

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 60, No. 1

APRIL 2015



2015 MOS Spring Meeting to be held May 8-10 in Vicksburg!

The Spring MOS Meeting will be held in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Join us as we search the Vicksburg Military Park and Mahanna Wildlife Management Area in search of spring migrants. Our speaker for Saturday night will be conservation biologist Erik Johnson. Erik's lecture will center on the future of bird migration and what can be done to protect the biodiversity of our planet. Additional birding field trips will take place Sunday morning.

Online registration (and membership sign-up) is available at www.missbird.org/Meetings.htm. A mail-in form is also available on the back page of this newsletter.

Accommodations — A limited block of rooms at a discounted rate of \$89/night (plus tax) has been reserved at the LaQuinta Inn & Suites, 4160 S. Frontage Rd. Vicksburg, MS 39180 for attendees of the MOS meeting. To take advantage of this special rate, attendees must call the hotel at 601-802-0525 to make a room reservation by no later than April 24 (and sooner is better — this rate is available on a first-come, first-served basis only), and explicitly request the MOS meeting rate. Field trips will depart from the parking lot of this hotel on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Schedule...

FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 8

- 3:30-4:30 p.m. MOS Board Meeting at LaQuinta Inn & Suites
- 4:30-6:00 p.m. Meet & Greet with Erik Johnson, including sandwiches, dessert, and drinks. (Breakfast Room)
- 7:30 p.m. Discussion of Saturday field trips

SATURDAY, MAY 9

- 7:15 a.m. Meet in parking lot of LaQuinta Inn & Suites for morning field trips
- 1:15 p.m. Meet in parking lot of LaQuinta Inn & Suites for afternoon field trips
- 6:30 p.m. Dinner, Membership Meeting, species tally at Goldie's Trail Bar-B-Que, 2430 S. Frontage Rd.
- 7:30 p.m. Program: Erik Johnson, "*Bird Migration in an Uncertain Future: How Life-cycle Conservation Will Protect Earth's Biodiversity*"

SUNDAY, MAY 10

- 7:00 a.m. Field trips, to be determined at the Saturday night meeting, will depart from parking lot of LaQuinta Inn & Suites

COST

Includes Registration, Friday Meet & Greet, and Saturday Banquet: \$50 for MOS member, \$60 for non-members

About the Speaker...

Erik Johnson joined the National Audubon Society in April 2011 as a Conservation Biologist for the Mississippi Flyway and Gulf Coast programs, and today serves as Audubon Louisiana's Director of Bird Conservation. Before coming to Audubon, Erik's graduate work at Louisiana State University included researching the effects of forest fragmentation on Amazonian bird communities and understanding the effects of fire management on grassland birds in pine savannas of the southeastern U.S. It was while finishing his dissertation when the BP oil spill shocked the Gulf Coast, and in response Erik helped develop a citizen science program across the central Gulf Coast, Audubon's Coastal Bird Survey, which he continues to coordinate. Through research, monitoring, conservation, and restoration initiatives, Erik's work with Audubon engages communities and citizen scientists in helping protect birds and their habitats for future generations. An avid birder, Erik is active in Louisiana's birding community and serves as Louisiana's Christmas Bird Count regional editor, a member of Louisiana's Bird Records Committee, Vice President of Baton Rouge Audubon Society, and Co-director of the Louisiana Bird Observatory.



Erik Johnson

This issue of the *Mississippi Ornithological Society Newsletter* is dedicated to the late Bob Sargent of Clay, Alabama, and his wife Martha Gail, in honor of their many contributions to our knowledge of birds — especially hummingbirds — and their wonderful friendship to all of us who love birds and birding. Bob passed away on September 7, 2014.

MOS Officers and Board Members

President.....Ken Hackman
Vice President.....Chris King
Secretary.....Martha Swan
Treasurer.....Wayne Patterson
Past President.....Tom Pullen
Mississippi Kite Editor.....Nick Winstead
MOS Newsletter Editors.....Gene and Shannon Knight
Newsletter Design.....Tom Hoar

Welcome New Members!

David and Betty Blaylock, Mary Cargill, Doug and Joan Clarke, Judy Dorsey, Bob and Deb Foehring, Kathryn Hampton, Jeff Harris, Herbert Hayward, Mary Jefferson, Hal Mitchell, Kelly and Teresa Oneal, Guy and Charlot Ray, David and Vicki Reed, Sam and Gloria Slick, Carol White, Ben Woodard, and 25 Madison students!

