

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

HARRY E. LeGRAND JR.

(All dates winter 1986-87 unless otherwise indicated)

(CBC = Christmas Bird Count)

RED-NECKED GREBE: An excellent count of three grebes was noted by Ricky Davis on 3 January at Fort Fisher, New Hanover County, N.C. One was also seen in the harbor at Charleston, S.C., on 18 February by Dennis Forsythe.

MANX SHEARWATER: This species was noted on pelagic trips off of Oregon Inlet, N.C., by Dave Lee and other birders on several occasions: one on 20 December, three on 21 January, 15+ on 14 February, and three on 25 February.

AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER: Seldom reported off the Carolinas in the colder months, two were seen (one of which was collected) off Oregon Inlet on 21 January by Dave Lee.

WILSON'S STORM-PETREL: Remarkable for North Carolina was the tally of 351 birds on a pelagic trip off Oregon Inlet on 20 December (Bob Odear, Dave Lee, and others). This is the very latest date the species has been seen in Carolina waters.

LEACH'S STORM-PETREL: Dave Lee observed one, and possibly two others, off of Oregon Inlet on 20 December for a very rare winter record.

NORTHERN GANNET: One was somewhat "inland" in Mouse Harbor in northeastern Pamlico County, N.C., on 8 January (Philip Crutchfield).

GREAT CORMORANT: This species is being increasingly seen in the Carolinas. There were at least seven reports in North Carolina: two immatures at Oregon Inlet on 21 February (John Fussell), four birds at Cape Lookout on 4 January (Fussell), and immature at Beaufort on 16 February (Fussell), another immature at Atlantic Beach on 23 December (Robert Hader), a peak count of six birds at Masonboro Inlet on 26 February (Kitty Kosh), a peak of 11 on 4 February at Fort Fisher (Kosh), and 14 on the Southport CBC on 3 January (fide Bill Browkow).

AMERICAN BITTERN: One was seen on the Greenville, S.C., CBC on 21 December by John Batson.

GREAT EGRET: Rare in midwinter was one seen by Dick Thomas on 18 February near Pinehurst, N.C.

CATTLE EGRET: In Currituck County, N.C., 11 were counted by Bob Lewis near Currituck (village) on 2 January and three were noted by John Fussell near Bell's Island on 22 February.

GREEN-BACKED HERON: Quite tardy were single herons on 11 December at Crowders Mountain State Park, N.C. (Paul Hurt) and from 31 December to 5 January in Winston-Salem, N.C. (Barbara Page, Ramona Snavelly).

FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK: Robert Loftin saw ten on 7 February at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge, S.C. This is apparently the most consistent locale for the species in the Carolinas.

TUNDRA SWAN: Somewhat out of range was an adult seen at Fayetteville, N.C., on 7 December by Philip Crutchfield and Jim Sipiora.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: Excellent finds were two just north of Lake Mattamuskeet, N.C., on 8 February (Bob Holmes, John Fussell) and two on 15 February at Lake Hartwell near Clemson, S.C. (John Batson and party). At both sites the White-fronteds were with flocks of Canada Geese.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL: Two late teals were observed by Douglas McNair on 9 and 22 December at Hendersonville, N.C.

NORTHERN SHOVELER: One was rare at Hendersonville on 9 December, as seen by Douglas McNair.

EURASIAN WIGEON: Bob Holmes saw a male at an impoundment adjacent to North River in Carteret County, N.C., on 21 December. This is likely the same wigeon he saw there a year earlier.

GREATER SCAUP: The only inland report for the winter was a male noted by Robin Carter at a pond in Richland County, S.C., on 1 February.

COMMON EIDER: Very rare for South Carolina was a female seen at a jetty at Huntington Beach State Park. It was first noted on 5 December by Lex Glover, and it was seen by Perry Nugent and others into February. Another female was seen by John Fussell on 22 January at Cape Hatteras Point, N.C. An unidentified eider was noted by Fussell on the ocean at Rodanthe, N.C., on 21 February.

KING EIDER: A female was seen at Beaufort, N.C., on 21 December by Mike Tove.

HARLEQUIN DUCK: A male was reported by Tommy Tuttle to have been shot by a hunter during the winter near Pamlico Point, N.C.

OLDSQUAW: Good inland finds were nine at Roanoke Rapids Lake, N.C., on 3 January (Merrill Lynch et al.) and one in western Forsyth County, N.C., from 26 January to 5 February (Gray Tuttle and others).

