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2016 Annual Report of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee

Chris Hill¹, Chair, Giff Beaton, Jeff Click, Aaron Given, Lex Glover, Simon Harvey, Keith McCullough, William Post, Steve Wagner

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In 2016, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee took action on 19 new reports, of which 18 were accepted and 1 not accepted. All accepted records received unanimous support from the committee. One additional report was withdrawn by the submitter. Two accepted reports from early 2016, of Thayer's Gull and Scott's Oriole, were published with the 2015 report and are not addressed further here.

The accepted records detailed below add one species to South Carolina's Main Species List: Yellow-green Vireo. The Main Species list currently stands at 434 species. The most recent version of the list is available online at <http://carolinabirdclub.org/brc>. Also at that site is a list of reports the committee is currently considering, and ones for which we have recently voted.

Simon Harvey joined the committee in 2016. Other than that committee membership was unchanged.

Below we detail actions taken by the SC Bird Records Committee in 2016.

Accepted reports

Brant (*Branta bernicla*) (2016-003). Lex Glover submitted a written report of a Brant seen 17 December 2016 on South Island at the Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center in Georgetown County during the Winyah Bay Christmas Bird Count. The report was accepted unanimously. Brant are rare winter visitors to the South Carolina coast.

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) (2 reports: 2016-004 and 2016-005). David McLean submitted a report with a photograph of this species at Bull Island, Charleston County on 3 January 2016. The committee also accepted two reports of a bird in the ocean at Botany Bay WMA, Beaufort County. David Youngblood found the bird on 27 January 2016 and submitted a report with a clear photograph. Pam Ford relocated the bird on 31 January 2016 and submitted a written description. A possible second individual at Botany Bay on 27 January was not confirmed.

Black Guillemot (*Cephus grylle*) (2016-011) Michael Robertson submitted a report with 3 photographs of a bird at the Huntington Beach State Park jetty, Georgetown County, on 27 November 2016. The report was supplemented by a fourth photo from Pam Ford. The bird remained in the area

for several weeks and was seen by many birders. The last report to eBird was on 5 January 2017.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) (2016-009). Lois Stacey filed a report of a Brown Booby seen at Clark's Hill Dam on Strom Thurmond Lake on 9 October 2016. The report included an excellent description and definitive photos of the bird in flight. This bird was likely blown off course as a result of Hurricane Matthew that made landfall in South Carolina on 8 October 2016.

Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) (2016-017). Very surprising was South Carolina's second record of Snail Kite, seen and well photographed on 30 November 2016, and seen briefly the next morning, on 1 December 2016 at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville County. Paul Serridge filed a report supplemented with excellent photos by Anthony Martin. The juvenal plumaged bird was wearing a field-readable alphanumeric band, and the photos showed the complete code. Tyler Beck, Snail Kite Conservation Coordinator with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission forwarded the history of that bird, which had been "banded just prior to fledging on 16 July 2016 in a private mitigation wetland near Fellsmere, FL."

Red-tailed Hawk (Kridler's) (*Buteo jamaicensis kriderii*) (2016-012). Stephen R. Thomas sent the committee two photographs and a report of a flyover Red-tailed Hawk near Doar Plantation in Georgetown County on 21



Immature Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville County, SC, 1 December 2016. Photo by Anthony Q. Martin.

November 2016. The committee agreed unanimously that this individual was a Krider's Red-tailed Hawk, a subspecies that nests on northern plains and prairies in the north-central U.S. and adjacent Canada. This subspecies is rarely documented on the East Coast.

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) (2016-007). Aaron Given reported a Burrowing Owl that wintered at Kiawah Island, Charleston County (seen from 25 January to 5 March 2016). Some committee members attempted to determine whether the individual was of the Florida population or the subspecies from the western U.S. but as a whole the committee reached no firm conclusion on that.

Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*) (4 accepted reports: 2016-013, 2016-014, 2016-015, 2016-018). Although Bell's Vireo was practically unrecorded in South Carolina until recently, the recipe for finding one is clear – operate a fall banding station on the coast near Charleston. This year Aaron Given of the Kiawah Island Banding Station contributed three more records, of birds banded on 5, 12, and 30 September. A newer fall banding station on Sullivan's Island contributed a fourth record, from 21 September, reported and with photos by Jennifer Tyrell. Even at the banding sites, Bell's Vireos are seldom if ever detected unless they are captured.

Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) (2016-008). New for South Carolina. Blaine Harris Carnes reported this species, from the Kiawah Island Banding Station, with diagnostic measurements and photographs. As recounted in a blog post at the banding station website, Carnes actually had the bird in hand on 22 September 2016 and due to a mistaken measurement, he misidentified it as a bright Red-eyed Vireo and released it, despite having handled many Yellow-green Vireos in Central and South America. Once he released it, Carnes realized his error. After 5 tense days, the vireo was recaptured on 27 September, and this time measured properly and photographed to document the new species for South Carolina that almost got away. Yellow-green Vireos breed from Mexico to Panama, rarely to south Texas. They are migratory, and regularly stray to the California coast in fall, also straying to the Gulf coast states including Florida. The only previous record on the Atlantic coast north of Florida that the committee is aware of is a bird banded September 2011 in Massachusetts. (Flemer et al. 2011).

Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) (2016-019). Scarce even in migration, a Golden-winged Warbler in February is unprecedented in South Carolina. Keith McCullough provided a report with photographs of this bird, seen by many at Caw Caw Interpretive Center in Charleston County, found 6 February and continuing through 21 February (D. Forsythe pers. comm.).

Mourning Warbler (*Geothlypis philadelphia*) (2016-016). Aaron Given submitted a report with definitive photographs of a hatch-year Mourning Warbler banded at the Kiawah Island Banding Station on 12 September 2016.

Non-accepted reports

Masked Duck (*Nomonyx dominicus*) (2016-010). This intriguing report, of a bird at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge on 22 November 1973, received 2 votes to accept and 6 votes of inadequate documentation. The report came from field notes of long time Augusta, Georgia birder Anne Waters. Lois Stacey came across this report while transcribing these notes and entering unusual sightings into eBird. The field notes submitted to the committee showed an excellent sketch of a *Nomonyx* duck with a dark cap and two horizontal dark stripes on a paler cheek. However, it seemed likely that the sketch was done after the sighting, not during it, and most voters had too many concerns about the lack of details (actions of the bird, specific habitat) to vote in favor.

Acknowledgements

The committee thanks all the observers who submitted reports, and those who encouraged others to submit reports. Your actions increase our understanding of bird occurrence in the state.

Literature Cited

Flemer, B., W.O. Gette, and D.M. Larson. 2011. Yellow-green Vireo *Vireo flavoviridis* banded at Plum Island, Massachusetts. *Bird Observer*. 39:5.

General Field Notes

General Field Notes briefly report such items as rare sightings, unusual behaviors, significant nesting records, or summaries of such items.

First, second, or third sightings of species in either state must be submitted to the appropriate Bird Records Committee prior to publication in *The Chat*.

First Record of Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) for South Carolina

Blaine H. Carnes, Aaron Given

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On 22 September and 27 September 2016, Blaine H. Carnes, Michael Gamble, Ryan Donnelly, Collette Lauzau, and Allison Nevins captured a Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) on Kiawah Island, South Carolina. The bird was captured in a mist-net as part of an ongoing study monitoring songbird migration during the fall. Fall migration banding occurs on Kiawah Island at two locations: the Captain Sam's banding site since 2009, and the Little Bear banding site since 2015. The Yellow-green Vireo was captured at the Little Bear banding site which is located at the far eastern end of Kiawah Island. At Little Bear, 20 permanent 12-m mist-nets placed in maritime scrub-shrub are operated daily from 22 August through 17 November. Nets are opened approximately 30 min before sunrise and remain open for 5-6 hours, weather permitting.

