

General Field Notes

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.

Third Record of Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) in North Carolina

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After birding sections of the Caswell Game Land the morning of 24 February 2013, I thought I'd drive along NC Highway 57 through Person County, NC, and look for a Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*) reported in the area the day before. After not seeing any flocks of geese in the fields along the highway, I turned around and headed north to Concord Church Road towards home. Just after I turned west onto Concord Church Road, I noticed about 100 Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) near a small pond on the north side of the road. I found a place to turn around, went back and parked on the south shoulder of the road, rolled my window down and started picking through the geese. After a couple of minutes, I got out of my car for better views.

At approximately 11:10 a.m., while scanning with my 10x50 binoculars, I saw something green move in the corn stubble field closest to me. When I first saw the bird, it was approximately 50 meters north of my position. I hadn't immediately seen it because it was foraging in a furrow. It was much larger than the nearby Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) and darker in color. When it moved, I could see the green on its back (Fig.1), and I was able to identify it as a Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*). I never got a good look at the crest due to my angle of view, strong sunlight, and the corn stubble in the background. In flight the bird was amazing -- broad, dark green upper wing surfaces with a little white at the front of the unusually rounded wingtips (Fig. 2).



Figure 1. Northern Lapwing (back), 24 February 2013, Person County, NC.
Photo by Kent Fiala.



Figure 2. Northern Lapwing (underwing), 24 February 2013, in Person County, NC.
Photo by Kent Fiala.

I had seen many photographs of the Northern Lapwings reported along the East Coast this winter so I was confident in the identification. At that point I got my camera rig out of the car to get some photographic proof of the sighting. I made the mistake of crossing the road to the north side to get closer. After a few photos, the Lapwing flew to the bottom of the field approximately 200 meters away. I watched it for another 15 minutes and took some distant photos. At approximately 11:30, a noisy group of Killdeer flew over the Lapwing, heading north. The Lapwing took flight and followed them out of my sight. I immediately made the one-hour drive home and reported the bird on the carolinabirds listserve and on eBird. Fortunately, the bird was relocated and seen by many others, daily until 9 March.

According to eBird data and reports from various rare bird alerts, there were an unusual number of Northern Lapwing records in the eastern US during 2013, ranging from Maine as far south as Georgia. This Eurasian shorebird was first recorded in the North Carolina Piedmont province at Siler City in Chatham County, where collected on 12 November 1926 (Pearson et al., 1942). The second state record was one photographed near the coast at Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge in Currituck County on 23 December 2004 (Davis 2005; LeGrand et al., 2005). This is the third record for the state.

Literature Cited

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