



# THE TENNESSEE WARBLER

Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

August, 2017

Editor, Theresa Graham

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thanks to the Knoxville chapter for hosting our annual Spring Meeting. Despite some Saturday AM showers, it was a resounding success. Though weather issues closed the roads to the Great Smokies, good numbers of migrants were seen at all other Knoxville area hotspots. The Saturday evening banquet culminated in a highly fascinating update by Dr. David Buehler on the health of our Golden-winged Warbler populations. While the Appalachian population seems to be declining, the population that breeds in the Northern Plains, especially Minnesota, is at least holding steady. Thanks to the advantages of geo-locators, we can now follow these and other migrants more accurately.

Many interesting Society projects were announced during the weekend. Currently, we are in the stages of updating our TOS website. This should help streamline communications among our current members as well as encourage new site viewers to see all the areas in which TOS is involved. We are also encouraging all chapters to become knowledgeable in minimizing bird fatalities due to window strikes. We have members actively engaged in determining the most cost-effective way to achieve positive results and are also engaged in conversation with architects who are eager to possibly include window-strike prevention in some of their newer construction.

TOS is also supporting the Junior Duck Stamp program in Tennessee. We have decided to help with the program costs this year, 2017, as well as offer a free one-year student membership for the upcoming year to the twelve finalists of the different age categories. We will continue to offer these free student memberships to future finalists. I believe we should all be proud to see TOS support initiatives such as this.

Our Tennessee Birding Trail may be fully operational very shortly. TWRA is hopefully obtaining a little more money and already has an intern to put the signs up at good birding locations around the state. Keep your fingers crossed!

A project that TOS has supported the last few years, The Discover Birds Activity Book, has now had 27,000 copies printed and 17,200 distributed to over 18 states and four countries. Thanks to the efforts of our sister-in-law, Barbara Routledge, it's even available in Spanish.

Finally, we hope to see you all at our fall meeting in Kingsport, October 6-8 and at the Wings of Winter Festival at Paris Landing January 19-21. Should be excellent birding at both places!

As you can see, our organization is involved in many aspects of birds and birding throughout the state. I know that even more is being done locally at the chapter level. One thing I know for sure, there are a lot of people who are extremely interested in birding, either as a budding naturalist, a photographer, or just curious about their backyard birds. Let's continue to encourage and engage all interested folks at our local meetings, birding walks, programs, etc. We have a vibrant society. Let's share it with others!

Cheers!  
Steve Routledge

## 2017 TOS FALL STATE MEETING KINGSPORT, OCTOBER 6-8, 2017

The Kingsport Chapter invites you to the 2017 Fall meeting to be held October 6-8. Friday night registration & social will be held at Bays Mountain Recreation Area. The Saturday afternoon Board meeting and banquet at 6 p.m. will be held at MeadowView.

The conference hotel is MeadowView Conference Resort & Convention Center, 1901 Meadowview Parkway, Kingsport, TN 37660 (I-26, exit 3). A block of rooms is reserved at a discounted rate of \$111.00 plus taxes per night for a standard room. Make your room reservations with a credit card by September 15 by calling 800-228-9290 or 423-578-6600 and mention Birding Kingsport.

A room block is also being held at Holiday Inn Express & Suites with a \$112.00 rate plus taxes for a double and \$122.00 plus taxes for a suite. Breakfast is included. Call 423-723-2300 by October 5. There are also other nearby hotels – Hampton Inn, Comfort Suites, and Quality Inn.

We are pleased to announce the speaker following Saturday's banquet will be Dr. Fred J. Alsop, III. A professor in the ETSU Department of Biological Sciences, Dr. Alsop tells students who take his ornithology classes, "This class will change your life," and it does.

The menu for the banquet is chicken, salad, two sides, rolls, dessert, tea, and coffee.

Field trips for Saturday and Sunday mornings are planned for Roan Mountain, Weir Dam, as well as in Kingsport on the Greenbelt and Kingsport Birding Trails. We hope you will join us! For additional information, email [birdingkingsport@gmail.com](mailto:birdingkingsport@gmail.com)

An itinerary will be posted on TN bird listserve in the near future.

