

# MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 61, No. 1

MARCH 2016



## 2016 MOS Spring Meeting to be held in Oxford April 29 - May 1

The Spring MOS Meeting will be in Oxford, Mississippi, April 29-May 1 with special guest speaker David Allen Sibley. We wish to thank meeting co-sponsors Audubon Mississippi, Wild Birds Unlimited of Jackson, Okatibbee Audubon Society, and Delta Wind Birds as well as numerous individual donors for helping us bring Mr. Sibley to Mississippi. The meeting will be held at Camp Lake Stephens just south of Oxford. The camp boasts an 87-acre campus of forested hills with walking trails and a lake which should make for wonderful spring birding. Please pay particular attention to the lodging information below as very few hotel rooms are available in the Oxford area the weekend of the meeting due to a large soccer tournament. We encourage those coming from out of town to take advantage of the seclusion, easy access for birding, and proximity to David Sibley offered by accommodations at Camp Lake Stephens. Field trips will depart from the parking lot of the camp on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

### OUR GUEST SPEAKER: DAVID SIBLEY

The son of Yale University ornithologist Fred Sibley, David began birding in childhood and began painting birds at age seven. A largely self-taught bird illustrator, he was inspired to pursue creating his own illustrated field guide after leading tours in the 1980s and 1990s and finding that existing field guides did not generally illustrate or describe alternate or juvenile plumages of birds. He cites European wildlife artist Lars Jonsson as a great influence on his own work. In 2002, he received the Roger Tory Peterson Award from the American Birding Association for lifetime achievement in promoting the cause of birding. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, published in 2000, was the realization of a lifelong dream for Sibley and contains over 6,600 of his original illustrations. Used by millions of birders, from novices to the most expert, *The Sibley Guide* is now the standard by which natural history guides are measured.



(photo © Erinn Hartman)

### ACCOMMODATIONS

Camp Lake Stephens (CLS) offers clean, very simple lodging in the form of 22 cabins. Each cabin accommodates four people. We will set aside a few cabins for occupancy by 2 or 3 people, but most need to be filled with 4 people. In addition, a few private rooms are available (please call or email for details). The rates are \$70 per person, total, for both nights in cabin accommodation and \$150 for a private room (twin beds, can accommodate 2 persons), again for both nights. Please bring your own towels and linens or sleeping bag/pillow as they will not be provided. We can help match you with others looking to share cabin accommodations, but meeting attendees are also encouraged to work out cabin sharing with each other before registration. Camp Lake Stephens is located at 117 Lake Stephens Drive, Oxford, MS 38655. From Oxford, travel east on Highway 6 (278), and less than a mile past Highway 7 turn right (south) onto County Road 334. After about 3 miles heading southeast on CR 334, watch for signs for Camp Lake Stephens on the right, and turn right.

### SCHEDULE

#### Friday Evening, April 29

- 3:00-4:00 p.m. MOS Board/Officers' Meeting (CLS Conference Room)
- 3:00-5:00 p.m. Check-in for Cabins (CLS Office)
- 5:00-6:30 p.m. Book Signing by David Sibley (Off Square Books, 129 Courthouse Square, Oxford)
- 7:00 p.m. Dinner, Meet & Greet, and Discussion of field trips (CLS Dining Hall)

#### Saturday, April 30

- 6:30-7:30 a.m. Breakfast (CLS Dining Hall)
- 7:30 a.m. Meet in parking lot for morning field trips.
- 8:00-Noon Field trips and guided walks with Sibley
- Lunch On your own
- 1:00 p.m. Afternoon field trips (TBD)
- 6:00-6:30 p.m. Membership meeting, Dinner, Species Tally (CLS Chapel)
- 7:15-8:15 p.m. Program: David Sibley, "The Psychology of Bird Identification," (CLS Chapel)
- 8:30 p.m. Drinks, stories, owling...

#### Sunday, May 1

- 6:30-7:30 a.m. Breakfast (CLS Dining Hall)
- 7:30 a.m. Meet for field trips, to be determined Saturday night

### COSTS

#### Meeting Registration

Registration fees are \$85 for MOS members, \$100 for nonmembers. This includes the Friday Meet & Greet including dinner, Saturday banquet and Sibley presentation, and breakfast on both Saturday and Sunday (total 4 meals). If you have special dietary restrictions please let us know by email: [missbird.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:missbird.treasurer@gmail.com)

#### Birding Walk with David Sibley

An optional 1-hour morning small-group Birding Walk with David Sibley is offered Saturday morning for an additional fee of \$25 (limited availability).

