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General Field Notes Editors
North Carolina
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Articles

- House Wren Breeding Status in the Sandhills of Moore County, NC *Douglas B. McNair and Mark T. Stanback*37
- 2018 Spring Migration Counts in North Carolina *Marilyn Westphal*40

Briefs for the Files

- Winter 2019 *Josh Southern*.....54

Birders' Book Review

- Birds of the Central Carolinas *Steve Shultz*.....67

Cover: Razorbill, 12 February 2019, Dare County, NC
Photo by Greg Hudson

House Wren Breeding Status in the Sandhills of Moore County, North Carolina: Has the Range Expansion Persisted?

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The House Wren's (*Troglodytes aedon*) breeding range expanded to Southern Pines-Pinehurst, the largest micropolitan area in the Sandhills of Moore County, North Carolina (U.S. Census Bureau 2018), in the late 2000s. Two singing males were present in 2008, and in 2009 approximately 20 territories were occupied by singing males, although the number of males that were paired and breeding was undetermined (Southern 2009). Nonetheless, nest sites were confirmed in both years (Southern 2009). Subsequently, this local breeding population in the Southern Pines-Pinehurst micropolitan area has declined (S. Campbell, pers. comm.). Only single males without proof of breeding have been reported at three towns (Aberdeen, Southern Pines, Whispering Pines) within the last two years (2017-2018; eBird: McNair, pers. exam.).

Only one House Wren has been detected in Moore County and two adjacent areas of the Sandhills on any of three BBS routes since the 1990s (Lake Surf in 2012; Sauer et al. 2017), which are primarily located in rural habitats. House Wrens have only attempted to breed at one rural site in this section of south-central NC, of two incomplete nests in boxes at a managed mature Longleaf Pine (*Pinus palustris*) forest (Calloway Forest) in 2017 (Stanback, unpubl. data), near the Southern Pines-Pinehurst area. Thus, confirmed nest records of House Wrens in the Sandhills of Moore County have been confined to urban habitats, including the "core area" of Pinehurst (Southern 2009).

About 25 years earlier, House Wrens were first noted breeding in Fayetteville, the largest metropolitan area (U.S. Census Bureau 2018) at the boundary of the Sandhills subregion of the Coastal Plain with the upper Coastal Plain of NC in the early 1980s when at least two pairs had become established. Fledged young were first recorded in this area in 1985 (LeGrand 1981, 1982, 1983a,b; 1984, 1986). The urban breeding populations of House Wrens in Southern Pines-Pinehurst and Fayetteville, both at the edge of their current range in the upper Coastal Plain (see LeGrand et al. 2018), probably both arrived from a northeasterly direction where urban populations were first documented in Raleigh over 90 years ago (Pearson 1934, Hader 1969; McNair, submitted ms).

Local, marginal populations at the edge of their breeding range are subject to wide fluctuations in annual abundance. The purpose of this note is to examine whether breeding House Wrens have persisted in urban habitats of the Southern Pines-Pinehurst area since they initially arrived in 2008-2009.

Methods

We sampled the breeding population size of House Wrens at golf courses in Pinehurst (population 15,945; U.S. Census Bureau 2018), Moore County. From 2013-2014, Stanback established 160 nest boxes at five golf courses (Pinehurst Nos. 6, 8, and 9; Country Club of North Carolina Cardinal and Dogwood courses, hereafter CCNC) in Pinehurst Moore County, primarily for the purpose of studying cavity competition between Brown-headed Nuthatches (*Sitta pusilla*) and Carolina Chickadees (*Poecile carolinensis*). The nest boxes, both tree- and pole-mounted without predator guards, have 26-mm entrance holes (and are thus unavailable to Eastern Bluebirds [*Sialia sialis*]). House Wrens breed well into the summer, whereas Brown-headed Nuthatches and Carolina Chickadees do not. Four of five of these golf courses are embedded within residential subdivisions, whereas the fifth course (Pinehurst No. 8) is not. Stanback found that House Wrens built a total of one complete nest in these boxes each year from 2014-2016 at two of these golf courses (CCNC-Cardinal course, Pinehurst No. 6) after Brown-headed Nuthatches had finished breeding. In 2018, we inspected these 160 nest boxes for evidence of House Wrens breeding three times, once each in April, May, and June of 2018, respectively. McNair returned to Pinehurst from 28-30 October 2018 to re-examine nest box contents for any additional breeding evidence that may have occurred after mid-June. McNair could determine whether the nest was built by a female, and not by an unpaired male, by the presence of a distinct and lined nest cup, which is constructed solely by the female (Alworth and Schieber 2000, Johnson 2014, Kennedy and White 1992).

Results

In 2018, House Wrens were absent at the one golf course (Pinehurst No. 8) not embedded within a residential subdivision, but were present at three of the other four golf courses (Pinehurst No. 9, CCNC Cardinal and Dogwood courses). They used a total of six nest boxes (four at Pinehurst No. 9) from 17-30 April through 8-19 June and afterwards (based on the inspection in late October). Three nest boxes contained active nests: (1) 18 May, nest with six eggs; (2) another had a lined cup but was empty on 12 June, with 5 adult feathers in box, suggesting predation; and (3) another nest had been built after the nest box had been emptied of all contents on 12 June which contained one addled egg and a skeletonized carcass of an adult). The other three boxes contained incomplete House Wren nests, probably built by unpaired males. All nests were built on top of Brown-headed Nuthatch nests after the latter's young had fledged or on incomplete nuthatch nests after they ceased using the boxes for other reasons. Thus, in 2018, a total of 6% of available nest boxes (6/106) were used in some capacity by House Wrens at these three golf courses (or 4%, 6/160, at all five golf courses). In addition, an estimated total of five singing males were present on different territories away from the above nest boxes at these same three golf courses. Thus, an estimated total of eleven territorial male House Wrens were present at these three golf courses in Pinehurst during 2018.

Discussion

House Wrens have persisted to breed in their "core area" of Pinehurst, NC where a firm population estimate is now available for these five golf courses. This local

population has not collapsed, but we lack a population estimate for the entire Southern Pines-Pinehurst micropolitan area where the population may have declined because we did not monitor other urban habitats. The Sandhills of Moore County has had a unique concentration of resident naturalists, birdwatchers, and ornithologists in this section of south-central North Carolina for over a century (Brimley 1939; LeGrand 1975, 2018), including the current period which has more skilled observers than ever before. Consequently, this group could establish a community-based project to monitor scarce, local breeding populations of the House Wren (and other species such as the Blue-headed Vireo [*Vireo solitarius*]) every five years to document their persistence and determine the extent of their confirmed breeding distribution in the Sandhills of Moore County.

Acknowledgments

We thank S. Campbell for sharing information.

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2018 Spring Migration Counts in North Carolina

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Twenty-two count areas provided data for the 2018 Spring Count, two more than the previous year and back up to previous high levels. The Grandfather Mountain Count resumed after poor weather prevented its completion last year. Watauga County also joined with a very successful trial count. Total species (239) for the North Carolina Spring Count was slightly lower than average for the past few years, but identical to 2017. Total individual birds (82,629) was the lowest since 2010, although the number of participants (478) and total team-hours (1367.89) were above average. Birds per team hour (60.4) were well below average. In other words, it took more effort to find fewer birds than in previous years.

Some of the most uncommon species found (usually in just one count area, or in a few cases two areas, included: King Rail on the Chapel Hill count, Virginia Rail on the Mecklenburg count, White-rumped Sandpiper on the Henderson count, Mississippi Kite on the Southern Pines count, Olive-sided Flycatcher on the Hanging Rock count, Black-capped Chickadee on the Balsam Mountains count, Warbling Vireo on the Hanging Rock and Forsyth counts, Marsh Wren on the Brunswick count, Gray-cheeked Thrush on the Mecklenburg and Greensboro counts, Lark Sparrow on the Southern Pines count, Seaside Sparrow on the Brunswick count, Bay-breasted Warbler on the Forsyth count, Orange-crowned Warbler on the Greensboro count, Golden-winged Warbler on the Hanging Rock and Rockingham counts, Red Crossbill on the Balsam Mountains and Black Mountains counts, and Dickcissel on the Iredell count.

The most common and widespread species (overall total individuals exceeding 1000 and at least some found on every count) include, in order of abundance from highest to lowest: Northern Cardinal, American Crow, American Robin, Carolina Wren, Tufted Titmouse, Mourning Dove, Red-eyed Vireo, Eastern Towhee, American Goldfinch, Carolina Chickadee, Chipping Sparrow, Blue Jay, Chimney Swift, and Indigo Bunting. Most abundant birds in the mountains were American Robin, Eastern Towhee, American Crow, Dark-eyed Junco, and Red-eyed Vireo. Most abundant birds in the Piedmont were American Crow, Carolina Wren, Canada Goose, Tufted Titmouse, and American Robin. Most abundant birds on the coast were Royal Tern, Short-billed Dowitcher, Black Skimmer, Laughing Gull, and Dunlin.

Details of individual counts including names of compilers and participants as well as count highlights and a list of species found exclusively on each count follow.

Mountains

Transylvania County – Count date May 7th, 120 species, 5116 individuals, 28 participants, 89.10 party-hours. Elevation ranges from 2100 to 5600 ft.

Weather: Temperature lower 50's to lower 70's Fahrenheit and partly cloudy

Compiler: Michael Plauché (captainbluegill@gmail.com)

Participants: Marvin Barg, Michele Barg, Nancy Cowall, Bruce Cox, David Dolittle, Ray Dunkelberg, George Dunkelberg, Robert Emmott, Deane Freudenberg, Mary Freudenberg, Elizabeth Galloway, Kathleen George, Gary Harris, Kathy Harris, Richard Jackson, Mike Judd, Nora Murdock, Janie Owens, Michael Plauché, Frank Porter, Barbara Reynolds, Marcus Simpson, Bill Seibenheller, Norma Siebenheller, Martine Stolk, Charlie Threatte, Linda Threatte, and Marilyn Westphal.

Exclusives: none

Notes: It was a great day. We might have had better luck with a few non-breeding migrants (swallows, non-breeding warblers, shorebirds) if the count had been a little earlier, but we got the *Empidonax* flycatchers, which we might have missed had the count been earlier.

