



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 14

5:30 p.m. Executive Board

7:00 p.m. Monthly Meeting

Program: For our December 14 meeting Clyde Blum will do the program on the birding trip he took to Cuba last year.

For the December meeting we will have refreshments. We have people signed up for cookies and banana bread. If others would like to furnish an item let David Stone (rockyturf@epbfi.com) know or just show up with something. Certainly, we do not need everyone to bring something but if a few could it would be nice. The board has talked about doing this a couple of times a year rather than one person doing refreshments as in the past

Thanks to Tom and Pat Corey of Corey Nature Photography for presenting our November Program.

Field Trips

December means Christmas Bird Counts.

The Annual Chattanooga Christmas Bird Count will take place December 16, 2017. The Annual Hiwassee Christmas Bird Count will take place January 1, 2018.

Contact Kevin Calhoun if interested in helping on these days.

kac@tennis.org.

The Nickajack Lake Count will be held on Wednesday, December 27. If you wish to

participate, please let me know. – David Spicer birdsnbflys@gmail.com



Peregrine Falcon, Chickamauga Dam by Gary Lanham

Sandhill Crane Festival

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency is happy to host the 2018 Tennessee Sandhill Crane Festival in Birchwood on January 13-14 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. Olan Chlor will once again sponsor the event. The festival includes the popular American Eagle Foundation, recording artists 2ND Nature, a main speaker, folk singers and arts and craft vendors.

The Cherokee Memorial is once again hosting Native Americans folklorists and crafts throughout the weekend. This inspiring place evokes responsibility and remembrance of our acts as a nation. The memorial also serves as a place of celebration for a people still thriving with a rich tradition and culture. The 14th North American Crane Workshop annual meeting will take place in Chattanooga, prior to the festival. Crane researchers and

conservationists from around North America will attend this prestigious event.

The Tennessee Aquarium is providing guided crane and eagle boat tours on the Hiwassee River. Two-hour tours offer a serene trip, where passengers will enjoy hearing not only about the various migratory and resident birds, but also about the Cherokee heritage in the region and historic Mississippian cultural sites that date back to 1,000 A.D. Register at: <https://community.tnaqua.org/events/member-programs/winter/2017/sandhill-crane-cruise-1-15-18>

The entire region buzzes with birds and birdwatchers alike. Along with the star of the weekend, the Sandhill crane, many types of waterfowl, bald eagles, golden eagles, white pelicans and even whooping cranes are spotted each year. Free buses run the short distance from the Birchwood Community Center to the Hiwassee Refuge and Cherokee Removal Memorial. Both the memorial and refuge provide great birding opportunities, with views of the Hiwassee. Volunteers with scopes are set up at each location to help novice birders or curious visitors.

Beginning in the early 1990's the recovering population of eastern Sandhill cranes began stopping at the Hiwassee Refuge as they migrated to and from their wintering grounds in Georgia and Florida. TWRA has been managing this refuge for more than 60 years for waterfowl. Therefore, cranes find a perfect combination of areas for feeding and roosting. As many as 12,000 cranes have been known to overwinter at the confluence of the Tennessee and Hiwassee Rivers.

Visit the Cherokee Removal Memorial's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Cherokee-Removal-Memorial-Park-210935905589406/>

Other Sandhill Crane Festival partners include the Tennessee Wildlife Federation, the Tennessee Ornithological Society, Birchwood

Area Society Improvement Council, Cherokee Removal Memorial Park, Cleveland State Community College, American Eagle Foundation, Chattanooga Chapter TOS, Meigs County Tourism, and Rhea County Tourism.



Herring Gull, Booker T. Washington State Park by Gary Lanham

Editors Corner

I have been reading *The New Year's Owl* by Susan Hand Shetterly. First published in 1986, this book by a dedicated wildlife rehabilitator includes some lovely descriptions of encounters with the natural world. One follows:

It was only a matter of time. I was willing to wait forever. A layer of ice beneath me turned to water and froze again, fastening me to the stump. A leg fell asleep.

After a while, I turned cautiously around. The owl was perched in a tree at my back. It had been there, I suppose, watching.

Field Trip Report

On Saturday, November 11th, five CTOS members met at the Chickamauga Dam to begin a day of birding. We were joined by Susan and Michael Hubley from Hawkins County, and we enjoyed their company very much.

Here are some of the highlights: We saw a Rusty Blackbird and a Peregrine Falcon at the dam. On the lake we had a Herring Gull, Bufflehead, Canvasback, Scaup, and Redhead ducks, as well as our usual wintering birds.

