

from the ocean beach and barrier islands, both of which migrating shorebirds regularly follow. The high, immense, and largely unvegetated dredge spoil islands NW of Ft. Macon and on Radio Island to the N of Ft. Macon would probably seem little different from the barrier islands the birds had been following for several miles and of which the birds had been staying to the mainland side. The Morehead channel could appear to be just another inlet. Also, the angle negotiated by the shorebirds would have been relatively slight (about 50°) and less than the angle of change they almost certainly made further E on Shackleford Bank a short time earlier.

It is very interesting that at the point where the shorebirds made their change in direction, Barn Swallows gained altitude and then turned sharply to the SW, crossing Ft. Macon and probably moving W along the ocean front.

## Golden Eagle in the Unicoi Mountains

JON E. DeVORE

Apt. A-5, 1510 Huntington Drive  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130

14 October 1972

On 14 August 1972 my wife and I observed an adult Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) on the Tennessee-North Carolina state line at the junction of the Tellico Wildlife Management Area (Tennessee) and the Nantahala National Forest (North Carolina) in the Unicoi Mountains. When first seen the bird was gliding out of North Carolina. After traveling a short distance it turned diagonally along the crests of the mountains that mark the state line. Again, after flying a short distance the bird dropped downward into Tennessee and flew directly toward our location at Whigg Meadows, a clearing approximately 30 acres in size and located at an elevation of 4,800 feet. We did not move and the bird made several passes over the opposite side of the meadow at a height of approximately 50 yards before turning and gliding NE along the state line crests and then back into North Carolina. Atmospheric conditions were good for observations, with a partly cloudy sky and an easterly (out of North Carolina) breeze ranging in velocity from 5 to 10 mph. This is the writer's second sighting of this species in the same general area during the summer months. In early August of 1968 I observed another adult Golden Eagle approximately 10 miles W of Whigg Meadows in a small Tennessee mountain valley.

## Thayer's Gull at Kill Devil Hills, N.C.

CARL W. CARLSON

5706 Lone Oak Drive, Bethesda, Md. 20014

January 1972

On 26 October 1971 I was on the porch of the Cavalier Motel at Kill Devil Hills, N.C., scoping the ocean for seabirds when four gulls landed at the water's edge directly in front of me. They were about 100 feet from me and had the mid-afternoon sun directly on them; they stood quietly, facing into the wind and resting, but with their heads out and eyes open. As I have for several years, I checked the eye and leg color somewhat automatically. Three were pink-legged, yellow-eyed orthodox adult Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*). The fourth – otherwise seemingly identical – had a definitely dark eye.

Because the light was perfect and the birds quiet, I was able to use the 60X Balscope lens and could see the dark iris plainly. The color, I would say, was a light walnut brown; the iris looked very like brown glass and thus the color had a somewhat transparent quality. Although the iris did not contrast strongly in color with the black pupil, I could clearly distinguish the two parts with the 60X lens. The pupils of all four birds were much contracted as they were standing in full sunlight, and this made all, or nearly all, of