

NEWSLETTER OF THE \_\_\_\_\_

# MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 67, No. 1

APRIL 2022



## Spring Meeting Set for the Gulf Coast April 29 - May 1

The spring meeting of the Mississippi Ornithological Society will be held on the Gulf Coast in the Biloxi and Gulfport areas. The main field trip on Saturday will be to Ship Island by ferry, with optional beach shorebirding afterwards at Jones Park in Gulfport. There will also be an alternative, mainland field trip option.

Details will be discussed at the Friday Meet & Greet, but tickets will be required for Ship Island Ferry and can be purchased in advance for a small discount (<https://msshipisland.com/round-trip-ferry/>). The Saturday banquet will be held at Patio 44 restaurant in Biloxi, with a talk by special guest Nick Lund on "The Sorry State of State Birds: How America Badly Screwed Up Our Avian Ambassadors."



**Nick Lund**

© Audubon/Camilla Cerea

### • REGISTRATION

The registration fee for the Spring Meeting is \$40 per person or \$20 per student. Please register online (<https://missbird.org/meetings/>), or make check payable to MOS and mail to: Wayne Patterson, MOS Treasurer, 283A CR 501, Shannon, MS 38868. **Mail your registration to reach Wayne no later than April 15.** Dues are payable in January of each year. Check your mailing label for your dues status.

### • ACCOMMODATIONS

A limited block of hotel rooms have been reserved at the following hotel at a reduced rate, but will be held only until April 15 (advance reservations are highly recommended due to limited availability and much better rates on what will be a busy weekend on the coast). Please make your reservation as soon as possible, and be sure to refer to code "MSO" (not "MOS", sorry!) or "MS Ornithology Group" to get the contracted discount: **Hampton Inn & Suites** at I-10 in Gulfport, 15580 Daniel Blvd Gulfport MS 39503, phone 228-539-0601 (then choose "0"). Discount rate: \$139/night.

### • FRIDAY, APRIL 29

Pascagoula River Audubon Center

3:30-5:00 p.m. MOS Board/Officers' Meeting (PRAC)

5:00-7:00 p.m. Book signing and social with Nick Lund, and discussion of Saturday field trips (PRAC). Light refreshments served.

### • SATURDAY, APRIL 30

6:30-7:30 a.m. ....For those staying at the Hampton Inn, breakfast is provided in the breakfast room.

7:30 a.m. ....Field trips: All field trips will meet in the parking lot of the hotel.

Lunch .....On your own. Pack a lunch if you are going to Ship Island.

6:30 p.m. ....Banquet: Patio 44 (124 Main St, Biloxi 39530; 228-207-2628; <https://www.patiofortyfour.com/biloxi-ms>)

Meal will be served buffet style and include: Salad, gumbo, choice of pot roast or crawfish etoufee, Gouda grits, roasted vegetables, sourdough rolls, bread pudding, and non-alcoholic beverages. The cost of this meal is included in your registration fee. Alcoholic beverages can be purchased separately on site.

7:30 p.m. ....Business Meeting and Species Tally

**Guest Speaker:** Nick Lund, "The Sorry State of State Birds: How America Badly Screwed Up Our Avian Ambassadors"

Nick has been interested in state birds ever since he learned about Maine's Black-capped Chickadee in school. But any grown birder who looks at the list of state birds knows that states have made some, let's say, interesting choices. Nick will talk about the history and development of state birds, discuss the good and not-good choices from each state, with special emphasis on the particularly egregious selection of one of his favorite states: Mississippi. Nick Lund spent one year living in Mississippi between 2010 and 2011, working at the Sea Grant Law Center at Ole Miss. He did more birding than working, seeing 260 species with Jason, Gene, and many others. He eventually returned to his home state of Maine to work for Maine Audubon. He recently authored the *ABA Field Guide to the Birds of Maine*, a middle-grade science book called *The Ultimate Biography of Earth*, and other upcoming titles.

### • SUNDAY, MAY 1

6:30-7:30 a.m. ....Breakfast

7:30 a.m. ....Field trips: meet in the parking lot of the hotel.

# President's Corner

by JR Rigby, MOS President

Oxford, MS – Gardening is a very popular pastime in part because of the rich associations with so many senses. From the hard manual labor of preparing a garden, to the smell of particular flowers, the beauty of an orderly and productive bed, and the flavor of vine-ripened tomatoes. Smell, touch, taste, sight... but what does your garden sound like?

Of course, birders are often better than average at using their ears (if not to confuse this with being good listeners, necessarily). If you haven't tried learning to identify bird sounds, I enthusiastically encourage you to do so. No special equipment needed. I guarantee it will enrich your outdoor experience wherever you find yourself this spring, because birds are almost always present and vocal.

