

# 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 30 July 2006. In attendance and voting at this meeting were Phil Chu, Ann Kessen, Jim Lind (alternate member), Bill Marengo (alternate), Jim Mattsson, Drew Smith, Steve Stucker, and Peder Svingen (Chairman).

Among the items on the agenda were discussions of a potential first state record of Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*) and two previously accepted records of Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*). The committee unanimously voted to review the two frigatebird records in light of information presented in Howell (1994) and a recent report of Lesser Frigatebird (*F. ariel*) in Wayne County, Michigan, 11 September 2005 (Brennan and Schultz 2006). Ten recirculated records were also discussed.

The following records were voted on by mail January – July 2006 and were Accepted (also see Not Accepted records #2006-011 and 2006-044 which involved qualified Accepted votes).

- Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*), 17 May 2006, near Waskish, Beltrami County (record #2006-046, vote 7–0).

Written details for this adult male were submitted by each of two observers and eliminated hybrid Eurasian X American Wigeon (*A. penelope* X *A. americana*).

- Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*), 12–13 April 2006, Brockway Lake, Powers Township, Cass County (record #2006-032, vote 7–0).

Digital images and written details by three independent observers confirmed the identification of this adult male and

addressed the possibility of hybridization with Blue-winged Teal (*A. discors*).

- Cinnamon Teal, 26 May 2006, Worthington W.T.P., Nobles County (record #2006-051, vote 6–1).

- Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*), 20 November 2005, Mississippi River near Reno, Houston County (record #2005-081, vote 6–1).

- Barrow's Goldeneye, 19–26 February 2006, Lake Pepin near Reads Landing, Wabasha County (record #2006-028, vote 6–1).

The identity of the above two adult male goldeneyes was not disputed, but one member questioned their locations with respect to the state line.

- Barrow's Goldeneye, 13 April 2006, Mallard Lake, Aitkin County (record #2006-038, vote 7–0).

- Glossy/White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis*, sp.), 17 August 2004, Walter Township, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2006-004, vote 6–1).

Though submitted more than 17 months late and unaccompanied by field notes, documentation for this immature ibis included two photographs.

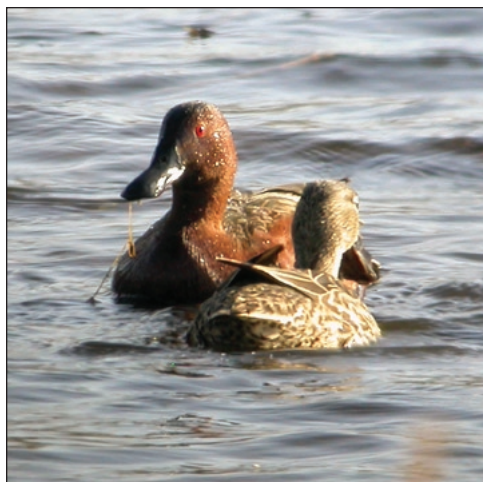
- Glossy/White-faced Ibis, 24 April 2005, near Waubun, Mahanomen County (record #2006-007, vote 7–0).

- Glossy/White-faced Ibis, 27 July 2005, Swenson Lake, Big Stone County (record #2006-014, vote 7–0).

- Glossy/White-faced Ibis, 23 August 2005, Royal Township, Lincoln County (record #2006-016, vote 6–1).

- Glossy/White-faced Ibis, 4–6 May 2006, Danvers W.M.A., Swift County (record #2006-044, vote 7–0).

- White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chibi*), 24



**Record 2006-032, Male Cinnamon Teal, 13 April 2006, Brockaway Lake, Cass County. Photo by Peder H. Svingen.**



**Record 2006-030, immature Gyrfalcon, 6 February 2006, Walter Township, Lac Qui Parle County. Photo by Bill J. Unzen.**

May 2005, Big Stone N.W.R., Lac Qui Parle County (record #2006-011, vote 6-1 for one adult as White-faced Ibis, vote 7-0 for second adult as *Plegadis ibis*, sp.).

- White-faced Ibis, 21-22 April 2006, near Bellingham, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2006-037, vote 5-2).

