

Minutes of the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee: meeting of 18 January 2015

Present: Paul Sweet (Secretary), Josh Engel, Dan Kassebaum, Greg Lambeth, Keith McMullen, Doug Stotz, Geoff Williamson (Vice-Secretary)

This meeting of the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee (the "Committee") was called to order at 9:40am at the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.

Minutes of the 1 December 2012 and 12 January 2014 meetings were approved by unanimous vote.

Josh Engel's and Doug Stotz's terms as IORC members were to expire at the conclusion of this meeting. Geoff Williamson nominated both to serve another three year term and indicated that both individuals had expressed willingness to serve another term. No other nominations were made. Both individuals were elected by unanimous vote to serve terms from January 2015 to January 2017. At the conclusion of this new term, Doug Stotz would be eligible to serve another term, as his expiring term was a partial term. Doug Stotz indicated that he has presently no intention to serve an additional term beyond 2017, and pointed out that the Committee would be well-served by fresh perspectives.

It was noted that Dan Kassebaum's and Keith McMullen's terms will expire at the end of 2015. Dan will not be eligible to serve another term as this is his second. Doug Stotz expressed the view that replacing Dan with someone who resides away from the Chicago area and preferably in the southern portion of the state would help maintain geographic diversity of membership.

The election of Secretary was taken up next. Paul Sweet reaffirmed per his earlier communication to the Committee that his time commitments on other projects led him to decide to not seek another year term as Secretary. Josh Engel nominated Geoff Williamson to be Secretary. There were no other nominations, and Geoff was elected Secretary by unanimous vote.

With Geoff Williamson's election to the Secretary position, his position as Member was now vacant. Geoff Williamson nominated Paul Sweet to fill the remainder of this term. There were no other nominations, and by unanimous vote Paul Sweet was elected to complete this 2014-2016 term. This being a partial term, the Committee noted that Paul would be eligible to serve two complete terms following the conclusion of this one.

After discussion about suitability, the next Annual Meeting was scheduled to occur during the weekend preceding Martin Luther King Day in 2016. The dates of this meeting would thus be either 16 or 17 January 2016.

A subcommittee was established ("Archives Subcommittee") for the purpose of (1) defining Committee standards and policy for the maintenance of archives to achieve the purpose noted in Section II.B of the Bylaws, including (a) what is archived for each record, (b) how material is to be archived (paper, electronic, web-based, etc.), both going forward and with respect to existing materials, (c) the accessibility of archives to bird students, and (d) a proposal for a Section to add to the Bylaws

concerning archives, if deemed appropriate; and (2) reviewing the contents of the extant archives, assessing its condition with respect to the subcommittee's proposed policies, and recommending Committee action to address any shortcomings in the current condition of the archives. The membership of the Archives Subcommittee is Greg Lambeth (chair) and Doug Stotz. The subcommittee will report its findings to the Committee in a written report no later than 1 June 2015.

A subcommittee was established ("Bylaws Subcommittee") to review the Committee's Bylaws, as required by Section VI.B of the Bylaws. The membership of the Bylaws Subcommittee is Dan Kassebaum (chair) and Paul Sweet. The subcommittee will report its findings to the Committee in a written report, including specific language for proposed changes to the Bylaws, if any, no later than 1 June 2015.

The Committee then considered a number of the records under circulation.

Record 2012.007

The status of the pending decision as to identification to species of the White-crested/Small-billed Elaenia (IORC #2012.007) was discussed. Doug Stotz affirmed that he had drafted a narrative explaining the evidence examined by IORC that was in support of its being a Small-billed Elaenia. This narrative, a link to the compendium of 107 photographs, plus relevant commentary from the Illinois Birders Forum and other public venues, will be sent by Doug Stotz to the following individuals:

1. Bret Whitney
2. Alvaro Jaramillo
3. Tom Schulenberg
4. Dan Lane
5. Mark Robbins
6. Kevin Zimmer
7. Frank Rheindt

Among individuals who had commented thus far with respect to this bird on the public fora, Bret Whitney was the main White-crested Elaenia advocate and Alvaro Jaramillo the main Small-billed Elaenia advocate. Tom Schulenberg had been following the discussion but to date has been silent regarding his opinion. As a member of the South American Bird Check-list Committee, and a former member and chair for six years of the American Birding Association's Check-list Committee, Mark Robbins brings perspective and experience with the impact of this bird as a potential first North American record. Kevin Zimmer has extensive experience with South American birds, and Frank Rheindt has done a lot of taxonomic work on the flycatcher family.

