

There is no doubt concerning the identification of the birds as Monk Parakeets. The color slides show clearly the distinguishing green back, long tail, blue-green wings, and the gray "cowl" or "hood" on the face and breast. I have also examined a dead bird that was found on a road and brought to me. This specimen, apparently a "road-kill", will be donated to the Charleston Museum for preparation as a study skin.

These sightings constitute the third record of the Monk Parakeet in South Carolina. A single adult bird was observed by Julian Harrison at Fort Johnson on James Island near Charleston, S.C., on 2 June 1974; several weeks later Perry Nugent saw another at the USDA Vegetable Breeding Laboratory near Charleston, S.C., on 17 July 1974 (*Chat* 38:97).

Two Records of the Clay-colored Sparrow from the Eastern Piedmont of North Carolina in Fall

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The Clay-colored Sparrow (*Spizella pallida*) was first recorded in North Carolina on 19 September 1963 when Elizabeth D. Peacock (*Chat* 28:98) banded one near Duck in coastal Dare County. Paul W. Sykes Jr. (unpublished Master's thesis, N.C. State University, 1967) found the species to be an uncommon transient during his study of fall land bird migration in the Bodie-Pea Island section of Dare County. He saw nine Clay-colored Sparrows between 5 October and 14 November 1965. Lee Jones (*Audubon Field Notes* 22:25) found two at Cedar Island, Carteret County, on 30 September 1967. Subsequent records (*Chat* 35:34, 37:33, and 38:29) have established the regularity of this sparrow of the Great Plains as a fall transient in the northern part of coastal North Carolina between mid-September and mid-November. South of Cape Hatteras and inland, however, records are too scarce for the species to be considered anything more than accidental.

Robert and Elizabeth Teulings (*Audubon Field Notes* 22:25) netted a Clay-colored Sparrow on 14 October 1967 at the Mason Farm, which is located adjacent to Finley Golf Course just SE of Chapel Hill, Orange County, N.C. The Teulings were conducting a banding demonstration for a group of Carolina Bird Club members attending the fall meeting at Chapel Hill. The Clay-colored Sparrow was caught in a mist net set along one of the multiflora rose hedges dividing the corn fields on the farm. The bird had a thin white median line on the crown (Figure 1) and a distinctly buff-colored rump. In addition, the Teulings noted the grayish nape, or "collar," a characteristic of the species. The immature bird had an incompletely ossified skull and a wing chord of 58 mm. Ida Suttman photographed the bird (Figure 1).

The second inland fall record of the Clay-colored Sparrow for the state occurred on 23 October 1975 about 10 miles S of Louisburg in Franklin County. About 16:30 EDT, Eloise Potter stopped just E of US 401 to examine a flock of blackbirds in a soybean field on SR 1101. Some of the blackbirds flew into pines at the edge of a pasture across the road, displacing a small bird. Through a 7 X 50 binocular at a distance of about 20 feet, Potter saw in profile only the head of a sparrow that had such a wide buffy-yellow superciliary stripe, rich mahogany-brown auriculars, and distinct malar line that it appeared to be a Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*). When the bird flew to a nearby tree, it revealed no breast spot or white in the tail, thus eliminating that species from consideration. The bird perched in another pine with only one wing, part of the back, and all of the tail visible. The wings were folded over the rump, hiding most of it. The brown wing had two distinct wing bars, the light-

brown back was neatly streaked with dark brown and no gray could be seen where the rump met the back. The bird moved to a higher limb, perched facing the bright afternoon sun, and began preening. Potter was able to study the head and breast of the sparrow for about 5 minutes through a 30X Balscope at a distance of no more than 30 feet. The unstreaked and unspotted white breast had a slight dingy gray wash at each side. The black, or blackish-brown, whisker widened at the end toward the breast. The center of the ear patch was lighter than the edges but still a darker and more reddish brown than shown in illustrations of the Clay-colored Sparrow in field guides. Eye ring and eye stripe were buffy. The nape never was seen satisfactorily. Bill was a pinkish horn color, considerably less pink than that of the Field Sparrow (*S. pusilla*). The crown was a rich mahogany brown finely streaked with black and buffy gray. When the bird lowered its head to preen the breast, a distinct buffy gray median line extended the full length of the crown. The bird appeared to be an adult in winter plumage. The richness of the brown in the ear patch and crown as well as the strong yellow tinge to the eye stripe may have been a result of the warm glow of the afternoon sun. Unfortunately, there was no opportunity to study the bird in different light. About 10 minutes after the original sighting, the bird suddenly took flight, joining a passing flock of sparrows flying directly into the sun. These birds definitely were not Chipping Sparrows (*S. passerina*). They sounded like Savannah Sparrows (*Passerculus sandwichensis*), which reportedly have flocking calls very much like the faint *tisp* of the Clay-colored.

