

# NewsHawk



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## Our Websites

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[www.nashvillebirds.org](http://www.nashvillebirds.org)

4th Quarter, 2026

## President's Message...

As we close in on the end of another year, it seems, in some ways, to have been a very long one, while in others it has passed at the speed of light.

By the time you're reading this issue of the NewsHawk, we will have completed four bird counts, hosted two potluck dinners, introduced new spring and fall evening migration walks at Shelby Bottoms, and almost completed 50 years of continuous Wednesday morning walks at Radnor Lake. We also hosted seven meeting programs, a dozen field trips, and participated in numerous bird conservation action letters. It truly takes a village, and we thank everyone for every effort, large or small, that helps us continue the important work we do.

As we enter 2027, I will be looking for three individuals to serve on the Nominating Committee and help secure a slate of volunteers who will lead us into the future. At the end of 2027, after 12 years as your President, I will be stepping aside. It will be time for new energy, fresh ideas, and new leadership.

I am also seeking a volunteer to coordinate the land-based Christmas Bird Count, a role I have managed for many years. Coincidentally, this is an excellent time for a transition, as National Audubon has recently announced a new streamlined reporting system for the upcoming season and will be providing online training for those responsible for submitting data. Combined with Scott Block's outstanding computer compilation program, I anticipate that this position will become even more efficient and manageable. If you are interested, or simply have questions, please contact me.

Finally, we are still searching for someone to fill the Historian position for NTOS. Susan Hollyday retired from this role in February, and despite several calls for a replacement, the position remains vacant. The good news is that the Tennessee State Museum has agreed to accept all of the archives that Susan cataloged and maintained for so many years. Be sure to see Danny Shelton's article and photos elsewhere in this publication for details about this exciting development.

As we enter the last quarter of 2026, consider how your unique talents and skills can help NTOS continue to thrive and let me know how you would like to get involved.

Till next time...

Happy birding!

Cyndi Routledge

Having trouble deciding on an  
accessory to wear to complete your  
look?



A crow on your shoulder is unique,  
gender neutral, works with any outfit,  
and never goes out of style.

#### Fourth 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.

#### October 15 – “Madeira and the American Birding Association” – A Conversation with Chris Sloan

Chris Sloan is current Board Chair of the American Birding Association and past president of the Tennessee Ornithological Society. An avid bird photographer, Chris has been birding since his youth and has birded many parts of the world. This evening, he will discuss the American Birding Association and his role with it, make a presentation about a birding trip to Madeira he and several other NTOS birders made in 2024, and perhaps make some pointers about bird photography.

#### November 19 – “Beasts of Birdin on YouTube” – presented by Asher and Ari Frémont

Asher and Ari Frémont, two young birders, have created the #1 birding show on YouTube, called Beasts of Birdin. They and their family live on a 45-acre property in Rutherford County that has been optimized for birding. Their video programs include quests for rare, iconic, and everyday birds and interviews with noted personalities. They will discuss their process and show some of their videos. The Frémonts have hosted several NTOS field trips at their property.

#### December 17 – “Puerto Rico Endemic Birding” – presented by Steve and Cyndi Routledge

In February 2026, Steve and Cyndi Routledge traveled to Puerto Rico with four fellow birders in search of the island’s 19 living endemic bird species, including the critically endangered Puerto Rican Parrot and the colorful Puerto Rican Tody. Join us in December as they share highlights from their adventure on this self-governing Caribbean island and unincorporated U.S. territory, located approximately 1,000 miles southeast of Miami. Through photos, stories, and birding experiences, you’ll get a glimpse of Puerto Rico’s unique wildlife, habitats, and endemic birds.



Dear human — it’s all of us this time.  
The cricket wrote the **first** line  
because he counts the temperature  
dropping. The **hummingbird** signs  
first; she leaves tomorrow.

The **dragonfly** already left — tell her  
pond it was perfect.  
The **bumblebee** queen signs from  
underground; **wake** her gently in April.  
The **fireflies** signed in light, back in  
July — you saw it.

We were your **summer**. The hum, the  
flicker, the dawn chorus, the trill at  
dusk.  
**Thank you** for every flower, every  
unmowed corner, every light turned off.  
Keep the porch warm.  
Some of us are staying.  
All of us are coming back.

