

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. 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 can be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you type them and list the sightings according to the birds in checklist order (not according to dates or locations). If you submit your report to me through e-mail, please type your report directly into the message or copy it from a word processing program directly into the message. You may also attach your file to the e-mail, but if you do, please let me know the program used and also send a second version saved as a text (.txt) file.

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.

COMMON LOON: An unusual summer sighting was of one on L. Hickory, NC, June 7 (Dwayne & Lori Martin). Most summer Commons are found at coastal sites.

HERALD PETREL: The only summer Heralds included one intermediate morph off Hatteras, NC, June 4 (Patteson *et al.*) and two (one dark, one light) off Manteo, NC, June 4 (Focus on Nature Tours).

FEA'S PETREL: Two were found this summer, off Hatteras July 15 (Patteson *et al.*) and off Oregon Inlet July 31 (Focus on Nature Tours).

BERMUDA PETREL: The ninth and tenth reports of this species for North Carolina included singles off Oregon Inlet June 2 (Patteson *et al.*) and June 3 (Focus on Nature Tours). Along with three sightings the week before, during the spring reporting season, a total of 5 this year is truly amazing.

CORY'S SHEARWATER: The peak count this summer was of 1,156 off Hatteras July 29 (Patteson *et al.*). The best total from shore was the 50 seen moving just off the beach at Long Beach, NC, June 16 (Ricky Davis).

GREATER SHEARWATER: The peak offshore count was 293 out of Hatteras July 29 (Patteson *et al.*). Noteworthy sightings near land included three at C. Lookout, NC, June 2 (Clyde Sorenson), one at Long Beach, NC, June 16 (Ricky Davis), and two off Winyah Bay, SC, July 4 (Clay & Pat Sutton, *fide* Harry LeGrand).

MANX SHEARWATER: This species is normally very rare and unexpected off the Carolinas in summer. This year though, they were found multiple times off Hatteras, with singles June 4, July 16, and July 29 (Patteson *et al.*).

AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER: Always of interest from shore, three flew past Long Beach, NC, June 16 (Ricky Davis).

WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL: One individual of this exciting, much-sought-after species was found out of Oregon Inlet, NC, in mid-July (Allan Foreman, *fide* Brian Patteson).

LEACH'S STORM-PETREL: The best one-day count this summer was the 21 off Manteo, NC, June 4 (Focus on Nature Tours).

BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL: The peak total reported for this species during the summer was 143 off of Oregon Inlet July 29 (Focus on Nature Tours).

WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD: The only tropicbirds reported were off Hatteras, with two July 15 and one July 29 (Patteson *et al.*).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN: Unusual for summer, 12 spent the period of June 26 to the end of July at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC, as noted by Steve Calver.

BROWN PELICAN: Very rare and unusual inland sightings of Brown Pelican included one at Falls Lake, NC, July 26 (*fide* Brian Bockhahn) and one near the dam of L. Jocassee, SC, June 8 (*fide* Irvin Pitts).

ANHINGA: This species is being found inland with more regularity the last several years. One was a good find at a beaver pond complex in northern Johnston County, NC, June 20 (Harry LeGrand).

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD: This summer's frigatebirds involved a female flying north at Hilton Head Island, SC, June 3 (Steve Compton and Margo Digan) and an immature at C. Hatteras, NC, June 6 (Wayne Irvin).

GREAT "WHITE" HERON: Extremely rare and totally unexpected was the presence of one at a golf course pond in Brevard, NC (Simon Thompson, sev. obs.). The bird was first located in mid-July and remained through the period. There are no previous mountain area records, and this form had not been seen in the Carolinas since the Pea Island, NC, bird that was present from July 1994 through the following year!

GREAT EGRET: Noteworthy mountain reports included nine along the New River, Alleghany County, NC, July 7 (Harrol Blevins) and one near Long Branch Creek, Ashe County, NC, July 8-9 (Tom Howard, Harry LeGrand).

REDDISH EGRET: Not very unusual but always exciting, Reddish Egrets included one at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, during June and July (Bob & Barbara Maxwell, Jack Peachey, sev. obs.), one at Litchfield Beach, SC, June 14 (Bob & Barbara Maxwell), and one at the Portsmouth, NC, flats July 13 (*fide* Taylor Piephoff).

