

MOS NEWSLETTER

September 1987

Volume 32, No. 4

MOS Fall Meeting: Mississippi Coast  
6-8 November 1987

The fall meeting of the Mississippi Ornithological Society will take place on the Coast on 6-8 November 1987, and will be hosted by the Mississippi Coast Audubon Society, whose members urge you all to come down for an exciting weekend of birds, birders, and birding!

Schedule of events as follows:

Friday night, 6 November, 7-9:30 p.m., MCAS members will host a dessert and coffee (tea, cold drinks, etc.) get-together for those coming from out-of-town, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Morgan, 140 Walda Drive, Biloxi, (Ph. 601-399-3671). Directions from U.S. Hwy. 90 ("motel row") in Biloxi are included with this notice.

Saturday birding, 7 November: field trips will be in Hancock County. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the parking area to the south at the traffic light just beyond the Bay St. Louis bridge on U.S. Hwy. 90 in Bay St. Louis, a 35-40 min drive from west Biloxi. There are many fast-food breakfast places along the way. You should bring your own lunch and snacks, or alert your leader to the fact that you will need to find a convenience store or fast-food outlet around lunchtime. We hope to have more than enough leaders to provide for small birding groups (hopefully, no more than two cars per leader). Field trips will end by 3:30 p.m.

Saturday night, 7 November, 6:30-10 p.m.: banquet and meeting at Howard Johnson Coliseum Beach Resort, 3920 West Beach Blvd., Biloxi, MS 39531 (Ph. 601-385-5555 or 800-323-9164). Happy hour begins at 6:30, with a cash bar (mixed drinks and wine) which will be open till 7:30. Please check at the registration desk for exact location of banquet room. Dinner will be served at 7 p.m. The menu includes: soup du jour, mixed green salad, chicken cordon bleu, baked potato with sour cream, rolls and butter, etc., and assorted desserts; the cost will be \$12.25, which includes 15% gratuity and 8% sales tax. Please fill in the form accompanying this newsletter, and return, with check made payable to MCAS, not later than 1 November.

Business meeting and program will follow. We are fortunate to have Nancy Newfield as a speaker. Nancy, from Metairie, Louisiana, is a master bander of hummingbirds; through her banding efforts she has documented the occurrence of several species of hummingbirds in southern Louisiana, among them

Allen's, Calliope, and Broad-billed. Certainly her knowledge of hummingbirds in our geographic area is unparalleled. She will share some of the surprising and fascinating things she has learned about the hummingbirds that visit Louisiana gardens in fall and winter, and give us more than a few good reasons why we should not despair of seeing some of the same species here. After a slide presentation that includes a great many hummingbirds and the flowering plants to which they are attracted, there will be a question and answer session.

Sunday birding, 8 November. Meet at the eastern entrance to Gulfport Harbor at 7:30 a.m. for a morning of beach birding. Additionally, we will announce at the Saturday night meeting if there are species in other areas of Harrison and Jackson counties that will be of interest to MOS members.

About the birding: November on the Coast is generally very good. Some of the birds we will be looking for include Eared Grebe, Brown Pelican, Reddish Egret, Oldsquaw, scoters, Osprey, Black-shouldered Kite, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, American Oystercatcher, Franklin's and Lesser Black-backed gulls, White-winged Dove, Common Ground-Dove, Groove-billed Ani, Common Barn-Owl, Vermilion Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.

Accommodations: Finding a room on the Coast in November is not difficult. However, you may want to locate at Howard Johnson or other nearby motels. The rate schedule for Howard Johnson's follows: single, \$29.95, double, \$32.95, triple, \$35.95, and quadruple, \$40.95. Other quality motels should offer comparable prices. We have asked for a block of rooms on the ground floor, outside, so mention that when making reservations at Howard Johnson. Below is a list of nearby motels, all within a mile of Hojo's:

Best Western Biloxi Inn 388-5555  
 Ramada Inn 388-5512  
 Captain's Inn 388-3131  
 Economy Inn (Coliseum) 388-7321  
 Scottish Inn 388-2610

#### Field Study of Migratory Birds

Field Research volunteers are needed to assist in the study of migratory passerines, spring 1988 from 31 March through 20 May. Field sites are located in southwest (coastal) Louisiana and on Mississippi Gulf Coast barrier islands (Gulf Islands National Seashore), where migrants are studied during stopover following trans-Gulf flight. Field work involves mist-netting and marking

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birds, foliage and invertebrate sampling, and some behavioral observations. Some experience with passerive migrants is desirable. This research is supported by the National Park Service and the National Geographic Society. Per diem is available through the National Park Service for work on the barrier islands. For additional information contact Dr. Frank Moore, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-5018. (Ph. 601-266-4394/-4923).

