

The Chat

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Articles

Use of Hornet Nests for Winter Roosting by the Carolina Wren in the Southeastern United States

Todd F. Elliott and Doug Elliott97

Briefs for the Files

Summer 2017 *Josh Southern* 101

Twenty-Five Years Ago in The Chat

Steve Shultz.....112

*Cover: Black-bellied Whistling Duck, July 2017, New Hanover County, NC
Photo by Sam Cooper*

Use of Hornet Nests for Winter Roosting by the Carolina Wren in the Southeastern United States

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The Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) is one of several species of wrens found in the Carolinas. This small-bodied bird is found year-round through much of the eastern United States and south into Mexico (Peterson and Peterson 2002). It is the only wren in eastern North America that does not migrate to warmer climates in the winter (Sibley 2000). This overwintering habit makes the species vulnerable to harsh winter temperatures, particularly in the mountains of the Carolinas and in the northern portion of the bird's range. Many researchers have concluded from studies in the colder portions of its range that winter survival is directly related to low temperatures (Brooks 1936; Root 1988; Link and Sauer 2007). Other researchers have suggested that it might be linked to the availability of food resources (Job and Bednekoff 2011). Ultimately, both factors contribute to the bird's range, and changes in climate temperature have been directly correlated to the gradual northward range expansion of the species (Job and Bednekoff 2011).

In the mountains of Rutherford County, North Carolina, we have frequently observed an interesting phenomenon that may contribute to the winter survival of Carolina Wrens. After the autumn killing frosts, we encounter large nests of the Bald-faced Hornet (*Dolichovespula maculata*) with one or more holes approximately 10 cm in diameter torn into the side (Fig. 1). There are often remnants of bird scat near the opening (Fig. 2), and the hollowed out cavity is generally substantially larger inside. We believe that Carolina Wrens tear these holes into the

hornet nests; on winter nights, one or more can often be found roosting in the well-insulated cavities (Fig. 3).



Figure 1. Bald-faced Hornet nest hung under the shelter of a porch roof with hole made by a Carolina Wren for winter roosting.

The thick, paper-like walls built by the hornets during the summer months are very insulating and apparently help the wrens to withstand low winter temperatures. Every year for the last ten years, we have collected one or more large Bald-faced Hornet nests and hung them under the roof of a porch. We have yet to observe a winter during which one or more wrens have not roosted in the hornet nest. Although this roosting behavior appears to be common, at least in our region, it has seldom been reported in the literature. West Virginia

naturalist Professor Maurice Brooks reported that in the fall of 1927, a hornet nest was hung in an outbuilding, and by late winter, a pair of Carolina Wrens was regularly roosting there and continued to do so for the next five winters (Brooks 1932). In Ohio in 1932, Louis B. Kalter reported seeing a Carolina Wren using a hornet nest that had been placed on a porch as a winter roosting place; Kalter comments: "This may be an entirely new and individualistic adaptation of the Carolina Wren to man's civilization, or it may indicate one type of its normal winter roosting place" (Kalter 1932). These two reports from 1932 in West Virginia and Ohio are the only published accounts we have found that outline this behavior in Carolina Wrens. There are other accounts of these wrens roosting in different insulated items such as coat pockets, shirts on a clothesline, folds in curtains, etc (Members 1943; Bent 1948).



Figure 2.
Carolina
Wren scats
around the
opening of a
winter roost
in a Bald-
faced Hornet
nest.

It is apparent from these formerly published notes and our observations that this winter roosting behavior is likely far more widespread among Carolina Wrens than has been previously reported. Bald-faced Hornets are widely distributed in North America (Milne and Milne 1980), and in the colder portions of the Carolina Wren's range, they may play a vital role in the bird's ability to overwinter. Further research is needed to understand how widespread and important this roosting behavior is among Carolina Wrens and other related bird species. It is also necessary for data to be collected regarding this behavior where hornet nests have been left in the wild and have not been moved to sheltered environments by humans.



Figure 3.
Carolina
Wren roosting
inside a well-
insulated
Bald-faced
Hornet nest
on a cold
winter night.

