

‘Sparrow Identification’ by Giacomo and Muise is topic of March 1 program

This Wednesday, March 1, KTOS president Charlie Muise and member Jim Giacomo will present "Sparrow Identification." Jim recently received his PhD in Natural Resources in the Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Department at UT. He currently is a post-Doctoral Research Associate. Charlie continues to work as a Senior Teacher Naturalist at the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont.

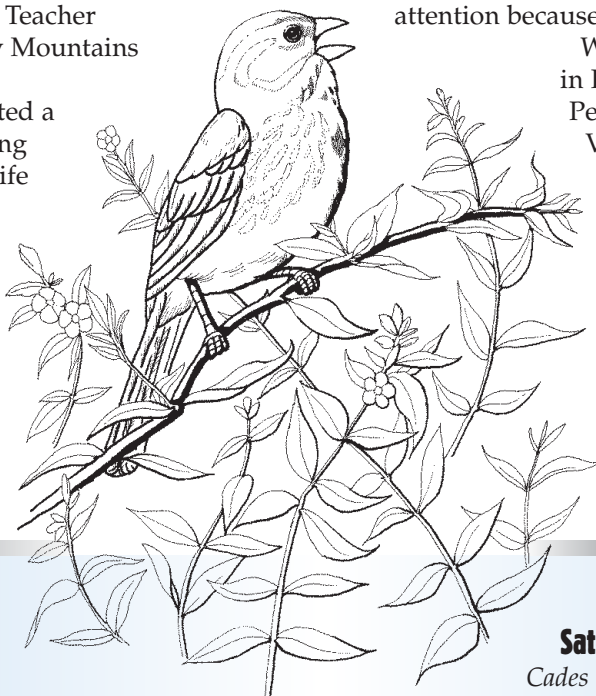
Both Jim and Charlie started a MAPS (breeding birds) banding station at Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge. All were surprised by the over 495 birds that they captured. Many of those birds were sparrows. Charlie's and Jim's presentation will share pictures of some of those birds as well as other sparrows found in Tennessee.

With their program, they hope to educate both beginning and advanced birders. In addition to pictures they will have skins, some bird calls, and perhaps some sparrow nests. When asked if they had anything else to share with the club, Charlie and Jim replied (with big, toothy grins) "They better pay attention because there will be a test."

We hope you can join us at 7 p.m. in Room 117 (across the hall from Pendergrass Library at the UT Veterinary Building on Neyland Drive) to learn more about these common, yet often elusive birds.

Kid Friendly Rating: ★
(Out of four)

- Tracey Muise, VP and
program coordinator



 MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Field trips for March

See page 2 for details.

Thursday, March 9, 7:30 AM

UT Arboretum, Oak Ridge

Saturday, March 18, 9 AM

Beginning Birders walk at the Maryville Greenway

Sunday, March 26, 8 AM

Fort Loudoun area beaver ponds, open and tail waters

"A silvery music, a flute song, simple and sweet and piercing to the heart. A twilight music, painful in its beauty. If there is a Heaven, an ideal realm beyond space and time, it must contain the hermit thrush."

- *Down the River*, Edward Abbey, American author and essayist (1927- 1989)

March field trips *(Continued from page 1)*

Saturday, March 4, 3 PM

Cades Cove, Great Smoky Mountains National Park

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

Meet at the Stokely Building (320 N Cedar Bluff Rd) for a 3:00 p.m. departure. We'll park at the campground area and walk in to the ponds and fields. There may be some ducks, a few woodpeckers, sparrows, turkeys and wintering songbirds. As the sun sets (~6:30) we'll listen for American Woodcock, owls and coyotes. The earliest return time to Knoxville may be about 8:30. We can stop for something to eat on the way home if needed.

