

THE MIGRANT



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AMERICAN WOODCOCK NEST IN WEAKLEY COUNTY, TENNESSEE

T. David Pitts
Martin, Tennessee

On 05 March 2005, James L. Byford flushed an adult American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) from a nest with four eggs on his farm approximately 4 km southeast of Gleason, Weakley County, Tennessee. On 07 March 2005 he told me about the nest and gave me permission to study the nest. Subsequently, I visited the nest site 14 times and observed activities at the nest, measured and weighed the eggs, and photographed the incubating adult (Figure 1), the eggs (Figure 2), and the newly hatched young. Apparently, this is the first documented American Woodcock nest in Weakley County and one of the few confirmed American Woodcock nests in west Tennessee. Nicholson (1997) describes American Woodcock as rare breeding birds in west Tennessee, with confirmed nesting in only three west Tennessee counties (Benton, Hardin, and Shelby).



Figure 1. American Woodcock adult incubating eggs at the nest in Weakley County, Tennessee. Photo by T. David Pitts.



Figure 2. American Woodcock nest with eggs documented in Weakley County, Tennessee. Photo by T. David Pitts.

The Byford farm, which is used for commercial timber production and recreational hunting, is located in the watershed of the Middle Fork of the Obion River and consists of 59.9 ha. The entire farm, except for a few patches of hardwood trees, was clear-cut in 1999 and subsequently replanted with Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*) in 2000. Most of the pines were 3-4 m in height in March 2005. Hardwood saplings were scattered among the pine trees.

The American Woodcock nest consisted of a ring of dead plant materials around a slight depression in the ground. It was located 0.5 m from the base of a 3 m tall Loblolly Pine on a ridge that sloped gradually to the west. Dense vegetation that was almost impenetrable to humans surrounded the nest. The most conspicuous hardwoods near the nest were Yellow Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*), Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*), Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), and oak (*Quercus* spp.) The ground cover included Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), blackberry (*Rubus* sp.), greenbrier (*Smilax* sp.), and Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*). Cleared field roads and fire lanes, most of which were planted with grasses and legumes, traversed the rolling hills of the farm; the cleared areas were used for courtship displays by male American Woodcock (Figure 3). The nest was approximately 40 m from the nearest field road. Moist woodland feeding sites for American Woodcock were located within 100 m of the nest. The nest was located at 36.196761 N, 88.552519 W; the elevation was 146.7 m above mean sea level.



Figure 3. American Woodcock nesting habitat contained dense vegetation around the immediate vicinity of the nest. Photo by T. David Pitts.

White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) used the farm intensively; their numerous trails through the dense vegetation were conspicuous. When Byford discovered the nest, he was using a chainsaw to remove trees and produce shooting lanes to facilitate deer hunting from a nearby stand. In spite of the disturbance from the chainsaw and the cutting of several

small trees located less than 2 m from the nest, the female American Woodcock did not abandon the nest.

I inspected the nest 12 times while it was active and two times after the young departed. The eggs hatched on 23 March. Using this date as a point of reference for backdating, I calculated that the female laid the first egg between 26-28 February and completed the clutch between 01-03 March. For this calculation I assumed the length of incubation to be 20-22 days and that the eggs were laid at the rate of one per day (Keppie and Whiting 1994). When I inspected the nest on 20 March, none of the eggs were pipped. On 22 March (at 1430) all four eggs were pipped; on 23 March (at 1645) four wet nestlings were present. The young moved around in the nest by crawling, not by walking. A dorsal egg tooth was clearly visible on each of the hatchlings. I was not aware at that time that young American Woodcock typically possess two egg teeth, one on the upper mandible and one on the lower mandible (Jehl 1968), so I did not look for the ventral egg teeth. Empty eggshells were lying in and adjacent to the nest. I noted that two of the shells had been opened lengthwise, as usually happens in American Woodcock but unlike songbirds, which typically open the blunt end of the egg (Wetherbee and Bartlett 1962). The third eggshell was opened at the blunt end, but a longitudinal break in the shell extended to about the middle of the egg; I did not closely examine the fourth shell. When I checked the nest the following morning (24 March) at 0745 only empty eggshells remained. The young birds apparently departed the nest sometime during the previous night or early in the morning of 24 March. Keppie and Whiting (1994) report that young American Woodcock leave the nest shortly after their feathers dry.

I measured the maximum length and maximum width of each of the eggs with a dial caliper on 20 March. The measurements (in mm) were: 39.19 X 29.38, 39.74 X 29.22, 37.74 X 29.25, and 38.31 X 29.74. The mean length was 38.75 mm, and the mean width was 29.40 mm, both of which are virtually identical to means of measurements reported from other parts of the breeding range (Keppie and Whiting 1994). I weighed each of the eggs with a digital electronic balance on 22 March (the day prior to hatching); the weights were 14.76 g, 15.02 g, 14.10 g, and 14.70 g with a mean of 14.65 g. I did not find any published information about the weight of American Woodcock eggs that were within 24 hours of hatching. However, freshly laid American Woodcock eggs have an average weight of 17.6 g (Keppie and Whiting 1994). If American Woodcock eggs lose approximately 15% of their weight during incubation, which is typical of many birds (Ar and Rahn 1980), I predicted the average weight of American Woodcock eggs at the time of hatching would be approximately 15 g. The average weight (14.65 g) of the American Woodcock eggs on the Byford farm on the day prior to hatching supported that prediction.

During 13 human visits (one by Byford and 12 by Pitts) to the active nest, an adult, that I assumed to be the female, was present on the nest 10 of those times. My presence caused the American Woodcock to flush, usually when I was 4-5 m from the nest, but sometimes only after I was within 1-2 m of the nest. On two visits when the female was not on the nest, I flushed an adult American Woodcock (from the same site each time) approximately 2 m from the nest. On only one visit to the active nest (16 March at 1420 with a cloudy sky and air temperature of 6 degrees C) did I not see an adult American Woodcock; on that visit, the eggs were warm, indicating that the incubating adult had been away from the nest only a short time.

