

## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Winter 2022-2023, unless otherwise noted)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **CBC** – Christmas Bird Count, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **Mt** – Mount, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

*All place names preceding NC/SC, also in italics, are counties.*

**Snow Goose:** One at Meat Camp Creek ESA *Watauga* NC 9 Jan (Peter Jones, m. obs.) and, likely the same individual, in neighboring southern *Ashe* NC 1-4 Feb (Sandy Sanders, m. obs.) was unusual for the northwestern corner of the state.

**Ross's Goose:** A few were seen in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Hyde/Washington* NC 22 Nov (Lori White, et al.) intermittently through 1 Feb (Ron Clark, Jim Guyton), with a high count of six made there 13 Jan (Carl & Cathy Miller). Elsewhere, individuals were seen in Minnesott Beach *Pamlico* NC 30 Nov through 1 Dec (Christine Stoughton Root, m. obs.), near Kernersville *Forsyth* NC 4-10 Dec (Nathan & Sarah Gatto, m. obs.), near Tillery *Halifax* NC 18 Dec (Ricky Davis), at Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 4 Jan through 24 Feb (Aaron Steed, m. obs.), in Wilkesboro *Wilkes* NC 7 Jan through 4 Mar (Dale Reynolds, m. obs.), in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC 9 Jan (Matt Rivers), in Beaufort *Carteret* NC 16-27 Jan (Marty Wall, m. obs.), near Ridgeville *Dorchester* SC 18 Jan (Brittany Puite), near Antreville *Abbeville* SC 28-31 Jan (John Patten Moss, m. obs.), in Spruce Pine *Avery* NC 15-21 Feb (Dennis Smith, m. obs.), and in north-central *Greenville* SC 28 Feb through 4 Mar (Laura Harris, Simon Harvey, m. obs.). Pairs were seen in Mills River *Henderson* NC 2-10 Dec (Michael Plauché, m. obs.) and near Tarboro *Edgecombe* NC 18 Dec through 2 Jan (Trevor Sleight, m. obs.).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Sightings included one in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC 3 Dec (Gus Messinides) and 5 Dec (Ron Ahle), four at Swann WTP *Forsyth* NC 25 Dec (Nathan & Sarah Gatto), two at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC during its CBC 30 Jan (Jeff Lewis, Audrey Whitlock), two in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Hyde/Washington* NC 4 Jan (Heather Russell) and 6 Jan (Sarah Toner), one in Hertford *Perquimans* NC 19 Jan (Jamie Adams), four just southeast of *Columbia* Richland SC 8 Jan through 1 Feb (Michelle Wilcox, m. obs.), and four in Brevard *Transylvania* NC 26 Jan through 28 Feb (Karen Hogan, Michael Plauché, m. obs.).

**Barnacle x Cackling Goose:** A presumed hybrid of a Barnacle Goose and a Cackling Goose was seen and photographed among a flock of Canada and Cackling Geese at a pond along US-64 just east of Creswell *Washington* NC 17-26 Feb (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.).

**Cackling Goose:** Nine at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 17 Dec (Jacob Annis, Sam Cooper) and ten at a pond along US-64 just east of Creswell *Washington* NC 26 Feb (Chip Davis, Dale Lambert) were notable counts. One seen along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 26 Dec through 13 Jan (Mary Alice Hayward, m. obs.) was unusual for that stretch of coast.

**Trumpeter Swan:** One was photographed at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 30 Jan (Walt Jenkins). One was first heard and then seen among a large flock of Tundra Swans in agricultural fields along NC-42 in southeastern *Edgecombe* NC 5 Feb (Ricky Davis).

**Tundra Swan:** 12 seen in flight over Stafford Gap *Madison* NC 17 Dec (Connie Toops) was a remarkable count for the mountain region. Unusual for the Triad area of NC was an immature individual at Lake Brandt *Guilford* 20 Dec (Robin Toler) and Salem Lake

*Forsyth* 26 Dec (Paul Beerman, m. obs.), and an adult individual at Lake Townsend *Guilford* 27 Dec (Elizabeth & Henry Link, m. obs.), at Lake Brandt 28-29 Dec (James Pretzsch, m. obs.), and near Kernersville *Forsyth* 4-6 Jan (Paul Nielson, m. obs.). A flock of an estimated 7000 in agricultural fields along NC-42 in southeastern *Edgecombe* NC 5 Feb (Ricky Davis) was a notable count away from a wildlife refuge.

**Eurasian Wigeon:** Individual drakes were seen at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC throughout the period (m. obs.), in southern *Georgetown* SC during the Winyah Bay CBC 15 Dec (Elizabeth Anderegg, et al.), at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 17 Dec (Jacob Annis, Sam Cooper) and intermittently into February (m. obs.), and in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC 8-9 Jan (Carl & Cathy Miller, m. obs.).

**Common Eider:** Eiders were few and far between this winter. Three in flight off Figure Eight Island *New Hanover* NC 24 Dec (Derb Carter) was the high count.

