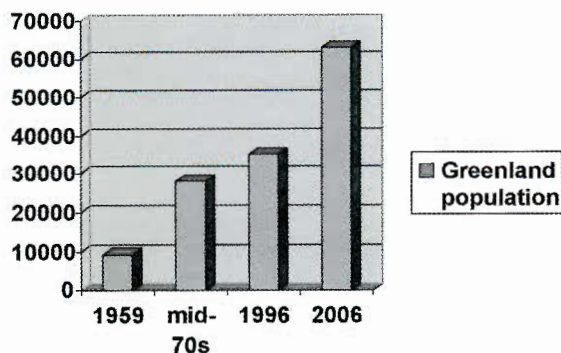


ing ranges of Barnacle and Richardson's Geese may well overlap in the not-too-distant future. Illinois birders will probably remember the impact that a burgeoning population can have on vagrancy. Illinois's second record of Ross's Goose was in 1980 (Bohlen 1989). Now they are readily found by the dozen across downstate Illinois.



Hybrids

A thorough comparison of positively identified online photos to sketches of the LaSalle Co. hybrid confirmed that it was indeed a *B. leucopsis* \times *hutchinsii* hybrid. We are therefore left with two likely possibilities: either the Barnacle escaped and followed the Richardson's north to breed with one of them and returned south, or it came with them as a genuine vagrant from Greenland. Either way, natural hybridization is not unlikely, as these two taxa are closely related. Barnacle Goose's close relationship with *B. hutchinsii* was one of the reasons Canada Goose sensu lato was split in 2004. Richardson's Goose and Barnacle Goose are more closely related to each other than either is to Canada Goose (*B. canadensis*) sensu stricto (Banks et al. 2004).

The LaSalle Co. hybrid is not the first observed of this combination, either. A mated pair comprising a Barnacle and a Richardson's accompanied by two hybrid offspring was present in Connecticut from 22 Nov 1984 through 10 Jan 1985. Like the Illinois birds, they were believed to have migrated at least 2,000 miles together (Szantyr 1985). A 1985 report from the New York Records Committee describes another record of an adult with two hybrid immatures 11-15 March 1985. It also notes that there are 12 prior records of Barnacle Goose in New York. Though it would seem that records committees have been accepting birds for years, most had refrained until recently (<http://www.nybirds.org/NYSARC/Reports/NYSARC1985-86.html>).

Patterns of Occurrence

Widespread invasions of Barnacle Goose occurred across the East in winters 2001-02 and 03-04. Dinsmore and Silcock (2004) noted that, "As [Cackling and Canada Goose] populations also increase, several 'vagrant' taxa – Barnacle Goose, Pink-footed Goose, and Greenland Greater White-fronted Goose – have also been detected

more frequently. The proliferation of Barnacle Goose records in the East continued this spring, with reports from Quebec (two), Massachusetts, New York, and Maryland." As I type this in October 2007, two more have just been noted in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

I have tried to compile the official status of Barnacle Goose in eastern North America. Attempting to locate this information on poorly-kept Web pages was not easy, and there are undoubtedly some errors. Due to our new understanding of the pattern with which these birds appear, a sea change is occurring with regards to how Barnacle Goose records are treated. New Jersey, Tennessee, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, Virginia, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Newfoundland, Ontario, Maine*, Maryland*, and Connecticut* all have accepted records. Asterisks denote an "origin uncertain" or other similar category on the state list. States not included either have no accepted records or no information available.

The Massachusetts Committee accepted six records between 2001 and 2004, all of them between December and April; they concluded that "While captive origin is always a possibility for reports of this species, these reports seem to fit into a pattern of sightings that suggest[s] that vagrancy was the likely explanation" (<http://massbird.org/MARC/MARCreport8.htm>).

Connecticut also started accepting records, and its Committee's comments are worth noting.

[T]he "old school" common logic was to be better safe than sorry and reject this easily identified bird, nearly out of hand, simply because the committee could not be sure that any individual was truly wild. Why then are we accepting this individual to the official state list?

The evidence: The bird appeared wild, was unbanded[,] and had all its toes intact.

The bird occurred at the proper time for its species to be migrating ... The goose was in the company of ... birds that had been neck-banded ... in or near Greenland ...

[The number] of Barnacle Geese in captivity has probably been declining through the past decade, a consequence of economic and legislative factors.

When the bird has been properly identified and the preponderance of the evidence seems to indicate a wild origin and there is little or no evidence to the contrary, we believe it is responsible to accept the record under our voting category, Accept – Origin Uncertain. Species accepted under this category are fully accepted onto the state list and enjoy the same status as any other bona fide vagrant. We believe that the disclaimer simply reflects the truth in a situation that is essentially unknowable."

(http://www.ctbirding.org/eleventh_arcc_report.htm)