



Oklahoma City Audubon Society

OKC-AUDUBON.ORG

April 2010

Bears in Oklahoma

Our speaker for the April 19 meeting of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society will be Jeremy Dixon, wildlife biologist at the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. His presentation is titled "The Strange But True History of Bears in Oklahoma."

For many years Jeremy was a biologist in Florida where he studied the interactions between black bears and humans. His master's research was on the Conservation Genetics of the Florida Black Bear. Jeremy moved to Lawton in 2009 to experience life out here in the middle of the continent. Our grass prairie and ancient granite mountains are a new living environment for him. However, the black bears are coming back across Oklahoma from the east presenting birders an experience with a new and large predator to which we are unaccustomed. With an education from Jeremy, hopefully we can learn how to watch the birds while not feeding the bears ourselves.

Come out for bear-hugging good time at bird club and bring a friend.



County Birding: Kingfisher

Jimmy Woodard

On March 11, the group of 7 birders entered Kingfisher County in the far southeast corner. We located several small lakes with waterfowl: Canada Geese, Gadwall, Mallard, Green-Winged Teal and Ruddy Duck. We also found an adult Bald Eagle, the first of two found during the trip. Driving the back roads, we observed Great Horned Owl, Phoebe, Kingfisher, and a bunch of sparrows – Harris, White Crowned, Song, Savannah, & Lincoln's.

We visited fields along the Cimarron River southeast of Dover. Carla Brueggen & her husband lease fields in this area. We walked across the river on an old metal frame bridge with wooden planks. We saw more ducks, including Shovelers, several Phoebes, and an immature Bald Eagle.

A pit stop was made in Dover and then it was on to bird Dover marsh. New duck species were found: Canvasback, Bufflehead, and Blue-wing Teal. We coaxed a swamp sparrow up for very brief looks. We tried for Rails and Bitterns, but no luck.

We took lunch in Hennesey then ventured to the northwest corner of the county. We checked several playas, but found no new species.

We stamped a few old homesteads and found a few woodland birds. We found Eastern bluebird, Flicker, Downey woodpecker, Mockingbird, Red-bellied woodpecker, Chickadee, Cedar waxwing, Goldfinch, and Tree Sparrow.

Later in the afternoon we visited Lake Elmer fishing area west of Kingfisher. The lake had been drained, but the muddy bottom held over 100 Killdeer, a few American Pipits, and several Greater Yellowlegs and Least Sandpipers.

A quick check of sewage ponds north of Okarche added Common Goldeneye to complete our daylist at 65 species. The beautiful weather made exploring some new areas enjoyable. We will visit other counties in the future.

President's Perspective

By Bill Diffin

Birders engage in a behavior that is an important topic of current research in both the fields of computer processing and brain science. Birders recognize objects, i.e. birds, in a minimum of time in often challenging settings. Computer capability to recognize objects, particularly faces, is of interest in criminal investigation, security, espionage and missing persons. In the field of brain science, it has long been hypothesized that the way we see the world, the way we process the scene around us, has strong connections to the way we reason about what is happening and the conclusions we draw. Many research results have been obtained which support the hypothesis. Most of us by now are familiar with the modern characterization of the right brain vs. the left brain. The right side of the brain handles tasks which require abstraction, creativity, synthesis, holistic thinking, parallel processing and inductive reasoning. The left side of the brain handles tasks which require detailed evaluation, piecemeal approaches, analysis, logic, serial processing, and deductive reasoning.

So what side of the brain do we use to id birds? The holistic, parallel processing approach, i.e. right-brained, has been referred to as jizz birding for years. No matter what we may think of the term, "jizz birding", it usefully identifies an approach that all birders use to some extent. It is the way we identify a Blue Jay, a Robin or a Cardinal -- the instant recognition we experience when we see medium sized birds that are crested and sky blue with black and white markings; or dull, dark brown with a russet breast; or some mixture of gray and red with a prominent crest and bright orange-pink, triangular bill. Note that because these birds are so readily identifiable, we may be unfamiliar with major details. I doubt if many birders know the exact pattern of black and white on a Blue Jay, or the molt sequence of male and female Northern Cardinals. In fact I have read that Cardinals were only recently discovered to have an unusual and complex molt sequence.

