

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Organized April 30, 1955

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Compiled by: W. H. Turcotte

The first annual meeting of the MOS on Saturday, April 28th, was held at the Community House, Riverside Park in Jackson. At 6:00 A. M. the group began a field trip along the bluff in the park overlooking the Pearl River bottom. Mayes Lake in the river bottom about one mile up-river was the second stop. From there we went north to the Natchez Trace Parkway making several stops enroute with a short stay on the picnic ground for coffee and doughnuts, courtesy of the ladies in the group.

Highlights of the two-hour morning tour were: a pair of gnatcatchers completing nest-building in a post oak on the picnic grounds; flock after flock of indigo huntings in oat and vetch patches with a liberal sprinkling of blue grosbeaks in migration along the Trace; and a fast drive and short stop up the Trace to observe several pairs of red-cockaded woodpeckers in a pine grove alongside. At least one pair had an active nest in a living pine with "cat-faces" dripping with rosin above and below the nest hole. We observed a male rose-breasted grosbeak in a pine at the woodpecker stop.

A list of the species observed: green heron, turkey and black vultures, red-tailed hawk, bob-white, killdeer, mourning dove, barred owl, chimney swift, hummingbird, flicker, red-bellied, red-headed, and cockaded woodpeckers, kingbird, crested flycatcher, Acadian flycatcher, wood pewee, r. w. swallow, blue jay, crow, fish crow, t. titmouse, wh. br. nuthatch, car. wren, mockingbird, br. thrasher, robin, wood thrush, bluebird, bl. gr. gnatcatcher, shrike, starling, wh. eyed vireo, y. th. vireo, red-eyed vireo, Prothon. warbler, Tennessee warbler, parula warbler, myrtle warbler, Y. th. warbler, yellowthroat, yellow br. chat, hooded warbler, redstart, English sparrow, meadowlark, r. w. blackbird, o. oriole, Baltimore oriole, purple grackle, cowbird, summer tanager, rose br. grosbeak, blue grosbeak, indigo hunting, goldfinch, towhee, field sparrow, wh. th. sparrow, song sparrow.

M 5312
The business meeting was held at 10:00 A. M. at the Community House. In the absence of a quorum official business was not transacted. The President appointed John Phares, Chairman, Mrs. Dorothy Harper and Vivian Cook as a nominating committee. This committee withdrew and after a short deliberation returned and recommended that the present officers, with exception of the Secretary, be retained. Mrs. W. G. Wills was nominated for Secretary. Miss Carol Webb had requested that she not be considered to serve another year because of her physical condition. The President will poll the membership by mail to elect officers.

We discussed organizing local bird clubs. The group agreed that members should encourage the formation of local bird clubs by their active participation. Affiliation of local clubs with the MOS was mentioned but encouraging active individual membership in the MOS was considered to be more important to us at this time.

John Phares read Ben B. Coffey, Jr's. paper on observations of pipits and longspurs in Mississippi. Mrs. W. G. Wills read Mrs. Mayo Tolman's paper on cedar waxwings around her home near Picayune. Abstracts of these papers by John Phares are attached. Ben was unable to attend because of a conflict with another meeting in Tennessee. Mrs. Tolman was unable to attend because she had important visitors. The MOS certainly appreciates the contribution these papers made to the meeting.

There was some discussion about publication of The Mississippi Kite but since there were not enough members present, no action was taken. We decided to send out newsletters until publication is possible.

Motion pictures in color taken mostly on MOS coast trips were shown by Bill Turcotte. Pictures of the Holly Bluff Gardens near Bay St. Louis (where part of the MOS group visited last March 25), the nesting colony of skimmers, least terns, and gull-billed terns discovered by Father Dorn last June, the sandhill cranes and the Horn Island trip pictures made last June were among those shown. A 20-minute film produced by the Game and Fish Commission entitled Audubon Philosophy was also shown.

Members visited the Commissions Museum at its new location across from the State Fair grounds in the early afternoon. Members present for the field trip or meeting were: Fannye A. Cook, Vivian Cook, John Phares, Dr. Hurst Shoemaker, John Frazier, Mrs. W. G. Wills, Mrs. Dorothy Harper and Bill Turcotte.

Dr. Shoemaker reported finding a Sandhill Crane nest near the area we visited March 23rd. The nest contained two eggs about the middle of April and incubation was underway.

Miss Lessie Rowan, Biloxi, brought a male rose-breasted grosbeak to the Museum April 20th. She found it with a broken wing.

I collected and mounted a male whip-poor-will April 7th near Clinton and which will be added to the Museum collection. I have observed them before around this date but never hear them in migration through here.

Miss Cook is making plans for the Coast trip sometime early in June with a boat trip to the Chandeleur Islands to visit the pelican rookery. We also expect to see nesting laughing gulls, royal and caspian terns, willets and skimmers on some of the shell islands. This will be a trip long-remembered, so be there! Miss Cook will write you as soon as plans are complete.

Abstracts of papers read at 1st. MOS meeting.

The Sprague's Pipit and
Smith's Longspur in Mississippi

by

Ben B. Coffey, Jr.
672 North Belvedere, Memphis 7, Tennessee

The Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spraguei*) and Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*), two species of "short-grass" birds which have wintered in the Mid-South recently were objects of special searches on airfields, pastures, and similar habitats. Mr. Coffey points out the overlap of the winter ranges of the birds in the Mid-South and deliveates their ranges in this area.

Habitat preference is apparently the same for both species, both being observed on almost bare fields. The Sprague's pipits are found more widely scattered than the Smith's longspurs. The latter birds are more usually found in small flocks or as singles in more restricted localities. Field identification of the two species is discussed on the basis of notes, general appearance, flight action, and field marks that may be observed when the birds are at rest or in the air.

The Sprague's is reported from fourteen localities in the State. The first Mississippi record was a bird collected January 1, 1902 near Bay St. Louis by Reverend Andrew Allison. The Smith's is reported from four localities in the State. Mr. Horace H. Jeter only recently added the Smith's to the Louisiana list at Shreveport, December 13, 1952. Rather detailed records of observations of the two species are given for the State.

Extremely dry weather over a period of three summers is given as a probable reason for the presence of the two species in Mississippi.

Observations On The Cedar Waxwing
(*Bombycilla Cedrorum*)

by

Mrs. Amy B. Tolman
Route 1, Picayune, Mississippi

Mrs. Tolman reports observations of the species over a period of nine years in the vicinity of her home on U. S. Highway 11 in the southern part of Pearl River County. Her findings are in accord with Burhigh (*The Bird Life of The Gulf Coast Region of Mississippi*, 1945) who says, "Of all the species that are considered winter residents on the Mississippi coast, the Cedar Waxwing is unquestionably the most erratic. Although usually common, the species was rather scarce some years, though on one or two occasions it was almost abundant."

During the period of her observations, she did not record any waxwings in her area during the winter of 1949-50. Detailed observations are given on: the numbers of birds seen, abundance compared with other species, length of stay in the locality, feeding habits with regard to four plant species, holly, legustrum, yanpon and red cedar, and association with other birds.