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER: Two or three were uncommon in Mouse Harbor in Pamlico County, N.C., on 8 January (Philip Crutchfield).

COMMON GOLDENEYE: Philip Crutchfield and others saw an immature male at Fayetteville, N.C., from 31 January to 16 March.

COMMON MERGANSER: Rare along the coast were a female in Bogue Sound near Morehead City, N.C., on 21 December (Ricky Davis), two females at a pond in Nags Head, N.C., on 9 January (Sam Cooper), and a male at Huntington Beach State Park, S.C., on 24 January (Greg Cornwell, Pete Worthington).

NORTHERN GOSHAWK: Very rare in the piedmont was an adult seen by Derb Carter in residential Raleigh on 9 December.

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK: A dark-phase individual was seen near Rocky Mount, N.C., on 1 December by Frank Enders.

GOLDEN EAGLE: Douglas McNair observed an immature on 3 December, and an adult or subadult on 14 January, at Black Balsam Knob in southern Haywood County, N.C. (Readers should be aware that Tennessee Valley Authority biologists have been hacking and releasing Golden Eagles in southern Haywood County for the past several years. Many sightings reported in *The Chat* from the southern mountains of that state are likely of these released birds rather than of migrants from the Far North—HEL.)

MERLIN: The only inland reports for the winter were one seen by Bruce Mack in Columbia, S.C., on 15 January, and another (or the same bird) seen by Mack on the following day about three miles away from the first site.

PEREGRINE FALCON: One was seen in a yard near Reidsville, N.C., in late November and again on 6 December (fide Julia Gunn).

YELLOW RAIL: Highly significant was the reporting of three individuals in grassy fields in northeastern Hyde County, N.C., where this rail is apparently regular in winter. One was accidentally shot by a quail hunter on 17 January. Fred Annand gave the specimen to the N.C. State Museum. On 24 January, one was flushed by Ken Read in this same area; and Merrill Lynch and others flushed a third bird on 16 February a few miles away. John Fussell and Jeremy Nance searched for Yellow Rails in flooded marshes in Carteret County, N.C., on 1 January, as extremely high tides were present on that day. Along the North River (north of US 70), they observed two Yellow Rails, along with three Clapper Rails, 25 Virginia Rails, and two Soras.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER: One seen at Harkers Island, N.C., on 4 January (John Fussell) was rare in midwinter for that state.

WHIMBREL: Four were noted by Mike Tove at Beaufort, N.C., on 21 December, and one was observed at Pea Island, N.C., on 24 January by Harry LeGrand and Wayne Irvin.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW: One spent the winter at Fort Fisher, N.C., as it was seen on 14 December by Jeremy Nance and several times by others as late as February.

SANDERLING: Hardly ever seen inland in winter, one was at Sumter, S.C., on 6 January, as noted by Lex Glover and Evelyn Dabbs.

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER: John Fussell carefully studied a first-winter bird at Cape Hatteras Point on 2 December, an extremely late record for this species.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER: A good count of 35 was made by Kitty Kosh at a spoil pond on Eagle Island near Wilmington, N.C., on 8 January.

AMERICAN WOODCOCK: One heard calling near Franklin, N.C., on the night of 14-15 February by Steve Murphy was an infrequent winter report for the mountains.

RED PHALAROPE: Dave Lee and others had excellent counts on pelagic trips off Oregon Inlet: 525 on 20 December, 429 on 9 January, and 121 on 21 January, plus "lots" on 14 and 25 February. A pelagic trip out of Morehead City, N.C., yielded 52 on 14 February (Harry LeGrand, Jeremy Nance).

BONAPARTE'S GULL: A good island count was 300 at Lake Wateree, S.C., on 10 February (Lex Glover).

ICELAND GULL: A first-winter bird was seen at Hatteras village, N.C., on 30 December by John Fussell. An adult was noted at Cape Hatteras Point on 25 January by Fussell and Jeremy Nance, whereas an adult, apparently a different bird, was there on 1 February (Fussell, John Wright). In South Carolina, an adult was seen in flight at Huntington Beach State Park on 24 January by Pete Worthington and Greg Cornwell.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL: This gull was fairly common during the winter at Cape Hatteras Point, where John Fussell and others saw as many as ten per day. One at Carolina Beach, N.C., from 14 to 16 February (David Wright, Taylor Piephoff, Jeremy Nance) was common in that part of the state.

