

## Field Trips

*Continued from page 5*

**Directions:** Meet at the parking strip southeast of 22nd Ave just north of Ferril Lake. From Colorado Blvd, turn west onto 22nd Ave and go past the Museum of Nature and Science. Turn left just before the zoo at the sign to the Pavilion Bandstand. Park on the left at the end of the parking area closest to Ferril Lake.

We will focus on photography of the heronry and cormorant colony and documenting nesting status as part of DFO's Colonial Waterbird Nesting Project. Bring spotting scope and camera if you have them. Night-herons and egrets should be building nests, and cormorants will be well into the nesting cycle. Don't forget water, snacks, and sunscreen. **Register online or contact leader.**

**Cheyenne Bottoms & Quivira NWR, Great Bend, KS  
Saturday, April 22–23  
6:00 AM - 6:00 PM**

Mary Cay Burger (Email: mcburger3@juno.com Phone: 720-940-8394)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 15

**Directions:** Drive on your own to Great Bend, KS on Friday. Meet Saturday at 6 a.m. at Quality Inn, 3500 10th St in Great Bend, KS.

**This is a 3-day trip.** Experience Spring migration in the Central Flyway at the peak of shorebird season. See many eastern species, 100+ species possible.

Bring scopes if possible. Arrive on your own in Great Bend, KS on Friday. Meet Saturday at 6 a.m. at the Quality Inn, 3500 10th St in Great Bend to bird Quivira NWR. Sunday at 5 a.m.

*Continued on next page*

## Last Month's Program: *Golden Eagles*

Tim Johnson

A corps of DFO stalwarts assembled on the chilly night of February 27 to enjoy "Eastern Golden Eagles: Tree-Hugging Forest Dwellers," presented by Scott Somershoe. Scott, currently the Land Bird Coordinator in the Migratory Bird Program for the 8-state Region 6 of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service, served as state ornithologist for nine years in Tennessee (further background was well described in the March *Lark Bunting*). His talk revealed new perspectives on Golden Eagles as well as glimpses of what recent technology can bring to ornithology and land use planning. (See video of presentation at <http://dfobirds.org/Programs/Past.aspx>.)

The largest populations of Golden Eagles occur in western states, but a few thousand (4,000–5,000) breed in Quebec and Labrador and migrate south to spend winters in Appalachia. In Tennessee, they are seen most often in the western part of the state along the Mississippi and Tennessee Rivers. The Eastern Golden Eagle Working Group (<http://www.appalachianeagles.org>; website needs updating) initiated a research project to explore basic questions about these birds in their winter habitat. Where are they and how many? What is their habitat, diet, and movements? Where do they come from and how do they get there and back?

To attract eagles in Tennessee, they established about 28 sites baited with road-kill deer, using the edges of small forest clearings as sites for cameras and rocket-propelled net traps. Sounds simple—drag in deer carcass, set up equipment, and wait. However, the carcasses needed rebar stakes and foot snares to prevent them from becoming dragged off by coyotes. Plenty of other scavengers turned up to purloin the bounty, including ravens, bobcats, Red-shouldered Hawks, and Bald Eagles. So, the remote camera images proved to be a gold mine of data for species other than Golden Eagles.

The Golden Eagles themselves were so skittish that one cough or ill-timed twig snap made them disappear for good, in part because these heavy birds need a few seconds to launch and are thus vulnerable on the ground. Some bait sites in western Tennessee never attracted an eagle, although Golden Eagles were seen happily hunting nearby. About half the sites were visited by eagles, all in eastern Tennessee.

The group has also tagged 12 Tennessee Golden Eagles with GPS-GSM tracking devices, through January 2017. These solar-powered units can send altitude, speed, and GPS coordinate data through a mobile phone network; can store up to 100,000 data points for later retrieval; and can be reprogrammed "on the wing." Scott described individual birds who have provided exceptional data. Below are three. You can find remote camera and tracking data (see especially the Hytop link below!) at <http://tnwatchablewildlife.org>.