— Your backyard, August 2026

## New Home for NTOS Archives

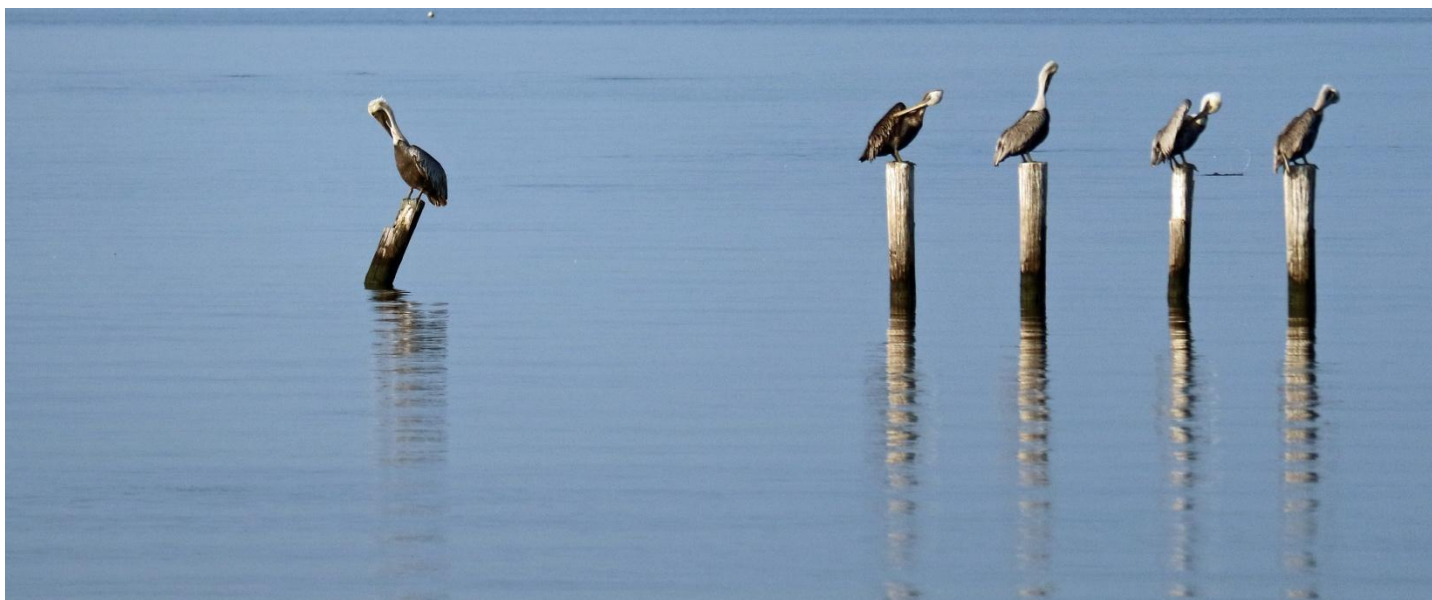
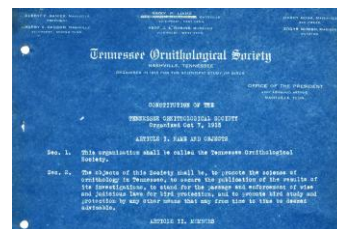
*By Danny Shelton*

Recently, NTOS and TOS historical documents and photographs, some over 100 years old, were officially transferred to the permanent care and custody of the Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA) in Nashville recently. The official archives of the Nashville Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society have been in the care of NTOS curator Susan Hollyday for over 25 years. Many other members have stored them over the past century. The archives contain items such as the original Tennessee Ornithological Society Constitution with its organization date of October 7, 1915, field trip records, bird count records, NTOS yearbooks, *The Migrant* collection from 1930-2024, and much more. After Susan received the archives from Philip Casteel about 2000, she further organized it and eventually it filled 21 plastic boxes. For over two decades she added to it and made sure it was safe. The archives became a critically important reference tool when I researched the history of TOS for the documentary *A Century of Birds* which was released on the 100-year anniversary of TOS in 2015.

