

The Raven

JOURNAL OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

VOLUME 50

MARCH 1979

NUMBER 1



Courtesy of Walter Weber

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The Virginia Society of Ornithology, Inc., exists to encourage the systematic study of birds in Virginia, to stimulate interest in birds, and to assist the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources. All persons interested in those objectives are welcome as members. Present membership includes every level of interest, from professional scientific ornithologists to enthusiastic amateurs.

Activities undertaken by the Society include the following:

1. An annual meeting (usually in the spring), held in a different part of the state each year, featuring talks on ornithological subjects and field trips to nearby areas.

2. Other forays or field trips, lasting a day or more and scheduled throughout the year so as to include all seasons and to cover the major physiographic regions of the state.

3. A journal, *The Raven*, published quarterly, containing articles about Virginia ornithology, as well as news of the activities of the Society and its chapters.

4. Study projects (nesting studies, winter bird population surveys, etc.) aimed at making genuine contributions to ornithological knowledge.

In addition, local chapters of the Society, located in some of the larger cities and towns of Virginia, conduct their own programs of meetings, field trips, and other projects.

Those wishing to participate in any of the above activities or to cooperate in advancing the objectives of the Society are cordially invited to join. Annual dues are \$2.00 for junior members (students), \$5.00 for active members, \$7.50 for sustaining members, \$15.00 or more for contributing members, \$125.00 for life members, and \$9.00 for family members (limited to husband, wife, and their dependent children).

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Published four times a year in March, June, September, and December at Richmond, Virginia. Membership includes subscription to *The Raven*. Annual subscription price to nonmembers is \$6.00. Individual issues, when available, are priced at \$1.50 for current ones, \$1.00 for those dated from 1971 through 1975, and 75¢ for those prior to 1971 (plus postage).

THE ROCKY KNOB FORAY OF JUNE 1976

F. R. SCOTT

Twenty-one members and friends of the Virginia Society of Ornithology registered for the ninth in the recent series of breeding-bird forays sponsored by the VSO. This one was held in the Rocky Knob area of the Blue Ridge Parkway between 15 and 20 June 1976. Attendance at this foray was somewhat below the average of 29 of the previous eight forays, and this was undoubtedly a result of the lack of suitable motel accommodations within a reasonable distance of the principal foray area. All participants either camped out at the Rocky Knob Campground or stayed at the nearby Rocky Knob Cabins. The participants were indebted to Bill J. Opengari who did much of the necessary preliminary on-the-spot survey of local accommodations and possible field trip locations.

Rocky Knob lies about 42 miles southwest of Roanoke (about 54 miles by car) on the eastern escarpment of the Blue Ridge Plateau, the edge of which is followed by the Blue Ridge Parkway. In this area the Blue Ridge loses its narrow character and becomes a wide, rolling plateau. One of the principal areas covered on the foray was the parkway between Smart View to the northeast (mile post 154) and Puckett Cabin on the southwest (m.p. 190). This stretch also included Rake's Mill Pond (m.p. 162), Tuggle Gap (m.p. 165), Rocky Knob Recreation Area (m.p. 167-174), Mabry Mill (m.p. 176), and Meadows of Dan (m.p. 178). The altitude of the parkway here varies from 2340 to 3450 feet, though the summit of Rocky Knob, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile off the parkway, rises to 3572 feet. With few exceptions, the parkway closely follows the boundaries between Floyd and Carroll Counties on the northwest and Franklin and Patrick Counties on the southeast.

To the north and west of the parkway the foray coverage included the adjacent parts of Floyd County on the plateau west beyond Floyd to include Little River and the extreme southeastern corner of Carroll County. Elevations here vary from 2000 feet along Little River to about 3400 feet, though the peak of Buffalo Mountain, about 7.5 miles west-southwest of Rocky Knob in southern Floyd County and the highest point in the area, rises to 3971 feet. South and east of the parkway the escarpment drops abruptly into the lowlands of southwestern Franklin County near Endicott and Calloway and northwestern Patrick County near Woolwine. Minimum altitudes in both places are about 1200 feet. Relatively little field work was done in these areas, though Rock Castle Gorge, a heavily wooded valley that drops from 3000 feet at the Rocky Knob Cabins to 1600 feet at Virginia route 8 (Patrick County), was covered by four different parties.

There is relatively little water here, which easily accounts for the foray's poor showing of waterbirds. The headwaters of the Dan River, originating in the Meadows of Dan (Patrick County), drain southward into the Piedmont through some spectacular but rather sterile gorges towards North Carolina, and the Smith River, which originates in western Patrick County, also drains southeasterly into the Piedmont. On the plateau, the major streams are the Little River, which rises in Floyd County just west of the parkway, and Big Reed Island Creek, which originates in extreme southeastern Carroll County. Both of these flow westward to eventually join the New River. The major wooded areas are along the entire eastern escarpment of the Blue Ridge (including the

4130-acre Rocky Knob Recreation Area) and Buffalo Mountain, whereas most of the plateau consists of farmland interspersed with woodlots. Much of the cropland appeared to be in hay.

Aside from a few scattered field notes, there appears to be only one published work on the birds of this area, an account of some of the birds found about Rocky Knob between 3 February and 31 October 1948 (Lord, 1949). The only previous breeding-bird foray held in the Blue Ridge was in the Peaks of Otter area in 1970 (Scott, 1971), about 60 miles northeast of Rocky Knob.

No five-day foray like this can be expected to result in a definitive account of the breeding birds of an area this large. Incomplete coverage, differences in the abilities of the observers, the status of the song cycles of various species, and the weather will all affect the final results, and in this case the weather was an extremely adverse factor which undoubtedly reduced the peak counts as well as the total number of species recorded. There was heavy rain on two days, intermittent rain on another, and high winds and heavy fog on another. Only one day, 18 June, was reasonably satisfactory in the field. Ninety-nine different species were recorded on the foray, and an additional one (Bewick's Wren) was found shortly before the foray began.

Of the usual "Alleghanian" species normally expected in the medium elevations (2500-4000 feet) of the Virginia mountains, several were missed entirely. These included Veery, Golden-winged and Blackburnian Warblers, and Dark-eyed Junco. Among these, only the Veery was recorded in summer by Lord (1949), who termed it "fairly common" in the summer of 1948. If present at all in 1976, it was clearly much reduced in abundance. Other species looked for but not found included Red-shouldered Hawk, Spotted Sandpiper, Black-billed Cuckoo, Barred Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Cliff Swallow, Loggerhead Shrike, Yellow-throated and Pine Warblers, Summer Tanager, and Henslow's Sparrow.

Procedures for the foray were the same as those for previous ones. Several different parties, usually small, covered different areas each day, and some of the better localities were visited on several different days by different parties. Each party submitted a detailed field card each day, and if radically different localities or altitudes were visited on the same day, two or more cards were filled out. In total, 32 field cards (plus numerous incidental observations) were turned in, edited, tabulated, and then summarized in the following annotated list.

These observers are identified by last name only in the list which follows: Robert L. Ake, Mary Arginteanu, John H. and Thelma Dalmas, Barry Kinzie, Norwood C. Middleton, Dorothy L. Mitchell, Myriam P. Moore, Bill J. Opengari, John Pancake, F. R. Scott, and Charles E. Stevens.

Green Heron. A few were found both in the lowlands and on the plateau with a peak count of 3 along the Little River on 19 June (Opengari and Pancake).

Wood Duck. Several were seen in Floyd and Carroll Counties. A female with 6 young was noted along the Little River in 19 June (Opengari and Pancake).

Turkey Vulture. Common throughout with a peak count of 18 along the parkway north of Rocky Knob on 19 June (Moore *et al.*).

Black Vulture. Rather uncommon with all records from the Meadows of Dan and Floyd County. The maximum count was only 5.

Sharp-shinned Hawk. One record. Mitchell and others found one near Floyd on 17 June. An unidentified *Accipiter* was reported in Floyd County on 16 June (Pancake *et al.*).

Red-tailed Hawk. Uncommon with only five reports of single birds, probably all different individuals.

Broad-winged Hawk. Fairly common with reports from at least five localities. The peak count of 3 was obtained on two occasions.

American Kestrel. Uncommon with reports from four localities.

Ruffed Grouse. Uncommon with only five reports. An adult with 5 half-grown young was seen along the parkway 4 miles north of Rocky Knob Campground on 17 June (Kinzie *et al.*), and an adult with 1 young was noted at the Meadows of Dan on 19 June (Middleton and Scott).

Bobwhite. Common both in the lowlands and on the plateau up to 3300 feet. The peak count was 33 on 17 June, mostly in Floyd County (Scott and Arginteanu).

American Coot. A single bird was present on a pond near Woolwine on 16 and 20 June (Middleton and Scott).

Killdeer. Rather common up to 3300 feet with a peak of 13 in the Meadows of Dan area on 18 June (Dalmas).

American Woodcock. An adult and 2 immatures were present near the Rocky Knob Cabins on 18-19 June (Kinzie, Mitchell, *et al.*).

Mourning Dove. Fairly common up to 3300 feet with a maximum count of only 12.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Uncommon with six reports and a peak of only 2. None were seen above 3400 feet.

Screech Owl. Fairly common with two maximum counts of 3. On 19 June Moore *et al.* noted Blue Jays mobbing a gray-phase Screech Owl at Smart View while a red-brown phase bird perched nearby.

Great Horned Owl. Two heard calling in the Meadows of Dan area on 18 June (Dalmas) were the only report of this species.

Whip-poor-will. One record, a single calling bird at Meadows of Dan on 18 June (Dalmas). Lord (1949) thought it was fairly common in the area.

Common Nighthawk. One seen near Rocky Knob on 15 June (Mitchell) was the only report. Lord (1949) did not record this during the summer.

Chimney Swift. Common at all elevations with a high count of 20.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Fairly common at all elevations (up to 3900 feet) though no party reported more than 2.

Belted Kingfisher. Fairly common up to 3300 feet with a maximum count of 4.

Common Flicker. Common at all elevations. The high count was 19 in the Meadows of Dan area on 18 June (Dalmas).

Pileated Woodpecker. Fairly common below 3400 feet. Reported by 11 parties with a peak of 3.

Red-bellied Woodpecker. Generally uncommon up to about 3600 feet with a maximum count of only 4. It was reported by eight different parties. Lord (1949) did not list this species.

Hairy Woodpecker. Fairly common at all elevations, though the peak count was only 3.

Downy Woodpecker. Common throughout. The best count was 26 near Floyd on 17 June (Moore *et al.*)

Eastern Kingbird. Fairly common up to 3300 feet with a maximum count of 7. Two occupied nests were found near Floyd on 19 June (Ake *et al.* and Mitchell *et al.*).

Great Crested Flycatcher. Common at all elevations with a peak of 20 near Floyd on 17 June (Moore *et al.*). Adults were feeding young in a nest at the Rocky Knob Cabins on 20 June (Middleton and Scott).

Eastern Phoebe. Common at least up to 3300 feet. The high count was 28 in Floyd County on 17 June (Moore *et al.*). Three nests with eggs, two nests with young, and one nest with 2 eggs and 2 young were found in Floyd County on 19 June (Ake *et al.*).

Acadian Flycatcher. Common at least up to 3300 feet with a maximum of 17 in two different localities. An adult was incubating eggs along the parkway 2 miles north of the campground on 17 June (Kinzie *et al.*).

Willow Flycatcher. Reported in two localities. One to 2 birds were found 16-19 June by four different parties along U.S. 221 just northeast of Floyd, and 2 were located along Little River northwest of Floyd on 19 June (Pancake *et al.*).

Least Flycatcher. Uncommon and quite local above 2500 feet with a high count of 4 in Floyd County on 17 June (Moore *et al.*). This appears to be a rare summer resident elsewhere on the Blue Ridge, and only one was recorded on the 1970 Peaks of Otter foray (Scott, 1971).

Eastern Wood Pewee. Common at all elevations with a peak count of 26 in the Meadows of Dan area on 18 June (Dalmás).

Horned Lark. Two reports. One was noted along the parkway near Smart View on 17 June (Kinzie *et al.*), and 3 were found in Floyd County on 19 June (Dalmás).

Rough-winged Swallow. Rather common if somewhat local up to 3300 feet. The peak count was 15 in Floyd County on 19 June (Ake *et al.*), and the same party recorded two different pairs feeding 3 young and 4 young, respectively.

Barn Swallow. Common up to 3300 feet with a maximum count of 72 in Floyd County on 19 June (Kinzie and Arginteanu). Ake and others counted 24 occupied nests in Floyd County on 19 June.

Purple Martin. One record. Three were seen flying over Rocky Knob on 15 June (Pancake *et al.*).

Blue Jay. Fairly common at all altitudes with a high count of 13.

Common Raven. Rather uncommon with only six reports. Peak counts were 6 at Rocky Knob on 17 June (Scott and Arginteanu) and 5 twice on

19 June, once along Little River (Pancake and Opengari) and again northeast of Floyd (Kinzie and Arginteanu). Single birds were also noted at Meadows of Dan, near Smart View, and on Buffalo Mountain.

Common Crow. Common throughout with a maximum count of 57. Fledged young were seen at Rocky Knob on 16 June (Scott).

Carolina Chickadee. Common at all elevations with two peak counts of 21.

Tufted Titmouse. Common at all elevations. The maximum count was 16.

White-breasted Nuthatch. Fairly common above 2500 feet with counts of up to 6 birds. None were reported in the lowlands.

House Wren. Locally fairly common, most birds being reported at Meadows of Dan and about Floyd. The peak count was 10 in Floyd County on 17 June (Moore *et al.*).

Winter Wren. One report. Stevens and others had 2 singing birds just below the summit of Buffalo Mountain on 18 June at about 3800 feet. This is a major extension of the known summer range of this species. Elsewhere in the Blue Ridge this bird has been reported in summer once in Nelson County in 1975 and numerous times in the central part of Shenandoah National Park in the area from Big Meadows to Stony Man between 1949 and 1971 (Stevens, 1965 and 1976; Wetmore, 1950).

Bewick's Wren. Although not recorded on the foray, Opengari found one singing bird on route 804 in Floyd County on 6 June just prior to the foray. It was considered common in summer here in 1948, when Lord (1949) noted that "It is dominant in numbers over both the house and the Carolina wrens. All three are commonly seen, sometimes in close, if not harmonious, association."

Carolina Wren. Common up to 3300 feet with a few higher records. The peak count was 28 in Floyd County on 17 June (Moore *et al.*).

Mockingbird. Common in the lowlands but rather uncommon above 2500 feet. The maximum count on the plateau was only 5. An adult with a fledged young was observed at Meadows of Dan on 16 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Gray Catbird. Common at all elevations with a high count of 29 at Meadows of Dan on 16 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Brown Thrasher. Common at all elevations. The peak count was 16 at Rocky Knob on 15 June (Pancake *et al.*).

American Robin. Common everywhere except on Buffalo Mountain. The peak count was 82 in the Meadows of Dan area on 18 June (Dalmás). An occupied nest was noted near Floyd on 19 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Wood Thrush. Common at all elevations with a high count of 61 in Floyd County on 18 June (Scott).

Eastern Bluebird. Common throughout with two maximum counts of 21. Adults were feeding young in a nest with a fledgling perched nearby near Floyd on 19 June (Ake *et al.*).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Fairly common up to 3300 feet but 3 were also found on Buffalo Mountain at 3900 feet on 18 June (Mitchell *et al.*). The maximum

count was 10 in the Meadows of Dan area on 18 June (Dalmás). On the 1970 Peaks of Otter foray none were found above 3000 feet (Scott, 1971).

Cedar Waxwing. Fairly common at all elevations with a peak of 22 in the Meadows of Dan area on 18 June (Dalmás). Curiously, there were only two reports on the 1970 Peaks of Otter foray (Scott, 1971).

Starling. Abundant throughout with a high count of 134.

White-eyed Vireo. Fairly common in the lowlands but quite uncommon above 2500 feet. On the plateau there were only six reports of 1 to 2 birds each.

Yellow-throated Vireo. Fairly common at all elevations up to 3900 feet on Buffalo Mountain. The peak count was 8 in Floyd County on 19 June (Dalmás).

Solitary Vireo. Fairly common above 2500 feet with two peak counts of 6 and two of 5. Two adults were with 2 young in the nest in Carroll County where route 654 crosses Big Reed Island Creek on 18 June (Dalmás). The elevation here was 2500 feet.

Red-eyed Vireo. Common at all elevations with a maximum count of 61.

Warbling Vireo. Two reports of single birds, one in Dan River Gorge, Patrick County, at about 1500 feet on 19 June (Dalmás) and one along the Little River in Floyd County at 2000 feet on the same day (Pancake and Opengari).

Black-and-white Warbler. Fairly common at all elevations with a peak of 18 in Rock Castle Gorge on 19 June (Stevens).

Worm-eating Warbler. Uncommon and local with only five reports. They ranged in elevation from 1500 feet to 3200 feet, and the maximum count was 5 in Rock Castle Gorge on 19 June (Stevens).

Northern Parula Warbler. Fairly common but local up to 3300 feet. The high count was 12 along Little River on 19 June (Pancake and Opengari).

Yellow Warbler. Common up to at least 3000 feet with peaks of 24 along Little River on 19 June (Pancake and Opengari) and 20 at Meadows of Dan on 16 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Black-throated Blue Warbler. Locally common above 2500 feet with high counts of 17 in Rock Castle Gorge on 19 June (Stevens) and 13 on Buffalo Mountain on 18 June (Stevens *et al.*).

Black-throated Green Warbler. Three reports. Single birds were noted near Rocky Knob on 18 June (Mitchell *et al.*) and in Rock Castle Gorge on 19 June (Stevens), and 5 were recorded on Buffalo Mountain on 18 June (Stevens *et al.*).

Cerulean Warbler. Two reports of single birds on 19 June, one in Rock Castle Gorge at 1800 feet (Stevens) and one on Buffalo Mountain at 3600 feet (Scott). This species is locally common in parts of the Blue Ridge (Freer, 1973; Scott, 1971) but not, apparently, here.

Chestnut-sided Warbler. Rather uncommon and local above 2500 feet with a peak count of only 7. Two adults were carrying food near Floyd on 19 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Prairie Warbler. Fairly common below 3000 feet with a maximum count of 9 in Floyd County on 16 June (Kinzie and Opengari).

Ovenbird. Common at all elevations. The high count was 52 in Floyd County on 18 June (Scott).

Louisiana Waterthrush. Fairly common up to at least 3000 feet. The peak count was 9.

Kentucky Warbler. Fairly common below 3300 feet with a maximum count of 12 on 19 June in Rock Castle Gorge (Stevens), where an adult was also seen carrying food.

Common Yellowthroat. Fairly common at least up to 3300 feet with a peak of only 12.

Yellow-breasted Chat. Fairly common below 3000 feet. The high count was 10.

Hooded Warbler. Fairly common throughout with a peak count of 10.

Canada Warbler. Recorded only on Buffalo Mountain where 4 were found near 3900 feet on 18 June (Stevens *et al.*).

American Redstart. Rather uncommon throughout. There were three different maximum counts of only 4.

House Sparrow. Common up to 3200 feet with a peak count of 39.

Eastern Meadowlark. Common up to 3200 feet with a high count of 91 in the Meadows of Dan area on 18 June (Dalmas). Curiously, on the 1970 Peaks of Otter foray, none were found over 1800 feet (Scott, 1971).

Red-winged Blackbird. Abundant up to 3300 feet with a high count of 175. There was an occupied nest near Floyd on 19 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Orchard Oriole. One report, a single bird near Floyd on 19 June (Dalmas). This species is probably more common here than this indicates, especially in the lowlands.

Northern Oriole. Fairly common up to 2900 feet but mostly below 2500 feet. The maximum count was 9 along Little River on 19 June (Pancake and Opengari). Adults were feeding young in two nests in Floyd County on 19 June (Ake *et al.*) and in one nest along the parkway 2 miles northeast of Tuggle Gap on the same day (Moore *et al.*). Adults were also seen feeding fledged young at Woolwine on 16 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Common Grackle. Common at all elevations though few were seen over 3500 feet. The peak count was 67. Mitchell and others found an occupied nest near Floyd on 19 June.

Brown-headed Cowbird. Common at all elevations with a high count of 19.

Scarlet Tanager. Common at all elevations. There were two peak counts of 20.

Cardinal. Common at all elevations with 2 even recorded on the Buffalo Mountain summit at 3950 feet. The maximum count was 54. On the 1970 Peaks of Otter foray, none were found over 2600 feet.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Uncommon above 2900 feet with only 12 birds reported by seven parties and a peak of only 3.

Blue Grosbeak. Uncommon at low elevations with a high count of only 3 singing birds. At least one was found as high as 3100 feet at Meadows of Dan.

Indigo Bunting. Common at all elevations with a peak of 89 in Floyd County on 18 June (Scott). A female at a nest with 3 eggs was located along the parkway 2 miles northeast of Tuggle Gap on 19 June (Moore *et al.*).

