



Oklahoma City Audubon Society

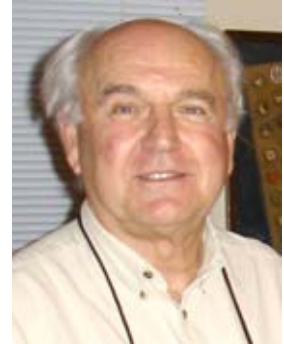
OKC-AUDUBON.ORG

NOVEMBER 2007

A Good Time for Birding

Program and Meeting: November 19, 2007

Our own John Shackford will be the guest speaker at the November meeting. His presentation will be titled, "Wintertime: A Good Time for Birding in Central Oklahoma." John will show slides of winter birds in central Oklahoma and explain why winter is a productive time to bird in Oklahoma. John is also our Christmas Bird Count compiler and he will also talk about the upcoming Count, including a video showing the Count area. 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 Scott Jantz, Jim Bates and John Shackford.

Tuesday morning birders



Birders of all skill levels should plan to attend the Tuesday Morning Field Trips led by Nancy Vicars. The main focus is to introduce people to new places, improve bird ID skills and enjoy a leisure morning with friends. These weekly outings are much more than just looking for birds, even though that is the main goal. We have such a nice diverse group with a vast array of knowledge including photography, flowers, mammals, reptiles and butterflies that it's a great opportunity to learn about all of the critters, feathered or not.

October 9 – Mitch Park

Dora Webb, Esther Key, Marion Stewart, and Karen Barker -- our Tenacious Tuesday Birders were rewarded with a perfect birding morning. During our leisurely stroll around this beautiful park, sightings included Brown Thrashers, Cardinals, Red-bellied & Downy Woodpeckers, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Orange-crowned & Nashville Warblers, American Kestrel, Scissortails, Eastern Bluebirds, RB Nuthatch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Carolina & Bewick's Wrens, Eastern Phoebe, Robins and Clay-colored Sparrow.

Tuesday Trips to other Birding HotSpots continue on page 3.

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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 Muzny family's recent move to a home in southwest Oklahoma City that has different and much better bird habitat, promised some interesting sightings. Although our new (to us) home is less than three miles from our old home, the semi-rural lot that's surrounded by major thoroughfares still has attention-grabbing birds.



On moving day, one of the first items that I moved was the bird feeder. My kitchen was a disaster, yet the feeder hung ready to attract whatever new birds could be found. (Life with a birder!)

When moving after 22 years, the "to do" list seems overwhelming and unending, but with the help of my very dear friend, Nancy Vicars, we stormed the house like Merry Maids on a caffeine high and soon had it move-in ready. While Nancy and I were out in the back yard, she looked up and said, "There's an osprey for your yard list!" That's a pretty cool bird with which to begin a new yard list!



Since the end of September, our list has grown and now includes Red-breasted Nuthatches, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Killdeer, Chickadees, a resident Downy, Red-bellied Woodpecker, a feisty Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Jays, Crows, too many Great-tailed Grackles, White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows, Goldfinches, House, Carolina and Bewick's

Wrens, House Finches, Canada Geese, Mississippi Kite, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Turkey Vulture, and if we count the field about 2 blocks away, Song, Lincoln and Clay-colored Sparrows.

One morning I looked out into the backyard of the house across the street to see the Cooper's Hawk diving at the little flock of chickens. The chickens would streak toward their coop with the hawk nearly riding their backs, but no direct hit was ever scored and no blood was ever shed. I wondered what that hawk was planning to do with a full-grown rooster if it ever did pounce on it! This scenario was played out for several mornings before the hawk apparently tired of this sport and moved on to more realistic breakfast possibilities. And the bonus is: We get to pretend we're in the country when our wake-up call is the crowing of the neighbor's rooster!

A most unexpected yard bird had to be a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. I had just spoken to Nancy and told her I certainly had no Sapsuckers in my yard and didn't expect any. Soon after this conversation, I looked out into the back yard at our "wishing well" and saw a woodpecker hanging onto one of the support poles. Not

Continues on page 3.

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 |
| Parliament | Sam Moore | 752-9549 |
| Programs | Warren Harden | 364-3491 |
| Recorder | Esther M. Key | 381-9170 |
| Conservation | Larry Mays | 392-2131 |
| Field Trips | Jimmy Woodard | 324-1462 |
| Newsletter | Patricia Velte | 751-5263 |
| 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

Tuesday Morning Birders, cont.

October 16 - Lake Hefner

The Tuesday birders are on a roll...the second Tuesday with NO rain and an absolutely beautiful cool, calm morning for our bird walk. Some of the highlights included Osprey, Forster's Tern, Franklin's Gull, Black-crowned Night-herons, American Kestrel, Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Phoebe, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Robins, Orange-crowned and Nashville Warblers, Yellow-shafted Flickers and a first of the season Dark-eyed Junco. Participants were Henry Benedict, Fay Carver, Carla Brueggen, Esther Key, Marion Stewart, and Feodora Steward.



