

## **IORC EVALUATION FORM**

**Record #:** 2019-002

**Name of bird form:** Barnacle Goose

**Committee member name:** Fraker

**Date of review:** 3/31/19

**Circulation number:** 1st

**Vote:** A-E(ph)

**Comments:** [required as this is a potential 1st state record]

Honestly I am voting to accept this only because I am treating this record as possibly moot if any of the previous Barnacle records get accepted.

## IORC EVALUATION FORM

**Record #:** 2019-002

**Name of bird form:** Barnacle Goose

**Committee member name:** Davida Kalina

**Date of review:** 15 April 2019

**Circulation number:** 1st

**Vote:** A-E(photo) and A-S(3)

**Comments:** [required as this is a potential 1st state record]

The submitters' photos clearly support the ID of Barnacle Goose. No submitter mentions the halluces (although the hallux on the left foot can be seen in Photo #8) nor leg bands (although no bands can be seen on the legs in any of the photos). No submitter mentions the presence of other geese besides Canada Geese. No submitter saw the bird in flight. The late-winter sighting date supports wild vagrant status. (Other birders reported on eBird seeing it take flight when it departed the location for good the next day, 26 February 2019. Assuming the bird that was sighted in Kendall County on 28 February 2019 was the same bird that was in DuPage County, then the bird probably could fly pretty well.)

(I also observed this bird on the morning of 26 February 2019 at the same location in DuPage County. The only information I can add is that it was in the presence of at least 15 Cackling Geese, 2 Snow Geese, and many Canada Geese. At the Kendall County location, eBird checklists indicate at least 25 CACK, 200 GWFG, and around 2000 CANG were also present.)

If the A-O status was available, I would accept this record with that status. Instead, I am voting to accept the record as A-E(photo) and A-S(3).

## IORC EVALUATION FORM

**Record #:** 2019-002

**Name of bird form:** Barnacle Goose

**Committee member name:** Walter Marcisz

**Date of review:** 4-20-19

**Circulation number:** 1st

**Vote:** U-O

**Comments:** [required as this is a potential 1st state record]

When I became aware of the numerous and increasing records of Barnacle Geese in the northeast (with many states and provinces including these reports as naturally-occurring vagrants on official state and provincial checklists) my initial inclination was to believe that Barnacle Goose should also be added to the official Illinois state checklist. But after reading more on the subject, I have become decidedly more conservative in my approach to Barnacle Goose acceptance in Illinois. A few relevant quotes follow-

Per Sherony (2008): "Extralimital reports of Barnacle Geese have been contentious because this species has been popular with wildfowl breeders, and escapes are well known."

Also per Sherony (2008): The greatest number of reports of Barnacle Geese for eastern North America comes from Québec. This province accounts for 24% of all eastern North American reports and 79% of all Canadian reports in NAB. Almost all come from the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers. Ninety percent of these occur from Ottawa to Montreal along the Ottawa River and from Montreal to about 40 miles north of Québec City around the St. Lawrence River."

Per Burrell (2017), banding recoveries of Greenland Canada Geese as of 2014 are concentrated in southern Quebec, easternmost Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and the northeastern United States. If I am interpreting Burrell's data correctly, none of these Greenland Canada Goose recoveries come from Illinois (and I believe my interpretation is validated by the map shown in Figure 4 on page 129 of Burrell's 2017 paper).

Sherony (2008) mentions "A Barnacle Goose found in Storrs, Connecticut, on 4 December 2002 associated with Canada Geese that had been banded in Greenland (NAB 56:155)." Burrell (2017) mentions an adult Barnacle Goose shot in Ontario in 2005 which had been banded as a juvenile in November 2004 on the Isle of Islay, Scotland, a well-documented wintering area for Greenland breeding Barnacle Geese, leaving absolutely no doubt that genuine vagrant Barnacle Geese have occurred in Ontario. On the other hand, as far as I am able to tell, neither Sherony, Burrell, nor anyone else has reported a Barnacle Goose banded in Greenland or in the Palearctic that has been recovered in Illinois, and without such confirming evidence I can't help but feel that adding Barnacle Goose to the official Illinois checklist is mostly based on a hunch and little else.

In my view, acceptance of any Illinois Barnacle Goose record by IORC must at minimum meet 2 basic requirements: 1) The bird or birds under consideration must be correctly identified to species; and 2) The bird or birds under consideration must be conclusively proven to be naturally-occurring wild vagrants (not escapes from captivity).

I believe that the present record under consideration meets my 1<sup>st</sup> basic requirement, i.e. it has been correctly identified as a Barnacle Goose. But I do not believe that it meets my 2<sup>nd</sup> basic requirement, i.e. it has been conclusively proven to be naturally-occurring wild vagrant, and therefore I vote to reject.

Literature cited:

[D.F. Sherony](#), "Greenland Geese in North America," *Birding*, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 46-56, May-Jun 2008.

