

sewage ponds there and at St. Hilaire. We did add Greater Yellowlegs and Solitary Sandpiper, both tough to get in late May, but we arrived at Agassiz 1½ hours behind schedule. There we found Great Egret and Sandhill Crane, and we also lucked into a small wave of needed woods birds, including Alder Flycatcher, Gray-cheeked Thrush and Harris' Sparrow. We headed for Lake of the Woods at 6:15 p.m. with 178 species, still somehow on a record pace with almost three hours of daylight left.

On the way to Warroad it started to rain again, as we were to be plagued with showers and the resulting premature sunset for the next couple hours. But Terry spotted the always-difficult Short-eared Owl in the rain as we sped on to Lake of the Woods, and at Warroad we rounded out our list of needed water birds and were thoroughly amazed as a flock of 20 Red Knots flew in among them. We then tentatively headed east towards Pine-Curry Island, but decided not to make the drive since the rain showers were still with us, and it looked particularly black in that direction. But between showers just east of Warroad we chanced upon a needed Cape May Warbler and heard a pheasant which had thus far eluded us. Back at Warroad we waited out the rain with 189 species now to our credit, and as it got dark at 8:45 we headed for the bog north of Roseau where we knew we could count on woodcock and Whip-poor-will. Although we failed to spot a hoped-for Great Gray

Owl just south of the border on Hwy. 310, Paul and Terry were the first to hear a totally unexpected Boreal Owl calling from the bog! This was a long way from Cook Co. where one might not be so surprised to hear one, but that's what it was: quite a fancy species for number 192 for the day.

As pleased as we were with our record 192, we still wonder if 200 was possible that day. After all, we lost some time at dawn and in the evening due to rain, a strong wind was with us almost all day, and the colder than normal spring delayed the arrival of many birds we missed. On any given Big Day there will always be some "easy" species missed; in 1983 if we could have seen the likes of Broad-winged Hawk, Gray Partridge, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-headed Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Water-thrush, Indigo Bunting, Eastern Meadow-lark and/or a few others, our dream of 200 species would have been realized.

As a final note, Minnesota's Big Day record of 192 now ranks our state sixth among all the states/Canadian provinces; only California (235), Texas (234), Alabama (202), Manitoba (194) and New Jersey (194) have recorded better Big Days. Although the 230 species range is impossible on a Minnesota Big Day, we will certainly try to reach 200 or more in May of 1984. 9735 North Shore Dr., Duluth, MN 55804

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE MINNESOTA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE

by Kim R. Eckert, M.O.R.C. Secretary

Before listing the votes on records during the last half of 1983, a report on a few of the items discussed at a Dec. 4, 1983 meeting of the Committee follows.

1) A discussion on "second-hand" records (i.e., those records in which the details submitted to M.O.R.C. are written by someone other than the observer) reaf-

firmed both our policy on such records (see *The Loon* 52:151) and our Unacceptable vote on a 1973 Swallow-tailed Kite record (see *The Loon* 55:119).

2) The reported Iceland Gull record from Duluth in January 1983 was discussed (see *The Loon* 55: 188-189), and it was decided to regard this gull as an unidentified Thayer's/Iceland Gull, although the majority thought it was more likely an Iceland. One problem is that the identification of this gull as an Iceland relied mainly on the presence of subapical spots in the primaries; however, this field mark (along with others involved in the very difficult problem of Thayer's/Iceland Gull identification) may not be infallible since most references deemphasize or fail to mention this feature, and since it is possible that some paler Thayer's could show such spots (see the photo in *Birding* 12:199). The other problem with this record is that the gull's inner primaries are whiter than the darker outer primaries and secondaries (see the photo in *The Loon* article); although this feature is not widely published, it is consistent with all first-winter Thayer's Gulls this writer has seen either in life or in photos. Also note that the outer primaries, while pale, are still slightly darker than the wing coverts — a field mark of the Thayer's rather than the Iceland.

3) In order to make our proceedings more open and available to M.O.U. members, two decisions were made. First, those interested should be aware that all M.O.R.C. votes on bird records, both Acceptable and Unacceptable, are kept on file with the permanent M.O.U. bird records located at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. These files are open to the public, and access to them, either in person or by mail, can be arranged by contacting either Janet Green, M.O.U. Research and Records Chairman, or Kim Eckert, M.O.R.C. Secretary. Second, all future M.O.R.C. meetings, usually held annually in summer or during the December M.O.U. Paper Session weekend, will be open for anyone interested to attend. To find out when the next meeting is, contact M.O.R.C. Chairman Bob Janssen or any of the Committee members.

