

The Michigan Bird Records Committee

by

James Granlund

Michigan has long been a stronghold of bird study, featuring prominent ornithologists such as Pettingill, Sutton, and Walkinshaw. In 1945, George Wallace began a long tradition of helping amateur ornithologists compile their bird records in the *Jack-Pine Warbler*. This effort today has evolved into the Michigan Bird Survey, one of the longest running surveys of its type. Originally, the information included in the Survey was determined by the seasonal survey compiler. In the early 1980's, a committee, the Michigan Ornithological Records Committee, was formed to broaden input into this decision and to coordinate the publication of a State List for Michigan Birds. Because of logistical problems this committee did not complete its objectives.

In 1988, a new committee, the Michigan Bird Records Committee (MBRC)

was created with the same goals. The original MBRC contained several members of the older committee (Raymond Adams, Victor Janson, David Powell, and C. Roy Smith) plus several new faces (James Fowler Jr., James Granlund, Philip Chu, Jack Reinoehl, and Terry Walsh). The committee ratified a set of By-Laws and compiled a State List in 1988. Both of these were published in the *Jack-Pine Warbler* (Vol. 66 No. 4 pp 175-180). Within those by-laws the stated purposes of the MBRC were as follows:

1. To develop and maintain the official list of Michigan Birds and to define the status of each species on that list.
2. To develop and maintain a list of accepted records of birds unusual to Michigan.
3. To determine the acceptability of sightings, photographs, or specimens of birds unusual to Michigan for inclusion in the permanent list of records.
4. To provide information on Michigan birds as requested by other organizations, governmental agencies, and private individuals where deemed appropriate by this committee.
5. To encourage birders in methods of keeping records and documenting observations of birds, especially of unusual species.

Today the committee is virtually the same with exception of the retirement of Raymond Adams and Victor Janson and their replacement by new members, William Bouton and Karl Overman. The committee has reviewed nearly 200 records over the past three years. They have also toiled over collecting and reviewing pertinent information for the State List. During this review, new documentation for some records was uncovered, and some of the documentation cited by previous authors was found missing. The review process will continue until all materials at hand have been reviewed. In the articles that follow, the results of the first two years of votes are detailed by Philip Chu, the current

Chair of the Committee. Also included is the latest iteration of the State List.

The actions of the MBRC are on file at the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology along with all documentation gathered. Persons wishing access to these materials can contact me at the address below. The committee elects new members on an annual basis. Qualifications for committee appointment include expertise in bird identification and familiarity with Michigan birds and birding locations. Persons who feel they meet these criteria and wish consideration for appointment may contact me. Lastly, the committee holds two meetings per year. One is typically on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend at Whitefish Point Bird Observatory while the other is in November at the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology. The meetings are open to the public, but because of space limitations we would like prior notification of your intention to attend. — Secretary MBRC, 6253 N. Westnedge, Kalamazoo MI 49007

Actions of the MBRC for 1988 and 1989

by

Philip Chu

This is the first report of the Michigan Bird Records Committee (MBRC). It covers our actions during 1988 and 1989. In those two years, we reviewed the documentation for 96 records, each of which is described below. In all cases dates, location, an indication of the documentation submitted and a vote tally are given. Rules for the acceptance or rejection of documentation are given by Granlund (1988).

Sixty-seven of the 93 records reviewed were accepted by MBRC. For every accepted record, I list the observer(s) who submitted documentation to MBRC or to the *Jack-Pine Warbler's* Seasonal Survey compiler. The name of the person who first reported the bird in question is also provided if that person did not submit any documentation.

During 1988 records were reviewed

Request For Information

I am writing a review about the hour of egg-laying of passerines. As published data on this topic is scarce, I would appreciate hearing from persons who have unpublished records on laying times that they would allow me to use with appropriate acknowledgements. The records should include species name, locality, date, estimate of hour of laying, and type of time used (eg., Eastern Standard Time or Eastern Daylight Time in North America, or British Summer Time, etc.). Information on whether the observation was of the first, second, or third egg, etc., of the clutch would also be useful. Please write to David M. Scott, Professor emeritus, Department of Zoology, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada, N6A 5B7.

by MBRC members Ray Adams, Jr. (Kalamazoo Co.), Philip Chu (Washtenaw Co.), Vic Janson (Ingham Co.), Dave Powell (Kalamazoo Co.; Chairperson), Jack Reinoehl (Hillsdale Co.), C. Roy Smith (Berrien Co.) and Terry Walsh (Midland Co.), and alternates Jim Fowler, Jr. (Wayne Co.) and Jim Granlund (Kalamazoo Co.; Secretary). At the beginning of 1989, Adams' and Janson's terms ended and they chose not to seek reappointment to the Committee. Jim Fowler then filled one of the two available regular member positions; the other was filled by Bill Bouton (Kent Co.). Karl Overman (Wayne Co.) replaced Fowler as an alternate. In addition, Dave Powell was re-elected Chairperson for 1989, and Jim Granlund was re-elected as Secretary.

