



# The Chattanooga Chat

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A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter  
Tennessee Ornithological Society

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## October Meeting

**Ascension Lutheran Church**  
**720 S Germantown Rd**  
**Thursday, October 12**

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

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

**Program:** Rick Huffines will be our speaker for the October 12 program. Rick is the executive director of the Tennessee River Gorge Trust. He will bring us up to date on the birding projects; (tracking of Louisiana Waterthrush, work with Worm Eating Warblers, bird banding and other any other work) in the gorge.

**Thanks** to Kaye Fiorello who presented the program at the September 14 meeting. Kaye works at Volkswagen developing the VW property for the enhancement of birds and biodiversity and is a member of our Chattanooga TOS chapter. Some of you have been able to bird the property with Kaye, and we were glad to see what she has done and possible future work.

## Field Trips

**October 1, Tennessee River**

**Gardens:** We have an opportunity to bird with Clyde Blum at the beautiful Tennessee River Gardens, 22573 Hwy 41, on Sunday, October 1. We will meet at 8:00 AM and look for fall migrating birds. Thanks to

Teddy Caldwell for arranging for us to visit this private property. Directions: Take I-24 toward Nashville; at exit 174, go north on US 41 past the Highway Patrol station. Follow US 41, enter Marion county, pass the TVA Raccoon Mountain entrance road, then take the first driveway on the right. For more information contact Pixie Lanham 886-4321 or at [planham@epbfi.com](mailto:planham@epbfi.com)

**Bird the Honors Golf Course**  
with David Stone.

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).

## Bill Pulliam Memorial

Brian Sullivan and I co-wrote a memorial for Bill Pulliam, which was posted on the eBird homepage this morning.

I took the photo of Bill at Moss Island WMA in 2008.

<http://ebird.org/content/ebird/news/bill-pulliam/>

Good birding,  
Scott Somershoe  
Littleton CO

### **Editors Corner**

Another day watching a Kingfisher at  
the Brainerd Levee  
December 1, 2003  
11:00 AM

Many of the kingfisher's dives were false starts. The bird would plunge earthward and then stop and hover. Perhaps the fish would move to the side or dive deep. Perhaps it was too small to be worth the effort, or too large to swallow. In any event, the kingfisher made many aborted dives before it finally plunged into the water with an audible splash.

Then the bird was gone. I was unable to tell if the hunt was successful or not, but I later discovered that it was a male bird with none of the red patch on the stomach characteristic of a female Belted Kingfisher.

Further along the trail, I saw a large brown bird cross the levee and land in a nearby dead tree. At first, I thought that it was the resident red shouldered hawk, but as it landed, I saw the long tail with alternating light and dark bands that identified it as a Coopers Hawk. As the raptor sailed across the marsh in search of a smaller bird for dinner, I noticed its short wings and long tail, also characteristic of the species.

As I turned and began the journey back to my truck, I passed the tall upright snag in the center of the large pond. I spied the Kingfisher on his customary perch. His beak seemed larger than usual. With binoculars, I saw he was holding a fish. The meal was nearly half as long as the bird, and nearly as wide from dorsal fin to belly as

it was long. The thickness from side to side was considerably less, and so the fish had the saucer shape of smaller members of the sunfish family. From the distance, I could not tell if it was a green sunfish, a bluegill, or a shell cracker.

Whatever the species, the fish looked far too large for the bird to swallow. The kingfisher turned his head first one direction and then the other, shifting the fish in his beak. I didn't believe that the bird would try to swallow so large a fish, but soon it was pointed head first into the beak. In this position, the bird could swallow the fish without fins, spines or scales opposing the motion and damaging the delicate tissues of the throat.

With a quick upward thrust of the head and an opening of the beak, the fish's head was lodged deep in the bird's throat. Then the real work began, and several powerful thrusts of the head brought most of the fish into the bird's throat. Only the tail remained protruding.

The bird thrust its head again and again, but the mandibles remained parted with the tail lodged between them. I began to wonder if the bird would ever be able to swallow that last little bit of fish. Perhaps it would be doomed to starve with the fish tail preventing it from ever swallowing again. Perhaps it would digest the head and swallow the rest later, much as a King Snake does when it eats another snake too long to swallow. Then, with one energetic thrust of its head the bird raised its beak skyward, opened wide, and engulfed the last of the fish. Perhaps the bird would remain immobile for a few hours, much like the guests at a Thanksgiving dinner.

