



through the biKNOXulars

Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

Meet and eat at Ijams June 7 potluck

On Wednesday, June 7, KTOS will meet for its annual Spring Potluck at Ijams Nature Center at 6 p.m. Please bring a covered dish (with serving utensil) to share with the group. As in the past, silverware, plates, cups and drinks will be provided. This is a great opportunity to socialize with old and new friends. There will also be some time for informal birding. We love to see families at picnics—so bring your kids along. A short business meeting will follow dinner.

Something to think about: Over the past few years, KTOS has almost eliminated our use of disposables at picnics and other club events. I am proud of this achievement. I know I'm always disappointed when I attend an event for an organization that promotes environmental values (nature watching, etc)

that relies on disposables. This practice has negative impacts on habitat quality for birds and other species—not to mention the financial expenses. The disposables mean more landfill space taken up, gas and oil for transporting the products, electricity utilized to produce them, etc. Those, of course, add to the problems of pollution and habitat loss.

During Charlie's presidency he has borrowed plates and cups from Tremont. Since we're moving, that will no longer be a possibility. Charlie and I will donate the silverware that we have been providing for these events (hand-me-downs from friends). Someone will have to wash and store them. Charlie and I really hope that the club will figure out a way to keep our events environmentally friendly and disposable free.

Kid Friendly Rating: ★★★★★ (Out of four)

The Birds of Mazatlán and NW Mexico is August 2 Program

On Wednesday, August 2, Chattanooga TOS member Kevin Calhoun will present "The Birds of Mazatlán and NW Mexico." Calhoun currently serves CTOS as statistician and count coordinator. Additionally, he is a member of the state-wide TOS Bird Records Committee. Professionally, Calhoun has been a senior aviculturist at the Tennessee Aquarium (in Chattanooga) since 1991. In that position he has led several domestic birding trips. Personally, he has bird-

ed extensively in the US and has spent a good deal of time in Mexico and Central and South America.

(Continued on page 5)

Editor's Note: Mazatlán is a city in the Mexican state of Sinaloa; the surrounding municipality, for which the city serves as the municipal seat, is also called Mazatlán. San Blas is a fishing village located on the Pacific coast of Mexico in the state of Nayarit.

📅 MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Summer Field trips

(Planned to date.)
See page 2 for details.

Saturday, July 1, 8 AM or earlier

Ace Gap Trail, GSMNP

Sunday, July 9, 7 AM

Cherohala Skyway, Tenn and NC

Saturday, August 19, 8 AM-Noon

Quail Hollow Park

*"My love is deeper than the holler, Stronger than the river, Higher than the pine trees, Growing tall upon the hill.
My love is purer than the snowflakes, That fall in late December,
And honest as a robin, On a spring time window sill, And longer than the song of a whippertail."*

- Randy Travis, "Deeper than the Holler," Number 1 Hit - January 1989, CD: "Old 8X10"

2006 field trips locate 141 species to date

In January of this year we started entering KTOS field trip reports into Ebird. Ebird is a database hosted by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. One of the benefits to using Ebird is instant access to your state and county list. So far this year KTOS field trip participants have seen 141 species of birds on field trips sponsored by the club.

Totals for each county: Knox 97; Campbell 91; Cocke 52; Loudon 63; Blount 54; Anderson 34; Jefferson 32.

- Submitted by Dan Mooney

KTOS calendar of events online at:

www.tnbirds.org/chapters/knoxville/Calendar/KTOSCAL.htm

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Summer field trips (planned to date)

(Continued from page 1)

Saturday, July 1, 8 AM or earlier

Field trip/hike at Ace Gap Trail,
Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Leader: **David Trently**; 974-8664 (w); 531-1473 (h);
dtrently@utk.edu

Please contact trip leader at least two days in advance as an earlier start is preferred. Meeting time will be adjusted if those attending are able to meet earlier.

Meet at the Townsend Visitor Center on Route 321. Plan to leave there no later than 8:00 a.m. for the short drive up to the Ace Gap trailhead. This is a fairly easy walk, with little overall change in elevation, though there are some uphill and downhill sections.

