

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

Volume 45, Number 3

September 2000



Ictinia mississippiensis

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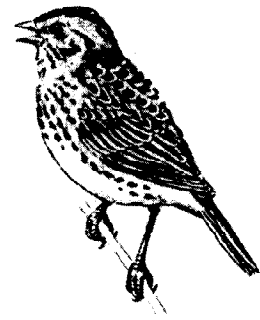
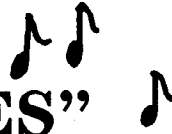
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAYS: Mary Stevens, MMNS

MISSISSIPPI BIRD INFORMATION

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“CALL NOTES”



BY SHANNON KNIGHT
M.O.S. PRESIDENT

With the extremely hot, dry weather the birds have really been coming to the birdbaths around our house. Recently, Gene had the water hose spraying on my impatiens where a hummingbird feeder hangs nearby. We watched out the kitchen window as a male hummer sat on a tiny branch, taking a delightful bath in the spray. This went on for about five minutes. These little gems never cease to amaze me with their beauty and tenacity. We have only about another month to enjoy their company in this part of the state.

As those of you who come to meetings and read the newsletter know, we are still seeking a newsletter editor. I have talked to several people who have said that they might be interested in the future, but could not take on this job at this time. With a mailing list of 185 members and only 30-35 actively participating members, we don't have a big "pool" from which to choose and everyone already seems to be involved with so many other things that they can't take on any more—which is the case with Gene and me. We are both actively involved in

several aspects of M.O.S., but feel that until we get a full-time editor, we are going to cut publication of the newsletter to two issues a year—a fall and a spring publication. We hope this will be agreeable to everyone. If you would like to volunteer for editor of the newsletter or if you have talked to someone who might be interested, please let us know.

While reading Jan Dubuisson's article about the trials and tribulations of the Least Terns' nesting conditions, I thought about what an admirable and courageous thing she and the other volunteers were doing. I want to thank her and the many volunteers who helped these adorable little terns survive another nesting season. Jan, not many people know just how many hours you really spend attending meetings to lobby for these birds, and the actual beach-hours that you spend during nesting season. We all appreciate your efforts on behalf of the terns.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the Fall Meeting at J.P. Coleman State Park. It is a beautiful park with many excellent facilities. I'm sure that Carolyn Jamigan has a wonderful weekend planned for us! See you there!

MISSISSIPPI BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE VACANCY

Two positions on the Mississippi Bird Records Committee will become vacant this year with the expiration of the terms of two of the committee's current members. The committee is looking for two new members to fill these vacancies. Prospective members should have a demonstrated expertise in field identification and be knowledgeable about the birds of Mississippi and the surrounding region. Responsibilities of members include reviewing records of birds that are on the Mississippi Review List and attending the committee's annual meeting. Committee members serve a three year term. Most business will be conducted by mail.

If you are interested in serving on the committee or have questions about the responsibilities involved, *please contact Terry Schiefer (P.O. Box 9775, Mississippi State, MS 39762; 662-324-3748; tschiefer@entomology.msstate.edu).*



Least Terns 2000

by Jan Dubuison

As chairperson of MS Coast Audubon's Least Tern Committee, I looked forward to the tern nesting season on the Gulf Coast this Spring with a great deal of trepidation. In 1999, the majority of the birds had nested outside the designated sanctuaries, and a man who lived adjacent to a seed colony in Long Beach had just about driven the Board of Supervisors, the Department of Marine Resources, the Harrison County Sand Beach Authority, the sheriff's department, and ME, to distraction with his complaints. I did not see how any of us could survive another year like 1999. We had to come up with a solution.

In February of this year, all the above agencies met with members of the board of MS Coast Audubon Society and with our state ornithologist, Mark Woodrey, to try to devise a management plan for this year's nesting season. Our main focus was on how to deter the birds from the Long Beach seed colony, where they were so unwanted and faced additional problems from an access ramp for beach vendors. We put together a plan with a combination of deterrents, using suggestions from all parties. The Sand Beach Authority was to scrape that area with their equipment daily as the birds arrived and scouted out nest sites. They also removed a dune area, trying to make the site look different and somehow less hospitable to the birds. The disgruntled beachfront owner was told he could do anything he liked to discourage the birds from choosing that site, as long as he did not harm the birds or disturb any scrapes with eggs. He attacked this with a vengeance, purchasing numerous owl and crow decoys and even tying aluminum pie plates to his volleyball net! Lydia's Audubon Shoppe donated large balloons with eyes on them, made especially to frighten birds. I had

little faith in all these measures, feeling we were in for another tough year, but was willing to try anything.

