



Oklahoma City Audubon Society

OCTOBER 2007

Backyard habitat, and then some

Program and Meeting: October 15, 2007

Kurt and Sharon Meisenzahl of our OCAS Lawton contingent will be the speakers at our **October 15** meeting. The Meisenzahls have constructed one of the best birding backyards in Oklahoma. Situated on a creek and straddling eastern, western, northern and southern birding regimes with trees, understory shrubbery, feeders and a mist system, the Meisenzahls attract a wonderful mixture of birds coming into their yard. With an advantageous viewing setup built into their house, Kurt and Sharon possess a long list of species we all would love to see in our backyards. At our monthly Monday night meeting they will share their backyard experiences along with other birding tales. Come along and bring a friend. Our meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Will Rogers Garden Center, I-44 and NW 36th Street. Visitors are always welcome. Refreshments will be provided by Carol Enwall, Faith Johnson and Carla Brueggen.



Tuesday morning birders: Yukon City Park

Although our morning walk on September 25 got off to a WET start, the Tenacious Tuesday birders were not discouraged. The one hour wait in the shelter of our vehicles proved to be worth while!! As anticipated, as soon as the rain stopped the birding was great.

We followed a feeding flock made up of 2-Red-breasted Nuthatches, Orange-crowned, Nashville, Black & White and Wilson's Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Chickadees, Titmice and Downy Woodpeckers along the nature trail. An Olive-sided Flycatcher, Red-headed and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Yellow-shafted Flickers, Brown Thrasher and Robins were also colorful additions.

This is a very birder friendly park with a very nice nature trail, a pond and lots of good habitat for the resident species as well as migrants. This was my first trip but I will look forward to returning soon.

Participants were Esther Key, Karen Barker, Carla Brueggen, Sue Smith, Marion Stewart and our newest OCAS member Tim Ryan. Although the morning was cut short by the rain delay, our little group recorded 25 species. Quality versus Quantity.

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Oklahoma City Audubon Society dues are \$10 per person/family. You may pay Nancy Vicars at any meeting or mail to:

Nancy Vicars
820 Arthur Drive
Midwest City, OK 73110

Chirpings

By Patti Muzny

The 23rd of September dawned calm and quiet in our south Oklahoma City back yard. Rarely are we in town on a Sunday morning, but we did not make our usual trip to Byars this weekend. I was walking past the windows in the breakfast area about 8:00 AM and saw one of our House Wrens perched on a rock in the back. I had noticed the newly mowed lawn was sparkling with dew.



Quickly the little wren jumped down into the wet grass. I thought it was after a bit of breakfast, but that was not the case. Suddenly it literally dove into the grass and rooted its beak and head through the grass, much like a dog might do. It also flattened its diminutive body into the grass and continued rooting and rolling and fluttering until it was thoroughly wet! The second wren appeared and decided that if wren #1 was having this much fun with a bath, wren #2



was going to join in. Now there were two dipping, bobbing, fluttering and flapping wrens having their "bath." Perhaps they missed the ritual Saturday night bath?

One of the wet little birds flew into the Oregon Grape Holly and began to preen a few seconds, then decided a spot had been missed and dove back down for one last shower. Before this little saga had ended, three House Wrens had been showered and preened. There was a lot of conversation going on, so I very quietly opened the window. I could now hear the sounds and was rewarded by a symphony of delightful wren chatter.

I had seen Jays, Mockingbirds and House Sparrows doing the "anting" thing on a pile of grass clippings, and had seen Hummingbirds shower on leaves, but had never observed the grass showers by any species. About four feet away was a shallow birdbath with water. In a few seconds that birdbath had a Robin and a Mockingbird taking a drink.

What a privilege to be at the right place at the right time and be able to just sit quietly and observe yet another phenomenon of nature materialize just for me.

P.S. I want to thank my dear friend, Pat Velte, for agreeing to take on the responsibilities of this newsletter! After many years of being the editor, I felt the time was right for me to turn it over to new ideas and talents. I will continue to "chirp" through this column.

Oklahoma City Audubon Society

Officers 2007

President	Nealand Hill	388-6759
Vice Pres.	John Shackford	340-5057
Secretary	June Ketchum	387-3620
Treasurer	Nancy Vicars	732-9885
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Conservation	Larry Mays	392-2131
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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.

In Other Words

by Larry Mays

Ah, a forum. When Patricia Velte, our brand new newsletter editor, suggested I might write a little something for the newsletter, my first thought was to put together an article to just simply bum everyone out. There is so much really bad news available concerning the environment that it wouldn't have taken but a few minutes to scrape up enough scary stuff to make what little hair we collectively have left stand straight up. But then I thought, "oh, what the heck, I'll go easy on 'em the first time."

