

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 9 December 2007. In attendance and voting at this meeting were MOURC members Philip Chu, Kim Eckert (alternate), Ann Kessen, Jim Lind (alternate), Bill Maren-go, Drew Smith, Steve Stucker, and Peder Svingen (Chair). In accordance with its policy on term limits, the Committee reviewed nominations for membership and elected Jim Lind as a regular member, replacing Philip Chu. Bruce Fall was elected as an alternate member. Anthony Hertzell replaced alternate member Karl Bardon.

Among the items on the agenda was a report from the subcommittee tasked to review Minnesota records of Townsend's Warbler and Hermit Warbler in light of the recently Not Accepted record of Townsend's Warbler in Steele County (record #2006-058, *The Loon* 79:56–57). Hybrids between these two species are well known in the Pacific Northwest (Jewett 1944, Morrison and Hardy 1983, Pearson 1997, Wright *et al.* 1998) and have strayed as far east as Newfoundland (Mactavish 1996). On behalf of the subcommittee, Philip Chu discussed the Rohwer and Wood Index (Rohwer and Wood 1998) and how it was used by the subcommittee for screening Minnesota records. The Index was designed for use with specimens of adult males; three of Minnesota's five Accepted records of Townsend's Warbler refer to females or first-year males. Based on the subcommittee's findings and discussion at the December meeting, the Committee voted to not reevaluate four Townsend's Warbler records, and to pro-



Record 2007-070, Sabine's Gull, 28 September 2007, Cottonwood Lake, Lyon County. Photo by Kim R. Eckert.

ceed with reevaluation of one Townsend's Warbler record and one Hermit Warbler record. Ann Kessen volunteered to examine Minnesota's specimen of Hermit Warbler.

Also discussed were three potential first state records, seven recirculated records (six for questions on identification and one on origin), and an old record of Iceland Gull from 1987, when this species was Casual in Minnesota. In accordance with its procedures for the evaluation of "old" records, a vote was taken on whether or not to bring the Iceland Gull record forward for review; the Committee voted 7–0 to evaluate the documentation. Results of votes on recirculated and potential first state records, and other records voted on by mail, are listed below.

The following records were voted on



Record 2007-057, Black-headed Gull, 2 September 2007, Spirit Lake, Jackson County. Photo by Anthony X. Hertzell.



Record 2007-061, California Gull, 15 September 2007, Walker, Cass County. Photo by Andrew L. Birch.

October – December 2007 and were Accepted (also see Not Accepted records #2006-103, 2007-014, 2007-046, 2007-051, and 2007-062, which involved qualified Accepted votes).

- Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*), 16 June 2007, Canby, Yellow Medicine County (record #2007-044, vote 5–2).

- Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*), 6–7 October 2007, Duluth harbor, St. Louis County (record #2007-078, vote 7–0).

- Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*), 2 September 2007, along north shore of Spirit Lake, Jackson County (record #2007-056, vote 10–0).

Excellent photographs and thorough written documentation ruled out other frigatebird species. First state record, following three records of *Fregata* sp.

- Ibis sp. (*Plegadis* sp.), 27 May 2007, Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, Sherburne County (recirculated record #2007-046, see comments under Not Accepted records).

- Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*), 6 May 2007, Ironton, Crow Wing County (recirculated record #2007-027, identification Accepted 6–1, origin Accepted 7–3).

All ten members discuss and vote on questions of origin. The location and date of this sighting were atypical for this species, which can only be reasonably expected in western Minnesota; although no transmitters or bands were visible as this bird flew overhead, and satellite tracking data supplied by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service showed no captive-bred cranes in this area, transmitters occasionally malfunction or are lost. Therefore, this may have been a bird wandering from the experimental flock at Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, Wisconsin. In this case, the majority voted to accept the record as A_0 , i.e., the chances of natural origin and captive origin were considered to be about the same.

- Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*), 29–30 September 2007, Sleepy Eye, Brown County (record #2007-072, vote 7–0).

Sixth documented record for the state. Photographed.

- Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*), 28 July 2007, Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2007-048, vote 7–0).

See note in *The Loon* 80:44–45.

- Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*).



Record 2007-055, Long-tailed Jaeger, 30 August 2007, near southwest boundary of Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge, Marshall County. Photo by Kim R. Eckert.

dus), 10 August – 12 October 2007, along north shore of Spirit Lake, Jackson County (record #2007-057, vote 7–0).

