

General Field Notes

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Limpkin Documented in Craven County, North Carolina

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On 21 June 1998 Shelley identified a Limpkin (*Aramus guarauna*) on the edge of a freshwater pond in the Fairfield Harbor community of Craven County, N.C. He reported his sighting, and the bird was subsequently seen by scores of observers over the following ten days. Multiple photographs were made.

This adult-plumaged individual allowed itself to be closely approached, so that details of its appearance could be appreciated by the naked eye. The long legs were gray; its long, down-curved bill was dull yellow for the proximal two-thirds of its length and gray at the tip. The bird was generally dark brown with white streaking on the neck and elongated white spots on its back and wing coverts. It appeared gangly in flight, with its neck extended and its legs hanging down. When we were observing the bird, it was feeding entirely on a mussel, the common rangia (*Rangia cuneata*) (Harry LeGrand, personal communication).

It is uncommon for Limpkins to stray outside their usual range in Florida. To our knowledge, this is the third report of this species in North Carolina and the first to be photographed. The first report was from Lake Waccamaw, on 7 September 1975 (Wiley and Wiley 1976), and the second on 20 May 1983 at Smith Mill Pond, near the Sampson-Bladen county line (Lee 1987).

As this is the first record of Limpkin in the state documented by photographs or specimen, acceptance by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee would place the species on the Official List.



Limpkin photographed in the Fairfield Harbor community of Craven County, NC, by Cindy Scop

Literature Cited

- Wiley, RH and MS Wiley. 1976. Limpkin Observed at Lake Waccamaw, N.C. Chat 40:94-95.
- Lee, DS. 1987. Breeding Birds of Carolina Bays: Succession-related Density and Diversification on Ecological Islands. Chat 51:85-102.

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