



photo by Tom Whipple

# The Pileated Post

A National Audubon Society Chapter  
Grove, OK

**Grand Lake Audubon Society**

**Mar-May 2016**

From the President's desk...

It is time for the advent of spring—the birds, blooms and the...bugs. Now is a good time to think about growing plants that are attractive to birds and butterflies, such as purple coneflowers (echinacea), milkweed—including butterfly weed (aesclepias)—and sunflowers.

The latest issue of *Audubon* just arrived in the mail. The magazine has a crow on the cover, and it contains several articles on the *Corvid* family of birds. It appears that crows are way smarter than your average bird. Research shows they can recognize and remember people's faces, and know whether a person is nice or not. Be sure to be good to crows if you wish to avoid their scorn. By the way, a favorite snack food for crows is Cheetos!

To view a fascinating documentary on these birdbrained...um...ape-brained... birds, here is the link to a video called *Murder of Crows* from the *Nature* series of PBS programs: <http://www.pbs.org/video/1621910826/>

The past few months we have learned that Ellie Womack has been entertaining a special guest during the winter: a rufous hummingbird. Not all hummingbirds go south for the winter. Some go to Ellie's place!

New trips are in store, including the Oxley Nature Center near Tulsa, and field trips at the Spavinaw Creek Wildlife Management Area and the George Washington Carver National Park.

Nearby, there are numerous other places of interest to visit, including the local Bernice State Park Nature Center, Lendonwood Gardens in Grove, Natural Falls State Park in Delaware County near West Siloam Springs, and the Wildcat Glades Audubon Center in Joplin.

Don't forget our regular meetings on the second Monday of each month, when Judith Deneen will continue to produce experts bringing us new and fascinating presentations on the natural world. Spring is such a great time for nature "nerds!"

*Erin*

## Upcoming Events

Mar 5 Flood restoration public workday at Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Cntr

Mar 14 "Whooping Cranes & Sandhill Cranes", Craig Davis, PhD. Professor of Natural Resource Ecology & Management, OSU

April 11 "Hybridization of Hummingbirds in Oklahoma", Chris Butler, PhD., Zoology, Assoc Professor Biology, University of Central OK

April 16 Oxley Center, depart 7:30 am; Laura Stanfill, 918 589-4140

April 26 Spavinaw Creek; depart 8:00 am; Sandra Sullins 918 786-2638; bring a sack lunch

May 9 "Scissor-tailed Flycatcher", Diane Landoll, Doctoral Candidate in Biology, University of Oklahoma, Norman

May 14 George Washington Carver National Park; depart 7:00 am; John Beyer 918 787-5188; lunch at Undercliff

## Hospitality Schedule

Mar: Sharon Herhager, Patsy Hagen

April: Laura Stanfill, Ken & Ann Scragins

May: Carolyn Burr, Vincent & Sharon Witt

## Eagle Watch

"Our trip began with overcast skies, 27 degrees, and just a puff of wind. The sun refused to come out until we were near the end of our 123 mile round trip to northwest

Arkansas. There were eight guests and eight GLAS members in the caravan.” There were 35 different species observed including 71 eagles. The eagle count was lower than previous years. Join us next year to see for yourself this amazing viewing of eagles in nearby Arkansas.

- Evelyn Houck ♦

**Flooding Damage at Wildcat Glades**

On December 26<sup>th</sup> through the 28<sup>th</sup>, there was historic flooding that impacted the Four State Area. Shoal Creek, a tributary of Spring River that runs through Wildcat Park, shattered previous flood records of 18.81 feet by cresting at 23.4 feet. There was a plea for the public to help in a volunteer workday. The Joplin television station, KOAM, reported that 125 people helped with the restoration project on February 6<sup>th</sup>. Wildcat



Photo on Wildcat Glades website

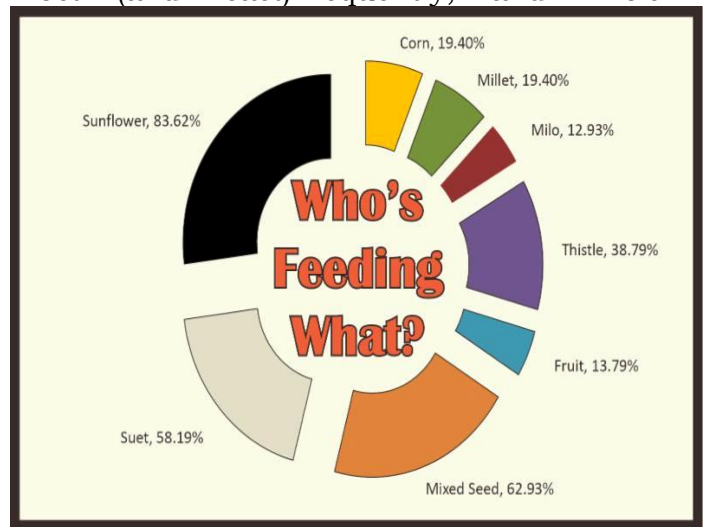
Glades estimates that around \$50,000 will be needed to repair all the damage. GLAS has contributed \$333 toward their goal. We have been a partner in this Audubon Center since their groundbreaking. Visit [wildcatglades@audubon.org](mailto:wildcatglades@audubon.org), to get more information. Please consider contributing to this restoration project. ♦

**Winter Bird Feeder Survey**

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife has published their findings for this year’s survey. There were only 3 participants from Delaware County out of the 232 total participants in 47 counties. The top five species listed for this year are American Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, House Sparrow and Northern

Cardinal. It will be interesting to compare the Great Backyard Bird Count with these state specific results taken a month earlier.