#### How to Register

You may register by mailing in the attached form with payment OR using PayPal online at [www.missbird.org/Meetings.htm](http://www.missbird.org/Meetings.htm). If you register by mail, please email us at [missbird.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:missbird.treasurer@gmail.com) or call J.R. Rigby at 662-202-7777 so that we can reserve your spot immediately.

## 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.....	JR Rigby
Membership Committee Chair .....	Gene Knight
Newsletter Design.....	Tom Hoar

### President's Corner

By Ken Hackman, MOS President

I feel it. Springtime. It's a magical time of year for all of us. The gardeners are gardening. The kids are heading to the beaches. Baseball is in full swing; March Madness is taking over the basketball world. And while I love my hummingbird and bird plants, none of that is of much consequence to many of us. Sure, we have passing interest in some of the activities going on, but the real main event is just around the corner. Migration is upon us. Perhaps no other time of year is as exciting; as joyful for those of us who watch the feathered.

Purists may say there is no one time of year that is best. Sure, winter has its wonderfully puzzling sparrows and exciting gulls with their challenging age/ phase identification mysteries. The late summer and early fall brings the magic of the Wind Birds in migration across our bountiful Delta. Even summer in Mississippi has its moments, if you can escape the heat.

But for me, it is the promise of spring; warmer temperatures are already here, with their freshening native blooms, hosting hummingbirds on the wing northward. Bluebirds are already fledging, as are others. The cries of Killdeer, calling their young to order, are ringing out over the fields and flats.

However, the best is yet to come. Certainly, they have been trickling in for a while, now, but it is about to get better. Birders are reloading their Doppler apps in preparation for the hordes about to arrive en masse. Warblers, tanagers, orioles and many more are on the way. Buntings, with their bright colors will arrive in time to accompany the still-present American Goldfinches, creating a colorful kaleidoscope. It is, for me, the most magical time of year.

This year, it will be even more special. Your event organizers have secured what may be the most well known speaker we have ever had for MOS; certainly in my recollection. David Sibley- author and illustrator extraordinaire will be in the Magnolia State on the heels of his latest book. Come join us. Bring a friend. It will be magical. Just like the time of year.

*Ken*

Madison, Mississippi



Wilson's Warbler • Larry Pace

### New Members

The Mississippi Ornithological Society welcomes new members Eunice Benton, Clyde and Lucy Burnett, Jay Cliburn, Jason Ervin, Gladys Ishee, Brian Johnston, June Ladner, Madge Lindsay, Carol and Tom Lutken, Lori McDonald, Aaron Mitchell, Rhonda Plitt, Carly Rekosh, Curtis and Kathy Ross, Tom and Suzanne Schneidau, Janet Schove, Robert and Sunshine Stewart, Kitty Tripp, and Susan Zachos.

### 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

### 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](mailto: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!

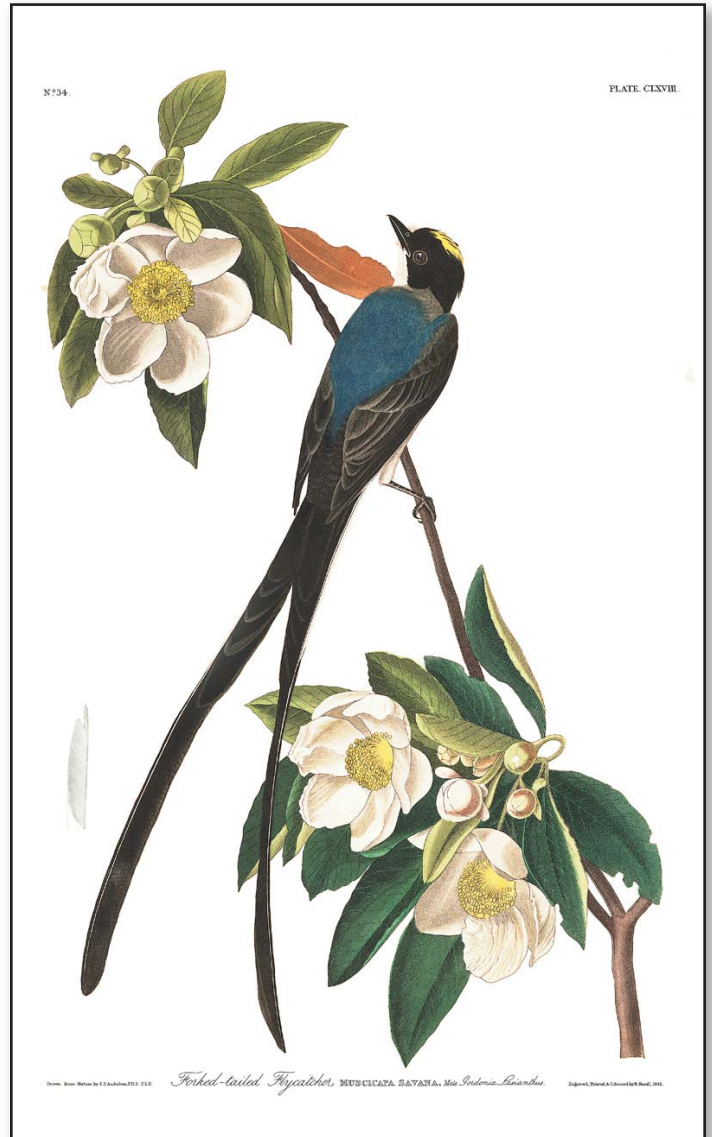
# BIRDS TO WATCH FOR: Fork-tailed Flycatcher By Ned Boyajian

