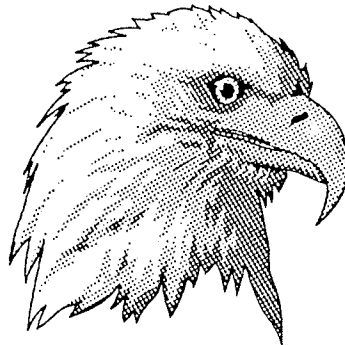

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LOOKING AHEAD--TO SPRING BIRDING

TISHOMINGO COUNTY, HERE WE COME!

MOS Spring Meeting--Tishomingo State Park, APRIL 30-MAY 2

[Arrangements/Program: Margaret Copeland, Terence Schiefer]

GENERAL INFO: Nestled in the northeast corner of the state, Tishomingo State Park is the site for this year's Spring MOS Meeting. The Park offers Mississippi "mountains" with opportunities for migrating warblers and songbirds from the roads and trails. Just off Miss. Highway 25 and the Natchez Trace, Tishomingo State Park surrounds Haynes Lake, while Bear Creek flows through a major portion of the Park. Hillside and streamside birding should yield views of Ovenbirds, Worm-eating Warblers and Scarlet Tanagers as well as a host of nesting and migrant woodland species.

The featured speaker for the Saturday dinner meeting will be James Key of Starkville, who will give a slide presentation on his research on Barn Owls in Mississippi. He is currently an M.S. student in Biological Sciences at Mississippi State University. His research has centered on Barn Owl food and habitat preferences, especially where they raise their young and spend the winter.

ACCOMMODATIONS: MOS has reserved group cabins for the weekend; these each accommodate 16 people in dormitory style, with showers and bathroom facilities in each cabin. Cost is \$6.00 per night per person. You must bring your own linens, soap and towels. For reservations, complete and mail form on page 9. [Overnight guests do not pay park entrance fees.] A limited number of sleeping cabins that accommodate 4-6 persons may be available through calling the park office for reservations (601/438-6914). R.V. or other camping is also available. The nearest motels (Days Inn and Key West Inn) are 15 miles north in Iuka.

MEALS: To use the group cabins, we must eat 3 meals in the park dining area. Breakfasts will be served both Saturday and Sunday (\$4.50 per person each); the Saturday evening meal will be \$9.00 (chicken entree, salad, vegetables, pie, etc.). Plan on a Friday night meal at the restaurant just outside the park on Rt. 25; others are rather far away. For Saturday and Sunday Lunches, bring your own supplies or purchase at vicinity restaurants.

FIELD TRIPS: Birding trips are planned for Saturday and Sunday

mornings. A native plant field trip is scheduled for Saturday afternoon. The canoe trip down Bear Creek takes 3-4 hours depending on conditions of water; return transportation, canoe, paddles, and life jackets are provided by the Park at a cost of \$15.00 per canoe (2 or 3 people). If you need a partner we can find one for you! Indicate your need on the registration form, and make these reservations by mid-March to reserve a canoe (601/323-1445). Sign-up lists will be available Friday night to facilitate small groups for birding trips. Trips will depart as per listed schedule--PLEASE BE ON TIME! Walking trips or birding by car will be offered to accommodate all needs. Use the registration form to indicate your needs/wishes. Be willing to share a ride and to meet new people. "OLD" MEMBERS--Please do your part to make visitors/new members feel welcomed and included!

