

## 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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### **A Specimen of the Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) from South Carolina: Southernmost Atlantic Coast Occurrence Since Late Pleistocene**

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#### **Introduction**

Here we report the capture of a Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) on the coast of South Carolina in May 2006. Based on one previous report of a sighting, the Common Murre was previously on the Provisional I list of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee. The species may now be added to the definitive list of South Carolina birds. This record represents the southernmost documented occurrence of the species on the Atlantic coast of North America.

#### **Results**

On 2 May 2006, an unknown individual found a Common Murre stranded on the beach at Folly Island (Charleston County), South Carolina. The bird was given to Bogart for rehabilitation. She confined the bird in a wading pool filled with sea water (Fig. 1). The murre quickly acclimated and readily fed on live minnows. After 3 wk, Bogart released the bird near the point of capture on the beach, but within 1 h, it returned to land. The murre was confined for an additional 2 wk, during which time it continued to feed and appeared healthy. Bogart again attempted to release the bird at the same location. Again the murre left the water, and was captured and returned to captivity. Although it continued to act normally, it was found dead in the pool on 13 June.

Apparently, the bird was unable to fly or dive because it had a dislocated left shoulder. It also had a hematoma on the surface of its skull. The murre was preserved as a study skin (WP 930; ChM 2006.16.050). It was an adult

female (ovaries: 24.5 X 9.0 mm; diameter of oviduct: 3.6 mm; diameter of largest follicle: 2.2 mm) in clean and unworn basic plumage, with no evidence of molt. It weighed 670 g, much less than the normal female winter weight of  $1000 \pm 35$  g ( $n=5$ ; Ainsley *et al.* 2002). Other measurements were: length of flat wing: 21.2 cm; wing span: 74.5 cm; total length: 44.5 cm; culmen (from nares): length: 35.2 mm; depth: 14.3 mm; width: 8.9 mm. The salt gland measured 21.4 X 26.8 mm. We did not see any external or internal parasites.



Figure 1. Common Murre in wading pool. Photo by Susan Bogart.

## **Discussion**

We know of two previous reports of the Common Murre in South Carolina:

1) One seen at Huntington Beach (Georgetown County), 17 Jan 1995 by D. Forsythe (South Carolina Bird Records Committee No.1-95-02) was supported by extensive details, and is considered valid (Chat 60: 142, 1996).

2) One seen at Litchfield Beach (Georgetown County) 6–7 March 1996 (B. and B. Maxwell, J. Peachey *in* Davis 1996). We can find no further information about this sighting.

Fossil remains of the Common Murre have been found in a late Pleistocene archeological site in Florida (Brodkorb 1960). The present record appears to be the southernmost post-Pleistocene occurrence of the Common Murre on the Atlantic coast of North America. Up to 1998, the southernmost report of this species was from Back Bay, Virginia (Ainsley *et al.* 2002, AOU 1998). Since then, North Carolina has had one verified record, of a bird photographed 2 February 2001 at Cape Hatteras Point (Dare County; photograph in Dole 2002). It has not been recorded from Georgia. It is on the hypothetical list of Florida (Stevenson and Anderson 1994), based

on a specimen found but discarded at Fort Pierce (St. Lucie County), 28 Dec 1971 (Stevenson 1972).

### **Literature Cited**

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