American Goldfinch. Common throughout with a high count of 102 in the Meadows of Dan area on 18 June (Dalmás).

Red Crossbill. One record, a single bird flying over Buffalo Mountain on 18 June (Stevens). There are few previous summer records for this species in the Blue Ridge.

Rufous-sided Towhee. Common at all elevations with a maximum count of 67. A nest with 3 eggs was located on Buffalo Mountain on 18 June (Stevens), and an adult feeding a fledged young was seen at Rocky Knob on 16 June (Scott and Arginteanu).

Savannah Sparrow. Two singing birds were observed at the intersection of routes 641 and 648 in southeastern Carroll County on 18 June (Dalmás), and one of these was found at the same spot the following day (Scott). This is a major southeasterly extension of this bird's summer range in Virginia (Peake, 1978; Peake and Holt, 1978).

Grasshopper Sparrow. Locally common up to 3300 feet with a peak count of 19 singing birds in Floyd County on 18 June (Scott). The prevalence of hay fields was certainly a factor in this bird's abundance here.

Vesper Sparrow. Uncommon with only 12 birds reported by six parties, all on the plateau. There were two peak counts of 3 birds.

Chipping Sparrow. Common throughout with a high count of 49 in the Meadows of Dan area on 18 June (Dalmás). An apparently abandoned nest with 2 eggs was located in Floyd County on 19 June (Ake *et al.*), and an adult with just fledged young was noted at Meadows of Dan on 16 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Field Sparrow. Common up to 3300 feet with two maximum counts of 42. Adults were feeding fledged young at Woolwine on 16 June (Scott).

Song Sparrow. Common at least up to 3300 feet with a few higher. The peak count was 109 in the Meadows of Dan area on 18 June (Dalmás). Ake and others found a nest with 5 eggs in Floyd County on 19 June.

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A FIRST RECORD OF THE BRIDLED TERN AT SEA OFF VIRGINIA

RICHARD A. ROWLETT

I observed two subadult Bridled Terns, *Sterna anaethetus*, flying together from the lobster boat, "Jack Pot," on 24 August 1977 in Washington Canyon about 96 km due east of Hog Island, Virginia (37°25'N, 74°25'W). The birds were studied for 10 minutes with 10x40 Zeiss binoculars at a distance of about 1 km while the boat was stationary and in the process of pulling red crab and lobster pots. The terns displayed no curiosity in our presence and slowly flew towards the south-southwest into the 10- to 15-knot SSW wind. They stayed low, seldom rising above the water line on the horizon.

The mantle was slate gray, and the strongly forked tail was slightly lighter, with white conspicuously showing in the outer rectrices. A broad light collar on the hind neck separated the mantle from the cap which was confined to the back of the crown and nape, and the forehead and top of the crown was white. Flight was graceful and less bouyant than nonmaritime light-mantled terns, and they gently picked at the surface but never dove or allowed their feathers to touch the water.

Additional seabirds observed in the canyon, where a continuous watch was maintained all day, included 40 Wilson's Storm-Petrels, *Oceanites oceanicus*, and one Audubon's Shearwater, *Puffinus lherminieri*. A few widely scattered small patches of sargasso weed, *Sargassum* sp., and Portugese man-of-war, *Physalia* sp., were observed.

The position of these observations was located just off the edge of the Continental Shelf, in the "mouth" of Washington Canyon, where warm, blue slope water was beginning to mix with cooler green shelf water. The only weather pattern affecting the area during the preceding two months was the persistent influence of the "Bermuda High" with its predominating flow of southwesterly winds.

The Bridled Tern is fairly common in late summer in the Gulf Stream off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, and non-storm-related occurrences are probably

at least occasional off Virginia, especially near the edge of the Continental Shelf in August and September. Another non-storm-related Bridled Tern was seen on 26 September 1976, 42 km east-southeast of Ocean City, Maryland (*Maryland Birdlife*, 33: 31-33, 1977).

Seabird observers in late summer are cautioned to beware of Black Terns, *Chlidonias niger*, which often become pelagic during migration and might be confused with Bridleds. Molting Black Terns can be recognized by their smaller size, gray patch near the shoulder, *notched* tail, and bouyant and erratic flight.

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COMMON NIGHTHAWKS SUMMER IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

ROBERT LOCHMILLER

The Common Nighthawk, *Chordeiles minor*, is a fairly common transient in southwestern Virginia and a rare summer resident. In 1977 a pair of nighthawks was first observed in Blacksburg on 24 May flying above the buildings on the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and was seen on numerous occasions through 3 July. Subsequent attempts to locate the pair after this were unproductive. There is a possibility that fireworks displays in the area on 4 July frightened the two birds to a new locality. Such techniques are often employed in unwanted blackbird roosts quite effectively.

The fall migration of Common Nighthawks through the Blacksburg area began around 22 August, at which time I observed 4 birds flying over some pastureland just west of town. On 24 August 7 birds were seen over the university campus. According to J. W. Murray (*Raven*, 45: 61, 1974), records of the Common Nighthawk for Montgomery County extend from 26 April to 18 November with the majority of records occurring from 9 May to 26 May and 15 August to 2 October.

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AN UNUSUAL PHOEBE NEST

ROBERT LOCHMILLER

I discovered an unusual nest of an Eastern Phoebe, *Sayornis phoebe*, in Montgomery County, Virginia, on 24 May 1977 while collecting information on the species' nesting habits. The nest was attached to an I-beam which was supporting a secondary road bridge adjacent to Craig Creek in the Jefferson National Forest. It measured approximately 6.5 inches in height and 4 inches in width, and examination revealed it to be composed of four layers of nests built on top of one another. This behavior is not unusual for the Eastern Phoebe, and it will often reuse the same nest year after year, adding only a

fresh layer of moss or mud over the structure. However, in this nest the second-level nest contained five phoebe eggs, all in various stages of decomposition. One of the eggs was still intact, and upon examination it was found to contain a slight amount of decomposed yolk. The eggs appeared to be from an early nesting attempt of the previous year. Since the top-level nest was empty, it appeared as though the first clutch of eggs had failed to hatch, and a second nest was built over the eggs for another nesting attempt which succeeded. The bird apparently did not return this year for another nesting attempt.

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CROWS VERSUS BLACK SNAKE

JACKSON M. ABBOTT

At lunch time on 14 May 1977 I was birding in a wooded ravine back of my office building at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. I heard several Fish (*Corvus ossifragus*) and Common Crows (*C. brachyrhynchos*) giving their alarm calls and headed that way to see what hawk or owl they were harrassing. As I got close to the spot, I saw one Common Crow repeatedly swooping at something about 40 feet up in an oak. After one swoop, the crow dislodged a three-foot black snake (either *Coluber constrictor* or *Elaphe obsoleta*) which fell to the ground. Another Common Crow joined the first one, and together they hopped over the ground chasing the apparently dazed snake and viciously pecking at it. The snake struck back after each crow assault, and in this manner they moved about 30 feet to the base of a large oak where the snake found and escaped down a hole.

During all this, the 3 or 4 Fish Crows present sat up on their perches high in the surrounding trees offering vociferous support. This is the first time I've ever seen any bird attack a snake which wasn't at or near its nest or its intended meal. I think it all started as crow harrassment but don't deny that if the crows had been successful in killing the snake, they probably would have eaten it.

8501 Doter Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22308

VARIED THRUSH IN HIGHLAND COUNTY

YULEE LARNER

On 23 December 1977 I received a phone call from James Beverage, who reported the sighting of a strange bird at the home of his brother, Albert Beverage, in Monterey, Highland County, Virginia. They believed this unusual visitor was a Varied Thrush, *Ixoreus naevius*. The next morning, 24 December, my husband and I drove to Monterey, arriving about 11 a.m. Almost immediately the strange bird flew to the feeding area, and we were able to identify it positively as a Varied Thrush. It was photographed that day by my husband, M. W. Lerner, Jr. On returning home, I sent out a "rare bird alert" to Lynchburg, Roanoke, Waynesboro, Harrisonburg, and Wise, and

almost immediately birders began arriving at the Beverages for a glimpse of this rare western bird.

The bird fed on corn scattered on the ground in the company of House Sparrows, *Passer domesticus*, Cardinals, *Cardinalis cardinalis*, Evening Grosbeaks, *Hesperiphona vespertina*, and Dark-eyed Juncos, *Junco hyemalis*. It spent many hours perched in evergreen trees, at about roof-top height, in sight of the Beverages' kitchen window. As snow melted, it was observed feeding on the ground at the base of lilac bushes and other shrubs. Photographs were taken by Robert L. Ake, James Carter, and others. A total of 137 birders observed the bird, traveling from all over Virginia as well as from West Virginia and Tennessee.

First sighted by the Beverages on 14 December 1977, the bird appeared for the last time on 2 March 1978.

This appears to be the third record of the Varied Thrush in Virginia. The species was first reported in the state on 27 December 1962 at Blacksburg (*Raven*, 34: 5, 1963; correction, *ibid.*, 34: 45, 1963). Another was carefully observed and photographed in Albemarle County on 16 January 1977 (*Raven*, 49: 68, 1978).

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PAINTED BUNTING IN RADFORD, VIRGINIA

ROBERT J. ABBOTT

In the morning of 19 October 1977 I was birdwatching in a large old weedy field by the Radford, Virginia, railroad switching yard located just north of the Radford College campus. While walking through this field, I encountered a flock of about 70 sparrows of various species. Three-fourths of them were Savannah Sparrows, *Passerculus sandwichensis*. With them were about 15 or more Song Sparrows, *Melospiza melodia*, 4 White-crowned Sparrows, *Zonotrichia leucophrys*, 4 White-throated Sparrows, *Z. albicollis*, and 7 or more Chipping Sparrows, *Spizella passerina*.

One uniquely different "sparrow" drew my attention because of its bright green upperparts and yellow-green underparts. The bird had no wing bars or other distinctive markings at all. It had a small, narrow, indistinct white eye ring and a grayish finch-like bill and was about the size of a Savannah Sparrow, many of which were close by during the time I observed the bird. It perched several times in a sapling and then would fly a short distance and drop to the ground. It did this several times as I watched it through 7x35 binoculars in good light for over 5 minutes at distances as close as 10 feet.

The only sparrow-sized United States bird which is bright green above and yellowish green below with no distinctive marks is a female Painted Bunting, *Passerina ciris*. I have seen this species in South Carolina several times. This appears to be only the fourth record of this species from Virginia west of the Blue Ridge.

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BANDING RESULTS AT KIPTOPEKE BEACH IN 1977

F. R. SCOTT

The fifteenth annual fall banding project of the Virginia Society of Ornithology took place at its Kiptopeke Beach Field Station in southern Northampton County, Virginia, for the 77 days from 22 August to 6 November 1977. During this period the station was in full operation every day except for 13 and 26 October and 2 November, when rain forced closure of the nets all day. As in the past up to 46 mist nets were opened generally from dawn to midafternoon depending on weather and available manpower. Whereas most of these nets were of relatively small mesh (about 30 mm or 1¼ inches), six were of a larger mesh (about 2½ inches) and were used along woodland net lanes. Although the use of these undoubtedly reduced the birds banded per 100 net-hours, since most small birds simply passed through the mesh without being caught, the catch of Sharp-shinned Hawks was materially increased.

During the period 12,312 new birds of 95 species were banded in 22,691 net-hours of effort, or 54 new birds per 100 net-hours. This was a slight increase in birds banded over 1976 but a decrease in new birds per 100 net-hours from 67 to 54 (see *Raven*, 49: 38-39, 1978). There were also 10 different returns of birds banded in previous years and 500 repeats of birds banded earlier in the fall. The species banded in the highest numbers were Yellow-rumped Warbler, 4078; American Redstart, 1863; Gray Catbird, 1154; Common Yellowthroat, 664; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 288; and Veery, 276.

Record totals of birds banded included 288 Sharp-shinned Hawks (versus 143 in 1976), 6 Cooper's Hawks (versus 2 in 1966 and 1975), 1154 Gray Catbirds (versus 1087 in 1970), 189 Northern Waterthrushes (versus 126 in 1967), and 9 Blue Grosbeaks (versus 7 in 1973). Other higher-than-average seasonal totals included 66 Wood Thrushes, 34 White-eyed Vireos, 130 Blackpoll Warblers, and 39 Prairie Warblers. Much lower in numbers from 1976 were Winter Wrens (17 versus 102), Golden-crowned Kinglet (22 versus 572), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (210 versus 650), and Red-eyed Vireo (90 versus 329). There is an interesting correlation between the decrease in kinglets reported here and that reported for the 1977-78 Christmas bird counts in Virginia (*Raven*, 49: 28-29, 1978). Fairly unusual birds for this area were a Loggerhead Shrike on 27 August, 6 Blue-winged Warblers between 23 August and 29 September, and an extraordinarily early Clay-colored Sparrow on 2 September.

Thirteen cold fronts moved through the area while the station was open, and all but two of these produced light to excellent flights a day or two following the frontal passage. Three flights occurred following passage of low-pressure areas over eastern Virginia but were not associated with cold fronts. These were a light one on 10 September, an excellent flight on 15 October, and a moderate one on 18 October. The best flight days were 4 September (485 new birds banded), 11 September (319), 28-30 September (429, 1109, and 348, respectively), 3-4 October (475 and 562, respectively), 11 October (718), 15 October (530), 18 October (451), and 20 October (474). As in past years, the most common species on most September flights was the American Redstart, while the Yellow-rumped Warbler took over after early October. One exception occurred 29 September when the commonest three species were Gray Catbird, 274; Common Yellowthroat, 189; and American Redstart, 176. Other exceptions

occurred 4 October with 333 Gray Catbirds and 42 American Redstarts and on 7 October with 50 Gray-cheeked Thrushes and 45 Yellow-rumps. Interesting daily species totals, in addition to those above, included 15 Traill's Flycatchers, 104 Veeries, and 50 Northern Waterthrushes on 4 September, 56 Magnolia Warblers and 60 Ovenbirds on 29 September, and 39 Black-throated Blue Warblers on 3 October.

There were 14 foreign retraps of birds originally banded elsewhere. Ten of these were direct recoveries of first-year (HY—"hatching year") Sharp-shinned Hawks banded from 1 to 11 days earlier in southern New Jersey (all but one at Cape May Point), one was a HY Cooper's Hawk also banded at Cape May Point 12 days prior to its recapture at Kiptopeke on 24 October, and one was a HY Sharp-shin banded a few miles away at another banding station and recaptured here the same day. The remaining two were both Gray Catbirds, one adult (AHY—"after hatching year") banded in Middlesex County, New Jersey, on 16 May 1977 by Charles Leck and retrapped here on 29 September 1977, and one originally banded as a HY bird at Island Beach, New Jersey, on 16 September 1974 by J. C. Miller and found dead on a road at Kiptopeke on 4 October 1977. The ten different returns from previous years included five permanent resident (1 Screech Owl, 2 Carolina Chickadees, and 2 Cardinals) and five apparent summer residents (1 Yellow-billed Cuckoo, 1 White-eyed Vireo, 2 Prairie Warblers, and 1 Common Yellowthroat). The most interesting of these were a White-eyed Vireo banded as an AHY on 10 September 1972 and a Prairie Warbler banded as a HY bird on 4 September 1972, indicating minimum ages of 6 and 5 years, respectively. The vireo had also returned in 1976.

Age ratios of some of the new birds banded showed some marked changes over previous years with striking differences in day-to-day ratios. For example, between 22 and 31 August 146 American Redstarts were banded, 144 of which (or 98.6%) were HY birds. Yet of 183 American Redstarts banded on 4 September, only 131 (72%) were HY. This helped reduce the seasonal figure to 88% HY versus 91% in 1976 and 94% in 1975. Similarly, of the 56 Magnolia Warblers trapped on 29 September, 32 (57%) were HY. This helped to bring the seasonal figure down to 78-79% HY versus 95% in 1976. Other species with relatively low percentages of HY birds included Northern Waterthrush with 76-77%, Common Yellowthroat with 75-76%, and Red-breasted Nuthatch with 73%. More normal were Sharp-shinned Hawk with 95% HY, Brown Creeper with 94%, House Wren with 96%, and Yellow-rumped Warbler with 93%.

The licensed banders in charge of the station operation were Mr. and Mrs. Roger Foy, C. W. Hacker, Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Mitchell, F. S. Schaeffer, F. R. Scott, and W. P. Smith, and they were assisted by 109 other banders and helpers, without whom the program would have been much less successful. Robert Hillman, of Amagansett, New York, agent for Kiptopeke Terminal Property, and John Maddox, of Virginia Beach, very kindly extended the banders permission to use the land for the field station, and Walter P. Smith again did the initial editing and tabulation of the field records.

115 Kennondale Lane, Richmond, Virginia 23226

The Raven

JOURNAL OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

VOLUME 50

JUNE 1979

NUMBER 2



Courtesy of Walter Weber

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The Virginia Society of Ornithology, Inc., exists to encourage the systematic study of birds in Virginia, to stimulate interest in birds, and to assist the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources. All persons interested in those objectives are welcome as members. Present membership includes every level of interest, from professional scientific ornithologists to enthusiastic amateurs.

Activities undertaken by the Society include the following:

1. An annual meeting (usually in the spring), held in a different part of the state each year, featuring talks on ornithological subjects and field trips to nearby areas.

2. Other forays or field trips, lasting a day or more and scheduled throughout the year so as to include all seasons and to cover the major physiographic regions of the state.

3. A journal, *The Raven*, published quarterly, containing articles about Virginia ornithology, as well as news of the activities of the Society and its chapters.

4. Study projects (nesting studies, winter bird population surveys, etc.) aimed at making genuine contributions to ornithological knowledge.

In addition, local chapters of the Society, located in some of the larger cities and towns of Virginia, conduct their own programs of meetings, field trips, and other projects.

Those wishing to participate in any of the above activities or to cooperate in advancing the objectives of the Society are cordially invited to join. Annual dues are \$2.00 for junior members (students), \$5.00 for active members, \$7.50 for sustaining members, \$15.00 or more for contributing members, \$150.00 for life members, and \$9.00 for family members (limited to husband, wife, and their dependent children).

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Published four times a year in March, June, September, and December at Richmond, Virginia. Membership includes subscription to *The Raven*. Annual subscription price to nonmembers is \$6.00. Individual issues, when available, are priced at \$1.50 for current ones, \$1.00 for those dated from 1971 through 1975, and 75¢ for those prior to 1971 (plus postage).

VIRGINIA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS—1978-79 SEASON

F. R. SCOTT

This year 34 Virginia Christmas bird counts were submitted to *The Raven*, a figure which equaled last year's record number. Participation dropped slightly, and there were "only" 675 different observers, down a bit from the previous year's 698. Since many observers took more than one count, however, there was a total of 910 named participants, up from 903 last year. Coverage continued upward, and total party-hours climbed to a record 3168, nearly 5% higher than the 3026 of the 1977-78 season. The Christmas counts unequivocally remain the most popular birding activity in the state.

Helped by favorable weather during the count period (no snow or heavy rain, though a few counts had high winds) and a warmer-than-normal November and early December, observers totaled 215 different species plus one additional hybrid (Mallard X Black Duck), one color phase (Blue Goose), and one race (Ipswich Sparrow). This was second only to the record 220 species recorded in the 1973-74 season. Four new birds were added to the cumulative list of all species seen on Virginia Christmas counts, the first additions in three years. These were American Flamingo, Northern Parula Warbler, American Redstart, and Clay-colored Sparrow. The cumulative list now stands at 277 species.

Regrettably, the Kerr Reservoir count was not taken this year, leaving a big void in the southern Piedmont. The one new count was Catherine Furnace from the northern Piedmont just west of Fredericksburg. Three additional counts (Calmes Neck, Danville, and Wachapreague) were submitted to *American Birds* but not to *The Raven*, and there were four counts in adjacent states which overlapped into Virginia. These were Crisfield, Point Lookout, and Seneca, Maryland, and Washington, D. C. As usual, this summary is confined to those counts submitted to *The Raven*.

Nine counts exceeded 100 species each, all on the Coastal Plain. In fact, only one Coastal Plain count did not go over this magic figure. Top honors for the principal physiographic regions went to Cape Charles with 170 species (Coastal Plain), Lynchburg with 88 (Piedmont), and Northern Shenandoah Valley with 98 (Blue Ridge westward). In terms of coverage, Chincoteague was tops with 246 party-hours followed by Cape Charles with 227 and Fort Belvoir with 203. At the bottom of the list were Darlington Heights with 16 party-hours and Sweet Briar with 22. Better coverage, of course, yields a better sampling of the birds present in an area, and observers would do well to increase the coverage of existing counts rather than to initiate new ones with low coverage.

The count tabulation given in Table 1 is more or less in order of distance inland from the coast. Counts 1-10 were all on the Coastal Plain with 1-4 being directly on the coast and 5 and 6 on the western edge of Chesapeake Bay. Counts 11-17 were on the Piedmont, and 18-34 were from the Blue Ridge westward. Very abbreviated details on each count are given at the end of this summary. Thanks are due to Walter P. Smith who again prepared the initial tabulation of these counts.

