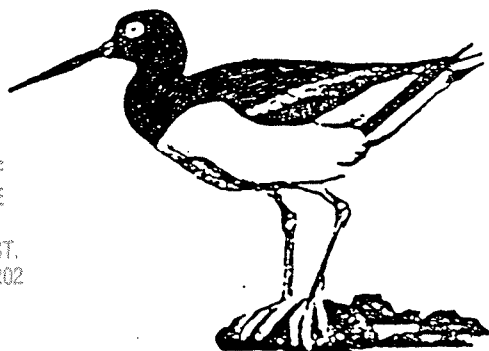


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**Mississippi  
Ornithological  
Society  
NEWSLETTER**

Vol. 42, No. 2  
Summer (June) 1997

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**LOOKING AHEAD:**

**To the Fall MOS Meeting, September 12-14, 1997**

**MEETING PLACE:** George Payne Cossar State Park is the site of our 1997 fall meeting. The park is situated on the shores of Enid Lake in North Mississippi. It is approximately 6 miles east of Oakland, MS, Yalobusha County, and about 5 miles east of I-55 off State Highway 32. Friday and Saturday evening gatherings will be held in the Visitor's Center overlooking Enid Lake.

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** The Park has duplex-style cabins completely furnished with bed and bath linens and basic kitchen equipment. Campsites are also available. Call the Park Office at 601-623-7356 for reservations. Motels are also available just off I-55 in Grenada and Batesville. Both are about a 25-minute drive from the Park.

**Grenada**

Holiday Inn - 226-2851  
Best Western - 226-7816  
Days Inn - 226-5555  
Hampton Inn - 226-6666  
Comfort Inn - 226-1683  
Ramada Ltd. - 229-0892

**Batesville**

Comfort Inn - 563-1188  
Days Inn - 563-4999  
Ramada Ltd. - 563-4528  
Amerihost Inn - 563-6592 (new)  
Hampton Inn - 578-5555 (new)

**FRIDAY EVENING, SEPT. 12** The Park Restaurant does NOT serve breakfast or lunch, so you are on your own. If you choose to stay in a cabin at the Park, bring your own food. If you stay in Grenada or Batesville, fast food restaurants are available. An informal social gathering, registration and light meal of sandwiches, chips, and vegetables will be held at the Visitors Center from 6:00-8:30 p.m. Field trips and recent sightings will be discussed at this time. We invite photo-birders to share slides. Just let S. Knight know if you need a carousel projector.

**SATURDAY, SEPT. 13, BANQUET:** The dinner will be at 6:30 p.m. in the Visitor's Center and will consist of a catfish plate, vegetables, and dessert. Make sure that you send in your registration form and fee by August 20 so that the Park caterer can be notified. **FEATURED SPEAKERS:** Records Committee Secretary Terry Schiefer and Records Committee Member Gene Knight will conduct an informative "How To" Workshop on how to properly fill out the Rare Bird Documentation Form and the MOS Bird Record Card. Filling out these forms is very important and necessary to substantiating bird species in our state. List compilation will also be done at this time.

**FIELD TRIPS:** Four area trips are being planned on Saturday around Sardis Lake, Grenada Lake, Enid Lake, and the Tallahatchie National Wildlife Refuge. Besides herons, egrets, ducks, hawks, flycatchers, nightjars, swallows, and tanagers, the area should turn up a good variety of migrating shorebirds and

warblers. All trips will depart from the Visitors Center parking lot at 6:30 a.m. Sunday morning field trips will be arranged on Saturday evening according to interest.

**RESERVATIONS AND REGISTRATION** -- Make your own motel/cabin reservations based on info above; send your **REGISTRATION/DINNER RESERVATIONS FORM from Page 9 NOW**, while it is on your mind, but not later than August 20.

## **REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE--**

### **FROM MOS PRES. ALLAN MUELLER, re. COLONIAL WATERBIRDS:**

The Mississippi Colonial Waterbird Count (MCWC) is now in its 4th year of trying to locate and annually census every waterbird colony in Mississippi. The MCWC relies on a cadre of volunteer counters. The coast, the Delta, the Mississippi River tern colonies, and the Tenn-Tom Waterway have had adequate coverage (not as good as I would like, but adequate) in past years, but the remainder of the state has received little or no attention.