### **Whigg Meadow Reports**

September 10

I have extreme admiration for the persons manning this remote bird banding station. This station gives

birders a chance to get out of their comfort zones. Make a point of spending at least one night at this camp in September every year. It is not easy living at altitude. There are no restrooms, no showers, no ATM, no McDonalds nor any cell phone service. Just try it. Do a day trip (we had 4 visitors in 3 days). Ask questions. Check out the nets. Watch a bird being banded. Film the process. You will be amazed and want to return to camp out for a day or two.

Tony King

September 16

I went up to Whigg Meadow late in the morning yesterday. The banding station is back up and running but the shrubby habitat around the meadow and many of the larger trees were pretty much completely defoliated by the Irma winds. The road in is clear and easily passable, though a bit soggy in spots. (If you have never been up there, and want specific directions, email me. Some have gotten lost on the Forest Service roads up there trying to find Whigg)

Here's Eric Soehren's list from yesterday:

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S39201018>

Bates Easterbrooks

### **What Have You Seen**

September 22

Banding was slow today. We need another front to push birds down this way!

Magnolia Warbler = 2

Hooded Warbler = 2

Swainson's Thrush = 2

Brown Thrasher = 2

Ovenbird = 1

Gray Catbird = 1

David Aborn

Chattanooga, TN

September 20

Hamilton County, TN

Banding was steady today, but much slower than the past several outings.

Magnolia Warbler = 4

Gray Catbird = 3

White-eyed Vireo = 3; 2 new and 1 recapture from April 2017

Northern Cardinal = 2; both recaptures. One was banded in 2012, the other in 2014

Brown Thrasher = 1

Thanks to Lisa Schott for helping out today!

David Aborn

September 18

Hamilton county, TN

Banding started off slow this morning, but then picked up around 9:30. Here are my totals:

Hooded Warbler = 4

Brown Thrasher = 4

Magnolia Warbler = 2

Kentucky Warbler = 2; 1 new, 1 recap from September 8

American Redstart = 1

Golden-winged Warbler = 1; the 1st one I have ever banded at Greenway Farms!

Black-and-white Warbler = 1

Worm-eating Warbler = 1

Eastern Wood-Pewee = 1

Acadian Flycatcher = 1

Ovenbird = 1

Gray Catbird = 1

Carolina Wren = 1

Thanks again to Laura Marsh for her help!

David Aborn

September 14

Home at Birchwood except as noted

Eastern Wood-Pewee

Black-&-white Warbler (FOY)

Tennessee Warbler

Hooded Warbler (FOS)

Chestnut-sided Warbler

Black-throated Green Warbler (FOS)

Gray Catbird

Scarlet Tanager

Bald Eagles – 2 immatures at the TWRA  
Thatch Road boat ramp.

Charles Murray

September 15

Home at Birchwood

Tennessee Warbler, American Redstart  
(1st male and a few females; females  
first seen on 9-4-17)

Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated

Green Warbler, Scarlet Tanager

Charles Murray

September 15

It was a busy day banding at Greenway  
Farm this morning.

Magnolia Warbler = 8

Gray Catbird = 3

Canada Warbler = 2

Hooded Warbler = 2

Ovenbird = 2

Chestnut-sided Warbler = 1

Northern Parula = 1 (only the 2nd NOPA  
I have ever banded out there)

Worm-eating warbler = 1

Acadian Flycatcher = 1

Least Flycatcher = 1

I also did well catching non-migrants,  
with 3 Carolina Wrens, a Downy  
Woodpecker, and a Northern  
Mockingbird.

Thanks to Laura Marsh and Mary Feely  
for their help, otherwise I might still be  
out there!

David Aborn

Sept 12

Late this afternoon I was checking  
Chickamauga Dam for any storm birds  
from Hurricane Irma.

I observed an immature Sooty Tern  
flying low over Chickamauga Lake.

The Sooty Tern circled a couple of times  
and flew toward the center of the lake  
and upriver.

Other Terns seen were Caspian,  
Forster's and Black.

Bruce Dralle

September 9

Two more FOY warblers appeared this  
morning at my property in Hamilton County  
at Birchwood before I left for morning  
worship. One Ovenbird and one Worm-  
eating Warbler were seen. Each of them  
gave me more than the usual few seconds to  
locate them and identify them than most  
warblers allow me. I also saw a few  
Tennessee Warblers for the second day in a  
row.

Charles Murray

September 11

This afternoon four Caspian Terns were seen  
from the primitive campground at Chester  
Frost State Park. The Caspian Terns were  
flying upriver.

Also, this morning Tommie Rogers  
observed three Caspian Terns from  
Chickamauga Dam flying upriver.

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

[chattanoogaoutlook.com](mailto:chattanoogaoutlook.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.