards occasionally basked on the sides of the buildings. While my parents played golf, I often roamed the surrounding desert in search of Horned Toads, Racerunners, and the occasional Banded Sand Snake. The rattlesnakes and sidewinders, which were not uncommon, were left alone. The Gila Monster I saw wandering along a shallow wash one morning was probably the rarest creature I've ever encountered in the wild.

I was 13 when we moved to Oklahoma City. While my parents searched for a home, we lived in some apartments near 23rd and Meridian. Behind them was a field of tall grass where I found a Prairie Kingsnake. When the creek flooded in the spring, we waded in the turbid water up to our waists to catch the Yellow Mud Turtles that came up to breathe in middle of the slough. My family eventually moved to a house in Bethany about a mile and a half from Lake Overholser. Where Bethany Park and Eldon Lyon Park are now located were Post Oak/Blackjack woods. I wandered into that woods one day to find an enormous roost of herons and egrets. The little pothole pond in a pasture near our home supported a bloom of strange little Clam Shrimps when it filled with water in the spring.

None of the close-to-home nature experiences I had in my youth can be duplicated today in the locations where I had them. This is the constant theme, the erasure of small scale nature by development. If you extrapolate long established trends to their logical conclusion, a discouraging prospect emerges. Every square foot of land not in public hands is either intensively cultivated for agricultural production or is developed for commercial and residential use. An increasingly wealthy and still growing world population is demanding ever increasing amounts of food.
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Oklahoma City Audubon Society

Officers 2010

President	Bill Diffin	722-3778
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The Oklahoma City Audubon society is neither a chapter of nor affiliated with National Audubon.

For Oklahoma City Audubon news between newsletters and meetings, be sure to log onto:

OKC-Audubon.org

Bird of the Month

By John Shackford



Spotted Towhee

Although the Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*) and Eastern Towhee (*P. erythrophthalmus*) are closely related, they are currently classified as separate species. The debate about “splitting” these into two species or “lumping” them into one has an interesting history.

The American Ornithologists' Union (AOU), official arbiter of bird nomenclature, periodically puts out updated Checklist Editions that show name changes since the previous AOU Checklist Edition. From the AOU's 1st Edition (1886) through the 4th Ed. (1931) the Spotted Towhee was split as a separate species called the Arctic Towhee, while the Eastern Towhee was known simply as Towhee. By the 5th Ed. (1957) through the 6th Ed. (1983) the two towhees were lumped as a single species, the Rufous-sided Towhee. By the 7th Ed. (1998), the most recent, the towhees had been split once again into two species, the Spotted and Eastern Towhees.

In his “Oklahoma Birds” (Sutton 1967), Dr. Sutton made the following statement (in which I have substituted common names for Latin names): “...in my opinion there is no more justification for throwing the two [towhees] together than for throwing together Yellow-shafted and Red-shafted Flickers, Myrtle and Audubon's Warblers, Baltimore and Bullock's Orioles, Indigo and Lazuli Buntings, and possibly even Rose-breasted and Black-headed Grosbeaks because...each of the twelve forms ‘breeds true’ throughout a vast area.” Currently, only the Flickers (lumped as Northern Flicker) and Warblers (lumped as Yellow-rumped Warbler) are considered only one species. I believe I am accurately paraphrasing something Dr. Sutton once said about nomenclature and closely related populations: Just wait a while and things will change.

Males of both the Spotted and the Eastern Towhee have black backs, with at least some white spots on the back, considerably more of these white spots on

the back of the Spotted Towhee. The females of the two species differ because the back color of the female Spotted can be either black or gray, while that of the female Eastern is a chocolate brown; females of both species also have white spotting on the back similar to the respective males. Both species have rufous on the sides of the breast and white in the middle of the breast.

In central Oklahoma, the Spotted Towhee is our common towhee. A very few Spotted Towhees nest in the Black Mesa area of the Oklahoma Panhandle; their song is a “harsh buzzy trill” (Kaufman Field Guide 2000). A few Eastern Towhees nest in northeastern Oklahoma; their song is “drink your teeeeeee.” But both species are primarily migrants and winter residents in Oklahoma. On our Oklahoma City Christmas



Bird Count there are usually about 50 Spotted Towhees reported for each Eastern Towhee. In central Oklahoma the Spotted may actually be a little less common than 50 to 1, because the Spotted is the “default” towhee when a bird is not checked carefully. Not long ago my wife

Melissa noticed an Eastern Towhee eating birdseed in our yard. During the snowstorm a few days later, we had both a Spotted and the Eastern Towhee feeding in the yard, quite a treat.

