

# LARK NEWS

## *Lebanon Birding Club – John W. Sellars Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society*

Hope everyone has had a great Fall season. Our August business meeting was highlighted by an informative talk by Richard Conners on Fall Warbler Identification. We also had our Officers elections. Melissa Turrentine remained President, Linda Robertson remained Vice President, Stephen Zipperer was voted into the Treasurer position replacing Ann Holladay who wished to no longer hold the position. Ann has done an excellent job for our group for many years. Thanks so much for all you have done for our group Ann. Greg Tomerlin remained Secretary.

In September we were treated to an excellent talk about The Bosque NWR Volunteer Experience by Bob and Amy Swanson. They spent the winter volunteering and birding there. They were trained by biologists and firefighters before being given jobs like the mail run, wildlife tours, etc. They hope to do it again. Thanks so much for your interesting presentation.

Our October meeting was replaced by a birding trip to Sumner County. Mike Smith who is the eBird reviewer for Sumner and Robertson Counties lead us on a nice walk on the Greenway at Drakes Creek Park in Hendersonville. He also led us to a few other spots around the county. It was a nice morning of birding and discussing different bird topics along the way. Thanks to Mike and all that attended.

### **Fall TOS meeting Kingsport, TN**

Stephen Zipperer attended the Fall TOS meeting in Kingsport, TN. It was an excellent opportunity to see old friends and meet new ones. Birding was a little slow due to very dry weather in the area. But, a day of birding beats most other days. Hurricane Nate brought rain early to Kingsport so, Sunday morning birding was cancelled.

### **From the TOS Board Meeting:**

**Spring TOS Meeting** will be held in Chattanooga, TN April 20-22, 2018.

**Dr. Chris Hanney** will be the guest speaker. He is an expert on Seabirds and has worked along the Gulf Coast after the Oil Spill and after the major hurricanes that have impacted this area. Mark your calendars and make plans to attend.

**Duck Stamps:** With declining funds for our National Wildlife Refuges be sure to buy your Duck Stamp. If you buy them through the American Birding Association ([aba.org/stamp](http://aba.org/stamp)) you will help to give birders a louder voice in the management of these resources.

**TOS Website:** The TOS website is currently under new development. It should have a new look and be user friendly and up and running in the early part of 2018.

**Sandhill Crane Hunting:** Sandhill Crane hunting is now state wide during hunting season. 1200 permits will be issued with a limit of 3 birds per permit.

**Conservation Policy Committee:** This is the committee who you submit applications for money to be used for conservation projects. They review the applications and make recommendations to the TOS Board. To find the contact information currently go to the TOS webpage. On the left-hand side click on MORE, then click on Conservation Policy. They are also looking for new members for this committee. If you are interested follow the link and send them an email.

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS:**

**November 18, 2017:** Annual Soup and goodies at the Turrentine home in Bedford Co. With Bedford County birding to follow. Always a fun event. This is also when we renew our club memberships.

December no meeting.

**Saturday December 30, 2017 Wilson County Audubon Christmas Bird Count.** This is our second official count in our new count circle. We need everyone to participate. If you can come all day or half a day or a few hours please sign up to attend. We usually finish up around dark and head to Greg Tomerlin's house for pizza and refreshments and final tabulations. All experience levels welcome. We have leaders for each of our 4 routes.

**January:** The new **Wings of Winter Birding Event** will be held in Paris, TN on the weekend of **Jan 19-21, 2018**. Signups are currently underway. Go to <http://paristnchamber.com/wingsofwinter/> for information and registration. There will be talks and field trips that will let you in to the closed areas of the National Wildlife Refuges. TOS and Kentucky Ornithological Society and others are joining in supporting this new event. Since this is the weekend we normally meet we recommend going to this event instead of our meeting.

**January 27, 2018:** Annual trek to the Wheeler NWR in Alabama. Join us at the Wheeler Visitor Center for a great day at the Refuge observing thousands of ducks, geese and Sandhill Cranes, and possibly Whooping Cranes, along with whatever else is flying around.

**April 20-22, 2018:** Tennessee Ornithological Society spring meeting will be held in Chattanooga.

As always look for our emails and event posts on our Facebook page for greater details about meetings and club events.

**eBird news:**

If you have not heard long time State eBird reviewer Bill Pulliam died of aggressive lung cancer a few months ago. There is a memorial write up about Bill on the Home page of eBird.

Regarding eBird reviews, there was already a plan in the works to bring new eBird reviewers on board after Dr. Stedman resigned from reviewing the Upper Cumberland and Highland Rim area last summer. There is a large learning curve once you become a reviewer and training and confidence takes time and a lot of question and answers between experienced reviewers and new reviewers. Before Bills death several new reviewers had been brought on board with others waiting for the new reviewers to become proficient before adding more. With Bills death this process came to a halt. A plan was put forth to Cornell for a new State reviewer and new reviewers to be added. It took Cornell over a month to finally implement the plan. So, all the new reviewers are reading through all the instructions and asking questions and beginning the process of catching up on all the back log. Please give all the reviewers time to become proficient and your cooperation. Below is a list of all the reviewers and their assigned regions.