**We are interested in nesting colonies of herons, egrets, ibis, terns, gulls, skimmers, pelicans, cormorants, anhingas, and spoonbills.** In 1996 we censused 33 colonies recording 16,380 pairs of nesting waterbirds of 14 species. This was not close to the total population of waterbirds nesting in Mississippi. We need your help! If you know of one of these colonies, please let me know. **SEND INFO TO:**

Allan J. Mueller  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
2524 South Frontage Road, Suite B  
Vicksburg, MS 39180  
Phone: 601-629-6610 Fax: 601-636-0128  
E-mail Allan\_Mueller\_AT\_4AT~ES@mail.fws.gov

### **FROM KEITH KIMMERLE, re. BANDED PURPLE MARTINS:**

Hi everyone, just a reminder that I have been banding Purple Martins over the last four years in northeast Mississippi and northwest Alabama. These martins are banded with a USF&WS aluminum band and two color-bands. On my study area in NE MS and NW AL, martins returned last year to a large colony in Lackey Mississippi, on the 16th of February. I had four band recoveries by February 24, 1996, and they were present at numerous colonies as a result of the unseasonable warmth during the first two weeks of February last year. However, for 1997, Purple Martins appeared about 12 days behind last year. I would like to ask that if you live in AL, TN, LA, or MS, please be on the lookout for banded martins, as over 1,800 have been color-banded in Alabama and Mississippi over the last four years. Please report when aluminum band is noted and, the colors if colored bands are also noted.

Keith Kimmerle  
Dept. of Biological Sciences, MSU  
Mississippi State, MS 39762  
E-mail: progne@ebicom.net

### **FROM TIM NUTTLE re. MISS. ORNITHOLOGICAL ATLAS:**

Some of you may have heard about (or even already signed up for) the Mississippi Ornithological Atlas Project at the Spring MOS Meeting. This project is a monumental effort to map the breeding and winter distribution of all Mississippi bird species. The Atlas Project is beginning this year with the breeding season survey. Volunteer birders are the backbone of this project, and dedicate 16 to 25 hours of their time recording observations of breeding and territorial activity of birds in 10 square mile blocks located

survey. Volunteer birders are the backbone of this project, and dedicate 16 to 25 hours of their time recording observations of breeding and territorial activity of birds in 10 square mile blocks located throughout the state. Data collection is primarily in the form of a special checklist where the goal is to gain ever higher evidence that a species is breeding in your block. If you are interested in participating, or would like more information please contact me.

Tim Nuttle  
Miss. Ornithological Atlas  
P.O. Box 9691  
Mississippi State, MS 39762 Phone: 601/325-2952;  
Fax: 601/325-8762 E-mail: [tnuttle@CFR.MsState.Edu](mailto:tnuttle@CFR.MsState.Edu)

\*\*\*\*\*

### TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE

Teaming With Wildlife (also known as the Fish and Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative) is a proposal to add a small surcharge to bird books, bird seed, binoculars, and other birding equipment. The money would be collected by the federal government and then passed on to the state conservation agencies for the management of nongame wildlife. Legislation has not been introduced yet, but MOS has formally endorsed the concept.

Previously the TWW coalition was asking everyone to write to outdoor equipment companies asking them to support the proposal. on behalf of MOS I wrote to over 40 companies, most of which did not reply. Now, in preparation for introducing legislation, the TWW coalition is asking for letters to members of Congress and senators. Again I represented MOS by writing to all of the Mississippi senators and representatives. So far I have received replies from Chip Pickering, Mike Parker, Thad Cochran, Bennie Thompson and Trent Lott (see copies below in a space-saving style).

As you can see from the replies, none of our elected representatives have endorsed Teaming With Wildlife. This could be the most important piece of conservation legislation of our lifetimes. If this proposal becomes law, millions of dollars will become available for nongame management. Your individual letter could make a difference.

Allan J. Mueller

### REPLIES FROM MISSISSIPPI SENATORS & HOUSE MEMBERS:

Dear Mr. Mueller:

Thank you for contacting me regarding the "Teaming With Wildlife" program. I appreciate your taking the time to share your views with me.

