

2018 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

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The make-up of the 2018 North Carolina Bird Records Committee included additions of Nathan A. Swick, Andrew K. Thornton, and Jan J. Hansen as voting members; and the retention of Richard J. Davis and Harry E. LeGrand Jr. in advisory capacities. Susan Campbell, Steven P. Shultz, and Z. Taylor Piephoff rotated off the Committee for at least a one-year hiatus.

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

Common Swift (*Apus apus*) (18-01). A written description with photos of an *Apus* swift near Pea Island NWR (*Dare*) on 7 October 2017 by Carol Hare was reviewed by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee (NCBRC) in 2018. The committee initially voted 6-3(ID) to accept, with those voting “No” citing the difficulty of identifying *Apus* swifts to species given the quality of the photographic evidence. Such a vote requires a second evaluation with outside review to place the species on the NC list. That review was invited and the report was resubmitted as a Class C report with comments from a number of Old World authorities, all of whom stated that the available evidence strongly suggested Common Swift. The NCBRC unanimously agreed, accepting the record 9-0 on the second ballot. This remarkable record represents the first for North Carolina and by virtue of submitted photographs it is placed on the Definitive List.

Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) (18-03). The NCBRC reviewed a written description by Dwayne Martin and photos by Lori Owenby of a subadult individual of this species at Lake Hickory (*Catawba/Alexander*) on 17 November 2017. The report was unanimously accepted and represents the second record for the Piedmont region of North Carolina.

Broad-billed Hummingbird

(*Cyananthus latirostris*) (18-04). A report with photographs submitted by Susan Campbell of an adult female Broad-billed Hummingbird banded by the observer at a private home in Southern Shores (*Dare*) on 19 November 2017 was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This individual was first reported on 1 November 2017 and found dead by natural causes on 1 January 2018. This represents the state's fourth record of this species.



*Broad-billed Hummingbird,
19 Nov 2017, Dare Co, NC.
Photo by Steve Shultz*

Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) (18-05). The NCBRC reviewed a written description of at least 11 individuals, with photos of 1, submitted by Ed Corey from a Seabirding pelagic trip southeast of Oregon Inlet (*Dare*) on 10 February 2018. The report was accepted unanimously. This represents a high count of this species in North Carolina and the seventh time it has been observed in the state.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*) (18-06). The NCBRC unanimously accepted a record of a subadult Kirtland's Warbler captured at a banding station near the Appalachian Trail in Pisgah National Forest (*Yancey*) on 3 October 2017, with written description and in-hand photographs by Mark Hopey. This record represents the seventh record of this endangered warbler in North Carolina, all but one of which have been in the fall.

Red-billed Tropicbird (*Phaethon aethereus*) (18-07). An exciting record of a Red-billed Tropicbird on 9 February 2018 at Nags Head (*Dare*), with written description and photographs from David Disher, was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This represents the first winter record for this species in North Carolina, and one of very few winter records of this species in the United States.

Chestnut-collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*) (18-08). A stunning adult male Chestnut-collared Longspur seen at the Cape Point Campground, Cape Hatteras National Seashore (*Dare*) on 17 May 2018 was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. With written description and photographs by Michael Gosselin, this represents the fourth North Carolina record of this Great Plains songbird.

Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*) The summer of 2018 saw an unprecedented incursion of Roseate Spoonbills into the Piedmont and

Mountains of North Carolina. The following reports were accepted by the NCBRC.

(18-09) Written description and photos by Biz Allen of a bird on the French Broad River in *Henderson* 3 June 2018. Accepted 8-1, with one member finding the report to be inadequately documented. This represents the first record for the mountains.

(18-12) Written description and photos by David Schroder of a bird near Davidson in *Mecklenberg* 27 May-27 June 2018. Accepted unanimously and representing the eighth Piedmont record.

(18-10) Written description and photos by Jacob Farmer of a bird at Crabtree Creek wetlands in *Wake* 16 June 2018. Accepted unanimously and representing the ninth Piedmont record.

