

# BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

HARRY E. LeGRAND JR.

(All dates 1978 unless otherwise indicated)

- COMMON LOON:** Merrill Lynch counted 108 birds at Roanoke Rapids Lake, N.C., on 8 November, an excellent inland total. One all summer at Beaverdam Reservoir in northern Wake County, N.C., as reported by Clark Olson, was noteworthy, as were four at Parker Creek impoundment in Chatham County, N.C., as seen by Jim Pullman and Elizabeth Teulings.
- CORY'S SHEARWATER:** Twenty were seen off Charleston, S.C., on 4 August by Sidney Gauthreaux and Harry LeGrand. The peak count in North Carolina was 152 off Hatteras Inlet on 8 October, as reported by Paul DuMont. Six seen by Dave Lee on 14 November off Oregon Inlet, N.C., were rather late.
- GREATER SHEARWATER:** One was noted on 4 August off Charleston by Sidney Gauthreaux and Harry LeGrand. A good count of 42 was made off of Hatteras, N.C., on 8 October by Paul DuMont et al.; also noteworthy were 16 late individuals out of Oregon Inlet on 14 November (Dave Lee).
- AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER:** Sidney Gauthreaux and Harry LeGrand observed four off Charleston on 4 August. An outstanding total of 204 birds was noted by Paul DuMont et. al. off Hatteras on 8 October.
- WHITE PELICAN:** A very rare North Carolina record was an individual seen at Bird Shoal near Beaufort on 8 October by John Fussell and David Barnes.
- GREAT CORMORANT:** As many as two were seen regularly at Wrightsville Beach, N.C., from early September into December, as observed by Robert Needham, George Bond, James Parnell, et al.
- DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT:** Jim Mulholland noted single birds at Lake Wheeler near Raleigh, N.C., on 9, 26, and 28 October; and M.E. Whitfield and T. Playforth saw one on the Cape Fear River near Fayetteville, N.C., on 8 November.
- GREEN HERON:** Clyde Smith found a late individual at Clemmons, N.C., on 4 November.
- CATTLE EGRET:** Ten birds were late at Harlowe, N.C., on 3 December, as reported by John Fussell.
- LOUISIANA HERON:** Singles were rare inland visitors at Clemson, S.C., on 10 September (Sidney Gauthreaux, Harry LeGrand); at Beaverdam Reservoir on 27 August (Jim Pullman, Elizabeth Teulings); and at Fayetteville on 6 October (P. J. Crutchfield).
- BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON:** A rare summer record was an apparently uninjured bird captured on a street corner in Southern Pines, N.C., on 24 July by Tom Howard. It was released at a nearby lake.
- LEAST BITTERN:** Breeding near Southern Pines is indicated by the presence of two individuals seen at Johnson's Mill Pond by Tom Howard and Elliott Horner on 2 June.
- GLOSSY IBIS:** An adult on 14 August and an immature on 17 August near Fayetteville, as reported by P.J. Crutchfield, were very rare inland visitors.
- WHITE IBIS:** Noteworthy western North Carolina sightings were two immatures photographed by Robert Ruiz on 15 August at Black Mountain, an immature seen near Morganton on 1 August by William A. Kirksey, and three seen by the latter observer at Lake James on 18 August 1977.
- WHISTLING SWAN:** Two immatures at Pea Island, N.C., were early migrants (or summer stragglers) on 19 and 21 August, as noted by John Bazuin.
- BRANT:** Brian Keelan observed an out-of-season individual at Pea Island on 19 August.

