

NewsHawk



www.nashvillebirds.org

2nd Quarter, 2026

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NewsHawk deadline is the 15th of
the month prior to publication
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Our Websites

TOS www.tnbirds.org
NTOS www.nashvillebirds.org

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Peter Followill for his generous donation made in honor of Sue Senecal. His thoughtful contribution is deeply valued and serves as a meaningful tribute to Sue. Such acts of kindness and support are truly appreciated and help to further our mission.

President's Message...

Each year, as my yard begins to turn from brown to green and the daffodils and redbuds bloom, I'm reminded of a playful rhyme I recited as a child.

"Spring is sprung, the grass is riz,
I wonder where the birdie is?
The birdie, he is on the wing.
My word, how absurd—
I thought the wing was on the bird!"

Little did I know, as I spoke those simple lines each spring, what marvels were unfolding in the skies above me. Those "birdies" truly were on the wing—traveling overhead with a kind of built-in map. Guided by the Earth's magnetic field, by cues from the sun and stars, and by routes both learned and inherited, these winged travelers follow remarkably consistent paths. They return to familiar places, create new life, and ensure that the cycle—and their species—continues.

Spring is an exciting time for birders—and for NTOS. Take a minute to note all the wonderful field trips planned for us, thank the volunteers who will be leading our annual Wednesday morning Radnor Lake walks, and join us at our monthly meetings for fascinating programs. Your presence at these events is a 'thank you' to those who work to bring them to us.

In the meantime, I encourage you to take a moment to look (and listen) up—you might be lucky enough to spot a 'birdie on the wing' passing through on its long journey home.

Til next time,

Happy birding!

President Cyndi Routledge

REMINDER:

WE DO NOT HOLD A MONTHLY MEETING IN JULY and AUGUST.

NTOS 2026 Second Quarter Field Trips

April 18th: Harpeth River State Park – Gossett Tract (Cheatham Co.)- 7:00 a.m.

Join NTOS for a spring field trip to the Gossett Tract of Harpeth River State Park (1230 Cedar Hill Rd, Kingston Springs, TN 37082), a scenic riverside property in Kingston Springs. This tract features a mix of open fields, riparian habitat along the Harpeth River, and wooded edges making it an excellent spot to look for early spring migrants as well as resident species. The river corridor can be especially productive for swallows, warblers, vireos, and flycatchers, while the fields may host sparrows and other grassland birds.

We'll begin at 7:00 a.m. and take an approximately 2-mile walk along the gravel and natural-surface pathways. The terrain is relatively flat and open, offering wide views of the surrounding habitat.

Bring water, binoculars, and dress for the weather. We hope you'll join us for a beautiful spring morning along the Harpeth!

April 25th: NTOS Spring Bird Count

The NTOS Spring Bird Count will take place on Saturday, April 25th! Spring counts are a wonderful way to document migrating and breeding birds across our area while contributing valuable data that helps track population trends over time. By surveying assigned territories and recording every species seen or heard, participants provide a snapshot of spring migration at its peak.

Whether you're an experienced birder or newer to birding, there's a place for you on a count team. It's a fun, collaborative way to sharpen your skills, explore local hotspots, and contribute to community science.

For more information or to sign up to count, please contact Barbara Harris at harrbarbara@bellsouth.net. We hope you'll join us for this exciting day of birding!

May 2nd: Fremont Property Bird Walk (Davidson Co.) – 7:00 a.m.

Join us for our recurrent spring trip to explore the private 45-acre property of the Fremont family and their avid birder son, Ari, in southeastern Davidson County between Nolensville and Smyrna (8856 Rocky Fork Road, Smyrna, TN 37167). Ari will lead us on a walk through their beautiful mix of gardens, woods, and pastures; all prime habitat for a wide variety of neotropical migrants during peak spring migration.

We'll begin at 7:00 a.m. Once you arrive at the driveway, head past the black barn and turn left up the gravel road to the back of the property, where there is ample parking and access to the trails. A cabin on site (with restrooms available) will serve as our gathering spot.

At the conclusion of the walk, we'll enjoy cookies, milk, and coffee, along with a little live "farm jazz" music courtesy of Asher and Elinor. Those who would like to linger are welcome to bring a bag lunch and spend more time visiting and enjoying the property. Join us for this fun outing graciously provided by the Fremont family!

May 16th- Bells Bend Park (Davidson Co)- 6:30 a.m.

Join us as we explore one of the most popular birding areas in Davidson County, Bells Bend Park. Mike Smith will lead us as we explore the fields and woods of Bells Bend Park in search of the birds found here including Northern Bobwhite, Indigo Bunting, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, Yellow-

breasted Chat, Common Yellowthroat, Prairie Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, and in recent years, Dickcissel. We'll also keep an eye out for other migrating warblers, flycatchers, and grassland species such as Bobolink that may be moving through during this time.

To maximize the number of birds seen and take advantage of cooler morning temperatures, we'll plan on an early start. We will meet at the visitor center on Saturday, May 16th at 6:30 a.m. Waterproof footwear and bug spray are highly recommended, as trails may be damp and insects active. We hope you'll join us for what promises to be a rewarding and bird-filled morning!

