

the eagle

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Stephen Russell Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society / Virginia Society of Ornithology

BBC MEETS TUESDAY AT ETSU- BRISTOL.

Emory & Henry College biologist will speak at March meeting of BBC

Watch for more specific details about our speaker to be announced on Bristol Birds Net in the next few days. The meeting will be held Tuesday, March 21 at the East Tennessee State University -- Bristol Center on the Volunteer Parkway in Bristol Tennessee at 7:30 p.m.

DINNER AT THE MAD GREEK - 6 PM.

<http://www.madgreekrest.com>

vastly expanded menu; redecorated; reserved table
2419 Volunteer Parkway, Bristol, TN -- across from Avoca School
Phone: (423) 968-4848

The majority of members gather at the Mad Greek Restaurant at 6 p.m. for a fellowship dinner. Meals are on your own. Our pre-meeting dinners are an excellent way to learn other birder's by name, get to know more about them and get caught up on what we've been doing.

President Bill Grigsby will call the BBC monthly meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. at the ETSU Bristol Center and the program will be presented following a few brief announcements.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO HELP FRIENDS OF STEELE CREEK

The Friends of Steele Creek Nature Center and Park are still needing volunteers for working the race concessions the friends operate at the Bristol Motor Speedway.

One of the biggest races of the year is coming up next weekend (Mar 23-26). The Friends earn about \$9,000 per year which is used to help fund research, natural history programs like Wildlife Weekend and for trail improvement and other visitor services.

Please let City Councilwoman Margaret Feierabend 423-764-3336 and let her know if you can volunteer to help. She and her husband, Dr. Robin Feierabend, who heads up the ETSU Medical School operations at Bristol Regional Welmont Hospital, take on the responsibility each year to get volunteers and coordinate the race concessions for the Friends group at the speedway.

They are our most responsible and active advocates for both the Friends and the natural history efforts at Steele Creek Park Nature Center.

If you or a friend know of any one who would like a RACE experience, this is it ! Margaret would probably love to know that your best friend will help the Friends raise money for the park.

Work can be broken into shifts. Please let her know when you are available and willing to work. The shuttles will leave from a special out-of-the traffic Raytheon—American Phoenix—parking lot on TN Rt. 394 (beltway) where you may leave your car and will take you right to the door. The shuttle will also return folks there. On race days, the traffic may be very heavy and extra time should be allowed.

You can volunteer for inventory and set up involves counting, folding, getting prices with products, working on the displaying of the products. Working the race events involves being friendly with customers, making sales, counting money, giving change, etc. All the work does require being on your feet A LOT! (they do have rubber mats that are great!) Comfortable clothing, shoes, are musts!!

You will get a chance to walk just a few feet from where the shuttle drops you off straight to the Friends concession booth. You can also take breaks and look in on the race to see that sight if you have never had a peek.

If you have any possible chance to help, please call Margaret Feierabend 423-764-3336. Her last name is pronounced "Fire-Robin" and she is very friendly and easy to talk with. You can also e-mail her at: friendsofsteelecreek@peercom.net

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Bristol Bird Club Special Membership Benefit Report

Kaufman has doubts about Ivory-bill

By Kenn Kaufman *

March 17, 2006

A current mystery to me is the question of why there has been so little discussion of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers on I.D. Frontiers. In the nearly 11 months since the announcement of the reported rediscovery of the species in Arkansas, it has been mentioned here only briefly, and then mainly as links to other sources of information.

I don't mean that we should be discussing the philosophy or mythology surrounding the bird -- there has been at least enough of that elsewhere. I don't necessarily mean general discussion of the behavior of the species relative to the recent reports, although that does raise some interesting

questions. For example, the last two known birds in the Singer Tract in Louisiana were just not that hard to find. When R.T. Peterson went to the Singer Tract in 1942, there were no precise stakeouts, so he and his companions had to search for a day and a half.

Once they found the birds, though, they were able to follow them for nearly an hour. Compare that to the recent episode in Arkansas, with the bird(s) supposedly evading an army of searchers for two years, and it just doesn't make sense.

