

# 1999-2000 Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

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This report enumerates the decisions of the Carolina Bird Club's North Carolina Bird Records Committee during 1999 and 2000. The Records Committee conducted no review of reports in 1998; thus, this is the first report of the Committee since a 1997 summary (North Carolina Bird Records Committee 1998). Committee voting information is referenced in parentheses (*i.e.*, year report received, reference number).

## ACCEPTED AS VALID

The reported identification is judged to be accurate, and the bird is judged to be of wild origin. Photographs and/or written descriptions of all accepted records have been deposited in the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences.

**Bermuda Petrel** (*Pterodroma cahow*) (00-06). One was observed in the Gulf Stream off Oregon Inlet on 2 June 2000 by a large group of birders. The Committee accepted a description provided by Joseph Morlan. Despite a number of recent reports, the Committee has voted on just two previous reports, accepting one with photos in 1996 and considering the other as Unresolved (North Carolina Bird Records Committee 1997). The species is already on the Official List, and this becomes the second accepted record.

**Bermuda Petrel** (00-18). One was seen by Brian Patteson and other birders on a pelagic trip to the Gulf Stream off Hatteras on 14 August 1999. The Committee accepted a description of the bird written by Steven Mlodinow. The species is already on the Official List, and this becomes the third accepted record.

**Bulwer's Petrel** (*Bulweria bulwerii*) (00-03). One was photographed in the Gulf Stream southeast of Oregon Inlet on 8 August 1998 by Mary Gustafson. The Committee accepted the photos and the written description presented in LeGrand *et al.* (1999). This is the second accepted record for the state; the first was a sight record only. Because of the acceptance of photos, the species is elevated from the Provisional List to the Official List.

**Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel** (*Oceanodroma monorhis*) (99-03). One was seen and photographed on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras on 8 August 1998 by Michael O'Brien, Brian Patteson, and many other birders. The Committee accepted the description and photographs presented in O'Brien *et al.* (1999). This is not only the first record for the state but also for North America (American Birding Association Checklist Committee 2000). The species is hereby added to the state's Official List.

**Purple Gallinule** (*Porphyryla martinica*) (99-06). One was seen by Simon Thompson and other observers in Henderson County on 14 May 1999. The Committee accepted written material and a sketch provided by Thompson. The species is already on the Official List, but this is the first record accepted for the mountain province.

**Purple Gallinule** (00-12). An immature found by Charles Gambill was seen by many other observers at Bodie Island on 29 December 1998. The Committee accepted details written by Harry LeGrand. This is the first winter record accepted by the Committee; the species is already on the Official List.

**Limpkin** (*Aramus guarauna*) (99-02). One was seen and photographed by many birders near New Bern in June 1998. The Committee accepted a written description provided by Dick Shelley and Bob Holmes and a photograph by Ricky Davis. The record has since been published (Shelley and Holmes 1999). This is the third accepted record for the state. As the other two were sight records, this third record, plus the photo, elevate the species from the Provisional List to the Official List.

**Black-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa limosa*) (00-07). One bird was observed in flight by Eric Dean near Goldsboro on 23 September 1999. This is the third accepted record for the state, with the others being from the Outer Banks. As one of the two previous birds was photographed, the species is already on the Official List. This is the first inland record.

**Franklin's Gull** (*Larus pipixcan*) (99-05). One adult was seen in a field with Ring-billed Gulls (*L. delawarensis*) in Henderson County on 25 November 1998 by Wayne Forsythe and Ron Selvey. The Committee accepted material written by Forsythe. The species is already on the Official List, but this is the first report of the species accepted by the Committee for the mountains.

**Atlantic Puffin** (*Fratercula arctica*) (00-02). Two individuals were seen in the Atlantic Ocean northeast of Oregon Inlet on 30 January 1999 by Brian Patteson and many other birders. The Committee accepted a written description provided by Jeff Phippen. Based on the Carolina Bird Club Records Committee Regulations, the species is hereby elevated from the Provisional List to the

Official List, as three records have now been accepted. However, all three are sight records, and photos or a specimen are desired.

