

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 23 July 2017. In attendance and voting at this meeting were MOURC members Dedrick A. Benz, Robert M. Dunlap, Anthony X. Hertzel (alternate), Douglas W. Kieser, William C. Marengo (alternate), Andrew D. Smith, and Thomas A. Tustison (chair). Absent were: Andrew R. Forbes, Robert P. Russell, and Pedder H. Svingen (alternate).

At, or subsequent to, the meeting the following records were voted on and were Accepted:

- **Eurasian Wigeon** (*Anas penelope*) [Casual], 16–23 April 2017, rice paddies near Aitkin, Aitkin County (record #2017-028, vote 6–1). Photographed, adult male.
- **White-winged Dove** (*Zenaida asiatica*) [Casual], 16 April 2017, private residence in Montgomery, Le Sueur County (record #2017-032, vote 7–0). Photographed. First county record. The bird stayed for approximately one week although the observer was uncertain of the exact date it was last seen.
- **White-winged Dove** [Casual], 12 May 2017, Lake Crystal, Blue Earth County (record #2017-007, vote 7–0). Photographed. First county record.
- **King Rail** (*Rallus elegans*) [Accidental], 15 June – 19 August 2017, North Ottawa Impoundment, Grant County (record #2017-024, vote 7–0). Two birds were present. Both were photographed and accepted. Second county record; first record was 26 June 1923 near Herman.
- **Black-necked Stilt** (*Himantopus mexicanus*) [Casual], 25 April – 2 May 2017, Lone Tree Lake, Lyon County (record #2017-004, vote 7–0). Photographed.
- **Black-necked Stilt**, 9 May 2017, County Road 14 north of Minnesota Lake, Blue



King Rail, 24 June 2017, North Ottawa Impoundment, Grant County. Photo by Larry Sirvio.

- Earth County (record #2017-005, vote 7–0). Two birds both photographed and accepted.
- **Black-necked Stilt**, 12–13 May 2017, North Ottawa Impoundment, Grant County (record #2017-031, vote 7–0). One bird photographed and accepted. During this period as many as two, or possibly three, Black-necked Stilts were reported at the impoundment. However, only very limited details were provided without formal documentation.
- **Black-necked Stilt**, 15 June – 17 August 2017, North Ottawa Impoundment, Grant County (record #2017-025, vote 7–0). Two birds both photographed and accepted. It is possible that one of these birds was the same bird as record #2017-031 (see previous); however, an interval of 26 days separates the sightings and there is no specific evidence linking the two records.
- **Snowy Plover** (*Charadrius nivosus*) [Ac-



Lewis's Woodpecker, 22 May 2017, Aurora, St. Louis County. Photo by Steven G. Wilson.



Western Wood-Pewee, 4 June 2017, Clay County. Photo by Anthony X. Hertzell.

cidental], 8–9 June 2017, North Ottawa Impoundment, Grant County (record #2017-020, vote 7–0). Photographed. First county record. Sixth summer record.

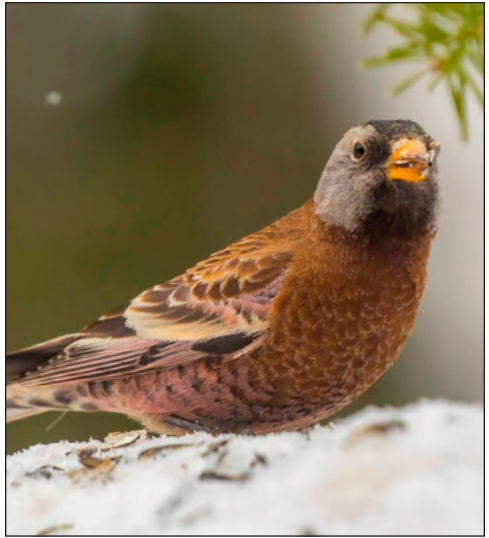
- **Black-legged Kittiwake** (*Rissa tridactyla*) [Casual], 15 February 2016, Agate Bay, Two Harbors, Lake County (record #2016-053, vote 7–0). Juvenile, photographed.
- **Northern Fulmar** (*Fulmarus glacialis*) [Accidental], 27 April 2017, Park Point, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2017-033, vote 10–0). Salvaged specimen. Photographed. First state and county record. The bird was found dead on the beach at Park Point, having apparently been killed and partially eaten by a Peregrine Falcon (two Peregrines were seen in the immediate vicinity). The bird was dry, indicating it had not washed up on to the beach, and rigor mortis had not set in at the time of the discovery. The specimen was prepared four days later and is now part of the collection at the Bell Museum of Natural History. The Northern Fulmar is a very abundant sea bird found primarily in subarctic regions of the north Atlantic and north Pacific oceans. There are three generally recognized subspecies: the nominate form, *F. g. glacialis*, breeds in the high Arctic regions of the north Atlantic; *F. g. auduboni* breeds

in the low Arctic and the boreal regions of the north Atlantic; and *F. g. rodgersii*, (the “Pacific” form) breeds on the Pacific coasts of eastern Siberia and the Alaskan Peninsula. The Committee ascertained that the bird was the “Atlantic” form — either the nominate *glacialis* or *auduboni* — primarily based on the paleness of the upper tail and rump. A few members were leaning toward the subspecies *auduboni* which is distinguished by its bill, described as “long and rather wide.” The *auduboni* subspecies has darker nostril tubes (this bird has nearly black tubes) and the tail averages paler and less contrasting with the upper tail coverts (again, consistent with the Minnesota specimen). However, the majority of the Committee thought it best to simply refer to it as the “Atlantic” form. (*The Loon* 89:43–46).

