

**NEW YORK STATE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORTING FORM**

Report Submitted 07:05:44 02 October 2014 GMT -5

REPORT NO. 2014-39-A STATUS \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIES: Brown Booby

DATE(S) OF OBSERVATION: August 23, 2014

LOCALITY: Crown Point State Historic Site – Essex County, NY

TIME & LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 10:20 A.M. 2:20 PM

SUBMITTER NAME: Gary Chapin

OBSERVER? Yes

OTHER OBSERVER(S): Many observers (30?), most from Vermont but a few from NY

LIGHT CONDITIONS: Mostly clear and sunny

DISTANCE IN FEET: 100 feet while roosting with the gulls

OPTICS: Swarovski 10 x 50 SLC Binoculars, Kowa TSN-824 scope with 20 – 60X eyepiece

**NUMBER/SIZE/SHAPE**

One bird, approximately 25 inches in length (longer than Herring Gull but not nearly as bulky), booby shape (long gangly look, long wings and neck, longish tail, eyes set at base of large yellow bill).

**COLOR & PATTERN**

Dark brown upper parts, throat, and upper chest. White belly and lower chest with some brown mottling. Yellow bill and feet.

**BEHAVIOR**

Loafing on rock outcroppings with gulls on the shore of Lake Champlain. Three times in my 4 hours of observation it flew a short distance over the lake, twice nabbing a fish, but I never saw the bird actually consume it either time.

**HABITAT**

Crown Point SHS is the site of a former Revolutionary war period military fort. Habitat is mowed grass right to the rock outcroppings upon which this bird perched along the shore of Lake Champlain.

**HOW IDENTIFICATION WAS DETERMINED**

Bird was initially found roosting on the rock outcroppings as I scanned the New York State side of Lake Champlain from Vermont. The bird was facing away with its head and bill mostly concealed but eventually raised its head to reveal the massive yellow bill with eyes set at its base. With past experience with this bird in Florida and several Caribbean islands I suspected immediately it was a Brown Booby. I raced back to the NY side to document the bird with photographs. The combination of all dark brown upper surfaces, head, neck and upper chest with white belly and large webbed yellow feet allowed me to identify the bird as an adult (although there is some brown mottling in the belly that seems a little odd for a full adult bird).

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

In the 4 hours I was present the bird got up and flew 3 times. The first time was approximately 10:40 AM, before anyone else had arrived, when it flew directly toward Chimney Point State Park, VT. It flew under the Champlain Bridge to a point I judged to be approximately 2/3rds of the way across the span, perhaps a little further. Given the distant it had flown I am absolutely positive the bird had entered VT airspace. The final photo attached to this report is the bird during this flight, at its closest approach to VT (it had dropped to the surface moments earlier and nabbed a fish which is visible in the picture). The second time it got up to stretch its wings, it didn't go very far offshore, much to the disappointment of all the VT birders present. By 2:15 PM everyone had left except for two other NY birders and a diehard VT birder. The bird got up again, this time it stayed on the north side of the bridge but flew even further east than it had during its morning flight. I judged the bird to travel at least ¾ of the way across the span and again into VT airspace. The next day the bird was seen again from the same location but it was far offshore to the north on a green buoy claimed by VT birders to be in VT. I do not know whether the buoy is in VT or not and I do not know how to ascertain this information. There was an additional sighting in New York waters by Matt Medler at Noblewood Park Essex County on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Lastly, the bird was seen to the north of Charlotte Town Beach, VT by many observers (including the author of this report) on September 7<sup>th</sup>. Interestingly, in a search of ebird data I am unable to find a single entry for this bird in the state of VT.

OTHER EVIDENCE: Photos attached.

PERSON SUBMITTING REPORT

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DATE/TIME WRITTEN: 10/9/14 - 10:45 P.M.

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Bird loafing at Crown Point State Historic Site



Bird in NY waters during its 10:40 AM flight



Bird in NY waters during its 10:40 AM flight



Bird during its 10:40 AM flight approaching the VT shoreline