

# *The Chattanooga Chat*

CHATTANOOGA CHAPTER OF THE TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Northern Parula

Photo Credit: Shutterstock

## **MAY PROGRAM**

**May 9, 7pm**

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

Stephanie Mueller will be our program presenter for the Thursday, May 9 meeting. Stephanie is a ranger at the 416 acre Seven Islands State Park, where efforts to maintain habitat for grassland birds, shore birds and woodland birds have resulted in a rich environment. Located along the French Broad River, just east of Knoxville, their bird habitat efforts were highlighted last summer on the TV show "Tennessee Crossroads." Some of you might have joined us when CTOS had a joint field trip with Knoxville TOS at the park last fall. To learn more about Seven Islands visit <https://tnstateparks.com/parks/seven-islands>.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By OJ Morgan

Just recently I enjoyed perusing the CTOS archives stretching back to the 1950's. Browsing through all the old membership rolls and field trip reports gave me a good feeling about the impact our club has had on the good folks of Chattanooga over the years, providing valuable educational opportunities and experiences for everyone. We continue to be part of something quite good for our community.

One lasting impression was how important social gatherings used to be for the club. Usually after field trips or on certain weekends, members would all bring food for a picnic to enjoy some downtime together. These days, however, this sort of gathering has lost the race against our overly scheduled and busy lives. I regret that. It just seems a healthy thing for folks who share a common passion and interest to get to know one another better. I think it's also healthy for our club.

With that in mind, and to kickstart us thinking along those lines, the board has scheduled a potluck dinner on Sunday, July 7, at the Greenway Farms Conference Center. It's a beautiful place with plenty of parking and fields and trails for families to enjoy. We thought we'd begin around 4 pm, and finish around 7:30. I want to encourage everyone to come, especially since we have no scheduled monthly meetings during the summer.

If anyone would like to help plan some social events in the future, please let me know. We'd like to keep them simple and let good food and good cheer (and lots of bird talk) be the motivating factors in bringing everyone together.



Blue Grosbeak

Photo Credit: Shutterstock

# MAY FIELD TRIPS

**When: Every Tuesday and Wednesday in May at 7:45pm**

**Where: Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor Center**

Join Danny Gaddy for an evening of birding. Danny will take you to look for Chimney Swifts and Chuck-will's-widow, along with other birds.

**When: Sunday, May 5, 8:30am**

**Where: Point Park, 110 Point Park Road**

Will Otis will lead this trip. Admission to the National Park is required and the group size is limited to 12. RSVP to Will at [wotis1114@gmail.com](mailto:wotis1114@gmail.com) or text 423-902-8858. Meet Will at the entrance to the Park near the Visitor Center.

**When: Wednesday, May 8, 7:30am (Central Time Zone)**

**Where: Nashville, Radnor Lake, 1160 Otter Creek Road, Oak Hill, TN 37220**

This is in conjunction with the Nashville Chapter of TOS. Join us for this Wednesday morning for a spring migration walk at Radnor Lake State Park. Our walk begins at 7:30am outside the Visitor's Center off Otter Creek Road. If you get caught in traffic or can't get there right at 7:30am you can catch up with us. We go up the road, across the spillway and down the trail to Long Bridge where the walk officially ends. Many will continue around but that is a personal choice. There is no registration or fee involved and we welcome ALL birders no matter experience or knowledge. There will be a point of contact who will keep a list of birds for the group.

**When: Saturday, May 11, 8:30am to 10:30am**

**Where: Crabtree Farms, 1000 East 30th Street, Chattanooga**

Barbara Johnson will be leading this field trip at Crabtree Farms. See, hear, and learn about the birds that nest at Crabtree Farms, and birds that are migrating through. Members of the Chattanooga Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society (the local birdwatching club) will guide you around the farm's various habitats and give you tips on spotting and identifying birds. All ages are welcome, from beginners to seasoned birders! Bring binoculars if you have them; there will also be a limited number to borrow. Wear long pants and sturdy shoes; bug spray recommended. Canceled in the event of rain.

**When: Sunday, May 12, 8am**

**Where: Craven's House**

Come and see the late-spring migrants with Kevin Calhoon. To RSVP, email Kevin at [kac@tnaqua.org](mailto:kac@tnaqua.org) Meet in the lower parking lot at Craven's House.