Though seen by many observers, no one provided written documentation; two members found the single photograph inconclusive with respect to hybrid ibis.

- White-faced Ibis, 22 April 2006, Carlos Avery W.M.A., Anoka County (record #2006-035, vote 5-2).

Though supported by written details and a digital image that clearly showed a white facial-skin border, poor lighting precluded definitive views of all field marks; two members concluded that a hybrid ibis could not be eliminated.

- White-faced Ibis, 1-2 May 2006, Copeland W.M.A., Western Township, Otter Tail County (record #2006-039, vote 6-1).

- Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*), 25 December 2005 - 25 March 2006, various locations near Hastings, Dakota County (record #2005-084, vote 7-0).

This adult gray morph was seen and

photographed by many observers, and was probably a returning individual from the previous winter.

- Gyrfalcon, 29 December 2005, Park Point, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2005-085, vote 7-0).

- Gyrfalcon, 21-28 January 2006, Park Point, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2006-002, vote 7-0).

This juvenile was simultaneously found by an observer standing at the Park Point Recreation Area in Duluth and a group of observers standing on Barkers Island in Superior; the bird was on the ice between these two locations and eventually flew over the observer on Park Point.

- Gyrfalcon, 23 January - 2 March 2006, Port Terminal, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2006-003, vote 7-0).

Though not documented during the 25 days between 29 December 2005 and 23 January 2006, this adult was probably the same individual as record #2005-085.

- Gyrfalcon, 6 February 2006, Walter Township, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2006-030, vote 7-0).

This juvenile gray morph was well-described and photographed.

- Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus*



**Record 2005-082, Black-legged Kittiwake, 10 December 2005, Black Dog Lake, Dakota County. Photo by Anthony X. Hertzel.**



**Record 2006-045, White-winged Dove, 14 May 2006, Mora, Kanabec County. Photo by David A. Cahlander.**



**Record 2006-001, Barn Owl, 20 January 2006, North Oaks, Ramsey County. Photo by Anthony X. Hertzel.**



**Record 2006-041, Burrowing Owls, 6 May 2006, Tilden Township, Polk County. Photo by Peder H. Svingen.**

*mexicanus*), 27 May 2006, Carlos Avery W.M.A., Anoka County (record #2006-055, vote 7–0 for each of two adults).

- Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*), 7 May 2006, Lake Byllesby, Dakota County (record #2006-054, vote 7–0).

- California Gull (*Larus californicus*), Inver Grove Heights, Dakota County, 30 March 2005 (record #2006-027, vote 5–2).

Though submitted one year late, the description was based on photographs.

- California Gull, Clay County landfill, Clay County, 1 May 2006 (record #2006-040, vote 5–2).

Digital images were submitted of this first-cycle gull. It reportedly lacked pale inner primary “windows”, but it was unclear how well or for how long this bird was seen in flight. Two members concluded that Herring Gull was not eliminated.

- Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*), 4 December 2005, Cenakio Lake, Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park, Anoka County (record #2005-088, vote 7–0).

- Black-legged Kittiwake, 7–24 December 2005, Black Dog Lake, Dakota County (record #2005-082, vote 7–0).

Both of these records referred to first-





**Record 2006-025, Green Violet-ear, 28 July 2005, Hubbard County. Photo by Jeanne and David Hilgendorf.**



**Record 2006-057, Lazuli Bunting, 10 June 2006, Blue Earth County. Photo by Doug Kieser.**

winter kittiwakes and may have involved the same individual; the latter was photographed by many observers.

- White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*), 10–16 May 2006, Mora, Kanabec County (record #2006-045, vote 7–0).

- White-winged Dove, 2–24 June 2006, Nelson's Resort at Crane Lake, St. Louis County (record #2006-056, vote 7–0).

Both of the above were photographed.

- Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), 20 January 2006, North Oaks, Ramsey County (record #2006-001, vote 7–0).

Photographs were submitted of the specimen after the owl struck a window and died. Ninth winter record.

- Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*), 27 April – 6 May 2006, Tilden Township, Polk County (record #2006-041, vote 7–0 for each of two adults).

- Burrowing Owl, 6–29 May 2006, near Lockhart, Norman County (record #2006-042, vote 7–0 for each of two adults).

- Burrowing Owl, 9 May – 24 June 2006, Rochester airport, Olmsted County (record #2006-048, vote 7–0).

All three Burrowing Owl records were documented by written descriptions and digital images; the Olmsted County bird was also recorded calling.

- Green Violet-ear (*Colibri thalassinus*), ~25 July – 21 August 2005, Straight River Township, Hubbard County (record #2006-025, vote 7–0).

Stunning images of this adult male were submitted in February 2006. Second state record.

- Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), 27 July 2005, Felton Prairie, Clay County (record #2006-021, vote 5–2).

This adult along county road 108 may have been one of those seen at a nearby gravel pit 15 May – 2 July 2005 (record #2005-019, *The Loon* 77:173, 78:56–57).

- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*), 23 April 2006, Garfield Township, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2006-036, vote 7–0).

- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 1–2 May 2006, near Downer, Clay County (record #2006-043, vote 7–0).

- White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*), 29 May 2006, Blue Mounds S.P., Rock County



**Record 2006-036, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 23 April 2006, Garfield Township, Lac Qui Parle County. Photo by Bill J. Unzen.**



**Record 2006-052, Prairie Warbler, 5 June 2006, Ellsworth, Nobles County. Photo by David A. Cahlander.**

(record #2006-049, vote 7-0).

- Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*), 7-8 May 2006, undisclosed location in east-central Rice County (record #2006-047, vote 7-0).

- Prairie Warbler (*Dendroica discolor*), 4-5 June 2006, near Ellsworth, Nobles County (record #2006-052, vote 7-0).

Digital images and written details were submitted by multiple observers.

- Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*), 22 June 2005, Grant County (record #2006-031, vote 7-0).

This singing male was discovered at an undisclosed location near Herman by a researcher familiar with the species. Third state record and first summer occurrence.

- Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*), 10 June 2006, St. Clair, Blue Earth County (record #2006-057, vote 7-0).

Photographed and well-described.

The following records were voted on January – July 2006 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.)

- Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*), 17 April 2006, Princeton W.T.P., Sherburne County (record #2006-033, vote 0-7).

The observer was unaware of this species' status in Minnesota and did not take field notes. Only its head was described.

- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*), 1 June 2005, Walter and Perry townships, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2006-022, vote 1-6).

Field notes were not included when a narrative was submitted more than seven months later. Optics were not used until the bird was almost out of sight. Light conditions were unspecified.

- White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chibi*), 24 May 2005, Big Stone N.W.R., Lac Qui Parle County (record #2006-011, vote 3-4 for second of two adults as White-faced Ibis; Accepted as *Plegadis ibis*, sp., vote 7-0).

Unlike the first of two adult ibises photographed together, this second adult could not be identified as to species from the photograph.

- White-faced Ibis, 4-6 May 2006, Danvers W.M.A., Swift County (recirculated record #2006-044, first vote 4-3, second vote 1-6 as White-faced Ibis; Accepted as *Plegadis*, sp., vote 7-0).

Though clearly a *Plegadis ibis*, a hybrid

Glossy X White-faced Ibis (*P. falcinellus* X *P. chibi*) could not be eliminated since eye color was not described (Arterburn and Grzowski 2003).

- Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*), 1 October 2005, Cormant Township, Beltrami County (recirculated record #2006-017, first vote 4–3, second vote 2–5).

Those voting against this record were concerned that the documentation may not have reflected what was visible in the field, since the observer was looking into the morning sun.

- Gyrfalcon, 10 November 2005, Orwell Township, Otter Tail County (recirculated record #2005-087, first and second votes 4–3).

Though seen from close range for an extended period of time by an experienced observer, field notes were not included with the documentation when it was submitted more than six weeks after the sighting. Three members felt that the brief description did not eliminate all other species of falcon.

- Gyrfalcon, 17 December 2005, near Fairmont, Martin County (recirculated record #2006-026, first vote 4–3, second vote 2–5).

