



Newsletter of the Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

KTOS AUCTION IS HUGE SUCCESS!

Before and after our last meeting, we held a silent auction to raise money for the J. B. Owen Memorial Fund. An enormous quantity of quality items were donated for the auction and it turned out to be a rousing success. Can you believe we raised a total of **\$886.00**?!! Thanks to all that donated items and thanks to all of you that purchased them. The success of this venture exceeded our expectations. THANKS again for your generosity. This brings the total in the J. B. Owen Memorial Fund to **\$3576.00**. This is a tremendous start to a fund that is going to be very important to KTOS in the years to come. The proceeds of the fund will be used to promote the study of birds in Tennessee through research, conservation, and environmental education, including nature writing.

If you wish to donate to the fund please send your donation to KTOS treasurer,

Bob Steffy
7619 Charlton Road
Knoxville, TN 37920

June Meeting Information

Our annual June pot-luck dinner/club meeting will be held **Wednesday, June 6th at 7:00 pm** Bob Steffy's house in South Knoxville. We'll eat around 7, then have a short business meeting. Please bring a dish to share and lawn chairs, since seating will be limited. The meeting area will be beside a pool, so children will require careful supervision.

****this will be our last meeting until September.**

Directions to Bob's house: From Knoxville, come south about 6 miles on hwy 129 until you pass the Mouse's Ear then take the next right (about 1/4 mile) which is Topside Road.

Once on Topside Road, follow the double yellow stripe in the middle on the road for over a mile until it ends. The road will fork; take the left fork (Charlton) our house is about 1/4 mile on the right (7619 Charlton) just past the huge house under construction.

From the South (Maryville, Alcoa, Pellissippi Parkway, etc.), come north until you cross into Knox County (this occurs as you cross the bridge for the Little River embayment) be sure you are in the left lane because you need to turn almost immediately onto Topside Road. Then follow instructions in preceding paragraph to get to the Steffy's house.

***One word of caution, there are two Topside Roads within a half-mile of each other. Be sure and take the one in Knox County.

Central Park Birdsong Mystery

The Case of the Invisible Warbler

April 9, 2001 — As spring comes to New York City's Central Park, so does an ornithological mystery. For the past few years, birdwatchers heard the song of the Black-throated Green Warbler ("Zee zee zee zoo zee") several weeks before the bird's seasonal return to the park.

Careful birdwatchers noticed that the warbler's song was alternating with that of the more common White-throated Sparrow ("Oh Sam Peabody, Peabody").

The mystery was solved when a veteran birder realized that there was a treetop mimic -a single white-throated Sparrow was singing both its own song and that of the Black-throated Green Warbler.

- From the All Things Considered web page at: www.npr.org/programs/atc/

Presidential Perch

by Chris Welsh

I suppose it's traditional for outgoing presidents to reminisce in their final column about all the great things that were accomplished during their term of office. Looking back over the last two years, I have to say we gotten some good things done. Our contribution to the Foothills Land Conservancy for Smith's Bend was the first significant pledge from nonconsumptive users and led in part to still larger contributions attributed to TOS. Establishment of the J.B. Owen Memorial Fund was a major accomplishment that will pay off year after year, not only in remembering J.B. and advancing our knowledge and communications about birds, but also in giving KTOS a higher profile. Our silent auction to benefit the fund was a great success (raising about \$900), and one we need to repeat each year to get the fund to a self-sustaining level. We've interacted with the Tennessee Valley Authority, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Knoxville Police Department, Knoxville Parks Department, and more. We are even close to having a presentation put together to introduce people to birding. And hey, we have nice car window decals to announce to the world that we are birders and belong to a group of birders. All this and more seems like a pretty good term.

I'm pleased to look back and see all that we've accomplished during my watch, but there's very little of it I can take credit for. I seem to recall George W. Bush saying something about not worrying much about the details of getting things done because he surrounds himself with good people who can and will get things done. I'm not a big Bush fan (except when there are birds in them, of course), I do worry about the details, and I didn't get to pick the people surrounding me. However, I've been fortunate. The accomplishments of the last two years have come because KTOS has some truly committed and competent people willing to do what it takes to get things done. Without the likes of Dan and Laurie Mooney, Bob Steffy, Christine and Roger Tankersley, Wes James, and others, I doubt we'd have gotten half as much done.

