



The Chattanooga Chat

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A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter
Tennessee Ornithological Society



Hooded Merganser, Curtain Pole Marsh,
by Hugh Barger

February Meeting

Ascension Lutheran Church
720 S Germantown Rd
Thursday, February 9, 2016
5:30 p.m. Executive Board
7:00 p.m. Monthly Meeting
Program:

Braam Oberholster will do a program about "Florida Birds" for our Feb. 9 meeting. Braam developed a keen interest in bird watching with the encouragement of a close friend, started blending birds and photography. Within the first year after starting photography he won nature photography awards at competitions and salons with his bird photography. Through the years, his photographs have been used in various publications, primarily within countries in Southern Africa. Braam and his wife, Petro, continued their bird watching hobby during the decade that they lived in Malawi, accumulating a bird sighting list of over 100 bird species in their yard.

Currently they live in Ooltewah and continue to enjoy birding when time and opportunity allow. Recent projects include a multi-year effort to photographically capture the grace and beauty of Sandhill Cranes, an exhibit of African wildlife photographs at the Williams Gallery at Southern Adventist University, and the launching of a daily post of wildlife photography on the Facebook page – Moments of Providence.

Thanks to David Spicer for presenting the January program on birds and butterflies of the Rio Grande Valley.



Fox Sparrow by Gary Lanham

Field Trips

FEBRUARY 2017 FIELD TRIP
SATURDAY, FEB. 4 – WHEELER
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE,
DECATUR, AL – Meet at 7:00 AM, EST
in the parking lot of the former Food Lion, next to LaQuinta Inn on Brown's Ferry Road. Dwight Cooley, retired

Wheeler Refuge Project Leader will be our leader. Expect to see Sandhill Cranes, Whooping Cranes, Lapland Longspurs, Horned Larks, etc. Bring a snack, shoes suitable for mud, binoculars, a scope is optional, and a full tank of gas. We will have a lunch break at the Greenbriar Restaurant or bring a sack lunch if you prefer. This will be an all-day trip; we are usually back by 7:30 PM. If you plan to go, please notify Starr Klein by text or E-mail at 423-991-0249 or starrkle@gmail.com.

News Items



Members at Chickamauga Battlefield – Photo by Gary Lanham

Winter Meeting

Have you made your reservations and plans to attend the TOS Winter Meeting at Paris Landing State Park on February 17-19th?? There are still rooms available at the State Park and itinerary plans are being finalized. Information as well as details can be found within the TOS President's Message at the following link:

<http://www.tnbirds.org/downloads/warblerdec16.pdf>

In the coming weeks we will be attempting to get a “head count” amount attendees as the good folks at TN National Wildlife Refuge will be coordinating with us and providing a delicious hot lunch for us mid-day, Saturday the 18th of February, (for a nominal charge to cover costs) and we need to know exactly how much food to

bring in...so please watch for that email in the coming weeks.

In the meantime please plan on joining in on the weekend of birding and fellowship...remember there is no business conducted at this meeting and EVERYONE is welcome. Plan to join us February 17th-19 at Paris Landing State Park.

Cheers!

Cyndi Routledge



Winter Wren Curtain Pole Marsh, Hugh Barger

An endangered Whooping Crane was shot in rural Indiana last month. Follow this link for full information.

<http://www.indystar.com/story/news/2017/01/14/indiana-whooping-crane-killing-latest-loss-rare-birds/96582874/>

Notes from the Field

The Chattanooga CBC was held on Saturday December 17. The temperatures were in the 40's and it rained off and on throughout the day. Twenty one observers in eight parties counted 98 species (around average). Highlights included:

23 Snow Geese – New high number for count

1 Brewer's Blackbird – Always great species for SE TN!

1 Redhead

14 Canvasbacks

1 Great Egret

2 Virginia Rails – Standifer Gap Marsh
1 House Wren
4 Orange-crowned Warblers

Misses:

Sandhill Crane (seen day after count)
American Woodcock
Great Horned Owl
Fish Crow
White-crowned Sparrow
Purple Finch
Pine Siskin

Thanks to everyone who helped on the count!

Kevin Calhoun –Compiler

Thanks to David Spicer for forwarding a copy of the count Summary Report for the Nickjack Christmas Bird Count. A few highlights follow.

