



photo by Tom Whipple

The Pileated Post

A National Audubon Society Chapter
Grove, OK

Grand Lake Audubon Society

June - Aug 2014

From the President's desk...

Winter has come and gone and for the most part we are glad. Even though we did not get any appreciable amount of moisture the Spring has been fairly green. We have enjoyed some trips to various places looking for birds and have not been disappointed. The trip to Tallgrass was considered a success even though we did not see the birds for which we were looking. The prairie chickens had taken cover when we were there. The trip to Spavinaw Creek was very successful as we saw several birds we only hear about. The most notable was a Kentucky Warbler. The trip to George Washington Carver National Monument gave us glimpses of some birds that are regularly here but very secretive. Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Yellow Warbler, Prairie Warbler and Red-eyed Vireo were a few of the 40 species located either by sight or sound. Our programs have been exceptional this year thanks to Judith Deneen. The annual picnic was held May 13th with 22 members and guests enjoying good food and fellowship. The food was good, but the highlight of the evening was presentation of the Cy Seibert Award presented to Carole Chalupnik. Carole has organized several of our trips to different destinations. She also has been President and now serves on the Board of Directors. The last program for the year will be presented by Bill Petrunich a nature photographer. His program will be titled "Birds of Tanzania". It sounds as if it will be very informative and will give us a chance to see birds that are very different from what we usually observe. We will be taking the summer off before regrouping in September with another full slate of events scheduled. Have a great summer and keep looking up, you never know who or what you might see.

Frank

Upcoming Events

Jun 10 Monthly meeting, 7 pm at Grace Presbyterian Church; "Birds of Tanzania", Bill S Petrunich, Nature photographer

Aug 9 Ecology and Environment Day, Har Ber Village

Aug 9 Shoal Creek Water Festival, Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center

Hospitality Schedule

June 10 Laura Stanfill & Sandy Sullins

"The participation in hosting our Audubon meetings was outstanding. Thank you ladies."

Coordinator - Willie Hale 918-791-0926

Amazing Birds

By devouring carrion Turkey Vultures help prevent the spread of disease. The acid in their digestive tract is so strong that botulism & cholera bacteria are killed leaving Turkey Vulture droppings bacteria free. It's a tough job keeping the environment clean but somebody's got to do it and this bird does his share. Lacking strength in their tiny grasping claws, Turkey Vultures are the only scavenger birds that cannot kill their prey.

Turkey Vultures are protected by law from shooting & harassment. ♦
Reported by Willie Hale

Kentucky Warbler ▶
Oporornis formosus

Have you seen this bird? On a recent field trip to the Spavinaw Creek area, it was a “life bird” for everyone in the group. Cornell Lab puts far Eastern Oklahoma as the summer breeding area. The date guide from the Oklahoma Ornithological Society, 2009 edition, gives a wider occurrence in the Eastern half of Oklahoma from April 8 to September 26. It is a small, ground nesting warbler with a distinctive black eye patch or mask. It has a bright yellow eye ring that extends to the beak sometimes referred to as yellow, angular spectacles. The body is olive with yellow below. There are neither wing bars nor tail spots. Female Kentucky warblers have slightly less black on the sides of their head, and immature birds may have almost no black at all. It prefers deciduous woodlands near water. Unlike most songbirds, a male Kentucky Warbler appears to sing only one song type. He will sing the same one throughout his life with no difference between the breeding call and foraging calls. It builds an open cup nest either on the ground or slightly above ground in a young sapling well concealed. Come fall and winter the Kentucky warbler will migrate back to the Yucatán Peninsula and the many islands of the Caribbean, flying non-stop across the Gulf of Mexico. If you hear ground level foraging with loud two syllable tweets or chants, think about the Kentucky warbler.

