

The Chat

Vol. 85

Winter 2021

No. 1



Carolina Bird Club
www.carolinabirdclub.org

**The Quarterly Bulletin of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc.
The Ornithological Society of the Carolinas**

THE CHAT

ISSN No. 0009-1987

Quarterly Bulletin of Carolina Bird Club, Inc.

1909 Lakepark Drive, Raleigh NC 27612

Vol. 85

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North Carolina
South Carolina

Christina Harvey
William Post

Briefs for the Files

Josh Southern

Editor

Steve Shultz
2404 Bristers Spring Way
Apex, NC 27523
chat@carolinabirdclub.org

THE CHAT is published quarterly by the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., 9 Quincy Place, Pinehurst NC 28374. Subscription price \$30 per year.

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General Field Notes

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First Record of Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) in South Carolina

Erinn Szarek, Shawn Smolen-Morton*

*723 Ivanhoe Drive, Florence, SC 29505

SSmolenMorton@fmarion.edu

On the morning of 12 October 2018, Szarek located a Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) near the corner of Jetty Drive and Prat Road in Huntington Beach State Park, Georgetown County, South Carolina. This sighting represents the first record for South Carolina.

Discovery

Szarek stopped to look for a kingfisher frequently seen just north of the Nature Center site where an opening in the scrub and trees affords a view of the Oaks Creek saltmarsh. She located an unusual looking flycatcher sitting far back from the road. After a couple of minutes of observation, Szarek was able to exclude the expected Great Crested Flycatcher, as well as most of the other locally common flycatchers.

Szarek stated: “The bird had a relatively large bill, yellow belly, no white on the tail feathers, and an olive back. The fieldmarks fit Tropical/Couch’s Kingbird, and naturally, I was quite thrilled. I have been a birder for a couple of years, and this was my first big find!”

Szarek notified Ritch Lilly, and Rich notified the greater birding community. This allowed numbers of other birders to see the kingbird, which by this time had become active, chasing large dragonflies.

Observations and Identification

The Tropical Kingbird was observed, discussed, and described for over 10 hours by several birders. Many photographs were taken of the perched bird. Using online resources and field guides, the group eliminated several *Tyrannus* species.

In the field, the Tropical Kingbird can be separated from Cassin’s and Western Kingbirds. Cassin’s Kingbird presents a uniformly medium-gray head, chest and back, setting off a white malar bar. The Cassin’s tail is black with a white tip. The Western Kingbird’s head, nape, mantle, and chest are light gray showing less contrast with the white malar and more contrast with the dark lores and eye, presenting a thin-masked appearance. The tail of a Western Kingbird is blackish with white edges. The bills of Cassin’s and Western are both relatively small in comparison with Tropical Kingbird.

In contrast, the kingbird we observed had a brown tail with no white edging or tip. Its head was light gray, fading gradually into a whitish malar and throat. The thin mask was a shade or two darker than the gray face, but not black. The bill was hefty, long, and straight. The chest was yellow with an olive wash, not gray. Other field marks noted by observers were the olive back, a belly yellow though the vent, and a deeply notched tail. The tails of Cassin’s and Western Kingbirds appear un-notched when folded.

Based on observable physical characteristics, the Tropical Kingbird cannot be distinguished from the Couch's Kingbird, even with excellent photographs. So far, recent attempts to establish diagnostic markers based on bill and primary feather morphology have been inconclusive (Garvey and Iliff 2010). Fortunately, these kingbird species have distinct vocalizations, and the bird of 12 October 2018 often gave a high-pitched sputtering twitter in three or four notes, its typical call. Couch's typically give a squeaky, single "tik", sometimes followed by a raspy "wheeer" (Stouffer and Chesser 1998). No single notes were observed. Ed Blitch, Pam Ford, and Brad Sale obtained recordings, and all observers heard the calls well.

Distribution and Recent Vagrancy

Fairly common and widespread throughout its range, the Tropical Kingbird prefers open country with trees and scrub and has adapted to human landscapes like parks and farms. In suitable habitat, the species occurs regularly from the southeastern United States to Argentina's Rio Negro (Stouffer and Chesser 1998).

In the United States, the northern subspecies *T.m. satrapa* breeds in southeastern Arizona and southernmost Texas. In the fall (September into November), the Tropical Kingbird is a regular, annual visitor along the California coast, and has been recorded with increasing frequency since the 1990s in Oregon and Washington (Stouffer and Chesser 1998). The Washington Bird Records Committee removed Tropical Kingbird from its review list in 2011 (Matt Bartels, pers. comm.)

Along the east coast, the Tropical Kingbird was a very rare fall vagrant until the early 2000s. The first record was a remarkably well-studied specimen collected from Scarborough Marsh, Maine, in 1915 (Norton 1916). Bird records committees along the East Coast have accepted 13 reports in the past 30 years, with five in the last five years and at least five more currently pending. North Carolina has accepted four records of Tropical Kingbird: 29 December 1985 to 3 January 1986 at Lake Mattamuskeet (LeGrand et al. 1990); 29 October to 18 November 2001 at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge (LeGrand et al. 2002); 19 November to 26 December 2005 at Pettigew State Park (LeGrand et al. 2006); and 3 June 2017 at North River Farms (Campbell et al. 2018).

Conclusion

The South Carolina Bird Records Committee accepted this as the state's first record of Tropical Kingbird based on reports submitted by Erinn Szarek, Ed Blitch, Pam Ford, Craig Watson, John Cox, and Frank Lawkins (Givens et al. 2019). The South Carolina Bird Records Committee is currently reviewing a report of Tropical Kingbird observed and photographed by Pam Ford and Craig Watson at Fort Moultrie, Charleston, SC, on 16 June 2019 (Southern 2019).

This first record fits a pattern of vagrancy along the East Coast that is either increasing or is better detected. For now, observers must continue to rely on vocalization to separate Tropical Kingbird from the rarer but still possible Couch's Kingbird. As more birders learn to use mobile devices to record bird sounds, identifications are more certain and specific. Those skills may be the key to the first record of Couch's Kingbird in the Carolinas.



*Tropical
Kingbird,
12 Oct 2018,
Georgetown Co,
SC.
Photo by Craig
Watson.*

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B. Everett Jordan Lake Bird Counts – Part Two

Norman Budnitz
4115 Garrett Drive
Durham, NC 27705
nbudnitz@gmail.com

Part One in this series of articles (published in *The Chat*, Vol. 84, No. 4, Fall 2020) covered background information on the Jordan Lake bird counts and discussed the long-term data for several species of birds that are closely tied to the lake itself. Part Two explores a family of birds associated with non-lake habitats within the count circle, the woodpeckers.

The 15-mile diameter Jordan Lake count circle includes more than just the immediate environs of the lake itself. There are wooded areas, open fields, residential areas, and stream and river bottom habitats as well. Of course, the count circle encompasses a lot of private property, but our intrepid counters do their best to cover as much of the accessible land areas as they can. This article looks at woodpeckers, a group of birds that includes species that inhabit upland and river bottom habitats, deciduous and pine woodlands, wetlands, and residential areas. In short, one or several of these species are found throughout the count circle, except perhaps in the middle of the lake.

Woodpeckers

Most of our woodpecker species are year-round permanent residents. The two exceptions are Northern Flickers and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. Flickers do breed here, but their numbers increase in the non-breeding seasons, augmented by migratory individuals who come south for the winter. Sapsuckers migrate into our area for the winter but are absent during the breeding season.

These and subsequent graphs use ‘birds per party hour’ versus time. This helps in comparing data because time spent in the field by counting teams varies from year to year. Spring bird count graphs (SBC) are yellow; Christmas bird count graphs (CBC) are green.

Figure 1 is a graph of the spring bird count (SBC) data for all woodpecker species together, and Figure 2 is for all woodpeckers found on the Christmas bird counts (CBC). These numbers have fluctuated quite a bit over the years. Can we speculate on the reasons for the peaks and troughs?

