

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: Rare summer sightings included one at C. Lookout, NC, June 1 (Russ & Patricia Tyndall), one off the Huntington Beach State Park, SC jetty June 7 (Stephen Thomas), one off the beach at Kitty Hawk, NC, in early July (Sam Corbo), and one at Oregon Inlet, NC, July 4 (Russ & Patricia Tyndall).

HERALD PETREL: Only one was found this summer, that being off Hatteras, NC, June 2 (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

GREATER SHEARWATER: A good count of 217 Greaters was had off of Hatteras, NC, June 9 (Brian Patteson *et al.*).

MANX SHEARWATER: This rare but regular migrant was found off Hatteras, NC, with two birds on June 1 & 9 (Patteson *et al.*).

WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD: This species was found multiple times off Hatteras this summer. One was found on the June 2 pelagic trip (Patteson *et al.*), and single birds were found on five fishing trips spanning the period June 5 - July 9 (Patteson).

RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD: The very rare Red-billed Tropicbird was found twice off Hatteras, with an immature June 29 and an adult July 13, as noted by Brian Patteson.

MASKED BOOBY: One off Hatteras, NC, June 9 (Patteson *et al.*) provided one of the few reports of this species from that state the last several years.

BROWN BOOBY: An immature Brown Booby was picked up on the beach at Emerald Isle, NC, July 30 (*vide* John Fussell). The bird was taken to a local wildlife shelter where it died the next day. This bird provided the first specimen record of this very rare species for North Carolina.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN: A good count of 60+ at Bear Is., Colleton County, SC, June 29 (Robin Carter and Caroline Eastman) proved that this species continues in that area in good numbers.

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD: This summer's reports of this yearly visitor included one over Winyah Bay, Georgetown County, SC, June 27 (*vide* Jack Peachey), one at south Litchfield Beach, SC, July 3 (Bob Maxwell), and one over the breakers at Pea Is. N.W.R., NC, July 3 (Rich and Susan Boyd, Bob Holmes, Wade Fuller).

LITTLE BLUE HERON: An immature was a locally unusual find at Hendersonville, NC, July 29 (Wayne Forsythe).

REDDISH EGRET: This species was found in both states again this summer. In South Carolina the best count was an impressive 8 birds at Bulls Is., Charleston County July 22 (Perry Nugent). Also up to three were in the Murrell's Inlet area July 4 (Ritch Lilly). In North Carolina the best count was of 6 on the Portsmouth Is. Flats July 21 (Wayne Irvin, Jeff Lewis and Joan Kutulas, Brad and Pat Carlson). Also up to three were in the Shackleford Banks, Carteret County area July 27 (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, Rich and Susan Boyd). And one found at Wrightsville Beach, NC, in late July (*vide* Taylor Piephoff) was locally unusual.

WHITE IBIS: The best inland count received was of 28 at the New Hope Creek arm of Jordan Lake, NC, June 15 (Cynthia Fox *et al.*). And a group of three at the Four Seasons Marsh, Henderson County, NC, June 29 (Wayne Forsythe and Marilyn Westphal) provided a good report for that western locality.

WOOD STORK: This is one of the rarer inland wandering waders in North Carolina. Thus of note were one near Norfleet, Halifax County July 14 (Ricky

Davis) and two at the New Hope Creek arm of Jordan Lake July 21 (Davis). At least one of the latter birds remained until at least July 28 (Rick Payne *et al.*).

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK: Reports of this species continue from coastal South Carolina. One was at Magnolia Gardens, Charleston June 5 (Jim Edwards and Jane Chew), and a flock of 22 was at a pond near McClellanville June 5 (*fide* Dennis Forsythe). One wonders about the "wildness" of these birds, but the latter report really makes a case for naturally-occurring birds, as most escapes are of small groups or individuals.

TUNDRA SWAN: One, apparently injured, spent the summer at North Pond, Pea Is. N.W.R., NC, as noted by many observers.

NORTHERN SHOVELER: One was unusual and very late at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC, June 23 (Steve Calver).

