



The Pileated Post

A National Audubon Society Chapter
Grove, OK

Photo by Tom Whipple

Grand Lake Audubon Society

Mar 2015 – May 2015

From the President's desk...

This has been an active winter with various birds in our state. Some people have seen Evening Grosbeaks; the Pelicans have stayed over the winter here on Grand Lake. At the December meeting we were given the opportunity to listen to Larry Herbert from Ozark Gateway Audubon Society who talked about Eastern Bluebirds and their nesting habits. It was very informative. The Chapter participated in "The Christmas on Main" held at Har-Ber village. Our display was a whimsical presentation in the old jail building. Willie Hale and her crew of volunteers took different waterfowl decoys and made them up as "JAILBIRDS". It was probably the best presentation, but in order to qualify the visitors voted by donating to each booth represented and we did not make out as well as some of the other booths. Also in December we were asked to fill a large display case at the Grove Public Library. We filled the case with various nest boxes, feeders, and publications from our organization. They also asked for a formal presentation about nest boxes, feeders etc. There were three attendees. It was cold for our January meeting, but 15 hardy souls braved the night and ate very well. The annual Christmas covered dish meal had been moved to January this year. The 24th of January saw us taking our annual trip to Northwest Arkansas to look for/at eagles and we weren't disappointed. In all we saw 128 eagles plus other assorted species. There were 17 participants with 7 of those being Chapter members and the rest interested caravaners. One of those new observers was an exchange student from Germany and he was excited and impressed. We saw eagles on the roost East of Gravette and in the trees and on the ground around some chicken houses. Breakfast is always the main event after seeing the birds and we ate at the Hard Luck Café in Gravette. We didn't see as many birds at Gentry as we usually see. The cooling lake is fuller and the fishermen can move up into the area where the birds usually sit in the trees. After an eventful morning

we traveled back to Grove by various routes depending on who was driving. The February meeting was presented by Chris Pistole who is the Director for Wildcat Glades Wildlife area. He spoke on "Climate Change" and the impact it is having on the wintering and nesting habits on birds as well other warm-blooded creatures. His program was well received. After the February 9th meeting Alan Smith asked who to contact about an eagle nest on Horse Creek here on Grand Lake. The proper authorities were contacted. In their correspondence they said that there were 121 eagle nests confirmed in Oklahoma at this time; whereas, in 1990 there were none. It sounds like we are getting/doing something right. So: **KEEP LOOKING UP**. You never know who or what you might see.

Frank

Upcoming Events

Mar 9 Monthly meeting at 7 pm; "Ecuador in 4G: Going, Going, Guong, Galapagos", Doug Wood, Ornithologist, Professor of Biology, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Durant, OK

Apr 13 Monthly meeting at 7 pm; "Wild Turkeys of Northeastern Oklahoma"; Tony Crawford, Wildlife Biologist Technician, Oklahoma State Department of Wildlife Conservation

Apr 21 Spavinaw Creek field trip depart 8 am; bring sack lunch; Sandy Sullins, 918 786-2638

May 11 Monthly meeting at 7 pm; "Birds and other Beauties of Nature from Florida to Alaska", Tom Whipple, Photographer

May 16 George Washington Carver National Park field trip; depart 7 am, lunch at Undercliff; John Beyer 918 787-5188

Hospitality Schedule

March 9 Carole Chalupnik & Ellie Womack
April 13 Sharon & Vincent Witt
May 11 Diana Smith & Marie Burns
Coordinator - Willie Hale 918 791-0926

Nesting Biology of the Genus Sialia

Our speaker for the December meeting of GLAS was Larry Herbert who has spent over thirty years researching bluebirds. He was a very entertaining speaker who explained that bluebirds can be banded in the nest from eight to eleven days after hatching. At this point in their lives, they can be handled



and will not have legs that are too small to keep the bands on.

Occasionally, bluebirds will lay white eggs. The entire clutch will be white. If you find blue eggs mixed with white in the same nest,

it probably means eggs were placed by another female. If you find white eggs with speckles (brown, red, etc.) suspect another species. He also stated that the bluebirds from the northern regions tend to migrate further south than those birds that live in the central areas of the United States. Often, the birds from Canada and the northern U.S. will leapfrog over areas with many resident birds in order to avoid competition for food. Weather, especially the temperature, has a big influence on spring migration. As the temperature warms, insects become active and bluebirds begin their journey northward, back to their breeding territories. He also stated that Western bluebirds prefer mistletoe as a food source. Visit www.nabluebirdsociety.org for more information. ♦