**Anna's Hummingbird** (*Calypte anna*) (00-19). An immature male seen by Judy Walker and many others at her feeder in Charlotte from 29 November 1998 to 4 March 1999, and banded and photographed by Bob and Martha Sargent, was accepted. This is the first record for the state, and acceptance of the written material (from Judy Walker) and the photographs places the species directly onto the Official List.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher** (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) (00-04). One was videotaped in Henderson County on 28 October 1999 by Wayne Forsythe. This is the third accepted state record. As there is an accepted photo for a bird at Pea Island a few years ago, the species is already on the Official List. This is also the first accepted record from the mountains.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher** (00-05). One was observed by a group of six birders at Bodie Island on 7 November 1999. The Committee accepted the description provided by David Hughes. This is the fourth accepted record, the second for the coast; one record is from the eastern Piedmont, and the other record (00-04) is from the mountains.

**Cave Swallow** (*Petrochelidon fulva*) (00-09). One individual was observed by Lori and Dwayne Martin and Dominick and Emma D'Ostilio in Iredell County on 20 December 1999. The Committee accepted both written material from the Martins and a sketch from Dominick D'Ostilio. The species is already on the Official List, and this is the fifth accepted record, but the first true inland one. The other four records are all from coastal (or near-coastal) counties – Carteret, Craven, Onslow, and Dare.

**Black-throated Gray Warbler** (*Dendroica nigrescens*) (00-15). One was observed by Kent Fiala on Roanoke Island on 7 October 2000. This is the fourth accepted record for the state, and thus the species is already on the Official List. However, there is no photo or specimen yet for the state.

**MacGillivray's Warbler** (*Oporornis tolmiei*) (00-20). An individual found freshly road-killed in central Hyde County on 6 November 1998 (by Kelly Davis) was accepted. The Committee accepted the written material provided by John Fussell, who examined the specimen, which has been deposited at the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences. The Committee also accepted a confirmation letter from the Museum's John Gerwin in lieu of viewing the specimen or a photograph of the specimen. This is the first record for the state, and acceptance of the description and the specimen (through the confirmation letter) places the species on the Official List.

**Brambling** (*Fringilla montifringilla*) (99-04). A winter-plumaged individual at a feeder in Brevard was videotaped by Shawn Stevens on 31 October 1998. The Committee accepted the photographic evidence (videotape and/or still photos from the tape), but no written description was available for review. A copy of the videotape has been deposited at the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences for permanent documentation of this first state record, adding the species to the Official List.

#### UNACCEPTED SIGHTING

The bird is judged to be a species other than that reported, or the bird is insufficiently documented to identification of the species reported.

**Yellow-billed Loon** (*Gavia adamsii*) (96-18). One was reported along the southern coast in December 1995. A first vote yielded an Unresolved verdict, and the description was sent to outside review. The outside reviews were mixed, and some indicated that Common Loons (*G. immer*) could not be completely eliminated. A second Committee vote returned a "Not Accepted" verdict, based on these reviews. The Yellow-billed Loon has been found at a number of lakes in the northeastern United States but perhaps has not previously been reported as valid on the Atlantic coast (and not in North Carolina). The report might well have been correct, but the Common Loon is quite numerous on the Atlantic, and some purported Yellow-billed reports from the East likely involved Commons.

**White-chinned Petrel** (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*) (96-14). One was reported (and photographed at a distance) in the Gulf Stream off the coast in October 1996. A first vote yielded an Unresolved verdict, and the report was sent to several birders (around the world) familiar with the species. These outside reviews were mixed. Outside reviewers mentioned that this species can easily be confused with the Westland Petrel (*P. westlandica*) and the Parkinson's Petrel (*P. parkinsoni*), though the latter two are not found in the Atlantic. (The White-chinned is found in the oceans of the southern hemisphere, including the South Atlantic.) As there is no confirmed record of White-chinned Petrel from the United States (American Birding Association Checklist Committee 2000), and as the outside reviews were mixed, the Committee's second vote gave a "Not Accepted" verdict. In summary, the Committee felt that there was not strong enough documentation of this single-observer report to place the species on North Carolina's Provisional List, even though the species may have been correctly identified.

**Magnificent Frigatebird** (*Fregata magnificens*) (00-11). One report from the inner Coastal Plain during December 1998 was not accepted. One or two reviewers were not convinced the bird was even a frigatebird, but the main concern was that the description was not thorough enough to rule out other

frigatebird species, as a far inland report in December would be highly unusual even for a Magnificent Frigatebird, which is seen once or twice a year coastally during the warmer months. There is one record of Lesser Frigatebird (*F. ariel*) from Maine (American Birding Association Checklist Committee 2000).

**White-tailed Kite** (*Elanus leucurus*) (00-21). A previously published sight report from Davie County in November 1946 (Knox 1947) was not accepted. A number of Committee members believed that the bird was likely a Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). The species is already on the Official List, with three accepted records, one having been photographed from Fort Fisher (though full details of this latter record have yet to be published).

