

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 via electronic media on 18 November 2023. In attendance and voting at this meeting were MOURC members Kimberly A. Emerson (alternate), Rebecca R. Engdahl, Anthony X. Hertzler, Ann E. Kessen, Andrew D. Smith, Steven P. Stucker, Howard C. Towle (alternate), William C. Marengo, Joshua G. Watson (alternate), and Thomas A. Tustison (chair).

The following records were voted on at, or subsequent to, the meeting and were Accepted (Note: in general, dates given for each record represent the first and last dates of observation; some records may not have been documented on each intervening date):

- Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) [Accidental], 10 October 2022, pond near highway 36 and Stillwater Boulevard interchange, Lake Elmo, Washington County (record #2022-087, original vote 6-1, a proposal to reconsider this record was rejected by an 8-2 vote).

- Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) [Accidental], 30 October – 15 November 2023, private residence, Eureka Township, Dakota County (record #2023-106, vote 7-0). Immature male, photographed and video recorded. Sixth state and second county record.

- Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta*) [Accidental], 19 April 2022, City of Wabasha, Wabasha County (record # 2022-011, vote 7-0), First county and second state record. A consensus vote was taken on whether to consider origin (6-4 to not consider a formal vote on origin). The origin vote is in keeping with the precedent of the first state record which considered the bird wild. The first state record was recorded in Grand Marais in 1996 (*The Loon* 68:165). Apparently, these two records represent the only known vagrants in the "Lower 48" states.

- Limpkin (*Aramus guaranauna*) [Accidental], 9 September 2023, along 70th Avenue South

just north of Turtle Lake, Clay County (record #2023-097, vote 7-0). Adult, photographed. First county record. Since it was first recorded in the state on 30 May 2021 (*The Loon* 93:112), there has been a total of nine records through the end of 2023.

- Limpkin, 25 September 2023, north side of 700th Street near Iowa's Trickle Slough Wildlife Management Area, Jackson County (record #2023-102, vote 7-0). Adult, photographed. First county record.

- Limpkin, 24 October 2023, south of Lake Pokegama near the Snake River about 0.9 miles south of Pokegama Lake Road, Pine County (record #2023-117, vote 7-0). Adult, photographed. First county record

- Limpkin, 29 October 2023, 48.2749, -92.9337, about 0.2 miles east of the intersection of Sheep Ranch Road and Forest Road 608, St. Louis County (record #2023-112, vote 7-0). Adult, photographed. First county record.

- Limpkin, 3-20 November 2023, in a wooded swamp near Moose Lake, Carlton County (record #2023-113, vote 7-0). Adult, photographed. First county record.

- Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) [Casual], 23 May 2018, in flooded field along the south side of county highway 28 east of 785th Avenue, Big Stone County (record #2023-103, vote 7-0). A single adult.

- Black-necked Stilt, 13 May 2023, west ponds, near Reno, Houston County (record #2023-119, vote 7-0). Adult male, photographed.

- Black-necked Stilt, 4 June 2023, south of Litchfield on 180th Street about one mile west of county road 22, Meeker County (record #2023-069, vote 7-0). Adult, photographed. First county record.

- Black-necked Stilt, 4 June 2023, Gaylord Water Treatment Plant, Sibley County (record #2023-089, vote 7-0). Adult, photographed.

- Black-necked Stilt, 8 June – 11 July 2023, Blue Earth County (record #2023-071, vote 7-0).



Limpkin, 25 September 2023, Middletown Township, Jackson County. Photo by Mark Brown. Record #2023-102.



Ruff, 22 August 2023, Louriston Township, Chippewa County. Photo by Kimberly A. Emerson. Record #2023-096.

Two adults were accepted and photographed. Nesting was observed during this time period. Then on 2 August 2023 at the same location, three adults and three near-adults were reported, but these birds were not separately documented and no photographs were submitted to the Committee.

- Black-necked Stilt, 15 June 2023, south basin of the IC&E Waterfowl Production Area near Alden, Freeborn County (record #2023-073, vote 7-0). One adult, photographed. Two birds were reported, but only one accepted.

- Black-necked Stilt, 28 June 2023, Cottonwood Wastewater Treatment Plant, Lyon County (record #2023-083, vote 7-0). A single adult.

- Black-necked Stilt, 1 July 2023, Ellendale Wastewater Treatment Plant, Steele County (record #2023-090, vote 7-0). Adult.

- Black-necked Stilt, 23 May 2018, in flooded field along the south side of county highway 28 east of 785th Avenue, Big Stone County (record #2023-103, vote 7-0). Adult.

- Black-necked Stilt, 14 July 2023, on the west side of East Pool, Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge, Lac qui Parle County (record #2023-118, vote 7-0). Adult.

- Black-necked Stilt, 23 April 2023, west ponds, near Reno, Houston County (record #2023-119, vote 7-0). Adult male, photographed. First county record.

- Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*) [Casual] 22-25 August 2023, Louriston Township, county road 277

at county road 40, Chippewa County (record #2023-096, vote 7-0). Juvenile, photographed. First county record.

- Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*) [Casual], 23 September 2023, Purgatory Creek Park, Hennepin County (record #2023-101, vote 7-0). Molted adult, photographed.

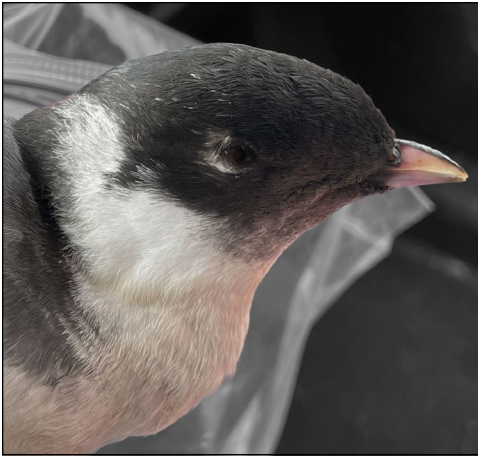
- Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) [Accidental], 26 August 2023, southwest Lake Winnibigoshish near Elvin R. Heller Memorial Harbor, Cass County (record #2023-098, vote 7-0). Apparent adult or near adult, photographed. First county record.

- Ancient Murrelet (*Syntliboramphus antiquus*) [Accidental], 9 November 2023, Mississippi River backwaters a few miles north of New Albin, Iowa, Houston County (record #2023-107, vote 7-0). Adult, photographed. First county record.

- Ancient Murrelet, 18 November 2023, 31st Street just south of Vermillion Road, Hastings, Dakota County (record #2023-110, vote 7-0). Adult, photographed. First county record. Found in the street within the city limits of Hastings, where it was rescued then transported to a rehabilitation center where it subsequently died. Tenth state record.

- Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) [Casual], 14 June 2023, Lake Winnibigoshish, Cass County (record #2023-094, vote 7-0). Adult, photographed.

- Black-legged Kittiwake, 5-7 November



Ancient Murrelet, 18 November 2023, at the Wildlife Rehab Center, Ramsey County. Photo by Anthony X. Hertz. Record #2023-110.



Black-legged Kittiwake, 19 November 2023, Taconite Harbor, Cook County. Photo by Alex Sundvall. Record #2023-109.

2023, Palmers, St. Louis County (record #2023-122, vote 7-0). First cycle, photographed.

- Black-legged Kittiwake, 19-22 November 2023, Taconite Harbor, Cook County (record #2023-109, vote 7-0). Two first-cycle birds, photographed.

- California Gull (*Larus californicus*) [Casual], 25 September 2023, Garrison Walleye Wayside, Crow Wing County (record #2023-100, vote 7-0). Adult, photographed.

- Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maximus*) [Accidental], 21-25 September 2023, various locations along the St. Croix River from Stillwater to Point Douglas, Washington County (record #2023-085, original vote 8-2, recirculated vote 0-10). Accepted as *Thalasseus* sp. (vote 9-1), but also see below for Not Accepted records.

- Neotropic Cormorant (*Nannopterum brasiliianum*) [Accidental], 10-12 August 2023, Richfield Lake, Hennepin County (record #2023-132, vote 7-0). Juvenile, photographed. This is the fifth consecutive year that the species has been observed at this location. At least four different individuals have been documented at this location: one adult in 2019; two adults in 2020; an adult and a subadult in 2021; one adult in 2022, and this juvenile in 2023.

- Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) [Accidental], 6 August 2023, Seasons Park, Washington County (record #2023-092, vote 7-0). Adult, photographed. Second county record; prior county record was 29 April 1966

(*The Loon* 38:86).

- Common Black Hawk (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) [Accidental], 18 September 1976, along Power Dam Road Northeast seven miles east of Bemidji, Beltrami County (record #1976-001, vote 10-0 to accept the identification). Female specimen, photographed. It had been hit by a vehicle along the roadside (see the article by Hertz in an upcoming issue of *The Loon*). The injured bird was then ultimately transported to a rehabilitation center, where it died on 20 September 1976. The specimen was then added to the checklist of Minnesota birds by MOURC (then MORC) in 1978 as a hypothetical record (*The Loon* 50:31-34). In 1980, MOURC eliminated the status of hypothetical records and the specimen was reclassified to the modern equivalent of an Accidental subscript "o" species (*The Loon* 52:150-152). The "o" subscript indicates that there is uncertainty as to the bird's wildness or origin or its natural occurrence and arrival in the state. In February of 1988, the Director of the James Ford Bell Museum re-examined the specimen and concluded that the bird was likely an escaped bird. Consequently, at the direction of the Chairperson of MOURC (and without a vote) the bird was removed from the state checklist in 1988 (*The Loon* 60:13-16). In 2024, MOURC reconsidered the origin of the record and, by a vote of 6-4, restored the specimen record to its former status as an Accidental subscript "o"

species.

- Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*) [Accidental], 11 October 2019, county road 59 about 0.5 miles south of county road 20, Rock County (record #2019-072, vote 6–1). Indeterminate age and sex, photographed.

- Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) [Casual], 20 March 2023, near Climax, Polk County (record #2023-133, vote 7–0). Specimen, photographed. Specimen now resides at the International Owl Center.

- Barn Owl, 16 May 2023, Money Creek Township, Houston County (record #2023-129, vote 6–1). Audio recorded.

- Barn Owl, 19 September 2023, near the intersection of University Avenue Northwest and Quincy Drive Northeast, Isanti County (record #2023-126, vote 6–1). Audio recorded. First county record.

- Barn Owl, 25 September – 11 October 2023, Money Creek Township, Houston County (record #2023-130, vote 6–1). Audio recorded.

- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) [Casual], 20–21 October 2023, Grey Cloud Dunes Scientific and Natural Area, Washington County (record #2023-105, vote 7–0). Adult, photographed.

- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 19–27 October 2023, West Knife River Road, St. Louis County (record #2023-104, vote 7–0). Adult, photographed.

- Clark's Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*) [Casual], 6 October 2023, Pine Point Regional Park, Washington County (record #2023-116, vote 7–0). Adult, video recorded. First county record.

- Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) [Accidental], 13–16 November 2023, Battle Creek Regional Park, Ramsey County (record #2023-108, vote 7–0). Adult, photographed and video recorded. First county record.

- Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*) [Casual], 11 April – 15 May 2023, Park Point, St. Louis County (record #2023-123, vote 7–0). Three adults, photographed and video recorded.

