

through the biKNOXulars

Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

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Winter foraging ecology of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers topic of May 4 program

Wednesday, May 4, Dr. H. Dawn Wilkins will present "Winter Foraging Ecology of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers." Wilkins currently teaches at UT Martin. I met her and learned of her research at the TOS Fall Meeting. (I enjoyed her presentation so much I invited her to come speak to our club.) Wilkins received her B.S. from UT Martin in Wildlife Biology, her M.S. from Eastern Kentucky University in Applied Ecology and Ph.D. from Mississippi State University in Biological Sciences.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (*Sphyrapicus varius*) are medium sized woodpeckers. In Tennessee, they are primarily winter residents. They breed in Canada and Northern United States. There are also records of them breeding in high elevations in Tennessee and research is currently being conducted in Great Smoky Mountain National Park to ascertain their current breeding status in the park.

Wilkins will talk about how adult and juvenile Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are using the environment in slightly different ways and why very few female sapsuckers were observed during the winter in her research. The primary focus of her program, though, will be what parts of the habitat sapsuckers use and how the birds impact their environment, particularly the trees they forage on.

Wilkins' interest in the ecology and behavior of woodpeckers extends beyond sapsuckers. This fall she plans on studying how various woodpecker species divide up available resources and coexist in a forest. She is looking forward to meeting the members of KTOS. So come meet her in room 117 of the UT Vet building at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 4.

- Tracey Muise, program coordinator

 MARK YOUR CALENDAR

May trips and happenings!

(See page 2 for all contact information and details)

Thursday, May 5, 8 AM

Sharp's Ridge, Knox County

Saturday or Sunday, May 7-8

Cross Mountain, Caryville, TN

Saturday, May 14

International Migratory Bird Day

Saturday, May 14

Rankin Bottoms WMA, White Pine, TN



Sunday, May 22, 8 AM

Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge

ORNL Nature Walks

Saturday, May 7 - Bird walk.

East Tennessee Technology Park

Saturday, May 14 - Wildflower walk.

Rainy Knob at Freels Bend near Melton Hill Lake

"Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly."

"Dreams" By Langston Hughes, American poet (1902-1967)

May happenings! *(Continued from page 1)*

Thursday, May 5, 8 AM

Sharp's Ridge, Knox County

Leader: **Tony Headrick** 687-9956

Meet at the ranger's house at 8:00 a.m. The walk will be along the road in Sharp's Ridge Memorial Park. Spring migrants are the objects of this field trip. Orioles, grosbeaks warblers and other spring migrants are expected.

Saturday or Sunday, May 7-8

Cross Mountain, Caryville, TN

We are trying to schedule this trip, but traffic conditions with the I-75 bridge construction over the Clinch River are such that we have no easy way to get to Caryville. If conditions improve we will make an announcement at the May 4 club meeting. Target birds would be locally breeding warblers including Swainson's, Prothonotary, Cerulean, Golden-winged, Blue-winged and Chestnut Sided as well as many other warblers, orioles, tanagers, flycatchers and spring migrants.

Saturday, May 14

International Migratory Bird Day

Coordinator: **Ron Hoff** 435-4547, rondolly@esper.net

Pick your spot and count birds all or part of the day. Keep track of time spent and the distances covered (separate by foot travel and automobile travel.) Report your findings to Ron soon thereafter.

Saturday, May 14

Rankin Bottoms WMA, White Pine, TN

Leaders: **Michael Sledjeski** mtnsylva@msn.com or

(423) 487-3161, **Leslie Gibbens** and **Marcia Davis**

TARGETS/HIGHLIGHTS: CANOE/KAYAK TRIP THROUGH WATERBIRD AND WARBLER NESTING HABITAT

As a part of International Migratory Bird Day, three canoe/kayak trips will be held at Rankin Wildlife Management Area. Meet at the coal tipple. Michael Sledjeski and Leslie Gibbens will lead the canoe trips, and Marcia Davis will be on hand for walks with anyone who cannot go in the canoes. Each trip will last about 2.5 hours, and 10 people maximum can be accommodated on each trip. The trips will begin at 9 a.m., 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. The lake level will be up and the actual elevation will determine the route, but we should get good views of resident and late migratory species. Driving time to Rankin Bottoms from Knoxville is about one hour, with time for a bathroom break along the way. There are no bathrooms at Rankin Bottoms. Most of the participants should have some paddling experience. Life jackets will be furnished. Sunscreen, hat, drinking water, boat shoes recommended. Please contact leaders by May 12.

