

2010 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

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This report enumerates the decisions of the Carolina Bird Club's North Carolina Bird Records Committee during 2010. There were no changes to the membership of the committee during the year. Committee voting information is referenced in parentheses (i.e., year report received, reference number).

Accepted as Valid

The reported identification is judged to be accurate, and the bird is judged to be of wild origin. Photographs and/or written descriptions of all accepted records have been deposited in the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences.

Black-bellied Storm-Petrel (*Fregetta tropica*) (10-16). One was seen by many birders on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare County, on 14 August 2010. The Committee accepted a photo taken by Kate Sutherland. Remarkably, this is the fourth accepted state record from this area of the Gulf Stream. As all four records have been documented by photos, the species is already on the Official List.

Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*) (10-14). One was seen and photographed in the Mills River portion of Henderson County on 29–30 August 2010. It was originally seen by Shelby Birch and Donald Coody; the Committee accepted written descriptions by Birch and Wayne Forsythe, plus photos taken by Forsythe and Simon Thompson. This is the first record away from the tidewater zone of the state; surprisingly, there are as yet no piedmont or inner coastal plain records.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*) (10-21). A juvenile was seen by Greg Massey, Amy Williamson, Mark Jones, and Harry Sell at Fort Fisher State Recreation Area, New Hanover County, on 15 October 2010. The Committee accepted photos taken by Sell. This is the first accepted record for the state, and as photographs were accepted, the species is placed directly onto the Official List.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (09-12). A juvenile was seen at a sod farm in Craven County on 31 August 2009 by Bob Holmes. The first vote, in 2009, yielded a "Send for Outside Review" verdict. Upon a second vote, the record was accepted (by a 5–4 vote). Whether this is the first state record (first

chronologically) or second (by vote acceptance) is perhaps immaterial. There are now two state records, with the other being Record 10-21 above.

Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*) (10-12). One was observed at Fort Fisher, New Hanover County, on the surprisingly late date of 3 January 2010, by Bruce Smithson and John Voigt. Each observer provided a description, and this becomes the first accepted state winter record. There are two older December reports that have not been reviewed by the Committee.

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) (10-15). One was photographed on the beach at Bald Head Island, Brunswick County, on 3 September 2010, by Maureen Dewire. The species is already on the Official List, and this is the sixth accepted state record and the earliest in fall migration.

Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) (10-13). A breeding-plumaged male was seen by Chris Decker at Ocean Isle Beach, Brunswick County, on 20 July 2010. The species is already on the Official List, and this is the fifth state record but the first for the summer season.

Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*) (10-02). One was seen and photographed along the causeway at Lake Mattamuskeet, Hyde County, on 27 December 2010, by Allen Bryan. This is the fifth accepted state record, but the first for the winter season. Surprisingly, for such a secretive bird, all but one of the records have been documented by photos.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*) (10-01). One, apparently an adult male, was photographed near Chalybeate Springs, Harnett County, on 2 January 2010, by William and Angie DeLozier. A dead Varied Thrush, found a week later near Angier, about five miles to the east, was likely the same bird; it is now a specimen at the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences. The Committee accepted both photos and a written description, and acceptance of photos moves the species from the Provisional List to the Official List. This is the second accepted record for the state.

Varied Thrush (10-06). One, apparently an adult male, was photographed in Fletcher, Henderson County, 1 February 2010, by Charles and Lorene Gudger. The Committee accepted both photos and a written description, making this the third accepted for the state, but the first for the mountains.

Varied Thrush (10-08). One, an immature or female, was seen and photographed in Mebane, Alamance County, on 13–14 February 2010. The bird was originally found by Steve Wedge and was subsequently seen by at least ten other birders. The Committee accepted photos taken by Derb Carter and a written description from Harry LeGrand. This was the third record for the winter 2009–2010, and the fourth accepted state record.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) (10-17). One was seen and photographed at Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge in Mecklenburg County on 27 September 2010, by Kevin Metcalf. The photographs are believed to be the first tangible documentation for the species in the state. The species is already on the Official List, as there are four other accepted sight records; a minimum of three such records is required for placement onto this list.

Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*) (10-11). One in breeding plumage was photographed by Jeff Lewis at a feeder in Kill Devil Hills, Dare County, on 22 April 2010. This is the eighth accepted state record, and the third from the coast.

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) (10-09). A female was present at Doug Johnston's feeders in Leicester, Buncombe County, from 22 January to 20 February 2010. The Committee accepted a photo and description provided by Johnston. This is the first winter record for the mountain region. There are numerous winter reports from downstate; these have not yet been reviewed by the Committee.

Unresolved

Further action by the Committee is needed.

