
Mississippi Ornithological Society



Volume 58 Number 2

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2013

2013 MOS FALL MEETING September 20-22 JACKSON/VICKSBURG AREA

The fall MOS meeting is being co-sponsored with the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science in Jackson. There will be a Friday night gathering of MOS members at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science starting at 5:30 pm accompanied by light food and refreshments. At 7:00 pm Bob and Martha Sargent from Alabama will present a program on hummingbirds. The Sargents are widely known for their banding studies of hummingbirds. The program will be open to the public. An extended field trip on Saturday to the Vicksburg area will end up northwest of Vicksburg at the Halpino Lodge at Tara Wildlife (www.tarawildlife.com) where we will have dinner and a formal membership meeting. Field trips on Sunday to locations near Jackson that may include sites such as LeFleur's Bluff State Park, the Mule Jail area on the Pearl River below Ross Barnett Reservoir, the Reservoir proper, and elsewhere.

ACCOMMODATIONS - lodging and other visitor's information may be found on the internet at

<http://www.visitjackson.com/>

DIRECTIONS TO MMNS: The museum is in Jackson's LeFleur's Bluff State Park off I-55. Get off I-55 at the Lakeland/Hwy 25 Exit and go East and at the first red light get on Highland Drive. Follow this around and you will see the Museum on the left.

FRIDAY EVENING – September 20

- 5:30-6:30 p.m. Social Hour – at MMNS in downstairs classroom- light food and refreshments - discussion of Saturday and Sunday field trips. Possible Board Meeting
- 7:00-8:00 p.m. Program: Bob and Martha Sargent – “Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Hummingbirds (But Didn't Know Who To Ask)

SATURDAY – September 21

- 7:00 a.m. Field trip to the Vicksburg area will meet in the parking lot at MMNS
- 5:00 p.m. Board Meeting (if needed) at Halpino Lodge at Tara Wildlife
- 7:00 p.m. Dinner and formal membership meeting at Halpino Lodge at Tara Wildlife, Species Tally and bird sightings reports
- 8:00 p.m. Return to Jackson

SUNDAY – September 22

- 7:00 a.m. Field trips - meet in the parking lot at MMNS

MOS OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT: Tom Pullen
VICE-PRESIDENT: Ken Hackman
SECRETARY: Martha Swan
TREASURER: Jan Dubuissou
PAST PRESIDENT: Nancy Madden
MISSISSIPPI KITE EDITORS: Margaret Copeland, Marion Schiefer, and Nick Winstead
MOS NEWSLETTER EDITORS: Gene and Shannon Knight

MOS ON THE WEB

MISSBIRD@frelists.org
<http://www.mississippiornithologicalsociety.com/>

ATTENTION ALL MOS MEMBERS
ELECTRONIC MOS NEWSLETTER

In order to cut down on our printing and mailing costs of the Newsletter, we are asking any of you who would be willing to receive your Newsletter by email to please contact us at:
gsknight@hughes.net
Thanks for your help.

MOS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip: _____

RENEWAL _____ NEW MEMBER _____

DUES:

- ___ Individual \$15 yr.
- ___ Family \$25 yr.
- ___ Student/Senior Citizen \$10 yr.
- ___ Subscribing (Libraries) \$15 yr.
- ___ Sustaining \$30 yr.
- ___ Life \$300 yr.

DUES ARE DUE

And payable in January of each year. Send check to: Jan Dubuissou, 22410 Glad Acres, Pass Christian, MS 39571

