

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Organized April 30, 1955

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March 31, 1970

MOS NEWSLETTER - Vol. 15, No. 1

Compiled by: W. H. TURCOTTE

PLANS FOR ANNUAL MOS MEETING AND FIELD TRIP

The MOS business meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn restaurant on Highway 45 South in Meridian, Mississippi starting at 7:30 P.M., Friday, May 1, 1970. The motel and restaurant is on the south side of Meridian just south of Interstate 20. We plan to have buffet style food service featuring a seafood jamboree at \$3.90 per person for food, meeting room and service. A film program on woodcock banding and bird songs with sounds is planned. The rest of the program is open for anyone volunteering to participate.

The field trip will be to areas in Clarke County. We plan to leave Meridian from the Holiday Inn South at 7 A.M. and go south about 35 minutes on Highway 45 where we turn left and meet Mr. John Shirley, Area Manager, Bucatunna Wildlife Management Area, who has arranged our tour. We then drive on to the Huffstetler Place, a privately owned area with mature bottomland timber on Bucatunna Creek. This place and surrounding country is good wild turkey range. If we are lucky we may see or hear wild turkeys during the trip. Next we plan a short visit to Clarko State Park for bird walks in the park. We should see some "even-aged timber management" or clear-cutting and replanting operations by timber companies.

For lunch we go south on Highway 45 to "Gappy's Place" on the Chickasawhay River. You can order steak, fried chicken, catfish or fried shrimp (all you can eat for about \$2.75). After lunch a short trip is planned to Dobie's Bluff overlooking a high bluff on the same Chickasawhay River. Nearby are some unique plants for this area--hepatica, bloodroot, wild ginger, southern maidenhair fern, etc. John Phares will be our "local guide" for this part of the tour.

In order to complete arrangements for food service and the field trip, please return the enclosed slip as soon as possible, indicating your plans to attend and number in your party.

We hope these arrangements will assure a good attendance. We expect to have a number of new members making the trip this year. We should see plenty of migrants at this time of the year.

(O V E R)

EVENING GROSBEAKS RETURN IN 1970

Mr. E. H. Magruder, 1739 Howard St., Jackson, reported the first evening grosbeak, one on January 21, 1970 at feeder and again recorded one male and three females on February 25th.

Mrs. B. D. Aldridge, 114 Pecanwood Dr., Natchez, reports "several small flocks (evening grosbeaks) seen here since February 15th." (Card mailed March 4, 1970.) Mr. Burton S. Webster, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, Brooksville, Mississippi in a letter dated February 9, 1970: "Eight evening grosbeaks - first seen January 11th and seen many times since at Noxubee River bridge on the Starkville Road."

Mrs. Wm. G. Wills, 1521 Poplar Blvd., Jackson, observed from three to eleven evening grosbeaks in adjacent yards between March 12 - 22, feeding on the ground and in trees. Reported by telephone conversation to W. H. Turcotte.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES

Mr. Clarence E. Morgan, Jr., Kosciusko, reports by letter dated May 6, 1969:

"My late date for Red-breasted nuthatch is April 26th. This is thirteen days later than my previous date." And by letter dated October 27, 1969: "I had a Red-breasted nuthatch on my feeder for the first time, Saturday, October 25, 1969. That afternoon I saw one about two miles east of town near the airport. Mrs. D. B. Watson, who lives on the street behind me reported one on the 15th of October, but I did not see it and cannot vouch for it." He adds further that: "I still had a White-throat at the end of last week (May 4, 1969)" and "The first white-throated sparrow appeared at the feeder on October 25, 1969." Editor's Note: The editor recorded first whitethroat in his yard on the same date, October 25, 1969.

B. F. Gandy, 1123 Shalimar, Jackson, recorded the Red-breasted nuthatch in his yard on November 16, 1969. The bird was seen placing shortleaf pine seeds in bark crevices and eating them. He reports also from one to three birds of this species regularly using his feeder almost daily through the winter, first taking sunflower seeds and later switching entirely to peanut butter until as late as March 29, 1970 one or two present. The birds were exceptionally tame. They were also observed catching flying insects similar to a flycatcher. He describes the call as a "tin-horn" sound.

