

# THE MISSISSIPPI KITE

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THE MISSISSIPPI KITE

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Contents

A GUIDE TO BIRDING IN OKTIBBEHA COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI--	Jerome A. Jackson	1
SYNCHRONOUS NEST BUILDING AND EGG LAYING AMONG HOUSE SPARROWS	James N. Sappington	6
SOME BIRD LORE COLLECTED IN MISSISSIPPI-----	Beulah M. D'Olive Price	8
FIRST NESTING RECORD OF GRAY KINGBIRDS IN MISSISSIPPI	Wayne C. Weber and Jerome A. Jackson	10
RED-TAILED HAWK WINTERING ON THE BEACH AT GULFPORT-----	Judith Toups	13
THE RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER IN NORTH MISSISSIPPI	Jerome A. Jackson, Patricia Ramey, and Bette J. Schardien	14
A BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK IN ATTALA COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI-	James A. Sanders	18
REVIEWS-----		19
SUMMARY OF MISSISSIPPI CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS, 1976-77	Compiled by Wayne C. Weber	24
BIRDS AROUND THE STATE	Compiled by Jerome A. Jackson and Wayne C. Weber	27
M.O.S. OFFICERS AND MEMBERSHIPS-----		Back Cover

Front Cover: Red-cockaded Woodpecker at its nest on the Mississippi State  
University Forest, Oktibbeha County. Photograph by J. A.  
Jackson.

A Guide to Birding in Oktibbeha County, Mississippi

Jerome A. Jackson

Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University  
Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762

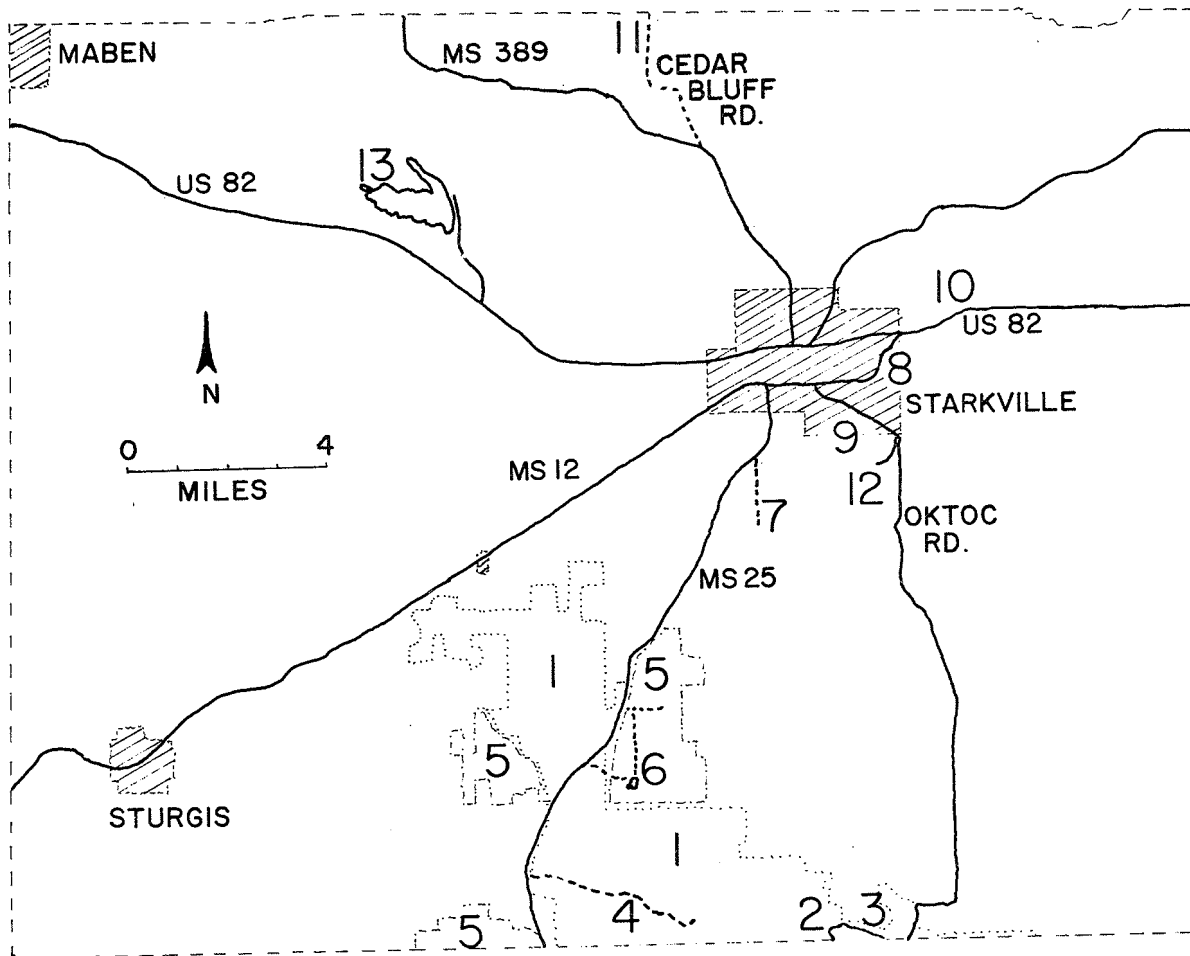
Oktibbeha County in east-central Mississippi includes an edge of the blackbelt prairie to the northeast, but, before human settlement, was primarily what Kuchler (1964) refers to as oak-hickory-pine forest. Bernard Romans (1962:313) in 1771 briefly characterized what is probably now partly Oktibbeha County: "...we went to the Chickasaw nation, through a road leading in general over stiff clay land; saw very little else but white oak, and that no where tall, occasioned by the stiffness of the land; crossed only two rivers of note, one Nashooba, the other Oka tebbe haw; no remarkable ascent or descent on the whole road; crossed many savannahs.."

Romans (op. cit.) also mentions considerable cultivation of the land by Choctaw Indians. During the past two centuries most of the remaining forest land was cleared for agriculture. By the 1930's depleted soils and economic depression resulted in much of the land reverting to second growth forest, though considerable acreage was kept in pasture and the county became known as the dairy capital of the south. Today there are fewer than half the number of dairy herds in the county that there were in 1956 and Oktibbeha County does not seem to be a major center for any agricultural product (Scott 1976). Various forest industries are important in the county and over 148 thousand acres (51%) of the county are forested (Scott op. cit.). Much of the forested area is loblolly pine (Pinus taeda), but along the many stream bottoms there are still sizeable stands of hardwood. Unfortunately, as a result of current and past forest management practices, there is little old forest.

While there are no major rivers which flow through the county, a number of smaller streams, a few large lakes, and numerous small lakes add important aquatic components to the environment. These, combined with the various forest types, pastures, and other agricultural land, provide habitats for a great diversity of resident and transient birdlife. Some of the better birding areas in the county are described below and are indicated on Figure 1. Bird names refer to species as listed in the AOU Checklist (1957) and recent supplements.

1. Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge.--Slightly less than half of this 46,000 acre refuge is located in Oktibbeha County. This includes extensive pine-hardwood forest along Mississippi Highway 25 and bottomland hardwood forest and cypress swamps along Cypress Creek, the Noxubee River, and Oktoc Creek. Approximately 1200 acres of bottomland hardwood between Oktoc Creek and the Noxubee River have been proposed for wilderness status. The northern end of Bluff Lake, a 1000 acre reservoir, is in Oktibbeha County. There are many good birding areas on the refuge, some of which will be specifically mentioned here. For detailed maps, bird checklists, and additional information, visit the refuge headquarters near Bluff Lake (open only on weekdays). Information can also be obtained by writing to the Refuge Manager, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, Brooksville, Ms. 39739.

Fig. 1. Good birding areas in Oktibbeha County. Numbers refer to the areas described in the text



2. Bluff Lake.--Only the northern end of this 1000 acre lake on Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge is in Oktibbeha County. This lake is a winter home for several thousand ducks and geese each winter. Nonmigratory descendants of a former captive flock of Canada Geese can be seen here at any time. Wood Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, Screech Owls, and Great-crested Flycatchers nest in the nest boxes placed around the lake. In the 1950's Bald Eagles used to nest in the cypress trees at the west end of the lake. Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, and Ospreys are now occasionally seen near the lake during the winter. In late summer the lake level is lowered to allow growth of food plants for wintering ducks. The resulting mud flats attract large numbers of wading birds - including post-breeding Wood Storks and several species of herons and egrets. Up to 200 Black and Turkey vultures also congregate around the lake in late summer and fall. Common Loons occasionally spend a few days on Bluff Lake during migration. Gulls and terns are not common in the area, but a few individuals can show up at almost any time of year.