October 23 - Oklahoma City Zoo

The outing this morning took us to the OKC Zoo, specifically the new Oklahoma Trails exhibit. We found some "countable" birds on Northeast Lake and in the park on the west side including Canvasback and Wood Ducks. The participants today were Tim Ryan, Esther Key, Jeanette Schoff, Feodora Steward, Karen Barker, Carla Brueggen and we were rewarded with a beautiful, very cool, calm and absolutely clear morning once again.

October 30 - Pat Murphy Park

The Tuesday Birders were met with a strong south wind at Pat Murphy Park this morning. The birds were pretty hard to find but we did prevail and found some very noteworthy species. The birds of the day were a Blue-headed Vireo and a Winter Wren!! Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets. A quick stop at Prairie Dog Point added several duck species, gulls and Osprey. Participants were Henry Benedict, Fay Carver, Carla Brueggen, Karen Barker, Feodora Steward, Esther Key, Stan Eliason, Tim Ryan, Jeanette Schoof, Nadine Varner and Sue Smith.

November 6 - Crystal Lake & Bridgestone Preserve

This Tuesday Morning outing started with a *short* stop at Crystal Lake. *Short*, in that there weren't many birds present to count. The Bridgestone Preserve's nature trail was very birder

friendly. American Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, Song & White-throated Sparrows, Spotted Towhee, Carolina Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Flickers, Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, Red-tailed Hawks and an Eastern Phoebe were found along the trail. A Belted Kingfisher, Western Meadowlarks, Killdeer, and some unidentified ducks were added at a small pond. This was the first visit for all participants and it was unanimous that we all look forward to a return visit. Our thanks to Jimmy Woodard for this new "Hot Spot".... Participants were Henry Benedict, Fay Carver, Tim Ryan, Carla Brueggen, Feodora Steward, Sue Smith and Marion Stewart.

Chirpings, cont.

the resident Downy! A sapsucker was hanging on to the pole where I had my feeder and wanted to make a liar out of me for sure! Neat yard bird!

Another interesting "almost yard bird" was a pair of Monk Parakeets only a block from our home. We've heard their call one more time, but have yet to find out where they might be nesting or roosting. Since they were so close, we are counting them as our birds. Why not?!



Our little House Wrens at our 68th Street house were such delightful entertainment, I was not looking forward to leaving their happy chirpings. Not to worry – the first day we were working at the new house, I heard and saw a pair of House Wrens! Maybe ours followed us?

At Byars on the weekend of November 10-11, I was thrilled with the sighting of a Winter Wren as it foraged among some brush at the end of our pond. I was standing in the woods just trying to hear birds in the atrocious wind on Sunday morning, when I heard wren-like fussing. Soon I saw the little migrant hopping among the brush. It was fussing at me and doing its bobbing, "Get out of my territory" dance. That tiny little bit of a tail was defiantly held straight up as it fussed and fussed, giving me great looks at it. A wonderful Sunday morning treat, indeed.

In Other Words

by Larry Mays

Feeling the pressure to write *something* in my allotted space in the newsletter, I began to think about some of the things that I consider important, and which I would like to share. One of the things I consider of primary importance is the need to develop a sense of *place*; that is to have a knowledge of where we exist in the natural world as apart from what we have chosen to build over it. What would this place where you are right now be like if there were no signs of modern technology? Try to imagine it if you were to suddenly find yourself standing here 500 years ago. This is not to disparage what we have created here. It is simply an exercise to help us relocate *value*, if you will. Simply put, our membership in this organization tells a lot about what we consider valuable, does it not? After all, didn't your mama say you would be judged--and influenced--by who you run with?

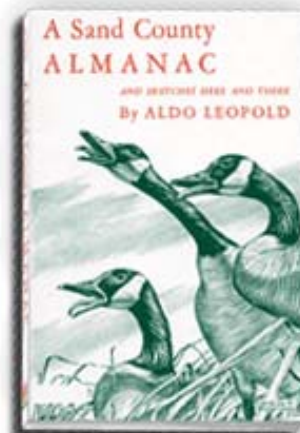
What triggered this was a post by Debby Cotter Kaspari (drawingthemotmot.wordpress.com/) on her



blog wherein she spoke of the term *nature deficit disorder*--a term apparently coined by Richard Louv in his book "Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder," which, of course, I now want to read (and isn't that a *seductive* title?).

That triggered the remembrance of a quiz that was published originally in, I think, *Co-evolution Quarterly*, which was an outgrowth of the *Whole Earth Catalog* series edited by Stuart Brand, and later Kevin Kelly (what, *you* didn't join the counterculture? Remember what your mama said?) That quiz, at least a shortened version of which I found by googling Kevin Kelly (and ain't the internet grand?), and from which I shamelessly have stolen at least some of the questions, dealt with our knowledge--or lack thereof--of *place*. Where do we live?

