

Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee

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

The following records were voted on August-December 2000 and found to be Acceptable:

- White-tailed Kite, 10-19 May 2000, Afton State Park, Washington Co. (record #2000-36, vote 10-0, **The Loon** 72:193-194). Note that all ten members, seven regular members plus three alternates, vote on potential first state records.

- White-throated Swift, 10 May 2000, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. (record #2000-37, vote 10-0, **The Loon** 72:191-193). Note that all ten members vote on potential first state records.

- Great-tailed Grackle, 14 May 2000, Little Swan L., Cottonwood Co. (record #2000-45, vote 7-0).

- Painted Bunting, 24 May - August 2000, Maple Grove, Hennepin Co. (record #2000-51, vote 7-0).

- Tricolored Heron, 29 May - 4 June 2000, Hastings, Dakota Co. (record #2000-52, vote 7-0, **The Loon** 72:242-243)

- Lesser Black-backed Gull, 2 June 2000, Crookston, Polk Co. (record #2000-53, vote 7-0, **The Loon** 73:59-60).

- Great Black-backed Gull, 5 June 2000, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2000-55, vote 5-2).

- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 10-11 June 2000, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2000-56, vote 7-0, **The Loon** 72:180).

- Eurasian Tree Sparrow, 11 June - August 2000, Parke Twp., Clay Co. (record #2000-57, vote 7-0, **The Loon** 72:133-134).

- *Plegadis* ibis, 18 June 2000, Audubon Twp., Becker Co. (record #2000-58, vote 7-0).

- White-eyed Vireo, 20 May 2000, Glendalough State Park, Otter Tail Co. (record #2000-63, vote 7-0, **The Loon**

72:250).

- Harris's Sparrow, 29 July - August 2000, Big Deep L., Cass Co. (record #2000-65, vote 7-0).

- Yellow-throated Warbler, 18 June - August 2000, William O'Brien State Park, Washington Co. (record #2000-67, vote 7-0, **The Loon** 73:61-62).

- Harris's Sparrow, 20 June 2000, near Waubun, Becker Co. (record #2000-68, vote 5-2).

- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 8 July 2000, Olmsted Co. (record #2000-70, vote 7-0).

- Prairie Falcon, 25 July 2000, near Ortonville, Big Stone Co. (record #2000-73, vote 5-2).

- Yellow-breasted Chat, 29 July 2000, Carver Park, Carver Co. (record #2000-74, vote 5-2).

- Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, 6 August 2000, Delaware Twp., Grant Co. (record #2000-75, vote 7-0 on identification, **The Loon** 73:64). After the identification was accepted, a discussion and vote on the origin of this individual was taken, and by majority vote (8-2; all ten members vote on questions of origin) it was accepted as Accidental (o) — i.e., the possibilities of captive vs. wild origin are about equal.

- White-faced Ibis, 19-20 August 2000, Carrigan L., Wright Co. (record #2000-76, vote 7-0).

- Sabine's Gull (26 individuals), 23 September 2000, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2000-78, vote 7-0).

- Arctic Tern, 23 September 2000, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2000-79, vote 7-0).

- Pomarine Jaeger, 23 September 2000, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2000-80, vote 6-1).

- Eurasian Collared-Dove, 30 September – 9 October 2000, Odessa, Big Stone Co. (record #2000-81, vote 7-0).

- Black-headed Gull, 8 October 2000, Spirit L., Jackson Co. (record #2000-82, vote 7-0).

- Sabine's Gull, 9 October 2000, Breckenridge, Wilkin Co. (record #2000-83, vote 7-0).

- Mississippi Kite, 11 September 2000, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2000-84, vote 7-0). Photographs were taken of this individual, and a vote (with all ten members eligible to vote) was taken on whether or not they are identifiable on their own. The majority opinion (7-3) was that they are not identifiable, which means this species remains classified as Casual (s) — i.e., there are no identifiable specimens or photos obtained in the state.

- King Eider, 14-16 October 2000, Good Harbor Bay, Cook Co. (record #2000-85, vote 7-0).

- Black-headed Grosbeak, 21-23 October 2000, Two Harbors, Lake Co. (record #2000-87, vote 5-2).

- *Plegadis* ibis, 29-30 October 2000, Carlos Avery WMA, Anoka Co. (record #2000-88, vote 7-0).

- Black-legged Kittiwake, 30 October – 2 November 2000, Two Harbors, Lake Co. (record #2000-89, vote 7-0).