TABLE 1 (following 8 pages). The 1978-79 Christmas bird counts in Virginia. The underlined figures indicate an unusual species or an unusual number of individuals for that particular count.

	1. Chincoteague	2. Cape Charles	3. Little Creek	4. Back Bay	5. Newport News	6. Matthews	7. Williamsburg	8. Hopewell	9. Brooke	10. Fort Belvoir	11. Catherine Furnace	12. Gordonsville	13. Charlottesville	14. Warren	15. Darlington Heights
Date	12/28	12/27	12/31	12/29	12/16	12/31	12/23	12/16	12/21	12/23	12/17	12/16	12/17	12/31	12/20
Common Loon	139	37	5	47	20	70	...	1	...	4	1	...	...	...	...
Red-throated Loon	111	48	1	57	6	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Red-necked Grebe	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Horned Grebe	285	142	40	25	244	232	13	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Pied-billed Grebe	55	83	69	138	44	23	31	5	4	9	3	1	12	...	...
Gannet	14	1300	1053	3400	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Great Cormorant	2	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Double-crested Cormorant	4	55	20	31	29	3	39	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Great Blue Heron	126	156	151	58	32	41	64	66	46	68	4	3	2	3	...
Green Heron	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Little Blue Heron	4	25	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cattle Egret	...	1	...	8	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Great Egret	34	33	65	1	...	...	7	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Snowy Egret	23	15	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Louisiana Heron	7	45	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Black-crowned Night Heron	14	100	118	102	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
American Bittern	2	2	1	2	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Glossy Ibis	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
American Flamingo	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Mute Swan	11	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Whistling Swan	586	87	21	1000	2	375	244	14	27	8	...	...	...	...	1
Canada Goose	3656	3163	20	1600	17	195	4159	12,500	75	295	...	1426	260	62	15
Brant	9368	1335	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Snow Goose	19,500	115	...	6250	...	...	1	20	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Snow Goose (blue form)	9	...	...	...	...	...	2	225	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Mallard	1442	959	769	454	393	340	357	845	116	1130	26	122	178	410	...
Mallard X Black Duck	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Black Duck	3033	1252	135	565	24	20	354	272	104	1074	3	82	41	27	...
Gadwall	260	104	16	1025	17	...	42	19	...	34	...	...	19	...	...
Pintail	1827	272	65	1300	...	6	2238	332	10	12	...	...	...	1	...
Green-winged Teal	289	77	34	230	28	...	101	16	2	38	...	8	...	4	...
Blue-winged Teal	3	5	3	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
American Wigeon	206	455	410	750	747	33	223	43	...	46	...	...	5	6	...
Northern Shoveler	417	35	9	17	...	...	6	4	...	2	...	...	...	...	...
Wood Duck	6	5	9	9	5	2	11	549	...	3	...	2	1	13	...
Redhead	...	3	...	2	15	3	37	...	13	14	...	1	...	...	...
Ring-necked Duck	35	134	39	4	25	...	106	156	...	5	...	17	...	11	...
Canvasback	1	16	226	...	406	225	343	5	...	1041	2	...	...	1	...
Greater Scaup	20	2	6	1	18	...	...	...	...	11	...	...	...	...	...
Lesser Scaup	4	68	5	10	63	100	11	2	22	136	1	...	2	7	...
Scaup sp.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	86	9	...	...	...	...
Common Goldeneye	89	71	28	14	453	287	31	...	15	23	...	...	...	1	...
Bufflehead	1475	1649	221	13	288	1110	69	32	5	141	64	16	3	...	...
Oldsquaw	545	66	41	25	261	270	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Common Eider	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
White-winged Sooter	12	30	20	12	8	18	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...
Surf Sooter	537	2870	50	915	166	524	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Black Sooter	52	602	30	243	3	31	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sooter sp.	83	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	20	...	...	...	...	...
Ruddy Duck	116	36	28	111	48	1391	307	4	300	722	22	...	9	...	...
Hooded Merganser	104	83	468	27	22	2	228	28	13	71	10	11	2	9	...
Common Merganser	3	1	12	...	...	3	4	31	8	682	...	...	...	...	...
Red-breasted Merganser	130	160	20	287	24	128	16	...	...	10	...	...	...	...	...
Duck sp.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Turkey Vulture	347	175	1	23	4	...	160	8	34	11	129	131	987	74	...
Black Vulture	15	...	...	46	...	1	52	3	1	...	10	17	376	100	...
Sharp-shinned Hawk	20	19	9	16	5	4	9	4	5	6	1	4	9	2	1
Cooper's Hawk	7	3	...	2	...	1	1	1	...	3	...	3	1	1	...
Red-tailed Hawk	32	39	19	38	6	3	34	22	12	31	7	20	22	20	...

[illegible]

[illegible][illegible]

[illegible]

	1. Chincoteague	2. Cape Charles	3. Little Creek	4. Back Bay	5. Newport News	6. Mathews	7. Williamsburg	8. Hopewell	9. Brooke	10. Port Solovar	11. Catherine Furnace	12. Gordonsville	13. Charlottesville	14. Warren	15. Darlington Heights
Date	12/28	12/27	12/31	12/29	12/16	12/31	12/23	12/16	12/21	12/23	12/17	12/16	12/17	12/31	12/20
Black-throated Blue Warbler ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Yellow-rumped Warbler	6987	4069	974	2650	956	1757	891	157	110	351	3	116	103	148	15
Bay-breasted Warbler	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pine Warbler	13	22	41	29	25	15	31	1	...	...	...	...	2	...	...
Prairie Warbler	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Palm Warbler	8	200	5	46	6	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Ovenbird	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Common Yellowthroat	8	5	3	13	1	2	...	5	...	1	...	...	...	2	...
Yellow-breasted Chat	2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
American Redstart	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
House Sparrow	523	213	254	182	634	66	113	92	35	390	74	81	42	19	61
Eastern Meadowlark	384	255	80	427	60	160	296	166	18	1	5	65	39	284	37
Red-winged Blackbird	4524	3799	3228	2700	934	347	3801	420	1360	402	...	103	152	887	...
Northern Oriole	...	2	...	1	9	...	8	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Rusty Blackbird	83	7	18	20	...	...	14	...	...	87	...	11	...	1	...
Brewer's Blackbird	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Boat-tailed Grackle	1139	1690	26	35	7	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Common Grackle	1684	559	588	686	834	66	223	8	1	437	304	...	8	77	...
Brown-headed Cowbird	14	2007	465	459	543	4	21	...	20	264	...	...	15	6	...
Blackbird sp.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cardinal	253	237	214	131	93	179	82	255	115	629	26	81	403	353	96
Dickcissel	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Evening Grosbeak	9	21	2	2	...	...	2	1	21	61	...	...	4	104	4
Purple Finch	31	35	68	24	4	1	31	25	52	44	13	137	123	687	7
House Finch	103	81	33	...	4	14	3	4	12	74	...	75	72	370	68
Pine Siskin	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	1	...	...
American Goldfinch	174	337	44	27	124	130	68	103	280	403	7	60	213	563	98
Red Crossbill	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Rufous-sided Towhee	108	51	44	77	25	61	28	21	7	14	1	4	20	22	7
Savannah Sparrow	210	549	49	344	109	14	56	41	...	11	1	22	13	42	9
Savannah (Ipswich) Sparrow	...	1	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Grasshopper Sparrow	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sharp-tailed Sparrow	10	24	55	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Seaside Sparrow	2	2	25	...	...	2	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vesper Sparrow	1	19	...	...	4	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Dark-eyed Junco	258	160	128	156	330	366	548	309	155	1525	412	257	726	1039	295
Tree Sparrow	...	1	...	2	...	...	...	...	3	6	2	2	4	36	...
Chipping Sparrow	7	112	11	40	21	102	72	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Clay-colored Sparrow	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Field Sparrow	157	438	69	134	75	71	174	76	115	250	26	43	205	309	72
White-crowned Sparrow	...	4	...	11	...	...	...	20	1	...	...	35	9	194	3
White-throated Sparrow	1525	2220	512	807	424	625	503	1661	440	1613	123	283	1129	1277	110
Fox Sparrow	14	45	6	3	2	3	...	12	6	6	...	1	13	7	...
Lincoln's Sparrow	1	2	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Swamp Sparrow	211	237	54	289	29	27	37	52	6	65	1	10	38	26	...
Song Sparrow	434	1361	199	546	108	132	137	302	80	526	20	87	400	537	82
Lapland Longspur	6	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Snow Bunting	1	9	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total Species	162	170	138	145	118	113	107	104	80	110	60	77	83	81	48
Total Individuals	84,661	74,461	62,118	44,452	23,939	15,460	22,928	24,140	5729	27,769	3100	5885	10,237	11,909	2170
Total Party-hours	246	227	109	179	60	126	126	79	74	203	49	64	105	97	16
Number of Observers	55	45	30	36	26	44	43	28	14	54	18	12	26	20	

16. Seest Briar	17. Lynchburg	18. No. Shenandoah Valley	19. Shenandoah Park	20. Big Flat	21. Rockingham Co.	22. Augusta Co.	23. Waynesboro	24. Lexington	25. Peaks of Otter	26. Clifton Forge	27. Fincastle	28. Roanoke	29. Blacksburg	30. Tazewell	31. Glade Spring	32. Bristol	33. Nicholsville	34. Wise Co.
12/30	12/16	12/16	12/17	12/23	12/16	12/30	12/16	12/26	12/19	12/17	12/17	12/16	12/22	12/16	12/30	12/31	12/30	12/23
...
24	108	99	123	...	2	28	35	299	...	27	27	110	38	6	11	5	21	10
...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	8	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
...
...
...
44	130	986	506	...	569	689	291	142	...	229	147	182	381	287	711	16	69	246
1	127	86	23	...	145	27	42	8	...	1	42	57	50	3	77	8	27	15
...	15	5131	21	...	717	200	110	3	...	...	11	14	5	39	56	1	51	...
...
...	2	43	150	...	15	10	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1
...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...
...
8	8	89	9	...	8061	52	95	...	3	4	2	9	11	89	384	...	12	1
...	78	1196	35	...	2223	181	64	...	...	...	2	19	4	16	62	...	25	...
...	...	...	...	...	...	20,000	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
101	313	516	203	17	116	269	149	187	16	100	249	390	266	178	334	68	235	203
...
4	6	15	15	10	1	63	...	15	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
70	104	350	472	37	61	160	48	234	5	20	111	28	45	7	...	18	26	15
63	257	529	9	...	105	74	76	32	...	12	13	99	5	31	...	...	...	...
...	25	28	9	...	...	...	...	7	...	10	3	1	3	3	...	...	12	...
28	234	664	184	18	186	59	179	278	45	142	102	397	263	56	102	24	131	146
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
13	20	8	9	1	3	1	4	3	...	5	8	27	23	25	56	9	12	59
...	8	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	8	...	...	...	3	...	...	...
...
...
...
...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
248	656	1937	951	167	249	795	293	717	170	170	416	423	451	172	299	27	540	537
2	1	51	4	...	...	...	1	1	...	2	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
...	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...
...
2	82	238	26	1	26	182	89	97	...	6	50	51	127	119	169	5	112	247
5	1	201	137	...	62	169	138	49	...	2	145	58	70	7	144	5	351	9
501	1006	1084	818	77	375	367	241	387	68	162	374	652	565	122	550	114	143	164
1	1	1	10	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	7	1	2	1	...	47	5
...	...	8	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
...	8	24	3	...	...	...	...	2	...	2	5	1	4	3	5	...	4	18
16	251	742	160	4	156	138	122	106	6	7	120	204	296	212	416	31	147	325
...
...
52	88	98	82	44	69	66	70	75	34	66	76	83	82	78	78	63	62	71
2800	10,881	444,101	12,744	679	27,366	34,179	9439	6869	594	3001	6264	9879	7648	5538	13,300	2346	4705	4969
22	99	165	181	36	54	82	65	50	25	42	77	116	99	63	69	33	38	92
13	45	47	55	4	27	29	21	14	7	17	16	34	32	27	23	8	9	25

The 4 Common Loons at Tazewell and the 8 at Bristol were excellent for southwestern Virginia, but loon and grebe numbers along the coast seemed fairly normal. The numbers of Pied-billed Grebes inland undoubtedly reflected the lack of ice. Great Cormorants were found at both Chincoteague and Little Creek, and both Hopewell and Brooke recorded Double-crested Cormorants, unusual in winter on the upper Coastal Plain. As usual when early winters are warm, there were large numbers of Gannets on the three southern coastal counts. Note the excellent total of 3400 at Back Bay. Herons and egrets were in rather average numbers along the coast except that for unknown reasons American Bitterns were in the lowest numbers in many years. Note that the normally rare Green Heron was found on five counts, three of them in southwestern Virginia. The American Flamingo at Chincoteague was a first for a state Christmas count and had been in the area since 17 October.

A Mute Swan showed up at Williamsburg as well as at Chincoteague where they are now quite regular, and Whistling Swans appeared on all Coastal Plain counts, two Piedmont ones, and three mountain and valley counts. Several noncoastal counts had excellent waterfowl totals; see especially Williamsburg, Fort Belvoir, Blacksburg, and Glade Spring. Numbers of Hooded Mergansers remained at high levels; this species was reported on 21 of the counts, and the 468 at Williamsburg was probably a state record. This year the best vulture count came from Charlottesville where the 987 Turkey Vultures and 376 Blacks were record numbers from the Piedmont. Rough-legged Hawks continue to be recorded inland as well as along the coast with birds this year at Cape Charles, Gordonsville, Northern Shenandoah Valley (5 birds), and Tazewell (4). Clifton Forge had the only Golden Eagle reported, and Ospreys appeared at Cape Charles and Charlottesville and Peregrines at Chincoteague, Cape Charles, and Bristol. Exceptional numbers of other hawks included 53 Red-tails at Northern Shenandoah Valley and 24 Red-shoulders at Fort Belvoir. A Sora at Northern Shenandoah Valley was a rare winter visitor for the area west of the Blue Ridge.

Spotted Sandpipers at Williamsburg and Roanoke were the most unusual shorebirds reported, though the Sanderling inland at Fort Belvoir was scarcely normal. The 420 Killdeer at Hopewell seem to be a record number for the Coastal Plain, and the 81 dowitchers at Chincoteague (15 Short-billed, 23 Long-billed, and 43 unidentified) were also notable. Back Bay furnished a Parasitic Jaeger and Little Creek the only Lesser Black-backed Gull, while the 128 Ring-billed Gulls far inland at Roanoke and the 15 Bonaparte's Gulls at Lexington and the one at Lynchburg probably indicate "fall" migration still in progress. Bristol's 50 Ring-bills may have been part of a possibly wintering population on the huge South Holston Lake (which is largely in Tennessee). Laughing Gulls at both Williamsburg and Hopewell were considered very late this far inland. Terns were fairly plentiful on the southeastern counts, most notable being single Common Terns at Little Creek, Back Bay, and Newport News and a Caspian Tern at Little Creek. The only other recent count records of Caspians were in 1973 when single birds were reported at Chincoteague and Little Creek.

There was no dearth of Mourning Doves. In fact, the 1336 totaled at Warren was probably a record count for the Piedmont. Screech Owl totals of 48 at Lynchburg and 35 at Roanoke were excellent but hardly a match for 1976 when Lynchburg got 220. Long-eared Owls were recorded only at Cape

Charles and Wise and Saw-whets at Cape Charles and Northern Shenandoah Valley.

In the Christmas count summary last year the totals of six species of semihardy birds were given for four consecutive seasons (*Raven*, 49: 29, 1978). This year the Eastern Phoebe increased slightly from 55 last year to 86 this year (or from 1.8 birds per 100 party-hours to 2.7), whereas the Carolina Wren continued its decline begun in 1976, going from 1797 last year to 1552 (59 to 49 birds per 100 party-hours). The Hermit Thrush remained about the same, going from 305 to 327 (both of these equaling 10 birds per 100 party-hours), and the Eastern Bluebird declined slightly from 1595 to 1457 (53 to 46 birds per 100 party-hours). Both of the kinglets recovered significantly, the Golden-crowned rising from 495 to 1090 and the Ruby-crowned from 400 to 1282 (16 to 34 and 13 to 40 birds per 100 party-hours, respectively). Comparing the totals per 100 party-hours, these are increases of 113% and 208%, respectively. If severe cold winter weather was really responsible for the drastic decline of these birds between the Christmas counts of 1975 and 1977 (*op. cit.*), one would hardly have expected this remarkable recovery following the unusually cold late winter weather of January and February 1978.

Table 2 gives the recent history of several other birds whose populations are thought by some to be sensitive to severe winter temperatures. Of these the Belted Kingfisher and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker show declines from 1976 to 1977 but slight increases this year, and the Winter Wren experienced a major decline of 70% from 1976 to 1977, then a sharp increase in 1978. A similar severe decline in Winter Wrens was also shown between the Kiptopeke Beach banding totals of 1976 and 1977 (*Raven*, 50: 15, 1979). Curiously, the major decline in the Mockingbird (43%) occurred between 1977 and 1978. The Common Raven is included in the table to document its recent increase in numbers on the Christmas counts. Note that since this bird occurs mainly on the mountain and valley counts and not statewide, it seemed more useful in Table 2 to give the number of counts reporting it each year rather than the birds per 100 party-hours. As in last year, all but one of the mountain and valley counts reported this species. This year's total was helped by counts of 110 at Shenandoah Park and 37 at Rockingham County. A detailed analysis of these yearly variations in populations could be of great interest but would be unsuitable for this overview.

TABLE 2. Christmas count totals for selected species for the past five years. The figures in parentheses are the totals per 100 party-hours except for the Common Raven, where these figures represent the number of counts on which the species was recorded.

Year	Total Party- hours	Belted Kingfisher	Yellow-b. Sapsucker	Common Raven	Winter Wren	Mockingbird
1974	2514	668 (27)	324 (12.9)	90 (14)	326 (13.0)	2461 (98)
1975	2657	607 (23)	276 (10.4)	99 (16)	425 (16.0)	2289 (86)
1976	2663	618 (23)	434 (16.3)	124 (15)	310 (11.6)	2814 (106)
1977	3026	516 (17)	261 (8.6)	117 (21)	105 (3.5)	3051 (101)
1978	3168	596 (19)	306 (9.7)	241 (20)	155 (4.9)	1824 (58)

Unusual flycatchers included a Western Kingbird at Catherine Furnace, an unidentified *Myiarchus* at Little Creek, and an Ash-throated Flycatcher at Cape Charles. The last, which was well photographed, was only the second record for a Virginia Christmas count and the third record for the state. Black-capped Chickadees finally returned to reasonably normal winter numbers after the big influx beginning in 1975. Still, from 1 to 3 were found at Fincastle, Roanoke, and Wise, which are all outside the traditional winter range of this species. A Long-billed Marsh Wren at Charlottesville was unusual but not unprecedented for the Piedmont, but a Gray-cheeked Thrush here was only the second state count record in over 20 years. Back Bay reported the first Swainson's Thrush since 1974, and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were found at Cape Charles, Back Bay, and Hopewell. The 858 Cedar Waxwings at Charlottesville were a significant count.

There were many holdovers of vireos and warblers, undoubtedly due to the warm late fall and early winter temperatures. Mathews had a White-eyed Vireo and Back Bay a Solitary, while a total of 6 Black-and-white Warblers were found on four counts: Chincoteague, Little Creek, Hopewell, and Roanoke. Among the other warblers were Nashvilles at Cape Charles and Back Bay, a Northern Parula at Hopewell, a Magnolia at Cape Charles, a Black-throated Blue at Gordonsville, 2 Bay-breasteds at Northern Shenandoah Valley, Prairies at Little Creek and Back Bay, Ovenbirds at Chincoteague and Tazewell, and an American Redstart at Fort Belvoir. The Parula and Redstart were firsts for Virginia Christmas counts. It is unlikely that any of these birds survived the remainder of the winter. A Brewer's Blackbird at Shenandoah Park was the only report of this species.

Dickcissels were reported at Chincoteague and Darlington Heights, and House Finches broke all records for the second consecutive year. This year 2435 House Finches were reported (77 birds per 100 party-hours) versus 1481 (49 per 100 party-hours) last year. The totals of 570 at Warren and 539 at Northern Shenandoah Valley both exceeded the previous state record. After the big northern finch flight last year, Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins were in rather small numbers though Purple Finches showed up very well (note the 687 at Warren and the 472 at Shenandoah Park). The only other northern finch was a report of 10 Red Crossbills at Clifton Forge and 1 at Wise. American Goldfinches, though not considered one of the northern finches, did quite well also, and the 563 at Warren and 664 at Northern Shenandoah Valley were excellent.

A Grasshopper Sparrow was found at Back Bay, and Chipping Sparrows exceeded all previous records in southeastern Virginia. Note the 119 at Cape Charles and 102 at Mathews. The 2 Clay-colored Sparrows at Newport News were firsts for a state count, and Lincoln's Sparrows were noted at Chincoteague, Cape Charles, and Back Bay.