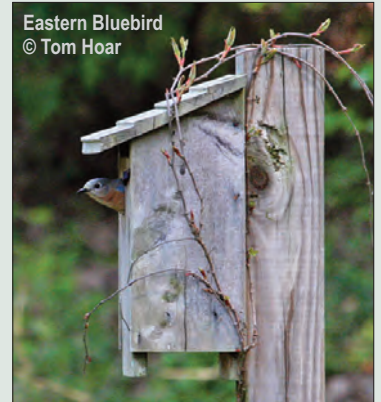
But the kind of listening I want to encourage here is also bigger than the focus on individual sounds. In the age of cheap digital cameras, we are bombarded with stunning photography. We instinctively judge the quality of visual composition in a painting or photo, and we strive for pleasing composition in our own creations and in the layout of our communities and college campuses.

But do we engage with sound as critically? Do we listen to the sonic composition of our landscapes? Do we recognize what should be there, what is pleasing, or what is alien and out of place? Do we try to create spaces where subtle sounds can be heard, the pianissimo as well as the forte? We don't think twice about making these kinds of judgments about visual spaces and setting high standards, but I think we often settle for the most chaotic soundscapes.

Now you might be thinking, "Well, I can't control all the noise coming from my neighbor's house." Of course, that is true. Nor am I encouraging us all to become curmudgeonly neighbors (although I may be one). Ultimately, though, we share the soundscape: with birds and with each other. As a medium for communication, our atmosphere is an increasingly noisy channel, if you'll forgive the pun. As we all know, sometimes being a good conversationalist is simply providing space for the other to get a word in; being a good listener can be recognizing when not to talk.

I'm not asking anyone to fix a neighbor. But spend a little time everyday listening, discerning, and appreciating the subtle dynamics of natural sounds. And maybe give a little consideration to your own contributions to your neighbor's soundscape.

JR Rigby



Eastern Bluebird  
© Tom Hoar

## Submitting Articles and Photos for the Newsletter

The *MOS Newsletter* is published biannually to inform members of upcoming meetings and birding events. The editor invites 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 180 dpi, to the email address listed below.

Articles and photos may be sent any time of the year, but if you would like for it to appear in a specific issue then it must be received by the following deadlines: **Spring Issue – March 1, Fall Issue – September 1.**

Please send your articles and/or photos to Cullen Brown, 160 Eagle Point Loop, Oxford MS 38655 or [brown2cu@gmail.com](mailto:brown2cu@gmail.com)

## MOS Officers and Board Members

President .....	JR Rigby
Vice President .....	Jason Hoeksema
Secretary .....	Lillie Gibb
Treasurer .....	Wayne Patterson
Past President .....	Ken Hackman
Mississippi Kite Editor .....	Nick Winstead
MOS Newsletter Editor .....	Cullen Brown
MOS Newsletter Design .....	Tom Hoar

Visit MOS on the web! at [www.missbird.org](http://www.missbird.org)



Semi-Palmated Plover  
© Larry Pace



Common Ground Dove  
© Cullen Brown



# Taking Part in a Big Year

By Gene Knight

Big Years are a birding event where you tally as many different bird species in a single calendar year. It can be guided by any of your own parameters, whether you bird the entire state, just a certain area, or even a single county. Whatever you want. If you decide to include the whole state, then your goal would be to break 300 species for the year. Logistics plays a major part in accomplishing this feat. Strategically, you would start the year by tallying as many winter species as possible, then do the same for spring and so on. Coastal birding is a must in the winter as well as the spring. Summer is slow, but there are resident breeding birds you will have to travel from one end of the state to see. Shorebirds begin to move through the state in July, so a site must be located, usually a spot in the Delta or a reliable catfish pond. Numerous trips to these shorebird sites are a MUST. Enduring the summer heat is a feat in itself but necessary to see many shorebirds you can't find elsewhere in the state. These are mostly fresh water shorebirds and the Gulf Coast doesn't have lots of habitat short of boating to the barrier islands. Then fall migration has lots to offer that you may have missed in spring. With fall being the season for tropical storms one MUST be ready to travel to the part of the state where it has passed through and endure much rain and wind! Then winter again might help you with misses from the first of the year. All through the year you MUST travel to see any Review Species that are reported. Here are a few items to think about that will put this activity in perspective. The State record is 330 species, and there are less than 10 birders who have broken the 300 mark! The current Checklist of the Birds of Mississippi includes 427 species. Of that number, 120 of those species are on the current Review Species List (which is attached). On that particular list, the rare/uncommon statewide list includes 45 species—inland includes another 21 species. There are currently over 160 breeding species in Mississippi.

