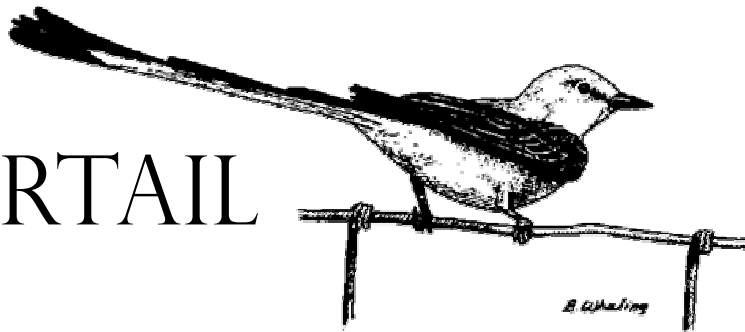


# TULSA SCISSORTAIL

SPRING 2004



TULSA  
AUDOBON  
SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER  
VOL. LXV, NO. 4

EDITOR: PETER LOWEN

## *From the President*

I've got several items to cover in this month's president's message. **The Tulsa Scissortail**, this newsletter you're now reading, will be undergoing some changes. Over the last few years the funds we have available have decreased since National Audubon has reduced the dues share that chapters receive. Our largest expense is this newsletter, so to meet this budget challenge the TAS Board has decided to reduce its frequency from bimonthly to quarterly. To offset this reduction, we are taking several steps. We do send everyone our annual program, so hopefully you have already marked the events you wish to attend on your calendar, and the current schedule of events is available on our web site, [www.tulsaaudubon.org](http://www.tulsaaudubon.org). We will also increase the number of pages (if our editor Peter Lowen receives enough material!) so you can get more information. Finally we will begin sending out monthly e-mail reminders of upcoming TAS Events. We

have e-mail addresses for a few members, but we do not have this for most of you. If you would like to receive these e-mail reminders please send an e-mail to [johnkennington@cox.net](mailto:johnkennington@cox.net) and we will add you to the list.

**Bird Seed Clearance Sale.** We still have a few bags of bird seed left, which we need to get sold (and out of my carport!) On page 2 is a list of the items we still have and the reduced sale prices. Give me a call at 809-6325 to get your order in.

**House Sparrows.** If you read Action Line in the Tulsa World you may have noticed some columns about "Killer" House Sparrows. In the first, Phil Mulkins had talked with Robert "Bluebird Bob" Walshaw. The thrust of the piece is that the non-native House Sparrow is a real problem for our native cavity nesting birds, especially Eastern Bluebirds. We completely agree that House Sparrows are a serious problem, but disagree with one of Bob's remedies – to withhold mixed bird seed. We have found

that House Sparrows will eat any food you put out, including the sunflower and thistle that Bob recommends using instead of mixed seed, which was the thrust of a follow-up article in Action Line.

We fully agree with Bob that House Sparrows are a problem and trying to reduce their population is a worthy goal. But simply changing our bird feeding techniques will not solve the problem. We've included a full page of information on House Sparrows, Starlings (another non-native problem species) and Bluebirds on page 7.

**Eagles.** Thanks to everyone who came out to Keystone for our Eagle Days – Both our members who shared their knowledge (and spotting scopes!) and everyone else who came out to enjoy the eagles. We were glad to have you there!

*John Kennington*

## TAS Upcoming Events

**Tuesday Morning Birders.** The Tuesday Morning Birders meet at 8:00am every Tuesday morning in March, and at 7:30am beginning in April (through October), at the Tulsa Garden Center. Trip leaders are listed by week.

1st Tues	Dave Edwards	865-7598
	Bob Gard	241-4273
	Jim Thayer	494-3784
2nd Tues	Bob & Donna Germany	493-2726
3rd Tues	Jo Loyd	835-2946
4th Tues	Patty & Paul Moser	252-2824
5th Tues	Bruce Nixon	494-3865

**First Saturday of every month.** Bird with Oxley Nature Center Staff in Mohawk Park. Meet 8:00 a.m at parking lot. Call 669-6644 for details.

