

MONTHLY NARRATIVE REPORTS FOR

MATTAMUSKEET AND SWANQUARTER WILDLIFE REFUGES

1935

Lake Mattamuskeet, N. Car.

BREEDING AND CERTAIN MIGRATING BIRDS
OF THE LAKE MATTAMUSKEET WILD LIFE REFUGE
(HYDE COUNTY, N. C.) DURING 1935

White Pelican.

Pelecanus erythrorhynchos. On June 16 one of these birds was seen soaring over the New Holland Inn and then coming down toward the Lake. It was observed for several minutes under 8 power glasses. Pearson, Brimley and Brimley in "Birds of North Carolina" give only three definite records for the State up to the time that book was published. There have probably been others since then but as the bird is rare in the Eastern States it was a welcome sight in this Federal Refuge.

Great Blue Heron.

Ardea herodias herodias. Common about the Lake and a permanent resident here.

American Egret.

Casmerodius albus egretta. A common summer resident about the Lake and at times easily approached. On July 2nd 20 birds were counted in flight between East Main Canal and the Refuge shore. A few winter records were made.

Louisiana Heron.

Hydranassa tricolor ruficollis. On July 17 an immature bird of this species was seen perched on top of the goose trap and later flew down to the marsh appearing tame and unafraid. Since then several birds have been recorded about the Refuge.

Little Blue Heron.

Florida caerulea caerulea. Common about the Lake during the summer, many in the white immature plumage. On June 19 about 37 birds were seen of which about 32 were in the mature blueish plumage.

Eastern Green Heron.

Butorides virescens virescens. Summer resident and common about the Lake.

Black-crowned Night Heron.

Nycticorax nycticorax hoactli. Fairly common during the summer in certain parts of the Refuge.

American Bittern.

Botaurus lentiginosus. Common during the spring and easily approached, the last date seen being May 7. Although possibly a breeder many hours of searching failed to locate any birds or hear their notes after the date mentioned.

Eastern Least Bittern.

Ixobrychus exilis exilis. Common in certain sections of the Refuge being a summer resident. May 8 is the first date recorded of its arrival.

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Whistling Swan.

Cygnus columbianus. A few birds have been noted about the Lake, six seen on the Fairfield side on May 8, May 14, and June 2. It is believed that some of these were cripples and the others unwilling to leave them as "family ties" are strong. These few birds apparently became scattered about the Lake, a few being seen by other parties in July. They do not breed here.

Canada Goose.

Branta canadensis canadensis. A few birds about the Lake all summer, eleven being seen on the Fairfield side on June 14. These were cripples and possibly birds unwilling to leave their mates, or non-breeding birds, or all three. No nests have been found here. On August 14 about 18 birds were seen in the Lake off East Main Canal between No. 3 and No. 4 Canals East, and on September 19 16 birds were seen at same place. Probably those seen by Fairfield joined others to form this group, all of which probably spent the summer in the Lake.

Common Mallard.

Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos. A few birds recorded about the Lake during May, June, July and August; six birds being observed on June 20 near East Main Canal road and the goose trap. Although there are very few if any breeding records of wild birds in the State, a nest was found by Outfall Canal which contained 5 eggs on June 23. Being visited again on the 24th the female was on the nest and leaving five eggs were again seen. On June 27 the nest contained only three eggs. It is believed that crows seen in the immediate section may have robbed it. It was deserted. At another time about 9 young and an adult were seen in Outfall Canal by the Refuge by Mr. Wheeler, of the Camp Redington C. C. C. Camp, and it is believed these also were wild birds.

Common Black Duck.

Anas rubripes tristis. During May, June, July and September a few birds were found about the Lake, 7 birds being seen on May 10. On June 19 an adult female and 7 or 8 young birds were observed in No. 4 canal West. No nests have been found by the writer although there were probably several in the Lake area.

American Pintail.

Dafila acuta tzitzihua. Mr. Jos. S. Mann reported 4 birds on the Lake near Fairfield on September 8. On September 11, I saw 5 birds over No. 4 West Canal. All early migrants.

