



November Program on Birding in California

Join us on **Wednesday, November 2, at 6:45 p.m.** to hear our state ornithologist, Scott Somershoe, talk about his birding adventures in California. In August 2010, Scott took his first birding trip to the West Coast. He and a friend, an expert regional birder, birded southern California non-stop for six days. Scott will share photos and stories of their travels from the beaches to the deserts, from the high mountains to the Salton Sea, and through the nights, chasing as many birds as they could. He will also give a short update on recent changes to eBird that make the program more user-friendly.

The meeting will be held in Room 117 of the UT College of Veterinary Medicine. For directions, visit the Meetings page on our web site at www.tnbirds.org/KTOS.html.

Recipients of the 2011 J. B. Owen Awards

The purpose of the J.B. Owen Memorial Fund is to honor the memory of J.B. Owen (1916 – 2001), longtime Tennessee Ornithological Society (TOS) member and columnist known to thousands in East Tennessee through his columns in Knoxville newspapers. The endowment provides funds for the annual J.B. Owen Award, which is to be used to support a project that promotes the welfare and conservation of birds in Tennessee. This year, funding was awarded to two recipients, Evan Searfoss and Than Boves.

Evan Searfoss was awarded \$300 at the September KTOS picnic to support his Eagle Scout project, which is the construction of an observation tower at Kyker Bottoms Refuge in Blount County. Thanks to Evan's initiative and hard work, along with some elbow grease from a few KTOS members, the tower is now essentially complete except for the installation of windows.

Than Boves was awarded \$300 at the October KTOS meeting to support his research on stable isotope analysis in Cerulean Warblers. Than will be analyzing feathers he has collected over the past three years during his research on this species in the Appalachian Mountains. Stable isotope analysis can help determine the geographic origin of feathers and thus show where Ceruleans in the study areas have dispersed after leaving their natal and breeding grounds.

Dues Reminder

As we kindly nudged you about last month, it's that time again: dues time. KTOS membership dues are now due for the coming year and may be paid at the welcome table at the next meeting. Dues levels are as follows: \$26/individual, \$30/family, \$38/sustaining, \$13/student, or TOS life membership for \$450 with \$8 annual fee to the local Chapter.

If you have any questions, contact Carole Gobert at (865) 254-8841 or via email at cpgobert@hotmail.com. Dues may also be sent to her via mail (address on page 4).



J. B. Owen Fund committee member David Johnson presenting the 2011 J. B. Owen Awards to Evan Searfoss (top) and Than Boves (bottom).



Presidential Perch

It was a beautiful weekend for the Fall TOS Meeting in Chattanooga on October 7 – 9. The river boat cruise was excellent with lots of birds and wildlife. (Check out pictures on our Facebook page!) We saw juvenile Bald Eagles, Great Egret, Belted Kingfisher, deer, and more. The food was excellent, as was the camaraderie.

Despite this great time, the highlight of the weekend for me was the trip led by David Stone to the Honors golf course. This course is a birder's paradise! Why can't more golf courses be this way? As a matter of fact, why can't more gardens and yards be this way? It's important to maintain a part of your garden and yard for wildlife, but wouldn't it be nice if we did more? We would help wildlife, the environment, and save ourselves time and money. Think of all the new bird species you might be able to attract. All it takes is someone like David Stone, someone who saw a golf course differently. He has created something that we all should strive to obtain in our own garden, let alone our places of work, schools, etc. Just imagine those wasted, manicured lawns as wildlife habitats.

Colin and I also observed David Aborn do bird banding at Greenville Farms where he's a one-man show. He has been doing this for years with little or no help. David is not alone in his limited staffing for the banding station, though. I attended the Advanced Banding class at the Environmental Studies on the Piedmont program and found out that most MAPS stations consist of only a two- or three-person team and that they're lucky to get 100+ birds a season. The MAPS station at Seven Islands averages 500 birds per season, and we have ten regular volunteers. Thanks to all of you who get up early and give your Sunday mornings to the birds!

Don't forget to check out our Facebook page and our updated web site, as lots of good things have been posted on both. Also, if you haven't bought your Federal Duck Stamp yet, we have only four left! Thanks to all who have made this a success. Finally, I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate Ron Hoff on his election to TOS President – an excellent choice!

