

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Summer 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.

Reports published herein may include sightings that require review by the state's bird records committee. Such reports are not considered accepted records until, and unless, they are so ruled by the committee.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: In North Carolina, where sightings of this species are rare, two were seen by refuge staff at Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), 19 June (*vide* Jerry Fringeli), but were never relocated. Six photographed in flight over Mullet Pond, Huntington Beach State Park (SP), SC, 16 July (Alyce Lanoue, *vide* Sharon & Phil Turner) were a good find for the northern part of the SC coast.



Greater White-fronted Goose, 27 July 2012, Charleston Southern University, SC.
Photo by Pam Ford.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Individuals were seen on Lake Junaluska, Waynesville, NC, 23 June (Nathan Gatto) through 11 July (Cherrie Sneed); with Canada Geese in a residential area on Lake Hickory, just N of Hickory, NC, 27–28 July (Dwayne Martin); and returning to Charleston Southern University, North Charleston, SC, 24 July (*fide* Matthew Campbell). Because this species has never previously been documented in our region during the summer, the origin of these geese is questionable.

Mottled Duck: One was photographed at Twin Lakes, Sunset Beach, Brunswick Co, NC, 7 July (Ali Iyoob). Up to three Mottled Ducks have wintered on Twin Lakes and adjacent Lake Medcalf in recent years, but this sighting is the site's first during summer.

Blue-winged Teal: A drake was photographed on Salem Lake, Forsyth Co, NC, 17 June (Martin Wall).

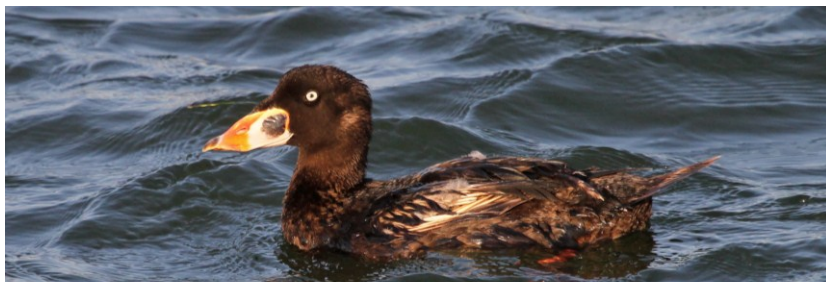
Northern Shoveler: Six at Bear Island Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Colleton Co, SC, 6 July (Ann Truesdale, Cherrie Sneed) provided a very unusual mid-summer sighting.

Northern Pintail: A female was seen at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 21 June (Audrey Whitlock, Peggy Eubank) and 23 June (Jeff Lewis).

Ring-necked Duck: A drake was photographed on Lake Reidsville, Rockingham Co, NC, 14 June (Martin Wall), where it had remained since late March.

Common Eider: The female that lingered at Oregon Inlet, Dare Co, NC, through the spring remained until at least 27 June (*fide* Jeff Lewis).

Surf Scoter: A near-adult male apparently moved up the NC coast in late June, with sightings made off Emerald Isle, 24 June (Scott Winton); off



Immature male Surf Scoter, 28 June 2012, Oregon Inlet, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

nearby Fort Macon, Atlantic Beach, 25 June (Sue Edwards); and at Oregon Inlet, 28 June (Jeff Lewis).

Black Scoter: One, possibly sick or injured, was photographed off Ocean Isle Beach, Brunswick Co, NC, 31 July (Walt Kent).

Common Merganser: This species apparently bred again this year on the Green River in Polk Co, NC, where nine birds were reported 3 July (*vide* Jeff Lemons) and three were seen on the Lake Adger portion of the river, 15 July (Lemons).

Red-breasted Merganser: A female seen at the W end of Huggins Island, Swansboro, NC, 9–10 June (Ginger Travis) was somewhat late to depart.

Common Loon: Summer sightings included one photographed on the Cape Fear River from Brunswick Town, NC, 2 June (John Ennis); three, one of which was in breeding plumage, around Swansboro, NC, in early June (Ginger Travis); one, injured, photographed on Seabrook Island, SC, 28 June (*vide* David Gardner); and one at Lake James SP, Burke Co, NC, 6 July (Jamie Cameron).

