



The Chattanooga Chat

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September 2018: Vol. 42, No 11

A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter
Tennessee Ornithological Society

Meeting

Ascension Lutheran Church
720 S Germantown Rd
Thursday, September 13

5:30 p.m. Executive Board
7:00 p.m. Monthly Meeting

Program: For our September 13 meeting, our president, Dr. David Aborn will present the second part of his Argentina program (the first part was this past January). You will be able to get close-up looks at some birds David banded while birding there and learn about other research he helped with while there.

Field Trips

Honors Golf Course Birding x3

Leaders: David Stone & Clyde Blum
Friday, Sept. 28 – 5:00 PM – 7:30 PM
Sunday, Oct. 7 – 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM
Monday, Oct. 15 – 9:00 AM – noon
Limit 10 participants per date.

If you would like to attend a session, please contact David Stone: rockyturf@epbf.com. Note: People will be allowed to go on more than one date if we do not reach the limit for any session with ones who have not yet attended a session this fall. David will email last minute instructions later to those registered.

McCoy Farms, September 22nd

Kevin Calhoun will lead a walk at the McCoy Farm & Gardens, 1604 Taft Highway, Signal Mountain, Tennessee,

at 8:00 A.M on Saturday, Sept 22nd. Come up Signal Mountain on Hwy 127, go through town and pass Miles Road. The 38-acre historic property and gravel parking lot are on the right.

Thanks

Thanks to Chris Sloan who gave the program at the August 9th meeting. He gave an illustrated talk on Uganda: Birds and Great Apes. Chris shared photos and stories from a recent tour of Uganda, including a variety of spectacular endemic birds, "big five" mammals, Mountain Gorillas, Chimpanzees, and scenery. As always, Chris gave an excellent program.



Chris Sloan. Photo by Ray Zimmerman

Editor's Corner

I am pleased to include two articles by members in this issue. Please consider submitting a short article pertinent to the interest of birds and birdwatching. Good quality photographs are always welcome.



Juvenile Wood Stork, Coffee County
Photographed by Kristy Baker

Several birders sighted the stork at Ragsdale Road as reported on the TN-Bird mailing list in August.

Book Review

Cat Wars: The devastating consequences of a cuddly killer by Peter Marra and Chris Santella

Reviewed by David Aborn

Of all the threats facing biodiversity, arguably the most controversial is that posed by feral and free-ranging cats (hereafter just referred to as cats). On one side, you have cat lovers, who are fond of their feline companions and are convinced that they pose no threat to wildlife, especially when the cats are fixed and fed. Then there are those who view cats as a very real threat, especially to birds (estimates put the number of birds killed by cats at 1 billion annually in the United States).

When people from the two sides get together, the exchange is often heated

(some wildlife biologists have received death threats for speaking out against cats!), and neither side sways the other. In *Cat Wars*, Pete Marra, Director of the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and outdoor writer Chris Santella try to present the case for why cats are a problem, not just for wildlife but for human health as well. In a thorough and objective manner, they counter arguments made by cat enthusiasts.

The book starts by describing the first documented case of a cat causing the extinction of a species, the Stephen's Island Wren of New Zealand, which was lost in the late 1800's. They then talk about how the increased popularity of domesticated cats as pets and as agricultural pest controllers throughout history led to their global spread and the start of their impact on wildlife.

The next chapter discusses the dual increase in bird watching and cat popularity in the United States in the mid-1900's, setting the stage for the conflict to come. The next several chapters present extensive scientific evidence of the numbers of animals killed by cats each year, as well as the negative effect cats can have on human health (e.g. toxoplasmosis, rabies).

The authors then look at attempts to control cats, both through legislation, and through direct action (the 2006 case of Jim Stevenson, who shot cats to keep them away from a colony of endangered Piping plovers). They also counter the methods used by pro-cat organizations (e.g. Alley Cat Allies), the most popular of which is Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR). They describe why TNR and other techniques do not work, and why the evidence to the contrary presented by

pro-cat organizations is misleading. Finally, Marra and Santella offer their thoughts on possible solutions and the consequences if we do not act.

