

# BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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All Dates Winter 1999-2000

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*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 General Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.*

**RED-NECKED GREBE:** This species is always noteworthy in the Carolinas. This winter singles were found at Charleston, SC, Dec. 28 (*fide* Ed Blicht), Ft. Fisher, NC, Jan. 6 (John Brunjes), and C. Hatteras, NC, Feb. 21 (Wayne Irvin and Phil Crutchfield).

**EARED GREBE:** The Eared Grebe is an annual winter visitor, though quite local in its distribution. This winter's reports included up to three in Wayne County, NC, through the winter (Eric Dean), one at C. Hatteras, NC, Dec. 27 (Harry LeGrand) and three there Feb. 13 (Marcia Lyons, Pat Moore, *et al.*), one at Jordan

Lake, NC, Feb. 29 (Doug Shadwick), and a peak of 17 at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC, Dec. 17 (Steve Calver).

**NORTHERN FULMAR:** Two pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, provided the only sightings with 11 on Feb. 5 and 120 on Feb. 20 (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN:** Only one was reported from North Carolina this winter, that being in the river at Ft. Fisher, NC, Jan. 5, as noted by Greg Massey.

**ANHINGA:** This species is rare in North Carolina in winter, although there has been an increase in sightings the last couple of years. Singles were on the L. Mattamuskeet CBC Dec. 29 (Harry LeGrand), the Greenville CBC Jan. 2 (*fide* John Wright), and at New Bern Jan. 14 (John Daughtry).

**AMERICAN BITTERN:** One was locally rare and unusual in the mountains at Ecusta, Transylvania County, NC, Dec. 22 (*fide* Norma Siebenheller).

**REDDISH EGRET:** One remained from the fall season at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, until at least Dec. 30 (*fide* Jack Peachey).

**GREEN HERON:** The number of winter reports of Green Heron was higher than normal this year. All in North Carolina, two were on the C. Hatteras CBC, Dec. 27 (*fide* Harry LeGrand), one was near Trenton, Jones County, Jan. 19 (Clancy Ballenger), one was on the Wayne County CBC, Dec. 18 (LeGrand), one was on the Charlotte CBC, Dec. 26 (*fide* Wayne Covington), and one was at Beaver Lake, Asheville, Dec. 2 (Len Pardue).

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON:** One flying over Silas Creek, Winston-Salem, NC, Dec. 28 (*fide* Ramona Snavelly), provided a first local winter record.

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON:** This species is very rare in the Carolinas during the winter. Four on the McClellanville, SC, CBC Dec. 22 (*fide* Perry Nugent) were excellent finds. One at Bird Shoal, Beaufort, NC, Dec. 10 & 22 (John Fussell *et al.*) provided a first December county record.

**WHITE IBIS:** One was locally rare at Wood Lake, Vass County, NC, Feb. 7 (Barbara Gearhart and Susan Campbell) and the 34 on the Santee NWR, SC, CBC Jan. 2 (*fide* Lex Glover) provided a new high number for that count.

**GLOSSY IBIS:** One was quite rare on the Bodie-Pea Islands, NC, CBC Dec. 28 (*fide* Paul Sykes).

**ROSEATE SPOONBILL:** One on the Hilton Head, SC, CBC Dec. 18 (*fide* Barry Lowes) was the same individual present since the fall season.

**BLACK VULTURE:** Locally rare coastal reports for North Carolina included five over Bird Shoal, Beaufort, NC, Feb. 10 (John Fussell and Jack Fennell) and one on Roanoke Island Feb. 27 (Jeff Lewis).

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:** Always noteworthy in our area, one was on the Pamlico County, NC, CBC Dec. 21 (*fide* Liz Lathrop), and one was on the Charleston, SC, CBC Dec. 28 (*fide* Ed Blitch).

**SNOW GOOSE:** Quite unusual for the mountains, four were found in Watauga County, NC, Dec. 30 (Curtis Smalling).

**ROSS'S GOOSE:** There were three reports of this rare species this winter. One was at Beaufort, NC, Dec. 17-23 (with a Snow Goose!) (John Fussell, *sev. obs.*); one was on the Pettigrew State Park, NC, CBC Dec. 28 (*fide* Scott Hartley); and one was present in Forsyth County, NC, Dec. 27 (Hop Hopkins, *fide* Ramona Snavelly) until at least Jan. 11 (Mary McDavid).

