

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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T. V. TOWER BIRD FALL-OUT----OCTOBER 1 - 2, 1965

On Saturday morning October 2, 1965 I received a telephone call from the operating engineer at the WLBT tower advising there had been an unusually large fall-out of migrating birds during the night of October 1 and 2. The TV tower is several miles southeast of Raymond, Mississippi, Hinds County, off the Spring Ridge Road and is about 1600 feet tall. The weather was heavily overcast during the night, with a low ceiling and ground fog at the tower. My son, Jim, and I proceeded to the tower and picked up some dead birds of each species represented. We did not pick up all the birds on the ground. We visited the WJTV tower nearer Raymond and also found and picked up many dead birds around this tower although the fall-out here was not nearly as large. A total of 222 birds was picked up around both towers. An estimated 500 birds were believed to have died as a result of collision with the towers or guy wires.

The 222 specimens gathered represented 39 different species, including 19 species of warblers. Black-and-white warblers, magnolia warblers, parula warblers, yellowthroats, ovenbirds, red-eyed and Philadelphia vireos and catbirds were killed in the greatest numbers of any of the species represented. Mrs. William G. Wills, Jr. and Miss Christine Berry helped me identify and tabulate this list of the birds collected:

- |                               |                                      |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Sora Rail - 1              | 14. Yellow-throated vireo - 1        |
| 2. Mourning Dove - 1          | 15. Black and white warbler - 14     |
| 3. Wood pewee - 1             | 16. Prothonotary warbler - 1         |
| 4. Acadian flycatcher - 1     | 17. Swainson's warbler - 2           |
| 5. Long-billed marsh wren - 4 | 18. Tennessee warbler - 5            |
| 6. Mockingbird - 1            | 19. Parula warbler - 9               |
| 7. Catbird - 13               | 20. Yellow warbler - 3               |
| 8. Brown thrasher - 3         | 21. Magnolia warbler - 9             |
| 9. Wood thrush - 7            | 22. Black-throated green warbler - 1 |
| 10. Swainson's thrush - 8     | 23. Blackburnian warbler - 2         |
| 11. White-eyed vireo - 4      | 24. Yellow-throated warbler - 1      |
| 12. Red-eyed vireo - 18       | 25. Chestnut-sided warbler - 12      |
| 13. Philadelphia vireo - 10   | 26. Ovenbird - 10                    |

- 27. Northern waterthrush - 2
- 28. Kentucky warbler - 3
- 29. Mourning warbler - 2
- 30. Yellowthroat - 24
- 31. Yellow-breasted chat - 5
- 32. Canada warbler - 3
- 33. Redstart - 4
- 34. Scarlet tanager - 3

- 35. Summer tanager - 10
- 36. Rose-breasted grosbeak - 8
- 37. Indigo bunting - 6
- 38. Painted bunting - 2
- 39. Lincoln's sparrow - 1

-- W. H. Turcotte

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YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD---COAST RECORD

Mrs. Howard N. Tait, 221 Beardslee St., Moss Point, Mississippi records the yellow-headed blackbird in Jackson County, Mississippi, with notes on the record as follows, submitted in a letter to Mr. B. E. Gandy, dated September 8, 1965 and signed by Mrs. Tait:

"The yellow-headed blackbird appeared in my backyard, where I ground feed, on April 9 and 10, and April 24 and 25. On April 24 and 25 he came each day about 12:30 and stayed but a few minutes, announcing himself by his raucous voice. Between April 11 and 23 he appeared daily at a feeder at the home of Mrs. Vard Cannon, 423 Weems St., Moss Point, about a quarter of a mile from here, and I observed the bird once at her feeder. I am sure it was the same bird. At Mrs. Cannon's the bird would appear early in the morning, also about 11 a.m., first lighting in a camphor tree quite near the feeder, remaining in it a few minutes, being very noisy, then would come down and feed, the other birds allowing him the feeder all to himself. In my opinion, also in Mrs. Cannon's, the bird was a young male, looking quite like the illustration in Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds of Texas, but lacking the white marks on edge of wing. Mrs. Cannon also noticed the bird at her feeder after April 25th and thinks possibly it was in the vicinity until the first of May.

On April 24th my husband and I attended the dinner of the Alabama Ornithological Society, and told the members of the bird, and it wasn't until then that I actually realized how unusual it was. I have just received a letter from Mrs. Henry Toenes of Mobile, who made two trips to see it, and I quote -

'The first time I saw the yellow headed blackbird in Moss Point was on 4-19-65. This was at Mrs. Cannon's place - I did not see it at the feeder but perched in a tree at the back of her lot. I had an excellent view of the bird and in my opinion it was an almost mature male.

The second time was on Monday, April 26, 1965. This time it was on the ground feeding at your place. A sudden noise frightened it up into a nearby tree. The head was entirely yellow (altho not as yellow as those I've seen out West), the body dark, and like you, I did not see the white wing patches. A Mr. and Mrs. Greene from Searcy, Arkansas were with me at this time. This was a life bird for them.

