

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Compiled by: W. H. TURCOTTE

STERLING GENE CLAWSON

Sterling Gene Clawson, Mississippi Ornithological Society secretary and game research biologist for the Mississippi Game and Fish Commission, died on the afternoon of August 4, 1962. His death was caused by lightning in a marsh area near the mouth of the Pascagoula River in Jackson County.

Sterling Gene Clawson was born in Tampa, Florida, on July 11, 1932. Survivors are his parents, Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Clawson, and one sister, all of Tampa. He attended schools in Tampa, graduated from Florida State University, and entered Auburn University where he obtained an M. S. degree in wildlife management with a straight A average grade. He began his career in wildlife conservation with the Game and Fish Commission on September 15, 1959, where he proved himself to be a loyal and conscientious worker. He showed a driving interest and dedication to his work. He was an outstanding field ornithologist and was especially interested in birds along the Gulf Coast. He was engaged in bird study and was alone near a nesting colony of skimmers and terns at the time he was struck by lightning. Presumably, he was checking further on the nesting record of the Common Tern reported in the last issue of the MOS Newsletter. He spent much of his spare time doing bird study and bird banding along the coast. He participated with his close friend, Lovett Williams, in the collection of at least twelve (12) species of birds additional to the Mississippi bird list. He was actively interested in the MOS and contributed notes frequently to the Newsletter.

His passing brought deep sorrow to his many friends and associates who have felt the imprint of his friendly work and interest in wildlife conservation and Mississippi ornithology.

Christmas Bird Count - Jackson Area

MOS members participating in the 63rd CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, Jackson, Mississippi, were: Miss Christine Berry, B. E. Gandy, W. H. Turcotte, and Mrs. W. G. Wills, Jr.

The count was taken within a 15-mile diameter circle, center intersection Highway 51 and Natchez Trace at Ridgeland; deciduous bottomland 18 percent,

upland mixed conifers and hardwood 22 percent, pastures, golf courses, and air-fields 20 percent, roadsides and woodland edges 15 percent, harvested and weedy fields 12 percent, wooded lakes 1 percent, commercial and residential 7 percent.

The four observers on this count were divided into two parties, starting at 6:30 A. M., and concluding at 5:00 P. M. They totaled 20 party hours - 14 hours on foot, 6 hours by car - and traveled 131 party miles - 10 on foot, 121 by car.

The total of 4,758 individuals included: Pied-billed Grebe, 2; Great Blue Heron, 4; Mallard, 40; Black Duck 3; Gadwall, 12; Green-winged Teal, 2; American Widgeon, 2; Shoveler, 60; Wood Duck, 8; Ring-necked Duck, 200; Lesser Scaup, 3; Ruddy Duck, 1; Turkey Vulture, 3; Red-tailed Hawk, 3; Marsh Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 3; American Coot, 40; Killdeer, 15; Common Snipe, 1; Herring Gull, 1; Mourning Dove, 46; Barred Owl, 1; Belted Kingfisher, 1; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 19; Pileated Woodpecker, 1; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 9; Red-headed Woodpecker, 22; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 22; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 5; Eastern Phoebe, 2; Blue Jay, 45; Common Crow, 35; Carolina Chickadee, 50; Tufted Titmouse, 26; Brown-headed Nuthatch, 3; Brown Creeper, 7; Winter Wren, 3; Carolina Wren, 24; Mockingbird, 31; Brown Thrasher, 40; Robin, 37; Hermit Thrush, 12; Eastern Bluebird, 3; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 17; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 21; Water Pipit, 50; Cedar Waxwing, 22; Loggerhead Shrike, 11; Starling, 117; Orange-crowned Warbler, 3; Myrtle Warbler, 12; Pine Warbler, 3; Yellowthroat, 3; House Sparrow, 40; Eastern Meadowlark, 103; Red-winged Blackbird, 50; Common Grackle, 2,200; Brown-headed Cowbird, 200; Cardinal, 167; Purple Finch, 3; American Goldfinch, 60; Rufous-sided Towhee, 50; Savannah Sparrow, 15; Slate-colored Junco, 85; Field Sparrow, 66; White-throated Sparrow, 600; Fox Sparrow, 7; Swamp Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow, 3.

