

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Winter 2017-2018, 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.

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, **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, **St** – Street, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

Snow Goose: Several small flocks were seen in the southern NC mountains this winter, including up to nine at Carolina Lake, Transylvania Co, 21 Dec through 1 Jan (Kevin Lash, m. obs.) and six at Mills River WTP, Henderson Co, NC, 17 Feb (Denise Hargrove). Individuals in Wilkes Co, 3 Dec (Dwayne Martin) through 5 Jan (Guy McGrane), at the Biltmore Estate, Buncombe Co, 11 Jan through 17 Feb (Doug Johnston, m. obs.); and at Lake Junaluska, Haywood Co, 2 Feb (Bob Olthoff, Connie & Stan Wulkowicz, et al.) were also unusual for the NC mountains.

Ross's Goose: Atypically, in NC, more sightings were made in the Mountain region than in the Coastal Plain this winter. One seen at the Biltmore Estate, Buncombe Co, throughout December, was joined by three other small white geese, either Ross's Geese or Snow x Ross's Goose hybrids, 11 Jan (Doug Johnston, m. obs.). Two were seen on Lake Junaluska, Haywood Co, 2-17 Jan (Bob Olthoff, Connie & Stan Wulkowicz, m. obs.). Two were seen in agricultural fields along US-64 in Tyrell Co and Washington Co, 15 Jan (Ed Corey) through 3 Feb (Ricky Davis). One photographed at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal, Carteret Co, 5 Dec (Chandra Biggerstaff) was unusual for that area.

Greater White-fronted Goose: High counts included 14 at Pettigrew SP, Washington Co, NC, during its CBC, 27 Dec (Al Hooks, Guy McGrane); 12 at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, during its CBC, 29 Dec (Steve Shultz); 17 in Polk Co, NC, where photographed, 13 Jan (Michael Robertson); 15 at Lake Leroy, Oconee Co, SC, 21 Jan (Mark Hopy); 11 in the fields where US-64 crosses over Beasley Rd in Washington Co, NC, 17 Feb (Jeff Lewis); and 27 at Dobbins Farm in Anderson Co, SC, 23 Feb (Jo Anne Keasler). Two hung around Kale Lake in Spartanburg Co, SC, 30 Dec (David Campbell) into March (m. obs.).

Cackling Goose: Three at the Beaufort Club golf course in Carteret Co, NC, 16 Dec (Martin Wall) were a first for that county. Other sightings included one in Forsyth Co, NC, 15 Dec through 2 Jan (m. obs.); one along the Nags Head causeway, Dare Co, NC, 1-4 Jan (Jeff Lewis, m. obs.); two in Guilford Co, NC, 3-7 Jan (Henry Link, m. obs.); and one to five where US-64 crosses Beasley Rd in Washington Co, NC, 9 Jan through 23 Feb (m. obs.).



*Cackling Geese
(with Canada
Goose)
16 December 2017
Carteret Co, NC
Photo by Martin
Wall*

Tundra Swan: Six on Salem Lake, Forsyth Co, NC, 26 Dec (David & Susan Disher, m. obs.) were unusual for that area.

Eurasian Wigeon: Mattamuskeet NWR and Pea Island NWR, two of the more reliable sites to find this species in NC, hosted, respectively, one to three 14 Dec (Phil Doerr) through 18 Feb (Jamie Adams), and one to two 2 Dec (Al Hooks, Jeff Lewis) through early February (m. obs.). In SC, individuals were seen at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, 23 Dec (Ed Blich, Pam Ford, Jim Pope) through 19 Feb (Steve Compton) and at Santee Coastal Reserve, Charleston Co, 8 Feb (Ritch Lilly).

American Wigeon: 30,683 in Hyde Co, NC, during the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Susan Campbell) was the highest total on any 2017 Audubon CBC and a record total for that count.

Northern Pintail: 113,521 in Hyde Co, NC, during the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Susan Campbell) was the highest total on any 2017 Audubon CBC and a record total for that count. 50 in Transylvania Co, NC, 15 Jan (Wayne Forsythe) was a notable count for the mountain region.

“Common Teal”: A Eurasian race Green-winged Teal was seen at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 3 Feb (Clyde Sorenson, et al.) and 8 Feb (Jeff Lewis).

Tufted Duck: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of an apparent Tufted Duck seen and photographed on Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 2 Feb (David McLean, David Youngblood) into spring (m. obs.). If accepted, this report would provide the first record of this Eurasian species in SC.

Lesser Scaup: 9000 on Stumpy Point Bay, Dare Co, NC, during the Alligator River NWR CBC, 30 Dec (Jay Ross, *fide* Jeff Lewis) was a noteworthy count.

King Eider: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of an apparent hen King Eider seen and photographed at the 2nd Avenue Pier in Myrtle Beach, Horry Co, SC, 7 Jan (Ritch Lilly) through 6 Feb (m. obs.).