- SNOW GOOSE:** A blue-phase bird was a good find near Walterboro, S.C., by Mark Hickman on 22 October.
- GREATER SCAUP:** One seen near Southern Pines on 22 March by J.H. Carter III was rare for that area.
- LESSER SCAUP:** J.H. Carter III noted a heavy influx near Southern Pines on 5 March, with flocks of 170, 107, and 69 counted on lakes in the area. An excellent inland total was the approximately 1000 birds on Roanoke Rapids Lake on 8 November, as reported by Merrill Lynch.
- BLACK SCOTER:** On 10 September Bob Holmes found a dead immature at Fort Macon, N.C., and saw another immature, perhaps flightless, waddling from a beach to the water in the sound behind the fort. Several adults in the vicinity, in addition to the immatures, have led the observer to speculate that breeding may have occurred in the area.
- RUDDY DUCK:** A female seen by Tom Howard was very early at Lake Surf, near Vass, N.C., on 5 and 15 September.
- COMMON MERGANSER:** Noteworthy finds for North Carolina were three at Thagard's Lake near Southern Pines on 5 March (J.H. Carter III), a very early individual at Parker Creek impoundment in Chatham County on 29 October (Dennis Alwon, Barbara Roth), and a male at Fort Fisher on 12 November in a flock of Red-breasted Mergansers (Ricky Davis).
- MISSISSIPPI KITE:** A very rare piedmont sighting was that of two immatures harassing a crow at Nash Farms in Franklin County, N.C., on 14 September, as noted by Eloise Potter. An adult was carefully observed by Ron Naveen on the extremely late date of 11 November near Dillon, S.C.
- GOSHAWK:** A rare North Carolina report was an immature observed by Ricky Davis at Fort Fisher on 30 September. The hawk had a conspicuous eye stripe and a very large size, and it was also seen swooping at a Yellow-crowned Night Heron in a dead tree.
- BROAD-WINGED HAWK:** Ann Brice and Gary McAlister noted a group of hawks soaring at Ocracoke Island, N.C., on 25 May. Two were definitely this species, and perhaps all were. Outer Banks records are quite unusual.
- GOLDEN EAGLE:** An adult was rare and early on 7 September approximately 4.5 miles NE of Moore's Landing in Charleston County, S.C. (John B. Andre). Other noteworthy records, all of single immature birds, were at Clemson, S.C., on 1 November (Harry LeGrand), at Lake Mattamuskeet, N.C., on 12 November with one or two Bald Eagles (Kevin Hintsa), and near McClellanville, S.C., on 11 December (Jay Shuler).
- BALD EAGLE:** North Carolina reports of this species were one to two present at least through 8 October at Beaverdam Reservoir (Clark Olson, Dennis Alwon), an immature near Harrisburg on 4 September (Harry LeGrand), an immature on 6 September at the Tar River Reservoir in Nash County (Lou Fink), one of unspecified age near Morganton on 13 September (Vernon Craig, John Abernethy Jr.), an immature at Harkers Island on 16 October (Skip Prange), and an immature at Raleigh on 29 October (Gail Whitehurst). In South Carolina four adults and an immature were noted at Bear Island on 29 October (Charleston Natural History Society), and an immature was seen at the Savannah spoil area on 20 November (Jim Orgain). Readers should note the high proportion of immatures of both species of eagles and the peak of the fall migration, particularly inland: Golden tend to peak in November, whereas Balds are seen most frequently in September.
- PEREGRINE FALCON:** One was rare and surprisingly early at Beaverdam Reservoir on 27 August, as seen by Jay, Eric, and Lois Garner and by Daniel and Ellen Kaplan. John Fussell reported that seven sightings were made in the Morehead City, N.C., area this fall (17 September to 7 December); the peak count was three on 4 October, seen by Skip Prange on Core Banks.

