

The Chattanooga Chat

CHATTANOOGA CHAPTER OF THE TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Photo Credit: White Crowned Sparrow by David Stone

JANUARY PROGRAM

January 11, 7pm

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

David Stone is our speaker for the January meeting. His program is "Our Birds in Winter." David is a local member and will focus primarily on the birds that are only in the Chattanooga area from mid-fall and winter to early spring. He will talk about some odd behavior he has witnessed, including watching birds eat some unexpected things! David will also talk about some unusual birds that have been seen in our area. Please join us!

NEW CHATTANOOGA TOS PRESIDENT IS OJ MORGAN

We are excited to have OJ Morgan as the new CTOS president! This position has been vacant with David Stone kindly acting as president for over a year.

Growing up in Louisiana, OJ came to Chattanooga in 1979 to teach at Baylor School, having completed his college and graduate studies in Maine, Chicago, and Cambridge, MA. In 2004, he left Baylor to become the Head of Bright School, where he served for 17 years. He and his wife Anne have three children and five grandsons. Birding is an important part of his retirement, as is world travel and photography.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Although I've only been a member of CTOS for about 8 years, I'm honored to have this opportunity to serve the club whose origin stretches back to 1953. For three quarters of a century, CTOS has given its members innumerable occasions to pursue their love of birds, increase in their knowledge of the avian world, serve in protecting birds and their habitats, and make life-long friends along the way. My goal as the club's president is to continue this tradition by working with all of you to create an active organization where everyone feels welcome and easily finds a place to get involved. I also want us to have a good time in the process.

In my pursuit to learn more about birds, I've been fortunate that present and former club members like David Stone, David Aborn, Danny Gaddy, Starr Klein, Dan Williams, Gary and Pixie Lanham, Clyde Blum, Gary Brunvoll, and Barbara Johnson were so generous in sharing their deep knowledge and experiences with me and others on numerous field trips and program meetings. For me, that sharing is what this club is all about. We have much to give to each other as well as learn from one other.

The same goes for the mutual advantages to be gained from collaborative engagement with other groups in the area. Already this year we have joined the Knoxville TOS chapter in a trip to the Seven Islands State Birding Park, and later this month and in February we will be teaming up with the Chattanooga Audubon Society to share our expertise and promote our shared goals. Learning more about birds and protecting their well-being will gain momentum, as will the vitality of our club, if we look for ways to work with others in the community.

I'm excited about the future of CTOS and greatly look forward to working with all of you in advancing that deep interest we all share, the beautiful and fascinating world of birds.

DECEMBER FIELD TRIPS AND BIRD COUNTS

This area had several Christmas Bird Counts but the numbers and rare species have not been totaled yet. Look for these in the February newsletter.

December 27: Three members joined Ray Zimmer for the visit to Hiwassee Refuge and Sandhill Crane viewing. Two brought scopes, and several photographers were present. Ray listened to the cranes with a parabolic microphone, but did not record them since he have already made several audio recordings at this location.

(<https://rayzimmerman.substack.com/p/hiwasee-wildlife-refuge>.)

Official figures say that 1,500 cranes were present that day, though Ray's estimate was somewhat lower at 1,000. Other species encountered included Bald Eagles, one adult and one immature. A lone Great Blue Heron stood in the slough. The most common ducks were Canvasbacks, Northern Shovelers, American Widgeons, and Ring-necked Ducks.

JANUARY FIELD TRIPS

Please join us for these birding walks! All birders, beginner and experienced, are welcome.

Saturday, January 20, 8:30 am

Where: Chester Frost Park

Leader: Kent DuBois (423-827-6306)

Meeting Spot: After entering Chester Frost Park, take a left into the first main parking lot. Chester Frost Park provides a variety of bird habitat including lake, shore, wetland, wooded area, and open fields. Please dress warmly and bring water. Contact Kent for questions or updates regarding weather.

Saturday, January 27,

Where: Audubon Acres

Leader: OJ Morgan and Kevin Calhoon

Meeting Spot: Inside the gate, on the porch of the office.

Kevin will show beginning birders how to use binoculars. A few pair of binoculars are available for loan.

For more information, go to <https://www.chattanoogaaudubon.org/beginnerbirding.html>.

Because of its strategic streamside location with a mix of open meadows, pines, and hardwood forests, it is an excellent location to spot winter species such as Pine Siskins, White-throated Sparrow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Brown Creeper, Hermit Thrush, Dark-eyed Junco, and Cooper's Hawk.

BIRDING IN PANAMA: JUNE 14-21, 2024

Join local birder and guide for the Taraloka Foundation **Luke Thompson** for an amazing week of birding in the mountains of Panama! You will spend the week looking for the spectacular Central American endemics like the Golden-browed Chlorospingus and the stunning Snowcap, as well as more widespread species like Keel-billed Toucans and a large variety of spectacular hummingbirds. There will be feeders set up to attract a wide array of species for good views and photo opportunities! \$2000 + plane tickets. All proceeds will go to disadvantaged girls in Sikkim, India. Email Luke at ldtbirds37@gmail.com if you are interested.

More information here at

<https://taralokafoundation.smugmug.com/Birding-in-Panama/n-DBbHWB>.

PROFILE: DAVID STONE

David moved to Ooltewah in 1982 to become the superintendent of The Honors Golf Course. Here is how he became interested in birds: "Shortly after it opened in 1983, a CTOS member gave the Honors Course ten Sawyer Bluebird houses. A year or so later another member and avid birder (Jonnie Sue Lyons - also a Chattanooga TOS member) asked me if I was cleaning out the houses after each nesting. I did not know they ever needed to be cleaned out, but we started doing it. In 1989, we discovered that one of the Bluebird nest contained a dead nestling but two more nestlings still alive. After a day of watching and seeing no parent feed them, we took them in and hand raised them. The next year, we were brought some other species of nestlings or birds that had experienced mishaps and we hand raised them, also. Almost all were successful and able to be released. After a couple of weeks outside most stopped coming back to be fed. One of the Bluebirds did come back and would eat out of my hand from the time we released him in the spring until spring the next year.

From that point on, I always tried to create habitat that would benefit the most birds. In 1991, The Honors Course received the first award given by the USGA for golf courses which created habitat for birds. A few years later, I was asked to do a program at a Chattanooga TOS monthly meeting. After that I started attending meetings occasionally. In the late 90's, Ken Dubke talked me into becoming a board member. As they say, the rest is history. I am a Past President and have been the Program Chairman more years than I want to remember!"

Note: At least 145 species have been seen at the Honors Course, including bald eagles.

You can read more about David and the Honors Golf Course here:

<https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2016/jul/10/wiedmer-honors-courses-stone-bird-different-f/>



David feeding the birds; a brown thrasher and a bluebird wait to be fed; talking to young birders at the Honors Golf Course this fall (photo credit: Jen Dolch-Martin)



Sandhill Cranes at Hiwassee Refuge

Photo Credit: Ray Zimmerman

JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP:

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

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

OR send a check to CTOS Treasurer Jennifer Dolch-Martin

1005 Meadow Lake Road, Chattanooga, 37415

Individual memberships \$30

Family memberships \$35

Student memberships \$15