

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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

All Dates Summer 2001

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events that do not 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: One found in the North River, Carteret County, NC, July 8 was in full alternate plumage (Rich & Susan Boyd). Summer lingering loons are practically annual, but they usually are in basic plumage.

PIED-BILLED GREBE: An adult Pied-billed was a surprise on the New River, Ashe County, NC, July 4, as noted by Dwayne & Lori Martin. Summer

sightings of this species become increasingly rare, especially as you head toward the mountains.

HERALD PETREL: There were two reports of this annual, expected seabird. Both off Hatteras, NC, one was seen July 8 and another was found July 28 (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

FEA'S PETREL: This rare and elusive *Pterodroma* was found once, that being off Oregon Inlet, NC, June 10 (Focus On Nature Tours-Paul Guris *et al.*).

BERMUDA PETREL: One found off Oregon Inlet, NC, June 10 (F.O.N.T.-Paul Guris *et al.*) provided another sighting for that state's waters. This bird and another from the spring season made it four years in a row that this rare and endangered species has been found off North Carolina.

GREATER SHEARWATER: This summer's shore-based sightings included one near Emerald Isle, NC, June 20 (Jim Bloor), five near C. Hatteras Point, NC, June 21-22 (Susan Campbell), and several dead or dying found on beaches in the C. Lookout, NC, area in late June (John Fussell, sev. obs.).

MANX SHEARWATER: This species was present off Hatteras, NC, for most of the summer, an unusual event. Single birds were seen July 7 and 29, while an amazing count of 7-8 was had July 8 (Brian Patteson *et al.*). One wonders if the presence of these birds meant that there were some nesting failures in the northern Atlantic breeding sites.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN: A group of this species was present at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC, for most of the summer. The peak count noted was 136 (an impressive total for the Carolinas) July 30 (Steve Calver).

GREAT CORMORANT: Great Cormorants sometimes linger into summer at a few select locations. This year one was at Ft. Macon, NC, June 10, as noted by Randy Newman.

ANHINGA: One was a surprise on Swift Creek just northeast of Rocky Mount, NC, July 15 (Ricky Davis). This site is about 20 miles away from known summer hangouts near the Roanoke River in Halifax County.

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD: Frigatebirds are annual visitors to the Carolinas. This summer's reports were of singles at Folly Beach, SC, June 1 (Tom Nicolls) and C. Lookout, NC, June 2 (Jeannie Kraus *et al.*, *fide* John Fussell).

AMERICAN BITTERN: One near the Laurinburg, NC, airport, July 22-26 (Barbara Gearhart) was unexpected. This species is usually not present, especially inland, until the fall.

REDDISH EGRET: The number of reports of this annual visitor was down this year. Sightings, from the usual spots, included singles at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, June 27 (Bob Maxwell), Sunset Beach, NC, July 22 (Barbara Gearhart), and Ft. Fisher, NC, July 29 (Sam Cooper).

CATTLE EGRET: One was a good find at a pond along Snelson Rd., Madison County, NC, June 20 (Len and Esther Pardue). Summer reports are hard to come by in the mountains.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON: The only report was of an immature bird at L. Osceola, Hendersonville, NC, July 31 (Ron Selvey).

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK: One was found at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, July 19 (Steve Calver). It is quite possible that this individual came from the nearby ACE Basin area, where this species has been seen off-and-on the last several years.

NORTHERN PINTAIL: Rare as a summer lingerer in the Carolinas, one was a good find at a small lake in Transylvania County, NC, July 8 (Nancy Iha).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER: A female was very late on the Shallotte River, Brunswick County, NC, June 16, as noted by Bob Perkins.

HOODED MERGANSER: Summer reports of this duck are always noteworthy. Sightings included single birds at the Little Creek Impoundment, Chapel Hill, NC, June 3 (Rob Gluck and Rick Payne) and at Emerald Isle, NC, July 21 (Jamie Cameron).

RUDDY DUCK: This species is an uncommon, very localized breeder in the Carolinas. Thus of note were two more breeding records for the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, with a female and 11 young June 7 and a female with three young July 7 (Steve Calver).

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE: Swallow-tailed Kites are regular spring transients along North Carolina's Outer Banks. Sightings there in summer are much more unusual. This year one to three were present in the Buxton area in early July (Marcia Lyons, sev. obs.). Were these non-breeding lingering birds?

MISSISSIPPI KITE: The Laurinburg, NC, area once again had two known nests, with both being successful (Barbara Gearhart). This species was also present again all summer in the Croatan Forest, NC, area (John Fussell). The largest concentration reported this summer was of 40 in a swirling flock at the Ventosa location in Halifax County, NC, June 9 (Ricky Davis).

