



THE TENNESSEE WARBLER

Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

August, 2026

Editor, Cheryl Greenacre

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

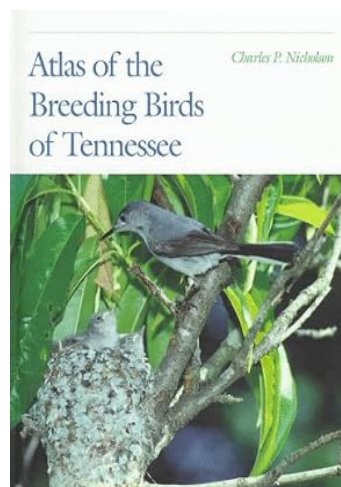
Here it is, mid-July, with oppressive heat and humidity confirming it is still summer, yet it feels like this summer has flown by and is nearly at an end. The older I get, the more I would like time to slow down, but there are things to get excited about. The beginnings of fall migration for one. The Tennessee Ornithological Society and Kentucky Ornithological Society joint fall meeting in September for another.

Plans for the fall meeting are well underway, but plenty of details are still being worked out. See the draft schedule farther down in this newsletter, mark your calendars, and make your travel and lodging plans. It will be a great weekend with lots of field trips, two keynote presentations on flycatchers by Cin-Ty Lee and Andrew Birch, and a modicum of business.

At our spring meeting in May we discussed the possibility of redoing the Tennessee Breeding Bird Atlas. It has been over 30 years, and many of us think documenting changes in the abundance and distribution of breeding birds would be a valuable project. We are early in the process, thinking about the feasibility of it, and looking to build a team to keep pushing the idea along. The advent of eBird has opened up some possibilities for data collection and communication that, if implemented for Tennessee, could build excitement among birders to support the project. One step at a time but stay tuned for more information and speak right up if you want to be involved.

The search for a President-Elect for TOS is ongoing. If you are interested, or if you have thoughts on who would be a good candidate whether they are interested or not, please contact me at tospresident1915@gmail.com.

Good birding all,
Chris Welsh, TOS President



TOS-KOS JOINT FALL MEETING SEPTEMBER 18-20, 2026

Excitement is growing for our fall meeting, to be held jointly with the Kentucky Ornithological Society at Lake Barkley State Resort Park. Below is a draft schedule. Details are subject to change, but this should help with planning your trip. Lodging at the parks (KenLake and Lake Barkley) is filling up, so book soon.

We hope to have representatives from Tennessee and Kentucky co-leading field trips, and as you can see, we have a lot of field trips to fill. Please volunteer to lead or co-lead a trip if you can.

The keynote presentations by Cin-Ty Lee and Andrew Birch will be educational and boost our abilities to identify flycatchers.

The registration fee for the meeting will be \$10 (\$3 for students), payable by cash or check at the meeting prior to the talks on Friday and Saturday evenings. We are not currently set up to handle pre-registration or to take credit card payments.

Lodging for TOS/KOS Joint Fall Meeting

KenLake State Park is the host hotel, and KOS/TOS has obtained a discounted rate. Reservations can be made online or by calling 270-474-2211. To get the discounted rate at KenLake, use our Group number 3076. This discounted rate and the 'hold' on lodge rooms is only good through August 18th, so don't delay making reservations. Cancellations must be made 48 hours in advance, or you'll be charged for one night's lodging.

Please note breakfast is NOT included but is available in the on-site dining room 6 am to 11 am.

There are also a handful of rooms available at Lake Barkley SRP for the weekend. To make a reservation for a room at Lake Barkley, call 1-270-924-1131, option 1, and give them the group code 3817. If you miss out on a room (or would rather sleep under the stars), there is plenty of camping available at the state parks or in the Land Between the Lakes area.

Alternative hotels are further away, but there are some in Murray, Kentucky (~20 min from KenLake) and Cadiz (~40 min).

