



Rare Birds

My wife and I took **Robin Barrow's** advice to visit the Harlequin Duck that has been seen numerous times near the Riverfront Seafood Company (1777 Netherland Inn Rd., Kingsport, Tenn.) We were very fortunate to see the Harlequin Duck, two Black-crowned Night-Herons, and numerous other birds.

On our drive there, we recalled watching an odd comedy a few years ago, Rare Birds. The movie follows the plans hatched by a restaurant owner (Dave) and his neighbor to increase business at the restaurant, the Auk. Yes, the restaurant is named for the family of birds. Their plan starts with Dave describing a sighting of the fictitious Tasker's Sulphureous, which one learns can easily be differentiated from the equally fictitious Common Sulphureous by its unusual spotted markings and white head tuft. The Tasker's Sulphureous may have been inspired by the extinct Labrador Duck. The movie takes some odd twists and turns and even has a reference back to my wife's former homeland, Bulgaria. The move is available from Netflix, Amazon, and other websites.

Michael Plaster



Harlequin Duck in Kingsport, Tenn., Source: Michael J. Plaster

February Program: Wildlife Rehabilitation



Sky is a male American Kestrel who was a victim of poisoning and can not survive in the wild.



An Eastern Screech-owl who was hit by car, lost an eye, and only has hearing in one ear. and can not survive in the wild.

Join us on **Wednesday, March 6, at 6:45 p.m.** to listen how Lynne McCoy helps injured wildlife in Jefferson County. Lynne takes in between 600 and 800 birds and mammals annually. She raises or treats them for release back to their natural environment. She will be bringing a few of her "ambassadors" with her, for what is sure to be a wonderful program! The joy of a successful release back into the wild is what Lynne calls her "true payment," but we will be passing around a donation jar during her presentation to help support her important work. Please visit Lynne's website at www.picturetrail.com/backwoodslynn for stories and pictures of some of her furry and feathered friends.

This meeting will be held in Room 117 of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine. For directions, please visit the meetings page on KTOS' website at www.tnbirds.org/chapters/knoxvill/KTOS Meetings.html.

Common Yellowthroat.
Source: Wikimedia Commons



Presidential Perch

At the time of writing this, the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is occurring. What fun it is to go out and see something you were not expecting in your yard! **Patty Ford** observed a mature Bald Eagle fly over as she was counting, **Warren Bielenberg** saw a Dickcissel and Great Egret, and **Tom Howe** observed a Sora and Marsh Wren! Way to go! Knox County was up to 79 species as of Sunday evening. Thanks to all who participated in this great citizen science project.

We are reinventing the hummingbird festival that will now occur on **Saturday, August 24, 2013**. Yes, I said Saturday! We are seeking sponsors for the festival who will defray the costs associated with the speakers, programs, and advertising. With the festival occurring in late August, we should see more hummingbirds than last year! It is exciting to see the changes and improvements that will be happening. If you want to get involved and help with the festival, please let one of the offices know and we will be happy to put you to work! Or, if you have any ideas that you would like to share, please do.

Our wine tasting "Bhutan – Land of the Thunder Dragon" was fantastic! We enjoyed wines from around the world and learned about Bhutan. Not just about the birds, but about a kingdom and its culture. The food was abundant and delicious at the tasting. A big thanks to **Mike Nelson** for doing this for KTOS!

I would like to welcome our new members. **Mark Alston, Gregory Button, Sherrie Liefsha, Peter Dolan, Bridget McNew, Gail Todd, Dreda Murphy,** and **Stephanie and Brandon Matheny.**

Please remember to check out our web page (www.tnbirds.org/KTOS.html) where you will find the newsletter, information about upcoming field trips, and the history of KTOS.

We are also on FaceBook (www.facebook.com/KnoxvilleTOS) where we share information about birds, events, and other bird-related items. Please check us out and "like us"!

Another way that you can keep up with the KTOS' activities is by joining the KTOS yahoo list serve (pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/KnoxvilleTOS) where we announce meetings, events, and cancellations.

Get Out and Get Birding! March Field Trips

**Kyker Bottoms Refuge and Abrams Creek
Saturday, March 2, 2013 @ 8:30 a.m.**
**Leaders: Tom Howe, tomandamy@nxs.net and
Warren Bielenberg, birdglass44@aol.com,
(865) 681-7884.**

Kyker Bottoms re-opens to the public on March 1, so this is our first chance of the year to bird large segments of this property. Early migrants, late winter sparrows, Red Crossbills, wrens, and rails may be some of birds that may be seen on this field trip. It may be possible that the fields may be wet, so please wear appropriate clothes. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the paved parking lot by the "old" observation platform on Big Gully Rd.

**Woodcock Courtship Display
Saturday, March 16, 2013 @ 6:00 p.m.**
Rain date: Sunday, March 17, 2013 @ 6:00 p.m.
**Leaders: Tom Howe, tomandamy@nxs.net,
(865) 748-9610 and Mark Campen,
mcampen7@hotmail.com, (865) 414-5593**

We will meet at Turkey Creek Medical Center (10820 Parkside Dr., Knoxville, Tenn.). Additional details will be at pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/KnoxvilleTOS when determined.

**The Cove at Concord Park
Thursday, March 21, 2013 @ 9:00 a.m.**
Leader: Tony King, (865) 988-6172

Concord Park is located at 10909 S. Northshore Dr, Knoxville, Tenn. We will meet at the parking lot by the Cove and bird until lunchtime.