So, quickly crunching some numbers: if you DO NOT see any Review Species, then that leaves you with 307 species for the year – that is, if you have tallied all the RARE species on that list for the state! One must go to the coast several times during the year. If you live on the coast, then you must travel north for many species that are not easy in southern Mississippi.

There are plenty of obstacles to deal with, the main one being the weather. When the opportunity arises for you to chase a special bird for your list, the wind may be blowing 15-20 mph, or it may be pouring down rain. You might also miss the bird by 30 minutes or a day. You might need to a boat to see a bird sitting in the middle of a large lake. The bird might be backlit. Hummingbirds will be at somebody's residence and you will have to make arrangements to be able to visit the location. You will have to monitor eBird, Missbird, Mississippi Birders Facebook page, and rare bird alerts to keep up with what you will need to travel for.

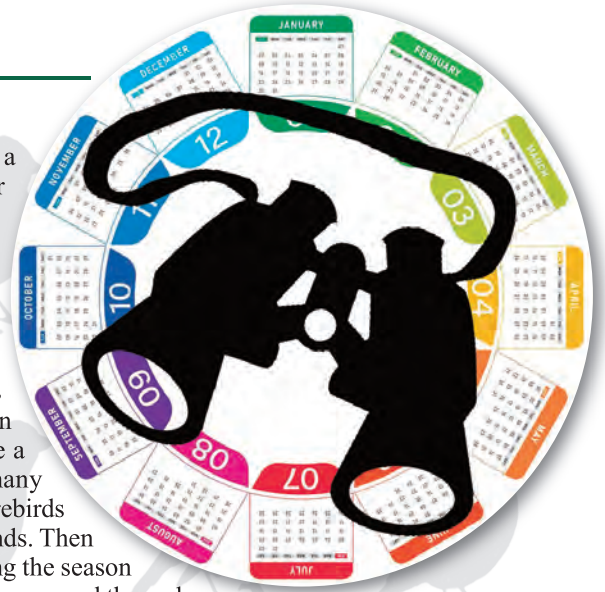


Great Cormorant  
© Andy Bell

So, you think you are ready to try for 300 species for 2022? Get started and good luck! Where you have to travel to find localized species:

Coast Birds only – Mottled Duck, Groove-billed Ani, Rare Hummers, Clapper Rail, American Oystercatcher, Snowy Plover, Piping Plover, Wilson's Plover, Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, Red Knot, Gull-billed Tern, Common Tern, Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, Black Skimmer, Magnificent Frigatebird, N Gannet, Brown Pelican, Tricolored Heron, Reddish Egret, Vermilion Flycatcher, Henslow's Sparrow, Nelson's Sparrow, Seaside Sparrow, Bronzed Cowbird, Boat-tailed Grackle.

Possible on Interior as well as coast (but Rare) – Mottled Duck, Scoters, Inca Dove, Black-bellied Plover, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Willet, Laughing Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Swallow-tailed Kite, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Vermilion Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Bachman's Sparrow, Yellow-headed Blackbird.





# GENE KNIGHT AND ANDY BELL'S BIG YEAR: 2021

Narrated by Gene Knight

**B**IRD, BIRD, BIRD is what you have to do as many days out of 365 as you can! The rewards can be GREAT, like adding a new species to your life and state lists. Our goal was to see over 300 species. Let me set the stage about the two birders involved here: Andy is married with two small children and owns his own landscaping business in Flora. Living in Oxford, Gene is 75+ years old and is retired and able to bird at will.

The winter season brought many birds to chase. There were 25 Review Species reported in the state. We both began 2021 listing our local year birds and chasing rarities like Evening and Black-headed Grosbeaks, Golden Eagle, and the State's 2nd Record of Chestnut-collared Longspur. We also rounded up the Rufous and Broad-tailed Hummers that wintered in Jackson plus the Black-legged Kittiwake



Western Grebe  
© Andy Bell

that Andy found on Christmas eve. So, we both had opportunities to pick up several for our personal lists. A Western Grebe, found by Ken Clough on the 13th of March and relocated by Andy, took me to Ross Barnett bright and early the next morning for an exceptionally close view. I missed the spring MOS meeting on the coast, which cost me lots of coastal residents.

We hadn't planned on a Big Year until several birding occasions with each other into late spring. Andy had made two coastal trips before this and was a dozen birds up on me. Meanwhile on 21-22 July Cullen Brown and Susan Wood caused a flurry in the birding world by discovering a 1st State Record and USA Rarity of an adult CURLEW SANDPIPER not far from Oxford in Quitman County. It was a 2-day wonder that I saw but Andy missed due to work-related circumstances.