- California Gull (*Larus californicus*), 15–16 September 2007, Walker, Cass County (record #2007-061, vote 7–0).

Second-cycle bird. Photographed.

- Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*), 20–21 December 1987, Black Dog Lake, Dakota County (record #2007-089, vote 6–1).

Contemporaneous field notes were recently discovered and submitted for review. This species was Casual in 1987 and the record had not been evaluated in the past due to lack of documentation. Acceptance of this record 20 years later underscores the value of notes taken during an observation.

- Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*), 3 September 2007, Headquarters Pool, Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge, Marshall County (record #2007-059, vote 7–0).

- Sabine's Gull, 16 September 2007, Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge, Lac Qui

Parle County (record #2007-071, vote 7–0).

- Sabine's Gull, 21–22 September 2007, Park Point, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2007-075, vote 7–0 for each of three juveniles).

- Sabine's Gull, 22 September 2007, Salt Lake, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2007-077, vote 7–0 for each of two juveniles).

- Sabine's Gull, 26 September 2007, Gull Island, Leech Lake, Cass County (record #2007-069, vote 7–0).

Found dead and photographed.

- Sabine's Gull, 28 September 2007, Superior Entry, St. Louis County (record #2007-073, vote 7–0).

- Sabine's Gull, 28 September – 2 October 2007, Cottonwood Lake, Lyon County (record #2007-070, vote 7–0).

First county record. Photographed.

- Sabine's Gull, 5–6 October 2007, Canal Park and Park Point Recreation Area, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2007-076, vote 7–0).

- Sabine's Gull, 6 October 2007, Lan-



Record 2007-072, Western Sandpiper, 30 September 2007, Sleepy Eye, Brown County. Photo by Kim R. Eckert.



Record 2007-086, Inca Dove, 23 November 2007, Two Harbors, Lake County. Photo by James W. Lind.

ners Lake Wildlife Management Area, Omro Township, Yellow Medicine County (record #2007-080, vote 7-0).

- Sabine's Gull, 6 October 2007, Lake Ripley, Meeker County (record #2007-081, vote 6-1).

- Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*), 15 June 2007, Garden Island, Lake of the Woods County (record #2007-040, vote 6-1).

This and the following record represent only the second and third times that this species has been found away from Duluth.

- Arctic Tern, 14-15 July 2007, Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2007-047, vote 7-0).

- Arctic Tern, 6 October 2007, Park Point, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2007-079, vote 7-0).

An experienced observer submitted

written details. Sixth fall record and 23rd overall.

- Elegant Tern (*Thalasseus elegans*), 28 June 2007, Little Pelican Island, Leech Lake, Cass County (record #2007-050, vote 10-0).

Extraordinary inland occurrence of this primarily coastal species (***The Loon*** 80:14-15). Multiple images were obtained, many with direct comparison to Caspian and Common terns. First state record.

- Jaeger sp. (*Stercorarius* sp.), 15 July 2007, Leech Lake, Cass County (record #2007-062, vote 7-0).

- Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*), 21 August - 2 September 2007, near southwest boundary of Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge, Marshall County (record #2007-055, vote 7-0).

This confiding adult established a predictable pattern of foraging for grasshop-



Record 2007-063, Burrowing Owl, late July 2007, Moorhead, Clay County. Photo by Dave and Jacki Bellefeuille.



Record 2007-068, Say's Phoebe, 25 September 2007, Park Point, Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Kim R. Eckert.

pers and other insects on a gravel road. Videotaped and photographed by many observers. Ninth state record and the first for Agassiz N.W.R.

- White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*), 15–21 October 2007, ~10 miles north of Fergus Falls, Otter Tail County (record #2007-082, vote 7–0).

- White-winged Dove, 20–21 November 2007, ~16 miles east of Ely, Lake County (record #2007-087, vote 7–0).

All but two of the state's thirteen records have occurred since 2003. Both of the above were photographed.

- Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*), 30 October – 5 December 2007, Two Harbors, Lake County (record #2007-086, vote 10–0).

First state record. Photographed and seen by many observers. The addition of this and the Elegant Tern brings the state

list to 434 species (frigatebird sp. was already listed).

- Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*), 18 June 2006, near Pipestone, Pipestone County (record #2007-083, vote 7–0).

- Burrowing Owl, 1 June – 28 July 2007, near Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge, Polk County (record #2007-039, vote 7–0 for each of two adults and two juveniles).

- Burrowing Owl, 2 or 3 July – 2 October 2007, Moorhead, Clay County (record #2007-063, vote 7–0).

- Burrowing Owl, 6–18 August 2007, near Edgerton, Pipestone County (record #2007-051, vote 7–0 for one adult and one juvenile).

- Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*), 21 June – 21 July 2007, near Jackson, Jackson County (recirculated record #2007-054, first vote 5–2, second



Record 2007-054, Western Wood-Pewee, 21 July 2007, near Jackson, Jackson County. Photo by Karl J. Bardon.

vote 7-0).

In addition to written documentation by an experienced observer, sonograms, recordings, and digital video were reviewed at the December 2007 meeting. The identity of the second pewee involved in nesting on private property could not be confirmed. Eighth state record.

- Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), 9 September 2007, Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, Sherburne County (record #2007-060, vote 6-1).

Distant photographs were submitted with written details. First county and refuge record.

- Say's Phoebe, 25-26 September 2007, Park Point, Duluth, St. Louis County (re-

cord #2007-068, vote 7-0).

Second county record. Photographed.

- White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*), 14-18 June 2007, Pipestone National Monument, Pipestone County (record #2007-042, vote 7-0).

First county record. Photographed.

- Worm-eating Warbler (*Helminthos vermivorum*), 23 April 2007, Camden State Park, Lyon County (record #2007-058, vote 7-0).

- Black-throated Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata*), 22-23 September 2007, west shore of Lake Winnibigoshish, Cass County (record #2007-065, vote 7-0).

Seventh state record. Photographed.

- Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melano-*

corys), 23 June – 1 July 2007, near Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge, Polk County (record #2007-045, vote 7–0).

- Lark Bunting, 2 August 2007, near Marietta, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2007-049, vote 6–1).

- Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*), third week of May 2007, Breckenridge, Wilkin County (record #2007-043, vote 6–1).

- Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*), 18 July 2007, Moulton Township, Murray County (record #2007-053, vote 7–0).

- Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (*Leucosticte tephrocotis*), 8 December 2006, Huntersville Road, Wadena County, bird #1 (recirculated record #2006-103, first vote 5–2, second vote 6–1).

One of two individuals of the “Interior form” was Accepted. Fourteenth state record.

The following records were voted on October – December 2007 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*), 27 October 2007, near Worthington, Nobles County (record #2007-084, vote 2–5).

Documentation was limited to two images of a drake wigeon shot by a hunter. The images showed extensive dark flecking on its chestnut face, suggesting hybridization with American Wigeon (*A. americana*).

- Barrow’s Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*), 25 November 2007, Lake Ripley, Meeker County (record #2007-088, vote



Record 2007-065, Black-throated Sparrow, 22 September 2007, Lake Winnibigoshish, Cass County. Photo by Ben A. Wieland.

3–4).

The identification of this female relied on bill characteristics and head shape. However, some female Common Goldeneyes show entirely yellow bills (Madge and Burn 1988, Di Labio *et al.* 1997, Eadie *et al.* 2000), and head shape and bill size are subjective impressions that may be influenced by age. Eye color was not described and there was no description of plumage. No field notes or sketches were submitted.

- Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*), 14 May 2007, near mouth of Warroad River, Roseau County (recirculated record #2007-026, first vote 4–3, second vote 4–3).

No field notes were taken and there was no description of the bird’s size. Two field guides were consulted to make the identification, so it was unclear how well the internet posting reflected what was seen in the field.

- White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chibi*), 27 May 2007, Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, Sherburne County (recirculated record #2007-046, first vote 4–3, second vote 0–7).

The description did not eliminate the possibility of hybridization with Glossy Ibis (*P. falcinellus*). In accordance with procedure adopted in December 2006 (*The Loon* 79:51), this record, which was documented by written details and a distant photograph, was automatically Ac-

cepted as *Plegadis ibis* sp.

- Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*), 9 April 2007, Pembina Trail Preserve, Polk County, two subadults (recirculated record #2007-014, first vote 5–2, second vote 4–3).

