

# General Field Notes

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## Double-crested Cormorant in Western North Carolina

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On 24 October 1971 my family and I were scanning Lake Julian, a large man-made lake in Buncombe County, N.C., when an unusual bird landed in the water. We watched it for about 45 minutes at a distance of approximately 400 yards with 7 x 50 binoculars and a 60X spotting scope. The all-black plumage and orange throat-spot clearly identified the bird as a Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*). Its behavior was also typical of a cormorant. The bird raised its wings and flapped several times and then held them in the air for 2 to 3 minutes.

*Birds of North Carolina* (1959) indicates that the only previous record for the Double-crested Cormorant from Buncombe County is a bird seen in 1889. I do not find any other records of the species from the mountains of North Carolina, although Stupka (*Notes on the Birds of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park*, 1963) mentions two cormorant sightings in eastern Tennessee, one at the mouth of Abrams Creek and another near Gatlinburg.

## Reddish Egret at Pea Island NWR

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On 25 September 1971 while birding with a group of CBC members, I discovered a Reddish Egret (*Dichromanassa lufescens*) in the brackish marsh just north of the north pond on Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge on North Carolina's Outer Banks. The bird was observed in good light through both binoculars and spotting scope.

The bird was a dark phase individual clearly larger than nearby Snowy Egrets (*Leucophoyx thula*). The body colors were typical of those described for this species with the long bushy head plumes, bill with pale base and dark tip clearly visible. In addition, it was observed feeding in the very nervous manner of this species, including a somewhat subdued sequence of "open wing feeding" as described by Meyerriicks (*Comparative Breeding Behavior of Four Species of North American Herons*, Nuttall Ornithological Club Publications, No. 2, 1960).

While it is recognized that there is much variation in this species and that at times separation from Little Blue Herons (*Florida cerulea*) is difficult, there seems no doubt