

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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All Dates Summer 1999

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed field note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter: December 1 - February 28, due March 20
Spring: March 1 - May 31, due June 20
Summer: June 1 - July 31, due August 20
Fall: August 1 - November 30, due December 20

Reports can be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you type them and list the sightings according to the birds in checklist order (not according to dates or locations). If you submit your report to me through e-mail, please type your report directly into the message or copy it from a word processing program directly into the message. You may also attach your file to the e-mail, but if you do, please let me know the program used and also send a second version saved as a text (.txt) file.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a field note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state field notes editor. You may, of course, submit your field note directly to the editor without going through me.

COMMON LOON: Summer occurrences of this species are annual in the Carolinas. This year one on Price Lake, Watauga County, NC, June 12-13, (Dwayne and Lori Martin), provided a rare mountain sighting. More expected were one near Oriental, NC, June 30-July 1 (Jim Ward) and one at Cape Hatteras Point, NC, June 30 (Steve and Tracy Shultz), the latter being in alternate plumage!

HERALD (TRINIDADE) PETREL: This species has been found quite regularly off North Carolina the last couple of years, probably due to the increased number of boat trips. This summer, off Hatteras two dark phase birds were found June 6, and one dark phase was seen July 17 (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

BLACK-CAPPED PETREL: The peak count off North Carolina this summer was 372 off Hatteras July 24 (Patteson *et al.*). Much rarer was one found off Murrells Inlet, SC, June 26 (Jack Peachey *et al.*), providing one of only a handful of reports for that state.

SOOTY SHEARWATER: Quite rare in summer, one was seen off Hatteras, NC, July 24 (Patteson *et al.*). This species normally moves out of our waters on its northward migration by mid to late June.

MANX SHEARWATER: This species is regular (in small numbers) in late spring and early summer off our coasts. Only one was reported this summer, off Hatteras June 6 (Patteson *et al.*).

AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER: The peak total for the summer was a very impressive 1035 off Hatteras, NC, July 17 (Patteson *et al.*).

WILSON'S STORM-PETREL: One was unexpected (no storm at the time) along the coast in Bogue Sound, near Morehead City, NC, June 20 (John Fussell).

WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL: One individual of this rare pelagic species was found this summer, off Oregon Inlet, NC, July 31 (Paul Guris *et al.*).

LEACH'S STORM-PETREL: The peak count this summer was 62 off Hatteras, NC, June 6 (Patteson *et al.*). Much more unusual was one found dead on the beach near Charleston, SC, June 10 (Eric Graves, *vide* Will Post), providing only the third specimen for that state.

BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL: South Carolina's second verified record of this species involved one found beached (later died) on Fripp Island, Beaufort County, June 2 (Ben Ten Eyck, *vide* Will Post). Also the peak North Carolina pelagic total was 71 off Hatteras July 24 (Patteson *et al.*).

WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD: Reports of this species picked up a little this summer, as compared to the past couple of years. Singles were found off Hatteras June 5 and 25, and off Oregon Inlet July 19 (Patteson *et al.*). Two were seen off Hatteras July 17 (Patteson *et al.*).

NORTHERN GANNET: Lingering young gannets included one-to-two off Murrells Inlet, SC, June 26 (Jack Peachey *et al.*) and one off Hatteras, NC, July 17 (Patteson *et al.*).

BROWN PELICAN: One was quite unusual and unexpected inland at the Stevens Creek Dam, near the Savannah River, Edgefield County, SC, July 31, as noted by Mike Turner.

ANHINGA: Anhingas were found at several new inland sites this summer. One was over Kinston, NC, June 13 (John Fussell), and one was along the Sapony Creek arm of the Tar River Reservoir in Nash County, NC, July 29 (Ricky Davis).

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD: This summer's sightings of this annual visitor included one at Buxton, NC, June 2 (David Dunmore), one near Avon, NC, June 15 (Marcia Lyons), and one at Litchfield Beach, SC, July 5 (*vide* Taylor Piephoff).

