

Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee

Thomas A. Tustison, Chairman

The most recent meeting of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (MOURC) was conducted at the Trailhead Lodge at the Carpenter Nature Center on 7 December 2014. In attendance and voting at this meeting were MOURC members Dedrick A. Benz (alternate), Robert M. Dunlap, Kim R. Eckert, Bruce A. Fall, Andrew R. Forbes (alternate), Anthony X. Hertz, Douglas W. Kieser (alternate), Robert P. Russell, Andrew D. Smith, and Thomas A. Tustison (chair).

The status of all species on the 2014 Checklist were reviewed by the Committee this past year and 16 species were acknowledged as having status changes. All ten members have discussed and voted on the status of these species, and the following changes were endorsed:

From Regular to Casual (one species):

White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*).

From Casual to Regular (three species):

Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*)

Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*)

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*).

From Casual to Accidental (seven species):

Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*)

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*)

Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*)

Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)

Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*)

Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*)

Black-throated Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata*)

From Accidental to Casual (five species):

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)

Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*)

Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*)

Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*)

Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*)

The Committee, at its 2 December 2012 meeting, decided that certain previously "Accepted" and published records of Casual and Accidental species should be deleted. Consequently, the Committee voted to deem such records as "Not Accepted" and to delete them from its archive and *The Loon*. These deleted Casual and Accidental records are listed in Table 1.

At, or subsequent to, the most recent meeting, the following records were voted on (most electronically) and Accepted:

- King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*), 1 November 2014, Good Harbor Bay, Cook County (record #2014-048, vote 7-0). Female/juvenile, photographed. Twenty-second state and thirteenth fall record.

- Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima v-nigrum*), 10 November 2014 – 19 February 2015, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2014-051, vote 7-0). Photographed. Fifth state and first county record. Both female/immature birds were identified and accepted as the subspecies *S. m. v-nigrum*, or Pacific Common Eider. This subspecies is a candidate for a future split into a separate species. It breeds in the coastal, arctic waters of Alaska and northeastern Siberia. The last previous Minnesota record of Common Eider was 5 November 1966 at Lake Reno, Pope County (*The Loon* 39:26). First discovered at Brighton Beach, one or both birds were later seen at various Duluth locations including Leif Erickson Park, Glensheen Historic Mansion, Canal Park, and the Minnesota side of Superior Entry. The two birds separated after 15 November 2014 with only the bird with an orangish bill tip being seen afterwards. This remaining bird was most frequently seen associating with other ducks at Canal Park. It was observed repeatedly at Canal Park until 18 January 2015. It was later discovered at Barkers Island in Superior, Wisconsin on 24

Species	Status	County	Date	Record	Citation
Ferruginous Hawk	C	Lac qui Parle	10/25/2010	#2010-042	83:99
Ferruginous Hawk	C	Lac qui Parle	3/21/2011	#2011-006	83:100
California Gull	C	Swift	6/20/2006	#2006-059	79:54
California Gull	C	Stevens	4/13/2011	#2011-010	83:101
California Gull	C	Lac qui Parle	4/23/2011	#2011-011	83:101
Barn Owl	A	Lac qui Parle	4/1/2011	#2011-007	83:101
Burrowing Owl	C	Lac qui Parle	4/21/2004	#2004-032	76:155
Gyr Falcon	C	Big Stone	12/5/2003	#2004-004	76:154
Gyr Falcon	C	Lac qui Parle	2/6/2006	#2006-030	78:127
Gyr Falcon	C	Lac qui Parle	1/5/2011	#2011-001	83:100
Clark's Nutcracker	A	Lac qui Parle	3/11/2011	#2011-005	83:101

Table 1. Deleted records. Status: C = Casual, A = Accidental. "Citation" refers to a record's published reference in *The Loon*.

January 2014, and at three other locations in Superior where it was seen sporadically at least until 23 March 2015. It returned to Canal Park on 3 February 2015 and was seen irregularly there and in Superior through late March.

- Common Eider, 13–15 November 2014, Silver Bay Marina, Lake County (record #2014-052, vote 7–0). Female/immature, photographed. Sixth state and first county record. The bird was determined to be of the subspecies *Somateria mollissima v-nigrum*. It was ascertained to be distinct from the two Common Eiders seen in Duluth.

- Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*), 1–11 August 2014, Manning Trail north of 155th Street, Washington County (record #2014-038, vote 7–0). Sub-adult, photographed. Third state, first county, and first fall record. Based on plumage characteristics, it was determined to be distinguishable from the sub-adult Wood Stork seen in June of the same year in Faribault County.

- Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), 29 April 2013, Nicollet (Swan Lake, south access), Nicollet County (record #2013-074, vote 6–1). Adult, photographed. Eighth state and eighth spring record. One dissenting member thought that while the photo was suggestive, it was not clear enough to make a positive identification and that it could be just a delayed molt White-faced Ibis.

