

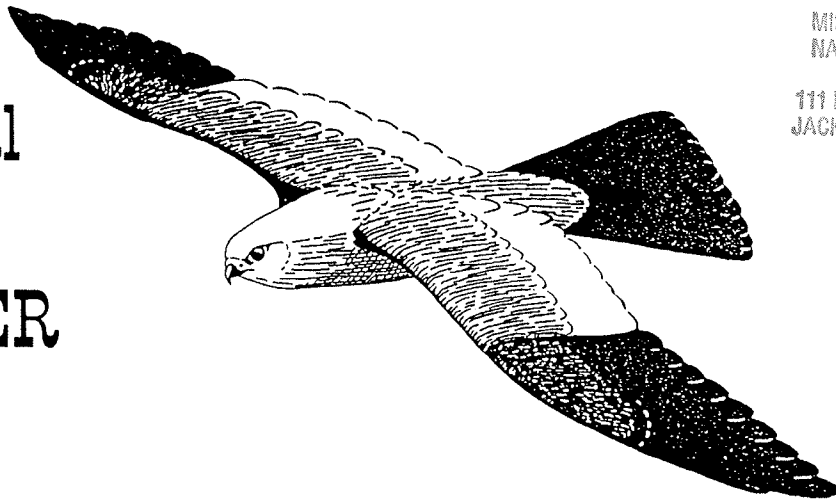
MOS: Founded in 1955 to promote scientific research and encourage greater appreciation of native birds

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Mississippi  
Ornithological  
Society  
**NEWSLETTER**

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Spring (1 June) 1999

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**LOOKING AHEAD:**

**MOS FALL MEETING—October 15-17, 1999--RESERVE THE WEEKEND!**

Place: Leroy Percy State Park in Washington Co., a few miles west of Hollandale and ca. 25 miles south of Greenville. The state park cabins and group camps (bunkhouses) are reserved for MOS. For more info and reservations, call the park office (662-827-5436). Accommodations in Greenville include: Comfort Inn, Days Inn, Fairfield Inn, Hampton Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Ramada Inn.

Saturday Banquet is 6 p.m. at state park lodge, and lunch is served on Sunday at the park dining room; however, no other meals will be available in the park. After-dinner speaker Sat. will be Paul Hamel, author of monographs in *Birds of North America*, who will describe experiences with the Cerulean Warbler. More program details will be provided in the next newsletter.

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**COMING IN THE FALL:** Off the presses about October from University Press of Mississippi--*"Birds of Mississippi"* by William H. Turcotte and David L. Watts; ca. 432 pages, covering 395 species, with illustrations (80 b&w plus 24 color photos), 394 range maps and charts; co-published with the MS Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks. [ISBN 1-57806-110-5]

Also anticipated is an authors' reception and signing party to be held at the **new** Mississippi Museum of Natural Science in Jackson. Watch for more details in the next MOS Newsletter.

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**"CALL NOTES"**

by Shannon Knight  
M.O.S. President

The death of Lula Coffey has saddened us all. I met Lula on only two occasions. Her zest for life and for birds intertwined, leaving you breathless and wanting to be just like her. A quote from Peter Matthiessen's *THE WIND BIRDS* seems to exemplify Lula's life, "... it is not the death sign that the curlews bring, but only the memory of life, of high beauty passing swiftly, as the curlew

passes, leaving us in solitude on an empty beach, with summer gone, and a wind is blowing." Lula will be sorely missed. M.O.S. has contributed to an endowment fund of the Memphis Chapter of T.O.S. in her memory.

A challenge: The purpose of our organization is "to encourage scientific research in the field of ornithology and to promote and encourage greater appreciation and conservation of native birds." We are the primary source of documentation of birdlife in the State of Mississippi. Therefore, all of us as members MUST do more than just bird "watching"—we MUST ALSO document what we see.

The documentation process is as follows: Using your Checklist of Birds of Mississippi, any bird that is followed by R (Rare), Ca (Casual), A (Accidental), or Ext (Extirpated), whether I (Inland) or C (Coastal), should be documented on the 3"x5" M.O.S. Bird Record Card and the Rare Bird Documentation Form (long form; see p. 14). The 3"x5" Bird Record Card is used not only for reporting rare birds, but also for recording information such as early arrival and late departure dates, and unusually large numbers of a species. The "Review List Species and Other Rare and Uncommon Birds" sheet that was passed out at the Fall, 1997 workshop by Terry and Gene, and recently published in the Fall, 1998 M.O.S. Newsletter, and repeated herein (page 13) will also be beneficial in knowing which birds to document.

Some are asking, "When is the documentation process going to be computerized?" As of now A.B.A. still requires the 3"x5" documentation card. In reading the L.O.S. Bird Records Committee Report in the latest JOURNAL OF LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGY (and I might add, one of the most reputable ornithological societies in the country), I noted that the L.B.R.C. "does not accept documentation via email; this is not considered original material. Computer discs and computer-produced printouts of photo images are not considered original copy because current technology allows manipulation of the image." We cannot enter an observation on MISSBIRD and consider that adequate documentation. SPECIFIC INFORMATION must be noted on ALL forms of documentation. Whether the forms are computerized or on 3"x5" cards is not the issue. It will take time and effort with either process.

The challenge here seems to me to be a matter of commitment to birds and birdlife in Mississippi. If we want to continue to promote research, appreciation, and conservation of our birds, we have to prove through documentation that the birds are here, that numbers have increased or decreased, that migration patterns are changing, that rare birds do occur, and so on. This documentation, along with other groups' documentation, is often the springboard for many conservation efforts to help birds and habitats. As an added bonus, I found that by documenting birds you are also helping yourself become a better birder, because it makes you more aware of the subtleties needed to identify one species from another.

Document truthfully what you observe—don't worry about whether it is the right or wrong format. You will learn more each time you document. And as my soul-mate, a M.B.R.C. member, and one of the most committed documentors I know says, "Study your field guide! It will give you the accurate information and confidence that you need in order to identify and document birds." So take up the challenge—help the birds and yourself by committing time and effort to documentation!

