

# The Chattanooga Chat

The newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society





The  
Chattanooga Chapter  
of the  
Tennessee  
Ornithological Society

**OFFICERS**

**President**  
Corey Hagen

**VP of Field Trips**  
Gary Burnvoll

**VP of Programs**  
open

**Treasurer**  
Fran Hiestand

**Secretary**  
open

**Historian**  
Barbara Johnson

**Communications**  
Jeffrey Schaarschmidt

**WEBSITE**

www.ChattanoogaTOS.org

**THE CHATTANOOGA CHAT**

The *Chattanooga Chat* is published monthly by the Chattanooga Chapter for the Tennessee Ornithological Society.

**Members Reach Birding Milestones**



Kevin Cahoun (L) and Jeffrey Schaarschmidt (R) reached achieved personal birding milestones in Namibia.

Recently a few club members went on a birding tour of Namibia. The tour was extremely successful, with the group seeing 499 out of Namibia’s 508 species of bird, including all of the endemic species.

While on tour Kevin Cahoun observed his 3500th world bird species, and eventually exceeded 3600 world life bird species during

the tour.

Jeffrey Schaarschmidt observed his 2000th world life bird species during the tour.

Gary Brunvoll fell a mere 37 species short of reaching his 4000th world bird species. However, he was able to photograph his 2900th world species during the tour.

**Secretary Position is Open**

As noted in the previous issue, Ray Zimmerman has been appointed to fill the vacant position of VP of Programming. Prior to this appointment Ray served as Secretary.

His appointment to VP of Programming leaves the position of Secretary open. If you are interested in the Secretary position, please contact Club President, Corey Hagen, at [chagen@reflectionriding.org](mailto:chagen@reflectionriding.org)

**REMINDER:  
Membership  
Dues Are Due  
for 2022**

The club’s membership year runs January 1 through December 31. The club provides a number of ways to join or renew for 2022.

You can join or renew online from the Join page of our website (<http://ChattanoogaTOS.org/joining-or-renewing-as-a-member/>) using your credit card or PayPal account.

Additionally, you can print the membership form from page 5 of this newsletter. You can either mail it in with a check or money order, or bring the same to the next club meeting.

Your membership dues allow us to offer exciting field trips and engaging programs at our monthly meetings.

Members receive our monthly newsletter, [The Chattanooga Chat](#), along with membership in the state Tennessee Ornithological Society. All state members also receive the [The Tennessee Warbler](#) newsletter and [The Migrant](#) quarterly journal.

**ON THE COVER:** Least Bittern photographed by and used with permission of Jeffrey Schaarschmidt.

## National Audubon Society Helps Overturn Trump Admin’s Harmful Policies, Reestablish Protections

Almost immediately after being elected, former president Donald Trump started an all out assault on our public lands and legislation that protected the country’s most vulnerable wildlife species.

Trump appointed mining insiders to head agencies that were charged with protecting our public lands, and he opened critical habitat and cultural sites to coal, gas, and mineral leases. For example, the Trump administration reduced the size of Bears Ear monument by 85% to allow for oil and gas exploration.

Additionally, Trump targeted, undermined, or ignored, the Endangered Species and Migratory Bird Acts.

Luckily, a coalition of conservation groups were able to get the current administration to turn back most of the Trump-era policies. Following are a list of their successful efforts:

### Bears Ear Monument Restored to Original Boundaries.

Lawsuits filed by indigenous tribes helped keep the Bears Ear Monument safe until after Trump left office. Trump’s executive order downsizing Bears Ear Monument at the behest of oil and gas lobbyist placed ancient dwellings and rock at risk of destruction.

However, shortly after taking office President Biden signed executive orders to restore Bears Ear Monument to its original boundaries. “This may be the easiest thing I have done as president,” Biden said after signing the executive orders.

This move will ensure that the panels of visionary rock art carved and painted on the cliffs will be preserved.

### Restoration of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

In September the Biden-Harris administration not only restored the protections afforded to birds, but took a step to create a framework for industry so that they could be compliant with the law. This included \$2.5 billion dollars to target USDA watershed programs, help fund the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the Army Corps Ecosystem Restoration projects.

### Audubon and Democracy Forward won a lawsuit to maintain the Coastal Barrier Resources Act.

The CBRA is a bi-partisan act signed into law by Ronald Reagan in 1982 to protect undeveloped beaches.

The Trump administration created an illegal rule that allowed the mining of sand from undeveloped beaches, in violation of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act.

These beaches provide a home for coastal birds, like the threatened Piping Plover, and a buffer for nearby communities from storm surges and rising seas.

Last month, in response to the Audubon lawsuit, new leadership at the Department of Interior issued a legal memorandum rescinding the Trump administration’s illegal rule. As a result, the

CBRA has been restored in full.

### Restoration of the Key Management Plans for the Bi-states Sage-Grouse in the West.

In an attempt to pander to gold mining interests, the Trump administration changed rules protecting critical bi-state sage grouse habitat. The National Audubon Society and other organizations filed suit seeking to block the rule change. In 2018, a federal judge found the Trump administration had illegally denied protection and ordered it to re-evaluate the bird’s status.

The bird was again proposed for protection, but the Trump administration withdrew that proposal claiming the population had improved, despite an 80% decline since 1965.

The suit continued until earlier this year, when the BLM announced it would reinstate the plans established in 2015 by stakeholders from across the West.