- MERLIN:** Jim Mulholland observed a male flying over Lake Wheeler near Raleigh on 10 October.
- SANDHILL CRANE:** One was seen at Johns Island, S.C., on 29 October by Ted Beckett and Stan Langston, and four were seen flying over I'On Swamp near Charleston on 2 December by Jay Shuler.
- PURPLE GALLINULE:** Jim Orgain observed a very late bird at the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge in South Carolina on 20 November.
- AMERICAN COOT:** At least 400 at the Tar River Reservoir on 25 November, as reported by Lou Fink, was a locally high number.
- PIPING PLOVER:** One was seen at Beaverdam Reservoir by Clark Olson on 13 August, presumably the same individual noted there in late July.
- WILSON'S PLOVER:** An individual was late near Beaufort, N.C., on 3 November, seen by John Fussell and Bill Moffitt.
- AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER:** Kevin Hints recorded a late migrant at Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge, N.C., on 12 November.
- RUDDY TURNSTONE:** A rare inland sighting was a bird in breeding plumage at Winston-Salem, N.C., from 9 to 11 August, as noted by Kevin Hints and Ramona Snively.
- UPLAND SANDPIPER:** One was seen at Kure Beach, N.C., on 1 August by Ricky Davis.
- SPOTTED SANDPIPER:** An early fall migrant was noted on 5 July near Chapel Hill, N.C., by Jim Pullman and Elizabeth Teulings.
- GREATER YELLOWLEGS:** One was late at McKinney Lake Fish Hatchery in eastern Richmond County, N.C., on 11 November, as seen by Tom Howard.
- WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER:** Rare inland in the fall was an individual at Roanoke Rapids Lake seen by Merrill Lynch on 3 October. John Fussell and Kevin Hints noted three late birds at Bodie Island, N.C., on 11 November.
- DUNLIN:** A single individual was seen at Raleigh on 26 October by Jim Mulholland, two were seen by Clark Olson on 12 November at Beaverdam Reservoir, and two were observed by Harry LeGrand near Clemson from 29 October to 19 November. This is the last shorebird to arrive inland in the fall, seldom being seen before late October.
- SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER:** Four were reported by Clark Olson at Beaverdam Reservoir on 3 September.
- LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER:** John Fussell noted three at Lake Mattamuskeet on 12 November, and he saw one on a saltwater mudflat near Beaufort, N.C., on 7 December. This species seldom occurs in salty habitats, but it generally forages at fresh and brackish pools and impoundments.
- SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER:** Forty was a good inland count at Roanoke Rapids Lake on 3 October (Merrill Lynch).
- BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER:** Inland individuals were seen by Eric Garner et al. at Beaverdam Reservoir on 27 August, and by Tom Howard at Lake Surf on 5 September. Good North Carolina Outer Banks totals were 10 at Bodie Island on 2 September (Paul DuMont) and 11 at Oregon Inlet on 3 October (Jim Pullman, Elizabeth Teulings). Coastal South Carolina sightings were five at the U.S. Vegetable Lab near Charleston on 18 September (Perry Nugent), and one on 8 October at the spoil area near Savannah (Joe Greenberg).
- HUDSONIAN GODWIT:** The first inland record for North Carolina is that of two birds seen along the causeway at Lake Mattamuskeet on 23 October 1977 by Geraldine Cox, Elizabeth Ball, et al., fide John Fussell.
- WILSON'S PHALAROPE:** Outstanding counts were the 18 birds at Pea Island on 21 August and 13 birds at Bodie Island on 18 August, as noted by John Bazuin, Brian Keelan, and Stan Walens.

