



VOLUME 26 • NUMBER 6

SEP 2003

through the biKNOXulars

Newsletter of the Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

Annual Fall Picnic is Wednesday, September 3 at Gilmer's home

As has become tradition, the Gilmer family will be hosting our fall potluck picnic. We will be meeting at their home in Sequoyah Hills at 7:00 p.m. Please consider carpooling with a friend or two to reduce the number of cars that have to park on the street, which can inconvenience neighbors—we don't want to wear out our welcome!

Please bring a covered dish, and your own beverage. Re-useable plastic plates, cups and real silverware will be provided. The plates and cups are

being loaned to us by Tremont and the silverware is courtesy of a gift by Caroline and Lance Hopenwasser of Huntsville, Alabama (Charlie's friends).

To get there from Kingston Pike turn into Sequoyah Hills at Scenic Drive and go about 1/2 mile, then turn left on to Bluff View Road and go to the first driveway on the right: 957 Bluff View Road.

Also, it's probably a good idea to bring some mosquito repellent. See you there.

Thank you, Brice, for inviting us!

 MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Field Trips and September Counts. Let's go birding!

Saturday, September 6, Noon

Rankin WMA, Cocke Co., TN. See page 1.

Sunday, September 7, 3 PM

Kingston Steam Plant. See page 2.

Saturday, September 13, 7 AM

Monroe County/Cherohala Skyway. See page 2.

Saturday, September 20, 2003

International Migratory Bird Day. See page 3.

Sunday September 21, 8 AM

Hawk Watch at Foothills Parkway. See page 2.

Sunday, September 28, 2003

Knox County Fall Count. See page 3.

Saturday, September 6, Noon

Rankin WMA, Cocke Co., TN

Leader: Dean Edwards (560-9701 h, 660-9701 c)

We will meet at the Stokely Building parking lot, 320 N. Cedar Bluff Road at 12 noon. The drive to Rankin Bottoms from Knoxville is approximately one hour.

We will stop at the Hardee's at Exit 417 on I-40 in Dandridge around 12:45-1:00 as a secondary rendezvous point and for a last-chance food and restroom break.

The proposed Rankin Festival originally scheduled for this date has been canceled due to logistic problems, but Michael Sledjeski and Leslie Gibbens of the Rankin Project (founded to preserve and protect Rankin Bottoms) will likely be on-hand to offer canoe tours later in the day.

Rankin is remote and open with little shade and no food or restrooms nearby. Some of us will likely stay until sunset

(Continued on page 2)

"Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."

- Harper Lee "To Kill a Mockingbird," 1960

September Birding. Let's get together!

(Continued from page 1)

when the waders come to roost. Bring plenty of food and drink, shoes you can get muddy and sunscreen. There will be little walking; lawn chairs can be very useful. A scope is required to see many of the birds but there should be plenty on-hand to share.

The trip is planned to coincide with the drawdown of Douglas Lake to levels which provide excellent habitat for migrating shorebirds including Black-bellied Plover, American Golden-Plover, Sanderling, dowitchers, Stilt, Buff-breasted and Baird's Sandpipers and many other more common species. Past trips have found Ruff, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Willet, and Wilson's and Red Phalaropes.

In addition to shorebirds, we should find many species of herons, egrets, ducks, terns and swallows as well as Willow Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo and Prothonotary Warbler. In past years, we have had Peregrine Falcon, Bald Eagle and White Ibis.

Sunday, September 7, 3 PM

Kingston Steam Plant

Leader: Harold Howell (howellh2@bellsouth.net; 828-6302 h)

We'll leave at 3:00 p.m. from the Stokely Building parking lot, 320 N. Cedar Bluff Road. The purpose of this trip is to view the migrating shore birds and terns on the ponds. We will also search the fields for sparrows and the pines for Brown-headed Nuthatches.

