

MINUTES OF THE 2007 SPRING MEETING--DRAFT
TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY DIRECTORS
MAY 5, 2007
BRISTOL, VA

The TOS 2007 Spring Meeting was held in Bristol, VA, May 4-6, 2007, hosted by the Bristol Bird Club. Field trips were offered to Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area, Grayson Highlands State Park, Whitetop Mountain, Bearcreek Lake & Campground, Steele Creek Park, Roane Mountain, and Shady Valley.

Prior to the meeting, State Ornithologist Scott Somershoe gave a presentation on MoSI (Monitoreo de Sobrevivencia Invernal) stations, which are bird-banding stations in the northern Neotropics that collect data to monitor overwintering survival of migratory landbirds. Because many of "our" breeding birds spend a good portion of the year in Central and South America, and since environmental conditions at wintering grounds affect populations of birds that we see here, projects like this are of particular interest in that they can yield information that is useful in designing more comprehensive and effective conservation strategies. Scott informed the group that the MoSI stations need funding to conduct this research and proposed that we consider adopting a MoSI station. This can be done for \$300/year, either at the state level, chapter level, or on an individual basis. TWRA Non-game Biologist Richard Kirk then presented the idea of birding festivals as a way of rallying public awareness and support for non-game wildlife management.

The Directors Meeting was called to order by President Danny Gaddy at 3:15. Secretary Laura McCall announced that a quorum had been met. The minutes from the Fall 2006 Meeting, held October 28, 2006, were distributed and approved with minor amendments.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Mac McWhirter gave the financial report for the year ended December 31, 2006. He stated that all things related to finance have gone well during the past year and he highlighted several areas from the distributed financial statement. Total investments for the Society are currently \$221,834 compared to \$214,019 at the beginning of 2006. In 2006 the Society operated at a surplus of \$10,875 with total revenue of \$27,237, which includes dues from memberships collected in the amount of \$13,862. Expenses were \$16,362 including the expense to produce the archival migrant C.D. at a cost of \$4,620 and \$1,500 in Conservation and Research and Goodpasture Awards. The Conservation and Research Restricted Fund has now grown to \$2,465 from additions of gifts and funds budgeted but not awarded in the current year.

He then distributed the 2006 membership report, noting that we had a total of 795 memberships, including 33 institution and library subscriptions. This is a slight decrease in membership level from 2005 and follows the trend of the last few years where we have seen an attrition of 2-3% per year in membership. He stated that this slight decline focuses the need to continue to improve educational programs and to involve younger birders in our ranks.

Mac reported that the Finance Committee has voted to close the accounts presently held by Morgan Stanley and to use index funds at Vanguard to lower the fee cost associated with those investments. The equity portion of the portfolio is also being increased from about 20% to a range of 40-45% to gain better asset allocation covering the broad financial market. Officer signatures are being gathered at this meeting and this transfer of funds should be accomplished before June 30.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: No report

Danny asked the Board to ponder what would happen if we had a claim against the organization, either at the state or chapter level. He asked the Finance Committee to investigate how to address this problem—perhaps a waiver or insurance policy would be the answer. Jo Anne Routledge asked whether seeking legal advice would be wise; it would be good to find out what our liabilities are before checking into insurance. Wallace Coffey suggested seeking advice from legal council **not** involved with TOS, particularly someone with experience in dealing with this issue for 501(c)3 organizations. The Finance Committee agreed to consider this issue after the meeting.

CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH FUND: No report.

Danny informed the Board that there are still vacancies on the Conservation and Research Fund Committee, and now is the time to fill these vacancies, as the busiest period for this committee is in the fall when grant applications have to be evaluated. As Outgoing President, Danny urged people to volunteer to serve on this important committee.

The Publications Committee also needs a chair.

TOS was granted a temporary reprieve when Theresa Graham said she would continue to serve as editor of the *Tennessee Warbler* until we find another editor.

Ron Hoff asked how many people are on the Publications Committee. Danny said that Mike Roedel,, former State Ornithologist, was on it, and his vacated position has still not been filled.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE:

CONSERVATION POLICY COMMITTEE (CPC): While no report was given from the CPC, Danny said that the committee had been very busy and had been dealing with several issues at the state and national level. There are currently a number of bills before Congress that will directly impact birds. Committee member Bob Hatcher listed a few of the issues the CPC has been tackling, including the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (specifically, on clarifying what it means to “disturb” the animals), water levels at Lake Barkley, and funding of Wildlife Refuges. Danny commended the CPC on their work.

Richard Kirk provided an update on the State Wildlife Grants. Sixty senators have signed on, including Bob Corker. Also, there are currently three bills concerning global warming, and all have expanded wildlife funding attached.

TENNESSEE BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE (TBRC): Danny read the TBRC report, prepared by TBRC Secretary Dean Edwards. The TBRC has had a busy spring, reviewing 30 bird-sighting reports, the largest single batch of reports ever reviewed by the Committee. This includes reports for some species that would be new additions to the State Checklist if accepted, including Cackling Goose, Greater Shearwater, South Polar Skua, Bicknell’s Thrush, and Black-throated Sparrow. The Committee thanked those who have submitted reports and urged everyone to continue documenting and submitting their sightings.

The Committee is working on a revision of the Official Checklist, and this will hopefully be ready by the Fall TOS Meeting. They are also working with Chuck Nicholson to update the TBRC website and add an online, digital version of the TBRC archives. The current Committee members are Dean

Edwards (Secretary), Kevin Calhoon, John Henderson, Don Miller, Jan Shaw, Dick Preston, and Phillip Casteel (Alternate).