RING-NECKED DUCK: Three males were a surprise at Jordan Lake, NC, June 23, as noted by Ricky Davis. Individuals of this species are somewhat regular nonbreeding lingerers, but the presence of three together was quite unusual.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER: A lingering female at Oregon Inlet, NC, July 4 was somewhat unusual for the summer (Russ and Patricia Tyndall).

RUDDY DUCK: One at University Place, Charlotte, NC, June 22 was unexpected in summer (Marek Smith). At a known summering site, the Jacksonville W.T.P. near Richlands, NC, an impressive count of 58+ was had July 1 (Nell Moore, Jim and Laura O'Donnell).

OSPREY: One, very unusual in summer, was present along the river at Brevard, NC, the entire period (Norma Siebenheller, sev. obs.).

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE: Two were excellent finds in upstate South Carolina near Pendleton, Anderson County July 27 (Steve Patterson). Also an impressive group of 30+ was observed on the Savannah River Site near Allendale, SC, in late July (Anne Waters).

MISSISSIPPI KITE: There were no new nesting areas reported in North Carolina this summer, but the known locations at Roanoke Rapids and Newport continued to have breeding birds (Frank Enders, Rich and Susan Boyd).

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK: Always noteworthy during the summer in the Carolinas, a Sharp-shinned was a good find at Chapel Hill, NC, June 23, as noted by Helmut Mueller.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK: A juvenile Broad-winged was observed near Mill Creek, Carteret County, NC, July 27-31 (Jack Fennell, *fide* John Fussell). Broad-wingeds are very rare near the coast as a breeder, and this juvenile would seem to point to local breeding.

AMERICAN KESTREL: Breeding season reports of Kestrels are always noteworthy. This summer's reports included a pair fledging two young in Roanoke Rapids, NC (Frank Enders), a single near Ocracoke, NC, June 3 (Nick Pantelidis), and one at Leggett, Edgecombe County, NC, June 30 (Russ and Patricia Tyndall).

BLACK RAIL: This species is rarely observed, and usually a brief glimpse of a bird running through the grass is the most one can expect to get. Thus truly

amazing was the seven, including four adults and three young, seen in the open at North River marsh, Carteret County, NC, June 29 (Brad Carlson).

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER: Only one inland Black-bellied was reported, that being at Falls Lake, NC, July 28 (Ricky Davis).

WILSON'S PLOVER: An excellent count of 50 Wilson's was had at the east end of Shackleford Banks, Carteret County, NC, July 27 (John Fussell *et al.*).

PIPING PLOVER: The best counts of this species this summer were 20 on Shackleford Banks, NC, July 27 (Fussell *et al.*), 25 at Portsmouth Is., NC, July 21 (Wayne Irvin, Jeff Lewis, Brad Carlson), and 38 on the Ocracoke, NC, flats July 22 (Irvin, Lewis).

AMERICAN AVOCET: Two at the New Hope Creek arm of Jordan Lake, NC, July 22 were good finds for that inland site (Mike Skakuj).

UPLAND SANDPIPER: Three were a little early at the Orangeburg, SC, sod farm July 6 (Tim Kalbach), but one at Mayesville, SC, June 23 was extremely early (Evelyn Dabbs).

WHIMBREL: One was a surprise, and very rare inland, at the Orangeburg, SC, sod farm July 27, as noted by Steve Compton.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW: Two were present on Shackleford Banks, NC, for most of July (Nell Moore, Jim and Laura O'Donnell, John Fussell, Jack Fennell, Rich and Susan Boyd). This area has become the most reliable location for Long-billeds in North Carolina the last several years.

MARbled GODWIT: One was rather early at Huntington Beach State Park, SC, June 26, as noted by Jack Peachey.

RED KNOT: An excellent count for the summer was the 110+ at South Pond, Pea Is. N.W.R., NC, July 3 (Ricky Davis).

SANDERLING: Inland Sanderlings reported involved singles at Falls Lake, NC, July 21 (Ricky Davis) and Jordan Lake, NC, July 22 (Shantanu Phukan and Allan Johnston).