My view here from the Perch has made me really appreciate the importance of active participation. For KTOS to be all that it can be, we have to have more active members, more people willing to take on coordination of projects and more people willing to help get projects done. The president's job is pretty easy when everyone else does everything.

As I turn the Perch over to David Trently, I say thanks to everyone who has helped make my job easier. It has been fun. Let's see if we can make David's job even easier than mine.

TOS Summer Birding Foray - June 29th, 30th, July 1st

The Summer Foray is an outing for TOS members from across the state to get together for a few days of birding. Generally these have a more specific purpose than just birdwatching. In the early days of forays, TOS members would select an area of the state like Reelfoot Lake or the Smokies (many years ago) that had not been birded much and then go there for a few days to get some information on the area's birds.

This year's foray will be to the Willamette properties on the Western Highland Rim (Humphries, Perry, Hickman, Lewis Counties), which are mostly all hardwood forest. There are a few pine plantations in there but not many. The hardwood forests are in varying age classes, starting with young clearcuts all the way up to mature forest. There are also some 'special areas' that Willamette has set aside from timber management because of ascetic or biological significance.

Birds expected are lots of neotropical migrants. Key birds would be Bewick's wren, cerulean warbler, and Bachman's sparrow, all of which have been recorded in nearby counties in year's past.

If anyone is interested they should e-mail Polly Rooker at prooker@mail.state.tn.us. We will provide additional information later.

-Troy Ettel

Knox County Spring Count

The Knox County Spring Count was held on Sunday, 29 April 2001. Twenty-four observers located 127 species on count day and another 9 during count week. This total equals the total species count from the previous year but falls below the average over my four-year tenure as compiler. During those four years we have tallied a total of 161 species plus 3 others seen only during count week. Full details will be published in *The Migrant*.

The highlight of the count was the count-week Scissor-tailed Flycatcher found at Turkey Creek by Wes James — the first record of this species in Knox County. Count-day highlights include Forster's Tern, Black-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Empidonax sp., and Warbling Vireo, all new species for the count over the last four years. Other goodies include two Northern Harriers, twenty-eight warbler species plus four others during count week, Lincoln's Sparrow and Bobolink.

The biggest misses were Northern Parula, Blue-winged Teal and American Kestrel (though kestrels were reported during count week). Other noteworthy misses include Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (apparently not returning to their nest site after it was hit by a tornado last spring), either yellowlegs species, American Woodcock (seen one day prior to count week), Whip-poor-will, Bank Swallow, American Pipit, and Loggerhead Shrike. -Dean Edwards

Bird Banding Field Trip in Smokies

Saturday June 23, 8:00 am Cades Cove GSMNP
Leader Paul Super (448-6709 ext. 14)

We will walk into the cove a short distance to where several mist nets have been set in proven locations. Those attending will see bird-banding in practice and, if conditions allow, may get to hold a bird briefly before release. Target species in this area are vireos, buntings, flycatchers, sparrows, and a yellow-billed cuckoo which has thus far eluded me. Birds are caught for a study of avian parasites for the ATBI. Nets will stay open until about 11:00.

Meet under the overhang of the Cades Cove Ranger Station and look for someone carrying a long metal pole. The Ranger Station is towards the campground and bicycle rental area, a left turn before the start of the one-way loop.

Netting will be canceled or cut short in the case of rain.

Summer Field Trips

Due to unforeseen circumstances, information on Field Trips for this summer was not available at time of publication. Please call the KTOS line at Ijams Nature Center: 577-4717 x80 for a list of field trip dates, locations and leaders. Thanks.

FOREST FRAGMENTATION LINKED TO STRESS IN BIRDS

New research offers a clue as to why Amazon forest birds are sensitive to habitat fragmentation - even patches as big as 250 acres are missing many species. Birds in fragments have slower growing feathers, learned U.S. researchers. This suggests that they are more stressed, which could decrease survival and reproduction.