The following records were found Acceptable, July – December, 1983. (Note — M.O.R.C. does not vote on, nor do these Proceedings articles include, obviously acceptable records substantiated by clearly identifiable photos or specimens; e.g., the Groove-billed Ani seen by many and photographed in Nov. 1983 in Brown Co. — however, if there had been no photo this record would have been voted on.)

- Bufflehead, 6/5-7/83, Carver Park Reserve, Carver Co. (vote 7-0; *Loon* 55: 123-124).
- Worm-eating Warbler, 5/11/83, Flaudrau State Park, Brown Co. (vote 7-0; *Loon* 55:126).
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 5/16/83, Tamarac N.W.R., Becker Co. (vote 7-0).
- Black-legged Kittiwake, 6/11/83, Greenbush, Roseau Co. (vote 7-0; *Loon* 55:123).
- White-eyed Vireo, 6/4/83, St. Paul, Ramsey Co. (vote 7-0; *Loon* 55:126-127).
- Worm-eating Warbler, 5/17/83, Minnesota State Park, Blue Earth Co. (vote 7-0; *Loon* 55:126).
- Lazuli Bunting, 6/26/83, near North Branch, Chisago Co. (vote 6-1; *Loon* 55:120).
- Hooded Warbler, 5/24-6/18/83, Maple Grove Twp., Crow Wing Co. (vote 7-0; *Loon* 55:124-125).
- Laughing Gull, 6/9-10/83, Frontenac, Goodhue Co. (vote 7-0; *Loon* 55:125).
- Tricolored Heron, 7/3-12/83, near Alden, Freeborn Co. (vote 7-0; *Loon* 55:179-180).
- Northern Wheatear, 5/15/82, near Whitman Dam, Winona Co. (vote 7-0; *Loon* 55:151-153).
- Snowy Plover, 7/28/83, Zipple Bay State Park, Lake of the Woods Co. (vote 7-0; *Loon* 55:177).
- Sabine's Gull, 10/2/83, Lake Benton, Lincoln Co. (vote 7-0; *Loon* 55:178).
- Black-legged Kittiwake, 9/11-17/83, Stoney Point, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0; *Loon* 55:179).
- Groove-billed Ani, 10/5/83, Lutsen, Cook Co. (vote 7-0; *Loon* 56:75).

—Mississippi Kite, 10/31/82, Oxbow Park, Olmsted Co. (vote 7-0; *Loon* 56:70-71).

—Arctic Loon, 10/16/83, Leech Lake, Cass Co. (vote 6-1; *Loon* 56:65).

—Ibis (*Plegadis*, sp.), 10/3/83, Mallard L., Dam 5A, Winona Co. (vote 7-0).

—King Rail, 5/31-6/7/83, Brockway Twp., Stearns Co. (vote 7-0; *Loon* 56:72).

The following records were found Unacceptable, July - December, 1983.

—Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 6/11/83, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. (vote 0-7)

This identification was only based on a sketchy description which mentioned only a "very long tail. . .with narrow feathers like the look of a Barn Swallow", "white throat and chest, light above", a call described as a harsh "kep or kek", and that the bird was "soaring around like night-hawk but slower". Although the description could fit a Scissor-tailed, the details were thought to be too vague, the observers appeared to be relatively inexperienced, the bird's call and visual appearance would also fit a tern (which was not considered in the details), and while the flight behavior could fit a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in courtship flight, it also suggests a tern.

—Rufous Hummingbird, 7/30/83, Anoka, Anoka Co. (2-5)

It was unanimously agreed that the description could fit an adult male Rufous Hummingbird; however, the bird was only apparently seen for a few seconds, the details did not include light conditions (the apparent colors of a hummingbird's plumage can change considerably depending on the light), no rufous on the tail was seen, and the observer apparently did not take a critical look at the bird since she wrote it was "not of great import to me".

