



The Chattanooga Chat

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A Newsletter of the Chattanooga Chapter
Tennessee Ornithological Society

Meeting

Ascension Lutheran Church

720 S Germantown Rd

Thursday, August 13, 2009

5:30 p.m. Executive Board Meeting

7:00 p.m. Monthly Meeting:

Program: Debbie Shelly of the Chattanooga Zoo will give a live animal program and discuss the zoo's conservation efforts.

Bird of the Month: Dr. Roger Nelson will do the Bird of the Month on the Black & White Warbler.

Thanks to Chris Sloan for his presentation on "North Carolina Pelagic Birding" and to Dee Parker for refreshments at the July meeting.

Field Trip

Sat., Aug. 15: Sequatchie Valley

Scissor-tailed Flycatchers

Meet: 7:30 am (EDT) at the Bi-Lo at the Base of Signal Mtn. on Signal Mtn.

Road

Leader: Starr Klein

starr.klein@dixiegroup.com or call 423-886-2575 and Clyde Blum

cdblum@bellsouth.net or call 886-4130.

Recent reports from the Sequatchie Valley, near Ninemile Crossroads, have found several Scissor-tailed Flycatchers as well as Grasshopper Sparrows and Eurasian Collared-doves. Other possibilities include Dickcissels and Loggerhead Shrikes. Dress for warm conditions and bring something to eat and drink. Prepare for at least a half-day of birding.

What Have You Seen?

From Harold Sharp

Yesterday, July 16, I found an immature Little Blue Heron on Amnicola Marsh. Two areas there have been cleared to open up a view, one behind the big rocks and one near the Osprey pole.

Friday July 3, I checked the Great White Heron at Thomas farm; it was still there on the back end of the pond. I did not see the two Great Egrets, but sometimes they are back in the tall weeds out of sight.

If you are looking for a great place for a birding field trip, try the pond on Thomas Farm off Corridor J (Hwy 27). This morning I stopped there to check on the White Morph Great Blue Heron (Great White Heron), it was still there along with about 25 young Wood Ducks, 2 Green Herons, 4 Great Blue Herons, 2 Great Egrets, 4 Killdeer, 8 Mourning Doves, and about 35 Turkey and Black Vultures riding the wind above the pond along with 2 Red-tailed Hawks.

Thursday July 2, Don, Bill, Roger, Bret and I were on the Riverwalk watching the GWH at the dam, it flew across the river and landed on the barge. After a while it flew up under the railroad bridge and disappeared behind the cofferdam. I drove to the Access Road side to see if I could locate it. It was on the bank just below the guard rail and flew when I walked up. It went back toward the Riverwalk and turned

downstream flying over the railroad bridge. Below the bridge it dived into the water in front of a fisherman casting from the bank. It made several attempts to take off but kept falling back into the water. I thought it might be tangled in the angler's line, but after about 3 tries it took off and flew back across the river. Bret Douglas drove up about that time and we tried to see it below the barge. As I was leaving I saw the GWH fly under the railroad bridge. It circled back and landed on the downstream end of the rock wall as I left.

We have over 500 good photos by RWBC members of these birds and we will share them with anyone.

Maria Derrick Reports

A chimney swift has built a nest high on a sheltered wall on the UTC campus. I pass under the nest every morning on my way to work, and I've enjoyed watching the nest develop and getting a chance to see a bird that before this I had only seen in flight.

From David Stone

Recent sightings at The Honors Course include Pied-billed Grebe (July 9-12) - Kevin Calhoon thinks it may have nested nearby - Louisiana Waterthrush (July 7 -10) and Gray Catbirds (all during July). Most interesting, on July 19, I saw two Brown-headed Nuthatches looking over a bird house like they were going to build a nest. They have used this house before but I have never seen them nest more than once a year. I also have never seen them nest past mid-spring. I will watch to see what happens.

Jonnie Sue Lyons

June 24th I watched an Adult Barred Owl and two juveniles. She let them feed at a friend's house. The juveniles looked just as big and their plumage was the same as adult. The

only way to tell they were juveniles was by their actions of flying down to feed on whatever in the grass. Also you could hear their soft calls of chups, chips, chirps etc. as they flew within fifteen feet of us as we sat on steps of house. The calls went on from 8:00 PM until dark when we left. This was a true birding highlight for me.