DETAILED MEETING SCHEDULE:

[NOTE: All activities are in the Park Dining Hall if not otherwise indicated]

Friday, April 30	Noon---'til	Arrival & check-in to cabins; eat supper outside park before evening gathering.
	5:30 to 7:00	Registration; Sign-Up for Field Trips; Maps & Schedule; Social (light refreshments)
	7:00 p.m.	Members slide show; Introduction of Red-cockaded Woodpecker Survey Project; Field trip Q & A time
Saturday, May 1	6:00 a.m.	Warbler Walks (small groups from Group Cabins to Dining Area)
	7:00 a.m.	Breakfast
	7:45 a.m.	Field Trips depart Group Cabins area
	Noontime	LUNCH ON YOUR OWN
	1:00 p.m. <u>only</u>	Canoe trip departs from Swinging Bridge
	1:30 p.m.	Native Plants Field Trip departs from Group Cabins area
	<u>Afternoon</u>	birding "on your own;" check "Must See List" in Dining Area for ideas
	5:30 p.m.	MOS Board Meeting
6:30 p.m.	MOS Dinner (casual dress); list compilation and business meeting; Speaker: James Key on "Barn Owls"	
Sunday, May 2	6:00 a.m.	Warbler Walk, as Saturday a.m.
	7:00 a.m.	Breakfast
	7:45 a.m.	Field Trips depart from Group Cabins
	Noontime	Departure

OTHER SPRING BIRDING OPPORTUNITIES:

Spring 1993 Field Trips of the Miss. Coast Audubon Society:

- 1) March 13: Logtown and Jackson Marsh -- Meet 7:30 a.m. at the Miss. Welcome Center off I-10 just E. of LA/MS state line, Hancock Co. Leaders: Gerry Morgan (388-3671), Sharon Milligan (435-4921).
- 2) April 17: Dauphin Island, AL -- Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Cadillac Square

on the island. Leaders: Millie Page(388-1230), Mickey Baker(388-6042).
3) **May 8: Jackson County** -- Meet at 7:30 a.m. at McDonalds on Hwy 90 in Gautier. Leaders: J.N. & Cheryl Randall (896-1543).

Public Meetings at the Marine Education Center, Biloxi at 7:30 p.m.:

- 1) **March 15:** "Bird Songs" by Richard Walton; Mr. Walton also will hold a 1-day workshop plus a half-day field trip on March 13 and 14; registration limited to 25; for details call Millie Page at 388-1230.
- 2) **May 17:** "The Nature Conservancy in Mississippi" by Roger Jones.

NOTICE: **Fall 1993 MOS Meeting** will be on the Gulf Coast, with headquarters at Holiday Inn Gulfport (on the beach) the weekend of 5-7 November. Mark your calendars now and reserve that weekend for having great fun birding on the Mississippi coast!

*******SECOND ANNUAL NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT--MAY 8, 1993*******

Careful readers of the MOS Newsletter may remember from a year ago an announcement of a new "event" the North American Migration Count, conceived and launched in '92 by Jim Stasz of Maryland. This occasion is designed to apply the approach of the Christmas Bird Count for a migration season count, but differs in targeting a single date. Local groups are urged to "team up" on that day to do a full-day census of their county, recording number of both species and individuals. The goal is to elevate the consciousness of the general public regarding present-day concerns for maintenance of populations, and even survival, of neotropical migrants, to gather data that may help in this fight-- THIS WILL PROVIDE AN IMPORTANT DATABASE! It also can focus attention on birding for those unaware of its allures.

The only two such counts taken in 1992--at Starkville and Vicksburg--were published in the September '92 Newsletter. The results showed many interesting findings. For 1993 our MOS President, JoRee Pennell, will serve as State Coordinator, gathering all such reports submitted and sending them on the National Coordinator. Information to accompany the bird list is similar but not identical to that for a CBC; you will need instructions for proper recording and submission of data. If thinking to involve your locality, please contact JoRee Pennell [address on outside mailer] for all details ASAP; mainly, you need a local person or persons to serve as organizer and a compiler-reporter. Incidentally, some publicity for your local club and for the pursuit of birding should be a part of the activity, so plan early to get the ear of someone at your local newspaper, radio or TV outlet.

LOOKING AHEAD--TO BIRD STUDY/CONSERVATION PROJECTS

RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER SURVEY PROJECT

Margaret Copeland

At its January 1993 meeting the MOS Board endorsed a new project for MOS involving the survey and listing of all active Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) colonies in Mississippi. This information will be given to the Mississippi Natural Heritage Program of the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science and shared with biologists working to protect

the species.

