

Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee

Tom Tustison, Chairman

The most recent meeting of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (MOURC) was conducted at the MVNWR Headquarters Building in Bloomington on 28 August 2011. In attendance and voting at this meeting were MOURC members Robert M. Dunlap (alternate), Kim R. Eckert, Bruce A. Fall, Anthony X. Hertzell, James W. Lind, William C. Marenco, Bob Russell (alternate), Andrew D. Smith (alternate), Steve Stucker, and Tom A. Tustison (chair).

The following records from 2010 were voted on by e-mail and were Accepted:

- **Barrow's Goldeneye** (*Bucephala islandica*), 12 November 2010, adult male in Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2010-045, vote 7-0, photographed).

- **Mississippi Kite** (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), 1 September 2010, Hawk Ridge, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2010-036, vote 6-1; *The Loon* 83:142).

- **Ferruginous Hawk** (*Buteo regalis*), 25 October 2010, adult in Walter Township, Lac qui Parle County (record #2010-042, vote 6-1, photographed).

- **Sabine's Gull** (*Xema sabini*), 12 September 2010, Gorder Lake, Stevens County (record #2010-038, vote 7-0).

- **Sabine's Gull** (*Xema sabini*), 20 September 2010, one adult and two juveniles on the Minnesota side of Superior Entry, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2010-039, vote 7-0, photographed).

- **California Gull** (*Larus californicus*), 12 November 2010, adult on the Minnesota side of Superior Entry, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2010-044, vote 7-0, photographed).

- **California Gull** (*Larus californicus*), 23 November 2010, adult on the Minnesota side of Superior Entry, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2010-046, vote 7-0, photographed).

- **Slaty-backed Gull** (*Larus schistisagus*),



Record #2010-042, Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*), 25 October 2010, Walter Township, Lac qui Parle County. Digital photo by Bill J. Unzen.

- 19 December 2010, adult at Canal Park, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2010-048, vote 7-0, photographed; *The Loon* 83:141-142).

- **Pomarine Jaeger** (*Stercorarius pomarinus*), 12 October 2010, two juveniles at Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2010-040, vote 7-0).

- **Eurasian Tree Sparrow** (*Passer montanus*), 22-28 November 2010, adult male at Atwater, Kandiyohi County (record #2010-047, vote 7-0, photographed).

The following records from 2011 were



Record 2010-048, Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*), 19 December 2010, Canal Park, Duluth, St. Louis County. Digital photo by Karl J. Bardon.



Record 2011-012, King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*), 5 May 2011, Duluth, St. Louis County. Digital photo by Jan and Larry Kraemer.

voted on by e-mail and were Accepted:

- **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*), 14 May 2011, two adults in a wetland adjacent to north side of Madelia, Watonwan County (record #2011-018, vote 7-0 for each individual).

- **Brant** (*Branta bernicla*), 9 April 2011, southwest of Herman, Grant County (record #2011-009, vote 7-0). This bird was documented as an adult *brota* which may be of consequence because the species may eventually be split.

- **King Eider** (*Somateria spectabilis*), 5 May 2011, immature male at St. Louis Bay, Park Point Recreation Area, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2011-015, vote 7-0).

- **Barrow's Goldeneye** (*Bucephala islandica*), 27 February – 5 March 2011, adult male at Swan Park, Monticello, Wright County (record #2011-004, vote 7-0; **The Loon** 83:141).

- **Barrow's Goldeneye** (*Bucephala islandica*), 8 April 2011, adult male at Park Point Recreation Area, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2011-008, vote 7-0).

- **Glossy Ibis** (*Plegadis falcinellus*),

9 May 2011, adult in alternate plumage in Preston Township, Fillmore County (record #2011-016, vote 7-0, photographed).

- **Black Vulture** (*Coragyps atratus*), 11 May 2011, North Oaks, Ramsey County (record #2011-017, vote 7-0, photographed and videotaped).

- **Mississippi Kite** (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), 6 June 2011, Lake Girard Park, Bloomington, Hennepin County (record #2011-025, vote 7-0).