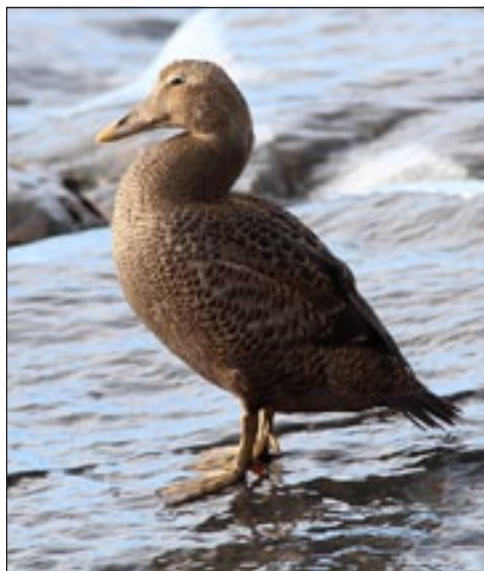
- Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*), 21 October 2014, Brownsdale wastewater treatment plant, Mower County (record

#2014-047, vote 7–0). Adult, photographed. Eighteenth state, first county, and fifteenth fall record.

- Mew Gull (*Larus canus brachyrhynchus*), 8–9 November 2014, Lake Calhoun, Hennepin County (record #2014-050, vote 7–0). Adult, photographed. Fourth state and third fall record. Last previous record was in 1998. This individual was established as the North American subspecies *Larus canus brachyrhynchus*.

- California Gull (*Larus californicus*), 19–22 October and 21–22 December 2014, Minnesota side of Superior Entry and Canal Park, respectively, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2014-046, vote 7–0). First-cycle, photographed. Third fall-winter record. After its initial sighting in October on the Minnesota side of Superior entry, it disappeared for nearly two months before reappearing at Canal Park for two days. Detailed photographs confirmed that this was, indeed, the same individual.

- Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*), 11–14 August 2014, 111th Street roughly 0.8 miles southeast of Luverne City Park, Rock County (record #2014-039, vote 7–0). An adult and a juvenile were both photographed. Twenty-second state and seventh fall record. The juvenile bird was sighted on 11 August 2014 and was later reported with an adult bird on 13 August 2014. The adult was observed feeding the juvenile (this does not necessarily indicate breeding as adult terns are known to feed juveniles accompanying them during



Common Eider, 15 November 2014, Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Ted R. Keyel.



Wood Stork, 6 August 2014, Washington County. Photo by Bruce A. Fall.

migration). Both birds were accepted.

- White-winged Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*), 17 August 2014, Willmar, Kandiyohi County (record #2014-040, vote 6-1). Adult. First county record. One dissenting member thought that while the identification of this bird was possibly correct, the description lacked several significant details, commenting that "there is nothing here about overall body color, blackish primaries and secondaries, and lack of dark spotting on the lower back/wings while at rest."

- Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), 5 May 2013, Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area, Anoka County (record #2013-043, first vote 5-2, recirculated vote 7-0; first origin vote 5-3-2, second origin vote 6-4). Specimen, photographed. The bird was determined to be wild after considerable discussion regarding the circumstances surrounding its discovery. The initial two negative identification votes were essentially protest votes and more appropriately should have gone to the issue of origin rather than identification which was clearly evidenced photographically.

- Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*), 13 September – 5 November 2014, Tyronne Township, Pumpkin Hill Road, Le Sueur

County (record #2014-045, vote 7-0). Adult male, photographed. Fifteenth state, ninth fall, and first county record.

- Rufous Hummingbird, 8-11 November 2014, St. Paul, Ramsey County (record #2014-049, vote 7-0). Adult male, photographed. Sixteenth state, tenth fall, and first county record. Based on plumage characteristics, this bird was determined to be different from the one seen in Le Sueur County.

- White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*), 7 September 2014, Seven Mile Creek County Park, Nicollet County (record #2014-043, vote 7-0).

- Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*), 27 June 2013, Old LTV tailings basin 7.25 miles north of Hoyt Lakes, St. Louis County (record #2013-046, first vote 2-5, reconsidered vote 7-0). This is one of very few heard-only records ever accepted by MOURC.

- Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*), 14 September 2014, Superior National Forest, Old Gunflint Trail at coordinates 48.0700, -90.6158, Cook County (record #2014-044, vote 7-0). Female/immature, photographed.

- Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*), Adult, photographed. 22 November 2014 – 15 February 2015, Lakeside Neigh-



Red Phalarope, 21 October 2014, Brownsdale, Mower County. Photo by Gerald Hoekstra.



