

[While reports such as this always leave room for question, it is an excellent account of how, with patience and persistence, records from people who are not active "birders" may be verified. This report should stimulate further field work in Avery County.—DEPT. ED.]

## Sandhill Cranes in Western North Carolina

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On 22 March 1974 John Lively, of the North Carolina Department of Forestry, and I were checking timber for stand reforestation on Nantahala Park Property. About 12:45 we were driving through Tuni Gap in Clay County when four large birds appeared over a nearby ridge (elevation 4,000 feet). We stopped the car and observed the birds for 20 to 30 seconds with 7 x 35 binoculars at a distance of about 400 feet. It was immediately obvious that the birds were Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis*). They flew in typical crane fashion with neck and legs extended as a "flying cross". The weather was clear, with a temperature reading of about 60 degrees. The birds continued through the gap in a northward direction.

[This is the third record of this species from North Carolina and the first from the western part of the state. The first record was from Robeson County in 1957 (*Chat*, 22:45, 1958) and the second was from Onslow County in 1970 (*Chat*, 38:39, 1974).—DEPT. ED.]

## An Avocet in the South Carolina Piedmont

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The first American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*) recorded in the South Carolina piedmont stayed at the Greenglow Farm operated by Don and Richard Quattlebaum, 1.5 mile NE of Pendleton, Anderson County, from 20 to 29 September 1974. The bird was observed by Clarissa Smith, Vivian Smith, Sidney Gauthreaux, Mr. and



American Avocet  
Anderson County, S.C.  
27 September 1974  
Photo by  
Gordon E. Howard

Mrs. Gaston Gage, the authors, and others. It was photographed on at least two occasions.

The bird spent its time at a newly constructed farm pond which contained less than 2 feet of water and abundant invertebrate life. It was very tame, feeding calmly at the approach of farm animals to within 30 feet, and allowing observers to walk to within 75 feet. The avocet fed with Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*) and Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), walked across the pond in water up to its breast, and tipped-up repeatedly in the deeper water (cf. Bent's *Life Histories of North American Shorebirds*, Part I, Dover reprint, 1962). After the avocet had left the pond, the Killdeer were joined by a pair of Pectoral Sandpipers (*Erolia melanotos*). Sprunt and Chamberlain (*South Carolina Bird Life*, 1970) record 21 September as the previous early date for the avocet in South Carolina.

## First Record of the Roseate Tern Nesting in North Carolina

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On 2 June 1972, while conducting a survey of the breeding colonies of gulls and terns in eastern North Carolina, the authors discovered a Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) in a colony of several hundred Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*), scattered Gull-billed Terns (*Gelochelidon nilotica*), and Black Skimmers (*Rynchops nigra*) in Lighthouse Bay in Carteret County, N.C. On a second trip to this island on 19 July 1972, a Roseate Tern was still present. Although the Roseate Tern remained with the flocks of Common Terns, either on the island's beach or overhead, no evidence of its nesting was obtained on either visit; and, in fact, its behavior was not that of a bird with nest or young. A year later, on 23 May 1973, we returned to this island and found two Roseate Terns in the Common Tern breeding colony. This time both were very disturbed by our presence and joined the Common Terns in protest as we approached the nesting colony. We then moved offshore and watched as one of the Roseate Terns settled on a nest at the edge of the colony. Subsequent inspection of the nest revealed two eggs which were very similar to, but slightly smaller than, those of the Common Terns. The nest and nest site were similar to those of the nearby Common Terns. Photographs were secured of the adults overhead and of the nest and eggs.

The occurrence of Roseate Terns in North Carolina is considered unusual at any season. There are but 11 previous records. One was collected at Pea Island on 22 August 1904, one was found at Cape Hatteras on 20 January 1937, and undetermined numbers were seen at Pea Island on 4 and 7 July, 26 August, and 8 September in 1938 (*Birds of North Carolina*, Pearson, Brimley, and Brimley, 1949, p. 188). Individuals were found at Oregon Inlet on 17 and 18 August 1939, and the species also was listed as fairly common at Pea Island between 28 August and 8 September 1939 (Gray, *Chat*, 4:3-4, 1940). Two individuals were seen at Town Shoal near Beaufort, North Carolina on 19 September 1939 (Simpson, *Chat*, 4:75, 1940). There were no further records until 23 May 1958 when one was seen near Southport by J. Irvine and M. Barnhill (*Audubon Field Notes*, 12:343). No observations of this tern in North Carolina have been published between 1958 and the present paper.

All of the above records appear to represent fall transients except the bird seen near Southport on 23 May 1958 and the individual seen on 20 January 1937 at Cape Hatteras.

The breeding range of this bird is very irregular. According to the American Orni-