

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*.

First Record of Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) in North Carolina

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On 15 May 2014, Desbordes and Vincent Gaillard were birding near the ferry terminal at Cedar Island, Carteret County, NC. Around 1700, they observed a breeding-plumaged Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) feeding on the beach next to several Semipalmated Plovers (*C. semipalmatus*), though still keeping a distance from them and not mingling with them as shown in Figure 1.

The Common Ringed Plover was slightly larger with a heavy head and with a large white front extending to the eye (Figure 2). The clearly contrasting facial pattern with deep black cheeks, a large white supercilium, broad black lores, and a long bill with extensive orange base and small black tip (less than half of the bill) were used to separate this bird from Semipalmated Plover. Photo examination of the toes showed virtually no webbing, a crucial separation mark from the Semipalmated Plover, which has partial webbing between the front three toes (Figure 3, especially the inset photo).

Desbordes and Gaillard watched the plovers for about an hour, at distances as close as 20 meters. Although the weather was cloudy, the light and viewing conditions were very good. Despite the long viewing time, they heard no vocalization from the Common Ringed Plover. They were not able to obtain photos of the bird in flight.

The Common Ringed Plover is essentially a bird of the Palearctic region (Eurasia). However, it does nest in the far north in North America, such as on Baffin Island and Ellesmere Island and in Greenland. It also nests sparingly on some islands off western Alaska (Dunn and Alderfer 2011, Sibley 2014). Unlike most North American breeders, it migrates back to the Old World for wintering. Thus, its presence anywhere in the lower 48 states is quite exceptional and far out of range. It is not overly rare during migration in

Newfoundland (Clark and Brown 2007). On the other hand, Garver and Iliff (2011) stated that Massachusetts's second record of Common Ringed Plover, in September 2010, was just the fifth for the lower 48 states. Though the species has been recorded in New York (BirdLife International 2015) on the Avibase online database, this website shows no other Atlantic coast state south of New York with a record, other than North Carolina (this record).

The North Carolina Bird Records Committee reviewed and accepted the photos and Rare Bird Report form submitted by the two observers for the Common Ringed Plover (Piephoff et al., 2015). Because photos were accepted for documentation, the species was placed on the Definitive List.

Literature Cited

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Figure 1. Comparison of Common Ringed Plover (left) with Semipalmated Plover (right) at Cedar Island, NC, 15 May 2014. Photo by Vincent Gaillard.



Figure 2. Profile view of the Common Ringed Plover at Cedar Island. Photo by Vincent Gaillard.



Figure 3. View of the feet of the Common Ringed Plover, showing an apparent lack of webbing; Cedar Island, NC. Photo by Vincent Gaillard.