As a fellow outdoorsman, I understand the need to preserve our environment for future generations. I realize that the "user-fee" that is placed on outdoor equipment is used to support state management of fish and wildlife programs. I am against any new taxes, but I will research this bill once it is introduced.

Please be assured that I will keep your views in mind when this important piece of legislation comes before the Congress. If I can ever be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Chip Pickering

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Dear Mr. Mueller:

Thank you for your letter regarding Teaming With Wildlife legislation. I appreciate hearing from you.

I have been a longtime supporter of nongame wildlife activities, ranging from camping and hiking to ornithology. As I understand it, this legislation will allow the government to instate user fees for equipment used in these outdoor activities. In turn, these funds will be used by the states for the management of nongame fish and wildlife facilities.

I appreciate your taking the time to make me aware of this legislation. I will certainly keep your views in mind, should this issue come before the Senate during this Congress.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Trent Lott

---

Dear Mr. Mueller:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Fish and Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative.

I appreciate knowing your views on the benefits of this legislation. Please know that I will keep your views in mind should this legislation be introduced in the Senate.

Thanks again for letting me hear from you.

Sincerely,

THAD COCHRAN  
United States Senator

---

Dear Mr. Mueller:

I appreciate you bringing to my attention your support for the Fish and Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative. I have not been previously made aware of this program that you also refer to as Teaming with Wildlife. I will certainly take a look at this legislation and if it is as you have reported, I do not see any reason why I could not support it. However, I would certainly want to review the legislation before making a commitment of support to you.

Again, I appreciate you bringing to my attention your support for the Teaming with Wildlife program. If I can be of additional assistance to you, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Sincerely

Mike Parker  
Member of Congress

---

Dear Mr. Mueller:

Thank you for taking the time to write me with your concerns about the Fish and Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative. I always appreciate hearing the opinions of my constituents about the issues that are important to them. As an avid outdoor enthusiast, I am committed to protecting any programs that ensure Americas extensive natural resources will be available for future generations. I am very interested in any legislation that encourages effective fish and wildlife management in Mississippi and nationwide, and I will examine the Fish and Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative when it is introduced. I thank you for bringing this legislation to my attention.

Once again, I appreciate you taking . the time to write me about this important matter. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress

-----  
COMMENT BY A VOICE FROM THE PAST:

**OUT-OF-DOORS**, n. That part of one's environment upon which no government has been able to collect taxes.

---Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914), "The Devil's Dictionary", 1911

\*\*\*\*\*

## LOOKING BACK ON SPRING NEWS FROM THE FIELD

### MIGRATION NOTES

Several fine reports of waterbird migrants from Gene & Shannon Knight began on March 23rd at the former catfish farm S of Crowder or nearby: "33 Am. Golden Plovers, 2 Blk-necked Stilts, 6 Greater Yellowlegs, \*600\* Lesser Yellowlegs(!), 2 Stilt Sandpipers (early), few Least Sandpipers, 75-80 Pectoral Sandpipers, 1 Dunlin, 60+ Long-billed Dowitchers and 1 \*Wilson's Phalarope\* -- extremely early, in basic plumage, PLUS, ca. \*12\* Am. Bitterns, 1 Black-crowned. Night-Heron, Sora and Va. Rails heard! The Am. Bitterns were seen through April, and joined in late month by Least Bitterns. Numerous rails were heard through April. Later, in April, they spotted a female \*Ruff\* in transient water nearby the Prophet Bridge in southwest- most Lafayette Co., but birds in the wetland were harassed by adolescent ATV riders before Davis or others could get there to see it also.

A solitary **WESTERN GREBE** was found by Terry Schiefer at the Oktibbeha County Lake, Oktibbeha Co., the morning of 7 May, but was not relocated later. This species is rare anywhere in Mississippi and is of only casual occurrence. There are probably less than ten records for the state, most of which are on the large reservoirs in North-Central Mississippi. This is a first record for Upper East-Central Mississippi (Oktibbeha and neighboring counties).

### NESTING NOTES

Earliest breeding season news of note, at a time when thought of spring migration were foremost, was the sighting of a **fledgling Red Crossbill** at Pat's Bluff recreation area at Sardis Lake in Panola County. Terry and Marion Schiefer led off on 12 or 13 March, then Gene and Shannon Knight on the 16th, followed by Cecil Kersting from LA on the 17th and Ken Hackman from Madison, as well. The birds were still present there on May 8, and another or the same group consisting of 5 ads. and 3 imms. was seen as late as May 15 ca. 3.7 mi west by Davis and T. Mikuska.

