

General Field Notes

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First Piedmont Record for Red Phalarope in South Carolina

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On the afternoon of 2 May 1985, I saw a Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicaria*) on a small farm pond at the Simpson Experimental Station of Clemson University, Anderson County, S.C. The pond is approximately 4.2 km SE of Pendleton. I saw the bird just after the passage of a major storm system. Surface winds were from the SSE and winds aloft from the SSW. The bird was first spotted swimming approximately 8 m from the shoreline of the 0.6-ha pond. Other shorebirds on the pond were Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca* and *T. flavipes*), and Solitary and Least Sandpipers (*T. solitaria* and *Calidris minutilla*). I approached within 5 m of the bird without flushing it. I identified the bird as a phalarope by its relatively small size, gray and white plumage, and swimming behavior. The following field marks were noted through 7 x 35 binoculars and a 20X spotting scope. The plumage was generally gray on the dorsal surface and white on the ventral surface, suggesting an individual in nonbreeding plumage. Some of the scapulars had a pinkish tinge, but this depended on the angle of observation. The bird had a black line through the eye to the back of the head, and the posterior surface of the crown was dark. The bill was short in relation to the bill of a Lesser Yellowlegs (direct comparison) and was noticeably thicker and blunt-tipped. The basal half of the bill was yellow, changing to black distally. The short legs were gray to grayish-blue, and the bird had a "squat" appearance on land. When the bird flushed, I noted two bold stripes on the wings and an unmarked back. The bird remained in the water the majority of the time it was seen and rarely left the water when it foraged on the shoreline. The bird also fed on dead emergent vegetation.

Red Phalaropes are regular transients off the coast of North and South Carolina, occasionally in very large numbers (Lee and Booth 1979; also Chat 45:106, 46:119, 47:108, 48:99). They also winter regularly in the Gulf of Mexico (Imhof 1962) and along the south Atlantic Coast (Amer. Birds 38:307, 39:158). However, inland records for both Carolinas and Georgia are few, and most of these records are near the coast. Sprunt and Chamberlain (1970) list four inland records for South Carolina all from locations near the coast. Two of these records were in the fall and two in the spring. In

North Carolina, extreme inland records include birds at Fontana Village in Graham County (Chat 13:75), Lenoir in Caldwell County (Wray 1947), and North Wilkesboro in Wilkes County (Smith 1960); all other records are from the lower piedmont and coastal plain (Marsh and Hader 1974; Chat 43:72, 45:50, 47:52 and 53, 48:58). All of these records except one have been in the fall and winter. A bird was sighted near Atlanta, Georgia, in the fall of 1981 (Bevis 1981). My record of a Red Phalarope from Pendleton, S.C., is the first report for the piedmont region of South Carolina, and one of the few inland reports in spring from both Carolinas.

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Records from "Briefs from the Files" published in *The Chat* and "South Atlantic Coast Region" in *American Birds* are not included in the literature citations.

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The Number of Fault Bars in the Feathers of Red-tailed Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawks, Broad-winged Hawks, and Barred Owls

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J.E. Cooper (1978) claims that malnutrition or other stressful factors during feather growth can produce weak areas in the feathers called fault bars. He explains that fault bars occur in a number of species of free-living birds of prey. Evans (1960) points out that fault bars appear as slightly frayed, defined lines that sometimes extend across the entire vane. Fault bars weaken the feathers on which they occur, making the feather easier to break. Hamerstrom (1967) and Glasier (1978) note that, because fault bars are formed at the time the feather is growing, fault bars found across the entire tail at an equal distance from the base indicate that all the feathers were growing at the time the animal was subjected to stress.