

# biKNOXulars

Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

## COVER PILOT FOR OPERATION MIGRATION TO SPEAK MARCH 4th

Operation Migration was established in 1994 to help start a second migratory population of the endangered Whooping Crane in the eastern U.S. Beginning first with Canada Geese then Sandhill Cranes and finally Whooping Cranes techniques were worked out to train birds to follow ultralight aircraft on migration. Jack Wrighter, a top cover pilot for Operation Migration, will be our speaker for the March meeting.

Jack is a native of Northeast Pennsylvania and worked for 25 years in Operations and Administration for Eastern Airlines. After Eastern shut down, Jack worked for 14 years in the Cobb County School System as assistant director of operations until his retirement in 2004. In Jack's own words: "My first encounter with Operation Migration was quite by accident one day in early 2005. I was waxing my airplane at the airport in Marietta, GA, when my friend and OM volunteer Dave Mattingly walked up and said, 'I have a cool movie you may want to see. It is about a group of people trying to reintroduce a Whooping Crane migration in the eastern U.S. This is the greatest thing I have ever done, and they sure could use you and your airplane for a couple of weeks this fall to assist as a top cover pilot with their 2005 migration.' Well, that two weeks turned into ten, and that year became an annual event for me."

"As the top cover pilot, I typically fly between 700 and 1000 feet above the migrating cranes and ultralights. I fly a Cessna 172 aircraft and carry one or two spotters with me. Our primary duty is to circle above and keep a close watch on all of the birds in case one were to decide to wander from the flock. We establish and maintain communications between the ultralights and the ground crew and also with air traffic control should we encounter any controlled airspace, military operations areas, or large cities. We also have enroute weather interpreting capability, should the weather make an abrupt change while in flight."

This program will be presented on Wednesday, March 4, at 7 p.m. in Room 117 of the UT Veterinary Building.

**DON'T FORGET TO PICK UP YOUR PARKING PASS!**

**"Off we go into the wild blue yonder..."**



### Upcoming field trips

**Friday, March 20, 6 p.m.**

**Woodcock Walk, Ijams Nature Center**

**Saturday, March 21, 9 a.m. - 12 Noon - Sharp's Ridge Litter Clean-Up & Non-Native Invasive Plant Removal**

**Sunday, March 29, 8:30 a.m.**

**Cades Cove Campground and Sewage Ponds**

Blount County

Leader: Warren Bielenberg

(865-681-7884, Birdglass44@aol.com)

**Saturday, April 4, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

**Ijams Annual River Rescue**

Volunteers Needed! Be a part of this long-standing community event and help clean up local shorelines. Call Sarah Brobst 577-4717 ext. 24 to register you or your group.

See Page 3 for additional field trip details.

*"We never miss the music until the sweet voiced bird has flown away."*

- O. Henry

## SHADE GROWN COFFEE

Don't forget to order your shade grown coffee to be delivered in April. Remember every purchase you make helps preserve habitat for birds.

See David Johnson to place your order.



Presidential Perch

By Mark Campen

### KTOS FINANCIAL REPORT CALENDAR YEAR 2009

	February	January	YTD
<b>Income:</b>			
Dues	\$ 560.00	\$ 405.00	\$ 965.00
Shade Grown Coffee	0.00	200.50	200.50
Interest	21.39	22.65	44.04
Silent Auction	0.00	0.00	0.00
Owen Memorial	0.00	0.00	0.00
Miscellaneous	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 581.39</b>	<b>\$ 628.15</b>	<b>\$1,209.54</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>			
Newsletter	\$ 74.70	\$ 0.00	\$ 74.70
Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00
Shade Grown Coffee	0.00	88.98	88.98
Member Dues to TOS	0.00	1,401.00	1,401.00
Misc.( NSF Returned)	0.00	-10.00	-10.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 74.70</b>	<b>\$ 1,479.98</b>	<b>\$1,554.68</b>
<b>Other:</b>			
J. B. Owen Award	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
<b>Total other</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>Account Balances:</b>			
KTOS Checking & Savings	\$ 3,471.06	\$ 2,985.45	
J. B. Owen Memorial	\$ 7,274.24	\$ 7,253.16	
Memberships	132	131	
Paid 2009 Memberships	102	77	
New Members			
Robert & Yeong Gofreed			

Here are some recent good, bad and sad stories related to birds in our area. A young red-shouldered hawk has been hanging around our yard lately. This bird is likely offspring of the breeding adults that nest annually in the nearby, four-acre woodlands. Our yard, which has attracted attention in years past due to its unmanicured appearance, seems to be producing an abundance of earthworms. Following recent rain events, the young hawk has been observed swooping down to and hopping around catching numerous worms for daytime snacks. This encourages me, as the mown lawns on either side of our "weedy" landscape don't keep the hawk coming back. It's nice to have this regular visitor to our suburban wild land.

