

## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Winter 2009–2010, 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.*

**Fulvous Whistling-Duck:** One was found at the Santee Coastal Reserve in Charleston County (Co), SC, 19 Dec (Bruce Peterjohn, Dick Rosche), but was not relocated during the McClellanville Christmas Bird Count (CBC) the following day. This sighting provided the first report of this species in the Carolinas in several years.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** There were more reports of this species than usual this winter, though no large flocks were found. Four were seen on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* National Audubon Society (NAS)) and provided the most southern report. Two were seen flying NE along the coast at the N end of Masonboro Inlet, during the



Wilmington, NC CBC, 2 Jan (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, John Voigt, *fide* Sam Cooper). Two were seen flying over the fields in the Lake Landing area of Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), NC, 12 Jan (Derb Carter). Individuals were also found on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (Ricky Davis); amongst Canada Geese on Lake Julian in Skyland, NC, 16 Jan (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey); at Annie McCrary Park in Wilmington, NC, 31 Jan (Bryan McLean); and at the Archie Elledge Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in Winston-Salem, NC, 13 Feb (Phil Dickinson, Bill Gifford).

Greater White-fronted Goose, 13 Feb 2010, Winston-Salem, NC. Photo by Phil Dickinson.

**Snow Goose:** Outside of the species' typical northeastern North Carolina wintering ground were five in a flooded field along NC-191 in Henderson Co, NC, 12 Dec (Wayne Forsythe); 600 on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); three on the Santee NWR, SC CBC, 26 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe); a large flock of 160 in flight over Ft Fisher, NC, 3 Jan (Ricky Davis); two at Annie McCrary Park in Wilmington, NC, 31 Jan (Bryan McLean); and about 40 in flight over Pee Dee NWR, NC, 20 Feb (Ron Clark).

**Ross's Goose:** The winter's reports of this rare goose were one with five Snow Geese in a flooded field along NC-191 in Henderson Co, NC, 12 Dec (Wayne Forsythe); one on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (Ricky Davis); at least five inside a huge flock of Snow Geese at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, NC, 12–14 Jan (Davis, Derb Carter); two with Canada Geese in a suburban area of S Myrtle Beach, SC, 20–22 Jan (Ritch Lilly); and one in Charleston, SC, 30 Jan (Cherrie Sneed, Chris Snook).

**Brant:** Sightings continued to increase at Oregon Inlet, NC, with 15 counted on the lawn of the fishing center, 17 Dec (John Haire) and a high count of 46 made at the same location, 2 Jan (Jeff Lewis). Also locally unusual were 30 on the Kitty Hawk, NC CBC, 19 Dec (*fide* Lewis); 11 on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); and four in flight over Ft Fisher, NC, 3 Jan (Ricky Davis). The winter's high count of this species was 253 on the Cape Hatteras, NC CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Pat Moore).

**Cackling Goose:** The winter's reports of this rare goose were of three on the Pettigrew SP, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Doug LeQuire); three on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (Jeff Lewis, Ricky Davis); two at the same location 16 Jan (Ed Corey, Harry LeGrand, Matt Daw, et al.); one, a first for the count, on the Alligator River NWR, NC CBC, 30 Dec (Bob

Lewis, *vide* Jeff Lewis); and two inside a huge flock of Snow Geese at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lake NWR, NC, 12–14 Jan (Davis, Derb Carter).



Brant, 17 Dec 2009, Oregon Inlet Fishing Center, NC. Photo by John Haire.

**Mute Swan:** Thought to be of wild origin were two at Pea Island NWR, NC, 10 Dec (Brian Bockhahn, Matt Daw, Ali Iyoob); and one seen flying S, high over the ocean, about half a mile off Ft Fisher, NC, 3 Jan (Ricky Davis).

**Tundra Swan:** South of the species' typical wintering range were nine on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*vide* NAS); 196 on the ACE Basin, SC CBC, 27 Dec (*vide* NAS); two on the Pee Dee NWR, NC CBC, 2 Jan (*vide* Don Fink); and 85 at Bear Island WMA, SC, 14 Feb (Carroll Richard, Kathleen O'Grady). A large flock of 1225 in NE Edgecombe Co, NC, 15 Feb (Ricky Davis) was considered locally unusual.

**Eurasian Wigeon:** The two most reliable sites in the Carolinas for this rare-but-regular Eurasian stray, Pea Island and Lake Mattamuskeet, each hosted up to four birds this winter. Four were counted on the Bodie-Pea Island, NC CBC, 28 Dec (*vide* Paul Sykes), with two to three present throughout the period (Jeff Lewis). Four were also counted on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*vide* Allen Bryan), three of which were found in the Lake Landing area (Ricky Davis). Individuals were also seen on Lilliput Pond in New Bern, NC, throughout the winter (Bob Holmes, Al Gamache); on the Winyah Bay, SC CBC, for a second year in a row, 17 Dec (*vide* Lex Glover); and at a pond in Morehead City, NC, 13–20 Jan (Ed Dombrowski, John Fussell, et al.).

**Mottled Duck:** For a third winter in a row, a pair was seen on Lake Medcalf in Sunset Beach, NC, throughout the winter (Mary McDavit, et al.). An individual found on a small lake in Boiling Springs, NC, 23 Jan (Greg Massey, Harry Sell) was a first for that immediate area.

**Redhead:** Unusually far inland were about 40 on Lake Julian in Skyland, NC, 12 Dec (Wayne Forsythe); a pair in Davidson, NC, in mid-December (Dave Lovett); and 35 in the Farrington area of Jordan Lake, NC, 4 Dec (Ricky Davis).

**King Eider:** One was seen this winter—a female in flight with two female Common Eiders, off Ft Macon, Atlantic Beach, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 20 Dec (Ricky Davis).



Common Eider, 8 Dec 2009, Cape Point, Buxton, NC. Photo by Audrey Whitlock.

