

# 2015 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

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**Z. Taylor Piephoff<sup>1</sup>, Chair, Susan Campbell, Michael McCloy, H. Douglas Pratt, Simon R. B. Thompson, Jeffrey S. Phippen, Steven P. Shultz, Nathan A. Swick, and Michael H. Tove**

<sup>1</sup> 13339 Mint Lake Drive, Matthews, NC, 28105. piephoffT@aol.com

The make-up of the 2015 North Carolina Bird Records Committee included additions of Susan Campbell, Michael McCloy, and Simon R. B. Thompson as voting members; and the retention of Richard J. Davis and Harry E. LeGrand, Jr. in advisory capacities. Keith E. Camburn rotated off the committee for at least a one-year hiatus.

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

**Trumpeter Swan** (*Cygnus buccinator*) (15-01). The North Carolina Bird Records Committee (NCBRC) reviewed a written report by Harry LeGrand of an individual of this species at Pungo Refuge 11 January 2015. The report was unanimously accepted. This report represents the third record for the state and the second accepted record for the Coastal region (LeGrand et al. 2015).

**Hooded Oriole** (*Icterus cucullatus*) (15-02). A series of photographs by John Brammer of an immature male of this species from a feeder in Charlotte (Mecklenburg) on 6 February 2015 were reviewed. In the initial round of voting, a majority of committee members felt the bird was a Hooded Oriole but the committee returned an “unresolved” verdict, thereby requiring input from outside reviewers. Two members felt that Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*) could not be ruled out. After receiving outside input comments from Mary Gustafson and Eric Carpenter, the NCBRC voted unanimously to accept the report. This represents the first state record for the species and it is placed on the Definitive List by virtue of definitive photographs.

**Arctic Tern** (*Sterna paradisaea*) (15-07). The NCBRC accepted, with 8 votes to accept (AV) and 1 as inadequately documented (ID), written reports of an individual of this species from inland Lake Waccamaw (Columbus) on 12 May 2015 from Ed Corey and John Finnegan with photos by Jeffrey Beane. This represents the first inland record for the state. The species is on the Definitive List due to numerous records from offshore locations (LeGrand et al. 2015).

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) (15-08). The NCBRC unanimously accepted a written report with photographs from Dwayne Martin of 7 individuals from Linville Lake (Avery) seen 27 May 2015. The species is already on the Definitive List; this represents the third

accepted record from the mountains (LeGrand et al. 2015).

**White-faced Ibis** (*Plegadis chihi*) (15-09). A 15 May 2015 written report with photos submitted by Greg Perry from Raccoon Island (Carteret) of an adult bird in a wading bird rookery was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This is the first coastal record away from Lake Mattamuskeet (Hyde) where there are multiple accepted records, and from South Nags Head (Dare) where the first state record occurred in 2002 (LeGrand et al. 2015). The species is already on the Definitive List.

**Trumpeter Swan** (*Cygnus buccinator*) (15-10). A photo of a bird from Pungo refuge taken by Keith Ramos on 4 January 2015 was reviewed by the NCBRC and was unanimously accepted. This represents the fourth record for the state and the third from the Coastal region.

**Limpkin** (*Aramus guarauna*) (15-12). A written report by Dwayne Martin with photos by Lori Owenby of an individual of this species from upper Lake Norman (Catawba) on 28 July 2015 was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This represents the fourth record for the state and the first from the Piedmont region (LeGrand et al. 2015). The species is already on the Definitive List by virtue of definitive photographs of this species accepted from New Bern (Craven) in 1998 (LeGrand et al. 2015).

**Townsend's Solitaire** (*Myadestes townsendi*) (15-13). A first state record for this species was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC after reviewing written reports from Curtis Smalling and Jesse Pope, and photographs from Pope of a bird at Grandfather Mountain (Avery) on 13 August 2015. The species is placed on the Definitive List by virtue of the submitted definitive photographs.

**Black-legged Kittiwake** (*Rissa tridactyla*) (15-14). The NCBRC reviewed written details and photographs by Doug Johnston of an immature bird observed at Lake Julian (Buncombe) on 11 September 2015. The report was unanimously accepted and provides the first record of the species from the Mountain region (LeGrand et al. 2015). The species is already on the Definitive List due to numerous records from the Coastal region.

**Buff-bellied Hummingbird** (*Amazilia yucatanensis*) (15-15). An adult male of this species appeared at a feeder in Winston-Salem (Forsyth) in September 2015 and lingered through the remainder of the year. Written details by Ron Morris and in-hand photos by Michael McCloy during the banding of this individual from 22 September 2015 were reviewed by the NCBRC and unanimously accepted. The species is already on the Definitive List due to accepted photos of a bird from Oriental (Pamlico) in October 2008. This provides the second record for the state and the first from the Piedmont region (LeGrand et al. 2015).

**Gray Kingbird** (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) (15-16). A written report by John Finnegan and a photo by Lucas Bobay of an immature bird at the North Carolina State Agroecology Education Farm (Wake) from 3 October 2015 was

unanimously accepted after review by the NCBRC. This record is the third for the Piedmont region and is the first from this region in 39 years (LeGrand et al. 2015).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*) (15-17). A 7 October 2015 report of a first-year bird from the Hooper Lane Sod Farms (Henderson) with written details and photos from Doug Johnston was reviewed by the NCBRC and unanimously accepted. This record is the first for the species from the Mountain region (LeGrand et al. 2015).

