

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Organized April 30, 1955

MRS. W. G. WILLS, JR.
Vice-President
1521 Poplar
Jackson, Mississippi

DR. HENRY D. HABERYAN
President
13 Poplar Circle
Gulfport, Mississippi

ERSKINE GANDY
Treasurer
261 Woodie Drive
Jackson, Mississippi

STERLING G. CLAWSON
Secretary
208 Carroll Avenue
Bay St. Louis, Mississippi

WILLIAM H. TURCOTTE
Editor
Route 2, Box 43
Jackson, Mississippi

March 9, 1962

MOS NEWSLETTER - Vol. 7, No. 2

Compiled by: W. H. TURCOTTE

ANNUAL MEETING, MOS - 1962

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Friday, 13 April:
4:00 - 9:00 P. M.

Registration

Gulfport Chamber of Commerce Building

Dr. and Mrs. Haberyan will be host at coffee and cokes
Maps, motel and other information available for those
who have not made reservations in advance.

Saturday, 14 April:

Field trips

- A. 8:00 A. M. Gulf Islands Refuge boat trip conducted
by Mr. John Walther, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
Leaves Biloxi Small Craft Harbor.
- B. 8:00 A. M. Mist netting and birding at Belle Fontaine
Beach and vicinity. Dr. Haberyan and Mrs. B. Floyd.

Banquet and business meeting

Paradise Point Restaurant - 7:00 P. M.

Dinner: Steak \$2.85
Seafood 2.50
Chicken 2.25

Compilation of bird list for the day
Business meeting
Program: Movie

Gulf Coast Midwinter Notes

The severe cold weather beginning 10 January brought temperatures in Gulfport to as low as 12° F. This weather brought large numbers and a variety of sparrows to the coast. Fox sparrows Passerella iliaca became very numerous and conspicuous all along the coast. These birds do not ordinarily winter this far South, and it is the first time I have encountered them here in the 4½ years of residence in Gulfport. Thomas Burleigh resided in this area for 8 years (1935-1943)

and apparently saw these birds only on the occasion of similar severe weather during the winter of 1940. I noted no increase in shorebirds or waterbirds, except for a very definite and marked increase in numbers of Killdeer, Charadrius vociferus.

The Red-breasted nuthatches, Sitta canadensis, mentioned in the previous MOS Newsletter as being in my yard have remained. Both, incidentally, have been banded without discouraging visits to the feeding station.

With the exception of a rather mild cold front this week, the weather has been very mild and reminiscent of Spring. The Chipping sparrows, Cardinals, Mourning doves, and other "yard" birds have responded to this weather with song, and the woodpeckers have been almost a nuisance with their drumming.

Oldsquaw, Clangula hyemalis, have been seen at frequent intervals since the last MOS Newsletter, but not as frequently or as numerous as last winter.

Dr. Henry D. Haberyan

White-fronted Goose and Franklin Gull in Mississippi

On 23 December 1961, while taking part in the Bayou Caddy-Pass Christian Christmas bird count, Dr. Henry D. Haberyan, Carl H. Struck, Jr., and John Walther identified a White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons) at Lakeshore. Later in the day, after being informed of the find by the original observers, I collected the specimen. Erskine Gandy prepared the specimen and told me that it is a female. It had a white face which indicates it is adult. The only other Mississippi record known to me is one S. G. Clawson and I saw on 15 January 1961, at the mouth of the East Pearl River (MOS Newsletter, 6 (1): 7).

The next day, 24 December, enroute to Florida from the Christmas count at Bay St. Louis, I stopped by the harbor area at Gulfport and there found and collected a juvenile Franklin's Gull (Larus pipixcan). The specimen is the first for Mississippi.

Both specimens were placed in the State Game and Fish Commission Museum at Jackson. Lovett E. Williams, Jr.

An Offshore Boat Trip in Mississippi Waters (Gannets and Parasitic Jaegers Observed and Specimens Collected)

On 24 February 1962, Sterling G. Clawson and I visited Mississippi Sound off Pascagoula and Gulf waters off Petit Bois Island in Mississippi. In the offshore waters we found the Gannet equally as abundant as on a similar trip last year when hundreds were seen in a few hours off Horn Island. On February 24 of this year the species was most abundant from near shore to 5 miles off Petit Bois Island. An adult specimen was taken (by Clawson) in Mississippi waters off the eastern end of the island. One individual was seen in Mississippi Sound two miles north of Petit Bois. It is planned that the specimen will be mounted for the Mississippi Game and Fish Commission Museum in Jackson.

Upon returning to Pascagoula, having searched the offshore waters for jaegers in vain, we were surprised to find five Parasitic Jaegers within one mile of shore near Pascagoula. Dredging operations are underway in the ship channel there and a large number of gulls and terns use the spoil banks for roosting. We reached this area around sundown to find the jaegers waylaying terns which approached the roost. In a few minutes we had seen five different individual Parasitic Jaegers and collected two light phases immature females for the Mississippi Game and Fish Commission Museum.

