

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

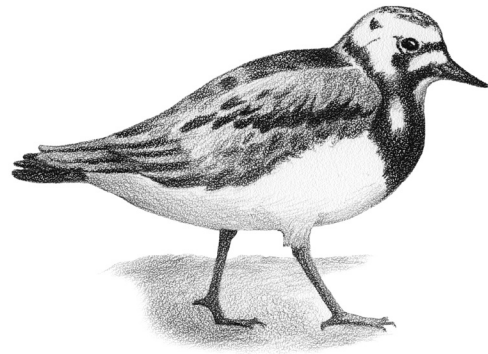


Folk Name: Calico-back
Status: Migrant
Abundance: Casual
Habitat: Shoreline of lakes

The Ruddy Turnstone is also one of the rarest shorebirds to ever visit this region. It is a bird that breeds in Arctic Canada, but some are present year-round along the coast of the Carolinas. Numbers are highest in both states during migration and winter and lowest during breeding season—which lasts from late May to mid-July. It does not breed in the Carolinas.

This shorebird has chestnut and black on the back, except in winter when its back is mostly drab gray. It is mostly white below with a conspicuous black bib and orange to yellow-orange legs in all plumages. It is about an inch smaller than a Killdeer. There are five records of Ruddy Turnstone in the Central Carolinas. All were sighted between 18 May and 12 September, so most were seen in full or partial breeding plumage.

Our earliest published reports of Ruddy Turnstone come from Mecklenburg County. Harriet Whitsett and several observers found one in the county on July 28, 1985. A month later Heathy Walker reported one present at the McAlpine WWTP in Pineville on 18 August.



David Wright discovered two Ruddy Turnstones in Iredell County on the shore of Lake Norman on May 18, 1996. Fifteen years later, Chris Talkington reported finding a Ruddy Turnstone walking with a Killdeer along a sandy beach on Alexander Island on Lake Norman on September 6, 2011. This bird was in Iredell County, but later flew due south toward the Mecklenburg County line just a few hundred feet away. Our most recent record is a bird Jeff Lemons photographed on Governor's Island on Lake Norman after Hurricane Irma rolled through on September 12, 2017.