



The Chattanooga Chat

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A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter
Tennessee Ornithological Society

January Meeting

Ascension Lutheran Church

720 S Germantown Rd

Thursday, January 11

5:30 p.m. Executive Board

7:00 p.m. Monthly Meeting

Program: UTC's Dr. David Aborn will present the January program about his birding trip to Argentina. As most know David teaches courses about birds and has kept records from years of banding he does in Chattanooga each year. If ever, it has been many years since someone did a program about birds in Argentina for us.

Thanks

Thanks to Barbara McMahan, Pixie Lanham, Kay Fiorello, & Linda Kelly for bringing refreshments to the December meeting.



Yellow Bellied Sapsucker photographed
By Gary Lanham in his yard.

Field Trips

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.

Hiwassee Trip for Crane Viewing with Reflection Riding Group January 20, 2:00 to 4:30 PM

There will be a joint field trip with Reflection Riding at the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge on January 20th, 2018. CTOS members meet at the Hiwassee gazebo at 2 PM. Bring a scope if you have one to assist RRANC members in viewing the cranes and other waterfowl. Please let me know if you can come or if we can borrow your scope and return it to you.

planham@epbfi.com.

Thanks, Pixie Lanham

Editors Corner

Bright Wings

An Illustrated Anthology of

Poems About Birds

Edited by Billy Collins

With paintings by David Allen Sibley

Reviewed by Ray Zimmerman

This book could not help but be a lovely addition to my personal library, with editing by a former Poet Laureate of the United States and Illustrations by the author of one of America's most popular birding guides. Billy Collins has worked hard to popularize poetry, especially during his two-year tenure

as Poet Laureate. He is also a birdwatcher, judging from his poem “Osprey” (published elsewhere).

The order of poems and illustrations follows the order in Sibley’s guide, beginning with Common Loon, and ending with three poems about the American Goldfinch. The collection does not include every bird seen in North America, but each illustration has a brief descriptive paragraph by Sibley, as well as one or more poems. The illustrations show primarily male birds in breeding plumage, though the kingfisher has the bright red belly band of a female bird.

I would not attempt to use the book as a field guide. The collection of illustrations is not nearly complete enough, but it is a thoroughly enjoyable read, potentially introducing novices to birds and new readers to poetry.



Pine Siskin photographed by Gary Lanham

Information Requests

David Stone (rockyturf@epbfi.com) would like to hear from anyone who is not getting the meeting reminder he sends out via email the day before the meeting each month.

Greetings,

I am an ornithological researcher based in Pennsylvania, and studying tree swallows. My colleagues and I will be collaborating with David Aborn at UT-Chattanooga this coming spring. We are excited to enjoy

a Tennessee spring, in contrast to the short gray muddy springs we get farther north.

For one of our studies, we are interested in access to a peripheral population of tree swallows near Chattanooga that is not part of David's research population. I was writing to see if anyone had or knew of tree swallows in nest boxes, such as in a bluebird trail.

Thanks in advance for any information or insight.

Best wishes,
Dan Ardia

Dear TOS Members,

I am currently looking for volunteers to help with a long-term monitoring project being run by National Audubon. I have attached a document that explains the goals of the program. It would be great to have members of the local ornithological society lead the community in understanding the changes to our birds and what that means for the future of Chattanooga, as well as the country.

As birds come under greater threat from climate change we will have to respond. Understanding how quickly ranges are shifting will help prioritize conservation efforts and better understand the compounding problems associated with these large movements. Some species will benefit, while others will not. This is the new reality we are living in, and we need your help to come up with solutions.

We need to engage these problems and help shape the discussion, be it city planning, future development, or the impacts of climate change at a local level. This is an easy opportunity to get involved in active research to help inform future actions.

In short, we hope to compare the population trends of several key species to their projected range shifts due to climate change. This work will allow scientists a more

focused look on how North American bird populations are coping with this dynamic problem.

