



Oklahoma City Audubon Society

OKC-AUDUBON.ORG

February 2009

Program: Birding Oklahoma's Yesteryear

February's program will be Birding Oklahoma's Yesteryear: Photos and stories of birding experiences with the Oklahoma City Audubon Society.

Warren Harden will relive exciting times with the Oklahoma City Audubon Society field trips, Christmas counts and bird banding illustrated with photos from Lake Overholser and elsewhere.

Everyone who enjoys birds has stories to tell. These will bring back memories and create new ones of birding in the past with fun people and birds and other wildlife. Come along and bring a friend.

OKLAHOMA CITY AUDUBON SOCIETY LUGGAGE TAG FUND RAISER

We will have luggage tags available at our February 16 meeting for \$3.00 each, or two for \$5.00. One hundred percent of the profit from this sale will go to the Oklahoma City Audubon Society.

The tags have images of birds on one side and space for personal information (name, address, etc.) on the other. They are made of rugged plastic and have been "airline tested."

Contact Larry Ferree at lferree10S@cox.net in order to view the entire selection of beautiful photos available for your tags.

2009 Calendars

Our beautiful 2009 fund raising calendars are here. They will be available at the monthly meetings for \$7.50 or you may order by mail. The mailing cost will be \$7.50, plus \$1.50 per calendar.

This is our only source of revenue other than our membership dues. If every member bought just one calendar, we would be able to net \$500.

Refreshments:

Refreshments for the February meeting will be provided by: Vasca Stanley, Matt Jung, and Jimmy Woodard.

Pontotoc Ridge Bird Count

By Jona Tucker with some editing by Jung

On Sunday, January 25, 2009, three OKC-Audubon Society Members went to Pontotoc Ridge Preserve to help with the Winter Bird Count there.

Observers: *Jimmy Woodard, Valerie Bradshaw, Matt Jung*, Bill Carter, Mickle Duggan, Doug Wood, Joey McAllister (SOSU), Samantha Meyer (SOSU), Lowell Mahatty (SOSU), Jared Wood (SOSU), Nicholas Tucker, Jona Tucker

Weather: Overcast in morning, scattered clouds in afternoon; calm with winds less than 10 mph; temperature during the count from 32 to 46 degrees Fahrenheit; dry, ponds dry or extremely low, local area experiencing a drought.

* Observed on Bolin's Pond north of PRP headquarters by Bradshaw, Jung, Woodard, and Tucker

** Observed approximately .25 miles north of northwest corner of preserve in hay meadow west of county road by Carter & Duggan

American Wigeon*, 2 (a pair)

Wild Turkey, 5

Northern Bobwhite, 39

Black Vulture, 4

Turkey Vulture, 23

Bald Eagle**, 1 (adult)

Northern Harrier, 3

Sharp-shinned Hawk, 2

Red-shouldered Hawk, 4

Red-tailed Hawk, 2

Merlin, 1

Greater Roadrunner, 1

Belted Kingfisher, 1

Red-bellied Woodpecker, 22

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 6

Downy Woodpecker, 20

Hairy Woodpecker, 2

Yellow-shafted Northern Flicker, 21

Red-shafted Northern Flicker, 1

Pileated Woodpecker, 8

Eastern Phoebe, 3

Blue Jay, 11

American Crow, 38

Carolina Chickadee, 32

Tufted Titmouse, 22

Northern Cardinal, 51

Eastern Meadowlark, 29

American Goldfinch, 109

White-breasted Nuthatch, 11

Brown Creeper, 7

Carolina Wren, 9

Bewick's Wren, 1

Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 4

Eastern Bluebird, 19

Hermit Thrush, 12

American Robin, 9

Northern Mockingbird, 16

Brown Thrasher, 9

Cedar Waxwing, 20

American Pipit, 8

Yellow-rumped Warbler, 18

Eastern Towhee, 3

Field Sparrow, 156

Savannah Sparrow, 152

LeConte's Sparrow, 11

Fox Sparrow, 2

Song Sparrow, 69

Lincoln's Sparrow, 2

Swamp Sparrow, 2

White-throated Sparrow, 8

Harris's Sparrow, 4

White-crowned Sparrow, 5

Dark-eyed Junco, 335

Total: 52 species (50 species on Pontotoc Ridge Preserve)

New species: Merlin, American Pipit

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Oklahoma City Audubon Society

Officers 2009

President	Eric Enwall	364-5029
Vice Pres.	John Shackford	340-5057
Secretary	Cheryl Allen	478-0339
Treasurer	Nancy Vicars	732-9885
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Programs	Warren Harden	364-3491
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Conservation	Larry Mays	392-2131
Field Trips	Jimmy Woodard	324-1462
Newsletter	Patti Muzney	634-8266
Publicity	Cheryl Allen	478-0339
Historian	Nealand Hill	388-6759
Refreshments	Jim Vicars	732-9885
Webmaster	Patricia 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 our outstanding website and keep up with the latest happenings.

OKC-Audubon.org

12th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count

The next Great Backyard Bird Count will take place February 13th-16th, 2009.

Check the GBBB website:
<http://www.audubon.org/gbbc/index.shtml> for details in participating, publicizing, and getting the whole family involved.

Last year we received more than 85,000 checklists.

2009 Dues

OKC Audubon Society membership dues are being collected for 2009. In order to receive this newsletter and meeting information, please remit dues to:

**Nancy Vicars
820 Arthur Drive
Midwest City, OK 73110**

Or pay at any meeting.

North of the Oklahoma Border

By Matt Jung

Jan 21 & 22, 2009 – Kansas trip to Lucas Park and Quivira NWR for Long-eared Owl and Northern Shrike. Lonnie Gamble and I birded the areas for target birds but we turned up none. On the 21st we stopped at the Excelsior Lutheran Church to look for the reported Northern Shrike and saw nothing but Red-winged Black Birds, thousands of them. There were many Western Meadow Larks in the fields singing and we had large numbers of Harris's Sparrows. From there we drove to Lucas Park on the north shore of Wilson Lake for the LE Owl. The cedar thickets we walked the next 2½ hours held Yellow-rumped Warblers, a roost of about 20 birds; we saw plenty owl droppings and pellets but no LE Owls. A survey of the lake for ducks and Grebes turned up a few. Driving from the swimming beach to the camping area we had more Harris's Sparrows, Goldfinches and 1 Townsend's Solitaire. We left at 5:30 for Great Bend and our Motel; on the way out we saw what could have been a Short-eared Owl hunting but did not make a clear distinction from afar between it and Northern Harrier since both hunt in identical fashion.

Thursday we visited Quivira NWR and spent 7 hours driving the main north-south road, the Wildlife Drive and surveying Little Salt Marsh for water fowl. In the north portion we saw 2 Loggerhead Shrikes, 4 mature Bald Eagles, 3 juveniles and 1 sub-adult, Rough-legged Hawks plus one Great Horned Owl. The Little Salt Marsh held about 20,000 Snow Geese, many Common Mergansers and other ducks. Two mature Bald Eagles were perched in trees just west of the water and on the way out we were able to photograph one mature Bald Eagle from close in. When driving west on 4th Street Road toward US-281 the sky was filled with tens of thousands of Canada Geese heading to roost for the night in Quivira. We tallied 43 species.

Picture by Lonnie Gamble taken at Quivira 1/22/2009



2008 Christmas Bird Count

Below is the unofficial list of bird species, and totals, seen on the Dec. 20th, 2008, OK City Christmas Bird Count. In spite of a pretty miserable day, we recorded a record 125 total species, 2 additional forms and 3 additional species during count week. We had a record number of observers as well. The distribution of rarities was well-scattered among different parties, so the extra effort paid off. Thanks to all for a great effort, to Diane Newell for a great tally party, and to Pat Velte for (most all of the) data entry.