And Welcome Back Renewing Members!

Nancy Donald, Seymour and Joan Johnson, Tippy Garner, Jackie Henne-Kerr, David King, and Erik and Jennie Richardson.



Solitary Sandpiper • Larry Pace

ATTENTION ALL MOS MEMBERS!

Digital Delivery of Newsletter and MS Kite

In order to cut down on printing and mailing costs of the Newsletter and the MOS Journal, we are asking any of you who would be willing to receive your copy by email to please contact us at gsknight@hughes.net **Members who receive issues by email (PDF) will receive a FULL-COLOR version.** Due to high printing costs, there can be only limited color in mailed copies. Thanks for your help!

President's Corner

By Ken Hackman, MOS President

As I write this, it's Springtime. Very soon the migrants will start traveling through en masse, in addition to those that have already begun their journey. It is, indeed, my favorite time of year. It's a time of year that all of us enjoy, I'm sure. That said, we must ensure that it continues happening in much the same way that it always has. Unfortunately, much has changed in the last few decades, and many more changes are right around the "corner". Globally, temperatures are necessitating changes that are affecting global bird movements. Miami now has flooding issues because of rising ocean levels. And still, people resist the idea of Global Warming being caused by the hundreds of millions of cars spewing exhaust on this planet; caused by the millions of toxin producing factories spewing who knows what into our atmosphere.

At the same time, birders' numbers are decreasing, at least in our state. Over the last few years, several long time members of our own tight community have left us – Marvin Davis, Bill Turcotte, Judy Toups and Bob Sargent, just to name a very few. There are certainly others. Once active leaders are no longer around. Each has been a vital part of this group, and the birding community in our state, at large.

This is your organization. It is vital for its continued existence that we continue to grow. Right now, as I see it, our numbers are dropping. The one time boon to the organization of having lifetime memberships available is now causing a loss of funds, as many of our rank and file members have those life memberships, and no longer add to the coffers, which continue to shrink. In that vein, I would invite you to make a donation to the MOS via the website: www.missbird.org. There, you can pay your dues online, register for Spring and Fall meetings, and even make donations. Our new, and gratefully, younger, tech savvy members are helping to make things more convenient. Unfortunately, even with an infusion of youth, we still continue to shrink. We need more members to continue the vital work of this great organization. We need your input. We need your continued involvement. More than that, we need your birding friends to join us. Our feathered friends are counting on us, just as we are counting on their continued survival.

I hope to see everyone at the Spring meeting in Vicksburg. Our speaker, Erik Johnson, is a personal friend with a wealth of information and expertise, and you know the birding will be fantastic! Sign up now!!!! Bring a friend or two!!!!

Good birding!

Submitting Articles and Photos for the 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 and/or photographs for possible publication. Some suggestions for articles might be:

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

Articles: 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.

Photos: Please send images in jpeg format, at least 180dpi, to the email address listed below.

Articles and photos may be sent in any time of the year, but if you would like for 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 and/or photos to:
Gene and Shannon Knight, 79 Hwy 9W, Oxford, MS 38655
662-236-2413 or gsknight@hughes.net

Remembering the “Chief Hummer”

Gene & Shannon Knight

We will always think of Bob and Martha Sargent when the “hummers” come our way during Spring Migration. As most of you know, Bob passed away on 7 September 2014. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. His wife, Martha Gail, was his most avid supporter. They worked together side-by-side in all kinds of conditions to get those hummers banded each year.

There is an extensive article about their contributions rewriting the knowledge of Mississippi hummingbirds in MOS Newsletter Vol. 58 #2. They were a “power” couple who did the work they were called to do. Our hearts are still heavy from the loss of the “Gentle Giant” who is no longer with us. He was one of a kind, a “special” man — “THE CHIEF HUMMER.”

We felt like sharing some of Bob’s precious moments banding hummers in Mississippi. The photos here are the courtesy of Strawberry Plains Audubon Center and friends.