Thursday, March 9, 7:30 AM

UT Arboretum, Oak Ridge

Leader: **Dan Mooney** (789-0806)

Meet at the Pellissippi State Community College campus (Hardin Valley Rd in west Knox County), near the pond, at 7:30 a.m. After checking out any ducks (Lesser Scaup have been present there recently), we'll head to the Arboretum. Fairly easy walking on gravel and dirt paths will yield songbirds, maybe Wild Turkey and hopefully an early spring migrant.

Saturday, March 18, 9 AM

Beginning Birders walk at the Maryville Greenway

Leader: **Tracey Muise** (traceson@yahoo.com; h 977-8429)

Meet at the new walking bridge near the Blount County Library at 9:00 a.m. This trip is especially designed with kids and those new to birding, but birders of all skill levels are urged to attend. We'll concentrate first on any larger, easier to see birds. There are places here for ducks and herons, kingfisher

and raptors. If you've never birded here before, come on over and see a place that has great potential for future field trips.

Sunday, March 26, 8 AM

Fort Loudon area beaver ponds, open water and tail waters

Leader: **Wes James** 988-2433 w; wkjames@tva.gov

Meet at 8 a.m. in the Tellico Canal Bathhouse/parking area adjacent to the canal that connects Tellico and Fort Loudon Reservoirs. This area is reached by taking the first exit after crossing the Fort Loudon Dam Bridge. The exit says Tellico Village, Route 444. After taking this exit you go straight across Tellico Parkway (Route 444) to the bathhouse and parking area. It is the same road that goes to the Tellico Canal boat ramp. There are major beaver pond areas to visit as well as the open water areas of the reservoirs and tail waters. There may be some waterfowl in the area, herons, gulls, swallows, early spring warblers. Bald Eagle is likely. We could finish up before lunch time. Walking should be fairly moderate.

- David Trently

Alabama Bird Trip planned - April 20-23

Bachman's Sparrow...Swallow-tailed Kite...Painted Bunting...These birds and so much more!! If you are also interested in wildflowers, butterflies, dragonflies, etc., then you may want to consider joining a trip through Alabama April 20-23. We'll spend a lot of time studying 'carnivorous' plants such as Sundews and Pitcher Plants, learn about life in an estuary in Mobile Bay and see spring bird migration in action at Dauphin Island. For more information, contact David Trently at avianpursuits@yahoo.com.

Annual TOS meeting to be in Nashville May 5-7

The Nashville Chapter extends an invitation to all TOS members across the state to attend the 2006 Annual Meeting, to be held May 5-7. The chapter welcomes you to Music City to enjoy the sights and sounds of spring.

The meeting will be headquartered at the Steeplechase Inn located at 5581 Franklin Pike Circle in Brentwood TN, off I-65 at Exit 74-A. The hotel is holding rooms for TOS members through April 10, 2006. Mention your TOS membership for the special rate of \$55.00, plus tax, per night for a room or \$75.99, plus tax, for a suite (the suite has a separate bedroom and a living room with a sleeper sofa, great bargain for a small group of friends or two couples). Also

included is a Deluxe Complimentary Breakfast. Members are encouraged to make reservations well in advance.

Alternate lodging choices at Exit 74-A include: Holiday Inn 615-373-2600, Comfort Inn 615-221-5001, and Hampton Inn 615-373-2212.

Registration will be held Friday evening, May 5, from 5:30-8:30 p.m. in Suite 401 at the Steeplechase Inn and from 6:30-7:00 a.m. on Saturday. Field trips will depart from the Steeplechase Inn parking lot on Saturday and Sunday mornings at 7 a.m.

For more information go to:

<http://www.tnbirds.org/events.htm>

2005 Knox County Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, 31 December 2005 • Dean Edwards, compiler

The 106th Knoxville CBC was held on Saturday, December 31, 2005. Forty-two observers in 24 parties (including 2 feederwatchers in 2 parties) spent 151.25 hrs in the field and counted 21,970 individual birds of 91 species (plus 2 others during count week— Wild Turkey and Fox Sparrow).