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BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Summer 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 that do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

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

Reports 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.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **Co** – County, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **Ln** – Lane, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: Two seen at a farm pond in the northeast corner of Craven Co, NC, 21 Jun (Lester Coble) may have been the same pair photographed at a small pond in Emerald Isle, Carteret Co, NC, a few

days earlier, 17 Jun (Kathleen Johnston). Also in NC was one photographed at a small pond in Wilmington, New Hanover Co, 15 Jul (Sam Cooper, m. obs.)

Tundra Swan: One lingering in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, Washington Co, NC, 25 Jun (Ricky Davis) must not have been able to migrate back north.

Mottled Duck: One photographed along the Basin Trail at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 1 Jun (Jamie Adams) was a good find for NC.

Blue-winged Teal: Two, a drake and a hen, photographed at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, SC, 19 Jun (George McHenry) through 21 Jun (Andy Norris) were unusual for June.

Redhead: An adult drake photographed near the dam on Lake Wateree, Kershaw Co, SC, 27 Jul (Steve Patterson) was very unusual for the summer period.

Ring-necked Duck: An adult drake summered at Salem Lake, Forsyth Co, NC, again this year (m. obs.).

Common Eider: Very unusual for the summer period was a pair, a drake and a hen, seen and photographed at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, 10 Jul (Peter Stangel) through 25 Aug (Richard Poort). This pair may have been part of the group of three eiders that lingered at this site in late May. These sightings were the first ever made of a Common Eider in SC during the months of July or August.

Black Scoter: 19 at the south end of Sullivan's Island, Charleston Co, SC, 7 Jun (Peter Bergseon) and 16 around Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 26 Jun (David McLean) were good counts for the summer period. Other summer sightings included three off North Topsail Beach, Onslow Co, NC, 1 Jun (Gilbert Grant); three at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal, Carteret Co, NC, 2 Jun (Bob Lockett, et al.); three at the south end of Bodie Island, Dare Co, NC, 6 Jun (Paul Doshkov); two at Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 15 Jun (Martin Wall) and 23 Jun (Jesse Anderson); ten at Breach Inlet, Charleston Co, SC, throughout much of June (Elizabeth Anderegg, m. obs.); five at Folly Beach, Charleston Co, SC, 14 Jul (Keith McCullough, et al.); and up to six at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, throughout the period (m. obs.).

Ruddy Duck: Individual adult drakes at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 13 Jun (Steve Calver) and at the WTP in Hemingway, Williamsburg Co, SC, 24 Jun (Jay Chandler, Pam Ford) and 3 Jul (Catherine & Jay Gamble) were unusual for the summer period.

Pied-billed Grebe: This species bred at North River Preserve (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, this summer. A total of eight grebes, including two singing adult males, one female, and five juvenile grebes, were seen there 16 Jul (John Fussell, et al.). Fussell notes that the impoundment where the grebes bred was only about a month old.

Horned Grebe: A breeding-plumaged adult in the Middle Marshes section of the Rachel Carson Reserve, Carteret Co, NC, 12 Jun (John Fussell, Paula Gillikin) was late to depart.

Common Ground-Dove: Breeding took place at Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, SC, at about the northern limit of the species' current range on the east coast. After a female was photographed on a nest, 27 Jul (Frank Lawkins), two juveniles were seen in the nest 15 Aug (Lawkins) and had fledged by 22 Aug (Sam Miller).

White-winged Dove: One was photographed at a feeder in a yard on James Island, Charleston Co, SC, 4 Jun (Barbara Spence).

Chuck-will's-widow: One heard calling in Ela, Swain Co, NC, 1 Jun (Charles Lawson) was unusual for the mountain region. Lawson notes that he also heard one calling at a nearby site in northwest Jackson Co, NC, throughout the summers of 2015 and 2016.

Black Rail: Up to three were heard calling along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, throughout the period (m. obs.). At least one was heard calling at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 23 Jun (Cherrie Sneed) through 23 Jul (Andy Harrison), with two being heard there 26 Jun (Elizabeth Anderegg) and 1 Jul (David Williams).

