

Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee

Kim R. Eckert, MORC Chairman

There was a meeting of the Committee on 20 July 1997, and the agenda included votes on the following: two records documented primarily by photographs (which are difficult to circulate by mail); three records with inconclusive first-round votes (which require a discussion and vote at a meeting); and three previously accepted records which were reconsidered at the request of a Committee member. (It was also decided to include the record numbers, which are assigned to the records the Committee votes on, in these Proceedings articles.)

At this meeting the following records were voted on and found to be Acceptable:

- Band-tailed Pigeon, 8–19 September 1996, Lawrence Twp., Itasca Co. (photo record #97–30, vote 7–0, *The Loon* 69:107).

- Yellow-throated Warbler, 13–16 May 1997, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. (photo record #97–31, vote 7–0).

- Sharp-tailed Grouse, 16 October 1996, Rothsay WMA, Wilkin Co. (reconsidered record #97–16, reaffirmed as Acceptable by 5–2 vote).

The following records were voted on at the meeting and found to be Unacceptable:

- Rufous Hummingbird, 7 August 1996, near Waubun, Becker Co. (recirculated record #97–01, vote 0–7). The Committee unanimously felt this was indeed a *Selasphorus* hummingbird; however, the possibility of it being an Allen's is not ruled out since the description includes no information about the back color.

- Gyrfalcon, 9 December 1996, Brandt

Twp., Polk Co. (recirculated record #97–12, vote 3–4). While the Committee felt the identification was probably correct, the description is too vague and confusing for the majority to find it acceptable. For example, no one was sure what was meant by the wings being described as “pointed in the middle” and “pointed at the shoulders”. There is no clear description of the under wing pattern or of the head/face pattern, and the more likely Northern Goshawk only seemed to be eliminated by the lack of a “broad eye stripe”; however, immature goshawks often lack an obvious white supercilium.

- Connecticut Warbler, 6 October 1996, near Barnum, Carlton Co. (recirculated record #97–15, vote 1–6). The possibility of this bird being a Mourning Warbler was not precluded since the observer only eliminated that species on the basis of the presence of a “complete eye ring” on the bird. However, Mourning Warblers in the fall frequently have complete and noticeable white eye rings.

- Chipping Sparrow, 4 December 1995, Hoyt Lakes, St. Louis Co. (reconsidered record #96–30, vote 2–5). The majority of the Committee had originally accepted this record, primarily because it had been seen by experienced observers and since it had been present at a feeder for several weeks previously. However, the Committee reconsidered the record and decided to reverse its earlier vote when it was pointed out that a Chipping Sparrow in December would not normally appear as described. The documentation includes mention of a “solid rusty cap with distinct white line below it”; however, fall and winter Chipping Sparrows have streaked brownish crowns that should not appear

as “solid rusty”, and at that time of year their supercilia are no longer white.

- Lesser Black-backed Gull, 25 March 1996, Rainy River, Lake of the Woods Co. (reconsidered record #96–38, vote 0–7). These two adult gulls were originally accepted by the majority of the Committee, but the record was reconsidered and unanimously found to be Unacceptable; it was pointed out that the observer was not using any optics during his observation, and the possibility of California Gull is not ruled out by the description.

The following records were voted on by mail January–June 1997 and found to be Acceptable:

- Sabine’s Gull, 27 September – 3 October 1996, Waterville, Le Sueur Co. (record #97–03, vote 7–0).
- Clark’s Grebe, 4 October 1996, Lake Traverse, Traverse Co. (record #97–04, vote 6–1).
- Sabine’s Gull, 29 October 1996, Fox Lake, Martin Co. (record #97–06, vote 7–0).
- Red-necked Phalarope, 1 November 1996, Lake Alexander, Morrison Co. (record #97–07, vote 7–0).
- Pomarine Jaeger, 8–13 November 1996, Lake Pepin, Wabasha Co. (record #97–09, vote 7–0, *The Loon* 69:3–6).
- Eurasian Wigeon, 17 November 1996, Lake Phalen, Ramsey Co. (record #97–11, vote 5–2).
- Least Tern, 16 May 1996, Whitewater WMA, Winona Co. (record #97–13, vote 7–0).
- Yellow-throated Warbler, 19 May 1996, Bloomington, Hennepin Co. (record #97–14, vote 7–0).
- Chipping Sparrow, 21 December 1996, Burnsville, Dakota Co. (record #97–17, vote 7–0).
- Barrow’s Goldeneye, 28 November 1996 – 16 February 1997, Blue Lake sewage ponds, Scott Co. (record #97–18, vote 7–0).
- Eurasian Wigeon, 19 April 1997, near Bohemian WMA, Lincoln Co. (record #97–20, vote 7–0).
- Yellow-throated Warbler, 27 April

1997, Northfield, Rice Co. (record #97–21, vote 7–0).

- Lesser Black-backed Gull, 6 April 1997, Athens Twp., Isanti Co. (record #97–22, vote 6–1).
- Say’s Phoebe, 27 April 1997, Keene Twp., Clay Co. (record #97–23, vote 7–0).
- Western Tanager, 16 May 1997, Byron, Olmsted Co. (record #97–24, vote 7–0).
- Yellow-throated Warbler, 23–24 May 1997, Agassiz NWR, Marshall Co. (record #97–25, vote 7–0).
- Lazuli Bunting (male), 25–26 May 1997, near Lynd, Lyon Co. (record #97–26, vote 7–0).
- Lazuli Bunting (female), 28 May 1997, near Lynd, Lyon Co. (record #97–27, vote 6–1).
- Burrowing Owl, 31 May 1997, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #97–28, vote 7–0, *The Loon* 69:168–169).

The following records were voted on by mail January–June 1997 and found to be Unacceptable:

- Acadian Flycatcher, 23 September 1996, location? (record #97–02, vote 1–6). The description of the plumage of this silent Empidonax flycatcher does not include any information useful enough to preclude any of the other members of this genus.
- Red-throated Loon, 24 October 1996, Gooseberry Falls SP, Lake Co. (record #97–05, vote 2–5). Although there was a Common Loon present for direct size comparison with the loon in question, its identity apparently was only determined by “the bill always being upward a bit”. However, since the actual shape of the bill itself was not noted, Pacific Loon is not precluded since that species frequently holds its bill uptilted as well.
- Red-shouldered Hawk, 3 November 1996, near Two Harbors, Lake Co. (record #97–08, vote 2–5). Portions of the lengthy and detailed description do suggest the hawk may have been correctly identified, but other parts of the documentation seem inconsistent with Red-shouldered. The sketched tail pattern would also fit a

dark-morph Rough-legged Hawk, and the overall darkness of the described plumage would also be more consistent with a Rough-legged than a Red-shouldered. The description also mentions "the wing tips reached very close to the tip of the tail", yet another feature favoring Rough-legged over Red-shouldered.

- Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 9 November 1996, Faribault, Rice Co. (record #97-10, vote 1-6). The brief description of this hummingbird is not nearly detailed enough to preclude some other vagrant species (e.g., Anna's).

- Cooper's Hawk, 3 January 1997, near Nevis, Hubbard Co. (record #97-19, vote 1-6). The brief description includes nothing about the plumage itself, with the identification based entirely on the observer's impression of its size. However,

nothing was available for direct size comparison, and therefore the more likely Northern Goshawk is not ruled out. In addition, no optics were used during the observation.

- Sprague's Pipit, 25 April 1997, near East Grand Forks, Polk Co. (record #97-29, vote 0-7). The observer did not consider the species to be unusual, and his description is therefore not detailed enough to indicate this species. For one thing the leg color was not noted; in addition, the bill is described as black, which alone would preclude Sprague's Pipit.

Summary: 33 records voted on; 22 Acceptable (67%), 11 Unacceptable (33%).

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