

New Jersey Bird Records Committee — Annual Report 2019

by Tom Boyle, Tom Brown, Carole Hughes, and Bill Boyle

The New Jersey Bird Records Committee (hereafter “NJBRC” or “the Committee”) met on 31 March 2019 at Cape May to complete review of rare bird reports for the year 2018. During the year and at the meeting, one hundred thirty-three reports were considered and voted on. There were two new additions to the New Jersey state list in 2018, so the grand total of the New Jersey State List stands at 481 species through 2018. The current State List and the current NJBRC Review List are available on the Committee web site at <<http://www.njbrc.com>>. Click on Lists and Annual Reports. At the March 2018 meeting, the Committee voted to change to just one meeting per year and to conduct business on-line as much as possible

Voting NJBRC members during the period covered by this report were Tom Boyle, Tom Brown, Glen Davis, Vince Elia, Sam Galick, Carole Hughes, Jonathan Klizas, Linda Mack, Tom Reed, Frank Sencher, Jr., and Dave Weber. Vince Elia continued as Committee Chair and non-voting member Bill Boyle continued as Secretary.

Reports should be sent to <njbrcreport@gmail.com>, or via snail mail to Bill Boyle, Secretary, NJBRC, 13 Strawberry Lane, Cape May, NJ 08204. In addition, more information can be found at the NJBRC website <<http://www.njbrc.com/>>.

The NJBRC would also like to thank all the observers who submitted documentation during the past year. The Committee would have an impossible job without the support of these birders. Although digital photography has made the documentation of many rarities easier, there is still an important place for field notes; good notes can strengthen the case made by photos of less-than-stellar quality.

Field notes can also make the case for rare birds that are recorded only as brief mentions on the Internet. If you see a Review List bird and post a report to an e-mail list, please take a little extra time and submit a

description to the NJBRC as well. Although the identification of rarities with no supporting details is often correct it cannot be accepted as part of the historical record, which relies on supporting evidence that can be consulted by researchers many years in the future. Even a brief description, or a sketch by an avowed non-artist, can be enough to support an observation well enough to add it to the official record. During the year, the Committee voted to remove Leach’s Storm-Petrel and White Ibis from the Review List; the former is regular offshore and the number of reports of the latter have increased dramatically in recent years.

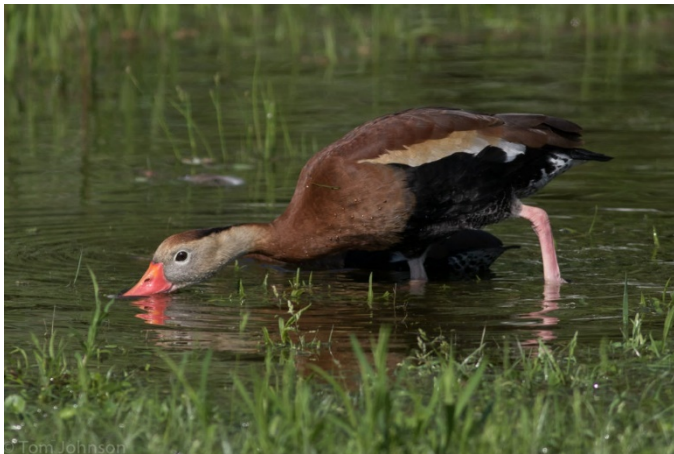
The format used to present data is standardized. Records are grouped by Committee actions, with Accepted records listed first, followed by reports that the Committee did not accept (identification was not sufficiently supported by the documentation supplied), and then a group for records treated specially. Within each group, records are presented in phylogenetic order (according to the *A.O.U. Check-list*, 7th edition and supplements through 2017). For each species, the English and scientific names are given, followed by the current total of accepted state records. The record(s) considered by the Committee are then listed, arranged by date. For each record entry, the internal NJBRC index number is given, followed by date, location, and county. If the report involved more than one individual, the number of birds is given following the location; all records involve a single bird unless otherwise noted. Then, for accepted records, data on finders and documenters are given. The finder’s name, if known, is listed first, followed by a semicolon and the names of the other observers who submitted some form of documentation to the Committee (in alphabetical order), accompanied by symbols: “*” indicates that written documentation was submitted; “ph” denotes a photo or videotape. Following these data, comments are provided to explain important or interesting aspects of the records.

Other abbreviations used: b = banded; Co. = County; m.ob. = many observers; NJAS = New Jersey Audubon Society; NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; Res. = Reservoir; SP = State Park; t = audio recording; Twp. = Township; WMA = Wildlife Management Area.

ACCEPTED RECORDS

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis* (23)

- 2019-035. 20 May 2018. (3) Cape May, Cape May Co. L. Sholl, T. Johnson*(ph), B. Bassett(ph), m.ob.
- 2019-051. 4 – 5 June 2018. (10). Hamilton Twp., Mercer Co. J. Parris*(ph), A. Hoyt.
- 2019-052. 15 June 2018. (1). Lenape Park, Union Co. D. Bernstein*(ph), J. Whitehurst(ph).
- 2019-054. 24 June 2018. (12). Cape May, Cape May Co. P. Belardo*(ph).
- 2019-055. 29 June – 7 July 2018. (10). Monroe Twp., Monmouth Co. A. Rigazio*, D. Brill*(ph), B. Ahern-Wilson, J. Austin-Cole(ph).



One of three Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks at a campground in Cape May, May 20, 2018. Photo/T. Johnson.