- **Tricolored Heron** (*Egretta tricolor*) [Accidental], 22–23 April 2017, Slaughter Slough, Murray County (record #2017-030, vote 7–0). Adult, photographed. First county record.
- **Glossy Ibis** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) [Casual], 5–19 June 2017, North Ottawa Impoundment, Grant County (record #2017-019, vote 7–0). Adult, photographed. First county record.



Curve-billed Thrasher, 7 January 2017, Grand Rapids, Itasca County. Photo by Bob Dunlap.



Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, 26 January 2016. Babbitt, St. Louis County. Photo by Ken Hupila.

- **Barn Owl** (*Tyto alba*) [Accidental], 1 April 2017, five miles northwest of Houston in the Perkins Valley, Houston County (record #2017-034, vote 7-0). Audio and video recorded. The video showed a captive Barn Owl responding repeatedly to a vocalizing, wild Barn Owl. Sonograms as well as additional voice recordings were provided. A Barn Owl was previously accepted at this same location on 1 August 2014 (record #2014-057, *The Loon* 88:92-93).
- **Lewis's Woodpecker** (*Melanerpes lewis*) [Accidental], 17-24 May 2017, private residence one and one-half miles southwest of the center of Aurora, St. Louis County (record #2017-014, vote 7-0). Adult, photographed. Fifth state, first county, and third spring record.
- **Western Wood-Pewee** (*Contopus sordidulus*) [Accidental], 3 June - 26 August 2017, Buffalo Lake State Park (46.86230, -96.46494), Clay County (record #2017-017, vote 7-0). Photographed, audio and video recorded. Ninth state and first county record. On 8 August 2017, an unsuccessful attempt was made to capture this bird for DNA analysis to determine genetically whether or not the bird might be a hybrid with Eastern Wood-Pewee. This was undertaken because the bird made a potentially questionable, atypical vocalization among several other normal vocalizations.
- **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** (*Tyrannus forficatus*) [Casual], 5 June 2017, on 250th Street about 970 meters east of Mound Spring Prairie Scientific and Natural Area, (44.761873, -96.428115), Yellow Medicine County (record #2017-018, vote 7-0). Photographed. Second county record.
- **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, 9 June 2017, T110R26, Nicollet County (record #2017-022, vote 7-0). Photographed. First county record.
- **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, 14 June 2015, north side of state highway 7 about three quarters of a mile east of McLeod County Road 9 (record #2015-047, vote 7-0). Photographed. First county record.
- **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, 25 June - 19 July 2017, Mower County (record #2017-026, vote 7-0). Photographed and video recorded. First county record.
- **White-eyed Vireo** (*Vireo griseus*) [Casual], 19-22 May 2017, farm near Saco, Somerset Township, Steele County (record #2017-010, vote 7-0). Audio recorded. Third county record.
- **Curve-billed Thrasher** (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) [Accidental], 4-17 January 2017, private residence in Grand Rapids, Itasca

County (record #2017-001, vote 7-0). Photographed. Apparently, this bird was discovered about a month earlier but was not documented until the first date given above. Fifth state record and, interestingly, a second county record for this Accidental species. The first county record was mid-August – 3 December 2006 (*The Loon* 79:126).

- **Eurasian Tree Sparrow** (*Passer montanus*) [Casual], 21 November 2016 – 5 May 2017, various locations in Two Harbors, Lake County (record #2016-045, vote 7-0). Photographed. First county record.
- **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** (*Leucosticte tephrocotis*) [Casual], 26 January 2016, Babbitt, St. Louis County (record #2016-052, vote 7-0). Photographed. The bird was accepted as the "Hepburn's" race (*L. t. littoralis*) which is the fourth record of this subspecies in the state. Apparently, it was discovered about two weeks earlier but was not documented until the date given above.
- **Lark Bunting** (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) [Casual], 6 June 2016, Wilkin County (record #2016-051, vote 7-0). Adult male, photographed.
- **Golden-crowned Sparrow** (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) [Casual], 17 April 2017, in a brush pile near a small parking lot off of Cheshire Parkway North west of Camelot Lake Park, Plymouth, Hennepin County (record #2017-003, vote 7-0). Adult, photographed. First county record.
- **Worm-eating Warbler** (*Helminthos vermivorum*) [Casual], 16 May 2017, farm near Saco, Somers Township, Steele County (record #2017-009, vote 5-2).
- **Worm-eating Warbler**, 22 May 2017, Sakatah State Park near campsite number 54, Le Sueur County (record #2017-013, vote 7-0).
- **Worm-eating Warbler**, 31 May 2017, Hawk Creek, Minnesota River Valley, Renville County (record #2017-016, vote 6-1). First county record.
- **Yellow-throated Warbler** (*Setophaga dominica*) [Casual], 22-25 April 2017, Gold Medal Park, Hennepin County (record #2017-029, vote 7-0).
- **Yellow-throated Warbler**, 15 May – 6 July 2017, near the Nature Store parking lot area, Winona County (record #2017-015, vote 7-0). Photographed. Two birds were

documented and both accepted.

