

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MINNESOTA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE

Kim Eckert, M.O.R.C. Secretary

As is now customary, a semi-annual summary of M.O.R.C. activities and votes, is to be published in the Spring and Fall issues of *The Loon*. Before listing the July-December voting results, there were decisions made at two meetings during this period that may be of interest.

August 14, 1982 meeting: 1) A recognizable and preserved tape recording of a bird's call is now considered as valid as a specimen or photo for admitting a species to the A_a list (e.g., Black Rail and Chuck-will's-widow are now on the A_a rather than the A_b list); 2) A species may be placed on the Casual list without a specimen/photo/tape record, if there are enough ac-

ceptable sight records (e.g., California Gull); 3) By majority vote the Chukar is now considered an Extirpated species on the list (the minority voted to drop the Chukar entirely from the new list since it was an introduced, rather than native species, which disappeared); 4) Several other species had their status changed on the new Minnesota checklist after discussion — these will not be listed here since the checklist is included with this issue; 5) For casual/regular species voted on and recirculated, the second vote must be 5-2 or better for the record to be accepted (formerly a 4-3 vote was considered acceptable) — the M.O.R.C. voting formula now stands as follows:

| Vote | Reg./Casuals | Accidentals (a) | Accidentals (b) |
|------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 7-0 | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| 6-1 | Acceptable | Acceptable | Recirculate* |
| 5-2 | Acceptable | Recirculate* | Recirculate* |
| 4-3 | Recirculate* | Recirculate* | Unacceptable |
| 3-4 | Recirculate* | Unacceptable | Unacceptable |
| 2-5 | Unacceptable | Unacceptable | Unacceptable |
| 1-6 | Unacceptable | Unacceptable | Unacceptable |
| 0-7 | Unacceptable | Unacceptable | Unacceptable |

*If a record of a regular/casual species is recirculated for a second vote, a vote of 5-2 or better is Acceptable, 4-3 or lower is Unacceptable; second vote of 6-1 or better is Acceptable for an A_a species, 5-2 or lower is Unacceptable; and second vote of 7-0 is Acceptable for A_b species, 6-1 or lower is Unacceptable.

December 4, 1982 meeting: 1) The "Great-tailed Grackle" reported June 19, 1982 at Black Dog L., Dakota Co. was discussed, and the majority voted to include it on the Minnesota list as Great-tailed/Boat-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus/major*, since most felt that Boat-tailed Grackle was not entirely ruled out in the details; 2) The problem of intermediate or hybrid Snow/Ross' Geese was dis-

cussed, and by consensus, all previously Acceptable Ross' Goose records were reaffirmed or reclassified as follows:

—Acceptable: October 1964-January 1965 photograph record from Rochester, December 1965-January 1966 photograph record from Howard Lake, November-December 1962 sight record from Round Lake, and October 1979 specimen record from Kittson Co.; Unaccept-

able (Possible Hybrids): December 1969-January 1970 sight record from Rochester, December 1968-March 1969 sight record from Rochester, December 1981-January 1982 sight record from Black Dog L., and April 1977 sight record from Watonwan Co.; Unacceptable as either Ross' or Hybrid: October 1966 sight record from Swan L. (all records reclassified as Unacceptable had been initially identified as Ross' Goose solely on the basis of size; all records reaffirmed as Acceptable are supported by descriptions of the bill).

Records found Acceptable July-December 1982:

- Ferruginous Hawk, 5/15/82, Cottonwood Co. (vote 6-1)
- Townsend's Solitaire, 4/14/82, Mankato, Blue Earth Co. (vote 6-1, *Loon* 54:191-192)
- Ferruginous Hawk, 5/7/82, Agassiz N.W.R., Marshall Co. (vote 7-0, *Loon* 54:191)
- Spruce Grouse, 6/20/82, Chengwatana State Forest, Pine Co. (vote 5-2, *Loon* 54:200-202)
- Bewick's Wren, 7/6/82, Nelson Wildlife Sanctuary, Freeborn Co. (vote 7-0, *Loon* 54:245-246)
- Laughing Gull, 5/20-22/82, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0, *Loon* 54:241)
- Mew Gull, 9/19/82, Knife River, Lake Co. (vote 7-0, *Loon* 54:241)
- Pomarine Jaeger, 9/6/82, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0, *Loon* 54:248-249)
- Anhinga, 9/20/82, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0, *Loon* 55:28-30)
- Black-headed Grosbeak, 10/10-11/82, Encampment Forest, Lake Co. (vote 6-1)
- Band-tailed Pigeon, 9/18/82, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0, *Loon* 54:249)
- Northern Wheatear, 9/27/82, Roseville, Ramsey Co. (vote 7-0, *Loon* 55:27-28)
- Iceland Gull, 11/16/82, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 7-0, *Loon* 55:38)
- Brant, 11/16/82, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 7-0, *Loon* 55:36)

