

## Actions of the Michigan Bird Records Committee for 2000

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This is the 11<sup>th</sup> report of the Michigan Bird Records Committee, covering the Committee's actions in 2000. The members of the Committee in 2000 were Brian Allen (Manistee Co.), Adam M. Byrne (Clinton Co.), Allen Chartier (Wayne Co.), Philip C. Chu (Minnesota), Louis Dombroski (Chippewa Co.), Chip Francke (Ottawa Co.), and Kevin Thomas (Ingham Co.), with alternate members James Granlund (Kalamazoo Co.) and Jack Reinoehl (Hillsdale Co.). Byrne was Chairman and Reinoehl was Secretary.

Due to increased awareness of geese showing intermediate traits between Snow (*Chen caerulescens*) and Ross's (*C. rossii*) geese, the Committee decided to reevaluate all of Michigan's Ross's Goose records. This process was initiated in 2000 and completed in 2001 (see Byrne 2001 for a more detailed description).

The Committee also decided to take another look at Michigan's Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*) records. Two members had independent experiences with a hybrid Cinnamon x Blue-winged (*A. discors*) teal, both in the spring of 2000. Both hybrids strongly resembled a Cinnamon Teal at moderate distances, only close observations allowing the observers to see conflicting field marks. These experiences prompted the Committee to reassess Michigan's records to ensure they adequately eliminated birds of hybrid origin. Some of the records were reviewed in 2000, the rest in 2001.

The state list increased by two during 2000, to 416.

### Changes from list of January 2000

#### Accidental to Casual:

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

#### Casual to Accidental:

Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*)

#### Regular to Casual:

Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicaria*)

**New species (Accidental):**

Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*)  
Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*)

**Nomenclature change:**

Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*), formerly named Oldsquaw

The records discussed below consist of the 91 reports for which a final decision was reached during the calendar year 2000. Of these, 55 (65%) were accepted. Names of contributors of written descriptions or material evidence appear in the heading for accepted records. In voting totals, the first number represents votes for acceptance and the second, votes for rejection; a third number, if present, represents members abstaining from voting (MBRC bylaws require members to abstain from voting on records for which they have submitted documentation). To find information on more recent records, view previous annual reports, or to read the bylaws in full, the reader is invited to visit the MBRC web site at:  
<[http://www.umd.umich.edu/dept/rouge\\_river/MBRCHome.html](http://www.umd.umich.edu/dept/rouge_river/MBRCHome.html)>

It is important to note that all actions made by the Committee are based on the written and physical evidence provided. When rejecting a record, the Committee is not stating that the identification is incorrect, only that the supporting evidence is not conclusive.

The author thanks Phil Chu for reviewing this manuscript and Jack Reinoehl for compiling and organizing the documentation.

**ACCEPTED RECORDS****Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)**

vote: 7-0 in the second round  
description: **Karl Bardon**

One adult in alternate plumage on 12 May 1999 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. The observer's statement "Arctic Loon [*G. arctica*] probably cannot be eliminated, since absence/presence of vent strap not conclusively noted..." led some members to vote against this record in the first round. However, the observer also describes "blackish upperparts...separated from the white underparts by a straight line between

the uppertail and undertail, without the white underparts flaring upward onto the uppertail coverts as on Arctic Loon". After some discussion, it was felt that the description of the posterior flank confirmed that the bird was a Pacific Loon.

**Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)**

vote: 6-0  
photographs: **Adam M. Byrne, Philip C. Chu, James Granlund, Brad Murphy, Jim Schei, Scott Terry**

One from 30 July-5 September 2000 on Duck Lake, Grand Traverse Co. (first county record).

**Western/Clark's Grebe (*Aechmophorus species*)**

vote: 6-1  
description: **William N. Grigg**

One on 1 September 1999 seen in flight from the Presque Isle Lighthouse, near Presque Isle, Presque Isle Co. (first county record). The lone dissenting voter felt the description "could have fit a Red-necked Grebe" (*Podiceps grisegena*). The remaining members, however, were comfortable with a wing-pattern description in which "the white...extended from next to the body (secondaries) out to nearly the end of the wings, at the base of the primaries".

**Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*)**

vote: 7-0  
photographs: **Dean Downing**

One on 19 August 2000 in Armada Twp., Macomb Co. This bird was found moribund by Kelly Downing in the family's yard and was taken to the Detroit Zoo for rehabilitation. It died five days later and the specimen was deposited in the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology. Most interesting was that the bird had been banded as a chick by the Copeland Bird Observatory on an island near Belfast, Northern Ireland, on 7 September 1991. This is Michigan's first record and may be the first inland record for North America (Chartier 2001).

**Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)**

vote: 6-1  
description: **Barry L. Barto**

One adult on 27 June 1999 on Portage Lake, near Onekama, Manistee Co. (seventh state record/first county record). The observer noted a large brown bird with "a white mark going from the top of its head to under its

chin" and a "long beak held in a down pointing position". The bird was also seen flying at "20 feet of height above the water...folded its wings and plunged into the water, bobbing up with a fish which a couple of tosses of its head aligned with its throat and swallowed". "Although...lacking in detail, the description given along with the feeding behavior seems to eliminate other species" summarized the thoughts of many Committee members, but it was this lack of specific detail that led to the dissenting vote.

**Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*)**

vote: 6-1  
description: **Roger I. Wykes II**

One on 18 December 1999 at Independence Lake County Park, Washtenaw Co. This bird was found during the Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count and was both a first for a Michigan Christmas Bird Count and the state's latest record by two months (Schipper 2000).

**Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*)**

vote: 7-0  
description: **Gerald J. Ziarno**

One on 31 July-17 August 1999 at Nayanquing Point State Wildlife Area, Bay Co., was the fourth record for 1999.

**Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*)**

vote: 7-0  
description: **Julie Craves**

One on 19 April 2000 at Fairlane Lake, University of Michigan-Dearborn campus, Wayne Co. (first county record).

**Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*)**

vote: 7-0  
photographs: **Adam M. Byrne**

One from 6 June-18 August 2000 at Nayanquing Point State Wildlife Area, Bay Co.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**  
(*Nyctanassa violacea*)

vote: 7-0  
description: **Jeff Sommer**

One adult on 8 May 2000 at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Saginaw Co.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**  
(*Nyctanassa violacea*)

vote: 7-0  
description: **Philip C. Chu**  
photographs: **Adam M. Byrne, Scott Terry**

Three adults from 1-12 July with one remaining to 15 July 2000 at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe Co. One individual was seen flying across the Huron River into Wayne Co. on 6 July.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**  
(*Nyctanassa violacea*)

vote: 7-0  
photographs: **Mike Moran**

One immature on 14 July 2000 at Muskegon Wastewater System, Muskegon Co.

**White-faced Ibis** (*Plegadis chihi*)

vote: 7-0

descriptions: **Calvin Brennan, Nathan McNett**

One adult from 29 July-1 August 1999 in Chippewa Co. This bird was observed at Vermillion on 29 July and later relocated near Whitefish Point on 31 July. It was last seen in flight at Whitefish Point on 1 August. This was the seventh state record and first in the Upper Peninsula.

**Black Vulture** (*Coragyps atratus*)

vote: 6-1  
description: **George E. Vogel**

Two on 4 September 1999 at Agate Harbor, Keweenaw Co. While most observers were comfortable with the description (with direct comparison to Turkey Vultures, *Cathartes aura*), one member had reservations over the bird's shape and flight style. This was the third state record and first for the Upper Peninsula.

**Black Vulture** (*Coragyps atratus*)

vote: 6-0-1  
descriptions: **Adam M. Byrne, Philip C. Chu, Scott Terry**

One from 22-23 October 1999 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (fourth state record, first county record).

**Black Vulture** (*Coragyps atratus*)

vote: 7-0  
description: **Joan Wolfe**

One on 8 December 1999 in Grand Traverse Co. This third record from 1999 was the fifth state record and a first county record.

**Black Vulture** (*Coragyps atratus*)

vote: 7-0  
description: **Paul Cypher**

One on 10 March 2000 at Lake Erie Metropark, Wayne Co. (sixth state record, first county record).

**Ross's Goose** (*Chen rossii*)

vote: 6-0  
description: **James A. Fowler**

Two (one adult and one immature) on 27 October-12 November 1979 at Allegan State Game Area, Allegan Co., representing Michigan's first record for this species. The adult was well photographed (McWhirter 1980).

**Ross's Goose** (*Chen rossii*)

vote: 6-0-1  
description: **Philip C. Chu**

One adult on 17 October 1986 in Richland Twp., Kalamazoo Co. (it should be noted that this record was reviewed and rejected in 2001 per request of the observer).

**Ross's Goose** (*Chen rossii*)

vote: 7-0  
description: **Joseph D. Kaplan**

Two adults on 25 October 1986 at Allegan State Game Area, Allegan Co. (second state record).

**Brant** (*Branta bernicla*)

vote: 6-1  
description: **Greg Links**

One on 10 November 1999 at the Whiting Power Plant, Monroe Co. The dissenting member felt the bird was "Brant-like in a number of respects" but that "a couple of features are incorrectly described: the back and wings were said to be black...and no black was seen in the tail." However, the rest of the Committee was comfortable with the description, as summarized by one member who wrote, "A very convincing and thorough description of a Brant..."

**Cinnamon Teal** (*Anas cyanoptera*)

vote: 6-1

photographs: **Allen T. Chartier**

One male from 25-28 April 1982 in Mt. Clemens, Macomb Co. (second state record/first county record). This record was rejected based on a written description, but photographs were provided as additional documentation and were found to be sufficient by most members, reversing the earlier rejection. One member did, however, question whether a hybrid could be eliminated by the slightly out-of-focus photos.