Birds seen on previous Christmas Counts not recorded this year: Common Egret, Bufflehead, Black Vulture, Red-shouldered Hawk, Bobwhite, Great Horned Owl, Burrowing Owl, Say's Phoebe, Fish Crow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Bewick's Wren, Solitary Vireo, Rusty Blackbird, LeConte's Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, and Chipping Sparrow.

Birds counted this year but not previously recorded on the Jackson Christmas Count: Black Duck, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, American Widgeon, Shoveler, and Herring Gull. All of these plus Mallards, Scaups, Ring-necked Ducks, Coots, Grebes, one Ruddy Duck and one Common Snipe were seen together on one lake - a total of 500 or more individuals. This observation was definitely the highlight of the day for Bill Turcotte and Erskine Gandy.

Turcotte and Gandy also observed 20 White-crowned Sparrows near Flora on December 26. These were outside the count area. - Compiled by B. E. Gandy

Wintering Green Heron

Miss Christine Berry and Mrs. W. G. Wills saw a Green Heron at Mayes Lake, Jackson, Mississippi, December 7, 1962. The bird was observed for about 20 minutes and all identifying characters were checked. This is the first reported record of the Green Heron wintering in Mississippi. Miss Berry and Mrs. Wills observed a Palm Warbler, December 17, 1962, near the Bruce Campbell Airfield, Ridgeland, Mississippi. Reported by B. E. Ganey

Early White-throat Arrival

I saw one White-throated Sparrow in my yard in Jackson on October 2, 1962. This was one of the earliest fall records. B. E. Gandy

Common Nighthawks

On the nights of October 11, 12, and 13, 1962, between 6:30 P. M., and 9:00 P. M., I observed 6 - 12 Nighthawks, presumably feeding on flying insects, soaring in the spotlighted area around the dome of the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson. This is the latest fall record we have for central Mississippi. B. E. Gandy

Jackson County Observations

Enroute to the coast on December 17, 1962, I noted eight Bluebirds, singly or in pairs, in the open pine woods alongside Highway 62, north of Moss Point. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet and one Common Egret were seen in Moss Point. Later in the day I met Dr. H. D. Haberyan near the West Bank Port Facilities, one mile west of Pascagoula. During the two hours from 3:00 to 5:00 P. M., he took me on a guided tour of the flats between the mouths of the East and West Pascagoula Rivers and the St. Regis Paper Company Tree Farm five miles west of Pascagoula.

The variety of habitats in the relatively small area between the mouths of the Pascagoula Rivers, south of Highway 90, is most interesting. Here we saw: Pied-billed Grebe, 2; Double-crested Cormorant, 5; Great Blue Heron, 15; Ducks (probably Lesser Scaup), 100; Marsh Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 4; Black-bellied Plover, 4; Willet, 1; Greater Yellowlegs, 2; Dunlin, 1000; Sanderling, 8; Herring Gull, 30; Ring-billed Gull, 18; Laughing Gull, 10; Forster's Tern, 1; Royal Tern, 12; Black Skimmer, 50; Common Crow, 1; Long-billed Marsh Wren, 6; Short-billed Marsh Wren, 3; Myrtle Warbler, 12; Eastern Meadowlark, 25; Red-winged Blackbird, 1000; Boat-tailed Grackle, 40; Savannah Sparrow, 4; Seaside Sparrow, 30; Song Sparrow, 14.

Driving through the St. Regis Paper Company Tree Farm about 4:30 P. M., we got a close glimpse of one Sandhill Crane as it flew up from the road in front of us and disappeared behind the trees of a creek bottom. Also seen were: 100 Tree Swallows, 100 Robins, and 4 Vesper Sparrows.

Returning to Jackson on the 18th, I saw 12 Tree Swallows at Lyman in Harrison County. B. E. Gandy

Membership Notice - 1963 MOS Membership Fees are now due for most members. Please send your \$2.00 to B. E. Gandy, Treasurer MOS, 261 Woodie Drive, Jackson.