An Addendum to last month's Bird of the Month, Ring-billed Gull. Although this gull spends time at trash dumps, including mall parking lots, I do not consider it a “trash” bird in the way I do the Starling and House Sparrow. One difference is that of the three species, only the Ring-bill is a native species; they have expanded opportunistically within their historic range, but not as an invader of new territory. Furthermore, they do not have a strong negative impact on other species as do the Starling and House Sparrow.

In Other Words

by Larry Mays

Eastern Red Cedar

In just a few weeks, maybe sooner, according to my friend at the gym who was already wheezing last week, a whole lot of people are going to develop the watery-eyed, runny-nosed, sneezing, wheezing (sound like an ad for an over-the-counter antihistamine?) symptoms of allergic reaction to the pollen of a tree that has become a very familiar member of our floral landscape. Called simply "cedar" by many, if not most of us, the eastern red cedar is actually a juniper. Junipers form a group of about a dozen or so species of medium sized trees which belong to the Gymnosperms, or "naked seeded" plants, but let's not get too deeply into taxonomy, if you don't mind.

Three species of junipers occur in Oklahoma, and formerly were confined mostly to broken, canyon riddled countryside. The One-seed Juniper is found only in the western portions of Cimarron county where it grows along the rocky slopes of the canyons cut by the Cimarron River and its tributaries. Another juniper, the Mexican Cedar, is found in the Arbuckle and Wichita ranges in southern Oklahoma.

The star of this show, though, will be the Eastern Red Cedar. The words "formerly" and "confined" hint at something interesting. Why "formerly" and how "confined"?

Junipers, like most of their relatives in the group, produce an interesting sap. I'm not sure of the evolutionary benefits of such a sap—a quick Google tells me it may work somewhat like antifreeze, allowing this

group of trees to withstand colder temperatures, and perhaps act as a deterrent to critters which might want to utilize these plants as food; nevertheless, the really interesting property of this stuff is its flammability. Which brings us back, once again to "formerly" and "confined."

Prior to the settlement of much of our state, and nation, fire was an ecological fact of nature. Plants evolved many strategies for coping with fire. Grasses may have evolved in such a way that they can sacrifice their grassy tops to fire while keeping their living, growing parts safely underground (useful, if you want to clear the area for more grass and fewer trees). Lots of trees have thickened bark that can tolerate at least fires of relatively low intensity. Junipers, when exposed to fire, simply go "foomph," lite up like a napalm bomb, and die. Thus they have chosen to grow in places where fires don't generally propagate well. When we started suppressing fires, that pretty much opened the door, and put out a welcome sign for this little tree. In my 60 years I have seen it propagate from just a few scattered trees to very nearly the most common tree in the state.

Red cedars are the subjects of paeans and profanity. In this part of the country, where evergreens tend to be scarce anyway, they are often utilized as landscape trees. On my own property I use them as screens and shelter belts, and some of their close cousins as foundation plants. They can look their loveliest with a nice frosting of snow. No one can deny their value to winter hungry birds. During this last period of snow and ice, the cedars around my house swarmed with hungry American Robins, Cedar Waxwings and at least a few Yellow-rumped Warblers. Their droppings were everywhere—each, not incidentally, containing a juniper seed or two. Junipers, like poison ivy, of which I've spoken previously, utilize birds as a means of seed dispersal. Birds also rely on cedars as shelter, roosting in them at night and diving into them for protection from marauding hawks and other predators. Quite a number of birds nest in the trees as well.

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Eastern Red Cedar



One-seed Juniper

In Other Words (cont.)

Undoubtedly, had the red cedar remained in its restricted range and not jumped at the opportunity to proliferate once wildfires were so thoroughly suppressed, we would have little negative to say about it. Unfortunately this is not the case. The trees have proven themselves an ongoing disaster in the grassland environment. A single tree can shade out a considerable area of grass, and nothing can grow under their dense shade. Multiply that shaded area by thousands and thousands and one can readily see what can happen to a grassland ecosystem. It may well be that many grassland birds owe their shrinking numbers to the inverse proliferation of red cedar. Interestingly, predatory birds tend to use trees in the landscape as points from which to survey for potential prey, and grassland birds may well have evolved an aversion to tall structures in the habitat as a means of avoiding predation. A recent topic of conversation on the OKBirds Listserv has been about the enormous decline in Bobwhite Quail population, and I wonder just how much blame might be placed on the boughs of red cedars.

