



MEMPHIS CHAPTER NEWS

TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

<http://birdmemphis.org>

June 2021

CHAPTER MEETING SAT. JUNE 5TH

Chapter President, Michael Collins, has scheduled a Chapter meeting at the Mid-South Raptor Center on Saturday, June 5th, at 4:00 pm. We will vote on a slate of MTOS officers and on several funding proposals that were put forward at the April meeting, and reported on in the May Chapter newsletter. Please bring chairs for your use. The Raptor Center is on Smythe Farm Road.

Thanks to Knox Martin for opening the Raptor Center for us.

-Margaret Jefferson

Ben and Jerry's catering will be at the Raptor Center meeting. From 4:00 to 5:30, free waffle cones and cups for all. Choose from Chocolate, Vanilla, Strawberry, Coffee buzzbuzz, Butter Pecan and Cherry Garcia.

Financial motions to be voted on June 5 Chapter meeting:

- A motion to provide an additional \$500 donation to the Mid-South Raptor Center. This will help to offset the increased expenditures that were needed to add extra predator protection to the raptor cages.
- A motion to donate \$500 to Mississippi Wildlife Rehabilitation, Inc. (MWR). This is in recognition of the volunteer and veterinary work provided by MWR. Volunteers from MWR and the Mid-South Raptor Center are working together closely and share some facilities.
- A motion to increase the expenditure amount that would require a motion to be published in the Chapter newsletter prior to the vote for or against the expenditure. The amount had been set at \$250, and the motion is to increase the amount to \$500.

Chapter meeting at the Mid-South Raptor Center



**Saturday,
June 5th**

4:00pm

Ben and Jerry's catering will be at the meeting. From 4:00 to 5:30, free waffle cones and cups for all.

Chose from Chocolate, Vanilla, Strawberry, Coffee buzzbuzz, Butter Pecan and Cherry Garcia.

Please bring chairs for your use.

..... Field Trip Reports

Shelby Forest -

Wednesday, May 12th at Shelby Forest. Eight observers, 54 species. Highlights: 19 species of warblers, including numerous Bay-breasted (19), Blackpoll (18), Blackburnian (3) and a single Canada Warbler.

Shelby County Spring Count -

On Saturday, May 8th, 39 observers reported an outstanding 160 species. Included were 30 species of warblers, 16 species of shorebirds, and 9 species of flycatchers.

-Dick Preston

Overton Park -

On May 2, a large group of 25 birders met in Overton Park to look for spring migrants along the paved paths that run through the "Old Forest." The Old Forest State Natural Area is a haven for migrating warblers, thrushes, grosbeaks, flycatchers and vireos. During our walk, the tall hickory and tulip poplar trees were attracting nectar, flower and bee-eating birds such as Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Baltimore and Orchard Oriole and Scarlet and Summer Tanager. The abundant mulberry trees were popular with Gray Catbird, Indigo Bunting and large numbers of Swainson's Thrush. The forest provides a summer home for birds such as Wood Thrush, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Red-eyed and White-eyed Vireo, Acadian Flycatcher, and Northern Parula Warbler. The heavy foliage and overcast skies made viewing difficult and airplanes interfered with ear birding, but with the help of many accomplished birders a total of 54 species was recorded, including 11 warbler species. Highlights included a Hairy Woodpecker, good looks at Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrush, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, a cooperative Barred Owl, Chestnut-sided and Canada Warbler, Orchard Oriole, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and a Carolina Chickadee family. Thanks to all the participants.

-Margaret Jefferson

Preliminary Report: Field Conservation Committee



This will be a brief overview of what your Field Conservation Committee (FCC) has been doing for the past several years. It took this name to distinguish it from Dick Preston's political "Conservation" activities that are regularly reported on at monthly MTOS meetings.

The FCC is an ad-hoc committee that has focused on obtaining and erecting nesting boxes for four local bird species of concern: Barn Owl, Eastern Bluebird, Barred Owl and Wood Duck. Committee participants are Michael Collins, David Hill, Mark Jenkins, Dick Preston and Jim Waldron, and boxes have been placed at selected sites in nearby Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi. The Barn Owl effort, in particular, is a continuation of a project that was begun by Martha and Jim Waldron several years ago.



