



THE TENNESSEE WARBLER

Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

April, 2015

Editor, Theresa Graham

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - SPRING 2015

We're having a whopper of a birthday party! The Tennessee Ornithological Society turns 100 years old at our Spring meeting, April 30 - May 3, 2015, at Montgomery Bell State Park. We are one of the oldest state birding clubs and conservation organizations in North America. Throughout our history we have been fortunate to have had the services of many competent, honored and intelligent people as members, both women and men alike. It has made our organization well respected and relevant. The past 100 years have seen TOS concentrating initially on WHAT species we have and where, evolving more recently to KEEPING what we have through monitoring overall populations and conservation efforts. The results of all our Spring, Fall and Christmas Counts have repeatedly been put to use in studies helping to track the populations of the species that breed in our state and the ones that migrate through it. eBird has become one of the largest collections of ecological data in the world, thus making bird watchers some of the most important sensors of the health of our planet. We ARE the proverbial canary in the coal mine that we call the environment. We should all be proud of our efforts over the years, but the job of protecting our birdlife and its habitats is far from over. Our efforts in monitoring our birds are needed now more than ever. Here's to the next 100 years!

The winter TOS meeting on February 6-8th at Paris Landing State Park was a fun and birdy event. A male Long-tailed Duck and a Lesser Black-backed Gull highlighted a grand day visiting all the refuges in the area. Then we were treated to a wonderful visit to the spanking new visitor center at the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge at Britton Ford. A free lunch there was an unexpected pleasant surprise. The weather was windy but overall very nice and sunny.

The TOS board-of-directors at our last Fall meeting decided that we did not have the personnel to conduct another Breeding Bird Atlas. It was decided that we should go back to running breeding bird county forays like we used to on an annual basis. The foray is a weekend of birding in a county that has been under-reported over the years. This is fine but it will take many years to get data on the breeding birds if we only do one county every year as we used to. It has been suggested that each of the 5 larger chapters (west to east this would be Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga, Knoxville, and a combination of Bristol/Elizabethton) run a foray in their area every year, thus censusing 5 counties each season. Tennessee has 95 counties so if we did this every year, we could census the entire state every 19+ years. The data collected from these forays would be published in our journal, *The Migrant*. A large project, yes, but certainly attainable with the folks we have as members right now.

It has been a pleasure and an honor serving TOS as president the past 2 years. I look forward to continuing to contribute to our society for the foreseeable future. Thank you one and all.

Ron Hoff, President, TOS

100th Anniversary

It's not too late to make your reservation and join us at the 2015 TOS Annual Spring Meeting, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of TOS!!

The meeting will be held at Montgomery Bell State Park on April 30 - May 3. The Nashville Chapter will be hosting this wonderful event.

Room reservations can be made by calling Montgomery Bell State Park at 1-800-250-8613 and use the event code – #6834 – and mention TOS when you talk to the staff.

The weekend will include interesting field trips, including a Thursday night owl prowl, Friday afternoon speakers, a visit by John James Audubon, receptions by the Memphis and Knoxville Chapter and a most special Saturday night banquet celebration featuring the debut of the brand new film depicting 100 years of TOS.

Don't miss out on his historic celebration!! For registration information please visit www.tnbirds.org Hope to see you there!!

FALL TOS MEETING THE CELEBRATION CONTINUES NASHVILLE, OCTOBER 2-4, 2015

The TOS Fall Meeting will be held in Nashville October 2-4, 2015. We will continue the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Society.

The Baymont Inn and Suites in Brentwood will be our headquarters. Reservations can be made by calling 615-376-4666. **Call before September 11, 2015 and mention TOS for the special rate of \$89.99 + tax.**

Our Field Trips will take us to some of the areas birded by the Founding Fathers. We will have a "Bird(th)day" Celebration Saturday afternoon at the Warner Parks Visitor Center and a few more birthday surprises.

So mark your calendars and plan on joining in on the celebration.

TOS 100th Anniversary Celebration Registration Form

April 30 – May 3, 2015

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____ Cell Phone #: _____

TOS Chapter: _____ Member since what year? _____

How many days do you plan on attending? _____

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION BY MARCH 31, 2015

\$ _____ for _____ Registration at \$32.00 each.

(After March 31st and at the door registration will be \$42.00)

\$ _____ for _____ Saturday Night Banquet Reservations at \$28.00 each

\$ _____ for _____ 100 Year Anniversary Commemorative t-shirts at \$15.00 each

Description - Blue 100% cotton, 6 ounce t-shirt with new TOS logo on the back and 100 Year Anniversary commemoration on front left.

