

# TULSA SCISSORTAIL



TULSA  
AUDUBON  
SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER  
VOL. LXIX, NO. 3

LAURIE RIBITZKI,  
EDITOR

SPRING 2008

## *From the President*

**Avocet Rescue.** The recent Avocet rescue story has been read by people across the country. If you have not heard about it, it was a great human/bird/dog-interest story right here in Broken Arrow. Gail Storey and I attempted to catch an injured Avocet, but were unsuccessful until a neighbor intervened with Zoe, his Black Lab. The Tulsa World also ran the story, and I have heard from folks around the world about it. See page 5 of this newsletter or check the TAS website for the full story and photographs.

**Email Updates.** If you are not already getting them, please sign up for the

TAS email alerts. It is normally a monthly email with upcoming events and updates on conservation issues. Just send your email to [johnkennington@cox.net](mailto:johnkennington@cox.net) and ask to be added to the TAS email list.

**Summer Potluck Picnic.** Please join us for our annual summer picnic. It will be Saturday, June 28 at 6:30 p.m. at Washington Irving Park, located in Bixby on Memorial Drive, just before you cross the Arkansas River. It will be potluck and TAS will provide the beverages, cups, plates, and eating utensils. Please bring the family for some summertime fellowship and relaxation.

**Thank You.** As we end our program

year, again, I want to thank all of our members, committee members and officers for all of the great work you do. Our excellent monthly programs continued to draw forty or more people every month, a good turn out in this TV and Internet age.

I want to welcome Laurie Ribitzki as our new Scissortail editor. I know Laurie would welcome your articles, ideas and comments as she learns the newsletter editing business. I just need to give Laurie a bigger stick so she can beat out a timely president's message from me! Also, to get us back on schedule, I've asked Laurie to combine our Spring and Summer Scissortail issues.

## TAS Upcoming Events

**Tuesday Morning Birders.** The Tuesday Morning Birders meet at 8:00 am at the Tulsa Garden Center from October through March and at 7:30 a.m. April through September during Daylight Savings Time. Join us!

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

**Second Saturday, March to October.** Oxley Nature Center Butterfly Walk, 10:30-12:00. Call 669-6644 for details.

**Third Saturday, March to October.** Oxley Nature Center Wildflower Walk, 10:00-11:00. Call 669-6644 for details.

### **May**

17 Sat **Field Trip** Nickel Preserve for spring migrants and summer residents. Meet Chris Wilson at 7:30 A.M. at the Eagle Bluff Resort parking lot north of Tahlequah. Contact Martin Brown phone:446-8667, [martin1420@scbglobal.net](mailto:martin1420@scbglobal.net) for directions.

20 Tue **Society Meeting.** "Hummingbirds: Beauty In Motion" with Ellie Womack, Oklahoma's renowned hummingbird expert. Ellie will discuss catching and banding hummingbirds and share general information about these flying jewels.

### **June**

7-8 Sat and Sun **Audubon at Home in Tulsa** Tulsa Audubon Society's 15th Annual Wildlife Habitat Garden Tour and Plant Sale, Saturday 9-5, Sunday Noon-5. Six of the coolest wildlife-friendly backyards in Tulsa! For details see article in this issue or go to [www.tulsaaudubon.org](http://www.tulsaaudubon.org).

21 Sat **Field Trip** Osage Trail, Sperry and Bird Creek area north of Sperry for migrating shorebirds, nesting birds, and any butterflies that cross our path. Meet at 7:00 A.M. at the Tulsa Garden Center. Contact Paul and Laurie Ribitzki, 243-5515, [lribitzki@juno.com](mailto:lribitzki@juno.com).