Sora: An adult found at Valle Crucis Community Park. Watauga Co, NC, 6 Jul (Robin Diaz) was very unusual for mid-summer. Amazingly, two Soras were reported at that site 18 Jul (Guy McGrane, Judi Sawyer, et al.), one of which some observers say resembled a juvenile Sora. Unfortunately only photos of the adult were obtained, leaving the species' breeding status in NC still unconfirmed.

Purple Gallinule: Breeding took place at Brick Pond Park, Aiken Co, SC, a site farther than inland than most documented breeding sites in the Carolinas, evidenced by an adult seen with four chicks, 1 Jul (Kathy Steele).

Common Gallinule: Breeding took place at the constructed wetland near the WTP in Goldsboro, Wayne Co, NC, evidenced by an adult seen with three chicks, 2 Jul (Ricky Davis) and 16 Jul (David Williams).

American Coot: Breeding took place at the retention pond at Concord Mills, Cabarrus Co, NC, evidenced by two adults photographed with five juveniles, 27 Jun (Jeff Lemons). This sighting provides the first record of breeding by this species in the Piedmont.

Limpkin: Individuals photographed at Lake Greenwood near Waterloo, Laurens Co, SC, 3 Jul (Jonas Younts) and along the Great Pee Dee River near Yauhannah, Georgetown Co, SC, 8 Jul (Mark Johnson) were, amazingly, the third and fourth Limpkins photographed in 2017 in SC, a state with only about a dozen total sightings prior to 2017.

Sandhill Crane: An adult photographed on Johns Island, Charleston Co, SC, 31 Jul (Jake Zadik, et al.) was unusual for the summer period.

Black-necked Stilt: Rare inland sightings involved two at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, SC, 1-5 Jun (Scott Davis, m. obs.); three at Horse Creek WTP (restricted access), Aiken Co, SC, 8 Jul (Dennis Forsythe); and 14 at the same site 11 Jul (Kent Bedenbaugh). The species likely bred at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, this summer, with sightings of up to seven birds made there throughout the period (m. obs.).

American Avocet: Inland sightings included three photographed at the WTP in Hemmingway, Williamsburg Co, SC, 20 Jul (Jay Chandler); one at Lake Hartwell near Clemson, Pickens Co, SC, 24 Jul (Kevin Kubach); and one at the WTP in Goldsboro, Wayne Co, NC, 30 Jul (Lucas Bobay).

Snowy Plover: One photographed on a sandbar near the south end of Lea-Hutaff Island, Pender Co, NC, 31 Jul (George Stubbs) was probably the same individual seen around Rich Inlet for the past couple of summers.

Wilson's Plover: 59 around New River Inlet, Onslow Co, NC, 20 Jul (Gilbert Grant), and 49 at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 22 Jul (Sam Cooper) were good counts.

Upland Sandpiper: "Uppies" began passing through the Carolinas in late July, with two photographed at the Bucksport Sod Farm in Horry Co, SC, 27 Jul (Chris Hill, John Hutchens) and one photographed in the grass around Wilmington International Airport, New Hanover Co, NC, 27 Jul (Sam Cooper).

Hudsonian Godwit: One photographed at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 30 Jul (Karen Lebing) was somewhat early.

Red Knot: 168 in a single flock at the east end of Shackleford Banks, Carteret Co, NC, 30 Jul (Martha Mayo, John Fussell, et al.) was a noteworthy count for summer.

Stilt Sandpiper: One photographed at New River Inlet, Onslow Co, NC, 6 Jul (Gilbert Grant) was somewhat early.

Short-billed Dowitcher: One photographed at Simpson Research Station in Anderson Co, SC, 20-21 Jul (George McHenry) was a good find for a site so far from the coast.

Long-billed Dowitcher: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of a Long-billed Dowitcher at Osceola Lake, Henderson Co, NC, 23 Jul (Ron Selvey, Wayne Forsythe). If accepted, the report would become the first documented record of this species in the NC mountains.

Willet: Two eastern-race birds photographed at Falls Lake in Durham Co, NC, 10 Jun (John Hammond, Thomas Hopkins) were extremely unusual for an inland site during the month of June.

Wilson's Phalarope: One was photographed near the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper So, SC, 19 Jul (Steve Calver).

South Polar Skua: One seen in flight over the ocean from the bathhouse area at Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, following several days of southerly winds, 18 Jun (Ricky Davis) was a real surprise, as this species is very rarely seen from shore.