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### TOS FALL MEETING 2017 REGISTRATION FORM

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

TOS Chapter \_\_\_\_\_ Office held? \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Registrations @ \$10 each

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Dinner Reservations @ \$30 each \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian \_\_\_\_\_ Gluten-Free

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total amount enclosed. Make check payable to **Birding Kingsport TOS**

Is this the first time you've ever attended a TOS meeting? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

Mail registration form and check **by September 1** to:  
Birding Kingsport, PO Box 7477, Kingsport, TN 37664

## **Summary: KTOS Hosts the TOS 2017 Spring State Meeting**

Our Chapter had the privilege of hosting the TOS state meeting this spring from May 5 to 7, 2017. It was well attended with about 60 who signed up for the banquet that was held at Zoo Knoxville. The zoo was once again very gracious to grant us the use of their Lee Congleton Conference Center where we have held the meeting twice before. The event began with an evening meet-and-greet at the Mainstay Suites off Merchant Drive where our out of town guests were staying. Many of our own attended and brought great food and wine. Ron and Dollyann brought their J.B. Owen books and gave them away for whatever donation the recipients were willing to give. We raised \$198 for the J.B. Owen Fund and Ron was so grateful to go home with fewer books.

Saturday morning we had field trips to Seven Islands (Morton Massey & Bill Keeler), Cove Lake (Tony Headrick & Chuck Estes), Sharp's Ridge (Chuck Nicholson & Tom Howe). Sunday we went to Sharp's Ridge, Cross Mountain, and Gupton Wetlands (Mindy Fawver & Doug Bruce). Some outings of course were more productive than others, Sharp's Ridge being at its best with 17 warbler and 5 vireo species. Many were especially excited by great looks at a singing Canada Warbler. Some were fortunate to see a Philadelphia Vireo. The weather was cold and stormy and the upper elevations of the Smokey Mountains had fresh snow. Many trees were down on roads so field trips to the park were canceled.

The Saturday night program featured a presentation by Dr. David Beuhler, UT professor of wildlife science. He spoke mostly about his ongoing research on the Golden-winged Warbler, and particularly on the incredible data provided by the geo-locators they attach to the warblers' backs with a harness. It measures the daylight period from day to day. This allows the researcher to know within about 50 miles where the bird was located on any given day, that is, once they recapture the bird and remove the geo-locator in order to download the data. It does not transmit. The unfortunate results of all his research seem to indicate that the Appalachian populations of the Golden-wings are in great peril of being extirpated due to loss of successional breeding habitat here, and more so by the loss of forest habitat in the Venezuelan mountains where they spend the winter. Dr. Beuhler's presentation was excellent and entertaining.

We also had a brief business meeting headed up by TOS President Steve Routledge during which Cindi Routledge gave a glowing report on the Discover Birds Activity Book. She has promoted the program with wondrous skill in schools and government agencies. She even had it translated into Spanish and had it delivered to Cuba by Vicki Henderson who wrote the program and drew all its artwork. The meeting was capped off with the TOS Distinguished Service Award granted to three Chattanooga TOS members in honor of their tireless decades of work establishing the Soddy Mountain Hawk Watch:

Jim and Cynthia Wilkerson and Bill Haley. Their parting words for us were that they need help desperately if the hawk watch is to continue, as they are up in years and need to cut back. I hope a few of us can commit to continuing this effort that is unmatched in the Southeast. Let's do it.

Tom Howe, President

## Distinguished Service Award

By Steve Routledge

The Soddy Mountain Hawkwatch, established over twenty-five years ago, has provided a steady stream of valuable information regarding migrating raptors of all kinds. While many people have volunteered with this project over the years, three people are most responsible for the continued success of this Hawkwatch located just north of Chattanooga. Over the past quarter century they have devoted thousands of hours on the mountain and have accumulated and shared vast amounts of migrating raptor data with the Hawk Migration Association of North America.

