

cold front had resulted in a low temperature of 55 F the night before this bird was seen.

This bird appears to be a rare fall migrant in the mountains of western North Carolina. No other fall records of the Wilson's Warbler in this area have been published since the 22-25 September 1894 record in Brimley's 1940 list of "The Birds of Buncombe County" (*Chat*, 4:21-36). This warbler was also recorded by Bob Ruiz in Swannanoa, N.C., 25 September 1969 in an unpublished observation. Arthur Stupka, in *Notes on the Birds of Great Smoky Mountains National Park* (1963), lists only four fall records - 31 August 1941, 11 September 1944, 18 September 1934, and 2 October 1939. Three of these records were at the Park Headquarters in Tennessee and one at Deep Creek.

In view of these isolated records, further field studies are needed to determine the status of this bird in the mountain region of the Carolinas.

Clutch of Unusually Large Eggs Laid by Rufous-sided Towhee

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On 15 June 1971 I discovered a banded female Rufous-sided Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) incubating a clutch of three unusually large eggs in a ground-level nest concealed beneath a bush beside the driveway to my home near Zebulon, Wake County, N.C. The eggs were of normal color for the species, and two were normal in shape though larger than average. The largest egg was somewhat constricted near the middle much like a peanut shell with two seeds, one slightly larger than the other. At its greatest dimensions this egg measured 35.0 x 16.0 mm. The other two eggs were 27.5 x 18.0 mm and 24.5 x 18.0 mm. Two extremely large *P. p. erythrophthalmus* eggs described in Bent's *Life Histories* (1968) measured 25.7 x 18.3 mm and 24.4 x 19.3 mm. Measurements of 50 eggs averaged 23.1 x 17.0 mm.

On 21 June the smallest egg in the clutch had hatched, and the nest contained one chick and two eggs through 25 June. The morning of 26 June I found the eggs punctured and both eggs and chick being devoured by tiny red ants that completely covered the contents of the nest.

A few days later I saw the banded female carrying nesting material toward a site about 150 feet from the first nest, but I did not locate the second nest until 3 August when it contained three well feathered chicks, which left the nest the next day.

A Le Conte's Sparrow Record for Moore County, N.C.

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On 30 April 1972, while conducting the annual Southern Pines Spring Bird Count, Sandra Bishop, Dana Taylor, and the authors observed a Le Conte's Sparrow (*Passer-herbulus caudacutus*). The bird was located in a large complex of interconnecting pastures at Little River Farm, near Whispering Pines in Moore County, N.C. Two creeks run through the pastures, and, except in times of drought, water stands in a number of places. In the drier areas upland grasses, especially broomsedge (*Andropogon* sp.), are prevalent, and in the wetter portions a variety of sedges and rushes are dominant.

We had flushed several Savannah Sparrows (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) and were searching for rails in the marshy places when we flushed a sparrow that was immediately separable from the Savannahs by its "sharp" tail and very pale, streaked back. The bird flew a short distance and landed. It was subsequently flushed at close range at least a dozen times. Making it fly was very difficult, and it would generally flush several feet or yards from where it was seen to land. It would neither perch nor respond to "squeaking." Carter saw it once very briefly on the ground, but all other observations were in flight, usually at distances of between 10 and 30 feet. It showed a definite preference for the wet sedges and rarely left them.

The bird was approximately the size of a Savannah Sparrow. It had a sharp-pointed tail, an orangish eye-line, and a very pale, well-streaked back. Both authors noted a light crown stripe, and Bishop observed streaking on its cream-colored sides.

After careful consideration and repeated reference to field guides, the authors determined the bird to be a Le Conte's Sparrow. All observed field marks, the bird's actions, and the habitat confirm the identification. There are four previously published records for this species in North Carolina. C.S. Brimley collected one at Raleigh on 21 April 1894 (*Birds of North Carolina*, 1959, p. 376). Single birds were observed on 23 October 1963 in Wake County (*Chat*, 30:30), on 17 October 1968 at Franklin (*Chat*, 34:49-50), and on 29 November 1970 at Morehead City (*Chat*, 35:59). There are several records for South Carolina, and *South Carolina Bird Life* (1970) considers it a "rare and erratic winter resident between October 25 and April 27." The 1957 edition of the *A.O.U. Checklist* gives much of the southeastern United States as the normal winter range, but terms Le Conte's Sparrow as "casual" in North Carolina.

On 9 October 1971 Carter had observed a very similar bird at the same locality. The bird showed the same preference for wet sedges, and was exceedingly hard to flush. It was seen only in flight. It appeared darker on the back than did the Le Conte's Sparrow, and had a sharp tail and an orangish eye-line. Due to the extreme rarity of Le Conte's Sparrow in North Carolina, and the dark-streaked back, Carter concluded that the bird was a Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammodramus caudacuta*). At the time of this observation, Sharp-tailed Sparrows were being found far inland in tower kills at the WECT tower near White Lake, Bladen County, N.C. (unpub., Carter and Parnell). Carter now feels it is best to retract the record for the Sharp-tailed Sparrow since a reasonable doubt about its accuracy has arisen due to the recent record of the very similar Le Conte's Sparrow at the same locality. The Sharp-tailed Sparrow record appeared in the *Chat* (35:105) and in *American Birds* (26:49).

Notes on Wintering Lapland Longspurs in Northampton County, N.C.

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About 15 Lapland Longspurs (*Calcarius lapponicus*) were present at Occoneechee Neck, Northampton County, N.C., 12 through 27 February 1972. These birds were associated with a large flock of 250 to 310 Horned Larks (*Eremophila alpestris*) during their 16-day residence here and were seen by five observers. The purpose of this note is to acquaint the reader with plumage characteristics of the longspurs and with the behavior of the lark-longspur flock.

Occoneechee Neck is an area of low, flat, and extensive farmland interspersed with tracts of bottomland and swampy hardwoods located in the western coastal plain. It is situated on a wide bend or "neck" of the Roanoke River about 12 miles SE of Roanoke Rapids, N.C. Elevation varies from 40 to 65 feet above sea level.

On 12 February the Lapland Longspurs were feeding with about 310 Horned Larks in a 275-acre plowed field almost totally devoid of vegetation. Bill Collier and I carefully