On 22 September the bird was captured and banded at approximately 11:10 AM EST in net #2, which is located within scrub-shrub. Vegetation surrounding the net consists primarily of Marsh-Elder (*Iva frutescens*) and Cabbage Palmetto (*Sabal palmetto*) from 7-12 ft in height. On 27 September the bird was recaptured at approximately 10:25 AM EST in net #16, which is located on an old dune ridge. Vegetation surrounding the net consists of Wax Myrtle (*Morella cerifera*) up to 15 ft in height with a dense thicket of brier (*Smilax sp.*). On both occasions the bird was placed in a cloth bag and brought back to the banding station within ten minutes.

Description of the Bird

The bird resembled a very brightly colored Red-eyed Vireo, with vivid yellow along the flanks, undertail coverts, underwing coverts, vent, and breast (Fig. 1). The cap was a paler gray than in Red-eyed Vireo, without dark edging,



Figure 1. Yellow-green Vireo recaptured on Kiawah Island, SC on 27 September 2016.

and the upper mandible appeared paler than in Red-eyed Vireo.

The bird had a molt limit within the alula (A1 had been replaced, with A2 and A3 retained) and the eye was brownish, which indicated a hatch-year bird. A small amount of subcutaneous fat was recorded in the furcular region (fat score = 1) on the original capture date, which had slightly increased by the recapture date (fat score = 2). Morphological measurements recorded included: wing chord was 73.0 mm; exposed culmen was 15.2 mm; the difference between the length of the 9th primary and the 5th primary was 2 mm; mass was 13.7 g at original capture and 18.9 g upon recapture.

Identification

Bright yellow coloration. This individual exhibited much brighter yellow coloration than shown by even the brightest Red-eyed Vireos, especially on the breast, underwing coverts, flanks, and undertail coverts (Fig. 2-3).

Exposed culmen measurement. This individual had an exposed culmen measurement of 15.2 mm, well outside the maximum length found in Red-eyed Vireos of 13.6 mm (Fig. 4) (Pyle 1997).

Wing morphology. There is very little overlap between Red-eyed and Yellow-green Vireos in the closed-wing measurement of the difference between the length of the 9th primary feather and the 5th primary feather, with



Figure 2. Close up of underwing coverts, flanks, and undertail coverts.



Figure 3. Comparison with Red-eyed Vireo of the same age.



Figure 4. Exposed culmen measurement. Figure 5. Difference between the length of the 9th primary and the 5th primary.

Red-eyed Vireo showing a range of 4-8 mm and Yellow-green Vireo showing a range of 1-5 mm (Pyle 1997). This individual had a P9-P5 measurement of 2 mm (Fig. 5).

Conclusion

The photos and description noted above describe South Carolina's first Yellow-green Vireo. Of the two similar North American species, Black-whiskered Vireo can be ruled out by that species' much duller coloration and dark lateral throat stripe. Red-eyed Vireo can be ruled out by coloration and by bill and wing measurements.

Based on the above diagnostic photos and description, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee accepted this record as the first Yellow-green Vireo in South Carolina (Hill et al. 2017). There have been other vagrant records of this species in North America, mostly in western states such as California, Arizona, Nevada, and the Canadian province of British Columbia, which most likely pertain to the *V.f.hypoleucus* subspecies, which breeds in western Mexico. In the east this species has appeared out of range along the Gulf Coast in Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida, in the Florida Keys and south Florida, and one individual captured and banded in Massachusetts in September 2011 (Flemer et al. 2011).

It is likely that this bird is an example of a misoriented reverse-migrant (Howell et al. 2014). In this phenomenon, a bird's internal compass is wrong, causing it to migrate the wrong way, often on a 90-degree or 180-degree track from their species' typical migration path. Yellow-green Vireo has a breeding range that extends from the west and east coast of Mexico down through Central America to Panama and a wintering range in Amazonia, mainly along the base of the east slope of the Andes (Rodríguez-Flores et al. 2010), with a migration route that theoretically runs from northwest to southeast through Central America.

By measurements and coloration, the Kiawah Island bird was not from the hypoleucus subspecies that breeds in west Mexico (Pyle 1997), and seems most likely to be of the nominate flavoviridis subspecies, found along the east slope of Mexico up to far south Texas.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Town of Kiawah Island and the Kiawah Island Conservancy for providing financial support to the Kiawah Island banding Station. We would also like to thank the Bear Island Holding Trust and the Kiawah Island Golf Resort for providing access to the Little Bear Island to band birds. We would like to thank all of the banding technicians (Mattie VandenBoom, Ryan Donnelly, Michael Gamble, Collette Lauzau, Allison Nevins, and Michael Rodgers) for all their hard work throughout the season.

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BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates WINTER 2016-2017, 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 bird record's committee. Such reports are not considered accepted records until, and unless, they are so ruled by the committee.

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

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: 18 photographed at a pond in Barnwell Co, SC, 18-19 Feb (Ed Peachey) were unusual for that area. Peachey noted that, according to the landowner, the ducks had been present for most of the winter.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Sightings made in NC included two at multiple sites around Swannanoa, Buncombe Co, 17 Dec (Denise Hargrove) through 17 Feb (Ryan Lubbers); up to five at the pond where US-64 crosses Beasley Rd in Washington Co, 6 Jan (Ed Corey, et al.) through 15 Jan (m. obs.); four in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, Washington Co, 27 Jan (Matt Daw, et al.); 17 at Ecusta Pond, Transylvania Co, 1-7 Feb (Michael Plauché); two on Lake Wilson, Wilson Co, 17 Feb (Ann Brice); and five at the Pungo Unit, 26 Feb (Ricky Davis). Sightings made in SC included seven at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, 19 Dec (Scott Davis); five at Fountain Lake in Richland Co, 29 Dec (John Grego) through 31 Jan (m. obs.); up to 12 in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, 21 Dec (Brad Dalton, Jack Rogers, et al.) through 7 Feb (m. obs.); and three at Dobbins Farm, 26 Feb (Jeff Click).

Snow Goose: Sightings made in the NC mountains included eight, including four dark-morph geese, at the WTP along NC-191 in Henderson Co, 4 Dec (Wayne Forsythe); one on Osceola Lake, Henderson Co, 11 Dec (Marilyn Westphal) into spring (m. obs.); two on Ecusta Pond, Transylvania Co, NC, 24 Dec and 13 Jan (Michael Plauché); and seven along the French Broad River in Woodfin, Buncombe Co, NC, 26 Dec (Doug Johnston). Good for upstate SC were four dark-morph geese at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, 22 Dec (Simon Harvey, et al.) through 28 Dec (Kevin Kubach) and three at the Clemson Aquaculture Facility, Pickens Co, 2-4 Jan (Scott Davis, m. obs.).

Ross's Goose: The trend in recent years of an increased number of sightings continued this winter. Note that almost all sightings involved birds associating with flocks of Canada Geese. Ten in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, Washington Co, NC, 14 Jan (Lucas Bobay, et al.) was our region's high count. Other sightings made in the NC coastal plain included one at the pond where US-64 crosses Beasley Rd in Washington Co, 10 Dec (Bobay, et al.) and 28 Dec (Jack Rogers, et al.); two in the Pungo Unit, 23 Dec (Ricky Davis); two at the Beasley Rd pond, 6 Jan (Ed Corey, et al.); one at Veterans Park, New Hanover Co, 15-18 Jan (Jamie Adams, m. obs.); and two at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, 29 Jan (Rogers, et al.). Four at the WTP along NC-191 in Henderson Co, NC, 4 Dec (Wayne Forsythe) was a record count for the mountain region, while four along Mid-Pines Rd in Wake Co, 1 Jan (Steve Shultz) was a great count for the Piedmont. Other sightings made in mountains and Piedmont of NC included one near Piedmont Triad International Airport, Guilford Co, 12-24 Dec (Rachel Milewski, m. obs.); one along Mebane Bridge Rd in Rockingham Co, 1-2 Jan (Martin Wall); one at a pond in Granite Falls, Caldwell Co, 4 Jan (Dwayne Martin); one along Shotwell Rd in Johnston Co, 5 Jan (Clyde Sorenson); one at Ecusta Pond, Transylvania Co, 5-6 Jan (Michael Plauché); and two at a pond along Howerton Rd in Guilford Co, 29 Jan (Elizabeth &



Cackling and Canada Geese, 10 Jan 2017, Washington Co, NC.
Photo by Martin Wall.

