



# MEMPHIS CHAPTER NEWS

TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

<http://birdmemphis.org>

January 2022

## **DECEMBER PROGRAM**

The Memphis Chapter held its first indoor meeting since February 2020 in the meeting room of Jason's Deli on Poplar Ave. near Highland. Chapter member Barbara Pyles described the travels of a group of MTOS birders and other nature lovers on a wildlife viewing adventure in Tanzania. The trip was organized by Chapter member Van Harris. Barbara showed pictures taken by several of the travelers. She noted that they had perfect weather throughout the January 11-27, 2020 trip. They were fortunate to return home before the Covid pandemic shut down foreign travel. She showed exceptionally beautiful pictures and videos of wildlife and scenery from several national parks along the northern safari route in Tanzania including Tarangire NP, Arusha NP, Ngorongoro Crater & Conservation Area and Serengeti NP. They stayed in lodges with luxurious accommodations and food with wildlife close at hand. They especially enjoyed Ndutu Safari Lodge that Van described as typical of the old African lodges. Their guides took them out each day to view wildlife from the safety



of the vehicles. An image that stands out for its beauty is of Zebras in the misty Ngorongoro Crater. She noted that the crater was cool with a rim rising 2000 feet above the crater floor at 7500 feet. The crater is famous for the vast number of animals found there. She had great pictures of Elephant families, Hippopotamus, and

Giraffe. She showed a dramatic video of a Leopard stalking through tall grass near a pond in the Serengeti. She noted that they had seen all of the big 5 species that are hoped for on an African wildlife safari, Black Rhino, Lion, Leopard, Elephant, and Cape Buffalo, and that she personally saw 300 bird species. She showed many bird pictures including Bar-tailed Trogon, Ostrich, and Secretary Bird and showed a video of her favorite bird singing. The scenery and big game wildlife images stood out for their exceptional quality, especially for those of us starved for travel. The Serengeti is so vast that it is best seen from the air. Barbara and her husband took it in from a hot air balloon. They also visited a Masai village and the Olduvai Gorge Museum that was founded by Mary Leakey to showcase paleoanthropological artifacts from the surrounding area.

-Margaret Jefferson

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### **Chapter business:**

The Chapter voted to elect Anita Vincent as a State Director.

### **Bird sightings:**

Dick Preston noted that many interesting species have been observed recently including: Snowy Owl at Paris Landing State Park and Lincoln Co. Tennessee, Least Flycatcher and Common Gallinule at Ensley Bottoms, Say's Pheobe, Lapland Longspurs, and Merlin at Shelby Farms. Dick also noted that a male Baltimore Oriole is coming to feeders in his yard in Tipton County and that Norman Soskel has a female Baltimore Oriole in his yard in Germantown.

**Please Note: The Chapter Meeting for January is **Cancelled****  
**due to the rapid increase in Covid cases over the past two weeks.**

**We will resume our meetings in February.**

# UPCOMING

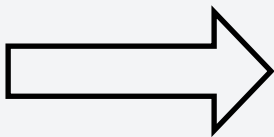
## January / February 2022

### **Sunday, January 9, 7:30am**

Tunica / North Mississippi

Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston

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



Meet at the Outfitters gas station/  
convenience store in Eudora at **7:30am.**

**Outfitters** (8995 Hwy 304, Hernando, MS), is at the intersection of Hwy 301 and Hwy 304. Click here for directions to the meeting place: <https://goo.gl/maps/nUGTBXX3C6GdNpx1A>

This is a safe place to leave cars, as carpooling is desired, but not required. Depending on recent sightings, we may check the area around the dam at Arkabutla Lake, before proceeding down into the delta.

Contact Dick Preston for questions or more information.

### **Friday-Monday, January 14-16**

Wheeler Wildlife Festival of Cranes

<https://www.friendsofwheelernwr.org/festival-of-the-cranes-2022>

### **Wednesday, January 19 (CANCELLED)**

Chapter Meeting

### **Saturday, January 22**

Wolf River WMA

Field Trip Leaders: Gaynell Perry & Martha Waldron

Gaynell: [gcperry1@comcast.net](mailto:gcperry1@comcast.net)

Martha: [martha.waldron@gmail.com](mailto:martha.waldron@gmail.com)

### **Saturday, January 29, 10am-2pm**

Birds & Seeds

Lichterman Nature Center, 5992 Quince Road, Memphis

<https://moshmemphis.com/event/the-birds-the-seeds/>

### **Friday-Monday, February 18-21**

Great Backyard Bird Count

<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/about-great-backyard-bird-count>