President's Corner

By Tom Pullen
MOS President

Hello all! I write this column from a guest house overlooking the Nature Conservancy's Hassayampa River Preserve near Wickenburg, Arizona. Below me lies a stretch of river that flows freely all year long creating an oasis in the Sonoran Desert. Upstream and downstream of the Preserve, the river flows only underground except when extremely heavy rainfall occurs. The river corridor is heavily forested and contrasts greatly with the extremely dry uplands on either side that are populated with small trees and cacti. Because of the habitat diversity here, some 280 species of birds may be seen. The Preserve contains habitats that are utterly unlike anything we have in Mississippi and the area demonstrates just how important water is to life. Water is something we, in Mississippi, tend to take for granted. We should not do so. Water is precious and without sufficient amounts, life can be difficult if not impossible. We are very fortunate to live in a location where rainfall is abundant and resultant lush forests, marshlands, rivers, streams and other water bodies numerous. Because of this, birds and other wildlife thrive in our state and provide us with the many opportunities we have to see common and rare birds year around. It is imperative that we all take an active part in protecting these resources from threats such as ill-advised development schemes, pollution, and overuse. We must also be mindful of the ever present need to inform and educate our public officials and the public, in general, about their importance!

Now it is time to stop writing and to go down the bluff to the river. There are Vermilion Flycatchers waiting in the tops of the Cottonwood trees and Roadrunners in the cactus filled hills beyond!
I hope to see you all in September at our Fall meeting in the Jackson area.

Submitting Articles For the MOS Newsletter

The MOS Newsletter is published biannually to inform members of upcoming meetings and birding events. The editors invite you to participate by submitting articles for possible publication in the newsletter. Some suggestions for articles might be:

- *Birding trips—in-state, out-of-state, or out-of-country
- * Life bird experiences
- *Bird locales
- * Special birding events
- *Any interesting story about birds or bird behavior

Please submit neatly handwritten or typed articles, not to exceed two single-spaced typed pages. You may contribute as many articles as you would like. Articles may be sent in any time of the year, but if you would like it to appear in a specific issue then it must be sent in on the following deadline dates.

- Summer Issue - June 30
- Spring Issue - December 31

Please mail or e-mail your articles to: Gene and Shannon Knight, 79 Hwy 9W, Oxford, MS 38655
662-236-2413 or gsknight@hughes.net

Minutes of the MOS Board and Business Meeting 26-27 April 2013

The Mississippi Ornithological Society convened Friday evening, April 26, at Annie's Restaurant in Holly Springs, MS. Following a buffet supper, Andrea Schuhmann, Outreach Director of the Strawberry Plains Audubon Center, gave an interesting presentation on the history and mission of the center. Plans were announced for Saturday's field trips to Strawberry Plains and Wall Doxey State Park.

BOARD MEETING

Tom Pullen, President, called the meeting to order at 7:55. Present were Tom; Ken Hackman, VP; Nancy Madden, Past President, Jan Dubuisson, Treasurer; Gene & Shannon Knight, Newsletter Co-editors; Margaret Copeland and Marion Schiefer, MS Kite Co-editors; and Martha Swan, Secretary. Jan presented the Treasurer's Report, showing that MOS has about \$9,000 to work with, since the \$15,000 Coffey Endowment can only be used for publications. Then the discussion turned to the need for an increase in membership fees. Gene had prepared a chart comparing our membership categories and fees with those of surrounding states. Ken moved that we raise fees as follows: Junior \$5.00 (age 14 & under – new category); Student \$10.00 (age 15 & over, unchanged); Library \$15.00 (unchanged); Individual \$25.00; Family \$35.00; Sustaining \$50.00; Life \$350.00; The "Senior" category will be eliminated. The motion was approved. Plans for the Fall 2013 meeting, set for September 20-22, were discussed. Bob Sargent will be the speaker and the main program will be held at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science. The location for other activities has not yet been determined. Gene announced that possible speakers for future meetings would be Mark Woodrey on the Yellow Rail research project in Spring 2014, and Matt Smith continuing his presentation on historical and ecological changes affecting Mississippi birdlife in Fall 2014. Tom will check with Mark regarding the status of a publication on the Yellow Rail project in the MS Kite.

Ken Hackman will appear on MPB's "Creature Comforts" show to publicize MOS. He was asked to discuss the Great River (Mississippi) Birding Trail, but its status is uncertain since Audubon closed its Vicksburg office. Photos taken for the trail are now housed at Strawberry Plains.

Margaret is continuing the disposal of extra copies of the Kites and is supplying libraries with those issues needed to complete their collections. Extra copies of 1999-2002 were lost during Katrina and are badly needed in order to digitize them.