Herald (Trindade) Petrel: Light-morph individuals were seen during pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 2 June and 7 July (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: A rare from-shore sighting was made at the jetty at Huntington Beach SP, SC, where it was photographed, 18 June (Kyle Fitz, Kathleen O'Grady, Miriam Oudejans, Jing Zhang).

Wood Stork: 161 nests were counted in the long-established breeding colony at Lays Lake, Columbus Co, NC, this summer (Sara Schweitzer). Two other breeding sites were noted in NC this year—one with about 20 nests on private property just E of Tabor City, NC; and the other, first noted last summer, along the Black River on the border of Bladen Co and Pender Co, NC (*vide* Schweitzer).

Masked Booby: An adult Masked Booby was photographed during a fishing trip out of Hatteras, NC, 12 June (Brian Patteson).

Brown Booby: A juvenile Brown Booby was discovered on the jetty at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 8 June (Brittany Hoffnagle, *vide* Chris Hill). Multiple birders visited the site until the bird was last reported the morning of 15 June (Thomas McNeil, Cathy Myers). Individual juveniles were also



Juvenile Brown Booby, 10 June 2012, Huntington Beach State Park, SC. Photo by Jeff Lemons.

photographed off Hatteras, NC—on a fishing charter 12 June (Brian Patteson) and during a pelagic trip 7 July (Patteson, et al.).

Anhinga: Suspected of breeding in the White Oak Creek arm of Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, one adult male Anhinga was seen 2 June (Harry LeGrand) and two birds were seen there 17 July (Nick Flanders, et al.).

American White Pelican: One, probably the same bird seen there in May, remained at Pea Island NWR, NC, 3 June (Richard Veit) and was relocated at nearby Oregon Inlet, 26 June (Jonathan Cooley).

Reddish Egret: Sightings included an adult photographed on Shackleford Banks, NC, in early June (*fide* Ali Iyoob); an immature on the W end of Oak Island, NC, 16 June (Sharon Smart); three at Pea Island NWR, NC, 18 June (Ed Smith, *fide* Audrey Whitlock); an adult near the jetty at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 25 June (Paul Serridge); an immature on Mullet Pond at Huntington Beach, 26 June (Serridge); three immatures at the S end of Litchfield Beach, SC, 29 June (Serridge); two, including one white-morph, near Johnson Creek Inlet, Hunting Island SP, SC, 14 July (Simon Harvey); and three at Mary's House Pond, Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 27 July (Willy Hutcheson).

Glossy Ibis: 75 near the ferry terminal on Cedar Island, Carteret Co, NC, 15 July (John Fussell, Jack Fennell) provided a good count for that site. Fussell noted that this species was more common in the county this year than in previous years.

Roseate Spoonbill: Some of the higher counts in SC were 26 at Bear Island WMA, 14 June (Chris Feeney); 18 at Savannah NWR, 23 June (Jack Colcolough); and seven at Mullet Pond, Huntington Beach SP, SC, 29 June (Sharon & Phil Turner). Three found with other waders in a muddy portion of a soybean field in Orangeburg Co, SC, 29 June (David Weathers) were unusual for a site away from the coast. In NC, one was seen at the Salt Pond, Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 3–10 July (Jeff Lemons, Neal Moore, m. obs.) and two juveniles were found at Twin Lakes, Sunset Beach, NC, 7 July (Thierry Besançon).



Roseate Spoonbills, 14 June 2012, Bear Island WMA, SC. Photo by Chris Feeney.

Swallow-tailed Kite: A count of 200+ over farm fields in Allendale Co, SC, 17 July (Buddy Campbell, Ken Scott) was remarkable. Farther inland than is typical, six were seen over Townville, SC, 24 and 26 June (Matt Johnson). Seven were seen over a field off NC-87, near Lock and Dam No. 1 on the Cape Fear River, Bladen Co, NC, 24 July (John Ennis), in an area where the species is suspected to breed. Other NC sightings were of vagrant individuals over NC-12 just S of Salvo, Dare Co, 4 June (Wayne Forsythe, Simon Harvey, J. B. Hines); I-40 near Old Fort, McDowell Co, NC, 13 July (Michael Welch); and Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, NC, photographed 15 July (Uwe Heine).



