



Newsletter of the Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

September Meeting: Wednesday, September 5th at 7:00 pm.

Brice Gilmer is once again host for the first meeting of the fall season, our traditional covered-dish picnic.

Bring your favorite dish and your summer sightings!

Directions: From Kingston Pike, into Sequoyah Hills, turn onto Scenic Drive and go about 1/2 mile. Turn left on to Bluff View and go to the first driveway on the right. Beverages, plates, etc will be provided.

** Volunteers are needed to come early to help with parking cars.

September Field Trips

Rankin Bottoms

Sunday Sept 2. 2:30 pm

Leader: Chris Welsh

Meet at exit 417 (Dandridge) in the Hardee's parking lot at 2:30p.m. Shorebirds, local nesters and wading birds are the targets. Rankin Bottom WMA is the premier shorebird spot in East Tennessee during fall migration. The water levels should be ideal for a wide variety of shorebirds. Last year we had 17 species of shorebirds and 60 species overall.

Cherohala Skyway, Monroe County, TN and Graham County, NC.

Sunday September 16

Leader: David Trently

Leave at 7:00 a.m. from Stokely Bldg on Cedar Bluff. We'll stop at Hardee's in Tellico Plains around 8:00. We will make several stops along the Skyway, where good numbers of migrating songbirds are expected. There won't be too much hiking on this trip, though a half mile or so into the woods will be possible at a few stops. Bring lunch, cameras and insect repellent (gnats can be a nuisance at lower elevations). Some of the birds we hope to find: Common Raven; Black-capped Chickadee; Winter Wren; Philadelphia Vireo; several warblers; Red Crossbill. Expect to return to Knoxville in late afternoon.

MIGRATION COUNT

The Fall North American Migration Count will be conducted on Saturday, September 15th. It's the same rules and areas as the Spring NAMC. Pick your favorite county and have a great and safe birding day. Send the results to: Ron Hoff, 282 Hackworth Ln., Clinton, Tn. 37716 or email them to me at dollyron@icx.net

Hawk Watch at Foothills Parkway

Sunday Sept. 23. 7:00am

Leader: David Trently (531-1473)

Leave from the Stokely Building parking lot (320 N.Cedar Bluff Rd, Knoxville). Alternatively meet at the start of the Foothills Parkway of US 321 between Maryville and Townsend at 8:00am. We will spend up to two hours at the start of this road, looking for migrant songbirds, before heading up the Parkway. We should see a number of warblers and vireos, with a good chance at Philadelphia Vireo. Once we start the hawk watch part of the trip (around 10:00am) we expect to see mostly broad-winged Hawks. Since there is often a lot of waiting between hawk sighting, bring chairs. This year we plan to do a "pot luck" lunch, so bring enough to share. In past years we have had Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Caspian Tern, Common Raven, Red-headed Woodpecker and many verios, warblers, thrushes and tanagers.

TVA Sponsored Hawkwatch

TVA plans to expand their wind electrical generation. The TVA windfarm on Buffalo Mountain (near Windrock Mtn.) has 3 turbines with a total capacity of 2 megawatts. The plan is for up to 50 megawatts, which could be up to 75 turbines. TVA is gearing up for studies of bird migration this fall at the current Buffalo Mountain site, and at 2 potential sites near Buffalo Mountain.

KTOS would like to help TVA by participating in hawkwatches on 9/16, 9/22 and 9/23. TVA will help provide transportation, and will also provide radios to help with communication between the three sites. The watch leaders will be Chuck Nicholson, Roger Tankersley and volunteers yet to come forward. We would like to have spotters on all three sights on all three days. **For more information, contact Dan Mooney at 525-5681 or dmoon@mindspring.com.**

Presidential Perch

During the summer of 2001, KTOS did not have the usual number of field trips. But don't think our chapter has not been active! We are hosting the TOS Fall Meeting and we have been working to make sure it will be memorable.

There are people set to help with registration, food, field trips, silent auction, door prizes - and a fabulous gift pack to all registrants! There are still plenty of opportunities to volunteer, so let us know if you'd like to help.

On August 15, those at a planning meeting worked out some details of the Fall Meeting, as well as other KTOS business. *[NOTE: If you have email but did not receive a message informing you of this meeting, I do not have your email address! If you'd like to be informed of club news in between newsletters, please send your name and address to dtrently@utk.edu]*

Some items discussed at this meeting: Knox County Fall Count: Dean Edwards will be compiler for this event again. We have discussed changing the determination of individual birders' count areas, from specific sites to a territory, as is done with the Christmas Bird Count. This may not happen this for the upcoming count, so be sure to let Dean know if you plan to count. We are still finalizing details on how the JB Owen Memorial Fund will be administered, which now contains almost \$4000. The Bird Records Committee is gearing up to enter as many area bird sighting records as possible into a computer database. We ask that members send us bird records from as far back as possible! Charlie Muise is actively pursuing the design and production of insulated coffee mugs for sale. They will have a TOS logo on them. This will be partly a fund raiser for KTOS and partly a statement of environmental friendliness - no more Styrofoam cups.