Records found Unacceptable July-December 1982:

- Lazuli Bunting, 5/20-22/82, Golden Valley, Hennepin Co. (vote 1-6)

The majority felt that this reported female, identified solely on the basis of its wing bars, may well have been a hybrid of an aberrant Indigo Bunting. Also the description mentioned the bird had some side streaking which the female Indigo has (the Lazuli does not), and there was no mention of the pale blue on the rump and tail which the female Lazuli should have.

- Long-billed Curlew, 5/5/82, Sherburne N.W.R., Sherburne Co. (vote 0-7)

The five birds were identified in flight on the basis of larger size and longer bills. However, these size features are only subjective and not diagnostic without direct comparison with Whimbrels. Although the observer is experienced with Long-billed Curlews, there was no indication he has any experience with Whimbrels which can also have a "brown mottled appearance."

- Sabine's Gull, 6/4/82, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 1-6)

Although the description of the wing pattern suggested Sabine's Gull, this description was somewhat vague and did not entirely rule out a sub-adult Bonaparte's. The head color was described as gray, but some Bonaparte's also show a gray rather than black head. Finally, this gull was seen standing at close range, but there was no mention of the yellow bill tip which should have been obvious under those conditions.

- Mississippi Kite, 6/4/82, Rice Lake N.W.R., Aitkin Co. (vote 0-7)

Although the observer is very experienced, the only plumage description given was "bright white underneath" (which the Mississippi Kite never is) and "tail was darkish." Such a sketchy description was considered inadequate.

- Western Tanager, 5/9/82, Westwood Nature Center, Hennepin Co. (vote 1-6)

The only plumage description, given by an observer with no experience with this species, was that the bird had a "scarlet head" and "dark wings." While such a description could fit a male Western Tanager, it was too sketchy and in-

adequate since there was no mention of wing bars of back color or yellow underparts in the original description.

- Kirtland's Warbler, 9/9/82, Lebanon Hills Park, Dakota Co. (vote 3-4)

Although there was agreement that the observer may well have seen a Kirtland's Warbler (since no other warbler seems to fit the description), the main problem was that the observer was inconsistent. His initial details mentioned the "even bluish gray" upperparts and that the tail had no spots — but a Kirtland's should have a streaked back and tail spots. A second, clarifying description was submitted and this said the back was streaked and that there were tail spots; however, this contradicted the original description, and it was felt the observer may have been led into providing the "correct" details by the letter sent by the M.O.R.C. Chairman requesting more information.

- Pygmy Nuthatch, 10/23/82, Fifty Lakes, Crow Wing Co. (vote 0-7)

This identification was based solely on "small size and white underside." With no mention of the cap color specifically, this description was inadequate.

- Common Eider, 9/26/82, Lac Qui Parle L., Lac Qui Parle Co. (vote 2-5)

Although this might have been a female/immature eider, there was nothing in the description to eliminate King Eider. However, the majority could not accept this as even an eider, sp. since the plumage was described as uniformly dark brown with no mention of barring; eiders are not dark brown and they are obviously barred, especially when seen at close range as this bird was. The bird was unnaturally tame with the observers approaching it to within 15 feet — this fact and the plumage suggest the bird

may have been a domestic duck of some kind.

- Anhinga, 11/3/82, Otter Tail Co. (vote 4-3, with 7-0 required for acceptance)

This identification may well have been correct but the description was brief in detail and casual in tone. It was stated that "the head, neck and upper breast were buffy" (suggesting a female) but there was no elaboration why it wasn't an immature cormorant instead. The bird was seen flying over about 100 yards away, but there was no mention of a light tail tip which the Anhinga should have. Nor was there any description of the flight, which is another difference between cormorants and Anhingas. The tail was only described as "long and fanned," but these are relative and subjective features that should have been described in more detail and even sketched (as this observer has often done with previous observations sent to M.O.R.C.). In sum, it was felt that such an unusual species should have been more completely described.

- House Finch, 11/25-16/82, Howard Lake, Wright Co. (vote 2-5)

This bird, which may well have been a male House Finch, was only described in terms of a "dark streak through the eye . . . heavy streaks on his sides," a "bright pink" rump, and "the wings and back were dark." However, all of these features can be shared by some Purple Finches, and the observer did not indicate whether she had any experience with the range in plumage variations of Purple Finch; there was also some indication that her description was influenced by the field guides.

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