### March

6 Sat. **Field Trip.** "Puddle Jumping" in the Tulsa Area. Lynn Lane and Yahola Reservoirs plus Skiatook and Collinsville sewage ponds for waterfowl. Leader Lynda Fritts, 669-6649, 341-7431, [okbirdwoman@yahoo.com](mailto:okbirdwoman@yahoo.com)

16 Tue. **Society Meeting.** Ed Fite, Administrator of the Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission, "Updates on the Illinois River, Eucha and Spavinaw Lakes."

### April

6 Tue. **Board Meeting** - 7:00pm at Marcie Goad's house. Call 492-0460 for directions

16-18 **Field Trip.** Broken Bow and Red Slough WMA, McCurtain Co. for migrants, shorebirds, waders and waterfowl. Leaders: Linda and John Clark, 252-4627, [inigen2000@aol.com](mailto:inigen2000@aol.com).

20 Tue. **Society Meeting.** Walter Gerard, butterfly expert and co-author of an upcoming book on butterflies of Oklahoma, "Local Butterflies."

**May events on following page.**

## End of Season Bird Seed Clearance Sale

Very limited quantities of the following items are available at these special prices. Call John Kennington at 809-6325 to place your order.

20 lbs	Black Oil Sunflower Seed	\$5.00
50 lbs	Black Oil Sunflower Seed	\$10.00
16 lbs	Birder's Blend Mix	\$5.00
14 lbs	Songbird Mix	\$5.50
35 lbs	Songbird Mix	\$12.00
25 lbs	Cracked Corn	\$3.00
8 lbs	Sunflower Hearts	\$9.00
50 lbs	Sunflower Chips	\$25.00
5 lbs	Safflower Seed	\$3.00
25 lbs	Safflower Seed	\$12.00
5 lbs	Peanut Hearts	\$5.00
7.5 lbs	White Millet	\$2.50
5 lbs	Nut & Berry Blend	\$4.50
12oz	Suet & Seed Cake	\$1.25
12oz	Raisin Suet Cake	\$1.25
12oz	Cherry Suet Cake	\$1.25
---	Wire Suet Rack	\$4.00
10oz	Gourmet Bird Bar	\$1.50
5 lbs	Corn on Cob (~ 15 ears)	\$2.50

## More Upcoming Events

### May

- 1 Sat. **Big Day Count.** Tulsa Audubon Society annual day-long, county-wide census of migrant and resident species. Organizer: Jo Loyd, 835-2946, [jo.loyd@worldnet.att.net](mailto:jo.loyd@worldnet.att.net).
- 8 Sat. **Field Trip.** Hawthorne Bluff. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Hawthorne Bluff Nature Trail parking lot. Take US 169 north to Oologah, then SH 88 east to campground entrance on left (north) before the dam. Long pants and tick repellent advised. Call leader Bruce Nixon 494-3865. [buteonitidus@aol.com](mailto:buteonitidus@aol.com).
- 14-17 **Field Trip.** Quivira-Cheyenne Bottoms, KS for shorebirds, waterfowl and perhaps a rail or two! Leader: Jo Loyd 835-2946, [jo.loyd@worldnet.att.net](mailto:jo.loyd@worldnet.att.net).
- 18 Tue. **Society Meeting.** Monica Macklin, Instructor of Biology at NSU "Great Oklahoma Native Trees that should be Planted More Often."

## Zink Island and the Least Terns



Many of you are aware that Zink Island has become very over-grown with vegetation which makes it much less attractive to the Least Terns as a nesting and breeding area. The island was treated with an herbicide early last year, but the results were disappointing and a more vigorous clearing of the vegetation is now necessary.

The Corps of Engineers and the Riverparks Authority have some "shared" responsibility for Zink Island, but the politics of this matter are unimportant. Due to budget constraints, we have been asked to assist with a Spring clean-up, and so I am asking members to kindly consider volunteering a day, or perhaps two, to assist in this operation. We hope to get out there before the summer sun starts beating down on us.