**Common Eider:** A massive irruption of this species took place along the Atlantic coast this winter, with multiple birds reported at multiple sites in our region. The best counts were nine (!), including two adult males, in Winyah Bay, SC, during the CBC, 17 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover); seven, five females and two juvenile males, around the jetties in Murrells Inlet, SC, 21 Feb (Steve Compton); four, three juvenile males and a female, near the coquina rock outcrop at Fort Fisher, NC, 20 Dec (John Ennis), with two continuing until at least 28 Jan (Ricky Davis); three females around the jetty at Fort Macon SP in Atlantic Beach, NC, 24 Dec (John Fussell), with at least one continuing into February (Randy Newman, *fide* Fussell); three, an adult male and two females, around a jetty in Folly Beach, SC, 1 Jan (Rob Lane); and up to three, two juvenile males and a female, around Oregon Inlet, NC, throughout the period (Jeff Lewis, Harry LeGrand, several observers (sev. obs.)). Adult males were photographed off Cape Point in Buxton, NC, 8 Dec (Audrey Whitlock) and at a pier in Garden City, SC, 8 Dec–28 Jan (Jack Peachey, Gary Phillips, et al.). Individual females were noted in Wrightsville Beach, 2 Jan (*fide* Sam Cooper); in Edisto Beach, SC, 7–9 Jan (Buddy Campbell,

Cherrie Sneed); off Indian Beach, NC, 31 Jan (Davis); and at a pier in Ocean Isle, NC, 13 Feb (Tom & Tammy Sanders).

**Harlequin Duck:** A juvenile/non-breeding male was photographed on the rocks next to the Bonner Bridge at Oregon Inlet, NC, 6 Dec (Jeff Lewis) and was relocated at the end of the rock groin, 10 Dec (Ben Watkins, *vide* Lewis). Two and a half weeks later, a bird entering adult male breeding plumage was photographed on the rocks next to the Bonner Bridge, 27–29 Dec (Lewis, Jeff Beane et al.). One could wonder if these sightings were of two different individuals, or, rather, the same bird in different stages of plumage.



Harlequin Duck, 28 Dec 2009, Oregon Inlet, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

**Surf Scoter:** Nine seen on the Neuse River, in New Bern, NC, during the CBC, 14 Dec (Rich & Susan Boyd) were unusual for a site so far from the coast.

**Black Scoter:** One found on Lake Tillery, NC, 6 Dec (Ron Clark) was the farthest inland scoter reported this winter.

**Long-tailed Duck:** Away from the Pamlico Sound, where this species is locally common, sightings included one on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*vide* Allen Bryan); two at N Folly Beach, SC, 1–9 Jan (Chris Snook, Andy Harrison); one at a fishing pier in Nags Head, NC, 14 Jan (Brian Bockhahn); up to two at Murrells Inlet, SC, 15–23 Jan (Ritch Lilly,

Stephen Thomas); one off Indian Beach, NC, 31 Jan (Ricky Davis); and “several” in flight off Pea Island, NC, 19 Feb (John Haire, Royce Hough).

**Common Goldeneye:** Some of the farther inland sightings were of two at the WTP along NC-191 in Henderson Co, NC, 30 Dec (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey); three at the same location, 27 Jan (Forsythe); and two females on Salem Lake in Winston-Salem, NC, 10 Feb (John Haire).

**Common Merganser:** Sightings included 25 on several ponds off US-64, just W of Creswell, NC, 27 Dec (Ricky Davis, Derb Carter); a pair at Riverbend Park in Conover, NC, 9 Jan (Monroe Pannell, Dwayne Martin); a female, well-studied, in a pond along NC-179 in Sunset Beach, NC, 9 Feb (Kevin Markham); two at Bear Island WMA, SC, 14 Feb (Carroll Richard, Kathleen O’Grady); and a female on Salem Lake in Winston-Salem, NC, 23 Feb (John Haire). Lake Phelps, NC, again hosted the best numbers in our region, with 180 tallied on the Pettigrew SP CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Doug LeQuire).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Inland sightings included one on the Southern Lake Norman, NC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* Taylor Piephoff); one on the Southern Pines, NC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* Susan Campbell); and nine on Jordan Lake, NC, 24 Dec (Phil Warren).

**Pacific Loon:** The winter’s reports of this rare visitor were of one on the New Bern, NC CBC, 14 Dec (*fide* Bob Holmes); at least three off Wrightsville Beach, NC, during the Wilmington CBC, 3 Jan (Derb Carter, *fide* Sam Cooper); and one near the coquina rock outcrop at Ft Fisher, NC, 9 Jan (Cooper) through 3 Feb (Mary McDavit).

**Horned Grebe:** Notable inland counts were 287 on Kerr Lake, NC, during the CBC, 5 Jan (*fide* Brian Bockhahn); 103 in the cove on the W side of Seaforth Recreation Area at Jordan Lake, NC, 23 Jan (Kevin Markham); and 80+ on the S end of Lake Norman, NC, 14 Feb (David Wright).

**Red-necked Grebe:** Four were reported this winter—three seen in flight over the ocean and one that lingered on an inland lake for at least a month. The ocean flybys were an individual, flying S, off Kitty Hawk, NC, during the CBC, 19 Dec (Ricky Davis); and two, flying E, off the Sheraton Hotel Pier in Atlantic Beach, NC, 30 Jan (Davis, Ali Iyoob, Harry LeGrand). The inland bird was found on the S end of Lake Norman in Mecklenburg Co, NC, 14 Jan (Kevin Metcalf) and was seen by many through 14 Feb (David Wright).

**Eared Grebe:** Individuals were seen on Lake Medcalf in Sunset Beach, NC, 11–12 Dec (Mary McDavit); on the S end of Lake Norman, NC, 12–14 Feb (Kevin Metcalf, David Wright); on the ocean off Kill Devil Hills, NC, 15 Feb (Scott Baron); and near the NC-50 boat launch on Falls Lake, NC, 28 Feb (Ali Iyoob). The winter’s high count was 11 at the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, 2 Feb (Steve Calver).

**Western Grebe:** A pair of *Aechmophorus* grebes, originally identified as Western Grebes, were found on Lake Brandt in Greensboro, NC, 6 Dec (Henry & Elizabeth Link, George Wheaton). Many birders observed the birds until they were last reported on the E side of nearby Lake Townsend,

22 Dec (Link). Some birders speculated that one of the two birds was actually a Clark's Grebe, or possibly a hybrid of the two species, though a written report of a Clark's Grebe has not yet been received by the NC Bird Records Committee (BRC). Another Western Grebe was found on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC CBC, 3 Jan (*vide* Melinda Jones).

**Northern Fulmar:** Only one was reported this winter—an individual seen during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 14 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). Usually late winter pelagic trips find multiple fulmars . . . where have all the fulmars gone?

