

THE CHAT

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Cover: This Black-headed Grosbeak was seen by many birders at the home of Shirley and David Remaley in Elizabeth City, NC. See page 3. Photo by Will Cook.

2003 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

**Harry E. LeGrand, Jr.¹, Chairman, Keith E. Camburn,
Samuel Cooper, Richard J. Davis, Eric V. Dean,
Wayne K. Forsythe, Russell L. Tyndall**

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This report enumerates the decisions of the Carolina Bird Club's North Carolina Bird Records Committee during 2003. During the past year, Russ Tyndall was added to the Committee, replacing Susan Campbell. 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 NC Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh.

Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*) (03-02). Two were seen from 22 to 25 January 2003 along Hooper Lane in Henderson County. Wayne Forsythe and others observed the geese, and the Committee accepted details provided by Forsythe. The species is already on the Official List, and this is the second mountain record.

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) (03-01). One was seen on 14 and 15 December 2002 by Tim Lewis and several other birders at Lake Julian, Buncombe County. The Committee accepted a description provided by Lewis. This is the first record for the mountain region. The species is already on the Official List, with this being the fourth record accepted by the Committee. There are about 10 other published reports for the species that have not been reviewed by the Committee.

Clark's Grebe (*Aechmophorus clarkii*) (03-09). Ricky Davis and several others observed one in the surf at Cape Hatteras Point, Dare County, on 15 March 2003, and it was seen on 19 March at nearby Hatteras by several other birders. The Committee accepted written details provided by Davis, and as this is a first record for the state, the species is placed on the Provisional List. However, the Committee did not accept still photos from a video taken by Derb Carter, as the photos were not definitive enough for Committee members to rule out the similar Western Grebe or a possible hybrid. Acceptance of photos would have elevated the species to the Official List. Because a video exists of the grebe, the Committee hopes to review it in 2004 to determine if it provides the necessary documentation to elevate the species to the Official List.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) (03-14). A sick bird was found on the beach at Ocracoke, Hyde County, on 11 May 2003. The Committee accepted a photo of the bird, in a cage, taken by Elizabeth Hanrahan. The species is already on the Official List, and there are now close to a dozen state records.

Brown Booby (03-21). Another sick bird was found on the beach at Emerald Isle, Carteret County, on 30 July 2002. The Committee accepted a photo taken by Elizabeth Hanrahan. Both of these Brown Boobies failed to survive, and they are now specimens at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences (John Gerwin, pers. comm.).

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) (03-15). An adult was seen at Lake Junaluska, Haywood County, from 31 May to early June 2003 by several birders. The Committee accepted written details submitted by Beth Brinson. This is the third known record for the mountain region, though it is the first to be reviewed and accepted by the Committee.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) (03-11). An immature was seen from 23 to 28 March 2003 at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in Dare County. The Committee accepted a written description from the initial observer, Mike Tove. The species is already on the Official List; this is the sixth accepted record for the state.

Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*) (03-06). One in winter plumage was seen in the surf at Fort Macon State Park, Carteret County, from 10 to 16 March 2003. The Committee accepted a description from Stuart Pimm, the initial observer, and photos taken by Will Cook and Harry Sell. The species is already on the Official List, and this is at least the eighth state record; however, this is one of the few that has been seen by a large number of birders and documented at close range.

Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*) (03-05). One in transition (winter changing to breeding) plumage was seen by Scott Baron in the surf at Kill Devil Hills, Dare County, on 15 February 2003. The Committee accepted his written description and sketch. This is the second accepted state record, both from the immediate coast (as would be expected). However, because both are sight records only, the species remains on the Provisional List.

Long-billed Murrelet (*Brachyramphus perdix*) (03-07). One in winter plumage was seen in the surf at Atlantic Beach, Carteret County, on 15 December 2002 by Eric Dean, Sharon Funderburk, and Tom Wade. The Committee accepted Dean's sketch and written description. Surprisingly, this is the second state record. The other record was from an inland site (Jordan Lake). However, as neither has been accompanied by photograph, nor is there a specimen, the species remains on the Provisional List.

Green Violet-ear (*Colibri thalassinus*) (03-16). One was seen at a feeder in Newland, Avery County, from 6 to 11 October 2003; it was identified by Wayne Forsythe and Keith Camburn on 11 October. The Committee accepted a written description and photos provided by Forsythe. This is surprisingly the third state record, all from the mountain region in fall. As one of these was documented with a photograph, the species is already on the Official List.