Many of the accounts below include information about sex and age. Unless otherwise noted, I used the terminology of Humphrey and Parkes (1959) to describe plumages. A discussion of plumage terminology is beyond the scope of this paper, but in many cases alternate and basic plumages correspond to summer and winter plumages, respectively. Interested readers are urged to consult Humphrey and Parkes, or, for a less technical discussion, Wilds (1989).

Records accepted, January 1988 - December 1989

ARCTIC/PACIFIC LOON (description: L. Binford): 1 in adult alternate plumage, 6 to 8 Oct. 1986, Agate Harbor, Keweenaw Co. (7-0).

ARCTIC/PACIFIC LOON (description: V. Fazio): 1 in adult alternate plumage, 31 May 1987, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (6-1).

ARCTIC/PACIFIC LOON (descriptions: L. Dombroski, J. Kaplan): 1 in adult alternate plumage, 25 May 1988, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

ARCTIC/PACIFIC LOON (description: L. Dombroski): 1 in adult alternate plumage, 17 May 1989, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (6-1).

BROWN PELICAN (description: L. Camburn): 1 adult, 24 June 1988, AuSable L., Ogemaw Co. (7-0).

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (description and photographs: A. Rider): 1

third-stage "juvenile" (Harrison 1983), 28 Sept. 1988, Port Huron, St. Clair Co. (7-0).

FRIGATEBIRD SPECIES (description: J. Preston, as told to C. R. Smith): 1 in one of Harrison's (1983) "juvenile" stages, 30 Sept. 1988, Bridgman, Berrien Co. (7-0).

FRIGATEBIRD SPECIES (description: J. White): 1 dark-headed individual (immature, subadult or adult: Harrison 1983), 2 Oct. 1988, Warren Dunes State Park, Berrien Co. (7-0).

FRIGATEBIRD SPECIES (description: H. Wyss): 1 adult male, 16 Oct. 1988, Leland, Leelanau Co. (7-0).

GLOSSY IBIS (description: P. Chu): 1 in adult alternate plumage, 19 May into June 1989, Pte. Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe Co. (7-0).

GLOSSY IBIS (J. Johnson; description: J. Granlund): 1 in adult basic plumage, 31 Aug.-1 Sept. 1989, Richland Twp., Kalamazoo Co. (7-0).

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (description: T. Walsh): 1 adult of the Greenland subspecies (*flavirostris*), 11 Apr. 1987, Fish Point Wildlife Area, Tuscola Co. (7-0).

ROSS' GOOSE (description: J. Kaplan): 2 adults, 25 October 1986, Allegan State Game Area, Allegan Co. (7-0).

EURASIAN WIGEON (J. Bartell; description: P. Chu; photographs: R. Putman): 1 adult male in alternate (non-eclipse) plumage, late Dec. 1988 through at least Feb. 1989, Drayton Plains, Oakland Co. (7-0).

MISSISSIPPI KITE (R. Annelin; photographs: C. Francke): 1 in first basic plumage ("subadult" plumage of Clark 1987), 22 and 23 May 1988, Midland, Midland Co. (7-0).

MISSISSIPPI KITE (descriptions: J. Kaplan and J. Reinoehl): 1 in first basic plumage, 31 May 1988, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

SWAINSON'S HAWK (descriptions: V. Fazio, L. Shutt, T. Wiens; photographs: V. Fazio): 1 dark-phase adult, 29 Apr. 1987, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

SWAINSON'S HAWK (description: J. Granlund): 1 dark-phase adult, 18 Oct. 1987, T48N R6W, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

FERRUGINOUS HAWK (description: J. Smith): 1 in juvenile plumage, 25 Apr.

1985, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (7-0 in round 2).

GYRFALCON (description: D. Evers): 1 described as, "very light gray phase," 16 Mar. 1986, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (6-1).

