

# BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Winter 2014-2015, unless otherwise noted)

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

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

*Reports 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 bird record's committee. Such reports are not considered accepted records until, and unless, they are so ruled by the committee.*

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Record Committee, **CBC** – Christmas Bird Count, **Co** – County, **et al.** – (*et alius*) and others, **Ft** – Fort, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **Mt** – Mount, **NC** – North Carolina, **NM** – National Monument, **NP** – National Park, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Well-reported this winter, Greater White-fronted Geese were especially numerous in western NC towards the end of the period. 30 around Ecusta Pond in Brevard, Transylvania Co, NC, 11 Feb (Simon Thompson), 14 Feb (Steve Ritt), and 22 Feb (Jerry Griggs), was the second highest count ever made in the mountain region. Other sightings made in mountains and western Piedmont of NC included two on Lake Junaluska, Haywood Co, 7 Dec (Robert Johnson) through 31 Jan (Vincent Weber); one amongst Canada Geese at Farris Memorial Park, Rockingham Co, 7-10 Dec (Ron Morris, Martin Wall, et al.); four at Farris Memorial Park, 20 Jan (Wall); one at the WTP along NC-191 in Henderson Co, 25 Jan (Michael Plaster) into March (Wayne Forsythe, Simon Harvey, m. obs.); eight at Kituwah Mound, Swain Co, 10 Feb (Andy Zivinsky); six on W. Kerr Scott Reservoir, Wilkes Co, 19 Feb (Jamie Adams, Guy McGrane) through 22 Feb (Eric Harrold, Issac Kerns, et al.); four at YMCA Camp Harrison (limited access), Wilkes Co, 22 Feb (Harrold); and one on a pond in western Alexander Co, 24 Feb (Dwayne Martin). Strangely, two seen in Washington Co, during the Pettigrew SP CBC, 30 Dec (Ed Corey) provided the only report from the NC coastal plain. In SC, sightings included six on the Santee NWR CBC, 20 Dec (fide Dennis Forsythe); three in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, 30 Dec (Craig Watson); one on the campus of Charleston Southern University, Charleston Co, 24 Jan (Pam Ford) into February (m. obs.); and ten at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, 27 Feb (Craig Watson).



Greater White-fronted Geese, 20 January 2015, Rockingham Co, NC.  
Photo by Martin Wall.

**Snow Goose:** 30,573 on the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC, 29 Dec (fide Susan Campbell) and 57,255 on the Pettigrew SP CBC, 30 Dec (fide Doug LeQuire) were impressive totals. West of the species' typical range in NC were two at multiple sites in Wilkes Co, 4 Dec (Dwayne Martin) into spring (m. obs.); a dark-morph bird on the upper end of Falls Lake in Durham Co, during the Durham CBC, 14 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); one on Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, 17 Dec (Lou Skrabec); one at the WTP along NC-191 in Henderson Co, 17 Dec (Marilyn Westphal) into February (m. obs.); and one around Yates Mill County Park, Wake Co, 5 Jan (Rebecca Cope, et al.) through 27 Feb (Mike Turner). Like Greater White-fronted Geese, good numbers of Snow Geese were seen at multiple sites in the NC mountains towards the end of the period—two on Lake Osceola, Henderson Co, 22 Jan (Simon Thompson) into spring (m. obs.); three dark-morph birds at Kituwah Mound, Swain Co, 7 Feb (Jeremey Hyman); 80, the highest count ever made in the NC mountains, in flight over Butler Bridge Rd in Mills River, Henderson Co, 9 Feb (Wayne Forsythe); 13, including ten dark-morph birds, at Kituwah Mound, 10 Feb (Andy Zivinsky); two on a pond at Maggie Valley Club & Resort, Haywood Co, 14 Feb (Robert Johnson); and 20 in flight over Brevard, Transylvania Co, 14 Feb (Steve Ritt). Sightings in SC included a dark-morph bird at Bolton's Landing, Charleston Co, 2 Jan through 14 Feb (Pam Ford); seven on the Sea Islands CBC, 5 Jan (fide Aaron Given); and two at Berry Shoals Pond in Spartanburg Co, 26-27 Feb (Simon Harvey).

**Ross's Goose:** Sightings of this rare goose have increased in recent years. As usual, the huge flocks of Snow Geese that winter around the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR in Washington Co, NC, held the highest number of Ross's Geese, with 21, a new record high count, seen there 11 Jan (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand, Jeff Phippen). Other sightings in NC included one at Deer Lake in Brevard, Transylvania Co, 30 Nov (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey) through 7 Dec (Aaron Steed); two at different sites in Wilkes Co, in early December (Walt Kent, Dwayne Martin, Barbara Miller, m. obs.); one at Farris Memorial Park in Rockingham Co, 7-11 Dec (Marty Wall); one in northern Durham Co, 14-28 Dec (Tom Krakauer, Scott Winton, et al.); two at the Oak Valley Golf Club in Davie Co, 15-23 Dec (David & Susan Disher, et al.); one at Veterans Park in New Hanover Co, 15-19 Dec (Andy Fairbanks, m. obs.); five in Dare Co, during the Bodie-Pea Island CBC, 28 Dec (fide Paul Sykes); one in northwestern Forsyth Co, 2-5 Jan (Shelley Rutkin, et al.); and one at the WTP along NC-191 in Henderson Co, 10 Jan (Glenda & Jon Smith) through 21 Feb (Jerry Griggs). Sightings made in SC included one on the Clemson CBC, 20 Dec (fide Drew Lanham); one with Canada Geese at The Market Common in Myrtle Beach, Horry Co, 2 Jan (Dick & Dorothy Rosche); two in the Del Webb Community in Berkeley Co, 10 Feb (Charlene King) through 22 Feb (Dennis Forsythe); and two on a pond in West Ashley, Charleston Co, 28 Feb (Chet Morse) into March (m. obs.).



Ross's Goose, 05 January 2015, Forsyth Co, NC. Photo by David Disher.

**Brant:** 4,015 on the Portsmouth Island CBC, 29 Dec (fide Peter Vankevich) was an unusually high count and the sixth highest total on any 2014 Audubon CBC.

**Cackling Goose:** One of the more remarkable events this winter was the residence of ten Cackling Geese in a relatively urban area around Salem Lake in Winston-Salem, Forsyth Co, NC, 31 Dec (John Haire) through 24 Feb (m. obs.). It's interesting that this new record count for the Carolinas was made in an urban area of the Piedmont rather than a wildlife refuge in the coastal plain. Other sightings, all in NC, included up to three at the pond at the Beasley Rd exit along US-64 in Washington Co, throughout the winter (m. obs.); one in northwestern Forsyth Co, 8-13 Dec (Cynthia Donaldson, Shelley Rutkin, et al.); two in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, Washington Co, 11 Jan (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand, Jeff Pippen); and two on Lake Hickory in Alexander Co, 21 Feb (Dwayne Martin).

