

Great Cormorant at the Pascagoula
River Marsh, Mississippi

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On 22 February 1986 I found and photographed a first-year plumaged Great Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) as it perched on a piling at a pond adjacent to the East Pascagoula River just north of Ingall's Shipyard and south of U.S. highway 90. The weather was overcast with intermittent light rain when the bird was found at 09:30. My ornithology classes from Mississippi College and Mississippi State University and I observed the Great Cormorant from a distance of 60m with a 20 X spotting scope. A first-year plumaged Double-crested Cormorant (Phalacrocorax auritus) perched on an adjacent piling provided a good comparison of size and plumage differences between the species. The dark neck and breast, separation from the light belly, along with lighter throat and cheek were obvious features, as was the relatively larger size of the Great Cormorant. Identification as a first-year Great Cormorant was confirmed from the photographs by Richard Banks of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C. The photographs are on file in the ornithological collections in the Department of Biological Sciences, Mississippi State University.

Previous records of Great Cormorants in Mississippi have included sightings by Larry Gates and Judy Toups in November 1978 (Jackson and Cooley 1978), by Toups in April 1984 (Hodges and Jackson 1978), and by Austin et al. (1984) in September 1984. All sightings have been of first-year plumaged birds, and all previous to this one were of birds seen just offshore in the Mississippi Sound.

Literature Cited

- Austin, L., M. Powell, J. Spence, and H. Wessel. 1984. Another Great Cormorant on the Mississippi Gulf coast. *Miss. Kite* 14:10-11.
- Hodges, M.F., and J.A. Jackson. 1984. Birds around the state: December 1983-November 1984. *Miss. Kite* 14:12-25.
- Jackson, J.A., and C.D. Cooley. 1978. Birds around the state: December 1977 through November 1978. *Miss. Kite* 8:48-62.