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203 Moreland Drive, Oxford, N.C. 27565, 24 September 1973.



Roundtable

... with Louis C. Fink

Doomsday for the Bald Eagle?

I visited Lake Mattamuskeet Wildlife Refuge to film the Bald Eagle, and the trip proved futile. John Davis, Refuge Manager, explained that there was not a pair of Bald Eagles nesting in the current year. There were two eagles nesting in 1971, but only one bird returned to the Refuge in 1972. An authority at the Pea Island Wildlife Refuge reports no nests in Dare County for several years.

Apparently, Bald Eagles are either transient visitors to eastern North Carolina, or they nest on private land. The danger of this is revealed by the report of eagles discovered by a logging crew. Tracked down, the crew foreman said that he had cut down the tree containing the nest.

The Backbay Wildlife Refuge in Virginia reports that the eagles are losing their foothold there.

It has been suggested that DDT is the largest factor in the reduction of the Bald Eagle population. Surely, destruction of its natural habitat is second in line. —JAMES F. HOLLINGSWORTH JR., Goldsboro, N.C.

No Bald Eagle Nests Here?

The annual survey by the Fish and Wildlife Service indicates 627 active nests of the Bald Eagle producing 500 young in 1973. No active nests were found in North Carolina; two in South Carolina produced one young bird. The survey covered the 48 States (eliminating Alaska); allowing for nests not found, there may be 1,000 active nests in the territory.

Additions to Wilderness Areas

Hearings have been held on the desirability of including in the National Wilderness Preservation System: 660 acres within the Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge; 9,000 acres within Swanquarter Refuge; 180 acres within Cedar Island; and 180 acres within Pea Island. Wilderness does not alter an area's status as a Wildlife Refuge.

Information, Please!

The crows in the Rocky Mount area are evident enough, but remarkably silent. When I do hear one, it seems to give the call of a Fish Crow, but all my reference works say this is a bird of tidewater. Rocky Mount is close to the Fall Line, but the Tar River is hardly affected by tides. Does any reader have information on the range of the Fish Crow away from the coast in North Carolina?

Bird-finding

PUNGO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, N.C.—This is 12,000 acres of marsh, timber, and farms, including the 2,800 acres of Pungo Lake. It was established in 1963 to provide winter habitat for Canada Geese, puddle ducks, and swans. Wood Ducks nest here, and wading birds are common. Deer, black bear, and other mammals are to be found.

At last reports, development of the Refuge for visitors had been delayed, but the last time I was there a good dirt road enabled cars to travel completely around the lake. It should be a good observation point for spring and fall migrations.

From Plymouth on U.S. Route 64, drive south on State Route 32 for five miles, then State 99 for 12 miles. You'll come to a road which leads to the Refuge.

Chickadee Acrobatics

City Lake, Rocky Mount, N.C., 6 March 1974.—Last summer, House Wrens nested in a broken lamp post. Today, two Carolina Chickadees flew in and out of the cavity, removing nesting material. The lamp is covered on top with a shield, about the size and shape of an inverted dinner plate. One of the chickadees grasped the edge of this metal shield with its feet, its body facing away from the cavity. Hanging upside down, the bird looked back over its shoulder to watch the work of the other chickadee. It was a performance worthy of Ringling Brothers.