



# MEMPHIS CHAPTER NEWS

TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

<http://birdmemphis.org>

October 2021

## REFLECTIONS ON 1000

What would it look like to do something for 1000 days straight? Well, let's see....

- Spend time outside everyday: hot, cold, rain, or shine.
- See 233 life-listers, on average 1 every 4-5 days.
- Learn more about the world around me.
- Become intimately acquainted with select environs.
- Visit various parks and refuges.
- Meet many interesting people.
- Make several new friends.
- Join organizations that give a voice to my concerns.
- Enjoy good mental health.

These are just some of the benefits I have had while birding for 1000 days straight.

I started this as a way to discipline and exercise my mind. I was struggling with depression and needed something to get me outside of my own headspace. Up to this time, I had mostly enjoyed the birds at my own feeders and a few places that I visited. But on December 12, 2018, I decided I was going to do this every day for a year. That year turned into two. Then the goal became 1000 days. Now... who knows. At the time of writing this, I am at 1020.

The first year, I just wanted to see birds. The second year, I went for a Shelby County big year. The third year, my goal is to see 100 species every month. So far this has been a reality. The hardest month was June. I was at 93 on June 29th. So I did the only thing a sensible birder would do: I took a trip to Ensley. I finished June 30th with 101.



Personally, I have lost a job, started an entirely new career at age 40, contracted Covid, worked in healthcare through this pandemic, started back to school for conservation, and so many other little things. Two things have remained constant: my faith and the birds.

I never thought I would make it to 1000. But here I am. Spending time with nature every day helps me enjoy the beauty around me. And that has made a big difference in my life.

-Cliff VanNostrand



# **SEPTEMBER 15 MEETING AND PICNIC AT THE MID-SOUTH RAPTOR CENTER**

## **Raptor Banding and Release Event**

About 30 people attended the first MTOS gathering of Fall 2021 on the grounds of the Mid-South Raptor Center. The weather was cooperative. As a bonus, prior to the start of the meeting, we were invited to observe the banding of a Cooper's Hawk, done by Michael Collins with assistance from Nick Smith. We then watched Nick release the Cooper's Hawk. She successfully flew and landed in a nearby tree. This was a happy ending for the Cooper's, found on Raleigh-Lagrange Road.

## **Business Meeting**

President Cliff VanNostrand welcomed our group and opened the meeting. Membership chair Barbara Pyles introduced new member Tricia Vesely, plus our guests (who joined as new members) Tatjana Jankov and Terry O'Nele. At-large TOS member (and former Memphian) Susan McWhirter and her daughter-in-law Ginna also were in attendance. A Treasurer's Report was given. New 2021-2022 Directories were available for pickup. They will also be available at upcoming field trips (via Dick Preston) and at the October 20 meeting.

St. George's Episcopal Church/Germantown is not available at this time for MTOS meetings due to COVID. Van Harris noted that T.O. Fuller State Park has offered their facility for meeting use. More research and discussion on meeting sites is expected.

Kate Friedman, representing Mississippi Wildlife Rehabilitation, offered to host MTOS at their grounds and facility in Desoto County, MS. An early October date is likely. Stay tuned for a newsletter update.

## **Unusual Bird Strike Story**

Debbie Crum with Mississippi Wildlife Rehabilitation (MWR) relayed the following story: At the Olive Branch airport in September, a 16-year-old student pilot in a Cessna 152 at 600 feet had a Red-shouldered Hawk smash through her windshield at 120 mph on short final approach for landing. With the hawk in the cockpit and latched onto the pilot's face and chest with its talons, the pilot successfully landed the plane. The hawk received care from MWF for a broken ulna. The pilot suffered a soup can-sized forehead bruise, but expressed more concern for the health of the hawk.

## **SEPTEMBER 15 MEETING AND PICNIC AT THE MID-SOUTH RAPTOR CENTER (CONT)**

### **Financial Matters Raised at September 15 Meeting**

MTOS proposes to join (3) local nonprofit organizations as a member/annual contributor. Martha Waldron noted that Shelby Farms and the Wolf River Conservancy assist MTOS by providing use of their properties for birdwatching as well as other activities. Treasurer Barbara Pyles noted that Shelby Farms has been a member of MTOS since 2007. Knox Martin noted that the Agricenter provides the property that houses the Mid-South Raptor Center. MTOS is a frequent guest and user of the Raptor Center grounds. The proposed expenditures will be on the agenda for the October 20 meeting. Members may also send e-comments to President Cliff (theirishdutchman@gmail.com) and/or Treasurer Barbara (brbpyles@gmail.com).

