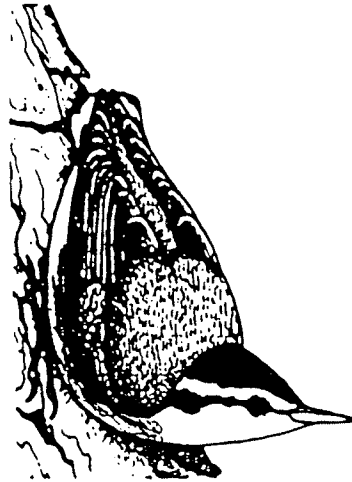


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Mississippi  
Ornithological  
Society  
NEWSLETTER

Vol. 42, No. 4  
Winter (December) 1997

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**LOOKING AHEAD:**

**WINTER BIRDING--Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Season Coming Soon (19 Dec.-4 Jan.)**

**Christmas Bird Count Schedule for Mississippi, 1997-98:**

Friday, 19 Dec., **Church Hill**, call Genevieve Tharp, 601-442-4622; or [getharp@telapex.com](mailto:getharp@telapex.com)

Friday, 19 Dec., **Sidon**--call Philip Barbour, 455-4166, or [barbourpj@microsped.com](mailto:barbourpj@microsped.com)

Saturday, 20 Dec., **Noxubee NWR**, call Terry Schiefer, 324-3748; or  
[tschiefer@entomology.msstate.edu](mailto:tschiefer@entomology.msstate.edu).

Saturday, 20 Dec., **Sardis Lake**--call Marvin Davis, 234-1773 (eve.); [marvdavs@olemiss.edu](mailto:marvdavs@olemiss.edu)

Saturday, 20 Dec., **Jackson County**--call Larry Gates, 268-6411, or [trogon@netdoor.com](mailto:trogon@netdoor.com)

Saturday, 20 Dec., **Crow's Neck/Tishomingo**--call Mark Woodrey, 354-7303 (days; or Carolyn  
Jarnagin, 287-2579 day; 287-5553 eve.)

Sunday, 21 Dec., **Vicksburg**--call David King, 638-4429.

Tuesday, 23 Dec., **Grenada**--call Marvin Davis, 232-5151 day/234-1773 ;  
[marvdavs@olemiss.edu](mailto:marvdavs@olemiss.edu).

Friday, 26 Dec., **Sumner**--call Genevieve Tharp, 442-4622; [getharp@telapex.com](mailto:getharp@telapex.com)

Saturday, 27 Dec., **Arkabutla Lake**--call Rob Peeples, 901/755-8671.

Monday, 29 Dec., **Southern Hancock Co.**--call Allison Henry, (228)896-1999.

Saturday, 27 Dec., **Hattiesburg**--call Larry Gates, 268-6411, or [trogon@netdoor.com](mailto:trogon@netdoor.com)

Sunday, 28 Dec., **S. Washington Co.**--call Paul Hamel, 686-3167

Saturday, 3 Jan. 1998, **Lauderdale County (NEW)**, call Van McWhorter, 626-7224 or  
[dmcwhorte@emced.msstate.edu](mailto:dmcwhorte@emced.msstate.edu)

Saturday, 3 Jan. 1998, **Jackson**, call Mary Stevens: 956-7444(H) or 354-7303(W)

Saturday, 3 Jan., **Tupelo (NEW)**--call Allen Jolley, 963-7301, [waj@netdoor.com](mailto:waj@netdoor.com) ; or David  
Parker, 566-7812, [ddp@netdoor.com](mailto:ddp@netdoor.com).

*Members are encouraged to participate in CBCs as an exciting and challenging annual birding activity. If you don't have the habit, start now! The organizers whose names are indicated must have advance notice so as to arrange for you to have a proper assignment.*

### **WINTER SPARROW WORKSHOP: OXFORD, MS -- JANUARY 16-17, 1998**

Enjoy this frustrating group of birds instead of just labeling them as hard-to-see, sneaky little streaky sparrows. We will combine habitat, field marks, and call notes to ease your identification problems; 10 species plus are expected.

JAN. 16, 1998 (FRIDAY) 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.--Snacks/sparrow slides/I.D. discussion

JAN. 17., 1998 (SATURDAY) 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.--Applying the Friday night workshop in the field, visiting various habitats, seeing lots of sparrows.

