

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Organized April 30, 1955

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MOS MEETING

The annual Mississippi Ornithological Society business meeting was held at 7:30 P.M., May 12, 1967 at the Holiday Inn Restaurant at Starkville, Mississippi. Following an ala carte dinner, Mr. Clarence E. Morgan, Jr. presided over the business session conducted in the following order:

Mrs. William G. Wills, Jr. read the minutes of the April 22, 1966 meeting. The minutes were approved as read.

Miss Christine Berry read the Treasurer's report in the absence of Mr. B. E. Gandy who was unable to attend. This report was accepted as presented.

W. H. Turcotte, Chairman, Bird Slides Committee, reported that two sets of a series of eighteen "Yard and Garden" bird slides together with program guides giving comments on each of the birds represented was completed and sent to Garden Clubs of Mississippi for use by affiliated clubs. The slide duplicates were made from slides loaned by Mrs. Bedford Floyd and W. H. Turcotte at a total cost of \$10.80. This cost of duplicating the slides was donated.

The membership present then voted to allow the Bird Slides Committee to continue to function and use the \$35.00 authorized for expenditure to obtain additional series of slides to be purchased if necessary and be made available for educational purposes.

The President appointed a nominating committee composed of Mr. Walter V. Davis, Mrs. William G. Wills, Jr. and W. H. Turcotte. This committee reported a slate of officers and these were elected by a majority vote of members present.

Mr. Burton S. Webster and Mr. Ernest Brown gave a report on the plight of a little blue heron rookery about 10 miles southeast of Brooksville. This rookery consists of about 1,500 - 2,000 birds that are nesting in about 10 acres or more of a brushy thicket on privately owned land in the black prairie. It is the only known heronry of this type in this part of the State.

The landowner, a Negro, has said he plans to clear or rent the land for clearing to plant soybeans. This rookery has been at the same location over twelve years. The landowner offered to lease the acreage on which the rookery is located for \$100 per year and continue to leave it as is but continue to cut posts and firewood as he needs them (this is responsible for its continuing suitability for the birds). The Birmingham, Alabama Chapter of the National Audubon Society has agreed to pay half of this. After considerable discussion, the membership present voted to pay \$50.00 to lease the area on an annual renewal basis. Mr. Ernest Brown (an attorney) offered to draw up the agreement to become effective early next year.

Mr. Ben B. Coffey gave us a very interesting and enjoyable program entitled "Nightjars of Mexico" with tape recordings of the calls of all the Mexican nightjars that he and Mrs. Coffey have personally recorded during numerous trips.

SPRING FIELD TRIP

On Saturday morning, May 13th, the MOS group enjoyed a visit to Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, a 42,000 acre waterfowl and upland game management area about fifteen miles south of Starkville. Birding along the way, we met at the refuge headquarters around 8:00 A.M. and toured refuge areas--visiting greentree waterfowl impoundments on the upper part of Bluff Lake and an over-cup oak-cypress swamp where we observed six or eight pairs of yellow-crowned night herons with young in the nest--returning by a large Canada goose enclosure to see the captive giant Canada goose flock of about 90 sub-adult geese which, it is planned will establish a non-migratory huntable population in future years. At the refuge headquarters Mr. Webster showed slides and gave a talk on history, purpose and management of Noxubee Refuge. The group then visited a red-cockaded woodpecker nest with young in it at the headquarters.

After having lunch at Brooksville, the group visited the little blue heron rookery in the prairie. Here we saw numerous little blue herons with young of various ages in and out of the nests. Several Common egrets and about a dozen or more cattle egrets were observed in and flying to or from the rookery. No nests or young of the cattle egret were seen but it is likely they are nesting or will nest there.

Our thanks to Burt Webster for this well-planned and conducted field trip.

BARN SWALLOWS

Barn swallows have extended their nesting range to Highway 80 between Jackson and Edwards, Mississippi. Active nests were found under Highway 80 box culverts between Bolton and Edwards at three locations on May 8th, 1967. On April 30th a pair started building for the first time in the box culvert in front of my home on Highway 80 between Clinton and Jackson after I made nesting ledges for them with cement and sand. On May 20 this pair had completed their nest with five eggs laid. A dozen or more pairs were seen nesting (one nest with four young ready to leave nest) under box culverts and bridges along

Highway 468 between Brandon and Whitfield, Mississippi on May 17th. Pairs of barn swallows were observed at several culverts along the Natchez Trace on May 12 between Thomastown crossing and Kosciusko, indicating nesting at these locations; also at locations along Highway 12 between Kosciusko and Starkville.

Barn swallows seem to prefer to nest in concrete box culverts under highways but the smooth finish inside most of them discourages nest building. Only where slivers of concrete or rough surfaces are left near the top of the culvert will they attach their nests. Sometimes they attach nests to old dirt-dauber nests. Artificially made sand and cement ledges about two inches by four inches in size, placed about five or six inches from the top of the sides of box culverts 3' X 4' or larger might entice swallows to nest in your area. They seem to prefer culverts with water standing at one or both ends. WHT

SOME MISCELLANEOUS SPRING NOTES

Mrs. William G. Wills, Jr. and Miss Christine Berry recorded bobolinks in vetch fields near Fannin (Rankin County), May 4th and later in the same week. On May 8th near Bovina, Mississippi (Warren County) about 40 bobolinks observed in bottomland pasture. WHT

April 28th, 10 miles southeast of Columbia, Mississippi (Marion County) a prairie warbler female building a nest in a sweet gum sprout in opening in burned-over pine woods. WHT and John H. Phares.

April 29th, Louisiana waterthrush nest with 4 newly hatched young under tree roots in stream bank in deep ravine, north of Bovina, Mississippi (Warren County). WHT
