

BEATING A DEAD HORSE

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We've all heard that expression haven't we? Usually around noon on one of those dull days when thoughts of po' boys began to outweigh prothonotaries.

But in thinking about what I could say to remember and honor Judy, I recalled having heard her use that expression more than once in quite another context. That was when voicing her exasperation (and as usual, blaming herself) for the apparent lack of interest of most of her associates in any systematic collection of data, of any interest in the "why" of what they were observing.

The very first time I met her (about twenty years ago, in the Ansley chenier) one of the first things she asked me was "Do you keep records?" I was more than non-plussed. I'd never known any active birders who *didn't* keep records. Welcome to the Mississippi Coast! In connection with a project I'm working on, I recently had occasion to read through some thirty years worth of *The Mississippi Kite*, particularly the Birds Around the State compilation; input from the coast has been virtually non-existent for many years. Contributions to North American Birds? Even less.

True there is an occasional posting to MISSBIRD. But recently when I tried to obtain some details about one of

them, the contributor, one of our better birders, could not recall them because no records were kept.

So if you want to honor and remember Judy in a way that would be significant to her, you could do worse than to begin participating and contributing to her compelling interest, the documentation and understanding of the birdlife of the place she loved so well.