

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Organized April 30, 1955

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The Mississippi Ornithological Society held its annual meeting in conjunction with the annual Mississippi Academy of Sciences Meeting at 1:30 P. M., April 28, 1961, on the Mississippi Southern College campus at Hattiesburg. The program consisted of an interesting account by Sterling G. Clawson on his and Lovett E. Williams' activities, observations, and collections of birds on the coast during the past year whereby a number of new species of birds were added to the State bird list. Bill Turcotte showed color slides made last June on a west Texas and Big Bend National Park vacation trip, also, color slides of horned lark nests found this April in Yazoo County.

Presentation of the J. W. Tucker Medal was made jointly to Sterling G. Clawson and Lovett E. Williams for their outstanding contributions to the ornithology of the state during 1960-61: First collection records for the state of cattle egret, glossy ibis, mottled duck, black-necked stilt, gannet, parasitic jaeger and first collection record on the coast of the avocet.

The nominating committee appointed by John Phares, President, nominated the following slate of officers for the ensuing year:

President: Dr. Henry D. Haberyan, Gulfport
Vice-President: Mrs. William G. Wills, Jackson
Secretary: Sterling G. Clawson, Bay St. Louis
Treasurer: Erskine Gandy, Jackson

Those present voted to submit to the membership by mail ballot a proposal to provide for a life membership upon payment of \$25.00 dues. The slate of officers nominated will be voted on by mail also, since there was not a quorum of members present at the meeting.

Annual Field Trip on the Coast

An all-day field trip on Saturday, April 29, started from Bay St. Louis at 6:00 A. M. We visited the beach areas south to Clermont Harbor and fresh water marsh areas near Lakeshore. The afternoon trip began from the old yacht basin at Gulfport, and we visited several areas in Jackson County. Highlights of the day's observations were mottled ducks at Ansley Marsh and Porter Chemical Plant at

Bayou Casotte; eleven whimbrels on a filled-in marsh west of the E. Pascagoula River; 5 cattle egrets (Bayou Casotte Area), and sandhill cranes after sundown on an area north of Fontainebleau.

Spring Notes From the Gulf Coast

In general, the trans-Gulf migrants have been quite numerous on the coast this spring. As usual, we have "barren" periods when the weather is fine and the winds predominate from the South, but after cold fronts and during periods of unsettled weather the area may be "swamped" with migrants. Probably the best such period occurred in this area 6 - 8 April when the following species were noted at Belle Fontaine:

Beach:	White-eyed vireo	American redstart
	Red-eyed vireo	Ovenbird
	Yellow-throated vireo	Prothonotary warbler
	Parula warbler	Summer tanager
	Yellow-throated warbler	Scarlet tanager
	Black and white warbler	Blue grosbeak
	Cerulean warbler	Indigo bunting
	Myrtle warbler	Wood thrush
	Common yellowthroat	Swainson's thrush
	Northern waterthrush	Ruby-throated hummingbird
	Tennessee warbler	Bewick's wren
	Hooded warbler	House wren
	Worm-eating warbler	Cedar waxwings
	Blue-winged warbler	White pelican (29)
	Golden-winged warbler	The usual summer residents
	Yellow warbler	

The first arrival of the Least tern Sterna albifrons consisted of a single bird 10 April with 17 being found two days later. They have steadily increased in numbers and are very abundant as I am sure the MOS field trip noted 29 April.

Another "wave" of trans-Gulf migrants descended upon us 14 - 16 April, but I am unable to give local details for I was in Dauphine Island, Alabama, at the time.

My notes with respect to departures are not yet complete since there are still occasional winter birds in the area. Briefly, Oldsquaw, Clangula hyemalis, were seen as late as 3 May (7 birds) and may still be in the area for I have not been able to check their usual areas the past few days. No Lesser scaup, Aythya affinis, have been seen since 2 May, but here again cannot be "written off" for this year. Red-breasted mergansers, Mergus serrator, were seen on the same date. A few Common goldeneye, Bucephala clangula, are still about. Herring gulls, Larus argentatus, Ring-billed gulls, Larus delawarensis, are greatly diminished in numbers, but are not uncommon. An occasional Bonaparte's gull, Larus philadelphia, can be found.