We talked about how many rarities we each had. I checked my other two years where I had hit the 300 mark and noticed that we were both behind the pace, so we planned a coast trip in mid-August to the Barrier Islands. This would allow me to catch up and both of us to tally some new birds for our lists. We ended up bettering the pace by 20 species, which put us ahead of the game. We both had over 295 species for the year! At that point, we each had several species the other didn't and some of those would end up being misses for the year. Fall can be very slow, and 2021's fall migration was a flop. But lots of trips to the delta catfish farms for rare shorebirds kept us busy on the road every weekend.

Then Hurricane Ida hit the coast in August and came up through MS. Brown Noddy and Brown Booby were rare species seen on the coast but Ida deposited all 3 jaeger species and Sabine's Gulls (ALL Rare species) at Ross Barnett Reservoir. After Andy and Tom Moorman spotted a Pomarine Jaeger near the Marina on August 30th, I made arrangements to be there first thing the following morning. Dressed in my "Blue Shirt," I loaded up in Andy's boat, and we were off into the white-capped lake with 20-25 mph winds in search of seabirds. We weren't disappointed and soon Andy spotted a Magnificent Frigatebird being harassed by a jaeger. It was a Pomarine flying at and hitting the Frigatebird 3 times before it dropped the fish a hundred feet from us. The jaeger quickly landed on the fish and we eased up within 10-15 feet all the while Andy taking photos. A Ritz cracker would keep the bird near when another jaeger and a Sooty Tern came flying in. The second jaeger was smaller and soon we were staring at the State's 2nd Record of a Long-tailed Jaeger! Still within 10-15 feet away! WOW! Who sees that? It can't get much better than that. This proved to be one of the most memorable and exciting birding trips I have made in my 35 years of birding. The next day Tom Moorman saw and photographed an adult SABINE'S GULL on the same lake!! Back home birding after Ida on 7 September I found two Bridled Terns on Sardis Lake. About two weeks later, Andy called and said he was watching two Parasitic Jaegers on the lake harassing terns, so a few days later I was again riding in Andy's boat looking for my 3rd jaeger species for the year AND we located one of the two within an hour. Nobody in MS has ever seen all 3 species jaegers period.... but all in a single year! And then on September 30th, Andy spotted a juvenile SABINE'S Gull flying over the Madison Landing flying south out of sight. This put us both right at the magic number of 300 species for a single year with three months to go!!!



Pomarine Jaeger  
© Andy Bell



Parasitic Jaeger  
© Andy Bell

**(BIG YEAR, CONTINUED)**



Long-tailed Jaeger  
© Andy Bell



Black-headed Grosbeak  
© Andy Bell



Red-necked Phalarope  
© Andy Bell

We had missed the rare seabirds like Brown Noddy and Brown Booby that the Gulf Coast birders had seen from Hurricane Ida. It's hard to chase coastal storm birds without proper advanced help and somewhere to stay, etc. You don't know even if you can get to the coast at times. A trip back to the coast in October to chase a Tropical Kingbird only produced a Groove-billed Ani and Snowy Plover to get us over the 300 mark. The rest of October was spent traveling into the delta looking for a couple of rarities like Ruff and Hudsonian Godwit. We only spotted Buff-breasted and Upland Sandpipers—year birds nonetheless. Andy had White-winged Scoter at Ross Barnett, so I spent 2 days searching among lots of waterbirds with no luck. Back home and birding the northern Delta, I located Western Meadowlark, a big flock of Gr White-fronted Geese, and two needed Cackling Geese. Three days later, Andy and I attempted to locate the Cackling Geese and Western Meadowlark with no luck, but we found a couple of Short-eared Owls in the process.

December and one month to go, and we both had hit the coveted 300 mark, something which only five other birders had eclipsed in the past. December is spent chasing rarities and finding some trickier winter species. I had periodically checked one of my old favorite birding spots, the A&D Turf Farm (now defunct) in Lafayette County, and one day was fortunate enough to spot a Sprague's Pipit flush and call from the highway. The next day, December 6th, Andy was working nearby but did not find the pipit, so we headed for Panola County to chase a rare wintering Grasshopper Sparrow. After a successful chase and an hour later at Coldwater River NWR, Andy had his LeConte's Sparrow for the year. Two days later, I drove to Pace, MS and saw the Say's Phoebe that Larry Pace had found on the 7th. Andy's business interfered once again. Another planned trip to the coast for 3 sparrow species came 2 days later on 10-11 Dec. In addition to acquiring Henslow, Nelson's, and Seaside Sparrow plus two species of hummingbird, we ended our trip with a 1st-cycle Iceland Gull at Pass Christian Harbor. Now that really put us over the 310 mark. Andy worked in the Say's Phoebe on the 13th, and I relocated two Long-tailed Ducks on Sardis Lake on the 19th. And Andy was busy finding our Lifer Great Cormorant on Ross Barnett on the 21st. We were flirting with 315 species for the year! In the final days of 2021, and with Holly Cox's help, I saw the Tropical/Couch's Kingbird for my final bird of the year. We both have species that need to be confirmed by the MS Bird Records Committee before our final total can be resolved, but it is near that 315 mark.