—Black-headed Grosbeak, 8/4-6/83, Roseville, Ramsey Co. (vote 2-5)

The details included no description of the bird; all that was said was that "the bird looked exactly like the bird in *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds*" — i.e., an adult female Black-headed. But it is never enough to say a bird looked just like in a book, since a de-

scription of the bird being reported (not the one in a book) is always required for any unusual record; with relatively inexperienced observers especially, there is always too great a possibility of a field guide misleading and influencing what was actually seen.

—Swainson's Warbler, 5/15/83, Dakota, Winona Co. (vote 1-6).

This identification, made by observers inexperienced with this species, was based only on: "rufous patch on the head. . .light stripe over the eye. . .back was plain brown toward an olive color". However, such details also fit Palm Warbler, a possibility apparently not considered by the observers. Also, the behavior (seen for 45 minutes "feeding on grass" under a tree out in the open) was inconsistent with Swainson's Warbler.

—Caribbean Coot, 8/7-13/83, Lake Minnewaska, Pope Co. (vote 0-7)

Although this coot apparently had an enlarged frontal shield suggestive of this species, this individual (and probably others reported in Mich. and Tenn.) was undoubtedly just an American Coot with an abnormal frontal shield. Such aberrant American Coots are not all that uncommon and are certainly far more likely in Minnesota than a Caribbean Coot.

—Rufous Hummingbird, 9/2-5/83, Detroit Lakes, Becker Co. (vote 1-6)

This could have been a female/immature Rufous, but nothing in the details precludes the possibility of Broad-tailed or Allen's Hummingbirds; although these are not as likely in Minnesota as the Rufous, they have to be considered. Although this bird appeared larger than the Rubythroats with it, there was "less white in tail than ruby throats" — but such does not fit the Rufous. At one point the back in the sun looked "bronzey-green or greenish-bronze", but this only "appeared" to be the case for "just an instant".

—Black-headed Grosbeak, 8/8/83, Roseville, Ramsey Co. (vote 2-5)

A photo of this individual (possibly the same one seen Aug. 4-6) suggests an adult female Black-headed Grosbeak, but the bird is most likely a juvenile male Rose-breasted which, although not adequately

stressed in the field guides, often appears relatively unstreaked and buffy below and is frequently and easily mistaken for the Black-headed Grosbeak.

—Worm-eating Warbler, 8/12/83, Potato Lake, Hubbard Co. (vote 0-7)

The relatively inexperienced observer's description was: "plain olive back, no wing bar, plain whitish breast, white eye line with black stripes above and below"; however, such details also fit Red-eyed Vireo.

—Great-tailed Grackle, 8/24/83, Roseville, Ramsey Co. (vote 0-7)

While this grackle may have been a Great-tailed, its apparently larger size and longer tail were only impressions with "nothing around for size comparison". The observer also states only that it was "perhaps" larger than a Common Grackle; more certainty is needed to accept such an unusual species.

—Trumpeter Swan, 11/6/83, Crow Wing Lakes area, Hubbard Co. (vote 3-4)

Although the two swans were heard by a 12-year employee at Carver Park Reserve who works daily with Trumpeter Swans and thus knows their call well, the majority were uncomfortable with the facts that he only heard and did not see the swans, that the call heard is not described in the details, and that this was a second-hand report provided by someone other than the observer.

—Trumpeter Swan, 10/10/83, Lake Emily, Pope Co. (vote 1-6)

Also a second-hand report, these details did not include a description of the calls heard, and, while this observer did actually see the swans in question, he apparently had little or no previous experience with this species and based his identification only from memory after later listening to captive Trumpeters in the Twin Cities.

9735 North Shore Dr., Duluth, MN 55804

## STATUS OF COMMON TERNS NESTING AT THE DULUTH PORT TERMINAL 1982-83

By Francesca J. Cuthbert<sup>1</sup> Joan E. McKearnan<sup>1</sup> and Thomas E. Davis<sup>2</sup>

Regional declines in nesting pairs of Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) recently have been reported for the Great Lakes area (Blokpoel 1977; Shugart and Scharf 1983). A November 1983 assessment of the Status of Common Terns in the eight states and one province that border the Great Lakes demonstrates the level of governmental concern for this species (Fig. 1). Three states have designated the Common

Tern as Endangered, two as Threatened, and the status of the Common Tern in Minnesota is Special Concern. In addition, the Midwest Regional Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated the Common Tern as a species of special interest (U.S.F.W.S. Regional Resource Plan, 1983).

Four primary breeding sites have been identified in Minnesota (Janet Green, pers.