

# General Field Notes

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## **Blue Goose Banded on Bermuda, Recovered at Cape Hatteras, N.C.**

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Snow Geese (*Chen caerulescens*) are occasional fall vagrants to Bermuda. A summary of the records up to 1972, including a banding recovery of five Greater Snow Geese (*C. c. atlantica*) from N.W. Baffin Island, has been published in *Bird-Banding* (45:217-223, 1974).

The bird reported on here was a typical blue-phase Snow Goose in adult plumage. It turned up on Bermuda on or about 1 December 1973. Like most of our goose vagrants, it was exhausted and remarkably tame and confiding. Indeed, it took up residence with some domestic Mallards on the lawn of a Bermuda luxury home at Fairylands Creek, Pembroke. When I first saw the bird, it was standing on the top of the porch awaiting a daily handout of duck food from the lady of the house. Not content with duck food alone, however, it soon became a nuisance by tearing up the flower beds!

When the homeowner began to complain, I decided to capture the bird and transfer it to a local waterfowl refuge known as Spittal Pond in Smith's Parish. This was achieved by the use of a mist net on 13 December. The bird was banded with F & W service band No. 597-84353 and released at Spittal Pond on the following day. Its weight was 5 pounds, total length 27 inches, wing chord 15.5 inches.

The Blue Goose remained on the refuge feeding in a wild state at a nearby cattle pasture until the morning of 2 January 1974, when it was last reported and photographed by Keith Pellow, a local birder.

Early in June, I received a report from the Bird Banding Office that the goose had been recovered in company with domestic Mallards at a farm pond near Avon, N.C., on the outermost tip of Cape Hatteras. Although the date was not specified, it was sometime within the first 10 days of January 1974. Two things are remarkable about this recovery. First, Cape Hatteras is the nearest point of land on the North American continent (580 miles W-NW of Bermuda). Second, the bird must have reached it fairly directly, suggesting a deliberate correcting or reorientation flight in the general direction of the species' normal wintering grounds.

The person who recovered the bird was reported by the Bird Banding Office as Mr. C. Williams III of Box 14, Avon, N.C. Although I have written him requesting further information, I have failed to receive any reply. Specific questions that still need answering are the exact date of recovery and the manner of recovery, i.e. whether the bird was collected, captured exhausted, or allowed to recover and continue its journey inland.

[NOTE: Further follow-up has failed to produce additional information on the recapture.—JFP]