



# Oklahoma City Audubon Society

OKC-AUDUBON.ORG

November 2010

## Birds of Oklahoma with Duane Angles



Northern Harrier © Duane Angles

At our November 15 OKC Audubon meeting, Duane Angles, professional photographer, will return for a showing of his "Birds of Oklahoma" collection, beautiful and exciting photos of our own Oklahoma birds along with his photography tips and stories of the birds.

Duane got started in photography in 1974. He was in the Air Force on assignment in Guam. He used his reenlistment bonus to buy his first 35mm film camera and was hooked. He took a correspondence course from the School of Modern Photography and attended several workshops and seminars, including one memorable seminal he attended with Ansel Adams. For some time, he dabbled in landscape, portrait and wedding photography. He took a hiatus from photography for several years and then in 2004, his love for photography was kindled again. All of his free time is spent taking bird and landscape photos, he says. "I am re-learning the stuff I learned 25 years ago."

Come join us for a great evening with great refreshments and great camaraderie. And bring a friend or two. 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.



### 2011 Calendars For Sale

Our beautiful  
new calendars

are available. They are \$5 each plus \$1.50 for mailing. You can order online ( [www.okc-audubon.org](http://www.okc-audubon.org) ) or pick one up at any meeting.

### Cookie Patrol

Refreshments for the November meeting will be provided by: Russell Linholm, Fay Carver, Henry Benedict, and Mark Delgrosso.

### Welcome

We welcome Marcia Reddy to the Oklahoma City Audubon Society!

### Meeting Change:

The January 2011 meeting will be held on the 4th Monday of that month due to the Garden Center closure for the ML King holiday.

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## President's Perspective

By Bill Diffin

The 2010 Fall Meeting of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society in Stillwater turned out to be an eye-opening and an ear-opening experience. From 11 to noon we went on a walk led by Ted Floyd, the guest



speaker. The theme was "Bare-naked Birding". We got to leave our clothes on, but use of binoculars was not permitted. The idea was that birds can be identified without optics or a close up view if an observer will utilize all the information available at a distance. Useful characteristics are shape and relative sizes of major parts of the bird, the blended color perceived at a distance, posture and behavior such as wing movements in flight, e.g. the rowing of a Blue Jay. Despite the season and the time of day, we saw a lot of birds. The intro to the "Bare" approach was facilitated by Eastern Bluebirds, Northern Cardinals, a Dark-eyed Junco, Crows and Blue Jays in the early going. Using birds perched on utility wires, Ted made the point that a bluebird viewed from so far away that the orange and blue are indistinguishable can still be ID'd even though few birders are prepared to do it. A supporting example was the Blue Jay. Not many birders can detail the various black and white color marks on a Blue Jay, but they all know the bird when they see it.

We soon arrived at the centerpiece of the walk, an open field surrounded by trees and a power substation. While Ted was making his point with a distant Killdeer on the grass, a hawk took flight and soared within viewing distance. The tail was kept folded, but it was too long for a buteo and had a rounded tip indicating a Cooper's. Another hawk took flight and soared directly overhead. The spread tail was short and square in comparison to the Cooper's without much terminal white, diagnostic for Sharp-shinned Hawk. The lesson drawn from the accipiter id's was that observation of the whole bird with attention to the relative size and shape of its parts is often more useful than focusing on separate details.

The other major lesson was drawn from an id on a bird perched high up on a wire next to a utility pole. It was drab, long and thin with a long tail that it moved

around constantly. It might have been ID'd as a mockingbird or thrasher, but Ted picked American Kestrel female in agreement with at least one of the audience. When the bird took flight, the long wings, brown upper side and soaring flight confirmed it was a kestrel. The key had been to both notice and trust, despite the distance and the relative abundance of mockingbirds, thrashers and cardinals, the hint of brown coloration and put that together with all the other information, i.e. the location (up high on a utility line), behavior (tail wagging), and posture.

The final talk after the banquet, "Birding at Night: the Final Frontier", was also given by Ted Floyd. The introductory slide showed a star field with the theme from Star Trek playing in the background. It turns out that most birds migrate at night, and night-flying flocks of migrants tend to call noisily. Because the birds can't see well, calling is necessary to coordinate the flock. Ted played a dozen or so recordings of night-flying flocks and challenged us to guess the id's based on the sounds. Almost all were unfamiliar. One of the most unusual sounds was produced by Orange-crowned Warblers. The rustling or rushing sound was not even recognizable as birds calling, no less the vocalizations of a flock of songsters.

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## 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
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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



A few weeks ago my wife Melissa had an immature **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** (*Sphyrapicus varius*) hit her office window (NW 63rd & Classen). The bird jumped to a nearby tree branch, stunned but apparently none the worse for wear—many birds are not

so lucky. Although “yellow-bellied sapsucker” is sometimes tossed around as a joke among non-birders, the species is quite real and very interesting. It derives the “sapsucker” name from its habit of drilling small holes into the bark of living trees, and then returning later to drink the sap that flows from these holes; and it does have a yellowish belly although often this cannot be seen too well—among tree shadows and limbs—as the bird clings to a tree.

