



The Chattanooga Chat

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A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter
Tennessee Ornithological Society

We will hold our March meeting online, via zoom. At 6:15, Laura Marsh will speak about her new [eco-adventures organization](#), Nova Conservation. Follow [this link](#) for the meeting. You must have zoom software installed to participate.

Field trips will resume in April. If you would like to lead an outing, please contact [Gary Brunvoll](#). He hopes to offer at least one outing a week in April.

Kevin Calhoun submitted reports on two Christmas Bird Counts. Unfortunately, your newsletter editor included the report on the 2019 Chattanooga CBC in the previous newsletter, so here is the correct report.

Hiwassee:

15 Participants found 89 species on the Hiwassee CBC held on January 1. This result was a little below normal. The most interesting birds included a total of 18,139 Sandhill Cranes (second-most ever counted on this CBC) and 635 American White Pelicans, which is by far the highest total ever for this species. There were very few waterfowl and no owls reported. I want to thank everyone who helped with this count!!

Chattanooga:

Twenty-four participants counted on the Chattanooga CBC on December 12, 2020. The count total was 107 species, quite a bit above the count average.

Highlights included:

Common Merganser
Pacific Loon
American White Pelican
Osprey
Merlin
Virginia Rail
Sora
Sedge Wren
Marsh wren
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Gray Catbird
Orange-crowned Warbler
Vesper Sparrow
67 Purple Finches
122 Pine Siskins

I appreciate and thank everyone who participated in this count!!

Chapter members also participated in the Nickajack Christmas Bird Count.



**Great Blue Heron Sculpture,
Riverpark, Ray Zimmerman**

Send us your photos and bird stories.
Safety for Birders

The editor recently received the following announcement endorsed by multiple organizations.

We recently became aware of a public allegation of a sexual assault by a well-known birder that occurred during a bird-watching excursion in a metro-Atlanta park. The professional ornithological societies of the Americas have come together in solidarity with a statement affirming our commitment to maintaining the safety of everyone participating in ornithological field activities or exploring the natural world.

The professional ornithological societies of the Americas are committed to maintaining a safe and welcoming environment for everyone in the field of ornithology and for all who participate in birding and other forms of nature appreciation. Among its many gifts, the natural world provides immeasurable solace, connection, comfort, wonder, and peace to those who enjoy it, and this should never come with risk, anxiety, or endangerment. While we represent different societies, we are united as a community around these principles. Individual behaviors that prohibit others

from safely engaging in ornithology will not be tolerated by our societies, and we will each do our part in advancing these shared ethical ideals.

American Ornithological Society
Association of Field Ornithologists
BirdsCaribbean
CIPAMEX
Neotropical Ornithological Society
Raptor Research Foundation
Society of Canadian Ornithologists-
Société des ornithologistes du Canada
The Waterbird Society
Western Field Ornithologists
Wilson Ornithological Society



**Great Blue Heron, Curtain Pole Road
section, Tennessee Riverpark**

Rare Bird Bonanza

Several rare birds visited the Chattanooga area this winter. Jeffery Scharschmidt prepared an article with photographs which appeared on our web page.

<http://chattanoogatos.org/2021/01/18/rare-birds-in-tennessee-chattanooga/>



Great Egret, Curtain Pole Road Section, Tennessee Riverpark

Editor's Corner

Ray Zimmerman, Newsletter Editor and Secretary has submitted the information on Christmas Bird Counts and the link to a webpage article "Rare Bird Bonanza" to the editors of the Tennessee Warbler, our statewide newsletter, as a chapter report.

Your board is considering a proposal to develop organized swift viewing events around the community; When the discussion began, I recalled a historical document about swift banding in Chattanooga. I encountered it in the Local History section of the Chattanooga Public Library. I described this document in an article on Robert Sparks Walker, published in the *Chattanooga Pulse*:

"Walker was also active in bird conservation. In 1930, Wyman Reed Green published "The Banding of Chimney Swifts in Chattanooga" with Robert Sparks Walker listed in card catalogs as an "other author." This article appeared in a journal titled *Bird Banding*, July 1930, Volume I. The Chattanooga Public Library has a bound offprint of the article, which includes a

photo of Walker placing a band on a swift."

I read the article, preserved as a noncirculating bound off-print of the journal *Bird Banding*, which later became the *Journal of Field Ornithology*. The full text of [my article](#) on Walker continues to be available in the *Chattanooga Pulse's* online edition.

A more recent article on hawk migrations appears in the online publication *Appalachian Voices*. Ray Zimmerman interviewed Bill Haley regarding his observations at the Soddy Mountain Hawk Watch. To give a complete picture of hawk migrations across the southern Appalachians, he interviewed representatives of three other hawk counts.

Mark Hopey of the Blue Ridge Bird Observatory counts hawks at the [Big Bald Hawk Watch](#). John Caveny counts hawks at [Grandfather Mountain](#). Vic Laubach is a hawk counter at [Rockfish Gap](#), near Waynesboro, Virginia. The story appears on the web page of *Appalachian Voices* with the title "[Counting Hawks](#)."



Great Blue Heron, Chickamauga Dam, Ray Zimmerman

[The Piedmont Naturalist](#)

The Piedmont Naturalist is the story of licensed bird bander, high school science teacher and naturalist Bill Hilton, Jr. Hilton also operates the Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont Natural History, a nonprofit organization devoted to education and research. He presents a collection of 38 columns originally published April through December of 1986, in *The Herald*, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

The column has since become a blog, "This Week at Hilton Pond." Both the blog and the organization are centered around Hilton Pond Farm, which he and his wife bought after returning to South Carolina from Minnesota, where he completed graduate studies.

Bill Hilton's writing is place-based, as are his teaching and research. He has a graduate degree in ornithology, so they are also science-based. His column began with the physiographic provinces and soils of South Carolina and moved on to phenology, the observation of change in the natural world. Further columns range from frogs to hummingbirds, tent caterpillars to floods.

Hilton is a dedicated observer, and you can read his work on his [web page](#). Like your editor, you may become a subscriber to his blog.

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Great Glue Heron, Curtain Pole Road Section, Tennessee Riverpark.

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