

## General Field Notes

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*General Field Notes* briefly report such items as rare sightings, unusual behaviors, significant nesting records, or summaries of such items.

First, second, or third sightings of species in either state must be submitted to the appropriate Bird Records Committee prior to publication in *The Chat*.

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### **Recovery of a Banded Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* in South Carolina: First Documentation of Its Occurrence in the State**

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#### **Introduction**

The Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) is on the Provisional I list of South Carolina. One detailed account of its occurrence has been published. The species is a sporadic winter visitor to the Carolinas and Georgia, rare in the mountains and piedmont and very rare on the coastal plain. We report the first physical evidence of the species' occurrence in South Carolina and review reports from neighboring regions.

#### **Results**

A dead Northern Goshawk was found on Kiawah Island, Charleston County, SC on 28 December 2004. It had no apparent injuries, and had fresh plumage. (Fig. 1). The hawk, a hatching-year female, had been banded by J. J. Zardus on 7 November 2004 at Berlinsville, Pennsylvania, about 1000 km NE of Kiawah Island

The details of its recovery are as follows. In an e-mail dated 21 July 2006, Shea transmitted this information to Post: "Got a report from Leila Macintosh of the KICA [Kiawah Island Community Association] horticulture crew about a dead hawk or osprey on Broomsedge Lane passed on to her by a PO. A subsequent report identified the area as Marsh Hawk Lane and we found the hawk lying dead in the road. It was examined and no apparent cause of death could be determined. The bird appeared to have been in good health, did not look malnourished, and had no injuries. It had an Avise Bird Band, #987-64207 from Washington, DC on it. It was reported to

the International Center for Birds of Prey and they said they would have someone come and pick it up. Tom Murphy was called as well.”



Figures 1 and 2. Immature female Northern Goshawk found dead on 28 December 2004, Kiawah Island, South Carolina; photograph by Norm Shea.

Additional correspondence was received from Ricky Davis who had initially published the report (*American Birds* 60: 54–57, 2006). In an e-mail to Post, dated 8 July 2006, Davis said “The N. Goshawk found on Kiawah Is SC 12-28-04 had AVISE # 987-64207. The bird was supposedly sent to the International Center for Birds of Prey in Awendaw SC for a toxicology run up. A Mr. Norm Shea had corresponded with Kathy Klimkiewicz at Patuxent about it. I am also attaching a picture Norm sent me.” (The hawk, however, was not received at the birds of prey center; Susan Bogart, pers. comm.).

## Discussion

Under his account of the Cooper’s Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), Wayne (1910) stated that Robert Wilson told him about a goshawk that he had seen near Bull’s Bay (Charleston County) on 3 November 1905. Wayne (1910) apparently considered this to be a spurious report. Although he mentioned it in his account of the Cooper’s Hawk, he did not include the species on his hypothetical list. Later, however, based on Wayne (1910), Sprunt and Chamberlain (1949) put the species on the South Carolina hypothetical list. Post and Gauthreaux (1989) kept the species on the hypothetical list. McNair and Post (1993) elevated it to Provisional I status, based on a 1973 sighting of a bird at McBee (Chesterfield Co.) on 21–23 November 1973 (Haas 1976).

Since 1973, experienced observers have sighted the species in South Carolina three other times, although details have not yet been published.

1) One was seen during a hawk watch on Caesar's Head (Greenville County), 9 October 1995 by B. Merrick and R. Phillips (Worthington et al. 1997).

2) One was reported from Simpsonville (Greenville County) on 20 September 2000 by P. Worthington (Davis 2001). This same hawk may have been the adult spotted by Haven Wiley on 26 September 2000 on Whiteside Mountain, NC (carolinabirds email list, 11 October 2000).

3) An adult female was seen on 2 January 2001 on Kiawah Island by Roger Taylor, an experienced Canadian observer who had seen many goshawks and who provided thorough details (on file, Charleston Museum).

As expected, there have been many sightings in North Carolina; for example, through 2004, Avendex (Redshank Software 2006) lists 46 sightings (19 from the mountains, 10 from the piedmont, 4 on the coastal plain and 13 from the tidewater zone). Knight (1990) reviewed reports of the species in Tennessee and North Carolina and tallied a total of 81 sightings (31 for NC) through 1988. Some of the North Carolina sightings were made by experienced observers, although only a few have been accompanied by details (Knight 1990); e.g., Tove (1977) and Bolen and Flores (1992). The species' occurrence in North Carolina has been documented by material evidence once. A bird was found wounded at Denver (Lincoln County), NC on 10 Jan 1992. The hawk was taken to the Carolina Raptor Center for rehabilitation (*vide* T. Piephoff *in* LeGrand 1993). The bird was photographed before release, and the photos have been deposited at the NC Museum of Natural History (*vide* John Gerwin).

Georgia had four acceptable reports as of 2003 (Beaton et al. 2003). The first record was made on 23 January 1983 from Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery, of an injured bird taken to a veterinarian (Fulton 1983). Photographs were taken of the bird, but they do not allow positive identification (Cohrs 1984). The hawk occurred a second time in Georgia on 23 January 1983, when an injured adult male was found near Athens. Cohrs (1984) published a photograph of the bird.

In conclusion, although the Northern Goshawk has been seen many times in the Carolinas and Georgia, only three confirmed reports (specimens or photographs) are now available for these states. On several occasions, injured or dead goshawks have been taken to rehabilitation centers, but it is not known if they were rehabilitated or died. It would be useful if rehabilitators or raptor centers, as part of their educational mission, saved specimens of unusual birds, or at least documented their occurrence with photographs.

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