The MOS website has been moved and Claire English is now the webmaster. There was a discussion of the role of the webmaster in the MOS organizational structure, as well as the Missbird listserv and its administrator. The website needs to include more information, e.g. photos, newsletter issues, and meeting information in a timely manner. We should try to set date and location of meetings a year in advance. Spring 2014 should be near the coast, since the speaker will discuss the Yellow Rail project: Picayune and Woodville were suggested.

Due to the lateness of the hour, the meeting was suspended and reconvened at 6:00 pm Saturday. New projects were the next topic. Tom is in the process of revising the MOS brochure. Ken proposed a Schoolyard Birding Challenge, to try to get school children involved with birding. His school, Madison Central, has been extremely successful in a national program. Science teachers would be recruited and we could give prizes to the school finding the most species of birds on their campus. Ken will investigate this possibility further.

MOS could sponsor a student at Millsaps College's Birding Camp. Tom will contact the administrator of this program and see how we could become involved. Likewise, MOS could sponsor a participant in the Audubon Naturalist Program, and/or become involved in the Catfish Pond Restoration Project sponsored by Audubon and Ducks Unlimited. Partnering with other organizations in these projects could increase our visibility and stimulate more interest in MOS.

Gene proposed that MOS establish a membership committee to keep up with dues, membership statuses, etc. Marion said this would require a change in the by-laws. It was agreed that the issue needs further consideration. The Board Meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Following a buffet dinner at Annie's, Dr. Stephan Schoech gave a presentation on his research with the Florida Scrub-Jay. He discussed the effect of stress hormones on multiple aspects of the jay's behavior and physiology. Tom called the Membership meeting to order at 8:25. Checklists (2011 revision) were offered for sale. He thanked the field trip leaders, Gene Knight and Jason Hoeksema, and the staff at Strawberry Plains. Gene conducted the species tally, which came to 117 species, later increased to 132! A great weekend of Spring Birding! The minutes of the Fall 2012 meeting were approved as distributed in the newsletter. Plans were announced for the Fall 2013 meeting. Jan presented the treasurer's report. Tom then reviewed the discussions of the board. He thanked Claire English for revising and moving the MOS website, and gave an overview of the new projects under consideration.

Mary Stephens Stripling, MOS Representative to the Mississippi Wildlife Federation, has reported that Cathy Shropshire has retired as MWF Executive Director and has been replaced by Brad Young.

Andrea Schuhmann suggested that we sponsor another Chimney Swift tower at MMNS, in a prominent location with a plaque bearing our name. Jan offered four MOS T-shirts for sale, \$15.00 each. The meeting was then adjourned.

Submitted by Martha Swan
MOS Secretary

About the Speakers
BOB & MARTHA SARGENT

Bob and Martha Sargent are licensed bird banders specializing in the banding of hummingbirds. Their license is under the supervision of the U.S. Geological Survey's Bird Banding Laboratory in Laurel, Maryland, and the states of Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee, Louisiana, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Arizona, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, District of Columbia, West Virginia, Maryland, Texas, Montana, New Mexico and Utah. As a part of their study of birds they lecture and give seminars nationwide. They target an audience of over 20,000 people annually. They are authors of books, scientific publications as well as popular magazines and newspaper articles. They have been involved in organized birding for 29 years and have been bird banders for over 24 years. The Sargents are authors of the highly successful book ***Ruby-throated Hummingbird*** published by Stackpole Books. They co-authored the highly acclaimed **Birds of North America (BNA)** species account for Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Bob and Martha are recipients of the American Birding Association's prestigious **2003 Ludlow Griscom Award** for Outstanding Contribution to Regional Ornithology. Other awards include the 1998 Alabama Wildlife Federation, Governor's Conservation Achievement Award, **Wildlife Conservationist of the Year**, the 1998 **W. Kelly Mosley Environmental Award** and the 1997 **Francis M. Weston Memorial Award** for public awareness and education of bird conservation. The Sargents were chosen by world renowned author Mr. David Sibley to write the **Hummingbird** foreword for his Field Guide companion book to **Bird Life and Behavior**.

