

Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee

Robert M. Dunlap

Following previous chair Tom Tustison's resignation in September, the MOU Board approved Bob Dunlap as new chair of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (MOURC); Tom's many years of service to both the committee and the organization are much appreciated.

MOURC conducted its most recent meeting virtually on 15 December 2024. In attendance and voting at this meeting were members Bob Dunlap (chair), Kimberly Emerson (alternate), Becca Engdahl (regular), Drew Smith (regular), Steve Stucker (regular), Howard Towle (regular), and Josh Watson (alternate). Absent were members Ann Kessen (regular) and Bill Marengo (regular). In accordance with its bylaws on term limits, MOURC reviewed nominations for membership. Following the meeting, MOURC elected Kimberly Emerson as a regular member, replacing Bill Marengo whose term expired at the end of the year. Ben Aguilera and Steve Houdek were elected as alternate members.

The following records were voted on at, or subsequent to, the meeting and were Accepted (note: in general, dates given for each record represent the first and last dates of observation; some records may not have been documented on each intervening date):

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) [Casual], 1–6 August 2024, grain silo near Courtland Bay, Nicollet County (record #2024-036, vote 7–0). Seen by many observers who submitted diagnostic photos to eBird. One observer closely studied the bird's wings and toes and found no evidence of clipping, which supports the likelihood of its provenance from the wild rather than captivity.

Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) [Accidental], 1 November 2024, Crookston Sewage Lagoons, Polk County (record #2024-055, vote 7–0). Diagnostic photos. Ninth state record.

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) [Casual], 19 October – 15 November 2024, Lino

Lakes, Anoka County (record #2024-059, vote 7–0). Diagnostic photos of a female-type.

Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) [Accidental], 29–31 May 2021, Lino Lakes, Anoka County (record #2021-044, vote 9–1). Fourth state record. This record was voted on and accepted by MOURC in 2021, but erroneously omitted from subsequent Proceedings articles. All ten members voted on this record because all records were being reassessed at the time, and it was unclear which was Minnesota's first.

Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*) [Accidental], 12 September 2023, Agassiz N.W.R., Marshall County (record #2023-137, original vote 4–3, recirculated vote 6–1). In discussing this recirculated record and in consultation with the USF&WS, it was determined the first half of September is within a reasonable time frame for birds departing the Wood Buffalo population in northern Alberta and southern Northwest Territories, from where this individual is presumed to have originated.

Whooping Crane, 5 October – 11 November 2024, northwest of Rothsay, Wilkin County (record #2024-051, vote 7–0). Diagnostic photos of two individuals. One of the birds was banded, and that bird is known to be a member of the Wood Buffalo National Park flock, a wild population which breeds in Canada and winters in Texas. On 1 October 2024, it left Wood Buffalo and arrived in the Rothsay area on 5 October (*vide* Aaron Pearse, U.S. Geological Survey). The other, unbanded individual with which it was associating undoubtedly belongs to the same population.

Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) [Casual], 6–10 October 2024, Old Cedar Ave. Bridge, Bloomington, Hennepin County (record #2024-046, vote 7–0). Diagnostic photos.

Red Phalarope, 17–22 October 2024, Silver Creek Reservoir, Olmsted County (record #2024-050, vote 7–0). Diagnostic photos.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) [Accidental], 22 August 2024, Angus-Oslo



Arctic Tern, 10 October 2024, White Bear Lake, Washington County. Photo by Darcy Pinotti.

#4 Flood Control Project, Polk County (record #2024-037, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos of an adult.

Ancient Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*) [Accidental], 28 November 2024, Bayside Park, Silver Bay, Lake County (record #2024-061, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos.

Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) [Casual], 5 November 2023, Superior Entry, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2023-139, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos of a first-cycle individual.

Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) [Casual], 5-6 September 2024, 540th Ave. near South Walnut Lake, Faribault County (record #2024-040, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos of a juvenile.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) [Accidental], 7-13 October 2024, White Bear Lake, Ramsey and Washington counties (record #2024-047, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos.

Arctic Tern, 2-8 November 2024, Mille Lacs Lake, Aitkin and Crow Wing counties (record #2024-056, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos.

Neotropic Cormorant (*Nannopterum brasilianum*) [Casual], 10 June 2024, French Lake, Hennepin County (record #2024-029, vote 5-2). Although the documentation omitted

finer details of the bird's identification and the photos provided are marginal in quality, the photos clearly show a smaller cormorant with a shorter bill and longer tail in relation to nearby DCCO which most members felt was sufficient in confirming the identification.

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) [Casual], 2 May 2024, Salt Lake, Lac qui Parle County (record #2024-032, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos of an adult.

Little Blue Heron, 4 May 2024, Jackson, Jackson County (record #2024-033, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos of an adult.

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) [Casual], 22 September 2024, Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Blue Earth County (record #2024-065, vote 6-1). Second-hand documentation includes the original observer's field notes and sketch which provided adequate support for the identification.

