



# THE TENNESSEE WARBLER

Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

April, 2026

Editor, Theresa Graham

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - SPRING 2026

It's hard to believe that our upcoming spring meeting will mark my first year as TOS President. Time flies! It's already time to start looking for a President-Elect. In the meantime, I'm happy to report on a few new developments.

One of the big challenges this past year has been finding people to replace Bob Ford, editor of *The Migrant*, and Theresa Graham, editor of *The Tennessee Warbler*. Bob started with the 2014 issue, and Theresa handled *The Warbler* for 30+ years. We thank them both for their many years of tremendous service to TOS. To carry on their great work we have Jeff Walck, who has already hit the ground running with *The Migrant*, and Cheryl Greenacre, who will take the reins of *The Tennessee Warbler* after this issue. See the introductions on pages 3 and 4 in this issue to learn more about them.

Another effort this year has been to move along the idea of having a joint fall meeting with the Kentucky Ornithological Society (KOS). See the full announcement on page 3 of this issue, but the dates for the joint meeting are now set for September 18-20, 2026. It has been a pleasure for Cyndi Routledge and me to work with KOS leadership to make this happen.

Some may have noticed that back issues of *The Migrant* are now available via the TOS website (<https://tnbirds.org/the-migrant-back-issues-archive/>). Big thanks to our webmaster Amy Wilms for her great job setting up the structure and pulling in all the old issues. In addition to being kind of fun to browse through old *Migrants* taking note of some of the great names in Tennessee Ornithology, having ready searchable access to *The Migrant* will be a wonderful resource for all of us.

Next up is this year's spring meeting May 1-3, hosted by the Fred J. Alsop III – Kingsport Chapter. If you haven't already registered for the meeting and made your reservations, now's the time (<https://tnbirds.org/event/annual-spring-meeting-may-1-3-2026-in-kingsport/>). The keynote speaker will be hummingbird expert and author Sheri Williamson. I hope to see many of you there!

Chris Welsh  
President, TOS

## TOS SPRING MEETING IN KINGSPORT May 1-3, 2026

The Kingsport Chapter invites you to the 2026 TOS Spring Meeting to be held May 1-3. Friday night registration & social will be held at Bays Mountain Recreation Area. The Saturday afternoon Board meeting and dinner will be held at Taylored Venue & Events located at 115 Shelby Street in downtown Kingsport.

A "TOS Meeting" room block is in place for \$143 at Hampton Inn Kingsport located at 2000 Enterprise Place. [Hampton Inn on-line reservation link](#) or call 423-247-3888 before the April 10 deadline. All field trips will depart from the Hampton Inn parking lot. A room block is also being held for \$140 for a room with a king bed at Comfort Suites located at 3005 Bays Meadow Place. [Comfort Suites on-line reservation link](#). If you prefer two queen beds, call 423-765-1955 prior to the April 17 deadline. Both hotels offer a hot breakfast at 6 a.m. There is also a Fairfield Inn nearby, but they don't offer breakfast until 7 a.m.

We are pleased to announce the speaker following Saturday's dinner will be Sheri L. Williamson, a naturalist, ornithologist, hummingbird researcher, and author of **A Field Guide to Hummingbirds of North America**.

The dinner menu is Parmesan-crusted Chicken, Bacon-wrapped pork tenderloin, salad, rolls, side dishes, and desserts.

We hope you will be able to join us. We are planning field trips for Saturday and Sunday mornings. For additional information, email [Susan Hubley](#).

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### TOS SPRING MEETING 2026 REGISTRATION FORM

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

TOS Chapter \_\_\_\_\_ Office held \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Registrations \$10 each

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Dinner Reservations @ \$27 each \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian \_\_\_\_\_ Gluten-Free

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total amount enclosed. Make check payable to **Birding Kingsport TOS**

Is this the first time you've ever attended a TOS meeting? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

Mail registration form and check **by April 10** to:

Ken Hendrix, Birding Kingsport, 1016 Oldham Court, Kingsport, TN 37660

## TOS-KOS JOINT FALL 2026 MEETING SEPTEMBER 18-20

Our TOS Fall 2026 meeting will be joint with the Kentucky Ornithological Society September 18-20, 2026. Plan to join friends from TOS and KOS for the weekend. Both groups will hold business meetings, we'll have plenty of field trips, and our keynote speakers will be Cin-Ty Lee and Andrew Birch, co-authors of Field Guide to North American Flycatchers: Empidonax and Pewees. Meetings will take place at Lake Barkley State Resort Park, and a room block is being held at the host hotel: KenLake State Resort Parks in Hardin, Kentucky.

