

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 conducted at the James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History in Minneapolis on 3 December 2006. In attendance and voting at this meeting were MOURC members Paul Budde, Philip Chu, Ann Kessen, Jim Lind (alternate), Bill Marengo (alternate), Jim Mattsson, Drew Smith, Steve Stucker, and Peder Svingen (Chairman). In accordance with its policy on term limits, the Committee reviewed nominations for membership and elected Bill Marengo as a regular member, replacing Paul Budde. Kim Eckert was elected as an alternate member.

Among the items on the agenda was additional discussion of Carolina Parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*) (record #2005-045). In December 2005, the committee voted to table this record for one year to allow research into the possibility of unpublished evidence from archaeological sites. No new information was submitted, so it was decided to vote on whether or



Record 2006-065. Burrowing Owl, 14 August 2006, Rendsville Township, Stevens County. Photo by Donna Oglesby.



Record 2006-078. *Plegadis* Ibis, 9 September 2006, Big Stone County. Photo by Peder H. Svingen.



Record 2006-61. Snowy Plover, 12 July 2006, Big Stone NWR, Lac Qui Parle County. Photo by James P. Mattsson.

not to add this species to the state list based on the information presented by Breckenridge (1995) and Hertzell (2004).

The recent status of *Plegadis* ibis was discussed and by a vote of 8–1, it was decided to Accept records submitted as unidentified *Plegadis* and to continue voting on records submitted as either Glossy Ibis (*P. falcinellus*) or White-faced Ibis (*P. chibi*), species which are currently Accidental and Casual, respectively. Similar to the treatment of rare Regular species, documentation will still be requested for all records submitted as *Plegadis* ibis and these records can still be circulated for voting at the discretion of the chairperson.

Also discussed were a recirculated record of the Townsend's Warbler (record #2006-058), a previously Not Accepted record of Williamson's Sapsucker (record #2005-054), and a 4 January 1968 record of a dark-mantled gull (*The Loon* 41:55–56), thought to be a Slaty-backed (*Larus schistisagus*), that had never been voted on in the past. For the Williamson's Sapsucker record, the Committee reviewed the additional information submitted by the observer and voted 8–0 to not reconsider the record. In accordance with

its procedures for the evaluation of “old” records, a vote was taken on whether or not to bring the Slaty-backed Gull record forward for review; the Committee voted 9–0 to evaluate the documentation.

The following records were voted on August – December 2006 and were Accepted (also see Not Accepted records #2006-074, 2006-098, and 2006-099 which involved qualified Accepted votes).

- Frigatebird sp. (*Fregata* sp.), 22 September 1988, Itasca State Park, Clearwater County (record #2006-098, vote 10–0).
- Frigatebird sp., 1 October 1988, Aca-cia Cemetery, Dakota County (record #2006-099, vote 10–0).
- Glossy/White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis* sp.), 5 August 2006, 22 first-fall birds along county road 54, 1.6 miles west of county road 61, Toqua Township, Big Stone County (record #2006-066, vote 7–0 for each of 22 individuals).

A dramatic beginning to an unprecedented influx of mostly immature ibises into Minnesota.

- Glossy/White-faced Ibis, 6 August 2006, Mud Lake, Traverse County (record #2006-067, vote 7–0).
- Glossy/White-faced Ibis, 15 August



Purple Sandpiper, 28 September 2006, Lake Winnibigoshish, Cass County. Photo by David Cahlander.



Record 2006-081. Sabine's Gull, 9 September 2006, Sleepy Eye, Brown County. Photo by Brian Smith.

– 7 October 2006, 1–3 adults and 16–20 first-fall birds along state highway 28, just west of county road 61, Toqua Township, Big Stone County (record #2006-068, vote 7–0 for each of 23 individuals).

Thirteen of these were identifiably photographed. Some may have been among the flock of 22 seen several miles away on 5 August (record #2006-066), though that flock was seen departing to the southeast.

- Glossy/White-faced Ibis, 19 August 2006, section 1, Prior Township, Big Stone County (record #2006-069, vote 7–0).

- Glossy/White-faced Ibis, 19 August – 2 September 2006, Munnwyler Lake, Big Stone County (record #2006-070, vote 7–0).

Photographed at the same pothole where one was found 9–15 October 2005 (*The Loon* 78:41, 78:84).

- Glossy/White-faced Ibis, 20 August – 7 October 2006, 5–20 first-fall birds along

Auto Tour Route at Big Stone N.W.R., Lac Qui Parle County (record #2006-071, vote 7–0 for first five individuals, vote 6–1 for fifteen more).

- Glossy/White-faced Ibis, 20 August 2006, near Low Flow area at Big Stone N.W.R., Big Stone and Lac Qui Parle counties (record #2006-072, vote 7–0).

This unaged bird was found shortly after sunrise on the Big Stone County side of the river and obligingly flew into Lac Qui Parle County before it disappeared to the southeast.

