



photo by Tom Whipple

The Pileated Post

A National Audubon Society Chapter
Grove, OK

Grand Lake Audubon Society

Dec 2014 – Feb 2015

From the President's desk...

It is time for words of wisdom (?) from your president. The months are flowing by with extreme haste. We participated in the annual Pelican Festival and good Chapter representations and good attendance at our booth. We held our annual owl watch at the Elmburg Ranch with a campfire and sitting outside around the fire to eat. Afterward we took the recorder and walked along one of the many trails available. After much calling and no response we returned back to the cabin. On the return trip we did manage to hear a barred owl, but couldn't entice it to come closer. During the playing of the recording we heard the owl take something. Before the evening was over we also heard a great-horned owl. The first of November found us at Schermerhorn Park south of Galena, Kansas on the banks of Shoal Creek. After seeing several common place birds we ate lunch at the Park Headquarters and visited with the naturalist who we found was the daughter of a girl our daughter ran around with when we lived in Western Kansas. We have had three very good programs at our meetings this fall and we are looking forward to another good one in December. Also in December we will be participating in the "Christmas on Main" sponsored by Har-Ber Village, the annual Christmas Bird Count, and putting up a display and making a presentation at the Grove Public Library. For those of you who are interested in obtaining sunflower seeds please let me know quickly. My supplier tells me he will only have enough seeds to last until Christmas. We will be doing our annual eagle watch January 24th. Keep looking up for you never know what you might see.

Frank

Upcoming Events

Nov 29 Starting night for Har Ber village "Christmas on Main Street", 2-8 pm weekends through Dec 14th, free admission; vote for GLAS Jail birds

Dec 8 "Nesting Biology of the Genus Sialia: Bluebirds of the Mountains, West, and Midwest", Larry Herbert, Ozark Gateway Audubon Society

Dec 4 Ladies luncheon, *The Parrot*, 12 noon; RSVP to Judith Deneen, 918 314-0268 or jkdall@groveemail.com

Dec 14 Christmas Bird Count; contact John Beyer at 918.787.5188 to help us with this year's count

Jan 12 Covered dish, Grace Presbyterian Church, **6 pm**

Jan 24 Eagle Watch, Frank Houck, 918 787-6532; depart promptly at **6 am**

Feb 5 Ladies luncheon, *The Parrot*, 12 noon; RSVP to Judith Deneen at 918 314-0268 or jkdall@groveemail.com

Feb 9 "Impacts of a Changing Climate on Birds", Christopher Pistole, Educational Director, Wildcat Glades Conservation and Audubon Center

Hospitality Schedule

December 8 Sharon Herhager & Eve Schnakenberg

January 12 Pot Luck Dinner - bring a covered dish to share with serving utensil

February 9 Evelyn Houck & Patsy Hagen

Eighteen people contributed assistance in some manner to the recent Pelican Festival. Proceeds from the festival help to purchase our new projector used at GLAS meetings. A big thanks to all of you who helped in this event.

Coordinator - Willie Hale 918-791-0926

To Snag or Not to Snag



Red-headed woodpeckers excavate cavities in large, dead trees called *snags*. Yet, over much of the Red-head's range, snags are frequently cut down as unsightly, or because they make good

firewood. There are ways we can help the Red-headed Woodpecker and many other woodpeckers, too. The key is to *leave snags intact*. If you must cut down a tree on your property, consider leaving the lower trunk as a snag - a veritable *condominium* for wildlife! Dead trees provide vital habitat for more than 1,000 species of wildlife nationwide. They also count as cover and places for wildlife to raise young in the requirements for Certified Wildlife Habitat designation. All woodpeckers nest in tree cavities, but northern flickers, red-headed woodpeckers and downy woodpeckers may also take up residence in **birdhouses** of varying sizes. *Northern flicker requirements*: 7" x 7" x 18" high; hole: 2-1/2", centered 14" above the floor; color: natural; placement: 8-20' high on tree trunk; nesting material: 4" of wood shavings on floor. *Red-headed woodpecker requirements*: 6" x 6" x 15" high; hole: 2", centered 6-8" above the floor; placement: 8-20' high on tree trunk; nesting material: 4" of wood shavings on floor. *Downy woodpecker requirements*: 4" x 4" x 10" high; hole: 1-1/4", centered 6-8" above the floor; placement: 8-20' high on tree trunk; nesting material: 4" of wood shavings on floor. Because woodpeckers are woodland birds, they will be more likely to occupy birdhouses that are mounted on the trunks of mature trees in the middle of woodlands. See the National Wildlife Federation website <http://www.nwf.org/How-to-Help/Garden-for-Wildlife/Gardening-Tips/Attracting-Wildlife-With-Dead-Trees.aspx> for more information. ♦