"There might be physiological consequences for birds that live in fragments," said Jeff Stratford of Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama, who did this work with Philip Stouffer of Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana. The work appears in the June issue of the journal "Conservation Biology." This is the first evidence that fragmentation may have direct physiological effects. Stratford and Stouffer compared feathers from two common bird species (the white crowned manakin and the wedge billed woodcreeper) that were captured in either forest fragments or continuous forest near Manaus, Brazil. To determine how fast the feathers had grown, the researchers measured the daily growth bars. Healthier birds are assumed to have feathers with wider growth bars, meaning faster growing feathers.

The researchers found that feathers from birds captured in forest fragments had grown slower: for instance, feathers from birds in 2.5 acre fragments grew 10 percent slower than those from birds in continuous forest. Why do birds in fragments have slower growing feathers? Stratford and Stouffer ruled out the possibility of insufficient food. The manakin's diet includes fruit and the woodcreeper eats insects living on tree trunks and branches, and fragmentation does not reduce either type of food. Fragmentation may not affect feather growth directly. Rather, less robust birds may be more likely to end up in undesirable habitats like fragments. "We suggest that these birds are social subordinates that are wandering about the landscape," said Stratford.

Birds in fragmented habitats elsewhere may be even more stressed because the fragmentation in this study was mild. For instance, the forest fragments were separated by pasture and regenerating forest rather than by parking lots and houses. "Even though things look bad, this is a 'best case scenario'" Stratford said.

North American Migration Count

I hope everybody had a fun and safe day counting birds on May 12. Send your results to me when you can at dollyron@icx.net or at my home address at 282 Hackworth Lane, Clinton, Tn. 37716. Your time and effort is greatly appreciated.

Ron Hoff – state compiler

Golden Winged Warbler Atlas Project

Troy Eittle, State Ornithologist and former KTOS member will be looking for Golden Winged Warblers June 7-9 in the Royal Blue area. Melinda Welton is coordinating this as part of the Golden Winged Warbler Atlas Project for Cornell University Lab of Ornithology. Participate in citizen science to save the birds! Anyone interested can contact Troy by email at: tettel@mail.state.tn.us

TheVirtual Birder (www.virtualbirder.com) is introducing A 2 Z 4 BIRDERS ONLINE GUIDE TO EASTERN WARBLERS. This guide features photos, text, animated sonograms with sound clips, maps, and video clips for 38 species of eastern warblers from some of the best resources available. Check out: <http://www.a2z4birders.com/birds>

To demonstrate the usefulness of an online guide they've integrated the warbler guide into the Mount Auburn Break, a feature on their website. Now when you click on a bird you'll have the option of pulling up the guide with easy access to the species accounts for the 4 species choices. It's quite cool even if you already know all your warblers! The Break features 9 habitat views from Mount Auburn in Cambridge/Watertown, Massachusetts and 17 bird sightings to identify (many include sound clips). You can find the Mount Auburn Break on the internet at : http://www.virtualbirder.com/mtauburn_bb

- Don Crockett, Editor/WebMaster

The Migrant - Dev Joslin will be stepping down as Editor of The Migrant, the TOS quarterly scientific journal. Our very own Chris Welsh will be taking over these duties.

Special Thanks to:
Art & Frame Outlet, Inc
for donation of matting materials and services for art prints offered at the auction. Please patronize thier store at
10811 Kingston Pike in Knoxville.
Phone: 675-3568

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

- PRESIDENT.....Chris Welsh
5337 Hickory Hollow Rd
Knoxville, TN 37919 766-0368
cwelsh@utk.edu
- VICE-PRESIDENT.....David Trently
1029 Morrow Road
Knoxville, TN 37923 531-1473
tn_mockers@hotmail.com
- TREASURER.....Bob Steffy
7619 Charlton Road
Knoxville, TN 37920 579-3674
robertsteffy@aol.com
- SECRETARY.....Jean Alexander
3808 Riverview Dr
Maryville, TN 37804
jjadmj@knoxnews.infi.net
- EDITOR.....Christine Tankersley
2924 Jenkins Street
Knoxville, TN 37921 673-0931
cytanker@yahoo.com

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