

## Sanderling *Calidris alba*



**Folk Name:** Bay Snipe, Beach Sea-chicken

**Status:** Migrant

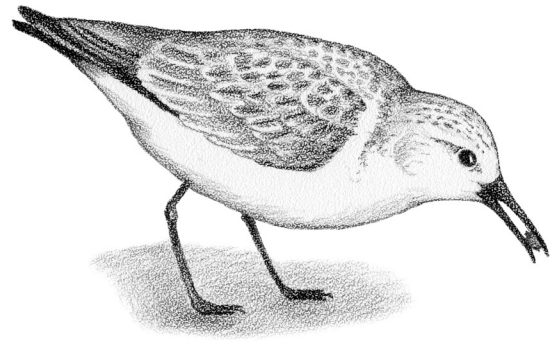
**Abundance:** Very Rare to Rare

**Habitat:** Mudflats

The Sanderling is one of the most common birds seen by visitors at our Carolina beaches, but this small shorebird seldom makes an appearance this far inland.

There were five reports of Sanderlings visiting the Central Carolinas in the twentieth century. Three were reported on the Stanly Spring Bird Count on May 15, 1976. They were described as twice the size of Least Sandpipers that were present and “with the white wing stripe, stout bill, and characteristic call note detected.” Paul Hart reported a group of five on Lake Norman in Lincoln County on September 15, 1983. A pair of birds was discovered by Heathy Walker at the Wallace Dairy Farm on September 20, 1989. The following year, David Wright found one on April 13, 1990, at the Charlotte Water Reservoir, and a few weeks later Mark Hoekstra returned there to find three Sanderlings present on 15 May.

There have been seven reports since the turn of the twenty-first century. On August 29, 2007, Heathy Walker and Harriett Whitsett sighted a Sanderling at the McAlpine WWTP in Pineville. Dwayne Martin discovered a pair of immature Sanderlings on Lake Norman near Long Island, Catawba County, on September 23, 2011. Tom Sanders located four Sanderlings foraging on a mudflat along the Catawba River at the Iswa Nature Preserve on September 16, 2015. The level of the river was unusually low and the Sanderlings were feeding with a variety of other interesting shorebirds that had stopped to rest and find food. These birds stayed several days and were seen and photographed by many observers. Dwayne Martin discovered one Sanderling on the Upper Lake Norman Cove in Catawba County on September 15–16, 2015.



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Monroe Pannell found a pair of Sanderlings on September 29, 2015, at Mountain Creek Park in Catawba County. Kevin Airington reported one “unmistakable” Sanderling at the swimming area on Badin Lake in Stanly County on August 31, 2016, but no details were provided. Our most recent record is a bird Chris Talkington photographed on Governor’s Island on Lake Norman on September 30, 2017.



Group of Sanderlings on the Catawba River. (Jeff Lemons)