On two of my 10 visits, the American Woodcock defecated on the nest rim and the eggs as she flew away from the nest. When flushed from their nests, some waterfowl routinely

defecate on their eggs; Swennen (1968) showed that these feces effectively deterred two species of mammals that are known to prey on eggs. I doubt that the female American Woodcock defecated on her nest as a defense against predators. I base this conclusion on my observations that (1) she did not defecate on the nest during eight flushes, (2) she also defecated on one of the occasions when I flushed her at a site away from the nest, and (3) American Woodcock commonly defecate when flushed during the non-nesting season.

Incubating American Woodcock that are disturbed by humans or other potential predators frequently perform distraction displays (Keppie and Whiting 1994). I did not observe any type of distraction display at the nest on the Byford farm, perhaps because the dense ground cover made walking so difficult (for both American Woodcock and humans). Also, the thick vegetation would have obstructed the American Woodcock's view of me and my view of the American Woodcock, both of which are probably necessary for a successful distraction display.

Out of concern that the female might abandon her nest, as often happens when an incubating American Woodcock is disturbed early in the nest cycle (Sheldon 1971: page 71), I remained at the nest for only a few minutes during each of my visits. I postponed taking measurements and weighing the eggs until they were near hatching, at which time the female is less likely to abandon them. The Byford farm female may have been especially tolerant of human interference. This possibility is supported by her returning to her freshly laid eggs after a noisy chainsaw buzzed close to her as she incubated on 5 March. The nest was approximately 1.6 km from the nearest public road, necessitating 3.2 km of hiking each time I inspected the nest, so I am confident that the only humans seen by the incubating American Woodcock were during the visits I report here.

My last visit to the nest site in 2005 was on 19 May. Empty eggshells were still lying in and around the nest, undisturbed since the day of hatching. Numerous mammals, including Coyotes (*Canis latrans*), Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), and Virginia Opossums (*Didelphis virginiana*), left their footprints in the field roads, but I found no evidence that any of them had visited the nest site, either while it was active or during the two months following the departure of the young birds. I suspect that the extremely dense vegetation surrounding the nest deterred potential mammalian predators. I visited the Byford farm during the 2006 and the 2007 nesting seasons; male American Woodcock were displaying from the field roads both years, but the 2005 nest site was not used for nesting in either year.

Some American Woodcock nests are not located in dense vegetation of the type I have described. In east Texas, American Woodcock commonly nest in pastures and meadows (Keppie and Whiting 1994). They may also nest in grasslands here in Tennessee. I talked with a Weakley County landowner who flushed an American Woodcock on 08 March 2005 while mowing a field of dry grasses; before he could stop his tractor, one of its wheels had crushed a nest with eggs. The landowner is familiar with American Woodcock; I have no reason to doubt his conclusion that an American Woodcock had produced the destroyed nest. The habitat in which this nest was located, a grass field dominated by Broomsedge (*Andropogon virginicus*) that is mowed at least once each year, differed greatly from the habitat on the Byford farm.

I suspect that American Woodcock nest more frequently in Weakley County than the small number of reports would suggest. Other American Woodcock nests could have been present on the Byford farm but finding them would require a huge amount of effort, even if trained dogs were used. On my farm 4.8 km southwest of Martin, Weakley County, I have observed numerous male American Woodcock performing courtship displays; I also have

three records of an adult with young (23 April 1978, 21 April 1981, and 13 April 1991). I have not succeeded in finding a nest in spite of intensive searches in areas where I had previously observed the adults and their young, all of which were adjacent to singing grounds.

The most conspicuous indicators of the presence of American Woodcock are the courtship displays of the males. Female American Woodcock commonly nest within 100 m of a singing ground (Keppie and Whiting 1994). I wonder what percentage of the singing grounds, or the areas adjacent to them, are also used as nest sites. The answer to this question would fill a major gap in our knowledge about the natural history of American Woodcock in Tennessee.

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Thanks to James L. Byford for telling me about the nest, for preparing a map that clearly showed the location of the nest, and for allowing me to access his farm and study the nest, and to Eric C. Pelren for reviewing the manuscript.

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BREEDING ANHINGA RETURN TO SHELBY COUNTY

Jeffrey Hill
Park Ranger, Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park
Memphis, Tennessee

The Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) is a large aquatic bird that breeds near small lakes and swamp land habitat throughout the southeastern United States (Figure 1). These birds can be differentiated from the Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auratus*) by their sharply pointed bill, longer tail and noticeable silvery wing patches. Records of large breeding colonies of Anhinga existed in far west Tennessee as recently as the 1940s before an apparent collapse. Since the collapse (Robinson 1990) of these large colonies, records of breeding Anhinga in Tennessee have been uncommon and typically consist of isolated pairs. On 8 May 2022, twelve Anhinga were observed soaring around Eagle Lake in Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park. During this initial observation the Anhinga were not seen performing any courtship displays or carrying any nesting material. On 28 May, an estimated 25 individuals were observed carrying nesting material into the tops of the Bald Cypress trees (*Taxodium distichum*) bordering the lake. Although it was difficult to differentiate between nests currently being constructed and nests from previous years, eight nests were actively being built by Anhinga (Figure 2). Other species observed building nests in the immediate vicinity include Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) and Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*). On 25 June, six occupied Anhinga nests were observed, two of which had a pair of nestlings. In two subsequent visits new nestlings could not be differentiated from existing nestlings. On the final visit to observe any potential activity, the nests were all empty and no adults were observed in the area. The area where these birds were nesting is closed to the public, but Tennessee State Parks in collaboration with Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency will conduct surveys in the future to monitor for any nesting activity.



