

VOLUME 31 • NUMBER 9 DEC 07 JAN-08

Through the

biKNOXulars

Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

Would you know what to do if you were birding and got bitten by a snake?
Find out at our December 5 Meeting.

The December speaker is Phil Colclough the reptile curator at the Knoxville Zoo. Phil will be speaking about the venomous and non-venomous snakes that we have in our area. Phil will cover their conservation, identification and what to do if you are bitten by a snake. Phil has also worked at an unusually large rattlesnake hibernaculum in the Pisgah National Forest to monitor the population of about 40-45 snakes.

Phil has worked at the Knoxville Zoo for 12 years and is primarily interested in snakes and specifically in venomous snakes and rattlesnakes.

Phil has lived in Maryville most of his life and graduated from the University of Tennessee in Anthropology. Phil has been married for 13 years and has two children.

JANUARY 2 PROGRAM: PICTURE SHARE

Calling all photographers, January 2 is our annual club member picture sharing meeting. Do you have pictures of local birds or bird photos from your travels? We love to see pictures and hope you will bring yours to share.

Please contact Mark Armstrong by December 28th if you plan to bring photos to share. For digital presentations equipment will be available if you have your photos on a CD or memory stick. If you have slides, you may have to bring your own projector and carousel, so contact Mark early to make arrangements. 865-577-5398 woodthrush@bellsouth.net

Both meeting at 7 p.m. in Room 117 of the UT Veterinary Building

Upcoming field trips and programs

**Clark Center Recreation Park
Gallagher Bend, Oak Ridge
Sunday, December 9
8:45 a.m.**

Clark Center Park is located on the Gallagher Bend Peninsula in Oak Ridge. At this time of year most of the park is closed to vehicular traffic and is little used by the public, making it an ideal, quiet birding location. The Gallagher Bend Greenway begins in the park itself and then continues on a 2 mile (one way) unpaved trail through the woods. We will spend 2 to 3 hours exploring the park and walking a short distance on the wooded trail. Birds likely to be seen include Brown Headed and Red Breasted Nuthatches, Hermit Thrush, Woodpeckers, Dark-Eyed Juncos, Pine Warblers, sparrows, etc. Meet at 8:45 a.m. at the Stokely Building on Cedar Bluff Road to carpool or around 9:00 a.m. in the main parking lot at Clark Center Park

Leader: Carole Gobert
Phone: 254-8841
cpgobert@hotmail.com

**NOTICE: 2008 DUES ARE DUE NOW!
See Marie or mail to address on back page ASAP.
Thanks.**

108th Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count

The Holidays are here again and you know what that means --Christmas Bird Counts! We encourage everyone to participate in one or more of the four local Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) sponsored by the National Audubon Society and KTOS.



Norris, Saturday, December 15, 2007

**Contact: Chuck Nicholson
cpnichol@bellsouth.net**

**GSMNP-Sugarlands, Sunday, December 16, 2007,
Contact: David Trently, (n) 865-531-1473 (d) 865-974-8664
dtrently@utk.edu**

Everyone is welcome! You can count in a territory by yourself, or join with a group.

There will be a morning meeting at 8:00 at the Sugarlands Visitor Center. If you have not already been assigned a territory, meet there to select a place to count. We'll meet again at Smoky Mountain Brewery & Restaurant in Gatlinburg (<http://www.smoky-mtn-brewery.com/>) at 5:00 in the evening to warm up, eat dinner and compare notes.

GSMNP-Cades Cove, Sunday, December 30, 2007

**Contact: Susan Hoyle, 865-909-0792
hoyle@cs.utk.edu**

Continued on next page -

Those little nimble musicians of the air, that warble forth their curious ditties, with which nature hath furnished them to the shame of art. - Izaak Walton



Presidential Perch
- By Mark Campen

"Christmas is a comin' and the goose is getting fat"

Hard to believe the holiday season is upon us already. As I write this it is not even Thanksgiving Day yet and Christmas decorations already adorn downtown Knoxville and many of our neighbors' homes. All I have to say is gobble! gobble! Let's not pass up Thanksgiving before it even gets here.

There should be a law, no Christmas decorations until after thanksgiving.

Wouldn't the wonderful wild turkey be displeased?! Many of you may have heard of Ben Franklin's comments related to this big bird, but if not, here is an excerpt from a letter he wrote to his daughter:

"For my own part I wish the bald eagle had not been chosen the representative of our country. He is a bird of bad moral character. He does not get his living honestly. You may have seen him perched on some dead tree near the river, where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the labor of the fishing hawk; and when that diligent bird has at length taken a fish and is bearing it to his nest for the support of his mate and young ones, the bald eagle pursues him and takes it from him.