The Friday night workshop will be held at the home of Prentiss and Louise Hooper, 410 South 9th Street, Oxford, MS. The Saturday field trips will start at Sardis Lake and end up in the Mississippi River Delta. There will be a \$10.00 fee per person, and the workshop will be limited to the first 15 registrants. To register call Gene Knight at (601) 236-2413.

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### **SPRING BIRDING--Spring MOS Meeting, April 3-5, 1998**

MEETING PLACE: Tara Wildlife Management, located 35 minutes northwest of Vicksburg in the Eagle Lake Community, will be the site of the 1998 Spring meeting hosted by the Jackson Audubon Society. Tara is a 20,000-acre wildlife management area specializing in trophy white tails and various other wildlife related activities including birding. There will not be a Wild Turkey season at Tara this year, so we will not be restricted from birding prime turkey-hunting habitat.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Tara Lodge will be the center of activities including lodging, meals and programs. Large groups can be assured comfort at Tara Lodge. They serve three daily meals that are priced at \$25/day. Rooms are \$55/day double occupancy; \$50/day single occupancy. Motels are also available in Vicksburg.

#### **FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 3:**

6:00 pm Informal social gathering, registration and supper will be held at TARA LODGE. Field trip sign-up, meeting schedules and bird conservation issues will be discussed. Allan Mueller has agreed to lead an informal discussion on "The Cormorant Issue in the Delta."

#### **SATURDAY, APRIL 4:**

6:30 am Breakfast at Tara Lodge  
7:30 pm Field Trips start at parking lot of Tara Lodge  
1:00 pm Lunch at Tara Lodge  
6:30 pm Banquet at Tara Lodge

#### **SUNDAY, APRIL 5:**

6:30 am Breakfast at Tara Lodge

BANQUET SPEAKER: ???To Be Announced in the Next Issue of the Newsletter???

FIELD TRIPS: Several different trips are being planned for Saturday around Eagle Lake, Mahannah Wildlife Management Area, Halpino Lake, the levees and batture lands, and the clay shooting course. All trips will depart from Tara Lodge parking lot at 7:30 am. Sunday morning field trips will be arranged on Saturday evening according to interest.

RESERVATIONS AND REGISTRATION: Send your RESERVATION/REGISTRATION FORM from **page 9** to Terri Jacobson NOW, while it is on your mind, but **NO LATER** than March 1. If you have any questions, Call Mary Stevens at 956-7444(H) or 354-7303(W).

**ANOTHER APRIL NOTE:** A combined North Am. Ornithological Congress will be in St. Louis, 6-12 April '98. (Wilson, Cooper, AOU, Field Ornith., Colonial Waterbird, Raptor socs.)



arrive concurrently on the 7th, or before, with two Chimney Swifts, a bunch of Tree Swallows, a dozen Barns and 2 Cliffs. The latter having been gone already, this suggests an influx of all these out-of-place migrants and southern/western vagrants because of a weather system carrying them northward together. This will demand some heavy-duty analysis of prior weather patterns.

**Whooping Crane Report** ---Patty Beasley, Corpus Christi, TX

“As of November 26, the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on the Gulf Coast of Texas has recorded 142 whooping crane adults and 29 chicks in residence for a total of 171 whooping cranes. Especially exciting this year: one pair of two pairs of twin chicks that hatched this spring HAS arrived and is in residence at the Refuge. Refuge officials say the twin chicks and their parents have taken up residence in the Lamar Peninsula section, close to the Big Tree (a 1000+ year old live oak tree and state park site). No sign yet of the second anticipated set of whooping crane twins. Monitoring goes on as remaining whoopers continue to make their way south. As for the other whooping crane populations:

1) The Florida non-migratory group in Kissimmee Prairie is stable at 61 birds.

2) The Rocky Mountain group that summers in Grace Lake, Idaho and winters in Bosque National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico is up to six birds, which effectively doubles the number of cranes at that Refuge. Three adult whoopers of the original Bosque group are the only survivors of an alternate site captive breeding program begun in the 1960s. That population did not take hold, and the birds at Bosque were not reproducing on their own. The whooper populations at Bosque diminished to today's level of three adult whooping cranes. However, biologists in a more recent breeding captive program of whooper eggs raised by Sandhill cranes at Grace Lake used an ultra-light used to guide the fledges southward this year. This action resulted in the successful migration of three new whooping cranes juveniles, who arrived intact at the Bosque Refuge with their surrogate-parent Sandhill flocks. That's the update for the moment.”

