

2016 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

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The make-up of the 2016 North Carolina Bird Records Committee included additions of Samuel Cooper, W. Jefferson Lemons, and Joshua L. Southern as voting members; and the retention of Richard J. Davis and Harry E. LeGrand Jr. in advisory capacities. Jeffrey S. Phippen, H. Douglas Pratt, and Michael H. Tove rotated off the Committee for at least a one-year hiatus.

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

White-checked Pintail (*Anas bahamensis*) (15-20). A written description with photos of a bird at Pea Island NWR (Dare) on 30 September 2015 and submitted by Audrey Whitlock was reviewed by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee (NCBRC) in 2015. The committee voted 7-2(QO) to accept, but such a vote requires outside review and resubmission as a Class C report and the record was left unresolved in 2015. In 2016 the committee considered the report again, with included comments from Edward Brinkley and Andy Kratter. The committee resolved that those comments established a useful standard for natural vagrancy of this Caribbean species which was met by this individual, and the report was accepted 8-1(QO) on the second ballot. This represents the first accepted state record and by virtue of submitted photographs it is placed on the Definitive List. Two additional reports of this species have been considered by the committee in recent years, both of which were not accepted by virtue of Questionable Origin. With the acceptance of this record the committee may have cause to re-evaluate these reports in the future.

Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*) (16-01). The NCBRC reviewed written reports by Ed Corey and Scott Winton, with photos by Winton, of an individual of this species observed on the South Core Banks of Cape Lookout National Seashore (Carteret) on 31 January 2016, originally found by Jon Altman on 26 January 2016 and present through at least 27 February. The report was unanimously accepted. This represents the first state record for the species and by virtue of submitted photographs it is placed on the Definitive List.

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) (16-02). A report with photographs submitted by Chelsea Weithman of an alternate plumaged bird of the nominate subspecies, discovered by Weithman in Frisco (Dare) on 8 April 2016,

was considered by the committee and accepted unanimously. This record represents the eighth in North Carolina for this species, and the fourth spring record (LeGrand et al. 2016)

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) (16-03). The NCBRC unanimously accepted a written report and photographs of an individual of this species from upper Lake Norman (Davidson/Iredell) on 10 April 2016 from Nathan Gatto. This represents the sixth inland record for the state (LeGrand et al. 2015).

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) (16-04). The NCBRC reviewed written records with photos from Lucas Bobay and Sam Jolly of an individual at the Lake Landing impoundments at Mattamuskeet NWR (Hyde) first discovered on 29 April 2016 and present through 9 May. The report was unanimously accepted. This represents the first state record for the species and by virtue of submitted photographs it is placed on the Definitive List.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) (16-06). A 31 May 2016 written report with photos submitted by Dwayne Martin from Lookout Shoals Lake (Catawba/Iredell) of an adult bird was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This is the first inland record of this species for North Carolina, which is a casual visitor to the coast (LeGrand et al. 2016).

Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*) (16-07). THE NCBRC reviewed a written report and photos submitted by Rob Van Epps of a bird seen on 5 May 2016 at Lake Davidson (Mecklenberg). The committee voted on the written report and photos separately, resulting in a split decision for both - 6-3(ID) for the former and 3-6(ID) for the latter. The report was then submitted for outside review and, following comments by Ted Floyd and Dave Irons, the written report was accepted 8-1(ID) on the second ballot. Because the photos were not accepted on the first ballot, the species is placed on the Provisional List.

Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) (16-08). The committee unanimously accepted photos of a Cliff Swallow taken at Alligator River NWR (Dare) on 4 Jan 2016 by Michael Gosselin. This is the first winter record for North Carolina and one of only very few winter records of Cliff Swallow in the United States.

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) (16-09). The NCBRC reviewed and unanimously accepted photos and remarks by Martin Wall and Henry Link of a White-faced Ibis observed at upper Lake Brandt (Guilford) on 4 April 2016. This is the first accepted record for this species away from the coast where there have been multiple records in recent years (LeGrand et al. 2016).

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) (16-10). Details and photos from LynnErla Beegle and Jeff Lewis of a female-type bird at Alligator River NWR (Dare), originally found by Harry LeGrand on 11 December 2015 and present through 1 January 2016 were considered and unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This represents only the third winter record of this Eurasian shorebird species

in North Carolina (LeGrand et al. 2016).

Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) (16-11). A young individual of this species appeared near the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, Buxton (Dare) in mid June, and lingered through the middle of July. The committee reviewed photos and a written report from Michael Gosselin from 17 June 2016 which was unanimously accepted. This represents the first accepted state record for the species and by virtue of the submitted photographs it is placed on the Definitive List.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*) (16-12). The committee reviewed and unanimously accepted photos and remarks on a subadult bird found at the Ridge Junction Overlook of the Blue Ridge Parkway (Yancey) on 28 September 2016 by Simon Thompson. This represents the sixth record for North Carolina of this endangered warbler, all but one of which are from fall (LeGrand et al. 2016).

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) (16-13). The NCBRC received a written report with photos from Ed Corey, along with additional photos from Jan Hansen, Lucas Bobay, and Jeannie Kraus of a basic plumage bird from East Shackleford Banks (Carteret) present from 2 October 2016 through mid-November. The report was unanimously accepted. This represents the 9th record for North Carolina (LeGrand et al. 2016).

Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) (16-14). The NCBRC received written details and photographs from Peter Quadarella of an individual visiting a feeder in Matthews (Union) on 22 November 2016. The report was unanimously accepted. Though there are about 12 previous records for the state and the species is on the Definitive List, this record is the fifth for the Piedmont region (LeGrand et al. 2015).

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

Yellow-headed Caracara (*Milvago chimachima*) (16-05). One of the more puzzling reports in recent memory, an unquestionable Yellow-headed Caracara was admitted to a bird rehabilitation facility in West Jefferson (Ashe) following a collision with a motorcycle, where many photos were taken by Jeff Lemons and facility staff. While the species is infrequently kept in captivity, the committee unanimously questioned the origin of this individual and voted to not accept this record 0-9(QO) due to the perceived unlikelihood that a mostly sedentary species from northern South America with little to no pattern of vagrancy would be a candidate to occur naturally in North Carolina.

Unresolved. No reports are pending.

Summary

With this round of voting, White-cheeked Pintail, Mountain Plover, Little Egret, and Crested Caracara are added to the Definitive List, and Violet-green Swallow is added to the Provisional List. The total number of species from North Carolina is now 482 on the Accepted List of which 467 are Definitive (gain of four species over the final 2015 List), two are considered Not Established, and 13 are Provisional (gain of one species over the final 2015 list).

Literature Cited

LeGrand, H., J. Haire, N. Swick, and T. Howard. 2016. Birds of North Carolina: their Distribution and Abundance. <http://ncbirds.carolinabirdclub.org/>