It was another banner year for Black-bellied Whistling Ducks in New Jersey, with five records from four counties, including first records for Union and Middlesex Counties. This species is becoming an annual visitor to New Jersey with sightings every year since 2014. This is the second year in a row with five records. Observers should fully document all sightings as potential escapees are unlikely but possible.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchos* (18)

- 2019-016. 1 – 20 February 2018. Warinanco Park, Union Co. A. Bernstein(ph), A Chodan, m.ob.
- 2019-105. 17 – 18 November 2018. Rahway River Park, Union Co. W. Whitehead*(ph), T. Smith(ph).

Pink-footed Goose has been recorded every year in New Jersey since the first state record in March 2011. Union County produced both accepted records in 2018, a first for the county. The first was observed early in the year in Warinanco Park, staying with a flock of Canada Geese and delighted many observers by staying for most of February. The second record was in November at the nearby Rahway River Park. The small parks in Union County have become gathering places for Canada Geese over the years and have hosted species such as Barnacle Goose, Cackling Goose and Greater White-fronted Goose. It is well worth checking these spots in the winter.

“Black” Brant *Branta bernicla nigricans* (Since 1996) (36)

- 2019-039. 1 April 2018. Sylvan Lake, Monmouth Co. J. Denesevich*(ph).
- 2019-040. 13 April 2018. Sandy Hook, Monmouth Co. M. Collins*(ph).
- 2019-042. 9 May 2018. Jarvis Sound, Cape May Co. M. O’Brien*(ph), L. Zemaitis, C. Busch.
- 2019-043. 16 – 22 May 2018. Sandy Hook, Monmouth Co. T. Boyle*(ph).

Careful searching through Brant flocks yielded four records of “Black” Brant in 2018. Three of the records came from the North Shore; this area has produced most of the sightings in New Jersey since 1996. *B. b. nigricans* is one of several subspecies assessed by the NJBRC. Black Brant winter primarily on the Pacific Coast but strays have been found in NJ most years since 2001. Intergrades between the two species are possible, observers should document unusual Brant sightings carefully, preferably with photographs.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* (31)

- 2019-005. 20 January 2018. Lake Takanassee, Monmouth Co. R. Brezak(ph).
- 2019-009. 4 – 13 February 2018. Wall Township, Monmouth Co. S. Barnes, L. Mack(ph), R. Dieterich, m.ob.
- 2019-010. 14 – 15 February 2018. Holmdel, Monmouth Co. D. Hockenbury(ph), N. Rach*(ph).

- 2019-107. 21 November 2018. Robbinsville, Mercer Co. L. Zirlin*(ph), S. Matson*(ph), P. Cadigan*(ph).

Barnacle Geese are breeders of the arctic North Atlantic and Baltic Sea, however annual records have occurred in New Jersey since 2002. They can often be found associating with flocks of Canada Geese. 2018 was a good year for Barnacle Geese, producing four sightings, three in Monmouth County and one at Mercer Corporate Park in Robbinsville.

Trumpeter Swan *Cygnus buccinator* (9)

- 2019-004. 21 January – 31 March 2018. S. Barnes*, L. Mack(ph), M. Jaworsky*(ph), R. Scherr*(ph), K. Thompson, m.ob.
- 2019-113. 29 November – 27 March 2019. Assunpink WMA, Monmouth Co. S. Matson(ph), M. Faizan(ph), V. Singlinger*, m.ob.

Trumpeter Swans are a relatively new species to New Jersey with the first record occurring at Ringwood State Park in 2012. Multiple observers documented Trumpeter Swans at Assunpink WMA both early in January 2018 and again starting in November 2018. The birds were observed both on the main lake at Assunpink as well as the nearby Stone Tavern Lake. Assunpink WMA has hosted Trumpeter Swans each winter since 2013/2014. While impossible to be sure, these may be returning birds.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* (11)

- 2019-001. 7 January – 27 February 2018. Monmouth and Ocean Cos. K. Leonard*(ph), V. Gauthier, A. Tongas(ph), S. Forsyth(ph), m.ob.
- 2019-021. 24 February – 27 March 2018. Sandy Hook, Monmouth Co. N. Kazanjian, L. & R. Fanning*(ph), L. Mack(ph), K. Leonard*(ph), m.ob.

For the second year in a row, Tufted Ducks appeared in New Jersey. The state's tenth record was a female-type bird that lingered for almost two months moving around between ponds along the North Shore. A stunning adult male Tufted Duck was initially found in late February at Sandy Hook in the North Pond and was well observed and photographed late in March during a NJ Audubon field trip. Most Tufted Duck records in the state occurred prior to 2003. Only four records including the 2018 sightings have been recorded since then.



The long-staying drake Tufted Duck at Sandy Hook. Photo/L. Mack.

Barrow's Goldeneye *Bucephala islandica* (23)

- 2019-002 1 January 2018 – 21 January 2018. Delaware River, Warren Co. S. Thompson(ph), C. Williams.

A female Barrow's Goldeneye was once again found with a group of Common Goldeneyes on the Delaware River. The Warren County section of the Delaware River also had records of a female Barrow's in 2014, 2015 and 2016. It is possible that this may be the same female demonstrating site fidelity. Separating female Barrow's Goldeneyes from female Common Goldeneyes can be challenging as bill color alone is not definitive. Field marks such as head shape and head color should also be carefully noted.

Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* (70)

- 2019-003. 10 January – 18 February 2018. Round Valley Res., Hunterdon Co. M. Collins*(ph), F. Sencher*(ph), N. Kirkos, m.ob.
- 2019-088. 12 October 2018. Forsythe NWR, Atlantic Co. R. Leifeste*, K. Miller(ph), S. Galick*(ph).

Eared Grebes returned to New Jersey again in 2018 in two spots that have featured multiple records in the past. The Round Valley Reservoir bird stayed just over a month and associated with a small group of Horned Grebes giving observers an excellent comparison between the two species. A second Eared Grebe made a brief one-day appearance at Forsythe NWR along the wildlife drive and was photographed by multiple observers.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* (24)

- 2019-046. 29 May – 23 June 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. D. Irons*(ph), J. Reb, M. Pasquarello(ph), M. O'Brien*

The first Eurasian Collared-Dove record since 2012 was found in late May around the Coral Avenue dune crossing in Cape May Point. Subsequent sightings occurred on June 12th and June 23rd all in the general vicinity of the dune crossings at Cape May. The committee believes these records are probably all the same bird due to the timing and proximity of the records.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica* (71)

- 2019-050. 30 – 31 May 2018. Barnegat, Ocean Co. D. Ortuso(ph), A. Majewski.
- 2019-068. 25 August – 9 September 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. M. Lanzone*, D. Weber*, J. Red*, A. Dreelin*.
- 2019-072. 2 September 2018. Hopewell, Mercer Co. A. Kuhn*.
- 2019-111. 25 November 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. T. Reed*(ph).

There were again multiple records of White-winged Doves reported in 2018 in New Jersey. White-winged Dove are distinctive, and the identification is very straightforward. Over the years the vast majority of these records come from coastal locations such as Cape May and Sandy Hook and two of 2018’s sightings were in Cape May. However, Mercer County had its first ever record in early September at a backyard feeder. Another lucky Ocean County birder took an excellent photo of one at her feeder in Barnegat.

Rufous Hummingbird *Selasphorus rufus*. (45)

- 2019-099 1 – 2 October 2018. Forked River, Ocean Co. D. Crawford*, A. Davis*(ph).
- 2019-103 5 – 21 November 2018. Barnegat and Barnegat Light, Ocean Co. D. Ortuso(ph), R. Dodelson, J. Howland(ph), P. Cadigan(ph).
- 2019-104 1 – 17 November 2018. Marlton, Burlington Co. D. La Puma*.
- 2019-108 2 November 2018 – 21 January 2019 +. Beachwood, Ocean Co. D. La Puma*.

Four records of Rufous Hummingbird occurred during 2018. Western hummingbirds have a pattern of appearing in the state at backyard feeders in fall and winter, which was again the case this year. The first bird was an adult male who stayed two days at a feeder in Forked River and was photographed. An adult female was banded by David La Puma at a feeder in Barnegat and was re-found several days later at

another location in Barnegat Light. Another Rufous Hummingbird was banded in Marlton, NJ and identified by David as a hatch year female. A fourth bird was also banded and identified as a hatch year female and stayed through the winter at a location in Beachwood, NJ.

Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinica*. (75)

- 2019-063. 13 August 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. C. Parkinson.
- 2019-118. 17 December 2018. Lower Alloways Creek, Salem Co. J. Fox(ph), fide D. Weber.

Purple Gallinules have a history of showing up in unexpected locations in New Jersey. This year’s first record was an adult bird found deceased along the road in Cape May. The specimen was handed over to CMBO for transport to the Academy of Natural Science in Philadelphia. Salem County’s second record was a young bird found in mid-December. This bird was taken to the Cedar Run Rehabilitation Center in Burlington County.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* (2)

- 2019-026. 8 – 10 April 2018. Pedricktown Marsh, Gloucester Co. J. Stippick*(ph), S. Keller*, S. Glynn*(ph), A. Mart*, m.ob..

There was a tremendous amount of excitement in the birding community when New Jersey’s second ever record of Black-tailed Godwit was found at the Pedricktown Marsh. The only other record occurred in 1971. The initial finder made a very careful detailed observation of the bird, ruling out other godwit species based on the underwing and tail patterns and was able to digiscope the bird. The godwit stayed in this location for three days, affording many birders a chance to view this mega-rarity for the state.



Just the second ever for New Jersey, this Black-tailed Godwit was a three-day visitor to Pedricktown, Salem County. Photo/J. Stippick.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax* (Since 2011) (13)

- 2019-025. 3 – 13 April 2018. Heislerville WMA, Cumberland Co. B. Johnson, S. Keller*(ph), D. Yochum(ph).
- 2019-029. 23 – 29 April 2018. Heislerville WMA, Cumberland Co. B. Moscatello, S. Keller(ph), M. Pasquarello(ph), C. Wooster(ph).
- 2019-033. 12 May 2018. Sayreville, Middlesex Co. D. Brill, T. Ostrand*(ph), A. Laquidara, C. Williams(ph).
- 2019-057. 21 April 2017. Cape May, Cape May Co. D. Welch*.
- 2019-082. 7 July 2018. Forsythe NWR, Atlantic Co. A. Grandys(ph).

After years with none or very few records, reports of Ruff have increased over the past few years, with four in 2016, three in 2017, and four in 2018. The belated 2017 record was of a female seen only in flight, while the females at Heislerville (2019-025) and Sayreville were well-photographed. Likewise, good photos were obtained of the males in breeding plumage at Heislerville (2nd bird) and Forsythe NWR.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* (4)

- 2019-060. 23 July 2018. Forsythe NWR, Atlantic Co. J. Amesbury*(ph).