Figure 1. Anhinga tending to a nest at Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park in Shelby County, Tennessee. Photo by Jeffrey Hill.



Figure 2. Multiple Anhinga nests documented in Shelby County mark the first known large nesting colony for this species since the 1940s. Photo by Jeffrey Hill.

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2022 TENNESSEE SPRING COUNTS

Ron Hoff
Loudon, Tennessee

There were 7 Spring birds counts conducted this year. Two hundred twenty-four observers recorded 203 species. The weather was mild overall with no major precipitation or high winds. Temperatures ranged from a cool 45° F in Elizabethton to 88° F in Montgomery County. Fulvous Whistling-Duck and Neotropic Cormorant were both new species for this count, bringing the all-time species total for the TOS Spring Count up to 278. Black-billed Cuckoo, Virginia Rail, Least Bittern, Snowy Egret, Peregrine Falcon, Horned Lark, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Marsh Wren, Pine Siskin, and Lark Sparrow were also notable.

The following species were all recorded in record high numbers since 2001: Wood Duck, Wilson's Phalarope, Least Tern, and Western Kingbird.

These species were all reported in the lowest numbers in the past 21 years: Ruffed Grouse, Chuck-will's-widow, Blue-headed Vireo, Loggerhead Shrike (first miss in 22 years), Red-breasted Nuthatch, Grasshopper Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Swamp Sparrow, Ovenbird, Worm-eating Warbler (tie), Blue-winged Warbler, and Black-throated Green Warbler.

The statistics for this compilation (total species found, high and low numbers, etc.) are from records I have been keeping since 2001 for comparison purposes. The counts in the table are arranged geographically from west to east. Taxonomic order follows the American Ornithological Society (AOS) Checklist of North and Middle American Birds, the 62nd supplement (2021) to the AOS Checklist.

COUNT SUMMARIES

cw = count week species (3 days before and 3 days after
actual count date, but not on count day)

F/Y= feeder/yard watcher

Blount County (BLNT) – 0450-2215. Weather: overcast, spotty light rain; wind 0-5 mph; 50-63° F. Least Bittern, Barn Owl, Peregrine Falcon, Common Raven, and 29 species of warblers were count highlights. Observers: Jean J. Alexander, Kat Barrow, Rick Barrow, Christie Bass, Frances Bunse, Wanda DeWaard, Erik Dodos, Andrew Feldt, Marian D. Fitzgerald, Tom E. Fitzgerald, Sandy Graves, Kim J. Henry, Stephen P. Henry, Bob Howdeshell, Thomas D. Howe (compiler), James R. Human, David M. Johnson, Evan Kidd, Morton Massey, Bridget McNew, Julie Moore, Michelle Pruitt, Logan Rosenberg, Michael G. Ryon, Beth Schilling, Harumi Tsuruoka, June D. Welch, Valerie Winingar, and Randy C. Winstead.

Elizabethton (ELIZ) - 0445-2200. Weather: overcast, misty light rain; wind NW 5-10 mph; 45-60° F. Notable sightings included Common Merganser, Fish Crow, and Golden-winged Warbler. Observers: Fred Alsop, Rob Armistead, Rob Biller, Tammy Bright, Kevin Brooks, Debi Campbell, Ron Carrico, Jack Counce, Sharon Counce, Catherine Cummins, Harry Lee Farthing, Jacob Foster, Makenzie Foster, Dave Gardner, Jennifer Kennedy, David Kirschke, Jackie Knight, Rick Knight (compiler), Roy Knispel, Richard Lewis, Larry McDaniel, Joe McGuinness, Brookie Potter, Jean Potter, Pete Range, Judith Reid, Judi Sawyer, Bryan Stevens, Kim Stroud, and Mary Anna Wheat.

Hamilton County (HAML) – 0500-1930. Weather: cloudy, light rain pm; 52-72° F. Highlights included Snowy Egret, Least Flycatcher, Bank Swallow, and Canada Warbler. Observers: Tim Baker, Jeff Basham, Harold Birch, Gary Brunvoll, Kevin Calhoun (compiler), John Dever, Bruce Dralle, Danny Gaddy, Bill Haley, Daniel Jacobson, Stephanie Jones, Katherine Jones, Sharon Klein, Gary Lanham, Pixie Lanham, Kathy Lockwitz, Rhonda McCarty, Barbara McMahan, Mike McMahan, Cynthia Morton, Pete Robinson, Tommie Rogers, Debbie Shannon, Roi Shannon, David Stone, and Penny Warren.

Knox County (KNOX) – 0447-1956. Weather: rain to partly cloudy; wind SSW 0-20, gusts to 30 mph; 65-77° F. Mississippi Kite and Lark Sparrow were new species for this count. Other highlights included Northern Bobwhite, Black-billed Cuckoo, Virginia Rail, Sora, and 51 Bobolinks. Observers: Amy Abercrombie, Robert Abercrombie, Zachary Arnold, Josh Baysinger, Karin Beuerlein, Frank Bills, Deedee Blaine, Eric Bodker, Josh Boucher, Barbara Brown, Doug Bruce, Howard Cox, James Davis, Tara Davis, Jeremy Dotson, K. Dean Edwards (compiler), Chuck Estes, Randall Falls, Melinda Fawver, Mary Feely, Dottie Habel, Patricia Harmon, Paul Hartigan, Gerald Hoekstra, Ron Hoff, Angela Hoffman, Susan Hoyle, James Human, Kristine Johnson, Michelle Johnson, Lorraine Lester, Jennifer Manges, Anne Marie, Lauri Martin, Morton Massey, Seth McConchie, Marcia Moon, Dollyann Myers, David Parmly, Jilynn Parmly, Kelly Roy, Martha Rudolph, Michael Ryon, Beth Schilling, Liam Sharp, Kevin Smith, Colin Sumrall, Laura Tappan, Keith Watson, Chris Welsh, Shane Williams, and Valerie Wininger.