MOS Financial Report: November 1986-April 1987  
Janet Dubuisson, Treasurer

Income

Dues		819.90	
Interest		240.87	
Donations		5.00	
Sales: T-shirts	50.00		
Checklists	11.00		
Publications	14.00		
Posters	<u>10.50</u>		
		85.50	
	Total		<u>1151.27</u>

Expenses

Printing: MS Kites	341.29		
Dues Notices	<u>12.35</u>		
		353.64	
Postage: MS Kites	77.94		
Dues Notices	<u>16.10</u>		
		94.04	
Printed checks		<u>20.30</u>	
	Total		<u>467.98</u>

Net profit 683.29

Assets

Balance in checking:			
Gulfport account	1660.47		
Starkville account	<u>183.91</u>		
		1844.38	
Balance in savings		2583.27	
Certificate of deposit		<u>2000.00</u>	
			<u>6427.65</u>

Summaries of a Few Mississippi Christmas Bird Counts, 1986-87

It's that time of year when we turn our sights toward the upcoming Christmas Bird Count season, and eagerly await the publishing of full details of last year's counts in American Birds magazine (hoping that the CBC issue will get out before the counts begin!).

For those of us who can't wait, following are highlights of a few CBC's for which I received details. (Counts not received: Hattiesburg, Jackson Co., Moon Lake, Natchez, Vicksburg, and Washington Co. (south).) Thanks to compilers for sending in details of their counts.

Arkabutla Lake (Rob Peeples, compiler)---3 Jan.; 30.5 party-hours; 109 party-miles (14 on foot, 95 by car); 10 observers.

This count suffered from inclement weather---a hard snow in the afternoon hurt visibility, and also undoubtedly affected bird movements. Total species counted: 73; total individuals: 11,125. This was the lowest count yet for Arkabutla Lake, with many ducks absent. However, 3 Bald Eagles were seen (1 ad., 2 imm.).

Church Hill (Genevieve Little, compiler)---2 Jan.; 7.5 party-hours (1 on foot, 1 on ATV, 5.5 by car); 89.7 party-miles (1 on foot, 3 on ATV, 85.7 by car); 1 observer.

This new CBC was submitted by the compiler this year, but was not accepted by National Audubon (they think it's too close to the Natchez count; she plans to do it again this year and resubmit). The count lies almost entirely within Jefferson County, with a couple of chunks of Louisiana due to bends in the River. Species total: 36; total individuals: 1435. The compiler writes that the circle is a challenge due to the lack of good roads.

Grenada (Marvin Davis, compiler)---23 Dec.; 25 party-hours (10.5 on foot, 14.5 by car); 68.5 party-miles (7.5 on foot, 61 by car); 10 observers in 4 parties.

Weather was troublesome on this count also, with rain or drizzle 80% of the day, and NE winds at 10-20 mph. Total species: 80 (plus 6 count week species); total individuals: 3124. This species total is a big drop from the count record of 97 seen in 1985; the compiler says that, in addition to the inclement weather, the total party-hours fell from previous years. The count did have two immature Bald Eagles, and an unusual number of Rusty Blackbirds (447). This was the 20th year for the Grenada count, on which 136 species have been recorded, including such

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gems as Little and Common Black-headed gulls and Mountain Bluebird.

Jackson (William Turcotte, compiler)---27 Dec.; 18 observers in 7 parties.

Too bad they missed Marsh Wren this year, or this count would have recorded all 6 of the possible wrens! Down from last year's total of 103, this year 96 species were recorded in Jackson. Total individuals: 14,110. An adult Bald Eagle, a Cooper's Hawk, and a Merlin were all raptor highlights; an Anhinga was also recorded.

Sardis (Marvin Davis, compiler)---27 Dec.; 47 party-hours (33 on foot, 14 by car) plus 4 owling; 183 party-miles (26 on foot, 157 by car) plus 6 owling; 17 observers in 5-6 parties.

