

THE MISSISSIPPI KITE

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July 2007



**Mississippi
Ornithological
Society**

THE MISSISSIPPI KITE

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Information for Authors

The Mississippi Kite publishes original articles that advance the study of birdlife in the state of Mississippi. Submission of articles describing species occurrence and distribution, descriptions of behaviors, notes on the identification of Mississippi birds, as well as scientific studies from all fields of ornithology are encouraged. All manuscripts, in both a hard copy and digital copy format, should be submitted to the editor.

COPY – Paper manuscripts should be *typed, double-spaced* throughout, on high quality paper. Digital copy manuscripts should be prepared using 12 pt. Times New Roman font. If possible, please submit computer files in Microsoft Word although WordPerfect formats will be accepted. Handwritten manuscripts will also be accepted, but please contact the editor prior to submission. Scientific names should be *italicized*.

STYLE – For questions of style consult previous issues of *The Mississippi Kite*. Manuscripts should include a title page (including names and addresses of all authors), text (beginning on page 2), literature cited (if applicable), tables, figure legends (on a separate page), and figures. Number all pages (in the upper right-hand corner) through the tables. Avoid footnotes.

LITERATURE CITED – List all references cited in the text alphabetically by the author's last name in the Literature Cited section. Citations should conform to the style of a recent issue of *The Mississippi Kite*.

NOMENCLATURE - Common names of bird species should be capitalized. Provide the scientific name (*italicized*) at the first mention of each species. Nomenclature should follow the American Ornithologists' Union Checklist of North American Birds, 7th edition (1998) and the 42nd (2000) through 47th (2006) supplements.

TABLES – Tables should be formatted with the size of *The Mississippi Kite* in mind and should be interpretable without reference to the text.

FIGURES – Figures should be appropriate for photoreproduction without retouching.

THE MISSISSIPPI KITE

The Mississippi Kite is a biannual periodical published by the Mississippi Ornithological Society to record and further the study of Mississippi birdlife.

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COVER PHOTO: Judy Touns on the beach in Gulfport, Mississippi, holding a Least Tern chick in July, 1977. Photo by Jerry Jackson.

INTRODUCTION

Marion Schiefer, Co-Editor

This issue of *The Mississippi Kite* is dedicated to articles written in memory of Judy Toups, who passed away on 27 February 2007. Judy was one of the best known birders in Mississippi during her lifetime. According to her son, Jay Toups, she started birdwatching in 1972. She took up painting earlier in that year, he says, and “many of her paintings featured birds.” Soon “she obtained a field guide and binoculars and began learning to identify each bird” (Toups 2007). JoRee Pease and Tish Machado both also mention in their articles written for this issue that Judy’s interest in birds began in the early 1970’s when her parents gave her a bird feeder.

Judy started birdwatching in her backyard in Gulfport, Mississippi, but she quickly expanded her range and knowledge to include all of Mississippi’s coastal counties. Before long she was recognized as an expert on Mississippi birds. She wrote a column about birdwatching for many years for the Gulfport-Biloxi newspaper, the *Sun Herald*, and taught a series of bird identification classes. She led her students and others interested in learning from her on field trips—a group that came to be known as the “Bushwhackers.”

Judy helped to found a local chapter of the Audubon Society named the Mississippi Coast Audubon Society, an organization that has played an important role in the

conservation of habitats for birds and other wildlife along the coast. She also became active in the Mississippi Ornithological Society (MOS) and served the organization as Secretary from 1977-1980, as Editor of the MOS Newsletter from 1981-1986, and as President from 1986-1988. She contributed many articles to *The Mississippi Kite* from 1976 through 1990 (see list in last article in this issue). Just looking at the titles of those articles indicates how much Judy contributed to Mississippi bird records. She also published articles in national birding magazines such as *Birder's World* and *Bird Watcher's Digest* and co-authored two books on birding on the Mississippi coast--*Birds and Birding on the Mississippi Coast* with Jerry Jackson as co-author in 1987 and *Guide to Birding Coastal Mississippi and Adjacent Counties* in 2004 with co-authors Jerry Bird and Stacy Peterson.