Thanks to the Gulf Coast M.O.S.'ers for a wonderful Spring Meeting. Several members acquired life birds and many listed year birds. Judy Toups gave a delightful, yet poignant reminiscent speech for Jerry Jackson on his departure to Florida, recalling "the early days with Jerry and Judy." I'm sure that Jerry will cherish it always. Also at the Dinner Meeting, certificates of honorary membership were presented to: Judith A. Toups, Jerome A. Jackson and William H. Turcotte (in absentia). Our keynote speaker was Scott Hereford who is a staff biologist at the Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge. He gave an entertaining and informative talk on cranes of the world. His crane imitations are priceless!

Gene and I experienced a most exhilarating spring migration in our own backyard. One day we observed 17 different warbler species, and several days we observed as many as 15! On those kinds of days you don't want to even go inside to eat or take care of business, and of course we didn't! We look forward to seeing all of you at our meeting at Leroy Percy Sate Park. I want to invite many of you who have never come to a meeting to please join us and experience what M.O.S. is all about!

[Ed.--See page 10 for the fine '99 Spring Bird List, perhaps the highest ever for an MOS meeting. Incidentally, if you know of corrections in the Membership List distributed last year, please send them to Janet Dubuisson.]

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### **THE MISSISSIPPI KITE: A CHANGE IN EDITORSHIP**

Mark S. Woodrey

As most of you know by now, Jerry Jackson has left Mississippi for "birdier" pastures in Florida. One consequence of this move is that Jerry needed to find a replacement to take over the editorial duties for our journal of record, The Mississippi Kite. With little forethought and little trepidation, I have agreed to become the new editor for The Mississippi Kite.

I include here a little information to provide some general guidelines regarding publication of The Mississippi Kite. The Kite will continue to be published biannually (one issue in July and one in December). The Mississippi Kite is our "journal of record"--a repository for information about birds in Mississippi. Further, The Mississippi Kite is reviewed in professional publications and is found in many major ornithological libraries throughout North America. To meet the minimum standards of science, articles are reviewed prior to acceptance to assure accuracy, originality, and significance -- this, however, is not a process to fear. If by chance an article is deemed inappropriate for publication in The Mississippi Kite, the article will automatically be forwarded to the editor of the newsletter for inclusion in this publication.

What kinds of material are appropriate for publication in The Mississippi Kite? Are you conducting a study on a particular species or bird community in Mississippi? Have you observed any unusual behavior during a field trip or noticed birds nesting in odd situations around your house? Do you have a series of unusual nesting records, early arrival dates, late arrival dates? If you have these sorts of observation or data, I would STRONGLY ENCOURAGE you to

consider writing up your observations for publication in *The Mississippi Kite*. If you have any questions regarding appropriateness for publication in the kite, please feel free to contact me (see below). I would be glad to talk with anyone about your observations and how best to get them into our publication.

For guidelines regarding formatting, please see recent issues of *The Mississippi Kite*. If possible, I would like to receive manuscripts which are typed and double-spaced; computer files in Word Perfect format would be most graciously accepted, but handwritten articles will also be accepted. Again, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Finally, let me say that *The Mississippi Kite* is *our* journal. It will only be as good as the variety and number of submissions I receive. I can promise that this experience will be beneficial for everyone involved. As stated above, "this is not a process to fear". I look forward to hearing from each of you and assisting you with the publication of your interesting observation and notes concerning the birdlife of Mississippi.

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## LOOKING BACK:

### 1998-99 MISSISSIPPI CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS by David King

This past year we lost one Christmas Count (Natchez) dropping the total for the state to 16. The accompanying table (pages 6-9) gives the unedited data for these 1998-99 Christmas Bird Counts (CBC's). These data will be edited and published in an upcoming issue of *Audubon Field notes*. The unedited data are currently available on the WorldwideWeb at:

[http://birdsource.tc.cornell.edu/showcbc/circle\\_select.html](http://birdsource.tc.cornell.edu/showcbc/circle_select.html)

The counts are arranged in the table from south to north (by latitude). This allows nearby counts to be easily compared. Numbers that are within heavy borders indicate unusual species. Numbers with gray backgrounds indicate unusually high numbers. CW means that the species was found during the count week, but not on the count day. The count name abbreviations in the species table (pages 6-9), and the dates on which CBCs were held are listed as follows:

Sym	Name	Date	Sym	Name	Date
HAN	S Hancock County CBC	28 Dec 98	NOX	Noxubee N.W.R. CBC	19 Dec 98
JC	Jackson County CBC	19 Dec 98	SID	Sidon CBC	27 Dec 98
HAT	Hattiesburg CBC	2 Jan 99	GRE	Grenada CBC	30 Dec 98
CH	Church Hill CBC	21 Dec 98	SUM	Sumner CBC	27 Dec 98
VIC	Vicksburg CBC	19 Dec 98	TUP	Tupelo CBC	3 Jan 99
JAC	Jackson CBC	2 Jan 99	SAR	Sardis Lake CBC	19 Dec 98
LAU	Lauderdale County CBC	2 Jan 99	ML	Moon Lake CBC	1 Jan 99
WAS	Washington County CBC	3 Jan 99	ARK	Arkabutla Lake CBC	27 Dec 98

The total number of species found on all the counts was **188** with two more found during count week. This is 11 fewer species than last year, but the same total as the two preceding years. As expected, the two coastal counts had the highest species totals with Hancock County breaking the magic one hundred fifty mark at 156 and beating out Jackson County, which came in with 134. Of the inland counts, five broke the 100 mark for number of total species with Jackson and Sardis tying at 108. Another three counts were in the 90's.

Although the total number of species found was not exceptional, the total number of birds was impressive. The total for all counts was just under a half-million, with the Washington County CBC (in the delta) contributing almost half. Somewhat surprising, the blackbirds (mostly Red-wings and Common Grackles) only made up about 20% of that total. The big numbers were largely due to an abundance of ducks and geese. The counts reported about 90,000 Snow Geese and Mallards, each. The 31,000+ Tree Swallows on the Hancock Co. CBC were also impressive.