July 3rd I had an immature Hooded Warbler bathing at the water area in my yard at 7:55 PM.

July 4th I had a Prothonotary Warbler at Nickajack pond.

July 4th I had Prothonotary Warbler and Great-crested Flycatcher at Baylor School pond. Also I had many Brown-headed Nuthatches in the Pines at the Baylor tennis center.

July 14 and 15 I had female Hooded Warbler bathing at my water area in my yard at 7:35 and 7:55 PM.

July 18th two adult Gray Foxes brought a pup to scrounge under the bird feeders at 4:55 PM. I have been seeing the Gray Foxes since April 14th and hoped that one day I would see their young. It was just a miniature adult with adult markings. The Pup drank at the water area as though he was right at home. The adults chase the squirrels and birds but haven't caught anything yet. The birds continue to feed on feeders and seem used to the foxes. They haven't learned a Gray Fox can climb straight up a tree. Although the Gray Fox doesn't take anything larger than a squirrel or rabbit, it has kept the stray cats away from my feeding area. I don't miss the cats but have missed my bunnies.

Dick Shier Reports Dickcissels in Northern Bledsoe County. Email him at rschier@aol.com to get on his mailing list and see his fabulous bird photographs

An Osprey Journal

From Carol E. Carson
and Ches Alper

Monday, May 4, 2009

I am observing an osprey nest. I've marked it on Google Earth, with the following coordinates:
35deg22'00.64"N 84deg54'37.02"W.
The Google Earth camera view near these coordinates is old. It shows the old Highway 58 bridge still standing and the new bridge before it was completed. The nest is atop one of the tall electric/telephone poles in the center of the new bridge on the west side.

I first noticed the nest being built in late March or early April. I've seen an osprey on the nest; an osprey on a nearby pole; and two adult ospreys flying nearby.

On Wednesday, May 6 an adult was at the nest and left. It came back with a fish. Another adult came to the nest also. We know there is probably a chick.

The surprise of the day was that I found a second nest with an adult Osprey. It is on a shorter pole, not on the bridge but just north of the Highway 58/Hiwassee River Bridge on the west side of the highway. There was one adult that didn't leave the nest. The nests appear to be approximately 50 - 75 yards apart. The second nest is screened from first by the top branches of a tree.

On June 15, I used our spotting scope to watch the nests. At the first nest there are two adults and two active fledglings. A youngster is at the edge of the nest, but is not flapping its wings yet. The other youngster is content right now to wait on its next meal.

A hunting adult returned to the nest with a fish and handed it off to the other adult. I think the less active

fledgling was fed first, with bites in between to the more active one. Then the adult fed the more active fledgling. Neither fledgling was flapping much, but it was late in the day (about 7 p.m.) when I observed them.

The second nest is about 75 yards north of the one above, just north of the bridge. My husband, Ches, has not seen any activity at this nest as he has driven by. I watched for a few minutes and no adult was at the nest. It has an untidy appearance - sticks hanging off the side and across at an odd angle - as if no adult is keeping it sturdy. We will continue to monitor it.

Ches and I spent about 1 1/2 hours on the afternoon of Tuesday, July 7 watching the Osprey nest. There are two healthy young birds. One was starting to exercise its wings a little. Both were intently looking for an adult to bring a fish. After 30 - 45 minutes, we saw an adult come to the nest with a fish. One of the fledglings took it and ate it - no sharing, of course. The adult did not stay around, but flew off immediately to hunt.

About 15 minutes later, the adult returned with another fish. To our surprise, the same fledgling got the second fish. The other fledgling looked interested, but was not assertive about trying to get the fish. The adult did not seem to pick which one was to get the fish.

Ches saw the nest briefly on Monday, July 13 with one bird sitting on the crossbar of the utility pole, not on the nest. He will try to check again today as he passes that way.

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\$15 - Student \$40 - Sustaining
\$460 – Life member (Life members must pay
additional \$10 local chapter dues each year.)

Send checks to Cathy Lockwitz, 4525 Lake Haven Drive, Chattanooga, TN 37416. Note: all dues, donations, gifts, and bequests are tax deductible under Sec. 501 (c) (3) of the internal Revenue Code of the U.S. Please make checks payable to TOS

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