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A publication of the Wildlife Diversity Program of Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

New Strategy Gives Extra Breadth To Conservation Programs

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. The 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.

All 50 states in the union are creating similar strategies. When fit together like a puzzle, they will show the current state of America's wildlife and identify actions needed to keep fish and wildlife populations healthy.

"Overall, we've made great strides in fish and wildlife conservation over the past few decades," said Greg Duffy, director of the Wildlife Department.

"However, some areas of the conservation effort have been historically underfunded."

"We're looking at this as the key to our future success as stewards and caretakers of Oklahoma's wildlife"

-Director Greg Duffy

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.

"At this point, the State Wildlife Grant funding is not permanent, but it

gives us an exciting opportunity to develop long-term conservation goals and to demonstrate the need for long-term funding," said Andrea Crews, project leader and responsive management specialist for the Department.

"We're looking at this as the key to our future success as stewards and caretakers of Oklahoma's wildlife," Duffy said.

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," Duffy said.

The Department will hold public meetings during the first week of March: March 1 in Oklahoma City, March 2 in Woodward, March 3 in Lawton, March 4 in McAlistler and March 5 in Tulsa. Locations are being determined and will be announced soon at www.wildlifedepartment.com.

Bald Eagles Cruise Through On Annual Visit

The majesty of the bald eagle needs no confirmation. Her white head stands out proudly, whether against a backdrop of gray winter clouds or the tumbling ripples of blue-gray water. She stretches her wings and suddenly occupies eight feet of air space. She's a sight to behold.

Bald eagles migrate to Oklahoma during the winter and spend a few months in the state. They dine on fish and are attracted to waterways like rivers, reservoirs and spillways below dams.

Each winter, as northern lakes freeze over, thousands of bald eagles migrate to warmer, southern lakes. Visited by 750-1,500 eagles annually, Oklahoma is one of the top ten states in the nation for winter eagle viewing.

Come watch bald eagles soar at an Eagle Viewing Event near you. Hosted by state parks, lake management offices and local Audubon Societies, 19 statewide events, providing over 50 viewing opportunities, have been compiled by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Most events are free and held on weekends during January. View event descriptions, locations, dates and times by logging onto www.wildlifedepartment.com/eagletours2.htm or call (405) 521-4616 for a free brochure of event dates, times and places.

WINTER 2003

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Interacting With Wildlife



Eagle Protection and Recovery Efforts

When adopted as the nation's symbol in 1782, eagles inhabited every large river and major concentration of lakes in North America. They nested in 45 of the lower 48 United States, but by the 1950s had reduced to fewer than 500 nesting pairs. No eagles nested in the Midwestern states.

Eagle numbers have increased 7-fold since the early 70s. A number of Congressional Acts have helped to

reverse the eagles' downward trend. Bald eagle protection began in 1940 through the Bald Eagle Protection Act. Today, the species is listed as threatened in all lower 48

states under the Endangered Species Act. Passed in 1973, America was the first nation to enact a comprehensive law to protect endangered species.

Another step towards healthy eagle populations occurred in 1972 when the Environmental Protection Agency banned the use of the pesticide DDT. DDT was used on crops after WWII. It seeped into the water supply, found its way to rivers and was absorbed into the meat of fish. Eagles ingested DDT through their diet of fish. High levels of DDT in eagles' bodies weakened eggshells and interfered with reproductive ability.

By the 1980s, bald eagles were again migrating through the state, but none lived here year-round. Oklahoma was still without a nesting population of bald eagles.

Be sure you see a wild eagle soar! With over 50 viewing events planned statewide, you're sure to find one that fits your schedule.

Visionaries at the Sutton Avian Research Center in Bartlesville, OK spearheaded an eagle reintroduction effort. Over a six-year period from 1984-2000, the Sutton Center took 90 eagles from Florida and reintroduced them

to the southeastern U.S. Each eagle was banded with a US Fish and Wildlife Service band. Because of the banding, the Sutton Center was able to tell that all breeding eagles in Oklahoma after 1990 were birds they had released.

Working in conjunction with cooperators and funding partners, including the Wildlife Department, pairs of nesting eagles in Oklahoma have increased from zero in 1990 to 41 pairs in 2003.