One of the reasons we felt the birds had deserted their original colonies was beach erosion, particularly from Hurricane Georges. We knew the beach replenishment project was not due to be started until the Fall of 2000, leaving us to deal with unsuitable sanctuaries this year and several seed colonies. It was suggested by the head of the Sand Beach Authority that we might need to have these seed colonies designated as emergency sanctuaries, at least for this year. I personally felt this would be difficult to accomplish.

The birds began to arrive, and we all watched carefully as they started to choose nest sites. Although the Long Beach birds checked out their old colony site at Trautman Avenue, much to my surprise and delight, they moved the entire colony about one half mile west, behind dunes and adjacent to the Boggs family compound, which turned out to be an ideal location. I marked 200 nests there over Memorial Day weekend. I even had one tern so intent on nesting successfully that she was incubating a Timex watch! We also had our requisite 200 nests on Henderson Point in West Harrison County. The rest of the birds flocked to a site in Biloxi they had begun using several years ago. It, too, was a good location, across from the Seashore Methodist Retirement complex, which contains a number of dunes and has little use by beach goers. Mark Woodrey did a quick overview of this area in mid May, counting 750 nests.

I felt that even in these relatively safe areas, the birds needed official protection, prompting me to request to speak at the Board

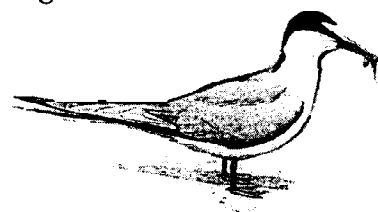
of Supervisors meeting the third week of May. Unfortunately, their agenda was full, but the President of the Board asked that I FAX him a letter with my concerns and requests, which he promised to read at the meeting and have the Supervisors take a vote. I personally called all the other Supervisors' offices to give them a heads up on what was to happen. My letter asked that any colony with at least 100 nests be designated as an emergency sanctuary, with signs and fencing, if possible.

I attended their meeting, sitting through two and a half hours of debate over the Confederate Flag and other county business. After the official agenda was addressed, President Bobby Eleuterius did indeed read my letter, and the Board agreed unanimously to all my requests. Needless to say, I was thrilled and relieved. The following day, the large signs that MS Ornithological Society had helped us to purchase were erected on the three sites. My heartfelt thanks goes to all the people who made this possible.

Over the Memorial Day weekend, I marked 1,375 nests in the Biloxi colony, which added to the other two sites, made 1,875 nests in all. This was an increase of approximately 500 nests from last year. Although I personally experienced a devastating thunderstorm in Biloxi that Sunday that drowned approximately 125 chicks (another story in itself), the nesting season seems to have been a success. Charlie Brenke of Vancleave painted and delivered 6 warehouse pallets, which we placed along the large colony for shade and protection for the chicks. Through Judy Toups' birding column in the Sun Herald and MS Coast Audubon's newsletter, I put out a call for volunteers to help

patrol the colonies over the July 4 weekend. The response was overwhelming. We had many people who knew nothing about birds wanting to help, and we guarded the colonies after dark over the weekend and on July 4 from 10 AM to after 10 PM. We set up shade tents, picnicked, and took children (and lots of adults) carefully into the edge of the colony to get to see newborn chicks. It was a wonderful day of camaraderie which I hope to make an annual event. We really had no problems until after dark, when people arrived in droves to watch fireworks and set off their own. However, except for one incident with a group of young people purposefully firing bottle rockets into the nesting area, people were sympathetic to our cause and agreed not to light fireworks in this area.

By the third week of July, all the chicks had fledged and the colonies were virtually deserted. We do not at this point know whether the original sanctuaries will be replenished by nesting season 2001. My committee will be developing a plan for next year over the next several weeks, making decisions about whether to try to attract the birds back to the old colonies or continue to protect the new ones. These efforts will include purchasing Least Tern decoys (and are they cute!), plus using a sound system playing colony sounds to attract the birds to areas where we want them to stay. I'm sure it will be another interesting year with lots of surprises. But I hope our efforts will continue to turn around the decline in these beach nesting birds.