Highlights of the count included a Dunlin at Cove Island for only the third time. Other good finds included Northern Bobwhite (only the 2nd time in the last 10 years), Rufous Hummingbird, Loggerhead Shrike, Horned Lark, Common Grackle (largest number since 1994) and Rusty Blackbird. High counts were set for Northern Shoveler, Bald Eagle, Ring-billed Gull, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, House Wren and Pine Warbler.

Duck numbers were low due in part to low water levels in many of the more productive ponds in Blount County. Other misses included Barred Owl, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Sandhill Crane and Great Egret (both seen one week later). Full details follow.

Observers: 42 in 24 parties (including 2 in 2 FW parties. See below for names.

Coverage: 00:15 - 00:30, 05:30 - 18:30

Effort: 86.5 hrs and 61 miles by foot,
38 hrs and 467 miles by car,
4.5 hrs and 20 miles owlwing,
22.25 hrs feederwatching

TOTAL: 151.25 hrs and 548 miles

Weather: Temperature: 38-50 F, **Winds:** S, 0-5 mph

Precip: 0.02 inches of rain pre-dawn

Conditions: Partly cloudy, no snow cover, water open

Individual birds: 21970, **Species:** 91 + 2 CW

Species: 775 Canada Goose, 7 Wood Duck, 90 Gadwall, 6 American Wigeon, 2 American Black Duck, 398 Mallard, 20 Northern Shoveler, 41 Ring-necked Duck, 4 Lesser Scaup, 4 Bufflehead, 42 Hooded Merganser, CW Wild Turkey, 1 Northern Bobwhite, 1 Common Loon, 61 Pied-billed Grebe, 3 Horned Grebe, 11 Double-crested Cormorant, 164 Great Blue Heron, 9 Black-crowned Night-Heron, 18 Black Vulture, 6 Turkey Vulture, 2 Bald Eagle (2 adult),

2 Northern Harrier, 4 Sharp-shinned Hawk, 9 Cooper's Hawk, 12 Red-shouldered Hawk, 42 Red-tailed Hawk, 2 Buteo sp., 11 American Kestrel, 103 American Coot, 162 Killdeer, 1 Dunlin, 2 Wilson's Snipe, 74 Bonaparte's Gull, 3540 Ring-billed Gull, 4 Herring Gull, 746 Rock Pigeon, 542 Mourning Dove, 1 Eastern Screech-Owl, 1 Great Horned Owl, 1 Rufous Hummingbird, 40 Belted Kingfisher, 129 Red-bellied Woodpecker, 51 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 101 Downy Woodpecker, 12 Hairy Woodpecker, 59 "Yellow-shafted" Northern Flicker, 10 Pileated Woodpecker, 18 Eastern Phoebe, 1 Loggerhead Shrike, 442 Blue Jay, 1251 American Crow, 1 Horned Lark, 546 Carolina Chickadee, 245 Tufted Titmouse, 48 White-breasted Nuthatch, 9 Brown-headed Nuthatch, 11 Brown Creeper, 295 Carolina Wren, 4 House Wren, 13 Winter Wren, 46 Golden-crowned Kinglet, 47 Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 382 Eastern Bluebird, 10 Hermit Thrush, 2194 American Robin, 215 Northern Mockingbird, 10 Brown Thrasher, 4086 European Starling, 11 American Pipit, 837 Cedar Waxwing, 540 "Myrtle" Yellow-rumped Warbler, 8 Pine Warbler, 6 Palm Warbler, 163 Eastern Towhee, 127 Chipping Sparrow, 259 Field Sparrow, 45 Savannah Sparrow, CW "Red" Fox Sparrow, 406 Song Sparrow, 46 Swamp Sparrow, 466 White-throated Sparrow, 30 White-crowned Sparrow, 103 "Slate-colored" Dark-eyed Junco, 530 Northern Cardinal, 4 Red-winged Blackbird, 205 Eastern Meadowlark, 1 Rusty Blackbird, 380 Common Grackle, 7 Brown-headed Cowbird, 17 Purple Finch, 240 House Finch, 297 American Goldfinch, 32 House Sparrow