So, what I'd like to do is tell you about someone remarkable. If you're a web surfer like myself, and if you like birds, as probably every reader of this newsletter does, then you may have already "met" Julie Zickefoose. She does a daily (not on weekends!) weblog that you can access at: Juliezickefoose.com, her website, where you will also discover her amazing talent as an artist and writer (two among an astounding array of talents).

As you will discover from her website, and weblog, Julie lives near Whipple, Ohio, on an 80 acre patch of paradise with her husband Bill Thompson III (editor of *Birdwatchers Digest*), her daughter Phoebe, son Liam, and the wonder dog, Chet Baker.

When I said "an astounding array of talents" I was not kidding. Julie is a wildlife rehabilitator, a gardener (including bonsai and orchids), a musician and a mom. She does frequent spots on National Public Radio. In fact, she is so hyperactive that just reading about what she does with her days can wear me out.

Just about a year ago her book, "Letters From Eden" was published, and that is what I want to tell you about. The book is, in part, a compilation of her blog posts for the previous year, but it does not begin, nor end, with that. Julie takes you through a year of her life there on that little patch of Appalachian

woodland; through the four seasons and into the lives of the creatures that share her world.

Alongside the excellent essays are her watercolors and sketches which are simply fantastic. In it you will read about Big Fergus, the bad boy bullfrog, and L.C., the box turtle, and lots of other critters without pet names, like Phoebes and copperheads and 'possums and turkeys and white-tailed deer.



I kid you not, you will love this book! Go buy two copies, and give one to a friend for Christmas. They will thank you for it.

Tuesday Morning Birders Eldon Lyon Park

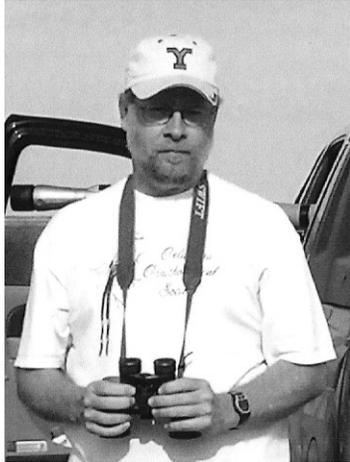
Our morning walk on October 2nd began with the sighting of a beautiful, mature adult Red-headed Woodpecker at Eldon Lyon Park. As a matter of fact, it was sparing with a Starling and we're proud to announce, it WON!! Although this was a great start, it became quite clear that finding other birds in this park, on this particular morning was not to be.

I made the decision to regroup and head to the eastside of Stinchcomb Wildlife Preserve. The **wind** was not our friend today and the birds managed to stay pretty well hidden in the dense foliage along the road. Sightings included a Gray Catbird, Bewick's Wren, Brown Thrashers, Nashville & Orange-crowned Warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and a White-eyed Vireo. Flyovers by an Osprey, TV's, Barn Swallows, American Goldfinch, Robins and Yellow-shafted Flickers were a treat.

The Tenacious Tuesday participants were Fay Carver, Henry Benedict, Tim Ryan, Karen Barker, Carla Brueggen, Feodora Steward, Garey Harritt, Esther Key, Marion Stewart, Dora Webb & Matt Jung. Even under these less than favorable conditions, we tallied 30 species for the morning.

The 700 Bird

by Jimmy Woodard



Max Fuller, Garey Harritt and I left Oklahoma City at 10 p.m. on Sunday, August 19th and headed for Big Bend, Texas. We were going in search of a Fan-tailed Warbler that had been reported in Pine Canyon in the park.

We arrived at the park about 8:30 a.m. on

Monday. The drive into the canyon was six miles long over a rough and uneven road. It took us almost an hour to make it to the trailhead.

We hiked for over an hour up into the canyon to a 200-foot waterfall at the end of the trail. I made it to the waterfall ahead of the boys since most of the hike was uphill.

Within 30 seconds of my arrival, I noticed several birds moving in the brush on the slope below me. The first bird was a Spotted Towhee but the second bird, which I could barely make out in the shaded cover, was the Fan-tailed Warbler. I could make out the eye crescents, white loreal spot, golden crown, and the spread of the fan-shaped tail.

The bird flew onto a rock out in the open so I got a great look for several seconds. Then the towhee chased the warbler across the creek onto a rock in the open in full sun for several more seconds for another great look! The bird even did a complete 360-degree turn while fanning its tail.

By the time Max and Garey made it up the trail, the bird had disappeared. We spent the next two hours searching and waiting for the bird to show again. We did get a few sporadic looks at the bird in the underbrush, but never in the open. Max got a decent look but Garey was unable to get an identifiable look.