3. The Bamboo Trail.--This trail extends along the top of the north levee at Bluff Lake. Willows line the lake shore and bottomland hardwood forest borders the trail on the north for about half a mile before the trail enters a beautiful tunnel of bamboo. The bamboo is not native, but has been in the area since the 1940's. Some of it is nearly 30 feet tall and six inches in diameter. Barred Owls, Wood Ducks, Pileated Woodpeckers, and Red-shouldered Hawks nest in some of the larger hardwood trees to the north of the levee. Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Prothonotary Warblers commonly nest in dead willow stubs along the lake shore. White-eyed Vireos often suspend their nests from low branches overhanging the trail. For each of the past three years Black Vultures have nested on the ground in the bamboo on the south side of the levee - within 4-6 feet of passersby. During the winter months Cardinals and White-throated Sparrows can be found here by the hundreds. A word of caution: cottonmouths are also common in this area and can be found at almost any season!

4. Pete's Slough.--This cypress slough is not readily accessible but is an attractive birding area for the birder willing to hike through brambles and do a little wading. In past years Great Blue Herons and Yellow-crowned Night Herons have nested in the tops of the cypresses in the slough. The slough begins about two miles east of Highway 25 and 150-200 yards south of the Keeton Tower Road. Before entering this area please check with Refuge headquarters.

5. Mississippi State University Forest.--This forest borders Highway 25 and its boundary adjoins Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge in many areas. While primarily managed for forest products and used as a training area for forestry students from Mississippi State University, the area also provides a lot of good birding. Much of the area is pine-hardwood forest, though bottomland hardwood habitats occur along Chinchahoma Creek. An easily observed Red-cockaded Woodpecker colony can be found on the MSU Forest at the northeast corner of the junction of Highway 25 with a gravel road, 8 miles south of Starkville. The gravel road is the first one on the east side of Highway 25 north of the Dorman Lake Road.

6. Dorman Lake.--This 12 acre lake on the Mississippi State University Forest is surrounded by pine-hardwood forest on all sides. Brown-headed Nuthatches are common in the pines around the picnic area to the east. Prothonotary Warblers nest in several of the dead trees along the upper arms of the lake and Swainson's Warblers have been seen along the ephemeral streams that feed into and from the lake. Dorman Lake is about 9 miles south of Starkville and just east of Highway 25. The road to the lake is at the top of a hill. A sign directing you to the lake is on the east side of the road.

7. Starkville Sewage Disposal Ponds.--In fall and winter these are often used by a number of species of waterfowl. The ponds can be reached by taking the first gravel road to the south from Highway 25 as you drive toward Starkville from Emerson Elementary School.

8. Mississippi State University Campus-Ed Roberts Nature Trail.--The main campus of Mississippi State University is well-landscaped and provides habitat for many bird species. Warblers are abundant in the large water oaks and sugarberry trees during migration. Purple Finches and White-throated Sparrows are common on campus throughout the winter. Flocks of 200 or more Cedar Waxwings or American Goldfinches can often be found on campus from February through early May. Barn Owls nest on campus each year - sometimes under the stadium, sometimes in cavities in the old oak trees behind Rice dormitory. The wooded areas at the edge of campus and several ponds on university land provide attractive birding spots. The Ed Roberts Nature Trail completely encircles the campus, staying as much as possible in the wooded and undeveloped area around campus. One of the most enjoyable segments of the trail extends from behind the Methodist Student Center to Eckie's Pond. The trail is marked by yellow paint on trees and posts along the way. Habitat along the trail varies from pine woods to second-growth hardwoods, to grasslands. It's not really "wild" - but it is a pleasant trail along which birds of disturbed areas, hardwood forest, and forest edge can readily be found. A guide to natural history along the trail can be obtained from the Zoology Department, Room 300 Harned Hall. A campus map can be obtained at the Information Desk in the MSU Union.

9. Mississippi State University South Farm.--Located just south of the MSU campus and reached from Oktoc Road, the MSU South Farm is primarily pasture land. A large ditch through the center of the South Farm (Catalpa Creek?) provides habitat for hundreds of nesting Red-winged Blackbirds. Belted Kingfishers and Rough-winged Swallows excavate nest cavities in the steep banks of the creek. Marsh Hawks can usually be found in the fields during fall and winter and American Kestrels and Loggerhead Shrikes commonly use utility wires along the gravel roads as hunting perches. Water Pipits frequently winter in the fields. Black-bellied Plovers have been seen in the short-grass pastures during spring migration. During early May, Bobolinks frequently show up in large flocks along the roadsides and in the fields of the south farm. The 23 acre ecological research area of the Zoology Department is located on the south farm and provides habitat for Chuck-will's-widows and other woodland birds.

10. Highway 82-Sand Creek.--Just west of Clayton Village, U.S. Highway 82 crosses Sand Creek. The two bridges here and several box culverts under the highway in this area support large nesting colonies of Barn Swallows.

11. Cedar Bluff Road-Sun Creek.--The bridge just west of Sun Creek is the only known recent nest site of Eastern Phoebe in the county. The bottomland along the creek at this point often supports concentrations of ducks, geese, and wading birds during the winter months.

12. Hillbrook Subdivision.--The grassy hills of this subdivision are used each spring as a display ground by courting American Woodcock. The birds can be heard and sometimes seen in their display almost any evening from late January through early March. Displays begin shortly before dark and frequently continue until well after midnight. To reach the area take Oktoc Road toward Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. Approximately one and a half miles south of the MSU campus a paved road branches to the right just before Oktoc Road crosses a small creek. Take the right hand road. The woodcock can be heard from anywhere along the road.

13. Oktibbeha County Lake.--This 700 acre lake and the surrounding pine-hardwood forests provide good birding most of the year. During late summer the water level of the lake is lowered and extensive mud flats attract numbers of shorebirds. Waterfowl also winter on the lake, though not in the numbers to be found at Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. Oktibbeha County Lake is approximately 7 miles northwest of Starkville and is reached by a county road which turns north from U.S. Highway 82 just east of Adaton. A sign on the highway directs you to the lake.

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Synchronous Nest Building and Egg Laying Among House Sparrows

James N. Sappington  
Department of Biology  
William Carey College  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Synchronization of nest building and egg laying by many social species of birds has been observed and reported. Notable studies have ranged from those of various species of gulls (Darling 1938) and blackbirds (Orians 1961) to ploceids (Crook 1960; Hall 1970), including the House Sparrow (Passer domesticus) (Summers-Smith 1963). In a 3 year study of House Sparrow breeding activities conducted on the main campus and adjoining areas of Mississippi State University, Oktibbeha County, Mississippi, from 1972 through 1974, I observed synchronous patterns in nest building and egg laying. Four nesting areas were studied: (1) 4 trees (Magnolia grandiflora) espaliered on the walls of Lee Hall in the central part of the campus; (2) a large barn where sheep and horses are fed and kept overnight; (3) an equipment shed and orchard; and (4) a cluster of buildings associated with a pig feed lot.

Both nest building and egg laying were observed under natural conditions in each colony. I plotted the location of each nest on a sketch map of the tree or building which contained it. The date of the beginning of nest building at each site was also recorded when it was known. Individual nests or blocks of nests located in the same area were observed for one-half or full-day periods beginning at 07:00 and lasting through 18:00 hours CST.

Nests were checked daily between 07:00 and 08:00 for eggs. The date of the laying of the first egg and appearance of the last egg in each clutch were recorded. I divided the breeding season into weekly periods and recorded the nests built and eggs laid during each period.

During the 3 breeding seasons 584 nests were built at 296 sites at the 4 locations. The earliest nest was started 10 February, and the latest was started 21 July. Peaks of nest building activity occurred during mid March, late April, early June and early July for 1974. For both 1972 and 1973 similar rhythmic patterns were noted. Others state that House Sparrow nesting is highly synchronized (Mitchell et al. 1973; Summers-Smith 1963; Weaver 1939).

Of the 584 nests built, 532 contained eggs. Egg laying during each of the 3 years embraced a span of approximately 5 months with the earliest egg being laid February 24 and the latest July 28 for the 3 year period.

Peak periods of nest building were generally followed within a week by intensive egg laying. Data for 1974 are presented in Figure 1 as an example. Four distinct cycles of laying occurred throughout the breeding season each year. Weaver (1939) found 4 distinct cycles at 5 to 6 week intervals in New York. Mitchell et al. (1973) also found 4 cycles of egg laying in Texas. Summers-Smith (1963) found a similar pattern of breeding



