

Fifty Years Ago in *The Chat*—March 1958

In “Backyard Birding”, Mrs. Pinckney King described her experiences with feeding wintering Baltimore Orioles in Hartsville, SC. They first appeared in January 1953 and had returned each year, five winters in all and numbering from six to 14.

B. R. Chamberlain reported on the 1957 Christmas Bird Count in the Carolinas. A total of 206 observers in 88 parties counted 183 species and 303,600 birds. The most unexpected find was six American Tree Sparrows on the Chapel Hill count, which also reported 800 Brewer’s Blackbirds. The Eastover SC count reported two Bewick’s Wrens. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park count reported eight Snow Buntings, the first record for the park. A Western Grebe was observed on the Wilmington NC count, as was a Common Ground-Dove.

The CBC midwinter field trip took place at Mattamuskeet NWR 17–19 January. The 84 birders attending observed 102 species. Great Black-backed Gull and Northern Gannet were considered to be the most notable species.

The General Field Notes editors considered that the winter, as of mid-January, promised to be an outstanding one for southward penetration of northern species. Purple Finches and Pine Siskins were already present in “unusual quantity and distribution”. Evening Grosbeaks had been reported as far south as Aiken and McClellanville SC.

B. R. Chamberlain reported discovery of a breeding colony of Barn Swallows in Stanly County, which he described as the first known nesting site in the Carolinas outside of Alleghany and Watauga Counties in NC or along the coast.

Paul Sykes reported three Yellow-headed Blackbirds at Pea Island NWR on 2 Sept 1957, apparently the fifth record for the state.