

Nesting of the American Coot at Noxubee National Wildlife
Refuge, Mississippi

Jerome A. Jackson and J. Ray Watson

Department of Biological Sciences
Mississippi State University
Mississippi State, MS 39762

On 28 May 1983, JRW observed an American Coot (Fulica americana) with three half-grown young near the spillway at Bluff Lake, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, Noxubee County, Mississippi. JAJ found an adult with 2 half-grown young in the same area on 31 May. At that time the birds were within a dense stand of cattails and it is possible that a third chick was present.

These observations represent the first nesting record for American Coots in Mississippi. The initiation and success of the effort was almost certainly due to the closed fishing season on Bluff Lake and the extensive emergent vegetation that resulted from the breaching of the dam by flood waters in April of 1979.

Summer records of American Coots have been reported with increasing frequency in Mississippi in recent years. Gandy and Turcotte (1970) list only May records from Hinds, Warren, and Lafayette counties. At the Hattiesburg sewage lagoons, Larry Gates and Terrie Fairley found up to eight coots that remained through the summers of 1976-1980 (Jackson and Weber 1976, Jackson and Cooley 1978, Jackson 1979, Jackson 1981). Wayne Weber found up to eight American Coots at the Pascagoula River marsh, Jackson Co., in June 1977 (Weber and Jackson 1977), and four there in June and July 1978 (Jackson and Cooley 1978). Weber found two at Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge, Washington Co., in June 1978 (Jackson and Cooley 1978). The only previous "summer" record for Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge was of two coots seen on 3 September 1977 by Weber (Weber and Jackson 1977).

In Alabama and Louisiana, the species is reported as uncommon in summer and rarely breeding, although summer records have come from throughout both states (Imhof 1976, Lowery 1974).

Literature Cited

- Gandy, B.E., and W.H. Turcotte. 1970. Catalog of Mississippi bird records. State Wildlife Museum, Jackson, Mississippi.
- Imhof, T.A. 1976. Alabama birds, 2nd ed. University of Alabama Press, University.
- Jackson, J.A. 1979. Birds around the state: June and July 1979. Miss. Kite 9:43-45.
- Jackson, J.A. 1981. Birds around the state: June 1980-May 1981. Miss. Kite 11:18-34.
- Jackson, J.A., and C.D. Cooley. 1978. Birds around the state: December 1977 through November 1978. Miss. Kite 8:48-62.
- Jackson, J.A., and W.C. Weber. 1976. Birds around the state. Miss. Kite 6:47-54.
- Lowery, G.H., Jr. Louisiana birds. Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge.
- Weber, W.C., and J.A. Jackson. 1977. Birds around the state - spring migration and breeding season, 1977. Miss. Kite 7:42-53.