

Fifty Years Ago in The Chat

Steve Shultz

1967. The Summer of Love. Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band by the Beatles ruled the airwaves. U.S. involvement in Vietnam increased so that by year's end, 475,000 troops were in Southeast Asia. The average price of a new home was \$14,250 and gasoline cost just 33 cents a gallon; but of course the average annual wage was lower as well, as \$7,300. The Carolina Bird Club offered annual dues at \$2 per year. With dues now at \$30 for individuals, dues paid annually have increased 1,400%. And while that might seem like a large increase, consider that in 1967 a Life Membership cost \$100. Today that membership costs \$500, an increase of only 400%. Considering the relative value of a Life Membership, does it make sense to convert your annual membership to a Life Membership? See <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/dues/> for details.

The Summer 1967 issue of *The Chat* included results of a study on the dive times of common waterbirds including Horned Grebe (mean dive time of 46.1 seconds) and Bufflehead (mean dive times of 20.3 and 25.6 seconds on separate study days) based on observations in South Carolina by Joseph and Elaine Fatora.

General Field Notes documented the increase in House Finch records in the Carolinas, with the species first noted by Eloise Potter in November 1962 at Zebulon, NC. By 1967 the species was still quite uncommon, with four records from NC and two from SC during the winter of 1966-1967. This included the first SC record, a sighting made at Greenville.

Briefs for the Files noted 17 Ring-billed Gulls found in Winston-Salem on 25 February 1967 as being uncommon for an inland location. One might expect many inland fast food restaurants could equal or exceed that figure today on any given winter afternoon! A harbinger of future wintering hummingbird records, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird was noted from Beaufort, NC on 31 January 1967. A young birder by the name of Derb Carter, Jr. found a Glossy Ibis in Fayetteville, NC on 24 September 1966, while another frequent future contributor to Carolinas birding knowledge, Harry LeGrand, spotted what was then known as an American Merganser near Raleigh, NC on 12 February 1967.