Host hotel: KenLake Resort State Park in Hardin Kentucky. Both cottages and lodge rooms are available with prices ranging from \$111-\$143/night, plus taxes. **To get the discounted rates you must use group 3076 when you make your reservation.** Reservations can be made online or by calling 270-474-2211. **Cottage reservations must be made before July 18<sup>th</sup> and lodge room reservations before August 18<sup>th</sup> to get the discounted rate.** All accommodations are NON-SMOKING. Cancellations must be made at least 48 hours in advance of arrival, or you will be charged for one night. Breakfast is **not included** in the room rate, but there is a dining room on-site that serves breakfast from 6 to 11 am. Folks will want to plan on getting to the dining room early for meals as it could get busy.

Plans for the weekend are still evolving. Details on meeting times, details and field trip times will be provided as they become available. For now, mark your calendars, reserve your rooms, and plan on having a great weekend in the fall.

### INTRODUCING JEFF WALCK, NEW *MIGRANT* EDITOR

Jeffrey Walck earned his B.S. from Cornell University and his Ph.D. from the University of Kentucky. He is currently a Professor at Middle Tennessee State University and has served as a visiting scientist in several countries. His research interests include botany and ornithology, with a focus on rare species, invasion ecology, cedar (limestone) glades, seed germination ecology, and habitat management and restoration. He began birding at age 12 in south-central Pennsylvania.

Note from Jeff: "As editor, I'd like to encourage all members to write up interesting sightings or observations for *The Migrant* and for those conducting research to consider *The Migrant* as an outlet for their results. If you have a potential article topic or would like assistance with the writing process, please do not hesitate to contact me at [jeffrey.walck@mtsu.edu](mailto:jeffrey.walck@mtsu.edu). I would be glad to help."

Hi! My name is Cheryl Greenacre and I have agreed to serve as the next editor for *The Tennessee Warbler*, Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society. Theresa Graham is retiring after this April issue. She has been your editor for 33 years! I don't think I can do it for that long (I'd be 94 at that point; yes, math wizards, that would make me 62), but I am happy to do my best to continue the wonderful work Theresa has done over the years creating an informative newsletter that started as a small printed version to the colorful digital version it is today.

A bit more about me (other than my age): I am a recently retired veterinarian living near Knoxville. I am a member of the Knoxville Chapter of the TOS. After teaching veterinary students and seeing patients in the fields of Avian, Wildlife, and Exotic Animal Medicine at both the University of Georgia (1991-2001) and the University of Tennessee (2001-2022), I wanted to follow my passion for birds by contributing to the community in a meaningful way. Even though I am boarded in both Avian Medicine and Exotic Companion Mammal Medicine, and worked with both pet and wild birds, I am an amateur birder. I enjoy learning at our KTOS meetings, helping to band birds at Seven Islands State Birding Park, and meeting fellow birders. I hope to contribute my communication and organizational skills, as well as my past experience as editor of the popular veterinary book "Backyard Poultry Medicine and Surgery – A Guide for Veterinary Practitioners" to this position. Thank you for this opportunity. I plan to be at the Annual Spring meeting in Kingsport, so please introduce yourself if you see me.



I can be reached at [cgreenac@gmail.com](mailto:cgreenac@gmail.com) (preferred) or if necessary, at 865-210-4196. I look forward to your submissions!

Cheryl

As editor of *The Tennessee Warbler*, the April newsletter will be my final issue to serve as its editor.

While this decision is bittersweet, it marks the conclusion of a tenure that began in the fall of 1993 during Bob Ford's presidency. Over the past 32½ years, I have served alongside 15 presidents and witnessed significant changes in the newsletter's evolution. In 1995, publication increased to three issues annually to better address time-sensitive information. In 2016, *The Warbler* introduced a new masthead, reflecting a more professional design, and in April 2022 the newsletter transitioned from print to a digital format.

Now this old girl is finally ready to pass along the editor's torch to a successor. *The Tennessee Warbler* has been a huge part of my life for nearly 33 years, and I look forward to seeing it continue to grow under new leadership. After the April issue, please join me in welcoming Cheryl Greenacre as the new editor, and I encourage members to continue submitting their excellent articles.



Thank you for the privilege and opportunity to have served you as *The Warbler's* editor.

Warmly,  
Theresa Graham

CHRISTMAS COUNT DATA AVAILABLE SOON,  
SPRING COUNTS COMING SOON!

