

High Altitude Occurrences of the Bobwhite In Western North Carolina

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At 4 PM on 29 June 1970, I flushed a covey of 12 Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) at the summit of Spruce Mountain (5,647 feet), Haywood County, N.C. Three of the birds were flightless chicks, and I succeeded in capturing two of the young birds in the dense grass near the fire tower. The peak is surrounded with a forest of Fraser fir (*Abies fraseri*) and red spruce (*Picea rubens*), although there is an open, grassy area of about one acre near the summit. The presence of the young birds strongly suggests that the brood was raised in the immediate vicinity, thereby providing evidence of high altitude nesting.

My only other records from comparable elevations were made on 23 July 1968 near Yellowstone Prong, Graveyard Fields, Haywood County, N.C., at an elevation of 5,200 feet. Two birds were calling repeatedly from an early stage, second-growth forest of yellow birch (*Betula lutea*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), and pin cherry (*Prunus pensylvanica*) bordering a grassy opening in the region devastated by the great fire of Thanksgiving Day 1925.

Pearson, Brimley, and Brimley (*Birds of North Carolina*, 1959) state that the Bobwhite occurs in suitable habitats in the mountain regions up to 5,000 feet in elevation, but no mention is made of specific records or whether the bird breeds at such altitudes. Stupka (*Notes on the Birds of Great Smoky Mountains National Park*, 1963) presents records from as high as 6,300 feet on Mt. LeConte in the Tennessee portion of the Great Smokies. He also states that the records of the bird above 3,500 feet are virtually limited to the period of May through August, when a ratio of 9:1 indicates the distribution below and above that elevation. To my knowledge, the only published report of chicks in the higher altitudes is also given by Stupka: a hen with four "half-grown" chicks noted on 24 and 25 August 1951 at Andrews Bald, Swain County, N.C., at an elevation of 5,800 feet.

Rejection of Tobacco Hornworm Moths By Laughing Gulls

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On Pamlico Sound during the spring and summer of 1969 I did research on over-water behavior of tobacco hornworm moths (*Manduca sexta*). On two different occasions one to two hundred of these moths were taken in a boat several hundred feet from shore where they were emptied from a cage onto the surface of the water. When on the surface of the water the moths soon started fluttering about and rising from the water. These fluttering and flying moths quickly attracted 50 to 75 Laughing Gulls (*Larus atricilla*). Although the gulls readily captured the moths, the moths were released without apparent injury before the gulls had flown 25 feet from the sites of capture.

Howell (*Florida Bird Life*, 1932) reported that Laughing Gulls feed on insects, including moths; however, Howell gave no information on either the nature or species of moths which are eaten. The tobacco hornworm moth is relatively large, with a wing spread of about 4 inches. As the moths were captured before they were rejected it would seem that they were rejected for a tactile or a gustatory characteristic, rather than a visual one.