Henry Link). Sightings made in SC included two on Lake Hartwell in Pickens Co, 22 Dec (Kevin Kubach); two at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, 9 Jan (Paul Serridge, et al.); up to three in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, 5 Jan (Tom Austin) through 25 Jan (Peter Stangel); and one on Fountain Lake, Richland Co, 13-31 Jan (Steve McInnis, m. obs.).

Brant: 650 seen from the Hatteras to Ocracoke Ferry at Hatteras Inlet, border of Dare Co and Hyde Co, NC, 26 Jan (Matt Janson, Martina Nordstrand, Jack Rogers) was a remarkable count.

Cackling Goose: Around the pond where US-64 crosses Beasley Rd in Washington Co, NC, after one was first seen 13 Dec (Audrey Whitlock), four were seen 28 Dec (Jack Rogers, et al.), and a high count of seven was made there 6 Jan (Ed Corey, et al.).

Five were also seen at a nearby site, a pond along US-64 just east of Creswell, Washington Co, NC, 29 Jan (Derb Carter, Ricky Davis). In the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, Washington Co, NC, after four were first seen 23 Jan (Dave Minnich, et al.), an astounding count of 24 was made there 5 Feb (Corey), and at least 20 remained on 26 Feb (Carter, Davis). One photographed at the Lincolnton WTP, Lincoln Co, NC, 4 Jan (Dwayne Martin) was a first for that county.

Mute Swan: One seen amongst Tundra Swans at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 1 Jan (Carl & Cathy Miller) into spring (m. obs.) may have been of wild origin.

Trumpeter Swan: In the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, Washington Co, NC, after one was first seen and heard 10 Dec (Jeff Beane, Ed Corey, et al.), two were seen there 23 Dec (Ricky Davis), a high count of three was made 14 Jan (Lucas Bobay, et al.), and at least one remained through 11 Feb (Phil Doerr, et al.). Pending review by the NC BRC was the report of a sub-adult Trumpeter Swan on the French Broad River near Alexander, Buncombe Co, NC, 25 Dec (Jay Wherley) through 27 Mar (Greg Massey). If accepted, it would be the first record of this species in the mountain region.

Tundra Swan: 18776 on the Pettigrew SP CBC, 27 Dec (fide Charlotte Davis) and 18413 on the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC, 29 Dec (fide Susan Campbell) were, by far, the two highest totals of all the 2016 Audubon CBCs. One photographed along Watauga River Rd in Watauga Co, NC, 19 Dec (Steve Dowlan) was a good find for the mountain region. 220 at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 11 Feb (Lewis Burke, Roger Smith) was a good count for a site so far south.

Eurasian Wigeon: Individual drakes were seen on North Pond, Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 9 Dec (Peggy Eubank, Mike Stewart, et al.) through 20 Jan (Eubank) and at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, during its CBC, 29 Dec (Edmund LeGrand, Harry LeGrand) and again 27 Jan (Mike McCloy, et al.) through 5 Feb (Ricky Davis). One seen feeding with American Wigeons in a field along Canal D Rd in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, border of Hyde Co and Washington Co, NC, 5 Feb (Ed Corey) was a first for that site. Up to two were seen at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 1 Jan (Lacy & Russell Johnson, et al.) through 22 Feb (m. obs.).

American x Eurasian Wigeon: An apparent hybrid of an American Wigeon and a Eurasian Wigeon was photographed at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 28 Jan (Kent Fiala, et al.).

Mottled Duck: In NC, where this species is still rare, individuals were seen on a pond in Wilmington, New Hanover Co, 29 Dec (Mark Jones, m. obs.) and at Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal (restricted access), Brunswick Co, during the Southport CBC, 1 Jan (Sam Cooper, Jones, et al.).

Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal: An apparent hybrid of a Blue-winged Teal and a Cinnamon Teal, originally identified as a pure Cinnamon Teal, was seen and photographed at Santee Coastal Reserve WMA, Charleston Co, SC, 18 Feb (Chris Davies) through 23 Feb (m. obs.).

Redhead: High counts were 10,000 at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 16 Jan (Susan Campbell) and 27 Jan (Kent Fiala, et al.) and 10,000 over the Core Sound near Ophelia Inlet, Carteret Co, NC, 19 Feb (Jeff Lemons, et al.).

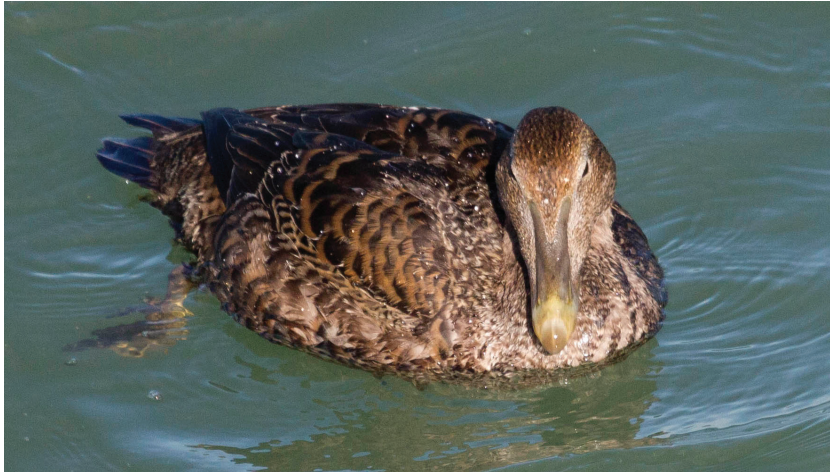
Ring-necked Duck: 11,000 counted on the Congaree Swamp CBC, 18 Dec (fide John Grego) was a record number for that count and the highest total of any 2016 Audubon CBC.

Greater Scaup: 4500 in Stumpy Point Bay, Dare Co, NC, 30 Dec (Jay Ross) was an amazing count for our region.



Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal, 21 Feb 2017, Charleston Co, SC.
Photo by Matt Johnson.

Common Eider: Around the pilings of Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, after a first-winter drake was first seen 8 Dec (Loren Hintz); three eiders were seen 11 Dec (Jeff Lewis); high counts of four were made 16 Dec (Bobby Koch) and 18 Dec (Lee Adams, Audrey Whitlock); and a hen continued to 7 Mar (Alan MacEachren). Twelve, including four adult drakes, in flight off the end of Jennette's Pier, 16 Jan (Michael Gosselin) was an amazing number for the Carolinas. Elsewhere along the NC coast, sightings included a hen around the pilings of Johnnie Mercer's Pier, New Hanover Co, 7-10 Dec (James Parnell, m. obs.); a hen at Oyster Creek near Davis, Carteret Co, 7 Dec (Chandra Biggerstaff) and 9 Dec (Martin Wall); two hens in a line of scoters off Kitty Hawk, Dare Co, during its CBC, 17 Dec (Ricky Davis); two, a first-winter drake and a hen, at Oregon Inlet, Dare Co, 20 Dec (Jim Gould); a hen around the pilings of the Kure Beach Pier, New Hanover Co, 28 Dec (Jurek Smykla) through 7 Jan (Brad Carlson); two, a first-winter drake and a hen, at Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, 31 Dec (Jeff Phippen, Sam Cooper, et al.) through 24 Mar (Natalie Barbour, et al.); and a first-winter drake in south Topsail Beach, Pender Co, 18 Feb (Henry Link, et al.). Around the jetties at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, after a hen was first seen 7 Dec (Irvin Pitts, et al.); as many as three eiders, including a first-winter drake, were seen there 28 Dec (Peter Stangel) through 19 Feb (Roger Smith). Elsewhere along the SC coast, sightings included one off Cherry Grove Fishing Pier, Horry Co, 27 Dec (Mike Turner); two, a first-winter drake and a hen, off Shem Creek Park, Charleston Co, 13 Jan (Elizabeth Anderegg) with the first-winter drake continuing through 5 Feb (m. obs.); and two hens around the pilings of the Garden City Pier, Horry Co, 20 Jan (Frank Lawkins) and 22 Jan (Paul



Common Eider, 11 Dec 2016, Dare Co, NC.
Photo by Jeff Lewis.