- NORTHERN PHALAROPE:** One was observed at South Pond on Pea Island on 21 August by John Bazuin, Brian Keelan, and Stan Walens, a rare onshore report.
- POMARINE JAEGER:** The only report from shore was a light-phase adult seen by Ricky Davis at Carolina Beach, N.C., on 19 November.
- PARASITIC JAEGER:** Ricky Davis saw two individuals, plus five unidentified jaegers, at Carolina Beach on 19 November.
- BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE:** An immature seen by Merrill Lynch and Harry LeGrand off Oregon Inlet on 14 October was somewhat early.
- FORSTER'S TERN:** Two were seen by Clark Olson at Beaverdam Reservoir on 3 September, and two (possibly the same birds that were at Beaverdam) were noted the following day at Parker Creek impoundment by Dennis Alwon. Alwon also reported two at Parker Creek on 30 April.
- COMMON TERN:** A high inland count was a flock of 26 seen at Lake Johnson near Raleigh on 30 August by Jim Mulholland. One was late at Cape Hatteras, N.C., on 11 November, as seen by John Fussell.
- LEAST TERN:** John Fussell saw one at Fort Macon, N.C., on 10 September, the latest fall date for Carteret County. Records for the Carolina coast after September are thus rare, and observers should be extremely careful when reporting such fall and winter sightings.
- CASPIAN TERN:** Ten at the Morehead City-Beaufort causeway on 3 December was a good count for so late in the season, fide John Fussell. Inland reports were four at Beaverdam Reservoir on 3 September (Clark Olson) and two there on 9 September (Dennis Alwon), and one at Lake Surf on 15 September (Tom Howard).
- BLACK TERN:** Jim Mulholland observed 10 near Raleigh on 10 August, and P.J. Crutchfield reported single birds near Fayetteville on 6 and 28 August.
- RINGED TURTLE DOVE:** There have been four sightings in the Charlotte, N.C., area during the past year, fide Joe Norwood. The latest report was one at R.D. Wilson's feeder on 28 November.
- MONK PARAKEET:** Mike Tove observed one flying over I-40, just SW of Asheville, N.C., on 27 August.
- BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO:** Two individuals were seen and heard along the Blue Ridge Parkway at Waterrock Knob, N.C., on 14 July by Mike Tove.
- CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW:** A late bird was noted by Tom Howard at Southern Pines on 18 September.
- WHIP-POOR-WILL:** One was heard by a student in the N.C. State University ornithology class at Manteo, N.C., on 10 November; and John Fussell noted one at Emerald Isle, N.C., on 16 November.
- COMMON NIGHTHAWK:** Late individuals were seen at Aberdeen, N.C., on 22 October (J.H. Carter III), and near Chapel Hill on 29 October (Jim Pullman, Elizabeth Teulings).
- YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER:** A very early fall arrival was noted by John Fussell II at Morehead City on 13 September.
- WESTERN KINGBIRD:** Only four reports, all coastal, were received, with the peak being three seen together at the Ocracoke Ferry Terminal, N.C., on 18 October by J.H. Carter III.
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER:** A noteworthy sighting was an individual reported by R.A. DesPortes at Myrtle Beach State Park, S.C., on 8 May.
- ACADIAN FLYCATCHER:** Paul DuMont et al. observed a late bird on the North Carolina Outer Banks on 7 October.
- ALDER FLYCATCHER:** Small populations were noted during the summer in the North Carolina mountains at Roan Mountain (Edmund LeGrand et al.) and in the Graveyard

- Fields area of southern Haywood County (Harry LeGrand, Tom Haggerty). Haggerty noted two singing at the latter site as late as 2 August. See General Field Notes for further details.
- OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER:** Rare fall sightings were individuals in eastern Chatham County, N.C., on 4 September (Dennis Alwon), and at Clemson on 17 September (Sidney Gauthreaux, Harry LeGrand).
- TREE SWALLOW:** One seen out-of-season at Chapel Hill on 13 June by Jim Pullman and Elizabeth Teulings was presumably a wandering non-breeder or a late spring migrant.
- BANK SWALLOW:** Good fall totals were 200 at Edisto Island, S.C., as seen by Harry LeGrand on 6 August, and over 500 seen by Mike Tove and Kevin Hints at Long Beach, N.C., on 2 September.
- SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN:** A good inland count was three birds near Townville, S.C., on 8 October, seen by Harry LeGrand, and one was there on 7 November.
- SWAINSON'S THRUSH:** Eleanor Carter saw a late individual at Southern Pines on several dates in early November, through 11 November; it was seen on the previous day by J.H. Carter III.
- YELLOW-THROATED VIREO:** Two, one of which was singing, were very late near Jamesville, N.C., on 14 November, as reported by Merrill Lynch.
- PHILADELPHIA VIREO:** What is apparently the first specimen for South Carolina was a dead bird found by Evelyn Dabbs at a TV tower near Sumter on 28 September 1975; it is now in the Charleston Museum. Other records, all in 1978, were two on the Outer Banks on 7 October (Paul DuMont, Robert Ake, et al.); one at Chapel Hill on 17 September (Dennis Alwon); one near Blowing Rock, N.C., on 27 September (Tom Haggerty); one at the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge on 7 October (Joe Greenberg); one killed at a TV tower in Charlotte on 11 October (Dick Brown); and a bird observed singing one phrase and giving several calls (a mewling note—Harry LeGrand) near Townville on 8 October.
- WARBLER WAVE:** Paul DuMont, Robert Ake, and two others reported the largest known wave of warblers along the Outer Banks. The following species were seen on 7 October: 5 Tennessee, 7 Nashville, 200 Northern Parula, 3 Magnolia, 260 Cape May, 91 Black-throated Blue, 60 Black-throated Green, 7 Blackburnian, 4 Chestnut-sided, 8 Bay-breasted, 192 Blackpoll, 427 Palm, 1 Ovenbird, 2 Canada, and 193 American Redstart. Also, an immature Connecticut was seen on 9 October.
- BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER:** A bird believed to be an adult female was seen near Chapel Hill on 3 July by Jim Pullman and Elizabeth Teulings.
- SWAINSON'S WARBLER:** J.H. Carter III heard one near Faison, N.C., on 27 April.
- GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER:** Single individuals, all on 17 September, were noted at Clemson (Sidney Gauthreaux, Harry LeGrand), at Raleigh (Clark Olson), and near Bunn, N.C. (Eloise Potter). Others reported were singles at McCain, Hoke County, N.C., on 19 August (Libba Watson), and at Bulls Island, S.C., on 25 August (John B. Andre).
- BLUE-WINGED WARBLER:** Noteworthy coastal sightings were singles reported by Ricky Davis at Kure Beach, N.C., on 14 September and at Carolina Beach the following day.
- ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER:** One was a good find by Clark Olson at Raleigh on 19 November.
- NASHVILLE WARBLER:** This species is rare in the eastern half of North Carolina in fall; thus noteworthy were one seen by Jim Mulholland near Raleigh on 17 September, one seen at Fort Fisher on 19 September by Ricky Davis, and two seen on 29 October at Chapel Hill by Carol Hamilton.
- BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER:** Late males were noted by Eleanor Carter at Southern Pines on 1 November, and by David and Bobbin Huff at Isle of Palms, S.C.,