June 6th: Tentative—NTOS Evening Field Trip: Cedars of Lebanon (with Lebanon TOS) Time: TBD

Join NTOS and the Lebanon chapter of TOS for a special evening outing at Cedars of Lebanon State Park on Saturday, June 27th. The evening will begin with a visit to the park's Native Plant & Butterfly Garden, followed by a guided exploration of nearby glade habitat in search of nightjars such as Common Nighthawks, Whip-poor-wills, and Chuck-will's-widows.

As dusk settles, we'll listen and look for nightjars and owls in the unique cedar glade ecosystem of southern Wilson County. This promises to be a relaxed and enjoyable evening of birding, with opportunities to experience the sights and sounds of late spring after dark.

Bring a lawn chair, water, snacks, and insect repellent. More details including timing, meeting location, and additional logistics will be shared as plans are finalized. It's sure to be a fun night in the field!

Spring 2026 Evening Bird Walks

Shelby Bottoms Park: Phase 3/Forrest Green Trailhead 5 pm each evening

Due to the popularity of our annual spring and fall Wednesday morning bird walks at Radnor Lake, NTOS is excited to host a series of Thursday evening bird walks this spring during peak migration.

Join us on April 23, April 30, May 7, and May 14 at Shelby Bottoms Park – Phase 3/Forrest Green Trailhead. (Parking lot coordinates: 36.19728, -86.70295). Each evening's walk will begin at 5:00 pm.

We will walk along a flat, paved trail that allows for easy birding. The route will take us straight out from the parking lot, with a left turn at the river, looping back to the parking area.

These evening walks are a great opportunity to experience spring migration and enjoy birds in a relaxed setting. Whether you're a seasoned birder or just getting started, we'd love to have you join us!

ANNUAL FALL TOS STATE MEETING...

The annual TOS fall meeting will be a JOINT meeting between Kentucky Ornithological Society and Tennessee Ornithological Society. It will be held on September 18-20, 2026. Host hotel is KenLake State Park Resort.

Keynote speakers for the event is Cin-Ty Lee and illustrator Andy Birch. They are authors of and experts on North American Flycatchers. They'll speak on Saturday night at Lake Barkley Convention Center. No dinner is planned – however a reception will take place during this event. Field trips to local hotspots will take place on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Separate Board of Director meetings for each organization will take place during the weekend as well. Stay tuned for more information and deadlines as this special joint event comes together. But mark your calendars for this special event!

Second Quarter 2026 NTOS Programs

The Nashville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society (NTOS) meetings are held at the Radnor Lake Visitors Center at 1160 Otter Creek Road on the third Thursday of every month (except July and August). We usually gather and greet one another at 7:00 pm; have a Business Meeting at 7:15; followed by a program at 7:30 pm. All are welcome. Membership in NTOS is not required.

April 16th – "Forty Favorite Spring Songsters" – presented by Richard Connors

Richard will conduct a mini workshop, with a brief review and quiz to brush up on our Spring migrant and resident songbirds. He will share tips and techniques to better identify and enjoy our local birdsong. With practice, he says, you may be less dependent on, and maybe even outperform, your Merlin app.

Richard Connors is a Nashville photographer, naturalist and birder. A long-time member of TOS, Richard has served as NTOS chapter president and as state president. He has used his birding skills developed over the years in scientific projects such as USFWS Breeding Bird Surveys, Partners in Flight point counts, Christmas bird counts, and seasonal surveys. For several years he conducted Beginning Birding and Birding by Ear classes at Warner Parks and at Radnor Lake S.P. In recent years, dragonflies and damselflies, and butterflies have come into focus as favorite subjects. But Spring birds will always be a favorite.

May 21st – "Smart Yards and Bird-friendly Habitats" – presented by Gretchen Judkins

Join Gretchen Judkins from Tennessee Smart Yards to learn about the nine principles of Smart Yards and how they connect to bird-friendly habitats. Tennessee Smart Yards is a free, online certification program that is all about making your yard more environmentally friendly. Attendees will leave two steps closer to certification with a yard-sketching activity and free rain gauge.

Gretchen Judkins is the Environmental Compliance Specialist for Metro Water Services. She inspects industrial facilities that hold National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permits with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and is the public education coordinator for Nashville's MS4 permit. She earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. In her free time, she enjoys browsing estate sales and going on hikes.

June 18 – "Birding the Canary Islands and Morocco" – presented by Ron Hoff

Ron will talk about a 19-day trip he and his wife took to target the endemic birds of the Canary Islands and Morocco. The trip started in the Canary Islands and then they flew a short distance to Agadir, in Morocco, for that portion. This trip was in mid-late February and early March of 2025. All habitats were covered including the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. Also included was the very NW edge of the Sahara Desert.