**Harlequin Duck:** First-winter drakes were seen around the Bonner Bridge Fishing Pier *Dare* NC 22 Nov through 1 Jan (Daniel Irons, m. obs.) and, possibly the same individual, around the jetty at Ft Macon SP *Carteret* NC 3-20 Feb (Clyde Atkins, Marty Wall, m. obs.).



*Harlequin Duck, 28 Dec 2022, Dare County NC.*

*Photograph by Ian McDonald.*

**Surf Scoter:** There was a short flurry of sightings on inland lakes 9-11 Dec including one on Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 9 -11 Dec (Michael Plauché, m. obs.), eight on Salem Lake *Forsyth* NC 10 Dec (John Haire, m. obs.), six at Swann WTP *Forsyth* NC 10 Dec (Haire), and 24, a remarkable count for the mountain region, on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 11 Dec (Kirstin Shrode, m. obs.).

**White-winged Scoter:** Inland sightings included four on Lake Hartwell *Anderson/Oconee* SC 22 Dec (Kevin Kubach, m. obs.), one on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 27 Dec (Matt Wangerin, et al.), one at YMCA Camp Harrison *Wilkes* NC 1 Jan (Guy McGrane, Maxwell Ramey), one at Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 5 Feb and nearby Lake Raleigh 6-15 Feb (Len O'Toole, m. obs.), and five on Lake Townsend 4 Feb (Wangerin, et al.).

**Long-tailed Duck:** Inland sightings involved one on Moss Lake *Cleveland* NC 12 Dec (Kade Lockhart), one on John D. Long Lake *Union* SC 16-17 Dec (Debra & Steve Patterson, m. obs.), three on Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 4 Feb (Zane Fish, m. obs.), and one on Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC 4-5 Feb (Matt Wangerin, m. obs.).

**Common Merganser:** This species made a moderate push into NC in late December into January, likely because of below-freezing temperatures to the north. One seen and photographed at Luther Britt Park in Lumberton *Robeson* NC 8-23 Jan (Eric Graham, m. obs.) was unusual for that area and a first for that county. Farthest south were two photographed on the Tugaloo River in *Oconee* SC 19 Jan (Jason Corder), though that pair may have wandered from a breeding area in the neighboring NC mountains. 600 on Lake Phelps *Washington* NC 13 Jan (Derb Carter, m. obs.) was this winter's high count.

**Red-breasted Merganser:** 59 on Lake Summit *Henderson* NC 11 Dec (Kevin Burke), 100 on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 14 Dec (Jim Tolbert), and 55 on Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 15 Dec (Nick Accardo, Michael Plauché) were notable counts for the mountain region.

**Red-necked Grebe:** Individuals were seen on Thurmond Reservoir *McCormick* SC 26 Nov through 4 Dec (Mac McCall, John Patten Moss, Sam Murray, m. obs.), on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 1 Dec (Heather Buttonow), on Salem Lake *Forsyth* NC 4-12 Dec (John Haire, m. obs.), on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 5-6 Dec (Mark Montazer, m. obs.), on Lake Norman in *Iredell* NC 18 Dec (Jeff Lemons, Dennis Kent), on Lake Hartwell *Oconee* SC 17-21 Jan (Vicky Burke, Bill Hooker, m. obs.), and again on Jordan Lake 21-26 Jan (Brian Strassburger, m. obs.).

**Eared Grebe:** Sightings included two at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC during the Savannah CBC 2 Jan (Steve Calver), one in the Seaforth arm of Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 15 Jan through 22 Feb (Dale Lambert, Scott Mullens, m. obs.), and one near the jetty at Ft Fisher SP *Carteret* NC 21 Feb (Marty Wall).

**Western Grebe:** One photographed on Lake Norman *Iredell/Mecklenburg* NC during the Southern Lake Norman CBC 18 Dec (Jeff Lemons, Dennis Kent) was an excellent find,

almost certainly the same individual photographed about 30 miles downstream on Lake Wylie *York* SC 19-21 Dec (John Demchak, m. obs.).

**White-crowned Pigeon:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent White-crowned Pigeon perched on a powerline in Carolina Beach *New Hanover* NC during the Wilmington CBC 31 Dec (Jesse Anderson). If accepted, the report would provide the first record of this Caribbean pigeon anywhere in the Carolinas.

**White-winged Dove:** Four seen together at Patriot's Point *Charleston* SC 29-30 Dec (Matt Johnson, m. obs.) was a remarkable concentration for the Carolinas. Individuals briefly visited five other sites along the southern half of our coast December and January.

**Chuck-will's-widow:** One photographed along Lighthouse Rd at Cape Point *Dare* NC just before dawn 19 Dec (Daniel Irons) was a great find for winter.

**Eastern Whip-poor-will:** One recorded singing in Francis Marion National Forest *Berkeley* SC 28 Feb (Brad Sale) was early.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** A few of the higher counts made on CBCs along the coast were 23 in northern *Dare* NC during the Kitty Hawk CBC 17 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis), 27 in southern *Dare* NC during the Hatteras CBC 27 Dec (*fide* Karen Lebing, Pat Moore), nine in *Georgetown* SC during the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill), and 12 in *Charleston* SC during the Sea Islands CBC 3 Jan (*fide* Aaron Given). Farthest inland this winter were two, a female and an adult male, visiting a feeder near downtown Raleigh *Wake* NC in December and January (*fide* Susan Campbell).