Several good species were located. Eight Ross' Geese were found between four counts. Hancock County had a White-winged Scoter. Arkabutla spotted one Harlan's race of Red-tailed Hawk, and immature Golden Eagles were tallied on both the Vicksburg and Noxubee CBC's (Noxubee had two). Vicksburg also had a surprising Solitary Sandpiper. One of the best birds identified the past Christmas season was a California Gull on the Hancock County CBC. Eurasian Collared-Doves continue their spread through the state with a total of 148 found on seven counts. The only hummingbirds this year were a Buff-bellied and an unidentified hummer on the Hancock County count, and a Rufous and a count week *Selasphoris* sp. on the Jackson count.

Hancock County had the only Vermilion Flycatcher and it also had a Western Kingbird. Some birds were conspicuous by their absence. There were no Red-breasted Nuthatches reported. Catbirds are regular only near the coast, but two were found as far north as the Arkabutla count. Six White-eyed Vireos were found on three counts. The best warblers were a Yellow-throated and a Wilson's on the Hancock County count. Another impressive bird was an Indigo Bunting on the Sardis count. Jackson County reported sixteen of the regular but elusive Henslow's Sparrows. Sardis had an Oregon race of Dark-eyed Junco. Finally, six Western Meadowlarks were found on the Sumner count. In all, it was another exciting year.

Congratulations to all who participated.

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#### **Whence Cometh Wintering Geese in Mississippi? Band Recovery, Winter '98-'99**

On Tuesday, 9 Mar 1999 Terry Schiefer reported on recovery data: "I just received information on the origins of the adult Ross's Goose with a neck collar that was at Noxubee NWR on 5 January 1999. It was banded on 31 August 1997 when it was still too young to fly, 13 km SW of Johnson Point, North West Territories. This is about 2400 miles from Noxubee NWR."



NAME	HAN	JC	HAT	CH	VIC	JAC	LAU	WAS	NOX	SID	GRE	SUM	TUP	SAR	ML	ARK
Latitude	30°18'	30°20'	31°21'	31°45'	32°19'	32°27'		33°07'	33°17'	33°22'	33°51'	33°58'	34°13'	34°27'	34°30'	34°46'
Common Loon	25	25				10								9	4	
Pied-billed Grebe	60	49	63	2	31	154	9	145	51	3	18		14	63	10	36
Horned Grebe	29	15				111					3			112	17	
Eared Grebe		6	2													
American White Pelican	44	35				103		610	10					1430		13
Brown Pelican	221	211														
Double-crested Cormorant	233	302	12		1326	644	1	24751	1106	1	4			14	3	131
Anhinga			4													
American Bittern	4	1														
Great Blue Heron	82	55	31	1	98	138	38	134	121	600	128	97	8	471	23	219
Great Egret	93	52	44		201	196	29	139	1	43	3			11		2
Snowy Egret	158	66														
Little Blue Heron	8	12														
Tricolored Heron	14	9														
Reddish Egret	1															
Cattle Egret	6				3											
Black-crowned Night-Heron		3														
White Ibis	33	14			10											
Gr White-fronted Goose		12						5421	9	200	6		CW	71	26	90
Snow Goose	6	22				-20		29340		5000		189	65	2	96	760
Snow Goose (blue phase)						1		54451				2000			346	761
Ross' Goose						2		2		3	1					
Canada Goose	31	130	5	1	156	225		93	531		189	104	4	859	5	138
Wood Duck	102	6	9		35	16	34	35	171	6	4	27		12	16	4
Green-winged Teal	545	153	4		10	50		526	312	10	36		2	318		
American Black Duck								2	9		4	6		21	2	5
Mottled Duck	296	26														
Mallard	484	166	10	21	416	303	6	72121	1652	4000	202	686	69	941	799	1097
Northern Pintail	15	13	2			CW		3884	6	250	2	53		3	166	11
Blue-winged Teal	4	150										40				
Northern Shoveler	29	93	1200		2	68		280	90	400	286	10	645	25	11	1495
Gadwall	212	16	35		302	49		4991	332	300	38	275	45	208	414	20
American Wigeon	27		2		96	1		1177	614	6		64	13	375	11	3
Canvasback	1					13				100	1	1			72	27
Redhead	17	5	6		8	9	2	2	6							3
Ring-necked Duck	390	23	1115		6	302	185	42	697	2	36	91	154	6	30	94
Greater Scaup	8															
Lesser Scaup	452	66	200		300	28	6	201	50	30	57	425	18	1		232
scaup sp.	200	2				5										
White-winged Scoter	1															
Common Goldeneye	3		4													
Bufflehead	75	53	7			113	153	52	21		18	4	28	4	5	201
Hooded Merganser	21	23	300		43	129	21	194	3568	47	84	45	1	77	8	372
Red-breasted Merganser	152	47												28		
Ruddy Duck	125	106	1901			1		570	169	400	81	342	96	8	3	920
duck sp.				7	175							75				
Black Vulture	11	2	128	51	45	181	18		92		7		3	2		
Turkey Vulture	44	2	173	20	20	15	33		132		7			9		2
Osprey	7	7			1	2								1		
Bald Eagle	5	2				5	2	3	4		16	1		17		3
adult	5	0				4	2	3	2		13	0		11		2
immature	0	0				1	0	0	2		3	1		6		1
unknown	0	2				0	0	0	0		0	0		0		0
Northern Harrier	8	11	1		15	8	1	14	7	2	13	4		8	3	15
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	3		1		5	1				1			2		1
Cooper's Hawk	3	1	1		3	3	1	1	CW		3				1	
Accipiter sp.	1			1	2				2							
Red-shouldered Hawk	22	2	5		9	10	13		11		7	1	1	3		2
Red-tailed Hawk	21	13	7	10	43	43	8	46	25	10	21	32	17	26	23	66