WHITE IBIS: This species wandered inland this summer in a very widespread fashion. Some of the more interesting sightings came from the western portions of North Carolina. The best count was of 30 near the French Broad River, Henderson County, June 15, as noted by Wayne Forsythe. Also seven were near Rosman, Transylvania County, June 24 (*fide* Tom Joyce), and three were found near Boone June 18-19 (Curtis Smalling). Elsewhere one was at Cowans Ford Refuge, Mecklenburg County, June 27 (Danny Swicegood), and one was at Grandview, Forsyth County, July 23 (*fide* Ramona Snavelly).

GLOSSY IBIS: An excellent count of 645 Glossies was made at a large wader roost at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC, July 12 (Steve Calver). This has to be one of the highest totals reported for this species in the Carolinas.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL: Always a noteworthy find in the Carolinas, one was present at Pea Island N.W.R., NC, all summer. First found in late May, the bird was seen off and on at several locations, either South Pond, New Field, or North Pond (Pat Moore, sev. obs.). Another previous report of a spoonbill at Bird Shoal, Beaufort, NC, May 15 (*fide* John Fussell) makes one wonder if the two occurrences involved the same individual.

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WOOD STORK: The sighting of 24 in flight along NC 904 June 29 (Katherine Higgins) was interesting since the location was about 19 miles west of US 17 in Brunswick County! Were these headed to the Sunset Beach summering area? Also one was a complete surprise and quite rare at an impoundment at the upper end of Falls Lake, NC, June 29 (*fide* Brian Bockhahn). Truly inland reports of this species are very rare in North Carolina.

RING-NECKED DUCK: Lingering or summering Ring-necks included one at Par Pond, Savannah River Site, SC, June 7-20 (Paul Champlin and Pete Johnson), two at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, July 12 (Steve Calver), and a pair at the Jacksonville Wastewater Treatment Plant, Onslow County, NC, in early July (Nell Moore and Jim O'Donnell).

RUDDY DUCK: One was at the Jacksonville W.T.P., NC, in early July (Moore and O'Donnell); and a female with seven chicks provided a rare breeding report for South Carolina at the Savannah Spoil Site June 9 (Steve Calver).

MISSISSIPPI KITE: The number of nesting locations for this species in North Carolina continues to increase. A pair in Goldsboro has been present in the same area for three years in a row, and nesting is suspected (*fide* Eric Dean). A Roanoke Rapids nest has been located (for at least the second year in a row), with young observed this year (Frank Enders); and the Laurinburg area had at least three different known nests (Barbara Gearhart). Also two birds at a nest with at least one young were found in Newport, Carteret County, during July (Susan Arrington, Rich Boyd, Jack Fennell, John Fussell). This nesting represents the first breeding of the species in the outer Coastal Plain for that state.

NORTHERN HARRIER: One was extremely early at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, July 31, as noted by Steve Calver.

COOPER'S HAWK: Noteworthy coastal summer reports included one near Buck Hall, Francis Marion Nat. For., SC, July 3 (Clay & Pat Sutton, *fide* Harry LeGrand), and one at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, June 9 and July 12 (Calver).

BROAD-WINGED HAWK: Two were locally rare in summer near Buck Hall, Francis Marion Nat. For., SC, July 3 (Clay & Pat Sutton, *fide* LeGrand). Nesting of this species is very unusual in the outer Coastal Plain of the Carolinas.

GOLDEN EAGLE: A sub-adult was a good find for the summer at Mt. Mitchell, NC, June 4 (Donna Bailey).

AMERICAN COOT: A rare summer report for North Carolina was of one on Lake Osceola, Hendersonville, July 7 (Simon Thompson). Most summer Coots are found in more coastal areas.

AMERICAN AVOCET: Two were rare inland migrants at Falls Lake, NC, July 13 (Kate Finlayson).

WHIMBREL: One provided a very rare inland sighting at Crabtree Lake, Wake County, NC, July 15 (Robert Perkins).

WESTERN SANDPIPER: Hooper Lane in Henderson County, NC, hosted up to five Westerns July 25 (Wayne Forsyth and Bob Olthoff). This species is considerably less frequent than Semipalmateds as inland migrants.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER: Inland Short-billeds of note included a good count of 15 at the Winslow Sod Farm, Scotland Neck, NC, July 25 (Elisa Enders), and three to the west at Hooper Lane, NC, the same day (Wayne Forsythe and Bob Olthoff).

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER: One was quite early at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, July 31, as noted by Steve Calver.