Marbled godwits (9) Limosa fedoa were noted on the beach in front of the old Gulfport Yacht Building on the East pier at Gulfport 28 April. There was heavy human traffic on the beach and these birds remained in the area for only about an hour.

A nest of Sandhill crane, Grus canadensis, has been located in south Jackson County. This nest contains two eggs, each of which measures about 10 cm in greatest dimension. This nest will be re-visited 7 May 1961, but I would not be at all surprised to find that the eggs have hatched. Dr. Henry D. Haberyan, Gulfport

Coastal Observations

April 13, 1961

Two male Eastern Painted Buntings seen at Clairborne in Hancock County.
Mottled Duck collected from marshes at Clairborne in Hancock County.

Three Upland Plovers seen in pasture along State Highway 53 in the southern part of Pearl River County. Specimen collected.

April 14, 1961

Flock of seven Old-Squaws seen in surf near Yacht Club at Gulfport, Harrison County.

Large gathering of gulls containing about 250 Herrings and 50 Ring-billeds observed on beach across from Veterans Hospital at Mississippi City, Harrison County.

A single Black-necked stilt was observed and collected at a rain pool along road about one mile north of the H. K. Porter Chemical Plant, Bayou Casotte, Jackson County.

April 15, 1961

Three Cattle Egrets observed in a pasture along State road 661 near Bayou Casotte, Jackson County.

Large number of Least Terns seen flying over fill area at Bayou Casotte, Jackson County. Sterling G. Clawson, Bay St. Louis

More Coastal Observations

Lovett E. Williams and Sterling G. Clawson listed 98 species in coastal areas from West Pearl River to Bayou Casotte Area in Jackson County over the week-end May 5 - 7. Notes of particular interest are: May 5, 1961: West Pearl River, 1/2 mile south of U. S. 90 - brackish marsh; large number (hundreds) of long-billed marsh wrens singing. One yellow-throated warbler in cypress tree singing. May 5; Bay St. Louis - Bonaparte's gull (2) and Turnstone (2). May 5; Lakeshore, Mississippi - fresh water ponds and marsh: Duck hawk (1), purple gallinule (12), common gallinule (8), King Rail (2) with 3 large 8" high downy young; gull billed tern (1); least bittern (7). All above by Lovett E. Williams alone. May 7; Clairborne, Mississippi - fresh and brackish marsh, Juncus, etc. - Clapper rail nests: 1 with 1 egg; 1 with 6 eggs; 1 with 7 eggs destroyed by predator; 1 with unknown number eggs destroyed by predator; Common gallinule (3); Mottled duck (3); Blue-winged teal (2); Least Bittern (5); Short-billed marsh wren (1); Blue grosbeak (1); Bay St. Louis - Baltimore Oriole (1); Pascagoula Area: Long-billed curlew (1); white rumped sandpiper (5); Sora (1); Whimbrel (10); Sharp-tailed sparrow (15); Duck hawk (1 specimen collected); Long-billed marsh wren (50); Bayou Casotte Area; White rumped sandpiper (2); Cattle egret (8); Mottled duck (3); Pass Christian Area: 4 Snowy Plovers and 1 young. (Editor's Note: No previous breeding record of this species on the mainland although Burleigh and others record it as breeding on the Mississippi coastal islands. No details as to size of young). Lovett E. Williams and Sterling G. Clawson

Additional 1961 First Arrivals - Overton Park, Memphis, Tennessee

Green Heron	4/17	Prairie warbler	4/25
Yellow-crowned night heron	4/14	Kentucky warbler	4/20
Chuck-wills-widow	4/22	Redstart warbler	4/23
Nighthawk	4/18	Scarlet tanager	4/16
*Prothonotary warbler	4/22	Summer tanager	4/14
Worm-eating warbler	4/21	*Rose-breasted grosbeak	4/22
*Golden-winged warbler	4/22	Catbird	4/22
*Blue-winged warbler	4/23	Orchard oriole	4/19
Tennessee warbler	4/18	Baltimore oriole	4/20
Nashville warbler	4/17	Hummingbird	4/18
Cerulean warbler	4/23	*Indigo bunting	4/16
*Blackburnian warbler	4/23	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	4/25
Chestnut-sided warbler	4/22		