Circle t-shirt size – Unisex – S M L XL XXL XXXL

\$ _____ Total enclosed.

Make check payable to NTOS.

Mail registration form and check to:

Susan Hollyday
211 Wauford Drive
Nashville, Tennessee 37211

J.B. OWEN MEMORIAL AWARD

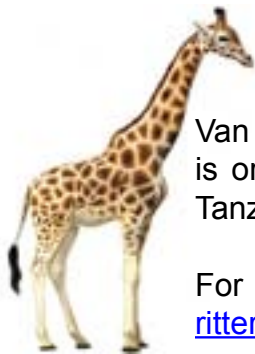
The purpose of the J.B. Owen Memorial Fund is to honor the memory of J.B. Owen, longtime TOS member known to thousands in east Tennessee through his columns in Knoxville newspapers. J.B. Owen was an active member of the Knoxville Chapter from 1947 until his death in 2001. He received the TOS Distinguished Service Award in 1990. An annual award is made by the Fund in the expected amount of \$250 to \$500 to promote the study of birds in Tennessee through research, conservation and environmental education.

The Fund was established in 2002 and to date has given out over \$7,000 in awards to support such diverse projects as research into the reproductive success and natal dispersal of American Kestrels; the study of the relationships between Cerulean Warblers and timber harvest; investigation of the potential impacts of hemlock decline on nesting Louisiana Waterthrushes in the Walker Valley; construction of an observation platform at Kyker Bottoms and TWRA's Golden Eagle tracking project. Awards have gone to the Foothills Land Conservancy to acquire wetlands and establish conservation easements and to Ijams Nature Center and the Clinch River Raptor Center for their educational and rehabilitative work with injured raptors. No matter how small or how extensive the project the J.B. Owen Award is open to anyone with a project that promotes the welfare and conservation of birds in Tennessee.

Applicants are encouraged to submit:

- Cover letter with short project description and applicant contact information.
- Resume
- Brief project proposal, of one to three pages, showing topic of the project, problem to be addressed, objectives, expected results and significance, deliverables (for example, written report, journal article, presentation), project location and project schedule.

Each year applications are due by May 1 and should be sent, preferably by e-mail, to cpgobert@hotmail.com or mailed to Carole Gobert, 1304 Barcelona Drive, Knoxville, TN 37923. The J.B. Owen Committee of KTOS will evaluate applications and will typically announce the Award winner or winners the following September.



Van Harris, TOS vice-president for West Tennessee, is organizing a birding and wildlife viewing safari to Tanzania November 4 – 18, 2015. Space is limited.

For more information, contact shelbyforester1223@rittermail.com



..... **CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATA DUE IMMEDIATELY**

If you are a Christmas Bird Count (CBC) compiler and you have not gotten your data to me for publishing in our journal, *The Migrant*, PLEASE do so at your earliest convenience. I CANNOT access the effort data at the Audubon web site so please remember to send the effort data for your count as well as the following:

- 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

As always, TOS thanks you for your efforts helping to monitor our birdlife.

Ron Hoff • TOS State Count Compiler
282 Hackworth Ln. • Clinton, TN 37716 • 865-435-4547
aves7000@bellsouth.net

Tennessee Birding Trails Web Site Is Live!

I'm proud to announce the launch of our Tennessee Birding Trails web site! This project has been a few years in the making, and it's finally live! This has been great a partnership between TWRA and TOS. Many TOS members helped me over the last few years in a variety of ways to get the page to where we are today. The web site is simple and to the point, without a lot of bells and whistles. In only 2 clicks you can be reading a description about a birding site.

You can search for places to go birding by region of the state, specific species (the common targets in TN), species groups, or season. And yes, there are more sites to add and content to add, but it's time to go live and we'll add/improve over time.

Tennessee Birding Trails:
<http://tnbirdingtrail.org/>

Many thanks to all that helped with the project!!

Enjoy and Please Share.

Cheers,
Scott Somershoe

DISCOVER BIRDS ACTIVITY BOOKS

With spring upon us and summer not far behind there's no easier way to share your love of birds with children than with our own Discover Birds Activity books.

Interest and distribution of the activity books continue to blossom. We've now sent books to Indiana, Arkansas, Iowa, Oregon and Alabama to be used at summer camps, teacher workshops, 4-H Clubs and in classrooms. To date over 8000 books have been distributed overall.

