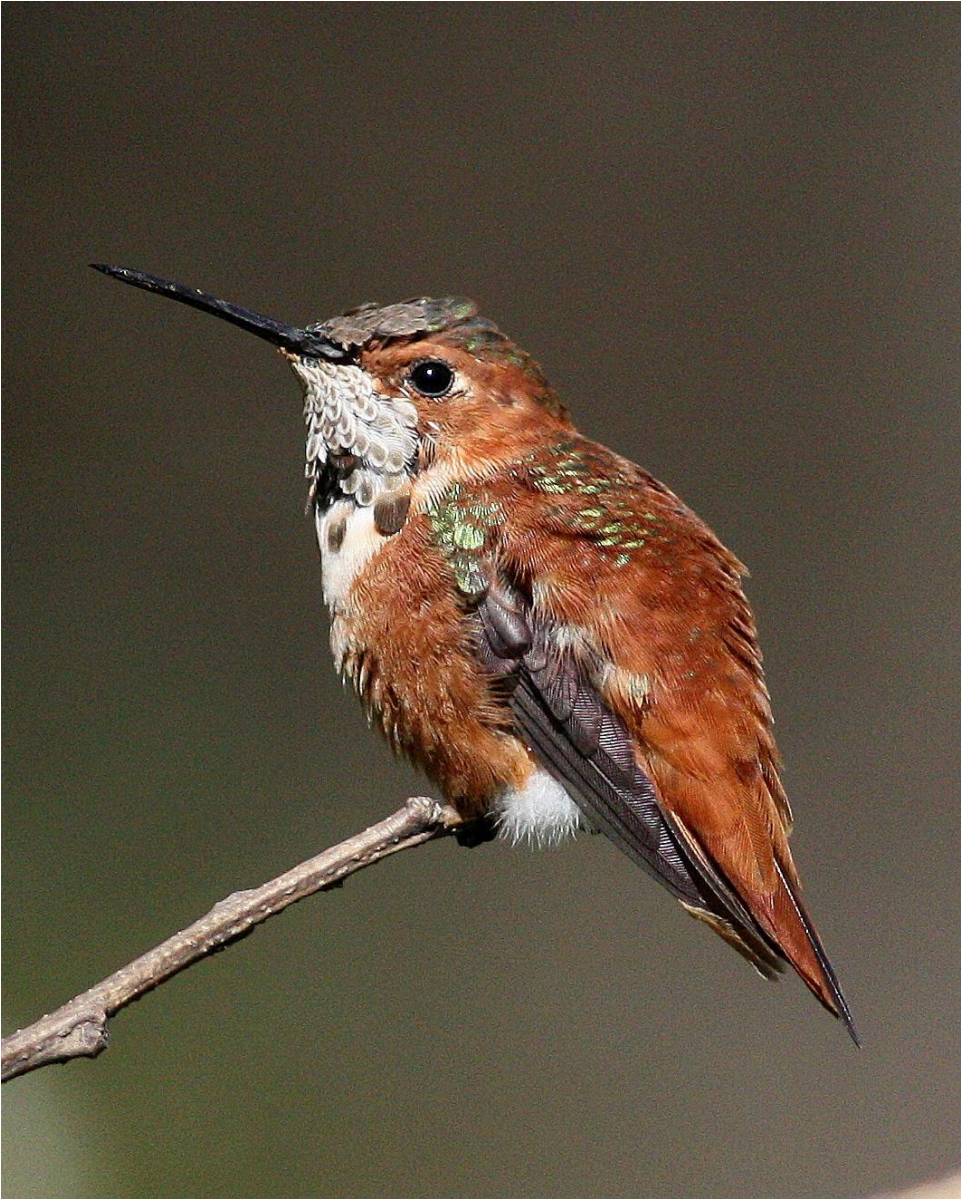


The Chat

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Editor

**Kent Fiala, 1714 Borland Road
Hillsborough, NC 27278
chat@carolinabirdclub.org**

General Field Notes Editors

North Carolina

South Carolina

Christina Harvey

William Post

Briefs for the Files

Josh Southern

Associate Editor

Ginger Travis

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A Three-Year Shorebird Survey of the Impoundments and Beaches on Bulls Island, South Carolina

Doreen Cubie¹, Perry Nugent², and Jim Cubie¹

¹ 7329 Awendaw Landing Rd., Awendaw SC 29429, doreencubie@tds.net

² 2260 Dallerton Circle, Charleston, SC 29414

Abstract

We conducted 59 shorebird surveys on Bulls Island in South Carolina's Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge from April 2001 to June 2004, recording 168,258 individuals on the island's beaches (75.7% of the total), impoundments (19.1%), and one oceanside marsh (5.2%). Of the 29 species observed, the most abundant were Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) with 61,236 individuals (36.39% of the total) and Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*) with 31,484 individuals (18.71%). We also recorded more than 10,000 individuals of four other species: Sanderling (*Calidris alba*), Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*), Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*), and Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*). The largest number of shorebirds in a single survey was 10,476 on April 1, 2002. The average number of shorebirds per survey was highest during the spring months (51.4% of the total). We also had 72 sightings of shorebirds of six species that had been color banded in Delaware, New Jersey, Michigan, Georgia, South Carolina, Canada, or Brazil. Our census highlights the importance of Bulls Island, especially its impoundments and its beaches, to wintering and migrating shorebirds.

Introduction

Most shorebirds are long-distance migrants and face threats on breeding grounds, migration routes, and wintering sites. Over half of the shorebird species that use the United States are in decline, and surveys of shorebirds are of high conservation priority. Surveys are especially needed to further evaluate population trends and to identify important habitat (Brown et al. 2001). Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge (CRNWR) is one of 85 sites in the Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network, and is a site of international importance. CRNWR provides critical habitat for migrating and wintering shorebirds in coastal South Carolina. Marsh and Wilkinson (1991) and Dodd and Spinks (2001) conducted earlier surveys of shorebirds in the greater Cape Romain region, but did not cover the impoundments of Bulls Island, a 10-kilometer barrier island located in CRNWR. At the request of the staff of CRNWR, we investigated shorebird use of Bulls Island's impoundments, beaches, and one oceanside marsh over a three-year period.

Methods

Our shorebird surveys on Bulls Island (32.54.28 N, 79.36.47 W) ran from April 2001 to June 2004. Surveys were conducted twice a month from March to November, and once a month from December through February. We began most surveys two to three hours before high tide and finished two to three hours after high tide. Shorebirds are more concentrated around high tide and consequently are easier to count. We surveyed at the same locations every time: seven impoundments (House Pond, Upper Summerhouse Pond, Lower Summerhouse Pond, Jack's Pond, and Pools 1, 2, and 3); two locations on the beach at the northeastern tip of the island; and one oceanside marsh situated between Jack's Pond and the beach. We visited each location on every survey, although the time spent at each one varied according to the number of shorebirds present. The southern beaches were not covered. The principal surveyors were Doreen Cubie and Perry Nugent, with assistance from Jim Cubie and Sue Ann Russell. Our surveys were conducted by truck and on foot. Binoculars and spotting scopes were used, and we estimated large aggregations of shorebirds by counting across by tens for each species present.