28 Sat **TAS Picnic** Summer potluck picnic at 6:30 P.M., Washington Irving Park, Bixby, on Memorial Drive, just before crossing the river. TAS provides beverages, cups, plates, utensils. Contact John Kennington, 809-6325, [johnkennington@cox.net](mailto:johnkennington@cox.net)

# Audubon's 15th Annual Wildlife Habitat 2008

## EAGLES PAST AND PRESENT BY DAVE EDWARDS

Admission donation \$5 Children under 13 FREE

### Begin the Tour at any garden

1111 S. 141st E. Ave, Tulsa

13513 E. 38th St., Tulsa

8637 S. 67th E. Ave, Tulsa

8801 S. 68th E. Ave, Tulsa

6656 E. 88th Pl., Tulsa

11719 S. 87th E. Ave, Bixby

### Vendors at the gardens are:

Pine Ridge Gardens (479) 293-4359

Clear Creek Farm and Gardens (918) 598-7382

Wild Things Nursery (405) 382-8540

Bird Houses by Mark (918) 408-5082

Missouri Wildflowers Nursery (573) 496-3492

You've heard about planting native plants and here's your opportunity to find rare and unusual plants acclimated to our bio-region. These quality plants and garden items are sure to lure birds and butterflies to your garden. The vendors will be at the gardens both days. Check out the map on the TAS website.

We have two fundraisers each year and this one is really fun! Come out and support the Garden Tour!

Help stamp tickets on the Tour and receive a free ticket!  
Call (918) 446-2720 to volunteer.

Oklahoma's migrating non-resident Bald Eagles have left us, headed back to their Great Lakes homes for nesting. But after February's fine program on the Siftar's eaglet rescue, interest in Tulsa Audubon's dealings with the national symbol remains alive. I'd like to pass on some information I garnered from talking with a few people like Paul Moser, John Kennington, Bill Foster and, especially, Dick Sherry.

Back in the 1970's, Keystone Lake had been impounded over 10 years and migrating eagles were coming to the state in large numbers. Audubon members began noting numerous instances of eagles being shot in the Keystone area. To stimulate community awareness and educate the public about the eagles' plight, at least two projects were started.

Since it was believed that irresponsible young people may have been involved, a program of school visitation and educational assemblies were presented, notably, by Bruce and Ruth Ewing from Prattville. Then, the Eagle Days project was born, originally busing the public from the dam area to sites downstream, with stops when roosting birds were spotted. Large numbers of people attended these affairs. Between five hundred and one thousand participants were recorded. The Tulsa World was recruited as a sponsor, furnishing the buses. The Tulsa World has continued to be a loyal supporter of our efforts with advance articles and event reporting each year in January. A 1979 article by World Outdoor writer Sam Powell is still informative and posted by John Kennington on our web site, [tulsaaudubon.org](http://tulsaaudubon.org). Sam continues his interest in our efforts. The format of Eagle Days has evolved, but the public still expresses gratitude when they come to our weekends in January. For some, this opportunity is their first experience to see a wild eagle.

In the late '70s Audubon members began noting that eagles were seen flying into a particular cove of the lake each evening and determined that a large number were roosting there. It happened that the owner who wanted to



### TULSA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS

President: John Kennington 809-6325

Vice-President: Gail Storey 742-2684

Secretary: Anita Mitchell 272-6755

Treasurer: Mary Jackson 254-1350

Recorder: Paul Ribitzki 243-5515

Directors: Linda Clark, Carol Eames, John Fisher, Jim Mitchell, Laurie Ribitzki, and Gary Siftar

TAS Website: [www.tulsaaudubon.org](http://www.tulsaaudubon.org)

"Tulsa Scissortail" is the quarterly 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, the editor needs items for that issue at least a week before going to press (For Summer 2008, that will be June 10th or so). We are always looking for a good nature story.

e-mail: [lrbitzki@juno.com](mailto:lrbitzki@juno.com)

Laurie Ribitzki, Editor

*Eagles Past and Present Continued from Page 2*

develop the land on the north shore of shore of the cove might be persuaded to sell it to us. With the backing of Joe Williams, Jerry Crowley, and perhaps others, most of the purchase price was raised by a large loan from the Noble Foundation, which, after we retained the land for 5 years, was converted to a grant.