The Knoxville Chapter deserves special mention as they continue to provide consistent programs for area children. Check out their latest activity at the Discover Birds Blog site. <http://discoverbirds.blogspot.com>

This site will also provide ideas for programming and groups to contact if you have the desire to do a program but need some direction.

With 8000 books still available at no charge, thanks to the wonderful grant we received, there's no time like the present to make a difference in your community.

For information on obtaining books please contact Cyndi Routledge at routledges@bellsouth.net

Spotting Scope Donation for Long Hunter State Park

Did you get a new spotting scope for Christmas? Are you looking for a good home for your old spotting scope? Long Hunter State Park is seeking to update our current equipment which consists of an astronomy telescope. It is good for star gazing, but not so good for birding, as you may know. We have eagles and many varieties of migratory waterfowl overwintering on Percy Priest and Couchville Lakes. That makes for a great impromptu ranger program and would boost our education program offerings tremendously.

If you have a decent, broken-in spotting scope and/or tripod, please consider donating to help us with this opportunity to connect with our visitors and introduce them to the world of birding. Contact Park Ranger Leslie.Anne.Rawlings@tn.gov or 615. 885.2422

Leslie Anne Rawlings, Park Ranger 2
Long Hunter State Park
2910 Hobson Pike
Hermitage, TN 37076-4027



Warm Friendships, Warm Birding. BBC Enjoys Winter Float Boat Field Trips.

by J. Wallace Coffey

Members of the Bristol Bird Club had a new approach to Northeast Tennessee birding this winter and planned field trips afloat on TVA's South Holston Lake in Sullivan County.

One such adventure was held in late November and a second was the last Saturday in January.

Seventeen birders boarded two float boats to bird more than 20 miles on the smooth lake surface for nearly four hours. It was the Saturday following Thanksgiving. Neal Henson and Wallace Coffey each provided boats for the day.

Looking up the towering snow-covered western slope of the Blue Ridge's Holston Mountain was scenic and wonderful. Looking down the throat of an Eared Grebe was a life experience for many. Most had seen the rare grebe on and off for 20 years near Musick's Campground but few birders had seen one at such close range.

A similar such BBC float boat field trip, 2 October 1994, had discovered the Eared Grebe near the mouth of Spring Creek. The Eared Grebe returned for the 20th consecutive winter this year at the same location.

Rick Knight and Andy Jones were the leaders. It was nice having Dr. Jones on board as a leader because of his prestigious accomplishments as Secretary of the American Ornithologists' Union and his position as Curator of Ornithology and Director of Science at the Cleveland Museum of Natural history.

It was enjoyable to watch 50 Horned Grebes about the boat in all direction. Bald Eagles flushed along the shoreline and flew near the boat to perch in rewarding views so very close. It was good birding.

Jean Henson and Nancy McPeak poured gallons of hot chocolate and served dozens of doughnuts.

Everyone came dressed and prepared for the weather. Birders came with gloves, heavy coats, thermal underwear, blankets and thermal blankets, hats, and 'boggans. It was cloudy early and the temperature was below freezing when we launched. The sun splashed over the lake and everyone eventually enjoyed a warm winter day at 50 degrees.

Neal Henson and Chris O'Bryan were boat pilots. They navigated among beautiful foothills and islands. Others kept everyone informed by two-way radios about what we were finding and where we were headed – including comfortable, warm and modern restrooms at a nearby marina.

We were back in late January on a day when the Bristol Bird Club members, for the first time, offered birders simultaneous bird walks at the South Holston weir dam and Osceola Island in the middle of the dam's tail waters. John Moyle and Rick Knight were the leaders.

Rick Knight then took his group to lunch at the South Holston Ruritan Club where area birders had a delicious "all-you-can-eat" meal BBC calls their "Soup 'n Sparrow" event. Nearly 50 crock pots of soup, beans and stew were served at a modest fee to fund scholarship money for a local high school. BBC has participated in the "Soup 'n Sparrow" field trip since 2010.

Following the meal those who participated in the fundraiser lunch joined Coffey and Knight on a second winter outing birding on a float boat to areas of South Holston Lake in the vicinity of Musick's Campground.

In addition to exciting water birds, this trip searched for new habitat for the Brown-headed Nuthatch. The birds have been wintering nearby.

We located what we believe are two Bald Eagle's nests with one having two adults perched near the nest.

