



Tennessee Ornithological Society Memphis Chapter

<http://birdmemphis.org>

December 2023

NOVEMBER PROGRAM

The November program was presented by MTOS member Ryan Pudwell. Ryan is President of the Nonconnah Creek Conservancy. The Conservancy's mission is to: (1) advocate for conservation of natural spaces along Nonconnah Creek and in its watershed, (2) educate people about natural and cultural resources found along the creek, (3) improve the recreational value of the creek for today and for future generations.



Photo by Ryan Pudwell

Ryan leads nature walks for the Wolf River and Nonconnah Creek Conservancies. On these walks Ryan points out birds, plants, mammals, and reptiles as well as rocks, fossils, archeological sites, and artifacts. The Conservancy is surveying the biodiversity of Nonconnah Creek and its watershed with the Nonconnah 2023 Project. Ryan and other volunteers post to and collect data from iNaturalist, eBird and other sources to get a picture of the animals and plants within the watershed. A link to survey data and maps is on the Conservancy website <https://www.nonconnah.org>. A discussion of the geologic, archeologic and cultural importance of Nonconnah Creek can be found at: <https://tennesseearchaeologycouncil.wordpress.com/2016/09/05/the-nonconnah-creek-conservancy/>.

Nonconnah Creek runs through the southern portion of Shelby County from Collierville to McKeller Lake. The creek was channelized to reduce flooding during the Great Depression. As a result, water rises dramatically in straightened sections during heavy rains. Nonconnah Creek is fed by surface water runoff and has a large watershed that includes much of the southern portion of the county. One unusual aspect of the creek is exposed gravel. Ryan showed agate and fossilized coral and wood that have been collected along the creek. He noted that an organic layer containing the remains of plants from the last ice age is evident along many of the creek banks.

The Conservancy was formed to protect a parcel of land called Christine's Woods in eastern Shelby County. These 160 acres of wetland, now known as the Dan Turley Natural Area, are protected with a conservation easement and home to the Nonconnah Greenbelt Park that runs from Forest Hill Irene Road to Hacks Cross Road. This wetland supports a heron rookery, large numbers of Wood Duck, Marbled Salamander, Leafy Blue Flag Iris, Woodland Spider Lily, Adders Tongue Fern, native viburnum, and Cottonmouth Snake. Ryan showed pictures of other areas along the creek where he leads nature walks. He brought a collection of arrowheads, fossils, agates, and toys that have been collected along the creek. Ryan is especially interested in cataloging the flora and fauna of Nonconnah Creek and its watershed and promoting recreational opportunities the creek provides. Watch the Conservancy website for scheduled nature walks with Ryan.

-Margaret Jefferson



Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NonconnahCreekConservancy>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/nonconnahcreek_conservancy/

Website: <https://www.nonconnah.org/>

2023
Christmas Bird
Count

The 2023 Memphis Christmas Bird Count is Sunday, December 17. We would love to have your participation! Birding parties will count birds in different areas of Memphis. The birding groups in Raleigh, Shelby Farms Park, TO Fuller SP/ Ensley Bottoms, and Overton Park would all like additional birders to help with the count. If you have any questions or want to join a group you can reach out directly to the area group leader, former compiler Margaret Jefferson, or me.

Thank you,
Anita Vincent
Memphis CBC compiler
avin1129@gmail.com

Memphis CBC group leaders:

Raleigh – Ryan Pudwell rpudwell@gmail.com

Shelby Farms – George Payne gpayne@fisherarnold.com

T.O. Fuller SP/Ensley Bottoms – Jim Varner jamescvarner@gmail.com

Overton Park – Margaret Jefferson mjefferson100@hotmail.com



2023 Christmas Bird Count

December 16 - **Sardis**

December 17 - **Memphis**

December 23 - **Fayette County**

December 23 - **Arkabutla**

December 30 - **Wapanocca/Shelby Forest**

January 5 - **Holly Springs Mississippi**





Upcoming Field Trips

December 2023 / January 2024

Saturday, December 16

Sardis CBC

Field Trip Leader: Jason Hoeksema

Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston

dickpreston48@gmail.com

Sunday, December 17

Memphis CBC

Compiler: Anita Vincent

avin1129@gmail.com

Wednesday, December 20, 7:00pm

Chapter Meeting

St. George's Episcopal Church

2425 South Germantown Rd. Germantown, TN

Saturday, December 23

Fayette County CBC

Field Trip Leader: Cliff VanNostrand

birdinginthe901@gmail.com

Saturday, December 23

Arkabutla CBC

Field Trip Leader: Hal Mitchell

halmitchell@gmail.com

Saturday, December 30

Wapanocca/Shelby Forest CBC

Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston / Van Harris

Dick: dickpreston48@gmail.com

Van: shelbyforester1223@gmail.com

Friday, January 5, 2024

Holly Springs Mississippi CBC

Field Trip Leader: Hal Mitchell

halmitchell@gmail.com

Saturday, January 13, 8:00am

Tunica/Northern Mississippi

Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston

dickpreston48@gmail.com

Wednesday, January 17, 7:00pm

Chapter Meeting

St. George's Episcopal Church

2425 South Germantown Rd. Germantown, TN



MEETING NOTES

Christmas Counts—Help Needed!

Sue Ferguson reported that the Raleigh area Memphis CBC group that she and her late husband have led for 40 years needs a new group leader and several younger participants. The group has been birding McCrary's Farm, Kennedy Park, the Epping Way portion of the Wolf River Greenway, and 3 small lakes (Windemere, Scenic Hills (Loch Neven), and Sky Lake). Cliff VanNostrand noted that he needs help with the Fayette Co. CBC. That count will be held on a Saturday (Dec. 23) so that more folks might be available to participate.

Field Trips

November 11. Shelby Farms

Twenty observers turned out to bird on a beautiful clear fall day. They recorded 65 bird species in the area north of Walnut Grove Rd. from Beaver Lake to the Gardens. Highlights included seven duck species including Green-winged Teal (8) and Canvasback (1), Greater Yellowlegs (4) Dunlin (1), Least Sandpiper (5), Northern Harrier (4), Sharp-shinned Hawk (1), Belted Kingfisher (3), Blue-headed Vireo (1), Winter Wren (1), Eastern Bluebird (16), Cedar Waxwing (8), Am. Goldfinch (12), Eastern Meadowlark (32), and nine species of sparrow including LeConte's (1), Savannah (44), Song (22), Lincoln's (1), and Swamp (4).

Unusual Bird Sightings

Short-eared Owls (4-9) are present in fields along Gardener Rd. near the community gardens. Watch for them from 4:30 pm till dark. First reported on Nov. 1.

Many less-common species of sparrow have been reported in fields near the Gardener Rd. marsh. These include Clay-colored Oct. 23, Henslow's Oct 29, Nelson's Oct. 28, LeConte's Nov. 21, Lincoln's Nov. 11, and Grasshopper Oct. 26.

Also at Shelby Farms: Franklin's Gull Nov. 17, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher Oct. 30, Red-necked Grebe Nov. 15, White-winged Scoter Nov. 15.

Knox Martin reported counting 84 Black Vultures feeding on dead catfish near Catch'em Lake at the Argicenter. Knox said that during the time that Shelby Farms was a penal farm that raised its own food, vultures were regularly killed, and that seemed to have kept the number of Black Vultures low in the area until recently.

Donations Needed

The Raptor Center plans to make upgrades to meet current Fish and Wildlife Service standards.



Mid-South
**RAPTOR
CENTER**

The Raptor Center needs to purchase pea gravel to make a 3 to 6 inch layer for cage bottoms.

The estimated cost for this project is \$1,000.

Donations will be matched by the Mid-South Raptor Center.

Send your donations to:

Mid-South Raptor Center
1176 Dearing Road
Memphis, TN 38117

You can also bring your donations to the December meeting.

SUBMISSIONS WELCOME

Submissions of any of the following are desired:

- Birding Events
- Stories about birds or birders
- Birding Tips
- Poetry, quotes, sketches, or photos
- Photo of birds or people at events or field trips.

