

## NOTES

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**FIRST GEORGIA SPECIMEN OF THE BROWN BOOBY**

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The Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) is a regular, rare to uncommon year-round visitor at Dry Tortugas and off both Florida coasts, but scarce northward (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). For Georgia, Beaton et al. (2003) recently moved the species from the Provisional List to the Regular Species List, and described it as an accidental, off-shore visitor on the outer shelf with observation records for 14 May 1983 and 24 August 2002. In South Carolina it is on the definitive species list.

The first Georgia specimen was salvaged on Cumberland Island on 28 September 2004, in the aftermath of Hurricane Jeanne (Permit No. MB 751734-0). The bird was immature and likely killed on the beach by an avian predator. It had no fat, and was stripped of all organs and flesh when found. The specimen is in the Cumberland Island Museum. Specimens of the Brown Booby are infrequent north of Florida, although there are records from South Carolina (Charleston Museum, collected 1968), North Carolina (NC State Museum, 2002, 2003), Virginia (U.S. National Museum, 1999), and a photograph from as far north as Nova Scotia (photographed in 1941; Godfrey 1979). The warm waters of the Gulf Stream are more distant from Georgia than from more northern states and most of the Georgia barrier islands are yet undeveloped, thus reducing the probability of finding stranded specimens.

Along with the Georgia specimen, three Brown Boobies were documented alive on shore in South Carolina in August and September of 2004 (W. Post, pers. comm.). On 18 August 2004, a juvenile was photographed perched and flying on Deveaux Banks by Jane Lareau, suggesting that a group was in the area at that time. After Hurricane Frances three weeks later, a juvenile, in apparently good health, was picked up in downtown Charleston (8 September 2004), and an adult was captured alive on Folly Beach fishing pier (14 September 2004).

Brown Boobies are pelagic birds of tropical climes which wander up and down the coasts during autumn and winter, sometimes as far north as Massachusetts, following schools of fish on which they feed (Bent 1964). Pelagic species are especially vulnerable to storms with high winds, and Bangs (1902) reported a large number of Brown and Red-footed boobies during a violent gale outside the Indian River in Florida in 1895. The birds Bangs saw were continually fishing just outside the breakers, and he suggested that they came in deliberately to take advantage of good fishing associated with the storm.

LITERATURE CITED

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