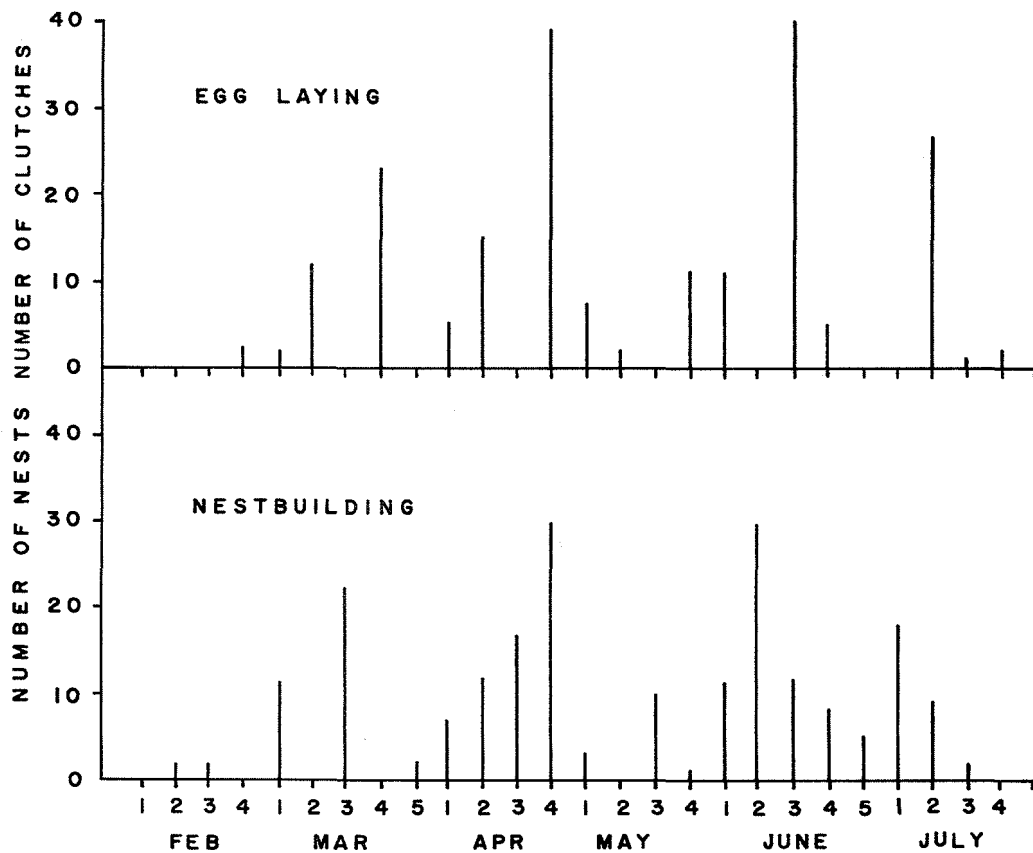


Figure 1. Timing of nest building and egg laying by House Sparrows at Mississippi State, 1974.

in Great Britain. In spite of differences in location and latitude, there are amazing similarities in the 4 data sets.

I wish to thank Dr. Jerome A. Jackson who encouraged the writing of this manuscript and Kenneth Bicker, Robert Kirkland, Gordon McWilliams, and Robert Stewart for their valuable assistance in data collection.

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#### Some Bird Lore Collected in Mississippi

Beulah M. D'Olive Price  
P.O. Box 7  
Corinth, Mississippi 38834

Bird lore, like general folklore, transcends geographical boundaries. Thus it is that there may be many similarities to such lore as found in Mississippi with that found in other localities.

The folklore pertaining to birds which is used here was collected for the most part in Alcorn County, one of the hill counties in northeast Mississippi. Some of it, however, is from Decatur and Hattiesburg. My informants for this article were Ovid Vickers, Decatur; Mrs. R. T. Davis, Hattiesburg; Mrs. Troy Norvell, Alcorn county; Mrs. Alfred Crum, Alcorn County. My own contributions will be designated by P. I live at Corinth, Alcorn County. The informants will be designated by the first letter of their surnames.

The superstition heard most often pertained to owls. Puckett (1926, *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro*. Univ. N. Carolina Press, Chapel Hill)

stated that in Europe and Africa the hooting of an owl near a house is indicative of the death of one of the inmates. He suggested that this almost universal superstition is "doubtless due to the nocturnal habits of the bird and his half-human cry, and possibly represents a remnant of the belief of the Middle Ages that such birds were evil spirits coming to devour the souls of the dying".

Several informants stated that a Screech Owl's cry is a sign of death (V,N,D). A Screech Owl can be made to be quiet by tying a knot in the shirttail or by putting a hat on backwards (V). Turning a shoe bottomsides up is another way of quieting a Screech Owl (N).

Other superstitions concerning birds as omens of death or bad luck: A white bird in a black flock is a sure sign of death (V); a bird in the house is a sign of death or bad luck (P); a bird fluttering against the windowpane is a sign of bad luck (P).

Beliefs concerning birds and the weather of the seasons: When seagulls fly out early and far to the seaward, moderate wind and fair weather may be expected (N); when blackbirds are shrill early in the morning, rain will follow (N); birds flocking for food in early afternoon means bad weather is coming (N); White-throats may come three or four weeks early but when they sing loud winter is here (N).

Folk observations concerning the distress noises of birds: When different birds raise their voices in distress usually a snake is nearby (N); birds make a different noise if the snake is a poisonous one (N); jaybirds make a racket when a snake is near (C).

Birds as farmers' friends: When you hear the first Whip-poor-will it is time to plant cotton (V); when you hear the first dove, it is time to plant corn (C).

Beliefs about crows: When you see very disturbed crows, their leader has died (N); they have a ceremony for picking a new leader (N). The leader of the crows serves as a guard when the flock is feeding; he will chase a hawk (N).

Folk observations about geese: On the sixth of January the geese would marry (C); later the gander would stand guard over the nest (C).

Courtship of Mockingbirds: The cock and hen face each other then take two steps back; each one will go two steps to the right, then two steps to the left, two steps to meet and repeat the sequence many times (N).

Courtship of pigeons: The cock and hen face each other, then step forward and touch beaks; then back a few steps; again forward and touch beaks. This sequence is repeated many times (P).

This counting out rhyme used in children's games mentions birds: "Wire brier limberlock, three geese in a flock (V) (one flew east, one flew west, one flew over the cuckoo's nest...)" (P) The rhyme usually

ended with the words "O-U-T spells out, you old dirty dishrag you". The child pointed to by the leader when saying "you" had to be "it" (P).

A folk remedy for croup: This was made by boiling the fat from a Pileated Woodpecker. This was given by mouth (N).

A superstition about birds and human diseases: There is a belief that birds will leave an infected area during an epidemic. This was noted in a Corinth newspaper during a yellow fever scare in the state. A large flock of "speckled" hawks in migration had been sighted over the town (P).

Perhaps this brief collection of folklore pertaining to birds in Mississippi will encourage others to collect such lore. One may even come across a superstition or belief that is unique for this state.

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#### First Nesting Record of Gray Kingbirds in Mississippi

Wayne C. Weber and Jerome A. Jackson  
Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University  
Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762

From 20 to 24 May 1976, Wayne C. Weber observed a pair of Gray Kingbirds (Tyrannus dominicensis) at the National Park Service ranger station on Horn Island, Jackson County, Mississippi, within the Mississippi section of Gulf Islands National Seashore. The birds appeared to be occupying a territory, and were seen at various times to pursue Eastern Kingbirds (Tyrannus tyrannus), Fish Crows (Corvus ossifragus), and Mockingbirds (Mimus polyglottos); however, no nest could be found at that time. The nest, a flimsy structure built on a slash pine (Pinus elliottii) limb about 18 feet from the ground and 4 feet from the trunk, was finally located about 6 June by Mike Batton of the Park Services staff. The birds were observed about the nest on numerous occasions during June by Batton and by park ranger Robert McDonald, but the nest contents could not be determined.

On 28 June, Weber, Jackson, and Richard Rummel visited the locality and discovered young in the top of a slash pine near the nest tree (Fig. 1). These were fed several times by both parents. To our knowledge, this is the first confirmed nesting of Gray Kingbirds in Mississippi.

We know of only three previously published records of Gray Kingbirds in the state, all of single birds. The first was one collected by Sterling G. Clawson and Lovett E. Williams (MOS Newsletter 7(3):12, 1962)



Fig. 1. Newly-fledged Gray Kingbirds in slash pine near Horn Island ranger station. Photograph by J. A. Jackson, 28 June 1976.

on 28 April 1962 at Bellefontaine Beach, on the mainland coast directly north of Horn Island; this bird is now in the collection of the Mississippi Museum of Natural Sciences in Jackson. On 23 May 1963, Henry D. Haberyan (MOS Newsletter 8(3):13-15, 1963) saw one on Horn Island; and a third bird was seen at Bellefontaine Beach on 21 July 1963 by Dr. and Mrs. Bedford Floyd (MOS Newsletter 9(1):2, 1964).

In addition, Donald M. Bradburn of New Orleans, who has visited Horn Island several times a year for many years, has numerous unpublished sightings of Gray Kingbirds. Bradburn first recorded Gray Kingbirds on 15 August 1964, when he photographed them near the chimney area on Horn Island, about 3 miles west of the ranger station. He states that several pairs were present on the island each year until 1969. On 17 and 18 August 1969, Horn Island was devastated by Hurricane Camille, with winds up to 200 mph. After Camille, Gray Kingbirds were apparently absent until 1974, when Bradburn recorded one on 20 July. Since then, only the pair in the vicinity of the ranger station has been observed. Despite this Weber noted in 1976 that Mockingbirds in the "chimney" area frequently imitated Gray Kingbirds in their songs, although the nearest kingbirds were 3 miles away. This could indicate either movement by Mockingbirds, or the former residence and possibly nesting of Gray Kingbirds in the "chimney" area.

Bradburn also has one Gray Kingbird sighting from Petit Bois Island, just east of Horn Island. He saw a single bird there on 13 July 1974.