Happy boating birders included: Neal Henson, Jean Henson, Rick Knight, Jacki Hinshaw, Denise Hall, Brookie Potter, Jean Potter, Roy Knispel, Chris O'Bryan, Wallace Coffey, Nancy McPeak, Dick Moose, Judy Moose, Andy Jones, Michele Jones, Adam Alley, Josh Alley and John Hay. Picture on page 11

CHAPTER NEWS

KNOXVILLE CHAPTER – Dr. Sam DeMent gave a presentation on his “American Kestrel Research” at our November meeting. He has banded more than 700 birds of prey, published ornithology articles in various publications, and lectures at the annual ornithology course at Coastal Carolina University.

At our December meeting, Dr. Michael P. Jones, Associate Professor of Avian and Zoological Medicine, at the University of Tennessee, College of Veterinary Medicine, gave an extremely exciting and interesting presentation on falconry entitled “What’s Up with Birds of Prey.” He headed to Abu Dhabi the next day and presented at the 2014 International Festival of Falconry.

The extremely cold weather on January 7 didn’t discourage our members from showing up to our annual January photo share meeting. We had 8 members share photos from kayaking trips in the Gulf coast of Florida and Cedar Keys, the Wakodahatchee Wetlands from southeast Florida, puffins in Maine, areas around Knoxville including our own backyards, and a few from far away places like Bulgaria, Greece, and the Caribbean Sea.

Dr. Indrikis Krams spoke at our February meeting on “Altruism in Birds.” He is a visiting Fulbright Scholar from Daugavpils University in Latvia. He also shared information about the diversity of birds in Estonia and that part of the world.

KTOS member volunteers presented the Discover Birds program to about 50 children in the after-school program at South Knoxville Elementary School on November 7 and to seventh and eighth grade students at Nature’s Way Montessori School on February 2. To see pictures and read about the event, go to <http://discoverbirds.blogspot.com/>.

There have been field trips to Seven Islands, Sharp’s Ridge, Victor Ashe Park, Louisville Point Park, Concord Park and Forks of the River led by John O’Barr, Jason Sturner, Tom Howe and Tony King.

John O’Barr, KTOS president, started a Facebook page called East Tennessee Birding. There are currently 220 members and continues to grow daily. Members post incredible photos, videos and questions and concerns.

KTOS member, Ron Shrieves and two other members of the Harvey Broome Group of the Sierra Club wrote the trail guide book, “Urban Hikes in Knoxville and Knox County, Tennessee.” All proceeds from the sale of the guide book will benefit Legacy Parks Foundation which is a local nonprofit that raises money to acquire lands for parks and trails.

The January/February issue of the Tennessee Conservationist featured “The Tennessee Ornithological Society Celebrates 100 Years” co-authored by Vickie Henderson and Danny Shelton. The article was featured on the cover of the magazine and is also the featured article online and can be read in its entirety at <http://www.tn.gov/environment/conservationist/tn-ornithological-society-100-years.shtml>. The article gives a brief history of the founding of TOS, highlights historic bird study and projects and features current activities of today’s local chapters.

Representatives of Seven Islands State Birding Park, Tennessee’s newest state park and first birding park, asked Vickie Henderson to create an ornament for the Tennessee Residence “Tennessee Landscapes” Christmas tree featuring Tennessee’s state parks and local artist talents. Her ornament depicted a White-crowned Sparrow on wingstem. The sparrow is one of the birds she was introduced to while working with the banding team at Seven Islands, in east Tennessee.

Karen Wilkinson, KTOS Secretary



Seventh and Eighth Grade students Discover Birds at Nature’s Way Montessori School, Knoxville.
Photo credit: Billie Cantwell

CHAPTER NEWS

The **MEMPHIS CHAPTER** continued its regular speaker series in November with U Memphis Ph. D. candidates Sara Bebus, Blake Jones, and Stephen Ferguson presenting their research on the Florida Scrub Jay. Bill Hampton brought us up to speed with winter waterfowl identification tips and tricks at our December meeting. Detailed information and stunning photos of birding the Guadalupe Mountains and Big Bend National Parks were provided by Georges McNeill in January. Our February meeting had to be cancelled due to hazardous road conditions and unusually frigid temperatures.

Blake Jones is in the preliminary stages of analyzing some Memphis Chapter historic eBird data. At our January meeting Blake displayed graphs comparing changing trends in the arrival and departure dates of several neotropical migrant species with NOAA historic temperature data for the same years. We look forward to following Blake's findings.