**Black-chinned Hummingbird:** Individuals were seen and photographed in Plantersville *Georgetown* SC 7 Dec (Mandy & Mark Johnson), visiting a feeder in Mt Pleasant *Charleston* SC 25 Dec through 6 Feb (Craig Watson, m. obs.), and visiting a feeder on James Island *Georgetown* SC 21 Jan through 3 Apr (Dennis Forsythe).

**Rufous Hummingbird:** Individuals were reported at dozens of sites this winter, mostly in the first half of the period, with over a dozen captured for banding in NC alone (*fide* Susan Campbell). One visiting a feeder in Mt Pleasant *Charleston* SC 27 Dec through 4 Feb (Tom Austin, Alison Smith, m. obs.) was unusual for a site near the coast in mid-winter. One successfully over-wintered in the Bean Tract of Riverbend Park *Catawba* NC for a third year in a row (Dwayne Martin).

**Allen's Hummingbird:** Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent immature male Allen's Hummingbird visiting a feeder on Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC 26 Feb (Andy Jones, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide SC its second record.

**Anna's x Allen's Hummingbird:** A very rare hybrid of an Anna's Hummingbird and an Allen's Hummingbird was identified after being captured for measurement and banding at a home in Concord *Cabarrus* NC 7 Feb (Susan Campbell). The juvenile male, first identified as an Allen's Hummingbird, visited a feeder at the home from mid-December

through 14 Feb (Connie & Doyle Bussey) and is the first confirmed hybrid hummingbird ever documented in the Carolinas.



*Anna's x Allen's Hummingbird, 8 Feb 2023, Concord,  
Cabarrus County NC. Photograph by Patty Masten.  
Note silver band on right leg.*

**Sora:** One at Conestee Nature Park *Greenville* SC 15 Jan through 2 Feb (Simon Harvey, Michael Robertson, m. obs.) was unusual for upstate SC in mid-winter.

**Limpkin:** Ten at a suburban retention pond in southern *Horry* SC 25 Jan (Dawne Dunton), near the site where breeding was confirmed in May 2021 and May 2022, was a notable count.

**Sandhill Crane:** Three photographed in northbound flight over Hump Mountain Peak *Avery* NC 18 Feb (Jedda Levy) were unusual for our northern mountains. Also notable were counts of up to 15 in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Hyde/Washington* NC intermittently through the winter (m. obs.), 16 in northern *Edgecombe* NC during the Rocky Mount CBC 16 Dec (Brain Bockhahn), 11 in *Guilford* NC during the Greensboro CBC 17 Dec (Matt Wangerin), 31 in flight over Calhoun Falls SP *Abbeville* SC 28 Dec (Irvin Pitts), three at Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 29 Dec through 12 Jan (Vicky Burke, Jay Wherley, m. obs.), and eight in a field near Delway *Sampson* NC 1-8 Feb (Marshall Quinn, m. obs.). The high count this winter was 110 in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC 17 Feb (Denise DuPon, et al.).

**Black-necked Stilt:** Two at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 27-28 Dec (Zane Fish, m. obs.) and, possibly the same pair of birds, at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 8 Feb (Abby Bourne) were very unusual for NC in winter.

**American Avocet:** Two at Singing Pines Recreation Area on Lake Hartwell *Anderson* SC 29 Dec (Kevin Kubach, m. obs.) were unusual for a site so far from the coast in winter.

**Long-billed Curlew:** Three at the mouth of Big Bay Creek in Edisto Beach *Colleton* SC 4 Dec (Lisa Cumming, Elizabeth & Jonathan Anderegg) was a good count.

**Bar-tailed Godwit:** The individual seen on the eastern end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC in the latter half of fall continued at that site through winter and into spring (m. obs.).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** Two photographed in a flooded field along NC-33 just east of Aurora *Beaufort* NC 25-30 Dec (Trevor Sleight) were an excellent find for NC in winter. One seen and photographed along the Murrells Inlet Boardwalk *Georgetown* SC 15 Jan (Joe Donahue, et al.) was unusual for the northern SC coast in mid-winter. In southernmost SC, the only area of the Carolinas where this species regularly lingers/over-winters, 28 were seen at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 30 Dec (Steve Calver).

**Purple Sandpiper:** 61 on the north jetty at Masonboro Inlet *New Hanover* NC 24 Jan (Wayne Hoffman) was a notable count.

**Least Sandpiper:** 50 at McAlpine WTP *Mecklenburg* NC during the Charlotte CBC 26 Dec (Matt Janson, et al.) and 37 at Eighteenmile Creek *Anderson* SC 29 Dec (Kevin Kubach) were good counts for the Piedmont region in winter.

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** A flock of 72, identified by call, in a flooded field along NC-33 just east of Aurora *Beaufort* NC 30 Dec (Trevor Sleight) was a notable count for that area. The winter's high count was 400 at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC during the Savannah CBC 2 Jan (Lauren Morgens, Matthew Sarver).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** Six at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 19-22 Dec, with five remaining through 2 Jan (Kevin Kubach, m. obs.) was a notable count for upstate SC in winter.

