

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 6 December 2015. 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).

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

- Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), 21 September 2015, Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, St. Louis County (record #2015-029, vote 7-0). Juvenile, photographed. Third latest date on record.

- Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinicus*), 23 October 2015, Wasca Street in West Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2015-033, vote 7-0). Juvenile, photographed. Second county and fourth state record. Retrieved after it apparently flew into a window and was stunned. Previous Minnesota records are the following: 11 November 1963, found dead near Toivola, St. Louis County (specimen now at the Bell Museum of Natural History, (*The Flicker* 35:123 and *The Flicker* 36:23); 11 or 12 June 1967, found dead in Sheldon Township, Houston County (specimen also at the Bell Museum), (*The Loon* 39:124); and 5 September 1970, Oakleaf Lake, Nicollet County, (*The Loon* 42:119).

- Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*), 25-27 November 2015, at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, Wells, Faribault County (record #2015-042, vote 7-0). Apparent adult, photographed. First county record.

- California Gull (*Larus californicus*), 24, 25 September, 1, 9, 28, and 30 October, and 6 December 2015 from the Minnesota side



Record #2015-029, Mississippi Kite, 21 September 2015, Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Karl J. Bardon.

of the Superior Entry, and 27 September at Park Point Recreation Area ballfields, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2015-031, vote 7-0). First-cycle, photographed (*The Loon* 88:41-42).

- Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*), 13 October 2015, Sax-Zim Bog, Cross Road (47.15318, -92.659100), St. Louis County (record #2015-032, vote 7-0). Fifth state record and the earliest of five fall records (*The Loon* 88:42-43). Composite dates for all five records range from 1-20 October — a remarkably narrow band of time.

- Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*), 2 November 2015, Kandiyohi County Road 88 southeast of Willmar (record #2015-038, vote 7-0). Juvenile photographed. First county record.

- Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*), 21 October - 16 November 2015, at a private residence near the community of Richwood, Becker County (record #2015-039, vote 7-0). Two sub-adult males were both



Record #2015-039, Vermilion Flycatcher, 6 November 2015, Richwood, Becker County. Photo by Paul E. Budde.



Record #2015-027, Tropical Kingbird, 5 July 2015, Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve, Scott County. Photo by Gerald Hoekstra.

photographed and accepted. First county record, fourth state record, and first occurrence of more than one individual. At least one of the males arrived on 21 October. The exact arrival of the second male is uncertain, but most likely the birds arrived together. At least one bird remained through 16 November, but the exact departure date for both birds is uncertain. All four records have been in the fall season. There have been only three previous Minnesota records: 6–7 November 1977, near Elizabeth, Otter Tail County (adult male), (*The Loon* 50:45), 13–14 October 1991, Duluth (juvenile female), (*The Loon* 64:57–58), and 25–27 November 1994, Kandiyohi County (juvenile female), (*The Loon* 67:57–59).

- Vermilion Flycatcher, 2 November 2015, Lutsen Resort, Cook County (record #2015-037, vote 7–0). Presumed juvenile or adult female, photographed. First county record and fifth state record.

- Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*), 24 June – 19 July 2015, horse/pet trails in Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve, Scott County (record #2015-027, vote 10–0, physical evidence vote 10–0). First state and first county record, photographed, video and audio recorded. Because this is a first state record, all ten members voted accepting the identification. The Committee also voted unanimously that the physical evidence standing alone was sufficient to establish the identification; consequently, the species will be added to the next state Checklist (2019) without a subscript. As part of its deliberations, the Committee consulted several outside experts.

- White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*), 25 October 2015, Sunset Memorial Cemetery, Minneapolis, Hennepin County (record #2015-035, vote 7–0). Adult, photographed.

- White-eyed Vireo, 1–11 November 2015, Wood Lake Nature Center, Richfield, Hennepin County (record #2015-036, vote 7–0). Adult, photographed.

- White-eyed Vireo, 8 November 2015, Artists Point, Grand Marais, Cook County (record #2015-040, vote 7–0). Adult, photographed.

- Clark's Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*), 7 September – 10 October 2015, private residence Winona, Winona County (record #2015-030, vote 7–0). Adult, photographed. The date first seen is reported to have been on 7 September 2015, although the precise date is unknown.

- Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*), 4 May 2015, southeast of the downtown train depot, Two Harbors, Lake County (record, #2015-010, vote 10–0, vote to determine whether the physical evidence standing alone is sufficient to identify the bird as to species 10–0). Because this species was an A_s species, all ten members were required to vote. The identification as well as the removal of the "s" subscript were both unanimous.

- Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*), 18 October 2015, last seen on an indeterminate date during the last week of April 2016, private residence Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2015-034, vote 7–0). Adult, photographed. This is quite possibly the same bird from the previous year returning to the same feeder (see also *The Loon* 87:6–7).



Record #2015-010, Brewer's Sparrow, 4 May 2015, Two Harbors, Lake County. Photo by James W. Lind.

- Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (*Leucosticte tephrocotis*), 14 November 2015, Iona's Beach SNA, Lake County (record #2015-041, vote 7-0). Adult, photographed.

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 Minnesota Ornithologists' Union ("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*), 7 September 2015, Camden State Park, Lyon County (record #2015-028, vote 3-4). There are many characteristics not mentioned that would have aided the identification such as the short outermost primary (P10), upperparts description (if visible) such as white secondaries, or reddish/rust colored tones in the upper wing. The observer omitted any mention of falcons in ruling out similar species.

- Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*), 26 November 2014, Canal Park, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2014-055, first vote 4-3, recirculated vote 2-5). Photographed. Several members felt that some of the features, noted

by the observer to be in the photographs, could not be clearly discerned. There was unease that other species such as Dunlin could not be completely eliminated.

- Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), 9 September 2013, Overlook Circle, Bloomington, Hennepin County (record #2013-073, first vote 4-3, recirculated vote 1-6). Photographed. No one actually observed the bird in person. A single, feedercam photograph (that conveniently includes date, time, location, and weather information) stands alone as evidence. Most members felt that the bird might possibly be a Bewick's Wren. However, because there was an inexplicable white marking visible in the malar region, most members could not accept the sighting based on just one photograph with no additional documentation.

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: Travis Bonovsky, Karl J. Bardon, David A. Bartkey, Patrick B. Beauzay, Conny M. Brunell, Paul E. Budde, Kim R. Eckert, Bruce A. Fall, Wayne Feder, Gerald Hoekstra, Joseph P. Hudick, Paul Kammen, Dee Kuder, James W. Lind, Michael J. Majeski, Craig R. Mandel, Scott B. Meyer, Earl E. Orf, Curt Rawn, John Richardson, Karl Roe, Liz Stanley, Matt Stratmoen, Peder H. Svingen, Tom A. Tustison, Tim Walker, Josh Wallestad, Justin Watts, Garrett Wee, 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 current checklist can be found at <http://moumn.org/mourc>. Summary: 19 records voted on — 16 Accepted, 3 Not Accepted.

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