

# Tennessee Ornithological Society Memphis Chapter

<http://birdmemphis.org>

November 2023

## **OCTOBER PROGRAM**

The October program was presented by Cameron Rutt. Cameron is the science coordinator for the American Bird Conservancy Lost Birds project. Using data from eBird and other sources, the project has identified 32 bird species from the Caribbean and Central and South America for which there is no recent documentation (sightings or recordings). The project encourages birders with access to appropriate habitat to attempt to locate these lost bird species and report their findings whether positive or negative. They also provide support and funding for searches. Lost species once found in the southern US are Ivory-billed Woodpecker (critically endangered) and Bachman's Warbler (critically endangered, possibly extinct).

Cameron's program "Insectivorous Mixed-Species Flocks Around the World" presented a new way to think about some of the common wintering and resident birds found in our local forests. He discussed published data by other researchers who have studied social interaction in mixed species flocks of forest birds in winter. In our area, typical species in these flocks are Downy Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Chickadee, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Brown Creeper. Cameron made a distinction between these flocks and mixed aggregations of birds together because of a common resource such as food, habitat, or roost site. Aggregations include mixed groups of ducks and geese, shorebirds, gulls and terns, blackbirds, and sparrows. The key to the mixed species flocks of forest birds is social interaction between the birds that allows them to gain something. This may be a reduction in competition that allows birds to feed together in groups or protection as a member of the group sees or hears a predator and alerts the others. Studies by an Ohio researcher found that birds within these flocks respond to the high-pitched Tufted Titmouse alarm call by diving for cover or freezing in place, and that they resume feeding when they hear the Titmouse all-clear call. The birds also respond to Chickadee alarm and all-clear calls. Downy Woodpeckers are the dominant species in these mixed flocks. White-breasted Nuthatch is second in the "pecking order" in which size matters. Males are dominant over females. This dominance hierarchy can impact the ability of smaller species to access food.

Birders learn quickly that spotting vocal species such as chickadees can lead to observations of additional bird species such as Kinglets and Creepers. The composition of these flocks varies with more northern species such as Red-breasted Nuthatch in the north and several wintering warbler species joining flocks farther south. Cameron noted that certain fish and monkeys also form social interspecies groups and that socially interacting bird flocks are found in areas around the globe. Cameron's doctoral and postdoctoral research focused on studies of mixed bird flocks in the Amazon rain forest. These flocks were not seasonal and had jointly held stable territories and a social leader.

-Margaret Jefferson

## **MEETING NOTES**

### **Unusual Bird Sightings**

- Mourning Warbler
- Canada Warbler, Johnson Park
- Nelson's (Oct. 14), LeConte's (Oct. 22), and Clay-colored Sparrow (Oct. 13) have been seen in the fields adjacent to the Gardner Rd marsh at Shelby Farms Park and near the Raptor Center. Marsh & Sedge Wren (Oct. 22) are also being seen in these areas.

### **TOS Fall Meeting Oct. 13-15 Chattanooga, TN**

Dick Preston reported that the small Chattanooga chapter did a great job hosting the TOS Fall Meeting with excellent reception and speakers. At the meeting, the TOS board of directors voted to increase the amount paid to the TOS webmaster. TWRA and TOS share in the cost for publication of Discover Birds Activity Books and each agreed to contribute \$2500 this year. These books are available for use by teachers and children. For details visit <https://tnbirds.org/education/>. Dick noted that TOS has more grant money than grant applicants for its Conservation and Research grants. Guidelines for applications can be found at <https://tnbirds.org/grants-and-awards/>.

### **Conservation**

There are two important bird conservation bills coming up for votes in Congress. For more information see action alerts at <https://tnbirds.org/thing-you-can-do-to-protect-birds/>. Dick Preston reported that 4 individuals were convicted and given significant fines and punishment for shooting endangered Whooping Cranes in Oklahoma.