### Restoration of the Federal Safeguards to Wetlands in the Mississippi Flyway wetlands.

In 2020 the Trump administration attempted to revive a project to drain Mississippi Flyway wetlands that support more than 28 million migratory birds annually.

The National Audubon Society and other conservations filed suit. In response, earlier this year, the EPA restored its 2008 Clean Water Act veto of the projects.

## Tennessee Rare Bird Reports

A **Western Tanager** was observed by Victor Stoll along Cuba Landing Road, in **Humphreys County**, on December 30.

A Scott’s Oriole was observed on December 27 at Bell’s Bend park in **Davidson County**. It could not be relocated the next day.

An **Iceland Gull** was observed by Warren Massey, at the Pickwick Dam, in **Hardin County** on December 27th. It was still being seen on this newsletter’s publication date.

A **Pacific Loon** was observed on J. Percy Priest Lake—Cook Recreation Area, on December 23. There haven’t been any reports of the bird since.

A **Little Gull** was observed by Don Blunk, in **Stewart County**, on December 22. The bird was along the Cumberland River at Wily’s Spring Bay, northwest of Dover. No additional reports for this bird have been made.

Two **Pacific Loons** were located on Chickamauga Lake, out from the dam, in **Hamilton County**, on December 17th. Both are still being seen on this newsletter’s publication date.

*Continued on Page 4*

**Tennessee Rare Bird  
Reports Continued**

A **Bullock's Oriole** was reported coming to the Bradford Ave, Wild Birds Unlimited's feeder in **Davidson County** on December 20. The last observation took place on December 27.

A **Snowy Owl** was reported at the Fowler Road Irrigation Pond in **Lincoln County** on December 11. However, the next day birder Thomas McEwen noticed the bird flopping around on the ground where it came to a rest and died.

TOS member David Aborn, was able to obtain the bird, and took it to the University of Tennessee's vet school where they took tissue samples to send to Project SNOWstorm for complete analyses. The goal is to determine the cause of death.

The body will become a preserved museum specimen and added to the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's collection.

We will post a follow up to this report in the next issue of *The Chattanooga Chat*.

Another **Snowy Owl** was reported at Paris Landing State Park in **Henry County** on December 6. No other reports for this bird have been made.

A **White-winged Scoter** was reported in Maury County on December 14. It was reported as continuing on December 18. No other reports for this bird have been made.

January Events

Our full events calendar can be found on our website:  
[www.ChattanoogaTOS.org](http://www.ChattanoogaTOS.org)

**January 1, at 8 a.m. —** The **Hiwassee Christmas Bird Count** is scheduled to take place on **January 1st**. If you are interested in participating, please contact Kelvin Calhoun at: [kevincalhoun@hotmail.com](mailto:kevincalhoun@hotmail.com)

**January 13, at 6 p.m.—** **Club meeting and program**, 900 N Sanctuary Rd, Chattanooga, TN 37421. **On line Zoom meeting only. See below for how to connect!**

Join Laura Marsh of Nova Conservation for a virtual bird watching experience from the comfort of your couch!

Laura will share the basics of birding from home, including using binoculars and a field guide, bird feeder use, and identification of common backyard birds. She will also be available to answer questions about bird biology and identification. Laura Marsh is a field ornithologist and conservation biologist. She holds a Master's in Environmental Science, and her thesis was on bird responses to human disturbances. She is also the founder of Nova Conservation, an organization dedicated to connecting hobby biologists to conservation researchers by providing unique field experiences. She has worked as a biologist at various institutions, including the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. Laura also volunteers at Chattanooga Audubon Society and other ornithological societies when she's not chasing birds in the field or her two young boys around the house.

**Attend this event via Zoom, by following the hyperlink from our Event's Calendar on our website. Simply go to [www.ChattanoogaTOS.org](http://www.ChattanoogaTOS.org), and click the Events tab. This will bring up our calendar. Click on the event to launch a small pop-up and scroll to the bottom of the event's description to locate the hyperlink. Click the link and enjoy the presentation.**

**Do you want to lead a fieldtrip?**

The Club is looking for members to lead field trips. If you would like to lead a field trip in the upcoming months, please contact our VP of Field Trips, Gary Brumvoll, at [gbrunvoll@epbfi.com](mailto:gbrunvoll@epbfi.com). Gary will make sure your event is added to our online calendar and is promoted in the newsletter.

# Chattanooga Chapter of Tennessee Ornithological Society

## Membership Form

You can also join online on our website: <http://chattanoogatos.org/joining-or-renewing-as-a-member/>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please ensure letters and numbers are unambiguous; use upper case letters if necessary)

Mobile phone number: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

### Annual Dues:

Individual Membership: \$28.00

Family Membership: \$32.00

Student Membership: \$15.00

State Sustaining Membership: \$40.00

State Life Membership: \$460.00 (local dues of \$10.00 still payable each year)

**FYI:** \$10.00 of your dues is retained at the local chapter, and the rest goes to the state organization. The extra contribution in the State Sustaining Membership goes to the state, but you may also designate an additional contribution for either the local chapter or the state organization. All dues, donations, gifts, and bequests are tax deductible under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

You can send a check for dues at the address below. *Make checks payable to "TOS".*

Fran Hiestand, CTOS Treasurer  
8935 N. Hickory Valley Road  
Chattanooga, TN 37416