

REPORT OF THE NORTH CAROLINA
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
1990

The following report is based on a meeting of the Carolina Bird Club's North Carolina Bird Records Committee held on 2 February 1990. The Committee reviewed the category statuses (Official State List, Provisional List, Unaccepted Origin List, and Unaccepted Sighting List) of a number of species, as well as individual records. The voting for the statuses followed the rules listed in the Proposed Bylaws printed in the Winter 1988 CBC Newsletter. In some cases, where no decisions have yet been reached, the committee considers the record or species as Unresolved and will discuss the record or species at a later meeting.

PACIFIC LOON (*Gavia pacifica*). Official. One in partial breeding plumage was seen and photographed at Cape Hatteras on 15 May 1987 by Michael Tove, John Fussell, Mark Oberle, and others (Chat 53:8). The Committee considers the photographs suitable to document this species. There is one other report of the "Arctic Loon" complex — on 17 February 1974 on Pamlico Sound at Ocracoke (Am. Birds 28:626). This report was made before the split of the original species into the Pacific Loon and the Arctic Loon. The former is the species that is widespread in northern North America, whereas the latter is essentially restricted to the Old World. No details were published of the Ocracoke record, and the Committee has not reviewed this record.

WESTERN GREBE (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*). Unresolved. The species was listed as "Official" by the previous Records Committee. The present Committee will review all records of the species complex. As with the previous species, the American Ornithologists' Union has split the former "Western Grebe" into Clark's Grebe and Western Grebe. All North Carolina records likely refer to the latter species. However, there are no known specimens or photographs of the complex for the state.

BLACK-BROWED ALBATROSS (*Diomedea melanophris*). Provisional. This species is elevated from the previous Provisional II category, as the Committee believes that the detailed sight record of two birds off Morehead City on 19 August 1972, seen by Paul DuMont and seven others, is valid (Am. Birds 27:739-740).

YELLOW-NOSED ALBATROSS (*Diomedea chlororhynchos*). Unaccepted Sighting. This is little change from the previous status of Provisional II. The Committee feels that the sight records from offshore waters on 17 April 1978 and two days later, plus albatrosses in October 1976 and 1978 (Chat 43:59; Am. Birds 33:720) are not detailed enough to clearly indicate that the species involved were Yellow-nosed.

BERMUDA PETREL (*Pterodroma cahow*). Unaccepted Sighting. The published record, of a bird seen off Oregon Inlet on 18 April 1983 (Am. Birds 38:159), is a detailed report that has considerable merit. However, because of the great variation in the plumages of the very similar Black-capped Petrel (*P. hasitata*), sight records at sea of the extremely rare Bermuda Petrel are always open to question.

SOFT-PLUMAGED PETREL (*Pterodroma mollis*). Unresolved. The Committee feels that the sighting of a bird off Oregon Inlet on 3 June 1981 (Am. Birds 38:158) is a valid record. The problem here is that the "species" may actually consist of three separate species [(*P. mollis*, *P. madiera*, and *P. feae*)], as suggested both by D.S. Lee (Am. Birds 38:159) and the American Ornithologists' Union (Auk 102:684). It is thus not clear to which of the three populations, or species, the sighting refers.

CAPE PETREL (*Daption capense*). Unaccepted Sighting. The published report (Chat 50:118-119) provides no description of the bird reported off Oregon Inlet on 26 July 1985, and the report was not written by one of the observers. This species has been reported on a number of occasions in North American waters off both coasts, but no record is substantiated by specimen or photograph; and the American Ornithologists' Union has removed the species from its list of North American species. The report does not rule out that a shearwater with an unusual plumage, such as a partial albino, might have been involved.

LITTLE SHEARWATER (*Puffinus assimilis*). Unresolved. The Committee believes that a sighting of one off Oregon Inlet on 28 December 1984 (Am. Birds 42:213-220) may have some merit. However, other reports of the species mentioned in the above reference are not convincing to the Committee. The Committee plans additional study on these records.

BROWN BOOBY (*Sula leucogaster*). Provisional. Lee and Haney review records of this species in the Carolinas (Chat 48:29-45). Both the previous and the current Committees accept the sight record of an immature at Ocracoke on 25 April 1983. Several other state reports are deemed unacceptable by the current Committee.