John Shackford, Compiler of OKC CBC

Snow Goose	1	Cooper's Hawk	6
Cackling Goose	57	Northern Goshawk	1
Canada Goose	1828	Red-shouldered Hawk	22
Wood Duck	28	Red-tailed Hawk	139
Gadwall	188	Krider's (Red-t) Hawk	1
American Wigeon	4	Ferruginous Hawk	3
Mallard	1299	Rough-legged Hawk	1
Northern Shoveler	134	American Kestrel	31
Northern Pintail	7	Merlin	1
Green-winged Teal	1	American Coot	561
Canvasback	110	Killdeer	26
Redhead	8	Greater Yellowlegs	6
Ring-necked Duck	57	Wilson's Snipe	5
Greater Scaup	11	Bonaparte's Gull	140
Lesser Scaup	139	Ring-billed Gull	4418
Long-tailed Duck	1	California Gull	2
Bufflehead	93	Herring Gull	59
Common Goldeneye	837	Lesser Bl-back Gull	2
Hooded Merganser	166	Rock Pigeon	1713
Common Merganser	356	Eurasian Col.-Dove	347
Red-breasted Merganser	56	White-winged Dove	12
Ruddy Duck	58	Morning Dove	162
Wild Turkey	3	Greater Roadrunner	cw
Northern Bobwhite	15	Eastern Screech-Owl	4
Pacific Loon	cw	Great Horned Owl	4
Common Loon	6	Barred Owl	2
Yellow-billed Loon	1	Short-eared Owl	1
(excellent photos)		Owl sp.	1
Pie-billed Grebe	75	Belted Kingfisher	16
Horned Grebe	6	Red-head Woodpecker	4
Am. White Pelican	156	Red-belly Woodpecker	44
Double-cr. Cormorant	1157	Yellow-belly Sapsucker	3
Black-cr. Night-Heron	7	Downy Woodpecker	62
Great Blue Heron	125	Hairy Woodpecker	1
Great Egret	1	Northern Flicker	98
Bald Eagle	1	Yellow-shaft Flicker	1
Northern Harrier	2	Red-shaft Flicker	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6		

2008 CBC cont.

Pileated Woodpecker	1
Eastern Phoebe	7
Loggerhead Shrike	1
Blue Jay	161
American Crow	342
Horned Lark	122
Carolina Chickadee	223
Tufted Titmouse	58
Red-br. Nuthatch	1
White-br. Nuthatch	2
Brown Creeper	3
Carolina Wren	55
Bewick's Wren	9
House Wren	2
Winter Wren	5
Marsh Wren	4
Golden-cr. Kinglet	2
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	49
Eastern Bluebird	65
American Robin	3151
Hermit Thrush	1
Northern Mockingbird	111
Brown Thrasher	3
European Starling	3051
American Pipit	1
Cedar Waxwing	714
Orange-cr. Warbler	5
Yellow-rump Warbler	207
Pine Warbler	cw
Spotted Towhee	26
Eastern Towhee	1
Am. Tree Sparrow	20
Field Sparrow	20
Vesper Sparrow	1
Savannah Sparrow	27
Fox Sparrow	22
Song Sparrow	84
Lincoln's Sparrow	5
Swamp Sparrow	4
White-throat Sparrow	80
Harris's Sparrow	338
White-crown Sparrow	131
Dark-eyed Junco	1558
McCown's Longspur	2
Lapland Longspur	38
Smith's Longspur	2
Northern Cardinal	265
Common Grackle	455

Red-winged Blackbird	1527
Eastern Meadowlark	2
Meadowlark sp.	407
Common Grackle	455
Great-tailed Grackle	1810
Brown-headed Cowbird	130
Purple Finch	1
House Finch	148
Pine Siskin	12
Lesser Goldfinch	1
(excellent photos)	
American Goldfinch	490
House Sparrow	508

Chirpings

By Patti Muzny

For our “yard” list in SW Oklahoma City, we’ve expanded the borders slightly to include an overgrown patch of land just south of I-240 between South Western and South Walker, which is “almost” our back yard. A nature walk with my 10 year-old granddaughter, Sydney, just before the ice storm, led us around and through the field to a tangle of weeds, berry bushes, trees and grass. A little “pishing” produced a beautiful male Eastern Towhee. While this little pocket of very urban-surrounded habit did not seem like a very possible place for a towhee, I guess the towhee had found it to his liking. Woo-hoo – another new “yard” bird!

Our nature walk included a little birding and making friends with every four-legged critter that Sydney could safely approach in the neighborhood. “Buster” the horse comes to the fence to be petted and we have permission from his owners. She’s made friends with Shelties, Great Danes, Yorkies, mutts, etc., and found that simply carrying a stick keeps the aggressive boxer from bugging us.

This field contained several other species, including several Cardinals and Mockingbirds. There are many bushes, black-berry patches, Osage orange trees, old elms, Eastern red cedar, thistles, and remnants of prairie grasses. We have found Harris’s Sparrows, Song and Lincoln Sparrows, Mourning and Eurasian collared Doves, White-crowned Sparrows, Titmice, Chickadees, Bewick’s Wrens, Jays, Crows, a resident Red-tailed Hawk and House Finches.