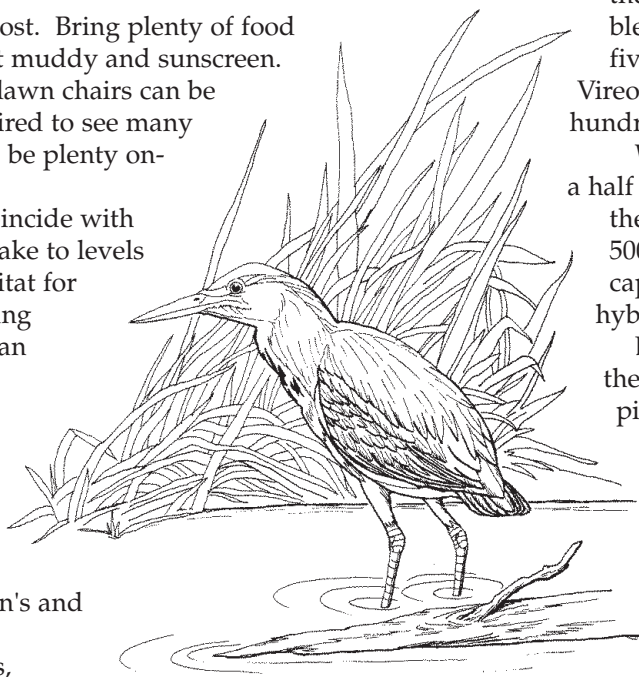
Saturday, September 13, 7 AM

Monroe County and the Cherohala Skyway

Leader: David Trently (dtrently@utk.edu; 974-8664 w; 531-1473 h)

This is a joint trip with the Chattanooga Chapter of TOS. Leave at 7:00 a.m. from the Stokely Building at 320 N. Cedar Bluff Road, or meet at Hardee's in Tellico Plains at 8:00 a.m.

Our primary destinations for this trip will be Cherohala Skyway and Chota Waterfowl Refuge. Mid-September has proven to be an excellent time to visit



these sites, with at least 18 warbler species seen over the past five years, plus Philadelphia Vireo, Bobolink, Red Crossbill, hundreds of Indigo Buntings.

We'll watch the behavior of a half dozen or so hummingbirds on the NC/TN state line at around 5000 feet elevation, where Black-capped Chickadees (and hybrids!) are possible.

Bring lunch for our time on the Skyway. We'll stop at a picnic area to eat.

There will not be much walking—a few short trail hikes on possibly wet paths. Insect repellent may be useful as there are sometimes gnat swarms at the mid-elevations.

If there is interest, we will stop at Chota Waterfowl Refuge on the return trip. Bald Eagles are often seen in this area.

Another alternative is to continue into North Carolina and return home via the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest. Expect to return to Knox County late afternoon/early evening.

Sunday September 21, 8 AM

Hawk Watch at Foothills Parkway

Co-leaders: Harold Howell & David Trently

Let's meet at 8:00 a.m. at the start of Foothills Parkway off US 321 near Townsend. 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 10:00 a.m.) we expect to see mostly Broad-winged Hawks. Since there is often a lot of waiting between hawk sightings, bring chairs. Once again 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 vireos, warblers, thrushes and tanagers.

-Best regards, Harold Howell, field trip coordinator

Bird Count News • Two September Counts Planned

Saturday, September 20, 2003

International Migratory Bird Day

Coordinator: Ron Hoff (435-4547, dollyron@icx.net)

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

Sunday, 28 September 2003

Knox County Fall Count

Compiler: K. Dean Edwards (560-9701 h, 660-9701 c; or kde@angst.engr.utk.edu)

1615 Meadow Chase Lane, Knoxville TN 37931

Everyone is invited to join the fun by counting birds somewhere in Knox County, even your own backyard. We hope to have a lot of folks out in the field for this count so please consider going out or joining up with others to participate in this important event. If you are interested in counting but are not sure what is required, feel free to contact the compiler to ask questions.

Rules are simple. Keep a list of the number of individual birds you see in Knox County on count day. It is also very important that you include ALL of the following information with your results: specific location(s) covered, time of day you started and stopped counting, hours AND miles spent on foot and by car, names of all participants and phone/e-mail for at least one person in the group.

There will be a mid-day compilation at the UT Trial Gardens at noon. Please contact the compiler if you are planning to participate in the count. Send your complete results to the compiler as soon as possible.

