

# The Chat

Vol. 85

Fall 2021

No. 4



**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

Fall 2021

No. 4

## General Field Notes Editors

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](mailto: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.

Copyright © 2021 by Carolina Bird Club, Inc. Except for purposes of review, material contained herein may not be reproduced without written permission from the Carolina Bird Club, Inc.

## Articles

2020 Annual Report of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee <i>Aaron Givens, et. al.</i> .....	131
2020 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee <i>Nate Swick, et. al.</i> .....	139
2020 Spring Migration Counts in North Carolina <i>Marilyn Westphal</i> .....	145

## Briefs for the Files

Summer 2021 <i>Josh Southern</i> .....	155
--	-----

# 2020 Annual Report of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee

---

**Aaron Given<sup>1</sup>, Chair, Giff Beaton, Jeff Click, Lex Glover, Simon Harvey, Chris Hill, Keith McCullough, Irvin Pitts, Steve Wagner**  
<sup>1</sup>4475 Betsy Kerrison, Kiawah Island, SC 29455 [agiven@kiawahisland.org](mailto:agiven@kiawahisland.org)

In 2020, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee acted on 32 new reports, of which 25 were accepted and seven were not accepted. In addition, the committee reevaluated 25 historical reports that had received a split decision during the first round of voting. These reports were required to be sent to outside review in accordance with the previous version of the bylaws governing the SCBRC, but it appeared that no further action had been taken. The Committee felt that these reports should be resolved. Of the 25 historical reports, 4 were accepted, 12 were not accepted, and 9 will be further reviewed.

The accepted records detailed below add six species to South Carolina's Main List: Little Stint, Short-tailed Hawk, Sage Thrasher, Bronzed Cowbird, and Townsend's Warbler. The Main List now includes 445 species. Townsend's Solitaire has been elevated from the Provisional I List to the Definitive List based on photographic evidence.

The SCBRC had been working diligently on updating their bylaws since 2019 and in August 2020 the CBC Executive Committee voted to approve the new bylaws. The full version of the SCBRC bylaws can be found at <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/brc/SCbylaws.html> but some of the major changes are summarized here.

1. North Carolina and South Carolina BRCs now have separate bylaws.
2. Committee members will be required to take at least a one-year "retirement" from the committee after two consecutive three-year terms.
3. The SCBRC has created an official Secretary position.
4. The Provisional II and Hypothetical Lists have been dissolved into the new Supplemental List.
5. Reports that do not receive either an "accept" or "non-accept" vote no longer need to be sent to outside reviewers for comments. These reports can now be rereviewed by the SCBRC.
6. The voting category NE (non-established) has been changed from a vote of acceptance to a vote of non-acceptance.

The annual meeting of the SCBRC was held virtually on 5 December 2020. The meeting was attended by Giff Beaton, Jeff Click, Aaron Given, Lex Glover, Simon Harvey, Chris Hill, Keith McCullough, and Steve Wagner. Aaron Given stepped down as Chair, and Keith McCullough was elected the new Chair for 2020. Lex Glover stepped down as a voting member but has agreed to stay involved with the committee as a non-voting member in the role of the Advisory Position. He also agreed to another

term as Secretary. Jeff Click and Chris Hill were reelected to the Nomination Committee. The Committee voted to remove Cave Swallow, Black-bellied Whistling Duck (inland only), and White-winged Scoter (inland only) from the review list. Ash-throated Flycatcher will be removed from the Review List coastally but will remain on the Review List as “inland only”. There were no changes to the membership in 2020.

## ACCEPTED REPORTS

**Common Merganser** (*Mergus merganser*). 2020-009. Accept (9-0). Shawn Smolen-Morton submitted a written report along with photos of a Common Merganser in a pond near an industrial park in Florence (Florence County) on 1 February 2020.

**Red-necked Grebe** (*Podiceps grisegena*). 2020-013. Accept (9-0). Shawn Smolen-Morton submitted a written report of a Red-necked Grebe on Lake Murray (Richland County) on 24 March 2020. Two individuals were originally photographed on 21 March 2020 by Zach Steinhauer (eBird) and at least one individual continued at this location until 5 April 2020.

**Western Grebe** (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*). 2020-001. Accept (9-0). David McLean submitted a written report along with two photos of a Western Grebe at Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR (Charleston County) on 5 January 2020.

**Buff-bellied Hummingbird** (*Amazilia yucatanensis*). 2020-023. Accept (9-0). Marcie Daniels submitted a written report and photo of a Buff-bellied Hummingbird at a private residence in Summerville (Dorchester County) on 13 November 2020. This report represents the 3<sup>rd</sup> record of this species in South Carolina.

**Little Stint** (*Calidris minuta*). 2020-028. Accept (9-0). The Committee reviewed an incredible sighting by Nathan Dias of a Little Stint at Santee Coastal Reserve (Charleston County) on 19 December 2020. An account of the observation was chronicled on social media outlets such as Facebook and Safaritalk. Photos of the bird revealed that the bird was banded. The band number was readable from the photos and after some inquiries, it was found that the bird was banded in Sweden three months earlier on 19 September 2020. This sighting represents the 1<sup>st</sup> record of this species in South Carolina.

**Parasitic Jaeger** (*Stercorarius parasiticus*). 2018-008. Accept (9-0). The Committee rereviewed an eBird report from Mark Vukovich and Matt Malin of a Parasitic Jaeger from 12 September 2018 at Lake Strom Thurmond (McCormick County). This record received a vote of 7-2 during the first vote.

**Black Guillemot** (*Cephus grylle*). 2020-004. Accept (9-0). Pam Ford submitted a written report along with photos of a Black Guillemot that was seen by many people on 18 January 2020 at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown County) on a field trip during the CBC's winter meeting.

**Glaucous Gull** (*Larus hyperboreus*). 2020-007. Accept (9-0). Lauren Vaughn submitted a written report and two photos of a Glaucous Gull at North Myrtle Beach (Horry County) on 15 March 2020.

**Pacific Loon** (*Gavia pacifica*). 2020-011. Accept (9-0). Jay Mager submitted a written report of a Pacific Loon that was seen on Lake Jocassee (Oconee County) on 28 February 2020. Nina Schoch provided two excellent photos. This bird continued at this location until at least 8 March 2020.

**Pacific Loon** (*Gavia pacifica*). 2020-012. Accept (9-0). Irvin Pitts submitted a written report and four photos of a Pacific Loon that was seen on Lake Murray (Richland County) on 15 March 2020.

**Pacific Loon** (*Gavia pacifica*). 2020-014. Accept (9-0). Steve Patterson submitted a written report and four photos of a Pacific Loon at Sadler's Creek State Park on Lake Hartwell (Anderson County) on 10 March 2020.

**Fea's Petrel** (*Pterodroma feae*). 09-03-08. Accept (8-1). The Committee rereviewed a written report and sketch by Nathan Dias from 53 miles offshore on 27 September 2003. At the time, some SCBRC members voted to not accept this record because they were not comfortable placing the species on the state list as "Fea's Petrel".

**Brown Booby** (*Sula leucogaster*). 2020-018. Accept (9-0). Shawn Smolen-Morton submitted a written report and Brad Sale provided two photos of a juvenile Brown Booby that was seen on 18 October 2020 at Lake Strom Thurmond (McCormick County). This individual was first seen on 18 September 2020 and continued through the end of October.

**Brown Booby** (*Sula leucogaster*). 2020-027. Accept (9-0). The committee reviewed an eBird report from David Nicosia of a juvenile Brown Booby from 17 December 2020 at Folly Beach (Charleston County). The following day the bird was reported lethargic on the beach and was captured for rehabilitation by the Center for Birds of Prey in Awendaw where it later died after receiving treatment.

**American Flamingo** (*Phoenicopterus ruber*). 2017-018. Accept (8-1). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of an American Flamingo submitted by Linda Wilkerson on 13 September 2017 at Myrtle Beach State Park (Horry County). This report came one day prior to an American Flamingo being photographed at Tibwin and following Tropical Storm Irma. This record received a vote of 6-2 during the first vote.

**Short-tailed Hawk** (*Buteo brachyurus*). 2020-022. Accept (9-0). Keith McCullough submitted a written report and 1 photo of a Short-tailed Hawk at Caw Caw Interpretive Center (Charleston County) from 26 May 2018. This report represents the 1<sup>st</sup> record of this species in South Carolina.

**Fork-tailed Flycatcher** (*Tyrannus savanna*). 2020-017. Accept (9-0). Charles Donnelly submitted a written report along with a photo of a Fork-tailed Flycatcher that was seen at Fort Moultrie National Historic Park on Sullivan's Island (Charleston County) on 16 September 2020. This report represents the 4<sup>th</sup> record of this species in South Carolina.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher** (*Myiarchus cinerascens*). 2020-003. Accept (9-0). Shawn Smolen-Morton submitted a written report of an Ash-throated Flycatcher at Watermark Lake in Mt. Pleasant (Charleston County) on 25 January 2020. Photos accompanying many eBird reports were also included. This individual was first reported on 17 January 2020 and was seen by many until 3 March 2020.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher** (*Myiarchus cinerascens*). 2020-005. Accept (9-0). Mary Alice Tartler submitted a written report and four photos of an Ash-throated Flycatcher that was seen from 30 January to 8 March 2020 at Sea Pines Forest Preserve on Hilton Head Island (Beaufort County).

**Black-whiskered Vireo** (*Vireo altiloquus*). 2020-016. Accept (9-0). Josh Lefever submitted a written report along with several photographs of a Black-whiskered Vireo that was banded at the Kiawah Island Banding Station (Charleston County) on 25 August 2020. This report represents the 2<sup>nd</sup> record of this species in South Carolina.

**Sage Thrasher** (*Oreoscoptes montanus*). 2020-021. Accept (9-0). Michael Robertson submitted a written report and 6 photos of a Sage Thrasher from Lake Conestee Nature Preserve (Greenville County) on 19 November 2020. This report represents the 1<sup>st</sup> record of this species in South Carolina.

**Townsend's Solitaire** (*Myadestes townsendi*). 2020-024. Accept (9-0). Ritch Lilly submitted a written report of a Townsend's Solitaire seen at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown County) from 11 October 2020. Word got out quickly and several people saw and photographed the bird. Unfortunately, the bird only stuck around for one day. This report represents the 1<sup>st</sup> record of this species in South Carolina.

