eBird.com

The speaker for our March 15 Oklahoma City Audubon program will be John Kennington, president of the Tulsa Audubon Society, who will provide an overview of the computerized eBird Online Checklist. Launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, eBird has revolutionized the way that the birding community reports and accesses information about birds. eBird is an easy yet powerful tool to manage your personal birding records. Your records are archived and protected, but the real power is that your records are combined with millions of other eBird observations providing a rich data source on bird abundance and distribution for researchers and the public.



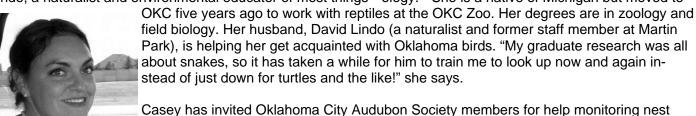
John moved to Oklahoma in 1982 and currently lives in Bixby. After growing up in New Jersey where he started birding as a teenager, he spent six years in Maine

for college and his first jobs and to see Puffins. Interestingly, with a degree in Wildlife Management John ended up as a computer programmer for Hewlett Packard/American Airlines, obviously qualifying him to speak about eBird. Having been a photographer all his life, John is now selling his work at art shows. Besides being president of the Tulsa Audubon Society, he is also chair of the Oklahoma Audubon Council and is on the OOS board. Together with Sharon, his wife for 31 years, they have two boys trying to finish college.

Come out for a soaring good evening and bring a friend. Our meetings are held September through June on the third Monday of each month. They begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Will Rogers Garden Center, I-44 and NW 36th Street. Visitors are always welcome.

Martin Park Nature Center

With the retirement last year of naturalist Neil Garrison, Martin Park Nature Center is now managed by Casey Lindo, a naturalist and environmental educator of most things "-ology." She is a native of Michigan but moved to



boxes at Martin Park She says there are 30 nest boxes on metal poles. The nest boxes are built to suit Eastern Bluebird, but they are placed in a variety of habitats within the park. The boxes are most commonly used by a Carolina Wren, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Chickadee or Eastern Bluebird. These boxes have been successful in the past as nesting real estate is extremely valuable at Martin Park Nature Center. Since the boxes

are so spread out the park could use 6 volunteers or 6 pair of volunteers to check the same boxes at least twice a week. It is important to check the boxes often in order to keep House Sparrow nests cleaned out of the boxes. "It is fun to check the boxes with a friend so one person can write down the data while the other person opens the box to check on the contents. It is lots of fun to watch the eggs hatch and hatchlings grow up," says Casey. Martin Park will provide the clip board, screwdriver and step stool for volunteers.

President's Perspective

By Bill Diffin

The subject of the program at our next monthly meeting, March 15th will be <u>eBird</u>, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's online birding database. John Kennington, the current president of the Tulsa



Audubon Society, will give the presentation. It was Jimmy Woodard's idea to have a program on eBird given by John. Jimmy has been using eBird since last Fall when he saw John's eBird presentation at the Oklahoma Ornithological Society Fall Meeting. On a personal level, I was very happy with Jimmy's suggestion. One of my primary birding goals for 2010 is to start using eBird. There are a variety of bird listing software packages available commercially, but they are rarely a topic of conversation at meetings. Looking over the members, it is easy to suspect that most have longer experience with birding than with use of personal computers. However, I do note the following:

- 1. Out of 109 family/memberships, only 20 have not provided e-mail addresses
- 2. Quite a few of our members make posts on the OKbirds listserv.
- 3. More of our members are OKbirds lurkers that enjoy the site without posting. I know this because I get praise for my posts from non-posters. Thanks by the way.
- 4. At least a few of our members use bird listing software like Avisys or Birdbase.

Therefore, it doesn't seem overly optimistic to say we are ripe for a membership-wide effort to join the modern age of bird record keeping. The eBird website has a nice sales pitch for use of the database which goes something like this:

Everyone of your bird records is a piece of a puzzle that shows the population and movements of birds, and eBird is the best way that you can help bird researchers assemble that puzzle.

I think many of our members keep records of their

bird sightings. Given the expertise of our membership, the records are likely to be very accurate and something the Cornell Lab should very much like to have as part of their database. And anyone thinking of investing effort in eBird need not worry about its long term relevance. The project has really taken hold. For example in Texas in 2009, the number of individual eBird checklists submitted was 41,111, which is more than 110 lists per day. In the most current month, California, Minnesota and New York actually led Texas in number of lists.