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*). Unaccepted Sighting. A report of this species, a breeding-plumaged adult at Pea Island in mid-May 1973 (Am. Birds 31:979), contains no further details. If additional details are received by the Committee, the report will be re-evaluated.

GREATER FLAMINGO (*Phoenicopterus ruber*). Unaccepted Sighting. Lee reviewed the status of flamingos in the Carolinas (Chat 51:43-50), noting that the only documentation (i.e., photographs) refer to the Chilean Flamingo (*P. chilensis*). There are a number of reports of "flamingos" for North Carolina, and some may refer to Greater Flamingo. The Committee certainly agrees that flamingos have occurred in the state, but the origin of them is in question, and there is apparently no detailed description of a Greater [American] Flamingo for the state. Observers are encouraged to submit full details, for publication in *The Chat*, on flamingos seen in the Carolinas.

CHILEAN FLAMINGO (*Phoenicopterus chilensis*). Unaccepted Origin. Lee (Chat 43-50) documents this species in North Carolina through published photographs. Because this is a South American species, records of such birds in the Carolinas might be of escaped individuals.

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*). Unaccepted Origin. There is a specimen record for Core Sound (not Cove Sound as indicated in Chat 45:41-42) on 15 February 1968. This species is partially migratory, and the record might refer to a wild individual; however, the Committee wishes to be conservative and considers the bird a possible escape. This is no change in status (Provisional II) from that of the previous Committee.

MUTE SWAN (*Cygnus olor*). Official. This is no change from the previous status; however, the Committee decided to review all North Carolina records. Several recent records are of birds that appeared at sites in the fall, apparently with other waterfowl, where the species was not previously known to be present. Thus, these birds may well have come from established populations to the north of the state. Photographs are available at the N.C. State Museum of Natural Sciences.

BARNACLE GOOSE (*Branta leucopsis*). Unaccepted Origin. There are several reports of the species in the state, with excellent details. The Committee acknowledges that the species has been reliably seen in the state, but the birds might have been escaped individuals. Ryff (Birding XVI:146-154) argues that nearly all United States records of the species probably refer to escaped birds; however, Szantyr (Birding XX:232-234) shows that all North American records fall between September and May, with peaks in November and March. These dates are consistent with birds being of natural origin as opposed to being escaped birds. The Committee will likely discuss the species again at future meetings.

RUDDY SHELDUCK (*Tadorna ferruginea*). Unaccepted Origin. The one state record (Birds of North Carolina) is believed to refer to an escaped individual.

COMMON SHELDUCK (*Tadorna tadorna*). Unaccepted Origin. Records for the state (Am. Birds 26:845) are believed to refer to escaped individuals.

MANDARIN DUCK (*Aix galericulata*). Unaccepted Origin. The published records of this species (Chat 38:70, Chat 54:22) certainly refer to escaped individuals, as this is an Asian species.

BAIKAL TEAL (*Anas formosa*). Unaccepted Origin. The one record (Chat 26:30) of this Asian species almost certainly refers to an escaped bird.

GARGANEY (*Anas querquedula*). Unresolved. The Committee has not yet reviewed the single state record (Chat 21:68 and 21:80). This Eurasian species might be a vagrant to the Atlantic coast, and it should not be assumed that such North

American records are of escaped birds. The Committee will review this species at its next meeting.

FALCATED TEAL (*Anas falcata*). Unaccepted Origin. The one record (Chat 42:58) is believed to refer to an escaped individual, as this is an Asian species.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE (*Bucephala islandica*). Unaccepted Sighting. The several "records" of the species for North Carolina are reviewed by Simpson (Chat 35:45-49). The Committee feels that there is no overwhelming evidence that the species has been reliably seen in the state and questions the validity of all records.

MASKED DUCK (*Oxyura dominica*). Official. This is an upgrading of the previous status (Provisional I), as the present Committee believes that the record of one at Lake Ellis from 20 to 25 February 1982 (Chat 46:112-113) refers to a wild individual. This species is seldom kept in captivity, and the species occurs regularly in Florida.

