

First Record of Broad-billed Hummingbird (*Cynanthus latirostris*) for North Carolina

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Inge Parker saw an unusual hummingbird on 7 October 2001 at a feeder in her yard in the Fairfield Harbour community in eastern Craven County, NC. She identified it as an immature male Broad-billed Hummingbird (*Cynanthus latirostris*). A number of other birders saw the hummingbird over the next few days, including Steve Shultz, who photographed the bird and put photos on his website.

On 11 October, Wayne Irvin and I traveled to observe and photograph the hummingbird. When we arrived around 1 PM, the bird had just finished a feeding bout at the feeder in the front yard. Over the next two hours, we saw the bird come to the feeder about five times, but we also saw it perched in some hardwood trees, with leaves partly fallen, for many minutes at a time. The sun was at our back and viewing conditions were excellent, with the bird seen as close as 30 yards. We watched the bird through a 20x scope, and Irvin took a roll of photos.

The bird appeared to be a medium-sized hummingbird, but no other hummers were present for size comparison. It was quite dark overall. It had a medium green color on the upperparts (crown, back, and rump), and it was a darker iridescent green on the head. There was a short white postocular stripe and there was also a short white malar spot or line. The white marks were different on each side of the face. The lores, throat, and upper breast were a deep indigo blue that was hard to see (i.e., looked black) in poor light. The breast was dark green and a bit mottled (with white and gray); the sides of the breast were a duller green. The belly and undertail coverts were white. The wings and tail were black, but a deep blue sheen could be seen on the tail in strong light. The bird had a white feather tuft in the shoulder region. We saw no white on the tail, which was slightly forked. The bill was slightly decurved and somewhat typical in length for a hummingbird. However, much of the bill was red or scarlet in color, with about the distal half being brown or blackish. The color was somewhat different on the left versus the right side of the bird. When seen from below, the bill was indeed broad, compared with most other hummingbird species of similar size. Irvin and I consider that the bird was not a mature male because of the mottling of the green underparts and the presence of some white on the face in the region of the malar and the supercilium.

The bird had a quick “di-dit” call that sounded quite a bit like that of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*). The call was a bit softer or higher in pitch than that of the kinglet, but both Irvin and I as well as Ms. Parker noted this similarity to a kinglet call note.

The hummingbird was last seen on the following day (12 October). Jeff Pippen and Will Cook briefly observed the bird just before it seemingly disappeared from the neighborhood.

No other hummingbird occurring in the United States is really similar in plumage to the Broad-billed, though the male White-eared Hummingbird (*Hylocharis leucotis*) is remotely similar. It has a noticeably short red-and-black bill and much more strongly marked and wider white eye stripe; it is also much smaller than a Broad-billed in size. The Buff-bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia yucatanensis*) has a medium-length red bill with a black tip but has a rusty tail and buff belly, and lacks blue on the head (though the throat can appear bluish to some inexperienced observers).

Broad-billed Hummingbird breeds in the United States only in southeastern Arizona and adjacent New Mexico, ranging south to central Mexico. It is strongly migratory, generally departing the United States in the fall and winter. This is the first record of the Broad-billed Hummingbird for North Carolina. The record was accepted by the NC Bird Records Committee (LeGrand et al. 2002), and because the Committee accepted photographs taken by Shultz and Irvin, the species was placed directly onto the Official List. Since that publication, a second record of Broad-billed Hummingbird—from Colington, Dare County, in July 2005—was accepted by the Committee (LeGrand et al. 2006). There is a single report from South Carolina—"One sight report: 30 July 1985, Seneca (details on file)" (Post and Gauthreaux 1989).

Literature cited

- LeGrand, H. E., Jr., K. E. Camburn, S. Cooper, R. J. Davis, E. V. Dean, W. K. Forsythe, and R. L. Tyndall. 2006. 2005 Annual report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee. *Chat* 70:8–13.
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- Post, W., and S. A. Gauthreaux, Jr. 1989. Status and distribution of South Carolina Birds. Contributions from The Charleston Museum, XVIII.