MacGillivray's Warbler (*Oporornis tolmiei*) (10-20). An *Oporornis* warbler, reported as a MacGillivray's, was photographed in Mecklenburg County on 5 September 2010. Six of the nine Committee members accepted the report. However, as at least 75% of votes (at least seven) must be "Accept as Valid" to accept a record on a first vote, the voting verdict is "Send for Outside Review". There are two previous records, one a specimen and the other documented by photos.

Unaccepted Sighting

The bird is judged to be a species other than that reported, or it is insufficiently documented for identification.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*) (10-10). A male was reported from a coastal area in February 2010. Because no description was provided, the Committee did not accept the report. The species is on the Provisional List, with one accepted sight record, considered wild, from Cape Hatteras in 1957.

Arctic Loon (*Gavia arctica*) (10-04). One reported from along the Outer Banks in late fall 2009 was not accepted. The details did not thoroughly rule out other loon species, especially the similar Pacific Loon (*G. pacifica*). There are no accepted records for Arctic Loon for North Carolina and few if any from other Atlantic Coast states.

Clark's Grebe/Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus clarkii/A. occidentalis*) (10-03). Two grebes were seen on Lake Brandt, Guilford County, between 6 and 21 December 2009, and on 22 December on nearby Lake Townsend. One of the birds, not voted on, was clearly a Western Grebe; there are numerous records of this species for the state, including several from inland lakes. The second bird was somewhat confusing in plumage and soft colors and was reported by some as a Clark's Grebe and others as a Western Grebe. A majority of the Committee felt that the mystery bird was not identifiable to either species and basically felt that it was "intermediate" between the two, or at least shared field marks of each. Thus, each species received a "not accepted" vote. Clark's Grebe remains on the Provisional List, with one

sight record—still photos from a video were deemed not clear enough to document the record—from Cape Hatteras point in 2003.

White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) (10-07). One reported in winter 2010, from a central piedmont county, was not accepted. The Committee felt that the bird was likely an adult male Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). The species is already on the Official List, with four accepted records (one with photos).

Kirtland's Warbler (10-22). One was reported at Cowan's Ford Refuge in Mecklenburg County about two weeks prior to one seen above (10-17). However, this bird (10-22) was considered as a mystery bird and was left unidentified by the observer, with Kirtland's Warbler not being considered; it was not identified as a Kirtland's until after the later bird (10-17) was reported over the carolinabirds listserv. Thus, Report 10-22 was influenced by Report 10-17, especially as both sightings occurred in the same general area. The majority of the members felt that the description was not detailed enough to conclusively document the extremely rare Kirtland's Warbler, as well as the identification being after the fact.

Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) (10-19). A male in breeding plumage was reported from a yard in the piedmont in fall 2010. The Committee was unanimous that the bird was not a Lark Bunting. There are six previous records, with the last one for the state in 1991. The species is already on the Official List.

Unaccepted Origin

The reported identification is judged to be accurate, but the origin of the bird is uncertain (and thus might not be of natural origin).

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) (10-05). One was photographed at a cemetery pond in Guilford County on 23 January 2010, by Mark Matte. Though the Committee unanimously accepted the identification, it also unanimously gave a "questionable origin" verdict, believing that the bird was not wild at such a suburban, piedmont site. The species is already on the Official List, based on photos of one record accepted as wild, at Lake Mattamuskeet in December 2004.

White-cheeked Pintail (*Anas bahamensis*) (10-18). One was photographed by Jeff Lewis at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, Dare County, during October 2010, and it was seen later in the month by other people. Later it was reported that the bird was originally seen at the refuge in July 2010. As with a bird photographed in the lower Cape Fear River in 2008 (LeGrand et al. 2009), the Committee felt that the duck was likely an escape, as it appeared somewhat tame, stayed away from other waterfowl, and apparently resided at the refuge for several months. The species is not yet on the Accepted List for the state as a wild species.

Discussion

The review of reports by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee for 2010 resulted in adding two species to the state's Official List. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper is added directly to the Official List, whereas Varied Thrush is elevated from the Provisional List (which decreases by one species). The current Official List is now 458 species, and the Provisional List is 12 species, for a total of 470 species on the state's Accepted List. Further Committee action is expected on the report of MacGillivray's Warbler (10-20).

Acknowledgments

In addition to the many people named above who provided written material and photographs for the Committee to review, we thank Kent Fiala—webmaster of the Carolina Bird Club—for placing a number of the photographs on the club's website for Committee review and sending electronic submission of Rare Bird Report forms to the Committee chair.

Literature Cited

LeGrand, H. E., Jr., K. E. Camburn, S. Cooper, R. J. Davis, E. V. Dean, W. K. Forsythe, J. S. Pippen, M. H. Tove, and R. L. Tyndall. 2010. 2009 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee. *Chat* 74:1–5.