Michael Plauché

Pisgah Ridge, Great Balsam and Plott Balsam Mountains IBA – Count dates spanned from May 18-22 with teams selecting one of those days to do their section, 80 species, 2938 individuals, 23 participants in 11 parties, 66.82 party-hours. Elevation ranges for this count run from 3500 to 6100 feet.

Weather: Variable over the count period with a couple of good sunny and clear days, but as always some windy and rainy conditions.

Compiler: Marilyn Westphal (mjwestph@ret.unca.edu)

Participants: Tim Carstens, Nancy Casey, Doug Johnston, Robert Emmott, Shannon Fair, Tom Flagg, Steve Frohock, Robert Johnson, Stacy Johnson, Gail Lankford, Charlie Lankford, Mark McNeil, Nora Murdock, Naomi Otterness, Michael Plauché, Catherine Reid, Russell Roe, Steve Semanchuk, Mark Simpson, Lou Weber, Marilyn Westphal, Connie Wulcovicz and Stan Wulcovicz

Exclusives: Black-capped Chickadee

Notes: Total species and total individual bird number were average for the 12 years of this count although effort (team hours) was slightly lower than average. May was a very wet month in the mountains, and that may have delayed nesting activity for many species. Prairie Warbler made a first time appearance on this count. No other unusual species were found, but Peregrine Falcons were once again attempting to nest at Devil's Courthouse, and swallows and Pine Siskins reappeared after being absent the previous year on the count.

The top ten most common species found were mostly the typical ones, except that Golden-crowned Kinglet numbers declined greatly taking this species completely out of the top ten with Red-eyed Vireo taking its place. The top ten were once again led by Chestnut-sided Warbler (247), and Dark-eyed Junco (246) followed by Eastern Towhee (222), Blue-headed Vireo (173), Black-throated Green Warbler (170), American Robin (137), Canada Warbler (121), Veery (116), Red-eyed Vireo (115), and Black-throated Blue Warbler (107).

As always, all of the singing chickadees between Black Balsam and Richland Balsam were singing the Black-capped song, and this time were listed as Black-capped although it is possible they are hybrids. Yellow-rumped Warblers were once again present along Black Balsam Road and may again be attempting to nest there.

Thanks again to all the count participants, especially for working hard to try to fit in a dry day for the count. Wet days at these elevations usually mean heavy fog, so finding a drier day is important.

Marilyn Westphal

Henderson County – Count date period from May 16th to May 23rd (teams select which date to do their count), 114 species, 2560 individuals, 19 participants in eight areas, 36.30 party-hours.

Weather: Variable, heavy rain early in count period.

Compiler: Jim Neal (jlbjneal@gmail.com)

Participants: Vickie Burke, Bob Butler, Doug Carle, Muriel Carle, Barrie Cliff, Paulette Cliff, Liz Fitts, Wayne Forsythe, Mike Judd, Barbara Neal, Jim Neal, Carol Palmer, Cherie Pittillo, Michael Plauché, Mark Simpson, Aaron Steed, Martine Stolk, Linda Wallace, and Marilyn Westphal

Exclusives: White-rumped Sandpiper

Notes: The 2018 Spring Migration Count for Henderson County, NC was conducted over an 8-day period from May 16-23. Nineteen people counted in eight areas within the county and found 114 species and 2560 individual birds. The 114 species is above the midpoint with a low of 95 species in 2015 and a high of 120 species in 2006. The 2560 total birds are below the midpoint between a low of 1612 in 2014 and a high of 3904 in 2012.

There were only four species with 100 or more birds. The European Starling at 122 was first followed by Eastern Towhee at 114, Song Sparrow at 102 and Short-billed Dowitcher at 100.

It rained every day of the count, which affected the results both positively and negatively. The positive result was that the torrential rain on the first day caused more shorebirds to stop at Hooper Lane and produced five new species for the spring migration count: Ruddy Turnstone, Whimbrel, Forster's Tern, White-rumped Sandpiper and Red Knot. Red Knots were also a first for Henderson County.

The negative impact was that flooding prevented counting certain parts of some areas and two areas had record low counts of species and individual birds for the 21 years of records. In spite of the weather conditions, the overall results were about average and we got our normal 20 species of warblers. Other really good species found included Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Common Nighthawk, Acadian Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo and Grasshopper Sparrow.

I want to thank all those who braved the weather conditions to help with the count for an excellent job.

Jim Neal

Buncombe County – Count dates ran May 11-14 with each group selecting a day to count their section, 108 species, 4578 individuals, 28 participants in nine parties, 65.45 party-hours.

Weather: No data

Compiler: Tom Tribble (tntribble@gmail.com)

Participants: Miles Buddy, Seth Buddy, Tom Bush, Nancy Casey, Robert Emmott, G Greenburg, K. Hillegas, Doug Johnston, K Kelly, Gail Lankford, Herman Lankford, D. Liberatori, Nora Murdock, Janie Owens, Liz Payne, Jim Poling, Kitti Reynolds, Russell Roe, Steve Semanchuk, Mark Simpson, Liz Skiles, Tom Tribble, C. Walsh, Marilyn Westphal, Jay Wherley, and Steve Yurkovich

Exclusives: Cerulean Warbler

Notes: Some comparisons from the last few years include:

2014 – 120 species, 5421 individuals

2015 – 112 species, 4902 individuals

2016 – 109 species, 4913 individuals

2017 – 113 species, 4024 individuals

2018 – 108 species, 4578 individuals

No unusual species were found, although one Cape May Warbler was reported, which is the first time in recent years. Also there were no Bobolinks reported for the first time in five years.

Tom Tribble

Black Mountains IBA – Count period ran from May 25th-31st with teams selecting one of those days to complete their section, 56 species, 1941 individuals, 18 participants in 11 parties with some teams covering a second section on a different day, 51.10 party-hours.

Weather: May was a very wet month, so finding a suitable day to do the count was a challenge. Elevation range for this count is 3000 to 6684 feet with most of the count area above 4000 feet. This count has been conducted since 2006 with 2008 missed because of road closures.

Compiler: Marilyn Westphal (mjwestph@ret.unca.edu)

Participants: Eric Andmundson, Robert Emmott, Jamie Harrelson, Doug Johnston, Don Kautz, Bob Knight, Charlie Lankford, Gail Lankford, Nora Murdock, Michael Plauché, Barbara Reynolds, Steve Semanchuk, Mark Simpson, Debbie Segal, Alan Shapiro, Liz Skiles, Tom Tribble, Marilyn Westphal

Exclusives: none

Notes: Weather is always an issue in spring in the Black Mountains as fog and wind are constant problems, and May 2018 was a particularly wet month, but every team managed to complete their section nevertheless. Although participation was good, fewer species and fewer individuals than average were found. Most notable misses were Turkey Vulture and Brown Thrasher, and no potentially-breeding Swainson's Thrushes, Yellow-rumped Warblers, or Least Flycatchers were found as they have been in previous years. The small population of Swainson's Thrushes that were located in this area for almost a decade has been absent the last couple of years. The population may not have been large enough to sustain itself. Least Flycatchers always occur only irregularly in the area. Also unusual was the lack of any raptors other than Broad-winged Hawk. No nocturnal birding occurred, so no owls were found.

Much of the area covered in this count is high elevation spruce/fir habitat and the most frequently found species are those common to that habitat. This year, as usual, the top ten species were largely dominated by spruce/fir specialists and included Dark-eyed Junco (244), Black-throated Green Warbler (190), Golden-crowned Kinglet (152), Blue-headed Vireo (135), Blackburnian Warbler (94), Eastern Towhee (94), Red-breasted Nuthatch (81), Black-throated Blue Warbler (80), Canada Warbler (75), and Veery (73). Red Crossbills and Pine Siskins, species with widely varying populations from one year to the next, were both present only in very low numbers in 2018.

Many thanks once again to all the participants. This count requires some significant hiking over sometimes steep and/or rocky trails, so their efforts are always greatly appreciated.

Marilyn Westphal

Grandfather Mountain – Count date May 25th, 75 species, 1085 individuals, nine participants in five parties, 24.00 party-hours.

Weather: No data

Compiler: Amy Renfranz (amy@grandfather.com)

Participants: Robin Diaz, Debi Campbell, Gina Diggs, Steve Dowland, Kendell Juell, Guy McGrane, Amy Renfranz, Judi Sawyer, and Chrissy Verdream

Exclusives: none

Notes: none

Watauga County – Count date May 5th, 115 species, 1741 individuals, 18 participants, 45.00 party-hours.

Weather: No data

Compiler: Guy McGrane (badgerboy@wilkes.net)

Participants: Alicia Baur, Meredith Boothe, Anita Clemmer, Martha Cutler, Steve Dowlan, Bill Dunson, Margaret Dunson, Elizabeth Faison, Pat Geiger, Merrill Lynch, Guy McGrane, Janet Paulette, Richard Paulette, Will Pratt, Pat Rusch, Beverly Saltonstall, Debbie Shetterly and Jimmie Shetterly

Exclusives: none

Notes: High Country Audubon Society completed this trial run for a Spring Count covering the whole of Watauga County this year. With 19 participants doing 45 party hours of birding, including a couple hours owling, 1741 birds and 115 species were found, 120 including four count week birds and a probably uncountable Mute Swan.

Good finds were a Sora at Brookshire Park, a Northern Saw-whet Owl above Sims pond at Price Park, a late Red-breasted Merganser at Price Lake, and a late White-crowned Sparrow at Brookshire Park.

Birds missed that we can usually find in the right habitat this time of year were Hermit Thrush, Vesper Sparrow, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Rock Pigeon, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Count week birds missed on count day were White-eyed Vireo, Hooded Merganser, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Sharp-shinned Hawk. If interest remains we will continue this count in future years.

Guy McGrane

Hanging Rock State Park IBA – Count date May 9th, 93 species 832 individuals, nine participants in five parties, 17.00 party-hours. Elevation range 1200-2400 feet.

Weather: no data

Compiler: Jean Chamberlain (jchamberlain1@windstream.net)

Participants: Jesse Anderson, Jean Chamberlain, Kerry Eckhardt, Don Kautz, Virginia Perry, Jeremy Reiskind, David Shumate, Cara Woods and Tony Woods

Exclusives: Bufflehead, Olive-sided Flycatcher

Notes: none

Piedmont

Iredell County – Count date May 6th, 109 species, 2657 individuals, 12 participants in four parties and one feeder watcher, 25.50 party-hours. Weather: Sunny, temperature ranged from 59-73°F

Count circle is centered on the South Yadkin River Bridge on Chipley Ford Road in northern Iredell County.