**Freedom Hill:** An Alabama juvenile who traveled to the Gaspe Peninsula via Cleveland and Chicago. She died from unknown causes trying to cross the St. Lawrence River. Large bodies of water are major obstacles to Golden Eagles, as they cannot sustain powered flight for long periods.

**Jericho:** *Twit*chy when captured, Jericho was carrying 78 µg/100 ml of lead in her bloodstream, 5–10 times the levels known to cause problems. Follow-

*Continued on page 7*

## Election of officers and directors

At its April 25, 2017 annual business meeting, DFO will elect a full slate of officers for the next year and five directors for three-year terms. As set out in the bylaws, the election will be by majority of the voting members present in person at the annual meeting. The voting will be by voice vote.

The nominated officers and directors are

### Officers (one-year term)

Chuck Hundertmark	President
David Suddjian	Vice President
Debbie James	Secretary
Sue Summers	Treasurer
Mary Cay Burger	Membership Chair

### Board of Directors (three-year term)

Kristine Haglund	Historian
Ira Sanders	Legal Advisor
Karen von Saltza	Field Trip Director
Sharon Tinianow	Editor
Bill Turner	Program Chair

Vice President Bob Shade and Directors Tina Jones, Chris Rurik, and Lynn Willcockson will be leaving the board in April. The board thanks Bob, Tina, Chris, and Lynn for their years of excellent service to the DFO.

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### *LAST MONTH'S PROGRAM, continued from page 6*

ing chelation therapy, Jericho was released. Unfortunately lead (in humans) can leach anew from bone, so Jericho may have become *twitchy* again (she has not checked in this winter).

**Hytop:** (<http://www.tnwatchablewildlife.org/hytop.cfm>) Migrated to Quebec from southern Tennessee through Indiana and Michigan, being careful to cross into the Upper Peninsula at the Mackinac Bridge. For the entire trip, Hytop followed forested riparian corridors, sometimes extremely narrow; jumped from block to block of forest; and roosted in the largest block of forest available.

Another bird migrated north along a ridgeline festooned with wind turbines for miles. It survived, but clearly this is a significant issue now that turbines are getting higher, larger, and more common.

Overall, the study indicated that (1) there are lots of Eastern Golden Eagles out there, but they're in the woods where you wouldn't think to look for them! Several tagged birds highlighted this, never venturing out of a forested area for weeks at a time. (2) Conservation of large forest blocks is important for Eastern Golden Eagles and probably for other species. (3) Lead is a serious concern. (4) West Tennessee Golden Eagles differ from East Tennessee Golden Eagles. The Working Group hopes to trap some western Tennessee eagles, quantify landscape use data obtained from tracking, and encourage the use of their data in siting wind power development. We wish them well.

## Field Trips

*Continued from page 6*

we will go to Greater Prairie Chicken lek and bird Cheyenne Bottoms. Drive home Sunday afternoon.

Expenses: Approx. 800 miles driving, 2 motel nights in Great Bend, 3 days meals, \$25 fee to Kansas Wildlife for the lek. Contact leader for more details. Please try to carpool as much as possible. **Register online or contact leader.**

### **Bluff Lake Nature Center Sunday, April 23**

**7:00 AM - 11:00 AM**

Pratyaydipta Rudra & Sreemala Das Majumder (Email: [pratyayr@gmail.com](mailto:pratyayr@gmail.com) Phone: 919-699-4043)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

**Directions:** From I-70 East, go south on Havana Street and left onto E 29th Dr, which then joins Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. Continue on Martin Luther King Jr Blvd to Bluff Lake Nature Center in the park on left side.

Bluff Lake offers a great range of habitat: wetland, yucca, and large cottonwoods. This attracts a variety of raptors and songbirds. Portable toilets are on site but no potable water. Paths are easy walking trails. However, there is a stair to go down to the trail. We'll be walking about 2 miles. Bring plenty of water, snacks, sunscreen. Scopes are optional. **Register online or contact leader.**

### **Jackson Lake Reservoir Saturday, April 29**

**7:30 AM - 4:00 PM**

Chuck Hundertmark (Email: [chundertmark8@gmail.com](mailto:chundertmark8@gmail.com)

Phone: 303-604-0531)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 10

*Continued on page 8*