These experts will be asked to respond with (1) what they think the bird is and why they hold that opinion, and (2) whether they think the evidence is sufficient to accept it as a first North American record. The Committee recommended to request a response no later than 31 March 2015, with the request to go out as soon as possible and no later than 23 January 2015. Once the expert opinion is obtained, the record will be circulated to the Committee to address the question of specific identification.

Record 2013.010

The status of information and opinion-gathering regarding IORC record #2013.010 was discussed. Geoff Williamson indicated that he had written to Paul Harvey (resides in Scotland, former member of British Birds Rarities Committee) and João Jara (resides in Portugal, former chairman and member of the Portuguese Rarities Committee) asking for their assessment of the evidence. Dan Kassebaum indicated that he planned to solicit opinions from Bill Rowe, Dave Roemer, Doug Robinson, and Dave Bohlen. Doug Stotz recommended Jon Dunn as someone to contact for an opinion since he would have the perspective of someone looking at this bird as a rarity while also having studied the species in its normal range for the purpose of being better able to identify it as a vagrant in North America.

The sense of the Committee was to have Members vote on the record once the external opinions have been gathered.

Record 2012.038

This record (Painting Bunting, documented by Pete Moxon) is in its first circulation. Four members have submitted votes but three votes are pending. There were questions raised about the record because neither the date nor the location was specified precisely in the documentation. The Secretary will contact Pete Moxon to obtain the date and location information, update the record, and then ask each Member to provide a vote or affirm or change the prior vote.

Records 2013.006 and 2013.021

The Committee was informed that documentation of a Mountain Bluebird in JoDaviess County on 23 February 2013, previously assigned to IORC Record #2013.021, was included with the documentation for IORC Record #2013.006 as all the material pertains to the same individual at the same location. Doug Stotz noted that it was somewhat unusual that the record number displayed 2013 when the bird was first found in 2012. It was noted that the numbering of this record stemmed from the first documentation provided to the committee pertaining to a 1 Feb 2013 sighting.

Record 2011.035

This is the first circulation of a record of Painted Bunting in St. Clair County during June 2011. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Record 2012.040

This is the first circulation of a record of California Gull in Clinton County during September 2012. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Record 2012.041

This is the first circulation of a record of Neotropic Cormorant in Clinton County during September 2012. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Record 2012.042

This is the first circulation of a record of Golden-crowned Sparrow in Wayne County during October 2012. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Records 2012.044 and 2012.045

These are the first circulations of two records of Bohemian Waxwing in Cook County during November and December 2012. Though the waxwings associated with each record were at the same site (Chicago Botanic Gardens), photographs of the birds revealed evidence indicating they were two distinct individuals. The Committee further reviewed the evidence, discussing also how molt might impact the appearance and the expected timing of any molt, and voted. The result for each record was acceptance based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Record 2014.022

This is the first circulation of a record of Black Vulture in Champaign County during May 2014. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Record 2014.023

This is the first circulation of a record of Western Tanager in Cook County during April and May 2014. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Record 2014.024

This is the first circulation of a record of Townsend's Warbler in McLean County during May 2014. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Records 2014.025 and 2014.026

These are the first circulations of two records of Barrow's Goldeneye, one in Kane County and one in Lake County, both during March 2014. The Committee discussed plumage characters visible in photographs that supported considering the birds involved as different individuals. The Committee further reviewed the evidence and voted. The result for each record was acceptance based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Record 2014.027

This is the first circulation of a record of Bewick's Wren in Brown County during May 2014. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Record 2014.028

This is the first circulation of a record of Black Vulture in Sangamon County during March 2014. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Record 2014.029

This is the first circulation of a record of Eurasian Wigeon in Fulton County during April 2014. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Record 2014.030

This is the first circulation of a record of Fork-tailed Flycatcher in Kane County during May 2014. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Record 2014.031

This is the first circulation of a record of Little Gull in Grundy County during March 2014. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Record 2014.032

This is the first circulation of a record of Snowy Plover in Fulton County during April 2014. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E. Members commented that the record would be more complete were written documentation obtained from one or more observers, and were better quality photographs also included.