**Cinnamon Teal** (*Anas cyanoptera*)

vote: 7-0  
descriptions: **Philip C. Chu, Ron Weeks**  
photographs: **Robert Putman**

One male from 12-22 April 1992 at Nayanquing Point State Wildlife Area, Bay Co. (third state record/first county record).

**Swallow-tailed Kite** (*Elanoides forficatus*)

vote: 7-0  
photographs: **Adam M. Byrne, Brad Murphy**

One from 22-24 August 2000 near Empire, Leelanau Co. On 23 August 2000, it was observed crossing into Benzie Co. This represented the first record for each county.

**Mississippi Kite** (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

vote: 7-0  
photographs: **Chris Neri**

One on 21 May 2000 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co.

**Merlin** (*Falco columbarius*)

vote: 7-0  
description: **William N. Grigg**

One on 18 December 1999 on the Alpena Christmas Bird Count, Alpena Co.

**Gyr Falcon** (*Falco rusticolus*)

vote: 7-0  
description: **Jeff Schultz**

One juvenile gray morph on 14 November 1999 at Lake Erie Metropark, Wayne Co.

**Baird's Sandpiper** (*Calidris bairdii*)

vote: 7-0  
photographs: **Chris Neri**

One from 1-2 June 2000 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. Although there is regular reference to this species in old

spring seasonal surveys, this is one of only two confirmed spring records for Michigan. Many, if not all, of the historical records were probably spring Sanderlings (*Calidris alba*) in a confusing transitional plumage.

**Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)**

vote: 7-0  
description: **Philip C. Chu**

One male wearing definitive alternate plumage (chestnut form) on 30 June 1988 at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe Co.

**Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)**

vote: 6-1  
description: **Adam M. Byrne**

One in second/third winter plumage on 3 January 2000 at Port Huron, St. Clair Co. This bird was observed from Point Edward, Sarnia, Ontario and was noted flying on both sides of the international border before flying inland over the Michigan shoreline. It was a large jaeger with two "broad and rounded" elongate central rectrices and "at least 3-4 of the outermost primaries had white shafts". The bird was within 300 yd (274 m) at closest approach, yet one Committee member felt the distance, coupled with an overcast sky, was too great to make a definitive identification.

**White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*)**

vote: 7-0  
description: **Laurence C. Binford**

One on 17 August 1999 in Lake Linden, Houghton Co. This is the fifth state record (fourth from the Upper Peninsula) and first county record.

**Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*)**

vote: 7-0  
photographs: **Adam M. Byrne, John McDaniel**

One from 30 September-3 October 2000 at Shelldrake Impoundment, Chippewa Co. (third state record).

**Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)**

vote: 7-0  
photographs: **John Cryderman**

One on 20 February 2000 found dead roughly 10 mi (16 km) south of Sault Ste. Marie, Chippewa Co. (first county record). This is also the first confirmed record since 1996 and only the fourth since 1990 for a species that was once a regular, local resident in southern Michigan (Allen and Trautman 1994).

**Broad-billed Hummingbird (*Cyananthus latirostris*)**

vote: 7-0  
photographs: **Dave Dykstra**

One adult male from 11-13 July 2000 in Rockford, Kent Co. (second state record/first for the Lower Peninsula).

**Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)**

vote: 6-0-1  
descriptions: **Adam M. Byrne, Philip C. Chu**  
photographs: **Adam M. Byrne**

One adult male on 19 August-6 September 1999 in Fenton, Genesee Co.

**Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus/sasin*)**

vote: 6-0  
description: **Christopher N. Hull**

One adult male on 9 October 1999 in Lansing, Ingham Co. This record was initially reviewed as a Rufous Hummingbird, but was rejected (vote: 0-5) due to the absence of optics during the observation. The observer described a hummingbird that was "tawny, rufous brown" but reviewers were unsure whether green coloration on the back of an Allen's Hummingbird would have

been visible with the naked eye, given the distances involved (10-39 ft/3-12 m) and the very small size of the bird in question.

**Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus/sasin*)**

vote: 7-0  
photograph: **Ellwyn Warren**

One adult male from 19-21 July 2000 in East Leroy, Calhoun Co. (first county record for a *Selasphorus* hummingbird).

**Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*)**

vote: 7-0  
photograph: **Laurence C. Binford**

One collected on 24 December 1962 in Keweenaw Co.; the specimen (#28793) resides in the vertebrate collection at the Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology.

**Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*)**

vote: 7-0  
descriptions: **Thomas Auer, Lynn Murphy, Joseph Youngman**

One female from 18-19 February 2000 along Big Lake Campground Road in the Baraga Plains, Baraga Co.

**Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*)**

vote: 7-0  
description: **Michael L. Scheiwe**

One female on 23 May 2000 at the Headwaters Environmental Station, Houghton Co.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*)**

vote: 5-2 in the second round  
description: **Nathan McNett**

One on 31 May 1999 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. The bird's head, underparts and underwing coverts were

pale, contrasting with darker axillaries. It had two long, black tail streamers and a slim body that was "slightly larger than a Blue Jay" (*Cyanocitta cristata*). The one dissenting Committee member felt this size estimate was too large for the species claimed.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*)**

vote: 6-1  
description: **John McDaniel**

One on 25 October 1999 at Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, Chippewa Co. It was light gray with a "black bill, eye, and eye line" and "an extremely long tail (almost the length of the body)". Most members were comfortable with description, but one felt the details were too brief to eliminate a Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*).

**Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*)**

vote: 6-1  
descriptions: **Cory Gregory, Brad Murphy, Dave Slager**

One from 18-19 July 2000 at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Berrien Co.

**Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*)**

vote: 6-0-1  
descriptions: **Adam M. Byrne, Allen T. Chartier, Doug McWhirter**

One on 13 November 1999 at the Grand Isle Marina on Harbor Island, Grand Haven, Ottawa Co. It was a small swallow with a squarish tail and "broad wings...reminiscent of a Purple Martin (*Progne subis*)". Its "forehead and crown were dark" contrasting with the "pale orange-buff" throat, cheeks, and nape. The dark crown gave a "distinctly capped appearance on an otherwise pale head". Its upperparts were "dark...except for a paler brownish-buff" or "dark orange" rump. "The upper breast was...pale orange, similar to the throat", while the "lower breast and belly were white" but the "orange

on the upper breast gradually blended into the lower breast, making the demarcation between them obvious, but not sharp". Despite some speculation, there is no compelling evidence to support identification at the subspecies level.

This is a first state record and coincided with a broad-scale movement into northeastern North America (Contreras 2000). In fact, the Lake Erie shoreline of southern Ontario had incredible totals of 25 on 3 November 2000 at Point Pelee Provincial Park and at least 44 from 4-5 November 2000 at the Long Point Bird Observatory (Bain 2000).

**Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*)**

vote: 7-0  
description: Doug McWhirter

One on 27 October 1999 at Tawas Point State Park, Iosco Co. (first county record).

**Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*)**

vote: 7-0  
description: Allen T. Chartier  
photographs: Adam M. Byrne

One from 3-6 November 1999 at the Whiting Power Plant, Monroe Co., was unusual for both the location and time of year.

**Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)**

vote: 7-0  
photograph  
unknown observer

One male on 15 May 1997 in Otsego, Allegan Co. There was also a male present from 12-14 May 1997 in Saugatuck, Allegan Co. (Reinoehl 1998).

**Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)**

vote: 7-0  
description: Frank Schermers

One male on 3 May 2000 in Byron Center, Kent Co. (first county record).

**Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*)**

vote: 7-0

video stills: James Granlund

One on 28 May 2000 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co.

**Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*)**

vote: 6-1  
descriptions: Laurence C. Binford,  
Joseph Youngman

One female on 27 August 1999 near Copper Harbor, Keweenaw Co.

**Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*)**

vote: 7-0  
photographs: Scott Terry

One male on 14 May 2000 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co.

**Chestnut-collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*)**

vote: 6-1  
descriptions: Adam M. Byrne,  
Jethro Runco

One seen in flight only from 29-30 October 1999 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. On the first date, one observer noted a small, buffy longspur with a unique tail pattern: "a black triangle at the tip of the tail with two wedges of white on either side". It was also heard twice giving a "soft, two to three syllable call that was almost finch-like in quality". The observer knew the tail pattern narrowed the identification down to either Chestnut-collared or McCown's (*C. mccownii*) longspur, but was uncomfortable with the

circumstances, given his limited experience with these species. Conversations that evening with Jon Dunn and Tony Leukering, both of whom have extensive experience with longspurs, suggested the bird was a Chestnut-collared Longspur and provided the observer with important details to look for during any subsequent observations. On the next day, the bird made another appearance, providing the observers with good looks at the uppertail surface. This time, armed with information gleaned from the conversations the night before, the observers were able to get conclusive views of the uppertail pattern. The one dissenting member was concerned with the ability to assess the details of tail pattern on a flying bird. This is the third Michigan record and first since 1988.

**Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)**

vote: 7-0  
description: Susan Musialowski

One male on 13 May 2000 in Big Bay, Marquette Co. This was the first record since 1997 and the second county record (first was in 1968).

**Great-tailed/Boat-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus/major*)**

vote: 7-0  
descriptions: Glenn Belyea, Philip

**C. Chu, James Granlund, Curt Powell**

One female on 29 May 2000 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. The bird was seen in flight with a flock of Blue Jays; its size was estimated to be "130 to 140% that of a jay" and it had a long, graduated tail. The anterior underparts were "a warm dirty tan" that "graded into the blackish brown of the posterior underparts", and the sides of the head were also a warm dirty tan. This is the second state record, the first occurring at the same location from 15-18 April 1997.

**Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)**

vote: 7-0  
photographs: Jeff Colon

One on 16 April 1994 in Berkeley, Oakland Co. (second state record/first county record).

**Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)**

vote: 7-0  
photographs: Adam M. Byrne,  
William N. Grigg, Scott Terry

One from 30 March-10 April 2000 near Atlanta, Montmorency Co. (first county record). This is Michigan's fourth record for this species, all since 1991.

**RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED**

**Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)**

vote: 2-5  
two descriptions

One in basic plumage was reported on 20 November 1999 at the head of the Keweenaw Bay near L'Anse, Baraga Co. The bird was observed at a distance estimated between "250 to 300 yards" and "approximately ½ mile". It had

white underparts and a gray to medium-gray forehead, crown, and nape that contrasted with the darker back. The neck was said to be "longer and thinner than...Common Loons" (*G. immer*) and with a "puffy appearance – cobra-like". While comparing it to a Common Loon, one observer noted "The Common also looked quite heavy in appearance and

was much darker...". Most Committee members felt that Red-throated Loon (*G. stellata*) was not eliminated by the descriptions, and, in fact, neither report addressed the possibility of Red-throated Loon.

#### **Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*)**

vote: 1-6  
one description

One in alternate plumage was reported on 14 September 1999 at Rock Harbor Channel at Isle Royale National Park, Keweenaw Co. The bird was seen in flight from a small boat traveling "at a speed of approximately 15-mph" without the aid of optical equipment. The bird "flew past the boat approximately 100 feet to the starboard and 25-30 feet above the water". The bird's plumage "looked identical to a breeding Common Loon" but as the bird passed by the boat, the observer noticed "an obviously yellow beak". One member summarized the majority opinion when he expressed reservations about "The combination of the bird being observed in flight without binoculars, and the lighting conditions which could be conducive to a bird's black bill being highly reflective".

#### **Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*)**

vote: 0-7  
two descriptions

One unusually-plumaged bird was present from 7 June-25 July 1992 at the Karn-Weadock Plant, Bay Co. Its overall plumage was similar to a Tricolored Heron, but there were numerous white feathers interspersed on the face and back, giving these regions a washed-out impression. In flight, the primaries and secondaries were white, with a hint of purple confined to 3-5 of the outermost secondaries. The upperwing coverts were purplish blue-gray. The legs were black with yellow soles to the feet and the loreal skin was pale yellow.

The observers felt this individual may have been a Tricolored Heron x Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) hybrid, but it was published as an unusually plumaged Tricolored Heron (Tessen 1998). Since it appeared in print as a Tricolored Heron, one observer requested that the record be submitted and rejected as a Tricolored Heron. All members agreed that the plumage and soft-part coloration were too aberrant to accept this record, but were uncomfortable endorsing any statements about the bird's parentage.

#### **Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*)**

vote: 2-5 in the second round  
two descriptions

Two adults reported from 8-10 May 2000 at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe Co. The main concern with this record was the discrepancies between the two reports. One observer noted "whitish facial skin" that "reached from the top of the bill to the bottom of the bill and went as far back as the front of the eye", while the other noted "the pale feathering that borders the facial skin was whitish". In other words, one observer reported a facial pattern that is, in some ways, consistent with Glossy Ibis, but the other described the pattern of a White-faced Ibis.

#### **Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)**

vote: 3-4 in the second round  
one description

One reported on 19 December 1999 in Beulah, Benzie Co. The bird was a "large, dark soaring raptor" with a "small head", "uniformly dark" body, "long narrow wings with prominent light colored primaries and secondaries contrasting with dark leading edge feathers", and a "long, light colored tail with no markings". It was observed soaring with "tippy flight...few wing beats" and "wings held in dihedral position". While all Committee members felt the details provided were

suggestive, some were concerned with the brevity of those details and the description of a pale tail. The dissenting members were not convinced that dark-morph Red-tailed (*Buteo jamaicensis*) or Rough-legged (*B. lagopus*) hawks had been fully eliminated.

#### **Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*)**

vote: 3-4  
one description

Three adults reported on 15 March 1990, with one remaining to 21 March 1990, at Fish Point, Tuscola Co. The birds were smaller than adjacent Snow Geese with more rounded heads, shorter necks, and shorter bills that lacked tomial markings. However, the observer did not describe the interface between the bill base and facial feathering or the presence/absence of blue-gray coloration or warty protuberances at the bill base. Given these missing details, it was not possible to eliminate hybrid Snow x Ross's geese from consideration.

#### **Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*)**

vote: 1-6 in the second round  
one description

Three adults reported on 16 February 1999 at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Saginaw Co. The birds were about 355 yd (325 m) distant and were said to be all white with black primaries. Their bills were "dark pink, without black tomial marking" and they were noticeably smaller than nearby Snow Geese. However, no blue coloration was noted at the base of the bill and the observer failed to note the interface between the bill base and facial feathering. Without these features, the possibility of Snow x Ross's goose hybrids cannot be eliminated.