Serridge).

Harlequin Duck: Sightings, all made in NC, included two off of Johnnie Mercer's Pier, New Hanover Co, 23 Dec (Sam Cooper); one in flight off of Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, 28 Jan (Derb Carter); and two, a drake and a hen, off the Coquina rock outcrops at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, 10 Feb (Mark Jones) and the nearby Kure Beach Pier, through 19 Feb (Ricky Davis). Also, a duck hunter reportedly shot a hen in the Bogue Sound near Salter Path, Carteret Co, in mid-January (fide John Fussell).

Surf Scoter: Sightings made on inland lakes included a hen on Thagards Lake, Moore Co, NC, 5 Dec (Susan Campbell); a hen on Lake Julian, Buncombe Co, NC, 6 Dec (Wayne Forsythe); four on Oak Hollow Lake, Guilford Co, NC, 4 Jan (Andrew Thornton); and two drakes on Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, NC, 12 Feb (Thornton).

White-winged Scoter: Two on Lake Keowee, Oconee Co, SC, during the Keowee CBC, 2 Jan (Stephen Schutt, et al.) and one on Lake Wateree, Kershaw Co, SC, during its CBC, 2 Jan (Lex Glover) were the only reports from inland lakes this winter.

Black Scoter: Five on Lake Wateree, Kershaw Co, SC, during its CBC, 2 Jan (Lex Glover) was a nice total for an inland lake.

Long-tailed Duck: Three, one drake and two hens, photographed on W. Kerr Scott Reservoir, Wilkes Co, NC, 4 Dec (Jesse Anderson), and also a hen seen on Ecusta Pond, Transylvania Co, NC, 11 Dec (Michael Plauché), were good finds for western NC. Five at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, 29 Dec (Tom Austin, Ed Blich) was a good count for a site in SC. A hen photographed off Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 10

Dec (Mark Vukovich) was a good find for a site so far south.

Common Goldeneye: This species was well-reported again this winter. Nine, three drakes and six hens, on the Cape Fear River off the Ft Fisher Air Force Recreation Area, New Hanover Co, NC, 1 Jan (Ricky Davis, Jeff Pippen) was a notable count.

Common Merganser: 520 on the north end of Lake Phelps, Washington Co, NC, 15 Jan (Ricky Davis) was our region's high count. Two hens in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, SC, during its CBC, 21 Dec (Jack Rogers, et al.) were good finds for SC.

Red-breasted Merganser: Some of the higher counts made in the mountain region were 114 on Lake Junaluska, Haywood Co, NC, 6 Dec (Kirk Gardner); 100+ on Lake Julian, Buncombe Co, NC, 6 Dec (Wayne Forsythe); and 75 at the WTP along NC-191 in Henderson Co, NC, 6 Dec (Forsythe).

Wild Turkey: 97 in Carteret Co, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 18 Dec (fide John Fussell) was a record total for that count, indicative of the species' increasing numbers.

Red-necked Grebe: Sightings were down again this winter, with only individuals seen off Kill Devil Hills, Dare Co, NC, 28 Jan (Ricky Davis, m. obs.) and at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 19 Feb (Peter Flood, Kate Sutherland).

Eared Grebe: Individuals were seen on the Salt Pond at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 14 Dec (Marcia Lyons) through 6 Jan (Steve Howell); at the WTP in Jacksonville, Onslow Co, NC, 27 Dec (Andy Webb); at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 13 Jan (Steve Calver, et al.); and off Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 1 Feb (Greg Massey, Harry Sell) through 4 Feb (Sherry Lane).

Eurasian Collared-Dove: 233 in Carteret Co, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 18 Dec (fide John Fussell) was a noteworthy count.

White-winged Dove: Individuals were seen in Litchfield Beach, Georgetown Co, SC, 20 Dec (Frank Lawkins) and visiting a feeder in Greenville, Pitt Co, NC, where photographed, 29 Dec through 10 Jan (Robert Driver).

Chuck-will's-widow: One seen near Billy Mitchell Airport in Frisco, Dare Co, NC, 7 Dec (Brian Patteson) was quite late while one heard in Mt Pleasant, Charleston Co, SC, 22 Feb (Craig Watson, et al.) was quite early.

Eastern Whip-poor-will: Winter sightings included one heard along Daws Creek Rd in Brunswick Co, NC, 31 Dec (Ricky Davis); one seen near the campus of UNC-Wilmington, New Hanover Co, NC, 6 Jan (Sam Cooper); one seen and heard at Myrtle Beach SP, Horry Co, SC, 12 Jan (Scott Hartley); and one heard at the Francis Beidler Forest longleaf restoration site (restricted access), Dorchester Co, SC, 19 Feb (Matt Johnson).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: As many as 21 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds visited feeders in a yard in Buxton, Dare Co, NC, during the winter (Ann Maddock).

Anna's Hummingbird: An adult male visited a feeder in Buxton, Dare

Co, NC, 21 Dec through 15 Mar (Ann Maddock, m. obs.) where it was also banded 16 Jan (Susan Campbell), providing NC with its third record of this bird from the western United States.

Rufous Hummingbird: Visiting feeders was an immature male in Durham Co, NC, 8 Dec through 17 Mar (Scott Winton, m. obs.); a banded adult female in northern Wake Co, NC, throughout the winter for a seventh year in a row (James Harper, Pat O'Leary); a female in Garner, Wake Co, NC, banded 21 Dec (Susan Campbell); and an immature male in northern Guilford Co, NC, throughout the winter, banded 3 Feb (Campbell).

Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird: Individuals not identified to species visited feeders near Irmo, Lexington Co, SC, 26 Nov through 26 Mar (Jerry Griggs); in Brevard, Transylvania Co, NC, throughout the winter (Griggs, m. obs.); near Okatie, Beaufort Co, SC, throughout the winter (Cherry Underwood); in Mint Hill, Mecklenburg Co, NC, throughout the winter (Taylor Piephoff, m. obs.); in Greenville Co, SC, 11-13 Jan (Doug Williams); and in Charleston Co, SC, 17-24 Feb (Lacy & Russell Johnson).

Yellow Rail: Two were flushed in the North River Marsh, Carteret Co, NC, 29 Dec (John Dole, et al.) and one was flushed at that same site 18 Feb (John Fussell, et al.)

Black Rail: One was flushed in the North River Marsh, Carteret Co, NC, 29 Dec (John Dole, et al.).

Clapper Rail: One photographed in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 2 Dec (Greg Hudson) was quite unusual for a site so far from the coast.

Virginia Rail: One at Charles D. Owen Park, Buncombe Co, NC, 1 Jan (Chris Jaquette, Doug Johnston, Simon Thompson) into March (m. obs.) was unusual for the mountains.

Common Gallinule: One seen along the causeway at Mackay Island NWR, Currituck Co, NC, 9 Dec (Karen & Tom Beatty) and 1 Jan (Eric Alton, Tamara Conklin) was unusual for a site so far north during the winter season.

Sandhill Crane: Impressive counts were made in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, SC, again this winter, with a high count of 71 made there 13 Jan (Dan Lovett, Steve Patterson). Other sightings made in SC included two to four at multiple sites southeast of Townville, Anderson Co, 19 Dec (Ann Bailes) through 12 Feb (Scott Davis); one photographed at a farm in Cherokee Co, 20 Dec (Marbry Hopkins); six over Wee Tee WMA, Williamsburg Co, 14 Jan (Jay Chandler, et al.); and 12 in a field off Two Churches Rd in Dorchester Co, 19 Jan (Matt Johnson). Sightings made in NC included two around Beaufort, Carteret Co, for a fifth winter in a row, 13 Dec (Martin Wall) through 26 Feb (fide John Fussell); one photographed just outside Snow Hill, Greene Co, 20 Dec (Neil Jernigan); three in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, border of Hyde Co and Washington Co, 27 Dec (Melissa Dowland, Sam Jolly) through 11 Feb (Phil Doerr, et al.); four near



American Avocet, 19 Feb 2017, Carteret Co, NC. Photo by Martin Wall.

