

1983.170.1). With this record, the species may now be placed on the definitive state bird list.

The first published report of the Mourning Warbler was in 1940 when, on 24 and 25 May, Gabriel Cannon saw a bird at Spartanburg, Spartanburg County (Bird Lore 42:384). Cannon published no details of this sighting, but apparently communicated with either A. Sprunt Jr. or E.B. Chamberlain, who stated in *South Carolina Bird Life* (1949, p. 478) that the observer studied "a male bird at close range and in good sunlight." Because the bird was a male, and Cannon was an experienced observer, there seems to be no reason to doubt this record. However, as only one person saw the bird, and no photograph was taken, this record should have been considered hypothetical.

[NOTE: Since 1968, there have been several reports of the Mourning Warbler in South Carolina. Because of the rarity of this species in the state, and because of the notorious difficulty of separating nonadult male Mourning Warblers from Connecticut Warblers (*O. agilis*) and MacGillivray's Warblers (*O. tolmiei*), these observations must be considered by the South Carolina avian records committee before they are accepted. Bird-banders are in a particularly favorable position to help determine the status of these species in the state, as measurements can usually serve to separate them (Lanyon and Bull 1967, Bird-Banding 38:187-194.)—WP]

First South Carolina Record of the Lazuli Bunting

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An adult male Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*) was noted by Ned and Teddy Shuler at feeders at the home of Ned's parents in Westminster, S.C., during February and March 1981. After two unsuccessful trips to see the bird, I was finally successful on 7 March. On that date, a number of color photographs were taken by Claire Filemyr and Sidney Gauthreaux. One photo has been sent to the Charleston Museum (CM 1983.124) for documentation.

The bunting was first seen on 11 February and was not reported beyond 7 March. It frequented both a feeder placed a few meters off the ground as well as the backyard patio, where seeds were also placed. The yard was in a moderately wooded part of town, and scattered pines were present in the yard. Thus, the habitat was most unlike the typical open-country thicket and scrub habitat favored for breeding in the western United States.

The identification of the bunting was obvious. This striking bird retained the turquoise blue of the head and rump, though a few brownish feathers were mixed with the blue on the head. The area between the eye and bill was mostly black. The breast and sides were rusty, with the back mixed rusty and blue. White wing bars were very noticeable, as was the white belly. The bill was a typical conical finch bill, and the overall size was somewhat smaller than that of a Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*).

This is the first record for the Lazuli Bunting in the Carolinas. It has not been recorded in Virginia or Georgia, and there appear to be very few records anywhere east of the Mississippi River.

Clay-colored Sparrows in Fall in Mountains of North Carolina

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In the early afternoon of 17 October 1982, two Clay-colored Sparrows (*Spizella pallida*) were feeding in north Asheville, N.C., on ground with sparse, low clumps of grass where I regularly scatter chick feed. Also feeding there were a White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) and six to eight House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*). They were in an area about 10 x 11 feet, sometimes with a foot or less separating individuals. I watched them for several minutes with binoculars, through a window, at about 25 feet. About 30 minutes later I saw a single Clay-colored Sparrow in the same place.

LeGrand (Chat 45:84) lists three recent winter records for the North Carolina coastal area, and Potter, Parnell, and Teulings, in *Birds of the Carolinas* (UNC Press, 1980) say this species is a rare transient along the coast, but they mention no records for the mountains. This Asheville sighting indicates that at least some of the birds seen along the coast may migrate there through the mountains of this region rather than coming down the coast from a crossing farther north.

BACKYARD BIRDING (Continued from Page 46)

A Fair Trade-off?

Our suburban backyard is a far cry from what is normally considered good habitat for the Fox Sparrow. We do not see them very often, and then only during migration or on a snowy winter day. However, we have been most delighted during the winter of 1983-1984 to have had a Fox Sparrow feeding here daily. It appeared on 17 December, just in time to get in on the Wake Audubon Christmas Count. Perhaps the bird is a bird-of-the-year and had no previous experience in picking a winter territory. Perhaps it chose to stay as long as there were plenty of food, a supply of water, and a few evergreen shrubs for cover. The bird is very shy and prefers to feed at first light in the mornings and in late afternoons. It is also very quiet. I have never heard it utter a sound—not a scold note nor a call note of any kind. It has developed a taste for my hand-out food of cornmeal and peanut butter, and occasionally darts out from cover to grab a piece. Mostly it feeds on wild-bird seed and sunflower seed that fall on the ground while the House Finches are scrapping on the hanging feeder. The bird is a beautiful rich red-brown color, similar to that of a Brown Thrasher. This is the first winter in many years that we did not have a thrasher, so maybe it was a fair trade-off for both of us; a Fox Sparrow for a Brown Thrasher for me, food and water versus the solitude of a thicket for the bird.—GAIL T. WHITEHURST, 1505 Brooks Avenue, Raleigh, N.C. 27607