**Trumpeter Swan:** Two were seen in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, Hyde Co, NC, in January—an adult photographed in the company of Tundra Swans, 4 Jan (Keith Ramos) and an immature bird seen 11 Jan (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand, Jeff Pippen). There are only two previous accepted records of this species in NC.

**Tundra Swan:** 200 at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 27 Feb (Craig Watson) was a remarkable count for a site so far south.

**Eurasian Wigeon:** Sightings, all of adult drakes, included two at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, during its CBC, 29 Dec (fide Susan



Campbell); one at Donnelly WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 15 Jan (Keith McCullough, Chet Morse); one at Savannah NWR, Jasper Co, SC, 24 Jan (Eric Haskell, Lois Stacey, et al.) through 16 Feb (Kathleen O'Grady); and one at Santee Coastal Reserve, Charleston Co, SC, 9 Feb (Steve Compton, et al.) through 25 Feb (David Gardner).

**American Wigeon:** 17,058 on the ACE Basin CBC, 28 Dec (fide David Chamberlain) was a record number for that count as well as the highest total of any 2014 Audubon CBC.

**Mottled Duck:** 1,099 on the ACE Basin CBC, 28 Dec (fide David Chamberlain) was a record number for that count as well as the highest total of any 2014 Audubon CBC. In NC, where the species is rare, one was seen on a pond adjacent to the NC Aquarium at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, 2 Jan (Ron Clark) into spring (m. obs.).

**“Eurasian (Common) Teal”:** Formerly considered a separate species, individual Eurasian Teals were found amongst Green-winged Teals at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, during its CBC, 29 Dec (fide Susan Campbell); at the Bodie Island Lighthouse Pond, Dare Co, NC, 1 Jan (Jeff Lemons, et al.); and at Alligator River NWR, Dare Co, NC, 31 Jan (Derb Carter, Jesse Pope) and 7 Feb (Dick Barmore, et al.).

**Common Eider:** This rare winter visitor was reliably seen at two sites along the South Carolina coast during the mid-to-late winter. Off Edisto Beach SP, Colleton Co, four eiders, one adult drake and three immature drakes, were seen 14 Dec (Sidney Gauthreaux) and 17 Dec (Cherrie Sneed); two, one adult drake and one immature drake, were seen from mid-December (m. obs.) through 19 Feb (Aija Konrad, Sneed); and one, the immature drake, remained through 28 Mar (Jack Rogers). Around Murrells Inlet in Georgetown Co, an adult drake found during the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC, 30 Dec (fide Chris Hill) was seen and photographed by many until last seen 2 Mar (Ryan Justice). Sightings along the North Carolina coast included three in flight off Johnnie Mercer's Pier in Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover Co, 26 Dec (Derb Carter); three around Hatteras Landing, Dare Co, during the Cape Hatteras CBC, 27 Dec (fide Pat Moore); a drake off Carolina Beach, New Hanover Co, 9 Jan (Mark Jones); one off Johnnie Mercer's Pier, 26 Jan (Sam Cooper, Sherry Lane); an immature drake off North Topsail Beach, Onslow Co, 27 Jan (Gilbert Grant); one at Hatteras Landing, 20 Feb (Nathan Gatto); and four, two hens and two immature drakes, off Cape Point, Dare Co, 28 Feb (Brian Patteson).

**Harlequin Duck:** One was seen during the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC, 4 Jan (fide Ron Clark). Two were seen at the south end of the Bonner Bridge in Dare Co, NC, 12 Feb (Jim Gould). An immature drake was seen foraging around the pilings of several fishing piers in southern Dare Co, NC, during the late winter—at the Rodanthe Pier, 25 Jan (Ricky Davis, David Howell) through 8 Feb (Sherry Lane); at the Frisco Pier, 14 Feb (Jeff Lemons);

and at the Avon Fishing Pier, 21 Feb (Michael Gosselin).

**Surf Scoter:** Five, including one adult drake, on Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, NC, 3 Dec (Andrew Thornton) and one first-winter drake at Swann WTP in Forsyth Co, NC, 25 Jan (Mike Conway, Phil Dickinson, et al.) were good finds for those inland sites.

**White-winged Scoter:** Eight on Lake Julian, Buncombe Co, NC, 5 Dec (Wayne Forsythe) may have been the highest count ever made in our mountains. A hen photographed at Indian Bluff Recreation Park, Orangeburg Co, SC, 20 Dec (Sidney Gathreaux) was a good find for that inland site. Like last year, an influx of White-winged Scoters occurred on lakes in the western half of NC during the late winter, probably due to the freezing of lakes north of our region. Those sightings included nine on Lake Hickory, border of Alexander Co and Catawba Co, 16 Feb (Dwayne Martin); a first-winter bird on Belews Lake, Rockingham Co, 16 Feb (Martin Wall); one on Lake James, Burke Co, 22 Feb (Martin); two on Lake Tillery, border of Montgomery Co and Stanly Co, 22 Feb (Mike McCloy); four, including three adult drakes, on Lake Brandt, Guilford Co, 25 Feb (Henry Link); three on Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, 25 Feb (Brendan Klick); three first-winter drakes at Archie Elledge WTP, Forsyth Co, 28 Feb (Phil Dickinson); and 11 on Lake Brandt, 28 Feb (Link).

**Black Scoter:** One found on the Clemson CBC, 20 Dec (fide Drew Lanham) was a good find for that inland site and a first for that count.

**Long-tailed Duck:** Rare inland sightings, all from NC, included two, a drake and a hen, on Buckhorn Reservoir, Wilson Co, 7 Dec (Ricky Davis); a hen on Salem Lake, Forsyth Co, 31 Dec (Marbry Hopkins, et al.); a hen on Lookout Shoals Lake, Catawba Co, 28 Jan (Dwayne Martin); a drake on a golf course pond in Rockingham Co, 20 Feb (Martin Wall); a drake at YMCA Camp Harrison (limited access), Wilkes Co, 22 Feb (Eric Harrold); and one on Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, 28 Feb (David Howell). 14 at Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 15 Feb (Sam Cooper) was an impressive count for that area. Along the SC coast, two, a drake and a hen, were seen at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, 25 Jan (Pam Ford, et al.); one was seen at Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, 7 Feb (David McLean) and 8 Feb (Paul Serridge); and three were seen at Murrells Inlet, 27 Feb (Cherrie Sneed).