Montgomery County (MONT) – 0520-1845. Weather: cloudy, partly sunny; wind SSE/W 5-10 mph; 63-88° F. Fourteen Northern Bobwhites, Semipalmated Plover, Alder Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo, 26 Henslow's Sparrows, and Lincoln's Sparrow were notable sightings. Observers: Susan Arnold, Elaine Foust (compiler), Joe Hall, Debbie Hamilton, Steve Hamilton, Iris Kilpatrick, Daniel Moss, Cyndi Routledge, Steve Routledge, and Sue Shipkowski (F/Y).

Nashville (NASH) – 0515-2300. Weather: partly cloudy, windy late; 65-80° F. Neotropical Cormorant, Mississippi Kite, 31 species of warblers, and Dickcissel were notable. Observers: Krista Allen, Kim Bailey, Bryn Beauchamp, Kinsey Bickham, Sandy Bivens, Kevin Bowden, Susan Bradfield, Trae Bradfield, Kristina Giard-Bradford, Jean Buchannan, Phillip Casteel, Richard Connors, Laura Cook, Allyson Davenport, Brad Dowd, Jessica Dragonetti, Frank Fekel, Avery Fish, Kelli Fly, Graham Gerdeman, Joy Giggie, Patrick Gritton, Lauren Hagan, Barbara Harris (compiler), Sue Lanier, Denis Lovell, Tim Loyd, Judy Luna, Roy McGraw, Deborah McQuaig, Emily Mills, Emily Moorman, Amy Pardo, Benjamin Pardo, Serena Pedane, Jordan Rex, Tom Seador, Jan K. Shaw, Kathy Shaw, Sheila Shay, Danny Shelton, Chris Sloan, Kathy Smith, Laura Smith, Michael Smith, Brenda Stein, Joe Stone, Carol Swann, Pandy Upchurch, Jerry Webb, LinnAnn Welch, Melinda Welton, MaryGlenn Williamson, and Grant Winter.

Shelby County (SHLB) – 0630-1900. Weather: partly cloudy; wind N 4-9 mph; 56-73° F. Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Alder and Willow flycatchers, 32 species of warblers, and Painted Bunting were count highlights. The total for Western Kingbird was a new high count for the state. Observers: Judith Barrie, Chad Brown, Judy Dorsey, Gregg Elliot, Andrew Gafford, Scott Heppel, Margaret Jefferson, Nadine Larimer, Perry Larimer, Anne O'Donnell, Rob O'Donnell, Dick Preston (compiler), Ryan Pudwell, P J Pulliam, Virginia Reynolds, Susan Riley, Caroline Schratz, Norman Soskel, Cathy Souther, Ed Thomas, Cliff VanNostrand, Deon VanNostrand, Jim Varner, and Tricia Vesely.

2022 Spring Counts	SHLB	MONT	NASH	HAML	KNOX	BLNT	ELIZ	Totals
Date	8-May	8-May	1-May	1-May	25-Apr	8-May	7-May	
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	56	-	-	-	-	-	-	56
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Canada Goose	55	176	82	163	285	177	482	1420
Wood Duck	18	58	126	4	32	95	58	391
Blue-winged Teal	47	-	5	24	9	15	4	104
Northern Shoveler	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
American Wigeon	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Mallard	79	2	40	91	68	48	113	441
Green-winged Teal	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Ring-necked Duck	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
Lesser Scaup	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3
Bufflehead	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Hooded Merganser	2	8	1	-	-	-	3	14
Common Merganser	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	5
Northern Bobwhite	-	14	4	-	6	6	-	30
Wild Turkey	2	18	36	5	12	45	41	159
Pied-billed Grebe	2	-	3	-	-	-	-	5
Rock Pigeon	98	1	10	157	44	18	124	452
Eurasian Collared-Dove	3	-	2	4	-	2	4	15
Mourning Dove	108	77	89	171	195	231	259	1130
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	7	21	1	1	5	6	2	43
Black-billed Cuckoo	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Common Nighthawk	3	2	-	-	-	2	1	8
Chuck-will's-widow	-	-	-	1	2	3	6	12
Eastern Whip-poor-will	-	-	-	51	-	12	12	75
Chimney Swift	216	29	50	61	59	165	401	981
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	18	8	14	4	8	17	19	88
Virginia Rail	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Sora	5	-	1	2	1	-	-	9
American Coot	1	-	18	-	-	-	-	19
Black-necked Stilt	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	29
Killdeer	19	33	35	15	23	24	32	181
Semipalmated Plover	2	3	-	3	-	-	-	8
Stilt Sandpiper	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Least Sandpiper	176	15	1	54	26	10	16	298
White-rumped Sandpiper	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Pectoral Sandpiper	36	-	-	4	-	-	2	42
Semipalmated Sandpiper	23	4	1	-	-	-	1	29
Short-billed Dowitcher	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Long-billed Dowitcher	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
American Woodcock	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Wilson's Snipe	-	-	-	1	2	3	-	6
Spotted Sandpiper	1	-	4	2	26	10	34	77
Solitary Sandpiper	55	1	2	22	15	8	13	116
Lesser Yellowlegs	262	1	1	11	1	1	5	282
Greater Yellowlegs	30	-	1	2	-	7	1	41

