

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

ORGANIZED APRIL 30, 1955

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MOS NEWSLETTER

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MOS Spring Meeting, Saturday, May 7, 1983, Jackson, Mississippi

Mike McGraw and Vic Duvic of Jackson announce the following schedule for the MOS spring meeting: Members will assemble on Saturday morning, May 7, at 7:00 A.M. at the entrance to the nature area at Riverside Park in Jackson.

Several field trips will be available: Steve Peterson will take a group to Riverside Park and Mayes Lake. Bill Turcotte will lead a group to bird the Ross Barnett Reservoir. Ruth Downy will lead a third group along the Natchez Trace, particularly covering the area of the Bluebird Trail.

The general meeting will be held at the Riverside Clubhouse in Jackson from 6:00 until 10:00 P.M.. A supper will be catered at a cost of \$6.00 per member, also at the Riverside Clubhouse. Reservations for supper should be made through Mike McGraw, 55 Summit Ridge Drive, Brandon Mississippi 39042. Make checks payable to Mike and make reservations BEFORE April 24th.

The program on Saturday night will feature Steve Peterson "on owls".

Mike McGraw has graciously offered MOS members a discount rate for motel accommodations in Jackson, specifically at Days Inn, I-55 North and Briarwood in Jackson. Rate will be \$20.00 for single accommodations, \$24.00 for double. Call the Central Reservation Desk, toll free, 1-800 241 3400 to make reservations. The appropriate discount will be given at checkout time, but members should inform the desk clerk of MOS membership before room statement is prepared.

There are several eating establishments nearby to accommodate early breakfasters.. The Omelet Shoppe, and McDonalds. Mike McGraw may be reached at 601 825 7077 (home) or 601 939 8200 (office). Birding should be good in Jackson in early May!

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

When M.O.S. was founded in 1955 the following goals were established for the organization: to promote the appreciation of native birds, to protect native birds, to encourage scientific research in ornithology, to cooperate with other similar organizations, and to publish the Mississippi Kite.

We have achieved a great deal and a great deal more will be achieved in the future. Enthusiasm is high.

In order to coordinate our talents and see that M.O.S. continues to thrive I am establishing the following goals for the near future:

1. The re-establishment of a records committee to review the state checklist, make recommendations for changes, and see that new checklists are printed.
2. A thorough review of all financial procedures. A strict accounting and accountability for all money that comes in and goes out.
3. A campaign to recruit new members as well as an accurate updating of our current membership list.
4. The vigorous promotion of M.O.S. armpatches.
5. A review of our constitution to bring ourselves more in line with it and to see if any revisions are necessary.
6. The adoption of a formal statement that M.O.S. does not discriminate with regard to race, color, creed, or sex.
7. A compilation and better organization of past minutes of meetings, official papers, documents, photographs, etc. associated with M.O.S.

Good birding! I hope to see you in Jackson.

Larry Gates

A SUMMARY OF MISSISSIPPI CBC'S

Jackson County, MS. December 18, 1982...Larry Gates, compiler
160 species 22 participants

Outstanding species: Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Black Scoter, Oldsquaw, Golden Plover, Franklin's Gull, White-winged Dove, Groove-billed Ani, Whip-poor-will, Tennessee Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak

Hattiesburg, MS. December 30, 1982... Larry Gates, compiler
113 species 21 participants

Outstanding species: Northern Parula, Archilocus sp., Forster's and Common terns, Anhinga, Yellowlegs sp..

CBC'S (Cont'd)

Moon Lake (Lula) MS. December 29...Ben B., Jr. and Lula C. Coffey, compilers. 6:15 A.M. to 4:45 P.M., A.M. overcast, P.M. mostly cloudy. Temp. 33° to 47°. Wind NW-N, 10-15 mph. Part flooded woods and fields. Wild food crop fair. Two observers in 1½ parties. Total party hours, 12 (7 on foot, 5 by car): total party miles, 54 (4 on foot, 50 by car). Total, 57 species; about 68,159 individuals. Included are 2,000 Starlings, 5,000 Red-winged Blackbirds, and 47,000 Common Grackles seen in part of one evening flight line. Ruddy Duck (2) recorded as low.

Vicksburg, MS-LA. December 18, 1982...Hal Moore and Louis Cashman, compilers. 18 participants. Total, 85 species; about 8053 individuals. Remarks: This count area is about one-half in Louisiana, batture and delta farm land, and one-half in Mississippi, with Vicksburg and Loess hills mostly wooded. The center is on I-20 over the Mississippi River. This was the third year for this count. The Mississippi River was almost at flood stage and covered some of our best areas. We had no unusual species this year.

