

General Field Notes

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Summer Record of a Common Loon Inland in North Carolina

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On 1 July 1974 a Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) in nonbreeding plumage appeared on a small pond in Charlotte, N.C., about 240 km inland from the coast. Based on a literature review and contacts with local ornithologists, there appear to be no inland records of this species in summer.

The bird remained on the pond through 20 July, and was found dead on the shore 21 July. On at least four occasions during the preceding period the loon had tried to fly without success. An examination of the carcass yielded the following: (1) the bird was not molting, (2) the digestive tract was empty, (3) fat reserves were absent, and (4) although no living parasites were found, over 200 old parasitic lesions were present in the lining of the lower abdominal cavity. Decomposition made the sex indeterminable.

Based on the above, it appears that the pond (approximately 50 m long) was too short for the loon to become airborne. Presumably the trapped bird then died of starvation. The skin of this bird is now in the Collection of the Biology Department at UNCC.

Great Cormorant Photographed at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, N.C.

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On 1 December 1973, we discovered an immature Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) in a pond just north of North Pond, Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, N.C. The bird was feeding actively at the time, and we momentarily passed it off as a Double-crested Cormorant (*P. auritus*). However, its strikingly different diving behavior prompted a closer study. On each dive, it leaped upward and forward, exposing some of the white on its ventral surface. This same manner of diving also has been noted by the authors in Red-necked Grebes (*Podiceps grisigenus*). This diving behavior in the Great Cormorant, which is described by Bent (1964), is probably adapted to its feeding preference. Great Cormorants feed primarily on bottom fish (Lack, 1945) while the Double-crested Cormorant feeds mainly on free-swimming forms (Bent, 1964) at intermediate depths.

The bird flew on several occasions, circled the pond and returned to the water allowing excellent views of its dark neck contrasting with the white underparts. Additionally, its large size, yellow lower mandible, yellowish naked skin of the throat, and whitish throat area identified it as a Great Cormorant. This finding represents the fourth documented