Several months ago, it was agreed by the NTOS Executive Committee that an appropriate permanent home should be found for the collection. Their first choice was the TSLA. Established in 1854, TSLA collects and preserves books, records, and historical documents, and encourages and promotes library development throughout the state.

On August 7, 2026, employees of the Office of Tennessee Secretary of State came to Susan's home and carefully carried out the boxes and transported them to their new home at TSLA, 1001 Rep John Lewis Way, Nashville. TSLA moved into their 165,000 square foot climate-controlled facility in 2021.

The Nashville Chapter of TOS extends its sincere gratitude to Susan Hollyday for her quarter century of volunteer service to preserve our archives and NTOS thanks all previous members who helped preserve the history of TOS, the first state-organized bird study and conservation organization in the Southeastern United States.



## NTOS 2026 Fourth Quarter Field Trips

### Reminder: NTOS Thursday Evening Bird Walks Return this Fall to Shelby Bottoms!

Our spring evening bird walks were such a hit that we're bringing them back this fall!

Join the Nashville chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society for a series of casual evening bird walks at Shelby Bottoms Park as we enjoy the excitement of fall migration. Whether you're new to birding or have years of experience, these walks are a great opportunity to get outside, meet fellow birders, and see what feathered visitors are passing through Nashville.

For the walks this fall, we will meet in the parking lot at Shelby Bottoms Nature Center (1900 Davidson St. Nashville, TN 37206) at 5:00 PM each evening. We will visit hidden pond, walk along the trail through the field, and visit the zig zag bridge before making our way back to the parking area.

#### Walk Dates:

- September 24
- October 1
- October 8
- October 15

During the walks, we will be on the lookout for migrating warblers, sparrows, hawks, and waterbirds. Bring binoculars if you have them, comfortable walking shoes, and your curiosity. All are welcome! Come for one walk or join us for all four! For questions, contact Shelley Smith at [wkusmith@gmail.com](mailto:wkusmith@gmail.com) and include "NTOS Field Trip" in the subject line.

*Please note: These evening walks may be canceled if hazardous weather conditions arise. Any cancellations will be announced as soon as possible on the TN-Bird Listserv and NTOS's social media accounts.*

### Saturday, October 3rd at 7 am- Marcella Vivrette Smith Park (Williamson Co.)

Join NTOS on Saturday, October 3rd at 7:00 AM for a morning of birding at Marcella Vivrette Smith Park in Williamson County. This is believed to be the first NTOS field trip to this park, so come explore a new birding destination with us! Serena Pedane and Matthew Palmeri will lead us as we explore the park's variety of habitats and trails, looking for both resident birds and fall migrants.

We will meet on Saturday, October 3rd at 7 am at Marcella Vivrette Smith Park 1825 Wilson Pike Brentwood, TN 37027. Please meet the group at the trailhead. (Trailhead Coordinates: 35.94715, -86.77325)

Bring your binoculars, water, and comfortable walking shoes, and join Serena, Matthew, and your fellow NTOS birders as we check out this new-to-NTOS location!

For questions, contact Shelley Smith at [wkusmith@gmail.com](mailto:wkusmith@gmail.com) and include "NTOS Field Trip" in the subject line.

*Please note: This field trip may be canceled if hazardous weather conditions arise. Any cancellations will be announced as soon as possible on the TN-Bird Listserv and NTOS's social media accounts.*

**Saturday, November 14th- Duck River Unit, Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge**

Join NTOS on Saturday, November 14th at 8:00 AM for our annual visit to the Duck River Unit of Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge!

This beautiful refuge is a prime birding destination in November, with large numbers of waterfowl returning for the winter. With luck, we could spot up to 20 species of ducks and geese. Duck River is also a reliable location for wintering raptors, including Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, and perhaps a falcon or two. We'll also keep an eye out for sparrows, with the potential to find 10 or more species.

Mike Smith will lead this year's outing, continuing NTOS's annual tradition of visiting the Duck River Unit for some excellent late-fall birding.

Carpooling is highly encouraged due to limited parking and group coordination. For those who wish to carpool, please meet at the MTA Park-and-Ride in Bellevue and depart promptly at 6:15 AM. You may also meet the group directly at the refuge entrance at 8:00 AM.

