

Fifty Years Ago in *The Chat*—March 1964

In this issue, Dr. John Grey, a prominent founding member of the Carolina Bird Club in 1937 and the first editor of *The Chat*, published a very important summary regarding the status of the “official” list of North Carolina birds. He noted that both South Carolina and Virginia maintained “official” state lists and that South Carolina required a specimen of a bird for it to be placed on the “accepted” state list. However, Virginia included all birds with specimens taken as well as “certain species...admitted on the basis of sight records”. North Carolina’s list at this time was primarily a list of birds whose records had been personally vetted and approved by C.S. Brimley for the 1942 edition of *Birds of North Carolina*, with some additions added during the 1959 revision of the book, a revision that Grey characterized as “not all one had hoped for”.

Grey advocated that the Carolina Bird Club should take on the responsibility for the creation of a formal records committee “of at least three persons who would be charged with the responsibility of passing upon the acceptability of all North Carolina records of birds”. He recommended the development of specific criteria to be followed for admitting new bird species to the list. He also recommended that all records added since the publication of the 1942 edition of the *Birds of North Carolina* be reevaluated using these newly established criteria. This article provided the initial impetus for the development of what today are the North Carolina and South Carolina Bird Records committees.

Several interesting bird records were also included in this issue. Paul Sykes provided a detailed report on the second record of Lark Bunting in North Carolina. This bird was sighted on Bodie Island on September 2, 1963. The observers carefully watched it feeding on grass seed for 5 minutes. The bird would periodically jump up and bend a stalk down to feed on the seed. A very detailed description of its markings was provided. A group from the Greensboro Junior Museum reported a flock of 18 White-winged Crossbills sighted at the headwaters of Lake Brandt on the Greensboro Christmas Count, December 28, 1963. The flock was comprised of mostly males with some females and a few immature birds present as well. Plumage details were provided but attempts later made to secure a specimen were unsuccessful. Also, a single Red Phalarope was observed and photographed by James Shuler on September 15, 1963 on a small pond in Charleston County providing a rare land record for South Carolina.

- Don Seriff, editor