It was a shame to hear about the young boy who was shooting robins (or any other bird that came into the crosshairs) from the trees in Greenback a couple weeks ago. The "supervising adult" didn't care either when told what the boy was doing was illegal. Although this type of behavior probably occurs more often than we'd like to know, it was good to know that the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency cared enough to send an officer out to address the illegal activity with the offending youth. Let's be thankful that warblers are quick and small and hope this young lad has poor aim!

A friend called from a north Knoxville golf course a couple Sundays ago to tell me that an owl was on the ground under a stand of pine trees and that it was acting funny. When described to me I knew it was a great horned owl. I drove over to see the bird, expecting it to be a recently hatched newborn that had fallen from the nest. Unfortunately, it was an adult that was disoriented and off-balance. When approached, it seemed to have a seizure and fall over. I contacted the Clinch River Raptor Center, whose co-director asked if I could bring the bird in. I took the bird to her and hoped for a speedy recovery. A few hours later, she called to tell me the bird had gone into convulsions and died. She suspected it had possibly eaten something that had been poisoned. Although a sad ending, its great to know there are organizations and people that care enough to take in animals on such short notice and try to rehabilitate them back to good health. Thank you for all you do Clinch River Raptor Center!

Now, the bird quiz:

Be ready for this bird as it passes through Tennessee soon on its way to breeding grounds in the northern spruce woods. You may see it foraging in thickets and deciduous trees along Sharps Ridge, but it prefers conifers to dine on insects, occasional fruits and juices. Using its tubular tongue like a straw, it can feed on nectar in holes made by sapsuckers. I'm not sure if this is a "super bird" or if likes a particular spring month, but it must be nice spending the winter in the Caribbean!

## Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge *BioBlitz*

Celebrate Earth Day and join us for the inaugural “**Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge *BioBlitz***” to take place from 3 pm on Friday, April 17 to 3 pm on Saturday, April 18. During this 24-hour event, teams of taxonomists will target refuge flora and fauna to identify as many species as possible. Professional and amateur teams are tentatively scheduled to inventory birds, amphibians and reptiles, butterflies, moths, dragonflies, trees, spring wildflowers, mushrooms and more.

Tallied species lists will reveal early spring taxa present at SIWR. Coupled with future surveys held during different seasons, the blitzes will provide important snapshots of the natural communities at SIWR. The *BioBlitz* project will complement the long-term species inventories being compiled for the refuge.

You don't need to be an expert taxonomist to participate. More eyes and ears are better! Plan to join us in this opportunity to learn more about SIWR, and make important contributions to understanding its natural communities.

For more information or to participate, contact David J. Trently [(865) 531-1473, [naturetours@avianpursuits.com](mailto:naturetours@avianpursuits.com)] or

Wayne H. Schacher [(865) 457-4355, [whschacher@natreserv.com](mailto:whschacher@natreserv.com)].

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### FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

#### **Woodcock Walk, Ijams Nature Center Friday, March 20 6 p.m.,**

Celebrate the arrival of spring on a twilight walk through the wetland to the woodcock display grounds at Forks of the River WMA near Ijams. With luck, we'll find a male woodcock twittering his flight call just after the sun goes down. Please dress for muddy conditions and bring a flashlight. Free for Ijams members, \$5 for non-members. Please call 577-4717 ext. 10 to register.

#### **Sharp's Ridge Clean-Up & Invasive Plant Removal Saturday, March 21 9 a.m. - 12 noon**

Please bring saw, clippers, etc. as well as gloves & water. Mark will provide trash bags.

#### **Cades Cove Campground and Sewage Ponds Sunday, March 29 8:30 a.m.**

This trip is a 3-mile walk over level terrain on paved roads and unpaved trails. Possible birds include Wood Ducks, Mallards, Bufflehead and Snipe on the sewage ponds; there may be other waterfowl or shorebirds as visitors change from day to day. Other birds expected would be woodpeckers (Pileated, Downy, Red-bellied, Hairy, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and flickers), both kinglets, White- and Red-breasted Nuthatches, Pine Siskins and American Goldfinch, Eastern Bluebirds, American Crows, Blue Jays, Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Dark-eyed Junco, various sparrows and blackbirds.