After Hurricane Katrina devastated coastal Mississippi in August, 2005, Judy led the efforts to help birds and other wildlife recover, an effort that came to be called "Operation Backyard Recovery." She also led in efforts to help birders who lost all or part of their homes to Katrina. But the after effects of Katrina ultimately forced Judy to move away from the coast she loved so much. According to her son, Jay, when his sister Christine lost her job about nine months after the storm because of economic slowdown in the coastal counties, she and their mother decided to relocate to Decatur, Alabama. By that time Judy's health was beginning to fail and by the beginning of February, 2007, her "health had declined noticeably." By February 27 she was gone (Toups 2007). As Dena and Don McKee said in a post to the Missbird listserv shortly after they heard of her death on that day, "All nature has lost a very dear friend" (McKee 2007).

This is just a brief summary of some of the many contributions Judy Toups made in encouraging and strengthening birding in Mississippi. As you continue to read the pages that follow, you will get a good idea of what her life meant to many of her friends and colleagues.

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McKee, Don and Dena. 27 Feb. 2007. Post to Missbird listserv, missbird@listserv.olemiss.edu. Hosted by the University of Mississippi, University, Mississippi.

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BEATING A DEAD HORSE

Ned Boyajian
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We've all heard that expression haven't we? Usually around noon on one of those dull days when thoughts of po' boys began to outweigh prothonotaries.

But in thinking about what I could say to remember and honor Judy, I recalled having heard her use that expression more than once in quite another context. That was when voicing her exasperation (and as usual, blaming herself) for the apparent lack of interest of most of her associates in any systematic collection of data, of any interest in the "why" of what they were observing.

The very first time I met her (about twenty years ago, in the Ansley chenier) one of the first things she asked me was "Do you keep records?" I was more than non-plussed. I'd never known any active birders who *didn't* keep records. Welcome to the Mississippi Coast! In connection with a project I'm working on, I recently had occasion to read through some thirty years worth of *The Mississippi Kite*, particularly the Birds Around the State compilation; input from the coast has been virtually non-existent for many years. Contributions to North American Birds? Even less.

True there is an occasional posting to MISSBIRD. But recently when I tried to obtain some details about one of

them, the contributor, one of our better birders, could not recall them because no records were kept.

So if you want to honor and remember Judy in a way that would be significant to her, you could do worse than to begin participating and contributing to her compelling interest, the documentation and understanding of the birdlife of the place she loved so well.

JUDY TOUPS: FOR THE BIRDS

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When I first met Judy Toups, in June 1975 at a Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) colony in Gulfport, Mississippi, we hit it off right away – but tenuously. I was “Dr. Jackson – the ornithologist from Mississippi State University,” and Judy was a local birder – older than I was by 13 years, a local leader of all things birding, and incredibly active and knowledgeable of Gulf Coast birds – even though she had just taken up birding in a big way in about 1972. We were both timid in our pronouncements of identification of less familiar birds – she apparently in awe of my education and title, and I because I knew I didn’t know the local birds as she did. The ice was soon broken as we each made a few mistakes in the company of one another, laughed about them, and learned from them. We acknowledged through mutual respect our individual strengths and weaknesses and learned from one another.

For nearly three decades, whenever I went to the Gulf Coast, Judy was likely to be the first person I would contact. She was always in touch with what was happening with birds on the Gulf Coast. Her home, sofa, and floor were always open. She became birding mentor to both me and my students. Her gravelly voice, the sparkle in her eyes, and her

loving “house mother” approach made her legendary among generations of my students. Of course she was also legendary for the number of cigarettes she enjoyed – no doubt contributing to her gravelly voice. But Judy was always – always respectful with her smoking. On long trips she looked forward to the next stop and it could be a running joke. She would sometimes ask me “How are we doing on gas?” and I would know it was time for a break. She would be the first out of the van with binoculars around her neck and a cigarette ready to light away from the group.