### **Proposed Expenditures for October 20 Meeting Agenda**

Shelby Farms Park Conservancy	\$60/year
Wolf River Conservancy	\$60/year
Agricenter International	\$60/year
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### **Unusual Sightings - New State Record**

Dick Preston noted the presence this week of three "good-to-get" warblers in the Community Gardens area of Shelby Farms: Mourning, Canada, and Wilson's Warblers.

Martha Waldron noted that we have a new, confirmed state record for a Brown-headed Nuthatch, seen in April 2021 for about 3 months in Germantown, TN. This is a new record for Shelby County.

-Barbara Pyles

# ..... Field Trip Reports .....

## **September 8, Ensley Bottoms**

Ensley Bottoms September 8th. Ten observers, 31 species. Highlights: Stilt Sandpiper (19), Short-billed Dowitcher (16), and a family group of American Kestrel (6).

## **September 11, Shelby County Fall Count**

A robust group of 31 observers reported a total of 122 species on September 11 at Shelby Forest. Dick Preston noted, however, that while the species count was good, the overall total number of birds seen was unusually low.

## **September 18, Fort Pillow**

Two observers, 49 species. Highlights: Wood Stork, Willow Flycatcher, and Canada Warbler.

## **September 22, Shelby Forest**

Shelby Forest. Eleven observers, 43 species. Highlights: American White Pelican (14), five species of vireos, including Blue-headed (2) and Philadelphia (8), ten species of warblers, including Golden-winged (2), and Blue-winged (2).







# UPCOMING EVENTS

October / November 2021

**Saturday, October 2, 7:30am**

Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park Field Trip  
*Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston / Van Harris*  
Dick: [dickpreston48@gmail.com](mailto:dickpreston48@gmail.com) / 901-837-3360  
Van: [shelbyforester1223@gmail.com](mailto:shelbyforester1223@gmail.com) / 901-592-8739

**Wednesday, October 6, 7:30am**

Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park Field Trip  
*Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston / Van Harris*  
Dick: [dickpreston48@gmail.com](mailto:dickpreston48@gmail.com) / 901-837-3360  
Van: [shelbyforester1223@gmail.com](mailto:shelbyforester1223@gmail.com) / 901-592-8739

**Saturday, October 9**

October Big Day  
<https://ebird.org/news/october-big-day-2021>

**Sunday, October 10, 7:30am**

Wapanocca NWR Field Trip  
*Field Trip Leader: Van Harris*  
[shelbyforester1223@gmail.com](mailto:shelbyforester1223@gmail.com) / 901-592-8739

**Wednesday, October 20, 6:30pm**

Chapter Meeting: Hal Mitchell, MTOS  
MOTUS Wildlife Tracking System  
*Host: Knox Martin, Mid-South Raptor Center*  
<https://goo.gl/maps/VFnaEXacAziRoGLA7>  
[knoxmartin2@aol.com](mailto:knoxmartin2@aol.com) / 901-574-2130

**Friday-Sunday, October 22-24**

Reelfoot Lake Pelican Festival  
<https://ebird.org/news/october-big-day-2021>

**Saturday, October 23, 7:30am**

W.C. Johnson Park  
*Field Trip Leader: Chad Brown*  
[cwb496@bellsouth.net](mailto:cwb496@bellsouth.net) / 901-754-3385

**Saturday, November 20, 7:30am**

Shelby Farms / Agricenter Field Trip  
*Field Trip Leader: Cliff VanNostrand*  
[theirishdutchman@gmail.com](mailto:theirishdutchman@gmail.com) / 901-483-7053