A GREAT bunch of birds for a couple of GREAT birders!

**Some Stats from 2021 Big Year:**

Total species reported in the state for 2021 .....	343 species; Together we had 95% of them (326)
Review Species Reported.....	119; We had 20% of them
Rare/Uncommon species .....	45 reported; We had 77% of them
Inland .....	21 reported; We had 57% of them
Away from the coast and delta.....	13 reported; We had 61% of them
Breeding species in MS-160 species .....	We had 98% of them (missed Bronzed Cowbird and Red Crossbill which are rare breeders)
Separate Tallies.....	Both birders had 10-12 species the other didn't
Lifers .....	Andy (14) plus 4 other State Birds, Gene (2) plus 2 other State Birds
Year Birds.....	We both had about 315+ species for the year (some pending on records Committee decisions)
Miles traveled.....	Gene kept up with this stat with his effort. Over 20,000 miles birding in 2021
BIG MISSES .....	Andy: Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Cerulean Warbler, Western Meadowlark Gene: Whimbrel, Swallow-tailed Kite, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Golden-winged Warbler, Cerulean Warbler

*Join us on the Mississippi Coast Friday - Sunday, April 29 - May 1, 2022  
for the MOS Spring Meeting!*



**REVIEW SPECIES LIST:** All sightings of the following species require full details to be reviewed by the MOS Bird Records Committee (please complete the Rare Bird Documentation Form; send to Gene Knight, 79 Hwy 9W, Oxford, MS 38655; gsknight@hughes.net).

**GEESE, SWANS & DUCKS**

Brant  
Trumpeter Swan  
Tundra Swan  
Cinnamon Teal  
Eurasian Wigeon  
King Eider

**FLAMINGOS**

American Flamingo

**GREBES**

Red-necked Grebe  
Western Grebe

**PIGEONS & DOVES**

White-Crowned Pigeon  
Band-tailed Pigeon  
Ruddy Ground-Dove

**CUCKOOS & ANIS**

Smooth-billed Ani

**NIGHTJARS**

Lesser Nighthawk

**HUMMINGBIRDS**

Mexican Violetear  
Anna's Hummingbird  
Calliope Hummingbird  
Allen's Hummingbird  
Broad-tailed Hummingbird  
Broad-billed Hummingbird  
White-eared Hummingbird

**RAILS, LIMPKINS & CRANES**

Black Rail  
Limpkin  
Whooping Crane

**SHOREBIRDS**

Mountain Plover  
Hudsonian Godwit  
Ruff  
Curlew Sandpiper  
Purple Sandpiper  
Red Phalarope

**JAEGERS**

Pomarine Jaeger  
Parasitic Jaeger  
Long-tailed Jaeger

**AUKS, MURRES & PUFFINS**

Razorbill

**GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMERS**

Black-legged Kittiwake  
Sabine's Gull  
Black-headed Gull  
Little Gull  
California Gull  
Iceland Gull  
Glaucous Gull  
Great Black-backed Gull  
Brown Noddy  
Bridled Tern  
Roseate Tern  
Arctic Tern

**STORM-PETRELS**

Wilson's Storm-Petrel  
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel

**SHEARWATERS**

Cory's Shearwater  
Sooty Shearwater  
Great Shearwater  
Audubon's Shearwater

**STORKS**

Jabiru

**BOOBIES & GANNETS**

Masked Booby  
Brown Booby  
Red-footed Booby

**CORMORANTS**

Great Cormorant

**KITES, EAGLES & HAWKS**

White-tailed Kite  
Golden Eagle  
Northern Goshawk

Harris's Hawk  
Swainson's Hawk  
Rough-legged Hawk  
Ferruginous Hawk

**TYPICAL OWLS**

Snowy Owl  
Burrowing Owl  
Long-eared Owl  
Northern Saw-whet Owl

**WOODPECKERS**

Ivory-billed Woodpecker

**CARACARAS & FALCONS**

Crested Caracara  
Prairie Falcon

**PARROTS**

Monk Parakeet

**TYRANT FLYCATCHERS**

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher  
Tropical Kingbird  
Couch's Kingbird  
Cassin's Kingbird  
Western Wood-Pewee  
Gray Flycatcher  
Say's Phoebe