**Red-necked Phalarope:** One photographed among a flock of Red Phalaropes during a pelagic trip out of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 5 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.) was extremely unusual for winter.

**Red Phalarope:** A total of 3152 seen on a pelagic trip out of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 28 Jan (Brian Patteson, et al.) was a remarkable count.

**Great Skua:** One was seen on a pelagic trip out of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 20 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.)



**Pomarine Jaeger:** Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of a Pomarine Jaeger at Thurmond Reservoir *McCormick* SC 3 Dec (John Patten Moss, Sam Murray). If accepted, the report would provide the first record of this species at an inland site during the winter.

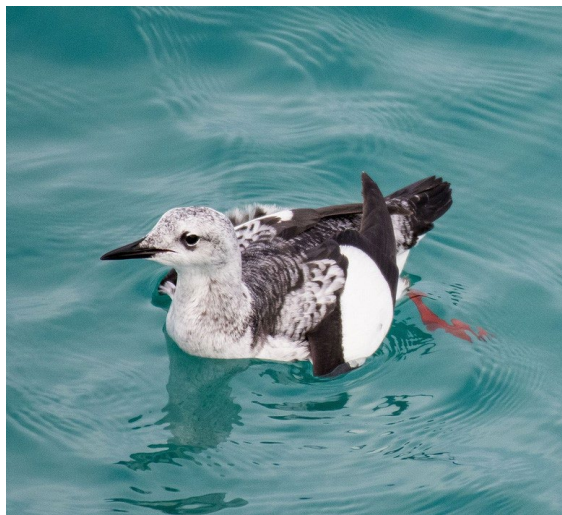
**Dovekie:** The only sightings this winter were made on two pelagic trips out of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC in late February, with 34 seen on 19 Feb and four seen on 26 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Common Murre:** Fantastic numbers were had on pelagic trips out of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC in February—44 on 9 Feb, 47 on 15 Feb, and 66 on 19 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.), all new record high counts for the Carolinas. One along the jetty at Ft Macon SP *Carteret* NC 10-12 Feb (Jamie Adams, m. obs.) and 12 off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 28 Feb (Andrew Thornton) were notable from shore.

**Thick-billed Murre:** One around Johnnie Mercer's Pier *New Hanover* NC 28 Jan (Sam Cooper, David Wilson, et al.) was a great find from shore. On pelagic trips out of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC, one was seen 9 Feb, three were seen 19 Feb, and one was seen 20 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Razorbill:** Numbers peaked in mid-February with counts of 1650 on a pelagic trip out of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 9 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.) and 1570, most in southbound flight, off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 17 Feb (Andrew Thornton).

**Black Guillemot:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Black Guillemot around the pilings of Johnnie Mercer's Pier *New Hanover* NC 17-19 Dec (Wayne Hoffman, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the fifth record for NC.



*Black Guillemot,  
17 Dec 2022,  
Wrightsville Beach,  
New Hanover County NC.  
Photograph by Liling  
Warren.*



**Atlantic Puffin:** 222 on a pelagic trip out of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 19 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.) was a fantastic count.

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of two adult Black-legged Kittiwakes seen in flight over Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 11 Dec (Nathaniel Axtell). If accepted, the report would provide the second record for the mountain region. A first-winter individual stuck around awhile at Johnnie Mercer's Pier in Wrightsville Beach *New Hanover* NC 8-21 Dec (Wayne Hoffman, m. obs.). 41, six adults and 35 first-winter birds, in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 22 Dec (Daniel Irons) was a notable count. A first-winter individual seen at Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC 23 Dec (Jack Rogers) was notable for SC.

**Black-headed Gull:** The adult seen around Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC beginning 7 Nov (Jamie Adams) continued intermittently through 20 Feb (Ann Stinely). A first-winter individual was seen and photographed on the beach near Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 5-12 Dec (Jason Bojczyk, m. obs.).

**Little Gull:** Counts of two off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 25 Feb (Ed Corey) and 27 Feb (Andrew Thornton) were notable from shore. Four, all adults, on a pelagic trip out of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 19 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.) was this winter's high count.

**Laughing Gull:** Nine, all adults, on Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 11 Dec (Harry LeGrand) were notable for the Piedmont region in winter.

**Franklin's Gull:** An adult individual seen and photographed at Cape Point *Dare* NC 8-19 Dec (Daniel Irons) was a great find for winter.

**Heermann's Gull:** An adult, likely the same individual seen at multiple sites along the coast the past two years, was seen and photographed in Folly Beach *Charleston* SC 5 Jan (Kevin Wistrom) and in Caswell Beach *Brunswick* NC 25 Feb (Cole Tiemann, m. obs.).

**Herring Gull:** Four on Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 9 Dec (David Fischer) was a notable count for the mountain region. 14 on Lake Robinson *Greenville* SC 26 Dec (Samuel Payne) was a notable count for upstate SC.