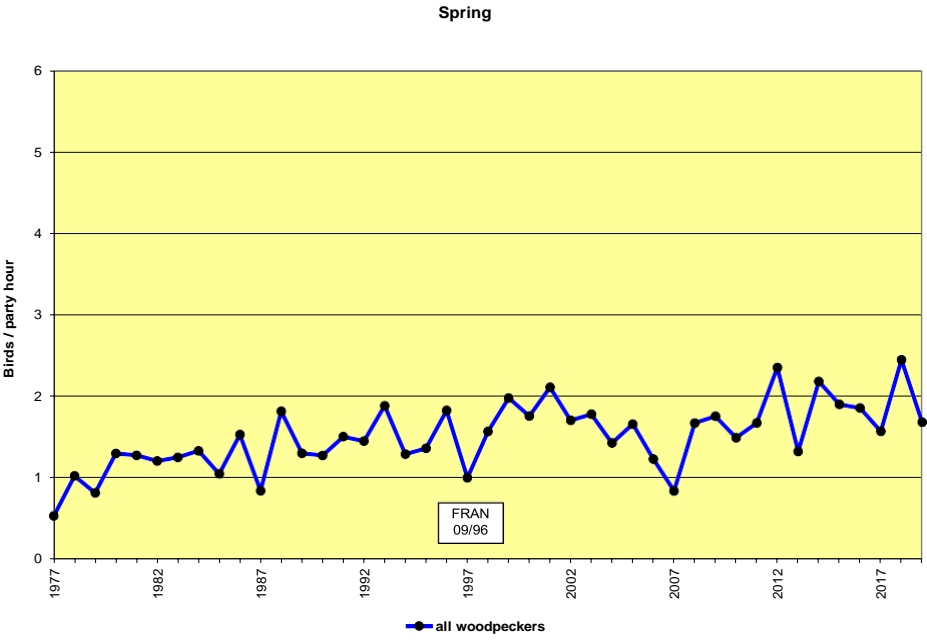


Figure 1. SBC, all woodpeckers

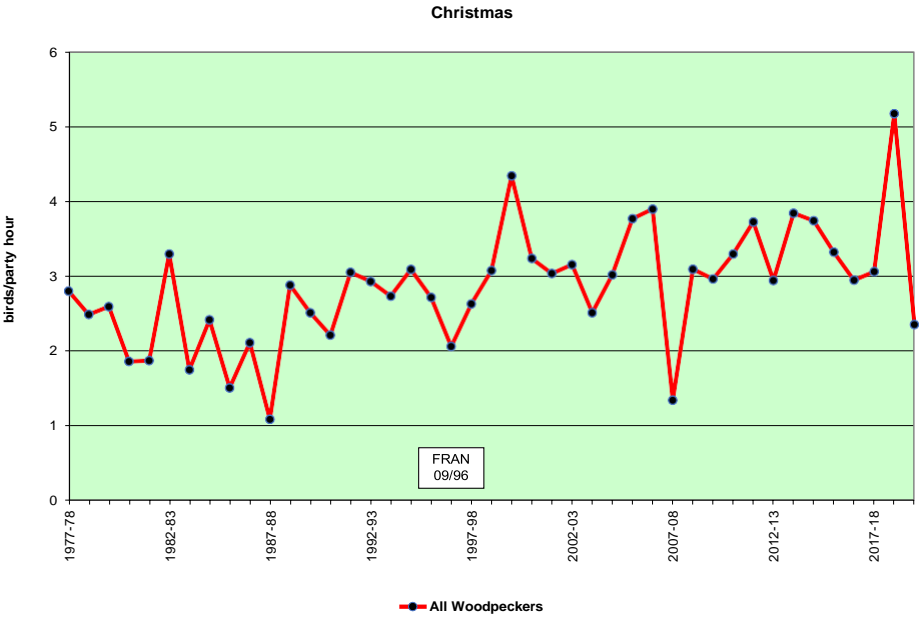


Figure 2. CBC, all woodpeckers

In September 1996, Hurricane Fran came inland and hit the Piedmont of North Carolina hard. Many trees were blown over and killed. Could that have been the cause of the low numbers of woodpeckers the following year—i.e., were many birds killed by the storm? Note that woodpecker numbers climb in the next few years. Could all those dead trees have been harboring insects that became food for the remaining woodpeckers? In an abundance of food, birds typically lay more eggs and successfully raise more babies. It is nice to think that the population levels did respond to better conditions and populations returned to stable numbers.

However, now consider the very low numbers in SBC 2007 and CBC 2007-08. There were no hurricanes or other adverse weather events prior to those low counts. On the other hand, we fielded fewer counting parties than average for the SBC 2007 count, so the coverage of some sections of the count circle was lacking. And we suffered from cold, very rainy conditions during the CBC 2007-08 count. Some parties even missed species like chickadees, towhees, and cardinals. This illustrates the problems that arise when trying to speculate on the reasons for high or low numbers in any given year.

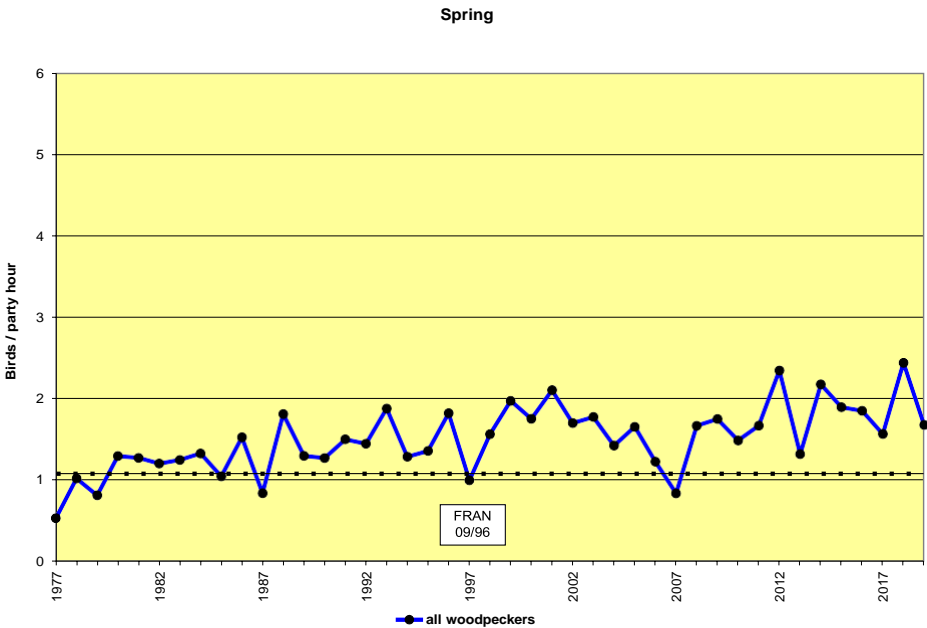


Figure 3. SBC, all woodpeckers

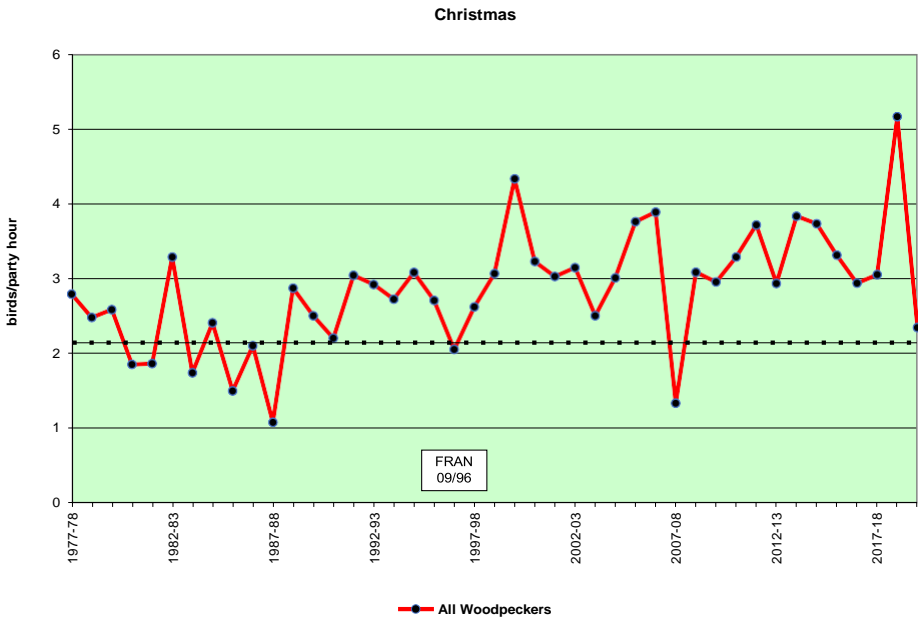


Figure 4. CBC, all woodpeckers

Figures 3 and 4 show these same data with the addition of trend lines that indicate a gradual increase in overall numbers of all woodpecker species over time. Why? “Why” questions are difficult to answer for biological systems in general and for populations in particular. The external influences on these systems tend to be complex. Are there more, older trees now than 40 years ago? Do those trees harbor more insects for woodpeckers to eat? Have there been changes in land use practices in the count circle over these 40+ years—for example, are there now more residential areas with trees and fewer farms with their open spaces? Also, why have more total woodpeckers been observed in winter than in spring?

Some of our woodpecker species are quite common, while others are relatively uncommon. It might be helpful to look at individual species as opposed to aggregating them all together. Perhaps we might find answers there. Of course, more questions might then arise. (The graphs below all use the same vertical scale for ease of comparison. Note however that it is different from the scale used in the previous graphs because the numbers are lower.)



Figure 5. Red-bellied Woodpecker (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*)

Our most common woodpecker species is the Red-bellied Woodpecker. The red belly on these birds is not always easily seen, and in fact it may be absent altogether in females or young birds. The male in Figure 5 is showing his red belly quite prominently. Red-bellieds are generalist woodpeckers, feeding on fruits and acorns as well as insects. They typically do not drill into trees in search of prey. They also do quite well around humans and human-made changes to the environment—residential areas, parks, etc. (Miller et al. 2020).

Spring

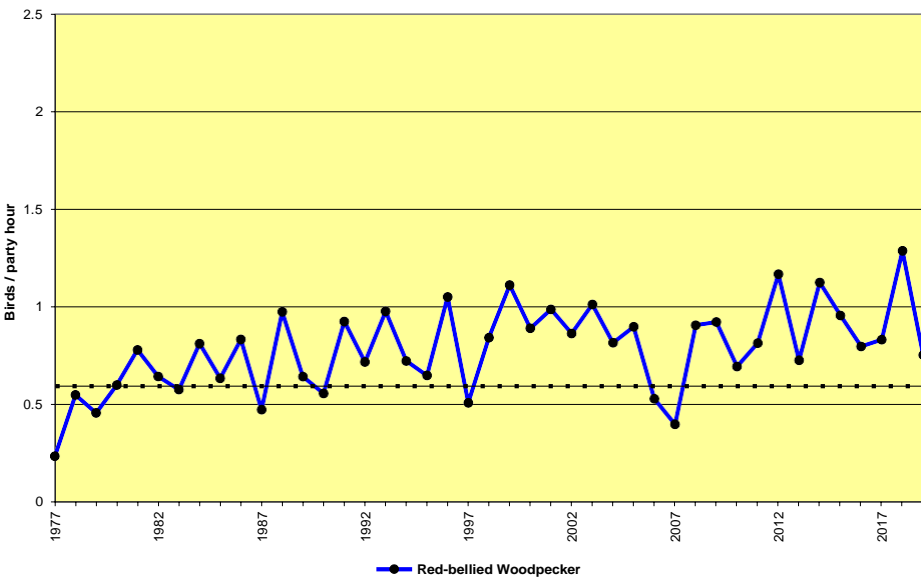


Figure 6. SBC, Red-bellied Woodpecker

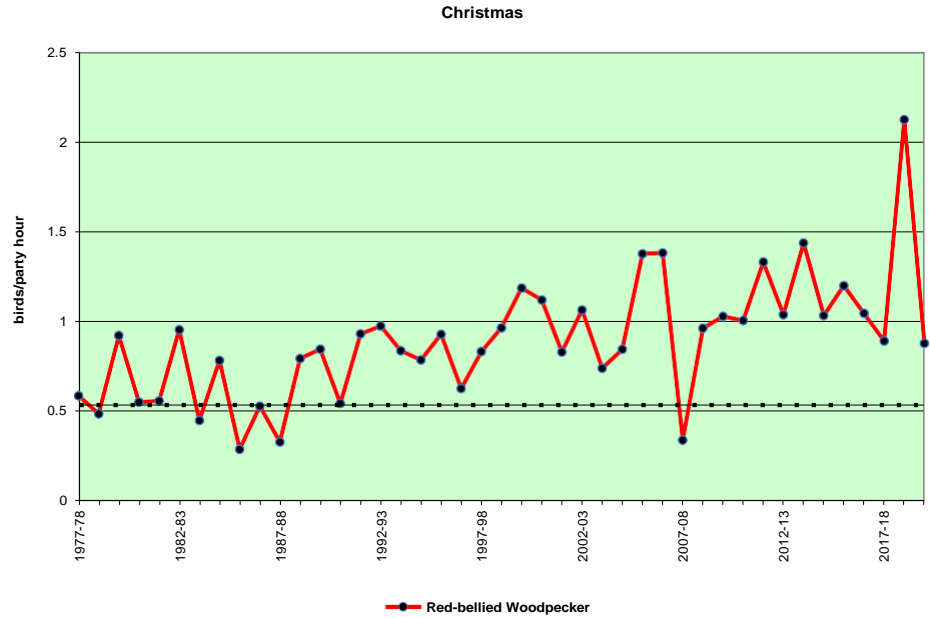


Figure 7. CBC Red-bellied Woodpecker

Figures 6 and 7 are graphs of the spring (SBC) and Christmas (CBC) counts, respectively. The trend lines show that the population of this species has been increasing steadily over the years. Some dips occur in the numbers, but whether these are related to hurricanes or to weather constraints on observers is difficult to discern. The overall trend, however, clearly indicates increasing numbers.

Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*)

The next most common woodpecker in our area is the Downy Woodpecker. It is our smallest woodpecker and feeds on a wide range of insects, gleaning them from surfaces and crevices in branches as well as drilling shallow holes in trees to find them (Jackson and Ouellet 2020).



Figure 8. Downy Woodpecker (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

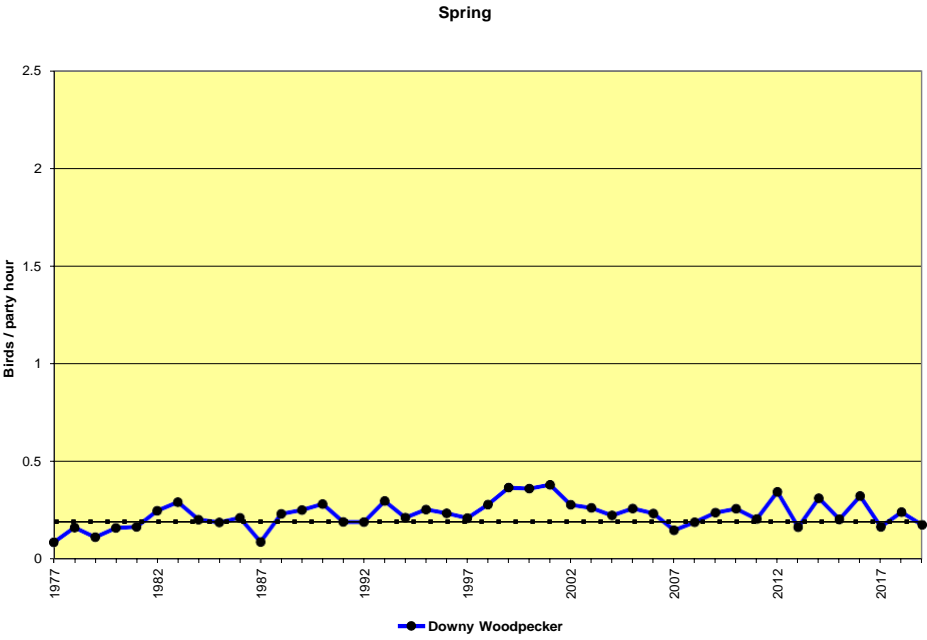


Figure 9. SBC, Downy Woodpecker

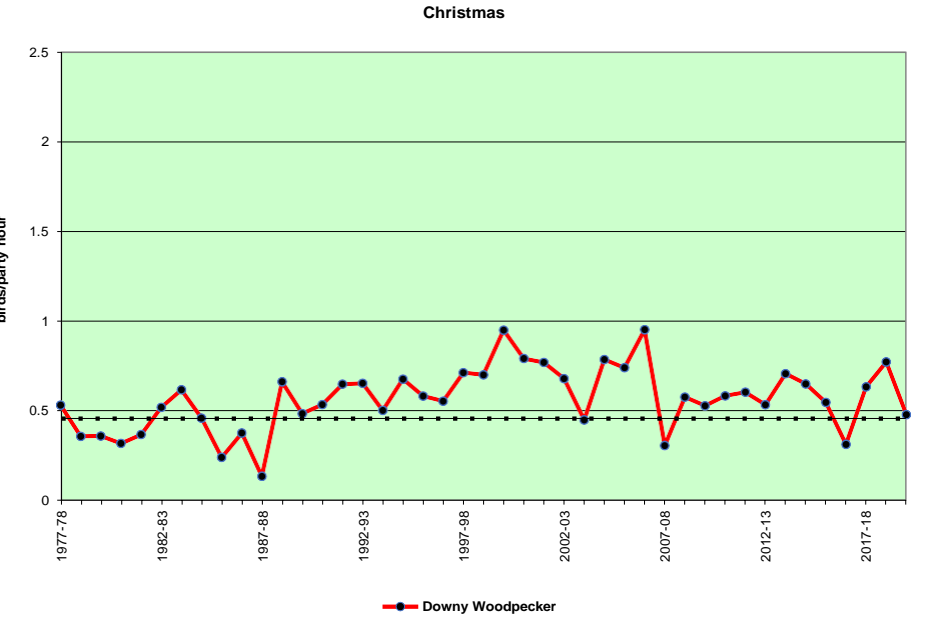


Figure 10. CBC, Downy Woodpecker

Figures 9 and 10 show that the population of Downy Woodpecker has remained quite stable over the years. A bit of a rise in the winter numbers can be seen, perhaps due to increases in numbers of young birds post-breeding. However, winter mortality seems to drop those numbers back so that the breeding population appears fairly constant.



Figure 11. Northern Flicker (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)

Our other relatively common woodpecker is the Northern Flicker, also sometimes called the Yellow-shafted Flicker, referring to the bright yellow feather shafts in its flight feathers. Flickers are migratory, and although we do have breeders here in the spring and summer, their numbers swell in winter when migrants from further north arrive in the fall. Though flickers nest in tree holes like other woodpeckers, they spend most of their feeding time on or near the ground where they forage for ants and other ground-dwelling insects.

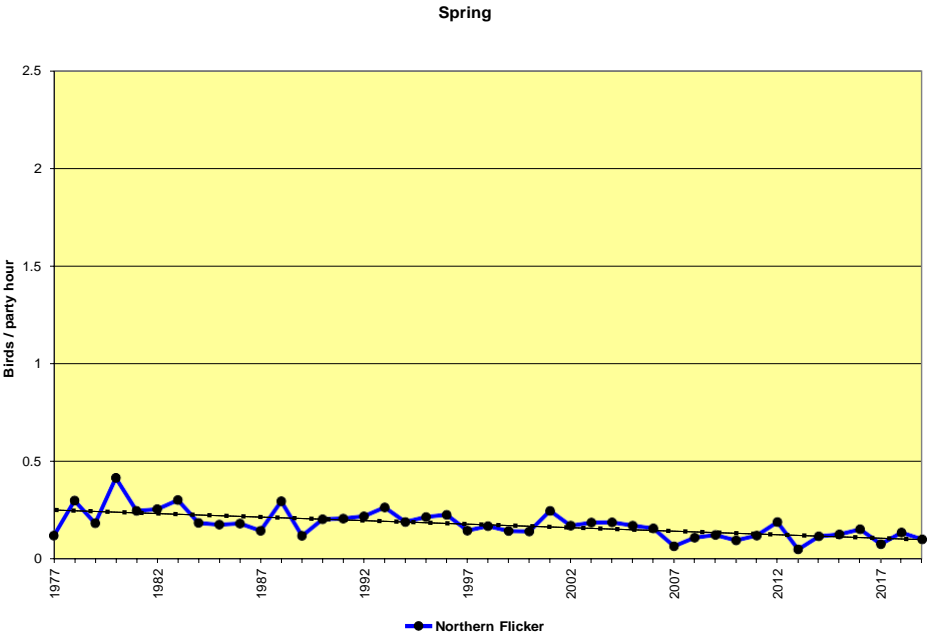


Figure 12. SBC, Northern Flicker

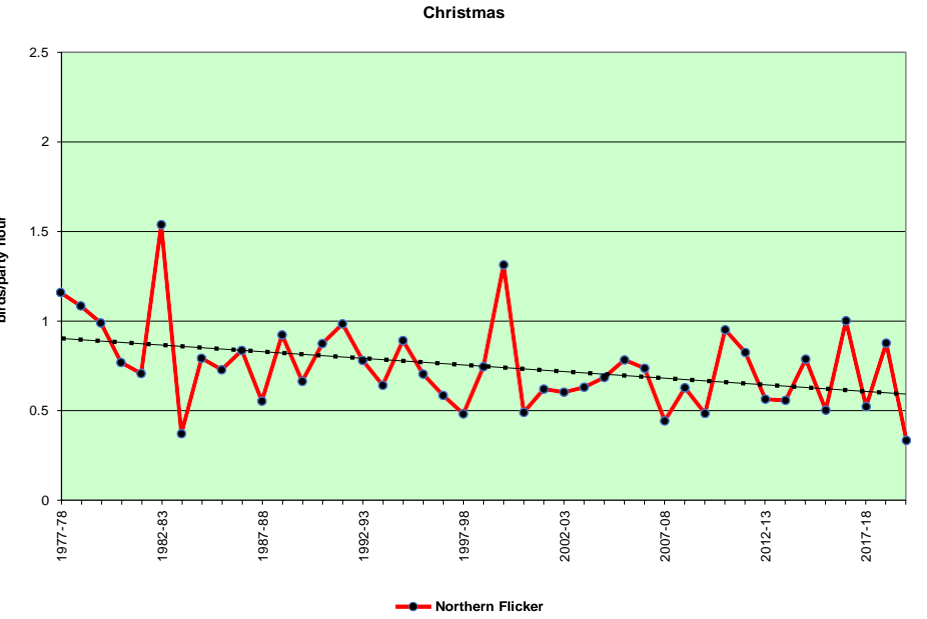


Figure 13. Northern Flicker

A look at Figures 12 and 13 reveals that although this species is considered abundant, its number are clearly declining, both in the breeding season and in the winter. This trend appears to be true throughout its range, not just in our count circle (Wiebe and Moore 2020). Habitat changes due to human activities and competition for nest holes with European Starlings are likely explanations.



Figure 14. Red-headed Woodpecker (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*)

The Red-headed Woodpecker is not as common in our area as in other parts of its range across North America (Frei et al. 2020). However, its numbers here have shown a steady increase during the course of our local data gathering (Figs. 15 and 16).