Thank you to all who participated in the Christmas counts and to the local compilers for putting it all together. The final crunching is underway and will be available in *The Migrant* soon. Spring counts are around the corner! As you're working on your spring count data, please send me the following effort data in addition to the count data:

- 1 - Hours and miles by car, foot, and any night-birding
- 2 - Number of observers and parties
- 3 - Any feeder watching hours & names
- 4 - Start and end times for the count
- 5 - Weather data for the count
- 6 - Names of all the participants
- 7 - Anything else about the count, i.e., record high or low numbers, extraordinary weather, all-time species total for your count, etc.

If you do not have a local compiler, you can send the data directly to me at the info below.

TOS appreciates your efforts to record and track our bird populations and abundance. Thanks for helping us to archive this data for future generations and researchers.

Liz Rutemeyer, TOS State Bird Count Compiler  
[zzalbers@gmail.com](mailto:zzalbers@gmail.com)

**LESSER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN REMOVED  
FROM THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT**

The fate of the Lesser Prairie-Chicken, one of the most cherished and iconic species of the western United States, has become much less certain after the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced the removal of the species from listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Lesser Prairie-Chicken has lost more than 90% of its historic population and now numbers only about 28,000 individuals.

The decision to strip federal protections from the beleaguered Lesser Prairie-Chicken reverses a 2022 ruling to list it under the ESA, the result of decades of advocacy by conservationists. The species had been listed as Threatened under the ESA, with a southern subpopulation considered Endangered. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) lists the Lesser Prairie-Chicken as Vulnerable.

Source: The American Bird Conservancy  
[www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org)

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## GLOBAL BIG DAY MAY 9, 2026

Coinciding with World Migratory Bird Day, the Global Big Day is a worldwide effort to record as many of the world's 11,108 species as possible within one 24 hour period. By participating, birders not only enjoy a day of bird watching, but contribute to global bird conservation efforts.

Participants contribute valuable data via eBird ([www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)), the citizen science project that collects bird observations from all over the globe. By reporting your observations using eBird, you help scientists track bird populations, migration patterns and conservation efforts.

Participating is easy – you can even be part of Global Big Day from home. If you can spare 5 or 10 minutes, report your bird observations to eBird online, or through the free eBird app. If you have more time, submit several checklists of birds throughout the day. You never know what you might spot.

Last year, Global Big Day collected more data about birds on a single day than ever before. More than 1.7 million people participated in the celebration, observing more than 7,900 species and setting new world records for a single of birding.

Source: Cornell University Lab of Ornithology ([www.eBird.org](http://www.eBird.org)).

For more details: <https://ebird.org/news/global-big-day-2026>.

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## THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT 2026

The 29<sup>th</sup> Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) was conducted February 13<sup>th</sup> through February 16<sup>th</sup>. What started as a true backyard count has evolved into a global effort to add to our knowledge of bird populations and their distribution.

Birders used eBird to submit 380,500 checklists reporting 8,257 of the world's approximate 11,108 species (74%). Observers in the United States submitted the most checklists (203,472), followed by India (67,645) and Canada (27,785). Observers in Columbia reported the most species (1,376), followed by Brazil (1,145), Ecuador (1,126), India (1,089), and Peru (1,003). Observers in The United States reported 696 species, which ranked 10th among nations. In the United States, California led with 383 species, followed by Texas (374), Florida (313), Arizona (294) and Oregon (229). California also led with 15,948 checklists submitted, followed by Florida (12,620), Texas (11,914), New York (11,657) and Pennsylvania (10,180). Tennessee bird watchers submitted 3,394 checklists (22<sup>nd</sup>) containing 155 species (24<sup>th</sup>). At least one complete checklist was submitted from 89 of our 95 counties. Shelby County birders submitted the most checklists (380) followed by Knox (339), Davidson (322), Hamilton (279), and Williamson (188). Hamilton County observers reported the most species (115) followed by Shelby (112), Davidson (109), Humphreys (108) and Knox (108).

Among Tennessee birders, Janie Finch submitted the most complete checklists (40), followed by Roi and Debbie Shannon (36), Alysia Baker (32), Kim Springer (27) and Cliff VanNostrand (22). Ruben Stoll reported the most species (98), followed by Roi and Debbie Shannon (97). Tim Lenz, Tynan Breeds and Avery Fish all tallied 90 species.

