

## Tellico Village Birding Club Newsletter – August 2023

### **Next Monthly Meeting**

The next monthly meeting will take place at 6 PM Tuesday September 5th in Room D of the Chota Recreation Center. The guest speaker will be photographer Clay Thurston.



### **Birds of Tellico Village Video Series**

Work has begun on Episode 3 of the Birds of Tellico Village video series. The new episode will feature Tufted Titmouse, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Mourning Dove, House Sparrow, Killdeer, and White-breasted Nuthatch.

Link to Episode 1: [Watch Episode 1](#)

Link to Episode 2: [Watch Episode 2](#)

### **Hummingbird Banding At Seven Islands State Birding Park**

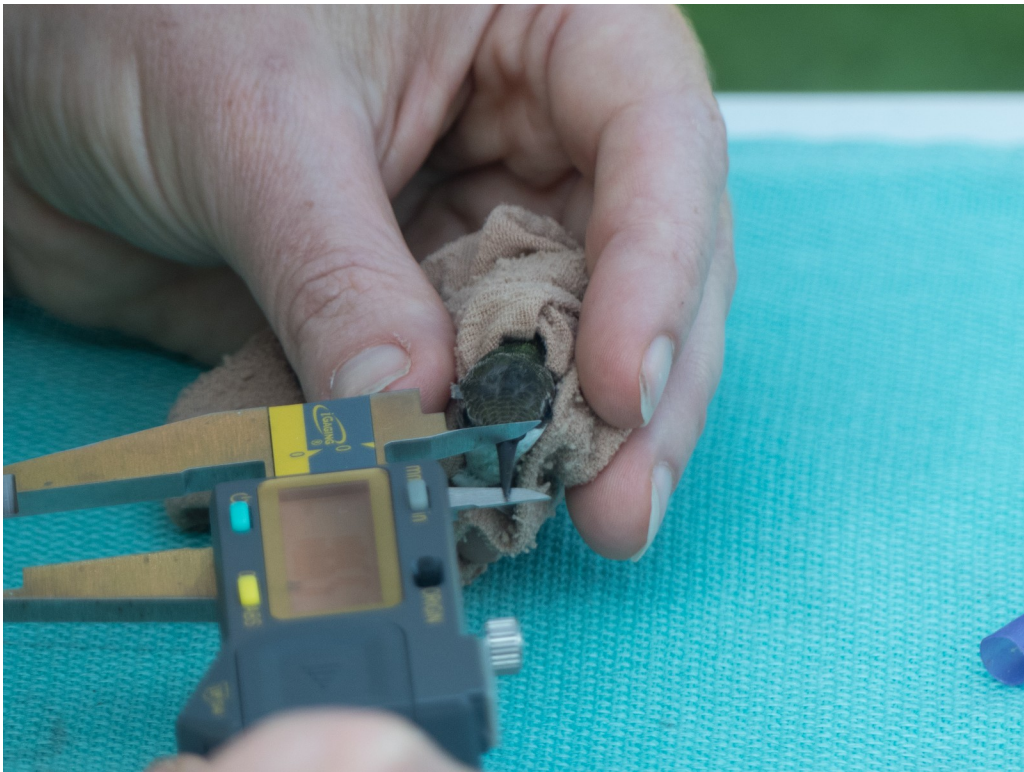
The hummingbird banding session at Seven Islands State Birding Park was held on Friday morning August 18<sup>th</sup>. It was unfortunate that weather caused the date to be changed from Tuesday the 15<sup>th</sup> since several club members could not make the rescheduled event. Hummingbirds were caught in a mist net and several feeders that had a fishing line triggered trap-door mechanism around them. Banding was done by licensed bird bander Mark Armstrong and assistant bird bander ranger Clare Dattilo.

As a side show, the area where the banding took place was fairly birdy and featured a couple of Northern Bobwhites calling from nearby long grass.

Below are some pictures from the event ...







## **Bird Watching Fun With AI**

Artificial Intelligence has been in the news quite a bit lately, with a lot of the discussion focusing on whether it will be used for good purposes or bad purposes. In order to give it a try I downloaded an app named “Ask AI” to my phone. The free version of the app allows you to ask three chat questions a day and provides an AI based response. For a not completely unreasonable \$39.99 you get unlimited questions. I had a small stash of free Google Play money (it’s a long story) so I did pay for the unlimited version.

