BRIEF **F**IELD **N**OTES

Mississippi

Ornithological
Society

C**LAPPER** R**AILS** A**LLOPREENING**

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A few years ago, the City of Pascagoula, Mississippi, built the Magnolia Birding Pier a few blocks south of downtown Pascagoula. It consists of a covered pier projecting into a small inlet or bayou off the Pascagoula River.

During the summer of 2017, Clapper Rails (*Rallus crepitans*) were reliable there from around sunset to dusk. On the evening of 17 June 2017, I was birding on the covered end of the pier. After a few minutes, a Clapper Rail came out of the marsh grass onto the narrow mud bank ~30-40 ft from me. This Clapper Rail moved methodically down the bank pecking and feeding for a few minutes, then stopped and began preening itself.

Within a couple minutes, a second Clapper Rail came out of the marsh grass and eased up to the first bird, which was still preening. In the nice light and great vantage point, I started snapping pictures of the two birds who appeared oblivious to me. I was wondering if this was a mated pair or a parent with a juvenile, and guessed it was a mated pair because both of them looked like adult birds.

When the second rail walked up to the first, the latter, which had been preening itself, started preening the second rail (Figure 1). This lasted for ~5 min. I know of no other instances of Clapper Rails allopreening.

Figure 1. Clapper Rails allopreening at Magnolia Birding Pier, Pascagoula, Mississippi, 17 June 2017.

KILLDEER FOSSIL NEST

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On 14 April 2017, a Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) nest was found near Pontotoc, Mississippi (Figure 1). The nest was in a bare area along the margin of a flat commercial lot behind an ALFA Insurance building undergoing construction. The nest was composed chiefly of fragmentary shells of a small Cretaceous oyster called *Ambigostrea tecticosta* (Gabb), with minor