

Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee

Peder H. Svingen, Chairman

The most recent meetings of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (MOURC) were held 20 April and 10 August 2008. In attendance and voting at one or both of these meetings were Kim Eckert (alternate member), Bruce Fall (alternate), Anthony Hertzell (alternate), Ann Kessen, Jim Lind, Bill Marengo, Jim Mattsson, Drew Smith, Steve Stucker, and Peder Svingen (Chair).

Significant discussion was held at each of these meetings on the 2009 revision of the Checklist of the Birds of Minnesota. MOURC also concluded its review of Hermit Warbler and Townsend's Warbler records (*The Loon* 80:5). Ann Kessen had examined a specimen of the Hermit Warbler from Isanti County, 3 May 1931 (BMNH #7735), and applied the criteria developed by Rohwer and Wood (1998) for determining hybrid characteristics. The resultant index score of .057 was within the expected range for "pure" Hermit Warbler, and the Committee voted not to review this record (vote 1–8). The Committee had previously voted to recirculate one record of Hermit Warbler from 1983 and one record of Townsend's Warbler from 1994.

Also discussed at one or both of these meetings were the origin of a Black-bellied Whistling-Duck in Hennepin County, a potential first state record of the Swainson's Warbler, and identification issues for several recirculated records. Results of these discussions and votes are shown below, along with records voted on by mail January – September 2008.

The following records were Accepted.

- Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Querquedula autumnalis*), 28–30 October 2007, Anderson Lakes, Eden Prairie,



Record 2008-026, Brant, Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Kim Eckert.

Hennepin County (record #2007-085, vote 7–0 on identification, vote 7–3 for natural origin).

Ninth state record; adult, photographed. All ten members discuss and vote on issues of origin. In this case, the majority felt that natural or "wild" origin was more likely, so the record will be filed without an "o" subscript.

- Brant (*Branta bernicla*), 19–27 May 2008, Bayfront Park, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2008-026, vote 7–0).

Sixteenth state record. Adult "Atlantic" Brant (subspecies *brotta*), photographed and seen by many observers.

- Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*), 7 April 2008, Bass Ponds, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Hennepin County (record #2008-009, vote 7–0).



Record 2008-023, White-tailed Kite, 4 May 2008, near Austin, Mower County. Photo by Brian Plath.

- Cinnamon Teal, 26 April 2008, Crookston Wastewater Treatment Ponds, Polk County (record #2008-020, vote 7-0).

- Cinnamon Teal, 22 June 2008, Walter Township, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2008-034, vote 7-0).

All three Cinnamon Teal records were of adult males showing no signs of hybridization with Blue-winged Teal (*A. discors*); the first two were photographed.

- King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*), 28 November 2007, Shingobee Bay, Leech Lake, Cass County (record #2008-001, vote 6-1).

Seventeenth state record. Female-type plumage, videotaped.

- Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*), 16 December 2007 – 13 January 2008, two adult males on Mississippi River, Dakota and Washington counties

(record #2008-003, vote 7-0 for first individual, vote 5-2 for second individual).

Only one adult male was reported at this location after 19 December, leading to speculation that one or both birds may have wandered farther south to Goodhue and Wabasha counties (see below).

- Barrow's Goldeneye, 5 January 2008, adult male at Colvill Park, Red Wing, Goodhue County (record #2008-004, vote 7-0).

- Barrow's Goldeneye, 2 February – 4 March 2008, adult male on Lake Pepin, Wabasha County (record #2008-006, vote 7-0).

- Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*), 20 April 2008, Lake Osakis, Douglas and Todd counties (record #2008-018, vote 7-0).

- White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chibi*), 24-



Record 2008-033, White-winged Dove, 15 June 2008, Grand Portage, Cook County. Photo by Stephen Veit.

25 May 2008, Straight River Marsh, Steele County (record #2008-030, vote 6-1).

Adult in alternate plumage, photographed.

- White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*), 4 May 2008, near Austin, Mower County (record #2008-023, vote 7-0).

Second state record; photographed.

- Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), 3 May 2008, Bass Ponds, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Hennepin County (record #2008-022, vote 5-2).

- Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*), 17 May 2008, near Ortonville, Big Stone County (record #2008-027, vote 7-0).

Twenty-fifth state record. Identifiably photographed.

- Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*), 10 January – 15 March 2008, Duluth,

St. Louis County (record #2008-007, vote 7-0) (*The Loon* 80:171-173).

Fourth state record. Adult in basic plumage, photographed.

- Ross's Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*), 15 December 2007, Mississippi River, Dakota, Ramsey, and Washington counties (record #2008-002, vote 7-0).

Third state record, documented by different observers in each county. Adult in basic plumage, photographed (*The Loon* 80:108-110).

- Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*), 7 January 2008, Canal Park, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2008-005, vote 7-0) (*The Loon* 80:174).

Eleventh state record, and the first for this declining species since December 1991 (*The Loon* 64:3-5). First-cycle, photographed.



Record 2008-028, Burrowing Owl, 22 May 2008, Moorhead, Clay County. Photo by Dale Rehder.



Record 2008-021, Golden-crowned Sparrow, 28 April 2008, Lutsen, Cook County. Photo by David Brisance.

- White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*), 16–22 April 2008, Lutsen, Cook County (record #2008-017, vote 7–0).

- White-winged Dove, 15 June 2008, Grand Portage, Cook County (record #2008-033, vote 7–0).

The 14th and 15th state records. Both were identifiably photographed.

- Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*), 22 May – 7 June 2008, Moorhead, Clay County (record #2008-028, vote 7–0).

Found in the same housing development as last year (**The Loon** 80:9). Photographed.

- Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), 25 April 2008, Artist's Point, Grand Marais, Cook County (record #2008-019, vote 5–2).

- Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*), 30 April 1994, Lac Qui Parle Township, Lac Qui Parle County (recirculated record #2008-011, vote 6–1).

- Hermit Warbler (*D. occidentalis*), 14 May 1983, Yellow Bank River, Lac Qui Parle County (recirculated record #2008-010, vote 5–2 / 6–1).

The above two previously Accepted records were discussed and recirculated

after a subcommittee re-examined Minnesota records of Hermit and Townsend's warblers, and recommended that they be reviewed in light of published information on the frequency of hybridization between *townsendi* and *occidentalis* in the Pacific Northwest.

- Yellow-throated Warbler (*D. dominica*), 25 May 2008, Dodge Nature Center, Dakota County (record #2008-031, vote 7–0).

- Yellow-throated Warbler, 12 July 2008, along St. Croix River near Otisville, Washington County (record #2008-035, vote 7–0).

Identifiably photographed.

- Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*), 28 April – 6 May 2008, Lutsen, Cook County (record #2008-021, vote 7–0).

Second county and fourth state record. Adult, photographed.

- Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*), 21 May 2008, Minnetonka, Hennepin County (record #2008-029, vote 7–0).

- Painted Bunting (*P. ciris*), 13 May 2008, Minnesota Department of Natu-



Record 2008-032, Painted Bunting, 13 May 2008, Lake City, Wabasha County. Photo submitted by Walter Popp.

ral Resources Office, Lake City, Wabasha County (record #2008-032, vote 7-0).

Twenty-first state record. Adult male, photographed.

The following records 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.)

- Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*), 9 April 2008, Eden Prairie, Hennepin County (record #2008-014, vote 1-6).

This intriguing report by an experienced observer emphasized the bird's shape and manner of flight. Unfortunately,

optics were not available and the distance of 0.3 mile precluded detection of this species' diagnostic silvery wing-tip patches.

- Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*), 16 December 2006, St. Paul, Ramsey County (recirculated record #2007-011, vote 1-6).

This previously Accepted record from the St. Paul Christmas Bird Count was recirculated after concerns were raised about the identification. The more likely possibility of Red-shouldered Hawk (*B. lineatus*) was not conclusively eliminated by the submitted description, and it was felt that unequivocal documentation would be needed to confirm Minnesota's first winter record of this species.

- Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*), 27 March 2008, Stillwater, Washington County (record #2008-015, vote 0-7).

The brief description of this vocalizing bird did not include an actual description of the call. The date was more than three weeks earlier than any previous occurrence of Whimbrel in Minnesota. Though even more unlikely, other *Numenius* sp. were not eliminated.