**Greater Shearwater:** A bird very rarely seen in winter, a Greater Shearwater was seen on a chartered pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 5 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Sooty Shearwater:** Another bird very rarely seen in winter, one Sooty Shearwater was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 20 Feb (Brian Patteson, Jeff Pippen, et al.).

**Manx Shearwater:** Three were seen during the Cape Hatteras, NC CBC, 27 Dec—one off Cape Point (Ricky Davis) and two off Hatteras Inlet, NC (Brian Patteson). On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, two were seen 5 Feb, and one was seen 14 Feb (Patteson).

**Northern Gannet:** Notable for their relatively inland locality were sightings of four in the Bogue Sound, off Morehead City, NC, during severe low pressure, 19 Dec (John Fussell) and 50 over Middens Creek, a bay off the Core Sound, in Smyrna, NC, during tranquil weather, 31 Dec (Mark Hooper, *vide* Fussell).

**American White Pelican:** Some of the better counts of this increasingly reported species were 54 at the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, 3 Dec (Steve Calver); 174 on the Winyah Bay, SC CBC, 17 Dec (*vide* Lex Glover); 82 on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*vide* NAS); 201 on the ACE Basin, SC CBC, 27 Dec (*vide* NAS); 57 on the Pea Island NWR, NC CBC, 28 Dec (*vide* Jeff Lewis); 30 in Atlantic, NC, 28 Dec (Barbara & Ginny Pigott, *vide* John Fussell); 33 on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*vide* Allen Bryan); 23 in the Spring Creek Impoundment Ponds near Aurora, NC, 4 Feb (Al Gamache, et al.); 12 over the Newport River near Morehead City, NC, 18 Jan (Rosemary & Tony D'Andrea, *vide* Fussell); 144 at Bear Island WMA, SC, 14 Feb (Carroll Richard, Kathleen O'Grady); and 23 at North Inlet, N of Georgetown, SC, 15 Feb (Chris Hill).

**Great Cormorant:** Sightings included one on the Winyah Bay, SC CBC, 17 Dec (*vide* Lex Glover); two on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*vide* NAS); 11 on the Wilmington, NC CBC, 2 Jan (*vide* Sam Cooper); three at Oregon Inlet, NC, 9 Jan (Jeff Lewis); two at the Cedar Island, NC, ferry terminal, 30–31 Jan (sev. obs.); and four on a channel marker between the Cedar Island and Ocracoke, NC, ferry terminals, during the winter (John Fussell).

**Anhinga:** Locally unusual for the winter season were two Anhingas at Greenfield Lake in Wilmington, NC, until at least 27 Dec (Daniel Hueholt); and one in W New Bern, NC, throughout the period (Al Gamache).

**Least Bittern:** Rare winter sightings were made at the Spring Creek Impoundment Ponds, near Aurora, NC, where an individual was photographed, 6 Jan (Al Gamache, Dick Barmore, Audrey Williams); and at Savannah NWR, SC, where three were well-seen, 9 Jan (Matt Malin, J. D. Wilson).

**Reddish Egret** (dark-morph unless otherwise stated): The individual seen at the Rachel Carson Reserve in Beaufort, NC, during the fall, continued until at least 20 Dec (Sam Cooper, JoAnne Powell, *fide* John Fussell). Two birds found at Cape Lookout, NC, 21 Feb (Fussell, et al.) very possibly overwintered at that location. In South Carolina, one was found during the Winyah Bay CBC, 17 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover)

**Cattle Egret:** Some of the higher CBC counts of this species, which can be uncommon-to-rare in winter, were three on the Hilton Head Island, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* Barry Lowes); 11 on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (Ricky Davis); and seven on the Pinewood, SC CBC, 31 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover). Also noteworthy was one seen at Pea Island NWR, NC, 6 Dec (Jeff Lewis); one photographed at a hog feed lot in Wilmington, NC, 2 Jan (John Ennis, *fide* Sam Cooper); and two at Savannah NWR, SC, 3 Jan (Carroll Richard, Kathleen O'Grady).

**Green Heron:** Ten found on the Hilton Head Island, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* Barry Lowes) provided the winter's high count of this species. Farther north, rare wintering individuals were found during CBCs at Cape Hatteras, NC, 27 Dec (*fide* Pat Moore); and in Wilmington, NC, 2 Jan (Cary Paynter, *fide* Sam Cooper). Also reported were individuals in Jasper Co, SC, 2 Jan (Carroll Richard, Kathleen O'Grady); and at Savannah NWR, SC, 9 & 24 Jan (J. D. Wilson, Matt Malin).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** One found on the Clemson, SC, CBC, 19 Dec (*fide* Drew Lanham) was unusual for that inland location in winter. At a more usual coastal location, a good count of 21 was made at a roost in Beaufort, NC, 27 Jan (Rich & Susan Boyd).

**Glossy Ibis:** Some of the better counts of this species, which is less common in winter, were 268 on the ACE Basin, SC CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* NAS); 120 on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); and 172 at Bear Island WMA, SC, 20 Feb (Lois Stacey, Anne Waters, Ruth Mead). Locally unusual for winter were individuals in Morehead City, NC, 30 Dec (Daniel Hueholt) and at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, 24 Jan (John Fussell, et al.).

**Wood Stork:** Unusual winter sightings included seven in the Hobucken Marshes of Pamlico Co, NC, during the CBC, 15 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); one on Bald Head Island, NC, 17 Jan (Juanita Roushdy); and one at a neighborhood pond in Wilmington, NC, 10 Feb (Amy Williamson).

**Black Vulture:** One, well-seen, flying low over Ocracoke, NC, 14 Jan (John Fussell) was possibly the first record of that species on that island.

**Osprey:** Inland sightings of this species are rare in winter, and thus of note were individuals found on CBCs at Southern Lake Norman, NC, 20 Dec (*fide* Taylor Piephoff); at Pee Dee NWR, NC, 2 Jan (Ron Clark, Tom



Sanders, et al.); in Alamance Co, NC, 2 Jan (*fide* Harry Shoffner); and on Jordan Lake, NC, 3 Jan (Kyle Mills, Mickey Mills, Richard Brown). Two at Thagard Lake in Whispering Pines, NC, throughout the winter, were also quite unusual (Susan Campbell).

**Northern Goshawk:** A perched adult was seen at close range at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, NC, 4 Feb (Rich & Susan Boyd). Remarkably, this was the observers' third sighting of this species around Pungo in the past eight years.

