

# *The Chattanooga Chat*

CHATTANOOGA CHAPTER OF THE TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Purple Martin, seen at the Honors Course. Photo Credit: David Goldsmith

## **APRIL PROGRAM**

**April 11, 7pm**

Ascension Lutheran Church  
729 S. Germantown Road  
East Ridge, TN 37412

For our April 11 program we have Dr. David DesRochers, Professor of Biology, Department of Life Science at Dalton State College. Dr. DeRochers, along with some of his students, will discuss their research on migratory bird banding. The study looks specifically at migrant songbirds and their use of ridge habitat adjacent to the college. Please join us for this interesting program and fellowship with other bird lovers!

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by OJ Morgan

As CTOS membership grows and we explore new ways to share what our club has to offer the community through updating our website and engaging more effectively in social media, we also want to clarify our information regarding membership. The Tennessee Ornithological Society, of which we are a chapter, sets the basic guidelines.

Presently, CTOS has 60 members. Ken Dubke, whom many of you may know, is our longest serving member, having joined the club in 1957. Just this past year, seventeen new members have joined our ranks, which is great news for the club and a sign of continued health and growth.

We are setting a new deadline of February 1, for renewing one's membership each year. Included in the renewal status is anyone who has paid dues in the last quarter of the previous year. In other words, if you submit your dues any time after October 1, you're good for the following year. Your membership, which also includes membership in the state organization (TOS), means you will receive the state's quarterly journal, *The Migrant*, and the state's newsletter, *The Warbler*, in addition, of course, to our monthly newsletter, *The Chattanooga Chat*. State meetings are held in the spring and fall and are a great way to meet other birders and join guided field trips in different areas of Tennessee.

Here are the membership categories for our chapter:

Student Membership \$15 (full-time, K-University)

Individual Membership \$30

Family Membership \$35 (those living at the same address)

Sustaining Membership \$40

TOS Life membership \$460

Life Membership Yearly Supplement to individual chapter \$10

The easiest way to join is through the chapter's website: <https://chattanoogatos.org>. As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to speak to us at one of our monthly meetings, the second Thursday of each month.

REMINDER: If you aren't current with your dues for 2024, please go to the website and complete your membership.

# APRIL FIELD TRIPS

**When: Saturday, April 6, 8:00am to 10:00am**

**Where: Baylor School Campus**

Luke Thompson will be leading this field trip at Baylor School. The campus has great bird diversity and is generally closed to the public. Please RSVP with Luke at [ldtbirds37@gmail.com](mailto:ldtbirds37@gmail.com)

**When: Saturday, April 13, 8:00am-10:00am (May be postponed to Sunday, 4/14 depending on the weather.)**

**Where: Bauxite Road**

Join Will Otis to bird Bauxite Road and trail. Be prepared to walk approximately 1 to 1.5 miles on gravel road/trail to see spring warblers and search for the elusive Swainson's Warbler. Parking is limited. If the trailhead is full, park at the Apison Baptist Church.

**Chimney Swift Watch Party**

**When: Thursday, April 25, 7:15pm -8:45**

**Where: Urban Stack Restaurant**

Meet to eat/drink/socialize/learn about Chimney Swifts at Urban Stack for an hour before the swifts begin to gather. Please register or email Barbara at [chimneyswifts423@gmail.com](mailto:chimneyswifts423@gmail.com) so we can notify the restaurant of the number of people coming **OR** just show up at 8:15 (no need to register).  
Optional but nice to have: Binoculars and lawn chair

**When: Saturday, April 27, 8am-12:00pm**

**Where: MacDonald Farm**

Join Kevin Calhoun as he partners with the Chattanooga Audubon Society to explore the MacDonald Farm property. To RSVP, email Kevin at [kac@tnaqua.org](mailto:kac@tnaqua.org)

