



THE TENNESSEE WARBLER

Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

April, 2018

Editor, Theresa Graham

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - SPRING 2018

As you receive this issue of *The Tennessee Warbler* the change of season from winter into spring will be in full swing. This never-ending cycle of migration continuously provides us with countless hours of joy, excitement, even solace, often all at the same time. I rarely come back from a birding adventure, whether it's local, national, or even international, without feeling a certain sense of inspiration by the natural wonders that birds provide us. With that being said, our Conservation Policy Committee, co-chaired by Dick Preston and Melinda Welton, has been vigilantly watching the de-regulation of the Migratory Birds Treaty Act (MBTA). As you may already know, protections are quickly being diminished for our birds in migration. I want to encourage each and every one of us to contact our state and national representatives with our considerations and concerns regarding the lessening of sanctions for those who put birds in harm's way. In situations such as this, we should be the voice for those who have no voice. Allowing our representatives to know how much we passionately value the birds of the world will allow us to participate in the stewardship of this sport that we all enjoy.

Many, many thanks to all of you who participated in the inaugural Wings of Winter Birding Festival at Paris Landing State Park in January. Ten separate entities including local, state, private and non-profit groups partnered to make this ambitious event a success. I particularly applaud all those in TOS who volunteered to help out in any capacity needed. Plans are already underway for next year's event to be held January 18-20. Cyndi has already received confirmation on next year's stellar keynote speaker. Details are inside this issue!!

Finally, I would also like to invite everyone to the Annual Spring Meeting to be held in Chattanooga April 20-22. Springtime birding in Chattanooga is hard to beat, so make plans now to attend. See you there!

Let's Go Birding!!

Steve Routledge



2018 Annual Meeting in Chattanooga

April 20-22 – A Learning Adventure

The Chattanooga chapter invites you to join us for the Spring Meeting, April 20, 21, and 22, 2018, on Chattanooga's burgeoning Southside. Meeting registration and Friday evening reception will be held at the pavilion of The Crash Pad boutique hostel off Main St., as well as a Sunday afternoon compilation of sightings. The annual meeting and banquet on Saturday evening will be held at The Well venue 3 blocks to the south. A variety of field trips on Saturday and Sunday mornings will showcase local birding hotspots.

Lodging

Conference will be based at **The Crash Pad** boutique hostel, 29 Johnson St., Southside neighborhood, 37408 (exit 178 off interstate 24), www.crashpadchattanooga.com (423) 648-8393. This is a lodge-type accommodation featuring enclosed bunks as well as private double rooms on an inexpensive hostel budget (\$30-75, with possible additional discount based on occupancy). Breakfast is included. Please visit their website for photos and details. (Tip: click on Talk to Us, and read FAQs). Local hosts will be staying on-site.

For the less adventurous, the **Days Inn** in Lookout Valley (exit 174, 3 miles away) will also host TOS members for approximately \$89/night. Call 7 - 3:00, ask for Carolyn. They are holding a block of rooms for us, but advise that, if you book early, a lower rate might be found using an online travel site such as Trivago, Expedia, or TripAdvisor.

Other nearby hotels include:

Red Roof Inn (Lookout Valley) – approx. \$85/night

Comfort Inn and Suites (Lookout Valley) – approx. \$95/night

Country Inn and Suites (Lookout Valley) – approx. \$125/night

La Quinta (Lookout Valley) – approx. \$129/night

and of course,

The Chattanooga Choo-Choo (downtown, 1 block from The Crash Pad)
\$159 hotel, \$189 pullman train car

Events

Saturday night banquet - 5 – 7:00 p.m. at **The Well** venue, 1800 Rossville Ave., Suite 110 (3 blocks south of The Crash Pad). \$15 per person. Vegetarian options available.

Guest speaker will be **J. Christopher Haney, PhD**, President and Founder of Terra Mar Applied Sciences, LLC, which focuses on conservation-oriented biological research carried out in the public interest. "Dr. Haney's expertise straddles the fields of marine science, climate change, wildlife biology, ecosystem

management, and conservation policy.” Some may know him as an author on the Defenders of Wildlife blog. His presentation will highlight ecosystem management and seabird conservation.