**Broad-winged Hawk:** Almost unheard-of in the Carolinas in winter, an adult Broad-winged Hawk was seen in Alleghany Co, NC, about a mile S of the Virginia border, during the New River CBC, 30 Dec (Ron Morris, Bill Gifford, Kim Brand, Jeremy Reiskind) and during the nearby Mount Jefferson, NC, CBC, 3 Jan (Phil Dickinson). Considering the rarity of this species in winter, and the proximity of these two CBC circles, it's highly probable that both sightings were of the same individual.

**“Kriger’s” Red-tailed Hawk:** An adult was seen at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, 29 Jan through the end of period (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, Mike Tove), and may very well be the same bird seen at this site last winter.

**Rough-legged Hawk:** Only one was reported this winter—an individual at Alligator River NWR, NC, 4 Feb (Rich & Susan Boyd).

**Golden Eagle:** Three were found on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (Ricky Davis, John Wright), providing a record number for that count. Two were seen at Bear Island WMA, SC, 14 Feb (Carroll Richard, Kathleen O’Grady). Individual adults were seen on Edisto Island, SC, 11 Dec (David Abbott); in Shelton Laurel, NC, 16 Jan (*fide* Charlotte Goedsche); and over fields along Canal B Rd, near the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, NC, 4 Feb (Rich & Susan Boyd).

**Merlin:** Notable outside the coastal plain, Merlins were found at several inland locations, including the Hillandale Golf Course in Durham, NC, for the second winter in a row, 8 Dec (Dan Kaplan) through at least 2 Jan (Steve Shultz); in Winston-Salem, NC, 19 Dec (John Haire) and 28 Jan (Phil Crisp, *fide* Haire); and at Jordan Lake, NC, during the CBC, 3 Jan (Tom Driscoll, Steve Foster, Bo Howes) and again 10 Jan (Phil Warren).

**Peregrine Falcon:** An adult found along Hooper Lane in Henderson Co, NC, 12 Dec (Wayne Forsythe) was unusual for the mountain region in winter. An adult returned to downtown Charlotte, NC, for a fourth consecutive winter, where it was seen throughout the period (Anne Clark, *fide* Ron Clark).

**Black Rail:** Individuals were briefly seen at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, during the Morehead City, NC CBC, 20 Dec (Rich Boyd, Wade Fuller); in Wanchese, NC, 28 Dec (Ricky Davis); at Savannah NWR, SC, 31 Jan (Scott Restivo); and along the causeway at Cedar Island, NC, 3 Feb (Rich & Susan Boyd).

**Common Moorhen:** One seen on the Bodie Island, NC, Lighthouse Pond, 18 Jan, was a good find for the midwinter season (Harry LeGrand).

**Sandhill Crane:** CBCs found one in McClellanville, SC, 20 Dec (*vide* NAS); five at Santee NWR, SC, 26 Dec (*vide* Dennis Forsythe); and one at Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC, 3 Jan (*vide* Melinda Jones). Apart from CBCs, four were seen in Pantego, NC, 27–28 Dec (Karen & Joe Bearden); and three were seen in Beaufort, NC, 4 Jan (Bob Austin, *vide* John Fussell) through 31 Jan (Ricky Davis, et al.).

**Snowy Plover:** An individual was found on the E end of Kiawah Island, SC, during a Piping Plover survey, 15 Dec (Aaron Given), and was seen into January. Interestingly, Kiawah Island has hosted several Snowy Plovers in the past few years.

**Wilson's Plover:** Six at the Rachel Carson Reserve in Carteret Co, NC, 7 Dec (John Fussell) provided a good winter count of this declining species. CBCs also found three on Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC, 3 Jan (*vide* Melinda Jones); two in McClellanville, SC, 20 Dec (*vide* NAS); and one in Winyah Bay, SC, 17 Dec (*vide* Lex Glover).

**Piping Plover:** High counts of this threatened species included 16 at the Rachel Carson Reserve near Beaufort, NC, 7 Dec (John Fussell); ten, six of which were color-banded birds from the Great Lakes population, at the S end of Topsail Island, NC, 10 Dec (Gilbert Grant); 12 on Kiawah Island, SC, 15 Dec (Aaron Given); 14 on the Lowcountry, SC CBC, 19 Dec (*vide* Ken Scott); and 13 on the Portsmouth Island, NC CBC, 30 Dec (*vide* Peter Vankevich).

**Black-necked Stilt:** Five seen at the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, 3 Dec, with one continuing until 13 Jan (Steve Calver), provided a rare winter sighting.

**American Avocet:** 118 counted on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (Ricky Davis), was a great number for that inland location in winter. The winter's high count was 831 at the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, 3 Dec (Steve Calver).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Rare in winter, lone Spotted Sandpipers were found in Core Creek, NC, 14–20 Dec (Jack Fennell, Dick Barmore, Elizabeth White); in Beaufort, NC, 20 Dec (JoAnne Powell, Paula Gillikin, et al.); near the dam on Falls Lake, NC, 4–6 Jan (Ali Iyoob); below the dam on Kerr Lake, NC, during the CBC, 5 Jan (Brian Bockhahn); and at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal, 16 Jan (Rich & Susan Boyd).

**Whimbrel:** Lingering into winter was one at the Rachel Carson Reserve in Beaufort, NC, 7 Dec (John Fussell); five on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC CBC, 3 Jan (*vide* Melinda Jones); and two around Cape Lookout, NC, 21 Feb (Fussell, et al.).



Sandhill Crane, 1 Jan 2010, McClellanville SC. Photo by Stephen Thomas.

**Long-billed Curlew:** Five at Cape Romain NWR, SC, in early December and again on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*vide* NAS) were the only curlews reported this winter.

**Purple Sandpiper:** 51 videotaped on the S end of Wrightsville Beach, NC, near the Masonboro Inlet jetty, 3 Jan (Scott Winton) must have been one of the biggest flocks ever seen in the state. In South Carolina, a good count of 35 was made on the beach of Sullivan's Island, 24 Jan (Hal Currey).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** One on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, CBC, 29 Dec (*vide* Allen Bryan) was a great find for such a northern site in winter. A winter high count of 164 was made 3 Dec (Steve Calver) at the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, where Stilt Sandpipers are known to winter.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** This rare migrant has usually passed through our region by October, and thus of extreme interest was the sighting of an individual at Ft Fisher, NC, 3 Jan (Bruce Smithson, John Voigt), during the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC. This sighting was, perhaps, the latest ever made of this species in North Carolina.

