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through the biKNOXulars

Newsletter of the Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

November 5 program to address Wetland and Meadow Restoration in Cades Cove

On November 5, Kristine Johnson, Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) Supervisory Forester, will present "Wetland and Meadow Restoration in Cades Cove: Improving Habitat Diversity for Birds" at our monthly meeting. The purpose of the presentation is to explain the native plant work being done in Cades Cove to increase grassland bird habitat. Johnson has been the Supervisory Forester at GSMNP since 1990. Prior to coming to GSMNP, she worked at the Blue Ridge Parkway, Chickamauga Battlefield and for the US Forest Service.

Cades Cove encompasses a 2,000-acre limestone basin. European settlers first legally inhabited Cades Cove in 1819 following a treaty with the Indians. Cades Cove became a well-settled agricultural community. Several of those pioneer era structures remain in there. Since the park's establishment in 1934, Cades Cove has been managed for a variety of objectives.

Currently GSMNP is the most visited national park in the country; Cades Cove serves approximately two million visitors each year.

During the 1950's – 1970's, many changes were made to the environment. Many of the wetlands were ditched and drained, streams were channelized and exotic fescue and lespedeza was planted. Also during that period the fields were managed for the hay and cattle lease operators, several of whom had lifetime leases.

In 1995 the Park began a pilot project to restore some of the native wetlands and meadows. In increase fields, they are producing native grass and wildflower seeds to restore the fescue fields. (*See story on page 3.*) They are also eradicating exotic honeysuckle, multiflora rose and lespedeza. Additionally, the death of Kermit Caughron, in 1999, brought about the end of cattle operations in Cades Cove. Currently the

(Continued on page 2)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

November field trips. Let's get together!

Saturday, November 8, 1 PM

Hiwassee Refuge-Sandhill Crane Viewing Area, Birchwood, TN. See page 1.

Saturday, November 15, 7:30 AM

North Boundary Trail, Oak Ridge, TN. See page 2.

Saturday, November 8, 1 PM

Hiwassee Refuge-Sandhill Crane Viewing Area, Birchwood, TN
Leader: Harold Howell (828-6302; howellh2@bellsouth.net)

This will be a joint trip with the Chattanooga TOS. Their announcement is reproduced on page two. Meet at the Stokley Building parking lot, 320 N. Cedar Bluff, Knoxville, at 1 p.m. for carpooling to the site, or meet at the site as noted on the next page. The leader will bring a portable charcoal grill.

(Continued on page 2)

*"That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold, What hath quenched them hath given me fire. Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman, Which gives the stern'st good-night."*

- Spoken by Lady Macbeth. Act II, Scene II, *Macbeth* - William Shakespeare, 1606.

Field Trips *(Continued from page 1)*

Please bring hot dogs and "fixings." Come and meet members of the CTOS group.

Sat, Nov. 8: Hiwassee Refuge - Sandhill Crane Viewing Area, Hot Dogs and Wildlife Viewing
3 p.m. till 5 p.m. (or stay till dark).

Leader: Danny Gaddy (937-3842)

Directions: From Dayton, take Hwy 60 East. After you cross the Tennessee River, turn left at next paved road. At sharp left hand curve, turn right. Drive a few hundred yards, look for sign on left. Drive to end of dirt road. You are at the viewing area. Join Danny and others. Those that can bring grills, contact Danny. Everyone should bring their own dogs and 'fix-ins' and enjoy the piece and serenity of the area, the good company and observe the wildlife as it enters and leaves the area around the lake and surrounding fields. Dress warm. The Knoxville TOS will join us on this trip. Come and meet members from the KTOS group.

Saturday, November 15, 7:30 AM

North Boundary Trail, Oak Ridge, TN

Leader: Dev Joslin (482-7581)

Meet at 7:30 am at the back of the Walmart parking lot in Oak Ridge (near the Comfort Inn and Panera's). Then we will head out for the North Boundary "Songbird" Trail and finish up at the wetland off Highway 58. Target birds will be Wood Duck, various raptors including Barred Owl, American Woodcock,

all seven woodpecker species including hairy, yellow-bellied sapsucker and red-headed (we'll do a woodpecker count), Brown Creeper, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Hermit Thrush, Fox Sparrow and many other sparrow species (we'll also do a sparrow count).