The bald eagle is preserved for further generations because of nationwide concern and action. Americans are making sure the bald eagle isn't only seen on coins; it will also be seen soaring through the sky. Don't miss your chance to view the nation's proudest living symbol.

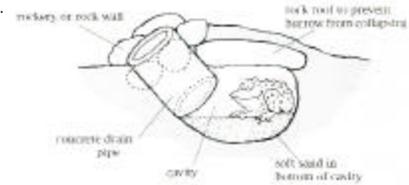
View the event schedule at: www.wildlifedepartment.com/eagletoours2.htm or call (405) 521-4616 for a free brochure.

Where do they go when it's cold?

The winter months bring icy wind gusts and flocks of jovial birds to backyard feeders. Winter also marks the ending of frog-chorus lullabies and the possibility of crossing paths with a turtle or snake during a stroll through the woods. Cold-blooded animals like fish, frogs, snakes and turtles haven't left the state, so, where are they? Because reptiles and amphibians have no way to regulate their own body temperatures, they find shelter in holes or burrows, passing the winter hours inactive, or dormant, patiently waiting for the warmer days of spring.

You can make it easier for cold-blooded animals to find shelter this winter.

- Rake deep piles of fallen leaves under shrubs and bushes: treefrogs stay in deep leaf litter.
- Remove the majority of leaf debris from water gardens, but consider leaving a layer of silt (mud) at the bottom. Leopard frogs, cricket frogs and some turtles hide at the bottom of ponds. Cold water holds more oxygen than warm water, and frogs and turtles breathe by absorbing it through their skin.
- Build a hibernaculum - a manmade burrow. This will provide a haven for species that remain under the ground, like toads.



This hibernacula diagram can be found on page 119 of the Wildlife Department's book "Landscaping for Wildlife: A Guide to the Southern Great Plains." Purchase the book through the Outdoor Store.

	Cert. #	Name	City
These property owners joined the Wildscapes network at the Habitat Level. They're landscaping with the needs of Oklahoma's wildlife in-mind!	394	May Nolan	Tulsa
	395	Barbara Wolf	Tulsa
	396	Kim & Nancy Hauger	Tulsa
	397	Trey & Deanna Law	Stratford
	398	Randy & Cindy Wiggins	Norman
	399	Genny & Pete Peterson	Ponca City
	400	Wes & Jeanie Mills	Edmond
	401	Barbara Mae Phelan	Whitesboro
	402	Tishomingo NWR	Tishomingo
	403	Gaylan & Barbara Parson	Seminole
	404	Phyllis Wheeler	Owasso
	405	Carol & Dennis Stayer	Meers
	406	Peggy & Jack Atkins	Spavinaw

Miracle Meal Recipe

Here's a concoction for attracting insect- and fruit-eating bird species to your feeder this winter.

What you need: flour, yellow cornmeal, lard (not shortening), peanut butter or peanut hearts (optional), an old log, a drill

1. Mix 1 part flour to 3 parts cornmeal and lard.
 2. Add peanut butter or peanut hearts (optional).
 3. Roll mixture into firm balls.
 4. Drill 1 1/2 inch holes into the log.
 5. Stuff the holes with the miracle meal mixture.
 6. Suspend the log from a tree limb.
 7. Watch the birds enjoy your meal!
- * Do **NOT** add bird seed to this mixture.*

This is likely to attract bluebirds, woodpeckers, titmice, chickadees, nuthatches, cardinals, blue jays and mockingbirds.

This "Miracle Meal" mix was shared with you from Jack Terres' book "Songbirds in Your Garden."

Map It Out

Anyone with access to the Internet can view the roads, lakes and rivers of Oklahoma at www.wildlifedepartment.com/wmas2.htm.

This site marks the completion of phase one of the Geographical Information System (GIS) laboratory project, funded by a federal grant. Natural resources biologist, Julianne Hoagland, is a member of the agency-wide committee on this project.

The site also serves as the electronic equivalent of the Wildlife Management Area Atlas. It displays Wildlife Management Areas and features like ponds, trails, parking lots, camping areas and public hunting areas.

