

2018 Annual Report of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee

Aaron Given¹, Chair, Giff Beaton, Jeff Click, Lex Glover, Simon Harvey, Chris Hill,
Keith McCullough, Irvin Pitts, Steve Wagner
¹4475 Betsy Kerrison, Kiawah Island, SC 29455
agiven@kiawahisland.org

In 2018, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee acted on 48 new reports, of which 40 were accepted, three were not accepted, and five left unresolved.

The accepted records detailed below add two species to South Carolina's Main List: Tufted Duck and Tropical Kingbird. The Main List now includes 439 species. Say's Phoebe has been elevated from the Provisional I list to the Definitive list based on photographs obtained of a bird in the upstate in April. Tropical/Couch's Kingbird will be dropped from the Hypothetical List.

The annual meeting of the SCBRC was held on 1 December 2018 at Caw Caw Interpretive Center in Ravenel. The meeting was attended by Jeff Click, Aaron Given, Keith McCullough, Irvin Pitts, Will Post, and Steve Wagner. Aaron Given was reelected as Chair. Lex Glover agreed to another term as Secretary. Jeff Click and Chris Hill were reelected to the Nomination Committee.

The Committee agreed to remove Limpkin, Ruff, American White Pelican (inland), and Roseate Spoonbill (inland) from the review list citing over 10 records in recent history. Limpkin and Ruff are becoming almost annual in South Carolina with sometimes multiple individuals in one year. American White Pelicans and Roseate Spoonbills away from the coast are now frequent enough to merit delisting.

In 2017, the Committee discussed creating a potential "auto-accept" policy of eBird reports of certain species (Given et al. 2018). Because the current workload for the committee is not excessive, the Committee decided to not institute the "auto-accept" policy of eBird reports at this time.

Membership change in 2018: Addition of Irvin Pitts, Will Post moving from voting member to Advisory member.

ACCEPTED REPORTS

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*). 2018-017. Accept (9-0). Richard Hayes submitted a written report of a Tufted Duck on Bulls Island (Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge) in Charleston County on 17 February 2018. The bird was originally found and photographed by David McLean and David Youngblood on 2 February 2018. This report represents the first record of Tufted Duck in South Carolina.

King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*). 2018-002. Accept (9-0). Chris Hill submitted a written report of two King Eiders that had been harvested by a hunter (RB Morris) in the ocean off Georgetown County on 23 November 2017. A photo of two female King Eiders was provided by Morris.

King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*). 2018-003. Accept (9-0). Jack Rogers and Chris Hill submitted separate reports of a King Eider at the 2nd Avenue Pier in Myrtle Beach (Horry Co.). The bird was originally reported by Ritch Lilly on 7 January 2018 from the same location.

King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*). 2018-026. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report from Jim Buxton who photographed a King Eider near Sullivan's Island (Charleston Co.) on 9 May 2018. The bird was relocated by many birders until the end of June between Ft. Moultrie and Pitt Street Causeway.

Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*). 2018-001. Accept (9-0). Jack Rogers submitted a written report along with three photos of a Harlequin Duck at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 8 January 2018. This bird was originally photographed by Ritch Lilly on 7 January 2018.

Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*). 2018-043. Accept (9-0). Carl Miller submitted a written report of a Common Merganser at James Island County Park (Charleston Co.) on 15 December 2018. This individual hung out in the main pond by the entrance of the park all winter being seen and photographed by many birders.

Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*). 2018-045. Accept (9-0). Shawn Smolen-Morton submitted a written report along with photographs of a Common Merganser seen in a residential area of Florence (Florence Co.) on 6 December 2018. This individual was seen on Forest Lake all winter and into early spring.

Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*). 2018-015. Accept (9-0). Christopher Clack submitted a written report along with a photograph of a Red-necked Grebe at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 25 January 2018.

Limpkin (*Aramus guarauna*). 2018-023. Accept (9-0). Barry Scully submitted a written report of a Limpkin that he photographed at Lake Marion (Sumter Co.) on 1 April 2018.

Limpkin (*Aramus guarauna*). 2018-028. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report from John Grego who photographed a Limpkin at Congaree National Park (Richland Co.) on 12 July 2018.

Limpkin (*Aramus guarauna*). 2018-029. Accept (9-0). Allison Leigh submitted a written report along with 3 photographs of a Limpkin at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge (Jasper Co.) on 20 July 2018.

Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*). 2018-006. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report from Roger Smith who photographed a Hudsonian Godwit at Orangeburg Sod Farms (Orangeburg Co.) on 9 August 2017.

Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*). 2018-007. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report from Craig Watson and Pam Ford who photographed a Ruff at Santee Coastal Reserve (Charleston Co.) on 17 March 2018.

Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*). 2018-018. Accept (9-0). Andrew Theus submitted a written report along with a photograph of a Ruff found near Hardeeville (Jasper Co.) on 19 February 2018.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*). 2018-038. Accept (9-0). Aaron Given submitted a written report along with a series of photographs from a specimen collected from Kiawah Island (Charleston Co.) on 8 September 2018. The bird was alive found by a beachgoer and brought to the Nature Center on Kiawah but the bird died shortly after its arrival.

Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*). 2018-039. Accept (9-0). Ritch Lilly submitted a written report of a Black-headed Gull at the Georgetown Wastewater Treatment Plant (Georgetown Co.) on 22 November 2018. The bird was seen and photographed by many birders until late January 2019.

Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*). 2018-040. Accept (9-0). Carl Miller submitted a written report of a Black-headed Gull that he photographed at Bear Island National Wildlife Refuge (Colleton Co.) on 30 December 2018.

Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*). 2018-019. Accept (9-0). Irvin Pitts submitted a written report along with one photograph of a Franklin's Gull at Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge (Charleston Co.) on 4 December 2016.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*). 2018-005. Accept (9-0). Martina Nordstrand submitted a written report along with one photograph of an Iceland Gull at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 15 January 2018.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*). 2018-020. Accept (9-0). Chris Hill submitted a written report of an Iceland Gull that was seen at Bird Island at the Little River Inlet (Horry Co.) on 6 February 2018.

Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*). 2018-009. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report by Irvin Pitts who photographed a Sooty Tern at the north end of the Lake Murray Dam (Lexington Co.) on 12 September 2017. Tropical Storm Irma moved through South Carolina on 11 September 2017 displacing this coastal species several hundred miles inland.

Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*). 2018-010. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report by Linda Montgomery and photographs by Scott Davis of a Sooty Tern at the Lake Hartwell Overlook (Anderson Co.) on 12 September 2017. Tropical Storm Irma moved through South Carolina on 11 September 2017 displacing this pelagic species several hundred miles inland.

Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*). 2018-011. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report by Mark Vukovich and Matt Malin who photographed five Sooty Terns at Scott's Ferry Ramp (McCormick Co.) on 12 September 2017. Tropical Storm Irma moved through South Carolina on 11 September 2017 displacing this coastal species several hundred miles inland.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*). 2018-012. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on a series of photos uploaded to the Carolina Bird Club photo gallery by Meghan Galipeau of a Brown Booby at the Port of Charleston (Charleston Co.) on 8 August 2017.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*). 2018-025. Accept (9-0). Derek Aldrich and Jack Rogers submitted two separate written reports of a Brown Booby at Swan Lake on the campus of Furman University. The bird was seen and photographed by many birders from 26 April 2018 to 30 May 2018.

Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*). 2018-021. Accept (9-0). Bill Anderson submitted a written report of a Snail Kite that he photographed at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge (Jasper Co.) on 4 April 2018. The bird was apparently a one-day wonder and was never relocated. This is the third record for South Carolina.

Snowy Owl (*Bubo scandiacus*). 2018-004. Accept (9-0). The State, a daily newspaper published in Columbia, SC, published an article about a Snowy Owl that was seen on 6 January 2018 in a Lake Murray neighborhood in Lexington County. The article included quotes from Julian Wilson, the person who saw and photographed the bird.

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*). 2018-033. Accept (9-0). Tammy Hester submitted a written report of a Burrowing Owl at Harbor Island (Beaufort Co.) on 30 July 2018. The bird was seen and photographed over the next 6 days.

Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*). 2018-036. Accept (9-0). Erin Szarek, Ed Blitch, Pam Ford, Craig Watson, John Cox, and Frank Lawkins submitted separate written reports of a Tropical Kingbird at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 12 October 2018. A very helpful audio clip was obtained which ruled out the nearly identical looking Couch's Kingbird. The bird was photographed by several people on the 12th but was never relocated after that. This report represents the first record of Tropical Kingbird in South Carolina.

Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*). 2018-014. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on a series of documentary evidence provided on various eBird reports from John Cox, Irvin Pitts, Michael Robertson, David Youngblood, and Kathy Woolsey of Great Kiskadee at Bear Island Wildlife Management Area (Colleton Co.) from 31 December 2017 to 16 April 2018. Several photographs and audio were obtained from this bird which is presumably the same individual that wintered at Bear Island WMA in 2016-2017.