This project will be a cooperative effort between national forest biologists, national wildlife refuge personnel, timber company biologists, county foresters, MOS members, Audubon Society members, and any other interested persons--all contributing information to aid in locating, tracking and protecting the woodpecker.

At this time there is no readily available or accurate inventory of active RCW colonies in this (or any other) entire State. While much is known about this endangered species, no data exist on the number and location of active colonies statewide in Mississippi. Thus, our goal is to obtain a complete and accurate listing and to conduct a tracking of all colonies over a period of time (e.g., 5-10 years). A density profile of RCWs, as well as a monitoring of changing activity patterns should provide biologists a clearer picture of the status and prospects for RCWs here.

A quiet visit to a colony during the nestling stage (ca. May 15-25) should give an observer the opportunity to count young being fed by adults at the nest cavity, to plot the location of trees being actively used on a schematic drawing, and to observe and record conditions of the forests surrounding the colony.

The project will be discussed on Friday night at the Spring Meeting. This first year we plan to work with National Forest biologists and NWR personnel to survey the known/reported colonies on federal lands. As plans progress with the Heritage Program and federal biologists this spring, we will discuss future possibilities involving timber companies and other private landowners. It is important that the project be perceived as "non-threatening," as our intent is to facilitate knowledge of the species in Mississippi and to increase public awareness of the RCW. The project should be viewed as scientific, educational and worthwhile by all who are involved in any aspect of it.

If you or other persons whom you know in your area may be willing to help in surveys or work in some manner on the project, please contact Terry Schiefer, 204 Gillespie Street, Starkville, MS 39759 (324-3748) or Margaret Copeland, 909 Evergreen Street, " " " (323-1445).

AM. KESTREL NEST BOX PROJECT

Penny Kochtitzky
Hattiesburg

The realization of a kestrel nest-box trail has already begun with a contract for 10 nesting boxes. The Mississippi Wildlife Federation has voted to help form a coalition of groups interested in erecting nest boxes along the highways of Mississippi. On the 4th of February the Pine Woods Chapter of the National Audubon Society gave the go-ahead for a trail outlined by Jim Puckett of Hattiesburg. Those MOS members who may be interested in building nesting boxes, helping to erect them, or merely obtaining more information on this project should contact Elizabeth Rooks, Director of the Mississippi Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1814, Jackson, MS 39215-1814.

Let's get involved, MOSers!

LOOKING BACK: FROM THE FIELD--Winter Season

Reminder! As stated previously, appearance of an item in "From the Field" does not constitute definitive publication, because items do not ordinarily reach the Editor with supporting details. This includes CBCs, for which details of rarity reports should have been provided to the Regional Editor for review. Thus, the *definitive* publication site for CBCs is the annual CBC issue of *Am. Birds*.

GENERAL: As of late December and January the Delta seemed to have extra good population of **Snow Geese**--big flocks reported in Tunica, Bolivar, Leflore and Washington Counties. **Ross' Goose** is to be found among them, if one can get a decently close view, as seems to be true for flocks from Mississippi westward.

Nona Herbert witnessed effects of a Delta field (N Bolivar Co.) being the only one for miles that had not been cleaned up for planting, indeed, left to be overgrown by weeds for more than a year. In January she counted **61 Red-tailed Hawks**, "sitting, flying and balancing on the tips of little bushes, a number of Am. Kestrels doing the same plus 8 or more N. Harriers flying low over the field" at this spot! What a sight that must have been.

The "hottest" item has been an **Ash-throated Flycatcher** from the SW U.S., only the 3rd sighting for Mississippi, found on 6 Feb. in Noxubee County SW of Brooksville by Terry Schiefer and others. Seen also by 6 more on the next day, the bird was target for 3 persons' photo efforts. Jeff Wilson did succeed in making this bird not only the first of its species seen by many observers in MS, but also first to be documented by means of photographs.