A wooden observation blind, elevated on telephone poles, was built, but eventually became unstable and was dismantled. Paul Moser convinced a builder of metal and wood sheds to build one for us in prefab form and sell it to us for \$600. He got the Corps of Engineers to load the whole thing on a barge and sail it up to what is now known as "Audubon Cove". The intrepid men of the Corps then offloaded the panels, pushed, lifted, and shoved them up the cliff, and helped the members put together the blind we now use.

Counts of eagles from those days were much higher than we see now. Paul remembers a day when 68 eagles were seen. Incidentally, a huge early roost site on Grand Lake was said to hold 180 birds. Residential development then encroached and the roost site essentially disappeared. If not for Tulsa Audubon, the same thing would have happened here. Pam and I saw 38 one evening a couple years ago, but typical counts are in the teens. Many people think that we're still getting lots of eagles, but that they're dispersed more, and not using our cove as exclusively. That's supported by comments I get from lake area residents that they're seeing

eagles now in areas where they were not seen before. I believe that the Dec. '07 ice storm contributed to the very low numbers we recorded this year. We could always count on eagles going to certain trees and certain limbs as we observed them from the blind. Now, many of those favored limbs are gone and the birds are not as attracted to our spot. I expect the numbers to gradually rise in succeeding years. I do not believe that the limited amount of traffic and trail-walking at the Keystone Ancient Forest to our south will be a negative factor. Their trails do not approach the roost site (which is on their property) and trail usage in the winter should be low.

I suggest that you visit the Audubon website, [tulsaaudubon.org](http://tulsaaudubon.org), to read the historic and interesting articles John Kennington has posted. Click the link at the bottom of the Eagle Days post, and then click on the link just above the map. Don't fail to follow his links to various posts as you read through, or you'll miss some of the best stuff.

Our Eagle property has never been open to the public, and rightly so. But one of the Eagle Committee members goes to the blind each week on a set day during the season. A special trip would not be made to accommodate your schedule, but a request from an Audubon member to go along on his appointed day would seldom be denied. It is a moderately strenuous hike with quite a bit of uphill and down. Call me and I'll let you know who's assigned the week you're interested.

Dave Edwards

The Eagle Committee's report, below, is from this season as observed from the eagle blind on Keystone Lake. These folks hike through the boulders and old growth ancient forest, sometimes at dusk, to gather this information.

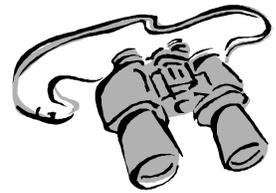
**Tulsa Audubon Society Bald Eagle Committee Report 2007 - 2008**

REPORT #	DATE	COUNT		OBSERVER	WEATHER	TIME	COMMENTS
		Adult	Immature				
i	10/21/07	0	1	D Edwards, P Edwards			pre-season
ii	10/25/08	1	0	D Edwards, B Gard			pre-season
1	11/06/07	2	3	B Gard	60, calm, sunny	1530 - 1615	1 immature had a white back
2	11/12/07	1	2	B Germany	79, light wind, partly cloudy	1545	
3	11/19/07	5	5	D Edwards			1 immature had a white back
4	11/30/07	4	14	J Fisher		1610 - 1710	1 immature had a white back
5	12/01/07	10	15	J Fisher	windy w/ intermittent mist	1600	
6	12/19/08	0	0	D Edwards, J Fisher			no report due to ice storm of 12/09/07-12/11/07
7	12/29/07		1	B Scott	42, light wind SW	1600 - 1700	
8	01/11/08	1	3	B Germany	63, SW 8-15, clear		
9	01/17/08	1	0	D Edwards			
10	02/04/08	1	2	D Edwards			1 immature had white head and dark tail
11	02/13/08	0	0	B Germany	58, NW 15, clear	1600 - 1730	2 immature eagles soaring over lake, but not at roost
12	02/23/08			D Edwards, P Edwards	40, light wind, drizzle to light rain		no eagles for 2 wk - last report