Each volunteer party (1 to 3 people) or individual, will be responsible for 12 (5 minute) point counts in the Chattanooga area. It takes a minimum of 2-4hrs to complete and will be done once in the Winter, Jan15-Feb15, and once in the Summer, May 15 to Jun 15.

Any skill level is welcome. I will work with anyone who is willing to learn the calls and songs of the focal species. I will host a meeting closer to the survey period to discuss details of the count and get everyone on the same page.
John Diener

What Have You Seen

Eleven species of ducks were observed today on Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge (HWR) in Meigs County at Birchwood. Several species were seen from the HWR viewing area and from the ramp at the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park (CRMP) 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. I noted a personal season high of 48 species today.

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

November 26

In the past several days my visits to the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge in Meigs County at Birchwood have produced several first-of-season (FOS) sightings and a few other highlights. Species observed from the viewing area at HWR will be noted as such. Observations from the viewing ramp at the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park will be labeled CRMP:

11-19-17: Horned Grebes – FOS at CRMP; also 10 species of ducks

11-20-17: Winter Wren – FOS at CRMP; an immature Bald Eagle was attacked by a Merlin or a Peregrine Falcon; using tracking equipment, I heard a Whooping Crane from HWR; it was found by satellite tracking from Wisconsin in Wheeler Refuge in Alabama the next day.

11-21-17: Snow Geese – FOS at CRMP

11-22-17: Northern Bobwhites seen on private property near HWR

11-23-17: Hundreds of Sandhill Cranes and some American White Pelicans in the same kettles flew south from HWR; Palm, Pine, and Yellow-rumped Warblers and Brown-headed Nuthatches also seen at HWR; 48 species for the day

11-24-17: Canvasback and Redhead ducks – FOS at HWR

11-25-17: Most Sandhill Cranes thus far this season late PM at CRMP

11-26-17: Fox Sparrow and Swamp Sparrow – both FOS at HWR; Large numbers of Sandhill Cranes and American White Pelicans at CRMP

Charles Murray

December 3

Just in case someone missed the alert sent out yesterday, Jeffrey Schaarschmidt and I were looking for ducks yesterday. Two White Winged Scoters, male and female

were on the east side of the dam. This would be the New Hope side.

Don't get fooled by all the decoys! I was so happy to see Buffleheads. More than one Greater Scaup made me very suspicious. Then I saw a small whirly-gig. Jeffrey saw the large whirly-gig. What a disappointment! There was a whole raft of decoys and NO DUCKS. There were hundreds of coots.
Tommie Rogers

December 15
Yesterday and today Sandhill Cranes were very active at Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge in Meigs County at Birchwood. Yesterday, many kettled and flew south. However, both yesterday and today many came into HWR. I think the numbers of cranes are the highest so far this season.

There was also a noticeable increase in the number of ducks today. However, the numbers of ducks may still be lower than some weeks ago. Late in the day today, I saw a swan in the slough at the viewing area of HWR. I am not an expert at identifying swans. I did note in the low light remaining today that it has a black bill.
Charles Murray

December 16
When the fog finally lifted today at the main overlook at Hiwassee Refuge, the Tundra Swan reported by Charles Murray the night before was still sitting there amongst 500 Sandhill Cranes.

Later that morning we found two more first year Tundra Swans resting on a sandbar off Riverview Rd in Rhea County directly across from Armstrong Bend Wildlife Refuge.
Morton Massey
Knoxville, TN

December 16
Two Snow geese seen feeding with a small flock of Canada geese behind the Food City in Ooltewah in Hamilton County.
Rick Houlk
Polk County

December 17
Birds (Snow Geese) still present @11:15 AM in company of 15 Canada Geese.
Dan Jacobson
Hamilton County, TN

December 17
5 cranes feeding in field at Intersection of North Lane and Taylor Rd. east of Eagleville.
Hugh Barger

December 21
This afternoon I observed a non-breeding adult Lesser Black-backed Gull from Hales Bar Road.
The Lesser Black-backed Gull was resting on the Hales Bar Marina boat dock with Ring-billed Gulls.
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