**Sage Thrasher** (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) (15-18). The NCBRC unanimously accepted a written report and photos from James Poling of an individual of this species from the Warren Wilson farm fields (Buncombe) on 31 October 2015. This record represents the third state record for the species and the first for the Mountain region. The species is already on the Definitive List due to the collection of a specimen from Woodlake (Moore) on 19 September 1973 (LeGrand et al. 2015).

**Black-headed Grosbeak** (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) (15-21). The NCBRC received written details from Curtis Smalling and a photo by Steven Bullock of an adult male at Boone (Watauga) from 11 May 2007. The report was unanimously accepted. Though there are about 10 previous records for the state and the species is on the Definitive List, this record is the first for the Mountain region (LeGrand et al. 2015).

**Black-legged Kittiwake** (*Rissa tridactyla*) (15-22). The NCBRC reviewed and unanimously accepted written details from Harry LeGrand and photos by Lucas Bobay of an immature bird seen at Beaverdam Reservoir (Wake) 29 November 2015. This represents the first record of the species from the Piedmont region (LeGrand et al. 2015).

**Burrowing Owl** (*Athene cucularia*) (15-23). Jamie Adams submitted written details and photographs of a bird on Masonboro Island (New Hanover) from 6 November 2015. After review from the NCBRC the report was unanimously accepted. The species is already on the Definitive List by virtue of a specimen collected from the Salvo Campground (Dare) 14 February 1967; this 2015 record is the third accepted for the state (LeGrand et al. 2015).

**Not Accepted.** The following reports were judged to be not accepted.

**Yellow-nosed Albatross** (*Thalassarche chlororhynchos*) (15-05). A written report of an individual of this species seen offshore just north of Oregon Inlet (Dare) 22 March 2014 was not accepted by a majority of NCBRC votes. While it was widely accepted that the observer saw an albatross and 2 members voted to accept (AV), 5 members voted ID (Inadequately Documented) and 2 voted for US (Unacceptable Sighting). Concerns were that key field marks were not mentioned and the exact species of albatross could not be determined by the written details provided. The species is already on the Definitive List based

on previously accepted reports with diagnostic photographs (LeGrand et al. 2015).

**Bewick's Wren** (*Thryomanes bewickii*) (15-06). A report from 2 April 2015 from Chatham County was not accepted by majority vote from the NCBRC. One member voted AV, 5 voted ID, and 3 voted as US. The committee felt the details provided lacked mention of key field marks and did not positively eliminate other more expected species of wren. The species is already on the Definitive List based on historical records of this once-common mountain breeder (LeGrand et al. 2015).

**Western Reef-Heron** (*Egretta gularis*) (15-11). A written description accompanied by an intriguing photograph of a heron from Raccoon Island (Carteret) on 25 June 2015 was ultimately not accepted as this species. Though one vote to accept (AV) was cast, 3 ID and 4 US votes reflected majority concerns that plumage inconsistencies with Western Reef-Heron and lack of photographs showing the entire bird, could not positively eliminate Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*). One member abstained from voting (AB).

**Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** (*Leucosticte tephrocotis*) (15-19). An intriguing written report of a bird from a grassy bald in Pisgah National Forest (Haywood) on 30 October 2015 was not accepted by the NCBRC. Two votes to accept (AV) were cast but a majority of voters (5 ID) felt the written description fell short of the desired level of documentation to justify a vote to accept. One vote of Questionable Origin (QO) was also received.

**Unresolved.** The following reports are pending due to being sent for outside review.

**Crested Caracara** (*Caracara cheriway*) (15-04). A majority of NCBRC members (5 AV) voted to accept a written description of a bird seen at Enfield (Halifax) on 21 February 2015, but the report failed to garner the necessary votes for first ballot acceptance (1 QO, 3 ID). Members voting not to accept cited concerns over origin and written details from an observer unfamiliar with the species and with no optical aids during the observance.

**White-cheeked Pintail** (*Anas bahamensis*) (15-20). A written description with photos of a bird at Pea Island NWR on 30 September 2015 were reviewed by the NCBRC. While there was no doubt among the committee the identification was correct, enough concerns were raised over origin (2 QO) that the report could not be accepted on the first ballot.

A list of all the species reviewed can be seen at <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/brc/NC/reports.html>. Finally, the NCBRC Chair received six reports of regularly occurring species that are not on the Review List.

## Summary

With this round of voting, Townsend's Solitaire and Hooded Oriole are

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added to the Definitive List. The total number of species from North Carolina is now 477 on the Accepted List of which 463 are Definitive (gain of two species over the final 2014 List), two are considered Not Established, and 12 are Provisional.

### **Literature Cited**

LeGrand, H., J. Haire, A. Iyoob, and T. Howard. 2015. Birds of North Carolina: their Distribution and Abundance. <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/ncbirds/accounts.php>