

# General Field Notes

**JAMES F. PARNELL, Department Editor**

Department of Biology, University of North Carolina at Wilmington,  
Wilmington, N.C. 28401

**JULIAN R. HARRISON, Associate Editor**

Department of Biology, The College of Charleston, Charleston, S.C. 29401

## Summer Record of a Common Loon Inland in North Carolina

ROBERT C. KULL JR.  
Department of Biology  
University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
Charlotte, N.C. 28223

4 November 1974

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.

GILBERT S. GRANT and SANDRA S. GRANT  
Department of Biology, University of California  
Los Angeles, California 90024

10 October 1974

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

record for North Carolina. Several color slides were secured and deposited in the National Photoduplicate File (Accession No. 119-1Ta, 119-1Tb). Unfortunately, the transparencies were not of suitable quality for publishing in *The Chat*.

Great Cormorants have been sighted with increasing frequency in North Carolina since first discovered there in 1970. The first sighting was of an immature bird studied by H.D. Pratt as it flew overhead at Oregon Inlet on 30 December 1970. This, or perhaps another, immature Great Cormorant was observed about 6 hours later on that same day by R.J. Hader and D.L. Hughes about 6 miles S of Oregon Inlet (Teulings, 1971). An immature bird was sighted one year later by R.H. Peake on Bodie Island, just north of Oregon Inlet, on 30 December 1971 (Teulings, 1972) and the third sighting was in Croatan Sound on 6 April 1973 by J. Potter and E. Potter (1974). Two Great Cormorants were recorded on the 1973 Christmas Bird Counts in North Carolina. One was recorded by D. Peake and R.H. Peake on the Bodie-Pea Island count on 31 December 1973 and one was found by J.F. Parnell on the Wilmington CBC on 15 December 1973 (Potter, 1974).

#### LITERATURE CITED

- Bent, A.C. 1964. Life histories of North American petrels and pelicans and their allies. Dover Publications, Inc. New York.
- Lack, D. 1945. The ecology of closely related species with special reference to Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) and Shag (*P. aristotelis*). *J. Anim. Ecol.*, 14:12-16.
- Potter, E.F. 1974. Christmas Bird Count—1973. *Chat*, 38:12-20.
- Potter, J. and E.F. Potter. 1974. Third sight record of Great Cormorant from North Carolina. *Chat*, 38:22-23.
- Teulings, R.P. 1971. Southern Atlantic Coast Region. *Am. Birds*, 25:562-567.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1972. *Ibid.*, 26:589-592.

[The authors' home address is 3916 Sawtelle Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90066.]

### **An Ash-throated Flycatcher at Raleigh, N.C., with Some Notes on the Occurrence of This Species in the Eastern United States**

W. ROSS SILCOCK

Route 3, Box 37, Edenton, N.C.

On 16 May 1973 at about 10:00, I was walking along a railroad line which passes through the North Carolina State University campus. At a point where the line passes behind Pullen Park, I noticed a bird perched on an exposed branch of a small tree—perhaps 6 feet from the ground. The day was sunny with the sun directly behind me and shining onto the back of the bird. At first glance I took it to be an Eastern Wood Pewee (*Contopus virens*) (one had been singing in the vicinity) because of the gray-black back with poorly marked wingbars and white edging on the primaries, as well as the absence of tail-flicking. It appeared larger, however, and when I examined it with 8x40 binoculars, I noted rufus in the primaries and tail feathers, the latter appearing brighter than the primaries. As the bird turned its head to watch me, I saw that it had whitish underparts. The bill was rather stout and appeared to be completely black. I made these observations at a distance of about 30 feet, but could not get a better look at the underparts of the bird as the tree it was in was on the edge of a railroad embankment. Fortunately, it did call twice, both calls being a single rather squeaky upward-slurred note, best described as similar to one of the calls of the Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*). The bird then flew away.

Mu inclination at this point was the bird was indeed an Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*), and I hurried over to the campus to check some references.