During the ice storm our feeder was extremely popular with everything. The House Finches that we had been missing suddenly appeared and brightened our feeding station, along with as many as eight male Cardinals and their partners. We could not keep the pecans cracked fast enough for the feasting Red-bellied Woodpecker, Bewick’s Wren, Mockingbirds, Titmice and Chickadees and a pair of Blue Jays. The Starlings tried for the

Chirpings, cont.

the suet, but didn't seem to bother the Red-belly. I thoroughly enjoyed the day off from work to watch my birds and their antics!

I did spend a lot of time watching (in between a nap or two), and we added a few new birds, such as female Red-winged Blackbirds and Great-tailed Grackles. After the storm we found a large "feather puddle" in the front yard. I suspect either Collared Dove or maybe a light-colored Rock Pigeon.

Post ice storm warm weather has perked up the crocus, daffodils, and House Finches, Cardinals, Mockingbirds, Mourning Doves and Bewick's Wrens. The Capitol Building's resident House Finches have already begun singing from the columns in front of the building and they are the last thing I hear before I go inside every morning. Pretty special!

Spring is slipping quickly into our world and it will be warmly welcomed. It's great to witness the awakening of Mother Nature, whether we live in the city or the countryside.

Recorders Report – January 2009 Beginning a New Year of Birding Adventures

It is time to start the 2009 New Year list and see what exciting bird adventures await central Oklahoma. In mid-January a winter storm roared through central Oklahoma leaving a dangerous layer of ice and snow. Birds flocked to feeders to the enjoyment of many backyard birdwatchers, as well as, the cold and hungry birds. In our yard a Northern Junco was eating berries on the dwarf Nandinas. Meadowlarks and sparrows were eating seeds from the native grasses, as well as, snuggling down in the dead stems to get out of the vicious wind and moisture illustrating how **it can benefit birds to wait until spring to clean up your garden.**

On the 3rd Gayle Snider reports a large group of birders found the **Yellow-billed Loon** on Lake Hefner. On the 2nd Max Fuller reports 7 people saw the **White-winged Crossbill** in Norman, and on the 8th Larry Mays found a Purple Finch while waiting to see it. On the 17th Mr. Byrd, Kent Andersson and others saw it. Nancy Vicars arrived later and missed it but found a **Pine Warbler**.

On the 4th Jimmy Woodard, Max Fuller and David Cook from Seattle, WA found about 100 **Mountain Bluebirds** in two locations ten miles west of Fort Reno and Old Hwy 66. They also found one Ferruginous Hawk, 3 Barn Owls, 2 Tree Sparrows and a Pileated Woodpecker. Later Jimmy and David flushed 3 Short-eared Owls over the "Purina field" in Edmond. On the Coffey Dam road Larry Mays found Marsh Wrens, a Common Yellowthroat, Swamp Sparrows, and at

Lake Hefner an adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull**. On the 5th Joe Grzybowski and Matt Jung saw Pacific Loons, Nancy Vicars reported a **Glucose Gull** and Paul van Els located 2 Wilson's snipe, 2 Great Egrets, and 3 **Western Grebes**.

On the 12th Wendell Long is quite certain he saw a **Gyr Falcon** just west of Lake Stanley Draper several miles north of Norman where John Sterling saw a possible Gyr Falcon on the 11th. According to Dick Gunn the Norman Sewage Treatment plant's outfall makes a year round warm water creek that parallels South Jenkins, which has good swamp/marsh birds, and on the 13th his dog flushed an **American Bittern** out of the very tall reeds.

On the 18th Jimmy Woodard, Jerry Vanbebber and Max Fuller stopped at Sooner Lake and found it full of waterfowl since the smaller bodies of water were frozen. They found a Pacific Loon near the dam and a Prairie Falcon along with dozens of Red-tailed Hawks and Bald Eagles soaring above the area. Patti Muzny had a Lincoln Sparrow in her yard in Southeast Oklahoma City, and Matthew and Cynthia Vandebroek had 2 confirmed Clay-colored Sparrows in Norman. On the 19th Tim O'Connell found about 20 Mountain Bluebirds in Payne County along County Road 150, aka Hackelman Road.

On the 20th the Tuesday Morning Birders at Lake Overholser found 2 Western Grebes and a female **Long-tailed Duck**. In Norman on the 23rd Dick Gunn and Brian Davis had a single Western Sandpiper on the mud flat off South Jenkins along with large flocks of peeps. Matt Jung's daughter in Norman had an Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warbler on the suet feeders, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, and a White-throated Sparrow. On the 25th Jim Arterburn made a quick pass through Sooner Lake where the **Surf Scoters** had increased to 6 while the **Black Scoter** was still hanging out with the large flock of Greater Scaup.

