

through the biKNOXulars

Newsletter of the Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

Warbler researcher Trently speaks at May meeting

The guest speaker for the KTOS May meeting will be Allan Trently. Many KTOS members know Allan from his birding around Knoxville, or through his brother David, our president. Allan is a biology professor at Northeast State Technical Community College and a researcher.

In the summer Allan is a naturalist and researcher for the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy on Roan Mountain.

Last year TOS awarded him a grant to study habitat use and population density of Golden-winged Warblers. Allan received this grant in part because of his knowledge of the avifauna of northeast Tennessee and the hard work and dedication he has shown in previous research projects. He will share with us how the research went and present his findings on this state-listed bird.

- Charlie Muise, program coordinator

At the May meeting, we will have our annual election of chapter officers. While officers' terms officially run for one year, by general practice each is re-elected after one year to serve a second term, unless any changes need to be made, or anyone else wishes to run for an office (please feel free to do so!) There is a change this year, as we need to elect a new treasurer, as Bob Steffy will be busy with other activities and unable to continue doing the fine job he has done. Here is the list of candidates for the vote: President: David Trently, Vice-president: Charlie Muise, Treasurer: Jerry Hadder, Secretary: Don Vowell.

The following will also be voted on for the TOS Board of Directors: Dev Joslin and Chris Welsh.

**The May Meeting is Wednesday, May 1
Room 117, UT Vet School. Folks gather at 7 PM
to socialize and the meeting starts at 7:30 PM**

2002 TOS Spring Meeting is May 3-5 in Dyersburg

The Memphis Chapter of TOS will host the 2002 Spring Meeting on May 3-5. Meeting headquarters will be Dyersburg State Community College Student Center. The college is located just south of the Highway 51 Bypass at the corner of Lake Road (Highway 78) and Parkview Street.

Saturday and Sunday field trips will be to the Reelfoot Lake area. Varied habitats such as woods, fields, lakes, marshy areas and the Mississippi River levees will provide opportunities to spring migrants of all kinds including warblers, rails and shorebirds,

Water-level and weather permitting, a limited number of TOS members will be able to go birding by canoe or pontoon boat. Dinner speaker will be Wayne R. Peterson, field ornithologist with the Massachusetts Audubon Society. He will speak on his specialty—shorebirds.

There are several motels in the area but special rates for TOS members attending the meeting have been arranged with Hampton Inn, Comfort Inn and Best Western. For more information go on-line to www.tnbirds.org.

KTOS May Field Trips Details on Page 3

- **Thursdays, May 2, 9 & 16, 8:00 AM**
Sharps Ridge
- **Saturday, May 4, 7:00 AM**
Three Bend Wildlife Refuge
- **Saturday, May 11, 7:00 AM**
Cross Mountain
- **Sunday, May 19, 7:30 AM**
Great Smoky Mountains

Birding on the Web Part 3 by David Trently

Planning a birding trip? How do you find out about local birding sites or what types of birds you can find there? If there is a bird finding guidebook to your destination, you should certainly buy that. But what if you don't have time to wait for it to come in the mail, or you want more up-to-date information?

There are many pages of web sites available that will give you information about birding locations. One that may be worth your first visit is called "Where do you want to go birding today?" You will find this at: <http://www.camacdonald.com/birding/birding.htm>. From here, you can link to birding information from all over the world! You will click on a region of the world...then a country... which takes you to a list of web sites. Some of these sites include: where to go birding; checklists; info about parks; trip reports. You'll also find information about guides, festivals, lodging, rare bird alerts...many of which will link you to more and more additional web pages.



Sometimes the best way to find your target birds in a new location is to get help from someone who lives there. Go to <http://birdingpal.org/> and click on links to the part of the world you will be visiting. You will find names of people who are willing to volunteer some time to give you birding help—often they will be happy to meet you and show you around. This page also has links to other useful birding information.

Another page that may offer additional information is the American Birding Association web site: <http://www.americanbirding.org/> Once there, click

'BIRDER RESOURCES'. Under 'Net Connections', click 'Travel' and then, in the drop down box near the top of the page (where it says "Go to..."), select 'Birding Links'. Explore the links on the left side of the screen, especially 'Local and Regional.'

Finally...you can always use a search engine to find lots of additional web pages that may help you find the perfect places to go on your vacation.

UPDATES

● **Reintroduction of an Eastern Migratory Flock of Whooping Cranes**

The Whooping Cranes are back in Wisconsin. Eight whoopers left that state last October following ultra-light airplanes. One was killed on the way and two were killed by a bobcat at their winter home, the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge in Florida. (The bobcat was later live-trapped and moved, but this would have to be the most expensive meal ever eaten by a bobcat since each crane is worth millions.)