The number of migrating raptors documented from Soddy Mountain is staggering. At the end of last fall 61,816 Broad-winged Hawks and 83,537 total raptors have been counted. They very much welcome volunteers and encourage one and all to come by and help. If you are unsure about raptor ID, as many of us are, all three are more than willing to share their expertise with you. It's an absolutely premier venue in which to see migrating raptors over the Tennessee River Valley. Make plans to join them this fall.

So, in honor of their dedication and determination in manning the Soddy Mountain Hawkwatch and providing a wealth of knowledge to the understanding of raptor migration, the Tennessee Ornithological Society Distinguished Service Award recipients for 2017 are Mr. Bill Haley, Mr. Jimmy Wilkerson and Mrs. Cynthia Wilkerson. Congratulations to you all. You are most deserving of this recognition. On behalf of TOS, we thank you!



Distinguished Service Award recipients Cynthia & Jimmy Wilkerson and Bill Haley

## 2017 GLOBAL BIG DAY

By Dick Preston

On May 13, 2017, nearly 20,000 bird watchers took to the field during the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Global Big Day. A project of Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology, the Global Big Day attempts to identify and count all species of birds seen anywhere around the world during a single 24 hour period. Checklists are entered via eBird.

Observers from 156 countries submitted more than 52,000 checklists, containing 6,564 species, representing over 60% of the world's bird species. This is a new record for the number of bird species recorded in a single day. Columbia led the way, with 1,486 species, followed by Peru, Ecuador and Brazil, all recording more than 1,000 species. Birders across the United States reported 709 species, with Tennessee observers reporting 198 species. Montgomery County (129) led the list, followed by Blount (128), Davidson (118), Shelby (109), Hamilton (105) and Knox (100).

The next Global Big Day will be May 12, 2018. For more information:

[www.ebird@cornell.edu](mailto:www.ebird@cornell.edu)

[www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)

### Spring Count Data Now Due

If you have data from a spring bird count and have not sent it to me, please do so at your earliest convenience. This allows me to compile the results and forward them to the TOS editor in a timely fashion to insure publication in our journal, *The Migrant*. My contact information is listed below.

As always, thank you for your participation in monitoring our Tennessee bird populations through these efforts. It is much appreciated.

Ron Hoff

166 Chahyga Way • Loudon, TN 37774 • 865-567-9679

[webe2brdrs@gmail.com](mailto:webe2brdrs@gmail.com)

#### OCTOBER 31ST DEADLINE

The deadline date for the December issue of *The Tennessee Warbler* is October 31st. 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](mailto:2graham@bellsouth.net)

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## Have You Seen A Loggerhead Shrike In Tennessee Recently?

Loggerhead Shrike Working Group members Cyndi Routledge ([routledges@bellsouth.net](mailto:routledges@bellsouth.net)) and Dr. Michael Collins ([collinsm@rhodes.edu](mailto:collinsm@rhodes.edu)) would love to hear about your sightings!

Please email us (at the addresses are above) the location and date of your encounters, a brief habitat description and whether or not you see the shrike(s) there often, occasionally, or was it just a one-time spotting. Naturally entering this information in eBird is also vital, but direct contact with us saves a bit of time searching for these records.

Since this LOSH study is on-going as fall migration gets into swing and northern birds make their way to Tennessee for the winter we need to hear about those shrike sightings too! So whether you're out and about birding your favorite spots, participating in a fall migration count or your annual CBC please let us know where and when you see Loggerhead Shrikes!! Let's work together here in Tennessee to help one of North America's most-threatened grassland bird species. Thanks!



Loggerhead Shrike Fledglings. Photo by Cyndi Routledge

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### “The Loggerhead Shrike” Film

The National Audubon Society has put on their website a nice article about “The Loggerhead Shrike” by Larry McPherson that has a link to the complete film. The film is now available free to the public. The Audubon article also has a link to a secure site where people can make donations to support this project and his work.

