

NEWSLETTER OF THE _____

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 62, No. 1

APRIL 2017



2017 MOS Spring Meeting to be held April 21-23 in Jackson!

The 2017 Spring Meeting is being hosted by the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science and MOS members in the Jackson area. This meeting will include speakers on both Friday and Saturday evenings. The Friday night meeting will be held at the Museum (2148 Riverside Drive, Jackson, MS 39202). A meet and greet with refreshments for MOS members will be followed by a public talk, "Decoding Bird Sounds" by Nathan Pieplow, and a book signing for his newly released *Peterson Guide to Bird Sounds*. Field trips on Saturday will go to Lefleur's Bluff State Park, Ross Barnett Reservoir area (including Pipeline Road and Fannye Cook Natural Area), and likely one trip to the south Delta for shorebirds if there is shorebird habitat close by at the time of the meeting. The Saturday evening banquet will be held at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science with a talk by special guest Dr. Stephen Dinsmore presenting on his long-term work on the life history of the Mountain Plover.

Accommodations: A limited block of rooms under the group name "MS Ornithological Society" has been reserved at the following hotel, but will be held **only until April 7** (advance reservations are recommended because of limited availability and better rates): Holiday Inn Express, 6485 Frontage Road, Ridgeland, MS 39157; phone 601-977-6111; rate \$92/night. Directions: From I-55, take exit 103 for County Line Road and proceed west. Turn north on Highway 51. Hotel is on the right.

Schedule...

FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 21

- 3:30-5:30 p.m. MOS Board/Officers' Meeting (MMNS Library or Conference Room)
- 5:30-6:00 p.m. Meet & Greet with light refreshments (MMNS Classroom B)
- 6:00-7:30 p.m. Guest Speaker Nathan Pieplow, talk and book-signing (MMNS Theater, open to the public)

SATURDAY, APRIL 22

- 6:30-7:30 a.m. For those staying at the Holiday Inn Express, breakfast is provided in the breakfast room
- 7:30 a.m. Field trips - All field trips will meet in the parking lot of the HI Express
- Lunch On your own
- 6:30 p.m. Banquet at MMNS (Chimneyville BBQ catering, see back page for menu choices)
- 7:30 p.m. Business Meeting and Species Tally
- Guest Speaker: Stephen Dinsmore, "Plovers, prairie dogs, and plague: The life history of the Mountain Plover"

SUNDAY, APRIL 23

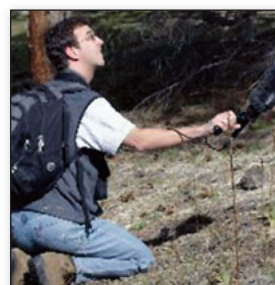
- 6:30-7:30 a.m. For those staying at the Holiday Inn Express, breakfast is provided in the breakfast room
- 7:30 a.m. Field trips: Meet in the parking lot of the Holiday Inn Express

COST: \$35 for MOS members, \$40 for non-members, \$20 student (see registration form, back page)



Stephen J. Dinsmore is a Professor of wildlife ecology and Associate Chair in the Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management at Iowa State University. He received a B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology from Iowa State University (1990), a M.S. in Zoology (minor in Statistics) from North Carolina State University (1994), and a Ph.D. in Fishery and Wildlife Biology from Colorado State University (2001). Prior to his move to Iowa State, he was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries at

Mississippi State University. His primary interests are avian ecology, population biology, capture-recapture analysis, and monitoring animal populations. His research program at Iowa State University emphasizes studies of avian population biology. He currently supervises one research associate and four graduate students working primarily on issues of demography and habitat management of birds. In addition to projects involving graduate students, he maintains his own research program with Mountain Plovers and collaborates with scientists on projects related to avian ecology, population biology, and sampling and study design issues. His teaching responsibilities include an undergraduate course in ornithology, a graduate course in avian ecology, and study abroad courses to Antarctica and Costa Rica. He gives seminars and scientific presentations nationwide, and enjoys teaching workshops on the use of Program MARK and the analysis of wildlife demographic data. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his wife (Karen) and daughter (Lena), bird-watching, and traveling.



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 *Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds*. He is author of the *Colorado Birding Trail*, former board member of the Colorado Field Ornithologists and former editor of the *Journal of Colorado Birds*.

MOS Officers and Board Members

President.....JR Rigby
Vice President.....Hal Mitchell
Secretary.....Holly Cox
Treasurer.....Wayne Patterson
Past President.....Ken Hackman
Mississippi Kite Editor.....Nick Winstead
MOS Newsletter Editors.....Gene and Shannon Knight
Newsletter Design.....Tom Hoar

Welcome New Members

We welcome John Ruckdeschel, John and Linda Cambre, Mitch Robinson and Joe McGee!