2022 Spring Counts Date	SHLB 8-May	MONT 8-May	NASH 1-May	HAML 1-May	KNOX 25-Apr	BLNT 8-May	ELIZ 7-May	Totals
Wilson's Phalarope	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Ring-billed Gull	-	-	27	-	3	-	3	33
Least Tern	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Caspian Tern	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Forster's Tern	-	-	2	4	1	2	-	9
Common Loon	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	6
Double-crested Cormorant	2	3	157	4	427	33	75	701
Neotropic Cormorant	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
American White Pelican	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	15
Least Bittern	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
Great Blue Heron	18	24	50	36	53	35	51	267
Great Egret	46	-	8	-	2	2	3	61
Snowy Egret	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Cattle Egret	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	6
Green Heron	6	7	1	13	15	18	10	70
Black-crowned Night-Heron	-	-	4	-	3	2	-	9
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	4
Black Vulture	18	62	157	81	66	23	40	447
Turkey Vulture	24	63	58	34	61	31	56	327
Osprey	2	1	9	18	45	19	4	98
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	-	1	-	2	1	-	5
Cooper's Hawk	3	1	9	-	4	10	3	30
Accipiter sp.	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Bald Eagle	5	1	6	3	4	2	5	26
Mississippi Kite	66	-	1	-	1	-	-	68
Red-shouldered Hawk	19	8	11	5	10	17	-	70
Broad-winged Hawk	1	1	8	4	1	1	2	18
Red-tailed Hawk	7	7	19	11	18	9	8	79
Barn Owl	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
Eastern Screech-Owl	-	-	2	5	3	1	3	14
Great Horned Owl	2	-	2	-	1	2	2	9
Barred Owl	7	6	8	1	4	1	1	28
Belted Kingfisher	4	3	10	3	9	12	11	52
Red-headed Woodpecker	6	9	11	7	-	2	2	37
Red-bellied Woodpecker	49	37	74	25	76	78	46	385
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
Downy Woodpecker	33	17	33	18	34	41	20	196
Hairy Woodpecker	1	2	8	3	6	4	7	31
Northern Flicker	1	3	9	8	13	9	36	79
Pileated Woodpecker	28	10	31	10	12	24	29	144
American Kestrel	6	2	6	2	2	1	8	27
Peregrine Falcon	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Great Crested Flycatcher	29	38	45	19	21	40	14	206
Western Kingbird	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
Eastern Kingbird	33	26	46	8	37	30	30	210
Eastern Wood-Pewee	49	48	32	9	3	32	11	184

2022 Spring Counts Date	SHLB 8-May	MONT 8-May	NASH 1-May	HAML 1-May	KNOX 25-Apr	BLNT 8-May	ELIZ 7-May	Totals
Acadian Flycatcher	20	36	17	-	-	5	15	93
Alder Flycatcher	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Willow Flycatcher	3	5	-	-	1	1	-	10
Least Flycatcher	7	1	-	1	-	1	2	12
Empidonax sp.	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Eastern Phoebe	6	15	15	29	31	66	61	223
White-eyed Vireo	56	28	84	22	19	23	7	239
Bell's Vireo	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
Yellow-throated Vireo	6	9	15	8	2	7	4	51
Blue-headed Vireo	1	2	5	-	1	7	25	41
Philadelphia Vireo	17	2	3	-	-	3	-	25
Warbling Vireo	7	4	19	-	1	-	8	39
Red-eyed Vireo	89	32	125	60	54	95	149	604
Blue Jay	39	24	109	47	131	149	193	691
American Crow	35	85	100	138	130	157	280	935
Fish Crow	8	-	-	10	7	3	4	32
Common Raven	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	9
Carolina Chickadee	38	21	116	69	112	135	123	614
Tufted Titmouse	76	51	134	67	109	123	140	700
Horned Lark	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Bank Swallow	6	-	-	1	-	-	6	13
Tree Swallow	6	4	29	89	167	145	399	839
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	27	2	65	73	82	66	168	483
Purple Martin	49	7	25	42	39	33	94	289
Barn Swallow	169	55	67	101	131	125	405	1053
Cliff Swallow	185	53	182	290	242	44	499	1495
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	-	6	-	3	3	-	13
Golden-crowned Kinglet	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Cedar Waxwing	234	48	191	200	195	283	75	1226
Red-breasted Nuthatch	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
White-breasted Nuthatch	13	13	32	14	23	22	11	128
Brown-headed Nuthatch	-	-	-	9	6	10	-	25
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	59	30	138	35	43	52	51	408
House Wren	-	20	5	6	11	18	53	113
Winter Wren	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2
Marsh Wren	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Carolina Wren	48	41	115	105	159	145	161	774
Gray Catbird	25	4	15	6	32	62	75	219
Brown Thrasher	9	16	21	33	62	57	64	262
Northern Mockingbird	32	45	73	100	145	122	93	610
European Starling	157	109	230	274	327	248	730	2075
Eastern Bluebird	26	51	75	84	112	127	141	616
Veery	13	1	9	3	3	4	19	52
Gray-cheeked Thrush	6	1	4	-	-	-	1	12
Swainson's Thrush	54	10	36	39	18	26	3	186
Wood Thrush	19	24	51	19	18	31	51	213