FROM THE FIELD (Fall/Winter 2014-15)

Gene Knight, MBRC Chair

The Fall season began on schedule with **Buff-breasted** (3 Aug) and **Upland** (6 Aug) **Sandpipers** spotted on the A&D Turf Farm, Lafayette County. A **Western Kingbird** on 4 Aug was early in Hancock County as was an adult **Great Black-backed Gull** on the 17th in Jackson County. Two male **Black-throated Green Warblers** on 14 August were early in Lafayette County. **Neotropic Cormorants**, **White-faced** and **Glossy Ibis** are now common at St. Catherine Creek NWR, Natchez as double digits of these species were seen in August and September. Notable were 10 **Marbled Godwits** in Sunflower County on 4 September and 3 **Red-necked Phalaropes** west of Greenwood on 19 September. **Black-billed Cuckoos** made unprecedented appearances this fall as singles were spotted on 14 September in Lafayette County, 15 October in Hancock County, and 17 October in Bolivar County. Two **Cave Swallows** were found at the Seaman Road Sewage Lagoon,



Say's Phoebe • Libby Graves



Tropical Kingbird • Jason Hoeksema

Jackson County on 16 Oct. A very rare **Say's Phoebe** was found on West Ship Island on 24 October and upon returning two days later with another birder the state's first **SAGE THRASHER** was seen as well as the phoebe. Photos document these two accidentals. Both birds were seen again on 31 October. 200+ **Franklin's Gulls** were seen at Sardis Dam, Panola County on 26 October. On November 9 a female **Surf Scoter** was spotted on Oktibbeha County Lake and on the 11th at the same locale the county's first **Western Meadowlark** was found. The first **Burrowing Owl** seen in the state in 10 years was present on the famous Buck Island Road in Tunica County 11-14 November. Also on this road a dark morph **Rough-legged Hawk** was seen 15-24 November. The Panola County **Sprague's Pipit** found last winter returned on 24 November 2014 and continues into February 2015. Another first state record **TROPICAL KINGBIRD** was found on the Hancock County CBC 16 December. It was present into February 2015. Female **C. Mergansers** made a show this winter as a single was seen at Sardis Dam, Panola County 18 November through mid December. At the same time, from 20 November 2014 and into February 2015, two females were present at Oktibbeha County Lake. **Pacific** and **Red-throated Loons** first seen on 26 December continue to be found at Bay Springs Lake, Tishomingo County into

the winter months. A second **Say's Phoebe** was found at the South Farm at Mississippi State University on 1 January and remained on site into March. A first cycle **Thayer's Gull** was a good find in Hancock County on 8 January. On 18 January a male **Bullock's Oriole** (possibly the same individual from last year) was present in Ocean Springs and seen into March. The Ballentine area of Panola County hosted 500+ **Sandhill Cranes** again this winter. An immature female **Baltimore Oriole** survived the February sleet and snowy weather this winter in Lafayette County and was present into March. A second Oktibbeha County record of **Western Meadowlark** was also found at the South Farm at Mississippi State University on 24 January.



Neotropic Cormorants • Jason Hoeksema



Sage Thrasher • Libby Graves

Minutes of the MOS Board Meeting and Business Meeting

September 19-20, 2014

BOARD MEETING

In the absence of the President Tom Pullen, Ken Hackman, Vice President, called the meeting to order on Friday, September 19, 2014 at 3:30. Other Board Members present were Nick Winstead and Margaret Copeland, Co-editors of the MS Kite, Gene & Shannon Knight, Co-editors of the Newsletter, Jan Dubuisson, Treasurer, and Martha Swan, Secretary.

Nick reported on the publication schedule of the MS Kite. It is now five issues behind. After an appeal to the membership to elect electronic delivery, only about 20 copies of the Kites and Newsletters are now being mailed, thus reducing the cost. Gene suggested that we could therefore revamp the format similar to what was done with the Newsletter, including color photos.

J.R. Rigby was invited to join the group to discuss the MOS website. He has purchased the address www.missbird.org, which is much simpler and easier to remember than www.mississippiornithologicalsociety.org. The costs are approximately the same. A motion to move the website to the new address was made by Nick and seconded by Gene, and passed.

Gene reported that he and Tom Hoar had been working on a new brochure, and distributed a prototype. Ken requested that they consider changing to full color. Gene and Nick will check with various printers on the cost. Other than that, the new design met with approval.

The new member packet will consist of the revised brochure (when ready) the welcome letter drafted and circulated by Jason Hoeksema last spring, and a checklist.

Nick proposed that there should be only one editor for the Kite, with associate editors serving as needed. He would agree to serve as the Editor, and only he would be a member of the board. A motion to approve this change was made by Margaret and seconded by Jan and passed.

Gene presented two versions of a new official logo for MOS: one with circular lettering, and one with straight line lettering. After much discussion, the straight line version was accepted.