A full adult male has a red cap and throat, along with black and white plumage on much of the rest of the body. Females are similar, but have red only on their foreheads; young birds have brownish on much of the upper body. But the mark that most birders look for, I suspect, and present in all plumages, is the longitudinal white stripe in the middle of the black wing, a diagnostic point among woodpeckers normally found in our area (the Red-headed Woodpecker has longitudinal white on the lower half of the wing). This white streak of the sapsucker is one of those marks that lets a person say, “Ahhh, I know what this woodpecker is.”

Bent (Life Histories of North American Woodpeckers, 1964 reprint edition) related that McAtee, in a 1911 publication, stated that “...the yellow-bellied sapsucker attacks no fewer than 246 species of native trees and 6 vines, besides 31 kinds of introduced trees. Twenty-nine of these trees and 1 vine are known to be sometimes killed and 28 others are much disfigured or seriously reduce in vitality.”

Because we have a reasonably low population of this woodpecker during migration and winter, timber in our area does not seem to be too adversely affected. Besides sap, sapsuckers supplement their diet with insects such as ants, beetles and wasps, some of which get caught in the flowing sap at ta-pholes. They also supplement their diet with nuts and berries.

Bent (1964), also related information from Bolles, taken from an 1892 publication, who raised 3 young sapsuckers in captivity: “They subsisted almost entirely on maple syrup and water in equal parts, fed by hand at first, but in a few days they drank readily from a basin.” Each consumed about 8 teaspoonfuls of syrup per day. Unfortunately, these 3 young, captured July 7, lived only a little over 3 months in captivity before they died, so there apparently were some diet problems in holding the birds so long in captivity; the autopsied birds showed abnormalities in the liver.



The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker migrates through Oklahoma and some of them remain in the state for the winter. On Christmas Bird Counts, from 1940 to 2009 the number of

sapsuckers seen per party hour for the entire U.S. has risen from about 0.025 birds/party hr. to about 0.075 birds/party hr; numbers for Oklahoma, from 1952-2009, average about 0.125 sapsuckers/party hr.; and numbers from 1952-2009 on the Oklahoma City CBC average about 0.04 birds/party hour, or about 1 sapsucker for every 25 party hours of field time (this is a good illustration of why knowing approximate party hours are important data on CBCs) (above data from Audubon Society CBC results).

Years ago, Hubert Harris, a club member, banded a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Oklahoma City and it showed up several days later (5 I think) in Redwing, Minnesota, a distance of some 550 air miles. Bird band returns from areas other than at and near the banding site are very rare, so the sapsucker Hubert banded told an interesting story of a bird moving hundreds of miles north-northeast in the span of a few days.

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## Cheyenne Bottoms / Quivira Trip

*By Jimmy Woodard*

A group of Oklahoma birders headed out on Friday, September 3rd, for a Kansas Birding weekend.

We made a stop at the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge at mid-morning. The winds were strong which hindered the birding. Since we didn't find much at the dam, we took a hike to Sand Creek Bay. We found waders, ducks and shorebirds. Seen were Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal, Northern Shovelers, American Wigeon, American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Long-billed Dowitcher, and Forster's Terns.

The Sandpiper Trail held Snowy and Semipalmated Plovers, Black Tern and several peeps.

We arrived at Great Bend around 5:30. After checking into our birder-recommended motel, we ran out to Cheyenne Bottoms where we saw Western and Eastern Kingbirds and Bullock's Oriole in the same tree. We had hundreds of birds flying around the marshes just before sunset.

We returned to the Bottoms on Saturday. Migrants were active at the primitive campground near the headquarters. Gray Catbirds were everywhere. A group of 4 - 5 Bell's Vireos was hiding in a weed-choked ditch. Several Brown Thrashers, Nashville Warblers, Baltimore Orioles and a Chat feasted on poll berries and beautyberries growing along the road.

Cheyenne Bottoms held more water than I've ever seen. The main pools were too deep for waders. A few side pools had shallow water but it was mostly more than a quarter mile out and covered with weeds and grasses. There were thousands of birds but most were too far out to ID.

We did find any Green and immature Black-crowned Night-Herons, Least and American Bitterns, Virginia Rail, and lots of swallows.

After lunch we went to Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. Most of the birds were on the north end along the Wildlife Tour Loop. We found lots of shorebirds including peeps, plovers, Pectoral and Stilt Sandpipers and yellowlegs. We also saw a couple of Red-necked Phalaropes and a beautiful, dark Peregrine Falcon. Later, while walking a trail at the visitor's center, we came across a cool looking Massasauga rattlesnake.

On Sunday, most of us revisited Cheyenne Bottoms

before going our separate ways. New birds found were House Wren and Great-crested Flycatcher.

We finished the trip with 107 species. Participants included Lorene Alcorn, Marilyn Bradford, Jane Boren, Betty Clark, Iris Dial, Doug Eide, Nealand Hill, Gene and Jana Mott, Donna Stone, and me.

I would also like to recommend a visit to the new Environmental Education Center on the southeast side of Cheyenne Bottoms. It's only been open for a year but it is full of exhibits, displays, live animals and a gift shop.

## Christmas Bird Count Information

This year's Oklahoma City Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, 18 December 2010. Unless I should make different plans with you, I hope most of you can return to the same areas, roughly, you surveyed last year. I apologize in advance for not always being able to use everyone's skill to the max in assigning territories. There are two reasons: first, we give counters the option to repeat the area they counted last year (which most counters choose to do, and which actually should increase the quality of the data—repeatability); secondly, we just have too many dadgum superior participants to keep everyone engaged to their full potential, given the urban nature of most of the habitat within our count circle.

For those of you who have extra time to devote to the count than your assigned areas require, I encourage you to seek out smaller nuggets of habitat that are probably not being covered by other participants (perhaps, for example, a weedy patch currently below our radar, or paying extra attention to the yard of a neighbor who has feeders). You can check with me to be sure areas are not already covered. If you have additional ideas or questions please feel free to call or email me.

Diane Newell has agreed once again to host our after count Tally Party. Many thanks, Diane! The party will begin at 5:30 pm on the 18th at Diane's house at 8304 Lakeaire, near Lake Hefner (call me if you need directions). We will plan to have chili and soup, and we hope many of you who usually bring a dessert or side dish will do so again. Nathan Kuhnert will begin the tally at about 6:30 pm.

Here's to fun counts—past, present, and future!

John Shackford, Compiler  
Oklahoma City Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count  
johnsshack@aol.com  
405-340-5057 home 405-996-6050 cell  
429 E, Oak Cliff Dr., Edmond, OK 73034-8626

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## Minutes of Oct. 18, 2010

President Bill Diffin called the meeting to order and asked if there were any first time visitors. No new visitors were in attendance.

President Diffin asked for any corrections or changes to the September minutes as published in the October newsletter. He stated if no one objected the minutes are approved as published. Motion was made by Terri Underhill to approve the motion. Jim Vicars second the motion. Motion approved.

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

Cash on Hand 9/20/2010	\$4,972.37
Deposits	97.10
Disbursements	108.96
Cash on Hand 10/18/2010	\$4,960.51

Bill Diffin asked for any objection to the report as read. Terri Underhill made a motion to approve as read. No one opposed. The report was approved.

**Field Trips** presented by Jimmy Woodard.

Jimmy stated there were additions to the Field Trip Schedule as listed on the back page of the newsletter.

1. January 29, Pontotoc Winter Bird count. Contact Jona Tucker if you can assist in this count.
2. OOS Fall meeting was recently held. The Spring meeting will be May 13-15 at Black Mesa.
3. Texas representative, Lynn Barber, attended the Fall OOS meeting. She is promoting a new book and would like to speak to our organization.

### **New Business:**

Nealand Hill, Historian, stated he is updating the history of the club. He would like any photos, newspaper articles, or information about the club to be added to the history. Please submit any information to Nealand.

President Diffin recognized several people for assisting him in two club activities. At the Doug Tallamy lecture was Terri Underhill, Larry Mays and Nancy Reed. At the Oklahoma Expo was John Shackford, Terri Underhill and Sandra Krug.

Jimmy Woodard stated Chris Butler is studying Yellow Rails. He is doing a Yellow Rail drag each month at the Red Slough along with a banding session. These are held at night. The next night drag

will be October 29. Berlin will hold a day drag on October 28.

President Bill Diffin stated that October is the month we choose a Nominating committee. He requested three volunteers. Nealand Hill, Jimmy Woodard and Jim Bates agreed to be the Nominating committee.

Bill Diffin asked if there were any questions on the Constitution. A discussion followed concerning mailing the newsletter versus e-mailing the newsletter. A straw poll was conducted. 10 people would like to receive the newsletter by e-mail. 17 members would like to receive a hard copy by mail.

President Diffin stated we need to take a vote on increasing the dues from \$10 to \$15. John Shackford made a motion to raise the dues from \$10 to \$15 effective 2011. Nealand Hill second the motion. Vote by show of hands resulted in 24 favor and 0 opposed. Motion passed.

Adjourned for snacks.

Warren Harden introduced Casey Lindo, naturalist from Martin Park, as our speaker for the evening. Casey presented a wonderful lecture along with an exhibit of live snakes and frogs from Martin Park.

*Nancy Reed, Recording Secretary*

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## **President's Perspective (cont.)**

Have birders become over-dependent on scopes, binoculars, photographic equipment, and immediate access to field guides? Probably in some cases, yes. It is human and efficient to use technology to improve accuracy and lower the personal resources required to achieve a goal. However, there are many cases where a birder needs to survey a wide area quickly, speedily recognize common species at a distance, find a target bird, and make use of the few seconds it is in view to id or photograph it. At night visual cues don't exist at all, yet the birds are there to be discovered. Habits of behavior and thinking that won't allow birding without technology do limit the time and space in which a birder can operate. Over-reliance on gear is crippling rather than enabling. A birder must self-evaluate performance in the field and judge whether it is insufficient technology that is holding her or him back or just lack of skills, experience and commitment to learning the craft. An outing without binoculars is a severe test by today's standards of technology use, but very illuminating.



