

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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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.

<i>Winter</i>	<i>December 1–February 28</i>	<i>due March 20</i>
<i>Spring</i>	<i>March 1–May 31</i>	<i>due June 20</i>
<i>Summer</i>	<i>June 1–July 31</i>	<i>due August 20</i>
<i>Fall</i>	<i>August 1–November 30</i>	<i>due December 20</i>

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.

PACIFIC LOON: Very rare and unexpected in summer was a Pacific at Pea Is. NWR, NC July 3 (Mike Skakuj), and later in the S. Nags Head, NC area July 15–19 (Jeff Lewis, Skip Morgan; Brad Carlson).

COMMON LOON: This species lingered in North Carolina in much higher than normal numbers this summer. Inland were one in alternate plumage near Wilson June 7 (Clyde Sorenson) and one on Jordan Lake June 27 (Ginger Travis, Lena Gallitano). One was in Bogue Inlet June 30 (Sam Cooper), but it was along the Outer Banks that numbers were greatest. Two

were found in the surf at Nags Head June 20 (Patrick Brisse) and June 29 (Jeff Lewis). Singles were at Pea Is. NWR July 1 and Oregon Inlet July 6 (Mike Skakuj). On July 20, an amazing count of 18 different individuals was had from Whalebone at Nags Head south to Pea Is. NWR (Ricky Davis). It was felt that this many loons remaining in our waters was partly due to the fact that cool Labrador Current water remained in place along the immediate coast much longer than normal this year.

HERALD PETREL: Only one was found on offshore pelagic trips this summer, that being a dark individual off Hatteras, NC June 7 (Brian Patteson et al.).

FEA'S PETREL: One was a good find only 25 miles southeast of Hatteras, NC June 14 (Brian Patteson), a rare report so close to shore.

GREATER SHEARWATER: One was seen just past the breakers at S. Nags Head, NC June 20, as noted by Patrick Brisse.

AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER: There were several onshore reports of this species this summer. In North Carolina, three were found dead on the beach at Atlantic Beach July 24 (John Fussell), one was at Shackleford Banks, Carteret County July 20 (Scott Baron, Elisa Enders), and one was in the surf at S. Nags Head July 20 (Ricky Davis). In South Carolina, one was just past the surf at Ocean Drive Beach July 26 (Jeff Beane et al.).

WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD: Only one was reported this summer, that being off Manteo, NC July 26 (Brian Patteson et al.).

RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD: Reports of this tropicbird off North Carolina continued from the spring with an immature off Hatteras June 7 (Brian Patteson et al.) and others off Hatteras June 14 and 30 (Patteson). Coupled with the spring birds, the birds this summer made this year the best ever for this normally very rare species.

MASKED BOOBY: A sub-adult Masked was a complete surprise onshore when found at Beacon Is., Ocracoke Inlet, NC July 18 (John Weske et al.). The bird was seen to fly away toward Ocracoke that day. Elsewhere, where more expected, one was a good find off Manteo, NC July 26 (Brian Patteson et al.).

NORTHERN GANNET: Another species present this summer in higher than normal numbers was the Northern Gannet. In South Carolina, one was at Pawleys Island June 25 (*vide* Will Cook) and probably the same bird was seen at Litchfield Beach June 26 (Ann Shahid & Cherrie Sneed). In North Carolina, two adults were at S. Nags Head June 19 (Patrick Brisse) and three immatures were there June 20 (Brisse). Also an immature was at Bogue Inlet June 30 (Sam Cooper), three immatures were at S. Nags Head July 20 (Ricky Davis), and an immature was at Cape Lookout July 27 (Wade Fuller).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN: The flock present throughout the summer at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC, peaked at 101 on July 27, as noted by Steve Calver.

BROWN PELICAN: Inland reports of Brown Pelican are always noteworthy. This summer three were found in the western portions of North Carolina. One was at L. Junaluska in early June (*vide* Wayne Forsythe), one

was at L. Wylie June 28–July 1 (*vide* Taylor Piephoff), and one was on High Point Lake, Jamestown, NC June 15–16 (Tom Shepherd).

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD: This summer's sightings of frigatebirds involved singles at C. Hatteras, NC June 29 (*vide* Russ Tyndall) and at S. Nags Head, NC July 11 (W. Hull, *vide* Ricky Davis).