Gene distributed copies of the Constitution and By-laws incorporating both the changes already approved by the board, and to be voted on by the membership at this meeting, along with other suggested changes. One is to include the sentences: "The term of the newly elected officers shall begin immediately following the Annual Meeting. Their terms will terminate in two years at the Annual Meeting" at the end of Article IV – Officers 1. This would eliminate the ambiguity about who is in charge between the fall meeting and the spring meeting. Gene moved to accept this change and Jan seconded. The motion passed. Proposed changes to the By-Laws were additions to the duties of the Secretary (accepted), changes in dues schedule (tabled for more discussion), and specifying the Order of Business for meetings (tabled for clarification of the language).

Margaret reported further development in the ongoing struggle to protect Red-cockaded Woodpecker cluster numbers at Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. The administration is now planning to reduce the former goal of 88 nesting clusters to the current number, 27. The comment period ends October 27. She will draft a letter and send it to Ken, to be distributed to the MOS board for their signature, in support of stronger protection and encouragement of RCW's and their habitat.

There was a discussion of why we have a membership in the Mississippi Wildlife Federation and representation on their board, but not Audubon Mississippi. It was suggested that MWF needs the input from birders, not just hunters and fishermen, and that a similar arrangement with Audubon MS is not feasible at this time. Perhaps a generic position for MOS representatives to other relevant organizations should be included in the By-Laws.

It has been suggested that MOS should establish a student travel grant in memory/honor of Bob and Martha Gail Sargent. Money is a problem; if we become 501(c)3 we could solicit funds. It was agreed that the topic needs more discussion.

Plans for the Spring 2015 meeting were discussed. Tishomingo State Park was suggested, but this also requires more discussion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Members of the Mississippi Ornithological Society met at the Crystal Grill in Greenwood at 6:30 pm on September 20, 2014. After dinner was served, Ken Hackman, Vice President, called the meeting to order. Ken thanked the meeting organizers, Jason Hoeksema and J.R. Rigby of the Delta Wind Birds organization. The minutes of the Spring 2014 meeting were approved as published in the Newsletter. Jan presented the Treasurer's Report, which was accepted. Mary Stripling, MOS representative on the Board of Directors of the Mississippi Wildlife Federation, gave a report. She encouraged everyone to become members of MWF, in order to better represent birders' interests to the group vis-a-vis hunters and fishermen. She explained a recent ruling, designed to prevent baiting fields for hog-hunting, which inadvertently outlawed backyard bird feeders! (The regulation will be fixed.)

Ken reported on the proceedings of the previous day's MOS board meeting. Margaret reported on recent developments regarding Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at Noxubee NWR, and asked members to comment before the October 27 deadline.

The slate of officers selected by the Nominating Committee (J.R. Rigby, Gene Knight, and Jason Hoeksema) was presented: Ken Hackman, President; Chris King, Vice President; Wayne Patterson, Treasurer; Martha Swan, Secretary. The nominations were accepted by acclamation. Ken thanked Jan for her many years of service as MOS Treasurer.

Gene Knight conducted the species tally, then offered a tribute to the memory of Bob Sargent, who recently passed away. A celebration of his life will be held in Trussville, AL, on October 25. Gene also thanked J.R. and Jason for their recent contributions to MOS, and wonderful job organizing the meeting.

Proposed changes to the MOS Constitution and By-laws passed.

Kevin Carlson, a noted birder, professional tour leader, and wildlife photographer, presented the evening's program, "Birding by Impression". Focusing on shorebirds, he emphasized using features other than plumage for bird ID, such as silhouette, behavior, and relative size, illustrated with his own stunning photographs. The meeting adjourned around 9:00 pm.

Submitted by Martha Swan, MOS Secretary

SPECIES LIST

2014 MOS Fall Meeting

September 19-21 • Greenwood, MS • Leflore County

Blue-winged Teal
 Ruddy Duck
 Pied-billed Grebe
 Wood Stork
 Neotropic Cormorant
 Double-crested Cormorant
 American White Pelican
 Great Blue Heron
 Great Egret
 Snowy Egret
 Little Blue Heron
 Tricolored Heron
 Cattle Egret
 Roseate Spoonbill
 Black Vulture
 Turkey Vulture
 Osprey
 Bald Eagle
 Broad-winged Hawk
 Red-tailed Hawk
 Black-necked Stilt
 American Avocet
 Black-bellied Plover
 Semipalmated Plover
 Killdeer
 Spotted Sandpiper
 Greater Yellowlegs
 Lesser Yellowlegs
 Ruddy Turnstone
 Stilt Sandpiper
 Sanderling
 Least Sandpiper
 Pectoral Sandpiper
 Semipalmated Sandpiper
 Western Sandpiper
 Short-billed Dowitcher
 Long-billed Dowitcher
 Wilson's Phalarope
 Red-necked Phalarope
 Least Tern
 Rock Pigeon
 Eurasian Collared-Dove
 Mourning Dove
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo
 Barred Owl
 Common Nighthawk
 Chimney Swift
 Ruby-throated Hummingbird
 Belted Kingfisher