NAME	HAN	JC	HAT	CH	VIC	JAC	LAU	WAS	NOX	SID	GRE	SUM	TUP	SAR	ML	ARK
Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk																1
<i>Buteo</i> sp.							7									
Golden Eagle					1				2							
immature					1				2							
American Kestrel	17	11	16	1	32	12	2	44	9	6	9	10	2	12	7	22
Merlin	1	1	1			1					1					
Peregrine Falcon		CW														
Falcon sp.				1												
Wild Turkey						CW	20	1	22					20		1
Northern Bobwhite	3					1		8	15		13		CW	32		
Clapper Rail	22	13														
King Rail						2										
Virginia Rail		2														
Sora	5	7									1					
Common Moorhen	1															
American Coot	489	403	1790		4	462	46	2022	295	100	30		74		223	2
Sandhill Crane		27														
Black-bellied Plover	55	21														
Semipalmated Plover	13	76														
Piping Plover	1															
Killdeer	178	184	83		429	331	19	1115	67	75	77	55	38	352	2	23
American Oystercatcher	CW	20														
Black-necked Stilt		12														
American Avocet		1														
Greater Yellowlegs	27	15			13	1			1		6	1		2		
Lesser Yellowlegs	16	39						1								
Yellowlegs, sp.			1													
Solitary Sandpiper					1											
Willet	73	153														
Spotted Sandpiper	2	4	2													
Marbled Godwit	CW															
Ruddy Turnstone	3															
Sanderling	218	50														
Western Sandpiper	7	6														
Least Sandpiper	2	33						25	1				7	21		
Dunlin	707	237														
peep sp.		10						25						36		
Short-billed Dowitcher	50															
Long-billed Dowitcher	1															
dowitcher sp.	115	65														
Common Snipe	152	11	1		4	CW		13	7		27	42	CW	52		3
American Woodcock						1		3			3					
Laughing Gull	479	567														
Bonaparte's Gull	120	27			1	1217		515	CW		2031		61	635	48	706
Ring-billed Gull	186	182	8		32	554	56	1712	CW	6	1454	4	7	479	15	892
California Gull	1															
Herring Gull	29	81	1			13		41			5			8		2
Caspian Tern	43	51														
Royal Tern	33	119														
Common Tern							6									
Forster's Tern	68	139	1		16	82			1		5			85		
Black Skimmer	43	45														
Rock Dove	36	185	243		490	57	26	43	4	8	3		158	3	15	21
Eurasian Collared-Dove	72	3	1		56	11		1				4				
White-winged Dove	7		CW													
Mourning Dove	218	73	92	14	264	136	212	277	52	12	52	58	36	149	40	285
Common Barn-Owl	1												1			
Eastern Screech-Owl	7		3	1	2	4		3	16		1			1		1
Great Horned Owl	3	1	2		1	3		2	2	1	5		1	3		1
Barred Owl	2		3		4	2		4	10	1	4	3		5	1	1
Short-eared Owl											2					

NAME	HAN	JC	HAT	CH	VIC	JAC	LAU	WAS	NOX	SID	GRE	SUM	TUP	SAR	ML	ARK
Buff-bellied Hummingbird	1															
Rufous Hummingbird						1										
<i>Selasphorus</i> sp.						CW										
Hummingbird sp.	1															
Belted Kingfisher	46	13	12	1	31	15	12	11	14	6	7	3	2	13	2	12
Red-headed Woodpecker			4	2	29	59	8	5	164	6	6	1	4	60	6	45
Red-bellied Woodpecker	82	17	24	44	94	42	41	68	136	5	39	23	18	141	42	94
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	21	3	11	8	36	12	8	10	8	2	15	2	6	12	3	19
Downy Woodpecker	43	6	11	17	49	12	7	31	36	3	23	4	8	44	10	39
Hairy Woodpecker	4		1	2	9	2	3	3	11		1	2	2	7	3	4
Red-cockaded Woodpecker									1							
Northern Flicker	35	9	16	9	57	35	60	16	60	1	30	5	11	106	24	68
Pileated Woodpecker	15	1	7	8	23	5	6	7	38	1	11	1	1	22	2	10
Eastern Phoebe	69	16	18	15	53	11	10	14	56	3	18	1	2	5	1	8
Vermilion Flycatcher	1															
Western Kingbird	1															
Horned Lark					23			212		8	9	43		4	2	11
Tree Swallow	31419	42	3													
Blue Jay	198	64	102	57	298	196	207	167	314	15	140	46	70	350	58	521
American Crow	281	31	249	112	197	346	358	2	403	25	235		94	285	1	81
Fish Crow	100	83	41	48	1	10			2		1			1		
crow sp.	44	11														
Carolina Chickadee	170	8	35	54	205	69	94	86	89	4	67	9	37	117	21	74
Tufted Titmouse	109	12	40	57	101	32	95	31	146	8	54	1	39	136	5	88
White-breasted Nuthatch				1		CW	1		17				3	26		8
Brown-headed Nuthatch	40		6			15	18		2		1		2			
Brown Creeper	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	1	7	1	1		7	9		7
Carolina Wren	144	33	46	23	159	76	30	52	76	4	41	1	12	103	11	68
House Wren	30	2	2	1	3			1	1	4	1			1		
Winter Wren						3	4	CW	17	1	8			8	9	10
Sedge Wren	23	25				1			5					3		
Marsh Wren	19	33	1			1										
Golden-crowned Kinglet	18	24	2	12	7	30	28	22	107	1	32		26	127	3	36
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	164	53	22	37	123	77	40	30	102	4	34	2	11	87	3	33
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	31	2	8		1											
Eastern Bluebird	238	53	158	29	167	244	235	92	86	10	76	3	49	117	23	244
Hermit Thrush	10	11	2	12	51	5	5	14	22	4	19		25	14	2	25
American Robin	3579	212	1089	229	113	150	491	107	298	25	74	84	253	25	12	197
Gray Catbird	33	2	2		1											2
Northern Mockingbird	159	51	67	21	113	88	90	82	37	10	22	21	27	35	31	77
Brown Thrasher	29	8	16	4	18	9	17	13	30	6	25	2	11	20	3	19
American Pipit	12	15	11		325		28	83	85	1	32	2	7	101		18
Cedar Waxwing	65	20	181	442	376	45	125	CW	82		20		22	13	9	88
Loggerhead Shrike	18	6	16	3	56	28	6	44	6	4	5	17	2	7	15	22
European Starling	405	102	174	4	755	367	67	5953	130	100	459	2975	628	169	345	231
White-eyed Vireo	3				1						2					
Blue-headed Vireo	15	2	2	6	8	3	1		12		1			1		1
Orange-crowned Warbler	32	4	4	1	11	3			2		3					
Yellow-rumped Warbler	7044	374	248	170	553	126	273	251	44	15	74		1	90	12	60
Yellow-throated Warbler	1															
Pine Warbler	144	8	52	3	5	94	58		77	4	20		10	27		13
Palm Warbler	82	16	15										1			1
Common Yellowthroat	21	8	1		3	2			4	1	1			1		
Wilson's Warbler	1															
Northern Cardinal	190	69	193	56	535	293	374	475	232	25	144	203	189	214	258	508
Indigo Bunting														1		
Eastern Towhee	63	17	60	6	32	36	33	7	116		97	1	19	79	2	41
Chipping Sparrow	43	1	102	2	94	64	201		61	10		8	126	25		48
Field Sparrow	3	5	7	3	13	10	26	8	11	6	40		42	25	2	71
Vesper Sparrow	22		1			13		6	2	6	12			2		2
Savannah Sparrow	186	55	17		71	70	10	220	52	30	55	4	106	129	31	48