Duck River Unit, Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge Entrance: 35.97407, -87.95305

Please dress in layers for the weather and bring water and snacks. We expect to wrap up by mid-day or early afternoon.

Come join us for one of the season's best birding outings!

For questions, contact Shelley Smith at [wkusmith@gmail.com](mailto:wkusmith@gmail.com) and include "NTOS Field Trip" in the subject line.

*Please note: This field trip may be canceled if hazardous weather conditions arise. Any cancellations will be announced as soon as possible on the TN-Bird Listserv and NTOS's social media accounts.*

**No December Field Trip**

There will be no traditional NTOS field trip in December. Instead, we encourage you to take part in the annual Christmas Bird Counts on December 19 and January 1.

The Christmas Bird Count is a long-standing tradition that combines the fun of birdwatching with the power of citizen science. Your observations help track bird populations, inform conservation efforts, and expand our understanding of the birds and wildlife in our region. It's also a wonderful opportunity to get outside during the winter, connect with fellow birders, and take part in a nationwide tradition that has been going strong for more than 120 years.

We hope you'll join in on one or both of this year's Christmas Bird Counts!



### **Birders Together Returns to Support Colombia's Coffee Region After Earthquake**

By now, many of you have heard about the devastating earthquake that struck Colombia's coffee region, an area known not only for its landscapes and communities, but also for its extraordinary birdlife and the people who welcome birders from around the world.

In 2020, during the height of the pandemic, Colombian birding companies and organizations created #BirdersTogether to support members of our community through one of the most difficult moments the world had ever faced. The response was extraordinary. Birding operators, travelers, friends of Colombia, and birders across the globe came together, transforming solidarity into meaningful assistance for people throughout our community.

Today, six years later, #BirdersTogether is back.

In the days following the earthquake, they began receiving reports from birders, guides, families, reserves, lodges, and birdwatching sites that have been affected. Once again, the organization chose to do what this community knows how to do best: come together.

This renewed campaign brings Colombian birding companies and organizations back together around a shared purpose: to identify urgent needs, verify cases, mobilize support in Colombia and abroad, and turn the funds raised into direct assistance for those who need it most.

All requests for support will be registered and verified before assistance is allocated. Funds will be distributed based on documented needs and the resources available, with care taken to ensure that support reaches those most affected.

The funds raised through this campaign will be administered by Birding & Herping, which has been selected by Birders Together partners to take on this responsibility. At the end of the campaign, we will share the fundraising results and explain how the funds were distributed, providing transparency for our entire community.

If you have ever birded in Colombia, walked our trails, spent time with our guides, visited our birding destinations, or simply love birds and this country, now is a moment to stand with the people who make Colombia such an extraordinary birding destination. For more information on this campaign and to make a donation following this

link: [https://vaki.co/en/vaki/birders-together?fbclid=IwY2xjawUFe4dwZG9mBWV4dG4DYWVtAjEwAGJyaWQRMWpMdmUwb002TjdKazlQMmNzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzIxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeyfY1aMN6Wn7gZrweDTbbJxjwjdftl21IPVecTsmenAiXC7BlqITXbOfSaCg\\_aem\\_b4XIS85UyopagzRAXrX4tA](https://vaki.co/en/vaki/birders-together?fbclid=IwY2xjawUFe4dwZG9mBWV4dG4DYWVtAjEwAGJyaWQRMWpMdmUwb002TjdKazlQMmNzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzIxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeyfY1aMN6Wn7gZrweDTbbJxjwjdftl21IPVecTsmenAiXC7BlqITXbOfSaCg_aem_b4XIS85UyopagzRAXrX4tA)

### **2026 Conservation Grant Awarded to the International Hummingbird Society**

At the unanimous recommendation of the Executive Board of Directors, NTOS members voted to award the 2026 Conservation Grant to the International Hummingbird Society, an organization dedicated to hummingbird education, research, and conservation.

The mission of the International Hummingbird Society is to educate the public about hummingbirds and to collaborate with scientists and research organizations around the world to protect hummingbird species through research, knowledge-sharing, and conservation education.

