

Razorbill Record for Huntington Beach State Park, S.C.

DON SERIFF

Caesar's Head State Park
8155 Gear Highway
Cleveland, SC 29635

At 1100 h on 26 January 1991, I observed an immature winter-plumaged Razorbill (*Alca torda*) at the South Jetty of Murrell's Inlet, Huntington Beach State Park, Georgetown County, South Carolina. I watched the bird swimming and diving between the North and South jetties for about 45 min under excellent light and visibility conditions using 9x binoculars. During this period, I had superb views of the bird and its activities (including swimming just below the surface) at close range.

The Razorbill was re-located and its identity confirmed by members of the Mecklenburg Audubon Society around 1300 h on 26 January. Lex Glover observed the bird on 27 January, and Caroline Eastman located and photographed (Fig. 1) the auk on 28 January. The bird was not seen after 28 January despite intensive searches by many observers. Each sighting of this bird occurred less than 2 hr after low tide.

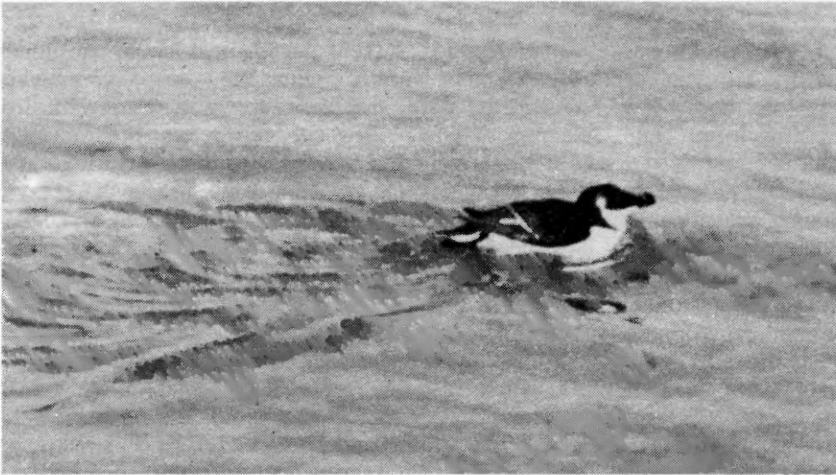


Fig. 1. Razorbill at Huntington Beach State Park on 27 January 1991. Photo by Caroline Eastman.

This sighting followed what appeared to have been a large southerly movement of alcids; as many alcids had been seen during the previous week off the southern coastal region of North Carolina (Taylor Piephoff, pers. comm., CBC Rare Bird Alert). Alcids are rare in winter off the South Carolina coast and views of alcids at this close range are highly unusual. According to Post and Gauthreaux (1989, Status and Distribution of South Carolina Birds, Charleston Museum Contr. #18, Charleston, South Carolina), there have been only ten previous records for Razorbills in South Carolina.