**Red Phalarope:** This winter's best count was 307, seen during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 27 Jan (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** Individuals were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 6 and 14 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). Kittiwake sightings in the past couple of years have been few and far between.

**Black-headed Gull:** One, probably the same bird seen there in the fall, and possibly the same bird seen there in past years, was photographed from the causeway at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 28 Dec (Karen & Joe Bearden). Interestingly, the bird was not seen during the CBC the following day.

**Little Gull:** Sightings of individuals, in flight over the ocean with Bonaparte's Gulls, were made of an adult in Kitty Hawk, NC, 19 Dec (Ricky Davis); a first-winter bird in Ocean Isle, NC, 1 Jan (Taylor Piephoff); an adult off Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 3 Feb (Brian Patteson); and an adult in Nags Head, NC, 20 Feb (Joe Poston, et al.). On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, sightings included one 5 Feb, two 13 Feb, eight 14 Feb, and two 20 Feb (Patteson, et al.). Also, a first-winter bird was found resting on the beach with Forster's Terns and other gulls in Frisco, NC, 15 Feb (Patteson, Steve Howell, Ken Peterson).

**Laughing Gull:** Six on the Columbia, SC, CBC, 16 Dec (*vide* Steve Dennis) were unusual for an inland location in winter.

**Ring-billed Gull:** Locally unusual was the high number, 57, counted on Lake Julian in Skyland, NC, 16 Dec (Wayne Forsythe).

**California Gull:** An adult was seen and photographed at the Horry County Landfill in Conway, SC, 5–18 Jan (Chris Hill, sev. obs.). This sighting, pending acceptance by the SC BRC, provides the first documented record of this species in South Carolina. In North Carolina, a third-winter bird was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 27 Jan (Brian Patteson, et al.); and an adult was found on the beach at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 15 Feb (Patteson, Steve Howell, Ken Peterson).

**Thayer's Gull:** An adult was seen and photographed during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 20 Feb (Brian Patteson, Jeff Pippen, et al.). This stray is not found in the Carolinas every winter.

**Iceland Gull:** On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, first-winter individuals were seen 27 Jan and 5 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). Onshore, a second-winter bird was found on the beach at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 31 Jan (Patteson).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Inland sightings included two on Jordan Lake, NC, 1 Jan (Steve Shultz); one on the Falls Lake, NC CBC, 4 Jan (Brian Bockhahn); three on the Kerr Lake, NC CBC 5 Jan (Bockhahn); an adult on Lake Townsend, Greensboro, NC, 6 Jan (Henry Link); and about 15 at the Wake Co, NC, Landfill, 9 Jan (Derb Carter).



**Glaucous Gull:** First-winter individuals were seen at

Iceland Gull, 27 Jan 2010, pelagic off Hatteras NC. Photo by Don Faulkner.

Wrightsville Beach, NC, where one was photographed during the week of the Wilmington CBC, 2 Jan (John Brunjes, *fide* Sam Cooper); at the Horry Co Landfill in Conway, SC, 6–16 Jan (Chris Hill, sev. obs.); and at the Wake Co, NC, Landfill, 9 Jan (Derb Carter).

**Great Black-backed Gull:** The best inland counts were five at the Wake Co, NC, landfill, 9 Jan (Derb Carter) and four, one adult and three juveniles, near the dam on Lake Gaston, NC, 8 Feb (Ricky Davis).

**Common Tern:** An individual found on the Santee NWR, SC CBC, 26 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe) was the only one reported in our region this winter.

**Sandwich Tern:** Two seen flying over North Pond at Pea Island NWR, 29 Dec (Kyle Kittelberger) were very unusual for that time of year. In South Carolina, CBCs found one at Winyah Bay, 17 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover); one on Litchfield-Pawleys Island, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill); and two on Hilton Head Island, SC, 20 Dec (*fide* Barry Lowes).

**Great Skua:** On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, an individual was seen 5 Feb; and two were seen on both 8 and 14 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Pomarine Jaeger:** This bulky jaeger is not often seen in winter, and an adult, well-seen, flying over the ocean during the Kitty Hawk, NC CBC, 19 Dec (Ricky Davis) was the winter's only report.

**Parasitic Jaeger:** Sightings included two on Edisto Island, SC, 11 Dec (David Abbott); five on the Kitty Hawk, NC CBC, 19 Dec (Ricky Davis); one on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); one on the Cape Hatteras, NC CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Pat Moore); two on the Southport-Bald

Head-Oak Islands, NC CBC, 3 Jan (*fide* Melinda Jones); and one off Ft Fisher, NC, 3 Jan (Davis).

**Dovekie:** Numbers of our smallest alcid were down compared to the last couple of winters. Individuals were seen on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC CBC, 3 Jan (*fide* NAS); in a line of Razorbills off the south beach of Cape Hatteras, NC, 2 Feb (Ricky Davis); in Surfside, SC, where a moribund bird was found, 6 Feb (*fide* Chris Hill); and off the pier in Nags Head, NC, 13 Feb (Jeff Lewis). Pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, counted eight 5 Feb, and 39, the winter's high count, 14 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Thick-billed Murre:** Only one murre was reported this winter—a fly-by Thick-billed on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 13 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Razorbill:** An epic flight of Razorbills took place off Atlantic Beach, NC, during an intense winter storm system, 30 Jan, where as many as 750+ were seen flying E during the course of the day from the Sheraton Hotel Pier (Ricky Davis, Harry LeGrand, et al.). According to John Fussell, "This is definitely the largest count of this species ever made in Carteret County." Another impressive flight was witnessed from the south beach of Cape Hatteras, NC, where 513 were counted flying east on 2 Feb (Davis). Earlier in the season, CBCs found ten at Cape Hatteras, NC, 27 Dec (*fide* Pat Moore); one off Wrightsville Beach NC, 2 Jan (Davis, Derb Carter); and five at Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC, 3 Jan (*fide* Melinda Jones). The peak count on pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, was 207 on 13 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). One at Murrells Inlet, SC, 15–20 Jan (Ritch Lilly) provided the most southern report.