Results

We conducted 59 surveys and counted 168,258 shorebirds, an average of 2852 per survey. The single highest count was 10,476 on April 1, 2002. The lowest count was 122 on July 30, 2001. Table 1 lists the totals for each survey.

We observed a total of 29 species of shorebirds. The most abundant were Dunlin (61,236, 36.39%) and Short-billed Dowitcher (31,484, 18.71%), followed by Sanderling (15,047, 8.94%), Red Knot (13,906, 8.26%), Semipalmated Plover (12,986, 7.72%), and Semipalmated Sandpiper (10,533, 6.27%). Other species with more than 1000 individuals were Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*), Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*), Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*), Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*), Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*), Least Sandpiper, (*Calidris minutilla*) and Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*). Table 2 lists their total numbers and percentages, as well as the numbers for the other 16 species recorded during the surveys. A total of 940 shorebirds (0.56%), mostly distant birds in flight, were unidentified.

We tallied 32,080 individuals (19.1% of the total) in the impoundments, primarily in Jack's Pond and Upper and Lower Summerhouse Ponds. A total of 8751 shorebirds (5.2%) were counted in the Oceanside marsh and 127,427 (75.7%) were on the beach. Table 3 lists the species and numbers recorded in each of the three habitats.

To approximate an annual cycle, we divided the year into four sections: Winter (November–February), Spring Migration (March–May), Summer (June–July), and Fall Migration (August–October) During Winter, we counted 47,131 shorebirds on 12 surveys, and the average count was 3928

(28.0% of the total). During Spring Migration, we tallied 86,512 shorebirds on 19 surveys, and the average count was 4553 (51.4%). During Summer, we recorded 4345 shorebirds on 12 surveys and the average count was 612 (4.4%). During Fall Migration, we counted 27,271 individuals on 16 surveys, and the average count was 1704 (16.2%). Table 4 lists the species and their seasonal numbers.

Table 1. Total numbers of shorebirds by date for surveys on Bulls Island, SC

Date	Total	Date	Total
29 April 2001	3683	05 November 2002	2075
07 May 2001	3434	18 November 2002	3204
21 May 2001	2677	03 February 2003	5952
11 June 2001	839	18 February 2003	4663
25 June 2001	389	03 March 2003	6246
30 July 2001	122	17 March 2003	5113
13 August 2001	431	07 April 2003	6254
27 August 2001	2080	21 April 2003	4769
12 September 2001	838	05 May 2003	3774
02 October 2001	495	19 May 2003	3604
15 October 2001	1015	02 June 2003	710
22 October 2001	4623	16 June 2003	614
05 November 2001	3672	30 June 2003	348
19 November 2001	4208	28 July 2003	605
28 January 2002	3623	11 August 2003	996
11 February 2002	9513	25 August 2003	899
18 March 2002	7579	15 September 2003	3325
01 April 2002	10,476	29 September 2003	1790
15 April 2002	4178	14 October 2003	2214
29 April 2002	7893	27 October 2003	2143
13 May 2002	3055	24 November 2003	2440
20 May 2002	2897	15 December 2003	3656
03 June 2002	1528	09 February 2004	2078
24 June 2002	508	23 February 2004	1096
08 July 2002	127	09 March 2004	4189
22 July 2002	558	19 April 2004	926
09 September 2002	1593	04 May 2004	4790
23 September 2002	2100	17 May 2004	974
07 October 2002	1670	07 June 2004	997
21 October 2002	2010		

Table 2. Total shorebird numbers and species recorded on Bulls Island, SC from April 2001 to June 2004

Common name	Scientific name	Total	Per cent
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	61,236	36.39%
Short-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>	31,484	18.71%
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	15,047	8.94%
Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	13,906	8.26%
Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	12,986	7.72%
Semipalmated Sandpiper	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>	10,553	6.27%
Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>	7299	4.34%
Black-bellied Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	5778	3.43%
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	1722	1.02%
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	1498	0.89%
Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	1319	0.78%
Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	1237	0.74%
Willet	<i>Tringa semipalmata</i>	1076	0.64%
Unidentified		940	0.56%
Marbled Godwit	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>	782	0.46%
Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>	427	0.25%
Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	198	0.12%
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	138	0.08%
American Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus palliatus</i>	133	0.08%
Wilson's Plover	<i>Charadrius wilsonia</i>	127	0.08%
Stilt Sandpiper	<i>Calidris himantopus</i>	98	0.06%
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	77	0.05%
Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	64	0.04%
Solitary Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>	56	0.03%
Wilson's Snipe	<i>Gallinago delicata</i>	22	0.01%
Pectoral Sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	17	0.01%
Piping Plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	16	0.01%
American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>	12	0.01%
White-rumped Sandpiper	<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>	9	0.01%
American Woodcock	<i>Scolopax minor</i>	1	0.01%

We had 72 sightings of color-banded shorebirds, although it is possible some of these were multiple observations of the same birds on different surveys. The majority of the banded shorebirds were Red Knots, although we also recorded Western Sandpiper, Dunlin, Sanderling, American Oystercatcher, and one Piping Plover. The oystercatchers were banded

locally, but nearly all of the other shorebirds were color banded in the Delaware Bay/Cape May, New Jersey region. The exceptions were three Red Knots banded in coastal Georgia and in South Carolina's Hunting Island State Park, one Red Knot banded in Canada, and one Red Knot banded in Brazil. Also, the single color-banded Piping Plover was banded as a chick in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Seashore in Michigan. It was observed on the north beach during two successive fall migrations.

Table 3. Numbers and species of shorebirds, classified by habitat, on 59 surveys on Bulls Island, SC from April 2001 to June 2004

Species	Impoundments	Marsh	Beach
Black-bellied Plover	238	749	4791
Semipalmated Plover	3152	893	8941
Piping Plover	0	0	16
Wilson's Plover	13	14	100
Killdeer	149	14	35
American Oystercatcher	5	19	109
Black-Necked Stilt	1264	55	0
Marbled Godwit	162	94	526
American Avocet	12	0	0
Greater Yellowlegs	1424	66	8
Lesser Yellowlegs	58	5	1
Solitary Sandpiper	55	1	0
Willet	144	144	788
Spotted Sandpiper	126	12	0
Whimbrel	29	48	0
Ruddy Turnstone	40	49	1633
Red Knot	6	1610	12,290
Sanderling	67	328	14,652
Dunlin	3785	1330	56,121
Pectoral Sandpiper	17	0	0
White-rumped Sandpiper	9	0	0
Western Sandpiper	1661	191	5447
Semipalmated Sandpiper	7015	1046	2492
Least Sandpiper	1152	36	49
Stilt Sandpiper	92	6	0
Unidentified	792	2	146
Long-billed Dowitcher	409	18	0
Short-billed Dowitcher	10,181	2021	19,282
American Woodcock	1	0	0
Wilson's Snipe	22	0	0

Five species of breeding shorebirds were observed. The most numerous were Black-necked Stilts, which nested in Jack's Pond and Lower and Upper Summerhouse Ponds during our surveys. We frequently saw adults and chicks together in July and August. We also saw one American Oystercatcher with a chick, flushed one Willet from a nest, and observed a number of Wilson's Plovers and Killdeer performing broken-wing displays, suggesting we were near a nest or chick.

