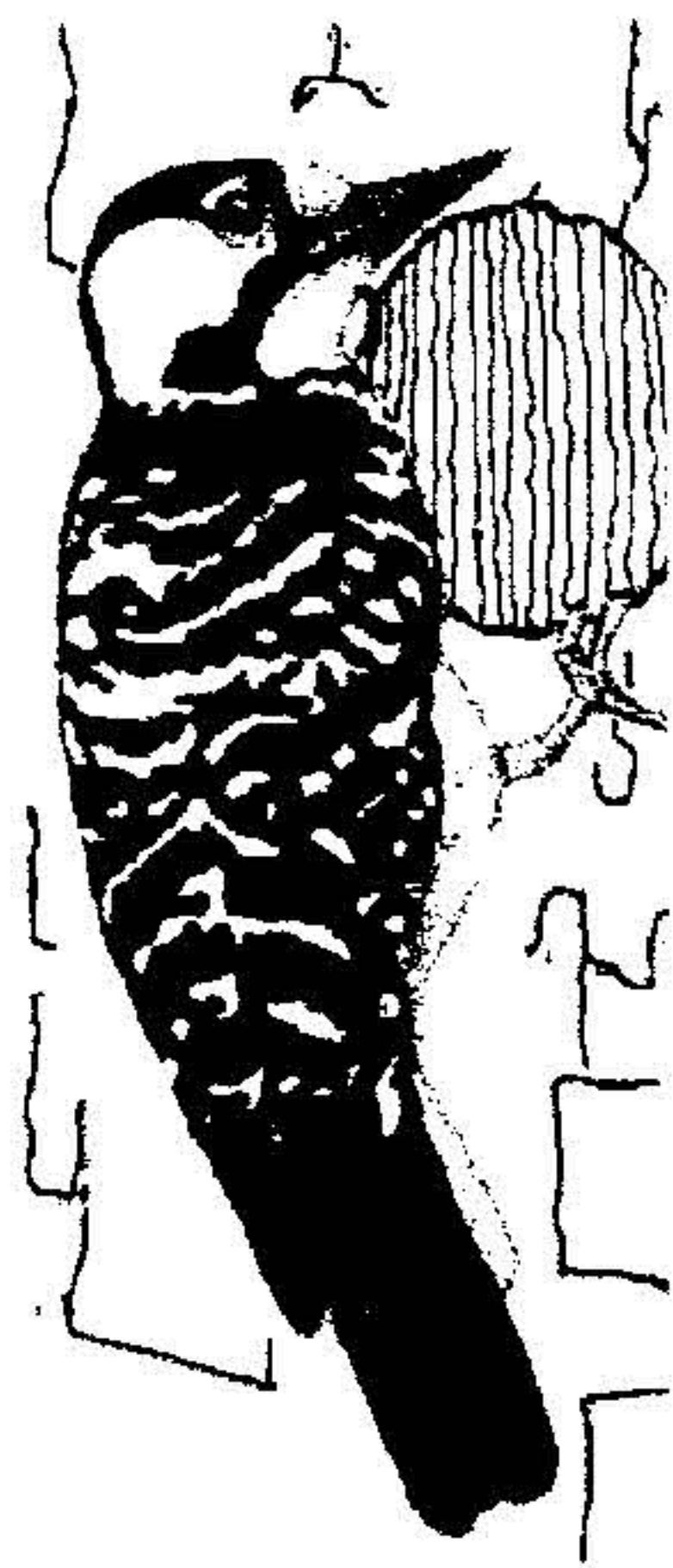


Oktibbeha

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Audubon Society

FLYER

Newsletter of the Oktibbeha
Audubon Society in Mississippi

VOLUME XLVI ISSUE 1

2016

Oktibbeha Audubon Society meets the second Thursday at 7 pm in the Clay Lyle Entomology Building on the MSU campus in the months of September, October, November, January, February, March, and April. Our May meeting is the annual picnic held at various places (this year at the picnic area at SDH Noxubee Refuge) on the second Thursday of May. Our December meeting is the compilation meeting following the annual Christmas Bird Count. The OAS board meets at 6 pm (same place) prior to the regular meeting; visitors/members are welcomed at both meetings. Field trips are the first Saturday of the month announced by email to various places depending on the presence of “good” birds. We publish only one newsletter each year. If you wish to keep updated regarding meetings, field trips, and other activities, please email or call Dianne Patterson (use .net after hummers2@bellsouth or call 662-327-4777). Dianne notifies by email and/or will call you if you request to be notified by phone.

BIRD NOTES: The “best” find this winter has been the mature male Wilson’s Warbler spotted early in January by James Osborne. The bird has consistently stayed in the same area of White’s Slough (Columbus) where it was first spotted; thanks to Jimmy’s report, many birders have enjoyed seeing the bird and many have also added the species to their Life List! Wilson’s are uncommon in migration so the winter sighting is most unusual. A Yellow-throated Warbler seen January 1st at Browning Creek by Marion and Terry Schiefer and later by Jeff Harris was another winter find. Dianne and Jim Patterson added two different Palm Warblers in Lowndes and Noxubee counties in early January. Ross’s Goose is usual during our winters so four at Prairie Waters in January was really special! The newspaper reports that Oktibbeha County Lake will be lowered in the next 3 months for levee inspection so there may be good shorebird habitat around the edges during spring migration. Check it out!

The compilation of information for our Audubon Chapter’s annual report for July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015 once again revealed the dedication of a lot of our members in helping with conservation projects, wildlife habitat preservation, public awareness of the importance of backyard habitat, wildlife surveys, and many other such projects. We had 34 members to report a total of 1,247 hours volunteering their help in such projects.

PURPLE MARTIN HOUSECLEANING REPORT

Joe Mulrooney, Joel Okula, and Margaret Copeland cleaned the purple martin gourds that OAS donated to Noxubee Refuge and Oktibbeha County Lake. Visits on January 25 and February 1 revealed that 24 of 24 gourds at Oktibbeha County Lake had PM nests and banding records (from MSU ornithology class) for 2015 had 89 PM young banded! These gourds were prolific! There were two PM nests and two Tree Swallow nests at Morgan Hill in those 12 gourds. There were two Tree Swallow nests in two of the 12 gourds at the Catfish Ponds behind Smith Field. There were no nests at Ross Branch which has two 6-gourd units. There were some shot-gun pellet scratches on the aluminum frame of one of the units. Wonder who would do something like that? All 24 of the gourds were removed from the Goose Overlook area to be cleaned. We will put back just 6 gourds on each of the two poles there and find two new places on the refuge to erect new spots for the purple martins. We are wondering about competition from the tree swallows as they are expanding their breeding range. We urge you to observe the usage of the gourds during the breeding season in 2016; we may need to erect tree swallow houses to perhaps lower the competition. We’ll discuss “solutions” at our February board meeting. Pass any suggestions on to a board member or attend the board meeting yourself!