In Cadiz: Quality Inn – 270-512-0173 or Red Roof Inn – 270- 522-7007.

In Murray: SpringHill Suites – 270-917-8000; Hampton Inn – 270-767-2226; Holiday Inn Express and Suites – 270-759-4449; Best Western Inn – 270-873-8167; Red Roof Inn – 270-753-1150.

About the TOS/KOS Joint Fall Meeting Keynote Speakers:

Cin-Ty Lee (left) is a professor of Geology, Earth, Environment, and Planetary Sciences at Rice University in Houston, TX. **Andrew Birch** (right) is an artist from southern California who has had his illustrations published in numerous field guides and identification articles. Together, Lee and Birch have left an indelible mark on the birding community with the publication of their guides to the flycatchers of North America with volumes 1 (Empidonax and Pewees) and 2 (Kingbirds and Myiarchus).

In their Friday talk (Flycatchers Demystified) Lee and Birch will cover the basics of identifying flycatchers, covering which field marks to look for and how to use them holistically to conclude an identification.

On Saturday (New Advances in Flycatcher Identification and Migratory Patterns) we will hear about new advances in flycatcher identification based on primary tip spacings and other field marks derived from feather patterns. We will also hear about how these advances in identification are changing the understanding of migratory and vagrancy patterns in flycatchers.



Cin-Ty Lee (left) and Andrew Birch (right)

SCHEDULE FOR THE TOS/KOS JOINT FALL MEEETING

Friday, September 18

- 1:00 p.m.** Field Trips departing from KenLake Resort Park
- 3-4 options
- 6:00 p.m.** Meeting Registration at Lake Barkley SRP Meeting Room
- 7:00 p.m.** Evening Meeting
- Welcome (David Bailey and Chris Welsh)
 - Bird ID Quiz (Steve Kistler)
 - Keynote: Flycatchers Demystified (Cin-Ty Lee & Andrew Birch)
 -

Saturday, September 19

- 8:00 a.m.** Field Trips departing from KenLake Resort Park
- 5 or 6 options (a few may opt to depart earlier than 8 a.m.)
- 1:00 p.m.** Field Trips departing from KenLake Resort Park
- Plan for 2 short trips, 2 longer trips
 - Park naturalist walk/talk (time TBA)
- 3:00 p.m.** Business Meetings at Lake Barkley SRP Meeting Rooms
- 6:30 p.m.** Meeting Registration at Lake Barkley SRP Meeting Room
- 7:00 p.m.** Evening Meeting at Lake Barkley SRP Meeting Room
- Welcome (David Bailey and Chris Welsh)
 - Trip Tally – field trip notes
 - Keynote: New Advances in Flycatcher Identification and Migratory Patterns
Cin-Ty Lee & Andrew Birch

Sunday, September 20

- 8:00 a.m.** Field Trips (Departure points announced at the end of Saturday's meeting)
- TBA (3 options) – destinations and meeting times to be announced later

Notes:

1. All times are **Central Daylight Time**
2. Due to construction at Lake Barkley, all field trips start from KenLake Resort Park unless announced otherwise.



1. Field trip during TOS Spring Meeting, Kingsport

A NOTE ON BIRDING ETHICS

It is unfortunate but perhaps not surprising that birders and outdoor enthusiasts in general need to be reminded to abide by ethical behaviors in the field. I've often read the Birding Community e-Bulletin compiled by Paul Baicich and Wayne Petersen, and a regular feature in their bulletin emphasizes that access matters. Poor behavior by individuals can reflect badly on the birding community and lead to access challenges that affect us all, in Tennessee and elsewhere. The American Birding Association's code of birding ethics (<https://www.aba.org/aba-code-of-birding-ethics/>) are worth reading and adhering to. Prominent in the code are 1) Respect and promote birds in their environment, 2) Respect and promote the birding community and its individual members, and 3) Respect and promote the law and rights of others. The code applies to everyone regardless of birding ability or status, and TOS strongly encourages all Tennessee birders to be respectful of birds and other wildlife wherever they are and to keep in mind that their behaviors can reflect positively or negatively on our community. Strive to do things that will reflect positively.

