

Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee

Tom A. Tustison, Chairman

The most recent meeting of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (MOURC) was conducted at the Minnesota Valley N.W.R. Headquarters Building in Bloomington in Minneapolis on 4 December 2011. In attendance and voting at this meeting were MOURC members Robert M. Dunlap (alternate), Kim R. Eckert, Bruce A. Fall, Anthony X. Hertz, James W. Lind, William C. Marengo, Robert P. Russell (alternate), Andrew D. Smith (alternate), Steven P. Stucker, and Tom A. Tustison (chair).

The following records from 2011 were voted on by e-mail and were Accepted:

- **Barrow's Goldeneye** (*Bucephala islandica*), 19 November 2011 to 22 March 2012, initially found at Duluth Harbor, St. Louis County, near Hearing Island and later seen at other Duluth locations including Canal Park (record #2011-043, vote 7-0). Photos are diagnostic. Presumably, the multiple sightings are of the same bird seen on different dates at various locations in Duluth. This is probably also the same adult male returning to Duluth for the fourth consecutive winter.

- **Barrow's Goldeneye**, 20 December 2011, adult male, Municipal Park in Sauk Rapids, Benton County (record #2011-048, vote 5-2). Several members commented that the written documentation might have been more thoroughly detailed. First county record.

- **White-tailed Kite** (*Elanus leucurus*), 4 August 2011, adult, Bluestem Prairie near Glyndon, Clay County (record #2011-026, vote 7-0). Photos are diagnostic. Third state record and first county record.

- **Mississippi Kite** (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), 27 September to 4 October 2011, adult, county road 24 south of Bowlus, one mile north of the Stearns County line, Morrison County (record #2011-040, vote 5-2). The record was accepted with some dissent. This



Record #2011-026, White-tailed Kite, 4 August 2011, Bluestem Prairie near Glyndon, Clay County. Photo by Susan Felege.

sighting is much later than most other fall records in Minnesota. It also seems unusual that it was seen in the same general location a week apart. Previous Minnesota records have been mostly single-day sightings or just a few days apart. First record for Morrison County.

- **Purple Sandpiper** (*Calidris maritima*), 15-27 October 2011, juvenile, Lubenow W.P.A., Swift County (record #2011-035, vote 7-0). There were numerous high-quality photos of this bird. It was well-documented with 13 observers submitting documentation. The Committee did discuss the difficulty of distinguishing Purple Sandpiper from Rock Sandpiper at its 4 December 2011 meeting. The distinctly orange-yellow legs and bill base shown in numerous photos are more typical of Purple Sandpiper. There is virtually no documentation of inland wanderings



Record #2011-035, Purple Sandpiper, 22 October 2011, Lubenow W.P.A., Swift County. Photo by Paul Kammen.



Record #2011-041, Pomarine Jaeger, 2 October 2011, Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Peder H. Svingen.

of Rock Sandpiper (apparently, there is only one inland record away from the Pacific coast which is a specimen from British Columbia). This is the 6th state record and first county record for this Accidental species.

- **Black-legged Kittiwake** (*Rissa tridactyla*), 13–17 December 2011, first-cycle, Canal Park, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2011-042, vote 7–0). The 17 December 2011 photo (taken during the Duluth Christmas Bird Count) is diagnostic, as is the description from the original observer.

- **Sabine's Gull** (*Xema sabini*), four juveniles, 24 September 2011, Duluth, Park Point Recreation Area, St. Louis County (record #2011-033, vote 7–0). A detailed description was provided by a very experienced observer. All four birds were Accepted.

- **Glaucous-winged Gull** (*Larus glaucescens*), 22 December 2011 to 15 January 2012, adult, Duluth, Canal Park, St. Louis County (record #2011-049, vote 7–0). There are numerous excellent photos, including those showing the spread wing. The detailed descriptions by experienced gull observers leave little doubt about the identification.