AMERICAN BITTERN: Uncommon summer reports included singles at Palmetto Peartree Preserve, Tyrrell County, NC June 12 (Jeff Lewis) and near Rimini, Clarendon County, SC June 26 (Lloyd Moon).

LEAST BITTERN: Always noteworthy in the Piedmont, one was observed in flight at the marsh on Big Woods Rd. near Jordan Lake, Chatham County, NC June 15 (Ricky Davis).

SNOWY EGRET: A huge feeding flock of 5200 Snowies was found at an impoundment on Wimbee Creek, Colleton County, SC July 31 (Will Post). This represents an unprecedented number for the Carolinas.

LITTLE BLUE HERON: Uncommon this far inland, one was at Fletcher Park, Henderson County, NC July 16 (John Lindfors) and two were near the French Broad River, Henderson July 22–23 (Marilyn Westphal, Wayne Forsythe).

TRICOLORED HERON: This species is a common inland wanderer to at least the central portions of the Carolinas, but mountain sightings are extremely rare. This summer two were near the French Broad River, Henderson County, NC July 22–August 3 (Wayne Forsythe). There were only a couple of previous reports for the western part of the state.

REDDISH EGRET: Reddish Egrets were found at the usual locations with up to three being at the east end of Shackleford Banks, Carteret County, NC July 20 (Scott Baron & Elisa Enders), two at Huntington Beach St. Pk., SC July 21 (Stephen Thomas), and one at Ft. Fisher, NC June 29 (Ricky Davis).

CATTLE EGRET: Eight Cattle Egrets were unexpected near Margarettsville, Northampton County, NC June 14 (Todd Day et al.).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON: Two were unusual at a pond near Trenton, NC June 2, as noted by Clancy Ballenger. Elsewhere, the nesting colony in the Winston-Salem, NC area was very successful this year with over a dozen young fledging (Ramona Snavelly).

ROSEATE SPOONBILL: One was found at L. Medcalf, Sunset Beach, NC July 30 (Diane Hahn) providing a very noteworthy report for North Carolina. In South Carolina, a flock was present at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County from June 27 until the end of the summer. The peak count was eight on July 6, as noted by Steve Calver.

WOOD STORK: Wood Storks were present at the usual Sunset Beach, NC area for much of the summer. Ten was a good count for early in the season on June 8 (Ricky Davis), and the peak count there was 50 on July 31 (Mary McDavit). Elsewhere in North Carolina, where reports are much more unusual, one was along NC 41 two miles east of the Bladen–Robeson County line June 14 (Buddy Garrett), one was over Howell Woods, Johnston County June 24 (Susan Campbell et al.), and four were over the Cape Fear River at the Bladen–Columbus County line June 29 (Davis).

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK: This species was reported from many areas in the eastern US this summer, probably consisting of dispersing birds from the Florida population. Sightings in the Carolinas included two near Sneads Ferry, NC June 10 (Susan Cohen, *vide* John Fussell), a “flock” at Savannah NWR, SC June 13 (Diana Churchill), 1–2 at Donnelley WMA, SC July 28 (Nathan Dias et al.) and July 29 (Mary McDavid), up to 9 at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC June 27 (Steve Calver), and 15 at a pond in S. Tibwin, Charleston County, SC June 5 (Ritch Lilly).

MUTE SWAN: A group of five Mute Swans at Pea Is. NWR, NC June 20 (Patrick Brisse) was unusual, and disturbing in that there could be wandering Mutes at this time of year.

AMERICAN WIGEON: One was late at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC June 1 (Steve Calver).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL: A noteworthy nesting record came from the Savannah Spoil Site, SC this summer with two different broods of Blue-winged Teal, a species found breeding in the state only a handful of times. A female with eight young was seen June 13 and a female with two young was found June 27 (Steve Calver).

GREATER SCAUP: One was very unusual in lingering at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC until June 27, as noted by Steve Calver.

LESSER SCAUP: Lingering Lessers included a group of five in Georgetown County, SC June 7 (Gary Phillips) and two on L. Marion, SC June 26 (Lloyd Moon).

SURF SCOTER: A Surf Scoter spending the summer in the Ft. Macon, NC area (Randy Newman) was considered very unusual since most of the lingering scoters along our coast are Blacks.