NAME	HAN	JC	HAT	CH	VIC	JAC	LAU	WAS	NOX	SID	GRE	SUM	TUP	SAR	ML	ARK
Grasshopper Sparrow	1															
Henslow's Sparrow		18														
Leconte's Sparrow		1									1			4		
Nelson's Sharp-tail Sparrow		2														
Seaside Sparrow	6	6														
Fox Sparrow					6	1		1	4		39	1	7	7	2	18
Song Sparrow	80	22	22	11	63	41	26	45	189	25	334	40	44	370	57	137
Lincoln's Sparrow				1		3										
Swamp Sparrow	158	85	13	2	84	130	4	23	93	15	294	1	9	299	17	114
White-throated Sparrow	104	28	142	46	720	237	153	298	348		267	26	203	398	183	788
White-crowned Sparrow	1		1		1	6	1	51				21		11	57	86
Dark-eyed Junco	4		59		168	66	155	69	47	6	273	15	384	592	48	965
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco														1		
Lapland Longspur								1							6	202
Red-winged Blackbird	2436	777	1081		2924	9804	305	6682	939	200	2415	3598	297	100	45	1819
Eastern Meadowlark	167	95	27		144	82	41	140	103	25	135	62	36	106	81	114
Western Meadowlark												6				
Rusty Blackbird	6	1	24	21	16	55		2	200		67	3	18	1	1	17
Brewer's Blackbird	26					35	175	32	22	75		120	252	1		
Boat-tailed Grackle	186	71														
Common Grackle	134	101	2593	1	3639	25972	3690	748	1306		1597	6150	3031	1624	223	3663
Brown-headed Cowbird	296	5	2		405	166	30	1881	63	15	52	49	38	8	10	56
blackbird sp.			7000	27			1260					5550	1453			
Purple Finch	2		10		37		9				1		6			
House Finch	42		20		86	23	21		1				19	26	8	54
Pine Siskin	5		4								14			1		
American Goldfinch	364	34	333	153	65	62	186	2	130	6	38	1	66	134	10	103
House Sparrow	39	13	14	4	334	53	36	199	43	10	10	76	16	40	212	148
TOTAL SPECIES	156	134	103	55	97	108	78	93	101	73	105	70	80	108	77	96
TOTAL BIRDS	57404	7672	21945	1899	18201	46292	10120	223380	16992	12358	12497	23932	9323	13517	4356	19920
# of OBSERVERS	26	15	14	2	18	26	24	13	25	1	8	3	5	16	4	13
NAME	HAN	JC	HAT	CH	VIC	JAC	LAU	WAS	NOX	SID	GRE	SUM	TUP	SAR	ML	ARK

unusual species   
high number of birds 

### Corrections to: "The First National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count from Mississippi" by Marvin Davis

In the last issue of the Newsletter I made at least two egregious errors in presenting as "first-ever CBC in Mississippi" the one taken on December 26 by Mr. Townsend Boyer at "Indianola, Sunflower Co., Miss. I enquired whether anyone could tell us anything about the counter. Indeed, I was informed that "Townsend" Boyer was a "nom de plum" for a LADY birdcounter responsible for a number of CBCs from Indianola, Mrs. John C. Boyer! My informant is Seymour B. Johnson of Indianola; he adds that Mrs. Boyer was a great-grandmother of Felder Rushing, a horticulturist for MS ETV, whom some of you no doubt know, and she preceded him as an excellent gardener/botanist. Mr. Johnson adds that "I can stand at my office window and see her yard...which was and is considered a bird sanctuary. As an adolescent boy we knew her as the lady who shot at cats and little boys carrying BB guns with her slingshot, and accurately as I recall." Mr. Johnson took umbrage at the suggestion of her report of a "Red-cockaded Woodpecker" possibly being inaccurate, which was done (I remind) only based on the opinion of our (newly-former) resident woodpecker authority, Dr. J. A. Jackson. But I send my apologies for the offense.

