



General Field Notes

James F. Parnell

Barnacle Goose at Pea Island, N.C.

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6049 Lake Terrace Circle, Norfolk, Virginia 23502

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On 6 November 1970 several members of the Cape Henry Bird Club and the Hampton-Newport News Bird Club visited Bodie and Pea Islands, Dare County, N.C. Snow Geese were on both islands by the thousands. At the observation platform on Pea Island, while attempting to count Blue Geese among the Snows south of the dyke, we saw one bird that was totally different from the others. Naturally, we all reached for field guides. After studying the bird for several minutes and concluding it could only be a Barnacle Goose (*Branta leuposis*) some eight or ten of the group walked about three-quarters of a mile down the dyke road to get a closer look. We crawled up the dyke and spotted the bird again, focused our scopes on it, and all agreed that it was a Barnacle Goose.

The following Friday, 13 November, W.F. Rountrey, Ed Ames, and I went back to Pea Island to check more closely. We finally spotted the bird with several Blue Geese. We were closer to the flock than the group was on 6 November. The feet and bill were black. Ed Ames remarked about the black stripe from bill to the eye. At a quick first look it resembled a brant or lesser Canada Goose, but the solid white face and white above the eyes, dark head and neck and white underparts convinced us that it could only be a Barnacle Goose.

The 1959 revision of *Birds of North Carolina* lists five prior occurrences of this bird in North Carolina. One of these observations was at Pea Island on 6 November 1949.

[There have been no published records of this species in North Carolina since 1950 when one was seen at Gaddy's Pond in Anson County.—DEPT. ED.]