

December Meeting: Wednesday, the 7th at 7:30 pm, Room 117 of the UT Vet School

Charlie Muise and **Paul Super**, from the **Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont**, will give a double presentation:

* With the Christmas Bird Counts upcoming, now is a perfect time to review some of the important points for participation in these annual events. Charlie Muise, Senior Teacher Naturalist at the Institute, will talk about some of the birds to look for on Christmas Bird Counts. He'll focus more on the expected birds, and the importance of really counting those, instead of spending all of our energy trying to boost numbers of species. Additionally, he'll speak on the importance of owling, covering more areas than just the "good" birding spots, and how beginning birders can be extremely important to a count.

* Did you know that there is a program in the Park that enables area teenagers to participate in bird-related research projects? Paul Super, Science Education Specialist at Tremont, has been working with teens at a MAPS station, as well as a survey of avian ectoparasites and blood parasites for the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory, and other research projects, which he will present to us.

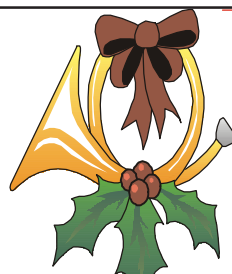
December Field Trip

12/2 - 8:00 a.m. Field trip to Cove Lake State Park and Campbell County.

Leader Tony Headrick (687-9956)

Meet in Ingles Parking lot at I-75 and Emory Rd. Target birds will be migratory waterfowl and passerines. After birding Cove Lake, there may be an excursion up Cross Mountain to explore a natural bald. Bring a snack.

**Buy some Shade-Grown Coffee
for Christmas!!**



2000 Christmas Bird Counts

12/16 - (Saturday) - Norris Area

Compiler: Chuck Nicholson (444-0705)

12/23 - (Saturday)- Great Smoky Mountains

Compiler: David Trently (531-1473)

12/30 - (Saturday)- Cades Cove

Compiler: Susan Hoyle (909-0792)

12/31 - (Sunday) - Knoxville

Compiler: Dean Edwards (560-9701)

1/1 - (Monday) - Hiwassee

Compiler: Kevin Calhoun (423-785-4070)



Chris Sloan banded an adult female rufous hummingbird at the home of Susie Stout in Knoxville. The bird entered the trap within about 2 minutes of the set-up. She handled all the banding hub-bub without any protests and then sat in her 12 year old daughter's hand for a few seconds before buzzing off. She was in good health, nice and fat, probably 2-3 years old.

Anyone who would like to see her is welcome to come sit at the kitchen table. She is very regular at the feeder, especially on cold days. Just call to make sure they're home 531-2860.

Although local stores start pushing the holidays as early as Halloween these days, Thanksgiving is the landmark for the beginning of the holiday season. With Thanksgiving just past, Christmas isn't far away. And if Christmas is nearly here, it must be time to start thinking about Christmas bird counts. We have four local counts this year: Norris on 12/16, Smoky Mtn on 12/23, Cades Cove on 12/30, and Knoxville on 12/31. If you want to travel a bit farther afield and almost guarantee seeing numbers of sandhill cranes, consider the Hiwassee count on 1/1. Please take advantage of the opportunity to get out birding for a cause and help make these counts successful. Contacts for the counts: Norris – Chuck Nicholson (444-0705); Smoky Mtn – David Trently (531-1473); Cades Cove – Susan Hoyle (909-0792); Knoxville – Dean Edwards (560-9701); and Hiwassee – Kevin Calhoon (423-785-4070). You don't have to be an expert to participate. Generally the count coordinators will hook beginners up with more experienced folks, and a good time is had by all. Charlie Muise, one of two speakers for the December meeting, will be discussing some of the fun and games involved in Christmas bird counts.

KTOS window decals were available for the first time at the November meeting. These decals are quite attractive with the head and upper body of a gorgeous Blackburnian Warbler inside a circle identifying the Tennessee Ornithological Society and the Knoxville chapter. Take a look around at the next field trip or meeting, and you'll probably see quite a few adorning member's cars. If you can't wait for the next meeting or field trip, the design appears at the top of your newsletter. You can see it in near living color online from the Tennessee Ornithological Society website (www.tnbirds.org). You can purchase your own at the December meeting or by contacting treasurer Bob Steffy.

I'm still looking for people interested in helping out with the Bird Records Committee. It is going to be lots of fun querying the bird records database once we get the system up and running. With luck, we will be entering records by early next year (as in maybe next month!).

Happy Holidays to everyone, and keep your eyes open for winter friends of the feathered persuasion.