Compiler: Ron Underwood (rongto@gmail.com)

Participants: Debbie Birnley, Evie Caldwell, Cynthia Dickerson, Bill English, Jack Greene, Larry Marlin, Caroline Martin, Cheri Seli, Jason Thiele, Garnet Underwood, Ron Underwood and Mark Whitaker.

Exclusives: American Black Duck, Dickcissel

Notes: none

Mecklenberg County – Count date May 5th, 125 species, 6896 individuals, 34 participants, 105.20 party-hours.

Weather: no data

Compiler: Jeff Lemons (birdsallot@gmail.com)

Participants: Jill Baim, Ron Clark, Wayne Covington, Jennifer Daggy, Bill Duston, Jan Fowler, Jim Guyton, Chris Hanna, John Hanna, Greg Hays, Christy Hill, Matt Janson, Dennis Kent, Malia Kline, Ken Kneidel, Dennis Lankford, Jeff Lemons, Joclyn MacLaughlin, Pat MacLaughlin, Kevin Metcalf, Roger Moyer, Martina Nordstrand, Jill Palmer, Taylor Piephoff, Lucy Quintilliano, Barry Rowan, Tammy Sanders, Tom Sanders, John Scavetto, David Schroder, Don Seriff, Steve Tracy, Rob VanEpps, and Judy Walker

Exclusives: Virginia Rail

Notes: none

Pilot Mountain State Park – Count date May 2nd, 107 species, 1265 individuals, nine participants, 26.00 party-hours. Surry County - Pilot Mountain is the count center.

Weather: Temperature 48-83°F, light winds, clear in the morning, increasing clouds in the afternoon

Compiler: Jesse Anderson (jesse.anderson@ncparks.gov)

Participants: Jesse Anderson, Brian Bockhahn, Jean Chamberlain, Kerry Eckhart, Nathan Gatto, Daniel Jackson, Don Kautz, Don Lendle and James Williams

Exclusives: none

Notes: none

Forsyth County – Count date May 5th, 127 species, 4750 individuals, 40 participants in 12 teams, 110.50 party-hours.

Weather: Temperature 62-77°F

Compiler: Nathan Gatto (ndgatto72@gmail.com)

Participants: Ga Baliga, Mary Franklin Blackburn, Malcolm Brown, Tommy Castleman, Harvey Clodfelter, David Collins, Mike Conway, Carol Cunningham, David Disher, Susan Disher, Cynthia Donaldson, Kerry Eckhardt, Greg Gatto, Kate Gatto, Nathan Gatto, Sarah Gatto, Bill Gifford, Lucy Gifford, John Haire, Roper Halverson, Elaine Hammond, John Hammond, Wendy Hawkins, Royce Hough, Jim Martin, Craig McCleary, Jane McCleary, Heather Moir, Ron Virginia Perry, Jeremy Reiskind, Rob Rogers, Lee Salisbury, Bill Spencer, Philip Stewart, Chuck Thompson, Cindy Thompson, Katherine Thorington, Gray Tuttle, Kay Tuttle, and Jay Wilhelmi

Exclusives: Ring-necked Duck, American Coot, Bay-breasted Warbler

Notes: We had a great Spring Bird Count last month! Our teams were able to locate 127 species, which is slightly better than the count average of 124 species. As a whole, I felt that this was a fairly slow spring and this count helped confirm my suspicions. We only recorded 4750 individuals, down from the average of 5444. It could just take one flock of European Starlings or Red-winged Blackbirds to completely change the average!

It's fascinating to think about the best birds of the count, and this year we had a lot of contenders. Ring-necked Duck, Semipalmated Plover, Bay-breasted Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, and multiple Bobolink were some of the best birds of the count. We did miss a few birds that were picked up during the count week: Willow Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Wilson's Snipe, Hermit Thrush, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Common Nighthawk, and Eastern Whip-poor-will. Overall we had a great count. I hope that next year we add a few new faces to the count teams.

Nathan Gatto

Rockingham County – Count date May 1st, 118 species, 2385 individuals, seven participants in three parties, 43.50 party-hours.

Weather: Mostly clear skies and moderate winds, temperature 57-76°F

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

Participants: Penny Barham, Brian Bockhahn, Becky Loyocano, M Miller, D Pennebaker, M Wall and Matt Wangerin

Exclusives: Barn Owl

Notes: The SIXTH Rockingham County Spring Bird Count was an overall record breaker! The count was held on Tuesday, May 1, 2018 under clear skies and wide ranging temperatures from 39-82°. Seven observers in five parties tallied a record 118 species (average 109 and previous high 116) and 2385 birds (average 1757 and previous high 2255). Totals were led by 128 Northern Cardinals and 111 Red-eyed Vireos. Two additional birds were seen during count week: Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Blackpoll Warbler.

First count records were many: a Barn Owl was heard well and recorded in the northern territory; maybe our park neighbors were right with their reports a few years

back! Horned Lark was a little more expected along Mayo River Road, as was our long awaited first Chestnut-sided Warbler, such foothills habitat; I thought they'd be more regular! Amazing was a photographed Golden-winged Warbler, only the second record for the park with just one early bio blitz sighting. A flock of ten Bobolink was seen in the Dan River/Airport region and a lone male Baltimore Oriole flew over the Mayo River near the beach.

Other goodies include second records of Red-headed Woodpecker, three parties with Lesser Yellowlegs, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-winged and Tennessee Warbler for our 24 warbler count total!

Misses included Wood Duck (second miss), Coopers Hawk (first miss), Great Horned Owl (second miss) and Palm Warbler (third miss).

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

Greensboro – Count date April 28th, 126 species, 7276 individuals, 39 participants, 108.50 party-hours.

Weather: Pleasant day, temperature 48-76°F, skies sunny to partly cloudy, wind light at 10-20mph from the southwest. In a spring notable for its wet weather, there was no precipitation.

Compiler: Elizabeth Link (elzlink@yahoo.com)

Participants: Carolyn Allen, Bruce Billings, Bill Bowman, Diana Bowman, Dennis Burnette, Lynn Burnette, Sue Cole, Scott DePue, Jim Eldrett, Lynne Gray, Amy Hanson, Mike Howard, Carolyn Hunt, Todd Kilb, Elizabeth Link, Henry Link, Clarence Mattocks, Linda Melendez, Lyn McCoy, Lauren McLaughlin, Jean Murdick, Roberta Newton, Lane Oldham, Sandy Redden, Stuart Redden, Danny Royster, Wallace Sills, Lou Skrabec, Jim Strickland, Tripto Suwal, Emily Talbert, Andrew Thornton, Emily Tyler, Ann VanSant, Marty Wall, Matt Wangarin, Stella Wear, Tom Wear, and Melissa Whitmire

Exclusives: Orange-crowned Warbler

Notes: The 2018 count was good in many respects, compared to the counts of the last 20 years. Thirty-nine birders took part in the count, well over our average of 30. They put in 108.5 hours counting, above our average of 95.75 hours, and we also had 1.5 hours of owling.

Our total of 126 species of birds was right at our average of 125, and we had six count week species. The number of individual birds counted was slightly below average: 7276 individuals were counted this year, and our average is 7307.

I have been using only the last 20 years of count data to determine averages, as I feel that it is more representative of current development and environmental conditions in the count circle. However, sometimes it is interesting to look at the over 50 years of count data that we have available for our count.

For instance, one of the highlights of our count was the first Orange-crowned Warbler since 1967, found by Melissa Whitmire. We also had two Blue-winged Warblers, a number matched in eight of the last 51 years and exceeded only twice. We also had 22 other warbler species, a nice tally when, for many years, our warbler species didn't hit 20. We had 22 Black-and-white Warblers, 59 Northern Parula, and six Worm-eating Warblers, all well above our average, and each are numbers that have been

exceeded in only one other year since 1967.

Lingering winter waterfowl of interest included a single Common Loon, and a Red-breasted Merganser. A Greater Scaup that showed up on count week was only the second time that we've had one in the count period – the first time was on count day last year.

While numbers of several warblers were well below our 20-year average, such as the Yellow Warbler (none on count day), Yellow-breasted Chat, and American Redstart, the numbers do not seem to represent a trend over that time.

Elizabeth Link

Southern Pines – Count date May 6th, 114 species, 3046 individuals, 22 participants in nine teams, 87.20 party-hours.

Weather: Temperature 64-87°F, wind calm – 10mph from W-WSW, mostly to partly cloudy, no rain

Compiler: Susan Campbell (susan@ncaves.com)

Participants: Rex Badgett, Doreen Blanchette, Carol Bowman, Jay Carter, Bob Ganis, Tina Ganis, Mike Greene, Tom Howard, Alicia Jackson, Charlie Jones, Linda Jones, Marjorie Ludwig, Jeff Marcus, David McCloy, Carolyn McDermott, Jon Rouse, Bruce Sorrie, Rick Studenmund, Michelle Wilcox, Nancy Williamson, Darryl Young and Shelley Young.

Exclusives: Pectoral Sandpiper, Mississippi Kite, Lark Sparrow

Notes: This year's count was definitely affected by having fewer participants as both species count and abundance were down. The weather forecast was for rain, but that did not transpire, so field conditions were pretty good.

Although only 114 species were encountered, there were some interesting sightings. Birds of note included Anhinga, Pectoral Sandpipers, Semipalmated Plover, as well as yellowlegs. Shorebird presence was surely a result of the lakebed habitat at Woodlake. Also, we had a nice pair of Mississippi Kites that were establishing a breeding territory adjacent to Woodlake at the time of the count.

Susan Campbell

Chapel Hill – Count date May 13th, 111 species, 6508 individuals, 37 field observers and one feeder watcher, 96.55 party hours.