GLAUCOUS GULL: The only report for the winter was an immature observed by Jeremy Nance at Wanchese, N.C., on 24 January.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTWAKE: Immediately after a storm on 2 December, 17 kittiwakes were seen by John Fussell from shore at Cape Hatteras Point. On pelagic trips, four were seen off Oregon Inlet on 20 December (Bob Odear, Dave Lee, et al.) and 29 were seen off that inlet on 9 January (Lee).

BLACK SKIMMER: As many as 16 skimmers were noted by John Fussell during the winter at Cape Hatteras Point, which is somewhat to the north of the usual range at that season.

ALCID (SP.): A large alcid, thought to be a Razorbill, was seen in the ocean at Fort Fisher, N.C., on 31 January by Mike Tove and Harry LeGrand.

COMMON GROUND-DOVE: Two were seen near the Silver Bluff Sanctuary in southern Aiken County, S.C., on 18 January by Dan Connelly.

SNOWY OWL: The first North Carolina reports in approximately 13 years were sightings in mid-December on a building near Avon (fide Marcia Lyons), on a dune at Bodie Island on 24 December (Lyons), and on a dune—Run Hill—at Kill Devil Hills on 9 January (Sam Cooper). It is possible that just one owl was involved in these sightings.

LONG-EARED OWL: Floyd Williams found a road-killed bird on NC 11-42 about 2.5 miles south of Oak City, Martin County, N.C., on 14 January.

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL: One was found dead on US 13-158 near Winton, N.C., on 14 January by Floyd Williams.

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HUMMINGBIRD: (SP): Two hummingbirds were seen at a feeder at Atlantic, N.C., in the fall until 24 December (Iris Fulcher), and two more were at a feeder near Marshallberg, N.C., until January (Rosemary Markham). These birds had no red or rufous coloring and could not be identified to species.

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD: Two were seen at the New Bern, N.C., feeders of Mr. and Mrs. John Dunn III from October to at least 15 March. Bob Holmes, Rich Boyd, and Dorothy and Roger Foy also observed the birds. One was a female, whereas the other was an immature male with rufous on the rump and lower back. (I reported these birds as Rufous Hummingbirds in my Winter Season report (Southern Atlantic Coast Region) in *American Birds*; however, the editors of that journal changed this report to "Two *Selasphorus*, thought to be Rufous Hummingbirds" (*Am. Birds* 41:271). Observers of these birds are convinced that they were Rufous, and I am not pleased to see them reported as "thought to be Rufous".—HEL)

BELTED KINFISHER: At a high elevation in winter was one seen at 5100 feet at Graveyard Fields in southern Haywood County, N.C., on 22 December and 14 January by Douglas McNair.

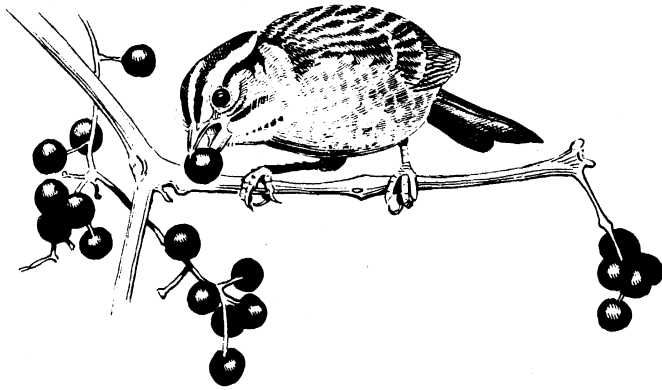
RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER: Along the edge of the range were two birds seen by Ricky Davis in a pecan grove near the Rocky Mount—Wilson Airport, N.C., on 21 February.

LEAST FLYCATCHER: Harry LeGrand closely observed one near Lake Landing in Hyde County, N.C., on 28 December. The "whit" call note was given every few seconds. The bird showed a distinct eye ring and was very active as it fed along a woodland edge. This is perhaps a first winter record for the state. A few days later, on 3 January, Jeremy Nance and John Hardwick observed a silent *Empidonax* flycatcher in a hedgerow near Southport, N.C. They believed it also to be a Least, based on plumage and behavior characteristics; they reported it as "*Empidonax* sp." on the Southport CBC.

WESTERN KINGBIRD: Late in departing were one at Gull Rock in Hyde County, N.C., on 28 December (John Fussell) and two along US 158 near Grandy, Currituck County, N.C., on 2 January (Bob Lewis).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: Most unusual in winter was one found by Marie Harper around Christmas Day in her yard in northern Duplin County, N.C. It was later seen by Ricky Davis, Derb Carter, and other birders until 4 January.