Common Eider: Sightings included one at the pier at Myrtle Beach SP, Horry Co, SC, 19 Nov through 28 Feb (William Kidwell, m. obs.); an adult drake at the Folly Beach Fishing Pier, Charleston Co, SC, 23 Nov through 18 Dec (Simon Harvey, m. obs.); two at Johnnie Mercer’s Pier, New Hanover Co, NC, 1-3 Dec (Jamie Adams, m. obs.); two at Jennette’s Pier, Dare Co, NC, 16 Dec (Ricky Davis); two at Oregon Inlet, 1-3 Jan (Jeff Lewis, m. obs.); and three in Beaufort Inlet off Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 18 Feb (Martin Wall).

Harlequin Duck: An adult drake seen and photographed at Jennette’s Pier, Dare Co, NC, 30-31 Dec (m. obs.) was probably the same adult drake seen around the south end of the nearby Bonner Bridge at Oregon Inlet, 1-3 Jan (m. obs.). It’s also possible that the adult drake seen and photographed around the jetty at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, 7-8 Jan (Ritch Lilly, m. obs.) was that same individual. Elsewhere, two hens were seen off the Coquina rock outcropping at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co,

NC, 29 Dec (Ron Clark, Matt Janson) and a first-year drake was photographed at the ferry dock in Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 3 Jan (Jeff Beane, Stephanie Horton).

Surf Scoter: Ten on Salem Lake, Forsyth Co, NC, 15 Dec (John Haire, Marbry Hopkins) was a good count for an inland site. Other inland sightings included one on Lake Junaluska, Haywood Co, NC, 2 Dec (Connie & Stan Wulkowicz, et al.); two on Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, NC, 11 Dec (Henry Link, m. obs.); and one in Barnwell Co, SC, during the Savannah River Site CBC, 14 Dec (Peter Stangel).

White-winged Scoter: Inland sightings included 12 on Lookout Shoals Lake, Catawba Co, NC, 6 Jan (Dwayne Martin); up to eight on Oak Hollow Lake, Guilford Co, NC, 7 Jan through 15 Feb (Roger Shaw, m. obs.); three on Salem Lake, Forsyth Co, NC, 7 Feb (John Haire); two on Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 9 Feb (Matt Spangler); and two near the dam on Lake Gaston, Northampton Co, NC, 11 Feb (Ricky Davis).

Long-tailed Duck: There was an influx of this species on inland lakes in January, likely due to below-freezing temperatures at sites to the north. A few of the higher counts were seven on Lake Rhodhiss, Burke Co, 13 Jan (Michael Robertson); six on Oak Hollow Lake, Guilford Co, 14-16 Jan (Mike Turner, m. obs.); 22 on Salem Lake, Forsyth Co, 14 Jan (John Haire); and five on Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, 26 Jan (Matt Spangler). Sightings made at inland sites in SC included one at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, 10 Dec (George McHenry); two on Lake Wateree, Kershaw Co, 28 Dec through 5 Jan (Steve Patterson, m. obs.); three at Arcadia Farms in Orangeburg Co, 15 Jan (Julie Mobley); three on Lake Murray, Lexington Co, 6 Feb (Jennifer Shockley); and two on a pond in Ridgeville, Dorchester Co, 17-27 Feb (Tracee Clapper, m. obs.). Four around the Charleston Battery, Charleston Co, 5-20 Jan (Craig Watson, m. obs.) was a good number for a site so far south.

Common Goldeneye: This duck was well-reported after a period of below-normal temperatures in early January. High counts included five on a pond along SC-546 in Greenville Co, SC, 4-6 Jan (Yves Limpalair, m. obs.); 11 on Lake Hickory in Caldwell Co, NC, 10 Jan (Dwayne Martin); five on Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, NC, 10-13 Jan (Matt Wangerin, m. obs.); eight on Beaverdam Reservoir, Wake Co, NC, 21 Jan (Harry LeGrand); 25 on the Cape Fear Fisher off the Ft Fisher Air Force Recreation Area, 3 Feb (Sam Cooper); ten on the Roanoke River in Northampton Co, NC, 11 Feb (Ricky Davis); and six on a pond in Wilkesboro, Wilkes Co, NC, 18 Feb (Guy McGrane).

Hooded Merganser: 1200 crowded into an unfrozen portion of Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, following a period of below-freezing temperatures, 7 Jan (Harry LeGrand) was a notable concentration.

Common Merganser: Like several other species of diving ducks, Common Mergansers were well-reported on lakes and ponds following a period of below freezing temperatures in early January. A few of the higher counts, all from NC, were 15 on Lake Brandt, Guilford Co, 4 Jan (Matt

Wangerin); six on Lake Junaluska, Haywood Co, 4 Jan (Vince Kloster); 15 on W. Kerr Scott Reservoir, Wilkes Co, 5 Jan (Guy McGrane, et al.); seven on Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, 8-11 Jan (Eddie Owens, m. obs.); seven on Beaverdam Reservoir, Wake Co, 11 Jan (Harry LeGrand); 15 at Swann WTP, Forsyth Co, 10-18 Feb (Shelley Rutkin, m. obs.); and six on Lake Gaston, Northampton Co, 11 Feb (Ricky Davis). A hen on Crystal Lake in Horry Co, SC, 5-29 Jan (Frank Lawkins, m. obs.) was unusual for a site so far south.