GRENADE CHRISTMAS COUNT

Dr. W. Marvin Davis, University, Mississippi, sends the following letter (excerpt) with an interesting Christmas bird count supported by subsequent observations from a partial rerun on the Count area three weeks later: "I'm enclosing a copy of my Grenada Christmas Count as submitted for Aud. Field Notes, plus some data from a partial rerun on the area 3 weeks later. I was thinking about whether any effects of the two intervening severe cold waves would be evident on the latter date. Whether the marsh birds would remain through was particularly of interest. I can say that at least the bittern and marsh wren were still present, however, I didn't succeed in uncovering the rail. This cannot be taken as evidence that they'd gone, because the marsh is extensive enough and rails elusive enough that I might have missed them.

One large difference was that at dawn on Jan. 24 there were grackles and redwings by the many 10's of thousands flying north at the west edge of the area, which sort of flight I didn't witness on the 1st. I couldn't be sure whether they were coming from roosts in the Yalobusha River bottoms, but it seemed likely so.

I also confirmed the identity of the longspur (sp.) of the Count, by getting good views and calls of the Smith's, as well as adding an unexpected Sprague's Pipit. Obviously, there's some good grassland habitat at the Grenada airport, which also yielded the Le Conte's sparrows.

Hope you had a good count at Jackson this year. Thanks for the tip last month on the Bald Eagle. I got to see it on the 10th. Also thanks for the suggestion on the Sandhill cranes near Pascagoula."

1969 Christmas Bird Count

Grenada, Miss.

33° 50' N, 89° 45' W (all points within a 15-mile diameter circle, center 4.5 miles east of north end of Grenada Dam to include various points on Grenada Lake and adjacent areas; bottomland deciduous woods 40%, pine-oak uplands 17%, lake and lake borders 15%, sedge-cattail marsh 10%, pasture and croplands 10%, airport and vicinity 8%). --Jan. 1; 6:30 a.m. to 6:40 p.m. Mostly clear in a.m., mostly cloudy p.m.; temp. 28° to 42°; wind N, 0-10 m.p.h.; Ground very moist, all waters open and high, reservoir full eliminating mudflats. One observer. Total party-hours, 11 (6 on foot, 5 by car); Total party-miles, 86 (4 on foot, 82 by car).

(v-Sp. found Jan. 24) *

Common Loon, 1			<u>Short-billed Marsh Wren</u> , 3	v (1)
Horned Grebe, 1			Mockingbird, 22	v
Great Blue Heron, 5			Brown Thrasher, 5	v
<u>Am. Bittern</u> , 2	v (1)		Robin, 22	v
Mallard, 150	v		Hermit Thrush, 2	v
Pintail, 1	v		Eastern Bluebird, 7	v
Hooded Merganser, 32	v		Golden-crowned Kinglet, 6	v
Red-tailed Hawk, 3			Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 8	v
Red-shouldered Hawk, 1			Cedar Waxwing, 45	v
Marsh Hawk, 2	v		Loggerhead Shrike, 5	v
Sparrow Hawk, 4	v		Starling, 215	v
Bobwhite, 11			Myrtle Warbler, 2	v
<u>King Rail</u> , 2			Pine Warbler, 2	v
Killdeer, 10	v		House Sparrow, 5	v
Common Snipe, 29	v (35)		Eastern Meadowlark, 62	v
Ring-billed Gull, 4	v (142)		Red-winged Blackbird, 170	v
Mourning Dove, 50	v		Rusty Blackbird, 2	
Great Horned Owl, 1			Brewer's Blackbird, 5	v
Belted Kingfisher, 1	v		Common Grackle, 1890	v
Yellow-shafted Flicker, 17	v		Brown-headed Cowbird, 2	v
Pileated Woodpecker, 3	v		Cardinal, 23	v
Red-bellied Woodpecker, 9	v		Purple Finch, 28	v
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 6	v		Pine Siskin, 65	v
Hairy Woodpecker, 3			Am. Goldfinch, 56	v
Downy Woodpecker, 8	v		Rufous-sided Towhee, 15	v
Eastern Phoebe, 2	v		Savannah Sparrow, 39	v
Horned Lark, 24	v		Le Conte's Sparrow, 2	v
Blue Jay, 10	v		Vesper Sparrow, 9	
Common Crow, 7	v		Slate-colored Junco, 120	v
Carolina Chickadee, 19	v		Field Sparrow, 32	v
Tufted Titmouse, 4	v		White-throated Sparrow, 58	v

1969 Christmas Bird Count, Grenada, Miss. (continued)

(v-Sp. found Jan. 24) *

Red-breasted Nuthatch,	6	v	Fox Sparrow,	4	v
Brown Creeper,	1		Swamp Sparrow,	8	v
Winter Wren,	2	v	Song Sparrow,	28	v
Carolina Wren,	12	v	Longspur (sp.),	1	v (3 clearly seen and heard to be <u>Smith's</u> - at air- port as on earlier date)

TOTAL, 70 species, about 3411 individuals.