Among the more unusual species reported in Tennessee: Pacific Loon, Black-legged Kittiwake, American Bittern, Whooping Crane, Golden Eagle, Say's Phoebe and Green-tailed Towhee.

The 30<sup>th</sup> GBBC will be held February 12<sup>th</sup> through February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2027.

More information can be found at: [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org)

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## WOOD STORK DELISTED

The United State Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced in early February that the Wood Stork (U.S. distinct population segment) has recovered and will be removed from the Federal list of Threatened and Endangered species. This is the result of decades of conservation actions, and a testament to the importance of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

In early 1984, when the Wood Stork was listed under the ESA, it was in a very serious state in the U.S. Its population had plummeted by over 75% since the 1930's. The sharp decline was largely attributed to habitat loss, especially in south Florida, where vital wetland areas for breeding and foraging had been severely diminished.

Today, the Wood Stork breeding population is estimated at 10,000 to 14,000 nesting pairs at roughly 100 colony sites. This is more than twice the number of nesting pairs and more than three times the number of colonies compared to when the species was first listed. Wood Storks now inhabit key parts of the coastal plain of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina and North Carolina. In addition, they have adapted to new nesting areas, mainly north into coastal salt marshes, flooded rice fields, floodplain forest wetlands and human-created wetlands.

The USFWS has a 10-year post-delisting monitoring plan to ensure the species' recovery is maintained.

You can view the USFWS announcement here:

<https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2026-02/wood-stork-delisted>.

Source: The Birding Community E-Bulletin March 2026

You can access an archive of past E-Bulletins on the website of the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA): <https://www.refugeassociation.org/birding-community-e-bulletin>.

### DONATIONS, MEMORIAL, AND HONORARIA

Pam Lasley, TOS Treasurer

TOS received the following general donations in 2025:

#### General Donations

Jennifer and Jay Mills Foundation

Colorflock LLC

## 2026 TOS GRANT WINNERS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Tennessee Ornithological Society solicits applications for conservation and research grants to support projects that directly or indirectly help to protect the birds of Tennessee, increase scientific knowledge, or educate others about the importance of Tennessee's birds. Anyone with a bird-related project, including students, professionals, and individual workers, may compete for a grant. This year, the Conservation Research and Funding Committee again received many strong proposals, and TOS has funded five particularly promising projects.

We had another year of strong applications in 2026, and here are the TOS-funded projects for this year. In East Tennessee, the Appalachian Conservation Institute (ACI) recently established the ACI Bird Banding Observatory, and TOS is helping them to strengthen avian research and conservation capacity and to study, among other things, a previously unknown population of Cerulean Warblers. Zach Atchison will conduct a study in East Tennessee examining the effects of microclimate in nest boxes on breeding success in Tree Swallows.

In Middle Tennessee, Cyndi Routledge will investigate in-season, real-time movement patterns of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. TOS will provide funding for Anna Kate Armstrong's outreach and program expenses with the Urban Bird Treaty Program in Nashville. TOS will also support the Middle Tennessee Raptor Center's "Wings on the Road: Interactive Mobile Raptor Education Program" by covering educational displays and program materials.

And in West Tennessee, Mary Giannini will conduct experiments on Carolina Wrens and Prothonotary Warblers to understand parent-offspring dynamics, hormone-mediated signaling, and nestling begging and how these relate to risk of predation and brood parasitism.

If you know any of these recipients, please congratulate them and ask them about their project. TOS looks forward to hearing from these grant recipients at statewide or chapter meetings, with updates in *The Tennessee Warbler*, or with an article in *The Migrant*.

Respectfully,

Michael Collins  
Conservation Research and Funding Committee, Chair

## DISCOVERING BIRDS IN VENEZUELA

By Vickie Henderson

In 2020, A Venezuelan group of conservationists who also work with scouts in Guanare, Portuguesa State, Venezuela, discovered the Spanish version of the *Discover Birds Activity Book* online. Carlos Jose Diaz-Garcia, a civil engineer, scout leader, and head of **Asociación Civil Jabirú [asojabiru]**, a non-government conservation organization, contacted me requesting permission to adapt the Spanish



version of the *Discover Birds Activity Book* to include birds of Venezuela and South America. Permission was granted and adaptations were developed by the Guanare Scout Group (both boys and girls, ages 7-11.) They educated themselves, created posters and handouts, adapted pages for their Venezuelan book, participated in bird walks and hikes, and created a video to educate their community about the birds around them and the need to save their habitat.

