

Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee

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

There was a meeting of the Committee on 20 July 1994 and among the items on the agenda, votes were taken on two potential first state records and on two recirculated records with inconclusive first-round votes (both types of records require discussion and a vote at a meeting rather than by mail) and on one photographic record:

A Curlew Sandpiper record on 21–22 May 1994 near Etter, Goodhue County, was unanimously found Acceptable as a first state record (see *The Loon* 66:113–114).

A Yellow Wagtail report on 1 June 1994 at Paradise Beach, Cook County, was discussed and found Unacceptable as a first state record. The description mentions a thin bill, “creamy yellow” throat and breast, “yellow” belly and under tail coverts, white outer tail feathers, dark legs, walking behavior, and tail-pumping. While such a description might be consistent with a Yellow Wagtail, it does not preclude other species of wagtail such as a female or basic plumaged Gray Wagtail, or a Citrine Wagtail (which was documented from Mississippi). In addition, the bird was described as being clear-breasted and lacking wing bars, which are both inconsistent with Yellow Wagtail. More importantly, the observers apparently did not consider the possibility of American Pipit, which is highly variable in plumage (alternate-plumaged birds are more highly colored ventrally), inadequately illustrated in the field guides, and has a history of being a confusing species to many birders.

A Eurasian Wigeon report on 30 October 1993 at Lake Bemidji, Beltrami County, was discussed and found Unacceptable on a second-round vote. Because hybrid wigeon frequently occur in the wild, and since the plumage of this male wigeon was not entirely typical of a Eurasian Wigeon, it was decided not to accept this record. The reddish head coloration suggests a Eurasian,

but the darker coloration through the eye and brownish overall body coloration both suggest an American Wigeon.

A Golden-crowned Sparrow on 20 April 1994 at Tofte, Cook Co., was found Unacceptable on a second-round vote. It was agreed that this sparrow may have been correctly identified; however, the entire original description mentions nothing more than “the yellow area on the top of ... the head,” and it was felt that a third state record should be more completely described. In addition, no binoculars were used, and the bird was reported at a distance of 25 feet.

A photograph record of a Western Tanager on 4–7 May 1994 at Willmar, Kandiyohi County, was voted on and found Acceptable (*The Loon* 66:151).

The following records were voted on by mail January–June 1994 and found to be Acceptable:

- House Wren, 14 November 1993, Fridley, Anoka County.
- Great Black-backed Gull, 18–20 December 1993, Duluth, St. Louis County (*The Loon* 66:50).
- Iceland Gull, 10–14 December 1993, Hennepin and Anoka Counties (*The Loon* 66:102–103).
- Iceland Gull, 18 December 1993, Black Dog Lake, Dakota County.
- Bell’s Vireo, 19 September 1993, St. Croix Savannah S.N.A., Washington Co. (*The Loon* 66:49–50).
- Gyrfalcon, 15 January 1994, near Wannaska, Roseau County.
- Pacific Loon, 15 October 1993, Good Harbor Bay, Cook County (*The Loon* 66:46).
- Barrow’s Goldeneye, 24–25 February 1994, Elk River, Sherburne County.
- Gyrfalcon, 11 December 1993–27 February 1994, Duluth, St. Louis County (*The Loon* 66:104).
- Gyrfalcon, 8 January–late January

1994, near Grand Marais, Cook County (*The Loon* 66:70-71).

- Clark's Grebe, 16 April 1994, Lac Qui Parle Lake, Lac Qui Parle County (*The Loon* 66:106).

- Townsend's Warbler, 30 April 1994, near Lac Qui Parle State Park, Lac Qui Parle County (*The Loon* 66:61-62).

- Townsend's Warbler, 30 April-1 May 1994, Yellow Bank Township, Lac Qui Parle County (*The Loon* 66:59-60).

- Lesser Black-backed Gull, 9-14 April 1994, Oak Grove Township, Anoka County (*The Loon* 66:147-148).

- Eurasian Wigeon, 22 April 1994, near Grand Marais, Cook County (*The Loon* 66:107).

- Pacific Loon, 15-16 November 1993, Albert Lea Lake, Freeborn County (*The Loon* 66:46).

- Iceland Gull, 9 April 1994, Anoka County (*The Loon* 66:147-148).

- Brambling, 22 October 1993, Sawbill Trail, Cook County (*The Loon* 66:148-149).

- White-eyed Vireo, 21 May 1994, Seven Mile Creek County, Park, Nicollet County (*The Loon* 66:154).

- Great Black-backed Gull, 24 May 1994, Hok-Si-La Park, Goodhue County (*The Loon* 66:146-147).

- Black-headed Grosbeak, 13 May 1994, Boyd, Lac Qui Parle County (*The Loon* 66:155).

- Painted Bunting, 23-25 May 1994, near Grand Marais, Cook County (*The Loon* 66:152).

- Prairie Warbler, 31 May 1994, Cedar Creek N.H.A., Anoka County (*The Loon* 66:148).

- Mississippi Kite, 12 May 1994, Felton Prairie, Clay County (*The Loon* 66:152).

The following records were voted on by mail January-June 1994 and found to be Unacceptable:

- Osprey, 27 November 1993, Aitkin County. The description is consistent with this species since it includes mention of "black at the bend of the wing" and "wide dark cheek patch;" however, the documentation is weakened by the fact that it was written by someone other than the actual observer, and since there is no indication

that Rough-legged Hawk or subadult Bald Eagle, which are frequently mistaken for Ospreys, were considered as possibilities.

- Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 7 November 1993, North Mankato, Nicollet Co. While there is no doubt that a hummingbird was seen, the brief description does not preclude, for example, an Anna's Hummingbird, which is much more likely in November than a Ruby-throated.

- Gyrfalcon, 27 January 1994, Northfield, Rice Co. Other than the mention of "breast streaking," the documentation includes no other actual description of anything else in the plumage of this raptor.

- Iceland Gull, 30 October 1993, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. The entire description of this adult gull, including the brown iris and gray coloration of the folded wing tips, is consistent with both Iceland and Thayer's gulls. While the gull may well have been an Iceland, there is nothing in the documentation to preclude a Thayer's.

- Swainson's Hawk, 10 December 1993, Highway 13, Waseca Co. While the brief documentation is consistent with Swainson's Hawk, it included only a casual description of the underwing. No optics were used, and it sounds as if the hawk was only seen as the observer was driving. Since this species has a long history of being involved in misidentifications, especially during winter, a more careful look and complete description would be needed to accept such an unprecedented winter record.

- Yellow-billed Loon, 30 May 1994, Grand Marais, Cook Co. The description was felt to be inconsistent and inconclusive for acceptance of such an unusual sighting. While at one point, the bill is described as "more yellow," elsewhere in the description it is said to be "bone colored," which is consistent with Common Loon. The bird's age is also in doubt, since the description of the ear coverts and culmen indicates an immature or basic-plumaged bird, while the description of the neck and back indicates an adult in alternate plumage. Also, there is no mention of bill shape, which is an important feature in separating Common from Yellow-billed Loons. 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.