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SEPT 04

through the **biKNOXulars**

Knoxville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

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Fall Picnic at Zoo • Wednesday, September 1

I have exciting news. Just like last month's meeting, September's meeting is breaking with tradition. After nearly 20 years of Brice and Beverly Gilmer's gracious hospitality, the fall picnic this year will be held at the Knoxville Zoo. We will meet at Tiger Tops, a section of the zoo. KTOS member and zoo employee, Mark Armstrong, will give us a tour of the birds on exhibit, including the new aviary (since we will be meeting after zoo hours, please do not travel the zoo without Mark Armstrong as a guide). Thanks to Armstrong's help and the zoo's generosity, this wonderful opportunity is afforded to us at no cost.

You will not be able to enter the zoo through the main entrance, so please travel to the Tiger Tops parking area, Gate 9, which will be open just for KTOS members. As usual for our potluck dinners, please bring an entrée, side dish or dessert to share with the group. Charlie Muise will bring plates, silverware

and cups for us all to use so we can avoid disposables.

- 6:30 PM: tour with Mark Armstrong, leaving from Tiger Tops
- 7:00 PM: potluck dinner to be followed by a brief meeting

WHAT TO BRING: food to share with others, an optional chair

DIRECTIONS to TIGER TOPS: (See map on page 2.) Take EXIT 392 from I-40 on to RUTLEDGE PIKE 11 W (do not follow the signs to the Zoo's main entrance). Rutledge Pike will merge with MAGNOLIA AVE. Travel westward on Magnolia and turn right on to CASTLE ST; there is a Chevron station at the intersection. Castle Street should bring you to Gate 9 and the Tiger Tops parking lot. The Tiger Tops building and patio are directly in front of the parking lot.

- Tracey Muise, program coordinator

 MARK YOUR CALENDAR

September birding

September 4-18, 7 AM

Whigg Meadow Bird Banding. See page 4.

Saturday, September 18

International Migratory Bird Day. See page 1.

Sunday, September 19, 8 AM

Hawk Watch at Foothills Parkway. See page 1.

Saturday, September 25, 12 Noon

Rankin Bottoms, Cocke County. See page 2.

Sunday, September 26

Knox County Fall Count. See page 8.

Saturday, September 18

International Migratory Bird Day

Coordinator: **Ron Hoff** (435-4547, rondolly@esper.com)

Pick your spot and count birds all or part of the day.

Keep track of the time spent and the distances covered, and separate these by foot travel and automobile travel. Report your findings to Ron soon thereafter.

Sunday, September 19, 8 AM

Hawk Watch at Foothills Parkway

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

Meet at 8 a.m. at start of Foothills Parkway off US 321 near Townsend. We will spend up to two hours at the start of this

(Continued on page 2)

"She was not quite what you would call refined. She was not quite what you would call unrefined. She was the kind of person that keeps a parrot."

- Mark Twain, *Following the Equator*, travel book, 1897

September field trips *(Continued from page 1)*

road, looking for migrant songbirds before heading up the parkway. We should see a number of warblers and vireos. Once we start the hawk watch part of the trip (around 10 a.m.) we expect to see mostly Broad-winged Hawks. Since there is often a lot of waiting between hawk sightings, bring chairs. Once again, we plan to do a potluck lunch, so bring enough to share. In past years we have had Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Caspian Tern, Common Raven, Red-headed Woodpecker and many vireos, warblers, thrushes and tanagers.

Saturday, September 25, 12 Noon

Rankin Bottoms, Cocke County

Leaders: **Dean Edwards** (560-9701, cell: 660-9701; kde@utk.edu); **David Trently** (contact info with September 19 trip)

We will meet at the Stokely Building parking lot, 320 N. Cedar Bluff Road at 12 noon. The drive to Rankin Bottoms from Knoxville is approximately one hour. We will stop at the Hardee's at Exit 417 on I-40 in Dandridge around 12:45-1 p.m. as a secondary rendezvous point and for a last-chance food and restroom break.

