

until reaching Cape Lookout and then turned ENE for the remainder of the outgoing trip. The boat stopped in the Gulf Stream about 55 miles out of Morehead City and only about 20 miles SE of Cape Hatteras.

Ten to 15 phalaropes were about 3 miles offshore of Morehead City. The light was not good enough at this early hour (06:00) to allow specific determinations. A total of 25 Audubon's Shearwaters (*Puffinus lherminieri*) were observed between 30 and 55 miles out of Morehead City. However, some may have been counted more than once as they were feeding and moving about at the time of the sightings. One Cory's Shearwater (*P. diomedea*) was 45 miles offshore, one was 30 miles offshore, and 15 were studied only 1 mile off Cape Lookout.

In addition, four unidentified jaegers were seen flying near an adult Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*) about 55 miles out of Morehead City. Both observers studied the tern carefully for several minutes. It is especially interesting to note that this occurrence of the Sooty Tern was not associated with a storm as has generally been the case for North Carolina records.

## Status of the Least Flycatcher On the Highlands Plateau

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20 May 1970

Although Pearson, Brimley, and Brimley (1959) regarded the Least Flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*) as a regular summer resident in the mountainous portions of North Carolina, the paucity of records from the area prompted them to comment that "our knowledge of its numbers and its distribution is quite limited." Nevertheless, observations of the bird in southeastern Macon County were reported as early as 1885; and subsequent records from the region provide a sound basis for assessing the status of the Least Flycatcher on the Highlands Plateau.

As defined by Odum (1949) the Highlands Plateau consists of a region of rolling table land including the town of Highlands and extending approximately 5 miles to the N, NE, and NW. Elevations vary from 3,000 to 5,054 feet, with the bulk of the terrain lying around 4,000 feet above sea level. As pointed out by Johnston (1964) the area is characterized by heavy annual rainfall, averaging 81 inches but occasionally exceeding 100 inches per year. Temperatures are cool during the summer months, with an average July temperature of 66 degrees F. Most of the area is covered by mixed, second growth forests which have been described in detail by Quarterman and Keever (1947).

The first records of the Least Flycatcher in the Highlands region came when Brewster (1886) reported his observations of the bird from the last week of May 1885, during which period "a day rarely passed without two or three being noted." The following year, C.L. Boynton reported a spring arrival date of 24 April (1886); and Pearson, Brimley, and Brimley (1959) subsequently listed this sighting as the earliest date for the bird in North Carolina. Torrey (1898) found a male in song near the Turtlepond Road in late May 1896; and C.S. Brimley collected a single bird there on 9 May 1908.

Due apparently to the absence of observers in the area, the bird was not reported again until the week of 20-26 June 1930, when A.H. Howell noted males in song within the city limits of Highlands. Stevenson (1941) conducted extensive field work in the Highlands area during the period 15 June to 6 September 1937 and 1 June to 4 July 1941; and his studies indicated that the Least Flycatcher was rare above 4,000 feet, common from 3,100 to 4,000 feet, and uncommon below 3,100 feet, with the lowest record at an altitude of 2,950 feet. Subsequent observations of singing males were reported in Highlands on 5 July 1944 by Lydia Sargent and from Horse Cove and the Scaly Mountain Road on 9 July 1960 by J.A. Cheek. Nests have been reported by Cheek on 16 July 1960 along Whiteside Cove Road and by M.L. Heddon near Buck Creek on 1

May 1946. Although Marie Huger has noted an early arrival date of 4 March, Johnston (1964) accepted Heddon's Buck Creek record of 16 April 1946 as the earliest spring date for the species. Toliver Crunkleton has noted extreme dates of 24 April to 1 October 1951 at Buttermilk Level (3,800 feet), but the latest departure record appears to be Huger's observation of 5 October.

Between 16 and 21 June 1969, I searched for Least Flycatchers along all passable roads on the Highlands Plateau; and nine calling males were repeatedly located at sites ranging from 2,900 feet to 3,950 feet in elevation. Individuals were noted at the following locales: two birds were on adjacent territories in Horse Cove (2,900 feet), one was noted at the junction of Route 106 and Turtlepond Road (3,950 feet), two were along Route 106 just W of the Highlands city limits (3,800 feet), two were noted on S.R. 1547 some .3 miles from US 64 (3,760 feet), and single birds were heard along SR 1564 (3,750 feet) and along US 64 just above Dry Falls (3,840 feet). Habitat selection at these nine sites consistently involved mixed, open, second-growth forests of maple, oak, hickory, and pine; and the bird's home range within these woodlands invariably bordered on open areas such as pasture land or orchards. Limitations of time precluded any search for nests, and consequently no evidence of breeding was noted.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to Highlands Biological Station for permission to examine and summarize the data contained in their biota file cards on the Least Flycatcher.

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### **Breeding Cedar Waxwings In Great Craggy and Black Mountains**

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On 17 June 1970, while exploring portions of the Great Craggy Mountains of Buncombe County, N.C., Simpson noted a pair of Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedorum*) carrying food into a small, open grove of hawthorns (*Crataegus* sp.) 50 yards S of Beetree Gap (elevation 4,920 feet). Subsequent investigation revealed a loose, bulky nest of twigs and grass at a height of 9½ feet in a 12-foot hawthorn shrub. Examination of the nest revealed four blind, naked young. The two adults, showing no