HOODED MERGANSER: Summer reports of Hooded Merganser, although annual, are nevertheless noteworthy. This year three young were found at a pond near Trenton, NC June 2 (Clancy Ballenger) in an area where breeding has occurred in the past. Also, an adult bird was at Magnolia Plantation, SC June 15 (Perry Nugent et al.).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER: This summer’s sightings included females at Oregon Inlet, NC July 4–5 (Mike Skakuj) and the Shallotte River, NC July 30 (Bob Perkins).

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE: The Swallow-tailed Kites present along the Cape Fear River, NC since May continued throughout the summer and caused much speculation about breeding in that area. The birds were mostly in the area centered along the Bladen–Columbus County line at the river. Up to four were present throughout June (sev. obs.), six were seen and several photographed July 5 (Harry Sell), and 10 were counted over a nearby field July 19 (Sam Moore, Mark Simpson). Actual breeding evidence was not obtained but there were several apparently young birds present in the flock during July. Elsewhere rare wandering individuals were found at Rodanthe, NC June 27 (*vide* Sam Cooper) and near Chapel Hill, NC July 8 (*vide* Cynthia Fox). The peak count from one of the usual locations was the 34 south of Allendale, SC July 26 (Robin Carter & Caroline Eastman).

MISSISSIPPI KITE: In North Carolina, this species was again found breeding at several of the usual sites such as 2–3 nests at Roanoke Rapids, NC (Frank Enders) and several in Goldsboro, NC (Eric Dean). A new location for probable breeding was along the Tar River in Rocky Mount where birds were present all summer with one juvenile being attended by two adults at a nearby roosting site for most of July (Ricky Davis).

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK: This very uncommon summer bird in the Carolinas was reported three times, all from the mountains. One was found west of Richland Balsam, NC, and one was seen carrying food north of Craggy Gardens, NC, both in mid-June (Helmut Mueller). Also, one was at Hendersonville, NC June 13, as noted by Simon Thompson.

COOPER'S HAWK: This species is more widespread during the summer than the preceding species. Nevertheless, noteworthy breeding reports included a pair at Darlington, Halifax County, NC June 13 (Frank Enders), a nest with four young (highly publicized by the media!) on the NCSU campus in Raleigh, NC (Will Rowland, Lena Gallitano, m. obs.), a pair on the Duke campus, Durham, NC June 24 (Will Cook), a nest in Greenville, SC during June (Steve Smith, *fide* Robin Carter), and an impressive four known nesting pairs, each with 3–4 young, in the Winston-Salem, NC area (Ramona Snavely et al.).

GOLDEN EAGLE: Two immature Golden Eagles were seen at Bakers Mt. Park, Catawba County, NC June 22 (Dwayne Martin). This highly unusual summer report is from the same area where an adult and one immature were found during the spring!

AMERICAN KESTREL: Locally unusual was the kestrel found at Snake Mt., Watauga County, NC June 4 (Chris Wilson, Merrill Lynch).

AMERICAN COOT: This species is a very rare nester in the Carolinas, although summering birds are found most years. Thus of note were the two nesting records from the Savannah Spoil Site, SC this summer (Steve Calver). An adult with 10 young was seen July 6 and an adult on a nest was observed July 27.

WILSON'S PLOVER: There were several excellent counts of this species reported this summer. A total of 59 Wilson's were on Deveaux Bank, SC July 31 (Will Post), and 60 were at the east end of Shackleford Banks, NC July 27 (John Fussell et al.).

BLACK-NECKED STILT: The peak count at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC this summer was the impressive total of 813 on June 27 (Steve Calver).

UPLAND SANDPIPER: The only Uppies found this summer involved singles at the Orangeburg, SC sod farm July 27 (Steve Compton) and at Hooper Lane, NC July 29 (Wayne Forsythe).

LONG-BILLED CURLEW: Sightings this season included one at Oregon Inlet, NC June 11 (Marcia Lyons), one at the Ocracoke, NC flats (John Weske, Jim O'Donnell), and 1–2 at the east end of Shackleford Banks, NC July 20 (Scott Baron, Elisa Enders) and July 27 (John Fussell et al.).

DUNLIN: Two at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC June 13 were considered to be rather late spring birds for that southern area (Steve Calver).