**Iceland Gull:** Individuals were seen at multiple sites in *Dare* NC including at Oregon Inlet 12 Dec through 4 Jan (Pat Draisey, m. obs.), at Pea Island NWR 20 Jan through 18 Feb (Alicia Bachman, m. obs.), and at Cape Point 11 Dec through 25 Jan (Jeff Lewis, m. obs.). Two distinct individuals were photographed at Cape Point 13 Jan (Bob Lewis).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Farthest inland this winter were individuals on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 5 Dec (Matt Wangerin), on Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC 17 Dec (Josh Mrozowski), on Lake Norman *Mecklenburg* NC 19 Dec (Patty Masten, et al.), on Lake Robinson *Greenville* SC 26-27 Dec (Samuel Payne), and on Rankin Lake *Gaston* NC 3 Feb (Chris Huffstickler).

**Glaucous Gull:** Individuals were photographed at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 20 Dec (Daniel Irons), at Cape Point *Dare* NC 14 Jan (Taylor Piephoff, et al.), and at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal *Carteret* NC 16 Jan (Wayne Lewis).

**Red-throated Loon:** One photographed on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 29 Dec (Fleeta Chauvigne, Mark Simon) was the only inland report this winter.

**Pacific Loon:** Two on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 1 Dec (Henry Link, m. obs.) was a remarkable report, as all previous inland sightings have been of individuals. One seen on the ocean in Southern Shores *Dare* NC 12 Dec (Jeff Lewis) was unusual for that stretch of the coast. Individuals were seen at multiple sites in *New Hanover* NC from Rich Inlet 24-25 Dec (Derb Carter) south to Masonboro Inlet 11-21 Feb (Sam Cooper, m. obs.). Three around Johnnie Mercer's Pier in Wrightsville Beach *New Hanover* NC 17 Dec (Jamie Adams, Derb Carter, m. obs.) was the high count.

**Northern Fulmar:** 130 on a pelagic trip out of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 26 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.) was a notable count.

**Sooty Shearwater:** Individuals seen from Cape Point *Dare* NC 22 Dec (Daniel Irons) and during a pelagic trip out of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 5 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.) were unusual for winter.

**Great Shearwater:** Two off Cape Point *Dare* NC 15 Dec (Daniel Irons) and individuals there 22 Dec (Irons) and 25 Jan (Michael Gosselin, Andrew Thornton) were unusual for winter.

**Manx Shearwater:** One to two around Wrightsville Beach and Figure Eight Island *New Hanover* NC 9-18 Dec (Jesse Anderson, m. obs.) were unusual for that stretch of the coast.

**Great Cormorant:** Peak counts were five at Masonboro Inlet *New Hanover* NC 31 Dec (Jacob Annis, Sam Cooper) and six at Beaufort Inlet at Ft Macon SP *Carteret* NC 6-17 Feb (Marty Wall, m. obs.).

**American White Pelican:** Below the High Rock Dam *Davidson/Rowan* NC, a regular aggregation site for the species in late winter, sightings began 16 Jan (Brenda Hiles) and numbers peaked about a month later with 116 there 15 Feb (Greg Hays). 300 at North Inlet *Georgetown* SC 19 Jan (Jack & Janet Volker, et al.) was a remarkable count.

**Least Bittern:** One at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 4 Jan through 4 Feb (Erinn Szarek, m. obs.) was unusual for the northern SC coast in mid-winter.

**Green Heron:** At sites away from the coast, individuals lingered into early winter at Beaver Lake *Buncombe* NC from late November through 21 Dec (m. obs.), at Patterson Place *Durham* NC 5-16 Dec (Mark DiGiovanni, m. obs.), at Heritage Lake *York* SC 27-29 Dec (Cindy Stacy, m. obs.), along Swamp Rd in *Cumberland* NC during its CBC 2 Jan (Brian Bockhahn), and in *Greenwood* SC 3-7 Jan (Julie Hobbs).

**Osprey:** One photographed along the Tuckasegee River in Bryson City *Swain* NC 27 Dec (Graham Norman) was rather late for a site in the mountain region. One seen at Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 21 Feb (John Koon, m. obs.) likely was an early spring arrival.

**Swainson's Hawk:** An intermediate-morph juvenile was seen and photographed at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 4-20 Feb (Walt Jenkins, m. obs.).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** Up to two were heard calling along the entrance road to the Bodie Island Lighthouse *Dare* NC 4 Dec through 19 Feb (m. obs.). One recorded calling southeast of Monroe *Union* NC 17 Feb (Paula Ford) was unusual for that area.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher:** Individuals were seen and photographed at Sturgeon City Park in Jacksonville *Onslow* NC 6 Dec (John Lynch), along Sawyer Lake Rd at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 30 Dec intermittently through 19 Feb (Alan MacEachren, m. obs.), at North River Farms *Carteret* NC 3 Jan (Curtiss Merrick, Marty Wall), and along Long Curve Rd at Alligator River NWR 25 Jan through 6 Feb (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.).

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** An individual photographed near the Bonner Bridge Fishing Pier *Dare* NC 19 Dec (Galen Goodrum, et al.) and, very likely the same individual, photographed four miles south at North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 2 Jan (Mary Hays) was incredibly late, the latest ever documented in fall/winter in the Carolinas.

