



# The Chattanooga Chat

Ray Zimmerman, Editor: [znaturalist@gmail.com](mailto:znaturalist@gmail.com)  
(423) 718-9393

September, 2016: Vol. 40, No 10  
A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter  
Tennessee Ornithological Society

## Meeting

**Ascension Lutheran Church**  
**720 S Germantown Rd**  
**Thursday, September 8, 2016**

**5:30 p.m. Executive Board**

**7:00 p.m. Monthly Meeting**

**Program:** For our September 8 program we have Dr. David Buehler, Professor of Wildlife Science at UT Knoxville. Dr. Buehler's research interests are focused on avian-habitat relationships, including developing new management strategies for species in need of management. His topic will be "New Insights into Migration Ecology of Golden-winged Warblers". Dr. Buehler has never spoken to our club before but I have heard great things about his work.

**Thanks** to Chris Sloan who gave the August 11 program on Shorebird Identification.



Scissor Tailed Kite photographed by Hugh Barger, Bledsoe County

## September 2016 Field Trips

September 15-30 Hawk Watches on Soddy Mountain: Cynthia & Jimmy Wilkerson & Harold Birch.

Take 111 North and exit at Jones Gap Rd. Turn left on Jones Gap Rd. and continue 2 miles to the intersection of Burchard Rd, and Jones Gap. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> left from the interstate. Make this left, rather than continuing on, since Jones Gap becomes Burchard Rd. past this intersection, and Jones Gap itself, turns left. At the dead end, park and climb the bank. (see the Blog)

Hawks don't usually start flying until 10:00. Bring a folding chair, sunscreen, water, snacks, binoculars, scope, if you have one, and stay as long as you can. To make arrangements for a special day (weekday) or event, call Jimmy (423-305-2766). They plan to be there much of the time. Daily info will be on Facebook: type Soddy Mountain Hawk Watch in Facebook "search" and like our page for updates. Stats and daily totals, with details appear on the blog:

**[soddymountainhawkwatch.blogspot.com/](http://soddymountainhawkwatch.blogspot.com/)**

This year marks the 71st year of hawk watches in this area, and 22nd year on Soddy Mountain. Cynthia & Jimmy will give you other statistics when you visit.

HONORS COURSE BIRDING,  
SUNDAY, SEPT. 25, 8:30-11:30 AM;  
THURS., SEPT. 29, 5:00-7:30 PM;  
MON., OCT. 3, 8:30-11:30 AM;

THURS., OCT. 6, 5:00-7:30 PM –  
Limited to 10 people per session - Please  
E-mail David Stone at with the date you  
want to attend, [rockyturf@epbfi.com](mailto:rockyturf@epbfi.com),  
and he will let you know if you make the  
cut. Meet at the Club House. Call 423-  
238-4234 if you do not have access to E-  
mail.

WHIGG MEADOW BIRD BANDING  
SEPT. 2 – OCT. 2. Visitors are advised  
to bring a folding chair, hat, raingear,  
sunscreen, water, hand wipes, lunch,  
etc. There are no restroom facilities in  
the area. The elevation is near 5,000 ft.,  
and it may be cooler there. The last few  
miles follow a gravel Forest Service road  
that may pose problems for those  
driving cars with low ground clearance.  
It is possible to drive all the way to the  
meadow.

Directions: From Tellico Plains, take  
Cherohala Skyway (Hwy. 165) for  
approx. 24 miles. As the Skyway crosses  
over the North Carolina line, it becomes  
Hwy. 143E. Continue on 143E about 1.5  
mi. until you cross a bridge at Stratton  
Meadows. Turn left on the gravel road  
immediately after the bridge, bear left at  
the fork, and go under the Skyway. This  
is Forest Service Rd. 217, also known as  
North River Rd. Continue on 217 for  
approx. a mile and turn left on the first  
gravel road on the left – Forest Service  
Road 61. It is fairly rough but can be  
traveled in 2 wheel drive vehicles with  
reasonable ground clearance. Continue  
on 61 for 4 to 5 miles to a gravel parking  
area at the meadow.

### **Editors Corner**

National Parks Adventure  
McGillivray Freeman Films

In celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of  
the National Park Service, McGillivray  
Freeman offers this IMAX 3D Adventure  
as part celebration of scenic vistas and  
part historical documentary, set against

a counterpoint of high adventure in the  
National Parks.

Narrated by Robert Redford, the striking  
cinematography features world  
renowned climber and expedition leader  
Conrad Aiken and friends climbing  
Devil's Tower, ice climbing at Painted  
Rocks National Lakeshore, and off road  
cycling in Canyonlands National Park. A  
brief stop at Redwoods National Park in  
California segues into a reenactment of  
the historical meeting between Teddy  
Roosevelt and John Muir which gave  
rise to the National Park Service.

The producers present a stirring film in  
a brief time frame. It is an excellent  
gateway to appreciation of our National  
Parks.



Scissor Tailed Kite photographed by  
Hugh Barger, Bledsoe County

### **In Memoriam**

James Thomas Patton  
Ron Schott  
Phil Whitaker

### **Notes from the Field**

August 28  
American Avocet still present at  
Highway 411 and Clemmer Ferry Road  
as of Saturday at 4 pm.  
Rick Houlk

August 25  
There were two Swallow-tailed Kites  
perched in a dead tree along Melvin

Cross Rd. about 200 yards from Upper East Valley Rd in Bledsoe County. They were not there when I drove back at 7:25 AM, nor were any birds at the original location about three miles northeast a few minutes later.

