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Organized April 30, 1955

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MOS NEWSLETTER - Vol. 16, No. 1

Compiled by: W. H. TURCOTTE

HAWK MIGRATION

Mr. L. D. Kier, Star, Mississippi, who operates a service station on Highway 49, called and reported a large hawk migration observed on September 28, 29 and 30, 1970. On September 28 between 7 and 9 A.M. Mr. Kier reported seeing six groups of 50 to 60 or more hawks circling and leisurely moving in a southward direction over Star, Mississippi. On September 29 and 30 during about the same time span others in smaller groups were seen. He estimated seeing altogether "over a thousand" birds which he could not identify except as "hawk-size, predatory birds". The migration coincides with the movement of a cold front and also with a reported sighting of 25 broadwings on September 27, 1969 in Choctaw County by Benny Herring and Wendell Neal. W. H. Turcotte

BARN SWALLOWS NESTING - FORREST COUNTY

On June 25, 1970, as I was traveling to Wiggins, Mississippi, I spotted two or more Barn Swallows flying near the Beaverdam Creek-Highway 49 junction. I investigated a double concrete culvert through which Beaverdam Creek flows and found one Barn swallow nest high on one of the vertical walls. Due to much rain here in the last three days I was unable to get a close look at the nest but the swallows did scold me as I stopped and looked. I assumed that the nest is new and possibly held eggs or even young.

I drove on down the highway when leaving, I saw three birds perched on electrical wires along the highway. I assumed these were the birds which scolded me earlier. There is another culvert located 200 yards from the nest site which I will check when the high waters recede.

The nest location is: Southwest Quarter of Section 4, Township 1 South, Range 12 West, Forrest County, Mississippi. Donald M. Lewis, 425 South 16th Ave., Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401.

HORNED LARK - JEFFERSON COUNTY

"Dr. Robert Hamilton and I closely observed a horned lark (prairie subspecies) in a plowed field on the Ashland Plantation April 18, 1970. I do not know how significant this may be but in my limited bird observations in Jefferson County I had never seen a horned lark before. However, there has not previously been 5000 acres of open fields as now occur at Ashland." Dr. Robert E. Noble, Department of Biological Sciences, Northwestern State College of Louisiana, Natchitoches, Louisiana 71457 - April 20, 1970.

SUMMER WHIP-POOR-WILLS - 1970

Whip-poor-wills were found in three additional counties, June, 1970. Rain, then on a return, auto trouble, prevented working one to three other counties; three nights during the best period were also unavailable because of runs in Central and West Arkansas and Southeast Oklahoma. Other runs in Mississippi (& Central Arkansas) for comparison with previous years, show increase and extension of range for this species.

Lee County, June 14. Natchez Trace Parkway; Guntown NW, E (2 miles), then S to Miss 348; - none. Saltillo area, from U.S. 45, E on Miss. 348, then S towards Springhill and back past Lake Piomingo: 13.2 miles, 25 stops, 8 WPWs at 7 stops, 46 Chuck-Will's-Widows at 22.

Chickasaw County, June 11. Miss. 15 to Davis Lake & circuit S & W: 9.8 miles, 18 stops, 6 WPWs at 6, 63 CWWs. To Houlka, then S on Miss. 15, no WPWs, occasional stops. Houston to Vardaman, 10 miles, 8 stops, unlikely country, except for small pines, low, marshy, flat, but 2 WPWs, no CWWs. S on Miss. 341, back roads and return past airport: 14 miles net, 21 stops, 2 WPWs at 2 miles W of airport, 30 CWWs at 15 stops. Occasional stops, S on Miss. 15, single WPWs E/S hwy, at Cumberland and at junction, Miss. 50.

Oktibbeha County, June 11 (12)-past midnight. Maben-Sturgis road: 16 miles, 26 stops, 2 WPWs at 8.7 miles S of US 82; 33 CWWs at 19 stops.