- Wood Duck. Aix sponsa. Wood Ducks arrived here from the south about March 2, Mr. J. B. Hodges noting 6 on that date. He and the writer recorded about 43 birds on June 9. During July, August, and September birds were observed about the Lake. On August 3 Bruce Hodges saw an adult female and 12 young in West Main Canal near the junction of No. 6 West Canal. On August 6 the writer saw an adult female in No. 5 Canal West and heard her calling for her young ones, three of which were seen by another member of the party.
- Turkey Vulture. Cathartes aura septentrionalis. Common permanent resident about the Lake and surrounding country.
- Black Vulture. Coragyps atratus atratus. A permanent resident in the Lake area but possibly not as common as the Turkey, although at times a number may be seen.
- Cooper's Hawk. Accipiter cooperi. One bird noted off the highway between New Holland & Swan Quarter on August 26.
- Northern Red-shouldered Hawk. Buteo lineatus lineatus. A few birds noted about the outskirts of the Refuge, and over Great Island in the western end of the Refuge.
- Southern Bald Eagle. Haliaeetus leucocephalus leucocephalus. Fairly common about the lake both fully plumaged birds as well as "gray eagles" being seen.
- Marsh Hawk. Circus hudsonius. Recorded on September 2 and 15 over the Refuge.
- Osprey. Pandion haliaetus carolinensis. Several birds about the lake. A nest about one-fourth mile south of the New Holland Post-office near the Outfall Canal and about 60 feet up a dead cypress tree which was apparently blown down by a high wind during night of April 15.
- Eastern Sparrow Hawk. Falco sparverius sparverius. None seen during the summer. One seen by Mr. J. B. Hodges on September 21 and 3 by him and me on September 23; 1 seen by me on September 24.
- Bob-White. Colinus virginianus virginianus. More common within the Refuge since the Lake is lower and the canal banks dryer. At times very tame and approachable. An adult and about 15 young ones were seen on July 19 along East Main Canal road.

King Rail.

Rallus elegans elegans. On March 24 I recorded 1 bird near the New Holland Inn; my first record here as I did not find any during the winter. Seen several times during the summer appearing tame and approachable.

Virginia Rail.

Rallus limicola limicola. Probably a rare breeder here as I have only one record, a bird seen on July 2 in the marsh between East Main Canal and the Refuge shore.

Sora.

Porzana carolina. On April 8 one bird was closely watched on West Main Canal bank as it flew up on fluttering wings from a bushy place to a bush about 15 feet above ground where it stayed for several minutes. On April 20 a bird was within thirty feet of automobile right off the road in front of New Holland Inn. None appear to breed this far south.

Florida Gallinule.

Gallinula chloropus cachinnans. Several records about New Holland Inn during April where they were easy to approach. One bird seen by the Inn on May 13; one bird recorded on June 9. It probably breeds about the Lake.

American Coot.

Fulica americana americana. The last coot seen by me was on May 21. However, Mr. E. P. Creaser reports seeing some during the month of August, so there is a possibility that a few birds may breed here, although so far no nest or young have been found by me.

Semipalmated Plover.

Charadrius semipalmatus. One bird was seen in the Refuge, on a mud flat at No. 2 East Canal near East Main Canal on May 18. A transient.

Wilson's Plover.

Pagolla wilsonia wilsonia. On September 15 one bird was seen on sand in front of New Holland Inn.

Killdeer.

Oxyechus vociferus vociferus. On August 12 one bird was seen in flight over East Main Canal. May breed about the Lake.

Black-bellied Plover.

Squatarola squatarola. On May 17 two birds were noted in and about the marsh between Central Canal and the Goose trap. Transients.

Ruddy Turnstone.

Arenaria interpres morinella. It was a pleasure to see this beach bird here, one individual by No. 2 East Canal bank on May 21. A transient.

Woodcock.

Philohela minor. On June 27 one bird was flushed near Rose Canal (No. 6 East) inside the Refuge. Probably breeds here.

