



# THE TENNESSEE WARBLER

Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

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April, 2011

Editor, Theresa Graham

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## *PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE*

On January 21<sup>st</sup>, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Commission (TWRC) deferred a final decision on implementing a Sandhill Crane hunt for two years. This will allow time to study the size and stability of the eastern population of Sandhill Cranes. Thanks to everyone who took the time to write a letter, send an email, or attend the Commission hearings to oppose this proposal. The TOS led effort was spearheaded by our Conservation Policy Committee (CPC), particularly Co-chair Melinda Welton (Nashville). Melinda, along with Chris Sloan (Nashville), Bob Hatcher (Nashville) and Bill Franks (Chattanooga) presented powerful arguments before the Commissioners. Cyndi Routledge (At-large) also deserves special recognition for her substantial contributions. While this was a great victory, there will be a lot of work to do over the next two years. Please direct suggestions or comments to any member of the CPC. The committee has been hard at work on a number of other important issues as well. Please see the full CPC report by Co-chair Gregg Elliott (Memphis) on page 3.

Bob Hatcher and Kevin Calhoon (Chattanooga) have rotated off the CPC. Our Society owes them a debt of gratitude for their distinguished service. To fill the vacancies, Bill Franks, Chris Sloan and Cyndi Routledge have accepted appointment to the Committee. We are fortunate to have such dedicated and capable people willing to serve.

The 14<sup>th</sup> annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) was held February 18 through February 21. The GBBC is not a strictly "scientific" survey, but it does provide a wealth of data useful for monitoring general population trends and range expansion/contraction of individual species across North America. There are several layers of review to improve the quality of the data. While overall submissions were down slightly, Tennessee saw submissions drop by more than half from last year, a disappointing result. "Citizen Science" projects like the GBBC, along with Christmas Bird Counts (CBC), Breeding Bird Surveys (BBS) and International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) counts have become increasingly important over the years. If you have never taken part in one of these counts, please take advantage of your next opportunity, the IMBD, on the second Saturday of May. Many chapters plan our Spring Bird Count (Field Day) to coincide with IMBD. Thanks to Dean Edwards (Knoxville) for again serving as one of Tennessee's GBBC reviewers and to everyone who sent in a checklist.

The Memphis chapter has finalized plans for the 2011 Spring Meeting. Perhaps the most difficult aspect of hosting a meeting is obtaining an accurate head count. Please assist the chapter by completing and mailing the registration form on the following page as soon as possible. Any member wishing to place an item on the agenda for the Board of Director's meeting please contact me immediately, preferably by e-mail ([dickpreston@bigriver.net](mailto:dickpreston@bigriver.net)).

See you in Memphis,  
Dick Preston

Comments and suggestions are desired.

**2011 TOS SPRING STATE METTING**

**MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, APRIL 29 – MAY 1, 2011**

The Memphis chapter invites all TOS members to the Spring Meeting, to be held April 29 – May 1. Friday night registration and the Board of Director’s meeting on Saturday will be held in the conference room immediately adjacent to the hotel. Saturday evening dinner will be at Old Timer’s Restaurant, 7918 C Street in Millington, approximately 3 miles from the hotel.

The meeting hotel is the Plantation Oaks Inn and Suites, 6656 Hwy 51N. From I-40, take exit 24B. Go 16 miles to Hwy 51. Go left on Hwy 51 for 2.2 miles. The hotel will be on the left. A block of rooms is being held for us at a rate of \$69.95 per night, king or double beds. Reservations: 888-422-1459 or email: [angie.plantationoaks@bigriver.net](mailto:angie.plantationoaks@bigriver.net).

All field trips will depart from the hotel and will include: Shelby Forest, Shelby Farms (and the Mid-South Raptor Center), “The Pits” and the North Treatment Plant.

Our speaker Saturday night will be Kathy Shelton, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. Kathy will talk about “The Effects of the Great Oil Spill of 2010 on the Wildlife of the Gulf Coast.” Please send your registration to MTOS by April 15<sup>th</sup>. Registration is \$10 and Saturday dinner (buffet) and speaker is \$20. For additional information, contact Van Harris ([shelbyforester1223@bigriver.net](mailto:shelbyforester1223@bigriver.net)) or Dick Preston ([dickpreston@bigriver.net](mailto:dickpreston@bigriver.net)).

**TOS SPRING MEETING 2011 REGISTRATION FORM**

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

TOS Chapter \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Registration(s) @ \$10 each

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Dinner Reservation(s) @ \$20 each

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Enclosed. Please make check payable to MTOS.