Just the fourth record for New Jersey, this Red-necked Stint was roosting with a flock of Semipalmated Sandpipers from which it “stood out like a sore thumb.” The observer was able to take some quick photos before it took off with the flock, not to be seen again.

Red Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius* (Since 2012 on land) (14)

- 2019-091. 28 – 29 October 2018. Round Valley Res., Hunterdon Co. A. Mart*, F. Sencher, Jr., A. Smith(ph).

Red Phalarope is a common to abundant migrant far off shore, but is infrequently seen from land. This juvenile was present for two days at Round Valley, but was difficult to locate

South Polar Skua *Stercorarius maccormicki* (22)

- 2019-065. 13 August 2018. Pelagic trip, off Atlantic Co. S. Barnes, T. Johnson(ph), m.ob.

This individual, probably an immature, circled the boat at close range, where it was well-photographed. Most of the records of this species have come from late May, but that may be more a function of the number of pelagic trips than timing of its occurrences.

Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus* (Since 2012 from land) (7)

- 2019-119. 19 November 2018. Avalon, Cape May Co. T. Reed*.
- 2019-131. 27 November 2018. Avalon, Cape May Co. T. Reed*.
- 2019-132. 5 November 2018. Avalon, Cape May Co. T. Reed*.
- 2019-133. 17 November 2018. Avalon, Cape May Co. T. Reed*.

Pomarine Jaegers are fairly common fall migrants well offshore, but occasionally come close to land, often after storms or other strong winds. Separating them from Parasitic Jaegers can be tricky and involves a combination of size, shape, plumage characteristics, and flight pattern. All four November records were of birds passing by the Avalon Seawatch and seen in direct comparison (and competition) with Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls.

Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus* (Since 2013 from land) (7)

- 2019-136. 22 October 2018. Avalon, Cape May Co. T. Reed*.

Even rarer from land than the larger Pomarine Jaeger and smaller than Parasitic Jaeger, Long-tailed Jaeger can be distinguished from the latter by its slenderer wings, relatively longer tail, and short, stubby bill. They show much less white in the primaries, typically only two white feather shafts on the upper surface of the wings. Juveniles are quite variable and can be difficult to identify.

Dovekie *Alle alle* (Since 2012 from land) (23)

- 2019-014. 24 January 2018. Manasquan Inlet, Ocean Co. S. Glynn*(ph), B. Dodelson, R. Wright.

Dovekies are often common at sea of New Jersey in the winter, but infrequently seen from land. This individual flew into Manasquan Inlet where it was photographed and seen by several observers. It offered

no hint of the invasion that was to follow one year later.

Thick-billed Murre *Uria lomvia* (21)

- 2019-019. 6 – 7 March 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. V. Elia, B. Boyle, K. Lukens(ph), B. Bassett, T. Reed(ph), m.ob.
- 2019-020. 14 March 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. T. Reed*(ph), V. Elia, J. Cuomo, et al.
- 2020-070. 1 January 2013. Manasquan Inlet, Ocean Co. T. St. Pierre(ph).

Although they breed farther north than Common Murre, Thick-billed Murre is the species most often encountered in New Jersey. They are very rare as far south as Cape May County, however. The bird seen on March 6 looked to be in poor health and may not be the same bird as that seen the next day, but photographed more distantly. Another was photographed as it flew close by Cape May Point a week later. The 2013 Manasquan Inlet report was only recently submitted, but includes a good photograph.



Thick-billed Murre at Sunset Beach, Cape May, March 6, 2018. Photo/K. Lukens.

Pacific Loon *Gavia pacifica* (42)

- 2019-013. 14 January 2018. Manasquan Inlet, Ocean Co. S. Lane*.
- 2019-058. 15 July – 8 August 2018. Nummy Island, Cape May Co. C. Busch, J. Nemeth, S. Galick*(ph), m.ob.
- 2019-134. 14 October 2018. Avalon, Cape May Co. T. Reed*.

Records of Pacific Loon have increased significantly since 2009 and now average about three a year. This is probably due in part to greater birder awareness of the possibilities and careful scrutiny of winter loons. Most

reports are of birds in basic (winter) plumage, but the Nummy Island individual was a molting adult that did not appear to be in good health.

Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris* (1)

- 2019-049. 20 April 2018. Atlantic Ocean off Cape May Co. O. O'Brien*(ph).



The first photographically confirmed Black-browed Albatross for New Jersey and one of the few for the mid-Atlantic States. Photo/O. O'Brien.

New Jersey's first confirmed Black-browed Albatross was seen following a research vessel with gulls and photographed at close range sitting on the water about 70 miles east of Cape Henlopen, Delaware. This location is in New Jersey waters as determined by the closest point of land.

Black-capped Petrel *Pterodroma hasitata* (9)

- 2019-066. 13 August 2018. (18) Pelagic trip off Cape May Co. T. Johnson(ph), m.ob.

This southern species is being seen with increasing frequency on late summer pelagic trips, but the numbers seen on this pelagic trip are unprecedented. The group had six different encounters with flocks of up to seven birds, many of which were well-photographed.