Devotion, Surry Co, 4-6 Jan (Royce Hough); two in agricultural fields near Haw River SP, border of Guilford Co and Rockingham Co, 13-14 Feb (Tim Martin, m. obs.); and one heard calling in the Mills River area of Henderson Co, 14 Feb (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey).

Black-necked Stilt: One photographed at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 28 Feb (Elizabeth Anderegg, et al.) was early.

American Avocet: NC's and SC's respective high counts were 310 at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, 2 Dec (Audrey Whitlock) and 500 at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, 13 Jan (Mark Welford). One photographed on a dredge island in the Core Sound off Atlantic, Carteret Co, NC, 19 Feb (Martin Wall, et al.) was unusual for that area in winter.

American Oystercatcher: 978 in Charleston Co, SC, during the Charleston CBC, 2 Jan (Nora Schillerstrom, et al.) was the highest total on any 2016 Audubon CBC.

Wilson's Plover: 18 on the beach at the east end of Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, 6 Jan (Aaron Given, William Oakley) was an excellent count for the winter period. As usual, the area farthest north where the species was found during the winter was Carteret Co, NC, with one on the west end of Shackleford Banks, 18 Dec (Jamie Adams), two at Cape Lookout, 15 Jan (John Fussell, et al.), and one on the beach at Ft Macon SP, 25 Jan (Fussell).

Semipalmated Plover: 7916 in Charleston Co, SC, during the Sea Islands CBC, 4 Jan (fide Aaron Given) was, by far, the highest total on any 2016 Audubon CBC.

Long-billed Curlew: Two were photographed at Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 4 Dec (Pam Ford, et al.) and 18 Dec (Roger Smith) and one was seen at Fish Haul Creek Park, Beaufort Co, SC, 5 Feb (Bob White).

Ruff: One photographed at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 13 Jan (Steve Calver, et al.) was a great find, especially for mid-winter.

Dunlin: One at Lake Wheeler, Wake Co, NC, 17 Dec (Harry LeGrand) through 8 Jan (W. S. Barbour) was unusual for a site so far from the coast in winter.

Pectoral Sandpiper: Individuals at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, SC, 25 Feb (Jeff Click) and along Howerton Rd in Guilford Co, NC, where photographed, 27 Feb (Roberta Newton, Ann Van Sant) were early to arrive.

Spotted Sandpiper: Individuals at the McAlpine WTP, Mecklenburg Co, NC, during the Charlotte CBC, 26 Dec (Matt Janson, et al.) and on the Yadkin River at Pilot Mountain SP, Surry Co, NC, 12 Feb (Jesse Anderson, Nathan & Sarah Gatto) were unusual for sites so far from the coast during the winter. A total of five at different sites in Carteret Co, NC, in December (fide John Fussell) was a good number for the NC coast in winter. 16 in Beaufort Co, SC, during the Lowcountry CBC, 17 Dec (fide Buddy Campbell) was a record number for that count.

Pomarine Jaeger: Individuals off Johnnie Mercer's Pier, New Hanover Co, NC, 23 Dec (Sam Cooper) and off Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, during the Southport CBC, 1 Jan (Greg Massey) were great from-shore sightings.

Parasitic Jaeger: A few of the higher counts were four off Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, 1 Dec (Peggy Eubank, Audrey Whitlock); three off Nags Head Fishing Pier, Dare Co, NC, 8 Dec (Sam Cooper); four off Kitty Hawk, Dare Co, NC, during its CBC, 17 Dec (Ricky Davis); two off Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, SC, 18 Dec (Keith McCullough); six in New Hanover Co, NC, during the Wilmington CBC, 31 Dec (fide Cooper); and three off Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, during the Southport CBC, 1 Jan (Davis).

Dovekie: Multiple sightings were made off the end of Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, starting 28 Jan, when up to 12 were seen (Jack Rogers, et al.), through 25 Feb, when two were seen (Ricky Davis).

Thick-billed Murre: One found amongst a raft of Razorbills off Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, 20 Feb (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand, Greg Massey) was a great find.

Razorbill: This species began irrupting down the outer banks in mid-January, with 200+ counted in a 30 minute span off Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, 18 Jan (Eric Dean). Later counts made at that site included 550 on 27 Jan (Ricky Davis, et al.), 1100 on 29 Jan (Derb Carter, Davis), 2000 on 20 Feb (Carter, Harry LeGrand), and a mind-boggling total of 7990 on 26 Feb (Carter, Davis). High counts at sites farther south included 38 off Johnnie Mercer's Pier, New Hanover Co, NC, 18 Feb (Sam Cooper); 220 off Cape

Point, Dare Co, NC, 19 Feb (Peter Flood, Kate Sutherland); and 26 at Ophelia Inlet, Carteret Co, NC, 19 Feb (Martin Wall, et al.). There were only a handful of reports made from the SC coast, the southernmost being a moribund individual photographed on the beach at Bloody Point, Beaufort Co, 25 Feb (Michael Loftus).

Black Guillemot: The individual found at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, 27 Nov (Michael Robertson) was last seen 5 Jan (Mary Foster, Linda Nordell).

Black-legged Kittiwake: A first-winter bird was seen off Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, 20 Feb (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand).

Black-headed Gull: An adult at the east end of Sunset Beach, Brunswick Co, NC, 15 Jan (Taylor Piephoff) was the only one reported this winter.

Little Gull: Amongst Bonaparte's Gulls off the end of Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, two, an adult and a first-winter bird, were seen 19 Feb (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand) and 26 Feb (Carter, Ricky Davis), and an adult individual was photographed 20 Feb (Greg Massey, Harry Sell).

Franklin's Gull: A first-winter gull photographed at Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 4 Dec (Irvin Pitts, et al.) was the only one reported this winter.

Iceland Gull: Individuals were seen at Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, NC, 25 Nov (Henry Link, et al.) through 22 Dec (m. obs.); at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 10 Dec (Lucas Bobay, et al.) intermittently through 5 Feb (Kate Sutherland); in Frisco, Dare Co, NC, 8 Jan (Sutherland); at the Horry County Landfill, Horry Co, SC, 21 Jan (Pam Ford, et al.); at Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 1 Feb (Josh Southern); and at the South Wake County Landfill, Wake Co, NC, 11 Feb (Bobay, et al.). Also, two distinct individuals were photographed at Cape Point, 21 Jan (Jamie Adams).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: As usual, the highest total on any 2016 Audubon CBC was made in Dare Co, NC, with 491 on the Cape Hatteras CBC, 27 Dec (fide Pat Moore). 153 on the Kitty Hawk CBC, also in Dare Co, NC, 17 Dec (fide Jeff Lewis) was also a good count. A few of the better counts at sites away from the coast were ten in a field along US-64 just east of Jamesville, Martin Co, NC, 29 Dec (Edward Landi); 16 at Buckhorn Reservoir, Wilson Co, NC, 17 Jan (Ricky Davis); and nine at the South Wake County Landfill, Wake Co, NC, 11 Feb (Lucas Bobay, et al.).

Glaucous Gull: One was seen at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 27 Dec (Edward Landi, Mike McCloy) intermittently through 25 Jan (Jeffery Sole).

Great Black-backed Gull: Inland sightings included one at Buckhorn Reservoir, Wilson Co, NC, 17 Jan (Ricky Davis) and 12 Feb (David Williams); six at Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 1 Feb (Ed Corey); and one at the South Wake County Landfill, Wake Co, NC, 11 Feb (Lucas Bobay, et al.).

Red-throated Loon: One accidentally caught in a gill net set by Fisheries biologists at Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 18 Jan (fide Brian O'Shea) was

almost certainly the same individual seen on the lake 13 Jan (Matt Spangler) and 14 Jan (Mark Kosiewski). 3,250 flying north off the end of Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, during a three-hour period 26 Feb (Derb Carter, Ricky Davis) was an impressive tally.

