

on. Later that day we found a second flock of 125 Ring-billed Gulls in a field with a group of pigs. The gulls apparently were benefitting from this relationship in much the same way as Cattle Egrets do from livestock. The gulls would feed where the pigs had uprooted the ground. I have never heard of such an ecological relationship existing between gulls and farm animals in this way before.

From these two observations, I have made an educated guess that all the gulls I have seen commuting to and from the lake have been feeding in fields surrounding Roanoke Rapids Lake; however, I do not know how far these gulls range in search for food.

In summary, there are two feeding populations of gulls at Roanoke Rapids Lake. The first group, numbering from 150 to 300 individuals are apparently able to obtain sufficient amounts of food from the lake and do not regularly leave it. The second group, the great majority of the gulls, resort to other feeding areas. These gulls use the lake not for food, but as a resting place at night.

High Altitude Occurrences Of the Belted Kingfisher In Haywood County, N.C.

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21 April 1971

Pearson, Brimley, and Brimley (1942) stated that the Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*) is widely distributed throughout North Carolina during most of the year; but no mention was made concerning altitudinal limits in the mountain regions. Stupka (1963) reported that the species was rarely observed above 3,000 feet in the Great Smoky Mountains, and he mentioned a total of only five records above that elevation. Ganier (1926) also regarded 3,000 feet as the upper limit at which the species regularly occurred, and he noted that no nesting burrows had ever been found above that altitude. Stupka (1963) reported the sighting of a single bird at Black Camp Gap (4,522 feet) on 31 July 1934, and this appears to be the highest elevation at which the species has been recorded in the southern Appalachians.

Located high in the mountains of southeastern Haywood County, N.C., Yellowstone Prong of the East Fork Pigeon River flows through a massive, mile high hanging valley known as Graveyard Fields. This high, flat basin and the ranges which encircle it were once covered with a mantle of Fraser fir (*Abies fraseri*) and red spruce (*Picea rubens*); but a devastating forest fire in November 1925 destroyed over 25,000 acres of this virgin Canadian zone forest, leaving open grassy fields infiltrated by an open, mixed, early growth of Catawba rhododendron (*Rhododendron catawbiense*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier laevis*), mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), blueberry (*Vaccinium* sp.), winterberry (*Ilex montana*), yellow birch (*Betula lutea*), fire cherry (*Prunus pensylvanica*), and red maple (*Acer rubrum*).

On 5 October 1969 I saw an adult male Belted Kingfisher at an elevation of 5,100 feet along Yellowstone Prong approximately 200 yards above Second Falls. The bird was flying upstream near the Graveyard Fields trail system maintained by the Blue Ridge Parkway. Although I have not seen the species in this area on any other occasion, Charles F. Hutchinson (pers. com.) noted a pair of kingfishers on Yellowstone Prong at Upper Falls (5,320 feet) on numerous occasions in June 1965. Although the behavior of the pair suggested the possibility of breeding, Hutchinson was unable to locate a burrow or any other positive evidence of nesting.

This appears to be the highest elevation at which the Belted Kingfisher has been recorded in the southern Appalachians. Furthermore, Hutchinson's observations suggest the possibility that the species may breed in this region. Observers should remain alert to

document any additional sightings and breeding evidence from the Yellowstone Prong area, which is easily accessible on foot from the Blue Ridge Parkway.

LITERATURE CITED

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Say's Phoebe at Eastover, S.C.

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15 February 1969

Early Saturday morning, 18 January 1969, Mrs. Emma Walker and Mrs. Jay Zimmerman came down from Columbia for a day of birding in lower Richland County. Between the Wateree and Congaree Rivers are broad flat fields at that time having just been planted with grain or in which grain was just coming up. This was an ideal area for sparrows and pipits and many other ground birds. Hawks were also present, particularly Marsh Hawks. Many flocks of blackbirds darkened some fields.

We had ridden in a wide circle, and at about 4:30 PM came to the J.C. Lanham pastures. We stopped at the watertrough to look for Brewer's Blackbirds. One large oak tree is by the roadside, with a vacant house nearby, around which was a low fence. On one of the posts was a phoebe. We sat and watched as it flew from post to post, then realizing that there was something decidedly different about this bird, we got out of the car and followed the bird from one side of the house to the other, thus getting to see it from every angle in the sunlight. The rusty underparts were clearly seen from the front, with the dark head and tail with lighter back visible from the rear. It was much too brown for our eastern bird. Having with us the book, *Birds of North America* by Robbins, Bruun, and Zim, we identified the bird as a Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*). We did not hear its call, but it bobbed its tail in the typical phoebe manner.

[Dept. Ed. -- This appears to be the first record of this western flycatcher in South Carolina. There is also a single record from Wake County, North Carolina (*Chat*, 30:28-29), which also summarizes the bird's occurrence east of the Mississippi River. While collections or photographs are always desirable to verify unusual sightings, careful observation by three capable birders certainly gives considerable weight to this observation which has been accepted by Burton in the revised edition of *South Carolina Bird Life* published in 1970. Say's Phoebe can now be placed on the Carolina Bird Club's hypothetical list for South Carolina.]

Traill's Flycatcher at Chapel Hill, N.C., in Breeding Season

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30 August 1971

On 6 June 1971 I found a Traill's Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*) singing steadily at Mason Farm near Chapel Hill, N.C. The song was of the "fitz-bew" variety. The bird was observed again on 12 and 19 June. The usual perch was in willow trees growing between multiflora rose hedges on either side of a wet ditch, surrounded by weedy fields. When last noted on 19 June, the songs were much less frequent; and the bird could well have remained in the area undetected for the rest of the summer.

The bird was once seen in vigorous conflict with a pair of chickadees, suggesting territorial defense. Speculatively, the bird was a male who established a nesting territory