COMMON SNIBE: One found in the Mills River, Henderson County, NC, area June 29 (Wayne Forsythe) must have been a non-breeding wanderer, as it was just too early for a fall migrant.

AMERICAN WOODCOCK: One seen on Roanoke Island, NC, July 4 (Lois Bradshaw, *vide* Jeff Lewis) was unusual in that this species is very rarely found during the summer season.

SOUTH POLAR SKUA: This summer's sightings included one off Hatteras, NC, June 4, two off Hatteras July 29 (Brian Patteson *et al.*), and three off Oregon Inlet, NC, July 30 (Focus on Nature Tours).

POMARINE JAEGER: The peak offshore total was the 19 off Hatteras July 29 (Patteson *et al.*). Other reports included two off C. Lookout, NC, July 23 (Brad Carlson and Gordon Smith) and one from shore at Long Beach, NC, June 16 (Ricky Davis).

PARASITIC JAEGER: This species is much less common offshore than the Pomarine. This summer singles were found off Hatteras June 14, 17, 18 (Brian Van Druten) and July 15 (Patteson *et al.*). Also one was seen from shore at Long Beach, NC, June 16 (Ricky Davis).

LONG-BILLED JAEGER: Very rare in South Carolina, two were off Murrell's Inlet June 17 (Jack Peachey and Donna Bailey). There are only about five previous reports for that state.

BONAPARTE'S GULL: Very unusual as a summer lingerer, one was at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, June 9-26 (Steve Calver).

ARCTIC TERN: This species has been harder to find offshore the last couple of years. Thus of interest was the excellent count of 33 spring migrants off Hatteras, NC, June 3 (Patteson *et al.*).

FORSTER'S TERN: Several inland sightings were reported this summer, including three at Lake Hickory, NC, July 11 (Dwayne and Lori Martin) and two at Falls Lake, NC, July 14 (Brian Bockhahn, Kate Finlayson).

BRIDLED TERN: Ten off C. Lookout, NC, July 23 (Brad Carlson and Gordon Smith) provided a good count for that locality.

SOOTY TERN: This species was present off North Carolina in excellent numbers this summer. The peak counts were 38 on July 15 and 86 on July 29, both off Hatteras (Patteson *et al.*). Six were also found off C. Lookout on July 29, as noted by Brad Carlson and Gordon Smith.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: This species has pushed ever farther into the Carolinas. It now seems that a group has established itself as far west as the Conover, Catawba County, NC, area, where up to six are present (Dwayne & Lori Martin).

WHITE-WINGED DOVE: One is still holding on at the usual Beaufort, NC, site, at least into June (John Fussell, Simon Thompson *et al.*).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO: Once again this species was found in Coastal Plain pocosin habitats during the summer. Three were heard near Great Lake, Croatan Nat. For., NC, June 1 (John Fussell), and two were at Alligator River N.W.R., NC, July 13 (Jeff Lewis). Also one found in the shoreline trees at Lake Phelps, NC, June 3 was probably a late migrant (Merrill Lynch).

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER: Very rare and most unusual was the presence of an Olive-sided at the Cooper Road W.T.P., Forsyth County, NC, June 25 and July 9 (Ramona Snavely and Regina Burt). Obviously a non-breeding individual, summer reports in the Carolinas, away from the mountains, are almost unheard of!

WILLOW FLYCATCHER: Late, locally rare migrants were found at Pea Island N.W.R., NC, June 2 (George Armistead *et al.*) and at Ft. Bragg, NC, in early June (Alan Schultz). Also of note, a nest with three eggs of this species was found in the Mills River, Henderson County, NC, area this summer (Wayne Forsythe). Video footage of this nesting provided the county's first documented breeding evidence.

EASTERN PHOEBE: One at Carver's Gap, Roan Mt., NC, June 16 & 30 (Rick Knight) was considered to be a high-elevation occurrence for the species in summer.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: North Carolina's first documented nesting of this species occurred south of Monroe, Union County. One was found June 1, and by the sixth, two were at a nest. Three young were raised and apparently fledged by July 15 (Eric Olsen, Anne & Blayne Olsen, m. obs.). Other summer reports of Scissor-taileds included one east of Scotland Neck, NC, June 11 (Jeff Lewis, John Wright) and one in Raleigh, NC, July 10 (Michael Davis, *fide* Ricky Davis).

