

TOS

Memphis Chapter News



Tennessee Ornithological Society

October 2017 <http://birdmemphis.org>

Program for the September MTOS Meeting:

Photographs Taken by MTOS Members During the 2017 Year.

The first presenter was **Allen Sparks** showing photos taken by Allen and his wife, **Dawn**.



The **Forster's Tern** (above) shows winter plumage according to Kaufman Field Guide. The bird concentrates in winter on both coasts in Mexico and the U.S. Gulf coast and Florida. Its breeding territory is in central Canada and the northern central U.S., which it shares, with some exceptions, with the Common Tern, which looks very similar. The **Common Loon** (above right), photographed by Dawn, breeds in the far north and winters on both coasts.



The amazing picture to the left of the **Belted Kingfisher** with prey was taken by Allen. The bird flew across the arm of the lake passing in front of the photographer and landed on the far side where it was able to finish the meal in one gulp—probably with some difficulty.

Thomas Blevins was our second presenter Wednesday evening with a series of photos, some taken by his wife **Andrea** and others taken by Thomas. Those displayed on this page are just a few of their more interesting ones, I think.

Thomas and Andrea contributed some photos of unusual birds and some unusual situations. Below left is a shot of 3 **Plain Chachalaca** taken by Thomas at Laguna Atascosta Wildlife Refuge in SE Texas, which



is possibly the only area of the U.S. where they occur naturally. They have been introduced on Sapelo Island, GA.



Flocks of these birds serve as an alarm clock at dawn as they “cha-cha-lac” from treetops. While shy in the tropics, they have become tame in Texas parks (Kaufman). The photo to the upper right is of a species familiar to Mid-South birders, the **Common Yellowthroat**. This photo was taken by Thomas at South Padre Island, TX. While the female lacks the “Lone Ranger” mask, this photo shows an example of the male in full adult plumage.

The photo (mid-page right) was taken by Andrea Blevins at the library in “Beautiful Downtown Collierville” (as Fred Cooke used to say). These two **Cooper’s Hawks** seem to be having a difference of opinion. Quick action by the photographer got this shot.

Andrea also took the photo (below right) at the same location of the **Mississippi Kite** with prey in its clutches and beginning to feed while in flight. These birds are familiar to Shelby County birders as the summer brings scores of them to the Mid-South. These Kites feed mainly on insects, many caught high in the air.



The final photo (below left) is of a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** taken by Thomas at Corpus Christi, TX. “An elegant summer bird of the southern plains” according to Kaufman, “perches on fences and wires; flutters over open fields...as it



chases flying insects.” They wander from their established range and appear in places like Shelby Farm Park in Memphis (reported by Andrea Cowart) and winter in Florida in small numbers.



Field Trip Reports:

The “Pits” Earth Complex - September 2, 2017.

Six MTOS members participated in the first outing of the year, meeting at the TVA Ash Ponds near the Allen Steam Plant to start the count for the day. The weather was partly cloudy and started out cool, but as the sun peeked out the temperature climbed quickly and leveled off in the 80s. The Ash Ponds yielded some of the usual birds with the most interesting being an Osprey taking a long bath. We moved on to the Pits where Dick Preston, our leader, and Martha Waldron tried their best to school the rest of us on some of the finer points of identifying shorebirds. Some of the highlights were Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks (61), American Golden-Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Greater Yellowlegs (3), Lesser Yellowlegs (77), and the Sandpipers: Stilt (11), Least (4400), Pectoral (220), Semipalmated (150), Western (3), Spotted (3), and Solitary (6). Total species for the day was 48. (C. Brown)

Fall Count at Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park - September 16, 2017.

22 observers counted throughout Shelby County. So far, 108 species have been reported. Best sightings: Dunlin and Canada and Wilson’s Warblers. (Dick Preston)

Strawberry Plains Hummingbird Festival - September 8-10, 2017: While not an actual field trip, there were several MTOS members either attending or volunteering. The festival was a success, but the total number of hummers was down from previous years. 206 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were banded on Friday, but on Saturday they seemed to have found other places to feed as there were only 50 captured and/or banded. I have no information on the Sunday successes. (Jay Walko)

Wolf River Restoration Trail - September 30, 2017: The leader will be Rob Harbin. Report will appear in the next newsletter.

Old Business:

Projector spares - The membership voted to purchase a spare bulb for the Chapter’s projector.