Table 4. Numbers and species of shorebirds, listed by seasons, recorded on 59 surveys on Bulls Island, SC from April 2001 to June 2004

	Winter	Spring Migration	Summer	Fall Migration
Black-bellied Plover	1637	3162	249	730
Semipalmated Plover	2756	6270	441	3519
Piping Plover	2	6	0	8
Wilson's Plover	2	71	40	14
Killdeer	25	107	50	16
American Oystercatcher	16	45	38	34
Black-Necked Stilt	0	516	720	83
Marbled Godwit	37	51	236	458
American Avocet	0	0	1	11
Greater Yellowlegs	186	867	151	294
Lesser Yellowlegs	2	30	15	17
Solitary Sandpiper	0	22	5	29
Willet	184	215	167	510
Spotted Sandpiper	4	72	33	29
Whimbrel	0	55	13	9
Ruddy Turnstone	469	756	70	427
Red Knot	1443	8124	35	4304
Sanderling	3302	4381	681	6683
Dunlin	25,500	33,662	34	2040
Pectoral Sandpiper	0	1	13	3
White-rumped Sandpiper	0	5	4	0
Western Sandpiper	2100	2909	372	1918
Semipalmated Sandpiper	0	5962	1922	2669
Least Sandpiper	2	918	113	204
Stilt Sandpiper	2	4	62	30
Unidentified	0	349	66	525
Long-billed Dowitcher	6	402	0	19
Short-billed Dowitcher	9442	17,549	1813	2680
American Woodcock	0	0	0	1
Wilson's Snipe	14	1	0	7

Discussion

Our census differed from Marsh and Wilkinson (1991) and Dodd and Spinks (2001) in several respects. First, our survey covered a longer period and was restricted to Bulls Island. We did not count shorebirds in the estuarine areas behind the island, as Dodd and Spinks did, but we did census the impoundments and one of the oceanside marshes, which they did not do. We covered the area by vehicle and on foot, instead of by boat, which allowed us to better observe and count roosting flocks of cryptic shorebirds. It also allowed us to identify the smaller *Calidris* sandpipers to species. In addition, by surveying the beaches on foot, we were able to observe color-banded shorebirds. The 72 banded shorebirds that we recorded suggest Bulls Island is used by birds from all over the hemisphere.

Like Dodd and Spinks, our two most abundant species were Dunlin and Short-billed Dowitcher. As they did, we also recorded large numbers of Sanderlings, Red Knots, Semipalmated Plovers, Semipalmated Sandpipers, Western Sandpipers, and Black-bellied Plovers. Our counts of American Oystercatchers and Marbled Godwits, however, were low compared to the findings of Marsh and Wilkinson and Dodd and Spinks. These two research teams also surveyed oyster reefs and docks along the Intracoastal Waterway. Both are favored roosting spots for oystercatchers and godwits. Bulls Island has little of this type of habitat, and consequently, we did not find large flocks of these two species on the island.

The highest shorebird count by Dodd and Spinks for the Cape Romain area was found during a census at the end of March. Our largest number of shorebirds in a single survey on Bulls Island was on April 1, 2002, suggesting that shorebird numbers peak in late March and early April when the winter residents overlap with the first of the spring migrants.

We had expected our average survey totals would be much higher during spring and fall migration. The single largest count was indeed during spring migration, but the average of the winter surveys was only 13.7% less than the spring count and was 56.6% higher than the fall migration period. The data do seem to indicate there is a large population of wintering shorebirds on Bulls Island.

Of all the areas surveyed, the beach on the northeastern tip of Bulls Island contained the largest number of shorebirds. Protecting this high-tide roost from human disturbance is critical, not only during migration but during winter as well. We also found the numbers of shorebirds in the impoundments were significant, with 19% of all observed shorebirds. Water levels in the impoundments were important, however. The highest numbers of shorebirds were found when the water in the impoundments was drawn down enough to expose shorelines and small mudflats. When water levels were high, virtually no shorebirds were present in the impoundments.

Our census highlights the importance of Bulls Island's impoundments and its beaches, and also serves as baseline data for this area of CRNWR. Long-term monitoring is encouraged to document trends of the species using this island, and to identify management practices that will benefit shorebirds.

Acknowledgments

Our thanks to Sarah Dawsey, Refuge Manager, Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, and Craig Sasser, Refuge Manager, Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge, who gave us the opportunity to conduct these surveys, and to the Cape Romain staff who provided transportation and support.

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BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

Josh Southern
203 Hyannis Drive
Holly Springs, NC 27540
joshsouthern79@gmail.com

(All dates Winter 2011–2012, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

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

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location), and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

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.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Sightings included one with a flock of Canada Geese at a pond in Durham, NC, 18–20 Dec (Brian Bockhahn, multiple observers [m. obs.]); three at Silver Creek Plantation Country Club, Morganton, Burke Co, NC, 9–18 Jan (Joy Strachan, Dwayne Martin, m. obs.); three at Mary's House Pond, Bear Island Wildlife Management Area [WMA], SC, 20 Feb (Cherrie Sneed); and one on the campus of Charleston Southern University, and at nearby Wannamaker County Park, Charleston Co, SC, 18 Jan through the end of the period (Matthew Campbell, m. obs.).



Greater White-fronted Goose, 24 Jan 2012, Charleston Southern University, SC.
Photo by Cathy Miller.

Snow Goose: Outside of the species' typical wintering grounds were individuals on the Columbia, SC CBC, 16 Dec (*fide* Steve Dennis); on the Southern Lake Norman Christmas Bird Count [CBC], 18 Dec (*fide* Taylor Piephoff); on the Falls Lake, NC, CBC, 4 Jan (*fide* Brian Bockhahn); amongst a flock of Tundra Swans at a borrow pit pond in E Edgecombe Co, NC, 15 Jan (Ricky Davis); and amongst a flock of Canada Geese in Meggett, SC, 5 Feb through late February (Cherrie Sneed).

Ross's Goose: Sightings included one near the Water Treatment Plant [WTP] in the Mills River area of Henderson Co, NC, 8 Dec (Wayne Forsythe); one at Wilkes Community College, and at "surrounding bodies of water around Wilkesboro, NC", 26 Dec through the end of the period (Dwayne Martin, m. obs.); two foraging inside a large Snow Goose flock at Pungo Unit, Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge [NWR], NC, 29 Dec (Jacob Socolar); one at the Dobbins cow ponds in Townville,



Ross's Goose, 10 Jan 2012, Wilkesboro, NC. Photo by Dwayne Martin.

