



Roundtable

... with Louis C. Fink

North Carolina Breeding Bird Atlas Project

The North Carolina State Museum of Natural History is in the process of establishing the support facilities necessary for conducting a breeding bird atlas project. Maps, computer services, and secretarial staff will be available in time to send instructions to participants prior to the 1987 nesting season. Anyone interested in reserving a particular 1-square-mile block should notify David S. Lee, Curator of Birds, N.C. State Museum of Natural History, P.O. Box 27647, Raleigh, N.C. 27611. The atlas project will not delay the planned publication of the *Distributional Survey of the Breeding Birds of North Carolina*.

Alternation of Singing Bouts in Vireos

Years ago at the Jigger John campground in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, I awakened to the singing of Solitary Vireos (*Vireo solitarius*). These birds were abundant in the mixed coniferous and deciduous forest of the area. By the time Janice and I had settled down to breakfast, the Solitary Vireos had quieted, and Red-eyed Vireos (*Vireo olivaceus*) commenced singing from clumps of deciduous trees, mostly birch and beech. Throughout the morning the two species alternated song periods, only occasionally overlapping at the beginning, or at the end, of a bout. Never did a member of the alternate species intrude while the other was singing vigorously.

Since that particular observation, I've noted alternate singing by the two species at Algonquin Park, Ontario; at Joyce Kilmer and Julian Price in the mountains of North Carolina; and several times in the Reedy Creek section of Umstead Park near Raleigh. At locations where only one of the species is in residence, the species present does not seem to restrict its singing to periods but is likely to sing throughout the day. Individual birds might, however, sing in bouts. That seems to apply to the Red-eyed Vireo in much of the piedmont and coastal plain of North Carolina and to the Solitary Vireo at the Shining Rock Wilderness Area on the Blue Ridge Parkway, and on the summit of Mount Jefferson in Ashe County, N.C., sites where I've not observed the Red-eyed Vireo. Therefore, I suspect that where the two species hold territories in proximity with each other, each adjusts its singing bouts so as not to interfere with the other. I doubt that anything like courtesy is involved. The songs of the two vireos are similar, and very likely

each territorial male needs to advertise his presence with a minimum of static from the conspecific neighbor.

Curiously, I've not noted whether or not the Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*) relates to other vireos in song periodicity. There must be places where the Yellow-throated Vireo dwells within earshot of both the Red-eyed and the Solitary Vireo. Have others noted anything like the phenomenon described above?—JOSHUA A. LEE, 5104 Newcastle Road, Raleigh, N.C. 27606

Golden Eagle and Swans at Pungo

On 16 February 1986 Scott Hartley, my wife Jan, and I visited Pungo National Wildlife Refuge. We took a lunch break on the north side of the lake adjacent to a wheat field, just outside the refuge boundary. As we looked through our telescopes at some 2,000 Tundra Swans (*Olor columbianus*), a large dark bird flew in low over the flock. My first thought was an immature Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). Then the bird banked, and I saw the distinctive white band on the tail, indicating a Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). The eagle flew in low over the swans, hovering, swooping down, and landing. This performance continued for about 20 minutes until the eagle gained altitude and flew back to Pungo Lake. We saw it once more flying low over fields within the refuge. The swans reacted by clearing out each time the eagle landed. When the eagle flew over us, we saw indistinct white patches on the underside of the wings, indicating a subadult bird. —MICHAEL L. DUNN, East District Naturalist, N.C. State Parks, Route Two, Box 50, Seven Springs, N.C. 28578

Newspaper Gleanings

Observers counted 94 Whooping Cranes ready to leave Aransas Refuge in Texas for Canada, with twice as many birds of breeding age as last year. Cornell University scientists are optimistic over the fate of five rare species. Since the banning of DDT and other persistent pesticides, numbers of the Bald Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Northern Goshawk, Merlin, and Gyrfalcon have all soared.

The largest gathering of Bald Eagles in the Lower Forty-eight States is said to occur at McDonald Creek in Glacier National Park, Montana. This year, 500 eagles were watched by an estimated 6,000 visitors despite snow and temperatures below zero. The eagles were attracted by salmon making their way to spawning grounds.

A Great White Albatross, considered extinct some years ago, was observed by a group of bird students cruising off Point Reyes in California. It is hoped that the bird may re-establish itself on our western coast.

About 1,500 groups took part in the recent Christmas Count. Last year 41,000 observers counted 108 million birds. The most abundant species? More than 53 million Red-winged Blackbirds.

**CBC Rare Bird Alert Phone Number
704/875-2525**