**“CACKLING” CANADA GOOSE:** An individual of this small race (“*minima*”) of Canada Goose was at L. Mattamuskeet, NC, Dec. 12 and Jan. 8, as noted by Brad Carlson.

**BRANT:** Two on the Southport, NC, CBC Jan. 2 (Ricky Davis) were locally rare. This species is not often found away from the usual Pamlico Sound wintering areas.

**TUNDRA SWAN:** This species continues to increase in the Carolinas, with more being found at scattered inland sites and numbers increasing at the usual areas. This year the Bear Island WMA, SC, wintering flock numbered at least 2,000 on Feb. 19 & 26 (Robin Carter and Caroline Eastman), probably a record total for that state.

**EURASIAN WIGEON:** Not too unusual, one spent the winter at North Pond, Pea Island NWR, NC (m. obs.). Much more noteworthy were the two at Cowans Ford, Charlotte, NC, Jan. 6 (Tom Lorenzin) and the two that wintered on Greenfield Lake, Wilmington, NC (Sam Cooper, sev. obs.).

**“EURASIAN” GREEN-WINGED TEAL:** This form was picked out of Greenwing flocks twice this winter, with singles at Pee Dee NWR, NC, Dec. 11 (Barbara Gearhart) and L. Mattamuskeet, NC, Dec 29 (Derb Carter and Ricky Davis).

**COMMON EIDER:** Common Eiders were not reported much this winter. The only ones found included a female at the Huntington Beach State Park, SC, area Dec. 11 (Steve Shultz and Kent Fiala) until at least Dec. 30 (*fide* Jack Peachey), and four in flight at Bald Head Island on the Southport, NC, CBC Jan. 2 (Ricky Davis).

**SURF SCOTER:** Rare inland winter sightings included two on L. Julian, Buncombe County, NC, Dec. 9 (Dick Blee and Wayne Forsythe), one at Charlotte, NC, Jan. 4 (Judy Walker *et al.*), and one on L. Keowee, SC, Dec. 3 (Steve Patterson).

**COMMON MERGANSER:** Interesting reports of this merganser involved one on L. Tillery, Montgomery County, NC, Dec. 1 (Grady Goldston), six on the Pamlico County, NC, CBC Dec. 21 (*fide* Liz Lathrop), and two on the L. Mattamuskeet, NC, CBC Dec. 29 (*fide* Allen Bryan).

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## CAROLINABIRDS

Carolinabirds is an Internet e-mail discussion group about birds and birding in the Carolinas. Subscribers frequently post sightings to it similar to those found in Briefs for the Files, but unusual behavior receives more attention. Subscriptions are free. To subscribe, address an e-mail message to <majordomo@duke.edu>. Don't fill in the subject line. As your message, simply put, “subscribe carolinabirds” (without the quotes). You will receive a confirmation and more information shortly. Submissions for Briefs for the Files should be sent directly to Ricky Davis.

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**OSPREY:** Noteworthy winter reports included one on the C. Hatteras, NC, CBC Dec. 27 (*fide* Harry LeGrand) and one inland on the S. Lake Norman, NC, CBC Dec. 19 (*fide* Taylor Piephoff).

**ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK:** This species turned up in North Carolina at several areas this winter. In the mountains, one was at Grassy Creek, Ashe County, Dec. 27, and another (or possibly the same) individual was on Pond Mt., Ashe County, Feb. 27 (*fide* James Coman). One was a surprise at Coddle Creek Res. near Charlotte Jan. 6-7 (Tom Lorenzin, Danny Swicegood). And near the coast, Alligator River NWR, Dare County, hosted a light-phase adult all winter (Eric Dean, m. obs.) and a second, darker, individual off and on during January and February (Eric Dean *et al.*, John & Paula Wright *et al.*, sev. obs.).

**GOLDEN EAGLE:** One was very rare for South Carolina at South Island, Dec. 3 (Van Atkins *et al.*). And in North Carolina, Alligator River NWR hosted an immature Jan. 16 and a sub-adult Feb. 19 (John & Paula Wright *et al.*). Having two separate Golden in one area anywhere in the Carolinas is a rare event indeed.