SC, 5 Jan (Linda Kolb); two inside several large flocks of Snow Geese at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 13 Feb (Scott Winton); and one, possibly the same bird that visited a pond in Cary, NC, in November, relocated at nearby ponds in the Crabtree Creek watershed, in late February (Jan Mouro, Eddie Owens, Jennifer Schrand).

Brant: Good numbers were had around Hatteras Inlet, with 250 estimated 11 Feb (Kyle Kittelberger, et al.); and 60 there 18 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). Locally unusual were four seen flying NE up the coast at Fort Macon SP, NC, 10 Dec (John Fussell).

Cackling Goose: Sightings of this small goose were one at Salem Lake, Winston-Salem, NC, 20 Dec through mid-January (John Haire, m. obs.); and three at Silver Creek Plantation Country Club, Morganton, NC, 12–18 Jan (Dwayne Martin, m. obs.).



Cackling Goose, 20 Dec 2011, Salem Lake, NC. Photo by John Haire.

Tundra Swan: 2800 at borrow pit ponds along US-64 in E Edgecombe Co, NC, and in fields near Conetoe, 15 Jan (Ricky Davis) provided a good count for that site. One at Pee Dee NWR, Anson Co, NC, 18 Feb (Ron Clark) was locally unusual.

Eurasian Wigeon: Single drakes were had at Lilliput Pond in New Bern, NC, 8 Dec (Al Gamache) through at least 1 Feb (Gamache, m. obs.); and at Alligator River NWR, NC, 7 Jan (Harry LeGrand, Derb Carter, Jeff Pippen), a first for the refuge.

Mottled Duck: Two were photographed near Eagle Island, Brunswick Co, NC, during the Wilmington CBC, 31 Dec (Greg Massey, *vide* Sam Cooper).

“Common Teal”: One was found amongst the Green-winged Teal in the impoundments along Sawyer Lake Rd at Alligator River NWR, NC, 4 Feb (Derb Carter).

Canvasback: Locally unusual was a female inside a flock of scaup, in flight S off the Isle of Palms fishing pier, Charleston, SC, 1 Jan (Ian Davies); and one in the retention pond in the parking lot of Sugar Mountain Ski Resort, Avery Co, NC, 4 Feb (Ali Iyoob).

Greater Scaup: One found during the Durham NC CBC, 18 Dec (John Hammond) was one of the very few reports of this species this winter.

Common Eider: Eider sightings were few and far between this winter. Singles were found along the jetty at Huntington Beach SP, SC, a female, 10 Dec (Stephen Thomas); off a pier in S Nags Head, NC, a first-winter male,

25 Dec (Audrey Whitlock) through 30 Dec (m. obs.); and on a bird club field trip to Bald Head Island, NC, 27–28 Jan (Scott Winton, et al.).

Harlequin Duck: Three found at the end of the jetty at Masonboro Inlet, Wrightsville Beach, NC, 5 Jan (Bruce Smithson) were seen by many through 2 Feb (Amy Williamson).

Surf Scoter: Inland sightings were one on Lake Julian, Skyland, NC, 6 Jan (Wayne Forsythe); and one at the pond at Concord Mills Mall, Cabarrus Co, NC, 13–15 Dec (Phil Fowler, Robert Gilson, m. obs.).



Surf Scoter, 13 Dec 2011, Cabarrus Co, NC. Photo by Phil Fowler.

White-winged Scoter: Inland sightings included a female/immature bird on Lake Julian, Skyland, NC, 5 Jan (Wayne Forsythe, Vin Stanton); and one on Lake Tillery, NC, next to the dam, 18 Feb (Ron Clark, et al.). At Mason Inlet, Wrightsville Beach, NC, 28 Jan (Thierry Besançon), 22 provided an impressive count.

Black Scoter: An adult was found at Latta Nature Preserve, near Charlotte, NC, 16 Dec (Ron Clark).

Long-tailed Duck: Sightings away from the Pamlico Sound included a female in Charleston Harbor, SC, 19 Jan (John Cox); two near the gazebo at Ft Fisher, NC, 15 Jan (Ron Clark); and one on the E end of Ocean Isle Beach, NC, in late January (Taylor Piephoff, et al.).

Common Merganser: Locally unusual was a raft of 12 females, observed from a kayak on the North River, Carteret Co, NC, 13 Dec (Dennis Chadwick, *fide* John Fussell) and one that remained for the Morehead City CBC, 18 Dec (Chadwick).

Red-breasted Merganser: Inland were one on the S end of Lake Norman, NC, 8–18 Dec (Ron Clark, Tom Sanders, Josh Sims); and seven at the WTP in the Mills River area of Henderson Co, NC, 27 Dec (Todd Arcos, Wayne Forsythe).

Wild Turkey: A count of 49 on the Morehead City, NC, CBC, 18 Dec (*fide* John Fussell) was indicative of the species' range expansion in that area.

Red-throated Loon: Inland were individuals on the Southern Lake Norman CBC, 18 Dec (*fide* Taylor Piephoff); and on Jordan Lake, NC, 7 Jan (Peter Perlman).

Pacific Loon: One found amongst a raft of Common Loons off Johnnie Mercer's Pier in Wrightsville Beach, NC, 6 Dec (Jeff Phippen), was seen

during the Wilmington CBC, 31 Dec (Derb Carter), and through 26 Jan (Ron Clark, m. obs.). One was seen and photographed at Oregon Inlet, NC, during the Bodie-Pea Island CBC, 30 Dec (Brian Bockhahn, Scott Winton, Kyle Kittelberger). A first-year bird was seen and well-photographed on Lake Julian, Buncombe Co, NC, 5–6 Jan (Wayne Forsythe).



Pacific Loon (with Common Loon), Lake Julian, NC. Photo by Wayne Forsythe.

Red-necked Grebe:

Individuals were observed on the New Bern NC CBC, 14 Dec (*vide* Bob Holmes); on the Pamlico Co, NC CBC, 15 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); at the N end of Oregon Inlet, NC, 22 and 28 Dec (Elizabeth White, James Meehan); on the ocean across from South Pond, Pea Island NWR, 27 Dec (Jeff Beane, et al.); on Lake Brandt, N of Greensboro, NC, 11–18 Dec (Henry & Elizabeth Link); and on Lake Murray, Dreher Island SP, Newberry Co, SC, 8 Jan (Irvin Pitts).



Red-necked Grebe, 28 Dec 2011, Oregon Inlet Fishing Center, NC. Photo by James Meehan.

Eared Grebe: Sightings included one on the ocean off Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 24 Jan (Brian Patteson); one off North Topsail Beach, NC, 26 Jan (Gilbert Grant); one off Ft Fisher, NC, 1 Feb (Harry Sell); two there 2 Feb (Greg Massey); and one near Fort Macon SP, Atlantic Beach, NC, 17 Feb (Al Gamache).

Black-browed Albatross: An adult was well-seen and photographed within very close range of the Stormy Petrel II, during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 18 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Northern Fulmar: On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, one was had 29 Dec, ten were counted on 11 Feb, and one was seen on 18 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Black-capped Petrel: Rarely seen in winter, a Black-capped Petrel was photographed from a research vessel off Brunswick Co, NC, 14 Feb (Bill Lotz, Eric Bowles).



