



# The Chattanooga Chat

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February 2019: Vol. 43, No 4

A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter  
Tennessee Ornithological Society

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## Meeting

Ascension Lutheran Church  
720 S Germantown Rd  
Thursday, February 14  
5:30 p.m. Executive Board  
7:00 p.m. Monthly Meeting

## Program:

David Stone will do the February 14 program. David will share some of his observations on many of our common birds at The Honors golf course the past 30+ years. Included will be what he has seen them eat as well as other behaviors of which you may not be aware.

David also presented our January program, a video on owls from the PBS series, *Nature*.



Birdwatchers, Crane Festival at Hiwassee Refuge, January 19  
Photo by Gary Lanham

## Field Trips

Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge with  
Reflection Riding Arboretum &  
Nature Center, Sunday, Feb. 3rd,  
2:00-4:30 PM

Bring your scope to assist RRANC visitors in viewing the Sandhill Cranes and other waterfowl.

Let me know if you can be there. (info below)

## Chickamauga Lake

Saturday, Feb. 16th, 8:30 AM

Meet in the powerhouse parking lot above Chickamauga Dam to scan for ducks, etc. We will go from there to check along the lake for more waterfowl and birds. Bring a scope and your binoculars.

Questions ?? call Pixie Lanham 886-4321 or email: [planham@epbfi.com](mailto:planham@epbfi.com)

## Remembrance of David Spicer

TOS and the birding community lost someone special last Friday. I am sad that David Spicer passed away after a long illness. During the illness, David always managed to find time and energy to pursue two of his favorite hobbies. David was a calm thoughtful birder who enjoyed nature and the puzzle of

identifying birds. His many years of experience helped him have good hunches as to the identity of a bird even though briefly seen. However, he would patiently wait, watch, and listen for more clues to help him be certain to get the identification right. David was not a birder who focused on seeing the most species in a day. David enjoyed seeing rare species but birded more for the joy of seeing and the challenge of accurate identification. Then a few years ago, David followed his interest in technology into a passion for photographing birds. He took photos of rare birds and common birds as well. He used the photographs to document birds, assist in identification of birds, and to preserve the beauty of birds. Often, David would patiently take multiple photos of a bird, looking for the best image light and weather conditions allowed.

David was a pleasure as a birding companion. For the past many years, (maybe 15 -20) David was with a group of friends who often worked together in a zone of the Chattanooga Count. David was with us this year on December 15th and as always, helped sort out the waterfowl on Amnicola Marsh. David also volunteered to be the compiler and organizer of the Nickajack Count. Some years, David had plenty of help on the count and other years, David would have to cobble together skeletal coverage of the count area. Either way, David maintained a positive attitude. David was quiet in his volunteer efforts – not expecting or asking for recognition. David and Judee enjoyed birding vacations. From time to time, David would share his photos in a TOS program. One of his more recent presentations was to share his last trip to Magee Marsh in Ohio. David

encouraged both of his sons, Scott and Jonathan, in their interest in birding, and they frequently accompanied David on birding outings.

Most of all, David was a good friend who considered TOS members to be friends. I know that all friends of David share sadness in his loss and think of his family. David Spicer will be missed.

Remembrance by Danny Gaddy



American White Pelican, Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge, Hugh Barger

### **Christmas Bird Count**

Twenty-eight participants counted 101 species on the Chattanooga Christmas Bird Count held on Saturday, December 15. That is a good total for this count.

Highlights included:

- 24 White Pelicans
- 2 Virginia Rail (Standifer Gap Marsh)
- 2 Sora (Standifer gap Marsh)
- 1 Peregrine Falcon (Chickamauga Dam)
- 6 Red-breasted Nuthatch (highest count in many years)
- 1 Orange-crowned Warbler
- 1 Lincoln's Sparrow (Brainerd Levee)
- 3 Pine Siskins

I want to thank everyone who helped with this count and made it so successful!!

Kevin Calhoon, CCBC Compiler

## **Soddy Mountain Hawk Watch**

Here are the fall hawk totals from the Soddy Mountain lookout. The time span covered was mid-September to early December.

