

## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Summer 2004, unless otherwise noted)

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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.*

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK:** The presence of this species in south-coastal South Carolina continued this summer. Up to 22 were present at Donnelley WMA during the summer, at least 12 were at Savannah NWR in early June (*vide* Pat Metz), and one was at Brays Is., Beaufort 9–14 July (*vide* Dennis Forsythe). In North Carolina, a flock of eight was at L. Medcalf, Sunset Beach 14 June–9 July, but it was felt that these birds were from a

development in Myrtle Beach, SC that has lost some before (Mary McDavid).

**SNOW GOOSE:** One, possibly injured, lingered at Pea Is. NWR, NC until at least 6 June (Russ & Patricia Tyndall).

**MUTE SWAN:** One at Pea Is. NWR, NC 27 July (Russ & Patricia Tyndall) added to the growing number of reports of this species from that area.

**RING-NECKED DUCK:** Males of this species were found summering in e. Franklin County, NC 5 June (Ricky Davis) and at the Futch Game Land Impoundment, Tyrrell County, NC 17 July (Jeff Lewis).

**LESSER SCAUP:** One was found during the summer at L. James, NC 8 July (*fide* Taylor Piephoff).

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER:** Always noteworthy in the breeding season, lingering/summering Red-breasteds included five at Oregon Inlet, NC 6 June (Russ & Patricia Tyndall) and one apparently injured male at Riverbend Park, Catawba County, NC 3–31 July (Dwayne Martin).

**COMMON LOON:** This summer's reports of lingering or summering Commons involved one in alternate plumage on Bass Lake, Blowing Rock, NC 5 June (Ann & Chester Robertson), one in basic plumage on L. Junaluska, Haywood County, NC 20 June (Jonathan Mays), three on L. James, NC 8 July (*fide* Taylor Piephoff), one at C. Hatteras, NC 17 July (Scott Baron, Elisa Enders), and one at Ocracoke Inlet, NC 18 July (Baron, Enders).

**PIED-BILLED GREBE:** A pair with young was a locally good summer sighting at the Goldsboro, NC WTP 24 July (Eric Dean, Gene Howe).

**HORNED GREBE:** A possibly injured Horned Grebe was at Oregon Inlet, NC 6 June, as noted by Russ & Patricia Tyndall.

**FEA'S PETREL:** This species has become annual off the Outer Banks the last several years. This summer, an excellent total of three was had off Oregon Inlet 4 June (Brian Patteson, Inc.).

**MANX SHEARWATER:** Manx Shearwaters are uncommon but regular spring migrants off our coast. This summer's early trips produced singles off Hatteras, NC 5 & 6 June (Brian Patteson, Inc.).

**AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER:** The peak count noted this season was the 128 off Hatteras, NC 5 June (Brian Patteson, Inc.). Rare from shore was an exhausted individual near Beaufort, NC 26 July (*fide* Taylor Piephoff).

**WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL:** Rather early in the season was one seen by a charter boat captain off of Oregon Inlet, NC in late June (*fide* Brian Patteson).

**LEACH'S STORM-PETREL:** The peak total reported this season was a respectable 20 off of Manteo, NC 1 June (Brian Patteson, Inc.).

**BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL:** The best count of this species was the 23 off Manteo, NC 1 June (Brian Patteson, Inc.).

**RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD:** The number of reports of this species from waters off the Outer Banks continues to accumulate. This summer, a subadult was off Oregon Inlet, NC 1 June, and an immature was found off Hatteras, NC 5 June (Brian Patteson, Inc.).

**MASKED BOOBY:** Always exciting finds in our waters, an immature was off Hatteras, NC 6 June (Brian Patteson, Inc.) and a subadult was seen from a cruise liner off C. Hatteras 2 July (Marshall Iliff).

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN:** Good numbers continued to be found in south-coastal South Carolina as evidenced by the 128 at Bear Is. WMA 2 July (Lloyd Moon).