# Recorder's Report

December 2007 through February 2008

Recorder: Paul Ribitzki, e-mail: Iribitzki@juno.com  
Paul Ribitzki 243-5515 or Pat Seibert 747-4202



RARITY	SPECIES		DATE	COUNT	LOCATION	PLACE	OBSERVER
					COUNTY		
	Goose	Cackling	12/15/07	3	Tulsa	CBC: WC AREA	J Cox, Et Al.
	Goose	Cackling	01/12/08	1	Tulsa	Tulsa, Mohawk Park	B Carrell
	Goose	Cackling	01/20/08	3	Tulsa	Tulsa, Lake Yahola	T Mitchell
	Goose	Cackling	02/21/08	5	Tulsa	Tulsa, 141st St E of Garnett	J Kennington
R	Duck	Long-tailed	12/15/07	1	Tulsa	CBC: WC AREA (Lake Yahola)	J Cox, Et Al.
R	Vulture	Black	02/09/08	3	Tulsa	Hwy 412 & Hwy 151	P Ribitzki
R	Vulture	Black	02/09/08	1	Tulsa	Tulsa, Harvard & 151st St S	G Troop
R	Vulture	Black	02/13/08	3	Osage	TAS Eagle property	B Germany
R	Hawk	Ferruginous	01/27/08	1	Tulsa	Bixby sod farms	J Singletary
	Hawk	Rough-legged	12/15/07		Tulsa	CBC: NW CENT	T Mitchell, Et Al.
R,O	Falcon	Peregrine	01/02/08	1	Tulsa	Tulsa, downtown	J Arterburn
	Merlin		01/21/08	1	Tulsa	Tulsa, 66th St N & Memorial	G Kamp
R,O	Gull	California	01/13/08	1	Tulsa	Tulsa, Lake Yahola	T Mitchell
O	Gull	Franklin	02/26/08	2	Tulsa	Washington Irving Park & Bixby Sod Farms	J Loyd
R	Gull	Little	12/05/07	1	Tulsa	Skiatook, Sewage Ponds	S Metz
R	Dove	Inca	01/13/08	6	Tulsa	220 W Ave & Wikewa Rd	T Curtis
R	Dove	Inca	02/22/08	1	Tulsa	Tulsa, Sheridan Rd S of 31st St	T Mitchell
R	Dove	White-winged	02/19/08	2	Tulsa	Tulsa, Sheridan Rd S of 51st St	J Fisher
	Wren	Marsh	01/06/08	1	Tulsa	Tulsa, Oxley Nature Center	B Carrell
O	Wren	Sedge	01/20/08	1	Tulsa	Tulsa, Oxley Nature Center	B Carrell
O	Wren	Sedge	02/17/08	2	Tulsa	Tulsa, Oxley Nature center	T Mitchell
	Wren	Winter	12/02/07	2	Tulsa	Tulsa, Mohawk Park	T Mitchell
R	Warbler	Pine	02/24/08	1	Tulsa	Keystone Dam, CoE park	T Curtis
O	Yellowthroat	Common	01/12/08	1	Tulsa	Tulsa, Oxley Nature Center	B Carrell

## Oklahoma Butterfly Hot Spots



Listed species are included because they are either abundant at a given location or are uncommon/rare or hard to find elsewhere.

