

General Field Notes

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A Survey of Whistling Swans Along the South Carolina Coast

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South Carolina Bird Life (1970, p. 584) classifies the Whistling Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*), as a "rare winter resident seen mostly along the coast." During the winters of 1976-77 and 1977-78, I had an opportunity to census Whistling Swans by air and ground along the South Carolina coast from Myrtle Beach to Savannah. My surveys showed that Whistling Swans were concentrated at the four major locations given below. Numbers in parentheses indicate the maximum swan population wintering at each location. Huntington Beach State Park (15) and South Island Refuge (28), Georgetown County; Bull's Island (30), Charleston County; and Savannah National Wildlife Refuge (25), Jasper County. Another concentration point often used by swans is Doe Hall Plantation, Charleston County, which has reported up to 30 swans (Chat 36:33). I found a total of 98 swans overwintering along the coast. Little difference was noted in the number of swans between 1977 and 1978, although the population at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge was down in 1978.

It is possible that swans have been overlooked between Charleston and Savannah, where none have been found in apparently suitable habitat. Elsewhere in the state, a few swans have been seen in recent years at Lake Greenwood, Lake Hartwell, the Santee National Wildlife Refuge, and locations in Richland and Barnwell Counties. The state's total wintering swan population could approach 120 birds.

I believe that Whistling Swans are gradually increasing in South Carolina. A review of Christmas bird counts in *The Chat* from 1963 through 1976 showed five counts, all in the 1960s, that reported no swans, but all counts in the 1970s showed swans at one or more sites in South Carolina.

The principal Whistling Swan foods in South Carolina seem to be Widgeon Grass (*Ruppia maritima*) and Muskgrass (*Chara* sp.). Both plants are widely used for waterfowl management in the state.

This survey was made possible by a contract from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the Clemson University Agricultural Experiment Station.

Historical Record of the Swallow-tailed Kite from the South Carolina Mountains

JOHN E. CELY

Several years ago Simpson (Chat 36:69-72, 1972) reviewed the former status of the Swallow-tailed Kite in the southern Appalachians, especially in western North Carolina. Kites were regular late summer visitors in the North Carolina mountains during the 1800s but had almost disappeared by 1900. Simpson attributed this decline to a corresponding shrinkage in the breeding range of Swallow-tailed Kites in the upper Mississippi Valley; he