

## The Centers of Learning

### The University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

by *Helmut C. Mueller*

In the last decade, the University of North Carolina has added four ecologists, two ethologists, and an avian systematist to its staff, and the Zoology Department is becoming an attractive and stimulating environment for students of avian biology. For the past several years, our zoology department was probably unique in having four "ornithologists" and no course in ornithology. This situation has now been remedied and we now teach an introductory course for advanced undergraduates and beginning graduate students. As in many other modern American universities, the emphasis is no longer on the taxonomic group to which the organism belongs, but in the approach of the investigator. Material dealing with birds is found in a variety of courses and seminars, but is especially prevalent in animal behavior, ecology, and morphology. Graduate degrees involving research on birds can be pursued either in the Department of Zoology, the Ecology Curriculum, or the Neurobiology Curriculum.

Ronald W. Oppenheim is an adjunct member of our faculty and his research deals with the embryology of behavior and early behavioral development in birds. R. Haven Wiley is primarily interested in the social behavior, social systems, and vocalizations of birds and has recently worked with grouse, hummingbirds, blackbirds, and tropical wrens. Helmut C. Mueller's current interests include prey selection and the development of predatory behavior in hawks, the development of predator recognition in birds, and

the influence of early experience on the social behavior in birds. Alan Feduccia works on a variety of aspects of the evolution, systematics and paleontology of birds and has recently suggested major changes in avian classification and phylogeny based on the morphology of the middle ear. W.L. Engels (emeritus) has worked in avian systematics, ecology, and photoperiodism, and continues to have an office in the zoology building. No other faculty members are currently working on birds, but a number of them are interested in, and have contributed advice to bird projects, including particularly the four ecologists in the Zoology Department. Of 11 graduate students currently in the Ethology group, four are currently working with birds: Lynn Moseley, breeding behavior of the Least Tern; Kerry Rabenold, a comparison of foraging behavior and resource partitioning of foliage-gleaning birds in spruce-fir forests in Maine and North Carolina; Donna Schroeder, individual recognition by the means of vocalizations in the yellowthroat and towhee, Harold Sears, breeding behavior of the Gull-billed Tern.

Our facilities for ornithological research include adequate laboratory space for maintaining birds in captivity and for experiments, and a well-equipped "sound" laboratory for analysing avian vocalizations. We have a modest field station three miles from campus which consists of a small laboratory and a number of aviaries in a 400-acre research area, partly in forest and partly an old-field succession. About 80 acres of the area is fenced and is restricted to researchers. The University has a marine laboratory at Morehead City which serves as a base for investigations of skimmers, terns and other marine and coastal birds. The University also has formal ties with the Highlands Biological Station near the Smoky Mountains National Park, the Bermuda Biological Station, and the Organization for Tropical Studies in Costa Rica. Duke University and North Carolina State University are less than 40 minutes distance by automobile, and opportunities exist for collaboration with faculty, and use of facilities at these institutions. The combined libraries of the three institutions constitute an outstanding collection of ornithological books and periodicals.

## OFFICIAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES

**Saturday, December 20, 1975 — Sunday, January 4, 1976**