Further Counts. June 11 (12): Bellefontaine to Duck Hill, 19 miles net, 28 stops, 9 WPWs at 8 stops, 89 CWWs at 26. June 10 (11): Montgomery County, from Winona SE on Miss. 407, 22 miles, 30 stops, 3 WPWs at 3, 72 CWWs at 27. Kilmichael to Winona, 10 miles, 30 CWWs at 11 stops, no WPWs altho occasionally on previous runs; negative results not always fully conclusive, WPWs call less consistently than CWWs this late in spring. Choctaw County (same night) on Miss. 407, E to French Camp and Miss. 413 to Weir, 10 miles, 15 stops, 27 CWWs at 11; the one WPW heard near Montgomery County line (the 3 in that county all east of Poplar Creek); a few in previous years, at and east of French Camp. Holly Springs area, June 12: Chewalla Recreational Area W to Miss. 4, 7 1/2 miles, 15 stops, 10 WPWs at 8, 31 CWWs at 13. Miss. 4, NE: Marshall County, 9 miles, 11 stops, 5 WPWs at 5, 31 CWWs at 10; Benton County, 6 1/2 miles, 11 stops, 10 WPWs at 8, 23 CWWs at 11.

For comparison with previous years. Benton County, E of Ashland to Tippah County line (road now Miss. 370), 9.4 miles, 14 stops, 22 WPWs at 12, 19 CWWs at 12. The Whips now outnumber the Chucks on a count along that ridge. Five to fifteen years ago, we heard less than half that many Whip-poor-wills. *Ben B. Coffey.*

1970 EVENING GROSBEAK RECORDS

"At feeder, Hickory Flat, Mississippi., Miss Annie Laws: February 24: 40; March 6: 20; March 7 and 8: 10; March 11: 3; March 25: 8; April 1: 12; April 1, Noon: 15; April 2: 8; April 4: 2 Male, 1 Female, early; April 4: 25 later; April 7: 3." Reported by Ben B. Coffey, 672 N. Belvedere, Memphis, Tennessee 38107.

"Evening grosbeaks are back again this year. They were first seen about three weeks ago, but I saw them this morning and identified them ---- in a neighbor's yard". Clarence E. Morgan, Jr., Box 721, Kosciusko, Mississippi 39090, March 4, 1970.

"Mr. Tom Crockett, 915 Avondale, Northeast Jackson, Mississippi, called and reported eighteen (18) evening grosbeaks at his feeder on the morning of March 4, 1970. He put out sunflower seeds and they were back later in the afternoon". W. H. Turcotte, March 4, 1970.

"Mrs. O. W. Connor III, 2266 Lake Circle, Jackson, Mississippi called on April 10, 1970 and reported 25 to 30 evening grosbeaks eating wild bird and sunflower seeds on their patio table and had been for about three weeks prior to April 10". WHT, April 10, 1970.

Evening Grosbeaks (Continued)

"Mr. E. H. Magruder, 1739 Howard St., Jackson, Mississippi reported evening grosbeaks last seen on Arlington St., a female near his home, on May 5, 1969. In 1962 last female seen May 1. In 1966 last bird also a female seen on May 2. Birds seen in 1970: One bird, a male, on January 21; next day two males and one female on 22, 23 and 24; Sunday, January 25 - 3 females and one male." Reported to W. H. Turcotte.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE - NEW STATE RECORD

Ed. Note: Details on collection record below as furnished by Dr. W. Marvin Davis in note form accepted by The Auk for publication.

Inland records and first specimen of Black-legged Kittiwake from Mississippi.

On 25 January 1969 I noted an immature Black-legged Kittiwake (Risa tridactyla) among a flock of 125 Bonaparte's Gulls (Larus philadelphia) which were resting on the waters of "Lower Lake," a basin lying below the dam and outlet channel of Sardis Lake, Panola County, in northern Mississippi. The bird was seen again on 26 January, 7 February and 10 February frequenting the basin area and outlet channel and sharing the latter as feeding ground with Bonaparte's Gulls and Ring-billed Gulls (Larus delawarensis). It was collected on the last date by Y. J. McGaha and the writer and was found to be a female in first winter plumage weighing 317 g. This specimen, which is no. 3565 in the Vaiden Collection of the University of Mississippi Department of Biology, is the first taken in Mississippi.

