

White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*). It was alone and perched on a low stump just above the water. Although the bird was about ½ mile away, it was easily identified with a 20X spotting scope. Its pink bill and vertical stripe behind it were easily visible. Also noted were the orange legs, the white flank stripe, and the gray-brown color of the head, neck and back. The black breast blotches were not seen well because of the distance, and the goose seemed darker around the belly than the birds pictured in the field guides. The goose was also seen on the afternoons of 1 through 3 March by Robert J. Hader, Mike Browne, Gilbert Grant, and others.

We have no knowledge of captive or domestic White-fronted Geese in the Raleigh area. Several pinioned White-fronted Geese were kept in the Wendell-Zebulon area a few years ago. However, they had been moved to Wilson, N.C., well prior to this sighting. This, coupled with the short stay of the goose in the area, makes it appear that the observation was of a wild bird. The first published record of the White-fronted Goose in Wake County, this is one of few inland records for North Carolina.

[Since waterfowl are so commonly kept in captivity, extralimital records must always be suspect. However, the group is also very mobile and apparently authentic records of strays are relatively common. Thus while records such as the above are always very exciting, it must be recognized that there is always the possibility that the bird represents an escape from a captive flock.—DEPT. ED.]

An Unrecorded Specimen Of the King Eider from North Carolina

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20 May 1970

Pearson, Brimley, and Brimley (*Birds of North Carolina*, 1959) list but four occasions when the King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*) has been reported in North Carolina; and a check through volumes 21-33 of the *Chat* reveals no subsequent observations. In addition to the 6 specimens taken during the flight of December 1908, individuals were collected along the coast on 1 December 1921, 14 December 1924, and in November 1936.

During July 1969, while examining the Anatidae collection of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, I located an adult female King Eider taken on 3 January 1925 at Manteo, N. C. The specimen, which was collected by J. H. Hickson, is catalogued as AMNH No. 750003; and so far as I am aware, has not been previously reported in the literature.

I also examined the specimen which Pearson and the Brimleys stated was collected on 14 December 1924, and the date appears to be in error. The bird was actually collected on 10 December 1924, but it was received at the Museum on 14 December. The date was erroneously reported to the Brimleys and subsequently included in the 1942 edition of *Birds of North Carolina*.

Sooty Tern and Audubon's Shearwaters Off North Carolina in September

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We departed from Morehead City, N.C., aboard the *Captain Stacy* for the Gulf Stream on 7 September 1969 to study pelagic birds. We traveled parallel to Shackleford Island

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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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