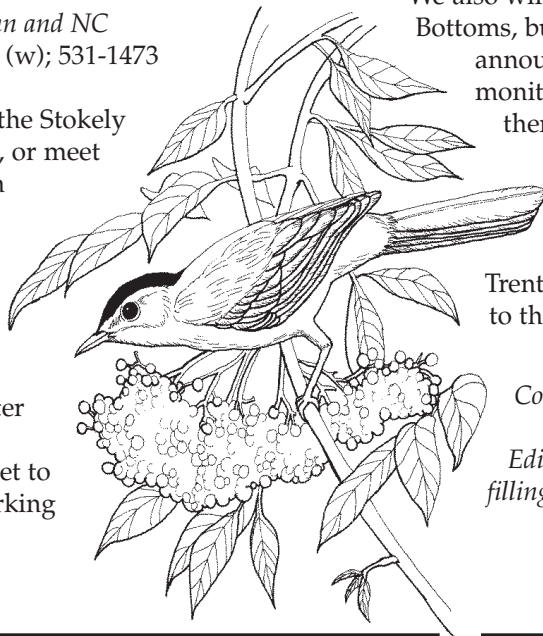
Bring lunch and a drink, which will need to be carried onto the trail.

Sunday, July 9, 7 AM

Field trip to Cherochala Skyway, Tenn and NC
Leader: **David Trently**; 974-8664 (w); 531-1473 (h); dtrently@utk.edu

Plan to depart at 7:00 a.m. from the Stokely Building (320 N Cedar Bluff Rd), or meet about 8:00 a.m. at the Hardees in Tellico Plains.

For this trip, we will try to get to the North Carolina section as early as possible, making just two or three stops in Tennessee on the way. We usually get to North Carolina later in the day and so miss a lot of potentially good birding. We'll get to our farthest point and begin working our way back.



There will also be the option of heading home via the Joyce Kilmer Forest. Bring lunch!

Target birds include Least Flycatcher; Common Raven; Black-capped Chickadee; Brown Creeper; Winter Wren; Veery; Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue, Blackburnian and Canada Warblers; Rose-breasted Grosbeak and, hopefully, Red Crossbill.

Saturday, August 19, 8 AM-Noon

Field trip to the "Quail Hollow Park," a reclaimed site that is a proposed park. Habitat varies, including scrub-shrub, open grass field and wooded.

Leader: **Mark Campen** 414-5593; mcampen7@hotmail.com

Meeting place to be announced. Mark will check it out close to the trip date, and if for some reason we can't go there, we will visit Hickory Bend (far west Knox) or Hastie Park in South Knoxville.

Contact Mark if you are interested in going on this trip. You can vote for which site we visit too.

We also will plan for a field trip to Rankin Bottoms, but the date and time will be announced later. Dean Edwards will monitor water levels and bird presence there before deciding when to run that trip.

Other field trips will be announced via the TN-Bird list-serve. Or you may call me (David Trently) to check if there are any updates to the schedule.

- David Trently, Interim Field Trip Coordinator

Editor's note: The club thanks David for filling in for Harold.

Gray Catbirds are found in early successional shrub and sapling habitats, often near stream borders and along forest edges. Modern suburban landscapes can contain good habitat, and catbirds have probably benefited from the expansion of residential development and edge habitat. Catbird populations are highest in places with the densest shrubbery.

Nesting flicker observed by sixth grader - Submitted by Tracey Muise

On April 4, a seventh grader pointed out a woodpecker on a tree outside my classroom window. It turned out to be a male Northern Flicker (*Colates auratus*) excavating a nest cavity. We have watched the nest on and off since then. Unfortunately we had a few "poorly planned" absences (as far as observing the nest) including Easter break and end of the year trips. Up until April 13 we watched the birds excavating their nest. During this time, primarily the male did the work. At that point I decided to offer my students a challenge. They had to observe the nest/birds a few times each week, take detailed notes in their science journal, and write an article for the KTOS newsletter. Several students jumped on the bandwagon, but only one sixth grader followed through. (Unfortunately, I don't think the birds ever laid eggs in the nest.) Here is what she wrote:

On Thursday, April 20, I started watching the behavior of a male and female Northern Flicker. They had moved into a dead tree outside our science room.

