

the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science collected at Gulfport on 20 September 1957 by M. F. Baker. This record is annotated "probably blown in by Hurricane 'Carla.'" Records of this species from Louisiana (Lowery, Louisiana Birds, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1974) and Alabama (Imhof, Alabama Birds, University of Alabama Press, University, 1976) all occurred following tropical storms or hurricanes in August or September.

The Noddy Tern is a tropical pelagic species that nests abundantly on the Dry Tortugas off the southern coast of Florida. Nest records for Louisiana have never been confirmed (Oberholser, The Bird Life of Louisiana, Bull. 28, Louisiana Dept. of Conservation, 1938).

Our work on the Gulf Islands has been supported by a grant to Jackson from the U.S. National Park Service.

Lark Buntings in Mississippi

Larry Gates¹, Martha Hamilton², David Hamilton², and Terrie Fairley³
2911 Mamie St., Hattiesburg, Ms. 39401¹; Petal, Ms.²;
Route 8, Box 71, Hattiesburg, Ms. 39401³

Two observations of Lark Buntings (Calamospiza melanocorys) in south Mississippi during the winter of 1979-1980 prompt this report. The Lark Bunting has heretofore not been known from Mississippi though there have been records from both Alabama (Imhof, Alabama Birds, University of Alabama Press, University, 1976) and Louisiana (Lowery, Louisiana Birds, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1974).

The first record was of a female or immature bird sighted by Gates on 13 October 1979 at Bellefontaine Beach in Jackson County. Gates observed the bird at about 6 meters through 7 X 35 binoculars at about 10:00 under excellent light conditions. While the observation was brief (less than a minute), the bird was seen in flight and on an exposed perch. The Bunting looked like a chunky sparrow with a large bill - similar to that of a Purple Finch (Carpodacus purpureus). Its head resembled that of a female Purple Finch, but the tail was longer and thinner than a finch's and was rounded rather than notched. White in the tail feathers was neither looked for nor noticed. The bird had an overall whitish appearance to it, being very white below with gray streaks on the breast. The back was brownish gray with pale streaking. The wings did not show a large white patch, but every feather in the wing seemed edged with white. The bird's legs were pale. Habitat where the sighting occurred was very sandy soil near the Mississippi Sound. There were scattered small shrubs, grass, cactus, pines, oaks, and vines. A few of the trees had recently been blown down by hurricane Fredric.

The second observation of a Lark Bunting was by Martha and David Hamilton and Terrie Fairley on 2 and 4 March 1980 at Petal, Forrest

County, Mississippi. The weather was very cold and unusual numbers of birds were coming to the feeder. This bird was an adult male and was feeding on the ground with Purple Finches and Brown-headed Cowbirds (Molothrus ater). It was very aggressive. Its plumage was the distinctive black and white of an adult male, unlike that of any other species possible for the area.

A Yellow-billed Fish Crow

Robert Chapel

706 S. Race Street, Urbana, Illinois 61801

On 5 January 1980, I observed a Yellow-billed Fish Crow (Corvus ossifragus) at a dump near Whitehead Lake, Jackson County, Mississippi. The bird was identified by call. Both upper and lower mandibles were bright yellow - about the color of a breeding-plumaged Starling's (Sturnus vulgaris) bill. The unusual bill color did not seem to influence the behavior of the crow relative to other crows flocking with it.

Lohofener, Jackson, and Ramey (1979, Chat 43:30) recently reported a Common Crow (Corvus brachyrhynchus) with a similarly colored bill in South Carolina and commented on the significance of bill color in other corvids as a difference between closely related species.

Mountain Bluebird Near Grenada, Mississippi

Richard L. Whittington

4778 Eaglecrest Drive
Memphis, Tennessee 38117

While participating in the Grenada Christmas Count, 26 December 1978, and accompanied by Lula C. Coffey, I drove along Mississippi Highway 333, parallel to and below Grenada Dam. A moderate width of the area below the dam is pasture-like and along the road is a fence with concrete posts. After crossing over the fence to work a damp area, our attention was drawn to a male Mountain Bluebird (Sialia currucoides) because of its unusual blue coloring. While observing it we were once as close as ten meters. We returned to a meeting place and brought back Ben B. Coffey, Jr. and H. Alice Smith and later Marvin Davis to see it. On each occasion the bird indulged in a hovering flight.

This western species occasionally wanders eastward. In the pages