



General Field Notes

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Aerial Diving by Great Egrets

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15 November 1975

On 4 November 1975 my two sons, John and Michael, told me that for several days they had been seeing some egrets acting peculiar at Greenfield Lake, Wilmington, N.C.

Schools of small fish were breaking the surface of the deep water in the center of the lake. The Great Egrets (*Casmerodius albus*) would fly from perches in cypress trees and hover about 4 to 6 feet above the water with necks and legs extended in a straight line. They would suddenly shift the legs downward and dive. The body and head hit the water at the same time. The wings were slightly raised and bent at the elbow so that the whole body did not submerge. When one rose with or without a fish, it would fly back to a tree and perch. Occasionally one would stay on the surface of the water and float for a minute or so, looking like a skinny swan. There were five egrets fishing.

Edna Appleberry and I watched four egrets diving on 5 November. On 6 November one egret was active. I counted 14 dives with five fish caught. On 10 November I saw two egrets diving.

By my observations the diving was obviously limited to the activity of the schools of fish. When the fish were inactive, the egrets stalked the shallow edges in a normal egret fashion.

[Dept. Ed.—This type of feeding behavior has been recorded for several species of long-legged waders. It appears, however, to be seldom used. I know of no previous reports of this behavior in North Carolina waders.]

Bald Eagle Seen in Forsyth County, N.C.

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10 November 1975

On 12 September 1975 a Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) in full adult plumage was sighted in the southern part of Forsyth County. The magnificent bird was first seen at 0600 by Wayne E. Nifong, owner of a dairy farm. Mr. Nifong observed the eagle from approximately 100 yards. The bird was feeding on a dead carp beside a very muddy ½-acre "catch-basin" pond. When the bird became aware of Mr. Nifong's presence, it flew immediately to a large pine tree. The eagle returned several times to feed on the carp, always selecting a pine tree for perching between feedings.

Mr. Nifong notified the local newspaper, the *Winston-Salem Sentinel*, of the occurrence. The *Sentinel* sent a reporter, Dee Wilson, and a photographer, Allie Brown, to investigate the report. They, in turn, saw and photographed the eagle and then called the local Audubon Society for confirmation. Fran M. Baldwin and I drove immediately to the farm, arriving just as a violent thunderstorm broke. After waiting 30 minutes for the lightning to subside, we made a thorough investigation of the area in a heavy rainfall, but we were unable to locate the bird. Examination of the photographer's film negatives, however, left no doubt about the sighting.

We returned to the Nifong farm at daybreak the next day to recheck the area and to examine the remains of the carp. This investigation and visits on several subsequent days yielded no additional sighting or information.

This is the first confirmed sighting of a Bald Eagle in Forsyth County. One of the photographs submitted to document the occurrence appears on the cover of this issue of *The Chat*.

Limpkin Observed at Lake Waccamaw, N.C.

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9 September 1975

About 1730 on 7 September 1975, we watched a Limpkin (*Aramus guarauna*) for several minutes at the head of the Waccamaw River in Columbus County, N.C. The bird emerged from the shrubs at the edge of the swamp just below the small dam at the outlet of Lake Waccamaw. Although we did not have our binoculars with us, we could see the bird clearly about 30 yards away. It stalked erratically along the edge of the water, jabbed at the ground, and once picked up a dark object, perhaps a snail. As it walked, it periodically jerked its dark tail downward. When one of us approached within 20 yards, it flew to seclusion in the shrubs nearer shore. In flight,