That's probably beyond the confines of what I.D. Frontiers can address. But there is one thing we could be sinking our teeth into: the four-second video that is the centerpiece of Cornell's "evidence" for the continued existence of the woodpecker.



Kaufman speaking to Bristol Bird Club - October 2000 at ETSU-Bristol

This video was shot almost by accident, by a continuously-running camera mounted in a boat; the searchers in the boat barely saw the bird, so the identification was based entirely on the video itself, not on any kind of sighting. When the paper by Fitzpatrick et al was first published in *Science*, they presented their analysis of the video, frame by frame, explaining why they had identified the fuzzy image as representing an Ivory-bill. I'm sure most of us have read that paper, examined the frame-by-frame, and looked at the video, but there has been startlingly little open discussion of whether the identification was correct.

Now the discussion is out in the open. In *Science* today there is a paper by David Sibley, Louis Bevier, Michael Patten, and Chris Elphick, examining the video and showing why the bird is more likely to be a Pileated Woodpecker. In the same issue, there is a rebuttal by John Fitzpatrick, Martjan Lammertink, David Luneau, Tim Gallagher, and Ken Rosenberg, reiterating their original position. If you haven't read these pieces, you can find them at:

<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/311/5767/1555a>

and

<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/311/5767/1555b>

The analysis by Sibley *et al* is new, but it's based on information and images that have been available for almost 11 months, and again I find it remarkable that this listserve has been so silent about the evidence. Then again, there has been a remarkable amount of fervor surrounding the initial report, with massive numbers of people believing simply because they WANTED TO BELIEVE, and attacking anyone who expressed any skepticism. As long ago as last June, when I mentioned in conversations that I thought the video showed a Pileated Woodpecker, some people reacted violently and accused me of being anti-conservation, or worse. With passions running so high, many I.D. experts may have decided to lie low and stay out of the controversy.

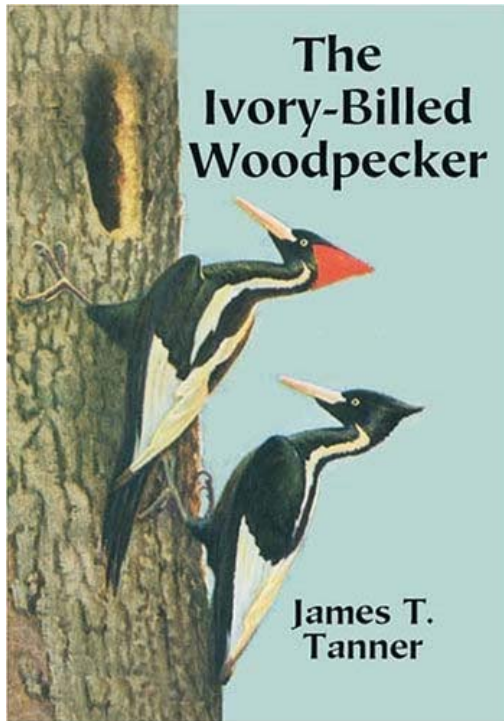
So I have to commend David Sibley *et al* for coming forward with their analysis. If you know David, you know that not only is he a genius, he's also modest and very quiet. He has no reason to seek publicity, nothing to gain by sparking controversy -- if anything, the wrath of "the believers" could hurt the sales of his books. So it took courage for him to go public with his doubts. Here's a challenge to the rest of you I.D. experts, playing it safe on the sidelines. Read the papers, look at the video, let us know if you detect any points that the papers published so far have missed. I have a lot of respect for all the authors of both papers, but I have to say that I still think the video shows the underside of the wings of a Pileated Woodpecker flying away above the plane of the camera. If you can prove me wrong, I'd love to hear about it.

I.D. Frontiers is sometimes a very active list. We'll go on and on about distant shots of worn hybrid gulls, or even about aberrant finches at somebody's feeder, in cases where we'll never really know and it doesn't make any difference. Here's a case where I.D. expertise could actually be useful, where it could affect what happens with millions of dollars of conservation funding, where it could have lasting influence on endangered-species policy. Here is where our ability to split hairs could actually be important.

Anyone care to contribute to the discussion?