### **Saturday, February 26**

Shelby Farms/Agricenter

Field Trip Leader: Sue Cosmini

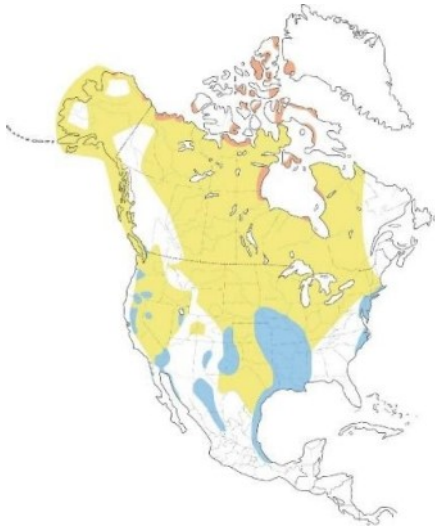
Sue: [susanewag@gmail.com](mailto:susanewag@gmail.com)

# Species Spotlight

## SNOW GOOSE

Few sights are as grand as a flock of Snow Geese rising up from a winter lake; it's as if snow were drifting upwards! Their annual northward migration is a sign of spring for many. However, it should come as no surprise that such large numbers dramatically—and often negatively—impact the environment.

**Scientific name:** *Anser caerulescens*



**Range:** Snow Geese breed in the high Arctic and winter in the middle to southern US. Most of them fly through central Canada and the Great Plains on long migration pathways that may span 5000 miles.

**Habitat:** Like most geese, Snow Geese stick to areas with water. They nest near rivers, lakes, and marshes with hilly terrain that prevents their nests from being flooded by the spring thaw. After the eggs hatch, families move on foot to grassy areas, such as marshes and ponds. During migration, farm fields, lakes, and marshes serve as important stopover sites.

**Diet/feeding:** Snow Geese are mostly vegetarian. They consume a wide range of grasses, rushes, horsetails, shrubs, and willows, nibbling the tender parts or unearthing entire shoots. Goslings eat flowers, shoots, and fly larvae. During winter, flocks may settle over agricultural fields to feed on leftover grain.

**Behavior:** These geese are adapted to long-distance travel. They might look heavy, but they can reach up to 50 miles per hour in flight. During the breeding season, families with goslings can walk 2 miles per day in search of food. A Snow Goose spends much of its day feeding on land, and while preparing for migration, they may spend 12 hours foraging. They rest and roost by standing on one leg or floating on water. Snow Geese are minimalist nesters; under the watchful eye of her mate, the female picks a nest site concealed by vegetation and makes a simple scrape lined with down. The first of 2-6 eggs may be laid only an hour after the site is chosen. After 24 days, during which the female spends most of her day incubating, the eggs hatch and the goslings follow their parents to grassy feeding grounds.

**When, where, and how to see:** Snow Geese are truly hard to miss. They often travel by the thousands, resting and feeding in raucous white flocks on lakes







and in fields. In flight, they lace the sky with graceful chevrons. Two morphs of Snow Geese exist: a dark, or blue, form, and a white form. The white form has all-white feathers except for black primaries and a yellowish head. The dark form often has dark gray feathers and a white head and belly, but the amount of dark coloration varies from bird to bird. Dark morph juveniles are covered in sooty feathers, while white juveniles are a dusty shade of gray. The light morph can be told apart from white domestic geese by their dark primaries and black eyes.

**Conservation:** Efforts to protect the Snow Goose have been a little too successful. They still face some threats, such as lead poisoning, but most people worry about keeping their numbers in check. Climate change has helped them to some degree, allowing them to extend their breeding range northwards. They have also learned to capitalize on leftover grain in fields, shifting their migration routes from coastal to inland areas. The resulting population boom continues to affect both humans and the environment. For example, they hurt the productivity of farm fields by trampling or eating crops and the ground cover that prevents erosion. Ironically, these same effects are felt in the Arctic ecosystem as they degrade their own breeding habitats by overgrazing.

### Fun facts:

- Large Snow Goose colonies effect the survival of other bird species. For example, researchers found that colonies are a magnet for predators, reducing the breeding success of shorebirds around them.
- Snow Geese can be hard to distinguish from their smaller relative, the Ross's Goose. While the white morph of a Snow Goose has a yellowish tinge on its head, Ross's Geese have truly snow-white heads. Ross's Geese also have shorter necks and stubbier, purplish bills that lack the Snow Goose's black "grin patch".
- What determines a goose's coloration? The answer lies in a single gene. Surprisingly, dark plumage is dominant to light plumage.
- Goslings and eggs face many challenges to their survival, as they provide tasty meals for gulls, ravens, foxes, wolves, owls, and bears.