Washington County (South) MS. January 2, 1983...Edward Alexander Jr., compiler. 24 participants. Total, 88 species (individual count not available). Some of the unusual species logged on this count: Green Heron, Sora, Common Gallinule, Burrowing Owl (first for this count but third appearance in successive years in same locality), Marsh Wren. Also these somewhat regular species: Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Pine Warbler, Common Yellowthroat.

Sardis Lake, MS. December 21, 1982...Marvin Davis, compiler. 5:55 A.M. to 5:10 P.M., A.M. clear, P.M. partly cloudy. Temp. 32° to 55°. Wind N 5-10 mph. Water open, lake quite high. 10 participants. Total, 88 species; about 9049 individuals. Remarks: Hooded Merganser 9 (low), Ring-billed Gull 379, Bonaparte's Gull 510, Blue Jay 185 (low), Tufted Titmouse 86, Brown Creeper 14, Sedge Wren 1 (first for count), Golden-crowned Kinglet 66, Solitary Vireo 1 (first for count), White-eyed Vireo 1 (first for count), Yellow-rumped Warbler 35 (low), Eastern Meadowlark 60 (low), Common Grackle 1585 (low), Purple Finch 41, Savannah Sparrow 8 (low), Fox Sparrow 14, Swamp Sparrow 89, Song Sparrow 160. Seen during count period: Black-legged Kittiwake (1a), Forster's Tern (8).

Grenada MS. December 23, 1982...Marvin Davis, compiler. 6:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., A.M. overcast, P.M. partly cloudy. Temp. 62° to 75°. Wind S-SW, 5-15 MPH. Water open, lake very high. 8 participants. Total, 77 species; about 78,673 individuals. Remarks: Great Blue Heron 25, Bonaparte's Gull 210, Forster's Tern 1 (first for count), Solitary Vireo 2 (and about 75,000 assorted blackbirds).

CBC'S (Cont'd)

Jackson, MS. January 1, 1983...Bill Turcotte, compiler
A.M. occasional light rain, P.M. steady rain. Temp. 40°-50°
Other details not given

Total, 92 species (individual count not available)

Remarks: Bald Eagle (3a 5Imm), Solitary Sandpiper 1, Horned Lark 15, Bewick's Wren 1, Marsh Wren 4, Gray Catbird 1, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 1, White-eyed Vireo 1.

Southern Hancock County, MS. December 20, 1982...Judith Toups, compiler
6:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Clear all day. Temp. 35° to 60°.

Wind S-SW 15-18 MPH

17 participants

Total 146 species, 1 additional form; about 6938 individuals

Remarks: Eared Grebe 1, White Pelican 11, Black-crowned Night Heron 1, Yellow-crowned Night Heron 1, White-tailed (Black-shouldered) Kite 2, Northern Harrier 20, Osprey 1, Merlin 1, Turkey 5, Loggerhead Shrike 80, Wilson's Warbler 1m, Western Tanager 1f, Grasshopper Sparrow 7, LeConte's Sparrow 1, Bachman's Sparrow 1, White-crowned Sparrow 2.

Unfortunately, not all compilers submitted details of their CBC's. This summary lacks results from the Natchez and Noxubee CBC'S.

This editor received a special Christmas report from J. Richard Moore and Pedro Rodrigues of Hattiesburg. It is entitled Isla Sisal: A Christmas Report and was written in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico. With abridgements, it is reprinted here:

"We have spent three days on this barrier island near the old village of Sisal along the northern coast of the Yucatan, almost due south of New Orleans. Everyone who has ever baled hay recognizes the twine name of sisal. The Mayan Indians make the rope which was once shipped to the U.S. from this port.

Here a narrow path follows the natural border between the mangroves and the impenetrable scrub. Even though our time is spent along the inner edge of the island we are always aware that a fifth of a mile across the low sandy ridge is the beach and the Gulf of Mexico. The sound of the waves carries over the low level scrub and the sea breeze helps to keep the mosquitoes down.

Slender black forms of Magnificent Frigatebirds soar effortlessly high above. They seem to hang in the sky. Pelicans...flocks of white and single or occasionally a few brown, gracefully fly along the shore but high enough to be seen from our position. Once in a while a Laughing or Herring gull or a Royal Tern will fly across the island.

Most exciting about the island are the winter residents. Many of these birds occur in strikingly different habitats than those in which we see them when they stay for the summer in the U.S. or as they pass through in spring or autumn.

Isla Sisal (cont'd)

I marvel at the Northern Waterthrush. During the summer I watch them in the moist woods of the Adirondack Mountains in New York State. Here they forage among the maze of Red Mangrove in the dense straw-like aerial roots that stick up about six inches for several feet around their bases. Often we hear their loud chip notes, but seldom do they move up and along the prop roots where their bobbing movements are visible.