2022 Spring Counts Date	SHLB 8-May	MONT 8-May	NASH 1-May	HAML 1-May	KNOX 25-Apr	BLNT 8-May	ELIZ 7-May	Totals
American Robin	57	55	102	239	327	386	934	2090
House Sparrow	28	48	28	44	16	26	50	240
House Finch	6	31	69	109	150	122	62	549
Pine Siskin	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
American Goldfinch	38	32	114	20	64	124	224	616
Grasshopper Sparrow	-	1	-	-	4	2	1	8
Lark Sparrow	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Chipping Sparrow	22	55	41	57	28	34	95	332
Field Sparrow	4	37	87	24	84	57	29	322
Dark-eyed Junco	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	19
White-crowned Sparrow	3	-	2	-	13	2	1	21
White-throated Sparrow	10	2	20	1	8	5	1	47
Henslow's Sparrow	-	26	-	-	-	-	-	26
Savannah Sparrow	24	-	-	4	15	1	1	45
Song Sparrow	2	11	19	31	90	94	290	537
Lincoln's Sparrow	3	1	-	-	-	-	1	5
Swamp Sparrow	2	-	1	-	-	1	-	4
Eastern Towhee	8	48	60	79	124	72	151	542
Yellow-breasted Chat	16	23	21	10	18	30	11	129
Bobolink	193	3	-	-	51	5	-	252
Eastern Meadowlark	23	31	21	7	35	60	91	268
Orchard Oriole	8	20	41	11	30	17	20	147
Baltimore Oriole	9	3	35	3	5	7	11	73
Red-winged Blackbird	133	125	85	89	195	212	302	1141
Brown-headed Cowbird	99	85	104	65	56	70	101	580
Common Grackle	36	47	76	199	116	219	281	974
Ovenbird	9	2	6	12	1	11	88	129
Worm-eating Warbler	1	-	8	1	4	3	13	30
Louisiana Waterthrush	10	6	17	-	1	14	25	73
Northern Waterthrush	7	-	16	6	4	4	1	38
Golden-winged Warbler	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	4
Blue-winged Warbler	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	5
Black-and-white Warbler	10	-	9	15	2	34	37	107
Prothonotary Warbler	54	28	35	5	8	1	-	131
Swainson's Warbler	2	-	-	-	-	2	6	10
Tennessee Warbler	139	6	137	27	5	4	1	319
Nashville Warbler	6	-	8	-	-	1	-	15
Mourning Warbler	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
Kentucky Warbler	12	7	34	1	3	2	5	64
Common Yellowthroat	39	49	73	14	47	36	17	275
Hooded Warbler	12	2	20	10	10	46	85	185
American Redstart	41	1	21	15	8	34	14	134
Cape May Warbler	2	-	8	5	12	4	1	32
Cerulean Warbler	7	1	2	1	-	-	-	11
Northern Parula	46	21	54	5	15	40	46	227
Magnolia Warbler	42	1	12	7	2	6	2	72

2022 Spring Counts	SHLB	MONT	NASH	HAML	KNOX	BLNT	ELIZ	Totals
Date	8-May	8-May	1-May	1-May	25-Apr	8-May	7-May	
Bay-breasted Warbler	15	-	4	4	2	7	2	34
Blackburnian Warbler	2	-	8	4	-	1	3	18
Yellow Warbler	17	12	22	6	4	5	9	75
Chestnut-sided Warbler	25	-	9	5	1	8	15	63
Blackpoll Warbler	14	1	32	11	2	9	2	71
Black-throated Blue Warbler	-	-	1	8	2	1	33	45
Palm Warbler	13	-	47	4	8	1	1	74
Pine Warbler	3	4	8	7	9	15	9	55
Yellow-rumped Warbler	2	-	79	4	38	11	9	143
Yellow-throated Warbler	9	14	30	6	2	7	44	112
Prairie Warbler	8	17	21	23	2	13	1	85
Black-throated Green Warbler	2	-	8	12	8	23	33	86
Canada Warbler	1	-	1	1	-	3	10	16
Summer Tanager	59	35	55	11	8	11	1	180
Scarlet Tanager	16	4	39	17	15	17	60	168
Northern Cardinal	169	117	270	124	377	288	270	1615
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	19	-	59	7	15	11	11	122
Blue Grosbeak	13	17	23	4	12	8	8	85
Indigo Bunting	198	97	139	23	44	99	104	704
Painted Bunting	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Dickcissel	142	37	3	-	-	4	2	188
Total individuals	5330	2868	5744	4571	6275	6133	9880	40801
Total species	164	120	149	129	135	150	147	203
Observers	24	9	54	26	53	30	28	224
Parties	15	5	11	-	32	19	9--12	82
Party hours	46.5	31.18	99.67	64	93.93	118.96	-	454.23
Hours by car	14.5	15.52	18.47	28	10.83	19.83	-	107.15
Hours by foot	32	12.66	81.2	36	77.17	99.13	-	338.16
Hours by canoe or other	-	-	-	-	5.93	-	-	5.93
Miles by car	38	215.8	161.5	252	134.05	150.8	-	952.15
Miles by foot	27.5	3.2	57.08	34	61.68	54.19	-	237.65
Miles by canoe or other	-	-	-	-	5.69	-	-	5.69
Hours owling	-	0.42	1.5	4	1.82	5.58	-	13.32
Miles owling	-	3.5	4	18	1.4	21.22	-	48.12
Feeder observers	-	1	-	-	-	8	2	11
Feeder hours	-	2	-	-	15.93	12.93	-	30.84

THE SEASON – EDITOR’S NOTE

The Season report for winter birds (1 December to 28 February) is scheduled to be published in the June issue of *The Migrant* each year. This year the winter report will be delayed until a later issue; we are in the process of streamlining the report to make the information provided easier for volunteers to collect and compile for publication.

Bob Ford, Editor.

MINUTES OF THE SPRING BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

23 May 2022

Millington, Tennessee

The annual Spring meeting of the Tennessee Ornithological Society was hosted by the Memphis Chapter and held in Millington 22-24 May. The Board of Directors Meeting was called to order by President Michael Collins at 1:33 pm. Secretary Cyndi Routledge determined there was a quorum. A motion was made to accept as read the minutes of the Fall meeting; this passed unanimously.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Treasurer – Pam Lasley reported the assets for the Society at the end of 2021 were \$475,648 including cash of \$2,543; fair market value of our Vanguard investment was \$472,039. The year saw our investments experience a net increase of \$55,330, which includes total transfers of \$10,000 to operating checking. The reserve for publication of *The Migrant* was reduced to reflect that only two issues were outstanding for 2021 at estimated current costs. The Conservation Reserve was reduced by \$5,000 to show the first two payments to the Swan Conservation Trust.

