



MEMPHIS CHAPTER NEWS

TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

<http://birdmemphis.org>

October 2021

MARCH PROGRAM

MTOS member David Hill presented a program on birding the Mexican Border. David has studied birds since his youth. At age twelve he worked as a junior ornithologist at the New York Museum of Natural History. He received a bird banding permit and later assisted in bird research in South America where he became interested in aviation. As a young man he spent a summer living on the Gaspé Peninsula in Québec, where he studied and photographed a colony of nesting Northern Gannets. He has been active in local and international bird and mammal conservation efforts. In his talk, David showed photos of birds he saw and photographed about two years ago in various National Wildlife Refuges along the Mexican border. He saw hundreds of bird species including 119 that are found only in the lower Rio Grande Valley. At the Laguna Atascosa NWR, near Brownsville, Texas, which includes a portion of San Padre Island, he saw many water birds. The refuge was established to protect wintering waterfowl especially the Redhead Duck. It provides habitat for all kinds of migrating birds. More bird species (417) have been recorded on this refuge than any other in the NWR system. It is home to the largest population of ocelots in the US and to the Aplomado Falcon. Species David noted seeing there included Reddish Egret, Least Bittern, Black-necked Stilt, Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Mottled Duck, Black Skimmer, Brown and Am. White Pelican, White and White-faced Ibis, Long-billed Curlew, numerous tern species, Roseate Spoonbill, and Great and Boat-tailed Grackle. He next visited Santa Ana NWR. This refuge is also in the Texas Rio Grande Valley but has a variety of habitats including subtropical wetland, Chihuahuan desert, Gulf Coast and Great Plains. Notable fauna include the Texas Ocelot, Gulf Coast Jaguarundi, and Collared Peccary. Santa Ana NWR is in the northernmost range for a number of Central and South American bird species and is at the intersection of north-south and east-west migratory routes for many birds. Species that David mentioned seeing there included Green Jay, Long-billed Thrasher, Least Grebe, White-tailed Kite, Green Kingfisher, Altamira and Audubon's Orioles, Virginia and Clapper Rails, Vermillion Flycatcher, Plain Chachalaca, Crimson-collared Grosbeak,

Crested Caracara, Couch's Kingbird, Olive Sparrow, Great Kiskadee, Black-crested Titmouse, Green Parakeet, and Red-crowned Parrot. David went on to the Bitter Lake NWR in New Mexico. Bitter Lake is an oasis in the desert. In this refuge the Chihuahuan desert meets the short grass prairie of the Southern Plains, and the Pecos River and gypsum karst topography provide wetland habitat. The refuge was established to protect wintering migratory birds. Its unique mixture of habitats supports wetland and desert species. The refuge provides habitat for large numbers of migrating Sandhill Cranes, 20 duck species, and a variety of shorebirds. David noted seeing N. Bobwhite, Upland Sandpiper, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, American Bittern, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Chihuahuan Raven, Phainopepla, Pyrrhuloxia, Canyon Towhee, Black-throated Sparrow, and Bewick's and Cactus Wrens. He noted seeing Verdin. These tiny desert-dwelling tit-like birds are the only member of the genus *Auriparus* and the only member of the old world family Remizidae to be found in North America. He commented on seeing a light phase Ferruginous Hawk. He continued his journey to Buenos Aires NWR in Southern Arizona. This refuge sits above the desert and has a mixture of semiarid grasslands and seasonal wetlands, willow-and cottonwood-lined riverbanks, and the higher elevation Brown Canyon. It is the northernmost range for several species. David commented on seeing Anna's, Broad-billed, and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, Juniper Titmouse, Acorn Woodpecker, Mexican and Woodhouse's Scrub Jay, Yellow-eyed Junco, Gambel's Quail, and Mexican Duck. He noted that the Great Horned Owls of the desert are lighter in color than those we see in the east. He enjoyed seeing Western Bluebirds as he has worked extensively with conservation of the Eastern Bluebird.

-Margaret Jefferson

The Memphis Chapter invites all TOS members and friends to the Spring State Meeting April 22-24. Our speaker Saturday will be Bird Watcher's Digest and Watching Backyard Birds editor, Dawn Hewitt. All field trips will depart from the hotel. Saturday destinations include: Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park, Shelby Farms Park (and the Mid-South Raptor Center), and Ensley Bottoms aka "The Pits." Sunday features a trip to Hatchie National Wildlife Refuge, right off I-40 and convenient for those heading back east.

Dinner reservation deadline is April 10. For complete info, including reservation and registration, click on the link at <http://birdmemphis.org> or go to <https://tnbirds.org/event/annual-tos-spring-meeting-april-22-24-2022>

Chapter Meeting

Shelby Farms Park
Buffalo Room



**Wednesday,
April 20, 2022**

7:00 pm

Enter/Exit through the Coastal Fish
Company entrance.