One of the numerous Black-capped Petrels seen on the August 13 pelagic trip. Photo/J. Joshon.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* (Since 2012 from land) (11)

- 2019-071. 2 September 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. M. Chelemer*, T. Reed(ph).
- 2019-073. 8 – 9 September 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. J. Funk*(ph), D. Taylor*, J. Reb, et al.
- 2019-084. 24 September 2018. Avalon, Cape May Co. T. Reed*.
- 2019-085. 25 September 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. T. Johnson*.
- 2019-127. 25 September 2018. (5) Avalon, Cape May Co. T. Reed*.
- 2019-128. 2 October 2018. Avalon, Cape May Co. T. Reed*.
- 2019-129. 29 October 2018. Avalon, Cape May Co. T. Reed*.

Manx Shearwater is a Review List species when seen from dry land, where it is far less expected than offshore. 2018 produced a record number of shore-based sightings, all of which were documented with either photos or written descriptions.

White-faced Storm-Petrel *Pelagodroma marina* (11)

- 2019-067. 6 August 2018. (3) Atlantic Ocean off Ocean Co. D. Gochfeld*, T. Johnson(ph).

White-faced Storm-Petrel is apparently a rare, but regular, late-summer migrant in the deeper off-shore waters of New Jersey. A single bird was photographed, then two others were seen an hour later by the observers.

Band-rumped Storm-Petrel *Oceanodroma castro* (15)

- 2019-064. 13 August 2018. (224). Pelagic trip, off Atlantic Co. D. Gochfeld(ph), K. Leonard(ph), m.ob.

A late-summer pelagic trip produced record numbers of this warm-water species. The increasing abundance of Band-rumped Storm-Petrels on such trips led the Committee to move the species to “Sightings from land” category. Observers should still fully document the species whenever encountered, however, as there is still much to learn about the subspecies (and potentially future species) involved.

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* (10)

- 2019-034. 17 May 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. R. Crossley, T. Johnson*(ph), D. Welch(ph), m.ob.

This juvenile bird soared along the beaches at Cape May Point for the better part of an hour to the delight of nearly three dozen observers. The excellent photos obtained allowed the elimination of the other possible frigatebirds.



Immature Magnificent Frigatebird at Cape May Point, May 17, 2018. Photo/D. Welch.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* (24)

- 2019-007. 25 February 2018. Shark River Inlet, Monmouth Co. C. Holzapfel*(ph).
- 2019-135. 9 October 2018. Avalon, Cape May Co. T. Reed*

Previous records of Brown Booby in the state have occurred between April and October, so the appearance of a sub-adult on the north shore in February was quite a surprise. The juvenile bird seen at the Avalon Seawatch was at a more expected date. Half of the New Jersey records of this species have come from the past six years.

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga* (18)

- 2019-048. 30 May 2018. Kittatinny Valley SP, Sussex Co. A. Boyd, K. Cronin(ph).

This individual, seen perched and in flight in the northwest corner of the state, was well-photographed. The long, thin neck and well-defined breast pattern conclusively rule out a cormorant, the family most often confused with this species.



Anhinga at Kittatinny Valley SP, May 30, 2018. Photo/Cronin.

Roseate Spoonbill *Plataea ajaja* (9)

- 2019-044. 25 May – 1 June 2018. Columbia, Warren Co. C. Welles*, J. Osborne(ph), M. Collins(ph), M. Gallagher(ph).
- 2019-053. 24 – 29 June 2018. Forsythe NWR, Atlantic Co. J. Austin-Cole*, J. Amesbury(ph), R. Fischer(ph).
- 2019-056. 2 July 2018. Rio Grande, Cape May Co. A. Harlan*.
- 2019-059. 22 July – 5 August 2018. Wallkill NWR, Sussex Co. L Detloff(ph), L. Scrima*(ph), M. Ofenloch, K. Miller*.



This young Roseate Spoonbill spent part of its week-long visit to western Warren County hanging around a truck parking lot. Photo/M. Collins.

Two records in 2017 were followed by a remarkable four in 2018. Spoonbills have recently expanded their breeding range into Georgia and South Carolina and have turned up as far north as Quebec, Minnesota and central Maine. The Warren and Sussex records are the first away from tidewater in the state.

Gyr Falcon *Falco rusticolus* (21)

- 2019-120. 17 November 2018 – 18 March 2019. Warren Co. M. Hiotis*, M. Collins*(ph), L. Wolf, m.ob.

A dark morph bird that moved some distance between Pennsylvania, Alpha and Merrill Creek Res. and is believed to be the same individual that wintered here the preceding year. Obtaining photographs is very important when documenting a potential Gyr Falcon. Not only do Peregrine and Prairie Falcons need to be eliminated but also Lanner, Saker, Barbary or any combination of hybrids from a possible falconer's escape. Even Gyr Falcon hybrids are kept in New Jersey and can cause real identification problems.



Returning for its second consecutive winter, this dark Gyr Falcon was frequently seen along Oberly Road, Warren County. Photo/M. Collins.

Ash-throated Flycatcher *Myiarchus cinerascens*. (74)

- 2019-112. 17 November 2018. Lincoln Park, Morris Co. I. Kossak*
- 2019-114. 3 December 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. R. Horn(ph), T. Johnson(ph), C. Payne(ph), V. Elia(ph), m.ob.
- 2019-115. 1 – 24 December 2018, Mercer Co. Park, Mercer Co. M. Hodanish, C. Brown, S. Ausabel(ph), M. Normandia*, m.ob.
- 2019-120. 25 December 2018, Assunpink WMA, Monmouth Co. J. Parris(ph).