NOTICE: There were two additional field trips in October that were announced by e-mail notice. If you did not receive the notices, then I do not have your e-mail address. If you would like to receive future notices, send me an e-mail at howellh2@bellsouth.net. We may have some additional trips in November.

Good birding to all,
Harold Howell, Field Trip Coordinator

November Program *(Continued from page 1)*

Park is working on a management plan to establish guidelines for future restoration of natural areas within the historic landscape.

Join us on Wednesday, November 5 at 7 p.m. to learn more about the implications of native plant restoration on bird populations. We will meet, as usual, in Room 117 (across the hall from Pendergrass Library), UT Vet School on Center Drive off Neyland Drive. See you there!

- Tracey Muise, program coordinator

Where to find



Red Crossbills in Tennessee

- By David Trently

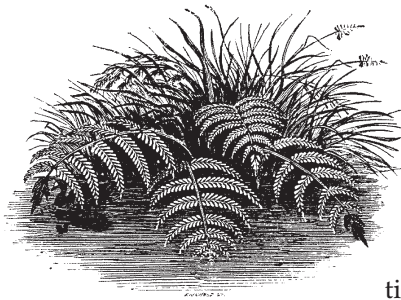
While Red Crossbills, *Loxia curvirostra*, can be found any month of the year in the mountains of east Tennessee and western North Carolina, they are sometimes thought of as a winter species. They are, after all, one of the "winter finches," birds that breed in the far north and are often only seen in winter during irruption years. These finches include both White-winged and Red Crossbills, Purple Finch, Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin, not all of which can be expected any year in this state.

A species that wanders very much, Red Crossbill, is possible just about anywhere in winter, but your best chance to see any is in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park or around Carvers Gap on Roan Mountain in Carter County.

To look for them in the Smokies, I would start at the Newfound Gap parking lot. Walk around the lot,

looking and especially listening for their two-note 'kip kip' call as they fly over. Often that will be all you see of them, a flyover. But watch where they go and hope they land in an evergreen tree near you. From the parking lot, walk down past the restrooms, through the gate to a short trail. This area is also good for other high elevation birds. From Newfound Gap, drive up the Clingmans Dome Road to the first pull-off on the right, about a mile up. This is Indian Gap and is often good for a crossbill sighting.

Your next good place to look is at the Clingmans Dome parking area. Wander around here for an hour or more and you should hear a few, if the weather is not too bad. This is often the very best place to get great looks at these birds. They sometimes walk around the pavement and perch in short trees along the edge of the lot. Hope you find some...and, of course, let us know what else you find!



Native Plants vs. Fescue - by Tracey Muise

This month our featured speaker, Kristine Johnson, will be talking about native plant restoration in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. So I'm going to take this opportunity to stand on my soapbox and share some more information on native plants, grasses and wildflowers.

First, a little terminology. Native plants (or species) are those that existed historically in an ecosystem, prior to human, particularly European settlers, interruption. Non-native or "exotic" species that take over an ecosystem, like Kudzu, are called "invasive."

In my mind, one of the most invasive, exotic species that we face is fescue (a.k.a. "grass"). The vast majority of us have fescue surrounding our homes, businesses, schools etc. In 1999, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) estimated that there were three million acres of fescue planted in Tennessee alone. Fescue is problematic for several reasons.

First, other species have difficulty competing with this fast-growing monoculture. In part, this is due to a toxin which fescue produces that inhibits the growth of competing species. Second, the thick mat growth of fescue significantly limits the movement of small mammals, like voles, and makes nest building difficult. Third, fescue has an associated fungus which has been shown to limit the populations of small mammals and birds. Finally, fescue has proven to be a nutritionally poor food source. (*I think of it as eating a salad with an iceberg lettuce base versus a spinach base*).

Native plants and grasses, on the other hand, provide all that fescue does not—diversity, nesting habitat, coverage, and nutrition. TDEC confirms that in areas where native grasses have been established there has been a significant increase in animal diversity, including Henslow's Sparrows, a species of concern.

The reintroduction of native species can be economically, as well, as environmentally beneficial. Native plants, which are adapted to live in our environment, survive droughts, floods and temperature vagrancies better than non-natives. Thus they don't require the time and expense of watering and other care. Natives rarely require pesticide or herbicide application. Again, saving both time and money.