### **Delta Wind Birds**

Dick Preston recently assisted with the radio tagging of 7 shore birds near Indianola, MS. These birds immediately pinged the local Delta Wind Birds Motus tower.

-Margaret Jefferson

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

## **September 27, Meeman-Shelby Forest SP**

A good turnout of 15 observers recorded 46 species under a clear sky on a warm morning.

## **October 4, Meeman-Shelby Forest SP**

Five observers braved a cloudy day to record 43 bird species.

## **October 7, Meeman-Shelby Forest SP**

Eleven observers recorded 39 species on a cool windy morning. Highlights included Bald Eagle (2), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (13), Gray Catbird (8).

## **October 8, Wapanocca NWR**

Three observers recorded 57 species on a pleasant cool sunny day. Highlights included Greater White-fronted Goose (15), American White Pelican (51), Limpkin (1), Neotropic Cormorant (1) seen among a flight of Double-crested Cormorants, and Dickcissel (2).

-Margaret Jefferson

## **October 21, W.C. Johnson Park**

Saturday October 21, 2023 dawned with clear skies and 55 degrees. The MTOS outing at W.C. Johnson Park in Collierville, TN. began at 8:00AM at the entrance to the boardwalk that leads to the Wolf River. 13 observers were present as we strolled along the walk. The birding was somewhat intermittent but eventually produced some interesting results. The results include a flyover of 60 White-fronted Geese, spotting of three different Winter Wrens, all the woodpeckers but the Redhead, Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, 51 Mallards, both Kinglets, plus the Nashville, Yellow-rumped and Black-throated Green Warblers.


Conner Robinson stayed a little longer adding a few species bringing the total to 33 for the day. Approximately 191 birds. The temperature at the completion of the hike was 75 degrees. An excellent day, weather-wise.

-Chad Brown





# UPCOMING EVENTS

## November & December 2023




**Saturday, November 11, 8:00 am**  
Shelby Farms / Agricenter  
Field Trip Leader: Cliff VanNostrand  
[birdinginthe901@gmail.com](mailto:birdinginthe901@gmail.com)

**Saturday, December 23, 7:30 am**  
Fayette County CBC  
Field Trip Leader: Cliff VanNostrand  
[birdinginthe901@gmail.com](mailto:birdinginthe901@gmail.com)



**Wednesday, November 15, 7:00 pm**  
Chapter Meeting  
St. George's Episcopal Church  
2425 South Germantown Rd.  
Germantown, TN

**Wednesday, December 20, 7:00 pm**  
Chapter Meeting  
St. George's Episcopal Church  
2425 South Germantown Rd.  
Germantown, TN




**Saturday, November 18, 8:00 am**  
T.O. Fuller State Park Field Trip (Visitors Center)  
<https://goo.gl/maps/JF9xp5K7RvZV9ZfF6>  
Field Trip Leader: Jim Varner  
[jamescvarner@gmail.com](mailto:jamescvarner@gmail.com)

**Saturday, December 16, 7:30 am**  
Sardis CBC  
Field Trip Leader: Jason Hoeksema



**Sunday, December 17, 7:30 am**  
Memphis CBC  
Compiler: Anita Vincent  
[avin1129@gmail.com](mailto:avin1129@gmail.com)





# 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

- We Dare You to Watch These Frighteningly Bad Bird Horror Movies  
<https://www.audubon.org/es/node/148374>
- Send a Child's Imagination Soaring With This Migration-Themed Activity  
<https://www.audubon.org/es/node/148374>
- Meet the Fire Starters Restoring One of North America's Greatest Forests  
<https://www.audubon.org/es/node/148227>
- Not Just Watching Feeders OR Birds: Updates from Project FeederWatch  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mq1U8CVp36w>
- Send a Child's Imagination Soaring With This Migration-Themed Activity | Audubon  
<https://www.audubon.org/es/node/148166>
- The first BILLION bird night: 6-7 October 2023  
<https://birdcast.info/news/the-first-billion-bird-night-6-7-october-2023/>



## 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.





# BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY CLASS

Where: Lichterman Nature Center (indoors),  
5992 Quince Road, Memphis, TN

When: 9:00-10:30am, Saturday, November 4

Cost: \$15 which gives access to the class,  
nature center, and grounds.