- Mew Gull (*Larus canus*), 13-14 April 2008, Eagle Lake, Blue Earth County (record #2008-016, vote 0-7).

The original observer declined to provide documentation after reviewing his field notes. Meanwhile, other observers arrived with expectations of seeing a Mew Gull, and although it was unclear if everyone saw the same bird, all of the submitted images showed Ring-billed (*L. delawarensis*) and/or Herring (*L. argentatus*) gulls.

- Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), 18 February 2008, near Fairmont, Martin County (record #2008-008, vote 0-7).

Though possibly correctly identified, the brief description of a bird with a "heart-shaped face" and "white speckled underside" was insufficient to eliminate Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*).

- Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), 9 April 2008, Sauk Rapids, Benton County (record #2008-013, vote 2-5).

Field notes were not taken and al-

though the bird was reportedly seen from a distance of only ten feet for four or five minutes, the brief description omitted key features of this species, including head and throat color, and contrast between the black tail and upperparts.

- Curve-billed Thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre*), 16 September 2007, Charles Lindberg State Park, Morrison County (record #2008-012, vote 0–7).

Poor quality images were submitted four months after the observation, with a detailed mathematical analysis of the bird's silhouette. Plumage was undescribed and the bird was not heard vocalizing.

- Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*), 14 May 2008, Faribault County (record #2008-025, vote 0–7).

The characteristic tail-pumping behavior of this Federally Endangered species was not noted. The description included "dark black cheeks" which does not fit Kirtland's. Female Magnolia Warbler (*D. magnolia*) was not eliminated by the brief description, and the record was not supported by field notes and/or sketches.

- Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*), 9 May 2008, Lake Vadnais, Ramsey County (record #2008-024, vote 0–10).

Field notes were reportedly taken but could not be found, and the observer had no experience with this species. Similar species were not eliminated by the brief description, which did not include information about its overall shape, bill color, bill shape, leg color, or its wings, rump, and tail.

- Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*), 2 August 2007, near Marietta, Lac Qui Parle County (record #2007-049, vote 1–6).

This previously Accepted record was recirculated after concerns were raised about the lifeless pose of the bird in the submitted image. Field notes, additional images, or written documentation may have assuaged these concerns, but none were submitted.

The efforts of all those observers who

document reports of unusual species are greatly appreciated, whether or not the records are Accepted. Accordingly, the Committee acknowledges with thanks those who provided written or photographic documentation for one or more of the records listed in this article: Leanne Alt, Karl Bardon, Dave Bartkey, Lars Benson, David Brislance, Conny Brunell, Paul Budde, Dave Cahlander, Mary Lynn Cervantes, Phil Chu, Phil Dech, Alyssa DeRubeis, Kim Eckert, Paul Egeland, Bob Ekblad, John Ellis, Bruce Fall, Wayne Feder, John Fitzpatrick, Merrill Frydendall, Caleb Gosiak, Lissa Grover, Dan and Pam Guynn, Timo Havimo, Anthony Hertzell, Sharon Jerabek, Doug Kieser, Jim Lind, Jim Mattsson, Stuart McKernan, Molly Jo Miller, Mark Nieters, Mark Ochs, Sue Plankis, Brian Plath, Dale Rehder, Harvey Sobieck, Sparky Stensaas, Peder Svingen, Kyle TePoel, Stephen Veit, Linda Whyte, and Ben Wieland.

There were many more observers who provided written documentation and/or photographs for records of Regular species which were not voted on by the Committee. Although such records are not cited here, the efforts of these individuals are greatly appreciated. All observers are encouraged to use the "Request for Documentation Form," which can be downloaded from the MOU website or filled out online at <<http://moumn.org/cgi-bin/rqd.pl?op=new>>.

The Committee welcomes questions or comments regarding any record or our procedures in general. Please contact Peder Svingen by e-mail at <mourc@moumn.org>. Summary: 38 records voted on — 28 Accepted (74%), 10 Not Accepted (26%).

Literature Cited

Rohwer, S., and C. Wood. 1998. Three hybrid zones between Hermit and Townsend's warblers in Washington and Oregon. *Auk* 115:284–310.

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