Rankin is remote and open with little shade and no food or restrooms nearby. The entrance road can be in bad shape, so you may need to ride in high clearance

or 4-wheel drive vehicles. We may be able to learn about road conditions before the day of the trip, contact one of the field trip leaders to find out.

Some of us will likely stay until sunset when the waders come to roost. Bring plenty of food and drink, shoes you can get muddy and sunscreen. We may do a bit of walking this year, possibly on rough terrain, though those not wanting to walk can remain with their scopes scanning the shorebirds we expect will be there. Lawn chairs can be very useful. A scope is required to see many of the birds but there should be plenty on-hand to share.

Birds present will depend in large part on the water level of Douglas Lake but we will be looking for migrating shorebirds, including Black-bellied Plover, American Golden-Plover, Sanderling, dowitchers, Stilt, Buff-breasted and Baird's Sandpipers and many other more common species. Past trips have found Ruff, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Willet and Wilson's and Red Phalaropes.

In addition to shorebirds, we should find many species of herons, egrets, ducks and terns. In past years, we have had Peregrine Falcon, Bald Eagle and White Ibis.

*-Best regards, David Trently, filling in for
Harold Howell field trip coordinator*

Map to Zoo Picnic *(See page 1 for details)*



Hummingbird nestling rescued *By Meredith Clebsch*

One of my crew at Native Gardens, Juli Rigell of Maryville, found a baby hummingbird while moving some plants.

The tiny bird was soaking wet and literally stuck to the cloth mat after having been under a sprinkler for 30 minutes or so. We held it close in our hands to keep it warm and I gave it a little sugar water via a dropper until it perked up. I tucked it into a little metal tin with a Kleenex. Afterwards, we spent almost two hours trying various ways to get it back into the nest which was about 20 feet up, directly above where it had been found. During much of that time nursery manager, Lisa Thomas of Alcoa, kept the tin in her bra to keep it warm and safe. This is definitely NOT in her job description!

After multiple failed engineering attempts, we finally cut off the branch with the nest, including another chick, replaced the escaped chick, secured the branch with wire and, of course, duct tape to a 20 feet metal greenhouse pole.

The rescued chick ended up almost exactly back where it had been and it wasn't long before the mother came back and began feeding them again. Neato!



Whigg Meadow Banding set for September *By Dave Vogt*

You are invited to attend our seventh season of fall bird banding at Whigg Meadow this September. We will set up the nets and shelter on Friday, September 3 and, weather permitting, bird banding will be conducted from Saturday, September 4 through Saturday, September 18 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. (except on the 18th when we will close up around noon).

Visitors are advised to bring a folding chair or stool, a sun hat, rainwear, sunscreen, drinking water and lunch. Be advised that the elevation at Whigg Meadow is near 5000 feet and temperatures are often cooler than in the lowlands. There are no restroom facilities in the area so, be prepared to "rough it."

Those who have visited the banding station in the past will notice that the Forest Service has made significant improvements to the road to Whigg Meadow. Although the road is still a modest gravel byway it is now possible for most passenger vehicles (providing they have reasonable ground clearance) to drive all the way to the meadow (see directions to the right). Of course, visitors are welcome at anytime, but if you are able to commit to help with banding chores, it is helpful to know when you will be available.

Although individuals with banding experience are most desirable, inexperienced helpers can be useful in operating scales recording data etc. If time allows, helpers can be trained on the job for more skilled activities (removing birds from nets, banding etc.).

ACCOMMODATIONS: Primitive camping is permitted on the meadow. Indian Boundary Campground is located about 12 miles from Whigg and has restrooms including showers. There are a number of more primitive campgrounds located near the Tellico River. Hotels in the area include; Green Cove Motel (modest accommodations on the Tellico River): (423) 253-2069, Snowbird Mountain Lodge (very nice though somewhat pricey, on the Cherohala Skyway): (828) 479-3433.

