



# FEATHERS

e-Volume 3, Number 6

June 2011

## Session I—June 6-10; Session II, June 13-17

### Nature Camp Lives!

**I**t was no easy decision for PCAS to cease to put on the nature day-camp for elementary school children that we have offered for so many summers. Many of you have contributed to it over the years, both financially and with your time and effort. So, you will surely be happy to hear that the camp will go on unchanged, except for the name.

**The Cimarron Group** of the Sierra Club has accepted our offer for them to take the camp over. So this year, for the weeks of June 6 and 13, Stillwater's kids will be attending Sierra Club Nature Camp. Nature Camp continues to be held at Sanborn Lake, and its curriculum remains just as it has been for years.

**As was always the** case, flyers for camp were distributed in March, and the camp was wait-list

only within a week. And like always, there are a number of children who want to attend, but whose parents have trouble with the \$90 tuition, particularly those families with multiple camper wannabes.

**PCAS never wanted** the camp to be only for children whose parents have money, and we are delighted that the Sierra Club has the same approach. However, they are in no better position than we were to cover the cost of the many kids who cannot pay or can pay only a part of the camp tuition.

**If you would like to help** by paying all or part of a camper's tuition, please just send checks payable to "Nature Camp" to PCAS, ATTN: Nature Camp, PO Box 82, Stillwater OK 74076. We will happily get your donation of any amount into the hands of the folks now running the camp. 🐦

### Send a Kid to Nature Camp!

Gramma? Grandpa? Aunt? Uncle? Anonymous?

Anyone can help make a child's summer meaningful and memorable.

Your \$90 covers full tuition for one child for one week; half tuition, \$45, helps parents with multiple children.

Mail in as directed above or simply go to the PCAS website and donate via PayPal. Please make sure to indicate "Nature Camp" in the "Specify Donation Area."

## June PCAS Calendar

### 6-10 Session I, Sierra Club Nature Camp

**Deadline** for turning in all BIRDATHON donations to PCAS ([Les Imboden](#)) and for reporting Birdathon results (money raised, number of species sighted, most interesting sighting) to [Sarah Kimball](#)

### 13-17 Session II, Sierra Club Nature Camp

## Welcome New PCAS Members

### Stillwater

Barbara Courtright  
Mary Frye  
Wayne Galleher  
Ann Geppert  
Jeanette Hane  
Sonja Hannon  
Jason Heinen  
Susan Hovis  
Karen Melcher  
Daniel Narvaes  
Celia Vandegrift

### Agra

Dorothy Davis

### Chandler

Marsha Malec

### Cushing

Shirley Elmore  
Barbara J. Parrish

### Davenport

Skip Blakley

### Perkins

Evelyn Adkins  
Phil Hughes

### Tryon

Richard L. Smith

### Marland

Homer M. Cain

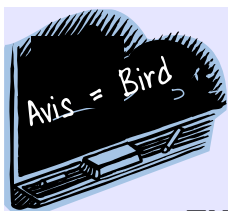
### Perry

Ruby E. Rutherford

### Yale

Letha Flagor





## Rara Avis

by Jerry Wilhm

### THOSE AWESOME BIRDS

**The birds! What an amazing diversity!** The ostrich is not only the tallest living bird standing up to 9 feet, but it is also the heaviest weighing almost 345 pounds. Its long legs and neck enables the bird to spot predators and to escape at speeds up to 40 miles/hour, a record for birds on land. Its eyes are the largest of any land animal, about 2 inches in diameter or about the size of a tennis ball. This huge bird hatches from an egg about 7 inches in length and weighing about 3 pounds. Although the world's largest and heaviest of living animals, it is relatively small compared to the height and weight of the mother.

**Several birds averaging 20 to 30 pounds** are the heaviest birds to fly. The California condor weighs as much as 29 pounds. Other heavy, flying birds include mute swans, wild turkeys, and white pelicans. Like a large airplane, taking off requires a strenuous effort. Condors must run along the ground and swans across water to attain sufficient speed for liftoff.

**The wandering albatross which has a circumpolar range** in the southern ocean holds the record for the longest wingspan. They soar on slim wings extending almost 12 feet in length. The albatross can glide for hours without a single beat of its wings. The Andean condor of South America has wings extending almost 10½ feet long.

**Smaller birds hold the speed records.** The peregrine falcon dives at speeds up to 200 miles/hour on its hunting stoop. For level flight, the spine-tailed-swift of India holds the record. It reportedly can speed through the air at more than 100 miles/hour.