Most people do one or two counts, but some of us have been doing more than four every year—it is hoped that this will encourage more of you to do extra counts! Last year, Illinois birder Kelly J. McKay did 20!!! If you participated in a CBC and paid the fee last year, you would have received a copy of the CBC report with his story. If not, here is a link to read about this "mad counter":

http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/pdf/103_h-marathon.pdf

Also check out the CBC home page at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/index.html>

- David Trently

Ijams plans trip to Ecuador

Join Ijams Nature Center for the most memorable fourteen days of your life in ECUADOR!

Experience the Rainforest and the Galapagos Islands on a journey to one of the most beautiful and diverse regions in the world—July 7-21, 2004

- Spend seven days in the Ecuadorian rainforest, at an eco-tourist lodge on the banks of the Napo River
- Participate in cultural conservation programs and live as the natives do with a stay in a Quichua village
- Add many birds to your "life list" including the Andean Condor, the world's largest flighted bird in Ecuador's birders paradise.
- Spend a further seven days in the Galapagos Islands, one of the most enchanting natural preserves on earth, with its rich and varied vegetation, saltwater lakes, mangrove forests and hardened lava flows which are home to many of the islands' most famous inhabitants including marine iguanas and giant tortoises

The cost of the trip is \$3,995 including round trip airfare, transportation, food and lodging.

A deposit of \$500 is required to reserve your place by December 1, 2003. For more information or to register for this fabulous trip, please contact Todd Witcher at 577-4717 ext. 16 or e-mail twitcher@ijams.org.

Christmas Bird Count News

Yes, we're still a long way from Christmas Bird Count (CBC) time (but wouldn't cooler temperatures be nice??). I received an announcement today that I thought I'd share with other Tennessee birders.

Beginning this year, there should be a way to pre-register for any CBC's that you do. You will also be able to pre-pay online the \$5 fee per count. The exciting news here is that for people pre-registering for U.S. counts there will be a four count (\$20.00) cap per observer—for that amount, anyone can do as many CBCs as they want for a given season.

Project Proposal: Feathers and Nests

At the September meeting, a motion will be made for the Bird Club to provide support for the Girl Scouts of Tanasi Council to create a "Feathers and Nests" patch program. It will be moved that KTOS provide \$500 of support from two sources: (1) a Louise Fuller memorial gift and (2) Spring TOS meeting proceeds. Please be prepared to vote on this motion. The proposal follows:

Topic of the Project

Our proposed new patch program, "Feathers and Nests," will help girls learn more about birds that live in our area. Girl Scout troop leaders will be provided with information packets related to patch requirements; girls will work through a series of activities designed to increase their knowledge about bird habitat. Our project targets Junior level Girl Scouts who are ages 9 – 11.

Problem to be Addressed

Children need opportunities to experience the natural world first hand so that they can make informed decisions about the environment as adults. By learning more about the needs of birds, girls will have a better understanding of the impact of development in communities. We have found that using a patch program as an incentive is an excellent way to deliver educational materials to our members.

Objectives

By the end of the patch program,

1. Girls will be able to identify ways to feed birds including the use of native plants.
2. Girls will build and place bird houses appropriate to our area.
3. Girls will be able to identify 10 birds that live in our area.

Expected Results & Significance

By completing the project's patch requirements, girls will have a better understanding and appreciation of birds and their place in the natural world. We expect to be able to show an increase in girls' awareness by developing and implementing a simple outcomes measurement tool. The significance of this project reflects one of Girl Scouting's key program goals: "To develop values to guide her actions and to provide the foundation for sound decision making."

Deliverables

At the end of the project in May 2004, we will provide a written report of our patch program. In addition, a complete set of all the materials used will be provided.

We would be glad to arrange for a group of girls and their leaders to make a presentation about the program.

Project Location

Our patch program will be made available to girls across our 18 county area, from Hamblen County to Cumberland County. As volunteer troop leaders work on this program during the year, activities will take place everywhere from meeting places in schools and churches to local parks.