DIRECTIONS: From Tellico Plains take Cherohala Skyway (Hwy 165) for approximately 24 miles. As the Skyway crosses over the North Carolina Line it becomes Hwy 143E. Continue on 143E about 1.5 miles until you cross a bridge at Stratton Meadows. Turn left on gravel road immediately after bridge and bear left at fork and go under Skyway. This is forest service road 217 (also known as North River Road). Continue on 217 for about a mile and turn left on first gravel road on left. This is forest service road 61. It is fairly rough but can be traveled in two wheel drive vehicles with a little ground clearance. Continue on 61 for four or five miles to a gravel parking area at the meadow. Vehicles are prohibited on the meadow itself so, walk out the dirt track to the opposite end of the meadow to the banding station.

For more info, contact Dave Vogt at: dfv@tnaqua.org, (423) 785-4036 work or 877-8129 home.

TRIP REPORT

'Working our plan'

— Part two, by Ed and Carlyle Manous

Editor's note: Part one of Ed and Carlyle's trip to the Carolina Coast appeared in last month's newsletter.

The second most memorable experience of our trip to the coast was the trip out to the Gulf Steam on the *Miss Hatteras*. The day was clear but very windy and we soon found that birding was going to be a real challenge. All the way out (and on the return trip) those of us on the outside were thoroughly soaked with salt spray. When we finally arrived at where the main birding was to be done we slowed down and avoided most of the spray, but the boat wallowed and pitched to such an extent that just standing up was often a major effort. Remarkably, we were able to see and identify seven pelagic species; we even got decent looks at some of the birds that came close enough to the boat and we didn't have to use binoculars.

We also collected some other great experiences including such "target" birds as the following: Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Bachman's Sparrow, Red Knot, Sandwich Tern, Gull-billed Tern, Willet, Skimmer and Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow. Another especially good experience was sighting a number of common birds seen for the first time in their breeding plumage—Dunlins, Short-billed Dowitchers, Sanderlings, Rudy Turnstones and a number of others.

Our final totals were 2200 miles traveled, 125 trip birds sighted, 15 life sightings for Ed and six for Carlyle.

With apologies to some very good commercials we can say, Pelagic trip, expensive; ferry rides, cheap; camping out, low cost; gasoline, exorbitant; birding with your brother, priceless; for all the other things there is MasterCard.

June Mossy Creek/Cherokee Field Trip *By Carol Lammers*

Saturday mornings on a KTOS field trip are always special and an opportunity to learn. After taking my camera on the House Mountain field trip in the spring, David Trently suggested I take my camera on field trips. In surprise, I said "I can't take pictures of birds." He assured me it was to document the trip. So on the Mossy Creek/Cherokee Dam field trip, Saturday June 3, the birders saw me snapping pictures of them rather than the birds.



I snapped one as we were congregating at the parking lot and David calls out, "there is a Black and White Warbler singin," and the binoculars go up.

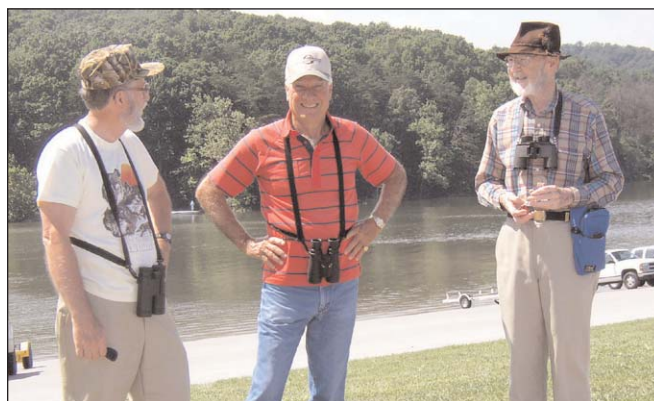


Then it was off to the structured viewing areas where Howard Chitwood shared some of the history of the Mossy Creek wildlife viewing area. He lamented that the team of TVA, TWRA and Carson Newman are not as active as they use to be; there use to be volunteers who would clear out the vistas from the viewing platforms. Yes, branches were starting to hang over the two story viewing structures. However, they still provided a tremendous place to watch the Wood Ducks with young, Red-winged Blackbirds and the common Americanized Canada Geese.

