

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Summer 2006, unless otherwise noted)

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.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL: One at L. Julian, Buncombe County, NC 6 July (Wayne Forsythe) was considered to be quite early, as most start returning late in the month or in August.

REDHEAD: A male was unusual in that it summered at Currituck, NC, being noted 18 July by Scott Jennex.

RING-NECKED DUCK: Lingering Ring-neckeds included a female at Bass Lake, Watauga County, NC 22 June (Jeff Lewis) and five at the Futch Game Land impoundments, Tyrrell County, NC 4 June (Ricky Davis). Of interest was that a pair of these birds gave repeated distraction displays as if young were hiding nearby.

SCOTERS: A few scoters will sometimes linger into early summer along the coast. An amazing report came from the rocky outcrop area of Ft. Fisher, NC 11 June when 15 were noted (Ricky Davis). This group consisted of 12 Blacks, one White-winged, and two Surfs. This was a very large number for that late, and summer reports of White-wingeds are very unusual.

HOODED MERGANSER: Nesting occurred again at an area near Trenton, Jones County, NC this summer as evidenced by eight young 7 July (Clancy Ballenger).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER: The only report of a summering Red-breasted involved one on the beach at Folly Island, SC 7 July, as noted by Jason Giovannone.

COMMON LOON: One flying north near Dump Island, Carteret County, NC 3 June (Paul Sykes, Wayne Irvin, Wade Fuller) was probably a late migrant. Summering individuals were at Clarks Hill Res., SC 11 July (Paul Champlin) and at Huntington Beach State Park, SC 8 July (Jack Peachey et al.). The latter bird, as is often the case with summering birds, appeared to be sick.

PIED-BILLED GREBE: Pied-billed Grebes are rather localized as breeders in much of the Carolinas. Thus of interest was the presence of at least eight (mostly young) at a borrow pit pond along the new US 64 bypass in Washington County, NC 29 July (Jeff Lewis). Up to three pairs were here this summer as noted by Jeff Pippen, Will Cook, and Harry LeGrand, Jr. Also, one summered at a White Oak Creek beaver pond in eastern Chatham County, NC, as noted by Merrill Lynch.

BERMUDA PETREL: Another petrel that has become annual off North Carolina, only during the last decade, is the Bermuda Petrel. This summer's sighting was off Hatteras 4 June (Brian Patteson, Inc.).

FEA'S PETREL: The only summer report of this rare-but-annual species came from the waters off Hatteras, NC 2 June (Brian Patteson, Inc.).

MANX SHEARWATER: This species usually migrates north into early June, and this year's reports, all off Hatteras, NC included one on 3 June, two on 11 June, and one on 16 June (Brian Patteson, Inc.). Two off Hatteras 16 July were somewhat rarer for mid-summer off our coast (Patteson, Inc.).

STORM-PETRELS: Six Leach's and 21 Band-rumped Storm-Petrels off Hatteras, NC 1 July were the peak counts noted for these species during the summer (Brian Patteson, Inc.).

TROPICBIRDS: White-tailed Tropicbird reports included one off John's Inlet, SC 16 June (Nathan Dias) and two to three off Hatteras, NC 1 July (Brian Patteson, Inc.). Sightings of unidentified tropicbirds involved one off Hatteras 10 June (Patteson, Inc.) and three off Morehead City, NC 21 June (*fide* John Fussell).

BROWN BOOBY: One was found on the beach at Bald Head Island, NC 16 June (Maureen Dewire). The bird appeared to be sick but could still fly; and it could possibly be the same individual that was noted there during the previous month.

NORTHERN GANNET: The only report received of a summering gannet was of an immature bird flying south over the breakers at Coquina Beach, Dare County, NC 16 July (Ricky Davis).

ANHINGA: Up to six Anhingas were present at a beaver pond along White Oak Creek in eastern Chatham County, NC from the spring through the summer. One to two nests were started, with one pair seen incubating during July, but by the end of the month the nests apparently failed (Lynch). This is the farthest inland in North Carolina that nesting activity has been noted for this species. Also, three were seen at a swamp on the western side of upper Jordan Lake 29 July (Cynthia Fox et al.), an area not too far from the White Oak Creek location.

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD: Frigatebird reports in the Carolinas, although annual, still merit mention. In South Carolina one was at Edisto Beach 4 June (Craig Watson), and another was at Bird Island, Cape Romain NWR 30 June (*vide* Nathan Dias). In North Carolina singles were noted at Oregon Inlet 1 June (Nathan Dias), over the New River at Sneads Ferry 30 June (Gilbert Grant), in the Wrightsville Beach area during mid-July (Walker Golder et al.), in the Salvo area the first week of July (Ginny Gillam, Russ Lay), and in the sound at Roanoke Island 15 July (Scott Jennex).

