



THE DRUMMER

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RUSSELL COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Editor-Dave Worley

MEETINGS ARE THE 4TH TUESDAY
AT THE LEBANON COMMUNITY ROOM
AT 7:30 PM

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MEETING: Lisa Nutt gave a great program on the Cerulean Warbler and what the US Forest Service was doing to help it. She presented Certificates of Appreciation to all who helped with the bird counts last year at High Knob.

Happenings: Tom Hunter found an American Bittern at Elk Garden recently. Laverne Hunter, Bob Riggs and Dave Worley made it out to see the bird before dark. It was a third record for Russell County. The other sightings were in 1974 and 1981, both at Laurel Bed Lake.

April 1st found Tom & Laverne Hunter, Judy Settle and Nina Gates birding the Clifton and Elk Garden areas. They found Tree and Barn Swallows at Elk Garden. The highlight of the trip was seeing an Osprey, immature Golden Eagle and Red-tailed Hawk at the same time. The Osprey was perched and the eagle was soaring at tree top level when the hawk flew in to harass the eagle.

Bob Riggs reports that warblers are arriving in the area, along with plenty of sparrows in the fields and thickets. He has seen Vespers, Savannahs, Chipping, White-throated, Field and Song Sparrows recently. His first eggs (4) of the new millennium belonged to a Northern Mockingbird.

The annual Tennessee Ornithological Society meeting will be in Bristol on May 5, 6 and 7th. It will be held at the exit 7, Holiday Inn in Bristol, Virginia. The Bristol Bird Club is sponsoring it to highlight their 50th Anniversary. Numerous field trips will be conducted on Saturday and Sunday. There will be a banquet on Saturday evening with Dr. Charles Smith of Cornell University as the guest speaker. Registration is \$10 per person for the event and \$15.95 plus tax and tip (\$19.06) for the banquet. To reserve space send your money before May 1st, to Bristol Bird Club, c/o Lorrie Shumate, Treasurer, 156 Meadowlark Lane, Shady Valley, TN 37688. For more info contact Dave Worley at 880-1373 or 1374.

Tom & Laverne Hunter had Evening Grosbeaks at their feeder.

Judy Settle and Jean Montgomery saw 4 Green Herons, 7 Blue-winged Teal and a Solitary Sandpiper on April 16th.

PRESIDENTS` CORNER: I first noticed the dark objects and thought they were stumps, but they were Wild Turkeys standing rigid in the clearing while the morning sun peeked over the horizon. Both combatants were in full strut, necks tucked in tight to the body, chest expanded, wings extended, the tail fanned, thereby outlining each bird with a stunning arc of dark radiance. The wattles hanging from the head were a bright glowing red. A patch of blue was on each cheek. The clearing was small, no more than 30 feet separated the two males as they eyed each other, searching for weaknesses and remaining rigid. The battle for dominance had begun before I arrived and each turkey was so focused on the other that they failed to notice me as I slipped behind a tree and held my breath. These contests take place each spring in the woods and fields around the county, but rarely are they observed. Usually when a dominant male gobbles the other males in the area give him plenty of space, but sometimes he will be challenged. This morning I was witnessing the challenge. They faced each other, inching closer and closer, maneuvering to the side, but always facing the other. Breaking into a stupefied dance, they inch closer, until suddenly they exploded into each other. Crashing onto the ground, intertwining their necks similar to the way we arm wrestle. Tiring, they back off and once again face each other, more rigid than the trees around them. Bursting into the air, they again clash and frail each other, but one is clearly dominant. The outcome is settled and the weaker runs from the clearing. The dominant one gobbles exuberantly, announcing that he is the one all the hens will want that morning. God had certainly blessed me that morning, what a show!

Hey, get out there and find the action. Enjoy.

Bob Riggs

Habitat Tip: Those of you who enjoy the Northern Cardinals` bright red color and vibrant song can attract them to your homes by improving the habitat in your yard. Plant a cluster of several berry or fruit producing shrubs or trees to create a thicket. The cardinal requires a lot of cover. In wet areas, plant winterberry, inkberry and dogwoods. In dry areas plant highland blackberry, flowering raspberry, eastern cedar or sumacs. Here is a good website for wildlife landscapes and water gardens. www.for-wild.org/index.html

Meeting: April 25th, normal time and place. Slide show on warblers.

