

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.

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK: More evidence that this species is doing well in south-coastal South Carolina came in the form of a pair with 14 young at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC 26 July (Steve Calver). With more and more nesting in the ACE Basin area, it is only a matter of time before locations north of there will harbor the species.

RING-NECKED DUCK: A male Ring-necked was at the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, SC 23 June (Robin Carter, Caroline Eastman), no doubt a non-breeding summer lingerer.

GREATER SCAUP: One summered at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC (Steve Calver), thereby providing a rare breeding-season report for this species.

SCOTERS: Lingering scoters noted this summer included a Surf at Emerald Isle, NC 22 June (Bruce Hallett), a Black at Holden Beach, NC 3 June (Jeff Gerbracht), six Blacks at Ft. Fisher, NC 6 June (Harry Sell), and five Blacks at Huntington Beach St. Pk., SC 12–14 June (Paul Serridge).

RUDDY DUCK: Nesting by this species, as evidenced by a female with three young at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC 13 July (Steve Calver), occurred at a site where breeding activity has been noted before.

COMMON LOON: This summer's reports of non-breeding Commons involved one at Salem L., Forsyth County, NC 12 June (John Haire) and one at Murrell's Inlet, SC 14 June (Paul Serridge).

PIED-BILLED GREBE: One at L. Ashwood, Lee County, SC 9 June provided an interesting summer sighting as the species is a rare breeder in that state's inner coastal plain (Robin Carter).

HERALD PETREL: Two were located off Hatteras, NC this summer, with individuals being found 6 and 27 July (Brian Patteson, Inc.).

FEA'S PETREL: One off Hatteras, NC 1 July (Brian Patteson, Inc.) provided one of the rarer mid-summer sightings for that species.

CORY'S SHEARWATER: Rare onshore sightings, some due to Tropical Storm Barry, included three from C. Hatteras, NC point 3 June (Geoff LeBaron, Greg Butcher), two at Emerald Isle, NC 3 June (Jamie Cameron), and one from Ocean Isle Beach, NC 6 July (Sam Cooper). Also five Cory's/Greaters were seen from Ft. Macon, NC 3 June (John Fussell).

GREATER SHEARWATER: Onshore Greater Shearwater reports involved 600+ (due to Tropical Storm Barry) from C. Hatteras, NC point 3 June (Geoff LeBaron, Greg Butcher), one sick on the beach at Ocean Isle Beach, NC 24 June (Taylor Piephoff), one dead at Bird Shoal, Beaufort, NC 27 June (*fide* John Fussell), and two dead at Ocean Isle Beach, NC in early July (Sam Cooper). Totally unexpected, however, was the Greater that landed in a field in Lancaster County, SC 12 July and later was taken to a wildlife rehabber in the Charlotte, NC area (*fide* Taylor Piephoff). What one was doing inland at a time of no storm systems defies explanation.

SOOTY SHEARWATER: Tropical Storm Barry was probably responsible for the good total of 25 Sooties close to C. Hatteras, NC point 3 June (Geoff LeBaron, Greg Butcher) and one found dead in Back Sound, Carteret County, NC 5 June (Nate Bachelor). Also one was found sick on the beach at Hatteras, NC 17 June (Brian Patteson).

AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER: Somewhat rarer onshore than the preceding several shearwaters, single Audubon's were noted at C. Hatteras, NC point 3 June (Geoff LeBaron, Greg Butcher) and at Ocean Isle Beach, NC 1–4 July (Sam Cooper). Also Manx/Audubon's shearwaters were noted

at Emerald Isle, NC (Jamie Cameron) and Ft. Macon, NC (John Fussell), both 3 June, most likely due to Tropical Storm Barry.

WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL: One found off Hatteras, NC 28 July (Brian Patteson, Inc.) was somewhat earlier than the usual August–October period of most of the previous sightings in the state’s waters.

BLACK-BELLIED STORM-PETREL: North Carolina got another documented Black-bellied Storm-Petrel when one was photographed off Hatteras 23 June (Brian Patteson, Inc.). With this being the third in four years off that state, one wonders if the species has been overlooked on many of the previous pelagic trips to those waters.

LEACH’S STORM-PETREL: One found sick (later died) on the beach at Holden Beach, NC 3 June (Jeff Gerbracht) was most likely brought in by Tropical Storm Barry.

WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD: Two reports of this hoped-for species were had this summer, with singles off Hatteras, NC 22 June and 27 July (Brian Patteson, Inc.).

RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD: One Red-billed off Hatteras, NC 30 July (Brian Patteson, Inc.) was the only one mentioned this summer.

NORTHERN GANNET: This species is found in very small numbers during the summer, usually immatures heading northward. The best count this year was the seven seen from Ocean Isle Beach, NC 2 July (Sam Cooper).

ANHINGA: This species continues to be found farther inland away from the usual coastal plain areas. The most western sightings involved one that summered in a heronry along the Yadkin River in Rowan County, NC and up to three at Coddle Creek Res., Cabarrus County, NC 29 July (*fide* Marek Smith).

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD: Magnificent Frigatebird is an annual visitor, and this summer’s reports included one at Seabrook Is., Charleston County, SC 9 June (Jim Edwards, Jane Chew), one at Southport, NC 18 July (John Thornton, *fide* Will Cook), and three over Croatan Sound, NC near the Manns Harbor bridge 26 July (Skip Morgan).

AMERICAN BITTERN: Very unusual during summer were single American Bitterns at the Goldsboro, NC WTP 2 June (Gene Howe), at Mt. Pleasant, SC 30 June (David Abbott), and along US 64 in Martin County, NC 18 July (Jeff Lewis).

GREAT EGRET: For the third year in a row, a small group (12 pairs) of Great Egrets nested in a large Great Blue Heron colony along the Yadkin River in Rowan County, NC (Marek Smith). This is most certainly the farthest inland for breeding by this species in that state.

REDDISH EGRET: There was the usual number of sightings of this annual summer visitor along the coast in both Carolinas. The best totals were the three at Huntington Beach St. Pk., SC 15 June (Paul Serridge), three at C. Romain NWR, SC 31 July (*fide* Taylor Piephoff), and three at Bear Is. WMA, SC 31 July (Sean Williams). The farthest north was the individual at the north end of Lea Is., Pender County, NC 10 June (Robin Wood).

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON: Two immatures at Beaver L., Asheville, NC 2 July (Richard Price, Marilyn Westphal, Simon Thompson, Wayne Forsythe) provided a rare local report for that part of the mountains.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON: An adult Yellow-crowned was seen along Little Laurel Creek near Hot Springs, Madison County, NC 10 June (Beth Brinson), a most unusual sighting for the mountains.

WHITE IBIS: Post-breeding dispersal inland by this species is an annual occurrence; however several were noted farther to the west than usual this summer. Up to two were at Beaver L., Asheville, NC during the month of July (Vin Stanton, Marilyn Westphal, Wayne Forsythe, Simon Thompson), one was at Hobby Park, Winston-Salem, NC 4 July (Bert Hollifield, *vide* Phil Dickinson), and up to six were at a Winston-Salem, NC WTP 21–28 July (Ferenc Domoki, Dickinson et al.).



Immature White Ibis at Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC, 3 July 2007.

Photo by Larry Nicodemus.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL: This species was once again a visitor to the south-coastal area of South Carolina this summer. The best count came from the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County where 26 were noted on 26 July (Steve Calver).

WOOD STORK: One over Southern Pines, NC 12 June (Susan Campbell) was locally unusual, being only the second for the Moore County area.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE: This species has been noted during summer along the Cape Fear River in the Bladen-Columbus Counties, NC area several years now. This year “several” were seen (by aerial survey) roosting in early June (Craig Watson). There is still no evidence of breeding in that state, although it is probably occurring. Another one for that state was over the Northeast Cape Fear River at Holly Shelter Game Land, NC 24 July (*vide* Taylor Piephoff). The best count from the usual late summer gathering near Allendale, SC was 80+ on 28 July (John Cely et al.).

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK: Sharp-shinned Hawk is a very localized, uncommon breeder in the Carolinas; thus of note was the nesting by this species at Weymouth Woods, Southern Pines, NC (Scott Hartley). This was the third year in a row at that location! Another interesting summer report was of the individual near the coast at Mt. Pleasant, SC 12 June, as noted by David Abbott.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK: Rare summer reports from the eastern portion of the Carolinas involved one at Ft. Moultrie, Sullivan's Is., SC 3 June (David Abbott), one in New Hanover County, NC 9 June (Sam Cooper), several in the Mill Creek area of Carteret County, NC June–July (John Fussell et al., Jack Fennell), one near Shallotte, Brunswick County, NC 6 July (Sam Cooper), and one near Beaufort, NC 15 July (Rich Boyd).

MERLIN: Most unusual and extremely late was the Merlin seen twice during the day at Wilmington, NC 16 June (Kitty Kosh, *vide* John Ennis). There are only about three previous summer sightings of this species in the Carolinas.