Inputting data from numerous sources such as maps, aerial surveys, text, and images creates a GIS layer. The project's first phase makes it possible to store multiple GIS layers in one place, making it easier for everyone to access the information. When complete, the GIS laboratory will be a comprehensive reference for wildlife, fisheries and natu-

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Biologists, Volunteers Uncover Diversity in Western Oklahoma

Ready for the BioBlitz results? The final tally of 1,071 species topped last year's count. The third annual, 24-hour species inventory brought together 135 volunteer scientists, naturalists, high school and university students and teachers in Boiling Springs State Park and the Cooper and Ft. Supply Wildlife Management Areas Sept. 12-13.

Prior to the ticking of the 24-hour inventory clock, scientist reached out to children from 5 school districts in the Woodward area. One-hundred seventy students learned about biodiversity and collection methods directly from the scientists themselves.

Once the countdown clock began, scientists shifted focus from the children to the inventory.

Collectors recorded one representative for each species. Terrestrial invertebrates (insects) had the most diversity at 471 species. Reporting 21 species, the mammal collectors were quick to point out insects are the most abundant life forms on the planet. At 289 species, plants were the second largest group. But plants can't fly away, the bird collectors, reporting 86 species, reminded everyone. Other species breakdowns were: 37 fungi (mushrooms), 30 reptiles and amphibians, 28 algae and 24 fish.

Two species were identified that had never been reported for Woodward County: the fulvous harvest mouse and nine-banded armadillo. Local residents



ODWC - JENNY THOM

Part of the mammal team, University of Oklahoma students check Sherman traps for the grasshopper mouse, kangaroo rats and other small mammals.

may have known they were there, but biologists didn't. That information is now in the scientific record. Complete data results are available at biosurvey.ou.edu/bioblitz/bb_download.html.

BioBlitz takes place in a different part of the state each year. BioBlitz 2004 will occur the second weekend of September in Dripping Springs State Park, Okmulgee County.

The Oklahoma Biological Survey hosts the event and is partnered by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation, the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, the Oklahoma City Zoo and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Accounts from the wild side...

Donna Pope from Bartlesville, OK recently ordered a second bat house kit from the Wildlife Department's Outdoor Store because her current house was overflowing with big brown bats! Here's what she writes:

Batty about Bats!

A few years ago, my parents in Tulsa, OK noticed large droppings on the hood of their car and along the wall of the carport. Attributing the droppings to an infestation of rats, they called an exterminator. But the droppings continued to appear. Searching for the source, my parents looked up. They discovered bats roosting behind loose shingles along the wall. The droppings turned out to be guano deposited by a bat colony that had made a home in their carport.

Big brown bats will roost in hollow trees, rock crevices or beneath loose tree bark, which is not unlike the shingles in the carport. Knowing that bats are great for reducing the mosquito population, my folks were happy to have these guests. Preferring they roost somewhere other than the carport, my folks purchased a bat house kit from the Wildlife Department. They mounted it and watched the bat colony take up residence. The bats leave each winter and return each spring. Each year their population grows as the colony creates new family members.

The bat house is stuffed to the gills with multiple generations of big brown bats. It's time to expand their living quarters! We purchased another bat house so our colony can continue to grow and provide us with more years of enjoyment.

Donna Pope & Family

A Bat House Kit may make a great Christmas gift. Before purchasing one for someone else, keep in mind:

- The house **must** be placed within a 1/4 mile of a permanent water source like a creek or pond.
- The house **must** receive six hours of sunlight a day and be at least 15' off the ground, attached to a pole or side of house/barn. It should never be placed in trees.
- It may take several years to attract bats to the house. Many houses attract bats by the second year, but there is no guarantee the house will ever attract bats.

The Wildlife Diversity Program is responsible for monitoring, managing and promoting Oklahoma's 800 wildlife species not hunted or fished.

The program falls under the Natural Resources Section of the Wildlife Department.

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Melynda Hickman - Biologist
Julianne Hoagland - Biologist
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This newsletter published free for Oklahoma's wildlife and outdoor enthusiasts.

Please email



jthom@odwc.state.ok.us with comments, article ideas or suggestions.