The first two sightings of the Black-legged Kittiwake in Mississippi were recorded from the Gulf Coast area. A single immature, possibly the same individual in each case, was found offshore in Mississippi Sound on 28 October 1961 and 11 March 1962 by two groups of observers (Aud. Field Notes, 16:46, 338, 1962). My only previous observation for Mississippi was another inland record of two immatures on 4 December 1967 (Aud. Field Notes, 22:51, 1968) which were found on Grenada Lake, another federal flood control reservoir located 42 miles southward from Sardis Lake. No certain sightings were obtained in later efforts to find and collect the birds on 9 and 20 December 1967 and 17 January 1968. Dr. W. Marvin Davis, Department of Pharmacology, University of Mississippi, University, Miss. 38677.

LITTLE GULL - FIRST STATE RECORD

A Little Gull, the first sighting and first collected specimen for Mississippi, was found on March 15 and collected on March 16, 1970 at Sardis Dam Area, "Lower Lake" below dam. The bird was in company with Bonaparte's Gulls and was also seen by Mrs. Davis and was collected with Dr. Y. J. McGaha on March 16. Dr. W. Marvin Davis, School of Pharmacy, University, Mississippi, April 2, 1970.

FIELD NOTES from Dr. W. Marvin Davis, University, Mississippi

RED-THROATED LOON, Gulfport, Mississippi, December 7, 1969 -- One seen at 10-15 yards.

Small size and characteristic bill quite obvious in comparison to common loon.

COMMON LOON, (1) beach front for 6-7 miles west of Bay St. Louis, (2) Bay St. Louis Mouth and 2 miles into Bay proper, (3) part only of beach front from Pass Christian to Gulfport, December 7, 1969, -- (1) 64 (2) 54 (3) 62 "in loose groupings of from 6 up to 45 !."

HORNED GREBE, from 6 to 7 miles west of Bay St. Louis, Miss. to Gulfport harbor area, December 7, 1969. Number seen 215.

LAUGHING GULL, 6 miles west of Bay St. Louis, Miss. to Gulfport Harbor, December 7, 1969. Number seen 210.

BROWN PELICAN -- Absent on Mississippi Gulf Coast from west of Bay St. Louis to mouth of Pascagoula River, December 7, 8, 1969. One (1) individual was seen off eastern tip of Dauphin Island, Alabama, December 8, 1969.

WHISTLING SWAN, Sardis Reservoir, State Waterfowl Refuge, Mississippi, March 14, 1970. One immature seen and reported present in area another 7 - 10 days later by R. L. Rodgers, Refuge Manager.

Field Notes - Dr. Davis (Continued)

PURPLE FINCH, Sardis Dam, Panola County, January 21, 1970, 350-400 in one flock feeding on ground in park area.

SMITH'S LONGSPUR, Grenada Airport, Grenada, Mississippi, January 24, 1970, total of three (3) seen. "My first record for Mississippi".

ADDITIONAL FIELD NOTES

KNOT, Gulfport, Mississippi, August 28, 1970: 2 August 25; 1 on beach at road to Yacht Club. Ben and Lula Coffey

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO, DE SOTO COUNTY, 2 miles south of Cockrum, .2 mile north of Tate County, Mississippi Highway 305: June 6, 1970: one (1) calling vigorously. Ben Coffey 6-8 and 6-9-70 at 8:30 and 7 A.M. respectively; not found. Ben and Lula Coffey, Memphis, Tenn.