Field notes were taken after looking at field guides. A mustachial mark was not seen by the observer writing the documentation, but instead was mentioned as being seen by another; second-hand information is less reliable and generally cannot be considered during evaluation of a record. Photographs were taken but not submitted in response to a request.

- Gyrfalcon, 18 December 2005, Black Dog Lake, Dakota County (record #2005-083, vote 3–4).

This bird and a Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) “were overhead for just a few seconds” and were backlit by the sun. Though documented by an experienced observer, the majority were concerned about the brevity of the observation under difficult lighting. The bird in question was said to be clearly larger than the Peregrine, but this comparison did not rule out a large immature female Peregrine, since size is affected by sexual dimor-

phism and subspecies; e.g., a female of the largest subspecies (*F. p. pealei*) could have two to three times the body mass of a male *tundrius* (White *et al.* 2002).

- Gyrfalcon, 31 December 2005, Roseau Lake W.M.A., Roseau County (record #2005-086, vote 1–6).

This bird was spotted from a vehicle that was still in motion on slippery roads. It was seen only in flight and for a brief period of time. Foggy conditions may have caused its pale appearance.

- Gyrfalcon, 20 April 2006, Richfield, Hennepin County (record #2006-034, vote 0–7).

This report referred to a bird observed without binoculars as it rapidly flew by an office window.

- Prairie Falcon, 19 May 2005, Mount Wickham, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2006-024, vote 2–5).

A narrative was submitted without field notes eight months later. The observation was made from inside a vehicle as the bird flew overhead and the report lacked information about light conditions, time of day, optics, and previous experience. Observers are encouraged to use the “Request for Documentation Form,” which can be downloaded from the MOU website or filled out online at <http://moum.org/cgi-bin/rqd.pl?op=new>, or to follow its format when preparing narratives; this form was designed to insure that critical information about a record is not omitted.

- Yellow Rail, 16 June 2005, Lubenow W.P.A., Shible Township, Swift County (record #2006-023, vote 0–7 for both birds).

A narrative was submitted without field notes seven months after the observation. This report of a notoriously secretive, nocturnal species, walking along the edge of a lake for 30 minutes during daylight hours, garnered no support.

- Whooping Crane, 25 August – 7 October 2005, southeastern Morrison County (recirculated record #2005-057, first and second votes 5–2 for each of three birds; since the identification was Not Accepted, there was no separate vote on origin.).

Three adults from the experimental flock at Necedah N.W.R., Wisconsin, apparently wandered to Minnesota according to satellite telemetry data. Unfortunately, there was no description of the birds. Photographs were reportedly taken, but could not be obtained for review. Telemetry data are not infallible and since the data were submitted on behalf of the principal investigator, the documentation was considered to be second-hand.

- Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*), 19 September 2004, Lake Winnibigoshish, Cass County (record #2006-005, vote 3–4).

- Sabine's Gull, 8 October 2004, Lake Bemidji, Beltrami County (record #2006-006, vote 0–7).

Documentation for the above two records was submitted about 16 months after the observations. The observer had no prior experience with Sabine's Gull and did not eliminate similar-looking species.

- Sabine's Gull, 8 October 2005, Warren Lake, Mahanomen County (recirculated record #2006-018, first vote 4–3, second vote 3–4).

- Sabine's Gull, 14 October 2005, Pegg Lake, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2006-019, vote 2–5).

Those voting against the above two records were concerned about the description of molt and plumage, as most Sabine's Gulls do not acquire basic plumage until after reaching their winter quarters. Since the observer had no prior experience with Sabine's Gull and since not all other species of gull were considered and eliminated, it was felt that photographs or verification by other observers would be needed to confirm the identification.

- White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*), 16 October 2005, near Appleton, Swift County (recirculated record #2006-020, first vote 4–3, second vote 3–4).

Though contemporaneous field notes were submitted, the observer had no prior experience with this species. Documentation was submitted three months after the sighting.

- Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax*

*virescens*), 17 May 2005, Madrena W.M.A., Lac Qui Parle County (record #2006-009, vote 1–6).