Observer: W. Marvin Davis

* 5 1/2 hr.; 6:50 to 12:30 portion attempting to closely match time and rte. of Count morning; 61 sp., incl. 3 not seen on Count morning: Wood Duck, Turkey Vulture, Sprague's Pipit (1, at airport)

CAMILLE VICTIMS

Bird observations along Highways 49 and 13 between Columbia and Jackson, Mississippi, August 21, 1969.

The time is the fourth day following Hurricane Camille's passage north from the Mississippi Coast Sunday night, August 17.

Considerable numbers of badly smashed gulls and terns were observed on the highway all the way from Columbia to the Simpson County line, a distance of about 38 - 40 miles. No positive identifications were made, but from the appearance and size of the wings, about all that remained, the gulls appeared to be ring-billed, with lesser numbers of laughing, and possibly Bonaparte's scattered along the way. Terns observed were in two sizes and were possibly least and Forster's. A few black skimmers were also noted. One was within a few hundred yards of the Simpson-Jefferson Davis county line about 15 miles north of Prentiss, and another was on Highway 49 at Braxton. No other dead birds were seen on 49 above Braxton. No doubt others were present further north as the storm continued north through the state and influxes of live gulls were reported from areas more northerly than Jackson.

One laughing gull was observed at close range over a small stock pond about five miles north of the Marion County line on Highway 13. Five black skimmers were walking around on the muddy shore line of this pond. No dead land birds were observed along the route traveled.

Brown-headed nuthatches were in plentiful abundance in what was left of the pines around Marion Area headquarters. Wonder where they were on the night of the big blow?
John H. Phares, August 21, 1969

EARLY FALL BIRD RECORDS - 1969

Horned Grebe - 4 at Moon Lake on October 16
Mallard - 5 at Moon Lake on October 16
Gadwall - 10 at Moon Lake on October 16
Lesser Scaup - 7 at Moon Lake on October 16
Ruddy Duck - 12 at Moon Lake on October 16
Snow Goose - 2 ad., 1 imm. at Moon Lake on October 16

Early Fall Bird Records - 1969 (continued)

Sharp-shinned Hawk - 1st of fall on October 19 at Wall Doxey St. Pk.
Marsh Hawk - First seen at Grenada Lake and Moon Lake on October 16 (1 each)
Osprey - 1 at Grenada Lake on October 4
Black-bel. Plover - 4 at Sardis Lake on October 25
Common Snipe - first for fall, (2) on September 28 near Oxford
Dunlin - 4 at Grenada Lake on October 16; 2 at Sardis Lake on October 25
Solitary Sandpiper - 1 yet at Wall Doxey State Park on October 19
Pectoral Sandpiper - 2 near Oxford on September 28
Bonaparte's Gull - 2 at Moon Lake on October 16
Ring-billed Gull - 1 at Grenada Lake on October 16; 14 at Sardis Lake on Oct. 25
Nighthawk - last date, 7 on October 12 at Oxford
Chimney Swift - last date, est. 500 at chimney roost on October 15 in Oxford;
none there on 16th and 17th.
Olive-sided Flycatcher - 1 at Oxford on Sept. 20 (Sandra Davis)
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher - 1 ea. on October 7th and 9th at Oxford
identified by voice (plus appearance); 1 seen
very closely on September 23, by Sandra Davis.
Red-breasted Nuthatch - first for fall on October 12 at Oxford (1);
2 at Wall Doxey on 19th
Golden-cr. Kinglet - first for fall on Oct. 19 at Wall Doxey State Park (8)
Ruby-cr. Kinglet - first for fall on October 12 at Oxford (2)
Solitary Vireo - 1 at Wall Doxey State Park on October 19 (rare to me)
Blk-thr. Green Warbler - 2 at Grenada Dam on September 7
Myrtle Warbler - first observed October 19 at Wall Doxey State Park (14)
Orange-crowned Warbler - first observed October 19 at Wall Doxey St. Pk. (2)
Pine-Siskin - first for fall on October 25 at Sardis Lake (2)
Savannah Sparrow - 3 at Tupelo on October 24 were first seen for fall
Vesper Sparrow - 1st for fall near Oxford on October 25 (2)
Slate-colored Junco - 1st for fall on October 25 near Oxford (3)
White-throated Sparrow - 1st for fall on October 17 near Oxford (7)
W. Marvin Davis, October 27, 1969

