

# *The Chattanooga Chat*

CHATTANOOGA CHAPTER OF THE TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY



**Black Legged Kittiwake- one of the birds recently seen in the Chattanooga area.**

Photo credit: Shutterstock

## **MARCH PROGRAM**

**March 14, 7pm**

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

For our March 14 program we have Sherry Teas from Camp Wilderdest. Sherry is the only songbird rehabilitator in the Chattanooga area. Their busy season is about to start as the nesting season brings a lot of orphaned nestlings. Many times they also rehab adult songbirds; of particular interest is a Blackburnian Warbler injured by someone's cat last fall. Come and hear that story and others. You can read more on how Sherry got started Camp Wilderdest at the website <http://www.happinestwildlife.com/sherry-teas.html>.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by OJ Morgan

As our days get a bit warmer, I'm sure everyone is looking forward to the spring migration and the influx of our favorite warblers and other avian visitors making a stop in Chattanooga. As you'll see in this month's newsletter, we're planning several field trips throughout the spring, and I encourage everyone to take advantage of what fellow CTOS members have to offer.

Speaking of field trips, for 70 years, CTOS birders have been educating each other as well as interested members of the public through our many trips. As a matter of fact, part of our mission statement reads: "The objective of this Chapter shall be to promote the study of birds in the Chattanooga area..." In addition to field trips, however, we're pursuing other ways of promoting the study and love of birds. CTOS offered a beginning birders workshop recently, led by Kevin Calhoun, for a group of folks, young and old, at Audubon Acres as part of their Great Backyard Bird Count of 2024. Dr. David Aborn also presented a bird banding workshop. Barbara Johnson and I also met with students at Ivy Academy last month to introduce them to birding and demonstrate how best to go about looking for birds and identifying them. Later this month a group of CTOS members will meet with over 100 first graders at East Ridge Elementary to talk about birds and advise them in their project to build feeders. We'll be providing them the poles from which they'll hang their feeders outside their classroom windows.

As a former educator, I love the idea of us sharing our knowledge with others, especially young people. The more they know, the better we will be able to fulfill the second part of our mission statement, "...to stand for the passage and enforcements of wise and judicious laws for bird protection." Education leads to wise decisions, and I see CTOS playing an important role in making this a reality.



**This month there was a confirmed sighting of a Golden Eagle soaring above Sidney Street in Chattanooga.**

photo credit: Shutterstock

## MARCH FIELD TRIPS

**When: Saturday March 9, 9am to noon AND Sunday, March 10, 3pm to 6pm**

**Where: Honors Golf Course**

David Stone and Clyde Blum will be leading two late winter birding field trips at The Honors Course in Ooltewah. Expect to see many of our year round birds, plus many birds that are only here during late fall through winter. We might also see some early arriving spring through summer birds. To reserve your spot email David at [rockyturf@epbfi.com](mailto:rockyturf@epbfi.com). These trips are limited to 18 participants.

Please note: Daylight Saving Time starts March 10

In the event of rain, the trip will be moved to March 16 and 17.

**When: Saturday, March 23, 8:30am - 10:00am**

**Where: South Chickamauga Greenway Trail**

Join Barbara Johnson and Jenn Martin for an easy birding walk along South Chickamauga Creek on pavement and boardwalk. Beginning birders are welcome. Meet at Sterchi Farm Trailhead parking lot. This trip will be canceled in the event of rain.

**When: April 6, 8:00am -10:00am**

**Where: Baylor School Campus**

Join Luke Thompson to bird a private spot with great bird diversity. RSVP Luke at [ldtbirds37@gmail.com](mailto:ldtbirds37@gmail.com) to attend. This trip is limited to 20 participants.

**When: April 13 or 14, 8:00am - 10:00am**

**Where: Bauxite Road**

Bird Bauxite Road and trail with William Otis. Be prepared to walk approximately 1 to 1.5 miles on a gravel road/trail to see spring warblers and the elusive Swainson's Warbler. Parking is limited at the trailhead. If the lot is full, park at the Apison Baptist Church.

**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**

# FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP REPORTS

## **Chester Frost Park Birding by Kent DuBois**

It turned out to be a productive birding trip at Chester Frost starting at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, February 10th. There were a dozen participants for a trip that lasted about 4 hours and covered different areas of the park, including both Dallas Bay and Chickamauga Lake. We identified a total of 53 different species, that included Sandhill Cranes, Least Sandpipers, Canvasbacks, Ruddy Ducks, American Pipits, Red-headed Woodpeckers, a Herring Gull, a Red-tailed Hawk, and at least 4 Bald Eagles. This was a very nice group and it was a very enjoyable experience.