The next stop was Cherokee Dam where a walk around the park provided more squirrels for viewing than birds. The squirrel population is thriving. I overheard comments like, "the most I have seen." The temperature was perfect and the location was beautiful, that made up for not seeing many birds on this leg of the trip. Some heard and saw a White-breasted Nuthatch and Eastern Kingbird



On the top of the dirt fill going to Cherokee Dam we had better viewing. An Eastern Kingbird was harassing a Bald Eagle. I overheard that the kingbird is one of the most fearless birds. Deedee Blaine shared a story from her recent trip to Alaska. While they were watching Bald Eagles the naturalist asked, "What is the United States official bird?" Answer: the American Robin. This is a trick question, the Bald Eagle is the national "symbol."



Harold Howell, Ed Manous and Howard Chitwood.



Our trip ended at the Howell's home where we had refreshments, recounted our birds, enjoyed the gardens and got a guided tour of their home with all its art works. Eastern Phoebe's sat on their porch railing enjoying the view overlooking the valley.

Thank you Harriet and Harold Howell!

Birding Bliss in North Dakota – Part one, by Janet McKnight

Fresh from a trip to North Dakota, I am wondering how can I possibly compose a trip report that will do the experience justice. How can I arrange the descriptive words well enough to convey the splendor of the landscape, the unbelievably high number of birds and the ease of seeing them, the amazing people. I will do my best to tell about birding nirvana, but I concede that you just have to see it to believe it.

I was inspired to go to North Dakota by an article written by Julie Zickefoose that I read in the April 2004 issue of *Bird Watcher's Digest*. She wrote so eloquently about the "Birding Drives Dakota Potholes and Prairie Birding Festival" that I wanted to drop everything and go—which is just what I did.

I knew I was in for a marvelous time, according to Julie's wonderfully written account of what I would see, as well as this being my first birding trip out west. My good omen came the second I stepped out of the airport; a bird I've never seen before flew in front of my face and landed in a small tree. I dropped loads of bags to dig out a field guide, which revealed my first of 21 life birds—a Western kingbird. I was so bursting with excitement and anticipation, not yet aware that my trip was just going to get better and better.

My husband Tim and I drove our rental car from Fargo to Jamestown, the festival sight. I checked in at the hotel and as I left the lobby to fetch my hubby and bags, who should open the door for me but my inspiration for even being there, Julie Zickefoose. I was face to face with someone I have so admired for years, and with a huge, delighted grin I said, "I am here because of you!" Julie and her husband Bill Thompson III, editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*, were there as the keynote speakers of the festival. The three of us launched into a chat and soon Julie was telling me bits of a letter I had written to her months previous. I was blown away for the first time of many by this amazing woman, whom I just have to assume has a photographic memory. I was in disbelief that she remembered I had written to her at all, let alone the part about there being a white-crowned sparrow in my parking lot! Then to astound me even more Julie invited Tim and me to their room to continue our chat. I was reminded of the time I got to ride in Kenn Kaufman's car in Roan Mountain and thought, man, writing fan letters really pays off in the birding realm! How lucky can I get? But more so than luck, birders are just such good, warm and inviting people. As I knocked on their room, I was so thrilled to have in my hand a copy of James Tanner's Ivory Billed Woodpecker book, signed by Nancy Tanner specifically for Julie Zickefoose, as they are longtime friends. Giving Julie the book signed by

Nancy must have racked up some serious brownie-points because soon I was no longer getting on a tour bus with dozens of other festival participants at 5 a.m. Instead, Tim and I were invited to ride with Bill and Julie for a personal tour and replay of their "Birding Drives Dakota" adventure.