**SANDHILL CRANE:** South Carolina had several reports of cranes this winter. The five at Donnelly WMA, present since late fall, remained throughout the winter (Judy Halleron, Pete Worthington, sev. obs.) as did the one at the Myrtle Beach airport (Jack Peachey). Other sightings were up to four near Hemingway, Williamsburg County, late January to early February (*fide* Peachey), one on the Santee CBC Jan. 2 (Lex Glover), and ten in flight over I-26 in Dorchester County Feb. 7 (Dean Edwards *et al.*).

**WILSON'S PLOVER:** Noteworthy reports of wintering Wilson's Plovers included up to four at Bird Shoal, Beaufort, NC, Dec. 15 & 22 (John Fussell), six at Ft. Fisher on the Southport, NC, CBC Jan. 2 (Fussell and Buddy Garrett), and two on the Charleston, SC, CBC Dec. 28 (*fide* Ed Blitch). This species seems to be wintering farther north the last couple of winters. Will this trend continue?

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER:** This species was reported this winter in the Carolinas in possibly record numbers. North Carolina sightings included singles on the Wayne County CBC Dec. 18 (John Fussell), at Atlantic Beach Dec. 22 (*fide* Fussell), on the Ocracoke CBC Dec. 31 (*fide* Peter Vankevich), on the Southport CBC Jan. 2 (Harry LeGrand, Taylor Piephoff, *et al.*), and at the Oxford Dam, Catawba County, Jan. 12 (Dwayne & Lori Martin). In South Carolina, one was in the McClellanville area Dec. 22 (*fide* Perry Nugent) and again Feb. 7 (Dean Edwards *et al.*), and one was at Great Falls along the Catawba River Jan. 11 (Stephen Harris).

**PECTORAL SANDPIPER:** One was late at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC, Dec. 9, as noted by Steve Calver.

**DUNLIN:** Rare inland in winter, three Dunlin were on the Wayne County, NC, CBC Dec. 18 (John Fussell), and one was on the Long Cane, SC, CBC Dec. 23 (Steve Patterson and Lex Glover).

**STILT SANDPIPER:** The only known wintering site for this species in the Carolinas is the Savannah Spoil Site, in Jasper County, SC. The peak count there this winter was 27 on Dec. 19, as noted by Steve Calver.

**RED PHALAROPE:** The only reports involved one near shore just off Masonboro Inlet, NC, on the Wilmington CBC Jan. 1 (Ricky Davis) and a count of 87 on the Hatteras, NC, pelagic trip Feb. 5 (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

**GREAT SKUA:** This annual, offshore-wintering species was found on both Hatteras, NC, pelagic trips with four birds on Feb. 5 & 20 (Patteson *et al.*).

**PARASITIC JAEGER:** One seen from the Cedar Island - Ocracoke Ferry in Pamlico Sound, NC, Dec. 26 was somewhat of a surprise away from the ocean waters (John Fussell).

**LAUGHING GULL:** Three at the Wayne County, NC, landfill Dec. 24 (Eric Dean and Gene Howe) provided a rare inland winter report.

**LITTLE GULL:** This sought-after gull was located several times, with one off of Salvo, NC, on the Feb. 5 Hatteras pelagic (Brian Patteson *et al.*), three in the Nags Head, NC area Feb. 6 (John & Paula Wright), and two at Avon, NC, Feb. 7 (Patteson).

**BLACK-HEADED GULL:** One was in the Morehead City, NC, wastewater treatment plant area Jan. 24 until at least Feb. 23 (John Fussell, sev. obs.). Another was in the C. Hatteras, NC, area Feb. 6 (Haven Wiley *et al.*, sev. obs.).

**CALIFORNIA GULL:** This gull has become expected each year at C. Hatteras, NC. This winter an adult was present Jan. 15 (Brad Carlson) until at least Feb. 19 (Brian Patteson *et al.*) and a 1st-winter immature was there Feb. 9 (Patteson). Others were found elsewhere, including a 2nd-winter immature offshore on the Feb. 20 Hatteras pelagic (Patteson *et al.*) and an adult at Oregon Inlet, NC, Jan. 9 (Eric Dean).

