



Oklahoma City Audubon Society

OKC-AUDUBON.ORG

May 2011

Extreme Birder: One Woman's Big Year

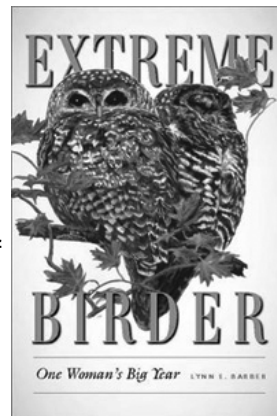


The speaker for our May 16 Oklahoma City Audubon meeting will be Lynn Barber of Fort Worth, Texas, who will talk about her "Big Year" of birding in 2008. She will also talk about the winter birds of north Texas. With rapid climate change the winter birds of north Texas are becoming the winter birds of Oklahoma.

Lynn Barber was born in Wisconsin and has lived in Alaska, Oregon, North Carolina and Texas (since 2000). She is a registered patent attorney in solo practice in Fort Worth. She has a B.A. in Zoology, a M.S. and Ph.D. in bacteriology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and a J.D. from Duke University Law School. She began to watch birds at age 7 and has been an active birder most of the years since. In 2005 she did a Texas big year and broke the previous record for number of bird species seen in Texas in one year with 522 species. She is a lifetime member of the Texas Ornithological Society and became its president in April 2009. She is on the board of the American Birding Association. In addition to birding, her avocations include nature photography, painting birds, and giving talks about birds

and bird-related activities. She is married to David Barber, who is a church pastor and meteorologist.

In her 2008 big year Lynn tallied 723 bird species in the ABA area. Her account of those experiences has resulted in her book "Extreme Birder: One Woman's Big Year" published this year by Texas A&M University Press. Lynn will have copies of her book for sale at the meeting.



Come out and bring a friend for a good evening of camaraderie and birds and great refreshments. 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.

Cookie Patrol

Refreshments for the May meeting will be provided by: Rich Taylor, Nancy Reed and Jim & Nancy Vicars

Welcome

We welcome Peter Kunzler to the Oklahoma City Audubon Society!

President's Perspective

By Bill Diffin

It is the middle of May, a fantastic month for birding in Oklahoma. Migrant warblers, shorebirds, spotted thrushes and empidonax flycatchers are moving through the state. The common summer resident birds, buntings, vireos, orioles, tyrant flycatchers, Lark and Grasshopper Sparrows, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, herons and egrets, Swainson's Hawks and Mississippi Kites have returned to their haunts and are getting ready to breed. It is the best time of year to see the summer resident passerines because they are so busy. They are chasing and courting, singing and calling, and making nests. And when they aren't occupied with those things, they are foraging ravenously to restock the energy used on migration and build reserves for reproduction. The fruit on the mulberry trees is ripening now and is attracting Cedar Waxwings, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, Swainson's Thrushes, Eastern Kingbirds, Brown Thrashers and Northern Mockingbirds. Spring is truly a time for growth, and a time for birders to grow their lists.



Making a species list for the year, the state, or your life is a fun way to keep track of progress as a birder and motivate the next expedition. The Breeding Bird Survey which is done at this time of the year involves a slightly more limited kind of list, a list of locally breeding species. Many aspects of birds can form the basis of a list, and I know birders who keep at least informal lists of vocalizations, nests, or subspecies. Plumages can form the basis of a list since most species have several appearances related to age, sex and time of year. These kinds of more in-depth lists improve identification skills and deepen knowledge of the life habits of local species. I made some long sought progress on a vocalization list recently when I was able to observe several vireos making their mewing calls. The weekend before last at the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, a Bell's Vireo alternated bouts of singing and calling in a scrubby little tree. Then just a few days later, a Red-eyed Vireo alternated song phrases and calls while hopping around in the tree-tops at Stinchcomb East. After observing the Red-eyed Vireo, I was listening to some counter-singing White-eyed Vireos when it dawned on me that one of them was using the mew call as part of its song. On the pages at the following links are recordings of vireos that contain mewing calls. The calls are near the

end for the Bell's and Red-eyed Vireos. The White-eyed Vireo incorporates a call-like note into its first song type. Note the resemblance to the mewing calls of a Gray Catbird.