Pacific Loon: New Hanover County, NC, was again this winter the best area to find this species, with one off Figure Eight Island, 4 Dec (Derb Carter); one off Johnnie Mercer's Pier, 29 Dec (Sam Cooper) through 21 Feb (m. obs.); one off the north end of Carolina Beach, 31 Dec (Brian, Bockhahn, Kyle Kittelberger); one off Oceanic Pier, 15 Jan (Carter); and two off Johnnie Mercer's Pier, 1 Feb (Jamie Adams) and 18 Feb (Cooper). Interestingly, one seen in flight off Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, 26 Feb (Ricky Davis) was the only sighting made in NC outside of New Hanover County. Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of one seen in Georgetown Co, SC, during the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC, 29 Dec (fide Chris Hill).

Common Loon: 3,443 in New Hanover Co, NC, most of which were seen from the north end of Carolina Beach, during the Wilmington CBC, 31 Dec (Brian Bockhahn, Kyle Kittelberger, et al.) was, by far, the highest total on any 2016 Audubon CBC.

Manx Shearwater: An unprecedented number of from-shore sightings were made along the Outer Banks this winter. Off Jennette's Pier in Dare Co, NC, after two were first seen 28 Dec (Lucas Bobay, Ed Corey), a handful of other sightings were made in early and mid-January, including three on 16 Jan (Michael Gosselin). In late January at that same site, after four were seen 27 Jan (Dwayne Martin, m. obs.) and eight were seen 28 Jan (Jack Rogers, m. obs.), a historic from-shore count of 217 was made during a three-hour span on the morning of 29 Jan (Derb Carter, Ricky Davis, et al.). Davis notes that most birds were flying south, with some as close as several hundred yards off the end of the pier, and some stopping to join the feeding groups of Razorbills. Sightings continued intermittently at that site through February until three were last seen 26 Feb (Carter, Davis). Though most sightings were made off Jennette's Pier, a few Manx Shearwaters were also seen from other sites in Dare County, including two off Cape Point, 19 Feb (Peter Flood, Kate Sutherland). Notably, one seen off of Johnnie Mercer's Pier, New Hanover Co, NC, 7 Feb (Sam Cooper, Greg Massey) was the only sighting made outside of Dare County.

Wood Stork: An immature stork photographed in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, border of Hyde Co and Washington Co, NC, 29 Jan (Ric Carter) was very unusual for that area of NC in mid-winter.

Brown Booby: Pending review by the NC BRC was the report of a sub-adult Brown Booby at Beaufort Inlet, seen from Ft Macon, Carteret Co, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 18 Dec (Ricky Davis). If accepted, this report would provide the Carolinas with its first winter record of this species.

Northern Gannet: Of interest, the four highest counts of Northern Gannets



Wood Stork, 29 Jan 2017, Washington Co, NC. Photo by Ric Carter.

made on all of this year's Audubon CBCs were made on CBCs in NC, the highest of which was 13,188 on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC, 1 Jan (fide Ron Clark).

Double-crested Cormorant: Also the four highest counts of Double-crested Cormorants made on all of this year's Audubon CBCs were made on CBCs in NC, the highest of which was 35,000 on the Ocracoke Island CBC, 31 Dec (fide Peter Vankevich).

Great Cormorant: The highest counts at two traditional wintering sites were eight at Cape Lookout, Carteret Co, NC, 15 Jan (John Fussell, et al.) and seven at Masonboro Inlet, 21 Feb (Sam Cooper). Construction of a replacement bridge over Oregon Inlet may have hindered birders' access to that traditional wintering site this winter.

American White Pelican: High counts at traditional wintering sites along the coast included 490 at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 1 Dec (Steve Calver); 100 at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 11 Dec (Susan Campbell, Jeff Phippen, et al.); and 100 at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 10 Feb (David McLean, et al.). Sightings made outside of the coastal plain included four on Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 18-22 Jan (Gordon Brown, m. obs.); three on Lake Greenwood, Greenwood Co, SC, 17 Feb (Janet Ledebuhr); and up to 20 at the dam on High Rock Lake, Davidson Co, NC, 17-20 Feb (Wanda Fortner, m. obs.).

American Bittern: An individual wintered at the Prairie Ridge Ecostation in Raleigh, Wake Co, NC, for the fourth year in a row (Brian O'Shea, m. obs.).

Least Bittern: Unusual for winter were four heard calling at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 2 Jan (Lauren Morgens, Matthew



Green Heron, 1 Jan 2017, Richland Co, SC. Photo by Jerry Griggs.

Sarver) and one seen at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 18 Feb (Aija Konrad).

Reddish Egret: One at Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 3 Dec and 13 Jan (William Christenson, David McLean) was unusual for winter.

Green Heron: In NC where rare in winter, Green Herons were found on Radio Island, Carteret Co, during the Morehead City CBC, 18 Dec (Mike Tove, et al.); at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, 21 Dec (Peggy Eubank, Audrey Whitlock); and in Brunswick Co, during the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC, 1 Jan (Ron Clark). One seen and photographed at Harbison Lake, Richland Co, SC, 1 Jan (Jerry Griggs) into February (m. obs.) was a good find for a site so far from the coast.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: An immature bird photographed at the north end of Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 3 Dec (Nathan & Sarah Gatto) and 7 Dec (Martin Wall) was unusual for a site so far north in winter.

Roseate Spoonbill: A few of the higher counts this winter were 15 at Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center (restricted access), during the Winyah Bay CBC, 15 Dec (Pam Ford, et al.); 17 at Donnelley WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 12 Dec (Doris Ratchford); and 17 at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 24 Feb (Steve Calver).

Osprey: Ten in Carteret Co, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 18 Dec (fide John Fussell) was a record high for that count.

Swallow-tailed Kite: Two over Avon, Dare Co, NC, 26 Feb (Ann Maddock) were extremely early.

Golden Eagle: An adult bird was seen and photographed at Alligator River



Northern Saw-whet Owl, 9 Dec 2016, Dare Co, NC. Photo by Jeff Beane.

NWR, Dare Co, NC, 27 Jan (Matt Janson, Jack Rogers, m. obs.) and 29 Jan (Jeri Smart, et al.). In SC, one was seen at the Savannah River Site (restricted access), Aiken Co, during its CBC, 15 Dec (Carl Huffman) and a juvenile bird was photographed at Carolina Sandhills NWR, Chesterfield Co, 10 Jan (Don Crutchfield).

Short-eared Owl: The peak count at Alligator River NWR, Dare Co, NC, this winter was five on 27 Jan (Ricky Davis). Two along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, 19 Feb (Jelmer Poelstra), and one there 25 Feb (Martin Wall), were locally unusual.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: One was seen and heard along the entrance road to the Bodie Island Lighthouse, Dare Co, NC, 9 Dec (Jeff Beane, Ed Corey, et al.) intermittently through 19 Feb (Greg Massey).

Peregrine Falcon: Up to two wintered in downtown Winston-Salem, Forsyth Co, NC, again this year (Ron Morris, m. obs.).

Nanday Parakeet: It is suspected that the escaped individual living in downtown Morehead City, Carteret Co, NC, died, as it stopped being seen near the end of February (fide John Fussell). Of note, it wasn't particularly cold around the time it stopped being seen, and it had survived some very cold

winters since its first sighting in July 2009.

Ash-throated Flycatcher: One seen and photographed at Greenfield Lake in Wilmington, New Hanover Co, NC, 21-22 Dec (Daniel Hueholt, m. obs.) was the only one reported this winter.

Great Kiskadee: The most exciting find of the winter was that of a Great Kiskadee at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 9 Feb (Kelley Luikey). It was seen and photographed by many until it was last seen 26 Mar (Doug Gochfeld, et al.). Pending review by the SC BRC, this sighting will become the first record of this tropical flycatcher in the Carolinas if accepted.

Western Kingbird: Individuals were seen and photographed at two sites in Charleston Co, SC—on Sullivan's Island, 24 Dec (Doris Ratchford, Pam Ford) and at the Park West Recreation Complex, 18 Jan (Kathy Woolsey). One was seen on the fence at the Ft Fisher Ferry Terminal, New Hanover Co, NC, 28 Dec (Jurek Smykla), but not photographed.