Besides he is a rank coward. The little king bird, not much bigger than a sparrow, attacks him boldly and drives him out of the district. He is therefore by no means a proper emblem for the brave and honest . . . America, who have driven all the king birds from our country . . .

I am on this account not displeased that the figure is not known as a bald eagle, but looks more like a turkey. For the truth is that the turkey is a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America . . . He is besides, though a little vain & silly, a bird of courage...."

Not only a great bird worthy of being the symbol of North America, but delicious as well. Tryptophan, take me away....

The fall meeting in Manchester was great. The presentations and field trips were great. A big thanks goes out to Chuck Nicholson, the Highland Rim Chapter and all those involved with bringing it together!

Christmas Bird Counts are approaching! Please plan to participate in a group count or in your backyard counting birds at your feeder. There are multiple count circles in our region that need participants, so please get involved!

There has been a request to help support Operation Migration as the whooping crane class of 2007 continues on south. At the November meeting, the hat was passed around for donations and \$206.00 was raised - enough to make KTOS a "Mile Maker." If you would like to learn more and/or donate to this cause, please contact KTOS member Tony King or visit www.operationmigration.org

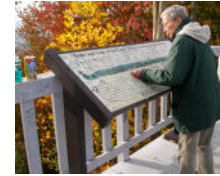
Wintertime bird watching is great. Get outside and go for a walk. Kinglets, Winter Wrens, a whole host of sparrows and other usual suspects are "toughing it out" while we sit inside our climate-controlled environments sipping hot chocolate, wassle and egg nog.

Bird On!

KTOS Members met on Saturday, November 17, for clean up on Sharps Ridge.



Left to right, Tony King, Libby Reid, Mark Campen & Ginger Goolsby.



Deedee Blane uses elbow grease to clean the sign!

108th Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count,

Knoxville, Saturday, January 5, 2008

Contact: Dean Edwards, 865-660-9701,

kde@utk.edu,

www-chaos.engr.utk.edu/~kde/birds/kcbc/KCBCpage.html

The organizers of these counts will be present at the December KTOS meeting to sign everyone up and provide additional information.

Birders of all skill levels can participate. You can join a group in the field, cover an area on your own, or (if you live in the count area) count in your own backyard. With the large number of winter finches being reported this year, we are particularly interested in having lots of folks watching their feeders.

The National Audubon Society does require a \$5 fee from each participant. This fee goes toward maintaining the public online database from the 100+ years of CBCs.

(www.audubon.org/bird/cbc)

For your \$5, you will receive a book summarizing the results of all of this year's CBCs.

All counters need to keep track of the time spent and distance traveled while birding on foot and by car (or other vehicle). Please include this with your data.

Common Barn Owl Pellet Analyses from SIWR

The late Dr. Paul W. Parmalee, professor emeritus from UT's McClung Museum and preeminent authority on freshwater mussels and zoo-archaeology called me in early 2002. Paul had heard of the Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge project, of the presence of common barn owls using the barns on the refuge, and wondered about the presence of barn owl pellets. I assured him that there were abundant pellets, and, in undeniable serendipity, he asked if he could analyze the pellet contents to ascertain the owl's food habitats.

Scores of hours spent teasing apart the dried pellets, and a lifetime of experience provided recognition of individual bones, teeth or other remains, resulting in identification of 11 mammal and 8 avian species from the pellets. The bird species found included: song, white-throated and swamp sparrows, northern bobwhite quail, northern mockingbird, cedar waxwing, common grackle, European starling and unidentified passerines. The small mammals identified included: 3 shrew species (southeastern, least, short-tailed), 4 mouse species (eastern harvest, deer, white-footed, house), eastern mole, hispid cotton rat, pine/woodland vole and eastern cottontail rabbit.

We'd talked about tracking the changes in barn owl pellet analyses over time to see if they would correlate with the habitat changes ongoing at SIWR, as reflected in shifts in the composition and abundance of the small mammal fauna. Paul's work has established the early part of that continuum. While missing Paul's professional interest and expertise, it is hoped that the rest of the food habits and species composition picture will yet be realized at some point in the future.