**When: Monday, May 20, 5pm and Tuesday, May 28**

**Where: Honors Golf Course**

Join David Stone and bird by golf carts at the Honors Course. We should see Red-headed Woodpeckers, Bald Eagles & Eastern Meadow Larks plus many of our spring/summer birds like Purple Martins, Tree Swallows, Orchard Orioles, Prairie Warblers and perhaps Kentucky Warblers. Each date is limited to 10 people. To reserve a spot email David at [rockyturf@epbfi.com](mailto:rockyturf@epbfi.com).

# APRIL FIELD TRIP REPORTS

## **Bauxite Road Trail Birding: Led by William Otis**

**April 13, 2024, 7:40AM, traveling 1.46 miles, 170 minutes**

9 Canada Goose, 3 Mourning Dove, 2 Killdeer, 1 Black Vulture, 2 Turkey Vulture,  
4 Red-bellied Woodpecker, 3 Downy Woodpecker, 1 Hairy Woodpecker,  
3 White-eyed Vireo, 1 Red-eyed Vireo,  
4 Blue Jay, 1 American Crow,  
4 Carolina Chickadee, 2 Tufted Titmouse,  
2 Tree Swallow, 2 Ruby-crowned Kinglet,  
1 Brown-headed Nuthatch, 5 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 3 Carolina Wren,  
1 Northern Mockingbird, 1 Brown Thrasher, 11 European Starling,  
3 Eastern Bluebird, 1 Hermit Thrush, 5 American Robin,  
1 House Finch, 5 American Goldfinch,  
2 White-throated Sparrow, 3 Eastern Towhee,  
3 Eastern Meadowlark, 2 Red-winged Blackbird, 1 Brown-headed Cowbird, 2 Common  
Grackle  
2 Swainson's Warbler -- Heard only, and by the whole group. Two distinct individuals calling  
in different sections of the trail. Possibly 3,  
1 Common Yellowthroat, 2 Northern Parula, 2 Pine Warbler, 1 Yellow-rumped Warbler,  
4 Northern Cardinal, 1 Blue Grosbeak  
Number of Taxa: 40

## **Tennessee River Gardens Spring Migration Count: Led by Clyde Blum**

**April 14, 2024, 8:56AM, traveling 2.5 miles, 3 hours 22 minutes**

2 Canada Goose, 2 Wood Duck, 3 Wild Turkey,  
1 Pied-billed Grebe, 7 Double-crested Cormorant,  
1 Green Heron, 3 Great Blue Heron, 10 Black Vulture, 14 Turkey Vulture, 2 Osprey,  
3 Bald Eagle (Two young on nest. Adult carrying fish to nest),  
1 Red-shouldered Hawk, 1 Broad-winged Hawk, 1 Belted Kingfisher,  
4 Red-bellied Woodpecker, 2 Pileated Woodpecker, 1 Northern Flicker, 2 Eastern Phoebe,  
4 White-eyed Vireo, 1 Blue Jay,  
5 American Crow, 2 Fish Crow, 4 Carolina Chickadee, 2 Tufted Titmouse,  
6 Tree Swallow, 8 Northern Rough-winged Swallow, 4 Barn Swallow, 2 Ruby-crowned  
Kinglet,  
1 White-breasted nuthatch, 6 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 4 Carolina Wren, 1 European  
Starling,  
3 Brown Thrasher, 1 Northern Mockingbird, 6 Eastern Bluebird, 1 Wood Thrush,  
1 American Robin, 5 American Goldfinch, 8 White-throated Sparrow, 1 Eastern Towhee,  
4 Orchard Oriole, 2 Red-winged Blackbird, 3 Brown-headed Cowbird, 1 Louisiana  
Waterthrush,  
1 Blue-winged Warbler, 1 Northern Parula, 2 Palm Warbler, 2 Yellow-rumped Warbler,  
3 Yellow-throated Warbler, 1 Prairie Warbler, 4 Northern Cardinal,  
1 Blue Grosbeak (Male- stout blue bird with heavy bill with red wing bars)  
Number of Taxa: 52

All photos courtesy of Clyde Blum; taken at the Tennessee River Gardens field trip.  
clockwise from top left: Turkey Vulture, 2 Juvenile Bald Eagles on nest, Tree Swallow, Prairie Warbler, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, White-eyed Vireo