Another problem with the tree due directly to its flammability is its role as a "fire ladder". Many red cedars start their lives beneath deciduous trees having been "planted" there by birds perched in the branches above. Once the tree has grown up into the crown of the sheltering tree, any fire that occurs will be able to reach the crown of the both trees by flaming upwards through the readily burning cedar, killing both in the process. This is a good reason as well for not planting these trees too near our homes.

Next time you're out in the field, be aware of the red cedar, and consider what the countryside would be like if it had stayed where it belonged. Nothing to sneeze at, if you know what I mean.



Cookie Patrol

Refreshments for the January meeting will be provided by: Carol Enwall, Pat Garrison and Fay Carver

President's Perspective (cont.)

With our nation's huge current account deficits, the pressure to produce foodstuffs for export is enormous. The existing system of national and state parks and refuges could wind up being a set of islands containing the only remnants of nature left in the country.

Birds and nature are more locally accessible in Europe than in the US. According to a few Europeans I've talked to, the demographic is different too, with more birders in the prime of life. For hundreds of years before motorized transportation, people traveled by foot or horse along an ancient network of trails that linked small communities and places of business. Public access to those trails is protected today by laws governing pedestrian rights of way (see Wikipedia articles on "Rights of Way in Scotland" and "Rights of Way in England and Wales"). The Scandinavian countries of Northern Europe go even farther. Their laws protect the Right To Roam freely over the countryside and to camp almost anywhere for limited periods of time (see Wikipedia article on "Right To Roam").

If a comprehensive network of trails were to be created around the Oklahoma City area, it seems like the natural place to start would be the banks of water courses. These are usually tree-lined habitats suitable for birds and many other kinds of wildlife. The City of Tulsa has a trail system with plans for extensive expansion, <http://www.incog.org/transportation/trails/trailsmap.pdf>. The City of Wichita, Kansas has established bicycle trails all over the city, <http://www.wichitagov.org/CityOffices/Park/Bicycling/>. Similar trail projects have been started in Oklahoma City, but coverage is still sparse, <http://www.okc.gov/trails/>. It is likely that planning ahead to lead and guide development will be more effective than efforts to reinsert natural environments in previously developed areas.

Perhaps the ability of our society to produce young birders is a litmus test of our ability to have and protect nature. If nature and human society can't be integrated so that nature is preserved as a reasonably continuous entity, then there will be very little access to birds where we need it most -- near our young people.

Pay Your Dues Online

If you haven't visited the OCAS website lately, be sure to drop by: <http://www.okc-audubon.org>. We've added several new features including online membership, which means **you can renew your membership online!** No excuse for not getting your renewal taken

2009 Christmas Bird Count

by John Shackford

The 2009 Oklahoma City Christmas Bird Count turned out very well, with 113 species reported, one of our higher totals. Although we had about the same number of observers (57) as last year, we were down from last year's all-time high of 125 species. Full lakes and cold weather before the count (I'm guessing) resulted in our missing some usual species. It speaks to the quality of our observers that these misses were grouped in such a way as to suggest the cause was high lakes and early cold weather affecting some less hearty species. I look forward to comparing results from other Oklahoma CBCs to see if the general trend of fewer species this year was widespread within the state.

Some of the highlights of the count were a Black Scoter, found by John Sterling at Lake Overholser and photographed beautifully by Terri Underhill from as close as about 30 feet; this bird was a real treat for several of us when it swam in very close to the shore—and us. Alton Higgins saw 9 Sandhill Cranes fly over Twin Lakes about noon, a great find. Jimmy Woodard and his crew came up very strong with 3 Western Grebes on Hefner and a Pileated Woodpecker at Stinchcomb Refuge. The Webb party was the only one to find a Hermit Thrush and an Eastern Towhee. The Muzny party had an excellent find in a Rough-legged Hawk. Three adult Bald Eagles were found, two by the Holbrook party and one by the Kuhnert party; the Kuhnert party also found an Eared Grebe, another excellent find. The Bates party found a very difficult species get a good look at, the Le-Conte's Sparrow. A Loggerhead Shrike was found by the Shackford party—shrikes have virtually disappeared from our count area.