TOS Board of Directors Meeting

Saturday at 2:00 at The Crash Pad pavilion or alternate indoor venue

Field Trips

Saturday and Sunday mornings. Explore a variety of habitats with local guides, including Tennessee River, north Georgia, Chattanooga Nature Center, and a challenging Lookout Mountain hike. Sign up at reception Friday evening, see detailed descriptions of recent sightings and degree of difficulty.

Compilation

Share your weekend results, help us compile a list of sightings for the weekend.
Sunday at Noon at The Crash Pad pavilion.

Contact Information

Danny Gaddy, CTOS President, (423) 316-5647, gaddy@catt.com

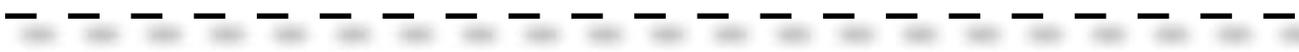
Registration

\$15 per person, \$10 student

Please print out the attached form and mail with your registration fee to Gary Lanham, treasurer, at the address on the form.

For registration questions, email glanham@epbfi.com

We look forward to seeing you in Chattanooga!



TOS Spring Meeting Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____

Cell Phone #: _____

TOS Chapter: _____ Office held? _____

Weekend registrations # ___ at \$15 (\$10 student) each = \$ _____

Banquet reservations # ___ at \$15 each = \$ _____

Total enclosed. Make check payable to CTOS = \$ _____

Mail registration form and check to:

Gary Lanham CTOS
21 Cool Springs Road
Signal Mountain, TN 37377

Wings of Winter

By Cyndi Routledge, Co-chair

The ice and snow of January 2018 did not stop the inaugural Wings of Winter Birding Festival from happening on the 19-21. A few last minute minor changes due to icy lakes and roads occurred, but all in all it was a tremendous success!

One hundred hearty souls from 6 different states braved the cold temps, boarded the vans and buses and set off on field trips that began with a special behind-the-scenes tour of Cross Creeks National Wildlife Refuge in Dover, TN on Friday morning the 19th. This trip was lead by refuge manager Rick Eastridge and Julie Zickefoose, book author and regular contributor to NPR and *Bird Watcher's Digest*.

Brian "Fox" Ellis, storyteller, author and birder, entertained the group at the Friday night reception at the Paris Landing State Park Inn with his portrayal of John James Audubon. He also led field trips and a workshop on Saturday and Sunday.

Julie Zickefoose's fabulous keynote speech took place at the banquet on Saturday night and she joined the folks on the Duck River tour on Saturday, one of 10 field trips that were offered throughout the weekend.

By the end of the event the bird count ticked in at 104 species with the additional bonus of 11 different mammals being spotted during the field trips.

Plans are already underway for the 2019 event which will take place January 18-20, 2019. And what better way to celebrate a waterfowl event then to have Richard Crossley, author of his newest book on waterfowl, join us as the keynote speaker! With new field trip locations being planned and local sponsors continuing to support the event, it's sure to be another great one. So mark your calendars, watch for announcements, or follow up on Facebook and plan to join us for the 2nd Annual Wings of Winter Birding Festival January 18-20, 2019!



Photographer: Joan Howe

FALL COUNT DATA DUE IMMEDIATELY

Christmas bird count data are due as soon as possible to allow me to get my report in to the editor of *The Migrant* in a timely fashion. Besides the actual count data, please be sure to include the following effort data:

- 1 - Hours and miles by car, foot, and any night birding
- 2 - Number of observers and parties
- 3 - Any feeder watching hours & names
- 4 - Start and end times for the count
- 5 - Weather data for the count
- 6 - Names of all the participants

If you do not have a local compiler, you can send the data directly to me at the address/email below.

TOS appreciates your efforts to record and track our bird populations and abundance. Thanks for helping us to archive this data for future generations and researchers.