Here is the link to the Audubon coverage of the film:

[audubon.org/news/watch-new-shrike-film-shows-previously-undocumented-butcherbird-behaviors](http://audubon.org/news/watch-new-shrike-film-shows-previously-undocumented-butcherbird-behaviors)

Larry McPherson  
(901) 233-9358  
[larryemcpherson.com](http://larryemcpherson.com)  
[larryemcpherson@gmail.com](mailto:larryemcpherson@gmail.com)

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## A Glimpse at the History of the Discovery Bird Activity Book

By Cyndi Routledge

Beginning in the fall of 2011 as an idea I had for the children who would attend the 2012 Crane Days, The Discover Bird Activity book has blossomed from that first simple coloring book created and illustrated by Vickie Henderson and printed in December of 2011, to the present 36-page book redesigned by Vickie and a dedicated group of individuals to introduce birds, their habitat, their adaptations and amazing migration journeys to children through games and activities. December of 2016 marked the 4<sup>th</sup> printing of The Discover Birds Activity book and was funded through a joint effort between Tennessee Ornithological Society and Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency.

To date we have printed 27,000 Discover Bird books with just over 17,200 of them being distributed to children both young and old. These books have been distributed in 18 different States and 4 countries. PDFs of the book not only appear but are also downloadable from the TOS webpage and on the TN Watchable Wildlife webpage. The pilot program for introducing the book and birds to children developed by members of Knoxville Chapter of TOS has become our standard. Books are or have been featured on many blog posts including Vickie Henderson's Discover Birds Blog, NimBios and The Bird Education Network. Articles have appeared in the *Tennessee Conservationist* and the American Bird Conservancy's *Conservation Milestone* issue.

The Discover Bird book has appeared at many different events over the years including but not limited to Sandhill Crane Festivals in Alabama, Wisconsin and Tennessee, Knoxville Chapter of TOS Hummingbird Festivals, The 100<sup>th</sup> year Migratory Bird Day Celebration at the Memphis Zoo, Hatchie Bird Days, TN National Wildlife Refuge Hummingbird Festivals, TN Environmental Education Association Conferences, Indiana Young Birder's Conference, and the HASTI Science Teacher's Conference in Indiana just to name a few.

Age is not a factor for interest in these books as they have been used from preschool to college. They have been used in more home school programs and co-ops than I can list here. They have been requested and used yearly at the Nashville area Sierra Club camps for inner city and disadvantaged youth, Jr. Ranger Camps in TN State Parks, yearly teacher workshops at TN National Wildlife Refuge, at the TN Department of Education Camp in Nashville, as a resource for Environmental education teacher candidates at Middle TN State University and at Miami of Ohio with science and math teacher candidates. The books have also been presented as a resource for all TN Master Naturalists and the STEM programs in many TN school systems.

Most recently the book was translated into Spanish by 3 amazing volunteers in Calera, Oklahoma at the direct request and expense of Naturalist Journeys, a travel company located in Portal, Arizona. Coordination of this new version of the book fell once again on artist Vickie Henderson and me, and after a few months of dedicated work and help from a few friends, these newly translated books found their way to Cuba as planned. Those remaining Spanish books that were printed will also make their way to Ecuador later this year with the same organization. And I am happy to report that the Spanish version also now appears on the TOS webpage and is downloadable as well.

In this day of video games, apps and the Internet this book has found its niche as an important "in-hand" educational tool for today's youth. Humans protect what they love and that love along with education is the vehicle to protecting our environment and the habitat that is vital for the survival of bird species.

We have about 9000 books yet to be distributed, and I will continue to coordinate their distribution as I have done since the beginning and search for more funding once these books are gone. In fact I have quite a relationship with my local post office and UPS office since I have been there so often over the last 6 years!

TOS was founded in 1915 to "promote the enjoyment, scientific study and conservation of birds". I believe that the Discover Birds Activity books are fulfilling that mission today and our founding TOS fathers would be proud.

## **2017 TENNESSEE JUNIOR DUCK STAMP CONTEST**

By Dick Preston

A portrayal of a Northern Pintail won Best of Show in the 2017 Tennessee Federal Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest, held March 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge. The colored pencil entry by 16 year old Alana Clark of Chattanooga won top honors.