We came back out of the canyon in mid-afternoon and the hike was sweltering hot. We took our time coming out but eventually made it down okay. We left the park by late afternoon and spent the night in Fort Stockton. We returned to Oklahoma City on Tuesday afternoon. After 21 years and 125 days, I had found my 700th bird!

The Fan-tailed Warbler



Jimmy's 700th North American life bird, the Fan-tailed Warbler, is a

large warbler, similar in behavior to redstarts but more secretive. According to the National Geographic Complete Birds of North America, the species breeds in moist, shady, steep-walled ravines from the Pacific slope of northwestern Mexico south to Nicaragua with disjunct population in coastal east-central Mexico. The warbler Jimmy spotted in Big Bend was first sighted just days before Jimmy, Max and Garey traveled to Big Bend and is the first documented sighting of the species in Texas. There have been a few reported sightings of the species in Arizona. Many field guides and even the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's web site do not list the bird among North American species. Congratulations to Jimmy on his landmark sighting.

Lake Hefner Habitat Project

The Audubon Society of Central Oklahoma is seeking volunteers to help with the planting and initial care of native shrubs and trees, and to support caring for the land. Planting will begin this Fall as part of their Lake Hefner Habitat Restoration Project. This is a conservation project and represents the idea of thinking globally and acting locally; it is intended to bring in more birds to the area and wildlife. They are also seeking donations towards this project.

Contact Jane Cunningham: hanenhark@sbcglobal.net for more information.

Overholser Ride

By Jimmy Woodard

One of my favorite things to do is take a bike ride early in the morning. I did just that on a recent Sunday.

I arrived at Route 66 Park at 6:30 AM. The chatter of Scissortails greeted me as I stepped out of the car.

The overcast skies kept it dark and the humidity kept it warm. The early start meant few cars on the road. Amazingly, even in the city you can have quiet times.

Out of the darkness appeared the silhouette of a Black-crowned Night Heron standing perfectly still along the shore. Close by was what appeared to be a black cat, but upon closer inspection turned into a skunk! A raised tail and whiff of scent convinced me to move on!

The whir of wings alerted me to a flock of ducks passing overhead. A “chip” alerted me to a Mockingbird. A “coo” became a Collared Dove and a “whistle” showed me a Northern Oriole. Riding in the dark means you bird more by ear than by sight.

As the day dawned, the increasing light revealed the seemingly never-ending groups of herons and egrets silently streaming overhead. Ripples on the canal revealed the presence of a pair of ducks on the canal.

A gaggle of Scissortails lined the wires as I ended my journey back at the park. Ironically, the flycatchers are only beginning their journey.

In closing, I want to give you my three rules for riding in the dark:

1. Always wear white for better visibility.
2. (Goatsucker Rule) Never ride with your mouth open. There is no limit to the number of bugs that are waiting to fly in there. They don't taste very good!
3. Never approach what you think is a black cat. It might turn out to be a skunk. Fortunately, my encounter ended well. The skunk only gave me a warning as we went in opposite directions.



Skunk Meets High School Football

by Patti Muzny

Jimmy's skunk encounter reminded me of the delightful pet skunk I raised and lived with as a teenager. (My mother must have been a saint!) I was a high school football cheerleader. Our school colors were black and white. Now wouldn't it be neat if we took the skunk (her stinker had been removed) to her first football game?

“Patsy” the skunk was fitted by a cobbler with a little leather harness and a leash. She had never been exposed to the high school football crowds of a small town, but she was a big attraction. All was mostly well until the team ran onto the field and the band fired up and the crowds yelled. Somehow Patsy managed to slither out of her nice new harness and to my total embarrassment, turned into a black and white streak and headed under the bleachers! I dove after her and managed to catch her before she got too far out of reach. No damage to anything but my 15 year-old dignity!

The story doesn't end here – I had my cheering duties to perform and nobody wanted to leave to take her back home. It was chilly and my mom had on her only decent coat. Mama took Patsy and the poor frightened animal hid under Mama's coat, snuggled between Mama's backside and the coat. All was mostly well until Patsy's bladder needed relieving. You can guess the rest! Coat went to the cleaners and Patsy was banished from attending any more football games! The hands of time kept on turning around and my family still laughs at many of our skunk stories. And to this day, I do covet a soft spot for skunks. (One of my sisters who got sprayed in the face by the one who kept his stinker doesn't feel quite the same about them and didn't think it was as funny as I did!)

