



THE TENNESSEE WARBLER

Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

April, 2020

Editor, Theresa Graham

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - SPRING 2020

In early February, the TOS winter meeting took place in Manchester. After mornings of birding in the area, we met to discuss topics pertinent to TOS. Thanks to all of the participants for their thoughtful comments and insightful suggestions which were offered for consideration. In an all-volunteer organization, it is important to have opportunities for open communication among our members. Organized small-group brainstorming sessions can be beneficial to the future direction of the organization. TOS is confronted by a number of issues related to the very existence of birds in the future. Among other things, we considered ways to reach out and cooperate with other organizations and ways that TOS can be more effective at the chapter and state levels. There will be more opportunities for similar discussions at the spring meeting in Memphis at the end of April. Specifically, a discussion group will offer a chance for representatives of each chapter to share successful activities with one another. I am asking that each chapter send two representatives to participate; it would be great if all of our chapters could join us.

The Conservation Policy Committee remains focused on educating our congressional representatives regarding bird-related legislation. While TOS is not political, we do speak on behalf of birds and conservation issues related to maintaining habitat for birds. Specifically, The Migratory Bird Protection Act is under consideration in Congress. The CPC worked as a group to generate a well-crafted position statement which was sent to all members of the Tennessee Congressional Delegation. I want to acknowledge the efforts of Dev Joslin as the primary author and of Representative Jim Cooper who agreed to co-sponsor HR 5552 which takes action on behalf of the protection of migratory birds. The bill has now been passed out of committee; however, it will require continued support to be enacted. I urge you to read the details of the bill and to encourage all Tennessee Congressional members to offer their support.

TOS will continue to advocate for our long-standing mission and will continue to work cooperatively with like-minded organizations. Please be an active member of TOS at the state or local level or even both. We have much to do which requires all of the volunteer effort that we can enlist! Thanks again to all TOS members for your support. You are appreciated!

Looking forward to seeing you in Memphis.
Danny Gaddy, President

2020 TOS Fall Meeting, Symposium & Banquet

October 16 - 18, 2020

The John W. Sellars Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society invites you to the Fall State Meeting, October 16-18 at Cedars of Lebanon State Park, located 7 miles south of Lebanon, Tennessee. There will be registration tables set up in the Cedar Forest Lodge at 4:30 to pick up your name tag and information bag and to provide opportunity to sign up for field trips on Saturday and Sunday. A Meet & Greet and Silent Auction, including wine and hors d'oeuvres, will begin at 5:30 to be followed at 7pm by a presentation from the explorer, Meriwether Lewis, recounting some of the adventures of his cross-country exploration of the northwest with William Clark. A registration table will also be set up Saturday morning in the Assembly Hall for those who are unable to attend the Friday night social.

Field trips will focus on resident species as well as late fall migrants and early arriving waterfowl in Middle Tennessee. Locations include: J. Percy Priest, Old Hickory & Center Hill Lakes and Stones River Greenway (paved). In addition, John James Audubon will lead a hike (limited to 20) along the park's newly established birding trail.

On Saturday afternoon, the TOS Board of Directors meeting and symposium will be held. In addition, Mr. Ellis will give a lecture on "How to be a Better Bird Guide". Saturday evening will conclude with a catered banquet and presentation by Brian "Fox" Ellis as Charles Darwin on the "Voyage of the Beagle".

Accommodations

Note:

- There are no restaurants in Cedars of Lebanon State Park
- Cedars of Lebanon State Park is located approximately 7 miles south of I-40 on US Highway 231
- All motels mentioned are located at Exit 238 on I-40

Option 1 - A block of 5, 2 bedroom cabins is reserved at Cedars of Lebanon State Park. Each cabin has a king & queen bed and a twin bed in the loft. They sleep 6, have one bathroom and a complete kitchen. The price is \$176/night, tax included. Reservations must be made by September 14 by credit card. Specify for TOS. Call park office at (615) 443-2769.

