

# BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All Dates Winter 1996 - 1997)

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**RED-THROATED LOON:** Only one inland report this season; an individual was on Jordan Lake, NC, Feb 6 (Jeff Pippen).

**PACIFIC LOON:** This rare (but almost regular) species was observed three times during the winter. One was on the Morehead City, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 22 (Mike Tove, Jim O'Donnell, John Hammond); one was on the Wilmington, NC, C.B.C. Jan. 4 (Derb Carter); and one was at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, Jan. 24-25 (Bob Maxwell, Jack Peachey, Pete Worthington, Anne and Vernon Waters, Larry and Carol Eldridge).

**PIED-BILLED GREBE:** The Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC, hosted excellent numbers of this species. An impressive 871 were found on Dec. 5 by Steve Calver.

**RED-NECKED GREBE:** Reports of this rare grebe included up to five in the Cape Hatteras, NC, area in late December through February (m. ob.). There was a flock of seven on the Morehead City, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 22 (Tove *et al.*), and one was on the Southport, NC, C.B.C. Jan. 5 (Derb Carter). In South Carolina, four were at Huntington Beach State Park Jan. 12 (Robin Carter, Caroline Eastman). The only inland report was of one at Falls Lake, NC, Jan. 26 (Ricky Davis).

**EARED GREBE:** There was a group of these grebes at the Goldsboro, NC, wastewater treatment plant ponds again, with the peak count being nine Dec. 29 (Eric Dean). Three were at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, Feb. 24 (Steve Calver), and two were at Cape Hatteras, NC, Feb. 8 (m. ob.). Other reports included two at Baldhead Island, NC, Jan. 5 (Derb Carter) and one inland at Lake Norman, NC, Dec. 22 (David Wright, Judy Walker).

**WESTERN GREBE:** One was found in the surf at Cape Hatteras, NC, on Feb. 8 (Paul Lehman *et al.*, m. ob.) for only about the 5th good record for the state.

**NORTHERN FULMAR:** An impressive total of 200+ was seen on the pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, Feb. 9 (Brian Patteson *et al.*). This was one of the best counts ever for this species in the Carolinas, and surprisingly many observers on board felt many more were actually encountered that day!

**GREATER SHEARWATER:** One out of Hatteras, NC, Feb. 9 (Patteson *et al.*) provided a rare winter sighting.

**SOOTY SHEARWATER:** This species is normally absent from the western North Atlantic during the winter. Thus of note were two reports: 2-3 were found offshore during the Hatteras pelagic trip Feb. 9 (Patteson *et al.*), and one was seen from shore at Wrightsville Beach, NC, Jan. 3 (Ricky Davis). There are only a couple of previous winter records from the Carolinas.

**MANX SHEARWATER:** The only sighting was of one out of Hatteras Feb. 9 (Patteson *et al.*).

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN:** One was at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, Dec. 5 (Steve Calver) for the only winter report.

**BROWN PELICAN:** One was unusual inland at the Lake Moultrie spillway, Berkeley County, SC, Feb. 8 (Robin Carter).

**DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT:** Cormorants continue to increase in the Carolinas. A count of 300 on the Jordan Lake, NC, C.B.C. Jan. 5 (*vide* Barbara Roth) was impressive for an inland site. Also a new coastal congregation was found in the Beaufort Inlet area when 30,000+ were on the Morehead City, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 22 (*vide* John Fussell). Were these birds part of the normally huge Ocracoke-Hatteras flock? Also one in flight near Ecusta, Transylvania County, NC, Dec. 25 (Tom Joyce, *vide* Norma Siebenheller) was rare for the mountains in winter.

**ANHINGA:** Rare winter reports included singles at New Bern, NC, Dec. 20 (John Fussell), one on the Wayne County, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 21 (Eric Dean), and one at Emerald Isle, NC, in early December (*vide* John Fussell).

**LEAST BITTERN:** Very rare winter sightings of this elusive species involved singles at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, Jan. 12 (Robin Carter, Caroline Eastman) and Ocracoke Island, NC, Jan. 19 (Keith Camburn, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Ron Cicerello). Very little is known of just how many attempt to winter in the Carolinas each year.

**GREAT EGRET:** An unusual winter report involved three Greats wintering inland at Lake Blalock, Spartanburg County, SC, (*vide* Lyle Campbell). Also one was probably an early migrant at Lake Crabtree, Wake County, NC, Feb. 23 (Ricky Davis).