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Bells_Vireo/id

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Red-eyed_Vireo/id

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/White-eyed_Vireo/id

Some birders have lists of creatures other than birds that they keep. Popular choices are odonates (dragonflies and damselflies), leps (i.e. lepidoptera, butterflies and moths), herps (reptiles and amphibians) and wildflowers. Photography is often an integral part of these hobbies. The subjects tend to be more stationary and approachable than birds, so a photo is easier to get. The photos ease identification and make a beautiful collection. In fact, a case might be made that identifying photos of insects or herps or even plants can improve bird identification skills. Photographs can be studied in detail and at leisure to find and recognize identifying marks and make accurate comparisons to images in guides. The skill of making a detailed analysis of an unfamiliar subject is more difficult to develop with birds in the field because of their annoying tendency to jump or fly out of sight in the middle of the procedure.

Enjoy nature! Make a list even if it's one you only keep in your head ... and heart!

Oklahoma City Audubon Society

Officers 2011

President	Bill Diffin	722-3778
Vice President	John Shackford	340-5057
Secretary	Nancy Reed	799-1116
Treasurer	Nancy Vicars	732-9885
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	Pat Velte	751-5263
	Carla Brueggen	495-3259
Publicity	Doug Eide	495-8192
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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



Although it looks like a thrush, the **Louisiana Waterthrush** (*Seiurus motacilla*) is actually a warbler.

The Louisiana Waterthrush nests in the eastern U.S. at least as far west as central Oklahoma, while the closely related Northern Waterthrush nests

north of us in a wide swath across Canada and into the northern U.S. The 2 species are quite similar in plumage. Some of the easiest, but still subtle, plumage differences are that the Louisiana Waterthrush has a clean white throat, with no spots or streaks, and a white eyebrow (supercilium), while the Northern Waterthrush usually has spots on its throat and an eyebrow tinged yellow.

The Louisiana Waterthrush is a lover of brooks and streams (i.e., where waters flow), while the Northern Waterthrush is usually found about bogs and swamps. This difference appears to hold true even where the ranges of the 2 species overlap in the northeastern U.S. A.C. Bent (1963, *Life Histories of North American Wood Warblers*, part 2) says that these two waterthrushes have the following behavior traits that help to identify them: "The two species...are much alike in their habits and movements; both of them are walkers and both have the peculiar habit of tilting the tail upward as if a spring holding it down had been suddenly released; both birds spend most of their time on or near the ground walking gracefully along the margins of streams or pools, or even in the shallow water..."

The Louisiana Waterthrush prefers wild places, places that have not been too affected yet by human activity. There has been a pair (I believe, or at least 1) that shows up in the spring of each year in a deep, wooded ravine in our backyard in southern Logan County; this ravine usually has water in it about 1/3 to 1/2 of the year. With the recent drought

the creek dried up and the bird(s), although here earlier, apparently have moved out, perhaps on down "stream" in the ravine until they actually do find water.

Another place in central Oklahoma where I have seen Louisiana Waterthrushes is in a heavily wooded streambed in northeastern Oklahoma City where I have also seen Pileated Woodpeckers on occasion. Along this streambed, with its frequent steep banks extending up from the stream, I have often heard the sharp "chink,"—the callnote—of the Louisiana Waterthrush. Here is another wild area with these wild birds



in the middle of town, in an area removed from lawncare. The species is said to nest among the turned up roots of an over-tipped tree or elsewhere along steep banks of a stream and the like. Their nest, built on the ground, is usually well concealed, and usually has a short runway of dried leaves that leads into the nest.

But even with these tips, I have searched in vain for its nest, although I am confident that a number of times I have been in a nesting territory. This waterthrush usually lays 4-6 whitish eggs that are spotted and blotched with browns and grays.