**Beginning Birders Walk at the Maryville Greenway
Saturday, March 23, 2013 @ 8:30 a.m.**
**Leader: Tom Howe, tomandamy@nxs.net,
(865) 748-9610)**

Meet at the new pedestrian bridge at Pistol Creek Station near the Blount County Public Library (508 N. Cusick St., Maryville, Tenn.) at 8:30 a.m. Parking is available at the library and at the intersection of McCammon Ave. and College St. This fieldtrip will cater to those new to birding, including children; however, birders of all skill levels are urged to attend. A Peregrine Falcon has been observed in the area.



Peregrine Falcon,
Source: Wikimedia Commons



Tree Swallow, a common March
Resident at Kyker Bottoms Refuge,
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) Results

The 2013 GBBC took place between Friday, February 15, through Monday, February 18, 2013. As of February 20, 2013, the following has been reported: **82** species in **Knox County**, **94** species in **Blount County**, **68** species in **Anderson County**, **60** species in **Sevier County**, **52** in **Roane County**, **46** in **Loudon County**, **39** species in **Grainger County**, **37** species in **Jefferson County**, and **16** species in **Union County**. The species observed in **Knox County** were: Ring-necked and Ruddy Ducks; Hooded Merganser; Wild Turkey; Pied-billed Grebe; Double-crested Cormorant; Great Blue Heron; Great Egret; Black and Turkey Vultures; N. Harrier; Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, Red-shouldered, Red-tailed, and Red-shouldered Hawks; Bald Eagle; American Coot; Killdeer; Ring-billed and Herring Gulls; Rock Pigeon; Mourning Dove; Barred Owl; Rufous Hummingbird; Belted Kingfisher; Red-headed, Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy, and Pileated Woodpeckers; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker; Northern Flicker; American Kestrel; Eastern Phoebe; Blue Jay; American Crow; Carolina Chickadee; Tufted Titmouse; Red-breasted, White-breasted, and Brown-headed Nuthatches; Brown Creeper; Winter and Carolina Wrens; Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets; Eastern Bluebird; Hermit Thrush; American Robin; Northern Mockingbird; Brown Thrasher; European Starling; Cedar Waxwing; Palm, Pine, and Yellow-rumped Warblers; Eastern Towhee; Chipping, Field, Savannah, Fox, Song, Swamp, White-throated, White-crowned, and House Sparrows; Dark-eyed Junco; Northern Cardinal; Red-winged Blackbird; Eastern Meadowlark; Common Grackle; Brown-headed Cowbird; Purple and House Finches; Pine Siskin; and American Goldfinch. The following species were observed in **Knox County** and **not Blount County**: Double-crested Cormorant; Red-headed Woodpecker; and Rufous Hummingbird. The following additional species were observed in **Blount County** and **not Knox County**: American Wigeon; Black-crowned Night-Heron; Bufflehead; Common Loon; Dickcissel; Green-winged Teal; Horned Grebe; Lesser Scaup; Marsh Wren; Northern Pintail; Peregrine Falcon; Rusty Blackbird; Sora; Tree Swallow; and Wilson's Snipe. For the counties listed above, a Muscovy Duck (Domestic type) was only seen in **Anderson County**, an Eastern Screech-Owl and a Merlin were only seen in **Sevier County**, a Common Redpoll was only seen in **Roane County**, Bonaparte's Gulls were only seen in **Sevier** and **Jefferson Counties**.



Common Redpoll, Source: Wikimedia Commons

Birding Briefs



Dickcissel, Source: Warren Bielenberg

Warren Bielenberg noticed a **Dickcissel** feeding on the ground below his feeder along with a male House Finch on New Years Day — a great start to the new year and the only reported one in Tennessee at this time! He has appeared nearly everyday since then and usually appears within 15 minutes of the first birds at the feeder, around noon, and again around 4:00 p.m. Maybe these are the times when Warren is in the kitchen and sees him. He feeds on either of Warren's feeders with mixed bird seed, but he appears to prefer white millet. He has been growing into bright breeding plumage as one can see from the photograph above. He is a bit timid when 3 or 4 Brown-headed Cowbirds are at the feeder and he has been seen flushed off by a female Northern Cardinal. However, some times he has been aggressive with the Cardinals and Cowbirds by chasing them off the feeder. He has been a great bird to have this winter and will keep watching to see how long it stays.

Have you seen something that you want to share? E-mail your bird information (e.g., species, number, date, location) to Michael Plaster at ktos.editor@gmail.com.

KTOS membership: Join or renew by mailing your annual dues to Carole Gobert, 1304 Barcelona Drive, Knoxville, TN 37923. Dues levels: \$26/individual, \$30/family, \$38/sustaining, \$13/student, or TOS life membership for \$450 with \$8 annual fee to Chapter.



www.tnbirds.org/KTOS.html

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We are trying to keep our dues at the current low level to ensure that KTOS is affordable to all those interested in birding in the Knoxville Metropolitan Area. One of our monthly expenses that continually increases is the production and postage costs associated with sending a paper copy of the newsletter. If you are receiving a paper copy and you have access to e-mail, it is simple to switch. Our Newsletter Editor sends a monthly e-mail with the newsletter attached. If you receive the newsletter electronically, you will get it several days sooner as compared to mail. If you would like a paper copy, you could simply print it on your home printer. Please contact Robin Barrow (braveladyrobin@gmail.com) and Carole Gobert (cpgobert@hotmail.com) to make the switch and save KTOS money.

Plastic Grocery Bags and Nature/Bird Related Items Needed

Our 3rd annual Hummingbird Festival will be on August 24, 2013. As with the previous festivals, we will have a “Bargain Barn” selling used nature and bird related items. This was a great money maker from the past festivals! A great time for you to find items to donate is during your annual spring cleaning. If you identify items to donate, please price them before giving them to KTOS in August. Also, plastic grocery bags are needed for the “Bargain Barn.” So if it you can, please considering saving them so you can also donate them to KTOS in August.