**Common Goldeneye:** Two drakes stuck around awhile on Lake Junaluska, Haywood Co, NC, 18 Dec (Connie & Stan Wulkowicz) through 19 Jan (Shawn Kurtzman). Like last year, there was an influx of Common Goldeneyes into our region during the late winter, probably due to the freezing of lakes north of our region. A few of the higher counts were up to four hens at Swann WTP in Forsyth Co, NC, 17 Jan through 19 Feb (Teresa Edwards, John Haire, et al.); 13 on the Newport River near Morehead City, Carteret Co, NC, 18 Jan (John Fussell, Jeannie Kraus, et al.); four at Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, SC, 16 Feb (Keith McCullough); six on Lake Hickory in Alexander Co, NC,

21 Feb (Dwayne Martin); and 15 on W. Kerr Scott Reservoir, Wilkes Co, NC, 25 Feb (Guy McGrane).

**Common Merganser:** 881 on Lake Phelps, Washington Co, NC, during the Pettigrew SP CBC, 30 Dec (fide Doug LeQuire) provided a remarkable tally for our region and a record number for that count. Rare along the coast, a Common Merganser was seen on the Bogue Sound in Morehead City, Carteret Co, NC, 11 Dec (John Fussell) and 16 Dec (Craig Harms); and four were seen on South Pond, Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 17 Jan (Jeff Lewis). Like other diving ducks and similar to the events of last year, an influx of Common Mergansers occurred on lakes in the western half of our region during the late winter. Those sightings included three on Lake Norman, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 8 Jan (Tom Sanders, Rob Van Epps); six on Lake Bowen, Spartanburg Co, SC, 30 Jan (Roger Smith); six drakes on Salem Lake, Forsyth Co, NC, 20-22 Feb (John Haire, et al.); 24 on W. Kerr Scott Reservoir, Wilkes Co, NC, 22 Feb (Issac Kerns); eight amongst the two lakes north of Greensboro, Guilford Co, NC, 26 Feb (Henry Link); 13 at Riverbend Park in Catawba Co, NC, 28 Feb (Dwayne Martin); and three at Lake Junaluska, Haywood Co, NC, 28 Feb (James Poling, Connie & Stan Wulkowicz, et al.).

**Red-throated Loon:** Rare inland, individual Red-throated Loons were found on the Southern Lake Norman CBC, 14 Dec (fide Taylor Piephoff); at the Swann WTP in Forsyth Co, NC, 18 Feb (Nathan Gatto, John Haire); on Falls Lake in Wake Co, NC, 21 Feb (Thierry Besançon); and on Lake Robinson, Greenville Co, SC, 25 Feb (Derek Aldrich).

**Pacific Loon:** Individuals were found off Johnnie Mercer's Pier in Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover Co, NC, 26-27 Dec (Derb Carter), and 31 Jan (Sam Cooper); and off the beach just north of Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 25 Jan (Ricky Davis, David Howell).

**Common Loon:** 730 on the Camp Lejeune CBC, 18 Dec (fide John DeLuca) was the highest count made on any 2014 Audubon CBC.

**Red-necked Grebe:** Sightings included one on Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, NC, intermittently throughout the period (Henry Link, Lou Skrabec, m. obs.); two on Lake Marion in Orangeburg Co, SC, 10 Dec (Dick & Dorothy Rosche); one on Falls Lake in Durham Co, NC, 11 Dec (Andrew Thornton); two off the Oceanana Pier in Atlantic Beach, Carteret Co, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 14 Dec (Ricky Davis); one on the Southern Lake Norman CBC, 14 Dec (fide Taylor Piephoff); one at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 3 Jan (Matthew Sarver) through 18 Jan (Steve Calver); one on the ocean off Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 1 Feb (Davis); one off Kill Devil Hills, Dare Co, NC, 4 Feb (Sam Cooper); one on Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, 16-20 Feb (Tom Snow, m. obs.); one off of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, during a pelagic trip, 16 Feb (Brian Patteson, Chloe Walker, et al.); two on W. Kerr Scott Reservoir, Wilkes Co, NC, 20 Feb (Jesse Pope, et al.); and two on Lake Tillery, border of Montgomery Co and Stanly

Co, NC, 22 Feb (Mike McCloy).

**Eared Grebe:** Two on the Pamlico County CBC, 16 Dec (fide Liz Lathrop) were new to that count. Individuals were found at Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 16 Jan (Sam Cooper); off the beach just north of Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 25 Jan (Ricky Davis, David Howell); off North Topsail Beach, Onslow Co, NC, 27 Jan (Gilbert Grant) through 28 Feb (Sherry Lane); and in a small pond near the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, Dare Co, NC, 13 Feb (Keith Camburn).

**Northern Fulmar:** Counts of six were made on pelagic trips out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 7 Feb & 14 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Manx Shearwater:** 16 on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 14 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.) was a good count.

**Wood Stork:** A few of the higher counts on CBCs in South Carolina were 82 on the Lowcountry CBC, 17 Dec (fide Ken Scott); 90 on the Winyah Bay CBC, 18 Dec (fide Lex Glover); and 83 on the ACE Basin CBC, 28 Dec (David Chamberlain). One on the mainland near Holden Beach, Brunswick Co, NC, 14 Jan (Debbie Kirby) was unusual for NC during the mid-winter.

**Great Cormorant:** Sightings from NC included an immature bird on a channel marker at Beaufort Inlet, Carteret Co, 5 Dec (John Fussell) through 21 Dec (Louis Teer); three around New River Inlet, Onslow Co, during the Camp Lejeune CBC, 18 Dec (fide John DeLuca); five at Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, during the Wilmington CBC, 3 Jan (fide Sam Cooper); six adults on the jetty at Cape Lookout, Carteret Co, 17 Jan (Fussell, Keith Rittmaster, Josh Summers); two at the south end of Oregon Inlet, Dare Co, 19 Jan (Sherry Lane); and six at Masonboro Inlet, 21 Feb (Lucas Bobay). An immature bird at Twin Lakes in Sunset Beach, Brunswick Co, 14 Feb (Taylor Piephoff) was unusual for that freshwater site. In SC, an adult was seen perched on a buoy off Ft Moultrie NM, Charleston Co, 28 Dec (Hilda Flamholtz) through 3 Jan (Pam Ford).

**Anhinga:** Two seen at a pond along Grapevine Rd in Halifax Co, NC, during the Roanoke Rapids CBC, 3 Jan (Ken Oeser) were unusual for that area in winter. 212 on the Hilton Head Island CBC, 15 Dec (fide Kathy Greider) was a record number for that count.

**American White Pelican:** Some of the higher counts were 312 at Donnelly WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 12 Dec (David McLean); 206 in Georgetown Co, SC, during the Winyah Bay CBC, 18 Dec (fide Lex Glover); 35 on North Pond, Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 10 Jan (Lynn Erla Beegle); and 45 at Congaree NP, Richland Co, SC, 1 Feb (John Grego). One on John D. Long Lake in Union Co, SC, 26 Dec (Richard Gregory) was unusual.

**Brown Pelican:** Rare away from the ocean, a Brown Pelican was seen soaring over the Scuppernong River in Columbia, Tyrrell Co, NC, 1 Feb (Ricky Davis) and, probably the same individual, at a pond along US-64, a few miles west of Columbia, 28 Feb (Davis).