Two birds flying with five adult Whooping Cranes “held some brown feathering,” but were otherwise not described. Though seen by an experienced observer and probably correctly identified, the majority felt that a more complete description was needed for acceptance.

- Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*), 15 September 2007, Hutchinson, McLeod County (record #2007-064, vote 1–6).

The identification relied primarily on bill size and shape, which is complicated by the fact that Semipalmated Sandpiper’s bill length increases from west to east across Canada (Harrington and Morrison 1979, Veit and Jonsson 1984). Field notes were not taken.

- California Gull (*Larus californicus*), 17 September 2007, Walker, Cass County (record #2007-066, vote 1–6).

Even though this first-cycle bird took flight and returned to land again, its upper wing pattern in flight was not described. The submitted description did not eliminate a small first-cycle Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*).

- California Gull, 29 September 2007, Superior Entry, St. Louis County (record #2007-074, vote 0–7).

This gull could not be aged from the description and important details, such as wing pattern and leg color, were not described.

- Glaucous-winged Gull (*Larus glaucescens*), 7 January 2007, Reads Landing, Wabasha County (record #2007-052, vote 0–7).

Documentation was submitted seven months later for a “uniformly colored, tawny-fawn” first-cycle bird that was “noticeably larger” than nearby Herring Gulls, and “similar in size” to an adjacent Glaucous Gull. Glaucous-winged Gull averages similar in size to a Herring Gull and is typically smaller than a Glaucous Gull (Howell and Dunn 2007).

- Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*), 23 September 2007, Park Point, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2007-067, vote 1–6).

The identification was based primarily on subjective impressions of shape and flight style. Most of the described characters would also fit other jaeger species. Size was reported to be similar to surrounding Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*); this is incorrect for any species of jaeger, including Pomarine Jaeger, which averages just larger than a Ring-billed Gull (*L. delawarensis*).

- Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*), 15 July 2007, Leech Lake, Cass County (record #2007-062, vote 1–6).

Though unanimously Accepted as jaeger sp., the documentation did not conclusively eliminate Pomarine Jaeger.

- Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*), 6–18 August 2007, near Edgerton, Pipestone County (record #2007-051, vote 3–4 for second adult, vote 2–5 for second juvenile).

Submitted photographs depicted only one adult and/or one juvenile in each image. None of the observers submitted written documentation, which could have substantiated the presence of a second adult and a second juvenile.

- Painted Redstart (*Myioborus pictus*), 25 May 2007, South Lake, Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, St. Louis County (record #2007-041, vote 0–7).

Though possibly identified correctly, the bird was only seen from below “for a minute or two,” Critical field marks for the identification of this species, including white eye arcs, white patch on wings, and white outer tail feathers, were not described.

- Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*), 14 May 2007, Moulton Township, Murray County (recirculated record #2007-036, first vote 4–3, second vote 3–4).

The brief description neither considered nor eliminated a hybrid Lazuli Bunting X Indigo Bunting.

- Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (*Leucosticte tephrocotis*), 8 December 2006, Huntersville Road, Wadena County, bird #2

(record #2006-103, vote 1–6).

The second of two birds (see Accepted records) was poorly seen and, except for its behavior, was not described.

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. The Committee acknowledges with thanks those who provided written descriptions for the records listed in this article: Karl Bardon, Dave Bartkey, Patrick Beauzay, Dave Benson, Lars Benson, Jo and Steve Blanich, Conny Brunell, Joshua Christian, Philip Chu, Scott Clark, Steve Dinsmore, Bob Dunlap, Kim Eckert, John Ellis, Ron Erpelding, Dan Floren, Jay Gilliam, Mike Hendrickson, Anthony Hertz, Robert Janssen, Nelvina De Kam, Paul Johnson, Jeanie Jopru, Jim Kiehne, Jim Lind, Chet Meyers, Steve Mortensen, Warren Nelson, Brian Smith, Peder Svingen, Scott Swanson, Dan and Sandy Thimgan, Mark Weber, Steve Weston, Ben Wieland, and Dale Yerger. These and other observers also documented records of Regular species which were not voted on by the Committee; though not cited here, their efforts 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://moum.org/mourc/index.html>>. Summary: 54 records voted on — 44 Accepted including 5 with qualified votes, 10 Not Accepted.

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