

## 2014 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

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The make-up of the 2014 North Carolina Bird Records Committee saw no changes in membership from 2013.

**Accepted as Valid.** The following reports were judged to be acceptable.

**Band-tailed Pigeon** (*Patagioenas fasciata*) (14-01). The North Carolina Bird Records Committee (NCBRC) unanimously accepted a written report with photographs supplied by Rangel Diaz of a single bird that was present for several weeks at a feeder in Manteo (*Dare*), seen and photographed by scores of birders. The species is already on the Definitive List based on an accepted report from the mountains and an accepted photographically documented report from the Piedmont (LeGrand et al. 2014). With this report, the species has been accepted from all three geographic regions of the state.

**Magnificent Frigatebird** (*Fregata magnificens*) (14-02). An inland Piedmont report from 2 September 2012 with photographs of this species from Durham County from Josh Sims was reviewed and unanimously accepted. Though the photographs and written report could not conclusively rule out other *Fregata* species, the NCBRC accepted the report to species as submitted. The NCBRC felt the odds of the bird being anything other than *F. magnificens* were long enough to allow for acceptance to that species. The species is on the Definitive List based on numerous reviewed records from the coast. This is the second accepted record of this species away from the coastal region (LeGrand et al. 2014).

**Allen's Hummingbird** (*Selasphorus sasin*) (14-03). A second-year male of this species was captured and banded 11 January 2014 at a residence in Oriental (*Pamlico*). The NCBRC reviewed a written report along with in-hand diagnostic photographs from Susan Campbell. The report was unanimously accepted. The species is already on the Definitive List based on accepted records with photos of birds from Manteo (*Dare*) and Catawba County (LeGrand et al. 2014).

**Yellow-nosed Albatross** (*Thalassarche chlororhynchos*) (14-04). An immature / sub-adult bird of this species was seen four miles offshore of Avon (*Dare*) on 22 February 2014. The NCBRC unanimously accepted a written report and photographs by Jeff Pippen. The species is already on the Definitive

List based on three previously accepted records with photographs, all from Dare County (LeGrand et al. 2014)

**White-faced Ibis** (*Plegadis chihi*) (14-05). Paul Guris photographed and provided written details on five individuals seen at Lake Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge (*Hyde*) on 10 March 2014. The NCBRC unanimously accepted the report. The species is already on the Definitive List with three previous records from two coastal counties (LeGrand et al. 2014).

**Mottled Duck** (*Anas fulvigula*) (14-07). An individual of this species was present at the Fort Fisher Aquarium (*New Hanover*) from 12 October to 18 October 2013. The NCBRC unanimously accepted photographs from Sam Cooper (12 October) and Bruce Smithson (17 October). The species is on the Definitive List by virtue of numerous records from four coastal counties and one record from the Piedmont (LeGrand et al. 2014).

**Cory's Shearwater (Scopoli's)** (*Calonectris diomedea diomedea*) (14-08). The NCBRC reviewed an account of this recognized sub-species by Mike Tove, with photos by Nate Swick, Steve Howell, Ryan O'Donnell, and Douglas Koch; all of which were taken in offshore North Carolina waters. The NCBRC unanimously accepted all the photos as depicting *C. d. diomedea*. The NCBRC recognizes the need to review reports of recognized subspecies' where elevation to full status by the A.O.U. is likely or imminent. By acknowledgment of the occurrence of *C. d. diomedea* in North Carolina, the NCBRC places the subspecies on the Definitive Subspecies List.

**Whimbrel (Eurasian)** (*Numenius phaeopus phaeopus/alboaxillaris*) (14-09). The NCBRC reviewed and unanimously accepted photographs of an individual from the European subspecies' group in flight, taken between Avon and Buxton (*Dare*) 6 April 2011 by Eric Frey. There are a handful of reports from the coast of this form but none have been reviewed by the NCBRC until now (LeGrand et al. 2014). Since a definitive subspecies was unable to be discerned from the photos, the NCBRC presumes the record *N. p. phaeopus* based on geographic probability. As in (14-08), the NCBRC feels this form is in line for species elevation by the A.O.U. and thus places presumed *N. p. phaeopus* on the Definitive Subspecies List.