Early the next morning, I looked out of the hotel room window at the bus I was supposed to be on and marveled at my good fortune. Tim and I went down to the lobby to meet Bill and Julie and to have some breakfast. The laughter started immediately when Julie exploded a hard-boiled egg in the microwave. She said, "If anyone wants to see what a smithereen looks like...". And the laughter didn't stop. Here I must say a word about Bill Thompson. He is, hands down, the funniest birder I have ever had the gut-busting pleasure of being with. His rapid-fire wit, character-actor mannerisms, and hilarity-filled stories had me almost wetting myself in the backseat. And Julie is not far behind on the funny trail. Between the two of them, I did more laughing than I or my abs can ever remember. And what an amazing birder Bill is. He is a quick and accurate spotter and is tireless in his pursuit of a target bird. I owe most of the life birds I got on this trip to Bill seeing them first and then pointing them out to me. I want to be a birder just like him when I grow up!

Now about Julie: she is a freak of nature. And I mean that in a purely positive, awestruck way. I have never known anyone to have the depth of talent in so many ways as Julie Zickefoose. Her bird paintings are unparalleled. She is an amazing writer. She is a musician, playing the pennywhistle and singing with a beautiful, clear voice. (The festival's Saturday night entertainment was a musical slide show by Bill and Julie, including their big hit, "Mamas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to be Cowbirds.") She has an all-encompassing knowledge of nature, from every butterfly to every plant; there wasn't a flower on the prairie she didn't know about. She is a birding marvel. She does songbird rehabilitation. She established the protection of Piping Plovers in the state of Connecticut. She is a gardener and a plant propagator and above it all, she does motherhood justice. (Bill and Julie have two little ones the same age as my boys. We had so much to talk about!) I've surely left out some of her resume, because it just goes on and on. And to be such a warm and good humored person too, is just a truckload of icing. I'm so proud to have met her and to have spent so much time with her!

(Part two of Janet's report will be in the next newsletter.)

AOU Bird Name Changes – Submitted by David Trently

The 45th Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Checklist is out. It was published in the July issue of the *Auk*. The AOU Checklist governs taxonomy (including splits/lumps, common names, scientific names and order) of North American species. Highlights (pertaining only to north of the Mexico border):

1. The species **Great-winged Petrel** has been added to the checklist, based on west coast pelagic records.

2. **Cackling Goose** has been split and is now a separate species from Canada Goose:

a. **Cackling Goose** (*Branta hutchinsii*) [the small forms] includes the former Canada Goose subspecies *hutchinsii* [Richardson's], *asiatica* [Bering-extinct?], *leucopareia* [Aleutian], *taverneri* [part of the Lesser complex] and *minima*.

b. **Canada Goose** (*Branta canadensis*) now includes the subspecies *canadensis* [Atlantic], *interior* [Interior], *maxima* [Giant], *moffitti* [Moffit's], *parvipes* [the other part of the Lesser complex], *fulva* [Vancouver] and *occidentalis* [Dusky].

The Checklist committee telegraphs that more splits of this complex may be yet to come. (The separation of the Lesser complex may present a field challenge.) For a good treatment of Canada Goose subspecies (prior to the release of this supplement), check Angus Wilson's web site at:

<http://www.oceanwanderers.com/CAGO.Subspecies.html>

3. The common name Mongolian Plover is now **Lesser Sand-Plover**, to agree with modern Old World literature.

4. **Greater Sand-Plover** is added to the main checklist based on the record from California.

5. The common name Spoonbill Sandpiper has been changed to **Spoon-billed Sandpiper**.

6. The common name Jungle Nightjar has been changed to **Gray Nightjar** to agree with modern Old World literature.

7. **Willow Warbler** has been moved from the Appendix and added to the main checklist, based on the record from Gambell, AK.

8. **Lesser Whitethroat** is added to the checklist, based on the record from Gambell, AK.

9. The common name of Siberian Flycatcher has been changed to **Dark-sided Flycatcher** to agree with modern Old World literature.

10. The common name of Gray-spotted Flycatcher has been changed to **Gray-streaked Flycatcher** to agree with modern Old World literature.

11. **Spotted Flycatcher** has been added to the checklist based on the record from Gambell, AK.

