

## 2006 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

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**Harry E. LeGrand, Jr.<sup>1</sup>, Chair, Keith E. Camburn, Samuel Cooper, Richard J. Davis, Eric V. Dean, Wayne K. Forsythe, Russell L. Tyndall**

<sup>1</sup> NC Natural Heritage Program, 1601 MSC, Raleigh, NC 27699-1601

This report enumerates the decisions of the Carolina Bird Club's North Carolina Bird Records Committee during 2006. There were no changes to the membership of the committee during the year. Committee voting information is referenced in parentheses (i.e., year report received, reference number).

### Accepted as Valid

The reported identification is judged to be accurate, and the bird is judged to be of wild origin. Photographs and/or written descriptions of all accepted records have been deposited in the NC Museum of Natural Sciences.

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) (06-11). A flock of 11 birds was seen in a field in Beaufort County for several days in mid-May 2006 by John Register, Curtis Dykstra, and Alan Meijer. The committee accepted photos provided by Dykstra, taken on 16 May. The committee unanimously accepted the record both to identification and to origin (as wild birds). This becomes the second record accepted as being of wild birds, but the first with photos. (A report with photos in 2004 was not accepted because of questions about the origin of the birds.) Thus, the species is elevated from the Provisional List to the Official List.

**Yellow-nosed Albatross** (*Thalassarche chlororhynchos*) (06-06). A remarkable record was of one bird seen on the beach at Cape Hatteras point in Dare County on 11 April 2006. The committee accepted photos of the bird, both perched and in flight, taken by Joe Byrnes; he also provided thorough details. The bird was seen by several other birders that day (see Chat 70:94–95). Amazingly, a Yellow-nosed was seen flying over this cape exactly two years earlier, on 11 April 2004. This 2006 report is now the third accepted record for North Carolina, all documented by photographs.

**Black-bellied Storm-Petrel** (*Fregetta tropica*) (06-09). One was seen in the Gulf Stream on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare County, on 16 July 2006. The committee accepted a photograph taken by Brian Patteson and a thorough description provided by Shawn Smolen-Morton. This is the second record for both North Carolina and United States waters; as the previous record, in 2004, also contained a photograph, the species is already on the Official List.

**Roseate Spoonbill** (*Platalea ajaja*) (06-18). An immature bird, perhaps in its second year, was seen by many birders at Lake Twiddy in Union County throughout most of September 2006. The committee accepted photos of the bird taken by Hop Hopkins and a written description provided by John Buckman. The species is already on the Official List; the Avendex database lists 16 previous state reports. However, this is the first record away from the coast/tidewater regions.

**Snowy Plover** (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) (06-07). One was found at Cape Hatteras point, Dare County, in late May 2006 and was seen by dozens of birders. The committee accepted photos taken by Sidney Mattock and Jeff Pippen; Harry LeGrand provided a written description. This is the second state record. Because of acceptance of photographs, the species is elevated from the Provisional List to the Official List; the other state record was a sighting only.

**Marbled Godwit** (*Limosa fedoa*) (06-15). A remarkable flock of 11 birds was seen by a group of birders at Lake Julian in Buncombe County on 19 April 2006. The committee accepted photos taken by Wayne Forsythe. This is just the second mountain record, and it represents the first inland record for North Carolina during the spring season.

**Franklin's Gull** (*Larus pipixcan*) (06-10). One in breeding plumage was found by John Lindfors along Hooper Lane in Henderson County on the unusual date of 26 June 2006. The committee accepted his written description and photos taken by Wayne Forsythe. The species is already on the Official List, as there are numerous state reports, though this is the first state record in the May–June period (*vide* Avendex database).

**Common Ground-Dove** (*Columbina passerina*) (06-14). Marilyn Westphal found one on 25 June 2006 in Henderson County. The committee accepted photos of the bird taken by Wayne Forsythe later that day. The species is already on the Official List, but this is apparently just the fourth report for the mountain region (*vide* Avendex database).

**Ash-throated Flycatcher** (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) (06-04). One was photographed by Mike Dunn at the Pungo unit of Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Washington County, on 28 January 2006. The committee accepted Dunn's photographs. The species is already on the Official List, and Avendex lists ten previous state reports.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher** (06-05). One was photographed at Cape Hatteras point, Dare County, on 27 December 2005, and was seen by at least five observers on the Christmas Bird Count that day. The committee accepted photos taken by James Reuter and a written description provided by Chris Eley, who initially discovered and identified the bird. The species is already on the Official List.

**Bell's Vireo** (*Vireo bellii*) (06-17). One was photographed by James Parnell at Carolina Beach State Park in New Hanover County on 21 September 2006. Its identity remained uncertain until photographs were circulated for public comment on the Frontiers of Bird Identification listserv. With the help of comments from persons familiar with this species,

the committee accepted Parnell's photos. This is the second accepted state record, and the first documented with photos. The species is thus elevated from the Provisional List to the Official List.

