

Saw-whet Owl Records From the Southern Great Balsam Mountains of North Carolina

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Peake (*Chat* 23:110-111, 1965) and Simpson (*Chat* 32:83-89, 1968; 36:39-47, 1972; 38:94, 1974) have reported the Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) as a spring and summer resident in the higher elevations of the southern Great Balsam Mountains of North Carolina. The following observations were made during surveys of the range in May 1975.

At 21:25 on 27 May 1975, Simpson listened for 10 minutes to the calling of a single owl at Spruce Ridge (1700 m). At Beartrail Ridge (1800 m) on the NE slope of Reinhart Knob, Simpson heard two owls calling loudly at 21:45 on 27 May; and on 30 May, Ruiz and Simpson noted a single owl calling from the same site at 21:40. At Sweetwater Spring (1550 m) just N of Haywood Gap, a single owl was heard by Simpson at 22:00 on 27 May and again by Ruiz and Simpson on 30 May. A single owl was heard by Simpson at Devil's Courthouse (1720 m) at 22:20 on 27 May, while Ruiz and Simpson located a faintly calling owl along Fork Ridge (1480 m) just N of Mt. Hardy at 22:45 on 30 May.

The active calling sites found during this survey have been described previously by Simpson (*Chat* 36:39-47, 1972; 38:94, 1974). These records provide additional data indicating the spring resident status of the Saw-whet Owl in the Great Balsams, and a comparison with previous surveys suggests a fairly stable population density over the past decade. Evidence supporting breeding has been presented by Peake (*Chat* 23:110-111, 1965) and by Simpson and Range (*Wilson Bulletin* 86:173-174, 1974), although no nests have yet been found.

Caspian Tern Nesting in North Carolina

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On 25 June 1972 we discovered two Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*) nests at Oregon Inlet on North Carolina's Outer Banks. These appear to be the first nests of this tern reported from North Carolina, although the species has been reported nesting both to the north at Cobb's Island, Virginia (A.O.U. *Check-list*, 1957) and to the south at Cape Romain, S.C. (McDaniel and Beckett, *Chat* 35:39-41, 1971).

Oregon Inlet was surveyed again in 1973 and a single nest was located. In 1974, four nests were present at Oregon Inlet, and one nest was found 50 miles to the south at Hatteras Inlet. See Table 1 for details.

All nests were placed on the bare or nearly bare sandy domes of dredge spoil islands. Nests were scrapes lined with small shell fragments, and were thus easily separable from Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maximus*) nests which never had shell linings.

The Caspian Tern nests were associated with colonies of Black Skimmers (*Rynchops niger*), Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*), or Royal Terns. They were usually on the fringes of other colonies and were never found completely isolated from other colonial ground nesting birds. In both 1974 and 1975 there were clusters of three nests at Oregon Inlet indicating the beginnings of small colonies. In both cases large colonies of Royal Terns were nearby.

These findings indicate that the Caspian Tern is establishing itself as a breeding

TABLE 1. *North Carolina Caspian Tern Nesting Data.*

Year	Date	Nests	Nest Contents	Location
1972	27 June	2	1 egg, 2 eggs	Oregon Inlet
1973	1 June	1	1 egg	Oregon Inlet
1974	12 June	1	1 chick	Hatteras Inlet
	13 June	4	1 chick, 2 chicks, 1 egg, 1 egg	Oregon Inlet
1975	5 June	4	1 chick, 1 chick, 2 eggs, 2 eggs	Oregon Inlet

species in coastal North Carolina. While this species is not abundant as a nester on the East Coast and appears to be erratic in its breeding distribution, it may become a regular component of our nesting bird fauna.

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Notes and Comments on the Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers in Southwestern North Carolina in Summer

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On 20 June 1974 I found five singing Blue-winged Warblers (*Vermivora pinus*) in the western half of Cherokee County, N.C., in the extreme southwestern corner of the state (*Chat* 39:58). In 1975 I made three more trips to Cherokee and Clay Counties to study the avifauna of this region and to search for additional Blue-wingeds. I was unable to find any Blue-winged Warblers east of Murphy despite considerable search; however, on 23 June I found the species at three locations west of that town, two of these near Suit and one near Unaka. Surprisingly, the song period of the species had ended, as I detected the birds only by their constant calls, which I render as a buzzy *bzee*. At each location I saw about three birds, with one adult male and two adult female or immature-plumaged birds present. I drew the birds into view with my imitation of the *b-e-e-e b-z-z-z* song, and the birds were very excited upon hearing the song. Although I am not positive I saw any juveniles, breeding is strongly indicated by the fact that I observed two female-plumaged birds at each location and saw one such bird carrying food into grasses on the ground.

In addition to the Blue-winged Warblers, I found Golden-winged Warblers (*V. chrysoptera*) at several localities in the two counties. On 13 June single singing birds were 2 miles N of Hayesville, 1 mile E of Marble, 3 miles SE of Andrews, and 6 miles SE of Andrews. On 23 June a singing male was found along NC 294 about 2 miles E of the Tennessee state line. All five birds were first noted by song, and three were singing an alternate to the usual song, a variation consisting of about seven rapid buzzes followed by a higher terminal note.

A discussion of the Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers in the same area must mention the possibility of hybridization between these two closely related species. I am not aware of any published records of hybrids (Brewster's and Lawrence's) or mixed matings in North Carolina during the summer, nor have I seen any evidence of hybridization between the two species in the mountains of the state. My summer observations total about 12 Blue-winged Warblers, all in Cherokee County, and over 30 Golden-wingeds, from Watauga County southwest to Cherokee County and especially in Jackson and Macon Counties. My observations also indicate that although the two species might breed