Moreover, my collecting of early CBCs was pointed out as being sadly incomplete by Terry Schiefer, whose own more thorough historical search had revealed CBCs dating back as far as '04, '08, '10 and 1912-13. The one from **Jackson in 1904** would be then the **ACTUAL 1st-ever count in Mississippi!**

**MOS '99 SPRING MTG. BIRD LIST- 180 spp.: Order per current MOS Miss. Checklist**

Common Loon	Whimbrel	Marsh Wren
Pied-billed Grebe	Marbled Godwit	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Horned Grebe	Ruddy Turnstone	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Brown Pelican	Red Knot	Eastern Bluebird
Double-crested Cormorant	Sanderling	Veery
Anhinga	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Gray-cheeked Thrush
Least Bittern	Western Sandpiper	Swainson's Thrush
Great Blue Heron	Least Sandpiper	Wood Thrush
Great Egret	White-rumped Sandpiper	Gray Catbird
Snowy Egret	Pectoral Sandpiper	Northern Mockingbird
Little Blue Heron	Dunlin	Brown Thrasher
Tricolored Heron	Stilt Sandpiper	Cedar Waxwing
Cattle Egret	Short-billed Dowitcher	Loggerhead Shrike
Green Heron	Long-billed Dowitcher	European Starling
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Wilson's Phalarope	White-eyed Vireo
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Laughing Gull	Yellow-throated Vireo
White Ibis	Bonaparte's Gull	Red-eyed Vireo
Canada Goose	Ring-billed Gull	Tennessee Warbler
Wood Duck	Herring Gull	Northern Parula
Mottled Duck	Gull-billed Tern	Yellow Warbler
Mallard	Caspian Tern	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Royal Tern	Magnolia Warbler
Northern Shoveler	Sandwich Tern	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Redhead	Forster's Tern	Black-throated Green Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Least Tern	Yellow-throated Warbler
Greater Scaup	Black Skimmer	Pine Warbler
Lesser Scaup	Rock Dove	Prairie Warbler
Red-breasted Merganser	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Bay-breasted Warbler
Black Vulture	Mourning Dove	Blackpoll Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Black-and-white Warbler
Osprey	Barred Owl	American Redstart
Swallow-tailed Kite	Common Nighthawk	Prothonotary Warbler
Mississippi Kite	Chuck-will's-widow	Worm-eating Warbler
Bald Eagle	Chimney Swift	Swainson's Warbler
Northern Harrier	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Ovenbird
Cooper's Hawk	Belted Kingfisher	Kentucky Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk	Red-headed Woodpecker	Common Yellowthroat
Broad-winged Hawk	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Hooded Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	Downy Woodpecker	Yellow-breasted Chat
Northern Bobwhite	Hairy Woodpecker	Summer Tanager
Clapper Rail	Red-cockaded Woodpecker	Scarlet Tanager
King Rail	Northern Flicker	Northern Cardinal
Virginia Rail	Pileated Woodpecker	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Sora	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Blue Grosbeak
Purple Gallinule	Acadian Flycatcher	Indigo Bunting
Common Moorhen	Great Crested Flycatcher	Dickcissel
American Coot	Eastern Kingbird	Eastern Towhee
Sandhill Crane	Purple Martin	Bachman's Sparrow
Black-bellied Plover	Tree Swallow	Savannah Sparrow
Semipalmated Plover	N. Rough-winged Swallow	Bobolink
Piping Plover	Bank Swallow	Red-winged Blackbird
Killdeer	Cliff Swallow	Eastern Meadowlark
American Oystercatcher	Barn Swallow	Boat-tailed Grackle
Black-necked Stilt	Blue Jay	Common Grackle
American Avocet	American Crow	Brown-headed Cowbird
Greater Yellowlegs	Fish Crow	Orchard Oriole
Lesser Yellowlegs	Carolina Chickadee	Baltimore Oriole
Solitary Sandpiper	Tufted Titmouse	House Finch
Willet	Brown-headed Nuthatch	American Goldfinch
Spotted Sandpiper	Carolina Wren	House Sparrow

### **HAVE YOU SEEN A SWALLOW-TAILED KITE LATELY? – Mark Woodrey**

In the spring of 1998, the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks began to gather data on the status and distribution of the Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) in Mississippi. In 1999, we have received funding to conduct surveys and nest searches in the Pascagoula River Basin as well as to continue the mail survey. As part of this pilot project, sponsored by the southeast Working Group of Partners in Flight and the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, data from Mississippi will be combined with similar data from South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, and Texas to determine the status and breeding range for this species across the southeastern United States. Partners in this endeavor include other state wildlife agencies (states mentioned previously), the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the US Forest Service, US Army Corps of Engineers, The Nature Conservancy, timber industry companies, as well as many other nongovernmental organizations.

Both the range and the numbers of the Swallow-tailed Kite in the U.S.A. have been greatly reduced. The Swallow-tailed Kite has been identified by Partners in Flight and the American Bird Conservancy as a high priority species in need of conservation attention. You can help in determining the extent and concentrations of these kites in Mississippi by sending your observations to Mark S. Woodrey at the Museum of Natural Science in Jackson (address below). A brief report summarizing the results of this survey will be provided to each participant by the fall meeting of the Mississippi Ornithological Society. Remember, this is your opportunity to contribute valuable information to the conservation of the spectacular birdlife of Mississippi.

**•Data needed for each observation:\***

1. Date sighted;
2. Time of Day;
3. Number seen;
4. Location (be as specific as possible - for example, "½ mile north of I-10 bridge over the west channel of the Pascagoula River");
5. Bird seen soaring or perched;
6. Bird seen carrying nesting material (stick, Spanish moss);
7. Bird seen carrying food (large insects, snakes);
8. Comments;
9. Your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address (if you have one).

\*Note: Sighting data forms are available. If you would like to participate in this important project, please contact Mark at the museum and he will be glad to send copies of the data forms to you.

**•Send your observations to:**

Mark S. Woodrey

Attention: Swallow-tailed Kite Survey, MS Museum of Natural Science

111 North Jefferson St., Jackson, MS 39202

\*\*\*\*\*

### **REQUEST FOR OBSERVATIONS OF SICK/DEAD AM. WHITE PELICANS**

Earlier in the year a request was sent out for "field folks" to be observing for mortality or abnormal behavior in the Am. White Pelicans that migrate through Mississippi from Florida.. There was a situation in central Florida that has exposed these birds and others to contaminants that could manifest as adverse impacts and mortality. The signs of the contamination are seizures, including swimming in circles, head tossing, aberrant wing flapping. Many deaths occurred from a distinct areal pattern. If you know of any such incidents concerning Am. White Pelicans, it is not too late to submit a report. Please contact Greg Masson, Environmental Contaminants Specialist, FWS, at (912) 265-9336 ext 30, Mobile, AL, or Fax at (912) 265-1061.