Non-investment revenue for the year was \$16,558 for memberships and subscriptions; \$1,064 was received from contributions. Total expenses were \$30,669. Publications and communication are our largest expenses at \$20,121 and included five issues of *The Migrant*, three issues of *The Warbler*, and the website maintenance contract. We awarded \$3,822 in research and conservation grants. Insurance remained the same at \$997. Net revenue over expenses was \$52,283.

Our investments had an excellent year; dividends and interest for 2021 were \$18,960, and we gained \$46,370 in market value for the year. Investment performance was 15.8% for 1 year returns; three year annualized is 15.3%, and 10 year annualized return was 10%. Our portfolio mix is 64% stocks, 30% bonds, and 6% short term reserves.

Individual memberships increased to 693; institutional subscriptions remained the same. Total memberships stand at 710.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee - As required by the constitution an examination of the 2021 financial records was performed by finance committee members Steve Routledge, Barbara Pyles, and Dick Preston and found to be in good standing.

Conservation Research Funding – Chair Michael Collins reported that \$8,400 has been awarded this year.

NEW BUSINESS

Website – Cyndi Routledge presented a proposal from website developer Amy Wilms to integrate all Chapters under the main TOS webpage at no cost to the Chapters. This would have no effect on the chapters' individual websites. A motion was made and seconded to accept this proposal; it passed unanimously.

Proposal for Change in Procedure – It was proposed that TOS merge the evaluation process of all types of conservation funding requests into one committee to be named the Grants Committee. It would consist of seven members appointed by the President with diverse conservation and research backgrounds. They will develop overall priority for TOS spending for conservation and research funds and will publish guidelines and requirements for projects to be evaluated and funded. The committee will be assigned an annual budget in consultation with the Treasurer and approved by the Board of Directors. This committee will also consider extra-budgetary requests arising after funding has been determined for the year and advise the

Executive Committee which will have the final decision. A motion was made and seconded to accept this proposal; passed unanimously.

Amendments to the Constitution – President Michael Collins presented the following as proposed changes to the Constitution:

To increase our membership and attract a broader, younger membership a proposal was made to add the category of College Membership, to read as follows:

- College Membership – Available to all students enrolled in any post-secondary educational institution. Post-secondary institutions include colleges and universities, including graduate programs, community colleges, and technical and trade schools. College memberships shall be entirely digital and will receive information via email. The dues will be \$10 per year.

The Constitution states that members shall receive the Society's newsletter by mail. The proposed change would allow *The Tennessee Warbler* to be sent by electronic delivery only to read as follows:

- An issue of *The Tennessee Warbler* shall be posted on the Society's website at least 30 days before the annual meeting.

The Constitution also specifies that any proposed amendment to the Constitution must be mailed to the membership. The use of email for contacting membership is quicker, avoids the cost of postage and is a more environmentally sound method of contact. The change to read as follows:

- Any voting member may propose an amendment to the Constitution by notifying all officers, directors, local chapter presidents and secretaries of the proposed changes in writing by email thirty days before a meeting of the Board of Directors and by publication in the Society's newsletter thirty days prior to the annual meeting.

A motion was made and seconded separately for each of the proposals to be accepted as changes to the Constitution; passed unanimously. As such, having received at least 2/3 vote by the Board of Directors, the proposals will be presented at the Membership meeting and go into effect if passed by 2/3 vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Cyndi Routledge, Secretary

MINUTES OF THE 2022 SPRING MEMBERSHIP MEETING

23 May 2022

Millington, Tennessee

President Michael Collins called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm. He presented to the membership a synopsis of the Board of Directors meeting, including the passing by the Board of the three proposed amendments to the Constitution, allowing them to come before the general membership meeting. Each of the proposals was detailed and voted on separately; each passed unanimously.

The Distinguished Service Award was presented to Ron Hoff and Bob Ford for their dedicated service to the Society.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Cyndi Routledge, Secretary

THE 2022 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD PRESENTED TO RON HOFF

Susan McWhirter
McMinnville, Tennessee

Ron Hoff's career as a highly specialized welder allowed him to travel to foreign countries and bird in exotic locations, but that was just a small taste of what was to come. Since retirement he and his wife, Dollyann Myers, have traveled to bird in 95 countries, and Ron has seen a total of 8573 species worldwide. Ron has also photographed 5210 species. His photographs have been published in over twenty journals, books, and magazines including the Asian version of *Time* magazine and the noted *Handbook of the Birds of the World*. He has presented many programs of his and Dollyann's journeys for TOS chapters across the state, beautifully illustrated with his photographs. His incredible memory for details and knowledge of the species observed and their behavior, along with an obvious joy in the experiences of seeing the birds make his programs a joy for his audience. Ron and Dollyann have not neglected Tennessee in their travels as they have seen at least 114 species in every county of the state.

It is fitting that the Distinguished Service Award is being given to Ron, the originator of this award and one whose work for The Tennessee Ornithological Society (TOS) has been ongoing since he first joined over 40 years ago. Ron is a member of the Knoxville Chapter, and for the chapter he has served as a state director, newsletter editor from 1980 – 1983, led many local field trips, and participated in numerous Spring, Fall, and Christmas Bird Counts. He was a volunteer for the Bald Eagle hacking project in Chattanooga and Region 9 coordinator for the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Tennessee* for which he did hundreds of hours of field work and also wrote species accounts. Since 2002 Ron has been the State Bird Count Compiler for *The Migrant* and state compiler for the North American Migration Count from its inception in 1997. From 2004 – 2017 Ron served as TOS Associate Curator; he was Finance Committee chair from 2005-2012, Vice President for East Tennessee from 1997-1999, State President 2013-2015, and a member of the Tennessee Bird Records Committee since 2015. Clearly Ron Hoff is deserving of the Tennessee Ornithological Society's Distinguished Award.