Sunday, May 22, 8 AM

Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge

Leader: **Harold Howell** (865) 828-6302 (h) or howellh2@bellsouth.net

Leave at 8 a.m.. from the Comcast parking lot (formerly the K-Mart parking lot) on US Highway 11E. Take the first exit from I-40 east of the junction of I-40 and I-640, turn left on US 11E and the lot is on the right at the top of the hill just before the new Holston River Bridge.

Alternately, meet at the parking lot Seven Islands at 8:20 a.m. We will be birding for the summer residents and also looking at any other wildlife that may be available.

ORNL NATURE WALK SCHEDULE - SPRING 2005

In addition to the KTOS Field Trips, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) in Oak Ridge has graciously extended an invitation to KTOS to participate in their field trips. Please call them at (865) 574-6417 to reserve a spot on any of these trips. The following walks have been scheduled in Oak Ridge, TN:

Saturday, May 7 - A bird walk is scheduled.

The walk is in the vicinity of East Tennessee Technology Park from 7 to 10:30 a.m. and is limited to 25 participants. Children are welcome.

Walking will take place over level dirt roads with a distance of between one and two miles. Walkers should dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, carry a supply of water and bring insect repellent and binoculars. A field guide to birds is also useful.

Saturday, May 14 - A wildflower walk is planned. The walk is scheduled from 9 a.m. until noon. The May 14 walk is limited to 15 participants and will take place in the Rainy Knob area of Freels Bend near Melton Hill Lake.

This walk will be between one and two miles and will be up and downhill climbs with some time spent off the main trails. Walkers are urged to dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes and bring a water supply. Children are welcome to participate in each walk.

Reservations must be made in advance by noon the day prior to each walk by calling Mary Beth Watt at (865) 574-6417.

If inclement weather forces postponement, it will be announced on Oak Ridge National Laboratory's Information Line at (865) 574-9836 by 8 a.m. the day of the walk. More information is available by calling Neil Giffen at (865) 241-9421.

You may call me at (865) 828-6302 if you have questions.

- Best regards, Harold Howell, Field Trip Coordinator

Park to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day with mist netting educational programs

To celebrate and support migratory bird conservation, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park will observe the annual International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) on Saturday, May 14 with public educational programs at two locations in the Park.

At the entrance to the Cades Cove loop road near Townsend, TN, Charlie Muise from Great Smoky Mountain Institute at Tremont will set up mist nets at 8:30 a.m. and throughout the morning will demonstrate how birds are carefully captured, measured, banded and released at research stations. Also, ranger-led bird walks will start at 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and noon.

At Oconaluftee Visitor Center, near Cherokee, N.C., Biologist Paul Super with the Appalachian Highlands Science Learning Center will set up mist nets and at 8 a.m. and throughout the morning demonstrate how birds are carefully captured, measured, banded and released at research stations. Other Park staff will lead bird walks and Dr. Trevor Rundle, formerly of Cornell University, will present short talks on bird flight, migration/navigation and adaptation—each brought to life with an array of hands-on bird skins.

"Thanks to Starbucks coffee shop at Five Oaks shopping center in Sevierville, TN, complimentary shade-grown coffee will be served to emphasize the importance of traditional coffee plantations that support over 150 species of birds—many of these migrants from the Smokies," said Park Ranger Carey Jones, coordinator of the event. Materials about IMBD and how to enjoy birds and help with their conservation will be distributed.

The 2005 IMBD theme is "Collisions: Clear the way for Birds." For many birds a journey across the skies may be an obstacle course of human-related hazards—cell phone towers, power lines, vehicles, windows on

homes and office buildings and even wind turbines kill several billion birds a year in the U.S. However, the collaboration of biologists, communities and corporations developing innovative solutions is promising.

