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# The SUTTON NEWSLETTER

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Photo by Dan Reinking



Your generous donation helps us with our mission of “finding cooperative conservation solutions for birds and the natural world through science and education.”  
Join us in protecting our natural heritage for the next generation!

## KEEPING AN EYE ON OKLAHOMA’S BIRDS





“finding cooperative conservation solutions for birds and the natural world through science and education”



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#### ON THE COVER:

The Western Kingbird is just one of over 200 species of birds nesting in Oklahoma. The second Oklahoma Breeding Bird Atlas will help determine if or how far its breeding range has expanded east over the past two decades.

Photo by Dan Reinking

## A Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Sutton Center friends,

A certain degree of uncertainty is inherent in everything we do, but everybody's lives have been upended this spring. Things that we have taken for granted were suddenly off-limits, like enjoying nice sit-down meals at restaurants, and spending time with friends and family. What really is essential, and how do we keep each other safe?

One way to give our minds a rest from the onslaught of all the disturbing events is to seek refuge in the outdoors. Although the world suddenly seemed to halt for us humans, the daily and seasonal cycles of nature continue, the trees and flowers are blossoming, the insects are buzzing, and the birds are singing their hearts out as the spring passes into summer.

When the leaves 'exploded,' it suddenly became a lot more difficult to monitor the eagles' nests. Some Sutton Center's BEST stayed "safer at home," while others enjoyed being in nature as part of social distancing. We received many reports of new eagle nests, although the final count of checked nests may end up being reduced due to the pandemic restrictions. We are also hoping to make the best of the situation for the breeding bird atlas surveys, but the mandated quarantine for people arriving from other states will restrict the total effort this year. We hope to make up for a slow start in these upcoming years, and if you have good bird identification skills and extra time on your hands, this project would welcome your help.

The Attwater's prairie-chickens surprised us by starting to lay eggs earlier than anticipated, and the chicks hatching require a lot of attention from our staff. The adults are "rebooting" and have begun molting their feathers to replace their plumage after all the early spring dancing and egg-laying. The greater prairie-chickens started a bit later on their production, so their hoots and booms can still be heard from a good distance. We are now "expecting" among the masked bobwhite as well.

Other good news is the addition of an educator, Miranda Adams, to our staff. She keeps our social media happening, and is working to build a menagerie of education ambassador animals. Miranda hopes to visit with school groups soon, and we can look forward to hear more about the education program in upcoming newsletters.

As we tread carefully forward, it is interesting to learn how more people have opened their eyes to the world around us. The news reported that bird-watching is soaring; downloads of bird identification apps, sales of bird feeders and nest boxes all spiked! While we are already fascinated by birds, it is nice to know that more people are becoming enthusiastic about the birds and the rest of nature around us.

Stay safe and healthy, and thank you for being a part of our collective mission to conserve birds and the natural world!

Lena Larsson, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

Photo by Tom Gilbert



## Oklahoma's Second Breeding Bird Atlas Moving Forward

by Dan L. Reinking



This nestling eastern phoebe is just one of more than 200 species that nests in Oklahoma each year. Photo by Dan Reinking

As the events of 2020 continue to unfold, the start of Oklahoma's second breeding bird atlas project has been affected, but is still moving forward. Planning and fundraising for this multi-year statewide survey of Oklahoma's nesting birds had been underway for months, with spring of 2020 marking the first of five seasons to get volunteers and staff out looking for birds across 583 randomly selected blocks of land across Oklahoma. The novel coronavirus pandemic began sweeping across the U.S. just at the time the project was to be publicly launched. With so much uncertainty about the disease, and a patchwork of restrictions and advice to deal with the crisis, we were unable to hire planned seasonal staff to conduct surveys full time, and volunteer recruitment was also delayed as people sought to protect themselves and others through sheltering in place.

At the time of this writing in early May, many restrictions are being lifted, and solo birdwatching in rural areas of Oklahoma is an activity that many birders are finding to be a welcome relief from spending too much time at home. We are starting up volunteer recruitment, skilled birders are responding, and we are hopeful that a number of surveys will be completed this year, even if less than the 20% we had originally desired to wrap up in 2020. Outdoor activities such as birdwatching can be an important part of staying healthy and happy during difficult times, and Oklahoma is rich with birdlife to be studied.