Kenn Kaufman
Rocky Ridge, Ohio

* Kaufman is one of the most famous of all birders in North America. He is author of a recent field guide and many other books cherished by birders. For many years he has been recognized as one of the great field identification birders of our times.



JAMES T. TANNER

Tanner's doctoral thesis was originally published by the National Audubon Society in 1942 as Research Report Number 1 of the National Audubon Society, and then republished by Dover in 1966 in unabridged form.

In the early 1940's he was on the biology faculty at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City. He finished out his academic career at the University of Tennessee Knoxville. He is one of the most prominent of all Tennessee Ornithological Society members. He died January 21, 1991.

At ETSU he met his wife Nancy who now lives in Knoxville. She is likely the last person living to have seen the Ivory-billeds at the famous Singer Tract in Louisiana.

Their story is dramatic and fascinating.

You must read the new book *The Grail Bird* by Tim Gallagher (2005) by Houghton Mifflin Co. publishers. Turn straight to Chapter 3 -- "*Jim and*

Nancy" and page 39 where she was a recently hired English teacher at East Tennessee State in 1940 and she met Jim Tanner. She joined Jim and two other teachers on a Christmas holiday break trip to Louisiana to see the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. There she waded into the swamp alone with Jim before dawn and fell in love with the Ivory-billed and fell in love with Jim Tanner !

BBC 13th of month field trip

Our next walkup field trip will meet at the ETSU Bristol Center on the Volunteer Parkway in Bristol Tennessee. The meeting will usually be 8 a.m. unless a notice of time change is given. The April field trip is Thursday, the 13th. We are going rain or shine. Each outing will be to wherever the group agrees to go birding. You always know the date.

BBC DUES ARE WAY PAST DUE

BBC Treasurer Janice Martin says about half of our members have not paid dues for 2006. It is very important that we get the money in because we have to soon mail our dues payment to the Tennessee Ornithological Society.

\$20 Individual

\$26 Family

\$30 Sustaining

\$15 Student

\$10 Associate

(Associate Members must be members of another TOS Chapter)

Make your check payable to the Bristol Bird Club and mail to our BBC Treasurer:

Janice Martin
701 Euclid Ave.
Bristol, VA 24201

janice@bristolbirdclub.org

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BRISTOL BIRD CLUB CALENDAR

Mar 21 BBC meeting 7:30pm. at ETSU-Bristol. Dinner at Mad Greek at 6pm

Mar 23 Appalachian Spring Series: "Keys to Bird Identification in the Spring" Fred Alsop, 7:30 p.m. Higher Education Center, Abingdon, VA.

Mar 24 -- Mar 26 Bristol Motor Speedway Spring Race at Bristol. Plan for traffic and time for schedule when birding to Musick's Campground, Weir Dam, Middlebrook Lake at Bristol TN via Bristol Beltway (TN 394), VA Rt. 75 from Abingdon to U.S. 421 (including TN Rt. 44 which is part of that route from US 421 to VA Rt. 75 at stateline) and US 421 north from Shady Valley towards Bristol. NOTE: Race is daytime Sunday, Mar 26.

Mar 30 Appalachian Spring Series: "Hiking Off the Beaten Path" Joe Tennis, 7:30 p.m. Higher Education Center, Abingdon, VA.

Mar 31 Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy Gala: Celebrating our Mountain Landscape 7-9 pm, Nelson Fine Art Center, 324 East Main Street, Johnson City. Hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, and music will be provided. The public is invited to attend at no charge. Gala will include photos of the Golden-winged Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler and Alder Flycatcher taken by *Bristol Bird Club photographers Mike Poe and Dexter Newman and local birder Ed Schell.*

Mar / Apr Herndon Bird Club Spring Banquet will be Late March or early April.

Apr 8 Early Bird Season Bird Walk, Hampton Creek Cove State Natural Area in Roan Mountain, TN. To celebrate Tennessee State Natural Areas Week and an area designated as an Important Bird Area 9:00 a.m.

Apr 8 Steele Creek Park salamander walk to Hemlock Hollow. Wetlands Search for frogs and toads 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Apr 8 Steele Creek Park "Rooster Front" on Vance Drive. Wetlands Search for frogs and toads 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Apr 8 Buchanan County Bird Club outing in Breaks Park (Open to public).