- Eurasian Tree Sparrow, 29 July – 19 August 2023, about 0.6 miles east of Sumner Center Methodist Church on county road 102, Fillmore County (record #2023-091, vote 7–0). Three adults, photographed.

- Eurasian Tree Sparrow, 20–21 November 2023, Cottage Grove, Washington County

(record #2023-124, vote 7–0). Adult, photographed.

- Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*) [Accidental], 5 October 2023, private residence, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2023-136, vote 7–0). Adult, photographed. First county and fifth state record.

- MacGillivray's Warbler (*Geothlypis tolmiei*) [Accidental], 9 September 2010, near Dundas, Rice County (record #2010-052, vote 7–0). Banded and photographed. Banding data included wing-minus-tail measurements within acceptable range by an experienced bander.

- Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) [Casual], 18–19 September 2023, Otter Tail County (record #2023-099, vote 6–1). First-year 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 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.)

- Royal Tern, 21–25 September 2023, various locations along the St. Croix River from Stillwater to Point Douglas, Washington County (record #2023-085, original vote 8–2, recirculated vote 0–10). The bird was originally seen just north of Stillwater on the St. Croix River and subsequently reported as far as 23 miles down river to Point Douglas near Prescott, Wisconsin. All observations were while the bird was in flight at varying distances. These sporadic observations cover a time span of five days. The original observer, to his credit, should be complimented for capturing photographs as well as an audio recording of the vocalizations. An analysis was conducted on the audio recording comparing the vocalizations to both Royal Tern and Elegant Tern (*T. elegans*). The results showed that there is a similarity in the particular vocalizations making these two spe-



***Thalasseus*, sp., 21 September 2023, Stillwater, Washington County. Photo by Garrett Wee. Record #2023-085.**



***Vireo*, sp., 16 May 2023, Lino Lakes, Ramsey County. Photo by Marie Chappell. Record #2023-088.**

cies indistinguishable. Photographs were not diagnostic. The written descriptions among several birders had considerable variation regarding some features of the bird. Given the time span and distance of these reports, one might question whether they even represented the same bird. Overall, the Committee after much discussion unanimously concluded that the identification could not be assigned to a specific species of *Thalasseus* tern, but was accepted as *Thalasseus* sp.

- Royal Tern, 25 September 2023, Spring Lake, Dakota County (record #2023-086, vote 0–10). The observer does not state whether it was perched or in-flight for the mere 30 second observation from 220 yards distant. Most members felt that the description of the bird was well short of expectations for a first state record.

- Neotropic Cormorant (*Nannopterum brasilianum*) [Accidental], 23 April 2023, Silver Creek Reservoir, Olmsted County (record #2023-131, vote 0–7). Most members felt that the very distant photos were inadequate to be of much value regarding the identification. The observer seemed uncertain about the identification given the long distance from the bird.

- Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) [Casual], 22 August 2022, Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, St. Louis County (record #2023-120, vote 0–7). Although the bird was photographed, the distance was more than three

miles and basically all that could be noted was a silhouette. All the Committee had to evaluate was a comment about the 'jizz' of the bird in flight.

- Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) [Casual], 26 June 2023, Sax-Zim Bog, on Sax Road just east of Cranberry Lane, St. Louis County (record #2023-095, vote 0–7). The observer saw the bird along the side of the road while driving in the dark about a half hour before sunrise. A Short-eared Owl, which is significantly more likely, could also appear long-legged in alert posture while standing on a flat surface such as a roadside. Moreover, the ten second observation was made without optics from a moving vehicle.

- Plumbeous Vireo (*Vireo Plumbeus*), 16 May 2023, Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve, Lino Lakes, Anoka County (record #2023-088, vote 0–10). Both observers appear to have done their very best to document this record and notify other birders in an attempt to get better photos and other critical information. The bottom line is that the photos, standing alone, are not sufficient to meet the high bar for a first state record. There is no audio recording to supplement the photos. Prior MOURC discussions regarding the identification of this species have concluded that it is extremely difficult to make a judgment in the absence of an audio recording.

