

## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Summer 2008, 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.*

**WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL:** One was photographed in the Cape Fear River off of Ft. Fisher, NC 9 July (Mike Polito, *fide* Steve Emslie). The bird was in excellent plumage with no signs of wear, but the legs were not seen to see if there were any bands. It is practically impossible to know if this individual was a wild wanderer or an escape.

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL:** An obviously non-breeding bird was present at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC 17 June, as noted by Steve Calver.

**CANVASBACK:** A male summered at L. Don T. Howell, Cabarrus County, NC (John Buckman); a rather rare occurrence for this species in the Carolinas.

**REDHEAD:** A male with an injured wing was at Beaufort, NC 9 June (John Fussell), providing a somewhat unusual summer sighting.

**RING-NECKED DUCK:** Unusual summer sightings of non-breeding Ring-neckeds included males at L. Warren, Hampton County, SC from spring until 15 June (Carroll Richard) and at New Bern, NC the first two weeks of July (Olwen Jarvis).

**LESSER SCAUP:** One lingered at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC until at least 28 June (Steve Calver).

**COMMON EIDER:** Another lingering/summering waterfowl was a female Common Eider at Silver Lake, Ocracoke, NC 26 July (Derb Carter, Ricky Davis).

**SURF SCOTER:** A male Surf Scoter was in the Cape Fear River across from Ft. Fisher, NC 7 June (Ricky Davis). A few scoters are noted as lingering/summering almost every year somewhere in the Carolinas.

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER:** Rather unusual was the lingering female Red-breasted Merganser at L. Wheeler, Raleigh, NC 1 June, as noted by Steve Shultz. Most tardy individuals of this species tend to be found near the coast.

**RUDDY DUCK:** This species summered at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC in good numbers this year (37 on 11 June), and a pair with five young was noted 3 and 11 June (Steve Calver).

**WILD TURKEY:** One was a surprise and locally unusual at Pine Knoll Shores, Bogue Banks, NC throughout the summer (sev. obs., *vide* John Fussell).

**PACIFIC LOON:** A Pacific Loon in alternate plumage was totally unexpected at Ocean Isle Beach, NC 13–14 July (Sam Cooper). Summer records of this rare winter visitor are quite extraordinary.

**BLACK-CAPPED PETREL:** Six Black-capped were good finds about 57 miles off Murrells Inlet, SC 14 June (Murray Honick).

**GREATER SHEARWATER:** Only one was reported onshore this summer, that being at Huntington Beach St. Pk., SC 14 June (Steve & Barbara Thomas). This report probably means that fortunately there was not a major die-off of this species off the Carolinas this summer—much different from the last couple of years.

**SWINHOE'S STORM-PETREL:** North Carolina's second documented Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel was found off Hatteras 2 June (Brian Patteson, Inc.). The first documented Swinhoe's was also off Hatteras 8 August, 1998.

**WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD:** The only one reported off North Carolina this summer was found out of Hatteras 7 July (Brian Patteson, Inc.)

**MASKED BOOBY:** An adult Masked Booby was a good find off Hatteras, NC 7 July (Brian Patteson, Inc.).

**ANHINGA:** One at Buckhorn Res., Wilson County, NC 18 July (Ricky Davis) was locally unusual, but not unexpected, as this species has pushed much farther into the piedmont than this.

**REDDISH EGRET:** North Carolina Reddish Egret reports included immatures at Rich's Inlet 5 July (Derb Carter), at Hammocks Beach St. Pk. 25 July (John Haire), and at Lockwood Folly Inlet 30 July (Rob Rogers et al.). South Carolina birds included a white morph second-year bird at Bear Is. WMA 27 July (Nate Dias).

**GLOSSY IBIS:** One was observed over Anilorac Farm, Orange County, NC 7 June (Will Cook et al.). This provided the first local report for the month of June.

**ROSEATE SPOONBILL:** The only reports came from the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC where the species was present the entire summer and the peak count was an impressive 61 on 24 July (Steve Calver).

