



# The Chattanooga Chat

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A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter  
Tennessee Ornithological Society

**March Meeting**  
**Ascension Lutheran Church**  
**720 S Germantown Rd**  
**Thursday, March 12**  
**5:30 p.m. Executive Board**  
**6:00 p.m. Monthly Meeting**

Those who attended the February Potluck and Planning meeting were treated to great food and a good discussion about the TOS survey results and the future of our club. Many thanks to Jeffrey Schaarschmidt for volunteering to overhaul the CTOS website!



**Program:** For our March 12<sup>th</sup> program, Eliot Berz will present his research on Louisiana Waterthrushes and speak about the Tennessee River Gorge Trusts' partnership with Guatemalan researchers.

Elections for the board will occur in June. Anyone who wishes to learn more about club business is welcome to attend the CTOS board meetings.

## **Young Birders Club (YBC):**

**Saturday, 2/29/20, 6:00 – 8:00 at Reflection Riding Arboretum and Nature Center (RRANC):** YBs will learn about and see up-close three of the resident non-releasable owls. Next, we'll go on an owl prowl on the RRANC grounds. Meet up with Dawn and Jim Greenway at 5:45 – 6:00 in front of the entrance to the main building and we'll give directions to the meeting location. There are no fees for this activity. The YBC is open to young birders ages 13-18.

## **Field Trips**

Spring migration is quickly approaching! Please consider sharing the joy of birding by leading a walk at Reflection Riding Arboretum and Nature Center

(RRANC) on Saturdays 4/4, 4/11 and 4/18. Please contact jim@mountainpathfinder if you are interested



Bob Caldwell supplied this photo of a Bald Eagle on the nest at Tennessee River Gardens. We have two upcoming bird watching opportunities there:

Bald Eagle nest viewing: Sunday, March 15, 2020, 11 a.m.

The gate will be open; turn right at the bottom of the hill and park when you can go no farther. The viewing site will be staked off 165 yards from the nest, where a narrow "window" permits the best view before it is blocked by spring growth. The eagles started building this nest last spring, but this is the first active season. Chicks should hatch on or before March 9th.

Please do not approach the nest beyond the marked viewing area.

The 2012 island platform should have ospreys back incubating eggs by mid-March. It is 720 yards from the eagle nest, and I've photographed some territorial combat between the two. There is a 2nd Osprey nest in a tree at the southeast corner of the lake.

TRG Spring Migration count: Sunday, 19 APR 2020; 8 a.m.

Park at the foot of the hill on the circle or near the docks.

Clyde Blum, who has led our count for the past five years, will lead again with co-leader David Stone. I'm scheduled to be in Hong Kong but look forward to getting the count results.

Bob Caldwell, who turns 96 in June, may join at the end of the walk. His Grandson, Tennessee River Gardens President, will be there if not traveling. Care-taker Terry Rausch will be there.

As there is a lot of maintenance required, donations to TRG are appreciated, and annual memberships are really appreciated.

Description submitted by Ted Caldwell

### **Help Wanted**

Please send in your photos for publication in the Chat. The editor also welcomes guest articles. Contact Ray Zimmerman, [znaturalist@gmail.com](mailto:znaturalist@gmail.com) if you have an idea for one.

### **New Look**

Your editor is working on a new design for the Chat. Hopefully, it will be in use for the next issue.

### **Editor's Corner**

The recent tn-bird discussion about the spotting of a Long-eared Owl in Tennessee and caveats about reporting the species reminded me of an event from many years ago.

While leading a hike, I took a short detour on a side trail and pointed out a lovely yellow lady slipper orchid. On my next trip through, the orchid had been replaced by a hole in the ground

I have since refrained from pointing out rare plants. Perhaps it is selfish of me, but I want to preserve them for my future enjoyment.

With permission, I include some of the discussion from the tn-bird list serve, edited due to available space,

On Mon, Feb 17, 2020, 6:56 AM <grahamgerdeman@gmail.com> wrote:  
Hi all - I wanted to make sure that people know that eBird has a pretty solid method of dealing with self-reporting (or non-reporting) of sensitive species like roosting Long-eared Owls.

This can (and should) be done whether you are viewing known birds like the ones Victor is discussing - or you find them yourselves.

You can also do this if you find a rare bird on your property which you want to count, but you don't want other birders to come see it.

You simply submit your list, and then immediately view/edit the list in a web browser and select "hide from eBird output" from the drop-down menu.

It is a little clunky in that you cannot select this before you submit the list, and you can't yet do it directly with the phone app, but you can submit it on the app, open the checklist you just submitted, click the "eBird.org" button to open it in a browser, and then hide it.

As long as you have a data connection or WiFi when you submit the checklist, it only takes a few seconds.

It must be done right away, to prevent any hourly "needs" or rare bird alerts from going out.

This way, if you absolutely must have the species on your life/state/etc. lists, it will still count as such in eBird, but the data will not be in the public record - and won't show up in searches, etc.

As much as we might say "don't eBird it," some people are going to anyway, so this is a way to do it privately.

By reporting the location of a roost to eBird (or Facebook, Tn-bird, or elsewhere), you put a big digital sign on something the owls themselves have taken great care to keep secret.

It's generous for Ruben and Victor to offer to lead folks out to see them - so please don't report the birds and defeat that purpose.

## **What Have You Seen?**

February 14

There was a big Sandhill Crane movement today over Hamilton County. From Amnicola Marsh between 12:53 and 1:30 this afternoon, I counted 381 Sandhill Cranes in eight separate flocks flying North.

From Chickamauga Dam between 2:57 and 3:10 this afternoon, I counted 187 Sandhill Cranes in four separate flocks flying to the North.  
Total number 568.  
Bruce Dralle

February 13

I do not know that this is the earliest return of Osprey for the Chattanooga area or not. It is the earliest I have ever seen one at this location by about a month. I saw it circling the golf course lake in mid-afternoon today. We had Butter Cups in full bloom before the end of January so not telling what we will see.

David Stone

February 13

Driving by Amnicola Marsh this morning, I saw a Purple Martin flying around. Spring is near!

David Aborn

February 5

Large raft of American white pelicans at Lamar Hill boat ramp. Maybe 75 or 80

Hugh Barger  
Nolensville Tn

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 continued to be found 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 monitor 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 the last species I identified 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  
[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