

Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*) Breeds at Wallace, Marlboro County, South Carolina

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The Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*) is not listed on the American Ornithologists' Union checklist because it is not recognized as having occurred naturally anywhere in North America (American Ornithological Society 2018) nor is it listed on the official list of the birds of South Carolina which does recognize non-established, exotic species (Carolina Bird Club 2018a). Thus, it is of interest to document a pair of Black Swans that nested at Wallace, Marlboro County in 2013.

I observed one pair with three downy cygnets (ca. 5-days old) in a pasture (1.13-ha) that enclosed a small farm pond (0.68-ha) located between Maston Lane and SC secondary road SR-35-262 (Delta Height Road) on 31 March 2013. This site was located behind the Linton residence along U.S Hwy 1. The five birds were also present on 14 April 2013. On both dates the birds (adults had unclipped wings) were observed in the pasture and on the pond.

The pair was originally purchased at Rock Hill, South Carolina in May 2011 when both birds were two years old; they were originally from Ohio and Pennsylvania, respectively (D. Linton, pers. comm.). The pair raised three broods through September 2014. In one nesting attempt, only one egg of a clutch of four hatched, although the cygnet survived. The pair always built their large nest along the margin of the farm pond. A low fence that enclosed the pasture provided some protection from terrestrial predators. The female and one cygnet were sold in September 2014, and later that year the male was accidentally killed.

Although free-flying, the adult swans rarely left the farm pond and pasture and never flew further than to a marsh located ca. 100 m away (D. Linton, pers. comm.). Even then, they promptly returned to their core area. The pond, even during drought conditions, always contained some water. Black Swans prefer permanent wetlands.

In Florida, 211 species of non-established exotics have been documented, with the focus on their breeding status (Greenlaw et al. 2014). The estimated breeding population of the Black Swan in Florida from 2008-2012 was 5-24 pairs, where they have been documented since the 1980s. Although most of these birds are concentrated in central and southern regions, Black Swan has occurred in cooler regions of the state, as far north as two counties (one coastal, one in the interior) in the northern peninsula (Greenlaw et al. 2014). Black Swans have occurred in North Carolina

(Wikipedia 2018), but they are not listed as a non-established exotic species for that state (Carolina Bird Club 2018b).

In South Carolina, the Black Swans at Wallace that were introduced as ornamental birds may satisfy the definition of the Provisional II category of the South Carolina checklist, i.e., of a species whose occurrence is believed to be the result of human assistance, and which have not become established. Thus, I suggest that the Black Swan can be added to the Provisional II category of the South Carolina checklist (Carolina Bird Club 2018a). I consider it likely that non-established exotic species, including some waterfowl, have been under-recorded in warm temperate regions of southeastern North America such as South Carolina and North Carolina.

Literature Cited

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Editor's Note: The South Carolina Bird Records Committee reviewed this Field Note prior to publication. While the committee does not feel that individual birds like the Black Swans noted here are intended to be covered by the Provisional II category, as their presence in the state is clearly due to transportation into the state with intent for aviculture or ornamentation, the committee is considering reviewing the definition of the Provisional II category to more clearly define the intention.