Participants: Lyn Bales, Warren Bielenberg, Dee Dee Blaine, Diane Bohannon, Ed Clebsch, Meredith Clebsch, Gail Clendenen, Steve Clendenen, Lindsay Crawford, Marcia Davis, K. Dean Edwards (compiler), Patty Ford, Reid Gerhardt, Carole Gobert, Paul Hartigan, Madeleine Hassil, Tom Howe, David Howell, Susan Hoyle, James Human, Wesley James, Tony King, Audrey Little-Crawford, Peggy Maher, Ed Manous, Harriett McCurdy, Janet McKnight, Ben Mooney, Dan Mooney, Laurie Mooney, Mike Nelson, Charles P. Nicholson, Joseph Pyle, Kelly Roy, Martha Rudolph, Boyd Sharp, Susie Stout, Allan Trently, David Trently, June Welch, Chris Welsh, Corwin Witt

Unlocking Winter's Pantry

Insects survive the rigors of winter in various ways, many of which involve hiding, whether under soil or bark, in wood, plant stems, curled-up leaves, or numerous other nooks and crannies.

For winter birds, the challenge is to discover these hiding places and extract the food within. A woodpecker has the perfect carpentry tool to access these morsels locked in nature's winter pantry: its bill.

From Secret Lives of Common Birds: Enjoying Bird Behavior Through the Seasons by Marie Read (See page 5.)

2005 Great Smoky Mountains Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, 18 December 2005 • David Trently, compiler

Weather & Effort

Count Date: Dec 18, 2005

Number of Participants: 19

Number of Party Hours: 46.0

Species Reported: 53

Low Temperature: 27

High Temperature: 50

AM Weather: Partly cloudy, Rain: None, Snow: None

PM Weather: Clear, Rain: None, Snow: None

Notes: loon sp. - This was a flyover bird. There are no large areas of open water in this count circle, so this was certainly lucky timing for the counter who looked up to see it fly past. It was most likely a Common Loon

Peregrine Falcons - This was a pair of birds at an area where they have nested the past few years. It is a 2.5 mile hike to get to the area. On this warm, sunny day, one counter literally risked his life to get a great view of one of the birds perched in a spruce tree—he had to walk under a high ledge with regularly-falling icicles (some likely over 100 pounds!) in order to get this life bird view.

"HC" after some birds means a record high count for this species on the Smokies CBC.

Species: Wood Duck 19 HC, Ruffed Grouse 11, Wild Turkey 39 HC, loon sp. 1, Turkey Vulture 5, Red-shouldered Hawk 2, Red-tailed Hawk 6, Buteo sp. 1, American Kestrel 1, Peregrine Falcon 2, Killdeer 10, Wilson's Snipe 1, Rock Pigeon 57, Mourning Dove 30,

Eastern Screech-Owl 3, Barred Owl 2, Belted Kingfisher 1, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 11, Downy Woodpecker 17, Hairy Woodpecker 10, Northern Flicker 1, Pileated Woodpecker 21, woodpecker sp. 6, Eastern Phoebe 17, Blue Jay 19, American Crow 66, Common Raven 4, Carolina Chickadee 69, Black-capped Chickadee 9, chickadee sp. 14, Tufted Titmouse 49, Red-breasted Nuthatch 7, White-breasted Nuthatch 34, Brown Creeper 15, Carolina Wren 48, Winter Wren 21, Golden-crowned Kinglet 43, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 5, Eastern Bluebird 35, Hermit Thrush 8, American Robin 2, Northern Mockingbird 6, European Starling 30, Cedar Waxwing 30, Yellow-rumped Warbler 8, Eastern Towhee 6, Field Sparrow 9, Song Sparrow 34, Swamp Sparrow 19 HC, White-throated Sparrow 45, Dark-eyed Junco 43, Northern Cardinal 49, House Finch 5, Red Crossbill 2, Pine Siskin 35, American Goldfinch 112, finch sp. 10