**Western Meadowlark** (*Sturnella neglecta*). 2020-020. Accept (9-0). Steve Patterson submitted a written report, three photographs, and a video of Western Meadowlark at Townville (Anderson County) on 12 November 2020. This individual stuck around most of the winter with the last sighting reported by Irvin Pitts on 23 February 2021. This report represents the 2<sup>nd</sup> record of this species in South Carolina.

**Bullock's Oriole** (*Icterus bullockii*). 2020-006. Accept (9-0). Matt Johnson submitted a written report of an adult male Bullock's Oriole at a private residence in Pineville (Berkeley County) from 19 February 2020. This individual was seen by many people from 18 January to 7 March 2020.

**Shiny Cowbird** (*Molothrus bonariensis*). 2020-025. Accept (9-0). Tate Curry submitted a written report and two photos of a Shiny Cowbird seen at a private residence on Daniel Island (Charleston County).

**Bronzed Cowbird** (*Molothrus aeneus*). 2020-026. Accept (9-0). The SCBRC reviewed eBird reports with photos by Nathan Dias and Dennis Forsythe of a Bronzed Cowbird from a private residence in Charleston (Charleston County) from 22-24 November 2008. This sighting represents the 1<sup>st</sup> record of this species in South Carolina.

**Nashville Warbler** (*Leiothlypis ruficapilla*). 03-99-05. Accept (9-0). The SCBRC rereviewed a late winter/early spring report of a Nashville Warbler submitted by Sharon Turner at private residence in Myrtle Beach (Horry County on 19 March 1999).

**Townsend's Warbler** (*Setophaga townsendi*). 2020-029. Accept (9-0). Wendy Allen submitted a written report along with four photographs of a Townsend's Warbler seen at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown County) on 22 December 2020. This individual was seen by many observers between 22 December 2020 and 6 January 2021. The bird was then resighted again on 13-14 March 2021. This report represents the 1<sup>st</sup> record of this species in South Carolina.

## NON-ACCEPTED REPORTS

**Egyptian Goose** (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*). 2020-015. Non-accept (0-9). The Committee considered a report of an Egyptian Goose seen by many observers at a farm pond in Columbia (Lexington County) in April 2020. The identification was correct based on photographs that were submitted but the SCBRC felt that origin of the bird remained in question. The chances that this individual escaped from a captivity is just as good as it being a vagrant from an established population. This species will be added to the Supplemental List with a designation of "questionable origin".

**Cackling Goose** (*Branta hutchinsii*). 2020-031. Non-accept (4-5). The SCBRC considered a report of a Cackling Goose at Santee National Wildlife Refuge (Clarendon County) in December 2020. The photos provided showed a small goose with a short neck and smallish bill compared to the Canada Geese it was near. Unfortunately, the photos did not show enough detail for a majority of the committee members to feel confident that smaller forms of Canada Geese could be ruled out.

**Whooper Swan** (*Cygnus cygnus*). 2020-030. Non-accept (0-9). The SCBRC considered a report of a Whooper Swan seen at Santee National Wildlife Refuge (Clarendon County) in December 2020. Photo documentation proved the identification to be correct, but the committee felt that the origin of this individual was in question. There is no pattern of vagrancy for this species in the eastern United States and it is apparently commonly kept in captivity. This species will be added to the Supplemental List with the designation of "questionable origin".

**Garganey** (*Anus querquedula*). 2020-010. Non-accept (3-6). The SCBRC considered a written report supported with photographs of a Garganey at Russell Burgess Coastal Preserve (Horry County) in March 2020. The committee was split on the identity of this individual. Some members felt that this bird was correctly identified while others noted inconsistencies in the plumage and facial pattern suggesting a hybrid or an escaped domestic duck.

**Common Merganser** (*Mergus merganser*). 2018-044. Non-accept (3-6). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Common Merganser at Pawley's Island (Georgetown County) in December 2018. The committee felt that the description provided was not detailed enough to rule out other species.

**Chimney Swift** (*Chaetura pelagica*). 2020-008. Non-accept (0-9). The SCBRC considered a winter report of a Chimney Swift from Columbia (Richland County) in February 2020. The bird apparently struck the glass of a greenhouse and was temporarily immobilized. The reporter took a single photo of the bird in the hand. Unfortunately, the photo did not show enough information to rule out Vaux's Swift which would be a 1<sup>st</sup> record for South Carolina.

**Pomarine Jaeger** (*Stercorarius pomarinus*). 11-99-16. Non-accept (2-7). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Pomarine Jaeger at Lake Keowee (Oconee County) in November 1999. While the committee felt that this bird was a jaeger, the description did not rule out the possibility of a Parasitic Jaeger.

**California Gull** (*Larus californicus*). 01-04-01. Non-accept (2-7). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a California Gull at the Spring Island Landfill (Jasper County) in January 2004. The committee felt that the description did not rule out other possibilities.

**Pacific Loon** (*Gavia pacifica*). 03-09-01. Non-accept (4-5). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Pacific Loon at Pawley's Island (Georgetown County) in March 2009.

**Arctic Tern** (*Sterna paradisaea*). 06-98-14. Non-accept (4-5). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of an Arctic Tern offshore of Murrell's Inlet in June 1998. A majority of committee members felt that Common Tern could not be ruled out based on the information in the report.

**Northern Goshawk** (*Accipiter gentilis*). 01-01-01. Non-accept (3-6). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of Northern Goshawk at Kiawah Island (Charleston County) in January 2001. Most committee members noted that the report lacked sufficient details to rule out other species.

**Cassin's Vireo** (*Vireo cassinii*). 2018-047. Non-accept (2-7). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report along with several photos of a "Solitary" Vireo that was banded at the Kiawah Island Banding Station (Charleston County) on 28 October 2018. Although the



bird showed a very pale head, other characteristics fell within the overlap range of Cassin's and Blue-headed Vireo leading the committee to exercise caution with this potential 1<sup>st</sup> record for South Carolina.

**Warbling Vireo** (*Vireo gilvus*). 2018-031. Non-accept (3-6). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report from July 2018 of a Warbling Vireo along the Great Pee Dee River (Marlboro County). Committee members felt that the description suggested Warbling Vireo, but the possibility of other species had not been fully ruled out.

**Varied Thrush** (*Ixoreus naevius*). 01-05-04. Non-accept (3-6). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Varied Thrush at Ashmore Heritage Preserve (Greenville County) in January 2005. The report lacked enough details for the committee to accept.

**American Tree Sparrow** (*Spizelloides arborea*). 2020-002. Non-accept (4-5). The SCBRC considered a written report of an American Tree Sparrow at High Falls County Park (Oconee County) in January 2020. Most committee members noted that a key field mark (bicolored bill) was missing from the description which gave them hesitancy to accept.

**Green-tailed Towhee** (*Pipilo chlorurus*). 11-01-08. Non-accept (2-7). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Green-tailed Towhee from November 2001. Committee members noted a lack of detail in the report that did not rule out other species.

**Bullock's Oriole** (*Icterus bullockii*). 2019-024. Non-accept (1-8). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Bullock's Oriole from a private residence in Beaufort County in October 2019. Despite the description matching a male Bullock's Oriole, the short observation period without optics by the observer left the committee with some doubts.

**Black-headed Grosbeak** (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*). 09-01-05. Non-accept (2-7). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Black-headed Grosbeak from Conway (Horry County) in May 2001. Inconsistencies with certain field marks noted in the report created some hesitancy for many committee members to accept this report.

## UNRESOLVED REPORTS

The following reports received a majority of votes to accept but more than one vote to not accept. These reports will need to be reevaluated by the Committee.

**Anna's x Calliope Hummingbird**. 2018-024. Rereview (7-2). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report and photos of a banded Anna's x Calliope Hummingbird hybrid that was captured at a private residence in Spartanburg (Spartanburg County). This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

**Ruff** (*Philomachus pugnax*). 10-00-06. Rereview (6-3). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Ruff from Jasper County in October 2000. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

**Ruff** (*Philomachus pugnax*). 04-00-02. Rereview (6-3). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Ruff from Santee Coastal Reserve (Charleston County) in April 2000. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

**Common Murre** (*Uria aalge*). 2020-019. Rereview (5-4). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a common Murre from Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown County) in November 2020.

**Iceland Gull** (*Larus glaucooides*). 05-98-22. Rereview (6-3). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of an Iceland Gull at Pawley's Island (Georgetown County) in May 1998. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

**Masked Booby** (*Sula dactylatra*). 11-98-20. Rereview (6-3). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Masked Booby at Litchfield Beach (Georgetown County) in November 1998. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

**White-faced Ibis** (*Plegadis chihi*). 01-03-12. Rereview (6-3). The SCBRC rereviewed two written reports of a White-faced Ibis at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge (Jasper County) in November 2000. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

**Say's Phoebe** (*Sayornis saya*). 2019-009. Rereview (5-4). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Say's Phoebe from Little Edisto Island (Charleston County) in September 2019. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

**Cave Swallow** (*Petrochelidon fulva*). 2019-008. Rereview (5-4). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report with photos of a Cave Swallow at Heritage Shores Nature Preserve (Horry County) in November 2019. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

**Blackpoll Warbler** (*Setophaga striata*). 12-98-21. Rereview (6-3). The SCBRC rereviewed a written winter report of a Blackpoll Warbler from Anderson County in December 1998. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

## 2020 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

---

Nathan A. Swick <sup>1</sup>, Chair, C. Wilson Cook, J. Edward Corey  
Jan J. Hansen, Henry E. Link, Martina A. Nordstrand  
Z. Taylor Piephoff, Steven P. Shultz, Andrew K. Thornton

<sup>1</sup> 4904 Jessup Grove Rd, Greensboro, NC 27410 [nswick@aba.org](mailto:nswick@aba.org)

The make-up of the 2020 North Carolina Bird Records Committee (NCBRC) included additions of J. Edward Corey, Henry E. Link, and Martina A. Nordstrand as voting members; and the retention of Richard J. Davis and Harry E. LeGrand Jr. in advisory capacities. Keith E. Camburn, Jeffrey S. Pippen, and Robert W. Van Epps, rotated off the Committee for at least a one-year hiatus.

