

# Briefs for the Files

---

Ricky Davis  
608 Smallwood Drive  
Rocky Mount, NC 27804  
RJDNC@aol.com

(All Dates Winter 1997 - 1998)

---

*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.*

**RED-THROATED LOON:** One was a good find on the So. Lake Norman, NC, CBC Dec. 21 (David Wright *et al.*).

**PACIFIC LOON:** There were two reports of this rare loon. One was found at Wrightsville Beach, NC, on the Wilmington CBC Jan. 3 (Derb Carter), and one was off S. Topsail Island, NC, Jan. 22 (Nell Moore).

**COMMON LOON:** Good counts of Commons included 87 at Roanoke Rapids Lake, NC Feb. 1 (Ricky Davis) and an impressive 8,000+ were seen flying north past Cape Hatteras point, NC Feb. 1 (Haven Wiley, Jeremy Hyman, *et al.*).

**HORNED GREBE:** An excellent inland count was the 165 at Roanoke Rapids Lake, NC Feb. 1 (Ricky Davis).

**RED-NECKED GREBE:** North Carolina had the only sightings of this grebe during the winter. Individuals were found at Kerr Lake, Vance County, Dec. 7 (*vide* Taylor Piephoff), Morehead City Dec. 21 (Harry LeGrand), Ocracoke Island Jan. 2 (Paul Sykes), Jordan Lake Jan 31 (Les Todd), and at Southport from Dec. 24 until at least Feb. 10 (Barbara Gearhart, m. ob.).

**EARED GREBE:** This species is definitely annual in the Carolinas now. Some of the more noteworthy reports included up to three at the usual Goldsboro Wastewater Treatment Plant Feb. 12 (Nell Moore), up to two at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC, during the winter (Steve Calver, Tim Kalbach, Van Atkins, Lex Glover *et al.*), two at Cape Hatteras, NC, Dec. 26 (Lex Glover, Chris Eley), one on Lake Norman, NC, Dec. 21 (David Wright *et al.*), and one on Jordan Lake Jan. 4 (Henry and Elizabeth Link).

**NORTHERN FULMAR:** A good count of 74 was had on the pelagic trip out of Oregon Inlet, NC, Jan. 24 (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

**MANX SHEARWATER:** Twelve was an excellent one-day total on the pelagic trip from Oregon Inlet, NC, Jan. 24 (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

**NORTHERN GANNET:** Reports of this species away from the inshore ocean waters are always noteworthy. This winter, eight were on Pamlico Sound in the Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, CBC circle Dec. 28 (*vide* Allen Bryan), and 20 were on the Neuse River during the New Bern, NC, CBC Dec. 22 (*vide* Wade Fuller).

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN:** The only report was of one seen near Huntington Beach State Park, SC, during the Carolina Bird Club meeting Jan. 29.

**BROWN PELICAN:** The immature found at Falls Lake, NC, during November was last seen there Dec. 6, as noted by Ben Steere and John Frederick.

**ANHINGA:** Inland winter reports included two on the Raven Rock State Park, NC, CBC Dec. 21 (Paul Hart, Scott Hartley, Dick Holbrook), one on the New Bern, NC, CBC Dec. 22 (John Fussell), one in Pitt County, NC, Jan. 4 (Brad Carlson), one in Richland County, SC, Jan. 26 (Lex Glover), and two in Jacksonville, NC, during January (*vide* Taylor Piephoff).

**LITTLE BLUE HERON:** Very rare inland during the winter, one was a good find at Santee NWR, SC, Jan. 3 (Dennis Forsythe *et al.*).

**TRICOLORED HERON:** Also unusual inland in winter was a Tricolored along the west side of Lake Moultrie, Berkeley County, SC, Jan. 4 (Lex Glover).

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON:** Amazing was the discovery of an adult Yellow-crowned in Winston-Salem, NC, during the first week of January (*vide* Ramona Snavely). This individual provided not only a first local winter report, but was probably the first inland winter report for anywhere in the Carolinas!