## NEW! Recent Changes for 2020 Taxes Maximize Your Donations

Now more than ever, we rely on donors like you to help find cooperative conservation solutions for birds and the natural world through science and education. With COVID-19 adding extra challenges to everyone's budget, we were glad to know of changes for the 2020 tax year that will maximize giving opportunities. Recently announced for 2020, anyone can write off up to \$300 if they give to a local nonprofit such as the Sutton Center during the year. People who itemize their taxes also get an additional benefit if they donate even more to a nonprofit in 2020. Contact your CPA for details.



# Easter Bunny Comes Early to Sutton Center

Cara Brown, Tayler Harlow, Kevin Jarrell, Madeleine Kaleta, Lena Larsson, Kat Munsell, Ashley Novar, Steve Sherrod, Gary Tweedy, Ariel Wapnick



As our chicks get older, their curiosity gets the better of them as this APC chick investigates the camera.  
*Photo by Tayler Harlow*

The Sutton Center staff has stayed busy as we took on our first full breeding season of Attwater’s prairie-chickens (APC). Last spring, we transferred partially incubated eggs from Texas to raise here at our facility. This year is the first time we go full circle from laying of eggs, incubating, hatching, raising chicks, and transporting this endangered species for release into the wild. As staff prepared for a busy year, our flock did too. Males geared up and began their elaborate displays mid-February. Our hens joined in and our very first APC egg was laid on March 19th – the earliest known lay date in captivity for the whole recovery program! After our first hen laid, many hens quickly followed, producing 11 different hatching dates for chicks throughout the spring. Our first chick of the year hatched April 19th. We plan to hatch as many chicks as possible to reintroduce individuals into the wild population in coastal Texas, and to maintain the captive breeding flock of APC.

Although this time of year is always fast-paced and filled with challenges, it was made more difficult by the COVID-19 outbreak. Other facilities within the APC recovery program are facing restrictions limiting available staffing, which caused a decrease in the number of APC the collective recovery program can raise. Since Sutton has been



Maddy has been involved in animal care through various volunteer and internship opportunities since she was in middle school. Her passion for animals has carried throughout her childhood, leading to a degree in Zoology from State University of New York. Although she began working with many domestic mammals, working with avian species soon swayed her to becoming a self-proclaimed “bird-nerd.” She has conquered many branches of conservation through her work in wildlife rehabilitation, breeding programs with the Florida grasshopper sparrow and the whooping crane, and data collection tracking bobwhite quail. *Photo by Madeleine Kaleta*



One of our many trays of APC eggs collected this spring.  
*Photo by Tayler Harlow*

fortunate to maintain staffing at a near-normal level, we focused on egg production and increasing our numbers to release chicks into the wild.

Between increasing egg production, travel restrictions that cancelled arrival of several interns, and delays in ordered supplies, we sure kept busy! Our biggest challenge is managing larger numbers of chicks with our current protocol. We find that we are capable of producing a significant amount of eggs, but young chicks need a lot of personal attention and space. We strategically planned our different chick enclosure areas to prevent bottlenecks as the chicks grow and are transferred from small inside cages to large outside flight pens. We relocated the acclimation pens we used for releases in Nebraska to our facility in Bartlesville, so we can now house more juveniles outdoors. We look forward to our first APC release in late summer, and will be relieved when our hatchlings are able to contribute to the continuation of their species.

Through the chaos of chick season, we were lucky enough to receive two interns, Ashley Novar and Kat Munsell, and two additional aviculturists. Our former lead aviculturist, Bonnie Gibson, has become a full-time mother. With that, we welcome aviculturists Cara Brown and Madeleine Kaleta. Cara joined us from Florida where she worked with wildlife rehabilitation of everything from turtles to eagles. Madeleine (Maddy) arrived from Texas after tracking bobwhite quail. We are so grateful to have these new staff members assisting in all the work that goes into the recovery of this truly unique species.



Two APC chicks explore the world around them.  
*Photo by Tayler Harlow*



Cara started her wildlife career as an intern for our former lead aviculturist, Bonnie Gibson, rearing whooping and sandhill cranes at the Audubon Species Survival center. There she costume-reared crane chicks to be released into the wild population. Afterwards she transitioned into wildlife rehabilitation in Florida, where she has been since 2011. With a degree in Zoo Science from University of West Florida, she has experience working with a multitude of animals ranging from bats to turtles. She has an in-depth knowledge of medical care, rearing, and release methods for various species.



