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**MISSISSIPPI  
ORNITHOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER**

**Vol. 37, No. 3  
FALL (SEPTEMBER) 1992**

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**LOOKING AHEAD:**

October MOS Meeting at Oxford in Conjunction with the Colonial Waterbird Society (CWS)

MOS is acting as local co-sponsor with the Department of Biology of The University of Mississippi for the 14-18 October 1992 meeting of CWS. Schedule of activities is as follows:

Wednesday: 9:00 a.m.-5:10 p.m., **Symposium on "The Double-crested Cormorant: Biology, Conservation and Management"** at the Yerby Conference Center on the Univ. of Mississippi Campus.

Thursday: 9:00 a.m.- Noon, **Cormorant Symp. continued**; 1:30-5:10 **Contributed Papers on Cormorants, Gulls at Yerby Ctr.**; 7:30 p.m.-10:00, **Cormorant Workshops.**

Friday: 6:00 a.m. **leave on vans to Memphis for Mississippi River and Delta Field Trip**; travel downstream from Memphis on the "Memphis Queen II." In the p.m. after a box lunch, trippers will explore catfish farms and other N. Delta habitats, returning to Oxford by 5:00 p.m.

Friday evening: **7:00 p.m., a joint reception for CWS/MOS** at the newly remodeled, historic Barnard Observatory, home of the Center for Southern Culture, 1 block E of Student Union) on the Ole Miss Campus. [See map on page 9] Information will be available for those opting to take Saturday a.m. and/or p.m. field trips. A film on cormorants will be shown, plus (we hope) some exciting bird slides from members (bring yours!).

Saturday: **6:30 a.m., field trip departures** from the east parking lot of Best Western Motel (to Sardis Waterfowl Refuge, Sardis Dam/Lower Lake area or Wall Doxey St. Pk.). **Papers session at 9:00 and 1:30 in the Yerby Center**; see pp. 6-7 for titles.

Saturday evening: **7:00 p.m. dinner meeting with CWS at Cobb's Seafood Restaurant west of Oxford**; all-you-can-eat seafood buffet dinner, followed by a slide-talk on experiences with Storks and Waterbird Conservation in Asia by James Hancock, retired business executive, member of the Royal Society of Photographers and past-president of the British Trust for Ornithology. He is a coauthor of the 1992 book, "Storks, Ibises and Spoonbills of the World," (as well as an earlier

one on Herons of the World) with Dr. James Kushlan, Chairman of Biology at Ole Miss. [Copies will be available at the meeting at a special rate.] A brief **MOS business meeting** for biennial election of officers will be held.

Sunday a.m.: **field trips, ad libitum.**

See page 9 of this newsletter for an important **registration form**; please fill it out and **send with your check ASAP.** Also there, see **motel information** and make your reservation soon.

#### MOS Field Trips--For the Fun of It!

President Schiefer announces the latest schedule for MOS Weekend Field Trips around the State:

1. November 14, Noxubee NWR and prairies in Noxubee Co. around Macon. Meet at Lake Lokafoma in the NWR at 8:00 a.m. Leader(s): Terry Schiefer and/or Margaret Copeland. Targets--large raptors, such as Golden Eagle, Rough-legged Hawk.

## **LOOKING BACK:**

### FROM THE FIELD

#### Nesting Season:

#### **Cliff Swallow Nesting Colony Discovered in the Mississippi Delta Near Eagle Lake**

Hal Moore

On 27 June 1992 a colony of Cliff Swallows was discovered beneath the bridge where Eagle Lake Road (MS Rt. 465) crosses Steele Bayou in Issaquena County. Three Vicksbirders were on their way to Eagle Lake when the swallows were spotted sitting on the wires along the roadway.

The group (consisting of Caroline Eastman, Allan Mueller and Hal Moore), who were taking a regular Saturday morning field trip, went below the bridge and found at least 30 active Cliff Swallow nests, many containing visible young. We believe this to be the first recorded nesting in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta for this species. Prior nesting sites have been east of the Delta region in Mississippi's sand-clay hills physiographic region, e.g., on or near the Sardis, Enid and Grenada flood control reservoirs and along the Natchez Trace in Claiborne County.