**An African vulture, spotted at 37,900 feet,** holds the altitude record for birds. Unfortunately, this record-setting bird was sucked into a passing jet engine. Bar-headed geese fly over the Himalayas at 27,880 feet. The sooty tern may spend years after fledging flying over the tropical oceans. It never lights except to breed on land. The champion long-distance migrant is the Arctic tern, making an annual round trip of up to 25,000 miles between the Arctic breeding grounds and its winter range over the Antarctic Ocean.

**A domestic breed of chicken, the male onagadori,** has tail feathers which grow continuously; lengths of 35 feet have been reported. For a wild bird, the feathers of the Argus pheasant of Southeast Asia can reach lengths of 5.7 feet long with a fan width up to 5 feet wide.

**The world's smallest bird is the bee hummingbird** of Cuba. It is only 2.24 inches long, about the size of an ostrich eye, and weighs only 0.056 ounces. Its wingspan is 2.6 inches and its eggs are the size of a garden pea. During courtship displays, its wings beat up to 200 beats/second. 🐦

## Birdseye App Harnesses the Power of eBird

**B**irdsEye is the best invention for birding since binoculars," says Kenn Kaufman.

**If you are in search of** a particular bird, BirdsEye will show you where it has been observed, and even give you directions. If you are new to birding or an experienced birder who is on the road, BirdsEye will give you a list of birds seen nearby and a map of birding hotspots for any location in North America.

**The application includes** images and audio for 470 of the species that are observed most frequently in North America. Additional content is available for more elusive birds—for a total of 847 species.

**Bird sounds come from** the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Macaulay Library archive, the largest collection of bird and animal sounds in the world. Images are from the VIREO collection at The Academy of Natural Sciences. Acclaimed birder and author Kenn Kaufman wrote text for each species account. "Even when you're in the right location, it helps to know something about the bird's behavior and habitat in order to find it," says Kaufman.

**BirdsEye provides real-time** access to bird observations submitted to the eBird database at the Cornell Lab. eBird users file 1 ½ to 2 million bird observation reports each month. The ability to submit observations to eBird directly from within BirdsEye is already in the works.

"It's amazing to have instant access to all the



birds reported to eBird within a 30-mile radius of my location," says eBird co-leader Brian Sullivan at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "I can step off a plane, turn on my iPhone and see what's been reported, target the locations showing the best birding potential and then head into the field!"

**"Our goal is to give** people more great birding opportunities," says Todd Koym, leader of the programming team and the person who first envisioned the power of building an iPhone app based on eBird. "BirdsEye is a means to an end – with the end being seeing more birds."

**Pete Myers, National Audubon Society,** sciednce VP, as well as a former Audubon board member, says "**BirdsEye** combines iPhone ease and elegance with some of the most trusted and authoritative names in birding, helping make everyone's birding experience richer and more fun. Experienced birders get a quick heads-up about opportunities to add birds to their life list. Beginning birders can quickly discover nearby hotspots to go birding."

**Portions of BirdsEye** sales go back to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to help support its research, education, and citizen science projects focused on birds, and to the Academy of Natural Sciences to support VIREO, the world's largest collection of bird photographs. 🐦



### **HOW MUCH WOOD COULD A WOODCHUCK . . . ?**

Stepped out the door May 10th to confront a fat woodchuck (groundhog) not five feet from me at the entry-way. It stared at me for a moment then ran to the carport decking, stopped, looked again, and eventually left the area via the driveway. Jeff had plenty of time to observe it too. Only the second woodchuck I've seen in OK. The other one emerged from under the carport decking and when next we looked it was lying on a branch of the mulberry over the deck. In the east, woodchucks are the primary roadkill, yet I have never seen a woodchuck roadkill in OK. Weird.

### **WEB MAIL #1**

I forwarded a website e-mail inquiry from **Janie Collins** about our bluebird trail to **Jay Burtka**. Got the following from **Jen Grindstaff**: *"Please direct people interested in the bluebirds to me. Jay is completing her degree and leaving Stillwater and Tim is not involved in the bluebird research. I replaced most of the existing nest boxes and I have put up over 100 new nest boxes in the Stillwater area for my research program at OSU. Please let me know if you have any questions or if you want to know which remaining nest boxes belong to the Audubon society."* Good on you, Jen . . . 100 new boxes. Wow!