Mail registration form and check to MTOS Treasurer:

Barbara Pyles  
667 N. Idlewild St.  
Memphis, TN 38107-4516

**Bird Quiz - The “All-American” Team**

What 18 species of North American birds have the word “American” in their name? (answers on page 14)

## **TOS – CONSERVATION POLICY COMMITTEE**

The TOS Conservation Policy Committee took the following actions from November 2010 through February 22, 2011:

- December 2010, TOS signed onto a letter in support of the USFWS final rule removing the Rusty Blackbird from its depredation order (which allows hunting of species for pest control purposes). This rule also precludes the use of lead shot ammunition to kill other species of blackbirds covered under the depredation order. It went into effect January 3, 2010.
- Melinda Welton, working with the Committee, prepared a letter to the editor that appeared in a January, 2010 *Tennessean*, in response to a letter by Mike Butler of the Tennessee Wildlife Federation. The TOS letter generally clarified Sandhill Crane population and mortality numbers under the proposed hunting plan, as well as the TOS argument on the merits of managing the cranes as a Watchable Wildlife resource.
- Individual TOS CPC members signed onto a letter of support as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the protection of an area in the core U.S. Prairie Pothole region, called the “Dakota Grasslands Project.” Using Land and Water Conservation Funds it would protect more than 240,000 acres of wetlands and 1.7 million acres of privately-owned grasslands. Without efforts such as these it is estimated that one-third to one-half of these critical habitats will be converted to other uses within 35 years, affecting many grassland and shorebird species, some of which migrate through or to Tennessee.
- As a member of the Bird Conservation Alliance, TOS signed onto a letter in support of reauthorization of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA).
- TOS signed onto a letter to Senators Alexander and Corker in support of full and dedicated funding for Land and Water Conservation Fund legislation during the lame duck session of Congress. This effort was spearheaded by the Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation.
- On October 1, 2010, Governor Phil Bredesen announced signing a Lands Unsuitable for Mining Petition that would protect 500 miles of ridgetops in the North Cumberland WMA in Anderson, Campbell, Morgan and Scott counties. This area literally includes the best-of-the-best Cerulean Warbler breeding habitat in the world! On November 18, 2010, Melinda Welton represented TOS at the Bird Conservation Alliance meeting in Washington D.C. She had the opportunity to meet with Assistant Secretary of the Interior Tom Strickland about the LUM Petition. He was very encouraging and said that Senator Alexander was very involved with moving the petition forward. On November 23rd the Office of Surface Mining determined that the state’s LUM petition was complete, an essential step in the approval process and the action TOS was pursuing.
- As a member of the Bird Conservation Alliance, TOS signed on to a letter to the FCC requesting that they prepare a full Environmental Impact Statement, rather than a programmatic Environmental Assessment to address fully the issue of bird collisions with communication towers. No reply for the FCC has been received.
- Melinda Welton represented TOS at a brown-bag lunch with the new TDEC Commissioner Robert Martineau on February 18th. TOS was one of about 25 environmental organizations represented. Melinda highlighted two of the conservation issues that TOS is currently involved with: 1) the wise management of the North Cumberland WMA and our strong support of the Land’s Unsuitable for Mining Petition (Governor Haslam has made no mention of his support or non-support of the petition), and 2) promoting the Sandhill Crane as a watchable wildlife resource with tourism implications for the southeastern portion of the state (by virtue of his position, Commissioner Martineau is a member of the TWRA Commission).

**Conservation Policy Committee - Continued from page 3**

- In late February, TOS signed onto a letter to the Secretary of the Interior asking for the development of a department-wide policy to address feral cat management. Feral cats cause the deaths of hundreds of millions of birds annually including endangered species, and addressing the problem will require science-based policies to conserve wildlife.

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## CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE REPORT

After careful consideration the Constitution Committee (Danny Gaddy, Richard Connors and Susan McWhirter) proposes the following amendments to the TOS Constitution:

### Article V – Officers

Section 6 currently states, “The Secretary shall keep minutes of the meetings, attend to official correspondence, prepare notices of meetings, and work to create interest in the activities of the Society.” We propose that “prepare notices of meetings, and work to create interest in the activities of the Society” be deleted and this addition be made: “The Secretary shall submit to the President a rough draft of the minutes within 30 days following the meeting. A final draft of the minutes is to be submitted to the President and posted on the Web site at least 30 days prior to the next meeting, with copies made to be presented to the Board of Directors at the next meeting.”

### Article VI – Committees

Section 1 After the sentence, “The President-Elect shall be chosen from that Division of the State whose turn it will be to receive the presidency for a full two-year term.”, add the following sentence: “If after extended search no candidate can be found from that Division the Nominating Committee may seek a candidate from another Division of the State, making every effort to follow the succession of the Divisions.”

The first proposed amendment clarifies the job of the Secretary. The second proposed amendment addresses a problem the Society faces at this time.

These proposed amendments will be presented at the Board of Directors’ meeting and at the general meeting in the evening. The proposals will become amendments if approved by two-thirds of the voting members present at the general meeting.

The Constitution may be viewed on the website.

## WEBSITE HELP NEEDED

Webmaster Chuck Nicholson could use some help with maintaining our website. Primary responsibilities would be removing old material and posting new information: meeting notices; committee reports; chapter newsletters and activities; making appropriate changes to officers and directors; announcing committee assignments and other material as may be received from time to time from the President, chapter officers or committee chairs.

You will not be tasked with originating material, only posting that which is received. If you possess basic computer skills and are willing to offer your assistance, please contact President Dick Preston ([dickpreston@bigriver.net](mailto:dickpreston@bigriver.net)) or Chuck Nicholson ([cpnichol@bellsouth.net](mailto:cpnichol@bellsouth.net)). Thank you.

## **SANDHILL CRANE HUNT PROPOSAL DEFERRED FOR TWO YEARS**

*Vickie Henderson*

On Friday, January 21, 2011 the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Commission voted to defer a decision on the proposal to hunt Sandhill Cranes in Tennessee for two years. They stated they wanted to see more data on the eastern population of Sandhill Cranes, and were concerned over the accuracy of winter survey population estimates, the low annual reproductive rates on the breeding grounds, and the hope that those in favor and opposed to the hunt could work out an agreement.