## Weekly Birders



*Weekly Birders trip leader,  
Bill Diffin*

Sharon Henthorn, Doug Eide, Charles Douglas and I comprised the Weekly Birders on Saturday, Oct 25. We met at 7:15 am at the Lake Overholser Lake Patrol HQ and drove to Rose Lake first, but the new rainwater had not revived it. Enormous flocks of large and small blackbirds were crossing Sarah Rd to the south. The larger birds were Common Grackles. Over on Mustang Rd there was an American

Kestrel on the utility wire, a half dozen Cattle Egrets around one of several cows, and a small flock of Eastern Bluebirds at the cattle pens.

Along Foreman Rd west of Cimarron Rd, a big puddle had two Greater Yellowlegs, a Long-billed Dowitcher, Least Sandpipers and Killdeer. A Red-tailed Hawk perched on a pivot sprinkler. At Evans Rd, an American Kestrel perched on the utility wire. The nearby puddle had two Greater Yellowlegs in it and a Yellow-headed Blackbird, eight Least Sandpipers and six Killdeer around the "shore".

In the El Reno north treatment pond were many Red-heads and Ruddy Ducks with Ring-necked Ducks, N Shovelers, Am Wigeon, Gadwall, Blue-winged Teal, a few Mallards and one female Lesser Scaup.

The Fort Reno entrance was locked. As we turned south from Rt 66 on to Ft Reno Rd, Savannah Sparrows flushed from the grass ditches on both sides and perched on the barbed wire or fled to the sprouting fields of winter wheat. Many of the Savannahs had yellow markings on the head. Occasional birds with longer tails and bright white outer tail

feathers indicated Vesper Sparrows.

We returned to Lake Overholser around noon and found Scattered rafts of Ruddy Ducks and a single Eared Grebe paddled in a cove, and Barn Swallows coursed low over the water. The point off the sand bar was covered with hundreds of Am White Pelicans. On

the bar to the north were a thousand roosting Franklin's Gulls bordered with Ring-billed Gulls, two Am Avocets and a few Double-crested Cormorants.

At Lake Hefner we started at the canal inlet. A hundred White Pelicans floated in a stately, linear raft. 15 Great Egrets and 12 Great Blue Herons roosted in separate groups across the cove. Six American Avocets loafed near the canal, while 22 Avocets, six Long-billed Dowitchers, and 30 Least Sandpipers foraged in front of us.

At Prairie Dog Point, the island was covered with Franklin's Gulls and a dozen Herring Gulls. Six White Pelicans and rafts of Northern Shovelers were placed around the periphery.

At Edmond's S Fink Park, we spotted Downy WP, Red-bellied WP, N Flicker, Blue Jay, Am Robin, E Bluebird, N Cardinals, N Mockingbirds, Carolina Wrens and Carolina Chickadees.

We visited Lake Arcadia near Air Depot and 33rd and saw a flock of 20 Eastern Bluebirds. As we left on 33rd St, Chipping Sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers and House Sparrows huddled on the ground in front of a cedar fence. We totaled 54 species for the day.

## In Memory



Our condolences go to the Enwall family on the recent death of Eric Enwall, former president of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society. Eric passed away October 29 at his Norman home.

Eric was a long time professor at the University of Oklahoma. He retired in 2005 from the department of Chemistry and Biochemistry after 35 with the university. In his early years at OU, he was a competitive tennis player. He was an excellent fisherman and skilled with a fly rod, having learned in the Colorado streams of his youth. Eric was an avid birder and member of OOS. Many wonderful hours were spent, with his wife Carol and other friends, with binoculars raised at his favorite birding sites across Oklahoma and beyond.

There will be a small, informal memorial service in Eric's beloved Wichita Mountains, attended by family and a few invited friends. Gifts may be sent to the Oklahoma City Audubon Society, c/o Nancy Vicars, 820 Arthur Drive, Midwest City, OK 73110.

# Recorders Report: October 2010

## Beginning the Fall Invasion

Beginning October, flies, crickets and spiders were abundantly hanging out in the fields providing a good food supply for the hungry insect eating birds. October was a warm dry month causing a lower amount of the forest fall color; however, the effect on the seed production of the prairie grasses and wildflowers is unknown. The Lake Hefner Cleanup and the Big Sit near Lake Thunderbird were big successes. Some unusual birds were relocated, and apparently the fall invasion of central Oklahoma has started.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brian Davis saw the first fall Dark-eyed Junco along South Jenkins. On the 4<sup>th</sup> at the Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge Bill Diffin found Spotted Towhee and Common Yellowthroat. Along South Jenkins on the 8<sup>th</sup> Jennifer Kidney and Cecil Johnson heard a Marsh Wren. In Norman C J Metcalf saw a Peregrine Falcon on a light pole next to the National Weather Center. It was spotted again on the 5<sup>th</sup> in a nearby neighborhood by Joe Grzybowski. On the 6<sup>th</sup> Matt Jung located a Black-bellied Plover at Rose Lake. Visitors Dan and Laurie Mooney spotted a Red-necked Phalarope at Lake Hefner.