The Society's current international initiatives reflect a focused commitment to critically endangered and vulnerable species, including the Marvelous Spatuletail, Chilean Woodstar, Juan Fernández Firecrown, and Santa Marta Sabrewing. Its work also supports awareness of vulnerable North American hummingbirds, including the Rufous Hummingbird—a rare winter visitor to Tennessee, but the hummingbird species most frequently reported in the state during that season.

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In addition to its conservation initiatives, the Society hosts an annual Hummingbird Festival each July in Sedona, Arizona. The festival draws attendees from across the Americas and offers opportunities to learn about hummingbird research, conservation news, and habitat stewardship. Activities include hummingbird banding demonstrations, educational seminars, garden tours, hummingbird-focused vendors, and children's programs.

Through its support of conservation organizations such as the International Hummingbird Society, the NTOS Conservation Grant helps strengthen the collective impact of conservation work by expanding resources, building partnerships, and supporting more effective protection of wildlife, habitats, and natural spaces for future generations.

### BOOK REVIEWS

*Reviewed by Cindy Kershner*

If you're looking for a bird-related book to give to someone you love during the approaching holidays, 2026 has been a banner year. Here's a random selection of some of the options!

Pre-school to 2nd Grade. **Bird! In Spring; Along Came a Spider.** Written and illustrated by Raymond McGrath. Bird is finally out on his own, but he's finding it harder than he thought to find the perfect nesting site and materials and he has no friends! This is the first of four books (one for each season) where Bird experiences life and makes more friends. **Bear and Bird: The Cloud.** Written and illustrated by Jarvis. The latest in the Bear and Bird series, the two heroes are looking for the Puffy Fluffy Octopus Cloud. They never manage to find it, but they discover something even more important. **It's My Bird-Day: An Annual Event.** Written and illustrated by Mo Willems. The Pigeon has the hat, the hot dog cake and is ready for the presents! Unfortunately, there are others claiming it as their special day too! **How to Hatch: A Gosling's Guide to Breaking Free.** Written by Sara Holly Ackerman and illustrated by Galia Bernstein. From first crack to first waddle, it's all here in this factual and well-illustrated book. **Light as a Feather: Fifteen Phenomenal North American Birds.** Written and illustrated by Will Hillenbrand. This book is filled with many interesting facts and charming illustrations of birds you're likely to see in the United States. **The Bedtime Book of Nighttime Animals: More than 100 Creatures Who Come Out to Play When You Go to Bed.** Written by Laura Buller. Birds are only one section of this interesting and informative book. Nighttime animals from around the world are highlighted in this perfect-for-bedtime-reading book. **Honeybird Blue.** Written by Taunya English and illustrated by Raissa Figueroa. Honeybird loves to take nature walks with her father. She's looking to find a bird in every color, but will she find a blue one? **Goldfinches.** Written by Mary Oliver and illustrated by Melissa Sweet. One of Pulitzer Prize Winner Mary Oliver's poems has been beautifully illustrated for children (and adults!).

Middle Grades. **Zeb and Bel: A Case of Bird Problems.** Written and illustrated by Rachel Elliott. Black cat Bel teams with her "brother" Zeb the dog to solve the mystery of the disappearance of Payton Parakeet, who goes missing during a magic show. There's never a dull moment in this graphic novel, plus hints along the way in case you want to solve the mystery first. **Opal Watson: A Case Most Fowl.** Written by Brittany J. Thurman. This is the second book based on the Pinna Podcast about the 11-year-old Opal. Friend Piper has a bird named Blizzard that disappears during her family's move. Opal and Frank agree to track down Blizzard with Piper's help, and also the help of Jake, Piper's bullying big brother. **Kestrel Takes Flight.** Written by Joy McCullough. Kestrel doesn't understand what's going on when her mother moves her in the middle of the night from her grandfather's strict church community in California to a conservation institute in the wilds of Montana. Told in free verse, she overcomes her fear of the dogs at the institute and learns to stand up for herself and fly free.

Ages 10 to 99. **Stuff Every Bird Lover Should Know.** Written by Alice Sun. Looking for something for a teenager or adult who has expressed interest in learning more about birds and birding? This little book, about the size and weight of a cell phone, does an excellent job of covering all the basics and more!