# Winter Sage-Grouse Trapping

by Aaron C. Pratt

A rare glimpse of the high desert during daylight



**M**uch wildlife research requires having your study species in hand to take measurements or to place a mark identifying, and maybe helping you relocate, an individual. Therefore, one of the important first steps of field research is capturing wildlife. It is also one of the aspects that people are most curious about. So, how do you catch a grouse anyway?

**I**t has been likened to catch-and-release hunting — pitting your wits against an animal and identifying a weakness you can exploit. For sage-grouse, it is their tendency to roost on the ground, out in the open, away from thick cover and during the night. They like to be able to see their natural predators approaching so they can escape quickly without obstructions.

**Y**ou can catch sage-grouse almost any time during the year so long as you know where they are; however, the easiest time is during a few weeks in the spring when they congregate around their leks, or strutting grounds. Multiple males display in the same location day after day creating the perfect atmosphere for females to select a mate. Because females are the usual targets for capture, and they hang around the strutting grounds until they are ready to disperse to their nesting areas, they are most easily located at this time of year. These conditions allow most sage-grouse researchers to start their projects by conducting their trapping during spring.

**C**apturing becomes more difficult when the birds no longer congregate near strutting grounds. Luckily, sage-grouse are social creatures, spending time in flocks most of the year (except during the nesting and early brood-rearing periods). Previously captured and marked birds, affectionally known as “Judas birds,” can help locate more birds during other seasons.

**T**he most popular trapping method uses a 2-person crew at night on an ATV, a spotlight, and a large long-handled fish landing net. Finding their eyeshine, the bright light and engine noise temporarily confuse the birds making them hesitate in deciding whether to trust in their camouflage or to take flight. When a bird is spotted, one crew member jumps off the ATV to net the bird, oftentimes hurdling over sagebrush at a full sprint!

**I**f this sounds a little adventurous you would be correct; but, adventures in the field are what field biologists live for. So how can you make this experience even more adventurous? By doing it during winter — in the snow and bitter cold, while miles from the nearest road. The regular ATVs must be upgraded to tracked ATVs because of the deep snow. Sub-zero temperatures require bundling up in layers and leaving no exposed skin. These were the conditions this past December while trapping 50 greater sage-grouse near Pinedale, Wyoming.

[CONTINUED >](#)





Female sage-grouse were the quarry



Tools required for sage-grouse trapping



Unexpected perils are hidden in the dark

Grouse are adapted to cold climates, and snow is a good insulator against the cold night air. They are always warm at night buried in the snow with 104-degree body temperatures, but snow burrowing can make it harder to find them. If they would just keep their heads under the snow their hiding place would not be revealed! However, their curiosity often gives them away. The area we were trapping has one of the highest concentrations of sage-grouse remaining. It supports birds moving into the area to access winter habitat after nesting throughout the Upper Green River Basin. Flocks are big (a few hundred birds each) but they can still be difficult to find. We had to deal with a full moon (which makes birds more likely to flush) and thick fog (which makes birds hard to spot). Conditions were not conducive for easy trapping, so we were not very efficient, but given the large grouse population we were still successful.



The trapping crew delirious after working a long winter's night

Working at night makes almost everything more difficult, and driving is no exception. At 5:30 one morning, after trapping about 10 hours, the tracked UTV driver failed to notice a hidden wash under the snow. During spring trapping, getting stuck is just an annoyance. During winter, when temperatures fall below 0, and you are 8 miles from the truck, it can be more serious. In these temperatures vehicles sometimes will not start, electronics don't work (unless they are kept in an inner pocket close to body heat), and neither do your fingers. But, with a little preparation you can stay safe. We had a winch and a land anchor to winch to, but our foldable anchor was completely frozen solid and unable to unfold. Fortunately, we had a portable heater that thawed it out after several minutes. Finally, as the sun approached the horizon, we were on our way again heading toward home. Despite the hardship, it was one of our more successful nights as we were able to catch 12 birds.