- HORNED LARK:** Seldom seen along the coast of the Carolinas were two at Huntington Beach State Park on 5 December (Lex Glover).
- NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW:** Extremely unusual in winter were two seen by Bob Holmes on the New Bern, N.C., CBC on 22 December. He saw four birds there on the following week.
- BARN SWALLOW:** Bob Holmes reported four at New Bern on 22 December, eight on the following week, and one still present on 1 February. Rather late was one seen by Lex Glover on 6 December near Georgetown, S.C.
- FISH CROW:** A roost estimated at 10,000 birds was reported by Merrill Lynch along US 264 north of Engelhard, N.C., from 14 to 16 February.
- BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER:** At Jordan Lake, N.C., one was seen on 4 January by Jim Keighton and it or another was near that lake on 17 January (Bill and Margaret Wagner). One was seen on the Greenville, S.C., CBC on 20 December by John McKay, and John Fussell saw individuals on 26 December in Carteret County, N.C., at Morehead City and near Beaufort.
- SOLITARY VIREO:** Paul Hurt had a few all winter in Crowders Mountain State Park, N.C., as did Harry LeGrand in Umstead State Park, N.C. Douglas McNair saw one at Six Mile, S.C., from 23 to 25 February.
- YELLOW WARBLER:** Apparently a first for North Carolina in winter was one seen at 15 feet along the causeway (NC 94) at Lake Mattamuskeet, N.C., on 8 February by John Fussell and Bob Holmes. Details supplied by Fussell were: "a very yellowish warbler; dark eye in uniformly yellow face; wings slightly darker with yellow wingbars; yellow tail spots seen very well; breast had faint streaking".
- YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT:** Single birds were observed near Weldon, N.C., on 7 December (Merrill Lynch) and at Beaufort, N.C., on 21 December (Bill Brokaw).
- WESTERN Tanager:** Mary Eriksen had a male tanager at her feeder in western Forsyth County, N.C., from 10 December to 17 February.
- INDIGO BUNTING:** One tardy individual was seen by John Fussell at Fort Fisher, N.C., on 3 January.
- PAINTED BUNTING:** An adult male wintered at Joyce Taylor's feeders in Morehead City, whereas a female or immature was seen in a swamp at Wilmington on 21 January by Kitty Kosh.



BACHMAN'S SPARROW: In the sandhills of North Carolina, Jay Carter saw two to three in western Fort Bragg on 22 December and one at Camp Mackall on 7 January. Dave Sibley saw one at the Silver Bluff Sanctuary in southern Aiken County, S.C., on 3 February.

AMERICAN TREE SPARROW: A good find was one seen by Ken Knapp at Jordan Lake on 4 January.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: One was seen along the north shore of Lake Mattamuskeet on 28 December by Ricky Davis and Eric Dean. There are only four or five winter records for North Carolina.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW: Four were seen on the Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge CBC on 28 December by Ricky Davis and Harry LeGrand. Other individuals were noted by Merrill Lynch near Weldon, N.C., on 7 December, by Harry LeGrand at Raleigh, N.C., on 20 December, and by Philip Crutchfield near Fayetteville, N.C., on 6 January.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW: Rarely reported from the South Carolina coastal plain were three immatures seen by Robin Carter and Lex Glover on 16 January near the Savannah River in Hampton County.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR: For the second consecutive winter, the species was noted at the Charlotte Motor Speedway near Harrisonburg, N.C. Several were seen in December (fide Dick Brown).

SNOW BUNTING: The only winter reports were from the Currituck Banks, N.C., near the Virginia border: 28 on 31 December (Harry LeGrand, Ricky Davis, Bob Lewis, Mike Tove) and 19 on 26 February (John Fussell).

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD: One seen by Hop Hopkins, Jim and Pat Culbertson, and others was a good find at a sewage treatment plant at Winston-Salem, N.C., from 1 to 3 January.

RED CROSSBILL: There are no winter reports other than from the mountains, where they are sporadic all year. Douglas McNair noted as many as seven a day in the Cashiers—Highlands area, N.C., through 17 January.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL: Extremely rare was a female seen at a feeder in Huntersville, N.C., on 16 and 17 February (during a snowstorm) by Eric Johnson, fide Dick Brown.

EVENING GROSBEAK: A modest flight occurred in the Carolinas during the winter, with numbers peaking in February and March. At least 100 were seen at Oriental, N.C., in February by Dorothy Foy, a good total for the lower coastal plain.