- on 11 November.
- BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER:** One seen by J.H. Carter III near Southern Pines on 8 May was a very rare spring record for the area.
- YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER:** Rare for the northwestern mountains was a male seen on 19 September by Tom Haggerty at Camp Broadstone in Watauga County, N.C.
- PRAIRIE WARBLER:** Three were rather late at Fort Fisher on 5 November, as seen by Ricky Davis.
- WILSON'S WARBLER:** An extremely late individual was observed by Tom Haggerty near Blowing Rock on 20 November. Other birds, all single, were at Fort Fisher on 30 September (Ricky Davis), both Capers Island and Breach Inlet, S.C., on 8 October (Perry Nugent), and near Pinehurst, N.C., on 6 May (Marion Jones).
- BOBOLINK:** Perry Nugent noted three early migrants near Charleston on 9 August.
- YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD:** Two females were seen by Harry and Edmund LeGrand at Pea Island on 1 September, and perhaps the same birds were observed farther south at Cape Hatteras point on 2 September by Paul DuMont et al.
- NORTHERN ORIOLE:** Two females were noted by Clark Olson on 3 December at Lake Wheeler near Raleigh; wintering birds are seldom seen away from towns.
- BREWER'S BLACKBIRD:** A good find was a group of approximately 30 birds at Hilton Head Island, S.C., on 7 October, as reported by Joe Greenberg.
- WESTERN TANAGER:** Evelyn Dabbs found one killed at a TV tower near Sumter on 13 October 1977.
- SUMMER TANAGER:** A female or immature was seen and heard calling near Boone, N.C., on 13 September by David Shuford and Tom Haggerty. The species is seldom reported from the mountains of the northern part of the state.
- BLUE CROSBEAK:** Two were late at Fort Fisher on 9 November, as seen by Ricky Davis.
- INDIGO BUNTING:** Late was a female seen by Renee Probst at a feeder in Pawleys Island, S.C., on 4 November, as were two seen by Ricky Davis at Fort Fisher on 9 November. One was also seen at the latter location by Davis on 11 November.
- PAINTED BUNTING:** Two green-plumaged birds were late at Pawleys Island on 28 October (Pat Probst).
- DICKCISSEL:** Ricky Davis observed two females or immatures at Fort Fisher on 7 October.
- EVENING CROSBEAK:** Unseasonably early were a male near Chapel Hill on 26 July (Dennis Alwon) and a female at a feeder in Raleigh on 28 September (Jim Mulholland).
- HOUSE FINCH:** Two brown-plumaged birds, perhaps immatures, were seen by Carol Hamilton in her yard in Chapel Hill on 25 August and 3 and 11 September. The peak fall count at the Raleigh Rose Garden was 140, noted by Kevin Hintsa on 18 November.
- PURPLE FINCH:** More than a month early was a male seen by Eloise Potter near Bunn, N.C., on 4 September.
- RED CROSSBILL:** Tom Haggerty noted that flocks of 10 to 20 birds were seen on many occasions during the fall in Watauga County, N.C. However, there were no reports away from the mountains this fall, indicating that the good numbers in this area were probably birds that were present all summer. As reported in the previous issue of *Chat*, unusual numbers were present in the mountains during the summer in the southwestern part of the state.
- GRASSHOPPER SPARROW:** One seen by J.H. Carter III in the Sandhills Game Land near Hoffman, N.C., on 12 November is the first record for the area since 1926. This secretive species might winter regularly this far north.

