

# *Carolina Birds and Birders*

. . . with Willie Morrison

## **On Caring for Abandoned or Injured Birds**

Anne Worsham Richardson, the gifted professional artist ornithologist from Charleston, S.C., writes of her experiences with injured birds.

"The little gray screech owl we raised when the Charleston Museum sent it to us on May 27, 1968. A yellow bulldozer had cleared a lot in Mt. Pleasant and when a lady inspected the awful sight, she noticed a gray tuft of 'earth' moved near her foot. When she saw the large eyes she knew it was a downy owl nestling about three inches tall with a wobbly head and no hollow tree home. The orphaned owl was brought to me and we call it Owlbert II. The other (red) screech owl which came to me with a fractured skull, October 30, 1962, is entirely different. He is imprinted by us and is uninhibited--will even take a bath while we hold the water container.

"Many of my bird models have been disabled birds brought to the studio. One learns many things in attempting to fulfill the needs of different species, whether it be a Black-crowned Night Heron, a Hermit Thrush, an owl, or a tiny hummingbird. To protect its broken wing, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird was placed in an over-sized brandy snifter, containing honeysuckle intertwined in the glass which served as a perch and nectar from the blossoms supplemented with honey and water. He recovered and was released in about ten days.

"When a bird has thoroughly recovered from an injury, a U. S. Wildlife band is placed on its leg, the window opened, and the bird is released to fly away.

"April 17, 1969 I counted 26 Evening Grosbeaks at our feeders and about 21 on the 20th. I have just completed a painting of them. My first Painted Bunting of the season arrived on our feeder on Friday, 18 April. It was a beautiful male."—ANNE W. RICHARDSON, 7 Arcadian Park, Charleston, S.C., 29407

## **It Pays to Take That Second Look**

"One of the greatest thrills for a birder is to see in your own baliwick a bird common in another area, but rare in your own. This happened to Leila Miles, Edmund Cuthbert and me on January 11 when we went for an impromptu picnic to Edmund's recently acquired acreage on Wadmalaw Island.

"The weather was definitely on the chilly side, but in spite of this we walked down the 'big road' to the Bear's Bluff gate hoping to scare up a few birds. Not finding any we decided to explore the Martin's Point road by car. About a half a mile from the main highway going north we stopped to look at a large flock of Red-winged Blackbirds, hoping to find a few Rustys among them.

"We were about to give up the search when Leila remarked that one seemed to have yellow on it. There in full view was a beautiful Yellow-headed Blackbird. It sat outlined against the sky for some minutes and we were all able to get a good look at it through binoculars. The Yellow-head has been seen a few times in this area, but it certainly cannot be called common. A new bird to add to our life list and such a beautiful one! Hence the thrill!"—MRS. ROBERT H. COLEMAN, 774 Ft. Sumter Drive, Charleston, S.C.

## Low-country Bird Notes

Mrs. Martha Bee Anderson, Box 146, Hampton, S.C. 29924, writes:

The crown jewel of Low-country birds, the Painted Bunting (alias Nonpareil or Rainbow Bird), arrived early this spring in the Hampton area with first sightings reported on 7 April.

During July we watched with fascination as parents brought in two or three young birds for early morning and late afternoon feedings—free-loading on seeds scattered on the ground below our backyard feeders. It seemed to us that they feasted just as readily on the “baby chick and bird scratch feed” as they did on the more expensive wild bird seed mixture put out for them all spring. The last time that we glimpsed them on the feeders was in late August.

Summer Tanagers and Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers are greatly attracted to our suet feeders. These are baskets fashioned of hardware cloth and hung by wires from various tree limbs or fastened against tree trunks.

One of the real disappointments of years of birding has been our failure to lure Eastern Bluebirds to nest here. We have put up several houses to no avail. However, this summer we were rewarded in an unexpected way. We were amazed in mid-June to discover a pair of Great Crested Flycatchers nesting in a bluebird box. It was a treat to watch them raise their family and then fly away and leave us after the young were airborne.

After an absence of several months, the Baltimore Oriole splashed down in one of our bird baths in late September. The species had been plentiful in early spring, but absent all summer. The sudden reappearance in September perplexed us. We never determined whether he was coming or going!