Apr 8 Herndon Chapter TOS Saw-whet Owl field trip Roan Mountain time TBA

Apr 8-9 Natural Tunnel State Park, Dungannon, Va. Wildflower Weekend. Join local wildflower experts and park naturalists on hikes that highlight the park's native wildflowers. Various hikes will be offered throughout the day. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Apr 13 BBC 13th of the Month Field Trip, ETSU-Bristol Center 8 a.m.

Apr 18 BBC meeting 7:30pm. at ETSU-Bristol Center. Dinner at Mad Greek at 6pm

Apr 22 BBC Migration Field Trip to Standifer Gap Marsh, Chattanooga, TN This is an overnight event.

Apr 22 Bristol Arbor & Earth Day Celebration DeFriece Park 11 a.m. to 12 noon.

Apr 22-24 Spring Nature Festival - Warrior's Path State Park, Kingsport. Experience the delights of spring nature discovery. Participate in seminars taught by professionals, and hikes guided by trained naturalists. Topics include: spring wildflowers, tracking, astronomy, stream life, local geology, spring trees, and more!

Apr 23 Abingdon Arbor Day & Earth Day Celebration (BBC display will be up), Veteran Memorial Park, Abingdon, VA 2p.m. to 4 p.m.

Apr 28-30 Carolina Bird Club Annual Spring Meeting, Asheville, NC at Ramada Plaza Hotel, 435 Smoky Park Hwy. This is a block south of I-40 off exit #44. For reservations call 828-665-2161 or 1-800-678-2161. Saturday night speaker will be Paul Super, Science Coordinator at the Appalachian Highlands Science Learning Center on Purchase Knob, Great Smoky Mountains National Park. His subject will be Protecting the Birds of the Smokies: Avian Research and Management. Friday night speaker is Christine Kelly, Mountain Nongame Wildlife Biologist for the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. She is in charge of the Peregrine Falcon research. Excellent mountain spring warbler migration expected on field trips with birding experts.

Apr 29 Northeast Tennessee Annual Spring Bird Count by the Herndon TOS

May 1-7 New River Birding and Nature Festival

May 5-6-7 Roan Mountain Naturalist Rally.

May 5-7 VSO Spring meeting. Breaks Interstate Park. Sponsored by Buchanan County Bird Club

May 5-7 TOS Spring meeting. Nashville. Sponsored by Nashville Chapter TOS.

May 7 Steele Creek Park "Ridge Life Walk" North Ridge Trail. Moderate hike. Park wildlife and wildflowers 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

May 12-13 Mount Rogers Naturalist Rally, Konnarock, VA

May 12-13-14 Clinch Mountain Trails Spring Migratory Birding Festival Mtn Trails loop of Virginia Birding Trail. Saltville, Va. and Marion, VA. Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management area birds and butterfly walks will likely be Sunday morning, May 14, due to an open hunting season on the area Saturday.

May 12-14 Clinch Mountain Trails Spring Migratory Birding Festival, Hungry Mother State Park. Three days of bird watching for songbird and hawk migrations. A juried bird-themed arts and crafts festival, guest speakers and birding by canoe.

May 13 BBC 13th of the Month Field Trip, ETSU-Bristol Center 8 a.m.

May 13 Birding with the Herndon Bird Club, Sycamore Shoals State Park 8 a.m.

May 13 Appalachian Trail Days, Damascus: 2-4pm Tiny Critters Tell Tales - - A Look into Our Streams by Andy Brown at Rock School Auditorium (includes a monitoring session)

May 13 Steele Creek Park "Rooster Front" on Vance Drive. Wetlands Search for frogs and toads 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

May 16 BBC meeting 7:30pm. at ETSU-Bristol. Dinner at Mad Greek, 6 p.m.

May 18 Wildlife / Wildflower Hike, Steele Creek Park Nature Center, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

May 19-20-21 Mountain Lake Migratory Bird Festival. Headquarters: Mt. Lake Hotel 1-800-346-3334

May 19-20-21 Appalachian Trail Days at Damascus, VA.