**WOOD STORK:** This species continues to increase in North Carolina, possibly due to the recent nesting colony in Columbus County. Several unusual inland reports well away from the outer Coastal Plain involved three circling over the North Toe River near Ingalls in s. Avery County 19 June (Jason Warner), two at the Yadkin River Canoe Access area in S. Davidson County 11–15 July (Gene Schepker et al.), two over Ferry Bridge Rd. west of Goldsboro 19 July (Eric Dean, Gene Howe), one over Walnut Creek east of Goldsboro 19 July (Dean, Howe), and seven near King, Stokes County 27 July (Christie Olsen, *vide* Phil Dickinson).

**SWALLOW-TAILED KITE:** Four birds (two pairs) summered in the Cape Fear River area around the Lock and Dam No.1 again this year. Still no nests have been located to document breeding in the state. Elsewhere one was a good find at North Pond, Pea Is. NWR 27 June (Neal Moore et al.), most certainly a wandering non-breeder.

**NORTHERN HARRIER:** Most unusual for mid-summer were the single Northern Harriers along Stella Rd., e. Onslow County, NC 19 June (Jamie Cameron) and at the VOA-A site in Beaufort County, NC 22 June (Ricky Davis). Were these birds just non-breeding summer wanderers? Also, one at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC 24 July (Steve Calver) was possibly just an early fall migrant.

**PEREGRINE FALCON:** One at Ridgeland, Jasper County, SC 5–13 July (Carroll Richard) defies categorization. Was it an early fall migrant or just a wandering non-breeder?

**SORA:** A Sora lingered at Tanglewood Park, Forsyth County, NC from the spring into the first week of June (Phil Dickinson), providing another interesting summer report for this species.

**AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER:** One in basic plumage was photographed at the Bamboo, Watauga County, NC fields 26 June (Jim Parnell). Mid-summer occurrences of this species are very rare.

**SNOWY PLOVER:** One was present on both sides of Ocracoke Inlet, NC during June (National Park Service staff, *vide* Derb Carter) and one was at Hammocks Beach St. Pk., NC 21 July on into the fall season (Emily Rice,

sev. obs.). These apparently two different individuals provided the fourth and fifth records for that species in the state.

**AMERICAN AVOCET:** A very impressive count of 368 was had at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC 17 June, as noted by Steve Calver. No nesting evidence was mentioned, thus indicating a larger-than-normal number of summering birds there this year.

**LONG-BILLED CURLEW:** One at C. Romain NWR, SC 27 July (John Cottingham, *vide* Nate Dias) represented the first returning bird to this traditional wintering location.

**AMERICAN WOODCOCK:** One at Straits, Carteret County, NC 29 June (Libby Liles, *vide* John Fussell) could have been a local nester, or a post-breeding wanderer.

**WILSON'S PHALAROPE:** The peak count of Wilson's Phalaropes at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC was 10 on 24 July (Steve Calver). This location consistently harbors this species in good numbers, more so than any other spot in the Carolinas.

**BONAPARTE'S GULL:** One at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC 16 and 24 July (Steve Calver) was obviously a non-breeding summer wanderer.

**SOOTY TERN:** Four to six were good finds about 57 miles s. of Murrell's Inlet, SC 14 June, as noted by Murray Honick.

**GULL-BILLED TERN:** Most unusual away from beaches were two Gull-billeds at the Tidewater Res. Station, Roper, NC 29 June (Ricky Davis) and 19 July (Don Rote).

**CASPIAN TERN:** Possible early fall migrant Caspian Tern reports involved four at Beaverdam, Falls L., NC 19 June (Lynn Moseley, Ginger Travis, John & Joan Little) and one at Buckhorn Res., Wilson County, NC 27 June (Ricky Davis).

**PARASITIC JAEGER:**

One uncharacteristically remained at Hammocks Beach St. Pk., NC from at least 25 July on into the fall season (John Haire, sev. obs.). There was no sign of apparent injury with this individual.



Parasitic Jaeger, 25 July 2008, Hammocks Beach St. Pk. Photo by John Haire.