The Buffalo Room is located on the
north side of the First Horizon
Foundation Visitor Center.

Species Spotlight

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

A bright and sprightly slice of spring

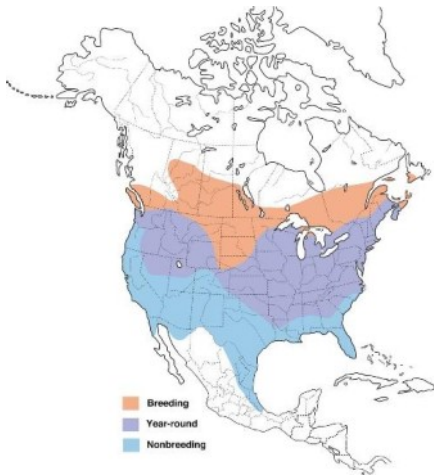
Perches on a bristly thistle
and starts to sing.

What wonderful music

The goldfinch brings!

Scientific name: *Spinus tristis*

Range: This finch stays year-round in the middle latitudes of the US. However, flocks migrate short distances as the seasons change.



Habitat: Goldfinches prefer wild meadows and overgrown fields with plenty of vegetation and a few short trees and shrubs. Favored areas include woodland edges, orchards, riparian habitat, and suburbs.

Diet/feeding: Goldfinches almost always eat seeds. They prefer smaller, softer seeds, as their bills are too small to handle large, tough shells. In the wild, they take thistle, aster, and sycamore seeds. They often frequent feeders, where they take sunflower hearts, nyjer, and thistle seed.

Behavior: Goldfinches have an almost warbler-like energy and agility. They often land in patches of aster and thistle in the summer, perching precariously on small flowers while busily plucking seeds. During the winter, they form flocks that chatter cheerfully with each other. However, unlike most songbirds, the goldfinch is a late breeder. In July and August, the female crafts a neat cup made of plant fiber such as thistle down. The bluish-white eggs hatch in about two weeks, and chicks fledge after two to three weeks.

When, where, and how to see: The goldfinch's striking appearance might





trick a birder into taking it as a rare tropical migrant, but this could not be farther from the truth! Goldfinches stay year-round in most places, although males exchange their brilliant yellows for subtler shades of gray in the colder months. In fact, some have mistakenly identified male goldfinches in different seasons as two different species. In fall, the bodies of both males and females take on a grayish-brown hue with only patches of yellow around the face and neck to suggest the splendor of their breeding plumage. Males lose their black caps, and the white bars on their wings widen as the weather cools. In March and April, goldfinches begin molting for the summer, with the males and females regrowing their yellow plumage. At the peak of the breeding season in late summer, males become completely yellow except for their black wings, tails and forehead. Females resemble a yellower version of winter males. During the breeding season, males sing a complicated jumble of

whistled notes. Goldfinches also make a “potato chip” call in flight.

Conservation: Goldfinch populations are on the rise, boosted by human expansion and the clearing of forests. However, herbicides that kill weeds reduce suitable habitat and food sources, and some pesticides may affect them. Conservation efforts include preserving habitat around water.

Fun facts:

- Why do goldfinches breed so late in the season? They feed their young seeds, which are most abundant in late summer.
- Goldfinch nests are so well-built that some can hold water!



-Lynn M. Hui

Bibliography:

- Most info in this article and range map from the American Goldfinch pages on Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds guide
- Other sources:
 - <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/american-goldfinch#>
 - <https://nestwatch.org/learn/focal-species/american-goldfinch/>
 - <https://birdsoftheworld.org/bow/species/ameqfi/cur/conservation>
 - <https://www.sibleyguides.com/2012/05/the-annual-plumage-cycle-of-a-male-american-goldfinch/>
 - <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22720407/94669207>
 - The Sibley Guide to Birds
- Range map from All About Birds American Goldfinch page
- Poem by Lynn Hui
- all photos taken by Lynn Hui

Editor's Note: Special thanks to MTOS member Lynn Hui for contributing this article.

LOOKING FOR ARTISTS

If you have artwork you'd like to submit for consideration for use on the cover of our next MTOS Directory, please send to Theresa Graham 2graham@bellsouth.net.

Artwork can be black & white, or in color. Preferred orientation is Portrait.

Deadline for artwork is August 31.

A LA CARTE

- April 2022 issue of The Tennessee Warbler
<https://tnbirds.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Warbler-Apr22.pdf>
- BWD is Back with Jessica Vaughan & Mike Sacopulos
<https://www.aba.org/bwd-is-back-with-jessica-vaughn-mike-sacopulos/>
- 9 Ways to Attract Nesting Birds (AND help them thrive!)
<https://birdwatchinghq.com/how-to-attract-nesting-birds/>
- 7 EASY Steps to Clean Your Birdhouse (No experience needed!)
<https://birdwatchinghq.com/clean-your-birdhouse/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL / MAY
2022

Sunday, April 3, 7:30am

Wall Doxey State Park, Holly Springs, MS

Field Trip Leader: Hal Mitchell

halmitchell@gmail.com

Saturday, April 9, 7:30am

Herb Parsons Lake, Fayette County, TN

Field Trip Leader: Allen Sparks

asparks306@bellsouth.net

Wednesday, April 13, 7:30am

Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park

Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston / Van Harris

Dick: dickpreston48@gmail.com

Van: shelbyforester1223@gmail.com

Wednesday, April 20, 7:00pm

Chapter Meeting

Shelby Farms Park, Buffalo Room

6903 Great View Dr N. Memphis, TN 38134

Friday-Sunday, April 22-24

Spring Meeting

<https://tnbirds.org/event/annual-tos-spring-meeting-april-22-24-2022/>

Friday-Sunday, April 22-24

Hatchie Birdfest

<https://www.hatchiebirdfest.com/>

Wednesday, May 4, 7:30am

Overton Park

Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston

dickpreston48@gmail.com

Saturday, May 7, 7:30am

Spring Count

Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston

Field Trip Leader: Margaret Jefferson (Overton)

Dick: dickpreston48@gmail.com

Margaret: mjefferson100@hotmail.com

Wednesday, May 11, 7:30am

Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park

Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston

dickpreston48@gmail.com

Wednesday, May 18, 7:00pm

Chapter Meeting

Shelby Farms Park, Buffalo Room

6903 Great View Dr N.

Memphis, TN 38134

Saturday, May 18, 7:30am

Ensley Bottoms

Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston

dickpreston48@gmail.com

TOS Membership Information

Members may join online
at www.birdmemphis.org or by mail.

Benefits include monthly programs, field trips, quarterly journals, and state and chapter newsletters.

Categories and dues are:

Individual	\$36
Family	\$40
Sustaining	\$55
College Student	\$23
Other Student	\$ 5
Lifetime	\$450 one time +\$18 yearly

Dues payable by PayPal
at www.birdmemphis.org or by check, made out to MTOS.

Please send dues to: Barbara Pyles
8488 East Askersund Cove
Cordova, TN 38018
(901) 570-1009
E-mail brbpyles@gmail.com

Newsletter Delivery Options

To reduce printing and mailing costs, a digital version, which is usually expanded with photos and occasional articles, is provided. Notify Margaret Jefferson, mjefferson100@hotmail.com. If you have no internet access, a printed version can be mailed.

Chapter Newsletter Submissions

Email submissions to Deon VanNostrand
mtosnewsletter@gmail.com

Deadline for submissions to the Newsletter is the 22nd of the month.

Field Cards

Please mail or e-mail your field cards and notable sightings to Dick Preston.
dickpreston48@gmail.com

Tennessee Warbler Deadlines

- *February 28 for the April Newsletter
- *June 30 for the August Newsletter
- *October 31 for the December Newsletter

Forward contributions to:
Theresa Graham, Editor
P.O. Box 366 Oakland, TN 38060
(901) 489-0795
Email: 2graham@bellsouth.net

Chapter Meeting

April 20, 2022. 7:00pm

Shelby Farms Park, Buffalo Room
6903 Great View Dr N.
Memphis, TN 38134

Enter/Exit through the entrance road leading to Coastal Fish Company and the Visitors Center. <https://maps.app.goo.gl/UfyXYTXmc8LNXGup8>

The Buffalo Room is located on the north side of the First Horizon Foundation Visitors Center. <https://maps.app.goo.gl/hzGsiUcjgeQF7X2QA>

Program

Van Harris, MTOS
"Madagascar: Land of Lemurs and Lizards"

Upcoming Field Trip Information

April 3: Wall Doxey SP
April 9: Herb Parsons Lake
April 13: Shelby Forest SP
April 22-24: Spring Meeting

Thank you to all who contributed to this month's newsletter.

New Members

Ryan Pudwell, Memphis
rpudwell@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report

The balance in the Treasury as of March 22, 2022 is \$18,015.99. The March 16 Silent Auction sales proceeds were \$175.00. Dues-paying chapter members total (125) to date. Twenty more payments are expected soon. In only (3) months of operation, over (50) dues payments were made via PayPal. The Treasurer loves PayPal.



Black-and-white Warbler



Yellow-rumped Warbler



Red-faced Warbler



Prothonotary Warbler



Golden Warbler



Northern Waterthrush



Palm Warbler



Black-and-white Warbler



Pine Warbler

PHOTOS BY
Thomas Kienzle



Orange-crowned Warbler



Common Yellowthroat



Prothonotary Warbler



Yellow-rumped Warbler



PHOTO BY

Caroline
Schratz

Yellow-rumped Warbler



PHOTO BY

Cliff
VanNostrand

Blue-winged Warbler



Golden-cheeked Warbler



Lucy's Warbler



Golden-winged Warbler



Ovenbird