

## **2007 MINUTES OF THE MONTANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE**

Date: 19 October 2007

Location: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Regional Office, Great Falls

Members present: Dan Casey (Chair), Chuck Carlson, John Carlson, Harriet Marble, Jeff Marks (Secretary), Bob Martinka, Fritz Prellwitz, Mike Schwitters, Terry McEneaney. Absent: Dan Sullivan

Non-members present: Coburn Currier, Alan Nelson

Approval of 2006 Minutes: 10:10

Evaluation of records: We reviewed 66 new reports in 2007, with Committee members submitting votes from two rounds of review in advance of the annual meeting. Highlights included acceptance of one new state bird, Inca Dove; acceptance of a second record for Bell's Vireo, which remains on the Supplemental list because the second record was a single-observer sighting with no other supporting material; the second record for Curve-billed Thrasher; the third record for Hooded Warbler; the first evidence for breeding in Solitary Sandpiper, and the first modern breeding record for Purple Martin. The annual report includes additional information for all records evaluated during the year.

Voting procedures: Members felt that some reports were not discussed adequately at annual meetings. The Committee decided unanimously that members wishing to discuss a particular report at the meeting shall indicate this with a lowercase letter when voting for the report.

Old reports reconsidered: John reviewed notes of Dave Skaar and Chuck Carlson concerning Chuck's Ivory Gull report from May 1974. The correspondence indicates that it's likely that at least one Ivory Gull was present. The record was stricken from MBD last year, and the Committee decided to leave things as they are now in the absence of photographs. The Committee reconsidered a previously accepted record of a flock of 6 male Summer Tanagers (2004-090) reported by Winton Weydemeyer and his brother in 1920. Available information included a copy of Weydemeyer's notes that are stored at the University of Montana and a series of papers on rare birds that he published without mention of the tanagers. The Committee believes that Weydemeyer's identification is questionable, but we need to examine written correspondence of Wright and Skaar in the UM archives. We also evaluated what reports existed for breeding Bohemian Waxwings. Coues's 1874 record was of a juvenile collected at Chief Mountain Lake in Glacier NP. The bird was with a flock of Cedar Waxwings, no other Bohemians apparently being seen. Another record was for a nest with eggs at which no adults were seen. It thus appears that no support exists for breeding Bohemian Waxwings in Montana, and we recommend that the "B" records be stricken from the MBD database.

Montana Bird Distribution database: An MOU was signed by Montana Audubon, Montana Natural Heritage Program, MBRC, and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks in late January/early February 2007. We need a second MBRC member to join Casey on the MBD Executive Committee. Casey will invite Dan Sullivan to will serve on the Executive Committee.

Bylaws discussion: We made two types of changes to the bylaws. The first was to replace "report" with "record" in numerous cases to highlight that a "report" is a submission evaluated by the Committee, whereas a "record" is an accepted report that is added to the MBD database.

The second change was to allow the Chair to serve consecutive terms just like we do for the Secretary. Both changes were accepted by unanimous vote.

Election of Officers: By unanimous vote, Dan Casey and Jeff Marks were elected to new terms as Chair and Secretary, respectively.

Action items: (1) Dan C. will track down and submit to the archives field notes of Rob Fergus for his sighting of a Black-throated Blue Warbler (2007-029); the notes should be in the archives at the Avian Science Center. (2) Jeff will make sure that Eng's record of a pair of Snowy Plovers is listed as a "b." (3) Chuck will make a thorough search of his home for photos of the possible Ivory Gull. (4) Dan will write up the Blue-headed Vireo report for the Giant Springs bird seen 18-19 October (2008-001). (5) Bob will look into digitally scanning the original reports and supporting material that currently exist only in hard copy the MBD archives. (7) Jeff will revise the contacts list and send to everyone; inform all observers who submitted reports for this round of the Committee's decisions on said reports; and post the minutes, revised bylaws, and report on the Montana Audubon Web site.