1. CHINCOTEAGUE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE. Center 2 miles N of center of Chincoteague. Dec. 28. Fifty-five observers in 31 parties. Total party-hours, 246 (224 on foot, 17 by car, 5 by boat) plus 5 hours owling; total party-miles, 432 (209 on foot, 208 by car, 15 by boat). Compiler: F. R. Scott.

2. CAPE CHARLES. Center 1.5 miles SE of Capeville P.O. Dec. 27. Forty-five observers in 9-26 parties. Total party-hours, 227 (179 on foot, 33 by car, 5 by boat) plus 10 hours owling; total party-miles, 498 (156 on foot, 317 by car, 25 by boat). Compiler: Henry Armistead. The editor changed the Ring-necked Pheasants reported to Japanese Green Pheasants.

3. LITTLE CREEK. Center 3.8 miles NE of Kempsville in Virginia Beach. Dec. 31. Thirty observers in 13 parties. Total party-hours, 109 (88 on foot, 21 by car); total party-miles, 409 (61 on foot, 348 by car). Compiler: Paul Sykes, Jr.

4. BACK BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE. Center 1.5 miles E of Back Bay. Dec. 29. Thirty-six observers in 15 parties. Total party-hours, 179 (128 on foot, 43 by car, 8 by boat); total party-miles, 455 (78 on foot, 363 by car, 14 by boat). Compiler: Paul Sykes, Jr.

5. NEWPORT NEWS. Center SW corner of Langley Air Force Base. Dec. 16. Twenty-six observers in 7 parties. Total party-hours, 60 (35 on foot, 25 by car); total party-miles, 297 (34 on foot, 263 by car). Compiler: W. P. Smith.

6. MATHEWS. Center 0.5 mile E of Beaverlette P.O. Dec. 31. Forty-four observers, 43 in 15 parties, 1 at feeders. Total party-hours, 126 (77.5 on foot, 43 by car, 5.5 by boat) plus 2 hours at feeders, 2 owling; total party-miles, 384 (65 on foot, 291 by car, 28 by boat). Compiler: Mary Pulley.

7. WILLIAMSBURG. Center Colonial Williamsburg Information Center. Dec. 17. Forty-three observers in 13 parties. Total party-hours, 126 (106 on foot, 18 by car, 2 by boat) plus 9 hours owling; total party-miles, 376 (96 on foot, 276 by car, 4 by boat). Compiler: Bill Williams.

8. HOPEWELL. Center Curles Neck. Dec. 16. Twenty-eight observers in 9 parties. Total party-hours, 79 (67 on foot, 9 by car, 3 by boat) plus 3 hours owling; total party-miles, 232 (44 on foot, 173 by car, 15 by boat). Compiler: F. R. Scott.

9. BROOKE. Center 3 miles ESE of Brooke. Dec. 21. Fourteen observers in 10 parties. Total party-hours, 74 (66 on foot, 8 by car); total party-miles, 129 (37 on foot, 92 by car). Compiler: E. T. McKnight.

10. FORT BELVOIR. Center Pohick Church. Dec. 23. Fifty-four observers in 31 parties. Total party-hours, 203 (180 on foot, 19 by car, 4 by boat); total party-miles, 487 (156 on foot, 328 by car, 3 by boat). Compiler: Jackson Abbott.

11. CATHERINE FURNACE. Center junction Sickles Drive and McClaws Drive. Dec. 17. Eighteen observers, 17 in 6 parties, 1 at feeders. Total party-hours, 49 (13.5 on foot, 26 by car, 9.5 by canoe) plus 0.5 hour at feeders, 3 owling; total party-miles, 277 (25 on foot, 240 by car, 12 by canoe). Compiler: Valerie Campbell.

12. GORDONSVILLE. Center junction rts. 15 and 33. Dec. 16. Twelve observers, 11 in 6 parties, 1 at feeders. Total party-hours, 64 (32 on foot, 32 by car) plus 1 hour at feeders, 2 owling; total party-miles, 348 (34 on foot, 314 by car). Compiler: Helen Goldstick.

13. CHARLOTTESVILLE. Center near Ivy. Dec. 17. Twenty-six observers in 11 parties. Total party-hours, 105 (87 on foot, 18 by car) plus 8 hours owling; total party-miles, 347 (85 on foot, 262 by car). Compiler: Charles Stevens.

14. WARREN. Center near Keene. Dec. 31. Twenty observers in 11 parties. Total party-hours, 97 (83 on foot, 14 by car) plus 2 hours owling; total party-miles, 286 (96 on foot, 190 by car). Compiler: Charles Stevens.

15. DARLINGTON HEIGHTS. Center Darlington Heights P.O. Dec. 20. Six observers in 2 parties. Total party-hours, 16 (12 on foot, 4 by car); total party-miles, 131 (9 on foot, 122 by car). Compiler: Vera Copple.

16. SWEET BRIAR. Center Sweet Briar College campus. Dec. 30. Thirteen observers in 4 parties. Total party-hours, 22 (21.5 on foot, 0.5 by car); total party-miles, 17 (11 on foot, 6 by car). Compiler: Gertrude Prior.

17. LYNCHBURG. Center Lynchburg College. Dec. 16. Forty-five observers, 42 in 11 parties, 3 at feeders. Total party-hours, 99 (64 on foot, 35 by car) plus 6 hours at feeders, 10 owling; total party-miles, 433 (58 on foot, 375 by car). Compiler: Myriam Moore.

18. NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY. Center junction Crooked Run and rt. 636. Dec. 16. Forty-seven observers in 20 parties. Total party-hours, 165 (65 on foot, 90 by car, 10 by canoe) plus 4 hours owling; total party-miles, 943 (72 on foot, 851 by car, 20 by canoe). Compiler: Rob Simpson.

19. SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK-LURAY. Center Hershberger Hill. Dec. 17. Fifty-five observers, 52 in 22 parties, 3 at feeders. Total party-hours, 181 (117 on foot, 57 by car, 7 by canoe) plus 4 hours at feeders, 5 owling; total party-miles, 639 (109 on foot, 521 by car, 9 by canoe). Compiler: Dennis Carter.

20. BIG FLAT MOUNTAIN. Center on Pasture Fence Mountain. Dec. 23. Four observers in 3-4 parties. Total party-hours, 36 (35 on foot, 1 by car) plus 2 hours owling; total party-miles, 67 (52 on foot, 15 by car). Compiler: Charles Stevens.

21. ROCKINGHAM COUNTY. Center Ottobine. Dec. 16. Twenty-seven observers in 10 parties. Total party-hours, 54 (28 on foot, 26 by car) plus 2 hours owling; total party-miles, 346 (26 on foot, 320 by car). Compiler: Max Carpenter.

22. AUGUSTA COUNTY. Center junction rts. 780 and 781. Dec. 30. Twenty-nine observers, 27 in 10 parties, 2 at feeders. Total party-hours, 82 (51 on foot, 31 by car) plus 3 hours at feeders, 1 owling; total party-miles, 449 (39 on foot, 410 by car). Compiler: John Mehner.

23. WAYNESBORO. Center Sherando. Dec. 16. Twenty-one observers in 9 parties. Total party-hours, 65 (43 on foot, 22 by car) plus 2 hours owling; total party-miles, 347 (37 on foot, 310 by car). Compiler: Ruth Snyder.

24. LEXINGTON. Center Big Spring Pond. Dec. 26. Fourteen observers in 10 parties. Total party-hours, 50 (34 on foot, 16 by car) plus 3.5 hours owling; total party-miles, 246 (31 on foot, 215 by car). Compilers: Bob Paxton and George Tolley.

25. PEAKS OF OTTER. Center Peaks of Otter Visitor Center. Dec. 19. Seven observers in 4 parties. Total party-hours, 25 (19 on foot, 6 by car); total party-miles, 40 (13 on foot, 27 by car). Compiler: Almon English.

26. CLIFTON FORGE. Center junction rts. 42 and 60. Dec. 17. Seventeen observers, 15 in 8 parties, 2 at feeders. Total party-hours, 42 (32 on foot, 10 by car) plus 5 hours at feeders, 2 owling; total party-miles, 225 (21 on foot, 204 by car). Compiler: Allen LeHew. One Yellow Warbler deleted for insufficient details.

27. FINCASTLE. Center near junction rts. 220 and 679. Dec. 17. Sixteen observers, 15 in 11 parties, 1 at feeders. Total party-hours, 77 (41 on foot, 36 by car) plus 4 hours at feeders, 2 owling; total party-miles, 333 (34 on foot, 299 by car). Compiler: Barry Kinzie.

28. ROANOKE. Center Oakland Blvd. and Williamson Rd. Dec. 16. Thirty-four observers, 32 in 14 parties, 2 at feeders. Total party-hours, 116 (69 on foot, 36 by car, 11 by canoe) plus 7 hours at feeders, 7 owling; total party-miles, 419 (57 on foot, 352 by car, 10 by canoe). Compiler: Barry Kinzie.

29. BLACKSBURG. Center near Linkous Store. Dec. 22. Thirty-two observers in 13 parties. Total party-hours, 99 (69 on foot, 26 by car, 4 by canoe) plus 1.5 hours owling; total party-miles, 334 (85 on foot, 241 by car, 8 by canoe). Compiler: Brian Murphy.

30. TAZEWELL. Center Fourway. Dec. 16. Twenty-seven observers, 26 in 7 parties, 1 at feeders. Total party-hours, 63 (30 on foot, 33 by car) plus 8 hours at feeders; total party-miles, 337 (49 on foot, 288 by car). Compiler: Sarah Cromar.

31. GLADE SPRING. Center junction rts. 750 and 609. Dec. 30. Twenty-three observers, 22 in 8 parties, 1 at feeders. Total party-hours, 69 (24 on foot, 45 by car) plus 4 hours at feeders, 1 owling; total party-miles, 435 (20 on foot, 415 by car). Compiler: Turner Clinard.

32. BRISTOL. Center junction rts. 647 and 654. Dec. 31. Eight observers in 4 parties. Total party-hours, 33 (9 on foot, 24 by car); total party-miles, 93 (9 on foot, 84 by car). Compiler: Rockwell Bingham.

33. NICKELSVILLE. Center Nickelsville. Dec. 30. Nine observers in 8 parties. Total party-hours, 38 (20 on foot, 18 by car) plus 2 hours owling; total party-miles, 158 (15 on foot, 143 by car). Compiler: Eugene Scott.

34. WISE COUNTY. Center Dorchester. Dec. 23. Twenty-five observers in 10 parties. Total party-hours, 92 (60 on foot, 32 by car) plus 2 hours owling; total party-miles, 347 (43 on foot, 304 by car). Compiler: Richard Peake.

RECENT BREEDING RECORD OF HORNED LARK FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY

ROBERT LOCHMILLER

An adult Horned Lark, *Eremophila alpestris*, was observed feeding an immature bird in Montgomery County, Virginia, on 31 July 1977. The juvenile Horned Lark had underdeveloped rectrices and primaries and could fly only for short distances. This could well be the latest nesting record of a Horned Lark in Virginia. According to John W. Murray (*Raven*, 45: 62, 1974) the Horned Lark is an uncommon summer resident in Montgomery County with nest records for May 1937, May 1940, and April 1942.

The birds were seen in an infrequently mowed field approximately 30 yards from a hard-surfaced road. The area of observation was searched, but the nest could not be located. A general habitat description of the nesting area is of great value and so is included here. The field consisted of vegetation approximately 1 meter or less in height. The major species included ragweed, *Ambrosia* sp., wild carrot, *Daucus carota*, aster, *Aster* sp., chicory, *Cichorium intybus*, foxtail, *Setaria* sp., and numerous species of grasses. Most of the plant species found in the field are listed by Martin *et al.* (*American Wildlife and Plants: A Guide to Wildlife Food Habits*, Dover Publications, New York, 1951) as occurring in the diet of the Horned Lark. On 9 August 1977 an immature was collected about 50 yards from the suspected nest site. The bird apparently fell victim to a passing automobile.

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HORNED LARKS SLEEPING IN FOOTPRINTS IN THE SNOW

JERRY W. VIA

During the snows of 16-18 January 1978, I observed a curious behavior by Horned Larks, *Eremophila alpestris*. As I walked home across a large parking lot about an hour after sunset, I noticed Horned Larks sleeping in the footprints which I had made on previous trips. A flock of approximately 70 Horned Larks was observed on three other occasions using the footprints. Most larks occupied individual footprints, but there were several depressions with two birds huddled together. When flushed, they quickly returned to other footprints in the snow. The snow cover was about 8 inches deep, and the footprints doubtless provided some protection from the wind and blowing snow.

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A SECOND BREEDING BIRD CENSUS IN THE DISMAL SWAMP

BROOKE MEANLEY

On 25 May 1978 I conducted a breeding bird survey in the Dismal Swamp of Virginia. The BBS, designed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is a 24.5-mile roadside census consisting of 50 stops at 0.5-mile intervals. At each stop all birds heard and seen were recorded during a period of 3 minutes. Most such surveys take from 4.0 to 4.5 hours. However, because of considerable backtracking and poor roads in some sections, the BBS in Dismal Swamp took 6.0 hours. The birds recorded and their relative abundance are presented in Table 1. Some comparisons are made with a 5-mile point census that I conducted in the Swamp on 1 May and 1 June 1975 (Meanley, *Raven*, 47: 40-43, 1976).

A total of 39 species was recorded on the BBS; in the point census on 1 May and 1 June 1975 totals of 38 and 31 species, respectively, were recorded. Because the dates of the BBS (25 May) and the second point census (1 June) are closest, certain results of these two are compared. The Red-eyed Vireo, Prothonotary Warbler, and Hooded Warbler were among the first most abundant species on both censuses; and the same eight species (Acadian Flycatcher, Carolina Wren, Wood Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo, Prothonotary Warbler, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, and Hooded Warbler) were among the first ten in both censuses.

I wish to thank Danny Bystrak of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for reviewing the manuscript.

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TABLE 1. Relative abundance of breeding birds in the Dismal Swamp, Virginia. Numbers are total individuals recorded during a breeding bird survey on 25 May 1978.

Prothonotary Warbler <i>Protonotaria citrea</i>	58	Cardinal <i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>	7
Red-eyed Vireo <i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	38	Pileated Woodpecker <i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>	5
Hooded Warbler <i>Wilsonia citrina</i>	38	Common Crow <i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	5
Ovenbird <i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i>	37	Mourning Dove <i>Zenaida macroura</i>	4
Wood Thrush <i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>	35	Blue Jay <i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>	4
Common Yellowthroat <i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	31	Gray Catbird <i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	4
Acadian Flycatcher <i>Empidonax virescens</i>	22	Black-throated Green Warbler <i>Dendroica virens</i>	4
Carolina Wren <i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>	21	Indigo Bunting <i>Passerina cyanea</i>	4
White-eyed Vireo <i>Vireo griseus</i>	21	Pine Warbler <i>Dendroica pinus</i>	3
Great Crested Flycatcher <i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>	20	Wood Duck <i>Aix sponsa</i>	2
Swainson's Warbler <i>Limnithlypis swainsonii</i>	12	Red-bellied Woodpecker <i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>	2
Common Grackle <i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>	12	Green Heron <i>Butorides striatus</i>	1
Eastern Wood Pewee <i>Contopus virens</i>	11	Red-shouldered Hawk <i>Buteo lineatus</i>	1
Tufted Titmouse <i>Parus bicolor</i>	11	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher <i>Poliopitila caerulea</i>	1
American Redstart <i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	11	Cedar Waxwing <i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>	1
Prairie Warbler <i>Dendroica discolor</i>	9	Worm-eating Warbler <i>Helmitheros vermivorus</i>	1
Yellow-billed Cuckoo <i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	8	Louisiana Waterthrush <i>Seiurus motacilla</i>	1
Carolina Chickadee <i>Parus carolinensis</i>	8	Summer Tanager <i>Piranga rubra</i>	1
Rufous-sided Towhee <i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>	8	Blue Grosbeak <i>Guiraca caerulea</i>	1
Brown-headed Cowbird <i>Molothrus ater</i>	7		

CHANGES IN BIRD POPULATIONS IN BOTETOURT COUNTY, VIRGINIA, DURING THE SEVERE WINTER OF 1977-78

BARRY KINZIE AND JOHN PANCAKE

During the bitterly cold winter of 1977-78 it seemed to birdwatchers in the Roanoke-Botetourt area that bird populations changed. To test this, the Fincastle Christmas bird count was re-enacted in late February. The results seemed to confirm that—at least for some species—there was a decline in the numbers of individuals present.

The National Weather Service office at Roanoke Municipal Airport (Wood-run Field) reported the average temperature for December, January, and February was 31.1°F., well below the normal average and 0.4° below the previous record set a year earlier. The weather service has been keeping records in Roanoke since 1939. There was also much more snow than normal—37.1 inches compared with the seasonal normal average of 24.5 inches. Cold temperatures kept the snow cover intact for most of January and February, and some patches persisted into early May.

Some specific results of the second count of the winter of 1977-78 are presented in Table 1. Most of the species listed were chosen because they showed substantial changes from the December 1977 count and from counts in previous Decembers. A few other species—the Belted Kingfisher, for example—were included because it was expected these birds would show a decline and they did not. Some species—Common Redpolls and Tree Sparrows were two—seemed to show a surge during this record winter.

Ducks are not listed in the table, but almost all of them disappeared as ponds froze. In December 1977, 715 ducks were counted; only 41 (32 of them Mallards) were seen in February.

It should also be noted that there was an overall decline in the total number of birds counted. The total in February, 7029, was well below the level of any previous Christmas count here. Although there were fewer birdwatchers in the field, the totals of parties and party-hours were close to those of previous December counts.

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TABLE 1. Comparative winter counts of selected species of birds in Botetourt County, Virginia.

	12/21/74	12/21/75	12/19/76	12/18/77	2/25/78
Temperature, °F.	32-52	20-30	30-60	42-47	30-52
Species Total	78	81	84	85	71
Individuals	18,659	10,049	11,837	11,177	7,029
Observers	38	15	21	23	13
Parties	14	9	10	13	10
Party-hours	110	60	70	76	63
Great Blue Heron	3	5	5	11	0
Red-tailed Hawk	17	11	16	12	29
Common Snipe	31	12	26	29	9
Belted Kingfisher	21	13	17	23	18
Common Flicker	28	21	41	51	6
Eastern Phoebe	22	7	4	2	0
Carolina Wren	118	105	172	73	21
Mockingbird	172	92	70	251	38
Hermit Thrush	20	11	17	13	1
Eastern Bluebird	87	110	161	117	42
Golden-crowned Kinglet	149	122	64	13	12
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	86	124	43	27	1
Eastern Meadowlark	438	269	238	173	22
Common Redpoll	0	0	0	0	27
Savannah Sparrow	0	8	1	5	0
Dark-eyed Junco	1,352	750	649	1,021	320
Tree Sparrow	25	0	32	26	73
Field Sparrow	293	471	510	174	28
Swamp Sparrow	3	1	12	3	0

NEW RECORD OF SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY

ROBERT LOCHMILLER AND EDWARD ROLLOR

A single Short-billed Dowitcher, *Limnodromus griseus*, was observed feeding along exposed mud flats of an estimated ¼-acre farm pond in Blacksburg, Virginia, on 9 August 1977. Five Least Sandpipers, *Calidris minutilla*, and one Semipalmated Plover, *Charadrius semipalmatus*, accompanied the dowitcher in feeding activities. Four observers were able to approach within 25 yards for close observation. The shorter bill and lighter gray and buff colors identified the bird as a Short-billed Dowitcher. The bird could not be identified by vocalization due to the large number of Killdeers, *Charadrius vociferus*, and sandpipers which drowned out any sounds of the dowitcher.

The Short-billed Dowitcher was observed on subsequent visits to the farm pond on 12 and 13 August. During all visits it was accompanied by numerous

shorebirds of the types mentioned above. Despite numerous visits to the area after 13 August, the dowitcher could not be found. However, many of the other shorebirds remained in Blacksburg throughout August.

According to J. W. Murray (*Raven*, 45: 60, 1974) the Short-billed Dowitcher is a rare transient with eight records for Montgomery County from 26 March to 16 May and 16 August to 5 September. F. H. Robinson (*Raven*, 34: 46, 1963) collected a Short-billed Dowitcher in Charlotte County on 18 May 1963 which proved to be the first definite inland Virginia record of the race *hendersoni*. Other inland reports of interest include a sighting by R. H. Peake, Jr., on 12 August 1963 at Bridgewater (*Raven*, 34: 63, 1963).

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REVIEWS

Swamps, River Bottoms and Canebrakes. By Brooke Meanley. Barre Publishers, Barre, Massachusetts, 1972, 142 pp., 111 illus. Price, \$12.50.

