



# The Chattanooga Chat

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A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter  
Tennessee Ornithological Society



## August Meeting and Field Trips

No information is available at the time of publication.

## Fall TOS Meeting

October 4, 2021

The 2021 Fall TOS meeting will be a virtual Zoom meeting on Monday night, October 4. The date was set by the current President Michael Collins and he'll be arranging the Zoom link and password which will be sent to all Chapter Presidents for distribution.

The Spring business meeting will take place in Memphis, April 22-24, 2022.

Details will be announced on the Statewide TOS website. [Tennessee Ornithological Society \(tnbirds.org\)](http://TennesseeOrnithologicalSociety(tnbirds.org))

Our statewide newsletter is available here: [Warbler-Apr211.pdf \(tnbirds.org\)](#) Articles include a wrap up report on Hummingbird research in the southeast, a message from the TOS President, and reports from each of the chapters. The August edition will be out soon.

Be sure to visit our chapter Web page for a multitude of birdwatchers' news reports. [Chattanooga Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society: \(chattanoogatos.org\)](#)

## September Field Trip

Kevin Calhoon will lead a bird walk on September 26 at 8:00 am at McCoy Farm and Gardens, Signal Mtn. The entrance to MFG is located on Taft Highway, just north of Miles Road. Turn right at the large MFG sign. Contact [KAC@tnaqua.org](mailto:KAC@tnaqua.org)

Gary Brunvoll, Vice President for Field Trips, has issued a call for **field trip leaders**.

We had some great field trips in April, May, and June and want to continue the momentum as fall migration approaches. Contact Gary if you are willing to help: [gbrunvoll@epbfi.com](mailto:gbrunvoll@epbfi.com).

We are always seeking material for our web page and newsletter. If you have **photographs** you will share, please send them to Jeffrey Schaarschmidt, [schaarschmidt@yahoo.com](mailto:schaarschmidt@yahoo.com) for the web page, or Ray Zimmerman, [znaturalist@yahoo.com](mailto:znaturalist@yahoo.com) for the newsletter. **Reports or stories** about birds sighted are also a welcome addition to the newsletter.

### **In Memorium**

It saddens us to announce the passing of Rick Houlk, long-time birder, member of Chattanooga TOS, and boat tour leader. His obituary appears here: [Ricky Gene Houlk Obituary - Visitation & Funeral Information \(companionfunerals.com\)](http://companionfunerals.com)

Numerous newspapers carried reports of his death, [Houlk, Ricky Gene \(Benton\) - Chattanooga.com](http://Chattanooga.com).

**Submitted by Jeffrey Schaarschmidt:** Chattanooga TOS member and long-time Polk County birder Rick Houlk lost his battle with cancer and passed on July 1.

His wife posted his passing to her Facebook page and shared the same on the Tennessee Birding Facebook Group. I shared it with the Tennessee Rare Bird Alert group, which I manage, as Rick's wife tagged me in the Tennessee Birding where she shared a post.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/356185474468991/user/1655396579/>

### **Posted to tn-bird by David Chaffin**

TN birders,

It is my sad duty to report the death of Rick Houlk today at approximately 6:30 am at his home in Benton. He fought brilliantly the diagnosis of thymic

cancer, an uncommon form with which he was diagnosed on May 31, 2019. Like those Tennessee birders who preceded him way too soon like Paul Harris and John Henderson, at least the prayers of his wife Jen and others were answered in that the Lord let him down easily. For those who knew him, he was an enjoyable companion on a birding trip, always patient with newcomers and eager to share his knowledge about birds, especially when it came to those in Polk County where he resided.

It is interesting to look at the ebird stats from the time Rick started inputting his bird data there. He started ebirding in 2005 and recorded 16 species that year, which was also the total reported by anyone for the county. From that low in 2005 to his best year in 2018, when he recorded 194 for that year, he rewrote the records for Polk Co. In 2018, he saw ALL species reported to ebird. The rise in total species reported each year kept creeping up, reflecting his stretching to up his year totals and adding new species to the county records. From 2005 to 2018, there was an increase in total species reported for Polk every year except for two straight years (2010-11), where the reported totals were the same. His life total in Polk on ebird is 240, where he has submitted 6005 checklists. Daniel Jacobson related that ebird recently sent Rick a notification, thanking him for 10,000 checklists submitted.