-Chris Welsh

2000 Fall Count Results

Sunday, 24 September 2000

Weather: AM - light to moderate rain showers,

PM - clear and sunny

Wind: W to SW, 5-10 mph

Low: 69 F High: 80 F

The poor weather on the morning of count day was probably to blame for the low number of observers in the field. Those who braved the rain were rewarded with clear skies in the afternoon and many good birds throughout the day. Unfortunately, many areas went uncovered including Sharp's Ridge and the Third Creek Greenway. As a result, the total number of species was down this year (93 compared to over 100 the past two years). Highlights include Pied-billed Grebe, Northern Bobwhite, Wild Turkey, all three common owl species, a non-nighthawk goatsucker, a late Barn Swallow, FIVE Marsh Wrens at the UT Plant Science Farm, and a few Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. The large number of Tennessee Warblers is also noteworthy. Big misses include Black-crowned Night-Heron, Cedar Wax-wing, many of the warbler species, and Brown-headed Cowbird.

Pied-billed Grebe-4; Double-crested Cormorant-3; Great Blue Heron-8; Green Heron-5; Canada Goose-220; Wood Duck-9; Mallard-11; -duck sp.-12; Turkey Vulture- 21; Black Vulture- 1; Osprey-1; Sharp-shinned Hawk-3; Cooper's Hawk- 1; Red-shouldered Hawk- 5; Red-tailed Hawk- 5; American Kestrel-5; Northern Bobwhite- 9; Wild Turkey-18; Killdeer- 25; Rock Dove-381; Mourning Dove- 317; Yellow-billed Cuckoo-1; Eastern Screech-Owl- 1; Great Horned Owl-2; Barred Owl-2; Common Nighthawk- 37; -nightjar sp. (not nighthawk)-1; Chimney Swift-243; Ruby-throated Hummingbird-34; Belted Kingfisher- 9; Red-bellied Woodpecker- 55; Downy Woodpecker- 27; Hairy Woodpecker-5; Northern Flicker- 25; Pileated Woodpecker-13; Eastern Wood-Pewee-8; -Empidonax sp.-3; Eastern Phoebe- 32; Barn Swallow-1; Blue Jay-238; American Crow- 421; Carolina Chickadee-140; Tufted Titmouse-81; White-breasted Nuthatch-14; Carolina Wren- 118; Marsh Wren-5; Ruby-crowned Kinglet-1; Blue-grey Gnatcatcher- 8; Eastern Bluebird-124; Veery- 1; Swainson's Thrush- 1; Wood Thrush- 6; American Robin-100; Gray Catbird- 24; Northern Mockingbird- 88; Brown Thrasher-33; European Starling- 784; White-eyed Vireo- 11; Blue-headed Vireo- 1; Philadelphia Vireo-1; Red-eyed Vireo-3; Tennessee Warbler-61; Yellow Warbler-1; Chestnut-sided Warbler- 16; Magnolia Warbler- 33; Black-throated Green Warbler-1; Blackburnian Warbler-4; Pine Warbler-6; Palm Warbler- 28; Bay-breasted Warbler-5; Black-and-white Warbler- 7; American Redstart-19; Ovenbird-1; Common Yellowthroat-20; Hooded Warbler-2; Canada Warbler-1; Yellow-breasted Chat-1; Summer Tanager-2; Scarlet Tanager- 4; Northern Cardinal- 157; Rose-breasted Grosbeak-5; Blue Grosbeak- 1; Indigo Bunting-213; Eastern Towhee- 13; Field Sparrow-27; Savannah Sparrow-2; Song Sparrow- 69; Red-winged Blackbird-281; Eastern Meadowlark- 42; Common Grackle- 78; House Finch-81; American Goldfinch- 84; House Sparrow-16

Observers: Jane Beintema, Frank Bills, Sharon Bostick, Howard Chitwood, Dean Edwards (compiler), Tony Headrick, Susan Hoyle, Kristine Johnson, Dan Mooney, Laurie Mooney, Truett Patterson, Martha Rudolph, Boyd Sharp, David Trently

January Announcements:

January Meeting: Wednesday, the 3rd at 7:30 pm, Room 117 of the UT Vet School

Do you have some bird slides you'd like to share with the group? Not enough for a whole program? Since two of the past three years we have had to cancel our January meeting because of bad weather, we would like to invite anyone who has some bird slides to share them with us. You can have as few as just one slide, to as many as...?...total will depend on how many people bring slides. Contact David Trently if you'd like to show us some.

January Field Trips

1/20 7:00 a. m. Field trip to Kyker Bottoms.

Leader Bill Smith TWRA (856-8691).

Meet in the WalMart parking lot on US 129 in Maryville. We will tour Kyker Bottoms WMA. If we have enough rain there should be lots of ducks and, if not, there should be plenty of sparrows! Raptors and redheaded woodpeckers are additional attractions.

1/27 8:00 a. m. Field trip to Smith Bend (soon to be WMA).

Leader David Buehler (966-3484).

Meet at the UT Ag Campus parking lot. We will visit a variety of habitats ranging from upland woods to wetland fields and river edges. We should find a variety of winter residents including sandhill cranes. We expect a good turn out for this trip and would like to encourage anyone who hasn't made a donation to the Smith Bend fund to bring one and give your support to this important cause.