BLACK RAIL: Reports of this elusive species are always noteworthy, and this summer good numbers were found in the Bear Is. WMA, SC area when nine were seen/heard 13 July (Nate Dias). Also two were in a marsh near Combahee Plantation, SC 14 July (Dias). And one heard calling in marshes along the Cape Fear River, New Hanover County, NC 9 June (Sam Cooper) provided a locally good report.

VIRGINIA RAIL: The rice fields near the Tidewater Research Station, Roper, NC hosted at least one 21–29 July (Ricky Davis, Don Rote). Summer reports of this rail are few in number as the species is a very localized breeder in that state.

SORA: The Roper, NC rice fields also had Soras, with three 21 July (Ricky Davis) and one 29 July (Don Rote). Breeding by this species has not been documented in the state, and July is a little early for migrants!

SANDHILL CRANE: One on the grounds of the Biltmore Estate, Asheville, NC 12 June (*vide* Taylor Piephoff) was no doubt just a non-breeding wanderer.

SNOWY PLOVER: An excellent find was the Snowy Plover photographed at the north end of Hunting Island St. Pk., SC 27 July (Sidney Maddock), which provided about the fifth record for that state.

WILLET: Locally very rare was the Willet found at drawn-down Beaver Lake in the Asheville, NC area 2 July (Simon Thompson, Wayne Forsythe). Also of interest was the “Western” Willet found at Emerald Isle, NC 22 June (Bruce Hallett). This bird, which was nicely compared to “Eastern” Willets, was considered to be somewhat early for a returning fall migrant.

UPLAND SANDPIPER: One was slightly early as a fall migrant when noted near Combahee Plantation, SC 14 July (Nate Dias).

RUDDY TURNSTONE: One was a good find inland at Falls Lake, NC 21 July, as noted by Steve Shultz.

SANDERLING: One at Falls Lake, NC 28–31 July was slightly early for an inland migrant (Steve Shultz).

WESTERN SANDPIPER: Nine at Falls Lake, NC 31 July (Steve Shultz) was a good number inland, especially for the month of July.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER: One inland at Falls Lake, NC 31 July was somewhat early as a fall migrant (Steve Shultz).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE: One at Cape Hatteras, NC 3 June (Geoff LeBaron, Greg Butcher) was somewhat late for a spring migrant. At the other end of the season, the annual summer/fall congregation at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC peaked at nine on 10 July (Steve Calver). Three were still there as late as 26 July (Calver).

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE: Eight just outside Beaufort Inlet, NC 1 June (Ron White, *vide* John Fussell) were good finds close to shore; possibly they were on the move in advance of Tropical Storm Barry.

SOOTY TERN: Three were noted onshore at C. Hatteras, NC 3 June (Geoff LeBaron, Greg Butcher). Although probably brought to shore by Tropical Storm Barry, this species has been noted previously on several occasions at tern colonies there.

ROSEATE TERN: One just east of Hatteras Inlet, NC 14 June (Brian Patteson) was a good find. There have been extremely few sightings of this species the last decade or so in that state.

COMMON TERN: One at Falls Lake, NC 20 July (Brian Bockhahn) was a good find inland during the summer season.

SOUTH POLAR SKUA: Only one was noted offshore this summer, that being off Hatteras, NC 27 July (Brian Patteson, Inc.)

JAEGERS: Tropical Storm Barry probably helped bring several jaegers close to shore at C. Hatteras, NC 3 June when single Pomarine and Parasitics were noted (Geoff LeBaron, Greg Butcher).

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: One found on the Gupton BBS route in Warren County, NC 8 June was locally unusual and provided a new location for the species in that state (Brian Bockhahn).

COMMON GROUND-DOVE: Three in the Mayesville, Sumter County, SC area 20 June provided another inner Coastal Plain site for the species (Robin Carter, Caroline Eastman). Common Ground-Doves seem to be increasing in inland portions of that state while obviously decreasing along the immediate coast.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER: One singing in northern Asheville, NC 8 June (Simon Thompson) was an obvious late-spring migrant.

WILLOW FLYCATCHER: Breeding-season reports of Willow Flycatchers away from the mountains and western piedmont are quite rare. This summer singing birds were noted at the Flat River Impoundment, Durham County, NC 23–24 June (Ricky Davis, Will Cook et al.) and at the Harris Farm in extreme eastern Franklin County, NC 23 June (Davis). The latter bird was present, apparently on territory, until at least mid-July (Davis).