Chris Welsh, TOS President

..... Spring Count Data Available Soon
Fall Counts Coming Soon!

Thank you to all who participated in the spring counts and to the local compilers for putting it all together. The final crunching is underway and will be available in *The Migrant* soon. Fall counts are around the corner! As you're working on your fall count data, please include the following effort data in addition to the count data:

1. Hours and miles by car, foot, and any night birding
2. Number of observers and parties
3. Any feeder watching hours and names
4. Start and end times for the count
5. Weather data for the count
6. Names of all the participants
7. Anything else of interest about the count (e.g., record high or low numbers, extraordinary weather, all-time species totals for your count, etc.)

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

TOS appreciates your efforts to record and monitor our bird populations and abundance. Thank you for your help in archiving these data for future generations and researchers.

Liz Rutemeyer, TOS State Bird Count Compiler
865-236-7646; zzalbers@gmail.com

PHOTOS FROM THE SPRING MEETING IN KINGSPORT



CHAPTER NEWS

The **BRISTOL BIRD CLUB** has enjoyed several fantastic programs recently. In February, Bryan Stevens from the Elizabethton Bird Club gave an excellent presentation on butterflies. In March, Adrianna Nelson shared her "Aussie Adventures," documenting her fieldwork in Australia with Fairywrens, Sacred Kingfishers, and other unique species. For our April meeting, Bob Riggs and Monica Hoel presented information on their annual "Salty Bird Festival" October 2-3rd in Saltville, VA. The festival features speakers, bird walks, and kid-friendly activities. The Bristol Bird Club is proud to announce we will have a BBC table set up and will be assisting with this festival now in its 3rd year.

We have also had several successful field trips, including a waterfowl trip to the Saltville Well Fields (Bob Riggs), a joint field trip with the Elizabethton Bird Club to Burke's Garden (Rob Biller/Joe McGuinness), an early warbler trip to South Holston Dam, a spring migration trip on the forest service road behind South Holston Lake (Rob Biller), monthly bird walks at Steele Creek Park (Michele Sparks/Harry Norman), and a late spring bird walk at Orchard Bog in Shady Valley (Rick Knight). The BBC also led a field trip for the spring TOS Meeting that was marvelously hosted by Birding Kingsport.

Additionally, thanks to generous donations from our members, the Club sponsored a youth participant to attend the Blue Ridge Discovery Center Ornithology Camp this past June. Going forward, this annual sponsorship will be The BBC Scholarship Fund. The 4 day/3 night camp is a tremendous educational opportunity for 11 to 17 year olds to learn and embrace the phenomenal joy of birds. More information about this wonderful opportunity for our next generation can be found at: Blue Ridge Discovery Ornithology Camp. Rob Biller and Michele Sparks

Members of the **CHATTANOOGA CHAPTER** of the TOS recently had the privilege of introducing to the public our bird blind project, known now as **Birdland**. Along with rangers from Booker T. Washington State Park, our partners in the construction of the blind and water feature, we described to those gathered how a germ of an idea has now come to a fully funded endeavor to create a wonderful place for everyone, young and old, to better understand the lives of birds. Similar to the bird blind at Chapman Mountain Nature

Preserve just outside of Huntsville, Alabama, Birdland will include easy access to the public and educational signage for its visitors.

CTOS is thrilled that its members are fully engaged in a project that so closely fits our mission: to educate the community about birds and to participate actively in the preservation of their habitats. We envision local school groups, families, bird photographers, and casual visitors making use of this invaluable resource. It's also a win



for the Park, as it seeks to educate visitors about the natural history of this area and broaden its recreational opportunities.

Major funding has been provided by The Lyndhurst Foundation, which has long been a generous partner locally with those seeking to enhance the beauty of this region and preserve its natural resources.