Red-headed Woodpecker
 Red-bellied Woodpecker
 Downy Woodpecker
 Hairy Woodpecker
 Northern Flicker
 Pileated Woodpecker
 Peregrine Falcon
 Eastern Wood-Pewee
 Loggerhead Shrike
 White-eyed Vireo
 Blue Jay
 American Crow
 Tree Swallow
 N. Rough-winged Swallow
 Bank Swallow
 Cliff Swallow
 Barn Swallow
 Carolina Chickadee
 Carolina Wren
Bewick's Wren (Review Species)
 Eastern Bluebird
 American Robin
 Northern Mockingbird
 Brown Thrasher
 European Starling
 Louisiana Waterthrush
 Blue-winged Warbler
 Black-and-white Warbler
 Prothonotary Warbler
 Common Yellowthroat
 American Redstart
 Magnolia Warbler
 Yellow Warbler
 Scarlet Tanager
 Northern Cardinal
 Blue Grosbeak
 Indigo Bunting
 Painted Bunting
 Dickcissel
 Red-winged Blackbird
 Eastern Meadowlark
 Common Grackle
 Brown-headed Cowbird
 Baltimore Oriole
 House Sparrow
Species Total: 94



Spotted Sandpiper • Larry Pace

MOS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

RENEWAL _____ NEW MEMBER _____

DUES:

- _____ Junior (14 and under) \$5 per year
- _____ Student (15 and older) \$10 per year
- _____ Individual \$25 per year
- _____ Family \$35 per year
- _____ Subscribing (Libraries) \$15 per year
- _____ Sustaining \$50 per year
- _____ Life \$350

DUES:

Annual dues are payable in January. Send check to:
 Wayne Patterson, MOS Treasurer
 283A CR 501
 Shannon, MS 38868



VISIT MOS ON THE WEB!

MISSBIRD@freelists.org • www.missbird.org

MOS Member Photos

MOS members are invited to submit photos for publication in the Newsletter. Send to gsknight@hughes.net. See page 2 for details!

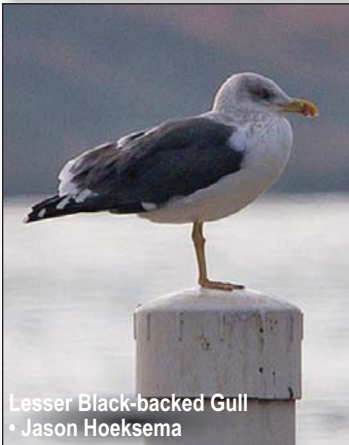
Greater Yellowlegs • Larry Pace



Brown Creeper • JR Rigby



Cedar Waxwing • Tom Hoar



Lesser Black-backed Gull
• Jason Hoeksema



Red-headed Woodpecker
• Jason Hoeksema



(Wintering) Baltimore Oriole • Gene Knight



Le Conte's Sparrow • JR Rigby



Shorebird Field Trip, MOS Fall Meeting • Dana Swan



Orange-crowned Warbler
• Larry Pace



Immature Black Vulture • JR Rigby



Killdeer • Tom Hoar

MOS SPRING 2015 MEETING – REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____ E-Mail _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Telephone _____

Additional Person(s): Name: _____ E-Mail: _____

Name: _____ E-Mail: _____

- Registration/ Friday Meet & Greet/ Saturday Banquet

\$50.00 (Members) per person ___ Person(s) X \$ 50.00 = \$ _____

\$60.00 (Non-Members) per person ___ Person(s) X \$ 60.00 = \$ _____

- Additional contribution to help with publications (\$5.00 per person suggested) \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please make check payable to M.O.S. Mail check and registration form to:

Wayne Patterson, MOS Treasurer
283A CR 501
Shannon, MS 38868



MAIL THIS REGISTRATION FORM NO LATER THAN SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 2015!

**Mississippi Ornithological Society
Gene and Shannon Knight
79 Hwy 9W
Oxford, MS 38655**



Dues are payable in January of each year. Check your mailing label for dues status.