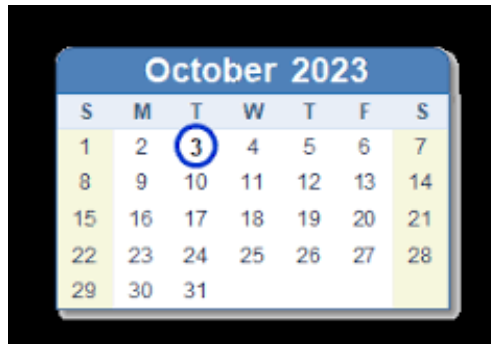


Tellico Village Birding Club Newsletter – September 2023

Next Monthly Meeting

The next monthly meeting will take place at 6 PM Tuesday October 3rd in Room D of the Chota Recreation Center. We will be playing “Bird Call Bingo” (kind of like Singo with a birding slant) so bring a pen/pencil/crayon and have some fun.



Birds of Tellico Village Video Series

Episode 3 of the Birds of Tellico Village video series is almost done! 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](#)

“Pickles” The Owl – Part 1

For those of you who missed it, here is a cut and paste of Lynda Parker’s original Facebook post from September 4th about the owl captured at the covered pickleball courts...

It really does take a village!

Friday afternoon, Sept 1st, around 2:00 I received a phone call from Larissa in the Tellico Village Recreation Department. She called me because she remembered I’m the president of the Tellico Village Naturalists Club, and she wasn’t sure who else to call. Pickleball players had been reporting a great horned owl was up in the rafters of the pickleplex at the Wellness Center.

I returned to the village around 4:30 and swung by the Wellness Center to check for myself, hoping the owl had moved on by now. But nope, there he was, perched high up in the rafters and looking very uncomfortable. Some people playing pickleball

recognized me and came over to tell me the bird had been up there all day Friday and most of the day Thursday as well. It was 82 degrees on the ground so I estimated it would be 100 to 120 up there in the peak of the pickleplex. I started making phone calls and was so very fortunate to reach Lisa, a raptor rehabilitator in Grainger County. After describing the situation to her, Lisa advised this bird seems to be in distress and needs to be rescued. She then told me she does not come to “rescue” birds but if I can catch the owl, she will meet me to take it into rehabilitation. She advised me to shoot water at the owl to encourage him to come down to the ground.

I left to go home and get some supplies. The pickleball players volunteered to remain at the pickleplex to “babysit” our new owl friend. I returned with the village directory, an old bed sheet, my cat carrier and a pair of heavy duty garden gloves. It took several of us calling friends and neighbors who volunteer with the TV fire department before we were able to obtain the phone number for the fire chief. I called Chief Dougherty and explained this unusual situation to him, and asked would it be at all possible for someone from the fire dept to come give us a hand? He called me back in less than 10 minutes and said he had a crew on their way to assist us.

I may not have all their names correct; but I want to express appreciation to Bill, Terry and Gary who brought the fire truck up from the station and of course to Chief Dougherty, who authorized this unorthodox fire call. After assessing the scene, the fire crew pulled their brush fire hose (I might not be using the correct terminology) from the truck and devised a plan to use the hose to flush the owl out one end of the pickleplex. They explained to me this is the hose they use to fight grass and low brush fires; they can precisely control how far and with how much pressure the water shoots from the hose. I believe it was Terry who was manning the hose. He aimed it at the owl and turned the water on. As he passed the water over the owl, the equivalent of a good soaking rain came down on the bird and disturbed him enough to take flight. All pickleball playing had stopped by this point and we had many onlookers cheering as the owl swooped down over the courts and then down to the other end of the pickleplex and back up into the rafters. The fire crew pulled more hose from the truck and Terry moved to the other end of the building to try again – with the same results – the owl left his position, swooped down and found another place in the rafters to perch. This happened several times. Now Terry was following the owl as he flew and letting the water rain down on him in flight. Finally, I think his feathers became wet enough that he was too heavy to fly and he came down to the ground and came to rest up against the fence between the courts. I had prepared one of the pickleball players how to help me once the owl was on the ground. We sprang into action and each grabbed a corner of the bed sheet, walked over to the owl and threw the sheet over him. I put on my garden gloves and carefully picked him up; someone brought the cat carrier and made sure the top was open. We put him in the carrier and then gently untangled him from the sheet. My leather garden gloves were a good call. The talons on a great horned owl can be 3 inches

long and can exert 200 to 500 lbs of pressure per sq inch. With the owl safely in the cat carrier, I put him in my car and drove home, and then called Lisa to let her know I had the owl safe. She immediately began her recall of her transport drivers to have someone meet me to collect the owl for the first leg of a relay transport to Grainger County. At about 9:15 Friday night, I met Tara, the first transport driver at the Ruby Tuesday parking lot in Lenoir City. After two or three more relays, I believe he arrived at the rehabilitator facility in Washburn, TN late Friday night. Lisa posted a photo of our owl on her Facebook page Saturday morning and then called me later in the day to give me an update on his condition. She said his eyes were badly irritated and he was covered with feather flies – which I've learned are parasitic bugs that attack birds and some mammals. He's a little underweight and definitely a young male, she thinks probably a bird of the year that's inexperienced and was having trouble hunting enough food to keep himself fed. I asked about his eye irritation because when we threw the sheet over him, he was glaring at us with round, bright yellow eyes that looked perfectly normal. She said it's possible he was banging his face on the door of the carrier during transport. Friday night she treated his eyes with antibiotics, sprayed him for the feather flies and gave him some fluids and liquid nutrition, and by Saturday afternoon, his eyes were looking better and overall he was feeling much better; she was planning to stop giving him fluids and put him on solid foods Saturday night. She told me she doesn't think he'll need to stay in rehabilitation very long. She just wants to put some weight on him and then he'll be released back to his home at the Wellness Center!

There's one more group of people I need to acknowledge: the people who showed up during the time I was coordinating with the fire department, ready to play some pickleball in the pickleplex – these 8 or 12 people just graciously moved over to the outdoor courts to play their game while the fire crew sprayed water all around the pickleplex.. If you were in this group, Thank You. You truly demonstrated the cooperative spirit of Tellico Village.

Pickles The Owl – Part 2

A now healthy "Pickles" was released back into the wild near the pickleball courts Friday September 22nd just before sunset. A great crowd, including many birding club members, were present. Below is a picture taken by Susan Kilday of the magic moment when Lisa Thomison of the Owl Ridge Raptor Center was about to do the release:



In addition to the release of “Pickles”, the crowd enjoyed an evening of owls featuring a Barred Owl, two Eastern Screech Owls (one gray, one red), A Great Horned Owl, and a Barn Owl. Here are a few pictures I took:







Here Come The Limpkins

If you look at the current range maps for Limpkins they would appear to be “Florida Birds”. But if you check out the “Tennessee Rare Bird Alert” page on Facebook you will find an increasing number of Limpkin sighting in Tennessee including one from the nearby Maryville Greenway. I can’t help get the feeling this is a bird which is on the way to becoming less of a rarity in our area.

Here is picture of a Limpkin I took in Florida a number of years ago:



You can find out more about Limpkins here at the Cornell Lab’s “All About Birds” entry: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Limpkin/id>

Member Contribution

Michael Elkins contributed the following: “Not a bird, but it does have wings! Spotted this Luna Moth in the yard a few weeks back. Pretty cool! ”. [I agree]:

