

### **OCAS OFFICERS**

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Ruth Ann Rosamond: Refreshments Coordinator  
Daniel Burns: Newsletter Editor

## ***Okatibbee Creek Audubon Society***

**November 2008**

Meetings are held at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Meridian every second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Trinity is located at 4223 Poplar Springs Drive.

Please use the SOUTH driveway on the church property (the one nearer downtown Meridian) and proceed around through the parking lot to the back, where you may enter the building through the double doors.

**Next meeting: November 10, 2008**

***Be like the bird, who halting in his flight /  
On limb too slight, / Feels it give way  
beneath him, yet sings / Knowing he has  
wings.***

--Victor Hugo, writer (1802-1885)

--contributed by Nancy Donald

Read OCAS' newsletter online at  
<http://home.comcast.net/~ocas/>

Opinions in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Mississippi Audubon or of National Audubon but of individual writers. We view it as important to provide a forum for discussion and therefore we include articles from diverse sources where we can.

## The Dark-eyed Junco

The Dark-eyed Junco is the most common winter bird feeder visitor showing up at around 83% of feeders nationwide. This little bird is called “snowbird” fittingly because its arrival means the beginning of winter in many areas. Even in yards without bird feeders, Dark-eyed Juncos can often be seen searching the ground for weed seeds.

The Dark-eyed Junco is a medium-sized sparrow around six inches long with a wingspan of seven to ten inches. The Dark-eyed Junco includes six forms that were at one time considered separate species. The Slate-colored Junco is uniformly colored with pale brown to dark grey back, hood, and sides. The Oregon Junco has a well-defined dark to dull gray hood, brown back and flanks. The Pink-sided Junco has a pearly grey hood, lighter throat, small black mask, and pinkish cinnamon eyes and flanks. The Gray-headed Junco has a light grey hood and sides, a well-defined reddish back, and a small black face mask. The Red-backed Junco is like the Grey-headed in coloration except having a dark upper mandible. The White-winged Junco has a pale grey back, hood, and sides, with two white wing bars and much white in the tail.

In the Southeast, the Slate-colored Junco is the subspecies that you will see at your backyard feeder. Their song is a musical trill and their call a hard “tick” or “smack”. The Dark-eyed Junco’s wintering habitat is fields, shrub land, cemeteries, parks, yards, shrubby woods, and fencerows. Their nesting habitat is mixed and coniferous forest. Their nest is an open cup consisting of rootlets, dried leaves, and mosses. It is lined with fine grasses and hair. The nest is usually placed in a small cavity on a sloping bank or among the roots of a toppled tree. The clutch size is three to five bluish-white eggs. The incubation period is twelve to thirteen days. The chicks fledge in nine to twelve days.

Dark-eyed Juncos flock together in the winter and search for seeds, their primary winter food. In Mississippi, they are only winter residents, returning to the north for nesting season. If you wish to attract these quaint little birds, provide white millet, sunflower seed, cracked corn, and peanut butter mix. Juncos prefer to feed on the ground but will come to platform or hopper feeders if they have no choice. Set the table for these little birds, and you will be rewarded by their presence all winter long.