**Atlantic Puffin:** On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 8+ were seen 5 Feb, and an individual was seen 13 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**White-winged Dove:** One was seen at a birdfeeder in Wilmington, NC, 8 Dec until late December (Bruce & Melinda Jones). Two were recorded on the Lowcountry, SC, CBC, 19 Dec (Ken Scott).

**Common Ground-Dove:** CBCs in South Carolina found ten at Winyah Bay, 17 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover); five in McClellanville, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); one in Aiken, 24 Dec (*fide* Calvin Zippler); two at Santee NWR, 26 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe); ten on Litchfield-Pawleys Island, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill); and 30 in Charleston, 3 Jan (*fide* Jennifer McCarthy Tyrrell).

**Short-eared Owl:** This winter's handful of sightings involved one on the Bodie-Pea Island, NC CBC, 28 Dec (*fide* Paul Sykes); two W of Lake Phelps, NC, during the Pettigrew SP CBC, 29 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); one in Snow's Marsh along the Cape Fear River in New Hanover Co, NC, 2 Jan (Ricky Davis); one on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC CBC, 3 Jan (*fide* Melinda Jones); and one at Alligator River NWR, NC, 14 Jan (Derb Carter). At the latter site, this winter was the first not to record this species on its CBC. Some birders speculate that excessive clearing of brush reduced the rodent population, and in turn, numbers of Short-eared Owls and other raptors.

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** One heard near the entrance to Saluda Shoals Park, SC, during the Lower Saluda CBC, 22 Dec (*vide* Jason Giovannone) was a great find for an inland location during winter. As small numbers of this species are known to winter in stands of pine trees along the coast, one found during Alligator River NWR, NC, CBC, 30 Dec (Allen Bryan), was a little more expected. Interestingly, unlike past winters, none were reported from favored sites along the Outer Banks, NC, such as Buxton Woods or the entrance road to the Bodie Island Lighthouse Pond.

**Whip-poor-will:** One seen at the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, 30 Dec (Steve Calver) was the only nightjar mentioned this winter.

**Black-chinned Hummingbird:** Doreen Cubie banded four Black-chinned Hummingbirds in South Carolina this winter—a juvenile male in Bluffton; an adult female on Seabrook Island; an juvenile female in Rockville; and a juvenile male on James Island. Interestingly, none were reported in North Carolina this winter.

**Rufous Hummingbird:** This species was well-reported again this winter. Two *Selasphorus* hummingbirds were photographed at feeders near Etowah, NC, 5 Dec through 5 Jan (Wayne Forsythe), which is an interesting find for the mountain locality. Not very far away, an adult male was banded in Moore, SC, 11 Dec (Bill Hilton, Martha & Jim Evans). Doreen Cubie banded five RUHUs in South Carolina this winter, one of which had returned to a yard in Lexington for a second straight winter. Also, a beautiful adult male allowed many birders good looks in Sunset Beach, NC, 3 Dec through the end of the period (Mary McDavid, *sev. obs.*).



Rufous Hummingbird, 5 Dec 2009, Etowah, NC. Photo by Wayne Forsythe

**Ash-throated Flycatcher:** One was found along a northern portion of the causeway over Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 6 Dec (Al Gamache), where it was seen and photographed by many until it was last seen during the CBC, 29 Dec (*vide* Allen Bryan).

**Western Kingbird:** Three were reported this winter—a “one-day wonder” at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 12 Dec (Paul Serridge, Shawn Smolen-Morton); an individual on the Cape Hatteras, NC CBC, 27 Dec (*vide* Pat Moore); and a lingering individual at Fort Fisher, NC, 14-28 Jan (Greg Massey, Bruce Smithson, Ricky Davis, *sev. obs.*).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** One found on the Cape Hatteras, NC, CBC, 27 Dec (Jared Sparks, Harry Armistead) was a first for that count, and was relocated 31 Dec (Ricky Davis). Sightings of this species on the Outer Banks are quite rare.

**White-eyed Vireo:** Some of the better counts of this species were 12 on the Winyah Bay, SC CBC, 17 Dec (*vide* Lex Glover); six on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*vide* NAS); three near North Harlowe, NC, 20 Dec (John

Fussell); six on the Santee NWR, SC CBC, 26 Dec (Dennis Forsythe); five on the Cape Hatteras, NC CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Pat Moore); four on the Alligator River NWR, NC CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis); and three at another location near North Harlowe, NC, 19 Jan (Fussell).

**Bell's Vireo:** One was photographed on a northern portion of the causeway over Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 27 Dec (Allen Bryan). The bird was not seen during the CBC, 29 Dec, probably due to high winds, but was relocated 30 Dec (Bob Lewis). This sighting provides the fourth documented state record of this species for North Carolina.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Quite late were four on Edisto Island, SC, 11 Dec (David Abbott); one in Sunset Beach, NC, 11 Dec (Greg Massey, Harry Sell); one on the Lower Saluda, SC CBC, 22 Dec (*fide* Jason Giovannone); one near the WTP in Goldsboro, NC, 24 Dec (Eric Dean); and one at the WTP in Ocean Isle, NC, 1 Jan (Taylor Piephoff). Winter sightings of this species seem to have increased in recent years.

**Cave Swallow:** Sightings of this rare-but-regular late fall/early winter vagrant included two at the S end of Wrightsville Beach, NC, 8 Dec (John Ennis); 15 on Edisto Island, SC, 11 Dec (David Abbott); eight in Sunset Beach, NC, 11 Dec (Greg Massey, Harry Sell); eight at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 12 Dec (Shawn Smolen-Morton); four on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); and four at the WTP in Ocean Isle, NC, 29 Dec (Taylor Piephoff).

**Barn Swallow:** Lingering into winter were individuals in Sunset Beach, NC, 11 Dec (Greg Massey, Harry Sell) and at the WTP in Ocean Isle, NC, 1 Jan (Taylor Piephoff)

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Individuals seen in Hiddenite, NC, 6 Dec (Ron & Garnet Underwood); on the Clemson, SC CBC, 19 Dec (*fide* Drew Lanham); and in Townville, SC, 20 Dec (Simon Harvey) were quite late for sites in the western piedmont.