#### **Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*)**

vote: 2-5  
one description

One adult on 6 October 1999 at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Saginaw Co. The bird was smaller than a nearby Snow Goose; it was all white with black primaries and had a pink bill "without black tomial marking". However, no blue coloration was noted at the bill base, and no details were provided on the bill base/facial feathering interface, causing several Committee members to feel a Snow x Ross's goose hybrid could not be eliminated.

#### **Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*)**

vote: 1-6  
three descriptions

One adult reported from 21 October-18 November 1999 on Thorn Lake, Jackson Co. One observer's comments were very troubling: "As noted by one or two other observers and in my own notes...this bird was not as small as most Ross's Geese" and "it may be that Snow Goose/Ross's Goose hybrid is not completely eliminated". Further, there was no information on the bill base/facial feathering interface in any of the reports, and no report noted blue coloration at the base of the bill.

#### **Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*)**

vote: 0-7  
one description

One immature reported on 20 November 1999 near Chippewa Lake, Mecosta Co. It was a white bird with "a gray wash running along back of neck from head to bottom of neck" and a "wholly black" bill. While it is not uncommon for young Ross's Geese to retain black bills into late fall (Dzubin 1965), several members felt the black coloration might make it difficult to ascertain whether a grin patch was truly absent. Also, the observer made no mention of the bill base/facial feathering interface.

**Common/King Eider (*Somateria mollissima/spectabilis*)**

vote: 2-5  
one description

One reported on 18 October 1998 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. This record was initially reviewed and rejected as a King Eider, but some members felt it should be resubmitted as an eider sp. The bird was seen in flight for 10 seconds and gave the impression of “a Black Duck with white wing patches and white near the base of the tail”. The observer never saw the head or bill. While an eider at this location and time of year might seem reasonable, most members felt that the description was too vague to support the identification.

**Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*)**

vote: 0-7  
one description

One immature reported on 10 October 1999 at Muskegon State Park, Muskegon Co. The observer describes a large buteo with a “buffy, light head w/ fine streaking”, dark wings with “huge light, buffy squarish windows in outer primaries”, and a light tail with a dark terminal band. The upperwing pattern, however, is incorrect: Ferruginous Hawks show pale windows that are crescent-shaped, not squarish. Further, most members were bothered that the underwing surface was not observed, preventing the observer from assessing the presence/absence of patagial bars and dark wrist patches.

**Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*)**

vote: 1-6  
one description

One reported on 24 April 2000 in Cedar Lake, Montcalm Co. The bird was observed without optics at a distance of 1500 feet. It had a “white belly” with “slight buff on breast”, “dark legs against white belly”, dark

upperparts, “white patches at base of primaries”, and a tail that was white at its base and red distally. Members were not convinced that a Red-tailed Hawk was eliminated by the description. There was no mention of the presence/absence of patagial marks on the underwing and the circumstances of the observation (no optics at 500 m) were troubling to many.

**Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*)**

vote: 0-7  
one description

Two reported on 5 May 2000 at Tawas Point State Park, Iosco Co. The description was of two birds in flight “near shore, but in shimmer” with “black wings with white in between...the white would be the tail and rump of a Black-neck [*sic*] Stilt”. The birds were “long-legged” and “looked like small herons” and the report concluded with the statement “there is nothing else I could make these birds to be”. The details above were not provided by the observer, but as quotes in a summary from another individual. This made several members uncomfortable, leaving them to wonder about the details that had not been provided (distance, use of optics, etc.). All members felt the available details were too brief and the conditions too poor to substantiate this record.

**Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*)**

vote: 1-6  
one description

One reported on 16 September 2000 in Ludington, Mason Co. It had dark gray upperparts and a long, slightly decurved bill. The bird was also reported to be “slightly larger” than the adjacent Black-bellied Plovers (*Pluvialis squatarola*) and had a lightly streaked breast, both of which are incorrect for Purple Sandpiper.

**American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*)**

vote: 0-7  
one description

Three reported on 18 December 1999 at Partridge Point, Alpena Co. The details provided were very brief. The birds were plump birds with a no-neck appearance and a dark rust coloration. They were seen without the aid of optics as they flushed away from the observer. Members were troubled by the brevity of the report and felt that it did not eliminate Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*).

**Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)**

vote: 3-4 in the second round  
one description

Two were reported on 17 May 1999 in flight over Thunder Bay, Alpena Co. They were observed at a distance of roughly a half mile (0.8 km) and had dark caps and elongate central rectrices. They were described to be “approx. Ring-billed Gull [*L. delawarensis*] sized and their upperwing surface was paler than the flight feathers”. Several members were bothered by the size estimation and plumage details. One member summarized these feelings when he said “If...were truly the size of a Ring-billed Gull, then they could not have been Long-tailed Jaegers” and “Parasitic Jaeger [*S. parasiticus*]...can match fairly closely the plumage features described”.

**Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)**

vote: 2-5  
two descriptions

One adult reported on 17 August 1999 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. Both observers noted a dark cap and elongate central rectrices that were equal to or greater in length than the tail. The upperparts were “pale...although no wing to body contrast was noted”.