Weather: Sunny and hot, temperature 67- 93°F, wind variable at 3-9mph, dry

Compiler: Will Cook (cwcook@duke.edu)

Participants: David Anderson, Vern Bothwell, Gail Boyarsky, Norm Budnitz, John Cantrell, Jim Capel, Will Cook, Maria de Bruyn, Kenny Dinnon, Joe Donahue, Tom Driscoll, Kent Fiala, Judith Foushee, Jill Froning, Bob Gardiner, Steve Graves, Clare Gyorke, Gene Kingsley, David Murdock, Don Pelly, Jelmer Poelstra, Judy Murray, Elaine Norwood, Joe Norwood, Margaret Scott, Roger Shaw, David Smith, Judy Smith, Steve Stevens, Paul Taille, Shelley Theye, Ginger Travis, Margaret Wainwright, Sue Wolff, and Bruce Young

Exclusives: King Rail

Notes: The 2018 Chapel Hill spring count on Sunday, May 13, 2018, was on the same date as last year's count, but what a difference! Last year's count was spectacular, one of

the best ever with 130 species, while this year's 111 species was our lowest in four decades. The weather made a huge difference. Last year's count had perfect weather: calm, cool, cloudy. This year's was sunny and hot, with the high of 93°F tying the record high for this date, more like a mid-July day than a mid-spring day; the birding was also reminiscent of mid-July. The extreme heat made both the birds and the birders lethargic, so many teams put in less time than usual.

This year's species total of 111 is 11 below the 10-year average of 122. This is the lowest since 1974, before the filling of Jordan Lake, when we had 109 species. The total number of birds, 6508, is well below the average of 8289. Effort on the count was also quite low, with 96.55 party hours (average 121.80). However the number of birds per party hour, 67.40, is surprisingly close to the average of 65.70. Perhaps the low count wasn't because the birds were lying low from the heat after all, but more instead the birders!

The star of this year's count was a Peregrine Falcon at Maple View Farm, seen flying north over Dairyland Road by Roger Shaw. This is only the second for the count; the first was way back in 1965. Roger also had a Grasshopper Sparrow there -- normally not notable, but they are getting more difficult to find in recent years. Other goodies included Hooded Mergansers still breeding at Sandy Creek Park in Durham (Kent Fiala), a Great Egret at Jordan Lake (Bruce Young), and a King Rail at University Lake (heard by Ginger Travis from her kayak).

We set one record high this year, unexpected considering the low number of party hours: Acadian Flycatcher (107 beats the old record of 88 set in 2006, average 64). Yellow-billed Cuckoos were also found in unusually high numbers (40 is the highest since 2000, average 15).

The big miss this year was White-throated Sparrow, the first miss of this lingering winter bird in the more than 60 year history of the Chapel Hill count. We did have it in count week, though. Many other species were remarkably scarce this year: Canada Goose (82 is lowest since 1990, average 199), Wood Duck (15 is lowest since 1990, average 35), Red-tailed Hawk (12, average 22), Rock Pigeon (7, average 21), Eastern Kingbird (12 is lowest since 1973, average 23), Purple Martin (10 is lowest since 1974, average 52), Tree Swallow (3 is lowest since 1998, average 23), American Robin (130 is lowest since 1975, average 245), Ovenbird (78, average 107), Prothonotary Warbler (14, average 35), Common Yellowthroat (50 is lowest since 1969, average 107), Common Grackle (96 is lowest since 1969, average 187), and Orchard Oriole (7 is lowest since 1995, average 18). Total number of warblers (505, average 792) is the lowest since 1996.

Team honors: Will Cook's team, covering Mason Farm as well as the SW Durham sewage plant, recorded 77 species, edging past the team of Shelley Theye and Jill Froning with 75. Tom Driscoll got the highest individual count with 765.

Charles W. "Will" Cook

Jordan Lake – Count date May 5th, 112 species, 6982 individuals, 50 participants in 21 parties, 105.81 party-hours. Weather: Mild with temperatures ranging from 63°F in the morning to 76°F in the afternoon. Winds calm and skies overcast in the morning to partly cloudy in the afternoon.

Compiler: Norm Budnitz (nbudnitz@gmail.com)

Participants: Patsy Bailey, Barbara Beaman, Eliabeth Bishop, Todd Bishop, Brian Bockhahn, Hillary Broder, Steve Buczynski, Norm Budnitz, Sebastian Burgess, Chris Canfield, Jim Capel, Cal Chelette, Carol Chelette, Barbara Coffman, Patrick Coin, Tom Driscoll, Russell Herman, Loren Hintz, Karen Hogan, Bo Howes, Elizabeth Keating, Gene Kingsley, Theresa Korab, Laura Lipps, Susan Lyons, Kerry MacPherson, Trish MacPherson, Jennifer Maher, Beth Mancuso, Marty McClelland, Steve McMurray, Kyle Mills, Robin Moran, Mark Owens, Rick Payne, Don Pelly, Doug Pratt, Susan Pratt, Tommy Richey, Roger Shaw, Josh Southern, Sterling Southern, Jenny Stanley, Chris Tomazic, Ginger Travis, Andy Upshaw, Margaret Vimmerstedt, Fleeta Wilkinson, Emma Wright and Joe Zellers.

Exclusives: Ruddy Duck

Notes: Fifty observers in 21 parties participated (our 10-year averages are 45 and 21, respectively). We tallied 6982 individual birds (average 8008) and 112 species (average 120) in 106 party hours (average 124).

Although we recorded all the usual suspects with no notable missed species, we found very few waterfowl (ducks) and very few passage migrants—neotropical migrants that pass through our area but don't stop to breed here. For example, we had the usual cast of our breeding warblers—Ovenbird, Northern Parula, Yellow-throated Warbler, etc.—but no Blackpolls, Bay-breasted, or Cape May Warblers. It's hard to say if there is any significance to that conservation-wise, or whether it was just a matter of timing—that we simply counted on a day when those birds were not on the move through our area. I prefer to think it was the latter; I worry that it might have been the former.

We did have a couple of new record high counts. We reported 86 White-eyed Vireos (our previous high was 83 in 1979) and 202 Summer Tanagers (189 in 2003). And we almost tied an old record with 79 Eastern Wood-Pewees (80 in 2015).

Brian Bockhahn found a couple of notable species from Vista Point: One Ruddy Duck and two Herring Gulls.

Again this year there was plenty of competition in the area with two bicycle events and a motorcycle rally. The first Sunday in May is a popular time to get out into open spaces.

Sebastian Burgess, Tom Driscoll, Elizabeth Keating, Don Pelly, and Susan Pratt, working Hank's Chapel and Gum Springs Roads, reported 81 species of birds, while Patsy Bailey and Gene Kingsley found 77 species in the area on the east side of the Jordan Lake Dam.

Norm Budnitz

Durham – Count date April 29th, 111 species, 2585 individuals, 12 participants in 7 parties, 39.00 party-hours. Weather: Clear skies, light winds, temperature 49°-62°F.

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

Participants: Brian Bockhahn, Steve Buczynski, Norm Budnitz, Bryce Fleming, Elizabeth Keating, Gene Kingsley, Thomas Krakauer, Roger Shaw, Bill Webster, Bruce Young and two others.

Exclusives: none

Notes: Twelve observers in seven parties tallied 111 species (average 111) and 2585 total

birds (average 4006) led by 152 Yellow-rumped Warbler, 139 Northern Cardinal and 129 Double-crested Cormorant.

Highlights include single Pied-billed Grebe at Brickhouse Road; three adult plumage Bonaparte's Gull at Hickory Hill; a Hermit Thrush seen well on the Mountains to Sea Trail; two parties with Chestnut-sided Warbler and two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks.

Misses include Northern Bobwhite, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Blue-headed Vireo and Cedar Waxwing!

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

Falls Lake – Count date April 25th, 113 species, 3132 individuals, 10 participants in 7 parties, 32.35 party-hours Weather: Cloudy with mild temperature 60-64°F

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

Participants: Herb Amyx, Pat Amyx, Brian Bockhahn, Beth Bishop, Todd Bishop, Norm Budnitz, Amy Corbally, A Sencartier, Josh Southern and Patty Tice.

Exclusives: none

Notes: The fifteenth Falls Lake Spring Bird Count was held on April 25, 2018 with cloudy skies and mild temperatures ranging from 60-64°. Ten observers in 7 parties tallied 113 species (average 113) and 3132 total birds (average 3902).

Most numerous birds were again Cliff Swallow at 316, followed distantly by 177 Yellow-rumped Warblers and 131 Northern Cardinals. First records included: not a surprise with the recent spring sightings, there was a single Lesser Black-backed Gull off Sandling Beach.

Other goodies included our second Blackpoll Warbler at Beaverdam Lake north end; which also had a male and female Hooded Merganser as our third record; our second record Greater Black-backed Gull showed up at Sandling Beach with the other five species of gulls and one tern species.

Misses included Solitary Sandpiper for the fifth time; Eastern Screech Owl (sixth miss); Great Horned Owl (fourth miss); Whip-poor-will (second miss) and Chuck-wills-widow (third miss); Song Sparrow (second miss).

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

Kerr Lake – Count date April 24th, 108 species, 2938 individuals, 16 participants in eight parties, 44.60 party-hours.

Weather: Cloudy, rain in the morning, temperatures (58°-61°F)

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

Participants: Jeff Blalock, Brian Bockhahn, Ann Brice, Adam D'Onofrio, Jackie Evrard, Mark Evrard, Bryce Fleming, Paul Glass, Bill Lindemuth, Joyce Lindemuth, Fred Lobdell, Carol Mauzey, J Mills, Clyde Smith, David Spears and Evan Spears

Exclusives: Blue-winged Teal, Redhead, Wilson's Snipe

Notes: The fifteenth Kerr Lake Spring Bird Count was held on April 24, 2018 under very cloudy skies with rain all morning and mild temperatures. Despite the rain a record 16 observers in eight parties tallied 108 species (average 118) and 2938 birds (average 3882) led by perennial leaders 227 Black Vultures, 185 Yellow-rumped Warblers and 179 Double-crested Cormorants.

New to the spring checklist were a single male Redhead loafing around below the dam, stretched its wings a few times seemingly uninjured but running late! Other goodies included a third record of Laughing Gull reported by three parties at Satterwhite, Bullocksville and Palmer Point, likely a shared sighting; third record of Chestnut-sided Warbler at Bullocksville; third record of Dark-eyed Juncos at County Line; fourth record Blue-winged Teal and Wilson's Snipe at Dick Cross.

Misses included Sharp-shinned Hawk (fourth miss); Yellow-billed Cuckoo (fourth miss); Great Horned Owl (third miss); Whip-poor-will (second miss); White-breasted Nuthatch (first miss); Yellow Warbler (first miss). Not all birds are waterproof!

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

Raven Rock State Park – Count date April 28th, 111 species, 4,078 individuals, 20 participants in 12 teams, 80.91 party-hours.

