



The Scissortail

a newsletter of the

Oklahoma Ornithological Society

Volume 75, Number 4

Winter 2025

President's Message:

This year, the Oklahoma Ornithological Society has been busy building partnerships that give us incredible opportunities to share our love of birds and conservation. We kicked things off this summer by hosting a booth at the Oklahoma Hall of Fame's student program. In September, we partnered with Edmond Parks and Recreation for a BioBlitz and will team up again this spring. One of the highlights of the year has been our work with Red Ridge Nature Preserve, where we'll be conducting seasonal surveys. Many of you were able to hear director Lance's presentation and join the property tour at our fall meeting, or have participated in the first bird counts.

Looking ahead, there are even more possibilities on the horizon with the OKC Library System, OSU's Science and Engineering Fair, Rockjumper Tours, and more. These are exciting chances for us to connect with new audiences and expand our reach. Whether you're brand new to birds or have years of experience, there's a place for you in these efforts. Please let me know if you're willing to get involved and help us make the most of these opportunities.

If interested, contact me at cole_of_oklahoma@yahoo.com or 405-213-9057.

Thanks,



Cole Penning

2026 Membership Renewal

It is time to renew your OOS Membership for 2026. All memberships run from January to December. You will receive all issues for a calendar year. Memberships can be renewed here: https://www.okbirds.org/get_involved There is also a form at the end of this newsletter that you can print and mail with a check to renew your membership, if you prefer.

Membership Categories:

\$26 Regular - Includes publications

\$35 Family - One set of publications

\$16 Student - Discounted dues with regular benefits

\$40+ Sustaining - Extra support to OOS

\$500 Life

Thanks,



Zach Poland

OOS Scissortail Membership Update - Q4 11/25/25

Total members: 143

New Members: Jessica Belt (Edmond), Stephen Pace (Edmond), Micah Friedman (Oklahoma City), and Seth Kastner (Oklahoma City)

Contributions: Tim O'Connell and George Peck

**OOS Officers and Chairpersons as of
10/18/2025**

President – Cole Penning;
cole_of_oklahoma@yahoo.com

Past-President – Zach Poland;
zachapoland@gmail.com

President-elect – Randy Soto;
randazo_670@hotmail.com

Secretary – Steve Stone;
stevestonemail@gmail.com

Treasurer – Carrie Cartwright;
carrie.r.cartwright@gmail.com

Membership/Circulation – Zach Poland

Awards – **VACANT**; Acting – Zach Poland;
Emeritus: Mia Revels

Activities – Rebecca Renfro; relore7@aol.com

Conservation – Mark Howery;
mark.howery@odwc.ok.gov

Archivist – **VACANT**
Emeritus: Claudia Glass;
crglass1970@gmail.com

Special Projects – **VACANT**; Acting – Jake
Kirkland; kirklandj@gmail.com
Emeritus: Donald Glass

Business Manager - **VACANT**

OOS Bulletin Editor – Eugene A. Young;
eugene.young@north-ok.edu

The Scissortail Editor – Jake Kirkland;
kirklandj@gmail.com

OBRC Chairman – Joe Grzybowski;
j_grzybowski@sbcglobal.net

Webmaster – Jeff Tibbits;
burttibbits@gmail.com

Other Positions:
Coordinator for Breeding Bird Survey & Winter
Bird Atlas – Dan Reinking;
dan@suttoncenter.org

If you would like to nominate anyone,
including a self-nomination, for any open
positions, please reach out to President Cole
Penning.

**Special Projects Grant Deadline -
March 1st, 2026**

The Oklahoma Ornithological Society's Special Projects awards provide funding to students at any level, faculty researchers, and individuals or civic groups proposing to do work that aligns with our general mission to promote the "observation, study, and conservation" of birds in Oklahoma.