NORTHERN HARRIER: From two to three Harriers spent the summer at Alligator River N.W.R., NC, although no breeding evidence was found (Jeff Lewis). Practically all breeding records have come from immediate coastal marshes along Pamlico and Core Sounds.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK: The only report of this rare summer resident came from Jasper County, SC, June 11 (Will Cook), which could have been a non-breeding wanderer.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK: An immature Broad-winged in Conway, SC, July 21, provided a rare outer Coastal Plain report (Gary Phillips).

AMERICAN KESTREL: Summer sightings included a probable early migrant at Aynor, SC, July 29 (Stephen Thomas) and a family of two adults and a juvenile at the Cherry Hospital, Wayne County, NC, July 1 (Ricky Davis). This latter site has been a regular breeding location for several years now.

UPLAND SANDPIPER: The first fall migrants reported included two at the New Hanover County Airport, NC, July 28 (Sam Cooper) and one at the Bucksport, SC, Sod Farm July 29 (Stephen Thomas).

WHIMBREL: Very rare inland, especially in the mountains, one was an excellent find at Hooper Lane, Henderson County, NC, July 25 (Wayne Forsythe and Bob Olthoff).

SANDERLING: One at Seaforth, Jordan Lake, NC, July 21 was the only one reported inland this season (Jeff Pippen).

WESTERN SANDPIPER: Inland sightings included two in eastern Franklin County, NC, July 22 (Ricky Davis) and five at Hooper Lane, NC, July 25 (Wayne Forsythe and Bob Olthoff).

STILT SANDPIPER: Noteworthy inland reports involved one at New Bern, NC, July 21 (Bob Holmes) and 6-8 at Hooper Lane, NC, July 25-29 (Wayne Forsythe and Bob Olthoff).

RUFF: The Savannah Spoil Site, SC, is becoming one of the best places for locating this rare shorebird. One was present there again this summer on July 10, as noted by Paul Sykes.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER: The best inland report was of five at Hooper Lane, NC, July 25 (Wayne Forsythe and Bob Olthoff).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE: Noteworthy was one at Pea I. N.W.R., NC, July 21 (Russ & Patricia Tyndall). The Savannah Spoil Site, SC, often harbors good numbers of this species, and the peak count noted was 13 on July 30 (Steve Calver).

PARASITIC JAEGER: This species is much less common than the Pomarine Jaeger during summer. Thus of note were one near shore at C. Hatteras Point, NC, June 22 (Susan Campbell) and one offshore out of Hatteras, NC, July 29 (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

LONG-TAILED JAEGER: A rare mid-summer sighting was of one off Hatteras, NC, July 7 (Brian Patteson *et al.*). Less unusual were early migrants off Hatteras July 28 & 29 (Patteson *et al.*).

HERRING GULL: One lingered surprisingly late at Falls Lake, NC, June 3 (Brian Bockhahn).

ICELAND/HERRING GULL HYBRID: An individual photographed at the Cedar I. Ferry Terminal, NC, July 8 (Rich and Susan Boyd) had the plumage of an Iceland Gull but showed structural characters of a larger species such as Herring Gull. Adding to the strangeness of this bird was the mid-summer timing of the sighting.

CASPIAN TERN: One at L. Wheeler, Wake County, NC, June 9 (Steve Shultz) was considered to be a late spring migrant.

SOOTY TERN: Summer reports of this species at tern colonies are almost annual in occurrence. This year one was present in the lower Cape Fear River, NC, in June (*vide* Jim O'Donnell), and one was on New Dump I., Core Sound, NC, June 24 (Micou Browne, Jim O'Donnell, *et al.*).

BAND-TAILED PIGEON: Two birds were heard and recorded near the Devil's Courthouse area of the Blue Ridge Parkway, NC, June 16 (Robin Carter, Caroline Eastman, Steve Dennis). Although the birds were never seen, they provided the third report of this Western species for the state.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE: The Beaufort, NC, area continued to host this species (for the third year in a row), with a pair seen copulating July 21 (John Fussell *et al.*).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO: The only report of this uncommon species was of two heard at Bunch Gap along the Blue Ridge Parkway, NC, June 9 (Wayne Forsythe and Bob Olthoff).

SHORT-EARED OWL: Unprecedented for our area, up to four Short-eared Owls remained at Alligator River N.W.R., NC, all summer (Jeff Lewis, sev. obs.). Although no direct breeding evidence was located during June or July, nesting was very possible.

SELASPHORUS HUMMINGBIRD: An immature male *Selasphorus* hummingbird at Simpsonville, SC, July 31 (Pete Worthington) was the first fall migrant reported.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER: Locally unusual were an adult with two juveniles on Roanoke Island, NC, in early July (Jeff Lewis). Nesting by this species is quite rare at that location.

WILLOW FLYCATCHER: One singing near Coddle Creek Res., Cabarrus County, NC, June 19 was probably a late spring migrant (Danny Swicegood).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: The nesting pair near Monroe, NC, for the second year in a row, successfully fledged four young June 24-25 (Anne Olsen). And a second adult male showed up at the site July 5-9, providing what must have been an impressive sight – two males, a female, and four young all at once (Olsen)!