The ideal solution would be to have the use a small bulldozer, or front-end loader. Do any members know of a public spirited contractor who would be willing to make this available for a day in the spring on a pro-bono basis? And while we are on the subject of trying to find environmentally friendly contractors, it would be wonderful to be able to replenish some of the sand on the island, too.

If you would like to volunteer, or have some ideas to add, please contact the Least Tern chair, Colin Davy, at 918-743-8161 or send e-mail to [cpd0716@cox.net](mailto:cpd0716@cox.net). Thank you all for your interest and assistance.

### TULSA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS

President: John Kennington 809-6325      Vice-President: Lynda Fritts 669-6644  
 Secretary: Cyndie Browning 492-5622      Treasurer: Mary Jackson 254-1350  
 Recorder: Amy Lambert 747-4202, 272-4794

Directors: Carol Eames, Bob Gard, Jo Loyd, Tomye Mainer, Patty Moser

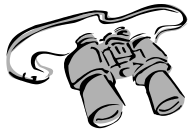
TAS Website: <http://www.tulsaaudubon.org>

"Tulsa Scissortail" is the bimonthly newsletter of the Tulsa Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society, P.O. Box 2476, Tulsa, OK 74101. As the "Scissortail" newsletter goes to the printer two weeks before the date of issue, your editor needs items for that issue at least a week prior to that (For Summer 2004, that will be May 10th or so).

e-mail: [thelowenfamily@aol.com](mailto:thelowenfamily@aol.com)

phone: 918-296-3093

Peter Lowen, Editor



# Recorder's Report

Recorder: Amy Lambert  
 lambert.a@sbcglobal.net  
 Amy Lambert 272-6595 or Pat Seibert 747-4202

Mail: 12006 E. 80th Street North  
 Owasso, OK 74055

Species	Date	Count	Location	Observer
R Red-necked Grebe	22-Nov-03	1	Lake Yahola	B. Carrell, T. Mitchell
R Black Vulture	20-Nov-03	1	Eagle Roost	D. Edwards
R Surf Scoter	09-Nov-03	2	Lake Yahola	B. Germany, et al
R Black Scoter	09-Oct-03	2	Lake Yahola	Carrell, Mitchell
R Long-tailed Duck	23-Dec-03	1	Lynn Lane Reservoir	J. Arterburn
R Ferruginous Hawk	28-Dec-03	1	121 St. & S. Garnett	C. Gerhardt
Merlin	11-Jan-04	1	Mingo Creek @ Pine	T. Mitchell
R Peregrine Falcon	14-Oct-03	1	Mohawk Park	B. Germany, et al
R Peregrine Falcon	16-Oct-03	1	Down Town Tulsa	T. Mitchell
O Peregrine Falcon	04-Jan-04	1	Mohawk Park	B. Carrell
Prairie Falcon	16-Nov-03	1	176th St N & Harvard	P. Seibert
R Greater Prairie-Chicken	19-Jan-04	1	176th St N @ Hwy 11	Loyd, Seibert
O Solitary Sandpiper	21-Oct-03	1	North Tulsa County	J. Loyd, et al
O Spotted Sandpiper	28-Oct-03	1	Mohawk Park/Lynn Lane	P. Moser, et al
O Semipalmated Sandpiper	11-Nov-03	2	Mohawk Park	B. Germany, et al
O Franklin's Gull	02-Dec-03	2	Lake Yahola	B. Gard, et al
O Franklin's Gull	03-Feb-04	2	Keystone Area, S River Rd	B. Gard, et al
O Bonaparte's Gull	25-Oct-03	1	Lake Yahola	B. Carrell
Short-eared Owl	16-Nov-03	1	176th St N & Harvard	P. Seibert
O Ruby-throated Hummingbird	21-Oct-03	1	Residence, Tulsa	B. Germany
R Rufous Hummingbird	02-Dec-03	1	Residence, Tulsa	J. Arterburn
R Rufous Hummingbird	05-Dec-03	1	Residence, Tulsa	J. Bacon
O Eastern Wood-Pewee	12-Oct-03	1	Oxley Nature Center	Carrell, Mitchell
L Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	03-Nov-03	1	East Tulsa	T. Mitchell
O Fish Crow	13-Jan-04	1	Lake Yahola	B. Germany, et al
O Cliff Swallow	09-Oct-03	1	Lake Yahola	Loyd, Seibert
O Gray Catbird	26-Oct-03	1	Oxley Nature Center	B. Carrell
O Ovenbird	12-Oct-03	1	Williams Center Green	M. Kamp
O Mourning Warbler	09-Oct-03	1	Williams Center Green	Loyd, Seibert
O Summer Tanager	12-Oct-03	1	Oxley Nature Center	Carrell, Mitchell
O Scarlet Tanager	01-Oct-03	1	Oxley Nature Center	T. Mitchell
O Lark Sparrow	29-Nov-03	1	Ray Harrell Nature Park	R. Anderson
O Fox Sparrow	12-Oct-03	1	Williams Center Green	M. Kamp
F Dark-eyed Junco	09-Oct-03	1	Mohawk Park	Loyd, Seibert
Smith's Longspur	16-Nov-03	1	176th St N & Harvard	P. Seibert
Smith's Longspur	03-Jan-04	30	176th N & Lewis	Mitchell, Woodfin