### **WEB MAIL #2**



I also forwarded to **Jim Ownby** the following website e-mail inquiry from **Sunil Kumar Lakkakula**:

*"My name is Sunil. I am a graduate student at OSU, Stillwater. I enjoy photography, especially nature ones. Recently one of my friends suggested me to contact you [PCAS] to get help in photographing Humming birds. I would like to take some photographs of humming birds as taking photographs of them are very challenging. If you could, please kindly help me in this regard. You can view my [facebook bird photography page here.](#)"*

Jim was kind enough to respond to Sunil's request with a long, helpful e-mail, praise for Sunil's bird photos, and an invitation to view his own website hummingbird photos ([www.ownbyphotography.com](http://www.ownbyphotography.com)). Jim also invited Sunil to attend a talk on hummingbirds that Jim was giving to the Golden Kiwanis Club May 10th.

### **BIRDATHON FINAL REPORT OUT SOON.**

**Sarah Kimball** is compiling BIRDATHON team totals. Teams have until the June 11th to collect their donations.

Donations should be mailed or given to Les Imboden, Treasurer, PCAS, P.O. Box 82, Stillwater, OK 74076. Be sure to give your name and to let Les know that this is a BIRDATHON donation.

This is the deadline also for [e-mailing Sarah](#) your team's tally numbers and best sighting. A wrap-up will be reported in the September *Feathers*. The Grand Prize Nikon binoculars will be awarded in September also.

### **NO SUMMER FEATHERS or PINFEATHERS.**

Speaking of which, I will be on the road (in my car and on my bike) from May 23 to July 2. Note: This means that I will not be home for the entire month of June, when I normally prepare the next month's newsletter, so the June *Feathers* is abbreviated. I will be gone again in July, so there will not be another newsletter until September. Have a great summer!

### **EAGLE BANDING PHOTOS.**

**Erica Miller** sends the following e-mail: "Yesterday we visited three eagle nests in NJ to band chicks. At the first nest, on the Oradell Reservoir near NY, the second chick had an infected leg wound that we cleaned and sutured. Chris, who works at the Reservoir, asked how he could help, and Kathy said, "Take photos! I want photo-documentation of this!" [This link](#) has the photos he took. I think they turned out great! Make sure you enter the password "eagle" when accessing the photo site. Erica



## Monthly Quiz to Make You a Wiz

by Jerry Wilhm

### **NONTAXONOMIC GROUPS**

Birds are classed into taxonomic groups. The birds below are grouped for other reasons; state the reason (e.g. great blue heron, belted kingfisher, osprey feed on aquatic organisms). There may be more than one answer; my answers are on page 10.

1. Dodo bird, passenger pigeon, elephant bird, heath hen, great auk.
2. Emu, cassowary, kiwi, ostrich, rhea, penguin
3. Cardinal, blue jay, cedar waxwing, tufted titmouse, belted kingfisher.
4. Bald eagle, white pelican, great blue heron, barred owl, Cooper's hawk
5. Cardinal, Carolina chickadee, house sparrow, house finch, barred owl.
6. Carolina wren, female house finch, female mallard, mourning dove, house sparrow
7. House, tree, Savannah, grasshopper, fox, Lincoln's.
8. Jay, bunting, finch, cowbird, hawk, pelican, heron
9. Bobwhite, ruffed grouse, wild turkey, greater prairie chicken, pheasant

And now, a grouping that requires careful observation and thought:

10. Catbird, flycatcher, grackle, magpie, owl, pelican, swift, starling, flicker

(*Hint*: Cardinal, kingfisher, meadowlark, bluebird would not fit in this grouping)

# The Last Word . . .



## White-headed Woodpeckers

**T**he photo on left was taken by daughter **Jessica** Walker with her iphone. She and a friend were camping in the Sierra Mountains near Tahoe and found a pair of White-headed Woodpeckers nesting low in a stump in the center of their campsite. They had fun observing the pair coming and going, and named them Woodward & Woodette. Since Jessica's cell phone photo was very poor (understatement), I pulled the two photos to the right from the Internet. Surprisingly, when I was looking for a photo, I found several of WHWs nesting low in stumps. I wondered if they'd been driven there by logging.

More research revealed that the bird is on the [Audubon Watch List](#) and also that "it nests in cavities of snags, stumps, logs, and dead trees usually within 3 meters (10 feet) of the ground."

