

2023 MINUTES OF THE MONTANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Date: 23 September 2023

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

Members present: Josh Covill, Coburn Currier, Ed Harper, Craig Hohenberger, Nate Kohler, Rose Leach (Chair), Jeff Marks (Secretary), John Parker, Kate Stone, Hilary Turner

Members absent: Dan Casey, Tom Forwood, Andrew Guttenberg, Trish Rodriguez, Forrest Rowland

Non-members present: None

Approval of 2022 Minutes: Motioned by **Rose**, seconded by **Nate**, all approved.

Introductions: Committee members gave brief accounts of their recent activities.

Action Items from 2022: By 1 November 2022, **Jeff** contacted each observer who submitted a report and informed them of the voting outcome. He also posted all reports and photos to our Groups.io site and posted the **Annual Report, Minutes**, and updated **Review List** on our Web site. **Rose** sent an edited version of the 2022 spreadsheet to **Scott Blum** so that accepted records can appear in the MNHP's MapViewer database.

Coburn could not archive reports, photos, and the spreadsheet of votes from 2022 because the Montana Historical Society in Helena has been closed for renovations.

Evaluation of records: Reports and supporting documentation were posted on our Groups.io site, and we evaluated reports in one round of voting during the year. We reviewed **28 new reports** that involved **22 species**; **20 reports** (71%) were accompanied by photographs or a specimen. We rejected only **one report**. A report (**MBRC 2023-008**) was withdrawn after Jeff determined the photos submitted with an eBird checklist were taken in California. Two species were added to the **Supplemental List, Barnacle Goose** and **Dusky-capped Flycatcher**; the goose went on the list because it may have been an escapee from captivity, and the flycatcher went on the list owing to thin documentation (two recordings of one call type accompanied the report, and the bird was not seen). Adding the flycatcher to the **Supplemental List** required that the **Bylaws** be modified to include birds that were heard but not seen, and for which a recording was obtained.

Bell's Vireo and **Scott's Oriole** were new for the **State List**. The vireo had been on the **Supplemental List** on the basis of two previous sightings (**MBRC 1995-051** and **MBRC 2007-051**). The number of **Bell's Vireo** records now becomes three after we transferred it from the **Supplemental List** to the **State List**. Other highlights included the state's fifth record of a **White-tailed Kite**, the third **White-eyed Vireo**, the fifth

Curve-billed Thrasher, the sixth **Golden-winged Warbler**, the third **Blue-winged Warbler**, the fifth **Virginia's Warbler**, the sixth **Painted Bunting**, and the third **Smith's Longspur** (and first spring report); the **Virginia's Warbler** was a male that occurred in the same location in 2022.

MBRC membership: By unanimous vote earlier in the year, **Tricia Rodriguez** joined the Committee to fill the vacancy left by **Ted Nordhagen**. Also by unanimous vote, **Rose Leach** and **Jeff Marks** were re-elected to two-year terms as Chair and Secretary, respectively.

Official State List: The **State List** now stands at **445 species** with the addition of **Bell's Vireo** and **Scott's Oriole**. The current **State List**, **Review List**, **Supplemental List**, and other MBRC material are at <https://www.montanabirdadvocacy.org/mbrc/>.

Review Species: **Jeff** proposed that we expand the exception area for **Gray Flycatcher** and **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** to include everything east of the Continental Divide, and that we not require reports for adult **Parasitic Jaeger** documented with diagnostic photographs. The Committee went one step further and voted unanimously to remove each of these species from the **Review List**.

Old reports reconsidered: None.

Bylaws discussion: In late October 2023 we approved by email vote two changes to the **Bylaws**. The first, in Section VII(B)(d), allowed for species to be added to the **Supplemental List** on the basis of voice recordings that are consistent with a species but not diagnostic of its occurrence (this allowed **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** to be added to the list). The second, in Section VIII(D), clarified that Committee members may choose for any reason not to render an opinion on a report, in which case they would cast an "NV" vote.

eBird discussion: Dan will set up a Zoom meeting of eBird reviewers for later this fall.

New action items: **Jeff** will contact each observer who submitted a report to inform them of the voting outcome and will make sure that hard copies of reports and photos will be archived. He will also post the **Annual Report**, **Minutes**, and revised **Review List** on our Web site. **Rose** will send an edited version of the 2023 spreadsheet to the Montana Natural Heritage Program so that accepted records can appear in the their database.

Jeff drafted text to amend the Bylaws regarding the **Supplemental List** and to institute the option for members to cast no vote (NV) for a report (see above).

Coburn will deliver reports, photos, and the spreadsheet of votes from 2022 and 2023 to the Montana Historical Society in Helena in October, following this meeting.

Adjournment: 15:07.

Our next meeting is proposed for Great Falls on Saturday, 7 September 2024

Submitted by: Jeff Marks, Secretary, 23 October 2023