Pomarine Jaeger: A dark-phase adult Pomarine Jaeger was seen over the ocean from Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 18 Jun (Ricky Davis).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Seven distinct immature birds photographed in Sunset Beach, Brunswick Co, NC, 23-27 Jul (Bob Lewis) was a notable count for that area in summer. An immature bird at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 8 Jun (Sam Cooper) and at nearby Masonboro Inlet, 30 Jun (David Weesner) was also unusual for summer.

Caspian Tern: Two in flight over Lake Julian, Buncombe Co, NC, 27 Jun (Simon Thompson) were very unusual for an inland site in late June. Were these birds late spring migrants or were they early fall migrants?

Black Tern: 81 on Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 26 Jun (David McLean) was a notable count for late June.

Roseate Tern: Individuals photographed on the beach just south of Carova Beach, Currituck Co, NC, 23 Jun (Lucy Jacobson) and in flight over Bogue Inlet from Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 5 Jul (Martin Wall) were great finds.



Roseate Tern, 5 Jul 2017,
Carteret Co, NC
Photo by Martin Wall

Red-throated Loon: One in flight over North Topsail Beach, Onslow Co, NC, 1 Jun (Gilbert Grant) was late to depart.

Cory's Shearwater: 24 seen flying east off Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, following several days of southerly winds, 18 Jun (Ricky Davis) was a notable from-shore count.

Sooty Shearwater: From-shore sightings included one off Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 7 Jun (Andrew Thornton) and two off Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 18 Jun (Ricky Davis).

Great Shearwater: 155 off Ft. Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, following several days of southerly winds, 18 Jun (Ricky Davis) was a fantastic from-shore count, probably the highest count ever made in that county. Around that same time, a

wildlife rehabilitator in Brunswick Co, NC, took in 30 emaciated Great Shearwaters found on area beaches over the course of a week (*fide* David Weesner). Also seen from shore were individuals at Indian Beach, Carteret Co, NC, 13 Jun (Chad Pumpelly); at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 16 Jun (Michael Gosselin); at Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover Co, NC, 18 Jun (Sam Cooper); over the Newport River estuary, Carteret Co, NC, 18 Jun (Vicky Thayer); at Capers Island, Charleston Co, SC, 19 Jun (Joe Magura); and at North Topsail Beach, Onslow Co, NC, 19 Jul (Gilbert Grant).

Manx Shearwater: One was seen among the flight of shearwaters off Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, following several days of southerly winds, 18 Jun (Ricky Davis). A sick or injured individual was photographed on the east end of Holden Beach, Brunswick Co, NC, 19 Jun (Malcolm Chesworth).

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: From shore, two were seen from Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 16 Jun (Michael Gosselin) and two were seen from Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 18 Jun (Ricky Davis).

Wood Stork: Individuals at Biltmore Estate, Buncombe Co, NC, where photographed, 1 Jun (Bill Alexander); in flight over NC-152 in Rowan Co, NC, 11 Jun (Issac Kerns); and at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, SC, where

photographed, 25 Jun (Linda Montgomery) were unusual for sites so far inland in June. One photographed at Palmetto Peartree Preserve, Tyrell Co, NC, 8 Jul (Alicia Jackson) was unusual for a site so far north. 24 at a farm in Jones Co, NC, 3 Jul (Clancy Ballenger) and 57 in flight over Chocowinity, Beaufort Co, NC, 3 Jul (Cody Stone) were notable counts for those areas. 375 at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 16 Jul (David Youngblood) was our region's high count.

Magnificent Frigatebird: Sightings included an immature bird photographed over Pine Knoll Shores, Carteret Co, NC, 22 Jun (David & Susan Disher); one over Rantowles Creek in Charleston Co, SC, 23 Jun (Dennis Forsythe); one photographed over Hampstead, Pender Co, NC, 8 Jul (Gwyn Marie); two immature birds photographed over Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 8 Jul (Scott Mullens); an immature bird photographed in Calabash, Brunswick Co, NC, 15 Jul (Neil Jernigan); and an adult female over the ocean at Rodanthe, Dare Co, NC, 25 Jul (Josh Auld).