Option 2 - A block of 15 rooms is reserved at Days Inn, 822 S. Cumberland St., Lebanon, TN 37087. Each room has 2 double beds, small refrigerator, microwave, TV & Wi-Fi. Breakfast is included. Rooms must be reserved by September 14. Cost is \$88/night, tax included. Reserve by credit card and specify for TOS. Days Inn is located at Exit 238 on I-40. Call (615) 449-5781.

Option 3 – If you prefer other accommodations, Holiday Inn Express, (615) 994-3225, and Comfort Suites, (615) 443-0027, are also located at Exit 238 on I-40, however no rooms are reserved there.

A registration form for the meeting is attached below. The deadline for banquet reservations is October 1. Additional details available here: lebanonbirding.org For questions contact: lebanonbirding@gmail.com

2020 TOS FALL MEETING REGISTRATION FORM

Name(s) _____
Address _____
E-mail _____ Cell phone _____
TOS Chapter _____

\$ _____ for _____ Registrations @ \$25 per person
\$ _____ for _____ Banquet Reservations @ \$25 per person
\$ _____ Total amount enclosed.

Make checks payable to: *John W. Sellars Chapter TOS* and mail to:

Lebanon Birding Club
c/o Stephen Zipperer
3105 Chapel Hills Drive
Murfreesboro, TN 37129

CHRISTMAS COUNT DATA DUE

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

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

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

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

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

WINGS OF WINTER RECAP

By Cyndi Routledge

The 3rd Annual Wings of Winter Birding Festival, hosted by the Friends of TN National Wildlife Refuge, along with dozens of volunteers and partners from State and local Agencies, including TOS, took place on January 24–26 in Paris, Tennessee. With 166 folks from across the country, and even a couple from Ontario, Canada, the event continues to grow in popularity and size. Friday night's reception speaker was refuge friend and storyteller, Brian 'Fox' Ellis who wowed the audience with his presentation "Charles Darwin and his Revolutionary Ideas". Author, naturalist and ornithologist, Scott Wiedensaul was the keynote speaker on Saturday night and presented a wonderfully informative program about ProjectSNOW, his ongoing study of Snowy Owls. With more than 14 field trips offered throughout the weekend, including a pre-festival boat trip on Friday afternoon, Birds and Brew on Saturday, and a bird banding demonstration by Southeastern Avian Research on Sunday, there was plenty to see and do for festival goers. Species totals for the weekend ended at 102, down a bit from the 108 of last year, but the absence of ice and snow and warmer temps made for easy travel and fun adventures.

Plans are well underway for next year's WOW festival. Those dates have been set for January 15–17·2021. Christian Hagenlocher, author of Falcon Freeway, a Big Year on a Budget will be the keynote speaker on Saturday, January 16. Friday night's reception entertainment is still being finalized, but rumor has it that it will be something totally different and most entertaining. Stay tuned for that announcement along with new and exciting field trips. Mark your calendars and plan to support this wonderful annual event!

THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT 2020

The 23rd Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) was conducted February 14 through February 17. What started as a true backyard count has evolved into a global effort to add to our knowledge of bird populations and their distribution.

This year, more than 246,000 checklists, containing over 40,400,000 birds of 6,843 species were submitted via eBird. Observers across the United States submitted 143,000 of those checklists, reporting 666 species. Tennessee observers submitted 2,688 checklists, containing 144 species. At least one checklist was submitted from 87 of our 95 counties. Shelby County led the way, with 478, followed by Davidson (261), Williamson (196), Knox (174) and Hamilton (159). In the species count, Lake County reported 104, followed by Blount (94), with a three way tie among Davidson, Dyer and Hamilton (89), and Shelby at (88).

Among individuals, Janie Finch submitted 29 checklists, followed by Roi and Debbie Shannon (28), Dick Preston (27) and Michelle Sparks and Francis Fekel (26 each). Dick Preston reported 110 species, followed by Ruben Stoll (88), Andrew Lydeard (86), Bill Keeler and Victor Stoll (84 each).

