

# Tennessee Ornithological Society Memphis Chapter

<http://birdmemphis.org>

May 2026

## April Program

Presented by chapter member Tricia Vesely, "Birding High Island, Texas" was the program at our April Meeting. High Island is not technically an island but a community that sits on the very eastern edge of the Bolivar Peninsula, which is a 27-mile strip of land that separates Galveston Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. The area of High Island is the highest point on the Gulf Coast (about 40 to 45 feet above sea level). It is a unique ecosystem within the coast region in that it is an oasis of trees in an area that is otherwise lowland, coastal marsh. High Island is known for its birds because as migratory birds cross the gulf, this is the area of land that many of them can stopover at for protection, food, water, and rest.



Houston Audubon maintains five sanctuaries in High Island. The nearby Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary is also managed by Houston Audubon but is not technically on High Island. The most famous of the five sanctuaries is Smith Oaks because of its rookery. Hundreds of pairs of herons, egrets, spoonbills, and cormorants nest in this 177 acre preserve. An elevated boardwalk allows close viewing and photography, as illustrated by Tricia's beautiful photographs.



# SUBMISSIONS WELCOME

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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:  
[mtosnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:mtosnewsletter@gmail.com)

## NOTICE:

At the April 2026 meeting, chapter members voted in favor of, **starting when we return September 2026**, meeting on the **third Tuesday of the month**.

As discussed, this change comes from the new Wednesday night programming St. George's is starting.

The final meeting of the 2025-2026 season will be **Wednesday, May 20th**.

# DIXON

GALLERY & GARDENS

The Dixon Gallery and Gardens is our feature hotspot for May. This will be a repeat location as it was previously our Feature Hotspot in December 2025. The Dixon has 16 acres including a cutting garden, formal gardens, and woodland garden as well as an art gallery. The property is mostly wooded, but the great lawn and cutting garden offer some sunnier spaces with open sky. Downy Woodpecker is the only species that has been observed at this spot during the month of May.

The Dixon is located at 4339 Park Ave.  
Memphis, TN 38117

Open Tues-Sat from 10am-5pm  
Sundays from 1-5pm  
3rd Thursdays from 10am-8pm

Admission is free but they do appreciate donations

May 2026  
Feature Hotspot

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

# 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 6<sup>th</sup> at 8am

led by Becky Rooney

Meet at the Kimbrough Trailhead

8108 Wolf River Blvd. 38138

## **Wall-Doxey State Park**

Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup> 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.

# Summer Field Trips



## **Hatchie NWR**

Saturday June 6, 2026 at 7am  
led by Larry Chitwood  
6772 TN-76, Stanton, TN 38069

## **Pioneer Springs Trail**

Friday July 3, 2026 at 8am  
led by Ryan Pudwell  
Meet at trailhead located near Poplar Tree Lake

## **John F Kennedy Park**

Saturday August 22, 2026 at 7:30am  
led by Ryan Pudwell  
4577 Raleigh Lagrange Rd, Memphis, TN 38128  
Park and Meet by the playground

# Field Trip Notes

## from Ryan Pudwell

Here we are at the beginning of May. We had some good field trips during the month of April starting with a visit to Wapanocca NWR led by Van Harris on Sunday April 12th. While there weren't really any surprises, the weather was great and the group was able to observe nearly 40 species, including an occupied Osprey nest.

The following Saturday, April 18th Dick Preston led a trip to Ensley Bottoms. Despite dodging some raindrops early, they were able to see a nice variety of shorebirds, including a Ruddy Turnstone and an American Avocet that had both made their first appearances earlier in the week. A visit to the outflow ditch turned up a few more species, including a Northern Bobwhite. There were some people in attendance who had not previously been to Ensley Bottoms. In total the group saw 47 species.

On Saturday April 25 we paid a visit to the Meeman Biological Station. This was the first time in a while we've had a field trip to this spot. Dr Bowers and a couple graduate students lead the field trip. We started at the research station with a brief history of Bowers Lab and an overview of some of the research they are doing. From there, we visited three nest boxes. At the first, a female Carolina Wren was caught, banded, and measured. At the second nest box, a male Prothonotary Warbler was caught in a mist net, measured, and had colored bands added to assist in identifying him from a distance; he was banded in 2025 as a hatchling. At the third nest box, they banded and measured five soon to be fledged Carolina Wrens. We birded along the way and ended up with 29 species on our list for the morning.

May kicks off with a field trip on Wednesday the 6<sup>th</sup> to the Germantown Greenway, followed by a visit to Wall Doxey State Park on Saturday the 9<sup>th</sup>, and a trip to Middle Fork Bottoms State Park in Madison County on May 16<sup>th</sup>. This year, we will continue field trips during the summer, with one field trip per month in June, July, and August. We will return to multiple monthly field trips opportunities in September.



Orange-crowned Warbler



Prothonotary Warbler



Northern Yellow Warbler



Yellow-rumped Warbler

Photos by:

**Allen Sparks**

Photos by:

# Dianna Johnson



Crested Caracara



Great Egret



Hudsonian Whimbrel



Nelson's Sparrow



Roseate Spoonbills



Seaside Sparrow



American Redstart



Blackburnian Warbler



Common Yellowthroat



Hooded Warbler



Pine Warbler



Worm-eating Warbler

Photos by:

**John Matthew Erickson**

Photos by:

# Ryan Pudwell



Hooded Warbler



Kentucky Warbler



Louisiana Waterthrush



Palm Warbler



Worm-eating Warbler



Yellow-throated Warbler



Black-and-white Warbler



Northern Parula



Prairie Warbler



Prothonotary Warbler



Swainson's Warbler



Wilson's Warbler

Photos by:

**Sophie Dismukes**

## 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 Caroline Schratz [caroline.schratz@gmail.com](mailto: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](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:  
Cheryl Greenacre, Editor  
E-mail: [cgreenac@gmail.com](mailto:cgreenac@gmail.com)

## Chapter Meeting

**May 20, 2026, 7:00pm**

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

### Program

Rin Pell, PhD candidate, Bowers Lab  
*Brown-headed Cowbirds: Avian Villains or Evolutionary Opportunists?*

### Hospitality

Hospitality will be provided by Margaret Jefferson and David Hill.

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Thank you to all who contributed to the 2025-2026 newsletter!  
Have a great summer, and I am looking forward to more in 2026-2027!  
- Sophie

Please send your submissions to [mtosnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:mtosnewsletter@gmail.com)

### New Members

Tracie Abel <a href="mailto:twabel@bellsouth.net">twabel@bellsouth.net</a>	Jonathan Harrison <a href="mailto:jharrison12@gmail.com">jharrison12@gmail.com</a>
Bonnie Barnes <a href="mailto:bonnieubarnes@gmail.com">bonnieubarnes@gmail.com</a>	David Posey <a href="mailto:dposey@gmail.com">dposey@gmail.com</a>
Mary Day <a href="mailto:marykananaughday@gmail.com">marykananaughday@gmail.com</a>	Jeffrey Shumate <a href="mailto:smsgtshumate@yahoo.com">smsgtshumate@yahoo.com</a>
Ashley Harper <a href="mailto:abbharper@icloud.com">abbharper@icloud.com</a>	

### Treasurer's Report

As of April 21, 2026 the balance in the Treasury is \$14,515.82. The chapter approved a \$600.00 honorarium to St. George's Episcopal Church at the April 15 meeting. We greatly appreciate the church's provision of meeting space. The chapter currently includes 128 memberships; new members are a major part of the total. MTOS added 21 new members in 2025, and 14 members have joined in 2026, to date. Excellent!