GREAT EGRET: Post-breeding dispersal of long-legged waders seemed to come earlier than normal this summer, as evidenced by 52 Great Egrets at Jordan Lake, NC, June 12 (Jeff Pippen). Could the cold, wet weather during the spring breeding season have caused the early dispersal?

REDDISH EGRET: This summer's reports came from the usual areas for this species and included one immature at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, July 17 (Jack Peachey *et al.*), one immature at Sunset Beach, NC, July 31 (Will Cook), and two adults near Cape Lookout, NC, July 31 (John Fussell *et al.*).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON: A new Forsyth County, NC, breeding location was discovered this year. One nest was found in the Old Salem area during June-July (*fide* Ramona Snavelly). Also of note were two adults at the Little Creek Impoundment, Chapel Hill, NC, June 16, as noted by Rob Gluck.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL: One immature was a good find on Kiawah Island, SC, in early July (*fide* Dennis Forsythe).

WOOD STORK: The Sunset Beach, NC, summering population arrived a little earlier than usual this year with an excellent count of 25 as early as July 4 (*fide* Taylor Piephoff).

RING-NECKED DUCK: Lingering Ring-necks involved singles at a pond east of Rocky Mount, NC, June 6 and another at a pond south of Tarboro, NC, June 13-July 11 (Ricky Davis).

BLACK SCOTER: A female was found on the beach in a slightly oiled condition on Sullivan's Island, SC, June 6 (Steve Compton).

HOODED MERGANSER: Two immatures in Sumter County, SC, June 2 probably represented locally reared young (Lex Glover).

RUDDY DUCK: A female on Lake Hickory, Caldwell County, NC, July 24 probably was a wandering non-breeder (Dwayne and Lori Martin).

MISSISSIPPI KITE: Laurinburg, NC, has become the spot to find nesting kites in that state. In addition to the original nest site (which reared at least one young), another colony was found at the Scotch Meadows Golf Course, where five kites were seen to be actively building a nest July 26 which apparently failed (Barbara Gearhart). In other breeding news, one nest was found in Roanoke Rapids, NC, and at least one young was raised (*fide* Frank Enders). Other kite reports included one near Jordan Lake, June 27 (Will Cook) and one in Raleigh, NC, July 23 (Derb Carter).

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK: Summer reports of this species are always noteworthy in the Carolinas. Single Sharpies were observed near Apex, NC, July 3 (Will Cook), in Charlotte, NC, July 2 (Phil Warren), and in Durham County, NC, during June and July (Jeff Pippen). Most importantly, breeding was noted in the Weymouth Woods Preserve, Southern Pines, NC, July 11, where two adults were seen with food at a nest (Scott Harley).

COOPER'S HAWK: Cooper's Hawks were reported throughout the Carolinas this summer, indicating that this species continues to increase in our area. Breeding evidence included two fledging in Raleigh, NC, June 22 (Joseph Covington) and four fledging in the Asheville, NC, area in early July (Len Pardue).

SANDHILL CRANE: The flock of 12 Sandhills noted in Carteret County, NC, during the spring were still present throughout June and early July. It turns out that these birds were from the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center's breeding program and for some reason did not make it back north after the winter season. The birds were monitored by Center staff and apparently were recaptured July 20-21 and returned to the Center (John Fussell).

AMERICAN AVOCET: Locally unusual and out of habitat was one Avocet at the jetty pond at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, July 13 (Jack Peachey). The bird was also found July 29 along the causeway there (Bob Maxwell).

WILLET: This species turned up in some unusual locations this summer. One was far to the west at Hooper Lane, NC, July 18-19 (Wayne Forsythe and Marilyn Westphal), providing a very rare local report. Another inland Willet was found at the Silver Bluff Audubon Sanctuary, Aiken County, SC, July 19-22 (Paul Koehler, *fide* Anne Waters). And finally one was far to the east when observed offshore of Hatteras, NC, July 24 during a pelagic trip (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

LONG-BILLED CURLEW: The only one reported this summer was found on Shackleford Banks, Carteret County, NC, June 29 (Nell Moore).

