



Malayan banded pitta, Source: Mike Nelson

## Tennessee Sandhill Crane Festival 2017

The 27th Tennessee Sandhill Crane Festival will be held **January 14–15, 2017** from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. daily at the Hiwassee Refuge and at the Birchwood Community Center.

Olan Chlor will once again sponsor the event. Lizzie Condon from the International Crane Foundation will be speaking on Whooping Crane conservation efforts at the International Crane Foundation on Saturday. The festival will also include the popular American Eagle Foundation, live music and crafts.

The 2017 festival is special this year, with the 14<sup>th</sup> North American Crane Workshop annual meeting taking place in Chattanooga, prior to the festival, see [tiny.cc/q83tgq](http://tiny.cc/q83tgq) for additional details on this meeting. Crane researchers and conservationists from around North America will attend this prestigious event.

The Tennessee Aquarium is providing guided crane and eagle boat tours on the Hiwassee River, see [tiny.cc/ub4tgq](http://tiny.cc/ub4tgq) for additional details. These two-hour tours offer a serene trip, where passengers will enjoy hearing not only about the various migratory and resident birds, but also about the Cherokee heritage in the region.

## December Meeting: “Birding Asia: An Avian-Rich Continent” by Mike Nelson

Please join us on **Wednesday, December 7, 2016** for a presentation by our own Mike Nelson, a leader of birding tours with Birdtour Asia. He is home in Knoxville for a holiday break for a couple months and once again offered to do a presentation for our monthly KTOS meeting.

Last December, Mike Nelson spoke about his sometimes crazy life as a tour leader. This year he will talk about birding in Asia itself from the high Himalayas to the deep tropical rain forests and from the wide plains of China to the remote islands in the Banda Sea. Many of Asia's most desired locations will be reviewed along with loads of its fantastic resident birds. Mike promises “eye-popping avian goodies that are high on everyone's target lists.” Sounds like an early Christmas delight.

The KTOS meeting begins at 6:45 P.M. in Room 118 of the University of Tennessee, College of Veterinary Medicine. For directions, visit the KTOS website at [www.knoxvillebirding.org](http://www.knoxvillebirding.org) or contact Merikay Waldvogel (865) 806-7505.

## January Meeting – Our Annual Photo Share Meeting

After the holidays, join us on **Wednesday, January 4, 2016** for our photo share meeting. This program provides the perfect opportunity to show off your photography skills and socialize with everyone at the beginning of the New Year. All photographers and birders, novice or seasoned, are encouraged to share their bird and nature-related photographs with the group.

Important: Please limit number of slides to 15 or less and the narration to five minutes or less. Sign up at the December meeting or email Merikay Waldvogel [quiltalive@aol.com](mailto:quiltalive@aol.com) to get your name on the list. It is best to bring your slides on a flash drive and arrive early (about 6:15 P.M.) to load them on the podium computer. Laptops may also be connected, if needed.

The KTOS meeting begins at 6:45 P.M. in Room 118 of the University of Tennessee, College of Veterinary Medicine. For directions, visit the KTOS website at [www.knoxvillebirding.org](http://www.knoxvillebirding.org) or contact Merikay Waldvogel (865) 806-7505.



## Presidential Perch

## Presidential Perch (cont.)

I hope it is an accepted fact that we all are prone to make mistakes, jump to conclusions and misidentify birds in the field. Sometimes, if you are overly determined to chase down and see a rare bird that someone has posted, you can be tempted to stretch a fleeting observation into a positive I.D. of that very bird you were dying to see. I remember on a trip up the east coast, we were looking for a Kelp Gull that had been hanging around a restaurant. We tried for a long time to convince ourselves that this dark backed gull we were looking at had to be that gull. Fortunately, we backed off and decided it was a Great Black-backed Gull. Then we happened to find out it hadn't been seen there for a month! We almost blew it. I've blown it before and rue the foolishness of my youth. Hopefully we all grew in humility to own up to our errors. It's hard to love one who stubbornly refuses correction, but we must correct gently.