Also entered in Tennessee's twenty second Junior Duck Stamp Contest were 354 individuals in four different age group categories. The other eleven finalists and first place winners in their category included Audrey Williams and Kylee Holt from Tullahoma; Hallie Revell and KaNetta Hampton from Dyersburg; Joshua Lee from Pikeville; Cynthia Xu from Brentwood; Carina Miller and Cailey Lewis from Chattanooga; Natalie Halling from Hixson; Nancy Yang from Nashville; and Amanda Jackson from LaFollette.

The Tennessee Junior Duck Stamp program is an art contest managed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Its Tennessee partners include the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Foundation, Friends of Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge, the Tennessee Ornithological Society and the Bass Pro Shops of Nashville. The judges for this year's contest were Julie Shuster, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Foundation; Bobby Wilson and Jamie Fedderson of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency; Dick Preston of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, and Ricky Eastridge of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Alana's artwork was sent to the national level, where her entry competed with 49 other state best of show winners. Twelve year old Isaac Schreiber from Virginia won top honors with his depiction of a pair of Trumpeter Swans.

In Tennessee the previous year's Best of Show entries from this contest have been made into a state waterfowl collector stamp available from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. All of these stamps can be purchased at a cost of \$10 per stamp by calling (615) 781-6585.

The Federal Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest is more than an art contest. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considers this a major outreach program to teach youth about the importance of waterfowl and wetlands conservation. As each student chooses a waterfowl subject for their entry they are encouraged to learn about that bird and its requirements for survival. A Junior Duck Stamp curriculum guide available to educators and home school students that focuses on conservation messages can be found at: [http://www.fws.gov/refuge/tennessee/junior\\_duck\\_stamp.html](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/tennessee/junior_duck_stamp.html).

As the winner of the Bass Pro Shops Conservation Message Award, Hannah Parker of Harrison, Tennessee wrote: "Enjoying nature is a privilege, but this privilege comes with the responsibility to protect nature for future generations."

For more information about this program, or to obtain a copy of the free curriculum, or to purchase a Junior Duck Stamp, call the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge at (731) 642-2091.

Editors note:

The TOS Board of Directors (BOD) voted on May 13<sup>th</sup> to support the Tennessee Junior Duck Stamp Contest with a donation of \$500. Additionally, the BOD voted to provide the top 12 finalists of each year's contest with a one year student membership in TOS.



Judges from L to R: Ricky Eastridge; Bobby Wilson; Jamie Fedderson; Dick Preston and Julie Schuster



Northern Pintail (Alana Clark) was Best of Show

Photos: Richard Graves, Friends of Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge



Green-winged Teal and Fulvous Whistling-Duck were runners-up

## CHAPTER NEWS

It's been a busy spring and summer for the **LEE & LOIS HERNDON CHAPTER** of the Tennessee Ornithological Society. The Elizabethton-based chapter held its 74th annual Elizabethton Spring Bird Count on Saturday, May 6. A total of 43 observers in nine parties took part in the annual survey, which consists of Carter County and parts of adjacent Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi and Washington counties.

The most unusual aspect of this year's count involved rather cold conditions, according to long-time count compiler Rick Knight. Although held nearly a week into May, this was one of the coldest days ever experienced on a spring count. The temperature range was 36 to 54 degrees. Light rain fell before sunrise; the morning was partly cloudy to cloudy, then the afternoon saw light rain, with light snow showers at the higher elevations and a half-inch accumulation of snow on Roan Mountain.

Knight noted that previous cold spring counts included: 32 to 55 degrees in 1979, 44 to 52 degrees in 1987, and 27 to 54 degrees in 1992. Despite the weather, participants managed to find 148 species, which is exactly the average over the last 30 years, but below the average over the last decade, which stands at 154 species.

The chapter conducted two summer bird counts in June. According to Knight, the chapter holds the counts in the counties of Carter and Unicoi to provide a set of baseline data on the diversity and numbers of breeding birds in these two local counties. This supplements other summertime data collection projects, such as the long-running Breeding Bird Survey (one route in Carter County) and the Nightjar Survey (three local routes).