“Backyard bird-watchers rallied together this January for the Wildlife Department's annual Winter Bird Feeder Survey. Together they reported 19,839 birds from 51 species during the four-day survey. As expected, the top five reported species did not change from last year. In fact, the American Goldfinch has been the top most reported species since 2008! We sifted through this year's data to find where Oklahoma’s citizen scientists are located, which birds were seen most (and least) frequently, and who's



feeding what. Get involved in other citizen science efforts at [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com).” ♦

**Purple Martin Migration Patterns**

Our February speaker at the monthly meeting was Dr. Jeff Kelly, Professor of



Biology and Heritage Zoologist at the University of Oklahoma. His main interest is the study of the migration of birds particularly the insectivores. The migration pattern helps to tell the effect of climate and land use changes on animals and birds.

His research involves light level geotracking devices. These devices record the length of

time the birds experience daylight and correlate with the banding of the individual to determine their location and migration pattern. These can also be correlated with Nexrad weather images. He presented interesting images of morning roosting plumes seen on unfiltered weather radar. Many changes in the tracking method technology have given more clues to shifts in migration patterns. He is continuing his studies to determine the basis for the decline in the migration patterns in the northern range. ♦

### **Mesmerizing Migration**

“We used millions of observations from the [eBird](#) citizen-science database,” says lead author Frank La Sorte, a research associate at the Cornell Lab. “After tracing the migration routes of all these species and comparing them, we concluded that a combination of geographic features and broad-scale atmospheric conditions influence the choice of routes used during spring and fall migration.”

La Sorte says a key finding of the study is that bird species that head out over the Atlantic Ocean during fall migration to spend winter in the Caribbean and South America follow a clockwise loop and take a path farther inland on their return journey in the spring. Species that follow this broad pattern include Bobolinks, Yellow and Black-billed cuckoos, Connecticut and Cape May warblers, Bicknell’s Thrush, and shorebirds, such as the American Golden Plover.

“These looped pathways help the birds take advantage of conditions in the atmosphere,” explains La Sorte. “Weaker headwinds and a push from the northeast trade winds as they move farther south make the fall journey a bit easier. The birds take this shorter, more direct route despite the dangers of flying over open-ocean.”

The study finds the spring migration path follows a more roundabout route but the birds move faster thanks to the presence of strong tailwinds as they head north to their breeding grounds.

For species that do not fly over the open ocean, the study finds that many use the same migration routes in the spring and fall. Geographic features shaping this pattern include mountain chains or isthmuses that funnel migrants along narrow routes.

“It’s an exciting new area of research,” says La Sorte. “By using eBird data and other forms of migration tracking information, we’re getting a more detailed picture than ever before about where and when birds migrate. That’s the kind of information we need to make smart conservation decisions for species that live in vastly different regions during the year. Citizen science makes it possible to do this for populations across an entire hemisphere.” – *Cornell Lab of Ornithology*

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/mesmerizing-migration-watch-118-bird-species-migrate-across-a-map-of-the-western-hemisphere> ♦

### **Spring Planting**

“Looking to spruce up your yard this spring? Try growing more native plants – plants that naturally occur in the area where you live. Gardening with native plants has many benefits: They’re beautiful, they’re already adapted to your precipitation and soil conditions, and they don’t need artificial fertilizers or pesticides. Of course the biggest benefit might be that native plants are great for birds and other wildlife. Native plants provide nectar for hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees. They provide nourishing seeds and irresistible fruits for your feathered neighbors, and they offer places to nest and shelter from harm. They’re also a critical part of the food chain—insects evolved to feed on native plants, and by and large, backyard birds raise their young on insects, explains Douglas Tallamy, the author of [Bringing Nature Home](#). Take the Carolina Chickadee: A single clutch of four to six chicks will gobble up more than 9,000 caterpillars in the 16 days between when they hatch and when they leave the nest. So thriving insects mean thriving birds. The key is to pick the right plants for your area.”

- *National Audubon Society News* ♦

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## **Support Wildlife by Purchasing a Conservation Plate**

Join the thousands of Oklahoma drivers showing their wild side by purchasing a hunting, fishing or wildlife-watching specialty license plate. You'll not only identify yourself as a fellow outdoor enthusiast, you'll also fund conservation efforts across the state.

"We have a design for nearly every interest," said Curtis Tackett, a biologist who works on fisheries and wildlife diversity projects for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. "Anglers can choose from two bass designs and a trout plate. Hunters can select a deer, turkey, quail, or mallard duck plate. We even have a scissor-tailed flycatcher and Texas horned lizard design for the outdoor enthusiast." More than half of the license plate fee goes directly to the Wildlife Diversity Program. Original plates cost \$38. Plate renewal is available for \$36.50.

"The Wildlife Department doesn't receive any state tax appropriations, so we rely on wildlife enthusiasts to help us manage Oklahoma's wildlife and habitats," Tackett said.

[Apply for your personalized or pre-numbered conservation plate](#) at your local tag agency.