Five Christmas Bird Counts were conducted by the Chapter: Memphis, Wapanocca, Fayette County, Arkabutla, and Moon Lake. Highlights included Long-tailed Duck on TVA pond, Long-eared Owl at Shelby Farms, Merlin and Golden Eagle at Wapanocca NWR, and Lesser Black-backed Gull at Arkabutla. Varying weather conditions included some of all possible extremes: excessively warm, excessively wet, and excessively cold.

Several members attended Delta Wind Birds' early December winter birding field trip in the Mississippi Delta and took advantage of their February Sparrow I. D. workshop. Others volunteered at the Strawberry Plains Audubon Center Winter Bird Count and the Lichterman Nature Center Birds and Seeds event. Attendance at the Reelfoot EagleFest field trip was dampened by inclement weather.

Sixteen intrepid birders rode out rain and wind to observe 9 Woodcock along the Wolf River WMA. All present heard the nasal peenting on the ground and wing twittering of descending birds in the air. Several had excellent looks at two birds on the wing. Short-eared Owl were a miss on that evening. An added treat was a visit by longtime chapter member Buzz Bean now living in PA.

Eight folks from Memphis Chapter enjoyed the warm hospitality of Joan Stevens and the all the fine staff and volunteers at the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge during the TOS winter waterfowl weekend at the Big Sandy Unit. Nineteen observers tallied 75 species, including 22 species of waterfowl. The highlight was a Long-tailed Duck at the Hwy 76/79 bridge near Paris Landing State Park and a Lesser Black-backed Gull at Pace Point. Five Sandhill Cranes made a brief appearance. Both Golden and Bald Eagles were observed. Pied-billed and Horned were the only grebes. Loons were conspicuously absent. Mammals included a cooperative armadillo and 6 Eastern Red Bats that had emerged to forage during the middle of that relatively mild winter day.

A tour of the new state-of-the-art visitor's center at the refuge was a big hit. Members from across the state were dazzled by the interactive educational displays and beautiful mounts and carvings. A delicious surprise luncheon of barbecue, slaw, potato salad, beans, and fabulous deserts was awaiting us when we arrived at the refuge.

On the Friday afternoon drive up to Paris Landing, a quick side trip though the Hatchie NWR, yielded a Eurasian Wigeon on Oneal Lake for Gaynell Perry. Several other birders were able to relocate the bird during the weeks following.

Highlights of our annual TVA/Robco/Coro Lakes waterfowl field trip included small numbers of American White Pelicans and Redheads. Memphis Chapter is interested in actively supporting all efforts to conserve the unique TVA habitat as the Allen Steam Plant converts from coal to natural gas.

Many MTOS members and other Shelby county bird lovers participated in the 18th annual Great Backyard Bird Count. Those efforts netted 252 reports and 95 species for the county. Arctic blasts which swept through the following week added extra visitors around area feeders including numerous reports of Fox Sparrows, Pine and Orange-crowned Warblers, Purple Finches, and Pine Siskins.

CHAPTER NEWS

Memphis - Continued from page 9

Our chapter notes the passing of Bill Peebles, member since 1978. Bill was an Army veteran who served in the Korean Conflict, and was an ardent supporter of the University of Memphis and a leader at Germantown United Methodist Church.

Happy 100th anniversary to all TOS chapters and members across the state! See you at Montgomery Bell in May.

Gaynell, MTOS President



U Memphis Ph D. candidates Stephen Ferguson, Blake Jones, Sara Bebus and nestling Idris present *Exploring links between stress hormones and behavior in the Florida Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*)* to MTOS, Nov 2014.

Photo courtesy of Blake Jones

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

NASHVILLE CHAPTER TOS members enjoyed several good programs and field trips before, during, and after the holidays. In November, Chris Sloan shared his recent pelagic trip experiences as well as the “do’s and don’ts” of birders attempting their first pelagic adventures. December’s holiday program was a festive affair as we enjoyed flavorful food and drink and a trip “down under” to Australia and Tasmania via the courtesy of Jan Shaw. January was bittersweet as state ornithologist Scott Somershoe illustrated the evidence of an increased Golden Eagle population in the eastern United States, but ended his program by announcing he will be leaving for Colorado to take on a new assignment with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. We all wish Scott and his family well. (We may need to schedule a TOS Gunnison Sage Grouse field trip in the near future!). Lastly, we had a splendid presentation by Polly Rooker on the Darien area of Panama, not only showing some of the birds and wildlife, but describing the Panamanian culture, also.