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE (*Elanus caeruleus*). Official, pending publication of a description of a bird seen at Fort Fisher on 8 April 1989 by Eric Dean, Clyde Sorenson, and others. A photograph taken by Sorenson and reviewed by the Committee confirms the record. The species was previously considered Provisional I based on a sight record (Chat 21:70). The Committee has not yet reviewed this latter record.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*). Provisional. No change from the previous status (Provisional I). The Committee considers two sightings as valid — at Pea Island on 11 October 1965 (Chat 44:76-78) and near Garner on 21 March 1982 (Chat 46:80-81). Two other sightings have been published (Chat 44:76 and Chat 44:76-78) that the Committee considers Unaccepted Sightings, believing that the birds were misidentified.

PRAIRIE FALCON (*Falco mexicanus*). Unaccepted Origin. This is a downgrading of the previous status (Provisional I). The Committee believes that the sighting of one near Sealevel in Carteret County on 23 May 1968 (Chat 33:26) might relate to an escaped individual. This species is kept in captivity by falconers, and the late spring date also seems unlikely for a wild individual.

LIMPKIN (*Aramus guarana*). Provisional. No change from the previous status (Provisional I). There are two accepted sight records — Waccamaw River on 7 September 1975 (Chat 40:94-95) and Smith Mill Pond on 20 May 1983 (Chat 51:100).

SPOTTED REDSHANK (*Tringa erythropus*). Official. There are published description and photos of one bird in partial breeding plumage seen by many observers at Cape Hatteras from 13 to 17 May 1987 (Chat 53:38-41; *Am. Birds* 41:379).

ESKIMO CURLEW (*Numenius borealis*). Unaccepted Sighting. There is a report of a "possible" Eskimo Curlew (Chat 39:35). The Second Supplement to the 1978 Checklist of North Carolina Birds (Chat 48:85-88) refers to perhaps another record in *North Carolina Historical Review*, 1984 issue. The Committee has reviewed only the report in *The Chat*.

SLENDER-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius tenuirostris*). Unaccepted Sighting. The previous Committee never reviewed the status of this species, and the present Committee also believes that mention of this species in *Am. Birds* 31:164 is most unfortunate, as the bird in question was reported by the observer as a Whimbrel of the Eurasian race (white rump) (fide John Fussell).

LITTLE STINT (*Calidris minuta*). Official, pending publication of details and deposition of photos. An individual in worn breeding plumage was seen at Cape Hatteras from 22 to 25 July 1989 by Derb Carter, Merrill Lynch, Ricky Davis, Harry LeGrand, and several other birders. Photos have been reviewed by the Committee and considered to document the sighting.

MEW GULL (*Larus canus*). Provisional. No change from the previous status (Provisional I). There are two reports accepted by the Committee — at Cape Hatteras on 31 December 1980 (Chat 45:75-77) and at Hatteras Inlet on 27 December 1983 (Chat 48:94-95). The former apparently refers to the Eurasian race (*L. c. canus*), whereas the second apparently refers to the western North American race (*L. c. brachyrhynchus*).

THAYER'S GULL (*Larus thayeri*). Official. This is an upgrading of the previous status (Provisional I). There are several published records, including a published photograph (see Chat 53:53-65). Unpublished photographs have also been reviewed by the Committee. The Committee is not addressing the validity of the species.

ICELAND GULL (*Larus glaucooides*). Official. This is an upgrading of the previous status (Provisional I). There are dozens of records for North Carolina, plus definitive published (see Chat 46:57-71) and unpublished photographs.

IVORY GULL (*Pagophila eburnea*). Unaccepted Sighting. The previous Committee never discussed the sight record of a "probable" Ivory Gull at Fort Macon State Park on 29 January 1980 (Chat 44:105-106), giving it a Provisional II status because the sighting was simply considered as "probable". The present Committee believes that the bird was misidentified, as suggested in *The Chat* 53:53-65.

BAND-TAILED PIGEON (*Columba fasciata*). Provisional. No change from the previous status (Provisional I). One accepted sight record, of an individual along the Blue Ridge Parkway in Haywood County on 10 June 1980 (Chat 44:106-107). The Committee considered, but rejected, the notion that the bird might have been an escaped individual.