So, why go through all this trouble? This project is investigating the response of sage-grouse to development of natural gas wells in winter habitat by using GPS transmitters to monitor survival and habitat selection. This project has multiple cooperators but is being headed by the University of Wyoming. Normally, winter is not a very difficult time for sage-grouse. They exclusively eat sagebrush during winter, gaining weight until the breeding season starts in the spring. Winter is the season when survival rates are the highest. However, land surface disturbance removes sagebrush, causing habitat loss. In addition, the large winter flocks are more responsive to, and easily disturbed by human activity. Therefore, understanding how demographic rates and habitat use changes relative to human disturbance is important for stakeholders when making land use decisions. So, until all questions are answered, field biologists will continue to brave the elements for the quest of information and will enjoy themselves in the process.

# The Sutton Award For Excellence in Communicating Current Conservation Topics

by Audra M. Fogle

In its 16th year, the Sutton Award has benefited more than 2500 high school students across Oklahoma. This statewide art competition creates an opportunity for students to learn more about issues of wildlife conservation, have conversations with teachers and classmates surrounding the issues, and win significant scholarships.

Educating and inspiring young people to appreciate the beauty of nature's diversity, as well as learning to tell a story that will inspire others to conserve it, aids both the Sutton Center and NatureWorks in our central missions of protecting the natural world for future generations. The competition continues to grow in prestige and reaches further across the state each year. Thanks to our partner NatureWorks and a generous donation from American Heritage Bank, we awarded 15,000 in prizes to our top contestants.

The following memory about a young participant has remained with me and illuminates the power of the Sutton Award to not only inspire passion for wildlife conservation, but to affirm young students and allow them to shine:

On the day of the reception, Emily walked in the room, her shoulders hunched and her gaze firmly fixed on her feet. When her parents encouraged her to introduce herself, her voice was barely above a whisper. Later, while buzzing around the room speaking with parents and students, I spied Emily standing next to a pastel drawing of a large Luna moth. I approached her and asked if the moth was her work. She replied that indeed, it was. It was BEAUTIFUL! When complimenting her on her artwork, I asked why she had chosen the subject. Before my eyes an incredible transformation took place. Emily lit up. Her spine straightened and she excitedly began to bounce on the balls of her feet as her eyes met mine and she told me about the plight of the Luna moth. She couldn't talk fast enough. Her eyes sparkled as she told me what they liked to eat and how important Luna moths were for pollination. She is already planning for what she will focus on for next year. I am so very proud of this opportunity to impact students.

It takes a village to put together the competition, reception and NatureWorks art show, and we give special thanks to the following: NatureWorks, American Heritage Bank, Grant's Frames, Barbara Bates, Nothing Bundt Cakes, Visual FX, Nouveau Chocolates, The University of Central Oklahoma, Jenks Chamber of Commerce, Oklahoma Sculptor Society, and all our volunteers who helped with the gallery set up, judging, reception and the NatureWorks Show and Sale- it would not be possible to put on such a high quality event without you.



1st place winner in the 2D Category—Darcy Ball, Metro Christian Academy and her teacher Ruth Vesanen.  
Photo by Kelly Bostian



1st place winner in the 3D Category—Destiny Telinde, Alva High School and her teacher Greg McClure.  
Photo by Kelly Bostian



1st place winner in the Photography Category—Liam Puls, Oklahoma School of Innovation and Experiential Learning (OSIEL).  
Photo by Kelly Bostian



# An Interview with Jim Harman

## – Honorary BEST member

by Miranda K. Adams

At the start of our interview Jim Harman gave me a warning, “I’m a very good liar and anything stated during this interview should be taken with two grains of salt.” What follows is the spectacular journey of a man who has dedicated his life to the protection of wildlife, with accomplishments as tall as his tales.

Jim starts with a simple thought, “To know a man you need to know his history.” Jim’s history begins in Oklahoma where his father made a living as a market hunter. His days would start well before dawn when he would head into the wilderness with his trusty dog named Prince. All day long they would hunt game including bobwhite quail, prairie-chickens, and passenger pigeons. These birds would be shipped to the markets of Kansas City, Missouri to be sold in hotels and restaurants. Every night he would spend reloading shot gun shells until well after midnight only to start the process over in the morning.

Jim Harman was born March 31st 1925. Growing up during the Great Depression, Jim never felt that his family was poor, and he recounts to me that he had the very best childhood. He holds a very vivid memory of being a young boy following after his father into the field with his BB gun making sure to step exactly into those large footprints as he went. That was when his love for wildlife began. His father died when he was only 13 years old.