James D. Lazell, Jr., of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, reported seeing a Gray Kingbird at the Horn Island ranger station on 22 February 1976. If correct, this record is quite extraordinary, even though there are a few winter records in southern Florida (e.g. *American Birds* 29:682, 1975, and 30:359, 1976). Imhof (*Alabama Birds*, 2nd ed., Univ. of Alabama Press, University, Ala., 1976) cites extreme dates for Alabama of 11 April and 30 October, and late April is probably the normal arrival date.

The habitat occupied by Gray Kingbirds in Mississippi is open slash pine forest close to salt water. Although the species in Florida appears to prefer mangroves and live oaks for nesting habitat (Bent, *Life histories of North American flycatchers, larks, swallows, and their allies*, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 179, 1942), slash pines are almost the only trees available on Horn Island.

Gray Kingbirds appear to have undergone a slow westward range expansion along the northern Gulf Coast in recent years. Although the species has nested for several decades at Pensacola, Florida (Bent, *op. cit.*), it was first recorded in Alabama only in 1950, at Fort Morgan (Imhof, *op. cit.*). The westernmost previously-known nesting locality is Dauphin Island, Alabama, about 30 miles east of Horn Island. Numbers seem to be increasing in Alabama; a record count of 30 was made on Dauphin Island in August 1975 (*American Birds* 30:85, 1976). In Louisiana, only four definite records of occurrence are known (Lowery, *Louisiana Birds*, 3rd ed., Louisiana State Univ. Press, Baton Rouge, La., 1974). Although the reasons for this range expansion are unknown, observers should be alert for possible future nestings of Gray Kingbirds even farther west in coastal Mississippi or Louisiana.

We wish to thank Donald M. Bradburn and James D. Lazell, Jr., for giving us details of their Gray Kingbird sightings. The personnel of Gulf Islands National Seashore and of the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory in Ocean Springs were very helpful in providing transportation to and from Horn Island and in other ways. Weber's work on the island was partially supported by a grant from the Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund of the American Museum of Natural History.

Red-tailed Hawk Wintering on the Beach at Gulfport

Judy Toups

4 Hartford Place  
Gulfport, Mississippi 39501

From early January through late February 1977, an immature Red-tailed Hawk (Buteo jamaicensis) resided along the beach at Gulfport, Harrison County, Mississippi. While many Red-tails winter in the area, this one was unusual because of his residence along the beach within the city limits of Gulfport and very near busy Highway 90. He consistently perched on a piling which was about 15 feet above the mud at low tide and was about 20 feet out in the Gulf of Mexico at high tide (Fig. 1). The piling on which the hawk perched was adjacent to a restaurant and many rats have been seen in the area. Perhaps the Red-tail was taking advantage of this food supply. An immature Red-tail also occasionally used a crane at a construction site on the beach as a perch from which to hunt. Residents of the area reported that two hawks had been seen in the area.

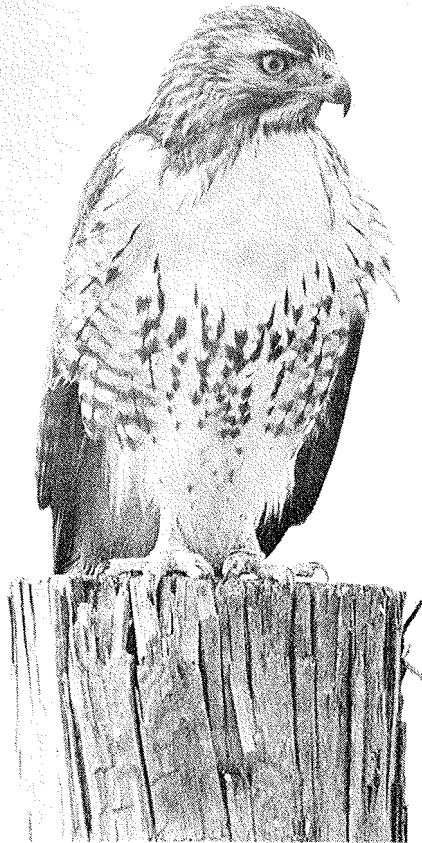


Figure 1. An immature Red-tailed Hawk perched on a piling on the beach at Gulfport. (Photo by Vernon Matthews)

The Red-cockaded Woodpecker in North Mississippi

Jerome A. Jackson, Patricia Ramey, and Bette J. Schardien

Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University  
Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762

Aside from old sightings in Tishomingo County (Allison 1907) there have been no reported colonies of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in north Mississippi. There are, however, more recent records of the species in eastern Tennessee (Calhoun 1941; Coffey 1963). In May 1975 J. Jackson received a report from Charles Hagen and Frank Troskey of Weyerhaeuser Company of a possible Red-cockaded Woodpecker colony on the Holly Springs National Forest in Lafayette County. That portion of the forest including the possible colony was being marked for a timber sale at the time, hence the colony's discovery. Jackson notified the endangered species office and the U.S. Forest Service of the possible colony and its importance and, in June 1975 he and David Werschkul searched the area but located neither a colony nor the birds. In a second attempt to locate the colony, we visited the area on 25 September 1976. Considerable timber harvesting had taken place in the area, but we were successful in locating a colony

(Fig. 1) and at least three Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at the east edge of Township 7 S, Range 2 W.



Two to three acres surrounding two cavity trees had been marked for cutting but, after discovery of the colony by Forest Service personnel had been removed from the timber sale. A search of the cutover area revealed two additional cavity trees. One was adjacent to a logging road and had been damaged during the logging operation (Fig. 2). Now that it has been isolated by the timber harvest, it is highly susceptible to wind damage. The second cavity tree found in the harvest area had already snapped off at the cavity (Fig. 3).

Figure 1. Active Red-cockaded Woodpecker cavity in a shortleaf pine, Lafayette Co., Ms., 26 Sept. 1976. Note the whitened surface of the tree trunk caused by an excessive accumulation of dried pine gum which had flowed from the birds' resin wells around the cavity.



All of the cavity trees were shortleaf pine (*Pinus echinata*). In the undisturbed area there was a thick understory of dogwood (*Cornus florida*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), French mulberry (*Callicarpa americana*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), southern red oak (*Quercus rubra*), winged elm (*Ulmus alata*), sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), and shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*). In our opinion the understory was nearly to the point of causing abandonment of the colony by the birds and was in need of management. Hardwoods were approaching the height of the Red-cockaded cavity (11 m) and the hardwood canopy was so complete that it was difficult to get a good view of the active cavity (Fig. 1).



Figure 2. A Red-cockaded Woodpecker cavity start in a shortleaf pine southwest of the active cavity trees.

Ramey visited the colony area again on 25 October and 25 November 1976 and on 22 January 1977. On each occasion at least one Red-cockaded Woodpecker was observed in the vicinity of the cavity trees. Ramey visited the site again on 10 April 1977 and was unable to locate the birds although the appearance of the cavity trees still suggests the colony is active. Another abandoned cavity tree was discovered south of the main colony site and much of the area around the protected site had been cleared.



Figure 3. A former Red-cockaded Woodpecker cavity tree snapped off at the cavity by wind. This often happens to cavity trees that are left when the forest around them is cut.

The U.S. Forest Service was informed of the probable existence of the colony in May 1975 but traded the land the colony is located on to Dunlap and Kyle Realty Company of Batesville, Mississippi, on 7 October 1975.

In a letter of 4 October 1976, District Ranger Roy J. Smith indicated that Dunlap and Kyle Realty Company was informed of the presence and importance of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker colony and that Mr. R. H. Dunlap, company president, indicated that no more timber would be removed from the main colony site. We appreciate the consideration of Dunlap and Kyle Realty Company and hope that they will be able to assure management of the colony area in a manner consistent with the continued existence of the birds.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Southeastern Forest Experiment Station, Clemson, South Carolina.

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A Black-headed Grosbeak in Attala County, Mississippi

James A. Sanders

Piney Woods Farm, Rt. 4, Box 74-C-2  
Kosciusko, Mississippi 39090

There is no need for any word description of the Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*), the subject of this report, for the excellent photograph of this bird taken by Ray Weeks and appearing below speaks for itself.



This individual, a male, first appeared here at Piney Woods Farm (Attala Co., Mississippi) on 10 January 1977 and was last seen here on 8 February 1977. The bird was apparently attracted to the chopped yellow corn that I had tossed onto the roof of a small outbuilding. Here the grosbeak joined Cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) and various native sparrows in eating this corn. I would sometimes have sunflower seeds mixed with the chopped corn, but I never noticed the grosbeak eating anything but the corn. He would sometimes also fly to the ground and eat corn that I had sprinkled there for my chickens.

For the first 10 days or so after his arrival here he was seen often and regularly about these acres, but after this he appeared less frequently. The bird behaved as a rather typical grosbeak, being tame and proceeding with his feeding in a slow, deliberate manner. Often, after feeding, he

would sit quietly in some nearby tree.

The other birds here showed him no special notice, nor did he exhibit any discernible reaction to them. They mingled together while feeding.

We do have a few previous records of the Black-headed Grosbeak in Mississippi, but to my knowledge this is the only photograph taken of the species in our state.