**GREEN HERON:** One was a good find on the Bodie-Pea Islands, NC, CBC Dec. 29 (*vide* Paul Sykes).

**GREAT EGRET:** Noteworthy inland reports included one on the Wayne County, NC, CBC Dec. 20 (*vide* Eric Dean), one on the Clemson, SC, CBC Dec. 20 (Steve Wagner, Steve Lohr, David Mizrahi), and one near Zebulon, NC, Jan. 8 (Ricky Davis).

**WHITE IBIS:** An excellent inland total for winter was the 12 found on the Santee NWR, SC, CBC Jan. 3 (*vide* Lex Glover).

**GLOSSY IBIS:** Single individuals (*Plegadis* sp.) were found near Beaufort, NC, Dec. 25 and at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, Dec. 6 (John Fussell), and on the Southport, NC, CBC Jan 4 (Ricky Davis). Eclipsing these was the unprecedented count of 480 coming into a roost near Bear Island, SC, Jan. 29

(Will Post). No doubt the warm winter was somehow responsible for this unusual winter count.

**FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK:** Two were at Savannah NWR, SC, from late January until early March (Mark Welford, Lex Glover, Steve Calver, sev. ob). This species has been hard to come by in recent years.

**TUNDRA SWAN:** A flock with at least 382 birds was counted at Pon Pon Plantation, Colleton County, SC, Feb. 18 (Will Post). This was probably a record one-day count for the species in South Carolina.

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:** One was at Pea Island, NC, Dec. 31 (Harry and George Armistead, John Fussell) and up to three were at Santee NWR, SC, during January and February (Lex Glover, sev. ob.).

**ROSS' GOOSE:** Pungo NWR, NC, once again hosted several this winter. Four were found there Jan. 31 (Haven Wiley, Jeremy Hyman *et al.*).

**BRANT:** One seen coming in to roost on Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, Dec. 12 (Susan Campbell) provided a rare sighting away from the usual coastal locations.

**CINNAMON TEAL:** This species continued its recent string of sightings in the Carolinas. One was back at Bodie Island, NC, Lighthouse pond Dec. 26 until late January (Gail Lankford, Lex Glover, Chris Eley, m. ob.) for the second year in a row. Also one was at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, during February (Steve Calver, Tim Kalbach, sev. ob.).

**EURASIAN WIGEON:** One was on the Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, CBC Dec. 28 (Ricky Davis, John Stanton, Derb Carter), and the male returned to the small pond near Lake Wheeler, Wake County, NC, again this winter Jan. 13 (Susan Campbell *et al.*).

**COMMON EIDER:** This species was found in the Carolinas in normal numbers this winter. The most interesting reports involved an immature at Oregon Inlet, NC, throughout the whole winter (Doug DeNeve *et al.*, m. ob.), an adult male there Dec. 5 (Doug DeNeve *et al.*), and an immature at Beaufort Inlet, NC, Jan. 17 (*vide* John Fussell).

**OLDSQUAW:** Reports away from the usual Pamlico Sound, NC, wintering area included one at Roanoke Rapids Lake, NC, Dec. 14 (Ricky Davis), one on the Wayne County, NC, CBC Dec. 20 (*vide* Eric Dean), one on Lake Atagahi, Transylvania County, NC, Feb. 15-17 (Dick Blee, sev. ob.), and a good count of eight near Sullivan's Island, SC, Feb. 28 (Mike Bernard).

**SURF SCOTER:** The only inland scoter report was of one female Surf at Jordan Lake, NC, Dec. 26 (Harry LeGrand, Les Todd).

**COMMON MERGANSER:** Reports included two at Roanoke Rapids Lake, NC, Dec. 14 (Ricky Davis), one at Lake Wheeler on the Raleigh, NC, CBC

Dec. 20 (Kent Fiala, Will Cook), one on the Durham, NC, CBC Dec. 21 (*fide* Mike Schultz), one east of Greenville, NC, Feb. 8 (John Wright), and an adult male in eastern Edgecombe County, NC, Feb. 8 (Ricky Davis).

**BLACK VULTURE:** An impressive roost of vultures contained at least 650 Blacks near Edgefield, SC, Jan. 24, as noted by Will Post.

**OSPREY:** Interesting winter sightings were of single birds at Cape Hatteras, NC, Dec. 30 (Harry LeGrand) and Feb. 15 (Les Todd, Chris Eley, Pat Moore), and one south of Fayetteville, NC, Dec. 21 (Hal Broadfoot *et al.*).

**GOLDEN EAGLE:** Probable late migrants included single birds at Mahogany Rock, NC, Dec. 1 (*fide* Jim Keighton) and one at Ivestor Gap, Haywood County, NC, Dec. 17 (*fide* Norma Siebenheller). Two wintering immatures were at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, Dec. 28 (Derb Carter, Ricky Davis).

**PEREGRINE FALCON:** Inland winter reports included singles on the So. Lake Norman, NC, CBC Dec. 21 (*fide* Taylor Piephoff), the Southern Pines, NC, CBC Dec. 21 (Dick Burk), and the Santee NWR, SC, CBC Jan. 3 (Lex Glover *et al.*).

**SANDHILL CRANE:** There were several sightings in the western portions of the Carolinas this winter. Three were near Townville, SC, during most of December (Sid Gauthreaux, Carroll Belser, Lex Glover, Pete Worthington), one was in the Hooper Lane area of Henderson County, NC, Jan. 9 (Wayne Forsythe, Marilyn Westphal) until at least Feb. 8 (Forsythe), one was in Brevard, NC, Jan. 10-17 (Bill and Norma Siebenheller, *sev. ob.*), and two were seen flying south over Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, Feb 8 (Wayne Forsythe).

**WILSON'S PLOVER:** A good winter find was one Wilson's at Fort Fisher, NC, Jan. 4 (John Fussell).

**PIPING PLOVER:** The 18 Pippings at Bird Shoal, Beaufort, NC, Dec. 17 and 21 (John Fussell, Sam Cooper, Kevin Markham) provided the best winter count there since 1987.

**AMERICAN AVOCET:** Huge numbers of Avocets were again present at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC. The best one-day total this winter was 971 on Jan. 29 (Steve Calver). This site easily has the biggest population in the Carolinas.

**LESSER YELLOWLEGS:** The Savannah Spoil Site was also home to an amazing number of Lessers. Large numbers were present all winter with the peak count being 3,062 on Feb. 25 (Steve Calver). This was undoubtedly one of the highest winter totals ever for the Carolinas.

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER:** Spotteds were found on several CBC's this winter. Singles were at Morehead City, NC, Dec. 21 (John Wright, Sam Cooper, Kevin

Markham, Ricky Davis), Spartanburg, SC, Jan. 2 (*vide* Matthew Campbell), and Santee NWR, SC, Jan. 3 (*vide* Lex Glover).

**MARBLED GODWIT:** A locally good count was had near Beaufort, NC, on the Morehead City CBC Dec. 21 (Eric Dean, Gene Howe).

**WESTERN SANDPIPER:** Two found on the Durham, NC, CBC Dec. 21 (Doug Shadwick) were quite rare for an inland winter report.

**LEAST SANDPIPER:** Good winter counts included 45 at Pea Island, NC, Jan. 25 (Harry LeGrand *et al.*), 24 in Aiken County, SC, Dec. 27 (Anne Waters), and two on the Santee NWR, SC, CBC Jan. 3 (*vide* Lex Glover).

**DUNLIN:** One was a good find on the Wayne County, NC, CBC Dec. 20 (*vide* Eric Dean).

**STILT SANDPIPER:** The only known wintering location for this species in the Carolinas is the Savannah Spoil Site in Jasper County, SC. This year 35 were counted Dec. 16, with numbers rising to 142 on Dec. 29 and falling to 57 by Feb. 18 (Steve Calver).

**GREAT SKUA:** One was seen on the pelagic trip out of Oregon Inlet, NC, Jan. 24 (Brian Patteson *et al.*) for the only winter sighting.

