

Minutes of the Mississippi Ornithological Society  
Spring Meeting, April 21 and 22, 1978

The annual spring meeting of the Mississippi Ornithological Society was held at the Gulfport-Harrison County Library on Friday, April 21, 1978. A buffet and social hour preceded the business meeting. Members of the Mississippi Coast Audubon Society acted as hosts.

President Steve Peterson called the business meeting to order at 7:45 P.M. The secretary's report was waived. The treasurer's report was read by Marita Smith, Treasurer, who reported a balance in the checking account of \$362.81 and a balance in savings of \$2230.17. Total assets as of April 21, 1978, were \$2592.98.

Several new orders of business were discussed and acted upon. First among them was a proposal that officers be elected to two-year terms, allowing time for more productivity during a term in office. It was motioned, seconded and affirmatively voted upon that, commencing in April 1978, officers of the MOS shall serve a two-year term, one year of which has already transpired.

A proposal to raise dues was the second order of business. Steve Peterson reviewed the financial position of the society and it was agreed during discussion that the amount in the checking account is insufficient to meet the society's goals. The single largest expenditure is the publication and mailing of the society's journal, The Mississippi Kite. Newsletters and the lease on the Cliftonville Heronry are other major disbursements. Dr. Jackson remarked that input for the Kite has been excellent enough to warrant at least two issues of the journal each year. There was some discussion on increasing issues of the newsletter, which are less costly to produce. It was generally agreed that the newsletter could be used to keep members informed of activities throughout the region, by Audubon, Sierra, and other bird and conservation groups. The prevailing opinion that the Mississippi Kite is an effective journal, one which we should like to see more often resulted in an affirmative vote for a raise in dues for regular membership category only.

New dues will be \$5.00 per year, commencing at renewal time, January 1979. Other classes of membership are to remain at their present levels.

A related discussion resulted in a suggestion that life members, and other classes of membership as well, be encouraged to make donations apart from their membership fees.

The subject of interest on life memberships, which are deposited into the savings account appeared to offer a solution to the present financial depression. It was voted to allow Treasurer, Marita Smith, to withdraw the accrued interest in savings for transfer to the checking account, as needed.

The lease on the Cliftonville Heronry was renewed for the year.

President Steve Peterson then presented Dr. Jerome Jackson with the society's annual Tucker Award. Steve noted the excellence of the Mississippi Kite which Dr. Jackson edits, and cited his continuing contribution to national publications through numerous scientific articles, which serve to augment our knowledge of the status of Mississippi bird life.

The program consisted of a variety of updates on various projects which are being done by various members of MOS. Mal Hodges of Ocean Springs explained his current study on the Eastern Bluebird. Mal and Bob Best found an area north of Ocean Springs where many bluebirds were present. They constructed twelve bluebird houses, erected them throughout the area, and as of April 21 had two bluebird pairs in residence. Mal will report his findings in a later issue of the Kite.

Dr. Jackson narrated a slide program on current work which he and his students are undertaking ... among them ... studies in the life history of the Pileated Woodpecker, studies of nesting success of an albinistic Red-headed Woodpecker mated to a normal male, an investigation of Prairie Chickens in nuptial display. He ended with slides made during a pelagic trip off the California coast.

Judith Toups brought membership up to date on the present status of the Least Tern colonies on the coast. Due to a change in county officials, terns arriving in early April (the 6th) met with disruptions in both colonies as beach maintenance continued, and small groups of returning birds have scattered throughout the three county area. Action on the part of the Mississippi Coast Audubon Society resulted in a suspension of maintenance, and a promise from officials that protection will be forthcoming. As of late April, both sanctuaries had been officially posted by the Harrison County Board of Supervisors at the request of MCAS. In addition, a symbolic fencing of the western sanctuary has been accomplished by members of the Mississippi Coast Audubon Society. Members of MOS generously donated more than \$100 to defray costs of the fencing, which ran to almost \$600. Toups expressed hope that new and better protection will alleviate the problems of human intrusion into the westernmost sanctuary.

Saturday field trips to Hancock and Jackson counties were very successful. Although warblers were scarce, the total species count approached 140. Coastal specialties included American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts, Buff-breasted Sandpipers, White-rumped Sandpipers, and Mottled Ducks with young.--Judith Toups, Secretary