



# The Chattanooga Chat

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A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter  
Tennessee Ornithological Society

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## December Meeting

Ascension Lutheran Church  
720 S Germantown Rd

Thursday, December 12  
5:30 p.m. Executive Board  
7:00 p.m. Monthly Meeting

### Program:

For the December 12th meeting, Chris Sloan will share his photographs of the birds of Australia.

To celebrate the holidays, refreshments will be available before and after the meeting. To limit trash, please bring your own cup. If you would like to bring snacks and/or drinks, please contact Dawn Greenway by 12/10 at [dawn@mountainpathfinder.com](mailto:dawn@mountainpathfinder.com) or 401-524-2141.

### Thanks

Thank you to Chuck James of the TN Bluebird Society for his informative presentation on conservation success of the Eastern Bluebird. You can find more information about ways to help with conservation at [www.TNbluebirdsociety.org](http://www.TNbluebirdsociety.org).

### Young Birders Club

CTOS members Jim and Dawn Greenway, in conjunction with Corey

Hagen from our partner, Reflection Riding Arboretum and Nature Center, kicked-off the first meeting of the Young Birders' Club (YBC) on November 21st. Young birders and their parents/guardians provided feedback about the vision and potential activities for our YBC. The YBC is open to young birders aged 13-18. For more information, contact [Jim@mountainpathfinder.com](mailto:Jim@mountainpathfinder.com).



Black and White Warbler, Signal Mountain; Photo by Gary Lanham

### Field Trips

First, a BIG thanks to David Stone, who coordinated this autumn's birding trips to the Honors Golf Course. These walks are enjoyed by many participants.

Local Christmas Bird Counts are listed below. If you would like to participate, contact the compiler for the count as listed on page 2.

Chattanooga CBC - 12/14/19 – Compiler  
Kevin Calhoon at kac@tnaqua.com or  
423-784-4070

Hiawassee CBC- 1/1/20- Compiler  
Kevin Calhoon

Nickajack CBC- 12/21/19 – Compiler  
Bruce Dralle at bwdralle@gmail.com

Jim & Dawn Greenway will lead a walk  
at the VW Wetlands on Sunday,  
December 15 at 9:00 – 11:00. We will  
be birding from the side of a lightly  
traveled, paved road that overlooks  
wetland, forest and field areas. We are  
catering to beginners, but birders of all  
skill levels are welcome.

Directions: FROM THE I-  
75/HIGHWAY 153 INTERCHANGE:

Go 4.3 miles north on 153 to the ramp  
for Highway 58 North/Decatur. Go  
around 3.9 miles north on 58 to the  
intersection with Ferdinand Piech Way.  
Turn right on Ferdinand Piech Way and  
drive around 1.2 miles east to the  
wetlands area. It is not marked but will  
be the only concrete bridge structure.  
Public restrooms are available within a  
1-mile drive at the Equestrian Trail on  
Ferdinand Piech Way. Jim's cell is 770-  
630-3854.



Hooded Warbler, Signal Mountain  
Photo by Gary Lanham



Ovenbird, Signal Mountain  
Photo by Gary Lanham

### **Crane Festival**

I've continued plans for the Sandhill  
Crane Festival. We're in need of  
volunteers for three days. We have a  
children's day on Friday, January 17th at  
the refuge. We'd appreciate two or three  
volunteers for this event. Mr. Charles  
Murray, from Birchwood, volunteers.  
However, we could use a few more folks  
to help children see cranes through  
scopes.

Saturday and Sunday, we're in need of  
volunteers to set up scopes and share  
birding knowledge with festival visitors.

Roi and Debbie Shannon join us each  
year. However, it would be great to have  
four others (two in the morning and two  
in the afternoon). I have two agency  
scopes for use too. We've had volunteers  
split the day and work from 8:00 a.m. to  
noon and then from noon to 4:00 p.m.  
I will have parking passes to email  
everyone in advance. Please let me know  
if there is anything else that would be  
helpful. I appreciate support with this  
event. I love this weekend and look  
forward to the sound of cranes

Mime Barnes  
Information and Education Coordinator  
Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency

## Help Wanted

We need club members to help organize/lead bird walks. Please consider sharing the joy of birding. Contact Jim if you are willing to help. jim@mountainpathfinder.com.

