



The Chattanooga Chat

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A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter
Tennessee Ornithological Society

December Meeting

Ascension Lutheran Church
720 S Germantown Rd
Thursday, December 8, 2016
5:30 p.m. Executive Board
7:00 p.m. Monthly Meeting

Program: Rick Huffines will be our speaker for the December 8 meeting. Rick is the executive director of the Tennessee River Gorge Trust. He will bring us up to date on the tracking of Louisiana Waterthrush in the gorge and their work with Worm-eating Warblers.

After the meeting Pixie Lanham, Starr Klein, Katherine Boyles, and Jennifer Rydell will provide refreshments.



Rusty Blackbird, Standifer Gap Marsh
by Hugh Barger

Thanks to Ron Hoff for his presentation on birding in Columbia at our November meeting.

Christmas Bird Counts will be our field trips this month. The Christmas Bird Counts are an important citizen science initiative that contributes data to ornithological research efforts.

Annual Chattanooga Christmas Bird Count: December 17
Contact Kevin Calhoon (423-785-4070 or kac@tennis.org) if you are interested in participating.

Annual Nickajack Christmas Bird Count: Friday, December 23rd
Contact David Spicer (423-894-5310 OR birdsnbflys@gmail.com) if you are interested in participating.

Annual Hiwassee Christmas Bird Count: January 1
Contact Kevin Calhoon (423-785-4070 or kac@tennis.org) if you are interested in participating.



Sandhill Cranes at Hiwassee Refuge,
photo by Hugh Barger.



Vesper Sparrow 2016 by Hugh Barger

Editors Corner

Coming of Age at the End of Nature
Julie Dunlap and Susan A. Cohen,
Editors

Book Review by Ray Zimmerman

These essays are examples of the voices of a new generation. The specific emphasis is on those who work in not for profit organizations, and on their struggles with day to day realities on and off the job.

I particularly liked the first section with its essays on a mission appointment in Haiti and a volunteer effort to clean up after Super Storm Sandy. The "Urban Foraging" essay addresses a unique approach to putting bread on the table with low income, while "Post Nature Writing" addresses the struggles of a park interpreter who reads the idyllic nature literature of past generations, provides programs for park visitors, and faces the forest's deterioration due to an invasion by Pine Bark Beetles. The author of a later essay "My Present is not Your Tombstone" confronts the angry authors of nature going awry, such as Edward Abbey and Terry Tempest Williams. The essay's author replies with an answer that she finds beauty in what

is left of an admittedly damaged natural environment.

Notes from the Field

November 22

On Monday, November 21, the number of Sandhill Cranes at Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge in Meigs County at Birchwood increased dramatically. Some flocks of cranes were kettling and flying south. The number of cranes was larger still today. I think that a few thousand are now present in the refuge area. The viewing areas at HWR and at the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park nearby provided the best results each day. Very large numbers of ducks were present both days at both locations. I saw 11 duck species on Monday and 9 today. Between the two days I saw: Gadwalls, American Wigeon (a few Monday), American Black Duck, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail (a few each day), Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead (a few Monday), Ring-necked Duck (the largest number each day), and Hooded Merganser.

From the CRMP on Monday, I observed 11 immature Bald Eagles on a mud bar in the Hiwassee River. Today I noted 5 immature Bald Eagles at the HWR viewing area. One was feeding on a dead crane, while the others were waiting their turn. I saw American White Pelicans at CRMP both days. On Monday at my home in Birchwood (Hamilton County), I had a first-of-season Swamp Sparrow and a FOS Fox Sparrow, which returned today. At least one Red-breasted Nuthatch has discovered a sunflower-filled feeder.

Perhaps that means it will stay for the winter! From all sites on Monday, I noted 56 species - my second highest count ever for one day. Today I tallied 50 species.
Charles Murray

On November 15, six species of raptors visited Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge in Meigs County at Birchwood today. Two birders from the Nashville area stopped at HWR after seeing the Northern Wheater in Loudon County. They were viewing a small raptor through binoculars when I arrived and got the bird in my scope. They were then able to confirm their previous tentative identification of a Merlin. This is only my third sighting of this species.

I also saw one or more of each of these: Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel. Over one thousand Sandhill Cranes are on the refuge and I also saw 7 species of ducks - none of them new from my recent posts. Around 20-25 American White Pelicans visited the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park.
Charles Murray



Male Purple Finch, by Hugh Barger

November 14
Some Sandhill Cranes were kettling to apparently head further south today at the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge in Meigs County at Birchwood. However, there were still hundreds of cranes in view at late afternoon from the nearby Cherokee Removal Memorial Park, also in Meigs County. From the CRMP viewing area, I added Green-winged Teal to my list of first-of-season ducks. To date, I've observed 13 species of ducks in the HWR area this fall. There were also a number of American White Pelicans in the Tennessee River northwest of Hiwassee Island. At home in Birchwood (Hamilton County), I saw a Red-breasted Nuthatch at a sunflower-mixed seed feeder for the first time ever. I noted Palm and Pine Warblers at the HWR viewing area.
Charles Murray

November 12
The number of Sandhill Cranes at Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge in Meigs County at Birchwood continues to increase. There were several hundred in view today. From November 10 - November 12, ten species of ducks were on the refuge:
Gadwall - 11/10 - 11/12
American Wigeon - 11/10 and 11/12
American Black Duck - 11/12
Mallard - 11/10 - 11/12
Blue-winged Teal - 11/11
Northern Shoveler - 11/10 - 11/11
Northern Pintail - 11/10 and 11/12
Canvasback - 11/12
Ring-necked Duck - 11/10 - 11/12
Hooded Merganser - 11/11 - 11/12
Observers noted one American White Pelican on 11/11, and Bald Eagles on each of the three days.
Charles Murray

November 3

Today I had my first purple finch of the season in my backyard in Ooltewah. It was also the first male purple finch that I have had here since 2014.
Also the FOS yellowbellied sapsucker has been here since Halloween.
Hugh Barger

October 31

I saw 1 or 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches and several White-breasted Nuthatches this morning, and I heard a Brown-headed Nuthatch at my home in Birchwood (Hamilton County). Also observed were 2 or 3 Ruby-crowned Kinglets and 1 Golden-crowned Kinglet. Pine and Yellow-rumped Warblers were also noted. A Hermit Thrush was also encountered. Hugh Barger joined me in mid-morning and saw all of these same species except the Ruby-crowned Kinglets.
Charles Murray

October 30

This morning I found a Tennessee Warbler window casualty on the UTC campus. While not a record, it is certainly getting late for them.
David Aborn

October 28

While I was at the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park in Meigs County at Birchwood in late morning today, I heard Sandhill Cranes in the direction of the viewing area at Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge, also in Meigs County. A little after noon I saw 5 Sandhill Cranes on the sandbar north of the Blythe Ferry

landing in Rhea

County. Charles Murray

October 28

This morning I had 3 female Purple Finches on one (of our five) sunflower seed feeders. Always a joy to have them return.
Carol Fegarido

October 26

Today was the last day of fall banding at Greenway Farm. I banded on 27 days, for a total of 864 net-hours (1 net open for 1 hour = 1 net-hour. I operated 8 nets for 4 hours per day). It wasn't a bad season, and certainly better than the spring! There some notable misses, including Tennessee Warbler and Indigo Bunting, while other species were down (e.g. American Redstart).

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

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