Great Cormorant: An immature bird lingered at Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, for most of the summer, until last seen 28 Jul (Sam Cooper).

American White Pelican: 97 at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 13 Jun (Steve Calver) was an impressive tally for summer.

Least Bittern: Individuals at Tanglewood Park, Forsyth Co, NC, 7-26 Jun (David Disher, m. obs.) and at Rocky River Nature Park, Anderson Co, SC, 26-27 Jun (Paul Serridge, m. obs.) were good finds for sites in the Piedmont. A very rare dark-morph Least Bittern was reported from Mackay Island NWR, Currituck Co, NC, 25 Jun (David Clark), though unfortunately not photographed. 44, many of which were juvenile birds, along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, 9 Jul (John Fussell, et al.) was a noteworthy count.

Snowy Egret: Farther inland than most sightings was one at Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, Gaston Co, NC, 6 Jul (Colleen Snow) through 19 Jul (Keith Camburn); one photographed at Beaverdam Creek WMA, Anderson Co, SC, 18 Jul (George McHenry); and one photographed at Old Kernersville Lake Park, Forsyth Co, NC, 21 Jul through 11 Aug (Marbry Hopkins, m. obs.)

Reddish Egret: At the east end of Shackleford Banks, Carteret Co, NC, one of the more reliable sites to find the species in NC, one dark-morph adult was seen 19 Jul (Martin Wall) and two dark-morph adults were seen 30 Jul (Steven Howell, et al.). Also in NC were two immature dark-morph birds photographed together on the east end of Sunset Beach, Brunswick Co, 27 Jul (Bob Lewis).

Glossy Ibis: 83 at North River Preserve (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, 16 Jul (John Fussell, et al.) was a noteworthy count for that area.

White-faced Ibis: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of an adult White-faced Ibis photographed at a pond in Camden, Kershaw Co, SC, 24

Jun (Steve Patterson). If accepted, this sighting would become the first accepted record of this species in SC.

Roseate Spoonbill: An immature spoonbill photographed at a small pond near Plymouth, Washington Co, NC, 21 Jun (Kimberly McCargo) was a first for the northern tidewater region of NC. In Brunswick Co, the county in NC where most sightings occur, two were photographed on Oak Island, 30 Jun (Gail Capel) and one was seen in Sunset Beach, 25 Jul (Bob Lewis) into fall (m. obs.). 15 at Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, SC, 27 Jul (Paul Serridge, m. obs.) was a notable count for that site.

Swallow-tailed Kite: 300 over agricultural fields near the intersection of SC-125 and Millett Rd in Allendale Co, SC, 27 Jul (David Youngblood) was an amazing total. 12 over fields along SC-63 northwest of Belton, Anderson Co, SC, 28 Jul (Michael Robertson) was a good count for upstate SC. Three, one of which may have been an immature kite, around the dam on Lake Waccamaw, Columbus Co, NC, 29 Jun (Ed Corey) were suggestive of possible breeding in that area. Locally unusual were individuals over Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, where photographed, 22 Jun (Scott Mullens); just east of Conway, Northampton Co, NC, 26 Jun (Clyde Smith); and just south of New Bern, Craven Co, NC, 12 Jul (John Fussell).

Mississippi Kite: Two active nests were found in Greensboro, Guilford Co, NC, 15 Jul (Henry Link, et al.).

Northern Harrier: Breeding was suspected at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, again this year, because a total of four birds, including two juvenile birds, seen there 2 Jul and 9 Jul (John Fussell, et al.).

Cooper's Hawk: Nesting at sites along the coast has become more common over the past decade. A pair nested in a yard on Sullivan's Island, Charleston Co, SC, for a seventh year in a row, with five juvenile birds seen 30 Jun (Hal Currey, Peggy Schachte). Also at sites along the coast, nesting took place in Kill Devil Hills, Dare Co, NC (*fide* Jeff Lewis); in Manteo, Dare Co, NC (*fide* Lewis); in Corolla, Currituck Co, NC (*fide* Lewis); and in Morehead City, Carteret Co, NC (John Fussell).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: A total of six chicks fledged from three owl boxes along the Pisgah Ridge and in the Balsam Mountains of NC this summer. Three fledged from a box in Haywood Co, 1-3 Jun; two fledged from a box in Transylvania Co, 2-5 Jun; and one fledged from a different box in Haywood Co, 14-15 Jun (Mark Simpson, Marilyn Westphal).