Wildlife Inventories

Conducting a Wildlife Inventory of Beaver River Wildlife Management Area

by Mark Howery, Natural Resources Biologist

The Wildlife Department is currently working on a comprehensive wildlife management strategy. A basic step in such a strategy's development is to collect information about the existing habitat conditions and species present within the focus area. Over the years, state fish and wildlife agencies have collected these types of data for game and sport fish species, but little collection has been done for the 800 plus wildlife species not hunted or fished.

Under a grant from the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program, the Wildlife Diversity Program has embarked on an effort to collect relative abundance and habitat data for all vertebrate species on some of the state wildlife management areas.

The data gathered can be used to ensure that wildlife management areas benefit entire groups of native species, conserving regional biological diversity. Biological inventories:

- 1) establish a baseline that can be used to monitor the effect that an area management plan has on multiple species
- 2) can be used to determine habitat needs and affinities of species not hunted or fished
- 3) identifies populations of species of conservation need, which can then be maintained or enhanced through habitat management.

The Beaver River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) was selected as the first state wildlife management area to be inventoried under this project. The WMA is approximately 16,000 acres and encompasses a surprising diversity of plant communities/habitat types. It occurs along the edge of the High Plains in a region that has received relatively little attention from the conservation community. This area has the potential to support populations of several species that have been identified as species of greatest conservation need in Oklahoma including the black-tailed prairie dog, swift fox, lesser prairie chicken, burrowing owl, Bell's vireo, McCown's longspur, Texas horned lizard, and Texas longnose snake.

Nine biological inventories were conducted in two to three day sessions in all seasons of the year. Each survey was focused on one to three taxonomic groups and employed a range of techniques to document species and their relative abundances. Most inventory methods

employed were quantitative or semi-quantitative: the data reflected a number of individual animals that were encountered during a unit of time or distance. By collecting quantitative data, it will be possible for biologists to repeat these surveys in the future to compare the current animal communities with their future condition.

To conduct a complete inventory, biologists employed ten survey techniques, but the timed-search method was the most widely used. Other methods included breeding bird point counts, mammalian track searches, small mammal live-trapping, amphibian calling surveys, turtle live-trapping and 100-meter seine hauls. Animals were either observed or captured and released, and data were collected regarding their habitat.

Thus far, we have documented the presence of and habitats used by 25 species of mammals, 131 birds, six amphibians, 19 reptiles and 16 fish. Further survey work is needed to fully document the small mammal and reptile community. Some species (e.g. Northern bobwhite, common nighthawk, white-crowned sparrow, ornate box turtle, Northern prairie lizard) occurred in all habitat types, but most species were found primarily in one or a few habitats.

The WMA is roughly rectangular and encompasses nearly nine miles of the Beaver River, its floodplain and surrounding upland habitat. The flow of the Beaver River is intermittent in this portion of the panhandle but several permanent, shallow pools occur on the west side of the



ODWC - JULIAN HILLIARD
Found in both types of prairie habitats, the yellowbelly racer is a common species statewide. This is a juvenile.

heron, and North rough-winged swallow.

Within the river's floodplain are scattered groves of



ODWC - MARK HOWERY
Low-rolling dunes of sand-sage/bluestem prairie comprise about one-third of Beaver River WMA.

Got Birds?

Studies Rely on Citizen Participation for Success

by Melinda Hickman, Natural Resources Biologist

Life is never dull for those who have discovered birds. They can be seen right outside our windows or in the most remote wilderness. Birds are numerous, abundantly diversified in form and easily observed. And, according to the 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, over 46 million of us, commonly referred to as birdwatchers or birders, have discovered birds. The same survey also states that birders spent over 2 billion dollars in 2001 for bird food and over 500 million dollars on nest boxes, bird feeders, and baths.

Obviously most birders (if not all) would say that the enjoyment of watching birds feed, bath, fight, sing, and interact with other birds from the comfort of one's home is worth the cost of food, other bird supplies and equipment.

On a statewide level, the following programs exist. Contact the Wildlife Diversity Program to request forms.

Winter Bird Feeder Survey: Record two days of bird use at your home feeders within a specified four-day period of time during the second week in January.