- Spotted Sandpiper. Actitis macularia. First seen on April 17; common during May, and several seen during July, August, and September. This species probably breeds here, although I was unable to find a nest.
- Eastern Solitary Sandpiper. Tringa solitaria solitaria. One transient was noted on August 21 near the old Warehouse at New Holland inside the Refuge; one on August 27 on the old railroad bed near No. 4 West Canal.
- Greater Yellow-legs. Totanus melanoleucus. On June 1 an individual bird was seen over Rose Canal (No. 6 East Canal) at East Main Canal. This was a late migrant. Recorded on May 14, 18 and 24.
- Lesser Yellow-legs. Totanus flavipes. On April 19 one bird was seen and heard near the Goose trap on East Main Canal road.
- Least Sandpiper. Pisobia minutilla. On May 18 one bird was seen on the mud flat at No. 2 East Canal and East Main Canal. A transient.
- Semipalmated Sandpiper. Ereunetes pusillus. On May 18 two birds were seen on the mud flat No. 2 East Canal and East Main Canal. At times they engaged apparently in quite lively fighting. Transients.
- Herring Gull. Larus argentatus smithsonianus. About 60 birds were observed on April 15 about the canal at Engelhard, a few miles outside the Refuge.
- Laughing Gull. Larus atrioilla. On April 15 one bird was observed on the Canal at Englehard, a few miles outside the Refuge.
- Least Tern. Sterna antillarum antillarum. On July 24 about 10 birds were seen by East Main Canal, and on August 14 about 20 birds were noted near the same location.
- Black Tern. Chlidonias nigra surinamensis. On August 14 three birds were seen over the Lake between No. 3 and No. 4 East Canals. During September they were abundant over the marsh inside the Refuge as well as over the fields along the highways.
- Eastern Mourning Dove. Zenaidura macroura carolinensis. This permanent resident is common along the canal banks inside the Refuge.
- ✓ Yellow-billed C^hoc^hoo. Coccyzus americanus americanus. Common summer resident along the canal banks and the territory bordering the Refuge.

Southern Screech Owl.

Otus asio asio. Heard frequently at night about New Holland Inn. A permanent resident.

✓ Eastern Nighthawk.
✓ Florida Nighthawk.

Chordeiles minor minor.

Chordeiles minor chapmani.

It will probably take some collecting to determine which form of Nighthawk breeds in this section. On May 19 one bird was seen almost over the New Holland Inn; on June 23 two birds were observed over a field between Swindell's Fork and Swan Quarter; on July 18 two birds were seen over Central Canal about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile north of the Inn; on August 20 two birds were recorded in front of the Inn.

✓ Chimney Swift.

Chaetura pelagica. This summer resident is common over parts of the Refuge and about Swan-quarter a few miles away.

✓ Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Archilochus colubris. A common summer resident.

Eastern Belted Kingfisher

Megasceryle alcyon alcyon. A few birds seen during the summer but not so abundant as during the winter months.

✓ Southern Flicker.

Colaptes auratus auratus. This is probably the form which breeds here and is common along the canal banks and about the New Holland Inn.

✓ Pileated Woodpecker.

Ceophloeus pileatus pileatus. This permanent resident is fairly common in certain sections near the Lake area, and within the Refuge. One bird was seen on the metal leg and pipe of water tower, appearing unafraid.

✓ Red-bellied Woodpecker.

Centurus carolinus. Fairly common permanent resident.

Red-headed Woodpecker.

Melanerpes erythrocephalus. Not until May 8 did I find this species and then four birds were seen near the highway between Hodges Fork and Fairfield, where they seem to be locally common.

✓ Southern Hairy Woodpecker.

Dryobates villosus auduboni. Common in wooded areas in and adjoining the Refuge. A permanent resident.

✓ Southern Downy Woodpecker.

Dryobates pubescens pubescens. Common in wooded areas surrounding the Refuge.

✓ Red-cockaded Woodpecker.

Dryobates borealis. On September 17 two birds were recorded near Rose Bay, between that highway and the Lake highway, about four miles from the Lake.

✓
Kingbird.

Tyrannus tyrannus. One of the most abundant summer birds about the Lake and seen along the canal banks and by the highways surrounding the Lake. Nests were seen in the trees of home places near the Lake, and four nests were located along East Main Canal between Central Canal and No. 2 East Canal on June 27.

✓
Northern Crested Flycatcher.

Myiarchus crinitus boreus. Abundant about the area, its loud notes heard constantly in April and May. It is known as "daybreak" by natives here and is well named. A nest was found in a mail box by the highway, which on May 30 contained 5 eggs and the customary cast-off skin. An unusual nesting location was the inside of a 3 inch pipe which hung over a temporary track about 25 feet from the entrance to the Pumping Plant. On June 16 it contained 5 young. The adults appeared unafraid and fed the young while numbers of workers were constantly moving about them. Note: As no collecting was done, it is believed this is the form found here.