ATTENTION ALL MOS MEMBERS!

Digital Delivery of Newsletter and MS Kite

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

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

President's Corner

By JR Rigby, MOS President

It is a good time to be part of MOS. In the last few years we have had a run of exciting and engaging authors and speakers join us as guests at the biannual meetings including Nathan Pieplow, Kevin Karlson, and of course David Sibley. The line-up for 2017 and 2018 will be just as engaging, beginning with the return of former MSU ornithologist and MOS member Stephen Dinsmore to be our guest speaker this April. We also welcome back Nathan Pieplow, author of the *Peterson Guide to Bird Sounds* (released March 7), who will give a talk and book-signing as part of the Friday program at the April meeting. Nathan's program will be free and open to the public, a little MOS outreach in partnership with MMNS. I hope you will help promote his visit with your friends and colleagues who may be interested in birds and their many sounds, but not quite ready to join MOS.

In addition to the meetings, we are working hard to build on the momentum that MOS has gained. Meeting attendance is up, participation on the MISSBIRD email listserv and particularly the Facebook groups is strong. In addition to addressing some administrative housekeeping in the society, I have tried to orient our planning around building MOS community, increasing engagement and access opportunities in birding and wildlife observation areas, and involving MOS more directly in conservation efforts. During the Spring Meeting banquet I will present some of our successes in recent months and plans going forward. Please consider how you might help us reach these goals; the officers need your help.

Finally, a comment on the weather. As I write almost two months prior to the Spring Meeting, it feels as if spring is already in full swing. The grass is green, the red maples are blooming, our forsythia is long past full bloom, and now even the azaleas are blooming. One friend reported a redbud blooming in December! Spring has come early this year, but migrants are just starting to arrive. So get out to explore your favorite patch, count some birds, enjoy the protracted spring, and join us in April to see what else is going on in MOS. – JR

MOS Members,

This is a notice to let you know it's past time to renew your 2017 MOS dues. If you have already taken care of this disregard this notice. If you have any questions about your membership dues please let me know.

Thanks.

**Gene Knight
MOS Membership Chair
Oxford, MS**

BIRDS TO WATCH FOR: Northern Wheatear

By Ned Boyajian

There are established populations of this species in both the northwestern and northeastern portions of arctic North America but relatively few records southward in the continent since the Alaskan/Yukon birds first migrate eastward into Siberia and the east Canadian birds westward across Greenland to western Europe before both head south to separate wintering grounds in northern Africa. (An excellent account of this fascinating behavior can be found online at *All About Birds*, a website of the Cornell laboratory of Ornithology.)

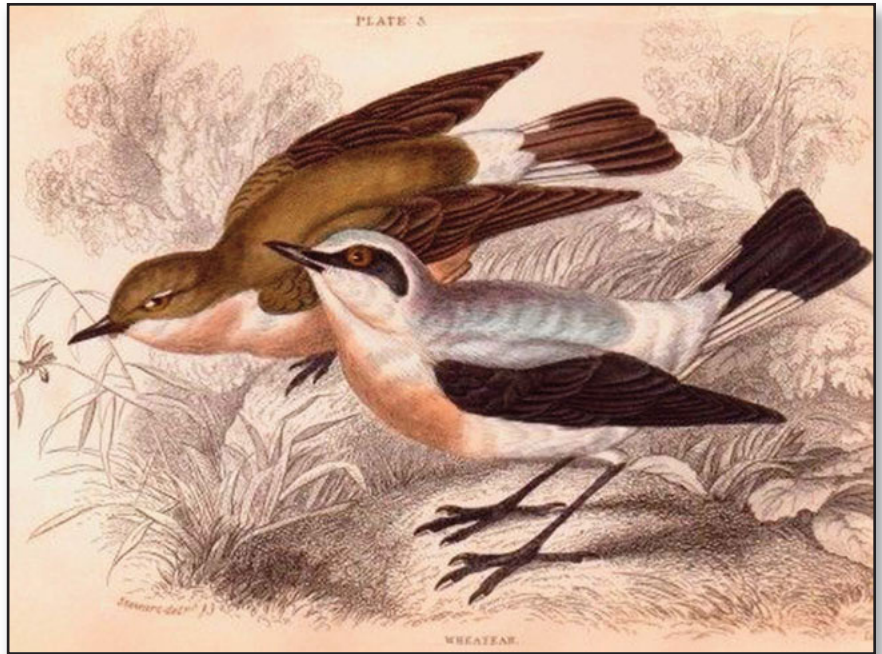
Though there are no records for Mississippi as of yet, wheatears have been found in all the other Gulf Coast states at least once. Most U.S. reports are from fall through early winter.