Those of us who subscribe to OKbirds have seen the weekly checklists produced with eBird for the Great Salt Plains and Red Slough. eBird also produces summaries at many different levels, e.g. week, month, or year and county, state, etc.

As new members join the club, we want to be able to share our birding experiences and resources available through software and the Internet. eBird is an important feature of that landscape. I look forward to sitting with you "in class" next Monday as we learn how to use this exciting new tool for birders and bird scientists. If a bunch of birders from Texas and California are using it, how tough can it be?

Oklahoma City Audubon Society

Officers 2010

President	Bill Diffin	722-3778
Vice President	John Shackford	340-5057
Secretary	Nancy Reed	799-1116
Treasurer	Nancy Vicars	732-9885
Parliament	Sam Moore	936-9440
Programs	Warren Harden	364-3491
Recorder	Esther M. Key	381-9170
Conservation	Larry Mays	392-2131
Field Trips	Jimmy Woodard	365-5685
Newsletter Editors:		
	Pat Velte	751-5263
	Carla Brueggen	495-3259
Publicity	Cheryl Allen	478-0339
Historian	Nealand Hill	388-6759
Refreshments	Jim Vicars	732-9885
Webmaster	Pat Velte	751-5263

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



The Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*) is told from the Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) by having a longer, heavier bill, and an extra two inches or so of overall length. Also, there is a subtle difference on the white outer tail feathers of the two species: the Hairy has no black bars,

while the Downy does, a distinction that can often be difficult to determine. These two are the only North American woodpeckers that have white down the middle of the back. If your ears are musically inclined, you probably won't have much trouble telling

the high-pitched "squeaktoy" note of the Hairy from the lower-pitched note of the Downy. But this difference can be somewhat difficult to sort out for less sensitive ears, especially if a call is not heard well or one is not that familiar with the notes of both species. And opportunities to hear this bird in this part of the country are not all that frequent: even though 57 birders participating on our Christmas Bird Count, we found no Hairy Woodpeckers.

Bent (A.C., 1964, Life Histories of North American Woodpeckers) has some interesting comments about the Hairy Woodpecker. As to how these woodpeckers locate tree-boring larvae, Bent quotes Dr. Thomas S. Roberts who says that "[a]II the special senses of birds are very highly developed and it seems probable that in this case [Hairy Woodpecker] hearing, touch, and smell all may play a part. The active grub, as it crunches the wood, makes a sound that would surely be audible to a bird with its keen sense of hearing. The tunnel produces a cavity which would give both a different sound and feeling on tapping

over it. Such things as grubs have a strong odor, and it is probable that this plays a part also."

Bent also relates an interesting story V. A. Alderson published in the "Oologist" in an 1890 article entitled "Hairy Woodpecker and potato bugs" (I believe these are the same as the Colorado potato beetles, adults of which are 2/5ths of an inch long, and 1890 was definitely before wholesale modern-day sprayings). Alderson talks of an infestation of "potato bugs [that] covered every patch of potatoes..." in Marithon County (his home county), Wisconsin, except for the field of one farmer. This farmer took pains to find out why he didn't have an infestation, and he observed a Hairy Woodpecker "making frequent visits to the potato field and going from there to a large pine stub a little distance away." After about six weeks, the farmer visited the pine stub, saw a large hole about fifteen feet up,

cut down the stub, split it open, and found "over two bushels of bugs.
All had their heads off and bodies intact."

Early ornithological literature (before field guides) would sometimes say that such-and-such a bird ate a lot of harmful insects and not very many that were beneficial. At times—it seemed to me—this was a somewhat strained defense of a particular species, but this was back in the day when birds were not protected by law, and such "kind" words about a species probably did change the behavior of some hunters. Now—I think we would all agree—the beauty and novelty of birds are reasons enough to protect

them, but to learn of a Hairy Woodpecker that gathered two bushels of potato bugs in six weeks is impressive. The same general principle, eating lots of bugs, no doubt extends to many other bird species as well. So maybe over a nesting season, a Purple Martin colony really does eat a gazillion mosquitoes!

Eagle Cam back in business

The Sutton Center's Eagle Cam at Sooner Lake is operational again. Be sure to visit the live images of the nest at: http://www.suttoncenter.org/eaglecam.html

Black Mesa

by Jimmy Woodard

Jerry Vanbebber, Max Fuller and I met up with Doug Eide on February 19 to begin our birding adventure to Black Mesa and Cimarron County.

We left El Reno and headed to Canton Lake. While there we found over 20 Bald Eagles, mostly adults, and tons of waterfowl. We also saw around 100 American White Pelicans. We heard a Marsh Wren but couldn't locate it.