Parulas, Magnolias, and Myrtles and a host of catbirds flit about the branches of the Mangrove canopies. Many Myrtles, like the numerous Palm Warblers, feed about the grassy growths on the sand barrens among the scrub. Once in a while Savannah Sparrows are here too. Common Yellowthroats, always inquisitive, come up from beneath the thicket to investigate our calls.

My favorite, for which I return time and time again, is the Mangrove Warbler, a member of the Yellow Warbler complex. The bright, chestnut-red heads and yellow bodies of the males are striking among the dark green foliage. The females are difficult to tell from "our" Yellow Warblers which spend the winter further inland. Another favorite is the large Cactus Wren. A striking bird, it becomes very visible when aggravated by our passage. Its high pitched threatening vocalizations can be shocking. The White-lored Gnatcatcher and Mangrove Vireo (related to our White-eyed Vireo) complete the list of unique birds restricted to the coastal habitats.

Many other species are shared in common with the mainland. The Tropical Mockingbird, perching high atop the fruiting stems of the sisal, is bigger than the North American species with more white on its longer tail. The familiar "bobwhite" call sounds from the highly secretive Yucatan or Black-throated Bobwhite...each of their white breast and chest feathers is rimmed with black. The cardinal (same species) is here but remains within the tangle of scrub.

Two species of orange orioles (Hooded and Altamira) flash their colors. Although Olivaceous and Wied's Crested flycatchers and the Tropical Pewee fly within the mangrove trees, the brighter Vermilion Flycatcher and the yellow-bellied Tropical Kingbird perch mostly in the scrub high where open vistas are available. The whizzing flight and electric chips of hummingbirds comes close often, but they play hide and go seek. Suddenly they perch on the other side of a shrub out of sight!

Two species are here in the winter when the other species have gone southward where flowering is greater. The Cinnamon Hummingbird is not as abundant as the Mexican Sheartail. The males of this last species are very scarce. Scatterings of Mangrove Swallows pass low enough to show the contrasting white rump against their bluish-black dorsa.

I could continue with many more exotic species such as the Ground Doves and the Rufous-browed Peppershrike, but there is not space enough to list and describe all the species. No hawks, nor the noisy Aztec (Olive-throated) Parakeets have been seen this year. I am worried that increased hunting by the local population may be responsible. The population is not only rapidly growing but it is economically depressed.

Isla Sisal (cont'd)

Green, Louisiana, and Little Blue Herons, and Great Egrets, Yellow-crowned Night Herons, and Double-crested and Olivaceous cormorants are common in the lagoon. Flamingos are seen on the island to the east and west. Huge concentrations of ducks winter further out in the lagoons between the islands and the mainland. We often see Blue-winged Teal close to shore.

This is our Christmas Report from the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. We thought the newsletter might be interested in knowing where some of Mississippi's birds have gone."

Thanks to Richard and Pedro for a most enjoyable armchair visit to the tropics!

Advance on the MOS Fall Meeting!!!

Tishomingo State Park: October 28, 29, 30, 1983.
Business meeting on Saturday, October 29. Group cabins (heated) will be \$4.75 per person per day. Meals \$3.50 per, beginning with evening meal on Friday through noon meal on Sunday. Spectacular autumn leaves. Good birds! Good hiking trails! Program and activities to be announced later.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING: Friday, May 6, 1983, in Jackson, at 8:00 P.M.
Place of meeting has not yet been announced.

Among the good birds that Marvin Davis saw in 1982 he lists Black-legged Kittiwake, Brown Pelican, Peregrine Falcon, Forster's Tern, and a number of 1st or 2nd state sightings for him in our state...Anhinga, Swallow-tailed Kite, White-rumped Sandpiper, White Ibis. Marvin's very respectable 1982 year list was 218!!!

Bald Eagles seen frequently in many areas of the state. Coast Bald Eagles doing well...young should be fledging any day now!

Joe McGee has singing Bewick's Wrens near home in Hickory, Newton County, MS. Most of us never get to even see this largely extirpated species in our state. Dare we hope that there may be a breeding pair or two hanging on in Mississippi?

Fantastic news from the Mississippi Coast. Two of the four Black-shouldered Kites reported previously are nesting in Hancock County!! On the beach in Gulfport... adult winter-plumaged Lesser Black-backed Gull. On the beach in Biloxi..presumed to be 2nd winter plumaged Great Black-backed Gull! Male Lark Sparrow has spent last two months on Bellefontaine Beach in Jackson County, MS. A number of overwintering species did well despite occasional arctic blasts!

Ben B. Coffey, Jr., certainly one of our most valued members, underwent open heart surgery earlier this year. I know I speak for all the members of the Mississippi Ornithological Society in wishing Ben a speedy and complete recovery. Ben's address: 672 N. Belvedere, Memphis, Tennessee 38107.