Adjournment: 14:50

Our next meeting is scheduled for Great Falls on 24 October 2008

Submitted by: Jeff Marks, Secretary, 23 October 2007

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## **2006 MINUTES OF THE MONTANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE**

Date: 27 October 2006

Location: Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks Regional Office, Great Falls

Members present: Dan Casey (Chair), Chuck Carlson, John Carlson, Jeff Marks (Secretary), Bob Martinka, Fritz Prellwitz, Dan Sullivan, Mike Schwitters.

Absent: Harriet Marble, Terry McEneaney

Non-members present: Susan Lenard, John Nordrum, Alan Nelson

Approval of 2005 Minutes: 10:12

Evaluation of records: We reviewed 64 new reports in 2006, with Committee members submitting their votes from two rounds of review to the Secretary in advance of the annual meeting. Highlights included acceptance of three new state birds: Iceland Gull, Blue-winged Warbler, and Curve-billed Thrasher. The first two species had been on the Supplemental List on the basis of previous reports, and the thrasher was the first report for the state. We also accepted the second record for Hooded Warbler, the third records for Curlew Sandpiper and Yellow-throated Vireo, and the first breeding record for Lesser Goldfinch. New records for Dickcissel in 2006 resulted in removal of the species from the Review List (i.e., we now have 20 or more accepted records). The annual report includes additional information for all records evaluated during the year.

Old reports reconsidered: The Committee reconsidered a report for a Black-legged Kittiwake (2004-094) that had been rejected in 2004 and again rejected it. The Committee unanimously

decided to reject the two records of Bewick's Wren flocks reported for western Montana in August 1973. No write-ups are available for these reports, and the habitat and number of birds make these records highly suspect. We also decided that during our 2007 deliberations, we will reconsider a previously rejected report of a Gray Flycatcher seen near Henderson in June 1990.

Bylaws discussion: We made three changes to the bylaws. In section III, second sentence of paragraph one, delete "that is maintained by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks." In section IV(B)(e), strike the final sentence "Each Committee member will be assigned....." With regard to Secretarial duties, change section IV(D)(c) to read "Insure that all original material noted in Part (b) above is returned to the archives at Montana Audubon, or to respective museums from which specimens were borrowed, immediately after each meeting at which the material is used, and make sure that all accepted records have been added to the Montana Bird Distribution database within 3 months of the annual meeting."

Review List: This list contains species with fewer than 20 accepted records for the state, and for which a rare bird report accepted by the Committee is required before the record can be entered into the MBD database. It also identifies exceptions for which rare bird reports are not needed for parts of the state where the species in question is known or suspected to occur regularly. The Committee voted unanimously to broaden the area excepted for reports of Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Philadelphia Vireo, and Gray-cheeked Thrush such that no reports are required for sightings east of 108°W longitude, and of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker such that no reports are required for sightings from LLs 10, 11, and 12. We also voted to narrow the exception area for Mew Gull to QLLs 2D and 14B and to remove all exceptions for Glaucous-winged Gull (i.e., all reports now require a rare bird report).

New committee members: During the year we voted unanimously via e-mail to add Bob Martinka (Helena) and Mike Schwitters (Choteau) to the Committee, which now stands at 10 members.

Montana Bird Distribution database: The Committee will become a formal partner in Montana Bird Distribution and as such will review the draft MOU among Montana Natural Heritage Program, Montana Audubon, and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Action items: (1) Committee will review the Montana Bird Distribution MOU and get comments to Casey by 10 November. (2) Committee should revisit previous reports of Iceland Gulls, including several with photos; these reports have not been accepted, or were previously accepted and later removed from the database. (3) Marks will examine and photograph sapsucker specimens and report to the Committee so that a final decision can be made on report 2006-059. (4) Marks will request a report from Drew Thate for a Hooded Warbler he observed in 2002. (5) Casey will xerox the 1990 report of Gray Flycatcher and mail to the Committee. (6) Marks will contact all observers to tell them our decisions on their reports. (7) Marks will redesign the rare bird report and distribute to the Committee for approval.