On the 9<sup>th</sup> six birders met at a Prairie Dog Point for the **Lake Cleanup** and found several birds including a Bank Swallow and 3 Osprey. Jimmy Woodward had a Northern Harrier fly over on the north side of Yukon. Matt and Jenny Foster in Blanchard are feeding Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches.



On the 10<sup>th</sup> the Wing Nuts had a **Big Sit** at North Sentinel Park in Norman. Twenty-two people and 2 dogs attended for a total of 17 hours and counted 59 species of birds including a Black-throated Green Warbler, Fish Crow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Common Nighthawk and Chimney Swift.

In Yukon, Jimmy located the first White-crowned Sparrows, and at Pat Murphy Park Bill spotted a Pied-billed Grebe. On the 11<sup>th</sup> Jennifer discovered an Eastern Wood-Pewee along South Jenkins.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> at Stinchcomb Matt found a Gray Catbird and

Vesper Sparrow, and Les Imboden had a Loggerhead Shrike east of Stillwater. On the 19<sup>th</sup> in Oklahoma City, Dora Webb saw her first Northern Junco. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> David McNeely had a Northern Goshawk briefly visit his yard in Edmond.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> the OCAS Weekly Birders lead by Bill Diffin went west to the Fort Reno area and reported a Yellow-headed Blackbird, Horned Grebes, Vesper Sparrows and back at Lake Overholser a single Eared Grebe. On the 24<sup>th</sup> in Yukon Park Jimmy found a Golden-crowned Kinglet and Blue-headed Vireo. Patti and Brian Muzny heard a Red-breasted Nuthatch in a neighbor's pine tree in southwestern Oklahoma City, and on the 25<sup>th</sup> Nancy Reed had one in her backyard in Norman. On the 26<sup>th</sup> Tim O'Connell reports two Red-breasted Nuthatch window casualties.



On the 27<sup>th</sup> Matt Jung found a single **Sandhill Crane** wading along the NE mud flat at Lake Overholser, and on the 29<sup>th</sup> a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Norman. Terri Underhill and Pat Velte located a Brown Pelican at Lake Arcadia in Edmond perched in a dead snag, Bill found Swamp and White-throated Sparrows in the field on Hefner Road between Rockwell and Council, and Tim found Golden-crowned Kinglet, Field Sparrow, and Hooded Merganser at Lake Carl Blackwell. On the 31<sup>st</sup> Joe Grzybowski found a few American Golden Plovers still hanging around the El Reno sod farm. On the 30<sup>th</sup> after 8:00 pm at the OU football game Brian Davis observed a Merlin doing loops high over the field. Even though it was after dark there were plenty of meaty moths around the lights.

To increase the September total to 124 reported species, along South Jenkins on September 16<sup>th</sup> Jennifer Kidney found a Tennessee Warbler, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> a Kentucky Warbler, and on the 24<sup>th</sup> a Lark Sparrow. To increase the species total for the year a **Ring-necked Pheasant** was seen by Esther Key on Highway 4 just south of Wal-Mart at Highway 152.

During October a total of **127** bird species were reported with **1** new addition making the Central Oklahoma area to date total at **259** 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](mailto:emkok@earthlink.net).

*Esther M. Key, Editor.*

# Chirpings

November 2010

By Patti Muzny



It's finally fall and the lure of the garden has disappeared with the first frost. What does one do with a couple of gallons of green peppers? In a few weeks when they become unrecognizable because furry stuff is thriving on them, I'll make the decision to recycle them to the compost barrel?

Favorite winter migrants are returning and the resident Cooper's Hawk

is still around to police his favorite feeding grounds. Some things in nature just never change. The Grackles have discovered our backyard horse and have been seen checking the ground for tidbits dropped – fresh sweet feed morsels or the aftermath of ingesting the sweet feed! We've also had Yellow-rumped Warblers, Juncos, Chickadees, Song Sparrow, Killdeer and the local Mockingbird, Cardinals and Carolina and Bewick's Wren. In early November, my drive to work was enhanced by the appearance of a Great-blue Heron flapping along the intersection of South Shields and 59<sup>th</sup> Street – not exactly Great-blue habitat!

At our Byars retreat on November 7, we heard our Eastern Phoebe calling around the cabin. On one of my hikes, I found a pecan tree with at least 6 Eastern Bluebirds that were sending out an alarm of some sort. They were soon joined by a few Yellow-rumped Warblers, who took up the vigil. I searched for the source, but didn't see anything that should cause such a commotion. The weeds at the edge of the pond provided cover for a tiny garter snake that had not yet found its winter home.

Down along the creek among the tangle of grape vines, poison ivy, hackberry and a pretty little vine with red berries, I located a half-dozen Ruby-crowned Kinglets, a dozen or so Yellow-rumped Warblers and several dozen American Robins. They seemed to be taking advantage of this year's bumper crop of fruit. The persimmons and hackberries are overloaded with fruit and there are lots of "possum" grapes left high in the trees.

