

## 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