**The Nature Conservancy Ponotoc Ridge Preserve** - Arogos Skipper

**The Nature Conservancy Tallgrass Prairie Preserve**-Regal Fritillary, Arogos Skipper, Grey Copper

**The Nature Conservancy J.T. Nickel Family Wildlife & Nature Preserve** -Great Spangled Fritillary, Diana Fritillary

**Salt Creek North Recreation Area, Keystone Lake**-‘Olive’ Juniper Hairstreak, Olympia Marble

**Fevodi Creek Park** - Phaon Crescent, Viceroy

**Oxley Nature Center/Mohawk Park** -Swallowtails, Dion Skipper, Bell’s Roadside-Skipper, Falcate Orangetip

## “Happy To Help” An Avocet Gets a Second Chance at Life

For those not following the story on the OKBirds list serve, an American Avocet had been seen hanging around a small pond at the corner of 121st St. and 129 E. Ave. in Broken Arrow, just north of the Bixby Sod Farms. It was in this same spot for at least a week and observers suspected the bird could be injured.

On April 15, I contacted Gail Storey, TAS Vice-President and a wildlife rehabber in Tulsa, and she went to check on the bird. I live only 3 miles away and was working from home that day, so met her out there to help. The bird indeed could not fly, but our attempts to capture it were unsuccessful.

At this time a neighbor, Rocky Lewis, approached to ask about our suspicious behavior. I explained the situation, and he said he had also noticed the bird. Being a sportsman and Ducks Unlimited member he had recognized it as an Avocet. Seeing that we could not capture the bird, he said his Black Lab Zoe could easily retrieve the bird. Also at this time another neighbor, Kelly Huckaby and her son arrived and explained they had also been watching the bird. Fortunately Kelly had her camera and got some wonderful photos of the rescue. (See TAS website for color photos)

Rocky then told Zoe to retrieve the bird and she jumped in the pond and swam after the Avocet. She pursued it for a few moments (Did you know that Avocets could dive?) and soon caught up with it, gently grasping it in her mouth. Gail had been on the far side of the pond, and had not heard my conversation with Rocky, and you could see the fear on her face. She was certain that the dog would eat the Avocet!

Of course, Zoe treated the Avocet with kid gloves. She swam back to shore and presented the bird to us with hardly a feather ruffled. The bird had no obvious injuries to explain why it could not fly and Gail placed it in her carrier to end a successful rescue.

Gail then transported the Avocet to Dr. Paul Welch, a wonderful vet in Tulsa (Forest Trails Animal Hospital) who donates his time and talent to area rehabbers. Dr. Welch reported that after an x-ray he found it had a fracture in the wing. There are two bones there and one bone was fine and would act as a natural splint. He said that if the bird were placed on a pond in relative safety, it would heal in a few weeks.

Gail did not want to take the bird back to where we found it, too exposed and out of its natural migration path. She called Ron Shepherd at the Great Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge in northwest Oklahoma, three hours west of Tulsa, and he offered to help.

It was April 17, just two days after rescuing the bird, and Gail immediately drove out there, arriving about 5:00 P.M. Ron took them to a non-public area with a pond that was perfect and there was even another Avocet nearby. Just over a small dike was a large lake that had about two hundred Avocets, many of which nest there. Gail released the bird at the edge of the pond. She reports "He was so happy. He drank and started to feed. I think that this was the best thing to do. I was concerned about how the bird would fare in captivity. I really appreciated Ron's help. He said that he was happy to help a bird in need."

Thank you to the real hero of this story, Zoe, and to everyone involved in what turned out to be a successful team effort!

Oklahoma Butterfly Hot Spots continued from Page 4

**Gilcrease Museum Gardens** – Rock garden at entrance, pond, herb and Victorian gardens

**Keystone Dam Area**- South bank below dam – Large Western Soapberry tree next to ORV area entrance Soapberry Hairstreak. North bank below dam – Thistle patches along road ½ mi. east of Corps office, Gulf Fritillary, Monarch, Queen

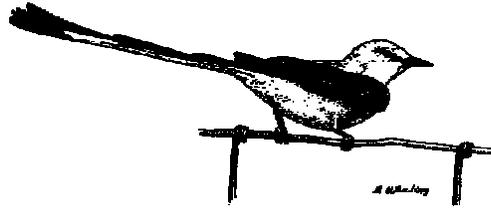
**Osage RR Trail** - Wetlands ½ mi. north of 86<sup>th</sup> St North, Bronze Copper, Broad-winged Skipper