Mentioned were the 753 public comments that TWRA received concerning the crane hunt proposal; 541 or 72% of the comments were opposed to a hunt, and 28% supported the proposal.

Melinda Welton, chair of the TOS Conservation Policy Committee, represented the Tennessee Ornithological Society and non-consumptive wildlife watchers in her presentation to the TWRC Wildlife Management Committee in Nashville, TN, in front of a packed audience of more than one hundred on Thursday, January 20<sup>th</sup>.

Melinda's presentation emphasized the watchable wildlife value of thousands of wintering Sandhill Cranes at the Hiwassee Refuge and the success of the annual Crane Festival. Among the points she discussed were discrepancies in the eastern Sandhill Crane management plan and the TN hunt plan, and that crop depredation is over stated as a justification for a hunt. She pointed out that winter wheat is the only crop that is impacted by cranes, and since 2008, only nine crane depredation permits have been requested and approved by the USFWS in TN. In addition, a non-lethal chemical treatment has been successful for corn on the breeding grounds, and research is needed to test its effectiveness with winter wheat. Both she and a TWRA biologist pointed out that hunting would likely not alleviate crop depredation.

The potential for an accidental shooting of a Whooping Crane was also part of Melinda's presentation. She discussed the new Direct Autumn Release method currently being used by the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership. This method will result in a small group of brown juvenile Whooping Cranes migrating together each fall through TN without the presence of white adults or Sandhill Cranes to help with their identification. She mentioned the three Whooping Cranes shot in Georgia last December were among the five juveniles released in the fall of 2010 using this technique.

Melinda's most important point, however, was that Sandhill Cranes have a higher value to Tennesseans as a watchable wildlife resource. She mentioned the growing number of wildlife watchers in the state (an 81% increase in the past 10 years, while hunters declined by 25%), and TWRA's high-profile investment in this species by taking over responsibility for running the Crane Festival from TOS in 2008. "To start a hunting season on these birds would send a confusing message to the public and possibly damage the image of the agency," she said. Another consideration mentioned was that by choosing not to initiate a crane hunting season, TWRA could attract a constituency that would advocate for the dedicated funding that the agency is in need of.

Despite the winter storm warning, an impressive number of TOS members from around the state were in attendance. Several TOS members and representatives from other conservation organizations offered excellent comments in opposition to the hunt. The owners of the two hunt clubs that border Hiwassee Refuge, a representative for the Farm Bureau, and the TN Wildlife Federation offered pro-hunt comments. Commissioners commended those in attendance, and acknowledged that they had each received thousands of emails, letters, and phone calls during the comment period.

The Conservation Policy Committee would like to thank all TOS members who sent letters to Commissioners, sent comments to TWRA, and/or attended the Commission meeting

TOS acknowledges the hard work that TWRA does throughout the year protecting and managing wildlife in our state, their willingness to partner with TOS on many wildlife projects, and thanks them for the opportunity to express our views in this difficult decision-making process.

## PURCHASE OF DUCK STAMPS MAKES A DIFFERENCE

To all of you who have purchased a Duck Stamp over the years, it does matter. Among the acquisitions for this year is the following:

### Secretary Salazar Announces Funding for Wetlands Acquisitions and Grants for Bird Habitat Conservation

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced today that the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC) has approved more than \$3.5 million in land acquisitions at three National Wildlife Refuges. The projects are supported by the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, which includes proceeds from the sales of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, otherwise known as the Federal DUCK STAMP. These approvals will add an estimated 1,300 acres of vital waterfowl habitat to the National Wildlife Refuge System.

### The following acquisitions were approved today:

Lower Hatchie National Wildlife Refuge Lauderdale and Tipton Counties, Tennessee Acquisition of 625 acres for \$1,880,000. The tract lies in the Hatchie River Basin, which contains a mix of bottomland hardwoods, grasslands, and flood-prone agricultural land. The Service plans to restore this tract to its former forested state and manage it for waterfowl and other migratory birds.

The Commission also approved more than \$29 million (pending FY2011 funding) in federal grants under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) for projects that will help to protect, restore and enhance more than 85,000 acres of wetlands and associated habitats across the United States and Mexico. If Congress approves FY2011 funding, these grants will support 26 projects in 17 states under NAWCA U.S. Standard Grants Program.

### Projects include:

Ark-La-Miss Wetlands Conservation II, Arkansas, Louisiana - Clay, Desha, Prairie, White and Woodruff Counties, AR and Concordia and Tensas Parishes, LA This project builds on efforts to acquire, protect, restore and enhance wetland habitats in the Lower Mississippi Valley to offset the habitat losses of the previous century. Activities will include enhancement of ecologically diverse wetland habitats that will provide foraging, nesting, or roosting habitat for a number of waterfowl species and other wetland-dependent migratory birds. Partners will also improve or enhance other wetland values and functions by improving local and regional water quality, providing natural flood storage capacity and enhancing soil conservation by reducing sediment in precipitation runoff. Six of the nine project tracts are publicly owned and will be available for public use and access.

Established by law in 1929, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission has approved the acquisition of more than 43,000 acres of quality waterfowl habitat at national wildlife refuges and in the northern Midwest Prairie Pothole Region, all using MBCF dollars.