SPRING MIGRATION 1970

Earliest Dates - Oxford, Mississippi and Vicinity

Solitary Sandpiper - April 17	Cerulean Warbler - April 18
Yellow-billed Cuckoo - May 2	Blackburnian Warbler - April 17
Black-billed Cuckoo - May 2	Yellow-throated Warbler - April 5
Common Nighthawk - April 18	Chestnut-sided Warbler - April 25
Eastern Kingbird - April 5	Bay-breasted Warbler - May 2
Crested Flycatcher - April 14	Blackpoll Warbler - April 18
E. Wood Pewee - April 14	Prairie Warbler - April 14
House Wren - April 25	Ovenbird - May 2
Catbird - April 17	Kentucky Warbler - April 25
Wood Thrush - April 18	Mourning Warbler - May 7
Swainson's Thrush - May 3	Yellowthroat - April 17
Gray-cheeked Thrush - April 24	Yellow-breasted Chat - April 25
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - April 5	Hooded Warbler - April 17
Yellow-throated Vireo - April 18	Canada Warbler - April 27
Red-eyed Vireo - April 17	American Redstart - April 28
Philadelphia Vireo - May 3	Baltimore Oriole - April 18
Black and White Warbler - April 4	Scarlet Tanager - April 17
Tennessee Warbler - April 17	Summer Tanager - April 18
Yellow Warbler - April 17	Rose-breasted Grosbeak - April 17
Magnolia Warbler - April 27	Indigo Bunting - April 18
Black-throated Green Warbler - April 28	Lincoln's Sparrow - April 25

Dr. and Mrs. W. Marvin Davis, University, Miss.

OBSERVATION ON LEACH'S PETREL

Reported by: E. B. Hoover, Box 168, Brandon, Mississippi 39042.

Date: July 25, 1970.

Place: Pelahatchie Lake, 1 1/2 miles northeast of Pelahatchie, Mississippi, Rankin County.

Time: 6:00 P.M.

Number of Birds: 6

Field Marks:

1. They were larger than a purple martin.
2. Dark silver gray on top.
3. A white rump patch clearly visible.
4. The flight character was like the night hawk except close to the water.
5. These birds did skim the water like a swallow.
6. They had the light brown band across the wing.

Leach's Petrel (Continued)

Narrative:

The birds were picked up by the naked eye. I knew instantly that this was a new family of birds for me. The nearest they came to me was about 1/8 to 3/16 of a mile, perpendicular, with a base flight left of the perpendicular of 1/4 mile and on the right of the perpendicular 3/8 mile. I used 20 x 50 binoculars to study them. They flew up the lake once, then turned and retraced their flight and then left the lake. I have not seen them again.

There was one mark that the distance and erratic flight kept me from observing. That was the tail detail. I can't swear to the tail.

These birds were so strange that I could not find them Saturday evening in "A Field Guide to the Birds" by R. T. Peterson. However, the next Sunday afternoon, as I was watching for the birds again, I recognized them, instantly, on plate 4, which I must have overlooked before. There is absolutely no question in my mind, as to their identification.

S/ E. B. Hoover

Ed Note: The Jackson weather bureau gave this information on August 4, 1970: "Tropical storm center "Becky" moved due east of Montgomery, Alabama, north along the Alabama-Georgia line at 8:10 P.M., July 22nd. There was an eastward flow of air in this area for more than a week following and might have had something to do with an appearance of oceanic birds in the area".

BALD EAGLES

Reports received of wintering bald eagles with dates, locality and observers:

Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, Bluff Lake, a mature adult on November 22, 1970 by Mrs. Burton S. Webster and an immature on November 20th to date December 1, 1970.

Burton S. Webster, Brooksville, Mississippi.

Natchez Trace Parkway at Ross Barnett Reservoir on December 11, 1970 by Harry Barkley and observed immature bald eagle same day by W. H. Turcotte and James Watts. Three miles south of Highway 43, Madison County -- by W. H. Turcotte.

Leake-Attala County line over Lee Johnson Farm, November 28, 1970, immature observed and reported by Wendell Neal, Kosciusko, Mississippi.