So, even though the water we drink may come from a source a hundred miles away in a bottle made of plastic made from oil taken from Iraq, and the steak on our plates may come from a steer born in Idaho, fattened in Kansas on corn grown in Iowa with ammonium nitrate made from natural gas in Alabama, and shipped to us using more oil from Kuwait, and even though the electricity used to power the lamps we read by may have been generated at Sooner Lake from coal mined in Wyoming, it is still imperative (*I* think) that we do not forget--or allow to be forgotten--*where we live*. Because this is the ultimate measure of *value*.



Aldo Leopold, in the first line of his foreword to *A Sand County Almanac* said, "There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot." I do not believe that. I do not believe anyone can live without wild things. Maybe they think they can. Maybe we, as a species, can, for awhile, but not in the long run of things. We must have a *measure*, and the natural world, out of which we come, had best be that measure.

Okay, church is over. Turn to **page 10 and take the quiz**. It's not a test... think of it as serious fun!

Christmas Bird Count

The Oklahoma City Audubon Society will participate in the annual Christmas Bird Count by surveying our designated "count circle" on Saturday, December 15. A copy of the our territory is on our website. If you are interested in participating in this year's CBC, please contact John Shackford at the November meeting or by email at: johnsshack@aol.com.

The fun continues following a day of counting birds! Diane Newell has once again graciously opened her house to host the chili dinner on Saturday evening. **The dinner is potluck so please consider signing up to bring a dish.**

Road Trip: The trip to Nome or about as far as you can go

By Garey Harritt

The trip to Alaska was to begin with a road trip to Seattle and a little birding on the way. We left Guthrie May 31, Noon, stayed in Colby, Kansas and then headed west and north.

We visited a place on I-90 known as Elk's Height where there was a burn area to search for Black-backed Woodpecker. Linda couldn't make it up the hill as far as I could and I tried to call the birds in as they were reported here. After deciding it was of no use I went back to Linda where she showed me a cavity where I saw a Hairy WP. She said the BB had come in and left on that tree. Always in the wrong spot again. Lifer for Linda. After exploring the place we headed back to Ellensburg to rest and get out of the heat. That evening we drove to Cle Elum and back down a highway to a bridge where we were able to coax out a couple of Veeries. Lifer for both of us.

The next day, Monday, June 4, we drove to the Olympic Peninsula and stayed in Sequim. Max Fuller had explored this area a couple of years before and we had good intel and contacts. We found Marbled Murrelet and Pigeon Guillemot at a marina. One for me and two for Linda. We also went to the Audubon Center at Railroad Park and looked for Chestnut backed Chickadee. No luck but we watched a pair of California Quail. A few nice birds at the feeders made the visit worthwhile.

We arrived in Nome and found our guide David MacKay. Only one other person, a woman from Hawaii, was on the tour. Dave took us to our hotel and then to lunch at Subway. I was amazed that Nome had such a place. Lots of mountains in the distance and the Bering Sea on the south side of Nome. We saw Cackling Goose, which is now split from Canada as a separate species. We saw subspecies *B. h. taverneri* (Lesser). We also saw Lesser and Dusky Canadas. Other birds included Tundra Swan, N. Shoveler, N. Pintail, Green-winged Teal (American), Greater Scaup, Sandhill Crane, American Golden-Plover, Semiplumbed Plover, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Red-necked Phalarope, Mew Gull, Glaucous Gull, Artic Tern, Long-tailed Jaeger, Common Raven (lots), Gray-cheeked Thrush, A. Robin, E. Yellow Wagtail, Yellow Warbler, N. Waterthrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Savannah Sparrow, Fox Sparrow (Red), White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco,

Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting, Common Redpoll, and Hoary Redpoll. Several lifers on this day.

The next day brought the chance for the famous Bristle-thigh Curlew. After a lot of searching and a few falls, we heard and very briefly saw the Curlew at a distance. Linda had stayed in the van and with her good hearing heard and then saw the curlew as it flew over and out of sight. Other birds on Taylor Road included Greater White-fronted Goose, American Widgeon, Harlequin Duck, Black Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Red Breasted Merganser, Willow Ptarmigan, Red-throated Loon, Red-necked Grebe, Slaty-backed Gull, Pelagic Cormorant, N. Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle, Merlin, Whimbrel, Red Knot, Western Sandpiper, Artic Tern, Parasitic Jaeger, Violet-green Swallow, Bank and Cliff Swallow, Artic Warbler, and the usual more common birds seen the day before. Lifers again and the Artic Warbler!!