**LAUGHING GULL:** A very rare inland winter sighting was provided by one on the Wayne County, NC, CBC Dec. 20 (*vide* Eric Dean).

**LITTLE GULL:** One in the Cape Hatteras, NC, area Feb. 14 (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand) was not unexpected; but an adult off of N. Myrtle Beach, SC, Feb. 20 (Andreas Kristensen) was considerably more noteworthy for that state.

**BLACK-HEADED GULL:** An adult at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, Jan. 30 (Pete Worthington, Jack Peachey, Irwin Pitts) provided a rare bird for South Carolina.

**CALIFORNIA GULL:** One was again present at Cape Hatteras, NC, this winter. It was present from late December through February (Lex Glover, Chris Eley, Pat Moore, m. ob.). This was the fourth straight winter that at least one individual has been present.

**THAYER'S GULL:** The only report was of one at Cape Hatteras, NC, Dec. 29 (Derb Carter).

**ICELAND GULL:** Apart from the usual handful at Cape Hatteras, NC, Iceland reports included two on the Morehead City, NC, CBC Dec. 21 (Mike Tove, John Fussell *et al.*), and an adult and immature at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, Jan. 30-Feb. 1 (Carolina Bird Club meeting participants).

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:** This species continues to increase in the Carolinas, and the noteworthy reports now mostly include the increasing number of inland sightings. One was locally unusual on the Wayne County, NC, CBC Dec. 20 (*vide* Eric Dean), but it was easily outclassed by the amazing

numbers in the Raleigh, NC, area. Frequent checks of the new Raleigh Landfill and nearby Wastewater Treatment Plant during February yielded at least seven individuals: four adults, one sub-adult, and two immatures (Bob Hader, Jim Mulholland, Clyde Smith, Harry LeGrand, Derb Carter).

**GLAUCOUS GULL:** As usual there were several found along the Outer Banks of North Carolina this winter. Some of the more interesting reports from other areas included a first-winter bird on the Raleigh, NC, CBC Dec. 20 (Derb Carter), one at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, Jan. 11 (*fide* Taylor Piephoff), one at Myrtle Beach, SC, Jan. 31 (Carolina Bird Club meeting participants), and one at Southport, NC, Jan. 27 (Mary McDavid).

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:** This species is also increasing as an inland winter visitor. Unprecedented numbers were found at the new landfill and nearby wastewater treatment plant in Raleigh, NC. In early February up to 19 different individuals (four adults, 15 immatures) were found (Bob Hader, Jim Mulholland, Clyde Smith, Harry LeGrand, Derb Carter). In South Carolina, four were at the north end of Lake Moultrie, Berkeley County Jan. 29 (Will Post, Ed Rice), possibly being the farthest inland for that state.

**BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE:** The pelagic trip out of Oregon Inlet, NC, Jan. 24 had a good count of 111 (Brian Patteson *et al.*). Much less common are the land based sightings. From one to two were present at Cape Hatteras, NC, from mid December until mid February (Brad Carlson, Jamie Glydon, Les Todd, Chris Eley, Pat Moore, Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand, *sev. ob.*). One was seen in the Murrells's Inlet, SC, area Feb. 10-15, as noted by Andreas Kristensen, Jack Peachey, Phil Turner, and Tim Kalbach.

**RAZORBILL:** The only report was of three on the Jan. 24 pelagic trip out of Oregon Inlet, NC, (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

**MURRE Sp.:** Two murrees were seen past the breakers off of Fort Fisher, NC, Feb. 14, as noted by Nell Moore and Roselyn Mullin. These were most likely Thick-billeds, but certain field marks were not observed to be more sure of the exact species. Anyway, a sighting of murrees is always noteworthy, especially in an off-year for acids!

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE:** One was found at the Caswell Golf Course on the Southport, NC, CBC Jan. 4 (Harry LeGrand), providing possibly the first CBC record of this species in the Carolinas.