GREAT BLUE HERON: The first known nest of this species for the mountains, noted during the spring near Brevard, NC, was successful and young had fledged by mid-June, as noted by Tom Joyce.

GREAT "WHITE" HERON: An individual of this form of the Great Blue Heron was reported during July at the Edenton, NC waterfront (Betsy Bennett, Bill Miller, *sev. obs.*). Apparently the bird has been present in the area for over a year, consistent with the habit of lengthy stays noted with previous Great "White" Herons in the Carolinas.

SNOWY EGRET: Two were somewhat early post-breeding wanderers at L. Wylie, SC 14 June, as noted by Chris Huffstickler.

REDDISH EGRET: This summer's post-breeding visitors included singles near Bird Key, Folly Beach, SC 30 June (Jack Peachey), at Sunset Beach, NC 15 and 22 July (Scott Jennex, Ricky Davis et al.), along the Pamlico Sound shore near Hatteras, NC 27 July (Brian Patteson), at Huntington Beach State Park, SC 28 July (Peachey, Paul Rogers), and along the Pocatigo River, SC 31 July (Nathan Dias).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON: This species is an annual breeder at a few localized inland areas in the Carolinas. The most interesting report this summer involved the presence of up to two adults and 11 immature birds, at the New Hope Impoundment, Chapel Hill, NC during July (Toby Nathan, Mike Johnson, *sev. obs.*). This is the highest count from this area, which has hosted the species several times previously. Elsewhere

an immature Black-crowned was a good find at Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC 15 July (Ron Selvey).



Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, New Hope Impoundment, Chapel Hill, NC, 23 July 2006. Photo by Kent Fiala.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL: This summer's reports involved up to six in the Bulls Island, SC area during most of July (Nathan Dias), one to two in the Calabash Creek–Twin Lakes area of Sunset Beach, NC during July (Steve Holzman, sev. obs.), and one along the Congaree River in Congaree Nat. Park, Richland County, SC 30 July (Mike Turner). The latter bird provided the second record of the species for that area!

WOOD STORK: Locally unusual reports for North Carolina included two over the Black River near Ivanhoe, Sampson County 12 June (Gilbert Grant) and one near Trenton, Jones County 7 July (Clancy Ballenger). Also, the species nested again at a pond in extreme southeastern Columbus County, NC for at least the second year in a row (*fide* David Allen). This only known nesting colony in the state had at least 100 birds present this summer.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE: This species was once again found along the Cape Fear River in the Bladen–Columbus Counties area this summer. Generally in the area of the Lock and Dam No. 1, six were observed 11 June (Ricky Davis), with the birds being obviously paired up. At least one pair was present through the end of July (Davis, Greg Massey, Robin Hall, Eric & Celia Dean, Sharon Funderburk) but no nesting evidence was observed.

NORTHERN HARRIER: One was extremely late, especially for an inland location, near Columbia, SC in lower Richland County 3 June (Mike Turner).

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK: This species is much less common in the Carolinas during summer than the Cooper's Hawk. Thus of note were reports involving one at Chapel Hill, NC during June (Will Cook), one at Durham,

NC 11 July (Cook), one seen carrying food at Roan Mt., NC 28 June (Rick Knight), and one near Winston-Salem, NC 1 July (Jeff Phippen, John Dole).

AMERICAN COOT: Coots are found in the Carolinas each summer at a few localized places. This summer the most interesting reports involved five at the Futch Game Land impoundments, Tyrrell County, NC 4 June (Ricky Davis), up to 11 at the Salt Pond, Cape Hatteras, NC all summer (Pat & Neal Moore, Davis, sev. obs.), two that summered along the Edenton, NC waterfront (Davis), and the successful breeding of several pairs at the Goldsboro, NC WTP again this summer (Eric Dean et al.).

AMERICAN AVOCET: One was a good local find, and somewhat early, at Huntington Beach State Park, SC 8 July (Mike Walker, Jack Peachey et al.).

UPLAND SANDPIPER: The first southbound migrants for the Carolinas included two at the Orangeburg, SC sod farm 7 July (Nathan Dias), one at North River Farms, Carteret County, NC 16 and 23 July (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, Carol Reigle), and one at the Manteo, NC airport 24 and 30 July (Jeff Lewis, Ricky Davis).

