

Actions of the Michigan Bird Records Committee for 2004

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This is the 15th report of the Michigan Bird Records Committee (MBRC). It covers the committee's actions during 2004.

In 2004, the MBRC's regular members were Rick Brigham (Allegan Co.), Philip Chu (Minnesota), Louis Dombroski (Luce Co.), James Granlund (Kalamazoo Co.), Joe Kaplan (Houghton Co.), Brad Murphy (Oakland Co.), and Scott Terry (Isabella Co.); alternate members were Jeff Buecking (Genesee Co.) and Jack Reinoehl (Hillsdale Co.). The committee was chaired by Chu, and Reinoehl was its secretary.

During 2004, the committee made 96 decisions on 93 records, with 59 (61%) of the decisions being to accept. The discrepancy between number of records and number of decisions, with there being three extra decisions, resulted because three records were reviewed not once but twice: a loon, reviewed once as a Pacific (*Gavia pacifica*) and not accepted, was reviewed again as an Arctic/Pacific (*G. arctica/pacifica*); an ibis, reviewed once as a Glossy (*Plegadis falcinellus*) and not accepted, was reviewed again as a Glossy/White-faced (*G. falcinellus/chilii*); and a hummingbird, reviewed once as a Rufous (*Selasphorus rufus*) and not accepted, was reviewed again as a *Selasphorus* species.

Rules for the acceptance or non-acceptance of documentation are given in the committee's bylaws, as described by Byrne (2000) and subsequently amended (Byrne 2004a, 2004b).

For each record, the following information is given: a vote tally, an indication of the documentation submitted, dates, and location. With regard to the documentation submitted, for accepted records only I list the observers who provided documentation, and the name of the person who discovered the bird is underlined, whether that person submitted documentation or not.

As a result of MBRC actions, the Michigan bird list changed in the following ways during 2004. First, one species, the Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*), was added, raising the Michigan list to 423 species; the Inca Dove was added with Accidental status. Second, two species were upgraded with respect to status: the Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) from Accidental to Casual, and the Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*) from Casual to Regular. And third, two species were downgraded: the Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) and the Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*), both from Regular to Casual.

During 2004, the MBRC also approved, by a vote of 8-0, a change in the "Structure of the Committee" portion of its bylaws. Prior to this change, all

committee members except for the secretary were subject to term limits. The change removed the secretary's unique term-limit exemption, so that he or she is now term-limited in the same way as other committee members.

To see a current version of the committee's bylaws, or view a summary of MBRC actions subsequent to 2004, visit the committee's website at http://umd.umich.edu/dept/rouge_river/MBRCHome.html.

Records Accepted

Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*)

Vote: 7-0

Descriptions: James Granlund,

Christopher Haas

Two adults on 19 November 2003 at the Muskegon Co. Wastewater Management System, Muskegon Co. (15th state record, first county record).

Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*)

Vote: 7-0

Description: Christopher Haas

One adult on 8 December 2003 at Grewes Lake, Isabella Co. (16th state record, first county record).

Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*)

Vote: 6-1

Description: Lyle Hamilton

One adult on 19 December 2003 at Lake Chemung, Livingston Co. (17th state record, first county record).

Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*)

Vote: 7-0

Description: Kevin Thomas

Photographs: Kevin Thomas

One first-winter individual on 27 December 2003 in Portland Twp., Ionia Co. (18th state record, first county record).

Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*)

Vote: 6-1

Descriptions: James Dawe, Jerry Hall

Video: Jerry Hall

Two on 7-8 April 2004, decreasing to one on 12-13 April, in Brookfield and Winsor twps., Huron Co. (19th state

record, first county record).

Brant (*Branta bernicla*)

Vote: 7-0

Description: Philip Chu

Two on 23 May 2004 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (53rd state record, 14th county record).

Brant (*Branta bernicla*)

Vote: 7-0

Description: Philip Chu

One on 24 May 2004 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (54th state record, 15th county record).

Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

Vote: 7-0

Photographs: Adam Byrne

One, an adult male wearing alternate plumage, on 9 April 2004 at the Pte. Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe Co. (36th state record, 5th county record).

King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*)

Vote: 7-0

Description: Steve Baker

One adult male wearing alternate plumage was observed on 15 December 2003 at the mouth of the Cheboygan River, Cheboygan Co. (46th state record, first county record). Note that, at this same location on this same date, a different observer reported a single male eider, and identified it not as a King but as a Common (*Somateria mollissima*); the Common Eider report was not accepted (see below).

Eider species

Vote: 7-0

Description: Philip Chu

One female or first-fall male on 29 November 2003 at Port Huron, St. Clair Co.

Barrow's Goldeneye*(Bucephala islandica)*

Vote: 7-0

Photographs: Scott Jennex

One, an adult male wearing alternate plumage, on 21-23 March 2004 at the Muskegon Co. Wastewater Management System, Muskegon Co. (10th state record, first county record).

Pacific Loon *(Gavia pacifica)*

Vote: 7-0

Description: Christopher Haas

One on 27 October 2003 at Port Huron, St. Clair Co., wearing juvenile plumage, basic plumage, or a combination of the two (18th state record, first county record).

Pacific Loon *(Gavia pacifica)*

Vote: 7-0

Descriptions: Rick Brigham, DavidVinnedge, Jonathan Wuepper

One adult wearing alternate plumage on 25-27 April 2004 at Lakeside, Berrien Co. (19th state record, first county record).

Brown Pelican*(Pelecanus occidentalis)*

Vote: 7-0

Description: Scott Jennex

Photographs: Kimberly Christie, Scott Jennex, Kip Miller, Jan Shillito

One in its first fall was discovered by Steve Minard on 29 August 2004 in Grand Haven Twp., Ottawa Co.; from 30 August through 4 September the bird was in the vicinity of the mouth of the Kalamazoo River in Allegan Co., and on 6 September it appeared

at St. Joseph, Berrien Co. On the 6th it was also recorded in adjacent LaPorte Co., Indiana, and thereafter there were occasional Brown Pelican reports along the Indiana and Illinois lakeshores until 11 October (Brock 2005). This record is the 11th for the state, the 2nd for Ottawa and Berrien cos., and the first for Allegan Co.

Tricolored Heron *(Egretta tricolor)*

Vote: 7-0

Description: Joe SoehnelPhotograph: Joe Soehnel

One adult found by Stan Madziar on 5 May 2004 in Hampton Twp., Bay Co. (40th state record, 11th county record).