May 20-21 Bristol Bird Club Natural Tunnel State Park Birding Weekend (IMBD Event), BBC members and park naturalists to lead hikes along the Natural Tunnel segment of the Virginia Wildlife and Birding Trail. Participants will view many species of birds passing through Southwest Virginia during the spring migration. There will also be a session on wildlife photography. Virginia Wildlife and Birding Trail. 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Duffield, Virginia

May 31 Native Tree Hike, Steele Creek Park, meet at Mill Creek Parking lot on Borad Street. 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Jun 3 Bibbee Nature Club (West Va. state bird club) Warbler Day - Tazewell Co., VA. Meet at the Hardee's at the 4-way in Tazewell at 7:00 a.m. to noon. Witten Park, the Mud Fork area, and Burke's Garden.

Date to be Announced - BBC Owl Prowl (Northern Saw-whet Owl), Roan Mountain, TN

Jun 10 BBC Whitetop Mnt. / Elk Garden Field Trip. Bird hike from Whitetop parking area down ridge thru the confier and northern hardwoods to the parking lot in Elk Garden -- an easy, beautiful and very birdy few hours. This has been a tremendously enjoyable walk and well attended.

Jun 13 BBC 13th of the Month Field Trip, ETSU-Bristol Center 8 a.m.

Jun 17-18: 60th Annual Rhododendron Festival Roan Mountain, TN.

Jun 18 Rhododendron Bloom Hike. Grayson Highlands State Park, Va. hike traverses the best rhododendron bloom on Wilburn Ridge. Massie Gap. 2 p.m.-4 p.m.

Jun 20 Regular date for BBC meeting but no meeting in June due to annual picnic which takes its place -- even though the picnic is July 1 this year.

Jun 23-25 VSO Statewide Summer Field Trip Mount Rogers, VA.

Jul 1 (Saturday) Bristol Bird Club Annual Picnic, Civitan Shelter, Steele Creek Park, Bristol Tennessee

Jul 8-16 Asa Wright Nature Center Trip to Trinidad. Good turnout. Reservations are already paid. The trip is full.

Jul 13 BBC 13th of the Month Field Trip, ETSU-Bristol Center 8 a.m.

Jul 15 BBC Funfest/Wards Feed Store Bird Walk (Bays Mountain Park, Kingsport)

Jul 15 14th Annual Butterfly Count, Roan Mountain. Sponsored by the North American Butterfly Association. Meet at the Roan Mountain State Park visitor center at 10 am.

**Jul 18 BBC meeting 7:30pm. at ETSU-Bristol.
Supper at Mad Greek at 6pm**

Jul 22 BBC Funfest/Wards Feed Store Bird Walk (Bays Mountain Park, Kingsport)

Jul 29 Virginia Highlands Festival, Virginia Creeper Trail Bird Walk. 7:30 a.m. Abingdon, VA.

Jul 29 -- Aug 13 58th Annual Virginia Highlands Festival at Abingdon, Va. While the festival has many excellent natural history and birding events, plan for traffic and time for schedule when birding to Musick's Camp Campgrounds via I-81 at Abingdon and Va. Rt. 75 towards Musick's, Weir Dam and Middlebrook Lake to TN Rt. 44 and U.S. 421. Abingdon traffic can be extremely heavy during the festival and long waits for off ramp to Va. Rt. 75.

Aug 6 5th Annual Elizabethton Butterfly Count, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sycamore Shoals State Historic Area(Don Holt)

Aug 13 BBC 13th of the Month Field Trip, ETSU-Bristol Center 8 a.m.

**Aug 15 BBC meeting 7:30pm. at ETSU-Bristol.
Supper at Mad Greek at 6pm**

Aug 24 -- Aug 27 Bristol Motor Speedway Fall Race at Bristol (night race Sat. Aug 26) Plan for traffic and time for schedule when birding to Musick's Campground, Weir Dam, Middlebrook Lake at Bristol TN via Bristol Beltway (TN 394), VA Rt. 75 from Abingdon to U.S. 421 (including TN Rt. 44 which is part of that route from US 421 to VA Rt. 75 at stateline) and US 421 north from Shady Valley towards Bristol.

Sep 8 BBC's Sponsored Mendota Hawk Watch begins , weather permitting.

Sep 8-9-10 Roan Mountain Fall Naturalist Rally.