Mid-Winter Eagle Count

The annual mid-winter eagle count will be conducted from January 3-17, 2001. The target dates for the count are January 12-13, but any sightings during the two week period should be reported. The Knoxville chapter traditionally covers Fort Loudon Lake, but volunteers to coordinate counts on the French Broad River (Tennessee River to Douglas Dam) or Chilhowee Lake are needed. Please contact Chris Welsh (766-0368) if you can help. Coordinators will receive a count form and guidelines from the national coordinator with the U.S. Geological Survey's Biological Resources Division. Bob Hatcher from TWRA oversees the counts for Tennessee sites.

A Crow Story...

This was originally posted on the TN-Birds internet list-serv, so many of you have seen it. But it was so good that I thought I'd share it with everyone else. -CT

I'd say there could be an entire list-serv on crow stories if we all get started, but I've learned to deeply love these birds and just have to contribute a little support for them. Their intelligence is sadly underrated by modern man and it's just too darn bad.

Some years back we ended up being caretakers of a young bird via a wildlife officer who had answered a call and found this near tame bird in someone's yard. We knew little about what to do, but just figured we'd help it along and then let it go. In a week or two we felt it seemed capable, so we let it go, but in that short time it had already bonded with us and now we were its parents and it wouldn't leave. It came back in the house often, but liked to sleep outside. He immediately figured out where our bedroom window was and always perched just outside and would begin "talking" to us daily when it saw us get up. We began to be impressed.

Of all the incredible things this bird did in the year and a half it chose to stay with us, one incident really made the light come on for me. I wasn't feeling well one day, which is fairly rare, and so went to rest on the couch. The bird joined me and hunkered down on my shoulder, right next to my face, as usual. Since this resting thing was not our usual routine he began to get a little restless after a while. Began to talk to me softly. When I didn't respond, I think he was concerned. I felt this very gentle beak on my eyelid and he carefully and precisely opened my eyelid to see if I was in there! I mean he could have just as easily poked my eye out, but it was like he just wanted eye contact to be sure I was ok. He knew how to get "into" me! And he knew not to hurt me. Our souls connected at that moment and I've never looked at a crow, or other corvid since without knowing that we are equals in many ways, and chances are they come out WAY ahead if we but knew...

Please don't let folks think of them as pests just because they can out smart us!

Meredith Clebsch

Bulletin Board

As many of you know, *The Migrant*, published by TOS, and *North American Birds*, published by ABA, rely on sightings submitted by birders for their seasonal sighting reports. These reports are invaluable aids for those researchers looking for trends in bird population dynamics as well as being of general interest to many birders. I encourage you all to submit your sightings for inclusion in these journals so that we can learn more about changes in distribution and population of bird species in our area and so that, through the conservationists who make use of this data, we can help the birds themselves.

The fall reporting season for *The Migrant* and *North American Birds* covers from 1 August through 31 November. Please bring your sightings to the December meeting or send them to

Dean Edwards

kde@utk.edu

8537 Carl Valentine Circle

Knoxville TN 37931

Include any bird sightings from our area that you feel are interesting, including unusual species, early or late arrivals and migrants, or high numbers of individuals. The information I need is what species was seen and when, where and by whom it was seen. While I do collect information reported on the TN-birds listserver, please send sightings to me as well..

Migration Count Data Needed

If you haven't turned in your data for the fall North American Migration Count, please do so as soon as possible. Send the results to: Ron Hoff
282 Hackworth Lane
Clinton, Tn. 37716
or (dollyron95@aol.com).

Wildlife Refuge Reminder!!

Kyker Bottoms, Kingston Steam Plant and Chota Wildlife Refuges are all closed to foot traffic from November 1st through February 14th.

Ijams Trip to Dale Hollow Lake Eagle Watch

Ijams Nature Center is sponsoring a field trip to Lilydale Campground at Dale Hollow Lake on Saturday, January 27th, 2001. They have reserved 10 spaces on the barge, run by the Army Corps of Engineers over to the Kentucky side of the lake, where you will be served hot chocolate to warm your innards. On the barg trip you will have the opportunity to see many Bald Eagles and other aquatic wildlife. It's usually really cold, but lots of fun! Ijams will provide transportation to and from the campground. Please call Ijams at 577-4717 for more information and to register.

Individual - \$18; Family - \$20; Sustaining \$28; Life - \$200 (state TOS only - local add'l \$8 per year); Student (High School and earlier) - \$8. Dues payment covers membership in both the State TOS organization and the Knoxville Chapter, with subscriptions to *through the biKnoxulars*, our chapter newsletter (nine times per year), *The Tennessee Warbler*, our state newsletter (four times per year), and *the Migrant*, our state quarterly journal. Please send payment to the Treasurer at the address below. Please notify Treasurer and Editor of changes of address.

TOS HOME PAGE: [HTTP://WWW.TNBIRDS.ORG](http://WWW.TNBIRDS.ORG)

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