On the 19th of April I must have stayed at the Cannon place for at least an hour. I could follow the bird easily because of the raucous parrott-like voice, quite unlike our blackbirds, - my only regret was that he hadn't made it to the Alabama line!! (Mrs. Henry Toenes)"

### LOON AND EARLY BROOD OF WOODIES ON BLUFF LAKE

Burton S. Webster, Refuge Manager, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, Brooksville, Mississippi records a Common loon observed on Bluff Lake (Noxubee County) by Mr. Paul Lefebre on November 12, 1965 (by letter to W. H. Turcotte dated November 15, 1965). An early brood of wood ducks was reported on Noxubee Wildlife Refuge by Mr. Webster (Dated March 10, 1966) and recorded on March 1st.

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### EVENING GROSBEAKS RETURN TO JACKSON

On February 22, 1966, Mr. E. H. MaGruder, 1739 Howard Street, Jackson, Mississippi called the editor and reported he saw that morning one male and one female Evening grosbeak at the feeder at his home. Mr. MaGruder and others recorded these unusual visitors in 1962 in the same neighborhood from January 29 - May 2, 1962. (See Vol. 7, Pages 10 and 16, MOS Newsletter).

On February 23, 1966, Mrs. William G. Wills, Jr. and Miss Christine Berry observed at separate times flocks of fifteen and ten (possibly the same birds) in the same area following Mr. MaGruder's alerting them. The birds were feeding on seeds of box elder trees ~~when~~ observed by Mrs. Wills.

This 'echo' flight, reported on the same day (February 22) that the first specimen was collected by Mr. B. E. Gandy four years ago, in the same neighborhood of northeast Jackson, Mississippi, certainly bears out the theory that imprinting of young causes birds to return to the same wintering areas.

--W. H. Turcotte

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### EVENING GROSBEAKS AT KOSCIUSKO AND RALEIGH

Mr. Clarence E. Morgan, Jr. also reports (letter dated February 26, 1966) that he identified a flock of evening grosbeaks in the city of Kosciusko, Mississippi that morning. The unusual visitors, he says, had been reported to him by other persons about two weeks earlier but he first saw them on February 26, 1966.

Also, I was told by Mrs. William G. Wills, Jr., that Mr. James Vardaman, a forester, saw a flock of evening grosbeaks near Raleigh, Mississippi, feeding on the ground.

Mr. Morgan has also had from one to four red-breasted nuthatches using his feeder this winter.

### PURPLE MARTINS' ARRIVAL ---- 1966

Purple Martins first arrived in the Jackson area this year on February 19 and were recorded at my house on Highway 80 West and by Mr. Alfred W. Johnson at his residence, 438 Pine Ridge Road in north Jackson. Six birds were at the Johnson residence on February 20. Several dozen Martins were observed over State Highway 43 crossing at the Pearl River Reservoir, Madison County, on March 4, 1966.

-- W. H. Turcotte

## PINE SISKINS AT MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI

Carol E. Krouse, 3110 - 29th Ave., Meridian, Mississippi, reports in a letter dated January 14, 1966 on observing pine siskins as follows:

"Wednesday, January 12th, was an exciting day for me. I saw for the first time in Mississippi a group of from 25 to 35 Pine Siskins. They were flying with a group of Goldfinches. They stayed around in the area for about a half hour. I telephoned a close friend who is also a M.O.S. member, Mrs. A. J. Hess, and she also was able to see them. I have been a bird watcher only 3½ years - real serious for about 1½ years - so I'm not too sure if this is really unusual. Mrs. Hess said that she had not seen them in the four years they had been in Mississippi.

Also I sighted about 50 Cedar Waxwings on January 4, which is the earliest I have seen them. They stayed around for three days, but I have not seen them since."

Editor's Note: Siskins are unusual in central Mississippi.

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## CHRISTMAS COUNT ---- JACKSON AREA

Jackson M.O.S. members, Mrs. William G. Wills, Jr., Miss Christine Berry, John H. Phares, B. E. Gandy and W. H. Turcotte were joined by Mr. and Mrs. Ben B. Coffey and Miss Alice Smith of Memphis, Tennessee in making a Christmas bird count in a fifteen-mile diameter area of Madison, Hinds and Rankin counties centered in the Pearl River Reservoir. A total of 88 species of birds was recorded on the count made Saturday, January 1, 1966. Among those species recorded of interest were: Common loon, double-crested cormorant, wild turkey, sora rail, ring-billed and herring gulls, red-breasted nuthatch, Bewick's wren, long-billed marsh wren (1), Bachman's sparrow (1) and Harris Sparrow (one collected by W. H. Turcotte). Numerous ducks (eleven species) were recorded on the reservoir area.

The Harris Sparrow is the first State Wildlife Museum specimen obtained and the first record known for the central Mississippi area. T. D. Burleigh collected one specimen on the Gulf Coast (1942) and others have been recorded or collected in the North Delta region. -- W. H. Turcotte

## LAST SPRING NESTING RECORDS

A pair of robins raised two broods last spring on my home premises at Jackson. The first brood was out of the nest in May and the second hatching occurred on June 6, 1965. Both nests were situated on a horizontal pine limb in trees about fifty feet apart.

