

General Field Notes

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An Observation of a Yellow-billed Common Crow

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At about 1830 on 17 September 1977, while driving south on SC 19 approximately 500 m S of the entrance to the Savannah River Plant in Aiken County, Lohoefer saw on the roadside a crow with a yellow bill. We returned to the area and found the yellow-billed crow and two other crows perched in nearby pines.

Both the upper and lower mandibles of the unusual crow were a uniform shade of yellow (best described as orange-yellow; Smith, *A Naturalist's Color Guide*, The American Museum of Natural History, New York); the bird's legs, eyes, and plumage appeared normally pigmented. As the yellow-billed crow flew, its call identified it as a Common Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*). We did not see the bird on the following day.

The family Corvidae also includes the Black-billed Magpie (*Pica pica*) and Yellow-billed Magpie (*P. nuttalli*), species differentiated by their bill color differences. While our report might draw only casual interest as a sighting of a rare mutant, it may have an evolutionary significance when viewed with bill color differences of these other corvids in mind.

Our work at the Savannah River Plant was supported by a contract to Jackson from the U.S. Energy Research and Development Administration.

Canada Geese Wintering in Western North Carolina

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Accepted July 1976

Western North Carolina is not known for its overwintering population of Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*). However, in 1950, 16 birds appeared on Roundabout Farm along the Yadkin River at Ronda, N.C. The farm, owned by R.T. Chatham, has several small ponds and proved to be attractive to the geese. They have returned each year since 1950, and numbers increased to a high of 450 in 1968 (Table 1). Since that time, numbers have fluctuated but have remained in excess of 200 each winter. The geese are fed and protected by Mr. Chatham and represent an unusual occurrence in western North Carolina.