Birding from an Oil Platform

by Stacy Jon Peterson



"React. NOW! That's an alarm!" my sleep-deprived brain muttered to itself seconds before my body involuntarily jerked into a sitting position, nearly cracking my skull on the bunk above me. I was fully dressed and staggering to the bedroom door before I realized the horns were monotone. That meant they weren't the oscillating "abandon platform" or "fire" alarms, and therefore nothing to which I needed to react. Furthermore, aside from those infernal horns, the platform was strangely quiet. No compressors. No pumps. No air conditioning. A glance at the alarm clock didn't help. The LED lights were dark. No electricity. The pale blue illumination of my watch showed me it was just before 1 AM.

A night owl under normal circumstances, I would have preferred to STAY up until 1 AM rather than WAKE up at 1 AM. But under these circumstances I was an ornithologist getting paid to do what I love to do—watch birds. Alarms in the middle of the night come with the territory.

I had heard about this. It's called a "shut-in," something that offshore oil workers dread perhaps more than fire. Certainly more than birthdays. The automated response to avoid catastrophe occurs when some vital piece of machinery malfunctions, throwing breakers and other safety switches which seal the platform in a silent tomb of darkness. And 100 miles offshore in the Gulf of Mexico, it can get pretty dark. As the workers struggled to get the main compressor back online, I had time to reflect on my life over the past couple of years. A life which has been anything but ordinary.

For the past several migration seasons, I was one of up to ten Louisiana State University bird observers, each stationed on different offshore oil and gas production platforms in the Gulf of Mexico from North Padre Island, Texas, to Alabama. Our mandate was to systematically study the interaction between birds, bugs, and these working platforms during spring and fall migration. My workday officially began with a

complete survey of the platform well before daylight, and ended with another shortly after sunset. Four more "platform censuses" were scheduled throughout the day. Several 30 minute "flight censuses" were also conducted from stationary perches, often an armchair at the rail, during which we scanned the skies with binoculars attempting to document birds flying past. During our one 30 minute "seawatch" we focused on the marine life, including sea turtles, dolphins, fish, and of course seabirds, like gulls, terns, shearwaters, boobies, and sometimes even storm-petrels.

Soon the horns were extinguished and a peaceful silence reigned for another hour and a half, while I leaned back in bed thinking. Our study season for spring 2000 migration was rapidly drawing to a close. Today WAS supposed to be my last full day on this platform, due south of High Island, Texas. Tomorrow a helicopter would arrive and I'd carry all our gear back to a place where grass was green, leaves were green, and even automobiles were green. I'd say goodbye to the small orange and silver oil platform that had been my home for 6 of the last 12 weeks.

In the meantime, my adrenaline-drowned body refused to sleep. What would today bring? Would I see any birds at all? To say the past week had been slow was an understatement. I had been lucky to see one or two birds a day, and that was better than some of my colleagues stationed on other platforms. Our nightly email reports to each other were becoming shorter and shorter as migration tapered off. Without a lot of imagination, it doesn't take long to say, "No Birds. No Bugs."

Things had not always been that way, of course, my subconscious brain reminded me. Ahhh, yes! On April 24 of this year things had been different indeed! I remembered with fondness the afternoon spent standing on the helipad atop the platform with my spotting scope, scanning the skies above and the seas

below in amazement as wave after wave of birds flew past. In five hours that afternoon, 1097 birds were counted, mostly herons and egrets. My daily total was 1107 "flybys."

But April 28 had put those totals to shame. In just under three and a half hours that afternoon, I had counted 2170 birds. Most of those were passerines. Birds like Baltimore Orioles, Bay-breasted Warblers, and Indigo Buntings flew by at eye-level, and several other flocks were heard chipping overhead before they were first seen. That only a Dickcissel and Yellow-billed Cuckoo were noted to rest on the platform that day must be a testament to the migrants' overall health and vigor. On that incredible day, a day with light northerly winds and clear skies, I had been awed. April 28 was clearly one for the mental record books.

But then, of course, there was the pre-dawn morning of October 12, 1999, when I found myself stumbling out of a pitch black bunk room into the brilliant glare of floodlights atop an oil platform 70 miles due south of Gulf Shores, Alabama. The bird calls overhead were audible even over the mechanical noise of the platform. On that morning I was amazed to find hundreds upon hundreds of small warblers milling about. Attempts to videotape the madness simply didn't do it justice. My first predawn census recorded 415 of the 450 birds

that would eventually be found resting on the platform over the course of the day. This included 158 American Redstarts, 112 Magnolia Warblers, 26 Black-and-white Warblers, 19 Northern Parulas, 15 Black-throated Green Warblers, 14 Common Yellowthroats, 13 Tennessee Warblers, 12 Hooded Warblers, 10 Chestnut-sided Warblers, 8 Bay-breasted Warblers, 7 Blackburnian Warblers, and lesser numbers of many others.