- Clay-colored Thrush (*Turdus grayi*), 18

May 2023, private residence, Prior Lake, Scott County, (record # 2023-087, vote 0–10). Not only is the bar very high for acceptance of a first state record, but the extreme vagrancy of the purported species adds an even higher level of caution required to evaluate the observation. Several members expressed that the totality of the circumstances surrounding the observation, and exclusive of the audio recordings themselves, casts doubt on the observation. The audio recordings, containing what clearly appear to be Clay-colored Thrush vocalizations, were the subject of extreme scrutiny. An audio recording analysis by a Committee member with expertise in the field, as well as a second analysis by Cornell University's eBird group both concluded that there was no detection in the recordings of other bird vocalizations that would necessarily preclude the recording as having been made in Minnesota. That said, the Committee has no reliable independent corroborating evidence, such as meta data, that the recordings were in fact made within the state of Minnesota. The lack of such corroborating evidence gave pause to members who would require such evidence prior to acceptance of the extreme record.

- MacGillivray's Warbler, 17 May 2019, Schulze Lake area, Lebanon Hills Regional Park, Dakota County (record #2019-071, vote 0–7). One of the photos shows quite prominent eye arcs. However, eye arcs alone are not considered diagnostic. In other photos, eye arcs are noticeably less prominent. The bird did not vocalize. There are other aspects of the bird that suggest more strongly that it is a male Mourning Warbler such as the longer undertail coverts, the absence of black across the anterior forehead, and moderate gray rather than black in front of the eye. In addition, this location is known to have summering Mourning Warblers that potentially breed here.

- MacGillivray's Warbler, 9 September 2023, St. Thomas Lake Wildlife Management Area, Le Sueur County (record #2023-127, vote 0–7). The observer apparently is relying almost exclusively on eye arcs which is an indicator of MacGillivray's, but not diagnostic.

- Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*) [Casual], 12 May 2023, private residence, Faribault, Rice County (record #2023-093, vote 3–4). Most members felt that the photos suggested hybridization.

- Lazuli Bunting, 17 May 2023, Little Falls Township, Morrison County (record #2023-053, original vote 4–3, recirculated vote 0–7). The bird showed evidence of hybridization such as the blue of the throat bleeding into the upper breast, weak wing bars, and deep blue coloration.

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: Nate Adams, Anna Arnebeck, Karl J. Bardon, Cole Bauer, Lon Baumgardt, Patrick B. Beauzay, Karla A. Bloem, Mark Brown, Nicholas Bruesewitz, Paul E. Budde, Alex Burchard, Kathy Carroll, Philip C. Chu, Jess Cosentino, Cathrine Currie, James Eklund, Kimberly A. Emerson, Steve Emerson, Bruce A. Fall, Tina Gandy, Tom Gilde, Richard Gotz, Les Gunderson, Liz Harper, Anthony X. Hertz, Rachel Hillesheim, John W. Hockema, Gerald Hoekstra, Luke Hollander, Ezra Hosch, Issac Hosch Steven C. Houdek, Paul E. Jantscher, Erik I. Johnson, Ted Keyel, Douglas W. Kieser, Jocelyn Kuo, Edward Larrabee, James W. Lind, Kevin Manley, Sean McLaughlin, Nolan Meyer, Dan Orr, Douglas L. Pierzina, Aaron Pietsch, Jerry Pruett, Tate Putman, Connie Rose, Kevin D. Smith, Dalton Spencer, Alex Sundvall, Peder H. Svingen, Dan Tallman, Elizabeth R. Tiller, Chad Unruh, Katy Victor, Joshua G. Watson, Thomas Weber, Garrett Wee, Bob Williams, James Wisnoski, John Zakelj, 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: 56 records voted on — 45 Accepted, 11 Not Accepted.

Edina, Minnesota.