This species does not appear on any current Mississippi state lists. However, in an article in *American Birds* (1980, vol. 34, no. 6, 845) Monroe and Barron list all records for the United States up to that date. Among them is a sight record for August 1822 “near Natchez” by John J. Audubon. Their sources were Audubon, J.J. 1834 *Orn Biogr.* 2:387 and Bent’s *Life Histories* U.S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 179:82. The Mississippi Ornithological Society Bird Records Committee has chosen not to accept this sighting on the basis that “near Natchez” does not preclude across the river in Louisiana.

There are numerous specimens and sightings from elsewhere in the eastern U.S. from Texas to the northeast. Of those identified to subspecies, the great majority are of the highly migratory form, *T.s.* savanna of southern South America. In itself this might not be surprising except for the fact that many of the occurrences (about 75 percent in a 1980 summary) were in our (boreal) autumn when this austral migrant should be migrating southward from wintering grounds in tropical South America to breeding grounds in temperate South America.

An excellent paper by Guy McKaskie in *Western Birds* (1994, vol. 5, no. 3) discusses this phenomenon and also offers valuable information on subspecific identification. Both this paper and the one previously cited are available online at the eLibrary of the University of New Mexico.

Fork-tailed Flycatchers are open country birds much like Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in their choice of habitat and up-front behavior, though mistaking one for the other would seem quite unlikely. But juvenile FTFLs are quite short-tailed and have more than a passing resemblance to Eastern Kingbirds (the two species often forage for fruit together at certain times and places in South America.) However, young *s. savanna* apparently molt prior to migration, so any of those that might occur here should be reasonably long-tailed. – NB



• Chase Fountain © Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

# SOME SIGHTINGS FROM THE FIELD (Fall/Winter 2015)

Gene Knight, MBRC Chair

A first-alternate plumaged **Neotropic Cormorant** was photographed on 13 August in Jackson County representing a first for recent times on the coast. Flycatchers were the talk of the season. Single **Gray Kingbirds** were seen on 30 August on Singing River Island in Jackson County and on 1 September at D'Iberville Boat Ramp in Harrison County. Then on 27 September a **Say's Phoebe** was photographed at Coldwater River NWR on the Quitman/Tallahatchie County line.

The seldom seen **Groove-billed Ani** was photographed in Hancock County on 12 October. Near that same area along South Beach Boulevard the following day a **Clay-colored Sparrow** was photographed. More **Clay-colored Sparrows** were reported from the old Broadwater Golf Course in Harrison County on 18 October and two remained on site into January. On 14 October the state's third **Brown Booby**, a female, was found by a fisherman on Grenada Lake, Grenada County. Unable to be relocated at that time another fisherman photographed the Booby six weeks later and made it possible for many birders to view and photograph. It was last seen at the Grenada Dam on 29 December.