It should be noted that while targeting these particular species, other highly desirable birds frequently make use of these boxes -- to our delight. These would include: Tree Swallow, Carolina Chickadee, Hooded Merganser and even the occasional Southern Flying Squirrel.



We have concentrated these activities at the Ames Plantation, Hatchie NWR, Shelby Farms, Wolf River WMA and Wapanocca NWR. A few boxes have been placed on protected private land. Rather than a lengthy description of these efforts, we are providing a series of photos (by Hill) that are self-explanatory.

We hope that you will support this work in the future.

-The MTOS Field Conservation Committee
-submitted by David O. Hill



Species Spotlight: Broad-winged Hawk

A secretive buteo of the forest, the Broad-winged Hawk glides quietly through wooded clearings and above leafy canopies during spring, summer, and fall. Broad-winged Hawks are often confused with Red-shouldered Hawks due to their rufous chests and banded tails. This shy raptor also forms magnificent kettles when migrating.

Scientific name: *Buteo platyterus*



Range: Unlike many of their relatives, Broad-winged Hawks make the annual North to Central America migration, along with warblers and other neotropical migrants. In the South, they first appear in April and leave in August-October.

Habitat: These hawks shy away from populated areas, choosing instead to nest in large forests, near bodies of water or open areas. During the winter, they live on the edges of rain forests, tropical dry forests, and in fruit groves.

Diet/feeding: Broad-winged Hawks eat mammals, amphibians, and insects. They often hunt frogs, toads, and rodents but will also eat mantises, June bugs, ants, caterpillars, birds, and reptiles.

Behavior: Broad-winged Hawks hunt by sitting on a perch and scanning for prey, much like a Cooper's Hawk. They also soar above the canopy to defend their territory from other hawks. Their courtship ritual includes a

“dance”, in which both birds ascend to great heights and dive back down together. The female builds a platform nest (with some help from the male) out of sticks, bark, and grass, situated near the trunk of a tree. She then lays 1-5 light-colored eggs, which hatch in 21-38 days. The nestlings fledge 5-6 weeks after hatching. The pair must defend the nest from a myriad of predators, such as porcupines, racoons, owls, and other hawks. During migration, broad-wings form large flocks, or “kettles”. These gigantic kettles may be thousands of birds strong!

When, where, and how to see: As they funnel through the narrow Central American isthmus, broad-wings form massive kettles. Kettles are often located near landforms (such as isthmuses and gorges) which



force the hawks to form large groups. However, broad-wings may be found in any large forest east of the Great Plains during spring, fall, and summer. Broad-winged Hawks sport a brown head, amber eye, and splotchy, rufous chest. The underside of the wing is mostly white with a dark rim while the upper side of the wing and back is brown. Broad bands on the tail allow identification at a great distance. Juveniles have chests with brown streaks that trail off into dots (looking as though they were splashed in mud) and finally barred tails lacking the clear black-and-white bands of adults. Broad-winged hawks are often confused with Red-shouldered Hawks, which also have rufous chests and barred tails. However, Red-shouldered Hawks have more finely barred chests and tails than broad-wings, as well as a completely black eye. The Red-shouldered juvenile's chest also tends to have more unbroken streaks. The broad-wing's call is a shrill whistle, like that of a Mississippi Kite, lacking the downward turn.

Conservation: Conservation-wise, Broad-winged Hawks are in good shape! Populations are stable in most places, with slight increases in Canada. Reforestation efforts conducted throughout the 1900's have proven beneficial to these forest raptors. However, human development and habitat destruction (especially in their winter range) still pose a threat to Broad-winged Hawks.

Fun facts:

- Broad-winged Hawks may maintain a pair bonds for more than a year.
- Most large-scale migrations of broad-wings take place after cold fronts.
- Though the hawks in a kettle seem to be traveling together on purpose, a kettle is just a large group of raptors that happens to be passing by the same area.
- Broad-winged Hawk plumage is variable. Some juveniles may have almost completely white chests, with only light streaking on the sides. Adults and juveniles of a rare "dark" variant, found in the westernmost reaches of the hawk's range, have chocolate brown body plumage.