**TOS Spring Meeting**

**April 26 and 27. The meeting begins at 6:30pm Friday evening in Knoxville.**

**Please register online with the Knoxville Chapter**

**<https://www.knoxbirds.org/state-meeting/>**

**Check our website calendar to see additional field trips!**

**ChattanoogaTOS.org**

## MARCH FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Birding at the Honors Golf Course by David Stone

The weather was cooler than expected for much of the morning but the birding was great. Below is a list of the birds seen and/or heard by at least someone in the group. I have not checked past records but **sixty-one** may be the highest number of species on an Honors Course field trip. Some highlights included seeing all 7 woodpecker species, both Kinglets, 2 adult Bald Eagles taking fish to the nest, a Wilson's Snipe that seems to have spent the winter here, seven sparrow species, about 10 Meadowlarks and several Yellow-rumped (I think some had just migrated in).

A special thanks to Clyde Blum and Kent Pennington in helping find so many birds.

Canada Goose	Brown-headed Nuthatch	Cedar Waxwing
Killdeer	White-breasted Nuthatch	Mourning Dove
Turkey Vulture	Northern Harrier	Blue Jay
Pectoral Sandpiper	Red-shouldered Hawk	Purple Martin
Wilson's Snipe	Red-tailed Hawk	Tufted Titmouse
Belted Kingfisher	Bald Eagle	Chipping Sparrow
Northern Flicker	Cooper's Hawk	White-throated Sparrow
Red-headed Woodpecker	American Robin	Field Sparrow
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Hermit Thrush	Savannah Sparrow
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Brown Thrasher	Song Sparrow
Pileated Woodpecker	European Starling	Northern Mockingbird
Downy Woodpecker	Carolina Wren	House Finch
Hairy Woodpecker	Eastern Bluebird	American Goldfinch
Barn Swallow	Dark-eyed Junco	Palm Warbler
Tree Swallow	Eastern Towhee	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Northern Rough-winged Swallow		Pine Warbler
Fish Crow		Brown-headed Cowbird
American Crow		Eastern Phoebe
Red-winged Blackbird		Carolina Chickadee
Rusty Blackbird		Northern Cardinal
Golden-crowned Kinglet		Eastern Meadowlark
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		
Ring-necked Duck (6 females)		
Mallard		
Blue-winged Teal		

# PHOTOS FROM BIRDING AT THE HONORS COURSE

All Photos courtesy of David Goldsmith



Clockwise from right: Cooper's Hawk, Blue-winged Teals, Hermit Thrush, Song Sparrow, Ruby Crowned Kinglet



CHATTANOOGA CHAT

## MARCH FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Birding South Chickamauga Creek- Sterchi Farms with Barbara Johnson and Jenn Martin. 32 Species and 73 individual birds were observed:

Canada Goose, Mallard, Mourning Dove, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Tree Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Carolina Wren, European Starling, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Brown-headed Cowbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Cardinal.



Photo credit: Mallard and Gray Catbird photos by Jenn Martin



Participant photo by Scott Martin

*If you have any bird photos you would like to see in the CTOS newsletter, please send them to [Chattanoogatos@gmail.com](mailto:Chattanoogatos@gmail.com). We will publish them as room permits.*

## CAKCLING GOOSE

By Kent DuBois

We had a very exciting visitor to the Chattanooga area recently. On March 17, 2024, I received a notice from Andrew and Rachel Burgess that there was a Cackling Goose (Richardson's) with some Canada Geese on a pond in front of Publix Supermarket on 1688 Ooltewah Ringgold Road. A lot of birders, including some from our group, came to see it. It is only the second time in history that a Cackling Goose is known to appear in Hamilton County. (Photo below by Kent DuBois)



## A VISIT TO EAST RIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

By Barbara Johnson

On March 18, CTOS members OJ Morgan, Sharon Klein, Kent DuBois, Danny Gaddy and Barbara Johnson visited with seven classes of first graders at East Ridge Elementary, to help with their ongoing study of wild birds.

In January, Arthur Williams, the STEAM Instructional Coach at ERE had reached out to CTOS. (STEAM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics.) OJ and Barbara visited the school then, and developed a simple teaching along with a plan to help install bird feeders which would be visible from the seven classrooms.