In the neighbor's pasture Brian saw several Black Vultures, a Harrier and Song Sparrows, a Lincoln's Sparrow, a Red-tailed Hawk and a Mockingbird. Our Red-

shouldered Hawk was heard earlier by Tim.

My fall hikes during the dry weather make sneaking up on a rock impossible! As I stroll along in the woods, I sound like an elephant in the crunchy leaves. But it's amazing what can be found, regardless of the noise. In between my noisy steps I heard White-throated Sparrows and found some Juncos and a Song Sparrow.

Our son, Tim, saw a Pileated Woodpecker before he and Sam fired up the tractor and chain saw and began clearing some downed timber so my walking trails would be open again. Not only do I use these trails, but our critters enjoy the tangle-free hikes, too.

A few weeks ago Tim bought a "critter cam" and set it up near the end of our pond. We left it for three weeks and when we brought it back to see what had come for drink we were amazed!



Three of our white-tailed bucks, some does and one fawn had walked across in front of the camera. We had a ten-point, an eight-point and a little six-point! Brian and I had seen the six-point, but didn't realize we had the big guy. I'd seen his tracks in the soft soil, but was surprised at his size and excellent physical condition.

As I loaf on our porch, I hear gunshots coming from property to the south of us. Maybe our antlered wildlife will be back for another photo op soon; maybe not.

It's fall; it's cool; I'm not shut in a building, and it's a great day to be out enjoying the country. My perfume this afternoon is essence of wood smoke and cooked bacon. It's just pretty "Chirpy! Our utility bills are paid; Sam repaired the hot water heater; life is good.

## Newsletter delivery via E-mail?

If you would like to receive your newsletter as an E-mail PDF attachment instead of through the mail, please contact Nancy Vicars at: [Nancy.vicars@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Nancy.vicars@sbcglobal.net)



## Field Trip Report: Lake Overholser, October 30, 2010

Thirteen birders gathered at Route 66 Park 7:30 in the morning on a windy and cool Saturday to survey the birds around Lake Overholser. The group observed the feeding of the Mallards and geese at the park and noticed one Greater White-fronted Goose among the many Canada Geese. According to Charles Douglas, this is a sedentary bird often seen at the park. It must have been injured in the past because it walks with an obvious limp. While we were walking around the pond a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher treated us to a fly-by.



After rounding the park, we checked the west side hedgerow for sparrows and found none. We did see a single Northern Flicker fly toward the south-east and later a single Cooper's Hawk was floating over some trees at the west side. Walking back toward the parked cars we heard a Western Meadowlark sing.

The dam area produced nothing but one GB Heron; however, large rafts of ducks and gulls were floating in the south-west part of the lake. We stopped to scope the area from two places and found 4 species of ducks, one Pied-billed and 3 Horned Grebes plus lots of Franklin's Gulls.

From there we went to the north side, near the Coffer Dam and observed the numerous American White Pelicans, I estimated 400 – 500 birds. A Sandhill Crane was keeping the pelicans company and another large flock of mixed gulls was present, mostly Franklin's with a sprinkling of Ring-billed Gulls. While driving past NW 23rd Street I had a single swallow fly across the road with a poorly white belly and navy-blue back – a Tree Swallow.

We then walked the Coffer Dam and observed the same birds, just from a different vantage point. I was hoping to

phish up a passerine or two but the wind kept the small birds under cover.

Then we drove to the canal road to scope the birds in the NE corner of the lake. Among the mass of Franklin's and Ring-billed Gulls, one Bonaparte's Gull was discovered. The crane decided to join the pelicans as they flew back into the NE corner after some hunters left and we had the best views yet of a bird not so frequently seen at Overholser.

On the mudflats were Greater Yellow-legs (7), about 5 -10 Least Sandpipers and 4 Dunlins. At this point it was noon and I had to excuse myself from the tour. Four members of the group continued to Lake Hefner after lunch and found several additional species: Northern Pintail, Ring-necked Duck, American Avocet, Vesper Sparrow. We found 43 species plus the additional ones spotted at Lake Hefner.

The attendance list for today was: Dan Mooney, Laurie Mooney, John Cleal, Marion Holmier, Sharon Henthorn, Charles Douglas, Doug Eide, Bill Gronos, Jean Braun, Bill Diffin, Jana Mott, Gene Mott, Matt Jung. If I spelled any names wrong – mea maxima culpa!

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## Christmas Bird Count Trivia

### Putting the CBC into perspective!

Did you know... making do with a mere two and three-quarters hours of daylight, Prudhoe Bay, Alaska counters spotted only one species: the Common Raven.

Did you know... during the 1987-88 Pine Prairie, Louisiana CBC, one group recorded 103 million birds, including more than 53 million red-winged blackbirds, a whopping 50 million more than the average tally for the total CBC.

Did you know... in 2008, during the Cape Crozier, Antarctica count -- the southernmost count and Antarctica's only one to date -- three participants saw 270,885 Adelie penguins, plus four other species.