Recorders Report

September 2007

Monarch Butterflies to Red-breasted Nuthatches

September signals the beginning of changes in weather and bird species. Scattered showers provided intermittent moisture for the gorgeous sunflower blossoms. As we enjoyed the beauty, from exquisite butterflies to stinging wasps, insects were busily pollinating the flowers for nectar while they were creating seeds for the winter birds. It appears to be an invasion year for Red-breasted Nuthatches, so keep your eyes and ears open. On the west side of Oklahoma City, we, too, were migrating from Piedmont to Tuttle. Our new home is in an old alfalfa field which is being reclaimed by native grasses and for the entire month, a small flock of Lark Sparrows.

On September 2nd Randy and Lisa Anderson had a pair of Inca Doves visit their backyard feeders. They were very excited to see them. On September 9th Tim O'Connell had about 100 American White Pelicans wheeling over the OSU stadium in Stillwater around noon.

On September 9th Phil Floyd in Lexington reports that the rain had let up and tempered to a soft drizzle. He walked out to the field on the north part of his property. As he looked over nodding thistles, partridge pea, sow thistle, and sunflowers, a small group of American Goldfinches passed through... 10 to 15. One came from the west across the field being chased beak-to-tail-feather by a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. The hummingbird chased the goldfinch into a sand plum tree and continued harassing him from limb to limb. When the goldfinch finally found cover, the hummingbird commenced the back and forth demonstration of aggressive intimidation. Quite the spectacle.

On the 9th Hollis Price reports there were at least 50 Common Nighthawks on Indian Meridian near NE 164th Street near Deep Fork Creek in Oklahoma City in a definite feasting mode. Hollis also reports 15-20 Hummingbirds at the backyard feeders in Jones, Oklahoma. Terri Bradburry in Yukon reports three Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are still at his feeders.

On September 9th, Jimmy Woodard started at the playa west of Route 66 Park on the west side of Lake Overholser where he found one Black-necked Stilt parading around the north end of the pool. The

Yukon City Park had a few migrants. He found 5 Mississippi Kites all on one branch, a Wilson's Warbler and several overflights of Northern Orioles. There was a Peregrine Falcon circling over the ponds at NW 63rd and Mustang Road scaring everything except a group of Canada Geese. At the Yukon Sewage Treatment Facility, he saw an adult Merlin make several passes at some shorebirds in flight. It then perched on a fence for a nice look. He also found two juvenile Short-billed Dowitchers in a flooded field. They were quite colorful. There are many shorebirds in the fields nearby. He also had 29 White-faced Ibis along Garth Brooks Blvd (11th Street) and a couple of Buff-breasted Sandpipers on NW 50th. His Road Update reports that SH4 north of Yukon is now open, but NW 50 at the corner of County Line just west of Stinchomb Gate 3 is completely washed out 1-3 feet deep. NW 63rd and Morgan Road was completely washed out, and a new ditch was carved alongside the road from the sand pit. The county has put in large rocks and overlaid it with gravel and dirt to make it passable for now. The corner of NW 63rd and Sara at Rose Lake is still blocked off, but you can walk the roads to the corner with boots since the water isn't very deep.

On Wednesday, September 12th Richard Gunn reports from the South Canadian River in Norman he found Killdeer, Green Heron, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Great Blue Heron, Morning Dove, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Rough-winged Swallow, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, American Robin, American Crows, Carolina Wren, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Chickadee, Common Grackle, and Eastern Meadowlark. At Thunderbird Lake along the dam and nearby woods he found Wood Duck, Turkey Vulture, several Red-shouldered Hawks calling, Northern Cardinal, Northern Mockingbird, and White-eyed Vireo.

On Sunday, September 16th Jimmy Woodard checked the Myriad Gardens around 9:00 am. One large line of shrubs on the west side of Crystal Bridge held 3 Nashville Warblers, 2 Wilson's Warblers, 2 Carolina Wrens, a Northern Mockingbird, a House Wren, and a Northern Oriole. There were some Chimney Swifts flying overhead and a Red-tailed Hawk. Lake Hefner is full of water, therefore, no shorebirds were found; but he did see 5 Ospreys and quite a few Ring-billed Gulls flying around. There was one nice interaction while he was watching a few Barn Swallows with one Bank Swallow flying over the lake headed south. As they came near Prairie Dog Point, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird dove on the Bank Swallow, causing it to make several evasive maneuvers. The hummingbird followed the swallow until they both made it over the point, and the hummingbird flew back into the trees. It

never struck the swallow, just followed it. Below the dam at the police ponds there were 100 or so gulls loafing on the flats, mostly Franklin Gulls, about 10 Forster's Terns, a Greater Yellowlegs and a flock of 11 Lesser Yellowlegs flew in for about 5 minutes, then got up and flew south over the lake.