WESTERN SANDPIPER: The best total of this peep inland was the 12 at the New Hope Creek arm of Jordan Lake, NC, July 22 (Mike Skakuj).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER: Four were quite late at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper County, SC, June 18 (Steve Calver).

CURLEW SANDPIPER: This rare but regular visitor was reported twice, both from Pea Is., N.W.R., NC. An alternate plumaged bird was at South Pond July 3 (Ricky Davis), and another was on North Pond July 20 (Jeff Lewis, Russ and Patricia Tyndall).

Instructions for Authors

www.carolinabirdclub.org/thechat.html

AMERICAN WOODCOCK: Rare summer sightings included one being flushed at the NC Arboretum, Buncombe County, NC, June 24 (John Lindfors), one flushed near Honey Hill, Francis Marion Nat. For., SC, July 15 (Perry Nugent *et al.*), and one seen in a yard in Asheville, NC, July 21 (Simon Thompson).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE: The only summer report received was of one at the Savannah Spoil Site, SC, July 10 (Steve Calver).

HERRING GULL: A dirty, oiled immature Herring was unusual in that it spent the summer inland at Jordan Lake, NC (Ricky Davis).

GULL-BILLED TERN: An excellent count of 110 Gull-billeds, a locally declining species, was at the Davis Impoundment, Carteret County, NC, July 28 (John Fussell *et al.*).

CASPIAN TERN: One at the Davis Impoundment, Carteret County, NC, June 16 (John Fussell) was considered locally unusual, while one at Falls Lake, NC, July 7 (Ricky Davis) was a little early as a fall migrant.

FORSTER'S TERN: Good inland sightings from western North Carolina included four on L. Hickory July 30 (Dwayne Martin) and one on L. Julian July 31 (Wayne Forsythe).

LEAST TERN: Rooftop nesting by this species was once again observed in the Carolinas. An impressive count of up to 110 Least was had at a site in Myrtle Beach, SC, in mid-June (*fide* Will Cook), and 75+ were on a roof east of New Bern, NC (Wade Fuller). A rare inland wandering Least was observed at the Goldsboro, NC, W.T.P. July 3, as noted by Hal Broadfoot, Jr.

SOOTY TERN: This summer's reports included one off Hatteras, NC, June 9 (Brian Patteson *et al.*), two on the beach at C. Fear, Bald Head Is., NC, July 25 (Greg Massey), one on the Ocracoke, NC, flats July 26 (Wayne Irvin), and one off Mt. Pleasant, SC, July 26 (Mal Hodges *et al.*).

WHITE-WINGED DOVE: One was a good find at Harbor Is., SC, June 29-30 (Judy Halleron). Also one bird continues to hang on in Beaufort, NC, where it was observed singing throughout the summer (Susan Boyd).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO: One was seen in southern Craven County, NC, July 6 (Rich and Susan Boyd), in the same area where one was present in May. This species has been known to summer in pocosin habitats in eastern North Carolina before.

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE: One observed singing at Wet Camp Gap along the Blue Ridge Parkway in Jackson County, NC, June 22 was unusual for such a high (5,000') elevation (Russ and Patricia Tyndall).

WILLOW FLYCATCHER: Two singing males near L. Don T. Howell, Cabarrus County, NC, from mid-to-late June were locally noteworthy. The first confirmed breeding at this site involved one adult with two recently fledged young in late June (*fide* Taylor Piephoff).

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: The Monroe, NC, breeding pair fledged three young around June 24 (Anne Olsen). This was the third year in a row that the pair had successfully raised young here.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO: Two males and a female were observed at Carolina Sandhills N.W.R., Chesterfield County, SC, June 16 (Robin Carter), suggesting local breeding, a first for that area. Also 10+ singing males and one located nest were noteworthy for the Savannah River Site, SC in early June (Paul Champlin).

WARBLING VIREO: Two singing Warblings provided a locally unusual summer occurrence at Fletcher Park, Henderson, NC, June 17-21 (Ron Selvey).