**Reddish Egret:** One found in Beaufort Co, SC, during the Lowcountry CBC, 17 Dec (fide Ken Scott) was unusual for the winter season.

**Cattle Egret:** Scarce in winter, a Cattle Egret was seen in Carteret Co, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 14 Dec (Nate Bacheler); 12 were seen on the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC, 29 Dec (fide Susan Campbell); and six were seen along Laurel Hill Wildlife Dr at Savannah NWR, Jasper Co, SC, 24 Jan (Eric Haskell, Lois Stacey, et al.).

**Green Heron:** In NC, lingering individuals were found on the Central Beaufort County CBC, 14 Dec (fide Kevin O’Kane); on the Holly Shelter & Lea-Hutaff Island CBC, 14 Dec (fide Carson Wood); on the Cumberland County CBC, 18 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); on the Rocky Mount CBC, 19 Dec (Bockhahn); in Wake Co, 28 Dec (Ryan Justice); on the Pettigrew SP CBC, 30 Dec (fide Doug LeQuire); on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC, 4 Jan (fide Ron Clark); and in the Roanoke Island Marshes, Dare Co, 30 Jan (Steve Ritt). One found in Greenville Co, SC, during the North Greenville CBC, 27 Dec (fide Donnie Coody) was very unusual for a site so far inland in winter. The highest count on a CBC along the SC coast was four on the ACE Basin CBC, 28 Dec (fide David Chamberlain).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** An adult over-wintered in Dare Co, NC again this year, seen on Pond Island, along US-64 between Roanoke Island and Whalebone Junction, 27 Dec (Edmund LeGrand) through 13 Feb (Chloe Walker).

**Glossy Ibis:** 77 on the Winyah Bay CBC, 18 Dec (fide Lex Glover) and 90 on the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC, 29 Dec (fide Susan Campbell) were high totals for winter. One at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 4 Jan (Bobby Koch) and 30 Jan (Paul Serridge, et al.) was unusual for that site.

**White-faced Ibis:** At least one probably over-wintered in the Lake Landing area (restricted access during the winter) of Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, as individuals were seen during the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC, 29 Dec (Derb Carter, Edmund LeGrand) and 18 Jan (Scott Winton).

**Roseate Spoonbill:** Eight on the Winyah Bay CBC, 18 Dec (fide Lex Glover) and seven on the ACE Basin CBC, 28 Dec (fide David Chamberlain) were great counts for the winter season and record totals for those CBCs.

**Osprey:** One at Buckhorn Reservoir, Wilson Co, NC, 7 Dec (Ricky Davis) was somewhat late for that inland location.

**Rough-legged Hawk:** One was reliably seen along Cheek Mountain Rd in Alleghany Co, NC, during the winter. First discovered during the New River CBC, 20 Dec (fide Harrol Blevins), this rare winter visitor was seen by many until last reported 7 Feb (Jesse Pope).

**Golden Eagle:** Multiple sightings were at opposite ends of NC—the northern mountains and the Albemarle Peninsula. In the northern mountains, an adult was seen in northern Watauga Co, 14 Dec (Merrill Lynch); one was seen at Carvers Gap, Mitchell Co, 18 Jan (Jacob Socolar); an adult was seen

in northern Wilkes Co, 26 Jan (Eric Harrold); two, an adult and an immature bird, were seen in the area around Cheek Mountain Rd in Alleghany Co, 31 Jan (Harrold); and an immature bird continued to be seen around Cheek Mountain through 2 Mar (Harrold, m. obs.). On the Albemarle Peninsula, individuals were seen at Alligator River NWR, Dare Co, 6 Jan (Jamie Adams, Greg Massey, Harry Sell) through 12 Feb (Jim Gould, m. obs.) and at a waterfowl impoundment along US-264 near Engelhard, Hyde Co, an immature bird, 20 Jan (Skip Hancock, Linda Ward). In SC, one was seen at Savannah NWR, Jasper Co, 6 Dec (Caroline Eastman).

**Purple Gallinule:** One seen and photographed at Lake Conway, Horry Co, SC, 3-11 Feb (Steve Thomas, et al.) was unusual for the northern SC coastal plain, especially in winter.

**Sandhill Crane:** The pair that has wintered around Beaufort, Carteret Co, NC, during the past few years, was again present throughout the period (fide John Fussell). In the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, SC, a rather sizable flock was seen through much of the winter, with 22 found there 17 Dec (Pam Ford), a high count of 34 seen 17 Jan (Cathy Miller), and 26 remaining 23 Feb (Donald Weidemann). Three were seen at the east end of Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, NC, 9 Jan (Lou Skrabec, George Wheaton) and 17 Jan (Jamie Adams). Four were photographed in flight over the Lake Landing area (restricted access in winter) of Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 8 Feb (Scott Winton, et al.).

**Black-necked Stilt:** Individuals in Georgetown Co, SC, during the Winyah Bay CBC, 18 Dec (fide Lex Glover) and at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 3 Jan (Irvin Pitts) were unusual for the winter season.

**American Avocet:** High counts at two traditional wintering sites were 650 at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 18 Jan (Steve Calver) and 250 at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 31 Jan (Paul Serridge, et al.).

**American Oystercatcher:** 600 in Beaufort Co, SC, during the Lowcountry CBC, 17 Dec (fide Ken Scott) was the second highest total of any 2014 Audubon CBC.

**Wilson's Plover:** Rare winter sightings included one at the Rachel Carson Reserve in Carteret Co, NC, 10 Dec (John Fussell); two at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, 2 Jan (Parkin Hunter); and one in Charleston Co, SC, during the Sea Islands CBC, 5 Jan (fide Aaron Given).

**Piping Plover:** 29 in Beaufort Co, SC, during the Lowcountry CBC, 17 Dec (fide Ken Scott) was a record number for that count.

**Spotted Sandpiper:** In NC, lingering individuals were seen near Core Creek, Carteret Co, 12 Dec (Jack Fennell) and 14 Dec (Ricky Davis); at Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, 1 Jan (Ed Corey); and at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, 15 Feb (Keith Camburn, Dennis Vollmar). As expected, our region's highest winter counts were made along the southern SC coast—12 in Beaufort Co,

during the Hilton Head Island CBC, 15 Dec (fide Kathy Greider) and ten in Beaufort Co, during the Lowcountry CBC, 17 Dec (fide Ken Scott).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** One at Harris Lake, Wake Co, NC, 7 Feb (Mike Turner) was unusual for a site so far inland during the winter.

**Long-billed Curlew:** Three were seen at Key Inlet, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, on a trip with Coastal Expeditions, 8 Feb (Paul Serridge, et al.).

**Marbled Godwit:** 290 at the Rachel Carson Reserve, Carteret Co, NC, 10 Dec (John Fussell) and 319 in Dare Co, NC, during the Cape Hatteras CBC, 27 Dec (fide Pat Moore) were impressive counts.