A large group of about 200 goldfinch fed busily in the grass. At the cemetery, Jerry located a Red-breasted Nuthatch.

We headed on to meet up with Nadine Varner in Woodward. Nadine was finishing a week of bird surveys with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation at their new Cimarron bluff and Cimarron Hills Wildlife Management Areas. She got to see Lesser Prairie-Chickens three days in a row -- the lucky dog!

After lunch we headed to Optima. We searched several lines of cedars for owls but had no luck We did

find over 3,000 ducks on the lake. Most were Mallards, Northern Pintails and Greenwinged teal.

The roads of Texas and Cimarron counties produced several Rough-legged and Ferruginous Hawks as well as a close look at a Prairie Falcon. As the sun set, we ended the day with a beautiful adult Golden Eagle.



We found several changes taking place in Boise City. First, a new bypass road is being built around the town which has wiped out a couple of playas that normally held water and birds. Also the Shell / Lydia's restaurant and gas station was closed for remodeling because Love's bought then out to move into the larger building.

Saturday we started early but morning fog kept bird activity down. There were lots of geese and the sewage ponds plus Wood Ducks and Redheads.

The fog lifted a little at the state park. We saw several

flights of geese and four Bald Eagles. We saw a Roughlegged Hawk harassing an eagle. He was a brave hawk.

Camp Billy Joe produced Mountain Bluebirds, Bushtits, Scrub Jay and Townsend's Solitaire. A Curvebilled Thrasher was singing at a corral in Kenton.

On the road to Colorado, we lucked into finding a Western Screech-Owl perched

in the open at an old homestead.



We visited the Hoot Owl Ranch and paid the owners, George and Jerry Collins, a \$5 fee per person to bird their property. We were rewarded with Sage Thrasher, Brown Creeper and Spotted Towhee.

Clouds and mist closed in so we ended the day early. After dinner at Pizza Hut, we celebrated Nadine's lifers with ice cream at Braum's.

On Sunday, we awoke to snow and ice. The roads were slick and more was coming down so we left the mesa country early. We drove through snow most of the way through the Panhandle. We finished our trip with 86 species.

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 care of!



Cookie Patrol

Refreshments for the March meeting will be provided by: Feodora Steward, Garey Harritt & Matt Jung.

OKC AUDUBON SOCEITY Financial Report for 2009

Committee Reports:

No committee reports were made.

CASH ON HAND 12/31/2008

\$5,641.34

INCOME:

Membership dues	1,289.49
Checking Acct. interest	48.72
Calendar sales	465.44
Contributions	1,565.00
Pay Pal	.05

3,338.70

+3,338.70

8,980.04

EXPENSES:

Meeting room rent Newsletter (copies & postage) 100 – 2010 Promotion calendar 2008 Xmas count Memb. dues (Garden Council) Equipment (computer, etc) Bank charge	
Bank charge	2.00

3,280.98 - 3,280.98

CASH ON HAND 12/31/2009

\$5,699.06

Oklahoma City Audubon Society Minutes of February 15, 2010

President, Bill Diffin presided over the meeting after calling it to order. Bill asked if there were any visitors. Eric Beck was introduced as a guest. Along with our speaker, Bill Voelker and Troy, there were several support staff from Sia visiting tonight's meeting.

Bill asked for a motion to approve the February minutes as published in the newsletter. A motion was made and approved.

Nancy Vicars presented the **Treasurer's Report**:

Cash on Hand	01/25/2010	\$5,569.20
Deposits		309.92
Disbursements		115.74
Cash on Hand		\$5,763.38

A motion was made to accept as read and approved.

Field Trips:

Jimmy Woodard stated there is a field trip scheduled to the Black Mesa on Saturday, February 20 at 8:00 AM. Call Jimmy if you want to carpool.

Eric Enwall will lead a local field trip on Saturday, February 20, in the Norman area.

Beginning with the March field trip, Jimmy would like to start birding each county in the state. Kingfisher county is being considered as the first county to be scheduled.

In April, Jerry Vanbebber will be leading a field trip to Pat Murphy Park. Matt Jung will be leading a field trip to Stinchcomb Wildlife Management in May. Check the OKC Audubon web site for details on these and future field trips.

Jimmy stated he is considering a field trip to Cheyenne Bottoms in Kansas. This trip will be at the end of the summer.

Old Business:

Nealand Hill has 2 caps left to sale for \$15.00 each.

Nancy Vicars reported the 2010 calendars are selling for \$2.50 each. The OOS has the new 2009 Date Guide to the Occurrences of Birds in Oklahoma and Birds of Oklahoma Checklist available at tonight's meeting.