Least Tern, 13 August 2014, Luverne, Rock County. Photo by David A. Cahlander.

borhood, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2014-053, vote 7–0). Tenth state and second fall-winter record. The bird apparently had been seen sporadically for about two weeks prior to 22 November, but no specific dates were given.

- Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*), 27 December 2014 – 10 March 2015, southwest quadrant of the intersection of 197th Street East and Orr Avenue, Ravenna Township, Dakota County (record #2014-056, vote 7–0). Adult, photographed. Twelfth state record and second winter record. The fact that there were three separate, documented records for this species in widely divergent locations in 2014 may indicate a range expansion into Minnesota.

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.)

- Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), 5 September 2014, Bethany Hawkwatch, Mankato, Blue Earth County (record #2014-042, vote 0–7). The Committee, as a whole, was uncomfortable with the statement that the tail “appeared whitish” which is not a plumage characteristic of the species.

- Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*), 23 November 2014, Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Blue Earth County (record #2014-054, vote 1–6). The observer had no prior experience with this often difficult-to-identify species. The written description is missing significant details. Other similar-looking species such as “Krider’s” Red-tailed Hawk were not distinguished.

- King Rail (*Rallus elegans*), 18 August 2014, Newport, Washington County (record #2014-041, vote 0–7). The very sparse description does not rule out other rail species.

- Barn Owl, 1 August 2014, five miles northwest of Houston in Perkins Valley,

Houston County (record #2014-057, vote 3–4). This is a heard-only record. The audio attachments, including a sonogram, were confusing because they were not well-labeled. However, the observer should be commended for presenting the physical evidence. Several members felt that a diagnosis should not be made based on a distant, single, “short, harsh scream” that could be confused with a juvenile Great Horned Owl begging call.

- Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmintheros vermivorum*), 10 May 2014, Nevis Township, Section 33, off County Road 13, Hubbard County (record #2014-037, first vote 4–3, recirculated vote 1–6). Two well-out-of-range birds seen together would be unprecedented. The observers were not experienced with the species. The description of the three black head stripes is confusing and not consistent with the species. Finally, the bird was said to have looked just like the one in the field guide indicating that the power of suggestion may have influenced the conclusion.

- Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*), 5 May 2013, private residence, Fairmont, Martin County (record #2013-015, first vote 6–4, recirculated vote 8–2). After discussion by the Committee at its 7 December 2014 meeting, all ten members voted on this record because it has an A subscript “s” checklist status. A minority of the committee thought the written description of the bird was incomplete, lacking some details.

- Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*), 18 May 2014, Maxwell Township, Section 15, Lac qui Parle County (record #2014-019, first vote 4–3, recirculated vote 2–5). Identification of a female/immature Black-headed Grosbeak can often be a difficult challenge. While this bird was photographed at a feeder, the single photograph permitted only a fairly distant, dorsal view. The photograph itself was not very useful in narrowing down the identification. The Committee felt that the description by an observer inexperienced with the species was lacking too much detail to eliminate Rose-breasted Grosbeak or a possible hybrid grosbeak.

- Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*), 6 May 2012, Lakefield, Jackson County (record #2012-012, first vote 5–2, reconsidered vote 1–6). After comparing this bird with several

hybrid museum specimens, it was concluded that hybridization could not be ruled out. While some members felt that the bird might possibly be a first or second-year male, the majority thought that it had hybrid characteristics such as a hood much lower onto the breast than is typical, and a mixture of rusty and blue in the upper breast. It was suggested by two members that the bird might represent a second-generation backcross Lazuli X Indigo hybrid.

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: Jim Amundson, Karl J. Bardon, Karla A. Bloem, Conny M. Brunell, Paul E. Budde, David A. Cahlander, Philip C. Chu, Erik Collins, Herb H. Dingmann, Robert M. Dunlap, Kim R. Eckert, Bruce A. Fall, Jason Heinen, Anthony X. Hertz, Peter R. Hoeger, Gerald Hoekstra, Jerry Hogeboom, Ted Keyel, Douglas W. Kieser, Jan Kraemer, Larry Kraemer, James W. Lind, Michael J. Majeski, Bruce Munson, Andrew Nyhus, David Pavlik, Jerry Pruett, Curt Rawn, Melinda Robertson, Karl Roe, Joel Schmidt, Larry Sirvio, Andrew D. Smith, Linda Sparling, Matt Stratmoen, Peder H. Svingen, Marvin Taylor, Raymond Tervo, Thomas A. Tustison, Don Vrchota, Josh Wallstad, John Weber, Marlene Weber, Steve Wilson, and 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 checklist can be found at <<http://moumn.org/mourc>>. Summary: 26 records voted on, 18 Accepted, 8 Not Accepted.

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