Proposals will be judged by a committee of OOS members who will rank overall merit based on professionalism of presentation, articulation of the question or need the proposal addresses, and significance of the work to Oklahoma ornithology. To apply, prepare a written proposal in MS Word, double-spaced, using 11-pt or larger font, and with a maximum length of 3 pages (not including lit cited and budget). Present the information in the following order:

1. name, institution, and contact information for the applicant
2. title
3. Introduction and justification
4. clear statement of objectives
5. study area and methods description
6. anticipated results
7. literature cited
8. itemized budget of expenses for which the funds will be used

Due to generous donations from the Jerome Westheimer Family Foundation and Janis Blanton, grant awards have increased. The OOS executive board has approved that Special Projects can now award 2-4 grants. Applicants may request support in any amount up to \$2000 (generally between \$500 and \$2000 is preferred). In 2025, OOS awarded three projects totalling \$3100. The submission deadline is March 1st, 2026, with decisions by April 15th, 2026.

Proposals should be sent as an email attachment to Jake Kirkland at
kirklandj@gmail.com

The membership of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society invests a significant proportion of the annual budget in its commitment to fund Special Projects. Applicants who receive Special Projects funding

for research projects are expected to prepare a manuscript of the work for publication in the Society's journal, the Bulletin of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society, and/or deliver a presentation of the work as part of the scientific program at our Fall Annual Meeting, usually held in October. Recipients of funding for non-research projects are expected to summarize their projects in a submission to our newsletter, *The Scissortail*, and are also invited to deliver a presentation at an annual fall meeting.

OOS Winter 2025 Conservation Report

Trump Administration Disincentivizes Wind Energy Development

During its first six months, the Trump Administration has eliminated or restricted all federal wind and solar energy tax credits through Executive Orders and, legislatively, through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which was signed into law on July 4, 2025. Legislatively, the existing federal Production Tax Credits and the Investment Tax Credits have been eliminated for all commercial wind and solar energy projects that are not operational by the end of calendar year 2027. The administration also temporarily paused federal permitting for wind projects and canceled approximately \$700 million in federal funding for offshore wind development initiatives, which have created additional barriers for new projects to meet the new tax credit deadlines. Furthermore, the new legislation included restrictions penalizing projects that use components from certain prohibited foreign entities, which has affected supply chains that rely on imported parts for turbine and solar cell production. Like commercial wind energy development itself, these changes have been met with mixed reviews within the environmental and conservation communities. They have been decried by the entities that advocate for renewable energy but applauded by organizations that are concerned about the impact of wind energy development on migratory bird and bat populations, both directly through collision mortalities and indirectly through the degradation of habitat – especially vulnerable prairie habitats, mountain top

habitats, and habitats near wetland complexes and rivers. Currently, some projects are racing to complete within the next 18 months, while many in the planning or early construction phases are being shelved.

Rollercoaster Federal Listing of the Lesser Prairie-Chicken

The status of the Lesser Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) has been dynamic and in a near-constant state of flux since 1997, when it was first proposed for federal listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Between 2000 and 2013, the Lesser Prairie-Chicken was classified as a federal candidate species for possible listing as threatened or endangered. In 2014, the Lesser Prairie-Chicken was listed throughout its range as a threatened species with special ESA rules under section 4(d) of the Act. In 2016, a court order vacated the 2014 federal listing decision, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service formally withdrew the prairie-chicken's threatened status in July of that year. This was quickly followed by a third-party petition to relist the species, and in December of 2022, the federal government listed the Lesser Prairie-Chicken as a threatened species in the northeastern part of its range (Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and the Texas panhandle) and as an endangered species in the southwestern part of its range (New Mexico and extreme western Texas). Once again, the Lesser Prairie-Chicken's status has changed. In May 2025, the Trump Administration initiated a legal review of the 2022 listing decision, asserting that it had foundational defects. In August of this year, a federal district court concurred with the administration's position and vacated the 2022 decision. In the coming months, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is expected to formally withdraw the Lesser Prairie-Chicken's current listed status and is likely to make a new determination on the 2016 listing petition within the next 18 months. Stay tuned.

