



Tennessee Ornithological Society Memphis Chapter

<http://birdmemphis.org>

January 2024

DECEMBER PROGRAM

The December program was presented by MTOS member Shelby Green. Shelby is a Master's degree student in the University of Memphis Biology Department. She talked briefly about her research project with Dr. Bowers and about two other local bird-related projects.

Shelby described Delta Wind Birds's efforts to work with delta farmers managing their land to provide stopover sites for migrating shorebirds. This fall, Shelby helped with netting and tagging shorebirds at the Delta Wind Birds site in Indianola, Mississippi.



Shelby and fellow U of M students started Bird Safe Memphis to collect data on bird collisions with windows on the University of Memphis main campus. Each morning during migration, volunteers walk areas outside campus buildings and record data on dead or stunned birds they find. Monitoring and collecting bird collision data in areas near buildings will continue this spring. After determining the extent of the problem and identifying problem buildings, students will present their findings to the campus administration and suggest ways to mitigate window collisions.

Shelby's Master's research project is being carried out at the Meeman-Shelby Forest portion of the University of Memphis Biological Station. The 623-acre site has a variety of habitat zones including edge, disturbed, upland, lowland, and floodplain. Six hundred twenty-five nest boxes have been placed in the various habitat zones. Previous studies determined the bird species using the nest boxes include Prothonotary Warbler, a neotropical migrant, and the resident Carolina Wren. Shelby is studying effects these two small cavity-nesting songbirds have on each other. Her study is especially focused first, on the degree to which nests of the two species are affected by parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds and predation by animals such as snakes and raccoons, and second, the degree to which time of nesting and proximity to nests of each species affects predation and parasitism of the other species. Prothonotary

Warblers are especially subject to cowbird nest parasitism. Shelby hopes to apply for a TOS conservation research grant to help fund her research.

Shelby noted that although Carolina Wren and Prothonotary Warbler exploit the same food sources, the decline in Carolina Wren numbers caused by a prolonged period of ice in 2021 did not seem to affect the health and success of Prothonotary Warbler broods. Another weather event occurred at the Shelby Forest research station in 2023. Back-to-back windstorms toppled many large trees creating new openings in the forest canopy and obstacles for researchers. Cleanup is ongoing at the research station.

-Margaret Jefferson

MEETING NOTES

TOS Conservation and Research Grant deadline

The TOS Conservation and Research Grant deadline is February 1.
For details, see tnbirds.org/grants-and-awards/

Conservation

Dick Preston encouraged members to support Delta Wind Birds by donating \$250 to pay for a tag that will provide data on the length of time a tagged bird spends on managed fields and data on their migration routes and success. He reported that a Lesser Yellowlegs tagged this fall spent 5 days on site and was then detected 53 hours later in Panama.

Adrian Hall reported that he observed an injured Short-eared Owl in the fields along Gardener Road and contacted the Mid-South Raptor Center. Center personnel were unable to find the owl. The next morning Adrian found it dead. He brought the dead owl to the December meeting. An effort will be made to determine the cause of death.

Knox Martin noted the 50th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act and the great success that has been achieved saving many raptor species including California Condor, Peregrine Falcon, and Bald Eagle from the brink of extinction. Martha Waldron reminded members of the Memphis Chapter's Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon hacking efforts, as well as the reintroduction of Mississippi Kites into the Memphis area by the Mid-South Raptor Center.

Martha Waldron thanked members for their donations that have allowed the Mid-South Raptor Center to purchase enough pea gravel to cover cage floors to a depth of 3 to 6 inches.

Notable Sightings

Am. Woodcock, Nov. 26, Overton Park, Memphis

Limpkin, Dec. 16, Moscow, TN

Long-tailed Duck, Dec. 17, Shelby Farms Park

Wood Thrush, Dec. 17, TO Fuller State Park

Virginia Rail, Dec. 17, Ensley Bottoms Complex

Western Flycatcher, Rough-legged Hawk, Dec. 22, Lake Co, TN

Swainson's Hawk, Dec., Lake County, TN

-Margaret Jefferson

FAMOUS BIRDERS IN HISTORY



Mark Catesby: Founder of American Ornithology

Who here loves field guides? If you happen to enjoy leafing through pages of drawn or photographed birds, then you're enjoying the legacy of Mark Catesby. Catesby was an English naturalist who published what became the first American field guide. In his *Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*, Catesby documented over 200 types of animals and plants.

Not much is known about Mark Catesby's early life, or how he acquired skills in the naturalist or art department. He was born on March 24, 1683 in Essex, England. His father, the mayor of Sudbury and a farmer, owned property in Suffolk and London. One of Mark's distant cousins, Robert Catesby, was one of the organizers of the 1605 Gunpowder Plot. As a growing boy, Mark Catesby kept an acquaintance with John Ray, a famous English naturalist and priest. Catesby's uncle, Nicholas Jekyll, also had many contacts with local naturalists, and was involved in horticulture. It is unknown where Catesby went to school or how he learned to paint, but he obviously was well-educated and his watercolors speak volumes.



