

2021 Annual Report of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee

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In 2021, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee (SCBRC) acted on 30 reports, of which 15 were accepted, 13 were not accepted, and two will be rereviewed. One report was discovered as being previously resolved, voiding the duplicate result in 2021. Among the reports that were acted upon, nine were historical reports that were determined to be pending according to the committee's master list. All nine were resolved in 2021.

Heermann's Gull, Bar-tailed Godwit, and Broad-tailed Hummingbird were added to South Carolina's Main List this year, bringing the total to 448 species. Each of the three additions is categorized as Definitive based on the presence of photographic evidence. For Heermann's Gull, two separate reports were received with observations separated by 6 months and over 100 miles. Both reports of this species were accepted and are presumed to be the same individual that was first photographed as a juvenile in Florida (Volusia County) in 2019 and since documented in various states as far north as Massachusetts. In 2021 another Heermann's Gull, a juvenile in Virginia, was documented with photographs to provide evidence of at least 2 individuals along the East Coast.

Following the acceptance of significant changes to SCBRC's bylaws in 2020 by the committee and Carolina Bird Club's Executive Committee, a reorganization of SC's Provisional II and Hypothetical lists into one Supplemental List occurred in 2021. Species categorized as hypothetical, not established, or questionable origin are now designated as such within the new Supplemental List.

In 2021 Steve Wagner rolled off the committee, Lex Glover became a non-voting member serving as secretary and committee advisor, and Steve Patterson and Linda Montgomery were welcomed as new members.

The annual meeting of the SCBRC was held on 13 December 2021 via Zoom. The meeting was attended by Giff Beaton, Jeff Click, Aaron Given, Lex Glover, Simon Harvey, Chris Hill, Linda Montgomery, Keith McCullough, Steve Patterson, and Irvin Pitts. Keith McCullough was reelected as Chair. The Committee did not add or remove any species from the Review List after discussions but did consider adding more Inland or Coastal review species based on their status in those regions. A significant portion of the meeting was devoted to a final oral voting session for reports that remained pending after three prior circulations. Four such reports were discussed and voted upon. Those results are included below.

ACCEPTED REPORTS

Anna's x Calliope Hummingbird (*Calypte anna x Selasphorus calliope*). 2018-024. Accept (8-1). The evidence for this observation spanned multiple states and multiple years being first observed, captured, and banded near Newark, DE in November 2012. At that time it was in juvenile plumage and identified as an Anna's Hummingbird despite some conflicting measurements. Continued observations of this bird into 2013 produced photo evidence of new plumage that conflicted with a pure Anna's Hummingbird. It was later recaptured in Spartanburg, SC on 09 December 2015 and in 2018 submitted by Rusty Trump to the Committee as Anna's x Calliope. After three rounds of voting the Committee ultimately agreed that the detailed feather measurements and analysis in 2015 aligned with the hybrid identification. One member acknowledged some solid evidence for the hybrid but was not 100% convinced and voted not to accept.

Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus*). 01-97-01. Accept (9-0). The Committee re-reviewed a pending report from Litchfield Beach on 27 January 1997 originally submitted by Pete Worthington. This vote produced unanimous agreement of an adequate description and comparison with similar species.

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*). 2021-017. Accept (9-0). Josh Lefever submitted a written report of a Bar-tailed Godwit first seen 25 October 2021 on the northeast Kiawah Island beach near the Ocean Course. Written details plus four photos from the same date by Keith McCullough were enough for unanimous acceptance. This is the first state record for Bar-tailed Godwit.



*Bar-tailed Godwit, 25 Oct 21, Charleston County, SC.
Photograph by Keith McCullough.*

Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*). 2021-012. Accept (8-1). Paul Serridge submitted a written report of a Hudsonian Godwit seen 20 November 2021 at Litchfield Beach in Georgetown County. These written details plus photos in eBird reports from this location on multiple dates were enough for all but one member to accept. The dissenting member did not think that Black-tailed Godwit had been sufficiently considered or was ruled out by photos.

Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*). 04-00-02. Accept (9-0). Originally reported by Kenneth Allen with observation dates from 08 April 2000 to 10 April 2000 at Santee Coastal Reserve in Charleston County, this report underwent a fourth and final vote at the Committee's annual meeting. Previous non-accept votes were received in prior circulations with common reasoning that the description was limited and similar species were not thoroughly considered in the description. After oral discussion, the Committee unanimously voted to accept based on the description given and the numerous experienced birders that observed it.

Dovekie (*Alle alle*). 2021-001. Accept (9-0). Shawn Smolen-Morton submitted a written report along with four photos of a Dovekie at the Huntington Beach State Park jetty seen on 06 March 2021. Many observers were able to observe and photograph this bird over about a week's time period.

Heermann's Gull (*Larus heermanni*). 2021-008. Accept (9-0). Tammy Hester submitted a written report along with six photos of a Heermann's Gull seen at Hunting Island State Park (Beaufort County) on 21 June 2021. Leading up to this report, a well-documented Heermann's Gull was present just over the Georgia state line on Tybee Island. This was the first SC state record for Heermann's Gull.

Heermann's Gull (*Larus heermanni*). 2021-018. Accept (8-1). Peter Stangel submitted a written report of a Heermann's Gull seen 30 December 2021 at Litchfield Beach (Georgetown County). Overall, the Committee felt that the written description was thorough enough to accept as the second state record. As mentioned above, based on documentation from records up and down the East Coast, it is presumed that this is the same individual as the 2021-008 Heermann's Gull.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*). 2021-002. Accept (9-0). Chris Hill submitted a written report of an Iceland Gull seen at the Horry County Landfill on 19 March 2021. The Committee unanimously accepted this based on appropriate written field notes and adequate size comparisons of nearby Herring Gulls.

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*). 2021-007. Accept (9-0). Aidan Rominger submitted a written report and one photo of a Glaucous Gull seen on Kiawah Island (Charleston County) on 31 May 2021. Committee members thought that the photo and description did well enough to eliminate the possibility of a pigment-challenged Herring Gull.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*). 2021-013. Accept (9-0). Bill Hilton submitted a written report along with a separate detailed write-up of a Broad-tailed Hummingbird observed and captured on 20 September 2021 at the Hilton Pond Center

(York County). The numerous close-up photographs and the detailed analysis of the bird while in-hand provided ample documentation for a unanimous vote. This is the first SC state record for Broad-tailed Hummingbird.

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*). 2021-005. Accept (9-0). John Kotz submitted a written report and four photos of a White-faced Ibis seen on 22 April 2021 on Kiawah Island (Charleston County). Aaron Given contributed three photos from 25 April 2021. The excellent photos provided sufficient documentation for unanimous acceptance.



*White-faced Ibis, 25 Apr 21, Charleston County, SC.
Photograph by Aaron Given.*

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*). 01-03-12. Accept (8-1). One written report from Bob Maxwell and one written report from Barbara Maxwell of a White-faced Ibis seen on 02 November 2000 at the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge (Jasper County) went unresolved after three previous rounds of voting. After a fourth and final vote at the Committee's annual meeting, the Committee voted 8-1 in favor of acceptance in large part due to the various experienced observers that observed the bird. Previous non-accept votes cited concern over the three plus year time interval between the observation and the report to the committee, and the limited details given.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*). 2021-006. Accept (9-0). George McHenry Jr. and Lois Stacey each submitted written reports of a Fork-tailed Flycatcher seen at Dobbin's Farm (Anderson County) between 28 March 2021 and 29 March 2021. George McHenry Jr. also contributed a photo. Around 100 observers observed this bird over the two-day span, contributing many photos to what represents the fifth SC state record for Fork-tailed Flycatcher.