**Accepted as Valid.** The following reports were judged to be acceptable.

**Lazuli Bunting** (*Passerina amoena*) (19-06) A report with photos submitted to the NCBRC by Patricia Finch of an apparent male Lazuli Bunting visiting a feeding station in *Carteret* County from 19-21 August 2019 was left unresolved in 2019, requiring a recirculation with review from outside experts. Upon rereview, the record was accepted 7-1(Inadequately Documented) with 1 abstention. This represents North Carolina's 3<sup>rd</sup> record of this western Emberizid.

**Red-footed Booby** (*Sula sula*) (20-01). Long considered a likely vagrant to North Carolina, a Red-footed Booby photographed on 8 June 2019 by Tom McElfrish from a cruise ship nearly 200 miles at sea, but assigned to *Carteret* County by closest point of land, was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC. Committee members questioned the accuracy of the location, but in the end decided to trust the observer's report and abide by closest point of land standards, even if it is a somewhat unsatisfying way to add this species to the NC list. This represents a 1<sup>st</sup> state record and, by virtue of photos, places Red-footed Booby on the Definitive List.

**Antillean Nighthawk** (*Chordeiles gundlachii*) (20-02). An extremely well documented record of Antillean Nighthawk from 8-15 August 2020 at the Cape Point Campground at Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Buxton (*Dare*) was considered by the NCBRC. The report by Josh Southern with photos and, especially, audio recordings made by Southern and others was considered conclusive and accepted unanimously (9-0). This represents the 3<sup>rd</sup> record of this Caribbean nightjar for the state, all of which come from the vicinity of Cape Point.

**Black Guillemot** (*Cephus grylle*) (20-04). The NCBRC considered a sight record of Black Guillemot from 9 February 2020 at Jennette's Pier (*Dare*) made by Ricky Davis. This record was accepted unanimously (9-0) and represents the state's 4<sup>th</sup> record of this alcid.

**Bobolink** (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) (20-05). A sight record of a wintering Bobolink, made by Taylor Piephoff on the *Gaston* County Christmas Bird Count on 14 December 2019, was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC. Though regularly seen in migration throughout the state and a local breeder in the mountains, this would represent the 1<sup>st</sup> credible winter record in North Carolina of a bird that winters in the southern cone of South America. It is one of only a handful of winter Bobolink records in North America.

**Bronzed Cowbird** (*Molothrus aeneus*) (20-06). The NCBRC unanimously accepted (9-0) reports made by Harry LeGrand and Jim Landau with photos by Ed Corey and others of a Bronzed Cowbird at a private residence in Morehead City (*Carteret*) seen from 15-28 February 2020. This represents a 1<sup>st</sup> record of this species for North Carolina, and by virtue of the many photos, it is placed on the Definitive List.

**Bronzed Cowbird** (*Molothrus aeneus*) (20-07). A well-documented report by Ronnie Hewlette of a Bronzed Cowbird at a private residence in James City (*Craven*), from 4-9 May 2020 was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC. This record represents the 2<sup>nd</sup> for North Carolina, not even three months after the first!

**Cassin's Kingbird** (*Tyrannus vociferans*) (20-08). The NCBRC considered and unanimously accepted (9-0) a report with photos from Michelle Forte of a Cassin's Kingbird near the Jordan Lake dam in Moncure (*Chatham*) on 30 June 2020. This record was submitted by a self-described non-birder, and the committee appreciates the effort made to document this outstanding record. While Cassin's Kingbird has some pattern of vagrancy in the East, records in the summer are very rare. This represents a 1<sup>st</sup> record of this species in North Carolina, and by virtue of the accompanying photos it is placed on the Definitive list.

**Kirtland's Warbler** (*Setophaga kirtlandii*) The year 2020 was an exceptional one for Kirtland's Warbler in North Carolina. The following three accounts are taken together. In addition to these, two additional credible reports from 30 Sep (*Avery*) and 6 Oct (*Buncombe*) were not considered by the NCBRC this year but may be evaluated in the future.

- (20-09) A well-documented subadult Kirtland's Warbler discovered at the Jordan Lake dam (*Chatham*) by Mark Montazer 27 September 2020 and present through at least the 30<sup>th</sup>, was accepted unanimously (9-0) based on a written report by Matt Lawing and photos by many.
- (20-15) A subadult individual at Haw River State Park (*Rockingham*), discovered on 4 October 2020, was accepted unanimously (9-0).
- (20-16) A singing adult male present at Meat Camp Environmental Studies Area (*Watauga*) from 13-14 May 2020 was accepted unanimously (9-0). The vocalizations were recorded and uploaded to Facebook for documentation. This was the first record of a singing bird in North Carolina.

**Neotropic Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) (20-10). Long anticipated in the state, the NCBRC unanimously accepted (9-0) a Neotropic Cormorant discovered by Jelmer Poelstra at Jordan Lake's Crosswinds Marina (*Chatham*) based on submitted reports from Harry LeGrand, David Schroder, and Matt Lawing, along with many photos. This represents a 1<sup>st</sup> record of this species in North Carolina, and by virtue of the accompanying photos it is placed on the Definitive list.

**Pacific Golden-Plover** (*Pluvialis fulva*) (20-11). A Pacific Golden-Plover, discovered at Cape Point Campground at Cape Hatteras National Seashore (*Dare*) on 18 July 2020 and present until 12 August 2020, was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC based on a written report by Ed Corey and photos by many. This represents the 2<sup>nd</sup> record of this species in North Carolina, the 1<sup>st</sup> record coming from the exact same location only a year earlier.

**White-winged Tern** (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) (20-12). The NCBRC considered and unanimously accepted (9-0) the report of an apparent adult White-winged Tern present at the Salt Pond, Cape Hatteras National Seashore (*Dare*) from 21 May-2 June 2020 based on written reports by David Fischer and Ed Corey and photos by many. While this record represents a 2<sup>nd</sup> record for this species in North Carolina, it is the 1<sup>st</sup> with photos which moves White-winged Tern from the Provisional List to the Definitive List.

**Painted Redstart** (*Myioborus pictus*) (20-17). A stunning Painted Redstart, seen at Pea Island NWR (*Dare*) from 5-6 October 2020, was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC based on written reports by Karen Lebing and Derb Carter and photos by many. This unexpected record represents the 1<sup>st</sup> for this species in North Carolina, and by virtue of the photos it is placed on the Definitive List.

**Black-throated Gray Warbler** (*Setophaga nigrescens*) (20-18). The NCBRC unanimously accepted (9-0) the report of an adult male Black-throated Gray Warbler at Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge (*Mecklenburg*), seen on 6-7 September 2020 from photos and notes submitted to eBird by many birders. This represents the state's 5<sup>th</sup> accepted record of this western warbler, and only the second record for the piedmont region.

**Townsend's Warbler** (*Setophaga townsendi*) (20-19). A report of a female-type Townsend's Warbler, seen and photographed 23-24 September 2020 at a private residence in Hatteras village (*Dare*) and reported to eBird by Haley Rosell, was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> record accepted by the BRC, though there are an additional two credible reports. All but two previous accounts have come from Dare County.

**MacGillivray's Warbler** (*Geothlypis tolmiei*) (20-20). The report of an adult male MacGillivray's Warbler from Duck Town Park (*Dare*) and submitted with photos by Nate Swick was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC. The bird was initially discovered on 3 December 2020 and was subsequently seen by birders into 2021. This represents the 4<sup>th</sup> record of this species for the state, all of which come from the coastal plain.

**Varied Thrush** (*Ixoreus naevius*) (20-21). The NCBRC reviewed and unanimously accepted (9-0) a written report from Kent Fiala, along with many photos from additional birders, of a Varied Thrush at a private residence in Cary (*Wake*). The bird was initially seen in early December (reported to the birding community on 3 December) and present into 2021. This represents the 5<sup>th</sup> record of this western thrush in the state, all but one of which have been in the piedmont region.

**Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher** (*Empidonax difficilis/occidentalis*) (20-22) An *Empidonax* flycatcher identified as Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher was captured on private property in *Randolph* County and banded by John Gerwin, et al, of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences on 11 December 2020. It was considered by the NCBRC, who ultimately accepted it 8-0 with 1 abstention based on photos and measurements taken while the bird was in hand. The committee agreed that Pacific-slope Flycatcher was the far more likely candidate, but as this species pair is exceptionally difficult to identify visually, and lacking any recording or description of vocalizations, felt that Pacific-slope/Cordilleran is the safer designation. This represents the 2<sup>nd</sup> record of this species pair for North Carolina.

**Vermilion Flycatcher** (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) (20-24). The NCBRC considered and unanimously accepted (9-0) the report of a first-year male Vermilion Flycatcher on a private farm in *Martin* based on photos by multiple birders. This individual was originally discovered by Bob Koch on 8 December 2020 and present into 2021. This represents the 7<sup>th</sup> record for North Carolina, all of which come from the coastal plain.

**Fork-tailed Flycatcher** (*Tyrannus savanna*) (20-25). A photo with notes of Fork-tailed Flycatcher at South Point of Ocracoke Island (*Hyde*) on 29 June 2020 and submitted to eBird by Camron Robertson and Chelsea Weithman was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC. This represents the 4<sup>th</sup> record of this South American austral migrant in North Carolina.

**Black-throated Gray Warbler** (*Setophaga nigrescens*) (20-26). The report of a Black-throated Gray Warbler at North End Park on Roanoke Island (*Dare*), initially discovered by Jeff Lewis on 19 December 2020 and present into 2021, was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC based on photos submitted by Lewis and many birders. This represents the 6<sup>th</sup> accepted record of this western warbler in North Carolina, and the second of 2020.

**Allen's Hummingbird** (*Selasphorus sasin*) (20-27). An Allen's Hummingbird report submitted by Steve Shultz of a bird at a private home in Charlotte (*Mecklenburg*) was unanimously accepted 8-0, with 1 abstention. The committee considered a written report by Shultz with in-hand measurements taken by bander Susan Campbell. This represents the 4<sup>th</sup> record for North Carolina, and the second from the western piedmont.

**Not Accepted.** The following reports were judged to be not accepted.

**Lazuli Bunting** (*Passerina amoena*) (19-14) A sight record of a Lazuli Bunting from *Dare* on 19 October 2020 was not accepted by a vote of 1-7 (Inadequately Documented), with 1 abstention on a second ballot. Outside reviewers had uncertainty based on description of the plumage which was reflected by the committee. In the end, it was felt that there was not enough to confirm such a sighting.

