

## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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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.*

*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.*

**COMMON LOON:** Lingering loons included five north of Rodanthe, NC, during July (Bob Burrell), three in eastern Carteret County, NC, June 14 (John Fussell), and one on Lake Russell, Anderson County, SC, June 21 (Lex Glover and Mike Turner).

**PIED-BILLED GREBE:** A locally uncommon find was a nest attended by two birds near Santee, Orangeburg, SC, July 18 (Lex Glover).

**HERALD PETREL:** Herald Petrels continued to be found off of North Carolina, with single dark phase birds off Hatteras Island July 12 (Todd Pusser, *fide* Brian Patteson) and off Hatteras July 18 & 25 (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

**BLACK-CAPPED PETREL:** The peak count this summer was 137 off Oregon Inlet, NC, July 20 (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

**BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL:** The best counts of this storm-petrel were 30 off Hatteras, NC, July 18 and 53 off Oregon Inlet, NC, July 20 (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

**WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD:** There was only one report this summer, with one due east of Cape Hatteras, NC, July 27 (Patteson *et al.*).

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN:** One was an unexpected surprise during summer in the ACE Basin, SC, July 26 (Bert Fisher and Leto Copeley).

**BROWN PELICAN:** An immature was found at Falls Lake, NC, July 17 by Jonathan Steere. Is it possible this could be the same individual that was there during last fall?

**DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT:** Indicative of this species' current expansion and increase inland was the discovery of a dozen birds around 13 nests on Lake Russell, Anderson County, SC, June 21 (Lex Glover and Mike Turner).

**MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD:** The recent trend of multiple sightings in the Carolinas was broken this year with only one report: a female was over the soundside of Ocracoke Village, NC, June 16 (*vide* Marcia Lyons).

**SNOWY EGRET:** One of the best counts inland was the four at the Little Creek Impoundment, Chapel Hill, NC, July 26 (Will Cook). Also three were at Gray Creek, Cumberland County, NC, July 20 (Phil Crutchfield).

**LITTLE BLUE HERON:** One was far inland at Asheville, NC, July 25, as noted by Simon Thompson.

**REDDISH EGRET:** Immatures of this species turned up at the usual places again this summer. Singles were at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, July 11 (Taylor Piephoff *et al.*), Sunset Beach, NC, July 13 and Ft. Fisher, NC, July 29 (*vide* Taylor Piephoff).



*Lucy Smith, Mt. Pleasant, SC*

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON:** There were good numbers found at the Little Creek Impoundment, Chapel Hill, NC, this season. Numbers built up from one on July 5 to six July 19, involving several adults and immatures (Rob Gluck). The Greensboro, NC, breeding colony continued this year, where at least two nests were found and at least 8 young fledged (Elizabeth Link). And unexplainable were single immatures found far offshore of Hatteras, NC, July 18 & 25 (Brian Patteson *et al.*). Where were these birds coming from?

**WHITE IBIS:** This species wandered inland in good numbers across the Carolinas. At the Little Creek Impoundment, Chapel Hill, NC, numbers built up from one on July 17 (Rob Gluck) to at least 20 on July 26 (Will Cook). At least three were at a pond in northern Mecklenburg County, NC, July 14 - early August (David Wright). Farther inland, two were at Bethabara Park, Winston-Salem, NC, July 6 - 27 (*vide* Ramona Snavely).

**FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK:** A rare summer sighting involved one in flight with a Wood Duck in the rice fields west of the US 17 bridge in Georgetown, SC, July 19, 1998 (Clay & Pat Sutton, *vide* Harry LeGrand).

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK:** Up to four were near Yemassee, Hampton County, SC, June 3 (Lex Glover) until at least early August (Carroll Richard, sev. obs.). With the species being found in the state earlier [the Yemassee area last year, May 26 and Sept. 15, 1997 (Bob & Carroll Richard), and two at nearby Donnelly W.M.A., Colleton County, July 30, 1994 (Dean Harrigal *et al.*)], in Georgia this year, and the expansion in Florida, these could be natural vagrants instead of escaped birds. Further monitoring of these birds is definitely needed.

**NORTHERN PINTAIL:** One was a very unexpected summer lingerer at Brier Creek Reservoir, Wake County, NC, June 28 (Ricky Davis).

**RING-NECKED DUCK:** Locally unusual summer reports included two at the Goldsboro, NC, Wastewater Treatment Plant all summer (Eric Dean) and one at the Orangeburg, SC, Fish Hatchery June 7 (Lex Glover).