**Red Knot:** A few of the better counts were 76 along the Bogue Banks in Carteret Co, NC, 3 Feb (John Fussell); 120 at Folly Beach County Park, Charleston Co, SC, 7 Feb (Paul Serridge, et al.); 60 at the base of the pier in Frisco, Dare Co, NC, 15 Feb (Keith Camburn, Dennis Vollmar); and 147 at North Topsail Beach, Onslow Co, NC, 16 Feb (Gilbert Grant). Also of interest, Fussell noticed a relative absence of Red Knots in the eastern portion of Atlantic Beach this winter. He theorizes a beach re-nourishment project last spring affected the number of *Donax* sp. clams, an important food source for knots, along that stretch of beach.

**Ruff:** A white-necked variant adult was seen and photographed at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 16 Feb (Brian & Jacquie Penney) through 21 Feb (Caroline Eastman). Amazingly, this individual makes the third Ruff found at Bear Island WMA within the span of a year!



Red Phalarope, 08 February 2015, Pee Dee NWR, Anson Co, NC.  
Photo by Martina Nordstrand.

**Wilson's Snipe:** 100 at North River Marsh, Carteret Co, NC, 3 Dec (John Fussell) and 100 at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 31 Jan (Lewis Burke) were good counts.

**Red Phalarope:** 350+ on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 7 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.) was a good count. One photographed at Pee Dee NWR, Anson Co, NC, 18 Feb (Matthew Janson, Martina Nordstrand, Will Stuart) was an excellent find and a county first. In fact, this sighting was especially unusual considering there are only two previous records of this species at an inland site in NC during the winter season. One photographed in Ocracoke, Hyde Co, NC, 28 Feb (Peter Vankevich) was also noteworthy.

**Great Skua:** On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, two were seen 17 Jan, and one was seen 16 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). One photographed in a tidal pool on the beach at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 26 Feb (Bobby Koch) was a remarkable find—it was the first Great Skua documented on land, not the open ocean, in the Carolinas.

**Parasitic Jaeger:** 13 on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC, 4 Jan (fide Ron Clark) was a record number for that count and the highest total of any 2014 Audubon CBC. Other “from-shore” sightings included one off Ft Macon, Carteret Co, NC, 13 Dec (Ricky Davis); one off Pine Knoll Shores, Carteret Co, during the Morehead City CBC, 14 Dec (Gilbert Grant); one off Coquina Beach, Dare Co, NC, 28 Dec (Davis); one off North Litchfield Beach, Georgetown Co, SC, during the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC, 30 Dec (fide Chris Hill); two off Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, 2 Jan (Peter



Great Skua, 26 February 2015, Dare Co, NC. Photo by Bobby Koch.

Stangel); two off Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, 4 Jan (Ryan Justice); and one off of Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, 30 Jan (Davis).

**Dovekie:** Counts on pelagic trips out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, included 101 on 7 Feb, 161 on 14 Feb, and 107 on 16 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). Seven in flight off of Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, 31 Jan (Ricky Davis) was the best "from-shore" count. One photographed alongside Johnnie Mercer's Pier in Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover Co, NC, 29 Jan (Jamie Adams) was the southernmost sighting reported.

**Thick-billed Murre:** Individuals photographed at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 17 Jan (Lucas Bobay, Sam Jolly, Paul Tallie) and at Oregon Inlet, Dare Co, NC, 7 Feb (Jim Elder, Daryl Owens, David Youker, et al.) appeared injured, while one, molting into breeding plumage, photographed alongside the Cherry Grove Pier, Horry Co, SC, 17 Feb (Bill Bendoritis) appeared healthier.

**Razorbill:** 1,430 on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 14 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.) was our highest one-day total. 1,070 off of Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, 31 Jan (Ricky Davis) provided an excellent "from-shore" count. Nine off Johnnie Mercer's Pier, New Hanover Co, NC, 31 Jan (Sam Cooper) was a good count for a site so far south.

**Atlantic Puffin:** One seen and photographed on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 14 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.) was the only one reported this winter.

**Little Gull:** On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, an adult was



Thick-billed Murre, 17 January 2015, Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC.  
Photo by Lucas Bobay.



seen 17 Jan, and at least five individuals were seen 14 Feb and 16 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). Birders attending the Carolina Bird Club Winter Meeting in Nags Head, Dare Co, NC, found an adult Little Gull amongst a flock of Bonaparte's Gulls off Jennette's Pier, 30 Jan (Ricky Davis, Jesse Pope, et al.).

**Laughing Gull:** One at Lake Wheeler, Wake Co, NC, 2 Dec (Mike Turner) was unusual for the Piedmont region during the winter.

**Thayer's Gull:** An adult was seen and photographed during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 14 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Iceland Gull:** At least two Iceland Gulls were seen at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, after millions of small bait fish washed ashore in late December. After one was first reported 1 Jan (Jamie Adams), a darker first-winter bird was photographed 2 Jan (Sam Cooper) and 4 Jan (Derb Carter), and a second-winter bird was seen there 3 Jan (Carter, Jeff Pippen) through 14 Feb (Cooper). A first-winter bird was photographed at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 18 Jan (Thierry Besançon). A lighter first-winter bird at Wanchese Harbor, Dare Co, first reported 20 Jan (R. Bruce Richardson) was seen and photographed by many during the Carolina Bird Club Winter Meeting, 30-31 Jan (m. obs.). On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, a first-winter bird was seen 14 Feb, and two were seen 21 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Inland sightings included 21 in a field along NC-42 near Conetoe, Edgecombe Co, NC, 13 Dec (Ricky Davis); an adult on Lake Murray, Lexington Co, SC, 17 Dec (Irvin Pitts); three adults on Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 21 Dec (Steve Shultz); two adults on Falls Lake in Wake Co, during its CBC, 5 Jan (fide Brian Bockhahn); two adults on Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, NC, 3 Feb (Henry Link); 67 in a field near Hobgood, Halifax Co, NC, 8 Feb (Davis); and one, either an adult or a third-winter bird, on W. Kerr Scott Reservoir, Wilkes Co, NC, 22 Feb (Issac Kerns, Guy McGrane). 150 at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 3 Jan (Jamie Adams, Derb Carter, Jeff Pippen, et al.) was an unusually high count for that area.

**"Nelson's Gull":** A hybrid of Glaucous Gull and Herring Gull, individual Nelson's Gulls were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, and 17 Jan and 14 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Glaucous Gull:** Individuals were seen at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 24 Dec (Frederic Hareau); at Ft Caswell, Brunswick Co, NC, 4 Jan (Ron Clark); and at Rich Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, a first-winter bird, 25 Jan (Derb Carter).

**Sandwich Tern:** Two in Georgetown Co, SC, during the Winyah Bay CBC, 18 Dec (fide Lex Glover) and three at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 3 Jan (Matthew Sarver) were good finds for the winter season.