Great Kiskadee, 16 Apr 2018, Colleton Co, SC. Photo by David Youngblood

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*). 2018-022. Accept (9-0). Kevin Kubach submitted a written report of a Say's Phoebe at Clemson/SCDNR Cherry Farm Complex (Pickens Co.) on 11 April 2018. Photographs provided by Linda Montgomery via eBird moved this species to the definitive list.

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*). 2018-041. Accept (9-0). George McHenry submitted a written report of a Say's Phoebe at Clemson University's Simpson Research Station (Anderson Co.) on 6 December 2018. The bird was seen and photographed by many until early February 2019.

Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*). 2018-046. Accept (9-0). Ritch Lilly submitted a written report of a Cave Swallow at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 16 November 2018. Up to four individuals were reported on eBird after Ritch's initial sighting until early December.

Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*). 2018-013. Accept (9-0). Aaron Given submitted a written report along with photographs of a Sprague's Pipit that was seen on the Ocean Course Golf Course on Kiawah Island (Charleston Co.) from 18-19 October 2018.



Snow Bunting,
22 Dec 2018,
Horry Co, SC.
Photo by Irvin Pitts

Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*). 2018-042. Accept (9-0). Ritch Lilly submitted a written report of 2 Snow Buntings at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 19 December 2018. These birds were seen and photographed by many birders throughout the winter.

Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*). 2018-016. Accept (9-0). Aaron Given submitted a written report along with photographs of a female Bullock's Oriole he captured and banded at a private residence in Mount Pleasant (Charleston Co.) on 9 February 2018. The bird was originally reported in late January and stayed through at least late March.

Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*). 2018-027. Accept (8-1). The Committee voted on an eBird report from Matthew Tozer who photographed a Shiny Cowbird at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge (Jasper Co.) on 7 July 2018. The report was accepted with 8 votes to accept and 1 to not accept.

Mourning Warbler (*Geothlypis philadelphia*). 2018-032. Accept (8-1). Kevin Kubach submitted a written report of a Mourning Warbler that he observed at Fants Grove Wildlife Management Area (Anderson Co.) on 14 September 2018.

Mourning Warbler (*Geothlypis philadelphia*). 2018-035. Accept (9-0). Michael Gamble submitted a written report and photographs of a Mourning Warbler that was captured and banded on Kiawah Island (Charleston Co.) on 4 October 2018.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*). 2018-034. Accept (9-0). Michael Gamble submitted a written report and photographs of a Kirtland's Warbler that was captured and banded on Kiawah Island (Charleston Co.) on 5 September 2018.

NON-ACCEPTED REPORTS

White-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon lepturus*). 2018-037. Non-accept (3-6). The Committee considered a written report of a White-tailed Tropicbird observed over the ocean near the Charleston/Georgetown County line on 12 October 2018. Some members noted that the detail presented in the report were plausible for a tropicbird but lack enough evidence to eliminate Red-billed Tropicbird.

Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*). 2018-048. Non-accept (0-9). The Committee considered a written report of “heard-only” Black-capped Chickadee from the upstate (Greenville Co.). Committee members commented that distinguishing Black-capped Chickadee from Carolina Chickadee based on call notes was problematic given the wide range of vocalizations, and variation of those vocalizations of both species.

Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*). 2018-030. Non-accept (4-5). The Committee considered a written report of 4 Savannah Sparrows observed on the beach at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 16 June 2018. Some members comment that the report lacked sufficient details to rule out more expected species.

UNRESOLVED REPORTS

The following reports received a majority of votes to accept but more than one vote to not accept. These reports will need to be reevaluated by the Committee.

Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*). 2018-044. 6-3 vote.

Anna’s x Calliope Hummingbird (*Calypte anna x Selaphorus calliope*). 2018-024. 6-3 vote.

Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*). 2018-008. 7-2 vote.

Cassin’s Vireo (*Vireo cassinii*). 2018-047. 5-4 vote

Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*). 2018-031. 5-4 vote

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee thanks all the observers who submitted reports, and those who encouraged others to submit reports. Your actions increase our understanding of bird occurrence in South Carolina.

LITERATURE CITED

Given, A.G., G. Beaton, J. Click, L. Glover, S. Harvey, C. Hill, K. McCullough, W. Post, and S. Wagner. 2018. 82:75-81.