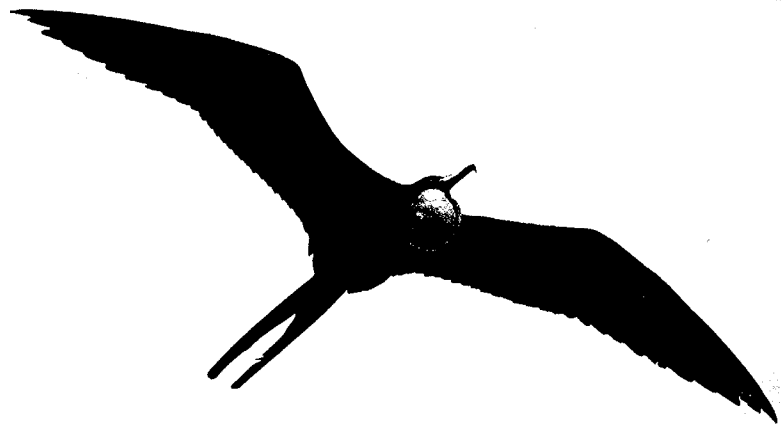

**MISSISSIPPI
ORNITHOLOGICAL
SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER**

**VOL. 38, No. 3
FALL (SEPTEMBER) 1993**



LOOKING AHEAD

FINAL Announcement of Nov. 5-7, 1993 Fall MOS Meeting

Hotel: Gulfport Beachfront Holiday Inn
1600 East Beach Blvd.
Gulfport, MS 39501 (601) 864-4310

Cost: \$46.00 +tax for single; add \$10 for each additional person. Make your own reservations IMMEDIATELY, if not already, at this hotel (mention MOS) or another, even if you're not absolutely sure that you can attend. The new "gaming"/gambling industry on the Coast has transformed motel/hotel occupancy on weekends. Don't wait any longer for making your reservations, or you may find NOTHING available on the whole Coast! DO IT NOW!!

Hospitality Time: Friday, November 5, at 7:00 pm in the Bayside Room. Soft drinks, chips, etc. Cash bar available down the hall.

Birding Field Trips: All day Saturday, meeting and leaving from the hotel parking.

Banquet: Saturday, Nov. 6, at 7:00 p.m. in the Hurricane (!) Room will feature a buffet dinner--mostly seafood, but also other meats available. Cost will be \$15.80 per person including tax and tip. Send meal reservations (form on page 11) and check made out to Gulfport Beachfront Holiday Inn by October 15 to: Millie Page

2600 Evergreen Lane
Biloxi, MS 39531

For further information or suggestions, call Millie at 388-1230.

1994 Spring Meeting

The MOS meeting next spring will be held in Jackson the weekend of April 22-24 and will be hosted by the Jackson Audubon Society and the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science. Be sure to reserve those dates on your calendar and plan to be there.

LOOKING BACK

Late Announcement: It is with deep regrets that we must notify the MOS membership of the passing of Ben B. Coffey, Jr., the "dean" of birders among folks in the Mid-South/Tenn-Ark-Miss area, on 22 August. Ben had been hampered by a cardiac problem for a number of recent years, which progressed past remedy in the week prior to his death. He is survived by his wife Lula. It has been indicated that any memorials may be made

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to the Memphis Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, or to the Nature Conservancy.

OVERDUE ITEMS

From the Field: Two New species for the Mississippi List!

Despite several good sightings of the **Northern Goshawk**, it had not been confirmed for the State List until a specimen came to hand as of early March '93. As MOS member **Judy Burkepile** of Oxford was driving up a hill approaching her home at the SW edge of Oxford near dusk, she saw a large raptor flutter across her path. Perceiving the bird to be injured, she walked back, spotted it perched low in the woods off the roadside and made a correct identification that it was an adult **Northern Goshawk**. Later she called your Ed. and Keith Meals of the MS Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks about attempting to capture it in the morning. Thus it was that Ed. arrived the next a.m., found the bird perched a few feet above the ground, and made identifiable photographs before Judy and Keith arrived to join the rescue force. Keith, being both nimble and quick, made a highly admirable capture, and soon it was possible to photograph the bird in hand before it was taken to a local D.V.M. for examination and surgery for a broken wing bone. An X-ray revealed that the fracture was caused by a large lead shot still embedded; damage to the nerve eliminated any chance of restoring the bird to flight. Moreover, the weakened and dehydrated state of the bird--evidently having been shot 2 or 3 days before--caused it to succumb to anesthesia for surgery attempted on the wing. The bird was taken by Meals to the Natural Sciences Museum, where it is slated to become a display-mounted specimen.

