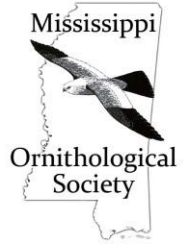


BRIEF FIELD NOTES



KING RAIL PAIR RESPONSE TO PLAYBACKS

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I was reminded of the following account while looking through old notes, and thought it was worth reporting. I conducted secretive marsh bird surveys on the north end of Ross Barnett Reservoir north of Hwy. 43 during summer 2007. One particular survey point along Lake Harbor Rd. in Rankin County on 15 June 2007 had two adult King Rails (*Rallus elegans*) with three black downy chicks. All birds were foraging about 8 m from the edge of the road on an open, narrow mudflat adjacent to some cattails and other marsh vegetation. My survey protocol called for 5 minutes of passive listening, followed by 30 seconds of playbacks and 30 seconds of silence for each of the focal species. Focal species, in order of playback, were Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), King Rail, Common Gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*), Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinicus*), American Coot (*Fulica americana*), and Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*). The King Rails were initially observed during the final two minutes of passive listening, and remained present throughout the remainder of the playbacks. The birds seemed oblivious to my presence until the King Rail playback began, whereupon both adults vocalized in response to the King Rail recording. The male charged in the direction of the

playback, but stayed hidden in the vegetation at the edge of the road. He gradually walked back to the other birds during the Common Gallinule playback. Interestingly, both adults responded again side-by-side during the Purple Gallinule playback, then the male mounted the female and copulated in front of the chicks. I assume this was an effort to reaffirm the pair bond, though I was surprised to see it occur in response to the Purple Gallinule playback.

MISSISSIPPI KITE FEEDING ON A RED BAT

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I have had a pair of Mississippi Kites (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) that have nested and raised a pair of young for the past two years on our property in Marshall County, Mississippi, just south of the Coldwater River. I spend a lot of mornings drinking my first cup of coffee on our porch, and watching them hunt in the fields. There are several large oaks (*Quercus* spp.) on our property that have been resting spots for them when hunting and training the fledglings.

They normally pluck dragonflies out of the air and eat them in flight. Often, they would fly to one specific oak they seemed to prefer and eat a dragonfly or grasshopper. On the morning of 28 April 2018, I saw one fly into the oak with something larger than normal that I did not recognize. I grabbed my camera, and to my surprise found that it had a red bat (*Lasiurus borealis*). I shot a few photographs (Figure 1), and then backed off to let it enjoy its prize. We regularly see red bats, and have even been seeing them recently on warmer days. I have read that Mississippi Kites will take bats, but I have never seen one with a bat previously.