**CATTLE EGRET:** Always noteworthy in winter, an amazing 16 were on the Morehead City, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 22 (*vide* John Fussell). Also an impressive count of nine was had on the New Bern, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 20 (John Fussell) and one was on the Wilmington, NC, C.B.C. Jan. 4 (*vide* Sam Cooper).

**GREEN HERON:** One was rare on the Bodie-Pea Islands, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 28 (*vide* Paul Sykes). Also of note were singles at Savannah N.W.R., SC, Jan. 13 (Pete Worthington) and Bear Island W.M.A., SC, Feb. 1 (Anne Waters). Inland one was quite rare near Pauline, Spartanburg County, SC, Dec. 31 (Ken Pearson, *vide* Lyle Campbell).

**GLOSSY IBIS:** An immature Glossy found in Pitt County, NC, Jan. 26 (Brad Carlson, Ken Harrell) provided a very rare inland winter sighting.

**WOOD STORK:** One lingered exceptionally late at Sunset Beach, NC, when one was still there Dec. 12 as noted by Diane Hahn. Also, one was over Harbor Island, SC, Jan. 23 for an unusual winter report (George and Judy Halleron).

**FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK:** The only report received was of one on the Kitty Hawk, NC, C.B.C. (*vide* Lee Yoder).

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:** This species staged what must have been a record invasion into the Carolinas! Some of the more amazing reports included a flock of 12 near Concord, NC, Feb. 16 (Taylor Piephoff); up to eight near Townville, SC, late January to early February (Steve and Freda Mitchell, Bob and Barbara Maxwell); six in the Lake Landing area of Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, Dec. 29 (Ricky Davis) with at least one still there Feb. 22 (Rich Boyd); up to five near Lenoir, Caldwell County, NC, during January (Jim and Caroline Wagner, Taylor Piephoff); and three at Santee N.W.R., SC, late December (Lex Glover, *sev. ob.*). Also one was at Savannah N.W.R., SC, Jan. 11 (Steve Calver), and another was in the Lake Wanteska - Deerlake areas of Transylvania County, NC, Jan. 18 until March (Bill Shank, Betty McIlwain, Norma Siebenheller, *sev. ob.*). One wonders if this species appeared in these numbers in other areas of the East this winter.

**SNOW GOOSE:** This species was also widespread this winter. Some good totals included the twelve at Santee N.W.R., SC, Dec. 30 (Lex Glover) and ten at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, Jan. 10 (Steve Calver). Other noteworthy reports involved birds in the western parts of the Carolinas, including singles on the Spartanburg, SC, C.B.C. Jan. 4 (Lyle Campbell *et al.*); Lake Julian, Buncombe County, NC, Jan. 19 (Wayne Forsythe); Townville, SC, Feb. 15 (Steve and Freda Mitchell); and at Casar, Cleveland County, NC, Feb. 27 (Pat Wilkison).

**ROSS'S GOOSE:** The Ross' Goose also staged a record movement into the Carolinas this winter. Seven were on the Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 29 (*vide* Allen Bryan). The flock grew to ten birds by Feb. 7 (Will Cook *et al.*), and at least one was still there Feb. 22 (Rich Boyd). This was easily a record total for the Carolinas, at least doubling the previous count! And alongside these birds, another flock of five was at the usual Pungo N.W.R., NC, site Jan. 19 (Haven Wiley *et al.*). Other very rare reports included one at Santee N.W.R., SC, in late December (*sev. ob.*) and one at Deerlake, Transylvania County, NC, Jan. 5 until at least late February (Tom Joyce, Becky and John Huggins, *sev. ob.*).

**"EURASIAN" GREEN-WINGED TEAL:** This rare, easily overlooked form was found on the Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 29 (Ricky Davis), for the only report.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL:** Rare inland in winter, noteworthy sightings included two at Cane Creek Res., Orange County, NC, Dec. 4 (Eric Barnhardt, *vide* Jeff Pippen), two on the Raleigh, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 21 (*vide* Susan Campbell), and one at Lake Orange, Orange County, NC, Jan. 3 (Jeff Pippen).

