



General Field Notes

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An Inland South Carolina Record for the White-winged Scoter

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On 12 November 1967, James Sweeney, John Sweeney, and I went to the dam of Par Pond on the AEC Savannah River Plant, Barnwell County, S.C., to census wintering ducks. Soon after arriving we noticed a strange duck feeding near a small group of Ruddy (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) and Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*) Ducks in deep water near the spillway. As we moved closer, the whole group began to drift slowly away from the dam. Upon observing the unusual duck at 15X with a spotting scope, we identified it as a female White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta deglandi*). The white wing patch was clearly visible while she rested on the water. We visited the spot again the next day and periodically for the next 2 months and always found the bird feeding or loafing near the dam, either alone or in the company of a small number of other divers. Because she always moved away by swimming, we thought at first that she may have been injured. However, on 12 December, when we rapidly approached the spot on the dam opposite her position in the water, she flushed and, after striding clear of the water, flew strongly for several hundred yards before alighting. No others of the species ever were observed, and she had disappeared by February.

Sprunt and Chamberlain (*South Carolina Bird Life*, 1970, p. 590) classified the White-winged Scoter as a rare winter visitor on the coast and gave only two inland records, both in the piedmont. Burleigh (*Georgia Birds*, 1958, p. 698) gave a record of a male on the

Savannah River near Augusta in January 1954, and Quay et al, (*Chat*, 33:27) reported one inland at Raleigh, N.C., in November 1968. No record of a bird wintering inland in any of these three states could be found. Norris (*Birds of the AEC Savannah River Area*, 1963) listed no scoters at SRP, so these observations constitute a new record for the area.

[There are at least three additional inland records of this species for North Carolina. Joyner (*Chat*, 21:70) reported a female at Rocky Mount in January 1957; Hader (*Chat*, 33:57) listed the record of Quay et al., plus another for the Raleigh area in November 1947; and Carter (*Chat*, 35:94) mentions one seen at Lakeview in the central sandhills area in October 1960. Although there are no definite records of White-winged Scoters wintering inland in the Carolinas or Georgia, one of the piedmont records (Shuler, *Chat*, 18:96) is that of an individual that appeared on Union Bleachery Reservoir in Greenville, S.C., on 12 March 1950, and stayed in the area for 12 days.—JRH]

Peregrine Falcon Harasses Red-tailed Hawk

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During field reconnaissance in Fairfield County, S.C., near the eastern edge of the Sumter National Forest, on 11 September 1974, I observed two raptors soaring over open fields at about 0.4 km from me. As I watched, the smaller bird, which I identified as a Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), dove from its higher position at a Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*). The Red-tail set its wings and veered upward and slightly sideways as the Peregrine passed within what appeared to be around 30 cm, with its talons outstretched.

After completing the dive, the Peregrine flew up to nearly its original height, above the Red-tail. Seconds later the entire performance was repeated, and then again and again for a total of five harassments. However, after each dive, the Peregrine never regained the same height above the Red-tail.

At the Peregrine's sixth dive, the Red-tail turned and met the harasser by rising slightly in the air and then dove with outstretched talons at the Peregrine as it flew by. This was the last harassment I saw, as both birds had flown a greater distance away during the activities, until they were no longer easily visible.

Sandhill Crane and Albino Owl in Charleston County, S.C.

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On 23 December 1973, my son Robert and I were hunting ducks in Mayrant's Reserve on Fairlawn Plantation, Charleston County, S.C., and for several hours had the opportunity to observe a Sandhill Crane that would occasionally circle around and over the reserve for 10 to 15 minutes at a time. Its loud call was easily distinguished from that of the Great Blue Heron, one of which was in the area at the same time. The weather, as I recall, was very cold with ice on the water most of the morning. That afternoon we returned and once again saw what we assumed to be the same bird. I have hunted Mayrant's Reserve every weekend of the duck season since about 1960, and to my knowledge this is the first and only observation of a Sandhill Crane.

On a completely different note, my wife and I were on Edisto Island, Charleston County, the weekend of 15-16 March 1975, and while walking through a stand of planted pine trees, flushed a white owl which I would identify as an albino Barred Owl. We both got a good look at the bird as it flew over our heads in an attempt to get over the tops of the closely planted pines. I very distinctly noted the round earless head and white back. My