**WILLOW FLYCATCHER:**

Unusual was the presence of six singing Willow Flycatchers along Salem Creek, Winston-Salem, NC for most of the summer (John Haire et al.). Nesting evidence was not obtained however.

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER:** The Monroe, NC pair returned in the spring and built a nest on the same tower as last year, but the nesting attempt failed due to the male's being killed by a car 9 June. The female was

last seen 28 June (Anne Olsen). Elsewhere a rare summer wanderer was noted at Pactolus, Pitt County, NC 24 June (Carl Darden, *vide* Paula Wright).

**WARBLING VIREO:** A second nest of Warbling Vireo was found along Salem Creek, Winston-Salem, NC 8 June (Kim Brand, John Haire); the first was located there in late May. This nest fledged three young.

**HORNED LARK:** Good evidence of local nesting was gotten at North River Farms, Carteret County, NC 29 June (John Fussell et al.) when a pair and two juveniles were noted. Actual nests of this species have still not been found in that county however.

**CLIFF SWALLOW:** Carteret County's first Cliff Swallow nests were found under a bridge near Newport, NC during late June to early July (Jack Fennell). This species has nested not too far away near New Bern, Craven County for several years now.

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH:** Five different birds in three different areas of South Mountains St. Pk., Burke County, NC were located in early June (Dwayne Martin). Interestingly, this species has been found there for three years in a row now!

**RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET:** One singing at Roan Mt., NC 2 June (Jeff Lewis) was either an extremely late spring migrant or a rare summering lingerer.

**AMERICAN ROBIN:** A female was locally unusual for the summer at Savannah NWR, SC 27 July (Jack Colcolough).

**BLUE-WINGED WARBLER:** A pair at Caesar's Head St. Pk., SC 12–13 June (Marion Clark) was probably nesting, as the male acted very territorial and the female was agitated. No actual nests have been found however.

**MAGNOLIA WARBLER:** Breeding season Magnolia Warbler reports included six at Roan Mt., NC 6 June (Rick Knight), two at Grandfather Mt., NC 3 June (Jeff Lewis), and one at Rough Ridge, Watauga County, NC 1–3 June (Lewis).

**YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER:** Very unusual was the male Yellow-rumped at Hilton Head Is., SC on the very late date of 14 June, as noted by Jack Colcolough.

**WORM-EATING WARBLER:** A female was caught at the MAPS banding station at Howell Woods, Johnston County, NC 24 June (James Sasser). This site is quite some distance from the normal breeding range of that species in the state.

**NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH:** One was very unusual at Hampton, SC 13 June–14 July (Carroll Richard), obviously a non-breeding lingerer.



Magnolia Warbler, 5 June 2008, Rough Ridge Trail. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

**VESPER SPARROW:** Three pairs were on Big Yellow Mt., Avery County, NC this summer and a nest with four eggs was actually discovered 18 June (Merrill Lynch).

**SAVANNAH SPARROW:** A male singing along NC 16/88 just east of Jefferson, Ashe County, NC 12 June (Merrill Lynch) provided a new breeding season location for this very localized breeder in that state.

**ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK:** A male at a feeder at Kitty Hawk, NC 6–8 June (*vide* Jeff Lewis) was obviously a very late migrant.

**DICKCISSEL:** One was locally unusual at Beaverdam, Falls L., NC 3 July (Brian Bockhahn). The species was not found to be nesting anywhere nearby.

**SHINY COWBIRD:** The only report in the Carolinas this summer was of a male that visited a feeder briefly west of Hillsborough, NC 14 June (Randy Dunson).

**BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD:** Quite unexpected was an immature Brown-headed at Round Bald, Roan Mt., NC area 31 July (Rick Knight). This species is most unusual at that elevation in that area.

**RED CROSSBILL:** Reports of this species away from the usual locations are always noteworthy. This summer's sightings included five at Rough Ridge, Watauga County, NC 1 June (Jeff Lewis) and 20+ at a feeder in s. Clay County, NC in mid-June (*vide* Nedra Sekera).