Since 1929, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission has met several times each year to consider MBCF land purchases and, starting in 1989, to approve NAWCA grant proposals.

### Commission members include:

- Chairman - Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior
- Thad Cochran, Senator from Mississippi
- Mark Pryor, Senator from Arkansas
- John D. Dingell, Congressman from Michigan
- Robert J. Wittman, Congressman from Virginia
- Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture
- Lisa Jackson, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
- Secretary - A. Eric Alvarez, Chief, Division of Realty, Fish and Wildlife Service

For more information about the Commission visit: <http://www.fws.gov/refuges/realty/mbcc.html>.

## CHRISTMAS COUNT DATA DUE

Data from the recent Christmas Bird Count season are now due. If you haven't already sent your data to either me or the Audubon web site, please do so as soon as possible. All Tennessee bird counts should have the following data included with the bird statistics:

- 1 – total miles and hours by foot, car, and other modes (canoe, horse, etc.).
- 2 – total miles and hours for night-birding (owling) are kept separately.
- 3 – Feeder-watching hours are also kept separately; include names of feeder-watchers.
- 4 – All count day weather data: temps; wind; precipitation; clouds, storms/fronts.
- 5 – Please include the starting and ending times of the count.
- 6 – Please include the number of observers, number of field parties, and names of all observers. For example, one person in a car is one observer in one party; 4 people in another car are 4 observers in one party; this example results in 5 observers in 2 parties.
- 7 – Any information that is specific to your count is always appreciated and makes for a more interesting and informative report. Things like the total number of species ever found in the history of your particular count, major weather events (such as "heavy thunderstorms last night", etc.), the most observers we've ever had, etc.
- 8 – Please send the data to Ron Hoff, 282 Hackworth Lane, Clinton, TN 37716. Email is acceptable at [aves7000@bellsouth.net](mailto:aves7000@bellsouth.net). I would like to have the data sometime in the first month after the count. This allows timely reporting to the *Migrant* editor.

As always, thanks in advance for your help gathering bird data for the Tennessee Ornithological Society.

Ron Hoff

Tennessee bird count compiler

Tennessee Ornithological Society

282 Hackworth Lane

Clinton, TN 37716

865-435-4547

[aves7000@bellsouth.net](mailto:aves7000@bellsouth.net)

## REFUGE SYSTEM MARKED 108th BIRTHDAY MARCH 14th

In case you missed it, our National Wildlife Refuge System celebrated it's 108th birthday on March 14th. On that date in 1903, President Teddy Roosevelt established the first national wildlife refuge on Florida's Pelican Island, to protect wild birds from bounty hunters. In doing so, President Roosevelt stated: "Wild beasts and birds are by right not the property merely of the people who are alive today, but the property of unknown generations, whose belongings we have no right to squander." Today, the Refuge System's 553 NWR's and 38 wetland management districts supports at least 700 species of birds.

***"I once had a sparrow alight upon my shoulder for a moment, while I was hoeing in a village garden, and I felt that I was more distinguished by that circumstance that I should have been by any epaulet I could have worn."***

***- Henry David Thoreau***



## BRISTOL BIRD CLUB SPONSORS GOLDEN EAGLE RESEARCH EFFORT

The Bristol Bird Club has sponsored a group to help research Golden Eagles throughout the Appalachian Mountain this winter. They teamed with the Eastern Golden Eagle Working Group of West Virginia University. The project includes 60 sites baited with roadkill deer carcasses and remote cameras which photograph birds coming to feed.

Using eight such cameras, BBC members have made thousands of digital images of an estimated 15 or more Golden Eagles and a Bald Eagle along the Clinch Mountain in Southwest Virginia.

Working with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF), BBC members have also assisted with an effort to capture Golden Eagles and place high-tech transmitters which use GPS data and mobile cell phone towers to gather location data on each bird. By late February, the Virginia state project has affixed 14 such transmitters to eagles during the past two winters. Birds are being tracked over wintering areas where BBC members go birding to see eagles. The transmitters also follow eagles to their summer breeding areas in Eastern Canada.



Dave Worley and Tom Hunter of the BBC have spent more than 75 days since late December luring and photo-capturing an estimated 15 Golden Eagles. Michele Sparks, a teacher in the Sullivan County, TN school system and BBC member, has developed an educational component for use with classrooms and bird clubs. Wallace Coffey coordinates the project for the club.

A Golden Eagle was photo-captured in Shady Valley, in Johnson County, Tennessee in February. It was photographed by Todd Eastin and Lynn Eastin. The BBC has worked with the Tennessee Chapter of The Nature Conservancy on the project which has also been conducted on two of the chapter's Northeast Tennessee properties. TNC helped purchase remote cameras and their staff members, Gabby Call and Charles McQueen, established monitoring sites in Shady Valley.

The Bristol Bird Club had a larger crowd on hand Feb. 16 to hear what many believe is one of the best bird club programs most of us have enjoyed in decades — maybe longer! It was an hour when the very objective, open and honest Vickie Henderson of Knoxville, TN, spoke in earnest about her study of Sandhill Cranes and the TOS effort to get the policy-making Tennessee Wildlife Resources Commission to table a proposed hunting season for the next two years so biologists can reconsider many of the concerns raised by the public — both hunters and wildlife observers.



