

General Field Notes

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Two Records of Atlantic Puffin for North Carolina

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The Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*) has been found to be a regular winter resident in waters off southeastern Virginia in recent years. Brian Patteson (pers. comm.) has found the species on six pelagic trips east of Virginia Beach, VA, from 1991–94; his dates range from 2 February to 6 March, with a peak of 32 birds on 15 February 1992. Despite these records being within 30 miles of North Carolina waters, until 1993 there were no records of the puffin for North Carolina. This paper documents two records of the Atlantic Puffin in North Carolina waters.

At least 20 observers, including the junior author, saw a puffin in alternate plumage on the unseasonable date of 14 August 1993, between Oregon Inlet and the Gulf Stream. The bird was seen primarily in flight, at distances as close as 40 yards, for at least four minutes. The puffin was a plump, football-shaped bird that was dark above and light below, with a brightly-colored bill. Its belly and breast were white, whereas the back, wings, and crown were black. The bird had a dark collar around its neck, a dark crown, and a white face. Its bill was still brightly colored, with yellow separating the orange outer bill from what appeared as a gray area.

Approximately 15 observers, including the senior author, saw a puffin in basic plumage on 18 February 1995. The observation was made in the vicinity of "The

Cigar”, an underwater ridge perhaps 25 miles east of northern Currituck Banks, just a few miles south of the Virginia line. The bird was spotted in the water, about 75 yards from the boat. It was viewed in the water for about a minute before it flew off. The stocky body, with the head seemingly one-third the size of the body, was immediately apparent. This individual was mostly dark on the body, with a large round or elliptical dusky patch covering the side of the head that contrasted with the blackish plumage. The huge triangular bill merged with the head. The distal portion of the bill had some dingy red or orange color, but most of the bill was dark.

Neither of these puffins was photographed. Thus, the species has been placed on the Provisional List for North Carolina (North Carolina Bird Records Committee, *Chat* p. 86 this issue).

Confirmed Nesting of Cerulean Warblers in Rutherford County, North Carolina

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Cerulean Warblers (*Dendroica cerulea*) are uncommon summer residents in Chimney Rock Park, Rutherford County, North Carolina, and over the past three years one to three territorial males have been observed annually. Despite fairly thorough searching over the years no evidence of nesting had been obtained in the park until June 1990. The presence of Cerulean Warblers has been noted at Chimney Rock Park by Simpson (1992:238, 305) and Thompson (*Chat* 54:96), but no details of nesting observations in the park have been previously published.

Although Simpson mentions that Cerulean Warblers nest in “mature open deciduous forest, particularly where large Tulip trees (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) dominate in cove hardwood forests” (Simpson 1992:304), this habitat is not indicative of the site in Chimney Rock Park. Here the forest type is of a highly disturbed nature which can best be described as mixed oak (*Quercus rubra*, *Q. prinus* and *Q. velutina*) over Dogwood (*Cornus florida*), but also includes Hickory (*Carya* spp.), Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) and Tulip tree.

On 17 June 1990 two male Cerulean Warblers were heard singing around the upper parking lot in Chimney Rock Park at an elevation of 1965 ft, and a single female was seen feeding in a nearby Paulonia Tree (*Paulonia tomentosa*). After several minutes she flew to a nest high in a tall Black Locust over the parking area, where she proceeded to brood. At this stage it was not possible to determine whether the nest contained eggs or young birds.

The small nest was located about 70–80 feet up on the upper surface of a thin horizontal limb at the base of a small vertical branch, and was about three inches across. It seemed to be composed of small plant stems and fibers bound into a two-