Billie Cantwell



Savannah Sparrow, Steven D'Amato

Get Out and Get Birding! November Field Trips

Sharp's Ridge Clean-Up
Saturday, November 5 @ 9:00 a.m.
Rain Date: Saturday, November 19
Leader: Tony King, (865) 988-6172

Join Tony King and fellow KTOS members for our fall clean-up day at Sharp's Ridge. Sharp's Ridge Memorial Park is one of the premier birding spots in the Knoxville area, and KTOS formally adopted the park in 2004 as a litter-free area. Meet at the overlook at 9:00 a.m., and bring gloves, water, and a cheerful attitude. The clean-up will last about two hours. Come early and stay late for some birding. In case of rain, the clean-up will be held on Saturday, November 19, instead.

For more info and directions, visit www.tnbirds.org/birdfinding/SharpsRidge.htm.

Kyker Bottoms Refuge
Saturday, November 12 @ 7:30 a.m. or 8:15 a.m.
Leader: Chuck Nicholson, cpnichol@bellsouth.net

Kyker Bottoms will be partially closed on November 15, so this will be the last chance to bird large segments of this site for a few months. Sparrows and rails will be some of the target birds on this trip, and in order to see them, we will be walking in potentially wet fields where lots of plant seeds might stick to us. Wear old shoes and clothes you can possibly throw away afterwards! You don't have to walk through the fields but can stay to the sides, watching for any birds the rest of us flush into view. This trip will also be an opportunity to view the new observation tower that was completed by Evan Searfoss as part of his Eagle Scout project.

Meet at the UT Ag School parking lot at 7:30 a.m. to carpool or at the parking lot by the "old" observation platform at Kyker Bottoms at 8:15 a.m. Bring water and a snack. For more info and directions, visit www.tnbirds.org/birdfinding/KykerBottoms.htm.

Mossy Creek Wildlife Viewing Area
Thursday, November 17 @ 9:00 a.m.
Leader: Harold Howell, (865) 828-6302

Take part in this mid-week trip to Mossy Creek Wildlife Viewing Area to look for rails, water birds, and sparrows. Meet at the paved parking lot for the viewing area at 9:00 a.m. When the group finishes at Mossy Creek, we will tour some other spots around the area, such as Cherokee Dam or possibly Buffalo Springs WMA in Grainger County. Moderate walking will be required over mostly level ground, and the trip should finish by noon.

For more info and directions, visit www.tnbirds.org/birdfinding/JeffersonCity.htm.

Big Outing to *The Big Year*

On Friday, October 14, a group of twenty KTOS members sat in the dark, waiting – not that this is anything new – but this time you could hear the faint crunch of popcorn and the gentle slurp of a beverage. A faint chorus of bird song began to rise out of the darkness, then a wave of sound from a tropical jungle, but this was all on the big screen. We were waiting, not for a bird, but for a bird movie: *The Big Year*. Mark Obmascik's book has been made into a movie starring Steve Martin, Owen Wilson, and Jack Black. The movie follows the book fairly closely and conveys the humor of chasing birds in a big year quite well, though the film does begin with the quite funny caveat: "This is based on a true story...only the facts have been changed." All the names from the book have been changed, and I loved Debbie Shearwater's new name, Auntie Aucklet. That got a good laugh from the birders in the crowd.

Birds came thick and fast with some good humor thrown in for good measure. Some of the CGI birds looked a bit odd but thankfully gone were the Common Loon and Cactus Wren calling in the middle of the wrong habitat (which happened in the movie trailer). All of the birds were identified correctly, though a Swainson's Hawk in January in Colorado was a bit off, since it should have been in South America by then.

The chase continued on through the whole movie with zany antics, disapproving fathers, company phone calls, and angry wives. Sounds like a regular birding trip to me! In the end, you begin to see what the folly and the passion is and what it can cost. For those less dedicated, it was the folly of sacrifice to see a bird, and for those with the passion, you could see the dark side of sacrificing all for that one rare lifer. (I'm beginning to think I might be the Darth Vader of bird watching.) The silver lining was the places, friends, and experiences along the way and the healed bonds, realized priorities, and found sanity. Either way, this was a funny movie, and it was nice to see something of the passion and folly we all experience chasing birds locally and around the world.

