

1996 Report of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee

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The South Carolina Bird Records Committee (SCBRC) acted on 24 reports in 1996. One other report (that of Alder Flycatcher) remains pending. Of the 24 birds submitted for review, 5 were rejected and 19 accepted. The accepted reports led to the addition of 8 species to the South Carolina list. American Ornithologists' Union splits added 3 more.

Accepted

NORTHERN FULMAR - A light phase bird was seen inshore at Huntington Beach SP (HBSP) by Jack Peachey and Bob Maxwell on 22 November 1995 and is the first accepted SC record. Added to the Provisional I (PI) list.

WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD - A bird was seen and well described by Jack Peachey on 12 October 1996, about 50 miles out from Murrells Inlet.

RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD - A freshly dead bird was collected at Folly Beach, Charleston County, in September 1996. The specimen is now in the Charleston Museum. Added to the Definitive (Def) list.

ROSS'S GOOSE - A very obliging individual spent November 1995 to February 1996 at a horse farm in Laurens County. Seen and photographed by many. Added to the Def list.

NORTHERN GOSHAWK - One was carefully described by Robert Merrick and Rick Phillips at the Caesars Head SP hawk watch on 9 October 1995 for a first accepted state sighting. Added to the PI list.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - Jack Peachey and others found a winter adult at Harbor Island Beach on 21 September 1996. These birds are now considered regular, though uncommon, on the SC coast.

ROSEATE TERN - Seen by Jack Peachey at HBSP on 2 July 1995. Added to the PI list.

RUFF - A basic plumage bird was seen and carefully described by Steve Calver at the Savannah River Spoil Site on 10 November 1995.

MURRE, SP? - A murre was seen on 6 March 1996 by Bob Maxwell and Jack Peachey, off S Litchfield Beach. It may well have been a Common Murre, but the sea was too rough for a satisfactory determination. The sighting is accepted as to genus only.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE - Judy Halloran photographed one at her feeder on Harbor Island on 28 June 1996, for a first summer state record.

LONG-EARED OWL - Steve Patterson and others heard the bird calling on 21 December 1995 during a McCormick County Christmas Count. This is a very rare inland report and was accepted on the basis of vocalization only.

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD - An immature male spent the winter of 1995 - 96 at a feeder in Lexington County. Photos and videotapes by many, with the bird maturing sufficiently by March for a determination of the species. Added to the Def list.

VERMILLION FLYCATCHER - Bob Maxwell and Pete Worthington saw 2 birds on 6 October 1995 at Big Beaverdam Creek, Townville. One was a female, the other appeared to be an immature. This is the first report in several years.

EASTERN KINGBIRD - One seen at Hunting Island SP on 16 December 1995 by Thomas Nicolls provided a rare early winter report.

CAVE SWALLOW - Doug McNair found a moribund bird at the foot of the radar tower at the Coast Guard Station at Folly Beach in October 1994. The specimen is now at the Charleston Museum. Added to the Def list.

MOURNING WARBLER - Three separate birds were seen by Bob and Barbara Maxwell and Betty and Peter Worthington in the Upper Piedmont in September - October 1995. All sightings have been accepted, with some reservations by one or more committee members on each, since they are of rare but regular occurrence in the Piedmont. While sightings of rare passerines need to be carefully documented and reported to Ricky Davis for Briefs for the Files, they will not generally be reviewed by the SCBRC.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL - South Carolina's first visited the feeder of Caroline Eastman and Robin Carter in Columbia on 3 April 1996. This was an immature bird and remained, on and off, all day for the many birders who rushed over. A videotape shows the crossed bill and white wing bars. Added to the Def list.

Rejected

CURLEW SANDPIPER- A 12 June 1996, sighting at HBSP was not accepted due to some inconsistent details.

LITTLE GULL - A report of a bird seen at the Savannah River Spoil Site was not accepted due to insufficient details.

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD - A bird that stayed at a Camden feeder from Thanksgiving to late December was at first believed to be this species. Photos reviewed by both Bob Sargent in Alabama and Nancy Newfield in Louisiana

ranged from a possible from Bob to an immature male Ruby-throat from Nancy. The SCBRC sided with caution and rejected the report.

CLAY-COLORED ROBIN - A report of this Mexican border bird in May 1995 was not accepted due to being so far out of range, and the species does not appear subject to vagrancy. Added to the hypothetical list.

BLACK-WHISKERED VIREO - A bird seen, but not heard, and very well documented, appeared to be of this species. But outside review by P. William Smith of Homestead, Florida, raised enough questions to cause it to be assigned to the hypothetical list.

Other Action

On 8 February 1997 the SCBRC downgraded Ash-throated Flycatcher to Hypothetical since several committee members doubted seriously whether the species should have been added originally. Further, Mute Swan (feral) is appearing with increasing frequency in South Carolina. Though the origin of some of the birds is suspect, others are probably truly feral, and the SCBRC voted to add the species to the Provisional I list.

Changes Caused by the AOU Split

The AOU splits caused the following changes to the SC list. All changes are to the definitive list, via specimens at the Charleston Museum, except for Bullock's Oriole (for which a photographic record exists). Bicknell's Thrush, Eastern Towhee, Salt-marsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Baltimore Oriole, and Bullock's Oriole are added. Rufous-sided Towhee, Sharp-Tailed Sparrow and Northern Oriole are deleted. Note: There is no SC record for Spotted Towhee, the Western species which has occurred casually in most Eastern states. Keep your eyes open!

Conclusion

With all these changes, the SC list now stands at 412 species + 1 genus (Catharacta) and 1 SSP. Of these, 21 (and the SSP) are on the provisional list.

We wish to note with regret that John Cely and Sid Gauthreaux have stepped off the SCBRC after serving since its inception. They will be sorely missed but will still be two of our best resources for critical comment. We welcome the return of Will Post and Chris Marsh to fill the gap.

Please remember that this report does not meet the criteria of "publication", i.e. full documentation in a journal to establish a permanent record. To do this, the original submitter or a collaborator should submit a note for publication in *The Chat* through Dennis Forsythe, SC Field Notes Editor.