

2021 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

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The make-up of the 2021 North Carolina Bird Records Committee (NCBRC) included additions of Lucas Bobay, Josh Southern, and Jeffrey S. Pippen as voting members, and the retention of Richard J. Davis and Harry E. LeGrand Jr. in advisory capacities. Jan J. Hansen, Nathan A. Swick, and Andrew K. Thornton rotated off the Committee for at least a one-year hiatus.

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

Hammond's Flycatcher (*Empidonax hammondi*) (20-23). An *Empidonax* flycatcher identified as Hammond's Flycatcher was captured on private property in *Randolph* County and banded by John Gerwin, et al, of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences on 12 December 2020. The NCBRC considered the record and voted to accept the record 7-1 (Inadequately Documented), with 1 abstention. But because the report received 2 non-acceptance votes, it required review from outside the committee and subsequent recirculation with these outside opinions or any additional comments or photos from other observers. During the period in which the report was circulated for outside review, a detailed sight report with photographs was received from Derb Carter. Upon second ballot, the NCBRC reviewed and accepted (6 Accept, 3 Abstain) the report. This represents a 1st state record and, by virtue of photos, places Hammond's Flycatcher on the Definitive List.



Hammond's Flycatcher,
9 January 2021,
Randolph County, NC.
Photograph by Derb
Carter.

Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) (21-05) The NCBRC reviewed multiple eBird reports of a Common Raven seen and photographed at Oregon Inlet and Cape Hatteras in *Dare* County between 17-24 April 2021. While common in the mountains and uncommon in the piedmont, this is the first documented record of the species along the immediate coast in nearly 90 years! Observers noted that the bird displayed a broken primary feather that allowed for confirmation that a single bird was responsible for sightings in both locations. The reports were accepted unanimously (9-0).

Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) (21-06) The NCBRC reviewed and unanimously accepted (9-0) eBird reports of a Yellow-green Vireo from Nags Head Woods Ecological Preserve in *Dare* County from 14-15 May 2021. Committee members lamented the lack of submitted documentation outside of eBird reports, for such a rare bird, resulting in a somewhat unsatisfying way to add this species to the NC list. This represents a 1st state record and, by virtue of photos, places Yellow-green Vireo on the Definitive List.



*Yellow-Green Vireo,
15 May 2021,
Dare County, NC.
Photo by Jeff Lewis.*

Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*) (21-09) The NCBRC unanimously accepted (9-0) an eBird report with photographs from Nathaniel Axtell of a female Magnificent Frigatebird from *Transylvania* County on 8 January 2021. This may be the only report of Magnificent Frigatebird from the state found during a snow shower!

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) (21-11) The NCBRC unanimously accepted (9-0) an eBird report with photographs from Emilie Travis of a non-adult Painted Bunting from *Graham* County on 13 May 2021. While a breeder along the coast, this species is very rarely encountered in the mountains.

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) (21-13) The NCBRC reviewed and accepted (6 Accept, 3 Abstain) an eBird report with photographs of a Townsend's Solitaire from Clingman's Dome Swain County on 10 October 2021. While details were scant, committee members felt that the photographs, while distant, were diagnostic. This represents the 2nd accepted record for the state, both from the mountain region.

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

Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*) (21-01) A sight report of twelve Bohemian Waxwings from the northern Coastal Plain was not accepted by a vote of 0-9 (6 Unacceptable Sighting, 3 Inadequately Documented). Committee members felt this report pertained to the common Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*).

Clark's Grebe (*Aechmophorus clarkii*) (21-02) A report with photograph of a deceased bird from the central coast was not accepted by the committee by a vote of 0-9 (5 Inadequately Documented, 4 Unacceptable Sighting). Some committee members noted the difficulty in identifying the partially decomposed remains, while others identified the bird as a Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*).

Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*) (21-03) A spring sight report from the northern mountains was not accepted by the committee on a vote of 3-6 (5 Inadequately Documented, 1 Unacceptable Sighting). Committee members felt that the report, while compelling, ultimately failed to provide the level of detail needed to accept.

Tricolored Blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*) (21-04) A late winter sight report from the central piedmont was not accepted by the committee on a vote of 0-9 (7 Unacceptable Sighting, 2 Inadequately Documented). Committee members felt this report pertained to the expected Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*). Tricolored Blackbird is essentially a sedentary species restricted to the Pacific Coast from Washington through Baja California Norte.

White-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon lepturus*) (21-08) The NCBRC reviewed an eBird report from Coquina Beach Dare County on 9 December 2020 of a White-tailed Tropicbird. The report received an equal number of votes, 4-4 (Inadequately Documented) with one abstention, on the first ballot. The report was not accepted on the second ballot 3-6 (3 Accept, 3 Inadequately Documented, 3 Abstain).

Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*) (21-10) A December 2020 sight report from the southern mountains was not accepted by the committee on a vote of 3-6 (5 Inadequately Documented, 1 Unacceptable Sighting). Committee members felt this report could have been correct but did not adequately eliminate more expected species.

Painted Redstart (*Myioborus pictus*) (21-12) A fall sight report from the piedmont was not accepted by the committee 1-8 (1 Accept, 3 Unacceptable Sighting, 2 Inadequately Documented, 3 Abstain). Committee members felt this report did not adequately eliminate more likely species, and that the scant detail did not serve to document what would be a 2nd record of this species for the state.

Summary

With this round of voting, Yellow-green Vireo and Hammond's Flycatcher are added to the Definitive List.

Due to the split of Mew Gull into Common Gull (*Larus canus*) and Short-billed Gull (*Larus brachyrhynchus*) (62nd Supplement, July 2021, AOU Check-list of North American Birds), Common Gull replaces Mew Gull on the Definitive list, and Short-billed Gull, based on a single sight report, is added to the Provisional list.

The total number of accepted species from North Carolina is now **493** of which 479 are Definitive, two are considered Not Established, and 12 are Provisional. The full lists may be found at www.carolinabirdclub.org/brc/

Literature Cited

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