GYRFALCON (descriptions: D. Cristol, D. Evers): 1 white-phase individual, 8 Apr. 1986, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

PRAIRIE FALCON (description and photographs: W. Whaley): 1, 16 to 19 Aug. 1987, Battle Creek, Calhoun Co. (7-0).

BLACK RAIL (C. Pomarius; descriptions: P. Chu, J. Granlund): 1 male, 12 June to at least 9 July 1988, Hofma Nature Preserve, Ottawa Co. (7-0). Sex was determined by the bird's "kik-kee-derr" call.

CURLEW SANDPIPER (D. Brooks; descriptions: P. Chu, J. Granlund): 1 in transition from alternate to basic plumage, 21 to 23 Aug. 1988, Pte. Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe Co. (7-0).

CURLEW SANDPIPER (description: P. Chu): 1 in adult alternate plumage, 16 July to at least 14 Aug. 1989, Pte. Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe Co. (7-0).

POMARINE JAEGER (descriptions: T. Leukering, D. Powell): 1 dark-phase individual without elongated central tail feathers, 1 Oct. 1988, New Buffalo, Berrien Co. (7-0).

PARASITIC JAEGER (descriptions: J. Reinoehl, T. Wiens): 1 light phase bird in adult alternate plumage, 26 May 1987, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

PARASITIC JAEGER (description: L. Dombroski): 1 adult or older subadult, 3 May 1988, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (6-1).

LONG-TAILED JAEGER (descriptions: P. Christgau, D. Plummer, R. Sawicki): 1 in adult alternate plumage, 7 June 1984, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (5-2 in round 2).

COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL (description: J. Granlund): 1 in first or adult alternate plumage, 20 May 1987, Benton Harbor, Berrien Co. (7-0).

MEW GULL (descriptions: P. Chu, J. Granlund; photographs: K. Miller): 1 in second basic plumage, 4 to 6 Dec. 1987, New Buffalo, Berrien Co. (7-0).

MEW GULL (descriptions: R. Planck, R.

Smith): 1 in first basic plumage, 23 to 29 Oct. 1988, Tawas Point State Park, Iosco Co. (7-0).

CALIFORNIA GULL (description: D. Powell): 1 in first basic plumage, 17 Oct. 1987, Grand Marais, Alger Co. (6-1).

CALIFORNIA GULL (description: K. Miller): 1 in second basic plumage, 11 Nov. 1988, New Buffalo, Berrien Co. (7-0).

THAYER'S GULL (description: T. Kemp): 1 in first basic plumage, 21 to 23 Dec. 1985, Erie Twp., Monroe Co. (6-1).

THAYER'S GULL (description: written jointly by D. Cristol, D. Evers): 1 in first or second alternate plumage, 29 May 1986, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (6-1).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (C. R. Smith; description: P. Chu): 1 in third alternate plumage, 1 to at least 13 July 1988, Lake Twp., Berrien Co. (7-0).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (description: R. Planck): 1 in second or third basic plumage, 22 to 29 Oct. 1988, Tawas Point State Park, Iosco Co. (6-1).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (description: P. Chu): 1 in second basic plumage, 8 Dec. 1988, Sterling State Park, Monroe Co. (7-0).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (description: P. Chu): 1 in adult basic plumage, 18 Dec. 1988, Monroe, Monroe Co. (7-0).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (C. Francke; description: R. Weeks): 1 in adult basic plumage, 28 Dec. 1988 to 3 Feb. 1989, Bay City, Bay Co. (7-0).

SABINE'S GULL (description: T. Kemp): 1 in juvenile plumage, or in transition from juvenile to first basic plumage, 11 Jan. 1986, Erie Twp., Monroe Co. (7-0).

ARCTIC TERN (description: R. Adams, Jr.): 1 in adult alternate plumage, 5 July 1982, Pte. Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe Co. (5-2).

ARCTIC TERN (descriptions: P. Chu, S. Stanbery, T. Wells): 1 in second alternate plumage, or in transition from adult alternate to adult basic plumage, 30 June 1989, Pte. Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe Co. (7-0).

SANDWICH TERN (description: W. Booth): 1 thought to be in adult basic plumage, 31 July 1987, St. Joseph, Berrien Co. (7-0).

LEAST TERN (description: E. Knapp): 1 in juvenile or first basic plumage, 17 to 21 Aug. 1986, Erie Twp., Monroe Co. (7-0).