So what happens when we see a bird that doesn't instantly fit a distinctive and familiar pattern? We begin to look at specific parts of the bird. Areas of bright or contrasting colors will probably draw our attention first, and we begin to compile a list of impressions, i.e. field marks, which can be used to separate birds which are similar in memory. If it turns out we have never seen the bird before, the field marks can be used with a field guide to get an id. This is the left-brained approach, the analytical, piecemeal, serial processing method that lets us focus on the separate facts in an orderly and accurate way to get to the right answer.

Is there a best way to approach id'ing a bird? Should one try to be careful and resist instant recognition in favor of methodical attention to field marks? Or should

one strive to become thoroughly familiar with all the birds seen in Oklahoma, or even North America, so that any bird one encounters can be instantly recognized without conscious effort? It is unlikely that for any particular birder, use of one approach can be correct in all circumstances. Experience naturally figures into it. New birders must learn to use field marks to correctly identify the many unfamiliar birds they will encounter for several years. As experience accumulates, identification of common species becomes second nature. Yet it seems evident that experienced birders do emphasize one approach or the other based on a personal analytic or holistic tendency. Analytical thinkers, who are adept at perceiving and handling details, will always be good at accurately, if slowly, identifying new birds correctly. But if they can't at some point shift to a more holistic method, they may forever be stuck in the slow lane and miss id's on relatively easy birds for lack of adequate information. Holistic thinkers on the other hand may have great difficulty identifying unfamiliar birds correctly at first. They will gloss over important details and lump new birds into familiar categories, Tufted Titmice may be id'd as Cardinals, or Nashville and Tennessee Warblers may be id'd as Orange-crowned Warblers. Or they will carefully note field marks, but because a methodical analysis is unnatural for them, they will jump to the wrong conclusion, e.g. a green bird with bright white and black wing bars is a White-eyed Vireo (and not a Ruby-crowned Kinglet) even if seen in February, or a dark flycatcher persistently singing on a low branch over water is an Eastern Wood Pewee (and not an Eastern Phoebe). But these early difficulties may mask an underlying strength at perceiving all the important information and drawing a conclusion very quickly, talents which will make the holistic birder extremely capable once the initial errors are corrected and out of the way. I think good experienced birders know without thinking when to switch from one approach to the other as appropriate to their abilities and the situation at hand.

The tendency to view the world through an analytic or holistic process is not altogether an inborn trait. Research indicates that cultural norms and values can bias an individual toward one approach. The analytical way of viewing the world originated in ancient Greece and is the underpinning of Western culture. Objects are perceived as separate entities that behave according to their particular properties. People are motivated internally and act according to free will. This view naturally focuses attention on the special characteristics of the individual. The holistic way of viewing the world originated in ancient China and emphasizes interrelationships and the many and disparate influences that surroundings have on behavior of people and objects. In the holistic view, it is the overall system that determines behavior, therefore the overall system is the focus of attention and not individual objects or people within it.

So the next time you miss an easy id, or get a tough one right, you can ponder how your upbringing and education combined with your basic left or right-brained tendency to determine the recognition process. Or if you figure out a new angle on how to identify birds and other objects quickly and correctly, you should patent it. It might make you rich.

Bird of the Month

By John Shackford



In its online write-up about the Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*), Cornell University states: "The Purple Finch is the bird that Roger Tory Peterson famously described as a 'sparrow dipped in raspberry juice.'" To me there is always something very satisfying about seeing Purple Finches, and Peterson's phrase catches much that is appealing

about this beautiful bird. To clarify, it is the male Purple Finch that has the beautiful raspberry juice—or wine—

color that goes over the head and "drips" downward over much of its body. This raspberry color is different from the red of the similar male House Finch—and this difference in color is rather easily distinguished if you get an adequate look with binoculars. The male Purple Finch is most similar in color to the Cassin's Finch, but Purple Finch males have a more uniform raspberry wash than the Cassin's Finch. Also, the Cassin's Finch does not normally range into central Oklahoma (travel to the Black Mesa area in wintertime to have the best chance to see a Cassin's Finch).

The female Purple Finch also has its own "character"—a strong white stripe behind the eye that (boldly) says "female Purple Finch," rather than the nondescript face pattern of the female House Finch. Both the male and female Purple Finch have strong brownish-black and white streaking on the body; immature males and older females have a faint wash of "raspberry," but not nearly so much color as an adult male. Often helpful too is that both a male and a female Purple Finch are seen together, at least in my experi-



ence.