The Great Dismal Swamp. By Brooke Meanley. Audubon Naturalist Society, Washington, D. C., 1973, 48 pp., paper, 23 illus.

Birds and Marshes of the Chesapeake Bay Country. By Brooke Meanley. Tidewater Publishers, Cambridge, Maryland, 1975, x + 157 pp., paper, 98 illus. Price, \$5.00

No better armchair tours of the swamps of the southeastern United States exist than those Brooke Meanley can provide, and the three books reviewed here offer ample proof of his affability and expertise as tour guide.

Of the three books, *Canebrakes* ranges the most widely: from the Okefenokee, the Ocmulgee River, and Dudley's Hammock in Georgia to the White River Swamp of Arkansas, Meanley leads the reader from the Atlantic to the Mississippi and back again with as genial and informative a manner as any tenderfoot could wish. The book centers on the swamps of Georgia, Florida, and Arkansas but offers descriptions of swampy jewels from the Carolinas, Tennessee, and Virginia as well.

Because of Meanley's years of fieldwork in the areas he describes, he gives an idea of what the swamps were like 30 or 40 years ago in addition to what their condition is in the seventies. Although much attenuated, these swamplands represent one of the last great remnants of American wilderness. The White River Wilderness, the Slovak Thicket, and the Great Pecan Forest of Arkansas are less familiar to most Virginians than are the swamps of the Atlantic coastline, but Meanley brings all these wild places alive for us. Meanley also discusses the lower Altamaha River, the locality where John Bartram and his son William in 1765 discovered the lost *Franklinia*, known today only from nursery plants descended from seeds Bartram collected; and our guide recalls extensive Ocmulgee River Swamp brakes of giant cane "covering a one-square-mile area."

An expanded version of the chapter on the Dismal Swamp in *Canebrakes*, *The Great Dismal Swamp* succinctly outlines previous knowledge of the Dismal and describes the scope of the author's observations there, studies begun in 1957 when he was concerned with the swamp's large blackbird roost. Emphasizing the subtropical nature of the Dismal, Meanley describes this swamp as the northern limit of southern plants and animals. Unlike the Okefenokee farther south, the Great Dismal is for the most part solid forest, not a "complex of forests, lakes, and grassy prairies." The Dismal's plant communities consist of deepwater swamp, mixed swamp forest, mesic forest or hammock, Atlantic white cedar forest, and the shrub bog or pocosin. Besides discussing the plants and animals that form these communities, Meanley appends helpful lists of these together with a selected bibliography at the end of the book.

In *Birds and Marshes* Meanley writes about coastal Maryland and Virginia based on field experience from the 1930's to the 1970's. Whether he describes the birds, the plants, or the people of the coastal marshes, the author helps his reader share his scientific and personal interests and enthusiasm for the natural lore of the Chesapeake Bay country; this book provides a collage of things marshy from wild rice to Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and rails. Again and again, the reader delights in gems of personal observation such as that of a King Rail in winter obtaining water "by ingesting snow or small chunks of ice."

All three of Meanley's books would add life to the shelves of a natural history library, but if you must choose just one for your shelves, *Canebrakes* is the most comprehensive, the most carefully written, and the most handsomely printed.

Richard H. Peake

NEWS AND NOTES

COMPILED BY YULEE LARNER AND F. R. SCOTT

CORMORANTS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY. On 30 April 1978 C. W. Roane found 5 Double-crested Cormorants on the New River near McCoy, Virginia. According to John W. Murray, this was the fifth record of this species for Montgomery County.

COOPER'S HAWKS NESTING. Michael W. Britten found two pairs of Cooper's Hawks nesting in Virginia in 1976. The first nest, near Brokenburg, Spotsylvania County, was discovered on 7 July 55 feet up in a Virginia pine. It had three young ready to fledge, and one adult was nearby. The second nest, about 50 feet up in a Virginia pine, was found near Palmyra, Fluvanna County, on 8 July. The three fledglings, which had apparently left the nest shortly before they were found, were in a group of pines nearby. Both nests were in woodlots immediately adjacent to clearcuts about 5 to 8 years old. Another indication of possible local nesting was a dead juvenile Cooper's Hawk picked up on Virginia route 39 at Goshen Pass, Rockbridge County, on 14 August 1977 by John Pancake. The wing chord of the bird measured 264 mm. There are few recent summer or breeding records of this species in Virginia.

GALLINULE ON MOUNTAIN TOP. Water birds stranded on mountain tops during migration are always an interesting anomaly. On 30 April 1978

T. F. Wieboldt flushed a Common Gallinule from a crevice in the rock on top of Rocky Mountain, Amherst County, Virginia. Before disappearing, the bird ran over to the Rockbridge County side of the ridge. There are few records of this species from either county.

REDPOLL INVASION. Probably the greatest Common Redpoll invasion into Virginia on record occurred during the winter and early spring of 1977-78 with records extending south in the Great Valley to Botetourt County, on the Piedmont to Campbell and Hanover Counties, and on the Coastal Plain to Virginia Beach. The first records included two Christmas bird counts: 3 near Middletown in the Valley on 17 December 1977 (Max and Joann Leight and Gwynn Evans) and 4 near Luray on 18 December (Rob Simpson *et al.*); 2 were also photographed in Virginia Beach on 23 December (R. J. Tripician) prior to being seen here on the Little Creek Christmas count on 31 December (F. C. Burford, Gisela Grimm, and Virginia Hank).

But it was really late January before most areas recorded the birds. In the Arlington-Alexandria-Fairfax area there were many feeder reports beginning in late January, and at Valerie Kitchens's home in Arlington, the peak count was 15-20 on 3 March 1978 and the last bird was seen here on 4 April. Mrs. E. D. Peacock banded a total of 18 at Fairfax during the period. Southeastern Virginia had a few records in addition to those above including 1 at Craney Island, Portsmouth, on 14 January (D. L. Hughes) and again the next day (R. L. Ake and G. M. Williamson), 1 banded at Newport News on 14 February and another 18-19 March (D. L. Mitchell), and single birds banded at Hampton on 2 and 15 March and last seen on 17 March (W. P. Smith). Also on the Coastal Plain were 4-6 at Kingsmill, James City County, on 10-22 February (Bill Williams), 1 in York County 11-18 February (Melvyn Schiavelli and Williams), and 1 near Mt. Holly, Westmoreland County, from 27 February to 13 March (Enoch and Sylvia Johnson).

On the Piedmont Margaret O'Bryan saw about 15 the last week of January at Glen Allen, Hanover County, and John Bazuin noted 16 in extreme northern Fluvanna County on 9 February and 3 at Green Springs, Louisa County, on 12 March. One to 2 were seen near Charlottesville between 22 January and 11 February (B. W. Keelan and T. F. Wieboldt), and Keelan additionally saw 29 here on 26 February. The peak count in the Lynchburg area was 33 in early February (P. E. McQuarry).

Although there were rumors of "large flocks" of redpolls in the northern Shenandoah Valley, precise information was not available. In Rockingham County there were some 15 reports in all between 23 January and 1 March, according to Kathleen Finnegan, with a peak of 40 at McGeheysville on the initial date. The 23rd of January was also the first date of observation at Waynesboro, when 25 were found by Ruth Snyder. Eighteen near Monterey on 25 February were the only report received from Highland County (John and Thelma Dalmas). In Botetourt County a flock of 17 remained near Daleville from 29 January to 19 February (Mike Purdy, Jerry Via, Barry Kinzie, and others), and another flock of 20 north of Daleville was present from 25 February to 12 March (Kinzie, Myriam Moore, John Pancake, *et al.*). An additional 6 birds were found at a feeder near Troutville on 12 March (Jim Ayres and Kinzie).

The Raven

JOURNAL OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

VOLUME 50

SEPTEMBER 1979

NUMBER 3



Courtesy of Walter Weber

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The Virginia Society of Ornithology, Inc., exists to encourage the systematic study of birds in Virginia, to stimulate interest in birds, and to assist the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources. All persons interested in those objectives are welcome as members. Present membership includes every level of interest, from professional scientific ornithologists to enthusiastic amateurs.

Activities undertaken by the Society include the following:

1. An annual meeting (usually in the spring), held in a different part of the state each year, featuring talks on ornithological subjects and field trips to nearby areas.

2. Other forays or field trips, lasting a day or more and scheduled throughout the year so as to include all seasons and to cover the major physiographic regions of the state.

3. A journal, *The Raven*, published quarterly, containing articles about Virginia ornithology, as well as news of the activities of the Society and its chapters.

4. Study projects (nesting studies, winter bird population surveys, etc.) aimed at making genuine contributions to ornithological knowledge.

In addition, local chapters of the Society, located in some of the larger cities and towns of Virginia, conduct their own programs of meetings, field trips, and other projects.

Those wishing to participate in any of the above activities or to cooperate in advancing the objectives of the Society are cordially invited to join. Annual dues are \$2.00 for junior members (students), \$5.00 for active members, \$7.50 for sustaining members, \$15.00 or more for contributing members, \$150.00 for life members, and \$9.00 for family members (limited to husband, wife, and their dependent children).

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Published four times a year in March, June, September, and December at Richmond, Virginia. Membership includes subscription to *The Raven*. Annual subscription price to nonmembers is \$6.00. Individual issues, when available, are priced at \$1.50 for current ones, \$1.00 for those dated from 1971 through 1975, and 75¢ for those prior to 1971 (plus postage).

THE KERR RESERVOIR FORAY OF JUNE 1977

F. R. SCOTT

The tenth in the recent series of breeding-bird forays sponsored by the VSO was held in the area about John H. Kerr Reservoir in southcentral Virginia from 7 to 12 June 1977 with 27 observers participating. Headquarters was the Lake Motel at Clarksville, and a number of participants camped out at nearby Oconeechee State Park. Paul E. McQuarry was very helpful in supplying information about local accommodations and possible field trip locations.

The foray area extended from southern Brunswick County on the east to South Boston and southern and eastern Halifax County on the west and included the entire southern half of Mecklenburg County in between. The linear distance involved here was about 75 miles across the eastern half of the Piedmont adjacent to the North Carolina line. The focus of the area was Kerr Reservoir (also often known by its old name of Buggs Island Lake), which was built on the Roanoke and Dan Rivers by the Army Corps of Engineers between 1946 and 1953 as a flood-control and hydroelectric project. The Roanoke is also known locally here as the Staunton River. This 50,000-acre reservoir with an 800-mile shoreline is partially in North Carolina, but all field work on this foray was confined to Virginia. The reservoir is principally in Mecklenburg County, but a small part of the western end is in both eastern Halifax and southern Charlotte Counties. Just downstream and east of Kerr Dam on the Roanoke River is Lake Gaston, only the western half of which is in Virginia. While the level of Kerr Reservoir fluctuates considerably, Lake Gaston, being strictly a hydroelectric project, is relatively stable, a situation that is necessary for the development of marshes. The shoreline of Kerr Reservoir tends to be rather sterile for marsh-type birds.

The drainage here, of course, is southeastward, and both the Roanoke and Meherrin Rivers eventually empty into Albemarle Sound, North Carolina. Elevations on the foray area ranged from about 150 feet along the Meherrin River to about 525 feet in eastern Halifax County. The normal lake water levels are at 200 feet at Lake Gaston and 300 feet at Kerr Reservoir.

Some of the areas named in the annotated list are noted here by county, roughly from east to west:

Southern Brunswick County—Seward Forest (just south of Ante), Pea Hill Creek (a northern tributary of Lake Gaston), Gasburg, and Meherrin River.

Southeastern Mecklenburg County—western Lake Gaston, including Smith Creek, Goodes Ferry Bridge (U. S. 1), and Elm Hill Wildlife Management Area, Kerr Dam, Forksburg (near Meherrin River), La Crosse, Lake Gordon (southwest of South Hill), Boynton, and Eagle Point (north side of reservoir).

Southwestern Mecklenburg County—Oconeechee State Park, Clarksville, Bluestone Creek, and Buffalo Springs.

Eastern and southern Halifax County—Staunton River State Park (at confluence of Roanoke and Dan Rivers), Hyco and Banister Rivers, South Boston, and Paces.

Land use in the foray area was a mixture of farmland and woodland with a few urban areas. Farms were mostly in grains and hay with a few pastures, while woodlands were mainly pine plantations and mixed pine and hardwoods.

The reservoir and Lake Gaston, of course, flooded out vast areas of bottomland hardwoods, and this habitat was quite limited, the best areas being on the Banister, Dan, Hyco, and Roanoke Rivers in Halifax County. Future field workers here would do well to cover as much of the Meherrin River bottomlands as possible, an area poorly worked during this foray. Of the urban areas, only Clarksville and South Boston were covered on this project.

Except for John B. Lewis's annotated list of the birds of Brunswick County, published in 1938 but based on observations made—incredibly—between 1912 and 1928, and a short note by Lynch (1974), there seems to be little published on the birds of this area except for numerous isolated field notes in *Audubon Field Notes*, *American Birds*, and *The Raven* (including Christmas bird counts between 1974 and 1977) and a paper on the Cliff Swallow (Grant and Quay, 1977). No extensive literature search has been made, however.

The weather during the period can best be described as very windy and unseasonably cool. Temperatures got down to 46° on the morning of 8 June and never got over 75°. A light rain on the morning of the 9th till 11 a.m. was the only precipitation. The wind and cool temperatures certainly inhibited the singing of some species, and for this reason and others, the absence or low numbers of some species should be interpreted with care. No field project of this length covering an area this large can be expected to provide a definitive list of the breeding birds under even ideal conditions.

Foray participants recorded 122 species during the 6-day period, and 2 more were seen on 25 June. In addition, evidence was found of the possible presence of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, though no birds were actually seen or heard. Species looked for but *not* seen included Pied-billed Grebe, Black-crowned Night Heron, Bald Eagle, Black-billed Cuckoo, Common Nighthawk, Tree Swallow, Black-and-white and Cerulean Warblers, and Henslow's and Bachman's Sparrows. Lewis (1938) noted the Black-and-white Warbler as a "fairly common summer resident" in Brunswick County, and Lynch (1974) found one in southeastern Mecklenburg County on 10 June 1973. Lewis also reported "several records" of Bachman's Sparrows, and a singing individual of this species was noted just a mile across the North Carolina border on 7 June 1976 (LeGrand, 1976).

The operating procedures for this project were the same as those for previous breeding-bird forays. Different parties covered different areas each day, and the most interesting areas were covered repeatedly by different parties on different days, thus compensating for varying weather conditions and abilities of observers. The field work was well distributed over the three principal counties of the foray area. A field card was submitted for each area covered by every party, and a total of 43 field cards were turned in, edited, tabulated, and then summarized in the annotated list.

The following observers are identified by last name only in the annotated list: Mary Arginteanu, Floy Burford, John H. Dalmas, John W. Dillard, Keith Fielder, Gisela Grimm, Barry Kinzie, YuLee Lerner, Harry E. LeGrand, Jr., J. Merrill Lynch, Paul McQuarry, Norwood C. Middleton, Dorothy Mitchell, Isabel Obenschain, Bill Opengari, John Pancake, Katherine Rice, Crysti Rosser, F. R. Scott, and C. E. Stevens. The 25 June observations were made by John and Thelma Dalmas. All general statements describing abundance in the annotated list (common, uncommon, etc.) apply to the entire

foray area (southern Brunswick and Mecklenburg Counties and southeastern Halifax County) unless clearly indicated otherwise.

Common Loon. One record, a single bird on the reservoir near Kerr Dam on 8 June (Middleton and Opengari). Since it was not seen again, this was probably a very late migrant.

Horned Grebe. Although not seen on the foray, a bird in breeding plumage was found at Kerr Dam on 25 June (Dalmases).

Double-crested Cormorant. Two records. One immature was seen near Kerr Dam on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch) and probably the same bird again nearby on 10 June (McQuarry and Rice).

Great Blue Heron. Fairly common locally on the western end of Lake Gaston and on Kerr Reservoir near the dam. Not recorded elsewhere. The peak count was 10 on Lake Gaston on 8 June (Middleton and Opengari). There appears to be no breeding evidence for this species for the Piedmont.

Great Heron. Fairly common throughout the area with a maximum count of 12 in southeastern Mecklenburg County on 8 June (Mitchell *et al.*). Two immatures were seen with 2 adults at Smith Creek marsh on 11 June (Dalmases).

Cattle Egret. Two records. Two were seen near Goodes Ferry Bridge over Lake Gaston on 7 June (LeGrand *et al.*), and one was seen flying up Lake Gaston near Smith Creek on 9 June (McQuarry and Rice).

Snowy Egret. One record, a single bird at Smith Creek marsh and rt. 712 on 8 June (Middleton and Opengari). This appears to be the first June record for Piedmont Virginia.

Least Bittern. One was found near Goodes Ferry Bridge on 7 June (LeGrand *et al.*) and again on 12 June (Dalmases and Scott). There are few previous summer records for the Piedmont in Virginia.

Wood Stork. This was not found on the foray, but one immature was flushed from a marsh near Goodes Ferry Bridge on 25 June (Dalmases). This was only the third record for Virginia's Piedmont.

Mallard. Rather uncommon with up to 7 reported by numerous parties on western Lake Gaston and near Staunton River State Park. Two were also found on Pea Hill Creek on 6 June (LeGrand). A pair with 2 young were seen along rt. 344 near Staunton River State Park on 8 June (Larner and Obenschain).

Black Duck. One record. Two were seen near Goodes Ferry Bridge on 11 June (Arginteanu and Scott).

Wood Duck. Fairly common throughout the area with a peak count of 26 adults on a pond just south of western Lake Gaston on 10 June (McQuarry and Rice). Broods of young were noted at Lake Gordon on 9 June (McQuarry and Rice), Elm Hill lake on 11 June (Dalmases), and near Staunton River Park on 10 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Ruddy Duck. One record, a single bird near Staunton River Park on 10 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Red-breasted Merganser. A single bird in female plumage was present below Kerr Dam from 8 to 12 June and was seen by numerous observers including Dalmases and Opengari.

Turkey Vulture. Common with a maximum count of 26 between Gasburg and Kerr Dam on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch).

Black Vulture. Common in southern Brunswick and southeastern Mecklenburg Counties with a high count here of 40 on 7 June (LeGrand *et al.*). Only fairly

common west of here with a peak of 8 near Staunton River Park on 10 June (Kinzie and Opengari).

Sharp-shinned Hawk. Two records. One was seen along the Banister River near rt. 16 on 10 June (Pancake) and two at Eagle Point on 11 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Cooper's Hawk. Two records. Single birds were found near Kerr Dam on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch) and near Staunton River Park on 10 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Red-tailed Hawk. Common with a maximum of 9 in eastern Halifax County on 10 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Red-shouldered Hawk. Two records. Single birds were seen near Kerr Dam (Fielder and Rosser) and near Paces (Stevens), both on 10 June.

Broad-winged Hawk. Uncommon throughout the area with reports from nine parties and a peak count of only 2.

Osprey. Single birds (possibly the same one) were noted by four parties on western Lake Gaston and Kerr Reservoir west to Clarksville between 7 and 11 June. One was also seen near Gasburg on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch). Mitchell Byrd made a complete aerial survey of the shoreline of the reservoir and Lake Gaston on 9 April 1977 but could find no evidence of nesting Ospreys (*personal communication*).

American Kestrel. Two records. Single birds were reported in the Kerr Dam area on 9 June (Kinzie *et al.*) and 11 June (Middleton and Opengari).

Bobwhite. Common with a high count of 60 in the Gasburg and Kerr Dam areas on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch).

Turkey. One record, 2 birds off rt. 644 in southern Brunswick County on 10 June (Dalmas and Middleton).

King Rail. Two records. One was seen at Elm Hill on 8 June (Mitchell *et al.*), and another was observed repeatedly when it responded to a tape at a marshy pond south of western Lake Gaston on 10 June (McQuarry and Rice). At the latter site an empty platform nest found on a sedge tussock probably belonged to this species. There are few previous records of this bird for Piedmont Virginia.

American Coot. One record, a single bird at a mud flat on the Roanoke River, Charlotte County, upstream from Staunton River Park on 11 June (McQuarry *et al.*).

Semipalmated Plover. One record, a single bird feeding with 7 unidentified "peeps" on the exposed rocks just below Kerr Dam on 10 June (Fielder and Rosser).

Killdeer. Fairly common with a maximum count of 9 in the Kerr Dam area on 10 June (Fielder and Rosser).

American Woodcock. Two records. Single birds were found along the Meherrin River in extreme western Brunswick County on 11 June and near Goodes Ferry Bridge on 12 June (both Stevens).

Greater Yellowlegs. One record, a single bird flying and calling below Kerr Dam on 11 June (Dalmas).

White-rumped Sandpiper. One record, 3 birds on a mud flat on the Roanoke River, Charlotte County, upstream from Staunton River Park on 11 June (McQuarry *et al.*). This appears to be a late spring migration record for the Piedmont.

Herring Gull. Two records, single subadult birds seen near Kerr Dam on 8 June (Middleton and Opengari) and 10 June (McQuarry and Rice). These appear to be the first June records for the Piedmont.