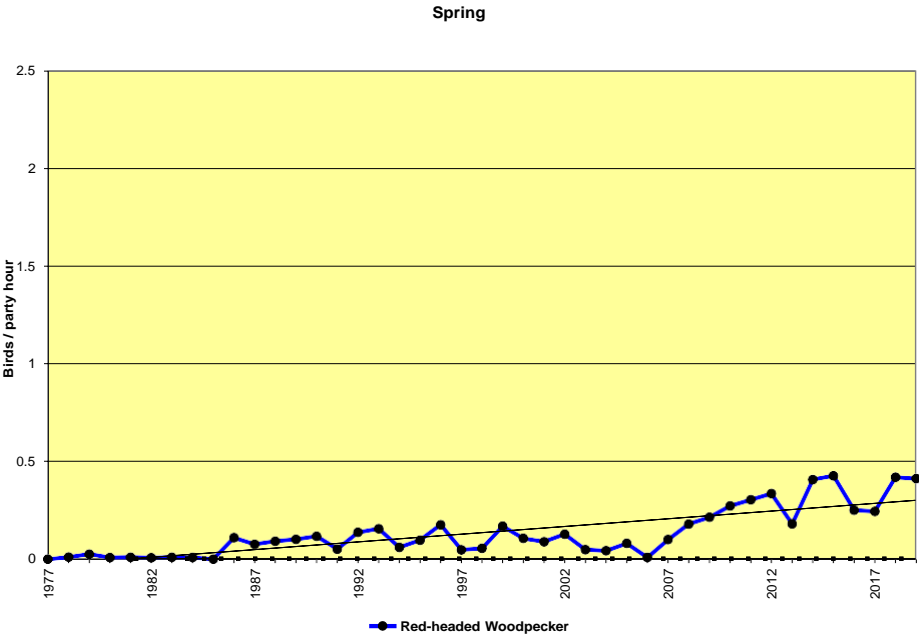


Figure 15. SBC, Red-headed Woodpecker

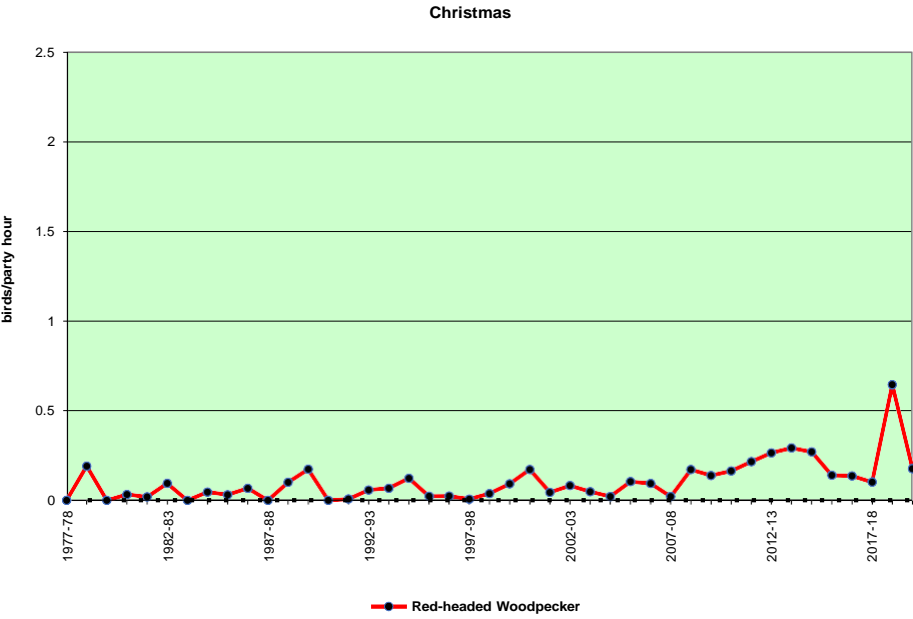


Figure 16. CBC, Red-headed Woodpecker

Red-headed Woodpeckers are hole nesters, being particularly fond of dead trees and dead branches. After Jordan Lake was filled, many swampy areas were created around the edges and in creek and stream tributaries. Beavers have also moved in, further backing up water with their dams. The high waters in these areas resulted in large numbers of dead trees, and it appears the Red-headed Woodpeckers have taken advantage of the habitat.



Figure 17. Hairy Woodpecker (photograph, Carol Tuskey)



Figure 18. Pileated Woodpecker (photograph, Vern Bothwell)

Hairy Woodpecker (*Dryobates villosus*)

Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*)

These two woodpecker species are permanent residents in our area, though in low numbers relative to the species mentioned above. Both species prefer more mature forests with older, larger trees.

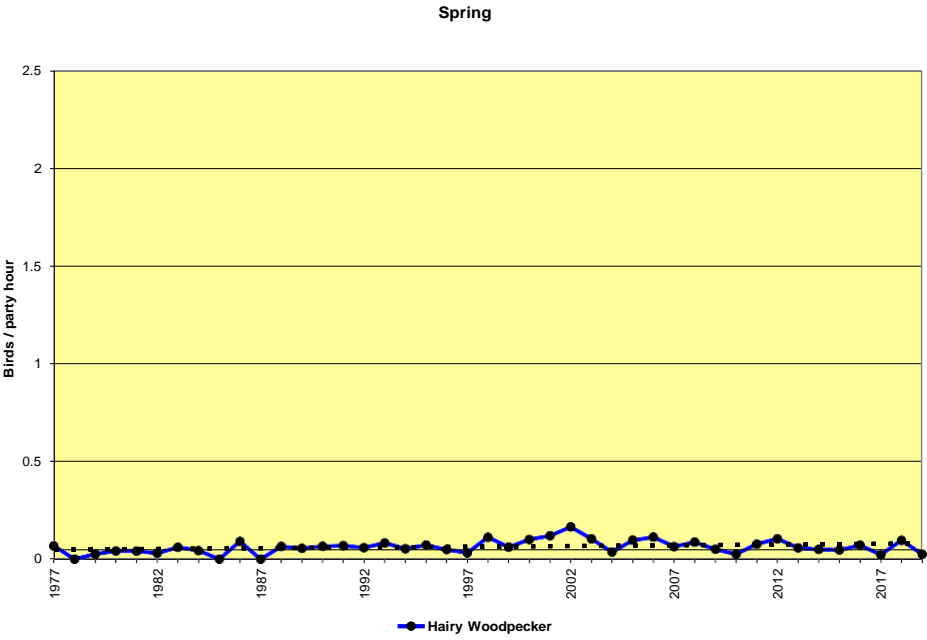


Figure 19. SBS, Hairy Woodpecker

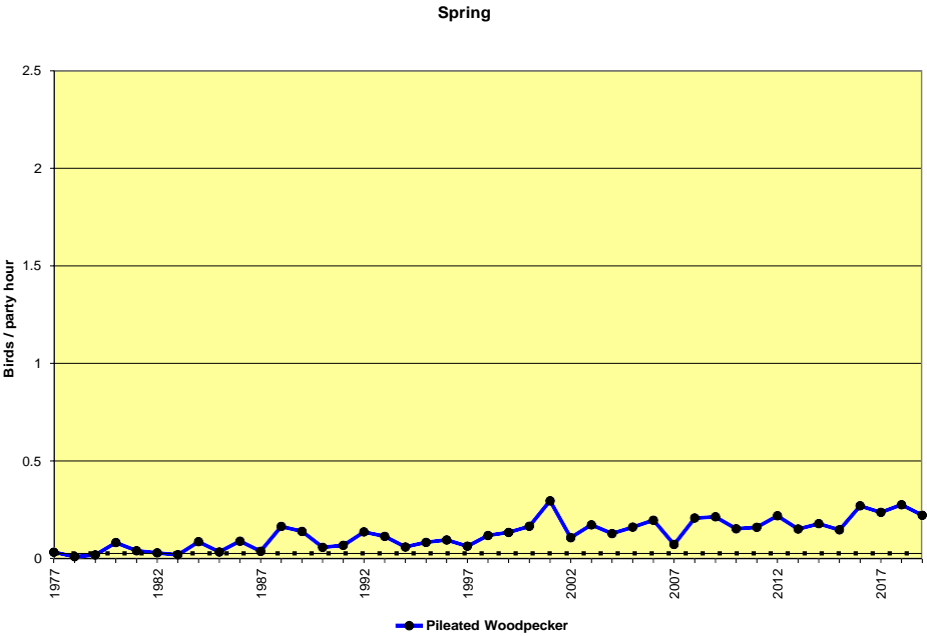


Figure 20. Pileated Woodpecker

Figures 19 and 20 show that the population of Hairy Woodpecker has remained low but stable throughout the past 40 years, while the population of Pileated Woodpecker has increased a bit. (The CBC graphs for these two species are almost identical to the SBC graphs.) Maturing forests in the count circle might account for the latter increase, but then why wouldn't the former show a similar increase?



Figure 21. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*)

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers come to our part of North Carolina only in the winter. They migrate north in the spring to breed. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are unusual woodpeckers in that they drill arrays of small, shallow holes in trees. These holes eventually exude sap from these 'sapsucker wells.' When the sapsuckers return to their wells, they drink the sap and eat any insects that have been attracted to the liquid. Other birds and even mammals take advantage of these special resources (Fig. 22).



Figure 22. Carolina Chickadee feeding at Yellow-bellied Sapsucker wells in a Sugar Maple (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

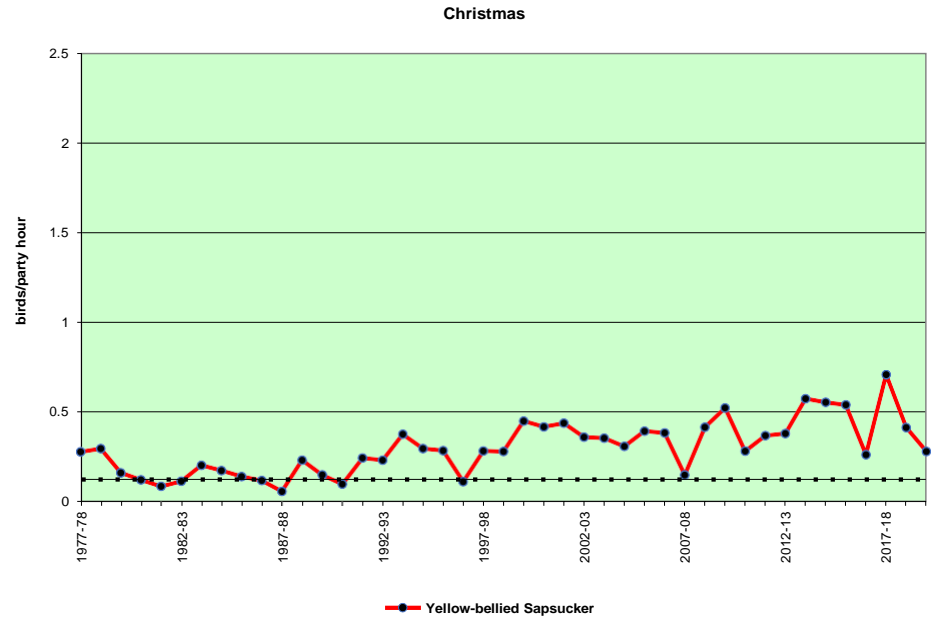


Figure 23. CBC, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Figure 23 shows that this species has also been on the increase over the years. Whether this trend is due to increased breeding success further north or to increased attractiveness of our maturing forests is anybody's guess.