Ron Hoff • TOS State Count Compiler • Tennessee Ornithological Society
166 Chahyga Way • Loudon, TN 37774 • 865-567-9679
webe2brdrs@gmail.com

Wishing you migrants soon!

June 30th Deadline

The deadline date for the August issue of *The Tennessee Warbler* is June 30th. Please submit all articles, announcements, reports and items of interest by this deadline date.

Submit Material To:

Theresa Graham, Editor
PO Box 366, Oakland TN 38060
(901) 465-4263 (home)
e-mail: 2graham@bellsouth.net

Tennessee Bird Conservation Meeting

The first Tennessee Bird Conservation meeting was held at the Nashville Zoo on January 9 – 10, 2018. The meeting was organized by David Hanni of The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. Comprised of a diverse group of organizations, the purpose of the meeting was to encourage cooperation, coordination and information exchange to benefit birds in Tennessee and throughout the Americas. More than 60 people attended.

In addition to TOS, other groups included: The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation; The Tennessee Valley Authority; Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture; Tennessee River Gorge Trust; The Tennessee Division of Natural Resources; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Southeastern Avian Research; The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; representatives from The University of Tennessee (Knoxville and Chattanooga); Austin Peay State University; Rhodes College; and Fort Campbell.

Presentations included: game bird and non-game bird programs in Tennessee (David Hanni, TWRA); Full Life Cycle Conservation of the Cerulean Warbler and Golden-winged Warbler (Dr. David Buehler, UT-K and TOS); Louisiana Waterthrush Migration and Connectivity (Eliot Berg, Tennessee River Gorge Trust); Southeastern Avian Research (Cyndi Routledge, SEAR and Nashville chapter president); Efforts with Black Vultures (Brett Dunlap - USDA); Tennessee State Parks Birding Trails (David Lincicome, TDEC); Migratory Bird Joint Ventures and Avian Conservation Assessment Database (Becky Keller, AMJV); Conservation Efforts by TVA (Damien Simbeck, Buffalo River chapter); Tennessee Ornithological Society (Dick Preston), Lands Unsuitable for Mining Petition and Reducing Window Kills (Melinda Welton, Nashville Chapter) and Loggerhead Shrike Distribution and Migration Study (Dr. Michael Collins, Rhodes College and Memphis Chapter president).

Other TOS members present included Daniel Moss (Fort Campbell, Nashville chapter) and Dr. David Aborn (UT-C, Chattanooga chapter).

Thanks to the Nashville Zoo staff for their warm welcome and generosity in supporting this important meeting.

Tennessee Ornithological Society Wishes to Acknowledge and Thank Those Making Special Contributions to Our Organization and Programs (March 2017 – February 2018)

General Fund

- Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, as donor advised by Jennifer and Jay Mills

Bird Discovery Books

- Robert Ingle
- Chuck and Lola Estes

Conservation and Research Fund

- Sandra Bivens and Bob Parrish
- Agnes and Nancy Harris Charitable Trust, as donor advised by Van Harris
- Angie Hays
- Greenville Chapter
- Ann Inouye and David Luth
- Bob and Lois Jones
- Kevin Jones
- Paul Latour
- Tom and Dell Mitchell
- Mike O'Malley
- Elizabeth Queener
- Denise Weyer

Threats to The Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Endangered Species Act

Congress is planning assaults on legislation that we have long relied on to give protections to birds.

The American Bird Conservancy is watching and responding to legislation as soon as it is proposed and updates on their progress through congress. The following House bills are now out of committee and could be scheduled for a vote any time!!

THIS AMENDMENT THREATENS THE MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT

H.R. 4239 has an amendment that would allow an individual or company to kill birds so long as their intent wasn't to kill birds. That means there would be no legal consequences for bird deaths, even if those deaths could have been prevented. In other words, BP wouldn't have been fined \$100 million for killing millions of birds in the Gulf Oil Spill.