**CINNAMON TEAL:** The male found at Bodie Island Lighthouse Pond on the Outer Banks during the fall remained until early December (Jeff Lewis). It disappeared for awhile and then was relocated at North Pond, Pea Island N.W.R. in mid January for several days before disappearing for good (m. ob.).

**EURASIAN WIGEON:** Winter reports of this species are always noteworthy, especially when away from the usual NC Outer Banks areas. A male showed up at a pond near Lake Wheeler, Wake County, NC, for the third year in a row when it was found on the Raleigh C.B.C. Dec. 21 (Kent Fiala, Diane Hardy, John Connors). Two were at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, Dec. 29 (Ricky Davis), and two were at Bear Island W.M.A., SC, in early February (Anne Waters, Jack Peachey, m. ob.). Also one was again found on North Pond, Pea Island N.W.R., NC, Jan. 18 (John and Paula Wright, Brad Carlson, Jodi Nicholson *et al.*).

**REDHEAD:** Some excellent counts of this species included 3800 on the Morehead City, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 22 (*vide* John Fussell), 3020 on the Bodie-Pea Islands, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 28 (*vide* Paul Sykes), 31 at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, Dec.21 (Steve Calver), and 25 at Deerlake, Transylvania County, NC, Feb. 28 (Betty McIlwain).

**RING-NECKED DUCK:** A count of 9000 on Middleton Pond, Georgetown County, SC, during the winter (Jack Peachey *et al.*) was impressive even for this common species.

**GREATER SCAUP:** This species is normally found in small numbers in the Carolinas. This year there were the usual scattered reports of small numbers. One exception was the flock in the Lake Crabtree - Brier Creek Res. area of Wake County, NC, where up to 50 were found from late January until March (Jeff Pippen, Harry LeGrand, m. ob.).

**COMMON EIDER:** There were more reports than normal this winter. Some of the better counts included an impressive eight on the Bodie-Pea Islands, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 28 (*vide* Paul Sykes); three on the Cape Hatteras, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 27 (*vide* Harry LeGrand); two at Fort Fisher, NC, Jan. 5 (Ricky Davis), and two at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, during the winter (m. ob.). Others noted were singles at Wrightsville Beach, NC, Jan. 4 (Derb Carter); Carolina Beach, NC, Jan. 4 (Ricky Davis); Morehead City, NC, Jan. 8 until late February (John

Fussell, Harry LeGrand, sev. ob); Emerald Isle, NC, Jan. 24 until February (Nell Moore, sev. ob.); and Sullivan's Island, SC, Jan. 27 (Rick Murray *et al.*). KING EIDER: An individual of this rare species was found on the Bodie-Pea Islands, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 28 (*vide* Paul Sykes).

OLDSQUAW: Rare inland reports of this coastal duck included an impressive flock of seven at Jordan Lake, NC, Dec. 15 (Pat Coin, Rob Gluck *et al.*); two at Charlotte, NC, late December to early January (David Wright, Taylor Piephoff, sev. ob.); one on Lake Townsend, NC, Dec. 21 (Herb Hendrickson, Peggy Ferebee); and possibly the same bird at a pond in southern Guilford County, NC, in late January (Lynne Moseley *et al.*). Other good records involved birds in South Carolina, where the species is much harder to come by. Two were at Huntington Beach State Park Jan. 23 (Barbara Maxwell), and one was in the Pee Dee River at the US 17 bridge Jan. 25 (Anne and Vernon Waters, Larry and Carol Eldridge).

INLAND SCOTERS: A Surf was on WoodLake, Moore County, NC, in December (Marion and Dick Burk *et al.*), and two Blacks were on Roanoke Rapids Lake, NC, Dec. 8 as noted by Ricky Davis.

HOODED MERGANSER: An impressive count of 1300 was had at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, Dec. 5 (Steve Calver).

COMMON MERGANSER: The best count of this species was eight at Roanoke Rapids Lake, NC, December to February (Ricky Davis), a usual wintering area. There were other reports of from one to two birds in several North Carolina areas. Also there was no report from Lake Phelps, NC, where a huge flock has wintered in the past.

RUDDY DUCK: Large numbers were found at a couple of areas this winter. There were 1505 on the Bodie-Pea Islands, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 28 (*vide* Paul Sykes) and 1778 at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, Jan. 10 (Steve Calver). Also in the mountains, where much harder to come by; there were 11 on Lake Toxaway in early January (June Humphrey, *vide* Norma Siebenheller), providing an unusual local record.

