



# The Chattanooga Chat

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A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter  
Tennessee Ornithological Society

## September Meeting

**Ascension Lutheran Church**  
**720 S Germantown Rd**  
**Thursday, September 14, 2017**  
**5:30 p.m. Executive Board**  
**7:00 p.m. Monthly Meeting**

**Program:** Kaye Fiorello will do the program at the September 14 meeting. Kaye is an employee of Volkswagen and a member of our Chattanooga TOS chapter. She has been developing the VW property for the enhancement of birds and biodiversity. Some of you have been able to bird the property with Kaye. Come see what she has done and possible future work.

**Thanks to** Chris Sloan who presented our August program. Claire Blum and friends provided refreshments in honor of Clyde's 60th birthday.



Juvenile Mississippi Kite, Sequatchie County, by Gary Lanham

## Field Trips

### **Soddy Mountain Hawk Watch:**

If you are interested in participating in the Hawk Watch, contact Jimmy or Cynthia

Wilkerson at least two days in advance:  
Text Cynthia at 423-760-0001, or  
Call Jimmy at 423-305-2766, or  
E-mail: [tenacbirder@comcast.net](mailto:tenacbirder@comcast.net).

**Honors Golf Course**, Leader David Stone, Multiple Dates:

Monday, September 25, 9:00 AM to Noon  
Thursday, September 28, 5:00 PM to 7:30  
Monday, October 2, 9:00 AM to Noon  
Monday, October 9, 9:00 AM to Noon  
Friday, October 13, 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

### **Limit 10 participants per date.**

If you plan to attend a session, please contact David Stone: [rockyturf@epbfi.com](mailto:rockyturf@epbfi.com).

## Fall Meeting

Detailed information will be available to registrants on Friday evening at the dinner but we wanted you to have a quick summary of events for the weekend. Remember the registration deadline is September 1 (form in The Tennessee Warbler). We will send another e-mail closer to the date with driving directions for Friday night, etc. We hope you can join us for a fun weekend.

Friday, October 6

Field Trip Registration Sign-Up, Social & Dinner

5:00-8:00 p.m.

Bays Mountain Recreation Area Shelter #9

Food, drinks, and a cash bar will be available

Handicap accessible

Saturday, October 7

Paper Sessions (open)

2:00-3:00 p.m.

Meadow View Nolichucky Conference Room

TOS Board of Directors Meeting (open)

3:00-4:30 p.m.

Meadow View Nolichucky Conference Room

Banquet & ETSU Eagle Cam Presentation begins at 6:00 p.m.

Attire: Casual; Cash Bar in Banquet Room

Meadow View Convention Center A

Presentation by Dr. Fred J. Alsop, III



Swallow-tailed Kite, Sequatchie County, Gary Lanham

Most Field Trips at the fall meeting begin at 7:30 a.m. All field trips leave from Meadow View Conference Resort & Convention Center

Saturday Field Trips:

- (1) Roan Mountain [carpooling recommended]
- (2) Shady Valley – Orchard Bog and Schoolyard Springs (Nature Conservancy sites) [carpooling recommended]
- (3) South Holston Dam - Weir Dam / Rooty Branch [carpooling recommended]

Sunday Field Trips:

- (1) Riverfront to Holston River Confluence (Greenbelt / KBT\*) and Ft. Patrick Henry Dam (KBT)

(2) Cattails at MeadowView (KBT)

(3) Phipps Bend [carpooling recommended]

\*Kingsport Birding Trail

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to ask. - Planning Committee  
Kingsport Chapter of TOS

Contact: Betty Bailey

Bettybailey1979@gmail.com

423-677-2757

### Editors Corner

This is an excerpted and slightly revised portion of a longer article which appeared in *The Hellbender Press*, Volume 5, Issue 5 October/November 2003

### The Levee Revisited

Earlier this fall I was pleased to see a few Blue Winged Teal at Brainerd Levee. The drakes had not fully acquired the handsome white crescent on their faces. Half-changed they moved across the marsh accompanied by Mallard Ducks and Canada geese.

The rainy summer kept the marsh filled with water, and there was no exposed mud for migrating shorebirds to search for the small crustaceans and aquatic worms that make up their diets.

I have seen only solitary sandpipers and the ever-present killdeer. They cross the wet grasses near their marsh with their continuous calls.

While the shorebirds are absent this year, another migrant has been plentiful. On several visits I have seen one to thirteen Great Egrets, also known as the American Egrets. Their size and their black legs distinguish them from other white members of the heron family.

In hunting, they stand in the water or on the shoreline as still as death itself. They are indeed death to any passing fish, frog, or water snake, which they soon annihilate

with the stroke of their beak, sharper than any spear and swift as the striking of a coiled snake.