Swallow-tailed Kite, 19 July 2012, Millet, SC. Photo by Phil Fowler.

Mississippi Kite: 282+ along Laurel Hill Drive at Savannah NWR, SC, 7 July (Ron & Garnet Underwood) provided a high count. Three were seen in a neighborhood in Greensboro, NC, 12 June (Scott DePue) where the species has nested for the past nine years. Locally unusual were individuals in flight over Forsyth Co, NC, 12 June (DePue); a site just W of Morehead City, NC, 14 June (Bob Holmes); and Prairie Ridge Ecostation in Raleigh, NC, 20 June (Nick Flanders, Scott Winton).

Northern Harrier: Sporadic summer reports were of one over Shackleford Banks, NC, in mid-June (*vide* Robert Meehan); a female in flight over Jane Bald and Round Bald, Roan Mountain, and one over American Turf Farm near Creswell, NC, 29 July (Jeff Lewis).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Possibly breeding in our region were individuals in Cary, NC, an adult, 4 June (Mike Tove); in Clayton, NC, an adult, 16 June (Kurt Barnhart, Tove); and along South Fork New River, at Absher Rd, Ashe Co, NC, 10 July (Ed Corey, Nick Flanders, Paul Taillie, et al.).

Cooper's Hawk: For the second year in a row, a pair nested only a few hundred yards from the ocean on Sullivan's Island, Charleston Co, SC, in June (Hal Currey).

Broad-winged Hawk: At least two were observed in a SE portion of Croatan National Forest (NF), near Mill Creek, NC, throughout the summer (Jack Fennell), suggestive of breeding at that site again this year.

Black Rail: Two were heard in the short grass marsh at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 14 June (Chris Feeney).

Virginia Rail: The individual at Salem Lake, Winston-Salem, NC, first heard during the spring, remained until at least 13 June (John Haire).

Purple Gallinule: Breeding was confirmed at two sites in SC—at Donnelley WMA, Colleton Co, where five birds, including two chicks, were seen 27 July (Willy Hutcheson); and at Savannah NWR, Jasper Co, where multiple adults and juveniles were photographed 31 July (Cathy Miller). One in the swamp behind Mullet Pond at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 7 June (Stu Gibeau) was a good find for that site.



Juvenile Purple Gallinule, 31 July 2012, Savannah NWR, SC. Photo by Cathy Miller.

American Coot: 240 at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 23 June (Jeff Lewis) represented a very large number for our region in summer.

Limpkin: One photographed at Savannah NWR, Jasper Co, SC, 28 July (Phillip Hodgkins) provided our region with its first Limpkin sighting in several years.

Black-bellied Plover: One found at the sod farm along Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 30 July (Dennis Kent, John Scavetto) was joined by a second bird, 31 July (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey).

American Golden-Plover: One at the sod farm along Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 30 July (Dennis Kent, John Scavetto) and 31 July (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey) was somewhat early.

Semipalmated Plover: 40+ at the sod farm along Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 31 July (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey) was a great count for the mountain region.

Black-necked Stilt: Locally unusual were one or two near the ferry terminal at Cedar Island, NC, 11 July through 29 July (m. obs.) and one at the Davis Impoundment, Carteret Co, NC, 29 July (John Fussell, Jack Fennell).



Black-necked Stilt, 12 July 2012, Cedar Island, NC. Photo by Phil Fowler.

Spotted Sandpiper: A count of 28 near the ferry terminal at Cedar Island, NC, 8 July (John Fussell, Jack Fennell) was rather large for that mid-summer date.

Upland Sandpiper: The first of the fall migrants arriving were two at the sod farm along Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 27 July (Todd Arcos, Wayne Forsythe) and 13 at American Turf Farm near Creswell, NC, 29 July (Jeff Lewis, Audrey Whitlock).

Whimbrel: Providing the sixth record from the mountain region, and second from that specific site, a Whimbrel was seen and photographed at the sod farm along Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 27–30 July (Wayne Forsythe, Todd Arcos).

