

# General Field Notes

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## Autumn Record of a Sandhill Crane from Macon County, N.C.

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During the autumn of 1968, an unusually heavy flight of Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis*), numbering over 400 individuals, was reported from eastern Tennessee, with the records spanning the 20-day period from 21 October through 10 November. These sightings, summarized by Smith (1968, 1969) and Joseph C. Howell (pers. com.), are as follows: (1) Savannah Bay, 21 October, 3 cranes; (2) Maryville, 23 October, 41 cranes; (3) Cherokee Boulevard, Great Smoky Mountains, 23 October, 27 cranes; (4) Norris Lake, 1 November, 75 cranes; (5) Savannah Bay, 10 November, 3 cranes; (6) Chickamagua Dam, 10 November, 276 cranes

Coincident with this migration in Tennessee, a Sandhill Crane was reported near the home of Orton Spencer Chambers, Buck Creek Road, Highlands, Macon County, N.C., on 25 and 26 October 1968 and reported to the Highlands Biological Station. Mr. and Mrs. Chambers and Mr. and Mrs. Alan Wallace observed the crane as it fed along the edge of their pond at an elevation of 4000 feet. Being familiar with both the Sandhill Crane and the Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*), the Chambers immediately recognized the bird. The crane flushed and circled briefly, allowing an opportunity to note its flight posture and wing beat. O.S. Chambers (pers. com.) informed me that the crane was a uniform gray color, conspicuously heavier or more robust than the Great Blue Heron, and that it flew with its neck fully extended and with the characteristic wing beat above body level. The bird was observed as close as 150 feet with the unaided eye and through 7 x 50 binoculars; light conditions were excellent, and all field marks were carefully checked. Mr. and Mrs. Chambers were unaware of the Tennessee records until I discussed the matter with them in June 1969.

This October record and Chamberlain's (1975) sighting of four cranes in Clay County, N.C., during March 1974 suggest that Sandhill Cranes may migrate across the extreme western portion of North Carolina, a region where very few ornithologists are active. Observers in this region should be alert for additional records during the migratory periods.

### LITERATURE CITED

- Chamberlain, W.D. 1975. Sandhill Cranes in western North Carolina. *Chat* 39:19.  
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