The Purple Finch nests over much of southern Canada and into the northern U.S., and it is the state bird of New Hampshire. It lays from 3-6 eggs, usually 4 or 5, and most often nests in coniferous trees, the nest usually being about 15-20 feet high.

In Oklahoma City we are on the western edge of the winter range of the Purple Finch; it shows up here erratically and most years we see very few or none. Then we have a year when they are decidedly more common, although seldom would you say abundant. This past winter has been a "boom" year; we have seen at least 9 at our yard feeders, a considerable jump over the usual zero. Many other people are also reporting them across Oklahoma this winter/spring (2009-10). Because of this influx, humor me for a moment while I suggest that—for this particular winter—we informally adopt the

Purple Finch as the State Wintering Bird of Oklahoma! Most of these finches leave some time during April, according to Woods and Schnell (Distribution of Oklahoma Birds, 1984), so watch your feeders for an ending date.

The Latin name of the Purple Finch—*Carpodacus purpureus*—means purple (*purpureus*) fruit biter (*Carpodacus*). On the breeding ground its diet is reported in Bent (1968, Life Histories of North American Cardinals, Grosbeaks, Buntings, Towhees, Finches, Sparrows, and Allies, part 1) to include strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and cherries, both tame and wild; other things it is reported to eat at some time of year include fruit tree blossoms and insects. In

winter, its diet is reported to be mainly seeds, and like a lot of small birds, they seem to particularly enjoy black sunflower seeds. In late winter and spring it will also eat the buds of a number of tree species. I suspect the developing pollen and young seeds in these buds provide a lot of nutrition for comparatively little effort for his small finch that weighs only ¾-1 ounce (a 1-ounce letter is about 4 sheets of paper and an envelope—not very much weight).

New Sutton Eagle Cam e address:
http://www.suttoncenter.org/pages/live_eagle_camera

See a live feed of a Barn Owl nest
<http://www.ustream.tv/theowlbox>



Cookie providers for
April will be Nealand Hill,
Jana Mott & Max Fuller

Oklahoma City Audubon Society

Minutes of March 15, 2010

President Bill Diffin presided over the meeting after calling it to order. Bill asked if there were any visitors. Rich Taylor, Mary Lane and Steve Davis were welcomed visitors and were invited to sign the guest book.

Bill called for any changes to the February minutes as published in the newspaper. A motion to accept the minutes was made and approved.

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

CASH ON HAND 2/15/2010	\$5,763.38
DEPOSITS	97.54
DISBURSEMENTS	140.12
CASH ON HAND 3/15/2010	\$5,720.80

A motion was made to accept as read and approved.

Committee Reports:

No committee reports were presented.

Field Trips:

Jimmy Woodard reported on the success of the Kingfisher Field Trip. The group of seven observed 65 species on the 180 mile drive. Jimmy advised there will definitely be future county birding.

On April 10, Jerry Vanbebber will lead a group to Pat Murphy Park and Lake Hefner. The first half of the day will be birding. At 11:00 AM, Pat Velte will lead volunteers on the annual spring clean up day of Prairie Dog Point.

Matt Jung will lead a field trip to Stinchcomb Wildlife Management on May 1.

Jimmy stated it would be helpful to field trip leaders to receive notification from each person that will be participating in a field trip. Please notify the field trip leader prior to the day of the field trip.

A trip to Cheyenne Bottoms located near Great Bend, Kansas is scheduled for Labor Day weekend. Please contact Jimmy as soon as possible if you are attending this field trip.

Old Business:

Nancy Vicars reported the 2010 calendars are selling for \$2.50 each. The *OOS 2009 Date Guide to the Occurrences of Birds in Oklahoma* and "Birds of Oklahoma Checklist" are available at this meeting.

Nancy stated she was passing around the cookie sign up list for volunteers to bring refreshments to the monthly meetings.

Nealand Hill will be ordering more caps. The caps are \$15.00 each. Notify Nealand if you would like to order a cap.

Nealand has copies of Mark Howery's information on Oklahoma Hummingbirds and a list of beneficial flow-

ers for hummingbirds. The report is available, free of charge, to all attending tonight's meeting.