Scott Somershoe takes statewide lead on all eBird review replacing Bill Pulliam. Scott will also review all counties not listed below.

Susan Hoyle is in charge of most of Eastern TN. This is not a change. She has been in this position since eBird started in TN.

Kevin Calhoon – Franklin, Grundy, Hamilton, Marion, and Sequatchie Counties.

Mark Greene – Lake, Obion, Dyer, Lauderdale, Weakley, Haywood, Gibson, Benton, and Henry Counties.

Frank Fekel and Phillip Casteel will share duties in Cheatham, Davidson, and Williamson Counties.

Mike Smith – Robertson and Sumner Counties.

Mike Todd – Carol and Madison Counties

Stephen Zipperer – Bedford, Rutherford, Marshall, and Wilson Counties.

As the reviewers become comfortable with their new duties they may be given more counties. Also, other new reviewers may be brought on, In the future. Give all the reviewers your cooperation and patience. This is not something one jumps into lightly. This is Citizen Science and it's the reviewers job to insure the accuracy of all reports.

## **Cedars of Lebanon State Park:**

Hopefully the new trail leading from the Nature Center through the field and around the old barn and pond and back will be completed this winter. If it is hopefully we can lead spring and fall migration walks here. The trail is supposed to be completely handicap accessible.

There is also talk of a paved Greenway Trail from the Park to Gladeville. Your officers hope to have more information on this in the near future.

## **Zip Trips in planning stages:**

As you may or may not know I like to put together what I call birding adventures that are beyond your normal morning casual birding trips. Example: for the last 3 years I have organized the Reelfoot Lake to Memphis Birding Run (Facebook page is **Reelfoot to Memphis Labor Day Weekend Birding Adventure**). This is an all-day birding event held on the Saturday of Labor Day weekend. The day starts in Lake county and travels down the Mississippi River crossing over into Arkansas and down to Ensley Bottoms in Memphis. Continuing this theme, I have several new events I am working on. All of these events are free except for whatever it cost you to get there and participate. I have local birders who know these areas I am working with to develop these events.

A winter birding day is in the planning stages. It will be held on a Saturday in February. The event will probably start somewhere on Center Hill lake and travel through White and Cumberland Counties and possibly more checking ponds and fields for wintering birds and ducks in these counties.

Saw-whet Owl weekend: This event will probably be held in April. The group will leave Johnson City on Saturday afternoon and bird up Unaka Mountain and try to locate Saw-whet owls after dark. Sunday morning before sunup the group will head up Roan Mountain looking for Saw-whet Owls. This trip is not for late risers.

Cades Cove to Rankin Bottoms: This will be held in the fall. It will be an all-day trip starting in Cades Cove and ending in at Rankin Bottoms with stops in between. Warblers to shorebirds you could call this one.

Look on Tennessee Birding Facebook Page and TN-BIRD for further announcements on these trips. I will also include information in future Lark News.

## Hurricane Birds:

Several birds were found in Middle Tennessee after Hurricane Irma and Nate passed through. Ranger Mark Taylor and his wife Holly found a **Parasitic Jaeger** on Center Hill Lake. This bird turned out to be club member Chris Agee's 300<sup>th</sup> bird species seen in Tennessee. Congratulations Chris. The Stoll brothers back from Big Year adventures in Gamble Alaska located a **Black-capped Petrel** at Woods Reservoir. This bird was seen by quite a few people. The Stoll brothers are from Perry County Tennessee for those of you who have never met them. So far, this year they have seen 811 species in the ABA area. This includes birds seen in Hawaii which was added this year to the ABA area.

## 2017 Changes to the ABA bird check list:

There were several changes to the ABA checklist. I will only cover a few of them.

1. Thayer's Gull is now a subspecies of Iceland Gull. If you had both on your list you just lost one.
2. Yellow-breasted Chat has been moved from Wood Warblers and now is in its own family, Icteriidae.
3. They have changed the spelling of Le Conte's Thrasher and Le Conte's Sparrow to reflect the way the person these birds were named for spelled his name. LeConte's is the new spelling. The space is left out which is the way evidence shows 19<sup>th</sup> century entomologist John Lawrence LeConte spelled his name.
4. There is also a new sequence for sandpipers. In other words the order in which they are listed. I'm not going to type them all now.
5. Other changes were made, but these were the most relevant to our group. You can find complete changes at ABA.ORG.

## New Field Guide:

The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the **National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America** is getting rave reviews. Amazon has it for around 20 dollars as I type this. If you are looking for a new field guide or are a field guide collector like myself, buy a copy or put it on your Christmas list.

Good birding everyone. Hope to see you in Bedford County in November. It's always a great time of socializing and birding.

## Members out traveling:

Once again, we have members out volunteering their time at National Wildlife Refuges for a few months or through the winter. Keep them in your thoughts as they travel and provide much needed help in our under-funded Refuges.