

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 60, No. 2

SEPTEMBER 2015



2015 MOS Fall Meeting to be held October 23-25 in Pascagoula

The Fall 2015 MOS Meeting will be held in Pascagoula, Mississippi, October 23-25. The dinner and lecture will be held at the new Pascagoula Audubon Center, and our speaker will be bird song expert Nathan Pieplow. In his talk, author Nathan Pieplow will introduce the concepts behind the field guide and teach expert skills in listening to bird sounds, reading spectrograms, and visualizing sounds. He will share some of the thousands of recordings he has made over more than a decade as a sound recordist, and the insights he has gained from his efforts to standardize the way we talk about, think about, and listen to bird sounds.

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 \$77/night plus tax has been reserved at the Comfort Inn, 6801 MS-63, Moss Point, MS 39563 for attendees of the MOS meeting. To take advantage of this special rate, attendees must call the hotel at 228-474-3600 to make a room reservation no later than October 9 (and sooner is better – this rate is available on a first-come, first-served basis), and specifically request the MOS meeting rate. Field trips will depart from the hotel parking lot on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

About the Speaker...

Nathan Pieplow lives in Boulder, Colorado, where he teaches writing and rhetoric at the University of Colorado. An avid bird sound recordist, he is the author of the bird sound blog *Earbirding.com* and the author of the upcoming *Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds*. He is an author of the *Colorado Birding Trail*, former board member of the Colorado Field Ornithologists and former editor of the *Journal of Colorado Birds*.



Nathan Pieplow

Schedule...

FRIDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 23

- 3:30-4:30 p.m. MOS Board/Officers' Meeting, Board Room of Comfort Inn
- 4:30-6:00 p.m. Meet & greet with Nathan Pieplow, including sandwiches, and drinks (MOS members only) Board Room of Comfort Inn
- 7:00 p.m. Discussion of Saturday field trips

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

- 7:15 a.m. Meet in Comfort Inn parking lot for morning field trips
- 1:15 p.m. Meet in Comfort Inn parking lot for afternoon field trips
- 6:30 p.m. Dinner, membership meeting, and species tally at the Pascagoula Audubon Center, 7001 Frank Griffin Rd., Moss Point, MS
- 7:30 p.m. Program by Nathan Pieplow, "*Seeing Sounds: A New Way to Identify Birds By Ear*"

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

- 7:15 a.m. Field trips, to be determined at the Saturday night meeting, will depart from parking lot of the Comfort Inn

COST

Includes Registration, Meet & Greet (MOS members only), **and Banquet:** \$50 for MOS member, \$60 for non-members

Visit MOS on the web! www.missbird.org

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
Web Committee Chair.....	J.R. Rigby
Newsletter Design.....	Tom Hoar

Welcome New Members!

John Miles and Janet Wright



Ruby-throated Hummingbird • Tom Hoar



Wilson's Phalarope • Wayne Patterson

ATTENTION ALL MOS MEMBERS!

Digital Delivery of Newsletter and Mississippi 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

Recently, I have become aware of a new source of information that all of us can benefit from. For years, many birders have dabbled, or more than dabbled, in wildlife photography. Documentation of rarities has always benefited when we could get definitive shots of the rare birds that show up needing valid identification. Not all interactions of birding and photography go smoothly, though. For many years, there has been a difference in ideologies between the die-hard birders and those that are purely wildlife photographers. Specifically, one difference has been the use of playback to attract birds; especially those in breeding plumage, during a time of year that utilizing playback is not recommended. For that matter, there is even a difference of opinion within the birding community at large on this issue.

A new trend has begun in Mississippi, though. Largely due to the efforts of your Vice President, Chris King, multiple Facebook groups in our state have arisen. At first it was the Mississippi Birding group, which then became the Southern Birding group actually endorsed and sponsored by MOS. Then, Chris developed a new page, the Mississippi Wildlife and Nature Photographers. Now, many photos are coming in from all over the state of Mississippi every day. And sometimes, those photos are helping us more than we know. In the last week, two pictures of unusual activity were posted by photographers who, unknowingly, found birds of interest. Both warranted documentation be sent to the MOS Bird Records Committee. Neither were earth shattering by any means, but they were significant in that they indicated breeding of species in Mississippi that warranted attention.

Many of these photographers are good enough to be professionals (and some are). Some are just folks who shoot backyard birds on their cell phones. All are helping. Some of them spend all day looking for unusual or different subjects to shoot. Some just grab their cell phone if they see something "pretty." Recently, the latter included Scissor-tailed Flycatchers nesting in a part of the state that I'm not sure we had any nesting records for, down in Copiah County. The other was the location of a group of American Kestrels, two adults and an immature, in the area around Raymond. While kestrels historically bred in Mississippi, the incidence of their nesting in our state has plummeted, and we are seeing fewer and fewer summer records. Join the Facebook groups. Get to know some of these photographers. As much as they are out there shooting, they may just find the next state record.