Red-necked Grebe: This species was well-reported this winter. Three photographed together near the southern end of the Bonner Bridge, Dare Co, NC, 15 Jan (Joe Donahue, et al.) and two off Coquina Beach, Dare Co, NC, 21 Jan (Jeff Lewis) were notable, as most sightings made in the Carolinas are of individuals. Individuals were seen on Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, NC, 17 Nov through 5 Jan (Henry Link, m. obs.); at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 15 Dec through 17 Feb (m. obs.); off Mitchellville Beach Park, Beaufort Co, SC, 25 Dec (Andy Martin); on Lake Hickory, border of Alexander Co and Catawba Co, NC, 26-27 Dec (Dwayne Martin); at Oregon Inlet, Dare Co, NC, 14 Jan through 16 Feb (m. obs.); off Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, 20-24 Jan (m. obs.); at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, 25 Jan (Chris Clack); on the Cape Fear River near Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 3 Feb (Sam Cooper); on Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 9-17 Feb (Matt Spangler, m. obs.); and on Jarrett Bay, Carteret Co, NC, 26-27 Feb (Martin Wall, et al.).

Eared Grebe: Individuals were seen at Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 30 Dec (Sam Cooper, et al.); at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 9 Jan (Brian Patteson), 17 Feb (Andrew Thornton) and 23 Feb (Jack Rogers); on the Cape Fear River near Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 21 Jan through 4 Feb (Bruce Smithson, m. obs.); at Glenburnie Quarry (restricted access), Craven Co, NC, 14 Feb (Ronnie Hewlette); and off North Topsail Beach, Onslow Co, NC, 28 Feb (Gilbert Grant).

Common Ground-Dove: One photographed along Baldwin Elkins Rd in Bladen Co, NC, 27 Jan (Amy Padgett) was the first sighting made in NC in three years.

White-winged Dove: One visiting a feeder in Wilmington, New Hanover Co, NC, 23 Dec through 23 Mar (Wanda King, m. obs.) was the only one reported this winter.



*White-winged
Dove
13 February
2018
New Hanover
Co, NC
Photo by Sam
Cooper*

Chuck-will's-widow: One was briefly seen roosting on the ground before being flushed in Sneads Ferry, Onslow Co, NC, after a locally unusual five-inch snowfall, 5 Jan (Gilbert Grant).

Nightjar sp.: One, probably either a lingering Chuck-will's-widow or a lingering Eastern Whip-poor-will, was seen in the campground at Pettigrew SP, Washington Co, NC, during its CBC, 27 Dec (Guy McGrane).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Several birders who hosted wintering Ruby-throated Hummingbirds in their yards at sites along the coast noted that some hummingbirds did not survive a period of persistent below-freezing temperatures in early January (m. obs.).

Rufous Hummingbird: Sightings included an adult female visiting a feeder near Irmo, Lexington Co, SC, for a second winter in a row, 29 Nov into spring (Jerry Griggs); an adult male visiting a feeder in Black Mountain, Buncombe Co, NC, 4-19 Dec (Richard & Elizabeth Bruce); and an adult female visiting a feeder in Apex, Wake Co, NC, for a fourth winter in a row, banded 8 Feb (Susan Campbell).

Calliope Hummingbird: The immature male visiting a feeder in Charlotte, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 27 Nov into winter, was last seen 6 Jan (Jeff Lemons).

Broad-billed Hummingbird: The individual that visited a feeder in Southern Shores, Dare Co, NC, during the late fall, was found moribund after a night of below freezing temperatures, 1 Jan (Jeff Lewis).

Purple Gallinule: One photographed on Ocracoke Island, Hyde Co, NC, 15 Jan (*fide* Peter Vankevich) was unusual for the Carolinas in winter, especially for a site so far north.

Common Gallinule: 24 in Carteret Co, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 17 Dec (*fide* John Fussell) was a good count for winter and the highest total on that CBC since 1984.

Sandhill Crane: Two seen in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, Washington Co, NC, from 12 Nov (Ricky Davis) were joined by a third crane 14 Dec (Greg Hudson) through 27 Feb (Stacy Barbour). Two wintered around the airport in Beaufort, Carteret Co, NC, again this year, 14

Dec through 8 Mar (Martin Wall, m. obs.). Two at Lake Junaluska, Haywood Co, NC, 1-2 Feb (m. obs.) were unusual for that site, probably forced down by inclement weather. A flock of nine was seen in flight over Cherokee Co, NC, near Farner, Tennessee, 17 Feb (Dennis Hammond). The high count of the wintering flock at the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, SC, was 70 cranes on 21 Dec (Jay Chandler, et al.). 80 in flight over Lake Hartwell SP, Oconee Co, SC, 16 Feb (Brooks Garrett) was a notable count.