✓
Eastern Phoebe.

Sayornis phoebe. On September 25 one bird was recorded near the Refuge.

✓
Acadian Flycatcher.

Empidonax virescens. Summer resident and fairly common in certain sections about the Lake area.

✓
Eastern Wood Pewee.

Myiochanes virens. Summer resident and fairly common, especially near the highway.

✓
Tree Swallow.

Iridoprocne bicolor. This species, which was here all winter, became extremely abundant during April about New Holland Inn, occupying the old wires as well as the branches of dead bushes near the dyke. On May 14 three birds were seen. They seemed to return about the middle of August as on the 18th of that month about 70 birds were counted on wires by the highway between Swindell Fork and New Holland. On September 8 about 200 birds were counted at about the same location. On September 26 over 325 birds counted on wires by the highway near the Refuge.

✓
Bank Swallow.

Riparia riparia riparia. On July 28 one bird of this form was seen on a wire near New Holland Inn with a number of Purple Martins.

✓
Rough-winged Swallow.

Stelgidopteryx ruficollis serripennis. Summer resident here and fairly common about the Inn and by the highways around the Lake. A nesting hole in the bank of Central canal near the Inn was occupied by a pair on April 19.

✓
Barn Swallow.

Hirundo erythrogaster. The first bird noted here was on April 21 and a number were seen during May. Diligent search failed to locate any nests. During August birds were seen again in several parts of the Refuge.

✓
Purple Martin.

Progne subis subis. On March 16 two birds were seen about the Inn and the Martin box in front. By April 5 a continual chatter with the longer drawn out low whistle could be heard as the birds flew about, a number of pairs nesting in this box. On August 24 hundred of birds could be seen about the water tank and the tops of the small trees near the Inn. Their chief enemy here appears to be the Crow which they will attack assisted by Redwings, Grackles, and Kingbirds. On September 7, 1 bird was seen near the Refuge, and September 10, 2 birds flew by New Holland Inn.

✓
Crow.

Corvus brachyrhynchos (species ?) This permanent resident may be seen any day about the Refuge, and is one of the few harmful species here. Kingbirds, Martins, Redwings and Grackles center their attacks on him but he seems to thrive in spite of them.

✓
Fish Crow.

Corvus Ossifragus. Permanent resident here and common about the Refuge. Hard to determine in the field from the above form unless heard cawing, in which case it is easy as their voices are quite different.

✓
Carolina Chickadee.

Penthestes carolinensis carolinensis. Permanent resident here and seen about the trees and shrubbery of certain dryer areas.

✓
Tufted Titmouse.

Baeolophus bicolor. Permanent resident here and like the former species and certain other forms which delight in wooded sections, it has a somewhat limited range about the Refuge, which is composed of so much marsh and water.

✓
Brown-headed Nuthatch.

Sitta pusilla pusilla. Permanent resident here and probably nests on the islands in the Lake or about the border of Refuge although I failed to locate a nest during the summer.

✓
Carolina Wren.

Thryothorus ludovicianus ludovicianus. Common permanent resident and heard singing about the Refuge throughout the year.

✓
Worthington's Marsh Wren.

Telmatodytes palustris griseus. On July 28 I heard two birds and had a fleeting glimpse of one of them in the marshy growth along the Lake by East Main Canal Road. Their gurgling notes are distinctive.

✓
Eastern Mockingbird.

Mimus polyglottos polyglottos. Common permanent resident. Several nests found. One in rose vines at back entrance of N. H. Inn containing 3 or more eggs on May 12; one in "First breath of Spring" bush about four feet above ground, containing 4 young well-feathered birds on May 17 in a yard by the highway near the Refuge; one in pine bush about 3 feet above ground, containing 4 eggs, on canal bank near the Pumping Plant on May 27; and one in "Myrtle" bush by the New Holland Inn about five feet above the ground containing 3 young on July 3.

✓
Catbird.