## "MURMURING" OF REDWINGS

William H. Turcotte, Richland, MS

On 1 January 1997, during the Jackson, MS Christmas Bird Count, my wife, Dorothy, and I saw Red-winged Blackbirds congregating in trees along Highway 43 and Pipeline Road. The party working this count area (Pearl River Waterfowl Refuge across Ross Barnett Reservoir) with Steve Peterson estimated about 25,000 redwings roosting there in a southern wild rice marsh at the intersection of the roads.

On the next day we visited the area around sunset and there were several hundred redwings in trees near the roost site. Well after sundown, arriving flocks milled around over the reservoir and near dark had joined together into an ever-changing cloud of birds against the darkening sky. Their movements were synchronous, and the mass of birds looked like dark clouds. This phenomenon lasted until almost dark, when small flocks began settling to roost in the small marsh area. Although the marsh must have been saturated with roosting redwings, it could not have held all the milling flock, some of which could have been roosting elsewhere on the reservoir. I estimated the total aggregation of redwings to be over 100,000 in the milling flock of birds over the reservoir.

Not long before I had watched a documentary film on a species of African martin that staged and roosted near a large lake. The lengthy sequence showed the martins "murmuring" in immense aerial displays before going to roost. That was the first time I heard the definition of such aerial displays. On several occasions I have seen large flocks of European Starlings in "murmuring" displays while in the act of harassing Red-tailed Hawks. Their actions were similar to those of redwings, but in much smaller numbers.

Martins and other swallows congregate in staging flocks and roosts, especially along the Mississippi River in late July and August before migrating southward. Mississippi Kites also congregate in large feeding flocks in the same areas. Although I have not seen or heard of our swallows "murmuring," they might rarely do so. I feel lucky to have seen "murmuring" redwings.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **FROM THE FIELD—Gray Kingbird, again on Harrison County mainland**

Ken Hackman reported on May 23<sup>rd</sup> that while on a trip with his students to the MS Coast, "we stopped in at the parking area of the Marine Education Center Friday evening around 6:00 p.m. to see if the kingbirds from 1998 had returned. The birds were located very quickly after arriving, due to their vocal behavior. I observed them until dark forced us on our way. I returned again this afternoon around 12:15 and observed them for another hour. Twice I observed one of the birds fly into the second tree from the Hwy. 90 bridge along the water's edge carrying nesting material. Both times, however, the items were simply dropped. In addition to carrying in the nesting material, the two were very active in chasing off a mockingbird and a crow that ventured too near the tree. They do seem to be spending most of their time in that one particular tree, and are also favoring a particular branch....I will "go out on a limb" (if you will pardon the pun!), and say that they are attempting to build in that tree, and on that limb." [Let's hope he's correct!]

**REVIEW LIST SPECIES:** All sightings of the following species require full details that will be reviewed by the MOS Bird Records Committee (please complete the Rare Bird Documentation Form):

Pacific Loon	Ruff	Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher
Red-necked Grebe	Red-necked Phalarope	Cassin's Kingbird
Western Grebe	Red Phalarope	Gray Kingbird
Sooty Shearwater	Pomarine Jaeger	Cave Swallow
Audubon's Shearwater	Parasitic Jaeger	Mountain Bluebird
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	Little Gull	Townsend's Solitaire
Masked Booby	Common Black-headed Gull	Citrine Wagtail
Great Cormorant	California Gull	Sprague's Pipit
Neotropic Cormorant	Thayer's Gull	Bell's Vireo
Glossy Ibis	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Black-capped Vireo
White-faced Ibis	Slaty-backed Gull	Black-whiskered Vireo
Roseate Spoonbill	Glaucous Gull	Bachman's Warbler
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	Great Black-backed Gull	Tropical Parula
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	Black-legged Kittiwake	Black-throated Gray Warbler
Tundra Swan	Sabine's Gull	Townsend's Warbler
Trumpeter Swan	Roseate Tern	Connecticut Warbler
Brant	Bridled Tern	Painted Redstart
Cinnamon Teal	Sooty Tern	Western Tanager
Eurasian Wigeon	Brown Noddy	Black-headed Grosbeak
King Eider	Band-tailed Pigeon	Lazuli Bunting
Common Merganser	Snowy Owl	Green-tailed Towhee
White-tailed Kite	Burrowing Owl	Spotted Towhee
Northern Goshawk	Long-eared Owl	American Tree Sparrow
Harris' Hawk	Northern Saw-whet Owl	Lark Bunting
Swainson's Hawk	White-eared Hummingbird	Harris' Sparrow
Ferruginous Hawk	Anna's Hummingbird	McCown's Longspur
Rough-legged Hawk	Calliope Hummingbird	Smith's Longspur
Crested Caracara	Broad-tailed Hummingbird	Chestnut-collared Longspur
Prairie Falcon	Allen's Hummingbird	Snow Bunting
Yellow Rail	Ivory-billed Woodpecker	Western Meadowlark
Black Rail	Western Wood-Pewee	Shiny Cowbird
Limpkin	Alder Flycatcher	Bronzed Cowbird
Mountain Plover	Willow Flycatcher	Bullock's Oriole
Hudsonian Godwit	Say's Phoebe	Red Crossbill
Purple Sandpiper	Ash-throated Flycatcher	Any species new to Mississippi

**OTHER RARE OR UNCOMMON BIRDS:** MOS solicits reports of all sightings of the following species whose status in Mississippi is poorly documented (please use an MOS Bird Record Card). Distinguishing features seen should be noted for species that are easily misidentified.

