

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Compiled by: W. H. TURCOTTE

ENDRIN-TREATED PINE SEEDING IS CAUSE OF DIRECT BOBWHITE QUAIL MORTALITY

For a number of years direct seeding with treated pine seed, particularly for long-leaf pine, has been practiced on clear cut or burned over areas in Mississippi. The seed are treated with anthroquinone (a derivative of coal tar and supposedly a bird repellent), endrin (a hard pesticide) used in this instance for small rodent control and aluminum powder mixed with or used as a binder. Following direct seedings hunters and others in the past have reported finding dead quail, turkeys, raccoons and other wildlife but facilities to show direct cause of wildlife mortality have been lacking until recently.

The U.S. Forest Service formerly used endrin treated pine seed at their tree nurseries and for direct seeding of longleaf. The practice of using endrin treated pine seed on National Forest lands has been discontinued by order of the State Supervisor, U.S. Forest Service.

The State Forestry Commission and perhaps industrial foresters have continued the use of endrin treated pine seed. The following affidavit and statement substantiate one example of a recent, direct poisoning of bobwhite quail in Stone County, Mississippi:

AFFIDAVIT

(C O P Y)

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI,
STONE COUNTY.

Before me, _____, Game & Fish Comm. employees of the said County Woodrow Hickman, James B. Smith makes oath that Herbert Farmer on or about the 11th day of January A.D., 1972, in the 2 District of said county did find 5 quail on sec 16-2-13 in the W 1/2. 3 birds sent to G&F office. 2 birds dressed but not eaten. All birds found were still warm, 2 died as hunter picked them up. 2 birds (quail) found by Warden Hickman on Sat. 22nd Jan 72 on treated area.

Witness Signature:

Woodrow Hickman (signed)
James B. Smith (signed)

S/ Herbert Farmer
Rt 3 Box 118 Lumberton Miss

Sworn to and subscribed before me, the 25th January A.D., 1972

Analysis of the three (3) quail referred to in the above affidavit showed 67 parts per million endrin in the crop content washings and 4 ppm in the combined body samples (less feathers) of the three quail. Crop analysis showed treated pine seed present along with natural foods. Specimens of additional quail were also collected from the treated area and untreated areas in the vicinity for control analyses. Analyses are being completed at the Game and Fish Commission's research laboratory and results of the findings will be published. The final results will show conclusively that endrin treated seed caused this direct, non-selective wildlife mortality which, in our opinion, should not be condoned when the alternative method of direct seedling plantings would be preferable and probably a better timber management practice in the long run. This conclusion has already been decided upon by the U.S. Forest Service.

SANDHILL CRANES RECENT VISITORS IN DELTA

Mr. E. J. Ganier, Jr., Hollandale, Mississippi confirmed the presence of a Sandhill Crane on his land in the southeast part of Washington County. The bird was first noticed by Mr. Ganier's brother on or about December 30, 1971. Following is an account of this unusual visitor:

January 12, 1972

"Having seen him only once from a distance, I set out on about Jan 8 to get a closer look at this bird. He was in a different location from where I expected to find him, so the car flushed him at a distance of about 200 feet. He was airborne when I got the glasses on him, but I watched him out of sight & it was quite obvious as to his identity.

I saw him once again in flight several days later & then on Jan. 13, my brother & I saw him light in an open field, but very close to a fence row that was grown up in grass & vines. We got behind this fence & walked to within 100 yards of him & watched him feed for about 20 minutes. Being well concealed we moved closer & then noticed he was feeding down the fence row toward us, so we decided to see just how close he would come. He finally spotted us at a distance of about 30 feet. He never became unduly alarmed, but did reverse his direction, but did not flush.

This bird was no doubt a juvenile, because his head showed only a small spot of red on his forehead. He was generally a buffy grey in color, but it was a bright sunny day, so as he walked along the shades of color seemed to change from grey to beige. We thought we noticed just a "suggestion of web" between the upper part of his toes.

Ed Alexander from Greenville visited our place on about the 10th of Jan. & he also got a close look at this crane.

The hard freeze came on the 14th of Jan. & we haven't seen him since. It got down to 12 degrees one night, so I assumed this bird moved because of that." (signed) E. J. Ganier, Jr.