Another winter visitor in early 1993, this one at a Tunica County catfish farm, was a large immature gull spotted as a "ringer" by **Jeff Wilson**, and identified as an Asiatic species, the **Slaty-backed Gull!** Jeff's successful photography has enabled the ID to be confirmed by Alaskan observers--the only folks in North America having much opportunity to become familiar with the species. Look for a full publication on this exceptional happening (although Lower 48 sightings are on the increase) to appear elsewhere.

FROM THE FIELD: Summer Season and Early Fall

Asiatic Red-neck Seen Headed for Mississippi

On the afternoon of 7 August a call from Jeff Wilson sent your Editor, as soon as obligations permitted, hurrying north to Shelby Co., TN and the Ensley Bottoms' supreme sewage sludgepits shorebird scene. Just as he arrived, Jeff shouted, "Hurry up, this bird's about ready to leave." No longer the "Silver Streak" of former days, but more like a "Silver Snail," Ed. was only a few yards from where Jeff and Carolyn Bullock of Memphis stood, with their scopes focussed on an array of several thousand shorebirds, when the terrible utterance rang forth, "There he goes!" By a mere 2 minutes or less he missed seeing a once-in-a-lifetime **Rufous-necked Stint**--an accidental visitor from Asia, sometimes known as the Red-necked Stint. Oh yes, he saw the bird, pointed out as it flew southeastward out of sight toward the nearby MS stateline, but in no way was it an identification. So near, but yet so far! Evidently the sandpiper, *Caladris ruficollis*, felt similarly; it was too close to its next stop, somewhere among the Mississippi Red-necks, to spend a night in west TN. It probably was headed for the Red-neck Capitol at Starkville, or thereabouts, where it may never be noticed as standing out from the crowd.

Coastal Caper

Ed. found that a visit to the Coast on 1 and 2 July was well timed for inspecting some of the cutest hatchlings of this breeding season. In Jackson Co. were two pairs of rather new baby Black-necked Stilts at Seaman Rd. Lagoons and Pascagoula River Marshes. On the Harrison Co. beaches at the observatory platform by part of the Least Terns' breeding sites, there was great fun to be had in watching the behavior of parents and young alike in the efforts of the former to drop fish in the correct gaping mouths of the latter! Some of the young were yet flightless, while others were close--doing low-level little "helicoptering" lift-offs. Yet others had "soloed" and were flying 5 or 10-yard circles over the colony. Same day in Hancock Co., some full-grown young were mixed in with adults on the beachfront at least 5+ miles from their possible nesting sites. Incidentally, one could also view young Black Skimmers and their parents at the same west Biloxi sites. Away from the shores, a pleasing sight was six Swallow-tailed Kites in view at one time soaring over the Pascagoula River near Cumbest Bridge.

Shorebirding Excellent

The second week of July saw the return of southbound arctic shorebirds already in migration. Gene Knight had 4 Greater Yellowlegs at Sardis Lake on the 10th, while Jeff Wilson, practically within sight of the Miss. stateline in southwesternmost Shelby County, TN had a remarkable **13 species of shorebirds** for that same early weekend. Apparently, this was not an ominous sign of more bad circumstances on their Far North breeding grounds, after 1992 being a "disastrous" breeding season because of bad weather conditions on the tundra. Around the 1st weekend of August, **20 species** were identified at the same area. By the 4th of August Gene Knight had totalled **18 species** of southbound shorebirds in NW Mississippi. At a catfish farm in E Tallahatchie Co. near Macel, Gene & Shannon Knight et al. had **25 species** for the month of August, including goodies such as Red Knot and Marbled Godwit!

Plentiful Purple Martins

From Nona and J.C. Herbert comes a report of unusual observations on Purple Martin migration along the Mississippi River already in progress by **June 30th**. While picking wild plums along the levee in the early evening, they saw numbers of martins going past. With time they became "thicker and thicker...birds thick as far as you could see in any direction...mostly males...thousands." Checking at another spot 1/4 mile away, they found "the river covered up with low-flying martins skimming the river. In that area were some dead trees that were covered up with perching martins, both sexes but mostly males; a wave of them would lift off and another group would land to rest a bit. We rode down the levee a mile and they were as thick as ever. Two days later we witnessed as many or more; and then several days later, thousands again, but not as many. In years past we never saw that many... *Migration is such a unique, mysterious thing.*"

SPECIAL ATTENTION: Hummingbirders

Ed. couldn't resist sharing what Rich Stallcup wrote recently--this delightful paragraph describing a marvelous moment:

A sudden "Zeeee," high in the air above, signaled the presence of the first spring Allen's Hummingbird to return from Mexico.

