

Tennessee Ornithological Society Memphis Chapter



<http://birdmemphis.org>

March 2023

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

The February program, *Cultural Significance of Birds*, was presented by Jennalyn Speer, an artist and new chapter member. She introduced herself and presented a lively entertaining program that highlighted use of birds in utilitarian ways such as hunting and fishing and as symbols in cultures from around the world. Jennalyn showed examples of the use of bird images on national flags and currency, the use of feathers in hats and ceremonial clothing, and birds as inspiration for music and dance. She noted the use of the red-faced European Goldfinch in centuries of paintings as a Christian symbol. The bird conservation movement and the Audubon Society began as a reaction to the loss of birds killed to provide feathers for the hat trade.



Jennalyn grew up in Buffalo, New York, and was exposed to birds and the natural world by her father, who worked in forestry. Roger Tory Peterson was from her hometown. They birded some of the same areas and she was inspired by his field guides and bird paintings. Her watercolor paintings of birds and their habitats promote environmental awareness and conservation. Her arresting painting entitled *Hard Pressed* shows a collection of colorful warblers inside a French coffee press to highlight the importance of the habitat provided by shade-grown coffee farms.



Jennalyn's work will be on display in March at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute in an exhibit *Hope is a Thing with Feathers: Contemporary Women Nature Artists*. Her work will also be on display at the Memphis Botanic Garden during the month of May.

-Margaret Jefferson



SPRING BANQUET & POTLUCK

St. George's Episcopal Church
2425 South Germantown Rd.
Germantown, TN

**Wednesday,
March 15, 2023**

Arrive between 5:30-6:00pm
Serving begins at 6:30pm
Programs begins at 7:15pm

Bring your favorite side dishes.

**MTOS will be providing barbeque at
no cost to members.**

RSVP with the number of attendees and
side dish to Martha Waldron.

..... Field Trip Reports

Feb 4, Wolf River Wildlife Management Area

On this late afternoon field trip twenty-two observers recorded 31 bird species, including: Barn Owl (3), Great Horned Owl (1), Barred Owl (3), Short-eared Owl (1) and Am. Woodcock (5). As the sun set, woodcocks were heard calling but few were seen. Observers watched as one of the Barn Owls flew by. Upland Chorus Frogs were calling from the wet fields. A rising full moon and a group of howling Coyotes added to the ambience.



Alder was in bloom along the Mineral Slough boardwalk. The boardwalk had been nicely repaired by West TN State Natural Area Ecologist, Allan Trently, and a group of Boy Scouts. Some areas of road and trail were under water from recent rains.

-Margaret Jefferson

Feb 25, Shelby Farms

Shelby Farms Feb 23 MTOS Field Trip
<https://ebird.org/tripreport/110324>



Five of us waiting in the rain for the other 150+ members of the club to show up for the Saturday outing at Shelby Farms. Which, by the way, turned out to be a pretty productive bird watch.

-Chad Brown

Species Spotlight

Northern Mockingbird

As the charismatic songster of the North American backyard, the Northern Mockingbird graces many a holly hedge and dense bush as it warbles, chirrups, screeches, and squeaks.

This bird of many tongues announces the arrival of spring with a serenade!

Scientific name: *Mimus polyglottos*

Habitat and Range: Mockingbirds live year-round throughout the contiguous US and Mexico. It should come as no surprise that five states have chosen this songbird as their state bird. These adaptable birds prefer open areas with dense fruiting shrubs. They are often found near holly trees and bushes, as they rely on fruit in the winter. Parks, suburbs, and second growth woods often harbor a few mockingbirds.

Diet/feeding: Mockingbirds are omnivorous, eating insects in the summer and fruit in the fall and winter. They hunt worms, ants, beetles, grasshoppers, and other insects. The fruity part of their diet includes many berries and fruits grown on ornamental garden plants, including holly and roses. Some have observed mockingbirds drinking sap from trees.

Behavior: Though they may sing beautifully, mockingbirds are feisty, aggressive, and easily provoked. Females chase other females off their territory and males take on other males; paired birds may remain together throughout the year. Territorial disputes between males may escalate into clawing and pecking, and particularly “angry birds” even shoo away cats and dogs. Mockingbirds form bonds when a female enters a male’s territory and he attempts to chase her away. After pairing, the couple’s songs become softer and shorter. The male builds a twig nest up to ten feet off the ground, and the female completes the lining. Two to six eggs are laid per brood, and the eggs hatch within 12-13 days.