Canvasback - 113
Red-breasted Merganser - 3
Ruddy Duck - 7 Horned Grebe - 8
Bald Eagle - 9
Bonapart's Gull - 41
Herring Gull - 1
Eurasian Colard Dove 5
Eastern Screech Owl - 2
Brown Creeper - 2
Cedar Waxwing - 221
Fox Sparrow - 1
Busty Blackbird 12

Results of all Christmas bird counts are available at:

<http://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/CurrentYear/ResultsByCount.aspx>

January 3

I wanted to let someone know about the Sandhill Cranes at Savannah Bay off Snow Hill Road in Ooltewah.

Every morning from about 7:30 on, for a half hour or more, they fly over my subdivision (North Heron Bay), on the east end of Savannah Bay. Then they fly back right about dusk.

They spend the night on the Bay which is a big mudflat now and the days in the fields.

I think the best viewing places are in front of my house at 8111 Turtle Lane and at the big pond on Turtle Lane. This is an open invitation from me:) Of course the streets are all public property and no one will question anyone who parks to watch the birds. People come into the neighborhood all the time to fish in the pond or walk.

I hope you can send this info out in a general email for anyone interested in getting a better view of these majestic birds. When they fly over the subdivision their average height is about 100 feet, sometimes lower.

I see them every morning and evening when I walk the dog.

Thanks,

Annie Campbell

January 8

There were large numbers of Sandhill Cranes at Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge in Meigs County at Birchwood both Friday and Saturday evenings, but I didn't view them long because of the severe wind chill! I had radio signals from one Whooping Crane both days but no sightings either day. (I am a Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership volunteer monitoring WHCR in SE Tennessee.) On Thursday, January 5, I had a 3-nuthatch-species day at home in Birchwood (Hamilton County). A few White-breasted, at least one Brown-headed, and at least one Red-breasted Nuthatch were at the feeders. Early this morning, I replaced the cats' outdoor water supply, which had frozen at 7 degrees F, with warmer water. (Don't call the SPCA; the cats stay inside on cold nights!) An hour or so later a Red-breasted Nuthatch arrived about one to two feet away from me outside a glass door to get some water from the cats' bowl and stayed about 30 seconds!

Charles Murray

January 12

This afternoon I found four White-winged Scoters and a Long-tailed Duck at Booker T. Washington State Park. Other species of waterfowl seen were Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Lesser Scaup and Hooded Merganser. The White-winged Scoters were also seen by Hugh Barger, Libby Wolfe and Tommie Rogers.
Bruce Dralle

January 16

Visitors to the TN Sandhill Crane Festival in Meigs County at Birchwood January 14-15 saw a number of rare, uncommon, and spectacular sights. On Sunday, January 15, many visitors to the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge viewing area saw a rare whooping crane. Bald eagles were noted at both the HWR viewing area and the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park overlook. On Saturday at CRMP, two adult and four juvenile Bald Eagles were in view for an extended time. Sunday afternoon, with the help of three visitors to the CRMP, adult Bald Eagles were observed on two different nests. Also on Sunday afternoon an estimated 200-300 American White Pelicans flew into the Tennessee River, landed on sandbars, and were seen from the CRMP! I was at the CRMP both days, but I was told that Mallards, Canvasbacks, Ring-necked Ducks, and Gadwalls were present at HWR. There may have been other ducks there, as well. Mallards, Green-winged Teal, and Black Ducks were observed from the CRMP. Visitors to the CRMP could count more than 30 Great Blue Herons fishing in the TN and Hiwassee rivers and resting in trees in the rookery on Hiwassee Island. A few Great Egrets were sighted from the CRMP during occasional visits to the area.

TWRA Yuchi Refuge Manager Bernie Swiney was joined by Roi and Debbie Shannon in helping visitors to see and identify birds at HWR, and Jimmy

Wilkerson worked with me at CRMP to assist the large number of visitors there. Cleveland State Community College Wildlife Society students kept a list of species seen at the two viewing sites and texted the lists to the festival headquarters at the Birchwood Community Center. Please accept my apologies if I left out any helpers! A special big thank you goes to the festival coordinator, TWRA's Mimi Barnes!!! She, in turn, was helped by numerous others to make the festival a huge success.

Charles Murray



Photo by Ray Zimmerman

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