LEAST TERN (description: P. Chu): 1 juvenile, 1 Sept. 1989, Pte. Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe Co. (7-0).

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (descriptions: D. Cristol, D. Evers): 1, 10 May 1986, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (description: L. Binford): 1, 13 June 1987, Copper Harbor, Keweenaw Co. (7-0).

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD (M. Wercinski; descriptions: L. Binford, D. Powell; photographs: B. Bouton): 1 adult male, 7 to 11 Aug. 1988, Rabbit Bay, Houghton Co. (7-0).

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD (description: E. Lake; photographs: C. Hull): 1 adult male, 25 Sept. to 22 Oct. 1988, T22N R2E, Ogemaw Co. (7-0).

THREE-TOED WOODPECKER (description: C. Vreeland): 1 male, 5 July 1986, Wilderness State Park, Emmet Co. (6-1).

THREE-TOED WOODPECKER (description: P. Sykes): a male and a female, 4 July 1988, Otter L., Benzie Co. (5-2).

CLARK'S NUTCRACKER (description: B. Grigg): 1, 16 Dec. 1978, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

ROCK WREN (descriptions: L. Binford, C. Clark, P. Chu, J. Granlund; photographs: B. Bouton): 1, 10 June to at least 4 Aug. 1988, Centennial, Houghton Co. (7-0).

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (description: J. Granlund): 1, 25 Feb. 1989, Allegan State Game Area, Allegan Co. (7-0).

SAGE THRASHER (descriptions: J. Buecking, D. Cristol, D. Evers; photographs: D. Evers): 1, 16 May 1986, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT (descriptions: D. Powell, R. Sawicki): 1, 25 May 1986, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (description: J. Price): 1 male, 1 May 1988, University of Michigan-Dearborn Nature Study Area, Wayne Co. (7-0).

GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE (description: R. Weeks; photographs: M. Willard): 1, 14 May 1988, Bay City, Bay Co. (7-0).

SHARP-TAILED SPARROW (description: B. Bouton): 1, 24 June 1989, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

LARK SPARROW (descriptions: R. Adams, Jr., P. Duley): 1, 27 Apr. 1987, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

CASSIN'S SPARROW (specimen: UMMZ 227670, found along a roadside by J. Rooks): 1 adult female, 16 Sept. 1985, T58N R31W, Keweenaw Co. (7-0).

LARK BUNTING (description: D. Evers): 1 female, 12 June 1987, T49N R6W, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR (description and photographs: B. Grigg): 1 male, 31 May 1980, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR (descriptions: L. Dombroski, J. Kaplan, T. Leukering; photographs: J. Kaplan): 1 female, 13 May 1988, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

WESTERN Tanager (T. Allen; description and photographs: J. Kaplan): 1 female, 23 May 1989, Vermilion, Chippewa Co. (7-0).

Records rejected, January 1988 - December 1989

YELLOW-BILLED LOON (2 descriptions): 1 in adult alternate plumage, 13 May 1987, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (0-7 in round 2). A loon that looked like a Common, but with an upturned yellow bill, was observed for about 10 s. as it flew past the Whitefish Point hawk counting station; one observer estimated distance at 60 m., while the other estimated it at 600 m. Because the time of observation was short and the distance may have been long, MBRC was concerned about the observers' ability to determine bill color reliably: brief, distant views could make it hard to evaluate tricks of lighting and the exact distribution of any dark pigment on the bill. YELLOW-BILLED LOON (1 description): 1 in adult alternate plumage, 30 Apr. 1988, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (2-5). For the second consecutive year a Yellow-billed Loon was described from this location; circumstances of the 1988 and 1987 reports were similar. The majority opinion was summarized by a committee member who concluded,



"Just not enough details with this brief view to be totally convincing. The bill color is good (like [1987's] record), but [there is] nothing about shape, possibility of reflection causing pale color etc."

CLARK'S GREBE (2 photographs): 1, 15 Aug. 1985, Seney National Wildlife Refuge, Schoolcraft Co. (0-7). The photographs showed a Western/Clark's Grebe with a greenish-yellow bill, as would be expected of a Western. However, its supraloral area was white and its superciliary region was white-mottled; in these respects it appeared intermediate between Western and Clark's. Because we did not know how to reconcile this combination of features we solicited an expert opinion from UMMZ's R.W. Storer. Storer concluded that the Western-like bill and intermediate face pattern made identification as either Clark's or Western uncertain.