When, where, and how to see: Mockingbirds carry themselves with energy, standing on the ground with head held high and tail lifted at a cocky angle. Their posture on the ground and habit of hopping or running gives them the appearance of miniature gray roadrunners pursuing insects on foot (although they may perch and swoop as well, flycatcher-style). To enhance their hunting technique, mockingbirds use their two white wing patches to flush insects from hiding. When singing, they position themselves atop a tree or post as though seeking





attention from birdwatchers. Mockingbirds have elegant plumage in the grays and whites of a businessman's attire. Dark wing feathers edged with white, cream underparts, and a silver back distinguish it from its rusty relative, the Brown Thrasher. A faint eyeline runs through their shrewd, piercing yellow eyes. In flight, mockingbirds are easily recognizable by the two bold white patches on their flight feathers and the two white sides of their tails. However, the most impressive trait of this "bird of many tongues" is its seemingly inexhaustible repertoire of songs,

most copied from other bird species. To distinguish the plagiarizer from the plagiarized, a birdwatcher must listen for repeated phrases followed by drastically different notes.

Conservation: Mockingbirds are doing well now, thanks to their adaptability. However, in the early 1900s and before, mockingbirds were prized as caged songbirds, and the bird trade nearly drained regions of the East Coast of these free-spirited singers. Their range now reaches more northward than before, due in part to the spread of an invasive rose which provides them with fruits and nesting sites.



Fun facts:

- In the age of the caged bird trade, the best singers could be worth fifty dollars.
- Mockingbirds, especially unmated males, may sing at night.
- Some songs are simply too hard to learn. For example, mockingbirds avoid species' songs that are complicated, such as the winter wren's, or too high or low pitched, such as the mourning dove's.
- A male mockingbird can learn a maximum of 200 songs, including non-avian sounds such as machine noises and even the calls of 12 frog species.

-Lynn M. Hui

Bibliography:

- Most information in this article and range map from:
 - the Northern Mockingbird pages on Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds guide
 - the Northern Mockingbird pages from Audubon's Guide to North American Birds website
- Other sources:
 - <https://www.audubon.org/news/10-fun-facts-about-northern-mockingbird#:~:text=The%20Northern%20Mockingbird%20is%20the%20state%20bird%20of%20Arkansas%2C%20Florida, Mississippi%2C%20Tennessee%2C%20and%20Texas.>
 - <https://www.wild-bird-watching.com/Mockingbird.html>
 - <https://feederwatch.org/birdspotter-2017/mockingbird-in-flight/>
 - <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/why-do-some-birds-mimic-the-sounds-of-other-species/#>
 - <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/mockingbirds-can-learn-hundreds-of-songs-but-theres-a-limit/>
 - all photos taken by Lynn Hui



Male House Finch and a Male Purple Finch

-Joanie Webb

A LA CARTE

- Chickadees, titmice and nuthatches flocking together benefit from a diversity bonus – so do other animals, including humans
<https://theconversation.com/chickadees-titmice-and-nuthatches-flocking-together-benefit-from-a-diversity-bonus-so-do-other-animals-including-humans-192319> (HT: Gregg Elliott)
- 2023 TOS State Spring Meeting Registration Form ,
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1krX9ckGxjzswGPxjgNgaBQUXoeDziuv/>
- Hatchie Birdfest, May 5-7, 2023
<https://www.hatchiebirdfest.com/>
- BirdCast - Bird migration forecasts in real-time
<https://birdcast.info/>
- Official Names of Birds
<https://ornithology.com/birds-official-names/>
- eBird Alerts and Targets FAQs
<https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48000960317-ebird-alerts-and-targets-faqs>

SILENT AUCTION ON MARCH 15

Starting at 5:30PM, you can browse (and enter a bid on) many interesting, historic, and attractive items on sale. The Auction is a fun way to support MTOS projects and save a useful item from a sad landfill demise. After the evening's program ends, there will be a 5-minute final period to enter a bid. Sales will then be finalized. Most items have a below-\$20 minimum bid. Cash or checks are welcome.

-Barbara Pyles, Auction Organizer

2023 TOS State Spring Meeting – Nashville, April 28-30, 2023

Registration for the annual TOS Spring meeting to be held April 28-30 in the greater Nashville area is ongoing. All details can be found at this link: <https://tnbirds.org/2022/12/08/plan-to-attend-the-annual-spring-meeting-in-nashville-all-details-below/>

The Nashville Chapter has some wonderful field trips planned, Keynote speaker is Noah Strycker, and dinner is at The Green Door - a farm to table venue owned by our founders grandson Albert Ganier III and his wife Sylvia. Host hotel is the Hampton Inn in Ashland City (north of downtown Nashville).