Tim O'Connell, who teaches biology at Oklahoma State University, has done extensive research on this waterthrush. He has related that nesting birds often have a noticeable increase in the number of droppings on rocks and other areas near the nest, sometimes several droppings within a very small area. Even when he cannot hear a bird calling he has often been able to identify a territory from this whitewash ("splay"). He has wondered, although he admits it would be extremely difficult to prove, if these droppings may warn other waterthrushes that the territory is occupied, or perhaps they are markers for some other reason. In any case Tim's observations in the vicinity of nests are interesting.

Minutes of the April 18, 2011 Meeting

President Bill Diffin called the meeting to order and asked if there were any guest. Brian Davis introduced himself.

Bill Diffin asked for any corrections or additions to the March minutes as published in the April newsletter. Motion was made, seconded and approved.

Treasurer, Nancy Vicars, presented the April Treasurer's Report:

Cash on Hand 03/21/2011	\$6,158.04
Deposits	140.63
Disbursements	-112.00
Cash on Hand 04/18/2011	\$6,186.67

Treasurer's Report was approved as read.

Committee Reports:

Bill Diffin, reporting for Jimmy Woodard, stated there were two recent field trips which included Salt Plains Bird Festival on April 15-16, and LPC Festival on April 15-17. Upcoming field trips are: May 6-8 Kansas Ornithological Society meeting at Elkhart, KS, May 7-10 Red Sough Festival at Idabel, and May 13-15 OOS meeting at Black Mesa State Park.

President Diffin gave recognition to Nealand Hill and Terri Underhill for their contribution to Martin Nature Park Earth Fest. Nealand made bulletin boards with bird pictures and brought a DVD of birds for all to view. Terri Underhill brought stickers to give to the children. Bill brought a book that plays bird songs. The Oklahoma City Audubon Society was a successful contribution to Earth Fest.

Old Business:

No old business conducted.

New Business:

Nealand Hill stated there are three hats for sale. These are the last hats for sale.

Adjourn for break.

Warren Harden announced the speaker for the month of May is Lynn Barber. Lynn will be speaking about her "Big Year" of birding in 2008.

Warren introduced tonight's guest speaker, Brian Davis. Brian gave a great program that was entertaining and educational.

Nancy Reed, Recording Secretary

Wheelchair-friendly Birding

In response to a recent request to learn about wheelchair accessible birding locations, Bill Diffin has prepared information that will be helpful to anyone needing pavement to get around while birding.

Bill's complete article is located on our website under **Birding HotSpots** and includes links to pages on the site that contain maps and species information. Here are the locations currently listed:

Yukon City Park in Yukon
Eldon Lyon Park in Bethany
Mitch Park in Edmond
Bluff Creek Park below the dam at Lake Hefner
Lake Hefner Trails at the southeast corner of Stars and Stripes Park
Route 66 Park at Lake Overholser and the lake access across the road
Oklahoma City Zoological Park and neighboring lake

In addition, Martin Nature Park has trails with a compacted layer of chat that is probably navigable with some help.

Please let us know about any other areas you are familiar with and we will add them to the website.
Email: info@okc-audubon.org.

Painted Bunting T-shirts

Dana and Bob Holbrook recently participated at a kid's event with some 4000 campers. They were promoting the new nature center they are working on down Texas way and have a few really nice t-shirts left over of the Painted Bunting. The artwork was done by one of Dana's "kids" in Romania and is in full brilliant color. They have a few in all sizes in natural and gray shirts and will have them at our club meeting in a few days. You can be sure to get one your size if you send them an e-mail at incatarn@msn.com or call 496-1731. They are \$15.00 each no matter the size. (They also have just a very few Western Diamondback shirts and Golden-eyed Phlox shirts.)



Chirpings

By Patti Muzny

April and May 2011

Driving east on SW 85th on my way to work one morning, a brilliant sun-drenched blue flash skimmed in front of my vehicle and down into the field beside me. I had wondered if 2010's Eastern Bluebirds were still in the area. They aren't in the Muzny's yard, but they're close enough. Chickadees and Bewick's Wrens are nesting in our back yard and their conversations are so welcome.