They are founders and directors of The Hummer/Bird Study Group, Inc., a 2000 plus member non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of hummingbirds and other Neo-tropical migrant birds. Under the funding of this organization they operate a seasonal banding station at Fort Morgan, Alabama, on the Gulf coast. This banding facility is open to the public for two weeks each spring and fall to capture and band inbound and outbound migrant birds (Neotropical migrants). This site is used for the study of these special birds, but more importantly, it is a hands-on teaching tool for the public. The Sargents specialize in making available to children of all ages the wonders of these beautiful birds that travel the winds of the Americas. With the help of a skilled crew of more than a dozen volunteers, this banding site is open from dawn until mid-afternoon during much of each migratory season. They capture and band over 5000 birds annually at their Fort Morgan location.

Bob and Martha also operate banding and bander training sites in Alabama, Mississippi, West Virginia and most recently in Arkansas. At their home they band over 800 Ruby-throated hummingbirds annually, and in addition recapture about 175 each year that were banded there in previous years. They are leaders in the pioneering study of wintering hummingbirds and travel thousands of miles each winter to capture, identify, band and document these more rare species that are found in the eastern United States. Their efforts have resulted in the identification and documentation of over 70 first state records representing 13 different species of the hummingbird family. As North America's foremost trainers of new hummingbird banders, the researchers that they have trained now operate in most of the United States and much of Central and South America, and Canada.

Bob and Martha are past president and treasurer of the Alabama Ornithological Society. They are members of the Ornithological Societies of North America. Like all of you, THEY SIMPLY LOVE BIRDS. Don't miss an opportunity to meet these folks.

For more information write: The Hummer/Bird Study Group, Inc., P.O. Box #250, Clay, Alabama 35048-0250. Phone (205) 681-2888, FAX (205) 681-1339 or Email: Rubythroat@AOL.COM or HummerBSG@AOL.COM

Visit their website at <http://www.hummingbirdsplus.org>

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE HUMMINGBIRDS OF MISSISSIPPI
BY
GENE KNIGHT, MBRC CHAIR

When I became the Chair of the Mississippi Ornithological Society's Record Committee in 2008 I was thrilled to know that I would have access to all the bird records of MS dating back to the beginning of what was the first bird list of the state. I was floored when I looked at the first official list to see that the only hummingbird was "hummingbird". No specific name was listed. In 1985 the bird list jumped to a whopping 2 species; Ruby-throated and Rufous Hummingbirds. Rufous had been highly suspected for several years and has proved to be the most numerous winter hummer in the south. Banding these tiny wonders became the item in proving the fact that many different species of hummers were indeed spending their winters in the southern US. Coastal birders were encouraged to leave their sugar water feeders out during winter months to see if the scientists were right. Then in November of 1987 at a feeder in Hancock County two new species were detected by coast birders. Nancy Newfield, a renowned hummingbird bander from Louisiana, trapped and banded the state's first Black-chinned Hummingbird. While she was there the state's first Buff-bellied Hummingbird was seen but not banded. The word traveled throughout the state and all birders began leaving their hummer feeders up through the winter and told all they knew to do the same. Two years pass when Bob and Martha Sargent, hummingbird banders from Alabama, began making contact with Mississippi hosts of winter hummers. The first day they banded in coastal Mississippi, 13 January 1989, they trapped and banded 4 Rufous Hummingbirds in western coastal MS. This marked the first banding of Rufous in the state. The next day, 14 January 1989, they banded 2 more Rufous and 2 Black-chinned Hummingbirds!!!! As word passed through the state they banded and photographed a Rufous in Bolivar and Oktibbeha Counties for the first banding of hummers away from the coast. Then in the fall of November 1992 two more species were added to the state list. They were Allen's and Calliope Hummingbirds, both from the same location in Hancock County that hosted the first Black-chinned and Buff-bellied. The Allen's was banded and photographed but the little Calliope was not. In December 1992 the Sargent's banded their first Buff-bellied Hummingbird in Harrison County and documented the 2nd Calliope without banding. Also the same day they banded a second Buff-bellied at a second site in Harrison County. Finally in January of 1993 they trapped and banded their first Calliope in Hancock County. In February 1993 they banded their first Black-chinned away from the coast in Hinds County. The first Broad-tailed Hummingbird in MS was banded by the Sargent's on 14 January 1994 in Pearl River County bringing the hummer species total to 7.