BLACK-WHISKERED VIREO: North Carolina's fifth Black-whiskered Vireo was found on Baldhead Island, Brunswick County, June 6-22 (Greg Massey, Sam Cooper, sev. obs.). The bird, seeming to hang out with a Red-eyed Vireo, was possibly joined by a second (heard only) singing individual June 18 (Mary McDavid). One wonders if breeding occurred there this year.

WARBLING VIREO: North Carolina's most easterly known nesting site, at Anilorac Farm, Orange County, had young by June 3, as noted by Shelley Theye and Lee Van Malssen.

TREE SWALLOW: Two adults and one juvenile were seen near the north shore of L. Gaston at Eaton's Ferry, NC, June 8 (Harry LeGrand), providing a new nesting season report for that part of the state.

HOUSE WREN: This species is normally absent from the northern coastal area of North Carolina during the breeding season. Thus of note this summer were a singing wren at Southern Shores June 9 (Jeff Lewis) and a pair in June on Collington Island (Bob Burrell, *vide* Lewis). It is not known if nesting occurred.

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH: One was quite late on Roanoke Island, NC, June 19 (Jeff Lewis).

CEDAR WAXWING: This species is notorious for lingering far to the east of its normal breeding range in North Carolina. This summer's easternmost reports

involved 5-6 in mainland Dare County June 18 and three in Manteo July 13 (Jeff Lewis). Breeding evidence, however, was not obtained for these birds.

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER: One to two singing individuals were late migrants at the Savannah River Site, SC, in early June (*vide* Paul Champlin).

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER: Summer reports of this species from the mountains are always noteworthy, especially since breeding has occurred rarely. This summer singing males were found near Craggy Gardens, NC, June 9 (Paul Champlin) and on Mt. Mitchell, NC, June 11 (Simon Thompson *et al.*).

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER: One was considered to be a early migrant at Ft. Macon, NC, July 14 (John Daughtry).

OVENBIRD: Rarely observed in nature, a leucistic Ovenbird was photographed near Connestee, Transylvania County, NC, in July (Betty McIlwain, Ludwig Kempe). The bird was a pale creamy color with buffy areas and an orangish crown. Identification was based on size, structure, and behavior.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH: Another early migrant was one far to the south at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, July 10, as noted by Paul Sykes.

MOURNING WARBLER: A singing male Mourning Warbler was present near Carver's Gap, in the Roan Mountain, NC, area June 23-July 1 (Allan Trently, *sev. obs.*). This was the first breeding season report of this warbler for the Carolinas since birds were found near the Great Smoky Mountains from 1983-1986.

SAVANNAH SPARROW: One was totally out of season near the Aiken County, SC, airport, June 28 (Carol Eldridge, *vide* Anne Waters). Was this an absurdly late lingering bird or a wandering non-breeder?

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW: One was very late, still coming to a feeder, in Southern Shores, NC, June 17 (*vide* Jeff Lewis).

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK: Another tardy spring bird was the Rose-breasted Grosbeak found at the Savannah River Site, SC, June 7 (Paul Champlin).

DICKCISSEL: The nesting pair at Anilorac Farm, Orange County, NC, produced four eggs by June 24, and at least three young successfully fledged by early July (Shelley Theye, Lee Van Malssen, Kent Fiala, Norm Budnitz, *sev. obs.*). The nesting pair near Southport, NC, was last seen June 8 (Mary McDavit), and the success of that attempt is unknown. And 1-2 Dickcissels were once again present near Pettigrew State Park, Washington County, NC, June 17 (Harry LeGrand, Jeff Phippen, Toni Rexrode, Scott Hartley).

BOBOLINK: The only report received was of a pair in Alleghany County, NC, June 17 (Harrol Blevins *et al.*), with nesting evidence not found.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE: One at Bear Island, SC, July 14 was most likely a very early fall migrant (Donna Bailey and Sharon Brown).

RED CROSSBILL: Two at a feeder in Skyland, NC, June 10 (Simon Thompson) were rather unusual for that location at that date. The best counts

reported from the more normal locations included 10+ at Balsam Gap, Blue Ridge Parkway, NC, June 11 (Thompson *et al.*), 40 at Haywood Gap, Blue Ridge Parkway, NC, June 9 (Russ and Patricia Tyndall), and an impressive 75+ on Roan Mtn., NC, June 30 (Wayne Forsythe, Bob Olthoff, Marilyn Westphal). **PINE SISKIN:** One at a feeder in Hopkins, Richland County, SC, June 7 was very late, even for this unpredictable species (Gary Sowell, *fide* Tim Kalbach).

Instructions for Authors

www.carolinabirdclub.org/thechat.html
