

2017 MINUTES OF THE MONTANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Date: 6 October 2017

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

Members present: John Carlson, Josh Covill, Coburn Currier, Ed Harper, Craig Hohenberger, Nate Kohler, Rose Leach (Chair), Jeff Marks (Secretary), Bob Martinka, Ted Nordhagen, John Parker, Forrest Rowland, and Kate Stone

Members absent: None

Non-members present: Paul Hendricks

Approval of 2016 Minutes: 10:35

Action Items from 2016: **Jeff** and **Rose** completed their various action items. **Coburn** spoke with the Montana Historical Society (MHS) about housing our archives. The MHS is willing to archive our material but would need our help to inventory it. We would gift it to them and it would become their property and take a few years to accession. We decided not to move the archives at this time and will continue to keep them at Montana Audubon so long as Janet Ellis is there to oversee the materials.

Introductions: Welcome to new Committee members **Josh Covill**, **John Parker**, and **Kate Stone**. We also paid tribute to MBRC charter member **Chuck Carlson**, who passed away in Billings on 28 August.

Evaluation of records: Reports and photos were posted on our Yahoo site, and Committee members evaluated reports in two rounds of voting that were submitted to the Secretary in advance of the annual meeting. We reviewed **26 reports** that included **20 species**; all but **nine reports** were accompanied by photographs. We rejected **eight reports**, three of which were accompanied by photos. It is noteworthy that 2017 was the first year that we've reviewed fewer than 30 reports. (Clearly, our work load has decreased as we have continued to remove species from the Review List.) Highlights in 2017 included the state's 1st record for **Wood Sandpiper** (one of only a small number of inland North American records), the 3rd record for **Mississippi Kite**, and the 2nd for **Eastern Towhee**. The **Official State List** remains at 433 species with the addition of **Wood Sandpiper** and the lumping of **Thayer's Gull** with **Iceland Gull**.

Supplemental List: We voted to place a summer record for **Gyrfalcon** on the list, which is the first time we've done so solely because the record was out of season.

Membership: On 24 October 2016, **Fritz Prellwitz** stepped down from the Committee, and his seat was filled by **John Parker** by unanimous vote shortly thereafter. **Bob Martinka** retired at the close of this meeting. Thank you **Bob** for 12 years of service to the Committee! During this meeting, we unanimously elected **Tom Forwood, Jr.**, to replace **Bob**. The Committee again stands at the maximum of 13 members. By unanimous vote, **Rose** and **Jeff** were re-elected **Chair** and **Secretary**, respectively.

Review List: Because we had 24 accepted records for **Black Scoter** as of late October 2016, Jeff requested on 30 November 2016 a vote via email to remove the species from the Review List. ***Motion passed unanimously on 1 December 2016.***

Sedge Wrens have been documented with photos and voice recordings multiple times at several locations at Bowdoin National Wildlife Refuge since 2012. On 7 August 2017, Jeff motioned via email to add **QLL 9C** to the geographic exception area. ***Motion passed unanimously via email vote on 19 August 2017.***

We have 21 accepted records each for **Red-throated Loon** and **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** and proposed removing them from the Review List. ***Motion passed unanimously.***

Jeff proposed expanding the exception areas such that no reports are needed for sightings east of the Continental Divide for **Blue-headed Vireo**, **Philadelphia Vireo**, **Bay-breasted Warbler**, and **Blackburnian Warbler**. ***Motion passed unanimously.***

Jeff proposed the same for **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** and **Black-throated Green Warbler**, but the Committee decided to leave the current more-restrictive exception areas for these species as they were already (i.e., no report needed for LLs 9, 10, 11, & 12 for the sapsucker or for sightings east of 108°W for the warbler).

Iceland Gull (a Review Species) and **Thayer's Gull** (not a Review Species) were lumped by the American Ornithological Society in 2017. We decided to continue to review reports for **non-thayeri Iceland Gulls** until we have more than 20 records.

Old reports reconsidered & Bylaws discussion: None.

MBRC Web pages: This summer **Jeff** revised all of our Web pages, and as of 30 September 2017, they have been hosted by the *Montana Bird Advocacy*, which is a nonprofit NGO founded by **Jeff** and **Paul Hendricks**.

eBird discussion: The review queue often exceeds 400 reports, and we should strive to keep the queue below 200. We decided it's okay for reviewers to make decisions on Review Species even before the Committee has made a final decision. **John Carlson** will review eBird reports for Valley, Garfield, and McCone counties, which were formerly assigned to **Chuck Carlson**. Reminder that filters should be set to 0 for Review Species!

Action items: **Jeff** will contact each observer who submitted a report to inform them of the voting outcome. **Jeff** also will invite **Janet Ellis** of Montana Audubon to join our Yahoo site to download the reports and photos for the archives and will send an edited version of the 2017 spreadsheet to **Bryce Maxell** at the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) so that accepted records can appear in their MapViewer database.

Adjournment: 14:20

Our next meeting is *tentatively* set for Great Falls on Friday 5 October 2018

Submitted by: Jeff Marks, Secretary, 10 October 2017