

Western Birds in the Sandhills of North Carolina

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On 10 August 1974, I observed an adult male Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) in the Sandhills Game Land, about 5 miles NW of Hoffman, Richmond County, N.C. The bird was watched for about 5 minutes with 9 x 35 binoculars, as it fed with Summer Tanagers (*Piranga rubra*) and other small woodland birds. Habitat was long-leaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) — turkey oak (*Quercus laevis*) woods. It was still in breeding plumage, though the plumage was worn and dingy. There are at least 12 previously published records for this species in North Carolina. This occurrence represents the first August record, and there are now published records from all months except April and May. Other summer records are two at Waynesville in June 1944 (*Chat* 11:14) and a female at Black Mountain on 19 July 1972 (*Chat* 36:115).

On 26 December 1974, a female Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) appeared at the feeders of Mr. and Mrs. John T. Lees in Pinehurst, Moore County. This individual was seen regularly through mid-February 1975, and was last seen on 18 April 1975. Besides being observed repeatedly by the Lees, the grosbeak was also seen by Mrs. Perry Jones and the author. This is the fifth published record for the Black-headed Grosbeak in North Carolina, and the first record for the south-central portion of the state.

A male Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus galbula bullockii*) was discovered by Miss Mary K. Wintyen at her feeders in Southern Pines on 13 January 1975. It was associated with a flock of Baltimore Orioles (*I. g. galbula*), and was very shy. It was seen on two occasions by the author, and once by John Fussell. The last date it was observed was 18 March 1975. There is one previous record for this subspecies in North Carolina. A male, female, and two immatures were seen in Morehead City in December 1959 and January 1960 (*Chat* 24:26).

High Elevation Nesting of the Indigo Bunting Near Mt. Pisgah, N.C.

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The Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) occurs at all elevations during the breeding season in the southern Blue Ridge Mountains, where it prefers disturbed open areas of secondary successional growth and forest-field edge. Stupka (*Notes on the Birds of Great Smoky Mountains National Park*, 1963) and Simpson (*J. Elisha Mitchell Sci. Soc.*, 88:244-251, 1972) have noted that records above 1525 m (5000 feet) almost invariably consist of solitary males, with no evidence of females, nests, or young except at lower elevations. The following observations suggest that the species does occasionally breed in the higher mountains.

On 30 and 31 May 1975, I watched a pair of Indigo Buntings constructing a nest in a dense thicket of blackberry (*Rubus* sp.) at an elevation of 1585 m (5200 feet) along the Blue Ridge Parkway near Mt. Pisgah, Henderson County, N.C. The structure was placed 55 cm (22 inches) off the ground in the heart of the thicket and appeared to be at least three-quarters finished. Because I was unable to return at a later date, it is not known whether eggs were laid or young successfully fledged. Nevertheless, this is the only record that I am aware of suggesting the possibility of nesting at such an elevation. Observers should document any additional records of breeding above 1585 m in the southern Blue Ridge.