The Black-headed Grosbeak is a western species, normally ranging from the eastern foothills of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific and from British Columbia to Saskatchewan and south to Mexico. The species winters mainly in Mexico.

The occurrence of this Black-headed Grosbeak this far east at this season of the year is unusual; some of us suspect that its arrival here was aided by the extremely strong and persistently prevailing westerlies, unusual for our latitude, that we have experienced all winter.

#### Reviews

A Guide to Bird Finding East of the Mississippi, Second Edition. By Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. Oxford University Press, New York, New York, 1977: 689 pp., black-and-white drawings by George Miksch Sutton. \$15.95 (hardcover).

As a young bird-watcher, aside from my field guide, there was one book which made my hobby more pleasurable and which always had the answer when I visited a new area and wanted to find new birds. That book was "A Guide to Bird Finding East of the Mississippi", which had been published in 1951. I never ceased to be amazed at the accuracy with which Pettingill's directions would lead me to the bird I sought - and I was using the book in the 1960's, over ten years after it had been written. Now the guide has been revised and brought up to date. As with the first edition, "A Guide to Bird Finding" is a series of chapters organized by state and arranged alphabetically. The section on each state first describes the physiographic regions of the state and the kinds of birds to be found in each. Often there is a brief comment on the state of ornithological knowledge of the area. The general comments are followed by several guides to specific, good birding sites within the state. These site guides tell you what can be found where and when it will be there. Directions for getting to a particular place are very easy to follow. Sewall credits the accuracy and clarity of these directions to his "pilot" and wife, Eleanor. Doc Sutton's line drawings add a fine touch to the book. I was particularly pleased to find his Red-cockaded Woodpecker drawing on the page for Starkville, Mississippi. Bird-finders in Mississippi will find the 17 page chapter on our state to be very useful. Site guides are included for Biloxi (and the Gulf Islands), Clarksdale (Moon Lake), Greenville (Lake Washington, Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge), Gulfport (Harrison Experimental Forest), Iuka (Tishomingo State Park), Jackson

(Ross Barnett Reservoir), Rosedale (Legion Lake, Lake Bolivar, Lake Concordia), and Starkville (Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge).

Without a doubt, if you're interested in bird-watching, you'll want a copy of this book to pack along with you wherever you go!--J. A. Jackson, Box Z, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

Alabama Birds, Second Edition. By Thomas A. Imhof. The University of Alabama Press, University, Alabama, 1976: 445 pp., numerous paintings, drawings, black-and-white and color photographs. \$22.50 (hardcover).

The first edition of Alabama Birds was, in my opinion, one of the best, most useful state bird books. The second edition maintains that status. It contains more recent bird records and some interesting analyses of range expansion (e.g., Barn Swallows) and Christmas Bird Counts (e.g., waterfowl) populations have been declining in the Birmingham area). The systematic arrangement of birds includes a brief description of each species, its nesting, food, distribution, and status in Alabama. Maps showing seasonal distribution in the state are very helpful. In addition to the fine artwork by Richard A. Parks and David C. Hulse which appeared in the first edition, this edition has 24 small, color photographs and several new black-and-white photographs by a number of individuals. These add interest to the book and will no doubt stimulate more interest in Alabama birds because Imhof has "allowed" so many people to contribute to the book's production. The second edition is nearly 150 pages shorter than the first. Much of the reduced length is probably due to the smaller margins and generally more "crowded" pages. These and the thin paper on which the book was printed, resulting in some annoying "bleed through" from one page to the next, detract from what is otherwise a very scholarly, very useable, and very important contribution to American ornithology. Without a state bird book of our own, Mississippians will find Alabama Birds to be an excellent reference.--J. A. Jackson, Box Z, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

Another Penguin Summer. By Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, New York, 1975: 80 pp., numerous black-and-white and color photographs. \$10.00 (hardcover).

Sewall Pettingill doesn't need to be introduced to most of us. We've seen his wildlife films and used his books and know that he is a master at wildlife photography and popular writing. This book is another enjoyable "Pettingill production". From it you will learn about the unusual social behavior and everyday lives of five species of penguins that can be found on the Falkland Islands. Following a 32 page narrative there are 48 pages

of photographs which depict penguins in all their splendor. While penguins are mostly black-and-white, variation in color and pattern on the head and chest distinguish the various species. Pettingill has captured in words and photographs the efforts of penguins migrating across land from the sea to their nesting grounds, their courtship, struggles in building and protecting their nest, the long incubation period, and caring for chicks. This is a book that can be appreciated by young and old. I thoroughly enjoyed it and I can hardly wait to see the lecture film by the same title that the Pettingills made on the trip to the Falklands.--J. A. Jackson, Box Z, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

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For The Love of An Eagle. By Jeanne Cowden. David McKay Company, Inc. New York, 1976: 165 pp., 16 pages of color pictures, 4 pages black-and-white photographs. \$9.95.

This book deals with the observations and filming of a family of Black Eagles in South Africa. During this time the eagles were successful in fledging one eaglet each year. It is difficult to determine if the behavior described was actual or a figment of the imagination since the author often writes of the eagles as if they were human. The book does make interesting reading if you like stories about eagles. Part of this book was published in the National Geographic Magazine in 1969.--Ray E. Weeks, Huntington House, Apt. 5, Kosciusko, MS 39090.

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Rocky Mountain Wildlife. By Don Blood, Tom W. Hall, and Susan Im Baumgarten. Hancock House Publishers, Seattle, Washington, 1976: 132 pp., numerous black-and-white and color photographs, line drawings, and maps. \$???? (hardcover).

This is an excellent popular account of the natural history of many of the birds and mammals of the Rocky Mountains from British Columbia and Alberta to southern Colorado. Most pages have several well-reproduced photographs, many in color. The first 30 pages of the book are an introduction to Rocky Mountain ecology and include discussion of the various plant and animal communities and how they are affected by climate, topography, and one another. Approximately the next 100 pages are devoted to the natural history of mountain mammals. A mere 36 pages are devoted to birds. The bird section is generally well done, but incomplete - at least I would have preferred more. The final section of the book is a series of vignettes giving field guide type information for nearly fifty species of Rocky Mountain mammals. This is not a field guide, but would be a handy reference. It is a fine "coffee table" book - one that can be spontaneously opened to any page and enjoyed.--J. A. Jackson, Box Z, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

Birds of Utah. By C. Lynn Hayward, Clarence Cottam, Angus M. Woodbury, and Herbert H. Frost. Great Basins Naturalist Memoirs, Number 1, 1976: 229 pp., photographs, maps, paper cover. \$10.00 (Obtainable from Brigham Young University Press, Marketing Department, 204 UPS, Provo, Utah 84602.)

Though of obvious value to our western friends, this publication should be of interest to most birders from professional to weekender. The text is well written (illustrated with 65 photos) and is divided into two sections. First the introduction provides the reader with a history of ornithology in Utah, topographical and climatic data, and a discussion of the diversity of avian habitats in the state. I found a summary of past conservation efforts of interest, though ironically, because of their absence. Apparently as late as 1930 the Utah Fish and Game Department was furnishing ammunition for slaughter of native pelicans and other fish-eating birds (one trapper interviewed in 1937 estimated that 10,000 herons were taken for bounty). The remainder of the text forms the heart of the book and is a species by species account of Utah birds. For each species the status, habitat preferences, historical distribution, and subspecies classification are given. For the M.O.S. traveler this book would be a worthwhile investment as a guide to Utah's birds though for those without the opportunity to travel the book would be of less value.--Dave Werschkul, Box Z, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

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The Sequence of Plumages and Moults of the Passerine Birds of New York. By Jonathan Dwight, Jr. New York Academy of Sciences, New York, New York, 1975: 360 pp + index, 7 black-and-white plates, \$8.00 (softcover).

This is a reprint of a classic and still very useful work that was published as Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Vol. XIII, No. 2, in 1900. Basically it is a compilation of detailed descriptions of the age and seasonal variation in the plumages of eastern songbirds. An introduction by Kenneth Parkes suggests a few of the ways in which our knowledge of plumages and molts has advanced in the 75 years since publication of Dwight's work, but it also emphasizes the lack of anything better in the way of a summary of this important area of avian biology. A new index by Katherine Gillam Price brings bird names up to date and greatly facilitates use of the book. This is a volume that belongs on every birdbander's shelf. It is an important reference work that will be useful to anyone having the need to correctly age and sex birds.--J. A. Jackson, Box Z, Mississippi State, MS 39762.



A Guide to Eastern Hawk Watching. By Donald S. Heintzelman, Keystone Books, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania, 1976: 99 pp., several black-and-white photographs, drawings, and maps. \$5.95 (paper bound), \$8.95 (cloth bound).