Field trips to Old Hickory Lake and to the Pace Point / Big Sandy area as well as our 2 Christmas counts were all very productive. Golden Eagles, Lesser Black-backed gulls, and Red-throated loons were just a few of the nice finds. Over 25 people enjoyed the Pace Point trip and as many as 50 birders joined us for the first of our two Christmas Counts. Thanks to Jan Shaw, Tarcila Fox, Richard Connors and Scott Block for helping to co-ordinate and compile the counts.

Our TOS Centennial Celebration committee is still focused on our upcoming anniversary April 30 - May 3. It’s very exciting hearing from the members who are planning to attend. Many of them are arriving from out-of-state, and several attended the 50th TOS Celebration. It is shaping up to be a wonderful weekend to reconnect with old friends and to truly appreciate the history of our historic organization. Please look in this edition of *The Warbler* for registration forms and information.

Hope to see you at the Centennial Celebration!

Steve Routledge, NTOS President

CHAPTER NEWS

The **LEE AND LOIS HERNDON CHAPTER** of Tennessee Ornithological Society held its 72nd consecutive Elizabethton Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, Dec. 14, 2014. A total of 25 observers in six parties tallied 69 species. In addition, counters observed another three species during Count Week.

According to long-time count compiler Rick Knight, this year's total was slightly below the recent 30-year average of 72 species. The all-time high for the Elizabethton CBC took place in 2012 when a total of 80 species was recorded.

Highlights from this year's Elizabethton CBC included a Greater White-fronted Goose, American Woodcock and Palm Warbler. Other notable finds include five Purple Finches and 18 Pine Siskins. Notable absences included Red-breasted Nuthatch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Eastern Meadowlark.

The chapter conducted the 62nd Roan Mountain CBC on Monday, Dec. 15, 2014. A total of eight observers in two parties found 53 species. This was above the recent 30-year average of 45 species and the most since 1995 when 54 species was recorded for this count.

According to Knight, an immature Northern Goshawk proved the highlight of this year's Roan Mountain CBC. Other notable finds included Red-breasted Nuthatch, Purple Finch and Pine Siskin.

Several members of the chapter also participated in February with the annual Great Backyard Bird Count.

Bryan Stevens, Newsletter Editor



Siskins were found on both Christmas Bird Counts conducted by the Herndon chapter. It has apparently been a good winter for this small finch in the Volunteer state.
Photo by Bryan Stevens

The **STEPHEN M. RUSSELL CHAPTER** (Bristol Bird Club) held their annual Christmas Party in December at the home of Kevin and Kami Blaylock. The members enjoyed a delicious covered dish dinner with good fellowship followed by a gift exchange.

In November Kim Stroud and Joe McGuinness presented a program on Birding Central California. They had beautiful pictures and good stories of their experience. In January Vice President, Bill Grigsby, coordinated a show and tell program of digital slides shared by members. The February meeting was cancelled because of inclement weather which closed the Bristol Public Library where we meet.

The club sponsored several Christmas Bird Counts in the region.

Recent field trips included a trip to the Hiwassee Crane Festival and birding the South Holston Lake and Middlebrook Lake areas in January. A trip to Burkes's Garden scheduled for February was cancelled because of a reported three feet of snow in the valley. Several interesting programs and birding trips are planned for spring.

Lois Cox, President



Bristol Bird Club members who participated in a Thanksgiving Saturday Float Boat field trip are shown standing on the marina. Birders boarded two float boats to bird more than 20 miles and for nearly four hours on TVA's South Holston Lake in Sullivan County. Full story on page 7
Photo Credit: Wallace Coffey

Birds of Greatest Conservation Concern to be Incorporated Into the Tennessee State Wildlife Action Plan

Below is the list of birds in the early draft 2015 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) that will be listed as “Greatest Conservation Concern” or GCN in Tennessee. Scott Somershoe coordinated the development of this list with input from several contributors, including TOS members that have extensive knowledge of bird status and distribution in the state. The State Wildlife Action Plan is being developed by TWRA in partnership with TNC and a wide range of partners that will guide management for priority taxa over the next 10 years; this is when the SWAP will again be reviewed and revised as needed.

At this stage in the development of the SWAP, specific areas have been selected that provide “conservation opportunities” to address the needs of priority species. The input from a wide range of TWRA partners, including selected members of TOS, have been solicited to review whether management in these conservation opportunity areas will be sufficient to address the needs of priority birds. After reviewing their input, the steering committee overseeing the development of the SWAP will draft the final plan.