**ANHINGA:** One was locally unusual at a small lake in n. Lancaster County, SC during July (Lisa Gaffney, *fide* Larry Barden).

**MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD:** This summer's reports included an immature heading westward at Ft. Macon, NC 11 June (Randy Newman), an adult male flying west at Frisco, NC 14 June (Mike Overton), and a juvenile present at Falls Lake, NC 17–18 July (Brian Bockhahn, Russ & Patricia Tyndall et al.). The latter bird, only about the third inland report for that state, was truly a surprise, as there was no previous storm activity to bring it that far inland. In South Carolina, one was noted s. of Myrtle Beach 17 July by Scott Jennex.

**GREAT BLUE HERON:** This species continues to increase as a breeder in the Piedmont of the Carolinas. One of the largest inland heronries of Great Blues was at the Ellerbe Creek area of Falls Lake, NC with at least 40 nests 10 June (Josh Rose).

**SNOWY EGRET:** Unexplainable was one offshore off Manteo, NC 1 June (Brian Patteson, Inc.). Also one at Lookout Shoals L., NC 26 June (*fide* Dwayne Martin) was locally uncommon as a post-breeding wanderer that far inland.

**TRICOLORED HERON:** Four post-breeding wanderers provided a locally good count near Scotland Neck, NC 27 July (Russ & Patricia Tyndall).

**REDDISH EGRET:** Always noteworthy, this summer's sightings included one at the n. end of Hilton Head Is., SC in early July (*fide* Taylor Piephoff), one near Emerald Isle, NC 3 July (Dave Lenat), one at Huntington Beach St. Pk., SC 6 July (Stephen Thomas), and two at Portsmouth Is., NC 24 July (John Fussell et al.).

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON:** One was a good find in the mountains in Henderson County, NC 10–27 July (Marilyn Westphal, Wayne Forsythe).

**ROSEATE SPOONBILL:** This summer's sightings involved five at Bear Is. WMA, SC 3 July (Kathleen O'Grady, Andrea Ceselski), one at Sunset Beach, NC 22 July (Joe Gagliano, *fide* Taylor Piephoff), and one at Parris Is., Beaufort, SC 25 July (Marvin Bouknight).

**WOOD STORK:** Three along the Lumber River near the Long Branch area of Columbus County, NC 21–28 July (Charles Gause, Neill Lee) were locally good finds.

**OSPREY:** One, probably a non-breeding wanderer, was seen hovering over Hemphill Bald, Haywood County, NC 20 July and was unusual for the mountains in summer (Jonathan Mays).

**SWALLOW-TAILED KITE:** One was photographed sitting in an Osprey nest at Orton Pond, Brunswick County, NC 17 June (Rex Padgett, *fide* Susan

Campbell). As this species usually uses nests up in big trees, this individual was most likely using the nest as a roosting site.

**MISSISSIPPI KITE:** Up to three adults and two juveniles were found in nw. Greensboro, NC 29 July until mid-August (Scott DePue, Henry Link, Melissa Whitmire, sev. obs.). These birds were obviously post-breeding wanderers, but since the young were still being fed by the parents, they could have nested not too far away. These provided probably the first Guilford County records for the species.

**SHARP-SHINNED HAWK:** Always noteworthy in the breeding season, a nest with three fledglings was a good find at Millers Creek, Wilkes County, NC in early July (Ken Crouse, *fide* Russ Tyndall).

**GOLDEN EAGLE:** There were three reports of this rare summer visitor. One was over Morganton, NC in June (*fide* Dwayne Martin), one was over Bakers Mt. Park, NC 4 July (John Sutton), and one was at the McDowell Prairie, Mecklenburg County, NC 16 July (*fide* Taylor Piephoff).

**MERLIN:** One found at the Santee R., SC delta 24 July (Dennis Forsythe et al.) was extremely early for a fall migrant, thus was probably a very unusual non-breeding wanderer.