It is a uniquely patterned, reasonably confiding, open-country species. If one happens to show up where you are, neither detection nor ID should be a problem.

They seem to prefer quiet shorelines, treeless, rubble-strewn fields and sparsely vegetated flats. Certainly dry lake beds, coastal salt-pans and quiet beaches and maybe sod farms and close-cropped fields, suggest themselves as high potential locales.

However, some years ago, one was found on a food plant lawn in New Orleans and the first one I ever saw, way back in the early 1950s, turned up in a tiny vacant lot in the heart of Archie Bunker Land (Queens, NY). It was reported (several times) by a 10-year old boy who was ignored for over a week by the birding establishment until someone finally decided to take a look.

So anything is possible. – NB



SOME SIGHTINGS FROM THE FIELD (Fall/Winter 2016-17)

Gene Knight, MBRC Chair

The state's fourth **Audubon's Shearwater** was a carcass found and photographed on Deer Island, Harrison County on 3 August. Just north of Deer Island at the Biloxi Small Craft Harbor an adult **Great Black-backed Gull** was present on 11 August. **Neotropic Cormorant** is a rare but regular species in the Mississippi Delta but the five to eight seen 14-16 August was a first for Coldwater River NWR in Tallahatchie and Quitman Counties. On 19 August two **Roseate Spoonbills** were a rare find for Lower Sardis Lake, Panola County. A very early first summer plumaged **Franklin's Gull** was photographed on 26 August in Jackson County. A single **A. Bittern** was early in Humphreys County on 28 August. Grand Bay NERR, in Jackson County, hosted a juvenile **Sooty Tern** on 6 September. Also in Jackson County on 6 September a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** showed up at a feeder in Pascagoula. A **Red-necked Phalarope** was a good find on 23 September in Oktibbeha County. A female **Brown Booby** was present for two weeks in early October at Lake Chewalla in Marshall County, the second sighting in as many years in north Mississippi. On 4-6 October a **Say's Phoebe** was present near the concession stand on West Ship Island, Harrison County. The rare and seldom seen **Groove-billed Ani** was spotted on 18 October in east Pascagoula, Jackson County. A **Buff-bellied Hummingbird** put in an appearance in a hummer garden in Pascagoula on 1 November. Again in Jackson County at the Pascagoula River Audubon Center an adult male **Western Tanager** was photographed on 2 November. As many as eight and possibly 11 **Western Kingbirds** were reported from all three Gulf Coast counties through the period. This is unprecedented with as many as four **WEKI's** at the same locale in Jackson County. 26 **Black Scoters** were a great find on 6 November at Bay Springs Lake in Tishomingo County. The following week at Bay Springs Lake a **Pacific Loon** was spotted. **Rufous Hummingbirds** are regular migrants in central and southern Mississippi in the fall so a female was an excellent feeder bird for Lafayette County in late November-early December. The state's second **Couch's Kingbird** was photographed and the calls were recorded in late



Say's Phoebe • Warren Martz



California Gull • JR Rigby

November and remained on site until 3 January 2017 in Leflore County. The Sardis Lower Lake adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** returned again for the fifth winter on 5 December and was still present on 2 Mar 2017. For the last three out of four winters the **Sprague's Pipit** on Holly Grove Road, Panola County, was present from 9 December into late January 2017. Swan species are accidental on the Mississippi Gulf Coast so a **Tundra Swan** photographed on a Harrison County beach was a great find on 9 December. The Sidon CBC produced the state's third **Brant** record where six were found among thousands of snow geese in Leflore County on 17 December. A male **Shiny Cowbird** put in an appearance at a feeder 17-20 December in Hancock County. A first cycle **California Gull**, accidental in Mississippi, was present at the spillway on Enid Lake, Yalobusha County, from 21 December 2016 until 7 January 2017. **Laughing Gulls** seen away from the Mississippi Gulf Coast are rare so an adult found on the Grenada CBC on 28 December was a good find. Probably the same **Tropical Kingbird**, the state's first, returned to the same locale for a third winter in Hancock County on 31 December 2016 and was seen well into March 2017. With the eastern **Golden Eagle** declining a sub-adult photographed on 31 December near Crenshaw, Panola County, was a great find. A **Nelson's Sparrow**, accidental away from the Gulf Coast, was an excellent find in Noxubee County east of Macon 8-15 January. Another repeat site for **Sprague's Pipit** is Buck Island, Tunica County, and one was present on 31 January. Three **Yellow Rails** were flushed during a nocturnal rope drag survey on 4 February at Devil's Swamp, Hancock County. – GK