The egrets will spend the fall here, hunting and storing up food reserves, preparing for a fall journey to other hunting grounds. Meanwhile, another, much smaller hunter proceeds with a chase far different from the egret's methods.

The kingfisher that I normally see at this marsh was strangely absent from view earlier today. Its absence surprised me, since I see the bird on nearly every trip here.

On my return trip, I heard the rattling call of the kingfisher, from the willows across the water, its presence revealed by the unique call.

It broke from cover and flew low across the water. It paused in the hunt to perch on a fence that ran right into the water. Then it hovered high over the marsh preparing to descend and deal death to the fish below.

Raptors like the osprey or bald eagle grasp their victims in the talons and barely wet their feathers. The kingfisher's descent ended with its whole body immersed in the water. Then it emerged, with no fish in its razor-sharp beak.

The bird hovered and dove again and again. It moved to the trees across the marsh, perhaps with meal in beak, though I really couldn't tell from my angle and distance.

As I left the Marsh, the bird hovered over the water again. The marsh will provide a feast for kingfisher, heron, egret, and duck. It provides a physical feast for the birds and I leave happy with the day's observations and discoveries.

As the march of progress continues to assault the natural environment the question remains, will we preserve the unique beauty of this wetland and its bird species both resident and migratory, or will

they become one more monument to "progress".

## **What Have You Seen**

July 24

A Solitary Sandpiper joined the Killdeers at Sculpture Fields this evening.

The Solitary Sandpiper made use of one of the three very small areas of water that are evaporating quickly.

Bruce Dralle

July 25

I stopped by Sculpture Fields this afternoon and found two Pectoral Sandpipers feeding in the small pool.

Bruce Dralle

July 25

Two Least Sandpipers were feeding around the second pond at WR Grace this afternoon.

The Pectoral Sandpiper seen on July 23rd could not be relocated.

Bruce Dralle

July 28

A juvenile Little Blue heron visited Bradley County. It stopped on a large pond in River Pointe subdivision on Upper River Road at 1300 hours today.

Rick Houlk

August 7

This afternoon I made a quick stop at W.R. Grace Ponds before the rain started.

Shorebirds Seen:

Pectoral Sandpiper - 5

Least Sandpiper - 3

Spotted Sandpiper - 1

Killdeer - 13

Bruce Dralle

August 7

I rarely bird beyond the confines of Blount County, but this afternoon I was exploring new territory in a strange county when I turned a corner on Lytle Creek Road in Rutherford County and saw 16 scissor-tailed flycatchers together on a power line. They

were about half adults and half immatures. I was parked almost underneath them, so before getting out of the car I counted the birds and took a few photos through the windshield of the nearest ones. When I emerged from the car, some birds scattered, so I did not get a photo of the entire group. The photos aren't great, because of the low light situation. (It was getting late and was very overcast.)

Here is a link to the eBird report:  
<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S38535251>

I also went by the Sod Fields on Highway 99 before coming to Lytle Creek Road. I arrived at the Sod Fields during a pretty decent rain. There were about 60 Killdeer (at least), about 25 pectoral sandpipers, two solitary sandpipers, and three least sandpipers.

Randy Winstead  
Maryville, Blount County

August 10

This afternoon there were ten Black Terns seen from Chickamauga Dam.

The Black Terns were feeding near Booker T. Washington State Park.

I moved upriver from the Chickamauga Dam to Booker T Washington SP to get a better view and count of the Black Terns. My high count was 45 Black Terns.

Bruce Dralle

August 15

4 Swallow-tail Kites and 2 Mississippi Kites were seen today in Sequatchie County at 1530 CDT on Kelly's Cross Road at the Knotty Pine intersection. The birds were feeding and wheeling over the field just southeast of the intersection and were present for over an hour before we left the area. Photos were obtained and one of each bird is attached. The location is about half a mile west of The Cookie Jar Café on Kelly's Cross.

Pixie and Gary Lanham  
Hamilton County

August 17

The Mississippi Kites and Swallow-tailed Kites are still working the same field that Pixie and Gary Lanham reported yesterday. At present, there is a pair of each working the field.

Martin Hall  
Moore County

August 17

The Mississippi and Swallow-tail kites were still present at Kelly Cross Rd and Knotty Pine intersection at 12 noon CST today in Sequatchie County.

J Marty Paige

While birding Point Park this morning I was surprised to find a Dark-eyed Junco feeding along the path.

The Birds of Tennessee-A New Annotated Checklist lists the species as a locally common Summer resident in the Southern Blue Ridge.

Does anyone know of any Summer sightings away from the Southern Blue Ridge?

Bruce Dralle

### **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