The Gannet specimen is the third preserved from the State and the two jaegers are the second and third of that species. Lovett E. Williams

Annual Autumn Hawk Count at Memphis, Tennessee, 1961

Observer: Oliver F. Irwin, 1789 Glenview Avenue, Memphis 14
Locality: Roof-top in the center of Memphis, Tennessee
Period: Daily, during noon hours, 9-25 to 11-19, inclusively
Results: A total of 378 southwardly-migrating hawks were recorded in approximately 150 passages on 15 days of active migration on 55 days of observation. No hawks were recorded on 12 days with strong opposing southerly winds, 15 days with low-hanging clouds, 9 of which were very rainy, 14 days of clear, cold days following frontal systems. Good flights preceded cooler weather, ending abruptly when clearing skies moved across the area. The largest flocks were 25 and 14 on 9-26, 39 and 36 on 9-27, 3 and 6 on 11-5, 6 and 7 on 11-6, and 5 were seen on 4 occasions in November. Nearly all were individuals gliding by at intervals. Over favorable feeding spots they often joined other pausing to soar before continuing swiftly onward. Nearly all identified hawks to 10-3 were broadwinged. After that date nearly all identified hawks were red-tailed. An osprey was seen on 9-29 and 10-1. A black vulture was seen on 10-3, 5, 14. A turkey vulture on 11-6. Record breaking lows were 47° on 9-16, 42° on 10-4, 44° on 10-5, 26° on 11-9. Days of active migration and totals were: 9-25 (14), 9-26 (30), 9-27 (34), 9-28 (14), 10-1 (18), 10-2 (14), 10-3 (4), 10-14 (10), 10-25 (6), 11-5 (49), 11-6 (35), 11-16 (4), 11-17 (22), 11-18 (5), 11-19 (14), total hawks 378.

Evening Grosbeaks in Franklin County

The recent article in the Jackson Daily News about some evening grosbeaks which were seen in Jackson prompts me to report a flock of these birds which I saw last December. This was in the north central edge of Franklin County where I was spending a few days on my old home place.

According to my records, on December 17, 1961, I observed a flock of 3 evening grosbeaks. They were in a pine tree close enough for positive identification. The following morning I observed two evening grosbeaks feeding on the seeds of blue beech, Carpinus caroliniana. I watched these birds for at least 10 minutes. The next morning, December 19, one bird was feeding in the same tree. This is the first and only time I have seen this species in Mississippi.

Edward G. Sullivan
Biologist, SCS, Grenada Mississippi
February 26, 1962

Evening Grosbeak in Jackson - Specimen Collected

A male Evening Grosbeak was collected on February 22, 1962, at 1600 St. Ann Street, Jackson, Mississippi. The collection of this new state record by B. E. Gandy climaxed a frustrating search by MOS members which began when Mrs. John S. Winbigler reported seeing seven of these birds in the Bellhaven College area on January 29, 1962. Rev. Dwyn M. Mounger saw a flock of six near his home on Piedmont Street on February 19, 1962, and again on February 22 when he reported them and followed them three blocks until Gandy arrived to collect one.

Five males and three females were seen again on February 23 by Rev. Mounger, Miss Christine Berry, Mrs. W. G. Wills, and W. H. Turcotte. Mrs. Lee Baker reported seeing a small flock on February 28. All of these flocks were sighted within an area approximately one mile in diameter.

The collected specimen was made into a study skin by W. H. Turcotte and placed in the Game and Fish Commission Museum. B. E. Gandy

Blackheaded Grosbeak Specimen Collected

On January 17, Mrs. Mayo Tolman wrote me from Picayune that a grosbeak unfamiliar to the area had recently been a daily visitor to the feeder in her yard. On January 19, I visited Mr. and Mrs. Tolman and was able to collect the bird for the Museum of the Mississippi Game and Fish Commission. It is an immature and Black-headed Grosbeak, Pheucticus melanocephalus, a species which normally breeds in the Western and Great Plains states and winters in Mexico. Though reported in Louisiana, this is the first record of this grosbeak for Mississippi. Normally none of the grosbeaks winter in the state.

The initial appearance of this bird on January 9 coincided with the severe weather conditions of the record-breaking cold front which involved the Southern states this year.

The Tolman residence is near Nicholson in the extreme southern part of Pearl River County and just north of the Hancock County line. Sterling G. Clawson

Miscellaneous Gulf Coast Notes

The record-breaking cold front which invaded the state during the second week in January was followed by the appearance of a considerable number of dead birds in certain coastal areas. Though I made no extensive or organized searches, carcasses of Herring Gulls and Lesser Scaups were found at many points along the beach in Harrison County. In a single 200-yard expanse of beach at Gulfport on January 26, I counted the following dead: 6 Oldsquaws (2 males, 4 females), 2 Red-breasted Mergansers, 3 Herring Gulls and 2 Lesser Scaups. Two other Old Squaws were found on other occasions. A total of 28 Tree Swallows were found dead in a single grove of trees in Jackson County.

A single male Yellow-throated warbler was seen on January 12, 1962, at Belle Fontaine Beach in Jackson County, Mississippi.

On January 11 a flock of approximately 50 Eastern Fox Sparrows was seen feeding in the brushy areas of a peninsular of land in the marshes around

Claiborne in Hancock County. On the following day larger members of this species were seen at Belle Fontaine Beach in Jackson County.
Sterling G. Clawson

Purple Martin Arrivals

First purple martin arrival this year at my martin house west of Jackson was on February 19 when one appeared briefly in the late afternoon. On February 21 two arrived to occupy the house - two days earlier than last year and the earliest arrivals in the past 5 years. W. H. Turcotte

American Bittern

An early migrant or over-wintering American bittern was observed in a marshy field grown up in weeds and sedgegrass near Brownsville, northwest Hinds County, on February 4, 1962. The bird was collected for a mounted specimen for the museum.

On the same afternoon a male sharp-shinned hawk was collected near the same area and given to the museum. W. H. Turcotte

#####