Considering the sheer volume of birds milling around and flying by in the pre-dawn hours, several thousand yellowish birds moved past the platform that day.

As I stretched out on a bench on the top deck of the oil platform later that afternoon, recuperating from what had been an exhilarating morning, one of my good oil worker friends stopped by for a break.

"Seen a few birds today, yeah?" he began.

"Indeed," I responded wearily "One of my best days ever!"

His response will stick in my mind forever, "D'ju see the one down there with yellow on it?"

Then I remembered that just a few days earlier, September 29, had been a day for shearwaters! Nearly two dozen of these large tubenoses had foraged around the platform that morning. Most were Cory's Shearwaters, but several Greater Shearwaters, and even a couple Audubon's Shearwaters were in the group. Of course, I was not lucky enough to have been on the platform off Louisiana during the spring of 2000, which reported over 50 storm-petrels, mostly Wilson's and Band-rumped, flying past. But I had found the only two Red-billed Tropicbirds during our study - one off Louisiana in the fall of 1998, and another off Alabama in the fall of 1999.

How many of my land-bound friends have seen repeated attacks by Blue Marlin at point blank range? Or been amazed at the "wing-spread" of giant Manta Rays cruising the surface directly below? Or seen the deep outlines of a Whale Shark cruising the depth around the platform?

Yes, I thought as I reclined in my bunk waiting for the adrenaline in my system to subside and the monotonous drone of the compressors to return, the Migration Over the Gulf Project had been an experience I will never forget. And even if my last day offshore is nothing but sunshine and marine breezes, it will be a great ending to a wonderful ride. With that, I fell asleep, still fully dressed.

BACKYARD BIRDWATCHING

STARTING A YARD LIST

by Gene Knight

Seasonal changes occur in every type of habitat and no matter the size of your yard this gives you the opportunity to observe bird life the year round. As winter residents arrive from the North we always look for our first White-throated Sparrows and Juncos. Some endure the winter, harsh or mild, disappearing one by one until Spring releases them back to the North Country. Spring is one of the greatest seasons for migration, as masses of birds make their way back to their nesting grounds as if drawn by an enormous magnet. This is the season we watch them trickle through our property sometimes overhead in the skies or simply in our trees or lawns. Some stay to nest and some continue farther north, and some are drawn to a different type of habitat only a few miles away.

While we have also longed for Spring, so have our permanent residents. The Chickadees, Robins, and Wrens already have nestlings to feed. With all this Spring "Hoop-la" happening, by the time you catch your breath - WOW - it's over! Summer's hot months produce all the resident nestlings that you can keep up with. Nothing is migrating through your yard but you keep a watchful eye on the skies for hawks, egrets, swallows, or any bird life. After all, you know that Fall brings another changing of the guard.

The single most important key in making the most of your yard list is— BIRD YOUR YARD! Spend as much time as you can every day. If you have all day every day, that's great—but 5-10 minutes a day can produce a respectable list. Make a graph by the month listing days of the month across the top and species down the side. Write the birds on the list, tallying them each day as you work or move about your yard in your daily routine. Check off each bird that you see OR hear daily. Sometimes designate pairs or chicks or simply male or female, or numbers seen. Before long you will anticipate the next season or even seeing or hearing a new species.

Put up some feeders, some birdhouses, and a water source. Learn all you can about the resident species in your yard—songs, calls, where they nest, what they eat, and what the young look like. You MUST take the time to look through your binocs to see who made that sound! After months and seasons and years have passed you will know all about the bird life in your yard and your yard list will soar!

This is the first of several articles that I will be writing on keeping a list of the birds in your yard. Don't miss the next MOS Newsletter for more on Backyard Birdwatching!

