

Western Gull from northern populations, while its mantle color was closer to that of the paler-eyed but darker-backed southern birds.

One characteristic that confirms the identification of this bird as Great Black-backed Gull, despite the dark eye, is the observed pattern of white in the wing tip, which is consistent with descriptions, illustrations and photographs of that species (e.g., Grant 1986, National Geographic Society 1983). This diagnostic pattern (Harrison 1985) also occurs in the three BMNH specimens: tenth primary tip white for about 5-8cm, ninth primary with a black band separating the white apical spot and large white mirror. In contrast, Western Gull has less white and a different pattern. The ninth primary has a small apical spot and usually lacks a mirror, while the tenth primary has both a mirror and small apical spot separated by black (Grant 1986). This pattern is also illustrated in Harrison (1985), McCaskie (1983) and National Geographic Society (1983), and occurs in the two BMNH specimens. Grant (1986) indicates that some fourth-winter Great Black-backed Gulls may exhibit signs of immaturity on innerwing coverts, tail and bill, and Dwight (1925) also notes that some fourth-winter individuals have traces of a dusky band on the bill. Thus, the presence of dark markings on this bird's bill, despite the otherwise full adult plumage, may indicate a fourth-winter individual. If so, perhaps the dark eye is also attributable to its relative immaturity, although this is unsupported by any of the above references.

#### Literature Cited

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## Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee

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At a meeting of the Committee on 27 August 1991, among the topics covered were discussions on the status of Ross' Geese in Minnesota and on the origin of a Trumpeter Swan seen in Wabasha County in January 1991. First, because of the large number of Ross' Goose sightings recently in Minnesota, it was decided that a vote by the Committee is

no longer necessary for all records. However, for the time being, this species is still on the Casual list and all records still need to be documented, but it is now up to the discretion of the Chairman which, if any, records should be voted on. Second, a "wildness" vote on the Trumpeter Swan individual with neck band 36FA (see *The Loon* 63:147-150) was taken,

and by a vote of 10-0 this was Accepted as an Accidental (a) species: i.e., it was unanimously decided that this swan was most likely a "wild and countable" bird from the established population at LaCreek N.W.R. in South Dakota. (Note, however, that all other Trumpeter Swans currently being seen in Minnesota are not yet "countable", since all such individuals are presumed to have originated from recent releases by the Minnesota D.N.R. and other local agencies, and this population is not yet "established" in the wild.)

The following records were noted on July-December 1991 and found Acceptable:

Curve-billed Thrasher, 4-9 May 1991, Eden Prairie, Hennepin Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:150-151).

Western Sandpiper, 21 May 1991, Agassiz N.W.R., Marshall Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:196-197).

Western Tanager, 11 May 1991, near Lake City, Goodhue Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:203).

Say's Phoebe, 1 May 1991, near Crookston, Polk Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:198-199).

Red-throated Loon, 1 July 1991, Stoney Point, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:210).

Plegadis, sp., 14 July 1991, near Wheaton, Traverse Co. (vote 7-0).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 15 July 1991, Ramsey, Anoka Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:208).

White-faced Ibis, 20 May 1991, near Morristown, Rice Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:206).

Ross' Goose, 28 March 1991, near Wheaton, Traverse Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:157-158).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 19 July 1991, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:199).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 10-11 July 1991, near Dawson, Lac Qui Parle Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:277).

Clark's Grebe, 27 July - 10 August 1991, Lake Traverse, Traverse Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:220-224).

Ruff, 31 July 1991, Carlos Avery W.M.A., Anoka Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:280).

Baird's Sparrow, 19 June - 9 July 1991, Roseau River W.M.A., Roseau Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:284-285).

Ferruginous Hawk, 24 July 1991, Felton prairie, Clay Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:279).

Black-throated Gray Warbler, 31 August 1991, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:272-273).

Fork-tailed Flycatcher, 6 September 1991, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 10-0; *The Loon* 63:217-220).

Pacific Loon, 22-24 September 1991, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:280-281).

Sprague's Pipit, 25 May 1991, Badoura Twp., Hubbard Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 62:284).

White-eyed Vireo, July-August 1991, Reno, Houston Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 64:50-52).

Rock Wren, 26 September 1991, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. (vote 6-1; *The Loon* 63:282).

Black-legged Kittiwake, 26 October 1991, Tofte, Cook Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:279).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 4-22 October 1991, Knife River, Lake Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:278).

Red-throated Loon, 1-2 October 1991, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:273).

Mississippi Kite, 30 August 1991, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:282-283).

Lesser Black-backed Gull, 26-29 October 1991, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:275-276).

Baird's Sparrow, 1 June 1991, Felton prairie, Clay Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 63:275).

King Rail, 24 October 1991, near Appleton, Swift Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 64:64-65).

Vermilion Flycatcher, 13-14 October 1991, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 64:57,58).

White-faced Ibis, 8-26 May 1991, Heron Lake, Jackson Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 64:5-10).

Great Black-backed Gull, 23-30 November 1991, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 64:64,65).

Fieldfare, 3-10 November 1991, near Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 10-0; *The Loon* 63:215-217).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 18-22 October 1991, Lutsen, Cook Co. (vote 7-0).