-Lynn M. Hui

### Bibliography:

#### •Most info in this article and range map from:

- the Snow Goose pages on Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds guide

#### •Other sources:

- <https://animals.mom.com/swan-migration-5032.html>
- <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/snow-geese>
- [https://www.pennlive.com/wildaboutpa/2018/02/15\\_things\\_you\\_may\\_not\\_know\\_abo.html](https://www.pennlive.com/wildaboutpa/2018/02/15_things_you_may_not_know_abo.html)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snow\\_goose#Migration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snow_goose#Migration)
- <https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ecs2.1788>
- [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife\\_damage/reports/Wildlife%20Damage%20Management%20Technical%20Series/GeeseDucksCoots-WDM-Technical-Series.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/reports/Wildlife%20Damage%20Management%20Technical%20Series/GeeseDucksCoots-WDM-Technical-Series.pdf)
- <https://www.news-leader.com/story/sports/outdoors/2018/03/02/snow-geese-boom-could-lead-ecological-disaster/376946002/>

•All photos taken by Lynn Hui

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

# 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)**

## A LA CARTE

- Last seen in ... birdwatchers asked to join hunt for world's 10 rarest birds  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/dec/17/search-for-lost-birds-birdwatchers-asked-track-down-10-rarest-birds-species-in-world>
- Wild Kids Magazine  
<http://magicalchildhood.com/wildkids/>
- Take a Virtual Gallery Tour of the 2021 Audubon Photography Awards Winners  
<https://www.audubon.org/news/take-virtual-gallery-tour-2021-audubon-photography-awards-winners>
- Burrowing Owl, the 2022 ABA Bird of the Year  
<https://www.aba.org/2022-bird-of-the-year-burrowing-owl-athene-cunicularia/>

## **Birds & Seeds Event at Lichterman Nature Center**

Saturday, January 29th 10a.m. - 2p.m.

I am currently looking for 2-3 volunteers to work the Birding from the Balcony table on January 29th. This is an outdoor stop by table that guests can visit to view birds and ask bird related questions. The nature center will provide binoculars for guests to borrow as well as field guides.

**Anyone interested in volunteering** please contact Mary Schmidt at [Mary.schmidt@memphistn.gov](mailto:Mary.schmidt@memphistn.gov)

## **PayPal is Now Available**

Members who would like to pay 2022 dues via PayPal are welcome to do so at:

<https://tnbirds.org/chapters/memphis-chapter/>



Tennessee Bird Watchers

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/66783408040/>

Tennessee Birding

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/356185474468991/>

TENNESSEE RARE BIRD ALERT

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TennesseeRareBirdAlert/>

West Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge Complex

<https://www.facebook.com/WestTennNWRC/>

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

<https://www.facebook.com/tnwildlife>





## HUMMINGBIRD SIGHTING BETWEEN November 1 and March 15

If you do get a hummingbird, Please contact  
Cyndi Routledge - [routledges@bellsouth.net](mailto: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.



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

### **Chapter Meeting**

The Chapter Meeting for January is **Cancelled** due to the rapid increase in Covid cases over the past two weeks. We will resume our meetings in February. The February meeting will feature "1000 Days of Birding" by Cliff VanNostrand.

### **Upcoming Field Trip Information**

**January 9:** Tunica / North Mississippi

**January 22:** Wolf River WMA

***THANK YOU TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED  
TO THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER.***

For our next issue, we would like to feature some photos of funny or weird bird behavior.

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

### **New Members**

Jim & Michelle Campbell & family  
Matt Dunning  
Pablo Pereyra & family  
Caroline Schratz & Neil Lovett  
Cecilia Clanton

### **Treasurer's Report**

The balance in the Treasury as of December 29, 2021 is \$17,166.65. All disbursement checks written in 2021 have cleared. The last disbursement for the year was \$200 paid to Jason's Deli for meeting room use.

### **PayPal is Now Available**

Members who would like to pay 2022 dues via PayPal are welcome to do so at [www.birdmemphis.org](http://www.birdmemphis.org). There are also options to join MTOS or donate. A handful of dues payments were processed and deposited into the MTOS PayPal account in December, with total success. MTOS thanks TOS Webmaster Amy Wilms for constructing this valuable website pay option.