Cat Wars is very well written, and easy to read (it is meant for the public not as a scientific text). While it may not change the opinion of the most passionate cat enthusiasts, it will hopefully give people good information to consider.

Birding Podcasts by Dawn Greenway

Are you interested in a new medium for learning about birds? Perhaps a free one that is portable and available while you're commuting to work or tooling around on errands peaks your interest. How about 'podcasts'? These "radio shows" are digital audio files made available on the internet for downloading to a computer or a portable media device such as a smart phone.

Podcasts are typically available as a series, new installments of which can be received by subscribers (you!) automatically. Podcasts can easily be downloaded on iTunes for Apple users and with the Stitcher app for Android. There are many birding podcasts that range in duration, frequency, target audience and production quality. Difficult as it was, I narrowed it down to three of my favorites for you.

Ray Brown's Talkin' Birds is a thirty-minute, weekly Boston-based professionally produced call-in radio show to which you can listen live over the internet on Sunday mornings at 9:30 or downloaded as a podcast. Entertaining and informative, it appeals to birders of all levels of experience. It includes a

mystery bird contest, featured feathered friend, and interviews with authors, researchers and conservationists.

This Birding Life by Bird Watcher's Digest (BWD) is a sixty-minute monthly podcast hosted by BWD Editor Bill Thompson III. Topics range from bird feeding, bird chasing and birding in foreign lands to interviews with authors, researchers and conservationists.

American Birding Podcast by American Birding Association is a 30-40-minute semi-monthly podcast hosted by Nate Swick. Appealing more to serious birders, its topics include recent rare bird sightings, taxonomic changes and interviews with authors, researchers and conservationists.

Honorable mentions:

- Out There with the Birds
- Bird Note
- Laura Erickson's For the Birds
- Bird Calls Radio

Listening to a podcast about our favorite topic is a different way to be entertained, educated and informed. Give it a try while you are cooking, cleaning, driving, sitting in a doctor's office.... ah the possibilities!

What Have You Seen

August 19

At 6:00 pm this evening there was a Lark Sparrow at the 0.6 mile marker from Shallowford Road.

It first perched in the dead Willow trees over the water with Eastern Kingbirds. It then flew over to the asphalt path and begin feeding.

Bruce Dralle

August 19

The juvenile White Ibis is still present in Polk County on Stone road. The Short-

billed Dowitchers and yellowlegs were not present this afternoon. The shorebird numbers have declined since yesterday.

If anyone is thinking of chasing this bird, please remember the pond/wet area is on private property and surrounded by chicken houses. I spoke with the owner. He does not want anyone driving on the property. There is a small viewing area from Stone road. The entire pond cannot be viewed from this spot. There are plenty of places for the Ibis to be out of view. Stone road is a narrow country road with a good bit of traffic especially tractors and feed trucks.

A couple of chicken farmers have denied me access to their property. The reason being that the chicken companies do not want unauthorized vehicles or people around. According to the farmers they could lose their growing contracts and livelihood.
Rick Houlk

August 19
This afternoon I found ten Black Terns flying over Chickamauga Lake. A couple of them were still in breeding plumage. Also, from Chester Frost Park this afternoon Augustus Meador counted thirty-six Black Terns from the Primitive Campground.
Bruce Dralle

August 11
About 9:20 this morning on my property in Birchwood, I identified a female American Redstart. I am pretty sure that two other warbler species were present about the same time, but I couldn't be certain of their identification.
Charles Murray

August 10
David Chaffin and I located an American avocet in Polk County this morning. This bird is on private property on Stone road. Viewing is between chicken houses. A Snowy Egret and a Great egret were also present.
Rick Houlk

August 8
I was looking for Black Terns and found two Forster's Terns this afternoon before the thunderstorms arrived. The Forster's Terns were perching on a green channel marker downriver from the Primitive Campground Area.
Bruce Dralle

August 1
I saw an immature Yellow-crowned Night-Heron this afternoon at the pond behind the Camp Jordan Park Arena.
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

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.