Discussion

It does not appear that we can attribute fluctuations in population sizes in the short term to particular events (e.g., hurricanes) because the variability of census coverage could be overwhelming those data. On the other hand, 40-plus years of data allows us to see trends in population changes that are not subject to short-term variations in censusing effort. The increase in woodpecker numbers (over all species) seems to correlate most obviously to the increase in numbers of Red-bellied Woodpeckers (compare Figures 3 and 4 with Figures 6 and 7).

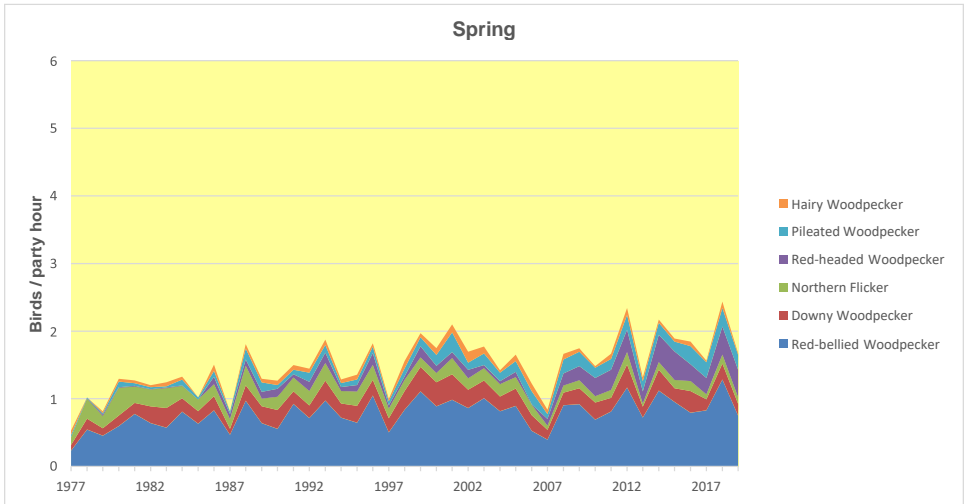


Figure 24. SBC, All Breeding Woodpeckers

Figure 24 shows this relationship another way. The area under the line for each species represents its abundance. The species are stacked with the most common species (Red-bellied Woodpecker) on the bottom and the least common species (Hairy Woodpecker) on the top. Note that the area for Red-bellied Woodpecker (blue) appears to be about equal to the sum of the areas of all the other species put together. Red-bellied Woodpeckers seem to thrive in areas where humans have reworked the landscape— residential areas and parks, for example—as well as in the forested areas common in the count circle. The increasing numbers of other woodpecker species contribute to the overall increase as well, but to a lesser degree.

Winter population numbers for all woodpecker species taken together (see Figs. 3 and 4) and for some particular species are greater than spring population numbers. The larger numbers on CBCs are probably due to young birds born during the previous breeding season. Winter mortality probably accounts for the decreases seen by the following spring. Though Northern Flicker numbers have declined, this decrease has not counterbalanced the overall increase in woodpeckers as a whole. Flicker decline is not a local phenomenon; it appears to be happening throughout the species’ range in North America.

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BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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

(All dates Fall 2020, unless otherwise noted)

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

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

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location), and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **et al.** – and others, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area

All italicized place names are counties.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: Breeding likely took place on private property along the Northeast Cape Fear River in central *Pender* NC this year, as a hen was seen alongside three chicks there 24 Oct (Ken Ashe). Four in Morehead City *Carteret* NC 6 Aug (Steven Howell), two on a pond along US-64 in Woodley *Tyrrell* NC 11 Nov (Keith Camburn), and one in flight over NC-62 in western *Alamance* NC 24 Aug (Andrew Thornton) were also notable for NC.

Snow Goose: 65 in the Lake Landing section of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 14 Oct (Dale Lambert) was a notable count for that somewhat early date.

Ross's Goose: Individuals were seen and photographed in Mills River *Henderson* NC 23-31 Oct (Elizabeth Fitts, m. obs.), on South Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 28-29 Oct (m. obs.), at the east end of Sunset Beach *Brunswick* NC 15 Nov (Simon Thompson, et al.), and on Lake Norman *Mecklenburg* NC 21-22 Nov (Greg Hays, Jeff Lemons, et al.).

Greater White-fronted Goose: One was seen and photographed at Morse Park in Lake Lure *Rutherford* NC 27-30 Nov (Dawn & Sean Leahy, m. obs.).

Eurasian Wigeon: One was seen at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 7 Oct (Fleeta Chauvigne, Suzanne Roberts, m. obs.) into winter, with a high count of three drakes there 8 Nov (Ricky Davis). One or two are regular at that site most winters.

Mottled Duck: One seen and photographed at the pond adjacent to Ashley High School *New Hanover* NC 14 Nov through 6 Dec (Jamie Adams, m. obs.) was notable for NC.

Green-winged Teal (Eurasian): A Eurasian race Green-winged Teal was seen on North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 28 Nov through 6 Dec (Jeff Lewis, m. obs.).

Redhead: A drake photographed in South Mills *Camden* NC 5-12 Sep (Marie & Ron Furnish) was unusual for September.

Common Eider: Individuals were seen at seven sites along coast in November, with a first-winter drake around the ferry landing on the west end of Ocracoke Island *Hyde* NC 3 Nov (Andrew Hawkins) being the earliest.

Harlequin Duck: A hen was seen and photographed around Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC for a couple of hours on the morning 10 Nov (Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.).

Surf Scoter: Inland sightings, all of hens or first-winter birds, included two on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC alongside five Black Scoters 1 Nov (Ronan Nicholson), one on Lake Julian 6 Nov (Aaron Steed, m. obs.), likely the same individual on nearby Beaver Lake 10 Nov (Jay Wherley, m. obs.), one on a pond along Mebane Bridge Rd in *Rockingham* NC 13 Nov (Marty Wall), and one on Lake Robinson *Greenville* SC 28-29 Nov (Robert Zickus, m. obs.).

White-winged Scoter: Inland sightings included one at Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 1 Nov (Stan & Connie Wulkowicz, Bob Olthoff), one at the Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC 2-15 Nov (Jay Chandler, m. obs.), one at the dam on Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 3 Nov (Nan Dewire, et al.), two on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* NC 14 Nov (Greg Hays, Jeff Lemons, et al.), one on Lake Pinehurst *Moore* NC 15 Nov (Kevin Markham), and two on Lake Thurmond *McCormick* SC 15 Nov (Matt Malin).

Black Scoter: Inland sightings included five on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC alongside two Surf Scoters 1 Nov (Ronan Nicholson), two on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* NC 14 Nov (Greg Hays, Jeff Lemons, et al.), and one on Lake Julian 27-30 Nov (John Koon, m. obs.).

Long-tailed Duck: Three on Lake Townsend Guilford NC 14 Nov (Andrew Thornton, et al.) possibly were the same three birds seen on Lake Norman in *Lincoln* and *Mecklenburg* NC 17 Nov (Dennis Kent, et al.). Two on Lake Edgar Brown *Barnwell* SC 27 Nov through 12 Dec (Julie Mobley, m. obs.) were a first for that county.

Common Merganser: 18 on the Tuckasegee River in *Jackson* NC 11 Sep (MeganEberly) provided more evidence of successful breeding along that river this year. An adult hen photographed at Deer Park Lake in Spruce Pine *Mitchell* NC 3-5 Nov (John Britt) was a first for that county.

Pied-billed Grebe: 354 on Roanoke Rapids Lake *Northampton* NC 5 Nov (Ricky Davis) was a notable concentration of this species.

Red-necked Grebe: Individuals were seen off Vista Point on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 22 Nov (Jonathan Cantrell) and off Rolling View access on Falls Lake *Durham* NC 29 Nov through 6 Dec (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.).

Eared Grebe: One hung around the Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC for much of the fall, 7 Sep into winter (Jay Chandler, m. obs.). Another individual was photographed on Lake Hartwell *Anderson* SC 28 Nov (Steve Patterson).

White-winged Dove: One at Fants Grove Waterfowl Area *Anderson* SC 19-20 Aug (Drew Lanham, Steve Patterson, m. obs.) was very unusual for an inland site in early fall. As usual, individuals were seen at about half a dozen sites along the coast, mostly at feeders, in October and November.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Individuals lingered into November at nine sites along the coast, with one photographed along the Basin Trail at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 21 Nov (Brian Strassburger) being the latest.

Antillean Nighthawk: Already accepted by the NC BRC, the report of an Antillean Nighthawk heard above Cape Point Campground *Dare* NC 8-15 Aug (Josh Southern, m. obs.) provided the third official record for NC. Interestingly, the two previous records, both from the mid-1990s, were made at that same site.

Eastern Whip-poor-will: One flushed along a path near Blue Clay Bike Park *New Hanover* NC 21 Nov (Sam Cooper) was late to depart.

Rufous Hummingbird: Counts of three at two sites were notable—three in the Bean Tract of Riverbend Park *Catawba* NC 15 Nov and 24 Nov (Dwayne Martin), with two continuing into winter (Martin, m. obs.), and three visiting a feeder in Burnsville *Yancey* NC (Patricia Millen) where banded 13 Nov (Mark Armstrong), with two also continuing into winter (fide Susan Campbell). A female photographed at a feeder in Holly Ridge *Onslow* NC 19 Sep (Mark Shields) was only the second for that county. An immature male was banded in Sparta *Alleghany* NC 6 Nov (Harrol Blevins, Campbell).



Rufous Hummingbird, 4 Dec 2020, Alleghany Co, NC. Photo by Harrol Blevins.

Buff-bellied Hummingbird: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Buff-bellied Hummingbird visiting a yard in Summerville *Dorchester* SC 13 Nov (Marcie Daniels). If accepted, the report would provide the third official record for SC.