**Western Kingbird:** Individuals seen along Compton Rd in northern *Orange* NC 17-19 Dec (Karen Hogan, Teresa Noel, m. obs.) and at Hank Anderson Park *Orange* NC 8 Jan (Lucretia Kinney) were unusual for the Piedmont. Closer to the coast, individuals were seen on Harbor Island *Beaufort* SC 16-17 Dec (Erinn Szarek, Jenn Clementoni), at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 17 Dec intermittently into spring (Jordan Juzdowski, m. obs.), in Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 17-23 Dec (Michelle Forte, m. obs.), at the Wright Brothers Memorial *Dare* NC 21 Dec (David True), at Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC 12 Jan (David McLean), on Daufuskie Island *Beaufort* SC 27 Jan (Mark Levine), and at Patriots Point *Charleston* SC 4 Feb (Andrew Lydeard). Sightings of multiple birds included two on Fripp Island *Beaufort* SC 11 Jan through 8 Feb (Susan Frost, m. obs.), three at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 13 Jan (Debra & Steve Patterson, et al.), and two at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 16 Jan (John Cox), 24 Jan through 6 Feb (Charles Donnelly, m. obs.) and 28 Feb through 1 Mar (m. obs.).

**Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher:** The "Western Flycatcher" found at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC 26 Nov (Ann Stinely) continued at that site through 25 Dec (Jeff Blalock).

***Empidonax* sp.:** An *Empidonax* flycatcher, likely a Least Flycatcher, seen and photographed at Lake Busbee *Horry* SC 29-30 Jan (Erin Szarek) may have been the same *Empidonax* flycatcher seen at that site last winter.

**Say's Phoebe:** The individual seen along Howerton Rd in *Guilford* NC in fall continued in that area throughout the winter and into spring (m. obs.).

**White-eyed Vireo:** Farthest inland this winter were individuals at Flat River Waterfowl Impoundment *Durham* NC 8 Dec (Ryne VanKrevelen) and 16 Feb (Karen Hogan, Teresa Noel), in southern *Greenville* SC 16 Jan (Laura Harris, Simon Harvey), and at Beaverdam Creek WMA *Anderson* SC 28 Jan (Brian Barchus) and 22 Feb (Scott Davis).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** One photographed at Buxton Woods *Dare* NC 10 Dec (Daniel Irons) was extraordinarily late, the latest ever documented with photos in fall/winter in the Carolinas.

**Blue-headed Vireo:** 31 in *Hyde* NC during the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC 29 Dec (*fide* Susan Campbell, Marc Ribaud) and 44 in *Georgetown* SC during the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill) were record high counts for those CBCs.

**Warbling Vireo:** One seen and photographed near the boat ramp at Pettigrew SP *Washington* NC 10 Dec (Jeff Beane, Ed Corey, et al.) was an excellent find in winter.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Individuals lingered into early winter at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC 2 Dec (Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.), at Angus Barn Pond *Wake* NC 21 Dec (Lori Arent, Harry LeGrand), in southern *Mecklenburg* NC during the Charlotte CBC 26 Dec (Nordstrand, et al.), in northeastern *York* SC during the Charlotte CBC 26 Dec (Nordstrand, et al.), and at Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 31 Dec (Thierry Besancon, m. obs.). A report of eight, one photographed, at Outlet Pointe WTP *Lexington* SC 22 Dec (Alison Davies) is an amazing count for winter. One seen near the dam at Lake Murray *Lexington* SC 9 Feb (Irvin Pitts) had either lingered through much of the winter or was incredibly early. Individuals at Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 26 Feb (Frank Porter) and along Hayes Rd in *Union* NC 26 Feb (Dennis Kent) were early spring arrivals.

**Barn Swallow:** One photographed around the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal *Carteret* NC 23 Dec (Marty Wall) was a great find in winter.

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Farthest inland this winter were two at Jetton Park *Mecklenburg* NC during the Southern Lake Norman CBC 18 Dec (Steve Coggin, et al.).

**Sedge Wren:** 92 in *Colleton/Charleston* SC during the ACE Basin CBC 1 Jan (*fide* David Chamberlain) was a record number for that CBC. Three along the Prairie Trail at McDowell Nature Preserve *Mecklenburg* NC 12 Jan (Larry Brown) was a notable count for the Piedmont region in mid-winter.

**Marsh Wren:** One seen and photographed near Brevard *Transylvania* NC 18-19 Dec (Nick Accardo, et al.) was very late for the mountain region. Unusual for upstate SC was one that likely over-wintered at Conestee Nature Preserve *Greenville* SC, seen at the same location 13-19 Dec (Simon Harvey), 18 Jan (Jason Taylor), and 25 Feb (Mike Spinelli). 81 at Checha-Combahee Plantation *Colleton* SC 26 Dec (Lauren Morgens, Matthew Sarver) was a notable count.

**Evening Grosbeak:** This large finch made a small irruption into NC this winter, reported at about a dozen sites in the northern mountains and Piedmont regions. 50 at Flat River Waterfowl Impoundment *Durham* NC 4 Dec (Lori Arent, et al.) with 44 continuing there 16 Feb (Noah Rokoske) was the high count.