Judy flew aerial surveys with me over the barrier islands off the Mississippi coast and went with me several times by boat to the islands. I remember one cold winter day when we went to Horn Island. The waves were bad. I had to anchor offshore, and we would have to wade in. Judy was cold and not feeling well; she decided she had best wait in the boat rather than get thoroughly soaked. I said “Judy, would you trust me to carry you ashore?” She eagerly responded, “Would you?” And I did.

I also initiated Judy into the fold of “professional ornithology” and she learned the importance of documentation and record keeping. She passed it on and became “advisor” in my absence when graduate students such as Martha Hays and Wayne Weber worked on the coast. Judy’s leadership and influence with the Mississippi Coast Audubon Society (of which she was a founder in 1975) introduced me to new friends, providing me with additional eyes and ears on the coast and very importantly, local moral and logistical support for our research.

Judy’s influence and importance was not only to birders and to ornithology, but to birds. This is demonstrated

by her drive and ability to get things done through her skill with words. The weekly column she wrote for the Gulfport newspaper, the *Sun Herald*, beginning in 1976 and running for more than 30 years, informed the community of events in nature, united the community in protecting wild things, and helped swell membership of the Mississippi Coast Audubon Society and Mississippi Ornithological Society. She was always positive, always informative, and always ready to look around the next bend. Could she ever write! My ego reached an all-time high as a result of a column she wrote in 1982, describing how we had met and many of our adventures (Toups 1982). Judy had an enormous capacity to win people over to birds and birding. Birds gave her joy – and she always passed that joy on.

Judy was intimately involved with the Mississippi Ornithological Society (MOS), and served as MOS secretary (1977-1980), MOS Newsletter editor (1981-1986), and president (1986-1988). She also played an active role on the board of directors of the American Birding Association (1988-1991) and put coastal Mississippi on the “must visit” list of birders around the world. She regularly taught Elderhostel classes in birding and was regularly available for advice and often hours afield for itinerant birders.

One of Judy’s defining efforts was the protection of Least Terns and Black Skimmers (*Rynchops niger*) that nest on the beach in Gulfport, Biloxi, and other areas along Mississippi’s mainland coast. Early efforts of the Mississippi Coast Audubon Society were led by Judy, and detailed in an article she wrote for *The Mississippi Kite* (Toups 1976). It was in part through her encouragement that my students and I continued working with Least Terns and Black Skimmers.

On the afternoon of 11 July 1981, Opal Dakin, one of my graduate students, and I were collecting behavioral data at a Black Skimmer colony on the Biloxi beach in front of the Veteran's Administration hospital. We were parked in the public parking lot along U.S. 90 less than 30 meters from the center of the colony as we recorded nest attendance and interactions among the birds. The colony stretched for nearly 150 meters along the beach and occasionally people walking on the beach at the water's edge would disturb the birds. When many of the adult skimmers suddenly took flight we saw two 9-13-year-old boys near the east end of the colony throwing sticks at the flying birds. We then saw them chase a two-week-old chick, capture it, toss it into the air, and hit it like a baseball with a bat-sized stick. I jumped from the vehicle and ran to them as quickly as I could without stepping on eggs or chicks. By the time I reached them they had killed over 40 chicks and smashed several eggs. I gave both a stern lecture and they responded by saying their mother said they could do it. They left and I called Judy. She immediately came to the colony and Judy took us to the newspaper office with film I had used to document the atrocity. What ensued as a result of Judy's, the *Sun Herald's*, and Gulf Coast Audubon's efforts and the cooperation of many local people and government offices was a conservation effort that continues to this day and is now known around the world. It is known under the title "Nest in Peace" – a slogan that appeared on bumper stickers, t-shirts, and signs posted in the Gulfport colonies within days of the incident (Jackson and Jackson 1985).

In May 1977, we hosted the annual meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Society, a professional organization that prides itself on including many avocational ornithologists among its members. Jay and Judy Touns

attended that meeting and Judy contributed to it as a member of the local committee and in leading field trips. In March 1980, Judy again attended a Wilson Ornithological Society meeting. This time she traveled with me and a group of students from Mississippi State to Corpus Christi, Texas.