Day three, June 9th. Today we saw a Blue morph Snow Goose, Brant, Common Eider, White winged Scoter, Common Merganser, Artic Loon, Pacific Loon, Gyrfalcon, Pacific-Golden Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Wandering Tattler, Bar-tailed Godwit (my 600th lifer), Ruddy and Black Turnstone, Dunlin, Herring Gull, Aleutian Tern, Boreal Chickadee, Northern Wheatear, Orange-crowned Warbler, Dark-eyed Junco, and the other usuals.

Day four, the 10th. On the way back from a trip on Teller Road we saw Rock Ptarmigan. We later cruised the coast for vagrants. We found Common Murre, Pigeon Guillemot, Black-legged Kittiwake, Horned and Tufted Puffin, Spectacled Eider, Lesser Scaup, and Artic Loon again.

The 11th is travel to Anchorage. After breakfast at Fat Freddy's we traveled around town to look for vagrants and found a Herring Gull subspecies Vega. This gull is due to be split into a separate species next year.

On our way home through the Olympic peninsula we met with Nealand Hill and birded three states. We returned to the Audubon Center and found the Chestnut-backed Chickadee (lifer for Linda). We later added the White-headed Woodpecker.

We tallied a total of 5758 road miles in the lower 48. We traveled 524 in the Anchorage area. We saw 48 species on the way to Washington, 67 in Washington, and 35 from there to Oklahoma for a total of 150 for the lower 48 plus 98 in Alaska making a grand total of 248. I had a total of 27 lifers, Linda had 48 and Nealand got 5.

Next year it is the Dry Tortugas. We will go to New England this winter to see family (and bird).

Minutes of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society

October 15, 2007

Minutes were reviewed and approved as printed in this month's newsletter.

President Nealand Hill called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Old Business:

Treasurer's report: Nancy Vicars reports that the club is solvent.

Recorder's report: Esther Key thanks all who have submitted sightings which are now posted in the newsletter.

Field-trip Chairman: Jimmy Woodard gave an overview of upcoming field-trips which are posted in the newsletter. He also made mention of the Tulsa Audubon's web-site (www.tulsaaudubon.org) and the field-trips available there.

Newsletter Editor, Pat Velte, was not in attendance but solicits articles. Thanks Pat for a great issue this month. Thanks also to outgoing editor, Patti Muzny, for all the hard work and great job she has done for years!

Our newly published club brochures are available as well as club "business" cards. Please pass some out to your friends and encourage them to join us!

New Business:

The evening program was presented by Kurt Meisenthal. Kurt shared stories and photographs of memorable moments of birding in his back-yard and the great success and difference a mister has made.

Rental for the meeting room has been raised from \$8/hr to \$16/hr.

Jane Cunningham, President of the Audubon Society of Central Oklahoma, presented an overview of a collaborative effort between the ASCO and the Friends of Lake Hefner which involves habitat restoration of 8.5 acres. Volunteers are needed. If interested contact Jane at 721-5711.

Red Slough brochures have been published and are available. They contain a great map of the area as well as informative text and pictures. Dave Arbour is conducting weekly Red Slough surveys and is willing to let you go along if you will call in advance and can be there early.

The National Wildlife Federation has published a new guide: Field Guide to the Birds of North America. It includes photographs of breeding and winter plumage individuals as well as juveniles.

The next meeting will be November 19, 2007.
Respectfully submitted, June Ketchum, Secretary

Road Trip Report: Stephens County

By Nancy Vicars

I spent the day with Leonard & June Ketchum at their family ranch located in Stephens County on Sunday, Oct. 28. It was an absolutely perfect day to be out-of-doors for any reason, especially, birding, COOL, CLEAR AND CALM...

We began the morning finding American Wigeon, Gadwall, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Pied-billed Grebe, Belted Kingfisher and a Great Blue Heron on a large pond

Brown Thrashers, Eastern Towhee, Eastern Phoebe, Red-tailed & Red-shouldered Hawks, American Kestrel, Eastern Bluebirds, American Goldfinch and a Loggerhead Shrike were noteworthy additions to our growing list.

Both White & Red-breasted Nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Brown Creeper, Flickers, Red-headed & Red-bellied Woodpeckers and a Winter Wren were found in our favorite low-bottom woodland.

Winter sparrow species included Savannah, Vesper, Song, White-throated and White-crowned, Harris's and Dark-eyed Juncos.

The incessant scolding calls of Blue Jays drew our attention into a heavily wooded thicket. A flock of Yellow-rumped & Orange-crowned Warblers, Chickadees and Ruby-crowned Kinglets joined in the fray and we slowly advanced upon a lone cedar tree that appeared to be the center of their interest. Years ago I learned to pay attention to these alarm calls because more than likely the birds had found a mammal, snake, hawk or an owl.... In this case it was the most exciting discovery of the day, who am I kidding, the Year....**A LONG-EARED OWL.**

We concluded our day with a paddle boat ride around the pond, a John Deere "Gator" drive up the mountain and a grand total of 54 species.