#### "Summer" Migration:

First sighting of presumably southbound shorebirds in north MS, always the earliest group found returning from the north, were 5 Lesser Yellowlegs found by Gene Knight on 30 June at the Sardis Waterfowl Refuge. Vic Theobald had an early flock of Black Terns there on 18 July, and more were at the new Yazoo NWR ponds on 25 July and 1 August. An Upland Sandpiper near Oxford on 16 July was also on the move.

First northbound long-legged waders were the Wood Storks mentioned in the last issue at Noxubee NWR by or before 1st of July. Later in the month, Tim Wilkins, manager at Yazoo NWR reported to Ed Alexander that 4 **Roseate Spoonbills** were at the set of former catfish ponds that have been added to the NW edge of the refuge, on Cox Road, south of the US Navy satellite tracking station. On 1 August, en route to seeing the 4 spoonbills, M. Davis spotted a single adult **Reddish Egret** at a small lake off MS 7 in the Malmaison WMA at Leflore (Grenada County). This seems to be a first MS record for this species north of the immediate coast. One or two weeks later, T. Schiefer duplicated the Reddish Egret feat with one at Noxubee NWR, this time an immature. Later on Aug. 1, the count of four spoonbills was topped by the six seen by a contingent of six ladybirders from the Gulf Coast who made a circuit for Noxubee storks and Yazoo spoonbills.

On 8 August at Noxubee NWR, Terry Schiefer and Gene and Shannon Knight spotted a quite early, presumed-migrant **Sora** at Lake Lokafoma's edge, moments after an unexpected encounter with two surprising species, but possible local breeders, a King Rail and 2 Least Bitterns. An earliest-ever date for a seldom-seen visitor to the beach of Lower Lake at Sardis Dam, also on August 8th by Davis, was of two **Sanderlings**. Four weeks later, on 4 September, two more were part of a "sensational" day [don't you laugh, coasters!] when they were seen with three **Ruddy Turnstones** on a rocky island (low-water peninsula) off the south end of Sardis Dam. These two species may be common stuff on the Gulf Coast, but to find either one "up north" is exceptional; both on the same day was unprecedented. However, on 2 September, Jeff Wilson noted a remarkable shorebird movement at SW Shelby County, TN that also included both of those species, plus Red Knots!

From the coastal counties RBA (Rare Bird Alert phone no., e.g., 467-9500), as of 31 August, came word that migrant Sharp-shinned Hawks, and Olive-sided Flycatchers had been seen before the end of August. Among the warblers moving south in August were both Northern and Louisiana Waterthrushes. Reddish Egrets (representing post-breeding dispersal from other coastal states) were being seen on beaches in all three counties.

The Yazoo ponds began to show some "Patagonia picnic table effect" in early September. Although the spoonbills were gone, Schiefer found a **Cinnamon Teal** and one ad. **Red-necked Phalarope** there on 13 and 20 September to help bring him to the verge of matching the previous long-time highest Mississippi BIG YEAR total of 304. Surprisingly, G. Knight found only 3 imm. Red-necked Phalaropes on the next day!

A boat trip down-river from Rosedale into Lake Whittington by Judy Burkepile on 19 September was rewarded by views of two flocks of **Am. White Pelican** totalling ca. 260, flocks of ca. 20 and 30 **Wild Turkey**, 5 **Tricolored Herons** and several Least Terns.