- Ash-throated Flycatcher, 3-5 November 2000, Two Harbors, Lake Co. (record #2000-90, vote 7-0).

- *Plegadis* ibis, 10 November 2000, near Herman, Grant Co. (record #2000-91, vote 7-0).

The following records were voted on August-December 2000 and found to be Unacceptable:

- Glaucous-winged Gull, 15 November – 4 December 1999, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (record #99-66, vote 0-7).

The numerous photographs and written descriptions of this second-winter gull were sent for comment to three reviewers from other states with extensive experience with this species. One of them felt the identification was probably correct, but the other two had reservations

about it, especially since the small bill size, the small and slight overall body size and structure, and some atypical pigmentation on the wing coverts and primaries seem inconsistent with this species. In addition, some of the observers documenting the record (including five MORC members) had reservations about the identification. While the gull may well have been a Glaucous-winged, the possibility of it being a hybrid or an atypically plumaged Herring Gull remains.

- Thayer's Gull, 5 April 1999, Bemidji, Beltrami Co. (record #2000-07, vote 2-5).

The description of this first-winter gull is not clear enough to indicate whether it was a worn or faded Herring Gull or a correctly identified Thayer's Gull. Those not accepting the record were bothered primarily by the apparent lack of darker secondaries and tail band, while the minority felt that the description was as good as — or better than — other Thayer's Gull records which have been accepted or published.

- Eurasian Collared-Dove, 7 May 2000, Redwood Falls, Redwood Co. (record #2000-31, vote 3-4).

Although there is little doubt the identification was correct, the dove did not give any vocalizations, and the pattern on the undersides of the outer rectrices was not visible. Without either or both of these diagnostic features, the possibility of Ringed Turtle-Dove is not entirely precluded.

- Plumbeous Vireo, 13 May 2000, Cottonwood, Lyon Co. (record #2000-38, vote 0-10).

All ten MORC members vote on potential first state records. Despite the unanimous Unacceptable vote, the majority felt the identification by the experienced observer may well have been correct. However, the record is weakened by the top of the head and nape being described as "almost black" and darker than the back, which is inconsistent with this species (and with Blue-headed and Cassin's vireos). It is also unclear from the description as to the exact extent of yellowish color on the flanks and under tail coverts. As stated and shown by an

article on these vireos in *Birding* (28:458–471), some Cassin's Vireos and one subspecies of Blue-headed Vireo can closely resemble Plumbeous Vireos, making any reported sight records of Plumbeous or Cassin's vireos here difficult to adequately document.

- Common Ground-Dove, 2 June 2000, Carlson Twp., Freeborn Co. (record #2000-54, vote 1–6).

The description does seem to be mostly consistent with this species and to preclude other dove species, but there are a few problems in the documentation which makes acceptance of this potential second state record of a species so far out of range difficult. For one thing, the back is described as "scaled with brown/black spots," which is more consistent with Inca Dove. Also the eyes are described as "black," while the irides should be reddish. It may be this really was a ground-dove and that the description is simply poorly worded, but again there should be no room for doubt in the documentation of such an unusual species.

- Sprague's Pipit, 18 June 2000, Felton Prairie, Clay Co. (record #2000-59, vote 3–4).

The description provided is entirely adequate and consistent with the identification, but the majority of the Committee felt the record was weakened by the observer's inexperience with this species, which was often involved with misidentifications. Some also felt the documentation is incomplete since the leg color was not noted, and no reason was given for why juvenile Horned Lark was eliminated from consideration.

- Mississippi Kite, 26 June 2000, Sibley State Park, Kandiyohi Co. (record #2000-60, vote 0–7).

The out-of-state observers, who had experience with this species, provided a description which seems mostly consistent with Mississippi Kite. However, the bird was only seen for a few seconds, the distance and optics involved are not given, and the overall size of the bird is not described. In addition, the plumage description is open to doubt since the under

side of the bird is described as "all light," which does not accurately fit the tail of this species at any age.

- Lark Bunting, 1 October 1998, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (record #2000-61, vote 2–5).

The majority had too many uncertainties about the description to accept the record. The amount and position of the white on the tail is unclear and inconsistently described; also unclear is whether or not the underparts were streaked. Finally, the sketched position of the white on the wings is somewhat incorrect for this species.