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

BIRDS TO WATCH FOR:

Cackling Goose

By Ned Boyajian

Several years ago I wrote a series of articles entitled "Birds to Watch For" that appeared in various publications of the Mississippi Coast Audubon Society. More recently some have appeared on the Band of Birders Facebook page. The intent was to provide pertinent information on habitat, season, sources of ID information, etc. on rarities that have a reasonable probability of occurring locally. The accounts were strongly oriented toward the coastal counties but some few that are relevant statewide will appear here. The first species I will deal with is Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsonii*). Though Cackling Geese occur with some frequency in north Mississippi in winter (where they are often found among flocks of Greater White-fronted Geese) as of yet there are no confirmed sightings for the coastal counties.



Photo by Jeff Wilson

LET'S DO THE BOTTOM LINE FIRST... *SIMPLY FINDING A DISTINCTLY SMALLER "CANADA" TYPE DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU HAVE FOUND A CACKLING GOOSE.*



CANADA GOOSE
CACKLING GOOSE

Illustration by Chester A. Reed, *Game Birds*, 1912

There is considerable variation in size, appearance and even voice within each species and considerable overlap between the two species. Furthermore, over the past hundred years, shifting agricultural practices, construction of refuges, destruction of habitat, urbanization, introductions, cross-breeding and escapes have profoundly altered the ranges (and perhaps even the physical characteristics) of this group in North America. Former (natural) range limitations may no longer apply; physical characteristics can be compromised. If you find (and hopefully photograph) a dark breasted, tiny billed little goose the size of a Mallard, I don't think you'd get much of an argument. But other forms of Cackling Geese are much more like Canadas. ID can be difficult even with direct comparison and single birds may be impossible.



Photo by Jeff Wilson

Experts seem to agree that bill conformation is the most reliable characteristic. Two websites that provide useful discussion are:

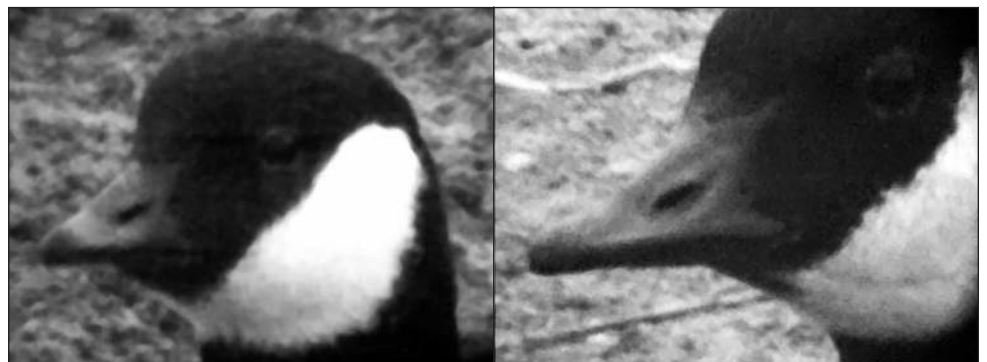
<http://www.idahobirds.net/identification/cackling.html>

<http://www.sibleyguides.com/?s=cackling>

Both are accurate and thorough but the material is complex and not always easy to follow. Fortunately for us the late Jeff Wilson (ole Coot) has left us access to a gallery of excellent photos which wonderfully supplement this material...

http://www.pbase.com/ol_coot/small_geese&page=2

- NB



Bill comparison of Cackling Goose (left) and Canada Goose. Photos by Jeff Wilson.

SOME SIGHTINGS FROM THE FIELD (Spring/Summer 2015)