**THAYER'S GULL:** The only report was of a 1st-winter immature at C. Hatteras, NC, Feb. 9, as noted by Brian Patteson.

**ICELAND GULL:** In North Carolina, up to three were in the C. Hatteras area all winter (m. obs.), and two were found offshore on the Feb. 5 Hatteras pelagic (Patteson *et al.*). In South Carolina, where decidedly much rarer, one was at the Horry County landfill Feb. 19 (Chris Hill, Jack Peachey, *et al.*), and another or the same was on the beach at Myrtle Beach Feb. 25 (Bruce Hallett).

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:** This species continues to increase its numbers in our area. Excellent counts this winter included 27 on the C. Hatteras, NC, CBC Dec. 27 (*vide* Harry LeGrand), an impressive 75 along the beach from C. Hatteras point to Frisco in mid-January (Brian Patteson), and eight inland at the Wayne County, NC, landfill Dec. 24 (Eric Dean and Gene Howe).

**GLAUCOUS GULL:** Apart from the usual C. Hatteras, NC, area birds, noteworthy sightings elsewhere included one at Ft. Fisher, NC, Dec. 4 (John Brunjes) until at least Jan. 2 (John Fussell and Buddy Garrett), one at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, Feb. 6 (Mary Douglass), and another or the same was at the Horry County, SC, landfill Feb. 17 (Jack Peachey and Gary Phillips).

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:** This species is also increasing, especially as an inland winter visitor. Excellent counts included 40 at the Wayne County, NC, landfill Dec. 24 (Eric Dean and Gene Howe), two at Falls Lake, NC, Jan. 1 (*vide* Brian Bockhahn), and nine at Greenville, NC, Jan. 2 (*vide* John Wright).

**"HYBRID GULLS"** The C. Hatteras, NC, area (on the beach and offshore) usually has several individuals of hybrid gulls each winter. This year some of the suspected forms included 3-5 Nelson's (Glaucous/Herring), up to two Herring/Lesser, and one Herring/Greater, all Feb. 19 at the point and Feb. 20 offshore (Patteson *et al.*).

**BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE:** Land-based sightings included one on the Wilmington, NC, CBC Jan. 1 (Ricky Davis), one at Wrightsville Beach, NC, Feb. 26 (Logan Williams), and one at C. Hatteras, NC, Feb. 18-19 (Wayne Irvin, Mike Tove and Jeff Phippen). The Hatteras, NC, pelagics turned up 10 on Feb. 5 and two on Feb. 20 (Patteson *et al.*).

**CASPIAN TERN:** One inland at Santee NWR, SC, on Feb. 15 (Lex Glover and Steve Lohr) was most unusual in that winter reports are almost unheard of and spring migrants usually show up in April!

**RAZORBILL:** The only land-based sighting was of one off Bodie Island on the CBC Dec. 28 (Matt Sharpe *et al.*). The Hatteras, NC, pelagics produced four on Feb. 5 and an impressive 540 on Feb. 20 (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE:** The colony at Beaufort, NC, continues to thrive, as evidenced by the count of 19 there on the Morehead City CBC, Dec. 19 (Eric Dean and Gene Howe). Also three were at N. Topsail Beach, NC, in January (Jamie Cameron). One wonders if these were hurricane survivors or new transplants!

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE:** One was at an Atlantic, Carteret County, NC, feeder until at least Dec. 8 (*vide* John Fussell), for the only report.

**LONG-EARED OWL:** There were three reports of this very rare and elusive owl this winter. Singles were on the Charleston, SC, CBC Dec. 28 (*vide* Ed Blich), at Simpsonville, SC, Dec. 29 (Pete Worthington), and on the Greenville, NC, CBC Jan. 2 (*vide* John Wright).

**SHORT-EARED OWL:** Up to three were present at Hooper Lane, Henderson County, NC, during January and February (Wayne Forsythe, Tom Joyce, *sev. obs.*) for a locally rare occurrence.

**SAW-WHET OWL:** Reports of this species were widespread this winter. Some of the better sightings included up to three along Mashoes Road, Dare County, NC, Dec. 16-17 (Jeff Lewis), one picked up injured, but later released, at Morehead City, NC, Dec. 9 (*vide* John Fussell), one netted at James Island, SC, Dec. 3 (Will Post), one heard at Santee NWR, SC, Jan. 22 (Tim Kalbach), and several netted at York, SC, in early December (Bill Hilton). In the mountains, reports were of one on the Stone Mt., NC, CBC Jan. 1 (Jim Keighton and James Coman), one in a yard in Boone, NC, Jan. 23 (Curtis Smalling), and one in Waynesville, NC, Feb. 7 (Don Hendershot).