- Glossy/White-faced Ibis, 4–19 September 2006, near Godahl, Albin Township, Brown County (record #2006-082, vote 7–0 for each of three individuals).

Two adults and one first-fall bird were photographed.

- Glossy/White-faced Ibis, 9 September 2006, Swan Lake, Nicollet County (record #2006-077, vote 7–0).



Record 2006-064. Slaty-backed Gull, 22 July 2006, Grand Marais, Cook County. Photo by Kim R. Eckert.



Record 2006-083. Rock Wren, 7 June 2006, Blue Mounds State Park, Rock County. Photo by Sparky Stensaas.

- Glossy/White-faced Ibis, 9 September 2006, 1.0 mile west of Clinton, Big Stone County (record #2006-078, vote 7–0).

Another first-fall bird photographed at close range.

- Glossy/White-faced Ibis, 28 September – 8 October 2006, Straight River Marsh near Owatonna, Steele County (record #2006-087, vote 7–0 for each of two first-fall birds).

Both birds were photographed.

- Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), 1 July – 27 August 2006, Big Stone N.W.R., Lac Qui Parle County (record #2006-061, vote 7–0 for each of four individuals and for confirmed breeding).

An adult male found 1 July led to the discovery of an adult female with the male on the 3rd, and ultimately, two chicks on the 8th. The chicks were faithfully attended by the male until they fledged sometime after 29 July; at least one individual was still present 27 August. Ninth state record and first breeding record.

- Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*), 26–29 September 2006, Lake Win-

nibigoshish at Bena, Cass County (record #2006-086, vote 7–0).

Digital video and numerous digital photographs of this juvenile were submitted in addition to written details. Fifth state record and earliest ever by more than a month.

- California Gull (*Larus californicus*), 20 June 2006, Lac Qui Parle Lake, Swift and Lac Qui Parle counties (record #2006-059, vote 7–0).

No field notes or written details were submitted, but the single image was diagnosable as this species.

- Slaty-backed Gull (*L. schistisagus*), 21 July – 14 August 2006, Grand Marais, Cook County (record #2006-064, vote 10–0).

Exhaustive field notes and numerous photographs documented the state's first record (see ***The Loon*** 79:11–15). This adult was found dead on the 15th and the specimen was donated to the Bell Museum of Natural History.

- Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*), 9 September 2006, Sleepy Eye, Brown County (record #2006-081, vote 7–0).

- Sabine's Gull, 10 September 2006, Superior Entry, St. Louis County (record #2006-079, vote 7-0).

- Sabine's Gull, 20-23 September 2006, Park Point, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2006-084, vote 7-0 for each of four juveniles).

- Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*), 4 June 2006, Lake Ocheda, Nobles County (record #2006-053, vote 7-0).

- Least Tern, 24 June 2006, South Landfill Reservoir near Rochester, Olmsted County (record #2006-053, vote 7-0).

Both records were of adults; distant photographs were obtained of the latter.

- Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*), 6 September - 4 October 2006, Park Point, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2006-076, vote 7-0 for first individual, vote 5-2 for second individual).

One was seen regularly off Park Point for nearly a month, then two juveniles were seen together 4 October; presumably, one or both birds were responsible for reports of this species at the Superior Entry in late September.

- Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*), 1 July - 14 August 2006, Rendsville Township, Stevens County (record #2006-065, vote 7-0 for each of two adults).

Two adults were photographed at a burrow, but there was no evidence of successful breeding; fourth occurrence of this Casual species for 2006.

- Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus* sp.), 10 August 2006, near Warroad, Roseau County (record #2006-074, vote 7-0).

- Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), 4 September 2006, Auto Tour Route at Big Stone N.W.R., Lac Qui Parle and Big Stone counties (record #2006-080, vote 7-0).

- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*), 1 July 2006, section 33, Echo Township, Yellow Medicine County (record #2006-063, vote 7-0).

- Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*), 7 June 2006, Blue Mounds State Park, Rock County (record #2006-083, vote 7-0).

- Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*), 17 September 2006, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2006-085, vote 6-1).

- Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melano-corys*), 14 June 2006, Benville Township, Beltrami County (record #2006-062, vote 7-0).

This adult male was found during a Breeding Bird Survey.

The following records were voted on August - December 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.)

- Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*), 22 September 1988, Itasca State Park, Clearwater County (record #2006-098, Not Accepted as Magnificent Frigatebird 2-8, Accepted as *Fregata* sp., vote 10-0).

- Magnificent Frigatebird, 1 October 1988, Acacia Cemetery, Dakota County (record #2006-099, Not Accepted as Magnificent Frigatebird 3-7, Accepted as *Fregata* sp., vote 10-0).

For both of these records, the written descriptions did not eliminate the possibility of Great Frigatebird (*F. minor*) (Howell 1994); though unlikely, *minor* has been documented in Oklahoma (Tomer *et al.* 1996). The Committee had previously accepted these two records as *magnificens* based on probability, an argument that was weakened by the subsequent occurrences of Lesser Frigatebird (*F. ariel*) in Big Horn County, Wyoming, 11 July 2003 (Faulkner 2006) and Wayne County, Michigan, 11 September 2005 (Brennan and Schultz 2006).

- Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*), 5 September 2006, Wild River State Park, Chisago County (record #2006-075,

vote 2–5).

Though probably identified correctly, the description of this bird was limited to “distinctive forked tail,” “white under-markings on its wings and body,” and comments about its size and graceful flight. It was felt that a more complete description would be needed for acceptance. The observers were unfamiliar with this species and did not sketch the bird or write down a description until after numerous references were consulted.

- Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), 6 June 2006, Willmar, Kandiyohi County (record #2006-073, vote 0–7).

This bird was seen with the naked eye for five or six seconds as it flew overhead. Perhaps as a result, important field marks (black mask, whitish secondaries, and short outermost primary) were overlooked or could not be detected. Moreover, one observer described the underbody as “more brown than gray” and the other observer described it as “light, almost white,” but neither description matches a Mississippi Kite in any plumage.

- Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*), 4 January 1968, Knife River, Lake County (record #2006-100, vote 0–10).

This published record (*The Loon* 41:55–56) of a dark-mantled gull had never been reviewed by the Committee. In light of this species’ recent occurrence in Minnesota, the observer submitted contemporaneous field notes and requested that it be evaluated as a Slaty-backed Gull. As a potential first state record predating the recent record in Cook County (record #2006-064), all ten members voted. While referring to this record as “tantalizing” and “intriguing,” all agreed that several key criteria for the identification of this species were not noted. For example, the folded primaries were described as “alternately black and white,” but it was unclear how many primaries had black markings, and the extent of the white subterminal mirrors on the two outermost primaries (p9 and p10) was not described. Most importantly, there was no mention of the so-called “string of pearls”

formed by white tongue tips on p5 or p6 through p8.

- Carolina Parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*) (record #2005-045, vote 1–9).

Extensive discussion and deliberation over a period of two years culminated in a nearly unanimous decision to not add this species to the state list. Each member considered this question from his or her own interpretation of historical perspective. Three main arguments were offered:

1. As is often the case for historical records lacking physical evidence, there was no description to evaluate.

2. This species’ occurrence in adjacent states has been questioned by some authors (e.g., McKinley 1965).

3. It was unclear whether Carver himself saw “a few parrots” during his trip up the Minnesota River that started 17 November 1766 (Carver 1976:95) or whether he was making a general statement based on something someone told him. Second-hand reports are inherently less reliable.

- Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*), 10 August 2006, near Warroad, Roseau County (record #2006-074, Not Accepted as Rufous Hummingbird, vote 1–6; Accepted as *Selasphorus*, sp., vote 7–0).

The submitted photograph of this subadult male hummingbird confirmed its genus, but did not show the extent of green on its back or the shape and width of individual rectrices. The latter are critical for separation of *rufus* from the very similar Allen’s Hummingbird (*S. sasin*) (Stiles 1972, Mitchell 2000, Howell 2001).

- Townsend’s Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*), 22 May 2006, Owatonna, Steele County (recirculated record #2006-058, first vote 4–3, second vote 4–3).

The written description of this adult male neither considered nor conclusively eliminated the possibility of hybrid Hermit Warbler X Townsend’s Warbler (Rohwer and Wood 1998). Hybrids between these two species are well known in the Pacific Northwest (Pearson 1997), and have been photographed as far east as Newfoundland (Mactavish 1996). Documentation was submitted without field notes several weeks after the sighting and after review

of field guides.

The efforts of all those observers who document unusual species are greatly appreciated, whether or not the records are Accepted. Though photographs are always welcome, observers are strongly encouraged to submit written documentation based on contemporaneous field notes for all records.

In addition to those observers who provided photographs, sound recordings, or other forms of documentation, the Committee acknowledges with thanks those who provided written descriptions for the records listed in this article: Colleen and Kevin Almquist, David Bartkey, Patrick Beauzay, Betsy Beneke, Conny Brunell, Dedrick Benz, David Cahlander, Philip Chu, Robert Dunlap, Kim Eckert, Angie Farrell, Randy Frederickson, Ben Fritchman, Janet Green, Mike Hendrickson, John Hockema, Gary Johnson, Jeanie Joppru, Doug Kieser, Mary Koetter, Jim Lind, Steve Schon, Brian Smith, Sparky Stensaas, Forest Strnad, Peder Svingen, Dan and Sandy Thimman, Nels Thompson, Tom Tustison, and Ben Wieland. There were many observers who documented records of Regular species which were not voted on by the Committee; though not cited here, the efforts of these individuals are also greatly appreciated.

The Committee welcomes questions or comments from MOU members regarding any record in particular or our procedures in general. More information including our bylaws and current checklist can be found at <<http://moumn.org/mourc/>>. Summary: 38 records voted on / 30 Accepted, 8 Not Accepted.

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