



THROUGH THE BIKNOXULARS

VOLUME 30
ISSUE 3
APRIL 2007

KNOXVILLE CHAPTER OF THE TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

"The Strongest Link in the Chain: The Incomparable Biodiversity of the Oaxacan Sierra Juarez"



Of the twenty-five world biodiversity hotspots, two intersect in Mexico at la Chinantla or Chinantec region of the Sierra Juarez in northeastern Oaxaca. This incredible location sustains one of the most biologically diverse areas on our planet. Hans has been visiting the surrounding area for the past eighteen years.

During this past summer he spent two weeks taking sound field recordings of bird calls and doing research on parasitic wasps. In addition to the flora and fauna of the area he will also speak on the complex web of factors, social and environmental, that bind this fascinating region.

Upcoming Field Trips

Sunday, April 1st 7:00 AM
Seven Island Wildlife Refuge and Eagle Nest

Saturday, April 14th 7:30 AM
TVA's Trotter Bluff Small Animal Wild Area

Saturday, April 28th 8:00 AM
Public Bird Walk on Sharps Ridge

Saturday, 28th or Sunday 29th
Cove Lake/ Cross Mountain

Is someone willing to lead a field trip to Cove Lake/Cross Mountain the last weekend of April? There is a request from a club member who has visitors coming from England to visit that particular location. Please contact Mark Campen or David Trently if you are willing to lead this trip.

(see page 4 for field trip details)

Knox County Spring Count

The Knox County Spring Count will be held on **Sunday, 29 April 2007**. As usual, parties will be counting birds throughout Knox County on this day. All are welcome and encouraged to participate by either joining a field party or counting birds in your own neighborhood (If you live in Knox Co) similar to Project Feederwatch or the Great Backyard Bird Count.

Submit your results to the compiler (Dean Edwards, 1615 Meadow Chase Ln, Knoxville TN 37931; kde@utk.edu) as soon as possible after the count. Results should include: checklist with numbers of each species observed; location covered; time of day you started and stopped counting; separate tallies of miles and hours traveled by foot, car, boat, etc.; tally of miles and hours spent owling; and names of all participants with contact information for at least one person in the party. You may also be asked to provide documentation for any rare or unusual species.

If you plan to participate or have any further questions, please contact the compiler (Dean Edwards, 660-9701).

Habitat Enhancement Underway at Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge

By Wayne H. Schacher
whschacher@natreserv.com

Author's note: This newsletter article continues a series 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.

From 2001 at Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge, the conversion of non-native, cool-season, fescue pastures and hayfields to native, warm-season grasslands has significantly altered herbaceous plant compositions and improved grassland habitat quality. Management is ongoing within fields to further diversify habitat for the grassland bird community. By varying grass-density and NWSG species composition, structure is provided to improve the quality and variety of nesting habitat. Beneath the over-canopy of the native clump-grasses, improved foraging opportunities exist for young birds at ground level, under increased cover from avian predators. Employing techniques (burning, strip-disking, etc) in grassland fields that encourage the presence of broad-leaf forbs within the plant community provide critical seed production and food sources.

While there has been major emphasis on improving grassland habitat at SWIR, other areas of habitat management and diversity have not been left wanting. A variety of partnerships have enabled large-scale improvements in 'edge', riparian and wetland habitat quality. With the assistance of dozens of undergraduate student volunteers from the University of Tennessee, over 8,000 tree and shrub seedlings of 22 native species have been planted as buffers along miles of river and stream riparian zones, along the shoreline of the upland pond, along property boundaries and to expand existing fence rows, with myriad, associated ecological benefits that will extend decades into the future as these zones and plantings mature.

In riparian buffers, silky dogwood, green ash, sycamore and several oak species will provide shoreline stability and reduce bank erosion. In many habitat areas, American crabapple, American plum, red mulberry and persimmon will provide soft mast food sources, while black walnut and the oak species will provide hard

mast. Buttonbush and other species planted along the intermittent stream corridor and the upland pond shoreline will diversify wetland habitats. In all areas where the woody species have been planted, they will provide nesting and den sites, foraging and roosting habitat, aesthetic appeal, sites for perching, resting and staging, food sources and other valuable ecological benefits for birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and countless invertebrate species.