**WHIP-POOR-WILL:** Small numbers of this species winter along the coast each year but often go undetected. This year singles were reported on the Litchfield-Pawley's Island, SC, CBC Dec. 30 (*vide* Jack Peachey), on the Wilmington, NC, CBC Jan. 1 (Greg Massey), and at Marshallberg, Carteret County, NC, Jan. 21 (*vide* John Fussell).

**RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD:** This species once again wintered in good numbers. The best reports were 14 on the Morehead City, NC, CBC Dec. 19 (*vide* John Fussell) and 11 on the C. Hatteras, NC, CBC Dec. 27 (*vide* Harry LeGrand).

**ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER:** Following the fall season's two reports, one was at the north end of Pea Island, NC, Dec. 12 (John & Paula Wright *et al.*, Jeff Lewis, Keith Watson), providing about the 5th report for that state. Three Ash-throateds in the state in one year is just amazing. One wonders if they were found in other eastern states during this time period as well.

**GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER:** Very rare winter (late fall) reports included one heard calling at Roanoke Island, NC, Dec. 5 (Jeff Lewis) and one on the McClellanville, SC, CBC Dec. 22 (*fide* Perry Nugent).

**NORTHERN RAVEN:** One was locally unusual at Tryon, NC, Feb. 25, as noted by Simon Thompson.

**HORNED LARK:** Six in a flock of pipits were considered locally rare along Cascade Lake Road, Transylvania County, NC, Jan. 15 (*fide* Norma Siebenheller).

**CAVE SWALLOW:** The fall influx of Cave Swallows into the East continued into December in North Carolina. That state's 6th record involved a specimen (now at the NC State Museum) found at Morehead City in early December (*fide* John Gerwin). Also another was seen for one day only at Troutman, Iredell County, Dec. 20 (Dwayne & Lori Martin, Dom & Emma D'Ostilio), providing the 7th report for the state.

**BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER:** Two on the Jordan Lake, NC, CBC Jan. 2 (*fide* Will Cook) were quite rare for that inland locality in winter.

**GRAY CATBIRD:** Quite rare away from the coast in winter, Catbirds were found at Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC, Dec. 2-5 (Len Pardue), on the Spartanburg, SC, CBC Dec. 30 (*fide* Lyle Campbell), and in northern Edgecombe County, NC, the entire winter (Ricky Davis).

**AMERICAN PIPIT:** There were several reports of huge numbers of pipits this winter. The Santee NWR, SC, CBC had an impressive total of 717 Jan. 2 (*fide* Lex Glover); and the 550 seen flying along the beach at N. Topsail Island, NC, Jan. 25 (Jamie Cameron) were no doubt being stressed by the snowy conditions in the eastern part of the state.

**NASHVILLE WARBLER:** One on the Wilmington, NC, CBC Jan. 1 (*fide* Sam Cooper) provided the only report this season. The Nashville is one of the rarest of the wintering warblers in our area.

**NORTHERN PARULA:** Very rare in winter, this species was found twice. One was on the Savannah River Site, SC, CBC Dec. 16 (*fide* Carol Eldridge), and one was on the L. Mattamuskeet, NC, CBC Dec. 29 (Harry LeGrand).

**YELLOW WARBLER:** Very rare anywhere in winter, one was a good find on the Spartanburg, SC, CBC Dec. 30 (*fide* Lyle Campbell).

**CAPE MAY WARBLER:** One was at Bald Head Island on the Southport, NC, CBC Jan. 2 (Ricky Davis), and another was found to the north at Ft. Fisher Jan. 5 (Greg Massey). This is possibly the first time that two individuals of this species have been found so close during the winter in the Carolinas.

**"AUDUBON'S" WARBLER:** Always exciting in our area, one was found at L. Mattamuskeet, NC, Jan. 15 (Doug Shadwick). One wonders just how many of these western forms are overlooked among the hordes of "Myrtles" each season.

**BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER:** There are only a couple of previous sightings of this warbler during the winter. This year, amazingly, there were two reported. One was on the Wayne County, NC, CBC Dec. 18 (John Fussell) and one was at Ft. Fisher on the Southport, NC, CBC Jan. 2 (John Brunjes).

**YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER:** Yellow-throateds were reported more than usual, with one on the Morehead City, NC, CBC Dec. 19 (Harry LeGrand),

three on the McClellanville, SC, CBC Dec. 22 (*vide* Perry Nugent), and one at Myrtle Beach, SC, Dec. 27 (Phil & Sharon Turner).

**BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER:** Another species that wintered in higher than normal numbers was the Black-and-White. Some of the more interesting reports included one at Clemson, SC, Feb. 1 (Sidney Gauthreaux), one on the Raleigh, NC, CBC Dec. 18 (Will Cook *et al.*), seven(!) on the Santee NWR, SC, CBC Jan. 2 (*vide* Lex Glover), three on the C. Hatteras, NC, CBC Dec. 27 (*vide* Harry LeGrand), and two on the L. Mattamuskeet, NC, CBC Dec. 29 (*vide* Allen Bryan).

**WILSON'S WARBLER:** There are normally a couple of reports of wintering Wilson's in the Carolinas each year. This season, though, there were at least six! One remained from the fall until at least Jan. 17 at a feeder in Forsyth County, NC, (*vide* Ramona Snavely); one was on the Wayne County, NC, CBC Dec. 18 (Harry LeGrand); one was on the New Bern, NC, CBC Dec. 20 (*vide* Bob Holmes); another was on the Southport, NC, CBC Jan. 2 (John Brunjes); and one was in Raleigh, NC Jan. 23-24 (John Connors). In South Carolina one was found at Pendleton Jan. 27 (Luanne & Buren Blankenship, Sidney Gauthreaux, Carroll Belser).

**YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT:** North Carolina hosted at least three chats this winter. One was found sick (later died) at Charlotte Dec. 5 (*vide* John Gerwin), one was at Pea Island NWR Dec. 27-28 (Wayne Irvin), and two were on the L. Mattamuskeet CBC Dec. 29 (*vide* Allen Bryan).

**CLAY-COLORED SPARROW:** This species is one of the rarest wintering sparrows in our area. This year two were found, with one on the Morehead City, NC, CBC Dec. 19 (Ricky Davis) and one on the Greenville, NC, CBC Jan. 2 (*vide* John Wright).

**VESPER SPARROW:** The Santee NWR, SC, CBC Jan. 2 had a total of 102 reported (*vide* Lex Glover). This is a very impressive count for a species that has been declining as a winter resident for many years now.

**GRASSHOPPER SPARROW:** Always good finds during the winter, Grasshopper Sparrows were located several times. Three were at Sandhills NWR, SC, Dec. 18 (Dwayne & Lori Martin *et al.*), two were on the Clemson, SC, CBC Dec. 18 (*vide* David Mizrahi), one was near Walterboro, SC, Dec. 22 & 26 (Mike Turner, Robin Carter and Caroline Eastman), and one was on the Wilmington, NC, CBC Jan. 1 (*vide* Sam Cooper).

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### Instructions for Authors

[www.carolinabirdclub.org/thechat.html](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/thechat.html)

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**HENSLow'S SPARROW:** This rare and elusive wintering sparrow was found in better than average numbers this year. Up to six were near Walterboro, SC, in late December (Mike Turner), and up to two were at Santee NWR, SC, from Jan. 2 (*fide* Lex Glover) until at least Feb. 22 (Tim Kalbach and Mark Dolan).

**LeCONTE'S SPARROW:** Numbers of this normally rare and elusive species were truly amazing this winter. The highest counts included an almost unbelievable 36 on the Santee NWR, SC, CBC Jan. 2 (*fide* Lex Glover), ten on the New Bern, NC, CBC Dec. 20 (*fide* Bob Holmes), up to seven in northern Mecklenburg County, NC, Feb. 19 (Simon Thompson *et al.*), and four in eastern Richland County, SC, Feb. 26 (Tim Kalbach). Other reports involved three at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, Dec. 19 (Steve Calver), three at the Broad River WMA, SC, Feb. 19 (Kalbach), two at Radio Island, Beaufort, NC, Dec. 8-24 (John Fussell, sev. obs.), two on the Southport, NC, CBC Jan. 2 (Sam Cooper), one on the Wayne County, NC, CBC Dec. 18 (Patricia Tyndall), and one near Walterboro, SC, Dec. 22 (Mike Turner).