We have some very capable officers running our organization this year. Charlie Muise has one of the most difficult positions - vice president. It is up to him to find a program for each meeting. If you have some bird slides or a PowerPoint presentation you can share with us, let him know. Bob Steffy is staying on as treasurer. He has responsibility for not only our checking and savings accounts, but also the JB Owen Memorial Fund. We have a new secretary - please say hello to Don Vowell and thank him for taking on the job. Christine Tankersley has kept our *through the biKNOXulars* going strong as newsletter editor but she has asked for someone else to take over this position. This job requires an extra commitment of time each month, but it can be an enjoyable job getting the information together, making it fit just right and having the satisfaction of seeing another issue published. Dan Mooney is our "interim" field trip coordinator, but would like someone else to become our "official" one. We are looking for volunteers.

We want your ideas!! What would you like to see in meeting programs, field trips, education, research, fund raising...? Let us know!

CLUB FUNDRAISERS

The American Birding Association (ABA) has discounted several items that can be purchased by bird clubs and resold to raise funds. We are planning to buy some of these and sell them to our members. Look over the following list to see if there is something you may want. Your price will be below the ABA member price, and you will not need to pay shipping or sales tax. We should have prices set by the September picnic. Numbers in parentheses are the item numbers from the ABA catalog (if you're not a member, see <http://www.americanbirding.org/> and go to the Birding Store)

* From the ABA Birdfinding Guide Series:
"A Birder's Guide to..."

Southeastern Arizona (102)[\$13.17; 19.95; 21.95]

Arkansas (117)[\$11.37; 16.95; 18.95]

S Calif (123)[\$14.37; 21.95; 23.95]

Colorado (145)[\$13.17; 19.95; 21.95]

Florida (175)[\$14.37; 21.95; 23.95]

Idaho (235)[\$11.37; 16.95; 18.95]

E Mass (266)[\$11.37; 16.95; 18.95]

New Hampshire (267)[\$11.37; 16.95; 18.95]

Rio Grande Valley (414)[\$14.37; 21.95; 23.95]

Texas Coast (413)[\$13.17; 19.95; 21.95]

Virginia (233)[\$14.37; 21.95; 23.95]

Wyoming (478)[\$11.37; 16.95; 18.95]

Churchill (490)[\$11.37; 16.95; 18.95]

* ABA Regional Checklists (510)- 10 different 3-fold checklists for different regions of the ABA birding area. [\$3.00; ABA 4.25]...these can also be purchased individually [\$0.35; ABA 0.50]

* T-shirts (1185T, 1272T, 1176T)[not sure ABA price - our price \$9.75]

* Song Bird Coffee[\$7.50 reg, \$9.00 decaf; 9.95-10.50 reg, 11.50 decaf]

* video: "How to Start Watching Birds" (642V)[\$17.95; 26.95; 29.95]

* the National Geographic Field Guide (014)[\$13.17; 17.50; 21.95]

* "Peterson First Guide: Birds" (808)[\$4.45; 4.95; 5.95]

* "Sharing the Wonders of Birds with Kids", book (Y019)[\$10.45; 14.95]

* "A Guide to Bird Education Resources: Migratory Birds of the Americas" (955)[\$6.95; 9.95]

FOREST FRAGMENTATION LINKED TO STRESS IN BIRDS

AUBURN, Alabama, May 29, 2001 (ENS) - New research offers a clue as to why Amazon forest birds are sensitive to habitat fragmentation - even patches as big as 250 acres are missing many species.

Birds in fragments have slower growing feathers, learned U.S. researchers. This suggests that they are more stressed, which could decrease survival and reproduction.

"There might be physiological consequences for birds that live in fragments," said Jeff Stratford of Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama, who did this work with Philip Stouffer of Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana. The work appears in the June issue of the journal "Conservation Biology."

This is the first evidence that fragmentation may have direct physiological effects.

Stratford and Stouffer compared feathers from two common bird species (the white crowned manakin and the wedge billed woodcreeper) that were captured in either forest fragments or continuous forest near Manaus, Brazil. To determine how fast the feathers had grown, the researchers measured the daily growth bars.

Healthier birds are assumed to have feathers with wider growth bars, meaning faster growing feathers.

The researchers found that feathers from birds captured in forest fragments had grown slower: for instance, feathers from birds in 2.5 acre fragments grew 10 percent slower than those from birds in continuous forest.

Why do birds in fragments have slower growing feathers? Stratford and Stouffer ruled out the possibility of insufficient food. The manakin's diet includes fruit and the woodcreeper eats insects living on tree trunks and branches, and fragmentation does not reduce either type of food.

Fragmentation may not affect feather growth directly. Rather, less robust birds may be more likely to end up in undesirable habitats like fragments.

"We suggest that these birds are social subordinates that are wandering about the landscape," said Stratford.

Birds in fragmented habitats elsewhere may be even more stressed because the fragmentation in this study was mild. For instance, the forest fragments were separated by pasture and regenerating forest rather than by parking lots and houses.