Since 1993, IMBD has celebrated the return of millions of migratory birds from their non-breeding grounds in South and Central America, Mexico, the Caribbean and the southern U.S., to their North American nesting habitats. Although most migratory birds are still abundant, many species are at risk due to the loss of habitat throughout the Western Hemisphere. The purpose of IMBD is to motivate people from all walks of life to learn about birds and the habitats that they need, to discover ways that they can become involved in improving conditions for birds and to enjoy watching birds. As the hallmark annual event sponsored by Partners In Flight, IMBD is turning into the Earth Day for birders!

Partners In Flight (PIF)/Compañeros en Vuelo/Partenaires d'Envol was launched in 1990 in response to growing concerns about declines in the populations of many land bird species, and in order to emphasize the conservation of birds not covered by existing conservation initiatives. The initial focus was on species that breed in the North America and winter in the Central and South America, but the focus has spread to include most land birds and other species requiring terrestrial habitats. PIF is a cooperative effort involving partnerships among federal, state and local government agencies, philanthropic foundations, professional organizations, conservation groups, industry, the academic community, and private individuals. For more information on IMBD and PIF go to:

www.partnersinflight.org

Election of club officers – It's déjà vu all over again! *(With apologies to Yogi Berra)*

The Nominating Committee of KTOS will nominate the following individuals for state and local offices for 2006: TOS State Directors - Dan Mooney, Laurie Mooney and Chris Welsh; KTOS Officers: President - Charlie Muise, VP - Tracey Muise, Secretary - Kathy Bivens, Treasurer - Marie Oakes; KTOS Directors at Large: Jean Alexander and Kim Henry.

Note that all of these individuals have experience in the offices to which they have been nominated and have agreed to serve if elected.

The Nominating Committee of KTOS recommends that you vote for these candidates.

- Respectfully, David Johnson, Deedee Blaine and Harold Howell

Editor's Note: If Charlie is elected, it will be his third term as club president. Others to serve three terms are Tim Snow, Boyd Sharp, Fred Alsop, David Highbaugh and probably H.P. Ijams (records for 1925 are incomplete).

SIWR: The Partnerships: Governmental, Educational and Conservation - Part Two

By Wayne H. Schacher • wwschacher@natreserv.com

Author's note: This is the eighth in a series of newsletter articles on Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge in Knox County. The Knoxville Chapter of Tennessee Ornithological Society has actively supported the concept and development of SIWR, and its membership is providing invaluable information on avian fauna usage of the Refuge, and other technical assistance. The partnership with KTOS at SIWR is most gratefully appreciated.

In the non-governmental sector, valuable partnerships have been established between SIWR and several Departments within the University of Tennessee. The Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries has provided technical expertise, assistance in field activities and recently signed an agreement to conduct a variety of research activities on SIWR. In return, SIWR has been used as an outdoor classroom for undergraduate and graduate coursework, and as a site for research. The Department of Biosystems Engineering and Environmental Science helped defray a major expense by using a senior undergraduate student to conduct a bottomland/wetland soil survey. The Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology is working with SIF to develop a protocol and methodology to inventory amphibian and reptile species on SIWR. For three years, the Department of Geology has provided student volunteers to plant tree seedlings as a community service requirement. The Department of Landscape Architecture has provided technical expertise in an exotic-invasive plant control strategy, and may help develop a wetland plant enhancement plan for the upland pond. A Department of Geography student conducted tree annulus research on a wooded island. The Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology has begun some terrestrial invertebrate and thistle sampling. This list of mutually

beneficial activities will certainly grow through the years, and will likely include other educational institutions on collegiate, high school and elementary school levels.

Significant contributions to SIF and SIWR have been made by non-profit, conservation organizations. At the top of the list is the Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society. From the beginning, KTOS participated in the SIWR Advisory Group. Through organized group and individual birding forays, its membership has been invaluable in helping track avian species use of the refuge. KTOS was also instrumental in donating three purple martin nesting structures erected on SIWR.

