

## Minutes of the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee: meeting of 12 February 2017

Present: Geoff Williamson (Secretary), Josh Engel, Bob Fisher (Alternate), Matt Fraker, Keith McMullen, Doug Stotz, Paul Sweet

Absent: Greg Lambeth

This meeting of the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee (the "Committee") was called to order at 9:29 AM at the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago. There being seven voting members present (including one alternate member), quorum was met to transact business.

Bob Fisher moved and Paul Sweet seconded to approve the minutes of the 16 January 2016 meeting. They were approved by unanimous consent.

In the absence of Vice-Secretary Greg Lambeth, Josh Engel was appointed to perform all necessary duties of Vice-Secretary for the duration of this Annual Meeting.

Acting Vice-Secretary Josh Engel conducted elections of Members for the 2017-2019 terms. Nominees were Walter J. Marcisz (nominated by Keith McMullen), Adam Sell (nominated by Paul W. Sweet), and Paul W. Sweet (nominated by Geoff Williamson). Voting members voted by secret ballot, and the tally of votes indicated the election of Walter J. Marcisz (2017-2019, 1st term) and Paul W. Sweet (2017-2019, 1st term).

Acting Vice-Secretary Josh Engel conducted the election of Secretary for 2017. The only nominee was Geoffrey A. Williamson (nominated by Paul Sweet), who was then elected.

Geoff Williamson then conducted the election of Vice-Secretary for 2017. The only nominee was Josh Engel (nominated by Geoff Williamson), who was then elected.

The date of the next Annual Meeting was discussed. Suggested dates included the Saturday preceding Martin Luther King Day (13 January 2018) or the Sunday following the IOS Gull Frolic. Full attendance at either date could not be confirmed, so that the scheduling of the next Annual Meeting was postponed to another time.

Geoff Williamson presented a Secretary's report on 2016 activities (attached).

### **Archives Subcommittee report**

The Archives Subcommittee reported on its activities during 2016, and other Members and the Secretary reported on 2016 activities related to IORC's archives. The membership of the Archives Subcommittee during 2016 was Greg Lambeth (chair), Josh Engel, and Doug Stotz. The Subcommittee will continue to be constituted in 2017 with membership of Josh Engel (chair) and Doug Stotz.

The charge of the Archives Subcommittee remains to be (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. Comments by IORC on suggestions for achieving these purposes are noted in the minutes of the 16 January 2016 Annual Meeting.

Josh Engel noted that all photographic material from the archives physically present at the Field Museum had been scanned into electronic form. Paper material has not yet been scanned into electronic form.

Near term goals for the Archive Subcommittee include the following.

- Purchase two hard drives for backing up the electronic archives, one to be stored at the Field Museum and the other to be in the possession of the Secretary. Josh Engel will lead the effort to complete this.
- Hire cloud storage services with sufficient capability to back up the IORC archives and to also meet the needs of other IOS committees (for instance the Ornithological Research and Data Committee). Josh Engel will lead the effort to complete this.
- Begin the process of scanning into electronic archives the paper material held in the Field Museum archives.
- Complete the electronic archiving of all material associated with records during the period with Paul Sweet as Secretary (2013-2014). Geoff Williamson will lead the effort to complete this.
- Begin the electronic archiving of all material associated with records during the period with Doug Stotz as Secretary (a number of years prior to 2013). Doug Stotz and Geoff Williamson will co-lead the effort to complete this.
- Continue archiving material received via the IORC gmail account. Geoff Williamson will lead the effort to complete this.

There was an extensive discussion regarding accessibility to the public of material in the IORC archives. The sense of IORC was that archive material should be made as publicly available as is convenient at as early a time as is convenient, including with respect to records currently undergoing review. The IORC membership directed the Secretary to effect this approach as soon as possible.

This concluded the discussion of the work of the Archives Subcommittee.

### **Bylaws Subcommittee report**

The Bylaws Subcommittee, consisting of Paul Sweet (chair), presented its report. Paul Sweet brought to IORC various proposals and issues regarding amendment of the Bylaws.

