



BIRD WATCHERS'

# Roundtable

Jay Carter is an outstanding representative of the younger birders in the Carolinas. A frequent contributor to *Chat* for the past 5 years, Jay finds time for bird banding in addition to extensive field work. He is probably best remembered by CBC members for discovering Swainson's Warblers breeding in Moore County.—HDP

## Bird Finding at Southern Pines, N.C.

J. H. CARTER III

Southern Pines is located in the North Carolina Sandhills, in the south-central part of the state. It is easily accessible from the north and south by US 1 and US15-501, and from the east and west by NC 211. The land is characterized by gently rolling hills, many of which are covered with forests of longleaf and loblolly pine. Swamps along Drowning Creek and Little River strongly resemble the river swamps of the Carolina coast. The area also has open farming country and several lakes.

One of the best land birding areas is Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve. The entrance is located on State Road 2074, about 2 miles SE of Southern Pines. It can be reached from Southern Pines by following Indiana Avenue out of town to SR 2074. Turn left and go about three-quarters of a mile. The entrance is on the left. The Preserve has an interpretation center, auditorium, and museum (not yet completed). In the pine woods around these buildings one can find Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Pine Warblers, Brown-headed Nuthatches, and Solitary Vireos (summer only). Most of the trails leading down the hillside from the buildings go to the beaver ponds in the center of the Preserve. If you are lucky, you may catch a glimpse of a beaver. Wood Ducks can often be found on the ponds; and in summer there is usually a pair of Green Herons in the vicinity. A walk along the pond and swamp edges in the spring and summer can usually produce Acadian Flycatchers, American Redstarts, Prothonotary, Hooded, and Kentucky Warblers, and a good variety of other land birds. The pond edge is a good place to look for Winter Wrens in winter. During the fall such interesting warblers as the Blackburnian, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Chestnut-sided, and Magnolia can be found in the swampy areas and in the mixed deciduous-coniferous forests. A pair of Red-tailed Hawks reside in the Preserve area the year round, and can often be seen soaring

overhead. A good bird to look for in the mixed forests on the far side of the ponds is the Ovenbird. It does breed sparingly in the park; but it can be very hard to find, especially in mid-summer.

A good place for waterbirds is Thagard's Lake, which lies in the Whispering Pines community about 6 miles N of Southern Pines. To reach it, follow NC 22 to the crossroads just before you reach the Southern Pines-Pinehurst Airport. (Horned Larks can be found at the airport all year.) Turn right on SR 1843, then take the first paved road to the left (SR 1842). Follow this road onto SR 1802, and the lake will shortly appear on the left. Ring-necked Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, Mallards, Black Ducks, American Coots, and Pied-billed Grebes can usually be found on the lake during the winter. The best numbers of waterfowl can be observed just before dusk as ducks from the surrounding areas come in to roost on the lake. During the migrations, one can see American Widgeon, Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal, and an occasional Shoveler or Common Loon. Almost all the ducks that occur in the state have been recorded at Thagard's or at the other lakes in the vicinity, so you can never tell just what you are going to see for sure. Redheads, Canvasbacks, and Red-breasted Mergansers turn up occasionally; and on very rare occasions, Canada Geese, Common Goldeneyes, and Common Scoters have been recorded. A pair of Spotted Sandpipers breed at the back of the lake every summer, and there is a small colony of Barn Swallows under the bridge at the back of the lake. Tree, Bank, and Rough-winged Swallows (the latter breeding in the area) can often be seen feeding over the lake during bad weather in the spring. The lake is a good place to see migrating Ospreys also.

The swamps along Little River and Drowning Creek are rich in bird life, especially during the summer and migrations. These swamps are very large and dense, so people unfamiliar with the area should not attempt to enter them. People wishing to look for birds in these swamps can write J.H. Carter III, P.O. Box 891, Southern Pines, N.C. 28387 (Phone 692-7561). I will try to take you into the best areas and show you the bird or birds you wish to see. During the spring and summer, one can see Red-shouldered Hawks, Black Vultures, Pileated Woodpeckers, White-eyed Vireos, Black-and-white Warblers, Swainson's Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrushes, and numerous Prothonotary Warblers and redstarts. Wild Turkeys occur in the nearby Sandhills Wildlife Management Area, which cannot be entered without special permission.

## **Request for Cattle Egret Records**

A survey of the northward movement of the Cattle Egret is being made to determine the distribution and post breeding movements of this species throughout its range. The following information is requested: Name, address of observer, date, time, number, location of observation (state, nearest town, county and if possible township, range and section), habitat, activities and weather. Please send records and observations to Alan B. Schroeder, c/o Norman Bird Sanctuary, Third Beach Road, Middletown, Rhode Island, 02840. Cooperators will be sent proper forms and a report of the results if requested.