It was January 26th the average annual arrival date for this species at Point Reyes. Upon hearing the bird, I glanced up and saw the little fellow power-diving straight towards me. By the time I could look back down he was drinking from the freshly filled hummingbird feeder, hanging, incidentally, from my hand. I froze. He drank, then went straight to the business of chasing the numerous Anna's Hummingbirds that had been here all winter. Having travelled over 1300 miles, this bird was territorial within 30 sec. of touch-down. He had been here before."

This was the introductory paragraph to an essay "Territory & Personal Space" in Observer (No. 96, Summer 1993), the Quarterly Journal of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory [a publication received by members of PRBO.] Stallcup is author of the 1990 book "Ocean Birds of the Near-shore Pacific" published by the Point Reyes (Calif.) Bird Observatory, with which he has long been associated.

THE BIGGEST YEAR
by Terence L. Schiefer

Each year I try to find as many species of birds as I can in Mississippi. I do this partly to keep myself familiar with all of the state's birds, partly for the challenge of learning where and when Mississippi's birds occur and partly just because it's fun. In a normal year I do most of my birding locally with a few trips to other areas of north Mississippi and several trips to the Mississippi coast. 1992 was not a normal year.

I returned from my Christmas vacation in Pennsylvania on the evening of January 5th only to learn from Gene Knight that several rare birds were in the Oxford area, three of which would be state birds for me. Since I had plenty of vacation time built up at work, I took the next day off (my first of many leave days during the year) and joined Gene and a group of visiting birders from the coast in a day of birding. I probably never saw so many rare birds in one day: Red-throated Loon (state bird), Red-necked Grebe, Trumpeter Swan, and Brant at Sardis Lake and a Prairie Falcon (state bird) at Enid Lake. The Pacific Loon which would have been a state bird eluded me. The following day I birded with the coast group on my home turf near Starkville where we saw Black Scoter, Short-eared Owl, and Bewick's Wren--all of which were wintering locally. By the end of my second day of birding for the year I had seen 96 species, nearly a third of the birds I would see during 1992. I rounded out the month with a successful trip to Grenada Lake to see an immature Black-legged Kittiwake and a weekend trip to the Mississippi coast where I saw some of the unusual birds that had been wintering there: Marbled Godwit, Purple Sandpiper, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Buff-bellied Hummingbird, and Vermilion Flycatcher. I ended the month with 161 species, the last of which was a very special bird.

On the afternoon of January 31st while checking for birds at the Starkville sewage lagoon a flash of yellow caught my eye. Putting my scope on the bird I was dumbfounded to see a wagtail! Never having seen a wagtail before I had no idea what species I was seeing. After

jotting down a few quick notes I ran home to alert other birders and check the field guides to learn that I had found a Yellow Wagtail (at least that is what I thought at the time). To the delight of many birders, the bird stayed all day on February 1st. But despite an all-day vigil the bird failed to return the next day. Fortunately, Greg Jackson of Birmingham, Alabama was able to take some good photographs of the bird, which were sent to the European experts for review. Every one of them agrees that the bird was not a Yellow Wagtail after all, but the very similar **Citrine Wagtail** of central Asia and eastern Europe. This sighting represents the first record of the species in the Western Hemisphere!

While making wagtail phone calls I learned from Hal Moore that a Western Grebe was being seen at Ross Barnett Reservoir. As soon as I was sure that the wagtail was gone for good, I made the trip to Jackson and got great looks at my 4th state bird of the year. The MOS meeting in Washington County during early February was great, the highlights being Tundra Swan, Ross' Goose and Western Meadowlark. A side-trip to Sardis Lake to find the Pacific Loon (state bird) finally paid off thanks to the aid of Jeff Wilson's superior Kowa scope. Back home a Golden Eagle was an excellent find at Noxubee NWR. Late in the month I chased a Glaucous Gull (state bird) that was seen on the coast. Not only did I see the Glaucous Gull, but a Great Black-backed Gull and Henslow's Sparrow (state bird) as well. By month's end I had seen 187 species.

With so many rare birds already on my year list I began thinking seriously of doing a big year. The current record had been set by Judy Toups when she saw 304 species in 1987. Both Gene Knight and I tried to better this record in 1989, but we both fell short with 300 and 297 species, respectively. Would 1992 be the year of the **big year**? Only spring migration would tell.

