

IN MEMORY OF JUDY TOUPS

From Barbara Bowen, Waveland, Mississippi:

To paraphrase John Muir—In every walk with Judy in nature one receives far more than he seeks.

There was always the expected as Judy had prepared us with her questions. What should be in this habitat, season, time of day, weather.....? And when a certain species was sought--what are the field marks, colors, where placed? She was able to anticipate my questions--waiting for the information to soak in and then posing the next one as it was beginning to form in my mind. She gave us the where, what, how and "now go get it".

And then there was always the unexpected: a lifer and the macarana, a spectacular view, a show-off bird or a strafing by a Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*). Every outing had a star bird.

Judy has added so much to so many lives. Just tuning into the amazing world of birds—something that is everywhere and others look at without observing—has so turned over my life and given me a hobby that is always there at the drop of a chirp. Judy is with me always.

From Jan Dubuisson, Pass Christian, Mississippi:

I have known Judy Toups since May of 1982, when I showed up for one of her "come join me" birding trips to what was then the Pascagoula River Marsh. I had become very interested in birds over a year before that, but with two small children, I had never been able to go on one of the field trips she offered. What a day! I think I got about 30 life birds that day, and she got so excited because I recognized a Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*) without having seen one before. (She just didn't know how many hours I had spent looking at that particular bird in the field guide as the one I most wanted to see!) We did the dikes and saw American Avocets (*Recurvirostra Americana*), Black-necked Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*), peeps, etc.; then we went to the Gallinule Pond that is gone now; and when everyone else was hot and left us, she and I went to the Pascagoula Wildlife Management area, picking up such life birds for me as the two kites, flycatchers, vireos, etc. It was a spectacular day and just the beginning of a life-long avocation. She opened up the world of field birding to me and, in the process, a whole life of new birds, new places, and lots of new friends. That one day changed my life forever, and I will never forget all the fun times we had, particularly playing "Name That Bird" while traveling in the car to some new and exciting experience.

We should all aspire to leave behind a legacy like Judy's.

From Susan Epps, Diamond Head, Mississippi:

When I first moved to the Mississippi Coast I read Judy's column in the *Sun Herald* newspaper. It had her e-mail address, so I contacted her. She responded and invited me to go birding with the Bushwhackers. It was a great opportunity for a newcomer to the coast to meet new people and learn birding spots.

Her book and her articles were very informative and enhanced my birding experiences as did just knowing her.

After Katrina she got books and bird houses for those of us who lost our homes.

Her knowledge and friendship are greatly missed.

From Frances Henne, Goodman, Mississippi:

Judy Toups taught many Elderhostel groups about Mississippi birds. I was fortunate to be on one of her last trips and enjoyed learning about coastal birds from her. Many of these birds were unfamiliar to me at that time.

She knew where to find all the common and rare birds on the shore and in the swamps. The many tips she gave us on identifying the different species of gulls, terns and swallows helped us all to know these species better.

It's a trip that will be remembered by all the Elderhostel participants. Judy and the birds flying over us on the shore will always be part of that memory.

From Malcolm Hodges, Atlanta, Georgia:

Judy Toups and I began birding when I was 19. We were soon almost constant birding companions, and Judy became a surrogate parent to me. She taught me my birds, but many other things as well, including the value of courage. Without Judy's influence, I might never have joined the Peace Corps, which was a transformative experience. Among others in my circle, there was universal disapproval for this decision, but Judy encouraged me, knowing that it would be good for me; she was correct. My Peace Corps stint in Ghana eventually and circuitously led to graduate school and to my career with The Nature Conservancy in Georgia.

Judy was thus one of the most profound influences in my life. Without her, I'm not sure where I would be right now, but it would certainly have been a very different life. I owe so much to her.

From Penny Kochtitzky, Hattiesburg, Mississippi:

I remember Judy Toups telling me that she didn't go to her mailbox without her binoculars. She was an inspiration to wanna' be's such as this novice.

From Sarajane Smith, Saucier, Mississippi:

Judy spread her love of birding to all the *Sun Herald* readers in South Mississippi. There was always someone

talking about her articles, even if they only had a slight interest in backyard birding.

Jack and I took Judy's birding classes when we first started birding. From these classes we grew a love for birding that has enhanced our lives. Many birders have gained knowledge from Judy that have made them have a true love of birdwatching.