

The Chattanooga Chat

CHATTANOOGA CHAPTER OF THE TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Red-bellied Woodpecker

Photo Credit: David Goldsmith

DECEMBER 12, 2024 PROGRAM

7 pm at Acension Lutheran Church
720 S Germantown Rd, Chattanooga

"45 Days of Budget Birding in Panama"

Luke Thompson, birder extraordinaire since boyhood, graduated from The Baylor School last spring and went directly to Panama, where he voraciously studied the avifauna and guided visiting birders, including CTOS members. He'll share photos, tales of thrills and adventure, and some close calls.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By OJ Morgan

For the past 123 years, North Americans have participated in the Christmas Bird Count, longest-running citizen science survey in the world. Begun by ornithologist Frank Chapman, the count, now sponsored by the Audubon Society, includes tens of thousands of fellow citizens across our land, now joining others in Canada, Mexico, and Central and South America. Along with eBird and other citizen-science reporting mechanisms, it provides essential data for the study and ultimate preservation of what we hold so dear. CTOS has been involved in the count for over 70 years.

Those involved in the CBC join in groups assigned to a “count circle” with a diameter of approximately 15 miles. Each group covers a small area within the circle, reporting their findings at the end of the day to the lead organizer, who in our case is Kevin Calhoon. Kevin, thankfully, has been doing this important work for years, meticulously recording and reporting our counts to the Audubon Society.

I want to encourage our members to take part this year, which will be held on Saturday, December 14. If you are interested, please email Kevin at kac@tnaqua.org.

Again, your participation will serve the mission of CTOS, which is to help promote the study and protection of birds.

Thank you!



Gadwall

Photo Credit: David Goldsmith

EVENTS AND BIRD COUNTS

🐦 Christmas Bird Counts: December 14, December 21 and January 1

Kevin Calhoon will be coordinating the **Chattanooga Christmas Bird Count on December 14** and the **Hiwassee Bird Count on January 1**. If anyone wants to participate and does not have a counting party, please contact Kevin at kac@tnaqua.org.

Bruce Dralle is coordinating the **Nickajack** count on **December 21**.

🐦 **SPRING TOS MEETING: MAY 2-4, 2025**

Our Chattanooga Chapter will be hosting the Tennessee Ornithological Society spring meeting beginning with a reception Friday evening May 2, 2025. If anyone is interested in helping with the conference, please email chattbirders@gmail.com.



Sandhill Crane

Photo credit: David Goldsmith

GREENWAY FARMS BANDING REPORT

From David Aborn

Here are some of the numbers from the 2024 fall banding season: I banded for 22 days, 4 hours per day using 8 nets, which comes to 704 net-hours (1 net open for 1 hour = 1 net-hour). I banded 131 new birds, had 10 recaptures from previous years, and 6 within-season recaptures, which comes to a capture rate of 21 birds per 100 net-hours. Here are my species totals:

White-throated Sparrow = 18 (13 of them were caught on November 5, and 8 of those were in a single net!) + 1 recapture (from 2022)

Wood Thrush = 14 + 1 within-season recapture; in 1 week it went from having no fat and a weight of 52g to having a fat score of 2 (out of 6) and weighing 58g

Brown Thrasher = 11

Ovenbird = 9

Hermit Thrush = 8 + 2 recaps

Carolina Wren = 7 + 3 recaps

Northern Cardinal = 6 + 4 recaps (1 from 2019)

Swainson's Thrush = 6 + 1 within season recap; in 1 week it went from no fat and 32g to a score of 2 and 36g

Yellow-rumped Warbler = 6

Tufted Titmouse = 5 + 1 recap

Magnolia Warbler = 5

Hooded Warbler = 5

Winter Wren = 5

Gray-cheeked Thrush = 4

Blue Jay = 4

Eastern Towhee = 3

Carolina Chickadee = 2

Gray Catbird = 2

Red-bellied Woodpecker = 2

Chestnut-sided Warbler = 1

Black-and-white Warbler = 1

Canada Warbler = 1

Common Yellowthroat = 1

Kentucky Warbler = 1

Worm-eating warbler = 1

Eastern Wood-Pewee = 1

Swamp Sparrow = 1

Ruby-crowned Kinglet = 1

I need to look at trends more quantitatively, but Magnolia Warblers, Gray Catbirds, and some others were definitely fewer this year than in past seasons. I thank Olivia Lowman for her help this season. We will see what the spring brings!

SUET RECIPES

This first recipe comes from Martha Sargent by way of **Clyde Blum**. Clyde makes up a big batch of this, but here is the recipe using the original amounts.

Martha's No-Melt Suet, submitted by Clyde Blum

1 cup crunchy peanut butter
1 cup lard
2 cups "quick cook" oats
2 cups cornmeal
1 cup plain all purpose white flour
1/3 cup sugar.

Melt the peanut butter and the lard separately, either on the stovetop or the microwave.

Mix together and add the other ingredients.

Pour into a square container about 2 inches thick.

Store in the freezer. This suet will not melt in warm weather.

Originally published in *The Chattanooga Chat*, February, 1996

Tommie Rogers uses a different recipe. She skips the peanut butter because of squirrels.

Tommie Roger's Suet

1/3 cup plain all purpose flour
1/3 cup old-fashioned oats
1 1/2 cup yellow cornmeal (not self-rising)

Mix together.

Melt 3 very heaping tablespoons of lard in the microwave and add the dry mix just until it doesn't look thick.

Stir and let cool. If it solidifies too dry, add a spoonful more of melted lard and remix.

Tommie writes, "I make it soft enough to insert it into holes bored into a slender log which hangs by a hook from a feeder pole. I try to mix up enough to last about four days. The birds love the mix regardless of the inconsistent proportions used. The birds which use it are: Summer Tanager, Chipping Sparrows, Junco, Titmouse, Cardinal, Bluebirds, Pine Warblers, Yellow-throated Warbler, Nuthatches, Wrens, and all woodpeckers. I put it out twice daily in winter and during breeding season as needed. Many species feed it to their nestlings and fledglings."



Pileated Woodpecker

Photo Credit: David Goldsmith