We ended our day at the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge where we saw Sandhill cranes, American Wigeon, Hooded Merganser, Gadwall, and Ring-necked Ducks. From the gazebo we observed 140 American White Pelicans feeding and flying over the slough. Lovely sight!

Over at the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park boardwalk we saw about 160 more American White Pelicans. Really nice! Total bird species for the trip: 60, Wonderful Day!
Pixie and Gary Lanham

What Have You Seen

November 17
Eleven species of ducks were observed today on Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge in Meigs County at Birchwood. Several species were seen from the HWR viewing area and from the ramp at the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park from which one can view portions of Hiwassee Island, the Tennessee River, and the Hiwassee River. A Northern Pintail at the HWR viewing area was a first-of-the-year bird for me. Blue-winged teal and Lesser Scaup were seen at both sites, and were first-of-season species views. The other eight duck species noted were: Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Ring-necked Duck, and Hooded Merganser.

Other highlights at HWR today included: American White Pelicans, Great Egret, Bald Eagle, Sandhill Cranes (fewer than yesterday), Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Warblers: Palm, Pine, and

Yellow-rumped. A personal season high of 48 species were noted today.

Yesterday, I saw first-of-season Green-winged Teal at the HWR viewing area and FOS Buffleheads from the CRMP viewing ramp.
Charles Murray

November 14
For the past few years, I have been asked by the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership to be a volunteer tracker to monitor the Eastern Migratory Population of Whooping Cranes. Most of the Whooping Cranes that spend part or all of fall or winter in Southeast Tennessee are older birds. The batteries in their radio transmitters are usually dead by now. Even though the WCEP provides me with equipment to receive radio signals, the only way I can identify any of these older whooping cranes is by noting the color bands on their legs. Therefore, I have to view the birds with binoculars or a spotting scope at a relatively short distance.

It is extremely helpful to me when birders, hunters, farmers, and others notify me of Whooping Crane sightings. Otherwise, rely on past history and search areas in several counties of SE Tennessee.

If you see a Whooping Crane would you please send me a private message at tn-bird@freelists.org or on Facebook. If you don't mind sharing your phone number by private message, I can get back to you for more details, and I will give you my cell phone number.

Please ALSO report your Whooping Crane sighting, including any photos that would show leg bands, to <https://www.bringbackthecranes.org/what2do.html>. It is very important for everyone to know what may be reported about Whooping Crane sightings and what should NOT be reported! That

information is available at the website above. One of the leading causes of death in the Eastern Migratory Population of Whooping Cranes is shootings. Sharing very specific information about the cranes' locations on social media, etc., may lead to such shootings! Ethical behavior by those who view or photograph Whooping Cranes is also essential to protect their safety and wildness and is discussed on the same website. Let's do what we can to preserve this magnificent species!
Charles Murray

November 1

This afternoon I found two Dunlin at the Nickajack Lock entrance on TVA Road. There is also a Green Heron hanging around the shoreline.

Bruce Dralle

November 1

In about 15 minutes beginning at approximately 11:15 AM yesterday at the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge in Meigs County at Birchwood, 8 species were identified in two small puddles about 6-10 feet apart near the end of the driveway into the viewing area parking lot at HWR. These birds were using these almost dry puddles as convenient bird baths or watering holes. I observed 4 sparrow species: Chipping, Field, Song, and White-throated. Three warbler species were noted: Pine, Palm, and Yellow-rumped. American Goldfinches were also seen. In the trees above the puddles, a Golden-crowned Kinglet was feeding. When I first drove into the refuge earlier, I saw a possible Hermit Thrush.

Earlier in the morning at the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park (Meigs County, Birchwood), I saw a few American White Pelicans and a few duck species: Wood, Gadwall, American Black, and Mallard. Many presumably Tree Swallows were

feeding over the Hiwassee and Tennessee rivers. Hundreds of water birds – likely American Coots – were in the Tennessee River north of Hiwassee Island.

Charles Murray

October 29

Late this morning I found a juvenile American Golden-Plover standing on the rocks above the reservoir along Drivepark road.

Bruce Dralle

Hamilton County TN

October 24

This afternoon there was a nice raft of waterfowl at Raccoon Mountain Reservoir.

Mallard - 1

Gadwall - 46

American Wigeon -11

Blue-winged Teal -1

Lesser Scaup -1

Pied-billed Grebe -5

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

chattanooga@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.