**COMMON GROUND-DOVE:** One was a good find on the Savannah River Site, SC, CBC Dec. 19 (Steve Wagner, I.L. Brisbin, Anne Waters).

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE:** A colony of up to six was seen at Beaufort, NC, on the Morehead City CBC Dec. 21 (Sally McClure, *fide* John

Fussell). It also seems that this colony has been present for a couple of years, but only recently was brought to light.

**SNOWY OWL:** An immature (probably female) was photographed at the north end of Masonboro Island across from Wrightsville Beach, NC, Feb. 7 (Trevis Karper), for one of the few reports of this species in the Carolinas this decade. As is frustratingly customary with the species, it was apparently on the move and was not relocated.

**NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL:** An adult provided some excitement Dec. 15 at a Kernersville, NC, elementary school by perching in a bush near a door all day (Bob Chamberlain, *fide* Ramona Snavelly). It seems that just about everyone at the school got a look at the tame, roosting owl. Another sighting was one "hunting at a feeder" in Boone, NC, Dec. 30 (*fide* Matthew Rowe).

**NIGHTHAWK Sp.:** A nighthawk, unfortunately not identified to species, was seen at Cape Hatteras, NC, on the absurdly early date of Feb. 5 (Marcia Lyons).

**WHIP-POOR-WILL:** This species was on two CBC's this year; one near Wilmington, NC, Jan. 3 (Greg Massey) and one near Southport, NC, Jan. 4 (Harry LeGrand).

**SWIFT Sp.:** A very early swift was seen at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, Feb. 21 as it flew across the river into Georgia (Lex Glover, Mike Turner, Steve Patterson). No distinguishing field marks were observed, so the identity of this swift remains a mystery. Being almost a month early for a spring migrant, it could easily have been something other than a Chimney Swift.

**HUMMINGBIRDS:** Distribution of wintering hummingbirds in the Carolinas is starting to take shape as the yearly observations continue to increase. It seems that *Archilochus* types dominate along the immediate coast and *Selasphorus* types dominate inland. Bob Sargent banded eight Ruby-throateds in coastal North Carolina, three Rufous in the Charlotte area, and two Rufous in Brunswick County. Also of note was the adult male Ruby-throated at a Morehead City, NC, feeder this winter (*fide* John Fussell), a rarely seen plumage in winter!

**TREE SWALLOW:** Three were good finds inland on the Santee NWR, SC, CBC Jan. 3 (Bob Wood *et al.*). And an unusually large flock for the winter was seen near Lake Phelps, NC, Jan. 11, where an estimated 10,000 were feeding over the fields (Ricky Davis).

**HORNED LARK:** Three on the Wilmington, NC, CBC Jan. 3 (Greg Massey) were locally rare and unusual.

**COMMON RAVEN:** Downtown Winston-Salem, NC, once again had nesting ravens where a nest with young was seen Feb. 15 (Reggie Burt, Ramona Snavelly).

**FISH CROW:** Unusual inland in winter were two on the Aiken, SC, CBC Dec. 24 (Anne Waters).

**WOOD THRUSH:** One was well-described from the Spartanburg, SC, CBC Jan. 2 (Mac Shealy, *vide* Lyle Campbell). When will one of these winter thrushes get photographed, thereby making believers out of the skeptics?!

**NASHVILLE WARBLER:** Nashville Warbler is a rare winter visitor at best in the Carolinas. Thus of note was the amazing report of three different individuals found on the Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, CBC Dec. 28 (Allen Bryan, Harry LeGrand, Wayne Irvin). This was undoubtedly a record one-day total for the Carolinas in winter.

**YELLOW WARBLER:** Also quite rare in winter, single Yellows were found on the Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, CBC Dec. 28 (*vide* Allen Bryan) and the Spartanburg, SC, CBC Jan. 2 (*vide* Matthew Campbell).

**BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER:** A male was a complete surprise at a feeder in Durham, NC, Feb. 14 (Don Bright-Smith, *vide* Will Cook). This species is almost unheard of in the middle of winter in the Carolinas, but was probably too early for a northbound migrant.

