

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Organized April 30, 1955

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FALL MEETING PLANS

The annual fall meeting plans are complete and the weekend will be scheduled as follows: Friday, December 5 Ginger and Ed Alexander, Jr. invite the members for supper at 6:00 PM (informal) at the home of Ginger's mother, Mrs. Virginia Ford. Her home is in Woodlawn Addition on Sherwood Drive south off Highway 82 between Greenville and Leland. A location map is shown on the attached clip-off sheet. Please clip and mail the reply form as addressed so that they will know how many guests to prepare for for supper.

At 7:30 PM our regular meeting will be held at the William Alexander Percy Library in downtown Greenville. Ben and Lula Coffey will give a program entitled "Birding in Nepal".

Saturday, December 6: Field trips to be announced at the meeting Friday night. Plans now are to meet at Yazoo Refuge Headquarters early Saturday morning, then split up into groups to the Refuge, levee, Percy Park, etc. At noon we will meet at Leroy Percy Park for a dutch lunch and tally our morning activities. We can visit Lake Jackson to see the Vermilion Flycatchers (if they show) either in the morning, afternoon or both.

Please do not fail to notify the Alexanders of your plans to attend the meeting.

WASHINGTON COUNTY BIRD NOTES

June 1, 1975 Bill Tomlinson (conducting breeding bird census at Huntington Point, Washington and Bolivar Counties) reported a Swallow-tailed Kite over the levee with Mississippi Kites.

August 6 - 7 LeRoy Percy reports a pair of Saw-whet Owls in his backyard. I have been unable to confirm this but Mr. Percy knows his owls, and described the birds as being very small, no tufts, very gentle.

August 19 Jim Williams, Assistant Refuge Manager, reports a Louisiana Heron at the (Yazoo) Refuge.

September 1 Female Marsh Hawk at Huntington Point.

September 2 - 5 About 90 Pectoral Sandpipers at the Refuge."

G. E. Alexander, Jr., 1749 W. Azalea Dr., Greenville, Ms. 38701

WHITE IBIS ROOKERY - WARREN COUNTY

On July 6, 1975, Mr. St. Clair Thompson, Mr. Charles Crowther and I visited the heron rookery in Big Black Swamp, West Carter Lake, in Section 14, Township 14 North, Range 4 East reported in Vol. 20, No. 2, MOS Newsletter. The several thousand cattle egrets and the few little blue herons had young in all stages of development from hatchlings to some in flight stage. Several young anhingas in early pre-flight stage and still with down on their bodies were seen. About 200 white ibis were found to be nesting in the colony, most with young of various ages from hatchlings to free climbers. A few nests still contained ibis eggs. The ibis nest and eggs, young in the nest and adults incubating on the nests were photographed to confirm breeding records. Most of the ibis nests were located at lower elevations, having been built since the high water receded from the lower branches of the trees since our visit to the rookery on May 26th. The nests were made of coarse sticks lined with dry and green leaves or leaves and Spanish Moss. The nests containing young were larger. The downy young were black turning to dark gray in the older young. The blackish bills of the young were marked with orange-colored stripes. The larger young ibis left their nests and climbed to higher elevations as we approached. Most nests contained two or three eggs or young, none as many as four. The eggs had a greenish white to pale buff ground color and were irregularly spotted and blotched with various shades of brown. The adults, which were white when seen on our first visit, were all dirty white in appearance. The males, if present in the rookery, did not show the bright red coloration on bill, legs and gular pouches noted on our earlier visit. All adult ibis had flesh colored legs, bills and gular pouches.

W. H. Turcotte

ADAPTIVE FEEDING BEHAVIOR BY THE HOUSE SPARROW

"The house or English sparrow was accidentally introduced into New York City and has since occupied most of the U.S. and much of North America. The house sparrow is well adapted to man and his manufactured environment.