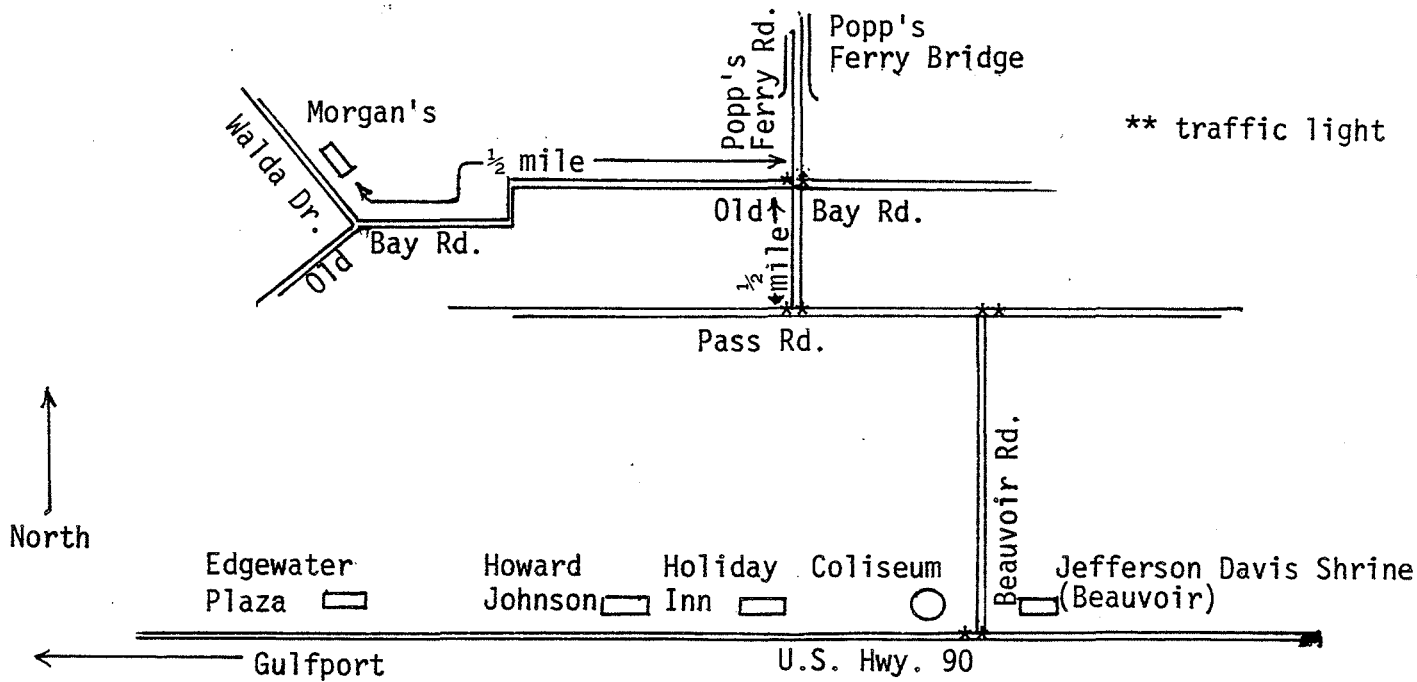
The cold, overcast weather must have helped this count, which recorded high numbers of several species: 15,051 Mallards, 90 Turkey Vultures, 74 Red-headed and 105 Red-bellied woodpeckers, 203 chickadees, and over 27,000 Common Grackles! The list goes on. An adult Tundra Swan was seen by several observers and was new to the count. Marvin Davis assembled a high-powered group of observers, including compilers of at least 3 other CBC's. Species total: 93; total individuals: 55,347.

Southern Hancock Co. (Judy Toups, compiler)---29 Dec.; 19 observers in 6-7 parties.

This count had a very good year, with 148 total species (up from 139 last year); total individuals: 15,000. Good birds included 2 Reddish Egrets, 14 Plegadis ibis, a Peregrine Falcon, 2 American Oystercatchers, a Short-eared Owl, and a Henslow's Sparrow. As new birding areas are discovered, this count's potential continues to grow---it could reach well into the 150's, with some luck.

Sumner (Genevieve Little, compiler)---26 Dec.; 5 party-hours (by car); 25.4 party-miles (by car); one observer.

Another new count initiated by the indefatigable Genevieve Little, this is probably the first CBC done in the Miss. Delta away from the River. The center of the count is in Sumner, with most of the circle in NW Tallahatchie County, although small parts of Sunflower, Coahoma, and Quitman counties are included. The compiler notes that this agricultural area has heavy pesticide use, but "the last few years local residents have tried to a certain extent to encourage bird populations, particularly ducks." Total species: 35; total individuals: 11,852.



Directions to Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Morgan's house, 140 Walda Drive, Biloxi

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Reservation Form

Enclosed is a check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (\$12.25/person) to cover costs of MOS banquet dinner, Saturday, 7 November 1987. Please reserve seating for the following persons:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to Mississippi Ornithological Society, and send to:

Mickey Baker  
200 North Shore Drive West  
Biloxi, MS 39531  
(Ph. 601-388-6042)

Please make reservations no later than 1 November.  
Non-refundable after 5 November.  
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MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Organized 30 April 1955

JUDITH A. TOUPS  
President  
4 Hartford Place  
Gulfport, MS 39501

JANET DUBUISSON  
Treasurer  
2 E. 52nd St.  
Gulfport, MS 39501

MICHAEL J. MCGRAW  
Vice President  
P.O. Box 6034  
Jackson, MS 39213

JEROME A. JACKSON  
Editor: Mississippi Kite

MALCOLM F. HODGES, JR.  
Editor: MOS Newsletter

JOHN BATTALIO  
Secretary  
4802 Halls Ferry Rd.  
Vicksburg, MS 39180

Dept. of Biological Sciences  
Mississippi State University  
Mississippi State, MS 39762

W H Turcotte  
240 Lowe Circle  
Richland, MS 39218

Return address:  
Malcolm F. Hodges, Jr.  
P.O. Drawer 67  
Miss. State, MS 39762