*Sandhill Cranes
2 February 2018
Carteret Co, NC
Photo by Martin
Wall*

Black-bellied Plover: One on the mudflats in the New Hope Creek arm of Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 3 Dec (Matt Spangler) and 4 Dec (Mark Kosiewski) was late for a site so far inland.

Long-billed Curlew: Two were seen around Raccoon Key, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 17 Dec (John Cox, et al.) and 25 Feb (Caroline Eastman, et al.).

Hudsonian Godwit: One seen and photographed amongst Marbled Godwits at North Pond, Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 14 Dec (Peggy Eubank, Audrey Whitlock) was quite late.

Ruff: A female (Reeve) was seen and photographed in a marsh along US-17 near the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, 19-24 Feb (Roger Smith, m. obs.).

Long-billed Dowitcher: 825 at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 30 Dec (Steve Calver) was a notable count.

American Woodcock: Several birders noted concentrations of woodcocks at coastal sites during a period of abnormal cold and snow in early January. Those sightings included 46+ around Oriental, Pamlico Co, NC, 6 Jan (Greg Perry); 22 video-recorded in a yard in Point Harbor, Currituck Co, NC, 6 Jan (*vide* Jeff Lewis); 15 at North River Preserve (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, 7 Jan (John Fussell, et al.); and 10 along the entrance road to the Bodie Island Lighthouse, Dare Co, NC, 7 Jan (Lewis).

Solitary Sandpiper: One photographed in Georgetown, Georgetown Co, SC, 12 Dec (Ritch Lilly) was late.

Red Phalarope: Sightings made from shore included one off Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 14 Jan (Bruce Young, et al.); one photographed off Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, SC, 16 Jan (Ritch Lilly); and two off Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 27 Jan (Ricky Davis).

Great Skua: Remarkably, this species was seen on all seven pelagic trips in Dare Co, NC, this winter, with one 29 Dec, three 27 Jan, two 3 Feb, two 10 Feb, one 18 Feb, one 19 Feb, and two 24 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Pomarine Jaeger: One seen and photographed from the ocean overlook at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 2 Dec (Jamie Adams, Sam Cooper) was a good sighting from shore.

Parasitic Jaeger: Six in Carteret Co, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 17 Dec (Mike Tove, et al.) was the highest total ever made on that count. Six off the Coquina rock outcrop at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 2 Dec (Jamie Adams, Sam Cooper) was a good total made from shore.

Dovekie: One around Johnnie Mercer's Pier, New Hanover Co, NC, 8 Feb (Jamie Adams) and 14 Feb (Sam Cooper) was a good find for a site south of the Outer Banks. 25 on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 3 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.) was the high count during the alcid irruption this winter.

Common Murre: 13 on a pelagic trip out of Wanchese, Dare Co, NC, 10 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.) provided a new record high count of the species in NC. Common Murres were also seen on two pelagic trips out of Hatteras, albeit in smaller numbers, with four on 18 Feb and three on 19 Feb (Patteson, et al.)

Thick-billed Murre: Three were seen from shore this winter—individuals off Coquina Beach, Dare Co, NC, 21 Jan (Ricky Davis); at Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 21-22 Jan (Sherry Lane, m. obs.); and around the Kure Beach Pier, New Hanover Co, 11 Feb (Robert Snowden). On pelagic trips in Dare Co, NC, one was seen 10 Feb, two were seen 18 Feb, and one was seen 19 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Razorbill: There was a large movement of alcids off the NC coast in late January through mid-February, including a notable count of 12,000 Razorbills in flight off Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 30 Jan (Brian Patteson).

Atlantic Puffin: This alcid was seen on all six pelagic trips in Dare Co, NC, in late January through February, with 15 on 27 Jan, five on 3 Feb, 17 on 10 Feb, three on 18 Feb, four on 19 Feb, and one on 24 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Black-legged Kittiwake: Sightings made on pelagic trips in Dare Co, NC, were five immature birds on 27 Jan, one immature bird on 3 Feb, five immature birds on 10 Feb, and one adult on 18 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). An immature bird in Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover Co, NC, 17 Feb (Jamie Adams, m. obs.) was the only one reported from shore this winter.



Black-legged Kittiwake
17 February 2018
New Hanover Co, NC
Photo by Sam Cooper

Black-headed Gull: An adult at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 8 Jan intermittently through 27 Feb (Jamie Adams, m. obs.) was the only one reported this winter.

Little Gull: This species put on a good showing on pelagic trips in Dare Co, NC, in February, with two on 3 Feb, four on 10 Feb, one on 18 Feb, and three on 24 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). An adult photographed at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 17 Feb (Patteson) and an immature bird photographed in Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover Co, NC, 18 Feb (Jelmer Poelstra, m. obs.) were the only ones reported from shore.

