



# through the biKNOXulars

November 2019



KNOXVILLE CHAPTER OF THE TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Please join us on **November, October 6** at 6:45 for a presentation by Lyn Bales. Lyn was a long time naturalist at Ijams Nature Center, author and public speaker. Lyn will be talking about “The Birds of Prey I have Known. He also tours around the East Tennessee area frequently with his American Kestrel “Doc”. The meeting is open to the public.



Bill Keeler with Knoxville Adventist School Students

## KTOS Works with Two Youth Groups in October

KTOS attended the regional Scoutfest in Blaine Tennessee of October 19. Approximately 2,220 scouts camped out over the weekend and plenty more attended Saturday with their parents. KTOS was set up with an educational booth where the scouts could learn about optics, birdwatching and how to feed backyard birds.

On October 24, KTOS led a group of 12 high school students plus staff from the Knoxville Adventist School on a bird walk at Seven Islands. The walk was to expose the kids to birds, wildlife and types of habitat during the 4 hour walk.

## Dean Turley Finds 2nd Record of Virginia’s Warbler in Tennessee

On October 6, Dean Turley was again out looking for migrating birds on his property in Union County. Dean had already had an incredible fall with sightings of Golden-winged Warbler, Least Flycatcher and several other less frequently seen species. But on the 6th, Dean photographed a picture of a warbler he did not know what it was. Once out on social media it was quickly verified as a Virginia’s Warbler. Incredibly, the only other record of this bird in Tennessee was this past winter up in the Kingsport. The bird did stay around a few days but unfortunately it was not reliable and Dean and Toby Koosman were the only two that got to see it.



Photo by Dean Turley

## KTOS Awards Two Memorial Fund Grants in October

The memorial fund committee met in September and voted to award two grants for 2019. The J B Owen Fund again awarded \$1,000 to Doug Raybuck to assist with his research project on Cerulean Warblers in the Cumberland Mountains. Doug is a graduate student at UT working under Dr Buehler.

The Marcia Davis Memorial Fund was set up to make grants that are have a bird education focus. The committee decided to fund the new enclosed bulletin board that is going into the Bluebird Barn at Seven Islands State Birding Park. The purpose of the bulletin board is to provide information to visiting birders to the park on what birds they could likely see and where best to go birding in the time they have available. The bulletin board will be installed around the first of November and the content will be managed by KTOS.

Tree Swallow Box  
planted near Sourwood Tree

## The Chickadee in the Coal Mine

By Karin Beuerlein



### Six thousand caterpillars.

That's how many it takes (at minimum) to raise a single brood of chickadees from hatching to fledging the nest. It's an incredible figure, especially considering how many flights the parents have to make to search out those caterpillars and bring them back to their babies. Seeds and fruits aren't the mainstay of raising young—nestlings need the protein found in caterpillars.

And where do you suppose all 6000 caterpillars come from?

That was the question I needed to answer in my own yard, where chickadees stopped breeding after the native vegetation around my house was lost to development. Even though my garden was growing, my bird diversity was declining.

Luckily, around the same time, I got hold of entomologist Doug Tallamy's fantastic books, ***Bringing Nature Home*** and ***The Living Landscape***. If you aren't familiar with either, I recommend you stop reading *this* and go read *those*. (Go right ahead; I'll wait.) They're absolute must-reads for any serious backyard birder. The first offers a plain-spoken primer for adding native vegetation to your property, and the second, authored with photographer Rick Darke, is a gorgeous illustrated guide that shows Tallamy's principles in action.



Tallamy explains in great detail why we need to pivot away quickly from exotic plants and turfgrass if we want to keep birds around. In both books, he catalogues which plants we need most to create biodiversity and quantifies which make the biggest contributions. (If you can do only one thing for birds in your lifetime, plant an oak tree. Somewhere. Anywhere.)

Long story short: with few exceptions, native plants—and particularly native trees—are the only ones that native insects use to reproduce. They and they alone are the source of the insect protein that birds use to feed their young. In fact, Tallamy's research shows that chickadees in particular need a landscape that's **at least 70% native** in order to be able to sustain a brood successfully to fledging.

So I decided to take stock and count plant species. And I got an unpleasant surprise.

Even though I thought I favored native plants, something was amiss on my nearly half-acre landscape. Through a combination of practical considerations (selecting narrow exotic evergreens for a hedge), plant lust (looking at you, golden dawn redwood), and poor planning (because . . . I garden, therefore I make impulse purchases), I had a landscape where exotic species equaled half my total—and more than half my biomass, since many of the exotics were large trees.

It gets worse. On the ten properties that touch mine, comprising three acres, I counted a total of *six native plants*, period. You read that right. Welcome to the modern subdivision. Those native plants were a river birch whose future I'm nervous about because it's planted too close to someone's foundation, and five dogwoods in one backyard that are currently being overrun by morning glory vine and johnsongrass.