**AMERICAN COOT:** This species is an infrequent breeder in the Carolinas. This summer one was at Woodlake, Moore County, NC 25–27 June (Russ & Patricia Tyndall), and a brood was seen at the Goldsboro, NC WTP 24 July (Eric Dean, Gene Howe).

**SANDHILL CRANE:** A rare summer occurrence of Sandhill Crane involved one flying over Hooper Lane, Henderson County, NC 6 July, as noted by Danny Swicegood.

**BLACK-NECKED STILT:** One found offshore out of Oregon Inlet, NC 4 June (Brian Patteson Inc.) was very unusual and unexpected, providing a first pelagic report for the species in the Carolinas. Also very rare was the stilt found inland in e. Franklin County, NC 5 June (Ricky Davis). There are only a handful of truly inland reports for this species.

**UPLAND SANDPIPER:** The only early fall migrants of this species reported included four at North River Farms, Carteret County, NC 18 July (John Fussell), three at the Cherry Hospital, Wayne County, NC grounds 24 July (Eric Dean, Gene Howe), and three again at North River Farms, NC 25 July (Fussell, Jack Fennell).

**LONG-BILLED CURLEW:** One was a good find at the n. end of Portsmouth Is., NC 24 July (John Fussell et al.).

**WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER:** One was a locally uncommon migrant at a Winston-Salem, NC WTP 24 July, as noted by Ramona Snavelly and Linda Davis.

**SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER:** Three at a Winston-Salem, NC WTP 24–31 July (Ramona Snavelly et al.) provided about the third Forsyth County report for that species.

**AMERICAN WOODCOCK:** One was seen in sw. Croatan Nat. Forest, Carteret County, NC 22 June (John Fussell). This species is rarely found in the nesting season, and once again no breeding evidence was noted.

**LAUGHING GULL:** Uncommon inland summer visitors included two at L. Murray, SC 1 June (Mike Turner) and one at L. Hickory, NC 13 June (Dwayne Martin, Monroe Pannell).

**HERRING GULL:** One was quite unusual inland at L. Murray, SC 1 June, as noted by Mike Turner.

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:** Rare summering Lessers included a second-year bird at C. Hatteras, NC 6 June (Russ & Patricia Tyndall) and a third-year bird at Nags Head, NC 10 July (Les Willis).

**GLAUCOUS GULL:** Very unusual was the presence of a second-winter Glaucous on an island in the Cape Fear River near Southport, NC 24–25 June (Walker Golder, Chris Canfield). Individuals of this species that winter in the Carolinas are usually gone by April.

**ROSEATE TERN:** Only one was reported this summer, that being at C. Hatteras point 17 July (Scott Baron, Elisa Enders). Sightings of this species in the Carolinas have been few and far between the last several years.

**ARCTIC TERN:** Very rare and unusual was one onshore at Ft. Macon, NC 5 June (Al Gamache). This well-described bird was noted sitting on the beach, affording a good opportunity for study.

**FORSTER'S TERN:** Uncommon inland occurrences included two at Santee NWR, SC 24 July (Mike Turner) and one at L. Hickory, NC 29 July (Dwayne Martin).

**BLACK TERN:** Two were good finds in the mountains near the French Broad R., Henderson County, NC 31 July (Wayne Forsythe).

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE:** One was in a Beaufort, NC neighborhood 2 June, as noted by Rich & Susan Boyd. This is the same area where individuals of this species have been observed irregularly over the last several years.

**BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO:** There were sightings of this cuckoo in eastern North Carolina again this year. Single birds were near Washington 4 June (Mark Johns) and near Catfish Lake, Croatan Nat. Forest 9 June (John Fussell). It could not be determined if these were anything more than just late migrants.

**WILLOW FLYCATCHER:** One was singing along Shimpock Rd., Coddle Creek Res., Cabarrus County, NC 15 & 28 June (John Buckman). This is an area that has hosted a localized summering population for several years.

