



## MEMPHIS CHAPTER NEWS

TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

<http://birdmemphis.org>

April 2021

### **EAGLE NUMBERS FROM USF & WS FOR 2020**



The US Fish & Wildlife Service recently issued the number of Bald Eagles in the lower 48 states as of 2020. They recorded a total of 71,400 active nests and a total of 316,700 individual birds.

In their report for 1963 there was a total of 417 known nests in the lower 48 states. Thanks to the Endangered Species

Act, the Eagle Protection Act, the removal of DDT, and the work of countless wildlife agencies and organizations including the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and members of TOS, the Bald Eagle was removed from the list of endangered species a few years ago. This increase in numbers has seen the number of eagles coming through the Mid-South Raptor Center also increase dramatically in the past 30 years. In the early days we seldom saw eagles. In fact, in a five-year period in the early and mid 1980s we saw only three



birds. More recently we have seen as many as 10 birds, both Bald and Golden Eagles, in a single year. There are a number of active nests in the Shelby County area each year and that number appears to be rising every year.



-Knox Martin



Photos by: Cliff VanNostrand



# EXPEDITION<sub>TO</sub> SOUTH AFRICA



Since 2013, I have been arranging for birders, nature photographers and other wildlife enthusiasts to accompany me on expeditions to Africa. An expedition to South Africa was planned for South Africa for September 2020, but it was, of course, postponed. The recent availability of vaccines, along with the re-opening of South Africa for tourism, has now made the expedition possible.

The expedition has been re-scheduled for **September 6-20, 2021**. There are now vacancies. It would be most exciting if more MTOS members could fill them!

If you are interested, please contact me at [shelbyforester1223@gmail.com](mailto:shelbyforester1223@gmail.com) or 901-592-8739 for more information.

-Van Harris

**2020 AUDIT OF THE**  
**MEMPHIS CHAPTER TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

Chapter treasurer Barbara Pyles turned over all ledgers and books to me in order to conduct the chapter's annual audit. On February 16, 2021, I completed the audit, with the following results:

- 1) All income was recorded and documented with receipts.
- 2) All expenditures were recorded, justified and documented with checks.
- 3) Balance at the beginning of the year was \$15,101.41.
- 4) Balance at the end of the year was \$16,784.52.
- 5) The chapter's books are in good order. I found no discrepancies, omissions or errors.

Special note: The normally time consuming and difficult tasks of the treasurer were complicated by two events directly related to the ongoing pandemic: cancellation of the annual potluck dinner, and cancellation of the state Annual Meeting, which was to have been hosted by our chapter. Particularly in the case of the state meeting, deposits and fees were collected, and then had to be returned. All such transactions were fully documented.

The treasurer is commended for her attention to detail, and we are lucky to have her services.

Respectfully submitted, Richard D. Preston

Due to the fact that we have not had a chapter meeting in almost a year Chapter President Michael Collins has announced a special combination chapter meeting and open house to be held at the Mid-South Raptor Center <https://goo.gl/maps/VFnaEXacAziRoGLA7> on Saturday, April 24, 2021 beginning at 6pm.

- Bring your dinner, chairs, and any chapter business we need to discuss. I will supply water, tea, and lemonade.
- Be sure to enter at the east entrance to the Agricenter as the gate at the west end of Smythe-Farm Road will be closed.

We have not been together as a group since the open house in August of last year so this will give us all a chance to get together and socialize. I hope to see you all there.

-Knox Martin

# Species Spotlight:

## Yellow-Breasted Chat

The Chat's strange, varied song is a sure sign that spring is in full swing! These comical birds sing ardently throughout the warmer season, puffing out their lemon-yellow throats. However, while the male is foraging, he adopts a surprisingly secretive persona, skulking behind a frustratingly dense screen of branches and leaves.



**Scientific name:**

*Icteria virens*

**Range:** Chats spend the summer in

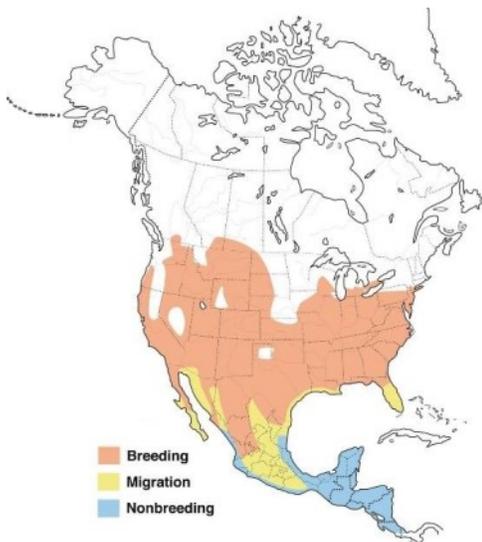
most of the US, arriving at their breeding grounds in mid to late spring along with many other migrants. At the close of the breeding season, they migrate back to Central America to escape the cold of winter.