On January 10, 1972, John Kerr, Area Manager, Issaquena County Wildlife Management Area was in the office. He reported seeing a cranelike bird in a pasture with cows near Fidler. This bird had a trailing, broken wing. On January 12, Henry Bobbs, Jr., Onward, Mississippi found the same bird dead and brought it to the Wildlife Museum. B. E. Gandy and W. H. Turcotte identified it as an immature, juvenile Sandhill crane.

These are the only known records of this bird in Mississippi outside of Jackson County. W. H. Turcotte

RARE RED QUAIL

Two specimens of the very rare red color phase of Bobwhite Quail were shot from the same covey by Rev. Kenneth Roberts, Monticello, Mississippi and Cletus Edwards his hunting partner. The birds were killed in Walthall County, 11 miles north of Tylertown, near Magee's Creek, Darbun Community, December 14, 1971. One of the specimens, an immature male, was donated to the Wildlife Museum. The normally white markings around the eye, on the forehead and throat are replaced by jet black. The body coloration is darker and redder except for the wing coverts which are buffier than a normal specimen. So far as known these are the only recorded specimens of this rare color phase of the Bobwhite in Mississippi. Probably less than a dozen wild specimens of the red color phase of Bobwhite are in existence today (according to Walter Rosene, The Bobwhite Quail, Its Life and Management, 1969, pp 34-35).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE

John Phares reports that his wife, Frances, and sons Haden and Allen, observed a male Baltimore oriole in bright plumage feeding among tree limbs in their yard on Meadowridge Drive, North Jackson on January 19, 1972.

EVENING GROSBEAKS BACK

Burton Webster, Manager, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge:

"I saw a flock (of evening grosbeaks) approximately 50 at Noxubee bridge at 8:15 A.M. on Dec. 19, 1971 and again at the same hour on December 24, 1971. They were also seen by Mrs. Lawrence Croft on Jan. 1, 1972 and 15 were recorded on the Christmas Bird Count , January 2nd."

Mary S. Pope, 4012 Kings Highway, Northeast Jackson, recorded and reported one evening grosbeak at her feeder on January 29, February 1 and 3, 1972 with a good number of purple finches. WHT

COMMON LOON

Mr. Champ Clark, Liberty, Mississippi found alive but injured on State Highway an immature Common loon. The bird probably went down the night of November 18, 1971 during a heavy rainstorm. The specimen was brought to the State Wildlife Museum on November 24, 1971. WHT

SISKINS IN JACKSON

About a dozen pine siskins in a mixed flock with goldfinches were seen on February 4, 1972 by John Phares and W. H. Turcotte on a school playground at Riverside Drive in North Jackson. The birds were studied at close range with binoculars in full sunlight. Some appeared very tame and were feeding on seeds of chickweed or dandelion in open ground. WHT

ANHINGAS ON NOXUBEE REFUGE

"The Curator of Birmingham Zoo reported an anhinga on or about Dec. 23rd. I saw the bird on Jan. 10/72 as it fed in turbulent waters created by heavy downpour at the Doyle Arm fill on Bluff Lake.

The Crescent Bird Club of New Orleans, Louisiana, were here on Jan. 22 and reported 3 anhinga or perhaps 2 in Bluff Lake. This can be verified by writing or calling Mr. & Mrs. John D. Guthrie, 6848 Louisville St., New Orleans 70124." Burton S. Webster, Noxubee Refuge, Brooksville, Ms. 39739

1971 Christmas Bird Count
Grenada, Miss.

Dec. 18; 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Clear; tem. 35° to 48°; wind NE, 5-10 m.p.h.; ground wet, reservoir level low. Three observers in 2-3 parties. Total party-hours, 20.

Horned Grebe, 15 (new high)
Pied-billed Grebe, 1
Great Blue Heron, 6
Mallard, 10
Gadwall, 12 (new count species)
Am. Widgeon, 5 (new count species)
Wood Duck, 6
Ring-necked Duck, 20
Canvasback, 6 (new count species)
Hooded Merganser, 45
(unidentified ducks, 100)
Turkey Vulture, 4 (new count species)
Sharp-shinned Hawk, 2 (new count species)
Red-tailed Hawk, 1

Bald Eagle, 1 imm. (new count species)
Marsh Hawk, 6
Sparrow Hawk, 7
Bobwhite, 4
Am. Coot, 5 (new count species)
Killdeer, 25
Common Snipe, 24
Herring Gull, 3 (new count species)
Ring-billed Gull, 56 (new high)
Mourning Dove, 28
Screech Owl, 1
Short-eared Owl, 2
Yellow-shafted Flicker, 29
Pileated Woodpecker, 6
Red-bellied Woodpecker, 17
Red-headed Woodpecker, 16
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 3