# Photos by Lynn Hui



Northern Pintail



Northern Pintail



Northern Pintail



Gadwall





Cinnamon Teal



Wood Duck



Mallard

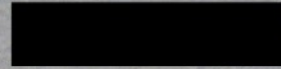


Gadwall

PHOTOS BY  
**THOMAS KIENZLE**



# PHOTOS BY



Bufflehead



Northern Shoveler



Canvasback



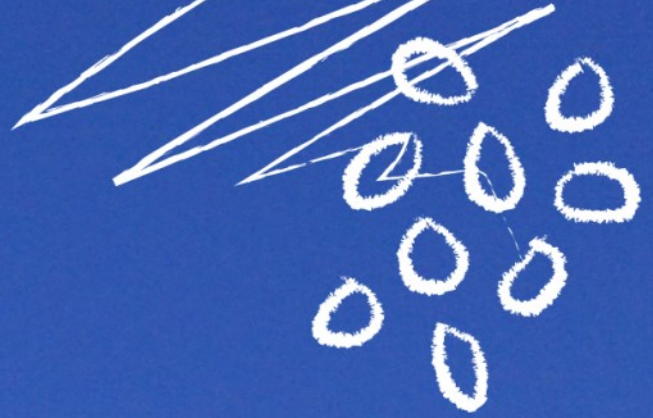
Ring-necked Duck



# DEBRA KIENZLE



# PHOTOS BY CLIFF VANNOSTRAND



Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (Ensley)



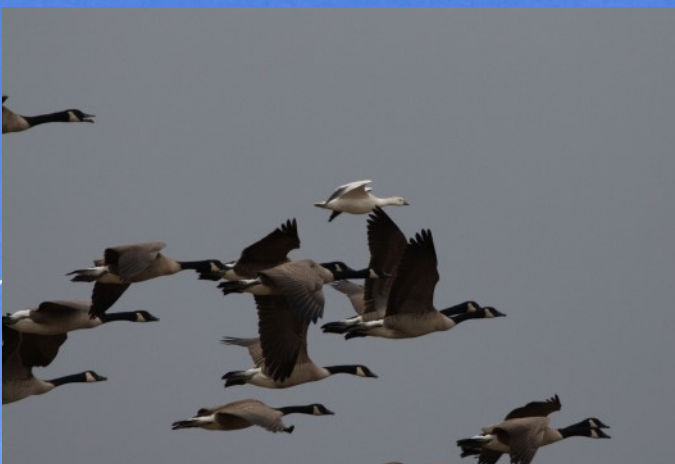
Hooded Merganser (Trap Lake)



Canvasback, Redhead, Snow Goose, Lesser Scaup  
(Trap Lake)



Green-winged Teal (Chickasaw Lake)



Canada Goose, Ross's Goose (Mid-South Raptor Center)



Common Golden-eye (Trap Lake)





Bufflehead



Ring-necked Duck



Black-bellied Whistling-Duck



Fulvous Whistling-Duck



Blue-winged Teal



Mottled Duck

Photos by:  
Jay Walko



Redhead, Bufflehead

## **Eleven bird feeders in the middle of Germantown, what should you expect?**

The first thing you should expect is that your yard will become a very popular place to visit for the birds in the local area. The second thing is that you will have a substantial yearly bill at Wild Birds Unlimited. If you add to this four bird houses, that ups the activity even more during the spring and summer at which time you will be helping nourish the nestlings and fledglings of various families. The nests we know about are in our bird houses but many of the Mom and Pop birds come from surrounding yards, grabbing seeds, etc. and flying off to feed their offspring.

Over time you can expect to see more than 40 species including some of the following: Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawk; Hummingbirds; Red-breasted Nuthatch (winter); Brown Creeper; Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Eastern Bluebird; Brown Thrasher; Pine and Yellow-rumped Warbler; White-throated Sparrow; Rose-breasted Grosbeak; Indigo Bunting; up to 50 Pine Siskins; Goldfinch and many more of our everyday birds at your feeders.

Another thing you should expect is to draw a following of squirrels, chipmunks, voles, shrews, an occasional rat and nighttime visits from raccoons and opossum. Be prepared, the chipmunks, voles and shrews will undermine your yard with their tunnels. They will feed on the ground but the squirrels and raccoons are amazingly agile and very persistent. Each feeder pole should have a protective baffle or two.

Watch out for "Free-range cats," and if you put a feeder near a window, when the hawks come to visit (hunting), birds on the feeders will freak and crash into windows and screens. Our experience is that the window wins and the screens do not. The birds, maybe, maybe not.





Peanut butter  
Nuggets



Protected Tube



Dried  
Mealworms



Squirrel-proof Hopper....(NOT)



Protected Platform



Large  
Hopper



Barkbutter



Small  
Hopper

Squirrel-proof? Not really! And that's my story for now.



Suet Feeder

In the summer add a couple Hummingbird feeders and in the winter a thistle seed feeder.

-Chad Brown