Bird of the Month: Rock Wren

By John Shackford

Jimmy Woodard's recent sighting of a Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) at the Coffey Dam at Lake Overholser, Oklahoma County is a great find! The species in Oklahoma is generally found around



rocky mountains/hills in the western 1/3 of the state, most notably in the Black Mesa area. But weird records do crop up in the central and eastern parts of Oklahoma. In 1962—and for some time thereafter—it was found nesting in the rocks of Lake Tenkiller dam in eastern Oklahoma. Many years ago another Rock Wren was seen—apparently during migration—in the parking lot of the (former) University of Oklahoma Stovall Museum in Cleveland County. The bird was hopping around those little concrete “car stops” one sees in parking lots.

Now Jimmy's record fills the Rock Wren “gap” in the Oklahoma City area! That we have never found them, at least during migration, at the rip-rap, especially at Lake Hefner, has been something of a puzzlement to me. It may be that we just have never worked the rocks at the dams at Hefner and Overholser enough, but it also occurs to me that all-rock habitats at these two dams may just be too rocky (sterile) for the species.

The Rock Wren, to me, has a delicate beauty that comes from its subtle grays and buffy browns mixed with the subtle soft streaking of the breast. Best marks for identifying the Rock Wren are buffy tips on the end of (most) tail feathers, a buffy rump, and the fine streaking on the breast. The bird also does “knee-bends,” particularly when it is excited. Part of the Latin name, *obsoletus*, means shabby, dingy, dirty. No doubt this Latin name was given in the days of collecting for scientific study—before binoculars were frequently used to see this animated, beautiful wren.

A nesting pair will make a landing runway of pebbles at the entrance of its nest cavity in rocks, a telltale sign that you have found a nest. It nests northward into northwestern Canada southward into (at least) central old Mexico. Birds in the northern half of the range retreat in winter to the southern half of the western U. S. and old Mexico. At least 2-3 times during migration periods I have seen one in the Panhandle scoot under a cattle guard, the only “rocky” thing visible in any direction on flat prairie for miles. It

is one of those birds that you come to expect the unexpected, a really fun species.

Recorders Report – October 2007 The Red-breasted Nuthatch Invasion Has Arrived

On October 1st Nancy Vicars found a Lincoln's Sparrow sneaking around her flower bed in her Midwest City yard. The next day after the Tuesday Morning Birders, she found a Yellow-rumped Warbler and a Brown Creeper. She certainly began the morning of the 3rd in a grand fashion when she discovered a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in her neighbor's pecan tree.

On Saturday, October 6th Jimmy Woodard reports a small but eager group met for clean up day at Prairie Dog Point. There was lots of bird activity in the brushes, grasses, forbs and trees including Brown Thrashers, Northern Mockingbirds, Scissortail Flycatchers, at least 4 Osprey, several Ruby-crowned Kinglets, a few Clay-colored Sparrows and hundreds of butterflies, mostly Monarchs in the native sunflowers bordering the road.

On the 7th Jimmy took a walk on the east side of Stinchcomb and found a Slate-colored Junco, 20 Nashville Warblers, 15 Orange-crowned Warblers, and 50 Ruby-crowned Kinglets. He found a small lake/flooded field in the woods toward the north end of the refuge. It had lots of ducks, mostly Northern Shovelers, Northern Pintails, and American Widgeons, along with egrets and herons. The butterflies were incredible and seemed to be everywhere. They included at least 4 Gulf Fritillaries, Swallowtails, Hackberry Emperor, Red Admiral, Goatweed Leafwing and many of the small and large yellowish Sulphurs. The dragonflies were numerous too, but he didn't have any idea what they were. It was a good morning to be out; the temperatures were nice and the breezes felt good.

On the 8th Nancy Vicars reports lots of bird activity in her backyard in the morning after the rain. She had at least 4 Eastern Phoebes, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Orange-

crowned and Nashville Warblers, 2 Clay-colored Sparrows, American Robins, a Red-breasted Nuthatch and her "pet" Red-shouldered Hawk on the back fence for the first time this season. It appeared to be checking for the usual squirrel buffet?? Don't laugh, but she also had a new Oklahoma and Yard Bird, a Nutmeg Mannikin, probably an escapee. She had seen one when she was in California several years ago; otherwise, she would have been totally stumped!!

On the 9th after returning to her Midwest City backyard from the Tuesday morning birders trip, Nancy found a Yellow-rumped Warbler and Brown Creeper with a flock of Orange-crowned and Nashville Warblers and a Red-breasted Nuthatch.

On the 10th Matthew Jung was walking at Eldon Lyon Park and found three Red-headed Woodpeckers involved in what appeared to be a territorial dispute. The Blue Jays were flying about and screaming more than usual along with several American Crows. Later he drove around Prairie Dog Point and watched an Osprey hovering and catching a fish and found Green Winged Teal on the lake.

