



Wednesday, April 7th, Virtual Program:

On Wednesday, April 7, join us to kick off “It’s Warbler Time in Tennessee”. April is when Spring warbler migration gets fully under way in our area. But warblers and other songbirds are already migrating north. In early April many of these birds make a major flight across the Gulf of Mexico before continuing on to Tennessee and beyond. We will be watching a fascinating video called “Gulf Crossing: Story of Sprig” in which it details how many of these birds make that long trip across the Gulf.

NOTE: The meeting will start at 6:45 for social time. At 7:00 we will start the business meeting and at 7:15 we will start the program.

Logging In To Meeting - We continue to have some folks not able to log into the meeting. You can always go to our website, knoxbirds.org and click on the link there. If that link does not work then you can go to Zoom.com and “Join a Meeting”. The meeting number and password is also on our website on the home page and calendar.



Seven Islands Nest Boxes

By Clare Dattilo

Signs of spring are showing up all over Seven Islands State Birding Park. Flowers are blooming, insects are buzzing, migratory birds are returning, and some birds are already nesting. We've been preparing by fixing old nest boxes and installing new ones.

Birds that nest in boxes are called "cavity-nesters". Primary cavity-nesting species like woodpeckers excavate their own holes while secondary cavity-nesters take advantage of abandoned cavities. Historically these nest sites were found in hollow trees, but as natural nest sites declined due to human land use and competition from invasive species, many secondary cavity nesters have adapted to using man-made boxes. By placing nest boxes with specific dimensions in the correct habitats, we can target desirable species and encourage them to nest in the park.

If you've been out to Seven Islands recently, you may have noticed new purple martin gourds on the riverbank near the bridge and at the Green house. Purple martins are the largest swallow in North America. Most eastern martins nest in colonies in multi-roomed boxes or groups of hanging gourds. An engineering class at UT designed and installed a system for us that could be easily raised and lowered for cleaning and monitoring. They did a great job, and we have been excited to see purple martins already checking out the boxes at both locations.



New Gourd Rack



Bright yellow prothonotary warblers are the only cavity nesting warblers in our area. They choose boxes placed near the edges of lakes or rivers. We began monitoring prothonotary nest boxes in 2019. Although the data is limited, we now know that they can have at least two broods during the season and that birds banded in the park have returned to nest in the park. We recently installed four new prothonotary warbler boxes on the island, for a total of nine in the park. We are looking forward to seeing how many of them are used by the warblers this year.

Eastern bluebirds prefer nest boxes placed in open areas. Their populations declined in the early twentieth century due in part to competition for nest sites by invasive European starlings and house sparrows. They are now thriving thanks to campaigns that put up boxes designed to keep the larger European starlings out. We have been monitoring 50 bluebird boxes in the park since 2016.

Seven Islands continued..



While these boxes are specifically designed to attract bluebirds, we have found that they are also used by other native species such as Carolina chickadees, tufted titmice, Carolina wrens, house wrens, and tree swallows. In fact, over the past 3 years more than twice as many tree swallows have fledged from our boxes as compared to bluebirds.

We also have wood duck and kestrel boxes in the park. We have little data on these, but we do know that they have been used by the targeted species as well as by screech owls.

The data collected on nesting birds in the park is submitted to the Tennessee Bluebird Society and Project Nestwatch. We rely on volunteers to monitor the boxes and are currently looking for a couple of new people to help with this project. Please contact me at clare.dattilo@tn.gov for more information.



Eastern Bluebird



Tree Swallow



Carolina Chickadee



Tufted Titmouse



House Wren

Fundamentals of Bird Photography

By Michael Plaster



Over the next few months there will be several opportunities to improve your ability to produce better bird photographs. To begin the process, KTOS will publish a series of short articles describing:

- 1) Camera exposure (“exposure triangle”), focal length, camera image sensors
- 2) Camera types and their application and common equipment (e.g., flashes, tripods, heads)
- 3) Other topics of interest

After these articles, we will host a couple of field trips where local amateur bird photographers will demonstrate how they use their equipment and help others increase their knowledge of their cameras. Following the field trips, different photographers will show their editing (postprocessing) style for several pictures taken by those attending the fieldtrips.

At a minimum, there will be demonstrations using

- 1) Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop
- 2) Topaz DeNoise AI and Sharpen A

If you plan on submitting some of your photographs for editing during the demonstrations, please consider taking your photographs using your camera’s RAW setting. During the editing sessions, there will be discussions on photograph composition. It may be beneficial to calibrate your computer monitor.

Photography Continued

Why a RAW file instead of a JPEG image? A JPEG file has been processed (“developed”) by your camera while a RAW file contains significantly more data (“digital film negative”) that will permit additional processing flexibility. Your camera may permit saving both a JPEG and RAW file for each image. A JPEG file is significantly smaller but tonal, color data, and other information is permanently lost.

For example, a JPEG file can have up to 16.8 million colors but a RAW file can have up to 68.7 billion colors. With a JPEG file, the white balance is applied by the camera while for a RAW file you retain control over balance during editing. Lost detail due to overexposure or underexposure cannot be recovered in a JPEG file but it may be possible to adjust and reveal detail with a RAW file. There is a better opportunity to sharpen and reduce noise with a RAW file. There are certain disadvantages of RAW files. They must be edited, are not standardized across manufacturers, and are significantly larger thereby requiring more storage capacity.



Calibrate your monitor? Because each screen displays images differently. The same image will look different on a different screen. Also, when you print your photographs, they can appear significantly different than what is displayed on your screen (e.g., drab, dark). There can be other reasons too, so try to use a professional local printer (e.g., f/32 in west Knoxville) that will help you resolve printing problems.

