

## Action Update

### Outdoor Oklahoma Now Accepting Annual Photography Showcase Entries

It is easier than ever to snap a good photograph in the outdoors, and it's time photographers can show off their pictures in *Outdoor Oklahoma*.

The annual Reader's Photography Showcase is featured in the July/August issue and gives both professional and amateur photographers the chance to have their digital photos displayed in the award-winning magazine.

“This a great chance for us to show our readers what sportsmen and wildlife enthusiasts are doing and seeing all over our great state,” said Michael Bergin, associate editor. “It’s challenging for the judges to make their final selections, but we always end up with an exciting issue filled with quality photographs of Oklahoma’s outdoors — everything from hunting and fishing scenes to stunning wildlife, birds, insects, landscapes and even eye-gripping storms.”

Each participant may submit up to five digital images.

Each submission must include a description of the photo including the location taken, name and hometown of photographer, names and hometowns

of subjects and what it took to get just the right shot. Contact information for the photographer must also be included.

Photos should be in sharp focus, and images should be at least 300 dpi (dots per inch). The canvas size should be about 8 inches by 11 inches. All submissions must be digital. Slides and print images will not be accepted. Though images will remain the property of the photographer, actual submissions that are mailed on CD or other form of storage device will not be returned.



*Mark Cromwell of Enid photographed this painted bunting along a roadside west of Drummond in northwest Oklahoma.*

Hopeful photographers can e-mail their entries to [photoshowcase@odwc.state.ok.us](mailto:photoshowcase@odwc.state.ok.us) or mail a disk to: Outdoor Oklahoma magazine, Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation, P.O. Box 53465, Oklahoma City, OK 73152. Deadline for submission is March 31.

## Action Update

### Reader's Photography Showcase (continued)

Individuals can subscribe to *Outdoor Oklahoma* by calling 1-800-777-0019. *Outdoor Oklahoma* is known for providing decades of outdoor entertainment to both youth and adults. Subscriptions are just \$10 for one year, \$18 for two years, or \$25 for three years. You can also subscribe on the Internet by logging on to the Department's website at [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com). ■



*This great egret was on its way to a rookery in Oklahoma County at sunset when David Strozdas of Edmond caught it on camera.*



*This pileated woodpecker was photographed by Bill Adams of Tishomingo while he was birding at Humphrey Lake in Duncan.*



*Mike Fuhr of Tulsa caught this bullfrog on camera at Woodward Park in Tulsa.*

## Watchable Wildlife

### Two Birds of a Feather

One of the easiest methods to identify birds is by the color of their feathers. Many bird species, such as the common American goldfinch and blue jay, are named after their beautiful feathers that are seen in an array of illuminating colors. Interestingly, many birds appear one color to the human eye, but their feathers are truly another color.

Like people, birds have pigmentation, or colored substances that are classified into three groups: melanins, carotenoids and porphyrins.

Melanins range in color from dark black to reddish brown or pale yellow. They appear in both the skin and feathers and give feathers greater strength and resistance to wear, especially if they are on the wing tips as shown on a whooping crane.



Maslowski Productions

*The female scarlet tanager is an example of carotenoids interacting with melanins to produce an olive-green feather.*



Maslowski Productions

*A northern cardinal shows its beautiful coloring gained by carotenoids.*

Carotenoids are gained by eating plants, as plants produce this type of pigmentation. They will appear red, yellow or orangeish yellow, as the red on a Northern cardinal or yellow of an American goldfinch portrays. An olive-green color appears when carotenoids interact with melanins, as seen on the female scarlet tanager.

Porphyrins produce a wide range of deep colors and can appear red, brown, green and pink. These pigments are found in the feathers of some doves, owls and game birds.

Pigmentation is not the sole factor creating a birds beautiful colors; feather structure is also a catalyst for color. The microscopic structures within feathers

## Watchable Wildlife

### Two Birds of a Feather (continued)

create light refraction, like a prism, and reflect specific wavelengths of light (colors) off of the feathers to the viewer. These iridescent colors vary depending on the viewing angle and the amount of light reflected.

Depending on the composition of structural feathers, the colors may not appear iridescent due to air pockets scattering incoming light. The most common color produced in this manner is blue, as seen on a blue jay. If examined under a black light, the feather will appear brown because there is no light available in the blue wavelengths to reflect off the feather.

Feathers serve multiple purposes aside from the ability to fly and being a pleasurable sight to onlookers. Sometimes, their plumage changes over time due to breeding, molting as it ages, wear and tear or staining from food sources and the environment.

Some species are more attracted to the opposite sex based on their color and markings, hence the old saying, "two birds of a feather flock together." This can be a sign of abundant health or dominance. Male birds, which are typically more vibrantly colored than females, use their color strength to denote they are fit to establish a dominant nesting territory.

Plumage may help camouflage birds when they are nesting. This will help keep eggs and live birds from being captured by predators. Often, birds will molt or shed their feathers with the seasons providing better camouflage.