1. Doug Stotz moved and Josh Engel seconded that the parenthetical item appearing in Section II.E of the Bylaws be deleted. The motion passed by a vote of seven in favor and zero against.

2. Matt Fraker moved and Paul Sweet seconded that in Section IV.D.(4)(h), the wording “and publish it in *Meadowlark*, preferably with each Annual Report” be replaced with “and make it publicly available.” The motion passed by a vote of seven in favor and zero against.
3. Geoff Williamson moved and Doug Stotz seconded that in Section VII.A.(1), “A.O.U. Checklist” be replaced with “A.O.S. Checklist of North American Birds and its supplements.” Further, should the A.O.S. alter the name of the Checklist during 2017, this Bylaw shall be adjusted to reflect that change. The motion passed by a vote of seven in favor and zero against.
4. Matt Fraker moved and Paul Sweet seconded that Section VII.B.(5) be changed to read “The Secretary will be sure that the Review List is made broadly and publicly available.” The motion passed by a vote of seven in favor and zero against.
5. Matt Fraker moved and Josh Engel seconded that Section VII.C.(3) be deleted. The motion passed by a vote of seven in favor and zero against.
6. Geoff Williamson moved and Paul Sweet seconded that Section VII.F.(1)(c) be changed to “Records that will not be reviewed shall be assigned a record number consisting of the year of initial observation, hyphen, ‘S,’ hyphen, and next available unused number, starting with 001 (and proceeding through 999 if necessary) and then shall be filed in the Suspense File along with the date received.” The motion passed by a vote of seven in favor and zero against.
7. Matt Fraker moved and Doug Stotz seconded that in Section VII.G.(7), the opening wording from “On the first ...” through to “On the second, third, and fourth” be replaced with “On any”. The motion passed by a vote of seven in favor and zero against.

The Committee noted the following areas of additional work for the Bylaws Subcommittee.

1. The Bylaws Committee will draft language to effect the changes suggested in discussion regarding Section VII.A.(2). Briefly, these were to rearrange the eight categories appearing in subsections (a) and (b) with into subsections (a) Regular, (b) Casual, (c) Accidental, (d) Exterpated, and (e) Extinct, with the new (b) and (c) broken into subsections corresponding to Status Codes 0, 1, 2, and 3.
2. The Bylaws Committee will draft language to modify Section VII.(G).(2)(a) to clarify vote categories with respect to type of evidence, how decisions on records adjudicate the type of evidence supported by the record, and how the type of evidence is to be reflected in the official Illinois State List of Birds.

#### **Status of the official Illinois State List of Birds**

The official Illinois State List of Birds was noted as now being up to date with respect to inclusion of species and with agreement of common names, scientific names, family headings, and taxonomic order with respect to the most recent A.O.S. Checklist of North American Birds and its supplements. However, it remains in various places out-of-date with respect to status code and breeding status. Doug Stotz will take the lead on updating the list with respect to status code and breeding status. To facilitate determination of the number of records for each species, Geoff Williamson will enter records from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> IORC reports into the web-accessible database of IORC records and will correct erroneous data entry from the 18th IORC report. This work will be completed by 30 April 2017.

### **Status of the Review List**

Doug Stotz moved and Paul Sweet seconded to delete Prairie Falcon from the Review List. After much discussion, the Committee voted with one in favor and four against, and the motion was defeated.

Doug Stotz moved and Paul Sweet seconded to delete California Gull from the Review List. After much discussion, the Committee voted five in favor and one against, and the motion was approved.

Matt Fraker moved and Josh Engel seconded to add Pacific Loon to the Review List. The Committee voted six in favor and one against, and the motion was approved.

Josh Engel moved and Matt Fraker seconded to add Tricolored Heron to the Review List. The Committee voted seven in favor and zero against, and the motion was approved.

Josh Engel noted that Common Ringed Plover needs to be added to the published Review List. It was also noted that the Review List needs to be placed in proper taxonomic order.

### **Consideration of Bird Records**

#### Record 1984-019

The Committee reviewed this record in order to assess whether it would be possible to make a determination of its identity to species (California Scrub-Jay or Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay), given the recent "split" of the two species involved. Matt Fraker will make an attempt to gather any further information that might be available from other observers at the time. Members will then review the evidence, and if any feel that a case can be made to identify to species, they will submit the argument to the Committee to re-open the file. Otherwise, the record will remain assigned to California/Woodhouse's Jay.

