

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.

Winter	December 1–February 28	due March 20
Spring	March 1–May 31	due June 20
Summer	June 1–July 31	due August 20
Fall	August 1–November 30	due December 20

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: Eight, seemingly paired, were seen at Donnelley Wildlife Management Area (WMA), SC, 18 June (Laura Dornan), with at least four continuing through the end of the period (Ron Clark).

Ross's Goose: The seemingly healthy individual seen in E Horry Co, SC, during the spring was relocated with a flock of Canada Geese in the

Waterbridge subdivision of Myrtle Beach, 3 July (Ritch Lilly), providing the first summer report of this species in South Carolina.

Tundra Swan: Two swans, both probably injured, were seen in NC this summer—one on North Pond, Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), seen throughout the period (Ricky Davis, multiple observers (m.obs.)); and the other in the Lake Landing area of Mattamuskeet NWR, seen 3 July (Davis, Bill Deans).

Ring-necked Duck: A drake that remained at Salem Lake in Winston-Salem, NC, throughout the summer (John Haire) was probably the same bird seen on the Spring Bird Count (SBC).

Common Eider: Several first-year males remained in our region this summer—one near the groin at Oregon Inlet, NC, throughout the period (Jeff Lewis, Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.); one at the Rachel Carson Reserve in Beaufort, NC, 7 June (John Fussell, Paula Gillikin); one photographed on the jetty at the Little River Inlet, just S of the NC/SC state line, 9 June (*fide* KC Foggin); and two around Cape Point, Buxton, NC, in the latter half of July (Ricky Davis, Pat & Neal Moore).

Hooded Merganser: Providing evidence of breeding in our region were sightings of an adult and juvenile in a wetland in Burke Co, NC, 2 June (Walt Kent); and a female and about 7–8 nearly grown juveniles on a small beaver pond near Draughn, Edgecombe Co, NC, 9 June (Harry LeGrand).

Red-breasted Merganser: One seen around Oregon Inlet, NC, in July (*fide* Jeff Lewis) was the only lingering bird mentioned this summer.

Northern Bobwhite: Locally unusual were two in the French Broad River Valley of Henderson Co, NC, 12 July (Wayne Forsythe); and one on Round Bald, Roan Mountain, NC, 24 June (Rick Knight).

Herald (Trinidad) Petrel: A dark-morph individual seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 24 July (Brian Patteson, et al.) provided the year's first report of this rare pelagic species.

Fea's Petrel: One was well-seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 1 June (Brian Patteson, et al.)

Great Shearwater: "At least 350, most of which were within 20 miles of shore" were counted on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 10 July (Brian Patteson, et al.). Rare "from-shore" sightings were made from the fishing pier in Folly Beach, SC, 12 June (Chris Snook); and from Wild Dunes, Isle of Palms, SC, 7 July (David Abbott).

Manx Shearwater: Four seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 10 July (Brian Patteson, et al.) provided a good mid-summer count.

Audubon's Shearwater: Rarely seen from shore, two were seen from Wild Dunes, Isle of Palms, SC, 7 July (David Abbott).

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: Also rarely seen from shore, two were seen about 100 yards off the beach of Pea Island NWR, NC, 31 July (Ricky Davis).

White-tailed Tropicbird: An adult was well-seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 31 July (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Wood Stork: A good count of 130+ was made at Huntington Beach State Park (SP), 12 July (Ritch Lilly).



Magnificent Frigatebird, 26 July 2010, Ocean Isle, NC. Photo by David Rintoul.

Magnificent Frigatebird: A juvenile was well-photographed over Ocean Isle, NC, 26 July (David Rintoul).

Double-crested Cormorant: Locally unusual during mid-summer were 15, mostly juveniles, near the upper end of Falls Lake in Durham Co, NC, 2 July (Brian Bockhahn); and one on Lake Julian, Skyland, NC, 17 July (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey).

Anhinga: Unusually far inland were four adults, including one on a nest, on a small beaver pond near Draughn, Edgecombe Co, NC, 9 June (Harry LeGrand); one on a nest along Swift Creek in the Seven Bridges Rd area of N Edgecombe Co, NC, 16 June (Ricky Davis); three seen circling high overhead at the upper end of Falls Lake in Durham Co, NC, 2 July (Brian Bockhahn); and one on a small pond in Bladen Co, NC, 7 July (Stacy Smaltz).

