

<u>Year</u>	<u>Date arrived</u>	<u>First to arrive</u>	<u>Total</u>
1950	Oct. 3	5	16
1951	Oct. 1	7	26
1952	Sept. 30	6	75
1953	Sept. 28	5	125
1954	Oct. 1	6	140
1955	Sept. 26	8	200
1956	Sept. 27	6	220
1957	Sept. 27	10	280
1958	Oct. 3	4	300
1959	Oct. 2	6	390
1960	Oct. 1	38	420
1961	Oct. 3	6	408
1962	Oct. 15	10	375
1963	Sept. 30	15	385
1964	Sept. 27	23	365
1965	Sept. 20	7	370
1966	Sept. 13	7	380
1967	Sept. 14	5	342
1968	Oct. 2	8	450
1969	Sept. 10	10	390
1970	Sept. 25	9	366
1971	Sept. 23	9	325
1972	Oct. 2	17	250
1973	Oct. 1	9	210
1974	Sept. 23	16	350
1975	Sept. 28	16	335

Table 1. Wintering Canada Goose numbers at Ronda, N.C.

American Avocet Breeding at Pea Island, N.C.

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On 18 June 1968, two one-day-old American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*) chicks were found on the mudflat north of North Field at the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge in Dare County, N.C. One chick was studied closely in hand (Fig. 1) but the second chick, about 20 feet away, was unapproachable due to deep water. A very agitated adult avocet was nearby.

Approximately 40 adult and immature avocets were present at Pea Island, and Black-necked Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*) were also nesting nearby. Several young stilts had been observed previously. A day-old American Avocet and a day-old Black-necked Stilt have much in common in general appearance, but upon close examination several specific differences are noted:

- (1) Avocet—slightly longer recurving bill.
Stilt—straighter bill and a more prominent egg tooth.
- (2) Avocet—small black spot of down in front of each eye and at the base (both sides) of the upper mandible.
Stilt—none.
- (3) Avocet—down on the neck and throat darker, grayish buff.
Stilt—pale gray down on the throat and neck.
- (4) Avocet—body down darker gray.
Stilt—body down pale to medium gray.



Fig. 1. American Avocet chick at Pea Island, N.C., June 1968. (Photo by William McVaugh Jr.)

- (5) Avocet—head and body stripes medium dark.
Stilt—head and body stripes more intense coloration.
- (6) Avocet—under-toe color pale fleshy-gray.
Stilt—under-toe color pale pink.

The toe color is the easiest and quickest way to identify the two species when there is an overlap in their breeding range, as at Pea Island.

[NOTE: While American Avocets have been observed at all seasons at Pea Island for several years, no positive evidence of nesting was available prior to this report. Thus, the avocet, which normally is a breeding bird of western North America (A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds, 1957), can be added to the list of North Carolina's breeding species.—JFP]

Black-headed Gull in Eastern North Carolina

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On 29 and 31 January and 2, 3, and 4 February 1976, a Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) was observed at the Hudles Cut Ferry Terminal on the Pamlico River near Aurora, N.C. The gull was seen in good light on several occasions. It was smaller than a Laughing Gull (*L. atricilla*). Key plumage features were a white head with a black spot behind the eye and a white tail with a wide black terminal band. The eyes were dark, the legs and feet red and the bill red with a dark tip. The wing pattern was that of an immature bird as illustrated in Robbins et al. (1966).

We concluded that the bird was a Black-headed Gull in subadult plumage. The red bill with black tip and the wide black tail band separated the bird from the very similar