The perennial **Lesser Black-backed Gull** returned to Harrison County beaches, whereas the **Prairie Falcon** of '91-'92 was back at its stand in the Cossar State Park-Enid Dam area of N Miss. Coastal folks complained of a "slow" season, but six species of hummingbirds for Dec./Jan. sounds high speed to some of us! New for Mississippi--**Allen's and Calliope**--plus **Buff-bellied, Rufous, Black-chinned & Ruby-throat**.

1992 Christmas Bird Counts Highlights

(Reporter/compiler named at beginning)

Arkabutla (Rob Peebles)--27 Dec.; 11 observers in 4-5 parties (party-hours?); cloudy, light rain; 38-48°;-- **1 Pacific Loon**, 305 Great Blue Herons; 17 species of waterfowl; **Com. Ground-Dove**; 7 Wild Turkey; **1 Western Tanager**; 4 Lincoln's Sparrow; 1 Purple Finch vs. 39 House Finch; TOTAL, **97** species.

Church Hill (Genevieve Little)--22 Dec.; 2 observers in 2 parties; 2 Am. Widgeon (1st for count); 1 House Wren; 32 Hermit Thrush; 1 Gray Catbird; 1 Solitary Vireo; 2 Com. Yellowthroat; **1 Northern Waterthrush** (prize late-lingerer! 1st for MS CBC?); TOTAL: **56** species, 2399 inds.

Grenada (Marvin Davis)--17 Dec.; 10 observers in 4 parties: 37 party-hours; cloudy, 41-51°;--2 Grt. Egret; 84 Mallard (low); **990** Bonaparte's Gulls (highest in 26 years); 4 Com. Ground-Dove and Com. Barn-Owl (both 2nd ever); 1 White-eyed Vireo (1st for count); TOTAL, **95** species, 8605 individuals.

Hattiesburg (Larry Gates)--2 Jan.; # observers, etc.??; 1 ad. **Red-necked Grebe**; 17 species of ducks, including 4 Greater Scaup (midst 904 Lessers); 5 Wild Turkey, but no Bobwhite; 62 Red-hd. Woodpecker (high); only 8 Golden-cr. Kinglets; 43 Dark-eyed Junco (low); 117 House Finches (twice '91!); 25 Pine Siskins (ave.+). TOTAL, **104** species, 8234 individuals (down ca. 25% from '80s average).

Jackson (Bill Turcotte)--2 Jan.; 22 observers in 8 parties; ? party-hours; clear, temp. 37-50°--**34** Com. Loons, 117 Am. White Pelicans, 213 Great Egrets, 13 sp. waterfowl, 1 Osprey, **2385** Bonaparte's Gulls; 2 Spotted Sandpipers (but no Least), 7 Am. Woodcock (great habitat and/or hard work!), 12 Barred Owl (must be dining on Screech Owls--none found!), 5 species of wrens; only 3 Hermit Thrushes; 7 Purple vs. 14 House Finches; TOTAL: **103** sp.

Jackson County (Larry Gates)--20 Dec.; # observers, hours, etc.??; 71 Com. Loons were 2.4x '80s ave.; 105 White Pelicans were 4x '80s ave.; 83 Brown Pelicans, ca. 5x '80s ave.; 1 Anhinga; no Cattle Egrets; only 2 Mottled Ducks; 18 sp. waterfowl; 9 Ospreys; 52 Sandhill Cranes (high); no Piping Plover; 12 Am. Oystercatchers (what a recent splurge!); [1 CW Whimbrel]; 1 Nightjar (species); 2 Purple Martin; no White-eyed Vireo; 1 Townsend's Warbler; **66** Palm Warblers; 1 Henslow's Sparrow; TOTAL, **141** species, 11,110 individuals (low).

