



Roundtable

Further Comments on Birds' Feeding at Night

Gilbert Grant reports in response to remarks in March 1972 *Chat* (36:12) that he saw Sanderlings feeding at night by full moon on 4 September 1968 and in light of fishing piers on 23 August 1969 at Topsail Island, N. C. Black Skimmers also feed at night, but they have special "pupil" muscles. Zusi did a paper on them.

CBC History

Beginning with the June 1972 issue, *Wildlife in North Carolina* featured a four-part series of articles on the history of Carolina Bird Club written by Charlotte Hilton Green, a charter member and past president of the club. An earlier issue carried an article about another CBC member, Elizabeth B. Clarkson of Charlotte. *Wildlife* almost always has several items of particular interest to the naturalist in addition to material on hunting and fishing. If you don't read it regularly, you are missing a treat!

Request for Data

Recent sight records of Painted Buntings in spring from scattered localities in the piedmont of North and South Carolina suggest that the species may be more than accidental in this section of the Carolinas. Please report any sightings of Painted Buntings in piedmont North or South Carolina to me for publication in *Chat*. Indicate dates of sightings, sex of birds, behavior, and habitat. Address reports to Miss Jane P. Holt, Dept. of Biology, Presbyterian College, Clinton, S. C. 29325.

1971 Christmas Bird Count:

A Correction and a Confirmation

Compiler Frances Needham reports that the 19 Glossy Ibis listed for Wilmington in the 1971 Christmas Bird Count table (*Chat*, 36:14) should be White Ibis. Please correct your copy.

Several club members have questioned the 28 Grasshopper Sparrows reported on the Yancey-McDowell count. Although the species has previously been recorded in several mountain localities, the large number of birds invites skepticism. Joseph Hall, leader of the field party that found the birds, has written a detailed report that is summarized below.

The Grasshopper Sparrows were found on 18 December 1971 in four different places. In a field near Lake Tahoma three were flushed and observed while perched and in flight. The flat head and light stripe on top of the head were noted. Two more were on a fence wire near Celo, and three were in a field between Pleasant Gardens and Marion along Hwy 80. The main group of at least 20 individuals was found in a 6-acre field of tall weeds. We watched the birds feeding undisturbed for about 25 minutes, during which time we were able to compare the Grasshopper Sparrows with Savannah, Field, White-throated, and Song Sparrows. The Savannahs were in short grass along the edge of the field, but the Grasshoppers were spread out over the entire field and didn't seem to associate with each other except for some groups of two or three birds. The presence of such a large number of Grasshopper Sparrows in a relatively small area during December is probably related to the unusually warm weather that prevailed until the night before the count day.

Institute for the Study of Bird Populations

Steve Fretwell, formerly a graduate student at N. C. State University and now an assistant professor in the Division of Biology at Kansas State University, is in the process of forming an Institute for bird population studies. Patterned after the British Trust for Ornithology, the Institute will offer financial support for appropriate graduate and post-doctoral research, analyze population data gathered by amateur bird students, and popularize the work of professional ornithologists. Dr. Fretwell maintains that we cannot adequately protect bird populations if we do not know what causes their fluctuations. He holds a Ph. D. in Theoretical Ecology and Biomathematics, and the basis for his work is being published in a monograph by the Princeton University Press. Anyone interested in obtaining further information about the Institute (annual membership \$5 per person) should write Dr. Steve Fretwell, Division of Biology, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66502.



Photo by
Gil and Jo Fernandez

Osprey Conference

Proceedings of the recent North American Osprey Research Conference are now in preparation, and copies may be reserved by writing Dr. Mitchell A. Byrd, Department of Biology, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185. Sale price is expected to be no more than \$2.00. Also available from Dr. Byrd are postcards featuring the head of an Osprey and small stickers bearing the photograph reproduced above along with the slogan PROTECT OSPREYS. CBC members will recall Dr. Byrd as the guest speaker at the Nags Head meeting in the fall in 1971.

The Osprey Conference took place last February, and Dr. Byrd served as host and chairman. Reports on the status of this endangered species came from Canada and Mexico as well as all sections of the United States. One highlight of the meeting was a report by Alexander Sprunt IV of the National Audubon Society, who described sightings of Ospreys and nest locations in eastern coastal regions of Mexico, the Yucatan, and Belize. Hitherto virtually unknown, these may comprise a resident race comparable to the birds of southern Florida.