The end credits show hundreds of photographs of all the birds seen in the big year, and there is some nice scenery along the way and some great bird jokes. Well worth seeing.

Mike Nelson



Townsend's Warbler, Kirsten Munson

Birding Briefs

Dean Edwards reported on October 6 that he had two good, but brief, looks at what he's almost certain was a **first-year male Townsend's Warbler** in his Knox County yard. While he was hesitant about stating with absolute conviction that it was a Townsend's, Dean provided detailed field mark information to the TN-Bird list and noted that there had been four reports of Townsend's Warbler along the East Coast in the prior weeks.

On the same morning (October 6), **Ron Hoff and Dollyann Myers** visited Eagle Bend Fish Hatchery in Anderson County and had their own warbler experience: **32 Palm Warblers** in one morning at this small site! They also observed their first-of-fall **Redhead** and a new species for the hatchery, **Philadelphia Vireo**.

On October 21, **Carole Gobert** enjoyed a beautiful fall day at Cove Lake State Park in Campbell County. She reported that **Gadwall** and **American Coot** had arrived and that **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were everywhere. Carole also got close looks at her first **Brown Creeper** of the season, and she had the opportunity to compare a **Song Sparrow** and a **Swamp Sparrow** that were perched just inches apart.

Have you seen a really great bird you want to share? Email your cool birds (species, number, date, location) to Angela Hoffman at ahoffman07@bellsouth.net or leave a message at (865) 670-8822.



Source: Fox 2000 Pictures.

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

2011 — 2012 Chapter Officers

President

Billie Cantwell
(865) 212-9797 or 567-4273
bfcantwell@gmail.com

Vice President

Patty Ford
(865) 719-8383
pattyford@pfordonline.com

Treasurer

Carole Gobert
(865) 254-8841
cpgobert@hotmail.com

Secretary

Melinda Fawver
(865) 310-1979
mindyfawver@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Angela Hoffman
(865) 670-8822 or 441-1107
ahoffman07@bellsouth.net

Newsletter Editor – Distribution

Robin Barrow
(865) 297-2572
braveladyrobin@gmail.com

Field Trip Coordinators

Alice & Gary Woody
(865) 573-4937
gamwoody@comcast.net

State Directors, 2010 – 2012

Ginger Goolsby
Harold Howell
David Johnson

State Directors, 2011– 2013

Mark Armstrong
Chris Welsh

through the biKNOXulars
5425 Yosemite Trail
Knoxville, TN 37909

PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID, KNOXVILLE, TN 37901
through the biKNOXulars (USPS 697-010)
Published monthly, except January, July, and August
by the Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, 5425 Yosemite Trail, Knoxville, TN 37909
Subscription price: \$8.00. **POSTMASTER:**
Send changes of address to: *through the biKNOXulars*,
5425 Yosemite Trail, Knoxville, TN 37909

Long-Lived Indigo Bunting

During our last banding session on September 25, 2011, at Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge, we caught a male Indigo Bunting with an unfamiliar band number. I checked back in my records and eventually found that the bird had been banded as an adult during MAPS on July 26, 2005. Since Indigo Buntings take two years to acquire the full blue plumage, this bird had been at least two years old when he was banded. This meant that he had hatched in 2003 or earlier and that would make him at least eight years old now.

On further investigation, I also found that he was caught in 2006, 2007, and 2008 in one of the two nets that we place in the buffer along the French Broad River. We didn't see him at all in 2009, but in 2010, we caught him on September 12 in a net along Kelly Lane near our banding station. We then caught him again back in the buffer along the river in 2011.

I checked on the bird banding lab web site for longevity records and found that our bird is tied for the oldest Indigo Bunting. It is really neat to be able to document this kind of longevity, and hopefully next spring we will see him again.

Mark Armstrong



*Male Indigo Bunting,
Kevin Bolton, Wikimedia Commons.*