Ring-billed Gull. Rather uncommon in western Lake Gaston and on Kerr Reservoir west to the Staunton River Park area. The peak count was 9 subadults near Kerr Dam on 10 June (McQuarry and Rice).

Forster's Tern. One record, 2 subadult birds at Staunton River Park on 10 June (Mitchell *et al.*). This appears to be the only early summer record for Virginia's Piedmont.

Common Tern. One record, 3 adults at Staunton River Park on 10 June (Scott *et al.*). This was the first June record for Piedmont Virginia.

Caspian Tern. One record, 2 birds flying toward the west up Lake Gaston near Goodes Ferry Bridge on 9 June (McQuarry and Rice).

Rock Dove. Common with a high count of 36.

Mourning Dove. Common with a peak of 120 in the Gasburg to Kerr Dam area on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch). Mitchell and others saw an adult nest building near Staunton River Park on 10 June.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Common with a peak of 22 along the Roanoke River in Halifax County on 10 June (Kinzie and Opengari).

Screech Owl. Uncommon with only four reports totaling 5 birds. Recorded only at Lake Gordon, near Goodes Ferry Bridge, and at Occoneechee State Park.

Great Horned Owl. Two records, one near Clarksville on 9 June (Mitchell *et al.*) and one at Occoneechee Park on 11 June (Fielder and Rosser).

Barred Owl. Uncommon with reports only from Lake Gordon, near Kerr Dam, near Boydton, and Occoneechee Park. The peak count was 5 at the last location on 11 June (Fielder and Rosser).

Chuck-will's-widow. Uncommon with only five reports from Gasburg west only to Occoneechee Park. Peak counts were 3 near Gasburg on 9 June (Scott *et al.*) and 3 near Occoneechee Park on 11 June (Kinzie and Pancake).

Whip-poor-will. Common with a maximum of 27 along U.S. 58 near Boydton on 12 June (Dalmas and Scott).

Chimney Swift. Common with a high count of 30.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Common with three peak counts of 6 each.

Belted Kingfisher. Fairly common with two maximum counts of 4 each. At Lake Gordon, McQuarry and Rice found a nest in a clay bank on 9 June containing 2 or more fully feathered young.

Common Flicker. Common throughout the area. The high count was 18 in the Staunton River Park area on 10 June (Mitchell *et al.*). An adult was carrying food at Occoneechee Park (Grimm *et al.*) and a pair was seen at a nesting hole near South Boston (Larner and Obenschain), both on 8 June.

Pileated Woodpecker. Fairly common with a peak of 5.

Red-bellied Woodpecker. Common throughout with a maximum count of 21 along the Roanoke River in Halifax County on 10 June (Kinzie and Pancake). On 8 June Grimm and others found two different adults, each accompanied by one young bird, at Occoneechee Park.

Red-headed Woodpecker. One record, 2 birds near Gasburg on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch).

Hairy Woodpecker. Uncommon with a peak of only 4.

Downy Woodpecker. Common throughout, although the peak count was only 11.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker. Although no individuals of this species were found, two apparently inactive nesting colonies were located on 9 June in the Seward Forest of Brunswick County just south of Ante (Dillard, Pancake, and Scott). These had been located earlier in the year by Mitchell Byrd (*personal communication*) and may have been the same colonies reported in 1972 (Scott, 1973).

Eastern Kingbird. Common with a high count of 25 in the Gasburg to Kerr Dam area on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch).

Great Crested Flycatcher. Common throughout the area. The peak count was 14 in Oconeechee Park on 8 June (Grimm *et al.*).

Eastern Phoebe. Fairly common throughout but the maximum count was only 5 reported by two separate parties. Young in the nest were noted at Staunton River Park on 9 June (Burford *et al.*) and near Forksville on 11 June (Stevens).

Acadian Flycatcher. Common with a peak count of 44 in eastern Halifax County on 10 June (Kinzie and Opengari). On the same date Kinzie and Opengari found a nest with young along the Hyco River near U. S. 58.

Willow Flycatcher. One record, a singing bird along the Roanoke River in Halifax County on 10 June (Kinzie and Opengari).

Eastern Wood Pewee. Common with a high count of 20 at Oconeechee Park on 9 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Horned Lark. Two records. Three were found in two areas near La Crosse on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch) and a pair was noted at Eagle Point on 11 June (Middleton *et al.*).

Rough-winged Swallow. Fairly common with a maximum of 12 in the Gasburg to Kerr Dam area on 7 June (LeGrand *et al.*). A nest with 5 young was found in a clay bank near Kerr Dam on 10 June (Pancake *et al.*).

Barn Swallow. Very common with a peak count of 70 on 8 June, mostly along western Lake Gaston (LeGrand and Lynch). Nests with young were noted under bridges at Pea Hill Creek on 8 June (Pancake *et al.*), Goodes Ferry on 9 June (McQuarry and Rice), and Banister River at rt. 304 on 10 June (Scott *et al.*).

Cliff Swallow. Common in western Lake Gaston (including Pea Hill Creek) and in Kerr Reservoir west to the Clarksville area and Bluestone Creek; less common farther west, and none were seen west of the Staunton River Park area. Peak counts were 60 on 7 June, mostly on western Lake Gaston (LeGrand *et al.*) and only 6 at Staunton River Park on 8 June (Larner and Obenschain). Adults were feeding young in nests at Pea Hill Creek bridge on 8 June (Pancake *et al.*), Goodes Ferry Bridge on 9 June (McQuarry and Rice) and on 11 June (Arginteanu and Scott), and Clarksville and Bluestone Creek on 10 June (Scott *et al.*). Estimates of numbers of active nests included 6 on Pea Hill Creek bridge, 28 on Goodes Ferry Bridge, 24 under U. S. 15 bridge south of Clarksville, 84 under U. S. 58 bridge at Clarksville, and 30 under U. S. 15 bridge at Bluestone Creek. There were also numerous pairs nesting on Kerr Dam itself, but these were effective hidden from observation. Twenty Cliff Swallow nests under the U. S. 58 bridge over the Hyco River on 10 June had apparently all been taken over by House Sparrows, and no Cliff Swallows were seen here (Kinzie and Opengari). A few nests had also been taken over by House Sparrows under Goodes Ferry Bridge and at Bluestone Creek.

The Cliff Swallow was first discovered nesting around Kerr Reservoir in 1966 by Paul W. Sykes, Jr., and Thomas L. Quay (Scott and Cutler, 1966) and further observations were made in 1967 (Scott and Cutler, 1967) and in 1969 (Grant and Quay, 1977). This area now contains the largest breeding population of these birds in Virginia. The best count of active nests, made in 1967 by Sykes and Browne (Scott and Cutler, 1967), was a minimum of 183. The 172 active nests partially estimated in 1977 were admittedly an incomplete count, since many potential nesting sites were not checked.

Purple Martin. Rather uncommon and local with most records near Kerr Dam, Clarksville, and Oconeechee Park. There were no reports from Halifax County. The peak count was 16 at Oconeechee Park on 9 June (Middleton). The only

nesting colony found was a small one in Clarksville on 8 June with an unknown number of active nests (Dillard and Scott).

Blue Jay. Common throughout the area. The high count was 40 in the Gasburg to Kerr Dam area on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch), and a pair feeding fledged young was observed at Staunton River Park on 9 June (Burford *et al.*).

Common Crow. Common with a maximum count of 65 in the Gasburg to Kerr Dam area on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch).

Fish Crow. Two records. A pair was noted flying over Seward Forest just south of Ante on 9 June (Scott *et al.*), and 1 to 2 were seen by three parties near Kerr Dam on 11 June (Kinzie *et al.*).

Carolina Chickadee. Common with a peak of 37 in the Clarksville area on 9 June (Mitchell *et al.*). Adults feeding fledged young were noted at Occoneechee Park on 8 June (Grimm *et al.*) and 9 June (Kinzie *et al.*).

Tufted Titmouse. Common throughout. The high count was 24 in the Clarksville area on 9 June (Mitchell *et al.*), and a pair feeding 3 fledged young was observed at Occoneechee Park on 9 June (Kinzie *et al.*).

White-breasted Nuthatch. Uncommon and local. The best counts were at Occoneechee Park where 6 were recorded on 9 June (Mitchell *et al.*). Not reported from Brunswick County.

Brown-headed Nuthatch. Uncommon but well distributed over the foray area. The maximum count was 10 at Occoneechee Park where adults were also found feeding fledged young, all on 9 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

House Wren. Scarce and very local with only 7 birds reported by four parties. Found only in the Kerr Dam area, Clarksville, and along the Roanoke River in Halifax County.

Carolina Wren. Common with a peak count of 22. Kinzie and others saw a pair of adults with 4 fledged young at Occoneechee Park on 9 June.

Long-billed Marsh Wren. Rare and local. Found only in a cattail marsh on Lake Gaston just east of Goodes Ferry Bridge where the best count was 5 males and 1 female on 7 June (LeGrand *et al.*). A nest with 4-5 eggs was located here on 7 June (LeGrand *et al.*), 2 different adults were nest building on 12 June (Dalmás and Scott), and another nest with 2 eggs was discovered here on 25 June by the Dalmases. There are few previous summer records for Piedmont Virginia.

Mockingbird. Common throughout. The best count was 70 in the Gasburg-Kerr Dam area on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch).

Gray Catbird. Common with a peak count of 20 in the Elm Hill area on 8 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Brown Thrasher. Common. The high count was 24 in the Staunton River Park area on 10 June (Mitchell *et al.*). A pair was noted nest building near Staunton River Park on 8 June by Larner and Obenschain, and Mitchell and others located a nest with 3 eggs at Occoneechee Park on 9 June.

American Robin. Common with a peak count of 44 at Staunton River Park on 9 June (Burford *et al.*). Kinzie and others found an adult feeding a fledged young at Occoneechee Park on 9 June.

Wood Thrush. Common throughout. The best counts were 47 at Occoneechee Park on 8 June (Grimm *et al.*) and 40 in the Staunton River Park area on 10 June (Mitchell *et al.*). There were numerous indications of breeding including an adult nest building and 2 different adults feeding 1 fledged young each, all at Occoneechee Park on 9 June (Kinzie *et al.*), and fledged broods at Staunton River Park on

8 June (Larner and Obenschain) and 10 June (2 broods—Mitchell *et al.* and Scott *et al.*).

Eastern Bluebird. Common with a maximum count of 28 in the Gasburg-Kerr Dam area on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Fairly common. The high count for the foray was 12 in eastern Halifax County on 10 June (Kinzie and Opengari). There were 3 fledged young at Kerr Dam on 8 June (Dillard and Scott).

Loggerhead Shrike. Rather uncommon and local in southern Brunswick and southeastern Mecklenburg Counties, where the peak count was 12 on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch). There were no reports in Mecklenburg west of the Kerr Dam area and only two reports of single birds in eastern Halifax County, both on 10 June, one each by Scott *et al.* and Pancake. Kinzie and Pancake located an adult feeding 3 fully fledged young southeast of La Crosse on 11 June.

Starling. Abundant with a high count of 90.

White-eyed Vireo. Rather common. The best count was 12 in the Elm Hill area on 8 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Yellow-throated Vireo. Fairly common but the maximum count was only 4 around western Lake Gaston on 11 June (Dalmas).

Solitary Vireo. One record, a single bird heard singing (but not seen) along rt. 626 near rt. 624 in eastern Mecklenburg County on 11 June (Mitchell *et al.*). Attempts to locate this species near Gasburg in southern Brunswick County, where 3 singing birds had been found by LeGrand the previous year on 7 June 1966 (Scott, 1977), were unsuccessful.

Red-eyed Vireo. Common with three peak counts of over 40.

Warbling Vireo. One record, a single bird along the Banister River on 10 June (Pancake).

Prothonotary Warbler. Uncommon and local in Halifax County with 10 birds reported by six parties along the Roanoke, Banister, Hyco, and Dan Rivers. Two additional birds were found along Miles Creek just north of Lake Gordon on 10 June (Dalmas and Middleton). There were no reports elsewhere.

Worm-eating Warbler. Two records. A pair was noted at Oconeechee Park on 8 June (Grimm *et al.*), and 2 were found at Staunton River Park on 10 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Northern Parula Warbler. Fairly common but somewhat local. The best count was 9 along Lake Gaston east of Kerr Dam on 8 June (Middleton and Opengari).

Yellow Warbler. Fairly common in southern Brunswick and southeastern Mecklenburg Counties with a peak count of 15 from Gasburg to Kerr Dam on 7 June (LeGrand *et al.*). Uncommon in western Mecklenburg and eastern Halifax County with only 6 birds reported by four parties.

Yellow-throated Warbler. Uncommon to fairly common in bottomland hardwoods as well as in the pinewoods around the shoreline of Kerr Reservoir. Locally common along the Roanoke River in Halifax County. Kinzie and Opengari recorded 31 in eastern Halifax County on 10 June.

Blackpoll Warbler. One record, 2 late migrants in the Elm Hill area on 8 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Pine Warbler. Very common, unquestionably the most abundant warbler in the area. The maximum count was 36 in the Gasburg-Kerr Dam area on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch), but there were three other counts of over 30. Grimm and others recorded three broods of fledged young at Oconeechee Park on 8 June, and Kinzie and others found another brood here the following day.

Prairie Warbler. Fairly common. The high count was 12 in southern Brunswick County on 8 June where an adult feeding fledged young was also found near Hobbs Chapel in Seward Forest (Pancake *et al.*).

Ovenbird. Fairly common with a peak of 14 in southern Brunswick County on 8 June (Pancake *et al.*). Grimm and others noted an adult feeding one fledged young at Occoneechee Park on 8 June.

Louisiana Waterthrush. Uncommon and local. The best counts were only 5 along the Hyco River on 9 June (Arginteanu and Opengari) and 6 along the Meherrin River near Forksville on 11 June (Stevens).

Kentucky Warbler. Uncommon with a high count of only 7 along the Meherrin River near Forksville on 11 June (Stevens). On the same date Stevens found a nest with 4 eggs near here in western Brunswick County.

Common Yellowthroat. Common throughout the foray area. The peak count of 38 was totaled by Mitchell and others in the Elm Hill area on 8 June.

Yellow-breasted Chat. Common with a high count of 25 in the Gasburg-Kerr Dam area on 7 June (LeGrand *et al.*).

Hooded Warbler. Fairly common but somewhat local. Scott and others recorded the maximum count of 7 in southern Brunswick County on 9 June.

American Redstart. Fairly common, the peak count being 10 in eastern Halifax County on 10 June (Kinzie and Opengari).

House Sparrow. Abundant. Mitchell and others counted 265 in eastern Halifax County (including South Boston) on 10 June. House Sparrows were found nesting in several Cliff Swallow colonies (see Cliff Swallow for details).

Bobolink. One record, a pair—including a singing male—in a red clover field at Elm Hill on 12 June (Dalmas and Scott). The birds could not be relocated here on 25 June (Dalmases).

Eastern Meadowlark. Common throughout the area. LeGrand and Lynch totaled 80 in the Gasburg-Kerr Dam area on 8 June. An adult feeding 3 fledged young was located near Kerr Dam on 9 June (Kinzie *et al.*).

Red-winged Blackbird. Common. The peak count of 110 was recorded by McQuarry and Rice along the south shore of Lake Gaston west of I-85 on 10 June. The same observers found a nest with 4 eggs near Goodes Ferry Bridge on 9 June and 2 fledged young near Kerr Dam on 10 June.

Orchard Oriole. Common in southern Brunswick and southeastern Mecklenburg Counties; fairly common in western Mecklenburg and eastern Halifax Counties. LeGrand and others recorded the high count of 35 in the Gasburg-Kerr Dam area on 7 June, but the peak in Halifax County was only 8 on 10 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Northern Oriole. One record, 2 along the Roanoke River in Halifax County on 10 June (Kinzie and Opengari).

Common Grackle. Abundant. There were several counts of over a hundred and the highest was 233 on the south shore of Lake Gaston near Kerr Dam on 10 June (McQuarry and Rice).

Brown-headed Cowbird. Rather common with a high count of 23 in the Elm Hill area on 8 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Scarlet Tanager. Common. Counts were generally no higher than 4 birds, but at Occoneechee Park Grimm and others totaled 17 on 8 June and Mitchell and others counted 16 on 9 June. A female was nest building at Staunton River Park on 8 June (Larner and Obenschain).

Summer Tanager. Common with a peak of 19 at Occoneechee Park on 8 June (Grimm *et al.*). A female was feeding young in the nest south of Clarksville on 9 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Cardinal. Common. LeGrand and Lynch totaled 48 in the Gasburg-Kerr Dam area on 8 June.

Blue Grosbeak. Common throughout the area. The maximum count was 38 in the Gasburg-Kerr Dam area on 8 June (LeGrand and Lynch).

Indigo Bunting. Very common with the best count being 70 in eastern Halifax County on 10 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Dickcissel. Dalmas and Middleton found a singing male in a hay field just south of rt. 624 on rt. 626 in eastern Mecklenburg County on 10 June. Several parties observed both the male and a female at the same site on the following day. Kinzie, Pancake, Mitchell, and others all noted the female carrying food, but attempts to locate a nest or young were unsuccessful. By 25 June the field had been mowed, and the birds could not be found (Dalmases).

American Goldfinch. Common. The maximum count of 44 was obtained by Mitchell and others in the Elm Hill area on 8 June.

Rufous-sided Towhee. Common throughout with a high count of 30 in the Elm Hill area on 8 June (Mitchell *et al.*).

Grasshopper Sparrow. Common in southern Brunswick and southeastern Mecklenburg Counties. None were found in western Mecklenburg, and the only Halifax record was 3 on 10 June (Scott *et al.*). Kinzie and Pancake had the peak count of 23 in the Kerr Dam area on 11 June where the same observers found an adult carrying food on the same day.

Chipping Sparrow. Common throughout the area. Mitchell and others had the peak count of 32 in eastern Halifax County on 10 June.

Field Sparrow. Common with a high count of 45 around western Lake Gaston on 11 June (Dalmas).

Song Sparrow. Fairly common locally in suburban South Boston with a maximum of 6 singing birds on 10 June (Scott *et al.*). Rare elsewhere with only three records, one at Elm Hill on 7 June (LeGrand *et al.*), one along the Roanoke River in Halifax County on 10 June (Kinzie and Opengari), and 2 near Goodes Ferry Bridge on 12 June (Stevens).

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WOOD STORKS IN WESTERN VIRGINIA

TURNER N. CLINARD

On Friday evening, 11 August 1978, George Treadwell told me of an unusual long-legged wader he had seen on the Emory & Henry College campus at Emory, Washington County, Virginia. At daylight the next morning, 12 August, I saw the Wood Stork, *Mycteria americana*, feeding by a small stream which flows through the campus and pond. It was immediately identifiable because of its distinctive markings: the long, heavy, down-curved bill, the dark gray head and neck, the black stilt-like legs, and white feathers, with just a trace of black showing under the wings and in the tail. The bird was well over 3 feet tall. I watched it at 50 to 75 feet with 6x30 binoculars for nearly 2 hours as it stepped or flew awkwardly from one little pool of water to another. In flight its neck was extended as well as its legs, and the black flight feathers were highly conspicuous. The early morning was cloudy, and because of the size of the bird, I assumed it to be an adult. But I called John Wright from Abingdon to come and corroborate the identification. By the time he arrived the light was better, and we could see some gray and white down on the head as well as some yellow in the bill. It was an immature bird. John Wright took three pictures.

According to E. E. Scott (personal communication to F. R. Scott), another immature Wood Stork was found by Carolyn Peters near Nickelsville, Scott County, Virginia, roughly 35 miles west of Emory, also on 11 August, and was relocated about 2 miles away on 13 August by Scott and several other persons. This bird was photographed in color, and the print clearly shows the yellow bill of an immature. Apparently there was a mild postbreeding flight of these birds northward since there were other records about the same time near Portville, New York, and Raleigh County, West Virginia (*American Birds*, 33: 175 and 176, 1979).

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POSSIBLE NESTING ATTEMPT BY AVOCETS IN VIRGINIA

JENNIFER S. DILLON

On the morning of 27 June 1975 I observed a group of approximately 55 American Avocets, *Recurvirostra americana*, on a mudflat near a marsh on the southwest corner of Craney Island landfill in Portsmouth, Virginia. The avocets were associated with a mixed species flock including Semipalmated Plovers, *Charadrius semipalmatus*, Killdeer, *C. vociferus*, Lesser Yellowlegs, *Tringa flavipes*, Short-billed Dowitchers, *Limnodromus griseus*, Least Sandpipers, *Calidris minutilla*, and Stilt Sandpipers, *Micropalama himantopus*. Although some of the avocets were feeding, many were standing or lying (squatting) on the mudflat. There were several instances of what seemed to be agonistic behavior among the nonfeeders; these interactions included one bird flying at another with bill extended, two birds running at one another, and vocalizations that I did not recognize.