By Wayne H. Schacher

whschacher@natreserv.com

KTOS Financial Report - Calendar Year 2007

	Nov.	May to April	YTD
Income			
- Dues	\$304.00	\$232.00	\$2,416.00
- Shade grown coffee	\$263.00	\$333.00	\$930.00
- Interest	\$ 25.95	\$162.25	\$269.18
- Silent Auction	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
- Owen Memorial	\$12.00	\$240.00	\$361.00
- Miscellaneous	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
Total Income	\$604.95	\$ 967.25	\$3,976.18

Expenses:			
- Newsletter	\$56.64	\$273.36	\$638.20
- Supplies	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$73.07
- Shade Grown Coffee	\$144.79	\$277.93	\$928.24
- Member Dues to TOS	\$0.00	\$66.00	\$1,510.00
- Miscellaneous	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$160.20</u>	<u>\$210.20</u>
Total Expenses	\$201.43	\$777.49	\$3,359.71

Other:			
J. B. Owen Award	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
Inst. for Bird Populations	<u>\$300.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$300.00</u>
Total Other	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$800.00

Account Balances			
KTOS Checking & Savings	\$3,636.11	\$3,570.09	
J. B. Owen Memorial	\$7,126.10	\$7,088.60	

Memberships	148	145	
Paid 2008 Memberships	18		
New Members	None		

Note:
Miscellaneous for current period: brochures advertising KTOS

Compiled by Marie Oakes, Treasurer

The Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society held the annual Knox County Fall Count on Sunday, 30 September 2007.

Twenty-three observers in 13 parties covered 376.4 miles over 77.13 hrs and counted 7837 individual birds of 107 species (plus 1 more during count week).

Highlights include Peregrine Falcon, 2 Black-billed Cuckoos at Cherokee Woodlot, 2 Philadelphia Vireos, 5 Red-breasted Nuthatches, 9 Brown-headed Nuthatches, 5 wren species including 2 Sedge Wrens at Seven Islands and a Marsh Wren at UT Plant Science Farm, and 6 thrush species.

Limited effort owling resulted in no owl or nightjar species being counted. Only 21 warblers species were found (plus one during count week) but that did include a Wilson's, both waterthrushes, and a nice total of 93 Palm Warblers. There were several other big misses including Green Heron, Broad-winged Hawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Yellow-throated Vireo. Two recent additions to the Knox County avifauna, Eurasian Collared-Dove and Fish Crow, were also missed.

Knox County Fall Count

Sunday, 30 September 2007

Weather: Clear, light fog around water in the AM

Low: 51 F

High: 85 F

Precipitation: none

Winds: 0-5 mph, NNW

Parties: 13

Observers: 23 (see list that follows)

Party hours:

55.16 hrs by foot;
19.30 hrs by car;
0.17 hrs owling;
2.50 hrs feeder watching
77.13 hrs TOTAL

Party miles:

35.5 miles by foot;
340.9 miles by car;
376.4 miles TOTAL
Coverage: 06:30 - 19:20

Species: 107 + 1 CW
Individual birds: 7837;
Birds per party hour: 101.6

Canada Goose - 317; Wood Duck - 17; Mallard - 38; Blue-winged Teal - 5; Northern Shoveler - 2; Wild Turkey - 5; Northern Bobwhite - 1; Pied-billed Grebe - 4; Double-crested Cormorant - 21; Great Blue Heron - 25; Great Egret - 1; Black-crowned Night-Heron - 4; Black Vulture - 6; Turkey Vulture - 20; Osprey - 2; Northern Harrier - 2; Sharp-shinned Hawk - 2; Cooper's Hawk - 3; Accipiter sp. - 1; Red-shouldered Hawk - 9; Red-tailed Hawk - 16; American Kestrel - 4; Peregrine Falcon - 1; Killdeer - 75; Wilson's Snipe - 1; Rock Pigeon - 406; Mourning Dove - 216; Black-billed Cuckoo - 2; Chimney Swift - 782; Ruby-throated Hummingbird - 4; Belted Kingfisher - 21; Red-bellied Woodpecker - 70; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - 4; Downy Woodpecker - 52; Hairy Woodpecker - 5; Northern Flicker - 43; Pileated Woodpecker - 13; Eastern Wood-Pewee - 19; Empidonax sp. - 3; Eastern Phoebe - 38; White-eyed Vireo - 9; Blue-headed Vireo - 2; Philadelphia Vireo - 2; Red-eyed Vireo - 4; Blue Jay - 407; American Crow - 296; Tree Swallow - 4; Carolina Chickadee - 157; Tufted Titmouse - 74; Red-breasted Nuthatch - 5; White-breasted Nuthatch - 16; Brown-headed Nuthatch - 9; Carolina Wren - 167; House Wren - 13; Winter Wren - 2; Sedge Wren - 2; Marsh Wren - 1; Ruby-crowned Kinglet - 3; Eastern Bluebird - 154; Veery - 2; Gray-cheeked Thrush - 6; Swainson's Thrush - 20; Wood Thrush - 7; American Robin - 112; Gray Catbird - 41; Northern Mockingbird - 172; Brown Thrasher - 30; European Starling - 483; Cedar Waxwing - 79; Blue-winged Warbler - CW; Tennessee Warbler - 45; Nashville Warbler - 5; Northern Parula - 1; Chestnut-sided Warbler - 1; Magnolia Warbler - 41; Cape May Warbler - 3; Yellow-rumped Warbler - 24; Black-throated Green Warbler - 5; Blackburnian Warbler - 2; Pine Warbler - 19; Prairie Warbler - 1; Palm Warbler - 93; Bay-breasted Warbler - 3; Black-and-white Warbler - 3; American Redstart - 7; Ovenbird - 2; Northern Waterthrush - 2; Louisiana Waterthrush - 1; Common Yellowthroat - 42; Hooded Warbler - 3; Wilson's Warbler - 1; Summer Tanager - 5; Scarlet Tanager - 7; Eastern Towhee - 78; Chipping Sparrow - 4; Field Sparrow - 141; Savannah Sparrow - 5; Song Sparrow - 104; Northern Cardinal - 269; Rose-breasted Grosbeak - 50; Blue Grosbeak - 8; Indigo Bunting - 82; Red-winged Blackbird - 12; Eastern Meadowlark - 11; Common Grackle - 1759; Brown-headed Cowbird - 155; House Finch - 125; American Goldfinch - 161; House Sparrow - 18