Don't delay...group pricing for rooms at the Hampton will ONLY be honored until March 30.

-Cyndi Routledge (NTOS President)

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH / APRIL
2023

Wednesday, March 15

Chapter Meeting
St. George's Episcopal Church
2425 South Germantown Rd. Germantown, TN
Arrive between 5:30-6:00pm
Serving begins at 6:30pm
Programs begins at 7:15pm

Sunday, March 19, 7:30am

Shelby Farms
Trip Leader: Martha Waldron
martha.waldron@gmail.com

Saturday, April 8, 7:30am

Herb Parsons Lake, Fayette County, TN
Field Trip Leader: Allen Sparks
asparks306@bellsouth.net

Wednesday, April 12, 7:30am

Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park
Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston / Van Harris
Dick: dickpreston48@gmail.com
Van: shelbyforester1223@gmail.com

Saturday, April 15, 7:30am

Wall Doxey State Park, Holly Springs, MS
Field Trip Leader: Hal Mitchell
halmitchell@gmail.com

Wednesday, April 19, 7:00pm

Chapter Meeting
St. George's Episcopal Church
2425 South Germantown Rd.
Germantown, TN

Friday-Sunday, April 28-30

Spring Meeting
<https://tnbirds.org/2022/12/08/plan-to-attend-the-annual-spring-meeting-in-nashville-all-details-below/>

Remembering Chapter Member

Jeanne Payne

The Memphis Chapter lost member Jeanne Payne, on February 13 at the age of 76. A member since 1989, Jeanne is survived by her husband and chapter member George R. Payne, Jr., her son Scott Kirkpatrick, IV, four grandchildren, and nine great grandchildren.

She and George met while both served as docents at the Ramesses the Great Exhibition as part of the Wonders Series. Many chapter members remember their wedding. Jeanne was an active chapter member for many years, attending meetings and participating in birding field trips and CBCs. A graduate of Germantown High School, Jeanne worked as an accountant for Dobbs international and later worked for the University of Memphis Civil Engineering Department.

Jeanne enjoyed being with her family, reading, cooking, entertaining, traveling, watching professional soccer and University of Memphis basketball, going to the theater and the zoo, decorating for the holidays, listening to music, studying Egyptian archaeology, birdwatching, and volunteering at her church and at the Dixon Gallery and Gardens as a docent.

-Margaret Jefferson



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

March 15, 2023

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

Program

Spring Banquet

Ron Hoff & Dollyann Myers, TOS

Hummingbirds - A closer look at the world's 3rd largest family of birds

Hospitality

Spring Banquet

Co-Chairs: Dick Preston & Martha Waldron

Upcoming Field Trip Information

March 19: Shelby Farms / Agricenter

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

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

Please send your submissions to mtosnewsletter@gmail.com.

New Members

Bruce Batt bbatt02@aol.com

Marie Chrisman mariechrisman@comcast.net

Nina Grice ninagrice@aol.com

Glenda McDonald glendagmcd@gmail.com

Jacob Newby sirencresselia@gmail.com

Ashley Park ashleypark58@icloud.com

Treasurer's Report

The balance in the Treasury as of February 21, 2023 is \$15,998.39. At the February meeting Dick Preston presented findings from the audit of 2022 financial transactions. No errors or omissions were discovered.

Expenditures Approved at the February 15 meeting

Members voted to approve donations of \$500 each to the Mid-South Raptor Center and Mississippi Wildlife Rehabilitation, Inc. Knox Martin noted upcoming plans to assist an injured Bald Eagle at the Raptor Center, one of many found recently in our area.