Weather: Temperature - 48-80°F; wind SW at 0-7mph; water open, AM sunny, PM partly cloudy. Count circle center at junction of NC210 and SR 1434

Compiler: Erik R. Thomas (erthomas@ncsu.edu)

Participants: John Bartlett, Steve Buscynski, Charles Byrd, Lisa Cook, David DuMond, Michael Fisk, Molly Fullwood, Paul Hart, Tom Howard, Prudence Mainor, Tim McGreal, Jeff Mielke, Henry Rease, Kevin Rease, Mitch Rease, Mary Stevens, Sarah Stevens, Erik Thomas, April Wagner and Amber Williams

Exclusives: none

Notes: Our total of 111 species equaled last years' count. Our biggest misses were Belted Kingfisher and Anhinga. Among the highlights were a Blue-headed Vireo by Paul Hart, Sarah Stevens, and Lisa Cook; two Swainson's Warblers by Mitch, Kevin, and Henry Reese; and two Yellow Warblers by John Bartlett. We also had good counts of owls and nightjars.

Erik R. Thomas

Coast

Brunswick County – Count date April 21st, 156 species, 6619 individuals, 19 field observers and 1 feeder watcher, 66.50 party-hours. Weather: Partly cloudy, wind NE to E at 5-10mph, temperature 40-67°F.

Compiler: Dave Weesner (david.weesner@yahoo.com) and Sam Cooper (dmcooper2@juno.net)

Participants: Jamie Adams, Lynn Eria Beegle, Kathleen Bowman, Sam Cooper, George Harrington, Joy Hosier, Doug Hughes, Amanda Kiel, Sherry Lane, Maxine McCullar, Mary Lynn Meister, Ann Orsillo, Stacey Sayeth, Harry Sell, Deborah Shaw, Hugh Shaw, Jeri Smart, Bruce Smithson, Dave Weesner, Carson Wood.

Exclusives: Gadwall, American Wigeon, Lesser Scaup, Black Scoter, Clapper Rail, Common Gallinule, American Oystercatcher, Wilson's Plover, Piping Plover, Sanderling, Western Sandpiper, Willet, Least Tern, Gull-billed Tern, Common Tern, Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, Black Skimmer, Wood Stork, Northern Gannet, Brown Pelican, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Cattle Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron,

White Ibis, Glossy Ibis, Marsh Wren, Seaside Sparrow, Boat-tailed Grackle, Painted Bunting

Notes: The 2018 spring count was conducted on 21 April and yielded 156 species, 6620 individuals from the effort of 20 participants. Twenty observers in 8 groups concentrated on some of the birding hotspots, including the beaches of Sunset, Ocean Isle, Oak Island, Bald Head, the southern portion of Fort Fisher, the Green Swamp, Southport area, Orton Pond, Brunswick Nature Park, EV Henwood, and Indian Creek by boat (the only area covered by boat). Eagle Island and areas associated with the old Orton Plantation property were not surveyed due to access restrictions. This year's effort, coverage, and species count was similar to last year, and was the second spring count conducted since the 1990s.

Dave Weesner and Sam Cooper

Appendix

To view the Appendix detailing species identified on each count, click in the box below:

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

Josh Southern
203 Hyannis Drive
Holly Springs, NC 27540
joshsouthern79@gmail.com

(All dates Winter 2019, 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, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **Mt** – Mount, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

**All italicized place names are counties.*

Ross's Goose: Multiple birds were seen amongst the large flocks of Snow Geese in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Washington* NC throughout the winter, with counts of nine+ on 3 Dec (Derb Carter) and 16 on 10 Feb (Jelmer Poelstra). Individuals were reported at about a half-dozen other sites during the period as well.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Though no large flocks were reported this winter, sightings of individuals and pairs were made at scattered sites throughout the period.

Cackling Goose: Several continued from late fall in the fields around the Beasley Rd exit on US-64 in *Washington* NC throughout the period (m. obs.) with counts of four on 8 Dec (Ed Corey, et al.) and seven on 11 Dec (Lucas Bobay, Sam Jolly). A small irruption occurred in the northwestern NC Piedmont in mid-February, with sightings including three at a pond along Howerton Rd in *Guilford* 4-26 Feb (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.), two in Wilkesboro *Wilkes* 15 Feb into spring (Dale Reynolds, m. obs.), and one at Farris Memorial Park *Rockingham* 16 Feb through 5 Mar (Marty Wall).

Trumpeter Swan: Sightings of this largest swan have increased in recent years. This winter sightings involved one or two at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 8 Dec (Jeff Lewis), one in the Lake Landing area of Mattamuskeet NWR 5 Jan (Jelmer Poelstra), one in a field along NC-42 just southeast of Conetoe *Edgecombe* NC 4 Feb through 3 Mar (Derb Carter, m. obs.), and one or two in the Northeast Creek arm of Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 26 Feb (Louise Belk). The last sighting is pending review by the NC BRC due to its inland locality.

Tundra Swan: A Eurasian race Tundra Swan [Bewick's Swan] was seen and photographed amongst a large flock of Tundra Swans in an agricultural field along NC-42 just southeast of Conetoe *Edgecombe* NC 2-8 Feb (Ricky Davis, m. obs.).



*Tundra Swans, 6 Feb 2019,
Edgecombe Co, NC.
Photo by Michael Cheves*

Cinnamon Teal: A drake seen and photographed by many along River Rd at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 17-22 Jan (Lester Coble, m. obs.) provided the first definitive report of this duck in NC in 18 years!

Eurasian Wigeon: Sightings included up to two continuing at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC from fall through 6 Feb (m. obs.), one at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 8 Dec (Jeff Lewis) and 31 Jan (m. obs.), one at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 6 Jan (Derb Carter, m. obs.), and two amongst American Wigeons in a flooded agricultural field near Gull Rock Game Land *Hyde* NC 10 Feb (Jelmer Poelstra).

Green-winged Teal: A Eurasian race Green-winged Teal [Common Teal] was seen by many along River Rd at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 17 Jan (Lee Adams, et al.) through 8 Feb (Andrew Thornton).

Canvasback: There was a widely reported irruption into the western half of the Carolinas beginning in late January, almost certainly related to a period of below-freezing temperatures to the north. New record high counts were made in multiple counties including 24 on Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 30 Jan (Michael Plauché, et al.), 11 at the Woodland Lagoon WTP in *Lexington* SC 30 Jan (John Ebert), eight on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 31 Jan (Bob Butler), eight along Woodfield Way in *Wilkes* NC 9 Feb (Dale Reynolds), 23 on a pond along Stamey Valley Rd in *Greenville* SC 12-13 Feb (Gary Harbour, m. obs.), 15 on a pond along Buffalo Church Rd in *Cleveland* NC 14 Feb (Bill Hooker), 15 on a pond along Farmstead Way in *Iredell* NC 18 Feb (Jeff Martin), 19 on Osceola Lake *Henderson* NC 20 Feb (Kevin Burke), and eight at Cherry Farm in *Pickens* SC 8 Mar (Austin Pickhardt).

Redhead: 15000 on South Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 8 Dec (Susan Campbell, et al.) and 2000 on the Newport River estuary north of Morehead City *Carteret* NC 26 Jan (Jeannie Kraus) were notable concentrations. Like Canvasbacks, Redheads numbers increased in the western half of the Carolinas in the late winter, with 318 on Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 1 Mar (Frank Porter) providing an incredible total for the mountain region.

Ring-necked Duck: 8000 at ACE Basin NWR *Charleston* SC during its CBC 30 Dec (Christopher Davies, Pam Ford, Craig Watson) was an amazing count, the highest on any Audubon CBC this year.

Tufted Duck: Pending review by the SC BRC was the report of an apparent Tufted Duck seen and photographed on Bulls Island at Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC 8 Feb (Scott Davis, David McLean, Linda Montgomery). This individual is almost certainly the same individual reported in that area Feb-Mar 2018.



*King Eider, 7 Jan 2019,
Dare Co, NC.*

Photo by Marty Wall

King Eider: A hen was briefly seen around the jetty on the south side of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC where photographed 7 Jan (Marty Wall).

Common Eider: This species was well-reported this winter, with sightings made along much of the Carolina coast from Carova Beach *Currituck* NC, where a sick/injured hen was photographed 17 Dec (Marissa Bijarro), south to Hunting Island SP *Beaufort* SC where a first-winter drake was seen 19 Jan to 18 Feb (Steven Guy, m. obs.). Three, two hens and a first-year drake, were seen at Johnnie Mercer's Pier and later Masonboro Inlet *New Hanover* NC 7-9 Dec (Sam Cooper, David

Weesner). Two hens were seen and photographed by many in Edisto Beach *Colleton* SC 23 Dec through 9 Feb (Sidney Gauthreaux, m. obs.). Five in *New Hanover* NC during the Wilmington CBC 29 Dec (Sam Cooper) was a good tally. Three first-year drakes around

the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal *Carteret* NC 6 Jan through 3 Feb (John Fussell, et al.) were likely the same three eiders seen there 29 Nov (Alain Robert). Three, two hens and a first-year drake, were photographed in flight together off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 16 Jan (David Wilson).

Harlequin Duck: A drake seen and photographed by many around the pilings under the south end of the Bonner Bridge over Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 12 Jan (Michael Gosselin, Jeff Lewis) through 17 Feb (m. obs.) was the only one reported this winter.

White-winged Scoter: A sub-adult photographed at River Park North *Pitt* NC 4 Feb (Trevor Sleight) was a first for that county.

Black Scoter: A drake on Lochmere Lake *Wake* NC during the Raleigh CBC 15 Dec (Josh Southern, Sterling Southern) was unusual for a site in the Piedmont.

Long-tailed Duck: An adult hen photographed on Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 1 Feb (Eddie Owens) and an adult drake on Lower Springdale Estates Lake *Wake* NC 6-18 Feb (Karaleah Reichart, m. obs.) were good finds for the Piedmont, probably displaced to those sites by below-freezing temperatures north of the Carolinas.