Bob Ford (left) and Ron Hoff (right) receive the 2022 Distinguished Service Award for their efforts toward bird conservation. TOS President Michael Collins (center) presented the award during the 2022 TOS State meeting in Memphis. Photo by Melinda Welton.

THE 2022 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD PRESENTED TO ROBERT FORD

Susan McWhirter
McMinnville, Tennessee

Bob Ford began a study of birds early in his life. As a teenager he assisted TOS in Breeding Bird Surveys on the Hatchie River, and seasoned veteran birders were impressed with his knowledge and ability. From this early beginning he went on to earn a Master of Science degree from the University of Tennessee in 1990; his thesis was titled “Habitat Relationships of Breeding Birds and Winter Birds in Forested Wetlands of West Tennessee”.

A review of Bob Ford’s career from then is like looking through a guidebook for the study and conservation of birds, especially those of the southeastern United States and Tennessee. While still in college he worked as a seasonal naturalist for Tennessee State Parks, conducting basic biological inventories. In 1985 he was hired as a Field Ornithologist for the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) to supervise and conduct a study of sixty bottomland hardwood and swamp forest tracts. Then in 1987 he became TDEC Conservation Planner and Project Manager for the Hatchie State Scenic River where he inventoried and monitored transient and breeding bird populations at key sites and collaborated with private landowners for the successful implementation of forestry and wildlife management programs on public and private lands. From 1991 - 1996 he served as Project Leader, Tennessee Biodiversity Program and Southeast Partners in Flight, of the Tennessee Conservation League. From 1996 – 1998 he served as director of the Lucius Burch Center for Conservation Planning in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy and then for two years as a Director of Conservation Planning for the Nature Conservancy of Tennessee.

In 2000 Bob began his career with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as the United States Coordinator, North American Bird Conservation Initiative, and received the US Department of the Interior Meritorious Service Award for his work to establish migratory bird joint ventures in Mexico. From 2005 – 2008 he served as Supervisory Wildlife Biologist, Migratory Bird Program for USFWS; from 2008 – 2010 as Climate Change coordinator for the Southeast Region. In 2009 he served as Project Leader for the first US State of the Birds Report. From 2010 until 2015 he was Deputy Assistant Regional Director for Science Applications. From then until the present Bob has served as the Partners in Flight Coordinator and on the North American Wetlands Conservation Council staff. While coordinator, Partners in Flight completed the conservation assessment of all bird species from the Arctic to Panama and provided habitat and landscape-scale guidelines to federal public land managers.

Bob joined the Tennessee Ornithological Society in 1987. He went on to find the Jackson Chapter and serve as its president. On the state level he served as a Vice President in 1990, and a member of the Tennessee Bird Records Committee from 1990 – 1993. He served two terms as President from 1991 – 1995 and as editor of the Seasons Report for *The Migrant* from 1993 – 1996. He served as a regional coordinator for the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Tennessee* and wrote species accounts. From 2014 to the present he has served as Editor of *The Migrant*.

For his exceptional service to the study and conservation of birds in Tennessee and to the Tennessee Ornithological Society we present him the Distinguished Service Award.

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

The Migrant records observations and studies of birds in Tennessee and adjacent areas.

SUBMISSIONS: The manuscript should be submitted electronically to Bob Ford at editorthemigrant@gmail.com. Submission of hard copies is optional. If so desired the original and two copies of the manuscript should be sent to the: Editor: Bob Ford, 808 Hatchie, Brownsville, TN 38012. Manuscripts that have been published in other journals should not be submitted.

MATERIAL: The subject matter should relate to some phase of Tennessee ornithology. It should be original, factual, concise and scientifically accurate.

STYLE: Both articles and short notes are solicited; recent issues of *The Migrant* should be used as a guide in the preparation of manuscripts. Where more detail is needed, reference should be made to *Scientific Style and Format*, eighth edition, by the Council of Science Editors, councilscienceeditors.org.

COPY: Manuscripts should be double-spaced with adequate margins for editorial notations and emailed in Word.docx. Tables and figures should be prepared in a separate file with appropriate headings; see *Scientific Style and Format* for examples of appropriate form for tables. Photographs intended for reproduction should be at least 300 dpi or sharp with good contrast on glossy white paper. Weights, measurements, and distances should be in metric units. Dates should be in “continental” form (e.g., 16 March 1997). Use the 24-hour clock (e.g., 0500 or 1900).

NOMENCLATURE: The scientific name of a species should be given after the first use of the full common name in the text. The scientific name should be italicized and in parentheses. Names should follow the *A. O. U. Check-list of North American Birds* (seventh edition, 1998, or supplements).

TITLE: The title should be concise, specific and descriptive.

ABSTRACT: Manuscripts of five or more pages should include an abstract. The abstract should be less than 5% of the length of the manuscript. It should include a brief explanation of why the research was done, the major results, and why the results are important.

LITERATURE CITED: List all literature citations in a “Literature Cited” section at the end of the text. Text citations should include the author and year.

IDENTIFICATION: Manuscripts including reports of rare or unusual species or of species at atypical times should include: date and time, light and weather conditions, exact location, habitat, optical equipment, distance, behavior of bird, comparison with other similar species, characteristic markings, experience of observer, other observers verifying the identification and reference works consulted.

REPRINTS: Reprints are available to authors on request. Billing to authors will be through the TOS treasurer. Request for reprints must be made well in advance of printing.

SEASON REPORTS: Observations that are to be considered for publication in “The Season” should be mailed to the appropriate Regional Compiler. Consult a recent issue of *The Migrant* for the name and address of the compiler.

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