Hummingbird Survey: Record first and last sightings of hummingbirds using your feeder or garden flowers between April 1 and November 1.

Oklahoma Nestbox Project: Monitor home nestboxes and record egg, chick, and fledgling numbers of cavity-nesting birds such as the Eastern bluebird, Carolina chickadee, tufted titmouse, and wren species. Control house sparrows so that they are not able to raise young in the nestboxes. Survey occurs throughout spring and summer.

Bat House Survey: Place bat house(s) on your property and monitor the houses for bat occupancy.

On a national level, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology offers valuable "citizen science" programs in which to participate

Project Feederwatch: Record birds using your feeders once every two weeks from November through April. Feeder Watchers are the world's largest research team studying feeder bird populations from coast to coast. There is an annual participant's fee of \$15. If interested, contact the Project Feederwatch volunteer ambassador for Oklahoma: John E. Turnaukas at (918) 546-2335 or turnauk@cherokeetel.com.

The Birdhouse Network: Involves the same monitoring as the Oklahoma Nestbox Project but your data will be submitted to a continent-wide database. There is an annual participant's fee of \$15. The Oklahoma volunteer ambassador for this program is also John E. Turnaukas at (918) 546-2335 or turnauk@cherokeetel.com.

Other citizen science programs through the

Cornell Lab or Ornithology include:

- **House Finch Disease Survey**
- **Urban Bird Studies/Project Pigeon Watch**
- **Birds in Forested Landscapes**

Form more information, contact:

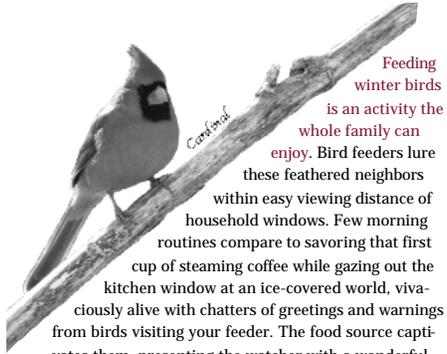
Cornell Lab of Ornithology

159 Sapsucker Woods Rd
Ithaca, NY 14850

<http://birds.cornell.edu> or
cornellbirds@cornell.edu

Whether you participate on a statewide or national level, your contribution of data is valuable to gaining a better understanding of the behaviors, wintering habitat needs, breeding habitat needs, and other aspects of the life histories of North American birds.





Feeding winter birds is an activity the whole family can enjoy. Bird feeders lure these feathered neighbors within easy viewing distance of household windows. Few morning routines compare to savoring that first cup of steaming coffee while gazing out the kitchen window at an ice-covered world, vivaciously alive with chatters of greetings and warnings from birds visiting your feeder. The food source captivates them, presenting the watcher with a wonderful opportunity to discover the birds' special markings and to observe their behaviors.

According to a US Fish and Wildlife Service 2001 analysis of bird watching in the United States, 608 thousand Oklahomans watch birds around their homes. Through the Wildlife Department's Winter Bird Survey, your enjoyable past time can help contribute to biological research. Over the past 16 years, Oklahomans have participated in the Winter Bird Survey. This has enabled biologists to track the downward and upward trends of bird species that visit Oklahoma feeders.

If not for dedicated Oklahomans, biologists would not have been aware of the increase in morning doves visiting feeders or have been able to monitor the boom and bust trends of species like the robin and cedar waxwing, which vary dependent upon winter weather conditions and food availability.

An exciting trend recently captured through the survey is the appearance of a new bird species to Oklahoma, the Eurasian collared dove (*Streptopelia decacotyl*). The bird first appeared on 2001 survey forms as write-ins. By 2002 it had been reported, still as write-ins, in six counties. By 2003, 26 doves visited 11 feeder locations in nine different counties. It has been added to the bird list on the 2004 survey form.

The Eurasian collared dove is new to the United States; in fact, it's been on this continent fewer than 25 years! It wasn't until the early 1980s that this dove appeared in the United States. It left the Bahama Islands, where the species had been inadvertently introduced via the pet trade, and flew on its own to the

Florida coast. The species has an insatiable urge for expansion. Originally from the Indian subcontinent, it began expanding westward into Europe in the early 1900s. It appeared on the British Isles by the 1950s and within 10 years had expanded to 50,000 breeding pairs. Today, it seems to be making its way westward across the United States with the same voracious speed.