Additional information about monitor calibration is provided at: <https://tinyurl.com/wpd6k47e>.

Popular monitor calibration tools are produced by datacolor (<https://spyderx.datacolor.com/>). The cheapest model is more than adequate. There are other manufacturers who produce similar products. Again, calibration is only a suggestion.

Bluebird Boxes

Last month, Bill Keeler and Tony Headrick built and installed 6 new Eastern Bluebird boxes for Marble Springs State Historic Site on John Sevier Highway. This was the weekend homeplace of John Sevier and is a state owned property. The property has several open areas that are suitable for bluebirds, chickadees and titmice. The director and KTOS discussed the need to have several bird houses placed at the site to make the property more wildlife friendly.



Tony Headrick and Bill Keeler



Bill Keeler and staff at Marble Springs



Please go to: www.knoxbirds.org for all KTOS information.

- Calendar (Fieldtrip Info)
- Newsletters
- Membership Information
- Contact Us
- FaceBook
- Blog
- Resources



Being part of a like minded community is important. Please remember to check the status of your membership. Morton Massey will be happy to answer any questions. You can email him at knoxtbirds@gmail.com. Please remember to put "Membership" in the subject line.

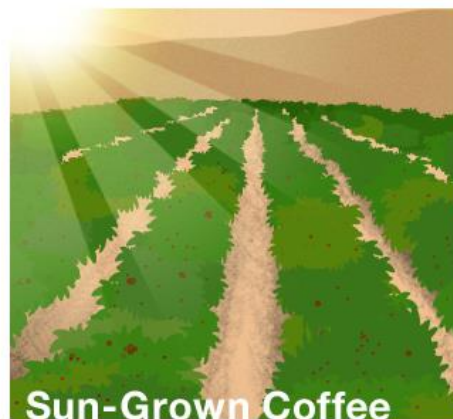


Field trips and social gatherings are a great way of getting to know one another. Fields trips can be lead by any of our members regardless of skill level. We all can learn from one another. If you have an idea or would like to lead a trip, please contact Tom Howe at knoxbirds@gmail.com. Please remember to put "Field Trip" in the subject line.

Always check the Calendar at www.knoxvillebirding.org to view upcoming Field Trips, Festivals, Bird Counts and Social Gatherings.

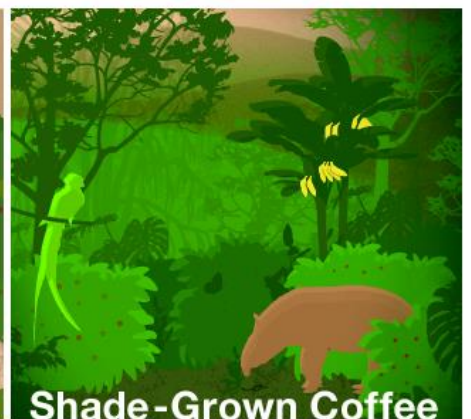
Shade grown coffee is a great product and environmental friendly for our beloved feathered friends.

Due to the Covid situation, we are not taking orders for coffee. However, you can find a number of the Vienna Coffee House blends at Whole Foods, Fresh Market and Butler and Bailey in Rocky Hill.



Sun-Grown Coffee

- ✗ Grows faster
- ✗ Requires more water, fertilizer and pesticides
- ✗ Supports less biodiversity
- ✗ Degrades ecosystems



Shade-Grown Coffee

- ✓ Grows slower
- ✓ Requires less water, fertilizer and pesticides
- ✓ Supports greater biodiversity
- ✓ Sustains healthy ecosystems
- ✓ Allows farmers economic diversification
- ✓ Tastes better



2021 Membership Renewals:

Annual dues can be turned in at KTOS meetings or mailed to KTOS, 1553 Dutch Valley Rd, Clinton TN 37716. Dues levels: \$26/individual, \$30/family, \$38/sustaining, \$13 student (high school or younger), or TOS life



2020 - 2021

Chapter Officers / Staff

President

Morton Massey

Vice President

Bill Keeler

Treasurer

Tony Headrick

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Laura Tappan

Newsletter Editor

Position Open

Website

Morton Massey

Discover Birds

Tom Howe

Field Trip Coordinator

State Directors

Ron Hoff

Chris Welch

Tom Howe

Letter from the President

Its Here! Spring bird migration. Warbler Time in Tennessee!!

The birds are coming and our bird club is gearing up. Take a look below at our April schedule of events. Four walks on Sharp's Ridge, two walks at Seven Islands and a walk at Gupton Wetlands and the Spring Knox County bird count. So get out, take advantage of our walks and have fun viewing our feathered friends.

I still have heard nothing officially but it is my understanding there will be no state meeting in Memphis this year however there is still going to be a virtual board meeting at some point.

In our April business meeting, nominating committee chair Jimmy Tucker will present a slate of officers and directors for 2021/2022.

As some of you know, we have been inviting members of the East Tennessee Facebook page to join in on our program during our monthly Zoom meetings. As membership in this Facebook page increased dramatically every month we are trying to reach out in the hopes of attracting some of them as members of KTOS.

Good birding!

Morton Massey

Upcoming Events

- Apr 7 - Monthly Virtual Meeting
- Apr 15 - Sharp's Ridge Warbler Walk
- Apr 17 - Gupton Wetlands Walk
- Apr 22 - Sharp's Ridge Warbler Walk
- Apr 24 - Seven Islands Bird Walk
- Apr 24 - Sharp's Ridge Warbler Walk with Wild Birds
- Apr 25 - Knox County Bird Count
- Apr 28 - Seven Islands Birding with Friends
- Apr 29 - Sharp's Ridge Warbler Walk

May's meeting is TBD.