Noxubee NWR (Terry Schiefer)--20 Dec.; 20 observers in 7 parties; 61.5 party-hours; cloudy, temp 35-58°--3 Horned Grebes, 7 Gr. Wht-front. Geese; 997 Ring-necked Ducks and 2219 Hooded Mergansers; [1 Golden Eagle in count week]; 71 Com. Snipe; 51 Wild Turkeys; 1 ea of Barn Owl and Fish Crow; 1 Red Crossbill; and extra good nos. of several other species; TOTAL, **100** species.

Sardis Lake (Marvin Davis)--21 Dec.; 16 observers in 6 parties; 50 party-hours; cloudy, rain early then foggy, temp. 43-53°--1 Eared Grebe, [1 Red-necked Grebe in count week]; 1 Am. White Pelican (no match for Jackson flock, but a 1st), 1 imm. Black-legged Kittiwake (matches the 1st year of the count, 1975; seen by many 6+ weeks); 4 Sedge Wrens, 1 Com. Yellowthroat, 1 Lincoln's Sparrow--all were only 2nd timers in 18 years; TOTAL: **100** species; 14,258 individuals.

Sidon (Philip Barbour)--27 Dec.; 20 observers in 6 parties; 56 party-hours and 442 party-miles; 927 D-cr. Cormorants and 419 Great Blue Herons--sure to make catfish farmers unhappy!; 700 Canvasbacks, 8006 Lesser Scaup, and 1000 Ruddy Ducks--made happy by the presence of those catfish farm ponds; 19 E. Screech Owls (some early-birders at work); 1 swallow (sp.); 127 E. Bluebird; 3 Gray Catbirds; 4 only Purple Finches, but 70 House Finches; total, **83** species; 19,596 inds.

Southern Hancock County (Judy Toups)--28 Dec.; 52-67°, early fog; 18 observers in 8-9 parties; 82 party-hr;--2 Am. Bittern; 1 ea. Reddish Egret, Grn-backed Heron, Blk-sh. Kite, Merlin, Peregrine, Buff-bel. Humm., Vermilion Flycatcher, N. Rough-w. & Barn Swallow, Blk-&-Wht. Warbler, Grasshopper Sparrow and Bronzed Cowbird; 2 Sharp-tailed

Sparrow; 14 species "very low Nos." ranging across all families; TOTAL: 159 species (+ 1 CW), 25,406 individuals.

Southern Washington County (Ed Alexander)--3 Jan.; # observers, hours?; 2 Anhingas; 1 Tundra Swan; 24k+ Snow Goose and 1 **Ross' Goose** (1st on a MS CBC); **12 Com. Moorhen**; 95 peep (both Least and Western Sandpiper); 1 Forster's Tern (new for count); 2 Com. Ground-Dove; 1 **Vermilion Flycatcher**; **1 crow (sp.)--only 2nd ever for this CBC!**; 2 Dickcissel; 2 **Lark Sparrow**; TOTAL: **113 species** (former record was 104); 118,017 individuals. Highest total ever for an inland MS CBC?

Sumner (Genevieve Tharp)--26 Dec.; 3 observers in 2 parties, 14.5 party-hours; 250 Grn-winged Teal (2+x prior high); 14 species of waterfowl, incl. 585 N. Shoveler, 702 Gadwall, 775 L. Scaup; 17 Pine Siskins; TOTAL **64** species, 15,986 individuals.

Vicksburg (Hal Moore)--20 Dec.; 17 observers in 11 parties, plus 1 at feeder; 69 total party-hours; weather good; 1 Com. Loon; 1 **Vermilion Flycatcher**; beaucoup Am. Robins (**16K** by one party **5+K** by another!), 637 Cedar Waxwings; TOTAL, **97** species; 44,510 individuals.