As a young man at the start of WWII, Jim left his studies at the University of Kentucky with the intention of enlisting in the United States Air Corps. He was rejected for being colorblind. He returned to Oklahoma to study at Northeastern State University, but was soon drafted into, you guessed it, the United States Air Corps. He did well, despite being colorblind and all the equipment relying on color coding, receiving a score of 95% on his exams. At the age of 19 after preforming drills in the South Dakota winter, Jim came down with a case of rheumatic fever. He was diagnosed with a damaged heart and discharged from the service.

Following his discharge from the military Jim returned to Oklahoma, married a girl from Skiatook, and continued pursuing a degree in electrical engineering from Northeastern State University. He soon discovered that his classes were filled with recently discharged servicemen who had already spent years working in engineering and the professors taught at a level that left Jim behind in his coursework. Fortunately, he discovered NSU offered a wildlife course. He changed his major to Zoology with a minor in Botany and graduated with flying colors. He started his first job as a biologist in 1949 with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, studying quail in southwest Oklahoma. Jim quickly progressed in his career, changing agencies and becoming refuge manager of the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in 1950.

Jim continued his work as a refuge manager in Muleshoe, Texas, where he managed 70,000 sandhill cranes, a large amount of their total population of 250,000. During his time there, he met hundreds of other scientists coming to study the birds, including Dr. Arthur Allen, who he regrets not recognizing for the icon he is today. There were times Jim recalled that 500,000 waterfowl would gather on the playas with less than 150 acres of water. During droughts there would be terrible outbreaks of disease turning the water green and killing thousands of birds at a time. His work with birds continued at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge along the Gulf of Mexico, where he monitored 18 to 21 whooping cranes (the majority of their entire species at the time), and continued with sandhill cranes at Bitter Lake Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico. Jim Harman’s life changed in 1958 when he moved to Hutchinson, Kansas. Here he had the opportunity to design a new wildlife refuge. For years he sold a hesitant community on a refuge made for outdoor enthusiast of all kinds while painstakingly working to acquire the land he needed. All his promises came true with the unveiling of Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, a premiere location for birders, hunters, and wildlife. He had officially ruined his reputation as a good liar.

In 1966 he left Kansas for the regional office in Albuquerque where he spent 12 years helping refuge managers cut through red tape, but all the while he missed having his boots on the ground in a refuge himself. He finally negotiated an early retirement in exchange for a transfer to Tishomingo Wildlife Refuge in 1978. He retired after 30 years of service to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He reckons they didn’t suspect he’d be retired 10 years (so far) longer than he ever worked.



**Jim Harman with one of hundreds of bluebird nest boxes he has built for the North American Bluebird Society.**  
*Photo by Dan Reinking*



**Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge was one of the Sutton Center’s original eagle release sites in Oklahoma, and is home to a number of eagle nests today.** *Photo by Dan Reinking*

During his retirement, he has served on several Audubon Society committees using his experience to help rewrite refuge laws, he has built hundreds of bluebird boxes for the North American Bluebird Society, and he has worn out many sets of tires preforming educational outreach at rural schools. He reminisces that educating the youth about birds and conservation has been one of his favorite endeavors. By instilling a value of nature into kids while young and impressionable, you create adults who want to protect and conserve our wildlife.

He learned about the Sutton Center in 1990 while volunteering at Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge. There, he was able to witness the return of nesting bald eagles into Oklahoma, a 5-year-old female and a 4-year-old male raised and released by us. He caught the “eagle bug” and has monitored bald eagle nests ever since. When he started, his goal was to live long enough to see five or six nests in Oklahoma. He has been astounded by the success of Sutton Center’s bald eagle recovery program, with over 200 active nests last season, but then again, he did not expect to stick around this long either.

Jim Harman has long suffered from an incurable disease called wildlife. He figures there must be a purpose to his time on this earth, and though he might not be smart enough to figure out what it is, he is not leaving until he does.

Happy 95 years Jim!