On the 11th Patti Muzny saw and heard a White-crowned Sparrow chipping in the hedge in her new south OKC back yard near SW 85th and Western. Jane Cunningham viewed a flock of American White Pelicans at the south end of Lake Hefner earlier this month. On the 12th Matthew Jung finally saw the Red-breasted Nuthatch at his feeders which he had been hearing for at least two weeks around the neighborhood.

On the 14th Jennifer Kidney in Norman had a pair of Lesser Goldfinches, a wan female at the thistle feeder and a hooded male at the corner birdbath! She had a female Red-breasted Nuthatch arrive September 23rd and on October 13th it was joined by a male.

On October 14th Jimmy saw a total of 5 Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, four were along I-40 near Okemah. There were four Clay-colored Sparrows at his sister's house in Okmulgee, and he observed at least 15-20 species of butterflies. On the 15th he had a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at Hwy 152 and Council Road.

On the 15th Joe Grzybowski checked Lake Hefner and reported lots of Franklin's Gulls among lesser numbers of Ring-billed, some Herring Gulls, Forster's Terns, a few American Avocets and Long-billed Dowitchers. At Rose Lake and areas north of Yukon, there are still a few Little Blue Herons and a mostly dark-billed, immature Cattle Egret, as well as, Great Egrets. A most unexpected find was a Western Kingbird passing over Rose Lake. In central Oklahoma, most depart in mid-August, and are already unusual the 1st of September, but mid-October is quite late. He had a good view, including the black tail

with a narrow white outer edge.

On October 16th Mark Howery received a call from Stephanie Reid who works at an art gallery in downtown Edmond. She thought she had a baby owl or an injured owl in their courtyard. After talking to her, Mark was sure the mystery bird wasn't an owl. The bird didn't appear to be injured; but rather, it just seemed to be "hiding" in plain sight for the day. Later she emailed two photos of "Hoot" (their name for the "owl") who was sitting on a plaque on the ground in the garden around their building. It appears to be a Common Poorwill. Since it disappeared the next day, it is assumed that it was just hanging out until the night when it resumed its southward migration.

On the 16th Tim Ryan saw and heard a Red-breasted Nuthatch in the greenbelt area of Edgemere Park in Oklahoma City, as well as, a Yellow-crowned Night Heron standing duty on the shore of the creek that runs through the same park. On the same day just south of Lake Hefner Jane Cunningham's husband found a Red-breasted Nuthatch on their feeders.

On the 19th Matt Jung located a male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on the west side of Eldon Lyon Park. Other notable birds were 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches, 3 Red-headed Woodpeckers and a Yellow-shafted Northern Flicker.

On the 21st Tim O'Connell found there were still 10-20 Scissor-tailed Flycatchers at the Boomer Lake roost in Stillwater. A few weeks ago his ball-park estimated was around 100 individuals. Matt Jung visited his daughter's home in Norman where they found two Red-breasted Nuthatches and one Carolina Wren feeding on sunflower seeds while several Northern Cardinals and Northern Mockingbirds were feeding on pokeweed berries.

On the 23rd Matt Jung saw a gaggle of about 40 Greater White-fronted Geese fly over Eldon Lyon Park. At Coffey Dam and Route 66 Park he found White-crowned and Field Sparrows, American White Pelicans and Brown Thrashers. At Rose Lake and along County Roads he found Snowy Egrets, a male Belted Kingfisher, a just gorgeous male Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in absolute pristine plumage, Savannah Sparrows, Pied-billed Grebe, and Eastern Meadowlarks.

On the 23rd Olen Thomas was traveling to his Mom's (between the towns of Tryon and Carney) to mow her yard when he came upon a flock of about 40 American White Pelicans gently circling and dropping down to a farm pond. About 2:00 pm as he finished mowing, he looked up and saw a large bird in the distance, a mature Bald Eagle making lazy circles in the sky.

On the 24th Patti saw a pair of Monk Parakeets flying from SW 85th Street down Western toward some soccer fields

just south of I-240. She and Bryan are looking for more parakeets and a site where they could have nested. Three years ago they nested on the corner of South Pennsylvania and SW 89th Street, which is slightly over a mile from Patti's new home.

On the 25th Matt and Jenny Foster report Northern Juncos and Yellow-rumped Warblers have shown up in Blanchard. They regularly have Red-breasted Nuthatches at their feeders.

On the 27th on the east side of Edmond Nealand Hill reports both Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches on his feeder at the same time. He also had a small flock of Cedar Waxwings and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. On the 28th he reports Mr. Red was there all day, but Mr. White was no place to be seen.

On the 28th Dora Webb reported three Red-breasted Nuthatches had returned to her feeder, as well as, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in the River Birch, along with an Orange-crowned Warbler, one Northern Junco, and her usual Downy Woodpecker. About an hour later she heard one of the nuthatches on the patio really making a racket with his alarm calls. Suspecting the neighbor's cat was visiting, Dora opened the door; but instead, it was the resident Red-shouldered Hawk perched on the peak of her roof. That afternoon she observed an Eastern Phoebe perched on the feeder hook. It tried to open a couple of sunflower seeds without any success so it flew back to the river birch tree.

