

Barnacle Goose in South Carolina

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A Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) was present in South Carolina during the winter of 1980-1981 at Santee National Wildlife Refuge on Lake Marion. It was first observed by refuge personnel on 7 November, by Gardner Miller and Perry Nugent on 22 November, and by other birders at least through 22 January.

Several members of the Zoology Department at Clemson University (Sidney Gauthreaux, Carl Helms, Anna Ross, and I) traveled to the refuge on 22 January and saw the Barnacle Goose in a large flock of Canada Geese (*B. canadensis*). Unfortunately, the geese were several hundred yards away from the nature trail and observation platforms, and "no trespassing" signs prevented us from approaching the flock for closer viewing. Nonetheless, we obtained good looks of the Barnacle Goose as it fed with the Canadas in a grain field adjacent to Lake Marion. The Barnacle was noticeably smaller and shorter-necked than the Canadas. The large amount of white on the face, encircling the eye, was clearly seen. An excellent mark was the great extent of black on the underparts, ranging down the neck onto the breast. The black color on the neck of the Canadas stops at the base of the neck.

This appears to be the first record of the Barnacle Goose for South Carolina. There are numerous records for North Carolina; yet the North Carolina Records Committee placed the species on its Provisional II list, as opposed to its Official List (Chat 44:59-61). The committee stated: "occurrence well documented but birds possibly escaped from captivity" (p. 59). Barnacle Geese are kept as captives by a number of waterfowl breeders and zoos; thus, there is a possibility that the bird seen at Santee could have escaped. However, the goose seemed in good health, was wary (as it flushed and flew freely when the entire flock of Canadas was disturbed and took flight), showed no signs of captivity (such as leg bands), and appeared at an appropriate season (winter) in prime goose habitat. As a result, the origin of the bird, and the validity of the record, are both open to question.

Observations on the Singing of a Chuck-will's-widow

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On 2 June 1983 at 0245 a Chuck-will's-widow began to call in my yard on Johns Island, Charleston County, S.C. The bird sang continuously until 0419. I counted 2616 calls. Every 25 to 100 calls the bird would pause for perhaps 2 to 3 seconds before continuing. On average the bird sang about 27 times per minute.

When the bird ceased calling, it flew much closer and in a matter of seconds began to call again. After calling continuously for 11 minutes at this new location, it moved

farther away, called for 4 minutes, then moved much farther away where it was so difficult to hear that I ceased observations.

On 15 June 1983 I heard a Chuck-will's-widow (probably the same bird as above) begin to call at 1800. It called continuously for 15 minutes at an average rate of 25 calls per minute. The weather was hot, clear, and sunny.

The rate of calling that I noted does not differ from that reported by other workers. For example, Sprunt and Chamberlain (South Carolina Bird Life, 1949, p. 317) say that 25 calls per minute is usual. However, it appears that the length of the singing bout I report here is unusual. Sprunt and Chamberlain (op. cit.) cite A. Sprunt Jr.'s count on 2 June 1939 of 834 consecutive calls as a "remarkable number." This is only about a third the number emitted by the individual whose songs I recorded 44 years later.

First South Carolina Specimen of the Black-throated Gray Warbler

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The Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*) was first reported in South Carolina on 13 December 1941, when A. Sprunt Jr. saw an individual on Bull's Island (South Carolina Bird Life, 1949, p. 456). The species has been seen only once in North Carolina, at Orton Plantation, near Wilmington, by Maurice Barnhill and James Parnell (Chat 30:24).

On 29 March 1972 the Horlbecks collected the first specimen for South Carolina. They picked up the individual under a window of a house on Wampee Plantation, Wadmalaw Island, Charleston County. The habitat is an open woodland of mixed hardwood/pine forest, near the edge of a brackish marsh on Church Creek.

With this record, the Black-throated Gray Warbler may now be placed on the definitive South Carolina list. The account of its sighting that was published in *South Carolina Bird Life* (1949) implies that several people saw the 1941 bird. However, E.B. Chamberlain (pers. comm.) states that only Sprunt saw the bird. Therefore, the species should not have been placed on the definitive list of birds recorded in South Carolina, but rather placed on the hypothetical (=Provisional II) list.

The specimen is a female, and is now in the collection of the U.S. National Museum (USNM No. 565257). Our identification was confirmed by Roxie C. Laybourne. Data on the specimen label are: ovaries 3 x 2 mm; fat: trace; skull ossified; molt: above eye, on throat and cheek; stomach empty; legs brownish black; bill: black with little brownish tinge and darker towards tip. A photograph of the living bird from which the skin was made is on file at the Charleston Museum. (CM 1983.167).

We thank Mrs. Laybourne for her help, and we also appreciate Margaret T. Donald's effort in preparing the skin.