CURLEW SANDPIPER: One adult was at Oregon Inlet, NC July 5–6 (Hayes & Joyce Williams, Mike Skakuj) for the only report this summer.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER: The only inland fall migrant reported was in Henderson County, NC July 26 (Wayne Forsythe).

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER: One photographed at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC June 13 was not only very late but also provided a probable first summer record for that locality (Steve Calver).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE: One at Pea Is. NWR, NC July 1 (Mike Skakuj) and six there July 12 (Jeff Lewis) were the only ones reported from North Carolina this summer.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE: Up to three were rare onshore, and late, at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC June 3–4, as noted by Steve Calver.

POMARINE JAEGER: One was seen from shore at Caswell Beach, NC June 7, a rare event for that state's southern coastal area (Ricky Davis).

LAUGHING GULL: This summer's inland-wandering Laughings involved singles at Falls Lake, NC June 9 (Brian Bockhahn) and L. Norman, NC July 2 (Taylor Piephoff).

BONAPARTE'S GULL: One in basic plumage was observed at Bogue Inlet, NC June 30 (Sam Cooper), a most unusual summer occurrence.

CASPIAN TERN: Unusual inland summer sightings included two in the mountains at L. Junaluska, NC June 18 (Bob Olthoff) and four in a plowed field near L. Phelps, NC June 21 (Harry LeGrand, Jr., Jeff Pippen).

"CAYENNE" SANDWICH TERN: One was photographed at Ft. Fisher, NC April 5 (Pru Williams and Cindy Grimes). Susan Campbell saw the photos and confirmed the identification. This represents about the seventh report of this Caribbean subspecies for North Carolina.

ROSEATE TERN: Two adults were good finds at Pea Is. NWR, NC July 5 (Mike Skakuj). There have been few reports of this species the last several years.

SOOTY TERN: The peak count from North Carolina waters was 69 off Hatteras July 19 (Brian Patteson et al.), a good total for the summer season. Much more interesting was the presence of two near Harkers Is., NC June 22 (John Fussell et al.). The birds were hanging around an island as if possibly nesting, an event which has happened before in that area.

BLACK TERN: One was a good find at Falls Lake, NC June 15 (Ricky Davis). Was this a late spring bird, or an early fall bird? A flock of 40 at Pea Is. NWR, NC July 12 obviously consisted of returning birds (Jeff Lewis).

WHITE-WINGED DOVE: White-winged Doves have been found in the Carolinas on a regular basis the last couple of years. This summer one was at a feeder in Buxton, NC June 1 (Kelley Van Druten), one was heard near Roxboro L., Person County, NC June 8 (Jeff Pippen), and one was at Bear Is. WMA, Colleton County, SC July 19 (Robin Carter).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO: One at Trenton, NC June 2 (Clancy Ballenger) was either a late spring migrant or one of the few that have been known to spend the summer in some Coastal Plain pocosin habitats.

CHIMNEY SWIFT: Two at Chimney Rock Park, NC June 29 (Simon Thompson) were observed flying in behind a waterfall. This was surprising since this behavior is not normally seen in Chimney Swifts.

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD: An adult male at a feeder near Hillsborough, NC June 6–8 (Ginger Travis) provided only the second record of a Rufous in North Carolina in June. The first was the one that wintered and then summered at a Raleigh, NC feeder last year.

ALDER FLYCATCHER: One heard at Bodie Is., NC June 4 (Eloise Potter, Nell Barkley) provided a late, locally unusual occurrence for that coastal locality.

WILLOW FLYCATCHER: An extremely unusual and out-of-range breeding record involved a Willow with two young in a nest at Caw Caw Park, Ravenel, Charleston County, SC this summer. Several birds were present from the spring and the nest was located in early June (Perry Nugent et al.). Apparently the nest failed but at least one individual was present until July. Also of interest is the fact that Willows have been found at this site several times in summer since the late 1990s.

GRAY KINGBIRD: Only one was found this summer, that being at Edisto Beach St. Pk., SC July 27 (Paul Champlin).

