



# The Chattanooga Chat

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A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter  
Tennessee Ornithological Society

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## April Meeting

Reflection Riding, April 8

5:30 Board Meeting

6:30 Brief members' meeting followed by an opportunity for birdwatching on the trails.

**Thanks** to Laura Marsh for presenting our March Program.



This Long-billed Dowitcher was seen on the Brainerd Levee on 3-15-21. Bruce Dralle spotted it and we identified it after studying field marks.

## Field Trips

Submitted by Gary Brunvoll,  
Vice President for Field Trips  
[gbrunvoll@epbfi.com](mailto:gbrunvoll@epbfi.com)

April 3: 8 AM

Reflection Riding

Gary Brunvoll and Luke Thompson

Greenway Farm 7:30-11 AM.

David Aborn will be banding every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays in April. Anyone is welcome to join him.

April 10, 8 AM

Reflection Riding

Pixie and Gary Lanham

Meet at the Parking Lot

April 17, 7:30 AM

Baylor School

Luke Thompson

Meet Luke at the parking lot on the right on the way to the Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute.

April 18 (Tentative) 8 AM

Tennessee River Gardens

Clyde Blum

Watch your email for details

April 24, 7:30 AM

Chickamauga Battlefield

Danny Gaddy

Meet at the Visitors Center

May 1st- Kevin Calhoon

Chattanooga Migration Count.

Please contact Kevin for areas to be covered.

[kac@tnaqua.org](mailto:kac@tnaqua.org) is the contact email.

May 21-23

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Jeffrey Schaarschmidt

Subject to weather permitting  
Leave Chattanooga around 5 PM  
Looking for the Northern Saw-whet  
Owls.

Spend the night in Gatlinburg and bird in  
the National Park on Saturday.  
Check the web site for information  
closer to the date.

May 22: 9-10:30 AM  
Crabtree Farms  
Barbara Johnson



Purple Finch, Marion County near the  
Tennessee River, Gary Brunvoll

### **New Development**

When Corey Hagan began his term as  
the current president of CTOS; he  
challenged the board to find ways for  
CTOS to serve the community. How  
could we use the club's resources to  
preserve our wild birds and cultivate the  
public's interest in birds and birding,  
while increasing club membership and  
engaging young people and urban  
residents?

Several excellent ideas emerged,  
including building bird blinds,  
increasing access to birding areas with  
boardwalks, hosting birding events at  
local watering holes, and increasing  
publicity around field trips.

With a fascination for chimney swifts, I  
began last Fall to find and observe local  
chimneys that migrating swifts use for  
their collective roosts. I located 7 sites  
and spent many evenings counting birds  
as they gathered in great swirling,  
chittering masses before descending into  
their roosting chimneys in dramatic  
"swift-nados." The phenomenon was so  
awe-inspiring that I wished others were  
there to enjoy it. At my home in  
Southside, neighbors came out to watch  
the hundreds of "bats" roosting in a  
nearby chimney.

The CTOS board agreed that Chimney  
Swifts could be an "education  
ambassador species" for our goals  
because they:

- 1) are urban dwelling
- 2) are easy to see and hear
- 3) beneficially consume insects such as  
mosquitoes and flying-stage fire ants
- 4) are in decline (population down  
nearly 70% since 1970)
- 5) can be visibly supported through  
community education and constructed  
nest/roost towers

Some background: Chimney Swifts  
winter in Central America and return to  
the Eastern US. to breed. On  
their northward and southward  
migration, they roost nightly in groups  
numbering from dozens to thousands,  
huddled together for safety and warmth,  
historically in hollow trees and caves. As  
forests were logged, they adapted to  
human encroachment by building nests  
(glued with their saliva) on chimneys'  
interior walls. Only one pair uses a  
chimney for nesting, and communal  
roosting behavior resumes when the  
swiftlets fledge.

Swifts are not damaging to chimneys, and they don't eliminate their waste while at roost.

The same chimneys are visited year after year, but old industrial and residential chimneys are being capped, demolished, or replaced with smooth-sided structures unsuitable for clinging birds. (I was sad to see my neighborhood chimney torn down over the winter.) Pesticides have also contributed to population decline.

The CTOS board has explored building chimney replacements and locating them where the public can observe and learn about chimney swifts. Such "swift towers" are successfully serving in other areas.

CTOS could host community "swift watch parties" on evenings during migration, at an eating/drinking establishment near an urban chimney, at a school, or in a neighborhood.