O = Out of Date R = Rare L = Late F = First

Are you familiar with the Oklahoma Sustainability Network? From its website, OSN "serves to connect those working towards sustainability in Oklahoma and to advance the public's awareness of sustainable issues. OSN is a resource for promoting, gathering, distributing, and exchanging environmental information integral to the sustainable future of Oklahoma." OSN and its close relative, Sustainable Tulsa, help network local programs and organizations to form a sustainability coalition for the greater Tulsa Area. They focus on education, environmental stewardship, economic sustainability, and community health and diversity. To get more involved in this growing movement, consider attending the Third Annual Oklahoma Sustainability Network Conference, which will take place at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education on the OU campus in Norman on Friday, March 12, 2004. For registration and more information, visit them at [www.oksustainability.org](http://www.oksustainability.org).

## Wildlife officials looking to the future

An opportunity to shape the future of Oklahoma's fish and wildlife conservation is in the works. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, in collaboration with wildlife stakeholders, is creating a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. This strategy will address the needs all fish and wildlife species in the state. It will also use a habitat approach, rather than a species-by-species management approach.

Hunters, anglers and boaters, and participants in outdoor recreation have traditionally funded the majority of fish and wildlife conservation. This funding has not been enough to address the needs of all 800 plus wildlife species in Oklahoma. That is the case nationwide, and all state fish and wildlife agencies have been working for 20 years to fill this funding gap.

This strategy is a component of the new, Federal State Wildlife Grants Program: the nation's core program for keeping America's wildlife populations healthy. Although not permanent, it allows development of long-term conservation goals and illuminates the need for long-term funding.

The Department needs input from citizens and organizations as it develops this all-wildlife strategy.

"We're going to need everyone's input, including sportsmen and women, birdwatchers and landowners," said Greg Duffy, director of the Wildlife Department.

Public meetings will be held across the state during the first week of March, so mark your calendars. The meeting in Tulsa will occur March 5<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30 – 8:30pm on the OU Tulsa campus at the Schusterman Center. Go to the conference center on the first floor of building 4 West (the only four-story building). This is your opportunity to voice important conservation concerns.

(from various sources)

## Your Backyard In Winter

Carol Eames



On some bright, sunny winter day, you may feel the urge to explore your backyard or the woods around your neighborhood (if you are lucky enough to have woods close by)! Grab your hand lens and discover a whole world of creatures who are waiting out the long cold months in a sheltered spot. Specifically, look for the pupa of butterflies who are overwintering, waiting for spring to come so they can continue with the next stage of metamorphosis. This is also the time to plan for additions that you will want to make to your butterfly garden this year. What works and what does not work for you? The butterflies will let you know which plants are their favorites.

