



Presidential Perch

Welcome spring, or is it summer? Lots of beautiful blooms and birds are busy nesting. Lots of activity as the wildlife gets a little frisky! My bluebirds have a complete nest with 5 eggs, the screech-owl is back, and I am now waiting for the first ruby-throated hummer to show up! The Rufous Hummingbird took off on March 8, but he stayed for two months, which was exciting!

We as a club have some great opportunities coming up that can increase our membership and get new vigor in the club. We have the Hummingbird Festival coming up on Sunday, July 29. Please mark your calendars! We need lots of volunteers, so please let any of the officers know if you are interested in helping out. This is going to be a great time, and I hope it can become a regular event. It will help not only us, but Ijams Nature Center as well. It should be a win-win for everyone involved, even the birds!

Another great opportunity comes via Outdoor Knoxville. If you are not yet familiar with this organization, check out www.outdoorknoxville.com. On their website, we can upload events to their calendar and reach more people. They also have a Facebook page. Speaking of Facebook, have you been on our page lately? If not, please take a minute and check it out at www.facebook.com/KnoxvilleTOS. It's a great place to post pictures of that bird you just saw or get caught up on our upcoming events. Don't forget our listserv either – KnoxvilleTOS (pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/KnoxvilleTOS/). It's a great way to stay connected to our group and know what's going on. If you haven't joined, visit the site and request membership or just let me know your email address.

Spring is a busy time, so remember to take time out and enjoy it!

Billie Cantwell

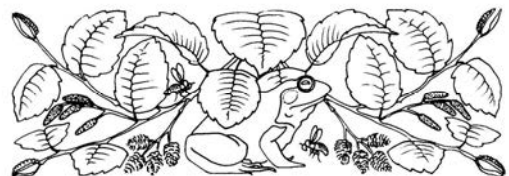


N. Rough-legged Hawk, Steven D'Amato.

April Program: Clinch River Raptor Center

Join us on **Wednesday, April 4, at 6:45 p.m.** to hear representatives from the Clinch River Raptor Center present about the Center and its work. This program is always a popular one because the staff brings rehabilitated avian guests to visit with the crowd. In addition to showing off these beautiful raptors, our presenters will talk about the birds' natural histories, how they sustained their injuries, and why they became education birds instead of being released into the wild.

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



Rosemary Gilbert Bell.

Vote on Activity Books

The *Discover Birds* Activity Book is designed to get kids excited about birds and specifically about Sandhill Cranes. After first being distributed at the 2012 Tennessee Sandhill Crane festival, the activity book is now available for local clubs to purchase and promote in their own communities through sales to individuals, groups, or sponsored classrooms. KTOS can buy a quantity of books for \$2.00 each from TOS. Bring your thoughts to the April meeting and consider how many books you would like the club to purchase and how you would like to see the book promoted in our area. We will vote on the purchase at the end of the discussion.

Get Out and Get Birding! April Field Trips

Weekday Bird Walks along Sharp's Ridge

Thursdays: April 12, 19, 26, and May 3 @ 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Tony Headrick, (865) 621-9836

These weekday bird walks will be held along the road in Sharp's Ridge Memorial Park. Spring migrants will be the focus, with orioles, grosbeaks, warblers, and others expected. If you are new to birding or to KTOS field trips, this is a great way to get started. It's also a great way to brush up on your spring warbler songs and IDs if you're more experienced.

Meet at the ranger's house at 8:00 a.m. For site info and directions, visit www.cityofknoxville.org/parks/sharpsridge.asp

Evening Woodcock Walk @ Forks of the River WMA

Saturday, April 14 @ 6:00 p.m.

Leader: Mike Nelson, madbirder@surfbirder.com

After meeting at the gravel lot at 6:00 p.m., the group will walk the open woodlands and wet bottomlands until we get to the location to listen and watch for lekking woodcocks. We'll need to get there and be set up before sunset. Wear green and brown clothes (no bright colors), and be prepared to stand silently for a bit until the birds show up. Mike has three leks staked out, so the group should have some luck as long as the birds are still displaying. If it's rainy, check the KTOS listserv for a possible cancellation.