American White Pelican: Wandering through our region were ten in the New Hope Creek arm of Jordan Lake, NC, 7–9 June (Ginger Travis, Will Cook, Mark Kosiewski); and eight over the Intracoastal Waterway in Hampstead, NC, 19 June (*vide* Sharon Smart).

Brown Pelican: A juvenile was seen and photographed at Lake Wateree Dam, Kershaw Co, SC, 30 June through 9 July (Mike Williams, Lex Glover, Dan Tufford). Another juvenile was photographed on High Rock Lake in Rowan Co, NC, 11 July (Mike Erb, Karen Pridmore). Could both sightings be of the same wandering juvenile?

Least Bittern: One was seen in the wetlands near the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in Goldsboro, NC, 24 July (Eric Dean, Gene Howe). This species was also noted at this site during the previous two summers.

Great Egret: Nine in the French Broad River Valley of Henderson Co, NC, 11 July (Wayne Forsythe) was an unusually high count for that area.

Snowy Egret: Farthest inland were two at Riverbend Park in Conover, NC, 26–27 June (Monroe Pannell, Alisha Hayes, Dwayne Martin) and one at Tanner's Creek Pond in Mecklenburg Co, NC, 19–21 July (Kevin Metcalf).

Little Blue Heron: Post-breeding wanderings into the piedmont included a juvenile on a small pond in NW Mecklenburg Co, NC, 4–5 July (Kevin

Metcalf); six, five adults and one juvenile, at Riverbend Park in Conover, NC, 9 July (Monroe Pannell); a juvenile at the Walnut Wood Golf Course in SE Guilford Co, NC, 29 July (Dennis Burnette); and seven at Pee Dee NWR, NC, Anson Co, NC, 30 July (Will Stuart).

Reddish Egret: Individuals were found along the shore of Bogue Sound at the NC Aquarium in Pine Knoll Shores, NC, 29 June (Keith Camburn, *vide* John Fussell); and on the E end of the Rachel Carson Reserve in Beaufort, NC, 7 July (G. R. Dun).

White Ibis: Wandering juveniles were seen as far west as Highlands, NC, 4 July (Laura Blackburn, *vide* Edwin Poole); and in Muddy Fork, in the Broad River Basin, Cleveland Co, NC, 29 June (Tracy Morman).

Glossy Ibis: Three were seen flying SW over Beaufort Inlet in “obvious ‘fall’ migration” on the early date of 7 June (John Fussell). Fussell has observed this phenomenon of very early southward migration several times before and wonders if these birds are the ones that failed at nesting.

Roseate Spoonbill: The first post-breeding disperser arrived at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 17 July (Parkin Hunter, Jack Peachey) and two were there by 20 July (Ritch Lilly).

Swallow-tailed Kite: In North Carolina, where this species is not yet a documented breeder, sightings involved one in flight near Lake Gaston, NE of Warrenton, NC, 11 June (*vide* Lena Gallitano); one in flight, carrying a snake, over Richfield, Stanly Co, NC, 18 June (*vide* Dennis Burnette); and four foraging over fields along NC-210, just N of NC-53, E Bladen Co, NC, 20 July (Heather Renninger, Melissa Miller, *vide* Harry LeGrand).

Mississippi Kite: Breeding in the area was suspected when adults were seen with juveniles on a farm near Trenton, NC, 11 July (Clancy Ballenger); in urban Goldsboro, NC, 15 July (Mary Bridges); at the Wilson Country Club in Wilson, NC, 20 July (John Wright); and in Wilmington, NC, throughout the summer (Sam Cooper). In South Carolina, 133+ flying above the treeline to the N of Caw Caw County Park, Ravenel, SC, 30 July (Ron Clark) provided an impressive count.

Northern Harrier: A male was seen in flight over the marshes on Roanoke Island, NC, 19 June (Jeff Lewis). This site is close to the Bodie Island marshes, a site where this species has been seen in summers past.

Broad-winged Hawk: This species apparently bred in the Mill Creek area of Carteret Co, NC, again this summer, as a pair of adults was seen in May and a juvenile was seen in July (Jack Fennell, *vide* John Fussell).