FISH CROW: One at Forest City, Rutherford County, NC, June 5 was considered locally unusual and a little farther inland than normal (Simon Thompson).

HORNED LARK: This species breeds around large grassy areas and bays in the northern mountains, but actual breeding evidence is rarely reported. Thus of note was a juvenile at Rich Mt. Bald, Watauga Count, NC, June 16 (Walt Conway). At the other end of the state, where the species becomes harder to find as you near the coast, an excellent count of 150 was had at a site in Carteret County, NC, July 21 (John Fussell and Jack Fennell). This flock contained many juvenile birds, thus proving local breeding.

TREE SWALLOW: Several were noted as probably nesting at Mackay Is. N.W.R., Currituck County, NC, June 23 (Jeff Lewis and Joan Kutulas). All reports of breeding season Tree Swallows in the Carolinas are noteworthy, especially those in eastern North Carolina and all of South Carolina.

CLIFF SWALLOW: Breeding by this species was noted at New Bern, NC, this summer in the Brice's Creek area June 11 (John Fussell). Nesting Cliff Swallows are very unusual as you get away from the Piedmont lakes and rivers, and breeding near the coast is a rare event indeed.

BROWN CREEPER: Two acting territorial at Milepost 375.4 on the Blue Ridge Parkway, Buncombe County, NC, June 20 (Charlotte Goedsche) were unusual in summer for several reasons. They were at a low elevation of 3,300', and the habitat was deciduous woods, not coniferous.

HERMIT THRUSH: Breeding season reports of this species were found farther south this summer, with up to three singing individuals being noted along the Heintooga Rd., Great Smoky Mts. Nat. Park, NC, during July (Marilyn Westphal, Simon Thompson *et al.*).

CEDAR WAXWING: This species was reported rather frequently in eastern North Carolina this summer. The farthest east were two pairs at Mackay Is. N.W.R. June 23 (Jeff Lewis and Joan Kutulas) and a pair seen courting in the Croatan Nat. For. June 11 (John Fussell). Confirmed breeding, where young were observed, occurred in Zebulon and at Falls Lake during July (Ricky Davis).

MAGNOLIA WARBLER: One was found on Black Balsam Mt., Haywood County, NC in late June (Steve Perry). This location is considerably south of the usual areas (Roan, Grandfather, Mitchell Mountains) this very local species has been found previously.

CERULEAN WARBLER: Excellent numbers of Ceruleans were counted during a roadside survey along the Blue Ridge Parkway, Buncombe County, north of Asheville, NC, in June (Charlotte Goedsche). There were up to 30 territorial males in one five mile stretch, and even more amazing was the sighting of up to eight fledglings.

WORM-EATING WARBLER: Early migrants included a female netted at York, SC, July 9 (Bill Hilton, Jr.) and one at Asheville, NC, July 12 (Simon Thompson).

MOURNING WARBLER: A territorial male, no doubt the same as last year, was back at Grassy Ridge, Roan Mt., NC, this summer. The bird was first noted in early June (*vide* Dwayne Martin) and was seen by several observers until sometime in early July. There appeared to be just the lone male this year.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW: A juvenile was observed near Otway, Carteret County, NC, July 21 (John Fussell and Jack Fennell). This is of interest since there are no previous breeding records for the county.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW: Rare and unusual in summer, a singing male White-throated was acting territorial at Beaver Lake, Asheville, NC, from July until August (Simon Thompson *et al.*). Most summer reports of this species involve lingering, non-breeding individuals.

BOBOLINK: This species began its southward migration a little earlier than normal this summer, as evidenced by one near Scotland Neck, NC, July 14 (Ricky Davis), a flock in Jones County, NC, July 15 (Clancy Ballenger), and one at Ferguson Fields, NC, July 19 (Josh Rose).

SHINY COWBIRD: Only one was reported this summer, that being a male at a feeder on Edisto Is., SC, July 6 (Sidney Gauthreaux).