I encourage you all to plant natives and reap the rewards—a greater diversity of wildlife, more time to view that wildlife, and more money to go out on those birding and wildlife excursions.

If you are interested in learning more, here are a few helpful websites:

For a list of native plants:

<http://www.se-eppc.org/states/TN/landscape.html>

For a list of native trees:

<http://www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/spfiles/SP515.pdf>

Local native plants nurseries:

<http://www.overhillgardens.com/>

<http://www.native-gardens.com/> (operated by KTOS members Meredith and Ed Clebsch)

KTOS Financial Report • November 2003

Compiled by Marie Oakes, Financial Committee

	October	September	YTD
Income:			
. Dues	\$168.00	\$0.00	\$1,800.00
. Mugs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$163.50
. Interest	\$41.21	\$0.00	\$125.06
. Misc Donation	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7.50
. Spring Meeting	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,909.00
. Owen Memorial	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,209.70
. Fuller Memorial	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$420.00</u>
Total Income	\$209.21	\$0.00	\$6,634.76
Expenses:			
. Newsletter	\$72.50	\$235.00	\$959.60
. Supplies	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$87.31
. Member Dues to TOS	\$12.00	\$0.00	\$1,356.00
. Spring Meeting Expense	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$2,313.46</u>
Total Expenses	\$84.50	\$235.00	\$4,716.37
Other:			
. Foothills Conservancy	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$250.00
. Friends of UT Gardens	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$60.00
. Fuller Memorial	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$120.00
. Girl Scouts of Tanasi Council	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
. Memorial Books	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$90.00</u>
Total Other	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$1,020.00
Account Balances			
. KTOS Checking & Savings	\$4,462.60	\$4,372.64	
. J.B.Owen Memorial	\$5,622.11	\$5,587.36	
Memberships			
	165	164	



Presidential Perch

- By Charlie Muise

I was pleased to see a strong Knoxville chapter turnout at the Fall TOS meeting last month at Warner Park. The birding was good, many of us learned a lot from the symposium and of course there was lots of good company. Any members who have never attended a state meeting do not know what they are missing! I think it is worth the long drive.

One of the topics discussed at the board meeting was the possibility of allowing people to opt out of receiving *The Warbler*, and instead read it online. If you would like to help the organization save postage and paper, and be more environmentally friendly, simply contact me. Once we have a reliable system in place to allow folks to read it online in a timely manner, I will pass on my list.

And just to prove to you how much our chapter parallels the state-wide organization, we are putting the finishing touches on providing this same service to KTOS members who would rather read *Through the Binoxulars* online. So far I only have three people on my "opt-out" list. If you would like to be on this list, please contact me. And please be clear about WHICH list you would like to be on, if not both.

In other news from the TOS fall meeting, TOS voted to join the Cumberland Alliance. David

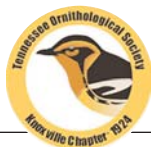
Trently's idea of resurrecting the TOS spring forays drew good reviews—stay tuned in upcoming months for details. The possibility of selling ads in *The Warbler* was discussed. Nominations are being sought for TOS Distinguished Service Awards. The winter TOS meeting will be January 9 and 10 at Pickwick State Park. And last but not least, the Chattanooga Chapter will host the spring TOS meeting April 30 – May 2.

We will have an open planning meeting at 6 p.m. at Ellington Plant Science Building, room 128 on the night of the regular club meeting. Anyone who is interested in where our club is heading is welcome to attend. One of the issues we have been discussing is the possibility of adopting chapter rules or constitution. As part of this we may consider creating an executive committee so that more people are involved in decision making. Attending the planning meetings would be a responsibility of such a committee.

Please help me in welcoming Kris Johnson from Great Smoky Mountains National Park as our speaker this month. - *Good birding, Charlie*

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Would you rather get your newsletter online as a pdf file? And save KTOS money? Let Charlie know and we'll drop your name from the postal mailing list. You then can go to the state website each month to read or download your newsletter. Thanks.



KTOS Membership

Renew your membership with KTOS by mailing 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.

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DEADLINE for the December issue is November 22

For a color version of this or past issues go to "local chapters/Knoxville" at the TOS Home Page: [HTTP://WWW.TNBIRDS.ORG](http://www.tnbirds.org)

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