Other highlights included 29 Black-crowned Night-Heron, most of which were found in the early morning below Overholser dam by Warren Harden, not the place where we usually find them in similar (large) numbers—at Twin Lakes. Some interesting high numbers were a total of 180 Yellow-rumped Warblers, 17 Lincoln's Sparrows and 12 Purple Finches.

Many thanks to all who participated. We especially thank Diane Newell, her sister Donna, and friend Sally for hosting the tally party at the Newell home, and thanks to all who brought food for the party. Pat Velte did most of the data entry—thanks Pat for a (tedious) job well done!

View the complete results on page 9.

Oklahoma City Audubon Society

Minutes of January 25, 2010

President Bill Diffin called the meeting to order. He asked for a motion to approve the December minutes as published in the newsletter. A motion was made and approved.

Nancy Vicars presented the Treasurer's report:

Cash on hand 12/21/2009	\$5,482.52
Deposits	216.54
Disbursements	129.86
Cash on hand 1/25/2010	\$5,569.20

A motion was made to accept the report and approved.

New Business:

Nancy Vicars passed around the sign-up sheet for volunteers to bring refreshments to the meetings. Nancy introduced Nadine Varner, an OOS representative visiting tonight's meeting. Nadine has the 2009 *Date Guide to the Occurrences of Birds in Oklahoma* and *Birds of Oklahoma Checklist* which are available for purchase.

Dr. Pat Garrison presented a Pentax 16x50 binocular to be given to anyone who would like it.

Old Business:

Nealand Hill announced he has six caps left to sell for \$15 each.

The 2010 calendars are now selling for the low price of \$2.50. Contact Nancy Vicars if you would like to purchase a calendar or visit our website www.okc-audubon.org

Field Trips:

— Jimmy Woodard stated the February field trip will be led by Eric Enwall on Saturday, February 20, in Norman. Any changes or updates to this field trip will be posted on the web site.

— Jimmy will be leading an impromptu field trip to the Black Mesa February 19-21.

— A trip to Pat Murphy Park, led by Jerry Vanbebber, will be changed to April 10.

— On May 1, Matt Jung will be leading a trip to Stinchcomb.

— All changes to field trips will be posted by Pat Velte on the web site. Also, Pat has posted extended trips on the web site.

A break for refreshments was followed by Warren Harden announcing Bill Voelker as the February speaker. He will be speaking on Eagles.

Warren introduced Ted Goulden as the speaker for the evening. Ted presented a history of bird banding. Next he presented a wonderful and exciting demonstration of netting and banding birds.

Nancy Reed, Recording Secretary

Tuesday Morning Birders



Tuesday Morning Birders trip leader, Bill Diffin

Arnett CBC, 1/4 -- Lynn Barber from Ft. Worth, Doug Eide and Bill Diffin formed one of two teams on the Arnett CBC. We started with a loop around EW 61 and EW 62 from US 283 to three miles east. A flock of thousands of Red-winged and Brewer's Blackbirds was around the loop along with American Crows, Horned Larks, two Northern Harriers and Meadowlarks.

A little east of the loop, a local rancher showed us a field of bunch grass and sage brush where we flushed a Lesser Prairie Chicken. Twelve Mountain Bluebirds were in a small group of cedars on the loop.

Going south along 283 to the edge of the circle we saw two Ferruginous Hawks, a Great Horned Owl and a number of Red-tailed Hawks.

Along EW 68 Rd, a juvenile Northern Shrike was in a tree near Mosquito Creek. The Virginia Rails responded to the count leader's recorded calls. Heading for 283 on EW 68, a third flock of Mountain Bluebirds (6) was spotted in shrubs along the road. 35 species.

Wichita Mountains, 1/16 -- Jim Bates and Bill Diffin provided bird ID services to the Sierra Club, OKC Chapter on a trip to the Wichita Mountains. All the birding was done around a little lake in the restricted access area north of the main road. A peak east of the lake had two and then three eagles soaring over it. The slope to our left had several scattered elk and some deer. A herd of buffalo crossed ahead. Where the road veered north we stopped to look at the eagles. The six eagles stayed above the peak, soaring on outstretched wings at various levels. Two of them came close together, occasionally swerving and dodging but keeping in contact.