**White-winged Dove:** Sightings included one along the Pitt St causeway in Mt Pleasant, Charleston Co, SC, 4 Dec (Irvin Pitts); two in Mt Pleasant, 9 Dec (Craig Watson); one in Georgetown Co, SC, during the Litchfield-

Pawleys Island CBC, 30 Dec (fide Chris Hill); one at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 6 Feb (Lee Adams, et al.); and one visiting a feeder in Spring Lake, Harnett Co, NC, 13-25 Feb (Mike Stewart).

**Long-eared Owl:** An injured Long-eared Owl was found in a commercial area along US-76, southwest of Irmo, Lexington Co, SC, 8 Dec (fide Ron Clark). The owl was taken to the Carolina Raptor Center where it recovered and was later released.

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** One that responded to an audio recording on Sauratown Mountain, Stokes Co, NC, at 1300 feet above sea level, during the Hanging Rock SP CBC, 21 Dec (Brian Bockhahn) was a first for that count. One was heard in Buxton Woods, Dare Co, NC, during the Cape Hatteras CBC, 27 Dec (Mike McCloy). After three were heard along the entrance road to the Bodie Island Lighthouse, Dare Co, NC, during the Bodie-Pea Island CBC, 28 Dec (fide Paul Sykes), high counts of five were made there 6 Jan (Jamie Adams) and 3 Feb (Sam Cooper).

**Caprimulgidae species:** One, either a Chuck-will's-widow or a Whip-poor-will, was found lingering into winter in Beaufort Co, SC, during the Hilton Head Island CBC, 15 Dec (fide Kathy Greider).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Two yards at opposite ends of our coast hosted good numbers this winter—up to 15 in Buxton, Dare Co, NC (Ann Maddock) and up to 14 in Mt Pleasant, Charleston Co, SC (Lynn Fortenberry). Away from the coast, where winter sightings are rare, an adult female visited a feeder in Alexander Co, NC, just north of Hickory, 4 Nov into winter, banded 10 Jan (Dwayne Martin) and another female visited a yard in Mecklenburg Co, NC, seen on the Charlotte CBC, 27 Dec (fide Ken Kneidel).

**Black-chinned Hummingbird:** Two were seen in SC this winter. An adult male visited a feeder on James Island, Charleston Co, SC, 16 Jan (Keith McCullough) through 23 Feb (Charles Donnelly). Another adult male visited a Red Camellia bush and adjacent feeder in a yard in Lexington Co, SC, 6 Feb into spring (Edith & Marion Clark). Both hummingbirds were photographed and seen by multiple observers.

**Rufous Hummingbird:** Sightings included an adult female visiting a feeder in Hiddenite, Alexander Co, NC, 3 Nov into spring (Ron Underwood); two females visiting a feeder in Forsyth Co, NC, throughout the winter (Phil Dickinson, Ann Williams, et al.); an adult female visiting a feeder in Hickory, Catawba Co, NC, 8-19 Jan, banded 10 Jan (Dwayne Martin); an immature male visiting a feeder on Ladys Island, Beaufort Co, SC, 16 Jan through 12 Mar (Buddy Campbell); and a female at Coker Arboretum in Chapel Hill, Orange Co, NC, 4 Feb (Lucretia Kinney) into spring (m. obs.).

**Calliope Hummingbird:** An immature male visited a feeder in Charlotte, Mecklenburg Co, NC, where banded, 7 Jan (Dwayne Martin) through 7 Feb (Matthew Janson). Interestingly, a different Calliope Hummingbird, a female, visited a feeder on the other side of Charlotte last winter.



Black-chinned Hummingbird, 10 February 2015, Lexington Co, SC.

Photo by Irvin Pitts.

**Crested Caracara:** Our region's first Crested Caracara was seen and photographed at, ironically, The SC Center for Birds of Prey in Awendaw, Charleston Co, SC, 17 Feb (Keith McCullough, Craig Watson, et al.). The report already has been accepted by the SC BRC. Considering the number of sightings in the northeastern United States in recent years, it's only a matter of time before a Caracara is found in North Carolina as well.

**Peregrine Falcon:** Two seen on the Reynolds American building in downtown Winston-Salem, Forsyth Co, NC, 1 Jan (Ron Morris) and 21 & 28 Feb (John Haire, et al.) may have been a bonded pair.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher:** The only one found in the Carolinas this winter was intermittently seen in the vicinity of the boat ramp at Pettigrew SP, Washington Co, NC, 9 Jan (Jamie Adams) through 1 Feb (Ron Clark, et al.).

**Western Kingbird:** Individuals were seen at Pamlico Point, Pamlico Co, NC, 9 Dec (Cody Stone) and on Hilton Head Island, Beaufort Co, SC, 27 Dec (Timothy White). Three kingbirds were photographed at Ft Moultrie NM, Charleston Co, SC, 5 Jan (Cherrie Sneed). Interestingly, three Western Kingbirds were seen at nearby Patriot's Point last winter—were these three birds the same three individuals?

**Blue-headed Vireo:** As expected, the highest counts were made along our southern coast, with 23 on the ACE Basin CBC, 28 Dec (fide David Chamberlain); 23 on the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC, 30 Dec (fide Chris Hill); and 22 on the Sea Islands CBC, 5 Jan (fide Aaron Given). 23 on the Cape Hatteras CBC, 27 Dec (fide Pat Moore) was NC's high count.

**Tree Swallow:** 20,000+ at North River Farms (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, 25 Jan (John Fussell, et al.) was an impressive count. Fussell noted

that numbers at that site increased throughout January, but then drastically decreased in February.

**Barn Swallow:** Quite late were individuals at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 25 Dec (Frederic Hareau) and at Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, SC, during the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC, 30 Dec (fide Chris Hill) and 16 Jan (Irvin Pitts).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Farther inland than is typical in winter were two at Rankin Lake, Gaston Co, NC, 2 Dec (Steve Tracy); one at Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 2 Dec (Tom Snow); one on the Durham CBC, 14 Dec (fide Jeff Pippen); one on the Clemson CBC, 20 Dec (fide Drew Lanham); one on the Gastonia CBC, 20 Dec (fide Tracy); one on the Charlotte CBC, 27 Dec (fide Ken Kneidel); one photographed at Miller Park, Forsyth Co, NC, during the Winston-Salem CBC, 3 Jan (Heather Moir, et al.); and one on the Jordan Lake CBC, 4 Jan (Barbara Coffman, et al.).

**Lapland Longspur:** Individuals were seen at Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base (restricted access), Onslow Co, NC, during the Camp Lejeune CBC, 18 Dec (John Fussell); with Snow Buntings at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 24 Dec (Frederic Hareau), and by many through 28 Feb (Phil Cumming); and with a flock of Horned Larks in a harvested corn field in Cleveland Co, NC, 15 Jan (Simon Thompson, et al.).

