

Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee

Kim R. Eckert, MOURC Chairman

On 30 November 2001, the Board of Directors of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union approved changing the name of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee (MORC) to the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (MOURC). This Committee had made this request primarily to emphasize that MOURC is a standing committee of the MOU, has always operated under the auspices of the MOU, and is not an independent entity.

Also note that Bruce Fall's term on MOURC ended at the end of 2001, and he was replaced in January by former Alternate Member Philip Chu. Drew Smith was then chosen to replace Phil as an Alternate.

The following records were voted on August – December 2001 and found to be Acceptable:

- Yellow-billed Loon, 4 November 2001, Mille Lacs Lake, Mille Lacs County (record #2001-70, vote 7-0).

Note that only the documentation from the original observers on 4 November was accepted. Although there were reports of this loon by other observers on other days, none of these was substantiated or documented.

- White-faced Ibis, 19 June 2001, near Dexter, Mower County (record #2001-38, vote 7-0).

A photo of the individual confirms the identification as a White-faced.

- White-faced Ibis, 26 April 2001, Spring Lake Township, Scott County (record #2001-40, vote 7-0).

Accepted on the basis of the bird's red iris and the white feathering beginning to show around the base of the bill.

- *Plegadis* ibis, 15 April 2001, near

Rochester, Olmsted County (see Unacceptable record #2001-45).

- *Plegadis* ibis, 17–18 October 2001, near Camden State Park, Lyon County (record #2001-59, vote 7-0).

Field identification of immature ibis as White-faced or Glossy in fall is very difficult, and most will remain and be filed as unidentified *Plegadis*, sp.

- Black Vulture, 28 August 2001, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2001-63, vote 10-0).

All ten MOURC members vote on potential first state records, and this was accepted unanimously as species number 427 on the Minnesota list. The documentation includes clearly identifiable photos.

- Barrow's Goldeneye, 17 November 2001, Reno, Houston County (record #2001-65, vote 7-0).

The documentation of this adult male includes a photo. The observer also made a special effort to make sure the bird was in Minnesota waters, something to consider when finding an unusual species on any river or lake bordering another state.

- Western Sandpiper, 26–27 October 2001, Lake Byllesby, Dakota County (record #2001-69, vote 7-0).

Excellent written descriptions and sketches by three experienced observers results in this being only the fourth accepted state record.

- Pomarine Jaeger, 19 September 2001, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2001-55, vote 7-0).

Jaeger identification is typically difficult, but this individual was an adult with a fully grown tail and seen at relatively close range.

- Long-tailed Jaeger, 5–7 September 2001, Bayport, Washington County (record

#2001-52, vote 7-0).

Also an adult with a fully grown tail, and seen by many observers.

- Little Gull, 16 September 2001, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2001-53, vote 7-0).

This individual was in first-winter plumage. Note there was a juvenile Little Gull reported the same day in Duluth (see unacceptable record #2001-54).

- Black-headed Gull, 6 October 2001, Spirit Lake, Jackson County (record #2001-66, vote 7-0).

Note that all accepted records of this species have been from Jackson County.

- California Gull, 26 May 2001, Fairview Township, Lyon County (record #2001-29, vote 7-0).

Three individuals were seen and photographed, two adults and one second-year immature, but only one of the adults was documented and photographed clearly enough to be accepted. The second adult was also probably correctly identified, but the vote on it was 4-3, with a 5-2 vote needed to accept reports of this species. The identification of immature California Gull is much more difficult, and the vote on this individual was 0-7 (most felt it was probably a Ring-billed Gull).

- California Gull, 22 May 2001, Breckenridge, Wilkin County (record #2001-35, vote 7-0, *The Loon* 74:50-54).

Three subadults were involved, and all three were clearly photographed.

- Sabine's Gull, 16-19 September 2001, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2001-64, vote 7-0).

One or more juveniles were seen by many observers during this time.

- Common Tern, 4 November 2001, Vineland, Mille Lacs County (record #2001-71, vote 6-1).

The most convincing feature indicative of this species was the black wedge seen about halfway out on the upper surface of the primaries. The lone dissenting voter felt that Forster's Tern is not entirely precluded.

- Band-tailed Pigeon, 18-20 October 2001, Golden Valley, Hennepin County (record #2001-60, vote 7-0).

Seen and photographed by many observers.

- Eurasian Collared-Dove, December 2000 - August 2001, Russell, Lyon County (record #2001-13, vote 7-0).