Gene Knight, MBRC Chair

Spring **Franklin's Gulls** are rare in Mississippi, so a single bird seen on 10 April at Lower Lake, Sardis, Panola County, was a good find. Another rarity in our state, a **Cape May Warbler**, a male, was seen on 14 April at Rowan Oak, Lafayette County. A singing male **Grasshopper Sparrow** produced excellent photos on 17 & 18 April on the famous Buck Island Road, Tunica County. The state's second **Brown Booby** record was photographed on a piling at West Ship Island, Harrison County, on 17 April but was found dead on the 19th of April and donated to the MMNS in Jackson. **Swallow-tailed Kites** are rare north of their nesting range so two seen on 18 April at Noxubee NWR were a great find. A Lafayette County first was three **Black-bellied Whistling Ducks** seen on Timber Lake on 20 April. An immature light-morph **Swainson's Hawk** was photographed on 21 April near Hattiesburg, Forrest County. The pair of **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers**, rare nesters in Mississippi, seen nesting off Hwy 45 in Lowndes County a couple of years ago, returned this year on 25 April and were seen at the nest all summer. Adults were seen feeding young on 28 June. A male **Eurasian Wigeon** was seen and photographed on Loakfoma Lake, Noxubee NWR, on 25 April possibly representing only the third state record. Also on 25 April a **Ruff** was seen in Lowndes County in a flooded field just west of Golden Triangle Airport. Another **Swallow-tailed Kite** was seen away from nesting territory near Flower Lake, Tunica County, and a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was spotted in Greenville, Washington County, both on 26 April. The elusive **Grasshopper Sparrow** was again seen and heard on 4 May at Sardis Waterfowl Refuge, Lafayette County, and on the Mississippi River Levee south of Bass Landing, Tunica County, on 10 May and 15 June. A rarity in north Mississippi, **Anhinga** was seen in Lafayette County on 7 May at the Upper Sardis WMA. **Fulvous Whistling Ducks** were seen near Lakeshore, Hancock County, on 9 May and at Seaman Road Lagoons, Jackson County, through the period. Another warbler rarity in Mississippi, the **Mourning Warbler**, a male, was seen and photographed at Rowan Oak, Lafayette County, on 16 May. **Ruddy Turnstones** are strong flying shorebirds and usually overfly the interior of Mississippi so one found on 18 May at a Ross Barnett Reservoir restaurant, Madison County, was a good find. Three **Roseate Spoonbills** were seen near Lakeshore, Hancock County, on 31 May. A **Sooty Tern** on Ship Island on 10 June represents one of very few non-storm related summer records for Mississippi. The first Wilkinson County **Inca Dove** (7) and **Neotropic Cormorant** (4) were found on 21 June. The first Mississippi Coast July record of **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** was found on 24 July in Pascagoula, Jackson County.



Brown Booby • Warren Martz



Swainson's Hawk • Larry Basden



Mourning Warbler • J.R. Rigby



Grasshopper Sparrow • Stu Nielsen

Minutes of the MOS Board Meeting and Business Meeting

Spring Meeting • May 8 & 9, 2015

BOARD MEETING

The Board of Directors of the Mississippi Ornithological Society met on Friday, May 8, 2015 at the La Quinta Inn in Vicksburg. Present were Ken Hackman, President; Chris King, Vice President; J.R. Rigby, Web Committee Chair; Wayne Patterson, Treasurer; Nick Winstead, Editor of the *Mississippi Kite*; and Martha Swan, Secretary. Ken called the meeting to order at 3:40 and thanked the meeting organizers.

Nick distributed copies of the new brochure, produced by Gene Knight and Tom Hoar. He also reported that there are only three issues left for the *Mississippi Kite* to be caught up. The major holdup is the editing of the BATS articles (Birds around the State), which are extremely tedious and time-consuming to compile. In the future these may be processed electronically. There is also a need for other articles in addition to the Mississippi Bird Records Committee reports.

J.R. reported that the move of the website to *missbird.org* has been completed.

Under unfinished business, the timing of the terms of office was clarified to begin immediately after the Annual (Fall) Meeting. Dues can now be paid through the website using Paypal, and can be scheduled as recurring payments. It is hoped that this feature will bring in dues money more regularly. Nick moved that we drop the suggestion of having a MOS representative to Audubon, and Wayne seconded. The motion passed. J.R. reported that the website does not need to pay for its own Audio/Sounds page, since we can include a link to the Museum's xeno-canto web page.

The suggestion of establishing a Student Travel Grant in memory of Bob and Martha Sargent was tabled until the issue of obtaining 501(c)3 status is settled. The benefit would be federal tax exemption on expenses, and being able to accept donations that are tax deductible. It would require that we have an Annual Report, and would cost \$800 (one-time expense).

Regarding activities between meetings, J.R. pointed out that Strawberry Plains is going to be offering bird walks and needs volunteers to lead them. He and Jason Hoeksema are also working with Brad Holder, Manager of the Sardis Wildlife Management Area, trying to get approval to lead bird walks there.

Under New Business, J.R. moved that the Missbird Listserv be placed under MOS, and Nick seconded. The motion passed. Wayne asked for clarification of the Treasurer's responsibilities. Also, more than one person needs to be able to write checks on the account, so Ken is getting approval. Changes are needed in the By-Laws on these issues.

J.R. moved that MOS have four committees: a Records Committee (already exists), a Program Committee, a Sponsored Program Committee, and a Communications Committee. Chris seconded, and the motion passed. Later, J.R. sent out more details about the committees by email for further discussion. These Committees need to go in the By-Laws and be approved by the membership.