**VIREOS**

Black-capped Vireo  
Bell's Vireo  
Black-whiskered Vireo

**SWALLOWS**

Cave Swallow

**WRENS**

Rock Wren  
Bewick's Wren

**MOCKINGBIRDS & THRASHERS**

Sage Thrasher

**THRUSHES**

Mountain Bluebird  
Townsend's Solitaire

**MUNIAS**

Scaly-breasted Munia

**WAGTAILS & PIPITS**

Citrine Wagtail  
Sprague's Pipit

**FINCHES**

Evening Grosbeak  
Red Crossbill  
Lesser Goldfinch

**LONGSPURS & ALLIES**

Chestnut-collared Longspur  
Smith's Longspur  
Thick-billed Longspur  
Snow Bunting

**NEW WORLD SPARROWS**

Lark Bunting  
American Tree Sparrow  
Harris's Sparrow  
Saltmarsh Sparrow  
Green-tailed Towhee  
Spotted Towhee

**BLACKBIRDS & ALLIES**

Hooded Oriole  
Bullock's Oriole  
Altamira Oriole  
Scott's Oriole  
Shiny Cowbird  
Great-tailed Grackle

**WOOD WARBLERS**

Bachman's Warbler  
Connecticut Warbler  
Black-throated Blue Warbler  
Black-throated Gray Warbler  
Townsend's Warbler  
Painted Redstart

**GROSBEAKS & ALLIES**

Western Tanager  
Black-headed Grosbeak  
Lazuli Bunting

**Any species new to MS**

**OTHER RARE OR UNCOMMON SPECIES:** MOS solicits reports of the following species whose status in Mississippi is poorly documented (please use the MOS 3x5 Bird Record Card or equivalent; send to Terence Schiefer, Mississippi State University, P.O. Box 9775, Mississippi State, MS 39762-9775). Reports may be included in North American Birds. Distinguishing features seen should be noted for species that are easily misidentified.

*Records are accepted anytime, but to ensure consideration for season reports in North American Birds, winter reports (December-February) should be received by 20 March, spring reports (March-May) by 20 June, summer reports (June-July) by 20 August, and fall reports (August-November) by 20 December.*

**STATEWIDE**

**GEESE, SWANS & DUCKS**

Fulvous Whistling-Duck  
Cackling Goose  
American Black Duck  
White-winged Scoter  
Black Scoter  
Long-tailed Duck  
Common Merganser

**PIGEONS & DOVES**

Inca Dove

**CUCKOOS & ANIS**

Groove-billed Ani  
Black-billed Cuckoo

**HUMMINGBIRDS**

Buff-bellied Hummingbird

**RAILS**

Yellow Rail

**SHOREBIRDS**

Upland Sandpiper  
Long-billed Curlew  
Buff-breasted Sandpiper  
Red-necked Phalarope

**GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMERS**

Lesser Black-backed Gull  
Sooty Tern  
Common Tern

**LOONS**

Red-throated Loon  
Pacific Loon

**CORMORANTS**

Neotropic Cormorant

**TYPICAL OWLS**

Short-eared Owl

**TYRANT FLYCATCHERS**

Ash-throated Flycatcher  
Western Kingbird  
Gray Kingbird  
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher  
Olive-sided Flycatcher  
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher  
Traill's Flycatcher complex

Alder Flycatcher

Willow Flycatcher

Least Flycatcher

Vermilion Flycatcher

**NEW WORLD SPARROWS**

Grasshopper Sparrow  
Lark Sparrow  
Clay-colored Sparrow  
Lincoln's Sparrow

**BLACKBIRDS & ALLIES**

Yellow-headed Blackbird  
Western Meadowlark  
Bronzed Cowbird

**WOOD WARBLERS**

Golden-winged Warbler  
Nashville Warbler  
Mourning Warbler  
Cape May Warbler  
Cerulean Warbler  
Wilson's Warbler

**INLAND ONLY**

**GEESE, SWANS & DUCKS**

Mottled Duck  
Surf Scoter

**PIGEONS & DOVES**

Common Ground Dove  
White-winged Dove

**HUMMINGBIRDS**

Black-chinned Hummingbird  
Rufous Hummingbird

**RAILS**

King Rail  
Purple Gallinule

**SHOREBIRDS**

Piping Plover  
Snowy Plover  
Whimbrel  
Marbled Godwit  
Ruddy Turnstone  
Red Knot  
Willet

**GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMERS**

Laughing Gull

**BITTERNS & HERONS**

American Bittern  
Least Bittern

**KITES, EAGLES & HAWKS**

Swallow-tailed Kite

**NEW WORLD SPARROWS**

Nelson's Sparrow  
Henslow's Sparrow

**COAST ONLY**

**GEESE, SWANS & DUCKS**

Ross's Goose

**LARKS**

Horned Lark

**NUTHATCHES**

White-breasted Nuthatch

**LONGSPURS & ALLIES**

Lapland Longspur

**AWAY FROM DELTA & COAST**

**GEESE, SWANS & DUCKS**

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck

**RAILS**

Virginia Rail  
Sora  
Common Gallinule

**CRANES**

Sandhill Crane

**SHOREBIRDS**

Black-necked Stilt  
American Avocet  
Wilson's Phalarope

**GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMERS**

Least Tern

**STORKS**

Wood Stork

**IBISES & SPOONBILLS**

Glossy Ibis  
White-faced Ibis  
Roseate Spoonbill



# We Birded South Africa!

by Dana Swan

We originally had our trip to South Africa scheduled for March of 2020, but we had to cancel due to Covid. In the Spring of 2021, our tour company let us know that a trip was available in June of 2021 and that it was a photo trip. Martha and I looked at each other and said “why not!”

We rebooked the photo trip and arrived in Johannesburg on the evening of June 4, 2021. The next day we met our two travel companions, Dave and Lynn, as well as our expedition leader Lorraine. Lorraine was the first woman to be certified as a guide by the South African Government. We went to three different lodges in South Africa: Madikwe, Marataba, and MalaMala. Each lodge provided us with a local guide who was also our driver.

Although there were only five of us, including Lorraine, the staff at each lodge were very happy to see us. Covid had all but shut them down. The accommodations and the food at the lodges were excellent. Each day, and accompanied by a local guide, the five of us left by Land Cruiser for our game drive. We left early in the morning after breakfast and returned before noon for lunch. We rested until about 2:30 and then had high tea. Around 3:00 we left for the afternoon game drive and returned at dark for dinner.

Martha and I told each of the local guides that we were more interested in finding birds rather than finding the big five! Lorraine, as well as the three local guides, were all excellent birders. Our companions were not birders but both were interested in photography. They didn't care what we found as long as they could photograph them. On previous trips to Africa, we learned that the guides prefer birders because birds are much easier to find than large wild animals, such as lions. In fact, I gave our first local guide in Madikwe a list of target birds and she found every one of them for me.

The five of us are in the photo in front of the Land Cruiser. From left to right: Dave, Lynn, Me, Martha and Lorraine. My favorite bird photo is probably the Pied Crow with a chameleon in his beak. The local Madikwe guide Lisa liked the picture so much she asked me to send her a copy of it so she could put it on the Madikwe Facebook page. So, I made the big time in South Africa!

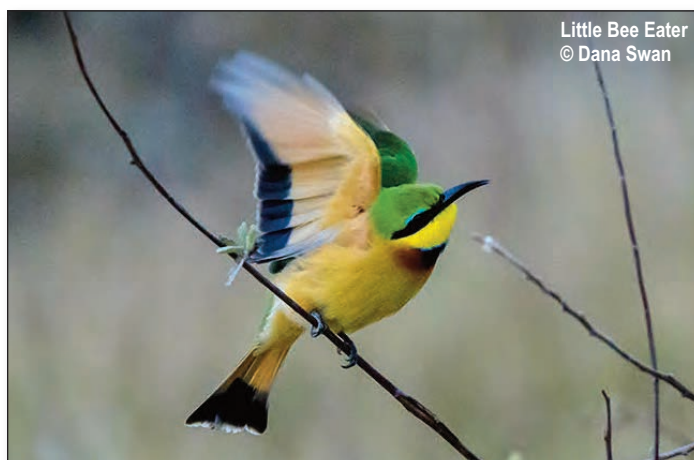
Other birding highlights of the trip included Natal Spurfowl, Gray Go-away Bird, Yellow-billed Hornbill, Burchell's Starling, Southern Pied Babbler, Arrow-marked Babbler, African Red-eyed Bulbul, Spotted Thick-knee, Red-billed Hornbill, Red-faced Mousebird, Helmeted Guineafowl, Pearl-spotted Owlet, African Spoonbill, Lilac-breasted Roller, Long-billed Crombec, Mocking Cliff Chat, Burchell's Coucal, Purple-crested Turaco, Little Bee-eater, White-fronted Bee-eater, and Crowned Lapwing, just to name a few. Almost all pictures were taken with my Nikon