Carol Eames

## Tulsa's Most Wanted (by birds)

The following five plants are top of the list of favorites and will attract many, many types of birds, often in great numbers. You may have to look a little harder to find these plants and some people consider them a little messy, but the rewards in terms of bird life are amazing. All of them provide food for robins, blue jays, cedar waxwings, brown thrashers, bluebirds, catbirds, cardinals, flickers, mockingbirds, red-bellied and red-headed woodpeckers, vireos, grosbeaks, towhees and tanagers. Individually, they attract dozens of other birds as well.

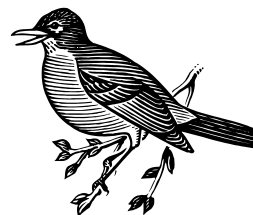
**Elderberry** likes full sun to partial shade and grows up to 20 feet.

**Cherry** is a small tree that likes full sun.

**Blackberry and raspberry** grows in full sun and forms thickets.

**Serviceberry** likes sun to partial shade; a suckering shrub or small tree.

**Mulberry** can grow to 15 feet in full sun.



# TULSA AUDUBON SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT Jo Loyd

Tulsa Audubon Society conducted its Christmas Bird Count, Saturday, December 20, 2003, in conjunction with the National Audubon Society count. A total of 40 persons in 11 teams participated, resulting in 107 species and 54,229 individual birds being counted. 561 driving miles and 27.5 walking miles were recorded. A big thanks to all made this count possible.

Common Loon, 3	Cooper's Hawk, 3	Eastern Phoebe, 3	Le Conte's Sparrow, 6
Pied-billed Grebe, 14	Red-shouldered Hawk, 47	Loggerhead Shrike, 20	Fox Sparrow, 28
Double-cr. Cormorant, 41	Red-tailed Hawk, 153	Blue Jay 304	Song Sparrow, 276
Great Blue	hawk species, 3	American Crow 748	Lincoln's Sparrow, 2
Heron, 64	American Kestrel, 82	Horned Lark, 67	Swamp Sparrow, 47
Turkey Vulture, 2	Merlin, 1	Carolina Chickadee, 394	White-Thr. Sparrow, 305
Snow Goose, 1	Northern Bobwhite, 12	Tufted Titmouse, 228	Harris' Sparrow, 277
Canada Goose, 1,139	American Coot, 3	White-breasted Nuthatch, 25	White-Cr. Sparrow, 191
Wood Duck, 54	Killdeer, 111	Brown Creeper, 18	Dark-eyed Junco, 572
Gadwall, 561	Least Sandpiper, 9	Carolina Wren, 79	Smith's Longspur, 8,
American Wigeon, 36	Common Snipe, 29	Winter Wren, 5	Northern Cardinal, 353
Mallard, 1289	Franklin's Gull, 2	Golden-crowned Kinglet, 13	Red-wi. Blackbird, 14,231
Northern Shoveler, 100	Bonaparte's Gull, 157	Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 23	Eastern Meadowlark, 608
Northern Pintail 27	Ring-billed Gull, 844	Eastern Bluebird, 149	Western Meadowlark, 1
Green-winged Teal 65	Herring Gull, 1	Hermit Thrush, 8	Rusty Blackbird, 163
Redhead, 2	Rock Dove, 326	American Robin, 435	Brewer's Blackbird, 55
Ring-necked Duck, 164	Mourning Dove 142	Northern Mockingbird, 166	Common Grackle, 10,572
Greater Scaup, 10	Eurasian Col.-Dove, 1	Brown Thrasher, 5	Great-tailed Grackle, 447
Lesser Scaup, 159	Great Horned Owl, 14	European Starling, 15,353	Brown-he. Cowbird, 37
Bufflehead, 105	Barred Owl, 6	American Pipit, 21	blackbird species, 50
Common Goldeneye, 102	Short-eared Owl, 8	Cedar Waxwing, 140	Purple Finch, 2
Hooded Merganser, 67	Belted Kingfisher, 12	Yellow-ru. Warbler, 36	House Finch, 124
Common Merganser 6	Red-he. Woodpecker, 52	Spotted Towhee, 1	American Goldfinch, 121
Red-br. Merganser, 82	Red-bel. Woodpecker, 110	Eastern Towhee, 1	House Sparrow, 680
Ruddy Duck, 1	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 9	towhee species, 2	
Osprey, 1	Downy Woodpecker, 90	American Tree Sparrow, 228	Total Individuals 54,229
Bald Eagle, 7	Hairy Woodpecker, 7	Chipping Sparrow, 5	
Northern Harrier, 35	Northern Flicker, 140	Field Sparrow, 34	Total Species 107
Sharp-shinned Hawk, 5	Pileated Woodpecker, 12	Savannah Sparrow, 34	

