

Tennessee Ornithological Society Memphis Chapter

<http://birdmemphis.org>

January 2023

December Program



Dr. Jerad Henson of Christian Brothers University presented a program on Black-bellied Whistling Ducks (BBWDs). It was a program full of interesting details and findings from Dr. Henson's local research on these "really weird ducks." Dr. Henson's research on this species has been made possible due to the massive northward range expansion of BBWDs seen in recent years, including into our area. Dr. Henson noted that in 1942 the northern breeding range for these ducks was the Rio Grande River!

BBWDs do NOT like swimming around in water. Rather, they prefer to hang out in mudflats and shallow wetlands. They are a big, heavy duck, averaging 2.5 pounds, and they are night feeders. BBWDs are very good at laying lots of eggs in other ducks' nests. To what extent do

BBWDs out-compete Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers for nesting sites? During the normal nesting time for Wood Ducks and Mergansers, from late February into March, BBWDs have not begun nesting. This is usually a non-competition period. However, any re-nesting attempts made later in the season by these two species are often not successful, due to being pushed out of nest boxes by BBWDs.

An interesting tidbit that Dr. Henson shared is that, unlike Wood Ducks or Mergansers, BBWDs do not line their nest boxes with down. They lay eggs directly onto the bottom of the box. Their average clutch size is 13.

Dr. Henson has banded 76 BBWDs at Ensley Bottoms. These bandings have mostly taken place at nest boxes, where he is able to grab them from the box. Dr. Henson's recapture rate for birds he has banded is in the 20-30% range. About 30-40% of the nest boxes that are in place have been used as nests.

Dr. Henson initially used 17 rough-cut cypress nest boxes that weigh about 25 pounds each. However, lighter plastic nest boxes are the dominant box type in use now. How hot do plastic vs wood nest boxes get in June and July? Is it hot enough to cook eggs? Dr. Henson, with help from CBU undergraduates, checked box temperatures to ensure this was not the case. There was relatively little difference in the inside temperature of wood vs plastic boxes. Both got quite warm (up to 111 degrees F). However, eggs did successfully hatch during this time. They did not cook.

Dr. Henson will continue to study how successful BBWDs are at reproducing in the Memphis area, what their habitat preference is, and if the birds that leave this area come back to this area.

-Barbara Pyles

CHAPTER MEETING

St. George's Episcopal
Church

**2425 South Germantown Rd.
Germantown, TN**

**Wednesday,
January 18, 2023**

7:00 pm

**Meetings are held in the
Parish Hall**




BIRDS & SEEDS

AT LICHTERMAN NATURE CENTER

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28TH
10A.M. - 2P.M.

Seed swap and giveaway, plant sales,
birding and gardening tips, demos,
presentations and activities!



**Birds & Seeds at Lichterman Nature Center,
Saturday, January 28th 10a.m. - 2p.m.**

Mary Schmidt could use another volunteer or two if anyone is interested in manning a scope, talking to folks about birding or leading a walk.

mary.schmidt@memphistn.gov or 901-636-2224

<https://moshmemphis.com/event/the-birds-the-seeds-2/>

**Great Backyard Bird Count,
Saturday, February 18 10:30a.m. - 1p.m.**

Mary is also looking for one or two volunteers for the Saturday of the Great Backyard Bird Count at Lichterman Nature Center.

<http://www.memphismuseums.org/lichterman-nature-center/>

Species Spotlight

Eurasian Collared-Dove

An ocean away from its native land, this large, majestic dove has made itself quite at home in our neighborhoods and cities. The soft tones of its plumage and its graceful black necklace, made more elegant by a snowy day, recall an aristocrat in avian form!

Scientific name: *Streptopelia decaocto*

Range: Eurasian Collared-Doves originally hail from India and China. Their range started to expand across Eurasia around the 10th century, and they reached the Western Hemisphere in the 1970s. Now they are a common sight across the Southern and Western US.



Habitat: These doves prefer populated areas, especially in their non-native range. They are attracted to open farmland, where grain is abundant and trees, barns, and telephone poles provide perching and nesting places. They avoid urban areas and thick forests. In their native range, they stick to dry, open areas with few trees.

Diet/feeding: Seeds comprise most of this dove's diet, but they may take berries and insects as well. Like many other birds, they also eat grit to aid digestion. Interestingly, millet is one of their favorite feeder foods.

Behavior: Collared-Doves are ground feeders that meticulously comb the ground for seeds while constantly bobbing their heads. Flocks form near abundant food sources such as farms, and individuals may chase off other species from feeders. In the breeding season, a male calls tirelessly from a high perch to attract a female, who watches her suitor fly upwards and clap his wings in a show of strength. Once a pair bond forms, the doves preen each other and visit potential nest sites in trees. The male provides his mate with nest material and protection from predators. A pair can raise six broods per year at most, although the female lays only 1-2 eggs per brood.