Acknowledgments: We thank Matt Heindel, Steve Mlodinow, Bob Mulvihill, Dennis Paulson, Peter Pyle, Don Roberson, and Angus Wilson for commenting on several reports of challenging taxa.

Adjournment: 15:25

Our next meeting is scheduled for Great Falls on 19 October 2007

Submitted by: Jeff Marks, Secretary, 30 October 2006

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## **2005 MINUTES OF THE MONTANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE**

Date: 14 October 2005

Location: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Regional Office, Great Falls

Members present: Dan Casey, Chuck Carlson, John Carlson, Bob Eng, Harriet Marble (Chair), Jeff Marks (Secretary), Fritz Prellwitz, Dan Sullivan.

Absent: Terry McEneaney

Non-members present: Alan Nelson and Mike Aderhold

Approval of 2004 Minutes: 10:05

Evaluation of records: In accordance with our Bylaws, Committee members submitted their votes to the Secretary in advance of the annual meeting. In addition, we voted at the meeting on five new reports that arrived in the month prior to the meeting. This enabled us to reach final decisions on all 62 reports received since our 2004 meeting by 12:20. Highlights included final acceptance of two new state birds, Ross's Gull and Eastern Towhee. We also accepted the second records for Yellow-throated Vireo and Curlew Sandpiper, the latter report constituting the first fully documented occurrence of the species in the state (photos and multiple observers), and the second and third records for White-tailed Kite. In addition, Hermit Warbler was added to the Supplemental List, as was the first recent record of a Virginia's Warbler. The annual report includes additional information for all records evaluated during the year.

Old records reconsidered: Whooper Swan was deleted from the Supplemental List because review of video footage taken by Tim Barksdale revealed that most primaries were clipped from the left wing. Ivory Gull was removed from the State List because the observer retracted the original report, and no photo or other documentation is extant. In addition, a previously accepted report of a Laughing Gull (2003-017 in QLL 2D) was stricken from Montana Bird Distribution (MBD) database by unanimous vote after re-evaluation of the submitted report. We also considered but rejected removing from the MBD database two earlier records of "flocks" of Bewick's Wrens reported in 1973.

Bylaws discussion: Based on unanimous vote, change VII(B)(d) to read "The Supplemental List contains species reported only by a single observer (no photo or specimen), or for which only one independent write-up was received, and therefore not yet on the official state list, or those for which the only records represent birds of uncertain origin that may have escaped from captivity, or those for which a hybrid origin cannot be ruled out."

Review List: This list contains species officially considered “rare” (fewer than 20 accepted records for the state), and for which a rare bird report reviewed and accepted by the Committee is required before the record can be entered into the MBD database. It also identifies exceptions for which rare bird reports are not needed for certain parts of the state where the species in question is known to occur regularly. Marks made a motion to broaden the area excepted for reports of Black-throated Green Warbler and Bay-breasted Warbler from quarter-latitude 12B to latitudes 10, 11, and 12. Motion seconded by Casey and carried unanimously.

Election of new officers: Marks motioned that Dan Casey be the Chair for 2006-2007. Seconded by C. Carlson. Motion carried unanimously. J. Carlson motioned that Jeff Marks be elected to another term as Secretary. Seconded by Sullivan. Motion carried unanimously.

New committee members: Within the next month, the Committee will circulate names of potential new members to all members via e-mail. If a consensus emerges, we will vote on a new member.

Adjournment: 14:15. C. Carlson will prepare a report for the Arctic Tern he had at Fort Peck Reservoir on 6 October, and Casey will prepare reports for the Thayer’s Gull and Mew Gull he found on the Missouri River on 13 October.

Our next meeting will occur in Great Falls on 27 October 2006

Submitted by: Jeff Marks, Secretary, 17 October 2005

For information contact Jeff Marks, Secretary, at 503-774-4783 or [jeff17\\_marks@msn.com](mailto:jeff17_marks@msn.com)