One of my first queries was “What is birdwatching” which elicited the following response which I thought was pretty good:

Birdwatching, also known as birding, is a recreational activity that involves observing birds in their natural habitats and identifying different species. It is a popular hobby among nature enthusiasts, ornithologists, and bird lovers. Birdwatchers typically use binoculars or telescopes to get a closer look at birds and often keep a field guide or smartphone app to help with bird identification.

Birdwatching can be done in various settings, including forests, wetlands, mountains, parks, and even urban areas. Birdwatchers may go on hikes or nature walks to spot birds, or they may set up feeders or birdhouses in their own yards to attract birds. Some birdwatchers also participate in organized bird counts or join birding clubs or societies to share their observations and knowledge.

The primary goal of birdwatching is to observe and appreciate the beauty, behavior, and diversity of birds. Birdwatchers often pay attention to details such as plumage, songs, flight patterns, and nesting habits to aid in bird identification. They may also keep records of their sightings, create life lists (lists of bird species they have seen), or contribute data to citizen science projects that monitor bird populations and migrations.

Birdwatching provides an opportunity to connect with nature, enjoy the outdoors, and develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for birds and their conservation. It can be a peaceful and meditative activity, allowing individuals to escape the hustle and bustle of daily life and immerse themselves in the fascinating world of birds.

### **More Bird Watching Fun With AI**

After the hummingbird banding, I queried “Tell me five fun facts about Ruby-throated Hummingbirds” and the Ask AI app responded:

Certainly! Here are five fun facts about ruby-throated hummingbirds:

1. **Size and Speed:** Ruby-throated hummingbirds are extremely small, measuring only about 3 to 3.5 inches (7.6 to 8.9 cm) in length, and weighing just a fraction of an ounce. Despite their small size, they are incredibly fast flyers, capable of reaching speeds up to 60 miles per hour (97 km/h) during their migratory flights.
2. **Brilliant Plumage:** As their name suggests, male ruby-throated hummingbirds have a vibrant, iridescent ruby-colored throat patch, called a gorget, which shines brightly in the sunlight. The rest of their body is predominantly green, providing excellent camouflage in their natural habitat.
3. **Feeding Behavior:** Hummingbirds are known for their unique feeding behavior. They have a high metabolism and need to consume vast amounts of nectar to sustain their energy levels. Ruby-throated hummingbirds use their long, slender beaks and extendable tongues to reach deep into flowers, feeding on nectar and occasionally catching insects in mid-air.
4. **Migration Marvels:** Ruby-throated hummingbirds are remarkable migratory birds. They are the only species of hummingbird that breeds in eastern North America and then migrates across the Gulf of Mexico to spend winters in Central America or Mexico. This migration journey can cover over 1,000 miles (1,600 km) and requires non-stop flying for up to 20 hours.
5. **Acrobatic Displays:** These tiny birds are known for their incredible aerial displays. Male ruby-throated hummingbirds perform elaborate courtship flights, soaring high into the sky and then diving steeply downward, creating a distinctive "J" shape with their flight path. These acrobatic displays are used to attract females and establish their territory.

Overall, ruby-throated hummingbirds are fascinating creatures, combining speed, agility, and stunning beauty in one small package.

### **Member Contribution – Stephen Lyn Bales Zoom September 7<sup>th</sup> 7 PM**

Member Beth Burke noted that excellent speaker Stephen Lyn Bales will be doing a zoom presentation on East Tennessee birds of prey Thursday September 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM.

You can register for free: [Register For Stephen Lyn Bales Zoom](#)

About the event: To learn about the birds of prey living in East Tennessee and gain some valuable tips for identifying them, join UT Arboretum education coordinator Michelle Campanis and local author and naturalist Stephen Lyn Bales, via Zoom Thursday, Sept. 7, at 7 p.m. Eastern. Some of the local birds of prey to be discussed are eagles, hawks, vultures, and falcons. Closed captions are available for this presented by the UT Arboretum Society Zoom class. The program is free, but registration is required to receive your Zoom link and the recording. Register at [www.utarboretumsociety.org](http://www.utarboretumsociety.org) Contact Michelle at [mcampani@utk.edu](mailto:mcampani@utk.edu) for any questions or registration issues.

### **Member Contribution – Portraits of Pigeons**

Member Richard Ganch provided a link to a page titled “Photographer Captures Formal Portraits of 'Misunderstood' Pigeons “.

To check out the cool pictures: [Portraits of Pigeons](#)

### **Member Contribution – Courtship Dance Of The Male Red-Crested Korhaan**

Another contribution from Richard Ganch, check out the courtship dance of the male Red-crested Korhaan in South Africa.

Impressive, even when unsuccessful: [Courtship Dance](#)