12. The western Alaska subspecies of Yellow Wagtail has been split from the Yellow Wagtail complex and now appears on the checklist as the **Eastern Yellow Wagtail** (*Motacilla tschutschensis*). (This is the only "yellow" wagtail on the AOU checklist.)

13. **Rufous-tailed Robin** has been added to the appendix (not the main checklist) based on a record from Attu.

14. **Blue Rock Thrush** has been added to the appendix (not the main checklist) based on a record from British Columbia.

15. There are numerous changes to scientific names.



OF NOTE!

Welcome new KTOS members!

- Ellen Bean • Linda Perazzelli • James Ewart
- Wayne Schacher • Catherine Henn

KTOS Financial Report • September 2004

Compiled by Marie Oakes, Treasurer

	August	June-July	YTD
Income:			
. Dues	\$36.00	\$128.00	\$1,598.00
. Mugs & Patches	\$10.00	\$6.50	\$31.00
. Interest	\$0.00	\$39.21	\$120.37
. Dividend	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$26.38
. Owen Memorial	\$0.00	\$569.87	\$575.87
. Fuller Memorial	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
Total Income	\$46.00	\$743.58	\$2,351.62
Expenses:			
. Newsletter	\$95.40	\$204.40	\$849.30
. Supplies	\$0.00	\$48.05	\$184.14
. Member Dues to TOS	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$94.00</u>	<u>\$1,578.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$95.40	\$346.45	\$2,611.44
Other:			
. Foothills Conservancy	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
. Friends of UT Gardens	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
. Fuller Memorial	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
. Owen Award : J. Powers	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
. Transfer to J.B. Owens	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
. Memorials	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$100.00</u>
Total Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,600.00
Account Balances			
. KTOS Checking & Savings	\$3,087.13	\$3,136.53	
. J.B. Owen Memorial	\$6,864.78	\$6,864.78	
Memberships	173	171	

BIRD COUNT

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 fees are \$18 for an individual and \$20 for a family. Sustaining memberships are \$28 and a Life membership with TOS is \$200 with an annual fee of \$8 to the local chapter.

DEADLINE for the October issue is **September 24**. Due to space restrictions, please try to 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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Knox County Fall Count set for September 26

We will be conducting our annual Knox County Fall Count on Sunday, September 26, 2004. As usual, everyone is invited to get out on that day and count birds at their favorite spot in Knox County. And if you live in Knox County, that includes your backyard. Results (including list of birds seen, names of everyone that counted with you, hours and miles spent counting on foot, by car, feederwatching and owling, when you started, when you stopped and where you went) should be sent to Dean Edwards (kde@utk.edu, 1615 Meadow Chase Lane, Knoxville, TN 37931).

If you have any questions or if you normally participate in this count but will be unable to do so this year, please contact Dean Edwards (865) 560-9701.

JOIN US!

Tennessee Valley Nature Club

Last year, a group was started for birders who wanted to learn more about nature than just birds. Since that time, we have taken field trips to study salamanders, trees, dragonflies, butterflies, plus a trip to a planetarium and a guided hike in the Smokies. We have lots more activities in mind for upcoming months. If you would like to join, contact David Trently at avianpursuits@yahoo.com or 531-1473 (h); 974-8664 (w). There are no dues or meetings, just field trips, announced via email. For reports from past trips, go to <http://web.utk.edu/~dtrently/AvianPursuits.html> and click on the link for the Nature Club. While at that site, you can also learn about upcoming birding trips run by Avian Pursuits Nature Tours.

PANAMA TRIP. Several KTOS members are planning to spend two weeks studying birds and other wildlife in Panama around March 5-20, 2005. There is still room for a few more people to join us. Cost of the trip should be around \$1600 plus airfare (expected to be a bit over \$500). If you would like to see 3-400 species of birds in a two week period, plus lots of new butterflies, mammals and plants, contact David Trently at dtrently@utk.edu or 531-1473 (h); 974-8664 (w).

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