**Snow Bunting:** Up to five Snow Buntings were seen at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 24 Dec (Frederic Hareau) through the end of the period (m. obs.).

**Ovenbird:** Winter sightings included two on the Sun City-Okatie CBC, 14 Dec (fide Jim Cubie); three in Dare Co, NC, during the Cape Hatteras CBC, 27 Dec (fide Pat Moore); one at Caw Caw Interpretive Center, Charleston Co, SC, 15 Jan (Keith McCullough); and one on Roanoke Island, Dare Co, in January and February (Jeff Lewis).

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** One photographed at Donnelly WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 21 Feb (Brian & Jacque Penney) was early.

**Northern Waterthrush:** One lingered or over-wintered at Savannah NWR, Jasper Co, SC, seen 8 Dec (Mary Lou Dickson) and 3 Jan (Steve Holzman).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** As expected, the highest winter counts were made along our southern coast, with 16 on the Congaree Swamp CBC, 14 Dec (fide John Grego) and 18 on the Santee NWR CBC, 20 Dec (fide Dennis Forsythe). Nine around Florence, SC, during the Pee Dee Area CBC, 14 Dec (fide Shawn Smolen-Morton) was an impressive count for that area. Farther inland, individuals were found in Huntersville, Mecklenburg Co, NC, during the Southern Lake Norman CBC, 14 Dec (Jeff Lemons); in Orange Co, NC, during the Chapel Hill CBC, 21 Dec (Robert Howes); on the Charlotte CBC, 27 Dec (fide Ken Kneidel); and in a yard in Durham Co, NC, 8 Jan (John McVay).

**Cape May Warbler:** A first-winter female visited feeders in a yard in



Northern Parula, 17 February 2015, Moore Co, NC. Photo by Linda Jones.

Hillsborough, Orange Co, NC where photographed, 7-11 Feb (Carol Tuskey).

**Northern Parula:** A rare-but-regular over-winterer along our coast, individual Northern Parulas were seen at Alligator River NWR, Dare Co, NC, during its CBC, 30 Dec (Lee Adams); in Georgetown Co, SC, during the Winyah Bay CBC, 18 Dec (fide Lex Glover); and in the Fairfield Harbor neighborhood in Craven Co, NC, 1 Jan (Matt Gould). One that visited a feeder in Vass, Moore Co, NC, where photographed, 17 Jan through 27 Feb (Linda Jones) was especially interesting for that inland location.

**Yellow Warbler:** One was photographed along the causeway at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, during its CBC, 29 Dec (Jeff Lemons).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** One photographed along McGhee Rd in Chatham Co, NC, during the Chapel Hill CBC, 21 Dec (Andrew Thornton) was incredible. There are no previous winter records of this species in the Carolinas.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** Individuals lingered at White Deer Park in Garner, Wake Co, NC, 7 Dec (Clyde Sorenson); in the Cuddo Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, SC, 14 Dec (Katie Rittenhouse) and at a feeder in Dare Co, NC, photographed, on the Kitty Hawk CBC, 20 Dec (Alan McEachren).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** In NC, individuals were seen on the Wilmington CBC, 3 Jan (fide Sam Cooper) and visiting a feeder near Belville, Brunswick Co, in February (Greg Massey). One wintered in a yard in Meggett, Charleston Co, SC, for a fifth straight year (Cherrie Sneed). SC's high count this winter was nine in Beaufort Co, during the Hilton Head Island CBC, 15 Dec (fide Kathy Greider).

**Prairie Warbler:** Individuals were seen in Dare Co, NC, during the Cape Hatteras CBC, 27 Dec (fide Pat Moore); at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC,





Chestnut-sided Warbler, 21 December 2014, Chatham Co, NC.

Photo by Andrew Thorn.

27 Dec (Ryan Justice) through 4 Jan (fide Ron Clark); at Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, SC, during the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC, 30 Dec (Stephen Thomas); on the Wilmington CBC, 3 Jan (fide Sam Cooper); and at the Bodie Island Lighthouse pond, Dare Co, 31 Jan (Kent Fiala, et al.). Counts of two were made in Georgetown Co, during the Winyah Bay CBC, 18 Dec (fide Lex Glover) and in Charleston Co, SC, during the Sea Islands CBC, 5 Jan (fide Aaron Given).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Individuals were seen in a yard in Jacksonville, Onslow Co, NC, throughout the winter (Gunter Richter); at Mackay Island NWR, Currituck Co, NC, 3 Jan (Ryan Justice, et al.); and visiting a feeder in Stumpy Point, Dare Co, NC, from early January through the end of the period (Jeff Lewis). Two at Palmetto Island County Park, Charleston Co, SC, 8 Jan (Chet Morse) was remarkable because most sightings made in winter are of individuals.

**Bachman's Sparrow:** Winter sightings included two on the Southern Pines CBC, 14 Dec (fide Susan Campbell); twelve on the Camp Lejeune CBC, 18 Dec (fide John DeLuca); four on the ACE Basin CBC, 28 Dec (fide David Chamberlain); and two at Santee Coastal Reserve, Charleston Co, SC, 9 Feb (Steve Compton, Paul Serridge).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Strangely, this winter's sightings were all made at the same site, North River Farms (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, where the species was present from 25 Jan into spring, with a peak count of 17 sparrows on 15 Feb (John Fussell, et al.).

**Vesper Sparrow:** The high count for the period was 16 at Dobbins Farm in Townville, Anderson Co, SC, 24 Feb (Scott Davis).

**Lark Sparrow:** The only one found on any CBC in the Carolinas this

winter was an adult bird along Ambrose Rd in Washington Co, NC, during the Pettigrew SP CBC, 30 Dec (Ed Corey). Away from CBCs, individuals were also noted in Ellore, Orangeburg Co, SC, 8 Dec (Donna & Harold Donnelly) and in Jarvisburg, Currituck Co, NC, 31 Dec (David Clark).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Winter sightings included one in a Longleaf Pine regeneration area at Congaree Bluff Heritage Preserve, Calhoun Co, SC, 3 Dec (Irvin Pitts); one just east of Congaree Bluffs, during the Congaree Swamp CBC, 14 Dec (Cathy Miller); two at Carolina Sandhills NWR, Chesterfield Co, SC, during its CBC, 14 Dec (Pitts); two in Barnwell Co, SC, during the Savannah River Site CBC, 18 Dec (Mark Vukovich); and two in a recently-plowed field in Meggett, Charleston Co, SC, 9 Jan (Cherrie Sneed).

**Henslow's Sparrow:** From the Spring 2014 period, a Henslow's Sparrow mist-netted, photographed, then released during a research study of Bachman's Sparrows in Cumberland Co, near its border with Hoke Co, NC, 10 Apr (Alexander Fish) was unusual for that area.