The pair of Mallards that have been using our back yard as a resting/feeding station came back early this spring. At daybreak they can be found patiently waiting for one of us to put out some bird seed. One day the lid to a plastic storage container was left at the side of our driveway. It held about an inch of water and was about 24 inches long. Mama Duck claimed this little "duck bath" as her own and every time they come into the yard she bathes and drinks in this shallow lid and most of the time leaves a "deposit" for us to clean out. Papa Duck just watches and sometimes gets a drink from the end while she's resting in it. She will squat down and just sit there for long periods of time, cooling what few body parts that will fit in that little bit of water. Papa Duck patiently awaits and when SHE decides it's time to fly away, he dutifully follows. They've even come up onto our patio and walked across near the den windows.

One morning I looked out the den window and noticed a new yard bird. A Dickcissel had landed near the ducks. Soon I saw two Dickcissils. New yard bird for us. Brian found a House Wren in the yard and the flock of Cedar Waxwings continues to choose one of the pecan trees for their evening stopover. Each evening they come in and land, facing west and their beautiful lemon-colored breasts would flash in the setting sun.

One of the most fun species this spring has been the little Clay-colored Sparrows. On the morning of May 6, I counted over 30 of them busily scratching in the grass looking for leftover seed. They are so "busy," and their buzzing songs are just day-brighteners. I will really miss them when they leave. Also on the evening of May 6, while I was taking up space on the

porch swing, I looked up to see two Mississippi Kites soaring over the yard. In a few minutes a beautiful Harris's Sparrow came to the feeder. Then I noticed a white spot on the fence and focused on the very bright white crown of a White-crowned Sparrow. I'd thought they might have moved on.

All winter and into late April, we had Harris's and White-crowned Sparrows at the feeders and they were usually accompanied by Goldfinches and sometimes House Finches. The Cooper's Hawk is a year-long resident, so he/she make keeping all of one's feathers a challenge in our neighborhood. Something was also was grabbing Eurasian Collared Doves and leaving several feather puddles in the neighbor's yard. I suspect the Cooper's. On May 7th, I saw a small bird dive-bombing a Cooper's that had come too close to something near and dear.

Brown Thrashers, Mockingbird and Cardinals are among those who add to the spring serenade. Our Purple Martins are fickle again this year – they just come and go, but haven't stayed. Also on May 7th, while I was out in the flowerbeds, a Carolina Wren decided to let me know he was one happy bird.

On my way to work I had been looking so diligently for the first Scissortail. The first one I noticed was at the intersection of SW 59th and Shields Blvd. He was catching flying things from a traffic light arm. Another was found near OUHSC, doing the same thing at NE 8th and Lincoln. The Capitol grounds also has a pair and the Barn Swallows are everywhere in this area. I love their chatter.

On May 1, many of the McClain County migrants had returned to our property and I heard my first Chuck-Will's Widow and Summer Tanager. An evening walk put me in the path of an upset Painted Bunting male and I was thrilled. The bunting was also having territorial issues with a Black and White Warbler. I just smiled to myself and hiked on. The "Porch Phoebe" was the first bird of the morning, followed by the raucous call of the Great-crested Flycatcher. Love it!

It's spring. Hope everyone is able to get out and re-new old friendships with our favorite species of birds. Even if you can't get out, maybe an open window will work.



Recorders Report: April 2011

Busy, Busy, Busy

While the drought continues along with random out-breaks of fire, spring bird migration continues in full swing. Due to the drought, lake levels are low making this an awesome month and year for shorebirds.

