

1997 - 1999 Report of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee

Lex Glover, Chair
Donna Slyce Bailey,
Secretary and Compiler
Gifford Beaton, Jr.

Tim Kalbach
Taylor Piephoff
Will Post

In 1997, 1998, and 1999, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee completed action on 25 records. Of these, 11 were accepted and 14 were not accepted. Among the accepted reports were two records that added new species to the Definitive State List. A report of a White Wagtail accompanied by photographs and a report on a specimen of a Northern Fulmar archived at the Charleston Museum of Natural History added these two species to the Definitive State List. Inclusion on the Definitive State List requires a properly vouchered specimen, unretouched recognizable photographs or video, or a recognizable sound recording of a species, as set forth by the Committee in 1996.

Membership changed somewhat during the three years covered by this report. The committee, reduced from the original nine to seven, consisted of Robin Carter, Dennis Forsythe, Lex Glover, Chris Marsh, Will Post, Simon Thompson and Pete Worthington, Chair, in 1997. At the end of 1997, Pete Worthington turned over the duties of chair to Lex Glover. Pete Worthington remained on the committee as a member. At the end of 1997, Robin Carter and Dennis Forsythe rotated off the committee and were replaced by Giff Beaton and Taylor Piephoff. In 1998, the committee consisted of Giff Beaton, Chris Marsh, Taylor Piephoff, Will Post, Simon Thompson, Pete Worthington and Lex Glover, Chair. At the end of 1998, Chris Marsh and Pete Worthington rotated off the committee and were replaced by Tim Kalbach and Steve Wagner. In 1999, the committee consisted of Giff Beaton, Tim Kalbach, Taylor Piephoff, Will Post, Simon Thompson, Steve Wagner and Lex Glover, Chair. At the end of 1999, Simon Thompson rotated off the committee and was replaced in early 2000 by Donna Slyce Bailey.

Committee activity is reviewed below.

Accepted reports:

Northern Fulmar (02-98-18) - A report written by Will Post, Katherine Higgins, Lex Glover, and Taylor Piephoff on a specimen archived at the Charleston Museum was accepted.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (06-98-19) - A report (with photos) written by Lex Glover of three adult birds observed for just over two months in Yemassee, Hampton County, beginning in June of 1998 and extending until early August of 1998 was accepted by the committee.

Iceland Gull (02-98-05) - A single first or second winter bird of this species, seen from Huntington Beach State Park by Andreas Kristensen and several other observers in late January of 1998, was reported by Andreas Kristensen. The detailed report was accepted by the committee.

Little Gull (12-96-02) - A succinct but detailed report with sketches from Steve Calver of a bird of this species observed at the Savannah Spoil Site area in early December of 1996 was accepted by the committee.

Long-billed Murrelet (11-94-02) - A report with photos of a Marbled Murrelet, originally reported from the Huntington Beach State Park jetties in 1994 by Faye Metzl and accepted by the committee in 1995, was re-opened on the basis of the 1997 split of the species Marbled Murrelet by the AOU. On a review of the photos, the committee accepted the report as Long-billed Murrelet.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird (03-98-07) - A report of an immature male of this species, coming to a feeder in the suburban yard of Dennis and Donna Forsythe on James Island and banded by Bob Sargent in late January of 1998, was accepted.

White Wagtail (04-98-09) - The first state record of a White Wagtail, documented in a well written report by Kenneth Behrens accompanied by photos from Phil Turner, was accepted by the committee. This cooperative bird was seen and enjoyed by many as it stayed for a few days in mid April of 1998 around the jetty ponds at Huntington Beach State Park. This species was added to the Definitive category of the State List on the basis of this report.

Lawrence's Warbler (05-97-01 & 05-97-02) - A bird of this plumage, a plumage pattern arising as a result of one pure Blue-Winged or Golden-winged Warbler parent and one hybrid Blue-winged Warbler X Golden-winged parent, was observed for at least two days at Croft State Park in Spartanburg county in May of 1997. Two reports, one written by Stephen Harris and one written by Matthew Campbell, most likely of the same bird, were accepted by the committee.

American Tree Sparrow (12-96-01) - A report of a bird found on a rural road in the southeastern corner of Greenville county in late December of 1996 written by Pete Worthington was accepted.

Dark-eyed Junco (07-97-01) - An unusual summer report of a Dark-eyed Junco was accepted by the committee. The bird was observed coming to a feeder in Hemingway in early July of 1997 by David Donnmoeyer, Bo Lawrimore, and Carol Lawrimore. The bird was reported by David Donnmoeyer.

Non-accepted reports:

Arctic Loon (02-97-01) - A report of very brief observations of a bird close to shore at Huntington Beach State Park was not accepted due to a lack of diagnostic detail in the written description to identify the bird positively to species.

Western Grebe (02-98-04 & 06-98-13) - A report of a bird seen from shore at Litchfield Beach in late January of 1998 was not accepted due to a lack of

diagnostic details in the written documentation to identify the reported bird positively to species.

Clark's Grebe (12-95-04) - A report of this species from December of 1995 was not accepted due to the inconclusiveness of the written documentation as to the species of the reported bird.

Manx Shearwater (05-97-03) - Due to the abbreviated documentation of consideration of similar species, a report of this species seen offshore in May of 1997 was not accepted.

Arctic Tern (06-98-14) - A report of an observation made offshore in early June of 1998 of this species was not accepted due to a lack of fine details in the written description to distinguish to species a member of this confusing genus.

Calliope Hummingbird (11-97-01) - A report of a female/immature of this species observed in Simpsonville in September of 1997 was not accepted due to a lack of documented diagnostic details in the written description to distinguish the reported bird from several related hummingbird species.

Bohemian Waxwing (03-98-06) - A report of three birds of this species was not accepted due to insufficient details in the written description.

Yellow Warbler (01-97-02) - A report of this species, seen in early January near Spartanburg, was not accepted due to a lack of fine detail in the written description and a less than rigorous elimination of more likely species.

Prothonotary Warbler (01-97-03) - Observed in early January from Spartanburg, a report of this species was not accepted due to insufficient details and the abbreviated written consideration given to several potentially confusing similar species.

Reports sent for outside review:

Trumpeter Swan (01-98-01) - The difficulty of identifying some immature swans to species occasioned enough non-accept votes to send this detailed report of an immature swan observed in southern Greenville county in January of 1998 to outside review. The report will be re-submitted to the committee for consideration.

Snowy Plover (01-97-01 & 01-97-02) - A pair of detailed reports of a bird observed at south Litchfield Beach in Georgetown county drew an indecisive vote from the committee and will be sent to outside review. The report will be re-submitted to the Committee for consideration.

American Tree Sparrow (03-97-01) - A bird of this species was observed at the end of March in 1997 in Beaverdam WMA near Townville. The report caused an indecisive vote from the committee and will be sent for outside review. The report will be re-submitted to the Committee for consideration.

Also included in committee work for this period were two reports, accompanied by photos, of birds not identified by the reporters. While the persistence of "mystery birds" in memory is admittedly frustrating, identification of such birds is outside the scope of the duties of the committee.