

General Field Notes

JAMES F. PARNELL, Department Editor
Department of Biology, University of North Carolina at Wilmington,
Wilmington, N. C. 28401

JULIAN R. HARRISON, Associate Editor
Department of Biology, The College of Charleston, Charleston, S. C. 29401

Double-crested Cormorant in Western North Carolina

JOSEPH L. HALL
Route 8, Box 1136, Asheville, N.C. 28806

5 December 1971

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

JAMES F. PARNELL
Biology Department
University of North Carolina at Wilmington
Wilmington, N.C. 28401

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

that this was a Reddish Egret. Color photographs were secured and two have been submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Photoduplicate File at Patuxent, Maryland. The photographs have been given acquisition numbers 198 ITa and 198-ITb.

This appears to be the second record of this southern wader in North Carolina. The first report was from near Charlotte on 27 July 1947 (*Chat*, 12:52, 1948). Two birds found in Berkely County, S.C., on 15 January 1934, represent the only published record of this species from South Carolina (*South Carolina Bird Life*, Sprunt and Chamberlain, 1970). The publication of this note and the placement of photographs in the National Photoduplicate File allow the Reddish Egret to be added to the official bird list for North Carolina.

A Second Hooded Merganser Brood in South Carolina

LAWRENCE H. ROBINSON
Biologist, Soil Conservation Service
P.O. Box 493, Walterboro, S.C. 29488

A brood of Hooded Mergansers (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) was produced at Orangeburg National Fish Hatchery, Orangeburg, S.C. I saw a female with three young unable to fly on 2 June 1972. The brood was first seen in the hatchery's main reservoir pond two weeks earlier by Hatchery Manager Ted Dingley. At that time four young were present. No male was ever observed. The nesting site was not found, but nine Wood Duck boxes are located in the reservoir area. By 21 July 1972 the female had disappeared, but the three young remained and were observed flying from one hatchery pond to another (Ted Dingley, pers. com.).

This is the second positive instance of nesting by the Hooded Merganser in South Carolina. The first was reported by T. A. Beckett, who observed two young at Magnolia Gardens, Charleston County, in May 1967 (*South Carolina Bird Life*, 1970, p. 592). As one of these was secured for the Charleston Museum, no attempt was made to collect the hatchery birds, but on 2 June several recognizable photographs were made. During my attempts to photograph them, the young dove and disappeared from view for 30 minutes. The female scooted frantically across the reservoir in an apparent attempt to decoy me away from the brood.

Increased use of Wood Duck nesting boxes by Hooded Mergansers in states north of South Carolina raises the possibility of imprinting as a technique in promoting future Hooded Merganser nesting in this state.

Woodcock at Butner, N.C., in March

OWEN L. McCONNELL
2808 Butner Street, Durham, N.C.

27 March 1972

On 21 March 1972 at 11:00 I observed three American Woodcock (*Philohela minor*) chicks near Butner, N.C. They were in a "freezing" defense in the middle of a paved road near a creek bottom. I approached on foot within 20 feet before noticing the long-billed Woodcock hen feigning injury at the edge of the woods. Before I could reach the young, a car passed over them, the backdraft tumbling them like bits of weightless fluff. They immediately resumed their "freezing" attitude and maintained it while I knelt beside them, observing them closely. They were unharmed and unmistakably Woodcocks because of their elongated bills and mottled downy plumage. They had not developed primary wing feathers. Fearing for their safety, I placed them on the shoulder of the road. They ran skillfully, with wings raised for balance. From growth characteristics cited by W. G. Sheldon in *The Book of the American Woodcock*, 1967, I estimated their