Record 2015.001

This is the first circulation of a record of an Ivory Gull in Adams County during 2-9 Jan 2015. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Record 2013.018

This record of Glossy Ibis in Grundy County during May 2013 has yet to have its first circulation completed, with one vote still outstanding. The evidence was displayed during the meeting; however, the remaining vote will be submitted later.

Record 2011.036

Dan Kassebaum presented to the Committee a photograph submitted as one of a California Gull at Carlyle Lake in Clinton County taken 5 Feb 2011. This is the first circulation of this record. After reviewing the evidence, not all Members voted. Some requested further written detail and other photographs if such are available. The record's first circulation is suspended while this evidence is solicited.

Record 2013.062

Dan Kassebaum presented to the Committee a photograph submitted as one of a California Gull at Carlyle Lake in Clinton County during October 2013. This is the first circulation of this record. After reviewing the evidence, all but one Member voted. This record remains in its first circulation pending this last vote.

Record 2013.063

Dan Kassebaum presented to the Committee photographs submitted as being of a California Gull seen both at Rend Lake in Franklin County and at Carlyle Lake in Clinton County during December 2013 and January 2014. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Record 2014.034

Dan Kassebaum presented to the Committee photographs submitted as being of a Mexican Mallard at Carlyle Lake in Clinton County in March 2014. This is the first circulation of the record. After reviewing the evidence, all but one Member voted. This record remains in its first circulation pending this last vote.

Record 2014.035

Dan Kassebaum presented to the Committee photographs submitted as being of a Neotropic Cormorant at Carlyle Lake in Clinton County in April 2014. This is the first circulation of the record. After reviewing the evidence, all but two Members voted. This record remains in its first circulation pending these last two votes.

Record 2014.036

Dan Kassebaum presented to the Committee photographs of the Sage Thrasher found by Doug Stotz in Putnam County in December 2014. This is the first circulation of the record. After review of the photographs, the Committee voted, and the result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E.

Record 2014.033

Dan Kassebaum presented to the Committee photographs of a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher X Western Kingbird at American Bottoms in Monroe County in July 2014. This is the first circulation of the record. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of seven A-E. Several Members noted that this individual may be an F2 hybrid.

Record 2014.017

This is the first circulation of a record of Ash-throated Flycatcher in Sangamon County during September. The Committee reviewed the evidence and voted. The result was acceptance of the record based on photographic evidence, with a vote tally of six A-E and one A-S.

Record 2010.029

The Committee discussed a Field Museum specimen (FMNH #472922) identified as a Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher in a paper by Michael Baumann et al.¹ and submitted by Michael Baumann to the Committee as such. This specimen was a building-strike casualty in Chicago in 2010 and was identified post-collection as a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. The morphological feature studied in the paper

¹ M.J. Baumann, S.C. Galen, N.D. Pederson, and C.C. Witt, "Simple technique for distinguishing Yellow-bellied Flycatchers from Cordilleran and Pacific-slope Flycatchers," *Journal of Field Ornithology*, vol. 85, no. 4, pp. 391-396, 2014.

associated this individual with the Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher complex rather than Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, and it was the one exception among all 113 museum specimens examined in the authors' study where the morphological feature's indication to either Yellow-bellied Flycatcher or to Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher deviated from the museum labelling. Also, the study's analysis of mtDNA sequences associated FMNH #472922 with Pacific-slope Flycatcher. The authors, however, noted the following.

Considering that these two species recently diverged, overlap in distribution, and are geographically variable in genetics and vocalizations, it cannot be assumed that their mtDNA haplotypes provide certain species identification. We assigned FMNH:Bird:472922 to the Western Flycatcher complex, but refrain from more specific identification due to current uncertainty regarding species limits in this group.

The nature of the mtDNA analysis and how to interpret its results was discussed within the Committee. Members were then asked to vote on the record, and to indicate in their vote their opinion regarding both identification to Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher and identification to Pacific-slope Flycatcher. All votes but one were recorded; the record remains in its first circulation pending this vote.

Record # unassigned

Dan Kassebaum showed to the Committee photographs of an apparent Bullock's Oriole said to be taken some time recently at a location in Massac County. When the date and location are obtained and verified, the record will be circulated for consideration as a first state record.

The matter of electing a Vice-Secretary for 2015 was raised. Doug Stotz nominated Greg Lambeth for the position, and Greg indicated his willingness to serve. He was elected by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM.