

1949. A fourth record is a bird sighted on 15 June 1972 by Lynch and Chris Marsh, also at Oconeechee Neck and not more than ¼ mile from the 1973 sightings (*Chat*, 36:112). The presence of two Mississippi Kites in adjacent counties in North Carolina suggests that this species is not so rare as the paucity of recent records would seem to indicate. The species apparently is undergoing a significant range expansion and population increase in the Mississippi Valley region (*American Birds*, 25:824; 26:830), and this could be a factor in dispersal into peripheral regions.

Third Sight Record of the Goshawk for North Carolina

HELMUT C. MUELLER

Department of Zoology, University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514

11 April 1973

On 24 December 1972 at approximately 13:30, I was eating lunch in my home about 4 miles W of Chapel Hill, N.C. About 15 Evening Grosbeaks and a number of other birds were at the feeder outside my window some 6 feet away. The birds suddenly flew away in apparent panic. I immediately moved to the window and looked for a hawk. After about 30 seconds I saw a large, grayish *Accipiter* fly for about 150 feet to another perch. Its size and manner of flight led me to believe that it was a Goshawk. I quickly found my 10 x 50 binocular and carefully went out on our patio. I was able to view the bird for a few seconds at a distance of 150 feet, noting the gray striations on the breast and the long tail before it flew to another perch about 250 feet away. I was unable to obtain a good look at the head of the bird and thus did not note the stripe over the eye. The relatively small size of the bird leads me to suspect it was a male, and the plumage was clearly adult. (See Mueller and Berger, *Auk*, 84:183-191, 1967; and *Auk* 85:431-486, 1968.)

I have seen several hundred Goshawks previously, most of them in Wisconsin, and have live-trapped and banded about 100 individuals. In my 20 years of observing hawk migration at Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, I have become about as proficient in identifying *Accipiters* as any ornithologist I have known. I am confident that the Chapel Hill bird was a Goshawk.

Personal communications with D.D. Berger and other hawk watchers and banders indicate that the 1972-73 flight may well be one of the greatest southward invasions of Goshawks in recorded history. Unusual numbers of Goshawks were seen in the Great Lakes region, the Pennsylvania mountains, and even at Cape May, New Jersey. Adults were considerably more common than juveniles at all observation points. Thus, the appearance of an adult Goshawk in the piedmont of North Carolina in this winter is perhaps not surprising.

There are two previous sight records of this species in North Carolina, both from the mountains in the southwestern corner of the state (Enloe, *Chat*, 34:79-80, 1970; Pratt, *Chat*, 35:1-4, 1971).

[Dept. Ed.—With the recording of the third occurrence of this northern hawk, it can be placed on the official North Carolina list.]

A Pileated Woodpecker at Bodie Island, N.C.

JOHN S. WRIGHT

D-25 McKimmon Village, Raleigh, N.C. 27607

24 April 1973

At approximately 09:30 on 21 April 1973 while birding near the Bodie Island lighthouse I heard what sounded like the call of a Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*). Within a few seconds the woodpecker flew from a nearby stand of pines and

came within 40 yards of me as it flew away. A quick look through 7X binoculars confirmed all field marks of the Pileated Woodpecker. This sighting appears to be the first for this species from the heavily birded Bodie Island-Pea Island section of the North Carolina coast. It is noteworthy because the surrounding area is apparently almost completely unsuitable for the Pileated, consisting only of dune vegetation, marshes, and maritime shrub thickets. The Pileated flew from an acre-sized plot of small to medium-sized planted pines which is surrounded by younger planted pines and shrubs.

The Pileated Woodpecker has been reported previously from Wachese, N.C., on Roanoke Island, approximately 4 miles away across Roanoke Sound and also at Kitty Hawk, 18 miles to the north. Both of these sites have better habitat for this woodpecker.

Brown Thrasher Encounter with Snake

M. RALPH BROWNING

Bird and Mammal Laboratories, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife
National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C. 20560

24 July 1973

The Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) eats primarily insects and larva but has been reported to eat lizards, salamanders, and tree frogs (Beal, McAtee, and Kalmbach, 1916, in Bent, USNM Bull. 195, p. 364, 1948). On 19 May 1973 I observed an adult Brown Thrasher striking a small snake on the Chapel Hill campus of the University of North Carolina. The bird was standing on the ground where the snake had been discovered in the leaf litter. I found that the snake had been decapitated and was wriggling vigorously. The body was approximately 8 inches in length and ½ inch at its largest diameter. The head could not be found. While I was examining the snake, an immature Brown Snake (*Storeria dekayi*), the thrasher flew off about 15 feet and made throaty *chuck* sounds, the only vocalization heard during this observation.

After 30 seconds I moved 20 feet away, and the thrasher returned to the snake. The bird immediately began striking the snake. The bill was maintained at 90 degrees to its body axis, and its head was raised about 2 inches above the snake before delivery of each blow. The body pivoted at the acetabulum; otherwise, there was no movement. After about a minute of jabbing, during which time the snake ceased movement, the thrasher flew about 40 feet with the snake in its bill. For another minute the thrasher pecked at the snake and on three occasions threw the body about 6 inches above the ground. The thrasher spent about a quarter of this time peering at the snake. Pecking, throwing, and peering were accomplished using primarily the neck with little body movement. During the next 3 minutes the thrasher attempted to swallow the prey. Wing flashing was not observed (see Potter, *Chat*, 32:103, 1968).

I was unable to confirm whether the thrasher succeeded in swallowing the snake, because a car stopped nearby and the bird flew out of sight. However, as the thrasher flew, I could not see the snake, and a thorough search for the snake was negative. I remained in the vicinity for another 3 minutes watching apparently the same bird forage in the forest litter.

The thrasher and *Storeria dekayi* frequent the same habitat. This report indicates that the opportunistic feeding habits of the Brown Thrasher allow it to include small snakes in its diet.