White-eyed Vireo: Four along the Main Prong in the Croatan NF in Carteret Co, NC, 2 Dec (John Fussell) was a good count for that area in winter.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Individuals at Webb Wildlife Center, Hampton Co, SC, 27 Feb (Kevin Kubach) and at Rankin Lake, Gaston Co, NC, 28 Feb (Steve Tracy) were somewhat early to arrive.

Barn Swallow: Lingering into winter were individuals at the Salt Pond at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 10 Dec (Karen Lebing, m. obs.) and on the west end of Lake Phelps, Washington Co, NC, on the very late date of 30 Dec (Ed Corey).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: There was a minor irruption of this species into the Carolinas this winter. Some of the higher counts were 46 on Ocracoke Island, Hyde Co, NC, during its CBC, 31 Dec (fide Peter Vankevich); 11 along the entrance road to the Bodie Island Lighthouse, Dare Co, NC, 28 Dec (Jacob Socolar); eight at Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center (restricted access), Georgetown Co, SC, during the Winyah Bay CBC, 15 Dec (Steve McInnis); four in Pine Knoll Shores, Carteret Co, NC, 10 Dec (John Fussell, Martha Mayo); four in Swannanoa, Buncombe Co, NC, 2 Jan (Simon Thompson); and three at Reedy Creek Nature Preserve, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 16 Feb (Leigh Anne Carter).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: One seen and photographed at Lake Junaluska, Haywood Co, NC, 15 Dec (Kirk Gardner) and 5-11 Jan (Simon Thompson, Gardner, m. obs.) was a good find for the mountain region in winter.

Wood Thrush: One at Santee Coastal Reserve, Charleston Co, SC, 12 Feb (David Booth, Jeff Click, Linda Montgomery, Paul Serridge, et al.) was an amazing find for the winter season and the first ever to be photographed in the Carolinas during the winter.

Purple Finch: There was a minor irruption this winter, with sightings made across the Carolinas, though no new record high counts were made on any of our CBCs. 70 visiting feeders in a yard in Halifax Co, NC, 7 Jan (Frank



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 5 Jan 2017, Haywood Co, NC.
Photo by Simon Thompson.

Enders) was the best count.

Red Crossbill: A few of the higher counts this winter, all from the NC mountains, were 13 at Leicester Patch, Buncombe Co, 29 Dec (Doug Johnston); eight at the Cataloochee Ski Area, Haywood Co, 4 Jan (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey); six in Buncombe Co, during its CBC, 2 Jan (Simon Thompson, Johnston); and 14 at Mt Mitchell SP, Yancey Co, 6 Feb (Clifton Avery).

Pine Siskin: There was only a minor influx of Pine Siskins into the Carolinas this winter. 70+ at the Cataloochee Ski Area, Haywood Co, NC, 4 Jan (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey) was the highest count.

Lapland Longspur: Sightings included one photographed on the beach on Seabrook Island, Charleston Co, SC, 2 Dec (Aija & Ed Konrad); one seen in a harvested soybean field in central Horry Co, SC, 10 Dec (Stephen Thomas); and one heard along Inwood Rd in Wake Co, NC, during the Raleigh CBC, 17 Dec (Harry LeGrand).

Snow Bunting: Seven were seen on the beach on the south side of Oregon Inlet, Dare Co, NC, 21 Dec (Marcia Lyons) through 24 Dec (Audrey Whitlock). Six on the beach on the north end of Oregon Inlet, during the Bodie-Pea Island CBC, 28 Dec (John Fussell) were probably part of that same flock. Also, one was seen at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 16 Jan (Kate Sutherland) through 6 Feb (m. obs.).

Ovenbird: Winter sightings included three in the Frisco Woods, Dare Co,



Ovenbird, 8 Jan 2017, Dare Co, NC.
Photo by Jeff Lewis.

NC, during the Cape Hatteras CBC, 27 Dec (John Fussell); one at a feeder in Manteo, Dare Co, NC, 7 Jan through the end of the period (Jeff Lewis); two at that same feeder in Manteo, 8 Jan (Lewis); one at a feeder in Pittsboro, Chatham Co, NC, 8 Jan (Rouse Wilson); one near Rougemont, Durham Co, NC, 11 Jan (Helen Kalevas); and one in a yard in Buxton, Dare Co, NC, 16 Jan (Ann Maddock).

Louisiana Waterthrush: One photographed at McDowell Nature Preserve, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 24 Feb (Kevin Metcalf) was very early.

Northern Waterthrush: One lingered at Beaver Lake, Buncombe Co, NC, until 12 Dec (Tom Bush), quite a late date for a site away from the coast. Five at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, during the Savannah GA-SC CBC, 2 Jan (Lewis Burke, et al.) was an excellent count of over-wintering birds.

Black-and-white Warbler: NC's and SC's respective winter high counts were ten in New Hanover Co, during the Wilmington CBC, 31 Dec (fide Sam Cooper) and 28 in Beaufort Co, during the Hilton Head Island CBC, 15 Dec (fide Susan Murphy). Five responding to playback near the golf course in Pine Knoll Shores, Carteret Co, NC, 10 Dec (John Fussell, Martha Mayo) was a notable count for that area in winter.

Nashville Warbler: Individuals seen near the Glenburnie Quarry, Craven Co, NC, during the New Bern CBC, 19 Dec (Al Gamache, Steve Shaffer) and at a birdbath in Cabarrus Co, NC, where photographed, 23 Feb (Ginger

Walter) were great finds for winter.

Common Yellowthroat: One seen and photographed at Brookshire Park, Watauga Co, NC, 26 Dec through 5 Mar (Wilcox, m. obs.) was very unusual for the mountain region in winter. 51 in Hyde Co, NC, during the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC, 29 Dec (fide Susan Campbell) was our region's winter high count.

American Redstart: One at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, during its CBC, 29 Dec (Susan Campbell) was a good find for winter.

Cape May Warbler: Amazingly, not one, but two Cape May Warblers wintered at Coker Arboretum on the campus of UNC-Chapel Hill, Orange Co, NC. After a female/immature-plumaged individual was first seen 12 Feb (Lucretia Kinney), a male-plumaged bird was seen there the next day, 13 Feb (Jelmer Poelstra), and both birds were seen together 21 Feb (Mary Sonis) and 23 Feb (Kinney, et al.). Both remained at the site through 29 Mar (Kinney).

Northern Parula: Individuals were found at Washington Park, Forsyth Co, NC, during the Winston-Salem CBC, 17 Dec (Kim Brand, Doug Demarest) and at Coker Arboretum on the campus of UNC-Chapel Hill, Orange Co, NC, during the Chapel Hill CBC, 26 Dec (David & Judy Smith) and again 10-25 Feb (Lucretia Kinney, m. obs.) One heard on Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, 27 Feb (Jake Zadik) was likely an early spring arrival.

Yellow Warbler: Individuals were photographed at a WTP in Conway, Horry Co, SC, 21 Dec (John Hutchens) and 6 Jan (Chris Hill), and in Pineville, Mecklenburg Co, NC, during the Charlotte CBC, 26 Dec (Matt Janson, et al.). The sighting made in Pineville was most remarkable because almost all previous winter records are from the coastal plain.

Blackpoll Warbler: Two found amongst a flock of Yellow-rumped Warblers in the Roanoke Island Marshes, Dare Co, NC, 10 Dec (Susan Campbell, Jeff Pippen) were very late to depart.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: An adult male seen at a birdbath in Charleston, Charleston Co, SC, 29 Jan (Kristina Wheeler) was very unusual for mid-winter.

Yellow-throated Warbler: The high count along the SC coast was 23 in Beaufort Co, during the Hilton Head Island CBC, 15 Dec (fide Susan Murphy). One photographed at a suet feeder in Kill Devil Hills, Dare Co, NC, 19 Jan (Bobby Koch) was the farthest north where one was seen this winter.