## Backyard Birding

by Laurel Upshaw

Where, oh where has my Sharpie gone? We had quite a relationship for about a month. In January it came and spent a sunny Sunday morning on the limb of the sweet gum tree in front of my bedroom window. I pulled up a chair and, with binocs, saw every tiny feather, the lovely red-amber eye, steely blue beak with white dot on top and black sharp tip, north wind blowing the pink-lined breast feathers and soft white undertail feathers out past the gray back and wings, and browner primary feathers meeting neatly just over the third dark bar up from the edge of the tail.

I had seen Junco feathers that week just off a log that edges a flower bed. This month the sharpie tried to take up residence in my bird brush pile by the corner of that bedroom, just by the base of the sweet gum. It came every morning, sitting 2 hours or more, in the shade of the privacy fence, before the sun rose high enough to warm it - waiting!! Since I have multitudes of House Sparrows, I do not begrudge it. But when the Carolina

Wrens are the only things I hear, and are in hysterics, I run outside to shoo it.

Last Saturday was hilarious. Sharpie was sitting in front of the brush pile on its usual branch. The resident squirrel in the sweet gum tree came down head first to face the hawk several times, and they squared off at each other, from a measured distance of 3 feet, about 2 feet above the ground. The squirrel did not scold or wave its tail - I think it was just extremely curious. The Sharpie made itself into a complete arc, like a bow fitted with an arrow pointed at the squirrel, head and neck extended, shoulders hunched, back bowed and tail turned under. Then the squirrel leaned out toward the hawk, which dived into the brush pile, facing inward for a moment, and then came back out and flew off toward the other brush pile in the opposite corner of yard.

The squirrel came across to sniff at the branch where the Sharpie had been sitting, and spent a long time investigating sticks under the branch - maybe it never saw such a big bird before!! Maybe the sharpie thought the silly squirrel might attack! It has not come back!

## Oklahoma City Reservoirs

by Jim Arterburn

The Tulsa Audubon Society sponsored an outing to Lake Hefner on January 24th to look at gulls. Thirty birders from Tulsa, OKC, Lawton and Ellsworth showed up. The gull numbers were down in the morning but we were able to see all sizes, shapes and plumages of Ring-billed and Herring Gulls. From Prairie Dog Point we saw a Red-throated Loon over by the dam. By the time we got around there it could not be refound. Right before lunch all of us got up close looks at an adult California Gull. This was a lifer for some. The California Gull was standing in the water with several adult and third-winter Herring Gulls.



Everyone got to see the smaller size, darker mantle, dark eye, yellow-green legs and longer primary projection. I photographed this bird and it is a different bird from the one I photographed there on December 29. We then broke for lunch with several of us going back to Stars & Stripes Park for lunch while some went for fast food. At Stars & Stripes we found one of the adult Lesser Black-backed Gulls. This bird was seen by 15 birders. After that most left but 6 of us continued around the lake one more time. Dan Farrell found another Lesser Black-backed Gull from Stars & Stripes also. At Prairie Dog Point all 6 of us got real good looks at, and several of us photographed, an adult Thayer's Gull. This Thayer's is also a different bird than the bird I saw and photographed on December 29. From the NW corner of the dam we found 2 Red-throated Loons but again they were quite a ways out and they were gone by the time we got to the water inlet. By then it was 4:25 and we all headed for home.