New Business:

Bill Diffin would like to see growth in our organization. He suggested one way is to invite Scout troops to our meetings. He asked for other suggestions from the members.

A break for refreshment was followed by Warren Harden announcing John Kennington as the March speaker. John will demonstrate the eBird program on the Internet.

Warren introduced speakers Bill Voelker and Troy. After an excellent insight into Sia, Bill and Troy presented two live eagles, a Hawk Eagle from Peru and a Martial Eagle from Kenya.

Nancy Reed, Recording Secretary

Tuesday Morning Birders



Tuesday Morning Birders trip leader, Bill Diffin

February 16 -- Norman Area

Bob and Dana Holbrook, Charles Douglas, Doug Eide and Bill Diffin started at South Jenkins. The small birds were staying hidden due to the cold wind and very bright sky. The best birds were a Red-shouldered Hawk, a male Belted Kingfisher, two Eastern Phoebes and several Song Sparrows. South Jenkins is always a great place to see colorful

Eastern Bluebirds. Other birds we listed were Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, Red-tailed Hawk, Wilson's Snipe, Ring-billed Gull, American Coot, Carolina Wren, Marsh Wren (calls), Eastern Meadowlark, American Crow and Yellow-rumped Warbler. Dick Gunn toured us around and doubled the number of birds we might have otherwise listed by guiding us to the latest hot spots.

At Summit Lake eight Trumpeter Swans were at the south end of the lake where the street ends.

We went to Nancy Reed's in hopes of seeing the Dark -eyed Junco with the red back. It had been coming up on her patio to a dish of seeds. Her latest photos showed a grayish pink bill indicating a Gray-headed type. The junco had been there just 40 minutes before we arrived around noon, but it didn't reappear while we were there.

At the Wes Watkins Reservoir we saw a mature Bald Eagle gliding low over the shore. A pair of fruiting cedars next to the Jeep were alive with Cedar Waxwings and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Total species count for the day was 38.

February 23 -- El Reno west to American Horse Lake

Charles Douglas and Bill Diffin started at Lake El Reno around 8:45 am. From the east side parking lot we could see Common and Red-breasted Mergansers cruising along the far shore in front of a thicket of young trees. Three formations of Snow Geese accompanied Canada Geese. Seven Greater White-fronted Geese were also spotted.

South of I-40 and east of Fort Reno Rd, the little pond had a flock of Common Goldeneye and a few Gadwall.

Back south near old Route 66, a juvenile Ferruginous Hawk was soaring, stopping every so often to hover. At the fort, around the west side buildings, one male and two female American Kestrels engaged in short courtship flights. On the ground, a male N. Harrier pulled fur off a rodent. As we left the fort we stopped to observe two adult Ferruginous Hawks soar and hover near the highway.

Several miles west of Fort Reno Rd on Darlington Rd, a Loggerhead Shrike made repeated forays to the ground from a barbed wire fence. At a homestead east of Karns Rd, six Mountain Bluebirds flew to perches in trees and a fence gate. On the east side of Chisholm Rd about two hundred yards south of Historic Route 66, we watched 50+ Mountain Bluebirds dispersed in a terraced field. The birds either hovered into the wind 4 to 6 feet above the ground, perched on scattered dead weed stalks, or hopped across the cropped pasture like Robins. Several miles west of 281 on EW 0940 Rd a Ferruginous Hawk soared and hovered to the north.

At American Horse Lake we flushed a Barred Owl and observed a Bufflehead and a Belted Kingfisher.

From E 0940 Rd we turned south on N 2540 Rd to reach the east side lake access. Just south of the turn, 50+ Mountain Bluebirds were dispersed in a terraced field with short vegetative cover. The ground and the behavior were pretty much identical to the observation east of Geary. South of the field, a Loggerhead Shrike hunted from utility wires and hay bales around a farmhouse. The road to the lake was closed with a locked gate and a no trespassing sign.

Going south on N 2540, the road jogs east a half mile at E 0960 and then turns back to the south at N 2545. At the turn south a flock of 30 Eastern Bluebirds flew across the road and settled in a weedy field. Many perched on stalks. West on E 0970 we found flocks of Harris's Sparrows and Northern Flickers (YS). In a shallow draw choked with low shrubs, a flock of 20 Field Sparrows stayed close together with only two to four members exposed at any one time.

Along our route between Fort Reno and American Horse Lake, the most constant presences were Redtailed Hawks, Northern Harriers, American Kestrels, Eastern Bluebirds, Meadowlarks, and American Crows. We saw 32 species during the day.