Merlin: One seen along the BRP at mile 357.5 in Buncombe Co, NC, 2 Jun (Aaron Steed, Simon Thompson) was very unusual for the summer period.

Alder Flycatcher: During the summer, up to five were seen around Black Balsam Knob, Haywood Co, NC (Marilyn Westphal, m. obs.) and up to three were seen around Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, NC (Rick Knight).

Tropical Kingbird: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of an apparent Tropical Kingbird at North River Preserve (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, during a Lower Neuse Bird Club field trip, 3 Jun (John Fussell, et al.). The bird was observed for about an hour, photographed, and heard

vocalizing. Subsequent attempts to re-find the bird were unsuccessful. If accepted, this sighting would become the fourth record for NC, and first record from the summer period. Interestingly, all previous sightings were made in the late fall/early winter, at the complete opposite time of year of this sighting.

Gray Kingbird: One was photographed along the Sullivan's Island Nature Trail, Charleston Co, SC, 1 Jul (Elizabeth Anderegg, et al.)

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: The adult male seen at the traditional nesting site along Gunter Rd in Greenville Co, SC, throughout May and June, was joined by an adult female and an immature bird 5 Jul (Jane Kramer) and photographed alongside the immature bird 11 Jul (Joan Baker) and 12 Jul (Kevin Kubach). Because a nest was never seen and the adult male was alone for the two previous months, it's likely that the other two flycatchers wandered there from a different site. In nearby Anderson Co, SC, an immature bird was photographed at Dobbins Farm, 8 Jun (George McHenry, m. obs.) and an adult was photographed at Simpson Research Station, 26 Jun (Linda Montgomery). One photographed at Jockey's Ridge SP, Dare Co, NC, 26 Jun (Steve Landes) was very unusual for a site along the coast during the mid-summer.

Warbling Vireo: A singing male found on a BBS route in Camden Co, NC, 4 Jun (Jeff Lewis, Audrey Whitlock) was unusual for a site in the coastal plain. A pair nested at Beaver Lake, Buncombe Co, NC, in early June (Simon Thompson, m. obs.).

Black-whiskered Vireo: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of an apparent Black-whiskered Vireo seen and heard singing on Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 13 Jun (David McLean, Irvin Pitts, Madison Stelljes). If accepted, this sighting would become the first official record of this species in SC.

Cliff Swallow: 1280 at the Modern Turf farm in Rembert, Sumter Co, SC, 17 Jul (Steve Patterson) was a remarkable count.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Individuals in Low Gap, Surry Co, NC, 6 Jul (Eric Harrold) and at Pilot Mountain SP, Surry Co, NC, 8 Jul (Jesse Anderson, et al.) were unusual for sites outside of the mountain region in summer.

Marsh Wren: 75 heard along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, just before dawn, 20 Jul (Martin Wall) was a notable count.

Hermit Thrush: 30 along Wilson Boundary Rd in Yancey Co, NC, 2 Jun (Aaron Steed, Simon Thompson) was a remarkable count for the breeding season. Up to five were seen around Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, NC, throughout the period (Rick Knight). An active nest containing four eggs was photographed off the Flat Laurel Branch Trail in Haywood Co, NC, 20 Jun (Chris Kelly).

Cedar Waxwing: Active nests were found at Brookshire Park, Watauga Co, NC, 3 Jun (Al Hooks, et al.); in the Pisgah National Forest in Transylvania Co, NC, 3 Jun (Joan Baker, et al.); along the Summit Trail at Mt Mitchell SP, Yancey Co, NC, 12 Jun (Marilyn Westphal, et al.); and at

Mt Pisgah Campground, Haywood Co, NC, 27 Jun (Westphal). Waxwings were also seen carrying nesting material at multiple sites across North Carolina.

American Pipit: One at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, SC, 22 Jul (Brian Barchus, Scott Davis) was unusual for the summer period.