CONTEST- First of the Season Hummingbird and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher contest. Nealand advised to report your first sighting of the Hummingbird and the first sighting of the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher to OK BIRDS Listserv with the date and time. These sightings must be observed in Oklahoma County or a county surrounding and touching Oklahoma County. There will be a prize for the first sighting in each category.

New Business:

John Bates presented a discussion concerning the importance of developing birding within a city. John Kennington stated that it is the goal of the IBA to get to the State level. The State level would identify local birding areas. IBA started with International significance, then moved to National significance and will move to State significance.

Bill Diffin stated the Martin Nature Center has 30 nest boxes which need to be monitored twice a week. Volunteers would be appreciated to support this project.

Terri Underhill made a variety of bumper stickers for display. Each one cost \$3.00 to make. She would like to sell these for \$5.00, giving the profit to the OKC Audubon Society. Contact Terri if you would like to order a bumper sticker. Bill suggested taking a picture of the bumper sticker and place it on the Internet to present to all members.

John Shackford stated the cost of each individual participating in the CBC is \$5.00 per person. He prepaid this fee for a total of \$285.00. If the members are willing, he would appreciate reimbursement. Bill asked for a motion to reimburse John for the amount of \$285. A motion and second was made. No opposition was made. Motion approved.

A break for refreshments was followed by Warren Harden announcing Jeremy Dixon, Wildlife Biologist at the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge, as the April speaker. Jeremy will present, *The Strange But True History of Bears in Oklahoma*. Bring a friend to learn about encountering bears in Oklahoma.

John Kennington gave a great interactive presentation on the computerized eBird Online Checklist.

Nancy Reed, Recording Secretary

Dues

OCAS dues are \$10 per household. Dues may be paid at the monthly meeting, online at the OCAS website, <http://www.okc-audubon.org>. or mailed to Nancy Vicars, Treasurer, 820 Arthur Drive, Midwest City, OK 73110.

Welcome new members:

Carol & Jim Matt, Josh Lunsford, Richard Taylor, Hollis Price, Mary Lane & Steve Davis.

Condolences

to Patti Muzny in the loss of her sister.

Red Slough

Jimmy Woodard

We left a Midwest City a rainy morning bound for Red Slough. The we being me, Max Fuller, Jerry Vanbebber, and Nadine Varner. We birded our way down to McGee Creek WMA in Atoka County. Along the way we saw Cattle Egrets, Scissortails, Barn and Cliff Swallows.

The rain subsided as we made it to the Fugate area. We stopped at a couple of creek crossings and found them to be birdy. We heard several Black & White and Parula Warblers. A Louisiana Waterthrush gave us a close look. There were lots of gnatcatchers, Fish Crows and both vultures.

We turned south by the fancy Pogue Ranch onto the eight mile long road down the peninsula between arms of McGee Creek Lake. A huge area of the forest here burned a few years ago. The regeneration is prime Bachman's Sparrow habitat. We stepped out of the car and heard several Bachman's singing. We heard and saw many on this day.

The strong wind on the ridge kept bird activity down, but we also located four Brown-headed Nuthatches, a fly-over Osprey, Turkey, and Red-headed Woodpeckers.

After lunch in Antlers, we arrived in Broken Bow, picked up Berlin Heck and went out to Little River NWR. We hoped to find several warblers but had no luck. Berlin located a Yellow-throated Warbler and several White-eyed Vireos.

At a swampy area we were treated to a calling American Bittern. We lured it closer where it proceeded to perch atop a bush out in the open. Much bill clacking and throat puffing occurred before a full-bodied effort produced the pumping call we all know. What a sight! We saw two more bitterns on the loop road. We heard Marsh wren and Barred Owl. We saw Great Egret and Yellow-crowned Night Heron perched atop tall trees in the distance. Heavy rains washed out our birding evening. We enjoyed the fine Mexican food at Papa Pabloano's in Idabel before retiring to a motel.

As messy as Friday's weather was, Saturday's was just the opposite. The day started cool (46o) but later warmed to the mid-70's. Winds were nonexistent and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. Berlin joined us on this beautiful day as we visited Red Slough. Lots of waterfowl greeted us on our first stop in the refuge. Jerry located a male Mottled Duck. There were lots of shorebirds including Yellowlegs, Pectorals, LB Dowitchers, and many Golden Plovers. Tree Swallows were on every nest box we saw.