Our Discover Birds logo was included on the **Scouts Guanare en acción** Facebook page and on their adapted materials. In addition to educational

activities focused on birds, the goal was to support the preservation of a natural area, “Montana Los Pozuelos”, with the hope of making it a National Park with added protections. These 3000 hectares of undisturbed mountain forest were known to support 223 species of birds, including 23 migrant species, and contain waterfalls, cloud forests, and the vulnerable Andean bear (Spectacled Bear).

Since that time, their use of the *Discover Birds Activity Book* has been far-reaching and described in three scientific papers. In these papers, *Henderson, V*, represents the *Discover Birds Activity Book* as its author with the Tennessee Ornithological Society identified as the organizational affiliate.

In December 2021, AsoJabiru and its partners presented a conservation paper to the Virtual Congress of the Venezuelan Ornithological Union. In this paper, the *Discover Birds Activity Book* was included as a strategy for educating and involving the community.

In November 2022, The *Discover Birds Activity Book* and related activities were the headline of a paper: *Discover Birds! As an Environmental Education Tool for the Conservation of Birds in the Municipality of Guanare, Portuguesa State (Venezuela)* presented at the IV National and I International Meeting on Research in Animal Health and Production in Nov 2022 in Columbia, South America. In the abstract of this paper, “Let’s discover birds” refers to their community education project which included training college and high school students to organize and teach the community how to use binoculars, to identify birds and to use bird guides and eBird and Merlin for recording and identifying birds. “In order to promote the

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### Discovering Birds - Continued from Page 9

conservation of birdlife, observation days have been held with the participation of the communities as a tool for environmental education in the municipality of Guanare (Venezuela), periods August-December 2020 and August-November 2021.... The book *Discover Birds* (Henderson 2017) has been used to promote birdwatching through social networks.”

During this period, while Carlos Jose Diaz-Garcia and I were corresponding about printing their adapted book pages, the need for a banding station and supplies was revealed as a pressing concern. With guidance from TOS members, I was able to get AsoJabiru in touch with the TOS grant committee. At that point there was a pause in our correspondence. In February 2026 I learned that the August 2023 edition of *The Tennessee Warbler* had announced the awarding of a TOS Conservation and Research Grant to Luis Mieres-Bastidas and AsoJabiru “to train community biologists as a strategy for conserving bird communities in Montana Los Pozuelos Natural Park.” When I learned of this, I wanted to be sure everyone knew these projects are linked together.

In 2024, fifteen-year-old, Ana Isabel Vasquez Garcia, a member of the Grupo Scout Guanaguanare, applied for a national grant with the Asociacion de Scouts de Venezuela. Her project was accepted! The name of her project: “Discovering Birds: Promoters of Environment Culture in my Community.” The main goal of her project is “to promote knowledge, appreciation and conservation of birds in the community, understood as the state of Portuguesa, through environmental education, citizen participation and the promotion of birdwatching as a recreational and sustainable activity that contributes to mitigating climate change.” This is an exciting project, expanded from the 2020 Covid pandemic activities that were designed to keep scouts active by adapting the Spanish version of the *Discover Birds Activity Book* to Venezuelan birdlife!

On November 4 and 5, 2024, a paper was presented to the 5<sup>th</sup> National and 2<sup>nd</sup> International Meeting on Research in Animal Health and Production. The title was “Training of Paraecologists and Tour Guides Community-based as a Strategy for Bird Conservation in the Mountains Pozuelos, Portuguesa State (Venezuela). Listed among the presentation contributors are Carlos J. Diaz-Garcia, Luis A. Mieres-Bastidas, Henderson, V. and Ana I. Garcia-Vasquez (the author of the scout grant). This paper describes activities from May 2023 to July 2024. Observation and training days were held for education and to record birds identified. The activities were described as part of the “Discovering Birds” project (Ana’s) and “Henderson’s *Discover Birds Activity Book* was used to promote bird watching through theoretical-practical workshops.”

In summary, 155 observers using the e-Bird platform and 389 observers using the Merlin app were recruited to identify birds in their communities. 235 people were trained as birdwatching guides and community paraecologists. The reports that came from these activities increased the number of known bird species in the state of Portuguesa to 517 (431 species in Montana Los Pozuelos.)

I think you will agree, this is a remarkable story, sparked by an ingenious way of viewing the *Discover Birds Activity Book* as an educational tool for bringing youth and the community together to learn about birds, and in turn, use that knowledge to teach others. All of the described activities have been carried out in a country torn by economic collapse and government upheaval and yet, a deep connection to the environment and the power of youthful energy have prevailed in the promotion and protection of birds.