<u>Statewide</u>	Rufous Hummingbird	<u>Inland Only</u>
Red-throated Loon	Olive-sided Flycatcher	King Rail
American Bittern	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Virginia Rail
Least Bittern	Least Flycatcher	Sora
Wood Stork	Vermillion Flycatcher	Purple Gallinule
Ross' Goose	Western Kingbird	Common Moorhen
Oldsquaw	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Sandhill Crane
Black Scoter	Bewick's Wren	Black-necked Stilt
Surf Scoter	Golden-winged Warbler	American Avocet
White-winged Scoter	Nashville Warbler	Willet
Am. Swallow-tailed Kite	Cape May Warbler	Whimbrel
Golden Eagle	Black-throated Blue Warbler	Ruddy Turnstone
Snowy Plover	Cerulean Warbler	Red Knot
Piping Plover	Mourning Warbler	Wilson's Phalarope
Upland Sandpiper	Wilson's Warbler	Laughing Gull
Long-billed Curlew	Painted Bunting	Franklin's Gull
Marbled Godwit	Clay-colored Sparrow	Least Tern
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Lark Sparrow	White-winged Dove
Common Tern	Grasshopper Sparrow	
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Henslow's Sparrow	<u>Coastal Only</u>
Common Ground-Dove	LeConte's Sparrow	American Black Duck
Black-billed Cuckoo	Sharp-tailed Sparrow	Horned Lark
Groove-billed Ani	Lincoln's Sparrow	White-breasted Nuthatch
Short-eared Owl	Yellow-headed Blackbird	Winter Wren
Buff-bellied Hummingbird	Evening Grosbeak	Lapland Longspur
Black-chinned Hummingbird		

# Mississippi Ornithological Society Rare Bird Documentation Form

1. Species \_\_\_\_\_ 2. No. of birds \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. Age \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Sex \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Date observed \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Hour \_\_\_\_\_  
 7. Duration of observation \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Sky \_\_\_\_\_  
 9. Exact location (include county) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Habitat \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Distance from bird \_\_\_\_\_

12. Optical equipment used \_\_\_\_\_

13. Relationship of sun/observer/bird \_\_\_\_\_

14. Others with you who saw the bird...

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>
-------------	----------------	--------------

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. Others who have independently identified the bird...

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>
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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Anyone who disagreed with this ID? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Vocalizations \_\_\_\_\_

18. Behavior \_\_\_\_\_

19. Describe in detail the features YOU noted. Attach drawings made during observation. Were features noted before \_\_\_ or after \_\_\_ consulting field guides? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

20. What similar species did you consider? \_\_\_\_\_

21. Why did you eliminate them? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

22. Previous experience with this species \_\_\_\_\_

23. Did you identify the bird prior to consulting field guides? \_\_\_\_\_

24. List additional materials submitted (photos, tapes, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

25. \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>
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26. \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Date</u>
------------------	-------------

[ED.: As we are about to go to press, missbird has spread an alert for MS birders to let their opinions to be known on an issue of timber harvests in **YOUR MS National Forests VERSUS Red-cockaded Woodpeckers'** survival needs. Please review the attitudes expressed in excerpts below, and communicate your views, addressed to **Sen. Trent Lott, 487 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING, WASHINGTON DC 20510** or phone (202) 224-6253; or e-mail: [senatorlott@lott.senate.gov](mailto:senatorlott@lott.senate.gov) ]

## Timber in national forests

by Sen. Trent Lott [from the Opinion page of the Ocean Springs Record-Gautier Independent]

"For generations, Mississippi was known as home to King Cotton. Cotton fields seemed to blanket much of our state, not only in the Delta but also throughout Central and South Mississippi. However, today, there is a new king - timber products.

With our timber harvest worth \$1 billion annually, trees are Mississippi's largest cash crop and they help make up our largest single industry. Today, Mississippi's timber harvesting is complemented by our bustling furniture manufacturing industry. In fact, 60,000 Mississippians are now employed in the timber production and the wood products industries combined. A vital part of this industry is made up of timber sales from our national forests. Without revenue generated through national forest timber sales, Mississippi counties, schools, courthouses and all -- could virtually shut down.....

.... During the summit, we actively discussed a troubling downward turn in Mississippi's timber sales, which is directly linked to diminishing school revenues in some Mississippi counties. Some of this downturn has resulted from limitations placed on harvesting in order save the Red Cockade [sic] Woodpecker, *a bird which is not native to our state* [emphasis added, because this statement is absolutely, totally FALSE!], and the Louisiana Quillwort, a type of grass [NOT!].

Efforts to preserve rare birds, plants and other species are laudable, but I believe these efforts must be based on proven scientific data. In both of these cases, *the science suggesting either species' habitat is seriously endangered remains questionable* [thanks in part to research stimulated by the Endangered Species Act, equally FALSE!]. Yet thousands of acres of national forest land has been set aside for their habitat and taken out of timber production. I continue to get alarming reports that the Red Cockade [sic] Woodpecker situation is causing production problems in the DeSoto, Bienville and Homochitto national forests. In fact, within the Bienville National Forest 125,000 acres have been set aside for 80 woodpeckers, about 1,500 acres per bird. That seems a bit much. I am told this value is an educated guess -- a guess that is harming the education of Mississippi's children." [Wasn't gambling supposed to handle that problem?]

Cut below

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### **ORDER FORM -- MOS ITEMS FOR SALE--** [PRICES INCLUDE POSTAGE CHARGES]

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**MAIL THIS FORM WITH CHECK (TO MISS. ORNITHOL. SOC.) TO:** Janet Dubuisson, 22410 Glad Acres, Pass Christian, MS 39571

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**MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**Organized 30 April 1955**

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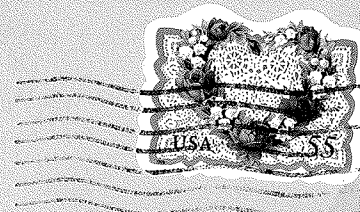
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All persons interested in Mississippi bird life are invited to join the **MOS**. **Annual dues:** Sustaining, \$30; Family, \$25; Individual (regular), \$15; Student/Senior, \$10; Subscribing (libraries only), \$10; Life Membership, \$300. All membership 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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*RETURN ADDRESS:*

Miss. Ornithological Society  
P.O. Box 515  
University, MS 38677



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***FEATURED IN SUMMER '99 ISSUE:***

**p. 15-RC 'PECKERS "WORTH" SAVING?**

First Word on Fall '99 MOS Mtg.; News of Spring  
MOS Meeting; Compilation of '98 Miss. CBCs  
**[Red on Your Label = Dues are Overdue!]**