On the 26th freezing rain, sleet, and snow hit Central Oklahoma. Andy Feldt in Norman had Ruby-crowned Kinglets regularly visiting his suet feeder. In Edmond Karen Bays had a Fox Sparrow, Hermit Thrush, both Eastern and Spotted Towhees and White-throated Sparrows. Jim Jorgensen in Midwest City had a Fox Sparrow at his feeder. In Tuttle Sue Lutzes hosted about 18 species, which included Pine Siskin, Brewer's Blackbirds, and Brown-headed Cowbirds. Matt

Recorder's Report, cont.

Jung had already made three trips to the feeders and was rewarded with 20 species including a White-winged Dove and on the 27th a Cooper's Hawk and **Inca Dove**.

On the 28th Dick Gunn, Brian Davis and Joe Grzybowski checked South Jenkins in Norman and saw 2 Wood Ducks, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, the albino Red-tailed Hawk, an American Kestrel with a small mammal in its clutches, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Hermit Thrush, Common Yellowthroat, American Tree, Lincoln, Swamp, and White-throated sparrows. Later Diane Landoll and Charles Treafits added a Brown Thrasher.

On the 28th Pat Velte was still seeing the Yellow-throated Loon on Lake Hefner. On the 29th Jerry and Peggie Mitchell of Marlow, OK saw the White-winged Crossbill around noon in Norman and in the afternoon the Yellow-billed Loon on Lake Hefner. Both life birds for them!

Jim Arterburn has never considered Sooner Lake a hot spot for gulls, but on the 31st he found a shelf of ice on the back pond on the north side of the plant property that had around 40-50 large gulls including a **Glaucous**, first winter **Thayer's** and an adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull**. Later on the N-S causeway there was a first winter **Great Black-backed Gull**. An awesome find!

To date **122 species** have been reported in the Central Oklahoma area. I appreciate those who help provide the history of central Oklahoma birds by turning in their reports of bird species seen at home and in the field. I can be contacted by email at emkok@earthlink.net, leave a message at 405-381-9170 or mail to 4603 Pikey's Trail, Tuttle, OK 73089. Esther M. Key, Editor.

A Plurality of Birds:

In the English Language are coined a host of terms describing birds in groups. Here are some that still survive today.

Source: Peterson, Roger Tory. The Birds. New York: Time Life Books, 1963.

A **siege** of herons or bitterns
A **plump** of wildfowl
A **gaggle** of geese
A **skein** of geese (flying)
A **herd** of swans, cranes or curlews
A **bodelyng** of ducks
A **sord** (or **sute**) of mallards
A **spring** of teals
A **company** of widgeons
A **cast** of hawks
A **bevy** of quail
A **covey** of partridges
A **muster** of peacocks
A **nye** of pheasants
A **brood** of chickens
A **covert** of coots
A **congregation** of plovers
A **desert** of lapwings
A **wisp** (or **walk**) of snipe
A **fall** of woodcock
A **bazaar** of murrets (or guillemots)
A **flight** of doves or swallows
A **murmuration** of starlings
An **exaltation** of larks
A **watch** of nightingales
A **building** of rooks
A **chattering** of choughs
A **host** of sparrows

Field Trips

Tuesday Morning Birders Tuesdays (weather permitting)



Birders of all levels are encouraged to participate in these informal weekly field trips led by Nancy Vicars. ALWAYS Contact Nancy for meeting place and destination at: nancy.vicars@sbcglobal.net, 732-9885 or (cell) 831-1945 prior to each Tuesday morning event. You may also check our website at **OKC-Audubon.org**.

February 21, 2008—Oklahoma City Lakes Tour. Meet at Route 66 Park on the west side of Lake Overholser at 8:00 a.m. Leader: Jimmy Woodard — (324-1462 or 365-5685—cell).

March 27-29, 2009—Selman Ranch—Woodward County. Join us as we bird this 19,000 acre ranch for prairie chickens and more. For the rate of \$75, you get a bed, breakfast, a visit to the LPC lek, and unlimited birding access to the property. Accommodations at this B&B are limited, so book early. **Note: There is a fee for birding access if you stay offsite and wish to join us for day birding. Contact Sue Selman at 580-256-2006 or Jimmy Woodard at 324-1462 or 365-5685 (cell), for more information.

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