For directions, visit www.cityofknoxville.org/parks/forks.asp.



Public Bird Walk on Sharp's Ridge

Saturday, April 21 @ 8:00 a.m. or join at any time

Leaders: Tony King, (865) 988-6172

& Tony Headrick, (865) 621-9836

This annual bird walk is intended as an opportunity to encourage new and fledgling birders to come out and learn more about our feathered friends. All KTOS members are encouraged to come and help new birders learn about our hobby/sport/passion. The more eyes and ears we have, the more everyone will see. Please bring your scopes and any spare binoculars you have.

Meet at the J.B. Owen overlook for a walk along the road. For site info and directions, visit www.cityofknoxville.org/parks/sharpsridge.asp.

GSMNP/Clingmans Dome Road: Grouse Drive & Saw-whet Owl Walk

Saturday, April 21 @ 6:00 p.m.

Leader: Mike Nelson, madbirder@surfbirder.com

The group will meet at the Sugarlands Visitor Center at 6:00 p.m. and drive up the road, birding along the way. We'll stop at Newfound Gap to check for crossbills and high altitude birds and then make our way up Clingmans Dome Road to check for Ruffed Grouse that come out along the road at dusk to feed. We'll make our way to the top to watch the sunset and then make our way down the mountainside, stopping at a few places to listen for Northern Saw-whet Owls. We'll be back late and it could get a little cold, so bring a jacket.

For directions to the visitor center, visit www.nps.gov/grsm/playourvisit/visitorcenters.htm.

Late Waterfowl and Water Birds in Chattanooga

Sunday, April 22 @ 7:00 a.m.

Leader: Mike Nelson, madbirder@surfbirder.com

Join Mike for a road trip to Chattanooga birding sites. The group will search for late winter gulls, loons, ducks, and rails at a variety of sites, including Booker T. Washington State Park, Standifer Gap Marsh, and Brainerd Levee. This is likely to be an all-day adventure, so bring your scopes and dress for the weather. We will stop for lunch and needed breaks.

Meet at the Stokely Building, 320 Cedar Bluff Road, Knoxville, at 7:00 a.m. to carpool or caravan. For directions and site descriptions, visit www.chattanoogatos.org and click on "Local Birding."

Yuchi Refuge & Smith Bend

Saturday, April 28 @ 8:00 am

Leader: Tony King, (865) 988-6172

Yuchi Refuge/Smith Bend in Rhea County is a lesser known but "must see" birding site in East TN. Varied habitats, including wetlands, river front, upland woodlands, grasslands, cedar glades, and bluffs, make this 2,500 acre refuge a great place to see many different species. KTOS provided funds to help Yuchi Refuge several years ago, so the group has a special connection to this place. Bernie Swinney, refuge manager, will act as our special guide and join Tony King in leading this trip.

Meet at the Ruby Tuesday restaurant in Lenoir City (120 Interchange Park Drive, 37772, exit 81 off I-75) at 8:00 a.m. to carpool or caravan. Bring lunch and a drink. Please RSVP to Tony at (865) 988-6172 so no one is left behind. For a map of the refuge, visit www.tn.gov/twra/gis/wmapdf/YuchiRefuge_2011sm.pdf.

Sharp's Ridge Clean-up Day

Knox County Spring Count

Saturday, April 7 @ 9:00 a.m.
(Rain date: Saturday, April 14 @ 9 00 a.m.)
Leaders: Tony King, (865) 988-6172
& Mark Campen, (865) 406-6377, campen@tnike.com

Let's get the ridge cleaned up for our Thursday morning walks and the Public Bird Walk to be held on April 21. Our past efforts have made a big difference in the appearance of one of our most accessible birding sites here in Knoxville. Participants are encouraged to bring work gloves, pruning tools, and trash bags.

Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the J. B. Owen overlook. For site info and directions, visit www.cityofknoxville.org/parks/sharpsridge.asp. Members are welcome to come early and get in some extra birding time before the clean-up begins, too!

Great Backyard Bird Count Results

A big thank you goes out from Dick Preston, the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) team, and me to those who participated in the 2012 Count. We are especially grateful to those who provided details on unusual reports.

The number of species identified during the count can provide insight into bird diversity and habitat quality. Geography is an important factor for bird diversity. For example, Memphis should (and did) beat Knoxville in this category due to differences in habitat and its location along a major migration corridor. The number of checklists can also provide some indication of local interest in nature and conservation and the ability to engage the community in these interests.

As for number of checklists submitted, Knoxville finished first with 173, Memphis was second with 153, Nashville was third with 128, and Cookeville came in fourth with 69. Maryville was sixth with 62 checklists.

Of the 162,563 birds counted in Tennessee, the Top 10 most numerous species were European Starling (17,134 individuals), Sandhill Crane (15,646), American Robin (10,179), Northern Cardinal (9,109), Lesser Scaup (7,619), American Goldfinch (7,369), Mourning Dove (6,377), American Crow (5,598), Mallard (4,716), and Canada Goose (4,398).

Other noteworthy species reported in TN included: Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (42 in Memphis), Northern Bobwhite (29), Osprey (2 early migrants), Whooping Crane (2 - KTOS boat trip), Greater Yellowlegs (1 reported 3 times, an early migrant in Knoxville), Rufous Hummingbird (1 from Knoxville), Say's Phoebe (1 at Hatchie NWR), Loggerhead Shrike (10), Blue-headed Vireo (1 early migrant), Purple Martin (3 early migrants) Tree Swallow (6 early migrants), Rusty Blackbird (215), and Common Redpoll (1 in Nashville but a second bird was also present in TN but not reported).

A full report on the GBBC can be found at: www.birdsource.org/gbbc/.

Contributed by Dean Edwards

The Knox County Spring Bird Count will be held on Sunday, April 29, 2012. Everyone is encouraged to participate by joining a group in the field or by counting birds in one's own backyard. There is no cost to participate, and all experience levels are welcomed!

If you are interested in participating or have any questions, please contact Dean Edwards [1615 Meadow Chase Lane, Knoxville, TN 37931; (865) 660-9701; kde@utk.edu]. If you normally take part in this count but will not be able to do so this year, please inform Dean in advance so that he may assign someone to cover your territory.

Please submit your results to Dean as soon as possible after your count is completed. The following should be included in your results: (a) checklist with the number of each species observed; (b) area covered; (c) time you started and stopped counting; (d) separate tallies of miles and hours travelled by foot, car, etc.; (e) tally of miles and hours spent owling; (f) tally of hours spent feeder watching; and (g) names of all participants with contact information for at least one person in the party. If you identify any unusual species, you may be asked to provide additional information.

Contributed by Dean Edwards



*Tennessee's most numerous bird according to the 2012 Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC): the European Starling.
Image source: Wikimedia Commons.*

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

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Osprey Nest Structure Success!

In the February newsletter, we reported on the damaged Osprey nesting structure on Looney Island that was repaired by KTOS members and TVA staff on January 10. Two months after the initial repair (March 10), Roger and Jan Kiger, Colin Leonard, and Billie Cantwell took a boat out to the island to check on the structure and the nest. They are delighted to report that there were two adult Osprey on a nest and another flying overhead. Just another example of how KTOS is helping our local birds!

As the group moved onto Lyons Island, they found another Osprey nest, 60 Great Blue Heron nests, and many, many Double-crested Cormorants.



One of the adult Osprey seen at the nest structure on Looney Island on March 10, 2012.