We hiked around the aptly named Bittern Lake. We saw and heard an amazing eight Bitterns! We also found a

few Moorhens. While glassing Pintail Lake we enjoyed five Aningas soaring above our heads. A group of Little Blues flew by as well as an immature Bald Eagle.

A funny sight was a Cottonmouth with a two Coot escort. The snake crawled up onto some vegetation to warm itself in the bright sun. With its subtle hues and pattern, it was actually a quite attractive animal.

We parted company with Berlin and then had lunch. Afterward we returned to Little River. We quickly found a singing Hooded Warbler. Further along the road we found a cooperative Yellow-throated Vireo.

In the late afternoon we searched the McCurtain County Wilderness Area for Red-cockaded Woodpecker. We found Pileated and Downy Woodpeckers, Pine Siskin, Pine Warbler, Brown Creeper and Chipping Sparrows, but no Red-cockaded Woodpecker.

We headed home late Saturday and finished with 107 species. We had a fantastic two days of birding. Saturday at the slough was a picture perfect day to be birding.

Oklahoma City Audubon Society

Officers 2009

President	Bill Diffin	722-3778
Vice President	John Shackford	340-5057
Secretary	Nancy Reed	799-1116
Treasurer	Nancy Vicars	732-9885
Parliament	Sam Moore	752-9549
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

Tuesday Morning Birders

Tuesday Morning Birders

3/2, Wichita Mtns, Hackberry Flat - Doug Eide, Susan Prescott, Charles Douglas and Bill Diffin. Bob and Dana Holbrook joined us for an early longspur hunt. Matt Jung guided us to the longspur field south of Tecumseh and east of 24th. A group of 22 Smith's Longspurs and several smaller groups were identified by their rattling flight call, extended flights and yellowish buff undersides.

At the Medicine Park treatment ponds were Redheads, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Canvasbacks and Northern Shovelers. In the field west of the road to the Holy City, a pair of the Chestnut-collared Longspurs were id'd by tails marked boldly white and short squeaking flight calls. Across the Quannah Lake dam, a Canyon Wren called and bobbed on top of a boulder, head back to show its white throat. Leaving the west side of the refuge, we saw a large flock of Yellow-shafted and Red-shafted Flickers.

In a farm field west of Hackberry Flat, Western Meadowlarks gurgled their song. A couple of jackrabbits fled from the birders. A Ferruginous Hawk was sitting on a utility pole along Hwy 70. At Hackberry Flat, the flooded unit near the Visitor's Center had Greater Yellowlegs, Killdeer, Green-winged Teal, American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall and Bufflehead. It was easier to hear the cries of overflying Sandhill Cranes than to spot the birds. The main unit in the center of the refuge had an enormous number of Ross's and Snow Geese. A Ladder-backed Woodpecker gleaned the willow shrubs.

3/9, Sooner Lake - Terri Underhill, Charles Douglas and Bill Diffin. Southwest of the lake, several Northern Harriers glided over the grass land. Then a light morph Rough-legged Hawk climbed from a low glide and soared over the road. The little marsh along CR210 near Ranch Rd had a Loggerhead Shrike, three Ring-necked Ducks and two Gadwall looking perfect in the morning sun.

The Eaglecam had been relocated from the pole nest at the bridge cove to a tree nest southeast of the lake near the abandoned one-room school house on 15. One Bald Eagle was sitting on the nest, and four more engaged in close aerial maneuvers.

We saw a soaring Red-shouldered Hawk, an Eastern Phoebe and a Loggerhead Shrike. A Bald Eagle was sitting on a nest in the big cottonwoods below the dam. Four Forster's Terns were flying around the sand excavations. 28 Sandhill Cranes flew over, and a Turkey Vulture soared over the hills to the east.

3/16, Rose Lake, Stinchcomb WR West and Lake Overholser - Carla Brueggen, Matt Jung, Doug Eide, Charles Douglas and Bill Diffin. At Rose Lake, were many Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal and Lesser Scaup with lesser numbers of Ring-necked Duck, Northern Pintail and Green-winged Teal. Flocks of Blue-winged Teal flew around the lake showing off their blue coverts. A Northern Harrier flew over the

trees, and three Wood Ducks took shelter under the willows east.