HUDSONIAN GODWIT: Quite rare for South Carolina was one slightly early at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County July 27, as noted by Steve Calver.

WESTERN SANDPIPER: Inland reports included three at Claremont, NC, July 14 (Dwayne and Lori Martin), two at Hooper Lane, NC, July 19 (Wayne Forsythe), and two near Robersonville, NC, July 25 (Ricky Davis).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER: One at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC, June 23, was probably a very early fall migrant (Steve Calver).

DUNLIN: One in alternate plumage was at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, on the extremely early date of July 4 (Jack Peachey, Gary Phillips, and Paul Rogers).

STILT SANDPIPER: One was locally rare at Hooper Lane, NC, July 18 (Wayne Forsythe). On the coast where much more expected, a likely record count for the Carolinas of 898 Stilt Sandpipers was had at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, July 27 (Steve Calver).

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER: Noteworthy mountain area reports included one at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, July 13 (Ron Selvey, *fide* Wayne Forsythe) and one at Hooper Lane, NC, July 17-18 (Wayne Forsythe and Marilyn Westphal).

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER: Rare July occurrences included one adult inland at the Winslow Sod Farm, Scotland Neck, NC, July 25 (Ricky Davis) and one offshore of Hatteras, NC, July 25 (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

COMMON SNIPE: One at Hooper Lane, NC, July 14 (Wayne Forsythe and Ron Selvey) was so early (if a fall migrant), it defied explanation!

WILSON'S PHALAROPE: The peak summer count at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, was five on July 27 (Steve Calver).

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE: A rare onshore sighting was of one at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, June 12 (Steve Calver), most likely a late spring migrant.

SOUTH POLAR SKUA: There were a good number of sightings this summer. Two to three were off Hatteras, NC, June 6 and another was found July 25 (Brian Patteson *et al.*). Much more rare and unexpected was one off of Murrell's Inlet, SC, June 26 (Jack Peachey *et al.*).

LAUGHING GULL: An adult in basic plumage was found at Jordan Lake, NC, July 5 (Ricky Davis), probably representing a non-breeding wanderer.

FRANKLIN'S GULL: Quite a surprise was the adult breeding-plumaged Franklin's found with Laughings at the Hatteras Inlet Ocracoke Ferry Terminal

on the date of July 3 (John Weske). One wonders what was this bird doing on the east coast at this time of the summer?

ROSEATE TERN: Rare at any time in the Carolinas, a Roseate Tern was found offshore of Oregon Inlet, NC, June 4 (Brian Patteson *et al.*). This species is almost never found away from the immediate coast.

COMMON TERN: Two on Lake Hickory, Catawba County, NC, July 22 (Dwayne and Lori Martin), were considered to be locally unusual.

FORSTER'S TERN: Also locally unusual was one Forster's near Margaret in eastern Franklin County, NC July 5, as noted by Ricky Davis.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: Another location was added to the list of sightings for this species when one was seen at the Cherry Hospital, Wayne County, NC, June 26 (Eric Dean and Gene Howe).

COMMON GROUND-DOVE: Very unusual were two seen flying along NC 32 south of Plymouth, NC, June 7 (Jack Peachey and Paul Rogers). This area is considerably north and inland of where the species used to be found in that state.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO: An adult near Orrum, Robeson County, NC, July 27 is just another in a long list of weird locations and dates for this unpredictable species (*vide* Susan Campbell).

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD: An adult male was somewhat early at a Chapel Hill, NC, feeder July 7-9 (Janice Bloch, *vide* Taylor Piephoff), for the only report received.

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER: One in a yard in Whispering Pines, NC, during the first week of July (Audry Parowski, *vide* Susan Campbell) defies explanation. Was this a mixed-up migrant or just a non-breeding wanderer?!