CBC Overview: CBC period weather was mild; happily no all-day downpours this year. Lots of interesting birds were reported. There were banner numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls (Barnett and Grenada having new highs; Sardis also had lots, hidden by fog.) One likely correlate was the imm. **Black-legged Kittiwake** at Sardis (present from early Dec. to 30 Jan.). Several reporters found ordinarily common residents and migrants to be scarce; certainly the irregular winter finches were low--Purple Finch and Pine Siskin, even Am. Goldfinch, and lack of Red-breasted Nuthatches everywhere. An echo of last year were single Golden Eagle (CW) and **Red Crossbill** at Noxubee NWR.

LOOKING BACK--New Members, and Delinquent Ones

MOS Treasurer and Keeper of the Membership List, Jan Dubuisson, is pleased to announce the following MOS additions since the list published in the July '92 MOS Newsletter.

From Hattiesburg: David Cimprich and Mark S. Woodbury; from Jackson: Mary P. Stevens; from Madison--Ken Hackman, Col. Stephen W. Hickock; from Oxford/University: Robert N. Davis, Col. and Mrs. James P. Hooper, Alison Nimrod; from Vicksburg--David King; from Cleveland, Tenn.--Dr. David C. Chaffin; from Midfield, Alabama--Sharon Hudgins. **GREETINGS AND WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!** And **THANKS** to those members who may have had a hand in recruiting them--**KEEP AT IT!**

HOWEVER, we are NOW threatened with the loss of quite a number of members who haven't paid membership dues for 1992 or even earlier, much less '93, while having been kept on the mailing list for our publications by our former easy-going (or lazy?) computer. The mailing label on this Newsletter shows year(s) for any dues unpaid; if 1992 or earlier is in red, it means that you are classed as "delinquent," and that your name will be dropped by our new, not-so-forgiving computer from future MOS Newsletter mailings after this one. **DON'T LET THIS BE OUR LAST TIME TOGETHER!**--please remedy any delinquent state by sending

a check for dues for the years indicated on the label to our Treasurer, who will strive to call off the computer from chewing up your name and deleting it from our rolls!

More on CBCs

MY FIRST CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

by Robert E. Briscoe
Lafayette County, MS

I arrived at the rendezvous point a few minutes before the time appointed by my leader, Gene Knight. While awaiting his arrival I wondered, because it was still dark, why did he want to begin so early? The weather was far from ideal for birding--cloudy with an occasional misty rain falling. Then after Gene arrived, we left our meeting place, and it was still dark! I began to wonder what we were going to see, for I had left my flashlight at home.

We drove about a mile down a gravel road and stopped. Gene said, "This looks like a good place to start." Yes, I thought, and a good place to stop and wait for daylight! I may be exaggerating; there might have been enough light to identify a Bluejay--especially if it had been sitting on the hood of the truck calling "jay, jay"!

Gene stepped out and I followed him to the roadside, where he turned on a tape-player to produce the call of the Eastern Screech-Owl. Now I've known Gene for several years, but about that time because of this action (which then was all new to me), I began to wonder if he might have some mental problems--you know, just a small chemical imbalance. However, as the tape played through a second segment of the owl call, guess what? A *Screech-Owl* answered the tape! Unbelievable. That's how we listed bird number one.

Gene had explained how we were to cover an assigned area while others were doing likewise in adjacent areas about the 15-mile diameter circle focussed on Sardis Lake. We walked fence rows, boggy fields, big woods, marshy spots, briar thickets, pine thickets, and a couple of places that I wouldn't know how to describe.

At the end of the day I was nearly exhausted physically, but overjoyed mentally. We had identified a total of 78 species, which was surely a one-day record for me. I also listed three lifetime firsts, or "lifers," a Brant, a Vesper Sparrow and a LeConte's Sparrow. I feel that I have been very fortunate to have become acquainted with a number of members of the Oxford Bird Club, for through their help and encouragement I've made the acquaintance of lots of mighty fine species of birds around the Oxford area.

KIRTLAND'S WARBLER NEWS: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Forest Service announce posting and closure of all K.W. nesting areas this season. Free guided tours to see the warbler are provided 15 May-4 July out of Mio or Grayling, MI. For info, call 517/826-3252.