This small guide for "hawk-watchers" includes brief descriptions of the diurnal birds of prey found in the eastern United States, photographs and or drawings of each in flight, description of equipment needed for hawk-watching, a brief discussion of migration and the weather conditions favoring hawk movements, and thorough descriptions of the best places to go to find hawks. The book is organized in such a way that it is a useful and handy reference. I appreciate the careful directions given for reaching each of the good hawk-watching sites. Some of the photographs were distinctly lacking in quality, but then what we often see is a blurred bird sailing past - so perhaps the photos are realistic. If you enjoy birds of prey, you'll enjoy this book.--J. A. Jackson, Box Z, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

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Birds: Their Life. Their Ways. Their World. By Christopher Perrins. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Times Mirror, New York, New York, 1976: 160 pp., numerous colored illustrations by Ad Cameron. \$19.85 (hardcover).

Here is a well-written, beautifully and profusely illustrated book on bird biology. The nine chapters in the book discuss the following general subjects: evolution, feeding, habitats, social behavior, breeding, migration, bird populations, and bird study. The illustrations in the book are not just pictures of birds, but are pictures of birds doing something - each has a special story to tell. For example, on pages 72 and 73 there is a series of paintings depicting the excavation of a nest cavity by a woodpecker and the successive use of the cavity by five other species as the cavity begins to deteriorate. Most of the illustrations are of European birds, though many of our birds are figured and discussed in the text. Because of the illustrations and the clarity of the text I think this would make a fine text for an introductory ornithology course, though it is not really organized as a text book and it does not include a bibliography or a glossary. This is a book that anyone interested in birds would enjoy and learn from.--J. A. Jackson, Box Z, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

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Summary of Mississippi Christmas Bird Counts, 1976-77

Compiled by Wayne C. Weber

Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University  
Mississippi State, MS 39762

In the last issue of the Mississippi Kite, a request for compilers of Christmas Bird Counts (CBC's) to send us their results was tucked inside the Note to Contributors in the Birds Around the State section. Considering that this is our first attempt at this summary, the response was encouraging; at press time we had heard from compilers of all established CBC's in the state except Natchez. Ben Coffey writes us that the Moon Lake CBC was cancelled because of poor weather. However, at least 8 CBC's were carried out last winter; one was new and 5 of the other 7 posted record highs in number of species.

We will not include complete results of CBC's here; these are published in the July (formerly the April) issue of American Birds, which usually appears about September. However, we hope this summary will be of interest to MOS members who do not receive American Birds, or who tire of waiting until September to see results from other counts in the state.

The information is incomplete for this year's summary, because some compilers did not keep copies of their complete results. In future, we request all compilers to send us a complete photocopy of the form they send to American Birds, including field descriptions of any unusual bird species reported. Such descriptions are required for acceptance by American Birds, but most compilers did not send them to us. We decided to include all unusual birds reported in this summary, without "editing", but it should be understood that adequate field notes for some species (e.g. the Green-tailed Towhee on the Jackson Co. CBC, which would be new for the state) are necessary before the record can be considered fully acceptable.

Table 1. Data for Mississippi Christmas Bird Counts, 1976-77

Count	Date	Species	Indiv.	Observers	Parties
Sardis L.	22 Dec.	87	27,495	9	5
Grenada	27 Dec.	74	6,217	2	2
Noxubee NWR	18 Dec.	91	13,935	13	6
Washington Co. S.	2 Jan.	81	558,390	25	NR
Jackson	1 Jan.	101	66,008	13	5
Hattiesburg	31 Dec.	100	13,732	NR	NR
Hancock Co.	29 Dec.	140	6,781	16	6
Jackson Co.	18 Dec.	145	NR	NR	NR

NR = not reported

Table 1 includes important data for each CBC (date, number of species, total number of individuals, number of observers, number of parties). Other information (hours afield, weather, party-hours, and party-miles, and highlights of the more interesting observations) are given in a separate paragraph for each count.

Our sincere thanks go to all CBC compilers and observers, and with your help, we hope to produce an even better summary next year.

Sardis Lake (W. Marvin Davis, compiler) - Dec. 22; 06:40 to 17:15. Partly cloudy all day; temp. 15° to 38°; wind SW, 5-15 mph. Reservoir quite low, little ice. Total party-hours, 39 (18 on foot, 21 by car); total party-miles, 167 (16 on foot, 151 by car).

On this count, first held in 1975, 87 species were recorded by 9 observers this year, compared with 79 by 1 observer last year. Highlights included an Eared Grebe, a Surf Scoter, and 3 Black Scoters (scoters present since early Nov.; distant but recognizable photos obtained - Marvin Davis). Other good birds were a Bewick's Wren, an Orange-crowned Warbler, and an impressive 7 Le Conte's Sparrows.

Grenada (W. Marvin Davis, compiler) - Dec. 27; 06:15 to 17:15. Mostly clear A.M., partly cloudy P.M.; temp. 31° to 63°; wind WNW, 15-25 mph. Reservoir quite low. Total party-hours, 20 (15 on foot, 5 by car); total party-miles, 133 (13 on foot, 120 by car).

No very unusual species seen; however, Common Goldeneye (7) was new to the count, and a Le Conte's Sparrow on the count and Orange-crowned Warbler in count week are worth noting.

Noxubee NWR (Jerome A. Jackson, compiler) - Dec. 18; 06:00 to 18:00. Clear all day; temp. 40° to 67°; wind variable, 0-2 mph. Total party-hours, 41.5 (25 on foot, 13.8 by car, 2.7 by aircraft); total party-miles, 138.5 plus (17.5 on foot, 121 by car, undetermined by aircraft).

This year's 91 species was the highest since this count was started in 1970. Four species were new to the count: Golden Eagle (1 imm.), Least Sandpiper (2), Bonaparte's Gull (1), and Solitary Vireo (1). Two other species, Le Conte's Sparrow (2) and White-crowned Sparrow (8), were seen for only the second time in 7 years. A White-fronted Goose and an imm. Whistling Swan were also seen during count week.

Washington Co., south (G. Edward Alexander, Jr., compiler) - Jan. 2; dawn to dusk. Cloudy all day, with intermittent rain and sleet; temp. about 24°; wind N, 15 mph. Total party-hours and party-miles not reported.

Although foul weather cut the species total to 81, Washington Co. had quantity if not quality. The total of 558,390 birds was nearly 4 times the combined total of the other 7 counts! This must have been one of few counts in the U.S. to list 4 species each numbering over 100,000 (Mallard, 118,478; Starling, 102,093; Red-winged Blackbird, 178,438; Common Grackle, 145,393). The Mallard count was 10 times last year's; other high waterfowl

counts were 2252 American Wigeon (112 last year) and 1600 Canvasbacks (5 last year). Unusual species included 11 White-fronted Geese, a House Wren, and 4 Pine Warblers (rare in the Delta).

Jackson (William Turcotte, compiler) - Jan. 1; 04:30 to 17:30. Mostly clear A.M., partly cloudy P.M.; temp. 17° to 36°; wind NW, 5-10 mph; fresh water partly frozen. Total party-hours, 54 (38 on foot, 16 by car); total party-miles, 271 (26 on foot, 245 by car).

Jackson posted a record high of 101 species this year - barely edging out Hattiesburg's 100 for the highest-ever inland CBC in the state. Jackson observers logged an Oldsquaw, 12 (!) Bald Eagles, an Osprey, a King Rail, and 2 Lincoln's Sparrows. High counts of commoner species included 348 Canvasbacks, 2075 Ruddy Ducks, an impressive 19 Barred Owls, 13 Orange-crowned Warblers (down from 21 last year, but still high), and 72 Pine Warblers.

Hattiesburg (Larry Gates, compiler) - Dec. 31. No details on weather, coverage, or number of observers.

The gem of Hattiesburg's list of 100 species was a male Vermilion Flycatcher, found at Johnson State Park by Cile Waite, Jean Freeman, and Nell Powers. (A scurrilous rumor is circulating that this bird was kidnapped from Washington Co., which had 3 Vermilions on Dec. 26, but could not find one on their count Jan. 2!) Several unusual species, including Eared Grebe (3), Blue-winged Teal (1), and Spotted Sandpiper (2), have been seen often enough in winter at Hattiesburg that they should probably be considered regular. Other Hattiesburg goodies were a Peregrine Falcon, a Franklin's Gull, 2 Ground Doves, 2 Bewick's Wrens, a Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, and 2 Grasshopper Sparrows.

Hancock Co. (Judith Toups, compiler) - Dec. 29; 05:30 to 18:30. Clear, temp. about 40° to 70°. Total party-hours and party-miles not reported.

Congratulations are due the Hancock Co. group who found 140 species on their first count, highest count for the state except for the 145 species seen in Jackson Co. 11 days earlier. This high count was made despite missing several expected species (e.g., Semipalmated Plover, Least Sandpiper, dowitchers, Black Skimmer, Brewer's Blackbird). Best birds were probably a Magnolia Warbler (Larry Gates) and a Lincoln's Sparrow (Judith Toups); other highlights were an Osprey, 2 Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, 2 White-breasted Nuthatches, and a whopping 1462 Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warblers.

Jackson Co. (Larry Gates, compiler) - Dec. 18. No details on weather, coverage, or number of observers.

The total of 145 species, up 12 from last year, is a record for Mississippi, and not far from Alabama's high of 156 species on Dauphin I. in 1965. However, it could have been 147; a pond which had Redheads and Ring-necked Ducks the day before was visited on count day by a motorcyclist who frightened off all the ducks before observers could get there!