### Hurricane Andrew Report:

The happy news is that the coastal Mississippi counties didn't get enough wind to cause serious damage--only downed tree limbs and branches, just as we had even up here in Oxford. The sad part is that coast birders didn't get to enjoy any storm-driven pelagic species onshore, despite considerable efforts to find some. However, there were indeed some avian effects of the peripheral winds of Andrew. On Wednesday August 26th, Terry Schiefer found coastal **Royal and Sandwich Terns** at the sewage lagoon complex in Hattiesburg. On Thursday he spotted Laughing Gulls, **Black Skimmers** and **Magnificent Frigatebirds** blown inland all the way to Ross Barnett Reservoir NE of Jackson. A late report suggests that two singles of **Sooty Tern** from the Caribbean were blown inland to Jackson and nearby Utica. One was found dead, the other is undergoing rehabilitation in Louisiana.

### Newsbytes from the Neighboring States

The 1st two weekends of September found two new species for the Tennessee being sighted in west Tennessee, both involving MOS members. On 5 September a.m. Jeff Wilson and Gene and Shannon Knight were at Island 13 on the Mississippi west of Reelfoot Lake, when an immature **Ferruginous Hawk** hesitated for several circles over their heads. After giving the trio good views of its ID marks, it soared on southward along the course of the river, apparently heading for Mississippi. Anybody see him there?

On 12 September, Jeff Wilson arrived early at the Ensley bottoms in SW Shelby Co. to lead a field trip. At the sewage sludge pits famous for attracting shorebird migrants there, the first bird he viewed was a juvenile **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper**, an Asiatic species that is known from North America in the Lower 48 mainly from the west coast. Its normal wintering area is in Australia and New Zealand. Gene Knight arrived soon after hearing the news. Your MOS president and Newsletter Editor joined the first 5-6 dozen viewers of this great rarity on the 14th. From the Gulf Coast, Judy Toups, Chita Cassibry and Jo Ree Pennell were successful on the 15th. This led to Chita's picture--taken while viewing the bird through her scope--appearing on the front page of the next morning's Memphis Commercial-Appeal. Jeff et al. and the Sandpiper also had good coverage on two evening local TV news broadcasts that day, sharing top billing with a cooperative migrant Peregrine who thrilled at least one TV photographer more than the sandpiper by providing good footage for the story. The bird had been seen by ca. 150 people through Wed. Sept. 17, at least one coming from as far away as Virginia. On the 18th, MOSer Judy Burkepile from Oxford and her sister, Linda Gall from Indianapolis, IN, joined the Sharp-tail Watchers. Judy remarked at the bird's marvelous cooperativeness, feeding in plain view for the whole hour that she stayed at "the pits." The sandpiper welcomed visitors again on Saturday September 19, but then departed. [See also p. 6]

After several slack years on Spring Big Day efforts, the same trio as above--Jeff Wilson and the Knights--established a fine new **Big Day Record for the State of Arkansas** with a one-day May list of 160 species. They followed about the same route as had the former record-holders, MOSers Davis, Hodges and Schiefer, in their 1988 record-setter of 140 species. That was from Wapanocca NWR, on the Mississippi River north of W. Memphis, westward across Crowley's Ridge and the Grand Prairie to the Little Rock area and on to Mt. Nebo south of Russellville on the Arkansas River at the end of day. Actually, on a week-prior "warmup" effort confined to extreme eastern Arkansas, Wilson and Gene K. had already established another--short-lived--new big day mark of 150 species!

### MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

#### American Kestrel

From Joe McGee in Hickory came some very kind words plus the suggestion that "any members whose attention was attracted by the recent item regarding an Am. Kestrel nestbox program should also see another source, the August-September 1991 issue of National Wildlife, which had an article by Cheryl Lyn Dybas on a kestrel nestbox program." Let's strive to get such a program going here in Mississippi. Those trails of bluebird-boxes have been a great success, judging from the number of Eastern Bluebirds that we encounter. Anyone out there helping the Boy Scouts re. birds? How about encouraging some Scouts doing bird study merit badge to build and place kestrel boxes along our highways?

#### Red Dates

If the address label on the outside of this newsletter bears a red "92," that is our Treasurer's gentle reminder, dear reader, of dues unpaid for 1992.

#### Coverage

If your records, or others' from your area, aren't getting included in the Newsletter it's because the Editor didn't hear about them. Please communicate!