Using his own photos of local birds, OJ created an attractive 8-panel, 5"x4" pamphlet entitled "Chattanooga Birds" to be given to each of 140 students. The pamphlet featured 5 bird species likely to be seen at feeders (house finch, tufted titmouse, mourning dove, northern cardinal, and ruby-throated hummingbird) and simple facts about each bird. Also featured was a bird name word search in a letter grid, and "Interesting Bird Facts" including "The smallest bird is the bee hummingbird, which weighs less than a penny" and "A robin can eat about 14 feet of earthworms in one day." Wonderpress in North Chattanooga helped with the layout and did the printing, all for about \$50.

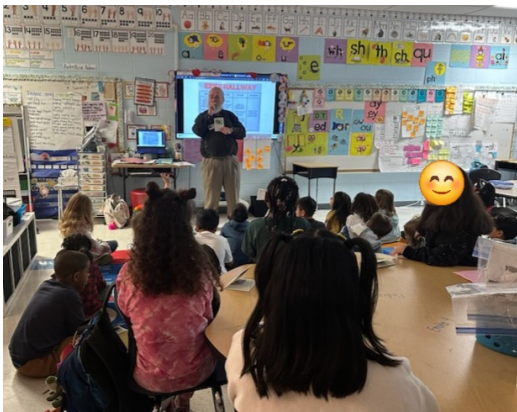
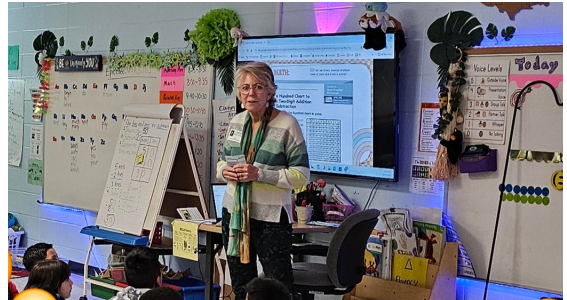
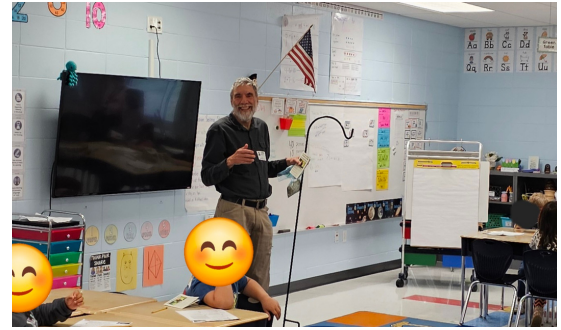
The CTOS volunteers had 15 minutes to talk birds with groups of about 20 students (veteran teachers Danny and OJ each had two groups combined). The students were well prepared, enthusiastic, and they peppered the CTOS folks with questions. One little boy did a near-perfect mourning dove call, then his entire class followed suit! They got to pass around bags of sunflower seed as an example of what they would see the birds eating.

Then all the students traipsed outside with their teachers. The CTOS volunteers had brought seven "shepherd hook" feeder poles and the students watched, (shivering!) as the poles were planted outside their classroom windows.

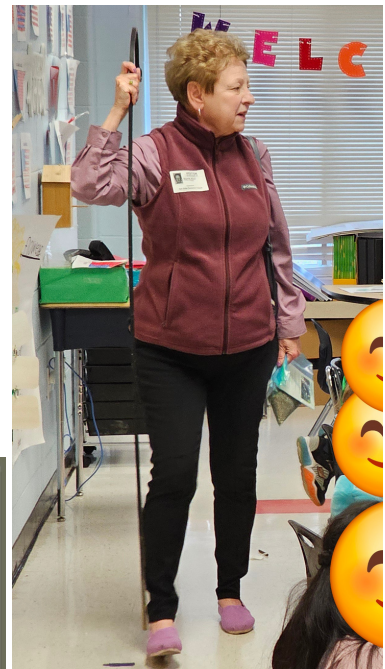
Mr. Williams explained that the platform feeders to be hung from the hooks would be made by the students in the school's fabrication lab. Mr. Williams is looking into coordinating with the grounds crew to plant more shrubbery close to the feeder poles.