**LESSER SCAUP:** Five was an impressive count for obviously late spring migrants near New Bern, NC, June 2 (Bob Holmes).

**COMMON EIDER:** An immature male was present at the Cape Lookout, NC, jetty until at least early July (*vide* John Fussell).

**BLACK SCOTER:** Another late duck was the Black Scoter seen at Cape Lookout, NC, June 7, as noted by Peter Bridge and Cynthia Renk.

**BUFFLEHEAD:** A female was observed on the North River, Camden County, NC, July 14 by Merrill Lynch. This individual's presence in mid-summer was due to the fact that it was injured and probably never tried to move north this spring.

**HOODED MERGANSER:** Late Hoodeds (or possible local nesters) included two on Julian Price Lake, Watauga County, NC, June 27 (Dwayne & Lori

Martin) and one on University Lake, Chapel Hill, NC, June 4 (Susan Campbell).

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER:** One was slightly late at Oregon Inlet, NC, June 1 (Rick Knight), and up to two were definitely lingering non-breeders at Mt. Pleasant, SC, July 18 (*vide* Pete Worthington).

**RUDDY DUCK:** This species is a notorious late lingerer and localized summering species. This year the best counts were several all summer at the Goldsboro, NC, Wastewater Treatment Plant (Eric Dean) and eight at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC, June 9 (Steve Calver).

**SWALLOW-TAILED KITE:** Locally uncommon were one in Conway, SC, July 19 (Lex Glover and Giff Beaton) and two in Norway, Orangeburg County, SC, July 22 (Lex Glover and Lynne Askins).

**MISSISSIPPI KITE:** This species continues to increase in North Carolina during the summer. Some of the better reports this year included up to five at Falls Lake June 14 (Josh Rose *et al.*), two at Jordan Lake June 20 (Rob Gluck, *et al.*), and five over Rockingham July 25 (Bill & Barbara Gearhart).

**SHARP-SHINNED HAWK:** This species is much rarer in summer than the Cooper's Hawk. Therefore of note were single birds at Clemmons, NC, June 21 (Lloyd Ramsey), at Claremont, NC, June 30 (Dwayne & Lori Martin), north of Sanford, NC, July 9 (Jay Carter), and in Winston-Salem, NC, July 31 (*vide* Ramona Snavelly).

**COOPER'S HAWK:** Cooper's Hawks continued to increase as a summering bird in the Carolinas. The only definite breeding evidence reported, though, was of three juveniles in a yard in Simpsonville, SC, July 12, as noted by Paul Shewmaker.

**BROAD-WINGED HAWK:** The most easterly report this year was of one at Williston, Carteret County, NC, June 14 (John Fussell), probably a late migrant.

**AMERICAN KESTREL:** A pair once again raised young at the Cherry Hospital, Wayne County, NC, area this summer (Gene Howe). Also one showed territorial behavior when seen chasing a Red-tailed Hawk at the Durham Athletic Park, Durham, NC, June 15 (John Frederick).

**AMERICAN COOT:** More reports than normal were had for summering coots. Eight were at New Bern, NC, June 2 (Bob Holmes), two were paired up at Sunset Beach, NC, June 14 (Ricky Davis), two were at the Orangeburg, SC, Fish Hatchery June 7 (Lex Glover), and one was at Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC, from July 2 until August (Gail Whitehurst).

**AMERICAN AVOCET:** Six avocets at Salem Lake, Forsyth County, NC, July 17 (*vide* Ramona Snavelly) provided a first record for the county.

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER:** Three were quite late at the Bethel, NC, Sewage Lagoons June 7, as noted by Ricky Davis.

**UPLAND SANDPIPER:** The only reports received were of nine at the Orangeburg, SC, Sod Farm July 26 (Tim Kalbach) and two at the Cherry Hospital grounds, Wayne County, NC, July 30 (Eric Dean).

**LONG-BILLED CURLEW:** One was at its usual spot, Ft. Fisher, NC, July 26 (Gene Howe) and 29 (*fide* Taylor Piephoff).

**BAR-TAILED GODWIT:** A basic-plumaged individual was at North Pond, Pea Island NWR, NC, July 22 (John Wright). Seen only in the morning, the bird was of the expected race "*lapponica*", and was the first Bar-tailed reported from the Carolinas since the spring 1993 Portsmouth birds.

**MARbled GODWIT:** One found at Gray Creek, Cumberland County, NC, July 20 - 26 (Phil Crutchfield and Hal Broadfoot) provided only about the 5th inland record for the state.