About a dozen hardy TAS birders, led by Jim Thayer, ventured up to Osage County on Saturday, February 7, to weather the cold and enjoy the birding. With morning temperatures in the high teens, we headed north on Route 75, quickly doubling back to pore over a flock of hundreds of little brown jobs. After parsing out a couple of Smith's Longspurs and a few dozen Horned Larks from the mass of Lapland Longspurs, we drove up to Barnsdall for a pit stop. Then, we zipped up to Pawhuska (and another pit stop) and entered the preserve for serious birding.

We started innocently with a few dozen American Tree Sparrows and a handful of other passerines, along with some good raptor sightings (Red-tails, Bald Eagle, Harrier, Rough-legs, and a Merlin). After a herd of bison watched us pass by, Jim stopped at a field, marched us out into the frigid air, and a Short-eared Owl soon lifted off, circled around and flew over the far ridge. To the mammal list, we added coyote and white-tailed deer.

As we drove north out of the preserve, we spotted more Harriers hunting and Rough-legs perching atop poles, and flock after flock of Tree Sparrows. We notched another Short-eared Owl along a fence, saw lots of beautiful prairie vistas, watched a Bald Eagle being harassed by a Prairie Falcon, saw Bob Gard

stalk several raptors with his new digital camera-on-steroids, and lucked into six Greater Prairie-Chickens quietly foraging 30 yards off the road (thanks to good spotting by Tom Clark).

There was ample opportunity to practice identifying Harriers on the ground (without the white rump visible), and Rough-legs of varying plumages. By day's end, we had logged 42 Rough-legged Hawks and an astonishing 560-odd American Tree Sparrows, a record in everyone's book. We saw so many Rough-legs, we learned their "being birded" routine: sit quietly until all vehicles arrive and stop; let everyone get a good look for about four minutes; relieve oneself and shuffle one's feet; and after precisely fifteen more seconds, take off.

With 37 species tallied, we concluded with dinner at the Whiz Bang Café in Pawhuska. It was a glorious day of birding.



Rough-legged hawk by Bob Gard

## Roughing It

by Peter Lowen

## Discourage House Sparrows and Starlings!

A homesick Englishman by the name of Nicholas Pike brought with him 50 House Sparrows from England and released them in Brooklyn, New York. Those 50 sparrows quickly adapted to the American lifestyle, driving out birds that had been native here. Today, House Sparrows are one of the most common birds in the World, having been introduced virtually everywhere. The House Sparrow is not a true sparrow but is actually a member of the weaver finch family. It is a brown bird with a black bib and is often seen around fast food restaurants, stores and people's yards.



*House Sparrow*

The House Sparrow has driven birds like the Bluebird and Purple Martin from areas where they were once common. House Sparrows nest in bird boxes, tree holes and in almost any nook or cranny of a building. They are aggressive fighters and will evict ANY nesting bird from a cavity to take over the site. House Sparrows will tear up nests, break eggs, kill and toss out nestlings and adults and then build their nest right on top of the carnage.

Do NOT help House Sparrows to nest around your home. Buy nest boxes designed to exclude sparrows by having an opening only large enough for a Chickadee, Swallow, etc. On your existing boxes with openings over 1-1/8", install an opening adapter to reduce the opening to 1" to 1-1/8". But be sure to note that Bluebird boxes use 1-1/2" holes, which a House Sparrow CAN fit through. But there are things you can do to discourage the Sparrows. Plugging the entrance hole of a box taken over by sparrows will prevent the male from using that specific box, and might even encourage him to move elsewhere. Some people plug the entrance hole at the end of the nesting season and leave it plugged until the bluebirds arrive in the spring. This will prevent sparrows from roosting in the box during the winter, and then staking an early claim in the spring. More active techniques, such as trapping, can also be appropriate. The North American Bluebird Society has much more specific information. See <http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/sparrow.htm> on the web.

Regarding bird feeding, House Sparrows are very opportunistic. It is sometimes suggested to eliminate mixed bird seed from your feeders and use only sunflower, niger (thistle) and suet. But the experience of Tulsa Audubon is that House Sparrows love black oil sunflower seed and will also eat niger and suet, so selective feeding is not an effective deterrent. If you are lucky enough to have Bluebirds in your area and have a House Sparrow problem, you may want to try what one of our members does – stop feeding the birds entirely in late winter, when the Bluebirds start getting ready to nest. However, many of us don't have Bluebird habitat and want to encourage a wide variety of birds at our feeders.