- SHARP-TAILED SPARROW:** Rare inland records were an individual, believed to be of an inland race, seen at the upper end of Roanoke Rapids Lake on 3 October (Merrill Lynch), and a tower-killed bird reported by Dick Brown at Charlotte on 29 October.
- BACHMAN'S SPARROW:** J.H. Carter III noted single birds at two locations near Hoffman on 23 August, one of which was singing in a brushy old field. Breeding birds in the Sandhills, and in the remainder of the coastal plain, generally inhabit open pine-woods and not old fields, the typical habitat of the species in the piedmont.
- DARK-EYED JUNCO:** An early arrival was noted at Charlotte on 26 September by Joe Norwood.
- CLAY-COLORED SPARROW:** An adult was seen at Fort Fisher on 7 October by Ricky Davis, and another adult, perhaps a different bird, was noted there on 21 October by Charles T. Clark.
- WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW:** An immature was rare at Hunting Island, S.C., on 2 October, as seen by James Clark.
- LINCOLN'S SPARROW:** Mike Tove found a dead individual at Cullowhee, N.C., on the extremely early date of 29 August. One seen by Tom Howard at Lake Surf on 15 September was the first record for that area. Other individuals were reported at Chapel Hill on 21 October (Dennis Alwon et al.), and near Townville on 22 October (Sidney Gauthreaux, Harry LeGrand).
- LAPLAND LONGSPUR:** Winter arrivals in northwestern South Carolina were noted near Townville on 19 November and near Pendleton on 25 November, both reported by Harry LeGrand.

## SUGGESTIONS ON REPORTING NOTEWORTHY SIGHTINGS FOR "BRIEFS FOR THE FILES"

HARRY E. LeGRAND JR.

Many people who have reported their sightings to me for publication in *Chat* "Briefs for the Files" and in *American Birds* have asked whether or not their manner of reporting is the "correct" or "recommended" manner. The purpose of this note is to give contributors an idea of the "recommended" format.

**WHAT TO REPORT** —Naturally, you should report species that are rare in the area where found or season when seen. I am also interested in trends, such as species in unusually low or unusually high numbers in your area. This information is important in the *American Birds* seasonal report. Stated simply, report what you think is noteworthy (worthy of mention in the "Briefs" or *American Birds*).

**HOW TO REPORT**—Every sighting must, by necessity, contain five bits of information: the species name, the number of individuals, the date of the sighting, the location, and the observer(s). Also, the significance of the records may be stated if desired, such as "first county record" or "very late." In addition, I urge contributors to describe the field marks on the rare species, especially those difficult to identify. Species such as Baird's Sandpiper, Iceland Gull, and Warbling Vireo (each of which is rare in the Carolinas and easily confused with other species) are examples of birds that should be described in detail. A Common Loon or a Horned Grebe at an inland locality would not need a full description, but a Red-throated Loon, Red-necked Grebe, or Eared Grebe definitely should be detailed. Even though I generally do not publish the descriptions in the "Briefs" or *American Birds*, they are necessary for me to decide whether the sightings are valid or