FULVOUS WHISTLING DUCK (1 description): 1, 16 June 1988, Round L., Lenawee Co. (1-6 in round 2). Plumage and soft part details were well-described; however, most committee members were concerned by the details provided for behavior and vocalizations. The bird was perched in a lakeside treetop for most of the observation period, but the only accounts of Fulvous Whistling Ducks using trees as perch sites are both old and anecdotal (e.g., Herrera 1888; Shields 1899; Bent 1925). In addition, the bird gave a "muffled 'caw'" that was unlike any published Fulvous Whistling Duck vocalizations.

EURASIAN WIGEON (1 description): a female and an alternate-plumaged male, 11 May 1988, T50N R6W, Chippewa Co. (1-6 in round 2). The female was described simply as "brown" and so could not be identified to species. The male's plumage was described well, although several committee members expressed surprise that the description indicated a green postocular area; many or most Eurasian Wigeons show postocular green, but it is inconspicuous in the field. A greater concern was the observers' inexperience—they had encountered neither Eurasian Wigeon nor American Wigeon before.

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE (3 descriptions): 1 apparently in transition from juvenile to first basic plumage, 26

May 1988, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (4-3 in round 2). The observers did not study this bird until it was overhead and heading away over Lake Superior. Because they had brief views from a poor angle, their reports were short, describing a raptor with pointed wings, pale gray upperparts and white underparts. Committee members were uneasy because the descriptions seemed to exclude all other North American hawks, yet did not note major field marks like the black shoulders and dark wrist mark. One reviewer summarized MBRC's debate by noting that, "all reports do a better job of eliminating other diurnal raptor species than they do in describing a Black-shouldered Kite," and another summarized it by asking, "whether an 'identifying' but otherwise unsatisfactory look is sufficient to add the bird to the state list." After two rounds of voting MBRC was unable to reach consensus.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (3 descriptions): 2, 31 Jan. 1987, Allegan State Game Area, Allegan Co. (0-7). All three descriptions indicated a pair of buteonine hawks with unmarked whitish underparts and wing linings. Patagial marks were looked for but not seen. The undersides of the primaries and secondaries were dark, contrasting with the pale wing linings, and the tail was barred, with the subterminal bar being the widest. Many committee members conceded that these details would have been adequate for a report from May or October, when Swainson's Hawks pass through the state in very small numbers. However, this report was from late January. A literature review revealed only one documented Swainson's Hawk north of Colorado in winter (Gibson 1984); Colorado has two winter records (Bailey and Nedrach 1965), Oklahoma has six (Sutton 1967), and Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina each have one (Muth 1987; Imhof 1984; LeGrand 1985). Given this shortage of winter records, two Swainson's Hawks in winter in Michigan would be almost unprecedented. Accordingly, MBRC agreed with the committee member who wrote, "The extreme rarity of this species at that date . . . indicates that [a recognizable photo or a specimen] is needed to accept this species in Michigan in the winter."

FERRUGINOUS HAWK (1 description): 1, 9 Jan. 1977, Cooper Twp., Kalamazoo Co. (3-4 in round 2). The observer described a large butco with rusty upperparts, pale rufous tail, and white underparts with chestnut markings on the belly and leggings. This combination of plumage characters is not duplicated by any of the Red-tailed Hawk specimens housed at UMMZ. MBRC was divided between those who believed the description was closer to Ferruginous Hawk than to anything else, and those who felt that some of the features described were at variance with Ferruginous. One from the latter group commented, "the plumage does not appear to fit either classic '1st winter' or adult plumages [of Ferruginous Hawk]. There is an indication that the upper primaries were closely inspected ('from above, primaries appeared gray-black') but no indication that white was seen at the base of these feathers as might be expected. Also, the bend of the [under]wing was observed, but no mention is made of a dark comma, also indicative of a Ferruginous."

FERRUGINOUS HAWK (1 description): 1 apparently in transition from juvenile to adult basic plumage, 30 May 1979, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (2-5 in round 2). This butco was larger and longer-winged than a Red-tailed Hawk. Its underside and underwings were white except for some dark streaking on the breast, and it had rufous shoulders. However, the observer also wrote that, "The mantle and dorsal surface of the flight feathers of the wing were a light bone gray-brown;" there is no mention of the conspicuous white window in the primaries that Ferruginous Hawks show.