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) [Casual], 31 August 2024, Willmar, Kandiyohi County (record #2024-038, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) [Casual], 4 September 2023, Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, Duluth, St. Louis County (record



Rufous Hummingbird, 13 November 2024, Lino Lakes, Anoka County. Photo by Darcy Pinotti.



Whooping Cranes, 23 October 2024, Rothsay, Wilkin County. Photo by Anthony X. Hertzell.

#2023-111, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos of a subadult.

Mississippi Kite, 4 September 2024, Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2024-039, vote 6-1). Although the bird was viewed from a considerable distance and no photos were obtained, the hawkwatchers who observed it provided an adequate description of this individual that includes mention of the bird capturing a dragonfly in flight.

Mississippi Kite, 7 September 2024, North Mankato, Nicollet County (record #2024-041, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos of a juvenile.

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) [Accidental], 20 April 2024, lodge near Gunflint Trail, Cook County (record #2024-067, vote 7-0). Bird was discovered alive but found deceased the following day when diagnostic photos were taken. Specimen delivered to the Bell Museum and given accession number MMNH #51667.

Burrowing Owl, 19 August 2024, Touch the Sky Prairie, Northern Tallgrass Prairie N.W.R., Rock County (record #2024-064, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos show at least one individual and possibly a second directly behind it.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) [Accidental], 8 September 2024, UMD Campus, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2024-042, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos of a juvenile. Third state record.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) [Casual], 13 October 2024, Two Harbors, Lake County (record #2024-049, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 27 October – 10 November 2024, Grand Marais, Cook County (record #2024-054, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos.

Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) [Casual], 26–28 October 2024, Lakeview Cemetery, Two Harbors, Lake County (record #2024-053, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos.

Sage Thrasher, 7 November 2024, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2024-057, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos.

Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*) [Casual], 24 October 2024, 155th Avenue, east of Hanska, Brown County (record #2024-052, vote 7-0). Convincing description of an adult male.

Black Rosy-Finch (*Leucosticte atrata*) [First state record], 4 May 2024, Silver Bay, Lake County (record #2024-010, vote 9-1). This bird appeared briefly at a feeder and thankfully the homeowner was able to capture a series of diagnostic photos, furnishing Minnesota's first state record (*The Loon* 96:104–105). The lone dissenter argued that plumage color in May might be misleading as feathers are generally worn by then following the single annual molt in fall. The committee discussed provenance of this bird and determined that it likely arrived here naturally; although this represents only the second vagrant east of the Rocky Mountains (of which MOURC is aware) following a 1989 record in Missouri, the species' migratory behavior suggests that vagrancy is possible.

Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) [Casual], 19 May 2024, Two Harbors, Lake County (record #2024-034, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos of an adult male.



Ash-throated Flycatcher, 8 September 2024, Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Peter Mundale.

Lark Bunting, 12 September 2024, Park Point, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2024-043, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos of a female-type.

Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Setophaga nigrescens*) [Casual], 9-26 November 2024, Mississippi West Regional Park, Ramsey, Anoka County (record #2024-058, vote 7-0). Diagnostic photos of an adult male.

Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) [Casual], 21 September 2024, Duluth, St. Louis County (record #2024-044, vote 5-2). Although both Black-headed and Rose-breasted grosbeaks in fall present difficult identification challenges, enough members felt that the observer adequately ruled out Rose-breasted Grosbeak based on the following three characteristics: 1) narrow flank streaking that did not continue uninterrupted across the breast, 2) a bicolored bill with a dusky gray upper mandible and pinkish lower mandible, and 3) a pale buff supercilium that contrasted less with the cheek patch.

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 when identifying or documenting these and similar species.)

Long-tailed Jaeger, 18 September 2023, Pipestone W.T.P., Pipestone County (record #2023-138, vote 3-4). While the photos clearly show an immature jaeger, most committee members felt that the images were too distant to be diagnostic for Long-tailed Jaeger and the accompanying description of the bird did not adequately rule out Parasitic Jaeger.

Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*) [Accidental], 30 November 2024, Lake Bemidji, Beltrami County (record #2024-062, vote 0-7). The identification of this individual was based largely on the bird's size, as well as its bill shape and color. Unfortunately, the quality of the photos appears to have been affected by distance and heat shimmer, and none of them were considered diagnostic by the committee for the identifying marks called out in the accompanying description. In addition, the brief mention of plumage details in the description did not include any information that would have helped to eliminate Common Loon.

Correction: The location of record #2023-105 (Scissor-tailed Flycatcher) was erroneously given as Grey Cloud Dunes S.N.A., Washington County (*The Loon* 95:118). The correct location for this record is along Oakgreen Avenue, Cottage Grove, Washington County.

The efforts of all those observers who document unusual species are greatly appreciated, regardless of whether 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. In addition to thanking the many observers who submitted eBird checklists associated with these records, MOURC is especially grateful to those who provided written descriptions for the records listed in this article: MOURC welcomes questions or comments from MOU members regarding any record in particular or the committee's procedures in general. More information including the committee's bylaws and current list of review species can be found at <http://moumn.org/mourc>. Summary: 40 records voted on — 34 Accepted, 2 Not Accepted, 4 Recirculated.

St. Paul, Minnesota.