

**Thayer's Gull.** An immature reported from the coast in December 1992 received more than 50% Accepted Sighting votes but more than 25% Non-accepted votes.

**Tropical/Couch's Kingbird** (*Tyrannus melancholicus/couchii*). One was reported from the Outer Banks in late fall 1992. The species complex received more than 50% Accepted Sighting votes but more than 25% Non-accepted votes. There were no Accepted Sighting votes for either Tropical Kingbird or for Couch's Kingbird specifically. Thus, the vote for the species complex only is to go to outside review. The species complex is already on the Official List, based on a bird photographed near Fairfield in December 1985 and January 1986; the bird was identified as a Tropical Kingbird based on call notes heard, but a tape recording of the calls was not obtained for documentation to Tropical Kingbird.

Persons interested in obtaining a copy of the "Regulations Governing the Operation of Bird Records Committees" should write to Harry LeGrand, the North Carolina Committee Chairman, 331 Yadkin Drive, Raleigh, NC 27609.

Committee members: Harry E. LeGrand, Jr., Chairman  
Derb S. Carter, Jr.  
Samuel Cooper  
Richard J. Davis  
John O. Fussell III  
Simon R. B. Thompson  
Michael H. Tove

## REPORT OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE 1993

During 1993 the South Carolina Birds Record Committee (SCBRC) continued to refine its procedures under the overall guidance of a draft of regulations to govern both Carolina record committees. This draft was reviewed and approved with changes at a meeting 31 July 1993, with a majority of the SCBRC present, and now awaits final CBC board approval. This approval was granted at the January '94 meeting at Litchfield, SC. By a separate vote, the changes incorporated by this draft regulation were immediately adopted by the SCBRC for all future actions; decisions rendered before 31 July will stand, since none would have been materially affected by the new regulations.

The adoption of these regulations resulted in a decrease in the number of accepted sight reports, without supporting specimen or photo, required to add a species to the SC Definitive List from 4 to 3, which brings SC into agreement with NC, and most other states. This change resulted in five (5) species being added to the Definitive List (Harlequin Duck, Long-tailed Jaeger, Say's Phoebe, Warbling Vireo, and Pine Grosbeak).

During 1993 we accepted the resignations of Chris Marsh and William Post from the SCBRC, their work in our first year is greatly appreciated, and their thoughtful insight may be sought in the future in tough cases. This

initiates the rotation of one or two members of the committee each year, to assure a continued fresh input, and avoid cases of burnout. They have been replaced by Pete Laurie and Roger Clark, both experienced birders: Roger in particular has lived and birded in many areas of the United States, which should reinforce our review of Northern and mid-western stragglers; Peter knows the coastal area as few others, has submitted a number of reports to the SCBRC, and will be a valuable member. Also in the past year, Robin Carter asked to be relieved of his duties as chairman, though he remains on the board. Robin was instrumental in getting us off to a good start, and many thanks are owed him for doing an excellent job. The writer accepted nomination from Lex Glover to fill the vacancy, as well as retaining the duties of secretary.

During the year we received and circulated 19 new reports, and have completed review of 17, plus 8 holdovers from 1992. These resulted in the addition of three (3) new species to the state Provisional I list (Pacific Loon, Arctic Tern and Blue-throated Hummingbird), the addition of four (4) species to the Definitive List (Manx Shearwater, Snowy Plover, Black Guillemot, and Band-tailed Pigeon), and a change from Provisional to Definitive for Curlew Sandpiper. Details on completed action, by case record, follow below, with comments from committee members where appropriate.

We would also like to stress to respondents that submittal to, and acceptance by a state record committee of a sighting, however good the documentation, does not meet the criteria of a published record, available to others in the field for study and evaluation. For the record to become permanently documented, and available to others in the field, it must be published in an appropriate journal, such as *The Chat*. This can be either as a "General Field Note" (Dennis Forsythe is the SC editor for this section) or as a full article (submit directly to Herb Hendrickson, editor of *The Chat*); their addresses appear in *The Chat*. Mention in the *CBC Newsletter* does not meet the criteria of publication, and neither does inclusion in the *American Birds* regional reports.

As a whole, I feel the committee is working well. Late receipt of reports (some have been over two years old!) continues to be a problem, as well as slow action by the committee, at times. We wish to thank all respondents for their time and effort, and continue to urge submittal of unusual temporal or location sightings to the board. From time to time we may elect not to circulate such a report, and advise the submitter of its acceptance without further action, but we would rather be swamped by too many, than to miss one of significance.

#### Actions Completed in 1993

Note: The first two numbers of the case record indicate the month and year of the sighting, not of submittal to SCBRS. The third number is sequential for the month of sighting. A letter modifier indicates multiple reports of what is believed to be the same bird(s).

12-89-1 **Green-winged Teal**, Eurasian ssp. Rejected, insufficient details. (5-1). The submittal was photographs of a bird shot in 1989, near Charleston. The photographs did not show sufficiently well the white horizontal flank stripe above the wing, nor was there any trace of the buffy edges to facial

chestnut patches, typical of the Eurasian race. Best guess at this time is that this was an intergrade (hybrid if they were separate species).

4-91-1, **Manx Shearwater** - Mark Spinks & William Post. Accepted. This report records the accession to the Charleston Museum's collection of a Manx Shearwater found dead at Cape Island, Charleston County. While not in the form that the committee would normally accept, the existence of a valid specimen leads to acceptance, and addition of the species to the Definitive List.

8-91-1, **Band-tailed Pigeon** - Bill Pulliam. Accepted (7) Questionable Origin (1). Excellent report of a bird seen and photographed at Georgetown. The majority of reviewers concurred with the submitter that this was a truly wild bird. One observer felt there was an outside possibility of an escaped aviary bird. Added to the South Carolina Definitive List on the basis of the readily identifiable photographs.