Pied Crow  
© Dana Swan



Natal Spurfowl  
© Dana Swan



Little Bee Eater  
© Dana Swan



Pearl-spotted Owlet  
© Dana Swan



# Spring Nature Tour at Sky Lake Scheduled April 10

• **Sunday, April 10, 2022**

**9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

**Sky Lake Boardwalk (1090 Simmons Road, Belzoni, MS, 39038)**

- This spring nature tour of the Sky Lake area has three main stops, and you are welcome to join for one or all of them.
- At 9:00 a.m., we will offer a nature walk at the Sky Lake WMA boardwalk (directions, 1090 Simmons Rd, Belzoni, MS 39038), among the ancient bald cypress trees of the Sky Lake swamp, many of which are more than 1000 years old. While marveling at the giant trees, we will also ID birds by sight and sound, and will highlight dominant plants of the swamp besides the bald cypress. Birds may include permanent residents, lingering wintering birds, and spring migrants. Restrooms are available here.
- Next (likely ~10:15 a.m.), we will depart from the Sky Lake WMA boardwalk to caravan over to the DWB Sky Lake Nature Reserve., which is located on the other side of Sky Lake, approximately a 15-20 minute drive from the Boardwalk. At the DWB Reserve, we will enjoy views of Sky Lake itself, and will conduct a walking nature tour focusing on unique plants and mushrooms of the forested wetland (likely to include numerous species of wildflowers), as well as birds of the forest and adjacent Sky Lake. We will park along Sky Lake Rd, at the north end of the DWB Reserve. No restrooms are available at this stop.
- Around noon, we will depart the DWB Sky Lake Nature Reserve to head down the road to the nearby Four Winds Refuge, a private duck camp where former catfish ponds are now being managed by the owners for diverse wildlife, including shorebirds and wading birds. We'll first eat lunch there. You can bring your own lunch, or you can sign up for a hot, family-style catered lunch from Jerri's Bakery & Southern Kitchen (price of \$20/person includes tax and tip; menu is baked chicken, mashed potatoes, vegetable soup, and cornbread). Please bring your own beverage. We will have some disposable plates & forks, etc. available, but please consider bringing your own re-usables to reduce waste, as well as some tupperware and a cooler to take home some leftovers (which may be abundant). Please sign up for the lunch in advance below.
- After lunch, we'll tour the Four Winds Refuge by vehicle, stopping periodically to enjoy the birds and other diverse nature. We will be seeking a diversity of birds, including herons, egrets, and migratory shorebirds. Restrooms are available at this site.
- Food, bathrooms, and other stuff: There will be restrooms available at the Sky Lake Boardwalk and at the Four Winds Refuge, but not at the DWB Sky Lake Nature Reserve. Don't forget sunscreen, especially for DWB Sky Lake Nature Reserve and Four Winds Refuge. Bug spray is recommended if you tend to be a bug magnet. Rubber boots or other extra footwear are recommended, especially for the DWB Sky Lake Nature Reserve.
- Directions: The Sky Lake WMA Boardwalk, where we will begin the trip at 9:00 a.m., is located at 1090 Simmons Rd., Belzoni, MS 39038, and can be found on mapping apps (Google Maps link). From Belzoni, drive north on Hwy 7 for 6.5 miles and turn left on Four Mile Rd (follow signs for the Sky Lake Boardwalk). Drive west on 4 Mile Rd for less than a mile, turn left and drive 0.2 miles, then turn right on Simmons Rd and drive less than a mile—the Sky Lake Boardwalk parking lot will be on your right. The Sky Lake Boardwalk has spacious parking, restrooms, and a covered picnic area.
- **The trip is free (except for the optional catered lunch), but registration is requested and space is limited. To register, please visit: <https://www.deltawindbirds.org/events/spring-nature-tour-at-sky-lake>**





# MOS Member Photos

MOS members are invited to submit photos for publication in the Newsletter. Send yours to the editor at [brown2cu@gmail.com](mailto:brown2cu@gmail.com).

Say's Phoebe  
© Larry Pace



Ruby-throated Hummingbird  
© Dana Swan



Sharp-shinned Hawk  
© Tom Hoar



LeConte's Sparrow  
© Jason Hoeksema

Bufflehead  
© Larry Pace



Killdeer Eggs  
© Gene Knight

Red-tailed Hawk  
© Dana Swan



Brown Pelican  
© Robert Briscoe





## MOS MEMBERSHIP FORM

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RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_ NEW MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_

(Select One):

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Junior (14 and under)   | \$5 per year  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student (15 and older)  | \$10 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual              | \$25 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family                  | \$35 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Subscribing (Libraries) | \$15 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining              | \$50 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life                    | \$350         |

## DUES:

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

Shannon, MS 38868

Dues may be paid online (with credit card or PayPal) at:  
<https://missbird.org/membership-2/>

## ATTENTION ALL MOS MEMBERS! Digital Delivery of *MOS Newsletter* and *Mississippi Kite*

In order to cut down on printing and mailing costs of the *MOS Newsletter* and the *Mississippi Kite*, we are asking any of you who would be willing to receive your copy by email to please contact us at [brown2cu@gmail.com](mailto:brown2cu@gmail.com). 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!



### Mississippi Ornithological Society

Cullen Brown, Newsletter Editor  
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