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS OF BIRDS IN OKLAHOMA:

WINTER 2024-2025 PERIOD

The following is a listing of noteworthy records of birds for the Winter period—December 2024 through February 2025. It incorporates records outside or near limits of expected occurrence delimited by the *DATE GUIDE to the Occurrences of Birds in Oklahoma, Seventh Edition* (Oklahoma Bird Records Committee (OBRC), 2019, Oklahoma Ornithological Society, Norman, OK.). Also included are noteworthy high counts. Exceptional records reviewed and found acceptable by the Oklahoma Bird Records Committee are given in **bold**. Species whose names are followed by an (R) are expected, but RARE in very low frequencies. Underscores for date or locality depict records outside limits specified for the species in the DATE GUIDE. High counts are underscored also. m. ob. = multiple observers.

The winter period in Oklahoma is generally a good time for waterfowl, gulls, and sparrows. While the noteworthy records of geographic rarities, some seasonal, do not focus broadly on population dynamics, the assemblage can depict some patterns of occurrences within season and between years.

There were, at best, weak patterns emerging from this season's observations, except perhaps that there were weak patterns. There was a spurt of Black Scoters with a few double-digit numbers reported. There was also an increasing number of reports of Crested Caracaras, most from the southeastern counties. There was only a modest amount of lingering neotropical migrants. Perhaps of note are the more regular sightings of Palm Warblers during the winter periods, still very rare, but regular in the past few years. And the odd Lesser Goldfinch or four have been noted at several yards extending into northeastern Oklahoma. As last year and the previous year, there were no significant irruptions of boreal or montane species.

Among the rarities, a remarkable occurrence was the presence of up to 8 **White-throated Swifts** (an OBRC Review Species) at Gloss/Glass Mountain SP, dwindling to two on 28 Dec. Several notable gulls included the State's second record of **Slaty-backed Gull**, a primarily Asian species of the north Pacific coasts, including Alaska's northwest coast; it was a first-winter bird distinguished by Scott Loss at Lake Carl Blackwell. A second-winter **Short-billed Gull** (a species primarily of northwestern North America) was discovered briefly in Tulsa County, one of about ten reports in Oklahoma. The flock of **Western Bluebirds** in Washita County was only the second noted east of the 100th meridian. And a **Varied Thrush** in Washington County provided an exceptional occurrence.

SPECIES	NUMBER	DATE	COUNTY	LOCALITY	OBSERVER
		2024-2025			
Trumpeter Swan (R)	5	29 Jan-2 Feb 2025	Alfalfa	three locations	Aaron Short, m. ob.
Tundra Swan (R)	6-24	30 Nov 2024-2 Feb 2025	Roger Mills	Baker Lake	m. ob.
Tundra Swan (R)	6	7 Dec 2024	Harper	near Buffalo	Aaron & Brittany Short
Tundra Swan (R)	2	4 Jan 2025	Osage	Tallgrass Prairie Preserve	Melinda Droege, Zach Matchinski, Josh Engelbert
Tundra Swan (R)	3	26 Jan 2025	Washington	Tuxedo Road Pond	Bill Carrell