**Habitat:** Chats occupy any shrubby, open habitat with many bushes and dense vine tangles in which to nest. They are commonly found in old

fields, forest edges, and swamps.

**Diet/feeding:** Insects comprise most of a Chat's diet. They may eat beetles, mayflies, cicadas, and caterpillars. Chats also eat fruit on their wintering grounds in Central America. They do not visit feeders regularly.

**Behavior:** For the most part, these birds forage deep in the tangle of vegetation that dominates their habitat. They skulk about, energetically hopping from branch to branch in search of insects. When breeding season arrives, however, males become aggressive and territorial, singing loudly from exposed branches. They may also fight other males in territorial disputes. Males have a distinctive display, a prolonged flight from one tree to another with exaggerated wingbeats and strange posture. Most birds only have one mate during the breeding



season, but some males may father two nests. Females build cup nests out of plant material such as grass and leaves. Nests are situated in shrubs and thickets, hidden from prying eyes by a thick tangle of vegetation.

**When, where, and how to see:** Chats of both sexes boast a bright yellow throat patch, white flanks, an olive back, and white eye rings. Despite their vibrantly colored throat patch, Chats are difficult to spot amongst dense vegetation. Females and males are similar in appearance.

Chats are mostly easily seen when singing on a conspicuous branch. The male's song is a loud, extremely varied collection of rough, sandpapery "chat chat chat" calls, piercing shrieks, and soft musical notes. The male pauses for a few seconds between each call. Oftentimes, this diverse amalgamation of noise seems to come from multiple birds!

**Conservation:** Although Chats are not uncommon, their population declined by 37% between 1966 and 2014, following an initial increase in the first half of the century. Logging produces the Chat's favored habitat, but forest regrowth and grazing detract from it. The population also suffers casualties caused by building collisions, a fate shared by many migrating birds.



**Fun facts:**

- Chats are related to warblers, but they don't have much in common. They are larger than warblers (about the size of a cardinal), and their songs are much more varied. In fact, Chats are thought to have diverged from sparrows, blackbirds and warblers when those three groups were formed.

**Bibliography:**

- Most info in this article and range map from the Yellow Breasted Chat pages on Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds guide
- Other sources:
  - <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/yellow-breasted-chat#>
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWBn3\\_CtZ\\_E&list=TLPQMTcwMzlwMjH1eDFo-TPOew&index=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWBn3_CtZ_E&list=TLPQMTcwMzlwMjH1eDFo-TPOew&index=1)
- Range map from All About Birds Yellow Breasted Chat page
- all photos taken by Lynn Hui



# UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

## April / May

**Saturday, April 3, 7:30am**

Wall Doxey State Park, Holly Springs, MS

*Field Trip Leader: Hal Mitchell*

[halmitchell@gmail.com](mailto:halmitchell@gmail.com) / 409-539-2577

**Wednesday, April 14, 7:30am**

Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park

*Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston*

[dickpreston48@gmail.com](mailto:dickpreston48@gmail.com) / 901-837-3360

**Saturday, April 17, 7:30am**

Herb Parsons Lake, Fayette County, TN

*Field Trip Leader: Allen Sparks*

[asparks306@bellsouth.net](mailto:asparks306@bellsouth.net) / 901-604-7654

**Wednesday, April 21, 7:30am**

Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park

*Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston*

[dickpreston48@gmail.com](mailto:dickpreston48@gmail.com) / 901-837-3360

**Saturday, April 24, 6pm**

Open House at the Mid-South Raptor Center

*Host: Knox Martin*

[knoxmartin2@aol.com](mailto:knoxmartin2@aol.com) / 901-685-8827

**Sunday, May 2, 7:30am**

Overton Park

Meet at East Parkway Entrance Parking Area

*Field Trip Leader: Margaret Jefferson*

[mjefferson100@hotmail.com](mailto:mjefferson100@hotmail.com) / 901-274-1045

**Saturday, May 8**

Traditional Spring Count

*Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston*

[dickpreston48@gmail.com](mailto:dickpreston48@gmail.com) /

901-837-3360

**Wednesday, May 12, 7:30am**

Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park

*Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston*

[dickpreston48@gmail.com](mailto:dickpreston48@gmail.com) / 901-837-3360



*Open House  
at the  
Mid-South  
Raptor Center*



**Saturday,  
April 24, 2021**

**6:00 pm**

Bring your dinner, chairs, and any chapter business we need to discuss. Knox Martin will supply water, tea, and lemonade.

Remembering Chapter Member

## **Dr. Clair E. Cox II, MD**

A LIFE member of TOS for 40 years, Clair E. Cox passed away in July 2020 at his Memphis home. Married for 61 years, Dr. Cox and his wife Clarice met at the University of Michigan where he was a medical student and she was a nursing student.