- **Prairie Warbler** (*Setophaga discolor*) [Casual], 26 May 2017, private property in Blackduck, Beltrami County (record #2017-023, vote 6-1). Adult male, photographed and audio recorded. First county record.
- **Painted Bunting** (*Passerina ciris*) [Casual], 8-10 May 2017, south of Cannon City, Rice County (record #2017-006, vote 7-0). Adult male, photographed. First county record.

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.)

- **Inca Dove** (*Columbina inca*) [Accidental], 20 May 2017, along 531st Avenue just south of Courtland Wildlife Management Area and north of Courtland, Nicollet County (record #2017-011, vote 1-6). There was a lack of consistency among the three observers regarding the color of the upper surface of the wings. Only one of the three observers mentions the rufous color of the wings and hedges his statement as follows: "The wings also had largely dark to rufous (sic) contrast to the body unlike morning dove (sic)." The observation by all observers was very brief ranging from five to thirty seconds and as close as five feet by one observer. Most members shared the view that the rufous in the wings should have been obvious at this distance particularly because other less obvious characteristics were well-described.
- **Black-headed Gull** (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [Accidental], 8 August 2016, Black Rush Lake Waterfowl Production Area/Lyon County Landfill, Lyon County (record #2016-034, initial vote 5-2, recirculated vote 4-3). Of the eleven or more birders who

saw the bird (some very experienced with the species), only one observer was willing to state categorically that the bird was a Black-headed Gull. The photographs are of poor quality and are only marginally helpful. Many of the observations were brief and the bird was often not well-seen at the time. At best, this was a Black-headed Gull in unusually pale plumage; however, the identification is still uncertain.

- **Mississippi Kite** (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), 5 June 2017, Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve, Scott County (record #2017-027, vote 0–7). Details of the observation were insufficient to rule out other raptor species. The description makes no mention of the outermost primary (P10) being shorter than the adjacent primary (P9). Apparently, the observer was describing a juvenile or sub-adult but fails to mention the streaked underparts, wing shape, or tail shape. The observer had no familiarity with the species.
- **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** (*Tyrannus forficatus*), 12 August 2016, Lac qui Parle County (record #2016-035, initial vote 4–3, recirculated vote 2–5). The bird was observed while driving 45 miles per hour without the aid of optics. The observer had no previous experience observing this species. The bird appeared to have a long white tail but no black was noted in the tail. There was a quick view of some pinkish or orangeish coloration described as similar to what is found on an alternate-plumaged Cattle Egret. However, the observer makes ambiguous statements about the exact nature of the coloration. We were given no indication of the bird's overall size or any other details of coloration such as the paleness of the head or mantle.
- **Eurasian Tree Sparrow**, 19 December 2016, University of Minnesota East Bank, Hennepin County (record #2016-047, initial vote 4–3, recirculated vote 1–6). The observer viewed the bird without the aid of optics. Having no experience with the species, the observer claims the ability to discern the call note of the species among the throng of House Sparrows also present at the location.
- **Prairie Warbler** (*Setophaga discolor*), 20 May 2017, Indian Point Campground trail, St. Louis County (record #2017-012, vote

3–4). Another record that may be legitimate given the observer's experience, but it is unfortunately poorly described. Other than having red streaks on its back and lacking a rusty cap, there is nothing else provided to support the identification of a Prairie Warbler. The observer even notes "face markings" and "undertail coverts," but doesn't actually describe their appearance.

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: Brad Abendroth, Ruth Amundson, Keith Anderson, Sandy Aubol, David A. Bartkey, Karla Bloem, William E. Brooks, Paul E. Budde, Philip C. Chu, Shawn Conrad, John Frentz & Tom Dahlen, Amy Simso Dean, Robert M. Dunlap, Kim R. Eckert, John P. Ellis, Becca Engdahl, Rebecca Engdahl, Ronald A. Erpelding, Roger and Tammy Field, Jason Frank, Alex J. Franzen, Elissa Gallien, Liz Harper, Don Havel, Chad Heins, Anthony X. Hertz, Pete Hoeger, Gerald Hoekstra, Ken Hupila, Douglas W. Kieser, Andrew Krenz, James W. Lind, Ann Luloff, Douglas Mayo, John Nelson, Jackie Packer, Aaron Pietsch, John Richardson, Larry Sirvio, Linda Sparling, Paul Suchanek, Alex Sundvall, Peder H. Svingen, Raymond Tervo, John Thoenke, Molly Thompson, Howard Towle, Thomas A. Tustison, Justin Watts, Garrett Wee, Bob Williams, Steve G. 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 current checklist can be found at <<http://moumn.org/mourc>>. Summary: 39 records evaluated, 33 Accepted, 6 Not Accepted.

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