Blue-winged Teal	1	<u>4 Dec 2024</u>	Tulsa	Lafortune Park	Theramansi Lion
Blue-winged Teal	1	<u>14 Dec 2024</u>	Tulsa	Owasso	Mathew, Virginia & Levi Radford
Cinnamon Teal (R)	1	<u>12 Dec 2024-15 Jan 2025</u>	<u>McCurtain</u>	<u>Red Slough WMA</u>	David Arbour
Cinnamon Teal (R)	2	<u>23 Jan 2025</u>	<u>McCurtain</u>	<u>Red Slough WMA</u>	David Arbour
Surf Scoter (R)	1-2	thru 16 Jan 2025	Woodward	Fort Supply Reservoir	m. ob.
Surf Scoter (R)	1	1 Dec 2024	Custer	Foss Reservoir	Greg Cook, Steve Glover
Black Scoter (R)	1-11	26 Nov 2024-20 Jan 2025	Tulsa	Lynn Lane Reservoir	m. ob.
Black Scoter (R)	1	8 Dec 2024	<u>Payne</u>	<u>Lake Carl Blackwell</u>	Scott Loss
Black Scoter (R)	4,3	17, 28 Dec 2024	Noble	Sooner Lake--Bank Fishing Area	Scott Loss, Mike Yough
Black Scoter (R)	1-2	25-27 Dec 2024	<u>Oklahoma</u>	<u>Lake Hefner</u>	Steve Glover, Greg Cook, m. ob.
Black Scoter (R)	4	5 Jan 2025	<u>Woods</u>	<u>Alva Sewage Ponds</u>	Aaron Short
Black Scoter (R)	4	6 Jan 2025	<u>Blaine</u>	<u>Canton Lake Dam</u>	Aaron Short
Black Scoter (R)	4-8	8-21 Jan 2025	<u>Payne</u>	<u>Lake Carl Blackwell</u>	Caleb McKinney, Clay Billman
Black Scoter (R)	6	11 Jan 2025	<u>Oklahoma</u>	<u>Arcadia Lake</u>	Braden Farris
Black Scoter (R)	1	20 Jan 2025	<u>Oklahoma</u>	<u>Lake Hefner</u>	Randy Soto
Black Scoter (R)	20, 32	7,9 Feb 2025	Pawnee/No ble	Sooner Lake	Neil Gilbert et al., Scott Loss
Long-tailed Duck (R)	1	8 Dec 2024-4 Jan 2025	Alfalfa	Salt Plains NWR, Eagle Roost	Curtis Stewart, m. ob.
Long-tailed Duck (R)	1	28 Dec 2024	Roger Mills	Baker Lake	Nathan Pieplow
Long-tailed Duck (R)	1	2, 28 Feb 2025	Custer	Foss Reservoir	Blaine Carnes, Greg Cook, Mike & Debbie Flake
Long-tailed Duck (R)	1	11-15 Feb 2025	Blaine	Canton Lake	Aaron Short, m. ob.
Inca Dove (R)	1	12, 17 Dec 2024	<u>Woodward</u>	<u>Woodward</u>	Terri Jo Littau
Inca Dove (R)	1	1 Jan 2025	Oklahoma	Crystal Lake	TJ Hatchcock
Inca Dove (R)	1	15, 18 Feb 2025	Logan	Mineral Wells Park	George Zimmer, Aaron Short
Common Ground Dove	1	1-9 Jan 2025	Tulsa	Washington Irving Park	Levi & Mathew Radford, m. ob.
White-throated Swift	1-8	29 Nov- 28 Dec 2024	Major	Glass/Gloss Mountains SP	Aaron Short, m. ob., Nathan Pieplow