On Saturday, November 4, Curt Hart and Allen Sparks will present a class on bird photography. The indoor class will cover topics such as perched birds, birds in flight, feeding, hummingbirds, etc. This class is appropriate for beginning and intermediate photographers interested in learning more about photographing avian subjects. Using DSLR and mirrorless cameras will be discussed.



Contact Allen Sparks  
[asparks306@bellsouth.net](mailto:asparks306@bellsouth.net) / 901-604-7654

Registration is not required.  
Optional shooting on the grounds of  
Lichterman Nature Center after class.



2023  
*Christmas Bird Count*

**December 16 - Sardis CBC**

**December 17 - Memphis CBC**

**December 23 - Fayette County CBC**

**December 30 - Wapanocca/Shelby Forest CBC**

**TBA - Arkabutla CBC**

**TBA - Holly Springs Mississippi CBC**

**January 13 - Tunica/Northern Mississippi CBC**





### TOS Membership Information

Members may join online  
at [www.birdmemphis.org](http://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	\$10
Lifetime	\$450 one time +\$18 yearly

Dues payable by PayPal

at [www.birdmemphis.org](http://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](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 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

- \*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](mailto:2graham@bellsouth.net)

### Chapter Meeting

**November 15, 2023. 7:00pm**

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

### Program

**Ryan Pudwell, MTOS**  
*Nonconnah Creek Conservancy*

### Hospitality

Refreshments will be provided by Sheila Bentley and Henry Stokes.

### Upcoming Field Trip Information

**November 11** — Shelby Farms/ Agricenter

**November 18** — T.O. Fuller State Park

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](mailto:mtosnewsletter@gmail.com).

### New Members

Liz Drobashevsky, Cordova ([ldrobash915@yahoo.com](mailto:ldrobash915@yahoo.com))

Lori Miller, Cordova ([treefan5555@gmail.com](mailto:treefan5555@gmail.com))

Kristy Webb, Bartlett ([kristywebb87@gmail.com](mailto:kristywebb87@gmail.com))

Julia Weil, Memphis ([jnweil82@gmail.com](mailto:jnweil82@gmail.com))

### Treasurer's Report

Following October 2023 donations, the balance in the Treasury is \$13,443.60.

### New Business

MTOS donated \$500 to the Mid-South Raptor Center and Magnolia Wildlife Education, Conservation, and Rehabilitation, Inc. (MWECR) in October 2023. These groups assist injured raptors. After a successful test flight in the Raptor Center flight cage, MWECR released an eagle in Sunflower County, MS on October 19, 2023. Martha Waldron of MTOS notes that over 50 birds have been assisted this year alone.

In January 2023 MTOS donated \$500 toward the construction of a MOTUS (radio-tag sensing) tower managed by Hal Mitchell of MTOS and Delta Wind Birds. On October 21, 2023 a total of 28 shorebirds were successfully captured, banded and radio-tagged at "our" tower site near Indianola, MS. Of note, a Pectoral Sandpiper with a 2022 radio tag was sensed by a MOTUS tower in South America later that winter. MTOS assisted with tag funding.



Lincoln's Sparrow



Orange-crowned Warbler

PHOTOS BY  
**CONNOR ROBINSON**



PHOTOS BY  
**SOPHIE DISMUKES**



Barred Owl



Northern Harrier vs Red-tailed Hawk



Barn Owl



Red-shouldered Hawk



PHOTOS BY  
**CLIFF  
VANNOSTRAND**



Bald Eagle



Osprey



Red-shouldered Hawk



American Kestrel



Peregrine Falcon



Black Vulture