

During the month of June, large flocks of siskins were seen on every visit I made to the Forney Ridge-Newfound Gap area. June is ordinarily a month with infrequent records for this species. Red Crossbills were also common and easily seen during this same month. The total population of siskins I would estimate to be in the thousands, that of the crossbills in the hundreds for this particular area.

Both of these species remained present through August, the siskins becoming less numerous as the summer progressed, the crossbills seeming to increase. All records for these species were taken in the spruce-fir biome of the park with the one exception noted below. It should also be noted that these birds were absent from the Balsam range which has extensive growth of spruce and fir. All the above records exceeded 5,000 feet in altitude.

On 21 August, while driving across the park on Hwy 441, I noted a small flock of Red Crossbills in a hemlock grove near "the loop" on the Tennessee slope. The elevation there is 3,500 feet. A fresh road kill of a female was found at the site. This was the lowest altitude at which I observed the species during the summer.

## Low Altitude Summer Record of the Slate-colored Junco

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I observed a Slate-colored Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) near the town of Ela in Swain County, N.C., on 13 June 1969. This locality is at approximately 2,000 feet elevation. According to Stupka (*Birds of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park*, 1963) this species is usually confined to altitudes above 3,000 feet during the breeding season. Indeed, he points out that the birds are not found below 3,200 feet in the drainage of the Oconaluftee River. The Ela locality is within that drainage. This record thus constitutes an unusual and presumably abnormal occurrence of this species.

## Behavior of Some Birds During a Total Eclipse of the Sun

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From popular reports and newspaper articles I had been led to suppose that, during a total eclipse of the sun, birds normally go to roost and otherwise behave as at nightfall. Accordingly, my wife and I went to the Greenville, N.C., area with plans to observe birds going to roost during the total eclipse of the sun at midday on 7 March 1970.

About one-half hour before the eclipse was due to start, we went to a woods along a drainage ditch near Greenville and located several birds, including one Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*), two Song Sparrows (*Melospiza melodia*), and two Cardinals (*Richmondena cardinalis*). Of these we were able to follow only one Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and one Cardinal before and throughout the duration of the total eclipse. These two birds remained in view and continued moving about just as they had done before the eclipse started. The sapsucker moved from one position to another on the sides of two tree trunks in the 2 minutes and 57 seconds of the total eclipse; the Cardinal made three short flights to new positions among the small trees beside the ditch. A female Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*) also flew down the ditch and gave its *hoo-eek* call as it flew past us in the darkness. We lost it from view but found it on the water of the ditch some 200 feet below us when better visibility returned.

Thus, it appears that, although birds may sometimes go to roost during the darkness resulting from a total eclipse of the sun, this is not an invariable behavior response.