-Lynn M. Hui

Bibliography:

- Most info in this article and range map from :
 - the Broad-Winged Hawk pages on Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds guide
- Other sources:
 - The Broad-Winged Hawk pages on Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Birds of the World
 - The Sibley Guide to Birds (2nd edition)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UuWCo-ksHLM>
 - <http://migratoryconnectivityproject.org/the-quest-for-nests-in-search-of-broad-winged-hawks-by-jesse-watson/>
 - <https://www.thespruce.com/glossary-definition-kettle-386843>
 - Ebird Bar Charts for Meeman Shelby State Forest
 - <https://www.chattnaturecenter.org/visit/experience/wildlife/animal-facts/broad-winged-hawk/>
 - Range map from All About Birds Broad-Winged Hawk page

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

Remembering Chapter Member

Earl J. Fuller

Several Chapter members sent remembrances of former Memphis Chapter member Earl Junior Fuller who passed away on April 29 at the age of 94. He served as Chapter President from 1967-68. His obituary notes that, "Earl's career focused on teaching science to children and he will be remembered as "Professor Bones" on WKNO's science show, "Scientific Bureau of Investigation." He was a park ranger, museum curator, and science curriculum supervisor for Memphis City Schools. He was also the coordinator of MCS's Mobile Science Traveling Trailer and Planetarium."

Sue Ferguson wrote, "Earl Fuller was a former TOS member. He taught children to use their "bird-noculars," and from time to time spotted a "Scarlet or Summer Teenager." When he spoke to school groups, he entered the stage on his unicycle (and once invited our son David to enter with him on his own unicycle.)" Virginia Reynolds wrote, "Earl was MTOS president in the sixties. He was a great favorite of Lula (Coffey) and once took a squirrel to the dentist to have a mal-formed tooth repaired."

SUBMISSIONS WELCOME

Please email all submissions to
MTOSnewsletter@gmail.com

If all goes as planned, Eric should graduate [college] next year. This summer he will be an Intern Park Ranger at South Cumberland State Park near Chattanooga. Please tell everyone, so they can look for Eric if they are there."

-Janet Rosenthal

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- Group of endangered condors take up residence outside of a California woman's home
<https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/07/us/california-condors-invade-womans-yard-trnd/index.html>
- Flocks of Migrating Birds Invade 2 Calif. Homes in Less Than a Week: 'We Lost Count After 800'
<https://people.com/human-interest/flocks-of-migrating-birds-invade-2-california-homes-days-apart/>
- Bring Birds Back: A podcast about the joy of birds and the ways that humans can help them through simple, everyday actions.
<https://www.birdnote.org/listen/podcasts/bring-birds-back>
- Global Big Day 2021 reaches new heights
<https://ebird.org/news/global-big-day-2021-reaches-new-heights>

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

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 Cliff 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

Chapter Meetings are cancelled until further notice.

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

The editor of the newsletter will be on summer break. Look for the next edition this fall.

Please send your submissions to mtosnewsletter@gmail.com.

Treasurer's Report

The balance in the Treasury as of May 24, 2021 is \$18,167.41. This includes \$8,167.41 in the checking account and \$10,000 in a money market account set up in May. As of May 24, MTOS has (120) paid memberships for 2021; a handful more renewals are expected shortly. Over the summer months I expect MTOS will be working with TOS website folks to get PayPal operational. Our nonprofit status was recently recognized by PayPal, giving us the lowest fee structure for payments made through them.

-Barbara Pyles

Spring migration is always exciting because of the possible rarities that might come our way. This year we were graced with a visit from a White-winged Dove.



Photo by: Julie Markham



Photo by: Cliff VanNostrand

MTOS member Julie Markham reported this bird at her feeder on May 4th. Some of us were able to view this beauty for the two days it was here.

Thank you Julie!



Snowy Plover



Snowy Plover



White-faced Ibis



American Avocet



Long-billed Curlew



Photos by
Lynn Hui



Willet



Piping Plover



Short-billed Dowitcher



Semipalmated Plover

Photos by
Tom & Debra
Kienzle



Sanderling



Ruddy Turnstone



Long-billed Curlew



Long-billed Dowitcher

PHOTOS BY
Dianna Johnson



Whimbrel



Stilt Sandpiper



Long-billed Curlew



Least Sandpiper



Dunlin



Black-necked Stilt



Gray Catbird



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher



Cedar Waxwing



Virginia Rail



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

Photos by
JOHN WALKO



American Avocet



Tropical Kingbird



Eastern Bluebird



Northern Parula