#### MOSers Seen in Print Elsewhere:

1. Jerome A. Jackson, "Summer Bird Feeding," Birder's World, August 1992, pp. 50-54. This latest article in the Attracting Birds series explores the pros and cons of summer feeding, the special opportunities for bird observing, and the manner and materials of summer feeding. It provides lots of good practical advice--a "must see," especially for those new to bird feeding.

2. Jerome A. Jackson, "Crafty Mudslinger," Birder's World, October 1992, pp. 12-16. Jerry provides an appreciation of the cosmopolitan Barn Swallow, which includes lots of information on one of our familiar species that you and I probably didn't know!

3. Judith A. Toups, "In Search of a Longspur," Birder's World, October 1992, pp. 18-22. Judy describes an adventure at Oldsquaw Lodge in Canada's Northwest Territories that should make any reader envious of her opportunity for a 1991 visit to that remote region. The Far North did finally yield to her a desired encounter with a breeding season male Smith's Longspur. However, that species, unfamiliar to Mississippi birders, was only the crowning touch to many great sightings of distinctive mammals and birds of the northern wilderness. Read about it and you'll want to go too!

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**"Facts" to Shed Light on the Mid-South Occurrence of the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** [from "Shorebirds: An Identification Guide to Shorebirds of the World," by Hayman, Marchant and Prater, Houghton-Mifflin, Boston, 1986, p. 375-376.

It was astonishing to read in the above source that "the breeding range of this species [Pectoral Sandpiper] is almost as extensive in N. Siberia as in North America, yet the vast bulk of the population winters in S South America.....Siberian breeders are believed to join those of North America in migration to South America, largely by a Great Circle route over W Atlantic." [Emphasis added] About the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, "The breeding range of this Siberian species is, remarkably, entirely enclosed within that of its closest relative, the Pectoral Sandpiper.....In some years, a few birds apparently join the eastward movement of Pectorals from Siberia across North America..." The authors' statements seem inconsistent as to whether the Siberian Pectoral Sandpipers' Great Circle route from northern Asia is NE-ward or NW-ward to N North America. Whatever may be the case, it helps rationalize the finding of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers in the center of the continent, e.g., Memphis, TN. I only wish we could find one now south of the MS-TN stateline! My mind reels at the thought of sandpipers flying a Great Circle route to reach northern North America from Asia--and we thought that human aviators invented that trick! With this information we now must wonder which of the Pectorals that we see may be from Siberia!

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**Colonial Waterbirds Society, Scientific Program for Day 4, Saturday October 17, 1992--Two Concurrent Sessions of 20-min Papers:**

**SESSION A -- Terns in a.m., Biology and Pollution in p.m.**  
**SESSION B -- Egrets and Ibises, a.m. and p.m.**

Times & Titles for Session A

- 9:10 Selection of nest and colony sites by Least Terns on Georgia Barrier Islands.
- 9:30 A good vs. a bad year for Roseate Terns nesting in Puerto Rico.
- 9:50 Why do adult and immature Roseate Terns lose colorbands at such different rates?

- 10:10 Supernormal clutches and unusual mating associations in Roseate Terns.
- 10:30 Break
- 10:50 Substrate use and chick-shelter success on Common Tern nesting rafts in Toronto Harbour, Ontario.
- 11:10 Foraging and chick-provisioning patterns of male Common Terns at a colony on Lake Ontario.
- 11:30 Arctic Tern chick provisioning strategies at Matinicus Rock, Maine.
- 12:10 Lunch
- 1:30 Metal levels in regrown feathers: assessment of contamination on the wintering and breeding grounds in the same individuals.
- 1:50 Chromosomal aberrations as an indicator of contaminant exposure in Black-crowned Night-Heron embryos and chicks.
- 2:10 Reproductive effort and parental experience hypotheses and their ability to explain increased reproductive success with age.
- 2:30 Recruitment: sources, age and potential in relation to nest-site availability in the Black Guillemot.
- 2:50 Lyme disease and seabirds.
- 3:10 Break, followed by Business Meeting; 4:30, Reproductive success workshop.