Henderson won the hearts of the BBC folks with beautiful art and photography. Her simple style and simple logic brought a fresh and welcomed approach for all. BBC members bought dozens of her beautiful art pieces and stationery to help pay expenses for her trip to speak at Bristol.

*Wallace Coffey*



## CHAPTER NEWS

**GREENEVILLE CHAPTER** – An unusually cold season warmed the hearts of Greene County birders with a significant number of noteworthy species, both regular winter birds and uncommon or rare visitors and residents.

Highlights included: Snow Goose (1-2, on 13-14 Feb.), Cackling Goose (1, on 28 Jan.), Tundra Swan (1, from 1 Jan. until late Feb.), Canvasback (6, from 22 Jan. until late Feb.), Ruddy Duck, (1-5, on 18 Dec.; 23 Jan.; 13, 19 Feb.), Green Heron (1, on 18 Dec.), Bald Eagle (1, on 31 Dec.), Red-shouldered Hawk (1, on 18 Dec.; 8 Feb.), Rough-legged Hawk (1 on 16 Feb.), Merlin (1, on 31 Dec.; 1 Jan.), Sandhill Crane (1, on 2 Feb.); American Woodcock (1-6, on 14, 26-27 Feb.), Loggerhead Shrike (1, on 24 Dec.; 1 Jan.), Red-breasted Nuthatch (2-4, on 18 Dec.; 30 Jan.), Brown-headed Nuthatch (2, on 18 Dec.—first county record), Marsh Wren (3, on 19 Feb.), Brown Thrasher (1, on 12 Dec.; 15, 27 Feb.), Pine Warbler (1, on 16 Feb.), Common Yellowthroat (1, on 19 Feb.), Fox Sparrow (1, on 22 Jan.), Pine Siskin (1-2, on 31 Dec.; 22 Jan.).

The Chapter's Spring Count is scheduled for Saturday, 7 May. Please contact Don Miller (423-639-4100; [pandion@embarqmail.com](mailto:pandion@embarqmail.com)) for further information.

*Don Miller*

**KNOXVILLE CHAPTER** – The busy holiday season included four scheduled Christmas Bird Counts in the Knoxville area, including the Norris count, the Knoxville count, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Sugarlands count, and the Cades Cove count. Highlights of the Knoxville count, compiled by Dean Edwards, included Summer Tanager and Sedge Wren, each recorded for only the second time on this CBC. Other notable species included Loggerhead Shrike (1), Snow Goose (4), and Fish Crow (2). Forty-five observers in 27 parties contributed to the 99 species observed.

In December, Robin Barrow resigned as field trip coordinator, and Alice Woody stepped up to take over her duties. Many thanks are extended to Robin for her time of service and to Alice for stepping forward when needed. The spring calendar has a bevy of field trips already planned, including trips to Forks of the River Wildlife Management Area for a woodcock walk

and owl prowl and a trip to Kyker Bottoms to search for waterfowl, sparrows, and rails.

The chapter has enjoyed two great speakers recently, including Stephen Lyn Bales, naturalist with Ijams Nature Center, about his latest book, *Ghost Birds: Jim Tanner and the Quest for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, 1935-1941*; and Scott Dykes, TWRA conservation planner and biologist, about habitat planning for the Golden-winged Warbler. The January meeting was cancelled due to snowy weather.

KTOS has also jumped further into the digital age and started a Facebook group. We'd love for you to "like" us, so please find us on Facebook! We're listed under our full name: Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society.

*Angela Hoffman*

The **LEE AND LOIS HERNDON CHAPTER** of Tennessee Ornithological Society conducted a fundraising campaign during the holiday season, publishing and selling copies of a 2011 calendar featuring photos submitted by chapter members. The campaign was a great success with 100 calendars sold.

The chapter held its annual Christmas Bird Counts for Elizabethton and Roan Mountain on Saturday, Dec. 18, and Sunday, Dec. 19, respectively.

The 68th consecutive Elizabethton CBC was held Saturday, Dec. 18, on a cold, cloudy day, with little or no wind and as much as six inches of snow cover in some areas. Some of the mountainous roads were impassable. A total of 28 observers in six parties found 79 species. This tally ties the record high, which was set in 1995 and again in 2001. The average of the last 30 years has been 70.6 for this count. Count compiler Rick Knight indicated that notable species for this count included several ducks. One Northern Shoveler was only the fourth record on this CBC for this duck. A single Northern Pintail was only the sixth record for this duck. A single Greater Scaup followed only six previous records.

A covey of 11 Northern Bobwhites represented only the third record in the last 16 years. Two Bald Eagles (an adult and an immature bird) means this large

## CHAPTER NEWS

### Lee and Lois Herndon - Continued from page 9

raptor has now been found on 13 of the last 17 Christmas Bird Counts. Prior to 17 years ago, however, the Bald Eagle had been recorded only once on an Elizabethton CBC. An adult Peregrine Falcon represented only the second record for this falcon on the count. A single Collared-Dove, first reported in 2009 on the Elizabethton CBC, made a second appearance on this count. This year's single Pine Warbler can be added to five previous records for this species.

Some birds were notably common. Knight said the following totals for five different species represented record high numbers. These high counts included Gadwall, 16; Wild Turkey, 61; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 42; Eastern Bluebird, 194; and Hermit Thrush, 16. Knight stated that the Red-bellied Woodpecker has shown a steady population increase since the late 1980s.