Some of the more unusual finds: Western Grebe, Little Gull, Golden Eagle, Rough-legged Hawk, Virginia Rail, Sora, Long-eared Owl, Rufous Hummingbird, Black-chinned Hummingbird (2!), Gray Catbird, Baltimore Oriole and Spotted Towhee. A Cape May Warbler visiting a feeder for three weeks in Shelby County disappeared just before the start of the count period.

Please consider participating in the 24th GBBC next February. More details can be found at: birdcount.org

Editor's note: totals are as of press time. Minor changes may occur.

Winter 2019-2020 Hummingbird Update

By Cyndi Routledge

The 2019-2020 winter hummingbird season saw a slight up-tick in reported winter hummingbirds. This was rewarding since I've spent many hours over the last few years getting the word out about leaving out a feeder year-round and whom to contact if you get a winter bird. I believe there are far more hummingbirds buzzing around Tennessee and Mississippi from 15 November to 15 March than perhaps are being spotted and/or reported, and I hope reports like this will continue to help spread awareness. So, with that said, here's a recap of the birds seen and those banded in the states of Tennessee and Mississippi this winter.

November and December continue to be the busiest months for winter hummingbirds in Tennessee, both current and historically, though there are still a good number of hummers banded in early January as well. I banded six hummingbirds, two Ruby-throats, two Rufous and two Black-chinned, between November 15 and January 12. (Four hummers in Tennessee and two in Mississippi.) Mark Armstrong, the winter bander in East TN, banded two Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, 1 Black-chinned Hummingbird, and had one 'return' adult male Rufous Hummingbird in Clinton, TN. He also relayed that the Ruby-throat he banded outside Hixon, TN on 12 November 2019, a juvie male, was later captured in Dothan, Alabama by Fred Bassett on 25 January 2020. It's these kinds of recaptures that provide great data and are always fun to hear about.

The two Rufous Hummingbirds banded in Tennessee in November, both 'hatch-year' birds, one male and one female, remain at their host homes at the writing of this update (Feb. 8 2020). I expect they will remain with their hosts until at least late March/early April, unless something unforeseen happens, and then head north to their place of birth to mate and nest.

In addition to these banded hummingbirds I also had reports in January of two additional winter hummers in yards in Fayette County. Unfortunately, the 1st of these hummers left before it could be captured and/or identified. The other Fayette County hummer, a female Black-chinned Hummingbird, was IDed by a series of excellent photos taken by Thomas Blevins of MTOS. This hummer remains un-banded at the request of the homeowner.

Finally, as you read this update, I'm sure some of you have already had springtime Ruby-throats at your feeders and others are anxiously waiting their arrival as I am. Last season I banded a total of 2028 ruby-throats and fully expect to band as many or more this season as my migration research continues with the help of my wonderful volunteers.

Please remember, no red nectar, keep feeders clean and nectar fresh. I recommend 4 parts water to 1 part cane sugar. This nectar recipe was shared with me by Bob and Martha Sargent, and I hope you'll use the same. Happy hummingbird season!



Female Rufous Hummingbird
Photo by Rob Harbin



Black-chinned Hummingbird - Photo by Thomas Blevins

Discover Bird Activity Book Update

by Cyndi Routledge

It seems like a lifetime ago when the first of the Discover Bird Activity Books was delivered to my basement and then placed in the hands of a child at the Crane Festival in January of 2012. We had printed 1,000 books and wondered if our mission of getting them in the 'hands of every 3rd grader in Tennessee' would come to pass. Eight years later and we've reached a notable milestone, having distributed 30,000 Discover Bird Activity Books!