This record was accepted on a second-round vote after the first vote was an inconclusive 4-3; close examination of a photograph shows the diagnostic under tail pattern of this species.

- Eurasian Collared-Dove, 3 July 2001, Renville, Renville County (record #2001-39, vote 7-0).

A good description of the under tail pattern was included in the documentation.

- Eurasian Collared-Dove, June-July 2001, Caledonia, Houston County (record #2001-42, vote 7-0, *The Loon* 74:7-13).

A nesting pair seen by many observers and photographed, representing the first confirmed breeding record of this species in the state.

- Eurasian Collared-Dove, 8-9 September 2001, Jasper, Rock / Pipestone Counties (record #2001-50, vote 7-0).

Seen, heard, and photographed by many observers.

- White-eyed Vireo, 12 May 2001, Bloomington, Hennepin County (record #2001-34, vote 6-1, *The Loon* 74:54-55).

The lone dissenting voter felt the documentation should have mentioned more about the bird's size, its song (it was heard singing, but the song was not described), and plumage.

- White-eyed Vireo, 25-28 October 2001, near Lutsen, Cook County (record #2001-68, vote 7-0).

Seen and photographed by many observers.

- Sprague's Pipit, 21 September 2001, Mendota Heights, Dakota County (record #2001-51, vote 7-0).

Excellent written description and sketches by an experienced observer.

- Yellow-throated Warbler, 11 June - July 2001, Acacia Park Cemetery, Dakota County (record #2001-43, vote 7-0, *The Loon* 73:236-240).

A nesting pair seen, documented, and photographed by many observers. This

represents the first confirmed breeding record in Minnesota, although it is likely the species nested in recent years in Kandiyohi County.

- Yellow-throated Warbler, 24 August 2001, Fort Snelling State Park, Dakota County (record #2001-48, vote 7-0).

This individual might have been one of the nesting adults from nearby Acacia Park Cemetery.

- Black-throated Sparrow, 7 October 2001, Knife River, Lake County (record #2001-67, vote 7-0).

Seen and photographed by many observers.

- Great-tailed Grackle, 12 May 2001, Rochester, Olmsted County (record #2001-41, vote 7-0).

Seen by many observers, but only one of them provided documentation.

- Great-tailed Grackle, 4 April 2001, Black Rush Lake, Lyon County (record #2001-44, vote 7-0).

This represents one of the few records of this species outside of Jackson County.

- Great-tailed Grackle, 17 October 2001, Minneota Township, Jackson County (record #2001-58, vote 6-1).

The lone dissenting voter felt the possibility of Boat-tailed Grackle was not eliminated.

The following records were voted on August–December 2001 and found to be Unacceptable. (It is important to note that an Unacceptable vote on a record only means the provided documentation was not complete or convincing enough to include the sighting in *The Loon* or in the MOU's archives of bird records. An Unacceptable vote does not necessarily mean the observer misidentified the bird.)

- White-faced Ibis, 15 April 2001, near Rochester, Olmsted County (record #2001-45, vote 2-5).

It was unanimously agreed that the digital photograph shows a *Plegadis* ibis. The photo also seems to show reddish color on the facial skin, but such color does not appear on the eye, and it does appear in places elsewhere in the plumage where no red should be. Since the observer

could actually see no color on the facial skin, it was thought the reddish color was an artifact of the camera or computer.

- Mississippi Kite, 28 May 2001, Kasota Prairie, Le Sueur County (record #2001-36, vote 0-7).

The observer, who had no experience with this species, makes a point of stating he clearly saw reddish color on the rump and tail. However, no Mississippi Kite at any age would show such color.

- Mississippi Kite, 28 May 2001, near North Mankato, Nicollet County (record #2001-37, vote 0-7).

The same reddish color was also reported on this individual. It was also thought highly unlikely a single observer could find two individuals of such a rare species on the same day at two different locations.

- Mississippi Kite, 23 September 2001, Brawner Lake, Lyon County (record #2001-56, vote 1-6).

The sketch of the underwing shows black outer primaries, uniformly pale inner primaries and secondaries, and dark gray coverts. However, such a pattern is not consistent with this (or any?) species of raptor. The overall size of this bird as described suggests it was too large to be a Mississippi Kite. Also apparently inconsistent with this species was the bird's aggressive behavior and strong and rapid flight.