Each year in March I take the ferry to West Ship Island to see Northern Gannet and Snowy Plover, both "must see" big year birds. The long trip to and from the island has always proved uneventful on past trips despite my best efforts at scanning the Mississippi Sound. All that scanning finally paid off as a Jaeger (which I failed to identify to species) flew by the ferry. The Gannet and Plover were nice too. Having seen most of the winter birds earlier in the year, species added in March were mainly the expected early spring migrants. I ended the month with 209 species.

I had been asked by Judy Toups to help lead some of the Mississippi field trips for the American Birding Association convention being held in Mobile, Alabama during mid-April. I was uncertain what effect my spending a week in Alabama during peak spring migration would have on my big year attempt. I would, however, have the long Easter weekend before the convention to bird on the coast, and the three field trips I was going to lead during the week would be in Mississippi. My pre-convention birding found a nice breeding-plumaged White-faced Ibis at the Lakeshore ponds, and I had a good Easter day fallout of migrants at the Ansley chenier. The highlight of the ABA field trips (at least for me) was Mississippi's 4th Hudsonian Godwit at the Seaman Road

sewage lagoon. Some of the west coast birders were just as excited to see Tufted Titmouse and Brown Thrasher, not to mention the great looks they got at Swallow-tailed Kites. Most of the birds added during April were migrants heading farther north or newly arrived summer residents. By the end of April I had seen 273 species.

On May 11th, 1991 Gene Knight found a Connecticut Warbler and all the *Empidonax* flycatchers along the Mississippi River near Bass Landing in DeSoto County. Jeff Wilson also had found a Connecticut Warbler here on May 13th 1990. I've looked for these birds there in the past but have never found much in the way of migrants at all. Still I wanted to check this spot since I still needed four species of empids as well as a Connecticut Warbler, which would be a state bird. May 10th at Bass Landing was the most spectacular spring fallout I've experienced in Mississippi! Warblers (23 species), thrushes and orioles were everywhere along the short stretch of road along the river inside the levee. I never found a Connecticut Warbler, and the only empid I saw was a Least Flycatcher, but I did add six species to my year list (including my 2nd Mourning Warbler in MS), which is a lot at this late a date. (That same day, farther north along the river at Wapanocca NWR in Arkansas, Jeff Wilson and Gene and Shannon Knight were experiencing a similar or even better fallout that led to their setting a new Arkansas Big Day record). Since the birding was so good at Bass Landing, I decided to stay another day but saw only the same species in smaller numbers. A short trip down the levee, however, produced three more birds for the year including a Black-throated Blue Warbler (my 2nd in MS), and my first spring-time Olive-sided Flycatcher, which I was glad to see as one can spend days searching for this species in the fall. May ended with my tally at 286 species.

Spring migration had been good to me. The only small land birds that I missed, which I might have expected to see in spring were Yellow-bellied, Alder, and Willow Flycatchers, Cape May and Connecticut Warblers, Philadelphia and Black-whiskered Vireo and Gray Kingbird. The later two are strictly coastal, very rare and seldom seen outside of spring migration. During June I added only three species: Least Bittern, Chuck-will's-widow, and Wood Stork. July was even slower (but prettier) with four Roseate Spoonbills at Yazoo NWR being the only species added.

August is a time to fill in the shorebird list. Buff-breasted Sandpipers can be hard to find, but this year I saw several the first of which was on the A & D Turf Farm near Oxford. A trip to the coast in late August produced the uncommon Common Tern and the long walk to the east tip of West Ship Island was rewarded with Red Knots and a Long-billed Curlew (my 2nd in MS). On August 26th Hurricane Andrew hit the Louisiana coast. I birded that day on the coast of Mississippi but failed to find any of hoped for boobies, shearwaters, or tropical terns that might be blown to shore by the strong south winds. I did find some good inland records of Sandwich and Royal Terns at the Hattiesburg sewage lagoon and on the following day found Laughing Gulls, Black Skimmers, and Magnificent Frigatebirds at Ross Barnett Reservoir. Although I added no new species, Hurricane Andrew produced some of the most dynamic birding of the year. Later I learned that three Sooty

Terns were taken to rehabilitators in Natchez and Jackson. I closed the month with a trip to Great River Road State Park where in past years the Knights and I have seen numbers of *Empidonax* Flycatchers feasting on the fruit of Rough-leaved Dogwoods. Seeing empids in fall is one thing, identifying them is another. With a lot of work and patience I was able to pick out Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and Alder Flycatchers (the later by its call note which is quite distinctive if you take time to learn it). I had now seen 296 species for the year.