Common Gallinule: One seen on Roanoke Rapids Lake *Northampton* NC 5 Nov (Ricky Davis) was locally unusual and a possible first for that county.

Black-necked Stilt: One at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC following the passage of tropical storm Isaias 4 Aug (Ricky Davis) and three at Silver Bluff Audubon Sanctuary *Aiken* SC 28 Aug (Peter Stangel), with four there 29 Aug (Matt Knepley), were notable for sites so far from the coast.

American Avocet: Sightings were made at seven inland sites in August including a notable count of 13 on the western end of Lake James *McDowell* NC 10 Aug (Art Webster). Two at a pond along Milford Church Rd in *Greenville* SC 8 Oct (BarbHennessy, m. obs.) were a first for that county. Two on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* NC 30 Oct (Jeff Lemons, Jeffrey Turner, Judy Walker) were somewhat late for a site in the Piedmont.

American Golden-Plover: Sightings mostly were typical this fall. Two in a field adjacent to Schenck Forest *Wake* NC 18 Sep (Brian O'Shea) were locally unusual. One hung around on the lawn at the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center *Dare* NC for several weeks where seen by many, 24 Sep (Heather Russell) through 29 Oct (Audrey Whitlock).

Upland Sandpiper: Individuals were reported at about half-a-dozen sites, mostly sod farms, in August and very early September. "Uppies" hung around Vandemark Sod in *Nash* NC for six weeks, 31 Jul through 11 Sep (Ricky Davis, m. obs.), with high counts of six made there 15 Aug and 20 Aug (Davis).

Whimbrel: One photographed at Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 25 Sep (John Koon, m. obs.) was a good find for a site in the mountain region.

Long-billed Curlew: Sightings included one continuing at the Rachel Carson Reserve *Carteret* NC intermittently throughout the period into winter (John Fussell, m. obs.), one on East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 9 Aug and 13 Sep (Fussell, et al.), one at Edisto Beach SP *Colleton* SC 11 Aug (Dan Zankman), one at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 14 Aug (Ruben Stoll, et al.), one over Hatteras Inlet on the border of *Dare* and *Hyde* NC 15 Aug (Stoll, et al.), two on East Shackleford Banks 27 Sep intermittently through 21 Oct (Fussell, Steven Howell, m. obs.), and two on the sound-side of Edisto Beach on the border of *Charleston* and *Colleton* SC 12 Oct (Elizabeth Anderegg) with one remaining at that site through 28 Oct (m. obs.).

Bar-tailed Godwit: One, presumably the same individual as past years, returned to East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC for a fifth straight winter by 13 Sep (John Fussell, et al.),

Hudsonian Godwit: "Hudwits" were seen on South Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC for two weeks in late August, 14-29 Aug (Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.), with a high count of four made there 17 Aug (Pat Draisey, Peggy Eubank, Whitlock).

Ruddy Turnstone: One photographed in a flooded field along Burma Rd in *Lexington* SC 23 Aug (David Dobson, Irvin Pitts, Jennifer Shockley) was the farthest inland reported this fall and a first for that county.

Sanderling: Inland sightings included one at Vandemark Sod *Nash* NC 24 Aug (Ricky Davis), one at Oak Hollow Lake *Guilford* NC 29 Aug (Andrew Thornton, Matt Wangerin), one at McAlpine WTP *Mecklenburg* NC 1 Sep (Greg Hays, Dennis Kent), four at Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 8 Sep (Ann Prince), one at Vandemark Sod 11-12 Sep (Davis, m. obs.), and one along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 18 Sep (Wayne Forsythe).

Dunlin: Farthest inland were seven at a sod farm in *Transylvania* NC 29 Oct (Frank Porter, et al.), five along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 29 Oct (Bill Hooker, et al.), and one in *Clemson Pickens* SC 16 Nov (Steve Patterson).

Baird's Sandpiper: Sightings included one along Hooper Ln in *Henderson* NC 20-23 Aug (Vicky Burke, Mike Resch, m. obs.), one at Vandemark Sod *Nash* NC 27-28 Aug (Ricky Davis), two at Vandemark Sod 29-30 Aug (David Fischer, m. obs.), and one at the Super Sod farm in *Orangeburg* SC 6 Sep (Patty Masten, et al.) and 18-21 Sep (Matt Malin, m. obs.).

White-rumped Sandpiper: Individuals along Lancaster Drive in *Oconee* SC 12-13 Sep (Joe Dunkleman, m. obs.) and at Lyman Lake *Spartanburg* SC 27 Sep through 3 Oct (Michael Robertson, m. obs.) were firsts for those counties.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Sightings were made at about a dozen sites this fall, mostly in September. One at the Bishop Branch Turf farm in *Oconee* SC 5 Aug (Scott Davis, m. obs.) was somewhat early and a first for that county.

Short-billed Dowitcher: Inland sightings, all late August through September, involved one along Burma Rd in *Lexington* SC 23-24 Aug (Zach Steinhauser, m. obs.), one in Roaring River *Wilkes* NC 23-24 Aug (Dale Reynolds, m. obs.), two at Mills River Park *Henderson* NC 28 Aug (Kevin Burke, et al.), one at Lyman Lake *Spartanburg* SC 2-4 Sep (Neil Owens, m. obs.), one at Horse Creek WTP *Aiken* SC 12 Sep (Peter Stangel), and five along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 17 Sep (Mike Resch).

Willet: Individuals along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 16 Aug (Mike Resch, m. obs.) and at Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 16 Aug (Mel Green) were good finds inland.

Wilson's Phalarope: Sightings involved two in North Charleston *Charleston* SC 1 Aug (Micah Owens), one at Cape Point Campground *Dare* NC 14-16 Aug (Chris Sloan, m. obs.), two at North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 16 Aug (Nathan Gatto, Audrey Whitlock), one at South Pond at Pea Island NWR 27 Aug through 4 Sep (Whitlock, m. obs.), one in South Mills *Camden* NC 29 Aug (Marie & Ron Furnish), and two at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 18 Sep (Steve Calver).

Red-necked Phalarope: Individuals were seen at the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 14 Aug (Ruben Stoll, et al.), on South Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 7 Sep (Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.), and at the Salt Pond at Cape Point 12 Sep (Chris Thomas, m. obs.). Two were seen at Grandfather Lake *Avery* NC following the passage of remnants of Hurricane Laura 29 Aug (Gordon Warburton, m. obs.). Following the passage of remnants of Hurricane Sally, individuals were seen at Lake Conestee Nature Preserve *Greenville* SC 18 Sep (Michael Robertson, m. obs.), at Archie Elledge WTP *Forsyth* NC 18 Sep (Harvey Clodfelter, m. obs.), and at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 18 Sep (Steve Calver).

Common Murre: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report two Common Murres around the jetty at Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC 9 Nov (Simon Harvey). If accepted, the report would provide the fourth official record for SC. Notably, this sighting occurred much earlier in the fall/winter season than all previous reports made in the Carolinas.

Black-legged Kittiwake: Sightings involved a first-winter bird photographed on the jetty at Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC 10 Nov (Mark McShane), two around Cape Point *Dare* NC 11-15 Nov (Brian Patteson, m. obs.), two on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 14 Nov (Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.), and a first-winter bird at Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC 26 Nov (Jamie Adams).

Sabine's Gull: Two were reported this fall—an adult seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 6 Sep (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) and a first-year birdseen on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* NC 13 Sep (Steve Coggin, Jeff Lemons, Patty Masten, Martina Nordstrand).

Black-headed Gull: An adult, presumably the same individual that visited the site last winter, returned to Carolina Beach Lake *New Hanover* NC 7 Nov (Jamie Adams). An adult photographed at Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC 13 Nov (Simon Thompson, et al.) may have been that same individual.

Laughing Gull: Somewhat late for sites away from the coast were three on Roanoke Rapids Lake *Northampton* NC 19 Nov (Ricky Davis), one on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* NC 20-22 Nov (Jeff Lemons, m. obs.), and one on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 28 Nov (Matt Spangler).

Herring Gull: One along Hooper Ln *Henderson* 29-31 Oct (Wayne Forsythe, TimNovak) was the farthest inland reported this fall.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Individuals on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* 15 Aug (Taylor Piephoff) and 5 Oct (Jeff Lemons, et al.) were good finds for a site so far inland.

Brown Noddy: One seen and photographed near shore during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 8 Aug (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) was a great find.

Sooty Tern: Ten on Lake Waccamaw *Columbus* NC 4 Aug (Ed Corey) and two near Tarboro *Edgecombe* NC 4 Aug (Trevor Sleight), both following the passage of Hurricane Isaias, were good finds inland. 150 on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 7 Aug (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) was a notable count.

Bridled Tern: One on Lake Waccamaw *Columbus* NC following the passage of Hurricane Isaias 4 Aug (Ed Corey) was a good find away from the ocean.

Least Tern: 54 on Lake Waccamaw *Columbus* NC following the passage of Hurricane Isaias 4 Aug (Ed Corey) was a notable count for a site away from the coast.

Common Tern: One photographed at Cape Point *Dare* NC 18 Nov (Megan Baker, Michael Gosselin) was rather late for the northern part of our coast.

White-tailed Tropicbird: A juvenile was photographed resting on the beach at Hammocks Beach SP *Onslow* NC 12 Aug (Jacob Vitak).

Red-throated Loon: One photographed on the lake at YMCA Camp Harrison *Wilkes* NC 24 Nov (Guy McGrane) was notable for an inland lake.

Pacific Loon: One was seen on the ocean in Nags Head *Dare* NC 20-21 Nov (Andrew Thornton, Matt Wangerin). Four among 500-600 Common Loons off Figure Eight Island *New Hanover* NC 28 Nov (Derb Carter) was a notable count.

Trindade Petrel: Four were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC this fall—a light-morph bird 22 Aug, an intermediate-morph bird 5 Sep, and two, one light-morph bird and one dark-morph bird, 6 Sep (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Fea's Petrel: One was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 15 Aug (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Cory's Shearwater: 218 flying northeast over Cape Point *Dare* NC 11 Oct (Peter Flood, Kate Sutherland) was a notable count from shore.

Great Shearwater: 427 on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 28 Aug (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) was a notable count.

Audubon's Shearwater: 504 on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 10 Oct (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) was a notable count.

Wood Stork: Post-breeding dispersal resulted in sightings as far inland as *Henderson* NC, where one, possibly the same individual seen in *Macon* and *Transylvania* in July, was seen near the WTP in Mills River 1 Aug (Tim Novak, m. obs.), and as far north as *Orange* NC, where one was photographed in flight over Chapel Hill 30 Aug (Ryan Bakelaar, et al.)