**BAIRD'S SANDPIPER:** An individual in alternate plumage was seen at the Orangeburg, SC, Sod Farm July 19 (Pete Worthington), providing a very rare occurrence for that plumage in the Carolinas.

**DUNLIN:** Three in alternate plumage were at the Orangeburg, SC, Sod Farm July 17 - 19, as noted by Pete Worthington. This report provides a very rare summer occurrence of this species, normally not occurring until August or later in any numbers.

**STILT SANDPIPER:** One was slightly early at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC, June 25 (Steve Calver).

**BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER:** The only report was of one at the Orangeburg, SC, Sod Farm July 26, as noted by Tim Kalbach.

**SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER:** One was locally unusual east of Greenville, NC, at a golf course on July 5 (Ricky Davis).

**WILSON'S PHALAROPE:** The only ones reported were at South Pond, Pea Island NWR, NC, with one July 13 & 19 (John Wright and Ricky Davis) and three July 23 (John Wright, Harry LeGrand, Jeff Phippen, Gene Howe, and Will Cook).

**RED-NECKED PHALAROPE:** A female was a nice surprise in the pond at Cape Hatteras Point, NC, June 4 (Henry & Elizabeth Link).

**SOUTH POLAR SKUA:** Only one was seen this summer, off Hatteras, NC, in early July by Capt. Spurgeon Stowe, *fide* Brian Patteson.

**POMARINE JAEGER:** An adult light phase individual was seen on the beach at Kill Devil Hills, NC, July 6 (Audrey Whitlock and Keith Watson), providing a rare on-land sighting for the Carolinas. Less unusual were the three off Morehead City, NC, July 18 (Brad Carlson).

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:** One, seemingly sick or injured, was very unusual inland during the summer at Falls Lake, NC, July 11 (Jonathan Steere).

**CASPIAN TERN:** One at Jordan Lake, NC, June 21 (Ricky Davis and Jeff Phippen) was quite early for a fall migrant.

**COMMON TERN:** One of the most unusual nesting sites ever found of this species involved a pair nesting on top of a flat concrete bridge support in the Beaufort, NC, channel this summer (Keith Rittmaster and John Fussell). Two eggs were present June 11 and by July 3 two large young were seen. They were not seen after then, and it is hoped that they were able to fledge successfully. Of interest was the material used for the nest scrape - broken shells left earlier by gulls using the support as a shell-breaking surface.

**BRIDLED TERN:** The best reports included two out of Morehead City, NC, July 18 (Brad Carlson) and five off Oregon Inlet, NC, July 27 (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

**SOOTY TERN:** Two off Hatteras, NC, July 25 (Patteson *et al.*) were expected, but more unusual were one over Cape Hatteras point, NC, June 7 (Keith Watson) and one near Ft. Fisher, NC, July 26 (*fide* Taylor Piephoff).

**BLACK TERN:** One at New Bern, NC, June 2 was locally unusual during the spring migration of this species (Bob Holmes).

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE:** The Beaufort, NC, birds continued from the spring, and a peak count of four was had July 27 (Simon Thompson). The Snead's Ferry, NC, birds also remained from spring, and of note was one carrying material to a nest on July 6 (Nell Moore).

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE:** The Beaufort, NC, birds found during the spring remained with at least four being in the area (sev. obs.). Of interest was the fully-feathered young picked up on June 12 (*fide* John Fussell) and the two adults and one young at a nest on July 5 (Jimi & Nell Moore). Throwing doubt onto the "wildness" of these birds is the fact that one was seen to have leg bands (Frank Enders) and therefore local escapes can't be ruled out. Other reports of this species included one in flight at Atlantic Beach, NC, June 11 (John Fussell) and one on Harbor Island, SC, July 11 (George & Judy Halleron).

**RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD:** An adult male was in Balsam Grove, Transylvania County, NC, July 29 - 30 (*fide* Norma Siebenheller). As usual the adult males found in the Carolinas tend to be the early migrants in July and August.

**NORTHERN "RED-SHAFTED" FLICKER:** An individual of this western form of the Northern Flicker was seen in flight at Beaufort, NC, on the highly unusual date of July 19 (Brad Carlson). The few previous reports for North Carolina have been during the more expected fall migration or winter seasons.

**ALDER FLYCATCHER:** One on territory east of Jefferson, Ashe County, NC, July 11 was considered to be at a rather low elevation (3,000') for the nesting season (Harry LeGrand).

**WILLOW FLYCATCHER:** One calling at Mason Farm, Chapel Hill, NC, June 8 (Susan Campbell) was probably a late migrant.

**GRAY KINGBIRD:** This species continued to be found at Cape Lookout, NC, with one there June 6 (Peter Bridge and Cynthia Renk) and possibly two there July 2 (Nell Moore).