After we left Mississippi State in 1999, I rarely got to see Judy, but she contacted me two or three times a year with questions or comments – always active, continuing to write her weekly column, always getting things done for birds and birders. When I was asked to give a lecture for Mississippi Audubon and lead a field trip to Tensas National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana on 11 February 2005, I was so pleased that Judy was there. We spent a wonderful day in the field together – birding and reminiscing. What a grand lady!



Judy and Jerry on 11 Feb. 2005
(Photo courtesy of Jerry Jackson)

Judy died on 27 February 2007, but her legacy can be seen in each new bird we encounter, many arriving with the warm breezes of spring. And we can watch her legacy – and our own – grow by taking others to the fields and shore as she did to find the joy of birding.

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JUDY TOUPS' FRIENDS

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As you all know, Judy had many friends. Friends from here and friends from there, friends from just about everywhere. Because of people like Judy I feel that I know each and every one of her friends. Over the last 25 years I have spent many, many hours getting to know her friends, so I would like to share with you my knowledge about Judy's friends.

Now these friends would show up just about anytime they saw fit. Some showed up early, which usually got her all excited and some showed up late, which made her wonder what had happened to cause their tardiness. Then there were those that didn't even bother to come. Of course the ones that came that she didn't even know (that were coming from some unknown hole in the wall) really got her blood stirring. AND when one of her friends came into Mississippi for the first time.... well, this was the ultimate friendship. She would call all her local buddies just to come over and see this special friend and spend the rest of the day with them. What a true friend Judy was!

Her friends wore many different sets of attire. As a matter of fact some changed their clothing according to the season. The gaudiest suits were worn in Spring with special emphasis on her male friends. They would really dress up in their best attire, outdoing their mates hands down. Now some of her couple friends were really weird due to the fact that

they dressed almost identically. Go figure. Then there were several groups that were probably cousins or the like because they all dressed in drab colors like browns or grays or off-whites or drab streaky suits. It was really hard to keep up with their names. After Summer had passed, it seemed like many of her friends would come from all over and stop by with their children to see Judy, stay a couple of weeks and then off again to some far away place. Judy would tell everybody not to fret because they would stop back by again in several months with the children all grown up. She insisted that they had been doing that for as long as she could remember. When we first met Judy we all thought she was a little odd, but after several years had passed and her friends kept stopping and taking time in their travels to see her every year, we decided she knew exactly what she was talking about.

Some of the places she would take us to see her friends were along the beaches, out in the Mississippi Sound, on the islands, in the woods, in a park, along any roadside, in someone's backyard, AND as a matter of fact she had friends everywhere she went. Heck, she would take you to Texas just to show you the friends that she knew.

Some of them were quite shy and you had to be quick if you wanted to see them. Judy really wanted you to see them and would make funny noises of all sorts to entice them into view. Now we really thought she had gone off her rocker making those silly noises, BUT low and behold, her friends would come out into the open and pose for us. Over the years this method proved to be quite successful for anybody that tried it on their shy friends.

She would find a nice couple in some remote area and would tell the story that it was their first time to raise a family in Mississippi, and that they were really from points farther to the West. She had one small family of friends that was one of the most beautiful we had ever seen. Every time we visited Judy, she had to take us to see them. They weren't the easiest of her friends to find. Judy recognized their voices and would have to tell us where they were. Sure enough, if you looked long enough there they were. It would be well worth the effort.

Her friends wore a multitude of colors: some totally black, some totally white, some bright orange and black, some all red, some red and black, some with various amounts of blue and white, ones with yellow mixed with black and brown, some had red throats and black throats, some streaky brown and on and on. So MANY, BUT Judy could name each and every one just as if they were her own.

By now you should know who Judy's Friends were. They were THE BIRDS!!!! She absolutely LIVED Birds!!! She loved these feathered creatures more than life itself. I know for sure that every season that passes in the future, Judy's Friends, the world of birds, our fine-feathered friends, the avian world..... will miss her dearly. They will miss her pointing those binoculars in their direction as she related all she knew to some new OR experienced birder about what she was seeing. You have to believe her friends will be off their mark somewhat while approaching the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Because for years they HAD to have used Judy as a LANDMARK during migration!!!