During these 8 years the books have been distributed to 18 different states in the US and four Central and South American Countries: Ecuador, Cuba, Panama and Honduras. These books have been used in preschool to college classes and beyond. They have been requested and used by far more home school programs than I can count, utilized by Boy Scout and Girl Scout merit badge programs, with inner city Sierra Club summer programs, and in the summer of 2017 they were used at the TN Department of Education Camp in Nashville. State Parks use them with their Jr. Ranger program and summer camps each year. The Tipton County Museum uses them with their summer nature camps. The books have been presented as a resource for environmental education teacher candidates at MTSU, and at yearly continuing education workshops for Stewart, Humphreys, Henry and Benton County teachers. In 2018 the Kentucky Ornithological Society, Beckham Bird, and Louisville Audubon Society requested them for use with their youth bird programs. That same year Lincoln County schools requested over 500 books for use with their 3rd and 4th grade science curriculum, and Bradley Academy in Murfreesboro began using the books as part of their Life Science STEM curriculum. Most recently 1,600 books were requested and delivered to the Maury County school system for use with their science curriculum for grades K-12 and their afterschool Senior Citizen outreach program. The book continues to be distributed at annual events including but not limited to Sandhill Crane Festivals in TN, AL, and Wisconsin, at the Migratory Bird Day Celebration around the state, and hummingbird festivals in Tennessee and Mississippi. Articles about the book itself have appeared in the *Tennessee Conservationist* and in the American Birding Association's *Conservation Milestone* magazine. Pdfs of the book and its pages continue to be available on the TOS website and Tennessee Watchable Wildlife webpage in both Spanish and English.

Finally, by the time you read this update, 3,000 more books will have been printed and will be ready for distribution, thanks to matching grants by TWRA and TOS, who in recent years have joined together to make sure that this successful outreach and education program continues for some time to come.

If you are interested in learning more about these books or how you might get them into the hands of children in your community, please contact me at routledges@bellsouth.net. Together we can make it happen!

Taking Flight

An International Juried Bird Art Exhibition
For Youth Ages 4 to 18

The Taking Flight Exhibition aims to create greater awareness and appreciation for birds, support the development of young artists, and share their art with the public at a professional museum.

Submissions will be accepted between January 15 and June 15, 2020.
Juried art will be exhibited at the museum September 2020 - March, 2021



963 Washington Street, Canton, MA 02021
Learn more: www.massaudubon.org/youthartskent@massaudubon.org

CONSERVATION NOTE

Successful Federal programs vital to conserving birds and their habitats, such as The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, North American Wetlands Conservation Act and State and Tribal Wildlife Grants, are keys to reversing the well-documented loss of nearly 3 billion in the bird population across North America.

Last year Congress reversed a years-long trend of budget cuts with a modest increase of \$10 million for critical bird conservation programs. With the fiscal year 2021 Federal appropriations process underway, legislators are currently making funding decisions that impact these and other important programs.

Please take the time to contact your district representative and both Senators to urge their support.

Additional details (and a user-friendly hot link) are available from the American Bird Conservancy (ABC): www.abcbirds.org

Editor's note: TOS is a member organization of ABC

WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

World Migratory Bird Day is an awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. It aims to draw attention to the threats faced by migratory birds, their ecological importance and the need for international cooperation to conserve them. Approximately 40%, or a little over 4,000 of the world's species, are migratory.

World Migratory Bird Day is officially the second Saturday in May in the United States and Canada (May 9th this year) and the second Saturday in October in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

The focus of the 2020 World Migratory Bird Day conservation campaign will be on the various tracking technologies used by researchers to monitor the routes, stopover locations and hazards birds face during migration. This includes bird banding, satellite tracking, feather analysis and weather radar.

Programs will be held at schools, parks, zoos, wildlife refuges, museums, libraries and many other locations.

For more information: www.environmentamericas.org and www.migratorybirdday.org.

APPARENT EARLIEST AMERICAN ROBIN NESTING

In early January, one of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's "nest-watchers," Ed Laster, surprised the Lab by reporting an American Robin building a nest in his neighbor's yard in Arkansas. When nest building developed into egg laying, it turned out to be the earliest clutch that could be verified by Cornell.

Apparently the eggs were laid sometime between 30 December and 6 January, probably early January. Three eggs were present on 8 January. Laster reported that the eggs were abandoned as of 13 January, an expected outcome for such an early nest.

Source: The Birding Community E-Bulletin, February 2020.