POMARINE JAEGER (1 description): 1 in juvenile or subadult plumage, 16 Aug. 1986, Grand Marais, Alger Co. (2-5 in round 2). Because of this bird's age, plumage features were of limited use in identification; it was called a Pomarine on the basis of its size (larger than the Ring-billed Gull it was harassing), heavy build and ponderous flight. MBRC recognizes the value of shape and flight style in jaeger identification; however, the majority of committee members felt that shape and flight style can be difficult to judge accurately, especially when

(as in this case) the observation period was only one to two mins. and the observer had seen only one jaeger previously. As one reviewer said, the "Description is good, but it seems to me that a bird that is so hard to identify to species should be seen repeatedly over a longer period of time. In this way impressions can be checked and rechecked."

LONG-TAILED JAEGER (2 descriptions): 1 adult or older subadult in alternate plumage, 11 May 1986, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (4-3 in round 2). The two reports included some features that strongly suggest Long-tailed Jaeger, and others that seem to eliminate Long-tailed from consideration. The back was brown, the same color as the primaries, and the number of white primary shafts on the upperwing was three. These features are consistent with Parasitic Jaeger, not Long-tailed. Conversely, the under-primaries were dark and the central tail feathers, much longer than the other rectrices, features that are consistent with Long-tailed rather than Parasitic.

LITTLE GULL (1 description): 100 in adult alternate plumage, 17 Apr. 1988, Oak Beach County Park, Huron Co. (1-6 in round 2). The plumage description was good, but the number of individuals reported is apparently over two times greater than any previous North American maximum: high counts MBRC found were 43 (Monroe 1988) and 30 (Scott and Cutler 1975).

MEW GULL (1 description): 1 in adult alternate plumage, 23 Sept. 1989, Fairport, Delta Co. (4-3 in round 2). The description relied on two characters, a delicate, unmarked yellow bill and unusual white patterning in the wingtips. Bill bulk and color seemed to rule out Ring-billed Gull. However, the description of wingtip pattern was unclear ("two sets of white dots in the primary tips, separated by an area of black," and then, more specifically, "at least two large white spots near the tips of the first two or three primaries, then large white dots in . . . the third and fourth or fourth and fifth primaries"). One committee member wrote, "for a Michigan record, the account needs some firmer detail such as eye color. . . , comparative detail

versus Ring-billed Gull. . . , better understanding of the wing-tip pattern etc. Conclusion: close, but no cigar!"

THAYER'S GULL (1 description): 1 in adult alternate plumage, 23 Apr. 1984, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (2-5 in round 2). Adult Thayer's and Kumlien's Iceland Gulls are separated by still-evolving criteria of wing-tip pattern and color. This Thayer's/Kumlien's Gull could not be identified to species because the markings in its wing tips were not described in enough detail ("dark gray, darker than mantle, but obviously not black"). Observers documenting either of these gulls are urged to describe as precisely as possible the pattern of black, gray and white in the outer primaries; Grant (1986) provides the most concrete discussion of what to look for.

ICELAND GULL (1 description): 1 in first alternate plumage, 23 May 1988, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (1-6). This gull was identified on the basis of whitish plumage and, "because it didn't dwarf Ring-billed Gulls the way a Glaucous Gull would." Most committee members felt that this description did not adequately address the size and structural criteria that are essential for separating Iceland and Glaucous Gulls.

ARCTIC TERN (1 description): 1 in adult alternate plumage, 17 May 1979, Tahquamenon R. mouth, Chippewa Co. (3-4 in round 2). Wing characters that are essential for separating Arctic and Common Terns, such as the uniform gray uppersurface of the primaries and the translucence of the flight feathers, were not described. The features that were described (grayish throat and underparts, dark red bill and rounded forehead) can overlap with Common.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (1 description): 1, 22 May 1988, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (2-5). A streamer-tailed flycatcher was seen high overhead as it passed NE over the point; because of the distance and unfavorable angle the observer could describe the plumage only as, "uniformly pale below, with no contrasting darker areas noted." As a consequence of these relatively poor views, the observer was unable to eliminate Fork-tailed Flycatcher, which has occurred once in Michigan (UMMZ 206495).

CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE (1 description): 1, 6 Dec. 1988, Pike L., Marquette Co. (0-7). The observer described a chickadee with a black cap and bib, rusty-brown back and rust-colored flanks; only the Chestnut-backed Chickadee shows this combination of features. However, Chestnut-backed is a sedentary species that has not been recorded east of Montana (DeSante and Pyle 1986). MBRC was reluctant to accept such an exceptional record without a specimen or photograph.