**Saturday, November 27, 7:30am**

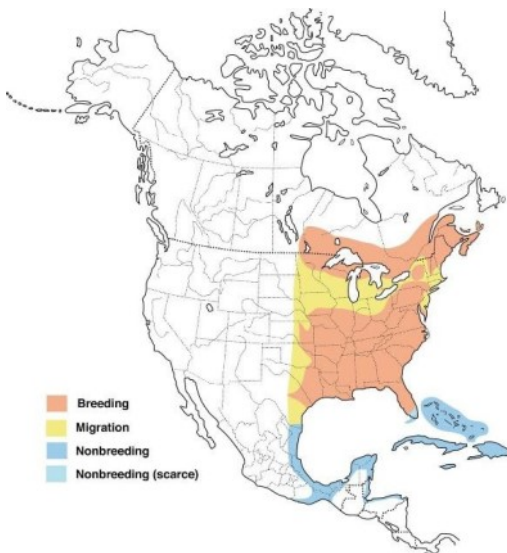
T.O. Fuller State Park Field Trip (Visitors Center)  
<https://goo.gl/maps/JF9xp5K7RvZV9ZfF6>  
*Field Trip Leader: Jim Varner*



# Species Spotlight: Northern Parula

As the tiniest warbler in the US, the parula really gives you a bang for your buck – you can see bright yellows, steely-blue grays, and a spot of rufous all in the feathers of one bird! This warbler flits around in bushes and brambles with boundless energy, moving restlessly from twig to branch and stopping every so often to let out a mechanical trill.

**Scientific name:** *Setophaga americana*



**Range:** Northern Parulas

are found throughout most of the Eastern US in late spring, summer, and early fall. In Tennessee, they arrive from their wintering grounds in April and leave in October.

**Habitat:** These warblers prefer mature forests near water. They are often found in swampy bottomlands and near streams. Usually, they breed in areas with Spanish or beard moss, which are favorite nesting materials.

**Diet/Feeding:** Parulas are mostly insectivores, eating beetles, wasps, ants, spiders, and almost any insect they can find. However, caterpillars seem to be a favorite. During the winter, parulas may eat nectar, fruit, or seeds.

**Behavior:** Parulas forage quickly, hopping about on the ends of outer branches and poking leaves with their sharp bills. They may also hover at the tips of branches while looking for insects. When confronted with an intruder, they lower their wings and



sometimes swipe their bills on a branch in an aggressive display. They chase and attack during territorial disputes. These birds are picky about their nest materials, nesting mostly in clumps of hanging moss situated high up in a tree. The female takes advantage of these existing moss clumps and hollows out a cavity before lining it with other soft materials. Then, she lays 2-7 speckled eggs which hatch in 12-14 days. Most pairs raise 1-2 broods per year. During migration and on their wintering grounds, parulas may form small groups with other birds, but they tend to stay alone.



**When, where, and how to see:** Look for this brightly colored warbler from April to October. The males sport a steely blue head with a yellowish patch, two bold white wing bars, white eye-rings, a bright yellow throat, and a multicolored chest with a rufous and black band. Females lack the male's chest bands. Diminutive size, stocky body and short tail, yellow throat and bill, and clean white belly distinguish them from other warblers. The male sings two songs: a characteristic trill that crescendos to a loud note and a buzzy, emphatic warble.

**Conservation:** Thankfully, Northern Parulas are common and their populations are increasing. However, deforestation destroys their favored habitat, and collisions with man-made structures kill hundreds of birds each year. Poor air quality also affects parulas by limiting the growth of the hanging mosses they use as nesting material.

#### **Fun facts:**

- Although they are small, parulas consume grit to aid in digestion.
- They seem to recognize different forms of the same song, as birds in one region will respond more aggressively to a song from their own region.

-Lynn M. Hui

#### **Bibliography:**

- Most info in this article and range map from the Northern Parula pages on Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds guide

#### **Other sources:**

- Ebird Bar Charts
- the Northern Parula pages on Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Birds of the World website