**Closer to Home:**

On 13 November, Terry Schiefer saw **54 Common Loons** at the Oktibbeha County Lake - an extra high counts for the northern/inland part of Mississippi, excepting the larger flood-control reservoirs. On 24 November, 71 were counted by MD for only a part of Sardis Lake; 50 also were sighted by TS on Ross Barnett Reservoir (RBR) on Nov. 18. Two apparent **Pacific Loons** were reported by Ken Hackman at RBR on Nov. 17. Third hand info says that Judy Troups had a tough-to-find **Red-necked Grebe** off the beach in Hancock Co. in 2nd half of November.

Another outstanding waterbird was one **Black Scoter**, female or imm., at the Oxford WWTP lagoon, which provided a Lifer for 10 or more folks between 15 and 22 November.

An immature **Golden Eagle** low overhead was quite a thrill for Gene and Shannon Knight on 25 November, at the ponds of Black Bayou Unit, Tallahatchie NWR. Your Editor was grateful to have a repeat on the same bird 2+ miles further north on Thanksgiving Day.

A "star" species was a first-winter **Little Gull** on 9 November seen at Grenada Dam by Gene and Shannon Knight. It was the 2nd-in-a-row "big" year for migration of **Franklin's Gulls**, being seen in Oktibbeha Co. as well as at the flood control reservoirs. Fred Broerman had a record 500 Franklin' Gulls at Grenada in early Nov., where one or two lingered into the 3rd week of Nov..

However, Fred's "bird of distinction" for Fall was a live **Yellow Rail** flushed and sighted from a federal wetland in Tallahatchie Co. on 3 November. That was the same week that a dead **Yellow Rail** was found by a bird student on the MSU Campus. Moreover, two Coast birders,

Charlie Delmas and JoRee Pennell were fortunate to see **3 Yellow Rails** as they were flushed from tall grass by a mower at the Seaman Road WWTP Lagoon complex north of Ocean Springs.

Shorebird migration was good, but not extra special; at least 32 species were seen for Fall '97.. Two **Marbled Godwits** were on Hancock and Harrison Co. Beaches for a while in late October. Two **Am. Avocets** lingered to mid-Nov. at Sardis L., and small nos. of both yellowlegs, **Dunlin** and **Long-billed Dowitchers** remained in N Miss. at Thanksgiving time. Not migrating, one presumes, but of great interest were the **26(!) Am. Oystercatchers** spotted by Gene and Shannon Knight from the Causeway at Pascagoula on 26 Nov., plus six more the next day in Hancock Co.

Western hummers made a good start with **Rufous and Buff-bellied Hummingbirds** on the Coast, plus a female **Allen's Hummingbird** IDed in the hand by Bennett Carver in the 2nd half of November at a feeder in the yard of JoRee Pennell in Ocean Springs.

On 11th November at Vicksburg, Richard Fischer saw a wood-pewee and heard it give the sure call of a **Western Wood-Pewee**, for which there a few prior Mississippi sightings/hearings. Curiously, most of these (maybe all?) have not been from coastal sites.

The masthead bird signifies that this Fall was a fine one for **Red-breasted Nuthatch**. First on 7 Sept., Oxford, by Judy Burkepile, many followed in October; CBC nos. will be of interest.

**REMINDER!!** These listings are not definitive; THAT is the role of the annual Birds Around the State section in *The Mississippi Kite*. Some of the records reported here properly will undergo review by MS Bird Records Committee [see "Review Species List" published here 1+ yr. ago]

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## TOPICS ON HISTORY OF THE M.O.S.:

### "History of the J. W. TUCKER AWARD"

by Mr. William (Bill) H. Turcotte, as told to Mary Stevens

Mr. J. W. Tucker was a friend and supporter of Miss Fannye Cook, and "The Mississippi Association for the Conservation of Wildlife," organized in 1926-27 for the sole purpose of securing passage of laws establishing a state agency for the conservation and management of wildlife resources. He was an early conservationist with a keen interest in nature, birds, rocks and minerals. He owned a camp at Eagle Lake.

Mr. Tucker was an engraver, printer and owner of the Tucker Printing Company in Jackson, which was located on North State Street across from the Old Capitol. The building still bears the Tucker Printing Company name etched in stone. He printed, on credit, the first game and fish licenses sold by The Mississippi Game and Fish Commission. The Commission's offices were moved to the second floor of the Tucker Printing Company building soon after the Commission was created by the Legislature.