As with most counts, there were also some notable misses, including American Black Duck, Ruffed Grouse, Common Loon, Horned Grebe and Eastern Meadowlark. "This was the first miss since 1945 for Eastern Meadowlark," Knight commented. "This bird has shown a steady decline in the last 20 years." He also noted that had any one of these species been observed during the Elizabethton CBC, it would have established a new record-high species count.

The Roan Mountain CBC was held Sunday, Dec. 19. This count featured cold temperatures and mostly to partly cloudy skies, a light to moderate breeze, with 1 to 12 inches of snow. Amazingly, the road to Carver's Gap — which ascends to an elevation of 5,500 feet — was passable. Six observers in two parties found 41 species, which is about average for this count.

Two birds were new to the Roan Mountain CBC. Two Golden Eagles (an adult and an immature bird) in Hampton Creek Cove represented an amazing find. Two Brown-headed Cowbirds were, if less dramatic than Golden Eagles, still newcomers to the Roan Mountain CBC.

Both counts found Common Raven, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Purple Finch and Pine Siskin. However, only a single Pine Siskin was found on the Elizabethton count.

The chapter will conduct spring bird walks for the public at Tipton-Haynes Historic Site in Johnson City, Sycamore Shoals State Park in Elizabethton and Roan Mountain State Park for the annual Roan Mountain Spring Naturalists Rally.

*Bryan Stevens*

**NASHVILLE CHAPTER** – The Nashville CBC was held on Saturday, Dec. 18, and totaled 81 species which is a little better than the last few years. Two Pied-billed Grebes were seen at Radnor Lake as a count week species. Count day was a cold, cloudy morning, but turned into a sunny afternoon. Highlights included 1 Snow Goose just outside Bells Bend Park, 1 Peregrine Falcon in front of St Cecilia's Academy, 1 Gray Catbird on the Harpeth East route in Williamson Co., 1 American Tree Sparrow at Richland Creek Greenway, 3 Vesper Sparrows at Bells Bend Park, 29 Fox Sparrows, 65 Rusty Blackbirds at Percy Warner Park, and 26 Purple Finches. There was no influx of Red-breasted Nuthatches or Pine Siskins this year, and no Loggerhead Shrikes were found, but it was a pleasure for many folks to see some of the thousands of Cedar Waxwings swarming around. In fact, there were more waxwings than European Starlings this year. We had all-time high numbers of Wood Duck 38, Northern Harrier 9, Barred Owl 7, Golden-crowned Kinglet 64, and Cedar Waxwing 3567.

The Hickory-Priest CBC on Jan. 1 produced 94 species. Highlights included a Common Merganser and Cackling Goose at Old Hickory Lake, three more Commons at Percy Priest Lake along with 10,000+ Ring-billed Gulls and 140+ Common Loons, 6 Screech-Owls, and a Merlin at Anderson Rd. Recreation Area, and one Short-eared Owl at Shelby Bottoms.

Our Nashville Spring Count will be held May 7. Please contact Jan Shaw at [jankshaw@aol.com](mailto:jankshaw@aol.com) if you'd like to participate.

Radnor Lake walks will be held on Wednesday mornings, meeting at the visitor center parking lot on Otter Creek Rd. at 7:30. Those dates are: April 13, 20, 27 and May 4, 11, 18. All are welcome.

## CHAPTER NEWS

**Nashville** - *Continued from page 10*

Recent fine field trips included Wheeler NWR in northern Alabama, Eastern Flank Battleground Park in Franklin, the Hiwassee Crane viewing Days, and Percy Priest Lake. Highlights at Wheeler were numerous Sandhill Cranes, White Pelicans, Snow Geese, Horned Larks, and a few Bald Eagles.

Frank Fekel spotted a female Yellow-headed Blackbird near Old Hickory Lake on Jan. 9. Phillip Casteel found a White-winged Scoter at the lake on Feb. 14 which several people got to see that week. A probable juvenile Northern Goshawk was seen by Richard Connors and Jan Shaw at Percy Priest Lake on Feb. 19, and then Tony Lance had a juvenile Northern Goshawk from the Wood Thrush Shop parking lot on Feb. 21. A group of birders led by Steve and Cyndi Routledge at the Duck River Unit of the TN NWR in Humphreys County on Feb. 19 had 2 Mute Swans, 1 Glaucous Gull, all 5 geese species, including a flock of 36 Ross's Geese, 4 Northern Harriers, a Common Goldeneye performing a courtship display, a curious in-flight diving display by a group of Great Blue Herons none of them had seen before, and a fantastic close up look at a LeConte's Sparrow.

Elections for NTOS state directors took place in February and the lucky chosen are Scott Block, Amy Potter, Tony Lance, Ed Schneider, and Barbara Harris. Thank you to all!

*Jan Shaw*

The **MEMPHIS CHAPTER** of TOS observed a very active 2010-2011 Christmas Bird Count season. Chapter members participated in counts in Tennessee (Fayette County, Memphis), Mississippi (Arkabutla Lake, Sardis Lake, Moon Lake) and Arkansas (Wapanocca/Shelby Forest). Chapter members who participated were Lillian Durand, Kate Gooch, Kay Lait, Susan McWhirter, Dick Preston, Martha Waldron, Dick Whittington, Van Harris, Lisa Jorgensen, Keith Kunkel, George Payne, Jay Walko, Andrea Cowart, Carol Johnson, Seher Thurston, Chad Brown, Mike Collins, Susan Davis, Jim Ferguson, Sue Ferguson, Bob Ford, Robert Ilardi, Margaret Jefferson, Jo Levy, Georges McNeil, George Payne, Ernie Restivo, Virginia Reynolds, Ed Thomas, Sue Williams, David Blaylock and Barbara Wilson.