I observed another house sparrow adaption. While eating at a restaurant outside the city limits of Monte Vista, Colorado, on June 12, 1974, I observed a female house sparrow gathering food items, mostly insects, from the bumpers and grills of parked cars. The sparrow also flew up into the space between the grill and radiator to take insects from the radiators. The house sparrow was feeding the food items to nestlings located in a nest in a drive-in movie screen. The sparrow made several trips and "cleaned" four cars in a short time.

The house sparrow has found a readily available source of good food items for their young. Man and his vehicles -- food gathers for house sparrows -- can be found everywhere." Dr. George A. Hurst, Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Ms. 39762

CATTLE EGRET BEHAVIOR

On August 4, 1975 I observed unusual behavior of a flock of Cattle Egrets in a corn field beside the Natchez Trace in Claiborne County just south of the Bayou Pierre bridge. Two tractors and two loading trucks were harvesting a large corn field for silage. About half the field had been cut in separate strips. About a hundred cattle egrets were feeding in the areas that had been harvested. Some were following in the path of the tractors, others flying from one harvested area to the other and some were grouped and feeding together in separate parts of the field. This is the first time I have seen cattle egrets following farm equipment to feed upon insects or other matter on ground recently disturbed by a farming operation.

W. H. Turcotte - August 4, 1975

SPRING BIRD RECORDS FOR HATTIESBURG, MISSISSIPPI (1975)

	First Seen	Last Seen		First Seen	Last Seen
Common loon	4-24	5-8	Pied-b. grebe		5-1
Horned grebe		4-6	Eared grebe (See note)		5-4
White pelican	5-4	5-6	Green heron	4-6	
Little blue heron	3-31		Cattle egret	4-10	
Great egret	4-15		Louisiana heron	4-3	
Yellow-crowned night heron	4-3		Gadwall		5-4
Blue-winged teal	3-22	5-7	Shoveler		3-28
Canvasback		5-18	Scaup (lesser)		5-18
Bufflehead		5-7	Ruddy duck		5-11
Red-breasted merganser	5-1	5-11	Mississippi kite	4-5	
Sharp-shinned hawk		3-7	Osprey	5-6	5-6
Virginia rail		4-10	Sora		4-10
Coot		5-30	Semipalmated plover	4-24	4-24
Piping plover (See note)	5-7		Snipe		4-3
Spotted sandpiper	Wintered	5-18	Solitary sandpiper	3-31	4-24
Lesser yellowlegs	4-10	4-24	Pectoral sandpiper	4-3	4-6
Least sandpiper	4-24	5-8	Semipalmated sandpiper	4-3	5-18
White-rumped sandpiper (Flushed twice)	5-30		Western sandpiper	5-18	
Wilson's phalarope (See note)	4-3		Sanderling (See note)	5-7	5-8
Laughing gull (See note)	5-1		Ring-billed gull	4-3	
Common tern (See note)	5-4	5-6	Forster's tern	5-8	
Yellow-billed cuckoo	4-6		Black tern	5-4	5-8
Chuck-will's-widow	4-10		Black-billed cuckoo	at Merrill,	
Com. nighthawk	4-24		(Heard, not seen)	4-12	Miss.
Ruby-throated hummingbird	3-31		Chimney swift	3-25	
E. kingbird	4-3		Yellow-billed sapsucker		4-22
Acadian flycatcher (Heard)	4-8		E. phoebe		3-28
Great crested flycatcher	4-6		E. wood pewee	5-4	
Bank swallow	5-7		Tree swallow	3-28	5-8
Barn swallow	4-3	5-30	Rough-winged swallow	3-28	
Fish crow	3-1		Purple martin	late Feb.	
Wood thrush	3-31		House wren		4-24
Swainson's thrush	5-6		Hermit thrush		4-5
Golden-crowned kinglet		3-7	Blue-gray gnatcatcher	3-22	
Cedar waxwing		5-16	Ruby-crowned kinglet		4-5
White-eyed vireo (heard & seen)	3-7			(at Merrill -	4-26)
Solitary vireo		4-5	Yellow-throated vireo	3-31	
Black-and-white warbler	4-3		Red-eyed vireo	3-31	
Swainson's warbler	4-24		Prothonotary warbler	3-31	
Tennessee warbler (This was not a red-eyed vireo)	3-31	4-29	Blue-winged warbler	4-8	
Brown creeper		3-7	Orange-crowned warbler		4-8
Magnolia warbler	4-28		Parula warbler	3-22	5-5
Cerulean warbler	4-10	5-3	Yellow warbler	4-11	5-8
Bay-breasted warbler	5-6		Yellow-rumped warbler		5-3
Prairie warbler	4-8		Yellow-throated warbler	3-22	
Louisiana waterthrush	4-8		Blackpoll warbler	4-30	5-3
Chat	4-19		Palm warbler		
American redstart			Kentucky warbler	4-3	
(Male, well seen)	3-31		Hooded warbler	3-28	
Summer tanager	4-6		Orchard oriole	4-3	
Indigo bunting	4-3		Scarlet tanager	4-15	
			Blue grosbeak	4-12 (Merrill)	
			Painted bunting	4-22	