Sanderling: A rare transient in the mountains, a Sanderling was found on the shore of Lake James SP, Burke Co, NC, 22 July (Jamie Cameron).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: One at the ferry terminal pond on Cedar Island, NC, 8 July (John Fussell, Jack Fennell) through 13 July (John Voigt) was unusual for mid-summer.



Whimbrel, 29 July 2012, Mills River, NC. Photo by Phil Fowler.

White-rumped Sandpiper: One at the ferry terminal pond on Cedar Island, NC, 8 July (John Fussell, Jack Fennell) through 17 July (Jeff Lemons) was unusual for mid-summer.

Pectoral Sandpiper: Ten at the sod farm along Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 28–30 July (Wayne Forsythe, Dennis Kent, John Scavetto) provided a good count for the early date.

Stilt Sandpiper: Sightings included two at the ferry terminal pond on Cedar Island, NC, 22 July (John Fussell); four at the Brant Island Spoil Site, off Morehead City, NC, 30 July (Fussell); and two at the sod farm along Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 31 July (Wayne Forsythe).



Stilt Sandpiper, 11 August 2012, Henderson County, NC. Photo by Wayne Forsythe.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Three at the sod farm along Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 27 July (Wayne Forsythe, Todd Arcos) were quite early.

Ruff: A male in partial breeding plumage was found at the ferry terminal pond on Cedar Island, NC, 8 July (John Fussell, Jack Fennell). This Eurasian stray was seen and photographed by many until last seen 17 July (Judith Fortney, Jeff Lemons).

Short-billed Dowitcher: Seven at the sod farm along Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 31 July (Wayne Forsythe) were a good find for the mountains.

Least Tern: A nesting colony was found on a rooftop in Camden, Kershaw Co, SC, 6 June (Lex Glover, Robbie Speaks). 25 miles N-NW of the nesting site at Shaw Air Force Base in Sumter, SC, this nesting site is one of the farthest inland ever noted in our region.

Black Tern: One over Lake James, Burke Co, NC, 30 June (Jamie Cameron) was early.

Roseate Tern: One was seen during a fishing trip off Hatteras, NC, 6 June (Brian Patteson). National Park Service staff photographed two, one leg-banded, on the beach near the lighthouse at Cape Lookout, NC, 21 June (Felicia Nawn, *vide* Jon Altman).



Ruff, 12 July 2012, Cedar Island, NC. Photo by Phil Fowler.



Roseate Terns (with Sandwich Tern), 21 June 2012, Cape Lookout, NC. Photo by Felicia Nawn.

Black-billed Cuckoo: This species was well-reported in pocosin habitat of eastern NC this summer, with breeding confirmed at two sites. In the Croatan NF, one was heard singing just NW of Catfish Lake, 6 and 11 June (John Fussell); one was heard singing just SE of Catfish Lake, 7 June (Fussell); two were heard singing at separate sites along Catfish Lake Rd, 17 June (Fussell, Jack Fennell); and an adult was observed feeding a juvenile, with a second adult in the area, along Catfish Lake Rd, 28 June (Fussell, Scott Winton). At North River Farms in Carteret County, two or three were heard singing 24 June (Fussell, Fennell). Fussell notes that attempts to relocate the birds in July were largely unsuccessful, and wonders if the birds had already left the area or simply become more secretive. Fledglings were photographed at Pocosin Lakes NWR in July (Todd Pusser, *vide* Susan Campbell).

Merlin: One on Seabrook Island, Charleston Co, SC, 6 July (Jim Edwards, Jane Chew) was extremely unusual for the mid-summer.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: One was photographed along the Bald Knob Ridge Trail, just off the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) near the entrance to Mt Mitchell SP, Yancey Co, NC, 5 June (John Gerwin, Brian O'Shea, Mark Simpson, Marilyn Westphal).

Alder Flycatcher: Six to eight were seen around Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, NC, throughout the season (Rick Knight).

Willow Flycatcher: One was seen and heard “fitz-bew-ing” at a willow-lined pond at Prairie Ridge Ecostation in Raleigh, NC, 18–30 June (Brian O'Shea, m. obs.).