THESE BILLS THREATEN THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

H.R. 717 would undermine the ESA listing process by factoring in economic considerations now only considered during the designation of critical habitat. It would also remove deadlines necessary to ensure petitions are ruled on in a timely fashion.

H.R. 1274 would subvert the ESA's science-based listing process by allowing any information provided by states, tribes, or counties to constitute "best available science" effectively contradicting the meaning of "best available science." H.R. 1274 would also direct the federal government to utilize state and local data in its listing decisions, regardless of whether the data is based in science.

H.R. 3131 would undercut citizen engagement and enforcement of the ESA by impeding citizens' ability to obtain counsel and challenge illegal government actions. Under H.R. 3131, citizens who successfully challenge illegal government actions under the ESA would be subject to fee recovery restrictions that could make it difficult for them to obtain counsel.

The Conservation Policy Committee of TOS will put out Action Alerts when there is congressional action on any of these bills. Here's how best to make your voice heard:

Hierarchy of effectiveness:

1. Call your congressperson (202) 224-3121
Ask to be put in contact with your Senator or Representative and ask the staff person you want your Congressperson to protect the MBTA and the ESA and oppose any amendment or bill that would weaken either of these acts.
2. Send a letter
www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative
3. Send an email
<https://thepeoplegov.org/state/tennessee>
4. Do all three
5. Do it again in a few weeks

It matters!

Bird-Strike Prevention at Shelby Park Nature Center, Nashville

The Conservation Policy Committee and NTOS are engaged in a project to reduce bird-strikes on the windows of the Shelby Park Nature Center. Birds colliding with glass is the 2nd greatest human-caused bird mortality accounting for up to a billion bird deaths per year. Several techniques and materials have been developed and tested and proven effective at reducing bird strikes.

A variety of these methods are being proposed for windows at the nature center with the intention of not only reducing bird strikes, but having the center serve to showcase the variety of ways homeowners can reduce bird strikes at their homes.

Below are links to websites with descriptions of the various techniques and materials and links to where some of these materials can be purchased.

American Bird Conservancy Effective Window Solutions

<https://abcbirds.org/get-involved/bird-smart-glass/>

Fatal Light Awareness Program Canada

Protect birds at home http://flap.org/residential_new.php

Do-it-yourself techniques <http://flap.org/do-it-yourself.php>

Feather Friendly Bird Tape

<http://www.conveniencegroup.com/featherfriendly/feather-friendly>

Acopian Bird Savers / Zen Curtains

<https://www.birdsavers.com>

American Bird Conservancy Bird Tape

<http://www.collidescape.org/abc-birdtape>

Conservation Policy Actions Dec. 2017 – February 2018

CPC recommended and President Steve Routledge signed TOS to the following group letters from December 2017 through February 2018:

- 1) Requesting Senators and Representatives to oppose any effort that undermines the ability to address the incidental take of birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- 2) Support for the American Prairie Conservation Act. This bill would enact a nationwide “sodsaver” provision to protect native grasslands by reducing taxpayer-funded incentives to convert grasslands to cropland.

The CPC drafted a letter that was sent by TOS President Steve Routledge to Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Bob Corker (R-TN) and each of TN Representatives urging them to co-sponsor S. 1920/H.R. 2542, Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act, which would require new federal buildings to incorporate bird-safe building materials and design features.

Committee Members: Co-chairs: Melinda Welton (Nashville) and Dick Preston (Memphis)
Cyndi Routledge (Nashville), Ashley Heeney (Nashville), Vickie Henderson (Knoxville)

Migratory Bird Treaty Act Turns 100

by Cyndi Routledge

This summer the Migratory Bird Treaty Act turns 100 years old. To truly understand its history and significance let's take a brief look at how it came to be.

In the 1800's, as our country grew in prosperity, millions of birds were being killed for food, feathers and scientific collection. Overuse of our natural resources was the norm. As a result, and with the absence of any regulations, bird populations began to decline drastically. By the end of the century Great Auks, Labrador Ducks, Passenger Pigeons, Carolina Parakeets and Heath Hens were extinct. In 1900 the first Audubon Societies were established as well as the first Christmas bird counts, and in that same year Congress passed the Lacey Act - the first federal law protecting wildlife. Introduced by John Lacey, and signed into law by President William McKinley, this new law enforced civil and criminal penalties for illegally trading animals and plants and remains in effect today.