Although the Clay-colored Sparrow was found at Columbia, S.C., on 20 and 21 April 1968 (*Chat* 32:78) and at Clemson, S.C., on 29 and 30 April 1973 (*Chat* 37:89), no entirely satisfactory spring record is known from North Carolina. Harry E. LeGrand Jr. (*American Birds* 25:723) reported one at Raleigh on 9 May 1971. LeGrand (pers. com.) says the bird was feeding with Field Sparrows in a patch of weeds, and the flock perched in a fence for about 3 seconds. In spite of LeGrand's excellent reputation as a field observer, the brief viewing time does not seem adequate for the first



Fig. 1. Shown above is the immature Clay-colored Sparrow banded at Chapel Hill, N.C., on 14 October 1967 by Robert and Elizabeth Teulings. (Photo by Ida Suttman)

spring record of the species for the state. It should be noted, however, that spring Clay-colored Sparrows are far less difficult to identify than the fall immatures, which can be reliably separated from immature Chippies only by rump color, gray in the Chipping Sparrow and brown in the Clay-colored.

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

Compiled by ROBERT P. TEULINGS
Route 2, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514
(Winter Season, 1975-1976)

- RED-NECKED GREBE:** A sighting of an individual was recorded in South Carolina waters 10 miles outside Charleston harbor on 31 January during an offshore cruise sponsored by the Carolina Bird Club (Sidney Gauthreaux et al.).
- HORNED GREBE:** Winter visitors were unusually abundant at several of the larger inland reservoirs, topped by counts of 168 at Roanoke Rapids Lake and 116 at Lake Gaston in Halifax and Warren Counties, N.C., noted by Merrill Lynch on 27 December.
- EARED GREBE:** One was present in mid-December at Lake Wheeler near Raleigh, N.C., observed by Chris Marsh and James Mulholland; and another was seen at Salvo on the North Carolina Outer Banks on 25 January by Robert Anderson.
- GREAT CORMORANT:** An adult and immature were seen at the Charleston shipyards on 3 January by Jim Berry; and one adult was seen at Hatteras Inlet, N.C., on 12 March by Eloise Potter.
- DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT:** An estimated 10,000 were seen massed in Pamlico Sound near Hatteras Inlet on the North Carolina coast on 10 January by Joe Hudick. Inland, four were noted on 31 March at Salem Lake near Winston-Salem, N.C., by Fran Baldwin, Pat Culberson, and Ramona Snavelly, a second local record.
- CATTLE EGRET:** Three winter stragglers were seen in Currituck County, N.C., near Powell Point on 25 January by Dorothy Lapeyre; and several remained through the season in the Morehead City, N.C., area of Carteret County (fide John Fussell). Inland, a late individual was seen at Chapel Hill, N.C., on 6 December by Bill Wagner and another at Raleigh, N.C., on 9 January by Donna Goodwin and Darryl Moffett.
- BRANT:** Three were seen in Hatteras Inlet off Ocracoke Island, N.C., on 10 January by Joe Hudick.
- SNOW GEESE:** Census data reported by Jack Hagan showed a peak of 16,000 present at Pea Island N.W.R. in late December.
- BLUE-WINGED TEAL:** A very early inland migrant was seen at Townville, S.C., on 15 February by Harry LeGrand, and another was sighted on 7 March near Reidsville, N.C., by Barry Kinzie.
- CANVASBACK:** An unusually high local count of 150 was recorded inland at Lake Anne near Raleigh, N.C., on 4 February by Carl Leibrandt.
- GREATER SCAUP:** At Sullivans Island, S.C., a flock of 2000 was present in Breach Inlet 7 February, observed by Edmund Farrar.
- BUFFLEHEAD:** Over 500 were seen in Charleston harbor on 7 December by Ted Beckett.