## CHAPTER NEWS

The **J. WALLACE COFFEY CHAPTER TOS (BRISTOL BIRD CLUB)** had a banner year in 2025 as we celebrated our 75th Anniversary. This milestone initiated a few informal but “special” Anniversary events. Besides a few guided bird walks and outreach activities, we sponsored a Tee-shirt contest challenge to identify 75 birds within the 5 surrounding counties within a certain time frame. The first dozen members/associates to do so received a free special 75th Anniversary Tee Shirt designed by club member Janet Brown. We also initiated a Photography Contest with our 1st- place winning photo of an Eastern Towhee by Karl Schneck. Ryan Rice of *Above Ground Media* judged the Photo Contest. Thanks to all who submitted photos which will be featured on our Chapter website in the coming days.

A very special and apropos undertaking for the 75th Anniversary was to offer members, associates, family, and friends of J. Wallace Coffey the opportunity to contribute a paragraph or two of their recollections and memories of our eponym. Twenty submissions were collected and “Club Reflections/75th Anniversary» were all read aloud for our November 18th Bristol Bird Club (BBC) meeting. His daughter, Janet Coffey Godfrey, joined us via Zoom from Atlanta. It was a very moving and rewarding evening to hear how many folks had been positively affected by Wallace. All memories can be found on our TOS chapter website.



Karl Schneck's Winning Photo for Photo Contest - Photo By Karl Schneck



Michele Sparks giving Roy Knispel Award for BBC Lifetime Achievement Award - Photo by Larry McDaniel

President Michele Sparks presented Roy Knispel with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his outstanding accomplishment as a lifelong birder, loyal member of the BBC, and his many contributions to the birding community. Roy's generous sharing of knowledge with fellow members has enriched all of our lives. Congratulations to Roy on a job well done as he continues to make so many contributions to the BBC.

Our Birder of the Year Award went to Rob Biller to honor not only his outstanding field expertise but also his unwavering dedication to our birding club community. Rob demonstrates the kind of stellar leadership that makes our club flourish. He was presented the award at our Christmas Party held at the home of Michele Sparks. Rob manages and updates our TOS website serving as Media Specialist, helps coordinate field trips, compiles two Christmas Bird Counts, serves as a moderator on the TN-Bird list serve, and serves

## CHAPTER NEWS

### Bristol Bird Club - *Continued from Page 11*

as representative for the BBC at TOS meetings and is always willing to lend a helping hand to anyone in need.

The BBC has been very active this past fall and early winter. We've had a lot of success with Facebook members joining the BBC. Our website, which TOS provides to the club, is slowly getting used and is constantly being updated.

We were also lucky to have some great guest field trip leaders. Bob Riggs led a BBC trip for us to brackish Well Ponds in Saltville, Virginia. Rick Knight also led a trip for the BBC to Orchard Bog in Shady Valley, TN. Lisa Benish, of the Blue Ridge Discovery Center, led the BBC to the top of Whitetop Mountain in Whitetop, Virginia (late summer).

The BBC has had the honor to partner with other clubs for field trips. The BBC was joined in the summer with the High-Country Audubon Society to the top of Roan Mountain in Roan Mountain, TN (Leaders: Guy McGrane and Larry McDaniel). Also, the BBC joined the Elizabethton Bird Club in December to travel to the higher elevations of Burke's Garden, Virginia on a successful hunt for Golden Eagles (Leaders: Joe McGuinness and Rob Biller).

In September, we had our annual Mendota Hawk Watch field trip to the Mendota Fire Tower in Mendota, Virginia. This year was under the guidance of the Mendota Hawk Watch Organization that was formed by local hawk watch enthusiasts in the region to better monitor this fantastic hawk watch. Ron Harrington and Larry McDaniel coordinate this new organization. The BBC also participated in the annual five county fall bird count that the Elizabethton Bird Club conducts every year. We ended the year with the long-standing Audubon Christmas Bird Counts (CBC).

Richard Lewis, who was the compiler for Bristol's CBC from 1996-2024, sadly passed away in early 2024. Rack Cross, who was co-compiler in 2024, compiled the CBC for the club in 2025. In 2026, Rob Biller, who also compiles the Shady Valley/Mountain City CBC, took over as compiler for Bristol's CBC.

Ron Harrington compiled his last Glade Spring CBC this year and is stepping down after 25 years as the compiler for that count. Thank you very much Ron for such dedication and all the years of hard work! Going forward, we welcome Monica Hoel as the new compiler. She is an experienced and a very enthusiastic birder and will do a great job.