To our mutual benefit, SIWR and Ijams Nature Center have partnered to conduct "owl prowls" and anuran vocalization surveys on SIWR, while SIWR has donated wetland plants to the Ijams "plant rescue" program. A National Tree Trust grant helped purchase tree seedlings in-kind, for planting on SIWR. A Ducks Unlimited wildlife biologist visited SIWR and offered wetland enhancement insight and recommendations. As above, this list will undoubtedly grow through the years.

Not to be overlooked are the dozens of informal and personal uses and enjoyments expressed by the hikers, nature enthusiasts, kite-flyers, dog walkers, birders, runners, photographers and myriad others who have discovered SIWR and grown to appreciate its attributes. I'm never there without seeing people enjoying the refuge, asking questions about ongoing activities, and praising its virtues and opportunities. Those approvals are likely the best endorsements of all.

(Next Newsletter – Demonstration, Educational and Research Potential at SIWR)

 MARK YOUR CALENDAR

1965-2005: Ijams celebrates 40th Anniversary

In May, Ijams Nature Center will celebrate its 40th Anniversary. The nature center was created on the 20-acre former homesite of H.P. and Alice Ijams. The tradition of nature and environmental education carried on today at the South Knoxville facility was established by H.P. and Alice over 60 years ago. Many local people remember coming to the site to work on scout merit badges or to simply walk their trails and learn about local birds and wildflowers

To enhance the celebration, a ribbon-cutting for the Mead's Quarry property will be held on Tuesday, May 17. The site restoration is a work in progress, but

it's certainly ready for public use. This contiguous addition will expand Ijams Park to over 160 acres.

On Saturday morning, May 21, Ijams' staff will on hand to conduct walks around the quarry. That afternoon, 2 to 4 p.m., the American Eagle Foundation from Pigeon Forge and Ijams will do a bird of prey presentation at the park's Visitor Center. This will be a wonderful opportunity to see up-close many of our local raptors including: bald and golden eagles, turkey and black vultures and peregrine falcon.

For more info go online to: www.ijams.org



Presidential Perch

- By Charlie Muise

The hard work of the JB Owen Committee continues to be fruitful. The funds continue to grow, even after giving out awards to good causes the last two years. And the silent auction held on Friday, April 22, just prior to the talk by Sam and Mary Ann Venable added \$745 to the coffers. That auction also benefitted Ijams Nature Center, so thank you to all who came. And of course, thanks to those who helped plan it, set it up and clean up. A special thanks also goes out to John Clark of Vienna Coffee, who donated fresh-brewed coffee for the function.

Back in December a few of us who live in Blount County were talking about how our county doesn't get birded a lot, and how most birders go to just a couple special locations. In order to motivate ourselves to bird more in the county, and to keep better track of our records, we decided to hold a small competition. So far a handful of us have found over 150 species! Each one of us has seen or heard at least 130 species in just under four months. In addition to the fun competition, we are all learning so much more about our county. We recommend folks

try this in other places, too.

This year our club has hosted two clean-ups of Sharps Ridge. Mark Campen has been the main coordinator and many folks have helped by cleaning graffiti off the sign, picking up trash or removing exotic plants. Kudos to all.

It's great to see our chapter active in so many worthy endeavors. We attempt to have something for everyone who is interested in birds. If you have any suggestions for future activities, please let us know.

Plans are in the works for the June picnic. Start going through your recipes now!

Eagle comeback (Continued from page 6)

Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge. To give the birds the privacy they require to raise their young, people are asked to keep a respectful distance away from the nest. This may be the first successful bald eagle nest in recorded history inside Knox County. (If anyone knows anything to the contrary please contact me.)

Recently I spoke to both Linda Classen and Doug Bataille, director of Knox County Parks and Recreation. Both are elated. There's nothing like creating a wildlife refuge and having a pair of eagles claim it in only three years. Now that's conservation in action! Let's keep up the good work.



OF NOTE!