JUDY TOUPS, A TRIBUTE

Tish Machado
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Jackson, MS 39206

On February 27, Mississippi lost a State Treasure, Judy Touns, field birder, teacher, writer, and conservationist extraordinaire. In the early 1970's her mother gave Judy, a young Navy wife living in Biloxi, a bird feeder. Judy was introduced to her destiny. With a remarkable single mindedness she began to devote her considerable talents and fine mind to birds and birding. Gifted with the natural tools of a great field birder--a quick eye, keen hearing, a scholar's mind, and an encyclopedic memory for sight and sound--Judy set out to see all the birds in Mississippi and later in North America. In doing so she recognized the birding opportunities in this state, which is not only located on the Mississippi flyway but which contains an enviable diversity of habitat. She made the recognition of Mississippi as a birding destination, especially the Coast, one of her heart's desires. This was not an easy task at the time. Judy had no degree to give her credibility and she was a woman in a field largely dominated by men. Yet her talent and dedication won the respect of her peers. Judy became one of the first women to be elected to the board of the prestigious American Birding Association. Seeing the need to protect the Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) population on the Coast, she helped to found a local chapter of the National Audubon Society to lead in the effort. She was also a member of the Mississippi Ornithological Society.

Judy, however, is perhaps most fondly remembered as a teacher eager to share her love of birds and birding with the community. For over thirty years she wrote a weekly column in the *Sun Herald* newspaper. These informative and exquisitely written essays, true gems of prose, followed the birds through the seasons and taught innumerable students and backyard birders alike the identification and appreciation of natural wonders just outside their windows. Her book *Birds and Birding on the Mississippi Coast*, published with Jerry Jackson as co-author in 1987, remains a classic of its genre.

As a teacher of field birding she may be unsurpassed. Her students remember her creativity – teaching warbler identification with paint chips of all things – and her dedication – up and at'em at six every Saturday and Sunday morning birding all day both days for eight weeks every fall and spring. For every class every bird was presented afresh with the joy and excitement of discovery. All of Mississippi was a resource. In the winter her classes would travel to North Mississippi to see birds not found on the Coast. Bemused Delta farmers drove their tractors past shivering, but enthusiastic little groups of people were looking through scopes and binoculars at what may have been to the farmers little more than freshly plowed fields. To Judy's students those fields were treasure troves of geese, pipits and larkspurs. With experiences such as this Judy enriched, even changed, the lives of her students who under her tutelage have been in touch with wonder.

Until her last few years age and illness did little to dull Judy's powers. In 2004 she, Jerry Bird and Stacy Jon Peterson published a *Guide to Birding Coastal Mississippi and Adjacent Counties* and that same year the Mississippi

Coast Birding Trail. The almost total devastation of her beloved Coast by Hurricane Katrina, did, however, break her heart.

Judy Toups is not altogether lost to us. All Mississippi as a whole has gained significance, as she hoped it would, as a state whose many assets for birders will continue to be worthy of enjoyment and preservation.

JUDY TOUPS, A LEADER EXTRAORDINAIRE

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MOS lost part of its foundation on February 27, 2007, with the death of Judith Touns in Decatur, Alabama. She was an active member for many years, a past president and a member of the records committee. She was instrumental in recruiting many others to the ranks of active birding. There surely are few, if any, birders on the coast who were not taught by Judy, and her influence is felt throughout the state.

Judy was born in Gloucester, Massachusetts, on November 30, 1930, and grew up in that area on the Cape Ann peninsula northeast of Boston. In 1955 she married Jay Touns of Gulfport. Jay was in the Navy and Judy had six children while moving frequently as his career required. When Jay retired from the Navy in 1965 they settled in Gulfport.

Judy's interest in birds began when her parents gave her a bird feeder and she acquired a field guide. With nobody to teach her she studied on her own and became a nationally recognized expert. She wrote a column on birds for the *Biloxi Sun Herald* for thirty-five years. In the early 1980's Judy taught a series of bird identification classes in which she demonstrated her talent as a teacher. She led birding Elderhostels on the coast for several years. She was a director of the American Birding Association.