**Antillean Nighthawk** (*Chordeiles gundlachii*) (20-03) A report of Antillean Nighthawk from *New Hanover* on 16 June 1990, was not accepted by the committee by a vote of 2-4 (Inadequately Documented) with 3 abstentions. Committee members called into question the submission of the report 30 years after the initial observation. It was noted that while the observer could indeed have seen Antillean Nighthawk, it would be unlikely that such details necessary to confirm what would be, in effect, a retroactive 1<sup>st</sup> state record, could be recalled accurately after so many years.

**Philadelphia Vireo** (*Vireo philadelphicus*) (20-12) The winter season report of a Philadelphia Vireo from *Craven* was considered by the NCBRC and not accepted by a vote of 1-7 (4 Inadequately Documented, 3 Unacceptable Sighting), with 1 abstention. The observer did not rule out other similar, and more likely species, even noting that their own first impression was not of the species so reported.

**Western Spindalis** (*Spindalis zena*) (20-13) The report of a potential state 1<sup>st</sup> Western Spindalis from *Dare* was not accepted by the committee on a vote of 0-8 (5 Inadequately Documented, 3 Unacceptable Sighting), with 1 abstention. The committee notes that documentation submitted was inadequate for a record of such magnitude, and that multiple species of Spindalis, among other more likely species, were not sufficiently eliminated.

### Unresolved - Outside Review Pending

**Hammond's Flycatcher** (*Empidonax hammondii*) (20-23). An *Empidonax* flycatcher identified as Hammond's Flycatcher was captured on private property in *Randolph* County and banded by John Gerwin, et al, of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences on 12 December 2020. The NCBRC considered the record, a potential 1<sup>st</sup> for this species in North Carolina, and voted to accept the record 7-1 (Inadequately Documented), with 1 abstention. But because the report received 2 non-acceptance votes, it requires review from outside the committee and subsequent recirculation with these outside opinions or any additional comments or photos from other observers.

### Summary

With this round of voting, Red-footed Booby, Bronzed Cowbird, Cassin's Kingbird, Neotropic Cormorant, and Painted Redstart are added to the Definitive List. White-winged Tern is moved from the Provisional List to the Definitive List. Hammond's Flycatcher is unresolved with outside review pending.

The total number of accepted species from North Carolina is now **490** (+5 over the final 2019 list) of which 477 are Definitive (+6 over the final 2019 list), two are considered Not Established, and 11 are Provisional (-1 from the final 2019 list).

**Literature Cited**

LeGrand, H., J. Haire, N. Swick, and T. Howard. Birds of North Carolina: their Distribution and Abundance



## 2020 Spring Migration Counts in North Carolina

---

**Marilyn Westphal**

*P.O. Box 1427*

*Hendersonville, NC 28793*

[mjwestph@ret.unca.edu](mailto:mjwestph@ret.unca.edu)

Needless to say that Covid-19 caused havoc in 2020 and made it very difficult for many count areas to conduct spring counts. Because of problems accessing some areas, and the limitations caused by team members needing to social distance, only about half of the usual count areas were able to complete counts. In some cases count coordinators had to resort to less orthodox methods to complete their counts, but they got the job done. Only ten areas completed counts, three from the mountains and seven from the piedmont, compared to the usual total of 19 to 21 over the past 15 years, seven to eight from the mountains, 12 to 13 from the piedmont, and one from the coast. Since no coastal areas were included this year, many typical coastal species were missed. However, many of the individual counts had excellent results, so the birds were certainly present. Total species (197) was naturally well below the average (234), but above the average for counts completed during years when no coastal count was conducted. Total individuals (51,491) were about 30,000 to 35,000 below the average year, which isn't bad considering there were half the usual count areas. There were also a little more than half (238) the usual number of participants (415).

In the mountains, the Watauga count had to resort to less orthodox procedures as a result of sudden wintry weather conditions. As a result, some areas were covered more than once, and the results were much higher than average. Also, although both of the high elevation mountain counts were completed, none of the counts that include mountain valleys in the southern mountains were carried out, so the total numbers were skewed towards the higher elevation species, and some of the lower elevation species in that area were missed altogether. In contrast, the piedmont area was well represented from east to west.

Although many species were missed, many unusual birds were found in areas they don't often occur. These include such species as Red-necked Grebe and Philadelphia Vireo on the Greensboro count, Red-throated Loon and Horned Lark on the Kerr Lake count, six American Bitterns, a Snowy Egret and a Vesper Sparrow on the Durham count, Glossy Ibis, Swallow-tailed Kite, and Dickcissel on the Chapel Hill count, Vesper Sparrow, Golden-winged Warbler, and Wilson's Warbler on the Watauga count, and Cerulean Warbler on the Rockingham count.

Most common species found in the mountains included Dark-eyed Junco, Chestnut-sided Warbler, American Robin, Eastern Towhee, and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Some of these may show up as most common because the count was skewed towards higher elevation species. In the piedmont, the most common species were Double-crested Cormorant, Northern Cardinal, Carolina Wren, Red-eyed Vireo, and American Crow. Some species missed include Bachman's Sparrow, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, and Peregrine Falcon. The absence of the Southern Pines and any coastal counts were the main cause for the missing sparrow and woodpecker. The Peregrine Falcon has been

absent the last couple of years mainly because the once reliable pair at Devil's Courthouse seems to have given up nesting there.

Hopefully the Covid-19 pandemic will have abated sufficiently enough that more areas will be able to complete counts in 2021 and 2022.

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**

**Pisgah Ridge, Great Balsam and Plott Balsam Mountains IBA** – count dates spanned from May 15-20 with teams selecting one of those days to do their section, 83 species, 3266 individuals, 25 participants in 12 parties, 66.87 party-hours. Elevation ranges for this count run from 3500 to 6100 feet. Weather: Excellent over most of the count period with one morning of intermittent rain. Temperature 45-75°F.

**Compiler:** Marilyn Westphal ([mjwestph@ret.unca.edu](mailto:mjwestph@ret.unca.edu))

**Participants:** Miles Buddy, Seth Buddy, Kevin Burke, Tim Carstens, Nancy Casey, Ron Clark, Robert Emmott, Tom Flagg, Robert Johnson, Stacy Johnson, John Koon, Gail Lankford, Charlie Lankford, Dave Minnich, Nora Murdock, Naomi Otterness, Catherine Reid, Kitt Reynolds, Russell Roe, Marcus Simpson, Alan Smith, Sidney Snyder, Marilyn Westphal, Connie Wulcovicz and Stan Wulcovicz

**Exclusives:** Northern Saw-whet Owl, Black-capped Chickadee

**Notes:** It was an unusual count in an unusual situation. As the coronavirus epidemic closed parks and national forests it looked like the count would have to be cancelled, but about 10 days before the typical start date the Blue Ridge Parkway announced that it would be reopening the road on May 15<sup>th</sup>, the typical start weekend for this count. It required some scrambling to find volunteers, but fortunately there were a lot of people anxious to get out and do some birding in remote areas where social distancing was easy. The virus did cause some complications forming teams as they couldn't ride in the same car, but most areas are largely walked anyway, and some sections were split up to make it easier. A few areas were still inaccessible, but most were covered. The count suffered a couple of disasters with one participant slipping on wet rocks early in the count and breaking her arm, and another slipping at the end of the count and breaking her leg, but both are recovering well.

Despite the late organization and accidents, 83 species were counted, which is higher than average, 3266 individuals counted, also higher than average, during 66.87 team hours, which was about average. Overall it was quite a typical count with few unusual species found. Gail and Charlie Lankford found a Black-billed Cuckoo and Nancy Casey and Russell Roe found one Yellow-rumped Warbler along Black Balsam Road where it is believed a small colony has attempted breeding for the past few years. With only one found the colony may have either moved or given up. Two teams, Nora Murdock/Robert Emmott and Kevin Burke/Ron Clark found Red Crossbills. Two teams, Kevin Burke/Ron Clark and the Johnsons/Barbara Reynolds found late Ruby-crowned Kinglets, always suspicious as far as possible breeding. The Black-capped/Carolina Chickadee conundrum continues with most birds from Black Balsam to the end of the parkway singing the Black-capped song. Alder Flycatcher numbers were down (23), but not

surprising as some of the prime area for them wasn't accessed, but Least Flycatchers were quite abundant (57) as their territories are more widespread along the parkway.

As usual the most abundant species was Chestnut-sided Warbler (389) and second most abundant was Dark-eyed Junco (241, although plentiful, fewer than usual). These were followed by Blue-headed Vireo (203), Eastern Towhee (192), Black-throated Green Warbler (169), Golden-crowned Kinglet (156), Black-throated Blue Warbler (149), American Robin (147), Canada Warbler (136), and Veery (132).

Many thanks to all the volunteers who quickly responded to the call and made this another successful count, and special thanks to those injured in the cause.

Marilyn Westphal

**Black Mountains IBA** – count period ran from May 23-28 with teams selecting one of those days to complete their section, 60 species, 1602 individuals, 15 participants in 11 parties with some teams covering a second section on a different day, 28.90 party-hours. Weather: Typical May weather for Mount Mitchell area, cold early and sometimes foggy early, then warming by mid-morning with some sun later. 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:** Robert Emmott, Chris Jacquette, John Koon, Charlie Lankford, Gail Lankford, Dave Minnich, Nora Murdock, Mike Resch, Barbara Reynolds, Mark Simpson, Alan Smith, Sidney Snyder, Simon Thompson, Marilyn Westphal

**Exclusives:** none

**Notes:** As with the Balsam Mountains Count, this count required last minute recruiting for participants as we did not know whether the area would reopen before the count period. Fortunately, most of the area did reopen on time, although the two forest roads were still closed and the trails between the park and the forest roads were closed, so less area was covered than typical for this count. Because of the virus there were also limitations for teams traveling together.

As a result of the limitations, the total bird count (1602) was lower than average as were the total party-hours (28.90), but the total species count (60) was typical for the area. Most notable misses were Turkey Vulture and Ruby-throated Hummingbird and, although not missed completely, there was only one Ruffed Grouse. The only relatively unusual species found was a Magnolia Warbler, although they have been appearing in the area near Mount Mitchell in late May and early June for the past few years and there may be some attempted breeding. There was also one Yellow-rumped Warbler, which has also been found at Mount Mitchell in the past few years and may also be attempting to breed.