Another area of priority at SIWR was to address the shortage of nesting sites for cavity-nesting bird species, a result of pre-SIWR, land-use decisions. Twenty-five wood duck boxes donated by TWRA, placed along the river and upland pond and maintained annually, immediately attracted usage by eastern screech owls, wood ducks, gray squirrels, southern flying squirrels, opossums, raccoons, hives of honeybees, starlings (we accept the bad with the good!) and even a family of eastern bluebirds desperate for a nest site. The purple martin colony house donated by KTOS attracted purple martins the first year. Artificial gourds donated by KTOS attracted tree swallows, more desperate eastern bluebirds (and again, starlings) at three locations. TWRA donated two, common barn-owl nesting structures which were mounted in barn lofts, have been used as roosts, but not yet for nesting. Two, pole-mounted bat houses from TWRA have attracted unknown bat species roosting during the warm months. Jim Giocomo, post-doctoral wildlife biologist from UT-FWF made 13 prothonotary warbler boxes from milk cartons, placed them along riparian zones and attracted nesting prothonotaries last spring.

We have begun construction of an artificial roosting structure for chimney swifts along the trail on the hillside, with hopes of attracting roosting and nesting birds. This winter, 23 eastern bluebird nest structures, made and donated by Knoxville Boy Scout Troop 246, were fitted with predator guards, placed in suitable habitat throughout the refuge. Ongoing nesting activity by adult bluebirds at the houses portends heavy usage.

Plans are to continue to build and place nest structures and hang natural gourds in field, 'edge' and woodland habitats to the benefit of many species. While much has been accomplished to meet the habitat needs of the animal communities, much remains to be done, all the time tracking usage, managing and fine-tuning habitat needs, educating, demonstrating and learning as we go.



Presidential Perch
-Mark Campen

KTOS Financial Report – March and February

Compiled by Marie Oakes, Treasurer

The birds and blooms don't lie; spring has sprung! Although, in east Tennessee it is possible for a cold front to move through next week and a few inches of snow to fall, but that is unlikely.

The equinox has come and gone and the reports of the arriving migrants from the tn-birds list-serve are starting to fill our inboxes. Get ready, Wallace!

There are some great chances to get out with others to view new arrivals, resident bird courtship, breeding and more this month. I observed a little lovey-dovey, or should I say "lovey-hawky", going on a couple days ago between our resident red-shouldered hawks.

As in years past, every April I believe there will be someone from the club up on Sharps Ridge every Thursday morning early to help "guide" and enjoy the birds with others who care to attend. I recall when I first became interested in the KTOS one of my first visits to Sharps Ridge was on an early April morning a handful of years ago, and I met a KTOS member who helped me with my bird identification skills. Although I had been there before during ornithology class under the tutelage of Dr. David Buehler, I seemed a bit more at ease, able to study the birds at a more leisurely pace.

On April 1st there will be a fieldtrip to see the bald eagles nest near Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge and, I hope we have a trip leader to guide a visit to Cove Lake at the end of the month, which was requested for some out-of-country visitors. Please let David Trently or myself know if you are interested in leading the Cove Lake trip.

Lastly, please let me know if you are interested in helping coordinate field trips or programs for our monthly meetings and we will need a newsletter editor in the next few months, but we have to start preparing now!

There is a lot going on this month and I hope we can all make time to get out and enjoy another spring migration.

	March	February	YTD
Income:			
. Dues	\$1,294.00	\$380.00	\$1,880.00
. Shade Grown Coffee	\$191.00	\$143.00	\$334.00
. Interest	\$24.55	\$27.18	\$80.98
. Silent Auction	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
. Owen Memorial	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$109.00
. Miscellaneous	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
Total Income	\$1,559.55	\$550.18	\$2,403.98
Expenses:			
. Newsletter	\$201.80	\$43.40	\$308.20
. Supplies	\$31.66	\$0.00	\$73.07
. Shade Grown Coffee	\$74.69	\$430.83	\$505.52
. Member Dues to TOS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,444.00
. Miscellaneous	<u>\$50.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$50.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$358.15	\$474.23	\$2,380.79
Other:			
J.B. Owen Award	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Account Balances			
. KTOS Checking & Savings	\$5,103.09	\$3,975.62	
. J.B.Owen Memorial	\$7,163.95	\$7,090.02	
Memberships	145	143	
Paid Up Memberships	126		
New Members:			
Frank Genova			
Elizabeth Singley			

Volunteers needed

KTOS currently has two positions opens. The Vice President's position is still open after Mark Campen took over the presidency. The field trip coordinator also currently open.

