

Horned Owl does compete for nesting sites. Even in these cases the owls fledge about mid-March, and the nests may then be used by the Ospreys.

An attempt to check on clutch size was made in 1969 using a mirror and aluminum conduit pipe. Unstable boats, however, made this process unsatisfactory for detailed counts. The usual clutch was two or three eggs. It was noted that eggs seemed to disappear from the nests late in the incubation period. Based on our experience with other birds, thin shells were suspected. This factor has been observed in the Charleston area in the Bald Eagle, the Black Skimmer, the Gull-billed Tern, the Barn Owl, and the Brown Pelican.

From about 35 active nests there were only three known fledglings. Very rough conditions around some nests made a complete check impossible, but numbers of fledglings were obviously very low. This indicates that the Osprey in the Santee area is in serious danger and may not be able to sustain itself in the local breeding colonies.

Summer Records of the Raven in Oconee County, S.C.

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Sprunt and Chamberlain (*South Carolina Bird Life*, 1948) state that the Raven (*Corvus corax*) is known as a rare permanent resident in Oconee County, but their most recent sightings from this area were of a single bird in March 1935 and of 3 individuals in 1936. Furthermore, a check through volumes 1-33 of *The Chat* reveals no additional observations from this region.

On 12 June 1969 I noted a total of 6 Ravens near the Walhalla Fish Hatchery in Oconee County, S.C. The birds were seen and heard along Route 107 and the Fish Hatchery access road at elevations ranging from 2,600 to 3,000 feet. The main attraction for these birds appears to be the recently constructed garbage dump on Burrell's Mountain, about 100 yards W of Route 107 along Chattooga Ridge (3,000 feet). This open dump is utilized by the Forest Service for disposal of picnic ground wastes and by the Fish Hatchery for removal of dead trout. The Ravens have quickly learned of the feast to be had. Laurie W. Smith of the US Fish and Wildlife Service informed me that at least one pair of Ravens have been present in the area each season for the past 30 years, but the creation of the dump some 5 years ago resulted in a marked increase in the local population of the species. Smith reports seeing as many as 15 Ravens around the dump at one time, although smaller flocks are the usual rule. The species has been rumored to nest in the mountains of nearby Macon and Jackson Counties in North Carolina; and it seems likely that some of these birds are among those attracted to the Fish Hatchery area. On subsequent trips to this region, I noted 8 birds on 17 June, 4 on 18 June, 6 on 21 June, and 9 on 25 June.

Red Crossbills and Pine Siskins In Great Smoky Mountains, Summer 1969

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Two finches that are generally regarded as being of erratic and unpredictable occurrence in the Great Smoky Mountains are the Pine Siskin (*Spinus pinus*) and the Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*). During the summer of 1969 I had the opportunity to observe these birds on numerous occasions. Based on information given in *Notes on the Birds of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Vicinity* (Stupka, 1963) I feel that the following observations are noteworthy.

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.