On May 31 a pair of tufted tits was observed feeding young for the first time in a nest house nailed to the side of a pine tree in my yard. The birds raised their brood successfully.

On June 3 a barn swallow nest containing large young about ready to leave the nest was found in a box culvert under Cynthia Road in Madison County (North Jackson) by W. H. Turcotte and John Phares.

## NATCHEZ AREA CHRISTMAS COUNT

Mr. Orrick Metcalf sends the following account of the Christmas Bird count conducted by Natchez M.O.S. members:

January 2, 1966

Participants 22

Total Miles covered 219

On foot: 14

By car: 205

Total hours in field 41

On foot: 12

By car: 29

Weather 1.7" rain

Wind: NW 5 - 25 mph

Temperature: 66° - 54°

Time 6:30 am - 5:00 pm

Mallard 8	Carolina Chickadee 51	Myrtle Warbler 85
Hooded Merganser 3	Tufted Titmouse 47	Pine Warbler 12
Turkey Vulture 5	White-breasted Nuthatch 1	Yellowthroat 1
Red-tailed Hawk 6(3 Krider's)	Brown Creeper 2	House Sparrow 548
Marsh Hawk 2	House Wren 6	Eastern Meadowlark 349
Sparrow Hawk 4	Winter Wren 1	Red-winged Blackbird 305
Bob White 1	Bewick's Wren 2	Common Grackle 1,770
Am. Coot 1	Carolina Wren 49	Brown Cowbird 3
Killdeer 19	Mockingbird 110	Cardinal 1,128
Great Horned Owl 1	Brown Thrasher 53	Purple Finch 5
Barred Owl 1	Robin 336	Am. Goldfinch 127
Yellow-shafted Flicker 82	Hermit Thrush 13	Rufous-sided Towhee 19
Red-bellied Woodpecker 56	Eastern Bluebird 30	Savannah Sparrow 74
Red-headed Woodpecker 4	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 1	Slate-colored Junco 26
Pileated Woodpecker 6	Golden-crowned Kinglet 1	Chipping Sparrow 36
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 7	Ruby-crowned Kinglet 18	Field Sparrow 17
Hairy Woodpecker 6	Water Pipit 3	White-crowned Sparrow 6
Downy Woodpecker 31	Cedar Waxwing 26	White-throated Sparrow 600
Eastern Phoebe 10	Loggerhead Shrike 28	Fox Sparrow 13
Blue Jay 187	Starling 231	Swamp Sparrow 5
Common Crow 60	Orange-crowned Warbler 1	Song Sparrow 36

TOTAL: 65 Species (1 additional race)

6,710 individuals

Seen during count period but not on count day:

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Red-shouldered Hawk

Vesper Sparrow

### SUBVERSIVE FLICKER

Last May 20, 1965 I observed and photographed a yellow-shafted flicker nest excavated underground. The bird laid seven eggs (one addled) and hatched six young at the Jackson Gun Club grounds off Cynthia Road in Madison County north of the Jackson, Mississippi, city limits. The nest was excavated at the base of a power line pole into the earth. The nest cavity, which was photographed, measured about 14 inches in depth and except for the overhead opening was typical in size and shape of woodpecker nest holes in trees. The young in the nest were first found by gun club members shooting at a nearby skeet range.--W. H. Turcotte

IMMATURE WHITE IBIS ON PEARL RIVER RESERVOIR

On June 7, 1965 I observed fourteen immature white ibis feeding in wet sloughs in the open fields of the Pearl River Reservoir Waterfowl Refuge north of Highway 43 in Madison County. The area was being dewatered by pumps and the birds were apparently feeding on aquatic life and were gentle enough to allow a close approach without flying.

-- W. H. Turcotte

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CHECK LIST OF MISSISSIPPI VERTEBRATES AVAILABLE

The Mississippi Game and Fish Commission has recently published the State Wildlife Museum's latest bulletin, A Preliminary Check List of the Vertebrates of Mississippi, by B. E. Gandy, Museum Director. The list gives common and scientific names of all living freshwater and land vertebrates that have been collected or photographed in Mississippi which includes 319 species of birds collected or photographed, plus 9 on a hypothetical list (seen or banded) in Mississippi. Copies are available at fifty cents each. Write to Mr. B. E. Gandy, 111 North Jefferson Street, Jackson, Mississippi.

The Check List is the first of its kind on Mississippi fauna and the supply is limited.

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ANNUAL MEETING

Plans for the annual spring meeting and field trip are being made at this time. The meeting is tentatively planned for April 22 - 23 or 29 - 30 and will feature a program and social activities, business session and a field trip of interest to everyone to the Pearl River Reservoir Area. If the Evening grosbeaks are still here, you may get to see them! Make your plans now to attend!

Details of the meeting plans will be sent out later in time to make your reservations. The Fannye A. Cook Memorial Wildlife Museum will be open until 5 P.M. on Friday afternoon to those who want to visit.

-- W. H. Turcotte

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