

choose nest sites well above the ground. The only similar report we have found was of a nest in a stump; in that case, the bottom of the nest was below ground level (Bent 1938).

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First North Carolina Record of a Wheatear

STEPHEN MURPHY

P.O. Box 571

Franklin, N.C. 28734

About 0800 on 11 October 1981, I saw a small flock of Eastern Bluebirds alight in a Flowering Dogwood tree in the front yard of my home at Franklin, Macon County, N.C. I noticed one of the birds was unusually light colored for a bluebird. With binoculars I observed, from a distance of about 40 feet, that the bird in question was not only a pale brown color on both top and bottom but also did not have the hunched-over look of a bluebird.

It was definitely a bird that I had never seen before. My first view of it, as it perched in the dogwood tree, was a profile, and I noticed a thin bill, possibly even a little thinner than that of the bluebird, as well as a pale brown color on the head, back, underparts, and upper half of the wings. The lower half of the wings was very dark, maybe even black, and what I could see of the rear portion of the tail was black also. The bird was constantly flicking its wings and bobbing up and down, and each time it flicked its wings I could see some white on its rump.

I went outside to get a closer look and was able to approach to less than 20 feet: I was now at about a three-quarter angle to the rear of the bird and for the first time noticed a hint of a pale eye stripe, not quite white. I also noticed the white of the rump was far more extensive than I had thought at first. When the bird became alarmed at my approach and flew, I could see a really tremendous contrast between the bright white of the rump and the black of the tail.

The bird then flew to some power lines, and I went back to the house, hoping it would return. About 15 minutes later I noticed the bird was with a small flock of Song Sparrows. At this time whenever the bird flicked its wings I was able to observe a pattern between the black and white on the tail. The rear portion of the tail, about one-third, was black and then a black stripe, maybe one-third the width of the tail, ran up the tail. The entire rump and rest of the tail were bright

white except for a very small strip—about 1/4 inch at the very tip of the tail—that was buff colored.

I saw the bird 8 or 10 different times between 0800 and 1030, when the sun burned off the overcast and the day warmed up. I was unable to locate it after that time, nor could I find it the next two mornings. I believe the bird was a Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*), a species previously reported only once from the Carolinas. Andrew Simons watched one at close range while golfing at the Charleston County Club, 1 October 1960. He noted the inverted T and rump patch together with the pumping action. Although E. B. Chamberlain (Chat 24:102) accepted this report and stated that the observation places the species on the South Carolina Hypothetical List, the Wheatear is not mentioned in the 1970 edition of *South Carolina Bird Life*, as revised by Burton. The species is, however, listed in *Birds of the Carolinas* (Potter, Parnell, and Teulings, 1980).

[NOTE: Publication of the above field note adds the Wheatear to the North Carolina state bird list with Provisional I status.—DSL]

Confirmation of Breeding Red Crossbills in the Mountains of North Carolina with Notes on Nesting Behavior

TOM HAGGERTY

613 Oakland, Apt. 4

Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701

Although there is considerable evidence for Red Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra*) breeding in the southern Appalachian Mountains and in North Carolina (Johnston 1963, Simpson 1974, Swindell 1974, Sykes 1974, Carter 1976, Phillips 1979), no one has reported finding an active nest with eggs or nestlings. Consequently, little has been recorded on the breeding biology of the species in this region.

On 5 September 1981, Joe Williams and I discovered a female Red Crossbill building a nest in a White Pine (*Pinus strobus*) at the edge of a gravel parking lot off of Plemmons Drive on the Appalachian State University campus in Boone, Watauga County, N.C. The altitude at this site is approximately 1006 m.

About 23 m in height with a d.b.h. of 62 cm, the nest tree is part of a large, fairly uniform stand of White Pines that cover an area of roughly 3 ha. These pines, like many others throughout the county, were heavily covered with cones in September 1981. The nest was placed in the fork of a branch 3.5 m from the main trunk and 19 m from the ground. Although visible from below, the nest was partially concealed from above by small pine boughs. Because the limb pointed south and extended over the parking lot, it received sunlight during most of the daylight hours.

On 5 September between 1700 and 1900, the female made 10 trips to the nest with building material. She collected epiphytic mosses, Tulip Poplar bark fibers, and unidentified materials, using her bill, feet, and body to construct the inner