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE: Nests of this species are rarely reported; thus of note was one with young along Raynor Mill Rd., Wayne County, NC June 3 (Clyde Sorenson). Also of interest were the two adults and four recently fledged juveniles at the Ft. Fisher, NC monument overlook June 7 (Ricky Davis). One near North River, Carteret County, NC July 13 (John Fussell, Jack Fennell) was apparently on the move and was not seen on later visits. This was the first shrike seen in that county by Fussell in about 20 years!

WHITE-EYED VIREO: One found singing on Bluff Mt., Ashe County, NC June 15 was at a rather high elevation (3200 ft) for the species (Merrill Lynch).

WARBLING VIREO: One was still at the Dairyland Rd. area of Orange County, NC July 28, as noted by Haven Wiley.

TREE SWALLOW: A pair that fledged four young at Huntersville, Mecklenburg County, NC July 1 provided a probable first breeding record for the county (Mary McDaniel, Dave LaBounty).

WINTER WREN: One on territory at Three Top Mt., Ashe County, NC June 18 was at a low elevation (3800 ft) for the breeding season (Merrill Lynch, Chris Wilson).

HERMIT THRUSH: Summer reports of this mountain breeder are always noteworthy. Singles were found in the Black Mountains at Blankstock Knob June 21 and at a gap between Mt. Mitchell and Mt. Craig July 4 (Marcus Simpson).

GRAY CATBIRD: One that had just fledged at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC July 19 provided the first documented proof of nesting in extreme southern coastal South Carolina (Will Post, Paul Sykes).

CEDAR WAXWING: This species once again remained in the eastern portions of North Carolina during the summer. A rare nesting record was

provided by a pair at a nest at Wyse Fork, Jones County June 6 (Wade Fuller, Rich Boyd). Other reports involved no nesting evidence but included three in Green Level, Chatham County July 16 (Merrill Lynch), four on the Dare County mainland June 21 (Jeff Lewis), and two on Roanoke Is. for much of the summer (Lewis).

MAGNOLIA WARBLER: There are very few Magnolia Warblers in the North Carolina mountains each summer. Thus of note were singing males at Potato Knob, Black Mts., NC June 25 (Marcus Simpson) and at Roan Mt., NC June 2–July 14 (Rick Knight).

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER: A singing male and a female were observed at Laurel Ridge, Mitchell County, NC June 2 (Chris Wilson) at an elevation of 3080 ft in a chestnut oak-dominant forest. This is a rather low elevation and the absence of hemlock made this sighting unusual.

SWAINSON'S WARBLER: One was a surprise in pocosin habitat at L. Phelps, NC June 21, as noted by Harry LeGrand, Jr. and Jeff Pippen.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH: One was a late spring migrant in northern Edgecombe County, NC June 2 (Ricky Davis).

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH: One was considered to be an early fall migrant at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC June 22 (Simon Thompson) as the species is not known to nest there.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW: Very late were a singing individual on Roanoke Is., NC June 5 (Jeff Lewis) and one near Greensboro, NC June 17–25 (Emily Tyler).

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW: An adult was photographed in a yard at Myrtle Beach, SC June 1 (Phil & Sharon Turner), providing the first June report for the species in that state.

DICKCISSEL: A pair, first noted in the spring, was observed carrying nesting material at the Cherry Hospital area, Wayne County, NC June 1 (Ricky Davis). No further breeding evidence was obtained, however. Elsewhere singing males were noted at a usual Gaston County, NC site June 6 (Simon Thompson) and along Dairyland Rd., Orange County, NC July 28 (Haven Wiley).

SHINY COWBIRD: South Carolina had the only reports of this species this summer. A male was at a feeder in Mt. Pleasant July 8 (David Chamberlain) and a flock of seven (one male, six females) was at the Savannah Spoil Site July 18–19 (Paul Sykes, Will Post). This last location has hosted flocks before, suggesting that it is an important area in the control of the spread of this invading species.

ORCHARD ORIOLE: A pair nested successfully at Table Rock St. Pk., SC during June (Scott Stegenga). This was the first nesting record for the park.

RED CROSSBILL: Reports of this species are always noteworthy. This summer's sightings included two at Balsam Gap, Black Mts., NC June 21 and two along NC 128 near Mt. Mitchell June 25 (Marcus Simpson), at least five at Roan Mt., NC June 25 through July (Rick Knight), and three at Cataloochee Ranch, Haywood County, NC July 4 (Wayne Forsythe).