On the 28th Brian Muzny heard and saw a Red-breasted Nuthatch in their yard. In a nearby field he found Clay-colored, Song and Lincoln's Sparrows, American Goldfinch, their first Northern



Juncos, an Empidonax Flycatcher, and relocated the Monk Parakeet near the soccer fields.

On the 28th Jimmy found about half a dozen Red-breasted Nuthatches at Stinchcomb and another 2-3 in Yukon City Park along with several Golden-crowned

Kinglets. He found a faded male Black-throated Green Warbler in a juniper right over the trail at the Yukon City Park and a Bobcat at Stinchcomb. At Route 66 Park he saw 17 Forster's Terns loafing along the shoreline with a large group of Franklin's Gulls. The Yukon Sewage Ponds

had 3 American Avocets, 3 Long-billed Dowitchers, and 20+ Least Sandpipers. Ducks included Canvasback, Redhead, Ruddy, American Widgeon, Mallards, Blue-winged Teal, Bufflehead and Northern Shoveler.

On the 29th Dick Gunn at South Jenkins in Norman reports Northern Junco, Wilson's Snipe, Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned Warblers, Song and Field Sparrows, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, a Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, American White Pelicans, American Pipits, a Marsh Wren, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a great gathering of about 40-50 Killdeers. The white Red-tailed Hawk has been hanging around the end of Chautauqua Avenue, west of the transfer station.

On the 30th near the Homeland on West Lindsey in Norman Joe Grzybowski noted a dark male Merlin stirring up quite a few birds in the area. It caught and carried a pigeon that was larger than it.

Mark Howery reports since late August, a roost of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers has been seen near the Oklahoma City Zoo. In mid-September there were over 50 birds, but it has dwindled down to a handful two weeks ago. On November 2nd he counted four Scissor-tailed Flycatchers hanging around.

From November 2nd to 4th a Rock Wren was reported by Jimmy at Lake Overholser Coffey Dam by the tree where the concrete begins at the end of the dam. On the 3rd Matt Jung reports seeing it at the end of the dam in the area where a rock wall has been built. On the 4th Jimmy and Max Fuller found the bird on the point of land that veers south from the dam. The end of the berm is covered with concrete and the bird was moving around this area. At times, it went under a dead tree into some holes under the roots and the concrete. They spent several minutes waiting for it to come out so they could get a decent look at it. There were also a huge number (5,000+) of gulls riding around in the sky above Lake Overholser. Most were Franklin's with a small number of Ring-bill, Bonaparte's and a few Herrings mixed into the group, along with about 40-50 Forster's Terns. On the lake ducks included Redhead, Lesser Scaup, Mallard, Gadwall, Ruddy, American Widgeon, Green-winged Teal, Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers, and Canvasbacks.

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.

In Other Words, cont.

Below is the "quiz". Some of the questions have "right" answers, others are more general.

There is no answer sheet. You will not be graded. Think of it as serious fun. Think of more questions. Try it on friends, family... strangers. Ready? Begin

1. Within a couple of days, what phase is the moon in?
2. How can you tell, without checking the weather channel, that a major weather change is about to occur?
3. What was/is the original dominant plant community where you live?
4. Name four of the dominant native grasses in your area.
5. What is the name of the nearest creek to your home?
6. Trace the flow of water from rainfall to your tap.
7. What was the original soil where you live, and how did it form?
8. Name two species of ticks found in your area.
9. How many diseases can you name that may be carried by these ticks?
10. What was the original indigenous culture in your area?
11. What large mammals are missing from your area that were here 500 years ago?
12. What species are on the endangered list in your area?
13. Point north.
14. What time is sunset today?
15. What wildflowers are the first to bloom in your area? The last to bloom?
16. How many feet above sea level are you?
18. What primary geological events shaped the land here?

19. Name three wild species of birds that were not found here 500 years ago.
20. Where is the nearest granite/ limestone/ gypsum outcropping?
21. How many species of frogs can you recognize by their calls, and which ones call earliest in spring?
22. How many insects can you recognize by their calls?
23. What constellations are visible in the night sky this time of year?
24. What species of turtles are you most likely to see nearby?
25. What native plants are edible in your area?
26. Where is the headwater of the nearest river to you?
27. What is the highest point in your watershed, or how far must you go to get to the next nearest watershed?
28. What is a watershed? How large is yours?
29. What are the most common species of snake in your area? Are any poisonous? Can you recognize them?
30. What natives plants would be most affected by fire in your area, and how would they be affected?