During September I concentrated my efforts in the Delta. In three trips to this area I was able to add a Cinnamon Teal (my 2nd in MS) and Red-necked Phalaropes at Yazoo NWR, a Western Kingbird on the Mississippi River levee, plus Philadelphia Vireo and Black-billed Cuckoo (state bird) at Great River Road State Park. Although occurring regularly in Mississippi, the Cuckoo had been my jinx bird, eluding me for the past six years. While looking for shorebirds on the huge sandbar at the state park, I received one of the biggest surprises of the year when I looked up to see a Black Bear walking toward me. What a treat it was to see this Mississippi endangered species up close and personal! Closer to home I was able to find Willow Flycatcher (state bird) and Baird's Sandpiper at Noxubee NWR. The Baird's Sandpiper was my 300th bird for the year, a milestone in itself. On only three other occasions had birders reached this mark: Judy Toups in 1987 & 1989 and Gene Knight in 1989. In 1992 Chita Cassibry and JoRee Pennell joined this group as well. By months end I was at 303 and counting.

October was spent looking for western birds on the coast. A Franklin's Gull on October 10th tied the record, and a pair of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers the next day at Ansley broke it. Other birds added on the coast include: Groove-billed Ani, Glossy Ibis, Merlin, Common Ground-Dove, Bronzed Cowbird, White-winged Dove, Surf Scoter, and Black-chinned Hummingbird. From the Ship Island Ferry I added another state bird, a Pomarine Jaeger, but it did not count as an addition to the year list since it replaced the unidentified Jaeger I had counted earlier. A White-winged Scoter at the Hattiesburg sewage lagoon round-ed out October's additions. At the end of October I stood at 314 species.

Most Yellow-headed Blackbird records in north Mississippi are in September so I was pleased to find a late one in Lowndes County in early November. Two hummingbirds on the coast, Mississippi's first Calliope Hummingbird and its first Allen's Hummingbird were seen at Lydia Schultz's feeders. The later species is so similar to Rufous Hummingbird (the Allen's has narrower outer tail feathers) that I was only able to identify it as *Selasphorus* species. My final species of the year, number 318, was a Peregrine Falcon at Pascagoula River Marsh on November 28th. It was chasing flocks of Eurasian Collared Doves, which I could not count because this introduced species is not yet considered to be established.

I added no new species in December, but not because I wasn't looking. Attempts to find Common Merganser and Harris' Sparrow in north Mississippi proved futile. During the course of the year I birded at least 255 days including the following trips to some of my favorite birding spots: Noxubee NWR (81), Oktibbeha County Lake (58), Starkville

Sewage Lagoon (76), MSU North Farm (111), Mississippi Coast (13), the Delta and Mississippi River (10), Sardis/Grenada Lake Area (10).

I had seen all the species on the checklist of *The Birds of Mississippi* (1991) listed as occurring regularly except the following: Common Merganser, Black-shouldered Kite, Rufous Hummingbird (covered by my having seen a *Selasphorus* species), Cape May Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow, and Evening Grosbeak. I saw 10 species listed as Casual, 16 listed as accidental, and 3 not on the checklist, all of which are mentioned in this article. I added 12 species to my state list during the year. There were about 20 species that I did not see that were reported by other birders in Mississippi during 1992. Some of these I learned about the day they were seen and subsequently mounted an unsuccessful search. Others I learned about long after the fact such as the Burrowing Owl that spent July through October near Natchez! Although chasing rare birds is critical to a successful big year, only 19 species on my list were the result of my having seen birds that were first found by other birders; the rest I discovered on my own. I certainly appreciate the help I received from all the birders across the state.

With close to 340 species of birds having been reported in Mississippi during 1992, I wonder where the big year record will stand in future years. With the increasing numbers of birders in the state and, more importantly, the better communication among birders in recent years, a big year total of 330 does not sound unreasonable. Any enterprising birder who decides to take on the big year challenge will certainly have a year full of great birding experiences whether or not they should topple the current record.

MOS MEMBERS SEEN IN PRINT:

Vice-President David Watts surpassed his usual fine job of writing [and editing] for the MS Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks' publication, Mississippi Outdoors,* in an article for the July-Aug. 1993 issue, pp. 15-21, entitled, "On the Wings of Spring." The critical problems of the declining populations of neotropical migrants nesting in No. America are reviewed, as are programs of research and education under "Partners in Flight" that are aimed at alleviating the situation. The article is illustrated by fine photos of netted birds. Do see it. [*A terrific bargain at \$6/year. The just-arrived Sept.-Oct. issue has some great winners in the '93 photo contest (birds +) you should see!]