Spring Bird Records, Hattiesburg, Miss. 1975 Continued

	<u>First</u> <u>Seen</u>	<u>Last</u> <u>Seen</u>		<u>First</u> <u>Seen</u>	<u>Last</u> <u>Seen</u>
<u>Dickcissel</u>	5-9		Purple finch		4-13
American goldfinch		4-24	Savannah sparrow		5-4
White-throated sparrow		5-4	Swamp sparrow		4-15
Song sparrow		4-3			

Wilson's Phalarope - Seen after the passage of a cold front. About the same size as a pectoral sandpiper it was associating with. Long, needle-thin black bill. Pure white underparts. No barring. White on front of neck. Phalarope mark through eye. Gray on back, back of neck and top of head. No wingstripe. White rump. (The bird was flushed.) Straw-colored legs. No markings on back. The bird was seen on the muddy edge of a small pond adjacent to the Hattiesburg sewage lagoons. After a while it walked out into the water and began swimming. It spun about and pecked about rather rapidly at the surface of the water. It was seen with a 20X telescope from no more than 30 feet. Light conditions were excellent.

Laughing Gull - Black head. Dark wings and black wing tips. White border on hind edge of wings. White tail. Much larger than a Bonaparte's.

Eared Grebe - Full breeding plumage. Solid black neck. Black crest. Light conditions were excellent. Seen from 40 feet with 20X telescope. All coloration well seen.

Piping Plover - 2 were seen after a severe hail storm. Very pale coloration. Orange legs and bill. The black ring was complete on one and almost complete on the other. Call note was heard: a soft, low pitched whistle pee-lee (the second syllable was lower in pitch than the first.)

Sanderling - Appeared after a severe hail storm. Associated with a semipalmated sandpiper. The sanderling was much bigger than the two peeps. It was in breeding plumage (reddish-brown). Black bill and legs. When flushed it showed an extremely broad wing stripe. This contrasted with the narrow wing stripes of the peeps and medium-width stripe of nearby spotted sandpipers.

Bufflehead - A female seen after the hail storm. Easy identification at close range. Very late.

Common Tern - Wing tips darker than the rest of the wing. Red not orange on bill. (2 birds).