While the length of the central rectrices suggests Long-tailed Jaeger, the observers should have noted some contrast between the upperwing coverts and the darker flight feathers, especially since at least one observer looked for this distinction. Most members were more bothered by the details of the upperparts than influenced by the length of the central rectrices, feeling it would be much easier to assess coloration differences than relative length of the streamers.

**California Gull (*Larus californicus*)**

vote: 1-6  
photographs

One first-year bird reported on 13 October 1995 at Muskegon State Park, Muskegon Co. The photos were not conclusive, and in fact many members felt the bird was probably a Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*).

**Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*)**

vote: 0-7 in the second round  
one description

One in transition from first winter to first summer plumage was reported on 8 May 1998 on Portage Lake, near Onkama, Manistee Co. The birds “more rounded” head shape, “noticeably [*sic*] shorter and a bit thinner than the Herring Gulls” bill shape, “all black” bill, “medium brown” tail, and primaries that were “light brown with light colored edgings or chevrons [*sic*]...when folded” were all used to separate this bird from a first spring Herring Gull. Members questioned whether the description eliminated a worn, bleached Herring Gull, as such individuals are commonly observed in spring. Additionally, one member added “head shape, bill size and shape, and bill color in young four-year gulls are all so variable as to merit little weight”.

**Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)**

vote: 2-4-1  
one description

One, seen in flight only, was reported on 28 August 1999 at Nayanquing Point State Wildlife Area, Bay Co. The bird's underparts were off-white, its crown and upperwings were light tan, it was unstreaked, and it had a "heart shaped face with dark eyes". The bird was said to be flying "west to east...to the southeast of where we were standing" and "turned directly north as it started to land", providing a brief frontal view before disappearing into a thicket. It was during this in-flight frontal view that the observers noted the eye color and heart-shaped face. However, members were uncertain how much confidence to place on the eye coloration and facial shape given the brief view.

**Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*)**

vote: 0-6  
one description and photographs

One banded on 14 September 1999 in Dearborn, Wayne Co. The report included several pieces of information, including photos, measurements taken during banding, and a letter from an outside reviewer (solicited by the bander). The bird was identified as "an adult, as indicated by a fully ossified skull", yet the photographs showed prominent buff edgings to some of the back and head feathers, strongly suggesting the bird was a juvenile.

The best means of identification involves "tail clear" (Pyle 1997), a formula using two different measurements, distance from the tail tip to the tip of the longest uppertail covert minus the primary extension (distance from the tip of the longest secondary to the tip of the longest primary). Unfortunately, the bander did not measure from the tail tip to longest

uppertail as required, measuring to the longest undertail covert instead, so one of the most pertinent measurements had to be estimated from the photographs. Members were bothered by the additional error incurred by using these indirect means to obtain a crucial measurement.

Other measurements, including tail length and wing chord, can also be useful; nevertheless, if all relevant measurements are taken into account, and even if the estimate for "tail clear" is assumed to be reliable, then the measurement data are inconclusive. In fact, in comparison to Pyle (1997), one measurement excludes Eastern Wood-Pewee (*C. virens*), three exclude Western Wood-Pewee, and one is equivocal.

The bander also felt the plumage suggested Western Wood-Pewee. However, the plumage differences between the two pewee species are subtle and variable (Kaufmann 1990). The bill was mostly dark, which would be suggestive on an adult pewee, but bill color is more variable on juveniles. So, given the confusion over this bird's age, bill coloration was also of little use.

Finally, the bander's outside reviewer felt the information gathered did not positively support the identification as a Western Wood-Pewee.

**Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*)**

vote: 1-6  
one description

One reported on 30 May 2000 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co.; this species is of interest because it has never been recorded at this location, and is rare in the eastern Upper Peninsula. The bird was heard only and the vocalization was described as "fitz-bew". The observer had no previous experience with Willow Flycatcher and wrote the description two weeks after the sighting, after listening to tape recordings to aid in the identification. Most Committee

members were bothered by the observer's lack of experience with this species, noting that it is not uncommon to hear confusing Alder (*E. alnorum*)/Willow flycatchers.

**Clark's Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*)**

vote: 2-5  
one description

Two reported on 15 November 1999 in Grand Rapids, Kent Co. The birds were described as gray with "black wings – white tips on secondaries" and "black central tail feathers with white outer tail feathers". This very brief description, coupled with the observer's lack of experience with this species, led most members to conclude that a shrike or Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) cannot be fully eliminated.

**Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*)**

vote: 0-7  
one description

One reported on 11 April 1948 in Wayne Co. The bird was brown above with a white eye stripe, white underparts, and a long tail. The bird was observed without the aid of optics and the first line of the report states "Bewick's Wren-probable". Coupling the vague details with the observer's implication of doubt, all members felt more was needed to substantiate this record.

**Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*)**

vote: 4-3 in the second round  
one description and one summary of winter records from east of the Great Plains

One reported on 20 December 1997 in Ann Arbor, Washtenaw Co. It was a "small thrush...with gray-green back and tail, and an off-white to buffy breast with dark, but not black, breast spots". It had a "distinct, buffy eye ring" and

"decidedly gray-green, rather than rusty orange" tail.

This record was originally reviewed and accepted in 1998, but resubmission was requested along with a summary of winter records from east of the Great Plains. There were nine Midwest winter records since 1980 in the seasonal survey reports published in *American Birds*, *Audubon Field Notes*, and *Field Notes*. In fact, winter records were more frequent than expected by most members, but it was kept in mind that these seasonal reports include many records that prove to be inadequately supported.

The members voting against acceptance had varied concerns, but all felt that more specific detail was necessary. One member requested a more thorough description of the face pattern, while another felt that a Hermit Thrush (*C. guttatus*) with a dull tail could have caused some confusion.

**Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*)**

vote: 2-5  
one description

One reported on 6 November 1999 at Sarett Nature Center, Berrien Co. It had a "thicker, heavier beak than a Scarlet Tanager" (*Piranga olivacea*), "the wing color didn't seem as dark as a normal Scarlet Tanager", and "the entire bird had an orangish wash". The observers initially thought it was a female Scarlet Tanager, but decided the above features were not quite right for that species. Bill coloration was not noted and the description ends with "we settled on Summer Tanager", a statement that does not evoke much confidence. Most members felt more detail was needed, especially with reference to the bill and wing coloration.



**Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*)**

vote: 0-7  
photographs

Two first-year birds reported the week before Labor Day 1997 in Mackinac City, Emmet Co. There was no evidence in the photos to believe the birds were anything but young Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (*P. ludovicianus*).

**Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea*)**

vote: 2-5 in the second round  
one description

One female was reported from 14-15 May 1999 in Holland, Ottawa Co. The description was extremely brief, stating only that the bird was "heavy-bodied" with a "heavy, stout beak" and the plumage was brown with rusty wingbars. Most members were troubled by the report's brevity and were not convinced that an Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) could be eliminated.

**American Tree Sparrow (*Spizella arborea*)**

vote: 3-4  
one description

Two reported on 13 May 2000 in Weidman, Isabella Co. Each bird had a rufous crown, gray throat and breasts with central breast spots, and two white wing bars. The observer stressed the importance of the breast spot, stating it "made the sighting seem quite apparent". Some members were comfortable with these details, but the dissenting members felt details on bill coloration would have been helpful and were unwilling to put as much weight in the central breast spot as the observer (it is not uncommon to see an impression of a central breast spot on other species of sparrow).

**Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*)**

vote: 2-5  
one description

One reported on 18 December 1999 in Lansing, Ingham Co. The bird was estimated to be 5-6 in (7.6-12.7 cm) long, had a "sparrow beak", brown crown and forehead streaked with light black, "brownish cheeks", brown back and wings, a "more grayish" rump, and unmarked "whitish/gray colored throat & belly". While these features are suggestive of Chipping Sparrow, the observer also noted "no distinguishing bars or coloration" on the wings, while a Chipping Sparrow should show two white wingbars. Members were also concerned with the lack of detail on bill coloration and shape.

**Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*)**

vote: 2-5  
one description

One reported on 15 September 1999 at Arnheim, Houghton Co. The only detail reported was that the bird had a "larger whitish wing (folded wing) patch" than a Lark Bunting observed in Copper Harbor earlier the same fall (see details under Accepted Records). Most members were unwilling to accept a detail-poor record that was based almost entirely on a comparison to another bird seen several weeks earlier.

**Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolni*)**

vote: 3-4  
one description

One reported on 18 December 1999 on the Anchor Bay Christmas Bird Count, St. Clair Co. It was smaller than a Song Sparrow (*M. melodia*), had brownish upperparts with dark streaking, whitish underparts with buff in the malar area, breast, and flanks, and gray sides to the head and neck. Most members were concerned that Swamp Sparrow (*M. georgiana*) was not fully eliminated.

**Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola enucleator*)**

vote: 2-5  
one description

Two reported on 13 May 2000 in Deerfield Twp., Isabella Co. Each bird had a plump body and long tails with red on the heads, underparts, and back, two white wing bars, and a dark, stubby bill. Most members felt the brief details did not adequately eliminate White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*) or Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*).

**Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola enucleator*)**

vote: 2-5  
one description

One reported on 13 May 2000 in Mecosta Co. It was duller in color than a Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) with brown streaks on the back and a wing bar, a finch-like beak,

and brown wings and tail. Members were concerned that several other finch species could fit this description.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)**

vote 3-4 in the second round  
one description

One male reported on 21 October 1999 in Dearborn, Wayne Co. It had "a black patch over the ear covert, a thin black chin patch, chocolate crown", "a faint white ring around the collar", and was thought to be slimmer than a House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). Some members were bothered by the brief nature of the report, feeling more details would be needed to substantiate a first state record. There was also no mention of a white cheek in the original notes and the details were observed without the aid of optics.

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