Frank R. Moore (USM) and M. Victoria McDonald (U. Central Ark.) wrote an analysis and commentary "On the Possibility that Intercontinental Landbird Migrants Copulate En Route" that appeared in The Auk, vol. 110, no.1, pp. 157-160, 1993. The paper summarizes some evidences consistent with that possibility, especially from studies in Missouri during 1984-89 by W.B. Quay, and suggests how early copulation might confer a reproductive advantage on both males and females.

Under the title "Some Chase Crows" in the July 1993 issue of BirdWatcher's Digest, pp. 42-47, **Marvin Davis** described a successful Colorado outing in August 1988. It had as its goal the setting of a new Lower 48 States & N. American record by identifying on one Big Day 10 corvid species--all those found in Colorado: Gray Jay, Steller's Jay,

Blue Jay, Scrub Jay, Pinyon Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, Black-billed Magpie, Am. Crow, Chihuahuan Raven and Common Raven. [Only in the states of New Mexico or Texas could this number be exceeded, but without air travel it is most unlikely to be achievable on one day.]

BIRDS IN THE NEWS MEDIA, Mississippi and Mid-South:

Golden Eagles' Eagle is a Dead Eagle

Heading late July '93 news was the sad tale of the death of Nugget, the Golden Eagle mascot of USM athletics, apparently as the direct result of gross neglect. USM Pres. Aubrey Lucas announced that investigation of the death by the Fish & Wildlife Service "concluded that malnutrition was due to improper feeding," or more likely, non-feeding! The university's permit to keep an eagle will be relinquished and a fine of \$5,000 will be paid as settlement with the office of the U.S. Attorney. Of further interest would have been an explanation for the lead shot found in Nugget's carcass, but which were not regarded to be a cause of death. Hopefully, this incident may help to put an end to such a questionable use for Golden Eagles, which should receive better protection under the federal Eagle Protection Act than this incident reflects.

Memphis, TN Seeks to Establish Breeding Peregrines Downtown

Five young Peregrines were hacked on a tall downtown building in Memphis this summer in hopes that an urban-nesting population might result in future years. First flights came about 12 July. With an abundant supply of meals on the over-population of feral pigeons, to say nothing of European Starling for hors d'oeuvres, the species might be expected to thrive as "Memphians," as they have upon being hacked in major metropolitan centers around the USA and Canada.

Summary of 1993 Spring Migration Count--by Marion Hutto, Jackson

Seven counties reported count data to JoRee Pennell, this year's state coordinator--Bolivar, Forrest, Jackson, Lafayette, Lowndes, Oktibbeha, and Rankin. 62 people in these seven counties participated in the count. Bolivar and Lowndes both had 2 participants, Jackson and Lafayette had 6, Oktibbeha had 12, Rankin had 16, and Forrest led in the number to participate with 18. Even though there were only 6 participants, Jackson County, as you might expect, had the greatest number of species with 142. Oktibbeha and Rankin had 105 each, Forrest had 104, Lafayette had 94, and Bolivar had 74. Lowndes had only 20 species, but the two participants there were feeder watching and stationary watching only and only for a couple of hours. For that reason, I've excluded that county from the numbers listed below, but I must mention that from one of their stationary spots they observed the only **Magnolia Warbler** for the state. Including the Magnolia Warbler, the total number of species seen in Mississippi on the count day was 178 (not counting "gull sp." and "wren sp."). On the following page is a list of the species seen, with the first letter of the county in which each was seen. As you can see from the list, most of the birds which migrate through Mississippi heading for a more northern area were evidently already through Mississippi by May 8. Hopefully, more were found by birders in other states. Greater participation next year would give a better picture of migration on that Saturday in Mississippi.