Common Name	Scientific Name	S_Rank TN ¹
Northern Bobwhite	<i>Colinus virginianus</i>	S2S3
American Bittern	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	S1
Least Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	S2B
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	S2B, S3N
Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	S2B, S3N
Black-crowned Night-heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	S2S3B
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	S1
Mississippi Kite	<i>Ictinia mississippiensis</i>	S2S3
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	S4N
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	S3B, S4N
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	S3
King Rail	<i>Rallus elegans</i>	S2
Virginia Rail	<i>Rallus limicola</i>	S1B, S3N
Whooping Crane	<i>Grus americana</i>	S?
American Golden-Plover	<i>Pluvialis dominica</i>	S3N
Piping Plover	<i>Charadrius melodus melodus</i>	S2N
Upland Sandpiper	<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>	SXB?
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	S?
Hudsonian Godwit	<i>Limosa haemastica</i>	S?
Marbled Godwit	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>	S?
Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	S2N
Stilt Sandpiper	<i>Calidris himantopus</i>	S3N
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	<i>Tryngites subruficollis</i>	S3N
Semipalmated Sandpiper	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>	S4N
Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>	S4N
American Woodcock	<i>Scolopax minor</i>	S4B

State Wildlife Action Plan - Continued from page 12

Common Name	Scientific Name	S_Rank TN¹
Interior Least Tern	<i>Sternula antillarum athalassos</i>	S2S3B
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	S3
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	S3N
Northern Saw-whet Owl	<i>Aegolius acadicus</i>	S1
Chuck-will's-widow	<i>Caprimulgus carolinensis</i>	S3S4
Eastern Whip-poor-will	<i>Caprimulgus vociferus</i>	S3S4
Chimney Swift	<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>	S5
Red-headed Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i>	S4
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	S1B, S4N
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	S1B
Olive-sided Flycatcher	<i>Contopus cooperi</i>	S1
Alder Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax alnorum</i>	S1
Least Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>	S3
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	S1B, S2N
Bell's Vireo	<i>Vireo bellii</i>	S1B
Bank Swallow	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	S3
Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>	S2B
Brown-headed Nuthatch	<i>Sitta pusilla</i>	S2B
Brown Creeper	<i>Certhia americana</i>	S2B, S4N
Winter Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	S3B, S4N
Sedge Wren	<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>	S3N, SPB
Bewick's Wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	S1
Wood Thrush	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>	S4
Worm-eating Warbler	<i>Helmitheros vermivorus</i>	S4
Louisiana Waterthrush	<i>Seiurus motacilla</i>	S4
Blue-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora pinus</i>	S4
Golden-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>	S3B
Prothonotary Warbler	<i>Protonotaria citrea</i>	S4
Swainson's Warbler	<i>Limnithlypis swainsonii</i>	S3
Kentucky Warbler	<i>Oporornis formosus</i>	S4
Cerulean Warbler	<i>Setophaga cerulea</i>	S3B
Blackburnian Warbler	<i>Setophaga fusca</i>	S3B, S4N
Black-throated Blue Warbler	<i>Setophaga caerulescens</i>	S4
Yellow-throated Warbler	<i>Setophaga dominica</i>	S4
Prairie Warbler	<i>Setophaga discolor</i>	S3S4
Canada Warbler	<i>Wilsonia canadensis</i>	S3B, S4N
Yellow-breasted Chat	<i>Icteria virens</i>	S4
Bachman's Sparrow	<i>Aimophila aestivalis</i>	S1B

State Wildlife Action Plan - *Continued from page 13*

Common Name	Scientific Name	S_Rank TN ¹
Grasshopper Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	S4
Henslow's Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus henslowii</i>	S1B
LeConte's Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus leconteii</i>	S1N
Painted Bunting	<i>Passerina ciris</i>	S2
Eastern Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella magna</i>	S5
Rusty Blackbird	<i>Euphagus carolinus</i>	S4N
Orchard Oriole	<i>Icterus spurius</i>	S4

¹S_Rank_tn

State Conservation Status describing the species' abundance within Tennessee (TNDH 2009).

S1 - Extremely rare and critically imperiled

S2 - Very rare and imperiled

S3 - Vulnerable.

S4 - Uncommon but not rare, and apparently secure within the state, but with cause for long-term concern due to declines or other factors

S5 - Demonstrably common, widespread, and secure in the state

_N - Conservation status refers to the non-breeding population.

_B - Conservation status refers to the breeding population.

Without N or B = year round and all occurrences

THE MIGRANT

With the publication of the December 2013 issue our tenure as editors of *The Migrant* is ended. We set out with the goal of getting the journal back on track, and we have accomplished this. While neither of us has a scientific background, we do have a love of TOS and *The Migrant*, and a combined 79 years of history with the Society to draw on. We hope you have forgiven our errors and enjoyed our efforts to make the journal accessible for the scientist as well as the backyard birder.