RINGED TURTLE-DOVE (*Streptopelia risoria*). Unaccepted Origin. No change from the previous status (Provisional II). There are numerous records for the state, including a specimen. A colony at Winston-Salem has not been considered to be established for a long enough time to be considered for Official status.

BUDGERIGAR (*Melopsittacus undulatus*). Unaccepted Origin. No change from the previous status (Provisional II). Escaped individuals have not established breeding populations in the state.

MONK PARAKEET (*Myiopsitta monachus*). Unaccepted Origin. No change from the previous status (Provisional II). Though breeding pairs or colonies have been reported from the state, the Committee believes that no populations have been established for a decade or longer.

BLACK-HEADED PARAKEET (=NANDAY CONURE) (*Nandayus nenday*). Unaccepted Origin. No change in status (Provisional II). This South American species is almost certainly an escape (Chat 46:43-44).

SMOOTH-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga ani*). Official. No change from the previous status. The Committee discussed the possibility of the 19th Century specimen being an escaped bird, as did the previous Committee; neither felt that the species is likely to have been kept in captivity.

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus rufus*). Official. The species was considered of Provisional status in 1984 (Chat 48:85-88), the last records committee decisions to be published. Since that time, a number of records of the species, including a specimen and many photos, have occurred in the state.

GREEN VIOLET-EAR (*Colibri thalassinus*). Official, pending publication of a description of the bird seen at a feeder in Asheville in October 1987 by hundreds of birders from across the country. Color photos are available. The Committee considers that the chance of the bird being an escaped individual is extremely slight, and there are a handful of other United States records for this species that ranges northward to Mexico.

IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER (*Campephilus principalis*). Official. No change in status, but the Committee wished to review the only record for the state. The specimen taken by Alexander Wilson in the 1800's is apparently no longer available or has been lost; however, the Committee believes there is no reason to question the validity of the record.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*). Provisional. No change from the previous status (Provisional I). The previous Committee reviewed photos of a bird seen near Lillington from 7 to 12 December 1985 by Clyde Atkins, Harry LeGrand, and others (Chat 51:75-76); the photos were considered of insufficient clarity for documentation. The present Committee considers that this record and a previous sighting from Raleigh on 23 October 1965 (Chat 30:28) to be acceptable sightings.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*). Provisional. No change from the previous status (Provisional I). The Committee has reviewed and accepts the sighting at Raleigh on 16 May 1973 (Chat 39:40-43). However,

unpublished details of one reported at Pea Island on 3 June 1974 (Am. Birds 28:891) have not yet been reviewed by the Committee.

TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*). Provisional. One bird was seen and photographed near Fairfield from 29 December 1985 to 3 January 1986 by Ken Knapp, Ricky Davis, Mike Tove, and many other observers. Because the species looks very similar to the Couch's Kingbird, the photos possibly might not conclusively prove the bird was a Tropical. The distinctive call was heard but not tape recorded for documentation. However, as neither Tropical nor Couch's has previously been recorded from the state, the photos document the species complex (Tropical/Couch's) as Official. Details have been reviewed by the Committee and will be published shortly. The Committee will seek outside review of this record.

FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus savana*). Official. The previous Committee voted the species as Official in 1988, but this decision had not previously been published. One seen and photographed by Henry Haberyan and others from 1 to 7 June 1986 at Cedar Point in Carteret County (Chat 52:54) is the only state record.

GRAY JAY (*Perisoreus canadensis*). Unaccepted Sighting. One was reported on a Christmas Bird Count in Rockingham County in 1987, but the count editor (Harry LeGrand) rejected the report. This Committee also rejects the sighting.

BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE (*Pica pica*). Unresolved. The present Committee has not reviewed the report of one seen at a feeder at Chapel Hill on 23 March 1960 (Chat 24:25). The previous Committee considered the record as valid and listed the species as Provisional I.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe oenanthe*). Official, pending publication of full details of one seen and photographed at Avon on 2 October 1987 by John Fussell, Ricky Davis, Harry LeGrand, and others. Photos have been reviewed by the Committee. The former status of Provisional I was based on the acceptance of a sight record of a single bird seen at Franklin on 11 October 1981 (Chat 46:82-83).