Stan Eliason in Norman reports an outbreak of eye disease in the House Finches at his backyard feeders. He has taken down the feeders until the infection dies out since he thinks the sick birds will spread it at the feeder to the healthy birds.

On the 15th and 22nd Tim O'Connell birded Sanborn Lake near the Stillwater airport and found his list was similar. On the 14th a powerful cold front came though and dropped some migrants in Stillwater. Then it got hot again with daily south winds that kept the migrants there. For the 22nd some of the birds he reported includes Gray Catbird, Bell's Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Chimney Swift, Eastern Phoebe, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, White-eyed Vireo, Field Sparrow, Painted Bunting, Nashville Warbler, Bewick's Wren, Pied-billed Grebe, "Trail's" Flycatcher, Yellow, Orange-crowned, and Nashville Warblers.

On the 18th the Tuesday morning birders met at Lake Overholser. They walked the Coffey Dam area and Sara Road along Rose Lake. True to this year's weather, it rained on them as they returned to the car. They also checked the playas on 50th near 11th Street and the Water Treatment Plant. Species of note included Chimney Swifts, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, American Kestrel, Eastern Phoebe, Pectoral Sandpiper, Belted Kingfisher, Semipalmated Sandpipers, Stilt Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope and thousands of Brown-headed Cowbirds. In Piedmont there was a Northern Harrier flying over a former wheat field.

Since yellow is one of Nancy Vicars favorite colors she was delighted on Sunday, September 23rd to behold not only the beautiful, bright yellow blossoms on her okra plants but 2 Wilson's, a Nashville and an Orange-crowned Warblers feasting on the ants that frequent said okra patch.

On Tuesday, September 25th the Tuesday morning birders waited about an hour for the rain storm to move over the Yukon City Park. Noteworthy migrants included Orange-crowned, Nashville, Black & White, and Wilson's Warblers, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. That afternoon at Fort Reno in El Reno they added Baltimore Orioles, Spotted

Sandpiper and one female Blue Grosbeak.

On the 26th Matt and Jenny Foster in Blanchard had a Red-breasted Nuthatch come to their bird bath, as well as, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a warbler, possibly a Nashville.

On the 27th Nancy Vicars found a female Common Yellowthroat, a House Wren, a Red-breasted Nuthatch and a flock of Brown Thrashers in her back yard. Matt Jung checked the Yukon City Park and some of the birds of note included Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Wilson's, Nashville and Orange-crowned Warblers, 6 Northern Flickers feeding on the ground, Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Baltimore Oriole, and 3 Brown Thrashers.

On the 29th Jimmy had a Red-breasted Nuthatch in a pine tree outside his apartment in Yukon. It called several times. In the evening Debbie Kaspari saw a big, noisy, cloud of Chimney Swifts (well over 1,000 birds) flying around the roof of the Fred Jones Industrial Building in downtown Oklahoma City.

On the 30th Jimmy found a Caspian Tern at the Route 66 Park on the west side of Lake Overholser resting with the gulls on the shore of the pond. There were 3 Swainson's Hawks soaring over and near Rose Lake, over 300 American White Pelicans came soaring right over the trees and his head at the corner of NW 63rd and Sara Road. There was a Semipalmated Plover and hundreds of shorebirds in the muddy field there. A Sanderling was at the playa just east of the waste water pond at the Yukon Water Treatment Plant just north of Yukon at 5301 Wagner Road. There were 3,000 Brown-headed Cowbirds at the farm just south of the playa between NW 50th and 63rd on Mustang Road and over 25 Night Heron species flying out of Stinchcomb into the coffer dam area of Overholser before dawn.

The next day Jimmy saw a large kettle 40-50+ of probably Swainson's Hawks flying over to his southeast from SW 33rd and Council. Another kettle is approaching from the north. He is seeing a steady trickle of Monarch Butterflies. He recommends that everyone go outside and look up. It is a good migration day.

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.

Bird of the Month: Red-breasted Nuthatch

By John Shackford



The Red-breasted Nuthatch—4.5 inches in length—gives birdwatchers abundant pleasure partly because it is so small a bird: some North American hummingbirds are longer than this nuthatch. Over the last couple of weeks the red-breasted has been reported in several locations over the state and after I began getting ideas together for this brief sketch, my wife Melissa reported one in each of two pines in our yard.

My favorite story about red-breasteds is the bird that visited Martin Park here in Oklahoma City quite a few years ago. The big display room at Martin Park, now loaded with exhibits, was once empty, except for a Christmas tree in one corner of the huge display room. When the exit door was left open one day, a red-breasted entered the room, flew to the furthest corner of the room from the open door (about 30-40 feet) and began feeding on the Christmas tree. Some one noticed the bird, and for the next several days the exit door was left open—to allow the nuthatch to make its visits to the indoor Christmas tree!