Turkey Vulture - 546  
Black Vulture - 16  
Northern Harrier - 12  
Osprey - 13  
Bald Eagle - 35  
Sharp-shinned Hawk - 159  
Cooper's Hawk - 22  
Broad-winged Hawk - 3643  
Red-shouldered Hawk - 5  
Red-tailed Hawk - 41  
American Kestrel - 9  
Merlin - 9  
Peregrine Falcon - 12  
Total: 4524

The Broad-winged Hawk total was the 5th best in our 26th year of coverage on the Soddy Mountain lookout. (High BW total was 8135 in 2015). Total of all hawks was our 7th best. (High total was 8616 in 2015).

Bill Haley

## **What Have You Seen?**

January 8

I am thinking the Pewee has moved on as I have not seen it since January 3. Insects are still available as I saw some Bluebirds fly-catching on Jan. 6 from the same bridge where I had spotted the Pewee. I first thought it was the Pewee. There was also an Eastern Phoebe feeding from the bridge. It is possible it will show up again as I saw it on Nov. 17 and did not see it again until Dec. 28. From Dec. 28 I saw it almost every day through January 3.

Many other birds have been reported in Tennessee, far beyond their normal date. Have those birds not put on enough weight to migrate? Will they still migrate? Will their migration take a different route? Will they survive? Are some adapting to our warmer winters so that we may see more and more of them out of season? I do think it may be possible for the Pewee to survive somewhere in the southern US during winter since the Eastern Phoebes here winter over every year.

David Stone

January 2

I have seen the Pewee 4 out of the last 6 days. I did not see it yesterday and almost gave up today but then I saw it at 4:50 PM just before I left the area. I then came back at 5:30 and it was still on the bridge feeding on insects when I left.

David Stone

December 29

Seven birders joined me at 1:00 PM today to see the Pewee and were not disappointed. Apparently, it is an Eastern Wood-Pewee. Dan Jacobson said he heard one when we first approached. Then we played the song of a Western Wood-Pewee and an Eastern, but it did not respond to either (the bird was 100 yards away). We watched the bird for over an hour and Dan was as close as 15 yards from it taking pictures. He said he did not hear it sing when he got close. I do not know if anyone played either song when they were nearer the bird as we not together all the time. It was on the smaller bridge when I saw it before lunch but at 1:00 it was on the long bridge. It moved back and forth on the bridge perhaps going 20 feet above the bridge apparently feeding off insects almost the entire time we were

there. It did fly off for a few minutes one time where we could not see it.

I now feel the bird has been here since Nov. 16 when I first saw it and may stay around for quite some time unless really cold weather limits its food. If others want to come tomorrow and try to see it, I will be there at 1:00 again to try and locate it for you.

David Stone

December 27

About 3:30 today (Dec. 27) I got a good look at an Eastern Wood-Pewee on a bridge hand rail at The Honors golf course in Ooltewah. It had distinct wing bars, a light-colored chest and did not pump its tail. My dog scared it, so I got to watch it fly and land on the bridge again. It never pumped its tail. I had seen one on Nov. 16 in the same area. I am not saying it is the same bird as I checked for it a few days after seeing one in November. Still I guess it could be the same bird. I did not have my camera with me. I will check with a camera tomorrow in case I see it again.

David Stone

December 27

With light rain much of the day and possibly heavier rain on the way, Birchwood area birds were quite active today. Some waterfowl highlights from a TWRA boat ramp on Thatch Road off Birchwood Pike in Hamilton County included Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye (only my second sighting of this species ever), Bufflehead, and Pied-billed and Horned grebes. Numerous Sandhill Cranes and several American Pelicans were noted on the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge in Meigs County at

Birchwood. Some observations at my property in Birchwood (Hamilton County) included Red-breasted Nuthatches, a Brown Creeper, a Pine Warbler, a handsome Swamp Sparrow that likes suet, and Purple Finches. Altogether, I saw 47 species of birds today.

Charles Murray



Pileated Woodpecker – 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

[chattanoogatos@outlook.com](mailto: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.