Pine Siskin: A few of the higher counts made in the NC mountains this summer were 30 at Balsam Gap, along the BRP in Buncombe Co, 3 Jun (Kirk Gardner); 15 at Grandfather Gold and Country Club, Avery Co, 28 Jul (Will Johnson); and four or more around Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, throughout the season (Rick Knight).

“Brewster’s Warbler”: A male, singing the typical song of a Golden-winged Warbler, was seen along Max Patch Rd in Haywood Co, NC, 17 Jun (Matthew Moskwik, Roger Shaw) and 4 Jul (Kirk Gardner). Gardner notes there were also two Golden-winged Warblers at the site, and there was some interaction between them and the Brewster’s.

Mourning Warbler: The adult male first discovered along the BRP near the Linn Cove Viaduct, Avery Co, NC, 20 May (Lynch, et al.) remained through 21 Jun (Steve Coggin).

Magnolia Warbler: An adult male was seen and heard singing along the Bald Knob Ridge Trail in Yancey Co, NC, 11 Jun (Jeff Click) through 25 Jun (Marilyn Westphal). Up to five males were seen or heard around Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, NC, throughout the summer (Rick Knight).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: An adult male photographed at Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, SC, 15 Jun (Sean Williams) was extremely late. Reports of males on territory at sites in the NC mountains included a singing male along Black Balsam Rd, Haywood Co, 3-15 Jun (Marilyn Westphal); a singing male at Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, 7 and 10 Jun (Rick Knight); an adult male at Clingman’s Dome, Swain Co, 9 Jun (Keith Watson, et al.); and at least three singing males at Mt Mitchell SP, Yancey Co, 12 Jun (Westphal, et al.).

Black-throated Green Warbler: 71 along Wilson Boundary Rd, 5.3 miles from Stepps Gap to Balsam Gap, in Yancey Co, NC, 2 Jun (Aaron Steed, Simon Thompson) was a noteworthy count.

Eastern Towhee: Previously reported white-eyed race individuals continued at the feeders at Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, throughout the period (Martin Wall, m. obs.) and in a yard in Raleigh, Wake Co, NC, 26-28 Jul (Sharon Kennedy).

Vesper Sparrow: An active nest with one egg was found in the Pond Mountain Game Land, Ashe Co, NC, 31 May (Clifton Avery). Six on Big Yellow Mountain, Avery Co, NC, 9 Jun (Merrill Lynch) was a good count. Up to two were seen on Round Bald, Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, NC, throughout the season (Rick Knight).

Lark Sparrow: After multiple sightings of Lark Sparrows in the Sandhills Game Land in Scotland Co, NC, in late May, an active nest with three eggs was found 24 Jun (Jeff Beane, Stephanie Horton), with the eggs hatching 1-2 Jul (Beane, Horton) and the juveniles having left the nest by 14 Jul (Beane). This nest is only the second Lark Sparrow nest to be documented in the Carolinas, though there are about seven breeding records based on the presence of juvenile birds. An immature bird was photographed at Pea Island

NWR, Dare Co,
NC, 26 Jun
(Audrey
Whitlock).



Lark Sparrow, 30 Jun
2017, Scotland Co, NC
Photo by Jeff Beane.

Savannah Sparrow: Up to four, including at least one singing male, in a field along Stratford Rd in Alleghany Co, NC, 10-14 Jun (Merrill Lynch, m. obs.) was suggestive of attempted breeding at that site.

Seaside Sparrow: 124, most of which were juvenile birds, along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, 9 Jul (John Fussell, et al.) was a good count.

White-throated Sparrow: An adult photographed at a millet feeder in Henderson Co, NC, 24 Jun (Adam Hull) was very unusual for mid-summer.

Painted Bunting: A singing adult male spent its third summer in a row at Wilson Educational Forest, Wilson Co, NC, a site north of the species' typical range, 22 Apr through 26 Jun (Ann Brice, m. obs.).