ADDITIONAL RECORDS FROM MERRILL, MISSISSIPPI

Swallow-tailed kite	4-12 & 4-26	Black-billed cuckoo	4-12
Cliff swallow	4-26	Anhinga	4-26
White ibis	4-26	Broad-winged hawk	4-12

DAUPHIN ISLAND, ALABAMA

White-winged dove	4-26	Black throated-blue warbler	4-27
Red-breasted nuthatch	4-26	(1 male & 1 female)	
Brown pelican	4-27	Gray kingbird	4-27

HORN ISLAND, MISSISSIPPI Magnificent frigatebird 4-20

LYMAN, MISSISSIPPI Snipe 4-19

Larry Gates, 100 N. 32nd, Apt 4, Hattiesburg, Ms. 39401

CLIFF SWALLOWS NESTING - ITAWAMBA COUNTY

"Barry Freeman and John Phares were visiting a public boat launching site at the State Highway 25 crossing of Bull Mountain Creek on the south boundary of Itawamba County and observed several cliff swallows flying over the stream and under the bridge. We walked under the bridge from the north side and could see three nests situated at some distance from us over the water. Nests appeared to be active; however, adults did not enter any of the nests while they were under observation. This location is approximately 55 miles south of the nesting colony at the Highway 25 bridge crossing on Yellow Creek in Tishomingo County, Mississippi." John H. Phares 8-6-75

BREEDING RANGE EXTENSION OF THE CLIFF SWALLOW

Mrs. William G. Wills, Jr. (personal communication) reported finding a Cliff Swallow, Petrochelidon pyrrhonota, nest under the Natchez Trace right-of-way in Claiborne County on July 27, 1975. The nest location at the "Indian Mound" and "Old Ford" exit was described by Mrs. Wills as a typical nest with fresh bird droppings underneath and evidently a 1975 nest. Two subsequent trips to the nest site on July 30th by Mrs. Wills and on August 2nd by Mrs. Wills and Mrs. Ruth Downey and Miss Christine Berry failed to reveal any Cliff Swallows around this nest although numerous Barn Swallows were seen nesting under a nearby box culvert under the Trace.

On August 4, 1975 I set out to look for other possible nestings of the Cliff Swallow. Thirteen bridges or box culverts were checked along I-20 west of Clinton and down the Natchez Trace to the reported Cliff Swallow nesting site in Claiborne County. Twelve, one to three-tiered nests of the Barn Swallow were located under the I-20-Raymond Road overpass bridges at Clinton. One nest contained visible downy young. Seven box culverts or bridges were then checked on the Trace right-of-way. All but one contained abandoned Barn Swallow nests. One box culvert contained eight abandoned nests, one of which held a three foot long Rat Snake, Elaphe obsoleta. The snake was captured alive and forced to disgorge its stomach contents - one Barn Swallow capable of flight.

On the next stop at an "agricultural underpass" between Trace mile 70 and 71 just north of Twelvemile Creek in Hinds County near the Morningstar Community I found one active Cliff Swallow nest. There were fresh droppings underneath. A bird was on the nest but flew out, pausing at the nest entrance. The dark throat, light patch on forehead and square tail were noticeable at the nest and in flight when it joined another bird, presumably its mate. Both had the dark throat and square tail. I remained on the Trace at the overpass until a bird returned to the nest and saw the distinctive buff-colored rump markings as it flew underneath.

Both nests described above were typical of other Cliff Swallow nests I have seen. The "Indian Mound" nest had a longer "neck" at the entrance hole than the active one.

Further checking of Bayou Pierre bridge and three other box culverts revealed other Barn Swallow nests. Six nests were at the south end of Bayou Pierre bridge. A culvert one mile south of Bayou Pierre contained 34 Barn Swallow nests and numerous birds were in and about the culvert. Two nests contained 2 and 4 eggs each. Two nests contained young in pinfeathers and one nest contained 3 flying or ready to fly young.

On the last stop at the "Indian Mound" site I saw the Cliff Swallow nest reported by Mrs. Wills. In a nearby box culvert there were 21 Barn Swallow nests, four containing young in pinfeathers and one containing downy young with a parent brooding them on the nest.

