

2022 MINUTES OF THE MONTANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Date: 8 October 2022

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

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

Members absent: Tom Forwood, Ted Nordhagen, Forrest Rowland

Non-members present: Harriet Marble

Approval of 2021 Minutes: Motioned by **Rose**, seconded by **Dan**, all approved.

Introductions: Committee members gave brief accounts of their activities.

Action Items from 2021: By 13 October 2021, **Jeff** had contacted each observer who submitted a report and informed them of the voting outcome. He also made sure that all reports and photos were posted on our Groups.io site and posted the **Annual Report, Minutes**, and the updated **Review List** on our Web site hosted by the Montana Bird Advocacy. **Rose** sent an edited version of the 2021 spreadsheet to **Scott Blum** so that accepted records can appear in the Montana Natural Heritage Program's MapViewer database.

Coburn delivered reports, photos, and the spreadsheet of votes from 2021 to the Montana Historical Society in Helena in October, following our meeting.

Forrest will develop a list of species for which we prefer vocal information in addition to a photo.

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 **19 new reports** (a record low number) that involved **17 species; 15 reports** (79%) were accompanied by photographs or a specimen. We rejected **three reports**, two of which were accompanied by multiple photos (albeit poor ones).

Cassin's Sparrow was new for the **State List**, although this species had been on the **Supplemental List** on the basis of a single-observer sighting in 1999 (**MBRC 1999-045**). Different birds were discovered only eight days apart at **Bowdoin NWR** by **Josh Covill** and at the **MPG Ranch** by **Eric Rasmussen**. The Bowdoin bird was seen by many observers and last reported on 14 June 2022; the MPG bird was seen by only two observers and was last reported on 13 July 2022. As per our protocol, we removed the first report from the **Supplemental List**, and the total number of records accepted for the state becomes three.

Other highlights included the state's fourth records of a **Garganey** and a **Virginia's Warber**, sixth record of a **Mississippi Kite**, tenth record of a **Hooded Warbler**, the second specimen of a **Wood Thrush**, and Montana's first nesting record of **Gray Flycatchers** from west of the Continental Divide.

MBRC membership: On 21 September, **Ted Nordhagen** told Jeff that he was stepping down from the committee. Ted joined the committee in 2010, and we appreciate his contributions over the past 13 years. The committee now stands at 14, which gives us the option of adding a new member. Potential names Tricia Rodriguez, Kristina Smucker, Robin Wolcott, Beth Madden, Amy Seaman. **Kate** and **Hilary** will approach prospective committee members. No election of officers was needed this year.

Official State List: The **State List** now stands at **443 species** with the addition of **Cassin's Sparrow** this year. The current **State List**, **Review List**, **Supplemental List**, and other MBRC material are at <https://www.montanabirdadvocacy.org/mbrc/>.

Review Species: On 2 May 2022, **Jeff** pointed out that we will have 21 accepted records of the easily identifiable **Black-throated Gray Warbler** after the bird found in Helena on 1 May is accepted (**MBRC 2022-008**). **Jeff** called for discussion and then a vote via email. Within a week, the committee voted unanimously to remove **Black-throated Gray Warbler** from the Review List while noting that eBird filters should remain at 0 statewide.

On 2 June 2022, **Jeff** proposed by email to expand the exception area for **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** to include latilongs 10 and 11, such that the new exception area becomes latilongs 10-12. Within two weeks, the committee voted unanimously to accept the new expanded exception area.

On 8 August 2022, **Jeff** proposed by email to expand the exception area for **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** to anywhere east of the Continental Divide. Previously, the exception area was anywhere east of 108° W longitude. Within one week, 14 of 15 committee members voted to accept the new expanded exception area.

With the acceptance of **Dan Casey's** report of a **Summer Tanager** (**MBRC 2022-018**) and two other photographic records reported to eBird in 2022, we now have 23 records for this species. Accordingly, the committee voted unanimously at the meeting to remove **Summer Tanager** from the **Review List**.

Old reports reconsidered: None.

Bylaws discussion: The **Bylaws** state that "At least one month prior to the selected

annual meeting date, the **Secretary** will make sure that copies of all reports and supporting material to be reviewed by committee members have been uploaded to the committee's private listserv" (Part VI(A), page 4). In practice, the **Secretary** often calls for voting on reports that arrive within a week or two of the annual meeting. At the request of the committee during the 2021 meeting, **Jeff** drafted this one-sentence addition to Part VI(A) of the **Bylaws**: "The Secretary also may call for a vote on reports that are received closer to the date of the annual meeting if the committee agrees they have time to vote on such reports." This addition was included with the list of Agenda Items that **Rose** sent to the committee two weeks before the 2022 meeting. The committee voted unanimously at the 2022 meeting to approve the amendment.

eBird discussion: Dan will set up a Zoom meeting of eBird reviewers in November.

New action items: **Jeff** will contact observers who submitted reports 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 2022 spreadsheet to the Montana Natural Heritage Program so that accepted records can appear in the their database.

Jeff will get a report for the **Barnacle Goose** photographed in Bozeman on 8 May 2022. **Jeff** will remove Black-throated Green Warbler from 2020-022 because hybrid.

Josh will revise the penultimate section of the rare bird report form to give more emphasis to voice descriptions and recordings.

Rose will talk with **Forrest** about the old action item of developing a list of Review Species for which we would prefer vocal information in addition to photos.

Rose will contact MNHP to tell them the accepted report of a **Black-throated Green Warbler** (MBRC 2020-022) was determined to be a hybrid.

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

Jeff and **Rose** will prepare a summary of duties routinely carried out by the Chair and Secretary and post it to our Groups.io site for use by future Chairs and Secretaries.

Adjournment: 11:45.

Our next meeting is proposed for Great Falls on Saturday, 23 September 2023

Submitted by: Jeff Marks, Secretary, 4 February 2023