Jessica reported her sighting on [ebird](#). 🐦

## Wind Turbines Coming to the Tall Grass Prairie

*Tulsa World*, 5 April 2011; submitted by Jerry Wilhm

**O**sage County commissioners unanimously approved a wind energy ordinance emphasizing that companies have the right to erect the massive turbines. Commissioner Bob Jackson said, "The only thing we're trying to do is protect the country. We don't have the legal authority to stop them from putting them up today if they wanted to." Two companies would erect turbines between 360 and 420 feet tall from base to blade tip.

**The development hinges on whether** the companies can contract to sell the electricity to a utility company. Ranchers in the area defended their right to do what they see fit with their land.

**The Nature Conservancy has been an opponent** of wind development in the proposed area stating that the turbines would fragment the last unspoiled prairie in the U.S. by disrupting the breeding grounds for prairie chickens and other birds. "This is the last frontier for the tall-grass prairie left in America," stated Bob Hamilton, director of the Conservancy's Tallgrass Prairie Preserve north of Pawhuska. 🐦

## Connections

[Ducks Battling the Wind](#) Submitted by Jerry Wilhm

[Giant Squid Killed by Sound?](#) "We now have proof" sonar blasts can harm squid, expert says.

### [FY11 Chapter Annual Report Summary](#)

NAS writes: "We are delighted to share a summary of last year's Chapter Annual Reports, featuring data and success stories from your good work in FY11. Chapter leaders and other volunteers made critical contributions towards the conservation of birds, wildlife and their habitat—all the while engaging people through education, citizen science, land conservation, and advocacy."

### [State of the Birds Report](#)

The Department of the Interior recently released the 2011 State of the Birds Report — Birds on Public Lands. Public lands support at least half of the entire U.S. distributions of more than 300 bird species. The new report provides the first assessment of the distribution of birds on public lands, and identifies conservation challenges and opportunities in the different habitats on which they depend.

Video: [Cat and Barn Owl play together](#)

[UAE Man had bears, panthers in suitcase](#)

[Not "birdy" at all but interesting nonetheless.](#) 🐦



## Answers to Monthly Quiz

1. Extinct birds
2. Flightless
3. Have crests
4. Carnivores
5. In much of North America, they do not migrate
6. Brown-colored
7. Complete common name of the bird contains the word "sparrow"
8. Complete common name of the bird contains a color
9. Game birds
10. No letter in their name is repeated

Payne County Audubon Society  
PO Box 82  
Stillwater, OK 74076



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**U.S. POSTAGE PAID**  
**Stillwater, Oklahoma**  
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*The English major, past drama director, in me  
thought this was funny.*

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✂

## Audubon

Membership entitles you to receive the National Audubon Society magazine, *Audubon*. With membership, you also automatically become a member of your local chapter, Payne County Audubon Society, receive *Feathers*, the Chapter's quarterly newsletter, and participation in the Chapter's monthly meetings, field trips, and events.

### **Membership**

- Yes, I want to join Audubon at the low introductory rate of \$20—that's 43% off regular dues!**
- Two-year membership — \$30
- Senior Citizen or student rate — only \$15
- I wish to make an additional donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_

### **Please complete and return:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/ZIP

\_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail

*(We respect your privacy. Your e-mail address will be used only by PCAS Chapter officers and directors to communicate with you about upcoming programs and events.)*

### **Method of Payment**

- Payment is enclosed       Please bill me

Dues include \$7 for **Audubon** magazine. Please allow 4-6 weeks to receive your first issue.

**The National Audubon Society occasionally makes its membership list available to carefully selected organizations whose mailings you might find of interest. To omit your name from this list, please check here.**

The PCAS asks that each member try to volunteer at least twice each year. Be careful: This might be fun! Please check the activities below that you are interested in.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sept. Potluck Opener | <input type="checkbox"/> Oklahoma IBA        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature Day           | <input type="checkbox"/> Programs            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Bird Count | <input type="checkbox"/> Field Trips         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Backyard Bird Count  | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter/Brochure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birdathon            | <input type="checkbox"/> Website             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature Camp          | <input type="checkbox"/> Awards/Scholarships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teal Ridge Litter    | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity            | <input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elections            | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know; call me |

Please detach this completed form at the dotted line and send it and your check (payable to PCAS for *Feathers* or National Audubon Society for membership) to:

**Payne County Audubon Society**  
**PO Box 82**  
**Stillwater, OK 74076**

**Chapter Code: C0Z T05 0Z**