

Pine Siskin: “Several” juvenile birds in the company of adult birds at the Cataloochie Ski Area in Haywood Co, NC, 23 Aug (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey) was suggestive of breeding in that area. Irruptive wintering siskins began arriving in lower elevation areas in late October. A few of the higher counts were 25+ in Asheville, Buncombe Co, NC, 28 Oct (Simon Thompson); 25 at Warren Wilson College, Buncombe Co, NC, 7 Nov (Simon Harvey); 70 at Cowan’s Ford Wildlife Refuge, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 23 Nov (Kevin Metcalf); and 40 at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville Co, SC, in late November (Anthony Martin).

Fifty Years Ago in *The Chat*—March 1965

Dr. James F. Parnell provided an in-depth account of the Swainson’s Warbler in the Carolinas. He noted that since its original discovery by Dr. John Bachman in the lowcountry of South Carolina in 1883, the Swainson’s Warbler remained “one of the least known of the warblers inhabiting the southeast”. In his article, Parnell provides the details of the first confirmed account of Swainson’s Warbler nesting in the North Carolina mountains. He found an adult feeding two young in the Toxaway River Gorge area in June 1961. “The young birds were capable of only short flights and appeared to have been out of the nest for only one or two days.” The sighting was made at an elevation of 1,400 feet.

Later in his survey, Parnell noted multiple Swainson’s Warblers along the length of the gorge in elevations ranging from 1,000 to 3,000 ft. He found singing males daily into August and collected two as specimens. Both the birds had enlarged testes indicating their breeding condition. The warblers seemed to be found primarily in areas with thickets of rhododendron, mountain laurel, and dog hobble and observations were made near streams and “some distance from water” as well. Parnell concluded that the Swainson’s Warbler was a “fairly common summer resident” along river gorges draining the Blue Ridge Plateau. He also surmised that two factors had resulted in the general lack of historic records of Swainson’s Warbler from the mountains. First, the rugged nature of the terrain and second, the density of the vegetation making the area difficult to study.

Dr. Parnell also submitted a significant note published in the General Field Notes section. He provided a detailed account of the third record of Harlequin Duck for the state of North Carolina. It was found in almost the exact same location as the first Harlequin Duck record in the state in 1962, the north end of Carolina Beach. E. Burnham Chamberlain provided a General Field Note on the confirmation of six pairs of Blue-winged Teal nesting on Bulls Island, the first confirmed account from the state. The birds raised 26 young. Several

observers submitted notes of Common Eiders showing up at both Morehead City and Nags Head, North Carolina. These reports provided details for a species that, at the time, had been recorded only a few times in the state.

Olin S. Pettingill, Director of the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University, announced the start of a continent-wide nest-record card program and encouraged birders from both Carolinas to participate. Details of all nests of any species discovered were to be recorded on the card and mailed to the Lab so that a comprehensive national database of nest details could be created. This nest card program was the first of its kind on a continent-wide basis. Several state or regional nest card projects had been organized including one sponsored by the North Carolina Bird Club in 1940.

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