Black-browed Albatross, 18 Feb 2012, about a mile east of Hatteras Inlet, NC. Photo by Scott Winton.

Great Shearwater: Also rarely seen in winter, a Great Shearwater was photographed from a research vessel off Brunswick Co, NC, 16 Feb (Bill Lotz, Eric Bowles). Two were seen on a pelagic out of Hatteras, NC, 29 Dec (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Manx Shearwater: From-shore sightings included one off Fort Macon SP, NC, 9 Jan (John Fussell); one off Pine Knoll Shores, NC, 11 Jan (Fussell); and one flying S off Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 24 Jan (Brian Patteson). Four were seen during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 18 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). 15 were seen about 50 miles ENE of Oregon Inlet, NC, 15 Feb (Christopher Vogel).

Wood Stork: Winter sightings included 15 at Mullet Pond at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 10 Dec (Stephen Thomas); five on the Santee NWR, SC, CBC, 22 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe); and 14 at Mary's House Pond, Bear Island WMA, SC, 20 Feb (Cherrie Sneed).

Northern Gannet: Unusual inland, two gannets were seen on the Alligator River NWR, NC, CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis). 4000 were estimated during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 26 Feb (Patteson, et al.).

Great Cormorant: Around rock jetties were one at Ft Macon SP, NC, 24 Dec (John Fussell); three at Masonboro Inlet, Wrightsville Beach, NC, 29 Jan (Scott Winton, et al.); and one at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 13 Jan (Ron Clark, et al.).

Anhinga: Winter sightings, which are increasing, included two at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 4 Dec (Jeff Lewis); one at the same site during the CBC, 29 Dec (Lewis); a pair around the quarry in New Bern, NC, throughout the period (*fide* Al Gamache); one at Eden Lakes in N Durham Co, NC, 18 Dec (Scott Winton, Tom Krakauer) through 15 Feb (Ali Iyoob); two in flight along the Roanoke River, along the border of Northampton and Halifax Co, NC, 8 Jan (Ricky Davis); and two at Greenfield Lake, Wilmington, NC, 26 Jan (Daniel Hueholt).

American White Pelican: Some of the larger counts were six on the Newport River near Morehead City, NC, 15 Dec (Rosemary D'Andrea); 11 at the same location, 14 Jan (D'Andrea); 14 in flight over Brett Bay in Carteret Co, NC, 20 Dec (Scott Winton, Ali Iyoob, Mike McCloy, Mark Kosiewski); six in flight over US-17 at Dixon, Onslow Co, NC, 26 Dec (Martin Korenek); and four on the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC, SC, 29 Dec (*vide* Chris Hill). Two photographed on Harris Lake, Wake Co, NC, 9 Dec (Susan Jones) were new for that location.

American Bittern: Of the two at Lake Conestee, Greenville, SC, 4 Dec (*vide* Paul Serridge), one remained 5 Jan (*vide* Serridge).

Least Bittern: One was found along the causeway, near the entrance to Wildlife Drive, Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 10 Feb (Lewis Burke, Irvin Pitts, Roger Smith, Jeff Click), but was not relocated.

“Great White Heron”: One originally found along the Eno River in Durham, NC, in late November, remained for the Durham CBC, 18 Dec (*vide* Michael Schultz) and was seen until at least 1 Jan (Bill Majoros).

Great Egret: One in flight over Durham, NC, 22 Dec (Greg Dodge) was unusual for the season.

Reddish Egret: Winter sightings included one at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 10 Dec (Stephen Thomas); one on the Hilton Head Island, SC, CBC, 14 Dec (*vide* Nan Lloyd); and two on the Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC, CBC, 29 Dec (*vide* Chris Hill).

Cattle Egret: In eastern NC, two were found at Alligator River NWR, during the CBC, 30 Dec (Wayne Irvin, *vide* Jeff Lewis); and three were seen in a yard in Engelhard, 23 Feb (Ron & Anne Clark).

Green Heron: Wintering individuals were found on the Pamlico Co, NC, CBC, 15 Dec (*vide* Liz Lathrop); in Frisco, NC, 27 Dec (Lee Adams, Peggy Eubank); and on the Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC, CBC, 29 Dec (*vide* Chris Hill).

Glossy Ibis: Two were regularly seen at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, from early December through 8 Jan (John Fussell, et al.).

Roseate Spoonbill: Two were seen at Donnelley WMA, SC, 7 Jan (Patrick & Bonnie Markham).

Northern Goshawk: An adult was photographed at Alligator River NWR, NC, during the CBC, 30 Dec (Derb Carter, Wayne Irvin, Joan Kutulas, Jeff Lewis).

Golden Eagle: Sightings included two on the Alligator River NWR, NC, CBC, 30 Dec (Jeff Lemons, Mike McCloy, Marlene Schumm, Audrey Whitlock, et al.); one continuing there 7 Jan (Jeff Pippen); one on the Pettigrew SP, NC, CBC, 30 Dec (*vide* Doug LeQuire); an adult at Vernon James Research Station in Roper, NC, 4 Jan (Rich & Susan Boyd); and an adult in flight over Halifax Co, NC, 12 Feb (Nick Flanders).

Yellow Rail: Up to three were flushed in the North River Marshes of Carteret Co, NC, 20 Dec (Scott Winton, et al.).



Purple Gallinule, 25 Jan 2012, Alligator River NWR. Photo by Greg Hudson.

Purple Gallinule: One photographed at Alligator River NWR, NC, 25 Jan (Greg Hudson) was a first for that refuge.

Common Gallinule: Locally unusual were one seen on a bird club field trip to Bald Head Island, NC, 27–28 Jan (Scott Winton, et al.); one at Mackay Island NWR, NC, 29 Jan (Greg Hudson); and two at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 12 Feb (Winton). Five on the Morehead City, NC, CBC, 18 Dec (*vide* John Fussell) was the highest CBC count of the species since 1989.

Sandhill Crane: Sightings were made across our region again this winter—two on the Pamlico Co, NC, CBC, 15 Dec (*vide* Liz Lathrop); one near the dam on Lake Tillery, NC, 31 Dec (Ron Clark, et al.); three at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 1 Jan (John Fussell, Matt Gould, Jack



Common Gallinule, 29 Jan 2012, Mackay Island NWR, NC. Photo by Greg Hudson.

Fennell); five on the Henderson Co, NC, CBC, 1 Jan (*vide* Wayne Forsythe); one in flight near a catfish farm in Roper, NC, 17 Feb (Scott Winton, Jeff Phippen, et al.); ten at Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 26 Feb (Nathan Gatto, Sarah Clark); and three in flight in Townville, SC, 28 Feb (Cherrie Sneed).

Wilson's Plover: North of the species' typical winter range was an individual on the W end of Shackleford Banks, NC, 3, 15 and 18 Dec (John Fussell, Sam Cooper, et al.).