The Red-breasted Nuthatch in Oklahoma is a migrant and frequent winter resident. Their absence in winter in central Oklahoma is likely due most often to poor pine seed crops, and we cannot always count on them on our Christmas Bird Count. Interestingly, we also have a few breeding records for the red-breasted in Oklahoma.



The Latin name of the Red-breasted Nuthatch is *Sitta canadensis*. Using the “[Dictionary of Birds of the United States](#),” an excellent book on the meaning of bird names, by Oklahoman Joel Ellis Holloway, he explains that, “Nuthatch is a corruption of *nuthack*, in reference to the feeding behavior of wedging a nut in tree bark and pecking at it until it breaks open.” *Sitta* comes from Greek (*sitte*) and was “originally used by Aristotle for a bird that pecked on a tree + *canadensis*, Latin for belonging to Canada.”

Watch for this bird at your feeder in winter!

Clean Up Day at Prairie Dog Point

The Oklahoma City Audubon Society is a participant in the Oklahoma City Beautiful Adopt A Park



project. We have adopted Prairie Dog Point and our commitment is for assistance in litter management.

Our second clean up day for the area at Lake Hefner was held October 6th. In spite of a brief rain shower, the morning turned out to be a comfortable and peaceful time for enjoying the slowly emerging shoreline and the colorful wildflowers. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were abundant and Ospreys were flying overhead.

Although the clean up crew was smaller: Jimmy Woodard, Nancy Vicars and Pat Velte, they didn't lack for energy and enthusiasm. The trio spent more than three hours canvassing the entire area and finding cans, bottles, clothes and even tubes of caulking.

Our Adopt A Park project has been receiving a hand from a pair of “litter angels.” A man and woman have been seen numerous times during the past month picking up litter around Prairie Dog Point. We don't yet know who these marvelous volunteers are but hope to meet them and thank them.

Minutes of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society

Sept. 17, 2007

President, Nealand Hill called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Minutes were dispensed with due to the informality and length of the June meeting where most of the officers were not in attendance, including the Secretary.

Three guests were in attendance. Welcome!

An account of the club's history as presented in an affidavit by founding president, Sam Moore, was read by Secretary, June Ketchum.

Treasurer's report was accepted as read by Nancy Vicars.

Recorder, Esther Key reported that it had been a busy summer and thanked everyone for their submissions.

Field-trip Chairman, Jimmy Woodard, reviewed the up-coming field-trips. He also suggested a publication from the Oklahoma Wildlife Dept., entitled Butterflies of Kansas, North Texas, and Oklahoma. Jimmy discussed a tentative proposal for a club field-trip to the Selman Ranch

Old Business:

Updated, revised, club brochures have been produced. The Wild Bird Store, at 63rd and Western will have these brochures on display and available to their customers. They are printing 100 copies at their own expense.

A motion was made to have an additional 250 printed at a cost of \$0.58/copy to be paid for by the club. The motion was seconded and approved by the membership.

"Tuesday Morning Birder's" will resume under the direction of Nancy Vicars.

New Business:

The evening program was presented by: Dr. Jeff Kelly, Asst. Professor at the University of Oklahoma and Asst. Heritage Zoologist with the Oklahoma Biological Survey. His presentation was entitled "Feather Connections in Migratory Birds".

Nealand announced that member Jimmy Woodard has finally reached his ABA 700th life bird. Jimmy chased a Fan-tailed Warbler in the hills of Big Bend, Texas for this accomplishment. Congratulations Jimmy!

Nealand reviewed a Lone Pine Publication entitled A Compact Guide to the Birds of Oklahoma. He suggests having it as a quick guide for window-watching or for new birders.

Dr. Garey Harritt, suggested adding "The Gulls of the Americas", by Howell and Dunn to one's library.

Nealand announced that this will be the last year that Patti Muzny produces our club newsletter. Nealand encouraged anyone who would be interested in taking over this very important job, to contact him.

John Shackford suggested asking Mark Howerly to look over a list of trees and plants submitted by Susan Schmidt for the "Friends of Lake Hefner".

Warren suggested looking at the following web-site as follow-up to Dr. Kelly's presentation:
<http://www.migrate.ou.edu>

A "Fan-tailed Warbler" cake was shared by Nealand with the membership as celebration of Jimmy's 700th bird conquest.

The next meeting will be on Oct. 15th, 2007.