**White-tailed Kite** (00-22). A sight report from the eastern Coastal Plain in January 2000 was not accepted. Several Committee members felt that the bird was misidentified and was probably a Northern Harrier or a Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*), both of which were seen by other observers in the same area during the same time period.

**Common Greenshank** (*Tringa nebularia*) (00-01). One was reported from the Outer Banks in spring 1994. This single-observer sight report contained meager details, and the observer even indicated that the report was likely not convincing. There are no accepted records for this Old World shorebird in North Carolina.

**Brown Skua** (*Catharacta lonnbergi*) (96-12). One bird was well described and photographed from the Gulf Stream in May 1993. A first vote by the Committee yielded an Unresolved vote, primarily because none of the Committee members who voted on this report was familiar with this species. As a result, the report and photos were sent for outside review to several ornithologists around the world familiar with skuas and with this southern hemisphere species. A second Committee vote gave a "Not Accepted" verdict, based on the fact that review comments were mixed, with one or two reviewers believing the bird to be a Brown and others concerned about variation in South Polar Skua (*C. maccormicki*). The skua taxonomy is unsettled as to how many species there are, and some species have color phases. The reported identification might well be a correct one, and it is hoped that one of the national records committees – either the American Ornithologists' Union or the American Birding Association – can review the photos and text and make a determination. However, for the present, there are no accepted North American records for Brown Skua (American Birding Association Checklist Committee 2000).

**Lazuli Bunting** (*Passerina amoena*) (00-10). Two males reported from a feeder in the eastern Piedmont in spring 1996 were not accepted. The details were too brief for acceptance, as well as the seeming unlikelihood of two males

together at a feeder. The species is already on the Official List, as the sole accepted record was also accompanied by a photo.

### UNACCEPTED ORIGIN

The reported identification is judged to be accurate, but the origin of the bird is uncertain (and thus might not be of natural origin).

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) (00-16). An individual photographed from the northern coast in spring 1998, as reported in Lee (2000), was considered not to be of wild/natural origin. The Committee did not see or review the photograph for accuracy. There are no accepted records of wild individuals of this species in North Carolina.

**White-faced Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna viduata*) (00-17). An individual photographed from the northern coast in spring 1998 (Lee 2000), with the above species of waterfowl, was considered not to be of wild/natural origin. The Committee did not see or review the photograph for accuracy. There are no accepted records of wild individuals of this species in North Carolina, nor has a record of a bird judged to be wild been accepted for the United States (American Birding Association Checklist Committee 2000).

### UNRESOLVED

Further consideration by the Committee is needed.

**Franklin's Gull** (99-01). A sight report of an individual seen in the southern mountains in late fall 1997 was unresolved (*i.e.*, more than 50% accept votes but at least 25% non-accept votes). The details were ruled to be inclusive for some Committee members to feel certain that the species was correctly identified. The species is already on the Official List, but this was apparently a first report for the mountain region.

**Cave Swallow** (00-08). A sight report of multiple birds from the southern coast in late fall 1999 was unresolved. Though the species was likely correctly identified, the details did not completely rule out Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) for some Committee members.

**Smith's Longspur** (*Calcarius pictus*) (00-13). A sight report of one in the Piedmont in early January 1998 was unresolved. Some members felt the details did not exclude Lapland Longspur (*C. lapponicus*) or other sparrow-like birds. Smith's Longspur is already on the Official List, with three accepted records.

**White-winged Crossbill** (*Loxia leucoptera*) (00-14). A sight report of an adult male from the mountains in June 1998 was unresolved. Several reviewers were not convinced that an immature or variant Red Crossbill (*L. curvirostra*) was

eliminated, as they may have wingbars (and the bird was seen with a flock of Red Crossbills). This would presumably be the first summer report for the state for White-winged Crossbill, which is already on the Official List (with a number of winter records).

### **Discussion**

The review of reports by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee for 1999-2000 resulted in adding seven species to the North Carolina Official List. Bulwer's Petrel, Limpkin, and Atlantic Puffin have been elevated from the Provisional List; and Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel, Anna's Hummingbird, MacGillivray's Warbler, and Brambling have been directly added to the Official List. The Provisional List has lost the three species mentioned above. The current Official List is 427 species, and the Provisional List is now 14 species, for a total of 441 species on the state's Accepted List.

### **Literature Cited**

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