RED-TAILED HAWK: A rare sighting was provided by a melanistic Red-tailed near Hendersonville, NC, Dec. 13-14 (Wayne Forsythe, Simon Thompson). Most reports concerning abnormal color involve leucistic or albinistic individuals, but observers should remember to check for some of the dark races found in the western US.

GOLDEN EAGLE: Two adults were near Lake Toxaway, NC, Dec. 1 (Doc Murphy, *vide* Norma Siebenheller), and one immature was in Transylvania County, NC, in late December (Clyde Osborne, *vide* Siebenheller) for the only (but expected) mountain reports. Much rarer in the coastal region was the immature at Bear Island W.M.A., SC, Feb. 1 (Anne Waters).

**MERLIN:** Some of the better inland reports included two at Southern Pines, NC, during the winter (Marion and Dick Burk), one in northern Mecklenburg County, NC, Dec. 14 - Jan. 2 (Taylor Piephoff), and one at Hooper Lane, Henderson County, NC, Dec. 13-14 (Wayne Forsythe, Simon Thompson).

**YELLOW RAIL:** The only report of this elusive winter resident involved one flushed at the Bodie Island Lighthouse Pond Dec. 28 (Mel Baughman, *vide* Paul Sykes).

**VIRGINIA RAIL:** A record count of 65 was had on the Bodie-Pea Islands, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 28 (*vide* Paul Sykes).

**SORA:** One was at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, Jan. 21-23 (Ben and Carol Ringer, Wayne Forsythe) for a rare local record.

**PURPLE GALLINULE:** One at Pinckney Island N.W.R., SC, Feb. 19 (William Carlson, *vide* Brad Carlson) provided a rare winter sighting of this species.

**AMERICAN COOT:** This species has been reported in increasing numbers from areas across the Carolinas. The count of 4170 on the Bodie-Pea Islands, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 28 (*vide* Paul Sykes) was the highest ever for that count. Will this trend continue next year? What is behind this increase?

**SANDHILL CRANE:** There were two reports this winter: one was in Clarendon County, SC, late December (Tom Hankins) into early January (Robin Carter, Caroline Eastman, Lex Glover, m. ob.), and one was in a field south of the Roanoke River in Halifax County, NC, Feb. 17 (Mike Schultz).

**AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER:** A late fall migrant was found near Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, Dec. 1 (Eric Dean).

**WILSON'S PLOVER:** One was at Bird Shoal near Morehead City, NC, Dec. 25 - Jan. 25 (John Fussell). This is the only place where they are known to winter in the Carolinas.

**AMERICAN AVOCET:** Two spent much of December to February at a spoil pond on the Morehead City - Beaufort, NC, causeway (Eric Dean, m. ob.), a locally unusual report.

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS:** A good count away from the coast was the 56 at the Hemingway ponds, Williamsburg County, SC, Dec. 4 (Jack Peachey, Paul Rogers).

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER:** Rare in winter were one at Morehead City, NC, Jan. 25 (Nell Moore *et al.*) and one at Landsford Canal State Park, SC, Feb. 16 (Albert Conway).

**LONG-BILLED CURLEW:** The Fort Fisher, NC, individual was again found this winter on Jan. 5 (Ricky Davis). One was also found on the Morehead City, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 22 (Sam Cooper).

**STILT SANDPIPER:** Once again a wintering flock was present at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC. Their numbers fluctuated from 25 on Dec. 5 to one

on Jan. 10 and back up to 64 on Feb. 24 (Steve Calver). This is apparently the farthest north that the species winters. Much more unexpected was the single Stilt Sandpiper found on the Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 29 (Ricky Davis), providing one of only a handful of winter records for that state.

**GREAT SKUA:** A pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, Feb. 9 reported a record total of 10 Great Skuas (Brian Patteson *et al.*). Even if there were some duplication, it still blows the old count of 2-3 right out of the water! Was this an unusual event, or does this happen in other years? More winter pelagic trips are needed to answer that question.

**LAUGHING GULL:** A Laughing on the Greenville, NC, C.B.C. Jan. 5 (Harry LeGrand) provided a rare winter report away from the immediate coast.