Michele Sparks & Rob Biller



Ron Harrington - Photo by Michele Sparks

## CHAPTER NEWS

The **CHATTANOOGA CHAPTER** has had an excellent string of speakers these last few months. Marie Landis recently shared intriguing stories from birding Big Bend in western Texas. Kent Pennington took us through a birding “summary” of Colombia Santa Marta. Austin Young shared insights from his master’s thesis research titled *Change in bird use at a stopover site in southeastern Idaho across 17 years*. David Stone gave a unique perspective of a birding hotspot in Ooltewah, known as the Honors Course, where he birded for 43 years and still hosts popular CTOS field trips. Finally, Jon Andrew took us through his experiences exploring the Antarctic Peninsula on the National Geographic boat *The Resolution*.

We are saddened by the recent move of former CTOS board member Ann Glass to the Northeast. Thank you, Ann, for your great work! At the same time, our board welcomed new members: Julianne Hale for Communications, Sharon Klein as Secretary, and Austin Young as Newsletter Editor. Our board continues leading local bird conservation by offering well-attended Birding 101 classes, planning projects such as a local birding blind and plantings, hosting field trips, and educating the public through speakers and invited talks.

To no one’s surprise, the Chattanooga area hosted excellent birds this past winter and early spring. A photogenic American Bittern has been seen by many at a unique wetland within city limits, and an overwintering Rufous Hummingbird has been widely enjoyed. We look forward to seeing other state chapters at the spring TOS meeting. In the meantime, please see and share our calendar webpage for field trips and speaker events coming up.

Austin Young, Newsletter Editor

Twenty-eight folks attended the **KINGSPORT CHAPTER**’s Christmas social event on the afternoon of December 13. It was a great, relaxed event. We participated in Audubon’s 126<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Bird Count on December 18. We had 12 teams counting birds on a decent weather day. Helen Sirett processed our compilation.

Fifteen birders traveled to Alabama on January 6-10 for our winter birding trip. Highlights were plentiful with lots of waterfowl, Sandhill Cranes, Whooping Cranes, a guided tour at Wheeler NWR, etc. We enjoyed delicious food and fellowship too. We tallied 95 species. Susan and Mike Hubley organized an excellent trip.

Seven members participated in a “Breakfast & Birds” field trip on January 19. We had breakfast at Tootie’s Restaurant in Bristol followed by birding at Weir Dam and Osceola Island. It turned out to be a beautiful, cold morning and we saw 31 species. The Buffleheads and Wigeons were gorgeous in the sunlight, and we were delighted to see several Winter Wrens.

We unfortunately had to cancel our January meeting due to icy roads and extremely cold temperatures. Our February program was “Winter Hummingbirds” presented by Mark Armstrong of East Tennessee Avian Research. He included interesting facts on Chimney Swifts. We had 37 attendees.

We look forward to hosting the Spring TOS meeting in Kingsport May 1-3.

Leadership Team

### July 15th Deadline

The deadline date for the August issue of *The Tennessee Warbler* is July 15th. Please submit all articles, announcements, reports and items of interest by this deadline date.

### Submit Material To:

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## CHAPTER NEWS

The **KNOXVILLE CHAPTER** started 2026 with numerous sightings of rare gulls. The Black-legged Kittiwake has been a particular highlight, drawing birders from across the state. Other notable sightings include the Great Black-backed Gull and the Lesser Black-backed Gull. Reports also indicate an above-average number of Common Mergansers across the county, with many currently visible at Melton Hill Lake. Additionally, hundreds of American White Pelicans arrived in early January and can still be spotted on local lakes.

Recent guided walks have been very successful, with numerous woodcock sightings reported. Additionally, the “Birding with a Biologist” series has officially launched at Seven Islands State Birding Park, led by Kelly Fox!

Dean Edwards organized the Christmas Bird Count, which took place on Saturday, January 3. A record number of 106 species was identified, including the Cackling Goose and Yellow-breasted Chat, which were new additions to the count history. Six record high counts were also established for the following species: Ross’s Goose, Double-crested Cormorant, Barred Owl, Merlin, Eastern Phoebe, and Fish Crow. Please note that the Knox County Spring Count is scheduled for Saturday, April 25, 2026.