24 October started the "western" flycatcher parade on the coast with an **Ash-throated Flycatcher** in Jackson County. It was in the presence of a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, **Western Kingbird**, **Vermilion Flycatcher**, and an **Eastern Phoebe**. Some of these were present for several days. Also on 24 October a **Parasitic Jaeger** was photographed from the Ship Island Ferry in Harrison County waters. One to two **Vermilion Flycatchers** were present in Jackson County at the Seaman Road Treatment Plant from 28 October through the winter period. Another **Ash-throated Flycatcher** was present 31 October-4 November at the old Broadwater Golf Course in Harrison County.

A 1st cycle **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was spotted on 11 November and remained through the period at Lower Lake, Sardis Dam, Panola County. A **Swainson's Hawk** seen flying over the Hancock County marshes on 13 November was a good find. An immature **Golden Eagle** was seen 2-4 December flying over Bluff Lake at Noxubee NWR, Noxubee County. On 3 December an **American Tree Sparrow** was spotted in Marshall County north of Holly Springs. On 15 December on private property in Hancock County yet another **Vermilion Flycatcher** was present.

For the 4th consecutive Winter an adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** returned on 19 December to the Lower Lake, Sardis Dam and continued through the period. The 3rd **Say's Phoebe** of the year was tallied on the Sidon CBC on 27 December in Leflore County and remained on site for several days. Possibly the state's first **Tropical Kingbird** returned from last year to the Bay St. Louis area of Hancock County. It was first seen on 31 December and remained through the winter period. Yet another "western" kingbird, the state's first **Couch's Kingbird**, was photographed as well as definitive recordings obtained in mid January. This kingbird, seen for about a month, was found on Singing River Island in Jackson County along with a **Western Kingbird**! All 3 Coastal Counties had a **Western Kingbird** present in January 2016.

More evidence of a very mild winter was the presence of several warbler species found well north of their wintering grounds. They were found in the northern third of the state. A **Black-and-white Warbler** was in Panola County; in several northern counties **Palm Warblers** spent the winter; in Oktibbeha County there was a **Yellow-throated Warbler** in January and a **Black-throated Green Warbler** in February; and a **Wilson's Warbler** was seen in Lowndes County for several weeks. To round up the season the drastically declining eastern **Bewick's Wren** was photographed in Lafayette County at the Sardis Waterfowl WMA on 20 February.



# Minutes of the MOS Board Meeting and Business Meeting

Fall Meeting • October 23-25, 2015

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## BOARD MEETING

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The Board of Directors of the Mississippi Ornithological Society met on Friday, October 23, 2015, at the Comfort Inn in Moss Point, Mississippi. Present were Chris King, Vice President; JR Rigby, Web Committee Chair; Wayne Patterson, Treasurer; and Martha Swan, Secretary. Chris called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Since no agenda items had been submitted, the floor was opened for general discussion.

Martha stated that there are still some discrepancies in different versions of the Constitution and By-laws which need to be resolved. She will contact Nick Winstead about this.

Wayne reported that the Spring Meeting 2015 resulted in a loss of \$22.16. JR suggested that the Spring 2016 meeting be held in Oxford in late April, and everyone agreed. Several potential speakers were suggested, and JR will pursue contacting them.

JR stated that the BATS (Birds around the State, as published in the MS Kite) report for 2011 is in draft form, and he has begun working on 2012.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

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## MEMBERSHIP MEETING

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MOS members gathered at the stunning new Pascagoula River Audubon Center at 6:30 pm on October 24th. After dinner was served, Ken Hackman called the meeting to order. He welcomed attendees and thanked the organizers of the meeting. He then introduced Mark LaSalle, Director of the Center, who gave some information about the beautiful building as well as the mission, programs, and staff of the Center. Wayne presented the treasurer's report, and Ken conducted the species tally.

JR then introduced the speaker, bird song expert Nathan Pieplow. Mr. Pieplow is an avid bird sound recordist, author of the bird sound blog *Earbirding.com*, and author of the upcoming *Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds*. In his talk, "Seeing Sounds: A New Way to Identify Birds By Ear," he explained how bird songs can be described using codes and symbols to represent pitch, speed, spacing, and tone, followed by interactive examples challenging the audience to identify bird songs based on visual representation.