**LITTLE GULL:** The best report involved one at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, Dec. 9 & 21 (Steve Calver), providing a very rare sighting for that state. In North Carolina, reports came from the Outer Banks as usual, with the best totals being four at Cape Hatteras Feb. 8 (m. ob.) and three on the Hatteras pelagic trip Feb. 9 (Patteson *et al.*).

**BLACK-HEADED GULL:** An adult Black-headed was at Cape Hatteras from Dec. 27 (Ricky Davis, Allen Bryan) until at least Jan. 19 (Keith Camburn, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Ron Cicerello). Also a 1st-winter bird was there Jan. 11 (Jeff Lewis, Pat Moore).

**CALIFORNIA GULL:** The Cape Hatteras, NC, area once again hosted this species. Two birds (1 adult, 1 first-winter) were present throughout the winter (m. ob.).

**THAYER'S GULL:** The only report received was of one adult on the Cape Hatteras, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 27 as noted by Derb Carter.

**ICELAND GULL:** At least three were found in the Cape Hatteras area this winter. Two 1st-winter birds were seen during January until early February (m. ob.), and one adult was seen Jan. 23 (Taylor Piephoff).

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:** Good reports away from the usual Outer Banks areas included four on the Wilmington, NC, C.B.C. Jan. 4 (*vide* Sam Cooper) and one inland on the Raleigh, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 21 (Derb Carter).

**GLAUCOUS GULL:** Two immatures were present in the Cape Hatteras area all winter (m. ob.), and one was at Pea Island N.W.R. Dec. 14 (Bert Fisher). Rarer sightings included a 1st-winter bird at the Horry County, SC, landfill Dec. 6-7 (Jack Peachey, Paul Rogers, Robin Carter, Caroline Eastman, Lex Glover) and a 2nd-winter at Myrtle Beach, SC, Jan. 21 (*vide* Jack Peachey).

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:** The Triangle area of North Carolina had several reports this season, continuing a recent trend the past several winters. Two 1st-winters were at Jordan Lake Feb. 1 (Will Cook *et al.*), a 1st-winter

and a 3rd-winter were at the Raleigh landfill in January (Dan Kaplan *et al.*), and a 1st-winter bird was at Falls Lake Feb. 9 (Ricky Davis).

**BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE:** The best count was the 30 found on the Hatteras pelagic trip Feb. 9 (Brian Patteson *et al.*). Onshore reports included one in the Cape Hatteras area most of the winter (m. ob.) and one found injured on the beach at Pine Knoll Shores, Carteret County, NC, Dec. 21 (*vide* John Fussell), which was taken to a local wildlife shelter.

**RAZORBILL:** This species was present in small numbers along the North Carolina coast this winter. Four were on the Bodie-Pea Islands C.B.C. Dec. 28 (Harry LeGrand *et al.*, Ricky Davis, Derb Carter); three were at Wrightsville Beach Jan. 3-4 (Derb Carter, Ricky Davis); three were at Fort Fisher Jan. 5 (Ricky Davis); and 12 were tallied on the Feb. 9 Hatteras pelagic trip (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

**DOVEKIE:** The only report was of one found alive on the beach at Pine Knoll Shores, NC, Dec. 21 (*vide* John Fussell). It died at a local wildlife shelter.

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE:** Two were seen at North Topsail Island, NC, Jan. 20 (Nell Moore). At least two survived last year's hurricanes. It seems that this colonizing, invading species is good at surviving intense storms!

**SHORT-EARED OWL:** An individual was found near Falls Lake, NC, Feb. 16 (Russ Tyndall) for a locally unusual report.

**HUMMINGBIRDS:** It seems that more and more hummingbirds are reported from the Carolinas each winter. They have become almost too numerous to mention in detail. They can be broken down into the two obvious classes - *Archilochus* and *Selasphorus* types. There were 20+ *Archilochus* scattered near the coast with 12+ in Carteret County, NC, alone. Four to six were in the Buxton, NC, area also. Of these 20+ birds, at least eight were identified to Ruby-throateds. There were at least 10 *Selasphorus* in the Carolinas. Of these, adult male Rufous were seen in Charlotte, NC, Dec. 1-20 (*vide* Taylor Piephoff) and Belle Isle, Georgetown County, SC, late December to early January (*vide* Jack Peachey). Also an immature male Rufous was identified (by Sargent) in Pleasant Hill, Transylvania County, NC, (*vide* Norma Siebenheller). One highlight of the hummingbird season was the discovery of a *CALLIOPE* at the Scott feeder in Hampstead, NC, (Derb Carter, m. ob.). This bird was probably present all winter, but the news did not get out until late February. Over the next couple of weeks, on into March, the bird was observed and photographed by many people. This was the second documented record for the state.