Most common species found were as follows: Dark-eyed Junco (239), which seems to have bounced back from a couple of lower count years, Golden-crowned Kinglet (199), Black-throated Green Warbler (117), Blue-headed Vireo (104), Winter Wren (91), Eastern Towhee (71), Veery (68), Hermit Thrush (63, first time in the top ten), Blackburnian Warbler (62), and Canada Warbler (61). Once again, Pine Siskins, Red Crossbills, Least and Alder Flycatchers were present, but in low numbers.

Thanks again to the participants who this year stepped up on short notice to volunteer for the count- Marilyn Westphal.

**Watauga County** – Count date May 10th, 141 species, 4735 individuals, 31 participants in 13 teams, 164.80 party-hours. Weather: Mostly sunny with snow showers early. Temperatures 25-60°F. Wind light to 30mph.

Compiler: Guy McGrane (badgerboy@wilkes.net)

Participants: Meredith Boothe, Bob Cherry, Nicholas Cline, Martha Cutler, Gina Diggs, Steve Dowlan, Bill Dunson, Margaret Dunson, Elizabeth Faison, Pat Geiger, Richard Gray, Katie Griffith, Tonya Lee, Merrill Lynch, Travis Marceron, Guy McGrane, Sheryl McNair, Wes McNair, Arthur Mersch, Janet Paulette, Janice Pope, Silas Powell, Max Ramey, Amy Renfranz, Shelley Ryal, Sarah Schnackel, Debbie Shetterly, Jimmie Shetterly, Curtis Smalling, Charlie Sykes, and Theresa Waldspurger.

**Exclusives:** Lesser Scaup, Short-billed Dowitcher, Willow Flycatcher, Purple Finch, Vesper Sparrow, Golden-winged Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Wilson's Warbler

**Notes:** The 2020 Watauga County spring count, was the third year in a row, for this relatively new count. This year, the schedule was somewhat unconventional in response to challenging conditions, both the pandemic virus situation and the very unusual late season cold front that brought winter-like conditions on the originally scheduled day of the count, May 9. Many of the participants were not going to be able to spend much time birding on that day, and we also wanted to give birders a chance to extend their birding into less crowded times at some of our more popular birding spots, so we made it a three-day count, from May 9 thru May 11.

The combination of this extended count period and birders staying alone resulted in significantly higher effort than in past years, and likely higher effort than we will have in future counts as well. Our party hours were 165, compared to 50 and 42 the previous two years. So the numbers may be skewed higher this year than past or future, as shown by our very high species count of 141, not including domestic species. This compares to 115 and 102 in our first two years, 2018 and 2019.

Consistent with regional findings, shorebird numbers were way up this year, and newly finished floodplain restoration work at Brookshire Park, provided extensive bare, wet mudflats, which attracted lots of shorebirds, increasing this trend.

Our most notable birds included a Short-billed Dowitcher at Price Lake, a first area report in about 40 years, a Lincoln's Sparrow along the Watauga River, very tough to find in spring here, a Virginia Rail which continued through the count weekend at the Boone Greenway, 14 Semipalmated Plovers, a bird reported only a few times before ever in the county, and a pair each of Mockingbirds and Blue Grosbeaks, tough to find here, were noted at lower elevation in the eastern end of the county. Also notable were five species of wrens, including Sedge and Marsh Wren.

Our respectable count of warbler species, at 27, included a Wilson's Warbler, quite a rare migrant in the northern mountains, although there seemed to be a statewide flush of them this spring. Seven of the warbler species appeared to be strict migrants, and numbers of those were quite low as usual in spring here, mostly with just a few birds each.

Birds missed that we can usually find without too much trouble in the spring included Ruffed Grouse, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Barred Owl, Whippoorwill, Great-crested Flycatcher, and Swainson's Thrush. Ruffed Grouse seem to be declining very

quickly, and it has been almost impossible to hear one drumming anywhere in the area in the last ten years or so, perhaps indicating that even where present, there is no need for territorial behavior. Yellow-billed Cuckoo seemed to return to the county somewhat later than usual this year.

Guy McGrane

## **Piedmont**

**Iredell County** – count date April 26th, 107 species, 2506 individuals, 11 participants in three parties, 25.00 party-hours. Weather: Partly cloudy, wind calm, temperature ranged from 49-71°F. Count circle is centered on the South Yadkin River bridge on Chipley Ford Rd in northern Iredell County.

**Compiler:** Ron Underwood (rongto@gmail.com)

**Participants:** Debbie Birnley, Cynthia Dickerson, Bill English, Larry Marlin, Johnny Marshall, Caroline Martin, Janice Powell, Garnet Underwood, Ron Underwood, John Whitaker and Mark Whitaker

**Exclusives:** Eurasian Collared Dove, American Pipit

**Notes:** Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, our count was conducted on a limited basis, with no meet-up prior to the count, and no post-count luncheon. Despite these limitations, we had good participation and a nice variety of birds.

Ron Underwood

**Rockingham County** – count date April 30th, 124 species, 2343 individuals, seven participants in four parties, 19.50 party-hours. Weather: Heavy rain and flash flooding overnight and at dawn, the rest of the day was cloudy with temperature 58-68°F.

**Compiler:** Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

**Participants:** Clay Barham, Penny Barham, Brian Bockhahn, Debbie Irving, Janet Ledbetter, David Pennebaker, Martin Wall, Cara Woods, and Tony Woods.

**Exclusives:** Cerulean Warbler

**Notes:** The 8th Rockingham County Spring Bird Count was held on Thursday April 30, 2020. Nine observers in four parties tallied a record high 124 species (average 112, previous high 118) and 2343 birds (average 1874). Totals were led by 109 Northern Cardinals, 99 Mourning Doves and 98 American Robins. Additional species seen during count week: Eastern Wood-pewee, Blue-winged Warbler, American Redstart and Rusty Blackbird.

First Count Records: a single Semipalmated Plover was on a farm pond at first light off Ledbetter Road, and I cannot believe it took eight years to finally get a Chestnut-sided Warbler, and by two parties!

Other goodies include two parties with two different Bald Eagles for second count record (now nesting in area), our second Black-billed Cuckoo in Waterfalls territory, second Bank Swallow over Mayo Mountain ponds, second Gray-cheeked Thrush on Mayo Mountain loop trail, second Cerulean Warbler in Waterfalls territory, second Swamp Sparrow in Airport section and second Baltimore Oriole at Mayo Mountain ponds.

Third Lesser Yellowlegs in Stoneville area, third Least Sandpiper on Ledbetter Road,

third Least Flycatcher around Mayo Mountain ponds, third Cliff Swallow and three parties with our third Ruby-crowned Kinglets.

Misses: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Eastern Screech-owl and Blackpoll Warbler.

A side note, instead of the rare dragonfly, on the summit of Cedar Mountain I was able to record video/audio a pair of Mountain Chorus Frogs! In NC this species is only known from Cherokee county, NC, further evidence of this unique county.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count.

Brian Bockhahn

**Greensboro** – count date May 2nd, 128 species, 7578 individuals, 41 participants, 132.50 party-hours. Weather: A perfect spring day, temperature 43-74°F. Skies were partly cloudy, and the wind was light from the southwest, averaging 5 to 10 mph with occasional gusts to 15 mph. We really couldn't have asked for better weather

**Compiler:** Elizabeth Link (elzlink@yahoo.com)

**Participants:** Nancy Adamson, Carolyn Allen, Frank Cashwell, Megan Damico, Scott DePue, Jim Eldrett, Lynne Gray, Chris Groh, Amy Hanson, Asha Khopkar, Elizabeth Link, Henry Link, Clarence Mattocks, Julien McCarthy, Shelley McDiarmid, Lynn Moseley, Roberta Newton, Lane Oldham, Judith Pait, Ann Presnell, Emily Reeve, Judy Roy, Danny Royster, Wallace Sills, Brian Stadler, Melanie Stadler, Ann Steighner, Linda Sumner, Paul Sumner, Emily Talbert, Andrew Thornton, Emily Tyler, Ann Van Sant, Anita Vigorito, Joe Vigorito, Ann Walter-Fromson, Matt Wangarin, Stella Wear, Tom Wear, George Wheaton, and Melissa Whitmire.

**Exclusives:** American Black Duck, Red-necked Grebe, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Forster's Tern, Philadelphia Vireo

**Notes:** The Spring Bird Count was held in Greensboro on Saturday, May 2nd, 2020. Because of the quarantine and stay-at-home orders in place for the COVID-19 pandemic, our count teams were a bit different than usual. Teams broke up and covered their territories in ones or twos, found a way to get around without piling into one car, a few birded in their neighborhoods, and altogether we ended up with 40 people counting, which is about average for us, and pretty good coverage of our count circle.

Our species count was 128, and the number of individual birds counted was 7568 both of which are right about average for our count circle. We had a combination of winter birds that are sometimes gone by the time we do the count, such as Greater Scaup, Hooded Merganser, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet; and late-arriving birds such as Acadian Flycatcher and Mississippi Kite that frequently haven't arrived by the time we do the count. While we have sometimes gotten the Mississippi Kite on count week, this is only the second time they've actually appeared on the count.

Oddities included a Red-necked Grebe, seen by Matt Wangarin on Lake Townsend. The bird had been spotted on the lake at various times for at least a couple of months and was still hanging out on count day. Other species that we don't usually pick up included Forster's Terns, Caspian Tern seen on Count Week, a Philadelphia Vireo, which has only been seen on the count three previous times, spotted by Melanie Stadler's group, and Blue-winged Warbler.

Many thanks to everyone who helped with the count. Your efforts are appreciated more than ever!

Elizabeth Link

**Chapel Hill** – count date May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 135 species, 11,214 individuals, 48 field observers in 27 teams with one feeder watcher, 161.60 party hours. Weather: Low 55F, high 85F; wind SW 5-12 mph; clear, no rain.