Sora	2-3	<u>29 Dec 2024-3 Jan 2025</u>	Ellis	Lake Lloyd Vincent	Jerry & Anita Vanbebber, m. ob.
Sora	2	<u>25-26 Jan 2025</u>	Oklahoma	Deep Fork--Remington Park	Jimmy Woodard, Steve Stone, Braden Farris
Sora	1	<u>2, 9 Feb 2025</u>	Harper	Doby Springs Park	Randy Soto, Steve Stone, Joe Grzybowski, m. ob.
Common Gallinule	1-3	<u>thru 4 Feb 2025</u>	McCurtain	Red Slough WMA	David Arbour
American Avocet	<u>68 (high)</u>	<u>8 Dec 2024</u>	Alfalfa	Salt Plains NWR, Eagle Roost	Curtis Stewart
Little Gull (R)	1	8-9 Dec 2024	Logan	Guthrie Lake	Neil Gilbert, m. ob.
Short-billed Gull	1 2nd win.	16 Feb 2025	Tulsa	Lake Yahola	Zach Poland
Great Black-backed Gull	1 1st win.	12 Jan 2025	Tulsa	Lake Yahola	Mathew, Virginia & Levi Radford
Great Black-backed Gull	1 1st win.	20 Jan 2025	Tulsa	Keystone Lake Dam	Zach Poland
Glaucous Gull	1 1st win.	30 Jan-27 Feb 2025	Oklahoma	Lake Hefner	Steve Stone, m. ob.
Glaucous Gull	1	31 Jan 2025	Oklahoma	Lake Overholser	Calvin Rees
Glaucous Gull	1	9 Feb 2025	Noble	Sooner Lake--Bank Fishing Area	Scott Loss
Glaucous Gull	1	27 Feb-1 Mar 2025	Blaine	Canton Lake	Matthew Cloyd, Dillon Cochran, Aaron Short
Slaty-backed Gull	1 1st win.	12-16 Feb 2025	Payne	Stillwater (various locations)	Scott Loss, m. ob.
Red-necked Grebe	1	26 Jan 2025	Kiowa	Tom Steed Reservoir	Joe Grzybowski, Randy Soto
Red-necked Grebe	1	1 Feb 2025	Custer	Foss Reservoir	Neil Gilbert
Western Grebe (R)	2	15 Dec 2024	Kingfisher	near Dover	Neil Gilbert
Western Grebe (R)	1	27 Dec 2024	Jefferson	Clear Creek Lake	Steve Davis
Red-throated Loon (R)	1-2	30 Dec 2024 thru period	Oklahoma	Lake Hefner	Steve Stone, m. ob.
Pacific Loon (R)	1	7 Feb 2025	Noble	Sooner Lake--Bank Fishing Area	Neil Gilbert, Steve Kolbe, Sean McLaughlin
Green Heron	1	3 Dec 2025	McCurtain	Red Slough WMA	David Arbour
White Ibis	45 to 7	<u>to 31 Dec 2024</u>	McCurtain	Red Slough WMA	David Arbour

White Ibis	12 to 1	<u>1 Jan-5 Feb 2025</u>	McCurtain	Red Slough WMA	David Arbour
Harris's Hawk	1	3 Dec 2024	Woodward	Cooper WMA	Larry Brown
American Bittern	1	<u>13 Dec 2024</u>	Noble	Sooner Lake--Bank Fishing Area	Brad Bergstrom
Northern Saw-whet Owl (R)	1	16 Feb 2025	Cherokee	near Proctor	Aaron Short
Crested Caracara (R)	1	6 Dec 2024	<u>Cotton</u>	<u>south of Temple</u>	Clayton Porter
Crested Caracara (R)	1-2	9 Dec 2024, 13 Jan, 12 Feb 2025	McCurtain	Red Slough WMA	David Arbour
Crested Caracara (R)	1	1 Jan 2025	Choctaw	Antlers	Khloe Campbell
Crested Caracara (R)	1	5 Jan 2025	<u>Jefferson</u>	<u>Waurika Lake</u>	Matt Ratcliffe
Crested Caracara (R)	1	18 Jan 2025	Bryan	ne. of Durant	Douglas Wood
Crested Caracara (R)	1	2 Feb 2025	<u>Okmulgee</u>	<u>south of Natura</u>	Peter Michael
Peregrine Falcon	1	<u>14 Feb 2025</u>	Tulsa	City Plex Towers	Jana Singletary
Say's Phoebe (R)	1	<u>12-13 Dec 2024</u>	Garfield	Covington	Jarron Peters
Say's Phoebe (R)	1	<u>27 Feb 2025</u>	Alfalfa	Aline	Matthew Cloyd
Ash-throated Flycatcher	1	<u>25 Feb 2025</u>	Tillman	Hackberry Flat WMA	Lou & Mary Truex
White-eyed Vireo	1	<u>2 Jan 2025</u>	McCurtain	Red Slough WMA	Nathan Pieplow
Northern Shrike (R)	1	1 Jan 2025	<u>Oklahoma</u>	<u>Crystal Lake</u>	Brian Marra, Grace Huffman
Tree Swallow	1	<u>7, 13 Jan, 3, 6 Feb 2025</u>	McCurtain	Red Slough WMA	David Arbour
Barn Swallow	1	<u>15 Dec 2024</u>	Osage	Pawhuska	Steve Glover, Greg Cook
Barn Swallow	1	<u>25 Dec 2024</u>	Pontotoc	Stonewall	Steve Glover, Greg Cook
Barn Swallow	1	<u>13 Feb 2025</u>	McCurtain	Red Slough WMA	David Arbour
Rock Wren	1	2 Dec 2024, 23 Jan 2025	<u>McCurtain</u>	<u>Red Slough WMA</u>	David Arbour
Rock Wren	1	20 Jan-26 Feb 2025	<u>Oklahoma</u>	<u>Lake Arcadia Dam</u>	Matt Ratcliffe, m. ob.
Western Bluebird	5, 10	2 Jan 2025	Custer	Foss SP	Larry Mays, Grace Huffman, Brian Marra