Sep 15-17 Bristol Bird Club Natural Tunnel State Park Fall Birding Weekend. Join our birders on hikes along the Natural Tunnel segment of the Virginia Wildlife and Birding Trail. Participants will view many species of birds passing through Southwest Virginia during the autumn migration. Virginia Wildlife and Birding Trail. 8 a.m.-6 p.m.

Sep 15-17 Clinch Mountain Trails Spring Migratory Birding Festival, Hungry Mother State Park. Three days of bird watching for songbird and hawk migrations. A juried bird-themed arts and crafts festival, guest speakers and birding by canoe.

Sep (usually 3rd or 4th Friday but date to be announced) Bristol Bird Club Annual Banquet. No regular monthly meeting schedule for Sept.

Sep 19 Regular date for BBC meeting but no meeting in September due to annual banquet which takes its place.

Sep 30 BBC's Sponsored Mendota Hawk Watch last day of season coverage.

Oct. 7 Bird Walks at Sycamore Shoals State Historic Area with Lee & Lois Herndon TOS Chapter 8 a.m.

Oct 13 BBC 13th of the Month Field Trip, ETSU-Bristol Center 8 a.m.

Oct 14 15th Annual Shady Valley Cranberry Festival, Johnson County, TN

Oct. 14 Bird Walks at Sycamore Shoals State Historic Area with Lee & Lois Herndon TOS Chapter 8 a.m.

Oct 17 BBC meeting 7:30pm. at ETSU-Bristol. Dinner at Mad Greek at 6pm

Oct. 21 Bird Walks at Sycamore Shoals State Historic Area with Lee & Lois Herndon TOS Chapter 8 a.m.

Oct. 28 Bird Walks at Sycamore Shoals State Historic Area with Lee & Lois Herndon TOS Chapter 8 a.m.

Nov 13 BBC 13th of the Month Field Trip, ETSU-Bristol Center 8 a.m.

Nov 21 BBC meeting 7:30pm. at ETSU-Bristol. Dinner at Mad Greek at 6pm

Dec 9 Bristol Bird Club Annual Regional Christmas Party (final date TBA)

Dec 13 BBC 13th of the Month Field Trip, ETSU-Bristol Center 8 a.m.

Dec 16 Elizabethton Christmas Bird Count

Dec 17 Roan Mountain Christmas Bird Count

Dec 19 BBC meeting 7:30pm. at Steele Creek Lodge. Supper at Mad Greek, 6 p.m. Annual Christ Bird Count Planning meeting.

Dec 31 Bristol Christmas Bird Count

Jan 1 Shady Valley Christmas Bird Count

Jan 3 Compilation Meeting for Christmas Bird Counts 7:30 p.m. Steele Creek Park Lodge. Dinner at 6 p.m. at the Mad Greek.

BBC Winter Meeting Cancellation Policy

- (1) If Bristol Tennessee City schools are closed due to weather on the day of our meeting, BBC will not meet.
- (2) If ETSU closes all classes due to weather on the day or closes the ETSU-Bristol Center, BBC will not meet.
- (3) If the weather service or police call for hazardous road conditions in Bristol anytime after noon or before midnight on the evening of a BBC meeting, BBC will not meet.

Of course, if we have enough warning, we will post a cancellation on the Bristol Birds Net.

Bristol Bird Club Officers 2005-2006

President-**Bill Grigsby**-Kingsport, Tennessee

V. President-**Larry McDaniel**-Johnson City, Tennessee

V. President-**Dave Worley**-Rosedale, Virginia

Secretary-**Diana Worley**-Rosedale, Virginia

Treasurer-**Janice Martin**-Bristol, Virginia

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Curator/Newsletter Editor-**Wallace Coffey**-Bristol, Tennessee

Statistician-**Richard P. Lewis**-Bristol, Tennessee

THE EAGLE

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Bristol Bird Club Website

www://bristolbirdclub.org

Bristol Birds Net listserv archives

<http://www.freelists.org/archives/bristol-birds/>

Bristol Birds Net Photo Gallery located at:

<http://f2.pg.photos.yahoo.com/ph/jwcoffey/album?.dir=/efd5>