Aiding the Eurasian collared dove's expansion is its association with civilization. It prefers areas where grain is readily available and appears in suburbs, small towns and agricultural settlements rather than unsettled countryside or heavily forested areas.

The Winter Bird Survey 2003 article in the Nov./Dec. issue of Outdoor Oklahoma provides more details about the expansion of the Eurasian collared dove. The article's text may be viewed online at www.wildlifedepartment.com/2004winter-birdsurvey.htm. Since that publication, the Wildlife Diversity Program has received several phone calls about Eurasian collared dove sightings in counties not previously recorded on past Winter Bird Surveys. While it's fascinating to learn that the dove is even more widespread across the state than first believed, biologists need Oklahomans to record this information during the Winter Bird Survey period. If you're in a county with Eurasian collared doves, that's all the more reason to participate in this year's Winter Bird Survey!

Last year, 146 participants represented 59 different Oklahoma counties and reported 13,620 total birds in the 2003 Winter Bird Survey. The number of participants was lower than in years past, but it represented winter feeders statewide.



Eighty-three percent of the respondents had participated in the survey before and 96 percent provided, or already had available, a water source. Additionally, 64 percent identified themselves as excellent birders, 24 percent as good birders and 5 percent as fair birders. As usual, black oil sunflower seed, which is good for attracting almost all seed eating birds, was the most popular feed provided.

You do not have to be an excellent birder to participate in the Winter Bird Survey. Birds at feeders usually give you a chance to take a good, long look, providing you with an excellent identification opportunity. The survey form already provides you with a list of 50 common winter birds. Mark those birds in your bird book, and then match them up with your outdoor visitors. Another helpful tool is the Wildlife Department's **free** Winter Bird Poster. It depicts 12 common winter birds and provides a description of each species and the type of feed it's attracted to. Call (405) 521-4616 if you'd like one mailed to you.

Top 20 Species Seen in 2003

Survey received from 146 participants.

Goldfinch	2259
Cardinal	1169
Dark-eyed Junco	1130
House Sparrow	1115
Mourning Dove	798
Red-winged Blackbird	710
House Finch	628
Starling	522
Robin	518
Blue Jay	458
Carolina Chickadee	432
Harris' Sparrow	415
Tufted Titmouse	354
Pine Siskin	326
Common Grackle	325
Crow	261
Purple Finch	169
White-throated Sparrow	167
White-crowned Sparrow	158
Downy Woodpecker	149

Telling a Ringed from a Collared



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Eurasian collared dove (above left)

- 3-syllable 'ku-koo-ku'
- emphasis on 2nd syllable, which is three times longer than the first
- call lasts 1.2-1.3 seconds, repeating 3 to 12 times

As you're identifying birds at your feeder, the ringed-turtle dove has the potential to be confused with the Eurasian collared dove. The two look quite similar, the easiest way to tell them apart is by their song.



US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ringed-turtle dove (below right)

- 2-syllable, purring 'coorr-coorr'
- call lasts about 15 seconds

And don't worry if identifying birds is new to you; you're not alone. The analysis of bird watchers conducted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service found that 760 thousand Oklahomans observed birds around the home and on trips. Out of those bird watchers, 71 percent could identify 1 - 20 different types of birds and 17 percent could identify 21 - 40 types of birds. Watching and identifying the birds at your backyard feeder is one of the best tools available to acquaint yourself with local bird species.

Don't forget to spend two consecutive days during the survey period, Jan. 8 - Jan. 11, recording the number of each species that visit your feeder/s. As always, the Wildlife Diversity Program welcomes write-ins of unusual birds seen and enjoys reading stories about the birds at your feeders this winter.

The Winter Bird Survey form is on the back of this page or you may fill out and submit the form online at www.wildlifedepartment.com/2004winterbirdsurvey.htm.