Laughing Gull: An adult at Lake Johnson, Wake Co, NC, 25 Dec (Harry LeGrand) was unusual for a site in the Piedmont during the winter.

Ring-billed Gull: Unusual for the northern mountains in winter were four in West Jefferson, Ashe Co, NC, 8 Dec (Guy McGrane) and six in Boone, Watauga Co, NC, 8 Dec (Steve Dowlan).

Iceland Gull: This gull was well-reported again this winter. Sightings included two first-winter birds at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 3-10 Dec (Nathan Gatto, m. obs.); one first-winter bird at Cape Point 13 Jan into March (Jamie Adams, m. obs.); one first-winter bird at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, 28 Dec through 21 Jan (Sam Jolly, m. obs.); two on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 29 Dec (Brian Patteson, et al.); one second-winter bird at Harris Lake, Wake Co, NC, 3 Jan (Lucas Bobay); an adult photographed on Lake Norman in Mecklenburg Co, NC, 6 Jan (Jeff Lemons, et al.); an adult on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, 27 Jan (Brian Patteson, et al.); and a first-winter bird on Waites Island, Horry Co, SC, 6 Feb (Chris Hill, et al.).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 112 at Buckhorn Reservoir, Wilson Co, NC, 9 Feb (Ricky Davis) and 39 at Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 25 Feb (Jelmer Poelstra) were notable counts for those sites away from the coast. Individuals photographed on Lake Norman in Mecklenburg Co, NC, 7 Jan (Jeff Lemons, et al.) and along Milliken Rd in Spartanburg Co, SC, 22 Jan (Gary Harbour, Michael Robertson) were great finds for those sites in the western half of the Carolinas.

Glaucous Gull: Sightings included an immature bird in Williston, Carteret Co, NC, 18 Jan (Kathy Calvert); a first-winter bird at the Horry County Landfill (limited access), Horry Co, SC, 23-24 Jan (Chris Hill, m. obs.); an immature bird at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 24 Jan (Brian Patteson) and 25 Feb (John Haire); an adult photographed at Cape Point, 28 Jan (Lucas Bobay, Ed Corey); and a second-winter bird on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 24 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Great Black-backed Gull: Farthest inland this winter was an adult at Buckhorn Reservoir, Wilson Co, NC, 9 Feb (Ricky Davis).

Red-billed Tropicbird: One of the most surprising sightings this winter was that of an adult Red-billed Tropicbird photographed flying south off the end of Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, 9 Feb (David & Susan Disher, Marbry Hopkins). This sighting was the first ever made of this species in the Carolinas during the winter period.

Red-throated Loon: Inland, individuals were seen on Lake Hartwell, Anderson Co, SC, 14-19 Dec (Scott Davis, m. obs.); on Lake Norman in Mecklenburg Co, NC, 7 Jan (Jeff Lemons, et al.); and on Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 3 Feb (David Anderson, et al.).

Pacific Loon: Only one was reported this winter—an individual around Johnnie Mercer's Pier, New Hanover Co, NC, 22-27 Jan (Jamie Adams, m. obs.).

Northern Fulmar: This species was seen on all six pelagic trips in Dare Co, NC, in late January and in February, with a high count of 36 on 24 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Black-capped Petrel: Rarely seen in winter, two were seen on a pelagic trip out of Wanchese, Dare Co, NC, 10 Feb, and one was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 18 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Sooty Shearwater: Unusual for winter was one photographed over the ocean from Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 2 Feb (Nathan Gatto, et al.) and two seen on a pelagic trip out of Wanchese, Dare Co, NC, 10 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Great Shearwater: Pelagic trips out of Hatters, Dare Co, NC, found one 27 Jan, two 3 Feb, and one 18 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Great Cormorant: Sightings included up to five at Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, throughout the winter (m. obs.); three at New River Inlet, Onslow Co, NC, 14 Dec (Gilbert Grant); and up to two at Beaufort Inlet, Carteret Co, NC, 17 Dec into spring (m. obs.)

Anhinga: Three lingered in Greenville, Pitt Co, NC, until its CBC, 2 Jan (*fide* Veronica Pantelidis), north of the species' typical winter range.

American White Pelican: A few of the higher counts this winter were 242 at Donnelley WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 14 Dec (David Perry); 227 at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 14 Dec (Steve Calver); 83 at Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, SC, 21 Dec (Ritch Lilly); 120 at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 8 Jan (Patrick Markham); and a total of 75 at two sites near Davis, Carteret Co, NC, 20 Jan (Martin Wall). Six in Barnwell Co, SC, during the Savannah River Site CBC, 14 Dec (Peter Stangel) were new to that count.

Brown Pelican: One photographed at Robinwood Lake in Gaston Co, NC, during the Gastonia CBC, 16 Dec (Christy Hill, David Schroder, Steve Tracy) was a great find for a site so far from the coast.