As part of our ongoing support of Birdland, CTOS has committed to maintaining the site in the future, which will require a monthly clearing of the small pond and basic cleanup. It's not a huge task, but it will be important for the future sustainability of the blind.

Construction will begin in a month or so, and I hope members of TOS will plan to visit the site in the future. Over time, we'll realize what a great contribution Birdland will be for the public as well as something for which CTOS can be quite proud.

Also, CTOS would like to give a shout out to CTOS member Dr. David Aborn who is now serving as Secretary for the Association of Field Ornithologists.

OJ Morgan

CHAPTER NEWS

The **HIGHLAND RIM CHAPTER**

As we said last year, about this time, we spend the months of June and July planning our monthly meetings and arranging for guest speakers and outdoor field trips for the upcoming year. Wow! It's a year later and once again, after two months of hard work, we kicked off our 2026-2027 season with our **annual covered dish supper**.



For about the zillionth time we met, again, at the residence of our gracious hosts **Darryl and Jean Gibson** for a wonderful "potluck" dinner. In addition to their hospitality, we so enjoyed their beautiful, "avian oasis" back yard that backs up to lush forest and which is chock full of wildlife. I'm running out of ways to describe their wonderful back yard! As we dined, we were blessed to see abundant wildlife including deer, turkeys, a **rare white turkey hen** again this year, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and lots of bluebirds!



Another one of our newer members suggested a **platform nesting box** for our many, many **mourning doves** in the area. We **presented our hostess, Jean, with a copy of our first prototype** in appreciation for

the years of hard work as our historian and for being such a gracious hostess. We passed out the traditional club year-book planner listing all of the results of our summer planning sessions and enjoyed each other's company. First off before it gets too cold, we announced our third annual September pontoon boat tour on Tim's Ford Lake! We are anxious to re-visit the rookery island, hoping to see as many Cormorants, Great Blue Herons, Anhingas (sometimes called snake birds), and vultures



CHAPTER NEWS



We got some exciting news just today! One of our members sent this out to the club: "Hello all. You may or may not have seen the reports of the **immature Wood Stork** in Decherd (a local small town). If you haven't gotten the chance to go see it, I highly recommend it! This is the first record of Wood Stork in Franklin County, ever!" This report and photo were from "Wil Duke" one of our younger members, and his enthusiasm for us old fogies is so rewarding.

We also claim an excellent photographer, **Laurie Anderson**, and she captured this beautiful **Scarlet Tanager** near their home and this marvelous photo of a **Bald Eagle**! At our October 6th meeting, Don Hazel from the Tennessee Bluebird Society will again be our guest speaker. He delivers a very educational program on the successful recovery of the Eastern Bluebird population. Also scheduled for that meeting, we will begin discussions and team assignments for the 127th Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count in December. Our little club is slowly growing, and it is so rewarding to live in such a "target rich" birding environment. Happy birding, everyone!
Murray King, President

KINGSPORT CHAPTER

Programs:

In March, member Shahram Malik shared pictures from a fantastic trip that he and his family took. His program was entitled "Birds of Australia and New Zealand". Thirty-two folks attended. Our April program, "Wading Birds and Some of Their Kin" was given by Bryan Stevens. At our monthly meeting in May, Vanessa Hawley shared "Raptors Surviving in Today's World" and we were delighted to have Rosie, an Eastern Screech-Owl, and Silas, a Barred Owl join us for the evening.

Activities:

We participated in Warriors Path State Parks' 47th Annual Spring Nature Festival on April 18. Bill Grigsby presented "Beaks & Bills – A Guide to Bird Identification" and we led a walk afterwards. We were delighted to host the TOS Spring Meeting the first weekend in May and appreciate everyone who traveled to East Tennessee to join us. On May 9, we helped a local chapter do a Spring Bird Count. Our club held its annual picnic in June. Five members participated in the first birding weekend hosted by Blue Ridge Discovery Center in Troutdale, VA. Birding Kingsport hosts three Fun Fest Bird Walks during the festival in July. We have held these annually for over ten years.

Bird Walks & Field Trips:

Ten members enjoyed a walk at Cattails at Meadowview Golf Course on a beautiful morning on April 2. It was organized and led by Bambi Fincher. Spotting an American Bittern was a nice find. We birded at Phipps Bend on April 17 and tallied 60 species. We took a field trip to Seven Islands State Birding Park on May 18 and saw 56 species. It's always nice to hear Northern bobwhite calling.

Leadership Team, Kingsport Chapter

The **KNOXVILLE CHAPTER**: Spring migration has brought an exciting array of bird sightings across East Tennessee! Members have reported wonderful finds both on and off the trail as our forests and waterways have come alive with returning migrants. Some notable sightings from April and May include: Louisiana Waterthrush, Yellow-throated Warbler, Hermit Thrush, Dowitcher, Snowy Egret at Eagle Bend, Black-throated Blue Warblers spotted on numerous hikes throughout

CHAPTER NEWS

the Great Smoky Mountains, Scarlet Tanagers and Swainson's Thrushes along the Songbird Trail in Clinton, an impressive gathering of approximately 500 Double-crested Cormorants at Lyons Island off Lakeshore. Spring has certainly rewarded those willing to get outside and look—and listen! Thank you to everyone who continues to share their sightings and contributes to our collective appreciation of Tennessee's incredible birdlife.

Our April and May meetings featured two engaging and educational presentations. Chuck Estes took members on an unforgettable journey through Brazil, sharing stories and photographs from his birding adventure. He highlighted the many lifers encountered along the way and spoke highly of the beautiful lodge accommodations that made the experience all the more memorable. Chuck's presentation offered both inspiration for future travel and a glimpse into the remarkable diversity of South American birdlife. David Aborn presented "Windows: What Birds Don't See Can Hurt Them," shedding light on one of the leading human-caused threats to birds. Windows are estimated to kill between 600 million and 1 billion birds in North America each year. Drawing from more than 25 years of monitoring window casualties on the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga campus, David shared his findings and discussed practical solutions that universities, businesses, and homeowners can implement to make windows safer for birds. His presentation served as an important reminder that even small changes can have a meaningful impact on bird conservation. We are grateful to both speakers for generously sharing their knowledge, experiences, and passion for birds.



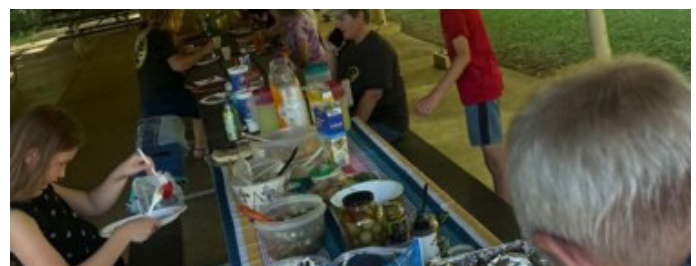
In May, **Sheila Rygwelski (President)** and **Kristen Smith (Secretary)** attended **Marble Springs Statehood Day**, where they welcomed children of all ages to explore the fascinating world of birds. Young naturalists had the opportunity to dissect owl pellets, investigate a sensory bucket filled with bird seed, and search for hidden bird treasures. It was a joy to see so many curious minds engaging with nature through hands-on learning and fostering a love for the natural world.



You can also find us at the 30th Annual Hummingbird Festival at Ijams! We're excited to celebrate one of Tennessee's favorite feathered visitors while sharing our love of birds and birding with the community. As always, we encourage members to continue sharing their sightings, stories, and photographs. Though spring migration may be winding down, summer residents are settling in and there's always something wonderful waiting to be discovered outdoors.

In June, we kicked off our summer break with a potluck gathering that brought together members and their families for a relaxed and joyful evening. Held at a park along the water, the event offered beautiful scenery, plenty of conversation, and even more bird sightings. Members enjoyed good food, friendly competition with a lively game of giant Jenga, and the chance to connect outside of our regular meetings.

Kristen Smith, Secretary, KTOS



CHAPTER NEWS

The **LEBANON BIRD CLUB**, has had some great birding this late spring and summer. We ventured to spots within our county and surrounding areas as well. Cedars of Lebanon State Park (SP), Sadie Ford Farm, Vesta, and Sellars Farm State Archaeological Area within our county and surrounding areas such as Murfree Springs, Stones River Greenway spots, Stones River National Battlefield, Ravenwood Park, Long Hunter SP, J Percy Priest WMA Field Trials, and Bledsoe Creek State Park, to name a few. We've enjoyed Swamp Sparrows to Little Blue Herons, Whip-por-will's to Nighthawks, and Cooper's Hawks to Osprey. We have some keen observers and photographers. We welcome any who want to join us! We meet for outings on 3rd Saturdays every month except July and August. The BIG NEWS: We are beginning to have "in-house meetings" 6 to 8 times per year. Dates will fluctuate but we overall aim for the first week. On occasion, it will alter to another due to speaker availability or another conflict. Try to set your calendars for Tuesday, September 28th at 6 pm as we welcome our own traveling Ornithology Professor Dr. Jeff Walck to speak on his recent trip to Ecuador!! Program will be held either at Smyrna Public Library or Cedars of Lebanon State Park Nature Center. Program details will be solidified by August 21st. Please join us! We will try to get these onto our TOS website and onto our lebanonbirding.org page as well! Melissa Turrentine

The **MEMPHIS CHAPTER** would like to remind you to mark your calendars for the 2027 TOS Spring Meeting, hosted by the Memphis chapter, the weekend of April 30 to May 2, 2027. Location and further details are yet to be determined and will be shared as soon as we have them. We hope to see many of you in Memphis as spring migration will be well underway here on the Mississippi Flyway! Liz Hall

Spring kept the **NASHVILLE CHAPTER** wonderfully busy, with plenty of birds, birders, and good company along the way! We had four successful Wednesday morning migration walks at Radnor Lake, plus the launch of our brand-new Thursday evening walks at Shelby Bottoms Park. Together, these eight outreach walks welcomed more than 200 birders - a terrific

showing and a great reminder of the energy and enthusiasm in our local birding community. We're delighted that the tradition will continue this fall, with the first walks scheduled for September 23 at Radnor Lake and September 24 at Shelby Bottoms. Many thanks, as always, to all of our walk leaders, and a special thank-you to Shelley Smith for creating the new Thursday evening walks.

The Spring Count, led by Barbara Harris, took place on April 25 and brought out 59 observers. Their efforts produced an impressive total of 154 species. Among the highlights were the ever-spreading Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Pacific Loon, Neotropic Cormorant, Sora at two locations, and Lincoln's Sparrow.

Looking ahead, our Fall Count is set for September 26. If you'll be in the area and would like to take part, please contact Barbara Harris—she'll be happy to help get you involved: harrbarbara@bellsouth.net.

After taking July and August off, NTOS will "flock" back together for our annual Potluck Meeting on September 17. If you're heading northwest for the joint fall TOS/KOS meeting at KenLake State Park, September 18th-20th, and would like to come a day early to join the fun, we'd love to welcome you! There will be great food, of course, and our own Tim Ryan will share stories and experiences from his 2024 Big Year. The meeting will be held at the Radnor Lake Visitor's Center beginning at 6 p.m.

We hope to see many of you at the TOS Fall meeting in September.

Until then,

Happy birding!

Cyndi Routledge

NOVEMBER 15th DEADLINE

The deadline date for the December issue of *The Tennessee Warbler* is November 15th. Please submit all articles, announcements, reports and items of interest by this deadline date.

Submit Material To:

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