But, if you want to become a lousy birdwatcher that keeps making mistakes, there are a few rules you can follow. (Gleaned from Nate Slick's ABA blog you can read at [seagullsteve.blogspot.com/2016/11/the-human-birdwatcher-project-presents.html](http://seagullsteve.blogspot.com/2016/11/the-human-birdwatcher-project-presents.html).)

- Don't use a field guide. You don't need one; after all you have the internet.
- Use an old field guide that doesn't have updated changes and knowledge.
- Don't learn the different parts of a bird so you understand the jargon.
- Don't learn about range and abundance so you know what to expect.
- Don't think about which season a bird is to be expected.
- Don't think about similar species that something might be.
- Don't worry about habitat preferences.
- Don't learn about their behavior that makes them unique.
- Don't learn bird vocalizations.
- One field mark is good enough to clinch an I.D., correct?
- Always bird alone and get hurt if someone tries to teach you something.
- Assume you must be looking at a rare bird.

This satire is both funny and informative, if not convicting.

A great local place to learn birds is one our favorite hot spots—Sharp's Ridge. Neotropical migrants are close and afford great looks in the spring. Among them are warblers, vireos, orioles and tanagers that pass through there, some breeding. But if you have been birding for any number of years, you recognize that the numbers of migrants you see is far below what it was in years past.

One way you can help these numbers is to join David Johnson and Jean Alexander in their quest to convert you to drink bird-friendly coffee. They take orders every month for shade-grown coffee which is grown in habitat that is healthier for the birds than large sun-grown plantation coffee. The shade-grown coffee doesn't require the fertilizer or pesticides that the others do. The birds control the bugs and the leaf litter provides the nutrients. And our favorite warblers like Blackburnian, Canada, Mourning, Golden-winged and Cerulean all spend the non-breeding season feeding there. In fact, what we call North American birds that fly south for the winter, are actually tropical birds that come north to nest. They spend more time in South America that they do on their breeding grounds. So, the more percentage of the coffee market we capture in shade-grown coffee, the healthier "our" neotropical migrant populations will become. Spread the good news about the benefits of converting. It's much better tasting too. There is a great article on this subject ("Coffee. Birds. People.") in the Autumn 2016 issue of Cornell's Living Bird magazine, but I don't believe it is available online yet.

I hope you get out birding this month. We have several Christmas counts to participate in. Or find a new birding hot spot and please share it with us.

*Tom Howe*

## Get Out and Get Birding! December/January Field Trips

**The Cove at Concord Park**  
**Thursday Dec 15, 2016, 9:00 A.M.**  
Tony King, (865) 988-6172

Meet at 9:00 A.M. The park is located at 1808 S. Northshore Dr., Knoxville, Tenn.

**Gupton Wetlands,**  
**Thursday, Jan 19, 2017, 9:00 A.M.**  
Tony King, (865) 988-6172

The geo-coordinates for this location are 35.925441 N, 84.517937 W. Meet in the parking lot.

**Cove Lake State Park**  
**Saturday, Jan 28, 2017**  
Tom Howe, (865) 407-9620, [blountbirder@gmail.com](mailto:blountbirder@gmail.com)

Meet at 8 A.M. at the cull-de-sac. The park is located at 110 Cove Lake Ln., Caryville, Tenn.

**2017 TOS Spring State Meeting  
Knoxville, May 5-7, 2017**

The Knoxville Chapter invites all state TOS members to the 2017 Spring Meeting, to be held May 5-7, 2017. Friday night registration will be held at the conference hotel from 6:00–9:00 P.M., while Saturday afternoon 1:00 P.M. meeting and the Saturday 6:00 P.M. banquet will be hosted at the Knoxville Zoo, Lee Congleton Conference Center (enter through ranger’s station), located off I-40 at Exit 392. Half-price tickets to the zoo for Saturday afternoon are available by mail-in, advance purchase only.