**Deep Fork National Wildlife Refuge Lake Eufaula State Park**- Butterfly garden near park office- Byssus Skipper

*Please remember that collecting is not allowed on Nature Conservancy Preserves, City of Tulsa Parks, Tulsa County Parks, Oklahoma State Parks, or National Wildlife Refuges.*

SPRING 2008

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



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**NAS/TAS Introductory Membership Form**

Membership in the National Audubon Society provides membership in the Tulsa Audubon Society. Members receive six issues each of **Audubon** magazine and the **Tulsa Scissortail**.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

*Please check:*

\$20 1 yr Introductory     \$30 2 yr Introductory  
 \$15 1 yr Student/Senior School/Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

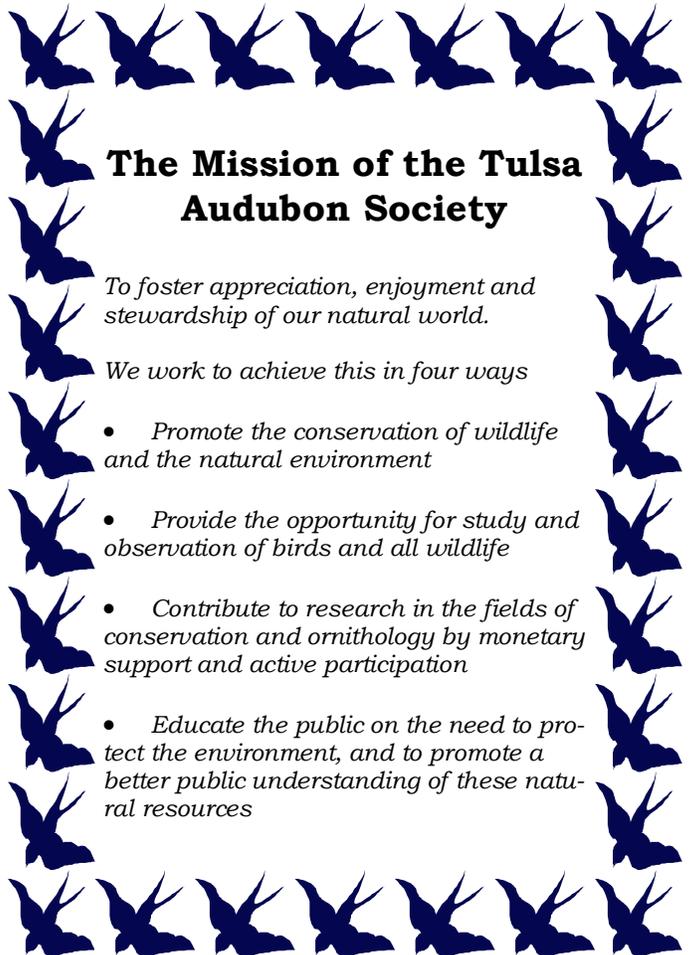
Check enclosed, payable to: **National Audubon Society**  
**Please write T01/7XCH on your check**  
 Please bill me

**OR**  
**TAS Local Membership**

Local membership in the Tulsa Audubon Society includes four issues of the **Tulsa Scissortail**.

\$10 Local membership, check enclosed  
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Mail either to: Tulsa Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 2476  
Tulsa, OK 74101



**The Mission of the Tulsa Audubon Society**

*To foster appreciation, enjoyment and stewardship of our natural world.*

*We work to achieve this in four ways*

- *Promote the conservation of wildlife and the natural environment*
- *Provide the opportunity for study and observation of birds and all wildlife*
- *Contribute to research in the fields of conservation and ornithology by monetary support and active participation*
- *Educate the public on the need to protect the environment, and to promote a better public understanding of these natural resources*