

## Fifty Years Ago in *The Chat*—June 1961

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Charles Blake reviewed the distribution of towhees in the Carolinas, in response to what he considered confusion in the 1960 edition of *Birds of North Carolina*. He reported that three subspecies of Rufous-sided (now Eastern) Towhee occur in our area, but that the subspecies are not readily distinguishable in the field, and even a bander can identify only about 30% of birds in hand, mainly adult males.

*Pipilo e. erythrophthalmus* had breeding records across most of North Carolina except for the southeastern section, and in the mountains of South Carolina. Winter records were throughout the region, but with an increased number toward the coast. In this subspecies, the iris is red in adults but varies in young birds from dark brown to reddish brown.

*Pipilo e. canaster* had an NC breeding record only in Richmond Co, and a winter record only in Pitt Co. SC records were only for wintering in coastal counties, but the subspecies was presumed to breed across the piedmont. The iris color of adults is variable, ranging from red to pale orange, occasionally yellow.

*Pipilo e. rileyi* had breeding records in Brunswick, Carteret, and New Hanover Counties, NC, and Charleston and Georgetown Counties, SC. Winter records covered a slightly larger range, with a suggestion of northward movement in winter. The iris color in adults varies from straw to orange or red.

In *General Field Notes*, a female Dickcissel was collected in Durham, NC, on 15 Jan 1961, and a male Dickcissel was seen at a feeder in Myrtle Beach, SC in Feb and Mar 1961. The SC record was one of very few for the state. A Ruff (Reeve) sighting was reported at the entrance to the campground at Cape Hatteras lighthouse, NC, on 26 Mar 1960. Another Ruff was reported at the Savannah NWR on 22–23 Jan 1961 and was the first record for SC. Extending the list of numerous reports of Fulvous Tree Ducks (now Fulvous Whistling-Ducks) in the previous issue, there were reports from Currituck Co, NC, in Oct and Dec 1960. A female or immature male Common Eider was observed on the Wilmington 1960 Christmas Bird Count and remained through 19 Feb 1961. It was the first record for North Carolina. A Mourning Warbler was reported near Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest on 16 May 1960. This was the first spring record for the state.

In *Briefs for the Files*, a singing male Bachman's Warbler was reported in Charleston Co, SC, on 19 Mar 1961, considered an early date.