**WESTERN KINGBIRD:** One was near Supply, Brunswick County, NC, Dec. 8 (Dick Brown, *vide* Diane Hahn), and one was at Frisco, NC, Dec. 12 (Nancy Nolan). These rare winter reports almost certainly involve late fall migrants.



**EASTERN KINGBIRD:** One was reported (and well-described!) on the Bodie-Pea Islands, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 28 (Carol Brown, *fide* Paul Sykes), for an extremely unusual sighting. This is one of those species that when reported from the winter season requires thorough details.

**BARN SWALLOW:** One was late at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, Dec. 1 (Eric Dean).

**HOUSE WREN:** One was found on the New River, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 28 (Harrol Blevins *et al.*), providing a rare report from the mountains during winter.

**EASTERN BLUEBIRD:** In the amazing department was the pair of bluebirds incubating three eggs in mid-January near Kernersville, NC, (*fide* Ramona Snively). They were known to incubate for at least five days, even through an ice storm! As far as is known, the nesting attempt was unsuccessful.

**VEERY:** One was found on the Mt. Jefferson, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 21 (Jim Keighton, James Coman III). The bird was well-described and provided an extremely rare winter sighting. All non-Hermit Thrush reports in the winter should be thoroughly described.

**GRAY CATBIRD:** Locally unusual inland in winter, two were on the Chapel Hill, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 29 (*fide* Will Cook), and one was on the Jordan Lake, NC, C.B.C. Jan. 5 (Chuck Byrd, Randy Neighbarger).

**LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE:** The decline of this species has been known for some time, so the report of 30 on the Aiken, SC, C.B.C. Dec. 24 was good news (*fide* Anne Waters).

**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER:** Unusual away from the outer coastal plain in winter were singles on the Lake Norman, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 22 (Taylor Piephoff) and at Jordan Lake, NC, Jan. 18 (Will Cook).

**YELLOW WARBLER:** An adult male was found on the Spartanburg, SC, C.B.C. Jan. 4 (Lyle Campbell) for a very rare winter report. Most of the few winter sightings of Yellow Warblers have been coastal, thereby making this one all the more remarkable.

**YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER:** The presence of 5-6 singing Yellow-throateds at the Silver Bluff Sanctuary, Jackson, SC, on Feb. 17 was truly amazing (Paul Koehler, *fide* Anne Waters). With that many being found, they were probably early returning nesters and not overwintering birds. Another early one was also singing on the Dare County, NC, mainland Feb. 28 as noted by Mary Lou Bell (*fide* John Fussell).

**BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER:** Four were found on the Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 29 (*fide* Allen Bryan) for a good winter count.

**NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH:** A very rare winter report involved the individual found on the Wilmington, NC, C.B.C. Jan. 4 (Greg Massey,

Maurice Barnhill). What is interesting is that the observers felt that there were two present, although only one was seen well.

**WESTERN TANAGER:** Only one was reported, a female at Kiawah Island, SC, all winter (Dennis Forsythe).

**ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK:** A winter-plumaged male was at a feeder in Buxton, NC, Jan. 9-10 (Charlotte and Eric Fulcher) for a very rare winter sighting. One hopes that Black-headed Grosbeak was ruled out by close observation.

**PAINTED BUNTING:** This species continues to be found during the winter. Seven were in Carteret County, NC, (*vide* John Fussell), with at least three of these in Morehead City. Up to eight were in the Buxton, NC, area (m. ob.), and two were at a feeder in Rodanthe all winter (Jeff Lewis).

**DICKCISSEL:** The only one reported this winter was one found at Edisto Beach, SC, Feb. 16 (Sid Gauthreaux, Carroll Belser).

**AMERICAN TREE SPARROW:** Extremely rare in South Carolina, one provided some excitement on the Greenville C.B.C. Dec. 28 when it was found in Simpsonville (Pete Worthington). This was the only report for the Carolinas this winter.