When, where, and how to see: Collared-Doves are conspicuously “beefier” and paler than native Mourning Doves. They have tan wings with black primaries and lighter pinkish coloring on the underparts and head. Males usually sport a paler head than females, but both sexes share the distinctive black necklace mark, one of the few bold features apparent on a perched bird. These birds fly quickly but with less agility than Mourning Doves. In flight and especially before landing, they spread their fan-shaped, white-tipped tails.

Conservation: As with other species that have formed alliances with humans, these doves benefit from the spread of human influence. Doves may become pests when they gather around farms and food processing areas, but they are kept as pets along with the domestic Barbary Dove. Collared-Doves are classified as invasive in some areas although they do not

affect native birds. As a non-native species, they can be hunted in the US.

Fun facts:

- This species’ unplanned invasion into the US began with the escape of a few doves during a pet-store burglary in the Bahamas. The shop owner freed the other fifty doves afterwards. Yet more birds were released on the island of Guadalupe before a volcano eruption.
- The Collared-Dove, along with its relatives, sucks water through its bill instead of scooping it up and letting it slide down its throat.
- The species name, decaocto, comes from a Greek myth about a servant girl who was transformed into a dove.



-Lynn M. Hui

Bibliography:

- Most information in this article and range map from:
 - the Eurasian Collared-Dove pages on Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s All About Birds guide
 - the Eurasian Collared Dove pages on Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Birds of the World website
- Other sources:
 - the eBird map for the Eurasian Collared-Dove
 - <https://pigeonpedia.com/eurasian-collared-dove-breed/>
 - <https://gobillybird.com/2018/11/16/why-do-our-doves-drink-differently-than-other-birds/#:~:text=The%20entire%20DOVE%20family%20of,Video%20Player>

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

- A video taken by Donna Dawson in their backyard in Castle Rock, CO. (HT: Chad Brown)
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/b49xy7rcmszf1t/Downy%20feeding.MOV?dl=0>
- Wisdom, a Laysan albatross, at 71 years old the oldest known wild bird. (HT: Knox Martin)
<https://youtu.be/IKyEHCun108>
<http://ow.ly/3qFk50Jh313>
- A dozen Bald Eagles being treated for poisoning after eating euthanized animals dumped at a local garbage dump. (HT: Knox Martin)
<https://kstp.com/associated-press/ap-us-international/3-bald-eagles-die-10-sick-after-eating-euthanized-animals/>
- MTOS member Susan Maakestad's review of the book *Birdpedia: A Brief Compendium of Avian Lore* is published in the December 2022 issue of *Birding*, the magazine of the American Birding Association (ABA). (HT: Judy Dorsey)
<https://www.aba.org/a-modern-birdwatchers-guide-to-everything/>
- After a Frantic Year, It's Time for 'Slow Birding' - The New York Times *Paywall (HT: Gregg Elliot)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/14/realestate/after-a-frantic-year-its-time-for-slow-birding.html>
- A Beginner's Guide to eBird
<https://www.audubon.org/news/a-beginners-guide-ebird>
- eBird Weather: RainCrow Q&A
<https://www.10000birds.com/ebird-weather-raincrow.htm>
- Recovering American's Wildlife Act
<https://tnbirds.org/2022/12/19/immediate-action-alert-2/>



Upcoming Field Trips

JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2023

Monday, January 2, 7:00am

Holly Springs, Mississippi CBC

Field Trip Leader: Hal Mitchell

halmitchell@gmail.com

Sunday, January 8, 8:00am

Tunica / Northern Mississippi

Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston

dickpreston48@gmail.com

Friday-Sunday, January 13-15

CANCELLED

Wings of Winter Birding Festival Field Trip

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/wingsofwinterbirdingfestival/posts/pfbid0eTUenkpw9QgsbnZ28VuGUNgJNTV8VNZnU6PkEpCwQL8cbiFi8gwWr5rhAXs3JEVnl)

[wingsofwinterbirdingfestival/posts/](https://www.facebook.com/wingsofwinterbirdingfestival/posts/pfbid0eTUenkpw9QgsbnZ28VuGUNgJNTV8VNZnU6PkEpCwQL8cbiFi8gwWr5rhAXs3JEVnl)

[pfbid0eTUenkpw9QgsbnZ28VuGUNgJNTV8V](https://www.facebook.com/wingsofwinterbirdingfestival/posts/pfbid0eTUenkpw9QgsbnZ28VuGUNgJNTV8VNZnU6PkEpCwQL8cbiFi8gwWr5rhAXs3JEVnl)

[NZnU6PkEpCwQL8cbiFi8gwWr5rhAXs3JEVnl](https://www.facebook.com/wingsofwinterbirdingfestival/posts/pfbid0eTUenkpw9QgsbnZ28VuGUNgJNTV8VNZnU6PkEpCwQL8cbiFi8gwWr5rhAXs3JEVnl)

Wednesday, January 18, 7:00 pm

Chapter Meeting

St. George's Episcopal Church

2425 South Germantown Rd. Germantown, TN



Saturday, January 28, 10am-2pm

Birds & Seeds

Lichterman Nature Center,

5992 Quince Road, Memphis

<https://moshmemphis.com/event/the-birds-the-seeds-2/>



Saturday, February 4, 3:30pm

Wolf River WMA

Field Trip Leader: Gaynell Perry

Gaynell: gcperry1@comcast.net

Field Trip Leader: Martha Waldron

Martha: martha.waldron@gmail.com

Friday-Monday, February 17-20

Great Backyard Count

<https://www.birdcount.org/>

Saturday, February 25

Shelby Farms/Agricenter

Field Trip Leader: Martha Waldron

martha.waldron@gmail.com



*CBC = Christmas Bird Count

<https://tnbirds.org/events/>



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.