I watched almost every day from 1:40 until 2:00 p.m. When the woodpeckers were very active I watched some times around 11:20 a.m. for about five minutes. Their nest is located under a shelf fungus sticking out the side of the tree.

The first couple of days it was cold and dreary, and I didn't see any sign of the woodpeckers. Then on April 27 it was sunny, and both woodpeckers were very active. Though you mainly saw the female, every now and then you would see the male. Then on May 10 there was no sign of the woodpeckers, and a wild cat was roaming around near the nest. A week later I still hadn't seen any sign of the birds, and two other cats were roaming around. By the end of my project I had come to the assumption that the woodpeckers had moved. I ended my project on Tuesday, May 16 and hope that if the woodpeckers did move they are fine and happy where they are.

- Kaili Lynn

OF NOTE!

Thank you Charlie and Tracey!

KTOS would like to thank outgoing president Charlie Muise and vice president Tracey Muise for their service to the club. Good luck with your new life in Georgia!

Both Charlie and Tracey served three consecutive years. Charlie is the fifth person to serve three years in a row as president. David Highbaugh was president 1958-60, Fred Alsop 1969-71, Boyd Sharp 1975-77 and Tim Snow held the office 1992-94.

Tracey is only the second person to serve three consecutive years as vice president. Andrew Core did it 1992-94. Holly Overton was chapter vice president four years but her terms weren't consecutive. She served 1952-53 and again over 20 years later, 1976-77.

Prior to being president, Charlie was vice president for two years, bringing his consecutive time as a chapter officer to five years.

Welcome new members: Charles and Lola Estes

KTOS thanks Sandy! Special thanks to Sandy Underwood who helps Patty Ford every month fold, staple and address this newsletter.

Fall Bird Count: Sunday, September 24

Mark your calendars! Dean Edwards reminds us that the Fall Count will be Sunday, September 24.

KTOS Financial Report • June 2006

Compiled by Marie Oakes, Treasurer

	May	April	YTD
Income:			
. Dues	\$68.00	\$52.00	\$1,034.00
. Shade Grown Coffee	\$119.00	\$58.00	\$445.00
. Interest	\$21.85	\$24.55	\$86.94
. Owen Memorial	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$25.00
. Other Memorials	<u>\$75.00</u>	<u>\$375.00</u>	<u>\$575.00</u>
Total Income	\$283.85	\$509.55	\$2,165.94
Expenses:			
. Newsletter	\$156.70	\$67.66	\$332.31
. Supplies	\$14.14	\$0.00	\$31.92
. Shade Grown Coffee	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$377.52
. Member Dues to TOS	\$204.00	\$0.00	\$2,570.00
. Miscellaneous	<u>\$90.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$90.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$464.84	\$67.66	\$3,401.75
Other:			
. J.B. Owen Award	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
. Scout Project	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$400.00
. Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
Total Other	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
Account Balances			
. KTOS Checking & Savings	\$3,859.52	\$4,461.75	
. J.B. Owen Memorial	\$6,984.94	\$6,963.70	
Memberships	137	136	

Note:

The \$90.00 in miscellaneous is for the "Cats-In Doors" Contest.



Presidential Perch

- By Charlie Muise

Hello KTOSers.

Well here it is, my last Perch. (Hey, stop cheering.) By now, most of you know that Tracey and I are moving to Lamar County, Georgia. It is sad to suddenly be leaving this organization that has meant so much to me for more than five years. It is truly an honor to have worked with many of you and I will miss your friendship, skills, knowledge and experience. Thanks to you we have accomplished a lot.

KTOS has established one of the most successful MAPS bird banding stations in the country, helped fund research on American Kestrels, a bird education program for Girl Scouts, and breeding boxes for various species. We have added greatly to the knowledge of bird life at Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge, funded educational signs at Ijams Nature Center and are starting to really help the manager at Kyker Bottoms Wildlife Management Area. We have helped spread the word on the value of shade-grown coffee while helping a small, local business. While the Cats Indoors! poster contest was modest this year, I think it was the beginning of a great way to educate, to get our name out there, and most importantly, to gain the interest of young people. I hope the club greatly increases this project.