Lakes Overholser and Hefner, 1/19 -- Dana and Bob Holbrook, Doug Eide, Charles Douglas and Bill Diffin started at Overholser dam west parking lot. A Belted Kingfisher at the downstream overlook was the first bird of the day. Dana Holbrook spotted a Lesser Black-backed Gull on the ice at the east end of the dam. The Herring and RB Gulls on the ice were a study in plumages. Back at the west end of the dam, the Holbrooks found a pair of Long-tailed Ducks. In

the southwest corner of the lake, gulls stood on an ice shelf -- RB Gulls, Herring Gulls and the Lesser Black-backed Gull.

As the fog cleared, hundreds of Red-breasted Mergansers and Common Mergansers became visible in a raft stretching from the fishing pier to near the east end of the dam. There were a few Am. White Pelicans and a raft of DC Cormorants with the mergansers.

Lake Hefner had the same common birds as Overholser. Pied-billed Grebes were thinly scattered all along the dam. Around the new Pat Murphy Park parking lot were Red-shouldered Hawk, Northern Cardinal, and Red-bellied Woodpecker. 22 species total.

Sooner Lake, 1/26 -- Bob and Dana Holbrook, Charles Douglas, Doug Eide and Bill Diffin birded the Sooner Lake area. Approaching the 412 turnpike on I-35, we were amazed by huge lines and vees of geese flying south, mostly Canada Geese with scattered Snow Geese but with one entire formation of Snow Geese. At the SW lake access point there were three Common Loons in the cove around the boat ramp. The first of the day's many Northern Harriers was coursing over the grassland.

We stopped at the bridge over the eagle-cam cove and looked hard for Surf Scoters but no luck. A Prairie Falcon glided over. Two adult Bald Eagles were perched over the eagle-cam nest.

The lake access point on E 0400 had a wide variety of birds. At least five Red-tailed Hawks were flying over the island or perched in its dense tree cover. A Bald Eagle was soaring over the lake, and a large cloud of Snow Geese flew across the sky far to the north.

While walking along the outfall creek and riparian woods we saw a juvenile Bald Eagle and a Red-tailed Hawk soaring close to each other when the hawk hit the eagle with its feet a couple of times. The eagle only flinched a little. A Pileated Woodpecker called from the woods near the NS road. We drove south 100 yards without seeing it. As we returned two Pileated WP flew out of the trees to the woods below the dam. One landed on the side of a gnarled black limb. A little farther north, a Loggerhead Shrike was perched on an isolated small tree.

We had some unbelievable luck on the way home. Heading west on 412 about 4 miles from the 177 toll gate, a raptor with a white tail flew north over the road. It circled west showing us wings the black markings of White-tailed Kite. 40 species total.

Recorders Report: January 2010

A Cold Wet Month

A new year, a new bird list, and a new weather pattern start the year 2010. In spite of a few days in the 60°F the monthly summary is recorded as a cold and wet month with a precipitation total of 2.77 inches. Quite a few days were rough on both wildlife and humans.

On New Year's Day in Edmond Terri Underhill woke up to a Great Horned Owl, and David McNeely started with a juvenile Red-tailed Hawk sitting on the feeder. In Norman Jennifer Kidney had 3 Pine Siskins, a female Purple Finch, and Merlin. On the 2nd she saw a greenish flash in the Photinia bush next to her back stoop when out hopped a lovely Or-



Immature Trumpeter Swan

Swans (1 immature and 7 adults) were located in the main pond of the Summit Lake Addition off Alameda Drive just east of 24th Street East. In Oklahoma City Jimmy Woodward and Max Fuller spend a wonderful day out birding. At Lake Overholser they found an immature Bald Eagle and two winter adult **Glaucous Gulls**, at Twin Lakes a pair of Wood Ducks, and at Terri Underhill's house in Edmond a **Rufous Hummingbird**, Purple Finch, Hermit Thrush, Hairy Woodpecker, and Brown Thrasher. In Edmond Dora Webb saw a juvenile Cooper's Hawk zoom right over her bird feeders. A little while later it zoomed back over the feeders immediately followed by two Red-tailed Hawks in hot pursuit. She could see them going after it like Kamikaze pilots as they chased it off to the north.