Rufous Hummingbird • Robert Briscoe

Minutes of the MOS Board Meeting and Business Meeting

September 30 - October 2, 2016

BOARD MEETING

The Board of the Mississippi Ornithological Society met in the Starkville, Mississippi, Holiday Inn Express meeting room at 4:00 p.m. on September 30, 2016. Present were Chris King, Vice President; Wayne Patterson, Treasurer; Nick Winstead, Editor, *Mississippi Kite*; JR Rigby, Web Committee Chairman; and Martha Swan, Secretary.

Chris presided since the President could not attend. JR moved to approve the minutes of the Spring 2016 meeting as printed in the newsletter, and Chris seconded. The motion passed. Nick reported on the publication status of the *Mississippi Kite*. At present, it is six issues behind, and will be seven behind in December. He has material for three issues which are close to being ready, but the rest are "BATS" (Birds around the State) issues which require a huge amount of time to compile. Various people are working on different years. Beginning in 2017, web reporting will be available and will make publication easier. The aim is to catch up on *Kite* publication by this time next year.

JR reported on changes in the website. He plans to include a blog which will be archived. The board approved his request for new software to enhance and simplify maintenance. Later, he reported that the website needs a way to accept photos. Plans for the Spring 2017 meeting were discussed. Possible speakers suggested included Brian K. Wheeler, Scott Weidensaul, Michael O'Brien, Dan Lane, and Nick Lund, with Jackson, the Delta, and Tunica/Southaven area mentioned as locations. Fall 2017 could be on the Coast.

Wayne presented the Treasurer's Report indicating that MOS is in relatively good shape financially, after the successful Spring meeting. JR raised the issue of the Coffey Endowment. It was designated for helping with MOS publications, but now most publishing is online, so MOS has about \$18,000 in CDs sitting in the bank not being used, and not earning much interest. He suggested using some of it for student research grants, with the requirement that the recipient produce an article for the *Kite*. We need to check on the legal restrictions on these funds. This brought up the issue of the Yellow Rail research project, which MOS helped fund but never received the promised article. JR suggested that MOS needs some logo items to sell (T-shirts, mugs, etc.). Nick will supply him with the official MOS Mississippi Kite logo, for which MOS has all rights. Other ways of creating interest in MOS were suggested.

Matters which need to be brought up for voting at the Membership meeting are changes in the Constitution and By-laws, approval of the financial report, and election of officers.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 pm.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

MOS members gathered at Harvey's Restaurant in Starkville at 6:30 p.m. for a banquet and the Annual Meeting. Ken Hackman, President, called the meeting to order. He thanked Marion Schiefer and members of the Oktibbeha Audubon Society for organizing the meeting. Wayne Patterson presented the Treasurer's Report. Nancy Madden moved acceptance and Bob Foehring seconded. The motion passed. Proposed changes to the Constitution and By-laws had been published in the newsletter. JR moved that the changes be



Lesser Black-backed Gull • Robert Briscoe

accepted and Nancy Madden seconded. The motion passed. Jason Hoeksema, chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of officer nominations: JR Rigby, President; Hal Mitchell, Vice President; Holly Cox, Secretary; other officers remaining in their positions. Marion Schiefer moved to accept and Nancy Madden seconded, and the motion passed. Ken thanked the outgoing officers.

Ken conducted the species tally, and then dinner was served. Following the meal, Jason Hoeksema, President of Delta Wind Birds, held a raffle as a fundraiser for the organization, which seeks to improve habitat for migrating shorebirds. Jeff Harris then introduced the speaker, Dr. Scott Rush, an assistant professor in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries & Aquaculture at Mississippi State University and a specialist in Wildlife Ecology and Management. His speech, "Recent Avian Research in Mississippi and Beyond," described research involving species as varied as Golden Eagles, Double-crested Cormorants, and Eastern Bluebirds. Following the program, Marion announced plans for Sunday field trip. The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Submitted by Martha Swan, MOS Secretary

SPECIES LIST: 2016 MOS Fall Meeting

September 30 - October 2 2016, Starkville and Columbus areas including Noxubee NWR