Near these avocets were five scrapes that appeared to be nests. All were dug into the mud within a small area. Each was approximately 0.75 inch deep and 6 inches in diameter and was lined with bits of shell and segments of dry reeds. There were some pieces of reed scattered around the area of the nests also. None contained eggs.

Between this date and my next visit to Craney Island, there was at least one heavy rainstorm. When I returned to this area about 2 July, there was no trace of the five nests, although there was still a flock of avocets on the mudflat where the nests had been scraped out. Although other observers were at Craney Island during this period, no one else apparently noticed this nesting attempt, and it was almost surely unsuccessful.

There appears to be only one firm record of avocets breeding on the East Coast: two chicks were found at Pea Island, North Carolina, on 18 June 1968 (Chat, 42: 31-32, 1978).

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KINGBIRD NEST ON WOODEN PILING¹

ARTHUR F. HARRIS, JR.

On 15 June 1978 G. M. Silberhorn and I observed an Eastern Kingbird, *Tyrannus tyrannus*, hovering above a wooded piling on the south side of the Mattaponi River in King William County, Virginia. The piling stood 50 feet from the shoreline and 12 feet above mean high water. The kingbird landed atop the piling, and only the head and tail of the bird remained visible. As we drew near the piling, the kingbird flew over to another piling about 35 feet away and perched.

¹ Contribution No. 872 from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Gloucester Point, Virginia 23062.

On the top of the original piling was a nest about 6 inches in diameter and 3 inches deep; it was made of sticks, twigs, and shredded string and contained 3 nestlings. A. C. Bent (*Life Histories of North American Flycatchers, Larks, Swallows, and Their Allies*, 1942: 11-29) had no reports of the Eastern Kingbird nesting on such structures south of Michigan and Massachusetts where fence posts and dead tree stubs over water were used. The only mention of an artifice used as a nest southward was a gourd open on both sides in Beaufort County, South Carolina.

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IN MEMORIAM: D. RALPH HOSTETTER

D. Ralph Hostetter, former President of the Virginia Society of Ornithology, died at his home in Harrisonburg, Virginia, on 27 September 1978. Born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, on 1 February 1896, he was 84 years old at his death.

At the time of his death Dr. Hostetter was professor emeritus of biology at Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg. He joined the EMC faculty in 1923 and taught biology, botany, ornithology, and geology until his retirement in 1966, but he continued on a part-time basis until 1974. Until his recent illness he maintained the D. R. Hostetter Museum of Natural History which he started over 40 years ago. While teaching at college he served as first director of Eastern Mennonite High School from 1938 until 1957.

Dr. Hostetter served as a member of the Executive Committee (now the Board of Directors) of the Virginia Society of Ornithology from 1941 to 1946. He then served as President from 1 July 1952 to 30 June 1954. In *The Raven* of April 1954, J. J. Murray, Sr., noted that Dr. Hostetter "received the only Doctor's degree in ornithology ever given by a Virginia institution. This degree was awarded by the University of Virginia to Dr. D. Ralph Hostetter for his work on the life history of the Carolina Junco at Mountain Lake." A condensed version of his thesis appeared in volume 32 of *The Raven* (pages 97-170).

Dr. Hostetter was a charter member of the Harrisonburg chapter of the VSO, the Rockingham Bird Club. His experience and wise counsel will be missed by the VSO and his many friends and associates.

Dr. Hostetter is survived by his wife, the former Kathryn K. Kauffman, of Manheim, Pennsylvania, to whom he was married on 16 June 1921. Also surviving are two daughters, Kathryn E. Hostetter, of Harman, West Virginia, and Elizabeth L. Hostetter, of Nairobi, Kenya.

James W. Eike

LOCAL CHAPTERS OF THE VSO

This list of local chapters, compiled by Myriam P. Moore, chairman of the Local Chapters Committee, has been revised to May 1979. The number in parentheses after the chapter name is the approximate total number of members of that chapter.

1. Allegheny Highlands Bird Club (15), Clifton Forge
2. Augusta Bird Club (100), Staunton-Waynesboro
3. Bristol Bird Club (50), Bristol
4. Cape Henry Audubon Society (200), Norfolk
5. Charlottesville-Albemarle Bird Club (68), Charlottesville
6. Clinch Mountain Bird Club (14), Nickelsville
7. Clinch Valley Bird Club (40), Tazewell
8. Cumberland Bird Club (20), Wise
9. Danville Bird Club (20), Danville
10. Hampton Roads Bird Club (112), Newport News-Hampton
11. Lynchburg Bird Club (150), Lynchburg
12. Marion Bird Club (17), Marion
13. Montpelier Bird Club (25), Gordonsville-Orange
14. New River Bird Club (65), Blacksburg-Radford
15. Northern Neck Audubon Society (280), Kilmarnock-White Stone
16. Northern Virginia Chapter (150), Arlington-Fairfax
17. Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society, Middletown
18. Richmond Audubon Society (598), Richmond
19. Roanoke Valley Bird Club (139), Roanoke-Salem
20. Rockbridge Bird Club (15), Lexington
21. Rockingham Bird Club (65), Harrisonburg
22. Virginia Beach Audubon Society (200), Virginia Beach
23. Margaret H. Watson Bird Club (25), Darlington Heights
24. Williamsburg Bird Club (50), Williamsburg

THE 1979 VSO ANNUAL MEETING

ROBERT J. WATSON

The fiftieth anniversary meeting of the Virginia Society of Ornithology was held in May 1979 on the campus of Lynchburg College in Lynchburg, Virginia, where the society was organized in 1929. The President, Dr. J. J. Murray, Jr., opened the first session in Hopwood Hall at 8:05 p.m. on Friday, 18 May. He introduced Mrs. James W. (Grace Taylor) Wiltshire, of Lynchburg, a charter member, who extended a welcome. She described the first meeting of the society (at which she was present) on 7 December 1929 and paid tribute to Dr. Ruskin S. Freer, the first president of the VSO. The audience responded with a spontaneous ovation for Dr. Freer.

Dr. Murray turned the meeting over to Mrs. Myriam Moore, who presided over a program entitled "Spread Your Wings" prepared by the Local Chapters Committee. Mrs. YuLee Lerner, editor of the newly published volume, *Virginia's Birdlife: An Annotated Checklist* (a revised version of the 1952 *Checklist of the Birds of Virginia*), introduced the other members of the Records Committee who had assisted the publication. She then received an appropriately humorous gift presented by Mrs. Thelma Dalmas. Mrs. Ruth Beck suggested ways of using the *Checklist* to raise money for chapters. Mrs. Dalmas drew attention to the availability of a revised edition of the society's pocket checklist and of back issues of *The Raven* on sale. Mrs. Mary Smith summarized a successful fund-raising project carried out by the Rockingham Bird Club by selling bird seed. Mr. Bill Williams spoke on methods for keeping systematic field notes, and Mr. Jerry Via described "miniprograms" prepared by the Local Chapters Committee.

Dr. Robert J. Watson announced that the Board of Directors had tentatively approved a plan to raise money to award an annual prize in memory of the late Dr. J. J. Murray, Sr., a founder of the VSO and editor of *The Raven* for 40 years.

President Murray opened the business meeting at 9:40 p.m. Mrs. Dalmas, the Treasurer, drew attention to the most recent financial report (as of 1 January 1979) which had been published in the newsletter, noting, however, that the Publication Fund and the special Checklist Fund had been exhausted by the publication of the new *Checklist*.

Dr. Richard Peake, chairman of the Nominating Committee, submitted the following slate of nominees:

President: Robert L. Ake, Norfolk
Vice President: Mrs. M. W. Lerner, Jr., Staunton
Secretary: Robert J. Watson, Arlington
Treasurer: Mrs. John H. Dalmas, Lynchburg
Editor: F. R. Scott, Richmond
Board of Directors, Class of 1982:
J. William Akers, Danville
James W. Eike, Fairfax
Jerry W. Via, Dalesville

A motion to close the nominations and accept the slate as presented was passed without opposition.

Dr. Murray announced that the 1980 meeting would be held in Arlington on 16-18 May 1980.

Dr. Watson moved the adoption of a resolution to establish a special capital fund, the income from which would be used to grant an annual award, to be known as the J. J. Murray, Sr., prize, to encourage the study of ornithology in Virginia. The motion was carried.

On request of the President, Dr. Watson then submitted a proposal (approved by the Board of Directors at its last meeting) to change Article I, Section 2(c)(4) of the Bylaws to establish dues for Life Members at \$150 instead of \$125. This proposal, in the form of a motion, was approved. The meeting then adjourned.

Of the several field trips sponsored on Saturday morning, 19 May, under the leadership of the Lynchburg Bird Club, particular interest attached to a trip through the Blackwater Creek Natural Area in Lynchburg. At the conclusion of this trip, participants enjoyed an opportunity to take part in a dedication of the new nature preserve dedicated to Dr. Ruskin S. Freer and named in his honor.

Dr. Freer was the first speaker for the Saturday afternoon session, which took place in Hopwood Hall. He presented his reminiscences of early days in the VSO and some highlights of his many years of field work.

Dr. Robert O. Paxton, of Lexington and New York City, spoke on "The Art of Bird Study," the same topic on which he had addressed the VSO at its 25th anniversary meeting in 1954. Tracing changes in methods in the last 25 years, the speaker noted with some regret the tendency to carry "listing" to extremes and stressed the importance of activities that would add new ornithological knowledge. Two projects that have grown to prominence in the VSO since 1954 were organized hawk watching and breeding-bird forays to lesser known areas of the state. An important new project developed in Europe was the compilation of atlases of breeding birds; Dr. Paxton hoped that the next 50 years might see such an atlas prepared for Virginia.

Dr. Maurice Brooks, professor emeritus of biology at West Virginia University, discussed changes in bird life in Virginia (and nearby parts of West Virginia) since 1929. The Evening Grosbeak and the House Finch have appeared in Virginia and have become common; the Swainson's and Hermit Thrushes have appeared (or reappeared) as breeding birds. On the other hand, the Spotted Sandpiper, Whip-poor-will, Red-headed Woodpecker, Cliff Swallow, and Loggerhead Shrike have decreased. The Olive-sided Flycatcher, Bewick's Wren, Dickcissel, Lark Sparrow, and Bachman's Sparrow require careful observation to determine their present status in the state.

Looking to the future, Jerry W. Via, of VPISU, called attention to goals that should be accomplished during the next 50 years. These included more widespread and more careful recording of observations (especially from parts of the state not yet well known ornithologically); a stronger voice for the VSO in the conservation movement; and expansion of the society's membership. He exhorted VSO members to "spread our wings" in the ensuing half century.

Dr. Philip C. Shelton, of Clinch Valley College, summarized observations of northern species of birds on Mount Rogers during the 1978 breeding season. These included the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Swainson's and Hermit Thrushes, Magnolia Warbler, and Purple Finch. Dr. Shelton compared his observations with those recorded by Dr. J. J. Murray, Sr., on Mount Rogers in 1937.

An important program to restore the Peregrine Falcon in the eastern United States was described by D. S. Davis, of the College of William and Mary. The program involved "hacking" young birds (i.e., taking them from a nest and letting them mature under careful supervision). Five young Peregrines were hacked in 1978 at the Coast Guard station on Cobb Island (chosen because it was free from Great Horned Owls, a major enemy of young Peregrines). Two birds were lost, but three survived to maturity.

The annual banquet took place in Burton Hall, beginning at 8 p.m. President Murray called upon three founder-members to stand and be recognized: Dr. Freer (the first president), Mr. Almon O. English (the longest continuous

occupant of the presidency), and Mrs. Wiltshire (the society's only woman president thus far). Other former presidents in attendance were James W. Eike (who has held the presidency on two separate occasions), Charles W. Hacker, Mitchell A. Byrd, and Richard H. Peake. Among the other members present, Mrs. Floy Burford held the record for membership longevity with 49 years, followed by Mrs. J. J. Murray, Sr., with 48 years and Mr. Eike with 45 years.

Dr. Murray paid tribute to Mrs. Myriam Moore for her outstanding performance as the new editor of the VSO Newsletter. The audience responded with a standing ovation.

The annual Conservation Award was presented to Dr. Mitchell A. Byrd for his work on endangered species in Virginia. Seven of Dr. Byrd's students who have worked with him came forward to be recognized.

Another standing ovation was given to Mrs. J. J. Murray, Sr., wife of a founding member and mother of the current president. Resolutions extending grateful thanks and hearty congratulations to all those responsible for the meeting, tendered by the chairman of the Resolutions Committee, Mrs. W. A. Rothery, were carried by acclamation.

At the request of the President, Dr. Ernest Edwards, of Sweet Briar, introduced the principal speaker, Mr. Chandler S. Robbins, one of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mr. Robbins' topic was "Our Changing Bird Populations: Present Trends and a Look to the Future." Species that have declined in recent years included the Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Golden Eagle, Osprey, Great Horned Owl, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, Common Loon, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Whistling Swan. Various human activities, involving the destruction of habitat, have been responsible for declines in the numbers of certain species and also in the diversity of species. The Patuxent Wildlife Research Center has a number of projects underway to obtain more accurate data on bird populations. Mr. Robbins discussed the status of a number of species in Virginia and urged his hearers to study what was happening to bird populations and their habitats.

Mr. Robbins' speech concluded the formal part of the evening, but most of the audience chose to stay on and be entertained by the latest film masterpiece produced by "Raving Publications," illustrating activities conducted at a banding station that were, to say the least, highly unusual. The weekend activities came to a close on Sunday morning, 20 May, with another series of successful field trips.

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REVIEWS

How Birds Fly: under the Water and through the Air. By John K. Terres. Hawthorn Books, Inc., New York, 1968, 177 pp., paper. Price, \$3.95.

Centering a discussion of bird flight around his experiences with his pet Peregrine, Princess, John K. Terres manages to interest the reader in Daniel Bernoulli's theories of lift and other principles of aerodynamics as applied to the avian wing. After finishing *How Birds Fly*, an ordinary reader will feel that he has learned a great deal about bird flight in a few enjoyable chapters.

Terres' descriptions of hawk flight in the Appalachians will be of special interest to readers who man posts along the Blue Ridge and other mountains in Virginia each year, although eagles are not as plentiful at Virginia lookouts as at Hawk Mountain, where Terres focuses his attention. The author's account of an eagle seizing a Red-shouldered Hawk that was bedeviling it, however, has a quality not limited by political boundaries.

A chapter on the world's greatest glider, the albatross, undoubtedly will strike a sympathetic chord in the souls of pelagic aficionados, but an excellent section dealing with hummingbird flight probably will intrigue a larger group of readers. Terres describes hummingbirds as the "helicopters" of the bird world. These machines run on sugar instead of gasoline.

The author summarizes knowledge about bird flight in chapters on the speeds and altitudes birds achieve. He also describes how alcids and penguins "fly" under water and relates how one observer watched two Water Ouzels or Dippers, songbirds of the western mountains, "plunge beneath the surface of the pond while flying. They continued their flight under water for the full length of the pond."

Following a discussion of *Archaeopteryx* and other fossil birds, Terres describes how he released his falcon Princess when he entered military service during World War II. *How Birds Fly* concludes with a final summary of bird aerodynamics.

Pertinent facts about wingspan, weight, length, and wingbeat of selected species are included in appendices. The book also has a bibliography and index.

All in all, *How Birds Fly* offers a pleasant way to begin learning about bird flight.

Richard H. Peake

Ornithology: from Aristotle to the Present. By Erwin Stresemann. Translated by Hans J. and Cathleen Epstein. Editor, G. William Cottrell. Foreword and Epilogue on American Ornithology, Ernst Mayr. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1975, xii + 432 pp. Price \$20.00.

Certainly every professional ornithologist should read this translation of Stresemann's *Entwicklung der Ornithologie*, which was published in 1951. Because ornithologists have time and again become leaders in new branches of biology, the book will be important reading for any biologist. The flow of the book—attributable to Stresemann's abilities as well as those of his translators—makes the book enjoyable reading also for amateurs in biology. If you have ever leafed through the *AOU Checklist* and wondered about some of the names attached to the Latin binomials, this book will satisfy your curiosity. If you have wondered about the Temminck of Temminck's Stint, Stresemann's book will bring Temminck to life for you.

Though its appeal is primarily to biologists, Stresemann's book will appeal to anyone interested in the history of ideas. He begins with a lucid explanation of classical approaches to science; he explains Aristotle's attempts to overcome the Platonic duality between idea and matter. Because Aristotle had declared ornithology a study worthy of the philosophic mind, later natural scientists

were able to cite his authority for the value of their studies. Among the pedantic tomes of the Middle Ages, Emperor Frederick II's book on birds stands out as a refreshing discussion of birds based on careful personal observation that made him bold enough to contradict Aristotle. Although Frederick's work was not surpassed for centuries, it was little known to other ornithologists before the eighteenth century.

By the seventeenth century, European explorers had brought back many unusual birds to whet the interest of collectors, and ornithology underwent a tremendous growth as wealthy collectors vied with one another to amass collections of skins as well as aviaries. For the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ornithology flourished as the cataloguing of exotic species after exotic species. The romance of exploration and discovery of new species led men like Francois Levaillant, Salomon Mullers, and Otto Finsch around the world seeking specimens which museum workers like Carl Illiger and Jacob Temminck could consider. The arguments ranged back and forth between the poles of Linnaeus and Buffon. Attempts to reconcile the systematists and those who opposed arbitrary systems had reached an impasse when Wallace and Darwin introduced their theories of evolution. At this point, European ornithology remained in a morass of dispute, but in America the work of Baird, Brewer, Ridgway, and Allen broke new ground; and in 1883 the AOU was founded. Its slogan asserted: "Intergradation is the touchstone of trinomialism."

As Ernst Mayr indicates, his epilogue to Stresemann's *Ornithology* is a rough sketch of developments in American ornithology during the twentieth century. It is barely more than an outline but does point out the need for a more complete history of American ornithology in this country.

Stresemann's book is all the more remarkable considering that he wrote it in Berlin, during the blockade, in a small apartment without water and heat. He had little access to library facilities, and the bibliographic details were supplied by G. William Cottrell for the American edition. The additions of Mayr and Cottrell are helpful, and Stresemann's book is required reading for anyone interested in the history of ornithology.

Richard H. Peake

A Coded List of Birds of the World. By Ernest Preston Edwards. Privately published, Sweet Briar, Virginia, 1974, 174 pp. Price, \$9.00.

Birds of the World: A Check List. By James F. Clements. Two Continents Publishing Group, Ltd., New York, 1974, xx + 524 pp. Price, \$15.00.

Checklist of the World's Birds. By Edward S. Gruson (with Richard A. Forster). Quadrangle, New York, 1976, xii + 212 pp. Price, \$10.95.

When one considers the multitude of the world's birds and the many lists of these birds that have been thrust upon ornithologists in the last decade, one is tempted to paraphrase Fitzgerald's Omar and say, "Ah, take the birds and let the listers go." Because there are today many globe-circling birders, however, many may want to own an international list. If you are seeking a list of the world's birds, you will probably best be served by Edwards' or Gruson's list.

The state of taxonomy today does not really permit a list of the kind that Clements, Edwards, Gruson, and others have tried to produce. All an American birder need do is consider the latest "lumpings" by the A.O.U. to recognize that the compilation of a standard list of species for America, much less the world, is a very debatable matter. In 1931 James L. Peters began the publication of a *Check-list of Birds of the World* to update the work of Richard Sharpe. Peters work has been continued by James C. Greenway, Raymond A. Paynter, and Ernst Mayr. This 15-volume project is, reportedly, now nearing completion. The early volumes, of course, already need revising; anyway, this work will not satisfy the needs of a birder building a world list. Since just such birders will be the people to use the books under review here, the needs of jet-set birders are of paramount importance in determining which book should be purchased.

Clements' book should be ruled out immediately as being too inaccurate, too heavy, and too expensive. The author relies on out-of-date sources, and a birder who uses Clements' book will be compiling a list of world birds circa 1930 or 1940. The book itself is designed for the arm chair rather than a traveler's bag.

The choice for the world-lister, then, is between Edwards and Gruson. Gruson says explicitly that his is "a book for 'listers' and 'tickers,'" but the author has relied "very closely" on Peters for sequence of families and genera. Gruson claims he has consulted ornithologists such as James Baird, Robert Smart, and Raymond A. Paynter. Unlike Clements, Gruson has looked at recent literature and has attempted to make his list as up-to-date as possible. For every species, Gruson lists a Latin binomial, an English name, numbers indicating the sources used to determine the species, and letters labeling the faunal regions in which the bird is found. Therefore, the Barn Owl receives the following entry: *Tyto alba*; Barn Owl; 2, 4, 6, 8, 15, 18; a, b, c, d, e, f, g. The birder can easily check in the back of the book and find that Gruson used Vaurie, Eisenmann, de Schauensee, White, Ripley, and Smythies to determine that the Barn Owl ranges the Nearctic, Palearctic, Ethiopian, Neotropical, Central American, and Oriental (India and Indonesia) regions. Where "lumping" or "dividing" of species has occurred, Gruson attempts to show this in a series of notes at the end of the book. Surprisingly easy to use, Gruson's work is far superior to Clements except in format. Gruson's type is crowded together and leaves little room for writing notes.