Times & Titles for Session B

- 9:10 Long-term population dynamics of Louisiana wading bird populations in relation to crawfish aquaculture.
- 9:30 An historic perspective of wading bird nesting populations at Lake Okeechobee, Florida.
- 9:50 Vegetative substrate a cause for high nest density.
- 10:10 Seasonal foraging habitat for the Reddish Egret in a hypersaline lagoon.
- 10:30 Break
- 10:50 Flock feeding and food intake in Little Egrets; the effect on food provisioning at the nest.
- 11:10 Postfledging mortality in the Little Egret.
- 11:30 Growth and survival of Great Egrets infected by the nematode *Eustrongyloides ignotus*.
- 11:50 Cattle Egret colonies do not function as information centers.
- 12:10 Lunch
- 1:30 Age before Beauty: Divorce rate and mate choice in the Greater Flamingo.
- 1:50 Ciconiform use of wetlands receiving wastewater effluent in Florida
- 2:10 Mate-switching in captive colonies of Scarlet Ibis and Waldrapp Ibis.
- 2:30 Studbook and masterplan programs for colonial waterbirds in North America.
- 2:50 Conservation of Ibises in the world.
- 4:30 Reproductive Success workshop.

## Recent Interesting Ornithological Literature

### **MORE ON PESTICIDES**

1. Paul M. Brehmer and Raymond K. Anderson (U. of Wisconsin, Stevens Point) reported on the "Effects of Urban Pesticide Applications on Nesting Success of Songbirds," in the Bulletin of Environmental Contamination and Toxicology. The possible impact of insecticide applications to trees on the nesting success of Wisconsin songbirds was studied. Acephate and carbaryl were the toxicants used by a commercial applicator company; nesting robins and mourning doves were the subjects of the observations comparing success in sprayed and non-sprayed yards. There were no differences in % of nests successful (one or more nestlings alive yet at 10 days after hatching), % of total eggs hatching or % of nestlings that fledged. "This study suggests that skilled application of acephate and carbaryl to individual trees does not negatively affect hatching success or fledging rates of robins or mourning doves."

### **NORTHERN PARULA HAS TWO SOUTHERN DIALECTS**

2. Ralph R. Moldenhauer (Sam Houston State Univ., TX) described "Two Song Populations of the Northern Parula" in The Auk, vol. 109, April 1992, pp.215-222. "Two distinctly different Type A songs characterize eastern and western populations within the breeding range of the Northern Parula... The two song populations are nearly allopatric, overlapping in southwestern Alabama and eastern Kentucky, where the two song forms can be heard in adjacent areas but where no intermediate songs are found." Only subspecific distinction between the two forms is proposed.

