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Andrew Allison

The Reverend Andrew Allison, Honorary Life Member of the Mississippi Ornithological Society, died June 6, 1960, at a Jackson hospital. He is survived by his wife, the former Ella Gates Ward of Ellisville, a son, Dr. Lex Allison of Ann Arbor, Michigan, a daughter, Mrs. C. A. Sheldon of Oklahoma City, and two brothers, Alexander Allison of New Orleans, and William Allison of Meridian. He was born in New Orleans June 19, 1879, the son of the late Alexander Allison and Elizabeth Bartlett Allison.

Andrew Allison attended Tulane University, 1894 - 1898 (B. S.) and 1898 - 1900 (M. A.). He worked as a bacteriological analyst for the New Orleans waterworks and then taught school in Louisiana and at Gloster and Ellisville, Mississippi, becoming principal of the Elementary School at Ellisville. Shortly after marriage, June 29, 1910, at Ellisville, Mr. and Mrs. Allison felt a call to mission service in China. He was principal of the James Sprunt Academy there, 1910 - 1933, then taught a year at Hangchow College. Furloughs home were in 1917, 1925, and 1934. In July, 1935, he was ordained a minister by the Meridian Presbytery, and returned to service as a missionary in China. They were interned by the Japanese and repatriated in October, 1943. At the first opportunity they returned. Subsequently, they were taken prisoners by the Chinese Communists. In 1949 Mr. and Mrs. Allison returned home and retired to Ellisville, Mississippi, remaining active in their church.

Accounts of Rev. Allison's life, by Rev. Charles Worth for the Board of World Missions, Nashville, and Miss Marion Wilcox at a memorial in Formosa, relate that he was one of the most brilliant missionaries in China. Well schooled in English and French, he learned and carried on a wide correspondence in Chinese without a "writer." Later, desiring ordination, he taught himself Greek and Hebrew. He had a photographic memory and a keen sense of humor. Principal of the Academy, yet he dignified all honest work, even the most menial. He was a man of prayer, and of action. As an evangelist at the Kiangyin station, he frequently visited those on a great sandbar, 25 miles below on the Yangtse, going either on foot or by bicycle, until he was 60 years old.

Serious bird students knew of Andrew Allison as the author of numerous short notes, about the turn of the century, on the birds of south Mississippi and Louisiana and as a co-author on the early installments of a list of birds for the latter state. Dr. George H. Lowery, Jr., in "Louisiana Birds" (1955) includes Allison when he states, "Just prior to 1900, four highly competent naturalists appeared on the Louisiana ornithological scene ... Each contributed greatly." Andrew Allison became an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1897 and in 1902 was elected a Member (this still limited class is known today as Elective Member). He continued his membership until about 1913. Dr. Harry C. Oberholser spoke highly, to me, of Allison as an ornithologist of our area.

He became interested in comparing the fauna and flora of northeast Mississippi with that of his home areas, so, in the spring of 1904, he went to Iuka and resided at the Goodman home, about six miles northeast of town. His observations, April 17 to May 17, were published in The Auk, official organ of the A. O. U., as were most of his other lists. This article was well studied by the founders of the Tennessee Ornithological Society and was of special interest to me (see Phoebe Tunnel, The Migrant 1943). I often wondered why we didn't hear further from such a painstaking and enthusiastic naturalist until I stumbled upon the reason in "Plants of Mississippi" (Bulletin No. 17, Mississippi State Geological Survey, February, 1921). In the preface E. N. Lowe states, "... the gift of about 450 species from Mr. Andrew Allison, an excellent field botanist who collected mainly in two counties - Tishomingo and Hancock. Unfortunately for botanical science, Mr. Allison left the state several years ago to take up missionary work in China. On his return, on vacation, in 1918, Mr. Allison very kindly presented to the Geological Survey Herbarium his beautiful collection."

While in the armed services I secured a copy of "South China Birds" by Harry R. Caldwell and John C. Caldwell (1931) and encountered in the preface another reference. "We are greatly indebted to Prof. Andrew Allison of Kiangyin for the loan of his beautiful drawings for use in colored plates. We are only sorry that we were unable to make use of more of his exceptionally fine material." Drawings of ten species (six colored plates) were used. Dr. H. G. Deignan of the U. S. National Museum kindly informs me that in 1911 the museum purchased several hundred skins of birds collected by Allison and Lacey I. Moffett in China. Specimens have also come into the museum over the years, collected in Mississippi and/or Louisiana not only by Andrew Allison but by Alex Allison, Jr., Lucie B. Allison, and William B. Allison. Dr. Deignan also furnished the Musée Heude reference listed below, publication of which paper was apparently held up until after the end of World War II. In it, he states, Allison named three birds presumed to be new. Rev. Worth mentions that Allison made talks on birds in several Chinese cities.