Both troop leaders and staff who work with our outreach program for under-served girls will make use of program kits designed to supplement written materials. These kits will be available to be checked out from the Girl Scout service center in Knoxville and at our camp in Andersonville. In addition, we will set up related workshops such as birdhouse building sessions at local home improvement stores.

KTOS Financial Report • September 2003

Compiled by Jerry Hadder, Treasurer

	June-Aug	May	YTD
Income:			
. Dues	\$130.00	\$92.00	\$1,632.00
. Mugs	\$65.00	\$6.50	\$163.50
. Interest	\$42.22	\$0.00	\$83.85
. Misc Donation	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7.50
. Spring Meeting	\$0.00	\$932.00	\$2,909.00
. Owen Memorial	\$38.70	\$1,109.00	\$1,209.70
. Fuller Memorial	<u>\$350.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$420.00</u>
Total Income	\$625.92	\$2,139.50	\$6,425.55
Expenses:			
. Newsletter	\$90.00	\$117.80	\$652.10
. Supplies	\$0.00	\$11.46	\$87.31
. Member Dues to TOS	\$104.00	\$44.00	\$1,344.00
. Spring Meeting Expense	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$1,913.46</u>	<u>\$2,313.46</u>
Total Expenses	\$194.00	\$2,086.72	\$4,396.87
Other:			
. Foothills Conservancy	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$250.00
. Friends of UT Gardens	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$60.00
. Fuller Memorial	\$0.00	\$120.00	\$120.00
. Memorial Books	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$90.00</u>
Total Other	\$0.00	\$120.00	\$520.00
Account Balances			
. KTOS Checking & Savings	\$5,107.64	\$4,748.32	
. J.B.Owen Memorial	\$5,587.36	\$5,514.76	
Memberships	164	161	



Presidential Perch - By Charlie Muise

Hello KTOS members and friends. Welcome back from summer! Most of the travelers among us are back from their exciting trips, shorebirds are coming through and cooler weather is just around the corner. It's time we get active as a group again!

I would like to thank our Field Trip Coordinator, Harold Howell, for continuing to put together trips for the fall, while most of us have been focusing on things other than the club. And I would also like to thank the ever-helpful Harold for offering to join the Conservation Committee. We would like to add a couple more people to that committee.

We are still looking for an organized person who would like to head the history committee. If you are interested, please contact me.

There are, of course, many conservation issues before us. Two very notable issues are the management of TVA waterways, and the management of Cades Cove. TVA is being lobbied to keep water levels up later in the year than they currently do. This would be very bad for shorebirds that migrate through the area, and for the people who like to see those shorebirds. *(Please see page 8 in this newsletter, for ways you can help.)*

Great Smoky Mountains National Park is under pressure led by professional deer photographers and a local commercial artist to maintain the fields in Cades Cove in a style that is less beneficial to wildlife. In years past, grasses and forbs in the cove were kept very short by cattle, horses and mowing. This reduced food and shelter for many animals, including

birds. It also assisted invasive exotic plants, such as fescue to overwhelm native plants. When the owner of those cattle passed away, the cattle were removed. Horses are still maintained by a park concession, but do not appear to have a large impact. In recent years the park's vegetation crew has been working to increase the amount of native plants. For historical accuracy the park has also started to break up the huge fields into smaller plots, which more accurately portray how the cove looked in pre-park days. In order to help native plants, the park developed a burn plan.

Unfortunately, some people view these policies as reducing visitor's ability to see deer and bear. They are pressuring the park to return to the old management ways to keep the grass short: increasing mowing, ending the burns and possibly even curtailing the native plant program. It would be terrible to stop the positive progress the park has made.

The lobby supporting a golf course-like appearance is well-organized and active. They have been contacting everyone from the Secretary of the Interior Norton, to head of National Park Service Mainela, to acting park Superintendent Phil Francis. It is up to more conservation-oriented people to make their own voices heard! Tennessee's US Senator Lamar Alexander has recently made statements about supporting environmental issues in general, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park in particular. He would be a good person to ask to support native plants.

- Thank you, Charlie

TVA needs input on policy changes by September 4

(Continued from page 8)

this replacement habitat in perpetuity.