In 1916 the United States signed a treaty with Great Britain, who was acting on behalf of Canada, agreeing to stop all hunting of insectivorous birds and to establish the first hunting seasons for game birds. The goal of this treaty was to protect and preserve those species most beneficial to man and adopt a uniform system of protection. In 1917, in order to implement the treaty of the previous year, Canada established the Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA) which formed the basis for establishing sanctuaries and enacting regulations for migratory birds which still stands today. In response, and to implement the act of 1916, Congress passed the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and on July 3, 1918 President Woodrow Wilson signed it into law. From that day forth it makes it a crime "for anyone to take, possess, import, export, transport, sell, purchase, barter, or offer for sale, purchase, or barter, any migratory bird, or the parts, nests, or eggs of such a bird except under the terms of a valid permit issued pursuant to Federal regulations." The Act would go on to be challenged in 1920 and expanded in 1936. In the 1970's a similar treaty was signed with Mexico, Japan and the then Soviet Union. In 1972 an amendment was added that protected an additional 32 families of birds, and in 2004 all naturally occurring native species were ultimately included.

One of the many success stories of this law is that of the Snowy Egret. Breeding Snowy Egrets grow beautifully flowing, curvy plumes that were coveted not only their beauty, but for the price milliners could charge for their adorned hats. As a result, by the late 18th century the Snowy Egret was near extinction. But thanks to early conservationists efforts and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Snowy Egrets are a common and beautiful sight along our coasts. Examples such as this prove that our conservation efforts are not in vain and we must remain vigilant and continue to protect it.

Congratulations MBTA on 100 years of successfully protecting our treasured wildlife!

eBird Tips and Pointers

Spring is right around the corner. It seems to be a little early this year with the trees budding out, the buttercups blooming, and the recent warm temperatures. We have already had early Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and Tree Swallows around the state. With this in mind, your Tennessee eBird reviewers are hoping you are dusting off your field guides and brushing up on your spring warblers and shorebirds. If this rainy and stormy pattern holds, we could be in for some exciting spring shorebird migration and fallouts! I personally can't wait to see warblers back in their breeding plumage, along with all our other spring and summer birds.

With spring coming on strong, here are a few tips and reminders from your eBird reviewers.

1. We encourage you to use established **Hotspots** whenever possible for your eBird checklists. Hotspots are established in regularly birded areas, which are not always the most amazing birding places, in order to be the one place in eBird to view all observation from that location. Using hotspots make the information more easily accessible to researchers AND birders using eBird. If you don't use hotspots, we all spend more time looking at all the other data in that area. Hotspots are great because you can also see not only your list from that location, but the top 10 observers! Hotspots simply improve data quality and accessibility. eBird is **Citizen Science**, not your personal checklist, although that is a benefit of the program.
2. When you are birding by car, walking, bicycling, or any other mode of transportation, eBird encourages you to keep your mileage for each list at a maximum of 5 miles. If you bird more than 5 miles, start a new list every 5 miles. One key value of eBird is the spatially explicit value of the data and 5 miles is the maximum distance recommended for a list. Lists longer than 5 miles add species to your lists, but are automatically not used for any data analyses. Making new lists every 5 miles on a day of driving and birding can be a hassle, but it's simple with the mobile app. You can initiate lists offline when out of cell phone service and still get an accurate starting point. Just enter your list as usual and submit when back on Wi-Fi or in cell coverage. Shorter lists along regularly birded roads have so many benefits for you and the eBird database.
3. What is a complete checklist vs incomplete? Complete checklists in eBird are those where the observer makes a concerted effort to identify all species present by sight and sound (preferably for a bare minimum of 5 minutes), and includes all of them on the checklist. If either condition is not met, the checklist should be entered as incomplete. To submit an incomplete list, simply click "no" when asked if the list is complete. By knowingly submitting a complete list, but only reporting a few species that you actually identified is inappropriate and suggests the few birds you were reported were the only ones there. Thus eBird would assume other species are not present when in fact they were. This is a data problem. Reviewers can often look at lists and often determine when a list was incorrectly submitted as complete!
4. Many users have been having trouble adding rare birds to their checklists and thus are using warbler sp. or owl sp. instead of the actual species and putting the species' name in the comments. Finding species not on the list of regularly occurring species is easy! Whether you are in the mobile app or on eBird in a web browser, you can either show "All" species (on the app) or "Add species" or "Show rarities" (on a web browser). Selecting "Show rarities" will bring up most of the rare species that are possible in that given area, while "Add species" or "All" (on the app) gives you the option to add anything to your list. Sometimes a really rare bird shows up and it's not on the rare list! Be sure to add comments and details about these sightings!