Mrs. Coffey and I were fortunate in having the pleasure and inspiration of meeting Rev. and Mrs. Allison at Ellisville, after their retirement. It has been my wish here to give some of Andrew Allison's accomplishments. In closing I would like to quote a most fitting tribute to him by Miss Mary Spence Maily in a news "In Memoriam" (June 6, 1960). She writes: "Andrew Allison loved nature and through that love lived near the God who created the beauty and purity of all things thereto pertaining. His love of growing things, his knowledge of birds and his interest in their habits and lyrical offerings gave him a closeness to all creation along with a closeness to God ..."

"Sincerity in his beliefs, constancy and love in his marriage, devotion to his duties throughout his 81 years, gave him stature and never robbed him of his youth..."

ANDREW ALLISON - BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- 1898 Louisiana Tanager and Sprague's Pipit in Louisiana. Bulletin of the Michigan Orni. Club II (3-4):39 (collected).
- 1899 The Sparrows of Mississippi. The Auk XVI (3):266-270.
- 1900a The Cinnamon Teal in Louisiana. The Auk XVII (2):170
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- 1904 The Birds of West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. The Auk XXI (4):472-484. (annotated, 130 Species).
- 1906a Notes on the Winter Birds of Hancock County, Mississippi. The Auk XXIII (1):44-47.
- 1906b Notes from Hancock County, Mississippi. The Auk XXIII(3):232-233.
- 1907 Notes on the Spring Birds of Tishomingo County, Mississippi. The Auk XXIV (1):12-25.
- 1946 Some New Chinese Birds in the Heude Museum Collection. Notes d'Ornithologie Vol. 1, fasc. 2, May 30, 1946. 7 pp (Musée Huede, Aurora University, Shanghai)

ALSO: Beyer, George Eugene; Allison, Andrew, and Kopman, Henry Hazlitt.

1906a List of Birds of Louisiana. The Auk XXIII (1):1-15.

1906b List of Birds of Louisiana. The Auk XXIII (3):275-282.

1907 List of Birds of Louisiana. The Auk XXIV (3):314-321.

1908a List of Birds of Louisiana. The Auk XXV (2):173-180.

1908b List of Birds of Louisiana. The Auk XXV (4):439-448. (185 species, to Pici. - Continued in 1915 by Kopman)

Many of the older references above were taken from Dr. Harry C. Oberholser's "The Bird Life of Louisiana" (1938).

Ben B. Coffey, Jr., Memphis, Tennessee

Memphis Area Notes:

Frontal activity has been frequent in the past week, evidence consisting of very early morning thunder storms. These seemed to clear the area of migrants although bright sunny days were ideal for hiking. As usual, a light, hazy overcast appearing about 3:00 or 4:00 P. M. would bring a new individual migrant into the heavy woodland of Overton Park at Memphis. I have done concentrated work searching for first 1961 arrivals in this extensive woodland. Daily trips were made from 12:00 to 6:00 P. M. on March 14, 15, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29:

3 - 15 Cooper's hawk - at nest area where a nest was built several years ago

- 3 - 22 Chipping sparrow - several on edge of golf course
- 3 - 24 Barn swallow - flying up river cresting at 36.1'. Highest since '55
- 3 - 24 Rough-winged swallow - at nest site formerly occupied on Bluff River
- 3 - 24 Tree swallows (?) - Since these were over Poplar Street, possibly first
- 3 - 24 Nestling horned larks - sand plot, hole, beneath dry grass tuft
- 3 - 25 Barn swallow - one at small bridge in open country, 35-40 usual in late summer
- 3 - 26 T. O. S. trip to Holly Springs, Mississippi, unknown list but gnat-catchers, water-thrush were seen (No migrants at Overton Park)
- 3 - 27 Blue-gray gnatcatcher
- 3 - 28 Black-throated green warbler
- 3 - 28 Chimney swift - 1 or 2 in separate parts of town, very scarce
- 3 - 29 Black and white warbler (much cooler)
- 3 - 29 2 B-T green warbler, 3 gnatcatchers, 2 black and white warblers
- 3 - 29 Common egret recorded over town by someone else

No Whip-poor-will, yellow-throated vireo, or parula yet recorded by me.