Christmas Bird Count

Eight members and guests conducted the annual Christmas Bird Count in the Spavinaw area on December 14th. GLAS

has conducted a bird count in this area since 1975 with the help of our regional owl expert, Paul Wilson, who spotted 3 different owl species. The weather was as perfect as December can give with temperatures centering around 50 degrees. Although the total bird count was lower than previous years, we observed a total of 77 bird species. This data is valuable for monitoring changes in bird migration and number of birds present at a specific time in a specific area. Please consider joining us next year for a comfortable outing with a variety of bird habitats and some species that aren't usually seen in our back yards. ♦

Eagle Watch

“Weather and bald eagles cooperated on Saturday, Jan. 24, as 17 members of the Grand Lake Audubon Society took part in the annual Eagle Watch trip. The group departed Grove for northeast Arkansas for a day of bird watching and more. The group saw a count of more than 126 bald eagles, and that was conservative, reported member Evelyn Houck. As the group approached the



Photo by Joyce Weber

roost east of Gravette, Arkansas, birds were already leaving for the day. About 50 were observed in the trees along a bluff and leaving the roost. Houck said another large group of mature and immature eagles were seen as the group looped around Gravette and to their breakfast stop. Two mature birds and one immature bird were spotted on the edge of a pond near the road. Other sightings along the way gave great looks and

photo ops near the road too. Other birds of interest included a pair of Rusty Blackbirds at the Swepeco Plant near Gentry; Loggerhead Shrike; Am. Kestrel; Pileated Woodpecker; Red-bellied Woodpecker; Collared Dove; White Pelicans, and more.” ♦

- Grove Sun, January 26, 2015

Grove Public Library Program

Were you at the library during the month of December? Grand Lake Audubon Society provided the featured display and hosted a talk by Frank Houck on the



Photo by Sandy Sullins

enjoyment of birding and activities of our society. We had many compliments, comments and questions from people viewing the display. ♦

Brown Creeper

Certhia familiaris

“Bird-watching requires keen observation skills, especially if one hopes to spot the elusive brown creeper. Detection is the biggest challenge; once the small, camouflaged bird is seen crawling up the tree trunk, the birds' shape, coloration and distinct ‘creeping’ behavior clinch the identification. Just over five inches in length, this bird's mottled brown back, wings, and tail and tendency to hug the tree bark often make it indiscernible from the tree to which it clings. Only the slow and steady progression upwards and the swift flight back to the base of the trunk give away its location. In fact, brown creepers have been

described as a ‘piece of bark coming to life.’ Once detected, observers can see the sharply down-curved bill used to retrieve the spiders and insect larvae concealed in the bark crevices. Creepers also have a long, stiff tail, used to brace the bird against the tree as it makes its ascension. This tail is reminiscent



of woodpeckers; the brown creeper is the only songbird to molt tail feathers in the same order as woodpeckers.

The two inner tail feathers are replaced last as they are the most important. Brown creepers are only

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found in the Great Plains and Southeastern United States during winter months. They breed in the northern states and Rocky Mountain region where their preferred coniferous trees are more abundant.” ♦

-OK Dept of Wildlife Conservation, Jan 2015 Wild Side e-newsletter

Bald Eagle Nest Sites

A couple at the February 9, meeting of Grand Lake Audubon Society reported a Bald Eagle nesting pair on the Horse Creek arm of Grand Lake. Their contact information has been sent to Sutton Avian Research Center as there are persons within that group that monitor Bald Eagle nests in Oklahoma. So if you have an active eagle nest in your area of Grand Lake, I'm sure they would be happy to hear from you and check the location. (They are monitoring nests already in the Grand Lake area.) The Sutton Avian Research Center has monitored the growing number of bald eagle nests in our state following Sutton's hatching and reintroduction of young eagles here (and in MS, GA, SC, and AL) from 1985-1992. They monitored 121 bald eagle nest territories in Oklahoma last year, where none were known nesting in 1990. The Sutton Center website is: www.suttoncenter.org. ♦ - Evelyn Houck

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How do birds learn their songs?

“Some scientists have devoted their careers to figuring this out, species by species. Some bird songs are hardwired into a bird’s brain. Virtually all flycatchers, including kingbirds and phoebes, fall into this category. Marsh wrens imitate elements of songs they hear. Sedge wrens seem to improvise their own song repertoires. American robins share some whistles with neighbors, so they apparently learn song elements from one another. Baltimore orioles may learn their songs from their fathers and neighboring orioles during their first summer. It’s possible to detect differences between songs of yearlings and older males, so orioles adjust their songs at least until they’re 2 years old.” – Birds and Blooms, Jan 2015