



The Chattanooga Chat  
**Ray Zimmerman, Editor: [znaturalist@gmail.com](mailto:znaturalist@gmail.com)**  
**(423) 718-9393**  
**February 2018: Vol. 41, No 4**  
**A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter**  
**Tennessee Ornithological Society**

---

### February Meeting

**Ascension Lutheran Church**  
**720 S Germantown Rd**  
**Thursday, February 8, 2018**  
**5:30 p.m. Executive Board**  
**7:00 p.m. Monthly Meeting**  
**Program:**

John and Lizzy Diener will do the February program on two of their research projects. The first part of 2017 they worked in Jamaica on a long-term monitoring project of the American Redstart, with the Smithsonian. They studied wintering ecology, including territory size and the body condition of birds, and how that affects the timing of their northward migration.

The last half of 2017 they were in South Africa working with a PhD student who was studying the Cape Rockjumper. Very little was known about nest site selection or basic criteria about timing of the nesting season. They did nest searching and monitoring, setting up cameras looking at predation events, and doing some genetic work. This will be a very interesting program.

### Thanks

Thanks to UTC's Dr. David Aborn for presenting the January program about his birding trip to Argentina.

### Field Trips

**Saturday, February 3, 2018--**  
**Wheeler NWR, Decatur, AL.**  
Meet at 7:00 AM, EST in the parking lot of the Walmart Supercenter located at 3550 Cummings Hwy. From there we

will carpool to meet Dwight Cooley, retired Wheeler Refuge Project Leader, who will guide us to local spots to see birds in and around the refuge. Dress for the weather.

Bring scopes and binoculars to view a wide variety of birds. We will stop for lunch at the Greenbrier Restaurant or bring your own if you like. This is an all-day trip, so expect to get back to town by 7:00 PM.

Please let me know if you plan to go so that we do not go off and leave you. Pixie Lanham ([planham@epbfi.com](mailto:planham@epbfi.com); 423-886-4321 is the home phone, or 423-509-2919 text only)



Leucistic American Goldfinch, yard bird by Gary Lanham.

**Saturday, February 10, 2018--**  
**Amnicola Marsh for Woodcocks**  
Meet at 5:30 PM in the Election Commission parking lot, 700 River Terminal Rd. off Amnicola Hwy to bird

the marsh. At dusk we will begin to listen for and try to see American woodcocks. For more details contact:

Pixie Lanham (planham@epbfi.com or call 423-886-4321)

### **Editors Corner**

The Home Place:  
Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair  
with Nature

J. Drew Lanham

Reviewed by Ray Zimmerman

J. Drew Lanham grew up on a small farm in rural South Carolina. His parents and his paternal grandfather were teachers as well as farmers. He is a bird watcher, a deer hunter, and an Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Master Teacher at Clemson University. His articles have appeared in Orion and numerous other publications. Dr. Lanham has created a compelling narrative of life close to the land.



Red Shouldered Hawk by Gary Lanham

### **News Items**

There is a great article in the January "National Geographic" entitled "Why Birds Matter". It's by Jonathan Franzen and although it's not a long piece it is very thoughtful and thought-provoking. Being National Geographic, it is, of course, accompanied by gorgeous photographs.  
Hugh Barger

There is an interesting article on owl watching to appear in the NY times on Sunday, January 14. The online article is available at this link:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/12/opinion/sunday/owl-watching.html>

### **Bird Counts**

Seventeen participants survived bitter cold conditions (10 – 25F) to find 97 species in the Hiwassee CBC on January 1. This was an excellent, above average total. Much of the water was frozen except in the main Tennessee and Hiwassee River channels which concentrated the birds into better viewing areas. Highlights included:

4 Greater White-fronted Geese  
12 Snow Geese  
6 Ross's Geese  
3 Tundra Swans – Several years since seen on count  
1 Great Egret  
24 Bald Eagles  
1 Forster's Tern – Very rare  
2 Whooping Cranes  
10579 Sandhill Cranes  
120 White Pelicans  
8 Least Sandpipers  
10 Dunlin  
1 House Wren  
1 Gray Catbird  
1 Vesper Sparrow  
1 Pine Siskin  
Kevin Calhoun/ Count Compiler

### Nickajack Count

The Nickajack Lake CBC was held on Dec. 27. My thanks to everyone who helped.

