

**FIRST BREEDING RECORD OF ROSEATE
SPOONBILL (*PLATALEA AJAJA*) IN MISSISSIPPI**

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On July 5, 2004, Don McKee and Mary Stevens kayaked into a large multi-species heronry in Yazoo County, locally known as White's Lane, and discovered a Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*) nest with three chicks. This is the first known nesting record of Roseate Spoonbills in Mississippi. The nest was located on the northern border of the heronry. One adult in breeding plumage was present at the nest. The chicks appeared to have primary feather sheaths, so their age was estimated at approximately five days (Dumas 2000). The nest was large and conical and was located in a buttonbush approximately five feet above the water. Photos of the nest were taken on July 5, 2004 by Don McKee and have been deposited with the Mississippi Ornithological Society Records Committee. See Figure 1 below for one of the photos taken on that day. Six subadult spoonbills were observed perched in nearby tupelo trees.

Two subadult spoonbills were observed at this site in June, 2000 by David Linden, biologist at Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge. On June 30, 2004, Mary Stevens, Jenny Thompson, Bryan Fedrick, and Meredith Wilson observed one subadult spoonbill perched in a tupelo tree next to the nest site, but no evidence of nesting was observed at that time. However, considering a 22-day incubation period (Dumas 2000), incubation should have begun around June 8.



Figure 1. Photo of Roseate Spoonbill chick in nest taken on July 5, 2004 by Don McKee at the heronry in Yazoo County, Mississippi

On June 4, 2005, four spoonbills in breeding plumage were observed in the colony and on June 10, 2005, two subadult spoonbills were observed on the south side of the colony. On subsequent visits to the colony during June 2005 and June 2006 to conduct the Mississippi Colonial Waterbird Count, observers found no evidence of nesting of Roseate Spoonbills (Mississippi Colonial Waterbird Count 2000-2006).

This heronry has been selected as one of Mississippi's Important Bird Areas by Audubon Mississippi. The site is a 960-acre baldcypress-tupelo-buttonbush swamp located in Yazoo County at 32° 50' 16"N, 90° 27' 57"W. It is privately owned and

located adjacent to commercial catfish ponds. It is bordered on the west by Panther Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and supports breeding populations of White Ibises, Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Little Blue Herons, Cattle Egrets, Black-crowned Night-Herons, Great Blue Herons, Tricolored Herons, Anhingas and Double-crested Cormorants. The Mississippi Colonial Waterbird Count reports approximately 2,000-3,000 nesting pairs of waterbirds annually in this colony. This site has the largest known concentration of nesting White Ibis in the state.

LITERATURE CITED:

Dumas, J. V. 2000. Roseate Spoonbill (*Ajaia ajaja*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 490 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.

Mississippi Colonial Waterbird Count Database. White's Lane Colony, Yazoo County, 2000-2006.