Common Goldeneye: Sightings increased in late winter during of period of below-freezing temperatures north of the Carolinas. A few of the higher counts were 25 at Riverbend Park *Catawba* NC 4-7 Feb (Dwayne Martin), seven on Mullet Pond at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 8 Feb (Roger Smith, m. obs.) and 23 Feb (Wendy Allen), and ten on a pond along Woodfield Way in *Wilkes* NC 23 Feb (Martin)

Common Merganser: Individual hens wintering on Forest Lake *Florence* SC 6 Dec through 23 Mar (Shawn Smolen-Morton) and at James Island County Park *Charleston* SC 15 Dec through 2 Mar (Carl Miller, m. obs.) were unusual for sites in SC. Eight on Lake Hartwell *Anderson* SC 26 Jan (Joe & Liz Dunkleman) was a notable count for SC. Multiple sightings were made in northwestern NC in late winter including two drakes on Powder Horn Mountain *Watauga* 5 Feb (Janet Paulette, m. obs.) and 12 on Belews Lake *Stokes* 16 Feb (Tony & Cara Woods).

Red-necked Grebe: Individuals were seen at multiple sites in *Dare* NC—just off the beach in Nags Head 23 Dec (Eric Kershner), on the Salt Pond at Cape Point 28 Dec through 19 Jan (Jack Rogers, m. obs.), at Oregon Inlet 19 Jan (m. obs.), off Coquina Beach 19 Jan (Derb Carter), off Jennette's Pier 19-29 Jan (Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.), and off the beach at Pea Island NWR 14 Feb (Allen Bryan).

Eared Grebe: One was photographed at the Jacksonville WTP *Onslow* NC 6 Feb (Brad Dolak).

Western Grebe: Individuals were photographed on the ocean off Kill Devil Hills *Dare* NC 13 Dec (Audrey Whitlock, et al.) and off Bulls Island at Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC 7 Feb (David McLean, et al.).

White-winged Dove: Individuals, possibly the same individual, visited feeders on opposite sides of Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 4 Dec (Bruce Smithson) and 14-20 Jan (Elizabeth Gordon).

Chuck-will's-widow: One heard calling in the I'on Swamp *Charleston* SC during the Charleston CBC 5 Jan (Ed Blitch, et al.) was a great find for winter.

Rufous Hummingbird: Sightings included a first-winter male visiting Elaeagnus flowers and later a feeder in Morehead City *Carteret* NC 11 Dec (John Fussell) through 26 Jan (Steve Howell), possibly the same individual at another feeder in Morehead City 30 Jan through 3 Feb (Carol Reigle), a second-year female visiting a feeder in Asheville *Buncombe* NC 23 Dec through 29 Mar (*fide* Simon Thompson), an adult female in Buxton *Dare* NC during the Cape Hatteras CBC 27 Dec (Lena Gallitano, Audrey Whitlock) banded 31 Jan (Susan Campbell) and continuing through 17 Feb (Ann Maddock), and an adult female visiting a feeder in Apex *Wake* NC for the fifth consecutive winter 1 Jan through 25 Feb (Susan Davis, m. obs.).

Selasphorus sp.: Birds not identified to species but probably Rufous Hummingbirds visited feeders in Davidson *Mecklenburg* NC in early December (*fide* Taylor Piephoff), in *Charleston* SC 8-31 Dec (Russell and Lacy Johnson), in Huntersville *Mecklenburg* NC 21 Jan (Dennis Kent, et al.), and in Mars Hill *Madison* NC 16 Feb (Jay Wherley).

Virginia Rail: One seen at The Park at Flat Rock *Henderson* NC 6-28 Jan (Catherine Ford, m. obs.) was unusual for the mountain region in winter.

Common Gallinule: Seven+ photographed at Forest Hill Park in Emerald Isle *Carteret* NC 17 Feb (John te Raa) was a good count for that area in winter.

Sandhill Crane: The peak count of the wintering flock in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC was 93 cranes on 4 Feb (Scott Davis, Linda Montgomery). 34 in flight over west Asheville *Buncombe* NC 26 Feb (Bryant Anderson) was a notable count for the mountain region. Three were seen in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Washington* NC through much of the winter, 22 Dec through 22 Feb (m. obs.). Five hung around for several days at the Super Sod farm along Hooper Lane in *Henderson* NC 23-28 Jan (Wayne Forsythe, m. obs.). One seen at Lake Murray in southwestern *Newberry* SC 3 Feb (Marion Clark) was unusual for that area. The pair that wintered around Beaufort *Carteret* NC again this year were last seen 12 Mar (Chandra Biggerstaff).

American Avocet: 600 at Bear Island WMA, Colleton SC, 9 Feb (Christopher Davies, et al.) was a remarkable count.

Wilson's Plover: 15 on Harbor Island *Beaufort* SC 17 Feb (Tammy Hester) was a notable count for the winter period. It's likely that at least some of those birds wintered south of the Carolinas and were already moving northward along the coast. One on east Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 10 Feb (John Fussell, Suzanne Wheatcraft) was the northernmost sighting made this winter.

Long-billed Curlew: This winter's sightings were of two at Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC 16 Dec (John Cox, et al.), four at the mouth of Big Bay Creek in Edisto Beach *Colleton* SC 23 Dec (Sidney Gauthreaux) with three continuing there through 10 Feb (m. obs.), and one on east Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 10 Feb (John Fussell, Suzanne Wheatcraft).

Bar-tailed Godwit: One, almost certainly one of the two seen there 18 Nov (Haven Wiley) and probably the same individual that wintered at the site the previous two years, was seen on east Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 12 Jan (John Fussell, Marty Wall), 10 Feb (Fussell, Suzanne Wheatcraft) and 23 Mar (Jesse Anderson).

Hudsonian Godwit: One photographed at North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 8 Dec (Audrey Whitlock, et al.) was very late.

Spotted Sandpiper: Farthest inland were individuals at Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 3-12 Dec (Lucas Bobay, m. obs.), at McAlpine WTP *Mecklenburg* NC 22 Dec (Matt Janson, et al.), at University Lake *Orange* NC 23 Dec (Jan Hansen), in Clemson *Pickens* SC 4-10 Jan (Kevin Kubach), and at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 26 Jan through 24 Feb (m. obs.).

Great Skua: Individuals were seen on Seabirding pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 26 Jan and 17 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). Notably, the latter sighting was made south of Diamonds Shoals, "just a few miles off the beach."

Parasitic Jaeger: Seven in flight off the end of Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 7 Jan (Jelmer Poelstra) was a noteworthy 'from-shore' total.

Dovekie: A few sightings were made along the Outer Banks beginning in late December with six+ in flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 27 Dec (Kyle Kittelberger, Kate Sutherland) being the high count. One in flight off Johnnie Mercer's Pier *New Hanover* NC 12 Jan (Sam Cooper) was the only sighting made south of Dare County.

Common Murre: One was seen and well-photographed during a Seabirding pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 18 Jan (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Thick-billed Murre: One, possibly sick or injured, was photographed on the ocean off Kill Devil Hills *Dare* NC 2 Feb (Stephen Garvey).

Razorbill: There was a moderate irruption along the Outer Banks beginning in late December. 1100 off Cape Point *Dare* NC 19 Jan (Ed Corey, et al.) and 2000 off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 9 Feb (Andrew Thornton) were two of the higher counts. Only a

few sightings were made south of Cape Point, the southernmost being an individual off the Folly Beach Fishing Pier *Charleston* SC 25 Jan (Edward Patten).

Black Guillemot: One seen and photographed around the pilings of Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 26 Dec (Jacob Farmer, Josh Sims, m. obs.) was only a one-day-wonder. Already accepted by the NC BRC, this report provided the third official record for NC, and the first with photographs.

Black-legged Kittiwake: This species made an incredible flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC during the Cape Hatteras CBC 27 Dec, when 89, mostly first-year birds, were counted flying eastward around the cape (Kyle Kittelberger, Kate Sutherland). Kittiwakes continued to be seen there, albeit in single-digit numbers, through 31 Dec (m. obs.). In February, a first-year bird was photographed on the beach there 16 Feb (Jonathan Cantrell, Matt Spangler).

Black-headed Gull: Adults continued from fall at the Georgetown WTP *Georgetown* SC 22 Nov (Ritch Lilly) through 19 Jan (m. obs.), and at Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC 5 Nov (Jamie Adams) intermittently through 3 Mar (Ricky Davis). A first-year bird photographed at Bear Island WMA *Colleton* SC during the ACE Basin CBC 30 Dec (Carl Miller, et al.) was a first for that count.

Little Gull: Individual adults were seen off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 27 Dec (Jack Rogers) and 12 Jan (Michael Gosselin, Jeff Lewis), and during Seabirding pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 26 Jan and 2 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). Two adults were seen amongst Bonaparte's Gulls over the surf a few miles north of Jennette's Pier 3 Feb (Scott Barnes, Linda Mack).

Laughing Gull: Individuals at Lake Benson *Wake* NC 15 Dec (*fide* John Connors) and at Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 22 Feb (Eddie Owens) were unusual for the Piedmont region during the winter period.

Iceland Gull: A first-winter bird photographed on the beach in Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 23 Feb (Tom Parmeter) was a great find for a site away from the Outer Banks. All other sightings this winter were made in *Dare* NC. Individuals were seen on the beach in Kill Devil Hills 14 Dec (Al Hooks, Alan MacEachren, Audrey Whitlock), on the beach on the south side of Oregon Inlet 17 Dec (Peggy Eubank, MacEachren, Whitlock) and 22 Dec (Steve Ritt), at Cape Point 28 Dec through 29 Jan (Jack Rogers, m. obs.), and on Seabirding pelagic trips out of Hatteras 26 Jan, 2 Feb, 10 Feb and 17 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). Three on a Seabirding pelagic trip 18 Feb (Patteson, Sutherland, et al.) was a great count.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 213 in Kitty Hawk *Dare* NC during its CBC 15 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis) was a good count for that part of the Outer Banks. 18 on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 9 Feb (Jelmer Poelstra) was a notable count for a site in the Piedmont.

Glaucous Gull: A first-year bird seen and photographed on Lake Norman *Iredell* and *Mecklenburg* NC during the Southern Lake Norman CBC 16 Dec (Dennis Kent, John Scavetto, Chris Talkington) and continuing through 18 Dec (m. obs.) was a first for the greater Charlotte area. In *Dare* NC, first-year individuals were seen around Pea Island NWR 25 Nov (Jeff Lewis) throughout the period into spring (m. obs.), at Cape Point 31 Dec (Jacob Farmer, Nathan Gatto) through 16 Feb (Jonathan Cantrell, Matt Spangler), and on a Seabirding pelagic trip out of Hatteras 2 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Red-throated Loon: Sightings on inland reservoirs involved one just above the dam on Lake Gaston *Northampton* NC 9 Feb (Ricky Davis), one on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 1-6 Feb (Jelmer Poelstra), two on Jordan Lake 3 Feb (Stacy & Natalie Barbour), and two on Belews Lake *Rockingham* NC 14 Feb (Marty Wall).