- **Ferruginous Hawk** (*Buteo regalis*), 21 March 2011, Section 33, adult light morph at Garfield Township, Lac qui Parle County (record #2011-006, vote 6-1, photographed).

- **Gyrfalcon** (*Falco rusticolus*), 5 January 2011, adult gray morph along county roads 66 and 69 in Hantho Township, Lac qui Parle County (record #2011-001, vote 7-0, photographed).

- **Gyrfalcon** (*Falco rusticolus*), 10 January 2011, Manganika Creek, south of Virginia, St. Louis County (record #2011-003, vote 7-0).

- **Whooping Crane** (*Grus americana*) 30 May 2010, Newfolden area, Marshall County, (record 2010-021, vote 10-0). Origin



Record 2011-016, Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), 9 May 2011, Preston Township, Fillmore County. Digital photo by Jerry Pruett.



Record 2011-012, Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*), 28 April 2011, Duluth, St. Louis County. Digital photo by Jan and Larry Kraemer (also see page 143).

Vote was to unanimously Accept as a wild bird.

- **Laughing Gull** (*Leucophaeus atricilla*), 28–29 April 2011, adult in alternate plumage at the Park Point Recreation Area, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2011-012, vote 7–0, photographed on both dates).

- **Laughing Gull** (*Leucophaeus atricilla*), 3 May 2011, Eggert Lake, Montgomery, Le Sueur County (record #2011-014, vote 7–0).

- **California Gull** (*Larus californicus*), 13 April 2011, adult in alternate plumage at Clear Lake, Stevens County (record #2011-010, vote 5–2). Dissenting members commented that the submitted photographs did not clearly depict mantle shade and soft parts color.

- **California Gull** (*Larus californicus*), 23 April 2011, Sections 29 and 20, Perry Township, Lac qui Parle County (record #2011-011, vote 7–0). Two adults in alternate plumage were voted on separately and both Accepted.

- **Band-tailed Pigeon** (*Patagioenas fasciata*), 22–26 May 2011, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2011-023, vote 7–0, photographed).

- **Barn Owl** (*Tyto alba*), 1 April 2011, sec-

tions 25/36 Walter Township and section 30, Perry Township, Lac qui Parle County (record #2011-007, vote 7–0, photographed; **The Loon** 83:143).

- **Burrowing Owl** (*Athene cunicularia*), 18–19 May 2011, Clow Township, Kittson County (record #2011-021, vote 7–0).

- **Clark's Nutcracker** (*Nucifraga columbiana*), 11 March 2011, Section 9, Hantho Township, Lac qui Parle County (record #2011-005, vote 7–0, photographed).

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



Record 2011-023, Band-tailed Pigeon (*Patagioenas fasciata*), 26 May 2011, Duluth, St. Louis County. Digital photo by Anne Karakatsoulis.



Record 2010-047, Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*), 22–28 November 2010, Atwater, Kandiyohi County. Digital photo by Richard Phillips.

similar species.)

• Taiga Bean-Goose (*Anser fabalis*), 14 April 2010, Section 12, Arena Township, Lac qui Parle County (record #2010-034, vote 0–10). Two outside experts were consulted, and only one provided comment. It was Mr. Martin Reid's opinion that the possibility of a Greater White-fronted Goose could not be conclusively eliminated from consideration and a number of Committee members agreed with this view. There was no effort made by the observer to eliminate an immature Greater White-fronted Goose or an escaped domestic. The apparent height differential in a digital photo between nearby Greater White-fronted Geese and the purported Bean-Goose was determined to be an artifact of perspective as the bird in question is standing on elevated ground in alert posture while the Greater White-fronted Geese are relaxed. This was reinforced by measurements of the neck length made directly on the photo. Overall, many members felt that there were inconsistencies between the less-than-adequate photos and the written documentation, especially differences in the bill. The record was unanimously Not Accepted as Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose (*A. fabalis serrirostris*). The record was also unanimously

Not Accepted as a Bean-Goose sp.

• Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*), 30 April 2011, Albert Lea Lake, Albert Lea, Freeborn County (record #2011-013, vote 1–6). This record was initially Accepted, vote 5–2. At the 28 August 2011 meeting, a majority decided to reconsider this record. These very experienced observers may have seen a Neotropic Cormorant, but sufficient details are lacking to effectively eliminate all other small cormorants. While the possibility of these birds being small cormorants other than a Neotropic is extremely remote, the Committee has rejected other records based on this same reasoning. Consequently, neither bird was Accepted.

• Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*), 15 May 2011, Carver Park Reserve, Victoria, Carver County (record #2011-019, vote 0–7). Many members agreed that this may have been a Black Vulture, but the description was not adequate for such a rarity. Though the observer indicated the flight differed from Turkey Vultures, that was not clearly described. Other raptors besides Black Vultures have white in the wings. There is no mention of leg color which can be visible at long distances. Also, no mention of the tail size in relation to the feet was given which

would clearly aid in the evaluation.

- Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*), 8 September 2010, eight miles southeast of Warroad on County Road 2, Roseau County (record #2010-037, vote 2–5, photographed). Many members thought the photo and description were insufficient to rule out the more probable Red-tailed Hawk. The observer also had reservations about the bird and thought it possibly may have been a Red-tailed Hawk.

- Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*), 15 May 2011, Carver Park Reserve, Victoria, Carver County (record #2011-020, vote 0–7). The description is far too brief and casual for a species that's often involved in misidentifications in Minnesota. Several members felt that the more likely "Krider's" Red-tailed Hawk was not eliminated by the description.

- Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*), 8 January 2011, Cass County (record #2011-002, vote 0–7). Behavior, more than the field marks, is convincing, but this is insufficient. Size is subjective without direct comparison. The description is somewhat vague and inconclusive. Also, an observation from a moving car can be difficult depending on glass angle, speed etc. This record was only reluctantly Not Accepted by several members.

- Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*), 15 October 2010, Superior Entry, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2010-041, vote 1–6). This recirculated Record 2010-041 Long-tailed Jaeger, St. Louis County, was split into two separate sightings: (15 October 2010, vote 4–3, and 17 October 2010, vote 5–2) and was discussed at the 28 August 2011 Committee meeting. After lengthy debate, the record was voted on again. The consensus was that there was too much supposition without enough actual detail to support a positive vote for either bird. Neither bird was Accepted.

- Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*), 30 October 2010, about one mile south of Judge C.R. Magney State Park entrance on state highway 61, Cook County (record #2010-049, vote 0–10). A significant number of members thought that this experienced birder may have actually seen a Cave Swallow. However, the consensus was that there were insufficient details to Accept as a first state record.

- Prairie Warbler (*Setophaga discolor*), 20

May 2011, Courthouse County Park, St. Mary Township, Waseca County (record #2011-022, vote 0–7). The description is quite casual and could have been much more informative given the closeness of the bird and the length of the observation.

- Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*), 28 May 2011, near Hamden Slough headquarters, Becker County (record #2011-024, vote 2–5, adult male). The observer seems to have limited experience with only one other observation. He does not seem to consider possible hybridization. This might well have been a Lazuli, but the documentation falls short of what is expected for this species.

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: Josh Anderson, Nick Anich, David A. Bartkey, Conny M. Brunell, John Cyrus, Robert M. Dunlap, Kim R. Eckert, Steve L. Falkowski, Susan Felege, Frank Gosiak, Janet C. Green, Chad Heins, Paul E. Jantscher, Anne Karakatsoulis, Douglas W. Kieser, Jan and Larry Kraemer, Andrew Krenz, Allen Loken, Gabriel Miller, David F. Neitzel, Tom A. Nelson, Jerry Pruett, Brian Ratcliff, Peder H. Svingen, Bill J. Unzen, Garrett Wee, Bob Williams, Christopher Wood, Dale A. Yerger and Tracy Brewer.

Many additional 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: 39 records voted on, 29 Accepted, 10 Not Accepted, 1 Origin Vote.

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