The conference hotel is the Mainstay Suites, 144 Merchant Dr., Knoxville, Ten. (I-75, Exit 108). A block of rooms is reserved at a discounted rate of \$84 plus taxes per night for a choice of a room with either two double beds or one king bed. A free continental breakfast 6:00–9 A.M. (or earlier upon request) and Wi-Fi is included. Make your reservations for the hotel by April 5, 2017 by calling (865) 247-0222 and mentioning “TOS” for the discounted rate. All field trips will leave from the Mainstay Suites.

We are pleased to announce that the speaker for the Saturday banquet will be Dr. David Buehler, professor of Wildlife Science in the Department of Forestry, UT, Knoxville who will talk about his latest research on Golden-winged Warblers. The menu for the banquet includes roast beef, chicken breast, vegetarian lasagna, salad, vegetables, and dessert.

Field trips are still being finalized, but possibilities include Seven Islands, Kyker Bottoms, Sharp’s Ridge, Norris Dam, Cove Lake, Cross Mountain, the upper Smokies and Cherohala Skyway. What do you desire? Target species? Contact Tom Howe with your recommendations on locations.

Send your registration to KTOS by April 1.  
For additional information, contact Tom Howe, [blountbirder@gmail.com](mailto:blountbirder@gmail.com).

**TOS SPRING MEETING 2017 REGISTRATION FORM**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

TOS Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_ Office held: \_\_\_\_\_

- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Registrations @ \$10 each
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Dinner Reservations @ \$25 each
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Child’s Dinner Reservations (age 12 & under) @ \$13 each
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday afternoon Zoo tickets, adult @ \$10 each
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday afternoon Zoo tickets, child @ \$8 each
  
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total amount enclosed. Make Check payable to KTOS

**Mail registration form and check to:  
Morton Massey, 6932 Westland Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919**

**KTOS membership:** Join or renew by mailing your annual dues to Morton Massey, 6932 Westland Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919. Dues levels: \$26/individual, \$30/family, \$38/sustaining, \$13/student (high school or younger), or TOS life membership for \$450 with \$8 annual fee to Chapter.



[knoxvillebirding.org](http://knoxvillebirding.org)

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**POSTMASTER:** Send changes of address to: *through the biKNOXulars*, 725 Mountain Pass, Knoxville, TN 37923

## Christmas Bird Counts

This year's Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) are right around the corner! Held each year, Christmas Bird Counts provide an opportunity for birdwatchers to use their identification skills to help with bird research and conservation. The tallies of different bird species gained from CBCs are routinely used by scientists as a way to monitor winter bird populations. Participation in the count is free! Contact the respective compiler(s) for the counts in which you are interested. Count dates and compiler information appear below.

- **Norris**, Dec. 17, 2017. Contact Chuck Nicholson to get an assigned territory of find someone to join, (865) 405-7948, [cpnicholson53@gmail.com](mailto:cpnicholson53@gmail.com)
- **Great Smoky Mountains**, Dec. 17, 2017. Contact Warren Bielenberg, (865) 681-7884 or (865) 919-8663, [birdglass44@aol.com](mailto:birdglass44@aol.com)
- **Knox County**, Dec. 31, 2017. Contact Dean Edwards, (865) 660-9701, [kde@angst.engr.utk.edu](mailto:kde@angst.engr.utk.edu)
- **Cades Cove**, Jan. 1, 2017. Contact Susan Hoyle, (865) 909-0792, [hoyleshrike@gmail.com](mailto:hoyleshrike@gmail.com)

## Final Call for Dues

It is the final call for your 2017 dues! You can renew at the December meeting or by mailing your payment to Morton Massey, KTOS Treasurer 6932 Westland Drive Knoxville, TN 37919. See [www.knoxvillebirding.org/membership.html](http://www.knoxvillebirding.org/membership.html) for membership application and fees.