

## **Sandhill Crane in Transylvania County, NC**

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On 10 January 1998 we observed a Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*) in a grassy farm field along Country Club Road, Transylvania County, NC, in the French Broad River valley about three miles west of the city of Brevard.

The bird was standing approximately 100 feet from the road when we first saw it. We were struck immediately by the large size, gray color, obvious red mark on the forehead, white cheek patch, and downturned tail feathers. The shape was quite different from that of the Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*), which we see commonly here. Through binoculars we could see that the bird had considerable brownish coloring on its body and wing feathers, a mark of an immature bird. Also, the red on the bird's crown was not quite as extensive as it is in a full adult.

Over the next week, dozens of local birders saw the Sandhill Crane. It was not present every time we and others visited the site, but it appeared at least every other day during that period. The bird was last observed on 17 January 1998.

A photograph, taken by Ludwig Kempe, is on file at the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences. This is the first documented record of Sandhill Crane in Transylvania County.

The day before we found this bird, on 9 January 1998, Wayne Forsythe had observed a different Sandhill Crane on a farm field in Mills River, Henderson County, NC. The cranes were later seen simultaneously in these two places by different birders, confirming that there were indeed two different birds. Forsythe's Sandhill Crane was the first ever recorded for Henderson County and stayed a month before finally departing. On 8 February 1998, Wayne Forsythe observed two Sandhill Cranes flying by Jackson Park, Hendersonville, Henderson County, NC (*Chat* 62:3, p. 162).

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