Another four new records and all within the expected late fall/early winter time frame. Three of these birds were photographed, and a detailed submission was given on the Lincoln Park bird which eliminated other *Myiarchus* species.

Gray Kingbird *Tyrannus dominicensis* (19)

- 2019-079. 20 May 2018. Atlantic Ocean off Ocean Co. P. Kirby-Miller(ph).

Multiple photos were taken of this bird sitting on the rigging of a sailboat 75 nautical miles offshore. Vagrancy patterns in Gray Kingbird occur mainly from mid-May thru mid-June and again from late August thru fall in the northeast. Of all the accepted NJ records, most have occurred in fall. Aside from a July 4 2009 Cape May record, all NJ records fit the pattern nicely. Very much a coastal species, inland records are very unusual.

Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya* (23)

- 2019-081. 1 October 2018. Sandy Hook, Monmouth Co. C. Buchanan*.

Found by an experienced observer and well described near the entrance to the north beach pavilion. Late September/early October seems to be the peak of the vagrancy period for Say's Phoebe in New Jersey.

Bell's Vireo *Vireo bellii* (11)

- 2019-093. 30 October 2018. Forsythe NWR, Atlantic Co. J. Votta*(ph).

At first glance the observer thought the bird might have been a late Philly Vireo, but he was able to stick with the bird, describe details and get photos. A great find, the first for Atlantic Co. and only the second away from Cape May. The September/October time frame seems to be the most likely time for moving active migrants.

Yellow-green Vireo *Vireo flavoviridis* (1)

- 2019-080. 26 September 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. L-M Koitsch*,b,(ph), m.ob.

As crazy as this record sounds, there are fairly recent banding records for South Carolina (22 Sept 2016) and for Massachusetts (4 Sept 2011). This bird was banded and photographed at the Nature Conservancy's South Cape May Meadows Preserve. A tropical species, Yellow-green Vireos mainly breed from northern Mexico into Central America. They are regular vagrants to California and have become irregular breeders in the lower Rio Grande valley of Texas. This becomes the first state record.



Yellow-green Vireo banded at Cape May, September 26, 2018. A first for New Jersey. Photo/L. Koitsch.

Brown-headed Nuthatch *Sitta pusilla*. (12)

- 2019-037. 15 May 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. D. Irons*, V. Elia*, M. Pasquarello(ph).
- 2019-038. 21 May 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. D. Irons*, J. Reb, V. Elia*, T. Reed.
- 2019-045. 29 May 2018. (3). Cape May, Cape May Co. D. Irons(ph), J. Reb.
- 2019-126. 28 March 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. S. Peters*(ph).



One of three Brown-headed Nuthatches at Cape May Point, May 29, 2018. Photo/D. Irons

Thus far all records of this species have come from Cape Island and have been recorded from late March through July. The May 29 record involved three birds. This species is increasing as a spring overshoot/post

nesting wanderer to New Jersey. Of the now 12 records, 10 have been recorded in the last 5 years. When will we get our first record away from Cape May? When will they breed?

Townsend's Solitaire *Myadestes townsendi* (16)

- 2019-023. 2 April 2018. Brick Twp., Ocean Co. J. Demko*(ph).
- 2019-106. 17 – 19 November 2018. Sandy Hook, Monmouth Co. L. Scachetti(ph), J. Pescatore(ph), L. & R. Fanning*, L. Mack, S Barnes.



Stunning photograph of the adult Townsend's Solitaire at Sandy Hook, the second record there. Photo/L. Scachetti.

The Brick Township bird was a one-day wonder and may have been a spring migrant. Sandy Hook got its second record with a bird feeding on red cedar berries at the campground. Whether in the mountains or along the coast, your best bet for finding this thrush of the western mountains is to look in areas with plenty of berries in the late October/November time frame.

LeConte's Sparrow *Ammodramus leconteii* (46)

- 2019-100. 12 November 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. B. Boyle*, M. Watkins, K. Horn(ph), R. Horn(ph), S. Wilson(ph), m.ob.
- 2019-125. 29 – 30 December 2018. Belford, Monmouth Co. M. Collines*(ph), T. Boyle, S. Barnes.



LeConte's Sparrow is increasingly being found in New Jersey during fall migration, this one at South Cape May Meadows. Photo. S. Wilson.

The first bird was found at the South Cape May Meadows during their peak of fall migration, while the second was seen on a Christmas count. First found in New Jersey in the 1970's, this species became a rare but regular low-density migrant through the state during the 1990's. In the 20 years since its status remains the same, except for a slight increase in wintering reports.

"Gambel's" White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys gambeli* (17)

- 2019-027. 1 – 7 April 2018. Sandy Hook, Monmouth Co. M. Collins*(ph), L. Mack, S. Barnes.
- 2019-122. 20 October 2018. Duke Farms, Somerset Co. J. Ellerbusch*(ph).

This sub-species can be a difficult identification problem. The Duke farms bird was a typical adult while the Sandy Hook record was of a more difficult to separate immature. The eastern subspecies *leucophrys* meets the west Taiga subspecies *gambelli* around James and Hudson's Bays. Although the songs are a bit different, interbreeding between the subspecies does occur. Intergrades with characters of both subspecies are found and only *gambelli* that are most typical can be accepted.

Swainson's Warbler *Limnothlypis swainsonii* (25)

- 2019-031. 27 April – 28 June 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. A. Kvarnäck*, T. Johnson, t(ph), T. Baxter, m.ob.
- 2019-032. 5 May 2018. Garret Mt. Reservation, Passaic Co. G. Schultze, C. Hughes*, C. Tacaks(ph), m.ob.