# 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](mailto:mtosnewsletter@gmail.com)**

## ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- 'Fowl' Weather is for the Birders  
<https://www.wknofm.org/2021-09-03/fowl-weather-is-for-the-birders>
- How To Clean Your Hummingbird Feeders  
<https://youtu.be/Mu819OjDBNY> (HT: Judy Dorsey)
- Reelfoot Lake State Park Photo Contest  
<https://www.facebook.com/465224110192370/posts/4339834499397959/>
- TWRA's 2022 Calendar Contest  
[https://stateofennessee.formstack.com/forms/photo\\_submissions](https://stateofennessee.formstack.com/forms/photo_submissions)
- October Big Day—9 Oct 2021  
<https://ebird.org/news/october-big-day-2021>
- Reporting Banded Birds  
<https://fws.gov/birds/surveys-and-data/bird-banding/reporting-banded-birds.php>
- Enter your pre-eBird life list  
<https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48000804866-enter-your-pre-ebird-life-list>



### 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 & Deon 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) 489-0795  
Email: [2graham@bellsouth.net](mailto:2graham@bellsouth.net)

### Chapter Meeting

**October 20, 2021. 6:30pm**

Mid-South Raptor Center

Smythe Farm Rd, Memphis, TN 38120, USA

<https://goo.gl/maps/VFnaEXacAziRoGLA7>

Host: Knox Martin 901-574-2130 (cell)

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.

### Program

**Hal Mitchell, MTOS**

*MOTUS Wildlife Tracking System*

### Upcoming Field Trip Information

**October 2:** Meeman-Shelby Forest SP

**October 6:** Meeman-Shelby Forest SP

**October 10:** Wapanocca NWR

**October 23:** W.C. Johnson Park

For our next issue, we would like to feature some photos of waders (herons, egrets, ibis, *etc.*).

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

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

### New Members

Jennifer C. Ireland [jenjen1399@me.com](mailto:jenjen1399@me.com)

Tatjana Jankov [march1298@gmail.com](mailto:march1298@gmail.com)

Nadine and Perry Larimer [plarimer123@gmail.com](mailto:plarimer123@gmail.com)

Terry O'Nele [mickterry71@gmail.com](mailto:mickterry71@gmail.com)

### Treasurer's Report

The balance in the Treasury is a little over \$17,000. Due to having few meetings since February 2020, chapter expenses declined somewhat, while membership numbers have stayed at normal and even growing levels. The Treasurer hopes to have a PayPal online option for paying dues or making donations by January 1, 2022. Technical assistance is being provided by TOS contractor Amy Wilms. -Barbara Pyles



# WHOOSH

With a feet forward whoosh, wings  
power-braking in a downward flare,  
the hawk landed spot-on

at the base of a mulched maple,  
not six feet from where we'd frozen  
on the road, and, righting himself

on staunch legs, loomed  
over that small realm, tracking the stir  
beneath: some dim, anonymous

thumb-sized thing – a mouse? a vole? –  
had run for cover, and now shifting  
rumples were all the hawk

could see, his head at a quizzical tilt  
as he picked at the undulant grasses.  
He never looked our way.

Such pure rapacity . . .  
That part of me drilled in distance  
allowed the hawk was

simply hungry; a step farther  
back, it recognized a little life  
deluded by mere straw.

ANNE RICHEY







Here are a couple of photos taken by Nick Smith of two juvenile Barred Owls that came to the center earlier this year. The bird on the right has normal coloration. The bird on the left is extremely light, almost white. We have never had a bird this light in 30 years of rehabbing.

-Knox Martin



# Photos by Tricia Vesely



Short-billed Dowitcher



Solitary Sandpiper



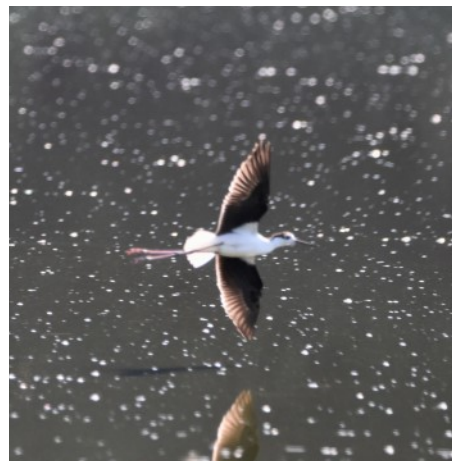
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck



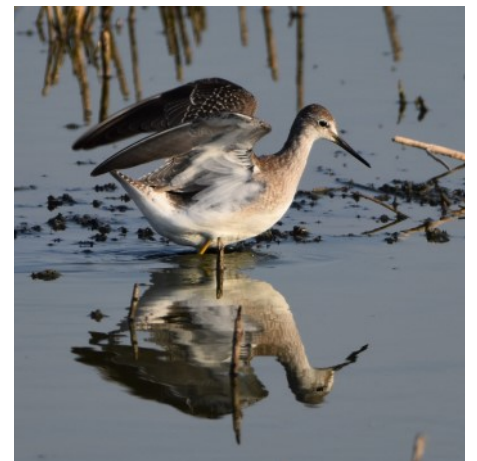
Cooper's Hawk



American Kestrel



Black-necked Stilt



Lesser Yellowlegs



# Photos by Tricia Vesely



Ruby-throated Hummingbird



Black-throated Green Warbler



White-eyed Vireo



Yellow-throated Vireo



Summer Tanager



Red-bellied Woodpecker



PHOTOS BY  
**DEBRA KIENZLE**



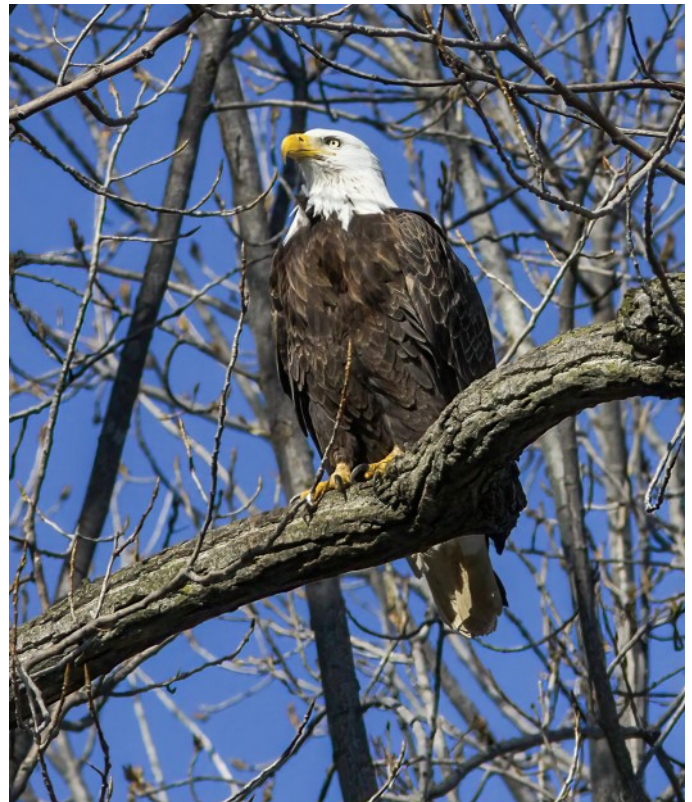
Peregrine Falcon



Red-shouldered Hawk



Mississippi Kite



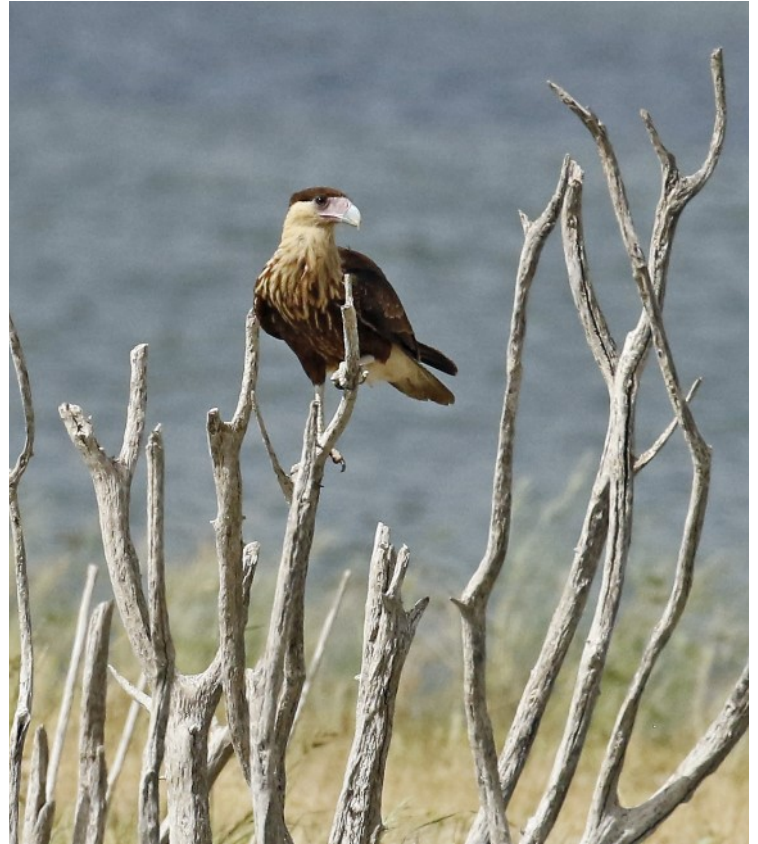
Bald Eagle



PHOTOS BY  