2-92-2, **Snowy Plover** - Bill Pulliam. Accepted (8). Detailed reports with clear photographs. Bird was photographed on North Island, Georgetown County. Bird added to the SC Definitive list on the basis of this report, and photographs. This is also the first documented report for the state.

5-92-1, **Black-headed Grosbeak** - Sam Brayshaw. Accepted (7), Unsatisfactory (1). At least two specimens exist for the state. The one dissenting vote was based on the fact that the underwing was not seen for this female-plumaged bird, and the description of a white blob below the eye would tend to indicate a Rose-breasted Grosbeak, or a hybrid. Time of observation (May) fits several other records.

5-92-2, **Masked Booby** - Steve Patterson. Accepted (7), Unsatisfactory (1). Well detailed report. One reviewer felt that the bird's description did not necessarily exclude a juvenile Northern Gannet, in transitional plumage. Also the bird was reported to be about the size of a gannet, whereas a booby should be several inches shorter.

5-92-3, **Arctic Tern** - Steve Patterson. Accepted (4) Unsatisfactory (3). The bird was sighted by Steve and others well offshore from the Charleston harbor. Two reviewers felt that the apparent lack of translucency in the wing would rule out Arctic. A third reviewer felt that the bill description did not rule out some other species. Accepted by a narrow margin. Added to the state Provisional List.

5-92-4, **Curlew Sandpiper** - James E. Lyons. Accepted (7). The bird was seen by several observers and photographed, in alternate plumage, on North Island, Georgetown County. This report adds the species to the SC Definitive List, only one year after the first sight report.

9-92-2A & B, **Sabine's Gull** - Roger McNeill & Les Todd. Accepted (9). Two very good reports of the same occurrence, near the outer breakwater at Charleston. While the bird is on the Definitive List from photographs taken near Georgetown, it remains one of our rarest vagrants. All reports need to be documented.

10-92-2, **Rough-legged Hawk** - John T. Fulton. Accepted (7) Unsatisfactory (2). The report was from Pinckney Island NWR. The bird was seen by several observers, though only one documented it. Two reviewers felt that the possibility of a Red-tailed Hawk was not sufficiently discounted.

11-92-1, **Black Guillemot** - Ted Buerger. Accepted (9). The bird stayed at Murrell's Inlet most of the winter. Buerger's photograph is conclusive, and adds the species to the SC Definitive List. This was also the first state sighting of the species.

12-92-1, **Spotted Sandpiper** - Peter Worthington. Accepted (9). One of the very few upstate winter records. Coneross Park, Lake Hartwell, on Clemson's Christmas Count. A bird of this species was reported on a Clemson count in 1974.

12-92-2A & B, **Pacific Loon** - Caroline Eastman, Dennis Forsythe, Nathan Diaz. Accepted (unanimous in the aggregate of three reports). The bird was seen at Murrell's Inlet, at least until 30 December. This smallish bird with a small dagger bill was seen by many observers, including the writer. Discussion centered as to whether this was a Pacific or an Arctic, which is known to breed in Iceland, Scotland, etc. Based on the lack of white flank patches (personal observation) and the fact that Grant does not report any tendency of westward vagrancy, even by Iceland birds, the committee agreed to assign it to the Pacific species, rather than as an Arctic/Pacific pair. As no photograph was taken, the species is placed on the Provisional I List.

12-92-3, **White-fronted Goose** - Stuart Reitz. Accepted (7). Two birds at Clemson's Horse Farm, where they over-wintered. One of very few documented upstate records.

1-93-1, **Thayer's Gull** or **Hybrid**. Rejected, Insufficient details (4) Abstain (3), Outside review by Mike Tove. The bird was seen at Horry County landfill, and the report is accompanied by an excellent sketch. The reviewers generally felt that the bird represented a transitional 1st winter to spring plumage of a Ring-billed Gull, with the outside possibility of Ring-billed X ? Gull. The apparent size (larger than a Ring-billed Gull) might be explained by the bird being out of plane with other gulls, or just an unusually large specimen. Size range is quite large in Ring-billed Gulls. The bird does not resemble plumages reported for Thayer's Gull on the west coast.

1-93-2, **Rough-legged Hawk** Rejected (5) Accept (2). The bird described was most likely a dark phase Red-tailed Hawk.

6-93-1, **Arctic Tern** - Nathan Diaz, countersigned by Edwin L Blicht III. Accepted (5) Unsatisfactory (2). Report is of three birds seen 48 mi NE of Charleston Harbor. Of concern to some of the reviewers was the late date. Also one reviewer felt that the description did not completely eliminate a female Common Tern. The species remains on the Provisional List.

8-93-1 & 1A, **Blue-throated Hummingbird** - Peter Worthington. Accepted (5) Insufficient details (1). This was the first sighting of the species outside of the Southwest. The bird was found at a suburban yard in Laurens County, and was present for some time in late July and early August before the writer was notified. One of the reviewers accepting the identification voted "questionable origin", due to the almost inconceivable dislocation of the bird. Added to the Provisional I List.

8-93-2, **Reddish Egret** - Gary A Klue. Accepted and filed without review. The bird was photographed at Seabrook Is., Charleston County, and was present for some time. There have been several prior coastal records of the species. Occurrences in the Piedmont and Upstate still need documentation.

10-93-1, **Olive-sided Flycatcher** - Robin Carter. In review.

12-93-1, **Little Gull** - Robin Carter. In review.

**Committee Members**

Peter L. Worthington, Chairman  
Robin Carter  
John Cely  
Roger Clark  
Steve Compton  
Dennis Forsythe  
Sidney Gauthreaux  
Lex Glover  
Peter Laurie

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