After the death of his father in 1712, Catesby inherited much of his family's money and so decided to sail across the pond to visit his sister, Elizabeth, in Williamsburg, Virginia. During his seven-year stay with Elizabeth and her two children, Catesby became enamored with the flora and fauna of North America.



One source says that Catesby "not being content with contemplating the Products of our own Country...soon imbibed a passionate desire of viewing as well the Animal as Vegetable Productions in their Native Countries; which were Strangers to England" (*Sherard*, n.d.). He also began to collect samples of the animals and plants that he found, such as seeds and other botanical specimens. He sent the samples back to his naturalist friends in England, making his mark in English naturalist circles. He also traveled to the West Indies and Jamaica, all the while sending back more botanical samples to his friends back home. When Catesby returned home to England, he befriended William Sherard, a beginner naturalist and member of the Royal Society. This friendship would later benefit Catesby, when Sherard recommended to members of the Royal Society (Sir Isaac Newton being the chairman at the time) to sponsor Catesby on a botanical expedition to South Carolina.

In 1722, Catesby once again crossed the pond to America, where his four-year trek led him through South Carolina, Georgia, and the Bahamas. During his expedition, Catesby encountered many undiscovered species, both plants and animals. His sketches show species such as the Carolina Parakeet, Ivory-Billed Woodpecker, and the Passenger Pigeon - all of which would later be classified as extinct as a result of habitat destruction. Catesby also proved to naturalists that birds migrated - a shock to birders who had previously believed that birds hibernated at ground level in caves and ponds.

In 1726, four years later, Catesby returned home to England and began to transform his art from simple sketches to watercolor paintings. He worked for the next two decades on what would become his 220-engraving magnus opus: *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*. He oversaw every step of the drawing, writing, and publishing process on his own, and even learned the complicated



process of copper plate etching when the sources he found to do this were either unavailable or too expensive. To finance his project, Catesby relied on subscriptions from his growing fanbase, as well as a generous, interest-free loan from Peter Collinson, a prominent Quaker and Royal Society horticulturist. Published in eleven sections, each of the 160 plates of the first volume of his book were individually hand-colored, making no two plates exactly alike. He presented the first completed section of *Natural History* to Queen Caroline in 1729, and would later dedicate the volume to the queen.

Catesby lived with his partner Elisabeth Rowland for over 17 years. Between April 1731 and June 1740, they had at least six children. On October 8, 1747, they were quietly married in St. George's Chapel in London's Hyde Park. Catesby continued to work on his many paintings for *Natural History*, until a collapse caused him to die on December 23, 1749 at his home in Old Street, London. As he and his wife were parishioners of St. Luke Old Street, Catesby was buried in the churchyard. Unfortunately, the church was closed in the 1750s, and Catesby's exact gravesite is now lost.

Even after his death, Catesby has had a remarkable impact on birding and biology conservation. Although many of Catesby's slides were lost, damaged, or split apart, 80 first edition copies of *Natural History* still exist and are preserved at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, the Royal Society, The University of Southern Carolina Libraries, and various private collections. A few of the original paintings are also now in the Royal Collection in Windsor Castle, having been bought by King George III in 1768. Catesby's documentation of birds was used by Carl Linnaeus in the 10th edition of his 1758 book *Systeme Naturae*, a taxonomic collection of discovered living species. Because of his groundbreaking discoveries in bird behavior and his depictions of birds, some consider Catesby "the founder of American ornithology" (Mark Catesby, n.d.). Catesby will always be remembered as a pioneer in the scientific community, and in the birdwatching world.

-Cate VanNostrand

References

- Fishman, G. (2017). *Journeys Through Paradise: Pioneering Naturalists in the Southeast*. University Press of Florida.
Mark Catesby. (n.d.). Virginia Museum of History & Culture. Retrieved December 27, 2023, from <https://virginiahistory.org/learn/mark-catesby>
Mark Catesby (1683-1749) – Arader Galleries. (n.d.). Arader Galleries. Retrieved December 27, 2023, from <https://aradergalleries.com/collections/mark-catesby-1683-1749>
Sherard, W. (n.d.). Mark Catesby – Mark Catesby Centre. Digital Collections. Retrieved December 27, 2023, from <https://digital.library.sc.edu/markcatesbycentre/mark-catesby/>

