

# 2012 Annual Report of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee

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**Irvin Pitts<sup>1</sup>, Giff Beaton, Lex Glover, Chris Hill,  
J.B. Hines III, Will Post, Steve Wagner**

*<sup>1</sup> 221 Mooring Lane, Lexington, South Carolina 29072*

In 2012, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee (SCBRC) took action on 17 records of which 14 were accepted, two rejected and one recommended for outside review. The decisions on two other reports initially reviewed in 2011 are also still pending outside review. Additionally, the committee received four other reports that were not circulated because of their non-review status. South Carolina's Main Species List continues to stand at 427 species. The most recent version is available online at <http://carolinabirdclub.org/brc>.

In 2012, the committee membership remained unchanged with the committee still consisting of seven people, with Irvin Pitts serving as Chair. The following report details actions taken by the SCBRC in 2012.

## **Accepted Reports:**

**Iceland Gull** (12-09-08, 02-11-11, 12-11-12 and 12-03-13). A compilation of reports, one dating back to 2003, along with photographs, were submitted by Chris Hill. All were accepted with the reporting member abstaining. These reports document an apparent continuing trend in recent years of this species' occurrence at the Horry County landfill near Conway. The Iceland Gull was added to the State's Definitive List in 1985 based on a record from 14 January 1985 (Post and Belser 1985). Acceptance of the 2012 reports brings to seven the number of records accepted by the SCBRC, which includes observations of birds from Huntington Beach State Park, Georgetown County in January 1998 and February 2000, and a bird on 25 February 2005 at the Savannah River Spoil Area in Jasper County.

**Northern Goshawk** (01-12-01). A report with accompanying photographs of a bird observed by Irvin Pitts and photographed by Nathan Dias during a Christmas Bird Count at the Savannah River Spoil Area on 2 January 2012 was accepted, with the reporting member abstaining. The SCBRC first added Northern Goshawk to the State's Provisional List on the basis of an accepted sight record from Caesars Head State Park in Greenville County on 9 October 1995. The species was added to the Definitive List after a dead immature bird was discovered and photographed on Kiawah Island, Charleston County in late December 2004 (Post and Shea 2007). The 2012 report constitutes the third accepted record of this species including the first known photographs of a free-flying bird in our state.

**Western Tanager** (01-12-02). This report, with photos of a bird discovered by Phil Turner at his home near Myrtle Beach, Horry County on 23 and 24 of January 2012, was unanimously accepted. The Western Tanager occurs as a very rare but regularly occurring winter visitor to South Carolina. Since 1987, there have been a number of reports of this species in winter including at least four with substantiating details. This species was first placed on the State's Definitive List in 1993 based on an accepted sighting of a bird (SCBRC: 1-92-2) in the Goose Creek area. The 2012 record represents the third report reviewed and accepted by the SCBRC.

**Snowy Owl** (02-12-03). A report of a Snowy Owl discovered in January 2012 at a farm located about 10 miles southeast of Camden, Kershaw County was submitted by Austin Jenkins and unanimously accepted. The bird was photographed alive on 17 January but unfortunately died shortly thereafter. Apparently, this record documents the first known report of this species in South Carolina in 25 years. Although a number of records of this owl exist historically, only two other reports have been deemed credible since 1956 (McNair and Post 1993). These include a specimen of an immature male collected near Whitmire, Newberry County in November, 1981 and another observed in Richland County from 18 November through 26 November 1987 (Glover and Cely 1987).

**Hudsonian Godwit** (02-12-04). A report of a bird found at Bear Island Wildlife Management Area in Colleton County by Jeff Click and members of the Greenville County Bird Club on 24 February 2012 was unanimously accepted. This bird was also seen and photographed by a number of different observers for the next several days. Post and Gauthreaux (1989) cites five records of this species dating back to 1941 and it was first added to the Definitive List in 1986, based on a bird that was present at Huntington Beach State Park from 31 October to 12 November 1985 (Post 1986). Since, there have been four additional documented reports, including two reviewed and accepted by the SCBRC: a bird at Huntington Beach State Park from 11 November through 7 December 1991 (SCBRC: 11-19-1) and another at the Savannah River Spoils Area in May 2003 (SCBRC: 05-03-07).

**Fork-tailed Flycatcher** (04-12-07). A report with excellent photos was received by Connie Kogler of a Fork-tailed Flycatcher discovered on 3 April 2012 at Edisto Island, Charleston County. The report was unanimously accepted. This represents only the second accepted record of this species in South Carolina, with the only other known record being a bird observed and photographed on 1 November 1973 at Bull's Island (Dick 1974).