Prairie Warbler: Winter sightings included one photographed in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR in Hyde Co, NC, 2 Dec (Greg Hudson); one on Ocracoke Island, Hyde Co, NC, 28 Dec (Mike McCloy) and again during its CBC, 31 Dec (Jeff Beane, et al.); one photographed on Seabrook Island, Charleston Co, SC, 2 Jan (Aija Konrad, et al.); and one on Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, 4 Jan (Aaron Given, et al.).

Wilson's Warbler: An adult male photographed at Santee Delta WMA, Charleston Co, SC, during the McClellanville CBC, 18 Dec (Pam Ford, et al.) was a fantastic find.

Yellow-breasted Chat: At least a dozen were seen in the Carolinas this winter. Three at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, during its CBC, 29 Jan (Jacob Socolar, Susan Campbell) was a great count for winter. Chats were found at four different sites in New Hanover Co, NC, including the NC Aquarium at Ft Fisher, where one lingered 28 Jan (Virginia Holman) through 19 Feb (Ricky Davis). One visited a yard in Morehead City, Carteret Co, NC, where it fed on mealworms, 2 Jan through the end of the period (Martha Mayo, m. obs.). In SC, individuals were photographed at Oak Point Golf Course, Charleston Co, 21 Dec (Jake Zadik); at Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, 28 Jan (George Stubbs); at Santee Delta WMA, Charleston Co, 11 Feb (Pam Ford, Craig Watson); and on James Island, Charleston Co, 20 Feb (Kelly Draganov).

Eastern Towhee: White-eyed Eastern Towhees photographed in a yard in Raleigh, Wake Co, NC, 11 Dec and 7 Jan (Sharon Kennedy) and in Croatan NF in Craven Co, NC, 8 Jan (Martin Wall) were unusual for sites so far north.

Bachman's Sparrow: This species was found at multiple sites in the Sandhills and coastal plain with appropriate longleaf pine/wiregrass habitat. Most notable, though, were the high counts made at Webb Wildlife Center in Hampton Co, SC, in late February—16 on 26 Feb (Kevin Kubach) and 23 on 27 Feb (Kubach), both excellent counts for winter.

Clay-colored Sparrow: One hung around for a while at a brush pile along Newland Rd in Washington Co, NC, where it was seen by many, 27 Dec (Lucas Bobay, Ed Corey) through 5 Feb (Jan Hansen, Jelmer Poelstra).

Vesper Sparrow: One seen at Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 16 Feb through 22 Mar (Martin Wall, m. obs.) was unusual for that area in late winter.

Lark Sparrow: One spent the entire winter at the UNC Coastal Studies Institute on Roanoke Island, Dare Co, NC, where it was seen and photographed by many, 30 Nov through 13 Apr (Jeff Lewis, m. obs.). Another individual was seen along Stanford Rd near Cane Creek Reservoir in Orange Co, NC, 18 Jan (Loren Hintz) and 18 Feb (Keith Jensen, Eddie Owens) through 17 Mar (Maria de Bruyn).

Grasshopper Sparrow: Winter sightings included two photographed at the Francis Beidler Forest longleaf restoration site (restricted access), Dorchester Co, SC, 8 Feb (Matt Johnson) and two photographed at Holston Creek Park, Spartanburg Co, SC, 8 Feb (Michael Robertson).

Henslow's Sparrow: Winter sightings included four at the Savannah River Site (restricted access), Barnwell Co, SC, during its CBC, 15 Dec (Sam Murray, et al.); one in the Sandhills Game Land in Scotland Co, SC, 15 Jan (Kevin Metcalf, Rob Van Epps); and two at Webb Wildlife Center, Hampton Co, SC, 16 Feb (Steve Calver).

Le Conte's Sparrow: One seen and heard along Newland Rd near its intersection with Weston Rd in Washington Co, NC, 28 Jan (Jack Rogers, et al.) was the only one reported this winter.

Seaside Sparrow: Four heard singing at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co,



Lark Sparrow, 12 Jan 2017, Dare Co, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

NC, 26 Feb (Martin Wall) were unusual for that brackish, largely non-tidal marsh in winter.

Lincoln's Sparrow: Notable counts included seven along a half mile stretch of road bordering a young clear-cut east of Newport, Carteret Co, NC, 11 Dec (John Fussell, et al.) and three in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR in Washington Co, NC, 23 Dec (Ricky Davis). Individuals photographed at Savannah NWR, Jasper Co, SC, 4 Dec (Audrey Whitlock) and at Myrtle Beach SP, Horry Co, SC, 23 Feb (John Hutchens) were unusual for those areas.

White-crowned Sparrow: 47 around Stone Mountain SP, Wilkes Co, NC, during its CBC, 1 Jan (fide Guy McGrane) was a remarkable total. 18 at Prater Farm in Anderson Co, SC, 9 Jan (Steve Compton, et al.) was also a good count.

Summer Tanager: One photographed at a feeder during the Charlotte CBC, 26 Dec (fide Ken Kneidel) was a first for that count and very unusual for a site so far from the coast. A female visited a feeder in Jackeys Creek Estates, Brunswick Co, NC, for a third winter in a row (Greg Massey). In SC, individual males were photographed at feeders in Charleston, Charleston Co, 22 Nov through 6 Mar (Lacy & Russell Johnson) and in Columbia, Richland Co, 7 Jan (Leslie Dillon).

Western Tanager: An adult male was photographed at a feeder in Greenwood, Greenwood Co, SC, 19 Dec (Denny Walker).

Blue Grosbeak: A first-year male photographed at a feeder in Lincolnton, Lincoln Co, NC, 5 Jan (Cathy Loughlin) was very unusual for the winter

season.

Painted Bunting: A few of the higher counts this winter were two at a feeder in Manteo, Dare Co, NC, 19 Dec (Karen Lebing); three at Cypress Wetlands, Beaufort Co, SC, 23 Dec (Jennifer Hunter); two at a feeder in Southern Shores, Dare Co, NC, 29 Dec through 12 Mar (Jim Gould); three at a feeder in Charleston, Charleston Co, SC, 7 Jan (Lacy & Russell Johnson); and two at a feeder at Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 2-21 Feb (Martin Wall, m. obs.).

Dickcissel: A first-winter female was photographed underneath a feeder in Forestbrook, Horry Co, SC, 18 Feb (John Hutchens, et al.).

Red-winged Blackbird: A massive flock of 500,000 in an agricultural field northeast of Engelhard, Hyde Co, NC, 29 Jan (Jack Rogers, et al.) was an amazing total.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: One was seen amongst the massive Red-winged Blackbird flock in the agricultural fields near Engelhard, Hyde Co, NC, 17 Jan (Eric Dean), 29 Jan (Jack Rogers, et al.), and 5 Feb (Ricky Davis).

Brewer's Blackbird: For a second winter in a row, a small flock of Brewer's Blackbirds was seen in a horse pen along Gum Swamp Rd in Hyde Co, NC, with four seen during the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC, 29 Dec (John Fussell) and a high count of eight made 5 Feb (Ricky Davis). Also in eastern NC, six were seen along Canal B Rd in Washington Co, 22 Jan (Ricky Davis). High counts made in SC included 38 at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, 24 Dec (Scott Davis) and 80 in an agricultural area of Orangeburg Co, 29 Jan (Dennis Forsythe).

Bullock's Oriole: An adult male sporadically visited a feeder in Morehead City, Carteret Co, NC, 27 Dec through 29 Jan (Bill & Loretta Hettler).

Baltimore Oriole: One photographed at a feeder in Woodfin, Buncombe Co, NC, 21 Dec (Alice Semanchuk) was unusual for the mountain region in winter.

CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

www.carolinabirdclub.org

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

Membership is open to all persons interested in the conservation, natural history, and study of wildlife with particular emphasis on birds. Dues, contributions, and bequests to the Club may be deductible from state and federal income and estate taxes. Pay dues or make donations at <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/dues/>. Make change of address at <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/profile/>. Send correspondence regarding membership matters to Headquarters Secretary. Answers to questions about the club might be found at <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/about.html>. Dues include \$6 for subscription to the *CBC Newsletter* and \$7 for subscription to *The Chat*.

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