At the Stinchcomb WR West entrance gate, a calling Red-shouldered Hawk flew along the woods across the cattail marsh. At the river, a Tufted Titmouse and a flock of Cedar Waxwings perched in the tree tops. As we walked beside the pond, Mallards, Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, Northern Shovelers and Northern Pintails took flight. Out in the pond were many of the same ducks with Ring-necks, Redheads, Blue-wings, a pair of Bufflehead and American Coots. At the second nest box, a pair of Wood Ducks floated near shore. American Wigeon whistled beyond the trees west and then flew across the pond.

At the Lake Overholser cofferdam, a Marsh Wren bubbled in the cattails. Out on the lake was a long raft of Red-breasted Mergansers with a few Redheads. In front were several rafts of Ruddy Ducks. A flock of American White Pelicans was dispersed north of the fishing pier. A small raft of American Wigeon took a short flight to the south. We easily beat our goal of ten duck species with 14.

3/23, Ten Mile Flats, Sutton Urban Wilderness, SW Minco Area, Red Rock Canyon - Tim Ryan, Doug Eide, Charles Douglas and Bill Diffin. A Cooper's Hawk was observed running/hopping over the ground in a cultivated field near Indian Hills Rd and 48th. Along Rock Creek Rd near 72nd were Harris's Sparrows in a roadside shrub. A Pileated Woodpecker flew across the road to an old tree row. Green-winged Teal were paddling in a natural drainage channel. Both Eastern and Western Meadowlark songs came from a large flock dispersed in a field. On Robinson west of 60th, scattered Vesper Sparrows and Savannah Sparrows were foraging on close-cropped ground.

At Red Rock Canyon, the chirping of American Goldfinches was nearly constant. At one point they were joined by a flock of Cedar Waxwings and a Red-bellied Woodpecker. Eastern Phoebes were flying about in the trees over the ponds or going in and out of holes in the rock faces.

3/30, South Jenkins, Lake Thunderbird, Lexington WMA - Charles Douglas and Bill Diffin. At South Jenkins a Yellow-throated Warbler sang loudly up in the Cottonwoods. A male Ruby-crowned Kinglet sang and displayed his red crest for a female along the upper outfall creek. Field Sparrows and White-crowned Sparrows populated the same area, and we saw one group of Harris's Sparrows. Song Sparrows and Marsh Wrens sang in the marsh. Waterfowl on the pond and sloughs were Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall and Northern Shoveler.

At Lake Thunderbird, we saw three Blue-gray Gnatcatchers between South Dam and Clear Bay & Wild Turkeys near the entrance to Clear Bay.

While at South Jenkins, Dick Gunn gave us a location for Black and White Warblers in the Lexington WMA. Where the trail meets the south boundary, singing male Black and White Warblers were in the oaks east and west.

Recorders Report – March 2010

When Spring Turned Into Winter

March is the magical month when birds return and winter turns into spring, but this year was different. Several winter residents left including the Yellow-billed Loon and the Trumpeter Swans, and other species started returning from Purple Martins to Scissor-tailed Flycatchers. But an unusual event occurred the first day of spring.

On February 28 the first **Purple Martin** scout was reported in Blanchard. On March 1st Martin and Carol Blick from England saw the Yellow-billed Loon, Western and Horned Grebes on Lake Hefner. On the 3rd Matt Jung reports the **Red-headed Woodpeckers** are back in Eldon Lyon Park. On the 6st Terri Underhill's Carolina Wrens were starting to nest. At South Jenkins Dick Gunn reports the first **Blue-winged Teal** arrived. Bill Diffin and Paul Roisen from Iowa birded central Oklahoma and found Brown Creeper, White-breasted Nuthatches, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and the Western Grebe. On the 7th Berlin Heck found the Yellow-billed Loon on Lake Hefner. On the 9th Lindell Dillon last found the **Trumpeter Swans** in Norman.

On the 10th in Grady County Paul Sunby from Austin, TX found Mountain Bluebirds and a Ferruginous Hawk. On the 13th along South Jenkins Matt found the Marsh and Winter Wren, one Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and in his daughter's backyard a female Purple Finch. Near 36th and Classen Larry Mays found two **Barn Swallows**. The OCAS Kingfisher County birding trip discovered Swamp Sparrow, American Tree Sparrow, Green-winged Teal, Bald Eagle, **Greater Yellowlegs**, and Loggerhead Shrikes.