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER:** One was near Townville, SC, June 28 (Don & Steve Cox), continuing the string of sightings in the Carolinas for the last several years!

**LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE:** One was on the sound side of Sunset Beach, NC, June 14 (Ricky Davis), providing a locally rare sighting for the breeding season in that part of the state.

**WARBLING VIREO:** The Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC, birds were present again this year, and from one to two birds were seen all summer (sev. obs.).

**COMMON RAVEN:** The birds present in downtown Greensboro, NC, from the spring were still being seen through July (Elizabeth Link).

**BANK SWALLOW:** One at Falls Lake, NC, June 7 (Will Cook and Randy Emmitt) was most likely a late spring migrant.

**CLIFF SWALLOW:** One of the biggest colonies located on the eastern edge of the breeding range involved 200 nests at a bridge near Havelock, NC, during the summer (Bill Rogers, *fide* John Fussell).

**NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD:** In the weird department was the "flock" of 30(!) mockingbirds in one tree near Georgetown, SC, July 21 (Paul Sykes). What could have caused this behavior in a normally solitary species?

**BROWN THRASHER:** Another instance of an unusual assemblage of birds was the 15 thrashers in one group in the yard of Merrill Lynch near Green Level, Chatham County, NC, on June 27. Lynch figured the group consisted of three broods and parents hanging together for some reason.

**AMERICAN PIPIT:** One heard calling at Cape Hatteras point, NC, June 1 (Rick Knight) was extremely late and possibly a record date for the coastal region.

**CEDAR WAXWING:** This species was once again found on the eastern edge of the range in North Carolina. Two were in Edgecombe County June 7, and a pair was seen building a nest in eastern Chatham County June 21 (Ricky Davis). Also in eastern Chatham County, Merrill Lynch found a pair July 5 and another pair in his yard near Green Level July 13-21.

**"LAWRENCE'S" WARBLER:** A male of this Blue-winged XGolden-winged Warbler hybrid was on territory along Candy Mt. Road, west of Murphy, NC, June 3 (Jim Edwards and Jane Chew). The bird was observed singing a Blue-winged type song.

**CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER:** One was a very late migrant near the coast at Alligator River NWR, Dare County, NC, June 3, as noted by Merrill Lynch.

**MAGNOLIA WARBLER:** A male singing at Carver's Gap, Roan Mountain, NC, June 15 & 19 was apparently a wandering, unmated individual (Rick Knight).

**NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH:** One was seen well and heard singing at Bethel, Fairfield County, SC, on the unusual date of June 23 (Donna Bailey). The presence of this bird at that locality in late June defies explanation, unless it was an extremely early fall migrant.

**LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH:** Two on territory in the Green Swamp, Brunswick County, NC, June 14 (Ricky Davis) were locally rare in summer, being on the edge of the normal breeding range.

**DICKCISSEL:** Some of the reports of this erratic but annual summer visitor included three males singing in eastern Washington County, NC, June 20 (Harry LeGrand, Jeff Pippen and Scott Hartley), two singing males east of Greenville, NC, early June to early July (*fide* John Wright), two all summer at the VOA-B site, Pitt County, NC, (John Wright), three pairs near Lattimore, Cleveland County, NC, during June (JoAnn Martin), one at Townville, SC, June 29 & July 11 (Paul Shewmaker and Len Kopka), and one in Dillon County, SC, June 14 until early July (Lex Glover and Steve Patterson).

**BOBOLINK:** North Carolina had more summer reports this year. A pair nested successfully at Black Balsam, Haywood County, at an elevation of almost 6,000' (Bill & Norma Siebenheller). Also three males and two females were confirmed nesters at a site near Calvert, Transylvania County, in late June (Siebenhellers). This site had nesting previously, as in 1994. Also extremely unusual near the coast were one male east of Greenville June 19-20 (Ernie Marshall) and two males at the VOA-B, Pitt County area July 30 (John Wright).

**SHINY COWBIRD:** A male was frequenting the feeder at the Ft. Fisher, NC, Aquarium from July 8 until at least July 11 (Paul Sykes, m. obs.). Also three were at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC, June 18 - 25, as noted by Steve Calver.

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE:** Good summer reports included a male seen carrying food at Lake Cunningham, Greenville County, SC, June 9 (Lex Glover) and at least three confirmed nestings in the Winston-Salem, NC, area (*fide* Ramona Snavelly).

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