The observer's prior experience with this species was unstated and the description of its vocalizations was atypical. It was felt that verification by an experienced observer or audio recordings would be necessary to confirm such a far out of range record.

- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*), 6–7 August 2005, Big Stone N.W.R., Lac Qui Parle County (recirculated record #2006-015, first vote 4–3, second vote 3–4).

This bird was aged as a juvenile by an observer who had no experience with this species. Members were concerned that documentation was submitted five months after the sighting and that no photographs were obtained, even though the bird was refound the following day.

- White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*), 18 May 2005, Walter Township, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2006-010, vote 3–4).

Documentation for this non-vocalizing bird was submitted nine months after the sighting. The observer had no experience with the identification of this species.

- Common Raven (*Corvus corax*), 2 February 2006, Lac Qui Parle L., Lac Qui Parle County (recirculated record #2006-029, first vote 4–3, second vote 1–6).

This bird was not seen in flight which precluded confirmation of tail length and shape. Nearly all of the vocalizations that were reported can be approximated by American Crow (*C. brachyrhynchos*).

- Louisiana Waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*), 13 May 2005, Madrena W.M.A., Lac Qui Parle County (record #2006-008, vote 1–6).

The observer's experience with this species was unclear and the field sketch showed a supercilium tapering to a sharp point behind the eye.

- Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*), 24 May 2006, Marshall, Lyon County (recirculated record #2006-050, first vote 4–3, second vote 0–7).

Though possibly this species, the brief description omitted key field marks (exact



color of blue on the head and presence of wing bars) that might have ruled out the possibility of hybrid Lazuli X Indigo Bunting (*P. amoena* X *P. cyanea*).

- Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*), 23 June 2005, Walter Township, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2006-012, vote 1–6 as Great-tailed Grackle, also Not Accepted as Boat-tailed/Great-tailed Grackle, vote 3–4).

It was unclear how this female's calls were distinguished from the many grackles, blackbirds, and cowbirds in the same tree. Its call was described as "a dry, somewhat soft 'chuk,'" but female Great-tailed and Boat-tailed grackles "both... give *chut* warning notes" (Selander and Giller 1961).

- Great-tailed Grackle, 16 July 2005, Mud Lake, St. Louis County (record #2006-013, vote 1–6 as Great-tailed Grackle, also Not Accepted as Boat-tailed/Great-tailed Grackle, vote 3–4).

The majority felt that a more complete description and one which unambiguously ruled out the remote possibility of Boat-tailed Grackle would be necessary to confirm the first record of Great-tailed Grackle for northern Minnesota.

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: Mark Alt, Dan Amerman, Karl Bardon, Gene Bauer, Pat Beauzay, Dedrick Benz, Tom Boevers, Jerry Bonkowski, Paul Budde, Conny Brunell, Dave Cahlander, Philip Chu, Ed Duerksen, Gerlinde Doom, Kim Eckert, Heidi Ferguson, Ben Fritchman, Mike Hendrickson, Anthony Hertz, John Hockema, Larry Igl, Bob Janssen, Paul Jantscher, Jeanie Joppru, Doug Kieser, Robin LaFortune, Andrew Longtin, Michael Mann, Jim Mattsson, Matt Mecklenburg, Craig Menze, Steve Millard, Skip Mott, Bob O'Connor, Jim Otto, Greg Pietila, Al Schirmacher, Brian Smith, Drew Smith, Shelley Steva, Peder

Svingen, Dan and Sandy Thimgan, Bill Unzen, Curt Vacek, Paul Voigt, and Ben Wieland. The Committee also thanks the many photographers who submitted images in support of these records.

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 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: 65 records voted on — 41 Accepted (63%), 24 Not Accepted (37%).

*Corrigendum:* In the previous "Proceedings" article, the date was inadvertently omitted for record #2005-072, Black-throated Gray Warbler in St. Louis County. The date was 14 October 2005 (*The Loon* 78:43).

### Literature Cited

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**2602 East 4th Street, Duluth, MN 55812.**