On the 17th at South Jenkins Dick found a **Vesper Sparrow**, and Larry Mays saw a Turkey Vulture from the dentist's chair. On the 18th CJ Metcalf found a **Least Flycatcher** in Norman. In Perkins, Mark Cromwell had a Purple Martin arrive at their new house. On the 19th the last report of the **Yellow-billed Loon** at Lake Hefner was made by Matt plus Jimmy and Nadine. Later while checking the Max Westheimer Airport area in Norman Matt observed a small jet taxied to the take-off lane and flushed up a Short-eared Owl. Jimmy Woodward and Nadine Varner also found a **Rough-winged Swallow** at Overholser and a **Great Egret** at Stinchcomb. On Twin Bridges in Norman Dick saw a single **Bank Swallow**. Terri Underhill and her grandchildren discovered Great Horned Owl babies in a pine tree nest in Edmond.

On March 19th, the last day of winter was 70°F. March the 20th was the first day of spring but rain had turned to snow and central Oklahoma was experiencing a winter blizzard. It was hard to tell if it was snowing or the wind was just blowing the fallen snow into drifts. Meadowlarks in the front yard were hiding from the ferocious wind behind tufts of grass.

Around noon in Stillwater Jason Heinen heard some **Killdeer** outside his apartment. When he opened the door he was amazed to see close to 50 of them frolicking in the snow! Nearby James Ownby reports another dozen or so were playing in the street. In Oklahoma City Patti Muzny reports dozens of Killdeer all over Fifth Street in Moore between South Santa Fe and Janeway and large flocks of them at SW 85th and Walker. Further east Frank in Sand Springs saw well over a hundred grounded Killdeer. In Norman Ben Holt reports at Ten Mile Flats just before dark there were groups of 3-5 **American Pipits** everywhere you looked from Indian Hills down to Rock Creek. The road edges are absolutely dense with sparrows – Savannah's and Vespers were especially abundant, and in the ditches **Wilson's Snipes** were found in good numbers. On the 21st Jerry Vanbebber found a **Sprague's Pipit** in the group.

On the 22nd Jimmy checked the Sutton Wilderness area and found two Golden-crowned Kinglets and at 10 Mile Flats an **American Golden Plover**. On the 23rd Dick and Matt walked the length of South Jenkins and found a **Fish Crow** and Field Sparrow. Andy Feldt stopped by the playa near 48th and Rock Creek and found a **Marbled Godwit**.

On the 26th Matt birded the Norman area and found a **Baird's Sandpiper**, **Bonaparte's Gull**, and Pine Siskin. At Crystal Lake in Oklahoma City Jim Bates saw **Franklin's Gulls**. On the 27th in Stillwater James Ownby saw a **Black and White Warbler**. In Oklahoma City Jim Bates observed a **Swainson's Hawk**. On the 28th Brian Davis saw two **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** along the outflow creek on South Jenkins. On the 29th in Norman Lindell saw a **Lark Sparrow** in his yard. In Midwest City Anais Starr found a **Yellow-crowned Night Heron**. Along South Jenkins Brian Davis discovered the **Yellow-throated warbler** had returned and was singing his heart out from the same stand of trees. On the 30th Matt found two **Chipping Sparrows**. In Norman Nancy Reed arrived home and looked out the window just in time to see a **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**. On the 31st along South Jenkins Dick found a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, Nancy Reed found one on the chain link fence at Tinker Air Force Base, and Cynthia and Matthew Whittier saw a couple of on the south side of Norman and heard a **Chimney Swift** loud and clear. On South Jenkins Matt Jung heard the **White-eyed Vireo** while the **Brown Thrasher** showed up in his daughter's back yard. As the birds return in the forest the red-bud tree buds are beginning to break open to brighten the stark gray bark of the winter trees with a cheerful purple, the promise of spring's grand opening for real this time.

During **March 137** bird species were reported making the Central Oklahoma area to date total at **158** 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 Carla Brueggen
8010 NW 32
Bethany, OK 73008

Field Trips & Opportunities

April 17, 2010 — Friends of Lake Hefner COSA park cleanup

Meet next to the ranger station at 10 am. Trash bags and gloves will provided courtesy of OKC Beautiful and litterblitz. All help is appreciated!! At noon we will have food and beverages at COSA park. If any OKC Audubon Society members can attend an estimate would be great!!

May 1, 2010—Stinchcomb 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 St. 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.