*Van Harris*

### FREDERICK T. CARNEY TOS Member for 76 Years

The Memphis Chapter lost its longest term member with the death of Fred Carney on November 10, 2010. Fred joined the Society in 1934 at the age of eighteen, just four years after the founding of the Memphis Chapter. He was a Life Member of TOS, and an active birder all his adult life, including trips to South America and Mexico with TOS members. He



He assisted with the Coffeys' great Chimney Swift and heron banding projects. An active participant in Chapter activities, Fred served as Chapter President 1988-89. At the age of 94 he still regularly attended Chapter meetings.

Fred was one of the few people lucky enough to see the Ivory-billed Woodpecker on the Singer Tract in Louisiana — and he saw not just one, but three together on his one trip to the site.

Born in Memphis, Fred found the Boy Scouts early on. Eagle Scouts from Ben Coffey's Troop One joined TOS members in the Christmas counts in 1936 and continued for many years afterwards. These young men came to be known as "Ben's Boys" and attended annual reunions with the Coffeys for many years afterwards. Fred remained active in Boy Scout affairs for decades and encouraged bird study by scouts. He was awarded the Silver Beaver and the Silver Antelope for his outstanding service as an adult leader.

Fred retired as a Captain in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve after service in World War II, where he served in the Atlantic and Pacific theaters. He commanded the destroyer Howard D Crowe, DE-252, and served aboard the USS El Paso. His vocation was law, and after receiving his Masters in Tax Law at NYU, began a career in 1951 with the IRS, rising to become the Assistant Regional Counsel of the Birmingham office. He retired from the IRS and returned permanently to Memphis to join a private law firm in 1977.

Fred is survived by his wife Doris, three children and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## Federal Agency Bans Lead Ammunition For Depredation Hunting of Nuisance Birds

Citing the need to prevent lead toxicity hazards to wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has banned the use of lead ammunition for hunting nuisance birds. The decision was published by FWS as a final rulemaking action in the Federal Register.

American Bird Conservancy expressed support for the decision in a letter sent to Fish and Wildlife Service Acting Director Rowan W. Gould.

Depredation orders are issued by FWS to allow the killing of migratory birds such as crows, grackles, and blackbirds that are causing damage to public or private property, pose a health or safety hazard, or are damaging agricultural crops or wildlife. This new regulation will require the use of non-toxic ammunition in the control of these nuisance birds.

"We're very supportive of FWS in siding with wildlife on this issue. Depredation hunting tends to leave large amounts of highly toxic lead ammunition on the ground that non-target birds and other wildlife can consume, mistaking it for food. Those birds or other wildlife will either die agonizing deaths shortly thereafter or suffer severe illness for a prolonged period. We have had many discussions with FWS about using non-toxic shot for all agency operations and we are very glad they have made this decision," said Michael Fry, Director of Conservation Advocacy for ABC.

ABC was one of the leaders in a group that had petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency on August 3, 2010 to ban lead ammunition used for hunting and lead fishing gear because of the toxic threats they posed to wildlife. EPA responded that they did not have the authority to regulate lead ammunition, though Congressional legislative history records document that they did have such authority. EPA then later denied the fishing gear portion of the petition saying that evidence of impacts from fishing gear were being addressed by some States, and national regulations would be overly burdensome (see editorial on page 3.)

"The paint industry got the lead out, the gasoline industry got the lead out, the toy industry got the lead out, the home building industry got the lead out of plumbing, and even the automotive industry most recently is getting the lead out of the wheel weights on cars. The lethal impacts of lead in our environment are so well-documented and accepted by the science and health community that any deliberate release of lead into a public environment should be viewed as unacceptable. The federal government has shown concern for human impacts of lead – we are very glad that here they are showing the same level of concern for wildlife," Fry concluded.

Source: February issue of *Bird Calls* - American Bird Conservancy

### Listen to American Bird Conservancy on NPR

American Bird Conservancy is delighted to be partnering with the producers of BirdNote, a daily radio series about birds broadcast on National Public Radio stations around the country. BirdNote shows are two-minute vignettes that incorporate the rich sounds of birds with stories that illustrate the interesting—and in some cases, truly amazing—abilities of birds. ABC-BirdNote collaborations focus on conservation issues facing birds, ranging from Hawaiian songbirds to the plight of the Cerulean Warbler to the King Rail. If you miss a show or your local NPR station doesn't carry BirdNote, you can listen to or download past ABC-BirdNote collaborations at [www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports](http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports), or catch the full suite of BirdNote shows at [www.birdnote.org](http://www.birdnote.org)

Source: February issue of *Bird Calls* - American Bird Conservancy

## **The Silent Fisherman**

By Jimmy Wilkerson

It was what one might consider an average fall morning in Tennessee for early November, however, by comparison, it would actually prove to be an extraordinary morning. As the sun broke over the mountain brow on Walden's Ridge spectacular sunrays illuminated the darkness as they lit up Chickamauga Lake inside Chester Frost Park. Already there were many anglers on the water, evidenced by the number of trucks with empty trailers orderly parked in their assigned spaces. Out of the early morning fog ghostly images of fishermen plying their trade were becoming visible.