- Thayer's Gull, 18 May 2000, L. Lilian, Kandiyohi Co. (record #2000-62, vote 1–6).

The identification may well have been correct, but there is still much misunderstanding among even experienced birders regarding the diagnostic field marks of this species, and many observers are unaware how faded and worn Herring Gulls can closely resemble Thayer's Gulls. In this case, the documentation leaves out too many details to be convincing, with uncertainties remaining about this gull's overall size, age, bill color, tail pattern, eye color, mantle color and pattern of the flight feathers.

- Brant, 9 July 2000, Forest L., Washington Co. (record #2000-64, vote 0–7).

The very brief documentation does not preclude the more likely possibility of this bird being some sort of exotic or barnyard waterfowl escaped or released from captivity; the bird also might have been an injured, summering blue-morph Snow Goose.

- Hooded Warbler, 9–14 June 2000, Chaska (?), Carver Co. (record #2000-66, vote 1–6).

No field notes were taken at the time of the observation, with the provided documentation apparently only written from memory two months later. The majority of the Committee was also bothered by the atypical habitat for this species ("wet field with small trees and shrubs"), and some felt the description was too vague and did not adequately rule out other possibilities,

such as Common Yellowthroat.

- Mountain Bluebird, 1 July 2000, Lake Louise State Park, Mower Co. (record #2000-69, vote 3-4).

This record involves a pair of bluebirds, but the female, which was only superficially described, was unanimously felt to be Unacceptable. A minority of the Committee, however, felt a male Mountain Bluebird is too distinctive to mis-identify, but the majority was uncomfortable with accepting either individual. The descriptions seem to be at least partly copied from a field guide, and undue emphasis is given to the male's white belly, which Easterns also have. Finally, the observer's sole experience with this species is stated as coming from Mower County on two previous — and undocumented — occasions.

- Baird's Sparrow, 13 July 2000, Pembina Trail Scientific & Natural Area, Polk Co. (record #2000-71, vote 0-7).

The incomplete description of the bird's plumage only includes mention of a light eyebrow and some faint stripes on the sides of the breast, which is not enough to determine what kind of sparrow was seen. The song was heard and described, but the musical trill with "a lower note" at the end is more suggestive of Savannah Sparrow and would be inconsistent with a normal Baird's Sparrow's song.

- Baird's Sparrow, 25 July 2000, Felton Prairie, Clay Co. (record #2000-72, vote 0-7).

This bird was never actually seen, and many species have vocalizations which can easily be misidentified, especially when the observers have limited experience with them; atypical songs of other similar species do occur. The description of the song (as in the above record) also fits Savannah Sparrow well, since the introductory notes are described as lower pitched than the trill — in the Baird's Sparrow's song, these notes are higher pitched.

- Western Tanager, 17 August 2000, Lakeville, Dakota Co. (record #2000-77, vote 0-7).

The identification of this apparent tanager seems to be based primarily on the bird's wing bars; however, the Scarlet Tanager can sometimes show visible wing bars, and nothing else in the brief description clearly indicates why this was a Western Tanager.

The efforts of all those observers who document their reports of unusual species are appreciated, whether or not those records are accepted. Accordingly, the Committee acknowledges with thanks those who provided documentation for the records listed in this article: Diane Anderson, Karl Bardon, Brad Bolduan, Michael Bowen, Jim Braastad, Judd Brink, Paul Budde, Dave Cahlander, Philip Chu (3 records), Merce Dostale (2 records), Bob Dunlap (2 records), Kim Eckert (7 records), Paul Egeland, Cheryl Fox, Bill George, Don Grussing, Tom Hartman, Mike Hendrickson, Anthony Hertzell (8 records), Ben Hopland, Bob Janssen (2 records), Doug Johnson, Douglas Johnson, Ann Kessen, Byron Kinkade, Jim Lind (3 records), Craig Mandel (2 records), Craig Menze, Steve Millard, Frank Nicoletti, Terry Niedenfuer, Michael North, Tom Polasik, Paul Prior, Ed Quinn, Forest Strnad, Peder Svingen (18 records), Michael Tarachow (2 records), Tom Tustison (2 records), Marlene Weber, Bob Zink, and Dave Zumeta.

There were also other observers who documented records which were not submitted for a vote to the Committee; their documentations, though not mentioned here, are also appreciated.

Summary: 47 records voted on: 32 Acceptable (68%), 15 Unacceptable (32%).

8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.