Dumetella carolinensis. An abundant summer resident about the Refuge, a few having wintered here. On May 21 a nest was found near the Pumping Plant containing 2 young birds. A late date is September 3 when I saw a young bird, appearing fully feathered except its tail, in the bushes back of New Holland Inn, one of the adults close by with food in its bill. One of the birds about the Inn was the finest songster of this species I have ever heard, equalling many mockingbirds in its range and varied notes.

✓
Brown Thrasher.

Toxostoma rufum. A permanent resident, fairly common during the winter and common about the Refuge during the summer months. Several nests were examined: - One was in some rose bushes about 3 feet above the ground in the yard of Mr. Cahoon's home on the highway and contained 3 eggs on May 17. The adult bird on the nest was very tame and allowed close inspection of the eggs without uttering a note, which is very unusual in this species. On May 29 two young only were in the nest. On May 17 another nest in the Weston yard by the highway was located in a rose bush about four feet above ground and contained 4 eggs. In this case the adult bird flew off and made considerable "fuss" and was greatly agitated. On May 20 and 26 only three eggs were seen in this nest. On May 28 a nest in the yard of Mr. J. B. Hodges in a Cape Jasmine bush about 4 feet above the ground contained 2 young birds and 2 eggs. On June 7 a nest containing 3 eggs was found about 5 feet above ground in a bush near New Holland Inn. On June 23 birds were seen mating near the Inn.

✓
Southern Robin.

Turdus migratorius achrusterus. Nests sparingly in this section. On April 26 one adult was seen near the Refuge and I believe had a nest near by. On June 2 near Fairfield, just outside the Refuge, an adult and 2 young were seen on the grounds of one of the homes. On June 11 an immature bird, almost grown, was seen near Fairfield.

✓
Wood Thrush.

Hylocichla mustelina. Just before the Hermit Thrush leaves here the Wood Thrush arrives and although not common in this particular area its song may be heard in certain wooded tracts near the Lake.

✓
Eastern Bluebird.

Sialia sialis sialis. So far this bird breeds only sparingly in this section. On June 21 an adult female was seen near the highway, just west of Patrick's Filling Station and I believe had a nest near by. On August 15 two birds were seen in flight toward the Refuge. They are scarce in this particular section.

✓
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

Polioptila caerulea caerulea. On July 26 one bird was seen inside the Refuge by No. 4 West Canal near Fairfield. This species probably breeds here but so far this is the only one seen.

✓
Starling.

Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris. Common in the towns and fields about the section and nesting about the watertower and the Inn at New Holland.

✓
White-eyed Vireo.

Vireo griseus griseus. One of the common denizens of the thickets along the canals and islands in the Refuge. A summer resident.

✓
Red-eyed Vireo.

Vireo olivaceus. Fairly common summer resident in this section. One nest was located in a hickory tree about 10 feet above the ground in the yard of J. B. Hodges near the Refuge.

✓
Prothonotary Warbler.

Protonotaria citrea. The most abundant summer warbler in and about the Refuge. An unusual nesting site was an old peach can located on a cabinet about twelve feet above the floor of the pumping plant. On June 20 it was removed to a window ledge and contained 4 eggs. During the occupancy of the nest, work of removing heavy machinery was carried on almost daily but in spite of this three of the young hatched out, only one of them, however, getting safely out of the building, the oil on the floor and all about proving fatal to the other two. On June 19 2 birds were mating on Head Lake Island.

✓
Parula Warbler.

Compsothlypis americana americana. On April 29 one bird was seen between the Refuge and the New Holland Post-office. This could have possibly been a bird of the northern form C.a. pusilla. On September 29 one bird and on September 30 two birds were recorded by New Holland Inn, either form.

✓
Eastern Yellow Warbler.

Dendroica aestiva aestiva. I have only one spring record of this bird, a male in song in a cypress tree by the water tower near New Holland Inn on April 29; and in the fall that of 2 birds by the office at New Holland on September 20.

✓
Wayne's Warbler.

Dendroica virens waynei. On May 14 one bird was seen in a cypress tree just outside the eastern end of the Refuge. Probably this form of the well known Black-throated Green Warbler. On September 29 one bird was seen near New Holland Inn.

✓
Yellow-throated Warbler.

Dendroica dominica dominica. On August 22 one bird was recorded between the highway and the Refuge in the Piney Shoals section.