**Varied Thrush:** Until this winter, there was only one accepted record of this species in North Carolina. That number sure changed this winter, though, when three (!) Varied Thrushes were photographed in the state. The first sighting was of an adult male, photographed in a yard in Chalybeate Springs, NC, 2 Jan (Angie & Bill DeLozier). The bird was not seen again until, assuming it's the same bird, it was found moribund in Angier, NC, 30 Jan (*fide* Becky Desjardins). The second sighting was of an adult male, photographed beneath a feeder in Fletcher, NC, 1 Feb (Lorene & Charles Gudger, *fide* Wayne Forsythe). This bird was never relocated. The state's third sighting was of a juvenile bird, seen and photographed by many in a yard in Mebane, NC, 13–14 Feb (Steve Wedge, *sev. obs.*). In South Carolina, one was briefly seen amongst a flock of Robins in a yard in Columbia, SC, 15 Feb (Caroline Eastman). If accepted by the SC BRC, this sighting would provide the fifth record of this species in the state.

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** This species is known to winter along the coast, but sightings west of the coastal plain are less common. Sightings of note included three on the Charlotte, NC CBC, 26 Dec (*fide* Ken Kneidel); one on

the Jordan Lake, NC CBC, 3 Jan (Terry Logue, *fide* Norm Budnitz); one at a feeder in Columbia, SC, 12 Jan (James Wilson); and one at a feeder in Whispering Pines, NC, for a second year in a row, throughout the winter (Susan Campbell).

**Nashville Warbler:** One found along River Rd, E of the Cape Fear River, in Cumberland Co, NC, 4 Dec (Brian Bockhahn) was either a rare wintering bird or a very late migrant. Another observed for 30+ minutes as it foraged in some ivy on a large sycamore tree at Latta Park in Charlotte, NC, 19 Jan (Tom Sanders) must have been wintering, as it was too late or too early to have been a migrant.

**Northern Parula:** CBCs found two of these birds wintering in our region—one along the causeway over Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, 30 Dec (Jeff Lewis) and another in the ACE Basin, SC, 27 Dec (*fide* NAS). A male found in the Elizabethan Gardens in Manteo, NC, 14 Feb (Lewis), was either wintering or a very early migrant.

**Yellow Warbler:** One was found along the causeway over Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, during the week of the CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan) but not on the day of the count, probably due to high winds.

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** Extremely rare in winter, single Black-throated Green Warblers were found on the USC campus in Columbia, SC, for a second year in a row, 4 Dec and 5 Jan (John Grego); on the Pee Dee Area, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* David McLean); and on Roanoke Island, NC, 28 Jan (Jeff Lewis).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** Inland and/or north of the species' typical winter range along the southern coast was one in a yard in Chapel Hill, NC, 26 Dec–4 Jan (Tom & Barbara Driscoll); two on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (Ricky Davis); and one in a yard in Lexington, SC, 4 Jan through the end of the period (Marion & Edith Clark).

**Prairie Warbler:** Sightings of this rare-but-regular wintering warbler included one at Ft Fisher, NC, 14 Dec (Daniel Hueholt); two on the Winyah Bay, SC CBC 17 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover); three on the Lowcountry, SC CBC, 19 Dec (*fide* Ken Scott); two on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); and one on the Alligator River NWR, NC CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** This species is another rare-but-regular wintering warbler, more likely to be found along the southern coast. A female/juvenile in Charlotte, NC, 16–17 Jan (*fide* Ron Clark) was an excellent find for a location so far inland. Some of the more northern sightings were of two on Roanoke Island, NC, 8 Dec through the end of the period (Jeff Lewis); one on the W side of Lake Phelps, NC, 10 Dec (Brian Bockhahn, Matt Daw, Ali Iyoob); one in Pine Knoll Shores, NC, 13 Dec (Matthew Gould); one on the Kitty Hawk, NC CBC, 19 Dec (*fide* Lewis); three on the Pee Dee Area, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* David McLean); one on the Bodie-Pea Island, NC CBC, 28 Dec (*fide* Paul Sykes); four on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); and one at Fort Macon SP, Atlantic Beach, NC, 31 Jan (Randy Newman, *fide* Fussell).



**Ovenbird:** The wintering Ovenbird stronghold that is Buxton Woods again harbored an excellent number this winter, with 16 counted on the Cape Hatteras, NC CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Pat Moore). Three were seen on Roanoke Island, NC, this winter, one of which visited a yard for a second winter in a row, 14 Jan through the end of the period (Jeff Lewis). Individuals were also found on the McClellanville, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); and at Pinckney NWR, SC, 21 Feb (Aaron Given).

**Northern Waterthrush:** Two were seen at the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper Co, SC, 13 Jan, and at least one of these birds spent the whole winter there (Steve Calver).

**Common Yellowthroat:** One on the Spartanburg SC CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Lyle Campbell) was a good find for a site so far from the coast.

**Wilson's Warbler:** Only one was reported in the Carolinas this winter—a male, well-observed as it foraged along Buckeye Trail off Capital Blvd, in Raleigh, NC, 14 Jan (John Finnegan).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** An individual that visited a feeder in Greensboro, NC, where it primarily fed on sunflower hearts, 10 Jan through the end of the period (Lou Skrabec) was quite unusual because most wintering are found along the coast. Less unusual, but still noteworthy, was one on the Bodie-Pea Island NC CBC, 28 Dec (Ricky Davis); two on the Mattamuskeet NWR NC CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan); four on the



Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands NC CBC, 3 Jan (*fide* Melinda Jones); and one in a yard in Morehead City, NC, throughout the period (John Fussell).

**Bachman's Sparrow:** 52 individuals were counted in surveys of the S Croatan National Forest (NF), NC, Jan–Feb, mostly in the recently burned area around Millis Rd where there was, at least, a moderate growth of wiregrass (John Fussell). Fussell thinks that “it is safe to assume that literally hundreds of birds overwintered in this area this year.” Also of note was a lack of this species in a nearby USFS Longleaf Pine restoration site, most certainly due to the lack of wiregrass (Fussell).

**American Tree Sparrow:** Not found every winter in the Carolinas, an individual was well-studied amongst a flock of Chipping Sparrows at Sandhills NWR, SC, 4 Dec (Kevin Markham).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** There were only two reports of this rare sparrow made this winter—one in the Red Hill area of NE Edgecombe Co, NC, 12 Jan (Ricky Davis) and two in Iredell Co, NC, 17 Jan (Monroe Pannell).

Yellow-breasted Chat, 10 Jan 2010, Greensboro, NC. Photo by Lou Skrabec.