We are preparing a pamphlet to:  
~distribute as educational material at programs and swift watches  
~thank owners of known nest/roost sites and encourage them to maintain chimneys  
~encourage community reporting of local nesting/roosting sites

**Do you have other ideas?** We need help hosting events, fundraising for "swift tower" construction, or creating a Chimney Swift PowerPoint to present for CTOS and other audiences. Please contact Barbara Johnson. Also, please contact Barbara if you know of chimney swift roosts in our area. She is compiling a list of swift viewing locations.  
[barbarajohnson222@gmail.com](mailto:barbarajohnson222@gmail.com).

The following items are from the tn-bird Mailing List

Hi All,

Tennessee birders might be interested to know that the American Birding Association (ABA) has added the HOODED CRANE to the official ABA Checklist in view of past reports of the crane in Nebraska, Tennessee, Idaho, and Indiana:

<https://www.aba.org/three-species-added-to-the-aba-checklist/>

Good Birding All!

Mark McShane

Lawrenceville, Gwinnett County, Georgia

### Sightings

March 22 Birchwood Area

I noted forty-four species of birds in several areas around Birchwood on March 22, 2021. My favorite species is the Brown-headed Nuthatch, but I rarely get to see them! At the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge yesterday, I saw my first one of this year in a large oak tree at the viewing area. It became my 100th species seen this year! Other highlight species follow.

- \* Wood Ducks (BFR)
  - \* American Wigeons (HWR)
  - \* Green-winged Teal (HWR)
  - \* Ruddy Ducks (T)
  - \* Wild Turkeys (HWR) – heard
  - \* Common Loons (HWR, T)
  - \* American White Pelicans - ~30 (HWR near Hiwassee Island)
  - \* Ospreys (HWR, E)
  - \* Bald Eagles (HWR, E)
  - \* Fish Crow (T)
  - \* Carolina Wren (HWR) – The wren was VERY dark above and below the white eye stripe. Might it be a western form blown in from Texas or Mexico?
  - \* Pine Warbler (HWR)
- Charles Murray

March 15

Shorebirds Seen at the Brainerd Levee

The shorebird habitat at the Brainerd Levee has been excellent the last two weeks.

Below is the list of shorebirds that have been seen.

Greater Yellowlegs (2) March 9 - continuing.

Lesser Yellowlegs (1) March 11 - continuing.

Least Sandpiper (2) March 10-March 11.

Long-billed Dowitcher (1) March 15.

Wilson's Snipe (16-95) January 6

Killdeer (3-30) January 5 - continuing.

- Bruce Dralle

March 13

Brainerd Levee

Northern Rough-winged Swallows

Barn Swallow

Wilson's Snipe,

Greater Yellowlegs.

- David Aborn

March 8

I took my UTC Ornithology class to Brainerd Levee yesterday, and we saw a nice assortment of species. The highlights were a pair of Blue-winged Teal (the 1st ones I have seen all winter) and an American Pipit (amazingly, just 1). Many Wilson's Snipe are out foraging, Gadwall, Northern Shovelers, and Green-winged Teal, a lone Tree Swallow, and a sub-adult Bald Eagle. Here is the full list:

Canada Goose

Mallard

Blue-winged Teal

Green-winged Teal

Gadwall

Northern Shoveler

Mourning Dove

American Coot

Killdeer

Wilson's Snipe

Ring-billed Gull

Great Blue Heron

Turkey Vulture

Red-tailed Hawk

Bald Eagle

Belted Kingfisher

Red-bellied Woodpecker

Eastern Phoebe

American Crow

Fish Crow

Carolina Chickadee

Northern Mockingbird

Eastern Bluebird

American Robin

American Pipit

Song Sparrow

Eastern Meadowlark

Red-winged Blackbird

Common Grackle

Northern Cardinal

- David Aborn

March 5

At Thatch Road north of Island View Drive in Hamilton County I located a Horned Grebe, and it was with a group of six Ruddy Ducks. A few minutes later, the ducks were drifting south in the river and came near another group of ten Ruddy Ducks. I have usually seen this species only every couple of years, and I usually see only one or two Ruddy Ducks then!

- Charles Murray

### **Join CTOS:**

Membership Dues Individual: \$28

Student \$15 Family: \$32

Sustaining: \$40 Lifetime: \$460 (Lifetime members must pay \$10 local dues each year.)

**NEW: Join or renew your membership online!**

[ChattanoogaTOS.org](http://ChattanoogaTOS.org)

**Select membership level, click "Add to Cart", and you will be taken to the Secure PayPal site where you can pay by credit card or PayPal account**

All dues, donations, gifts, and bequests are tax deductible under Sec. 501 (c)(3), the Internal Revenue Code.

Need to pay by check? Make your check out to "TOS" and send to:

Fran Hiestand, CTOS Treasurer  
8935 N. Hickory Valley Rd Chattanooga,  
TN 37416 Please include your address,  
phone number, and an email address.