Tricolored Heron *(Egretta tricolor)*

Vote: 7-0

Description: Scott Jennex

Photographs: B. Richards, Steve Walker

One adult, found by Joe Johnson, was at the W. K. Kellogg Bird Sanctuary, Kalamazoo Co., on 5-17 May 2004 (41st state record, first county record).

Tricolored Heron *(Egretta tricolor)*

Vote: 7-0

Descriptions: Adam Byrne, ScottJennex

One adult on 27 June 2004 at the Pte. Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe Co. (42nd state record, 17th county record).

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

Vote: 7-0

Descriptions: Lyle Hamilton, Don Henise

Photographs: Chuck and SueBradford, Lyle Hamilton

One adult, found "after 30 April" 2004 (Reinoehl 2004:192) in Spring Arbor Twp., Jackson Co., was joined

by a second-summer individual on 17 July; the two were last reported on 26 July (92nd state record, 2nd county record).

Glossy/White-faced Ibis
(Plegadis falcinellus/chihi)

Vote: 7-0

Description: David Peters

One on 26 May 2004 at the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Saginaw Co., was reported as a Glossy Ibis; however, it was ultimately accepted under the more-inclusive designation of "Glossy/White-faced Ibis. See the Glossy Ibis account below under "Records Not Accepted."

Black Vulture *(Coragyps atratus)*

Vote: 7-0

Descriptions: Calvin Brennan,Darlene Friedman

One on 2 October 2003 at the Pte. Mouillee State Game Area, Wayne Co. (11th state record, 2nd county record).

Black Vulture *(Coragyps atratus)*

Vote: 6-0-1

Description: Scott Coddle

One on 26 June 2004 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (12th state record, 3rd county record).

Mississippi Kite*(Ictinia mississippiensis)*

Vote: 6-1

Descriptions: Karl Bardon, Calvin Brennan

One adult on 16 May 2004 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (21st state record, 9th county record).

Mississippi Kite*(Ictinia mississippiensis)*

Vote: 6-1

Descriptions: Chip Francke, Ann Frieswyk

One adult on 26 June 2004 at the Muskegon State Game Area, Muskegon Co. (22nd state record, 2nd county record).

"Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk*(Buteo jamaicensis harlani)*

Vote: 6-1

Description: Jerry LiguoriPhotograph: Jerry Liguori

One adult, an intermediate morph by the criteria of Wheeler (2003), was documented on 24 April 2003 at Brockway Mountain, Keweenaw Co. (first state record, first county record). The documentation was reviewed in 2003 and then again in 2004 (Byrne 2004b), with both reviews hinging on the tail: the bird in question was photographed from below, and in the photo light shines through the rectrices, revealing the tail to be off-white with a narrow, ill-defined, blackish subterminal band and a fine pure-white tip.

In 2003 MBRC members – mindful of Mindell's (1983) maximum-of-10%-uppertail-red criterion for "pure" *harlani*, and uncertain that the documentation excluded slightly more than 10% red – were reluctant to accept; however, later that year the committee learned that a pure Harlan's can have rufous covering more than 10% of the uppertail (W. Clark, pers. comm.; B. Wheeler, pers. comm.), so in 2004 it reconsidered the record and, this time, voted to accept.

Black Rail *(Laterallus jamaicensis)*

Vote: 7-0

Photographs: Brian Johnson

One on 3-4 June 2004 at the Munuscong Wildlife Management Area, Chippewa Co. (3rd state record,

first county record).

King Rail (*Rallus elegans*)

Vote: 7-0 in the 2nd round

Description: Adam Byrne

One juvenile on 13 July 2003 at the Pte. Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe Co. (112th state record, 27th county record).

Black-necked Stilt

(*Himantopus mexicanus*)

Vote: 7-0

Description: Philip Chu

Photographs: Adam Byrne

One was discovered on 18 April 2004 at the Pte. Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe Co.; on 2 May two were present, and two were observed through 28 May, after which there was one report of a single individual on 30 May (4th state record, 2nd county record).

Bairds Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*)

Vote: 7-0

Photographs: Tim Baerwald

One, wearing alternate plumage, on 19 April 2003 at St. Joseph, Berrien Co.

Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*)

Vote: 7-0

Description: Philip Chu

Photographs: Christopher Neri

One, wearing alternate plumage, on 24 May 2004 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

Vote: 7-0

Description: Keith Westphal

Photographs: Carl Freeman

One juvenile on 20-23 September 2003 at Betsie Bay Lake, Benzie Co. (41st state record, first county record).

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

Vote: 7-0

Descriptions: Scott Jennex, David

Peters, Jeff Sommer

Photographs: Charlotte Hosking,

Scott Jennex, Myles Willard

One, appearing to have little or no alternate plumage, on 2-9 April 2004 at the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Saginaw Co. (42nd state record, first county record).

Red Phalarope

(*Phalaropus fulicarius*)

Vote: 7-0

Description: Philip Chu, Walt

Pawloski

Photographs: Adam Byrne, Brad

Murphy, Scott Terry

An individual in its first fall was observed on 28-29 November 2003 at the Whiting Power Plant, Erie Twp., Monroe Co.; however, on 25 November a Red-necked Phalarope was reported from the Whiting plant, and many believe this Red-neck report pertains to the Red that was documented from the same location a few days later (72nd state record, 7th county record).

Pomarine Jaeger

(*Stercorarius pomarinus*)

Vote: 7-0

Two descriptions: Rick Brigham,

Jon Wuepper

One pale-bellied individual, old enough to have long, spoon-shaped central rectrices, on 23 November 2003 at New Buffalo, Berrien Co. (28th state record, 5th county record).

Long-tailed Jaeger

(*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

Vote: 7-0

Description: James Granlund

One, by plumage at least a year old, on 29 August 2003 at South Haven, Van Buren Co. (22nd state record, first county record).

Black-legged Kittiwake

(*Rissa tridactyla*)

Vote: 7-0

Description: Louie Dombroski

One first-spring individual on 17 May 2004 at Seul Choix Point, Schoolcraft Co.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

Vote: 7-0

Description: Philip Chu

One adult wearing alternate plumage on 14 May 2004 in Three Oaks Twp., Berrien Co. (18th state record, 3rd county record).

Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*)

Vote: 5-2 in the 2nd round

Descriptions: Christopher Haas,

Derek Lovitch

One individual in its first fall on 11 October 2002 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (10th state record, first county record).

Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*)

Vote: 6-1

Description: Tim Rodenkirk

Two adults wearing alternate plumage on 8 July 2004 at New Buffalo, Berrien Co. (11th state record, 2nd county record).

Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*)

Vote: 7-0

Photographs: Adam Byrne, Jerry

Kolak, John McDaniel, Christopher

Neri, Steve Pike

One adult on 7-11 October 2004 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (first state record, first county record).

Rufous Hummingbird

(*Selasphorus rufus*)

Vote: 7-0

Photographs: Allen Chartier

One adult male, discovered by Robert and Pat Palmer, was present from 7 November to 19 December 2004 at

Berrien Springs, Berrien Co. (16th state record, 4th county record).

Lewis's Woodpecker

(*Melanerpes lewis*)

Vote: 7-0

Description: Philip Chu

Photographs: Darlene Friedman, Christopher Neri, Scott Terry One, first observed by Calvin Brennan, was present on 21-26 May 2004 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (2nd state record, 2nd county record).

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*)

Vote: 7-0

Description: Karl Bardon

One on 31 August 2003 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (13th state record, 7th county record).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

(*Tyrannus forficatus*)

Vote: 7-0

Descriptions: Karl Bardon, Diane Ten

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One on 29 April 2004 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (22nd state record, 11th county record).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

(*Tyrannus forficatus*)

Vote: 7-0

Description: Philip Chu

Photographs: Adam Byrne

One on 30 May 2004 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (23rd state record, 12th county record).

Western Tanager

(*Piranga ludoviciana*)

Vote: 7-0

Photographs: Chris Neri

One first-spring male, discovered by Roger and Sue Jones, was present from "around Saturday" - 1 May 2004 - to 6 May at Paradise, Chippewa Co. (15th state record, 3rd county record).

Western Tanager*(Piranga ludoviciana)*

Vote: 6-1

Description: Jeralyn Beardsley

One after-hatch-year male on 24 July 2004 in Pine Grove Twp., Van Buren Co. (16th state record, first county record).

Green-tailed Towhee*(Pipilo chlorurus)*

Vote: 7-0

Photographs: Allen Chartier

One found by Jim and Val Nelson on 29 November 2003 at Livonia, Wayne Co., was present until 21 January 2004 (8th state record, first county record).

Spotted Towhee *(Pipilo maculatus)*

Vote: 7-0

Description: Rebecca Irwin

Photograph: Rebecca Irwin

One female on 13 January 1988 in Northfield Twp., Washtenaw Co. (2nd state record, first county record).

Spotted Towhee *(Pipilo maculatus)*

Vote: 7-0

Photographs: John Lowry

One male from 31 January through 1 March 2004, and then again from 30 April through 2 May, in Hamburg Twp., Livingston Co. (3rd state record, first county record).

Lark Sparrow*(Chondestes grammacus)*

Vote: 7-0

Description: Paul Cypher

Photograph: Paul Cypher

One on 26 November 2003 at Lake Erie Metropark, Wayne Co. (63rd state record, 2nd county record).

Lark Sparrow*(Chondestes grammacus)*

Vote: 7-0

Description: Julie Craves

Photographs: Julie Craves

One from 31 January through 15 March 2004 at Dearborn, Wayne Co. (64th state record, 3rd county record).

Lark Sparrow*(Chondestes grammacus)*

Vote: 7-0

Descriptions: David Vinnedge,Jonathan Wuepper

One on 18 April 2004 in Lincoln Twp., Berrien Co. (65th state record, 7th county record).

Lark Sparrow*(Chondestes grammacus)*

Vote: 7-0

Description: Zach Gayk

One on 8 May 2004 at Alberta, Baraga Co. (66th state record, first county record).

Lark Sparrow*(Chondestes grammacus)*

Vote: 7-0

Description: William Grigg

One on 20 May 2004, "2 miles east of Alpena," Alpena Co. (67th state record, first county record).

Lark Sparrow*(Chondestes grammacus)*

Vote: 7-0

Description: Karl Bardon

Photographs: Christopher Neri, Bob Stucker

One on 3 November 2004 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (68th state record, 23rd county record).

Lark Bunting*(Calamospiza melanocorys)*

Vote: 7-0

Descriptions: Karl Bardon, Ken Mettie, Jr.

One on 13 October 2003 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (17th state record, 6th county record).

Smith's Longspur *(Calcarius pictus)*

Vote: 6-1

Description: Karl Bardon

One on 26 September 2003 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co. (13th state record, 9th county record).

Lazuli Bunting *(Passerina amoena)*

Vote: 7-0

Descriptions: Philip Chu, Gary

Siegrist

Photographs: Adam Byrne, James Granlund, Scott Terry

One male, found by Charlie and Kathy Johnson, was present from 20 May through 16 June 2004 in Sutton's Bay Twp., Leelanau Co. (2nd state record, first county record).

Painted Bunting *(Passerina ciris)*

Vote: 7-0

Description: William Grigg

Photographs: William Grigg

One female or first-spring male, first observed by Larry Hall, was present on 21-24 May 2004 at Alpena, Alpena Co. (13th state record, first county record).

Records Not Accepted**Ross's Goose** *(Chen rossii)*

Vote: 2-5

One description.

One was reported on 16 September 2003 at Chatham, Alger Co.

Trauger et al. (1971) and McLandress and McLandress (1979) recorded geese that – on the basis of their intermediate appearance – were believed to be Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens*) x Ross's Goose hybrids. Moreover, they observed intermediates that were paired with Snows and intermediates that were paired with Ross's.

If Snow and Ross's geese interbreed, and if the hybrid offspring can breed with either parental species, then young of mixed parentage could be quite similar to a Snow Goose, quite similar to a Ross's, or anywhere in between; accordingly, MBRC members are often reluctant to endorse Ross's Goose records

unless the Ross's condition is shown for all characters relevant to Snow-versus-Ross's identification.

- (1) Overall size should be considerably smaller than that of a Snow Goose.
- (2) The bill should be proportionally smaller than that of a Snow – shallower at the base and, especially, shorter.
- (3) The bill/facial-feathering interface should be straight.
- (4) The bill should meet two color-and-pattern requirements. (a) Though largely pink, it should have an area of grayish, greenish, bluish, or purplish coloration at the base of the maxilla. And (b) it should have little or no "grin patch," i.e., little or no black on the tomlia.