The five remaining cranes departed from Florida on their own April 9 and arrived in Wisconsin April 18. Along the way in Tennessee, one left the group and spent the night in McMinn County. The other four overnighted in Fentress County. The flock followed roughly the route they had been taught last fall, although this time they lead the way and they covered the 1,000+ mile journey in much less time. (It took 47 days to fly south in the fall.)

For more information go on-line to: www.bringbackthecranes.org

● **May 11: International Migratory Bird Day**

International Migratory Bird Day is Saturday, May 11. This annual event was created by Partners in Flight, a coalition of federal and state agencies, bird clubs, non-governmental organizations, corporations and individuals. Their mission is to conserve migratory birds by increasing public awareness of the factors that may contribute to declines in their populations. Protecting and providing habitat—at either end of their seasonal journey or stopover points in between—is one of the most important ways that people can help these birds.

To learn more about this event call (703) 358-2318 or go on-line to: www.americanbirding.org/imbd/imbdgen.htm

Our heartfelt condolences to KTOS member Mary Trice who mourns the passing of her husband
Lillard Trice

May Field Trips - Let's go birding!

Thursdays, May 2, 9 & 16, 8:00 AM

Sharps Ridge

Thursday, May 2, May 9 and May 16, 8:00 AM. Field trip to Sharps Ridge. Leader: Tony Headrick (687-9956). Meet at the ranger's house. The walk will be along the road in Sharps Ridge Memorial Park. Spring migrants are the object of this field trip. Orioles, grosbeaks warblers and other spring migrants are expected.

Saturday, May 4, 7:00 AM

Three Bend Wildlife Refuge

For those members not attending the State TOS meeting, the American Museum of Science and Energy (AMSE) in Oak Ridge has graciously extended an invitation to KTOS to participate in their field trip.

Location of walk: Freels Bend, on the 3,000-acre Three Bend Wildlife Refuge, Oak Ridge DOE Reservation. Meet at 7:00 AM, Saturday, May 4.

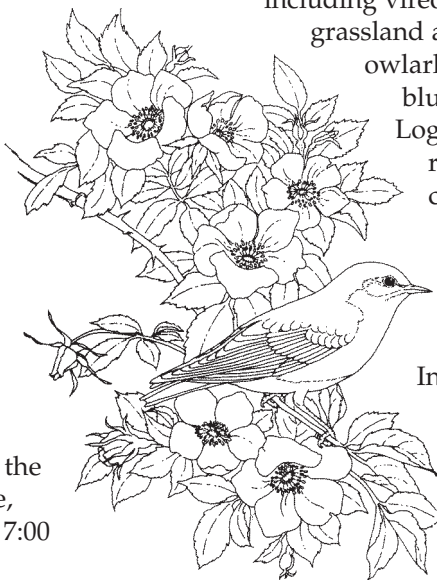
Directions to meeting place: Take Pellissippi Parkway off I-40 west out of Knoxville, cross Solway bridge going towards Oak Ridge. Shortly after the bridge take Bethel Valley Road exit. (Do NOT go into Oak Ridge downtown area!) Proceed on Bethel Valley to first traffic light. Turn left on Scarboro road and park in parking lot behind building on the corner.

Leader: Jim Evans, TWRA, 675-6836 (home)

Requirements: Call Lissa Clarke in advance at AMSE to reserve a spot and give phone number (necessary for DOE security). (865) 576-3218. Walk will be limited to first 25 or 30 participants, and likely break up into two groups.

Target birds: Various raptors incl. Osprey, Bald

Eagle, owls, hawks, harriers; resident migrant song-birds, esp. those of shrub-scrub habitats (Blue-winged Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat); nesting swallows, Phoebes, Willow Flycatchers, other flycatchers; waterfowl (esp. 3-4 species of herons); misc. migrants passing through including vireos, warblers, tanagers, orioles, thrushes; grassland and open area birds (Bobolink, meadowlarks, Field Sparrow, Indigo Buntings, bluebirds; Orchard Oriole, Blue Grosbeak; Loggerhead Shrike; Dickcissel; other sparrows); hedgerow species (Thrashers, catbirds) and misc. woodland species.



Saturday, May 11, 7:00 AM

Cross Mountain

Leader Bob Collier (938-4050). Meet at Ingles parking lot at I-75 and Emory Road at 7:00 AM for car pooling to the site.

Target birds are warblers, tanagers, orioles, grosbeaks and others. Bring insect repellent, lunch and a drink.

This is reputed to be one of the best field trips of the spring.

Sunday, May 19, 7:30 AM

Great Smoky Mountains

Field trip to Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The leader will be Harold Howell (690-6183). Meet at the wye in Townsend at 7:30 AM. Exact destination has not been determined, but will be set by the weather and current birding conditions. Please bring lunch and water, and be prepared to walk approximately four miles.