This Swainson's Warbler at Garret Mt. Reservation was enjoyed by many during its visit May 5, 2018. Photo/C. Tacaks.

Ninety percent of Swainson's Warbler records in New Jersey are in the spring and are usually singing male overshoots. These two records fit the pattern. Both birds were well photographed. The Cape May bird sang on territory for almost two months at Cape May Point SP, before relocating briefly to Higbee Beach WMA. It is almost certainly the same male that sang in the same spot at the park for two days in 2017.

Black-throated Gray Warbler *Setophaga nigrescens* (29)

- 2019-087. 10 October 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. T. Younkin(ph).
- 2019-089. 12 – 18 October 2018. East Windsor, Mercer. S. Matson*(ph), V. Nichnadowicz*, A. Sandoval(ph), m.ob.
- 2019-090. 19 – 26 October 2018. Piscataway, Middlesex Co. L. Bizarro*, P. Belardo*, D. Brill(ph), J. DiMaio*, m.ob.



The third of this years Black-throated Gray Warblers, this individual entertained numerous birders in Piscataway. Photo/D. Brill

New Jersey's most regular vagrant western warbler. After last year's two sighting, the three in 2018 is the highest total for a single year. The Cape May bird was photographed at Higbee Beach WMA, while the East

Windsor and Piscataway birds lingered for days and were enjoyed by many. A bird of the foothills and brushlands of the mountain west, they are often found foraging in areas of red cedar here in New Jersey.

Townsend's Warbler *Setophaga townsendi* (16)

- 2019-076. 9 September 2018. Sandy Hook, Monmouth Co. T. Boyle(ph).

A dull, possible first fall female, this individual was seen during the morning flight of songbirds at north beach. It was photographed, but didn't linger. This species is most likely to occur in fall. Our earliest was in August, and many have been found in December. Although there are fewer than 20 records for New Jersey, this is the fifth record for Sandy Hook.

Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana* (52)

- 2019-018. 17 – 19 February 2018. Egg Harbor City, Atlantic Co. L. Tutunjian(ph).

Seen and photographed coming to a suet feeder during a cold snap in February, Western Tanagers are often found in New Jersey in late fall and winter. A widespread Tanager of the western US, they winter in southern Mexico and central America. When found in the state late in the season, are often seen around berry producing trees and bushes, or at feeders. Interestingly, photos indicate that this is not the same bird that visited a nearby (1.3 miles) Galloway Township feeder six weeks earlier.

Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris* (67)

- 2019-022. 3 – 4 February 2018. Holland Twp., Hunterdon Co. K. Hudkins(ph).
- 2019-030. 7 – 9 March 2018. Monroeville, Salem Co. S. Fuller(ph).
- 2019-036. 6 January 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. R. Ozmore(ph).
- 2019-098. 10 November 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co. C. Holzapfel, M. Schoenitz(ph).

Another four documented records of this tropical bunting. The first three were of birds coming to feeders in winter, while the last was a migrant found at Higbee Beach WMA in fall. The Monroeville bird was a male, the others females. A combination of climate change and increase of winter feeding stations is likely helping the survival of these vagrants, as seems to be the case with the slow increase of vagrant western hummingbirds.

NOT ACCEPTED

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchos*

- 2019-006. 13 January 2018. Whitehouse Station, Hunterdon Co.

A very brief description was given for this bird; the committee reached out for more detail on this bird but the observer did not provide more information. Although observations of Pink-footed Goose have increased, adequate descriptions are required.

“Black” Brant *Branta bernicla nigricans* (Since 1996)

- 2019-041. 26 April 2018. Atlantic City, Atlantic Co.

Simply not enough information in this report to separate Black Brant from the flock that it was mixed in with. The bird was noted as being “darker”, but without descriptions of why it was a Black Brant there wasn’t much for the committee to go on.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

- 2019-011. 9 February 2018. Rahway, Union C.
- 2019-047. 25 May 2018. Califon, Hunterdon Co.
- 2019-117. 17 December 2018. Hamilton Twp., Mercer Co.

Unfortunately, the first report with no descriptive information. The observer reported a barnacle goose feeding with a flock of Canada geese, but no information as to why it was a barnacle goose. All known records of Barnacle Goose are from late fall and winter, so the odd time of year for the second report immediately raised some questions among the committee. What description was provided wasn’t convincing for Barnacle Goose, but perhaps a hybrid goose with some resemblance to a Barnacle goose. The last report was from an experienced observer but simply lacked enough detail to merit consideration by the committee. In addition, another Barnacle Goose was found nearby in Mercer County, and may have been the same bird.

Trumpeter Swan *Cygnus buccinator*

- 2019-124. 26 -29 December 2018. (2) Cape May, Cape May Co.

There was some disagreement over the identity of these swans, but expert opinion deemed them to be Tundra Swans. Separating these two species in the field, even under good conditions, can be an underrated challenge.

Cinnamon Teal *Spatula cyanoptera*

- 2019-078. 15 September 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co.

This was an intriguing bird. It had a large bill, but probably too large for Cinnamon Teal, and more like Northern Shoveler. The eye in profile appeared Red, and one photo showed some red coloration in the throat. However, there wasn’t enough here to positively identify this bird as a Cinnamon Teal, and some thought there was possibility of the bird being a hybrid.