In future editions of eBird Tips and Pointers, we will include useful steps for moving your existing data from a personal location to a Hotspot, and guidance on how to use that comment box.

Great birding and remember to dust off those field guides before all the spring migrants return.

Stephen Zipperer
Scott Somershoe

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT 2018

by Dick Preston

The 21st Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) was conducted February 16 – 19. This global event provides an opportunity for bird enthusiasts to contribute important bird population data that helps scientists see changes over the past 21 years.

The GBBC is a product of The University of Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology, The National Audubon Society and Bird Studies Canada, and made possible through the support of organizations like founding sponsor, Wild Birds Unlimited.

This year birders in 150 countries submitted 175,000 checklists, containing 6,248 species, and over 27 million individual birds. The United States submitted the most checklists (108,000), followed by Canada and India. Colombia reported the most species (996), followed by Ecuador (904), Brazil (847), India (832) and Mexico (780). Birders in The United States tallied 657 species.

Tennessee was 26th among the states, with 145 species. As expected, California (373), Texas (361), Florida (290), Arizona (266) and Washington (221) led the way.

Shelby County reported the most species (100), followed by Humphreys (99), Hamilton (93), Blount (87) and Knox (85). Shelby County also submitted the most checklists (251), followed by Davidson (142), Knox (139), Williamson (104) and Hamilton (96). Sadly, 18 counties did not submit a single checklist.

Ruben Stoll led Tennessee birders, reporting 115 species. Dick Preston (110), Victor Stoll (104), David Kinsinger (75) and Mark Greene (74) rounded out the top five. Ruben Stoll also placed 69th among all USA birders, while Dick Preston was 95th.

Leading the way in checklists submitted was Rick Houlk (34), followed by Janie Finch (30), Dick Preston (26), Mellissa Turrentine (22) and Roi and Debbie Shannon (21).

The GBBC has come a long way from the first count in 1998, when "only" 13,500 checklists were submitted from The United States and Canada. The next Great Backyard Bird Count is scheduled for February 15 – 18, 2019. For more information, visit: www.birdcount.org.

Editor's note: figures as of press time; final numbers will change slightly.

CHAPTER NEWS

As the “Music Note” dropped over Nashville marking the end of one year, **NASHVILLE CHAPTER** TOS said hello to the beginning of a new year with a full slate of activities, two very important conservation projects and a slow but growing membership. Interesting speakers, new and exciting field trips, traditional bird counts and of course our Radnor Lake sponsored walks will round out our calendar for 2018. It is indeed a busy year already!

Our annual spring Radnor Lake Wednesday morning bird hikes will begin on April 18th and run through May 9th. We gather in the west parking lot outside the Visitor’s Center by 7:30 am and set off up the road and across the spillway to see what migrants have dropped in to rest, feed and delight us. This event seems to grow each year and is an excellent member and outreach program. We hope, if you’re in the area, you will join us.