Pascagoula Christmas Count

MOS Members participating in the 63rd Christmas Bird Count, Pascagoula, Mississippi, were: Henry Haberyan, M. D., Mac Myers, and C. H. Struck

The count was taken on December 29, 1962, in two parties until 2:00 P. M., then as one party. Many common birds were missed (Fish crow, water pipits, Red-headed woodpecker, etc.). Birds of particular interest for this time of year are underlined:

The total of 121 species, 19,441 individuals included:

Common Loon	6	Semipalmated Sandpiper	8
Horned Grebe	5	Western Sandpiper	37
Pied-billed Grebe	4	Sanderling	7
<u>Gannet</u>	1	Herring Gull	94
Double-crested Cormorant	20	Ring-billed Gull	75
Great Blue Heron	21	Laughing Gull	59
Little Blue Heron	4	Bonaparte's Gull	1
Common Egret	10	Forster's Tern	19
Snowy Egret	13	Royal Tern	45
Louisiana Heron	6	Caspian Tern	4
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	2	Black Skimmer	47
American Bittern	1	Mourning Dove	16
Mallard	3	Screech Owl	1
Black Duck	1	Belted Kingfisher	4
Gadwall	6	Yellow-shafted Flicker	5
Shoveler	2	Pileated Woodpecker	1
Wood Duck	1	Red-bellied Woodpecker	7
Redhead	2	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1
Canvasback	80	Downy Woodpecker	3
Lesser Scaup	3,610	Eastern Phoebe	7
Common Goldeneye	43	Tree Swallow	3500
Bufflehead	26	Blue Jay	29
Oldsquaw	1	Common Crow	8
Hooded Merganser	4	Carolina Chickadee	21
Common Merganser	1	Tufted Titmouse	11
Red-breaster Merganser	15	Brown-headed Nuthatch	4
Turkey Vulture	4	Brown Creeper	3
Black Vulture	3	House Wren	3
Red-tailed Hawk	1	Winter Wren	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	2	Carolina Wren	9
<u>Bald Eagle</u>	1	Long-billed Marsh Wren	10
Marsh Hawk	5	Short-billed Marsh Wren	6
<u>Osprey</u>	2	Mockingbird	23
Peregrine Falcon	1	Catbird	1
Sparrow Hawk	9	Brown Thrasher	9
Bobwhite	11	Robin	437
<u>Sandhill Crane</u>	7	Hermit Thrush	1
King Rail	2	Eastern Bluebird	28
Clapper Rail	4	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	2
Sora	2	Golden-crowned Kinglet	15
American Coot	100	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	28
Semipalmated Plover	4	Cedar Waxwing	40
Piping Plover	6	Loggerhead Shrike	2
Killdeer	27	Starling	183
Black-bellied Plover	19	Solitary Vireo	2
Ruddy Turnstone	5	Orange-crowned Warbler	1
American Woodcock	1	Myrtle Warbler	212
Common Snipe	3	Pine Warbler	7
<u>Long-billed Curlew</u>	1	Yellowthroat	6
Willet	21	House Sparrow	2
Greater Yellowlegs	4	Eastern Meadowlark	31
Lesser Yellowlegs	5	Red-winged Blackbird	8000
<u>Knot</u>	3	Boat-tailed Grackle	77
Least Sandpiper	13	Common Grackle	33
Dunlin	1703		

Cardinal	11	Vesper Sparrow	11
American Goldfinch	8	Chipping Sparrow	42
Rufous-sided Towhee	18	Field Sparrow	7
Savannah Sparrow	16	White-throated Sparrow	225
Sharp-tailed Sparrow	23	Swamp Sparrow	46
Seaside Sparrow	87	Song Sparrow	7

Dr. Henry D. Haberyan
13 Poplar Circle
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Fall Hawk Migrations, Memphis, Tennessee

Observations of Broad-winged Hawks: No Red-tailed Hawks have been noted.