GRAY KINGBIRD: Always a good find in the Carolinas, one was noted at Ft. Moultrie, Sullivan's Is., SC 3 June (David Abbott).

BLUE-HEADED VIREO: A family group of three Blue-headed Vireos was found at Peachtree Rock Preserve, Lexington County, SC 8 June (Robin

Carter). The species apparently nests in the Sandhills of South Carolina—just as in the North Carolina Sandhills.

COMMON RAVEN: One was still present (first noted last year) in eastern Greenville, NC this summer. It was seen three times during June and early July (Veronica and Nick Pantelidis) and constitutes the most easterly Raven noted in North Carolina over the last several years.

HORNED LARK: Good reports from the eastern fringes of their range included one along Callison Road, Pamlico County, NC 15 June (Sean Williams and Liz Lathrop) and 30 at North River Farms, Carteret County, NC 15 July (John Fussell, Jack Fennell). The latter birds were most likely post-breeding dispersants, as there is still no breeding evidence from that location.

BANK SWALLOW: One of the very few sites where this species is known to breed, at a quarry near the Avery County, NC airport, harbored several pairs 13 June (Curtis Smalling).

CLIFF SWALLOW: This species has continued to expand south and east in the Carolinas and also is beginning to use nest sites other than bridges and dams. Of interest was the colony of 40 nests placed on the exterior wall of a hotel building in Havelock, NC this summer (John Fussell). This particular colony previously used a nearby bridge!

MAGNOLIA WARBLER: This summer's Magnolia Warbler reports once again came from Roan Mt., NC where up to three territorial males were noted during mid-June (Ricky Davis, Rick Knight).

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER: This species summers at only a handful of high-elevation sites in North Carolina each year; no breeding evidence has been obtained yet. Two singing males were found near Mt. Kephart, Great Smoky Mts., 9 June (Tom Howe, *fide* Dean Edwards), and a non-singing male was at Roan Mt. 10 June (Ricky Davis). Obvious non-breeding wanderers provided very unusual summer sightings at the coast, with a singing male on Roanoke Is., NC 15 June (Jeff Lewis) and a female at Charleston, SC 8 July (Nate Dias).

SCARLET TANAGER: A male Scarlet Tanager singing near Grifton, Lenoir County, NC 26 June (John Fussell) was somewhat southeast of the usual breeding range in that state.

VESPER SPARROW: Locally uncommon were the two Vesper Sparrows present all summer on Round Bald near Carver's Gap, NC (Ricky Davis, Rick Knight). This localized species is not present at that particular location every year.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW: An adult White-crowned Sparrow of the *gambelii* race was a complete surprise at a feeder on Orchard Creek Rd., Pamlico County, NC 14 July (Sean Williams, Liz Lathrop). Summer reports of this species are extraordinarily rare, and of particular interest was the appearance of a "possible juvenile" present too—quite unexplainable!

DARK-EYED JUNCO: A very rare and unusual summer occurrence was provided by a Dark-eyed Junco at a feeder in Meggett, SC 29 June (Cherrie Sneed).

DICKCISSEL: This summer's reports involved up to two at Alligator River NWR, NC during June (Jeff Lewis), a family of three southwest of Sumter, SC 18 June (Robin Carter), one along a BBS route near Youngsville, Franklin County, NC 21 June (Brian Bockhahn), three males and one female throughout June at the Harris Farm, Franklin County, NC (Ricky Davis), and a peak of 19 singing males at North River Farms, Carteret County, NC 24 June (John Fussell et al.). Of note were three juveniles at the latter site 8 July (Fussell, Jack Fennell).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE: The nesting Baltimore Orioles along Shimpock Rd., Cabarrus County, NC were apparently unsuccessful this year, as the female was not seen after spring and the male was last observed in early July, with no young being seen at all (John Buckman).

RED CROSSBILL: Numbers of this erratic, cyclic species seemed to be up this summer in the North Carolina mountains. The best reports included 35–40 in the Mt. Mitchell area in early June (Marilyn Westphal et al.), 8–10 along the Blue Ridge Parkway in the Balsam Mts. area 2 June (Irvin Pitts), 20–25 along Heintooga Road, Great Smokies, 3 June (Westphal et al.), several in the Clingman's Dome area of the Smokies during the summer (Becky Hylton), six at Grandfather Mt. in late July (*vide* Taylor Piephoff), and 10–25 in the Roan Mt. area through the summer (Rick Knight, Ricky Davis).