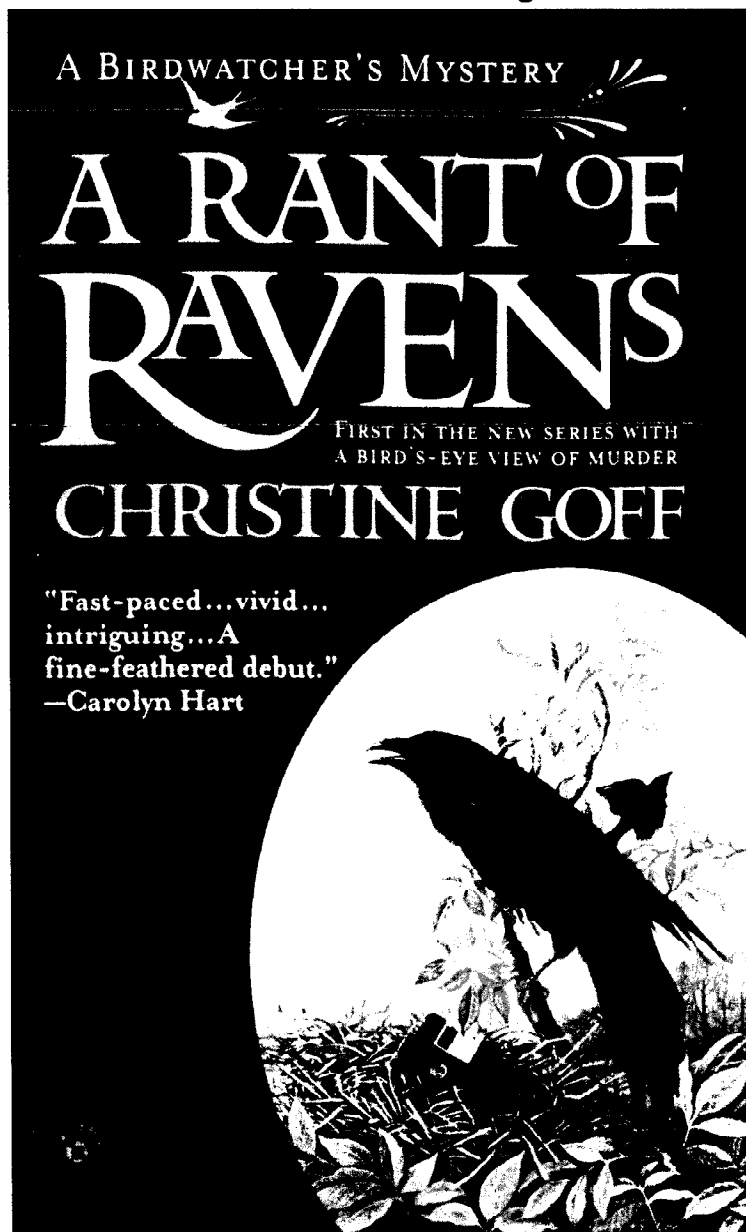
REMINDER

For those participating in the Yard List Contest (Sept. 1, 1999–Sept. 1, 2000)

Please send your list to us no later than September 15.

Mail to Gene and Shannon Knight, 79 Hwy. 9W, Oxford, MS 38655.

Coming October 2000 from Berkley Prime Crime



ISBN# 425-17360-7

Her marriage in shambles, her fast-paced life stuck in low gear, Rachel Stanhope has come to her Aunt Miriam's home—a ranch in Colorado that also serves as a bird sanctuary—in search of refuge. Since she can't tell a sparrow from a swallow, Rachel doesn't plan to spend much time scouring the skies for birds. But as a favor to her widowed aunt, she agrees to host the meetings of the local birdwatching society.

While searching for a LeConte's sparrow on her first expedition, Rachel makes a gruesome discovery—the dead body of a reporter for *Birds of a Feather* magazine. Rachel knew he had recently questioned Miriam about her deceased husband's involvement in a bird trafficking scheme—and warned her to beware. Now it seems Miriam's the chief suspect in his murder. But while Rachel is busy sorting out possible motives, three rare birds go missing—and Miriam disappears without a trace...

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MISSISSIPPI NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT

by Marion Hutto Schiefer

The fall migration count will be conducted on the third Saturday in September as usual, which is September 16 this year. We usually have more non-breeding migrants to count in the fall than the spring because the timing is better for our state. So I encourage anyone who hasn't tried the fall count to give it a try. If you are interested in participating and are not on my mailing list already, you can call me at 662-324-3748 to get a packet of information and forms to use. Nearly every state is participating in these spring and fall counts now, so eventually the data collected is certain to be very useful in analyzing the trends in bird populations. Just like the Christmas bird count, it's a fun way to spend a day and it's rewarding to know that we're helping in the accumulation of data that will hopefully some day help the birds we love.