Ways for increasing participation of coastal birders were discussed. MOS meeting plans need to take into account the Coast Audubon's field trip schedule. The Coast was suggested as a location for the Fall meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 4:45.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

MOS members met at Goldie's Trail Bar-B-Que in Vicksburg at 7:00 pm on May 9. Ken called the meeting to order, welcomed members, and thanked the meeting organizers. The minutes of the Fall 2014 meeting were approved as printed in the Newsletter. Wayne gave the Treasurer's Report, and J.R. explained some of the expenditures. Mary Stevens Stripling, MOS Representative to the Mississippi Wildlife Federation, reported on its activities as a "watchdog" on conservation issues, such as the "One Lake Project." Publication status of the *Mississippi Kite* was presented. J.R. gave an update on the MOS website: the move to *missbird.org*, the inclusion of recent Missbird posts, Birdtrax reports, etc. He would welcome any ideas for improvement. Ken encouraged everyone to join the Mississippi Birding Facebook page. Fall meeting plans on the Coast were discussed and volunteers were sought.

Ken thanked Tom Pullen, Past President, for his contributions to MOS.

In the absence of any new business, Chris moved to adjourn, and Bob Foehring seconded.

Following dinner, Ken conducted the Species Tally, then J.R. introduced the speaker, Erik Johnson, Audubon Louisiana's Director of Bird Conservation. He gave a fascinating program "*Bird Migration in an Uncertain Future: How Life-cycle Conservation Will Protect Earth's Biodiversity*." It showed how eBird reports are assisting scientists in protecting birds along their migratory routes.

ADDENDUM:

Additional business was conducted by email following the meeting. Chris moved for the creation of a Facebook group specifically dedicated to the mission of MOS, and volunteered to set it up and maintain it. J.R. seconded and the motion passed. The group has now been set up and is called "Southern Birding."

Submitted by Martha Swan, MOS Secretary

The 2015 update of *THE ANNOTATED CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF THE SIX COASTAL COUNTIES OF MISSISSIPPI* is now available for viewing or download at the website of the Mississippi Ornithological Society (www.missbird.org) by clicking Species Checklists). This list covers the history and current status of all species known to have occurred in the coastal counties. Approximately 160 pages, all text. Compiled by Ned Boyajian. If you prefer, I can forward a copy to you directly. Send email requests to nedrbo@gmail.com

SPECIES LIST

MOS Spring Meeting, May 8-10, 2015

Vicksburg, Mississippi and

Tensas River NWR, Louisiana

Canada Goose*	American Crow
Wood Duck*	Fish Crow
Mallard*	Purple Martin*
Blue-winged Teal*	Cliff Swallow*
Northern Bobwhite*	Barn Swallow
Wild Turkey*	Carolina Chickadee
Great Blue Heron*	Tufted Titmouse
Great Egret*	Carolina Wren
Snowy Egret	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Little Blue Heron*	Eastern Bluebird*
Cattle Egret*	Veery
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron*	Swainson's Thrush
White Ibis*	Wood Thrush
Black Vulture	American Robin
Turkey Vulture	Gray Catbird
Mississippi Kite	Brown Thrasher
Red-shouldered Hawk*	Northern Mockingbird
Broad-winged Hawk*	European Starling
Red-tailed Hawk	Cedar Waxwing
Killdeer*	Prothonotary Warbler*
Rock Pigeon	Swainson's Warbler
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Tennessee Warbler
Mourning Dove	Kentucky Warbler
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Common Yellowthroat
Common Nighthawk	Hooded Warbler*
Chimney Swift	American Redstart
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Northern Parula
Red-headed Woodpecker*	Yellow-throated Warbler*
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Yellow-breasted Chat
Downy Woodpecker	Eastern Towhee
Northern Flicker*	Summer Tanager
Pileated Woodpecker*	Northern Cardinal
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Indigo Bunting
Acadian Flycatcher	Painted Bunting*
Great Crested Flycatcher	Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Kingbird*	Common Grackle
Loggerhead Shrike*	Brown-headed Cowbird
White-eyed Vireo	Orchard Oriole
Yellow-throated Vireo	Baltimore Oriole
Warbling Vireo	House Finch
Red-eyed Vireo	House Sparrow
Blue Jay	<i>*Only recorded on Louisiana trip</i>



Marbled Godwit, American Avocets & Black-necked Stilts • 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

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!



Least Sandpiper • J.R. Rigby



Great Blue Heron chicks • Tom Hoar



Great Horned Owllet • Larry Pace



Black-bellied Plover • Larry Pace



Black-bellied Whistling Ducks • Jason Hoeksema



Semipalmated Sandpiper • J.R. Rigby

MOS FALL 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 (MOS members only) / 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 OCTOBER 14!



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.