Pacific Loon: One seen on Kerr Lake near Nutbush Bridge *Vance* NC 19 Dec (Bruce Young) may have been the same individual seen on that lake from nearby Satterwhite Point 22-25 Nov (Jeffrey Blalock, m. obs.).

Manx Shearwater: An impressive northbound flight took place along the Outer Banks in early January with 100 off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 2 Jan (Peggy Eubank, Audrey Whitlock), four off Cape Point *Dare* NC 3 Jan (Alan MacEachren), and 29 off Jennette's Pier 7 Jan (Jelmer Poelstra).

Wood Stork: A few immature birds that wandered around eastern NC were unusual for the winter period—one on Harkers Island *Carteret* 19 Jan (Karen Altman), one in Merritt *Pamlico* 28 Jan (Allan Porter), one in Manns Harbor *Dare* 30 Jan through 5 Feb (Sherry Foreman, m. obs.), two in Folkstone *Onslow* 5 Jan (Gilbert Grant), and two in New Bern *Craven* 20-25 Feb (Michael Cheves, m. obs.).

Great Cormorant: Seven at Masonboro Inlet *New Hanover* NC during the Wilmington CBC 29 Dec (Sam Cooper) was this winter's high count. The only sighting made south of Cape Fear this winter was of one on a jetty at the entrance of Charleston Harbor *Charleston* SC 17 Jan (John Cox).

American White Pelican: This species' annual (at least since 2007) early spring feeding congregation below the dam on High Rock Lake *Davidson* and *Rowan* NC began with 20 pelicans 9 Feb (Jesse Anderson). 50 were seen there by 19 Feb (Liz Cope) and numbers continued to increase in March. Not too surprisingly, hundreds of Double-crested Cormorants were reported feeding below the dam at the same time.

American Bittern: One photographed at Biltmore Lagoon *Buncombe* NC 5 Jan (William Ensign) was very unusual for the mountain region in mid-winter.

Great Egret: One at Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 1-7 Dec (Michael Plauché, m. obs.) was late for a site in the mountain region.

Reddish Egret: One lingered on East Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC from fall until at least 17 Jan (Aaron Given, m. obs.).

Glossy Ibis: North of the species' typical winter range were two+ at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC throughout the winter into March (m. obs.) and up to 32 in flooded agricultural fields southeast of Lake Landing *Hyde* NC 29 Dec (Allen Bryan) through 12 Jan (Ricky Davis).

Roseate Spoonbill: Record counts on several CBCs along the SC coast may have been an after-effect of the 2018 northward irruption.

Golden Eagle: Sightings included a first-year bird photographed at Congaree National Park *Richland* SC during the Congaree Swamp CBC 16 Dec (Brad Dalton), a second-year bird at the Savannah River Site (restricted access) *Barnwell* SC 28 Jan (Raymond Geroso) and along nearby Burma Rd in *Aiken* SC 25 Feb (Matt Malin), and an adult in Fairfield Harbor *Craven* NC 22 Feb (Rob Tarkenton).

Northern Goshawk: An adult seen along Florence Rd in *Pamlico* NC during its CBC 18 Dec (Ronnie Hewlette, Christine Stoughton-Root) was the only one reported this winter.

Red-tailed Hawk: A "Krider's Hawk" variant Red-tailed Hawk was photographed at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 13 Dec and 5 Jan (Steve Calver, et al.).

Short-eared Owl: Individuals on the south side of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 6 Dec (Michael Gosselin) and 7 Dec (Karen Lebing), along Daughtry Rd in *Cumberland* NC during its CBC 20 Dec (*vide* Brian Bockhahn), and at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC 29 Dec (Mark Kosiewski) were unusual for those sites.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: A moribund individual was found along US-70 near Oyster Creek in *Carteret* NC 5 Dec (*vide* Sam Cooper). Two were heard at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC, in the trees between the aquarium and the ferry terminal, 6 Dec (Cooper) with one continuing through the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC 30 Dec (Ricky Davis). Along the entrance road to the Bodie Island Lighthouse *Dare* NC, a traditional roosting site for one or two saw-whets some winters, one was seen and heard 16 Dec (Jesse Pope, Gordon Warburton), two were heard calling 19-23 Dec (Susan Mac, Steve McInnis, m. obs.), and one continued at the site through 17 Feb (m. obs.). One heard responding to playback in *Rockingham* NC during its CBC 26 Dec (Marty Wall, Danny Yount) was a good find for a site in the Piedmont.

Tropical/Couch's Kingbird: One, either a Tropical Kingbird or a Couch's Kingbird, was reportedly briefly seen near the gazebo at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC during the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC 30 Dec (*vide* Ron Clark).

Western Kingbird: Sightings, quite numerous this winter, included one continuing in *Georgetown* SC from 23 Nov (Craig Watson) through 2 Jan (Caroline Eastman), one in

the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Washington* NC 1 Dec (Jamie Adams, m. obs.), one at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 1 Dec (Pam Ford, Craig Watson, et al.), one at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 4 Dec and 23 Dec (John Fussell, et al.), one along River Rd at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 11-14 Dec (Greg Hudson, m. obs.), one at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 13 Dec through 23 Mar (David Perry, m. obs.), one on north Folly Island *Charleston* SC 15 Dec (Chris Snook), one at James Island County Park *Charleston* SC 18 Dec through 26 Feb (Irvin Pitts, m. obs.), two at Ft Moultrie 25 Dec through 7 Jan (Marc Regnier, m. obs.), one at Glenburnie Park *Craven* NC 2 Jan (Lester Coble), one at the north end of Ocracoke Island *Hyde* NC 5 Jan (Susan Campbell), and two at James Island County Park 7-25 Jan (Andy Harrison, m. obs.).

Say's Phoebe: Pending review by the SC BRC was the report of an apparent Say's Phoebe seen and photographed at Clemson University's Simpson Research Station *Anderson* SC 6 Dec through 2 Feb (George McHenry, m. obs.).

Common Raven: 18 in the Dan River Game Land *Rockingham* NC 23 Dec (Marty Wall) was a noteworthy count. Two heard and then seen flying north along I-95 near Four Oaks *Johnston* NC 15 Jan (Conor McKearney) were very unusual east of the fall line. One captured by a trail camera in north *Cabarrus* NC 26 Jan (Mike Walter) was unusual for that area.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: One photographed at Lake Busbee *Horry* SC 7 Dec (John Hutchens) was late to depart.

Bank Swallow: One photographed at Bear Island WMA *Colleton* SC 10 Feb (Dave Eslinger, et al.) was an incredible find for the winter period. There are only four previous records of this small swallow in the Carolinas during the winter.

Cave Swallow: One or more were seen over Mullet Pond at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 16 Nov through 12 Dec (Ritch Lilly, m. obs.) with a high count of four made there 8 Dec (Ian Hearn, William Hearn).

Barn Swallow: Individuals at Annandale Plantation *Georgetown* SC during the Winyah Bay CBC 20 Dec (Jack Rogers) and along River Rd at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 18 Jan (Ricky Davis) were very late.

Swainson's Thrush: An individual seen and photographed at Beaver Lake *Buncombe* NC 2-6 Jan (Aaron Steed, m. obs.) was incredibly late and a first for the mountain region in winter.

Evening Grosbeak: This large finch staged a small irruption into the northern half of NC this winter. Sightings included one at a feeder in Williamston *Martin* NC 8 Dec (Angela Bagley), three at a feeder in Chapel Hill *Orange* NC 9 Dec (Maria de Bruyn), one in *Durham* NC 16 Dec (Tom Driscoll, et al.), one at a feeder in Granite Falls *Caldwell* NC 30 Dec (Arlene Neal), one heard calling in *Durham* NC 13 Jan (Jeff Phippen), and one heard calling in *Nash* NC 17 Jan (Sam Cooper).

Purple Finch: This irruptive finch was well-reported this winter, with high counts near 40 in both states.

Pine Siskin: This finch was also well-reported this winter, with high counts nearing 100 at some sites in mid-February.

Lapland Longspur: One heard and then seen along Butler Bridge Rd in *Henderson* NC 15 Dec (Simon Thompson, Steve Yurkovich) was the only one reported this winter.

Snow Bunting: Two were seen and photographed by many at Huntington Beach SP, near the base of the jetty on the south side of Murrells Inlet, *Georgetown* SC 19 Dec through 3 Feb (Ritch Lilly, m. obs.).

Lark Sparrow: Up to three visited a feeder along Alder Branch Rd in *Camden* NC 11 Jan into spring (James Harrison). Individuals were seen at Willow Dale Cemetery in Goldsboro *Wayne* NC 15 Dec through 1 Feb (Mary Bridges, m. obs.), at Myrtle Beach SP *Horry* SC 10 Jan into spring (John Hutchens, m. obs.), and at the Simpson Research Station *Anderson* SC 18 Jan (Joe & Liz Dunkleman).

Golden-crowned Sparrow: Already accepted by the NC BRC was the report with photographs of an immature Golden-crowned Sparrow foraging with White-throated Sparrows behind a gas station in Harbinger *Currituck* NC 22 Dec through 14 Feb (Steve Ritt, m. obs.). This report provided the first official record of the species in NC.

Yellow-breasted Chat: Lingering or over-wintering were individuals in Washington *Beaufort* NC 12 Dec, 20 Jan and 5 Feb (Betsy Kane), at Airlie Gardens *New Hanover* NC 13 Dec (Jim Holcomb), at Foxcroft Lake *Wake* NC 22 Dec (Jason O'Connor), at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 29 Dec (Allen Bryan), at Lake Raleigh *Wake* NC 5-7 Jan (Edward Landi, m. obs.), in Mt Pleasant *Charleston* SC 16 Jan (John Cox) and possibly the same individual visiting feeders across town 16 Feb (Sally West) and 23 Feb (Jim Buxton, et al.), at Savannah NWR *Jasper* SC 19 Jan (Sidney Gauthreaux), and at New Field, Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 27 Jan (Courtney Check, et al.).