Purple Gallinule: An adult looked very “out-of-place” walking atop shrubbery next to an oceanfront cottage in Duck, NC, 10–13 June (Jeff Lewis). One in the wetlands next to the WTP in Goldsboro, NC, 12 June (Eric Dean, Gene Howe) was a great find. In South Carolina, where this species is easier to find, nine, four adults and five chicks, were counted at Donnelley WMA, SC, 18 July (Jeff Lemons).



Purple Gallinule, 10 June 2010, Duck, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis

Snowy Plover: One was seen on Bear Island, Hammocks Beach SP, NC, 8–11 June (Sarah Bouknight, Ali Iyoob, Becky Desjardins). Could this bird be the same one that visited this site in the summer and fall of 2009?

Wilson's Plover: A good count of 17, including two juveniles, was made at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 15 June (Paul Serridge).

Piping Plover: One seen on the N end of Portsmouth Island, NC, 13 July (National Park Service Staff, *vide* Peter Doherty) had been banded in the Bahamas in February and fledged four chicks near Watch Hill, RI in April/May.

Black-necked Stilt: Of the four found at the Archie Elledge WTP in Winston-Salem, NC, 28 May, one remained until 3 June (John Haire). Six were counted at Bear Island WMA, SC, 17 July (Jeff Lemons).

Spotted Sandpiper: Ten seen at Cedar Island, NC, 11 July (John Fussell, Jack Fennell) provided a good count for the summer season.

Sanderling: One seen at the Archie Elledge WTP in Winston-Salem, NC, 25–28 July (John Haire) was unusually far inland.

Western Sandpiper: One at the Super Sod farm in Henderson Co, NC, 20 July (Wayne Forsythe) was locally unusual.

Ring-billed Gull: One at the McAlpine WTP in Pineville, NC, 6 July (Tom Sanders, Ron Clark) was unusual for the mountains in mid-summer.

Sooty Tern: One was seen in the company of Black Terns off Cape Fear point, Bald Head Island, NC, 29 July (John Ennis, Lou Schiavo, Bob McGinness). An excellent count of 81–82 was made on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 31 July (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Least Tern: Of the several colonies that nest on flat-topped buildings around Morehead City, NC, the high count, 100, from the Rite-Aid building in Atlantic Beach, 29 June (John Fussell) was somewhat low compared to past years.

Sandwich Tern: One seen 30 miles off the coast during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 10 July (Brian Patteson, et al.) was unusually far from land.

South Polar Skua: One was seen during a fishing charter out of Hatteras, NC, in mid-June (Brian Patteson) and one or two were seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 10 July (Patteson, et al.).

Pomarine Jaeger: One, harassing Royal Terns over the ocean, was seen from shore at Wild Dunes, Isle of Palms, SC, 7 July (David Abbott).

Mourning Dove: Scarce at higher elevations, one or two were seen at Carver's Gap, Roan Mt, NC, throughout the season (Rick Knight).

Black-billed Cuckoo: In the NC mountains, the only part of our region where this species reliably breeds, sightings included one along the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) at Balsam Gap, NC, 12 June (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey); one at the Nature Conservancy's Bluff Mountain Preserve in West Jefferson, NC, 23 June (Merrill Lynch); one heard calling in the Snowbird Mountains of Graham Co, NC, 26–27 June (Cherrie Sneed); one heard in a yard in Buncombe Co, NC, 9–10 July (Gail Lankford); and one along the BRP at the Craggy Gardens picnic area, NC, 4 and 30 July (Chris Kelly).

Chuck-will's-widow: West of this species' typical range was a male heard calling in Webster, Jackson Co, NC, from late May through late June (Katherine Matthews, Jeremy Hyman, et al.).



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 8 June 2010, near Blowing Rock, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Two active nest cavities (adults feeding young) were photographed in the old maple trees around Bass Lake in Blowing Rock, NC, 8 June (Jeff Lewis). One bird was also seen and heard on Pond Mountain, 4750 ft, Ashe Co, NC, 3–4 June (Chris Kelly), though no nest was found.

Alder Flycatcher: 7+ were seen throughout the season on Roan Mountain, NC (Rick Knight).

Willow Flycatcher: At about the eastern limit of the species' breeding range, an individual was heard calling in the wetland on Ballinger Rd in Greensboro, NC, mid-May into June (Henry Link).

