

2019 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Record Committee

Nathan A. Swick¹, Chair, Keith E. Camburn, C. William Cook,
Jan J. Hansen, Z. Taylor Piephoff, Jeffrey S. Pippen,
Steven P. Shultz, Andrew K. Thornton, Robert W. Van Epps
¹4904 Jessup Grove Rd, Greensboro, NC 27410
nswick@aba.org

The make-up of the 2019 North Carolina Bird Records Committee included additions of C. William Cook, Z. Taylor Piephoff, and Steven P. Shultz as voting members, and the retention of Richard J. Davis and Harry E. LeGrand, Jr. in advisory capacities. Samuel Cooper, W. Jefferson Lemons, and Joshua L. Southern rotated off the Committee for at least a one-year hiatus.

All italicized place names are counties.

ACCEPTED REPORTS

Trindade Petrel (*Pterodroma arminjoniana*) (19-01) An eBird report made by Alec Hopping and Logan Kahle containing a written description and a series of photos of a *Pterodroma* petrel at Buckhorn Reservoir (*Wilson*) in the wake of Hurricane Florence on 15 September 2018 was unanimously accepted by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee (NCBRC) in 2019. Photos by Hopping and Kahle confirmed the bird as a Trindade Petrel, the first inland record of this species in North Carolina.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*) (18-03). The NCBRC reviewed excellent photos of a sub-adult Kirtland's Warbler taken by Pat Draisey and Joyce Edwards at Duck boardwalk (*Dare*). The bird was present from 3-5 October 2017. The report was unanimously accepted and represents the first coastal record of this Federally endangered warbler for North Carolina.

Tundra Swan (Bewick's) (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*) (19-05). A thorough report with photographs submitted by Ricky Davis of a *bewickii* Tundra Swan among a large flock of the expected nominate subspecies in *Edgecombe* was accepted unanimously by the NCBRC. This individual was seen from 2-4 February 2019, and represents not only the first record of this Old World subspecies of our familiar wintering Tundra Swans in North Carolina, but a first for the eastern United States.

Limpkin (*Aramus guarana*). 2019 saw multiple noteworthy Limpkin records in North Carolina. The following reports were accepted by the NCBRC:

(19-07) The committee unanimously accepted the report of a Limpkin at Mountain Island Lake (*Mecklenburg*) with written description by Kent Fiala and

photos by Rob Van Epps, Dwayne Martin, and Bert Fisher. This bird was present from 22 May-9 June 2019 and represents the sixth record of this species in the state.

(19-08) Written description and photos of a Limpkin at Owen Park in Swannanoa (*Buncombe*) on 8 July 2019 submitted by Sam Pratt were accepted unanimously by the NCBRC. This represents the state's seventh record.

(19-15) Photos of a Limpkin at Lake Tillery (*Stanly*) submitted by Matt Wangerin were accepted unanimously. This bird was present from 21 November to 2 December 2019 and represents North Carolina's eighth record.

Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*) (19-09). An exciting record of a Pacific Golden-Plover present from 29 July-7 August 2019 at the Salt Pond, Cape Hatteras National Seashore (*Dare*), with written description and photographs from Michael Gosselin, was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This represents the first record for this species in North Carolina, and one of only a few records of this species on the east coast of North America. By virtue of the photos it is added to the Definitive List.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*) (19-10) A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper seen at the South Pond of Pea Island NWR (*Dare*) on 11-12 July 2019 was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. With written description and photographs by Karen Lebing, this represents the third North Carolina record of this Old World shorebird.

Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) (19-11) A very unusual winter record of Swainson's Thrush from Beaver Lake Bird Sanctuary (*Buncombe*) was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. Written description and photo were submitted by Jay Wherley from an observation on 6 January, but bird was present from 2-6 January 2019. This represents one of only a few winter records of this Neotropical migrant in the United States, and is the first such record for North Carolina.

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) (19-12). The NCBRC unanimously accepted a written description and photo of a Trumpeter Swan at Jordan Lake (*Chatham*), 26 February 2019, submitted by Louise Belk. While Trumpeter Swan has been an uncommon, though expected, winter species among large Tundra Swan flocks in the Coastal Plain in recent years, this represents a second record for North Carolina's Piedmont region. Of note, the observer described two Trumpeter Swans in the written description, although the accompanying photo shows only one bird along with a Tundra Swan.

Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) (19-13). The committee considered and accepted (8-1) a photo of a sub-adult Snail Kite photographed at Oregon Inlet (*Dare*) by Nick Newberry on 4 December 2019. The committee lamented the fact that this report consisted of little more than a series of photos that, while definitive, offered little in the way of context. In any case, this represents the second record for this species in North Carolina and the first living record as the previous one was of an adult bird found dead.

NON-ACCEPTED REPORTS

Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*) (19-02) The committee considered a report consisting of written descriptions and field sketches of a possible Townsend's Warbler seen in *Mecklenburg* 22 September 2018 and voted not to accept (3-6). The committee commends the reporter for the field sketches, but ultimately found that the report did not eliminate species more expected for this part of the state and this time of year.

Sooty Shearwater (*Ardenna grisea*) (19-04) The NCBRC considered a written report of Sooty Shearwater in *Mecklenburg* following the passage of Hurricane Florence on 15 September 2018, ultimately voting not to accept (3-4, with 2 abstentions), due mainly to poor viewing conditions and the difficulty of ruling out similar species. The committee finds the observation compelling however, and has asked the observer to re-submit with additional details.

UNRESOLVED

Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*) (19-06). The NCBRC reviewed a written description and photos submitted by Patricia Finch of an apparent adult male Lazuli Bunting visiting a feeder in *Carteret* from 19-21 August 2019. The report received a majority of acceptance votes (7-2), with dissenting members noting the poor quality of the photos. Because the report received more than one non-acceptance votes, it requires review from outside the committee and subsequent re-voting on these outside reviews or any additional comments from the observers.

Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*) (19-14) A report of a male Lazuli Bunting from Salvo Day Use Area (*Dare*) on 19 October 2019 consisting of a written description was considered by the committee to accept (5-4), though not overwhelmingly so. Because the report received more than one non-acceptance votes, it requires review from outside the committee and subsequent re-voting on these outside reviews or any additional comments from the observers.

Summary

With this round of voting, Pacific Golden-Plover is added to the Definitive List. The total number of accepted species from North Carolina is now 485 (plus one over the final 2018 list) of which 471 are Definitive (plus one over the final 2018 list), two are considered Not Established, and 12 are Provisional (no change from the final 2018 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/>