The Carter County Summer Bird Count was initiated shortly after the conclusion of the Tennessee Breeding Bird Atlas project. This year's count — the 24th in its history — took place on June 10 under favorable weather conditions with twenty observers in six parties. A record high of 123 species were tallied, besting the previous high of 121 species set in 2013. The average over the previous 23 years was 112 species, ranging from a low of 105 species to the old record of 121. Highlights included seven Ruffed Grouse, including chicks, as well as the debut of Red-headed Woodpecker on this count. A total of 21 species of warblers were also found.

The fourth consecutive Unicoi County Summer Count was held on June 17 with 21 observers in five parties. Morning weather was favorable, but scattered rain in the afternoon hindered some efforts. A total of 104 species were tallied, down slightly from the three-year average of 111 species. Highlights included a Bald Eagle, Merlin and six Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, including a nest with young. A total of 20 species of warblers were tallied.

Chapter members elected a new slate of officers at the chapter's May meeting. Debi Campbell will step into the role of club president with Rick Knight as vice president for field trips and Bryan Stevens as vice president for programs. Vern Maddux continues as treasurer and Chris Soto will serve as secretary.

The chapter continued its tradition of holding a walk at Sycamore Shoals State Historic Park in Elizabethton in conjunction with International Migratory Bird Day. The walk drew participants from Kingsport, Blountville, Bluff City, Johnson City, Elizabethton and Hampton. The walk's participants saw 44 species of birds, including Solitary Sandpiper, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Wood-Pewee, White-eyed Vireo, Cedar Waxwing, Indigo Bunting, Savannah Sparrow, and four warblers: Chestnut-sided, Yellow Warbler, American Redstart, and Yellow-breasted Chat.

After a summer picnic, the chapter will resume monthly meetings in September at the Elizabethton campus of Northeast State Community College. The chapter is planning a fall trip to the Chesapeake Bay region of Virginia from Oct. 13-16.

Bryan Stevens, Newsletter Editor

## CHAPTER NEWS

**KINGSPORT CHAPTER** - Birding Kingsport has elected new officers: Helen Sirett, President; Bill Grigsby, First Vice President Programs; Gary Bailey, Vice President Activities; Priscilla Little, Administration Secretary; Kay Ann Smith, Public Relations Secretary; Betty Bailey, Treasurer.

Our club has continued to stay active with many local birdwalks at area parks and nature spots, as well as field trips to Roan Mountain, Phipps Bend and Seven Islands State Birding Park. We also sponsored two bird walks at Historic Exchange Place in Kingsport to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day. Monthly programs have included presentations by Morton Massey on Birding in Attu, Alaska, David Kirschke on Alaska Birding, and Ron Hoff and Dollyann Myers on Birding in Cuba. Great photographs and presentations by all! We are looking forward to hosting four birdwalks during Kingsport's FunFest community celebration in mid-July. These walks are held in local parks and are a great way to introduce birding to both adults and children.

In early April, Birding Kingsport members, along with Andes-Straley Veterinary Clinic, the TWRA, and UT Veterinary Medical Center, assisted with the rescue of an American Bald Eagle at the South Fork of the Holston River. The young eagle had been in a skirmish with a flock of Canada Geese defending their nest after the eagle attempted to scavenge the nest. It was ultimately a happy ending, however, as the eagle was successfully rehabilitated at the American Eagle Foundation in Pigeon Forge and released back to the wild at the same spot on the Holston River on May 17th. You can find more details on this event at the Kingsport Times-News website in the archived news articles.

Planning is well underway for the Fall TOS meeting in Kingsport. Further details can be found in this newsletter and we hope you all will join us in Upper East Tennessee on October 6th- 8th. We have a great slate of activities planned!

Our meetings are held at the Downtown Kingsport Association, 229 Broad Street, Kingsport on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm. Details of meetings and activities can be found at [www.birdingkingsport.org](http://www.birdingkingsport.org).