- Little Gull, 16 September 2001, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2001-54, vote 2-5).

There was no direct size comparison of this juvenile gull with any other bird. Also the complete wing and tail patterns were not seen or described since the gull was never seen preening or in flight. Numerous observers were present but only one wrote any documentation, and this apparently only from memory a few days later. The identification may well have been correct, but the incomplete description leaves too many doubts.

- California Gull, 26 May 2001, Fairview Township, Lyon County (see Acceptable record #2001-29).

- California Gull, 4 November 2001,

Bloomington, Hennepin County (record #2001-61, vote 1-6).

The identification of this apparent adult was based heavily on its dark iris, but the distance and light conditions at the time were not clearly indicated, suggesting this may well have been a pale-eyed gull, which often appear dark-eyed at a distance. Similarly, the darker mantle color of this gull as described may not have been accurately seen. The inexperience of the observer is also a problem, since his analysis of similar species includes several inaccuracies. Field notes taken at the time of the observation would have strengthened the record.

- Lesser Black-backed Gull, 4 October 2001, near Camden State Park, Lyon County (record #2001-57, vote 2-5).

The leg color of this gull was never seen, which is a key field mark of this species. The mantle is only described as dark gray, but this would also fit California Gull. Also, the overall size is described as about the same as nearby Ring-billed Gulls, which is not consistent with Lesser Black-backed. The mention of "bright white secondaries" in the documentation is equally inconsistent and puzzling.

- Common Tern, 11 June 2001, Lake Byllesby, Dakota County (record #2001-62, vote 1-6).

The observer did not consider or preclude the possibility of this being an Arctic Tern. In addition, the features used to preclude Forster's Tern (bill color and wing vs. tail extension) are only secondary field marks. A more complete description was not possible since the bird was not seen in flight.

- Orange-crowned Warbler, 24 August 2001, Carver Park, Carver County (record #2001-47, vote 2-5).

Although this warbler may have been correctly identified, the description is not complete enough to preclude other species. The observer did not address the possibility of this being an immature female Yellow Warbler, which can appear very similar to an Orange-crowned and would be much more likely in August. Also, the described call note ("stick!")

could be interpreted to fit Yellow Warbler better than Orange-crowned. Reading the documentation another way shows that Palm Warbler would also fit the description.

- MacGillivray's Warbler, 31 August 2001, Cottonwood, Lyon County (record #2001-49, vote 1-6).

The experienced and careful observer took field notes at the time of the observation, and it may well have been correctly identified. In fall, however, field identification of female-plumaged MacGillivray's vs. Mourning warblers is very difficult, and it may not be possible out of range without a specimen, photo, or a banded bird carefully measured. Bold eye-arcs are mentioned, suggesting this may have been a male, but there is no description of blackish lores, which would have been indicative of a MacGillivray's. The call note was described as "oick," but this would actually fit a Mourning Warbler's note better.

- Painted Bunting, 12 May 2001, Cottonwood, Lyon County (record #2001-46, vote 3-4).

This bird was almost certainly correctly identified, since it is hard to confuse a male Painted Bunting with anything else. However, the inexperienced observers only provided a photo in which it is hard to see anything on the bird, and the entire plumage description only mentions blue, green, and "burnt orange" colors being seen without saying where these colors were on the plumage.

The efforts of all those observers who document reports of unusual species are appreciated, whether or not those records are accepted. Accordingly, the Committee acknowledges with thanks those who provided documentation for the records listed in this article: Karl Bardon, Dedrick Benz, Paul Budde, Dave Cahlander (2 records), Philip Chu (4 records), Joel Dahl, Bob Dunlap (2 records), Kim Eckert (3 records), Paul Egeland, Bruce Fall, Colin Gjervold (3 records), Karol Gresser, Chad Heins, Anthony Hertzell (4 records), Bob Janssen (2 records), Paul Jantscher (2

records), Chuck Krulas, Fred Leshner, Jim Lind, Craig Mandel (4 records), Fr. Tom Margevicius, Frank Nicoletti, Thomas Ramsay, Roger Schroeder (6 records), Richard Smaby, Drew Smith (3 records), Jeff Stephenson (3 records), Peder Svingen (15 records), Tom Tustison (2 records).

There were also other observers who

documented records which were not submitted for a vote to the Committee; although these records are not cited here, their documentations are also appreciated. Summary: 40 records voted on; 29 Acceptable (73%), 11 Unacceptable (27%).

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