Piping Plover: Some of the better counts were ten on the W end of Shackleford Banks, NC, 15 Dec (John Fussell, et al.); and seven around new channels created by Hurricane Irene, on the Bodie-Pea Island, NC, CBC, 28 Dec (Paul Sykes, Fussell, Neal Moore).

Spotted Sandpiper: Lingering individuals were found in Atlantic Beach, NC, in early December (Charles Lynch); at Core Creek during the Morehead City CBC, 18 Dec (Jack Fennell); in Morehead City, 25 Dec (John Fussell); at McAlpine WTP in Pineville, NC, during the Charlotte CBC, 26 Dec (*vide* Ken Kneidel) through 8 Jan (Ron Clark, et al.); and in the marsh behind the aquarium in Pine Knoll Shores, NC, 2 Jan (Scott Winton).

Solitary Sandpiper: One found on the Congaree Swamp, SC, CBC, 18 Dec (*vide* John Grego) was unusual for the season.

Hudsonian Godwit: One photographed at Mary's House Pond, Bear Island WMA, SC, during a Greenville County Bird Club field trip, 24 Feb (Jeff Click, Paul Serridge, et al.) was seen by many through 29 Feb (David McLean, et al.).

Marbled Godwit: 77 on the flats at Fish Haul Creek Park, N end of Hilton Head Island, SC, 28 Dec (Ian Davies) was a good count.

Red Knot: 84 on the E side of Seabrook Island, Charleston, SC, 13 Feb (David Gardner) was an impressive count.

Least Sandpiper: Up to 23 were seen at the McAlpine WTP, Mecklenburg Co, NC, throughout the period (Ron Clark, Jeff Lemons, Tom Clark, m. obs.). 12 seen in a



Hudsonian Godwit, 26 Feb 2012, Bear Island WMA, SC. Photo by Cathy Miller.

field near the WTP in Rocky Mount, NC, 8 Jan through the end of the period (Ricky Davis) were locally unusual. A flock of 15 found inside a roosting flock of shorebirds on the shore of Atlantic Beach, NC, 21 Feb (John Fussell) was unusual in that beach habitat.

Purple Sandpiper: Some of the higher counts were 11 on the W side of Breach Inlet, Charleston Co, SC, 2 Jan (Ian Davies); 10 at Masonboro Inlet,

Wrightsville Beach, NC, 15 Jan (Ron Clark); 23+ at the same site 28 Jan (Thierry Besançon); and 30 there 4 Feb (Ed Corey, Jeff Beane, et al.).

Red Phalarope: During pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 25 were seen 29 Dec, and 40 were seen 18 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). High counts from a research vessel traveling up the coast included 92 off Georgetown Co, SC, 14 Feb, and 724 off Brunswick Co, NC, 18 Feb (Bill Lotz, Eric Bowles). From shore, a flock of 11 birds was seen at Mason Inlet, Wrightsville Beach, NC, 28 Jan (Thierry Besançon).

Black-legged Kittiwake: A first-year bird was photographed at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 27 Dec (Jeff Lemons).

Black-headed Gull: An adult found at the McAlpine WTP in Pineville, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 8 Dec (Ron Clark, Tom Sanders) remained for the Charlotte CBC, 26 Dec (*vide* Ken Kneidel) and was seen through 8 Jan (Jeff Lemons, m. obs.).

Little Gull: Two were seen amongst the Bonaparte's Gulls off Johnnie Mercer's Pier in Wrightsville Beach, NC, 2 Jan (Greg Massey).

Herring Gull: Farther west than typical were two over Lake Julian, Skyland, NC, 5 Feb (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey, Tom Joyce). 3000 were estimated on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 26 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).



Thayer's Gull, 18 Dec 2011, Lake Norman, NC. Photo by Chris Talkington.

Thayer's Gull: A first-year bird found on the Southern Lake Norman CBC, on the lake near Davidson, NC, 18 Dec (Chris Talkington) was well-photographed the same day (Talkington, Jeff Lemons) and remained for a day, 19 Dec (Ron Clark, Tom Sanders, David Wright, et al.). One was reported from Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 15 Jan (Mikey Lutmerding).

Iceland Gull: Sightings, all made along the coast, included an adult photographed at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 27 Dec (Jeff Lemons, et al.); one at Pea Island NWR, NC, 15 Jan (Alan Van Norman); two at the landfill in Horry Co, SC, 17 Jan (Ian Davies); and singles on pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 11 and 18 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Some of the higher inland counts were eight or nine at the landfill in Holly Springs, Wake Co, NC, 21 Jan (Derb Carter, Kent Fiala); ten in a large mixed gull flock at a borrow pit pond along US-64 E of Tarboro, Edgecombe Co, NC, 15 Jan (Ricky Davis); and 28 in a mixed gull flock in Halifax Co, NC, 13 Feb (Davis). Davis notes that “this species continues to increase as winter residents in inland NC; this is about the 3rd winter in a row that the gull flocks in this area have many ‘Lessers’ in them.” On the coast, where more expected, 150 were counted on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 26 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Glaucous Gull: Individuals were seen at North Topsail Inlet, NC, a first-year bird, photographed 18 Dec (Bruce Smithson); at the landfill in Holly Springs, Wake Co, NC, a first-year bird, 21 Jan (Derb Carter, Kent Fiala); and at the landfill in Conway, Horry Co, SC, 27 Feb (Chris Hill).

Common Tern: Rare in winter, three Common Terns were seen on the Santee NWR, SC, CBC, 22 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe).

Sandwich Tern: Also rare in winter, a Sandwich Tern was seen at Sunset Beach, NC, 23 Jan (Greg Massey).

Great Skua: Two were seen during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 18 Feb (Patteson, et al.).

Parasitic Jaeger: Up to three were seen from the beach at Fort Macon SP, NC, 3 Dec (John Fussell, Scott Winton, m. obs.) through 6 Jan (Fussell). Other from-shore sightings included one at Emerald Isle, NC, 3 Jan (Winton); one during a field trip on Bald Head Island, NC, 28 Jan (Winton, et al.); and six on the Bodie-Pea Island, NC, CBC, 28 Dec (*fide* Paul Sykes).

Dovekie: It was a bad year for Dovekie sightings in our region, possibly due to warmer-than-usual waters close to shore. Two were seen just past the breakers off Kill Devil Hills, NC, 29 Dec (Peggy Eubank). An exhausted bird was found at Oregon Inlet, NC, 16 Jan (James Meehan) where it later flew off. One was seen during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 18 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).



Dovekie, 16 Jan 2012, Oregon Inlet.
Photographed in the hand by James Meehan.

Razorbill: From-shore sightings included 2180, mostly in flight, off North Topsail Beach, NC, 17 Dec (Ross Gallardy); 575+, mostly flying S, but 200+ on the ocean quite close to the beach, from the piers at Wrightsville Beach, NC, 2 Jan (Ricky Davis, Derb Carter); 30 on the ocean off Pine Knoll Shores, NC, 11 Jan (John Fussell); and seven on a pelagic trip, 18 Feb (Patteson, et al.). Fussell theorizes the southward movement of Razorbills, especially into the Wrightsville Beach area, was due to unusually warm water along the Outer Banks and the Central Coast. One photographed alongside the jetty at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 28 Jan (Stephen & Barbara Thomas) was one the southernmost reports.