TN-BIRDS: Listserv Moderator Wallace Coffey reported that there are currently 525 subscribers to TN-Birds, and this number is growing. It is self-maintained and user-friendly. Many other listservs have been modeled after TN-Birds because of its success. Postings are monitored not only by Tennessee birders, but also by many conservation organizations and state and federal agencies, including the Smithsonian, The Nature Conservancy, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Defense, Cornell University, TWRA, and many others. Wallace added that, because TN-Birds serves as a source of information for such a wide range of interested parties, it is very important to be clear on abbreviations and directions in postings.

TOS WEBSITE/DIGITIZATION OF *THE MIGRANT*: TOS Curator and Webmaster Chuck Nicholson reported that the server switch had worked very well, and that the transition had resulted in a lower cost and more space. Since the switch, there have already been 14,000 visits to the website, many over the last month. Back issues of *The Migrant* through 2000 are now available on the website, except for a few articles, which will also be online soon. Chuck is currently working with *Migrant* Editor Chris Welsh to put more recent articles online, with the goal of putting articles online one year after they come out in print. Chuck is also working to put the TN Important Bird Areas (IBA) site on the TOS website, and this will be in place very soon.

Chuck emphasized that more bird-finding articles are needed. This feature gets a lot of use and helps to attract new members. Updates from the CPC are also needed so they can be posted on the website. Chuck asked chapters to review the information currently listed and to send updates and corrections to keep this information current. He offered to post chapter newsletters on the TOS website as well.

THE MIGRANT: *Migrant* Editor Chris Welsh reported that he has been trying to catch the publication dates up, but that more articles are needed. Sighting reports as well as scientific articles are welcome. There are currently only a small pool of reviewers, and Chris would like to have more. As an editor, Chris indicated that he is open to constructive criticism and welcomes new ideas and suggestions, and although he has no desire to leave his current post, he said he would not want to stand in the way of someone who might be better suited to the Editor position. There were no takers on his offer.

Bob Hatcher announced that the US Senate voted last week to designate June 20 as American Eagle Day. Congress will vote on the measure next week, and it is expected to pass. June 20 has also been designated as American Eagle Day in Tennessee.

President Gaddy commended Bill Grigsby and the others from the Bristol Bird Club on a wonderful job of organizing the Spring Meeting.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Although no report was given by the committee, Chuck Nicholson indicated that a slate of officers was due to be presented to be voted upon by the membership at the Business Meeting later in the evening, as the terms of current officers would be expiring at the conclusion of that meeting. The Nominating Committee members who were present agreed to convene immediately following the Directors' meeting to prepare the slate of officers for presentation.

OLD BUSINESS: No old business was discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

MoSI Station Funding: Mac McWhirter asked whether there was any desire to fund two MoSI stations using the windfall gift of undesignated funds that TOS had received last year. This would allow TOS to support the project this year and give the Conservation and Research Fund adequate time to determine if they wanted to fund this on an annual basis. Ron Hoff explained, for the benefit of those who were not present during State Ornithologist Scott Somershoe's presentation, that MoSI stations are supervised by the Institute for Bird Populations, a credible and well-respected institution. The Institute for Bird Populations also coordinates the well-known MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survival) program. Ron urged TOS to make a commitment to funding a MoSI station on an annual basis. Scott indicated that TOS would receive updates on birds banded at any MoSI station we adopt. Dave Vogt volunteered that sponsoring a bird banding station for \$300 is a good deal.

Mac made a motion that TOS utilize the \$600 unrestricted contribution for 2006 to fund two MoSI stations. The motion was seconded by Ron Hoff and passed unanimously.

Directors-at-Large: no reports

Rack Cross extended a welcome to Bristol for all in attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Jennings McCall, Secretary

TOS Annual Business Meeting May 5, 2007

The Annual Business Meeting of TOS was held at the Waldo Miles Retreat Center in Bristol, VA, at 7:30 p.m. following a banquet.

President Danny Gaddy presided over the business meeting. Committee chairs or their representatives highlighted the reports of the Directors' Meeting, as recorded above.

Danny asked Ron Hoff to tell the membership about the Directors' vote to adopt two MOSI stations. Ron added that he hoped that this project would be funded on an annual basis.

Wallace Coffey introduced Rack Cross, a new bird bander under Richard Lewis's MAPS station.

Nominating Committee member Linda Kelly presented the slate of officers for election:

Vice Presidents – Dick Preston, West TN
Melinda Welton, Middle TN
Rack Cross, East TN

Treasurer – Mac McWhirter

Secretary – Laura McCall

Migrant editor – Chris Welsh

Directors-At-Large – Donna Ward, West TN
Steven Routledge, Middle TN
Dee Eiklor, East TN

Ken Dubke moved to nominate Chuck Nicholson as Curator. Wallace Coffey moved to close nominations, and the motion was seconded. Susan McWhirter moved to accept the slate of officers by acclamation. The slate of officers was approved unanimously.

The location for next year's Annual Meeting will be in West Tennessee. No site has yet been selected for the Fall Meeting, but it would be preferable to hold it in the middle of the state.

Danny thanked the Bristol folks for putting together such an excellent meeting.

Danny turned the gavel over to incoming President Richard Connors, and Richard adjourned the meeting at 8:05.

Bristol Bird Club member Bill Grigsby introduced the evening's speaker, Dr. Richard Peake, who is the author of *The Birds of the Virginia Highlands*. Dr. Peake presented a slide show of birds from around the world.