

FIRST RECORD OF THE LONG-TAILED DUCK (*CLANGULA HYEMALIS*) FOR THE CARIBBEAN IN ANGUILLA

FARAH MUKHIDA¹, JACQUELINE CESTERO¹, AND BARB CESTERO²

¹Anguilla National Trust, The Valley, Anguilla; e-mail: antpam@anguillanet.com; ²Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Bozeman, Montana, USA; e-mail: bcestero@greateryellowstone.org

Abstract: The Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) is a circumpolar species never before recorded in the Caribbean. We document a male in winter plumage at Savannah Pond, located on the Temenos Golf Course in Anguilla, on 29 October 2008, as part of the Anguilla National Trust Bird Monitoring Programme.

Key words: Anguilla, *Clangula hyemalis*, distributional record, Long-Tailed Duck

Resumen: PRIMER REGISTRO DEL PATO DE COLA LARGA (*CLANGULA HYEMALIS*) PARA EL CARIBE EN ANGUILLA. El Pato de Cola Larga (*Clangula hyemalis*) es una especie circumpolar nunca antes registrada en el Caribe. Se documenta el avistamiento de un individuo macho en plumaje de invierno en Savannah Pond, localizado en el Temenos Golf Course en Anguilla, el 29 de octubre de 2008, dentro del Programa de Monitoreo de Aves del Consejo Nacional de Anguilla.

Palabras clave: Anguilla, *Clangula hyemalis*, Pato de Cola Larga, registro de distribución

Résumé : PREMIERE DONNEE DE HARELDE BOREALE (*CLANGULA HYEMALIS*) POUR LA CARAÏBE A ANGUILLA. La Harelde boréale (*Clangula hyemalis*) est une espèce circumpolaire qui n'avait jamais été signalée dans la Caraïbe. Nous avons observé un mâle en plumage nuptial à Savannah Pond, sur le terrain de golf de Temenos à Anguilla, le 29 octobre 2008, dans le cadre du programme de suivi des oiseaux du Anguilla National Trust.

Mots clés : Anguilla, *Clangula hyemalis*, donnée de distribution, Harelde boréale

The Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*), formerly known as the Oldsquaw, is a circumpolar bird that breeds in the Arctic and winters along both North American coasts (Robertson and Savard 2002). In this note, we report the first record of a Long-tailed Duck in the Caribbean, from Anguilla.

OBSERVATIONS

On 29 October 2008, we saw a male Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) on a constructed pond at the Temenos Golf Course in southwest Anguilla. We observed the duck feeding by diving into the shallow water of 1–2 m, remaining underwater for 30 sec or longer, and reappearing at a distance of about 30–40 m from where it first submerged. It remained at a distance of approximately 40–50 m from shorebirds that were also feeding along the perimeter of the pond, including Black-necked Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*) and Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*). We observed the bird, at a distance of approximately 50 m between 0700 and 0730 for approximately 20 min using binoculars and a spotting scope, and obtained photographs (Fig. 1).

The bird was a medium-sized duck, slightly larger than a White-cheeked Pintail (*Anas bahamensis*), with its most distinguishing features being its black and white body and black central tail feathers which

were remarkably elongated and slim. Its white head and neck were marked by black patches on its cheeks. The bird's breast was black in colour and the belly was white. Its wings and uppertail coverts were black and its undertail coverts were white. Its black bill had a distinctive orange-pink band, closer to its tip than its base. The bird's legs were not visible.

DISCUSSION

The combination of black and white plumage and elongated central tail feathers eliminate the more common White-cheeked Pintail, Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*), and Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) (Holliday *et al.* 2007). The breeding male Northern Pintail has a long tail, but its brown head and white neck stripe make it difficult to confuse with Long-tailed Duck (Sibley 2001, Raffaele *et al.* 2003).

In North America, the Long-tailed Duck normally winters south to central California on the Pacific Coast and South Carolina on the Atlantic Coast (Robertson and Savard 2002). It has been recorded as far south as Jalisco, Mexico, in the Pacific (Howell and Webb 1995), which is nearly as far south as Anguilla. Along the Atlantic Coast, it is recorded annually in Florida, with (as of 1993) all



Fig. 1. Male Long-Tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) at Savannah Pond, Temenos Golf Course, Anguilla, on 29 October 2009. Photo by Jacqueline Cestero.

records falling between 7 November and 22 May; the southernmost records are from the southern tip of Florida (Stevenson and Anderson 1994).

Of note, Hurricane Omar, with wind gusts up to 200 km / hr, swept by Anguilla from the southwest on 16 October 2008, 13 days before the Long-tailed Duck sighting. The hurricane caused severe coastal erosion and some structural damage. It also took its toll on Anguilla's salt ponds, an important habitat for many of Anguilla's waterbirds. While not necessarily directly linked, Hurricane Omar, along with the other 15 named storms of the 2008 hurricane season, may have led the bird to the Caribbean.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank Steve Holliday of the RSPB for help with identification, Sarah Sanders of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Rohini Bannerjee and Ralph Cestero for assistance with translation along with review of the text, Flag Luxury Properties–Temenos Golf Course for providing access to the site, and two anonymous reviewers for reviewing the manuscript.

LITERATURE CITED

- HOLLIDAY, S., K. HODGE, AND D. E. HUGHES. 2007. A guide to the birds of Anguilla. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Bedfordshire, UK.
- HOWELL, S. N. G., AND S. WEBB. 1995. A guide to the birds of Mexico and Northern Central America. Oxford University Press, Oxford, England.
- RAFFAELE, H., J. WILEY, O. GARRIDO, A. KEITH, AND J. RAFFAELE. 1998. A guide to the birds of the West Indies. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- ROBERTSON, G. J., AND J.-P. L. SAVARD. 2002. Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*). In The birds of North America, no. 651 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- STEVENSON, H. M., AND B. H. ANDERSON. 1994. The birdlife of Florida. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.
- SIBLEY, D. A. 2001. The Sibley guide to birds. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York.