MISSISSIPPI NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT, May 8, 1993

10

COUNTIES: B=BOLIVAR, F=FORREST, J=JACKSON, L=LAFAYETTE, O=OKTIBBEHA, R=RANKIN

COMMON LOON	J	O	PECTORAL SAND.	J	O	R	WREN SP.		R				
PIED-B. GREBE	J		DUNLIN	J			BLU-GR. GNTCTCHR	B	F	J	L	O	R
AM. WHITE PELICAN	F	J	L	STILT SAND.	J		EASTERN BLUEBIRD	B	F	J	L	O	R
BROWN PELICAN	J		S-BILL.DOWITCHER	J			WOOD THRUSH	B	F	J	L	O	R
D-C. CORMORANT	J	L	R	AM. WOODCOCK		R	AMERICAN ROBIN	B	F	L	O	R	
ANHINGA			R	WILS'. PHALAROPE	J		GRAY CATBIRD	B	F	L	O	R	
LEAST BITTERN	J		R	LAUGHING GULL	F	J	N. MOCKINGBIRD	B	F	J	L	O	R
GT. BLUE HERON	B	F	J	L	O	R	BROWN THRASHER	B	F	J	L	O	R
GREAT EGRET	B	F	J	O	R		CEDAR WAXWING	F	J	L	O	R	
SNOWY EGRET	B	F	J	O			LOGGERHD SHRIKE	B	F	J	L	O	R
LITTLE BLUE HER	F	J	O				EUR. STARLING	B	F	J	L	O	R
TRICOLORED HERON	J			CASPIAN TERN	J		WHITE-EYED VIREO	B	F	J	L	O	R
REDDISH EGRET	J			ROYAL TERN	J		YEL-THRT VIREO	F	J	L	O	R	
CATTLE EGRET	B	F	J	O	R		RED-EYED VIREO	F	J	L	O	R	
GRN-BACK HERON	B	F	J	L	O	R	COMMON TERN	J					
YEL-CRWN NGT HER	J		R	FORSTER'S TERN	F	J	L	BLUE-WING WARB.					O
FULV. WHIST. DUCK	J			LEAST TERN	J		TENNESSEE WARB.					L	R
CANADA GOOSE	B	J	L	O	R		NORTHERN PARULA	B	F	J		O	R
WOOD DUCK	B	F	J	L	O	R	YELLOW WARBLER				L	O	R
MOTTLED DUCK	J			BLACK SKIMMER	J		YELLOW-RUMP. WARB	B			L	R	
MALLARD	B	F	J	L	O	R	ROCK DOVE	B	F	J		O	R
BLUE-WINGED TEAL	B	F	J	O			MOURNING DOVE	B	F	J	L	O	R
LESSER SCAUP	F	J	O				BLK-BILL CUCKOO	F					
RED-BR MERGANSER	J			EAST-BILL CUCKOO	B	F	J	L	O	R			
RUDDY DUCK	J			EAST.SCREECH OWL	F	J	L	O	R				
BLACK VULTURE	F	J	L	O	R		GRT.HORNED OWL	F					
TURKEY VULTURE	F	J	L	O	R		BARRED OWL	F	J	L	O	R	
OSPREY	F	J	L				COMMON NIGHTHAWK	J	L	O	R		
MISSISSIPPI KITE	B	F	J	L	R		CH-WILL'S-WIDOW	F	J	L	O	R	
RED-SHOLDR HAWK	F	J	L	O	R		WHIP-POOR-WILL				L	O	
BROAD-WING HAWK	B	F	J		O	R	CHIMNEY SWIFT	B	F	J	L	O	R
RED-TAILED HAWK	B	F	J	L	O	R	R-T. HUMMINGBIRD	B	F	J	L	O	R
AMERICAN KESTREL	F	L	O				BELT. KINGFISHER	F	L	R			
MERLIN	F	J					RED-HEAD. WOODPKR	B	F	J	L	O	R
WILD TURKEY	B	F		O	R		RED-BELL. WOODPKR	B	F	J	L	O	R
N. BOB-WHITE	B	F	J	L	O	R	DOWNY WOODPECKER	B	F	J	L	O	R
CLAPPER RAIL	J						HAIRY WOODPECKER	B	F	L	R		
KING RAIL	J		O				RED-COCK'D WOODP				O		
SORA	J						NORTHERN FLICKER	B	F	J		O	R
PURPLE GALLINULE	J		R				PILEATED WOODPKR	B	F	J	L	O	R
COMMON MOORHEN	J		R				EAST. WOOD PEWEE	B	F	J	L	O	R
AMERICAN COOT	J						ACADIAN FLYCTCHR	B	F	J	L	O	R
SANDHILL CRANE	J						EASTERN PHOEBE				L	O	R
BLK-BEL. PLOVER	J						GT. CRST FLYCTCHR	B	F	J	L	O	R
WILSON'S PLOVER	J						EASTERN KINGBIRD	B	F	J	L	O	R
SEMIPALM. PLOVER	J						HORNED LARK	B		L			
KILLDEER	B	F	J	L	O	R	PURPLE MARTIN	B	F	J	L	O	R
AM. OYSTERCATCHER	J						TREE SWALLOW	B	F	J	L		
BLK-NECKED STILT	B	J					N. RGH-WNG. SWAL	F	J	L	O	R	
GREAT. YELLOWLEGS	B	J					BANK SWALLOW	F	J	L			
LESSR. YELLOWLEGS	B	J		O			CLIFF SWALLOW	F	J		R		
SOLITARY SAND.	B	J	L	O			BARN SWALLOW	B	F	J	L	O	R
WILLET	J						BLUE JAY	B	F	J	L	O	R
SPOTTED SAND.	B	F	J	L	O	R	AMERICAN CROW	F	J	L	O	R	
RUDDY TURNSTONE	J						FISH CROW	B	F	J	L	R	
RED KNOT	J						CAR. CHICKADEE	B	F	J	L	O	R
SANDERLING	J						TUFTED TITMOUSE	B	F	J	L	O	R
SEMIPALM. SAND.	B	J	L	O			WHT-BRSTD NTHTCH				L	O	
LEAST SANDPIPER	B	J	O	R			BROWN-HD. NTHTCH	F	J		O	R	
WHT-RUMP. SAND.	J						CAROLINA WREN	B	F	J	L	O	R
							SEDGE WREN	J					
							MARSH WREN	J		O			