Helen Sirett, President

**MEMPHIS CHAPTER** TOS ended our season with some great speakers! In April Stephen Ferguson, University of Memphis Department of Biological Sciences gave a very informative presentation entitled "Down South to Down Under: Avian Behavior around the World." His program focused on his research on aggressive behavior in Florida Scrub Jays. At our May meeting MTOS member, Dick Preston presented a well received program on "Buntings and Grosbeaks." Dick covered some of the challenges in identifying Painted Buntings, Indigo Buntings and Blue Grosbeaks. Juveniles, immature birds and females can be especially difficult to distinguish.

MTOS members enjoyed several birding trips this spring. Hikes in April and May took us to destinations such as Wall Doxey State Park in Holly Springs, MS, Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park, the Wolf River Restoration Trail, The Pits Earth Complex, and Overton Park.

At our May meeting MTOS members elected the following slate of officers for 2017-2019: President, Dr. Michael Collins; Vice President, Van Harris; Secretary, Knox Martin and Treasurer, Barbara Pyles.

In June, MTOS sponsored and participated in the Hatchie BirdFest in Brownsville, TN. This annual event features birding hikes, demonstrations, speakers and live birds of prey. The opening presentation on Friday night was presented by Bob Ford, National Coordinator for the *Partners in Flight* bird conservation initiative, who gave an excellent program entitled "An Abundant Natural Heritage: Keeping Common Birds Common." The weekend ended with a presentation by Sarah and David Levy from Willow Oaks Flower Farm who talked about the best plants for pollinators. In addition to great speakers, several hikes on Saturday and Sunday morning took beginning and advanced birders to the trails at the Hatchie National Wildlife Refuge. Other great activities included a butterfly and wildflower hike, a canoe float on Hatchie's O'Neal Lake, and an evening hayride courtesy of Hatchie NWR Manager, Brian Roberts. Thanks to Sonia Outlaw-Clark and her staff at the Delta Heritage Museum for hosting this annual event.

Kate Friedman, President

## CHAPTER NEWS

It was a busy first few months of 2017 for the **NASHVILLE CHAPTER**. The 41<sup>st</sup> year of our spring Wednesday morning Radnor Walks took place with over 225 birders of all ages and abilities participating. Many thanks to our leaders this spring - Susan Hollyday, Graham Gerdeman, Kevin Bowden and Pam Lasley. Our fall Wednesday morning walks will begin on September 20<sup>th</sup> and run through October 11<sup>th</sup>. We hope you'll join us if you're in the area.

NTOS continues work on our two conservation projects "Keeping Cats Indoors". <https://abcbirds.org/program/cats-indoors/> and "Window Strikes" <https://abcbirds.org/program/glass-collisions>. Stay tuned for information about fundraising and other efforts to showcase these two important bird conservation projects.

Our Spring Count took place in late April. New Spring/Fall migration coordinator **Barbara Harris** did a great job and the day was very successful not only in terms of participation but also in terms of the variety and number of species, and overall coverage of Davidson County. **Earl Henry Jr.** and volunteers attended the Bells Bend Outdoor Expo and Warner Park Spring Migration Celebration to spread the word about bird conservation, birding and NTOS. Between the two events Earl reached out to nearly 2000 folks! NTOS members also enjoyed a variety of educational programs thanks to Program Coordinator **Danny Shelton** and his knowledgeable list of speakers. Field Trip Coordinator **Tarcila Fox** provided our group with wonderful outdoor adventures in varied habitats including joining up with the Kentucky Ornithological Society and the Lebanon Chapter for two extended day trips. We thank these dedicated folks for their hard work and volunteer spirits.

Sadly we had to say good-bye to two long time members, Dr. Ed Gleaves and Gloria Milliken, who passed from this earth since the last newsletter. They leave us with many wonderful memories and great tales of their birding adventures. They will be dearly missed by family and friends.