2004 Winter Bird Survey - Fun for You, Important for the Birds
Survey Period: Thursday, Jan. 8 - Sunday, Jan. 11

You are needed to help track winter bird presence in Oklahoma by participating in the 16th annual Winter Bird Survey. New to the list this year is the Eurasian Collared Dove. Play a role in tracking this new species' presence throughout the state. Choose **two consecutive days** within the 4-day survey period to watch and tally birds seen at bird feeders around your home. Count birds at least four times on each of the two days. For each day, record the greatest number of species you saw feeding together at one time. Perhaps you saw six goldfinches at 10 a.m. but later saw a group of 12, record 12 on the form. If you can't make an exact count, record your best estimate, and always provide numbered responses. Also, only count birds seen at or around your feeder - flybys don't count! Birds are listed taxonomically rather than alphabetically on the form. Results are published in the Wildlife Diversity Program's newsletter, "The Wild Side," and the November/December issue of "Outdoor Oklahoma."

The Winter Bird Survey is a Wildlife Diversity Program project of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

Complete all eight parts of this survey:

1. Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ Zip _____
 County _____ Phone# _____

2. Have you participated in this survey before?
 No
 Yes, How many years? _____

3. Mark the statement that best describes the area within a 200-yard radius of your yard. Only choose one.
 A. Suburban area with small to moderate-sized trees.
 B. Suburban area with many large and mature trees.
 C. Neighborhood bordering or near rural area.
 D. Rural in an agricultural area.
 E. Rural in a forested area.

4. Check the following descriptions that best fit the area where your feeder is located.
 A. Evergreen Cover:
 Little or none
 Moderate
 Abundant
 B. Winter Food Plants:
 Little or none List types: _____
 Moderate
 Abundant

C. Is water readily available (bird bath, pond, etc)?
 Yes No
 D. What other features are offered for birds?
 Brushpile Dense shrubbery
 Roost boxes Snags

5. Check the type of feeder(s) in your yard.
 Corn Thistle Suet/Miracle Meal
 Millet Fruit Sunflower
 Milo Mixed Seeds Other

6. Describe your ability to identify winter birds:

<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Bobwhite	<input type="checkbox"/> Cardinal
<input type="checkbox"/> Rock Dove (pigeon)	<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Towhee
<input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Dove	<input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Towhee
<input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Collared Dove	<input type="checkbox"/> Fox Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/> Pileated Woodpecker	<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-headed Woodpecker	<input type="checkbox"/> Song Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-bellied Woodpecker	<input type="checkbox"/> Field Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<input type="checkbox"/> White-throated Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/> Downy Woodpecker	<input type="checkbox"/> White-crowned Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/> Hairy Woodpecker	<input type="checkbox"/> Harris' Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/> Flicker (all races)	<input type="checkbox"/> House Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Jay	<input type="checkbox"/> Dark-eyed Junco
<input type="checkbox"/> Crow	<input type="checkbox"/> Brewer's Blackbird
<input type="checkbox"/> Carolina Chickadee	<input type="checkbox"/> Rusty Blackbird
<input type="checkbox"/> Tufted Titmouse	<input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Blackbird
<input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Nuthatch	<input type="checkbox"/> Common Grackle
<input type="checkbox"/> White-breasted Nuthatch	<input type="checkbox"/> Great-tailed Grackle
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Creeper	<input type="checkbox"/> Meadowlark
<input type="checkbox"/> Carolina Wren	<input type="checkbox"/> (eastern & western)
<input type="checkbox"/> Bewick's Wren	<input type="checkbox"/> Brown-headed Cowbird
<input type="checkbox"/> Bluebird (eastern)	<input type="checkbox"/> House Finch
<input type="checkbox"/> Robin	<input type="checkbox"/> Purple Finch
<input type="checkbox"/> Mockingbird	<input type="checkbox"/> Pine Siskin
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Thrasher	<input type="checkbox"/> Goldfinch
<input type="checkbox"/> Cedar Waxwing	<input type="checkbox"/> Evening Grosbeak
<input type="checkbox"/> Starling	

7. Write the greatest number of birds seen at your feeders at any one time during two consecutive days. DO NOT make checks or other markings.
 List other birds seen at feeders:

eastern cottonwood trees and a savannah of native grasses and saltcedar (an Asian shrub that was introduced to the U.S. in the late 1800s). The groves of cottonwood trees supported an animal community comprised of many eastern species found in the main body of the state such as the great crested flycatcher, warbling vireo, house wren, Baltimore oriole, chuck-wills-widow, yellow-billed cuckoo, red-headed woodpecker, Northern flicker, Mississippi kite, porcupine, and white-footed mouse. Fewer species were found in the saltcedar savannah, but Eastern meadowlark, Eastern kingbird, and Eastern mole were common there.