Any updated info will be posted on the KTOS hot line, 577-4717, ext. 80, and on tn-bird list server.

- Harold Howell, field-trip coordinator

KTOS makes donation to assist Great Smoky Mountains bird research

KTOS recently donated \$30 for the purchase of equipment to help determine the population of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This came about after several members expressed interest in the new study which starts in May.

The park needs volunteers who are familiar with Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. Volunteers will conduct surveys along park trails, in which they will play tapes

of sapsucker sounds, then listen for birds to call back. The money KTOS donated has been used for tapes to supply to volunteers, and may help to defray the cost of a tape player. Donations of portable tape players may also be of use to the study.

If you are interested in helping out, please contact Vice President Charlie Muise. His phone number and e-mail address are on the back of this newsletter.

Ivory-billed woodpeckers: still a mystery wrapped inside an enigma?

Perhaps because of the Tanners, we Knoxvilleians feel a special kinship with the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

If you attended the April KTOS meeting you know the mystery that's swirled around this legendary bird since the 1940s is still swirling... well somewhat. The guest speaker that night was Rick Knight, one of the six team members who recently spent 30 days in the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area in Louisiana looking for the mystery bird. And even though no IBWP was seen by the group, some very tantalizing clues did surface: namely a large partially chiseled nest hole, several trees that had been debarked in IBWP fashion and even the far-away drumming—in part captured on tape—that sounded very Ivory-bill like. (Gives you goose bumps, doesn't it?)

If the phantom birds are living there, they have had to adapt to younger, smaller trees. They have also had to go undetected for decades in a parcel of swampland not far from civilization. And they had to elude six trained professionals desperately trying to find them. (No small feat, even for a legend.)

At the end of the presentation, Knight was asked the inevitable questions, "Well Rick, what do you think? Are

there any Ivory-bills there?" Rick's answer was classic, totally fitting the Ivory-bill mystique, "Well, there might be the possibility of a chance of one or two being in there." (So let's all buy mosquito netting and go camp out this summer.)

Dean Edwards posed an even more far-reaching query: "Should some living Ivory-bills be found, what then?"

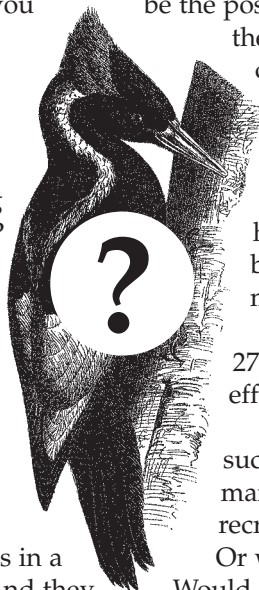
In 1941, the number of Whooping Cranes had dropped to 15. But because of a captive breeding program and other protective measures they're making a comeback.

California Condor numbers had dropped to 27 by the 1980s, but with a similar conservation effort they are making a comeback as well.

Would a captive breeding program work for such a habitat-specific bird as an Ivory-bill? How many Ivory-bills would you have to find to recreate a viable population? 20? 12? 6? 2? Or would a gene pool that small be too small?

Would they then be a species an eyelash away from extinction, destined to eventually fade away? Or have they already faded?

It seems when it comes to this stoic bird, there are no easy answers. - *Lyn*



Are your dues due? If a "01" follows your name on the mailing label for this newsletter it's time to renew your membership with KTOS.

Please send your annual dues to Jerry Hadder, 18 Rockingham Lane, Oak Ridge, TN 37830. Membership fees are \$18 for an individual and \$20 for a family. Sustaining memberships are \$28 and a Life membership with TOS is \$200 with an annual fee of \$8 to the local chapter.

PRESIDENT.....David Trently
1029 Morrow Rd.
Knoxville, TN 37923 (865) 531-1473
dtrently@utk.edu

VICE-PRESIDENT.....Charlie Muise
9068 Tremont Rd.
Townsend, TN 37882 (865) 448-1736
cmmbirds@yahoo.com

TREASURER (Acting)....Jerry Hadder
18 Rockingham Lane
Oak Ridge, TN 37830 (865) 483-9287
marieoakes@msn.com

SECRETARY.....Don Vowell
6909 Quail Dr.
Knoxville, TN 37919
don@vowell-law.com

EDITOR (Text/Design).....Lyn Bales
1801 Kemper Ln.
Knoxville, TN 37920 (865) 577-6978
lbales@ijams.org

EDITOR (Distribution)...Cindy Day
11417 N. Couch Mill Rd.
Knoxville, TN 37931-2908 (865)927-1417
n.c.day@worldnet.att.net

TOS HOME PAGE: [HTTP://WWW.TNBIRDS.ORG](http://www.tnbirds.org)

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