Vermilion Flycatcher: A breeding-plumaged male was well-seen as it actively fed from a perch in the scrub at the E end of Ocean Isle, NC, 20 July (Chris Decker). Later attempts to relocate the bird were unsuccessful. If accepted by the NCBRC, this sighting will provide the fifth record of this species in NC.

Western Kingbird: Though a few are found in our region each fall, one seen on a power line above the expansive fields along Newlands Rd, SW of Columbia, NC, 25 June (John Fussell) was extremely unusual for the mid-summer season. This bird is only the third ever reported during the summer season in the Carolinas.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: Many birders traveled to Piedmont, SC, this summer, to see a nesting pair of STFLs. The mated pair was first observed a few days prior to being reported 14 June (Lorraine Brown). In the following days, many birders observed the pair, and on 16 June, the adults were seen feeding three juvenile birds (Chip & Sara Gilbert). By 20 June, the female was observed sitting on a second(!) nest (Donnie Coody, et al.), and on 20 July three juveniles were photographed in the nest (Todd Arcos, Jeff Catlin, Don Faulkner, Jane Kramer).

Loggerhead Shrike: Some BBS routes reported encouraging numbers of this species, with four at three locations along a route in Lenoir Co, NC, 1 June (Rich & Susan Boyd); and four, a record number for a route near Hamilton, Martin Co, NC, 3 June (Merrill Lynch).

Horned Lark: Observers running BBS routes reported four at three locations in Lenoir Co, NC, 1 June (Rich & Susan Boyd); and one singing NW of Mocksville, NC, 6 June (John Haire). Possibly breeding in the area were three at Bear Wallow Mountain, Henderson Co, NC, 24 July (Chris Kelly, Wayne Forsythe). The peak late-summer count at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 25 birds on 25 July (John Fussell, Jack Fennell) was somewhat low compared to past years.

Tree Swallow: At about the eastern limit of the species' breeding range, a pair of adults successfully nested in the wetland at Bethabara Park in Winston-Salem, NC, where adults were observed feeding young in a bluebird box, 11 June (Phil Dickinson, Terri Maness).

Cliff Swallow: As was the case last year, several birds built new nests rather late in the season, on the walls of the Hampton Inn in Havelock, NC, in late June into July (John Fussell).

Barn Swallow: One seen 30 miles off the coast during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 24 July (Brian Patten, Kevin Metcalf, et al.) was unusual.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: Defying explanation was an individual present in the Elizabethan Gardens in Manteo, NC, 10–21 June (Jeff Lewis). There are no previous summer reports of this species from the coast.

Swainson's Thrush: Not yet documented as a breeder in the Carolinas, three were found on point counts along the Appalachian Trail in Avery Co, NC, in June (*fide* Kevin Caldwell).

American Robin: On the Outer Banks, during the breeding season, numbers of this species tend to fluctuate from year to year. Jeff Lewis reports that "This past summer, we had the most I've ever seen here during that period."

Brown Thrasher: Uncommon at higher elevations, one or two were seen at Carver's Gap, Roan Mtn, NC, throughout the season (Rick Knight).

Cedar Waxwing: Outside of the mountains, reports included a pair found on a BBS route between Hyco Lake and Hillsborough, NC, in early June (Jeff Phippen, Toni Rexrode); a "rather territorial" individual along Catfish Lake Rd, near Catfish Lake in the Croatan NF, NC, 27 June (John Fussell, Jack Fennell); and two near Ringwood, Halifax Co, NC, throughout the summer (Merrill Lynch).

Northern Parula: An impressive count of 69 was made at Congaree NP, SC, 13 June (John & Rhonda Grego). Three males were heard singing in a spruce-fir-N hardwood forest along the Flat Creek Trail in Great Smoky Mountains NP, NC, at 5200 ft, an altitude higher than typical for this species, 26 June (Chris Kelly).

Magnolia Warbler: Two to four singing males were seen on Roan Mountain, NC, 8 June through 6 July (Rick Knight). Though this species probably breeds somewhere in this area each year, minimal evidence of breeding has ever been obtained for this species in North Carolina.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: Another warbler species for which a NC breeding record is long overdue, an adult Yellow-rumped was observed feeding a fledged juvenile at the Tricorner Knob Shelter during a point count along the Appalachian Trail in Avery Co, NC, in early June (Tom Howe). If accepted by the NCBRC, this sighting will provide the first breeding record of this species in NC. A pair was also seen on Roan High Bluff, Roan Mountain, NC, 8 June through 6 July, though no evidence of nesting was found (Rick Knight).