## **Nickajack Lake Birding by Tim Lenz**

The February 17, 2024, CTOS Field Trip to Nickajack was a chilly one, but we still managed to enjoy many of the birds that are typical of the season. Early morning observations began at the TN-156 Pull-off, where a large raft of Lesser Scaup bobbed up and down in the distance. The Cole City Public Access area normally offers a sheltered locale to view dabbling ducks and gulls, but today the north wind zipped across the road and offered no respite. Nevertheless, we still found an active mixed flock of Carolina Chickadees and Yellow-rumped Warblers, which included 100+ Cedar Waxwings that would fly to the water's edge to drink.

Moving to the dam at Hogjaw Rd., we enjoyed watching the feeding frenzy of gulls below the powerhouse, which included a dozen Bonaparte's Gulls and one immature Herring Gull. Above the dam, we managed to spot four Ruddy Ducks near another raft of scaup. We then decided to head up to Bennett Lake, where the boat ramp offered distant views of hundreds of ducks, but only some Redheads and Canvasbacks were close enough to identify. This spot was also good for landbirds, which included a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and great views of a Brown Thrasher turning over dead leaves on the ground. Finally, on the way home, we stopped at the I-24 E Jasper Rest Area, which turned out to be the unexpected highlight of the trip! A Peregrine Falcon zipped right by us, followed by three Red-breasted Mergansers in the distance. We also saw our only Common Loon of the day here.

Overall, it was a fantastic day, and a great reminder that birds can be enjoyed and can surprise us no matter what the weather. To see the checklist, go to <https://ebird.org/tripreport/201267>

# CTOS BIRDWALKS AT CRABTREE FARMS

by Barbara Johnson

On May 11, for the 5th time, CTOS and Crabtree Farms will co-host a migration-season bird walk on the 22- acre parcel in the Clifton Hills neighborhood. Crabtree Farms has warmly welcomed CTOS, promoting the events on its website and other media, and even mowing extra walking paths. Each event has attracted 25-35 attendees (many new to birding, including youngsters) who break into smaller groups led by 3-4 CTOS leaders to explore the farm.

eBirders have reported 96 bird species at Crabtree Farms. The east edge of the property is bordered by Chattanooga Creek and one of the larger tracts of undeveloped woods in the city. Walking the perimeter of the fenced farm is productive for seeing and hearing a variety of woodland species, and the large hardwood trees within the farm are good for spotting orioles and tanagers. Swallows and sparrows hunt in the cultivated fields and around compost piles and grassy swaths. Large puddles have attracted waders. Blue grosbeaks and indigo buntings are often perched on grape arbor posts. In such a broad open area surrounded by woods, sky-watching is rewarding, with raptors and heron species. Prothonotary warblers and yellow-crowned night herons can be heard from the wet woods along Chattanooga Creek. In warm months, the annual gardens are a treat for butterfly lovers.

Since 1998, the non-profit community farm has leased the property from the city of Chattanooga. Crabtree Farms's mission (from the website) is "to expand access to locally grown food, provide farm based educational opportunities, and cultivate community." The farm produces a variety of crops which it sells and donates throughout the city. If you dine out often, you've likely enjoyed Crabtree Farm produce!

Crabtree Farms provides plots for community members to garden and learn sustainable farming. Career farmer training and internships are available. Chattanoogaans participate in activities and classes, including organic gardening instruction, breadmaking, beekeeping, and personal growth workshops. Volunteers help the staff with farm chores and operate the on-site farm stand, where visitors shop for seasonal Crabtree Farms produce and plants, along with goods from other local producers. The farm rents its attractive Evelyn Center for weddings and other events. At a yearly fundraiser, 200 guests are seated at long tables under the trees, for an elegant multi-course, farm-sourced evening meal prepared by Chattanooga's finest culinary talents.

Visitors are welcome. If you do visit the farm to birdwatch, please consider making a donation via the website ( [www.crabtreefarms.org](http://www.crabtreefarms.org)).

1000 E 30th St. Chattanooga, TN 37407

Mon-Sat: 9am-4pm; closed on Sundays



Recently there was a confirmed sighting of a Blue Winged Teal at Amnicola Marsh by Susan Schott.  
photo credit Shutterstock

*If you have any bird photos you would like to see in the CTOS newsletter, please send them to ChattanoogaGatos@gmail.com. We will publish them as room permits.*

## IN THE NEWS

On a street in Tacoma Park, Maryland, you can find a now-rare pay phone- except instead of making calls, it plays birdsongs. David Schulman, a violinist, created it in 2016 as part of a public art project competition, rewiring an old pay phone so that it played different birdcalls. To get the avian sounds, he contacted the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, New York, who sent him recordings of native birds. Schulman even added voice instructions in a range of languages, including Spanish and Amharic, the chief language of Ethiopia. Each button on the phone plays a different call; Number 1 is reserved for Schulman's favorite, the night heron.

*The Week Magazine, February 2, 2024*

### JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP:

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

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

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