Expectedly early nesters were a pair of **Bald Eagles** reported from Barnett Reservoir in March, and one reported from a new point on Grenada Lake 2nd ever there). A Great Horned Owl female on eggs, and later with young in 3rd week of March at Lower Lake near Sardis Dam was a gratifying sight. Not so unusual was a simultaneous Red-tailed Hawk nest ca. 300 yards from the GHO nest. Up the lake 10 miles, there were returned Ospreys surveying the "Old Homesteads"--two prior nestsites, by 15 March and shortly

Mary Stevens passed word from Richard Wells of MS Dept. of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks that the week of 14 April he had found and banded a hen **Hooded Merganser** with a clutch of 7 or 8 eggs in a Wood Duck box at the Pearl River Waterfowl Refuge on Barnett Reservoir.

Fred Broerman of Grenada, a biologist with USFWS, covers Tallahatchie NWR and assorted north Delta wetland properties. In late May he had a spectacular report, having spotted and photographed a **Northern Harrier** nest with 5 young in Quitman Co. He had seen three apparent females and one adult male nearby, suggesting possibly more nests of a species known at times to be a polygynous breeder. Expect to hear more details later and to see photograph(s) elsewhere.

### WHAT'S GOING ON WITH. . . . ??

*A Few Words From "Mr. Bill" Turcotte in Richland, MS*

"Give my regards to the MOS folks, and here's a note for the your Newsletter. My daughter Terry is hooked on feeding birds, but not in the conventional ways. She started putting cornbread on the raised deck of their house north of Atlanta, GA. Now she has a flock of Am. Crows that are regular visitors everyday! A pair of Red-shouldered Hawks have a nest with young in sight of her deck. After one day seeing one of those hawks on the railing of the deck, she started putting out meat where the crows ate. The hawks started feeding at the deck every day, chasing off the crows, on liver or ground meat. They watch for her to put out their meat and dive-bomb her coming after it, one coming within six inches of her head on one pass! She has to watch carefully now when putting out the "bird food." What next? Did I raise a screwball youngun' or what?!!"

*A Few More Words From "Ms. Nona" (Mrs. J.C. Herbert) in Bolivar County*

[NOTE: J.C. & Nona have a new "riverside" retreat--a house trailer perched on stilts inside the levee at a Mississippi River oxbow lake, Old River Lake.]

"I have never had Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at home in Choctaw, but saw many on our former place on Archer Island, and many this spring for about three weeks at Donaldson Point. I would really see them only momentarily, then they'd move on. But this year I have treasured every glimpse--especially the pair who would drop down on the feeder. I wear myself out going all over the trailer to see what's going on. It's heavenly! Around 6 a.m. I get up looking. The hummingbirds are at the feeders before good light, as are the Martins out feeding. Cardinals, Bluebirds, Prothonotary Warblers (I haven't heard a Parula yet) are too noisy for me to sleep later. And of course the Barred Owls are hooting back and forth across the lake and all around. One owl sometimes comes to the trees around us after I've joined in the hooting!

When the grosbeaks hit the feeder I was absolutely astonished, so I sat and watched them [*minute-to-minute notes supplied--ed.*] and other birds over an hour, and would return at intervals after that. Let me confess, Marvin, that I took your words about "*feeder grosbeaks*" with a little skepticism (given my years and years without ever hearing or seeing such a happening), but "*seeing is believing!*"

### **Calling Attention to Ornithological Papers on Migration by MOSers and Others:**

- 1) "Age-related Timing of Migration: Geographic and Inter-specific Patterns" by Mark S. Woodrey and C. Ray Chandler appeared in *Wilson Bulletin*, March, 1997, vol. 109(1), pp. 52-67.
- 2) "Spring Stopover of Intercontinental Migratory Thrushes Along the Northern Coast of the Gulf of Mexico" by Wang Yong and Frank R. Moore [U. So. Miss.] in *Auk*, April 1997, vol. 114(2), pp. 263-278, focussed on Wood, Swainson's, and Gray-cheeked Thrushes and the Veery netted in a coastal woodland of SW Louisiana. [These journals are available for use in major MS university libraries]