While probably best known to MOS members for her knowledge of birds, Judy was a multitalented person – seamstress, painter, writer, decorator, gourmet cook, tour leader extraordinaire, master teacher. Whatever was needed, whatever she was interested in, she mastered.

Judy was a founder of the Mississippi Coast Audubon Society and led the establishment of the Nest in Peace project for the protection of Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) colonies on the coastal beaches, which still continues.

After Hurricane Katrina, Judy led Operation Backyard Recovery, which focused on helping people and wildlife recover from damage to trees and habitat. She was instrumental in getting hundreds of donated bird books to people who lost theirs in the storm.

Many tributes have been written about Judy since her death. One was by Mark LaSalle, Director, Pascagoula River Audubon Center: “Judy was a wonderful person, a great advocate for conservation, a friend, and inspired many from all walks of life to watch the birds. Please do what Judy wanted all of us to do... look outside and enjoy nature.”

WELCOME TO MISSISSIPPI: A LETTER FROM JUDY TOUPS

Terence L. Schiefer
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Mississippi State University
Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762-9775

In the spring of 1986, while in graduate school at Penn State University, I was offered a position as curator of the Mississippi Entomological Museum at Mississippi State University. I happily accepted the offer despite never having visited Starkville or Mississippi State. Being an avid birder, I was eager to learn whatever I could about Mississippi's bird life prior to leaving my native Pennsylvania and starting my new job in Mississippi at the end of August. However, I could find very little information on Mississippi's birds as no state or local bird book or bird finding guide had been published at that time. The only Mississippi birder that I had ever heard of was Judy Touns. I had read several articles that she had authored in birding magazines, and she was listed as a subregional editor for *American Birds*. She also had fielded a Mississippi team in New Jersey's "World Series of Birding" birdathon during the same two years that our team from Penn State participated in the event, although I never met her on those occasions. I wrote to Judy to see if there was a list of Mississippi birds available and if she could suggest some good places to find birds in the state. The following letter is her reply. It certainly made me feel welcome to Mississippi and excited about birding in the state and is typical of the encouragement and help that Judy gave to many birders. In the years to follow I would have the

opportunity to share many birding adventures in Mississippi with Judy Toups.

4 Hartford Place
Gulfport, MS 39507
June 23, 1986

Dear Terry,

Enclosed find latest Mississippi checklist, replete with errors. Hope it will help you. You should really enjoy birding here; as you can see from the list, we have a very interesting and varied avifauna.

When you get to MSU look up Dr. Jerry Jackson in the Department of Biological Sciences; he is a first class ornithologist. Also you might touch base with some of his students....a good friend of mine, Mal Hodges, will be at State this fall in the graduate program. I consider Mal the best birder in the state, and feel that he would welcome companionship in the field.

If you get to the coast, by all means phone me (896 3153) and maybe we can explore together.

We have a state ornithological society (Mississippi Ornithological Society) which meets each spring and fall...not sure exactly when and where the fall meeting is, but Dr.

Jackson can help you on that later. You will also find that there is an Audubon chapter in the Starkville area...they do a CBC and I'm sure would welcome your contribution.

The hot spots in the Starkville area are pretty much terra incognita to me, but Noxubee NWR always has a good variety of birds. The best birding is on the coast, naturally. Spring and fall migrations are seldom dull anywhere in the state. Some other good areas are at Grenada and Sardis lakes, Barnett Reservoir at Jackson, Yazoo NWR in the Delta, etc. I know it won't take you long to find some heretofore unknown birding hot spots yourself.

If you are in the state in mid-August, why don't you attend the AOU meeting at state (details enclosed) and I'll see you there.

Please forgive this short and uninspired response to your inquiries...just returned from Florida and mountains of work await. However, lay aside your apprehensions...you are coming to a state that has been underbirded until quite recently, and much remains for a birder with pioneer spirit!

Judy Toups

IN MEMORY OF JUDY TOUPS

From Barbara Bowen, Waveland, Mississippi:

To paraphrase John Muir—In every walk with Judy in nature one receives far more than he seeks.