Least Bittern: One seen and photographed at Savannah NWR, Jasper Co, SC, 22 Dec through 14 Jan (David Youngblood, m. obs.) was unusual for winter.

Reddish Egret: One seen along the Pitt St Causeway in Charleston Co, SC, 11-24 Feb (Takayuki Uchida, m. obs.) was unusual for winter.

Green Heron: One in Kitty Hawk, Dare Co, NC, during it CBC, 16 Dec (Lee Adams, Peggy Eubank) was unusual for a site so far north in winter.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: One at the Goldsboro WTP, Wayne Co, NC, during its CBC, 23 Dec (Mae Howell, David Williams) was locally unusual.

Roseate Spoonbill: 27 in Georgetown Co, SC, during the Winyah Bay CBC, 14 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover) was a notable count for winter and record number for that count.

Swallow-tailed Kite: One photographed over South Pond, Pea Island NWR, 24 Feb (Morgan Wilson) was quite early.

Swainson's Hawk: This species was seen at Alligator River NWR, Dare Co, NC, again this winter, with a light-morph immature bird seen 30 Dec (Audrey Whitlock, et al.) through 5 Feb (Jim Gould) and a light-morph adult bird seen 19 Jan (Guy McGrane, et al.) through 4 Feb (Jeff Lemons).

Red-tailed Hawk: A leucistic individual was seen by many at Alligator River NWR, Dare Co, NC, 16 Dec (Cindy Hamilton) through 10 Mar (Kevin Hudson).

Rough-legged Hawk: A light-morph immature bird was seen and photographed by many at Alligator River NWR, Dare Co, NC, 2 Jan (Jamie Adams) through 3 Mar (Alan MacEachren).

Golden Eagle: Sightings included an immature bird at Pee Dee NWR, Anson Co, NC, during its CBC, 30 Dec (Jennifer Daggy, et al.); an immature bird at Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, SC, 13 Jan (Frank Lawkins) and 2 Feb (Ritch Lilly); a second-year bird photographed along Cheek Mountain Rd in Alleghany Co, NC, 21 Jan (Jesse Anderson, et al.); an adult over Seabrook Island, Charleston Co, SC, 15 Jan and 10 Feb (David Gardner, et al.); and an adult seen and photographed at Alligator River NWR, Dare Co, NC, 11-17 Feb (Rich DeMidio, m. obs.).

Snowy Owl: A minor irruption occurred this winter, with seven sightings made. One found at Pee Dee NWR, Anson Co, NC, 4 Dec, was taken to a wildlife rehabilitator but later died (*fide* Carolina Raptor Center). Individuals found in Myrtle Beach, Horry Co, SC, 12 Dec (*fide* Ritch Lilly) and at Piedmont Triad International Airport, Guilford Co, NC, in mid-December (*fide* Elizabeth Link) were collected by wildlife rehabilitators, treated and later released. One was seen around Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 15-17 Dec (Nathan & Sarah Gatto, m. obs.), 9 Jan (Becky Harrison, et al.), and 9 Feb (Karen Lebing). Because of the length of time between those sightings, it's likely the sightings represented three different individuals. One photographed at Lake Murray, Lexington Co, SC, 6 Jan (Julian Wilson) was not seen thereafter. All sightings made in SC are pending review by the SC BRC.

Short-eared Owl: One seen along Riverside Circle in Rockingham Co, NC, 1 Jan (Martin Wall) was a first for that county. Four on Marsh Island, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 3 Feb (Jack Rogers) was a notable count.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker: 3+ were heard at North River Game Land in Currituck Co, NC, 16 Jan (Nick Flanders), near the northeast limit of the species' range.

Vermilion Flycatcher: Two were seen and photographed in SC this winter—a female in Georgetown, Georgetown Co, 23 Nov through 2 Jan (Ritch Lilly, m. obs.) and a male at Bookhart Farm in Orangeburg Co, 6 Dec through 2 Jan (Harold Donnelly, m. obs.).

Ash-throated Flycatcher: Individuals were seen on the west side of Lake Phelps, Washington Co, NC, during the Pettigrew SP CBC, 27 Dec (Al Hooks, Guy McGrane) and at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 30 Dec (Steve Calver, et al.).

Western Kingbird: Individuals were seen at North River Preserve (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, 3 Dec (Carol Reigle, et al.) and 31 Dec (Chandra Biggerstaff, et al.); in Oak Island, Brunswick Co, NC, during the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC, 31 Dec (Matt Janson, Taylor Piephoff); and on Seabrook Island, Charleston Co, SC, 2-10 Jan (David Gardner, m. obs.).

Western Kingbird
3 December 2017
Carteret Co, NC
Photo by Martin Wall



White-eyed Vireo: Six along Little Deep Creek Rd in the Croatan NF, Carteret Co, NC, 11 Dec (John Fussell), with four remaining at that site 23 Feb (Fussell), was a good count for that area in winter. One photographed at the Walnut Creek Wetland Center, Wake Co, NC, 16 Dec (Edward Landi, et al.) was unusual for the Piedmont in winter.