# APRIL FIELD TRIP REPORTS, CONTINUED

**McDonald Farm: led by Kevin Calhoon and Jessica and Emilee from Audubon Acres.**

**April 28, 2024 8am, traveling 2 miles, 3.5 hours**

**Below is the list of birds and other creatures seen:**

Gray Catbird, Eastern Towhee, Blue Jay, Red-shouldered Hawk, Yellow-breasted Chat, Field Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Kentucky Warbler, Louisiana Water Thrush, Northern Waterthrush, Palm Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Rough-winged Swallow, Fish Crow, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Brown Thrasher, Chipping Sparrow, Indigo Bunting, White-eyed Vireo, Rock Pigeon, Tufted Titmouse, Great-crested Flycatcher, Red-tailed Hawk, Eastern Phoebe, Caroline Chickadee, Eastern Bluebird, Osprey, Mourning Dove, Blue Grosbeak, Great Blue Heron, Red-eyed Vireo, Goldfinch, Scarlet Tanager, Blue Gray Gnatcatcher, Baltimore Oriole, Orchard Oriole, Cowbird, Carolina Wren, Cormorant, Downy Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Killdeer, Common Grackle, American Crow, American Robin, Northern Cardinal, House Finch, Chimney Swift, Mockingbird, Barn Swallow, Tree Swallow, Meadowlark, Eastern Kingbird, Starling (Taxa 61)

We also saw an Eastern Cottontail, the shell of a Female Box Turtle, Cope's Gray Tree Frogs, Variegated Fritillary Butterflies, Pearl Crescent Butterflies, Eastern Tiger Swallowtails and a Northern Common Water Snake.



Eastern Bluebird

Photo Credit: Shutterstock

# THE VERMILLION FLYCATCHER

## BY LUKE THOMPSON

Tim Lenz and I had been birding since before dawn on our “half big day.” We had just finished up birding Raccoon Mountain for warblers. It had been a good day, with 25 species of warblers thus far. We ordered takeout from a restaurant near Baylor, and it turned out we would have an extra five minutes on the way. I did some quick calculations in my head, and we did what any sane birder would do: take a detour to check more habitat.

We pulled up to a field along Pineville Road expecting nothing but maybe a couple of common shorebirds like Solitary Sandpiper and Killdeer. As we hopped out of the car, Tim noticed a sparrow sitting on the fence behind the mud. I grabbed my scope to check for the sparrow (turned out to be a Savannah), but it had flown. I scanned right on the fence to double check a brown bird that I had seen further down. My scope landed on a small, upright bird perched atop the barbed wire. I ran through the possibilities. Upright posture and bill shape meant flycatcher. The brown on the back was decent for the expected phoebe, but this bird had a shorter tail. Streaks on the breast fading into salmon flanks and belly stood out against the white background on the underparts. I had seen this pattern before in Arizona and Texas, but it was nowhere near on my radar as a possibility here. Ten seconds of processing, and I let out a string of expletives surrounding the words “Vermilion” and “Flycatcher!”

This bird was the first Hamilton County record, second East Tennessee record, and around 20th state record.

Luck and fate led Tim and me to it, and fifty or more people were able to see it that day.



Vermillion Flycatcher 4/28/24, Chattanooga  
CHATTANOOGA CHAT



Photo Credit: Victor Stoll

## MEET WILLIAM OTIS

Will was born and raised in Southeast Pennsylvania before his family relocated to Chattanooga in 2005. He is a graduate of Southern Adventist University and holds a Master of Business Administration in Healthcare Administration and an undergraduate degree in Health Science with minors in Biology, Chemistry, and Business. Will currently is the Senior Vice President of Operations for QSL Management, where they operate and manage 30 senior living communities. He has been married to his wife, Sarah, for 12 years, and they have a 5-year-old daughter, Luz. A lifelong nature enthusiast, Will did not get into birding officially until 2022. Since then, birding has become a quick passion of his that he enjoys sharing with his brother, daughter, family, and friends. In his spare time, Will enjoys cycling, running, and travel. His favorite place to bird outside of Chattanooga has been Costa Rica. Will accepted the position as CTOS field trip chair to encourage more people to participate in the hobby (both young and old) and create lasting memories and experiences for Chattanooga birders.



Golden-crowned Kinglet Photo credit: Shutterstock



## DID YOU KNOW?

Chattanooga is the first city in the nation to be nominated for a “City in a Park” status! Below is a link to a most inspiring talk about caring for nature in a city, and what Chattanooga can do on the global movement.

<https://www.wutc.org/podcast/scenic-roots/2024-04-23/lessons-from-london-for-chattanoogas-national-park-city-quest>

And below is the **Chattanooga National Park City** link. We need 5,000 signatures! You can help generate signatures and prove Chattanooga cares about this landscape and our feathered and furry friends! Please share out to friends and family with a call to sign, that would help a lot. Signers don’t have to live in Chattanooga.

<https://www.chattanooganationalparkcity.org/>



Eastern Meadowlark

photo credit: Shutterstock