Every feature for distinguishing Glaucous-winged Gull from other large white-headed gulls is shown and described. One might suspect possible hybridization (possibly even several generations back) due to the somewhat rounded head and bill shape. However, without something else anomalous about its plumage, size, or shape, it seems more plausible that the head and bill simply represent a small female Glaucous-winged Gull. Photographed. Fifth state record.

- **Pomarine Jaeger** (*Stercorarius pomarinus*), 2 October 2011, juvenile, Duluth, Minnesota Point near Sky Harbor Airport, St. Louis County (record #2011-041, vote 7–0). The excellent photos, plus detailed descriptions from two experienced observers, leave no doubt about the identification. Eighteenth state record (*The Loon* 84:54–55).

- **White-winged Dove** (*Zenaida asiatica*), 14–19 June 2011, just south of Millville, Wabasha County (record #2011-029, vote 7–0). Photograph taken 18 June 2011 is diagnostic. First county record.

- **Tropical/Couch's Kingbird** (*Tyrannus melancholicus/couchii*) 28 October 2011,



Record #2011-029, White-winged Dove, 18 June 2011, Millville, Wabasha County. Photo by Gabriel Miller.



Record #2011-034, Tropical/Couch's Kingbird, 28 October 2011, Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Mike Hendrickson.

West Duluth, Smithville and Riverside neighborhoods, St. Louis County (record #2011-034, vote 10–0). While Accepted as Tropical/Couch's Kingbird, the record was originally submitted as Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*). Prior to voting, it was discussed in detail at the 4 December meeting where it was noted that there are two records of vocalizing Couch's Kingbirds from Massachusetts (7 September 2001) and Michigan (26–28 May 2007). Both the Massachusetts and the Michigan birds were vocalizing, whereas the Minnesota bird did not. The Committee also discussed the extreme difficulty of separating Tropical from Couch's where there were no vocalizations. Two outside authorities, John Arvin and Martin Reid, were also consulted prior to voting. Both agreed the culmen appeared from the photographs to be more like Couch's than Tropical, but was not diagnostic. One of the experts also commented that some of the other important features that might have aided in the diagnosis were not clearly visible in the photographs. First state record. Also see Tropical Kingbird below under Not Accepted records.

• **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** (*Tyrannus forficatus*), 18 October 2011, Wabasha airport, Wabasha County (record #2011-036, vote 7–0). Photographed. First county record.

• **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, 28–29 October 2011, adult, West Duluth, Waseca Industrial Rd, St. Louis County (record #2011-038, vote 7–0). Well-documented and photographed by several seasoned birders.

• **Yellow-throated Warbler** (*Setophaga dominica*), 21–22 October 2011, adult, Irondale Township, Ironton, Crow Wing County (record #2011-051, vote 7–0). The photos are diagnostic. First county record.

• **Scott's Oriole** (*Icterus parisorum*), 30 October 2011, immature male, Grand Marais, Cook County (record #2011-039, vote 7–0). The bird was photographed and seen by many observers. The Committee consulted Alvarillo Jaramillo and others whose expert opinions supported the identification. Fourth state record and first county record. The last previous record was in Olmsted County (April 2002).

• **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** (*Leucosticte tephrocotis*), 27 October 2011, 'interior form'



Record #2011-051, Yellow-throated Warbler, 21 October 2011, Irondale Township, Crow Wing County. Photo by Lorrene Maroney.



Record #2011-039, Scott's Oriole, 30 October 2011, Grand Marais, Cook County. Photo by Robert M. Dunlap.

adult, southwest shore of Bear Island Lake, Babbitt, St. Louis County (record #2011-037, vote 7-0). The photos show sufficient detail to confirm the identification. First fall record for St. Louis County.

• **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*), 14 May 2011, two adults in a wetland adjacent to the north side of Madelia, Watonwan County (record #2011-018, origin vote 8-2). Accepted as an Accidental (A) — i.e., there is reasonable certainty both birds were wild and arrived under their own power. The identity was previously voted on and Accepted. See *The Loon* 83:100.