Canada Goose	Hairy Woodpecker	American Redstart	Scarlet Tanager
Wood Duck	Red-cockaded Woodpecker	Cerulean Warbler	Northern Cardinal
Gadwall	Northern Flicker	Northern Parula	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Mallard	Pileated Woodpecker	Magnolia Warbler	Blue Grosbeak
Northern Shoveler	American Kestrel	Yellow Warbler	Indigo Bunting
Ruddy Duck	Peregrine Falcon	Palm Warbler	Red-winged Blackbird
Wild Turkey	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Pine Warbler	Eastern Meadowlark
Pied-billed Grebe	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Yellow-throated Warbler	Common Grackle
Wood Stork	Acadian Flycatcher	Black-throated Green Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Double-crested Cormorant	Eastern Phoebe	Eastern Towhee	Baltimore Oriole
American White Pelican	Eastern Kingbird	Chipping Sparrow	House Finch
Great Blue Heron	Loggerhead Shrike	Field Sparrow	American Goldfinch
Great Egret	White-eyed Vireo	Savannah Sparrow	House Sparrow
Snowy Egret	Yellow-throated Vireo	Swamp Sparrow	
Little Blue Heron	Blue-headed Vireo	Summer Tanager	Total Species: 120
Cattle Egret	Philadelphia Vireo		
Roseate Spoonbill	Red-eyed Vireo		
Black Vulture	Blue Jay		
Turkey Vulture	American Crow		
Bald Eagle	Fish Crow		
Northern Harrier	Tree Swallow		
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Northern Rough-winged Swallow		
Cooper's Hawk	Cliff Swallow		
Red-shouldered Hawk	Barn Swallow		
Red-tailed Hawk	Carolina Chickadee		
Purple Gallinule	Tufted Titmouse		
Common Gallinule	Red-breasted Nuthatch		
Killdeer	White-breasted Nuthatch		
Spotted Sandpiper	Brown-headed Nuthatch		
Greater Yellowlegs	Carolina Wren		
Least Sandpiper	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher		
Pectoral Sandpiper	Ruby-crowned Kinglet		
Rock Pigeon	Eastern Bluebird		
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Swainson's Thrush		
Mourning Dove	Wood Thrush		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	American Robin		
Eastern Screech Owl	Gray Catbird		
Great Horned Owl	Brown Thrasher		
Barred Owl	Northern Mockingbird		
Chimney Swift	European Starling		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Blue-winged Warbler		
Belted Kingfisher	Black-and-white Warbler		
Red-headed Woodpecker	Tennessee Warbler		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Nashville Warbler		
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Common Yellowthroat		
Downy Woodpecker	Hooded Warbler		

MOS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

RENEWAL _____ NEW MEMBER _____

DUES:

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

DUES:

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

VISIT MOS ON THE WEB!

MISSBIRD@freelists.org • www.missbird.org

MOS Member Photos

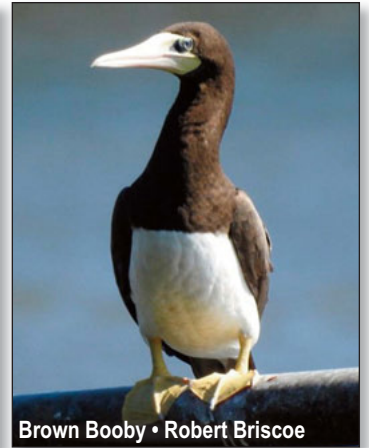
MOS members are invited to submit photos for publication in the Newsletter. Send to gsknight@hughes.net. See page 2 for details!



American Coots • Robert Briscoe



Painted Bunting • Holly Cox



Brown Booby • Robert Briscoe



Sanderling • Wayne Patterson



Couch's Kingbird • JR Rigby



American Oystercatcher (banded) • Holly Cox



Peregrine Falcon • Hal Mitchell



Sparrow identification workshop at Strawberry Plains • JR Rigby



Semi-palmated Plover • Jason Hoeksema

MOS SPRING 2017 MEETING – REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____ E-Mail _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Telephone _____

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

Name: _____ E-Mail: _____

• Registration

\$35.00 (Member) per person ___ Person(s) X \$ 35.00 = \$ _____

\$40.00 (Non-Member) per person ___ Person(s) X \$ 40.00 = \$ _____

\$20.00 (Student) per person ___ Person(s) X \$ 20.00 = \$ _____

Banquet entrees include 1 meat option (brisket or chicken) with 2 sides from green beans, broccoli, or mashed potatoes and gravy. Please indicate your meat preference (additional dietary restrictions, contact JR Rigby, jr.rigby@gmail.com). ___ Brisket ___ Chicken ___ Vegetarian (substitute additional side)

• 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 FORM TO REACH WAYNE NO LATER THAN FRIDAY, APRIL 7!



**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.