The reason for this abnormal behavior of the blue jays is not known and can only be conjectured at the present time.

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First Record of the Red Crossbill In Mississippi

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On 29 October 1972 I found a freshly killed Red Crossbill (Loxia curvirostra) in the middle of a gravel road near   the headquarters of Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge.   The specimen was found in Winston County, just west of the Noxubee-Winston county line.   The bird was prepared as a study skin and is catalogued as skin number 676 in the ornithological collections at Mississippi State University.   An automobile accident prevented us from searching for additional crossbills immed - iately,and we have found none on subsequent trips to the area.

This specimen, a male (testes: 1.5 x 2.0 mm), was moderately fat and weighed 37.9 grams.   The skull is incompletely ossified, suggesting that the bird was less than one year old. Seeds of loblolly pine filled the bird's crop.

Crossbills breed in many areas in the northern half of North America and also in mountainous areas of more southern latitudes. Populations of these birds have become adapted to the conditions of their breeding environment to the extent that ornithologists (e.g., Griscom, 1937; Bent, 1968) distinguish different races on the basis of differences in wing length, bill length, and bill depth.   Our specimen, with a wing length of 95 mm, bill length of 16.6 mm, and bill depth of 10.2 mm, most closely resembles Bent's Crossbill (Loxia curvirostra benti) (Bent, 1968).   This race normally breeds in the pine hills of southeastern Montana, eastern Wyoming, western North and South Dakota,and the Rocky Mountain region of Colorado.   Bent reports the accidental occurrence of this race as far east as Tennessee.

This is apparently the first record of the Red Crossbill from Mississippi.   The species has been reported on at least one occasion from Louisiana (Lowery, 1960) and is uncommon in Alabama,   though it has possibly nested in the mountainous areas of the northeast (Imhof, 1962).

The mainstay of the diet of Red Crossbills is pine seeds. When the pine cone crop fails within the normal range of the species(as it did this past year (Max Thompson, pers. comm.), the birds irrupt erratically into areas where food is more abundant. Mississippians should be on the lookout for this wanderer from the north. Crossbills normally occur in flocks and are not particularly shy. They may be spending the winter with us in other parts of the state.

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An Observation of a Least Tern Laying an Egg

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On 7 May 1972, while observing shorebirds on the beach at Gulfport, Harrison County, Mississippi, several students in my ornithology class and I had the rare opportunity to see a wild bird lay an egg. At 11:30 AM (CDT) we found a Least Tern (Sterna albifrons) that appeared to be sitting on a nest. As we approached the bird it flew from a shallow, empty de - pression in the sand and hovered, giving alarm notes about 20 feet from our party.   This bird was then joined by a second which was carrying a small fish in its beak. Both birds landed on the sand facing into the wind, the second bird slightly behind and about a foot away from the first.   While we watched, the first bird fluffed the feathers on her lower abdomen and laid an egg. She laid the egg from a standing position,