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Individuals were found amongst other species of blackbirds on the lawn around the monument at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 12 Dec (Mark Jones, *fide* Sam Cooper), in a field along Stewart Rd in *Greenville* SC 27 Jan (Simon Harvey), and along US-264 west of Lake Mattamuskeet *Hyde* NC 16 Feb (Jamie Adams).

Baltimore Oriole: A total of 33 visiting feeders in West Ashley *Charleston* SC 12 Jan (Russell & Lacy Johnson) was a fantastic count.

Brewer's Blackbird: For a fourth winter in a row Brewer's Blackbirds were seen in a horse enclosure along Gum Swamp Rd in *Hyde* NC, 29 Dec through 26 Feb (m. obs.), with a high count of 16 made there 5 Jan (Michael Gosselin, et al.).

Ovenbird: Though a few are typically reported at sites along the coast each winter, one well-seen near Cullowhee *Jackson* NC 21 Jan (Jeremy Hyman) was incredibly unusual for the mountains in winter.

Louisiana Waterthrush: One heard and then seen at Saluda Shoals Park *Lexington* SC 23 Feb (Irvin Pitts) was very early.

Northern Waterthrush: Lingering or over-wintering in the SC coastal plain were two at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* 5 Jan (Lewis Burke, Roger Smith), one at Santee NWR *Clarendon* 11 Jan (Irvin Pitts) and 2 Feb (Donna & Harold Donnelly), one at Charleston Southern University *Charleston* 15 Jan (David Perry), and one at Savannah NWR *Jasper* 16-27 Jan (Donald Thompson, m. obs.).

Waterthrush sp.: A waterthrush heard calling in Buxton Woods *Dare* NC during the Cape Hatteras CBC 27 Dec (John Fussell) was probably a Northern Waterthrush.

Nashville Warbler: Individuals were seen around the aquarium pond at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 23 Jan through 2 Feb (Jim Holcomb, m. obs.) and at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 28 Jan through 1 Feb (Keith McCullough, m. obs.).

American Redstart: Individuals at Savannah NWR *Jasper* SC 4 Dec (Phil McNeil) and 5-27 Jan (John Hammond, m. obs.) and at Saluda Shoals Park *Lexington* SC 10 Feb and 23 Feb (Patricia Voelker, m. obs.) were great finds for winter.

Cape May Warbler: Individuals seen visiting a feeder in Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 31 Dec through 5 Jan (Sam Cooper, m. obs.), around Swan Lake at Furman University *Greenville* SC 25 Jan (Joan Baker, et al.) and 5 Feb (Denise DuPon), and at a feeder in Rock Hill *York* SC 26 Feb (Bob Olson) were fantastic for winter. Sightings of lingering/over-wintering Cape May Warblers, most of birds visiting suet feeders, have steadily increased over the past couple of decades.

Bay-breasted Warbler: One seen at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC during the McClellanville CBC 16 Dec (Ed Blitch, et al.) was incredibly late.

Yellow Warbler: Individuals at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC during the McClellanville CBC 16 Dec (Charles Donnelly) and at Demetre Park *Charleston* SC 15-19 Jan (Nicole-Marie Pettinelli, m. obs.) were great finds for winter.

Yellow-throated Warbler: The northernmost sightings were of one on the campus of Davidson College *Mecklenburg* NC throughout the period (Eric Keith, m. obs.), one at a feeder in northern *Union* NC 9 Dec (Ed Simpson), one at a feeder in Chapel Hill *Orange* NC 9 Dec through 31 Jan (Lillian Brown, m. obs.), one in Buxton Woods *Dare* NC during the Cape Hatteras CBC 27 Dec (John Fussell), and one at a feeder in *Pasquotank* NC 29 Jan through 9 Feb (Greg Hudson).

Wilson's Warbler: One photographed in Clemson *Pickens* SC 4 Dec (Linda Montgomery) was likely a very late fall migrant, while one at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 27-30 Jan (Charles Donnelly, m. obs.) must have been over-wintering along the coast.

Summer Tanager: A female visited a feeder in eastern *Brunswick* NC for a fifth winter in a row 2 Dec into spring (Greg Massey).

Western Tanager: Individuals visited feeders in Salisbury *Rowan* NC 5-12 Dec (Ann Brownlee) and 6-12 Mar (m. obs.), in Fort Mill *York* SC 8-10 Dec (Stephen Thomas), in Wilmington *New Hanover* NC during its CBC 29 Dec (*fide* Sam Cooper), on James Island *Charleston* SC 29 Dec through 30 Jan (Jennifer Tyrrell, m. obs.), in Mt Pleasant *Charleston* SC 1-11 Jan (Craig Watson), in a different yard in Mt Pleasant 14 Jan through 21 Feb (Elizabeth Anderegg), in a different yard in Wilmington 27 Jan through 17 Mar (Amy McLane, m. obs.), in western *Johnston* NC 5 Feb (Mary Ann Booth), in Raleigh *Wake* NC 10 Feb through 25 Mar (Sam Jolly, m. obs.), and in a different yard on James Island 11 Feb through 22 Mar (Barbara Spence). One photographed at the east end of Pettigrew SP *Tyrrell* NC during its CBC 29 Dec (Floyd & Signa Williams, Ed Corey) was a first for that area of NC.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Immature males photographed at feeders in eastern *Johnston* 17 Feb (Scott Schulz) and in Mt Pleasant *Charleston* SC 28 Feb through 3 Mar (Dennis Forsythe, m. obs.) were very unusual for the winter period.

Indigo Bunting: A female/immature-type bird in Wanchese *Dare* NC during the Bodie-Pea Island CBC 28 Dec (Kyle Kittelberger) was a great find for winter.

Painted Bunting: Individual males visiting feeders in *Spartanburg* SC 27 Jan through 15 Feb (David Campbell, m. obs.) and in Endy *Stanly* NC 25 Dec through 5 Jan (Kyle Cook, m. obs.) were unusual for sites so far from the coast.

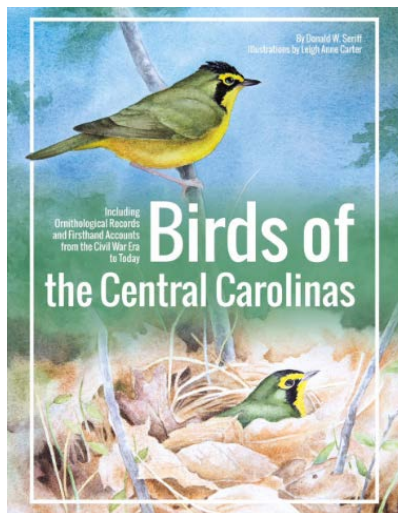
Dickcissel: Individuals at Savannah NWR *Jasper* SC 26 Dec (Christopher Burney), in Harbinger *Currituck* NC 30 Dec through 4 Feb (Mark Anthony, m. obs.), and at Lake Johnson *Wake* NC 3 Jan (Niki Robertson) were unusual for winter.

Corrigendum: In the Fall 2018 "Briefs for the Files," the date given for the last sighting of the Townsend's Warbler at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC was incorrect. The correct date is 3 Oct (Sam Cooper).

Birders' Book Review

Birds of the Central Carolinas

Steve Shultz



Birds of the Central Carolinas
Donald W. Seriff with
illustrations by Leigh Ann Carter
ISBN 978-0692-05539-7
608 pages, casebound, 2018
\$45 www.meckbirds.org

In 1885 Russian Tsar Alexander III presented Empress Maria Feodorovna, his wife, with the first Fabergé Imperial Easter Egg. Over the next 32 years (with a short intermission due to the Russo-Japanese war in 1904-1905) Carl Fabergé delivered a bespoke egg every spring to the royal family. Each imperial egg impressed even the most discerning eye with unequalled craftsmanship and attention to detail. And that was simply the “cover”, for this first impression was only the beginning, as each egg contained something very special once opened. Be it a miniature coronation coach, swan, or palace, the detail contained within the shell was nothing less than stunning.

And what, pray tell, does this little history vignette have to do with birds, birding, or most specifically, book reviews of material pertaining to the Carolinas? Well, one might note that the 1911 Bay Tree Egg featured a tiny, singing songbird as its “surprise”, but I would like to make the case that *Birds of the Central Carolinas* by Donald W. Seriff, with illustrations by Leigh Ann Carter, in many ways parallels those bejeweled gifts of spring.

Birds of the Central Carolinas impresses right out of the box (or gift bag as the case may be). Of impressive heft and obvious quality, the Smyth sewn volume spans 608 pages and includes more than 400 photographs and 312 illustrations. An example of impressive detail, photographs taken in the Central Carolinas accompany nearly all species encountered within the book’s scope.

And like those eggs, the more closely one looks, the more impressive the details become. From the front and back inside covers, which show an 1877 map of downtown Charlotte overlaid with then-contemporary bird sightings, to jewels embedded within species accounts (did you know that a folk name for Tricolored Heron is “Lady of the Lake”?) surprises abound.

Beginning with a brief history of ornithology in the Carolinas, the book soon comes to the yolk of this fit-for-a-queen volume: species accounts listing records from the Civil War Era to present, each accompanied by a Breeding Bird Atlas grid map showing

breeding status in the Central Piedmont. Just skimming through to appreciate folk names and historical accounts promises an evening of enjoyment and answers questions including: “which breeding bird is called the *Quock*?”, and “what bird interrupted a 1913 Charlotte Hornets baseball game, potentially affecting the outcome?”

Some 538 pages into the work, the reader comes to material that includes a list of exotic species found near the Queen City, an aggregation of nearly 20 years of Christmas Bird Count data, a melancholy gallery of “lost birds”, photographic line-up of imperiled species, and then a recipe on how the reader can aide birds through creation of cavity nesting boxes (with plans) and even instructions on how to create the perfect homemade suet.

Although the title may suggest a more parochial interest, birders throughout the Carolinas and beyond are well-served by the detail, historical information, and beauty of this impressive work. And though the local bookshelf may sag with combined weight from various field guides and volumes promising “easy identification” and “better birding now”, *Birds of the Central Carolinas* deserves a prominent spot, or as this reviewer noted on a recent visit to a birder’s home, makes a great coffee table centerpiece as well. While that Fabergé egg may be out of financial reach of most, Don Seriff’s work will provide much the same pleasure at just a tiny fraction of the cost!



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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