**Purple Finch:** This finch made a moderate irruption into the Carolinas this winter. A few of the higher counts were 59 at Prairie Ridge Ecostation *Wake* NC 21 Dec (Jeff Beane), 50 at Riverbend Park *Catawba* NC 8 Jan (Dwayne Martin), and 54 at Hilton Pond *York* SC 17 Jan (Bill Hilton).

**Red Crossbill:** Sightings were made at a few sites in the northern NC Piedmont including along Transis Camp Rd in northeastern *Chatham* NC where a flock of up to 20 crossbills was seen 26 Dec through 23 Feb (Marc Ribaud, m. obs.).

**Lapland Longspur:** Sightings included one at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 3 Dec (Jason Bojczyk), one at Prater Farm *Anderson* SC 7 Dec (Simon Harvey), one at Pea Island NWR 26-30 Dec (Julian Avery, m. obs.), and two in agricultural fields south of Allendale *Allendale* SC 30 Dec (Andrew Lydeard, Daniel Redwine).

**Snow Bunting:** The individual found at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 28 Nov (Karen Hogan, Teresa Noel) was joined by a second Snow Bunting 2-15 Dec (Mark DiGiovanni, m. obs.) with one continuing through 24 Jan (Karen Szafrajda). Two were seen on the beach just north of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 2-4 Dec (Michael Gosselin, m. obs.).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** One photographed in Sandhills Game Land *Scotland* NC 15 Jan and 18 Feb (Jeff Beane, Stephanie Horton) was a good find for that area in winter.

**Lark Sparrow:** Individuals were seen around the Old Coast Guard Station at Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 28 Nov through 1 Dec (Daniel Irons), in eastern *Bamberg* SC 26 Dec (David Dobson), and in Elizabeth City *Pasquotank* NC 15 Jan through 19 Feb (Lori Arent, m. obs.).

**American Tree Sparrow:** One photographed on private land in southwestern *Rockingham* NC 13 Jan (Chris Marsh, Ann Robertson) was the first documented in the Carolinas since 2014.

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** Individuals were reported at eight sites in the Piedmont and coastal plain December through early January. One photographed at Mason Farm Biological Reserve *Orange* NC 26 Feb (Fleeta Chauvigne) was unusual for the Piedmont region in late winter.

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Individuals were seen at seven sites along or near the coast in December and January. One seen along the Saluda Riverwalk *Richland* SC 29 Jan (John Grego) was unusual for a site away from the coast in late winter.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** An adult male was photographed at a feeder in Trent Woods *Craven* NC 14 Jan (Zachary Tyndall).

**Bullock's Oriole:** Sightings, all of individuals visiting feeders, involved an adult male in Mt Pleasant *Charleston* SC 29 Nov through 31 Dec (Pam Ford, Craig Watson, m. obs.), an immature male in Rock Hill *York* SC 6-13 Jan (C.L. Mobley, m. obs.), and an immature male in *Spartanburg* SC 6 Jan through 22 Feb (Anne McChesney, m. obs.).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** A few of the higher counts in SC were 22 at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* 19 Dec (Scott Davis), 27 in *Allendale* 2 Jan (Andrew Lydeard), and 15 along Goat Island Rd in *Clarendon* 13 Jan (Matt Rivers). Two males were seen at several sites around Brevard *Transylvania* NC 2-25 Jan (Nathaniel Axtell, Michael Plauché, Frank Porter, m. obs.).

**Ovenbird:** Lingering into early winter in wooded areas along the coast was one in Kitty Hawk Woods *Dare* NC 9 Dec (Jeff Lewis) and 17 Dec (Al Hooks), eight in Buxton Woods *Dare* NC 10 Dec (Daniel Irons), one at Charles Towne Landing *Charleston* SC 21 Dec (Marc Regnier), and four in Buxton Woods during the Hatteras CBC 27 Dec (*fide* Karen Lebing, Pat Moore). An individual banded on the western end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 4 Sep 2022 lingered at that site through at least 18 Jan when last recaptured (*fide* Aaron Given). One successfully over-wintered in Manteo *Dare* NC, seen visiting a feeder 15 Dec intermittently into March (Pat Draisey). Individuals seen at West Ashley Park *Charleston* SC 1 Feb (Jordan Juzdowski) and at Buxton Woods 19 Feb (Roger Shaw) and 25 Feb (Andrew Thornton) likely over-wintered.

**Northern Waterthrush:** As usual, a few lingered into the first half of winter at sites in southernmost SC. This year's sightings included one in *Charleston* SC during the James Island CBC 31 Dec (*fide* Lesa Jones, Kathy Woolsey), two at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 2 Jan (Lauren Morgens, Matthew Sarver), one in northern *Beaufort* SC 5 Jan (Jake Zadik), and one at Savannah NWR *Jasper* SC 15 Jan (Andrew Lydeard). One heard and then seen at a suburban retention pond near Rock Hill *York* SC 1 Jan (Greg Hays) was very unusual for a site away from our southern coast in winter.

**Nashville Warbler:** Three were reported this winter—one seen and photographed at Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 12 Dec (Matthew Murphy) and again 29 Dec (Vicky Burke, Jay Wherley), one seen in *Georgetown* SC during the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill), and one seen and photographed by many at Apex Community Park *Wake* NC 7 Jan through 19 Mar (Kevin Markham, m. obs.).