For the present record one important character, the bill/facial-feathering interface, was not described; conse-

quently, most committee members felt that they could not confidently eliminate the possibility of an intergrade.

Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*)

Vote: 3-4

One description.

One adult was reported on 22 March 2004 in La Grange Twp., Cass Co., but the report does not describe bill shape and makes no mention of gray, green, blue, or purple color on the basal part of the bill.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

Vote: 3-4

Photograph.

One was present on 24-27 May 2004 in Hamburg Twp., Livingston Co.; identity of this individual is not in dispute, but origin is – the MBRC has, since its inception, been divided on the subject of Barnacle Goose origin, and divisions remain, despite the fact that committee membership has changed over the years.

Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

Vote: 3-4

One description.

One adult male wearing alternate plumage was reported on 15 April 2004 at the Shiawassee River State Game Area, Saginaw Co. The report includes the following descriptive elements: the head of the bird in question was reddish, except for a pinkish buff forehead; the bird had "gray back & sides, & back tail & rump;" it had a white patch on the wing; and it was heard to give a "short, descending whistle."

One of these characteristics, the gray at the rear end of the body, is inappropriate – the Eurasian Wigeon is not gray but black at the rear.

Given that the rear end of the body is described incorrectly for a Eurasian Wigeon, it is difficult to argue that the description unequivocally indicates that species.

In an unrelated matter, multiple MBRC members argued that the description is not detailed enough to convincingly eliminate the possibility of a bird with both Eurasian and American wigeon (*Anas americana*) genes, and even two of the three committee members who voted to accept noted, with some concern, that the issue of hybrid origin had not been addressed. Presumed Eurasian x American wigeon hybrids are well-known (e.g., Bailey 1919, Gray 1958, Carey 1992, Merrifield 1993, Jiguet 1999), with an assertion from one North American region that the number of presumed hybrids is similar to the number of Eurasians (S. N. G. Howell in Hamilton 1996); some presumed hybrids resemble the Eurasian enough to be initially identified as that species (e.g., Watson 1970, Fall 1995).

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Vote: 2-5

Two descriptions.

This duck – a male wearing alternate plumage, reported on 6 March 2004 at South Haven, Van Buren Co. – was described as having a black head, neck, breast, and rear end, a dark back, pure white sides, and a bluish bill with black that spread "completely across the [bill] tip." It also had a tuft, though, as one observer wrote, "The tuft lacked the long plumes normally associated with Tufted Duck."

For a majority of the MBRC, one source of concern was the darkness of the back. One observer wrote, "When the bird was perpendicular to the observers the back appeared to be very slightly less black than the front and rear end of the bird. At all other angles the back looked the same color as the front and rear end." The second observer wrote, "The back was slightly but distinctly lighter than [the] rump and [the] head, neck and breast." Given that both observers noted a paler back, and that one did so without qualification, committee members could not ignore the possibility that the back was too pale for a "pure" Tufted Duck.

A second source of concern was the appearance of the tuft – "short (~1 inch) blunt" according to one observer, and "short but noticeable" according to the other. The latter observer suggested that the short tuft might be attributed to age or season, writing that "males have reduced tufts in winter and young males have smaller tufts than adult males." However, certain MBRC members – noting that the short tuft was observed in March, months after the most recent molt should have been completed (Cramp 1977), and that the pure white sides of the bird in question fit an adult male better than they do a youngster – suggested that the short tuft might be better viewed as an indicator of "mixed blood."

Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*)

Vote: 2-5

One description.

One male wearing alternate plumage was reported on 15 December 2003 at

the mouth of the Cheboygan River, Cheboygan Co.; the reporter wrote, "Black cap on top of head, cream color on back of neck, white on front of neck; black on sides, appeared to be sitting low in water, beak appeared yellow-orange. Sides of head white."

In response, multiple committee members expressed unease about the color on the hindneck and the color of the bill; one wrote, "The description of the back of the neck as 'cream color' does not seem the most accurate description of the color I would expect there for a male COEI," and continued, "The 'yellow-orange' beak concerns me because the most likely subspecies of COEI to occur in Michigan has a beak that would not likely have the word 'orange' appear in its description."

Multiple committee members also noted that description contained a significant omission. To quote one reviewer, "a male Common Eider old enough to have a white face should also have a lot of white on the upperbody, and the present description makes no mention of upperbody white."

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)

Vote: 0-7

One description.

One was reported on 1-2 November 2003 at Baraga State Park, Baraga Co.; the report consisted of just two sentences, neither of which described the bird in question, and without a description (or any other form of supporting evidence) the record could not be accepted.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)

Vote: 1-6

Photographs.

One was reported on 25 April 2004 at Grand Mere State Park, Berrien Co.

For this loon – perhaps in its first spring, as judged by its “winter-plumage” appearance in late April – shape seemed plausible for a Pacific Loon, and less so for a Common (*Gavia immer*). In particular, its head looked less massive than is typical for a Common; its forehead appeared to rise less steeply from the bill, so that the forehead/forecrown junction seemed less angular and the head, less “blocky;” and its bill looked too small. Note, however, that confident judgments about shape were hampered by the poor resolution of the photographs.

In contrast to shape, plumage was Common-like rather than Pacific-like. The hindneck was darker than, not paler than or concolor with, the upperbody. Moreover, the border between the dark hindneck and white foreneck was quite irregular, not straight.

Because plumage matched a Common Loon better than it matched a Pacific, most MBRC members were unwilling to accept the bird in question as a Pacific.

Arctic/Pacific Loon (*Gavia arctica/pacifica*)

Vote: 0-6-1

One description.

One, on 1-2 November 2003 at Baraga State Park, Baraga Co., was reported as a Pacific Loon; however, it was not accepted as such (see above) and so was reviewed again, this time under the more general designation of “Arctic/Pacific Loon.”

The record was not accepted as a Pacific because the observer provided

no evidence to support his identification, and the same problem – absence of evidence – ensured that the record could not be accepted as an Arctic/Pacific, either.

Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*)

Vote: 2-5

One description.

One, an adult reported on 26 May 2004 at the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Saginaw Co., was described as having a chestnut head, neck, and body combined with dark green flight feathers; additionally, the observer wrote, “The transition from the dark, slightly olive gray tone of the decurved bill to the dark gray face with dark brown eyes, and on to the dark feathers of the forehead and cheeks, was interrupted only by the thinnest of white lines.”