Respectfully submitted by June Ketchum, Secretary

Christmas Bird Counts

December 14 – Sequoyah NWR
December 15 – OCAS
December 16 – Grand Lake Audubon Spavinaw
December 19 – Atoka
December 22 – Fort Gibson
December 26 – Rogers County
December 27 – Broken Bow
December 29 – Morton County KS
December 29 – Stephens County
December 30 – Black Mesa

The Stephens County Christmas Bird Count will take place on Saturday, Dec. 29, 2007. We will meet in Duncan, OK at the Daybreak Diner (116 Highway 81 S) between 6:15 and 6:30 am. Bird watchers of any level of expertise are welcome to help conduct this count. We always need participants! Please contact June Ketchum at 405-387-3620 or june.ketchum@mercy.net if you are able to participate or would like more information.

Birding Hot Spot

Mitch Park - Edmond

By Terri Underhill

Editor's Note: Our members have contributed a great amount of birding experience to create our Birding Hotspots website feature. We'll regularly feature one of the Hot Spots in upcoming issues of the newsletter.

Mitch is a 133-acre park which features several playgrounds including handicap accessible facilities, multiple use trails, basketball courts, pavilions, picnic tables, grills, amphitheater, Multiple Activity Center and sports fields with concession stand and restrooms.

Getting to the park is easily accessible entering Covell from either Kelly or Santa Fe. You can take the main entrance into the park or follow the signs to the Mathis Skate Park on the east side of Mitch and north of Cheyenne Middle School. Both entrances are on Covell, along the south side of the park. Personally, I prefer to park and enter at the Skate Park since I can see and hear birds before I've even step foot on a trail.

During the summer months you most likely will have already seen numerous Mississippi Kites soaring before you even enter the park. The wooded areas of Edmond are ideal for nesting and therefore loved by the Kites, Red Shouldered Hawk and numerous raptors. This is the habitat they prefer to breed and raise their young in.



Painted Bunting © Terri Underhill

During the summer months the first song you'll want to listen for is the melodious song of the Painted Buntings. The males sing from the tops of the trees along the paved trails close to the area he nests in. The city of Edmond has done a fine job landscaping with native vegetation the birds and wildlife seem to thrive on. Throughout the park are benches and feeding stations where you can sit and enjoy the birds. I sometimes take along bird

seed just in case the feeding stations have been depleted from the squirrels and rabbits.

The majority of the trails are paved and a newly-opened trail bridge opened during the winter of 2005. This new bridge is a great area to observe the Louisiana Waterthrush during the summer months. The Indigo Buntings and Blue Grosbeaks also enjoy this area and can be seen and heard during their summer stay.

On the east side of the bridge and about 200' south, there's an unmarked opening in the dense trees. This is where you can walk down to a hidden waterfall and see the wonderful red rock our state is commonly known for. If you've ever had the urge to step back in nature but don't want to take a drive to the country, this is great little place to check out. This beautiful area is a bird magnet in the heat of the day when the birds and critters come to bath and drink from the cool pools of water below the slow streaming fall.

On the south end of the trails is a man-made overlook. This is a great place for getting a bird's eye view of the trees tops from down below and even a closer look at a variety of birds. Native birds can be seen carrying nesting material in spring and later caring for their young in this densely wooded area. Mockingbirds, Thrashers, Bluebirds and many other fruit loving birds and wildlife can be seen enjoying the extremely popular fruit from the native Chickasaw Plums bordering many of the nicely paved trails. An assortment of Sparrows and many other birds use the dense thicket of Chickasaw Plums for nesting and a safe haven for their young. The thorny spurs give maximum protection against even the boldest of predators.

New Bird Calendars

Nancy Vicars reports that our beautiful new 2008 bird calendars have arrived and are available for purchase. Calendars are available for \$5.00 each at the monthly meetings or \$6.50 each by mail.

Send payment to:

Nancy Vicars

820 Arthur Drive - Midwest City, OK 73110

Calendars are also available at Wild Birds Unlimited, Northwest 63rd and Western.

Field Trip Report: Hackberry Flats

September 22, 2007

By Jimmy Woodard

Ten birders met early Saturday September 22 for a trip to Hackberry Flats. We headed down I-44 in a four-car convoy and arrived at the Flats after 9 a.m. Along the way we saw several Scissortails and a lone Western Kingbird.

We came to Hackberry from the east through Hollister. There was lush growth of grasses and sunflowers in all the fields. We found Dickcissels, Bobwhites and many Mourning Doves. The doves were seeking escape outside the refuge where dove season was in full swing.

We birded along the east boundary of the refuge where all the fields were heavily overgrown with weeds, reeds, grasses, and cattails. Birds seemed to be flying everywhere, especially ibis and herons. Once they landed in a field they disappeared into the grass and weeds.

Along the south boundary is a line of trees called the "Willows" because it mostly consists of willow trees. We stopped here and found a House Wren, two Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and a faded female or immature Black-throated Green Warbler.