**BIRD LIST FOR MOS MEETING, GULF COAST, 18-20 APRIL 1997 -- TOTAL SPECIES: 167**

Common Loon	Solitary Sandpiper	House Wren
Pied-billed Grebe	Willet	Sedge Wren
Horned Grebe	Spotted Sandpiper	Marsh Wren
Eared Grebe	Ruddy Turnstone	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Am. White Pelican	Sanderling	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Brown Pelican	Semipalmated Sand.	Eastern Bluebird
Double-crested Cormorant	Western Sandpiper	Wood Thrush
Great Blue Heron	Least Sandpiper	Gray Catbird
Great Egret	Dunlin	N. Mockingbird
Snowy Egret	Short-billed Dowitcher	Brown Thrasher
Little Blue Heron	Long-billed Dowitcher	Cedar Waxwing
Tricolored Heron	Common Snipe	Loggerhead Shrike
Cattle Egret	Laughing Gull	European Starling
Green Heron	Bonaparte's Gull	White-eyed Vireo
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Ring-billed Gull	Solitary Vireo
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Herring Gull	Yellow-throated Vireo
White Ibis	Gull-billed Tern	Red-eyed Vireo
Wood Duck	Caspian Tern	Tennessee Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Royal Tern	N. Parula
Mottled Duck	Common Tern	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Mallard	Forster's Tern	Yellow-throated Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Least Tern	Pine Warbler
Northern Shoveler	Black Skimmer	Prairie Warbler
Greater Scaup	Rock Dove	Prothonotary Warbler
Lesser Scaup	Eurasian Collared Dove	Worm-eating Warbler
Red-breasted Merganser	White-winged Dove	Swainson's Warbler
Ruddy Duck	Mourning Dove	Ovenbird
Black Vulture	cuckoo sp.	N. Waterthrush
Turkey Vulture	Chimney Swift	La. Waterthrush
Osprey	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Kentucky Warbler
Swallow-tailed Kite	Belted Kingfisher	Com. Yellowthroat
Mississippi Kite	Red-headed Woodpecker	Hooded Warbler
Bald Eagle	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Yellow-breasted Chat
N. Harrier	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Summer Tanager
Red-shouldered Hawk	Downy Woodpecker	Scarlet Tanager
Broad-winged Hawk	Hairy Woodpecker	N. Cardinal
Red-tailed Hawk	N. Flicker	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Am. Kestrel	Pileated Woodpecker	Blue Grosbeak
N. Bobwhite	Acadian Flycatcher	Indigo Bunting
Clapper Rail	Great Crested Flycatcher	Painted Bunting
King Rail	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Eastern Towhee
Virginia Rail	Eastern Kingbird	Chipping Sparrow
Sora	Purple Martin	Savannah Sparrow
Common Moorhen	Tree Swallow	Swamp Sparrow
Am. Coot	N. Rough-winged Swallow	White-throated Sparrow
Sandhill Crane	Bank Swallow	Red-winged Blackbird
Black-bellied Plover	Cliff Swallow	Eastern Meadowlark
Semipalmated Plover	Barn Swallow	Boat-tailed Grackle
Piping Plover	Blue Jay	Common Grackle
Killdeer	American Crow	Brown-headed Cowbird
Am. Oystercatcher	Fish Crow	Orchard Oriole
Black-necked Stilt	Carolina Chickadee	Baltimore Oriole
Am. Avocet	Tufted Titmouse	House Finch
Greater Yellowlegs	Brown-headed Nuthatch	Am. Goldfinch
Lesser Yellowlegs	Carolina Wren	House Sparrow

### **Another Interesting Note from the Ornithological Literature:**

"Black-capped Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches "weigh" sunflower seeds" -- *Auk*, 114: 298-99 (April 1997). B. Heinrich and three coauthors describe how they experimented with empty hulls, full hulls and artificially-filled hulls to be extra-heavy. The chickadees and nuthatches --"choosy little buggers" that we know them to be--showed themselves well able to discriminate by weight. They weren't about to fly off with any empty hulls! And they clearly discerned the difference between "normal-weight" and "jumbo-weight" seeds, preferring to get "more for their money"-- i.e., for their energy expenditure in carrying the seed away to their "pounding place"-- in the artificially-heavier seeds. Wouldn't you know it!