Source: *Audubon*, November-December 2010

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## Montana Birding, Part II

When we last visited, our intrepid birders (Nealand and Jimmy) were arriving in Missoula. We were in town to attend the Wings Over the Big Sky birding festival.

My field trip on Saturday visited Pattee Canyon on the outskirts of town. About 20 conference attendees hiked miles of trails through canyons, hills and forests. We enjoyed the exercise but didn't find a lot. We did see a male 3-Toed Woodpecker, Cassin's Vireo, MacGillivray's Warbler, and Western Tanager.

After lunch, Nealand and I birded a recreation area in a national forest outside of town. Again, not too many birds. In the evening, we enjoyed the conference activities with the more than 100 attendees.

On Sunday, June 6th, we went on a field trip to Lolo Pass along the Idaho border. Dan and Amy Farrell joined us along the way. In the higher elevation forests you expect quality and not quantity in birds. That's what we got. A "Franklin's" form of Spruce Grouse was in the road. Also found were Olive-sided Flycatcher, 3-Toed Woodpecker, Gray and Steller's Jay, Pine Grosbeak and Varied Thrush.

We birded in Idaho and found Dipper on both sides of the border. After an Idaho lunch, we headed to Amy and Dan's house in the Bitterroot Valley near Stevensville. Dan and I went to nearby Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge and walked the trails. The place was fairly birdy; we had about 40 species in just a few hours.

The Bitterroot Valley is one of the fastest growing places in the country. It attracts impressive residents. Some of Dan and Amy's neighbors are Huey Lewis, Hank Williams, Jr., and Charles Schwab.

On Monday, we headed south to Lost Trail Pass in the Bitterroot National Forest which has Boreal Owl nest boxes. We found a few birds but no owls. We saw Clark's Nutcracker, Mountain Bluebird and Red-necked Sapsucker.

Near the Continental Divide, we tried to drive through a patch of snow on the forest road. We nearly slid off the road into the trees -- our left rear tire was on the side of the road. Since we were miles from the main road and with no cell service, we spent over an hour digging and bracing with rocks and tree limbs. Luckily, we were able to get out. Our reward was a Northern Goshawk flying down the road ahead of us.

We finally got a late lunch then birded for a bit in the af-

ternoon before calling it an early day. Our best find was a group of Bighorn Sheep along the road, just a few feet away from us.

On Tuesday, we said goodbye to Montana and headed west on Hwy 12 through several river valleys to Lewiston, Idaho. South of town we climbed into the forest atop Clark Mountain. The scenery was spectacular but the birds few. We did find 3-Toed Woodpecker, Townsend's Warbler, Veery, Dusky Flycatcher, and Mountain Chickadee.

We headed south to Riggins for the night. The view out our back door was the best view of the whole trip. A Confluence of rivers and grassy hillsides formed the backdrop. We'd hoped for Chukar and partridge but found none.

Wednesday, we continued south, stopping to bird along the way. We stopped at the World Birds of Prey Center in Boise. The center is small but it has lots of cool raptors like Harpy Eagle and a white Gyrfalcon. We did see Chukars on the grounds before spending the night in Twin Falls.

On Thursday, we made our way down to Utah and visited the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge on the Great Salt Lake. The tour road was closed but we got lucky and joined a field trip into closed areas along the dikes.

Along the marshes and pools we found many ducks, grebes, gulls, terns, and blackbirds. We also saw a Clark's Grebe with a chick on its back. Bear River was very birdy.

Next we visited Antelope Island. The scenery was nice but birding was limited. We then headed south and east through Salt Lake city to Green River in the east central part of the state.

Early Friday, we visited Arches National Park and enjoyed the gorgeous scenery. We hiked a few trails but saw few birds. We did get Prairie Falcon, Rock Wren, Scrub Jay, and Juniper Titmouse.

Late morning we made our way to the Four Corners monument. Unfortunately, it was under construction. It is being moved to a new location a few yards away. Who knew the four corners of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah has been in the wrong location?!

The rest of the trip consisted of driving home through New Mexico then I-40 to Oklahoma. We put 5,000 miles on the rental vehicle and tallied 198 species on the two-week trip.

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## SE Arizona, Part II

by Jimmy Woodard

On Monday we went back to Beattie's and re-found the Spotted Owl. Woodland birds and hummers abounded. We re-found the White-eared Hummer. Nadine got a lifer Cassin's Vireo.

We visited Ash Canyon and had a few things like Western Tanager, Lazuli Bunting, Scott's Oriole, and Painted Redstart. After a wait we got a look at a Lucifer Hummingbird.

We visited Ramsey Canyon but really didn't see much. After lunch, we went to Beattie's again. We stayed the afternoon enjoying the weather and the birds. A Berylline Hummingbird was a good find and another lifer for Nadine. The end of the day brought news of a tornado outbreak back home in Oklahoma.



