

ROUND TABLE NOTES

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON: A NEW BREEDING SPECIES FOR THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK—In June of 1974, Bill Deane located the nest of a Yellow-crowned Night Heron (*Nyctamassa violacea*) in Cades Cove, Blount County, Tennessee. He told me that he saw one young in the nest and an adult nearby.

On 15 June 1975, I found a nest in the same area where Deane had found the 1974 nest. Later, using a color transparency of the nest that Deane had found, I was able to determine that the 1975 nest was in exactly the same position, if not the same structure, as the 1974 nest. The nest was saddled on a horizontal branch about 14 M from the ground and 2.5 M out from the trunk of a pine (*Pinus* sp.). The nest tree was in a stand of pine trees (35° 35' 35" N; 83° 47' 22" W) near a small unnamed pond 100 M SE of the point where the Cades Cove Loop Road fords at an elevation of 573 M. The nest contained five young which varied greatly in size. The smallest young was only one third



Young Yellow-Crowned Night Herons, Cades Cove, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 15 June 1975.

as big as the largest young. When I climbed to the nest, the larger birds moved out of the nest onto the supporting branches. While I was photographing the nest, two of the young birds opened their bills wide and lunged at me. Two birds regurgitated food, and several of them defecated. Both adults, which were perched near the nest, flew away when I began to climb to the nest.

During the following month I regularly

visited the nest. Four young birds were always present in the nest tree and occasionally an adult heron was seen. I last saw young birds on 21 July. On most visits I examined the remains of food items which had been regurgitated or dropped below the nest. As well as I could determine, the young were fed entirely on crayfish.

These are the first breeding records of this species for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The species was first recorded in the Park in 1971 when Ranger Thomas E. Henry saw one bird at the sewage ponds in Cades Cove on 26 and 30 May. Alan Smith saw one bird in the cove on 5 July 1973. (These data were taken from records on file in the park library). I saw an adult along Abrams Creek in Cades Cove on 2 July 1974.

When I visited the nest site on 3 April 1976, the nest was no longer present. I was not able to find the herons on this or several subsequent visits later in the spring.

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WHISTLING SWAN IN SULLIVAN COUNTY—On the afternoon of 8 March 1977, while driving east on Netherland Inn Road in Kingsport, I sighted a large white bird swimming on the South Fork of the Holston River about a mile down-stream from the C. P. Edwards Bridge. I was able to approach to within twelve meters of the bird and to distinguish enough field-marks, with a pair of 7 x 50 binoculars, to identify the bird as a Whistling Swan (*Olor columbianus*), i.e., black bill without a basal knob and the neck held straight while swimming. This identification was confirmed later that day by Fred J. Alsop, III, who concluded that the bird was a young Whistling Swan since it possessed the buffy coloration about the head and neck characteristic of juveniles of that species. The swan was also observed by several members of the Kingsport University Chapter of the T.O.S. later that same afternoon. It remained in the same area where it was observed by local birders through the week and was last seen by Dr. Alsop on 13 March 1977.

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IMMATURE TIERCEL IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY—On 7 January 1976, I observed an immature tiercel (male Peregrine Falcon—*Falco peregrinus*) near Franklin, Tennessee. Approximately 10 days before George Mayfield had seen what he thought was a Peregrine Falcon sitting on a barn along Route 31, several miles southwest of Franklin. He did not have his binoculars with him and could not get close enough to make a positive identification.

On 7 January 1976, I drove Route 31 from Springhill to Franklin carefully inspecting every falcon that I saw. Across the road from the Haliday Restaurant, near the city limits of Franklin, I saw a very dark falcon land on a telephone wire. For three minutes it sat very still, intently inspecting the ground. As we moved the car closer the falcon flew about 70 yards to the corner of a low, flat topped concrete building. It remained on this corner for over fifteen minutes and allowed the car to approach to within 50 feet without becoming visibly agitated. During this time the falcon spent most of its time inspecting the ground but regularly turned its head to look toward the car. The portions of the following paragraph in quotation marks were taken directly from my field notes recorded while watching the falcon. These notes were recorded without reference to a field guide.

The falcon was "slightly bigger than a pigeon, slightly but noticeably bigger than a female kestrel seen very soon afterward." Size was estimated at "approximately 15 inches." The bird had a "falcon shape" with "brown streaks lengthwise on cream breast and abdomen, very light streaks on breast, darker, bolder, and more distinct on abdomen." It had a "dark head with white cheeks" interrupted by "two sideburns," one "extending down into the white cheek,"