For an archive of past bulletins: <https://www.refugeassociation.org/birding-community-e-bulletin>

CHAPTER NEWS

Rain, wind, and chilly temperatures were a fitting description for the weather on **BIRDING KINGSPORT'S** late fall and winter field trips and bird walks, but dedicated members persevered and were treated to many wonderful sightings. A trip to South Holston Lake resulted in wonderful scope views of two Hermit Thrush and a cooperative Pine Warbler. A visit to John Sevier Lake included Gadwall, American Wigeon, and Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal. A multi-day field trip to several sights in Chattanooga, including Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge, Chickamauga Dam, and Chester Frost Park, totaled 75 species with many highlights - Sandhill Cranes, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, American White Pelicans, and Brown-headed Nuthatches. Other field trips included Seven Islands State Birding Park, Shady Valley, Warrior's Path State Park, Wilbur Dam/Watauga Lake area, and Phipps Bend.

A December highlight was our traditional participation in the annual Christmas Bird Count. Uncommon finds this year included Northern Bobwhite, Great Egret, American Pipit, and Eastern Meadowlark.

In January, several of our members attended a Saturday seminar sponsored by Warriors' Path State Park, "Gardening for the Birds" presented by Dr. Fred J. Alsop from ETSU. We learned many great tips to make your backyard more attractive for birds. We also had members attend the Wings of Winter Birding Festival in Paris, Tennessee.

Program highlights at our monthly meetings included hearing more about the study reported in the September 20, 2019 issue of *Science Magazine* regarding the bird population decline in North America, as well as actions we can take that can make a difference in this troubling statistic. We enjoyed a relaxing social during the December holiday season. In January, we were fortunate to have Morton Massey from Knoxville TOS visit our club and share information on winter sparrow identification.

Birding Kingsport meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm, typically at the Eastman Employee Center in Kingsport. Meeting details can be found on our website at www.birdingkingsport.org.

Happy Birding!
Helen Sirett, President

CHATTANOOGA CHAPTER'S February 13th meeting was Potluck and Planning. During the September meeting, CTOS members asked for a potluck event during which we would revisit the TOS Survey results and plan for the future of our chapter.

CTOS members volunteered to support the Tennessee Sandhill Crane festival! Several members set up scopes and provided information to the large visiting crowd.

Kevin Calhoon organized the Chattanooga Christmas Bird Count and the Hiwassee Christmas Bird Count. Bruce Dralle organized the Nickajack Christmas Bird Count. Thanks to our members who participated in the three area Christmas Bird Counts.

Bob Shafto gave an informative presentation on the birds of Maine at our January meeting.

Chris Sloan shared his photographs of the birds of Australia at our December meeting.

Chuck James of the TN Bluebird Society gave an informative presentation on conservation success of the Eastern Bluebird at our November meeting. You can find more information about ways to help with conservation at www.TNbluebirdsociety.org.

CTOS members Jim and Dawn Greenway, in conjunction with Corey Hagen from our partner Reflection Riding Arboretum and Nature Center, kicked-off the first meeting of the Young Birders' Club (YBC) on November 21st. Young birders and their parents/guardians provided feedback about the vision and potential activities for our YBC. The YBC is open to young birders aged 13-18.

A BIG thanks to David Stone, who coordinated this autumn's birding trips to the Honors Golf Course. These walks are enjoyed by many participants.

Jim & Dawn Greenway lead a walk at the VW Wetlands on Sunday, December 15 from 9:00 – 11:00. This walk specifically catered to beginners, but birders of all skill levels were welcome.