I checked only one habitat, thus a large number of these aren't as early as normal. Temperatures 7.8 degrees below normal until 4/19, above normal to 4/26. Leaves heavy after 4/19. Migrants appeared in numbers, feeding in heavy foliage on swarming mosquitoes. Oliver F. Irwin, 1789 Glenview Avenue, Memphis 14, Tennessee.

*Reported earlier by "TOS" members on dates shown.

Arrival Dates - Rosedale, Mississippi

2/26	Purple martin and tree swallows	4/7	Catbird
		4/12	Painted Bunting
2-28	American egret 2 (Legion Lake, 3 miles south of Rosedale)	4/14	Green Heron 2 (Willow slough 4 miles south of Rosedale)
		4/15	Indigo Bunting
*2/28	Barn Swallow 3 (On levee, 2 miles south of Rosedale)	4/15	Orchard and Baltimore Oriole
		4/18	Crested Flycatcher
*3/5	Summer Tanager	4/21	Hooded Warbler
3/26	Chimney Swift	4/22	Dickcissel
3/28	Little Blue Heron 3 (Legion Lake)	4/23	Snowy Egret
3/29	Black and White Warbler		
4/5	Prothonotary Warbler		
4/5	Yellow-breasted chat		
4/7	Redstart 2 (Rosedale Hunting Club)		

Sammie Danna, Rosedale, Mississippi

*Editor's Note: Extremely early for these species. No details given on these observations.

White Pelicans - Bolivar County

Twenty-eight (28) white pelicans were observed by Rickie Cheatham, Rosedale, Mississippi, on May 20, 1961, at Legion Lake, 5 miles south of Rosedale and reported by Sammie Danna, Rosedale.

Upland Plovers - Attala County

Clarence E. Morgan, Jr., reports three upland plovers observed in a pasture on April 12, 1961, about 5 miles east of Kosciusko, Mississippi, the first of this species observed by him.

Cattle Egret - Pearl River County

The first record of a cattle egret (recorded previously from all three coastal counties) outside of the coastal counties was established by Sterling G. Clawson with an adult specimen collected May 8, 1961, south of Poplarville, Pearl River County, at Savannah on State Highway 53. This is about 30 miles north of the previous Hancock County records. The specimen was deposited in the state museum for mounting.

King Rail Breeding Record - Hinds County

Mr. A. M. Gill, Clinton, Mississippi, reported on April 22, 1961, seeing a King Rail in his yard near a marshy pond with a brood of 8 small black chicks about the size of day-old bantam hen chicks.

Horned Lark Breeding Record Established in Yazoo County

The two horned lark nests found and photographed near Holly Bluff, Mississippi, and reported in the last issue of MOS Newsletter produced 4 eggs each. Both sets of eggs were collected and deposited in the museum collection by W. H. Turcotte and John H. Phares. Collection dates were April 9 and April 13, 1961. WHT

Extension of Barn Swallow Breeding Range

A barn swallow nest containing 4 young capable of flight was located May 30, 1961, in a double concrete box culvert under Highway 45-W at its intersection with Highway 14 about one mile north of Louise, Mississippi, Humphreys County. Both parent birds were in flight about the nest and very noisy when the nest was approached. They were apparently the darker form, not the paler coastal race. One young bird was collected for museum specimen.

This is the southernmost known breeding record in Mississippi. Vaiden (conservation May 30) reported finding previously a small colony nesting at an old dam site on Big Sunflower River in southeastern Washington County. Ben Coffey has reported barn swallows nesting under bridges in north Mississippi north of Winona. The above record extends the known breeding range southward by about 30 miles.

An old nest, probably from last year, was found under the same culvert at the opposite end. W. H. Turcotte