American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana*

On our way to Schermerhorn Park in Galena, Kansas, we spotted an American

Avocet feeding on the shallow sand bars of Spring River at Twin Bridges on November 1st. This avocet has long, thin, gray legs, giving it its colloquial name, "blue shanks". The plumage is black and white on the back with white on the underbelly. The neck and head are cinnamon colored in the summer and gray in the winter. The long, thin bill is upturned at the end. The adult bird measures 18 inches long including the bill. This species is migratory, and mostly winters on the southern Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Mexico and the United States. The American avocet forages in shallow water or on mud flats.

Avocets feed much like spoonbills, sweeping their bills from side to side along the surface of the water to pick up crustaceans, aquatic insects, and floating seeds. They often feed in flocks, a line of birds advancing abreast, sometimes entirely submerging their heads as they sweep the water for food, but we saw a solitary bird feeding alone at the Twin Bridges area. It was most likely heading toward the Gulf coast for winter and only stopped for a snack along the way.



Photo by Nick Talbot 2111

Populations declined in the 1960s and 1970s, largely from the loss of wetlands from water diversion for human use. Contamination of wetland habitat with selenium caused increased developmental abnormalities and mortality. Since 1995, owners of selenium-contaminated sites in northern California have been required to provide safe wetland habitat for the species. Breeding success on the newly created sites has been much greater than initially

expected, but long-term prospects for breeding at these sites are not clear. ♦

American Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*

Eagles are here with several sightings around Grand Lake. The Sutton Center is celebrating their 30th anniversary. The George Miksch Sutton Avian Research Center was founded in 1984 with the mission of finding cooperative conservation solutions for birds and the natural world through science and education. The Sutton Center is a private, non-profit organization located near Bartlesville, OK, and has been affiliated with Oklahoma Biological survey in the college of Arts and Sciences at the University of Oklahoma since 1997. We have enjoyed their eagle cam over the last few years. Visit to see this year's progress in the nesting of bald eagles at http://www.suttoncenter.org/pages/live_eagle_camera. They are waiting to see if current activity will warrant replacing the camera equipment at both nesting sites. The Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge near Vian,



Rolf Hooker Homer, Alaska

Oklahoma has a functioning camera currently. The Sooner Lake site view is not available at the time of this publication. The Decorah Eagle Cam was turned on for the 2014-15 season on October 13th, 2014. This can be viewed at <http://www.ustream.tv/decoraheagles>. Don't forget our own local eagle watch on Jan 24th. Frank Houck will be our leader

and will be all set to roll at 6 am promptly from the Wal Mart parking lot behind Rib Crib. Dress warmly and be ready for a hearty breakfast in Arkansas. ♦

Bat Fungus Update

“After re-examining an Oklahoma bat specimen originally tested in 2010, scientists with the U.S. Geological Survey National Wildlife Health Center have dropped Oklahoma from the list of areas where White-Nose Syndrome in bats has been suspected or confirmed. The scientists have also removed the Cave Myotis (*Myotis velifer*) from the list of bat species that have tested positive for the fungus (*Pseudogymnoascus destructans*) that has been associated with White-Nose Syndrome, which since 2006 has killed millions of hibernating bats primarily in the eastern United States and Canada. The Oklahoma specimen was collected in a private Woodward County cave in May 2010, and at the time appeared to have the fungus. While original test results were positive for the fungus associated with White-Nose Syndrome, new testing procedures have revealed the bat was not infected with the fungus and did not show characteristic lesions. Five bats tested from that private cave in 2010-11, along with 81 swabs from that cave and surrounding caves taken in 2013-14, failed to show the presence of the fungus. This monitoring will continue in 24 caves across the state.”

- Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation ♦

Great Backyard Bird Count

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time. Since then, more than 100,000 people of all ages and walks of life have joined the four-day count each February to create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds. You are invited to participate! Simply tally the numbers and kinds of birds you see for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, **February 13-16, 2015**. See <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/about/> for more information. ♦

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Har-Ber Village Museum



Put Har-Ber Village **Christmas on Main Street** on your holiday schedule. There will be Christmas music, ornament decorating projects and Santa. The dates are Nov 29th and 30th, December 6th and 7th, and December 13th and 14th. The village will be open on these dates from 2-8 pm and admission is free. Select your favorite building with votes with coins or other currency. Enjoy what GLAS has done with the village **Jail** and vote for us. Bring your family, friends and neighbors. For more information visit www.har-bervillage.com or call (918) 786-6446.