### **Miscellany**

#### *Birding Enters the Advertising Age*

The Christmas Season 1996 men's wear catalog from King-Size Co. featured a "sportsman's print" brown t-shirt that showed western U.S. birds: Seller's Jay, Cedar Waxwing, Western Bluebird, Mountain Chickadee, Bullock's Oriole, Spotted Towhee, Canyon Wren and Anna's Hummingbird. The brawny model wearing it held porno-prism 7/8X30 binos in one hand and his western Peterson bird guide in the other as he peered into the distance for a "target." Birding has indeed arrived! It was good not to see the model with an unrealistic mini-binocular.

#### *Mississippi Cyberspace/Internet Bird Communications Available*

As promised in the March Newsletter, and even sooner than was expected, an e-mail state listserv, "bulletin board" or network, as you wish to call it, went into operation through the University of Mississippi's Computer Center on April 1st --no joke! There are now 65 subscribers--35 from MS, and TN--5, LA--4, AL--2 and NM, GA and Quebec, 1 each; plus 15 or 16 unidentified yet to locale. The name is "MISSBIRD"--"a bulletin board for sightings and studies of birds in Miss." Not all computerized-internetted MS birders have subscribed yet; some must be too shy or too busy. Subscribing involves sending one simple message, but it is to a computer not to a person. Maybe that is too far out for some who do use e-mail. If you're interested in precise directions, send a query for info to: [marvdavs@olemiss.edu](mailto:marvdavs@olemiss.edu) [Next goal--a State web-page for Mississippi Birds]

### **Bird Stories in the Mississippi Press from AP**

#### *Brown Pelicans Killed at South Mississippi Fish Farm (late May)*

No arrests have been made by federal authorities investigating the killing of 30 pelicans.

#### *Tupelo Wastewater Plant Becomes Bird Sanctuary (early June)*

The Tupelo WWTP is being converted into wildlife habitat and a nature education center. Representatives of the operating company and the NE MS Chapter of the National Audubon Society have been planning to make improvements--observation decks and a pavilion-- to facilitate wildlife use and human observation of the wildlife. This includes not only 130 species of birds sighted there in the past year, but also rabbits, coyotes, turtles and fish.



Cut below and mail

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REGISTRATION FORM - MOS FALL MEETING - SEPTEMBER 12-14, 1997

Reservations must be received **NO LATER** than August 20. Please complete the registration form and mail it as soon as possible.

**NAME(S):**  
**ADDRESS:**

**PHONE:**

Please make Saturday Banquet reservation for \_\_\_\_\_ person(s) at \$15.00 each.

Total enclosed: \$

Make check payable to: MOS

Mail this form **NO LATER** than August 20, or call:  
Shannon Knight, 79 Hwy. 9W  
Oxford, MS 38655 601-236-2413

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
Organized 30 April 1955

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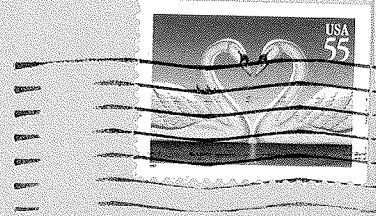
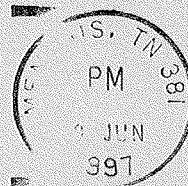
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All persons interested in Mississippi bird life are invited to join MOS. **PLEASE NOTE CHANGES in Annual Dues:** Sustaining, \$30; Family, \$25; Individual/Regular, \$15; Student/Senior, \$10; Subscribing (libraries only), \$10; Life Membership, \$300. All membership classes receive the MISSISSIPPI KITE semi-annually, and the quarterly MOS NEWSLETTER seasonally. **Please send dues OR address changes to: Janet Dubuisson, 22410 Glad Acres, Pass Christian, MS 39571.**

RETURN ADDRESS:  
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P.O. Box 515  
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**FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE:**

Plans for Sept. '97 Fall Meeting  
Bird Reports from the Spring Season  
Opportunities to Contribute to Field Studies

PLEASE NOTE: Address Label--**RED** message means  
are OVERdue!); new rates [back cover]---\$15/yr Reg