The count highlight was a Green-tailed Towhee reported from Bellefontaine Point by John Izral and Steve Peterson; as this species would be new for the state, we hope adequate details were recorded. Three unusual warblers were reported: Prothonotary (John Steen party), Yellow (Warren Garrott) and Magnolia (Cile Waite, Jean Freeman). Other noteworthy species were Anhinga, Osprey, Pectoral Sandpiper, American Avocet, Rough-winged and Barn Swallows, and a Dickcissel. Larry Gates also reported a Sprague's Pipit during count week.

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Birds Around the State - Winter 1976-77

Compiled by Jerome A. Jackson and Wayne C. Weber

The following is a summary of noteworthy bird sightings in Mississippi (and some in immediately adjacent areas) by MOS members and friends for the period 1 December 1976 to 28 February 1977. These sightings include records of unusual species in the state, unusual numbers, and arrival and departure dates. A key to observers' names follows the list. Nearly all localities mentioned have been previously identified in the Mississippi Kite (6(1):19 and 6(2):54).

Note - The following abbreviations are used below: m = male; f = female; imm = immature; CBC = Christmas Bird Count.

- EARED GREBE -- 1, 22 Dec., Sardis L. CBC, WMD; 3, 31 Dec., Hattiesburg sewage ponds (Hattiesburg CBC), LG, JI.
- DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT -- 1, 18 Dec., Noxubee CBC, JAJ (lowest CBC count ever; no more than 1 seen at any time during winter).
- ANHINGA -- 1, 18 Dec., Jackson Co. CBC, LG.
- WHISTLING SWAN -- 1 imm., about 16 Dec. - 22 Jan., Noxubee NWR JAJ, JAS.
- CANADA GOOSE -- 1200, first half of Feb., Noxubee NWR, JAJ; 600, 27 Feb., Yazoo NWR, GEA & GA.
- WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE -- 1, 19 Dec., Noxubee NWR, WCW; 11, 2 Jan., Yazoo NWR (Washington Co. CBC).
- MALLARD -- 118,478, 2 Jan., Washington Co. CBC (nearly all on Yazoo NWR).
- BLACK DUCK -- 63, 22 Dec., Sardis L. CBC; 50 plus, 21 Jan., Oktibbeha Co. L., WCW; 50, 23 Jan., Sardis L., WMD, BBC & LC, WCW et al.
- MOTTLED DUCK -- 2, 29 Dec., Hancock Co. CBC.
- BLUE-WINGED TEAL -- 1, 31 Dec., Hattiesburg sewage ponds (Hattiesburg CBC), LG, JI; 2, 27 Feb. (early migrants?), 10 mi. s. of Greenville, GEA & GA.
- AMERICAN WIGEON -- 2252, 2 Jan., Washington Co. CBC.
- CANVASBACK -- 348, 1 Jan., Jackson CBC; 1600 (in one raft), 2 Jan., L. Washington (Washington Co. CBC); 150, 22 Jan., Noxubee NWR, WCW; 400, 23 Jan., Sardis L., WMD, BBC & LC, WCW et al.
- COMMON GOLDENEYE -- 7, 27 Dec., Grenada CBC (new to count); 18 (10 m, 8 f), 23 Jan., Sardis L., WMD, BBC & LC, WCW et al.

- BUFFLEHEAD -- 54, 18 Dec., Noxubee CBC, JAJ, WCW et al.  
 OLDSQUAW -- 1, 1 Jan., Jackson CBC; 4, 30 Jan., Biloxi, WCW.  
 SURF SCOTER -- 1 f, early Nov. to 22 Dec., Sardis L., WMD (recognizable photos obtained).  
 BLACK SCOTER -- 3 f, early Nov. to 22 Dec., Sardis L., WMD (recognizable photos obtained).  
 RUDDY DUCK -- 2075, 1 Jan., Jackson CBC.  
 HOODED MERGANSER -- 61, 19 Dec., Noxubee NWR, WCW; 190, 22 Dec., Sardis L. CBC; 150, 23 Jan., Sardis L., WMD, BBC & LC, WCW et al.  
 COMMON MERGANSER -- 5, (4 m, 1 f), 21 Jan., Oktibbeha Co. L., WCW; 6, (3 m, 3 f), 23 Jan., Sardis L., WCW.  
 RED-BREASTED MERGANSER -- 1, 31 Dec., Hattiesburg CBC; 1, 1 Jan., Jackson CBC.  
 ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK -- 1 (light phase), 15 Jan., Sardis L. State Waterfowl Refuge, WMD.  
 GOLDEN EAGLE -- 1 imm., 18 Dec. to 29 Jan., Noxubee NWR, JAJ, JAS, WC, MC et al.  
 BALD EAGLE -- 1 imm., late Nov. - 29 Jan., Noxubee NWR, JAJ, WC, MC, et al.; 12, 1 Jan., Jackson CBC; 1 imm., 12 Jan., Kyle St. Park (Sardis L., WMD).  
 OSPREY -- 1, 18 Dec., Jackson Co. CBC, LG, WG; 1, 29 Dec., Hancock Co. CBC; 1, 1 Jan., Jackson CBC.  
 PEREGRINE FALCON -- 1, 31 Dec., Hattiesburg CBC, OL.  
 WILD TURKEY -- 54 (one flock), 2 Jan., Yazoo NWR (Washington Co. CBC) JW; Flocks of up to 35, Feb., Archer I., Ark., NH.  
 SANDHILL CRANE -- (Number?), 18 Dec., Jackson Co. CBC, LG, WG.  
 KING RAIL -- 1, 1 Jan., Jackson CBC.  
 VIRGINIA RAIL -- 2, 31 Dec., Hattiesburg CBC, LG, JI.  
 SNOWY PLOVER -- 2, 31 Dec., Hancock Co. CBC.  
 AMERICAN WOODCOCK -- 1, 11 Feb. (first heard displaying), Starkville, JAJ.  
 SPOTTED SANDPIPER -- 1, 28-29 Dec., Archer I., Ark., NH; 2, 31 Dec., Hattiesburg CBC, LG, JI.  
 GREATER YELLOWLEGS -- 10, 1 Dec., 10 mi. s. of Greenville, GEA & GA; 2, 4 Dec., 10 mi. s. of Greenville, GEA & GA; 2, 26 Dec., L. Jackson (Washington Co.), GEA & GA.  
 PECTORAL SANDPIPER -- (Number?) 18 Dec., Jackson Co. CBC, JT.  
 LEAST SANDPIPER -- 150, 1 Dec. to 28 Dec., 10 mi. s. of Greenville, GEA & GA; 2, 18 Dec., Noxubee CBC, WCW (new to count); 2, 2 Jan., Washington Co. CBC.  
 DUNLIN -- 25, 1 Dec. to 28 Dec., 10 mi. s. of Greenville, GEA & GA.  
 AMERICAN AVOCET -- (Number?) 18 Dec., Jackson Co. CBC, LG et al.  
 FRANKLIN'S GULL -- 1, 31 Dec., Hattiesburg sewage ponds (Hattiesburg CBC), LG, JI.  
 BONAPARTE'S GULL -- 3, 5 Dec., Oktibbeha Co. L., WCW; 1, 18 Dec., Noxubee CBC, JAJ et al. (new to count).  
 MOURNING DOVE -- (First heard calling) 27 Feb., Archer I., Ark., NH.  
 GROUND DOVE -- 2, 31 Dec., Hattiesburg CBC, NP.  
 BARRED OWL -- 19, 1 Jan., Jackson CBC.  
 RED-HEADED WOODPECKER -- 53, 18 Dec., Noxubee CBC, JAJ et al.  
 RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER -- 19, 18 Dec., Noxubee CBC, JAJ et al.; 2, 29 Dec., Hancock Co. CBC, (very localized on Gulf Coast).