Magnificent Frigatebird: Individuals were seen over multiple sites along the coast this fall. Atypically, more sightings were made in the second half of the period than the first. One seen over the Pungo River near Wades Point *Beaufort* NC 24 Oct (Ed Corey) was very unusual for a site so far from the coast, especially when not following the passage of a tropical storm. Individuals over Nags Head *Dare* NC 26 Nov (Sarah Toner) and at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 30 Nov (Michael Adams, m. obs.) were unusual so late in the season.

Masked Booby: An adult seen among gulls following a shrimp boat off North Topsail Beach *Onslow* NC 21 Oct (Gilbert Grant) was a great find.

Brown Booby: Juvenile individuals were seen just beyond the surf in Kill Devil Hills *Dare* NC 3 Aug (Joshua Uffman) and off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 26 Aug (VernBothwell, Clarke French). On pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC, a juvenile was seen 22 Aug and two or three, an adult and one or two juveniles, were seen 28 Aug (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). Pending review by the SC BRC are two reports—a sub-adult around the dam on Lake Thurmond *McCormick* SC 17 Sep through 29 Oct (Milton Hobbs, m. obs.) and a juvenile on the ocean 35 miles southeast of Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC 26 Sep (Steve Calver, et al.). Pending review by the NC BRC is the very unusual report of an apparent juvenile Brown Booby photographed sitting atop a chicken coop in *Stanly* NC 28 Sep (Martha O'Tuel).

American White Pelican: Locally unusual were 49 in flight over *Aiken* SC 1 Oct (Julie Mobley), 48, possibly the same flock seen over *Aiken*, over Lake Thurmond in *McCormick* SC 17 Oct (Kimberly Turner), two on Lake Wateree *Kershaw* SC in mid- October (*fide* Bob Wood), 36 on the pond at Blue Ridge Community College *Henderson* NC 28 Oct (Vicky Burke, m. obs.), one over Harris Lake *Wake* 31 Oct (Susan Campbell), three on Lake Norman in *Iredell* and *Mecklenburg* NC 1 Nov (Greg Hays, Jeff Lemons, et al.), likely the same three individuals in flight over I-40 in *Davie* NC later that same day (Trevor Sleight), 23 in flight over northeastern *York* SC 1 Nov (Gretchen Locy), five on Lake Hartwell *Anderson* SC 11 Nov (Steve Patterson), and one over W. Kerr Scott Reservoir *Wilkes* NC 28 Nov (Monte & Brenda Combs). 220 in flight over the Cape Fear River at Carolina Beach SP *New Hanover* NC 14 Nov (Jesse Anderson) was a notable count.

Brown Pelican: Following the passage of Hurricane Isaias, three were seen on Lake Waccamaw *Columbus* NC 4 Aug (Ed Corey, Andrew Thornton) and one was seen on Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC 4 Aug (Ricky Davis, m. obs.).

Least Bittern: One photographed at a farm pond near Hot Springs *Madison* NC 7 Sep (Carlton Burke, Gail Lankford) was very unusual for the mountain region and a first for that county.

Great Blue Heron (white morph): Individual “Great White Herons” were seen along the Watauga River just northwest of Valle Crucis *Watauga* NC continuing from summer through 13 Sep (Maxwell Ramey) and at the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 6 Aug (Carl Engstrom, et al.) through 20 Aug (Steve Howell).

Tricolored Heron: One seen along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 29 Aug (Gary Harbour, Tim Novak, Mike Resch) was a good find for the mountain region.

Reddish Egret: Eight, six dark morph birds and two white morph birds, at East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 13 Sep (John Fussell, et al.) was a notable count of NC. Three remained at that site through 10 Oct (Matt Spangler). An adult photographed at Hatteras Inlet *Dare* NC 27-30 Sep (Jim Loftus) was the northernmost report. One lingered on the Fish Haul Creek end of Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC until 15 Dec (John Bloomfield).

Cattle Egret: 12 at Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 23 Oct (Denise Hargrove, Jay Wherley, m. obs.) were unusual for the mountain region, especially so late in the season.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: A juvenile seen and photographed near Madison *Oconee* SC 21-27 Aug (Scott Davis) was a first for that county.

White Ibis: Locally unusual were 19 in *Cleveland* NC 4 Aug (Bill Hooker), four near Moravian Falls *Wilkes* 5-14 Aug (Guy McGrane), and four on Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 29 Aug (Bob Olthoff).

Glossy Ibis: Individuals in flight over Beaver Lake *Buncombe* NC 14 Sep (Tom Bush, m. obs.) and over the entrance road to Grandfather Mountain *Avery* NC 30 Sep (Maxwell Ramey) were very unusual for the mountain region. The sighting in *Avery*, at ~ 4400 feet above sea level, was most unusual for that high elevation. Other inland sightings included 16 in flight over Vandemark Farms *Nash* NC 2 Aug (John Lynch), one in Roaring River *Wilkes* NC 23-24 Aug (Dale Reynolds, m. obs.), up to two around Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 28 Aug through 10 Sep (Brian Barchus, m. obs.), and one in flight over Howerton Rd *Guilford* NC 20 Sep (Rhonda Weiss).

Roseate Spoonbill: Three at the Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC 6 Aug (Jay Chandler) were a first for that county. 12 at Copas Lake *Brunswick* NC 20 Aug (Cheryl Manger, Joanne Parker) was a record high count for NC.

Swallow-tailed Kite: As usual, post-breeding dispersal resulted in multiple sightings in the western half of our region from mid-July to early September. Nine near Fountain Inn *Laurens* SC 16 Jul (Simon Harvey) was a notable count for that area. Six over Harmon Field *Polk* NC 13-15 Aug (Aaron Steed, m. obs.) and one over Mills River *Henderson* NC 19-22 Aug (Steve Barlow, m. obs.) were unusual for the mountain region.

Mississippi Kite: During post-breeding dispersal, mid-July through mid-September, sightings were made at sites as far west as *Swain* NC, where an immature bird was photographed at Kituwah Farm 12 Aug (Bob Butler).

Rough-legged Hawk: Individuals were seen at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 29 Oct into winter (Dwayne Ragin, m. obs.), at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 8 Nov and 29 Nov (John Fussell, et al.), and at Pond Mountain Game Land *Ashe* NC, a rarer dark- morph bird, 26 Nov through 23 Dec (Guy McGrane, m. obs.).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: One heard calling in southern *Moore* NC 4 Sep (Jeff Beane, Stephanie Horton) was unusual for the Sandhills region.

Ash-throated Flycatcher: A first-year bird was banded at the Little Bear banding site on the east end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 3 Nov (Josh Lefever, et al.). Two were seen at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 29 Nov (John Fussell, et al.).

Great Crested Flycatcher: One recorded calling at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 29 Nov (Michael Adams) was very late.

***Myiarchus* sp.:** An ambiguous-looking pale *Myiarchus* flycatcher with a relatively long/slender bill was photographed during rainy weather in Waves *Dare* NC 25 Sep (Karen Lebing). Most likely a water-logged Ash-throated Flycatcher, this bird was quite early for that regular late-fall/winter vagrant. There in only one previous fall record made prior to November—one at Pea Island NWR 24 Sep 1994.

Western Kingbird: About ten were reported this fall, all at sites along or near the coast, 23 Sep though the end of the period.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent adult Fork-tailed Flycatcher at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 16 Sep (Elizabeth Anderegg, Charles Donnelly, Craig Watson). If accepted, the report would provide the third official record for SC.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Sightings were made at over a dozen sites this fall, all 16 Aug through 9 Oct. Individuals seen and photographed at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 18 Aug (Michael Adams, m. obs.) and at Ft Macon *Carteret* NC 23 Sep (Steve Howell) were notable for sites in the coastal plain.

Acadian Flycatcher: One seen and photographed along Howerton Rd in *Guilford* NC 3-4 Nov (Andrew Thornton) was quite late.

Least Flycatcher: One at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC, where photographed and recorded calling, 21-27 Nov (Jeff Lewis, m. obs.) was very late, possibly attempting to over-winter in that area. This species is the only *Empidonax* flycatcher that regularly lingers/over-winters in the southeastern United States, albeit mostly in Florida and Texas.

Say's Phoebe: One was seen and photographed in Waves *Dare* NC 5-6 Oct (Karen Lebing, m. obs.).

Red-eyed Vireo: A total of 350 migrants in flight over Run Hill State Natural Area *Dare* NC 23 Sep (Doug Gochfeld) was a truly amazing count. One photographed at a birdbath in *Lexington* SC 27-30 Nov (Irvin Pitts) was extremely late.



Red-eyed Vireo, 27 Nov 2020, Lexington Co, SC. Photo by Irvin Pitts.

Black-whiskered Vireo: Already accepted by the SC BRC is the report of one captured and banded on the east end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 25 Aug (Aaron Given, Josh Lefever, et al.). This report provided only the second official record for SC.

Common Raven: One seen in flight over I-95 in *Wilson* NC 1 Nov (Charles Caron) and, probably the same individual, over nearby Buckhorn Reservoir 2 Nov (John Lynch) were a first for that county.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Late to depart were three at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 21 Nov (Pam Ford, Craig Watson) and four at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 26 Nov (Jamie Adams).

Cave Swallow: Individuals at Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC 17 Oct (Jamie Adams), at Jockey's Ridge SP *Dare* NC 26 Oct (Brian Bockhahn), and at Mason Inlet 3 Nov (Sam Cooper) were good finds.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: It is an irruption year for this species. Sightings at sites outside the mountains began 30 Aug with one in Duck *Dare* NC (Jeff Lewis). By the beginning of October, sightings were made at sites throughout the Carolinas.

White-breasted Nuthatch: This species made a notable migratory push down the northern Outer Banks beginning in mid-October. Sightings were made at multiple sites where the species is typically absent, from Currituck Banks Reserve south to the Bodie Island Lighthouse. Four in Duck *Dare* NC 19 Oct (Mara Kaminowitz) was the highest count and possibly a new record high count for the county.

Winter Wren: One heard singing and then seen at Little Creek Waterfowl Impoundment *Durham* NC 8 Sep (Evans Lodge) was quite early for a site outside the mountains.

Sedge Wren: One at Lake Conestee Nature Preserve *Greenville* SC 20-29 Nov (Debra & Steve Patterson, m. obs.) was unusual for upstate SC.

Marsh Wren: One photographed in Brevard *Transylvania* NC 21 Nov (Nathaniel Axtell) was quite late for a site in the mountain region.