Hairy Woodpecker, 5
Downy Woodpecker, 8
Eastern Phoebe, 2
Horned Lark, 23
Blue Jay, 56
Common Crow, 47
Carolina Chickadee, 44
Tufted Titmouse, 29
Brown-headed Nuthatch, 1
Brown Creeper, 1
House Wren, 1

Winter Wren, 11
Bewick's Wren, 1
Carolina Wren, 25
Long-billed Marsh Wren, 2
Mockingbird, 28
Brown Thrasher, 14
Robin, 97
Hermit Thrush, 7
Eastern Bluebird, 23
Golden-crowned Kinglet, 35
Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 27
Water Pipit, 14 (new count species)
Cedar Waxwing, 46
Loggerhead Shrike, 11
Starling, 265
Solitary Vireo, 1 (new count species)
Orange-crowned Warbler, 1
Myrtle Warbler, 23
Pine Warbler, 1
House Sparrow, 25
Eastern Meadowlark, 257
Red-winged Blackbird, 348
Rusty Blackbird, 17
Brewer's Blackbird, 70 (new high)
Common Grackle, 2020
Brown-headed Cowbird, 8
Cardinal, 83
Purple Finch, 10
Am. Goldfinch, 72
Rufous-sided Towhee, 41
Savannah Sparrow, 123
LeComte's Sparrow, 2
Vesper Sparrow, 5
Slate-colored Junco, 130
Field Sparrow, 137
White-throated Sparrow, 634 (new high)
Fox Sparrow, 55 (new high)
Lincoln's Sparrow, 1 (L.C.) (new species)
Swamp Sparrow, 210
Song Sparrow, 79
Lapland Longspur, 3

TOTAL, 82 species, about 5655 individuals. This is highest species total in 5 counts. (Seen in area in the count period, Double-crested Cormorant, Pintail, Barred Owl.)
Mr. & Mrs. Ben B. Coffey, Jr., Marvin Davis (compiler)

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The following is reproduced regarding the Breeding Bird Survey in the hope that Mississippi's participation and route coverage can be increased. Contact Mr. VanVelzen directly if you are interested in participating in the 1972 Survey.

BREEDING BIRD SURVEY NEWSLETTER NUMBER I

COVERAGE

The 1971 Survey topped all previous years both in the number of observers cooperating and the number of routes run. The observer force has risen from the 32 assisting in 1965 to 1,100 this past year; route totals have risen similarly from 60 to 1,515.

New York (90 routes) and Texas (89) substantially led all other States in the number of routes run. Complete coverage, however, was achieved by 12 States: Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Rhode Island and Tennessee. A considerable increase in coverage was also obtained in Illinois, Maine and Oregon.

POPULATION TRENDS

The number of routes available for statistical analysis of population change from 1970 to 1971 is 1260, an increase of 17% over 1969-70. Of the 61 species analyzed, two registered highly significant changes in continental populations: There was a 13% decrease in the Bobwhite, with the greatest drop in the Central Region; and there was a 17% increase in the American Goldfinch, with the greatest rise in the West. There were also population increases for the entire breeding range of the Carolina Wren and Baltimore Oriole (significant at the 95% level of probability), as well as an increase in the eastern population of the Red-eyed Vireo.

In the States and Provinces east of the Mississippi River, we now have six consecutive years of coverage. Using weighted mean birds per route, linear regressions were computed for 25 of the more conspicuous species for the period 1966 through 1971. A statistically significant upward trend was noted for the Eastern Phoebe, Barn Swallow, Robin, Wood Thrush and Cardinal, and a significant downward trend for the Eastern Kingbird and Field Sparrow. The Eastern Bluebird had registered an increase in 1970 after a downward trend the three prior years; a further increase in 1971, most prominent in the Mississippi River valley (the center of the range of the species), put an end to the significant decline and furnished the first real basis for optimism in the population trend of this species.

CALL FOR OBSERVERS

Although coverage has increased very satisfactorily in almost every State, there are still areas that need additional help. We especially need observers in Idaho, Connecticut, Georgia and South Carolina. All interested persons are urged to contact us as soon as possible if they would like to participate in the 1972 Survey.