Six counties reported data for this year's spring migration count, which was conducted

on May 13—Bolivar, Forrest, Jackson, Lafayette, Lauderdale, and Oktibbeha. Since the count was so late in the month, most of the non-breeding migrants were already through Mississippi, but a few stragglers were found. On another page in the newsletter is a summary of the species seen in each of the counties that reported at least 5 party hours. Conflicts on that date caused Mildred Stennis (Lauderdale County compiler) to cut her observation time to only 2 hours and caused the Jackson County group to only be able to count for 5 hours. So Jackson County (compiled by Charley Delmas) is not representative of the usual number of species seen on that count. Bolivar County (compiled by Nona Herbert), Forrest County (compiled by Larry Smith), Lafayette County (compiled by Marvin Davis), and Oktibbeha County (compiled by Terry Schiefer) all had numbers similar to their usual counts, even though migrants were scarce.

Mississippi North American Migration Count, May 13, 2000

Counties: B=Bolivar, F=Forrest, J=Jackson, L=Lafayette, O=Oktibbeha

Common Loon	F		Euras.Col.Dove	B F J O	Red-eyed Vireo	B F L O
Am.White Pelican		L O	Yel-bill Cuckoo	B F L O	Tennessee Warb.	
D-C. Cormorant	F	L O	Great Horned Owl	B	Northern Parula	F L O
Anhinga	F		Barred Owl	B F O	Yellow Warbler	
Gt. Blue Heron	B F J L O		Com. Nighthawk	F L O	Magnolia Warbler	
Great Egret	B F J O		Ch-will's-widow	F L O	Yell-thrt'd Warb.	F
Snowy Egret	F J O		Whip-poor-will		Pine Warbler	F J L O
Little Blue Her	F J O		Chimney Swift	B F J L O	Prairie Warbler	F O
Cattle Egret	B F J O		R-T. Hummingbird	B F J L O	Blk & Wht Warb.	L O
Green Heron	B F J O		Belt. Kingfisher	F	Amer. Redstart	F L O
Yel-crwn Ngt Her		J	Red-head.Woodp	B F L O	Prothontry Warb.	B F O
White Ibis		O	Red-bell.Woodp	B F J L O	Swainson's Warb.	
Canada Goose	F	L O	Downy Woodpkr	B F J L O	Louis. Watrthrush	
Wood Duck	B F J L O		Hairy Woodpecker		Kentucky Warb.	L O
Mallard	F	L O	Red-cock'd W-P		Com. Yellowthroat	B F J L O
Blue-winged Teal		L	Northern Flicker	B F J O	Hooded Warbler	F O
N. Shoveler		O	Pileated Woodp	B F J L O	Yel-brsted Chat	B F J L O
Gadwall		L O	E. Wood Pewee	B F L O	Summer Tanager	B F L O
Ring-necked Duck	F		Acadian Flyctchr	B F O	N. Cardinal	B F J L O
Hooded Mergans.	B		Least Flyctchr	J	Rose-brstd Grsbk	F
Ruddy Duck	F	O	Eastern Phoebe		Blue Grosbeak	F J L O
Black Vulture	F J L O		Gt Crst Flyctchr	B F J L O	Indigo Bunting	B F J L O
Turkey Vulture	F L O		Eastern Kingbird	B F J L O	Painted Bunting	F O
Osprey	F J L		Horned Lark	B O	Dickcissel	B L O
Mississippi Kite	B F		Purple Martin	B F J L O	Eastern Towhee	B F J L O
Northern Harrier	F		Tree Swallow	B F L O	Chipping Spar.	
Sharp-Shin Hawk	F J		N. Rgh-wng Swal	F J O	Field Sparrow	L O
Cooper's Hawk	F O		Cliff Swallow		Savannah Spar.	O
Red-sholdr Hawk	F L O		Barn Swallow	B F J L O	Bobolink	B O
Broad-wing Hawk	F		Blue Jay	B F J L O	Red-wng Blackbrd	B F J L O
Red-tailed Hawk	B F J L O		American Crow	F J L O	East. Meadowlark	F L O
American Kestrel	F O		Fish Crow	B F J L O	Boat-tail Grackle	J
Wild Turkey	B F O		Car. Chickadee	B F J L O	Common Grackle	B F J L O
N. Bobwhite	B F J L O		Tufted Titmouse	B F J L O	Brn-hd. Cowbird	B F J L O
Clapper Rail		J	Wht-brstd Nthtch		Orchard Oriole	B F J L O
American Coot	F L		Brown-hd. Nthtch	F J L O	Baltimore Oriole	B L O
Semipalm. Plover		O	Carolina Wren	B F J L O	House Finch	B F J L O
Killdeer	B F J L O		Blu-gr Gntctchr	F J L O	Am. Goldfinch	L O
Lessr.Yellowlegs		O	Eastern Bluebird	B F J L O	House Sparrow	B F L O
Spotted Sandp.	F L O		Hermit Thrush			
Semipalm. Sandp.	F O		Wood Thrush	B F J L O		
Least Sandpiper	B O		American Robin	B F L O		
Wht-rump. Sandp.		O	Gray Catbird	F J L O		
Pectoral Sandp.	F O		N. Mockingbird	B F J L O		
S-bill.Dowitcher		O	Brown Thrasher	B F J L O		
Caspian Tern		L	Cedar Waxwing	F O		
Forster's Tern	F O		Loggerhd Shrike	B F J L O		
Sterna species		L	Eur. Starling	B F J L O		
Black Tern	F		White-eyed Vireo	B F J L O		
Rock Dove	F J L O		Yel-thrt Vireo	F O		
Mourning Dove	B F J L O		Warbling Vireo	B		