**Black-whiskered Vireo** (*Vireo altiloquus*) (06-08). One was initially heard singing and then photographed by Jeff Lewis in his yard in Manteo, Dare County, on 29 June 2006. The committee accepted his photos and brief text on the sighting. The species is already on the Official List, and this is now the seventh state record, all from coastal areas from April through June.

**Varied Thrush** (*Ixoreus naevius*) (06-03). One, apparently an adult female, was seen by Ginger Travis on three dates between 19 and 29 December 2005 in her yard near Hillsborough, Orange County. The committee accepted her written description. However, as no photographs were taken, the species is placed onto the Provisional List, as the first accepted sight record for North Carolina. The committee has received at least three other sight reports in the past but all were voted Unaccepted.

**Clay-colored Sparrow** (*Spizella pallida*) (06-12). One spent the winter of 2005–06 at Walt Kent's feeder in Gamewell, Caldwell County. The committee accepted his photos and written description. There are numerous records for the species in the state, but there are very few in winter for the upper Piedmont.

**Clay-colored Sparrow** (06-13). Wayne Forsythe photographed one in Henderson County on 19 January 2006. The committee accepted his photograph, apparently just the second in winter for the mountain region (*vide* Avendex database).

**Bullock's Oriole** (*Icterus bullockii*) (06-01). An adult male was present at a feeder in Conover, Catawba County, in January 2006. The committee accepted photographs taken by Mary Ann McCree on 14 January. The species is already on the Official List, though very few reports have had documenting photos. The Avendex database lists 11 previous state reports.

**Bullock's Oriole** (06-02). Another adult male was at a feeder in rural Chatham County from late January into March (Chat 70:58). The committee accepted photos taken by Will Cook and Jeff Pippen. This is now the 13th state report, based on the Avendex database.

### **Unaccepted Sighting**

The bird is judged to be a species other than that reported, or the bird is insufficiently documented to identification of the species reported.

**Whimbrel** (*Numenius phaeopus phaeopus*) (06-22). One bird of the European subspecies was reported from an impoundment in Hyde County in December 2005. Because the details were not convincing, the observer was inexperienced, and an immature White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) was observed by a committee member at the exact location a few days earlier, the report was not accepted. The observer presumably saw an immature White Ibis. This subspecies has been reported on several previous occasions in the state, though none of these earlier reports have been reviewed by the committee.

Of course, the full species is on the Official List, as it is a relatively common migrant.

**Ross's Gull** (*Rhodostethia rosea*) (06-20). One adult reported from the Outer Banks in early December 2006 was not accepted. The written description was incomplete, and the observer apparently had no familiarity with small gulls. The species is exceedingly rare in the eastern United States. A Bonaparte's Gull (*Larus philadelphia*) was the likely bird in question. This was the first report of Ross's Gull for the state; thus, the species is not on the state list.

**Blue-throated Hummingbird** (*Lampornis clemenciae*) (06-21). A female was reported at a feeder from the eastern Piedmont during early September 2006. No photos were obtained, and the written description—not from the observer but second-hand from a birding friend—contained very few details; thus, the report was not accepted. This is the first report for the state, and thus the species is not on the state list.

**Bell's Vireo** (06-16). An observer reported a probable Bell's Vireo in Moore County in July 2006; the bird was also noted in song. The report was not accepted by the committee because the species is very difficult to identify, the species existed on the state list (at that time) only as a single accepted sight record, the early summer date is quite unusual, and juvenile White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*) could not be completely ruled out.

### **Unaccepted Origin**

The reported identification is judged to be accurate, but the origin of the bird is uncertain (and thus might not be of natural origin).

**Black Swan** (*Cygnus atratus*) (06-19). One adult was present for at least six months during the first half of 2005 on Lake Norman near Mooresville in Iredell County. The committee accepted to specific identity a description as provided by Wayne McBryde; however, as the species is mainly non-migratory, is restricted to Australia and New Zealand, and is kept in captivity, it was not accepted as to a natural origin. A few previous state reports of Black Swans have been made; these have not been reviewed for origin by the committee, though such review might not be prudent.

### **Discussion**

The review of reports by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee for 2006 resulted in adding one species to the state's Accepted List: Varied Thrush is added to the Provisional List. More important, three species that were on the Provisional List in 2005 have been elevated to the Official List in 2006, thanks to photographs that were accepted by the committee. These species are Snowy Plover (second state record), Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (second state record considered to be wild birds), and Bell's Vireo (second state record). The current Official List is now 451 species, and the Provisional List is 14 species, for a total of 465 species on the state's Accepted List.

### **Acknowledgments**

In addition to the many people named above who provided written material and photographs for the committee to review, we thank Kent Fiala—webmaster of the Carolina Bird Club—for placing a number of the photographs on the club's website for committee review and sending electronic submission of rare bird report forms to the committee chair.