LONG-BILLED CURLEW: Two flying by Huntington Beach State Park, SC 30 July (Ritch Lilly, *vide* Jack Peachey) were probably part of the wintering flock south of there in the Cape Romain NWR area.

RED KNOT: Nineteen on the beach at Portsmouth Island, NC 28 July (Scott Baron et al.) were very early fall migrants.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER: One at Cape Hatteras, NC 10 June (Curtis Dykstra) was quite late for that species in the Carolinas.

WILSON'S SNIPE: A Wilson's Snipe was considered rather early at the rice fields near Roper, NC 29 July (Jeff Lewis), as the species does not normally start showing up in our area until mid-late August.

AMERICAN WOODCOCK: Summer sightings of woodcock are always noteworthy as the species is a localized, uncommon summer resident in the Carolinas. This season, one was observed near the Charlotte, NC airport 20 July (Alan Kneidel).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE: Only one Wilson's was noted this summer, that being at Pea Island NWR, NC 18 July (Scott Jennex).

FRANKLIN'S GULL: An adult Franklin's in alternate plumage was a complete surprise at Hooper Lane, Henderson County, NC 26 June (John Lindfors, Wayne Forsythe). This bird provided the first June report for the state and the second ever for the mountains region.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL: Once again this species spent the summer at several coastal locations in the Carolinas. The numbers seem to be increasing each year, and the best count this year was of 19 (involving all ages) on the beach at Frisco, NC 29 July (Scott Baron).

SOOTY TERN: Offshore sightings this summer included 11 out of John's Inlet, SC 16 June (Nathan Dias), five off Hatteras, NC 1 July (Brian Patteson, Inc.), and one out of Murrell's Inlet, SC 21 July (Jack Peachey).

BRIDLED TERN: The peak counts reported this summer were the 27 out of John's Inlet, SC 16 June (Nathan Dias) and the 16 off Hatteras, NC 1 July (Brian Patteson, Inc.).



Franklin's Gull, Hooper Lane, Henderson County, NC 26 June 2006.
Photo by Wayne Forsythe.

LEAST TERN: Rooftop nesting continues to occur in the Carolinas as evidenced by the 120+ at a site in Atlantic Beach, NC 11 June (John Fussell) and 120+ at a site in Wilmington, NC 13 June (Greg Massey).

CASPIAN TERN: One was slightly early inland at L. Wheeler, Wake County, NC 15 July, as noted by Jacob Socolar.

BLACK TERN: One was a good find and a little early inland at L. Wheeler, NC 15 July (Jacob Socolar).

SOUTH POLAR SKUA: Only two reports were received this summer, with singles off Beaufort Inlet, NC 1 June (Jack Fennell) and off Hatteras, NC 4 June (Brian Patteson, Inc.). The number of reports of this species from North Carolina has been down the last couple of years.

LONG-TAILED JAEGER: This summer's sightings of this uncommon jaeger included singles off Hatteras, NC 2 and 4 June (Brian Patteson, Inc.).

COMMON GROUND-DOVE: One was a complete surprise in the Mills River valley, Henderson County, NC 25 June–9 July (Marilyn Westphal, Wayne Forsythe, sev. obs.). This wayward bird provided only about the third mountains report, the first since the mid-1980s.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO: One was heard in the Bodie Island Lighthouse, NC area 10 June (Curtis Dykstra). This species has a history of late, lingering individuals along the North Carolina coast.

WILLOW FLYCATCHER: One was present along Shimpock Rd., Cabarrus County, NC 1–22 June (John Buckman), in an area where summering birds have been noted previously. Very unexpected, however, was the Willow found near the coast at North River Farms, Carteret County, NC 18 June–9 July (John Fussell et al.). Summering Willow Flycatchers are extremely rare away from the western portions of the Carolinas, especially along the coast!



Common Ground-Dove, Henderson County, NC, 25 June 2006. Photo by Wayne Forsythe.

EASTERN PHOEBE: This species normally is absent from the outer Coastal Plain during the summer, thus of note were singles on Hilton Head Island, SC 6 June (Jack Colcolough) and near Havelock, Craven County, NC 27 July (John Fussell).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: The pair that nested several years in Union County, NC south of Monroe was present again this summer 18 June–late July (Anne & Blayne Olsen). The birds apparently attempted to nest on a transmission tower but no evidence of young was noticed this year. The male Scissor-tailed that appeared in Southern Pines, Moore County, NC during the spring was joined by a female by 7 June (Mike Johnson et al.) and this pair attempted to nest three times during the summer with the last attempt apparently being successful, as the birds were observed carrying food and fecal sacs 30 July (Carol Bowman).