## Editors Corner

As published in the literary journal Number One, Gallatin, Tennessee. For the Last Carolina Parakeet Ray Zimmerman

I imagine the loneliness of your aviary there at the Cincinnati Zoo where your predecessor, the last Passenger Pigeon, flew off to oblivion just a few years earlier.

One voice is not a choir.

You were part of a social species, descending by the thousands, on fields to consume cockleburrs, or orchards for luscious fruits. One voice is not a choir.

Some labelled you a pest and pursued with shotguns. Audubon noticed your species in decline even in his bygone days. One voice is not a choir.

No welcoming song of your fellows greeted your waning days. Does your skin adorn a museum, just as your ancestors' feathers adorned ladies' hats? One voice is not a choir.

It saddens me to think my adopted home of Tennessee once knew the calls and colors of a native parrot. One scientist titled an article about your kin, "Forever Gone." No voices remain in the choir.

## What Have You Seen?

October 30

Last Thursday, October 24th, we were leaving our house, and on the field down below us about 10 yards from the road, were two adult bald eagles feeding on a rabbit they had caught. We have had our house there since 1988 and consider ourselves avid birders, keeping our home records and others, but have never seen bald eagles in Fiery Gizzard Cove where we live. There has been an active nest for several years across the Nickajack Lake about 20 miles from us.

When we saw them, I stopped in the middle of our narrow road to get out our camera and saw a UPS truck coming behind us, so I held up my hand to ask him to stop. He did and we all watched in awe of the beautiful plumage of these birds that seemed huge at such close range. Before we stopped watching and eased away, he said, "When I saw what you were looking at, I decided I did not care about my schedule." He had never seen bald eagles before. We think his excitement will carry over to watching for other birds.

J. N. Howard, Fiery Gizzard Cove,  
Marion County

November 3

For the past week or so, very large numbers of American Coots and a few hundred ducks have been observed in the Tennessee River from the overlook at the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park in Birchwood (Meigs County). For the most part, the ducks have been too far away to identify, however a few Gadwalls have been identified on the Hiwassee River side of Hiwassee Island. On the afternoon of November 3, I noted

about 20 first of season American White Pelicans in the Tennessee River. One Snow or Ross's Goose was also seen for the first time this season. It was too distant to determine which of the two species I was seeing.

On November 1, three Hooded Mergansers were identified from the TWRA boat ramp area of Dry Branch off Shahan Road in Birchwood (Meigs County) for the first time this season.  
Charles Murray

November 4

Late this afternoon there were two immature White-crowned Sparrows at the corner of Middle Street and St. Elmo Avenue.

Bruce Dralle

November 8

TWRA staff at the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge in Birchwood (Meigs County) reported seeing the first Sandhill Cranes of the fall on the refuge on November 4. However, I didn't see any until today, November 8. By sundown today, I estimated that at least a few hundred Sandhill Cranes were present on the refuge. The number of ducks has been increasing for at least of couple of weeks. Today, I saw a first-of-the-year species for me, a pair of Northern Shovelers. I also noted Green-winged Teals on the refuge for the first time this season. Several American Wigeons were noted again today, along with Gadwalls, Mallards, Ring-necked Ducks, and Hooded Mergansers. I had seen Redhead ducks on November 6.

One adult Bald Eagle was seen about sundown looking for a duck or American

Coot meal, and dozens of American White Pelicans appeared late in the day on the refuge as viewed from the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park (Meigs County). The number of Ring-billed Gulls also appears to be increasing daily.

November 13

I took my Ornithology class to Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge yesterday afternoon. There were about 400 Sandhill Cranes visible from the viewing area. Other highlights included 7 Canvasbacks, 50+ Ring-necked Ducks, and 1 Great Egret. We also went to the boat ramp just past the Cherokee Removal Memorial, and got good looks at 36 American White Pelicans.

David Aborn

## **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](mailto: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