*Photo by Dan Reinking*

## Sutton Center Hires New Educator

Miranda Adams, raised in Tulsa, OK and a graduate of Northeastern State University is excited to join the Sutton Center as our new educator. Miranda has used her degrees in biology and psychology to actively engage, inspire and educate people of all ages. Her journey to the Sutton Center has included nature education with the Audubon Society, studying lesser-prairie chickens in New Mexico, guiding hikes at Ozark Natural Science Center, and sharing a message of conservation with thousands as Tulsa Zoo’s outreach specialist. Miranda plans to energize Sutton’s community engagement with new STEAM focused educational programming, engaging media, and the return of live education animals! In her free time, she enjoys exploring nature, live music, and spending time with her family.

If you are interested in supporting our education program please visit our Amazon wishlist. All items help us provide quality care and enrichment to our animal ambassadors!

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1YLVW3MLUZM32?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1YLVW3MLUZM32?ref_=wl_share)



# Spring 2020 Masked Bobwhite Updates

by Brittney Tayrien, Sarah Harren, and Don Wolfe

## BANWR has BIRDS!

Masked bobwhites wintered another year on the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge (BANWR). At least 60 birds are being monitored AND... Trevor Lauber, the field tech who is tracking the birds has been hearing other masked bobwhites during tracking. These birds are in addition to the birds on the ground from last year's releases and are likely from earlier releases or from masked bobwhites breeding in the wild. Staff at BANWR captured this momentous event on camera last year!



## MANY HANDS SPEED UP HABITAT RESTORATION

We are happy to announce that a three-month partnership between BANWR and AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps took place on the refuge in early January to restore and enhance habitat for the masked bobwhite. AmeriCorps has provided a 10-person youth crew for 12 weeks; the equivalent of having a full-time employee for 2.5 years. The grant to support this work was pursued and obtained by the Friends of the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge and came at no cost to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The crew created hundreds of brush dams that help slow the water flow across the desert and allow vegetation to regrow. Healthy vegetation restores balance to the refuge by attracting bugs that provide food for the quail and other wildlife.

## NEW REFUGE PARTNERS HELP PROVIDE FOSTER PARENTS

Annual trapping on the High Plains National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Texas, as well as on the Washita and Optima National Wildlife Refuges in Oklahoma provided 58 wild male northern bobwhites. These birds will be foster parents for our 2020 chicks to be released. This year marks an expansion of our diverse list of partners as we add Washita and Optima National Wildlife Refuges to the sites providing quail.



## UN-BANDED MALE SPOTTED BASKING AT TUCSON RESORT

A Facebook post was released on October 24, 2019 of an un-banded male masked bobwhite taken at Westward Look Resort in NW Tucson. The distance from nearest release site is about 50 miles. Northern bobwhites are known to have moved over 35 miles, and it is not impossible that a single bird that was separated from his covey could take off and go a considerable distance to try to find other bobwhites. A network of vegetated arroyos to the west, ultimately connecting to a sparsely populated desert habitat north of and contiguous with BANWR, could have provided navigable corridors for movement. Two obstacles in the form of large (over 100 meters wide) underpasses under Interstate 10 must also have been crossed. Long-time Sutton volunteers Linda Maholland and Brian Fennern (*photo below*) spent several days at and around the resort attempting to relocate this elusive bird, alas, without success.



## BIRDS APLENTY FOR 2020!

The masked bobwhites are healthy and paired up for the breeding season. Our 95 breeding hens begin laying in May, and with an average of 30 eggs each, that's a lot of eggs and chicks! Thankfully, an additional intern will be joining our staff to help our two full-time aviculturists during the peak season. New for 2020, the chicks will remain at the Sutton Center for an additional week before fostering so that they can be released at 3 weeks of age onto the refuge. Even though we have been pleased with the survival rates from last season, we hope to increase their odds for survival even more. With the reports of birds living and breeding in the wild, we could not be more excited for this summer!





## WILD BREW celebrates 22 years of fundraising by hosting an online “COOPED UP WILD BREW” for 2020

by Audra M. Fogle

For more than 22 years, the Sutton Center has appreciated the generous support of our patrons and the ongoing and often humbling support of the local restaurant and brewery community for our annual fundraising event, **WILD BREW**. This year, in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, our appreciation has not changed; therefore, for the first year ever, we will be hosting an online **COOPED UP WILD BREW** for 2020. Your online participation and purchases will not only help save birds, but your support this year will also have an immediate and positive impact on our local breweries and restaurants. While this is not the legendary social event for which Wild Brew is famous, we are excited to have a way to support the important wildlife conservation mission of the Sutton Center AND to say “THANK YOU” to all of our local friends who have been supporting our cause for years.