Participants: David Trently, Compiler, Ellen Bean, Warren Bielenberg, Dee Dee Blane, Marcia Davis, Patty Ford, Linda Fowler, Ginger Goolsby, Tony Headrick, Susan Hoyle, Kristine Johnson, Jennifer Kasten, Tony King, Carol Lammers, Ed Manous, Dan Mooney, Laurie Mooney, Charlie Muise, Mike Nelson

Presidential Perch *(Continued from page 6)*

plans for which he may need some funding and/or building help in the future. They include possible blinds, a tower and other features that will help birds and/or bird watchers. Bill sure has gotten a lot done, and has great plans, for working almost alone out there. Let's try to support him.

The Executive Committee has also decided to sponsor a Cats Indoors poster contest as part of the national contest on International Migratory Bird Day, May 13. Since this is our first year coordinating this we want to keep it small. We will invite three schools, with associations to KTOS, to participate.

The contest is limited to sixth graders. KTOS will sponsor three \$30 gift card prizes. One at Carpe Diem, a local bookstore, one at Borders, a national bookstore, and one at local Jerry's Artarama.

KTOS Financial Report • March 2006

Compiled by Marie Oakes, Treasurer

| | February | January | YTD |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Income: | | | |
| . Dues | \$176.00 | \$108.00 | \$284.00 |
| . Shade Grown Coffee | \$136.00 | \$7.00 | \$143.00 |
| . Interest | \$21.18 | \$0.00 | \$21.18 |
| . Owen Memorial | \$25.00 | \$0.00 | \$25.00 |
| . Miscellaneous | <u>\$0.00</u> | <u>\$100.00</u> | <u>\$100.00</u> |
| Total Income | \$358.18 | \$215.00 | \$573.18 |
| Expenses: | | | |
| . Newsletter | \$44.95 | \$0.00 | \$44.95 |
| . Supplies | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| . Shade Grown Coffee | \$270.62 | \$0.00 | \$270.62 |
| . Member Dues to TOS | \$0.00 | \$1,938.00 | \$1,938.00 |
| . Miscellaneous | <u>\$0.00</u> | <u>\$0.00</u> | <u>\$0.00</u> |
| Total Expenses | \$315.57 | \$1,938.00 | \$2,253.57 |
| Other: | | | |
| . J.B. Owen Award | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| Total Other | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| Account Balances | | | |
| . KTOS Checking & Savings | \$3,977.86 | \$3,980.82 | |
| . J.B. Owen Memorial | \$6,922.02 | \$6,876.45 | |
| Memberships | 155 | 155 | |

Football fan wonders: What's a seahawk? *By Lyn Bales*

Now that Super Bowl XL is over and Pittsburgh is the champion of pro football, an important question may still be lingering in your bird-friendly brain: What in the world is a seahawk? Everyone knows what cardinals, eagles, falcons and ravens (other NFL team names) look like, but goodness, what about seahawks?

This query sent me scrambling to find an answer.

A quick check of *The Complete Book of Birds* turned up nothing. Seahawks are not listed anywhere in the volume.

Discouraged, I went to an even bigger book, a tome with over one thousand pages, *The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds*. And guess what? There's sea-crow, sea-dog (a species of skimmer), sea duck, sea-goose, sea gull, sea hen, sea mouse (a type of duck), sea parrot, sea-snipe and a long entry under the heading seabird, which is a general term used by ornithologists for any bird that spends most of its life on or over saltwater, but, again, seahawk is not listed.

I next turned to a copy of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, billed as America's best-selling dictionary, and it turns out that seahawk isn't even a word. Now I knew we were in trouble.