White-cheeked Pintail *Anas bahamensis*

- 2019-008. 14 – 18 March 2018. Lambertville, Hunterdon Co.

Although many birders flocked to observe this attractive duck, this is almost certainly an escaped bird as it was banded and not accepted based on suspicious provenance.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

- 2019-028. 12 April 2018. Middletown, Monmouth Co.

This bird was noted as being mixed in with a flock of distant scaup, and that it had “small tuft”. Without any other descriptive information, and the possibility the head feathers were not a true “tuft”, the committee voted to not accept.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

- 2019-062. 26 July 2018. Long Branch, Monmouth Co.

This bird warranted a bit of a discussion. Superficial looks at the photos led some to believe it was a Collared-Dove, but upon closer look, the bird was very pale with little contrast in the primaries compared to rest of wing. Plumage characteristics were more in line with Ringed Turtle Dove, and most likely an escaped or released bird.

Common Ground-Dove *Columbina passerina*

- 2019-101. 11 November 2018. Long Beach Twp., Ocean Co.

An enticing report but for such a rare bird, a quick flyby from a car, without optics, was simply not enough to warrant acceptance.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica* (71)

- 2019-017. 19 February 2018. West New York, Hudson Co.
- 2019-095. 3 November 2018. Middle Twp., Cape May Co.

The first report was of a “heard only” White-winged dove. The observer stated it was a sound he has heard in South America, but still relied on others on an online ID site to make the identification. With the paucity of records in Northern New Jersey this report was just not enough to go on. The second report was from an experienced observer, but there were no details about this bird. Without some kind of descriptive information, it’s difficult to vote on a record.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*

- 2019-061. 22 July 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co.

After much discussion the committee voted to not accept this record. The observer had a brief look at this bird, and although there were copious notes, the details of the bird that were given were not enough to fully accept.

Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus*

- 2019-096. 10 October 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co.
- 2019-097. 5 November 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co.
- 2019-102. 8 November 2018. Cape May, Cape May Co.
- 2019-109. 19 November 2018. Avalon, Cape May Co.

Photographs of the first bird proved it to be a Parasitic Jaeger. Details on the remaining birds were sorely lacking. The majority of jaeger sightings from land are Parasitic Jaegers; reporting Pomarine Jaeger from

land merits a good description of the bird and how the observer separated it from other jaeger species.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)

- 2019-015. 27 January 2018. Spring Lake, Monmouth Co.
- 2019-092. 27 – 29 October 2018. Bayonne, Hudson Co.

The observer of the first report wrote that bird was smaller than Common Loon, was observed briefly, and he wasn’t positive of the bird being a Pacific Loon as a chin-strap was not observed. Evidently it was reported as a Pacific Loon with the hopes that others would look for it to confirm. Although photographs aren’t essential for reports they obviously can help. The second bird was observed by multiple observers, and for some time, but the descriptive information wasn’t conclusive enough. For a bird observed for some time, and by multiple observers, it was very surprising that a photograph, even a poor one, wasn’t provided.

Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris*

- 2019-130. 12 May 1985. Off Cape May, Cape May Co.

A tantalizing report from the Cape May Ferry in 1985 by an experienced observer. The bird was first observed sitting on the water before lifting off with Northern Gannets and Great Black-backed Gulls, within 200 feet of the ship. Although the committee spent some time discussing this bird, it ultimately did not garner enough votes to be accepted. This report was reviewed since it was found on eBird; it was not submitted by the observer.

White-faced Storm-Petrel *Pelagodroma marina*

- 2019-074. 13 August 2018. Pelagic trip off Atlantic Co.
- 2019-086. 15 September 2018. Off Ocean Co.

There was some confusion about the first report. There were multiple observers, yet not very good descriptions, despite some very experienced birders on a pelagic trip. The second report also garnered a lengthy discussion. Although the observer is experienced with seabird observations there were some finer details in the description that were lacking, such as head plumage.

Band-rumped Storm-Petrel *Oceanodroma castro*

- 2019-075. 16 September 2018. Off Ocean Co.

This bird was probably a Band-rumped, but the description wasn't enough for a consensus among the committee.

the fact that this bird was described as being a young male but lacking streaking raised doubts; young male black-headed grosbeaks often have distinct streaking. Based on description, and time of year, it was hard to eliminate a young rose-breasted grosbeak

Bewick's Wren *Thyromanes bewickii*

- 2019-110. 6 October 2018. Princeton, Mercer Co.

The photos accompanying this report indicate the bird was a House Wren.

Bohemian Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

- 2019-094. 4 November 2018. Del Haven, Cape May Co.

This was a report of a heard only Bohemian Waxwing. The observer noted a flock of cedar waxwings in flight, with a bird that was larger mixed in, but without a good visual for confirmation of such a rarity the committee could not agree to accept.

Henslow's Sparrow *Centronyx henslowii*

- 2019-121. 10 October 2018. Troy Meadows, Morris Co.

An experienced birder reported this sparrow, but with Henslow's becoming such a scarce bird, a much better description of the bird, and separation from other sparrows was warranted.

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis*

- 2019-024. 28 January 2016. Lebanon, Hunterdon Co.

Reported as a possible Oregon Junco, this bird was more in line with the cismontanus subspecies (Cassiar Junco), or other type of intergrade.

Black-headed Grosbeak *Pheucticus melanocephalus*

- 2019-077. 23 August 2018. Hatfield Swamp, Essex Co.

The date for this sighting was a bit off, even for hatch year Black-headed Grosbeaks. The date along with