✓
Black-poll Warbler.

Dendroica striata. On May 14 a migrating bird was seen by the Refuge near Fairfield.

✓
Northern Pine Warbler.

Dendroica pinus pinus. This permanent resident is fairly common in piney sections near the Refuge.

✓
Prairie Warbler.

Dendroica discolor discolor. Next to the Prothonotary Warbler this species is the most abundant of the family during the summer months.

✓
Western Palm Warbler.

Dendroica palmarum palmarum. On September 30 one bird was seen near New Holland Inn.

✓
Maryland Yellow-throat.

Geothlypis trichas trichas. It is possible that the Florida Yellow-throat (G.t.ignota) is the form breeding about the Refuge although it would take some collecting to determine the facts. The Yellow-throat is frequently seen and heard among the lower growth along the canals in the Refuge and the borders of the woods outside.

✓
Yellow-breasted Chat.

Icteria virens virens. On June 14 Carter Whittaker, of Atlanta, Georgia, and I distinctly heard 2 of these birds calling in the thick brush along the highway between Fairfield and Hodges' Fork, near the Refuge.

✓
Hooded Warbler.

Wilsonia citrina. A summer resident here and seen in a few choice damp woodsy places near the Refuge.

✓
American Redstart.

Setophaga ruticilla. No breeding records here. On September 2 two birds were seen by N. H. Inn and were common there during the month. Also, common about the canal banks and Great Island in the western end of the Refuge. All of the birds seen were females and males in immature plumage.

✓
English Sparrow.

Passer domesticus domesticus. Common permanent resident, many pairs nesting about the eaves and holes of New Holland Inn.

✓
Bobolink.

Dolichonyx oryzivorus. A common transient in spring and fall. On April 25 three male birds were first seen by New Holland Inn. They were common in and about the Refuge through the middle of May. During September, on their return flight, hundreds of birds are seen in the field of soy beans near the highway. In the spring plumage of the male they are called "cottontails" by one of the natives here.

✓
Southern Meadowlark.

Sturnella magna argutula. This is probably the breeding form here and is fairly common along the dryer sections of canal banks within the Refuge. It probably winters here also as well as the northern form (S.m.magna.)

✓
Eastern Red-winged Blackbird.

Agelaius phoeniceus phoeniceus. An abundant breeding bird here.

✓
Orchard Oriole.

Icterus spurius. This charming singer, called "English Robin" by some of the natives, is very abundant in this section especially in the Refuge around the New Holland Inn. The first bird, a male in fine song, was seen on April 23. They must leave for the south early in the season as no birds were seen during August. On June 9 a nest was found about 7 feet above ground in a water oak tree. One young could be seen inside the nest and another on the edge of it. The adult male came with food and seemed to be very attentive, no female being seen. On June 11 a nest was found about 8 feet above the ground in a sweet-gum tree. The adult male came to the nest with food in bill, and later on both adults were seen nearby. On June 27 a nest was found in willow tree hanging over East Main Canal and about five feet above the water. It contained 4 eggs. The adult female flew from the nest.

✓
Purple Grackle.

Quiscalus quiscula quiscula. This is probably the form breeding here and birds were fairly common within the Refuge and in the fields along the highways surrounding it during the summer.

✓
Eastern Cardinal.

Richmondia cardinalis cardinalis. Common permanent resident within and about the Refuge.

✓
Indigo Bunting.

Passerina Cyanea. Although not appearing to be common, birds were recorded near the Refuge in May and June.

✓
Red-eyed Towhee.

Pipilo erythrophthalmus erythrophthalmus. Although not so abundant as in the winter months, this species breeds here. On May 18 an adult male, adult female, and a young bird recently out of the nest, were observed by me off East Main Canal road. Both adults had red eyes.

✓
Eastern Savannah Sparrow.

Passerculus sandwichensis savanna. On September 25 two birds were seen in the sand and about the sage brush near East Main Canal road.

✓
Eastern Chipping Sparrow.

Spizella passerina passerina. My records for this species are on April 13 and May 28, both near the Refuge. It may prove to be more common on further investigation.

✓
Eastern Field Sparrow.

Spizella pusilla pusilla. No summer records of this bird.

EARLE R. GREENE

New Holland, N. C.
September 30, 1935.