A visit to Wikipedia, an on-line encyclopedia, turned up the "USS Sea Hawk," a US Navy patrol boat

active 1917-18; "Armstrong Whitworth Sea Hawk," a British carrier-based aircraft of the 1960s; "The Sea Hawk," a 1915 novel by Rafael Sabatini; "The Sea Hawk," a 1940 movie starring Errol Flynn and a fictional "USS Seahawk," a submarine in a 1959 movie.

Under "osprey," we learn that the fish-eating bird of prey was once called a sea-hawk, but fish-hawk is the more common regional moniker and since they are not true hawks, neither name is no longer used.

Folklore has it that a seahawk is a nomadic raptor that covers great distances over open ocean. A sailor that spots one flying overhead is supposed to have good luck, but since there is no such bird, it's a event that's not likely to occur.

As it so happens, this lack of any real seahawk put the pro football team in a quandary as well. Their management decided they wanted a live mascot to appear on the sidelines of games at Qwest field in Seattle. They, too, discovered that there was no such bird and after searching the world, settled on adopting an augur hawk to represent the team.

Augur hawks are native to the highlands of east Africa. They live a long way from the sea, but apparently one looked enough like a bird that doesn't truly exist to get the job. What an African bird has to do with American football I cannot say, but now I'm wondering: What the heck is a steeler?

BOOK REPORT

Secret lives revealed in new book - *By Lyn Bales*

OK, you know a bird's field markings, its song and preferred habitat, what next?

For me the most rewarding part of bird study is getting to know bird behavior; how they get by in the natural world. Surprisingly, each species is different. Each has worked out a separate set of behaviors that it follows and knowing what to look for enriches your birding.

Secret Lives of Common Birds: Enjoying Bird Behavior Through the Seasons by Marie Read is a good general overview of key behaviors. It's not a detailed source that's species specific but it's loaded with large four-color photos of birds doing what birds do. Here's an excerpt:

Mutual preening is most often done to the facial area. The bird doing the preening nibbles with its bill at the facial feathers, head, or neck of its partner, which may stretch out its neck or bow down and ruffle its head feathers to facilitate the behavior.

The book's upside: glorious photographs that illustrate the topics. The downside: at only 95 pages, it's enough to whet your appetite but leave you wanting for more. But, then again, it's only billed as an introduction to bird behavior so why do I quibble? There are more complete behavior books available, but none that are this visually appealing.



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 April issue is March 25. 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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Presidential Perch

- By Charlie Muise

I am happy to announce that for as long as I've been a member of KTOS, our finances have been strong. This is due, in part to the three committed treasurers we've had in the last six years. It is also thanks to a strong membership. So a question that comes up from time to time, is what we should do with money above what is necessary for operating expenses.

In the past we have added money to the JB Owen Memorial Fund, we have donated to a good cause or we have provided extras for members, such as printing a member directory. This year it was decided that we should have a long term plan. After reviewing several ideas, the Executive Committee, voted to create a conservation account. While supporting the JB Owen fund is important and will continue, several planners thought it important to have more flexibility in cases where timeliness is important.

The family of long-time member Lou Fuller donated \$100 to KTOS in her memory. After considering several worthy causes, the Executive Committee decided to pass this money on to Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge, where manager Wayne Schacher will use it for supplies to build various bird nesting and roosting boxes. With help from KTOS, boy scouts and others, as well as refuge funds, Wayne has coordinated the placement of artificial nest sites for Purple Martins, Barn Owls, Eastern Screech-owls, Wood Ducks and other birds. His management is not only good for us birders, but good for the birds as well!

I will be building two Barn Owl boxes on behalf of KTOS, to be placed at Kyker Bottoms WMA. Manager Bill Smith has reported seeing this declining species in recent months. Jean Alexander is helping to coordinate. If you wish to help out, please contact Jean or me. Bill reports that the planned water feature, which will benefit waterfowl and shorebirds, will be fully funded by TWRA. This is good news to birds and bird watchers. He has many



(Continued on page 4)

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