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	\$ 5
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

January 18, 2023. 7:00pm

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

Program

Mary Schmidt, Lichterman Nature Center
Gardening for Birds and Pollinators

Hospitality

Refreshments will be provided by Betty Blaylock,
Sue Ferguson, and Mary Bruno

Upcoming Field Trip Information

January 2: Holly Springs, Mississippi CBC

January 8: Tunica / Northern Mississippi

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

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

Please send your submissions to mtosnewsletter@gmail.com.

New Members

Corinne McLaughlin corinnemcl1@gmail.com
Bob Walter walterrobert@msn.com

Member change of address

Forrest Priddy
300 Celebration Circle #221 Franklin, TN 37067
cellphone (901) 292-8352

Treasurer Report

As of December 21, 2022 the balance in the treasury is \$15,675.65. Two spending motions passed at the December meeting. The chapter voted to provide \$200 to support the 2023 Hatchie Bird Fest. The chapter also voted to provide \$500 to Delta Wind Birds, toward the construction of a second Motus (sensing) tower, as part of the shorebird monitoring project. MTOS Member Hal Mitchell plans to build the tower. Dick Preston is providing a 100% match. Last year MTOS funded the radio-tagging of a Killdeer and a Pectoral Sandpiper for this project.

Notice of Planned \$600 Expenditure - St. George's 2023 Honorarium
At the December meeting the Treasurer recommended that MTOS provide a \$600 honorarium to St. George's Episcopal Church for hosting our 2022-2023 set of 9 meetings at their facility. Chapter members will have an opportunity to vote on this spending recommendation at a 2023 chapter meeting. Input may also be sent to President Jim Varner at jamescvarner@gmail.com.

PHOTOS BY CLIFF
VANNOSTRAND



Black-bellied Whistling-Duck



Common Loon



Red-necked Grebe



Tundra Swan



Snow Goose



Ross's Goose

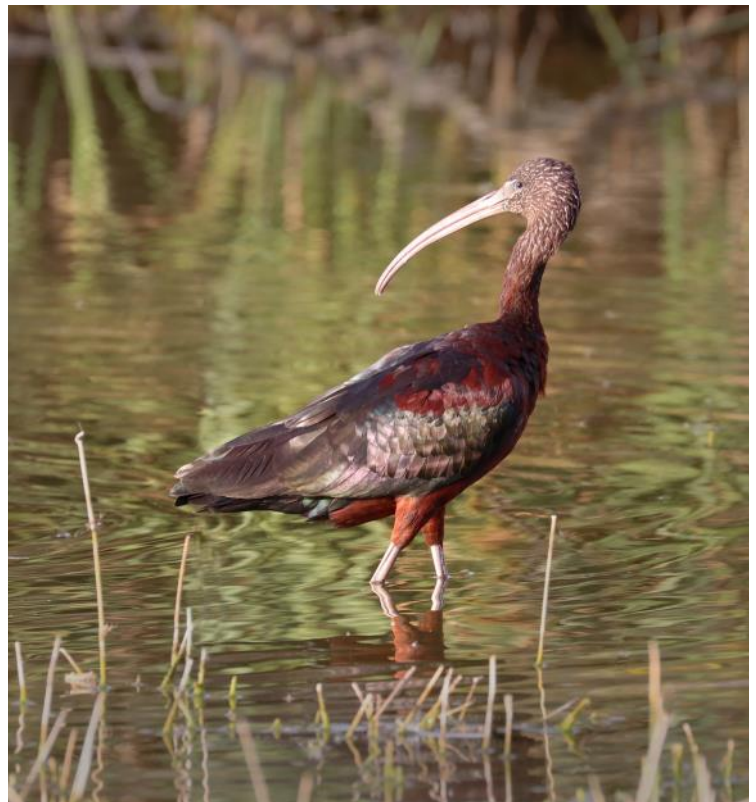
Photos by Debra Kienzle



Roseate Spoonbill



Trumpeter Swan



Glossy Ibis

PHOTOS BY:
TOM KIENZLE



Sora



Ring-necked Duck



Mallard

Photos by Michael Threlkeld



Pied-billed Grebe



Atlantic Puffin



Green-winged Teal



Northern Pintail



Painted Bunting



Western Grebe



Northern Cardinal