**THOMAS KIENZLE**



Galapagos Hawk



Crested Caracara



Turkey Vulture



Osprey



PHOTOS BY  
Cliff VanNostrand



Northern Harrier



Red-shouldered Hawk



Peregrine Falcon



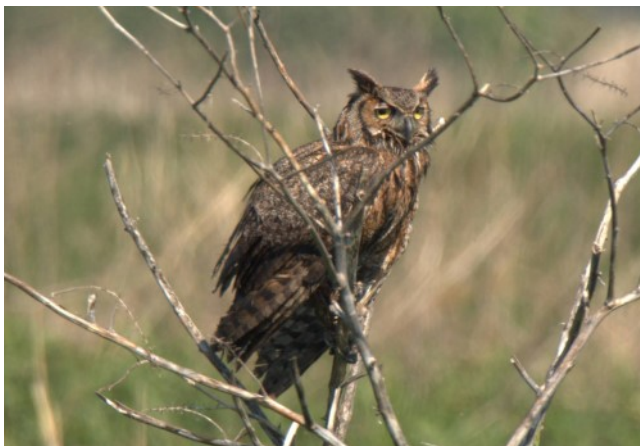
Broad-winged Hawk



Mississippi Kite



Osprey



Great Horned Owl



Red-tailed Hawk

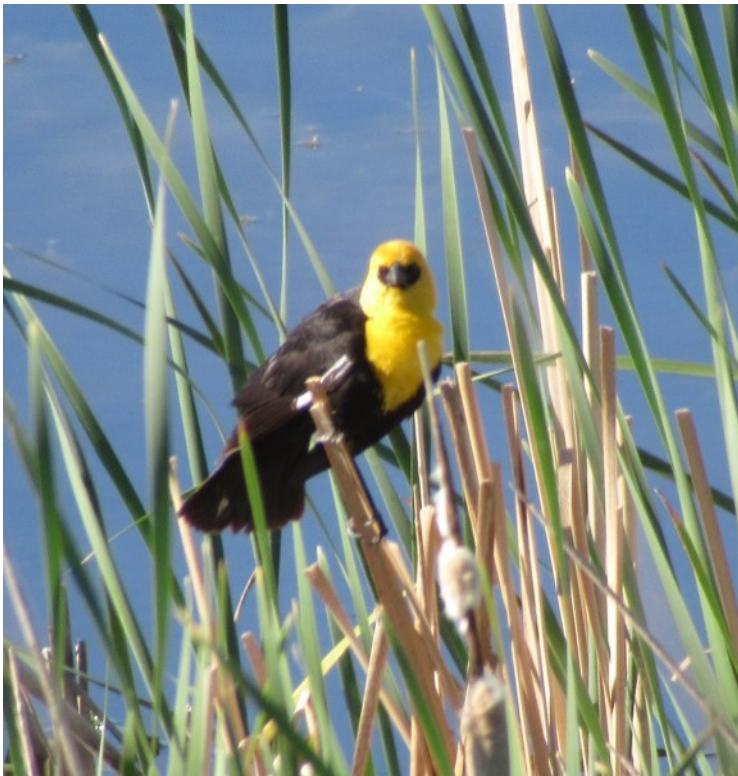




Marbled Godwit



Western Meadowlark



Yellow-headed Blackbird

These photos were  
taken at the Audubon  
NWR this June.

PHOTOS BY  
**DAVID YOUNG**