White-eyed Vireo
7 February 2018
Carteret Co, NC
Photo by Martin Wall

Warbling Vireo: One seen along Pine Grove Lane in Point Harbor, Currituck Co, NC, 13 Dec (Steve Ritt) was incredibly late. There is only one accepted winter report of this species in the Carolinas, one on Roanoke Island during the winter of 2001-2002.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: One at Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, 10 Dec (Harry LeGrand, Eddie Owens) was quite late.

Gray Catbird: One at Brookshire Park, Watauga Co, NC, 2 Dec (Guy McGrane, et al.) was late for a site in the mountains.

Snow Bunting: Sightings continued around the jetty on the south side of Oregon Inlet, Dare Co, NC, from 18 Nov to 17 Dec, with five seen 10 Dec (Jeff Beane, et al.).

Bachman's Sparrow: Counts of five at two sites in Croatan NF in Carteret Co, NC—along Millis Rd, 4 Feb (Martin Wall, et al.) and along Pringle Rd, 10 Feb (John Fussell)—were good for winter. Fussell notes that both sites had controlled burns the previous year.

Clay-colored Sparrow: Sightings, interestingly all made in Carteret Co, NC, this winter, were of two at North River Preserve (limited access), 3 Dec (John Fussell, et al.); one at North River Preserve 10 Dec (Martin Wall, et al.) and 31 Dec (Fussell, et al.); one at North River Golf Club, 14 Dec through 29 Jan (Fussell, m. obs.); and two at North River Golf Club, 29 Jan (Wall).

Vesper Sparrow: 15 at Donnelley WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 15 Feb (David Gardner, et al.) was a good count.

Lark Sparrow: Two were found at Archie Elledge WTP, Forsyth Co, NC, during the Winston-Salem CBC, 16 Dec (Nathan Gatto, et al.), with one continuing at that site through 15 Mar (m. obs.). One visited a feeder in Camden Co, NC, where photographed, 22 Feb into spring (James Harrison).

Henslow's Sparrow: One photographed in Croatan NF in Craven Co, NC, 5 Jan (Andrew Sodergren) was a good find for NC in winter.

LeConte's Sparrow: Two near the visitor center at Mackay Island NWR, Currituck Co, NC, 22 Dec (Eric Alton, Tamara Conklin) were unusual for the northeast corner of the Carolinas.

Lincoln's Sparrow: About a dozen were found across the Carolinas this winter. Three in a large industrial clear-cut with grass cover in Carteret Co, NC, 10 Dec (John Fussell, et al.) was a notable concentration.

Yellow-breasted Chat: Eight were reported in the Carolinas this winter, farthest inland were individuals visiting feeders in Mecklenburg Co, NC, 13-23 Dec (Taylor Piephoff) and in Spartanburg Co, SC, 30 Dec through 17 Feb (Susan Illner).

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Individuals were seen at a feeder in Pitt Co, NC, 4 Jan (Susan Bowen Moore); at a feeder in Chocowinity, Beaufort Co, NC, where photographed, 5 Jan (Ami Flowers Staples); in a yard in Morehead City, Carteret Co, NC, 9 Jan (Becky Brown); in Hobucken, Pamlico Co, NC, 10 Jan (Sheryl McNair, Christine Stoughton-Root); and along Baldwin Elkins Rd in Bladen Co, NC, where photographed, 26 Jan (Amy Padgett).

Bobolink: One photographed at Kinloch Plantation (restricted access), Georgetown Co, SC, during the Winyah Bay CBC, 14 Dec (Pam Ford, Craig Watson) was a truly amazing find, as there's only one previous winter record of the species in the Carolinas.

Bullock's Oriole: Two were seen in the Carolinas this winter—a first-year male visiting a feeder in Charlotte, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 19 Jan through 31 Mar (Carole Outwater, m. obs.) and an adult female visiting a feeder in Mt Pleasant, Charleston Co, SC, 22 Jan through 29 Mar (Dennis Forsythe, m. obs.), banded 9 Feb (Aaron Given).

Brewer's Blackbird: For a third winter in a row, this species was found in a horse pasture along Gum Swamp Rd in Hyde Co, NC, 29 Dec (John Fussell) through 20 Feb (Ron Clark), with a high count of ten at the site, 8 Feb (Jeff Lewis).

Tennessee Warbler: One seen and photographed along the Pitt St Causeway in Charleston Co, SC, 26-28 Jan (Elizabeth Anderegg, m. obs.) was noteworthy, as there are only five previous winter records for the Carolinas.

Nashville Warbler: One was seen in Oak Island, Brunswick Co, NC, during the Southport- Bald Head- Oak Islands CBC, 31 Dec (Matt Janson, Taylor Piephoff) and 1 Jan, when photographed (Jamie Adams).

