

2007 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

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This report enumerates the decisions of the Carolina Bird Club's North Carolina Bird Records Committee during 2007. There were no changes to the membership of the committee during the year. 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 N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences.

Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*) (07-14). Over the winter of 2006–07, two or three were seen at the Pungo unit of Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Washington County by Derb Carter, Ricky Davis, and other observers. The committee accepted photos taken by Ricky Davis and Curtis Dykstra, a month apart, and considered these as a single record. This is the fourth accepted state record, several with photos; thus, the species is already on the Official List. Several other reports are available for review.

Mottled Duck (*Anas fulvigula*) (07-17). A pair was present at a lake in Sunset Beach, Brunswick County, for most of October and November 2007. The male of the pair was first seen and identified by Randy Climpson, and many other birders saw both ducks later in the fall. The committee accepted photos taken by John Ennis, Ricky Davis, and David Lenat, and written descriptions provided by Climpson. The committee also “accepted as valid” the origin of the birds, which might be from the established and “countable” breeding population in coastal South Carolina. This represents the second accepted record for the species in North Carolina; as the previous record was also of a photographed pair of birds, the species is already on the Official List.

Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) (07-11). A male was seen at Lake Brandt in Guilford County on 18 February 2007 by Henry Link and others, and it remained for about a week. The committee accepted photos taken by Lou Skrabec and Melissa Whitmire. This is the first state record away from tidal waters; the species is already on the Official List, with many coastal records.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*) (07-03). Ricky Davis observed one in breeding plumage on Lake Tahoma, McDowell County, on 6 May 2007, but only one or two other observers were able to see the bird, on 6–7 May. The committee accepted written details provided by Davis. Though there are many records from the immediate coast (essentially all from the inshore ocean and observed from land), this is the first inland state record.

European Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*) (07-13). One was observed by Brian Patteson, Steve Howell, and many other birders on a pelagic trip off Hatteras, Dare County, on 28 May 2007. The committee accepted two photos taken by Howell. This is the third accepted state record, though a handful of other reports have been made offshore in the past few years. The species is already on the Official List, as one of the previously accepted records was of a photographed individual.

Black-bellied Storm-Petrel (*Fregetta tropica*) (07-10). One was seen on a pelagic trip off Hatteras on 23 June 2007. Many people observed the bird, including Brian Patteson, the trip leader. The committee accepted photos taken by Harold Stiver. Remarkably, this is the third record of the species for the state, each of which has been documented by photos, and thus the species is already on the Official List.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) (07-08). An immature, in intermediate to dark phase, was seen by Harry LeGrand on 17 December 2006 at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in Dare County. It remained for the entire winter and was seen by several dozen birders. The committee accepted a written description by LeGrand and photos taken by Ricky Davis and David Lenat. This is at least the tenth state record, and the species is already on the Official List. However, this represents the first record of a member of the species spending the winter in North Carolina and probably one of the few such records north of Florida.

Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) (07-04). One was first observed by Robin Wood at Wrightsville Beach on 7 April 2007, and it remained for several days. The committee accepted photos taken by Walker Golder and John Ennis. This is the third state record, all from the coast in spring; as the second record was documented by photographs, the species is already on the Official List.

Buff-bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia yucatanensis*) (07-15). A male was seen by Dick Barmore and Elizabeth White at their feeders near Arapahoe, Pamlico County, on 21 October 2007. It was seen by a number of other observers over the next two days. The committee accepted photos and a written description provided by Barmore. This is the first record of the species for the state, and acceptance of the photos places the species directly onto the Official List.

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) (07-01). One was found near Goldsboro, Wayne County, on 9 January 2007 by Mary Bridges, and dozens of birders saw the flycatcher for the remainder of the winter. The committee accepted photos provided by John Ennis, Kent Fiala, Michael McCloy, Jeff Pippen,

and Harry Sell. The species is already on the Official List, and this is now the fifth accepted state record.

Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) (07-02). Allen Bryan discovered a female near Bettie in Carteret County on 17 December 2006, and many people observed it until at least 4 February (Chat 71:46). The committee accepted photos taken by Harry Sell. This becomes the fourth accepted state record; the species is already on the Official List.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) (07-12). One was seen on 7 January 2007 at North River Farms in Carteret County by John Fussell and others. The committee accepted photos taken by Jeff Lewis. There are now about a dozen state records; thus, the species is already on the Official List.

Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*) (07-16). John Fussell observed an individual, and later heard it singing in response to tapes, in eastern Carteret County on 4 November 2007. The vireo was seen by a handful of other birders over the next few days; and the committee accepted photos taken by Ricky Davis, Jeff Pippen, and John Dole, as well as a written description provided by Harry LeGrand. This is the third accepted state record; because a record with photos was accepted in 2006, the species is already on the Official List.

"Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata auduboni*) (07-06). One male in breeding plumage was observed by Floyd Williams at Merchants Millpond State Park in Gates County on 21 April 2007. The committee accepted his written description. The Avendex database lists seven previous records of this subspecies (plus one obviously erroneous one). However, this appears to be the first report of the subspecies to be reviewed by the committee. Because the "Audubon's" Warbler was formerly considered as a separate species from the common eastern "Myrtle" Warbler, because the subspecies are distinguishable in the field, and as the two taxa might again be split into separate species in the future, the committee deems it important to review reports of "Audubon's" Warbler.

"Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler (07-07). One bird, considered to be a female, appeared in Judy Murray's yard in Chapel Hill in January 2005, and what is assumed to be the same individual appeared in her yard during the following winter. The committee decided to consider the two sightings to represent a single record, and it accepted photos taken of the bird by Will Cook on 18 January 2005 and 4 March 2006. This might be the first photographic documentation of the subspecies in North Carolina.

Unaccepted Sighting

The bird is judged to be a species other than that reported, or the bird is insufficiently documented to identification of the species reported.

American Three-toed Woodpecker (07-09) (*Picooides dorsalis*). One was described on a Rare Bird Sighting Report form from a piedmont county in July 2007. There are no state records for this boreal species, and it would only be expected in the middle of winter. The committee unanimously failed

to accept the report, which most likely referred to an oddly-pigmented Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*).

Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*) (07-05). One reported from Montgomery County in May 2007 was not accepted. There were no photos to accompany the written description. As the species is essentially extirpated as a breeding species from the Carolinas (i.e., the mountain region), and is now a very rare stray, a report of a Bewick's Wren in late spring in the eastern piedmont almost surely represents a misidentified Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*).

Bahama Mockingbird (*Mimus gundlachii*) (07-18). A written report of an adult, from Guilford County in August 2007, was not accepted. The report was almost certainly that of a Northern Mockingbird (*M. polyglottos*). There are no state records for this essentially non-migratory species of the West Indies; all records from the United States through 2001 are from Florida (American Birding Association 2002).

Discussion

The review of reports by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee for 2007 resulted in adding one species to the state's Accepted List; Buff-bellied Hummingbird is added to the Official List. Two species were reported/accepted on inland waters for the first time: Harlequin Duck and Pacific Loon. The current Official List is now 452 species, and the Provisional List is 14 species, for a total of 466 species on the state's Accepted List.

Acknowledgments

In addition to the many people named above who provided written material and photographs for the committee to review, we thank Kent Fiala—webmaster of the Carolina Bird Club—for placing a number of the photographs on the club's website for committee review and sending electronic submissions of Rare Bird Report forms to the committee chair.

Literature Cited

American Birding Association. 2002. ABA checklist: Birds of the continental United States and Canada; Sixth edition. American Birding Association.