We continued along the tour route until we found some mudflats which held tons of birds. We found numerous Avocets, Black-necked Stilts, Long-billed Curlews, and dowitchers. There were Black-bellied and Golden Plovers, one Marbled Godwit and many peeps.

We ran into Lou and Mary Truex and showed them the Black-throated Green Warbler which was a new bird for the Hackberry checklist. They led us along the dikes in the closed areas.

On the west side of the refuge, a new visitor center is almost completed. Near there we found more mudflats with a lot of birds. We saw several Stilt and Pectoral Sandpipers. Two Red-necked Phalaropes swam almost right up to us. This was another new bird for the refuge list.

Nearby we heard two Soras and one bird came out in the open for several minutes and even preened a little. At the lake, we observed several Black Terns flying and several dead tress full of egrets and swallows.

Learn About Oklahoma Bird Sightings

Excerpt from Sutton Avian Research Center

One of the fastest and easiest ways to learn about current bird sightings in Oklahoma is to receive them by e-mail. The OKBirds mailing list service (listserv), sponsored by the Sutton Avian Research Center, is a great way to receive birding news -- often within hours of the sightings.

Once you are subscribed (it's free) you will be able to send a bird-related question, observation, or message to a single address and it will quickly be delivered to all other subscribers to the list.

The OKbirds listserv provides a forum for questions, answers, and discussions about Oklahoma birds and birding. Post your questions, interesting observations, directions to good birding sites or rare birds, etc. Or, if you are shy, just sit back and read the messages as they come in!

To subscribe, send a message from the e-mail account you wish to use for your subscription with "subscribe OKbirds your name" as the only thing in the message body to listserv@lists.ou.edu. You will receive confirmation and further instructions once you are added. (Example message to subscribe: **subscribe OKbirds John Doe**)

Another great way to keep up with Oklahoma bird sightings is to view the messages online. The OKBird listserv messages, as well as those from dozens of listservs around the world are available at: <http://www.birdingonthe.net>

Field Trips

October 20

Tishomingo NWR / Lake Texoma

We will spend the day visiting one of the state's best wildlife refuges. Meet at Lowe's at I-240 and Santa Fe (northwest corner behind IHOP) at 7:00 a.m. Leader: TBA

October 27 - 28

OOS Fall Meeting, Lawton

The Oklahoma Ornithological Society fall meeting at Cameron University has an interesting slate of papers concerning birds of the region, and field trips to the Wichita Mountains and Hackberry Flat will provide great birding opportunities.

November 17

Wichita Mountains

We will look for winter residents and migrants in this great spot. Meet at the Wal-Mart parking lot at the NE corner of Sara Road (Highway 4) and Highway 152 in Mustang at 7:30 a.m. Leader: TBA

Oklahoma City Audubon Society

% Patricia Velte

1421 NW 102nd Street

Oklahoma City, OK 73114-4925



American White Pelican. Photo by Pat Velte



Great Horned Owl. Photo by Pat Velte



Newsletter

The Oklahoma City Audubon Society newsletter is filled with information about sightings, sketches, photos, outings, events, and contact information. You will hear about the birds that are visiting or nesting in Oklahoma, where to find them, and who to contact with to enhance the companionship inherent in birding.

Birding in Oklahoma

More than half of the 800 species of birds found in North America may be found in Oklahoma. Oklahoma is located in the Central Flyway which brings thousands of birds, including colorful neotropical species, through Oklahoma to rest or nest. Oklahoma bird watchers are lucky to reside in a flyway state and enjoy the diversity of habitat from the arid panhandle in the northwest to the wetland hardwood forests of the southeast. Each distinct habitat supports a different population of birds.

Membership

The Oklahoma City Audubon Society dues are \$10 per person/family per year. Dues may be paid to the treasurer at any meeting.

For more information e-mail: info@okc-audubon.org or visit www.okc-audubon.org

Website

Bookmark our website at www.okc-audubon.org and stay up-to-date with birding in Oklahoma. One of the newest features of our site is "Birding Hot Spots" where we introduce you to birding locations in Central Oklahoma. In addition to the description of the locations, we include directions, maps, listings of birds that have been sighted at that location, and nearby areas of interest. Some of the locations include Lake Hefner, Arcadia Lake, Lake Overholser, and Lake Stanley Draper.

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Wild Birds Unlimited
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Telling Our Story

Thanks to the incredible efforts of Susan Schmidt, information about the Oklahoma City Audubon Society is being distributed to interested birders. Susan designed and wrote a full-color brochure and our friends and supporters at Wild Birds Unlimited have printed them and have them available at their store (located at 63rd and N. Western.) Copies are also available at meetings.