**Arctic Tern** (06-12-12). A detailed report of an Arctic Tern, being the third in consecutive years, was submitted by Mike Bernard and pertained to a bird he saw over open ocean offshore Charleston Harbor on 2 June 2012. This report was unanimously accepted and constitutes the fifth record of this species. The Arctic Tern was first added to the State's Provisional List based on a report submitted by Steve Patterson of a bird sighted offshore Charleston (SCBRC: 5-92-3). The SCBRC elevated this species to the Definitive List through acceptance of a video obtained from Jack Peachey of

a bird offshore Murrell's Inlet in May 2004 (SCBRC: 05-04-05). Other accepted records include a specimen salvaged from Debidue Beach, Georgetown County in May 2009, which was well documented and photographed (Hill and Allen 2010), and two birds seen and photographed by Wendy and Dennis Allen on 16 May 2010 nine miles southeast of Winyah Bay (SCBRC: 05-10-03).

**Brown Booby** (06-12-13). An immature Brown Booby was first observed and reported by Brittany Hoffangle at Huntington Beach State Park, Georgetown County, on 8 June 2012 and documented by Ritch Lilly who photographed the bird on 9 June. This bird was seen and photographed by a number of other observers until 14 June when it was last seen by Lex Glover and others. A juvenile Brown Booby, which was deemed to probably be the same bird, was found and photographed by Betsy Brabson on the beach of North Island, Georgetown County on 25 June and reported by Wendy Allen to Chris Hill. These reports and photographs including those taken by Jeff Lemons on 10 June were unanimously accepted. This record constitutes only the second verified record of this species in the state.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** (08-12-14). This species now occurs regularly in the state during the summer months, particularly in the lower Piedmont region. There have been at least two documented successful breeding records since 1982. Yet, this species occurrence is still considered noteworthy and the SCBRC continues to accept reports for review. A sighting report submitted by Peter Martin documented an immature bird he observed near the Catawba River in Rock Hill, York County on 19 August 2012. The report was unanimously accepted.

**Mourning Warbler** (09-12-15). Chris Snook submitted a detailed sighting report of a bird he captured and banded on 10 September 2012 at the Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve on Folly Island, Charleston County. The report was unanimously accepted. This wood warbler occurs as a very rare migrant, with all known reports being in the fall. Post and Gauthreaux (1989) cites two acceptable records: a bird found near Kingstree, Williamsburg County on 30 October 1968 and one near Clemson on 4 October 1975, when it was first added to the State's Definitive List. Other existing reports include a record from James Island, Charleston County on 1 October 1990 (Charleston Museum 1991.37.08) and one banded by Lex Glover near Mayesville in Sumter County on 2 September 1991. The SCBRC also accepted three sighting reports from the upper Piedmont in September and October 1995.

**Black-chinned Hummingbird** (11-12-16). A report with photos submitted by Tammy Hester of a bird found in a yard at Lady's Island in Beaufort County on 10 November 2012 was unanimously accepted. This record constitutes the fourth reported occurrence of this species in South Carolina and the earliest reported fall arrival date. The SCBRC first added this species to the State's Definitive List in 1996 based on submitted photographs and videos of an immature male at a feeder in Lexington County during the winter of 1995 into March of 1996. Other accepted

records include an adult female (SCBRC: 01-99-2) found on James Island, Charleston County, from late January through early February, 1999 and a banded male (SCBRC: 02-03-01) visiting a feeder on Edisto Island, Charleston County, in January and February, 2003.

### **Non-accepted Reports:**

**Great Skua** (02-11-03). A report of two Great Skuas sighted from shore at Huntington Beach State Park, Georgetown County, was submitted for outside review as required by committee rules. Reviewer comments along with the original sighting report were circulated for a second vote and the report was not accepted. There have been no other previously accepted records of this species in South Carolina.

**Black Phoebe** (05-12-10). A report submitted of a bird sighted near the coast was not accepted due to the lack of substantiating details in the report. There have been no previously accepted records of this bird in South Carolina.

### **Unresolved Reports:**

The following three reports were submitted for outside review. The decision to circulate these reports to outside reviewers was made based on committee rules that dictate procedures resulting from close vote tallies. Further action by the committee will be taken on these records once outside comments are received and re-circulated to the committee members for a second vote.

**White-faced Ibis** (04-12-08). A report and photograph of a bird found near the coast is to be submitted for outside review as required by committee rules. If accepted, this report would constitute a first record of this species in South Carolina.

**Burrowing Owl** (07-10-08). This report and photograph of a bird found near the coast was initially submitted in 2011, but is still waiting outside review.

**Western Grebe** (02-11-05). A report of two birds found near the coast was initially submitted in 2011 and is still waiting outside review. Previously, the SCBRC has accepted one other record of this species in South Carolina.

### **Literature Cited:**

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- Hill, C.E., T. Marshall and W.B. Allen. 2010. First specimen of Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) for South Carolina. *Chat* 74:40-43;
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