On April 1st Bill Diffin checked the mud flats on Lake Overholser and noted American Golden Plover, Marbled Godwit, **Sanderling**, and **Stilt Sandpiper**. On the 2nd at the OSU Botanical Garden Tim O'Connell reported a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Louisiana Waterthrush. On the 3rd along South Jenkins Dick Gunn, John Raeside, and Anais Starr got great looks at the Yellow-throated Warbler and a **Solitary Sandpiper**. A **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** showed

up in Lexington in Phil Floyd's yard, and on the 6th in Norman at Nancy Reed's feeder. On April 4th a **Lesser Goldfinch** visited Pat Folley's feeder in Norman, and Lisa Bewley saw **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** at a pond in NW Edmond.



On the 5th Sue Lutze identified a **Black-and-White Warbler** in Tuttle. On South Jenkins Dick Gunn had a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Harrier, **Little Blue Heron**. Les Imboden reported **Cliff Swallows** along the H.E. Bailey Turnpike near Chickasha. On the 6th Matt Jung hiked Lake Overholser's NE mud flats and observed **White-faced Ibis**, Spotted Towhee, White-throated, Harris's, and White-crowned Sparrows, and on the 5th **White-rumped Sandpipers** and Sanderlings.

On the 7th Jennifer Kidney had a **Northern Parula** on South Jenkins. On the 9th the OCAS Zoo field trip located Ruddy Duck, Wood Ducks and **Cattle Egrets**. On the 10th Jimmy Woodard spent a couple of hours at Yukon City Park where surprises included Red-breasted Nuthatch, **Black-crowned Night Herons**, Brown Creeper, **Yellow-crowned Night Herons**, **Swainson's Hawk**, **House Wren**, **Nashville Warbler** and Pine Siskin. At Eldon Lyon Park Matt found **Western Kingbirds**, White-breasted Nuthatch and at Lake Overholser's Coffey Dam one singing **Prothonotary Warbler**. Jim Bates at Lake Hefner saw an **Osprey**, at a small cattail marsh he flushed a **Green Heron**, and at his house four **Chimney Swifts** swooped overhead. On the 11th along South Jenkins Dick located an **Eastern Kingbird**.

On the 12th Matt heard a single **Baltimore Oriole** in the Yukon City Park, and along South Jenkins Jennifer Kid-

ney saw a singing **Bell's Vireo**. Jimmy Woodard checked Lake Overholser NE and found one **Hudsonian Godwit**, a **Snowy Plover**, and at Rose Lake a **Willet**. Two days later Bill Diffin and Matt Jung found 40 more Hudsonian Godwits, and Dick reports Gary Schnell's Ornithology class located **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** along South Jenkins.

On the 16th the Payne County Audubon had their first official Big Day bird count with Tim O'Connell and Dustin Lynch locating Redhead, Lesser Scaup, Greater Scaup, Eared Grebe, **Broad-winged Hawk**, **Spotted Sandpiper**, **Chuck-will's-Widow**, **Red-eyed Vireo**, **Gray Catbird**, and **Grasshopper Sparrow**; another team found a lone **Black-necked Stilt** at the water treatment plant in Cushing. On the 17th Damon Doye and Elaine Stabler advised Tim there were about 100 Yellow-headed Blackbirds at the OSU Dairy Barn. On the 18th along west Stitchcomb WMA Matt discovered a **Great Crested Flycatcher**, Audubon Yellow-rumped Warbler and **Indigo Bunting**. On the 19th Jennifer Kidney had a Prothonotary Warbler along South Jenkins. At Lake Overholser Matt discovered 3 White-faced Ibises, a **Semi-palmated Plover**, on the 20th Matt found a **Swainson's Thrush** at the Yukon City Park and on the 21st in his bird bath a pair of **Tennessee Warblers**. On the 21st Judy Jordan heard and saw a **Wood Thrush**.



On the 22nd Jimmy checked Lake Overholser NE and discovered a **Wilson's Phalarope**, **Caspian Tern**, **Yellow Warbler**, and 4 Cackling Geese and at the zoo a **Warbling Vireo**. At Rose Lake Matt located American Pipits, and Dave and Sue Woodon had a Mississippi Kite circling overhead at 150th and Penn. On the 23rd along South Jenkins on the Canadian River section Joe Grzybowski located 3 Black-necked Stilts. At Yukon City Park Jimmy and Nadine had a **Black-throated Green Warbler**, **Wilson's Warbler**, Red-breasted Nuthatch and at Lake Overholser a **Peregrine Falcon**. During the week along South Jenkins Dick reports **Black-poll Warbler** and **Blue Grosbeak**.