Our two conservation projects, “Cats Indoors” and “Window Strike Awareness”, continue to gain momentum. We are working with The American Bird Conservancy and various other organizations to find the best way to address these issues and bring awareness of their importance to Middle Tennesseans. It’s slow steady work by those leading the charge. Many thanks to Melinda Welton, Ashley Heeney and Denise Weyer for continuing to lead us.

On February 24th, NTOS joined with Warner Parks Nature Center and Friends of Warner Parks for a Memorial bird hike honoring the late Dr. Ed Gleaves. Dr. Gleaves was a long-time NTOS member, supporter and volunteer at Warner Park, and it only seemed fitting that a few hours were set aside to hike the trails, search for his favorite winter birds and remember his dedication to the Park and to NTOS.

Finally, 2018 marks the 100th Anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a priceless cornerstone of bird conservation. This 100-year-old law is a true success story. For decades it has not only protected our bird population but it has helped save many bird species on the brink of extinction. However, this law is under attack by the current administration and, as birders, we should not only be alarmed but ready to fight for the species we love. From time to time you will see an ‘action alert’ on TN-Birds, on Facebook or announced at your local Chapter meetings. No matter your political affiliation, please take the time to get involved. Contact your

representatives and let them know how you feel. Be the voice for the winged voiceless so the very species we so enjoy watching will be protected for generations to come.

Cyndi Routledge, President

BIRDING KINGSPORT concluded 2017 with a program on “Birding California” by Gary and Betty Bailey in October, and a club social in November where information on the planned Christmas Bird Count was also shared with members. In January Marty Silver, Naturalist at Warrior’s Path State Park, presented a program on “Dragonflies”, with a focus on species found in Northeast Tennessee.

Between the holidays and very cold and wet winter weather, recent club outings to local birding areas have been limited; however, our club ventured out to Weir Dam, Cattails at Meadowview, Steele Creek Park, Warrior’s Path State Park, and Laurel Run. Our intrepid Field Trip Leader, Gary Bailey, also organized two longer outings in January, a wonderful day out to Burke’s Garden, Tazewell County Virginia and a weekend trip to the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge and other birding spots near Chattanooga. In February, Susan and Mike Hubley led an outstanding weekend trip to Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in Decatur, Alabama and surrounding areas. A total of 92 species was tallied for this trip and highlights also included a good variety of waterfowl at White Springs Dike and a spectacular sight of 1,500 Snow Geese in Limestone Bay.

Many of our club members braved the weather in mid-January to search and view the Yellow-headed Blackbird reported in Sullivan County, a rare and unusual sighting! The Yellow-headed Blackbird was associating with a large mixed flock of birds including Rusty Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Starlings.

We look forward to the start of our bluebird box monitoring, as well as more great birding as we head into Spring 2018.

Birding Kingsport meetings are currently held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm. Details of the meetings and activities, including location, can be found at www.birdingkingsport.org.

Helen Sirett, President

CHAPTER NEWS

Christmas Bird Counts in December kept the **LEE & LOIS HERNDON CHAPTER** of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, also known as the Elizabethton Bird Club, busy during the holiday season of 2017.

The 75th consecutive Elizabethton Christmas Bird Count, held last month, shattered records for this long-running survey. This year's CBC was held on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2017, with 25 observers in six parties participating. The 85 species tallied established a new high for this count, shattering the old mark of 80 species set in 2012 and again in 2016. The average total over the last 30 years of the Elizabethton CBC is 72 species.

A few species are becoming more expected on this annual December count. For instance, Greater White-fronted Goose was found for the third time in the last five years. Before that, this goose had never been found on this count.

Bufflehead set a new record with 293 individuals found. Four Northern Shovelers represented only the eighth time this duck has appeared on the count. Greater Scaup were found for only the seventh time in the last 25 years. Ruddy Duck has now been found three times in the last 25 years.

Bald Eagles, thanks to locations like Watauga Lake and Wilbur Lake, are also becoming more common. Eagles have been found in 20 of the last 25 years. Red-shouldered Hawk, which is uncommon in the region, was found for the sixth time in the last quarter-century. All seven of the region's woodpeckers were found on this year's CBC. The Red-headed Woodpecker has shown up on four counts in the last 25 years.