- EASTERN PHOEBE -- 1, 27 Feb., Archer I., Ark., NH (first seen on island in 3 years).
- VERMILION FLYCATCHER -- 3 m, 26 Dec. (2 present since 27 Nov.), L. Jackson (Washington Co.), GEA & GA; 1 m, 31 Dec., Paul B. Johnson St. Park (Hattiesburg CBC), CW, JF, NP.
- ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW -- (Number?), 18 Dec., Jackson Co. CBC, JT.
- BARN SWALLOW -- (Number?), 18 Dec., Jackson Co. CBC.
- PURPLE MARTIN -- 4, 1 Feb., Biloxi, JT (arrival); 2, 19 Feb., Jackson, WHT; 2 m, 22 Feb., Greenville, GEA & GA (arrival).
- CAROLINA CHICKADEE -- (First heard singing), 16 Feb., Archer I., Ark., NH.
- WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH -- 2, 29 Dec., Hancock Co. CBC.
- RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH -- 1, 19 Jan., Greenville, GEA & GA (rare in Delta).
- HOUSE WREN -- 1, 2 Jan., Washington Co. CBC; 1, 5 Jan., Kosciusko sewage lagoon, JAS.
- BEWICK'S WREN -- 1, 22 Dec., Sardis L. CBC; 2, 27 Dec., Grenada L. CBC; 2, 31 Dec., Hattiesburg CBC, LG, JI; 1, 12 Feb., near Kosciusko, JAS.
- MOCKINGBIRD -- 1, fledgling just out of nest, 25 Feb., Columbus, GEA & GA.
- AMERICAN ROBIN -- Flocks eating dogwood berries, 3 Dec., L. Mary Crawford (Lawrence Co.), CB.
- HERMIT THRUSH -- 28, 1 Jan., Jackson CBC.
- EASTERN BLUEBIRD -- 61, 31 Dec., Hattiesburg CBC, LG et al.; Scarce all winter in Greenville area, GEA & GA, NH.
- BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER -- 1, 31 Dec., Hattiesburg CBC, LG, JI.
- RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET -- None seen after 30 Jan., Greenville & vicinity, GEA & GA; Sharp decline between Jan. and Feb. on census plot near Larue, Jackson Co. (4 birds/count in Jan., 1 bird/count in Feb.), WCW.
- WATER PIPIT -- 1, 31 Jan., feeding on bare spot in melting snow, Monticello, CB; 10, 31 Jan., feeding on roadside in melting snow, Hwy. 1-59 S of Meridian, WCW.
- SPRAGUE'S PIPIT -- 1, about 18 Dec., Jackson Co., LG.
- CEDAR WAXWING -- First flock of winter seen, 18 Jan., Monticello, CB; 250, mid-Feb., Starkville, BW; 100, 20 Feb., Davis Bayou, Ocean Springs, WCW; 300, 22 Feb., Greenville, GEA & GA.
- STARLING -- 102,093, 2 Jan., Washington Co. CBC, GEA et al.
- WHITE-EYED VIREO -- 3, 18 Dec., Dorman L. and vicinity (Noxubee CBC), WC.
- SOLITARY VIREO -- 1, 3 Dec., near Kosciusko, JAS; 1, 18 Dec., Noxubee CBC, WCW (new to count); 7, 31 Dec., Hattiesburg CBC; 2, 2 Jan., Washington Co. CBC.
- PROTHONOTARY WARBLER -- 1, 18 Dec., Jackson Co. CBC, JS et al.
- ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER -- 1, 22 Dec., Sardis L. CBC; 1, about 27 Dec., near Grenada; 13, 1 Jan., Jackson CBC; 1, 29 Jan., Noxubee NWR, WC, MC; 1, all winter, Leroy Percy St. Park (Washington Co.), GEA & GA.
- YELLOW WARBLER -- 1, 18 Dec., Jackson Co. CBC, WG.
- MAGNOLIA WARBLER -- 1, 18 Dec., Jackson Co. CBC, CW, JF; 1, 29 Dec., Hancock Co., LG.
- MYRTLE (YELLOW-RUMPED) WARBLER -- 1462, 29 Dec., Hancock Co. CBC, JT et al.

- AUDUBON'S (YELLOW-RUMPED) WARBLER -- 1 m, last half of Feb. (with 30 to 50 Myrtle Warblers at feeder), Gulfport, JT.
- YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER -- 2, 29 Dec., Hancock Co. CBC.
- PINE WARBLER -- 72, 1 Jan., Jackson CBC; 4, 2 Jan., Hollandale & L. Washington (Washington Co. CBC), (rare in Delta).
- COMMON YELLOWTHROAT -- 1 m, 8 and 9 Dec., Kosciusko, JAS; 2, 19 Dec., Noxubee NWR, WCW; 1 f, 13 Jan., Kosciusko sewage lagoon, JAS; 1, 24 Jan., Noxubee NWR, WCW; 2, all winter, Leroy Percy St. Park (Washington Co.), GEA & GA.
- RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD -- 178,438, 2 Jan., Washington Co. CBC, GEA et al.
- COMMON GRACKLE -- 145,393, 2 Jan., Washington Co. CBC, GEA et al.
- BLACKBIRD SPP. -- Large flocks noted near Monticello following ice storm of 2 Jan., 3 Jan., CB.
- BLACK-HEADED GROSBIRD -- 1 m, 10 Jan. to end of Feb., at feeder near Kosciusko, JAS, RW, EWP, WCW, WJW (good color photos obtained by RW).
- DICKCISSEL -- 1, 18 Dec., Jackson Co. CBC, JS et al.
- PURPLE FINCH -- 149, 31 Dec., Hattiesburg CBC, LG et al.
- PINE SISKIN -- 4 (with 50 American Goldfinches), 5 Dec., Choctaw L., WCW.
- AMERICAN GOLDFINCH -- 256, 31 Dec., Hattiesburg CBC, LG et al.
- SPOTTED (RUFUS-SIDED) TOWHEE -- 1 m, 23 Dec. to end of Feb., at feeder near Kosciusko, JAS.
- GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE -- 1 (possibly 2), 18 Dec., Bellefontaine Point (Jackson Co., CBC), JI, SP (no previous record for Mississippi).
- GRASSHOPPER SPARROW -- 2, 31 Dec., Hattiesburg CBC, CW, JF.
- LE CONTE'S SPARROW -- 2, 18 Dec., Noxubee CBC, WCW, WJW; 7, 22 Dec., Sardis L. CBC; 1, 27 Dec., Grenada CBC; 1, 29 Dec., Hancock Co. CBC.
- BACHMAN'S SPARROW -- 2, 29 Dec., Hancock Co. CBC.
- DARK-EYED JUNCO -- 885, 22 Dec., Sardis L. CBC, WMD et al; 200, 27 Feb., Archer I., Ark., NH.
- TREE SPARROW -- 1, 15 Jan., Sardis L. State Waterfowl Refuge, WMD; 6, 22 Jan., near Sardis L., WMD; 2, 23 Jan., near Sardis L., LC.
- HARRIS' SPARROW -- 1 imm. (with flock of White-crowns), 15 Jan., Sardis L. State Waterfowl Refuge, WMD.
- WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW -- 8, 18 Dec., Brooksville road (Noxubee CBC), WCW; 1 imm., 22 to 25 Jan., near Kosciusko, JAS, WCW, EWP (rare in area).
- FOX SPARROW -- 16, 29 Jan., Ocean Springs, WCW (10 at Gulf Coast Research Lab, 6 at Davis Bayou); 2, 20 Feb., Davis Bayou, WCW, RWP.
- LINCOLN'S SPARROW -- 1, 29 Dec., Hancock Co. CBC, JT; 2, 1 Jan., Jackson CBC.

Key to Observers. -- GEA = G. Edward Alexander, Jr., GA = Ginger Alexander, CB = Carl Bauer, BBC = Ben B. Coffey, Jr., LC = Lula Coffey, MC = Murray Cross, WC = William Cross, WMD = W. Marvin Davis, JF = Jean Freeman, WG = Warren Garrott, LG = Larry Gates, NH = Nona Herbert, JI = Rev. John Izral, JAJ = Jerome A. Jackson, OL = Odee Landrum, EWP = E. W. Permenter, SP = Steve Peterson, NP = Nell Powers, RWP = Robert W. Pyle, JAS = James S. Sanders, JS = John Steen, DS = Dana Swan, MS = Martha Swan, JT = Judith Tonds, WHT = William H. Turcotte, CW = Cile Waite, WCW = Wayne C. Weber, WJW = Wendy J. Weber, BW = Burton Webster, RW = Ray Weeks, JW = Jim Williams.



Note to Contributors: Please submit your sightings for the spring migration (1 March to 31 May) by 5 June 1977, and for the breeding season (1 June to 31 July) by 5 August 1977. If time permits, we will forward your more significant sightings to American Birds as well as publishing them in the Mississippi Kite. For all records, please specify the number of birds, date, exact locality, and observer(s). Good quality, black-and-white photographs for use in the Mississippi Kite would be welcomed.

For unusual records (generally, any species preceded by a "4" on the Mississippi check-list, or out-of-season records of other species), supply as much detail as possible, including a detailed description of the bird(s), preferably made in the field, and the conditions of observation (e.g., bird seen at 40 feet through 7 X 35 binoculars, light behind observer). If at all possible, such birds should be photographed or corroborated by other observers.

Not all records received can be published. Those of major interest are: early and late records of migrants, records of unusual species or unusual numbers of birds, and unusual breeding records. All breeding records, for any species, are desired for our nest record card file.

Sincere thanks to everyone who sent in records for this issue, and we hope even more of you will do so in the future. We can only publish what you send us!

## THE MISSISSIPPI KITE

Mississippi Ornithological Society  
Organized 30 April 1955

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104 Bell Street  
Kosciusko, MS 39090

Vice President: Mr. Carl Bauer  
P.O. Box 396  
Monticello, MS 39754

Secretary: Mr. Stephen W. Peterson  
2127 E. Northside Drive  
Jackson, MS 39211

Treasurer: Miss Evelyn D. Tackett  
744 Oakwood  
Jackson, MS 39202

Editor: Dr. Jerome A. Jackson  
P.O. Drawer Z  
Mississippi State, MS 39762

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