Mr. Tucker presented the medallion to MOS in 1956. Miss Fannye Cook, the first Director of the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, wrote: "Mr. Tucker Honors Society: Mr. J. W. Tucker of Jackson, who on many occasions has encouraged efforts in conservation and bird study, has given the Society a copper engraving of Audubon's Falcon to be presented at the annual convention to the member judged as doing the most outstanding work." (Source, MOS Newsletter, v.2, no.1, 1956, p.4).

Tucker made the plated copper medallion, engraved with Audubon's Falcon and set on it the polished piece of jasper stone from Mississippi. He was one of Mississippi's first "rock hounds."

The J. W. TUCKER AWARD has been presented to the following MOS members:

- |      |   |   |
|------|---|---|
| 1957 | Mrs. William G. Wills, Jr., Jackson                                 | For exhibiting the most enthusiasm and progress for a beginning birder  |
| 1958 | William H. Turcotte, Richland                                       | For Wild Turkey film and movies of coastal birds.   |
| 1961 | Sterling G. Clawson, Gulf Coast<br>& Lovett E. Williams, Gulf Coast | Joint award for adding 12 or more new species to the State Bird List, and reporting them in the <i>MOS Newsletter</i> and the <i>Auk</i> .                  |
| 1965 | In memory of Fannye A. Cook:  | Presented to her sisters, Mrs. L. H. Hamal and Lucy E. Hastings   |
| 1966 | John H. Phares, Jackson   | For service as MOS President, and for bringing the U.S. Forest Service to alter its policy on removing trees used by Red-cockaded Woodpeckers.              |
| 1968 | Earl Cunningham   | Manager, Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge, for his outstanding Wood Duck nest box study program.  |
| 1971 | W. Marvin Davis, Oxford   | For outstanding field work in finding, and for his documenting in the <i>Auk</i> , the Black-legged Kittiwake and Little Gull                               |
| 1972 | Larry Gates, Hattiesburg  | For outstanding field work, new species added to state list and work to update the MOS Checklist.   |
| 1973 | B. E. Gandy, Brandon  | Dir. of the Miss. Museum of Natural Science, for his work on plans for a new building and for 12 years service as secretary/treasurer of MOS                |
| 1974 | William H. Turcotte, Richland                                       | For 20 years service as editor of MOS Newsletter.   |
| 1975 | William Quisenberry, Clinton  | For developing the Natural Heritage Program and acquiring Pascagoula R. Wildlife Management Area.   |
| 1984 | Margaret Copeland, Starkville                                       | For building bluebird houses and locating House Finches   |
| 1986 | William H. Turcotte, Richland                                       | For making bird song recordings of 115 species of Mississippi birds.  |
| 1987 | Judith A. Toups, Gulfport<br>& Jerome A. Jackson, Starkvl.          | Joint award for a book on Mississippi Coast birds   |
| 1990 | Malcolm F. Hodges, Jr.  | For outstanding field studies and publishing on birds in <i>The Mississippi Kite</i>  |
| 1993 | Terence Schiefer, Starkville  | For listing the most birds seen in one year in MS, for finding a new species for Miss. and North America, the Citrine Wagtail and for work on MOS Checklist |
| 1996 | Margaret Copeland, Starkville                                       | For work on breeding census of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in Mississippi  |
| 1997 | Mary P. Stevens, Jackson  | For work on developing a program of Bald Eagle nest monitoring and the Partners in Flight International Migratory Bird Day programs                         |

## **REPORTS ON THE M.O.S. FALL MEETING**

The Fall MOS meeting was held at George Payne Cossar State Park at Oakland, MS. After refreshments and socializing Friday evening various slide presentations were made and plans were made for the Saturday field trips.

### **MINUTES OF THE M.O.S. BUSINESS MEETING**

After the dinner Saturday evening President Allan Mueller called the meeting to order. Allan presented Important Birding Area information and said that a promotional effort is necessary now to begin establishing areas for nomination. Criteria have already been established. Soliciting will be posted in the MOS Newsletter. Allan stressed that this is a positive, friendly program and must have approval of the landowner of the nominated land. Allan has prepared packets of material for the nominations.