**Black-bellied Whistling Duck** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) (14-12). The NCBRC reviewed a written report by Mike Dorcas and photos by Dorcas and Doran Smith, and an opinion from Jennifer Gordon, a local waterfowl rehabber, of three birds that appeared 18 June, 2014 and lingered a few days at a residential pond in Indian Trail (*Union*). The NCBRC voted 8 AV (Accept as Valid) and 1 QO (Questionable Origin) to accept the photos. Those voting AV felt the birds' occurrence fit the pattern of date and behavior for natural occurrences of this species in the state. Though this species is already

on the Definitive List, this is the first accepted record from the Piedmont region, adding to multiple records from the coast and a mountain record from *Henderson* 10 June, 2013 (LeGrand et al. 2014).

**Townsend's Warbler** (*Setophaga townsendi*) (14-16). The NCBRC unanimously accepted photos taken by Todd Arcos of an immature bird at Richland Balsam (*Jackson*) on 13 September, 2014. This represents the third accepted record for the state, following two accepted records from the coast; a bird photographed on the Outer Banks in November 1992 (*Dare*), and a bird salvaged as a specimen from an offshore vessel in 1999 (LeGrand et al. 2014). The species is already on the Definitive List.

**Common Ringed Plover** (*Charadrius hiaticula*) (14-17). A remarkable report of an alternate plumaged adult seen 15 May, 2014 at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal (*Carteret*) was received from Laetitia Desbordes. The report included an excellent written description in addition to remarkable photographs which featured close-ups of the spread toes on the foraging bird. Both were unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. As this is the first record of this species from the state and is documented with definitive photos, the species is added to the Definitive List.

**Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)** (*Junco hyemalis oregonus* Group) (14-18). The NCBRC unanimously (8 AV) accepted photographs supplied by Jessie Dale of an adult male of the "Oregon Group" of dark-eyed junco at a feeder in Linville (*Avery*) on 2 November, 2014. Though there are multiple records of this group from across the state (LeGrand et al. 2014), this is the second report reviewed and accepted by the NCBRC. The Oregon Group is on the Definitive Subspecies list.

**Whooping Crane** (*Grus americana*) (14-19). By virtue of a newly created acceptance category for bird records, NE (Not Established), the NCBRC reviewed photos of three birds by Kent Fiala and Steve Shultz from the eastern portion of the state (*Jones*) from January 2005. The NCBRC also reviewed emails from the US Fish and Wildlife Service confirming the birds were part of a federally sanctioned re-introduction program. The Chair received votes from eight members of the NCBRC, all of whom voted NE (Not Established). The species is therefore placed on the Not Established List.

**Not Accepted.** The following report was judged to be unacceptable by a majority of NCBRC members.

**Heermann's Gull** (*Larus heermanni*) (14-15). A written report of a second winter bird seen in August 2014 in coastal Brunswick County of this species was reviewed by the NCBRC. One member voted AV (Accept as Valid),

six voted ID (Inadequately Documented), and two voted US (Unacceptable Sighting); resulting in an unaccepted report. While even several voting “not to accept” felt the report was indeed compelling, they felt the written description failed to eliminate juvenile Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) which is numerous on area beaches in August. Others felt the written description fell short of the desired level of documentation to result in a first state record.

The NCBRC also reviewed reports of three additional species which received no AV (Accept as Valid) votes. It is the policy of the NCBRC to not publish details, including the reported name, of any species which received no acceptance votes. The NCBRC feels that exercise serves no useful purpose while putting the name of a species in print where it may be indexed in *The Chat*. A list of all the species reviewed can be seen at <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/brc/NC/reports.html>. Finally, the NCBRC received three reports of commonly occurring species that are not on the Review List, and one report that was subsequently withdrawn due to a change in identification by the reporter.

## **Summary**

With this round of voting, Common Ringed Plover is added to the Definitive List, Whooping Crane is added to the Not Established List, (Eurasian) Whimbrel and Cory’s (Scopoli’s) Shearwater are added to the Definitive Subspecies List. The total number of species from North Carolina is now 476 on the Accepted List of which 461 are Definitive (net gain of one species, not including subspecies), two are considered Not Established (gain of one species), and 13 are Provisional.

## **Literature Cited**

LeGrand, H., J. Haire, A. Iyoob, and T. Howard. 2014. Birds of North Carolina: their Distribution and Abundance. <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/ncbirds/accounts.php>