

# Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee

Peder H. Svingen, Chairman

The most recent meeting of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (MOURC) was held on 10 July 2005. In attendance and voting at this meeting were Paul Budde, Phil Chu, Ann Kessen, Jim Lind (alternate member), Bill Marengo (alternate), Jim Mattsson, Drew Smith, Steve Stucker (alternate), Peder Svingen (Chairman), and Tom Tustison.

Among the items on the agenda at this meeting was discussion of two potential additions to the state list. Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) was Not Accepted on the basis of origin. No action was taken on the Carolina Parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*) pending further discussion (*The Loon* 76:175–181). The state list therefore remains at 430 species following the most recent addition of the Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*).

Criteria for the field identification of Cackling Goose are still being developed; its separation from *parvipes* and other small forms of the Canada Goose complex (*B. canadensis*) remains particularly challenging. The Committee is seeking banding recovery data that will unequivocally establish the presence of Cackling Goose in Minnesota. Meanwhile, we continue to request written details or physical evidence for all reports of this species in the state. Please send inclusive dates, specific locations, number of individuals and how identified, along with photographs, sound recordings, and any additional information pertaining to this species in Minnesota, to Peder Svingen (address below).

The following records were voted on by mail January – July 2005 and were Accepted (also see Not Accepted records #2005-013 and 2005-035 which involved



**Record 2005-001: Barrow's Goldeneye, 27 December 2004, Hastings, Dakota County. Digital photo by James P. Mattsson.**

qualified Accepted votes).

- Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*), 8 May 2005, Red Lake Falls, Red Lake County (record #2005-014, vote 7–0).

Photographs and written documentation by two of three observers confirmed the identification of this adult male and eliminated hybrid Eurasian X American Wigeon (*A. penelope* X *A. americana*)

- Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*), 26–27 May 2005, Oakland Township, Mahnomen County (record #2005-028, vote 7–0).

An adult male was photographed at close range while it displayed towards a female Blue-winged Teal (*A. discors*).

- Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*), 27 December 2004 – 11 January 2005, Hastings, Dakota County (record #2005-001, vote 7–0).

This adult male was recorded on the



**Record 2005-005: Gyrfalcon, 3 February 2005, Nininger Township, Dakota County. Digital photo by James P. Mattsson.**

Hastings-Etter Christmas Bird Count and was photographed during its 16 day stay.

- Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*), 4–11 January 2005, Two Harbors, Lake County (record #2005-003, vote 7–0).

Bill size and shape, bill color, and brown auricular spot on this juvenile were documented by experienced observers. Sixth state record.

- Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), 19–22 April 2005, near Aitkin, Aitkin County (record #2005-008, vote 7–0).

This cooperative adult in alternate plumage was studied and photographed by many observers, and established the state's second confirmed record.

- White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chibi*), 19 April 2005, Hills, Rock County (record #2005-010, vote 5–2).

This adult had red irides, red facial skin, and red legs, but completely lacked a white facial border, which concerned two Committee members.

- White-faced Ibis, 1 May 2005, Hills, Rock County (record #2005-013, vote 7–0 for one adult in alternate plumage; also

see Not Accepted records below).

- White-faced Ibis, 13–15 May 2005, Osakis, Douglas County (record #2005-032, vote 7–0).

- *Plegadis* ibis, sp., 30 April – 2 May 2005, Clare Johnson W.M.A., Lincoln County (record #2005-035, vote 7–0 for two adults, also see Not Accepted records below).

Although both birds were unanimously Accepted as *Plegadis* ibis sp., the written description eliminated neither Glossy Ibis nor hybrid White-faced X Glossy Ibis (see *North American Birds* 57:136–139).

- *Plegadis* ibis, sp., 28 May 2005, Plover Prairie, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2005-033, vote 7–0).

Seven dark ibises of indeterminate age were seen only in flight and prudently, were left unidentified.

- Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*), 9 January 2005, Two Harbors, Lake County (record #2005-004, vote 5–2).