The following records were voted on 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.)

• **Sabine's Gull** 19 September 2011, Glen-coe Water Treatment Plant, McLeod County (record #2011-031, vote 0-7). The record was insufficient in the required level of detail. Details about number of birds and age(s) of the bird(s) are lacking. The observer mentioned the distinctive pattern of the wings, but did not describe what was actually seen.

• **Laughing Gull** (*Leucophaeus atricilla*), 10 September 2011, Cottonwood, Lyon County (record #2011-030, vote 2-5). Size is not significantly larger than Franklin's Gull. Photo is not clear enough to be of any real value. The observer does not state his experience with Laughing Gulls — only with Franklin's Gulls. Several members did not think there was enough detail in the photos or the written record to clearly rule out a sub-adult Franklin's Gull.

• **Barn Owl** (*Tyto alba*), 19 November 2008, Meeker County (record #2008-067, vote 2-5). Factors that seemed to influence the members' votes were as follows: lapse of time between the observation and the documentation (submitted 17 April 2011); the lack of an



Record #2011-037 Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, 27 October 2011, near Babbitt, St. Louis County. Photo by Deborah Buria-Falkowski.

explanation as to how other species might have been eliminated; sparse details in the description; and failure to explain what kind of lighting enabled the observer to see the bird at night.

- **Sprague's Pipit** (*Anthus spragueii*), 5 May 2011, Lac qui Parle County (record #2011-032, vote 0–7). There is no written description of the bird but only a rather fuzzy photo. The opinion of all of the members was the image alone is not diagnostic.

- **Tropical Kingbird** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*), 28 October 2011, potential first state record, West Duluth, Smithville and Riverside neighborhoods, St. Louis County (record #2011-034, vote 0–10). Photographed. But see Tropical/Couch's Kingbird above under Accepted records.

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: Josh Anderson, Karl J. Bardon, David A. Bartkey, Betsy A. Beneke, Deborah Buria-Falkowski, Jason Caddy, David A. Cahlander, Robert M. Dunlap, Kim R. Eckert, Ronald A. Erpelding, Steve L. Falkowski, Susan Felege, Frank Gosiak, Chad Heins, Mike Hendrickson, Anthony X. Hertz, Kent Jensen, Paul Kammen, Andrew Krenz, Robin LaFortune, Brian Lubinski, Mike Majeski, William C. Marengo, Lorrene Maroney, Gabriel Miller, Peder H. Svingen, Bill J. Unzen, Robert B. Williams, Roy Zimmerman. Many observers documented records of rare Regular species which were not voted on by the Committee; though not cited here, their efforts are 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/moumc>>. Summary: 22 records voted on — 16 Accepted, 5 Not Accepted, 1 Origin.

Corrigenda: In the previous *Proceedings* article, the vote for record #2010-040 of two juvenile Pomarine Jaegers should have stated that first individual was Accepted 7–0 and the second individual was Accepted 5–2 (**The Loon** 83:99). Barrow's Goldeneye (record #2010-045) was also seen 13 November 2010 not just on 12 November 2010 (**The Loon** 83:99). Glossy Ibis (record #2011-016) has an error in photo caption. The ibis photo (**The Loon** 83:101) was submitted by Jerry Pruett, but was taken by Bob Ekblad. Slaty-backed Gull (record #2010-048) the correct dates are 19 December 2010 through 16 January 2011 (**The Loon** 83:99). Eurasian Tree Sparrow (record #2010-047) was actually seen 20–28 November 2010 not 22–28 November 2010. The date in photo caption is, therefore, also incorrect. The reference to the bird as an “adult male” should read “adult”. (**The Loon** 83:99, ph. 83:102). Band-tailed Pigeon (record #2011-023) the actual dates of observation were 22–23 May 2011 (not 22–26 May), and the date in the photo caption should be 23 May 2011 (**The Loon** 83:101, ph. 83:102).

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