You can submit your comments by writing TVA at rostudy@tva.gov, or by entering your comments onto TVA's web page. Do this by going to <http://www.tva-ros.com/> and following instructions. Then choose "terrestrial ecology" from list under "Study Areas" then click on "Comment on Selection" and enter comments into box on next screen.

State your concerns over the loss of late summer/early fall habitat for shorebirds, herons, egrets

and other species, as well as the loss of winter mudflat habitat. You can also vote for or against individual alternatives by choosing an alternative under "Policy Alternatives" and then enter specific comments about likes/dislikes of that alternative. Note that the "Base Case" alternative (the present operating regime) is the only one that would not harm important shorebird and wading bird habitat.

TVA needs to hear from you by September 4. Too much is at stake to quietly sit this one out.

- Charlie Muise, President, KTOS

Submit your comments by writing TVA at rostudy@tva.gov, or by entering your comments onto TVA's web page. Do this by going to <http://www.tva-ros.com/> and following instructions.

2003 Knox County Spring Bird Count Results

Saturday, 27 April 2003 • Dean Edwards, compiler

A total of 120 species is the lowest total for this count over the past 5 years. Only 24 warbler species were reported but we missed Northern Parula, Magnolia, Cape May and Blackpoll Warblers. We had 6 shorebird species with the most being found at the UT Plant Science Farm. As usual, timing of our count coincided with a big push of migrating Blue Jays which were reported in numbers second only to European Starling. Big misses other than warblers included American Coot, Bank Swallow, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Bobolink. Full details follow.

Weather: AM: Clear, light fog early, PM: Clear

Temperature: Low: 51°F, High: 74°F

Wind: E, light some gusts in afternoon

Party hours: by foot: 47.25; by car: 15; owling: 0.75;
feeder watching: 6.75 TOTAL: 69.75

Party miles: by foot: 32; by car: 241; owling: 11;
TOTAL: 284

Hours covered: start time: 05:00; end time: 20:53

Species: Double-crested Cormorant 56, Pied-billed Grebe 2, Great Blue Heron 82, Green Heron 4, Black-crowned Night-Heron 12, Black Vulture 9, Turkey Vulture 62, Canada Goose 178, Wood Duck 14, Mallard 19, Osprey 7, Sharp-shinned Hawk 1, Cooper's Hawk 1, Accipiter sp. 1, Red-shouldered Hawk 6, Broad-winged Hawk 1, Red-tailed Hawk 17, American Kestrel 3, Northern Bobwhite 15, Wild Turkey 4, Killdeer 20, Lesser Yellowlegs 2, Solitary Sandpiper 1, Spotted Sandpiper 3, Pectoral Sandpiper 22, Wilson's Snipe 4, Ring-billed Gull 3, Rock Dove 111, Mourning Dove 182, Yellow-billed Cuckoo 4, Eastern Screech-Owl 3, Great Horned Owl 3, Barred Owl 2, Common Nighthawk 2, Chuck-will's-widow 2, Chimney Swift 91, Ruby-throated Hummingbird 13, Belted Kingfisher 8, Red-bellied Woodpecker 60, Downy Woodpecker 16, Hairy Woodpecker 1, Northern Flicker (YS) 7, Pileated Woodpecker 11, Eastern Phoebe 11, Great Crested Flycatcher 15, Eastern Kingbird 33, White-eyed Vireo 23, Yellow-throated Vireo 5, Blue-headed Vireo 3, Red-eyed Vireo 65, Blue Jay 415, American Crow 132, Purple Martin 12, Tree Swallow 22, Northern Rough-winged Swallow 65,