Although this description does suggest a Glossy Ibis, MBRC members expressed reservations about two of the characteristics described.

- (1) Eye color – brown in the Glossy Ibis, red in the White-faced Ibis – might be difficult to assess accurately, given that observations were made at an estimated distance of 175 meters under overcast conditions.
- (2) The location of the pale facial line(s) is not specified, and the location of those lines – on the bare facial skin in a Glossy, on the feathers surrounding that skin in a White-faced – is an important distinction between the two ibis species.

Further complicating ibis identification is the issue of hybridization: interbreeding between Glossy and

White-faced ibises, long known from captivity (Gray 1958), has apparently occurred “in the wild” as well, as evidenced by the recent discovery of Glossy x White-faced ibis intermediates in Oklahoma (Arterburn and Grzybowski 2003). Intermediates can superficially resemble either a Glossy or a White-faced, so confident elimination of an intermediate requires a careful evaluation of all, not just some, of the characters differing between the two.

After its non-acceptance as a Glossy Ibis, this record was re-reviewed under the more-inclusive designation of “Glossy/White-faced Ibis,” and as such it was accepted.

See above under “Records Accepted.” Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)

Vote: 0-7

One description.

One was reported on 4 October 1924 near Tecumseh, Lenawee Co.; the observer reported seeing the “body outlined against the grayish white of the under wing surface,” a statement causing concern because it implies that the part of the underwing next to the body was pale.

White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*)

Vote: 1-6

One description.

One was reported on 28 September 2003 at the Quincassee State Wildlife Area, Tuscola Co.

Leaving aside subjective assessments of shape and flight style, the report describes plumage that appeared “uniformly brown on top and bottom of wing as well as body, head, neck and undertail coverts;” the

tail was “very white” with “No dark spots.”

The uniformly brown belly, flanks, and underwings and the unmarked white tail indicate that this eagle was an adult, and the dark under tail-coverts are consistent with an adult White-tailed rather than an adult Bald (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*); however, in an adult White-tailed the head and neck should be paler than the body and wings, not concolor with them.

Recognizing this latter point, the observer suggested that the dark appearance of the head might be an artifact of lighting – the best views were obtained “against a very bright sky” – and noted that, during more distant views when the bird was approaching head-on, the head looked paler than the body. However, if the dark appearance of the head was an artifact of lighting, then the dark appearance of the under tail-coverts – a critical mark offered in support of the identification – might have been an artifact of lighting as well.

Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*)

Vote: 1-6 in the 2nd round

One description.

One was reported from New Buffalo, Berrien Co., on 28 March 2004, and the details in that report were consistent with an adult Broad-winged Hawk; however, most MBRC members were uneasy about the conditions under which those details were observed. According to the observer, the “Sun was almost directly above the bird and us;” moreover, the length of the observa-

tion period was never specified, leaving open the possibility that the bird in question was examined only briefly. Given that the observer described very strong backlighting – a condition in which details can be quite difficult to observe – and given the possibility that, under such conditions, the bird may have been seen only briefly, most committee members were reluctant to endorse the identification.

“Harlan’s” Red-tailed Hawk
(*Buteo jamaicensis harlani*)

Vote: 3-4 in the 2nd round

Two descriptions.

One was documented on 13 April 2002 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co.; the documentation was reviewed in 2002 (Byrne 2004a), and then again in 2004. For an account of the decision to review the record a second time, see Byrne (2004b).

Although the description of the bird in question matched one of Wheeler’s (2003) intermediate or dark-intermediate morphs of *harlani*, it did not provide information about the appearance of the uppertail – a significant omission, as uppertail appearance, and particularly the amount of rufous there, is essential to ruling out intergrades between *harlani* and *B. j. calurus*, the “Western” Red-tailed. Because the 13 April 2002 report did not rule out an intergrade, the MBRC could not accept it as pertaining to a “pure” *harlani*, either in 2002 or in 2004.

King Rail (*Rallus elegans*)

Vote: 1-6

One description.

One was reported on 29 July 2004 at the Pte. Mouillee State Game Area,

Monroe Co.; according to the report, the bird was seen with the naked eye for five to seven seconds as it flew across a dike from one impoundment to another.

In this quick view, the reporter noted a “bright orange” breast, barred flanks, and a bill that was longer than that of an American Coot (*Fulica americana*); size was estimated to be “Much too large to be a Virginia Rail” (*Rallus limicola*).

Of these characteristics, only size is useful for separating King and Virginia rails, and in the present case committee members were nearly unanimous in expressing concern about the accuracy of the observer’s size estimate. As one wrote, “Size was estimated without any other birds present for comparison, a difficult situation, and that difficulty was compounded by the brevity of the observer’s views.”

Great Knot (*Calidris tenuirostris*)

Vote: 0-7

One description.

Two were reported on 25 October 2003 at the Muskegon Co. Wastewater Management System, Muskegon Co.

The report noted that the birds in question were “dowitcher-shaped shorebirds with smaller bills;” the observer continued, “The birds are exactly as seen on page 155 of the Peterson Western Field Guide. The only other field marks not listed in [the field-guide] description are olive colored legs.”

Unfortunately, comparison to field-guide illustrations cannot replace a description of the features observed. Reports that rely on such

comparisons present a “catch-22” – they are only as good as the observer’s ability to compare, yet provide no evidence that he or she is comparing accurately.

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)

Vote: 0-7

One description.

One was reported on 2 June 2003 at the Muskegon Co. Wastewater Management System, Muskegon Co.

In his report, the observer wrote the following. “Bird definitely smaller in size [than the accompanying Semipalmated Sandpipers]. Bird in winter plumage. Bird looks like species on page 151 of Peterson’s Western Field Guide.”

The considerable difficulty of identifying a winter-plumage Little Stint aside, the present report is similar to the Great Knot report in format, and is similarly compromised – it relies on comparison to field-guide illustrations, when such comparisons cannot adequately substitute for a description of the features observed.

Baird’s Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*)

Vote: 3-4

One description.