Stabilized sand dunes of varying heights lay north of the river, formed over many years by windblown river sand. The larger dunes near the river are covered by thickets of sand plum and skunk brush, scattered netleaf hackberries, switch grass and wildflowers. Collectively, these dunes are referred to as sandhills habitat and the animal community there included Bell's vireos, painted buntings, blue grosbeaks, field sparrows, brown thrashers, Harris's sparrows, white-crowned sparrows, common poorwills, and Southern plains woodrats.

Prairie habitat makes up the northern and southern edges of the WMA. Many small dunes comprise the north side. The land-scape is a gently rolling prairie of sideoats grama, sand sagebrush and little bluestem. The south side is more level and dominated by grama grasses and yucca. Several wildlife species are widespread in both types of prairie habitat (i.e. little bluestem/sand sagebrush and grama/yucca) including lark sparrow, Cassin's sparrow, Vesper sparrow, Western meadowlark, Western kingbird, loggerhead shrike, Northern harrier, black-tailed jackrabbit, Ord's kangaroo rat, grasshopper mouse, Texas horned lizard, prairie racerunner, yellowbelly racer, bullsnake and prairie rattlesnake.

However, the north-side prairie was the only habitat where biologists located spotted ground squirrels, lesser prairie chickens, plains spadefoot toads and Western hog-nose snakes. The south side was the primary habitat for rock wrens, scaled quail, desert cottontails, thirteen-lined ground squirrels and collared lizards.

Several noteworthy High Plains species were documented during the Beaver River WMA surveys. Four colonies (towns) of black-tailed prairie dogs occurred on the area. The two largest towns contained family groups of burrowing owls during the summer months. During the winter,

ferruginous hawks were seen hunting around prairie dog towns. It was difficult to determine the population size of the secretive lesser prairie chicken, but species were found at several locations in the sand sagebrush prairie.

Biologists also found several High Plains species that have been identified as species in need of conservation due to rapidly declining numbers. Found on Beaver River WMA were resident populations of Texas horned lizard, scaled quail and loggerhead shrike. Breeding populations of Swainson's hawk, Bullock's oriole and Cassin's sparrow were also found. Wintering populations of McCown's and chestnut-collared longspur and prairie falcon were identified, as well as the long-billed curlew and sandhill crane, which migrate through the area during the spring and fall.

Small isolated and ephemeral wetlands supported other migrating shorebirds (e.g. lesser yellowlegs, Wilson's snipe) and were breeding areas for most amphibians (e.g. spotted chorus frog, great plains toad and plains spadefoot).

Populations of several eastern species at or near the western edge of their ranges were exciting finds, as well as three species of birds not previously known to occur in the area: chuck-wills-widow, painted bunting and Bell's vireo.

Space limitations prevent me from listing all of the survey techniques and wildlife species that were documented, however, for a more complete summary, please contact the Wildlife Diversity Program for a copy of the project's Annual Report.

I would like to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Danny Watson, biologist on the Beaver River Wildlife Management Area, who allowed us access to all parts of the area and directed us to productive survey areas, especially for lesser prairie chicken. We also were aided by biologist Scott Cox who located several species of reptiles and amphibians. The natural resources biologists working on different aspects of this project were Mark Howery, Julianne Hoagland, Melynda Hickman, Tom Heuer and Julian Hilliard.



ODWC - ARCHIVES
The long-billed curlew, a rare migrant passing through the WMA, stops at wetlands to feed.



ODWC - JULIAN HILLIARD
The ornate box turtle is a common prairie species found in all habitats at Beaver River WMA. This is a juvenile.



ODWC - JULIAN HILLIARD
More Texas horned lizards were found on the WMA than expected: a pleasant surprise. The lizard shown here is "puffing up" in a defensive posture.