White-winged Dove: One was seen with two Eurasian Collared-Doves in Mt Pleasant, SC, 4 Jan (Ian Davies);

Barn Owl: Two were seen in flight at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, pre-dawn 21 Dec (John Fussell, John Voigt, Scott Winton, et al.). Individuals were seen along Mid-Pines Rd in S Raleigh, NC, 6 Dec (Clyde Sorenson); on the Congaree Swamp, SC, CBC, 18 Dec (*fide* John Grego); and in Mecklenburg Co, NC, on the Southern Lake Norman CBC, 18 Dec (Jeff Lemons).

Snowy Owl: One was photographed at a turkey farm in Hartsville, SC, 12 Jan (Kellie Dudley, *fide* John Grego). A moribund bird was found in Kershaw Co, SC, in late February (*fide* Nate Swick).

Long-eared Owl: A bird found roosting in an area of thick, young pines at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 4–20 Dec (John Fussell, Matt Gould) provided the first documentation of that species in Carteret County. Another individual was seen perched on a guardrail along US-264 at the airport in Hyde Co, NC, 4 Feb (Derb Carter).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: One was heard at Bodie Island Lighthouse entrance road, 3 Dec (Jeff Lemons).

Common Nighthawk: One over a tennis court in Aiken, SC, 12 Dec (Peter Stangel) was incredibly late. Other species of nighthawks, such as Lesser and Antillean, are just as likely to be seen as Common here in winter.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Of four that visited feeders in a yard in Morehead City, NC, in early December, only one remained after early January (John Fussell), possibly due to the locally mild winter.

Black-chinned Hummingbird: One visited a feeder in Wilmington, NC, 6 Jan (Bruce Smithson, Greg Massey) through 2 Feb (Amy Williamson, m. obs.).

Anna's Hummingbird: The adult male that returned to a yard in New Bern, NC, 12 Nov (Bill & Inge Parker, Susan Campbell) remained until 17 Jan (Parker).

Rufous Hummingbird: Individuals visited feeders just N of Conway, SC, 7 Nov into the spring (Belinda Todd, Jay Chandler); and in Morehead City, NC, an immature male, 4 Jan through February (Carol Reigle). A male frequented honeysuckle at Coker Arboretum, UNC-Chapel Hill from about 16 Feb–3 March (Allen Hurlbert, m. obs.), see cover photo.

Allen's Hummingbird: The adult male that first visited a feeder at Riverbend Park in Conover, NC, 18 Nov, was last seen 19 Dec (Dwayne Martin, m. obs.).

Ash-throated Flycatcher: One found along Shore Drive, Pettigrew SP, NC, 14 Dec (Ed Corey) remained for the CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Doug LeQuire).

Western Kingbird: Three were recorded on the Pettigrew SP, NC, CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Doug LeQuire).

Loggerhead Shrike: Locally unusual was one near the entrance to Open Grounds Farm in Carteret Co, NC, 20 Dec (Elisa Enders, et al.).

White-eyed Vireo: Rare in the mountains in winter, a White-eyed Vireo was found at Jackson Park in Hendersonville, NC, during the Henderson County CBC, 1 Jan (Ron Clark, Ron Selvey, et al.).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: One at the WTP in Henderson Co, NC, 26 Feb (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey) was quite early.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 20+ were observed on Roan Mountain, NC, 18 Dec and 7 Feb (Rick Knight).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: 16 on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan) provided a good winter count.

Lapland Longspur: Singles were found in Horry Co, SC, 16 Jan (Stephen Thomas); and on Bearwallow Mountain, NC, 26 Feb (Nathan Gatto, Sarah Clark);

Snow Bunting: A female was found amongst a flock of Horned Larks along the entrance road to the WTP in Rocky Mount, NC, 8 Jan (Ricky Davis), but was never relocated. One was seen and photographed in the parking areas at Lowes Motor Speedway, Concord, NC, 14–16 Dec (John Bonestell, Mike McCloy, Will Stuart).

Ovenbird: One was found at a feeder on the Kitty Hawk, NC, CBC, 17 Dec (*fide* Peggy Eubank, Lee Yoder).

Northern Waterthrush: One was seen at Magnolia Plantation, Charleston, SC, 12–15 Jan (Ian Davies, m. obs.).

Tennessee Warbler: Very rare in winter, a Tennessee Warbler was seen at Magnolia Plantation, Charleston, SC, 9–12 Jan (Ian Davies, m. obs.).

Orange-crowned Warbler: In the western part of our region, where sightings are less regular, Orange-crowned Warblers visited feeders in Lenoir, NC, 20 Jan into spring (Walt Kent); and in Winston-Salem, NC, 28 Jan into spring (John Schultz). John Fussell noted that the species was more common than usual this winter in Carteret County, NC.

Nashville Warbler: Lingering/wintering in our region were individuals on the causeway at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 20 Dec (Daniel Hueholt); and on private property in Craven Co, NC, 20 Jan (Matt Gould).

American Redstart: Rare in winter, redstarts were found on the Holly Shelter and Lea-Hutaff Island, NC, CBC, 18 Dec (*fide* Andy Wood); and at Savannah NWR, Jasper Co, SC, up to two females, 2 Jan (Matt Sarver, Lauren Morgens) through 5 Feb (Sandy Beasley).

Cape May Warbler: One that visited a feeder in Winston-Salem, NC, 28 Jan through 18 Mar (John Schultz) was most certainly the same bird that visited the yard last winter.

Northern Parula: Sightings included individuals photographed at Lake Conestee Nature Park in Greenville, SC, 11 Dec (Brad Dalton); in a private neighborhood in New Bern, NC, during the CBC, 14 Dec (Matt Gould), and continuing until at least 20 Jan (Gould); and on the Greenville, NC, CBC, 18 Dec (*fide* Veronica Pantelidis);

Blackpoll Warbler: Very rare in winter, a Blackpoll Warbler was photographed at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 26 Dec (Joe Sebastiani, *fide* Chris Hill).

Black-throated Blue Warbler: Almost unprecedented in the mountain region during winter, an adult male Black-throated Blue Warbler was photographed in Leicester, Buncombe Co, NC, 31 Jan (Doug Johnston).

Prairie Warbler: Four found along the causeway at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 21 Dec (Daniel Hueholt) provided a good winter count. Singles were found at Alligator River NWR, NC, 13 Dec (Audrey Whitlock, Peggy Eubank) and 30 Dec (Edmund LeGrand); at Pea Island NWR, 28 Dec (Jeff Lewis, Jeff Lemons); and on Portsmouth Island, Carteret Co, NC, 30 Dec (Jeff Beane).

Wilson's Warbler: One was seen in a private subdivision in New Bern, NC, 19 Dec (Matt Gould) through 20 Jan (Gould, Scott Winton).