Varied Thrush	1	4 Jan 2025	Osage	Pawhuska	Josh Engelbert, Zach Matchinski
Purple Finch	2	27 Jan 2025	<u>Woodward</u>	<u>Boiling Springs SP</u>	Dillon Cochran
Red Crossbill (R)	4	15 Feb 2025	Woods	Alva	Aaron Short
Lesser Goldfinch (R)	1	<u>1 Dec 2024-20 Jan 2025</u>	Payne	Stillwater	Landon Neumann, m. ob.
Lesser Goldfinch (R)	1	<u>5 Jan 2025</u>	Tulsa	Tulsa	Mathew Radford
Lesser Goldfinch (R)	4	<u>12 Jan 2025</u>	Oklahoma	Nichols Hills	Nancy Scroggins
Lapland Longspur	20	8 Jan 2025	Coal	Lehigh Cemetery	Braden Farris
Lapland Longspur	50	13 Jan 2025	Johnston	Tishomingo NWR	David Arbour
Chestnut-collared Longspur (R)	16	15 Dec 2025	Osage	Tallgrass Prairie Preserve	Steve Glover, Greg Cook
Yellow-headed Blackbird	5 single s	<u>8-27 Feb 2025</u>	Payne, Oklahoma	Caddo, Tillman and Harmon cos.	m. ob.
(Yellow) Palm Warbler (R)	1	<u>13 Dec 2024-9 Feb 2025</u>	<u>Payne</u>	<u>Lake Carl Blackwell</u>	Scott Loss, m. ob.
Palm Warbler (R)	1	<u>10 Feb 2025</u>	Nowata	Nowata	Zach Poland
Pine Warbler	1	20 Jan, 2 Feb 2025	<u>Woods</u>	<u>Alva</u>	Steven Thompson
Pyrrhuloxia	1	19 Jan thru period	Jackson	Eldorado area; sev. locations	Bill Carrell, m. ob.

Joseph A. Grzybowski, Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, and 715 Elmwood Dr., Norman, OK 73072

OOS DUES INVOICE

If your dues are paid or you are a life member, please consider a donation or use this form to recruit a new member.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip plus four _____ - _____

Telephone (_____) _____

E-mail _____

Year first joined OOS _____

☐ Renewal ☐ New Member

Dues are for January 1—December 31

Please enter my Membership in the OOS as a;

☐ Student Member \$15.00 ☐ Family Member \$35.00

☐ Regular Member \$25.00 ☐ Sustaining Member \$40.00+

☐ School/Library \$25.00 ☐ Life Member \$500.00

Membership Subtotal \$ _____

Donation Subtotal \$ _____

Total _____

Members are encouraged to make contributions to the Society. Contributions may be deducted to the extent allowed by current law (our IRS ID is 23-7057442). For sustaining members, the first \$25.00 is considered membership, and the remainder is a contribution to the fund of your choice. Please check one of the funds below and enter the amount you wish to donate:

☐ General Fund \$ _____ ☐ Endowment \$ _____

☐ GMS Bulletin Fund \$ _____ ☐ Special Projects \$ _____

Donation Subtotal \$ _____

Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you wish to receive a membership card. Make check payable to Oklahoma Ornithological Society and use the enclosed envelope or mail to OOS, P.O. Box 35413, Tulsa, OK 74153. If you have questions regarding your membership, please write us at the above address or our e-mail is: zachapoland@gmail.com