U.S. FOREST SERVICE TO INVENTORY RED-COCKADED WOODPECKERS; Policy Manual Revised to
Protect this Species --

The Forest Service has amended its Manual for Wildlife Management so as to provide additional protection to the habitat of the red-cockaded woodpecker. The revised policy reads as follows:

2630.3 - Policy. In recognition of the specialized habitat needs of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, full protection will be given to their nesting sites. In all future management practices, it will be the policy within the National Forests in Mississippi to refrain from disturbing trees that contain the very evident nest hole of this bird.

The Red-cockaded Woodpecker nests only in live pine trees. It prefers old residual trees which are infested with red heart. The nest holes are excavated in the tree trunk, which then exudes sap below and around the hole.

In addition to preserving nest hole trees, replacement trees must be retained in the vicinity to furnish habitat when the active hole trees die. In recognition of the high rate of mortality among trees with advanced state of red heart, replacement trees are important.

U.S. Forest Service Policy Manual Revised (continued)

Leave at least 10 to 15 older trees in a cluster around single nest hole trees for protection of the trees and for replacement if the hole trees die. Where there is a group of hole trees close together, leave mature trees or trees approaching maturity intermingled with the old trees and a buffer strip of trees around the outside of the hole-tree group about one chain wide.

In some cases where older trees are scarce around nest hole trees, a replacement group should be retained nearby. If a stand in the 60+ age class is located within 10 chains of the active colony it should provide the needed replacements in addition to those surrounding the hole trees.

Areas occupied by Red-cockaded Woodpeckers will be designated with an appropriate symbol on the wildlife overlay to the multiple use map. This data will be obtained at the time the compartment prescription is made. This will serve as a reminder that no treatment is required in that area. When a colony is located where it will be viewed by the public it will be given special treatment to improve its aesthetic value. On-the-ground, hole trees and replacement groups will be plainly marked to prevent erroneous removal.

The Red-cockaded Woodpecker is now classified as a rare or endangered species. All plans, prescriptions and treatments must provide for maintaining habitat to preserve the species.

SUMMER WHIP-POOR-WILLS IN MISSISSIPPI

Following is a summary of Mr. Ben B. Coffey's occurrence and distribution records for the whip-poor-will in Mississippi:

Recorded in late May and June, in 20 counties.

Marshall, Benton, Tippah, Alcorn, Prentiss, Tishomingo, Panola ('69), Lafayette, Union, Pontotoc, Yalobusha, Grenada, Calhoun, Monroe (Splunge '64), Carroll, Montgomery, Webster, Choctaw ('65), Attala, Winston.

Furthest South (140 miles from Tenn. line): SW cor. Winston Co., Miss. 25, 3 miles NE of Miss. 19 Jct. Present 1960 thru 1964. '65-'69 not present. Almost as far (#2 site) Miss. 19, 2 spots about 3 miles N of bridge at Zama, 1960 at one & 1962 at the other.

Although time does not permit return coverage except in certain cases, the species is undoubtedly spreading out and coming down off of ridges into valleys. For instance Miss. 7, from Holly Springs (Jct 4) to near Oxford 6-24-66: 40 stops, 15 WPWs, 116 CWWs. 1 WPW at 260 ft. elev. None on several previous trips. (1st WPW in Marshall Co. 1961, altho regular in Benton Co.). Recently 1st SE of Batesville and in SW Lafayette Co., few, Miss. 7 N. of Holly Springs, N. Tishomingo Co. (except Fairview ridge, an early locality for the species). None yet on Miss. 8 high ground SW of Greenwood Springs (last run '64, but one at Splunge, to N).

The WPWs at the 2 southernmost sites haven't been found lately. Near #1, the Mars Hill Church ridge looks better than #1 site.

The most regular and best areas at southern limits are: NW of Winona, E of Winona and SE of Kilmichael, Midway, -Pittsboro west to end of that peninsula.

Most in state, probably Benton and Tippah counties (not checked recently).

Ben B. Coffey, 672 N. Belvedere, Memphis, Tenn. 38107, Oct. 25, 1969

MISCELLANEOUS FIELD NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

GROUND DOVE - One observed on Hugh L. White Game Management Area in Marion County on October 15, 1969 and reported by Donald Lewis, 425 South 16th Ave., Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401.