Willow Flycatcher, 30 June 2012, Raleigh, NC. Photo by Kent Fiala.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: The pair seen for a third straight year along Gunter Rd near Piedmont, SC, remained until at least 21 July (*vide* Paul Serridge). The landowner reported seeing juveniles at the site in late June / early July (*vide* Serridge). A nest site was newly discovered near South Pointe High School in Rock Hill, SC, where two adults and four juveniles were seen, with one of the adults feeding the juveniles, 14 July (J. D. Bricken, Will Stuart, Jill Palmer).

Horned Lark: Peak summer counts at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, were 40 on 1 July and again on 29 July (John Fussell, Jack Fennell).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Three were found at 1400–1700 feet, a low elevation for this species during the breeding season, near Rose Mountain in the Pisgah NF, Burke Co, NC, in early June (Merrill Lynch).

House Wren: Locally unusual during the breeding season, two House Wrens were seen and heard singing in a yard in Greenville, NC, 23 June (Nick & Veronica Pantelidis).



Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, 15 July 2012, Rock Hill, SC. Photo by Phil Fowler.

Carolina Wren: Two seen at 5900 feet on Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, NC, 22 and 29 June (Rick Knight) were thought to be in post-breeding dispersal.

Swainson's Thrush: Suggestive of breeding in the area were the two or three regularly heard along the BRP in the Black Mountains, Yancey Co, NC, in late May through 20 June (Mark Simpson, Marilyn Westphal).

Hermit Thrush: Known to breed in the higher spruce-fir forests of the NC mountains, Hermit Thrushes were tallied at ten at Mt Mitchell SP, Yancey Co, 21 July (Nick Flanders, Eric Harrold); six at Grandfather Mountain, Avery Co, 22 July (Flanders, Harrold); and five to six on Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, throughout the season (Rick Knight).

Cedar Waxwing: Summer sightings made in the eastern portion of our region included pairs at Carolina Sandhills NWR, SC, 23 June (Ali Iyob, Mark Kosiewski, Robert Meehan) and at Prairie Ridge Ecostation in Raleigh, NC, 28 June (Brian O'Shea); and individuals along



Mourning Warbler, 5 June 2012, Richland Balsam Overlook, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

Breeding Bird Survey routes in Youngsville, NC, 4 June (Brian Bockhahn, Kyle Kittelberger) and Sampson Co, NC, in early June (Clyde Sorenson).

Northern Waterthrush: One on Sullivan's Island, Charleston Co, SC, 10 July (Will Post) was quite early.

Mourning Warbler: A singing adult male was found at the Richland Balsam Overlook, milepost 431 along the BRP,

border of Haywood Co and Jackson Co, NC, 5 June (Jeff Lewis). The bird was seen and photographed by many, though never with a mate, through 19 June (Jesse Pope).

Magnolia Warbler: Suggestive of breeding in our region were one to two regularly heard and seen along the Bald Knob Ridge Trail, off the BRP near the entrance to Mt Mitchell SP, Yancey Co, NC, 24 May through 28 June (Mark Simpson, Marilyn Westphal) and again 6 July (Kelly Hughes); at least three singing males on Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, NC, throughout the season (Rick Knight); and up to three seen and heard along the Old Mitchell Trail at Mt Mitchell SP, Yancey Co, NC, 3–7 July (Chris Kelly, Simpson, Westphal).

Vesper Sparrow: At least three pairs nested on Round Bald, Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, NC, during the season (Rick Knight). One was seen in the Elk Knob Game Land, Watauga Co, NC, 14 June (Ron Morris, et al.).

Lark Sparrow: An adult was seen in the Sandhills Game Lands, Scotland Co, NC, 13 June (Ali Iyoob, Mark Kosiewski, Robert Meehan).

Dickcissel: One's nocturnal flight call was recorded over Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, 3 June (*vide* Kim Brand). The peak count of singing males at North River Farms, Carteret Co, NC, was 27 on 24 June (John Fussell, Jack Fennell).

Eastern Meadowlark: One found on Round Bald, Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, NC, 19 June (Rick Knight) was the first ever seen at that site during the summer.

Red Crossbill: Two of the better counts from the NC mountains were eight in the Middle Prong Wilderness, Haywood Co, 9 June (Mark Simpson, Marilyn Westphal) and five on Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, 21 June (Rick Knight).