Ron, and his wife Dollyann, have been travelling together to search for birds since 1992. Dollyann began birding in 1973, and Ron began in 1978. Both are longtime TOS life members. Ron has been photographing birds since 2005, having now photographed over half of the world's birds. Both of their lifelists are now over 9000. Their love of Nature in general, and birds in particular, remains strong.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

- The Keep Walton Ferry Green Organization is looking for a volunteer to lead a beginner birding walk at the Sumner County Master Gardener plant sale and spring festival at Memorial Park in Hendersonville on April 25th from 10-11am. This walk is intended for all ages and all skill levels, but especially for those just starting to learn about birding. The hour-long walk is paved, relatively flat and involves staying on the park paths. Please contact Aprele Griffin at keepwaltonferrygreen@gmail.com if you are interested in volunteering to lead this walk.
This is a group of community members that have gathered to save green space on the Walton Ferry peninsula from future development. For more information visit: <https://keepwaltonferrygreen.org/>
- A Loretta Zweig contacted NTOS looking for a possible 'bird buddy' to go birding with her and her husband when they're visiting Nashville from California, May 19-25. If anyone is interested in being a host, her email address: lorettazw@gmail.com to put you directly in contact with them to coordinate. Please cc'd President Cyndi Routledge – routledges@bellsouth.net as well.
- Long time member Mary Zimmerman was doing a bit of cleaning out and came across some bird sighting records for Davidson County that she had been collecting when there was talk of an NTOS publication on the Birds of the Nashville area. Nothing has been done with the data since eBird came along...I'm looking for someone who might be interested in entering these sightings into eBird under historical data. If you think you might be interested or know of someone who might be, please let me know – routledges@bellsouth.net

From THE BIRDING COMMUNITY E-BULLETIN**AGEING AND BIRDING**

According to a study published last month in *The Journal of Neuroscience*, birdwatching has the capacity to reshape the brain in much the same way as learning a language or a musical instrument does. The researchers concluded that experienced birders have more structurally compact attention-and-perception-related brain areas, seemingly linked to more accurate bird identification skills.

To understand whether birding also shapes the brain, Erik Wing at York University in Toronto and his colleagues analyzed brain structure and function in 48 hobbyist birders, half experts and half novices, as judged by a screening test. Participants were aged 22 to 79, and both groups were similar in terms of sex, age and education.

Of course, more experienced birders could ID birds better than novices. (On average, they accurately identified 83% of local bird species and 61% of non-local ones. In contrast, novices correctly identified 44% of both groups of birds.) While identifying non-local birds, activity in three important brain regions increased among experienced birders, but not in novices. These brain regions are involved in object identification, visual processing, attention, and working memory. "It speaks to the wide range of cognitive processes that are involved in birding," commented Wing.

Remember, this study is only a snapshot in time. It might be that people who develop an interest in birds already have structural changes in their brains, or that there are other lifestyle factors related to brain changes that happen to be more common among bird enthusiasts.

Nonetheless, this is still interesting to consider!

Find a summary of the study here:

https://medicalxpress.com/news/2026-02-expert-birders-compact-attention-brain.html#google_vignette

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](#).

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

NTOS BIRD COUNT DATES...

- Annual SPRING bird count will take place on APRIL 25TH. Area leaders will be in touch with those who've counted with them a few weeks prior to this date. If you have never counted, want to change locations or want to do a feeder count and live within Davidson County please contact Barbara Harris to participate - harrbarbara@bellsouth.net
- Annual FALL bird count will take place on SEPTEMBER 26TH. Area leaders will be in touch with those who've counted with them a few weeks prior to this date. If you have never counted, want to change locations or want to do a feeder count and live within Davidson County please contact Barbara Harris to participate - harrbarbara@bellsouth.net
- The 2026 'land' Christmas Bird Count will be held on SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2026 and the 'lake' Christmas Bird Count will be held on FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 2027. Area leaders will be in touch with those who've counted with them a few weeks prior to this date. If you have never counted, want to change locations or have any questions, please contact Cyndi Routledge – routledges@bellsouth.net

Annual Spring Wednesday morning Radnor Lake Walks...

Here are our annual spring Wednesday morning Radnor Lake State Park and NTOS volunteer who will be leading each walk:

April 22nd – Richard Connors

April 29th – Mary Fitzgerald – *a recorder/eBird contributor is needed to assist on this day.*

May 6th – Danny Shelton

May 13th – Melinda Welton

Walks begin at 7:30 am in the west parking lot of Radnor Lake rain or shine. (The ONLY exception is lightning, thunder, high winds or torrential rain.)

Meet outside the Visitor's Center near the kiosk at the wood's edge where each leader will be there to greet you.

The route is always the same...up the road, across the spillway and up the trail to Long Bridge where the walk officially ends. This way if you're running late or get stuck in morning traffic you can catch-up with the group. Come for an hour, the entire time or as your schedule permits.

The NTOS leader will keep the official list of birds so please help them out by calling out the birds you see and hear. At the end of the day this list will be published on TN-birds.org and appear on the NTOS Facebook page as well. Feel free to keep your own list or edit the official list for your personal records.

These walks are FREE, for all caliber of birder from beginner to advanced. They're OPEN TO THE PUBLIC and NO registration is needed.

Any questions feel free to contact Cyndi Routledge – routledges@bellsouth.net Please put 'Wednesday walk' in the subject line.