(continued on page 7)



Picnic and Nightjar Watch

Join us **Saturday, June 4** for the Oklahoma City Audubon Society Picnic and Nightjar Watch. We have reserved a picnic pavilion at Lake Stanley Draper and the club will provide hotdogs, hamburger meat, buns, charcoal, etc. Please bring your own drinks and "picnic-type" foods to share with the group.

We will meet at 6:30 p.m. which should give everyone enough time to enjoy the picnic before Jimmy Woodard leads the field trip in search of nightjars.

The pavilion is near the marina. The marina is near the restrooms, the playground, the police station, and just a short distance to good birding along the lakeshore road to the north.

Lake Draper Pavilion - Recreation Area #1
9040 N. Stanley Draper Drive
Nearby: Playground, additional picnic tables, walking path, lake view

Recorder's Report (continued)

On the 24th rain finally arrived in central Oklahoma. In Stillwater Brian Sheehan had a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** in his yard, at the Teal Ridge Wetland Tim's highlight was a singing **Sedge Wren**, and in Norman Joe had a male **Lazuli Bunting** in his yard. Gayl Wells photographed Inca Doves in her Midwest City backyard. On the 25th Jennifer Kidney and Cecil Johnson were lucky to see a male **Painted Bunting** along South Jenkins and on the 27th Nancy Reed had one in her Norman yard. In the Yukon City Park Jimmy found a female Summer Tanager and Bill heard a flock of Harris's Sparrows calling in the twilight.

On the 28th Bill saw a **Whimbrel** at Lake Overholser, and at Lake Arcadia Dave and Sue heard a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** and saw a Broad-winged Hawk. A **Piping Plover** was located by Jim Bates at Lake Overholser and Angie Holt at Lake Hefner while James Hubbell saw a **Sprague's Pipit** in the Yukon City Park. On the 29th at the Lake Hefner Parkway ponds Joe found a **Neotropic Cormorant** and in Norman a Mississippi Kite.

During April a total of **175** bird species were reported including **61 new** species which increased the 2011 Central Oklahoma area total to **227** species. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds by turning in reports. I can be contacted by e-mail at emkok@earthlink.net. Esther M. Key, Editor.

Bird Walk or Big Day?

What do gender patterns (in humans) mean for the future of bird watching?

Caren Cooper, a research associate in the Bird Population Studies at the Cornell Lab, recently published an article in "Birdscope" about how men and women may approach birding differently and how understanding differences may help show us how we can motivate birders and attract people to birding.

Experiments show that across many careers and hobbies, men prefer competition more than women and tend to be more confident -- at times ranking their ability higher than it actually is, whereas women tend to show less confidence. *(continued on page 8)*



Oklahoma City Audubon Society
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Gender differences (continued)

Cooper and a colleague in England gathered gender information from dozens of organizations in both countries and found the trends identical in both countries. "Supportive" birding activities had slightly more women than men; "participatory" activities had up to 70 percent women.

Activities with open-ended checklists or lots of travel involved 57-83 percent men while competitive birding was even more skewed, with 80-99 percent of the participants male.

Conner stressed that her results did not typecast males as achievement hounds and females as appreciation seekers; individuals can always buck stereotypes. In fact, the most famous lister in the world (with 8,400 species) is Phoebe Snetsinger. Conner also found that young birders buck the trend with equal numbers of boys and girls in all categories.

What does this study have to do with our organization? Groups like ours can benefit from these types of studies by increasing our awareness of "birding personalities" and offering meaningful birding experiences for the non-competitive members as well as the listers and competitive birders amongst us.

No Field Trips Scheduled. (See *Picnic and Nightjar Watch*, page 7)