On the air was the unmistakable odor of wood smoke produced by the few campers who had braved the coldest night so far of this young season. The wind rustled the leaves on trees overhead. My favorite birding buddy (who is also my wife) and I were excited by the sudden appearance of an influx of Pied-billed Grebes, which we hastily added to an already growing list of "day birds." In the distance over the lake was my first fall gull, sighted and recorded. It was a magnificent specimen of Ring-billed Gull, a species that has, over the last few winters, begun to call Chattanooga its seasonal home. We marveled at its forgotten size!

One of us commented that if we had followed our usual late morning sleeping pattern, this bounty of splendor could have been missed. We were joined by other couples who turned out for their morning ritual of walking through the park. I pondered what might be inside their thoughts as they stamped their feet and rubbed their hands to generate extra warmth. Did they, too, have thoughts other than just completing another lap? Surely they were also seeing and enjoying the ever-present sights and smells. Were the anglers also enjoying this morning or were their thoughts preoccupied with the big catch of the day?

The recognizable sound of small motors erupted as park workers activated their blowers to hastily remove leaf litter. What a shame we humans, victims of our orderly thinking, have to disturb all of nature, thereby sanitizing God's handiwork. Alas, county officials have already somewhat addressed my concerns about tinkering with nature by providing for purists another area of the park known as Pinky's Point. I have gone there to enjoy unmolested nature to my heart's desire. I must, however, always be willing to overlook all the trash, beer cans and bait cups left by irresponsible persons. Yet, I do really enjoy this area. Rarely do I venture there without seeing beautiful Bald Eagles-this day was no exception, or thinking of the nesting pair of Osprey in season. At one time several brush piles were safe havens for White-crowned Sparrows, seen in so few places in our area. As in most things related to everyday living, things change in our surroundings. Due to the ravages of time those brush piles have withered and decayed, non-the-less, we still were enamored by our memories of days when sparrow hideaways were there.

After a short drive back into the main park, near the swimming area, we were enjoying close personal glimpses of one of the park's resident bird specialties, Brown-headed Nuthatches. The nuthatches remained silent, which was unusual. The only audible sound was movement of pine branches as they swayed in cadence with the moderate wind. We might not have seen these birds except for their nervous habit of fluttering repeatedly from tree trunk to branch, and then back again, as they scurried along the bark. We two birders were not alone in our endeavor. Across the way two other birders we had not previously been aware of shared this occasion as well, bringing their binoculars up just as we were lowering ours.

Nearby another fisherman was also enjoying his morning as he advanced toward the water's edge. There was a pattern, *distingué* yet primeval, in his approach. His eyes were focused on his mark with an intense determination lacking in many anglers. Stealthily, he stepped into the frigid water. Patiently the sentinel waited silently as he sized up the situation. As the plot gained in suspense we forgot about the coldness, the smell of wood smoke and the sun beaming in the early morning sky. My wife and I shared a moment, measured in milliseconds, with the silent fisherman. Although we have seen this silent fisherman at work before, we were mesmerized, in expectation of the scenario about to manifest. Suddenly, with the speed of a dragster at the end of his quarter mile race, the

**Silent Fisherman** - *Continued from page 13*

Great Blue Heron plunged his head into the shallow water and was rewarded with a large minnow. With expert precision, gained from eons of experience, the heron flipped his catch headfirst into the air, before effortlessly swallowing the fish. After satisfying his thirst, the heron relinquished his domain to one of his incoming brothers and flew to another location along the shoreline where the fishing might be repeated.

Invigorated by a successful outing, we sat down to satisfy our appetites too. By now the sun was well into the sky, and it had warmed the air to a comfortable level. The chatter of a pair of local squirrels interrupted conversation between us. On the way home we discussed pros and cons for the day, while semi-planning another future birding adventure.

*Jimmy and his wife Cynthia are birders from Chattanooga, TN, and have been associated with the Chattanooga chapter of TOS since 1993. Chester Frost Park is a small county owned park just off Hixson Pike and is a few miles above the Chickamauga Dam.*

**June 30th Deadline**

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

**Submit Material To:**

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**J.B. OWEN MEMORIAL AWARD**

The purpose of the J.B. Owen Memorial Endowment 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 Knoxville Chapter from 1947 until his death in 2001. He was awarded the TOS Distinguished Service Award in 1990. The Endowment provides funds for the annual J.B. Owen Award, with expected value of \$250 to \$500 per year.

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 up 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](mailto:cpgobert@hotmail.com) or mailed to Carole P. Gobert, 1304 Barcelona Drive, Knoxville, TN 37923. The J.B. Owen Endowment Committee of KTOS will evaluate applications and will typically announce the Award winner the following September.

**Bird Quiz Answers:** White Pelican; Bittern; Widgeon; Kestrel; Coot; Golden-plover; Avocet; Woodcock; Crow; Redstart; Tree Sparrow; Pipit; Goldfinch; Dipper; Magpie; Oystercatcher; Black Duck and Robin.

(Extra credit if you knew that "American" was recently removed from the Swallow-tailed Kite).



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