Knowing Rick and his love for our feathered friends, he is already scouting out heaven's birds, so he can show them to us when we get there.

Companion Funeral Home on Georgetown Road in Cleveland is in charge of arrangements. Check their website for further details.

Bird on, my faithful friend,

David Chaffin

## Sightings

Most of our members have access to sightings reports via tn-bird, ebird, or both. I am debating the need to continue posting them in our newsletter.

Swallow-tailed Kites in Sequatchie County July 30, 2021

Sat, 31 Jul 2021 14:46:04 +0000

Three Swallow-tailed Kites were observed by me and by Howard Cox and two other birders west of TN-283 (East Valley Road) between Barker-Talley Road and Stone Cave Road in Sequatchie County on Friday, July 30.

Charles Murray  
Birchwood, TN

Swallow-tailed Kites

Date: Sat, 31 Jul 2021 20:10:21 +0000

Sequatchie County, TN

Jayne Trapnell and I saw 6 Swallow-tailed Kites this morning at Bryant Cemetery Rd in Sequatchie County.

David Aborn  
Chattanooga, TN



Swallow-tailed Kite, Everglades, 1993  
Ray Zimmerman

Dickcissel and Others on Old Ten Mile Road in Meigs County

Date: Wed, 28 Jul 2021 19:12:44 +0000

A singing Dickcissel was very cooperative this morning on Old Ten Mile Road in Meigs County. I took 12 photos, trying to get one photo good enough to make a definite identification! Two American Kestrels and a female Orchard Oriole were among the other nine species I was able to identify. A photo of the Dickcissel is with my eBird checklist, S92426900.

Charles Murray  
Birchwood, TN

July 16, 2021

Hamilton County, TN

There are two immature White Ibis at Brainerd Levee, along with 4 Great Egrets. Other birds seen there this morning were:

Canada Geese

Mallard

Wood Duck

Mourning Dove

Great Blue Heron

Green Heron

Osprey

Fish Crow

Northern Rough-winged Swallow

Carolina Wren

Gray Catbird

Northern Mockingbird

Field Sparrow

Red-winged Blackbird

Common Grackle

Northern Cardinal

Blue Grosbeak

David Aborn

Birchwood Birding July 6, 2021

Date: Tue, 6 Jul 2021 19:17:48 +0000

In mid-morning today, I observed a male and a female Summer Tanager (SUTA) on my property in Birchwood (Hamilton County). I don't think I've ever seen a

male and a female SUTA on the same day. A couple of times, the two were in the same tree in good view at the same time. Did I have my camera? No. Later in the morning, I returned with my camera and tripod. Did I hear the male SUTA singing again? Yes. Did I see it again? Yes, briefly. Did I see the female SUTA again? Once, very briefly. Did I get a photo of either? No. Such is my life as a birder and poor bird photographer! I did see or hear some other species that I don't commonly see – a Wild Turkey, a Wood Thrush, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and a Great Crested Flycatcher.

Charles Murray  
Birchwood, TN



Great Blue Heron, Everglades, 1993,  
Ray Zimmerman

June 8, 2021

Hamilton County, TN

I found a surprising window casualty on the UTC campus today; a White-

throated Sparrow! I am not sure what the late date is for them in the state, but I would think this would rank near the top.

David Aborn  
Chattanooga, TN

### **Other informative birdwatching sites**

American Bird Conservancy  
[BirdScapes | American Bird Conservancy \(abcbirds.org\)](#)

Birders interested in state-wide reports of rare and notable birds, should join the [Tennessee Rare Bird Alert Group](#). The Facebook group has a handful of reasonable rules to help keep group posts on topic. The purpose of the rules are to help keep the group free from clutter that might cause confusion.

### **Join TOS**

Membership dues:

\$28- individual      \$32- Family  
\$15- student      \$40- sustaining  
\$460- Life (Life members must pay \$10 local chapter dues each year.)

**NEW: Join or renew your membership online!**

[ChattanoogaTOS.org](#)

**Select membership level, click “Add to Cart”, and you will be taken to the Secure PayPal site where you can pay by credit card or PayPal account**

All dues, donations, gifts, and bequests are tax deductible under Sec. 501 (c)(3), the Internal Revenue Code.

Need to pay by check? Make your check out to “TOS” and send to:

Fran Hiestand, CTOS Treasurer 8935 N. Hickory Valley Rd Chattanooga, TN 37416 Please include an email address.