

strongly. It was in its natural habitat, a wooded pond, and was associated with its North American relative, the Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*). I carefully examined the specimen and found its plumage to be full, brilliant, and immaculate—in contrast to the usually dull and frayed appearance of pen-raised birds.

The Mandarin Duck has been naturalized in Western Europe for a number of years (*A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe*, Peterson et. al., 1966). It is my suggestion that this individual, like the Eurasian Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*) and European Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) strayed from there. The skin is now preserved as a mounted specimen in the collection of Ralph Morris.

[See "Policy Statement on Exotic Waterfowl Records" published elsewhere in this issue of *Chat*.—DEPT. ED.]

Golden Eagle in Eastern North Carolina

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At 14:00 on 23 October 1973, we observed a mature Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) at the Upper Coastal Plains Research Station about 10 miles SE of Tarboro, N.C. When first seen the eagle was flapping and gliding over a cleared area on the edge of the station property. A Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) was circling nearby, and the contrast in wingspan, angle of wings, and mode of flapping allowed us to identify the bird as a eagle immediately.

As the eagle sailed overhead at about 100 feet altitude, we noted that it was deep brown in color with the base of the tail feathers white. The wings were proportionally broader in relation to their length than in the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). The secondaries shortened abruptly next to the body. All of the above features are helpful in separating the Golden Eagle from the Bald Eagle.

After gaining an altitude of about 300 feet the eagle glided about 2 miles on set wings to the vicinity of a small swamp south of the station. We followed the bird and again observed it from about 100 feet as it glided over a small pasture. William Brown at this time noted small white wing patches as the bird wheeled to fly over the swamp. In the Golden Eagle, white shoulder patches occur in birds from Scotland and eastern Canada (Amadon and Brown, *Hawks, Eagles and Vultures of the World*). We concluded that the bird was a mature Golden Eagle, and probably a female as we estimated the wingspread at over 7 feet.

Red Phalarope in Wake County, N.C.

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On 27 October 1973 Robert J. Hader spotted a phalarope while scanning Lake Benson for waterfowl; however, he was unable to see it well enough for satisfactory specific identification. On the following day Chris Marsh and David Whitehurst found the bird, and Marsh was able to wade to within 30 feet of where it was feeding on an island mud-flat. From the black eye patch, uniform gray back, white forehead, wing pattern, and thick bill, it was identified as a Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*). The solid black bill was

puzzling until we learned that immatures may lack the yellow base, which is characteristic of adults. The bird remained in the vicinity until 31 October and was seen at close range by several other observers. Marsh obtained several photographs.

A search through *The Chat* showed six previous inland records of the Red Phalarope in North Carolina. Perhaps the most interesting record was that of one kept alive from 21 to 24 March 1888 at Wake Forest by W.L. Poteat (*Chat*, 26:55). This record was overlooked by the authors of *Birds of North Carolina* and by Hader in his "Species List of Birds of Wake County, N.C." (*Chat*, 33:53-71). The other inland records are from Rocky Mount on 16 November 1939 (Pearson, Brimley, and Brimley, *Birds of North Carolina*, 1942, revised Wray and Davis, 1959); Lenoir on 1 January 1947 (*Chat*, 11:50); Fontana Lake on 2 October 1949 (*Chat*, 13:72); North Wilkesboro on 16 October (*Chat*, 24:24-25), and Fayetteville on 5 December 1960 (*Chat*, 25:16).

Least Terns in a Cantaloupe Patch

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12 June 1974

On 17 May 1971, while walking into a large cantaloupe field at the U.S. Vegetable Breeding Laboratory located about 7 miles S of Charleston, S.C., I was met by a group of dive-bombing Least Terns (*Sterna albifrons*). The air was full of them, dive-bombing, screaming, and beak-clicking at my head. This behavior suggested nests, which were soon discovered.

Although eight pairs of adult terns were present in the area, only seven nests, each with one or two mottled eggs, were found. The nests were placed in depressions on barrier paper-mulched, 80-inch wide, cantaloupe beds. During the next 3 weeks, two clutches were eaten by a fox, one was destroyed in a weeding operation, two were abandoned when cantaloupe vines overgrew them, and two apparently hatched, although no young were seen. Adult terns carried small fish to the area of the last two nests, evidently feeding young, but vine growth made it impossible to see them.

In mid-April 1972, while three fields near the site of the 1971 nests were being planted, four Least Terns landed in the middle one. Over the next three days they were there regularly. As we approached the area during a planting operation on the third day, I noticed one tern spinning a depression in the paper. Thinking this bird might be established a nest, I carefully noted the row number for future observation. Later in the day I attempted to locate the nest, but without success. Our activities probably discouraged the terns, for they flew away and did not return.

Least Terns are seen occasionally over the irrigation ponds along the tidal creek that borders the laboratory property, and sometimes in recently plowed fields in company with Ring-billed and Laughing Gulls; however, nests were unknown in our fields prior to 1971.

Why would Least Terns choose a paper-mulched cantaloupe field in preference to the usual sandy beach nesting sites several miles away? Perhaps there was some resemblance between these fields and sandy beaches. The question is difficult to answer, for color appears to be the only common factor in both sites. The cantaloupe plants were very small when the birds initially chose the field site, and the color of the fields was tan with small green patches.

Possible Summer Resident Nighthawks at Brevard, N.C.

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20 January 1973

The Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) has been observed during the summer of 1972 in the mountain town of Brevard, N.C., elevation 2,250 feet. Although com-