

Townsend's Warbler in Western North Carolina

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In the early afternoon of 24 April 1975, while I was walking on the old state highway that runs through Nantahala Village 9 miles W of Bryson City, Swain County, N.C., I observed two male Townsend's Warblers (*Dendroica townsendi*) and a third bird that may have been a female of the same species. I had stopped beside a group of white pines along the roadway to look at a mixed flock of small birds, mostly Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Carolina Chickadees. A male warbler caught my attention. Its cap was solid black with golden cheeks and black ear patches. Below the black throat and bib there was black streaking on the sides, which were gold not white. The color was a gold rather than the yellow with green tones found in the Black-throated Green Warbler. Shortly after my first good look at this bird, I saw a second male Townsend's Warbler and an unidentified female warbler. The female never was seen well and may or may not have been of the same species. The birds did not call; however, they did respond to my shushing them. They came within 25 feet overhead, stayed that close for a few minutes, and then began to move off. They were in view off and on for about 10 to 15 minutes. Their response to the shushing was like that of Townsend's Warblers I had seen in June 1974 on the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska.

I was accompanied on the walk by my mother, who knows the birds that visit her feeders. I saw the birds through 8 X 40 binoculars, and my mother saw them through 7 X 50 binoculars. I was able to get her to look at the birds and compare each of the field marks with the picture in *Birds of North America* (Robbins et al. 1966). Persistent searching later in the day failed to turn up the birds again.

[NOTE: This is the only record of Townsend's Warbler from North Carolina. This western species has been recorded only rarely in eastern North America. While the author was careful in his evaluation of the observation, this species must await further corroboration before being fully acceptable for the state checklist. Publication of this report gives the Townsend's Warbler hypothetical status on the North Carolina list.—JFP]

Harris' Sparrow at Huntington Beach State Park, S.C.

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On 14 November 1977 a Harris' Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*) was observed by Bobby Desporte and John Bacon at Huntington Beach State Park, Georgetown County, S.C. The bird was found near the outlet of the freshwater pond bordering the causeway to the front beach. It stayed in the area for 3 days and was observed and photographed (with 300 mm and 400 mm lenses) by the writer, John Bacon, Evelyn Dabbs, and possibly several others. A number of other birders, including Patty Culbertson of Winston-Salem, N.C., and Penny Richards of Sweden, Maine, also saw the sparrow.

Although apparently in good health, the bird seemed to be hungry and spent much time in feeding. On the first day it permitted us to approach rather closely; later, however, it was more wary but remained in the area and was readily observed. This species, the largest of our sparrows, is not likely to be misidentified when in the breeding plumage. The Huntington bird's crown was not totally black but mottled as in non-breeding individuals. The bib was almost completely black, though fading somewhat, and slightly shorter than that of breeding birds.

While common in its normal range (breeding nearly to the Arctic Circle in Canada westward from Hudson Bay; wintering mostly in eastern Arkansas and Texas), this western species is rarely observed in the Carolinas. The present sighting represents the

second known record of Harris' Sparrow in South Carolina. On 5 January 1962, an adult was observed by Mrs. Edgar N. Woodfin at her feeder in Gramling, Spartanburg County, S.C. (Davis, Chat 26:22; Audubon Field Notes 16:321); it remained in the area until 26 April 1962 (Shuler, Chat 32:78-79). The Gramling bird was photographed by Jay Shuler (Chat 32:78, Fig. 1).

It may be of interest to note that while most records of the Harris' Sparrow from the southeastern United States represent individuals associated with flocks of White-crowned Sparrows (Shuler, Chat 20:65-71), such was not the case with the Huntington Beach bird.

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

Compiled by ROBERT P. TEULINGS

(All dates 1978)

- HORNED GREBE:** Over 1000 were seen along the Outer Banks in the Bodie-Pea Island, N.C., area on 23 March by Kathleen Anderson and Trevor Lloyd-Evans.
- DOUBLED-CRESTED CORMORANT:** Observers reported a good inland count of 33 at Beaverdam Reservoir in northern Wake County, N.C., on 28 April (fide Bob Hader). One was an early and locally uncommon visitor at Lake Hartwell near Clemson, S.C., on 31 March, observed by Harry LeGrand and Sidney Gauthreaux, and another was seen at Salem Lake near Winston-Salem, N.C., on 20 April by Pat Culbertson.
- ANHINGA:** One was seen on the North Carolina Outer Banks at Pea Island NWR on 21 May by Herb Wilson.
- GLOSSY IBIS:** An estimated 1500 were counted near Charleston, S.C., on 10 April by Perry Nugent. One turned up as a rare inland visitor at Beaverdam Reservoir near Raleigh, N.C., on 23 April, observed by Bill Lezar. Another inland wanderer was found in Lenoir County, N.C., on 5 May by Bob and Mary Simpson.
- BRANT:** A raft of 10 late winter stragglers was seen at Hatteras Inlet, N.C., on 26 May by Guy Tudor.
- BUFFLEHEAD:** A late individual was still present at Hatteras Inlet, N.C., on 20 May, observed by Cliff and Randy Stringer.
- COMMON EIDER:** Royce Hough saw three at Cape Lookout bight off Beaufort, N.C., on the late day of 28 May.
- COMMON MERGANSER:** One was a late and unusual visitor at Pea Island NWR, N.C., on 19 May, reported by Robert and Peter Tripician. Twenty, all females, were seen on Lake Hartwell at Clemson, S.C., on 18 March by Harry LeGrand.
- SCOTERS:** Five Surf Scoters and 35 Black Scoters were late lingerers observed off Bogue Banks at Pine Knoll Shores, N.C., on 5 June by Bob Hader.
- SWALLOW-TAILED KITE:** On North Carolina's Outer Banks an individual was seen in Nags Head Woods on 19 April by David Lee and John Funderburg, and two were found at Bodie Island on 19 May by Robert and Peter Tripician.
- BROAD-WINGED HAWK:** Eight were seen circling over Ocracoke Island, N.C., on 26 May by Guy Tudor, an interesting spring record from the Outer Banks.
- ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK:** One was observed by Tom Haggerty in coastal Dare County, N.C., on 23 March. Another, in light-phase plumage, was seen in Haywood County, N.C., west of Asheville on 28 April by David Lee.
- GOLDEN EAGLE:** An immature was present at Fairlawn Plantation near Charleston, S.C., on 8 April, seen by Sidney Gauthreaux, Harry LeGrand, Bob Lewis, et al.
- BALD EAGLE:** Ricky Davis found two adults and two immatures at Beaverdam Reservoir north of Raleigh, N.C., on 17 May.
- OSPREY:** Four were observed soaring over Shining Rock Mountain, Haywood County, N.C., on 11 March by Roger Stone, an unusual spring record for the mountain area.