Dr. Cox was Professor and Chairman of the Department of Urology at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center for many years, retiring from UT in 2009. He considered his most rewarding accomplishment to be the training of 90 urological medical residents, many of whom practice in the area today. Surviving him are his wife Clarice, four sons, and 12 grandchildren. The Cox family enjoyed nature walks on their farm in Hernando, birding, sporting events, and attending their grandchildren's activities.

-Barbara Pyles, Treasurer

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# SUBMISSIONS WELCOME

Deadline is the 22nd of each month,

Please email all submissions to

**MTOSnewsletter@gmail.com**

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## ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- Creating a Hummingbird Paradise at Home (HT: Judy Dorsey)  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_qPmvEMLrQRqXZDIKLF9Aw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qPmvEMLrQRqXZDIKLF9Aw)
- Inspiring Results from GBBC 2021  
<https://www.birdcount.org/2021-final-results/>
- Land trusts build community and protect birds with eBird  
<https://ebird.org/news/land-trusts-build-community-and-protect-birds-with-ebird>
- How to Count Birds  
<https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48000838845-how-to-count-birds>
- The Eastern Bluebird is now the official bird of Germantown, TN  
<https://www.facebook.com/CityofGermantown/posts/4006510252735010>
- Nashville Birder Youtuber  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8CXNam36CzzGPP1B-6FmjQ>
- More Than 316,000 Bald Eagles Live in the Lower 48, New Estimate Says  
<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/new-bald-eagle-population-estimate-usfws/>
- Rare Yellow Penguin Bewilders Scientists  
<https://www.audubon.org/news/rare-yellow-penguin-bewilders-scientists>

### TOS Membership Information

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 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](mailto: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](mailto:mjefferson100@hotmail.com). If you have no internet access, a printed version can be mailed.

### Chapter Newsletter Submissions

Email submissions to Cliff VanNostrand  
[mtosnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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) 465-4263  
Email: [2graham@bellsouth.net](mailto:2graham@bellsouth.net)

### Chapter Meeting

Chapter Meetings are cancelled until further notice.

**Saturday, April 24, 6pm**

Open House at the Mid-South Raptor Center

Host: Knox Martin

[knoxmartin2@aol.com](mailto:knoxmartin2@aol.com) / 901-685-8827

### Upcoming Field Trip Information

**April 3:** Wall Doxey State Park, Holly Springs, MS

**April 14:** Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park

**April 17:** Herb Parsons Lake, Fayette County, TN

**April 21:** Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park

**May 2:** Overton Park

**May 8:** Traditional Spring County

**May 12:** Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park

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

For our next issue, we would like to feature some photos of nest building & baby birds.

**Please send all submissions to  
[mtosnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:mtosnewsletter@gmail.com).**

### Treasurer's Report

The balance in the Treasury as of March 22, 2021 is \$17,485.71. Your dues allow us to function as a local TOS chapter AND to support bird-work. MTOS is a financial supporter of habitat conservation and projects that promote the health of bird life (including education, rehabilitation, and nestbox construction).

### Request for Input

I expect MTOS to discuss potential 2021 financial-expenditure projects at the April 24 Open House gathering. If you have ideas on spending proposals, please send them to me at [brbpyles@gmail.com](mailto:brbpyles@gmail.com) so that I can share them with other members. Thank you.

-Barbara Pyles

## BIRDS OF A FEATHER



Yellow-rumped Warbler



Northern Cardinal



Eastern Bluebird



Yellow-rumped Warbler

Sitting out in my backyard on March 9th we had a few more warblers than we have seen on a regular basis at our feeders this winter, which is not many. They were all Yellow-rumps so not something to get overly excited about, but still it was nice to see them. Our number of birds at the feeders decreased significantly after the freeze and snow. Our Bluebirds have survived and have been checking out our Bluebird boxes but have not actually begun nesting activity. That cannot be said about our House Sparrows as they have been persistent about filling our newer Bluebird box despite our best efforts to discourage the critters.

-Chad Brown



Black-throated Green Warbler



Kentucky Warbler



Black-and-white Warbler



Wilson's Warbler



Magnolia Warbler

Photos by

**Thomas Blevins**

Pine Warbler



Pine Warbler



Photos by  
**Lynn Hui**



Yellow-rumped Warbler



Yellow-rumped Warbler



Yellow-rumped Warbler



Prothonotary Warbler

PHOTOS BY  
Tom & Debra  
Kienzle



Palm Warbler



Orange-crowned Warbler

# Photos by Cliff VanNostrand



Blue-winged Warbler



Northern Waterthrush



Chestnut-sided Warbler



American Redstart



Prairie Warbler



Bay-breasted Warbler



Black-throated Green Warbler



Blackpoll Warbler