S/ Willet T. Van Velzen
 Migratory Non-Game Bird Studies
 United States Department of the Interior
 Fish and Wildlife Service
 Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife
 Migratory Bird Populations Station
 Laurel, Maryland 20810

TIMBERDOODLING

February is the month to find singing male woodcocks and observe their courtship activities. The best time is a clear day, temperature above 40 degrees with little or no wind. The period of courtship display lasts only 20 - 30 minutes. Here is how to go about finding and observing this phenomenon:

After sundown travel a road, pipeline or powerline right-of-way (by auto or by walking) that parallels or crosses a fairly large river or creek bottom. Listen every 100 yards or so for the peents at the same time watching the skyline for birds in aerial flight. When the light intensity after sundown (usually 5 to 20 minutes after

sunset depending on cloud cover) reaches a certain point where visibility along the ground is rather dim, activity begins. All songbird activity will have ceased. If you do not hear the peent move on to another stop and repeat. Look and listen particularly in areas near beaver pond deadenings or in sight of wood duck roosts. When you locate a singing male peenting walk toward the sound or course the bird down from aerial flight. The singing ground can then be located and the bird spotted and approached on the ground. A spotlight held on the bird will not unduly disturb it on the ground or interfere with courtship flights. Males will usually make 5 to 7 aerial performances or until it gets too dark to see them in flight. A very close approach is necessary to hear the tuk-oo or hiccup sounds uttered between the peent calls. The peent resembles the call of the nighthawk and this can be heard for a distance of 50 - 100 yards away. Frog choruses are likely to be heard. The actual singing ground or grounds will usually be a road, pipeline right-of-way, firelane or small grassy opening in sedge grass near thick cover and usually in second bottom land.

John Phares, Frances Wills, Christine Berry, Ruth Downey and the writer observed at least 10 woodcock off the Pipeline road, upper Barnett Reservoir--including at least five singing males on the Jackson Christmas Count, January 1, 1972. John and Frances Phares and Bill and Katie Gill observed similar performances of even more birds at the same location the evening of January 23, 1972.

There is nothing in birddom like the courtship antics of the woodcock. Your cue is when the elm trees show their reddish brown color and while the red maple blooms. By March 1 activity ends abruptly in Mississippi. WHT

MORE ON ENDRIN-TREATED PINE SEED

State Forester, Mr. Wendell D. Lack, upon being advised of tentative findings regarding direct quail mortality caused by endrin-treated pine seeding on School land in Stone County, advised that his State office is in the process of sending out memoranda to field employees that will terminate the use and supplying of endrin-treated pine seed by the State Forestry Commission. WHT

MORE ON EVENING GROSBEAKS

"At 11:30 A.M. February 1 I observed a flock of 15 Evening Grosbeaks. Location of this sighting was Section 21, Twp. 15 N., Rn. 16 E., Noxubee County.

These birds were resting and watering along the West side of Hashuqua Creek. I watched these birds for 15-20 minutes in which time they flew from one tree to another 50 yards distant and back again, and several dropped to the ground to water in a surface pool.

James R. May was with me and made the initial sighting."

S/ N. F. Hanson, Box 565, Bruce, Miss. 38915

VERMILLION FLYCATCHERS

Ben B. Coffey, Jr. contributes the following note on vermillion flycatchers in Washington County and other items of recent interest:

"I want to report Vermillion Flycatcher (1 M) and other species near Glen Allan, with follow-up by Greenville area birders (2M 2F). Mr. and Mrs. Ed Alexander, Jr. of Greenville are joining M.O.S. and I'm sure others will also. Mr. Elie Ganier of near Hollandale had a Sandhill Crane on his place a few days ago. Seen, on follow-up by Ed Alexander.

Yellowthroat on 5 of 5 (Christmas) Counts, House wren on 4 of 5. Yellowthroat (6) at Horseshoe L., across river, and one, 12-7, at Noxubee (plus White-eyed vireo).

That plane crash in the Peruvian jungle, Dec. 24, was very saddening for us -- 5 missionary friends. Then, when the story of the teenage girl, finding her way out, was reported, we learned that Dr. Maria Koepcke was lost on it. A charming and very capable ornithologist, preparing a book on birds of Peru. We got a call, Wednesday night, from a radio operator, asking about 2 reels of my tapes, recovered. She was carrying them back to her jungle home---we had left them in Lima for her."

S/ Ben B. Coffey, Jr.



Big Show! On my Singing Grounds!!
Bring all your friends if you have any left.
If not, make a few! Starting any day
in February. Admission - only 2 ft. candles of
light power after sunset.