*Fork-tailed Flycatcher, 28 May 21, Anderson County, SC.
Photograph by George McHenry, Jr.*

Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*). 2019-018. Accept (8-1). The Committee voted three times without conclusion on a written report and photo of a swallow seen 29 November 2019 at Heritage Shores Nature Preserve (Horry County). During a fourth round of oral voting at the Committee's annual meeting it was accepted as Cave Swallow with one dissenting vote. Non-accept votes in all voting session centered around potential lighting issues in the photograph that could cause a misrepresentation of color.

NON-ACCEPTED REPORTS

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnusi*). 2021-003. Non-accept (0-9). The committee considered a written report with 7 photos of a Whooper Swan seen in Greenville County in March of 2021. As with the 2020 Whooper Swan individual in Clarendon County, the committee felt that the identification was correct but the origin in question. This species remains on SC's Supplemental List in the Questionable Origin category.

Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*). 2021-004. Non-accept (1-8). All but one member felt that the written report from Beaufort County did not contain sufficient details to rule out other godwits

Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*). 10-00-06. Non-accept (3-6). This was the third round of voting on this written report with sketch of a Ruff from Jasper County. After this circulation the majority of committee members felt that the description was too limited and that similar species were not ruled out based on the description or sketch.

Jaeger sp. (*Stercorarius* sp.). 2021-015. Non-accept (1-8). Jaegers and Skuas are reviewable at any time if observed inland in SC. The extremely limited details and long distance from the observer were enough for all but one member to give a non-accept vote.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*). 05-98-22. Non-accept (0-9). On this third round of voting for an Iceland Gull in Georgetown County the committee unanimously agreed that the provided written details did not adequately consider a bleached or pigment-challenged Herring Gull.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*). 2021-014. Non-accept (1-8). The Committee reviewed this written report from Abbeville County under the “Inland Only” review status for Common Tern in SC. All but one member felt that the potential for error was too great considering the limited details and nearly one-mile estimated distance from the observer.

Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*). 11-98-20. Non-accept (1-8). On this third round of voting for a written Masked Booby report from Georgetown County, all but one member chose to err on the side of caution. Cited reasoning includes the distance to the observer, the possibility of an immature Northern Gannett, the limited information given about size, and the observation date.

Monk Parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*). 2019-021. Non-accept (1-8). On this second round of voting for a Monk Parakeet seen in Horry County in 2019, all but one member felt that the origin of this bird was questionable enough to warrant a non-accept vote. The first round of voting on this report took place before the 2020 update of SCBRC’s bylaws, at which time a vote for “Not Established” constituted a vote to Accept. Monk Parakeet sits on SC’s Supplemental List under the Questionable Origin category.

Say’s Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*). 2019-009. Non-accept (3-6). On this third round of voting for a written report and photo of Say’s Phoebe reported from Charleston County in 2019, a majority of members felt this was insufficiently documented. Cited concerns include poor lighting, inexperience, lack of details, and the lack of optics used.

European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*). 2021-010. Non-accept (0-9). Three photos of European Goldfinch taken in Charleston County were considered by the Committee. Because of the presence of this species in pet trade and the lack of nearby established populations, the Committee unanimously voted not to accept the observation. Eight members chose Questionable Origin and one member chose Not Established as their non-

accept votes. European Goldfinch sits on SC's Supplemental List under the Questionable Origin category.

American Tree Sparrow (*Spizelloides arborea*). 03-97-01. Non-accept (2-7). The Committee discovered in 2021 that this report remained unresolved after being reported as such in the 1997-1999 annual report. This second round of voting for an American Tree Sparrow reported from Anderson County in 1997 returned seven non-accept votes. Common reasoning to not accept this report centered around the lack of details of the face and bill in the written report.

Blackpoll Warbler (*Setophaga striata*). 12-98-24. Non-accept (7-3). The Committee remained divided on this written out-of-season report for Blackpoll Warbler, but more than one non-accept vote is enough for non-acceptance in a fourth and final voting session. In general, members thought that the written details supported the identification. Concerns from dissenting members included the unusual nature of the bird being in breeding plumage in Anderson County on December 22.

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