Until next time,  
Cyndi Routledge, NTOS President

The **JOHN W. SELLARS CHAPTER** had a busy spring. In March we started our meeting with a delicious brunch. Then we enjoyed a presentation by Chris Sloan on Shorebird Identification; a great talk with lots of great pointers and information. Thanks for the great presentation, Chris. In April we joined the Nashville group at Edgar Evins State Park. Ranger Mark Taylor and his wife Holly got all of us on Cerulean Warblers. There were lots of other spring migrants around also. Great morning of birding in between the showers that occurred most of the day. Thanks to both Mark and Holly. In April we also had two Zip Trips looking for spring migrants in Wilson county. May brought 2 more Zip Trips. Also in May, the group enjoyed an early morning bird outing around Cedar Forest ending with our Spring potluck get-together. In June we once again joined up with the Nashville group for Nightjars and Owls in the Cedars of Lebanon Forest in Wilson County. All Nightjars were seen or heard and some heard one Barred Owl.

Our Chapter had the misfortune of saying goodbye to two of our faithful members. Kay Brinkhurst passed away on November 14, 2016 after a long battle with cancer. She was always such a fun birder, and her wit and astute observations could marvel anyone. In fact, it was these characteristics that may have been responsible for charming her now widowed husband, Dr. Ralph Brinkhurst. Birding with Kay and Ralph was certain to be a time of enjoyment, for birding was coupled with fun, intellectually stimulating conversations, and discussion of travels we had either experienced or contemplated. After Kay's passing, Ralph, a world renowned marine invertebrate biologist specializing in marine worms, decided to move back to Calgary, Canada, where his family is residing. Both Ralph and Kay will be missed immensely. Luckily through phone and social media, many of our members can keep up with our favorite Englishman and Biologist, Ralph!

The John W. Sellars Chapter of TOS meets the third Saturday of most months at Cedars of Lebanon State Park. Check out <https://lebanonbirding.org/> for up to date meeting and field trip information. Also like us on Facebook at Lebanon Birding.

Stephen Zipperer

## Operation Migration 2017-2018

One would think that it would be simple to switch from the aircraft-led migration method that required months of training to a parent-reared method where nature does most of the work, but that is not the case. The team must balance the allocation of the available eggs between the Louisiana Non-Migratory Population and the Eastern Migratory Population (EMP).

The early nests produced at Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin seem to coincide with the peak of black fly season. Therefore eggs are removed from some nests for incubation at captive breeding centers. As a control, half of the nests are left undisturbed to run their course with black flies. This practice requires intensive management. After several years' worth of research, we have learned that 59% of fertile eggs will result in releasable chicks.

This year two groups of WC chicks will be compared. Seven chicks are in large pens to be watched over by costumed volunteers. The second group is raised by adult cranes. By the spring of 2018 we should be able to compare successes with each group.

Last year at Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, twenty-three chicks were hatched. None of these birds survived. We do not know what is causing the post-hatch mortality. Research continues.

Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership is also working on capturing the growing list of birds that must be captured to replace non-functioning transmitters. OM teaches WCs to be wary of humans. Therefore it has been a challenge capture WCs needing new transmitters. So far about one in five attempts are successful.

This year OM has committed to raise the funds needed to acquire five GSM remote tracking units. To help accomplish this OM has set up a fun social campaign on Giving Grid. ([www.givinggrid.com/cranetracking](http://www.givinggrid.com/cranetracking)) Your help is needed! These devices produce accurate and reliable location information via cellular technology and allow OM to know the wearers whereabouts, but also their habitat choices made during migration. The current GSM units last about three years before they need replacing.

Bev Paulan of Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources, on an aerial survey of Wisconsin, found nine WC chicks hatched in the wild, mainly in two counties of Wisconsin. How she flies a plane and takes such wonderful photos of WC and chicks in the wild is absolutely incredible. Later reports will confirm how well the chicks do this year.

Finally do not forget to visit the Crane Cam to check on the progress of the seven costumes reared chicks (<http://operationmigration.org/cranecam.asp>). Enjoy!

Bird on!

Tony King, Certified Craniac



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[npmcwhirter@gmail.com](mailto:npmcwhirter@gmail.com)

**“THE TENNESSEE WARBLER”**

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

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
MAIL  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
MEMPHIS, TN  
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