GRAY KINGBIRD: Reports came from the usual areas with one at Caswell Beach, NC, June 5 (Brad Carlson and Diane DelleDonne) and Cape Hatteras, NC, June 25 (John and Paula Wright).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: The Outer Banks of North Carolina had the only reports with one at Cape Hatteras Point June 15 (Pat Moore *et al.*) and one at Ocracoke July 18 (*vide* Keith Watson).

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET: One was found dead in Raleigh, NC, on the very early date of July 29 (*vide* Susan Campbell). There are several previous August records for the area, but this one is definitely out of season.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH: One singing in an Asheville, NC, suburb from late May to early June was very intriguing (Alex Netherton). It was probably a late migrant, but the species does breed not too far away in the southern Virginia mountains.

YELLOW WARBLER: Two at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, June 4 (Steve Calver) were most likely late migrants.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER: One singing on territory in northern Moore County, NC, June 6 was along the known eastern edge of the piedmont breeding range (Jeff Pippen and Derb Carter).

WORM-EATING WARBLER: Three on territory at Morrow Mt. State Park, NC, June 11 (Mark Johns) were considered to be at the edge of the breeding range.

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH: A singing Louisiana at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, June 3 (Jack Peachey and Gary Phillips) was considered to be

a late migrant, but this species is usually in the middle of breeding activities by early June. One wonders if rare breeding by this species occurs in the outer coastal plain area of that state from time to time, like it does in nearby North Carolina.

SCARLET TANAGER: One was singing near Catherine's Lake, Onslow County, NC, June 29, as noted by Nell Moore. This is definitely far to the east for this species during the breeding season.

HENSLOW'S SPARROW: John and Paula Wright once again conducted surveys of singing males at the two VOA sites near Greenville, NC. This year, at VOA-A (Beaufort County), 76 males were counted June 5. And at VOA-B (Pitt County), 50 males were tallied June 6.

SONG SPARROW: A male was observed singing in Southern Pines, NC, June 3&7 (Susan Campbell). This being on the extreme eastern edge of the potential breeding range, no second bird or nesting evidence was observed.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW: One was very late at Raleigh, NC, on the date of June 16 (Erik Thomas).

PAINTED BUNTING: One was slightly past the northern limit of the known breeding area at the Cedar Island NWR headquarters, Carteret County, NC, June 2 (Josh Rose).

DICKCISSEL: Fewer Dickcissels were found during this summer in the Carolinas than in the past several years. A couple of easterly sightings included single males at Cedar Island NWR, NC, June 2 (Josh Rose) and near Pettigrew State Park, Tyrrell County, NC, June 19 (Scott Hartley *et al.*).

BOBOLINK: Always noteworthy during the summer in the Carolinas, Bobolink reports included three near Hooper Lane, NC, July 17 (one pair present since spring) (Wayne Forsythe and Marilyn Westphal) and a count of 20 at the usual Glendale Springs, Ashe County, NC, site June 6 (Will Cook *et al.*).

SHINY COWBIRD: North Carolina sightings included a male at the Ocracoke Terminal of the Cedar Island-Ocracoke Ferry June 7 (Wayne Irvin) and another male at Lola, near Cedar Island June 30 (Nell Moore and Jim O'Donnell). In South Carolina, one male was on Sullivans Island June 13 (Willy Hutcheson), and an astounding flock of 18 was found at the Savannah Spoil Site July 1-2 (Paul Sykes and Steve Calver). This flock was probably the largest found outside of Florida and does not bode well for the future of our native nesting passerines.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE: One was a very late migrant(?) in southwestern Orange County, NC, June 12, as noted by Will Cook.

RED CROSSBILL: Excellent numbers were found at several sites in the mountains this summer. Twenty were in the Devil's Courthouse, NC, area June 5 (Bill and Barbara Gearhart), 26 were at the usual Mt. Mitchell, NC, spot July 7 (Simon Thompson *et al.*), and 25 were at the Ridge Junction Overlook on the Blue Ridge Parkway (near the Mt. Mitchell entrance) July 23 (Dwayne and Lori Martin). In South Carolina, one was south of the Cherry Hill Recreation Area, Oconee County, June 15 (Dennis Forsythe).