Emmy James, a 3rd-year PhD candidate working with Dr. Liz Derryberry at The University of Tennessee, recently gave a presentation titled “When Behavior Fails: Understanding strategies for managing heat in a warming world.” During the presentation, James discussed birds’ ability to thermoregulate and emphasized that variation is a necessary component for evolution.

Local Girl Scout Troops 20034 and 22176 are currently working toward their Silver Award by partnering with the staff at Seven Island State Birding Park. Their project involves preparing a home for a new American Kestrel resident named “Captain Jack Sparrowhawk.” Fern and Sirena recently presented their proposal for a new enclosure. Additionally, they are focused on public outreach regarding the diet, habitat, and primary threats facing the kestrel population.



Photo by Stephanie Mueller

The Knoxville Chapter is gearing up to lead more bird walks in the spring of 2026. We are also focused on promoting conservation efforts to school-aged children and cleaning up local birding hotspots.

You can make a difference simply by bringing a bag to collect trash while you bird!

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Knoxville Chapter - *Continued from Page 14*



As always, before each monthly meeting, members gather at Tomato Head to enjoy local eats and discuss recent trips! Hope to see you there soon!

### **IN MEMORY:**

On January 14, 2026 the KTOS community lost one of our own far too soon. Ronan Nicholson passed away after a short battle with aggressive cancer. In 2019, the American Birding Association named Ronan one of the young birders of the year. He will be greatly missed by the entire birding community, especially those close to his home here in East Tennessee.

Kristen Smith, Secretary

## CHAPTER NEWS

### MEMPHIS CHAPTER TOS in the Community

On February 14, four dedicated members of the Memphis Chapter, Jaikin Harrell, Riley Metcalfe, Adrian Hall, and Liz Hall, shared a little bird-themed love with the community by volunteering at the Lichterman Nature Center's Annual "Birds and the Seeds" event. During the event, community members had the opportunity to learn about MTOS, discover how to become a member, and get a sneak peek of upcoming field trips. Chapter volunteers enjoyed answering a steady stream of bird-related questions, and the event even helped welcome a few new members to the chapter, making it a rewarding Valentine's Day for birds and birders alike.



Photo by Liz Hall

### Highlights from Recent Field Trips

Field trip participants enjoyed winter and early-spring birding at a variety of local sites, including Ghost River's bottomland forest, the open fields and edges of Shelby Farms, and the urban greenway habitats of the Nonconnah Greenbelt. Each location highlighted different seasonal patterns in bird activity while bringing members together to learn and share observations. American Tree Sparrows emerged as a highlight this winter, drawing particular attention from participants since the species had not visited Shelby County in five years. With spring migration rapidly approaching, enthusiasm remains high for the upcoming field trips.

Liz Hall, President

The **NASHVILLE CHAPTER** held its election for new officers at their year end 2025 monthly meeting. Congratulations to the following newly elected Executive Board:

President, Cyndi Routledge; 1<sup>st</sup> VP/Programs, Tim Ryan; 2<sup>nd</sup> VP/Field Trips, Shelley Smith; Secretary, Kathy Ware; Treasurer, Pam Lasley.

We're excited to welcome this leadership team, whose passion and dedication will help guide the Nashville Chapter through the next two years of conservation initiatives and birding adventures!

The January ice storm brought challenges and hardships for many of our members, causing damage to homes, yards and landscapes. Thankfully, everyone remained safe and unharmed. However, there was historic damage at Radnor Lake State Park and due to the ongoing recovery efforts, our February meeting was canceled. Rangers at Radnor continued diligently in clean-up mode, working tirelessly to restore the area for wildlife and visitors alike. A shining light among all this destruction was the good news that the resident Bald Eagle pair's nest remained intact, and the pair was busy preparing for this nesting season.

With spring just around the corner, and the projected re-opening date of early March, our annual Radnor Lake Wednesday morning spring bird walks are still scheduled to take place on time. The first walk will be on Earth Day, April 22<sup>nd</sup> and the last of 4 walks, on May 13<sup>th</sup>. Many thanks to Danny Shelton, Richard Connors, Melinda Welton and Mary Fitzgerald for volunteering to each lead a spring walk. Watch the NTOS webpage for any last minute announcements or changes regarding these much-loved walks.

As always, we welcome all to join us on these Wednesday migration walks or any of our field trips and meetings. Information on all can be found at [nashvillebirds.org/events](https://nashvillebirds.org/events), on our Facebook or new Instagram pages.

Happy Spring, good birding and we hope to see many of you in Kingsport at the Annual TOS meeting!

Cheers!

Cyndi Routledge, President