Our Tuesday began early as we headed toward the Patagonia area. We stopped at the famous Patagonia rest stop and located two Thick-billed Kingbirds. The Paton's backyard held lots of birds. We sat in the shade to bird the easy way: Abert's Towhee, Inca Dove, Gambel's Quail, Curve-billed Thrasher and Gila Woodpecker. Nadine got another lifer when a Violet-crowned Hummingbird made a visit to the feeders.

We ate lunch at Patagonia State Park and decided to camp there for the night. We spent the rest of the day birding several trails around the lake. We found Clark's Grebe, Common Moorhen, Green Heron, White-faced Ibis, and Black-throated Sparrow.



On Wednesday, we birded the lake then headed into Patagonia. We spent a couple of hours birding the Nature Conservancy Patagonia-Sonoita Preserve. We walked several trails and saw a good variety including Lucy's Warbler, White-throated Swift,

Gray Hawk, Lesser Goldfinch, Green-tailed Towhee, Dusky-capped Flycatcher and Black Phoebe.

We traveled the back road through Box Canyon to arrive at Madera Canyon by mid-afternoon. We checked into the Santa Rita Lodge then went down to the lower canyon to bird. We quickly found Botteri's and Rufous-winged Sparrows.

We visited Kobu Lodge and got a look at the infamous Flame-colored Tanager. At dusk we did the vigil to watch the Elf Owl come out of its roost hole.

On Thursday, we walked a new trail at Proctor Road. We'd hoped for Black-capped Gnatcatcher but didn't succeed.

We went to Upper Madera Canyon and hiked the Vault Mine Trail for a few hours. We saw several Hepatic Tanagers, Plumbeous and Warbling Vireo, Townsend Warbler, House Wren and one Olive Warbler. We also heard two trogons.

A walk along White Horse Trail produced a calling Buff-breasted Flycatcher that had been previously reported.

Friday was our last day in Arizona. We packed and headed to Tucson where we birded Tucson Mountain Park and found a few Gilded Flickers.

We entered the Sonoran Desert Zoo at 7:30 a.m. With Nadine's zoo contacts, we got a behind-the-scenes tour. The coolest part of the tour was the hummingbird aviary. The guide showed us several nests of five species of hummingbirds. We even got to feed some of the birds with live insects!

The zoo exhibits were clean and well designed. The main aviary is packed with all kinds of birds and the reptile house has a variety of snakes, lizards, frogs, insects, spiders and scorpions. We hated to do it but we had to leave about Noon to begin the journey back home.

We made it to New Mexico about 2:30. Our route went up through Silver City and over to I-25 on a scenic but windy road. We spent the night in Socorro.

On Saturday morning, we spent a few hours at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. There were lots of birds, as usual, including ducks, geese, herons, swallows, shorebirds, flycatchers, and raptors.

At quick stop at the Melrose migrant trap netted Nadine's last lifer on the trip, a Northern Waterthrush. We made home by late evening. Our tally was 226 species and 58 lifers on her first bird trip to Southeast Arizona.

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

## Field Trip Schedule: [ *watch for updates on the website and in future newsletters* ]

- Nov 13: **Arcadia Lake.** Meet at 8AM at Braum's in Edmond at I-35 and 15th St. Leader: Bill Diffin.
- Dec 4: **CBC Scouting.** John Shackford will lead us to scout areas to prepare for the Christmas Bird Count.
- Dec 18: **OKC Audubon Christmas Bird Count.**
- Jan 8 **Crystal Lake/Bridgestone.** Leader is Jim Bates. Meet at McDonald's at I-40 and Council at 8AM
- Jan 15: **Longspur search / Norman area.** Angie and Ben Holt will lead us to search for longspurs at Embassy Suites and the 10 Mile Flats area. Details TBA.
- Jan 13-16: **TOS Winter** meeting in Ft Worth. Texas Ornithological Society meeting.  
Lyn Barber at dalybar@aol.com.
- Jan 22: **Canton Lake.** details TBA.
- Feb 5: **Sooner Lake** (joint trip w/ Tulsa Audubon). details TBA.
- Feb 12: **Ft. Cobb Lake.** Leader: Larry Mays. Also, the meeting place for the trip will be the IHOP at I-40 and Mustang Road. Departure will be at 7:30 sharp but you can come earlier if you want to eat breakfast before we go.
- Feb 26: **Woodcock Watch at Byars.** Patti Muzny will host us to observe woodcocks at her cabin just east of Byars.
- Mar 5: **Tenkiller Lake** (joint trip w/ Tulsa Audubon). details TBA.
- Mar 19: **Stinchcomb WMA.** Leader is Jim Bates. meet at Jim's Restaurant and NW 39th and Council at 8AM.
- Mar 26 **South Jenkins St/Norman.** Leader: Dick Gunn. details TBA.
- Apr ?? **OKC Zoo Behind the scenes birding.** tour the zoo and bird the grounds. Leader: Nadine Varner.
- Apr 15-17 **LPC Festival at Woodward.** Contact John Kennington for more details at johnkennington@gmail.com.
- Apr 29 **Salt Plains Bird Festival.**
- May/June **Club picnic and Nightjar walk at Lake Draper.** details TBA.
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