

## A CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI RECORD OF AN ESCAPED MONK PARAKEET

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On 5 August 1988, Dorothy Turcotte and Nettie Austin heard and saw a Monk Parakeet (*Myopsitta monachus*) perched atop a privet bush along my garden fence in Richland, Mississippi. I was working on the opposite side of the garden while they were taking a morning walk. It was about 7:45 a.m. My wife, Dorothy, called to me that a "pet bird" was on the fencerow beyond my line of sight behind three rows of butterbeans. I walked to the garden gate and outside the garden fence and immediately recognized the bird.

I approached the bird and it flew into the garden and landed on top of a cornstalk. I asked my wife to bring a handful of sunflower seeds. With the seeds in my extended hand, I approached to within less than a meter of the bird. It flew and while in flight made a loud staccato screeching call before alighting about 120 m distant in the upper branches of a large oak. The bird later flew and called several times from a hackberry tree about 40 m from where it was first seen.

I continued working while my wife started picking butterbeans planted along the garden fence. After calling frequently from the hackberry tree, the parakeet flew back to the two rows of corn. My wife saw it fly and land on an ear of corn, which it was eating as she approached and caught it with her bare hands. The bird bit her hand, but did not break the skin. It made loud, screeching distress calls.

The bird was an adult in good plumage with wing feathers intact. It had a plain, round, wire ring on the left leg. The bird had apparently been wing-clipped at one time, since the lower ends of the left side tertiaries were cleanly sheared off. After photographs (see cover) were taken, the bird was taken to the Jackson Zoo. During the time when the Monk Parakeet was in my yard, resident birds were noticeably absent or inconspicuous.