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## **A Report on an Alder Flycatcher Colony at Roan Mountain with Comments on the Status of the Species in the Southern Appalachians**

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On 13 June 1978, I saw a small brownish flycatcher with wingbars on the North Carolina side of the Appalachian Trail at Jane Bald, 2 miles E of Roan Mountain, Mitchell County. Because the bird was singing *fee-bee-o*, I identified it as an Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*) despite the seemingly unusual location—the dry shrubby edge of a grassy bald at 5600 feet in elevation. Actually though, mountain alder (*Alnus crispa*) was the most prominent shrub.

After hearing another Alder Flycatcher one-half mile farther E on Grassy Ridge Bald, I met Ed Schell of the Tennessee Ornithological Society (TOS) and pointed this bird out to him. He mentioned that birders from New England had reported an Alder Flycatcher there in 1977. Immediately upon leaving Mr. Schell, I heard a third Alder Flycatcher. Like the second bird, it was on the Tennessee side of Grassy Ridge Bald. Returning the next day, I found a fourth bird, this one on the North Carolina side at 6000 feet in elevation. The original bird was found again at Jane Bald. Later in the summer Mr. Schell told me that many TOS members had gone to see the Alder Flycatchers and that seven singing males as well as a female and a fledgling were found along this short stretch of the Appalachian Trail. This first nesting record of the Alder Flycatcher in Tennessee is being written up for *The Migrant*.

After I told Harry LeGrand about these birds, he went to similar habitat (scattered deciduous saplings and small spruce trees) at Graveyard Fields, Haywood County, N.C., on 17 June 1978 and found an Alder Flycatcher. On 23 July 1978 he returned and found two Alder Flycatchers, one singing and one calling *pip*. This location at 5800 feet is where Joshua Lee, Walter Holland, and others reported a bird on 22 May 1976 (Chat 40:103).

There are only a few other reports of Alder Flycatchers in the southern Appalachians. Schell (pers. com.) found one at Mount Rogers, Virginia, several years ago, and there is a report of one at 5100 feet in southwestern Virginia in 1974 (Am. Birds 28:904). Harry LeGrand and I found one singing in a small bog at 3500 feet in Price Park near Blowing Rock, N.C., on 29 May 1972 (Chat 36:114). We also found a non-singing *Empidonax* flycatcher in the same territory that summer. In 1976 George Hall wrote in *American Birds* (30:956) that Alder Flycatchers were dwindling in numbers in West Virginia and were confined to a few high mountain bogs. The 1977 report for the Appalachian Region (Am.

Birds 31:1140) merely mentioned Alder Flycatchers nesting in Westmoreland and Butler Counties, Pennsylvania.

Perhaps additional field work on high balds will clarify the nesting status of Alder Flycatchers in the southern Appalachians.

## **Ruby-crowned Kinglet Seen in Late July in Franklin County, N.C.**

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While bird watching at Zane's Mountain near Bunn in Franklin County, N.C., on 29 July 1978, I saw a Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*) being chased by a male Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*). I had good views of the kinglet three different times as it perched briefly in a thicket of shrubs and saplings beside a stream. The kinglet's small size, small bill, greenish coloration, and prominent wing bars were obvious field marks, but the eye ring was not distinct. All doubt about the identity of the bird was removed when the Ruby-crowned Kinglet scolded the warbler and then gave a series of typical call notes.

Zane's Mountain is a prominent hill beside Crooked Creek on SR 1731 just east of Bunn. Within a relatively small area there are recently cutover woodlands, pine woods, upland hardwoods, and fairly extensive floodplain hardwoods. Zane's Mountain is one of the best places I have found in Franklin County for fall migrant passerines.

The earliest published fall arrival date for the Ruby-crowned Kinglet in North Carolina is 19 August 1973 when Kitty Kosh (Chat 38:28) saw one at Wilmington. However, Barbara Lee of Raleigh, Ben Saunders of Asheville, and Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Wagner of Chapel Hill have told me about seeing Ruby-crowned Kinglets in the mountains "in summer" or "during July." They did not mention any evidence of breeding. Although the Golden-crowned Kinglet (*R. satrapa*) nests regularly in the southern Appalachians, I am not aware of a published nesting record for the Ruby-crowned Kinglet in the Carolinas or Tennessee. Apparently a few kinglets migrate southward much earlier than generally expected.