Cliff Swallow 15, Barn Swallow 121, Carolina Chickadee 118, Tufted Titmouse 96, White-breasted Nuthatch 6, Carolina Wren 112, House Wren 8, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 9, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 60, Eastern Bluebird 62, Swainson's Thrush 1, Hermit Thrush 2, Wood Thrush 27, American Robin 197, Gray Catbird 4, Northern Mockingbird 124, Brown Thrasher 23, European Starling 430, Cedar Waxwing 96, Blue-winged Warbler 7, Tennessee Warbler 5, Nashville Warbler 3, Yellow Warbler 4, Chestnut-sided Warbler 2, Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle) 120, Black-throated Green Warbler 21, Blackburnian Warbler 1, Yellow-throated Warbler 1, Pine Warbler 2, Prairie Warbler 11, Palm Warbler 25, Cerulean Warbler 4, Black-and-white Warbler 5, American Redstart 5, Prothonotary Warbler 4, Worm-eating Warbler 5, Ovenbird 9, Northern Waterthrush 1, Louisiana Waterthrush 1, Kentucky Warbler 3, Common Yellowthroat 75, Hooded Warbler 20, Yellow-breasted Chat 15, Summer Tanager 8, Scarlet Tanager 36, Eastern Towhee 101, Chipping Sparrow 36, Field Sparrow 54, Savannah Sparrow 29, Song Sparrow 121, Swamp Sparrow 7, White-throated Sparrow 91, White-crowned Sparrow 3, Northern Cardinal 268, Rose-breasted Grosbeak 11, Blue Grosbeak 15, Indigo Bunting 64, Red-winged Blackbird 186, Eastern Meadowlark 82, Common Grackle 136, Brown-headed Cowbird 49, Orchard Oriole 32, Baltimore Oriole 5, House Finch 45, American Goldfinch 107, House Sparrow 22

Total individuals: 5234

Total species: 120 + 0 CW

Birds per party hour: 75.03942652

Observers: 24 in 12 parties

Jean Alexander, Frank Bills, Sharon Bostick, Howard Chitwood, Dean Edwards (compiler), Carole Gobert, Paul Hartigan, Ron Hoff, Susan Hoyle, Jim Human, David Johnson, Kristine Johnson, Tony King, Ed Manous, Dan Mooney, Laurie Mooney, Dollyann Myers, Chuck Nicholson, Truett Patterson, Martha Rudolph, David Trently, June Welch, Chris Welsh, Robert Wittig

 MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Carolina Bird Club's Fall in the Foothills

Make plans now to attend the fall meeting in Hickory, NC, September 19-21, 2003. Field trips are being planned for all day trips to the Blue Ridge Mountains and half day trips to various parks around the Catawba Valley.

For details go to: <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/newsletter.html>

Trip to Point Pelee - by Ed and Carlyle Manous

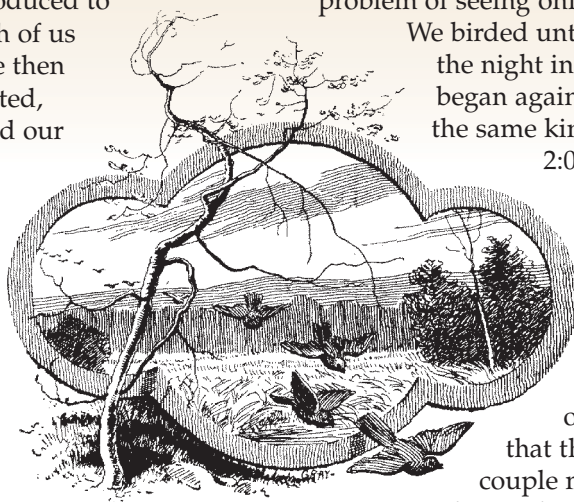
Back in the 50s we were introduced to birding by our mother. Both of us pursued it avidly for a time then put it aside while we got educated, began our families and launched our careers. About 25 years ago Carlyle began birding again and over the course of time made a trip to Point Pelee.

A couple of years ago when Ed retired and started birding again we began sharing birding experiences; Carlyle told Ed that if he was interested in warblers he simply must go to Point Pelee in May for the spring migration.

This last May 11 we left Knoxville for Ontario.

The weather was terrible when we left Tennessee and was still bad when we got to Michigan. When we arrived at Point Pelee at about 2:00 p.m. on Sunday it was still overcast and there were gale force winds blowing from the west. When you're a hard-core birder, of course, you ignore such minor matters as weather and get on with the action. What we found when we got down to business was that although it was cold and the wind was kicking up a major surf on the west side of the point, on the trails in the woods and on the east side it was remarkably calm!

