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Fifty Years Ago in *The Chat*—December 1959

The lead article, “The Amateur and the Study of Bird Behavior” by Andrew J. Meyerriecks discussed things that are unknown about bird behavior and ways in which amateurs could contribute to knowledge about those behaviors. This article could probably be republished essentially unchanged today.

In General Field Notes, Ernest Cutts reported on species nesting in the Drum Island, SC, heron colony. Total adult population was estimated at 10,000 birds. E. Burnham Chamberlain reported that Ruddy Ducks with young had been seen at Bear Island, SC, and at the Romain Wildlife Refuge, SC, in the summer of 1959. Wendell P. Smith reported seeing a Black Rail feigning injury (taken to be evidence of breeding) in Surry County, NC, on 6 July 1959. The editor noted that in its 23 years, *The Chat* had published only two NC records and one SC record of Black Rail. John H. Grey belatedly reported June 1951 observations by Robert Paxton of Black-necked Stilts at Bodie Island, NC. The editor noted that while this was a rare observation in 1951, stilts had since become more numerous. Grey also reported a 1941 observation by Ray J. Beasely of 10–15 Common Ground-Doves on Knott’s Island, NC. George Smith detailed an observation of Sprague’s Pipit near Chapel Hill, NC, an observation that was later designated an “unaccepted sighting” by the NC Bird Records Committee. A total of 150 Wood Storks were noted at Savannah Refuge on 10 June, “the largest concentration ever noted” there. —Kent Fiala