

Fifty Years Ago in The Chat

Steve Shultz

The September 1972 issue of *The Chat* featured a black and white photograph of a basic plumaged Ruddy Turnstone on the cover. Comparison of *Chats* from the early 70s to today highlights significant improvements in camera and optics technology, as well as the relative ease in handling of modern electronic photographs. The September 1972 issue contained a General Field Note on the first North Carolina record of Curlew Sandpiper. No photographs of the bird were included in the article, and the curlew was collected as definitive proof of occurrence in the state. Conversely, the Fall 2022 issue contains a General Field Note on the first South Carolina record of Slaty-backed Gull that includes multiple color photographs. Due in great part to the advances in photography and the increased number of field observers with cameras, collection of birds is no longer necessary to document records.

The 1972 edition's lead article examined the occurrence of Swallow-tailed Kites in the southern Appalachians, noting that the species could formerly be found with regularity north along the Mississippi Valley to Minnesota and Wisconsin. The article concluded that prior to 1900, Swallow-tailed Kites occurred fairly regularly in "portions of western North Carolina during the late summer and early autumn months".

An article summarizing spring bird counts in 1972 noted that two Black Rails were flushed at Wrightsville Beach, NC; Harry and Edmund LeGrand noted two occupied Yellow-crowned Night-Heron nests at Bodie Island, NC; gulls and Common Tern were seen at a newly-created 20,000 acre reservoir in Rocky Mount, NC; and in Charlotte, NC, Canada Geese successfully fledged two goslings.

Finally, Wake County's first record of Snow Goose was published, a sighting of 10 birds in the eastern part of that county.

Did You Know?

Full copies of *The Chat* dating back to the very first issue, March 1937, are available for viewing online. Find these and more at:

<https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/chat/>



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