The newsletter editor position will also be available in June.

FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

Sunday, April 1st, 7:00 a.m. Seven Island Wildlife Refuge and Eagle Nest

KTOS is planning a birding trip along the French Broad River to visit Seven Islands and the new Bald Eagle nest on the opposite side of the French Broad River. We will meet at the Seven Islands parking lot at 7am and do some birding along the paved road until 10am. At 10am we will meet in the parking lot and car-pool to the private farm field where the Bald Eagle nest is located. You can meet at 10am if you just want to go see the eagle nest.

It will be about a 20 min. drive from Seven Islands along the French Broad, although it is just on the other side of the river about a half a mile down stream. We will be parking on private land with landowner permission, but we will want to minimize the number of cars by car-pooling to the site (and then coming back to Seven Islands after). We also plan to try to visit an area where we can observe the 10 Great-blue Heron nests on one of the islands. We should get back to Seven Islands by 1pm.

Bring scopes to look at the Bald Eagle nest, because we will also try to minimize our impact by observing from the other side of the field from the nest. We will go rain or shine (as long as we are not in thunderstorms).

Directions to Seven Islands can be found on the TOS website. If you have any questions, send an e-mail to Jim Giocomo (jgiocomo@utk.edu) or Mark Campen (mcampen7@hotmail.com). Hope to see you there.

Saturday, April 14, 7:30 a.m. TVA's Trotter Bluff Small Animal Wild Area

Field trip to TVA's Trotter Bluff Small Animal Wild Area trail above Douglas Dam.
Leaders: David Trently (dtrently@utk.edu); 531-1473; and Jay & Diana Singer (jjdmsinger@peoplepc.com)

Meet at the Comcast parking lot on Asheville Highway just north of I-40 at 7:30 a.m. - or contact one of us for directions to the trail and meet there at 8:30.

It's a pleasant one mile loop through hardwoods with, at least in winter, views of the lake, the dam and the river.

As far as I know, this is our first trip to this area. There should be some spring migrants in the area.

Saturday, April 28, 8 a.m. Public Bird Walk on Sharps Ridge

Public bird walk on Sharps Ridge
Contact: David Trently (dtrently@utk.edu; w 974-8664; h 531-1473).

Other chapter members will serve as co-leaders as we bird our way along the road. All KTOS members are urged to attend. The more birders we have listening, the more birds we will see, and that may translate into new recruits for our hobby. Meet at the J.B. Owen overlook at 8 a.m. The walk will be along the road in Sharps Ridge Memorial Park. Spring migrants are the objects of this field trip. Orioles, grosbeaks, warblers and other migrants are expected. The general public will be invited.

The J.B. Owen Memorial Endowment

The J.B. Owen Memorial Endowment honors the memory of J.B. Owen, longtime Tennessee Ornithological Society (TOS) member who was widely known through his popular columns in Knoxville newspapers. The Endowment provides funds for the annual J.B. Owen Award, with expected value of \$250 to \$500 per year. The J.B. Owen Award is open to anyone with a project that promotes the welfare and conservation of birds in Tennessee. Applicants are encouraged to submit: Cover letter with short project description and applicant contact information. Resume, Project proposal, of up to three pages, showing topic of the project, problem to be addressed, objectives, expected results and significance, deliverables (for example, written report, journal article, presentation), project location, and project schedule. Each year, applications are due by May 1 and should be sent by e-mail to jjadmj@infionline.net or mailed to Jean Alexander, 3908 Riverview Drive, Maryville, Tennessee 37804.