Two wearing alternate plumage were reported on 29 May 2004 in Saginaw Co., and the report included the following details. The two birds were “noticeably larger” than nearby Semipalmated Sandpipers, and the tips of their folded wings “extended clearly beyond the tail.” Their legs were black. As for their plumage, they were buff on the face with a “fairly distinct, pale supercilium;” their underbodies were white except for a “distinct buffy brown” breast

that “did not exhibit distinct spotting;” and “Their backs appeared grayish brown with fairly large black spots.”

Although this description matches a Baird’s Sandpiper, committee members were concerned that it could match a Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) as well. Sanderlings are larger than Semipalmated Sandpipers, their folded wingtips often project beyond the tail tip, they are black-legged, and in some late-May individuals the ground color of the head, breast, and upperparts is gray-brown.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

Vote: 3-4 in the 2nd round

One description.

One photograph.

One wearing alternate plumage was reported on 16 July 2003 at the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Saginaw Co.

Regarding the description supporting this report, the observer wrote, “All of this is based on memory and the single photo.” Unfortunately, the memories in question were quite old – the description was not written until 11 April 2004, about nine months after the bird in question was seen. Because of reservations about the accuracy of nine-month-old memories, committee members tended to ignore the description, and to instead rely on the photo.

The photo shows a shorebird with the following characteristics. In shape, it is roughly like a yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca flavipes*), but with a proportionally bigger body and smaller head. In color, it is brown-gray on the head, neck, upperbody,

upperwings, breast, and anterior flanks, and whitish on the posterior underparts; the brown-gray areas are mottled darker, but, because the photo's resolution is less than ideal, determining whether the upperbody and upperwing feathers are pale-edged (as in a Ruff) or pale-notched (as in a yellowlegs) is impossible. In addition, though the legs seem faintly reddish, the photo's low resolution prevents leg color from being confidently determined.

With this photographic evidence in hand, some members of the MBRC voted to accept, believing that the bird's shape was diagnostic for a Ruff; others, however, voted against acceptance, feeling that shape had to be supplemented by information about plumage pattern or bare-part colors – information that could not be ascertained, given a photo that is not especially sharp. Indeed, as one dissenter noted, an identification based on shape is compromised by the bill; in the photo, the bill looks atypically long for a Ruff, being roughly one-and-a-half times as long as the head, and appears to be straight or even weakly upturned rather than slightly droop-tipped.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

Vote: 2-5

Two descriptions.

One, aged by one of the two observers as an adult, was reported on 26-27 May 2004 at Tawas Point, Iosco Co.

The two observers saw a jaeger with tern-like flight, long and pointed central tail feathers, and a pale breast with no breastband. Observer 1, in addition, indicated that the tail-

streamer projection was twice as long as the rest of the tail. Observer 2 was unsure about the projection of the central rectrices, but was able to add that the pale breast "faded gradually into" a dark belly, and that there was no white "flash" in the underprimaries. Unfortunately, neither observer was treated to prolonged views: observer 1 wrote, "We were able to watch it for a span of five or six seconds – enough time to get our binoculars up focused on it," and observer 2 described "A quick look through binoculars...as the bird was flying directly away from me, above me."

Regarding the characters described, some are not definitive. Not only the Long-tailed Jaeger but also the Parasitic can lack a breastband, and the white flash in a Parasitic's underprimaries can be missed, as MBRC members can attest from their cumulative experience at Whitefish Point. In addition, the tern-like flight of the bird in question is at best a supportive character, not a diagnostic one.

In contrast, two of the characters described are, among jaegers, unique to the Long-tailed – a central-rectrix projection that doubles the length of the rest of the tail, and an underbody pattern in which a pale breast grades into a dark belly; however, committee members were reluctant to weight these heavily, given the brief views in which they were observed.

Finally, several members of the MBRC expressed concern that one of the characters most useful for separating Long-tailed and Parasitic jaegers – the Long-tailed's relatively

strong contrast between grayish upper secondary-coverts and black remiges – was not noted by either observer.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

Vote: 0-7

One description.

One was reported on 19 September 2003 at East Grand Rapids, Kent Co.; according to the report, the bird in question had a black ear-spot, upperwings that were "white at end with dark tips," and a white, black-tipped tail – features that indicate either a first-fall Black-headed Gull or a first-fall Bonaparte's (*Larus philadelphia*).

The bird was identified as a Black-headed because its bill was pale with a dark tip, and because its wingbeats were "heavier" than a Bonaparte's; however, unlike any Black-headed, its underwings were "very pale throughout."

Chuck-will's-widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*)

Vote: 1-6

One description.

One was heard, but not seen, during "summer 1995" at Battle Creek, Calhoun Co.

The vocalizations heard were described only as a "distinctive call, how can you miss [it] if you've heard it before" – prompting one MBRC member to write, "Unfortunately, practically any bird that one hears at night has a distinctive call," and another to state, "It would have been helpful to have a simple written rendition of the bird's song."

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)

Vote: 0-7

One description.

One was reported from the "middle of Sept[ember]" 2003 at Newport, Monroe Co.; the report indicated that the bird "flew in to feed from hummingbird feeder," that it was "fatter than normal hummingbird (plump)," that its beak was dark, and that it combined a dark head with a brown chest.

Regrettably, this report fits the Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*) as well as it fits a Rufous; indeed, it could even match a Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) – male orioles, like the Rufous and Allen's hummingbirds, are dark-billed, dark-headed, and orangey on the chest, and the Baltimore is one of several orioles known to visit hummingbird feeders (Terres 1980).

Selasphorus species

Vote: 1-6

One description.

One female was reported "about a month" prior to 15 August 2003 in Newton Twp., Calhoun Co.

According to the observer, the bird in question was pale-throated and was larger than nearby female Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*); moreover, "rust color" was seen in its tail when the tail was spread.

Although rust color was seen in the tail, no mention was made of rust on the underbody, despite the fact that "I was observing her this whole time from the belly side." Of course, the absence of cinnamon or rufous on the underbody is of critical import, as it

is inconsistent with any female *Selasphorus* hummingbird.

***Selasphorus* species**

Vote: 1-5-1

One description.

One, from the "middle of Sept[ember]" 2003 at Newport, Monroe Co., was reported as a Rufous Hummingbird; however, it was not accepted as such (see above) and so was reviewed again, this time under the more inclusive designation of "*Selasphorus* species." The outcome of this second review, non-acceptance, was the same as the first, and for the same reason: the information provided by the report is consistent not only with a member of the genus *Selasphorus* but also with species that are not hummingbirds.