Deadline is the 22nd of each month,
Email submissions to mtosnewsletter@gmail.com

A LA CARTE

- 'Shelby Farms Parkway' project voted to be scrapped by Memphis Metropolitan Planning Organization
<https://www.localmemphis.com/article/news/local/shelby-farms-parkway-project-voted-to-be-scrapped-by-memphis-metropolitan-planning-organization/522-4ba6ced8-27e2-438a-84cc-74955d81aea2>
- Geese of North America (13 Species)
<https://badgerlandbirding.com/2022/08/14/geese-of-north-america-13-species/>
- Learn to Tell a Cackling Goose From a Canada Goose
<https://www.audubon.org/news/learn-tell-cackling-goose-canada-goose>
- Feederwatch 2023
<https://feederwatch.org/>
- eBird Patch and Yard Lists
<https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48001049078-patch-and-yard-lists-in-ebird>
- 9 Birds With the Largest Feathers
<https://birdfeederhub.com/birds-with-the-largest-feathers/>
- Fledglink
<https://www.fledglink.org/>
- Birding Gifts for the Family
<https://amzn.to/47VITpk>



Expedition

TANZANIA



Van Harris is arranging another expedition to Tanzania, October - November, 2024 (exact dates TBA). For more information contact Van at shelbyforester1223@gmail.com or 901-592-8739.



HUMMINGBIRD SIGHTING BETWEEN November 1 and March 15

If you do get a hummingbird, Please contact
Cyndi Routledge - routledges@bellsouth.net

Please consider leaving
out your feeder out year-
round. Keep it clean,
maintained and
easily viewed

Since November 1990,
300 hummingbirds of 7 different
species have been captured, banded
and released here in Tennessee as
part of a winter banding
research program.

PHOTOS BY
SOPHIE DISMUKES



LeConte's Sparrow



White-throated Sparrow



Vesper Sparrow



Henslow's Sparrow



Field Sparrow



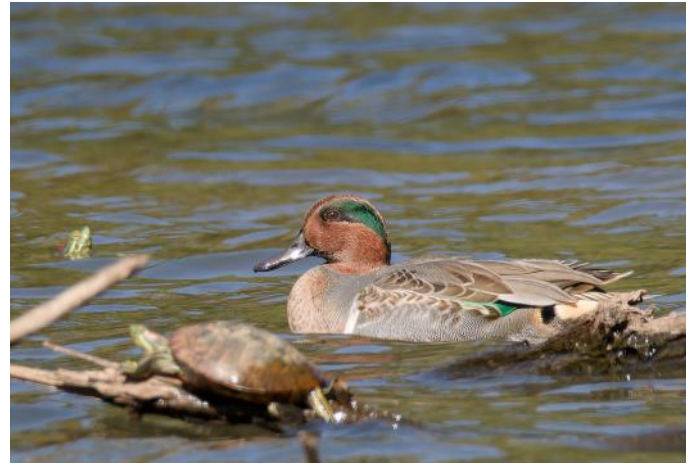
Harris's Sparrow (background in focus)
White-crowned Sparrow (foreground)

Photos by:

Connor Robinson



Dark-eyed Junco



Green-winged Teal



LeConte's Sparrow



Swamp Sparrow



Northern Harrier



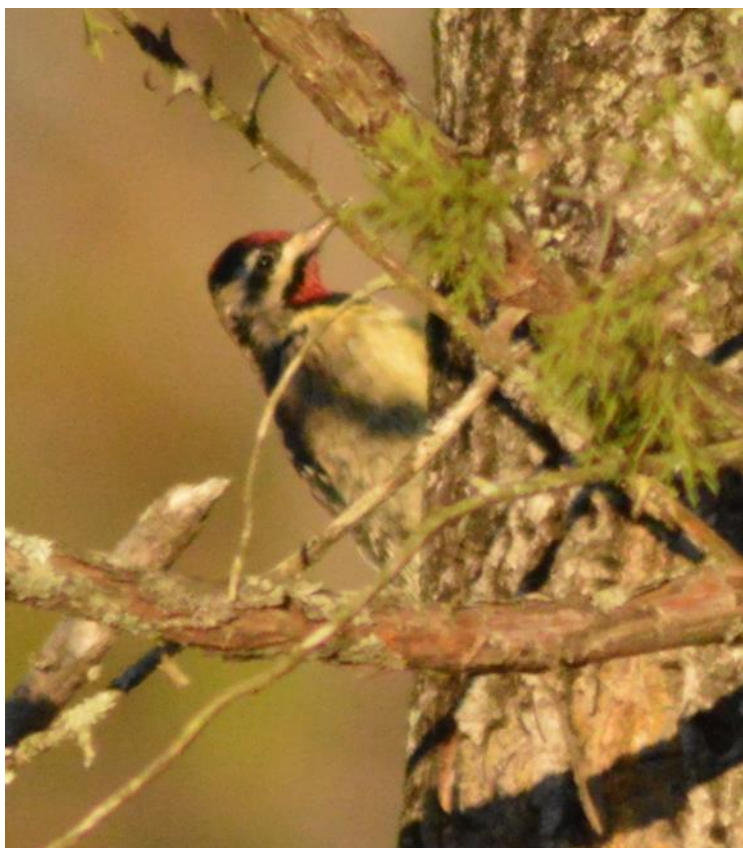
Black-throated Green Warbler



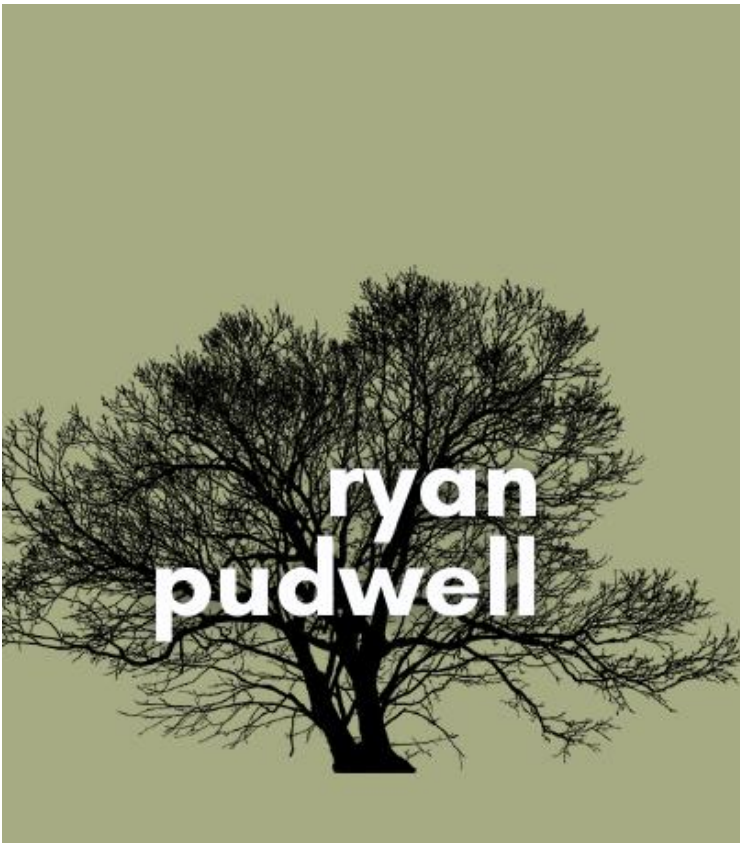
Vesper Sparrow



Short-Eared Owl



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker



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 | \$15 |
| Other Student | \$10 |
| 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

- *March 15 for the April Newsletter
- *July 15 for the August Newsletter
- *November 15 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

December 20, 2023. 7:00pm

St. George's Episcopal Church,
2425 South Germantown Rd. Germantown, TN
Phone 901-754-7282

Program

Shelby Green, MTOS
The Bowers Lab at the University of Memphis

Hospitality

Refreshments will be provided by Knox Martin and Jim & Martha Waldron.

Upcoming Field Trip Information

December 16—Sardis CBC
December 17—Memphis CBC
December 23—Fayette County CBC
December 23—Arkabutla CBC
December 30—Wapanocca / Shelby Forest CBC

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

For our next issue, we would like to feature some photos of ducks.

Please send your submissions to mtosnewsletter@gmail.com.

New Members

Laura Derrington, Bartlett
laura@ldcopy.com

Clara Irwin, Germantown
cirwin@memphis.edu

Cameron Rutt, Memphis
cameronrutt@gmail.com

Jake Tempchin and Hayley Brooks, Memphis
jacob.tempchin@gmail.com
hayleybethbrooks@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report

The balance in the treasury as of November 21, 2023 is \$13,495.57. This is the balance following a \$200 disbursement for bluebird box construction, per October 15 chapter approval. This balance also reflects costs of \$336.00 for Directory printing and \$140.91 for mailing. We reduced print costs from 2022.