

On 18 May 1969 a Bald Eagle was found perched on each of the three posts in the edge of the White Ibis colony. Two of the eagles appeared to be of the current season's hatch and one from the 1968 season. When we began to check the ibis colony it was quite evident that a tremendous amount of egg breakage had taken place close to the areas where the eagles were securing the young for food. A rough estimate showed that nearly 1,500 nests were abandoned. The eagles continued to feed in the colony for several more days and were still present on 21 May. It may surprise some to learn that instead of reducing the number of White Ibis that fledged, a significant increase in nesting success was found by the end of the season.

Late Summer Record of a Saw-whet Owl

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Received 26 December 1969

While observing the sunset from Barnett Knob Fire Tower on the Swain-Jackson county line in the Cherokee Indian Reservation in North Carolina on 14 August 1969, I heard the unmistakable call notes of the Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*). The time was approximately 8:15 PM EDT. The bird gave its call twice with an interval of about 8 minutes between the calls. Mike Browne and Darryl Moffet were also present.

The area surrounding the summit of Barnett Knob is second-growth deciduous forest. Spruce is not present save for three small trees at the base of the tower. These appear to have been planted. This observation thus constitutes a late-season calling record for North Carolina as well as a record from outside of the normal habitat of the Saw-whet Owl. The elevation of Barnett Knob is approximately 4,500 feet. The bird was not heard on subsequent visits.

Leconte's Sparrow at Franklin, N.C.

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Throughout the summer of 1968 I noticed small webs on the undersides of the leaves on the lower limbs of my sycamore tree. As the leaves fell they became attractive to several species of birds, including an Ovenbird, Carolina Wren, Tufted Titmice, Chipping, Field and Song sparrows, and Rufous-sided Towhees. Because of the activity among the leaves, I periodically checked the birds working on them.

About 5 PM on 17 October I thought I detected a movement in the fallen leaves about 5 yards from where I stood. I picked up binoculars and focused for close viewing. The bird worked so furtively that it was difficult to pick it up. I noted the dingy orange stripe above the eye, extending from bill to the nape of neck, and that the face and neck were suffused with the same shade of dull orange. When it faced me I noted the light streak down the center of the head and that its breast and under parts were unstreaked. It definitely was not a native bird and I delayed getting out my guide until I had seen every detail. When it turned I noted the sparse, and short, sharp tail, then reached for Peterson's guide. With close study it appeared to be a Leconte's Sparrow, so I checked it again and found the narrow stripes under the wing, and the narrow paler streaks around the nape of the neck, which contrasted sharply with the dark heavy stripes on its brown and buff back. In sunlight the streaks on the nape of its neck might have looked pink, but the sky was overcast and they appeared to be only a paler brown than the rest of its streaked plumage.

A Chipping Sparrow was feeding near it, and the Leconte's Sparrow seemed even smaller in comparison. A Carolina Wren was feeding about 6 feet beyond it and in comparison seemed larger. Its movements were barely perceptible, and it took so long for it to work its way across the driveway that I had a good, close view of it from every angle.

It had obviously followed a thicket of raspberry vines from the dense growth along the creek to the shrubbery near the walk. After it slowly and cautiously worked its way through the fallen leaves across the walk and driveway, it flew into the tangle of briars and weeds on the high bank back of the house and was lost from sight. I tried to find it in this growth but was unsuccessful.

[This appears to represent the third observation of this species in North Carolina and the only record outside of Wake County. See the article by Jones (*Chat*, 30:30) for the account of the Wake County records.--DEPT. ED.]

Briefs for the Files

Compiled by JAMES F. PARNELL

Common Loon, one was found at Lake Benson near Raleigh, N.C., between 6 and 27 December 1969 by Robert Hader.

Red-throated Loon, one was at Lake Wheeler near Raleigh on 11 November and 6 December 1969, Robert Hader.

Red-necked Grebe, individuals were observed at Topsail Island, N.C., on 13 and 24 January 1970 by Gilbert Grant.

Horned Grebe, J. Merrill Lynch noted an interesting build up of grebes during late winter on Roanoke Rapids Lake north of Roanoke Rapids, N.C. During December, January, and February numbers remained generally low. In late February numbers increased and were generally high throughout March. As many as 35 birds were observed on several occasions in late March. This appears to represent a build up preparatory to northward migration.

Common Egret, an individual seen on 4 January 1970 at Raleigh was most unusual for the winter season, Harry and Edmund LeGrand.

Cattle Egret, one was late at Springfield in Barnwell County, S.C., on 16 December 1969 by Bill Albritton and reported by Will Post.

Glossy Ibis, six were seen inland flying over Tarboro, N.C., on 19 March 1970 by Mr. and Mrs. Ed Marrow.

Peregrine Falcon, one was seen on 24 January 1970 at Topsail Island by Gilbert Grant.

Pigeon Hawk, inland an individual was seen at Mason Farm near Chapel Hill, N.C., on 11 January 1970 by Robert Teulings. One was also seen near Columbia, S.C., on 18 January 1970 by Bruce Mack.

Spotted Sandpiper, two wintered at Whispering Pines, N.C. They were recorded on 22 and 24 December 1969 and 30 January 1970 by Jay Carter.

American Avocet, a flock of approximately 100 birds seen on 29 March 1970 just south of the Roanoke Island causeway by Mr. and Mrs. Frank B. Aycock Jr. indicates that the "outer bank" population may move some distance from the usual observation sites at Bodie and Pea Islands. Three avocets were also seen on 11 January 1970 at Hilton Head, S.C., by Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Rousler and reported by Caroline Newhall.

House Wren, one seen on 10 January 1970 at Umstead State Park just west of Raleigh appears to be the first published January record for Wake County. The bird was also seen as late as 28 February, Harry and Edmund LeGrand.

Catbird, one apparently wintered at a lake near Vass, N.C. It was seen as late as 15 February 1970, Jay Carter.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, one was late at Raleigh on 23 November 1969, Harry and Edmund LeGrand; as was a single bird about 40 miles SE of Columbia, S.C., in the Santee River swamps on 27 December 1969, John Cely.

Solitary Vireo, one seen at Umstead State Park near Raleigh on 3 January 1970 was unusual at this season, Harry LeGrand.

American Redstart, a female was seen building a nest in the Santee River swamp about 40 miles SE of Columbia, S.C., on 14 May 1966 by John Cely. This is one of very few records of this species nesting in the coastal plain of the Carolinas.