"Even though things look bad, this is a 'best case scenario'," Stratford said.

'Managed' Cat Colonies in Parks Harmful to Birds and Other Wildlife New Study Shows

The non-profit conservation group, American Bird Conservancy (ABC), has long opposed so-called "managed" colonies of stray and feral cats, claiming that such colonies cannot be effectively controlled and that these cats, no matter how well fed, are still responsible for the deaths of thousands of native songbirds and other animals. Now, a new scientific study backs up ABC's claim that the efforts of stray cat feeders are misguided and damaging to wildlife.

The study by Dan Castillo at the Department of Environmental Studies at Florida International University, contradicts widely-held beliefs by cat colony proponents that well-fed cats do not kill wildlife, that cats are territorial and will prevent more cats from joining the colony, and that cat colonies decline in size over time.

Two cat colonies in Miami-Dade County parks were observed for 13 months and, contrary to previous assumptions, it was found that almost every month new cats joined the colonies while other cats disappeared. The colonies acted as dumping grounds for people abandoning cats, despite state and county laws making this illegal. Despite attempts by volunteers to have the cats spayed or neutered, intact cats were observed, as were pregnant cats and newborn kittens.

Although well-fed, cats at both locations were observed chasing, stalking and killing birds and other animals. Aggressive interactions among the cats were few and did not limit cat access to food or the colonies. Cat feeders placed large amounts of food throughout the parks, which then attracted other animals such as raccoons, fox, skunks and stray dogs.

According to Mr. Castillo, "Managed cat colonies are not the solution to cat overpopulation problems. My findings demonstrate that the establishment of cat colonies on public lands encourages cat abandonment and is harmful to native wildlife. Cat colonies do not decline over time - they just perpetuate themselves."

Linda Winter, director of Cats Indoors! for ABC stated, "Mr. Castillo's study confirms what other studies have shown - that cat colonies cannot be managed and do not belong in parks. Solutions to the stray cat overpopulation problem must also protect birds and other wildlife."

ABC's Cats Indoors! Campaign is supported by thousands of individuals and organizations in the conservation, animal welfare, wildlife rehabilitation, and veterinary communities. For more information, visit ABC's Web site at: www.abcbirds.org

CELEBRATION PLANNED TO BENEFIT WHOOPING CRANES

The Chattanooga Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society will host a "Whooping Crane Celebration" recognizing the arrival of the cranes to Tennessee, on **Friday, October 26, 2001, at 6:00 p.m. at the Chattanooga Choo Choo's Imperial Ballroom.** The TOS event is in partnership with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to Benefit the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Foundation. Funds will go to expand educational outreach and to enhance habitat for the cranes that pass through Tennessee. The evening will feature hors d'oeuvres, silent auction, Operation Migration video, and special guest speaker, John Christian, Project Leader, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Admission or a donation is \$10.00 and is available by sending SASE to Bonnie Johnson, Rt. 1 Box 487 B, Dunlap, TN 37327. For more information, contact: Craneinfo@cs.com

Celebrate!
The Cumberland Trail Conference
cordially invites you to
An Educational Evening
Celebrating Tennessee's First Linear State Park
The Cumberland Trail
Thursday, Sept. 13, 5:30-7:30 p.m. EDT
At Knoxville Area Chamber Partnership
601 W. Summit Hill Dr. in The Chapel
Light refreshments will be served
Hosts: Pete Claussen, Ellen Oblow, Tom Cronan
Al Bedinger, John Kennerly, Carlton Long, Pam Peters
R.S.V.P. to Carlton Long
865-588-0661 from 8 am-5 pm (ask for Laurie)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR NEEDED!

The time has come for me to turn over editorship of *through the BiKNOXulars* to someone new. Other obligations require me to give up my position, and **December will be my last newsletter.** If you enjoy keeping up with the happenings of the bird club then this is a great opportunity - It's fun and rewarding, not to mention very important to club members. Please contact me or David Trently if you're willing to take on this job. Thanks, Christine Tankersley

HUMMER HINTS

Feeding Hummingbirds used to be a chore, but here are some shortcuts I've learned over the years:

Homemade nectar – When you make a sugar-water solution (4 parts water to 1 part sugar, boil and cool), make a large batch. After the solution cools, measure how much liquid is needed to fill your feeder and pour equal amounts into resealable freezer bags. As a refill is needed, simply remove a bag from the freezer and thaw it in the microwave. Then just pour it into the feeder.

Cleaning – Sometimes black mold forms inside my feeders. To clean them, I simply break up a denture-cleaning tablet and add it to the reservoir with plain water. After the tablet does it's work, I thoroughly rinse the feeder. If stubborn stains remain, add a tablespoon of salt to plain water in the feeder and shake vigorously. The grains of salt will scrub it. These are non-toxic methods.

Pesky Ants – I spray the feeder's hanger with a light coat of nonstick cooking spray.

-Walter Norvell, Fort Worth, Texas (from Birds & Blooms – June/July 2001)

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