

from the western edge of the Great Plains east to the Atlantic Coast were from the west, northwest, and southwest during the 5-day period. Thus, weather conditions were favorable for this western raptor to reach the Outer Banks of North Carolina in early October.

The breeding range of the Swainson's Hawk is throughout most of western North America from central Alaska south to northern Mexico and eastward to Manitoba, western Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and western Texas. The species winters chiefly in Argentina and is of casual occurrence in eastern North America: Ontario, Quebec, Michigan, Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Alabama (Pough 1951, AOU 1957, Peterson 1964, Brown and Amadon 1968, Audubon Field Notes 1968-1970, American Birds 1971-1979). In Florida it is a regular spring and fall migrant in small numbers, and a few, mostly immatures, winter annually in the southern part of the state (Sprunt 1954 and 1963, Cunningham 1961, Abramson 1961, Ogden 1969, Audubon Field Notes 1955-1970, American Birds 1971-1979). Thus, based on the abundance of the Swainson's Hawk, its broad distribution, highly migratory habits, and casual occurrence in eastern North America, it is not particularly surprising for individuals of this species to be found in North Carolina, although a winter record is certainly rather extraordinary.

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- [NOTE: See the report of the North Carolina Records Committee elsewhere in this issue.—DSL]

## **Lesser Black-backed and Glaucous Gulls at Huntington Beach State Park, S.C.**

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On 27 January 1979, in connection with a field trip at the Pawleys Island, S.C., Carolina Bird Club meeting, several dozen birders observed an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) and an immature Glaucous Gull (*L. hyperboreus*) at

Huntington Beach State Park. Although there are approximately 10 previous South Carolina records for the Glaucous Gull (see Chat 42:12-13), there is only one previously published record of the Lesser Black-backed Gull for the state (Forsythe, Chat 44:42).

About midmorning, I was scanning a group of gulls on the beach at the northern tip of the park where I noticed a dark-backed gull essentially similar in size to nearby Herring Gulls (*L. argentatus*). I mentioned the possibility of Lesser Black-backed Gull to Jim Orgain and Bob Lewis, who were nearby, and we each carefully studied the bird through our scopes. Within a matter of seconds we had positively identified the gull as a Lesser. During the next 30 to 45 minutes, the gull was observed in detail by over 25 birders, as close as perhaps 150 m and through scopes reaching 130X magnification. The most obvious field marks were the slaty blackish back and the overall size, slightly smaller than the Herring Gulls. Actually, the mantle was black near the wing tips and slaty black elsewhere (as noted in flight), somewhat like the color and pattern of the Laughing Gull (*L. atricilla*): the Great Black-backed Gull (*L. marinus*) has a mantle that is entirely black. The yellow bill, with some dark coloring at the tip, was slightly thinner than that of the Herring Gull. Another outstanding mark was the dusky brown streaking on the face and especially on the nape, a distinguishing mark from the Great Black-backed, which has an essentially unmarked white head in adult winter plumage. Supposedly the best field mark for the lesser is the yellow legs, as opposed to the flesh-colored legs of the Great. Even though the Lesser did have pale yellowish legs, this color was seen clearly only at close range, and well after the bird had been identified by the group. The gull was not seen in the afternoon, despite a considerable search by other birders, and no photographs were taken.

The Glaucous Gull was first noted by Bob Lewis, only several minutes after I had spotted the Lesser Black-backed. The Glaucous was seen in flight with a large number of the commoner gulls, and it was quickly picked out by its overall buffy white plumage. This gull, apparently a first-year individual, was also studied carefully over the remainder of the morning by all of the birders in the group. The Great Black-backed Gull size, whitish color with white primaries, and flesh-colored bill with a black tip were easily noted. At one point during the morning both of the rare gulls rested on the same sandbar in Murrells Inlet, with several hundred other gulls, though the two were never in the same field of vision through the scope. The Glaucous was seen as closely as 100 m, and it was also seen in the afternoon on the beach along the southern portion of the park.

[NOTE: The Lesser Black-backed Gull has also been reported from Georgia (Oriole 43:32). Full details for a bird observed at Charleston in January and February 1979 (Am. Birds 33:273, Lesser Squawk 30(6):7 and 30(8):6) have not been published; consequently, this species remains on the South Carolina hypothetical list.—JRH]

## Lesser Black-backed Gull in the Carolinas

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The Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*), a breeding bird of the British Isles, Scandinavia, and northern Russia, has long been known as an unusual winter visitor to the northeastern United States. Reports of its occurrence in the Carolinas have accumulated in the past decade, but few detailed reports have appeared in print. This paper reports two sightings by the author and discusses field marks not normally emphasized. Only adult-plumaged birds will be discussed.

On the morning of 23 December 1979 I was working the west end of Shackleford Banks near Beaufort, Carteret County, N.C., as part of the Morehead City Christmas