LATE-LINGERING CATTLE EGRETS

W. Marvin Davis, University, Mississippi reports by letter of December, he observed two late Cattle Egrets on December 1, 1970 at Grenada Lake. Also, W. H. Turcotte and John H. Phares observed one at Lambert, Mississippi (Quitman County) on November 10. Again on Ross Barnett Reservoir at Highway 43, November 29th, W. H. and Annie C. Turcotte observed one on grounds at boat landing ramp. Two cattle egrets were seen on the Natchez Trace at the same Reservoir on December 6, 1970. W. H. Turcotte.

OTHER SARDIS AND GRENADA LAKE NOTES

"On the 1st of December (1970) I stopped briefly at Grenada Lake, seeing three Dunlin ----. We had a good group of Blue and Snow Geese at Sardis until the cold spell around the 24th of November which sent them south, apparently. Sardis Lake is getting rather low (and smelly!) but seems rather appealing to Horned Grebes (easily can spot 20 plus), a few Common Loons, Red-breasted and Hooded Mergansers, etc. in recent days. I've not seen any "Northerns", i.e., Siskins, Purple Finch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, thus far, but haven't really sought for them.

W. Marvin Davis, University, Miss., December 7, 1970.

OLD SQUAWS IN OKTIBBEHA COUNTY

"There were six or eight Oldsquaws in a flock on a farm pond near Mississippi State University Campus, Starkville, Mississippi on January 2, 1971. Here is a polaroid of the female taken by Jim and Jeff Bearden, Rt. 4, Starkville, Miss."

Burton S. Webster, January 11, 1971.

SCARLET TANAGER

"This is to report the presence of a male Scarlet Tanager at approximately 4 p.m., Sunday, February 7, 1971, near the Bluff Lake Spillway, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge."

Burton S. Webster, Refuge Manager, February 19, 1971.

FIRST MARTINS - JACKSON AREA

R. B. Layton called and reported 4 purple martins, the first seen this year in Jackson, Mississippi, on February 8, 1971. He also reported a call from Bolton, Mississippi that one or more "scouts" had arrived the same day. WHT, February 18, 1971.

1970 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Grenada, Mississippi

Dec. 22, 1970; overcast a.m., rain in p.m.; total party-hours, 20.

Horned Grebe, 4	Brown-headed Nuthatch, 4
*Pied-billed Grebe, 2	Brown Creeper, 4
*Double-crested Cormorant, 5	* House Wren, 4
Great Blue Heron, 7	Winter Wren, 11
Am. Bittern, 1	Bewick's Wren, 3
*Canada Goose, 9	Carolina Wren, 34
Mallard, 14	* Long-billed Marsh Wren, 4
*Wood Duck, 15	Short-billed Marsh Wren, 6
*Ruddy Duck, 8	Mockingbird, 32
Hooded Merganser, 31	Brown Thrasher, 9
ducks, unidentified, 350	Robin, 17
Red-tailed Hawk, 3	Hermit Thrush, 5
Marsh Hawk, 5	Eastern Bluebird, 8
Bob-white, 8	Golden-crowned Kinglet, 26
King Rail, 1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 12
Killdeer, 48	Loggerhead Shrike, 13
Am. Woodcock, 1	Starling, 3685
Common Snipe, 24	Myrtle Warbler, 9
*Dunlin, 5	Pine Warbler, 1
Ring-billed Gull, 15	House Sparrow, 50
Bonaparte's Gull, 10	Eastern Meadowlark, 255
Mourning Dove, 63	Red-winged Blackbird, 23,170
Great Horned Owl, 1	Rusty Blackbird, 11
*Short-eared Owl, 1	Common Grackle, 57, 285
Belted Kingfisher, 2	Brown-headed Cowbird, 62
Yellow-shafted Flicker, 34	Cardinal, 119
Pileated Woodpecker, 4	Am. Goldfinch, 132
Red-bellied Woodpecker, 17	Rufous-sided Towhee, 32
Red-headed Woodpecker, 6	Savannah Sparrow, 126
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 5	Le Conte's Sparrow, 5
Hairy, Woodpecker, 2	Vester Sparrow, 2
Downy Woodpecker, 18	Slate-colored Junco, 97
Eastern Phoebe, 3	Field Sparrow, 165