Our native birds really need your help to have a place to nest that is safe from the attacks of the House Sparrow.

In the early 1890's, the Acclimation Society of North America released 50 pairs of Starlings into New York's Central Park as part of a project to introduce every bird ever mentioned in a Shakespeare play. Only 50 years later their populations had spread across the continent, competing for nesting sites with our native birds. Starlings are black birds about the size of a Robin. In the late fall, Starlings turn dark black and brown with white speckles or "Stars".



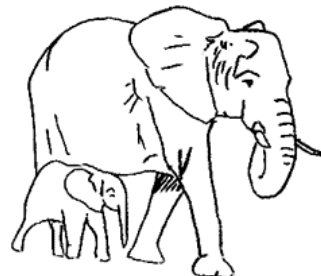
*European Starling*

Whatever negative qualities a House Sparrow bears, a Starling is much worse. They also take over nesting cavities and will evict birds larger than themselves like Flickers, Wood Ducks and Kestrels. Starlings are messy, quarrelsome, aggressive, and noisy. They gather by the thousands in their winter roosts and in the Spring nest in cavities to produce 2-3 broods.

Use nest boxes that discourage Starlings. A nest box with an entrance hole of 1-1/2" or less will deter Starlings. Evict Starlings you find in your nest boxes. Starlings like dark places so having a light colored interior nest box will help discourage the Starling. Our larger native cavity nesters also really need your assistance!

*Editor's Note: Starlings and House Sparrows are not protected by the Migratory Bird Act and can be "culled" legally.*

**Earth Day at the Tulsa Zoo: April 24 from 9am-5pm** A fun-filled day highlighting how animals, man, and nature all work together. Games, activities, and area environmental groups will show how you can make a difference. Contact Jay Ross at (918) 669-6215.



**NAS/TAS Introductory Membership Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please check:*

\$20 1 yr Introductory  \$30 2 yr Introductory

\$15 1 yr Student Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

\$15 1 yr Introductory Senior

Check enclosed, payable to: **National Audubon Society chapter T01/7XCH (please put on check)**

Please bill me

Mail to: National Audubon Society  
Membership Data Center  
P.O. Box 52529  
Boulder, CO 80322

**T01/7XCH must be on check and envelope**

OR, for only Tulsa Audubon Society  
 \$10 Local membership - includes  
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Tulsa Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 2476  
Tulsa, OK 74101

Metropolitan Environmental Trust's  
Semi-Annual  
**HOUSEHOLD POLLUTANT  
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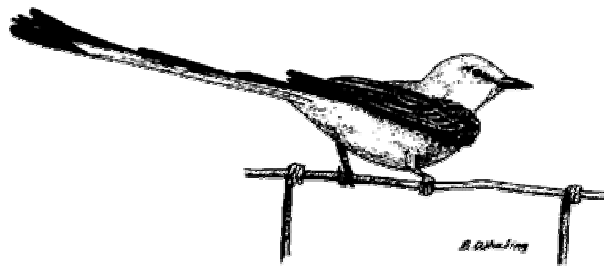
March 27-28, 2004  
Gate 7 Tulsa Fairgrounds  
10 A.M.-3 P.M. each day

Safely Dispose of household pollutants such as:  
Oil, Antifreeze, Pesticides  
Batteries, Household Cleaners  
Smoke Alarms, Bullets (under 50 caliber)  
Acids, Caustics, Flammable household liquids  
(NO latex paints)

**AND**

6th Annual Enviro Expo: April 21 10am-2pm  
Located at Downtown Main Mall, Tulsa. This  
expo provides the opportunity for area environ-  
mental businesses and organizations to share  
information with the public. Contact The M.e.t. at  
(918) 584-0584 visit them at [www.metrecycle.com](http://www.metrecycle.com)

Tulsa Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 2476  
Tulsa, OK 74101



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*Please share your "Scissortail" with a friend and get them to join!*