[According to *South Carolina Bird Life* by Sprunt and Chamberlain, pages 497-499, Baltimore Orioles rarely nest in the Coastal Plain. They leave us in May for the Northwestern part of South Carolina and the mountains of western North Carolina for nesting purposes and return in September.-WMM.]

If anybody comes up with a sure solution to keep the squirrels out of bird feeders, all the bird-lovers (and feeders) of Hampton would like to know! They're eating us out of bird feed, at alarming rates of consumption, and it is discouraging lots of folks who've just quit because of the persistence of squirrels. Here we have tacked up foil pie-plates and such to deter them. We actually have only one feeder that is squirrel proof and it is under a special metal awning over the kitchen window.

## A Report from Our Correspondent in the Mountains

Returning from a trip to the lower Rio Grande and Aransas just before Easter, we found on 9 April that a Red-breasted Nuthatch had adopted our feeder remaining with us for nine days.

We still had a few left-over Slate-colored Juncos and Purple Finches when, on 16 April, the first male hummingbird arrived, and on the same evening the first Whip-poor-will was heard and subsequently observed at close range on numerous occasions.

A transient Eastern Meadowlark, unusual on our wooded knoll, stayed until 5 May, the day the Indigo Bunting arrived. A pair of Broad-winged Hawks were first seen aloft 17 April and have remained in the area. By the end of April, while residents in town still reported the presence of Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks, we had four constantly twittering hummers that by the middle of July had increased to eight.

On 15 May a Black Vulture soared above us and was subsequently seen in the adjacent woods. On the 17th the first brood of four young Eastern Bluebirds left the nestbox on an overcast afternoon. A second brood by the same parents was coaxed from another box on 12 July, by constant loud, wren-like chattering accompanied by rapid tail vibrating in which both parents took part.

On 17 May we heard and saw a Great Crested Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, and several Chimney Swifts, and on the 24th an Eastern Kingbird. During June Robins, Tufted

Titmice, Downy Woodpeckers, Catbirds, Mourning Doves, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers exercised their young around our home, much to our delight. Later in the month a pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers was seen repeatedly but nesting status is uncertain.

The supposedly spectacular spring migration of warblers continues to elude us. A Prairie Warbler seen on 24 April and a more often heard than seen Yellowthroat remained in the area. On the last day in July a Golden-winged Warbler eyed our feeder from an adjacent wire and 2 August a green-backed Tennessee did likewise. On the 27th we saw briefly a Magnolia and on the 28th a Canada and later a Pine Warbler. On the 31st we had occasional glimpses of a Cape May and an Ovenbird. On 2 September we saw the tiny Parula, another Cape May, and a Catbird, all held immobile by an overpassing Cooper's Hawk.

On 23 August Joe Schatz reported an Ovenbird and a transient Common Egret not otherwise seen in our area. Mr. Grimshaw reports migrating ducks passing overhead as well as sighting Bald Eagles in his vicinity.

At the end of September four young Cardinals were observed daily, confirming last year's observation that the Redbird is a late breeder, evidently preferring a summer-long courtship to the strenuous efforts of other birds trying to raise two or even three broods a year.

Since 2 October the Ruby-crowned Kinglet is seen daily. On the 4th a Pine Warbler, next day a Black-throated Green and a female Indigo Bunting, and on the 6th, a White-eyed Vireo.

On 24 September a friend in Hendersonville found a large dead bird and brought him to me for identification. After a great deal of searching through the bird books we decided that it must be a juvenile Florida or Common Gallinule. Actually the gallinule gave us a bit of trouble, because of its inert (hence shapeless) body and the fact that this was a new bird for us. In desperation I shipped the bird to the N. C. State Museum, tentatively identifying it as a juvenile Florida Gallinule. I was glad when Director Hamnett promptly confirmed my conclusion—thereby making me feel somewhat less of a nitwit!!!--RUFOLF G. HOSSE, Route 3, Box 287A, Hendersonville, N.C. 28739

### **ETV Life Science Class Program**

Jacqueline Everington Jacobs, wife of a Columbia lawyer, Harold W. Jacobs, director and coordinator as well as teacher of "Life Sciences" of the Educational Television network from Columbia, S.C., was the speaker at a joint meeting of Garden Clubs in Hartsville, S.C., on 1 October 1969.