**PRAIRIE WARBLER:** Prairies often winter along the immediate coastal strip, but of note inland were two found on the Santee NWR, SC, CBC Jan. 3 (Perry Nugent *et al.*).

**BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER:** Also of note inland during the winter were two on the Raven Rock State Park, NC, CBC Dec. 21 (*vide* Paul Hart).

**AMERICAN REDSTART:** This species is extremely rare in the Carolinas during winter. This year a female was found on the Jordan Lake, NC, CBC Jan. 4 (Josh Rose, Les Todd, Chris Eley), and another female, the same day, was found on the Southport, NC, CBC (Taylor Piephoff, Katherine Higgins, Harriet Whitsett, Tom Ledford). The Jordan Lake bird provided the first inland winter report for North Carolina, and the Southport bird was surprisingly the second report for that count!

**NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH:** One was found at Pon Pon Plantation, Colleton County, SC, Feb. 19 (Will Post). Rare in winter in the Carolinas, this individual provided one of fewer than 10 South Carolina reports for that season.

**WILSON'S WARBLER:** One found on the Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, CBC Dec. 28 (*vide* Allen Bryan) provided a rare winter report.

**YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT:** The only winter sighting received was of one on the Morehead City, NC, CBC Dec. 21 (John Wright *et al.*).

**WESTERN Tanager:** This species is almost annual in its occurrence in the Carolinas. This winter one was at a feeder in Long Beach, NC, during the month of February (Mary McDavid, Carolyn Bush).



**INDIGO BUNTING:** Lingering Indigos included one banded at Mayesville, SC, Dec. 5 (Evelyn Dabbs) and one on the Morehead City, NC, CBC Dec. 21 (John Wright).

**PAINTED BUNTING:** This species has become a regular winter resident along the immediate coast in North Carolina. This year at least five were at a feeder in Buxton (Chuck Hebenstreit), three were on the Morehead City CBC Dec. 21 (*fide* John Fussell), and four were on the Southport CBC Jan. 4 (Ricky Davis, Taylor Piephoff *et al.*).

**DICKCISSEL:** The only winter report was of a female near the Cape Hatteras, NC, Lighthouse Feb. 15 (Les Todd, Chris Eley).

**BACHMAN'S SPARROW:** Winter sightings of this secretive species are always noteworthy. One was found inland on the Savannah River Site, SC, CBC Dec 19 (Anne Waters), one was on the Southport, NC, CBC Jan. 4 (Sam Cooper), and one was in Jasper County, SC, Feb. 21 (Lex Glover, Mike Turner).

**AMERICAN TREE SPARROW:** One was a good find on the Pee Dee NWR, NC, CBC Jan. 3 (Judy Walker). Sightings of this less than annual visitor are always noteworthy in the Carolinas.

**CLAY-COLORED SPARROW:** The only winter sightings included one near New Bern, NC, Dec. 11 (Bob Holmes, Nell Moore), two at the same location Dec. 22 (Wade Fuller), and one near Morehead City, NC, Dec. 21 (John Wright).

**LARK SPARROW:** Winter reports included one at Harker's Island, NC, Dec. 5 (Nell Moore), one at Oregon Inlet, NC, Dec. 15 (*fide* Taylor Piephoff), and an astounding total of five on the Pee Dee NWR, NC, CBC Jan. 3 (Judy Walker). The latter report probably represents a record total for the species during the winter.

**GRASSHOPPER SPARROW:** One was found near New Bern, NC, Dec. 11 and 22 (Bob Holmes, Nell Moore, Wade Fuller), and one was on the Greenville, SC, CBC Jan. 3 (*fide* Len Kopka).

**HENSLOW'S SPARROW:** The only winter reports of this secretive sparrow included one on the Pee Dee NWR, NC, CBC Jan. 3 (Judy Walker) and at least three near Tillman, SC, Jan. 2 and Feb. 15 (Tim Kalbach).

