

General Field Notes

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Barnacle Goose in Currituck County, N. C.

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3 May 1972

While driving through Currituck County, N. C., on 12 February 1972, my wife, Sandy, and I stopped to count a large flock of Snow Geese (*Chen hyperborea*) in a field about 1 mile N of Coinjock. We were rather surprised to find an adult Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) feeding with 1,500 Snow Geese and 2 adult Blue Geese (*Chen caerulescens*). At first glance it looked like a small race of the Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) or an American Brant (*Branta bernicla*), but closer study with a 30X scope and 7 x 35 binoculars disclosed the white forehead and cheeks, black neck and upper breast, blue-gray back, and small size which identified it as a Barnacle Goose. The feet, legs, and bill were black and the narrow black line from the bill to the eye was visible. We studied the bird at leisure for 20 to 30 minutes as it fed among the larger Snow and Blue Geese. Mitchell Byrd (pers. com.) and Robert L. Ake (pers. com.), independent of each other, each found the Barnacle Goose in the same area on 20 February 1972 and agreed with our identification. The bird was also found earlier, on 10 January 1972, at Coinjock by Floy C. Burford (pers. com.).

These sightings are particularly interesting, considering there was a Barnacle Goose seen in North Carolina the previous winter (6 and 13 November 1970) at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge (Burford, *Chat*, 35:52, 1971), which is only about 50 air miles SE of the Coinjock location.

Snow Geese Seen in Wake County, N. C.

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22 March 1972

On 1 December 1971 I saw 10 Snow Geese (*Chen hyperborea*) on a 16-acre farm pond near NC 39 and US 264 in eastern Wake County, N. C. The birds were discovered about 8:00 AM as they sat on the water. James R. Creech Jr. and I watched them with binoculars, and we noted the white body with black wing tips. The geese left the pond before noon and were not seen again.

[DEPT. ED. -- While Snow Geese are regular visitors to the North Carolina coast, inland records are very few. Hader (*Chat*, 33:53-71) did not list this species as having been recorded in Wake County.]