- 9-20-62, Thursday 10:00 A. M., (1) Broadwings; 10:30 (1) Sparrow Hawk, both locals. A very poor day although NE 20, bright after front. No Monarch butterflies.
- 9-21-62, Friday, 9:40 A. M., (17) Broadwings going swiftly in formation. Many Monarchs. 12:30 (1) Broadwing, local; 1:15 (1) Broadwing., (1) Marsh Hawk. Hunting low. 1:45 (1) Broadwing. 49 - 76 P. C. Hazy.
- 9-22-62, Saturday. 63 - 77° - SE 10 P. C. "Thunderclouds." Many migratory warblers, etc., in woodland. Occasional watch for hawks after 11:30. 3:25 (1) Osprey, (1) Broadwing.
- 9-23-62, Sunday. 70 - 79° SE 5 P. C. "Hazy." Heavy Monarch flight all day. 10:45 (1) Broadwing; Noon (1) Broadwing; 12:30 (1) Broadwing; 12:35 (14) Broadwings joined from a great height by another dropping like a stone into their midst. 1:00 P. M., (1) Broadwing; 1:40 (5) Broadwings.
- 9-24-62, Monday, 60 - 84° S 15 - 20, Cloudy A. M., light shower P. M. Poor day. 11:45 (1) Broadwing; 12 Noon Sparrow Hawks, all local.
- 9-25-62, Tuesday, 60 - 74° - Dark misty, light rain, poor day. N 6 at dusk, front high over Iowa due to turn cooler Wednesday. 1:30 Lg. Heron; 3:15 (1) Sparrow Hawk, local; 3:40 (1) Cooper's Hawk.
- 9-26-62, Wednesday. Cold front NE 10 - 15. Thunderheads. This is my best day. Broadwings 9:20 (2) 75 - 80 at 9:40; 4 at 9:45; 1 Turkey Vulture 9:45; (4) 9:55; (17) 10:00 A. M.; (9) 10:02; (2) 10:05; (1) 10:25; (8) at intervals, 70 Noon. (Occasional watch).

Oliver F. Irwin
1789 Glenview Avenue
Memphis 14, Tennessee

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

"October 7, 1962, I saw a Scissor-tailed flycatcher at Bridwell Ranch, seven miles northeast of Rosedale, Mississippi. I looked for it several times after that but I didn't see it (again)" ... Sammie Danna, Jr., Rosedale, Mississippi, December 27, 1962.

Waterfowl Notes

On Grenada Reservoir State Waterfowl Refuge (Calhoun County, Mississippi), November 14, 1962, there were at least 40 gadwall, 10 or more baldpate or widgeon, an estimated 1200 lesser scaup, a few ringnecks, 1 greenwinged teal and 7 Canada geese on the artificially flooded ponds planted with millet.

On the Sunflower Waterfowl Reservoir, Sharkey County, between Rolling Fork and Holly Bluff, Mississippi, on November 29, 1962, I saw about 150 mallards (mostly drakes), 500 or more wood ducks, 2 gadwall and 2 hooded mergansers. On December 7 and again on December 22, I checked a black duck bagged by hunters and observed them in small numbers with mallards several other times during the hunting season (December 6 - 30). On January 7, 1963, an estimated 2,000 mallards and 4,000 wood ducks were using the state waterfowl project area for resting, roosting, and feeding.

W. H. Turcotte

Fall and Winter Gulf Coast Notes

A belated late summer note should be reported before listing the fall and winter notes from this area. This consists of three buff-breasted sandpipers, Tryngites subruficollis, one of which was netted and banded, were discovered in the Pascagoula River "flats" on 25 August 1962. This is my first encounter with this species in Mississippi. Burleigh in "The Bird Life of the Gulf Coast Region of Mississippi," covering the period from September 1935 to September 1943, has only one record (Deer Island, 6 September 1940), further attesting to the rarity of this species in this area.

Another rarity east of the Mississippi River nowadays is the American avocet, Recurvirostra americana. Four birds of this species were found feeding in the shallow salt water between the mouths of the Pascagoula River on 20 September 1962. No mention of this species is found in the above-mentioned work by Burleigh.

Blue geese, Chen caerulescens, were unusually numerous on the mainland this fall. My first record is of a single Blue with two Snow geese over Belle Fontaine Beach on 14 October. A single immature Blue goose was at the U. S. Fish Hatchery at Lyman on 26 October and a flock varying from 4 to 5 in number were present about the Pascagoula River "flats" from 21 October until 8 November. A single immature Blue goose was seen in the Bert Jones Park (about the harbor) in Gulfport on 9 December.

An immature male Lesser snow goose, Chen hyperborea, collected at the U. S. Fish Hatchery at Lyman on 10 November 1962, officially adds this species to the state list. Two adult Blue geese were present with this collected specimen, but were spared.

White-throated sparrows, Zonotrichia albicollis, made their first fall 1962 appearance in Gulfport on 18 October.

Double-crested cormorants, Phalacrocorax auritus, did not appear until 27 October, a late arrival date probably reflecting the very mild fall we experienced.

Nine Cattle egrets, Ardeola ibis, were found resting with Ring-billed and Laughing gulls in the shallow salt water of Gulfport's beaches on 27 October. This is the first and only time I have seen this species in salt water.