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT (1 description): 1, 29 May 1989, Shiawassee River State Game Area, Saginaw Co. (2-5). The observer saw a bird about the size and shape of a Horned Lark. It was streaked brownish above, with a plain face and pale eyering; the underparts were white with streaking on the breast. Legs were pinkish and the tail had white outer feathers. However, no information about bill shape was given, and without an explicit description of bill shape the features described fit Vesper Sparrow as well as they fit Sprague's Pipit.

PRAIRIE WARBLER (1 description): 1, 9 May 1987, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (0-7). Documentation consisted solely of a phonetic rendition of a song that was heard once. One reviewer commented, "A song that was heard only once is ALWAYS suspect in my experience (and opinion). Besides, I once heard an American Redstart. . . that I thought was a Prairie Warbler until I saw the bird. . . ."

SWAINSON'S WARBLER (1 description): 1, 22 May 1987, Grant Twp., Mecosta Co. (1-6). A bird of "size and shape similar to a Tennessee Warbler" was observed feeding for about 15 mins. in a tamarack; the bird was army-brown above and uniform buff below, with a pale eyestripe and a thin dark bill. Plain brownish upperparts and a light eyestripe are consistent with a Swainson's Warbler, but buffy underparts and the comparison with Tennessee Warbler are not. Swainson's is up to 25% larger than a Tennessee Warbler; it has a largely pale bill that is twice as big as that of Tennessee; and its underparts are grayish-white with a variable yellow tinge. In addition, committee members were disturbed that a species normally



found in heavy cover would spend a quarter hour in plain view in a tree with light foliage.

WESTERN TANAGER (1 photograph): 1 in female or immature plumage, 29 Aug. 1971, North Point, Alpena Co. (0-7). The photograph showed a hand-held, recently netted tanager. The tanager was greenish or brownish with two wingbars, one broad and well-defined, the other weak. Committee members were unable to find any similar Scarlet Tanagers in the UMMZ collection. However, as a result of concerns about bill size and the absence of a contrasting grayish saddle on the back, we solicited an additional opinion from C. Wood and D. Paulson at the Burke Museum, University of Washington. Wood compared the photo to Western and Scarlet Tanager specimens and wrote:

—The bill seems short—Westerns have longer bills.

—All our male Westerns have much bigger wingbars, regardless of age.

—Several of our Scarlets. . . have small wingbars ([and] one fall female has a single middle covert with a big spot).

—Westerns have more edgings on innermost secondaries.

BLUE GROSBEAK, descriptions published in Brigham (1941): 1 male, 10 May 1927, Berrien Co.; 1 male, 20 May 1928, Kalamazoo Co.; 2 males, 4 Aug. 1929, Calhoun Co.; and 1 male, 26 May 1940, Ottawa Co. (3-4 in round 2). Documentation for all but the third of these consisted of quotes taken from personal letters and was thus second-hand. A majority of committee members were unwilling to accept records based on second-hand reports; they argued that important information could be lost in the transfer from first- to second-hand reporting. In addition, of the four records listed above, the first three described only birds with brown in the wings and prominent areas of blue coloration. These criteria are insufficient for eliminating male Indigo Buntings, which can be up to about 80% brown as late as their eighth year (R.B. Payne, pers. comm.).

DICKCISSEL (1 description): 1, 14 May 1987, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (2-5). The description consisted solely of flight calls heard several times. Phonetic

renditions of flight calls were, however, deemed insufficient evidence for a potential first Whitefish Point record.

McCOWN'S LONGSPUR (1 description): 1, 19 and 20 Oct. 1983, Copper Harbor, Keweenaw Co. (3-4 in round 2). Identification of this longspur was based on three features: a gray nape, rufous in the wings, and an unusual amount of white in the tail. The majority of committee members felt that this documentation was inconclusive; for example, Lapland Longspur shows rufous in the wings, with prominent rufous edges to the tertials and greater upper secondary coverts, and at least a few Laplands (e.g., UMMZ 58789, UMMZ 166606) can show a grayish bloom on the nape as well.

HOUSE FINCH (1 description): 2, 9 May 1987, Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (0-7 in round 2). This was another identification based solely on several flight calls. Representative comments included, "Although it is possible to identify a House Finch by call, I feel it unwise to document the first UP record on this brief encounter."

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