This year, the Wild Brew committee has assembled packages for purchase, which include gift cards to local restaurants and breweries, branded merchandise (available for sponsorships) and discount opportunities for next year’s event. There will also be VIP packages, which include opportunities for custom experiences like brewery tours, beautiful meals prepared by Tulsa’s finest chefs in your home and nature inspired eco-tours with our experts that will knock your socks off. *OR...for simplicity sake you are always welcomed to donate to the Sutton Center. We rely on revenue generated by our one and only annual fundraiser WILD BREW to support our wildlife conservation and education programs throughout the year.*

Supporting the Sutton Center’s efforts in recovering endangered species, helping eagles thrive, and bringing the “wild to the child” through education begins with your patronage of **WILD BREW 2020**.

To view all donation opportunities, auction items and exclusive experiences visit [www.wildbrew.org](http://www.wildbrew.org) and follow Wild Brew on Facebook.

We are all finding creative ways to cope with the unique challenges of 2020, and we hope you will enjoy and support this **COOPED UP WILD BREW** until we once again are able to pack thousands into a BIG room for the “Greatest Party Ever Hatched!”



## Sutton Volunteer Focus: Barbara Joyce

by Miranda K. Adams and Tayler A. Harlow

Barbara Joyce has been a volunteer for our Attwater’s prairie-chicken project for over four years now. Born and raised in Bartlesville, she first discovered the Sutton Center when she saw the breeding facility being constructed while cycling nearby. She watched our property develop each day as she passed on her way home. Her very first thought was that she would love to be able to work there. After seeing a staff member taking care of the grounds, she asked about volunteering and we are very grateful to have received her help all these years.

Barbara started as an imprint volunteer where her responsibility was to hold and interact with the greater prairie-chicken chicks we were acclimating to human contact. Barbara’s favorite memory is the first time she was able to help out with the young chicks. She values the trust placed in her to work with and care for them, even with the young chicks. While she enjoyed this interaction, Barbara wanted a more active role. She was then offered the opportunity to care for our adult flock. At first, she was worried about frightening the adult birds; they can be very flighty and she feared they could accidentally escape! With the guidance and support of the staff, she was able to start feeding, watering, and cleaning the enclosures. She has assisted in egg collection, hatching chicks, and husbandry for our flock. She is a vital component to keeping our flock healthy through her hard work.

Barbara never owned or worked with birds before, and she has learned a lot since becoming a volunteer at Sutton Center’s prairie-chicken breeding facility. From collecting eggs to seeing them come out of the egg for the first time is a phenomenal experience. Her biggest wish for the Sutton Center is for Bartlesville to be more aware of the work being done here, and she hopes that more people can come out to volunteer and support our work with the endangered species. She is proud to be a part of a great cause and to be assisting in the raising of these birds.

Barbara looks forward to volunteering every week. It allows her to get out of the house and help participate in something important. Every greater prairie-chicken has known her throughout the majority of their life. Each one tends to greet her in a different way. Her favorite part about volunteering at the facility is getting to work with Carl, the greater prairie-chicken. Even outside of breeding season he comes running up to the front when he sees Barbara to chatter at her. He likes to be mischievous by jumping on the feeders and waterers when she tries to take them for cleaning. Even when the prairie-chickens give her a hard time, she calls all of them “her birds!”

Barbara loves to volunteer, while giving her freedom to travel and enjoy other hobbies. She often visits her children and grandchildren in various parts of the country and abroad. She is also a bicycle enthusiast, having participated in the Oklahoma Freewheel for twenty years, biking 500 miles over the course of a week across Oklahoma with her family. Barbara feels that she is much busier in her retirement than while she was a licensed practical nurse for 25 years. In addition to volunteering at the Sutton Center, she also volunteers for Food For Kids, AGAPE, On the Rock Ministries, and occasionally Meals on Wheels (when her equally active husband is unable). She gets her fill of socializing while volunteering and especially loves the peacefulness she feels while working here. We at the Sutton Center prairie-chicken breeding facility are so honored and grateful to have Barbara and other amazing volunteers participate in our conservation and education efforts.