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW:** As usual, this species was found at scattered localities this winter. The best reports included one in the mountains at Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC, Feb. 7 (Don Hendershot), one on the Raven Rock State Park, NC, CBC Dec. 18 (*fide* Paul Hart), and one on the Columbia, SC, CBC Dec. 18 (Caroline Eastman).

**LAPLAND LONGSPUR:** Only two areas were found to have longspurs this winter. Hooper Lane in Henderson County, NC, had longspurs from Dec. 19 until Feb. 28 (Wayne Forsythe, Simon Thompson), with the peak count being a very respectable 15 on Jan. 31 (Forsythe). And five were locally rare and good finds at Ft. Bragg, Hoke County, NC, Dec. 17, as noted by Phil Crutchfield *et al.*

**SNOW BUNTING:** North Carolina had most of the Snow Bunting action as usual. In that state, reports included an impressive count of 37 at C. Hatteras Dec. 20 (Jon Altman), 11 at Ft. Fisher Dec. 4 (John Brunjes), four on Bird Shoal, Beaufort, Dec. 10 (John Fussell *et al.*), and one on the Bodie-Pea Islands CBC Dec. 28 (*fide* Paul Sykes). In South Carolina one was a surprise inland at Ebenezer Landing on L. Wylie Dec. 18 until at least Jan. 8 (Robin Carter and Caroline Eastman, sev. obs.).

**ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK:** A male was at a feeder in Little River, Transylvania County, NC, Feb. 12 (*fide* Norma Siebenheller), providing a very rare winter sighting.

**DICKCISSEL:** The only reports of this species involved singles at Myrtle Beach, SC, Dec. 30 - Jan. 2 (Phil and Sharon Turner, sev. obs.) and Santee NWR, SC, Feb. 6 (Tim Kalbach).

**BOBOLINK:** One found at Bear Island WMA, SC, Jan. 28 (Pete Worthington), provided an almost unheard-of winter sighting. Was this bird present all winter or possibly a very early spring migrant?

**RUSTY BLACKBIRD:** This blackbird was found in larger than normal numbers during the winter. Some of the best totals reported included 350 on the Durham, NC, CBC Dec. 19 (Will Cook), 258 on the Raven Rock State Park, NC, CBC Dec. 18 (*fide* Paul Hart), and 154 on the Southport, NC, CBC Jan. 2 (*fide* Ricky Davis).

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD:** Reports of this very localized species included three on the Savannah River Site, SC, CBC Dec. 16 (*fide* Carol Eldridge), 22 at Santee NWR, SC, Jan. 22 (Tim Kalbach), and 108 near Gary, Newberry County, SC, Feb. 19 (Lex Glover). The latter sighting provided one of the highest counts ever for the Carolinas.

**RED CROSSBILL:** Red Crossbills were reported considerably more than usual this winter. Jordan Lake, NC, had two groups with 20 south of Ebenezer Point Jan. 2 (Will Cook *et al.*, sev. obs.) and 16 along Big Woods Road Jan. 9 (Ron Silverman *et al.*, sev. obs.). Three were in Hendersonville, NC, Jan. 31 (Simon Thompson), one was on the Southport, NC, CBC Jan. 2 (Greg Massey), one was on the New River, NC, CBC Dec. 27 (*fide* James Coman), and one was at Table Rock State Park, SC, Feb. 8 (Scott Stegenga). Also up to 35 were in the usual Burrell's Ford, SC, area Jan. 8 (Giff Beaton *et al.*).

**COMMON REDPOLL:** This rare winter visitor was reported several times this winter, although all were frustrating one-day wonders. One was at a Meat Camp, Watauga County, NC, feeder Jan. 31 (Jason Bulluck and Chris Wilson); one-to-three were reported in the Boone - Blowing Rock, NC, area in January and February (*fide* Curtis Smalling); one was at Clemmons, Forsyth County, NC, Jan. 8 (*fide* Ramona Snavelly); possibly two different ones were in Durham, NC, Feb. 19-20 (*fide* Will Cook), and one was at a feeder in Columbia, SC, Feb. 21 (Jerry Griggs).

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