

*Friday, 26 April 1969*

16:30—1 Wilson's Petrel. 34 degrees 03' N, 76 degrees 05' W, 51 miles offshore.

18:00—1 Audubon's Shearwater: small black and white shearwater with rapidly beating wings. Came to within 120 yards of ship. 34 degrees 05.7' N, 76 degrees 00.8' W, 51 miles offshore.

*Saturday, 27 April 1969*

06:30—1 Greater Shearwater and 1 unidentified shearwater. 33 degrees 51' N, 75 degrees 46' W, 65 miles offshore.

07:30—1 Greater Shearwater; 3 unidentified shearwaters; 8 Wilson's Petrels. The petrels seemed to be following a "white-tipped" shark when first seen. The petrels followed the ship for a short while, apparently trying to feed on ham thrown overboard as bait for the shark. All were seen within a mile of 06:30 position.

Shearwaters listed as "unidentified" were large, probably either Greater or Sooty, but they were too far away for identification.

I am familiar with both Greater Shearwater and Wilson's Petrel from boat trips off Long Island and in the Bay of Fundy. Although this sighting of Audubon's Shearwater was my first one, the bird definitely was not a Greater Shearwater as it lacked the whitish rump, larger size, and more leisurely wingbeat of that species. Moreover, its wingbeat was faster than that of the Manx Shearwater (which I have seen once in company with more experienced observers); the process of elimination combined with the area in which I saw the bird (Gulf Stream) makes me reasonably certain it was, indeed, an early Audubon's Shearwater. For a full discussion of the field identification of "black and white shearwaters" see Peter Post's "The Occurrence and Field Identification of Small 'Black and White Shearwaters' in New York" in *The Kingbird*, 14:133-140, 1964.

The sighting of these birds was very early. *Birds of North Carolina* (Pearson, Brimley and Brimley, 1942) gives the following early dates: Audubon's Shearwater, 6 July; Greater Shearwater, 22 June; and Wilson's Petrel, 27 May.

There are, however, earlier records for the Greater Shearwater on 1 May 1965 off Long Island, New York. (*Audubon Field Notes*, 19:455) and 21 April 1911 in Massachusetts, (*The Birds of Cape Cod, Mass.*, 1965). Palmer in *The Handbook of North American Birds* (1962) states that occasional Greater Shearwaters are found in the north Atlantic in June, and that the Wilson's Petrel reaches 30 degrees N latitude by the third week of April on the ocean, and only later moves inshore. There is also a record of Wilson's Petrel on 20 May 1967 at Ocean City, Maryland (*Audubon Field Notes*, 21:493).

From the above records it is clear that my observations of the Wilson's Petrel and Greater Shearwater are not unprecedented. Indeed, it would seem that such early occurrence, for the petrel at least, is probably standard. In any event, these records for all three species are the earliest known for North Carolina.

[Dept. Ed.—Records of pelagic birds off the North Carolina coast are very scarce, and the timing of occurrences of most species is based only on fragmentary local data coupled with somewhat better data on arrival and departure from the breeding areas. Thus, additional records such as the above are always valuable.]

## **Breeding Range Extension Of the Blue-winged Teal into Southeastern North Carolina**

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11 July 1970

The southernmost breeding site of the Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors orphna*) along the Atlantic coast is given as northeastern North Carolina (Pea and Bodie Islands) by the

A.O.U. Check-list (1957) and by J.F. Parnell (The Populations, Breeding Biology, and Environmental Relations of Three Species of Waterfowl at Pea and Bodie Islands, North Carolina, Proc. Conf. Southeastern Assoc. Game and Fish Comm., 1960 p. 53-67).

However, evidence of nesting in an impoundment at West Onslow Beach, near Sneads Ferry in Onslow County, N.C., was discovered in 1969. This location is about 150 air miles SW of the Bodie and Pea Island colonies. I found seven adults and two young (unable to fly) at this impoundment on 22 June 1969 (*Chat*, 33:106). I was unable to search the area intensively for nests in 1969, but in 1970 I made several trips into this impoundment. On 31 May 1970 I found 9 Blue-winged Teal nests with clutches ranging from 3 to 12 eggs and averaging 7.67 eggs per nest. The nests were constructed of sedges and most were located on small patches of ground a foot or two above the water level. A few were fastened to grasses and suspended above water. I returned on 15 June 1970 to find all but two nests had apparently hatched successfully. The eggs in one nest were still being incubated while the remaining nest had spilled its eggs into the water. These were full clutches as 21 to 23 days are required for incubation (*Jour. Wildl. Mgm.*, 20 (1):28-46) and my two visits were only 2 weeks apart. A count of 20 adult Blue-winged Teal was recorded on 31 May 1970, which indicates practically all birds present were nesting. A partial count on 6 July 1970 disclosed at least 40 teal in the impoundment.

This impoundment was constructed about 4 years ago and is managed by a duck hunting club. The water level cannot be manipulated and the depth of the water varies with the rainfall. The construction of this impoundment at West Onslow Beach has created improved nesting and rearing habitats for the Blue-winged Teal as is the case at the Pea and Bodie Island impoundments (Parnell, *op. cit.*) and thus made it favorable for this breeding range extension.

## Unusual Nesting Site for Tufted Titmouse

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10 August 1971

On 8 May 1970 a neighbor in Southern Pines, Moore County, N.C., called and informed me that their dog had overturned the hollow base of a pottery bird bath, revealing a nest with young birds inside. When I arrived, I found the nest on the ground inside the base where the neighbor had replaced it. The nest contained five young Tufted Titmice (*Parus bicolor*), with pin-feathers just appearing.

The nest was square, measuring 5x5 inches, and it was  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch thick. It was a typical titmouse nest in its make-up. The base stood upright and was about 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  feet tall. It was cylindrical with a large bottom, narrower neck, and a flared out rim around the opening in its top. Habitat was a mature stand of loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*), open on one side and with a second growth of dogwood (*Cornus florida*) on the other side.

I placed several cinder blocks around the base to prevent dogs from overturning it again. Afterwards, both parent titmice were observed coming to feed the young. They would alight on the rim of the base and drop down inside. They were easily caught by hand while inside the base. Both wore bands that I had placed on them in my yard, which is situated nearby.

On 19 May all five young were well feathered and appeared ready to leave the nest. It seemed impossible for them to get out, as they would have to fly 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  feet straight up or climb the very slick walls. I therefore removed and released them nearby.

Titmice normally nest in cavities and crevices in trees, and also make frequent use of bird houses. In Bent's *Life Histories* (U. S. Nat. Mus., Bull. 171, p. 394-396) nest heights of from 3 to 97 feet are mentioned, thus ground nesting appears very unusual.