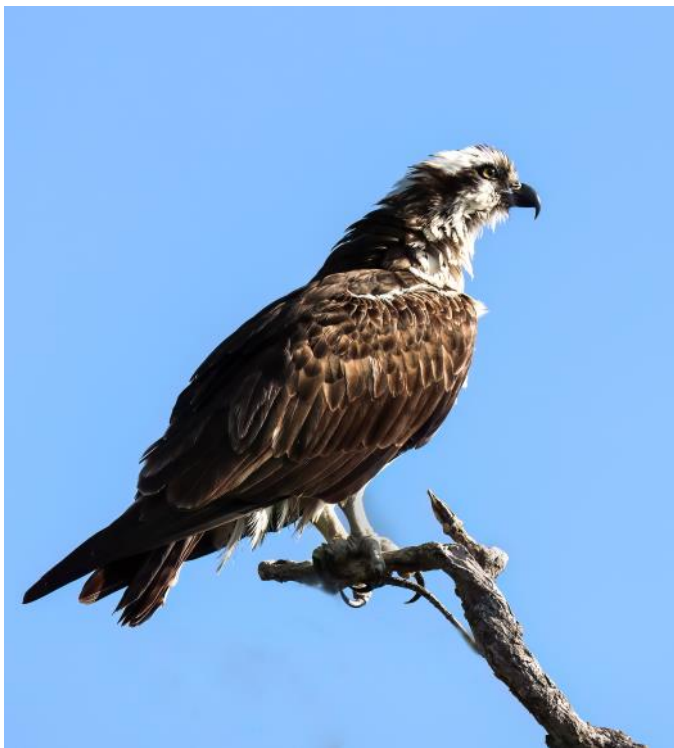
Following publication in the January 2023 newsletter, members voted to approve a \$600 Honorarium for the 2022-2023 year to St. George's Episcopal Church, our hosts for nine meetings. Members also voted to approve \$273.14 to fund a bluebird nestbox project. Four nestboxes on poles will be set up, with nesting results recorded by student-observers. MTOS member and Collierville High School student Lynn Hui will manage the project.



Barred Owl



Burrowing Owl



Osprey



Red-shouldered Hawk

PHOTOS BY
TOM AND DEBRA KIENZLE

PHOTOS BY:
SHANTANU DESHPANDE



Barn Owl



Osprey



Northern Harrier



American Kestrel



Sharp-shinned Hawk



Red-shouldered Hawk



Bald Eagle



White-tailed Kite



Mississippi Kite

PHOTOS BY ALLEN SPARKS



Red-shouldered Hawk



Osprey



Red-shouldered Hawk



Barred Owl



Bald Eagle



Bald Eagle



PHOTOS BY
SOPHIE DISMUKES



American Kestrel



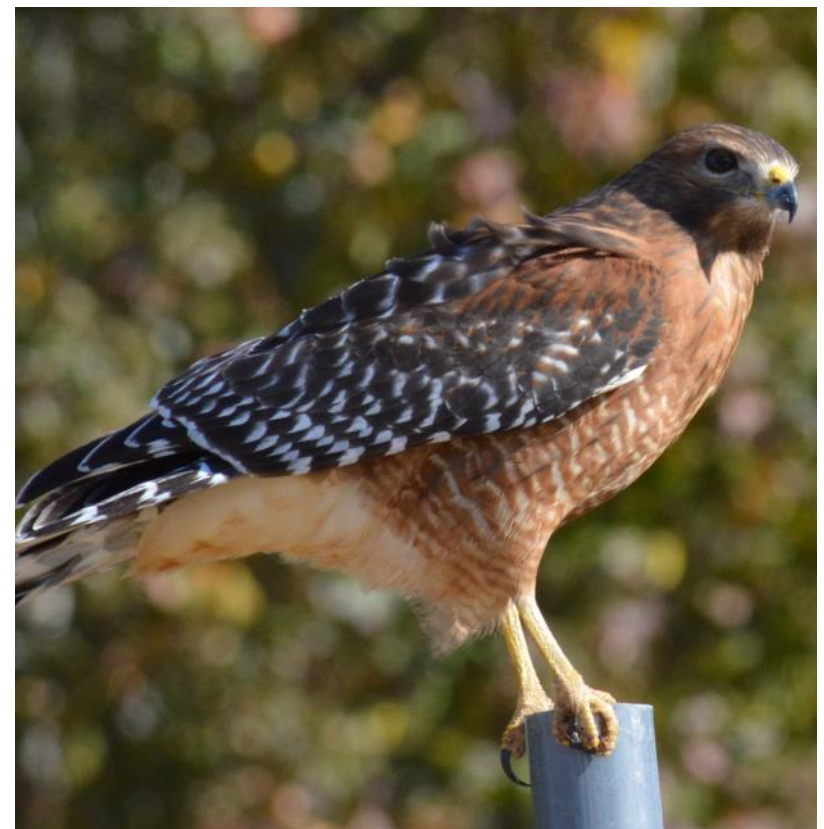
Red-tailed Hawk



Red-tailed Hawk



Barred Owl



Red-shouldered Hawk

PHOTOS BY

MICHAEL THRELKELD



Mississippi Kite



Bald Eagle



Osprey



Red-tailed Hawk



Roadside Hawk



Crested Caracara



Galapagos Hawk

PHOTOS BY
GEORGES MCNEIL



Downy Woodpecker



Carolina Chickadee



Red-breasted Nuthatch



Dark-eyed Junco



Red-shouldered Hawk