Dickcissel: The peak count at North River Farms (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, this year was 15, including 13 singing males, 11 Jun (John Fussell, et al.). Counts at other sites included five, including four singing males, at Alligator River NWR, Dare Co, NC, 5 Jun (Audrey Whitlock); three, including a female seen carrying food, in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, SC, 6 Jun (Brad Sale); two in the agricultural fields near Cherry Hospital in Wayne Co, NC, 2 Jul (Ricky Davis) through 16 Jul (David Williams); six, including a female seen carrying food, at the traditional Dickcissel site just north of Cowpens, Spartanburg Co, NC, 14 Jul (Irvin Pitts); and up to ten at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, SC, throughout the period (m. obs.). Individuals photographed along Daisy Thompson Rd in

Person Co, NC, 13 Jun (Simon Thompson) and in the fields around Warren Wilson College, Buncombe Co, NC, 21 Jun (James Poling, m. obs.) were locally unusual.

Bobolink: Three to five singing males in a field along Stratford Rd in Alleghany Co, NC, 10-14 Jun (Merrill Lynch, m. obs.) were suggestive of attempted breeding in that area. A lone female was photographed at Island Ford Landing in Transylvania Co, NC, 10 Jul (Claire Herzog, et al.).

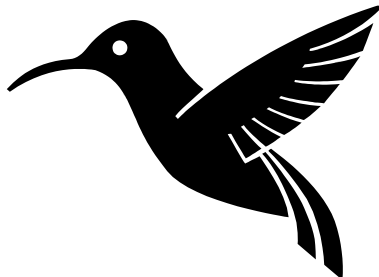
Yellow-headed Blackbird: An adult male photographed at a feeder in Gastonia, Gaston Co, NC, 7 Jun (Cindy Letorney) was very unusual for the summer period, especially for a site away from the coast.



Shiny Cowbird, 20 Jul 2017, Carteret Co, NC. Photo by Martin Wall

Shiny Cowbird: The adult male first discovered visiting the feeders at Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 25 May (Martin Wall) was, amazingly, joined by an adult female, 18 Jun (Ryan Bakelaar, Ricky Davis, m. obs.), when a brief

courtship display was observed. The pair continued at the site for several weeks, where seen by many, until the adult male was last seen 29 Jul (Andrew Guthrie). Apparently the pair successfully bred at the site, evidenced by a juvenile Shiny Cowbird photographed alongside the adult female, 5 Aug (Wall). Elsewhere along the NC coast, an adult male was photographed at a feeder in Sneads Ferry, Onslow Co, 1 Jun (Gilbert Grant).



Twenty-Five Years Ago in The Chat

Steve Shultz

Fall of 1992. The first extra-solar planets are confirmed, compact discs outsell cassette tapes for the first time, the first text message was sent, and Bill Clinton defeated George H.W. Bush and Ross Perot to become the 42nd President of the United States.

In the Carolinas, The Chat documented a leisurely 25 minute sighting of Northern Goshawk in Pender Co, NC; detailed a spring 1991 sighting of Harris's Sparrow in Durham Co, NC; related a harbinger of current climate change discussion with a report of January nesting attempts by American Robins in the Piedmont of North Carolina; and covered both opportunistic feeding by birds on insects (gulls, grackles and shorebirds foraging on ants) and insects on birds (wasps scavenging dead birds).

Briefs for the Files noted a Northern Gannet at Falls Lake, Durham Co, NC on 30 November 1991; a flock of 34 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks in Wilmington, NC on 8 November 1991 (a species now very rarely found in the Carolinas); noted that Ross's Geese were sufficiently uncommon that a count of three at Pea Island, Dare Co, NC was a record high count for that state; hints that Long-billed Curlew was still a regular wintering bird Ft. Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC; notes the third record of both Say's Phoebe and Shiny Cowbird in North Carolina; and details the sighting of a Curlew Sandpiper at Pea Island, Dare Co, NC that thrilled dozens of attendees at the Carolina Bird Club Fall Meeting at Nags Head.

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 to the extent allowable. Pay dues or make donations at <https://carolinabirdclub.org/dues>. Make change of address at <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/profile>. Send correspondence regarding membership matters to the Headquarters Secretary. Answers to questions about the club might be found at <https://carolinabirdclub.org/about.html>.

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Individual or non-profit.....	\$30.00
Family.....	\$35.00
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Patron.....	\$50.00 and up
Life Membership (payable in four consecutive \$100 installments)	\$500.00
Associate Life Membership (in same household as life member).....	\$100.00

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