If you wish to carpool from Knoxville, meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Stokely Building on the northeast side of the Cedar Bluff exit, in the parking lot closest to Cedar Bluff. Otherwise, meet at the parking area by the campground store at 8:30. The store will not yet be open but the heated restrooms are. There are vending machines with snacks and hot and cold drinks. Folks may wish to bring snacks, lunch and water, especially if they want to explore the Cove after birding.

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### TWITTER FOR RARE BIRD ALERT - by KATHY BIVENS

Twitter is a free social messaging site that allows you to keep up with what is happening with your friends, and is something we could try to communicate announcements and rare bird alerts to the whole group. Your participation would be voluntary.

To participate you must sign up for a free Twitter account before any KTOS activities or announcements can be sent to you or your phone via text message. You can also log into your account at Twitter and see updates on your PC.

To get KTOS Announcements and Rare Bird Alerts there are 3 steps: 1. You must create your own Twitter account with a user name and password. 2. You must register and enable your phone with Twitter if you wish to receive text messages. 3. You must log in and "follow" Knoxville Bird Club (the name KTOS was already taken).

To begin: Go to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and create your own Twitter account with your chosen user name and a password. Sign in to your new account at Twitter.

To subscribe to the text messaging feature you will need to activate your own mobile device. Go to your PROFILE and DEVICES tab in top right of screen. Twitter will require you to send a text message to them to activate your phone. I actually had to do this TWICE to get it to work.

To subscribe to the Rare Bird Alerts from Twitter: Log into your own account at Twitter.

Type in: <http://twitter.com/RareBirdAlerts> or search for the word KNOXVILLE and find the KNOXVILLE BIRD CLUB. Choose "FOLLOW" and click on enable device and choose YES or NO. You can only do this if you have previously set up your phone as mentioned above.

TO CREATE A RARE BIRD ALERT on Twitter, you must log into the Knoxville Bird Club account (not your own) and make an entry.

username: rarebirdalerts

password: rarebirdalerts

Type in the message about the bird and click UPDATE - you have 140 characters maximum. Your message will automatically be sent to all persons who have chosen FOLLOW with a text message or an update will appear in the log for all persons who visit the page: <http://twitter.com/RareBirdAlerts> Your message will appear on the HOME page of each person's account who is following the RareBirdAlerts.

If you need further information call:

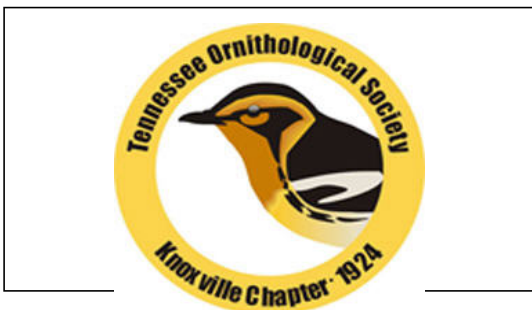
Kathy Bivens  
Home 865-983-7349  
Cell 865-250-6410

## 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 April issue is Friday, March 20.

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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## 2009 ANNUAL MEETING TO BE AT NASHVILLE

**May 1-3**

The Nashville Chapter extends an invitation to all TOS members across the state to attend the 2009 TOS Annual Meeting, to be held May 1-3, 2009. The meeting will be headquartered at the Baymont Inn & Suites located at 111 Penn Warren Drive in Brentwood TN, off I-65 at Exit 74-B.

The Saturday afternoon TOS Board of Directors Meeting and the Saturday evening banquet and Annual Business Meeting will take place at [Crieveview United Methodist Church](#), 451 Hogan Rd, across from Ellington Agricultural Center. [Birding on the Ag Center grounds](#) is usually productive and it is worth a visit before dinner.

### Field Trips

The field trip schedule and destinations are still being finalized, but will include several locales you have grown to know and love in the Nashville area. These include:

- [Radnor Lake State Natural Area](#)
- [Shelby Bottoms](#)
- [Beaman Park](#)
- [Bell's Bend Park](#)

Beaman and Bell's Bend Parks are two of the newest parks in the Nashville area. Both parks are located northwest of downtown Nashville.

### Registration

Fees are \$10.00 for registration and \$20.00 for the Saturday evening banquet buffet.

The speaker for the Saturday night banquet will be Gary Myers, Executive Director of TWRA. Gary has served as Executive Director since 1978 and is scheduled to retire on March 1, 2009. During his long tenure, Gary has been a great friend to TOS.

It is not too early to be making plans to attend the Spring Meeting.

For more information on the meeting, go to the Tennessee Ornithological Society web site at [tnbirds.org](http://tnbirds.org).

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