### **GILBERT MAY GIVE INSIGHT INTO ANDREW**

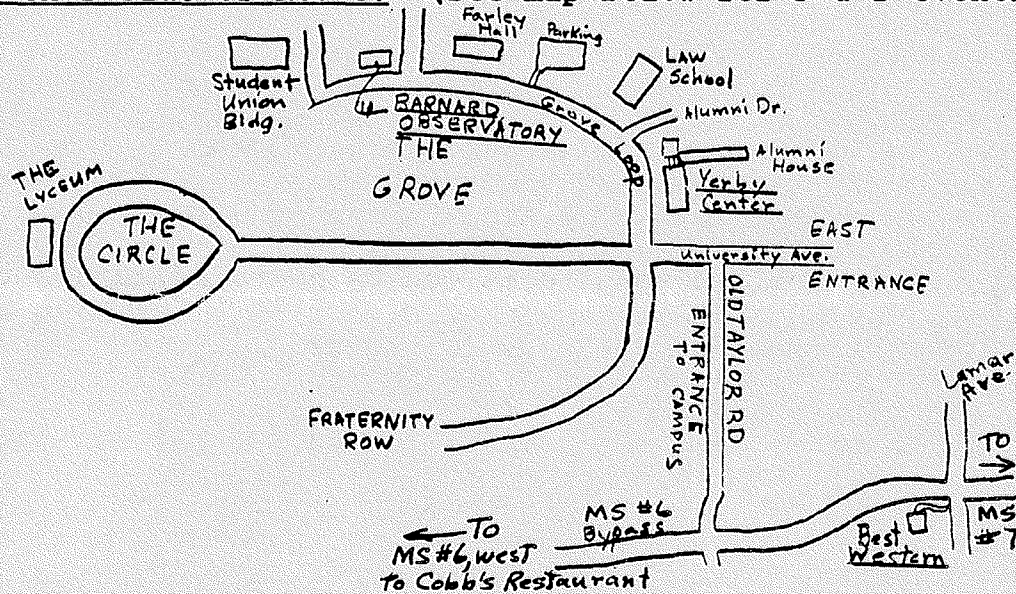
3. J.M. Wunderle, Jr., D.J. Lodge and R.B. Waide (USDA and Univ. of Puerto Rico) observed the "Short-term Effects of Hurricane Gilbert on Terrestrial Bird Populations on Jamaica" in The Auk, vol. 109, January 1992, pp. 148-166. Resampling was done in 10 habitats 4 months after Gilbert had caused much structural damage to trees. "Populations of several species declined in some habitats and increased in others, a pattern consistent with interhabitat migration." Data also suggest that dietary stress after the habitat damage was more significant than the direct impact during the storm. Nectarivores and fruit/seed eaters declined more than did insectivores, as would be predicted. It will be interesting to hear reports on the effects of Andrew on the bird populations of S Florida and Louisiana. Let's hope and assume that most are facing less adversity than are the people of Dade County! First word is that Andrew failed to benefit the region biologically, as biologists had hoped it might, through heavy rains flushing away Florida Bay's excessively saline waters; evidently the associated rainfall was insufficient for that to happen.



**OXFORD MOTELS:**

- A. Best Western Oxford Inn (most convenient to highways MS 6 & 7, on 6 Bypass) phone 234-9500 for reservations.
- B. Holiday Inn (nearest to downtown, 2 blocks north of the Square on N. Lamar), 234-3031
- C. Quality Inn (on Business 6, west of Ole Miss Campus) 234-7031

Please check appropriate blanks, give your name and address, cut along the line below, and return form with your check for the Friday Mississippi River and Delta Trip and/or the Saturday Banquet, an all-you-can-eat buffet, to: **MOS, P.O. Box 515, University, MS 38677**. If desiring to attend symposium or papers sessions of the CWS, please indicate so that an MOS badge can be provided Friday night to cover your attendance without paying a registration fee of the CWS. Saturday Banquet Meeting will be at Cobb's Seafood and Steaks Restaurant, which is ca. 7 miles west of Oxford, on S side of Rt. 6. (See map below for F & S events)



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Enclosed find my check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ persons  
 for \_\_\_\_\_ Dinner reservations at Cobb's, @ \$18.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ River and Delta Trip reservations @ \$50.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
TOTAL = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide ID badge(s) so I/we may attend sessions of the CWS Mtg.  Yes  No  
 name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

street/PO Box # \_\_\_\_\_

city, state, zip \_\_\_\_\_

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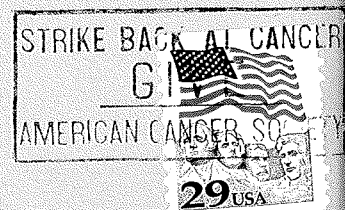
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**All persons interested in Mississippi bird life are invited to join the MOS. Life Membership, \$100. Annual dues: Sustaining, \$20; Individual, \$10; Family, \$15; (Junior and Golden Age: Individual, \$4; Family, \$8); Institutional (Subscribing): \$10. Members receive the Mississippi Kite semiannually and the MOS Newsletter on a quarterly schedule for each season. Please send 1992 dues, or address changes, to the Treasurer.**  
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