We have been a positive influence on Tennessee Ornithological Society as well. A number of members were instrumental in reviving the state's winter meeting. We led the way on the somewhat controversial increase in dues—which has led to an increase in the Conservation and Research Fund, among other things. Members of this club led the way in digitizing *The Migrant* (and I'll have copies for sale at the picnic!) and revamping the state Records Committee.

I like to think that I was a cog in that effective machine. I certainly learned a lot from many of you folks. People like Chuck Nicholson, Jim Campbell, Dean Edwards and David Trently have taught me much about bird monitoring, history, local

distribution and natural history, not to mention getting things done as an individual and as an effective organization leader. You folks have something great here and I hope you cherish it as much as I do.

But there is still much more to do. Birds are disappearing at an alarming rate. It may seem too daunting a task for a couple hundred people who have busy lives. But you can help. When Dean, Susan, Ron, David and Chuck ask for help on various counts—please get out there! These data are used in many ways—usually with no advertisement. When there is not a count going on (or when there is) try to bird some of the places that are not famous. You never know what you'll find. Remember when that new guy found the great sparrow field in Townsend? He didn't know that he should be looking for sparrows at Kyker. Be bold.

Many folks were unhappy when the club started using non-disposables at the picnics. But most folks have since realized that it is only logical and moral for those of us who love birds to do our part to help preserve habitat.

Write your politicians and let them know how you feel about new roads through rural areas, about mountain top removal, about trading publicly-accessible places to developers who destroy the habitat and gate the land off to the majority of us.

Work to involve and excite young people—tiresome as the saying is, they are the future. You may turn a future developer into a future researcher or trip leader—a worthy and sound career, with more positive aspirations. Form a coalition with others who love the outdoors, such as hunters, hikers and bikers—people who have a great deal more in common with us than differences.

I hope to read about all of this in future issues of *Through the BiKnoxulars*. And I'll miss you all.

"No one makes a greater mistake than he who does nothing, because he could only do a little"—Edmund Burke

Ok. The soapbox is now clear. Dan?

Koella memorials support scout projects at Kyker

KTOS has given \$400 to support the Eagle Scout projects of Travis and Tyler Wooden. Travis is constructing a duck viewing blind, and Tyler is building a 360-foot long walkway to the blind, which is located at the Kyker Bottoms Refuge. KTOS support was made possible by gifts to honor the memory of the late Tony Koella. Tony was an Eagle Scout and a KTOS member who made many important contributions to the welfare of birds in Tennessee.

Kyker Bottoms Refuge is a 350-acre area in southern Blount County owned and managed by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. For the birdwatcher, Kyker is one of the best birding locations in East Tennessee from fall through spring for a large variety of hawks, sparrows, and, depending on water conditions, waterfowl and shorebirds.

For more information go to: www.birdday.org

Cats Indoors! Poster Contest - By Tracey Muisse

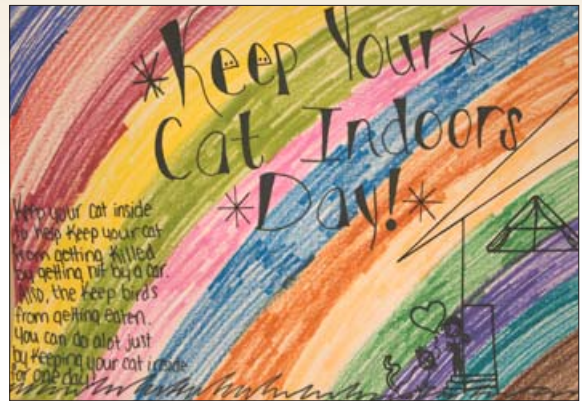
This year, at the suggestion of Chris Welsh, the Executive Committee decided that KTOS should sponsor an International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD)-Cats Indoors! poster contest. Similar contests are held throughout the country.

