



November Meeting: Wednesday, the 1st at 7:30 pm in Rm 117 of the UT Vet school.

The November program should be a very interesting one. Rick Knight, a member of the Bristol and Lee & Lois Herndon Chapters of TOS, and author of "Birds of Northeast Tennessee" will present a talk about LSU's Migration Over the Gulf Project, a 5-season study of trans-gulf migration based from oil platforms in the Gulf of Mexico. Rick was one of the observers documenting the presence of over 300 species of birds in the offshore waters of Louisiana & Texas. Ducks, herons, raptors, shorebirds and multitudes of passerines were among the trans-gulf migrants. A variety of seabirds and a perplexing mix of fall overshoots added to the spectacle. Also observed were good numbers of marine creatures and insects, giving a broader view of life out in the Gulf. Rick will have plenty of great slides - imagine how close you can get to take a picture of birds exhausted from trans-Gulf migration!

TWRA Selects New State Ornithologist

Bob Hatcher, coordinator of nongame and endangered species for Tennessee, recently announced that KTOS' own **Troy Ettel** has been selected as the new Tennessee State Ornithologist, effective November 1st. For those of you who don't remember Troy, he was a club member while completing his master's thesis at U.T. on nest predation in grassland bird species. Since then Troy has been working for the Nature Conservancy in Texas on bird conservation issues. We look forward to having Troy back in Tennessee.

Field Trip Info

TVA property on Melton Hill Lake

Sat. November 4, 7:30am

Leader Wes James (988-2433)

Meet at the overlook parking area in front of TVA Bull Run Steamplant on Edgemore Road. We will visit the "Butcher Bottoms" area, which contains hayfields, wetland sloughs and shrub edge habitats. If time allows we can visit the Bull Run Creek bottom land/wetland fields. Last year this field trip yielded marsh wrens, a late osprey, and 5 species of sparrow.

Fort Loudon Lake

Sat., November 25, 9:00 am.

Leader Marcia Davis (630-9214).

Meet in the West End of the Krogers parking lot at the North Shore Drive Exit off I-140. The field trip will include stops at various locations along Fort Loudon Lake including Louisville Point Park and Fort Loudon Dam. A wide variety of habitats are covered and a good diversity of birds are there to be seen. Last year we had loons, grebes, herons, ducks, shorebirds, raptors, gulls, and many passerines.

***Dec 2, we are looking for a leader to take us on a trip to Campbell County / Cove Lake State Park. If you are interested in leading this or any other field trip please contact Dan Mooney 525-5681.

Jan 13 there will be a field trip to Kyker Bottoms

Jan 27 there will be a field trip to Smith Bend

Through the BiKNOXulars Presidential Perch

By Chris Welsh

One of our priorities for KTOS this year is to improve the keeping and reporting bird records. We've spent a fair amount of time discussing hows and wheres at planning meetings and are now focusing in on two aspects of reporting sightings. First, the more formal reporting that results in records tied to date and location, the official records. Second, informal reporting that we've been doing at meetings, the purpose of which is to keep us all apprised of what birds have been seen in our area, stimulate discussion of where to find particular species, and remove any question beginning birders may have regarding what sightings are worthy of reporting.

One of our first steps was to define an area for which we will record sightings. We have now defined the area to be Knox and all contiguous counties, plus Morgan, Scott, Campbell, Claiborne, Hamblen, Cocke, and Monroe counties. This is a large area, and it includes the majority of the areas routinely visited by KTOS birders. You may report sightings from outlying areas as well, but our focus will be on these counties.

A second step was to decide on a system to use for keeping the official records. A number of KTOS members currently use a birding software package called AVISYS to keep their personal records. We are checking into details on how easy it is to merge files, but in all likelihood, we will begin keeping official KTOS bird sighting records in AVISYS. Of course, this means someone will need to enter sightings on the computer.

Anyone interested in volunteering to be on the Bird Records Committee should contact me or David Trently. A bird records committee is not a new group within KTOS, but has been dormant for a number of years. The committee will need to specify the information needed on sightings, encourage reporting of sightings, follow up on reports that lack sufficient details, oversee entering data into AVISYS, and rule on whether unusual sightings are sufficiently documented to be accepted into the official record. It may take a while, but we also hope to enter historical records into our bird sightings database.

As far as the informal reporting of sightings at meetings goes, I realize running through the bird checklist sometimes gets a tad on the tedious side.

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However, doing so lets all at the meeting know what birds have been seen recently, even common species. A bird that some of us take for granted may be a life bird for someone else. Ideally running through the checklist will generate discussion among members about sightings, making the whole process more fun. I will try to streamline the process for future meetings, and we'll see how it goes. Keep the feedback coming, positive or negative, feedback is good.

TOS Fall Meeting Report

While a good part of the weekend was spent birding (Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Barn Owls, Sedge & Marsh Wrens, Lincoln's and Henslow's Sparrows), some important Business was discussed as well.

* The Nominating Committee is looking for someone to take over as editor of The Migrant, as Dev Joslin will be retiring from that position next year.

* Allan Trently, former KTOS member, now with the Lee & Lois Herndon Chapter, is the winner of the Goodpasture Grant for 2000. He will be using the money, \$500, to study Golden-winged Warblers at the Hampton Creek Cove Natural Historic Area near Roan Mountain.

* Keith Kimmerle, from the Mississippi Ornithological Society came to help members sign up for the Race for the Rainforest program, in which you can click on a website every day and save 25 square feet of the South American rainforest. Go to <http://rainforest.care2.com> for more information.

