

Tennessee Ornithological Society Memphis Chapter

<http://birdmemphis.org>

April 2026

March Program

March's program was brought to us by Felicia Knightly, a senior veterinarian at the Memphis Zoo. She went into the nature of operant conditioning, and the benefits it's had on tending to and taking care of these animals during these finer procedures, as well as other aspects of the care that is taken when animals are transported from facility to facility.



In her talk, she spoke of the trust, mutual respect, and caution that's essential to operant conditioning, as well as what it could be used for. In particular, she spoke about its role in both the care of a polar bear, as well as how it's functioned in the care of the apes there. She also went into detail about the hospital there itself, as well as how many people are involved in a number of these procedures, including people from places like LeBonheur, or some that may come from out of state. To take care of such a vast variety of animals requires an incredible breadth of skills; the work that she, as well as the other people who work there and in the other zoos around the country, is impressive!

NOTICE:

Item for Vote: Change to Monthly Meeting Day

Members are asked to note that a motion will be brought to a vote at our April chapter meeting to change our regular meeting night from the third Wednesday to the third Tuesday of each month, beginning this fall. This change is necessitated by a new Wednesday evening program at St. George Episcopal Church, where we currently meet, which conflicts with our usual meeting time.

SUBMISSIONS WELCOME

Looking for submissions of any of the following:

- Birding Events
- Stories about birds, birders, or birding
- Birding tips
- Articles or other interesting things in the bird world
- Photos, poetry, art, quotes

Send your submissions to:
mτοςnewsletter@gmail.com

Information and registration for the Annual Spring TOS meeting in Kingsport May 1st to 3rd can be found at the following link on the TOS webpage:

<https://tnbirds.org/event/annual-spring-meeting-may-1-3-2026-in-kingsport/>

The same information will also be upcoming in the next issue of The Warbler which is also found on the TOS webpage.

Please note the deadline for registering for the dinner and for the hold on rooms at the host hotel.

If you have any additional questions about the event please feel free to reach out to our hosts at the Kingsport Chapter of TOS - <https://tnbirds.org/chapters/kingsport-birding/>

We hope you'll be able to join us. Spring time in the Smokey's is a wonderful time of year and we're excited to welcome you and our keynote speaker, Sheri L. Williamson, to birding in East Tennessee.

Cheers!
Cyndi Routledge
TOS Secretary

UPCOMING LOCAL EVENTS:



5th Annual Bluebird Nature Fest + Crawfish Boil

The 5th annual Bluebird Nature Fest and Crawfish Boil is coming up:
Saturday, April 11th, 2026, from 12 to 3 pm!

Presented by Methodist Le Bonheur Hospital - Germantown, this fun event will showcase the Eastern Bluebird, the conservation efforts that have gone into the species at a local level, and nest box demonstrations, as well as all-you-can-eat crawfish*, live music, and various food trucks.

*Fee: \$40 all-you-can-eat crawfish (Pre-registration is required. The deadline to reserve a plate is Tuesday, April 7th. Pre-registration is required ONLY if you plan to eat crawfish. If you do not plan to eat crawfish, you do not have to register for this event to attend.

For more information, please check out:

<https://www.germantownchamber.com/bluebird-nature-fest--crawfish-boil.html>

Shoebill Stork Seminar at the University of Memphis:

Dr. Doug Mock will present a public seminar on Shoebills (*Balaeniceps rex*) at the University of Memphis Department of Biological Sciences on Thursday 16 April at 4:00 pm in Ellington Hall room 100 (pre-seminar coffee and snacks start at 3:30). Dr. Mock is George Lynn Cross Research Professor Emeritus at the University of Oklahoma. He came to prominence through detailed behavioral analyses of heron and egret families, documenting siblicidal aggression as a way in which egret chicks monopolize food provided by their parents. He has remained a long-standing figure in ornithology and animal behavior, with many important contributions. Now retired, Dr. Mock has been studying shoebills in Uganda for the past several years in an attempt to understand how their peculiar bill has been shaped by natural selection.

If you would like to attend the seminar and have questions about where to go, please contact Keith Bowers (ekbowers@memphis.edu).

The title of his seminar is: Foraging ecology of shoebills: Why does this bird look so weird?



BLUE LAGOON PARK

Blue Lagoon Park, with 157 acres, is the 2nd largest park in the city of Bartlett. It is located just north of the north end of Germantown Rd and Old Brownsville Rd. The southern portion of the park is developed with a lake, a walking trail, and a playground. The northern portion of the park is largely undeveloped and consists of early succession bottomland forest. Some of the lawn areas around the lake have a tendency to hold water after rainy weather and create spaces that should attract some shorebirds. The park is best accessed by parking on street along the eastern portion of Blue Lagoon Drive. Like the majority of parks throughout Bartlett, it is open from 4am-11pm

April 2026
Feature Hotspot

Please visit and submit a checklist during the month of April if you are able.