A Blue-headed Vireo, spotted on this year's count, represented only the third time this species has been found. A flock of 75 American Pipits marked only the third time this species has been seen since 1992 on a CBC.

Gray Catbird has been found five of the last 25 years, including this year. Palm Warbler, found only once prior to 1992, has now been found eight of the last 25 years. The single Pine Warbler seen means that this species has now been found in four of the last 25 years.

The chapter also conducts a long-running CBC for Roan Mountain. The 65th Roan Mountain Christmas Bird Count was held Sunday, Dec. 17, 2017, with nine observers in two parties. Up to four inches of snow blanketed most of the area, but the roads were clear. These weather conditions highlight the fact that over the years a couple of Roan Mountain CBCs had to be cancelled due to weather conditions.

Some interesting incidents on this count included finding an Eastern Phoebe at an elevation of 4,450 feet surrounded by snow. The most abundant birds included Common Crow with 83 individuals found and European Starling with 65 individuals counted.

Bryan Stevens, Editor

Photo by Jean Potter

From left: Herndon chapter members Roy Knispel, Rick Knight, Harry Lee Farthing, John D. Anderson, and Debi Campbell were recognized with the Howard Langridge Memorial Award for 2017. This award recognizes club members who see 200 or more bird species in a calendar year in the five counties — Carter, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi and Washington — of upper Northeast Tennessee.



CHAPTER NEWS

MEMPHIS CHAPTER - In November, Dick Preston gave an informative talk to MTOS titled "eBird for Dummies." Dick encouraged members to enter their sightings into eBird and even called out some of us, including yours truly, who have not been contributing data regularly. In December, Van Harris and Dick Preston shared stories and photos of their birding trip to New Zealand. A heavy snow (by Memphis standards) caused us to cancel our meeting for January, but we hope to convince David Hill to speak next year and share with us what digital photography can teach us about birds. Last month, Rusty and Diana Johnson spoke on "The Art of the Decoy" and shared many photos and described the history and artistry of making decoys.

MTOS winter field trips focused on nearby Christmas Bird Counts in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas. We also had trips to Shelby Farms, which is a large urban park in Memphis, T.O. Fuller State Park, Strawberry Plains Audubon Center for their winter bird count, and Wolf River Wildlife Management Area. Shelby County birders also contributed heavily to the Great Backyard Bird Count in February.

Our Conservation Committee Chairperson, Dick Preston, encouraged members to remain informed and to contact our state and federal representatives to help conserve birds, habitats, and open spaces. Most notably, conservationists should be concerned about potential roll backs to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that would legalize the unintentional killing of most migratory birds.

Michael Collins
President

The **JOHN W. SELLERS CHAPTER'S** winter birding season has been hit and miss thanks to snow and rain.

In November we had our annual membership meeting and birding in Bedford County at the Turrentine's home. Tasty soups and other delicious food and treats were had by all. Thanks for opening your home to us once again. Always a great social event for our group.

In December members drove down to Woods Reservoir in Franklin County to look for ducks and other water birds. Also, in December we had another successful Christmas Bird Count using our new count circle for the third time. The old circle included Boxwell Boy Scout Reservation and the Gallatin Steam Plant, which are now both closed to birding.

January's inclement weather caused the cancellation of our meeting, but members drove down to the Wheeler NWR in Alabama the last Saturday of the month and enjoyed a day of Sandhill Cranes, ducks and geese. What a great place to bird. On a side note, the snow and extreme cold in January brought American Tree Sparrows to several of our members' yards in Wilson County. A great treat for all of us.

Once again in February our outing was ruined by rain. In March, Linda Robertson will give a talk on "Plants and flowers that can be used to attract Birds and Butterflies to your yard."

Stephen Zipperer
Treasurer



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“THE TENNESSEE WARBLER”

Published by the
Tennessee Ornithological Society
274 Beech Grove Rd
McMinnville, TN 37110

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