Handheld transmitter/receivers - The Chapter has purchased 4 handheld radios for communication between cars during field trips. **Dick Preston** has possession of these should anyone need them for a MTOS sponsored field trip.

New Business: - None

Unusual sightings:

Dick Preston reported hearing of the following sightings; At Shelby Forest - a Canada Warbler and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. In Tennessee - a Black-capped Petrel (blown here by a hurricane?), In Dyer County - a Crested Caracara on a sandbar in the Mississippi River. At the Pits - Wood Storks.

Conservation:

Germantown Parks wants lists of birds seen in the parks of Germantown. If you have birding records or could help to compile such lists, please contact **Cody Herron** at **(901) 751-7684**. The following parks are his top priority: Wolf River Greenway/Grove Park; Riverwoods State Natural Area; Cameron-Brown Park; W.C. Johnson Park.

Directory: A big **“THANK YOU”** goes out to Theresa Graham and all those involved in producing the 2017-2018 MTOS directory. Great job of making it a professional looking, useful, easily-accessed document for all members to use. The directory is available only in digital format and was sent out as an attachment to an email from Margaret Jefferson. If for some reason you did not receive this email, please contact Margaret at <mjefferson100@hotmail.com>.

TOS Membership Information

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	\$23
Other Student	\$ 5
Lifetime	\$450 one time +\$18 yearly

Please send dues to:

Barbara Pyles

518 Forest Hill-Irene Rd. South

Cordova, TN 38018-4832

(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 at mjefferson100@hotmail.com. If you have no internet access, a printed version can be mailed.

Chapter Newsletter Submissions

E-mail or call Chad Brown

cwb496@bellsouth.net or (901) 754-3385

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.

E-mail: dickpreston@rittermail.com

Tennessee Warbler Deadlines

*February 28 for the April Newsletter

*June 30 for the August Newsletter

*October 31 for the December Newsletter

Forward contributions to:

Theresa Graham, Editor

P.O. Box 366 Oakland, TN 38060

(901) 465-4263 or e-mail:

2graham@bellsouth.net

Chapter Meeting

October 18, 2017 at 7:00 PM

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

Program at 7:00 PM

Lindsey Day, World Bird Sanctuary, presents a talk on
"World Bird Sanctuary"

Hospitality

Refreshments will be provided by **Kate Friedman** and **Barbara Edward**.

Field Trip Information

October 4, 2017 - Shelby Farms Greenline. This is a Wednesday hike. Leader will be Dick Preston. Meet at the Podesta Street entrance at 7:30AM. Contact Dick at dickpreston@rittermail.com or (901) 837-3360.

October 8, 2017 - (Sunday) Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge. The leader will be Van Harris. Meet at the refuge Visitors Center at 8:00AM. Contact Van at the following: shelbyforester1223@rittermail.com or (901) 876-3337.

Special Events

October 6-7-8, 2017 - TOS Fall Meeting and Symposium - Kingsport, TN.

For information go to <http://tnbirds.org> and click on events or "2017 Fall Meeting and Symposium in Kingsport"

Oct. 20-22, 2017 - Reelfoot Lake Pelican Festival - Tiptonville, TN. Information at (731) 253-9652.

(Plan Ahead) **Wings of Winter at Paris Landing State Park.**

January 19-21, 2018 Information at

<http://paristnchamber.com/wingsofwinter>

Members **Rusty & Dianna Johnson** spent part of their summer at their cabin “Down East” in Maine.

Dianna took advantage of that time to photograph the images on this page. The **Common Loon family**



(below) is close to the southernmost edge of their breeding area, which includes forest lakes across Canada and some adjacent regions in the U.S. They are often identified by their yodeling call even before sighting the bird.



Another Canadian breeding species (at the left) is the **Least Sandpiper**. We have ample opportunity to see these birds by the hundreds as they migrate through, stopping at the “Pits” at the Earth Complex Solid Waste Facility in Memphis. (Below left) Three soon-to-be-fledged young **Osprey** anticipate a meal as mom or dad arrives with the fruits of her or his labors.

(Below right) The **Ovenbird**, according to Kaufman, is “common in summer in eastern woods but is often overlooked as it walks on the ground in slow dainty style.”



This bird is, on occasion, seen in the Mid-South during migration, but is more often heard. All these photos were taken near the Johnson’s cabin. Down East, Maine, lies between Penobscot Bay and the Canadian border.