We wish to thank the authors who allowed us to publish their work and those who reviewed the works. We thank those of you who offered advice and encouragement. Our special thanks go to Ron Hoff as Count Compiler; Rick Knight as Season Editor; and Dick Preston, Phillip Casteel, Scott Somershoe, Rick Knight and Richard Lewis as Regional Season Editors during our tenure. Their work is the backbone of *The Migrant*, and the amount of effort they do for every issue is phenomenal.

And finally, our thanks to our husbands, Jim and Mac, who put up with hundreds of hours of phone calls, papers strewn all over every flat surface and much fowl language (pun intended!).

We leave *The Migrant* in the very capable hands of Bob Ford.

Martha Waldron and Susan McWhirter

Operation Migration 2014-2015

The migration started in Wisconsin on October 10, 2014 and ended in Florida on December 11, 2014. At the time of the deadline for articles for the December 2014 edition of *The Warbler*, the migration had reached stop number 3 (of 23 total), in 34 days, for a total of 52 miles. They were still in Wisconsin and the weather forecast for the next fortnight promised even worse weather than had already been experienced. A staff huddle was in order.

The resulting plan was unprecedented. It was decided to crate the cranes and drive them overnight to Carroll Co. TN (stop #13) and hopefully to better weather. On November 13, 2014 the seven whooping crane cohorts were crated, individually, at dusk and loaded in a tracking van. Their pen was disassembled and packed in a trailer, along with food and water. Walter Sturgeon, who has emeritus status with Operation Migration (OM), and who happens to have a personal collection of 60 plus cranes, drove the van through the night from Wisconsin to Tennessee. The pen trailer driven by Brooke Pennypacker followed as escort. This journey bypassed 9 migration stops and clocked over 500 miles. The cohorts arrived in fine shape, occasionally peeping during the trip and presumably standing in their crates the whole 12 hours of the road trip. Ironically the temperature in Wisconsin was 24 F and upon arrival in Tennessee was 18 F.

The following day the remainder of the OM safari made the trip, in daylight, delivering the campers, ultra-lights(U-Ls) and the equipment. Once settled everyone readied for the migration to continue in the normal way.

One week later, on November 20, 2014, an attempt to fly was initiated in acceptable weather conditions. The cranes refused to fly, circling constantly or dropping into harvested cotton fields or soy bean fields. Eventually the cranes were confined, their pen was brought to them, assembled close by, while permission from land owners was sought to occupy their land. All in a day's work on migration.

On November 25, 2014, the cranes flew from this temporary stop-over to Hardin Co. TN, stop number 14. The migration was back on track even though 2 cohorts had to be crated because they refused to follow the U-Ls. The next day the migration reached Alabama. It was Thanksgiving Day.

It was not until day 61 of the migration, in Georgia, that all 7 cohorts flew with the U-Ls. The cohorts flew normally with the U-Ls from Decatur Co. Georgia, to St. Marks Wildlife Refuge in Florida, where the migration ended on December 11, 2014. 1100 miles were covered in 63 days. With much relief from the OM crew, the 7 cohorts were conditioned to their winter quarters at St. Marks. Brooke Pennypacker and others, usually in teams of 2 people, check on the cranes twice daily from December 12, 2014 onwards. Then sometime in April the cranes will spiral upwards and head north returning to Wisconsin, along the migration route. So will end their first round trip migration.

Relieved of their daily entertainment, the members of the OM crew are now ready to return to Wisconsin with the campers and equipment. Once there the OM crew splits up. Most go home to visit family. Others jump right into the backlog of office work and start planning the next migration. This year's goal from MileMaker was exceeded. Next year's campaign has already started. Two hundred dollars a mile contributed toward establishing a migratory population of Whooping Cranes in the Eastern United States.

The maximum size of the Eastern Migratory Population at the end of January 2015 was 100 birds (53 males, 47 females) estimated distribution (by EVA) was as follows: 26 in Indiana, 7 in Kentucky, 10 in Tennessee, 34 in Alabama, 3 in Georgia, 13 in Florida (including the 7 cohorts) and the remainder scattered around the S.E. Should you be fortunate enough to see one or more of these magnificent birds, you are encouraged to report your findings to a link in the Operation Migration Website: <http://operationmigration.org/InTheField/>

Tony King
Certified Cranic
865-988-6172



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npmcwhirter@gmail.com

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