* A major contribution to the Smith Bend fund was voted for. Following the lead of our own Knoxville Chapter, Dr. David Buehler recommended that all TOS chapters contribute money to the Foothills Land Conservancy for purchase of this important piece of property in Rhea County. It was decided that \$6000 from the reserve funds would be contributed, as the site represents such an important piece of habitat. Also, it was recommended that the Conservation & Research Funding Committee look into contributing a portion of its funds. ***A recommendation that all individual TOS members contribute \$25 was also made.***

* The 2001 TOS Spring Meeting will be held at Paris Landing, the first weekend in May.

-David Trently

CARA BILL APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN HIJACKED

Some slim hope remains for wildlife funding in the original CARA.

Wildlife conservationists in Tennessee and in the nation received a cruel lesson in political maneuvering in late September and early October. The CARA bill (Conservation and Reinvestment) would have provided guaranteed funding for wildlife conservation, state parks, and other conservation-related projects for the next 15 years. Nationwide, \$350 million would have been split among the 50 states for wildlife conservation every year, with Tennessee estimated to receive \$6 to 7 billion a year. This money was to come from taxes on oil companies for offshore drilling permits.

Despite working for 5 years to get this bill through the US House of Representatives (where it passed by a 3 to 1 majority), through the Senate (where 63 Senators supported it), to obtain the signed support of every governor in the U. S. and verbal support from the White House, supporters of the bill were bamboozled earlier this month. Since the bill had to be returned to a joint House-Senate conference to reconcile differences, key opponents were able to hijack the bill in an Interior Department Appropriations committee. It seems that the chair of that committee and other key members opposed the bill and managed to get it tremendously reduced—to almost nothing. \$350 million per year in guaranteed funding for 15 years evaporated and became \$50 million in NON-guaranteed funding for 6 years. (This means Congress has to specifically appropriate it every year—which they have failed to for the past 20 years in a row—and the states have to compete with each other for what funds there may be.)

In other words, the compromise in the Interior spending bill does nothing to ensure that adequate, reliable funding will be provided to protect and preserve our wildlife and open spaces. How could this happen with everyone—including 80% of the public in polls—supporting the bill? This is where the power of a few politicians in key situations was able to wreak havoc on a bill. Among the key players was

our own Zach Wamp (from a district extending from Chattanooga to Roane County), who sat on the key committee that watered down CARA. He and others argued that Congress should not “set in stone permanent funding, limiting our flexibility,” as Representative Wamp wrote in a letter to me. “Before we permanently devote all our money to enlarging parks, wildlife refuges, and preserves, we must make sure the ones we have are taken care of properly.” In fairness to Republicans, it appears that the White House was also partially to blame for not standing up to these political maneuvers, and even touted the bill that was passed as good for conservation.

At this writing, a last minute attempt was being made to save Section III of CARA—the portion that would provide the full funding for wildlife initiatives. After a fiery debate on the Senate floor during the vote for the tremendously scaled-down version of CARA, Senator Smith (LA) called the Interior bill’s conservation provisions, “an unfortunate and inadequate substitute.” To defuse the battle over CARA on the Senate floor, Majority Leader Trent Lott (MS), promised that the Commerce-Justice-State (C-J-S) spending bill would include money for conservation projects in coastal states (let’s see now, does that include TN—Oh, no, but it does include MS). As of this week, an effort was being made to attach the original full funding for Section III of CARA for ALL 50 states to this C-J-S spending bill. Smith and other CARA supporters want to make sure the bill includes \$350 million a year for wildlife conservation efforts. The money would be available with no strings attached, and individual states would know exactly how much they would receive each year, said Jody Applegate, an aide for the National Wildlife Federation. Unfortunately, many lawmakers are concerned that this same C-J-S will become a magnet for many unrelated “pork” amendments. As of Wednesday, October 25, negotiations were still taking place.

-Dev Joslin

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Christmas Bird Counts are just around the corner. Although the specific dates for local counts have not been set, the Christmas Bird Count period runs from Dec 14-Jan 5. The count period is now fixed and will be the same every year. Local counts include Norris, Smoky Mtn, Cades Cove, and Knoxville.

Don't forget to visit Don and Kathy Collins at the **Wild Birds Unlimited** to pick up lots of seed, suet and Shade Grown Coffee for winter! They have been generous enough to provide many door prizes for our meetings.

Decals Available!

We know everyone has been waiting with baited breath and we are happy to announce that the new KTOS brochures are all printed, cut and ready for sale at the November meeting. They are the kind that use static electricity to cling to the inside of car windows, so you won't have to deal with messy sticker scum.

And now... For Some Shameless Self-Promotion:

Just in case anyone was wondering why they haven't seen much of their newsletter editor lately, I wanted to let everyone know that I have been spending several nights a week rehearsing for a play at the West Side Dinner Theatre in Farragut. The comedy *Arsenic and Old Lace* will be playing Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights from November 2nd until December 23rd, and I play Martha Brewster, a nutty old lady. Reservations are required, so just call the theatre at 966-8768.

Martha Sargent's Sure-Fire Bird Mix:

1C crunchy peanut butter

1C lard

2C 'quick cook' oats

2C cornmeal

1C white flour

1/2 C sugar

Melt the lard & peanut butter separately in stove-top pan or microwave. Stir in other ingredients. Pour into square container about 2" thick. Store in freezer. *Will NOT melt in warm weather.*

Don't forget to renew your membership for 2001....

Individual - \$18; Family - \$20; Sustaining \$28; Life - \$200 (state TOS only - local add'l \$8 per year); Student (High School and earlier) - \$8. Dues payment covers membership in both the State TOS organization and the Knoxville Chapter, with subscriptions to *through the biKnoxulars*, our chapter newsletter (nine times per year), *The Tennessee Warbler*, our state newsletter (four times per year), and *the Migrant*, our state quarterly journal. Please send payment to the Treasurer at the address below. Please notify Treasurer and Editor of changes of address.

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