***Selasphorus* species**

Vote: 3-4 in the 2nd round

Six photographs.

One was reported from 2 to 8 October 2003 in East Jordan, Charlevoix Co.

Photographs show a female or immature male hummingbird with the following characteristics. Its upperparts were greenish. Its throat was whitish, with dark smudging where the corners of a gorget would be. And its underbody was whitish with pale rufous breast-sides, flanks, and under tail-coverts.

Unfortunately, the photos do not permit evaluation of certain other characters. One of these is bill length; a second is the appearance of the rectrices; and a third is the relative positions of the tail tip and the folded wingtips.

Because the above characters could not be evaluated, committee members could not eliminate a

Calliope Hummingbird (*Stellula calliope*) from consideration, and because they could not eliminate *Stellula* they could not accept the bird in question as a *Selasphorus*.

Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*)

Vote: 0-7

One description.

One was reported on 10 May 2003 in Norway Twp., Dickinson Co.; according to the report, the bird in question was a small vireo with an unbroken pale eye-ring, wingbars that were "light rather than strong," and "pale yellow on the upper sides." To further support his assertion that the bird in question was a vireo, the observer noted that it "didn't have a sharp pointed kinglet beak."

Two aspects of this report caused concern. First, in a Bell's Vireo the eye-ring is not complete, but is broken both before and behind the eye. And second, the statement about "pale yellow...upper sides" can be interpreted in more than one way: to quote one MBRC member, "Does it mean that the anterior flanks were yellowish (plausible for a Bell's Vireo), or that the upperparts were yellowish (implausible for a Bell's)?"

Yellow-green Vireo

(*Vireo flavoviridis*)

Vote: 2-5

One description.

One was reported on 25 April 2003 at Lake Erie Metropark, Wayne Co.

In this detailed report, the observer noted the following characteristics. The bill was judged to be "very noticeably heavier than those seen on Warblers," with a "light beige" mandible. There was a whitish supercilium that was judged to be

dingier than that of a Red-eyed Vireo (*V. olivaceus*); the supercilium was bracketed by a black line above and a black line below, with the black lines being narrower, and so less conspicuous, than those of a Red-eyed. The crown was "mostly gray looking," but contrasted less with the back than is typical for a Red-eyed; the back and folded upperwings were "basically an olive shade" with a "distinctive yellow cast." There was "some yellowish/olive in the lower post ocular area of the face." Finally, the throat and underbody were white with "bright yellow" under tail-coverts; there was also "bright yellow" on the flanks, but the yellow "did not extend as far down toward the belly as depicted in National Geographic" (Dickinson 1999).

Terrill and Terrill (1981) noted that several alleged Yellow-green Vireo characteristics – dullness of the supercilium, narrower black lines bracketing the supercilium, more greenish (less gray) crown, brighter (more yellow-tinted) underbody, and extensive bright yellow on the underbody – can be matched by some Red-eyed Vireos.

Accordingly, Terrill and Terrill (1981) argued that Yellow-green Vireo identification should emphasize the following characteristics.

- (1) The pale area at the base of the Yellow-green's mandible is more extensive.
- (2) The yellow color of the under tail-coverts and flanks extends forward to the neck-sides, and even to the face.
- (3) The yellow is "consistently a bright lemon or sulphur yellow"

[sic], as opposed to the "relatively bright...buffy or greenish yellow" of more colorful Red-eyes.

- (4) The remiges are edged with yellow.

- (5) The tail is yellowish.

The bird in question was thought to have a more extensively pale base to the mandible; it was said to have "yellowish/olive" on the cheeks, but yellow was not noted on the sides of the breast or neck; the yellow on its underbody was said to be "bright," but without additional adjectives describing its hue; there is no indication that its remiges were yellow-edged; and its tail was not described. Thus, regarding the most important characters for identifying a Yellow-green Vireo, the bird in question matched one, but may have failed to match the other four.

Clark's Nutcracker
(*Nucifraga columbiana*)

Vote: 2-5

One description.

One, reported on 4 October 1942 at Bass Lake, Gogebic Co., was said to have black wings with white patches and a "whitish-gray" head and neck; unfortunately, no additional details were provided, leading one member of the MBRC to write, "the brevity of the description does not eliminate other birds such as shrikes [*Lanius* species] or mockingbirds [*Mimus polyglottos*] from consideration."

Black-billed Magpie
(*Pica hudsonia*)

Vote: 2-5

One description.

One was reported on 9 April 2004 in Summit Twp., Mason Co.

The report contained the following description of the bird in question. "The bird appeared to be 18-19 inches long, with a black bill. The bird had a very long tail, a stark white breast, with the rest of the body being shiny black. I noticed the coloring of the bird because it reminded me of...Belted Galloway Cattle."

With its five elements – overall length, bill color, length of the tail, breast color, and color of the rest of the body – this description strongly suggested a magpie; however, it did raise two questions. First, the breast was said to be white, whereas in a magpie the underbody white is located on the belly and flanks; was white really restricted to the breast, or did the observer simply use the word "breast" to mean what someone with more experience would have called "belly and flanks?" And second, the rest of the body was said to be black, whereas magpies have an additional large white area in the form of white scapulars; was the rest of the body really black, without any white in the scapulars?

Given a description with just five elements, two of which are incorrect if taken literally, most committee members were reluctant to endorse the identification.

Common Raven (*Corvus corax*)

Vote: 2-5

One description.

One was reported on 10 May 2003 in Manchester Twp., Washtenaw Co.; according to the report, the bird in question was black, its "tail and beak/head protruded extensively from the body" as it flushed from a treeline, and its call, heard twice while the

bird flew, was described as a "deep, hoarse *kroark*."

Given this information, the MBRC recognized that identification of the bird in question rested on the bird's vocalizations; however, a majority was unwilling to rely on a twice-heard call.

Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*)

Vote: 4-3 in the 2nd round

One description.

One was reported on 20 October 2003 at Grand Rapids, Kent Co.; the site from which it was reported was a slope with "all sizes of deciduous woods" and an "understory of thickets on edge." The bird in question was perched in one of these thickets.

The bird was described as follows. It had a "Long curved bill like Carolina's" (a reference to the Carolina Wren [*Thryothorus ludovicianus*]). Its head, throat excepted, was gray, and its back was "Light brown with small dark spots;" its tail was "Browner [than the back] with tannish band at end." In addition, its throat and breast were white with dark streaks.