1993 was the year the Sargent's founded the Hummer/Bird Study Group (a non-profit organization) in their home state of Alabama. They were able to train a new hummer bander from Mississippi to aid in banding the ever growing numbers of winter hummers being reported throughout the state. On 26 December 1994 the Sargent's confirmed a highly suspect Anna's Hummingbird in Hancock County at the same site that had already hosted 4 other 1st State Records. The bird was not trapped and banded. Then on 1 December 1995 another Anna's showed up in Oktibbeha County that the Sargent's successfully trapped and banded for the state's 2nd Record. Quickly on 29 December 1995 the Sargent's first hummer trainee turned full-fledged bander trapped and banded a White-eared Hummingbird in Harrison County. This hummer was probably the first of this species banded east of the MS River and of course a first for MS. This was the 9th species of hummingbird recorded in the state. In just 10 years the number of hummingbird species has quadrupled from a mere 2 species in 1985.

The next several years yielded an amazing number of western hummingbird strays to the state. The numbers are as follows: Buff-bellied-10 records (is actually from Mexico); Anna's-3; Calliope-5; Broad-tailed-5; Allen's-4. Then on 4 November 1998 the 10th hummingbird species for MS, Broad-billed Hummingbird, was trapped and banded in Jackson County by one of the Sargent's banders. In early October 1999 in DeSoto County they identified a Green Violetear for the state's 11th hummingbird species. Unfortunately the bird left before it could be trapped and banded.

The Sargent's Hummer/Bird Study Group still band hummers in MS and to date they have banded close to 1,000 hummingbirds in over 35 of Mississippi's 82 counties. The most abundant winter hummer has proved to be the Rufous Hummingbird with nearly 600 banded and photographed by the Sargent's and their Hummer Group. Their work with hummingbirds in several southern states has proven that western hummingbirds do occur every winter in these areas. Their Group has expanded their banding into the northern states as well with much success.

ATTENTION MOS MEMBERS

Amending MOS Constitution- Members Section

Under Article III, Members section of the Constitution of the Mississippi Ornithological Society, the Constitution states that “There shall be seven classes of members: Active, Student/Senior, Sustaining, Subscribing, Honorary, Life, and Family.”

Under Article IX- Amendments, the Constitution reads, “This Constitution may be amended by a 2/3 vote of the voting members present at any regular meeting provided the membership has been given 30 days written notice of the proposed change(s) and the time and place of the meeting.”

The proposed changes to the Members section of the Constitution are as follows: Junior-age 14 & under (\$5); Student-age 15 & over (\$10); Library (\$15); Individual (\$25); Family (\$35); Sustaining (\$50); Life (\$350); and Honorary. Senior membership will be eliminated.

The proposed changes to the Members section of the Constitution will be voted on at the Fall MOS Meeting on 21 September at 6:00 pm at the Meeting held at Halpino Lodge at Tara Wildlife north of Vicksburg.