1970 Christmas Bird Count (Continued)

Blue Jay, 92	White-crowned Sparrow, 25
Common Crow, 29	White-throated Sparrow, 261
* <u>Fish Crow</u> , 2 (Mrs. B.C.) on Yalobusha River 1 - 2 miles below dam	Fox Sparrow, 12
Carolina Chickadee, 20	Swamp Sparrow, 36
Tufted Titmouse, 18	Song Sparrow, 117

TOTAL, 75 species, about 86,732 individuals.

(Seen in the area on December 19, before count period: Bald Eagle, 1 imm.; Lesser Yellowlegs, 1.)

* Ten (10) species not found on the three previous counts.

Mr. and Mrs. Ben Coffey, Marvin Davis (compiler).

JACKSON CHRISTMAS COUNT

The count area (15 mile diameter centered in middle of Ross Barnett Reservoir) covered by four observers in two parties, Mrs. William G. Wills, Jr. and Miss Christine Berry, W. H. Turcotte and John H. Phares produced on December 31, 1970, 71 species, 17,853 individuals. Most surprising, Turcotte and Phares observed one Indigo Bird or Jet Combassou, an escaped (not banded) exotic finch native to Africa, mingling and feeding with a flock of field sparrows about four miles northeast of Madison, Mississippi, Madison County. This bird was blue black on head, back and underparts, the wings and tail showing brownish-black, pinkish brown colored bill and reddish-orange legs and feet. The wing coverts and back showed some pinkish brown fleckings. It was slightly stockier with shorter tail than the field sparrow. Needless to say, this bird was not immediately identified. First thoughts were of a mutation of the field sparrow but this seemed hardly possible. A few days later the bird was identified by comparison with three specimens in a North Jackson pet shop and the aid of a pet shop operator. A note to the Smithsonian Institution regarding this record did not indicate that it is established as a breeding bird but several thousand individuals were imported in 1968.

This count also produced an immature Bald Eagle at Pearl River Waterfowl Refuge observed by all parties and putting on a spectacular show flying low over flooded millet fields, harassing and flushing greenwing teal, mallards and other ducks using the area. WHT

EXTRA FIELD NOTE

Note from Dr. W. Marvin Davis, 1/20/71: "Also of note recently at Sardis Lake: Oldsquaw, 22 on January 15th; Am. Egret, 10 on January 17th."

MOS ANNUAL MEETING AND FIELD TRIP -- APRIL 16 - 17, 1971

The MOS business meeting will be held at Starkville, Mississippi, 7:30 P.M., Friday, April 16, 1971. The program will feature Charles W. (Bill) Summerour in a presentation of his studies (with excellent color slides) of the heron rookery near Brooksville. The Saturday field trip will begin at Starkville, go to Noxubee Refuge and Bluff Lake where we can expect to find returning spring migrants, etc. and, after lunch, we plan to visit the heronry in the broad open prairie east of Brooksville.

This will be a fine opportunity to get acquainted and share experiences with members from the Starkville area, some or all of whom have an organized Audubon Society Chapter. We extend invitations for all interested birders to attend the Starkville meeting and join with us on the field trip.

MOS Meeting and Field Trip (Continued)

There are several motel accommodations available including Holiday Inn, University Motel and Plantation Belle Motel. Reservations should be made early. 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. WHT

FINAL MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

Burt Webster, Program Chairman, has just advised that the business meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn Restaurant in Starkville.

Cut Here and Return

TO: W. H. Turcotte
Rt. 2, Box 43
Jackson, Mississippi 39209

() I will attend the MOS Meeting at Starkville on April 16th and 17th.

I will have _____ persons in my party.

Signed:

Member, MOS