Ed LeGrand

August 9

Hugh Barger and I birded in Bledsoe County this morning, primarily on Upper East Valley Road and roads intersecting with Upper East Valley Road (UEVR). Thirty-six species were noted. Highlights included:  
2 Swallow-tailed Kites sitting in dead trees near the Lowe's Gap intersection with UEVR about 7:30 a.m., CST. Later in the morning, Ruth Ann Henry reported by phone that she saw 6 kites. If I understood her correctly, she first saw 4 on Melvin Crossing Road, then 6 (same 4 + 2?) near the UEVR-Lowe's Gap Road intersection.

3 Eurasian Collared Doves, 2 of them on Old Tennessee Highway 28 near Nine-mile Crossing Road. Approximately a dozen American Kestrels (including 3 in the Wesley Chapel Cemetery on Wesley Chapel Road).

A male Northern Bobwhite on Wesley Chapel Road

A Double-crested Cormorant in Swafford Pond on UEVR near Akins Road.

2 or 3 Summer Tanagers on Old Tennessee Highway 28

No Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were seen today, although both Hugh and I had seen one or more in those areas in recent days.

Charles Murray

August 7

Charles Murray reports that the Willet is still present this afternoon at Amnicola Marsh in Chattanooga. Last seen about 3:15 pm

Hugh Barger

August 6

There was one Cattle Egret at the back of the pond close to the upper end of north Snow Hill Rd. It moved up into a tree while we were there.

Also in the area was a Great Blue Heron and a couple of Great Egrets.

Dave Spicer

August 6

Hugh Barger spotted a Western Willet (immature) at Amnicola Marsh in Hamilton county yesterday. There is very little water in the marsh. Hopefully the bird will still be here today.

Local birders observed it until late in the day yesterday in the location where the Wood Stork was seen for several weeks.

Tommie Rogers

August 6

Cynthia and Jimmy Wilkerson asked me to post this. They located the kites further south of Upper Valley and Lowe's Gap Roads. Seen along the ridge from Brushy Creek Cemetery.

Rick Houlk

August 6

More kites have arrived. Six are in 2 dead trees NE of the intersection, near the river and bridge. Hugh Barger just arrived. 7:25 a.m.

One kite is in top of dead tree on SW corner of Upper East Valley Rd & Lowe's Gap Rd now, 6:41 a.m. It was not there at 6:20 a.m. Chris Agee is here also.

Steve & Gail Clendenen

August 5

One Willet is currently present at Amnicola marsh in Chattanooga.

Feeding on mudflats.

Hugh Barger

August 5

The three Swallow-tailed Kites first seen by Pam Barrett and Ed LeGrand were seen again at 8:20 am. The kites were

soaring south of Lowe's Gap and Upper East Valley Roads in Bledsoe County. Still present at 8:40 when I departed Rick Houlk

August 5

I thought I'd check on the three Swallow-tailed Kites from yesterday, so I got to the intersection of Lowe's Gap Rd. and Upper East Valley Rd. in Bledsoe County at 7 AM (central time) to see if the kites were roosting in the dead trees. Only one bird was there (200 yards WSW of the intersection). I then drove the roads immediately to the southwest and to the northeast looking for the other birds. At 7:40 when I returned toward the bridge on Lowe's Gap Rd. over the Sequatchie River, I saw three kites soaring over the woods along the river.

Upon driving the 1/2 mile farther to Upper East Valley Rd. I was surprised to see the original bird still in the dead tree. At 7:45 AM, it flew off toward where the others had been (one was still visible). The best viewing site is probably near the intersection of Lowe's Gap Rd and Upper East Valley Road. There's not a good place to park at the bridge, but the intersection of Lowe's Gap Rd. and Old Route 28 has a parking area from which to walk (and as I left, from there I saw one bird soaring over the river).

Ed LeGrand

August 4

Pam and I returned to the Swallow-tailed Kite site (35° 44' 02" N; 85° 02' 01" W) southwest of the intersection of Lowe's Gap Rd. and Upper East Valley Rd. in northeast Bledsoe County at 11:30 AM, but we couldn't find them again. However, we only looked for a few minutes without stopping to scan. The three birds had been perched in the open in a tall dead tree and were easily

seen from Lowe's Gap Road (beyond the powerline—see photo). I don't know if these birds will act like the others that occasionally come to the Sequatchie Valley in late July and early August, but the other Swallow-tailed Kites over the years have shown remarkable site fidelity rather than ranging widely over the valley.

We also found three Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in the valley this morning: one near Ninemile Crossroads chasing a Red-tailed Hawk, and two others with fairly short tails at the pond along Upper East Valley Road near Robnett Road. Ed LeGrand

August 2

The kite is sitting at top of a tree along the electric transmission route. Bird is visible from intersection of Batley Rd and Southard Farm Ln which is SE of airport entrance. Look toward airport. Thank you for reporting it, Ron and Dollyann.

Steve & Gail Clendenen

### **Join TOS**

Membership dues:

\$28- individual      \$32- Family  
\$15- student      \$40- sustaining  
\$460- Life (Life members must pay \$10 local chapter dues each year.)

Send checks payable to "TOS" to:

Gary Lanham, TOS Treasurer

21 Cool Springs Road

Signal Mountain, TN 37377

[chattanoogatos@outlook.com](mailto:chattanoogatos@outlook.com)

If you are a new member, please include your address, phone number, and an email address for Chat delivery and bird walk information.

All dues, donations, gifts, and bequests are tax deductible under Sec. 501 (c)(3), the Internal Revenue Code.