American Redstart: Lingering into winter were individuals at North River Preserve (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, 10 Dec (John Fussell, et al.); in Gaston Co, NC, during the Gastonia CBC, 16 Dec (Ron Clark, Tom Sanders); and at Samworth WMA, Georgetown Co, SC, during the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC, 29 Dec (Irvin Pitts, Shawn Smolen-Morton)

Cape May Warbler: A male individual visited a suet feeder in Salisbury, Rowan Co, NC, where photographed, 24 Jan through 20 Feb (Steve Coggin).

Northern Parula: Lingering individuals were seen in Georgetown Co, SC, during the Winyah Bay CBC, 14 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover) and on Roanoke Island, Dare Co, NC, during the Kitty Hawk CBC, 16 Dec (Jeff Lewis).

Magnolia Warbler: One photographed in a yard in Charleston Co, SC, 8 Jan (Arch McCallum) was a great find as there are only three previous winter records in the Carolinas.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: A male individual in Myrtle Beach, Horry Co, SC, 2 Dec (Dick & Dorothy Rosche) was late to depart.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 200 in central Halifax Co, NC, 28 Feb (Frank Enders) was a notable count for a site away from the coast.

Yellow-throated Warbler: Farthest inland this winter were individuals visiting feeders in Chapel Hill, Orange Co, NC, mid-December through 24 Jan (Tom Driscoll) and near Irmo, Lexington Co, SC, 5-10 Jan (Jerry Griggs).

Prairie Warbler: About a dozen were seen in the Carolinas this winter, all at sites along the coast. The northernmost was one at Mackay Island NWR, Currituck Co, NC, 10 Dec (Eric Alton, m. obs.) and two on Ocracoke Island, Hyde Co, NC, during its CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Peter Vankevich).

Wilson's Warbler: Five were reported in the Carolinas this winter—an adult male in Point Harbor, Currituck Co, NC, 13 Dec (Steve Ritt); a female in a yard in Mt Pleasant, Charleston Co, SC, 13 Dec (John Cox); a male in Mt Pleasant, 28 Dec (Cox); a moribund individual in Morehead City, Carteret Co, NC, 30 Dec (Dave Lovett); and one photographed in Wilmington, New Hanover Co, NC, 7 Jan (Jamie Adams).

Summer Tanager: A female wintered around a yard in Brunswick Co, NC, for the fourth year in a row, 28 Dec into spring (Greg Massey). A female was seen near Merritt, Pamlico Co, NC, 15 Dec (Christine Stoughton-Root). An adult male was photographed at a feeder in Beaufort Co, SC, during the Hilton Head Island CBC, 15 Dec (*fide* Susan Murphy).

Western Tanager: This vagrant was very well-reported this winter. Sightings included up to two, an adult male and a bright-morph female, visiting a feeder in Charleston Co, SC, 30 Dec into March (Lacy & Russell Johnson, m. obs.); an adult male visiting a feeder on James Island, Charleston Co, SC, 3-30 Jan (Jennifer Tyrell, m. obs.); an adult male at Old Santee Canal Park, Berkeley Co, SC, 5-17 Jan (Brad Sale, m. obs.); an adult male visiting a feeder in Scotts Hill, Pender Co, NC, 6-20 Jan (m. obs.); an adult male visiting a feeder in Wilmington, New Hanover Co, NC, 16 Jan (Bruce Smithson); a gray-morph female at Patriot's Point, Charleston Co, SC, 16 Jan (John Cox); a gray-morph female visiting a feeder on James Island, Charleston Co, SC, 11 Feb (Shannon Howard); and an adult male visiting a feeder in Stedman, Cumberland Co, NC, 19-24 Feb (Ann Horne, m. obs.).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Very unusual for winter was an adult male seen and photographed at a feeder in Cedar Mountain, Transylvania

Co, NC, late December through 15 Jan (Gail Wilcox) and an immature male photographed at a feeder in Gloucester, Carteret Co, NC, 15 Jan (Barbara Pigott).

Indigo Bunting: A male visiting a millet feeder in Meggett, Charleston Co, SC, where photographed, 13-16 Feb (Cherrie Sneed) must have been over-wintering in the area, as it was too early for a returning spring migrant.

Painted Bunting: 10+ in a yard in Straits, Carteret Co, NC, in February (Carolyn & Don Hoss) was a good count for a site so far north in winter. An adult male photographed at a feeder in Greenville, Pitt Co, NC, 6 Jan (Jerry Lotterhos) was locally unusual.

Dickcissel: A first-winter female was seen and photographed visiting a feeder at Myrtle Beach SP, Horry Co, SC, 30 Dec into spring (Scott Hartley, m. obs.).

Corrigenda: The Anna's Hummingbird that was banded in Buxton, Dare Co, NC, 16 Jan 2017, was first discovered in that yard the previous day, 15 Jan 2017, not 21 Dec 2016 as stated in the Winter 2017-18 "Briefs for the Files."