County	# Reg. Parties	# Observers	# Species
Bolivar	1	2	63
Forrest	7	13	100
Jackson	5	6	59
Lafayette	3	9	83
Oktibbeha	7	15	117

TOTAL # SPECIES
ALL COUNTIES: 140

*“ Somebody should do something”, I said.
Then I realized, I am somebody.*

Have you ever wished that you could do something that would make a difference in your world? I mean, really make a difference! Last December, as the rest of the world whirled about in preparations for the holidays, I spent two hectic weeks writing a grant to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, on behalf of the Friends of Dauphin Island Audubon Sanctuary, to solicit matching funds for FODIAS' efforts to acquire critical bird habitat on Dauphin Island. We received notice in mid-March that our grant had been awarded and the future is looking brighter by the day!

But I need your help!

Although we have secured several generous pledges already, we still have a long way to go to achieve our goal. Your contribution to the FODIAS Property Acquisition Campaign will bring us that much closer to success. Why should you give? Because you care. Because Dauphin Island is rapidly being developed and we are at a critical crossroads if we are to forever preserve pockets of crucial migration stopover habitat. Because the life of a Neotropical migrant is a tough one, and your contribution will make a difference. Because your grandchildren may never know the beauty and wonder of Neotropical migration if we do not act now.

Elsewhere in this issue of *Flicker Flashes* you will find an appeal for the FODIAS Property Acquisition Campaign. Please give some thought to making a generous contribution... in lasting memory of a loved one, in honor of your children or grandchildren, or as an anniversary or birthday gift to your spouse. How much should you give? The choice is yours, but no gift is too small. Some might say, "Give till it hurts", but I say, "Give till it feels good".

Many thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Greg Harber, FODIAS
Vice President for Conservation

*~Property Acquisition Campaign~
The Friends of Dauphin Island Audubon Sanctuaries
We Need Your Help!*

Dauphin Island is richly endowed with small pockets of wetlands, some seasonal, some permanent, providing reservoirs for ground water. This ground water eventually seeps down to the shallow aquifer, providing water for the Island. Most of these wetlands were platted in the 1950s and purchased by investors with the expectation of building at some time in the future. Dauphin Island has also been long recognized as a critical stopover point for Neotropical migrants. The entire island is part of this critical habitat with spring migrants frequently making landfall on the western spit and working their way eastward to the heavier cover of the maritime forest

At the annual meeting in October 1999, the Friends of Dauphin Island Audubon Sanctuary Board initiated a property acquisition campaign concentrating our efforts largely on the acquisition of these wetland lots. The goal is to preserve the critical habitat for the neotropical migrants, expand the opportunities for birders and other nature lovers to observe the twice yearly spectacle of migration while providing the property owners with a viable option for realizing an appropriate return on their investment. We have identified nine lots in a first group for acquisition and submitted a grant application to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for a total of \$272,600 to acquire these lots. Of this amount, they will provide 1/3, \$91,066, which we must match with the remaining 2/3, \$181,534. We are proud to announce that FODIAS was awarded the full amount of the grant! This first group of lots includes the four lots immediately adjacent to the Shell Mounds on the west (next to the Bee Tree and the water drip), and the four lots holding the Goat Trees, these eight lots being critical habitat and listed as wetlands on the National Wetlands Inventory Maps. Also included in this first increment is the lot adjacent to the entrance to the Sanctuary, needed to

improve access and safety to the parking lot. Now that the grant has been awarded we can begin soliciting donations. We have already received pledges of some \$84,000, \$50,000 from an individual towards the Goat Trees, \$10,000 from the Birmingham Audubon Society and \$10,000 from AOS (Alabama Ornithological Society) towards the lots near the Shell Mound and \$4,150 in a 2-1 challenge grant from the Alabama Coastal Heritage Trust. **We have a good start... but we have a ways to go... a balance of nearly \$97,000 to raise for this first phase. We need all the help we can get from you.**