Anna's Hummingbird, 11 November - 1 December 1991, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 10-0; *The Loon* 63:225-231).

Red Phalarope, 26-28 September 1991, Claremont, Dodge Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 64:67-68).

Glossy Ibis, 8-17 May 1991, Heron Lake, Jackson Co. (vote 10-0; *The Loon* 64:5-10).

Purple Sandpiper, 21-23 November 1991, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 64:56-57).

Iceland Gull, 9-10 November 1991, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 64:59-61).

Iceland Gull, 25 November 1991, Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 64:57,59).

Pacific Loon, 11-21 October 1991, White Bear Lake, Ramsey Co. (vote 7-0; *The Loon* 64:63-64).

The following records were voted on July-December 1991 and found Unacceptable:

Yellow-throated Warbler, 7 May 1991, Rochester, Olmsted Co. (vote 3-4). Because the bird was high in the tree canopy and difficult to see, only a partial description of the underparts was possible. This description mentioned that the upper breast was white, not yellow as it should be in Yellow-throated Warbler; it was also felt the description could fit a female Blackburnian. Also, the identification was largely based on the song heard and described by the observer; however, there was no evidence that the bird seen was actually doing the singing, and, in addition, the song description failed to mention the dropping-in-pitch quality which is characteristic of the Yellow-throated's song.

American Dipper, 2 August 1991, Big Falls, Koochiching Co. (vote 0-7). It was agreed the bird seen may well have been a dipper, especially since the observers had experience with this species and since the habitat was appropriate. However, the entire description only said it was a "small gray bird sitting on a rock". There was no mention of the bird's relative size in comparison with another bird, and nothing was said of its behavior (which is distinctive in a dipper). In addition, no binoculars were used. It was unanimously agreed that such an unusual species should be described much more completely.

Cassin's Finch, 9-11 July 1991, near Dawson, Lac Qui Parle Co. (vote 2-5). Although this bird was carefully studied and extensively described, and though it was agreed it may well have been correctly identified, the majority felt that this identification is so difficult and the species so unusual that even more thorough documentation - including photos and sketches as was the case with the 1987 Duluth record - was desirable. It was

also felt that early July would be an extremely unlikely time for this bird to wander out of range. There were House Finches present at the same feeder for direct comparison and several differences were noted, but it was felt that all the plumage, size and shape differences noted are within the range of variation in House Finch. There was also uncertainty expressed about the sex, age and stage of molt of the bird, so that the features listed which would seem to preclude Purple Finch might possibly not be diagnostic unless these uncertainties were clarified.

Rufous Hummingbird, 5-6 August 1991, Peterson, Fillmore Co. (vote 3-4). The entire description of the bird only mentioned "distinct rust coloration", and the majority felt that such a description was too sketchy to be accepted. Nothing was said about where the rust was located on the bird's plumage nor about what exact color was meant by "rust" (which might simply indicate an immature male Ruby-throated's "golden cast on upperparts", as mentioned in the Geographic field guide). There was also uncertainty about the light conditions: a "full bright sun" was mentioned, but if it were in the observer's eyes it could have given a misleading impression of the bird's actual color.

Black-throated Gray Warbler, 25 August 1991, Lake Elmo, Washington Co. (vote 2-5). There were too many uncertainties about the documentation to accept a third state record, especially that the observer did not have binoculars as he viewed the bird at a distance of 30 feet. Exact details were supposedly seen and described about the bird's eye and bill colors, absence of eye ring, the number of back streaks, the gray rump color and other features which are very difficult if not impossible to see without binoculars at the distance involved.

Great Black-backed Gull, 20 April 1991, Palisade Head Wayside, Lake Co. (vote 1-6). Although it was agreed the identification of this adult gull was probably correct, the observer was unable to see leg color, and the size of the bird was uncertain since no other bird was present for direct size comparison. Therefore, the possibility of Lesser Black-backed was not eliminated.

Blue-winged Warbler, 20 October 1991, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. (vote 3-4). The observers, who are well experienced with this and other warblers, were probably correct in

their identification; however, the majority felt the description was too sketchy to be accepted. The only plumage features mentioned were: "bright yellow breast...blue-gray wings with two whitish wing bars and the green back...black eye stripe". It was felt that such a description could also match Pine Warbler, among other species, and it was curious that only the breast, and not the entire underparts, was said to be yellow.

Pacific Loon, 26 October 1991, Lake Vadnais, Ramsey Co. (vote 2-5). This identification was based on the bird's "dark necklace", "more extensive" gray on the face, and the smaller bill and body size than a nearby Common Loon. However, these features were only briefly and vaguely described and, unless elaborated on, do not preclude Red-throated Loon or a small Common Loon. 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.



Young Wilson's Phalaropes in nest, 14 June 1991, Aitkin Township, Aitkin County. Photo by Warren Nelson.

## The Summer Season

(1 June to 31 July 1991)

Terry Wiens

Following the cool and wet spring of 1991, June was relatively warm. Temperatures were about two to five degrees above average in all regions of the state. Rainfall, however, varied

considerably. All western and most southern regions received above-normal precipitation. Many agricultural regions were declared disaster areas due to wet field conditions and