As the name indicates, the purpose is to have young people design posters that promote bird and cat safety. The average life expectancy of an outdoor cat is just two to five years, while an indoor cat may survive for 17 or more years. Each year, free-roaming cats kill hundreds of millions of birds and small mammals.

Following the national poster contest guidelines, we decided to start small this year. We invited the sixth graders from three local schools to participate. Two, Lenoir City Middle School (where KTOSer Autumn King attends) and Episcopal School of Knoxville (where I teach), accepted the invitation.

At the TOS spring meeting, held in Nashville, KTOS Executive Committee members and TOS President Danny Gaddy judged the entries.

Each winner will receive a \$30 gift certificate to a local store and a year membership to KTOS. We hope that next year more schools and more TOS chapters will participate.



First Place: Jessi Sewell (Lenoir City Middle School)



Second Place: Will Walker (Episcopal School of Knoxville)



Third Place: Hannah Bedwell and Kate Ballew (Episcopal School of Knoxville)

📅 MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The Birds of Mazatlán and NW Mexico is August 2 Program

(Continued from page 1)

In February 2006, Calhoun traveled and birded in northwest Mexico from Mazatlán to San Blas. He will share this experience with us. The areas he visited are rich in warblers, corvids and endemics. In addition to warblers wintering from the US, other warblers present included Red, Golden-browed, Fan-tailed and Slate-throated Redstart. The corvids included Sinaloan

Crow, Black-throated Magpie-Jay, Purplish-backed Jay and the very rare Crested Jay.

Calhoun hopes to keep his program light and fun with lots of pictures. Join us at 7 p.m. in room 117 of the UT Vet building to learn more about northwestern Mexico's birds.

Kid Friendly Rating: ★★★ (Out of four)

- Tracey Muisse, VP and program coordinator

Jays are noisy and quarrelsome. They're great mimics and exhibit a high degree of intelligence. The jay possesses a variety of notes and calls, some borrowed from other species of birds. In fact, the name of the subfamily in which they belong, Garrulinae, comes from the Latin word "garrio," meaning to prattle.

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 a Life membership with TOS is \$450 with an annual fee of \$8 to the local chapter.

DEADLINE for September issue is **August 26**. Due to cost and space restrictions, please limit your articles to 600 or 700 words.

For a color version of this or past issues go to "local chapters/Knoxville" starting at the TOS Home Page:

HTTP://www.tnbirds.org



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The search for lost species - By Lyn Bales

If you have followed the search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in the Big Woods you know the latest news. "There were teasing glimpses and tantalizing sounds, but the 2005-2006 search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in Arkansas has concluded without the definitive visual documentation being sought," the Cornell Lab of Ornithology announced last week.

But what does that mean? Was last year's announcement wrong? And is the South's famous "ghost bird" really just that? Well, not really.

As Scott Weidensaul points out in his book, *The Ghost with Trembling Wings*, it's not easy finding rare and endangered species. Underline the words "not easy." As the analogy goes: it's like trying to find a moving needle in a haystack. If they're gone, they're gone; but in some cases, they are just very, very well hidden.

Subtitled *Science, Wishful Thinking, and the Search for Lost Species*, Weidensaul investigates ghost species—both plant and animal—around the planet.

Case in point: Indian clover, a plant once common on the grasslands north of San Francisco Bay. It hadn't been seen in years and was declared extinct in 1984, only to be found, very much alive, in 1993 near the town of Occidental.

Then there's the completely nocturnal night parrot from Australia. It's nine-inches long and looks like an oversized, dark budgie. The species roosts in burrows during the day and hunts for seeds at night but hadn't been seen in decades. That is until October 17, 1990, when Walter Boles found a night parrot in western Queensland, not alive, but flattened on the highway as roadkill.

Weidensaul is always a joy to read and his book on lost species takes you on curious searches looking for incredibly hard to find creatures.

Ever heard of Gilbert's potoroo? It's a rabbit-sized marsupial unseen in Australia in 125 years, that is until one turned up recently in a live trap very much alive. If only the folks at Cornell could be so lucky.

- "*The Ghost with Trembling Wings*," North Point Press, 2002, 341 pages.



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