On the 6th the temperatures began dropping and went clear down to 5°F during the night of the 8th and 9th. It was so cold and windy during this time that several schools closed to protect students from frostbite indicating a tough time for wild creatures. Small ponds froze. On the 10th at Lake Hefner Angie, Amelie and Ben Holt found a mixed flock of about 500 Canada, Cackling, Greater White-fronted, Snow and Ross' Geese. Brian Davis joined them and located the **Lesser Black-backed Gull** and 4 Common Loons. They

returned to Norman and kicked the fields north of the Embassy Suites to find a Loggerhead Shrike, LeConte's Sparrow, Smith Longspur and six Northern Harriers.

On the 12th Brian Davis found another very large group of various geese species on the frozen water treatment lagoons on the north side of El Reno. On the 14th at Lake Hefner Bill Diffin found American White Pelicans, a first winter Glaucous Gull and a pale 2nd winter type **Thayer's Gull**. On the 15th Mark Cromwell found Mountain Bluebirds in the Freedom area.

On the 19th the weather warmed to 63°F and the next day over an inch of rain fell. On the 23rd at the southwest end of the Lake Hefner dam, Bill Diffin confirmed a report from Doug Eide of a **Western Grebe**. On the 24th at Fort Reno Ben and Angie Holt found a Barn Owl, Winter Wren, a lone Greater Yellowlegs and two **Ferruginous Hawks**. Later another Ferruginous Hawk was found in the Purina Field in Edmond. On the 24th along South Jenkins in Norman Jennifer Kidney found a Brown Creeper, and on various dates Dick Gunn found his first Purple Finch, a Marsh Wren and Common Yellowthroat. On the 25th Matt Jung found a Greater Yellowlegs, Wilson's Snipe, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. In Edmond this was the last day Terri saw the Rufous Hummingbird.

On the 27th the temperature warmed up to 64°F, keeping the ground warm, but the next day schools closed in anticipation of the arriving storm. On the 29th Jimmy Woodward reports that there is about an inch to two inches of ice and sleet on the ground in west Mustang. He then went to Lake Overholser but it began snowing heavily and he returned by 12:30 to find around 500 blackbirds at his feeders.



Mountain Bluebird

On the 30th Jimmy and Max found a flock of **Mountain Bluebirds** approximately five miles southwest of Calumet and a third year Lesser Black-backed Gull at Lake El Reno. Over the weekend at South Jenkins Dick Gunn found a Least Sandpiper and Swamp Sparrow.

During January 121 bird species were reported making the Central Oklahoma area to date total 121 species. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds by turning in reports. I can be contacted by email at emkok@earthlink.net. Esther M. Key, Editor.

Oklahoma City 2009 Christmas Bird Count

Species Total Birds

Greater White-fronted Goose	6
Snow Goose	4
Cackling Goose	79
Canada Goose	2715
Wood Duck	15
Gadwall.....	220
American Wigeon	59
Mallard	694
Northern Shoveler	429
Northern Pintail.....	40
Green-winged Teal	12
Canvasback.....	65
Redhead	10
Ring-necked Duck	61
Lesser Scaup.....	292
scaup sp.	14
Black Scoter	1
Bufflehead	68
Common Goldeneye.....	1228
Hooded Merganser.....	171
Common Merganser.....	855
Red-breasted Merganser.....	27
Ruddy Duck	95
Northern Bobwhite.....	3
Common Loon	12
Pied-billed Grebe.....	41
Horned Grebe	22
Eared Grebe	1
Western Grebe	3
American White Pelican	29
Double-crested Cormorant	519
Black-crowned Night-Heron.....	29
Great Blue Heron.....	147
Bald Eagle (adult)	3
Northern Harrier.....	13
Sharp-shinned Hawk	9
Cooper's Hawk	3
medium-small Accipiter sp.....	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	10
Red-tailed Hawk	104
Krider's (Red-tailed) Hawk.....	1
Rough-legged Hawk	1
American Kestrel	40
Merlin	2
Prairie Falcon	1
small falcon sp.	1
American Coot.....	140
Sandhill Crane	9
Killdeer.....	6