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Gail Clendenen
Steve Clendenen
Dean Edwards (compiler)
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Tom Howe
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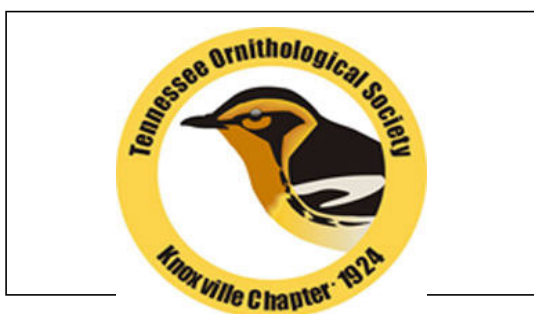
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Seth McConchie
Mike Nelson
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Martha Rudolph
Boyd Sharp
Allen Trently
David Trently

KTOS MEMBERSHIP

Join or renew your membership in KTOS by mailing your annual dues to: Marie Oakes
18 Rockingham Lane
Oak Ridge, 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 December issue is November 23.

Due to cost and space restrictions, please limit your article to 700 words. For a color version of this newsletter or for past issues, go to the TOS home page, <http://www.tnbirds.org> and click on "local chapters/Knoxville"



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BIRDING NORTHERN MINNESOTA

Northern Minnesota has three distinct ecosystems, the flat, grassy plains, deciduous forest (primarily oak, alder and aspen) and the coniferous forest (red pine, white pine, jack pine and some deciduous trees). These, plus Minnesota's famous 10,000 lakes, make for varied birding. Northern Minnesota has quite a few National wildlife refuges, State wildlife refuges, State forests and State parks. Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge is considered a birding hotspot and has a one way, gravel, auto tour route typical of many wildlife refuges. We saw most of the common ducks and should have, but did not, see the common clay colored sparrow which would have been a life bird. I enjoyed Rydell National Wildlife Refuge far more because, instead of a narrow, rough drive, it had miles of paved walkways around the ponds and through the woods. I can focus on the birds, not the road, not have to try and listen over the noise of a diesel engine, and get some good exercise. Five of the seven state parks we visited also had paved walks. The best known of the state parks is Itasca State Park which contains the headwaters of the Mississippi River flowing out of Lake Itasca. It has an eleven mile one-way wilderness drive with lots of hiking trails and the State's largest Red and White Pines. It also has nesting American Three Toed and Black Back Woodpeckers. Although we had seen both species before, it was nice to find a male Black Back shredding bark off a pine tree.

Other birds, fairly common in Northern Minnesota but less so in Tennessee, were the Trumpeter Swan, White Pelican, Franklin's Gull, Black Tern, Yellow Headed Blackbird, Black Billed Magpie, Merlin, American Black Duck and, of course, Minnesota's state bird, the Common Loon. We also did get to see a Greater Prairie Chicken.

My most memorable birding was out the window of the camper, parked for the night alongside the Rainy River separating Minnesota from Ontario. We watched Common Goldeneyes, Common Mergansers, a flock of White Pelicans, and six Canada Geese stewarding thirty-three goslings.

By: Jay Singer

THANKS FROM TONY KING

Tony said, "Due to the generosity of those present at the last meeting, we received \$203 - enough to make KTOS a member of the "Mile Maker Club." Thank you for responding to my plea for funds."

If you didn't get a chance to participate and would like to, you may call 1-800-675-2618 to make a credit card donation or you may mail your check to:

Operation Migration, Inc.
639-1623 Military Road
Niagara Falls, NY 14304-1745

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