WARBLING VIREO: Two on territory in Cleveland County, NC, in early June (JoAnn Martin and Simon Thompson) were locally rare. Even rarer were the two singing Warblings, first found in the spring at Anilorac Farm in Orange County, NC, that remained until at least July 4 (Will Cook).

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH: One found along Table Rock Mt. Road, north of Morganton, NC, June 25 (Dwayne & Lori Martin), was at a rather low elevation of about 1200' for this species during the summer.

CEDAR WAXWING: The only eastern summer report of this irregular breeder was of one near Buckhorn Reservoir, Johnston County, NC, June 25 (Ricky Davis).

MAGNOLIA WARBLER: Once again, this species was found on territory at Roan Mt., NC, June 28 (Allan Trently, Len Pardue) and July 1 (Wayne

Forsythe *et al.*). This area is easily the best site for breeding season Magnolias in the state.

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER: Late migrants included three singing males in the Ft. Bragg, NC, area in early June (Susan Campbell).

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER: Very rare and unusual were the late (or non-breeding) Yellow-rumpeds found at Ocracoke, NC, June 17 (Peter Vankevich), York, SC, June 19 (Bill Hilton), and the Savannah River Site, Barnwell County, SC, June 24 (Paul Champlin). Of particular interest, the Ocracoke bird was a singing male that was in the same area where one was reported the previous summer!

BLACKPOLL WARBLER: Late Blackpolls included singles in Franklin County, NC, June 1 (Ricky Davis), at Bodie Island, NC, Lighthouse woods June 1 (Jeff Lewis), and at C. Lookout, NC, June 7 (John Fussell).

AMERICAN REDSTART: One was very late on Roanoke Island, NC, June 7, as noted by Jeff Lewis.

SWAINSON'S WARBLER: One on territory near Littleton, Warren County, NC, June 8 (Harry LeGrand), provided a new breeding season locality for that part of the state.

SCARLET TANAGER: One on the Milltail Creek, Dare County, NC, BBS June 3 (Merrill Lynch) was considered to be a late migrant. Two on the California BBS in Gates County, NC, June 4 (Lynch) were on the eastern edge of the normal breeding range. And a male singing near Mill Creek, Carteret County, NC, June 14-15 (Jack Fennell, *fide* John Fussell) was interesting since there are no confirmed nesting records for the county.

LARK SPARROW: This species has been known to nest in the Sandhills region of North Carolina. This year several were found at Ft. Bragg in early June (Alan Schultz); and a new location for the species was found along Slate Rd., Scotland County, where three adults and five young were seen June 21-28 (Barbara Gearhart, Wayne Irvin). Also of interest was the adult near the French Broad River, Henderson County, NC, July 3 (Wayne Forsythe), which was not far from the area where one was found during the spring!

HENSLOW'S SPARROW: This year's censuses of the breeding populations at the VOA sites near Greenville, NC, totaled 83 singing males at Site A and 57 males at Site B (John & Paula Wright).

PAINTED BUNTING: A female was a late and unexpected visitor at Pea Island N.W.R., NC, June 8 (Jeff Lewis).

DICKCISSEL: Summer season reports included up to three in Cleveland County, NC, June 7 (JoAnn Martin and Simon Thompson), two in Henderson County, NC, July 9 (Marilyn Westphal), and one near Pettigrew State Park, NC, June 25 (Harry LeGrand and Jeff Phippen). Also up to three were at a farm near Margaret, Franklin County, NC, during late May and June (Ricky Davis). First definite breeding evidence for the county was obtained June 25, when a female was seen carrying food repeatedly to an area suspected of harboring a nest.

SHINY COWBIRD: The only sighting this summer was of a male at Ft. Macon, NC, in early July (Randy Newman, *fide* John Fussell).

BALTIMORE ORIOLE: One was considered to be a late migrant at Ft. Bragg, NC, in early June, as noted by Alan Schultz. Much more intriguing was the female oriole seen giving food to a juvenile in Raleigh, NC, July 9 (Mark Thompson, *fide* Harry LeGrand). Although no nest was ever found in the area, this still provided probable breeding evidence for the Raleigh area, which is very rare that far east.

RED CROSSBILL: Interesting summer reports included three at Gorges State Park, Transylvania County, NC, June 1 (Harry LeGrand), up to 30 at Balsam Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway, Buncombe County, NC, June 4 (Wayne Forsythe *et al.*), and an impressive flock of 80 on Roan Mt., NC, June 16 (Rick Knight).