WARBLING VIREO: Summer reports away from the northwestern corner of North Carolina are always noteworthy. This summer one was at Fletcher Park, Fletcher, NC 24 June (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey), and an adult feeding one young was at Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC 1 July (Simon Thompson).

BLACK-WHISKERED VIREO: One found singing in a yard in Manteo, NC 29 June (Jeff Lewis) was photographed and should represent about the seventh for that state! What is it about North Carolina getting so many Black-whiskeredes when compared to other nearby states?

COMMON RAVEN: More central North Carolina sightings of this species involved singles at Umstead State Park, Wake County 11 June (Brian Murphy) and at Southern Pines, Moore County 19 July (Wayne Irvin).

HORNED LARK: Good reports from (or outside of) the extreme eastern edge of this species' normal range included 10 in western Washington County, NC 21 June (Jeff Phippen, Harry LeGrand, Jr., Will Cook), one along Hardwick Rd., Horry County, SC 1 July (Steve Thomas), and 50 at North River Farms, Carteret County, NC 30 July (John Fussell et al.), with most of these being young birds of the year.



Black-whiskered Vireo, Manteo, NC, 29 June 2006. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH: One was very late at Miller Park, Winston-Salem, NC 8 June, as noted by Ann & Chester Robertson and Bert Hollifield.

AMERICAN PIPIT: An adult was seen and heard at close range on the Dortches BBS just north of Rocky Mount, NC on the amazing date of 22 June (Mark Johns). Summer occurrences of this species in the Carolinas are practically unheard of, and why one was here in mid-June is unexplainable.

CEDAR WAXWING: Once again this species was present at scattered locations in the eastern Carolinas this summer. Of particular note were the "small flock" on James Island, SC 25 June (Dennis Forsythe), small numbers on the North Carolina Outer Banks during the summer (Jeff Lewis, sev. obs.), and two in the Croatan Nat. Forest, Craven County, NC 17 July (John Fussell).

MAGNOLIA WARBLER: Three males were on territory at the usual Roan Mt., NC area this summer, as noted by Rick Knight.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER: This summer's reports came from the usual locations, with a male at Grandfather Mt., NC 20 June (Jeff Lewis) and two birds at Roan Mt., NC 25–28 June (Rob Biller, Allan Trently et al., Rick Knight).

BLACKPOLL WARBLER: One was a rather late spring migrant at Riverbend Park, Catawba County, NC 3 June, as noted by Dwayne Martin.

WORM-EATING WARBLER: One found singing at Congaree Nat. Park, Richland County, SC 10 June (Robin Carter) provided one of only a handful of summer records for the park.

SWAINSON'S WARBLER: One on territory near the Charlotte, NC airport in Mecklenburg County 20 July (Alan Kneidel) provided the third breeding-season report for the species in the county this summer!

OVENBIRD: Two singing at Congaree Nat. Park, Richland County, SC 10 June (Robin Carter) constituted the first June record for the park.

INDIGO BUNTING: Four singing males were noted in spruce-fir openings on Roan Mt., NC 19 July (Rick Knight); the species is unusual at that elevation.

PAINTED BUNTING: Three on the Merrimon BBS in Carteret County, NC 11 June (John Fussell) were considered to be somewhat inland and north of the usual range for the species.

DICKCISSEL: Reports this summer involved one southwest of McBee, Chesterfield County, SC 8 June (Robin Carter), two at Santee NWR, SC 16 June (Irvin Pitts), three to four territorial males just north of Pettigrew State Park, NC 21 June–1 July (Jeff Phippen, Harry LeGrand, Jr., Will Cook; Ricky Davis), and 17 were back at North River Farms, Carteret County, NC 11 June (John Fussell et al.). This was the second year in a row that large numbers summered at this location, and this year a nest was found 25 June (Jack Fennell).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE: The nesting pair along Shimrock Rd., Cabarrus County, NC first noted during May apparently was unsuccessful as no young were seen (sev. obs.). The birds were last noted in the area 22 June.

RED CROSSBILL: Summer reports of this enigmatic species included two in Blowing Rock, NC 21–23 June (Jeff Lewis), five on Roan Mt., NC 28 June (Rick Knight), and 30 along the road up Mt. Mitchell, NC 7 July (Marilyn Westphal). Of interest was that this large group of crossbills consisted of only about three females with the rest being juveniles!



Red Crossbill, Blowing Rock, NC, 21 June 2006. Photo by Jeff Lewis.