WHITE IBIS - Twelve immature white ibis feeding on Pearl River Waterfowl Refuge on August 29, 1969. W. H. Turcotte.

BALD EAGLE - One immature observed September 2, 1969 on Ross Barnett Reservoir off Natchez Trace right-of-way in Madison County. W. H. Turcotte.

FALL AND WINTER SIGHTINGS - NATCHEZ AREA

WOOD DUCKS - 3,031 on Christmas Count.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER - Seen September 5, 1969.

TWO GRAY CHEEKED THRUSHES lingered till November 4, 1969.

ROBINS - Almost none.

PARULA WARBLER - Christmas Count.

EVENING GROSBEAKS - Several small flocks seen here since February 15, 1970.

GOLDFINCH - First arrival September 4, 1969----about two months early.

This was, otherwise, a normal season. Above all seen by experienced observers.
Beverly Aldridge, 114 Pecanwood Dr., Natchez, Miss. 39120

NESTING OF BARN SWALLOWS

On June 19, 1969, a Barn Swallow (Hirundo rustica) nest was located near the Piney Woods School, Rankin County, Mississippi. The nest was located in a concrete box culvert measuring approximately 5' x 6' x 120' underneath U. S. Highway 49. At this date the nest contained five eggs but no adult bird was found on the nest.

On July 19, when the observer again checked the nest, at least three young birds took flight while one remained on the nest. There was confusion when the young birds took flight and the observer was unable to make an accurate count.

Donald Lewis, Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401

BROADWINGS IN FALL MIGRATION

On Saturday, September 27, 1969, approximately 9:00 A.M. we sighted approximately 25 Broadwinged Hawks soaring in a circle over the Choctaw Game Management Area equipment shed, in Choctaw County. They seemed to be moving in a westerly direction. Oct. 9, 1969. Benny Herring, PO Box 31, Kilmichael, Miss. 39747 and Wendell Neal, Rt. 2, Box 155, Kosciusko, Miss. 39090.

FULVOUS TREE DUCKS

With a letter dated November 28, 1969, Mr. Burton S. Webster, Manager, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, sends in a good photograph of the fulvous tree duck caught in a banding pen on Bluff Lake, Noxubee County, on February 26, 1965. It was banded with Band Number G 96-15031. This bird was the first ever recorded on Noxubee Refuge and constitutes the first known substantiated record for this species in Mississippi.

On November 16, 1969, Mr. John H. Phares and Mr. Lenwood Brooks of Jackson, observed six or more fulvous tree ducks on Pearl River Waterfowl Refuge, Madison County. Observations were made through a telescope. At about the same time the same birds were identified by W. H. Turcotte and wife from another viewing point. On November 20th there were thirty or more present in the same location near the goose pen in flooded browntop millet. On November 26, 1969 the birds were flushed several times and photographed several times in flight by WHT. Thirty-one birds were counted in one of the pictures containing the largest number of birds in flight. They were not seen following this date.

W. H. Turcotte

WHITE-FRONTED, SNOW AND BLUE GEESE ON NOXUBEE REFUGE

"Five white-fronted geese were seen first on January 8 and are still here; also, since January 25, 1970 there have been eleven snow geese and six blue geese at Bluff Lake, which is quite unusual at Noxubee at this time of year.

One golden eagle is here. Came in about January 10 and is still here."

Burton S. Webster, Refuge Manager, 2/9/70

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Lucas, Box 439, Rt. 3, Jackson, Miss. reported seeing one fully albino common grackle on the McRae Farm near Cynthia, Mississippi (north of Jackson) on February 23, 1970. WHT

PURPLE MARTIN ARRIVAL

The first purple martin of the year at my house near Jackson arrived on February 11, 1970 but remained only part of that day.

There were several other single arrivals during February but none stayed to occupy the boxes and gourds. Not until the week-end of March 20th did two occupants appear and stay. We have at this writing (April 2) only six birds taking up residence. WHT

There have been several sightings of two or three bald eagles in the Eagle Lake-Chotard Lake-Tennessee Bar areas of Warren and Issquena Counties. John Kerr, Area Manager, Tallula, Mississippi, saw one in fully adult plumage on School Section 15 on Tennessee Bar, at very close range on March 25, 1970. Hopefully, there could be a possibility the birds have nested or will be permanent residents of this area. WHT
