

The mainstay of the diet of Red Crossbills is pine seeds. When the pine cone crop fails within the normal range of the species (as it did this past year (Max Thompson, pers. comm.), the birds irrupt erratically into areas where food is more abundant. Mississippians should be on the lookout for this wanderer from the north. Crossbills normally occur in flocks and are not particularly shy. They may be spending the winter with us in other parts of the state.

#### Literature Cited

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#### An Observation of a Least Tern Laying an Egg

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On 7 May 1972, while observing shorebirds on the beach at Gulfport, Harrison County, Mississippi, several students in my ornithology class and I had the rare opportunity to see a wild bird lay an egg. At 11:30 AM (CDT) we found a Least Tern (Sterna albifrons) that appeared to be sitting on a nest. As we approached the bird it flew from a shallow, empty depression in the sand and hovered, giving alarm notes about 20 feet from our party. This bird was then joined by a second which was carrying a small fish in its beak. Both birds landed on the sand facing into the wind, the second bird slightly behind and about a foot away from the first. While we watched, the first bird fluffed the feathers on her lower abdomen and laid an egg. She laid the egg from a standing position,

a posture that appeared no different from that of the second bird. Immediately after the egg was laid both birds flew to the depression that presumably was the nest site.

Previous nest records for the Least Tern on the Mississippi Gulf Coast include an early egg date of 13 May (1962, Pascagoula, Jackson Co.) (Gandy and Turcotte, 1970). Imhof (1962) records an early egg date of 12 May for Alabama, while Oberholser (1938) reports 23 May as the earliest Least Tern eggs had been found in Louisiana. The earliest egg date recorded by Bent (1921) for the Least Tern is 3 May; this is a Florida record.

The egg, which was immediately abandoned, is now in the ornithological collection of the Department of Zoology, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Mississippi.

#### Literature Cited

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- Gandy, B. E., and W. H. Turcotte. 1970. Catalog of Mississippi bird records. State Wildlife Museum, Jackson, Ms.
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An evening grosbeak bearing band No. 74-133-778 flew into a window at a feeder, was temporarily stunned and released on January 26, 1973. Mrs. Thomas H. Blake, 1736 St. Ann St., Jackson, Ms. 39202 reported the band recovery. The first evening grosbeaks appeared at her feeder on January 7 and the high count was forty on January 14, 1973.

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