From the Field (Spring & Summer 2013) Gene Knight, MBRC Chair

A **Western Grebe** seen on Bluff Lake at Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, Noxubee Co. on 15 April 2013 was probably the same bird found two days later at Oktibbeha County Lake, Oktibbeha Co. The first bird was never seen again but the second lingered til 7 May 2013. Spring migration was much better than usual as **31 species of warblers** were found the weekend of 26-28 April at the MOS Spring Meeting in Marshall Co. Highlights were 2 male **Cape May Warblers** at Wall Doxey State Park. An injured **Sandhill Crane** was seen from mid to late April in Humphreys Co. A male **Harris's Sparrow** was photographed on 29 April in Leflore Co. An adult **Great Black-backed Gull** was found on West Ship Island, Harrison Co. on 16 March. Nesting **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers** in MS are quite rare but a pair found in early May at the same location as in 2012 proved to be nesting this year. The female was photographed on the nest in late May and in mid June adults were carrying food to the nest. A single **Common Moorhen** was a good find at the Coldwater River NWR in Quitman Co. on 13 May. A rare **Black-billed Cuckoo** was spotted near Rowan Oak in Oxford, Lafayette Co. on 15 May. 3 **Roseate Spoonbills** were early on 17 May near Sky Lake WMA, Humphreys Co. Also on 17 May a **Swallow-tailed Kite** was seen in southern Rankin Co. A pair of **N. Harriers** coursing over the marsh at the Hancock County Marshes Coastal Preserve on 24 June were miles from their nesting territory. On 1 July a male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was seen in the Heron Bay area, Hancock Co. With very few July records anywhere in MS a first summer plumaged **Lesser Black-backed Gull** seen in Hancock Co. on 3 July at Waveland front beach east of Ladner Pier was a great find. **Ring-necked Duck** in MS during the summer months is very uncommon so good finds were: a male on 11 July at Brown's Landing, Ross Barnett Reservoir, Madison Co. and another male on 3 August at Bonita Lake, Lauderdale Co.

Species List
2013 MOS SPRING MEETING
April 26-28

Wall Doxey State Park, Strawberry Plains Audubon Center, and Hurricane Landing

Canada Goose	White-eyed Vireo	Hooded Warbler
Wood Duck	Yellow-throated Vireo	American Redstart
Blue-winged Teal	Blue-headed Vireo	Cape May Warbler
Wild Turkey	Warbling Vireo	Cerulean Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Philadelphia Vireo	Northern Parula
American White Pelican	Red-eyed Vireo	Bay-breasted Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Blue Jay	Blackburnian Warbler
American Bittern	American Crow	Yellow Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Fish Crow	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Great Egret	Purple Martin	Blackpoll Warbler
Little Blue Heron	Tree Swallow	Palm Warbler
Black Vulture	N. Rough-winged Swallow	Pine Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Cliff Swallow	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Osprey	Barn Swallow	Yellow-throated Warbler
Swallow-tailed Kite	Carolina Chickadee	Prairie Warbler
Mississippi Kite	Tufted Titmouse	Black-throated Green Warbler
Bald Eagle	White-breasted Nuthatch	Canada Warbler
Northern Harrier	Carolina Wren	Yellow-breasted Chat
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Eastern Towhee
Red-shouldered Hawk	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Chipping Sparrow
Broad-winged Hawk	Eastern Bluebird	Field Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Veery	Lincoln's Sparrow
American Kestrel	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Swamp Sparrow
American Coot	Swainson's Thrush	White-throated Sparrow
Killdeer	Hermit Thrush	White-crowned Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Wood Thrush	Summer Tanager
Common Tern	American Robin	Scarlet Tanager
Forster's Tern	Gray Catbird	Northern Cardinal
Rock Pigeon	Northern Mockingbird	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Brown Thrasher	Blue Grosbeak
Mourning Dove	European Starling	Indigo Bunting
Barred Owl	Cedar Waxwing	Bobolink
Chimney Swift	Ovenbird	Red-winged Blackbird
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Worm-eating Warbler	Eastern Meadowlark
Belted Kingfisher	Louisiana Waterthrush	Common Grackle
Red-headed Woodpecker	Northern Waterthrush	Brown-headed Cowbird
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Golden-winged Warbler	Orchard Oriole
Downy Woodpecker	Blue-winged Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
Northern Flicker	Black-and-white Warbler	House Finch
Pileated Woodpecker	Prothonotary Warbler	Pine Siskin
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Swainson's Warbler	American Goldfinch
Acadian Flycatcher	Tennessee Warbler	House Sparrow
Eastern Phoebe	Nashville Warbler	
Great Crested Flycatcher	Kentucky Warbler	
Eastern Kingbird	Common Yellowthroat	

Species Total: 132

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

David Dunn
J.R. Rigby

Andrea Schumann
Bill Taylor