The rest of the story... There were six members of GLAS that enjoyed the Spavinaw Creek field trip on Earth Day. We observed 38 species in less than 3 hours. We had a close encounter with a Prothonotary warbler that circled the group approximately three feet off of the ground, checking out each one of us. This occurred close to the low water bridge. We were also visited by a large snapping turtle that crossed the road watching us watching him/her. ♦



Photo by Kevin T Karlson

Saving Darwin's finches

Researchers described a new method to assist Darwin's finches in combating the larvae of parasitic flies responsible for killing numerous nestlings of the famous birds that helped inspire Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection. They placed cotton balls treated with a mild pesticide near where the birds were building their nests. The birds picked up bits of the cotton with their beaks and incorporated it into their nests, killing the fly maggots while causing no harm to the birds or their offspring, the researchers said. The pesticide was permethrin, used to treat head lice in people. It also kills flies of the species *Philornis downsi* that was apparently unwittingly introduced by people to the Galapagos Islands and has been blamed for population declines among Darwin's finches, including two endangered species. "This parasite is not historically found in the Galapagos Islands and, therefore, Darwin's finches have not had enough time to evolve defenses against the parasites," said University of Utah biology professor Dale Clayton, one of the researchers. "In some years, 100 percent of nestlings die as a direct result of the parasites. It is critical to find a way to control the parasites in order to help the birds," Clayton said. The flies probably came aboard ships or planes arriving at the Galapagos and were first noticed as a problem in 1997. The flies lay eggs in bird's nests. When they hatch, the parasitic larvae feed on the blood of nestlings and their mothers. Finding a method to

control the flies has become a top priority for scientists studying the Galapagos birds. "There are currently no methods to effectively combat the parasite," said University of Utah biology doctoral student Sarah Knutie, another of the researchers. "Since we know that permethrin is effective at killing the parasite, I wondered if Darwin's finches could be encouraged to take cotton balls treated with permethrin back to their nests to kill the parasite," Knutie added. In experiments on the Galapagos' Santa Cruz Island, the researchers placed wire-mesh dispensers for cotton near where finches were building nests. They found that all four species of finches that nest there readily used the material in nests and were just as apt to use treated cotton as untreated cotton. When the birds used treated cotton in their nests, this "self-fumigation" technique eradicated at least half the maggots, the researchers found. In nests that contained at least a gram of treated cotton, all but one nest was parasite-free. The nest that was the lone exception had four maggots compared to an average of 30 in nests with no treated cotton. For more information on this study, visit: http://unews.utah.edu/news_releases/is-self-fumigation-for-the-birds-2/. ♦

Cy Siebert Award

On Tuesday, May 14th, 2014, Carole Chalupnik was awarded the Cy Siebert



Photo by Evelyn Houck

Award by the Grand Lake

Audubon Society. This award is given to those members who exemplify exceptional service and participation in our organization. Carol is a past president of GLAS and has organized and led field trips to Kearney, NE, to enjoy the Sand hill crane migration through that area. She has also organized

and led other field trips and projects in our region. She has been a worthy representative of our organization and we proudly honor her with this award. ♦

Tall Grass Prairie

Seven GLAS birders got up very early to make the trek to the Tall Grass Prairie near Pawhuska, OK. Although we were too late to view prairie Chickens, we did observe 33 species including the American Pippet.



Photo by Laura Stanfill

As usual, we were greeted by numerous bison grazing along the road. This Oklahoma Nature Conservancy area



Photo by Laura Stanfill

is well worth putting on your agenda. It has a variety of habitats that will spark your interest. Visit their website for more information.

<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/region/northamerica/unitedstates/oklahoma/index.htm?intc=nature.tnav.where.list> ♦

Grand Lake Audubon Society
PO Box 451813
Grove, OK 74345-1813

Here's some things you may not know about Woodpeckers:

They have 4 toes; 2 that face forward and 2 that face backward. (I've never really looked at their feet!)

They have a pair of stiff, centrally located tail feathers that help them balance/perch on trees or hang upside down on feeders.

They have bristle-like feathers over their nostrils to keep wood particles out!

They have long tongues with bristles at the tip for grabbing food. *-Birds & Blooms*