April Field Trips

Wapanocca NWR

Sunday April 12, 2026 at 8am
led by Van Harris
178 Hammond Ave, Turrell, AR 72384

Ensley Bottoms

Saturday April 18, 2026 at 8am
led by Dick Preston
Meet at 1500 W. Mitchell Road
(T.O. Fuller SP Visitor Center)



Meeman Biological Station

Saturday April 25, 2026 at 8am
led by Bowers Lab
1236 Cuba Millington Rd 38053

Overton Park

Thursday April 30 2026 at 7:30am
led by Ryan Pudwell
Meet at the parking area near the pavilion on East Parkway



May Field Trips

A close-up photograph of a small, yellow-green bird perched on a dark, textured tree branch. The bird is facing left, looking upwards. It has a bright yellow-green head and back, with a white breast and belly. Its beak is dark and pointed. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a forest or park setting.

Germantown Greenway

Wednesday May 6th at 8am

led by Becky Rooney

Meet at the West Parking Lot

Wolf River Blvd

Wall-Doxey State Park

Saturday May 9th at 8am

led by Hal Mitchell

3946 MS-7, Holly Springs, MS 38635

Middle Fork Bottoms State Park

Saturday May 16, 2026 at 8am

led by Ranger Jacob Newby

Meet at 111 Sanders Bluff Rd, Three Way, TN 38343

After we are finished at the State Park there will be an option to visit Cypress Grove Park for anyone who wants to do a little more birding while in Madison Co.

Field Trip Notes

from Ryan Pudwell

After a busy start to 2026, March felt a bit more laid back. There were three field trips this month.

Our first trip of the month was to Christine's Woods. We saw 23 species including quite a few GBHE, which is no surprise as this spot has an active rookery. We also spotted a Red-tailed hawk nest.

On March 14th Sophie led a field trip at Shelby Farms. We had 9 people present including an out of town visitor from Florida. We saw 41 species of birds plus a groundhog that was sitting in a tree in such a way that without binoculars it looked like it could have been a raptor of some sort.

For our last field trip of the month we visited the Nonconnah Greenbelt Park on Forest Hill Irene on Saturday March 28th. There were 7 people in attendance and we observed 41 species including an American Bittern, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-throated Warbler, and a Louisiana Waterthrush that was willing to be photographed. We also saw a flock of Tree Swallows which was a new species for this spot.

During the month of April, in addition to the MTOS Field Trips, I would also encourage everyone to consider participating in the City Nature Challenge (CNC). The CNC is an annual event that is put on by iNaturalist. In 2025 during the CNC there were nearly 1000 taxa observed in Memphis and Shelby County, including 134 species of birds. There are a few ways to participate in the CNC:

- Use the iNaturalist app or website post observations of plants, animals, fungi, and other lifeforms you see during the event (April 24-27)
- Attend an in-person event over the weekend (Like our field trip to the Meeman Biological Station)
- Look at observations by other people and add or confirm identifications on observations by other people.

[You can see more details from last years CNC here.](#)

Scan QR code to visit the Memphis page for this year's City Nature Challenge





Tree Swallows



Barn Swallows



Barn Swallow



Tree Swallow



Tree Swallow



Tree Swallows

Photos by:

Allen Sparks

Photos by:

Michael Threlkeld



Barn Swallow



Black Phoebe



Say's Phoebe



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher



Vermilion Flycatcher



Eastern Whip-poor-will



Barn Swallow



Cliff + Barn Swallow



Northern Rough-winged + Barn Swallow



Northern Rough-winged Swallow



Northern Rough-winged Swallows



Tree Swallow

Photos by:

Sophie Dismukes

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 Caroline Schratz caroline.schratz@gmail.com. If you have no internet access, a printed version can be mailed.

Chapter Newsletter Submissions

Email submissions to Sophie Dismukes 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:
Cheryl Greenacre, Editor
E-mail: cgreenac@gmail.com

Chapter Meeting

April 15, 2026, 7:00pm

St. George's Episcopal Church
2435 South Germantown Rd. Germantown, TN
Phone: (901)-754-7282

Program

Dick Preston and Tricia Vesley, MTOS Members
Birding in High Island, Texas

Hospitality

Hospitality will be provided by Pam Key.

Thank you to all who contributed to this month's newsletter!
For our next issue, we would like to feature some photos of:



Please send your submissions to mtosnewsletter@gmail.com

New Members

Michele Krantz
dulcevida2003@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report

As of March 22, 2026 the balance in the Treasury is \$14,586.56. Meal receipts for 50 attendees covered MTOS bbq costs at the 2026 March Pot Luck. A signed Charley Harper print was also successfully sold as a Silent Auction item. To date, a total of 98 members have paid 2026 dues. The Treasurer will email a final round of dues reminders to the 'pending dues' group in April. MTOS greatly appreciates the continued support of members.