Following a discussion of Sunday morning field trip opportunities, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Submitted by Martha Swan, MOS Secretary



Mississippi's first recorded Couch's Kingbird • Singing River Island, Jackson County • Brian Johnston

# SPECIES LIST

Birds sighted at the 2015 MOS Fall Meeting • October 23-25 • Mississippi Gulf Coast

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	Ruddy Turnstone
Canada Goose	Stilt Sandpiper
Wood Duck	Sanderling
Gadwall	Dunlin
American Wigeon	Least Sandpiper
Mallard	Pectoral Sandpiper
Mottled Duck	Western Sandpiper
Blue-winged Teal	Short-billed Dowitcher
Northern Shoveler	Long-billed Dowitcher
Green-winged Teal	Wilson's Snipe
Redhead	Parasitic Jaeger
Ring-necked Duck	Laughing Gull
Ruddy Duck	Ring-billed Gull
Common Loon	Herring Gull
Pied-billed Grebe	Caspian Tern
Double-crested Cormorant	Forster's Tern
American White Pelican	Royal Tern
Brown Pelican	Sandwich Tern
Great Blue Heron	Black Skimmer
Great Egret	Rock Pigeon
Snowy Egret	Eurasian Collared-Dove
Little Blue Heron	White-winged Dove
Tricolored Heron	Mourning Dove
Reddish Egret	Common Ground-Dove
Cattle Egret	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Green Heron	Belted Kingfisher
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Red-headed Woodpecker
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Red-bellied Woodpecker
White Ibis	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
White-faced Ibis	Downy Woodpecker
Turkey Vulture	Northern Flicker
Osprey	Pileated Woodpecker
Bald Eagle	American Kestrel
Northern Harrier	Merlin
Cooper's Hawk	Peregrine Falcon
Red-shouldered Hawk	Eastern Wood-Pewee
Red-tailed Hawk	Eastern Phoebe
Clapper Rail	Ash-throated Flycatcher
Virginia Rail	Western Kingbird
Sora	Eastern Kingbird
Common Gallinule	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
American Coot	Loggerhead Shrike
Sandhill Crane	Blue Jay
Black-necked Stilt	American Crow
American Oystercatcher	Fish Crow
Black-bellied Plover	Tree Swallow
American Golden-Plover	N. Rough-winged Swallow
Snowy Plover	Barn Swallow
Semipalmated Plover	Carolina Chickadee
Piping Plover	Tufted Titmouse
Killdeer	Brown-headed Nuthatch
Spotted Sandpiper	House Wren
Greater Yellowlegs	Sedge Wren
Willet	Marsh Wren
Lesser Yellowlegs	Carolina Wren
Marbled Godwit	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
 Eastern Bluebird  
 American Robin  
 Gray Catbird  
 Brown Thrasher  
 Northern Mockingbird  
 European Starling  
 Waterthrush sp.  
 Common Yellowthroat

American Redstart  
 Yellow Warbler  
 Palm Warbler  
 Pine Warbler  
 Yellow-rumped Warbler  
 Eastern Towhee  
 Savannah Sparrow  
 Nelson's Sparrow  
 Seaside Sparrow  
 Song Sparrow  
 Swamp Sparrow  
 Northern Cardinal  
 Blue Grosbeak  
 Indigo Bunting  
 Red-winged Blackbird  
 Eastern Meadowlark  
 Common Grackle  
 Boat-tailed Grackle  
 Brown-headed Cowbird  
 House Finch  
 House Sparrow



Ash-throated Flycatcher • JR Rigby

– Total Species 145

## 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](mailto:gsknight@hughes.net). See page 2 for details!



Pied-billed Grebe • Jason Hoeksema



Bewick's Wren • JR Rigby



Banded Herring Gull • Brian Johnston



Say's Phoebe • Wayne Patterson



Willet • Jason Hoeksema



Groove-billed Ani • Libby Graves

# MOS Spring 2016 MEETING – REGISTRATION FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT LODGING INFORMATION:** To reserve space in a cabin, please register online ([www.missbird.org/Meetings.htm](http://www.missbird.org/Meetings.htm)) or call JR Rigby at 662-202-7777. Bed linens and towels are NOT provided in the cabins, so PLEASE bring your own sleeping bag or linens.

- Registration / Friday Meet & Greet / Saturday Banquet
    - \$ 85.00 (Members) per person      \_\_\_ Person(s)    X    \$ 85.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_
    - \$100.00 (Non-Members) per person      \_\_\_ Person(s)    X    \$100.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - Additional contribution to help with publications (\$5.00 per person suggested)      \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - Lodging \$70.00 per person (total for two nights)      \_\_\_ Person(s)    X    \$ 70.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 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 TO REACH WAYNE NO LATER THAN APRIL 1**

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