Bachman's Sparrow: Eight found at Holly Shelter Game Land, Pender Co, NC, during a bird club field trip, 27 Jan (John Fussell, et al.) was a good winter count.

Clay-colored Sparrow: Individuals were seen at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 4 Dec (John Fussell, Scott Winton) and 8 Jan (John Fussell, et al.); during the Greenville, NC, CBC, 18 Dec (*fide* Veronica Pantelidis); along Leggett Rd in Rocky Mount, NC, for the third year in a row, 18 Dec (Ricky Davis); and in the Red Hill area of N Edgecombe Co, NC, again for two of the last three winters, 13 Feb (Davis).

Grasshopper Sparrow: Singles were found on the Greenville, NC, CBC, 18 Dec (*fide* Veronica Pantelidis) and at Pettigrew SP, NC, 7 Jan (Tony DeSantis, Ed Corey).



Henslow's Sparrow, 3 Dec 2011, Craven Co, NC. Photo by Michael McCloy.

Henslow's Sparrow: Winter sightings included one photographed in a power-line cut in the Southwest Prong Flatwoods Natural Area in Craven Co, NC, 3 Dec (Scott Winton, Mike McCloy, David McCloy); two in the same area, 21 Dec (Winton, et al.); one on the Congaree Swamp, SC, CBC, 18 Dec (*fide* John Grego); and one photographed at North River Farms in

Carteret Co, NC, 8 Jan, remaining into spring (John Fussell, Harry Sell, et al.).

Le Conte's Sparrow: At least eleven were present at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, during the period, with five first seen 4 Dec (John Fussell, Scott Winton). Fussell noted that damp conditions and changes in land usage created prime habitat for the species at the site. Two were counted on the Gastonia, NC, CBC, 17 Dec (*vide* Steve Tracey) and one remained in the Gastonia Technology Park until 8 Jan (Mike McCloy). One was found on the Greenville, NC, CBC, 18 Dec (*vide* Veronica Pantelidis). Three were found on Bodie Island, Dare Co, NC, 1 Jan (Steve Shultz). Four were seen in a private neighborhood in New Bern, NC, 20 Jan (Matt Gould).



Le Conte's Sparrow, 11 Dec 2011, Bodie Island, NC. Photo by Ken Christison.

Lincoln's Sparrow: Sightings included two at North River Club golf course in Carteret Co, NC, 30 Nov into early December (John Fussell); one along Merrimon Road, just N of the North River community, Carteret Co, 6 Dec (Fussell); one at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, 11 and 18 Dec (Fussell, Matt Gould); one on the Columbia, SC, CBC, 16 Dec (*vide* Steve Dennis); two at a usual wintering site along Leggett Rd in Rocky Mount, NC, 18 Dec (Ricky Davis); one along Damascus Church Rd in Orange Co, NC, 25 Dec (Andrew Thornton); one in New Bern, NC, 3 Jan (Scott Winton, Gould); one at Archie Elledge WTP in Winston-Salem, NC, 3 Feb (Nathan Gatto); and one in the Red Hill area of N Edgecombe Co, NC, another usual wintering site, 13 Feb (Davis).

Summer Tanager: A female that returned to a feeder in Wilmington, NC, in November continued through 25 Feb (Amy Williamson). An adult male visiting a yard in Raleigh, NC, was seen during the Raleigh CBC for a second year in a row, 17 Dec (Sue Harvey).

Western Tanager: Individuals visited feeders near Pinehurst, Moore Co, NC, 5–11 Jan (Marjorie Ludwig, Mike McCloy, Jeff Lemons, m. obs.); in Myrtle Beach, SC, a female, 23–24 Jan (Sharon & Phil Turner); in Gloucester, NC, in February (*fide* John Fussell); and in N Durham Co, NC, a female, 10 Feb (Scott Winton) through 23 Feb (Nick Flanders).



Western Tanager, 10 Feb 2012,
Durham Co, NC. Photo by
Scott Winton.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: A first-year bird found at Savannah NWR, Jasper Co, SC, 10 Jan (Sandy Beasley, Carroll Richard) continued through mid-January (m. obs.).

Indigo Bunting: One seen during the Rocky Mount, NC, CBC, 16 Dec (*fide* Brian Bockhahn) was unusual for the season.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: One was picked out of a large flock of Red-winged Blackbirds at Pocosin Lakes NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 23 Feb (Ron Clark).

Rusty Blackbird: The wintering flock at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville, SC, peaked at 500+ on 12 Dec (Paul Serridge). Serridge notes that after January 3rd, when 250 were counted, the species “practically disappeared” from the park.

Brewer’s Blackbird: Individuals were found by the silos at Open Ground Farm, 20 Dec (Nick Flanders, Scott Winton, Mark Kosiewski, Mike McCloy, Ali Iyooob, Elisa Enders); near the WTP in the Mills River area of Henderson Co, NC, during the CBC, 1 Jan (*fide* Wayne Forsythe); and in the same area, 26 Feb (Nathan Gatto, Sarah Clark).

Bullock’s Oriole: Two, a male and a female, visited a yard in Hemingway, SC, late November through mid-to-late February (Jay Chandler, m. obs.).

Red Crossbill: Nine were seen on Roan Mountain, NC, 18 Dec (Rick Knight).

Common Redpoll: One visited a feeder near Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC, in mid-January (Mary Spears, *fide* Judy Walker).

Pine Siskin: 170+ were counted on Roan Mountain, NC, 18 Dec (Rick Knight, David Kirschke). Knight attributed the high number to a “good spruce cone crop this season.” Up to 13 visited a feeder in Kings Mountain, NC, in mid-February (Ron Clark).

CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

www.carolinabirdclub.org

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- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
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NC Vice-Presidents	Michael McCloy, Cullowhee, NC	prothonotarywarbler@hotmail.com
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SC Vice-President	Jeff Click, Easley, SC	jeffreyclick@yahoo.com
Secretary	Phil Fowler, Concord, NC	janmfowler@gmail.com
Treasurer	Judi Durr, Kernersville, NC	judibird904@yahoo.com
NC Members-at-Large	David McCloy, Pinehurst, NC	dmcclloy@mindspring.com
	John Voigt, Emerald Isle, NC	jvoigt@coastalnet.com
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	Karyl Gabriel, Huntersville, NC	kmccclusky@yahoo.com
SC Members-at-Large	Don Faulkner, Easley, SC	donrfaulkner@aol.com
	Irvin Pitts, Lexington, SC	pittsjam@windstream.net

EX-OFFICIO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chat Editor	Kent Fiala, Hillsborough, NC	chat@carolinabirdclub.org
Newsletter Editor	Steve Shultz, Apex, NC	newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org
Web site Editor	Kent Fiala, Hillsborough, NC	webeditor@carolinabirdclub.org
Immediate Past President	Taylor Piephoff, Charlotte, NC	PiephoffT@aol.com

HEADQUARTERS SECRETARY

Katherine Higgins
6236 Teal St. Unit 8-D, Wilmington, NC 28403
hq@carolinabirdclub.org

The Chat

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