And there were warblers to be found everywhere! It was all that it was advertised to be and more. For those who haven't been there we should say that virtually every bird we saw was either on the ground or no more than three or four feet up on a tree or bush. So, even with a constant overcast, we didn't have to look up in the treetops with the consequent



problem of seeing only silhouettes.

We birded until around 6:00 p.m. and spent the night in a nearby camping area. We began again on Monday morning with the same kind of weather, but by around 2:00 p.m. figured we had seen pretty much what we were going to see so we headed up to Mio, Michigan to see if the Kirtland's Warblers were there yet.

When we went to the Ranger's Headquarters in Mio on Tuesday morning we found that they weren't doing tours for a couple more days, but they showed us their video and gave us a map with some potentially good spots marked. They also told us that Ranger Joe was out and about, trying to see if he could find any Kirtland's.

We arbitrarily chose an area to search and had only been there a short time when Ranger Joe showed up and joined us. In a very few minutes we heard a bird sing and right at that time came to an area that is off limits without a ranger. Since Joe was there he took us back into that area and in five minutes we had a beautiful male Kirtland's singing in the top of a bare oak tree not more than thirty feet away! The bird even turned this way and that so we could see him from all angles.

With a couple of other warblers we picked up while we were looking for the Kirtland's we ended up with an even two dozen warblers for the trip. If you have never been to Point Pelee this trip is a must! It seems impossible that one could ever be disappointed.

Greeting from New Vice President

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to all of you. I am Tracey Muise (known, not so long ago, as Tracey Everson) and am now the club's vice president. One of my primary roles as vice president is to coordinate the monthly speakers.

Please contact me with any suggestions regarding potential presentations. I can be reached at 977-8429 or at muise@esknoxville.org.

I am relatively new to the club; this is my second year with KTOS. Prior to that I was with the

Chattanooga chapter for a year. I have lived in many places along the east coast, but hail New Hampshire as my home. I currently teach middle school science at the Episcopal School of Knoxville, where we held the spring TOS meeting. Yes, Charlie and I married this summer. We had a wonderful trip to Ecuador, about which we will happily tell you stories. I am looking forward to getting to know all of you better.

- Tracey Muise, vice president

Tennessee Valley Birders: your input is needed by September 4

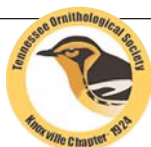
The Tennessee Valley Authority is in the midst of its Reservoir Operations Study (ROS). This study is to determine whether changes in how TVA operates the Tennessee River system would produce "greater overall public value." The draft environmental impact statement for this study was released several weeks ago and TVA is taking public comments on it until September 4, 2003.

Birders have a lot at stake in the ROS, as most of the alternatives that TVA is considering would, if selected, result in changes in reservoir water levels at various times of the years. Of particular concern are the several alternatives that would delay the late summer drawdown of tributary reservoirs (such as Douglas, South Holston and Norris) until Labor Day. This change would eliminate critical habitat for migrating shorebirds, as well as herons and egrets, during August and September at sites such as Rankin Bottoms. Several of the alternatives would also result in higher winter water levels; while this may have some benefits to waterfowl, it would eliminate a lot of mud flats important to gulls, Sandhill Cranes and other species.

TVA is, in effect, compiling votes on the various issues and alternatives, so numbers of commenters have become very important. According to the press reports of the public meetings that TVA has been holding, the strongest public support seems to be for the alternatives that delay the late summer drawdowns until Labor Day—and thus destroying a lot of shorebird habitat. About 500 people came out to the meeting in Morristown a couple weeks ago (a much larger attendance than has been present at most other meetings) and these folks were very vocal in their preference for delaying summer drawdowns.

So please let TVA know how you feel about the ROS alternatives. Let them know that the delayed drawdowns will cause great harm to shorebirds and wading birds. Demand that TVA, if it does choose an alternative that destroys this important habitat, mitigate the loss by providing a comparable or greater amount of habitat distributed across the reservoir system, and that TVA commit to properly manage

(Continued on page 5)



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 October issue will be September 20
For a color version of this or past issues go to "local chapters" at
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