*Nashville Warbler,  
18 Jan 2023, Apex  
Community Park,  
Wake County NC.  
Photograph by Kent Fiala.*

**Cape May Warbler:** Individuals were photographed visiting feeders in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 13-17 Dec (Deb Winter), in northern *Durham* NC 17-20 Feb (Janice Elrod), and in Greensboro *Guilford* NC 25 Feb (Robin Toler).

**Northern Parula:** Individuals lingered into early winter at Francis Beidler Forest Audubon Center *Dorchester* SC 6 Dec and 4 Jan (Matt Johnson), at Buxton Woods *Dare* NC 10 Dec (Daniel Irons) and 1 Jan (Stephanie Krueger, Andrew Thornton), and on Eagle Island *New Hanover* NC during the Wilmington CBC 31 Dec (Katherine Higgins, et al.). Returning migrants began showing up at a few sites in southernmost SC beginning 23 Feb.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** Individuals photographed at suet feeders in Pendleton *Anderson* SC 21 Dec (Penny & Thomas Alley), in eastern *Dorchester* SC 14 Jan (Lorraine Vargas), and in Simpsonville *Greenville* SC 17-19 Feb (Amanda Hickey) were notable for winter.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler (western race):** An “Audubon’s Warbler” was seen and photographed on the campus of UNC-Asheville *Buncombe* NC 27 Jan through 18 Feb (Till Dohse, m. obs.), providing the first record of this sub-species in the mountain region.

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** Individuals that successfully over-wintered in yards with feeders in Gantt *Greenville* SC (Valerie McGuffey) and in northern *Mecklenburg* NC for a second year in a row (Marcia Wright) were notable for the Piedmont region. Returning spring migrants began showing up at some sites in SC in mid-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 Colington Harbour *Dare* NC 22 Jan (David True, Teri Zambon True). If accepted, the report would provide NC its first winter record of this warbler.

**Wilson’s Warbler:** Individuals seen and photographed at Greenfield Lake *New Hanover* NC 14 Dec intermittently through 18 Feb (Patricia Rettig, m. obs.) and at Exchange Plantation *Georgetown* SC during the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC 30 Dec (James Eaddy, et al.) were great finds for winter.

**Summer Tanager:** Two, a male and a female, visited a yard with feeders in West Columbia *Lexington* SC for a third winter in a row, this year 20 Dec intermittently through 9 Jan (Allison Smith, m. obs.). An adult male visited a suet feeder in Chapel Hill *Orange* NC 31 Dec through 15 Jan (Volkmar Burke Siegemund).

**Western Tanager:** Individuals visited feeders in *Aiken* SC 5 Dec (*fide* Andrew Lydeard), in northeastern *Wake* NC 20-28 Dec (B. Fleming Allen), in Holly Springs *Wake* NC 23 Dec intermittently through 7 Feb (Chrissy Deal), in Mt Pleasant *Charleston* SC 30 Dec through 1 Jan (Jill & Ted Falasco, m. obs.), in Rocky Mount *Nash* NC 7 Jan (Ricky Davis), in Charlotte *Mecklenburg* NC 10 Jan (Patty Masten, m. obs.), in Elizabeth City *Pasquotank* NC 15 Jan through 10 Feb (Kay Sumerlin), and in Columbia *Richland* SC



intermittently through the winter (Betsy Newman). Counts of two, one female and one male, were made in yards with feeders in Charleston *Charleston* SC 19 Dec (Truman Smith) and in Aiken *Aiken* SC 24 Jan (Mary Jo Dawson, Julie Mobley).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** A female lingering in a yard with feeders in eastern *Brunswick* NC 5-12 Dec (Greg Massey) was quite late. A female photographed at a feeder just north of Millers Creek *Wilkes* NC 23 Dec (Nicole Henry) was extremely late, especially for a site in the foothills.

**Blue Grosbeak:** An adult male photographed visiting a feeder in Wake Forest *Wake* NC 10 Jan, 2 Feb, and 8 Feb (Stuart Reeves) was very unusual for mid-winter.

**Indigo Bunting:** A male photographed at a millet feeder on Seabrook Island *Charleston* SC 19-23 Feb (Judy Morr) either over-wintered in the area or was incredibly early.

**Painted Bunting:** 13 in *Charleston* SC during the Sea Islands CBC 3 Jan (*vide* Aaron Given) was a notable count for winter. Farthest inland this winter was an adult male visiting a feeder in Wake Forest *Wake* NC in mid-January (*vide* Mike Lowe). Farthest north along the coast was an adult male visiting a yard in Kitty Hawk *Dare* NC 19-23 Jan (Linda Courson, m. obs.).

**Dickcissel:** Individuals were photographed at Samworth WMA *Georgetown* SC during the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC 30 Dec (Andy Harrison, David McLean) and visiting a millet feeder in Pinckney Retreat *Beaufort* SC 10 Feb through 30 Mar (G. Dwight Mueller).

## Did You Know?

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### The Chat

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