There was always the expected as Judy had prepared us with her questions. What should be in this habitat, season, time of day, weather.....? And when a certain species was sought--what are the field marks, colors, where placed? She was able to anticipate my questions--waiting for the information to soak in and then posing the next one as it was beginning to form in my mind. She gave us the where, what, how and "now go get it".

And then there was always the unexpected: a lifer and the macarana, a spectacular view, a show-off bird or a strafing by a Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*). Every outing had a star bird.

Judy has added so much to so many lives. Just tuning into the amazing world of birds—something that is everywhere and others look at without observing—has so turned over my life and given me a hobby that is always there at the drop of a chirp. Judy is with me always.

From Jan Dubuisson, Pass Christian, Mississippi:

I have known Judy Toups since May of 1982, when I showed up for one of her "come join me" birding trips to what was then the Pascagoula River Marsh. I had become very interested in birds over a year before that, but with two small children, I had never been able to go on one of the field trips she offered. What a day! I think I got about 30 life birds that day, and she got so excited because I recognized a Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*) without having seen one before. (She just didn't know how many hours I had spent looking at that particular bird in the field guide as the one I most wanted to see!) We did the dikes and saw American Avocets (*Recurvirostra Americana*), Black-necked Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*), peeps, etc.; then we went to the Gallinule Pond that is gone now; and when everyone else was hot and left us, she and I went to the Pascagoula Wildlife Management area, picking up such life birds for me as the two kites, flycatchers, vireos, etc. It was a spectacular day and just the beginning of a life-long avocation. She opened up the world of field birding to me and, in the process, a whole life of new birds, new places, and lots of new friends. That one day changed my life forever, and I will never forget all the fun times we had, particularly playing "Name That Bird" while traveling in the car to some new and exciting experience.

We should all aspire to leave behind a legacy like Judy's.

From Susan Epps, Diamond Head, Mississippi:

When I first moved to the Mississippi Coast I read Judy's column in the *Sun Herald* newspaper. It had her e-mail address, so I contacted her. She responded and invited me to go birding with the Bushwhackers. It was a great opportunity for a newcomer to the coast to meet new people and learn birding spots.

Her book and her articles were very informative and enhanced my birding experiences as did just knowing her.

After Katrina she got books and bird houses for those of us who lost our homes.

Her knowledge and friendship are greatly missed.

From Frances Henne, Goodman, Mississippi:

Judy Toups taught many Elderhostel groups about Mississippi birds. I was fortunate to be on one of her last trips and enjoyed learning about coastal birds from her. Many of these birds were unfamiliar to me at that time.

She knew where to find all the common and rare birds on the shore and in the swamps. The many tips she gave us on identifying the different species of gulls, terns and swallows helped us all to know these species better.

It's a trip that will be remembered by all the Elderhostel participants. Judy and the birds flying over us on the shore will always be part of that memory.

From Malcolm Hodges, Atlanta, Georgia:

Judy Toups and I began birding when I was 19. We were soon almost constant birding companions, and Judy became a surrogate parent to me. She taught me my birds, but many other things as well, including the value of courage. Without Judy's influence, I might never have joined the Peace Corps, which was a transformative experience. Among others in my circle, there was universal disapproval for this decision, but Judy encouraged me, knowing that it would be good for me; she was correct. My Peace Corps stint in Ghana eventually and circuitously led to graduate school and to my career with The Nature Conservancy in Georgia.

Judy was thus one of the most profound influences in my life. Without her, I'm not sure where I would be right now, but it would certainly have been a very different life. I owe so much to her.

From Penny Kochtitzky, Hattiesburg, Mississippi:

I remember Judy Toups telling me that she didn't go to her mailbox without her binoculars. She was an inspiration to wanna' be's such as this novice.

From Sarajane Smith, Saucier, Mississippi:

Judy spread her love of birding to all the *Sun Herald* readers in South Mississippi. There was always someone

talking about her articles, even if they only had a slight interest in backyard birding.

Jack and I took Judy's birding classes when we first started birding. From these classes we grew a love for birding that has enhanced our lives. Many birders have gained knowledge from Judy that have made them have a true love of birdwatching.

**ARTICLES BY JUDY TOUPS PUBLISHED IN
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