

## Nesting Localities of House Finches Wintering in North Carolina

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I obtained from the Bird Banding Laboratory a listing of House Finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) recaptured after being banded in North Carolina. The listing involved 23 recoveries, of which one was a second recapture. The list was examined to determine to what states the birds go for the nesting season after being in North Carolina during the winter.

A House Finch banded in North Carolina by J. D. Copeland on 7 April 1983 was recovered in Pennsylvania on 2 June 1983, showing that at least some House Finches from more northern nesting grounds are still in North Carolina in early April. With no records available to determine the time of autumn migration to North Carolina, the winter season was arbitrarily set to start with December. Thus, the winter season was defined as covering the period December through April and the nesting season the period May through July.

Of the 23 recaptures, only 11 were of birds banded during the winter and recovered during the nesting season. Assuming that these birds constitute a representative sample of the winter population of House Finches in North Carolina, the distribution of these birds during the nesting season can be taken to indicate the percentages of the winter population of House Finches in North Carolina going to the different states for the nesting season. Thus, of House Finches in North Carolina during the winter, 54.5% go for the nesting season to Pennsylvania, 18.2% go to New Jersey, 18.2% go to Maryland, and 9.1% go to Virginia.

Clearly, a sample of 11 birds is much smaller than is to be desired. Pending the accumulation of more data, the figures given can be considered as a first approximation of the breeding distribution of our wintering House Finches.

## A Scarlet Ibis or Hybrid White Ibis X Scarlet Ibis In South Carolina

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A pink ibis was seen on two occasions in the Charleston, S. C. area. The bird was first seen by Ann N. Mithoefer on the NW end of Sullivan's Island near Station 17 on 27 September 1987. On 29 September the bird was seen by Henrietta Evatt on James Island Creek. The ibis was foraging in the salt marsh and resting on a dock with 6-7 adult White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*). Mrs. Evatt photographed the bird and a print has been placed on file at The Charleston Museum. Sidney A. Gauthreaux, Jr. reviewed the photographs of the pink ibis, and concluded that the bird was similar to the White Ibis X Scarlet Ibis (*E. ruber*) hybrids he observed in Flamingo, Florida in January 1983.

Hybridization was first known to occur in a colony of White Ibises in Greynolds Park, Florida, where Scarlet Ibis eggs were introduced from Trinidad in July 1961 (Bundy, Audubon Mag. 67:84-85, 1965; Zahl, National Geogr. 132:874-882, 1967). The first hybrids were pink and salmon colored.

In the overlapping ranges of the Scarlet and White Ibises in Colombia and Venezuela a natural hybrid population exists (Ramo and Busto, Col. Waterbirds 10(1):111-114, 1987). They recorded 40 mixed pairs and observed 14 mixed copulations between White and Scarlet Ibis from 1981 to 1984. Because these observations of mixed pairs were made in different locations over a period of years, this does not appear to be a rare event. Ramo and Busto reported that "the color of the Scarlet Ibis in the colonies varied from light orange to scarlet." They also commented that some white birds had scattered orange feathers and suggested that this was further evidence of hybridization. Currently Scarlet and White Ibises are hybridizing in a large flight cage at Disney World in Orlando, Florida (Palmer E. Krantz, pers. comm.).

It is possible that pink ibises are escaped Scarlet Ibises. According to Keith Bildstein (pers. comm.) Scarlet Ibises kept in captivity and fed inadequate amounts of  $\beta$ -keratin turn pink, and these birds are often difficult to differentiate from the hybrids. Palmer E. Krantz (pers. comm.), in contrast, reports that escaped Scarlet Ibises are still very red and do not appear pink.

During spring 1989 a pink ibis was seen several times by University of Georgia researchers in the White Ibis nesting colony on Pumpkinseed Island in Winyah Bay near Georgetown, South Carolina and on one occasion the researchers observed a Scarlet Ibis (Tony DeSanto, pers. comm. and in prep.).

## Swallow-tailed Kites Capture a Bat and Rough Green Snakes

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On 1 July 1989 at 1330 h we saw a Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) flying along a tree line bordering a large cutover area just inside the gate to Fairlawn Plantation on Gerund's Bridge Road (SR 98), Charleston County, South Carolina. The kite was back-lit initially, but was in good light. Flying toward the east, the kite dove into the canopy, and reappeared, grasping in its talons a small brown bat with wings still flapping. Several times the kite reached down, and pulling at the bat, removed its wings, and then began consuming it in flight. Once, the remains were dropped, and retrieved in air. The bat was completely eaten on the wing. While the kite was eating this bat, we saw another bat flying around, which may have been flushed during the capture of the first one. We do not know the species of the bat that was captured.