**CLAY-COLORED SPARROW:** Rare in winter in the Carolinas, one was at Buxton, NC, Dec. 16 (Marcia Lyons). This was probably a late migrant and did not try to overwinter.

**LECONTE'S SPARROW:** One was found on the Greenville, NC, C.B.C. Jan. 5 (Brad Carlson, Ken Harrell, Ernie Marshall) for the only report of this elusive, rare winter visitor.

**FOX SPARROW:** This species was more common than usual in several coastal areas this winter. One example was the 94 found in one area of Brunswick County, NC, Jan. 4 (Ricky Davis).

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW:** Lincoln's Sparrows were less common this winter. Only three reports were received: one was in Pitt County, NC, Dec. 15 (Brad Carlson), one was near Aurora, NC, Dec. 15 (Eric Dean), and one was in Horry County, SC, Feb. 25 (Lex Glover).

**"MYSTERY" SPARROW:** A sparrow of some sort provided a lot of excitement in the yard of Roger Kohn and Ramona Conyers in Durham, NC, this winter. The bird was a deep, dark reddish-brown on the body and almost black on the back, head, neck, and breast. It was associating with White-throated and Fox Sparrows, and observers felt it was one of these with abnormal pigment and not some kind of hybrid. The general concensus was that it appeared to be most like a White-throated in shape, size, and behavior. An erythristic (excessive reddish-brown pigment) or melanistic (excessive black pigment) White-throated Sparrow is the best guess at this time. The bird

never did vocalize during its stay (November through the end of the period) and we'll probably never know what's going on with this bird. Amazingly this was the second winter in a row that it had appeared, so maybe it will return for a third season in late 1997!

**LAPLAND LONGSPUR:** Reports included one at the Orangeburg sod farm, SC, Jan. 5 (Robin Carter, Caroline Eastman); one at Cape Hatteras, NC, Jan. 18-19 (Brad Carlson, Haven Wiley *et al.*, Keith Camburn, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Ron Cicerello); one at Townville, SC, Feb. 22 (Steve and Freda Mitchell); and four at Hooper Lane, Henderson County, NC, during December (Wayne Forsythe, Simon Thompson) building to eight in January (m. ob.)!

**SNOW BUNTING:** Snow Buntings were found in the Carolinas in what must have been record numbers. The flock at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, built from 11 in early December (Mary McDavit, Lex Glover) to 30 in early January (Jack Peachey). Five were at Ft. Sumter, SC, Dec. 30 (Peter Osenton, *vide* Kent Fiala) for another report from that state. In North Carolina, the numbers were truly impressive. In the Cape Hatteras area, a flock of about 36 was present from Dec. 15 (Pat Moore, Bert Fisher, Leto Copeley, Chris Eley) until at least Jan. 18 (Brad Carlson, Jodi Nicholson). Nine were on the Morehead City C.B.C. Dec. 22 (Eric Dean, Gene Howe, Sue Greenberg). There was a flock of buntings in the Oregon Inlet area throughout the winter, and the peak count was an amazing 60 on Feb. 19 (Jeff Lewis). There were also some inland reports, with one at Jordan Lake Dec. 31 - Jan. 8 (Lucretia Kinney, Will Cook, m. ob.) and a flock of 10 at Etowah, Henderson County, Jan. 10 (Ira Weigley).

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD:** Always noteworthy, one was on the Lake Norman, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 22 (Taylor Piephoff), and four were on the Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, C.B.C. Dec. 29 (*vide* Allen Bryan).

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE:** A male oriole at the feeder of Betty and Lloyd Davis in Rocky Mount, NC, was different from the others. This individual was patterned exactly like the other males, but the orange color was replaced by a deep scarlet red color! The Davises have been feeding orioles for 30 years, and this is the first one they've seen with color like this. Are there any other instances of abnormal coloration in orioles? And what would cause it?

**RED CROSSBILL:** The only report received was of two heard in flight at Burrell's Ford, Oconee County, SC, Dec. 28 (Lex Glover, Mike Turner).

**FINCHES:** Purple Finches were spread across the Carolinas in very small numbers, with most counts involving from a couple to 5 or 6 at feeding stations. Pine Siskins were reported even less, and Evening Grosbeaks were reported only twice: 12 in Chester County, SC, Jan. 14 (Albert Conway), and two near Fayetteville, NC, (Hal Broadfoot). Obviously not a finch year!

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