Townsend's Solitaire: Two reports were made this fall, both pending review by the respective state BRCs—one seen and photographed by many at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 11 Oct (Paul & Tristan Herwood, m. obs.) and one seen just downslope of Black Balsam Knob *Haywood* NC 22 Oct (Melinda Welton). North and South Carolina each have one previously accepted report.

Sage Thrasher: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Sage Thrasher at Lake Conestee Nature Preserve *Greenville* SC 19 Nov (Michael Robertson, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide SC with its first record of this vagrant from the west.

Evening Grosbeak: It is an irruption year for this species. Sightings began at the start of November with ten at a feeder in Gates NC 1 Nov (Signa Williams) and continued into winter at dozens of sites, mostly at feeders, in the northern half of NC.

Purple Finch: An irruption year for this finch as well, Purple Finches started showing up in the Carolinas in mid-September and were being seen throughout the region by the end of the period. 156 in flight over a hawk-watch at Riverbend Park *Catawba* NC 31 Oct (Dwayne Martin) was a notable count.

Common Redpoll: One photographed along the Blue Ridge Parkway in *Avery* NC 20 Nov (Cody Porter) was a good find for the mountains and a possible indicator of an impending winter irruption.

White-winged Crossbill: One seen and photographed at a feeder in northern *Wake* NC 28-29 Nov (Patty Tice, m. obs.) was quite the surprise.



White-winged Crossbill, 28 Nov 2020, Wake Co, NC. Photos by Patty Tice.

Pine Siskin: This irruptive finch was well-reported this fall starting around mid-October, with sightings made throughout the region by the end of the period. 500 at Mount Mitchell SP *Yancey* NC 24 Oct (Gary Harbour) was a notable count.

Snow Bunting: One photographed at the summit of Table Rock Mountain *Burke* NC 7 Nov (Jack Bennes, Mark Stanek) was a great find for the mountain region and a first for that county. Along the coast, individuals were seen at Ft Sumter *Charleston* SC 5-13 Nov (Pam Ford, Craig Watson, m. obs.) and around the jetty on the south side of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 15-17 Nov (Sarah Toner, m. obs.).

Lark Sparrow: Sightings were made at ten sites this fall. Two were seen around the north end of North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 27-30 Aug (Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.). Individuals photographed in Maiden *Lincoln* NC 13 Aug (Paige Martin) and at Modern Turf in Rembert *Sumter* SC 13 Sep (Shawn Smolen-Morton, Mac Williams) were first for those counties. One returned to feeders along Alder Branch Rd in *Camden* NC for a fourth winter in a row 10 Nov (James Harrison).

Clay-colored Sparrow: Sightings were made at over a dozen sites, mostly near the coast, beginning in mid-September. Outside of the coastal plain, individuals were photographed in Maiden *Lincoln* NC 26 Sep (Paige Martin), at Clarks Creek Nature Preserve *Mecklenburg* NC 11-12 Oct (Jeff Turner, m. obs.), at Mills River Park *Henderson* NC 11-12 Oct (Steve Barlow, Bob Butler, m. obs.), and at Jamison Park *Forsyth* NC 5 Nov (David & Susan Disher, John Haire).

LeConte's Sparrow: Individuals seen at the Coastal Studies Institute on Roanoke Island *Dare* NC 9 Oct (Jeff Lewis) and along the Basin Trail at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 16 Nov (Simon Thompson, et al.) were good finds. One seen and photographed at Valle Crucis Community Park *Watauga* NC 7 Nov (Thomas McNeil, m. obs.) was a great find for the mountain region and a first for that county. One hung around the former golf course at Rea Farms in southern *Mecklenburg* NC 19 Oct (Greg Hays, Patty Masten) into winter (m. obs.).

Nelson's Sparrow: Three at the former golf course at Rea Farms in southern *Mecklenburg* NC 10 Oct (Jeff Turner, m. obs.) was an excellent count for a site away from the coast.

Grasshopper Sparrow: One photographed along the Chinqua Penn Walking Trail *Rockingham* NC 27 Nov (Marty Wall) was late for a site in the Piedmont.

Henslow's Sparrow: One seen and photographed at the former golf course at Rea Farms in southern *Mecklenburg* NC 12 Oct (Greg Hays, Dennis Kent) was a fantastic find for the Piedmont region in fall.

Lincoln's Sparrow: One seen and photographed in the Dan River Game Land *Rockingham* NC 20-23 Sep (Marty Wall, m. obs.) was early for a site in the Piedmont. September sightings of this species are traditionally confined to the mountain region.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: An adult was seen among a mixed blackbird flock near Aurora *Beaufort* NC 15 Oct and 5 Nov (Richard Barmore, Elizabeth White).

Bobolink: One photographed at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 4 Nov (Mark Rhodes) was the latest reported this fall.

Western Meadowlark: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of a Western Meadowlark recorded singing at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 12-27 Nov (Steve Patterson, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the second record for SC.

Bullock's Oriole: A first-year male visiting feeders near Bluffton *Beaufort* SC Nov (Mindy Cawley) and 18 Nov (Steven Guy) was somewhat early for this rare winter vagrant to the Carolinas.

Baltimore Oriole: 1580 migrants over Run Hill State Natural Area *Dare* NC on the morning of 23 Sep (Doug Gochfeld) was an amazing count.

***Icterus* sp.:** A female oriole with a relatively long, down-curved bill photographed at Oleander Memorial Gardens *New Hanover* NC 21 Nov (Jamie Adams) was either an Orchard Oriole or a Hooded Oriole. If this bird was an Orchard Oriole, then it was extremely late, as most depart the region by September.

Shiny Cowbird: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Shiny Cowbird in a yard on Daniel Island *Berkeley* SC 15 Nov (Tate Curry).

Brewer's Blackbird: Sightings were made at four sites in November, with three near Brevard *Transylvania* NC 1 Nov (Michael Plauché) being the earliest.

Golden-winged Warbler: One captured at the banding station on the east end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 3 Oct (Josh Lefever, et al.) and one photographed near Hampstead *Pender* NC 5 Oct (Sara Meissner) were notable for sites along the coast.

Tennessee Warbler: One photographed at Williamson Preserve *Wake* NC 25 Nov (Carol Stroupe) was quite late.

Nashville Warbler: Five at Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 14 Oct (Aaron Steed) was a remarkable count for our region.

Connecticut Warbler: Almost a dozen were reported this fall, 5 Sep through 16 Oct. Amazingly, a total of three individuals were banded on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC over the course of two mornings 4-5 Oct (Daniel Errichetti, Josh Lefever, et al.). Interestingly, the individual captured 4 Oct was the first for that banding site in 12 years of operation.

Mourning Warbler: Individuals were seen at a total of seven sites in the southern NC mountains 4 Sep to 25 Sep. One at Mills River Park *Henderson* NC 12 Oct (Kevin Burke, m. obs.) was somewhat late for the mountain region. A first-year male was banded on the west end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 23 Sep (Daniel Errichetti, et al.) was notable for SC.

Hooded Warbler: An adult female in northern *Watauga* NC 6 Nov (Merrill Lynch) was quite late.

Kirtland's Warbler: Already accepted by the NC BRC were two reports from the NC Piedmont—one seen and photographed by many just below the dam on Jordan Lake *Chatham* 27-30 Sep (Mark Montazer, m. obs.) and one photographed at Haw River SP *Rockingham* 4 Oct (Paul Sumner).

Blackburnian Warbler: One photographed at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 16 Aug (Mandy Johnson, et al.) was rather early for a site along the coast.

Yellow Warbler: One photographed at Oak Hollow Lake *Guilford* NC 7 Nov (Andrew Thornton) was quite late, especially for a site in the Piedmont.

Blackpoll Warbler: Individuals photographed along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 21 Nov (Andrew Thornton, Matt Wangerin) and along the causeway at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 25 Nov (Sarah Toner, et al.) were late to depart.

Black-throated Gray Warbler: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Black-throated Gray Warbler at Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge *Mecklenburg* NC 6-7 Sep (Eric Keith, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the fifth official record for NC and the first with definitive photographs. This report is also the earliest in the fall/winter season ever made in NC, with all previous reports October through February.

Townsend's Warbler: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Townsend's Warbler in a yard in Hatteras *Dare* NC 23-24 Sep (Haley Rosell). If accepted, the report would provide the fifth official record for NC.

Painted Redstart: Perhaps the most unexpected find this fall was that of an adult Painted Redstart on the south dike of North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC where seen and photographed by many 5-6 Oct (Leo & Melissa Bachand, m. obs.). Already accepted by the NC BRC, the report provides the first record of the species anywhere in the Carolinas.

Summer Tanager: A female lingering in a yard with a suet feeder in southwestern *Greenville* SC until 12 Nov (Christina Burgess-Griswold) was rather late for upstate SC.

Scarlet Tanager: One photographed at Stanback Forest and Nature Preserve in Spencer *Rowan* NC 27 Nov (Steve Coggin) was very late. Of the three tanager species found in the Carolinas, this species is the least likely to be seen in late November.

Western Tanager: A female visited a feeder in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 22 Nov into winter (Deb Winter).

Indigo Bunting: One seen along Gay Rd in *Edgecombe* NC 22 Nov (Ricky Davis) was rather late, especially for a site away from the coast.

Painted Bunting: Two, a male and a female, photographed at a feeder in Hamlet *Richmond* NC 13 Aug (Doug Warnock) were firsts for that county.

Corrigenda:

Bobolink: Along with the sites listed in the Summer 2020 "Briefs for the Files," Bobolinks also likely nested at a traditional nesting site in northern *Alleghany* NC in late May (*vide* Guy McGrane).

Black-throated Green Warbler: The Summer 2020 "Briefs for the Files" contained a misleading statement regarding the breeding range of Black-throated Green Warblers in the Piedmont region. The species has been known to nest at South Mountains SP *Burke* NC for many years, though numbers recently have decreased due to the hemlock die-off associated with the Woolly Adelgid (*vide* Dwayne Martin). So, while breeding at most sites in the Piedmont is unusual, it is not unusual at that particular site and a few others in the foothills.

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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	Mac Williams, Hartsville SC

EX-OFFICIO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chat Editor	Steve Shultz, Apex, NC	chat@carolinabirdclub.org
Newsletter Editor	Open Position	newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org
Website Editor	Kent Fiala, Hillsborough, NC	webeditor@carolinabirdclub.org

HEADQUARTERS SECRETARY

Carol Bowman 9 Quincy Place Pinehurst NC 28374 hq@carolinabirdclub.org