For an hour Dr. Jacobs showed movies and slides and answered questions about the "Nesting Birds of Coastal South Carolina" at Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge. With editing, a sound track added with comments and credits, this material will be shown in April 1970 over ETV, Channel 7.

Dr. Jacobs, a Hartsville native, did her undergraduate work at Coker College, receiving a Bachelor's degree, with a major in biology. Over the years she has taught in the South Carolina public schools and at the college level while at the same time working for her Master's and Doctor's degrees in biology from the University of South Carolina.

Travis McDaniel, manager of the Cape Romain Wildlife Refuge, with an assistant, a cameraman from the ETV, and Dr. Jacobs, toured the islands of the Refuge 1 June 1969 on a routine inspection of the rookeries.

Bull Island may be reached by the motorist by following US 17 about 14 miles N of Mount Pleasant, making a right turn on Sewee Road and going about 5 miles to Moore's Landing where a boat makes scheduled trips to Bull Island three times a day. Inquiries about camping permits may be sent to Mr. Travis McDaniel, Manager, Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters, McClellanville, S.C. 29458.

The opening scenes of the movie show the salt marshes of Cape Romain interlaced by waterways that create the scores of islands used by the bird populations of the coastal area. Stops were made at Marsh Island to study the nesting colonies of Royal

(Continued on Page 29)

## CAROLINA BIRDS AND BIRDERS

(Continued from Page 9)

Terns and Laughing Gulls along the sand above high tide. Brown Pelicans prefer grassy higher areas where they can build their nests on the ground but add marsh grass and debris washed ashore. The terns just scoop out a depression in the sand to lay their single eggs, while the gulls build their primitive nests out of sedges and grasses.

Two to three dozen slides were shown of colonies of various species, adults, nests with eggs, and young birds from newly hatched to covered with downy feathers. On White Banks were the Snowy Egrets and Louisiana and Little Blue Herons that nest close together. Their eggs resemble each others and even the experts are not sure which is which when parents are away from the nests.

Other interesting facts of this refuge were mentioned, illustrating the year round use of these islands by various species. There are large wintering populations of a dozen different kinds of ducks with the Wood Duck being the only permanent resident, Coots and Common Gallinules are commonly seen feeding in the freshwater ponds with frequent glimpses of alligators sunning near the edges. On Bull Island wild Turkeys wander through the woods and appear on the edge of clearings or woodland roadways. In the trees overhead are the little known black fox squirrels perched on limbs watching the transients wandering along the paths.

Dr. Jacobs told of another trip, with a photographer, to Cape Island to record the arrival of the giant sea turtles as they came ashore to lay their eggs in the warm sands of the beaches. This, too, will become a program for the Life Science classes to teach the young people of Junior High School level the importance of the conservation of the wild life and the preservation of the habitats of our South Carolina species.—Willie M. Morrison

### Cooking for the Birds

Mrs. T.B. Winstead, Box 365, Elm City, N.C. 27822, shares her bird "gook" recipe with our readers.

"I make a mix by 'drying out' beef suet, chopped into cubes, placed over medium heat in an iron Dutch oven. I crumble the 'cracklings' into stale rice, grits, uncooked oatmeal, 'fish grease' or most anything that comes to hand. This mixture I place in gourds and suspend from a tree branch which has a convenient one below for perching.

"I usually throw in some sunflower seed, wild bird seed mixture and peanut butter to tempt the more choice specimens. During the winter, Baltimore Orioles cannot resist thick slices of baked sweet potatoes stuck on a twig or branch."

Another recipe, given to me by Mrs. P.A. King, that I have used for years brings in the Baltimore Orioles, warblers, wrens, kinglets, woodpeckers, Catbirds, etc. To two cups of water and two cups of bacon grease brought to a boil, add two cups of quick cooking oatmeal. Let cook for five minutes. Stir in separately one cup of peanut butter and one can of horsemeat dogfood. Put in glass jars and store in cool place. When 15 to 25 orioles are feeding daily, I make a double amount and hope that it will last for a week.—WMM