Golden plovers, Pluvialis dominica dominica, are decidedly uncommon here in the fall and winter, but a one-legged bird of this species was present on the beach at Gulfport on 28 October. This bird flew in with 3 Killdeer. A number of Black-bellied plovers already on the beach facilitated comparison between these species.

Common loons, Gavia immer, did not appear here until 27 October this past fall. Horned grebes, Colymbus auritus, appeared even later on 4 November.

A few Catbirds, Dumetella carolinensis, can usually be roused out here in winter, but this species as well as Hermit thrushes, Hylocichla guttata faxoni, have been unusually numerous this winter.

I have noted only one Slate-colored junco, Junco hyemalis, and only one Fox sparrow, Passerella iliaca iliaca, in Gulfport and vicinity this fall and winter, the former on 10 November and the latter on 12 December.

A partial albino Laughing gull, Larus atricilla, was seen in Gulfport on 11 November 1962, but was not collected because of the presence of too many humans in the vicinity. This bird was carefully studied while at rest with Herring, Ring-billed and other laughing gulls.

Bonaparte's gulls, Larus philadelphia, have been conspicuous by their rarity this winter. This species was very abundant on the coast last winter. They did not appear until 9 December this past fall.

An adult male Vermilion flycatcher, Pyrocephalus rubinus mexicanus, was collected at the U. S. Fish Hatchery at Lyman on 17 November 1962.

Knots, Calidris canutus rufus, rarely winter on the coast here, but six were found in Bay St. Louis on 9 December and three were found on the Pascagoula Christmas count on 29 December.

A fully adult male, Black-headed grosbeak, Phencticus ludovicianus, was studied in flight and at rest at Belle Fontaine Beach (16 January 1963). By the time a collecting gun was obtained, this bird had disappeared and could not be located. An attempt will be made to relocate him within the next few days so that he may take a place by the first specimen collected for the state by Sterling Clawson last winter.*

*Editor's Note: This bird was collected January 20, 1963, by Dr. Haberyan and reported to the editor by letter dated January 21, 1963. The specimen will be deposited in the Wildlife Museum in Jackson.

Two Bird Banding Items

1. A Sanderling, Crocethia alba, banded in Gulfport on 3 November 1961, was recaptured 5 October 1962, approximately 200 yards east of the site of its first capture. Since the bird was apparently completely healthy

and since almost a year had elapsed since it was first banded, it is assumed it had made a trip to its breeding grounds in the arctic before being retaken this past fall. (Band No. 61-199569)

2. A Killdeer, Charadrius vociferus vociferus, was banded (No. 602-48550) at the Fish Hatchery at Lyman on 7 December 1961, and retaken at the same location 18 November 1962.

My banding in Mississippi in 1962 amounted to 2,345 birds of 121 species.

Dr. Henry D. Haberyan

Partial Albino Cardinal

On January 22, 1963, I saw a male partial albino cardinal on Highway 49 E between Thornton and Mileston, Mississippi. The bird was in company with other male and female cardinals at the roadside and was a uniform, pinkish white color all over. W. H. Turcotte

1962 Nesting Barn Swallow Notes

5-20-1962 - Whitfield, Mississippi Area, Rankin County. 3 nests of barn swallow were found in a box culvert containing 5 eggs each nest; 1 nest in next culvert containing 5 eggs; 1 nest in culvert past cattle barn. This nest was not accessible but both birds were about; 1 nest in culvert by small pond contained 3 young in pinfeathers. There was a total of 6 active nests along the 2-mile stretch of State Highway 468.

On June 7, on a trip to Columbus, Mississippi, up the Natchez Trace and Highway 12, I checked the culvert on the Trace near Kosciusko that was used last year and reported in Newsletter. No nest. Between Sturgis and Starkville, I found one pair nesting in box culvert. Nest was over water and did not check nest contents. Returning from Columbus I found another pair nesting under a bridge on Highway 12 between McCool and Ackerman.

On June 9, I saw a pair of barn swallows evidently nesting under Calahan Bridge between Satartia and Holly Bluff on Lake George in Yazoo County.

W. H. Turcotte

Rosebreasted Grosbeaks

"On September 30, 1962, while dove hunting along a brushy ditch bank 2 miles east of Inverness (Sunflower County), Mississippi, I observed three (3) Rose-breasted grosbeaks. One of these individuals made a very striking appearance in the bright sunlight when it flew and flashed the salmon-orange underwings toward me." W. H. Turcotte