**Compiler:** Will Cook ([cwcook@duke.edu](mailto:cwcook@duke.edu))

**Participants:** David Anderson, Steve Backus, Jin Bai, Patsy Bailey, Jon Bennett, Brian Bockhahn, Norm Budnitz, Jim Capel, Fleeta Chauvigne, Carol Chelette, Will Cook, Maria de Bruyn, Nan DeWire, Barbara Driscoll, Tom Driscoll, Kent Fiala, Cynthia Fox, Jim George, Mary George, Steve Graves, Jan Hansen, Loren Hintz, Karen Hogan, Bo Howes, Judy Jones, Elizabeth Keating, Larry Kim, Gerald King, Gene Kingsley, Anne Miller, David Murdock, Judy Murray, Vicki Nebes, Alex Nickley, Ben Nickley, Elaine Norwood, Joe Norwood, Don Pelly, Jelmer Poelstra, Marc Ribaud, Margaret Scott, Roger Shaw, David Smith, Judy Smith, Richard Snow, Paul Taille, Margaret Vimmerstedt, and Bruce Young

**Exclusives:** Glossy Ibis, Swallow-tailed Kite, Dickcissel

**Notes:** The Chapel Hill spring count on Sunday, May 3, 2020, recorded an exceptional 135 species, our highest in 34 years! The high count was helped by the count date being the earliest in 10 years, with a combination of high observer effort and good luck with soaring vagrants and migrant thrushes and warblers. This year's species total of 135 was 16 above the 10-year average of 119 and the total number of birds, 11,214, was well above the average of 7694. Effort on the count was outstanding, the highest since 1986, with 161.60 party hours (average 118.50). However, the number of birds per party hour, 69.40, was not far above the average of 65.30

Remarkably we found two new species for the count, which was initiated in 1952 and has been conducted annually since 1957: Glossy Ibis and Swallow-tailed Kite. The Glossy Ibis was seen by Jelmer Poelstra at the Cub Creek arm of Jordan Lake as it soared with an Osprey and a few vultures, then glided away to cross the Morgan Creek arm of the lake eastward. The Swallow-tailed Kite was seen by Steve Backus (in his kayak) as it soared with Turkey Vultures over the Bush Creek arm of Jordan Lake. Both are first records for the count, though we did have a count week Swallow-tailed Kite in 2012. Other stellar rarities included our third Red-breasted Merganser (Brian Bockhahn at Jordan Lake), our second Mississippi Kite (Jin Bai, Dogwood Acres), first Warbling Vireo since 1994 (Marc Ribaud, Jordan Lake), and our second Dickcissel (Jan Hansen). Other species we usually miss included Northern Bobwhite, American Woodcock, Bonaparte's Gull, Caspian Tern, American Kestrel, two Gray-cheeked Thrushes, four Cape May Warblers, two Bay-breasted Warblers, and Blackburnian Warbler.

We had an incredible number of record highs: 86 Wood Duck (average 30), 211 Black Vulture (average 63), 200 Turkey Vulture (average 99), 44 Barred Owl (average 15), 51 Red-headed Woodpecker (average 17), 136 Downy Woodpecker (average 67), 27 Hairy Woodpecker (average 11), 37 Pileated Woodpecker (avg 21), 120 Great Crested Flycatcher (average 83), 111 Acadian Flycatcher (average 71), 104 Brown-headed Nuthatch (average 71), 35 Veery (previous high 16 in 1978, average 4), 33 Swainson's

Thrush (average 13), 187 Gray Catbird (average 65), 50 Orchard Oriole (average 17), and 93 Black-and-white Warbler (average 17).

There were no big misses or record lows, though the count of 23 Song Sparrows is far below the average 49 and lowest since 2001.

Team honors: Jan Hansen had an amazing 94 species at University Lake and the western portion of the count circle, followed by Brian Bockhahn at Stagecoach Road, with 90. Jelmer Poelstra, covering Cub Creek at Jordan Lake, counted the most individual birds, with 915.

We had 48 field counters in 27 parties (average 38 in 19 parties), with one feeder watcher. Thanks to all counters for their efforts on this stellar day!

Charles W. "Will" Cook

**Durham** – count date April 26<sup>th</sup>, 138 species, 7912 individuals, 24 participants in 14 parties, 79.00 party-hours. Weather: Mostly clear skies, light winds, temperature 54°-74°F.

**Compiler:** Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

**Participants:** Jeff Blalock, Brian Bockhahn, Vern Bothwell, Gail Boyarsky, Norm Budnitz, Sebastian Burgess, Jim Capel, Will Cook, Tom Driscoll, Randy Emmitt, Bo Howes, Elizabeth Keating, Gene Kingsley, Thomas Krakauer, Matt Lawing, Marcia Mandel, Carol McRae, Brian Murphy, Don Pelly, Jelmer Poelstra, Roger Shaw, Deck Stapleton, Steve Stevans, and Fleeta Wilkinson.

**Exclusives:** American Bittern, Snowy Egret, Northern Harrier, Merlin, Rusty Blackbird

**Notes:** The Durham Spring Bird Count was held on Sunday April 26, 2020. One for the record books we had record high 24 observers in 14 parties tallied 138 species (average 117) and 7910 total birds (average 4445) led by 941 Double-crested Cormorant, 308 Northern Cardinal and 260 Red-eyed Vireo.

Highlights were many, new to the spring checklist were calling Virginia Rail (fourth record) in Little River section, Snowy Egret (second) at the Ellerbe Creek mouth area, Mississippi Kite (third) over a backyard near the Eno River, Warbling Vireo along Panther Creek/hickory hill (first), Gray-cheeked Thrush at Eno River boat ramp (first, but several around this season), and one Sedge Wren (third) at Flat River Waterfowl Impoundment.

We lit up the "rarer" list with several, admittedly I need to update this old checklist format and put these on the expected side! Bonaparte's Gull (three parties and pretty plumage), Herring Gull, Red-breasted Merganser (two parties), Common Loon (four parties), American Bittern, Northern Harrier (three parties), Merlin (two parties), Greater Yellowlegs, Chuck-wills-widow, Bank Swallow (two parties), Magnolia, Cape May and Blackburnian Warblers, Rose-breasted Grosbeak (four parties), Bobolink (two parties), Rusty Blackbird and Baltimore Oriole (three parties).

Misses: for the second year in a row we missed Rock Pigeon, I even checked all bridges. And I won't be greedy, but other species shamelessly undetected this year included Hooded Merganser, Northern Bobwhite, American Woodcock and White-crowned Sparrow.



Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!  
Brian Bockhahn

**Falls Lake** – count date April 27<sup>th</sup>, 126 species, 5770 individuals, 23 participants in 15 parties plus one feeder watcher, 71.60 party-hours. Weather: Mostly clear skies, moderate winds, temperature 48-68°F.

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

**Participants:** Herb Amyx, Pat Amyx, Brian Bockhahn, Norm Budnitz, Sebastian Burgess, Will Cook, Ed Corey, Tom Driscoll, Kevin Durso, Sandy Durso, Marti Kane, Gene Kingsley, Kyle Kittleberger, Elliot McDowell, Carol McRae, Brian Pendergraft, Josh Southern, Deck Stapleton, Sara Steffan, Steve Stevens, Patty Tice, Karen Walencik, and Tom Walencik.

**Exclusives:** None

**Notes:** The 17th Falls Lake Spring Bird Count was held on April 27, 2020. Twenty-two observers in 15 parties and one feeder counter tallied our second highest 126 species (average 114, high 130) and our highest total of 5770 total birds (average 4004).

Most numerous birds were 420 Double Crested Cormorant, 297 Ring-billed Gull and 242 Northern Cardinal.

First Records: a whopping three Sedge Wrens in a field at Olive Grove game lands and a Lincoln's Sparrow in a field at the north end of Beaverdam Lake, check those fields, wow! A count week Marsh Wren was new for the spring checklist, in the same spot as the Sedge Wren and all were photographed!

Other Goodies: two parties had Cape May Warbler (second count record). Kpark in the lower lake had our second Gray-cheeked Thrush and a count week Greater Yellowlegs (second). Two parties had Common Raven (third record). Bank Swallow, Blue-winged Warbler, Veery, Bobolink and Baltimore Oriole were also found.

Misses: Nothing off A-list but we missed Sharp-shinned Hawk, Caspian Tern, Whippoorwill and Common Nighthawk.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!  
Brian Bockhahn

**Kerr Lake** – count date April 28<sup>th</sup>, 125 species, 4567 individuals, 12 participants in seven parties, 55.05 party-hours. Weather: Cloudy skies, light winds, temperatures 38°-62°F.

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

**Participants:** Brian Bockhahn, Ann Brice, Adam D'Onofrio, Paul Glass, Bill Lindemuth, Joyce Lindemuth, Fred Lobdell, Grace McCrowell, Carol McRae, Evan Spears, Deck Stapleton, and Elizabeth Wooten.

**Exclusives:** Ring-necked Duck, Sora, Red-throated Loon, Loggerhead Shrike, Horned Lark

**Notes:** The 17th Kerr Lake Spring Bird Count was held on April 28, 2020. Twelve observers in seven parties tallied 125 species (average 119) and 4567 birds (average 3916) led by 565 Double-crested Cormorant, 265 Ring-billed Gull and 211 Yellow-rumped Warbler.

A Sora from Dick Cross WMA, and Loggerhead Shrike from Palmer Springs were new to the spring count checklist.

Other Goodies: Rarity list was well represented with Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-throated Loon (three years straight), Pied-billed Grebe, American Kestrel, American Woodcock, Horned Lark, Marsh Wren (third) and Veery.

Misses: Coopers Hawk, Solitary Sandpiper, Hairy Woodpecker (first miss), Black-throated Green Warbler, Savannah Sparrow and Baltimore Oriole.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

Appendix: Please see the [appendix](#) for a chart of data from these counts.

## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

---

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

(All dates Summer 2021, 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, **BRP** – Blue Ridge Parkway, **et al.** – and others, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

*All italicized place names are counties.*

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** There was a flurry of sightings in the northern half of NC in early June including five at a small pond in Apex *Wake* NC 4 Jun (Molly Lankford, m. obs.), four at Patterson Place *Durham* NC 9 Jun (Karen Hogan, m. obs.), six where US-64 crosses NC-1139 in *Washington* NC 10 Jun (Matt Janson), and 28, a remarkable count for NC, at a pond in Hertford *Perquimans* NC 15 Jun (Bo Leisenring). Multiple sightings were made in the area southeast of Lake Mattamuskeet *Hyde* NC again this year, including confirmation of breeding near Middletown when a pair of adults were photographed with three chicks 29 Jul (Jeff Lewis).



*Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, 29 July 2021. Photo by Jeff Lewis.*

**Snow Goose:** One at Isothermal Community College *Rutherford* NC 9 Jun (Simon Thompson) was unusual for summer.

**Tundra Swan:** Unusual for summer were two in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Hyde* NC 12 Jun (Kees de Mooy), one at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC 11-18 Jul (Lucy Jacobson, m. obs.), and one on the western side of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 22-24 Jul (Tobias Gingerich, et al.).