The J.B. Owen Endowment Committee of the Knoxville Chapter of TOS will evaluate applications and will typically announce the Award winner the following September. Previous Owen Award winners were: 2002- Foothills Land Conservancy of Maryville, Tennessee, for the Conservancy's work in the acquisition of wetlands - for the welfare and conservation of cranes and other birds - in the area between the Yuchi and Hiwassee Island Refuges; 2003- Jennifer Powers, of East Tennessee State University, for support of graduate research on the reproductive success and natal dispersal of American Kestrels; 2004- Samuel deMent of Greenwood, SC, David Vogt of Chattanooga, and Keith Hobson of Saskatoon, SK Canada for support of the project on Stable-isotope feather analysis and foreign band encounter comparisons of wintering American Kestrels in similar habitats west and east of the Southern Appalachians; 2005- Ijams Nature Center of Knoxville, Tennessee, for support of educational outreach programs; 2006- Jim Giocomo of Knoxville, for support of his project on Northern Saw-whet Owl Monitoring in Knox County, Tennessee; and Mark Armstrong of Knoxville,

for support of The MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity Station) at Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge. The winning 2005 proposal is shown below as a guide for applicants.

EXAMPLE PROPOSAL: FOR THE J.B. OWEN AWARD To the J.B. Owen Memorial Fund Endowment Committee: Currently Ijams Nature Center instructs approximately 50,000 school students annually while doing curriculum-based, grade-specific classes that augment the classroom instruction of the teachers. Approximately 60 percent of the above numbers are outreach programs where an Ijams' educator goes to area schools in Knox and all of the surrounding counties. Many of the outreach programs include a live non-releasable education animal: amphibian, reptile or bird. We know from experience that nothing focuses a student's attention and creates a lasting memory like seeing a live bird of prey. In addition, Ijams educators, including myself, routinely speak to adult groups about local birds, their habitat requirements and conservation status. Currently we only have transportation boxes for our small birds: two screech-owls and a kestrel. Ijams Nature Center would like to apply for a \$500 grant to purchase two large transportation cases for our barred owl and red-tailed hawk. This would allow us to take these birds off-site to visit schools and other groups. The American Eagle Foundation in Pigeon Forge has recommended a local craftsman who custom builds boxes to fit specific birds. The cases are lightweight, made from aluminum and ABS plastic. They have a barred window that can be closed should the birds become nervous; key latches, removable perches for easy cleaning and are designed with a low center of gravity to help prevent them from tipping over. These cases are very durable and should be in use for years. Ijams would also be pleased to purchase decals for the cases that would have the KTOS logo and the wording, "Funding for this case provided by the J.B. Owen Memorial Endowment. The fund is administered by the Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society for the advancement of conservation and educational awareness of the birds of Tennessee."

KTOS MEMBERSHIP

Join or renew your membership
In KTOS by mailing your annual dues
to: Marie Oaks

18 Rockingham Lane
Oak Ride, TN 37830.

Membership dues are \$26 for an
individual, \$30 for a family, and \$13 for
a student. Sustaining memberships are
\$38 and Life membership with TOS is
\$450 with an annual fee of \$8 to the
local chapter.

**DEADLINE for May Issue is
April 20th. Due to cost and space
restrictions, please limit your
articles to 700 words.**

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

<http://www.tnbirds.org>



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2007 TOS Annual Spring Meeting May 4-6

Lodging: Rooms are being held for TOS at the La Quinta
(\$62.72 with tax) Rooms held until April 20th.

Program Speaker: Dr. Richard Peake, author of
"Birds of the Virginia Cumberlands"

Field Trips: not finalized but likely to include Shady Valley, Mount
Roger NRA and Whitetop Mountain, and Clinch Mountain WMA.

Check the April issue of *The Warbler* or the TOS website for further
details and updated fieldtrip information.

NEW MEMBERS

KTOS would like to welcome:

Frank Genova
and
Elizabeth Singley



through the biKNOXulars

(USPS) 697-010)

Published monthly, except January, July, and August by the Chapter of
the Tennessee Ornithological Society, 5525 Lonas Rd., D-11, Knoxville, TN 37909.
Subscription Price \$8.00. Periodical Postage paid at Knoxville, TN 37901.

POSTMASTER: Send changes to:

through the biKNOXulars, 5525 Lonas Rd., D-11 Knoxville, TN 37909