

well as black on the outer primaries of the wings and black forked tail could be seen easily as the birds passed over me. I used 7x35 and 10x50 binoculars in my observation. I am familiar with the species, having seen Swallow-tailed Kites on several occasions in Florida.

The area in which the birds were seen is a wide expanse of open farmland, interspersed with tracts of woodland, on either side of the French Broad and Mill's River. Many streams flow through the area into the rivers.

The Swallow-tailed Kite was reported from Buncombe County, N.C., during the years of 1887 to 1894 by John S. Cairns, who found it during the fall and primarily in the month of October. This is the first spring record for the species in the area and the first record for the county since 1894 (Simpson, *Chat*, 36:69-72, 1972.)

Goshawks in Avery County, N.C.

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This note is a brief summary of an exchange of correspondence between William Hamnett of the North Carolina Museum of Natural History and Dartha Frank of Cranberry (Avery County), N.C. The correspondence indicates sightings of several Goshawks present in Avery County during the summer of 1971. Though Miss Frank is not an experienced observer in the usual sense, her descriptions are most convincing and, it seems to me, worth including in the published record.

In early June of 1971 Mr. Hamnett received a letter from Miss Frank in which she described several huge "silver eagles." "One flew down off the mountain in back of this old company mining store and caught two blackbirds in the air and then another day we watched one fly around for about ten minutes and caught some pigeons."

Mr. Hamnett wrote back suggesting that the "silver eagles" might be Goshawks. In a second letter, apparently before mid-June, Miss Frank related that while she was hoeing in her garden "right over my head out of the mountains here came one large four foot bird (incredible speed) with two smaller ones a little under it. The smaller (about as a hawk) ones are lighter and almost white underneath. The large mature bird has a white streak right above its sharp yellowish eyes ... caught two pigeons in mid-air without lighting at all, one in each fast, swift claw." In the same letter she included an excellent pencil sketch with detailed description of the plumage. The sketch and description is unquestionably that of a Goshawk.

Following her second letter, Mr. Hamnett sent a circular with color pictures of the hawks of Eastern North America. Miss Frank showed the circular to some 30 people who had seen the birds and all identified them as Goshawks. "The area covered was from Cranberry to Crossnore to Banner Elk to Roan Mt., Tenn., and then to Erwin, Tenn., and back to Spruce Pine, N.C." She had again seen an adult and one young bird hunting pigeons. "The mature bird caught one instantly, the young one caught one on the second try. They don't dive, they have speed enough without."

Finally in mid-August Miss Frank reported that "there are now six of them in the area. They extend as far as Knoxville, Tenn., Bakersville, N.C., Mt. Airy, N.C. and as far again as Bristol, Tenn."

In June of 1972, I visited Cranberry and talked with Miss Frank for about an hour. She confirmed the details of her letters and reported that the birds had not been seen in 1972. I came away fully convinced that her report of Goshawk sightings the previous summer was genuine. Her account carried the suggestion of possible breeding in the area though, of course, is certainly not conclusive in this respect.

Of the three previous published records of Goshawks in North Carolina, one was seen in December 1972 near Chapel Hill (*Chat*, 37:106); one in March 1970 at Franklin (*Chat*, 34:79); and one or more in June 1970 in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (*Chat*, 35:1-4).

[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