Our volunteer group left the school enlivened, encouraged, and heartened to have helped plant seeds of bird awareness in so many young minds. These rewarding opportunities to reach our community members are important to the CTOS mission and the future of wildlife conservation, especially in upcoming generations.





Teaching East Ridge students (clockwise): OJ Morgan, Kent DuBois, Barbara Johnson, Sharon Klein, and Danny Gaddy. (Student faces were obscured by the smiling faces.)



Some of the common birds East Ridge students learned to identify

<p><b>Tufted Titmouse</b></p>  <p>These small birds have a gray upper body and a white chest and belly.</p> <p>They are named for pointed feathers on their head called a "tuft".</p> <p>The females and males look alike.</p> <p>They can eat hanging upside down, and feed on seeds, nuts, berries, insects, spiders, and especially caterpillars.</p> <p>They sing a song that sounds like "peter, peter, peter!"</p>	<p><b>CHATTANOOGA BIRDS</b></p> <p><b>House Finch</b></p>  <p>These small birds are mostly brown with dark streaks on their sides.</p> <p>Males have red chests and heads, and the females are plain brown.</p> <p>They eat seeds and berries.</p> <p>They love to eat at bird feeders, often with other house finches.</p> <p>Their song is lots of tweety notes in a row</p>
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## TOS SPRING MEETING IN KNOXVILLE

Join us in Knoxville for the TOS Spring Meeting April 26-28, 2024. Great birding, great people, great part of the state, what's not to like?

We'll have a Friday evening reception, field trips Saturday and Sunday mornings (and possibly a Saturday afternoon outing), Board of Directors Meeting Saturday afternoon, and a banquet and plenary speaker on Saturday evening. Saturday's business meeting, dinner, and speaker will be on the grounds of the historic Ramsay House (<https://www.ramseyhouse.org/>) in east Knoxville. We will only be able to accommodate 70 people for the dinner and speaker program on Saturday evening, so register soon.

KTOS will provide a potluck dinner at the Hampton Inn Knoxville -East (7445 Sawyer Lane, Knoxville, 37924, 865-525-3511) from 6:30-8:30 pm for those not looking to search up a local restaurant. Registration packets, name badges, and field trip sign-ups will be available during the reception as well as in the morning prior to field trips.

Our speaker will be Tiffany Kersten of Nature Ninja Birding Tours. Tiffany is a professional bird guide based in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. She is a Wildlife Ecologist, certified Interpretive Guide, and long-time environmental educator. She did a Lower 48 States Big Year in 2021, and her presentation "Birdie Big Year: Elevating Women Birders" will touch on the adventures inherent in such an endeavor with emphasis on a woman's perspective and the special challenges women face chasing birds near and far. Learn more about [Tiffany](#).

The host hotel will be the Hampton Inn Knoxville-East (7445 Sawyer Lane, Knoxville, 37924, 865-525-3511). The Friday reception will be at the Hampton, and all field trips will leave from there. This is at Exit 398 off of I-40. A room block is being held at the Hampton at a rate of \$149/night.

Dinner on Saturday evening will be catered by Bissel Catering. The menu will include grilled chicken, pork tenderloin, grilled portobello mushrooms (for non-meat eaters), red mashed potatoes, green beans with almonds, house salad, rolls, and banana pudding.

Expect Saturday and Sunday morning field trips to local hotspots including Sharps Ridge and Seven Islands State Birding Park, among others.

For more information and to register, go to

<https://www.knoxbirds.org/state-meeting/> or  
email Chris Welsh at [cwelsh@retiree.utk.edu](mailto:cwelsh@retiree.utk.edu) or  
Dawn Headrick at [mdheadrick@aol.com](mailto:mdheadrick@aol.com)

### JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP:

**Membership renewal is each January 1. Please renew your membership today!**

<https://chattanooga.org/joining-or-renewing-as-a-member/>

Individual memberships \$30      Family memberships \$35      Student memberships \$15