Two of the lots next to Shell Mounds have been listed for sale. They are the most immediately threatened. Acting quickly to assure their preservation, we made an offer, which was countered and have just concluded a purchase contract, contingent on receipt of the grant and a valid appraisal, with closing in 120 days. We are urgently soliciting contributions to make up the balance of this purchase, as well as the balance of the property included in the grant request. Inasmuch as we cannot directly contribute matching funds to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Dauphin Island Foundation has joined us in this campaign and will act as the receiving agent for all donations. They are also a 501-(C)-3 organization and all donations will be fully tax deductible. As appropriate you will receive documentation for the IRS to validate your donation.

Please make your check payable to the Dauphin Island Foundation, and send to P.O. Box 1295 Dauphin Island, AL 36528. Designate it for FODIAS-Property Acquisition. Be sure to include your name and address and any memorial or dedicatory designation that you might wish attached in future public recognition of your support. We thank you for your generosity... And the birds thank you!

Name _____ Donation _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Comments _____

FALL MEETING

OCTOBER 27-29, 2000

J. P. COLEMAN STATE PARK

LOCATION: J. P. Coleman State Park, four miles north of Iuka, perched on a rocky bluff overlooking the Tennessee River. Turn off Hwy. #25 onto CR 989; follow 989 until it intersects CR 321. Turn right. Entrance to the park is approximately one mile.

ACCOMMODATIONS:

J. P. Coleman State Park 662-423-6515

Tishomingo State Park 662-438-6914

Lodging available in nearby Iuka:

Hallmark Inn 662-423-6900

Victorian Inn 662-423-9221

Lodging available in nearby Corinth:

Hampton Inn 662-286-5949

Comfort Inn 662-287-4421

Executive Inn 1-800-354-3932

Holiday Inn Express 662-287-1407

FRIDAY EVENING – OCTOBER 27

6:30 PM – J. P. Coleman State Park Convention Center

7:30 PM – Slide show by MOS members – If you have slides, please bring your own projector.

8:30 PM – Board meeting

SATURDAY – OCTOBER 28

7:00 AM – Field Trips (meet at J. P. Coleman State Park Convention Center parking lot)

6:30 PM – Banquet – J. P. Coleman State Park Convention Center

7:30 PM – Business Meeting

Tucker Award Presentation

Species Tally

Speaker – Travis Little, State Representative from District 2

SUNDAY – OCTOBER 29

7:30 AM – Field Trips announced on Friday evening.

FALL 2000 MEETING – REGISTRATION FORM

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Registration: \$5.00 per person \$ _____

Banquet: \$10.00 per person \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please make check payable to M.O.S. Mail check and registration form to:

Jan Dubuisson, MOS Treasurer
22410 Glad Acres
Pass Christian, MS 39571

ORDER FORM – MOS ITEMS FOR SALE — PRICES INCLUDE POSTAGE CHARGES

Send Me:

MOS T-SHIRTS (with flying Miss. Kite), SIZES S, M, L, XL, \$17.00 ea. # _____ \$ _____

MOS MS KITE LOGO PATCHES (for your cap or jacket), \$5.00 ea. # _____ \$ _____

MOS FIELD CHECKLISTS OF BIRDS OF MISSISSIPPI, \$0.50 ea. # _____ \$ _____

BEN COFFEY'S MID-SOUTH BIRD NOTES, (reprint collection) \$10.00 # _____ \$ _____

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Jan Dubuisson, MOS Treasurer
22410 Glad Acres
Pass Christian, MS 39571

Mississippi Ornithological Society

Membership Form

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone: _____

Renewal: _____

New Member: _____

___ Individual, \$15 yr.

___ Subscribing (libraries), \$10 yr.

___ Family, \$25 yr.

___ Sustaining, \$30 yr.

___ Student/Senior, \$10 yr.

___ Life, \$300

Make check payable to: MOS

Send to: Janet Dubuisson, MOS Treasurer

22410 Glad Acres

Pass Christian, MS 39571

Dues are payable in January of each year. Check mailing label for your dues status.

Mississippi Ornithological Society
79 Highway 9 W
Oxford, MS 38655

Check your expiration date >>>>>>