The format of Edward's checklist also leaves little space for notetaking, but like Gruson, gives a more authoritative list than does Clements. Like Gruson, Edwards uses a code, one more complicated but also generally more informative than Gruson's. Edwards attempts to indicate some information concerning seasonal distributions. For example, according to Edwards, "HP; w. HP,O" informs the reader that the bird "breeds in Palearctic; some individuals spend the winter in the Palearctic and some in the Oriental mainland." Though somewhat more difficult to use than Gruson's code, Edwards' tells us far more when and where to look for the bird.

Also superior to Clements' bibliography are those in Gruson and Edwards. It is difficult to choose between their two checklists because they are, in balance, roughly equal. I believe, however, that Edwards' list is somewhat more helpful. It is in addition several dollars less expensive.

Richard H. Peake

NEWS AND NOTES

COMPILED BY YULEE LARNER AND F. R. SCOTT

VSO MEMBERS HONORED. At its annual awards banquet in Alexandria, Virginia, on 21 October 1978 the Virginia Wildlife Federation honored two members of the VSO. Mitchell A. Byrd, of the College of William and Mary, received the award of Wildlife Conservationist of the Year, and Thomas H. Krakauer, of Roanoke College, was awarded the title of Conservation Educator of the Year.

COMMON LOON IN SUMMER. Mike and Kathleen Finnegan, Leonard Teuber, and many others observed a Common Loon at Lake Shenandoah, Rockingham County, Virginia, from 8 to 12 June 1978. This appears to be the first state summer record west of the Blue Ridge.

MORE CORMORANTS INLAND. Although still considered a rare transient west of the Coastal Plain in Virginia, Double-crested Cormorants are seemingly being recorded more frequently in this area. In the spring of 1978 there were four reports from the Piedmont and three from the mountains. The Piedmont records were 1 at Swift Creek Reservoir, Chesterfield County, on 19 April (F. R. Scott), 3 at Roslyn (on the James River) in western Henrico County on 6 May (Scott *et al.*), 5 at Kerr Reservoir on 9 May (J. B. Bazuin, Jr., and Sarah H. Thomas), and 1 at Lake Anna, Louisa County, on 14 May (Bazuin and B. W. Keelan). West of the Blue Ridge there were two reports in addition to the one noted in the June 1979 *Raven*. These were 1 at Laurel Bed Lake (at 3500 feet elevation), Russell County, on 12 May 1978 (A. M. Decker) and 1 near Daleville, Botetourt County, on 14-15 May (Jim Ayers, John and Thelma Dalmas, and Barry Kinzie).

UPLAND SANDPIPERS IN SPRING AND SUMMER. During the spring of 1978 there were six sightings of Upland Sandpipers in the Green Springs area of Louisa County, Virginia. The first bird was seen here on 1 April (J. B. Bazuin, Jr., and B. W. Keelan), the best count was 3 on 30 April (Bazuin), and the last bird was noted on 3 May (Bazuin). The only other report east of the Blue Ridge was one near Jamestown on 12 May (Bill Williams). In the Shenandoah Valley near Broadway, Rockingham County, the first arrival was seen on 11 April 1978, and 2 or more pairs apparently summered here, though breeding was never confirmed (Randall Shank). Another bird near Middletown, Frederick County, on 10 June was apparently on territory (Peter May).

LEAST TERN AT WAYNESBORO. Mozelle Henkel carefully observed an adult Least Tern at the Waynesboro Airport pond, Augusta County, Virginia, on 19 September 1975. The bird was very small, had a black cap, and the bill was yellow and tipped with black. This observation, previously unpublished, is the third state record west of the Blue Ridge.

LATE NESTING CUCKOO. On 19 August 1978 T. F. Wieboldt and C. E. Stevens flushed an adult Black-billed Cuckoo off a nest containing 2 eggs along the crest of Shenandoah Mountain in Rockingham County about 3 miles south of rt. 33. This is an extraordinarily late breeding record for this species.

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JOURNAL OF THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY

VOLUME 50

DECEMBER 1979

NUMBER 4



Courtesy of Walter Weber

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The Virginia Society of Ornithology, Inc., exists to encourage the systematic study of birds in Virginia, to stimulate interest in birds, and to assist the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources. All persons interested in those objectives are welcome as members. Present membership includes every level of interest, from professional scientific ornithologists to enthusiastic amateurs.

Activities undertaken by the Society include the following:

1. An annual meeting (usually in the spring), held in a different part of the state each year, featuring talks on ornithological subjects and field trips to nearby areas.

2. Other forays or field trips, lasting a day or more and scheduled throughout the year so as to include all seasons and to cover the major physiographic regions of the state.

3. A journal, *The Raven*, published quarterly, containing articles about Virginia ornithology, as well as news of the activities of the Society and its chapters.

4. Study projects (nesting studies, winter bird population surveys, etc.) aimed at making genuine contributions to ornithological knowledge.

In addition, local chapters of the Society, located in some of the larger cities and towns of Virginia, conduct their own programs of meetings, field trips, and other projects.

Those wishing to participate in any of the above activities or to cooperate in advancing the objectives of the Society are cordially invited to join. Annual dues are \$2.00 for junior members (students), \$5.00 for active members, \$7.50 for sustaining members, \$15.00 or more for contributing members, \$150.00 for life members, and \$9.00 for family members (limited to husband, wife, and their dependent children).

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Published four times a year in March, June, September, and December at Richmond, Virginia. Membership includes subscription to *The Raven*. Annual subscription price to nonmembers is \$6.00. Individual issues, when available, are priced at \$1.50 for current ones, \$1.00 for those dated from 1971 through 1975, and 75¢ for those prior to 1971 (plus postage).

ESTABLISHMENT AND NESTING OF THE HOUSE FINCH IN VIRGINIA

CHARLES R. BLEM AND JOHN F. MEHNER

The release and subsequent establishment of the House Finch, *Carpodacus mexicanus*, near Long Island, New York, in 1940 is well documented (Elliott and Arbib, 1953; Woods, 1968; Bock and Lepthien, 1976). Since then, the species has spread northward to New Hampshire and Michigan, southward to Georgia and Alabama and westward to Nebraska and Oklahoma (Bock and Lepthien, *op. cit.*, Aldrich and Weske, 1978). South of the site of introduction, the species is now regularly recorded breeding at several sites in Pennsylvania (Scott and Cutler, 1974; Hall, 1974, 1977), and records of nests or young have also been obtained from Maryland (Scott and Cutler, *op. cit.*), West Virginia and Ohio (Hall, 1977), and North Carolina (Teulings, 1975; LeGrand, 1976). The introduced population is now so well established that individual specimens are morphologically distinguishable from the California race from which it is presumed they originated (Aldrich and Weske, *op. cit.*).

The first recorded occurrence of the House Finch in Virginia was in Falls Church in 1962 (Murray, 1963), and the first Christmas count record was in 1966 (Scott, 1967). The species is now locally fairly common in Virginia, especially in winter in urban areas. The earliest records of summer residency appear to be from 1974 (Scott and Cutler, 1974; Hall, 1974) when single adults were observed at several sites.

The first indications of breeding activity were obtained in 1976 when male House Finches were observed feeding young at Maymont Park in Richmond (C. F. Murray, *personal communication*) and at Staunton (F. R. Scott, *personal communication*). The first nests were discovered in Staunton in 1976 by Lolo Mengel and J. F. Mehner and near Richmond by Leann Blem in 1978. Since nests of this species have not been reported previously in Virginia and because the spread of this species should be documented for future analyses, data regarding these nests are given here.

The first nest, on the campus of Mary Baldwin College, was found 14 April 1976 in the open interior of an atlas cedar, *Cedrus atlantica*, at a height of 4 m. The nest initially contained 4 eggs, but by 3 May the eggs had hatched and the young were found dead. Mehner collected the nest which contained 3 dead young, two approximately 5 days old and a third about 2 days of age. A second nest was found 10 May on the campus in a firethorn, *Pyracantha occinea*. The nest was near the top of the shrub, about 3 m above the ground. Four young in the nest were being fed by both parents. On 14 May Mehner and Yulee Lerner observed a female House Finch carrying nest material to a site about 4 m high in a red cedar, *Juniperus virginia*, in Thornrose Cemetery in Staunton. A male was nearby. In 1977 and 1978 singing males were heard on the college campus and in other parts of Staunton, but no nests were found. The nest found by Blem was in a suburban development in western Henrico County and was located in an ornamental cedar, *Juniperus sp.*, at about 3 m. Both adults were tending this nest on 28 April 1978. The young (at least three) were not observed until after they had fledged, when they were seen following the adults (28 May). All of the above nests were open cups. Measurements of the first Staunton nest and the Henrico County nest were made and are

remarkably similar: outside diameter, 12-14 cm; inside diameter, 8-9 cm; and greatest depth, 5-7 cm. The nests were composed mainly of grasses and other fine materials.

The House Finch appears to be the latest in a series of avian expansions caused at least partially by man. Judging from previous experience with Starlings and House Sparrows, it will be important to document the spread, adaptation, and impact of the House Finch. Further increases in nesting populations should be documented. As this species is known to build nests in a wide variety of locations, including nest cavities, it is impossible to characterize nest sites and styles (see Woods, 1968). Therefore, one might expect them to breed in any available location, but at this point it appears that cedars or dense shrubs are being selected. Moreover, the House Finch appears to overlap partially the niche requirements of the House Sparrow and hopefully will contribute to the decline of that pest. Future observations of the breeding activities and relative abundance of the House Finch should be carefully recorded to document the spread of this species.

We are indebted to Leann Blem, C. F. Murray, and F. R. Scott for assistance in the preparation of this note.

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ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER AT CHERITON, VIRGINIA

JACKSON M. ABBOTT

While participating in the Cape Charles Christmas bird count in Northampton County, Virginia, on 27 December 1978, my sons David and Robert and I saw an Ash-throated Flycatcher, *Myiarchus cinerascens*. The bird was discovered by David, who was walking just inside a brushy wooded edge on the north side of an old paved road on the south side of Route 639 about 1.2 miles east of its intersection with U.S. 13 (business) in Cheriton. On the south side of the old road was an open field. It was a cold, clear day with northerly winds up to 30 m.p.h., but on the sunny side of the old road it was warm.

David flushed the flycatcher up from the ground and at first thought it was a phoebe, but after looking at it through his 7x binoculars from 20 feet away, he knew it was a *Myiarchus*-type flycatcher. David called Robert and me who were walking up the road ahead. When we got to the spot, the flycatcher was perched about 6 feet above ground in a bare sapling on the sunny edge of the bushes, right at the road edge. A more perfect, close, and clear view from side, front, and rear could not be had as the bird sluggishly moved from limb to limb, looking about intently for insects and occasionally darting out to catch one. It allowed us to approach as close as 10 feet, showing no alarm. A quick look at the bird made one think "Great Crested," but a longer look revealed the following distinctive characteristics: a rather small, thin, straight black bill; a sooty cap fading to olive green on the nape, ear coverts, and back; a starkly white throat surrounded by a pale gray chest; and a pale yellow belly. The wings and tail were sooty with whitish edges to the wing coverts, creating two whitish wing bars and whitish edges to the secondaries and the tail feathers. There was a patch of rufous on the upper half of the folded primaries caused by their rufous outer webs. Pale rufous was visible on the under side of the tail, but no rufous was visible on the unspread tail from above. The bird called three times during the 15 minutes we had it under observation and sounded like a soft, sharp *whit*.

The writer is familiar with all three species of western *Myiarchus* flycatchers and their call notes. We ruled out Great Crested Flycatcher, *M. crinitus*, the only eastern *Myiarchus*, and Wied's Crested Flycatcher, *M. tyrannulus*, be-

cause of our bird's small size, the small thin bill, and the contrasty white throat with gray breast; this latter feature and call note also ruled out Olivaceous Flycatcher, *M. tuberculifer*.

The bird was seen in the same place on 28 December by Norwood C. Middleton and Tad Finnell; on 29 December by John and Thelma Dalmás, C. F. Hills, and Leonard Teuber; and on 30 December by Robert L. Anderson. Anderson was able to get a good photograph of the bird, which is now in the National Photoduplicate File (Accession No. 454-1C). Attempts to relocate the bird on 1 January 1979 by Anderson and David L. Hughes were unsuccessful.

This is the third record of this species for Virginia and the first one confirmed by a photograph. Previous records were in Virginia Beach on 26 December 1957 (*Raven*, 29: 29-30, 1958) and at Chincoteague on 13 December 1969 (*Raven*, 41: 34, 1970).

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WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS IN SHENANDOAH VALLEY

YULEE R. LARNER

White-winged Crossbills, *Loxia leucoptera*, were reported from several locations in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia during the winter and spring of 1978. Harry M. Jopson discovered two birds in hemlock trees on the campus of Bridgewater College, Rockingham County, on 27 January 1978. They were also seen the next day, 28 January, by many observers, including Kathleen Finnegan, Leonard Teuber, and other members of the Rockingham Bird Club as well as by Robert L. Ake *et al.*

Three birds were seen feeding in hemlock trees in Harrisonburg on 14 February 1978 by Charles Ziegenfus and his students at James Madison University and members of the Rockingham Bird Club.

On 6 May 1978 I discovered one male bird perched in the top of a large Norway spruce in Thornrose Cemetery in Staunton. This bird remained for three days and was seen by other members of the Augusta Bird Club. On 8 May the bird was trapped by Curtis S. Adkisson of the Department of Biology, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Adkisson was attempting to establish a captive breeding population of White-winged Crossbills to aid in his research at the university. He brought a female crossbill in a cage, set it on the ground in front of a mist net, and waited only a short while until one of the birds gave a vocalization which made the other bird aware of its presence. When the male flew down to the cage, Adkisson tossed his hat in that direction and startled the bird so that it flew directly into the net.

Another occurrence of White-winged Crossbills in Augusta County has not been reported previously. On 28 March 1972 I was surprised to see a flock of at least 9 birds feeding on weed seeds in a ravine along a country road (rt. 700) near Arbor Hill. At least 4 of these were males in adult plumage, the others being olive-gold with brighter rumps; all, of course, had white

wingbars. While this species normally feeds on seeds of conifers, there are accounts of their feeding on weeds (Roberts, 1938; Taber, 1968).

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1020 West Beverley Street, Staunton, Virginia 24401

A CHRISTMAS COUNT BONUS—BIRD NO. 250 FOR AUGUSTA COUNTY

JULIE M. RUSSELL

During the Waynesboro Christmas bird count on 16 December 1978 on the Allan Bocock farm in Stuarts Draft, Virginia, Betty Loyd observed a hawk perched on a fencepost some 500 yards from a dirt road on the far side of a cornfield at 3 p.m. The sky was very overcast, and it was as dark as it would normally be at dusk.

As I was observing this bird, a Marsh Hawk, *Circus cyaneus*, through my binoculars, two other slightly smaller birds flew into view, flying at the same altitude as the harrier about 3 to 5 feet from the ground. James Gum, Betty Loyd, and Matt Vorko also observed the birds. Since the wings were so rounded and there seemed to be no neck indentation behind the head, we concluded that they were owls. We were unable to get close enough that day to make positive identification. The birds were very light below and tawny in appearance on the upper wing. They flew against a background of corn silos and repeatedly landed on the ground as though hunting over the corn stubble. They made no sound. I saw a total of three birds.

The next day was cold and blustery, but I took YuLee Lerner to the site of our observation. She had recently been to Louisa County to see Short-eared Owls, *Asio flammeus*, in a very similar habitat. We were unable to see the birds that day.

On 26 December Ruth Snyder and I went back to the area. After searching the cornfield with my binoculars, I finally found one owl, and we set off in pursuit through the stubble of a very muddy cornfield, across a small stream, and through a marshy area with cattails and swamp milkweed to an undulating area with short grass interspersed with mullein. The owls circled the area, landing on the ground and flying up again.

I played a tape recording of the call of the Short-eared Owl, and one of the light-colored owls circled overhead enabling both Ruth and myself to get a

good view of the black markings at the base of the primaries on the underside of the wing. The upper wing surface showed the almost triangular buffy patch, giving an additional confirmation. The Short-eared Owl then became the 250th bird for the Augusta County bird list.

Two of the owls were seen the following day, 27 December, by Mozelle Henkel and Ruth Snyder. Again we played the taped call and one flew towards us, giving us a good look at the buffy patches in the wings and the dark throat. It was about 5 p.m., at sunset. Several days later, on 1 January 1979, Mozelle and John Henkel observed one owl perched on a post. While they were watching, a Marsh Hawk dived at it, and the two chosed each other for awhile, affording a good comparison of size.

840 Hawthorne Lane, Waynesboro, Virginia 22980

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REVIEW

The Bird Finder's Three-Year Notebook. By Paul S. Eriksson. Paul S. Eriksson, Inc., New York, 1976, 384 pp. Comb-bound. Price, \$7.95.

Although this book is advertised as useful to "amateur and expert," it is difficult to see how it can be of help to anyone except for keeping track of casual records in the back yard. Of course, anything that encourages the keeping of accurate records is desirable, but a birder might be better advised spending his eight dollars buying copies of his state checklist and writing down casual records on ordinary notebook paper.

One helpful feature of this book is the so-called "Life List Index" at the end of the pages designed for record keeping. This list contains over 700 species found in North America "listed alphabetically by their common and scientific names (based upon the latest update of the *Checklist* of the American Ornithologists' Union)." Here again, though, the birder this book aims at might find his money better spent by buying the A.B.A. checklist put out by the American Birding Association.

Richard H. Peake

NEWS AND NOTES

COMPILED BY YULEE LARNER AND F. R. SCOTT

CORRIGENDUM. "Great Heron" on page 45 of the September 1979 issue of *The Raven* should of course be Green Heron.

BANDED COOPER'S HAWK CAPTURED. According to Royster Lyle, on 15 December 1978 Rusty Ford, assisted by Royster, Katie, and Cochran Lyle, captured and later released an adult male Cooper's Hawk that had been

trapped in the Ford's garage near Lexington, Virginia. The bird carried a leg band with the number 745-39301. It was later found to have been banded three months before on 16 September 1978 by Floyd E. Presley at Frostburg, Maryland, some 130 miles almost due north of Lexington.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE FLIGHT. There was an immense flight of Wilson's Phalaropes into the Midwest during early May 1978 (*American Birds*, 32: 1014, 1978) which spilled over into the Appalachians and the middle Atlantic states (*ibid.*, 32: 985, 990, and 1006, 1978). There were five Virginia records, three from west of the Blue Ridge. Two females were found at the Waynesboro airport on 5 May by Moselle Henkel, a first record for Augusta County, and 3 were present at a rainpool near Montezuma, Rockingham County, 5-7 May (Leonard Teuber, Kathleen Finnegan, and others), also a first county record. In Montgomery County 6 females appeared on Hethwood Pond on 5 May (Louise Borchelt), and one with a broken wing was still present here on 9 May. East of the Blue Ridge there were two reports in Albemarle County. A single bird was noted at a Birdwood Farm pond, just west of Charlottesville, on 6 May (Brian W. Keelan), and 2 in winter plumage were found at Langhorne's Pond (also called Scotland Farm Pond) near Scottsville on 6 May (Joe Croft) and the following day (C. E. Stevens). Prior to these records, there had been only one spring record of this species for Virginia west of the Blue Ridge and none for the Piedmont.

BANK SWALLOWS NESTING IN VALLEY. During 1978 Bank Swallows were found nesting in both Botetourt and Augusta Counties, Virginia. On 7 June 1978 a Bank Swallow colony with 25 apparently active nest holes was located by Barry Kinzie along Looney Mill Creek near the James River between Buchanan and Troutville in Botetourt County. Young birds were photographed at the nest hole entrances on 17 June. In Augusta County Sam Cooper found a colony of nine nest holes in a bank of the South River in the northeast section of Waynesboro on 3 July 1978. Adults were feeding young in the nests on 4 July when the site was visited by YuLee Larner, Ruth Snyder, and others. Larner estimated at least 7 Bank Swallows here flying with the large numbers of Barn Swallows in the area.

TREE SWALLOWS NESTING. Breeding records of the Tree Swallow continue to multiply in Virginia. Ira Campbell, of Broadway, Rockingham County, found a nest of this species in one of his bluebird boxes in 1978. On 6 June it held 5 eggs, and 5 nestlings about ready to fledge were noted on 29 June.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER IN ROCKBRIDGE. On 22 July 1978 C. E. Stevens found a Yellow-throated Warbler singing in mixed hardwoods on a bluff of the Buffalo River 4 miles north of Glasgow in Rockbridge County. This species does not appear to have been listed previously for this county (Murray, *Virginia Avifauna* No. 1, 1957; Hubbard, *Raven*, 44: 83-96, 1973).

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