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:

Tishomingo NWR

By Jimmy Woodard

Five Oklahoma City birders left on a cool, clear Saturday (October 20, 2007) and headed south. We took a route through Davis and Sulphur on Highway 7 to arrive at Tishomingo. We saw a dozen or so Scissor-tailed Flycatchers on the way. We arrived at the NWR a little after 9 a.m. and our first surprise was running into Sheila Edgmon, a birder from Tecumseh. She joined our group and we went to the observation tower on the east side of the refuge.

At the parking lot, we ran into Valerie Bradshaw, a relatively new birder. We walked a road through a dense, swampy forest and found the woods were full of woodpeckers and butterflies. We heard a couple of Pileateds and saw a juvenile sapsucker. We had every expected woodpecker except Redhead. Butterflies covered the trees which were mostly willows. Most of the butterflies were Monarchs but there were also a lot of Red Admirals, Question Marks and Goatweed Leafwings.

As we headed toward the observation tower, we noticed a group of birders. The group was from the OU Biological Station and included Dr. Doug Wood and noted bird guide author David Sibley. We got to see Sibley as they drove by in a van.



We spent nearly an hour at the tower watching birds feeding along the shoreline of the bay and birds flying over. There were numerous dowitchers and both species of yellowlegs. A group of Greater White-fronted Geese along with several Turkey Vultures roosted on a sand bar. A large group of ducks consisting mostly of teals, shoveler, wigeon, and pintails occupied a bay.

Several open fields held a bunch of crows, including several Fish Crows. A couple of Black Vultures flew over while we were on the tower. Just below the tower was a small puddle of water. One immature White-

faced Ibis and several egrets kept circling and landing for only a few minutes before leaving again. One female Green-winged Teal made several ungraceful splash landings, only to quickly flush and fly away again.

We ate lunch at the picnic area then returned to the tower. We were fortunate to locate a juvenile Sabine's Gull. This small gull spent some time feeding along the shoreline which allowed us to compare its size with several other birds. It was smaller than the crows and about the same size as Greater Yellowlegs. We also saw a few Barn Swallows, American Pipits and several groups of pelicans.

We ventured over to the Craven Nature Trail and Dick's Pond but there wasn't much activity. On the way out, Dr. Wood shows us a small (15") Cottonmouth snake near the trail. It had a fat body relative to its length.

Just before we left the refuge, we went back to the tower for one last search for an immature White Ibis that Dr. Wood's group had found earlier in the morning. As luck would have it, the bird flew over us just before we were going to leave. It was a nice way to end the day.

Birding Hot Spot:

Oklahoma City Zoo Lake

Located on the south side of the Oklahoma City Zoo, the area formally called Northeast Lake includes a small lake and park with mostly oak trees plus several brushy hillsides. This is a public park and the gate is open from dawn to dusk. Ample parking is available in several locations on the south side of the. There are areas where you can observe waterfowl from your parked car which is delightful especially for handicapped birders or in extreme weather conditions.

Drive the loop road and bird from your car or walk along the lake from any parking location on the south side of the lake. Be sure to check the vine covered, overgrown, brushy hillsides carefully. Patience and pishing helps to bring those secretive species out for a quick look. There is a small stream near the north end of the loop drive that provides excellent habitat, especially in the winter. It is the best place to check for wintering Sparrows, Towhees and Wrens. At the point where the stream enters the lake is the best place to look for the elusive Winter & Marsh Wrens and Swamp Sparrows. There are trees where you can bring a chair and your scope to observe birds in the shade and enjoy a picnic. Be sure to always scope out along the north shore (Zoo side) for the resident Wood Ducks.

Field Trips

December 1, 2007

Washita NWR, Butler, Oklahoma

Those interested should meet Nancy Vicars at Braum's in El Reno (Country Club Rd. exit) at 7:30 a.m. or at the Foss State Park office parking lot located at the south end of the dam at least by 9 AM.

You will want to make sure and dress warm and in layers. The temperature can change drastically and winds can be unpredictable. You will also want to make sure that you have drinking water, a snack and sack lunch with you as well. Butler is 5 miles away, but there is not much there.

Tuesday Morning Birders

Tuesdays, weather permitting

Nancy Vicars leads the weekly field trips to local areas. Birders of all levels are encouraged to participate. Contact Nancy at: nvicars@msn.com.

Oklahoma City Audubon Society

% Patricia Velte

1421 NW 102nd Street

Oklahoma City, OK 73114-4925

Christmas Bird Counts

December 14 – Sequoyah NWR

December 15 – Oklahoma City Audubon Society

December 15 – Hulah Reservoir

December 15 – Caddo National Grasslands

December 16 – Grand Lake Audubon Spavinaw

December 18 – Sooner Lake

December 19 – Atoka

December 20 – Wichita Mountains NWR

December 21 – Washita NWR

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

January 5 – Tallgrass Prairie Preserve

In Sympathy

Our condolences go to Dr. Sam Moore on the recent passing of his beloved wife Helen. Dr. Sam is a founder of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society.