

sighting was made on 28 April 1972 by J. R. Bailey and J. F. Harsh.

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GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS BREED IN  
LOWNDES COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

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Grasshopper Sparrows (Ammodramus savannarum) nested in Mississippi at Golden Triangle Airport, Lowndes County in 1980. There are few breeding season reports for Mississippi. Thirteen birds were recorded along Mississippi River levees on the Dundee BBS route on 18 June 1978. This count was comparable to previous counts on this route (WW). Three were recorded in northeastern Mississippi on the Tupelo BBS route on 21 June 1978 (DC). Four, at least three singing, were recorded on the Yazoo NWR in southwestern Mississippi on 12 May 1979 (MOS). These birds may have been tardy migrants. Bierley (1980) said the Grasshopper Sparrow was rare and local in areas of Tennessee adjacent to Mississippi. Imhof (1976) indicated a local but widespread distribution for Alabama, including records for counties contiguous to Mississippi. Thus, confirmation of breeding in Mississippi was expected. There are undoubtedly more breeding localities than have been recorded.

The Golden Triangle airfield is a single long oval runway, about 600 m long and 100 m wide. Bermuda grass (Cynodon dactylon) is the dominant plant. Soybean (Glycine max) rows surround the airfield for most of its area. Other important plants are johnson grass (Sorghum halepense), foxtail grass (Setaria geniculata), Euphorbia nutans, Desmanthus illinoensis, and Sida rhombifolia.

An early morning census on 12 August produced twenty-seven pairs of singing males. There are probably a few more for the northernmost portion of the airfield was inadequately censused. I found a family, two adults and three or four juveniles, also seen the previous day, and obtained additional breeding evidence. Another adult gave a distraction display and a rodent run as it flushed in front of me while I walked through bermuda grass between the runways. A nest search was unsuccessful. A different adult, with a caterpillar, attempted to approach an area, but gave a rodent run when disturbed by my close presence. Finally, another adult had a caterpillar and was anxious, flying back and forth between a presumed nesting area and cover in soybean fields.

Grasshopper Sparrows may be double-brooded (Smith, in Bent 1968). Data at this locality indicates nests may be active in August. Only the Eastern Meadowlark shares the same habitat for both nesting and feeding. Avian competition is probably minimal except for Brown-headed Cowbird (Molothrus ater) brood parasitism. Cowbirds are numerous at this locality during the nesting season. Elliott (1978) recorded very high rates of brood parasitism in a population of Grasshopper Sparrows in Kansas tallgrass prairie. Cowbirds usually cease depositing eggs in Mississippi by early July and sparrow success may be high for second broods. Study of the importance of this factor and others, e.g. habitat, climate, food supply, are unknown and thorough study is wanting on this species in the Southeastern states.

#### LITERATURE CITED

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SHOREBIRDS AT LAKE OKTIBBEHA, MISSISSIPPI  
IN THE FALL OF 1980

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I visited Lake Oktibbeha, Oktibbeha County, Mississippi, nineteen times from 22 August-7 November 1980 and recorded 20 species. Visits were usually spaced 3-4 days apart, in accord with International Shorebird Survey guidelines and constraints on my time. Counts were exact; "peep" numbers were rounded off on several dates because of their feeding movements. Birds were aged/sexed where possible or convenient.

Lake Oktibbeha is public and is easily accessible. The dam burst during the winter of 1979-1980, followed by a summer drought. By August of 1980 more than half the lake had drained. Flats one-half mile long by 100-200 feet wide existed on the west and north sides and almost all shorebirds were recorded here. Disturbance was light to moderate, usually by fishermen. Normally, when the lake is full, powerboats are the most common cause of disturbance, but shallow water prohibited water skiing. There are few prior records of migrating shorebirds at this site, perhaps because normal water levels preclude stopover. Migration during the fall of 1980 indicates that shorebirds may be numerous. Stopover appears to be opportunistic, but this is speculating without weight, molt, and banding/markings data. Almost all species were observed feeding;