Discussion: The above-cited records of Cliff Swallow nesting is a south-westward extension of 180 - 200 miles of the reported breeding range. It has been presumed to nest in Mississippi as a peripheral breeding species only in Tishomingo County. Other more

Cliff Swallow - continued

recent nest sightings in northeast Mississippi are not recorded at this writing. Only individual pairs were found nesting at these two locations recorded. Further searching should reveal other nestings of this species in similar locations in large open box culverts or under large bridges. The habitat described as "agricultural underpass" is a more open site than preferred by Barn Swallows. The Cliff Swallow is a colonial nesting species and the establishment of breeding colonies at the two and similar locations is predictable. Late nestings of Barn Swallows with eggs and young indicate that this species is raising two or possibly three broods a season. Tier-nesting and predation by a Gray Rat Snake of Barn Swallows is reported.

W. H. Turcotte

SUMMER BIRD NOTES - KOSCIUSKO

"I have in my yard some summer grapes and winter honeysuckle. Last week I had in the summer grapes, until they ate them up, four male Baltimore Orioles and a number of Mockingbirds, Catbirds, and Robins. They finished up the grapes last week and the Orioles left.

The Winter honeysuckle berries ripened right behind the grapes and the same birds are housing in them, except for the Orioles. I have noticed that the Catbirds departed after the honeysuckle berries are gone.

I saw a female summer tanager feeding on both the grapes and the honeysuckle.

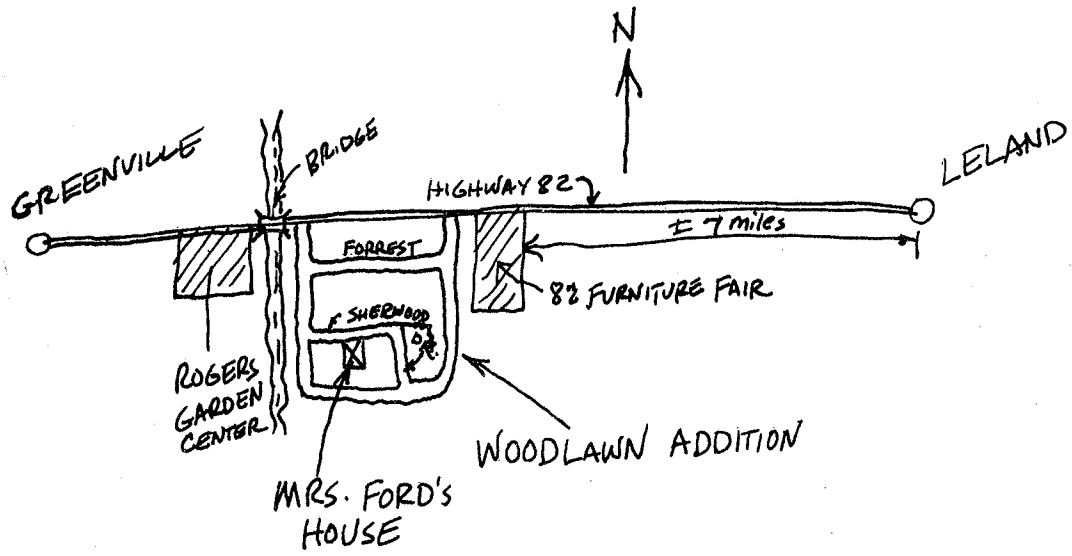
I have not had an opportunity to do any birding except in the yard, but have had a lot of fun there."

Clarence E. Morgan, Jr., Kosciusko, Ms. September 2, 1975

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHERS

"Today I saw 2 Scissor-tailed Flycatchers at Darlove, Mississippi (Washington County, 5 miles northeast of Hollandale) - perched on telephone wires - and flying out to feed on insects. Observed them for several minutes until they flew off."

G. E. Alexander, Jr., Greenville, Mississippi 10-14-75



Clip Here and Mail

Date _____

Mr. G. E. Alexander, Jr.
 1749 W. Azalea Drive
 Greenville, Mississippi 38701

I plan to attend the supper and regular meeting and field trip December 5 - 6, 1975.

There will be a total of _____ persons in my party for the supper.

Signed,