**Northern Shoveler:** A drake summering at the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC throughout the period (m. obs.) was unusual.

**Ring-necked Duck:** A pair, a drake and a hen, in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC 28 Jun through 5 Jul (Shawn Smolen-Morton, m. obs.) were unusual for mid-summer.

**Lesser Scaup:** Three drakes lingered on the Pamlico River in Washington *Beaufort* NC through 21 Jun (Betsy Kane, m. obs.) and, possibly the same three drakes, on the Neuse River in Bridgeton *Craven* NC through 3 Jul (Tom & Anna Leith). An individual drake lingered at the Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC through 3 Jul (Jay Chandler, m. obs.).

**Common Eider:** One lingered at Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC through 21 Jun (Audrey Whitlock). Six continuing from spring at Beaufort Harbor *Carteret* NC 20 Jun (John Fussell, Curtiss Merrick) was a remarkable count for summer. Two continued at Beaufort Harbor through 16 Jul (Caleb Bronsink).

**Surf Scoter:** Individuals lingered into mid-June at a few sites along the coast. Five at Beaufort Inlet *Carteret* NC 2 Jun (John Fussell) was a good count for summer.

**Black Scoter:** A hen on the Pasquotank River *Pasquotank* NC 8 Jul and 19 Jul (Matt Janson) was especially late.

**Bufflehead:** Individual hens at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC through 11 Jun (Sarah Lindgren) and on Daniel Island *Berkeley* SC 14 Jun (Bob Dellinger) were late.

**Common Merganser:** Mergansers bred again at two previously documented breeding sites—on the Tuckasegee River in *Swain* NC where a hen was seen with 11 juveniles 4 Jun (Jason Corder) and on the Green River/Lake Adger in *Polk* NC where a hen was seen with seven juveniles 20-26 Jun (Cheryl Day, m. obs.).

**Ruddy Duck:** Three on the Pamlico River in Washington *Beaufort* NC 21 Jun (Betsy Kane, Steve Taylor) were rather late.

**Horned Grebe:** One summered on Lake Keowee *Oconee* SC (Don Lenahan) for a second year in a row.

**Common Gallinule:** One at Conestee Nature Preserve *Greenville* SC 13 Jul (Max Bolin, et al.) was unusual for the Piedmont in summer.

**Limpkin:** Breeding was confirmed at two sites this summer—at the Belfair Golf Club near Bluffton *Beaufort* SC where two adults were seen with three juveniles 1 Jun (Jim Massey) and at the upper end of Goose Creek Reservoir *Berkeley* SC, the same site where breeding was first documented last summer, where two adults were seen with two juveniles 27 Jun (Andy Harrison, Craig Watson). Eight, including six juveniles, continued at this spring's breeding site in southwestern *Horry* SC 7 Jun (Scott Hartley). Individuals were seen at the upper end of Lake Marion *Sumter* SC 14 Jun (Frank Farrell) and 27 Jun (Cathy Mathias), at Pickney Island NWR *Beaufort* SC 26-27 Jun (Matthew Valencic, m. obs.), and at Lake Norman SP *Iredell* NC 30 Jul (Caroline Martin).

**Black-necked Stilt:** Four at the Horse Creek WTP in *Aiken* SC 7 Jun and 29 Jul (Mary Jo Dawson, m. obs.) were unusual for a site away from the coast in summer.

**Pacific Golden-Plover:** One was seen around the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC during the late summer for a third year in a row. This year, it was seen 8 Jul (Daniel Irons) through 30 Jul (m. obs.).

**Wilson's Plover:** 112 at New River Inlet *Onslow* NC 21 Jul (John Lynch) was a good count for NC.

**Semipalmated Plover:** One at McKinney Lake Fish Hatchery *Richmond* NC 14 Jun (Lori Arent, Harry LeGrand) was rather late for a site away from the coast.

**Long-billed Curlew:** Curlews began showing back up at a few favored tidal estuary sites around the middle of the period. Sightings included one at Hunting Island SP *Beaufort* SC 26 Jun (Milton Hobbs), one at Ophelia Inlet *Carteret* NC 3 Jul (Morgan Barnes, et al.), one at Onslow Beach *Onslow* NC 14 Jun and 20 Jul (Alisa Getz, John Lynch, et al.), three on Deveaux Bank *Charleston* SC during a shorebird survey 25 Jul (Luke Wilde), and one at the Rachel Carson Reserve *Carteret* NC 31 Jul (Lisa Tucci).

**Sanderling:** One at Archie Elledge WTP *Forsyth* NC 20 Jul (John Haire) was a good find for an inland site during the summer.

**Baird's Sandpiper:** One at Prater Farm *Anderson* SC 20 Jul (Brian Barchus, Joe & Liz Dunkleman, m. obs.) was rather early.

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** One at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 21 Jun (Karen Lebing) was unusual for June.

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** Inland sightings, all made mid-to-late July, included one at a pond along Ballinger Rd in *Guilford* NC 17 Jul (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.), one at Sandhills Sod Farms *Montgomery* NC 19 Jul (Martina Nordstrand), two at Bishop Branch Turf *Oconee* SC 20 Jul (Scott Davis), four at Prater Farm *Anderson* SC 20 Jul (Joe & Liz Dunkleman, m. obs.), and one in Mills River *Henderson* NC 22 Jul (Marilyn Westphal).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** One at Howell Woods *Johnston* NC 17 Jun (Lori White, et al.) was somewhat unusual for an inland site in mid-June.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** Individuals were seen and photographed on the lawn at Oregon Inlet Fishing Center *Dare* NC 5-7 Jun (Pat Draisey, m. obs.) and at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 31 Jul through 2 Aug (Jeff Tell, m. obs.).

**Heermann's Gull:** Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent adult Heermann's Gull at Hunting Island SP *Beaufort* SC 21 Jun (Tammy Hester). This bird was almost certainly the same individual seen at nearby Tybee Island

Georgia, near its border with SC, three days prior 18 Jun (Steve Calver, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the first record of this west coast species anywhere in the Carolinas.

**Sooty Tern:** Not typically seen from shore when not following the passage of a tropical storm, individual Sooty Terns on Bird Key *Charleston* SC 12 Jul (Cacky Rivers) and on Deveau Bank *Charleston* SC 23 Jul (Maina Handmaker, et al.) may have been attempting to nest at those sites.

**Bridled Tern:** One photographed at Masonboro Inlet *New Hanover* NC 9 Jul (Scott Mullens) was very unusual from shore outside the passage of a tropical storm.

**Roseate Tern:** Individuals near New River Inlet *Onslow* NC 21 Jul (John Lynch) and on the eastern end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 26 Jul (Aidan Rominger) were unusual for those areas. Counts at more traditional sites included four at Cape Point *Dare* NC 2 Jun (Daniel Irons, m. obs.) and up to three at the northern end of Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 27 Jul (Pat Draisey, m. obs.).

**Common Tern:** One on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* NC 19 Jun (Judy Walker, et al.) was unusual for the Piedmont region in June.

**Arctic Tern:** Individuals in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 1 Jun and 4 Jun (Daniel Irons) were good finds from shore.

**White-tailed Tropicbird:** One, possibly two, was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 6 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

**Wilson's Storm-Petrel:** Multiple from-shore sightings were made in early June including a remarkable count of 520 off Cape Point *Dare* NC 2 Jun (Daniel Irons). Three around Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC 3 Jun (Zealon Wight-Maier) were notable for the SC coast.

**White-faced Storm-Petrel:** One was well-seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 31 Jul (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). This sighting was only the fifth made in Carolina waters over the past decade.



*White-faced Storm-Petrel, 31 Jul 2021. Photo by Kate Sutherland.*

**Fea's Petrel:** One was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 6 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

**Cory's Shearwater:** 1312 in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 5 Jun (Daniel Irons) was a notable from-shore count.

**Wood Stork:** Post-breeding dispersal resulted in multiple inland sightings beginning around mid-July. Farthest inland and a first for the county was one in central *Polk* NC 13 Jul (Melinda Champion, m. obs.).



**Magnificent Frigatebird:** Multiple sightings were made at sites along the coast from *Currituck* NC south to *Charleston* SC from 3 Jun through 12 Jun (m. obs.) including a count of three over North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC and nearby Sunset Beach *Brunswick* NC 6 Jun (Ed Groneman, m. obs.).

**Anhinga:** Post-breeding dispersal resulted in sightings at multiple sites in the Piedmont region beginning in late June. 11 over Crabtree Creek Wetland *Wake* NC 14 Jul (Harry LeGrand) was a notable count for the Piedmont. Farthest inland was one over the upper end of Rhodhiss Lake *Burke* NC 16 Jul (Art Webster).

**Least Bittern:** Individuals at Conestee Nature Preserve *Greenville* NC 17 Jun through 5 Aug (Mark Harvell, Charles Rucinski, m. obs.) and along the Rocky River in western *Cabarrus* NC 11 Jul and 25 Jul (Taylor Piephoff, m. obs.) were unusual for the Piedmont region in summer, suggestive of attempted nesting at those sites.

**Great Blue Heron (Great White):** One around the Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC 24 Jun through 3 Jul (Jay Chandler, m. obs.) was a good find.

**Snowy Egret:** Post-breeding dispersal resulted in sightings at multiple inland sites beginning in late June. Farthest inland was one at Lake Adger *Polk* NC 21 Jun (Mike Resch, m. obs.).

**Tricolored Heron:** Individuals were found at six sites in the Piedmont in the latter half of July. Individuals at the upper end of Lake Fisher *Rowan* NC 22-25 Jul (Stephen Schoon, m. obs.) and at Lake Norman SP *Iredell* NC 27 Jul (Ralph Erickson) were especially unusual for those areas.

**Cattle Egret:** One photographed in southern *Ashe* NC 17 Jul (Guy McGrane, m. obs.) was unusual for the NC High Country.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Immature individuals seen and photographed along Cane Creek in central *Mitchell* NC 16 Jun (Cathy & Thomas McNeil) and at Valle Crucis *Watauga* NC 25 Jul into August (Paul Laurent, m. obs.) were unusual for the northern mountains.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** Two immature birds at Beaver Lake *Buncombe* NC 14 Jul (Jay Wherley, m. obs.) were unusual for the mountain region.