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia currucoides*). Provisional. No change from the previous status (Provisional I). The only record is a sighting of a male near Asheville on 15 June 1985 (Chat 50:54).

BLACK-BACKED WAGTAIL (*Motacilla lugens*). Official, pending publication of full details. This record, of an individual seen at Cedar Island by John Fussell and Bob Holmes on 15 May 1982, was published without details in *The Chat* 46:121 as "White Wagtail" of the Siberian black-backed race (*Motacilla alba lugens*). After this mention in *The Chat*, the American Ornithologists' Union considered the black-backed form as a separate species (Black-backed Wagtail). Color photos have been reviewed by the current Committee and have been determined to document the record as Black-backed.

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT (*Anthus spragueii*). Provisional. This is a down-grading of the previous status of Official. The present Committee reviewed four of the five known published records of the species in the state; all are sight reports (Chat 23:89, Chat 37:25, Chat 41:51, Chat 46:121; Occasional Papers of the North Carolina Biological Survey 1986-11). It feels that, collectively, the records do not conclusively establish, beyond question, that the species deserves a place on the Official list, as most records contain details that cause concern about the identification. Additional review of all five records will be made.

BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii*). Provisional. No change from the previous status (Provisional I). The present Committee believes the sight record of one near Zebulon on 10 August 1974 (Chat 39:92-93) was correctly identified.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER (*Dendroica nigrescens*). Provisional. No change from the previous status (Provisional I). The present Committee's decision is based solely on the published sighting by Kitty Kosh and others of one at Wilmington from 5 to 22 January 1986 (Chat 51:77-78). A record of one on the Wilmington Christmas count on 30 December 1965 (Chat 30:18, 24) was not described; this record has not been reviewed by the Committee, though acceptance or rejection would not change the status of the species in the state.

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (*Dendroica townsendi*). Unresolved. The Committee is split over the validity of the sighting of at least two birds in Swain County on 24 April 1975 (Chat 42:85). The previous Committee considered the

sight record valid (Provisional I); however, the current Committee has concerns about the sighting, some members believing that Black-throated Green Warblers, common in that area at that time of year, were misidentified, despite descriptions that are seemingly those of Townsend's. The observer was from out-of-state. The Committee hopes to contact the observer for additional details.

KIRTLAND'S WARBLER (*Dendroica kirtlandii*). Provisional. No change from the previous status (Provisional I). The present committee bases the status on the acceptance of a sight record from Iredell County on 29 August 1982 (Chat 51:107-108). Several sight records from Rocky Mount, all by the same observer (Birds of North Carolina 1942) have not yet been reviewed; these would constitute only one record, if accepted.

GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE (*Pipilo chlorurus*). Unresolved. The report of one seen at Bodie Island on 28 November 1975, a "close and well described sighting" (Am. Birds 30:53), may have merit. Unfortunately, no details were ever published in The Chat or elsewhere. The Committee hopes to receive details for future review. The species was placed in the Provisional II category by the previous Committee, for lack of published details.

WESTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella neglecta*). Provisional. No change from the previous status (Provisional I). There are two accepted records, of singing birds, from the Raleigh area from 21 January to 3 March 1968 (Chat 32:104-105) and from Pea Island on 30 November 1965 (Occasional Papers of the North Carolina Biological Survey 1986-11).

SHINY COWBIRD (*Molothrus bonariensis*). Unresolved. A male was reported, and photographed, near Aurora on 16 November 1989 by Sam Cooper and others. The Committee accepts the written description as valid, which places the species at least on the Provisional list (pending publication), but there is dissention about whether the photos are clear enough to confirm the record. The photos will be submitted for outside review.

PINE GROSBEEK (*Pinicola enucleator*). Official. No change from the previous status. Though there are over one-half dozen reports of the species in the literature, few contain details, and no photograph or specimen is known for the state. The current Committee feels that, collectively, the reports are sufficient to keep the species Official, but photographs are badly needed, as are sightings by multiple, experienced observers.

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Carduelis psaltria*). Provisional. No change from the previous status (Provisional I). There is a single sight record, from Winston-Salem on 27 September 1985 (Chat 50:59-60).

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