[M.V.A. Burrell](#), "The Case for Accepting Ontario Reports of Barnacle Goose," *Ontario Birds*, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 122-136, Dec 2017

## **IORC EVALUATION FORM**

**Record #:** 2019-002

**Name of bird form:** Barnacle Goose

**Committee member name:** Adam Sell

**Date of review:** 4/27/19

**Circulation number:** 1st

**Vote:** A-E (photo)

**Comments:** This is one where I would like the option to accept, but have a note where origin could be in question.

## **IORC EVALUATION FORM**

**Record #:** 2019-002

**Name of bird form:** Barnacle Goose

**Committee member name:** Douglas Stotz

**Date of review:** 2 June 2019

**Circulation number:** 1st

**Vote:** A-E(Photo)

**Comments:** [required as this is a potential 1st state record]

Identification is straightforward based on photos. The question for this record is origin. I have concluded, based on the increase in records in eastern United States and the treatment by other records committees, that Barnacle Geese with no obvious signs of captivity accompanying wild migratory geese at an appropriate time of year are best treated as wild birds. This record meets those criteria so I vote in favor of this record.

## **IORC EVALUATION FORM**

**Record #:** 2019-002

**Name of bird form:** Barnacle Goose

**Committee member name:** Paul Sweet

**Date of review:** 6/22/19

**Circulation number:** 1st

**Vote:** U-O

**Comments:** [required as this is a potential 1st state record]

No doubt about the ID, but origin of this bird doesn't even seem to have been considered. There's no description of behavior that would shed light on the issue, and while one observer stated that there were Canada Geese present, there's no discussion of whether those were likely to be local residents or migrants.

## **IORC EVALUATION FORM**

**Record #:** 2019-002

**Name of bird form:** Barnacle Goose

**Committee member name:** Geoffrey A. Williamson

**Date of review:** 26 March 2019

**Circulation number:** 1st

**Vote:** U-O

**Comments:** [required as this is a potential 1st state record]

This is one of seven Barnacle Goose records circulating simultaneously through IORC. I am prefacing my comments in each of these records with the following statement.

IORC prepared for this set of records by gathering information about prior records in the state, actions by records committees in neighboring states and the bases for those actions, and published literature about the status and distribution of the species. I had hoped that we would also have available a good amount of information about the status of Barnacle Goose in captivity in Illinois and nearby, the occurrence of escaped/released birds, and the kinds of behavior exhibited by escaped/released birds. However, in this latter domain our information base is still in my opinion not where it should be. The information bias is toward what to expect from wild birds and with less about what to expect from escaped/released/feral birds.

We do know that released birds can move around over large areas. Consider the case of some Barnacle Geese in the east during late 1989 to 1991. McLaren (1991) describes two pairs of Barnacle Geese being released from a waterfowl collection near Grand Manan Island in New Brunswick in fall 1989. One of these pairs stayed near the release area, produced four young, and then disappeared in late summer 1990. In September 1990 two adult and four juvenile Barnacle Geese appeared at Cape Sable Island, Nova Scotia, presumably these same birds. Then, as told in Nikula (1991), six Barnacle Geese thought to be this same family group showed up in Osterville, Massachusetts during 18 January to 28 February 1991. Sherony (2008) states that this group then wandered around the east until at least 1993, and perhaps until 2003. I know less about the local behavior of these birds, such as whether they associated with wild flocks of geese and moved with them into and out of areas, whether they were wary, and so on. My sense is that in this and other cases, birds that are escaped/released/feral can behave at least some of the time like wild birds.

We also know via birds banded in Scotland and shot in Ontario (Burrell, 2017) that wild Barnacle Geese can make the journey from Europe to presumably Illinois. Thus, our situation is that even during the times of year when one might expect arrival in Illinois of wild Barnacle Geese to be plausible, the possibility that these are still escapee or feral birds exists.

Having said this, I am going allow for a possible vote to accept in records in which (a) the time of year is reasonable for wild birds, (b) there was effort to examination for evidence of captivity that has a negative result, (c) the birds arrive with and leave with migratory species, generally geese, whose usual pathways align well with the presumed route for a wild bird coming from Greenland to North America.

Now, for this record (2019-002).

None of the three documenters discuss any attempt to ascertain signs of prior captivity. One can see in photo #5 that the left foot has a hallux and that neither leg has obvious bands. A photo taken by "Jayne L" and uploaded to eBird (<https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/142813451>) shows that the right foot also has a hallux. I think one can conclude that there are no obvious signs of prior captivity.

Only a few other geese that may have come from Greenland (Cackling Geese and Greater White-fronted Geese) in the company of this bird. This is a (mild) strike against the record.

There was a very odd-looking hybrid goose (seen by Aerin Tedesco among others) with this group of geese as well. Some might argue that the presence of something like this hybrid might suggest that geese got away from a nearby aviculturalist. I am not sure of this but I think it warrants investigation.



**Aerin Tedesco** i didn't see it saturday between 12 and 1 or after 2...  
😬 but that cool hybrid goose was at Southbury Avenue near Colchester!



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The timing is okay.

This bird moved a short distance, but not far.

Honestly, I don't know what to do with these records. I am happy that regardless of the outcome of the vote, the evidence is in the archives. I am inclined to be cautious with this one because of the lack of many other "Greenland type geese" and the presence of the odd hybrid bird without many other clearly wild types.



Literature cited.

Burrell, M.V.A. (2017). The case for accepting Ontario reports of Barnacle Goose. *Ontario Birds* 35(3):122-136.

McLaren, I.A. (1991). The Winter Season, December 1, 1990 – February 28, 1991: Atlantic Provinces Region. *American Birds* 45(2):244.

Nikula, B. (1991). The Winter Season, December 1, 1990 – February 28, 1991: New England Region. *American Birds* 45(2):250.

Sherony, D.F. (2008). Greenland geese in North America. *Birding* 40(3):46-56.