Greater Yellowlegs	3
Least Sandpiper	2
Wilson's Snipe	3
Bonaparte's Gull	255
Ring-billed Gull	10936
Herring Gull	64
gull sp.	1
Rock Pigeon	2241
Eurasian Collared-Dove	710
White-winged Dove	5
Mourning Dove	204
Eastern Screech-Owl	count wk
Great Horned Owl	8
Barred Owl	6
large owl sp.	2
Belted Kingfisher	19
Red-bellied Woodpecker	44
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	8
Downy Woodpecker	63
Northern Flicker.....	117
Yellow-shafted Flicker	3
Pileated Woodpecker	1
Eastern Phoebe.....	6
Loggerhead Shrike	1
Blue Jay.....	189
American Crow	390
Horned Lark.....	307
Carolina Chickadee	178
Tufted Titmouse	40
White-breasted Nuthatch.....	1
Brown Creeper	3
Carolina Wren	63
Bewick's Wren	8
Winter Wren	1
Marsh Wren.....	11
wren sp.	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet.....	5
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	18
Eastern Bluebird	63
American Robin.....	2711
Hermit Thrush.....	1
Northern Mockingbird.....	136
European Starling.....	4896
American Pipit	1
Cedar Waxwing	186
Yellow-rumped Warbler.....	180
Spotted Towhee	59
Eastern Towhee	1
American Tree Sparrow	17
Field Sparrow	9
Savannah Sparrow.....	16
LeConte's Sparrow.....	1
Fox Sparrow	38
Song Sparrow.....	175

Lincoln's Sparrow	17
Swamp Sparrow	9
White-throated Sparrow	35
Harris's Sparrow.....	301
White-crowned Sparrow	80
Dark-eyed Junco	894
Slate-colored Junco	2
Oregon Junco.....	2
Lapland Longspur.....	115
Smith's Longspur.....	2
Northern Cardinal.....	393
Red-winged Blackbird	4612
Eastern Meadowlark	3
Western Meadowlark	1
meadowlark sp.	300
Common Grackle	420
Great-tailed Grackle	325
Brown-headed Cowbird.....	18
Purple Finch	12
House Finch	114
American Goldfinch	412
House Sparrow.....	469

Total species 113

Total birds..... 41253

Additional species count week

Eastern Screech-Owl ,

Additional subsp. Or forms,

Krider's (Red-tailed) Hawk

Oregon Junco

Additional species [tame]

Mute Swan,

African Collared-Dove

Total Party Hours 132

--Party Hours (Foot) 79

--Party Hours (Car)..... 53.5

Total Party Miles..... 569

--Party Miles (Foot)..... 47.5

--Party Miles (Car) 521.5

Total (Party) Owling Hours..... 1

--Owling Hours (Foot)

--Owling Hours (Car) 1

Total (Party) Owling Miles

--Owling Miles (Foot)

--Owling Miles (car) 3

Total (Party) Feeder Hours 10

"Total Observers, FEEDER ONLY . 6

Total Observers..... 57

Total Parties 19

Oklahoma City Audubon Society
c/o Patricia Velte
1421 NW 102nd Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73114

Field Trips

February 19 – 21: Black Mesa

Jimmy Woodard is planning a trip to Black Mesa. Interested participants can contact Jimmy by email: j.woodard@cox.net or cell (405-365-5685).

February 20, 2010 – Birding locations in Norman

Meeting place: Saturday 8:15 a.m. at the southeast corner of the Lloyd Noble Arena parking lot. This is easily reached from State Highway 9 which passes along the south edge of Norman. From east or west, come to Jenkins avenue and turn north (toward the city of Norman.) Then go on about two blocks north until you reach a real street where you can turn west. You will see the parking lot easily at this intersection. Turn to the west for about 100 yards to enter the parking lot and come to the southeast corner. If birders want to carpool, this is a safe place to leave vehicles.

March 13, 2010 – County Birding (County TBD)

Meet at IHOP at I-40 and Mustang Road at 7AM for breakfast or at 8AM for departure. Leader: Jimmy Woodard. Date: March 13th (Sat). bring snacks and a lunch. We will be out most of the day.

April 10, 2010 – Pat Murphy Park & Lake Hefner

Jerry Vanbebber will lead a field trip to Pat Murphy Park (below the Lake Hefner dam) and Lake Hefner on April 10. Meet at the entrance to Pat Murphy Park (Meridian and Hefner Road) at 7:30 a.m. Please try to RSVP to photo1@sbcglobal.net at least a week ahead, so Jerry will know how many to expect.

May 1, 2010 – Stinchomb Wildlife Management Area

Matt Jung will lead a field trip through the Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge (north of Lake Overholser). Plan to meet at 8:00 a.m. at the east side entrance to the Area, on NW 50th Street. Please try to RSVP to mpjung5125@yahoo.com at least a week ahead, so Matt will know how many to expect.
