

## 50 Years Ago in The Chat

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Spring 1971. The Soviet Union, led by Leonid Brezhnev, launched the world's first space station, Salyut I. The conflict in Vietnam was in its 16<sup>th</sup> year, and while many eyes were focused on Southeast Asia, the Weather Underground exploded a bomb in the United States Capitol Building (no, not the Weather Underground that we rely on for tomorrow's forecast!). Led Zeppelin performed *Stairway to Heaven* for the first time in concert, and customers of the newly available Honda motor vehicles could choose from two models, the 4-door N600 or the 2-door Z600. The cars featured a 2-cylinder engine producing 36 horsepower. Wisdom, the famed Laysan Albatross, was already an estimated 21 years old.

The March 1971 issue of *The Chat* (naming convention had not yet changed to reflect seasons) featured a drawing of a Red-breasted Nuthatch surveying mountain scenery. The artist was H. Douglas Pratt. Doug authored the lead article *Additional Notes on the Birds of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina* and notes the first record of breeding Barn Swallow from the North Carolina portion of the park.

Gilbert S. Grant documented a *Three-year Study of the Heronry at Alligator Bay, N.C.* and provides notes on the "vaguely known subject" of young Cattle Egrets with black bills.

Results of the 1970 Christmas Bird Count were documented by Eloise Potter. Charleston, SC and Wilmington, NC tied for the most species, 156, with Bodie-Pea Island coming in third with 151 species. An immature Great Cormorant found on the Bodie-Pea Island count represented the first sight record for North Carolina. 255,137 individual birds were counted, but, as Potter notes, this pales in comparison with the more than three million birds counted in 1963, largely due to an impressive blackbird roost near Greensboro, NC.

Briefs for the Files noted that a pair of Bald Eagles appeared engaged in nest building activity at Lake Mattamuskeet in North Carolina; a Black Rail was flushed the prior November just south of High Point in Guilford County, NC; the tally of Bonaparte's Gulls at Roanoke Rapids Lake in North Carolina was one; the first Least Flycatchers banded at a station in Hillsborough, NC since 1958 were noted in September 1970 (Harry LeGrand reported three sight records in Raleigh that same month); and Jay Carter reported finding several dead Henslow's Sparrows at the WECT television tower in Bladen County, NC, which were deposited in the collection of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

Annual membership to the Carolina Bird Club cost \$3.00, with life memberships available for \$100. The *Chat* contained no photographs, but featured drawings of Yellow-breasted Chat, Carolina Parakeet, Swallow-tailed Kit, and Ruffed Grouse.