Bill Diffin

Recorders Report: February 2010

February Surprises

National records were set in February regarding both snow and wind. For the first time in the national weather records on February 12th snow fell in all 50 states. Also, it was the only month since 1950 when there were no reports of a tornado in any of the 50 states. In Oklahoma February started cold and wet but ended 'warm' and dry with the monthly precipitation total 0.91inches above average and temperatures **5.7°F** below normal.

In Norman on the 1st Dick Gunn commented that the January snow was still awfully pretty down on South Jenkins as he found Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's Snipe, Wood Duck, Lincoln's Sparrow, and the tracks of river otter, beaver, coyote, bobcat, skunk, cottontail, raccoon and white-tailed deer. At feeders Kim Wiar had at the same time White-winged, Eurasian Collared and Mourning Doves; while Matt Jung had an Orange-crowned Warbler along with over 300 blackbirds of various species.

On the 2nd in Norman at South Jenkins Dick added Bald Eagle, Barred Owl, and March Wren, and Matt had a Brown Creeper, Fox Sparrow, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. On the 3rd at Lake Hefner Bill Diffin found at least 20 Herring Gulls in and around a raft of Common and Red-breasted Mergansers and one **Glaucous Gull**. On the 4th John Manganiellow had a Ruby-crowned Kinglet at his feeder in Edmond. On the 6th along South Jenkins Matt and Cecil Johnson had a Hairy Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatches, and the 'white' Redtailed Hawk.

On the 6th at Lake Hefner Pat Velte photographed an immature **Yellow**billed Loon just north of Prairie Dog Point. On the 7th Jimmy Woodard and Jerry and Anita Vanbebber relo-



cated the loon and also found a **Western Grebe**. Both species were last reported in February on the 27th by Brian Davis. On the 7th at Lake Hefner Bill Adams and his mother found a couple of Hooded Mergansers and Horned Grebes. At Rose Lake, Mary and Steve Lane saw about 40 Northern Pintails. Over the weekend in her Norman backyard Nancy Reed had what is thought to be gray-headed Dark-eyed Junco.



On the 11th Max Fuller reports the **Lesser Black-backed Gull** is at Lake El Reno. On the 12th Pat Velte reports the 8 **Trumpeter Swans** were still on Summit Lake in Norman, and on the 16th Mark Cromwell found 4 Trumpeter Swans on a pond in Logan County north and west of Crescent. In Norman on the 16th Ben Holt had 121 Smith's Longspurs, and on the 19th Brian Davis reported the Merlin was flying over the ball fields south of Jackson Elementary. On the 20th Joe Grzybowski reports two adult **Thayer's gulls** and an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull at Lake Overholser.

On the 25th Bill Diffin and the Tuesday morning birders found several interesting species: Snow Geese and Greater White-fronted Geese were at Lake El Reno; **Ferruginous Hawks** and Western Meadowlark were in the Fort Reno area; and several flocks of **Mountain Bluebirds** were west of Fort Reno. **Turkey Vultures** were seen in Midwest City by Jim Jorgensen and over South Jenkins by Richard Gunn.

On the 26th Jim Bates saw **Short-eared Owls** in pastures near Fort Reno. On the 28th about 1 mile west of Norman on Indian Hills Road Joe Grzybowski spotted 3 **American Golden Plovers**, which is about 10 days before expected. Patti Muzny reported **American Woodcocks** were heard/observed calling just after sunset on their property in Byars. Where is spring? Is this the beginning?

During February 121 bird species were reported making the Central Oklahoma area to date total at **133** 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 Audubon Society c/o Patricia Velte 1421 NW 102nd Street Oklahoma City, OK 73114

Field Trips

March 13, 2010 - County Birding (Kingfisher County)

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.

April 10, 2010 — Prairie Dog Point Litter Clean Up

Join us for our annual spring clean up at Prairie Dog Point, sponsored by the City of Oklahoma City and Oklahoma City Beautiful and a part of the City's April Litter Blitz campaign. Gloves and trash bags will be provided; waterproof boots will come in handy. We'll meet at the paved parking lot on the north side of the Point at 11 a.m. You can join us after completing Jerry's field trip at the lake or stop by for an hour of litter pickup if that works best for you.

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.

September 3 - 6, 2010—Cheyenne Bottoms / Quivira NWR

Jimmy Woodard is planning an out-of-state trip to Cheyenne Bottoms/Quivira NWR near Great Bend, Kansas for Sept 3 -6th. Additional information will be posted in the newsletter and on the website.