Photos by Michael and Susan Threlkeld



White-cheeked Pintail



Green-winged Teal



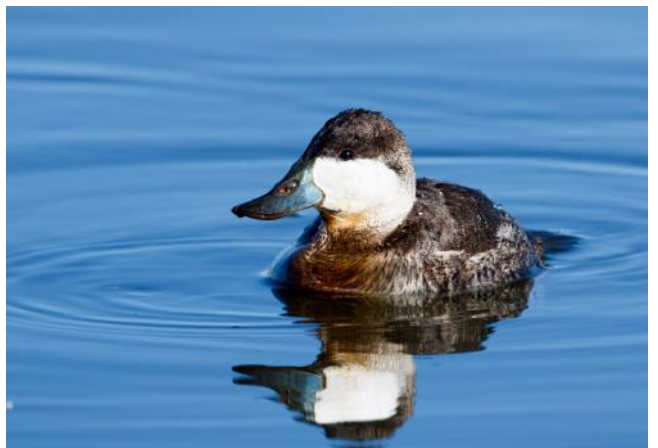
Common Goldeneye



Northern Pintail



Common Eider



Ruddy Duck



Cinnamon Teal



Redhead



PHOTOS BY
RYAN PUDWELL



Cooper's Hawk



Common Goldeneye



Ring-billed Gull



Pine Warbler



Canvasback

PHOTOS BY
**CLIFF
VANNOSTRAND**



Bufflehead



Common Goldeneye



Long-tailed Duck



Ruddy Duck



White-winged Scoter



Northern Shoveler



Upcoming Field Trips

January / February 2024

Friday, January 5, 8:00am

Holly Springs Mississippi CBC

Field Trip Leader: Hal Mitchell

halmitchell@gmail.com

Saturday, February 10

Wolf River WMA

Field Trip Leader: Martha Waldron

martha.waldron@gmail.com

Saturday, January 13, 7:30am

Tunica/Northern Mississippi

Field Trip Leader: Dick Preston

dickpreston48@gmail.com

Meet at the Outfitters gas station/convenience store in Eudora at 0730. We will carpool/caravan from there. The Outfitters is located at 8995 W. Commerce Street, Hernando (for GPS users). This is the intersection of Hwy 301 and Hwy 304 in Eudora. There will be very little walking, as birding will be primarily from roadsides.

Friday-Monday, February 16-19

Great Backyard Bird Count

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

Wednesday, February 21, 7:00 pm

Chapter Meeting

St. George's Episcopal Church

2425 South Germantown Rd. Germantown, TN

Wednesday, January 17, 7:00 pm

Chapter Meeting

St. George's Episcopal Church

2425 South Germantown Rd. Germantown, TN

Saturday, February 24

Shelby Farms/Agricenter

Field Trip Leader: Cliff VanNostrand

birdinginthe901@gmail.com

Saturday, January 27, 10am-2pm

Birds & Seeds

Lichterman Nature Center,

5992 Quince Road, Memphis

<https://moshmemphis.com/event/the-birds-the-seeds-3/>






BIRDS & SEEDS

AT LICHTERMAN NATURE CENTER

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27TH
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 27th 10a.m. - 2p.m.

Mary Schmidt would like volunteers if anyone is interested. She needs people to work the MTOS table and people to lead a few short beginner bird walks.

You can contact Mary at mary.schmidt@memphistn.gov or 901-636-2224.

<https://moshmemphis.com/event/the-birds-the-seeds-3/>



American Woodcock, taken by Bill Bullock on November 26 at Overton Park.



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.

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

- Bird flu continues to impact industry as 1.35M chickens are killed
<https://www.localmemphis.com/article/news/nation-world/bird-flu-more-than-1-million-birds-killed-ohio-egg-farm/507-fbfc83fe-352d-4170-ae00-8f0cb2c5f635>
- 18-wheeler hauling chickens overturns, closes interstate as birds escape
www.actionnews5.com/2023/11/28/18-wheeler-hauling-chickens-overturns-closes-interstate-birds-escape/
- The New Animated Film "Migration" Draws Inspiration From Birds' Real Journeys
<https://www.audubon.org/es/node/148460>
- Forget social distancing: House finches become more social when sick
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2023/11/231116140841.htm>
- Cuddle Up With These Ridiculously Cute Baby Bird Photos
<https://www.audubon.org/es/node/148459>
- Homemade Suet
<https://www.audubon.org/news/addictive-homemade-suet-will-keep-your-birds-returning-more>
- History of the Christmas Bird Count
<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count/history-christmas-bird-count>

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	\$10
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 17, 2024. 7:00pm

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

Program

Julia Weil, MTOS
University of Memphis

Hospitality

Refreshments will be provided by David Hill and Dick Preston.

Upcoming Field Trip Information

December 30: Wapanocca/Shelby Forest CBC

January 5: Holly Springs CBC

January 13: 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 owls.

Please send your submissions to mtosnewsletter@gmail.com.

New Members

Chris, Laura, and Forrest Daniels
nhdjoseywales@gmail.com
Morgan Mattingly helloyesthisiscow@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report

The balance in the treasury as of December 26, 2023 is \$14,611.65. Thank you to all who have renewed membership in MTOS or plan to renew soon.

Note to New Members

If you joined September 1, 2023 or later, you do not owe 2024 dues. Your initial dues payment covered the 2024 year.