#### Record 2009-033

The Committee reviewed this record in order to assess whether it would be possible to make a determination of its identity to species (Mexican Violetear or Lesser Violetear), given the recent "split" of the two species involved. Based on a review of specimens and identification criteria, the record was resubmitted as a Mexican Violetear, and the first circulation of the resubmission was conducted on site. The record was accepted by a vote of seven A-E(photo).

#### Record 2012-007

Doug Stotz reviewed the status of this record. IORC has accepted it as Small-billed/White-crested Elaenia. Going forward there are three options: (1) accept as Small-billed Elaenia, (2) accept as White-crested Elaenia, or (3) leave it as Small-billed/White-crested Elaenia. Doug Stotz expressed the opinion that (2) is not supported by the evidence; hence, the remaining options are (1) and (3). Doug Stotz has gathered some additional expert opinions and will draft a resubmission statement arguing what he feels should be done with this record. When this statement is submitting to IORC, the file will be re-opened and circulated (to the seven individuals present at this 12 Feb 2017 meeting). The Committee spent some time examining specimens of the two species in light of Doug Stotz's remarks.

Record 2012-039

This record remains open, with the 1<sup>st</sup> circulation not yet concluded. Josh Engel pointed out that a recent ID-Frontiers listserve discussion might be useful. Geoff Williamson will add this information to the file. Paul Sweet will send the original photos to supplement the file, plus any additional photos among the many that he has that he feels would be useful. Paul Sweet will contact Tony Leukering and ask him to comment on the record. Once this additional information is gathered, the record will be circulated to the seven individuals present at this 12 Feb 2017 meeting.

Record 2016-032

The status of Whooping Cranes in the state was discussed by the Committee. It was agreed that votes on a record involving an identifiable bird from the migratory population whose introduction is being attempted in Wisconsin should be U-O because this is not an established population. The 2<sup>nd</sup> circulation of this record will be reconducted among the seven individuals present at this 12 Feb 2017 meeting.

Record 2016-074 and 2016-078

Keith McMullen will contact Steve Freed to obtain information as to why he thinks these two records involve different birds. Once in receipt of that information, the question of whether to merge the records will be posed to the seven individuals present at this 12 Feb 2017 meeting.

Record 2016-075

The video submitted as part of this record was viewed and discussed by the Committee. This record will undergo a 2<sup>nd</sup> circulation to the seven individuals present at this 12 Feb 2017 meeting.

Record 2016-076

The additional videos and photographs submitted as part of this record were reviewed. Matt Fraker and Doug Stotz have yet to vote on this record. Once their votes are received, either the 1<sup>st</sup> circulation will have concluded, or the 2<sup>nd</sup> circulation will be conducted among the seven individuals present at this 12 Feb 2017 meeting.

Matt Fraker moved and Keith McMullen seconded that the 1<sup>st</sup> circulation of the following records be terminated: 2013-042 (Golden Eagle), 2013-043 (Loggerhead Shrike), 2013-044 (Least Tern), 2013-045 (Western Kingbird), 2013-046 (Scissor-tailed Flycatcher), 2013-052 (Loggerhead Shrike), and 2013-054 (Golden Eagle). The motion passed by a vote of seven in favor and zero opposed. These records all pertain to non-Review List species.

**Consideration of Records in the Suspense File**

No records from the Suspense File were requested to be brought up for consideration.

**Review of Barnacle Goose Records**

Matt Fraker will work to obtain information on Bird Record Committee positions regarding Barnacle Goose prior to the Committee circulating any records.

**Ted Floyd's ABA Blog Post**

Bob Fisher brought to the attention of the Committee an ABA Blog post by Ted Floyd from 2009 that essentially suggested that Bird Records Committees no longer vote on records. A discussion of this proposal was deferred to a later time. The post is viewable at <http://blog.aba.org/2016/11/bird-records-committees-a-modest-proposal.html>

The meeting adjourned at 3:24 PM.