Ray Zimmerman, Editor

CHAPTER NEWS

The **Highland Rim Chapter** November meeting was held at the Church of Christ at Cedar Lane, Tullahoma. The hostesses were Jean Gibson and Monica Oosting. We had 18 in attendance. Our program was ***Management Practices Used at Bark Camp Barrens WMA*** with Wes Winton, TWRA. Wes gave us an overview of how they are providing a better habitat for the Tennessee Northern Bobwhite Quail, which will also help other songbirds, turkeys, field mice, etc. Due to the decrease in farmland, changes in agriculture, and increase in forest land quail habitat has been reduced or eliminated resulting in the decline of the Quail population. The first step was timber thinning on 165 acres. In March, 2016 they did a spring burn of 65 acres, sprayed the woody vegetation and disked 100 acres. After a three year process, 250 acres have been burned. Timber harvest was completed on 170 acres with the establishment of two miles of fire breaks around the timber harvested. The average lifespan of the Bobwhite Quail is about three to six months, but under ideal conditions they can survive up to five years in the wild. They lay 12 to 14 eggs with approximately ten hatching. Their most common predators are skunks, raccoons, armadillos, opossums, bobcats, foxes and coyotes. They eat insects, grains and seeds. The WMA does not stock the area with quail. Their focus is to provide a good quality habitat. The population is on the rise. Federal money from sales of guns, ammo, binoculars and other hunting paraphernalia, as well as hunting and fishing licenses, help fund the program.

Our December meeting was held at the home of Kerry and Marie Syler. We had 17 in attendance. We were blessed with a wonderful spread of delicious food and desserts. We do have a lot of very good cooks in our group. After enjoying and indulging ourselves with all the goodies we had the most fun time in fellowship. Plenty of chatter and laughter was abound. Larry, Jim & Murray were able to ring us in to discuss the Christmas count. Murray handed out maps & clip boards and explained the front and back side of the form. Teams were given their designated counting route.

Our January meeting was held at the United Methodist Church of Winchester. We had twenty-two in attendance. Our program was on Murray and Cheryl's trips. "Snorkeling with the Humpbacks" and

their "Tanzania Safari", both trips with Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris. The snorkeling trip took place February 4-11, 2017 at the Silver Bank near the Dominican Republic. Silver Bank has the world's largest concentration of Humpback Whale where the whales converge to calve and mate. The whales come from the north to give birth and nurse their calves. This is also a breeding area for the whales and they will do a "Fin Slap" or "Fin Slapping" to get attention and communicate with other whales. The pictures they shared with us were magnificent.

The second part of Murray & Cheryl's program was their trip to Tanzania during February 3-23, 2016. Some of the areas they visited the Ngorongoro Crater and Arusha National Park. The pictures and stories they shared with us were glorious & captivating. They saw Colobus monkeys, Blue Face Monkeys and a variety of others. They also shared the story of seeing zebras lining up to pay their respect to a fellow zebra that had died. Wow, the animal kingdom is quite amazing. Murray and Cheryl shared many more animal and bird pictures and stories with us. To name a few of the birds: the Buffalo Weaver, Fischer, Jackson Widowbird, Eagle Owl, Hildebrandt's Starling and the Superb Starling, all were beautiful and unique.

Our February meeting was held at the Moore County Building in Lynchburg. Joyce and Dwain Adams and Larry and Susie Bowers were the hosts. We had 22 in attendance. Our guest speaker was Steve Johnson, author of *Sir Fob W. Pot's Journey to Katahdin*. Steve at fifty, decided to hike the 2,189.1 miles of the Appalachian Trail. The "A.T." is considered the longest footpath trail in the world. It consists of 400 mountain ranges, wooded slopes, ridges, valleys and farmland, but mainly a rocky terrain with a lot of up and down hiking. Steve's journey started at Springer Mountain in Georgia, continued through 14 states, and ended successfully at Katahdin in Maine, minus 52 pounds. Steve said walking the 2,189.1 miles is equivalent to walking from downtown Lynchburg to downtown Nashville every day for a month. 3,000 to 4,000 folks attempt a thru hike on the A.T. each year, approximately 25% succeed. Steve shared many humorous and intriguing trail stories with us.

Janie Denis, Secretary

CHAPTER NEWS

Members of the **KNOXVILLE CHAPTER** attended Scout Fest late last fall and talked to many scouts and leaders about bird watching. The club also manned a booth at the Dogwood Festival Home and Garden Show on a recent weekend, where they engaged a tremendous number of attendees, discussing all aspects of birding and care for wild birds. Our club now has a wonderful blog writer, Karin Beuerlein, whose missives are dedicated to creating better backyard habitats for birds. You can read her reports at: www.knoxbirds.org/blog.

All the area birders are thrilled that the new ADA trail, pedestrian bridge and island loop trail are now open at Seven Islands State Birding Park. This has been a long-awaited project which adds a whole new dimension to birding at one of the best bird sites in East Tennessee.



Members of KTOS under the bridge at Seven Islands State Birding Park - Photos by Laura Tappan

KTOS continues to offer a variety of bird walks that are open to the public. These include Gupton Wetlands, Cove Lake, Kyker Bottoms, Lakeshore Park, and a monthly walk at Seven Islands State Birding Park. Walks are also held quarterly for new birders at a variety of places, to help others learn how to ID birds, as well as how to feed birds visiting their yards. Please visit our website for the calendar of events and walks.

The Knoxville birding group meets monthly, with a short business meeting, followed by a variety of programs. In November, Stephen Lyn Bales, who is retired after a 21 year career at Ijams Nature Center, gave a humorous and informative program on Birds Of Prey, which included bringing with him, Doc, an American Kestrel, who is in his care. In December, Morton Massey presented a program on how to identify the confusing winter sparrows in East Tennessee. He suggested concentrating first on the breast, bill, and face of the birds. Later in the week, he led a walk at Seven Islands, concentrating on looking for these sparrows. January's meeting brought our annual Share Your Photos day, with many people sharing beautiful bird photographs from places near and far. In February, Barry Spruce showed photos and discussed winter birding in New England, mostly along the coast of Maine, with a focus on the Snowy Owl. We invite you to join us at future meetings!

We want to congratulate KTOS members, Ron Hoff and Dollyann Myers on their stellar numbers reported on worldwide counts: Number of species in the world: Dollyann #5 female with 8524 species, and Ron #6 male with 8485 species. Both added ~40 more species from a recent trip out of country. Number of species photographed, Ron is #1 with 5057! Well done!

Rare bird report: A black-chinned hummingbird showed up late last fall at a private residence in McMinn County. It has continued to come to their heated feeder over the winter. Many members of KTOS have ventured out in all types of weather to see this unusual bird.

Laura Tappan, Secretary

CHAPTER NEWS

Members of the **LEE AND LOIS HERNDON CHAPTER** of Tennessee Ornithological Society spent the winter months engaged in Christmas Bird Counts and regular field trips.

The 77th consecutive Elizabethton Christmas Bird Count was held by members and friends of the Elizabethton Bird Club on Saturday, Dec. 14. Participants for the long-running CBC tallied 63 species of birds, which was down considerably from the recent average of 73 species. The all-time high for this count consisted of 85 species and was established two years ago with the 2018 Elizabethton CBC.

The temperature lingered in the 40s all day with light rain. The low species total, as well as low individual numbers, was likely due to lousy weather, according to long-time count compiler Rick Knight. Knight noted some count highlights, including single representatives of Ruffed Grouse, Pine Warbler and Red-headed Woodpecker. In addition, 75 Wild Turkeys, 181 Eastern Bluebirds, and 449 Cedar Waxwings demonstrated that some birds were far from scarce. The 1,015 individuals counted made the European Starling the most abundant bird on this year's CBC, followed by Cedar Waxwing (449), American Robin (371) and Canada Goose (319).

Notable misses included almost all the ducks with only three species being found. Knight noted that duck numbers have been low so far this season. Counters also missed finding Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe, Eurasian Collared-dove, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Meadowlark, White-crowned Sparrow and Fox Sparrow. A single Eastern Screech-Owl represented the only owl species found on the count.

The Elizabethton Bird Club conducts a second CBC for Roan Mountain in Carter County, Tennessee. The 67th Roan Mountain CBC was held the following day, Sunday, Dec. 15, with eight observers in two parties. The skies had cleared from the previous day. Participants counting at elevations above 4,500 feet found an inch of fresh snow.

Knight noted that a good cone crop as being present in the spruce-fir forest. The count tallied 49 species, which is three above the recent 30 year average. The all-time high on this count was 55 species found in 1987. Lower species totals on this count are due to harsher climate in higher elevations, less diversity of habitats, and lower number of observers and parties.