Birding on a New Wildlife Refuge South of Natchez--by Marion Hutto

Many of you may not have heard about the new **St. Catherine's Creek Wildlife Refuge** just south of Natchez. It is a beautiful area along the Mississippi River and promises to be a good haven for birds during migration time and breeding season. There is a three-year purchase plan to acquire Sibley Farms, which adjoins the Refuge on the south. These two areas combined offer some very interesting birding areas. At the request of Ray Aycock, Wildlife Management Biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I've been working with other MOS members to develop a list of birds that can be found year round on what currently is a part of the refuge and on Sibley Farms. We started in April and we've already gotten a pretty good list, including nesting **Bald Eagles**.

Terry Schiefer and I went down to Sibley Farms for a short time on July 31st and found **200+ American White Pelicans**, **30+ White Ibis** (mostly imm.), **2 imm. Roseate Spoonbills**, **100+ Wood Storks**, **40+ Black-necked Stilts**. Also there were **Semipalmated Plovers**, **Greater Yellowlegs**, and **Spotted, Semipalmated, Western, Least and Stilt Sandpipers**. The water level was low at that time but it has risen since then and a lot of those birds have left, but Norman Haigh, one of the owners of Sibley Farms, expects them to return in September. Mr. Haigh has invited birders to come to see Sibley Farms, but he does ask that you call him in advance and then check in at the office when you arrive. If you are interested in visiting, call him at 442-5174. For more information about the refuge, you can call Tom Prusa, the Manager, at 442-6696.

Probably the most interesting bird record from the area is the **Burrowing Owl**. They have seen at least one Burrowing Owl at Sibley every year since its purchase in 1980, sometimes as many as four. Mr. Haigh gave me photographs of an owl taken on October 22, 1992, copies of which I have given to Terry to keep with the bird records for the MOS and also to the Museum of Natural Science for their records. Mr. Haigh has assured me he will let me know if and when one of the owls shows up this year. The high water may be a problem, however; it's already up into the culverts where they usually see the owl.

Feedback on our Last Issue--From Bill Turcotte came two welcome responses. One was some to send bird drawings by a friend in Calif. as possible residents on our front page. Secondly, he replied to the query about others' experiences with tree-climbing, nest-raiding Rat Snakes. Of course, this was not foreign to Bill with his long years of experience. He had occasion to shoot a 5.5 ft. snake out of a neighbor's pecan treetop as it "had just swallowed an adult female robin"! Another one of equal size "climbed a martin house pole and had swallowed 3 feathered young when I killed it with a golf club as its head hung out of the box... A Rat Snake can climb anywhere it wants to go!"

(cut here/mail to: Millie Page, 2600 Evergreen Lane, Biloxi, MS 39531)

1993 MOS Fall Meeting, Gulfport, MS

Please make _____ reservations @ \$15.80 each for the Saturday night banquet for the following persons (please include your address):

Enclosed find check(s) made payable to the Gulfport Beachfront Holiday Inn in the amount of _____ X \$15.80 = \$ _____

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FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1) Report on the N. Am. Spring Migration Counts
- 2) "The Biggest Year" by Terence Schiefer