**Vesper Sparrow:** Some of the better counts of this uncommon sparrow were 12 in a weedy field near ILM airport in Wilmington, NC, 23 Dec (Daniel Hueholt); eight on the Pee Dee Area, SC CBC, 20 Dec (*fide* David McLean); six on the Santee NWR, SC CBC, 26 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe); and three on the Gastonia NC CBC, 19 Dec (*fide* Steve Tracy).

**Lark Sparrow:** One seen and heard singing in a yard in NE Raleigh, NC, 19–21 Feb (Suzanna O’Donnell, Ali Iyoob) was locally very unusual. An individual on the Cape Hatteras, NC, CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Pat Moore) was found at a more expected location.

**Henslow’s Sparrow:** This winter resident of the southern coastal plain is often very hard to find. Five were seen at different sites along Millis Rd in S Croatan NF, NC, in February, all in recently burned, longleaf pine/wiregrass habitat (John Fussell). An individual was seen in a weedy field near ILM airport in Wilmington, NC, 23 Dec (Daniel Hueholt). CBCs in South Carolina found three at Santee NWR, 26 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe); two at the Savannah River Site, 18 Dec (*fide* Mark Vukovich); and two in the ACE Basin, 27 Dec (*fide* NAS).

**Le Conte’s Sparrow:** South Carolina CBCs turned up single Le Conte’s Sparrows, another elusive winter resident of the southern coastal plain, at McClellanville, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS); at Congaree Swamp, 20 Dec (*fide* John Grego); and at Santee NWR, 26 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe).

**Lincoln’s Sparrow:** Four were seen on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC CBC, 3 Jan (*fide* Melinda Jones), providing a good count of this species for our region. Elsewhere, individuals were found at Sandhills NWR, SC, 4 Dec (Kevin Markham); along Shore Dr, west of Lake Phelps, NC, 10 and 29 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); on the Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill); on the Alligator River NWR, NC CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis); on the Pee Dee NWR, NC CBC, 2 Jan (*fide* Don Fink); and in the Red Hill area of NE Edgecombe Co, NC, 12 Jan (Ricky Davis).



Lapland Longspur, 21 Feb 2010, Mecklenburg Co, NC. Photo by Kevin Metcalf.

**White-crowned Sparrow:** 90 were counted along Leggett Rd in Edgecombe Co, NC, 15 Feb, in an area that “hosts excellent numbers of this species each winter” (Ricky Davis).

**Lapland Longspur:** Three were found in a field NE of Rocky Mount, NC, during the CBC, 18 Dec (Brian Bockhahn). Up to five were seen, and photographed, in fields and parking areas surrounding Lowe’s Motor Speedway in Concord, NC, 28 Dec through the end of the period (Jeff Lemons, Tom Sanders, sev. obs.). “Very unexpected” was an individual photographed in a backyard in Huntersville, NC, 21 Feb (Kevin Metcalf), providing the first record of this species in Mecklenburg County.

**Snow Bunting:** This species was again scarce this winter, with only two reports made — individuals on CBCs at Bodie-Pea Island, NC, 28 Dec (*vide* Paul Sykes) and Alligator River NWR, NC, a first for the count, 30 Dec (Ricky Davis).

**Summer Tanager:** A female, possibly the same bird seen last winter, wintered in a yard in Wilmington, NC, for a second year in a row (Amy Williamson). A female also visited a yard in Leicester, NC, 22 Jan through the end of the period (Doug Johnston), and provided the first documented winter sighting of this species in our mountains. Elsewhere, CBCs found this very rare winterer on Bodie-Pea Island, NC, 28 Dec (Allen Bryan) and in Greenville, NC, the week of 3 Jan (*vide* Veronica Pantelidis).



Summer Tanager, 3 Feb 2010, Leicester, NC. Photo by Doug Johnston.

**Western Tanager:** This winter’s sightings of this rare winter visitor were of a bright-plumaged female in a yard in Florence, SC, in mid-December, where it was photographed and recorded on the Pee Dee Area CBC, 20 Dec (Shawn Smolen-Morton); an individual on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands, NC CBC, 3 Jan (*vide* Melinda Jones); and a rather dull-plumaged female at a feeder near Davidson, NC, 9 Jan through the end of the period (Ginger Walter, Jeff Lemons, sev. obs.).

**Indigo Bunting:** A juvenile found on the Santee NWR, SC CBC, 26 Dec (*vide* Dennis Forsythe) was a first for that count and an excellent winter find.

**Painted Bunting:** Some of the more interesting reports of Painted Buntings visiting feeders involved an adult male photographed in Peachland, NC, in early January (*vide* Dennis Burnette); an adult male photographed in North Wilkesboro, NC, in mid-January (Bryant Woods, *vide* John Gerwin); two “green” birds visiting a feeder in Kitty Hawk, NC, in January through the

end of the period (Jeff Lewis); and 21 (!), including six adult males (!), in Marshallberg, NC, this winter (Bobby Montgomery, *fide* John Fussell).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Individuals found on CBCs in McClellanville, SC, 20 Dec (*fide* NAS) and Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill) were the only ones reported this winter.

**Rusty Blackbird:** Some of the larger counts of this declining species were 907 on the ACE Basin, SC CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* NAS); 389 on the Santee NWR, SC CBC, 26 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe); 275 on the Wilmington, NC CBC, 2 Jan (*fide* Sam Cooper); and about 200 at Lake Conestee Nature Park in Greenville, SC, 16–21 Feb (Paul Serridge).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** This winter's sightings of this western vagrant were of six, two males and four females, at Open Grounds Farm in Carteret Co, NC, 29 Jan (Ricky Davis et al.); five, four males and one female, in White Plains, NC, during the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC, 29 Dec (John Fussell); and two on the Charleston, SC CBC, 3 Jan (*fide* NAS).

**Bullock's Oriole:** A juvenile male visited a feeder near Davidson, NC, where it was seen and photographed by many, 20 Jan through the end of the period (Ginger Walter, Taylor Piephoff, sev. obs.).

**Baltimore Oriole:** Some of the higher counts at feeders included 15 in Goldsboro, NC, 16 Feb (Mary Bridges), 14 in Raleigh, NC, in January (Lena Gallitano), and 12 in New Bern, NC, 14 Dec (Al Gamache).



Brewer's Blackbird, 29 Jan 2010, Open Grounds Farm, NC. Photo by Ali Iyoob.



Bullock's Oriole, 23 Jan 2010, Cabarrus Co, NC. Photo by Phil Fowler.