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER:** Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, now annually reported in the Carolinas, were found several times this season. One was along Southpoint Rd, Ocracoke, NC 1 June (Lindsey Nester, *vide* Elizabeth Hanrahan), one was at the past breeding location s. of Monroe, NC 14 June (Anne Olsen), one was at the Orangeburg, SC sod farm 23 July (Bob Maxwell, Billy Fuller), and a family group of five was present w. of Saluda, SC in Edgefield County 24–30 July (Jason Giovannone, Robin Carter, Caroline Eastman, Donna Slyce, Mac Sharpe, *sev. obs.*). This group apparently consisted of several young birds with short tails and probably nested not too far away.

**VEERY:** Very early migrants involved one seen and heard singing in a yard in Beaufort, SC 22–23 July (Rich & Susan Boyd) and one heard in the pre-dawn at Rocky Mount, NC 28 July (Ricky Davis).

**HERMIT THRUSH:** Another summer-season bird was heard singing at Grandfather Mt., NC 17 July (Chris Wilson). This species seems to be slowly increasing as a summer bird of the higher mountains of North Carolina.

**YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER:** Rare summer sightings of this warbler in North Carolina occurred again this year. Single adult males were noted at Mt. Mitchell 19–22 June (Susan Campbell) and at Clingman's Dome 4 July (Mike Tove). Females were not noted, so these birds could easily have represented non-breeding lingerers. Nesting by this species in the state has not been documented, and any further sightings should be noted.

**CERULEAN WARBLER:** A singing male was found at the coast in Southern Shores, NC 19 July (Jeff Lewis). Even though this species is one of our earliest fall migrants, this individual was still very early.

**WORM-EATING WARBLER:** One heard at the Congaree Nat. Pk., Richland County, SC 12 June (Robin Carter) was considered to be unusual in the breeding season for that central South Carolina location.

**LARK SPARROW:** A pair, obviously territorial, was observed at Camp Mackall, Scotland County, NC 5 June (Harry LeGrand). This species has been a very localized summer resident in the Sandhills area of that state.

**WHITE-THROATED SPARROW:** One was very unusual in that it spent the entire summer in Beaufort, NC (Rich & Susan Boyd). The non-breeding lingerer was present at least from 15 June until 2 August.

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW:** Even rarer as a summer visitor was the adult White-crowned Sparrow seen at an Emerald Isle, NC feeder 29 June (Sally Carter, John Voigt).

**DICKCISSEL:** This summer's reports involved two territorial pairs that probably nested in e. Franklin County, NC 5 June (Ricky Davis), up to four birds at their usual summer location in Gaston County, NC 18 June–18 July (Simon Thompson, Jo Ann Martin, John Buckman), and a singing male near North River Farms, Carteret County, NC 11 & 25 July (John Fussell, Jack Fennell). The latter bird provided a first breeding-season report for that county.

**YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD:** An adult male Yellow-headed Blackbird was a good find at a feeder near Back Creek, Carteret County, NC 21 July (Bill Simpson, *vide* John Fussell). This species is normally a fall-to-spring visitor in the Carolinas, thus a summer occurrence is quite unusual.

**SHINY COWBIRD:** Only one was reported from the Carolinas this summer; that being a male at Pea Is. NWR, NC 23 July on into August (John Fussell et al., *sev. obs.*).

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE:** Locally unusual summer Baltimore Orioles included three males singing at Riverbend Park, Catawba County, NC 5 June (Dwayne Martin) and one male along Shimpock Rd., Coddle Creek Res., Cabarrus County, NC 15 June (John Buckman).

**RED CROSSBILL:** Sightings of this species in the Carolinas are always noteworthy. An excellent total of 100 was seen at Black Balsam along the Blue Ridge Parkway, Haywood County, NC 5 June (Jeff Catlin, *fide* Wayne Forsythe), providing an impressive count for this species.



Shiny Cowbird at Pea Island NWR, 29 July 2004. Photo by Steve Shultz