Oliver F. Irwin
1789 Glenview Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee

Gulf Coast Notes:

The Western kingbird, Tyrannus verticalis, mentioned in my previous letter remained in this area until at least the middle of January. He may still be in the vicinity, but I have not seen him since the above period. A dragline began working in the vicinity where he was first discovered and apparently disturbed him for he was seen last near the Markham Hotel in Gulfport.

On a cold, overcast, windy, 16 January 1961, I noted very numerous Gannets Moris bassana well offshore in Mississippi Sound just north of Ship Island. I counted 43 adult and immatures from one spot. They were moving east to west and were probably much more numerous for I saw them everywhere I scanned offshore with a telescope.

On 22 January 1961, a party of "birders" visited the U. S. Fish Hatchery near Lyman, Mississippi, and identified a female Vermilion flycatcher, Pyrocephalus rubinus. This bird has been seen in the area on several subsequent visits, the last being yesterday. (March 5, 1961)

On 9 February 1961, a live Yellow rail, Coturnicops noveboracensis, in first winter plumage was captured with the aid of a bird dog near Gautier. This bird was kept overnight and photographed. It was released the following morning. I have a specimen which was shot (shotgun) from the same area. These rails are rather numerous in this area during the winter and I hope to do some banding of them.

Last Thursday, 2 March 1961, a single female Parula warbler, Parula americana, was noted among winter resident birds at Belle Fontaine Beach, Mississippi. I believe this bird to be a returnee from further South for I have not seen this species in that area during the winter. I would not be too surprised if they didn't remain in few numbers throughout the winter. Yellow throated warblers, Dendroica dominica, can be found there in the winter months.

That's about all from here. An estimated 1200 White ibis, Guara alba, in 6 flocks heading east to west were noted between Gulfport and Lyman yesterday. I would guess that these birds are coming up from Florida for I haven't seen them in such numbers since last summer.

Dr. Henry D. Haberyan, March 6, 1961
13 Poplar Circle, Gulfport, Mississippi

Gulf Coast Notes (Continued)

Birding has been relatively quiet here. We have an abundance of winter residents, especially the water and shore birds. They have not yet begun to depart for points North even though some of them have largely changed into summer plumage. The common loons and horned grebes show all variations from complete winter plumage through the various stages to complete or almost complete summer plumage. The same might be said of the Laughing gulls and Forster's terns.

Spring migrants have not yet appeared in any numbers. Purple martins were noted by me first on 18 February and are now present in abundance. A Ruby throated hummingbird was seen on 11 February and a Yellow throated vireo on 21 March.

The only news of real interest was the presence on the beach of a Glaucous gull, Larus hyperboreus, near the Gulfport small craft harbor. The bird was studied with a 20 X telescope at a range of not more than 30 yards. It was near a sub-adult Ring-billed gull and was relatively nervous, although it remained in this area for 15 minutes. The bird then flew several miles east along the beach where it was studied at a range of about 60 yards in association with three Herring gulls in first winter plumage. This provided an excellent opportunity to judge the size of the Glaucous gull, although it was obviously larger than a Herring gull. I was a little disturbed by the bill of the bird which was flesh colored at its base with a black tip, but subsequent study dispelled any confusion when I learned that this is typical of such species in their second year. The bird was an immaculate white in all areas, except, of course, the legs. I have been on the lookout for such species ever since "large pure white gulls" have been reported by an individual living on the beach in Pass Christian, but did not really expect to be fortunate enough to see anything of this sort until I learned that a Glaucous gull had been collected near Pascagoula and one observed in Lake Ponchartrain. I was unable to locate Mrs. Ethel Floyd in time for her to confirm my identification, although I am positive in this regard. I hope this bird remains in the vicinity so that she can see it this weekend.

I might add that Old squaw ducks are so common and scattered along the beach that they can now be seen at any time. They are largely in their summer plumage, also. I have seen them near the Gulfport Yacht Club at a distance of 20 yards feeding in the shallow water just south of the club and west of the small craft harbor mouth.

Dr. Henry D. Haberyan
13 Poplar Circle
Gulfport, Mississippi
March 24, 1961

Woodcock Nest - Bolivar County

A woodcock nest containing 4 eggs was found in a willow thicket on bank of old river chute at Merigold Hunting Club, Bolivar County, on March 3, 1961. The bird flushed from nest only a few feet from one of the observers. This nest was found by Messrs. Henry Hyder and Candry York. Reported by E. W. Coleman, Cleveland, Mississippi.

