

Spring Shorebirds at a Partially Drained Lake Near Fayetteville, N.C.

P.J. CRUTCHFIELD
901 Montclair Road
Fayetteville, N.C. 28304

11 August 1975

The note by Pullman (Chat 38:39-40) suggests that similar data collected at Fayetteville, N.C., during April and May of 1975 might be useful.

McFayden Lake is an impoundment which is located about 1 mile NW of the city of Fayetteville in Cumberland County, N.C. Normally, the lake covers about 115 acres. It has been partially drained for two seasons. The lake presently covers approximately 20 acres with large areas of exposed sand and mud flats.

The period of observation for this report was from 22 April to 13 May 1975. All of the trips were made during the late afternoon or evening except the trip of 1 May which occurred during the morning. Observations were made with the aid of a pair of 7x50 binoculars. I was accompanied on 1 May by Henry Rankin Jr. and 6 May by Mr. Rankin and his daughter, Douglas Rankin, both of whom are experienced bird-watchers.

The shorebird observations are summarized in the following table:

SPECIES	DATES				
	22 April	29 April	1 May	6 May	13 May
Killdeer	0	2-4	2-4	2-4	2
Spotted Sandpiper	0	0	0	3-6	2-4
Solitary Sandpiper	1	3-6	2-4	2	0
Greater Yellowlegs	0	2-4	2	0	0
Least Sandpiper	0	25-30	5-6	0	0

The numbers given are approximate. The nature of the terrain made exact counts difficult. Two other impoundments were surveyed during this same period. One impoundment, Lake Rim, is located in Cumberland County off the Raeford Road. No shorebirds were seen. Forest Lake which is located in the city of Fayetteville off Raeford Road was also surveyed on each trip. Only one Solitary Sandpiper was found.

Although these species of shorebirds are not necessarily strangers to this area, their occurrence at a drained pond may be noteworthy from the point of view of concentration of numbers and species at inland sites.

Some Observations of the Common Raven as a Predator

BEN A. SANDERS
U.S. Forest Service, P.O. Box 2750
Asheville, N.C. 28802

3 November 1975

There are few published reports of the food habits of the Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) population which exists in the southern Appalachians (Harlow et. al. 1975, Murray 1949). These studies, as well as studies in other sections of the United States, have concluded that ravens are primarily scavengers; but others have suggested that the raven may also be a predator (Craighead and Craighead 1956, White and Cade 1971, and Dorn 1972).

In late May 1974, I observed a lone raven capture a live snake on Tennesse Mountain in the Balsam Range of Pisgah National Forest. My attention was first directed to the raven by its croaking calls, but its unusual behavior caused me to observe its activities closely through binoculars.

The raven repeatedly dropped to the ground and then flapped in a tight circle around a small, rocky area of the mountain. It was obvious that the raven was attempt-

ing to capture an animal of some kind, but the animal was not immediately in view. After six or seven passes, the raven flew away with a snake in its grasp. As the raven departed, the reflexive movements of the snake were clearly visible through binoculars indicating a live capture by the raven.

On 4 May 1975 I received a report from Shawn Knickerbocker, who at the time was completing a series of raven observations for the U.S. Forest Service. Knickerbocker reported seeing a raven dive into brush and capture a small mammal. His sighting was also on Tennent Mountain.

On other occasions in 1974 and 1975, I observed ravens flying low on the perimeter of areas that were being prescribed burned. My inclination was to interpret this behavior as a hunting activity, but it may have indicated curiosity or coincidence. For example, during the controlled burn on Graveyard Ridge in April 1975, I observed from one to three ravens flying low through or along the perimeter of the burn on three occasions, but no capture attempts were observed.

During the fall burn near Sam Knob on 5 November 1975, I observed 28 ravens near the burn, but none passed close enough to cause suspicion of hunting.

The large size of the raven certainly would enable it to function as a predator in situations where its beak could replace talons as a primary attack weapon. Small mammals and snakes are well within the size limits which it could dispatch.

LITERATURE CITED

- Craighead, J.J., and F.C. Craighead. 1956. Hawks, owls, and wildlife. The Stackpole Company.
- Dorn, J.L. 1972. The Common Raven in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Unpublished M.S. Thesis, Laramie, University Wyoming.
- Harlow, R.F., R.G. Hooper, D.R. Chamberlain, and H.S. Crawford. 1975. Some winter and nesting season foods of the Common Raven in Virginia. *Auk* 92:298-306.
- Murray, J.J. 1949. Nesting habits of the Raven in Rockbridge County, Virginia. *Raven* 20:40-43.

A Case of Suspected Double-broodedness in the Carolina Chickadee

ELOISE F. POTTER
Route 3, Box 114 AA
Zebulon, N.C. 27597

27 October 1975

The Carolina Chickadee (*Parus carolinensis*) is generally considered to be single-brooded. The species account in Bent's *Life Histories of North American Jays, Crows and Titmice* (U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 191, 1946, p. 344-352) makes no positive statement on the subject, but one brood per year is implied by the use of the expression "bred annually" on page 347. *South Carolina Bird Life* (1970, p. 375) quotes Wayne as saying that the species is single-brooded and reports full sets of eggs from "as early as" 23 March until "late April or even early May" in "backward seasons." *Birds of North Carolina* (1959, p. 258) states that April is the usual month for nesting and that eggs have been found at Raleigh, Wake County, N.C., from 3 April to 11 May.

In view of the above information, the nesting behavior of Carolina Chickadees in my yard near Zebulon, Wake County, N.C., during the 1975 breeding season seems worth reporting. On 15 February 1975, Jack Finch of Bailey, N.C., installed two of his excellent bluebird nest boxes on predator-proof metal poles at the edge of my yard adjoining the golf course. On 21 February a pair of Carolina Chickadees investigated one of the boxes. In March they drove Eastern Bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*) from the site. At mid-April the box contained a nest with six eggs, which hatched on 22 or 23 April. Young left the nest on 10 or 11 May. I removed the 3-inch-thick pad of nesting