Cerulean Warbler: Six, including a family group of four, were seen along the BRP between Craggy Gardens and Mt Mitchell, NC, 4 July (Simon Thompson), providing an encouraging mid-summer count.

American Redstart: An uncommon breeder along the coast, an adult male redstart was observed singing in the Croatan NF, near Cahoogue Creek, about four miles NE of Havelock, NC, 6 and 8 June (John Fussell).

Swainson's Warbler: One heard singing on a BBS route in Jones Co, NC, 4 June (Wade Fuller, Rich Boyd) was a first for that route. An individual was heard singing in a rhododendron thicket, and then seen at close range, along the Jacob's Fork River at South Mountains SP, SE Burke Co, NC, 19 June (Dwayne Martin). A pair, one of which was singing, was found in the parking lot for the South Mills River trailhead, along Turkey Pen Rd on the border of Transylvania/Henderson Co, NC, 5 July (Marilyn Westphal, Mark Simpson). Westphal noted these birds were "much farther into the interior of the French Broad River watershed than either of us have ever [seen before]."

Louisiana Waterthrush: One, most likely an early fall migrant, seen in the Elizabethan Gardens in Manteo, NC, 26 July (Jeff Lewis) was locally unusual.

Bachman's Sparrow: A good count of eight was made at Carolina Sandhills NWR, Jefferson, SC, 19 June (Ron Clark, Jeff Lemons, Will Stuart).

Vesper Sparrow: 10+ were seen in the fields and fallow Christmas tree plots on Pond Mountain, 4750 ft, Ashe Co, NC, 3–4 June (Chris Kelly). One or two were seen on Round Bald, Roan Mountain, NC, throughout the season (Rick Knight).

Lark Sparrow: For the second year in a row, this species successfully bred at Carolina Sandhills NWR, Jefferson, SC, where two adults and two fledglings were seen 19 June (Ron Clark, Jeff Lemons, Will Stuart).

Savannah Sparrow: Two singing males were noted on a BBS route in W Alleghany Co, NC, 20 June (Merrill Lynch) at the same location where four were heard last year.

White-throated Sparrow: One seen eating sunflower seed hearts under a feeder in Gastonia, NC, 9 June (Steve Tracy) was quite late.

Scarlet Tanager: Of note was an orange color variant adult male that bred on private property just S of Mars Hill, Madison Co, NC, photographed 3 June (Jim Petranka).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Two juveniles were seen, and an adult was heard singing, on Standingstone Mountain, 3100 ft, N Greenville Co, SC, 24 June (Marion Clark). If accepted by the SC BRC, this sighting will provide the first confirmed nesting of this species in the state.

Blue Grosbeak: A rare breeder in the higher elevations, two singing males were seen on a BBS route in W Alleghany Co, NC, at 2700 ft, 20 June (Merrill Lynch).

Dickcissel: Dickcissels were seen again this summer at two of the more regular sites for this species in NC—in the fields near Cherry Hospital in Goldsboro, NC, where three, two males and one female, were seen 20 June (Eric Dean, Ricky Davis); and at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, where ten singing birds were seen 4 July (John Fussell, et al.).

Bobolink: This species apparently bred in a grassy area near Boone, NC, where at least five, including males and females, were seen in June (Curtis Smalling, Isaac Kerns).

Baltimore Oriole: A pair appeared to be nesting in the wetland on Ballinger Rd in Greensboro, NC, in early June (Henry Link).

Red Crossbill: Several, including calling males and a female carrying nesting material, were seen along the Flat Creek Trail (5200 ft) in Great Smoky Mountains NP, 26 June (Chris Kelly). Two males were seen on the NC side of Clingmans Dome, Great Smoky Mountains NP, 7 July (Phil Rusch).

Pine Siskin: A good mid-summer count of 30+ was made at the Cataloachie Ski Resort in Haywood Co, NC, 5 July (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey). Seen throughout the summer on Roan Mountain, NC, this species yielded a high count of 16 on 8 June (Rick Knight).

American Goldfinch: A few birds were present, and probably breeding, in the Croatan NF, near Havelock, NC, throughout the summer (John Fussell). Fussell notes that this location is “perhaps the easternmost point in our area where the species is reliably present every summer.”