**White Ibis:** One at New River SP *Ashe* NC 30-31 Jul (Joseph Johnson, m. obs.) was unusual for the northern mountains and a first for that county.

**Roseate Spoonbill:** Spoonbills made a remarkable push inland and northward in July during post-breeding dispersal. County firsts included one at a pond in southern *York* SC 10-11 Jul (Marcus & Cheryl Morris, m. obs.), three at High Rock Lake *Rowan* NC 17 Jul (Kayla Smith), one at the upper end of Lake James *McDowell* NC 21 Jul (Art Webster),

one at a pond along Bowden Rd in *Orange* NC 31 Jul through 25 Aug (Fleeta Chauvigne, m. obs.), and one near Poston *Florence* SC 31 Jul (Jamey Eaddy). Sightings of two or more at sites in the Piedmont included two at Lake Lynn *Wake* NC 4-6 Jul (Susan Conder, m. obs.), likely the same two individuals at nearby Shelley Lake 6-8 Jul (Steven Vozzo, m. obs.), three at Cane Creek Park *Union* NC 10-15 Jul (Chris Huffstickler, m. obs.), five along the Catawba River in *Mecklenburg* NC 13-18 Jul (Greg Hays, m. obs.), two in the Horsepen Creek arm of Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC 20 Jul into August (Henry Link, Matt Wangerin, m. obs.), and four at Lake Twitty *Union* NC 26 Jul (Dennis Kent, m. obs.). Two on the northern Core Banks *Carteret* NC 29 Jul (Rebecca Jones, et al.) was the northernmost sighting made along the coast. 13 at Twin Lakes in Sunset Beach *Brunswick* NC 12 Jul (David Wilson) and eight at New River Inlet *Onslow* NC 21 Jul (John Lynch) were notable counts for NC. 85 on Dewees Island *Charleston* SC 26 Jun (Laura Caudill, et al.) was the high count for SC.

**Swallow-tailed Kite:** As usual, Swallow-tailed Kites began dispersing from their breeding grounds in mid-July. Unusual for the mountain region was one just south of Brevard *Transylvania* NC 15-17 Jul (Michael Plauché, m. obs.) and two over Lake Louise in Weaverville *Buncombe* NC 20 Jul (Tom Dudley). 20 near Belton *Anderson* SC 23 Jul (fide Ann Bailes) was a notable count for the Piedmont.

**Northern Harrier:** Individuals lingering around the Bodie Island Lighthouse *Dare* NC through 19 Jun (Larry Chen, Sarah Toner) and at Cedar Island NWR *Carteret* NC 20 Jun (John Fussell, et al.) were suggestive of attempted nesting in those areas. One over the Super Sod farm along Hooper Lane *Henderson* NC 15 Jul (Kevin Burke, Benjamin Whitlock) likely was an early fall arrival.

**Mississippi Kite:** 30+ over fields in southeastern *Montgomery* NC 31 Jul (Wayne Hoffman) was a good count for the Piedmont.

**Broad-winged Hawk:** Individuals photographed at Sewee Preserve *Charleston* SC 13 Jun (Pam Ford, et al.), in Sunset Beach *Brunswick* NC 3 Jul (David Wilson), and at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 5 Jul (Ted Falasco) were unusual for sites along the coast in summer.

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** One seen excavating a nesting cavity at 3450 feet above sea level in northeastern *Watauga* NC 7 Jul (Adrianna Nelson) was unusual for such a high elevation.

**Merlin:** Four were seen at Land Harbor Lake *Avery* NC, a site where the species was suspected of breeding last year, 27 Jul (Barbara Stewman).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** Flycatchers successfully nested near the Rock Hill – York County Airport *York* SC for a third year in a row, as four juveniles were seen alongside an adult 28 Jun (Andrew Lewis, m. obs.). A pair attempting to nest just east of McConnells *York* SC 7 Jun through 16 Jul (Marcus & Cheryl Morris, m. obs.) were not

successful. The individual seen along Thompson Creek Rd in *Spartanburg* SC in late May remained through 17 Jun (Cherrie Sneed), probably departing due to the lack of a mate. One at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 5 Jun (Jill & Ted Falasco, m. obs.) did not stick around that site.

**Willow Flycatcher:** A singing individual seen along the Rocky River in western *Cabarrus* NC 3 Jun through 11 Jul (Taylor Piephoff, m. obs.) was suggestive of attempted nesting at that site.

**Warbling Vireo:** Southeast of the species' typical breeding range, one or more singing individuals were seen and heard at Crabtree Creek Wetland *Wake* NC throughout the period with a high count of three 27 Jun (Kent Fiala, Karen Hogan). Despite the presence of up to three singing birds at that site for two years in a row now, evidence of nesting there is yet to be obtained.

**Fish Crow:** Nine, possibly including juveniles, in Boone *Watauga* NC 15 Jul (Guy McGrane) were suggestive of breeding in that area. Though this species' range has expanded into the mountains in recent decades, documented evidence of breeding in that region is still lacking.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** Individuals at Bass Lake *Wake* NC 7 Jun (Mike Maier, Lawrence Zoller) and at Grandfather Mountain *Avery* NC 28 Jul (David Schlabach, et al.) were very unusual for summer.

**Sedge Wren:** Five singing individuals at the Voice of America Site in *Washington* NC 28 Jul (Elsa Chen, Matt Janson) was a notable count for summer. One wonders if these birds nested at that site.

**Swainson's Thrush:** One heard singing at Mount Mitchell SP *Yancey* NC 30 Jun (Dwayne Martin, et al.) was suggestive of attempted nesting there.

**Purple Finch:** A female lingered at a feeder in western Winston-Salem *Forsyth* NC until 16 Jun (David & Susan Disher).

**Red Crossbill:** 70 around the Richland Balsam Overlook along the BRP in *Jackson* NC 17 Jun (Ryan Bakelaar) was a good count.

**Pine Siskin:** Individuals lingered at feeders in *Lexington* SC until 13 Jun (David Dobson) and in Raleigh *Wake* until 22 Jun (Lynn Erla Beegle). One photographed at a feeder in Nags Head *Dare* NC 4 Jul (Audrey Whitlock) was especially unusual for July.

**Lark Sparrow:** One photographed at Gull Rock Game Land *Hyde* NC 27 Jul (Martin Stoner, et al.) was somewhat early, unusual for a site away from the Sandhills in summer.

**White-throated Sparrow:** One photographed in western Winston-Salem *Forsyth* NC 29 Jul (David & Susan Disher) was very unusual for July.

**Savannah Sparrow:** Breeding was confirmed in eastern *Wilkes* NC when a juvenile was seen in the company of two adults 8 Jul (Max Nootbaar). Three singing males and a female along White Plains Rd near Lomax *Wilkes* NC 9-10 Jun (Nootbaar) were suggestive of attempted breeding at that site as well.

**Bobolink:** 30 at a traditional breeding site near Beech Mountain in western *Watauga* NC 6 Jul (Paul Laurent) was a notable count for summer.

**Northern Waterthrush:** One at Catawba College Ecological Preserve *Rowan* NC 5 Jun (Vicky Burke, Bill Hooker) must have been a late spring migrant.

**Magnolia Warbler:** Individual singing males on Mount Pisgah *Haywood* NC 26 Jun (Jeremy Nance, William Huber), on Grandfather Mountain *Avery* NC 10 Jul (Clifton Avery, et al.), and on Roan Mountain *Mitchell* NC throughout the summer (m. obs.) were suggestive of attempted nesting at those sites.

**Blackpoll Warbler:** A singing male photographed at Wagon Rd Gap along the BRP in *Haywood* NC 13 Jun (Todd Arcos) was extremely late.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** One in southern *Union* NC 6 Jul (Martina Nordstrand) was extremely unusual for a site away from our highest mountains in mid-summer. Individuals seen at Clingmans Dome *Swain* NC (m. obs.) and at Roan Mountain *Mitchell* NC (m. obs.) intermittently throughout the period were more expected.

**Canada Warbler:** One photographed at Oconee SP *Oconee* SC 28 Jul (Marc Regnier) was unusual for SC in summer, likely an early downslope wanderer.

**Dickcissel:** Individual singing males at the Rowan County Landfill *Rowan* NC 17 Jun (Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.) and in Delta *Union* SC 1-5 Jul (Greg Berner, m. obs.) were firsts for those counties. A singing male in *Pasquotank* NC 5 Jun through 29 Jul (Greg Hudson, m. obs.) was a first for that county during the breeding season.

# CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

[www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://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>.

## ANNUAL DUES

Individual or non-profit.....	\$30.00
Family.....	\$35.00
Student.....	\$15.00
Sustaining and businesses.....	\$30.00
Patron.....	\$50.00 and up
Life Membership (payable in four consecutive \$100 installments) .....	\$500.00
Associate Life Membership (in same household as life member).....	\$100.00

## ELECTED OFFICERS

President	Steve Tracy, Gastonia NC	StevePath1@aol.com
NC Vice-Presidents	Colleen Bockhahn, Clayton NC	
	Guy McGrane, Deep Gap NC	
SC Vice-President	Craig Watson, Mount Pleasant SC	
Secretary	Jill Midgett, Charleston SC	
Treasurer	Paul Dayer, Durham NC	
NC Members-at-Large	Michael Clark, Durham NC	
	Lester Coble, Ernul NC	
	Julie Lee, Nebo NC	
	Marilyn Westphal, Hendersonville NC	
SC Members-at-Large	Ed Blitch, Charleston SC	
	Mac Williams, Hartsville SC	

## EX-OFFICIO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chat Editor	Steve Shultz, Apex, NC	<a href="mailto:chat@carolinabirdclub.org">chat@carolinabirdclub.org</a>
Newsletter Editor	Steve Dowlan, Vilas, NC	<a href="mailto:newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org">newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org</a>
Website Editor	Kent Fiala, Hillsborough, NC	<a href="mailto:webeditor@carolinabirdclub.org">webeditor@carolinabirdclub.org</a>
Immediate Past President	Lewis Burke, Columbia SC	

## HEADQUARTERS SECRETARY

Carol Bowman	9 Quincy Place Pinehurst NC 28374	<a href="mailto:hq@carolinabirdclub.org">hq@carolinabirdclub.org</a>
--------------	-----------------------------------	--