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW:** Numbers of wintering Lincoln's Sparrows in the Carolinas continue to decrease. This winter the only reports received were of single birds on the Pee Dee NWR, NC, CBC Jan. 3 (Judy Walker), the Greenville, SC, CBC Jan. 3 (*fide* Len Kopka), and in Jasper County, SC, Feb. 21 (Lex Glover, Mike Turner).

**DARK-EYED JUNCO:** An adult male of the "Oregon" form was found on the Spartanburg, SC, CBC Jan. 3 (Tim Brown, *vide* Lyle Campbell). This well-seen and described bird represented one of the few recent reports of this western form in the Carolinas.

**SMITH'S LONGSPUR:** North Carolina's fourth Smith's Longspur was one found on the Pee Dee NWR CBC Jan. 3 (Judy Walker). The bird was not relocated later, and one wonders how long it had been present before being discovered.

**LAPLAND LONGSPUR:** Reports this winter included three near Townville, SC, Dec. 20 (Lex Glover, Pete Worthington, Sid Gauthreaux, Carroll Belser); three or four at Hooper Lane, Henderson County, NC, Dec. 21 (Wayne Forsythe, Simon Thompson, Dick Blee); one at Hooper Lane Jan. 12 (Rick Knight); up to five at Cape Hatteras, NC, Jan. 23 (Bob Holmes, Wade Fuller, Rich Boyd); and one in Pitt County, NC, Jan. 25 (Brad Carlson *et al.*).

**SNOW BUNTING:** Compared to last winter, Snow Buntings were in short supply. Sightings included three at the Oregon Inlet, NC, jetty Dec. 15 (*vide* Taylor Piephoff) and one on Bird Shoal near Beaufort, NC, Dec. 17 and 21 (John Fussell, Sam Cooper *et al.*).

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD:** The only Brewer's found were seven near Allendale, SC, Dec. 7 (Robin Carter, Caroline Eastman) and six on the So. Lake Norman, NC, CBC Dec. 21 (*vide* Taylor Piephoff).

**BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE:** Three were "inland" on the western side of Lake Moultrie, Berkeley County, SC, Jan. 4 (Lex Glover). This area is about the only non-coastal site the species can be found in the Carolinas.

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE:** One was unusual at Lake Mattamuskeet, NC, Dec. 18 (Brad Carlson, Jamie Glydon). Also an oriole caused some excitement at Magnolia Gardens, Charleston, SC, during February and early March. The bird, a very pale female, was initially identified as a Bullock's. After more observation and much debate, it was felt that the individual was just an abnormally pale Baltimore. This occurrence points out the difficulty in separating very closely related species and that observers must consider all the possibilities in identifying certain plumages.

**RED CROSSBILL:** A flock of 18 on the Stone Mt., NC, CBC Jan. 3 (Jim Keighton) was a good report from the northwestern part of the state. Also five on the Raleigh, NC, CBC Dec. 20 (John Gerwin *et al.*) and one at Whispering Pines, NC, Feb. 2 (Susan Campbell) provided noteworthy sightings away from the mountains.

**WINTER FINCHES:** Winter finches were present across the Carolinas this year in small, localized numbers. Many observers mentioned having small

numbers of Purple Finches, Pine Siskins, and Evening Grosbeaks all winter. Others lamented that the birds were practically non-existent in their areas. The only sizable flock of any finch was the 98 Purples found in one area near Wilington, McCormick County, SC, Dec. 22 (Lex Glover, Steve Patterson). As for Evening Grosbeaks, numbers of 50 or less were the rule, and Pine Siskin numbers were even lower.

---

---

## **CAROLINABIRDS**

Carolinabirds is an Internet e-mail discussion group about birds and birding in the Carolinas. Subscribers frequently post sightings to it similar to those found in Briefs for the Files, but unusual behavior receives more attention. Subscriptions are free. To subscribe, address an e-mail message to <majordomo@acpub.duke.edu>. Don't fill in the subject line. As your message, simply put, "subscribe carolinabirds" (without the quotes). You will receive a confirmation and more information shortly. Submissions for Briefs for the Files should be sent directly to Ricky Davis.

---

---