Some highlights included 26 Canada Geese. On most CBCs, Canada Geese would not be considered extraordinary, but Knight noted there are few records on the Roan Mountain CBC for this goose. Other highlights included 11 American Black Ducks, two Red-breasted Nuthatches and a single Purple Finch. A single American Kestrel, which is also represented by only a few records on this count, was found. The counters found 27 Common Ravens, which meant that this corvid species outnumbered its relative the Blue Jay, which tallied only 21 individuals.

Knight suggested that a few notable misses for this count included Sharp-shinned Hawk, brown Creeper and Fox Sparrow.

Several chapter members also take part in other CBCs conducted annually in Northeast Tennessee. The chapter is currently making plans for its annual spring banquet. Work is proceeding on some bylaw revisions, as well.

Bryan Stevens, Editor

CHAPTER NEWS

The **NASHVILLE CHAPTER** of TOS started off 2020 with our annual Lake Christmas Bird Count on January 1, 2020. Overall numbers were a bit down. The Western Grebe, which had been seen by many birders on Percy Priest Lake, did indeed stick around to be officially included in the count as did the Pacific Loon. A complete list can be seen here <https://ntosfield.blogspot.com/p/bird-count-results.html>

Our Conservation project, Bird Window Strike Awareness at Shelby Bottoms Nature Center in East Nashville, is nearing completion, with the final window treatments being installed. Like any projects involving many moving parts and different state and local agencies, it's been a chore to keep everything coordinated. Many thanks to Denise Weyer, NTOS member and Shelby Bottoms Manager, for keeping it all on track. With fingers crossed I hope I'll be to report the completion of this project in the next *Warbler* and announce a reception date.

NTOS continues to sign-on to all Action Alerts recommended by the Conservation and Policy Committee of TOS and continues to encourage our chapter members to also take the time to send letters, emails or call their representatives as well. As wildlife, their habitats and funding for research continue to come under fire, it's important that we all take a minute to defend what we love and let others know to do the same.

Many of our members participated in the annual Great Backyard Bird Count that took place on February 14th-17th. This annual count sponsored by Cornell and National Audubon is fun, free and a great way to engage with anyone interested in birds.

It's hard to believe that I am also rounding up volunteer leaders for the annual spring Wednesday morning Radnor walks. It seems like we just completed our fall walks! The spring walks will begin on April 22nd and run through May 13th. With an average attendance

of 25 participants, these walks continue to be well received by active birders, visitors to Nashville and the general public, and are a wonderful outreach program for our Chapter.

In May NTOS is trying something new. Our field trip coordinator, Mike Smith, has a pelagic trip planned as part of our monthly field trip agenda. NTOS member, Chris Sloan will be leading this trip to Hatteras, North Carolina and providing the group with a pre-trip, what to expect program on Thursday night and a land birding adventure on Sunday before everyone heads home. If successful, we hope to repeat this kind of out-of-the-box field trip adventure each year.

On a personal note, many thanks to all who kept a hummingbird feeder out this winter, watching for one of those western hummingbirds and for those who also kept an eye out for Loggerhead Shrikes and reported the longitude/latitudes to me or on eBird. My research into both species continues and it indeed takes a village as there is no way I could cover the vastness of Tennessee alone. With spring just around the corner please continue to keep watching and report directly to me at routledges@bellsouth.net

Cyndi Routledge, NTOS President

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



SEND CORRECTIONS & CHANGE OF ADDRESS REQUESTS TO:
plasley@comcast.net

“THE TENNESSEE WARBLER”

Published by the
Tennessee Ornithological Society
5886 Willshire Drive
Nashville, TN 37215

PRESORTED
STANDARD
MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MEMPHIS, TN
PERMIT NO. 238

Want to save a tree, unclutter your mailbox and save mailing expense for the Society? If you would prefer to read each edition of *The Warbler* online at the TOS website <http://tnbirds.org/warbler.htm> please drop Pamela Lasley an email at plasley@comcast.net