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## Influx of Mourning Warblers in East Tennessee



Photo by Mark  
Armstrong

The drought that occurred this fall in East Tennessee led to a very high occurrence of Mourning Warbler sightings. Most of the birds were seen very close to a creek or river indicating these birds were not finding water in usual places and were hanging out near larger water sources. Sightings had been in Washington, Roane and Blount counties. Then, on October 20, a first year Mourning Warbler was caught and banded at Seven Islands, well after the expected dates for this bird to be migrating through. Another example how much Seven Islands is attracting rare migrants.



Please go to: [www.knoxvillebirding.org](http://www.knoxvillebirding.org) for all KTOS information.

- Calendar (Fieldtrip Info)
- Newsletters
- Membership Information
- Contact Us
- Facebook
- Photo Share
- Resources



Being part of a like minded community is important. Please remember to check the status of your membership. Melinda Fawver will be happy to answer any questions. You can email her at [knoxtbirds@gmail.com](mailto:knoxtbirds@gmail.com). Please remember to put "Membership" in the subject line.



Field trips and social gatherings are a great way of getting to know one another. Fields trips can be lead by any of our members regardless of skill level. We all can learn from one another. If you have an idea or would like to lead a trip, please contact Melinda Fawver at [knoxtbirds@gmail.com](mailto:knoxtbirds@gmail.com). Please remember to put "Field Trip" in the subject line.

Always check the Calendar at [www.knoxvillebirding.org](http://www.knoxvillebirding.org) to view upcoming Field Trips, Festivals, Bird Counts and Social Gatherings.

*Shade-grown coffee is a great product and environmental friendly for our beloved feathered friends.*

*To order shade-grown coffee, email David Johnson and Jean Alexander at [jjadmj@yahoo.com](mailto:jjadmj@yahoo.com). Your order must be turned in Thursday night before the meeting each month. David and Jean bring orders to the monthly meetings.*

*Thank you, David and Jean!*

<p><b>Sun-Grown Coffee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Grows faster</li> <li>✗ Requires more water, fertilizer and pesticides</li> <li>✗ Supports less biodiversity</li> <li>✗ Degrades ecosystems</li> </ul>	<p><b>Shade-Grown Coffee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Grows slower</li> <li>✓ Requires less water, fertilizer and pesticides</li> <li>✓ Supports greater biodiversity</li> <li>✓ Sustains healthy ecosystems</li> <li>✓ Allows farmers economic diversification</li> <li>✓ Tastes better</li> </ul>



**2020 Membership Renewals:**

Annual dues can be turned in at KTOS meetings or mailed to KTOS, 1553 Dutch Valley Rd, Clinton TN 37716. Dues levels: \$26/individual, \$30/family, \$38/sustaining, \$13 student (high school or younger), or TOS life membership for \$450 with \$8 annual fee to Chapter.



**2019 - 2020**

**Chapter Officers / Staff**

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Morton Massey

Vice President  
Bill Keeler

Treasurer  
Melinda Fawver

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Tony Headrick (2019 - 2020)  
Chris Welch (2019 - 2021)  
Tom Howe (2019 - 2021)

# Presidential Perch by Morton Massey

We have just finished the second month of our fall season and KTOS activities remain extremely high. In October we worked with two youth groups, we led three bird walks and held the Knox County bird count. The new birder bird walk scheduled for the 26th that had to be postponed had over 20 people signed up.

The fall TOS meeting was held the last week of September in Elizabethton. It was an extremely well run event put on by the Elizabethton club. KTOS had 12 or 14 attendees. The new TOS president, Danny Gaddy, seems fired up and excited about making a lot of good things happen in TOS this year.

One major development that was discussed at the fall meeting was that the new TOS website is nearly complete. KTOS has been discussing the last couple of months the possibility of redoing our website so we can add a blog and add some other features we presently cannot do. After looking at the new TOS website, we decided to move forward with a new KTOS website that will use the same design tools and look very similar to the TOS site.

We are pleased to announce our new website should go active in early November. It will include a blog and it will have the ability for people to go sign up for that blog as well as our newsletters. We hope to use Facebook to push more non KTOS members to our website to read our blog and newsletters.

Another major development has been the work on the new birder information bulletin board at Seven Islands. The bulletin board has been ordered and will be installed in the Bluebird Barn before November. Ron Shrives is working on maps that will show suggested routes based on how much time a visitor has to bird. Barry Spruce will be furnishing the photos that will go in the bulletin board. We have also created a checklist of the birds of Seven Islands along with lists of year round resident and other expected birds for the current season. While the bulletin board will be the property of Seven Islands, KTOS will be maintaining all the content that goes into it. Its been a long time coming but now there will be good information for visiting birders to the park.

## Upcoming November Events

- 2nd New birder bird walk at Lakeshore Park
- 2nd Cherokee Farms bird walk
- 6th KTOS Monthly Meeting
- 19th Executive Committee Meeting
- 27th Birding With Friends Walk at Seven Islands

All bird walks are subject to change. Please consult the KTOS calendar for the latest walk details.



December's program will be given by Morton Massey who's presentation will be on how to identify East Tennessee's winter sparrows. A walk at Seven Islands will be held on the following Saturday focused on winter sparrows.