

(8.4, 13.8, $n = 14$, $P = 0.04$) ((trend (%/year), variance, number of routes and P value)) (Sauer et al. 2004).

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The Cackling Goose in South Carolina and Neighboring Regions

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The Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*) has recently been classified as a distinct species (American Ornithologists' Union [AOU] 2003). Formerly (AOU 1998), it was considered a subspecies of the Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*), and was known as Hutchins's Goose (Forbush 1929), Richardson's Canada Goose (Delacour 1954) or Tundra Goose (Mowbray et al. 2002). The Cackling Goose is about half the size of the nominate race of the Canada Goose (*B. c. canadensis*; Fig. 1). Ninety years ago, Brooks (1914) suggested that the "Canada Goose" was composed of more than one species. Recent work with mitochondrial DNA (van Wagner and Baker 1986, Shields and Wilson 1987) and others confirmed Brooks's hypothesis.

The purpose of this paper is to review records of the Cackling Goose for South Carolina and adjacent areas, to clarify the distribution of the species on the southern Atlantic coast.

The small-bodied form of the Canada Goose (AOU 1998), now called the Cackling Goose (*B. hutchinsii*), includes four (Mowbray et al. 2002) or five subspecies (AOU 2003, following Delacour 1954). The Cackling Goose may be more closely related to other members of the genus *Branta*, such as the Brant (*B. bernicla*) and the Barnacle Goose (*B. leucopsis*), than it is to the large-bodied Canada Goose (*B. canadensis*), which is now thought to be composed of seven subspecies (Delacour 1954, AOU 2003).

Three specimens of the Cackling Goose have been collected in South Carolina, although only two are extant. The first (ChM 53.19, study skin prepared by E. B. Chamberlain, sex undetermined) was collected on 13 December 1950, Cherokee Plantation, Combahee River (Colleton County), by John H. Dick. As confirmed by Herbert Friedmann (US National Museum), the specimen is an example of *B. h. hutchinsii*, which is the palest subspecies of the Cackling Goose. As is characteristic of this race, it lacks a white collar at the base of its dark neck, and its white cheeks are continuous across the chin. The measurements of the specimen are: wing: 350 mm; total body length: 550 mm; mass: 1418 g; culmen from base: length: 32.5 mm; width: 18.0 mm, depth: 18.2 mm. These fall within the range of measurements given by Mowbray et al. (2002) for *B. h. hutchinsii*.

The second specimen (ChM 2001.2.101, mounted skin prepared by W. A. Biederman, sex undetermined; Fig. 1) was shot 11 November 1959 at Bear Point, Kinloch Plantation (Georgetown County) by Eugene E. DuPont. In comparison to the goose taken in 1950, this bird is a paler example of *B. h. hutchinsii*. Its measurements are: wing: 340 mm; culmen from base of skull: length: 33.5 mm; width 16.3 mm; depth: 18.5 mm, all consistent with measurements of *hutchinsii* (Mowbray et al. 2002).



Figure 1. Right: Cackling Goose, *Branta hutchinsii hutchinsii* (ChM 2001.2.101) collected 11 November 1959, Kinloch Plantation, Georgetown County. Left: Canada Goose, *Branta canadensis*.

A third Cackling Goose was taken on 9 January 1968 at Doar Point, also on Kinloch Plantation, by Johnny L. Walker, who stated that it was part of a flock of “four or five” (pers. comm. to Milby Burton from Richard Stanland, manager of Kinloch Plantation; Charleston Museum files, Burton 1970). The specimen was not preserved (Burton 1970).

Among the five subspecies of Cackling Goose, *B. h. hutchinsii* has the easternmost breeding distribution (map in Schorger 1976): the Arctic coastal plain from Melville Peninsula, Mackenzie River Delta, east to Hudson Bay, Baffin Island, and western Greenland. *B. h. hutchinsii* migrates through the central Great Plains to and from wintering grounds on the Gulf of Mexico and is therefore the subspecies most likely to occur on the Atlantic coast.

Only a few occurrences have been documented for the southern Atlantic coast. All of the Florida reports are from Wakulla County on the Gulf Coast: one specimen, collected 24 December 1954, and two sight reports (Stoddard 1950, Stevenson and Anderson 1994). No specimens are known from Georgia (Burleigh 1958, Beaton et al. 2003).

Apparently, the only North Carolina specimen was taken near Brant Island, Currituck Sound, by W. H. DeForest, 15 November 1888 (McAtee 1926). The skin was mounted and placed in the Narrows Island Clubhouse near Poplar Branch (Pearson et al. 1942). Its current location is not known. Recently, North Carolina has had an increasing number of sightings of Cackling Goose: for example, Davis and Temple (*in* Davis 2004) reported three birds on Lake Mattamuskeet, 29 December 2003. Since the 1960s, birds have been sighted or collected as far north as Long Island, New York (Bull 1974)

Forbush (1929) said that the Cackling Goose was “apparently not very rare in the 19th century” and he listed several specimen records for New England. By about 1920, the species had become “a rare or accidental migrant”. Numbers appear to have been greatly reduced during the market-hunting era of the early 20th Century. The increased number of recent sightings of Cackling Geese on the Atlantic Coast, especially from coastal North Carolina, suggests that the population may be increasing. No breeding population counts are available for *B. h. hutchinsii*, however (Mowbray et al. 2002).

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