Mary Stevens talked about the programs she held this year for International Migratory Bird Day. She asked if MOS would be interested in sponsoring this program in the future. Allan asked those interested to talk to him.

Janet Dubuisson gave the Treasurer's Report and announced a gift of \$601.27 from Ben and Lula Coffey. The money is principal and interest on \$500 originally donated to the Oxford Bird Club, which is no longer active; so Marvin Davis obtained approval of Lula Coffey to transfer the money be to MOS.

Newsletter Editor Davis said he often has room in the newsletter for inclusion of articles by members, such as trip reports. Those interested should send them to Marvin for publication in advance of the publication dates. Marion Schiefer announced the third Saturday in September is the day for the North American Fall Migration Count; she provided forms for those interested.

Allan Mueller told about the Mississippi Alluvial Valley Migration Study. This is a unified study of shorebirds, waterfowl, and songbirds. Francisco Viella and students are working on the study. They may ask MOS to participate in a partnership. Catfish farmers are also being encouraged to participate with data contributions.

Charles Delmas is the new Coastal Coordinator of the MS Colonial Waterbird Count. Allan needs broader contributions from observers across the state.

Spring and Fall meetings are not yet scheduled. Allan asked for volunteers. Diane Patterson will host one in the Hattiesburg area for Fall 1998. We still need a host and location for the Spring meeting. Meeting adjourned.

After the meeting Gene Knight and Terry Schiefer gave us a "How To" on documenting rare bird species. With the help of visual aids and hand-outs we were all instructed on the proper way to fill out the forms and document a rare bird sighting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carolyn Jarnagin, Secretary

### **MINUTES OF THE IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS (IBA) COMMITTEE MEETING**

On September 13, 1997, the Important Birding Area Committee held a meeting at the George Payne Cossar State Park. Those present were Allan Mueller, Carolyn Jarnagin, Marvin Davis, Wilma Pickett, Shannon and Gene Knight, and Mary Stevens.

Allan reported on the progress we have made and that the criteria was complete. Nomination forms are ready to be sent out to various agencies to be completed and returned to the committee.

The goal is to publish an IBA book of Mississippi when all work is complete.

Mary Stevens and Mark Woodrey will get criteria for nomination out to all State agencies. Allan will get articles out to various publications and to all local Audubon chapters.

We do not have a chairperson so Carolyn Jarnagin will temporarily accept data. No date was set for the next meeting. Meeting adjourned

--Carolyn Jarnagin

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### OPPORTUNITY FOR LOCAL BIRD GROUPS

*The Birds of North America, Life Histories for the 21st Century* is moving toward completion on schedule. Nine of the 18 volumes are now available for delivery. The remaining nine will be published as two-a-year for the next five years. A goodly number of contributing authors live among us here in Mississippi--their subjects were presented here about a year ago. This epic work is now available to bird clubs, Audubon chapters or other local conservation groups at a special charter price of \$2500, which is 25% off the list price. There is a great opportunity for such organizations to place copies of this series in community public libraries and/or high school or community college libraries, where they can be available to young birders-to-be and ornithologists of-the-future, as well as serving the needs of current bird fans of the area. This could be the subject for a group fund-raising effort. If you have questions, call the Sales Director for The Birds of North America, Pat Warner, at 800-627-0629. More details on the series can be viewed at the website: [www.acnatsci.org/bna](http://www.acnatsci.org/bna) Check it out!

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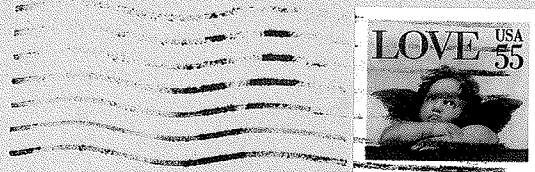
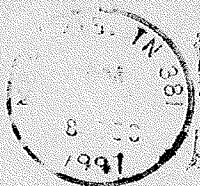
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All persons interested in Mississippi bird life are invited to join the **MOS**. **Annual dues:** Sustaining, \$30; Family, \$25; Individual (regular), \$15; Student/Senior, \$10; Subscribing (libraries only), \$10; Life Membership, \$300. All membership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

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**FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE:**

Reports: Fall '97 MOS Mtg.  
Jan.: Winter Sparrow Workshop  
Plans for April 1998 Spring Meeting;  
List of MS Christmas Bird Count schedules;  
Fall migration highlights and MUCH MORE!