Despite the slow day where I was and at least one person commenting that they missed common species we ended up with 93 species which is a recent high.

Highlights include:

Golden Eagle

Osprey

White-winged Scoter

Orange-crowned Warbler

House Wren

David Spicer

### Chattanooga Christmas Count

December 16

The Chattanooga Christmas Count was held on Saturday December 16, had 24 participants and found 95 species.

Highlights included:

American Wigeon

Canvasback

Redhead

14 Bald Eagles

Peregrine Falcon

House Wren

Orange-crowned Warbler

Blue-headed Vireo

Osprey – Many years have passed since the species was last seen on this count.

Misses:

American Pipit

Brown-headed Cowbird

Barred Owl

Fox Sparrow

Wilson's Snipe

Thanks to everyone who helped on this count!

Kevin Calhoun – count compiler

Curator of Forests

Tennessee Aquarium

Hawk Watch totals from Soddy

Mountain for 2017, our 25th season.

Black Vultures 29

Turkey Vultures 338

Osprey 21

Bald Eagle 21

Northern Harrier 13

Sharp-shinned Hawk 133

Cooper's Hawk 20

\* Northern Goshawk 1

Red-shouldered Hawk 6

Broad-winged Hawk 2275

Red-tailed Hawk 34

American Kestrel 9

Merlin 10

Peregrine Falcon 17

\*\* unidentified falcon 1

2928 season total; 286.75 hours on the lookout over 59 days.

Jimmy Wilkerson

### What Have You Seen

January 12

Six or, more likely, seven swans were observed from the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park in Meigs County at Birchwood today. They were quite far away in the Tennessee River (Rhea County) near Hiwassee Island. From that great distance, they appeared to all have black bills.

Charles Murray

January 9

This evening Tommie Rogers and I stopped by Amnicola Marsh to listen for American Woodcock.

We weren't disappointed and heard two birds starting to call at 6:15 pm.

The location is the backside of Amnicola Marsh along Riverport Road.

Last year in January 2017 the American Woodcock couldn't be found at the Marsh. I believe the extreme drought of 2016 was the reason.

Good to see the birds have returned.

Bruce Dralle

January 7

We have had a leucistic American Goldfinch at our feeder intermittently for the last two weeks. Black wings, bright yellow head, everything else white apart from faint yellow areas on the flanks. First seen December 26th, then

again on December 27th and January 6, 2018. Martin Hall also reported one recently (Moore County, about 60 miles away) on TN-bird on the 28th of December, but the one here has a much brighter yellow head. (Photo attached)

The second bird is a Pine Siskin with bright yellow markings, one of a group of 6 or 7 Siskins. We have had Pine Siskins every year since we learned to recognize them (about 5 or 6 years), and one year we had about 400 (haven't paid off the second mortgage required to feed them all winter yet), but we have never had one with markings this bright. Just a bright male we guess? (Very poor photo attached; New Year's eve bird; only seen that one day).  
Pixie and Gary Lanham

Libby Wolfe saw 3 Surf Scoters at Booker T Washington SP on Dec 26 in Hamilton county.

On Dec 27 at Nickajack Dam we saw two White-winged Scoters and 15 White-winged Scoters at Bennet Lake in Marion county.  
Tommie Rogers

December 30  
A Greater White-fronted Goose pair flew over the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge viewing area in Meigs County at Birchwood this morning. This was likely my last 2017 First-of-the-Year bird. Several other species were highlights at HWR today. Nine species of ducks were noted. They were: Gadwall, American Black Duck, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, and Hooded Merganser. At least 100 American White Pelicans were observed from the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park. The largest number of Sandhill Cranes that I've seen this season flew in to roost around the Hiwassee Island area late

today. Some of them would have been in Rhea County and the rest in Meigs County. Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Pine Warblers were among the species feeding on my modified Stokes recipe peanut butter suet at my yard in Birchwood (Hamilton County).  
Charles Murray

December 30  
The cackling geese and snow goose were still present at the MTSU ponds when Kathy Malone and I were there about 12:30 pm.

In the Swamp Rd. area near Eagleville I refound the merlin that Jackie Corbin found on North Lane some time back. There were sandhill cranes in several fields again although not as many as yesterday. Also observed two male northern harriers and also one snow goose that was flying with a group of sandhills. As usual also saw at least 5 American kestrels on the wires along Shoemaker and Swamp Rds.  
Hugh Barger

### **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.