Welcome New KTOS Members

Jim and Stephanie Giocomo, Janette Lacy

KTOS Financial Report • May 2005

Compiled by Marie Oakes, Treasurer

	April	March	YTD
Income:			
. Dues	\$510.00	\$252.00	\$1,076.00
. Shade Grown Coffee	\$114.00	\$102.00	\$392.00
. Interest	\$41.13	\$0.00	\$62.54
. Spring Meeting	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
. Owen Memorial	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$71.00
. Miscellaneous	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
Total Income	\$665.13	\$354.00	\$1,601.54
Expenses:			
. Newsletter	\$65.25	\$65.25	\$132.75
. Supplies	\$18.95	\$0.00	\$18.00
. Shade Grown Coffee	\$147.22	\$135.31	\$235.44
. Member Dues to TOS	\$370.00	\$376.00	\$1,262.00
. Miscellaneous	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$601.42	\$576.56	\$1,648.19
Account Balances			
. KTOS Checking & Savings	\$3,316.22	\$3,289.23	
. J.B.Owen Memorial	\$6,587.52	\$6,550.80	
Memberships	141	160	
Paid Memberships to Date = 141			



New interpretative signs at Ijams

Two new informational signs: one about the local vultures, the other about local Buteos, have been erected at Ijams Nature Center in front of the Raptor Enclosure housing a non-releasable turkey vulture and red-tailed hawk. The money for the signs came from the nature center's portion of the proceeds from last June's silent auction. KTOS is acknowledged on the signs for its role in their funding.

KTOS Membership

Join or renew your membership in KTOS by mailing your annual dues to: **Marie Oakes**, 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.

DEADLINE for June issue is **May 21**. Due to cost and space restrictions, please limit your articles to 600 or 700 words.

For a color version of this or past issues go to "local chapters/Knoxville" starting at the TOS Home Page:

HTTP://www.tnbirds.org



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Bald eagles making comeback - By Lyn Bales

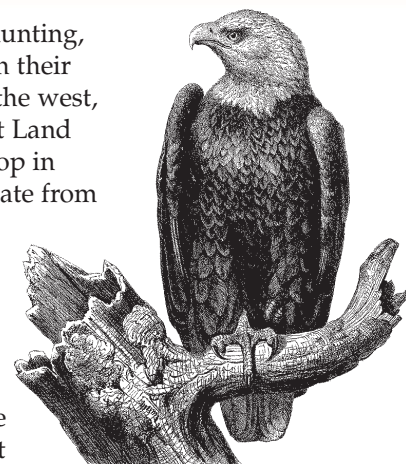
At the March meeting of KTOS, state ornithologist Michael Roedel was asked: "Are there any Tennessee birds once on the decline that are making a comeback?" Without hesitation he answered, "Bald eagles are coming back with great enthusiasm. In 2004, there were over 50 successful nests." Early reports for 2005 indicate there's even more nesting underway this year.

Bald eagle populations declined due to overhunting, habitat loss and the long-term buildup of DDT in their bodies. Historically in Tennessee they nested in the west, along the Mississippi River, Reelfoot Lake and at Land Between the Lakes. Because of their dramatic drop in numbers there were no successful nests in our state from 1961 to 1983, a period of 22 years. But with the banning of DDT in 1972 and the protection of the Endangered Species Act, the magnificent raptor is returning to our skies.

The comeback has been helped by the release, a process called hacking, of captive-bred or human raised eaglets into the wild. Once they fledge, the impressionable juveniles imprint on the area and usually return to within 75 miles of the spot when its time to raise a family of their own in a few years.

According to Bob Hatcher, who retired as TWRA's Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Coordinator in 2001, "Tennessee wasn't the first to hack young bald eagles, but it's now reintroduced more than any other state." Between 1980 and 2004, 294 eaglets have been hacked at seven locations in Tennessee. Locally, the American Eagle Foundation affiliated with Dollywood has released 69 juvenile bald eagles at Douglas Lake beginning in 1992. If you get your map out, you'll discover that we live well within the 75-mile radius of that TVA lake.

This spring, eagle watchers have been keeping track of an active nest at
(Continued on page 5)



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