(18-11) Written description and photos by Louis Skrabec of a bird at Plainfield Rd Marsh in *Guilford* 24 July 2018. Accepted unanimously and representing the tenth Piedmont record.

(18-13) Written description and photos by Shelley Rutkin of three birds at North Rugby Road in *Henderson* 21 July 2018. Accepted unanimously and representing the second record for the mountains.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) (18-14). The NCBRC unanimously accepted a written description and photos of a Curlew Sandpiper at Pea Island NWR (*Dare*), 24-26 July 2018, submitted by Karen Lebing. Formerly a rare but regular vagrant in North Carolina, this is the first record of this species in the state since 2008.

Tahiti Petrel (*Pseudobulweria rostrata*) (18-15). Easily one of the most incredible bird sightings in North Carolina's ornithological history, an adult Tahiti Petrel was seen from a Seabirding pelagic in the Gulf Stream out of Hatteras (*Dare*) 29 May 2018. The NCBRC received and unanimously accepted a written description from Ed Corey with photos from Peter Flood and Kate Sutherland. This record represents the first record of this species for the Atlantic Ocean, let alone North Carolina, and by virtue of submitted photographs it is placed on the Definitive List.

Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) (18-16) The NCBRC received a written report and photographs from Kyle Kittelberger of a Common Ringed Plover first discovered at Pea Island NWR (*Dare*) on 12 October 2018. The committee was impressed by the quality of the documentation of this notoriously difficult species. This record represents the second for North Carolina. It is already on the Definitive List.

Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) (18-17) The NCBRC unanimously accepted a written report with photos from Steve Ritt of an individual of this species discovered near Harbinger (*Currituck*) on 22 December 2018 and remaining present for several weeks afterwards. This record represents the first for North Carolina, and by virtue of submitted photographs it is placed on the Definitive List.



Golden-crowned Sparrow, 28 Dec 2018, Harbinger, NC. Photo by Bob Lewis

Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*) (18-18) Documentation of a subadult Kirtland's Warbler seen at Ridge Junction Overlook (*Yancey/Buncombe*) from 25 September 2018 through 2 October 2018, with written documentation by Kent Fiala and Trevor Sleight and photos by Fiala, was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This bird was seen by many birders during its stay. This represents the eighth record for North Carolina, all but one of which have been in the fall.

Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*) (18-20) The committee unanimously accepted a report of this species with written documentation by Jacob Farmer and photos by Farmer and Audrey Whitlock of a bird seen from shore in Nags Head (*Dare*) on 26 December 2018. This represents the 3rd record of this species in North Carolina, but the first time it has been photographed in the state. By virtue of those submitted photos this species is moved from the Provisional List to the Definitive List.

Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*) (18-21) Photographs taken by Jeff Pippen of an individual of this species seen at North River Farms (*Carteret*) between 30 September 2018 and 3 October 2018 were unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This represents the fourth record of this species in the state.



Townsend's Warbler, 30 Sep 2018, Carteret Co, NC. Photo by Martin Wall

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

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*) (18-02) The NCBRC considered a report with a single photo of a bird observed near Duck (*Dare*) on 3 September 2017 that the observer reported as a Yellow-legged Gull. While the committee noted that the individual was certainly interesting, members ultimately decided that the evidence was not sufficient to accept this potential first state record. Members cited the lack of additional photos, in particular those that would show the spread wing, and the similarity of this individual to locally common Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

Unresolved. The committee considered a report with illustrations of a Townsend's Warbler in *Mecklenburg*. There was some confusion with regard to the individual in *Carteret*, and the committee will re-consider the former in in 2019.

Summary

With this round of voting, Common Swift, Tahiti Petrel, and Golden-crowned Sparrow are added to the Definitive List, and Black Guillemot is moved from the Provisional List to the Definitive List. The total number of accepted species from North Carolina is now 484 (+3 over the final 2017 list) of which 470 are Definitive (+4 over the final 2017 list), two are considered Not Established, and 12 are Provisional (-1 over the final 2017 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/>