A majority of the MBRC found this description to be convincing; however, a minority agreed with the committee member who wrote, "While the description of the bird matches Rock Wren, I just can't get past the fact that the habitat is wrong."

Bewick's Wren

(*Thryomanes bewickii*)

Vote: 3-4

One description.

One was reported on 20 April 2004 at Lake Erie Metropark, Wayne Co.

The observer saw, for "perhaps 10-15 seconds," a Carolina Wren that did not look "right." It had a "brown/red" back and a "Prominent white eye brow stripe." However, it also had unmarked "Whitish or gray-white underparts" from the "throat all the way to the undertail coverts" and a long, cocked tail with white on the outermost rectrices. The tail was "actively being moved about" and "at times it appeared to fan open."

Subsequently, the observer was "distracted by other events of the day," and as a result field guides were not consulted until nine hours had passed; when guides were checked, the observer "noted immediately the significant difference in appearance between Carolina Wren and Bewick's Wren," and re-identified as a Bewick's the "weird Carolina Wren" that he had seen earlier.

To some, the description of the bird in question was convincing; however, even these were concerned about the apparent absence of markings on the underbody – in a Bewick's, the under tail-coverts should be dark-barred, not plain.

Other MBRC members believed the description to be neutralized by the circumstances of the sighting. Specifically, in explaining why they elected not to accept, they cited the brevity of the observation period and the hours-long delay between observation and identification.

Western Tanager

(*Piranga ludoviciana*)

Vote: 2-5

One description.

One was reported on 11-12 May 2004 at West Olive, Ottawa Co.; the bird in

question was said to be "Approx. 7 inches" long" with a "Bright red" head and neck, "Orange frontal chest," yellow belly, and "Blackish wings with wing bars similar to Baltimore Oriole."

Although this report is in many respects appropriate for a Western Tanager, the mention of an orange chest is puzzling – in Westerns the chest is yellow, just like the flanks and belly. Because the color of a large area like the chest is not correct for a Western Tanager, most committee members were reluctant to vote for acceptance.

Lark Bunting

(*Calamospiza melanocorys*)

Vote: 1-6 in the 2nd round

One description.

One, reported on 23 September 2003 at the Muskegon Co. Wastewater Management System, Muskegon Co., had the following appearance. It was judged to be similar in size to a Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*), and was said to have grayish "grosbeak mandibles." Its head and back were heavily streaked; the face showed an "ear patch" bounded above by a "Bright white" eye ring and pale supercilium, and below by a "white whisker." The bird had large white wing patches and its breast and belly were heavily streaked.

The above appearance is consistent with a Lark Bunting; however, the observer described not only appearance but also vocalizations – "cardinal [*Cardinalis cardinalis*] like song – even sounded like Tufted Titmouse [*Baeolophus bicolor*]" – and most committee members agreed that the Lark Bunting's song is

neither cardinal- nor titmouse-like. Confronted with visual characters that matched a Lark Bunting and vocal characters that did not, most members of the MBRC could not unequivocally support this record.

McCown's Longspur

(*Calcarius mccownii*)

Vote: 4-3 in the 2nd round

One description.

One was reported on 16 May 2004 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co.; the bird "flew in, landed, then flushed three times as we tried to approach..., each time landing out of sight until final flush when bird headed south...out of sight."

Because the bird was so uncooperative, its identification was based on just two characteristics, tail pattern and call.

- (1) The tail was white, patterned with an inverted black "T;" the observer noted "definitely squared corners to inside of black T-shape."
- (2) The vocalization, heard at least once, was a "loud, shrill, squeaky, slightly rising 'squeeee.'" Trying to place this call in an appropriate context, the observer continued, "[I am] especially familiar with Chestnut-collared [Longspur, *Calcarius ornatus*] on breeding grounds where I see it annually (and I have never heard Chestnut-collared make this call note)."

Interpretation of the tail pattern is less than straightforward: not only the McCown's Longspur, but also the Chestnut-collared, has an inverted blackish "T" on the tail. In both, R1 is dark (forming the shaft of the "T"),

as are the tips of R2-R4 (forming the crossbar of the "T"). The Chestnut-collared does have more dark on R2-R4, especially on the outer web and along the shaft of the inner, so when the tail is closed it looks more extensively dark – on the closed tail the only visible parts of R2, R3, and R4 are the outer webs, precisely the parts that are more extensively pigmented in a Chestnut-collared. Critically, however, if a Chestnut-collared spreads its tail widely then the white on the inner webs of R2-R4 is revealed, so that the dark on the tail looks like an upside-down "T," i.e., like a McCown's in pattern.

If not only the McCown's but also the Chestnut-collared can show an inverted dark "T" on the tail, then identification of the bird in question rests on vocalizations alone, and committee members were reluctant to place much weight on a call note that may have been heard just one time.

Eurasian Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)

Vote: 2-5

Photographs.

One male believed to be in its second spring was present on 5 May 2004 at Whitefish Point, Chippewa Co.

Although photographs unambiguously confirm the identification of this bird, questions about captive origin were raised by a plethora of recent Eurasian-passerine records in the Midwest.

- (1) In the Midwest generally, Whitefish Point excluded, the following Eurasian perching birds were recorded during the first six months of 2004 (J. Craves, unpubl. data): three

Eurasian Jays *Garrulus*

glandarius (Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan); up to 10 Great Tits *Parus major* (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois); one Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus* (Wisconsin); one Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* (Ontario); four European Greenfinches *Carduelis chloris* (Illinois, Indiana); and up to 49 European Goldfinches *Carduelis carduelis* (Ontario, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio).

- (2) At Whitefish Point, during May and June 2004 not only the Eurasian Siskin but also three other Eurasian finches appeared at the Whitefish Point feeders: a Common Chaffinch, a European Goldfinch, and a Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*).

Almost all of the species listed above – the Eurasian Jay, Great Tit, Blue Tit, European Greenfinch, European Goldfinch, and Linnet – are not believed to have occurred naturally in North America.

Given the many recent records of European passerines, most of which pertain to species that are exotic, treating the Whitefish Point Eurasian Siskin as if it originated "in the wild" is difficult.

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This Black Rail, a 3rd state record, was the first ever photographed (and banded!) in Michigan. Present on 3-4 June 2004 at the Munuscong Wildlife Management Area, Chippewa. Photo by Brian Johnson.