First Arrival Dates - Editor's Notes

- 3 - 18 Parula warbler and blue-gray gnatcatcher, Nature trail, Battlefield Park, Jackson
- 3 - 25 Prairie warbler, Rankin County, east of Brandon
- 3 - 27 Black and white and Prairie warbler, southwest Wayne County
- 3 - 27 Kingbird, one only at cloverleaf, Highways 80 and 51, city limits of Jackson
- 3 - 28 Chimney swifts in numbers first seen over downtown Jackson
- 3 - 27 3 adult little blue herons, Rankin County near Johns, Mississippi
- 3 - 29 5 adult little blue herons, Gr. Yellowlegs (1), Grenada Reservoir, east Grenada County
- 4 - 1 Sunflower Area, Sharkey County, white-eyed and yellow-throated vireos, prothonotary and yellow throated warblers in numbers. 2 white crowned sparrows north of Holly Bluff, Yazoo County. Also, hooded warbler in numbers.
- 4 - 2 Sunflower Area, Sharkey County, waterthrush (1), ruby throated hummingbird (1), Solitary sandpiper (1), Chickadee nest containing 5 eggs in willow stub over water. WHT

First Arrivals - Jackson Area

Parula warbler, Roses Bluff, March 9; Yellow throated warbler, Mayes Lake, March 14; Swifts, Fortification to George Streets, March 22; Louisiana water thrush, Roses Bluff, March 23; Yellow throated vireo, Mayes Lake, March 25; White eyed vireo, Mayes Lake, March 27; Kingbird, Riverside Park, April 2; Prothonotary warbler, Mayes Lake, April 4; Wood thrush, Mayes Lake, April 4; Gnatcatcher, Meeks Ferry Road, March 23; Blue headed vireo, Mayes Lake, March 6.

Christine Berry and Frances Wills - April 4, 1961

Parasitic Jaeger Collected

Lovett E. Williams and Sterling G. Clawson observed and collected (by Williams) an immature female specimen of the parasitic jaeger on February 26, 1961, one mile on 210° tangent from the west tip of Horn Island at 30° 14' N, 88° 74' W. The specimen was identified by comparison with specimen(s) at LSU Museum by Williams and George H. Lowrey, Jr. This collection record adds still another new bird to our state list.

Annual Meeting at Mississippi Southern, April 28 - 29, 1961

Another reminder about our Sixth Annual Meeting at Mississippi Southern College, Hattiesburg, Mississippi on April 28 - 29. The meeting will be held at

1:30 P. M. in New Science Hall, Room 107. Our officers are planning an interesting program and Saturday morning field trip. A presentation of the J. W. Tucker, Sr., Medal will be made to a member for outstanding work during the 1960 year. Members are urged to attend. Those who may have papers to present, or who wish to participate in the program, are urged to communicate immediately with the Program Chairman, Mrs. William G. Wills, 1521 Poplar, Jackson, Mississippi.

Registration and the business meeting of the Mississippi Academy of Sciences, Inc., will be at William Carey College. The afternoon programs for Mississippi Academy of Sciences, Inc., will be on the Mississippi Southern Campus.

Horned Larks Nesting in Yazoo County

Two pairs of horned larks were observed actively constructing nests in a large field about one mile northeast of Holly Bluff, Mississippi, Yazoo County, on April 9, 1961. Both nests were nearly complete and located on bare ground beside tufts of vegetation. Both females were observed carrying nest material and one was photographed while at nest construction. Both nests were photographed. The males were active in the vicinity of both nests. Other singing males were seen at other locations in the field. I believe that at least six pairs of horned larks were using the very large field. One male was observed in aerial flight song, remaining almost stationary in the air while heading into the wind, finally diving to the ground.

If these observations can be counted as a breeding record, the breeding range of the horned lark in Mississippi would be extended southerly by about 70 miles. M. G. Vaiden has previously recorded horned larks nesting in Bolivar County. The nests will be kept under observation, and, if not destroyed by subsequent plowing, an attempt will be made to collect eggs or young to further substantiate these nesting observations. W. H. Turcotte

Golden Plovers

Seven golden plovers were observed on April 9, 1961, in the same field near where the horned larks above were building nests. They were around standing water in a low spot in the field. WHT

A migrating whipporwill, actively pursuing an insect, was observed about 7:00 P. M., April 8, 1961, while driving on Highway 433 about 5 miles southeast from Satartia in the loess hills in Yazoo County. The bird was first noticed at a distance and then almost hit the windshield of the car. WHT