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** Sightings included one at the PotashCorp Wetland Mitigation Site in southern Beaufort Co, NC, 14 Dec (Lucas Bobay, Sam Jolly, Ed Landi); one in Georgetown Co, SC, during the Winyah Bay CBC, 18 Dec (fide Lex Glover); two on the Santee NWR CBC, 20 Dec (fide Dennis Forsythe); one on the Greenville CBC, 3 Jan (fide Veronica Pantelidis); five at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 3 Jan (Matthew Sarver); and one at North River Farms (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, 25 Jan (Jamie Adams, et al.) and 22 Feb (John Fussell, et al.).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** Sightings included one in a field along NC-111 near Tarboro, Edgecombe Co, NC, 13 Dec (Ricky Davis); one in southeast Richland Co, SC, during the Congaree Swamp CBC, 14 Dec (Caroline Eastman); three in a grassy clear-cut in southern Craven Co, NC, during the New Bern CBC, 15 Dec (John Fussell, John Voigt); two on the Chapel Hill CBC, 21 Dec (fide Will Cook); three at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, during its CBC, 29 Dec (Harry LeGrand, John Wright); one on the Brevard CBC, 29 Dec (fide Jerry Griggs); and two at Congaree NP, Richland Co, SC, 12 Feb (Eastman).

**Summer Tanager:** An adult male was photographed at a feeder in Beaufort Co, SC, during the Hilton Head Island CBC, 15 Dec (fide Kathy Greider). A female visited a feeder near Belville, Brunswick Co, NC, intermittently throughout the winter (Greg Massey).

**Scarlet Tanager:** Perhaps the most curious find on any CBC in the Carolinas this year was that of a female Scarlet Tanager at the Maggie Valley Club & Resort golf course in Haywood Co, NC, during the Balsam CBC, 2 Jan (Lori & Tim Lewis, Connie & Stan Wulkowicz). The tanager was seen foraging in dogwood trees with robins, but unfortunately not photographed. There are only a handful of previous winter records, and none of those are from the mountain region.

**Western Tanager:** Four were reported in NC during the period—a male



Painted Bunting, 06 February 2015, Mecklenburg Co, NC.  
Photo by Leigh Anne Carter.

seen and photographed eating dogwood berries around the Catawba River Area office at Lake James SP, McDowell Co, 3 Dec (Jamie Cameron, et al.) through 8 Jan (Ed Corey); a female photographed at the Currituck Beach Lighthouse, Currituck Co, 26 Dec (Greg Hudson); a male visiting a feeder in Morehead City, Carteret Co, 1 Jan (Jane & Maury Wolff, et al.) through 24 Feb (Chandra Biggerstaff, John Fussell, et al.); and a male photographed at a feeder in Wilmington, New Hanover Co, 17 Feb (Bruce Smithson).

**Indigo Bunting:** Rare in winter, a male Indigo Bunting visited a millet feeder near Merrimon, Carteret Co, NC, where photographed, 15 Feb into early March (Holly Powell).

**Painted Bunting:** Winter sightings included a female-plumaged bird at a feeder in Pawleys Island, Georgetown Co, SC, during the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC, 30 Dec (fide Chris Hill); two on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC, 4 Jan (fide Ron Clark); an immature bird at a feeder on James Island, Charleston Co, SC, 6 Feb (Dennis Forsythe); a female-plumaged bird at a feeder in Kill Devil Hills, Dare Co, NC, where photographed, from early February through 29 Mar (Jim Gould); a female-plumaged bird photographed at a feeder in Charlotte, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 6 Feb (Leigh Anne Carter); and three female-plumaged birds at a feeder in Myrtle Beach, Horry Co, SC, 6 Feb into spring (Dick & Dorothy Rosche).

**Dickcissel:** One, either a female or first-winter male, intermittently visited a feeder near Aynor, Horry Co, SC, where photographed, 22 Dec through 17 Feb (Steve Thomas).

**Rusty Blackbird:** The high count at Lake Conestee Nature Park in Greenville Co, SC, was 258 birds on 31 Jan (Jane Kramer).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** Western SC, the best area of the Carolinas to find this species, produced counts of 23 on the Clemson CBC, 20 Dec (fide Drew Lanham); 22 at Dobbins Farm in Townville, Anderson Co, 27 Dec (Scott Davis); and 30 at Dobbins Farm, 16 Jan (Stephen Schutt). Eight at Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, SC, during its CBC, 20 Dec (John Grego) were good finds. In NC, one was seen on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC, 4 Jan (fide Ron Clark) and a male was photographed near the grain silos at Open Grounds Farm (limited access), Carteret Co, 4 Feb (Chandra Biggerstaff, Jack Fennell, John Fussell).

**Hooded Oriole:** Pending review by the NC BRC was the report of an immature male Hooded Oriole at a feeder in Charlotte, Mecklenburg Co, NC, where photographed, 6 Feb (John Brammer). There are no previous records of this species from the southwestern United States in the Carolinas.

**Bullock's Oriole:** A first-year male visited a feeder just north of Ravenel, Charleston Co, SC, where photographed, 7 Feb (Deborah Nelson) through 19 Feb (Aaron Given).

**Purple Finch:** Although there wasn't a major irruption of this northern finch this winter, sightings were made across the region. Some of the higher counts were 55 in Chesterfield Co, SC, during the Carolina Sandhills NWR CBC, 14 Dec (fide Nancy Jordan); 52 in Yancey Co, NC, during its CBC, 27 Dec (fide Bob Repoley); and 60 at the Savannah River Site (restricted access), Barnwell Co, SC, 28 Jan (Mark Vukovich).

**White-winged Crossbill:** From the Winter 2012-2013 period, a female White-winged Crossbill visited a feeder in Chapel Hill, Orange Co, NC, where photographed, 16-18 Feb 2013 (Bill Bracey). There are only a handful of records from the NC Piedmont.

**Common Redpoll:** Two redpolls visited a feeder in Kill Devil Hills, Dare Co, NC, where photographed, 14 Jan (fide Jeff Lewis), and one remained through at least 19 Jan (m. obs.). Individuals also visited feeders in Linville, Avery Co, NC, where photographed, 17-18 Feb (Jesse Pope) and in Southern Shores, Dare Co, 22 Feb through 16 Mar (Alan McEachren).

**Pine Siskin:** Siskins began irrupting into our region in December, but didn't start visiting feeders in large numbers until a period of severe cold in mid-February. Siskins were found on most of our CBCs, including our southernmost counts, with 37 on the Sun City-Okatie CBC, 14 Dec (fide Jim Cubie) providing a record number for that count. Counts from feeders included 198 near Williamston, Anderson Co, SC, 14 Feb (Eugene Hayes); 155 in northern Wake Co, NC, 15 Feb (Brian Pendergraft); 275 near Franklin, Macon Co, NC, 16 Feb (Tricia Mack); and 75 in Gastonia, Gaston Co, NC, 19 Feb (Keith Camburn).