



The Chattanooga Chat

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A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter
Tennessee Ornithological Society

February Meeting
Ascension Lutheran Church
720 S Germantown Rd
Thursday, February 13
5:30 p.m. Executive Board
6:00 p.m. Monthly Meeting

Program:

Our February 13th meeting will be Potluck and Planning! IMPORTANT: The meeting will start at 6:00 instead of the usual 7:00. During our September meeting, CTOS members asked for a potluck event during which we will revisit the TOS Survey results and plan for the future of our chapter. Please visit the following link to sign up for a dish to bring:

<https://www.perfectpotluck.com/meals.php?t=REAW8370>.

Alternatively, you can reach out to barbarajohnson222@gmail.com and let her know what you'd like to bring. Please bring your own cup so we can reduce the amount of trash.

Thanks

Thanks to those CTOS members who volunteered to support the Tennessee Sandhill Crane festival!

Thanks also to Bob Shafto for his informative presentation on the birds of Maine at our January meeting.



Young Birders Club (YBC):

Save-the-Date! The YBC will meet on Saturday, February 29th at 6:00 PM at Reflection Riding Arboretum and Nature Center (RRANC) for a presentation on owls followed by an owl prowl on the grounds. The YBC is open to young birders ages 13-18. For more information, contact Dawn Greenway at dawn@mountainpathfinder.com.

Field Trips

Jim & Dawn Greenway will lead a beginner's walk at the VW Wetlands on

Sunday, February 2nd from 9:00 - 11:00.
We will be birding from the side of a lightly traveled, paved road that overlooks wetland, forest and field areas.

Directions: to VW Wetland from the I75/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.

David Stone will lead a birding trip to The Honors Course in Ooltewah on Saturday, February 8th from 9:00 AM until noon. There will NOT be any golf carts available, but we will go in cars (mostly on paved roads) around the course. We will make several stops and take short easy walks to see what birds we can find. We are likely to see approximately 30 species. Email David at rockyturf@epbfi.com to let him know you want to attend. David will email everyone the day before telling where to meet and any other items.

All the club's events can be found on the Chattanooga TOS Facebook page.

Help Wanted

We need club members to help organize/lead bird walks. Consider sharing the joy of birding. If you can help, please contact jim@mountainpathfinder.com.

Winter Meeting

The TOS Winter Meeting will take place at Manchester Tennessee (centrally located in state with inexpensive lodging and good winter birding)
February 7-9 Ambassador Inn, 925 Interstate Drive (exit off Interstate 24)
Cost \$57 + tax per night, double occupancy (ask for room held by TOS)

Schedule of Activities:

Friday: meet and greet, 5-7 in conference room.

Saturday morning field trip to Woods Reservoir

Afternoon: forum on future of TOS

Sunday morning: field trip to Bark Camp Barrens WMA

The Open Forum will be an informal discussion and brainstorming addressing some of the challenges and opportunities for TOS in the future and ways to address these issues. There will also be a general discussion of possible improvements which could be considered by TOS. Please come and contribute to this discussion without the usual time constraints of spring and fall state meetings.

Birding details: During the Winter, Woods Reservoir is always good for ducks, grebes, and loons. Bark Camp Barrens has excellent habitat for sparrows and larks and appears promising for Short-eared Owls. The adjacent sod farm often has pipits and longspurs. (Both sites near Manchester) Please let Danny Gaddy know if you plan to attend. 423-316-5647 or gaddy@catt.com.

Note: No chapter is sponsoring this meeting so if you can bring snacks or

drinks to the Friday night gathering,
please email Susan McWhirter at
smcwhirter@gmail.com.

Danny Gaddy,
TOS President

Editor's Corner Inspired by Cranes

A sense of time lies thick and heavy on such a place. Yearly since the ice age it has awakened each spring to the clangor of cranes. The peat layers that comprise the bog are laid down in the basin of an ancient lake. The cranes stand, as it were, upon the sodden pages of their own history.

So said Aldo Leopold in his essay "Marshland Elegy," I pulled out his book *A Sand County Almanac* after attending the Crane Festival at Birchwood and Hiwassee Refuge last weekend. It was a pleasure to read of his exuberance at the appearance of Sandhill Cranes in his native Wisconsin.

These peats are the compressed remains of the mosses that clogged the pools, of the tamaracks that spread over the moss, of the cranes that bugled over the tamaracks since the retreat of the ice sheet. An endless caravan of generations has built of its own bones this bridge into the future, this habitat where the oncoming host again may live and breed and die.

Leopold caught the meaning of history and nature on an abandoned farm he bought in rural Wisconsin. His book records both his technical skill as a scientist and his poetic words of the world of nature.



Display at Sandhill Crane Festival

Hiwassee CBC

Seventeen observers found 92 species of birds on the Hiwassee CBC on January 1. This is a little below average. The weather was just too nice! Highlights included:

Sandhill Crane – 7539 – A low count, with very little corn left in fields the birds have dispersed all over.
Tundra Swan – three immatures
American White Pelican – 361 – numbers growing every year
Snow Goose – 1
Least Sandpiper – 41
American Pipit – 65
Bald Eagle – 17 – a low count
Great Egrets – 6
Purple Finch – 2

Misses:

Barred Owl

White-crowned Sparrow

Rusty Blackbird
Dunlin
Woodcock
Sharp-shinned Hawk

I want to thank everyone who helped
with this count!

Kevin Calhoon, Compiler

What Have You Seen?

December 27

I observed and photographed 3
apparently immature swans at the
Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge viewing area
in Birchwood (Meigs County) in late
afternoon today. They mostly slept until
the skies darkened and a few sprinkles of
rain fell. Then when the light was quite
low the birds awakened so that the
features of their heads were visible. I
initially identified the 3 as immature
Mute Swans, but after examining field
guides, I think that they might be
immature Tundra Swans.

Charles Murray

December 31

December 31, 2019 was a good birding
day at my home in Birchwood (Hamilton
County) and in three other Birchwood
sites in Meigs County – the Hiwassee
Wildlife Refuge viewing area, the
Cherokee Removal Memorial Park
overlook, and a TWRA boat ramp at Dry
Branch on Shahan Road. Fifty-one
species were identified for the day. A
Snow Goose remains at HWR. Nine
duck species were identified at HWR,
CRMP, or both. Mallards and
Canvasbacks were the most numerous.
Five woodpecker species were noted at
home, but I didn't find a Hairy
Woodpecker nor a Red-headed
Woodpecker for my TWRA/TOS
checklist. An adult Bald Eagle was seen
at Dry Branch, and another flew over

HWR. Pine and Yellow-rumped
Warblers were observed at home, and a
few Purple Finches were also identified
at home.

Some of you know that I volunteer to
help the International Crane Foundation
by monitoring Whooping Cranes when
members of this endangered species
come into SE Tennessee. In the last
minutes of daylight on the last day of the
year and of the decade, I thought to
myself, "It would be nice if a Whooping
Crane was my last species identified in
this decade." I did NOT pray a selfish
prayer for that to happen, but just a very
few minutes later, two Whooping Cranes
– the rarest crane species in the world –
flew into view over the Hiwassee Refuge
in the company of about a dozen
Sandhill Cranes – the most abundant
crane species in the world. God is good,
and I was blessed!

Charles Murray

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

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