Seasonally speaking, one of the most important functions of feathers is to keep birds warm and dry. Feathers help insulate birds from cold temperatures and wind. Birds must wash their feathers for a better insulation function, and the feathers help protect the body from the water - as they can be waterproof. ■



Bill Horn

*Porphyryns produce a wide range of colors when exposed to ultraviolet light, as seen in this barn owl.*

# Species Spotlight

## New Venomous Snakes of Oklahoma Poster

As the weather slowly warms up you may get a chance to spot one of Oklahoma's unique snake species on your outdoor adventures. Get the newly published, free "Venomous Snakes of Oklahoma" poster from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) to learn where they live and how they behave in Oklahoma.

"When people are able to identify what they see in the wild and know whether or not the species is a rarity, they will typically feel more comfortable being outdoors," said Rachel Bradley, wildlife diversity information specialist for ODWC.

Oklahoma is home to 46 snake species, seven of which belong to a group known as pit vipers and are venomous.

"Oklahoma has a unique mixture of amphibians and reptiles because of its diverse habitats ranging from coastal plains to high mesas, as well as its central location in the United States," said Greg Sievert,

co-author of A Field Guide to Oklahoma's Amphibians and Reptiles.

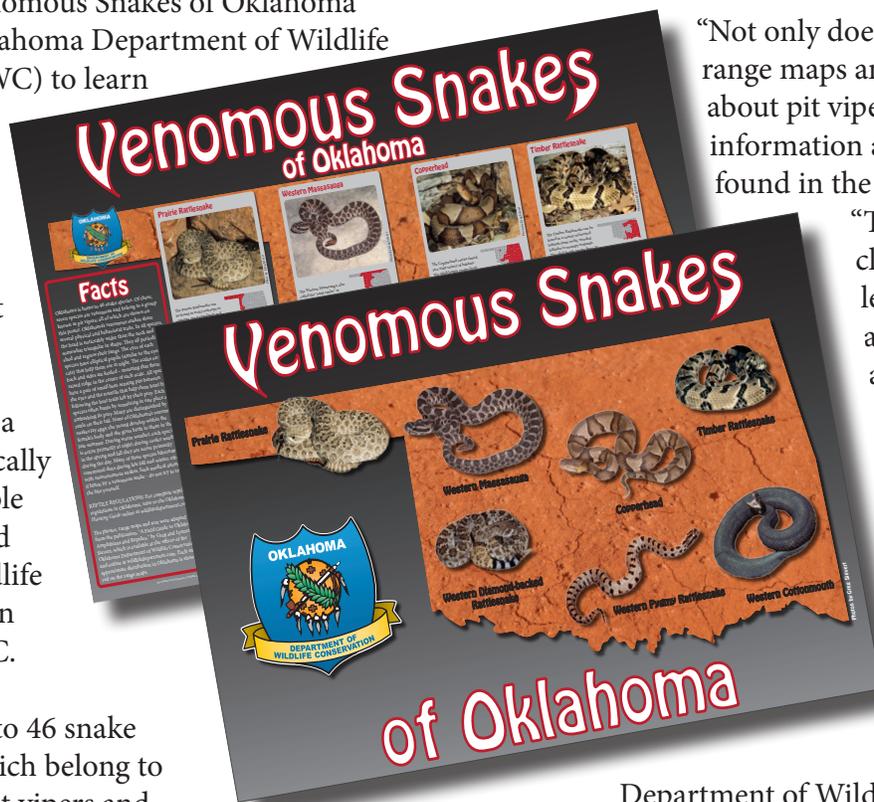
As the poster displays, venomous snakes are found throughout Oklahoma. Many venomous snakes reach their northern, eastern, southern or western-most range limit in Oklahoma.

"Not only does the poster provide range maps and general information about pit vipers, but also detailed information about each species found in the state," said Bradley.

"The poster is great for classroom use at all levels. It provides facts and photos on one side, and the other side is exclusively for photos and distribution so students may challenge their knowledge on each account."

The posters are a free publication of the Oklahoma

Department of Wildlife Conservation and are available at the offices in Jenks and Oklahoma City headquarters. The information on the poster comes from the ODWC publication, A Field Guide to Oklahoma's Amphibians and Reptiles, by Greg and Lynnette Sievert. Visit the Outdoor Store on [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com) to order your field guide. ■



## About Us

### Our Mission

The Wildlife Diversity Program - a program of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation - monitors, manages and promotes rare, declining and endangered wildlife, as well as common wildlife not fished or hunted. Oklahomans help fund the Wildlife Diversity Program through the purchase of wildlife conservation specialty license plates, product purchases, individual donations and an annual state income tax check-off.

Please send comments to [info@odwc.state.ok.us](mailto:info@odwc.state.ok.us).

### Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Commission

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M. David Riggs - Sand Springs - Vice Chairman  
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Ed Abel - Oklahoma City  
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### February 2012

**17-20:** Participate in a national Great Backyard Bird Count, a project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon. Visit [birdsource.org/gbbc/](http://birdsource.org/gbbc/) for more information and to participate.

**18:** Earth Science Hike at Oxley Nature Center, Tulsa from 10:30 a.m. to noon. All ages are welcome and registration is not required. Meet at Oxley. For more information call (918) 669-6644 or email [oxley@cityoftulsa.org](mailto:oxley@cityoftulsa.org).

**25:** Botany Walk at Oxley Nature Center, Tulsa from 10:30 a.m. to noon. All ages are welcome and registration is not required. Meet at Oxley. For more information call (918) 669-6644 or email [oxley@cityoftulsa.org](mailto:oxley@cityoftulsa.org).