Those not accepting this record of an adult gray morph were concerned that the identification was based primarily on size



**Record 2005-016: White-winged Dove, 7 May 2005, Empire Township, Dakota County. Digital photo by Blaine Seeliger.**

and shape; the bird was seen for less than a minute and only in flight.

- Gyrfalcon, 3 February – 10 April 2005, Nininger Township, Dakota County (record #2005-005, vote 7-0).

- Gyrfalcon, 6 February 2005, county road 18 near county road 5, Aitkin County (record #2005-006, vote 6-1).

- Gyrfalcon, 21 February 2005, county road 5 north of Palisade, Aitkin County (record #2005-022, vote 5-2).

Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) can show pointed wings under certain field conditions; two members concluded that written details were insufficient to conclusively eliminate this possibility.

- Gyrfalcon, 21 March 2005, Virginia, St. Louis County (record #2005-031, vote 6-1).

- Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*), 21-24 April 2005, Centennial W.P.A., Big Stone County (record #2005-009, vote 7-0).

- Black-necked Stilt, 8-10 May 2005, Spindler's Pond near Rice Lake S.P., Steele County (record #2005-015, vote 7-0).

Of interest was its possible relationship to three adults at Spindler's Pond 16-17 May 2004 (*The Loon* 76:197, 77:49).

- Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*), 16-18 April 2005, Fleming Township, Aitkin County (record #2005-007, vote 7-0).

This second county record was well-documented with written descriptions and photographs.

- California Gull (*Larus californicus*), Breckenridge, Wilkin County, 7 May 2005 (record #2005-029, vote 6-1).

Distant photographs and comparisons with Ring-billed Gulls (*L. delawarensis*) were included in the documentation.

- Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*), 20-22 May 2005, Park Point, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2005-024, vote 7-0).

- White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*), 7-8 May 2005, Empire Township, Dakota County (record #2005-016, vote 7-0).

- Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*), 30 April – 14 May 2005, Hantho Township, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2005-012, vote 7-0).



**Record 2005-008: Glossy Ibis, 19 April 2005, near Aitkin, Aitkin County. Digital photo by Kim and Cindy Risen.**



**Record 2005-011: Worm-eating Warbler, 14 April 2005, Warner Nature Center, Washington County. Digital photo by Kirk Mona.**

Digital images were obtained of this apparently unmated adult at a burrow.

- Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), 15 May – 2 July 2005, Felton Prairie, Clay County (record #2005-019, vote 7-0 for each of two adults).

Both of the adults were photographed and described separately; their behavior suggested the possibility of breeding, but nesting evidence could not be found.

- Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*), 10 May – 23 August 2005, Felton Prairie, Clay County (record #2005-017, vote 7-0).

One adult advertised from a pile of rocks in the same quarry where Minnesota's first breeding record occurred in 2004 (*The Loon* 77:30, 59-62). Though seen carrying food in late June, neither a mate nor young were observed in 2005.

- Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*), 15 May 2005, Belle Plaine C.P., Morrison County (record #2005-030, vote 7-0).

- Worm-eating Warbler (*Helminthos vermivorus*), 15 April 2005, Warner Nature Center, Washington County (record #2005-011, vote 7-0).

Netted, banded, and photographed in the hand on a record-early date.

- Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*), 26 May 2005, Ely, St. Louis County

(record #2005-026, vote 7-0).

- Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*), 24 May 2005, near Luverne, Rock County (record #2005-025, vote 7-0).

This adult male pursued a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*P. ludovicianus*).

- Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*), 13 May 2005, Owatonna, Steele County (record #2005-021, vote 6-1).

This adult male was documented only by two photographs, which appeared to show some pale blue on the bird's belly. A written description might have addressed one member's concern that this suggested possible hybridization with Indigo Bunting (*P. cyanea*).

- Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (*Leucosticte tephrocotis*), 30 December 2004 – early March 2005, near Hinckley, Pine County (record #2005-002, vote 7-0).

The following records were voted on January – July 2005 and were Not Accepted.

(Please note that a record which is Not Accepted only means that the documentation was not complete or convincing enough to include the sighting in *The Loon*, the journal of the MOU, or in the MOU's archives of confirmed bird records. Such a vote does not necessarily mean the observer misidentified the bird or did not see it. Summaries of the reasons why a record was Not Accepted are included here. These are in no way intended to be critical of the observer. The only purpose is to highlight the difficulties an observer may encounter while identifying or documenting these and similar species.)

- Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*), 22 May 2005, Sherburne N.W.R., Sherburne County (record #2005-034, identification Accepted 10-0/origin Not Accepted 0-10).

All ten members vote on potential first state records and on questions of origin. This adult was documented by a single photograph; its identity was not in doubt, but there was no written information about the bird's behavior, ability to fly, condition of its bare parts and plumage, and whether or not it was banded.

A late May date would be most unusual for a true vagrant. This species has been reported about a dozen times in Minnesota, but very few were documented, all were assumed to be escaped or released from captivity, and none were previously voted on by the committee. Information on the release of captive Whooper Swans in Minnesota and this species' status in North America was recently summarized in *North American Birds* 58: 301–308.

- Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*), 20 May 2005, East River Gorge Park, Minneapolis, Hennepin County (record #2005-023, vote 2–5).

A brief description by an inexperienced observer of a heron that “apparently has been staying in the park for some time, because many neighbors are familiar with it” garnered minimal support. Its bill was yellow — atypical for Tricolored Heron in May — and the description of a “grayish-blue back” and “light” belly might also fit Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*).

- White-faced Ibis, 30 April – 2 May 2005, Clare Johnson W.M.A., Lincoln County (record #2005-035, vote 0–7 for two adults; see Accepted record of *Plegadis ibis*, sp.).

- *Plegadis ibis*, sp., 1 May 2005, Hills, Rock County (record #2005-013, vote 2–5 for three individuals).

Three ibises reported with an Accepted record of one White-faced Ibis were not described in any way.

- Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*), 30 April 2005, Northfield, Rice County (record #2005-020, vote 2–5).

This warbler had a yellow throat, a “horizontal white streak” above the eye, and a gray back, and may well have been a Yellow-throated Warbler, but despite 20 minutes of observation the description omitted key elements of this species, e.g., the white suborbital arc, the pattern of black on its face, the distinctive white patch on the side of its neck, and white wing bars. The possibilities of Grace’s Warbler (*D. graciae*) and female Blackburnian Warbler (*D. fusca*) were not considered; though unlikely, the former was recently photographed in Chicago.

- Baird’s Sparrow (*Ammodramus bairdii*), 5 May 2005, Felton Prairie, Clay County (record #2005-018, vote 2–5).

This report of an early Baird’s Sparrow singing in atypical microhabitat (disturbed grassland with discarded farm equipment and materials) was not supported by field notes and the description did not conclusively eliminate other grassland sparrows.

The efforts of all those observers who document reports of unusual species are greatly appreciated, whether or not the records are Accepted. Accordingly, the Committee acknowledges with thanks those who provided written documentation for one or more of the records listed in this article: Dedrick Benz, Wayne Bjorlie, Paul Budde, Conny Brunell, Doug Buri, Dave Cahlander, Philip Chu, Bob Dunlap, Kim Eckert, John Ellis, Chris Fagyal, Steven Falkowski, Ben Fritchman, Mike Hendrickson, Jeanie Joppru, Bill Marengo, Jim Mattsson, Janet Petn, Peter Schmitz, Roger Schroeder, Bill Schuna, Peder Svingen, Dan & Sandy Thimgan, Tom Tustison, Tim Walsh, and Leo Wexler-Mann. The Committee also thanks an increasing number of photographers who submitted images in support of these records — a most welcome trend.

There were many more observers who provided written documentation and/or photographs for records of Regular species which were not voted on by the Committee. Although such records are not cited here, the efforts of these individuals are greatly appreciated. The Committee wishes to especially thank Conny Brunell, Craig Menze, and Dan and Sandy Thimgan for documenting several such records.

The Committee welcomes questions or comments from MOU members regarding any record in particular or our procedures in general. Please contact Peder Svingen by e-mail at <psvingen@d.umn.edu> or at the address below. Summary: 34 records voted on — 30 Accepted (88%), 4 Not Accepted (12%).

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