

# Actions of the Michigan Bird Records Committee for 2015

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This is the 26<sup>th</sup> report of the Michigan Bird Records Committee (MBRC). This report covers the committee's actions during the year 2015.

In 2015, the MBRC committee consisted of regular members Adam M. Byrne (Ingham County), Allen Chartier (Wayne County), Philip C. Chu (Minnesota), Skye Haas (Marquette County), Scott Terry (Livingston County), David Pavlik (Ingham County), Sean Williams (Ingham County), and alternate members Matt Hysell (Berrien County) and J.D. Phillips (Marquette County). Terry chaired the committee, and Byrne was the secretary.

In 2015, the committee made decisions on 140 records, with 79 (56.4%) of the records resulting in acceptance at some taxonomic level. Accepted means at least one individual reported was accepted, even if at broader taxonomic level. For example, a bird submitted as a Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) and not accepted, but was later accepted as an *Aechmophorus* grebe.

The information provided for each of the following records is: vote tally; an inventory of the documentation provided; number of birds claimed; date(s); and location. For accepted records only, the observers associated with the documentation are listed. If known, the person who first found the bird(s) is also listed and underlined, whether that person submitted documentation or not.

Based on actions in 2015, on records from 2014, Western Grebe moved from Casual to Regular and Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Setophaga nigrescens*) moved from Accidental to Casual. Per MBRC bylaw D.1., Western Grebe will remain on the review list through 2017, at which point, if still considered Regular, its status as a review species will be reassessed.

During 2015, five species moved from Casual to Accidental [Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*), Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*), Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*), and Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*)], four from Accidental to Casual [Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*), Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*), and Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*)], two from Regular to Casual [Western Grebe and Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*)], and two from Casual to Regular [White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) and Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)]. Per MBRC bylaw D.1., the latter two species will remain on the review list through 2018, at which point their status will be reassessed.

At the August meeting, the committee discussed the American Birding Association's recently revised listing rule regarding reintroduced species:

“(vi) an individual of a reintroduced species may be counted if it is part of a population that has successfully hatched young in the wild or when it is not possible to reasonably separate the reintroduced individual from a wild-born individual.”

As it turns out, this rule is retroactive to the first wild-hatched young, which for the Whooping Crane reintroduction occurred in June 2006. Ironically, there have only been four to five wild-hatched cranes, as of August 2015, far from what the committee would truly consider a wild population. So, regardless how silly the new ABA rule appears or what people may choose to count on their lists, the committee decided there was no basis to treat these birds as an established species. Michigan has no confirmed wild Whooping Crane records, and all agreed that individuals from this reintroduction program certainly didn't warrant adding the species to the state list.

The committee also considered several requests to reconsider records; most such requests are detailed in the species accounts below. Two of them, however, involve records not acted on in 2015, so are detailed here. First was a request to reconsider a Ross's Goose record from Benzie and Manistee Counties from 19-28 March 1997. In 1997, this record was accepted (Reinoehl 1998), but later, in 2001, reconsidered and rejected (Byrne 2002). In 2016, new documentation, in the form of a photo, was discovered, prompting the reconsideration request, which was accepted with a 9-0 vote. Lastly was a request to reconsider a “Yellow” Palm Warbler reported in Calhoun County on 4 May 2014 that was rejected in 2014 (Terry 2015). The original review was based on a series of photos, but

subsequently, the observer also provided a written report. Members were divided on whether the new documentation warranted reconsideration, with some feeling it should automatically warrant reconsideration and others arguing that the report offered no additional information not readily available in the photos. The request was rejected with a 4-5 vote.

## Records Accepted

### “Northern” Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis fulgens*)

vote: 7-0 for 12 individuals

description: Carl Drife

photo files: Linda Ar, Allen Chartier,, James Fox, Don Henise, Wayne Hoch, Curt Hofer, Scott Jennex, Philip Odum, Karl Overman, Kaitlyn Wilson

Twelve individuals were in a pond in Brownstown Charter Township, Wayne County, on 16-23 May 2015 (sixth state record, first county record).

### Black-bellied Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*)

vote: 7-0 for nine individuals

photo files: Archie & Carol Hendrick

Nine birds were on private property in Rock River Township, Alger County, on 29 May 2015 (seventh state record, first county record).

### Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

vote: 6-1

description: Mike Mahler

One male was at the Three Oaks sewage ponds, Berrien County, on 29 March 2015 (52<sup>nd</sup> state record, third county record).

### Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

vote: 5-2, in the second round

description: Jeff Buecking

One male was at Fish Point State Wildlife Area, Tuscola County, on 19 April 2015 (53<sup>rd</sup> state record, second county record).

### Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

vote: 7-0 for one individual (male),

0-7 for second individual (female)

descriptions: Adam Byrne, Allen Chartier

photo files: Kirby Adams, Allen Chartier, Nathan Martineau, Scott Terry, Larry Ubanski

Two birds, a male and a female, were claimed from Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe County, on 22-28 May 2015 (54<sup>th</sup> state record, 10<sup>th</sup> county record). The male was well photographed and showed no signs of introgression with American Wigeon (*Anas Americana*). However, one observer claimed an additional female, because it lacked “a distinct white ‘bar’ across the base of the secondaries, which is formed by pale tips of the secondary coverts.” This, however, is not quite correct: adult female Americans do have a white bar across the base of the secondaries, but it is formed



by the extensively white bases of the greater upper secondary-coverts. More importantly, first-cycle female Americans lack the white bar across the greater, which instead are mostly dark – “brown with a fine white subterminal band and narrow black tips” (Cox and Barry 2005). Lastly, some members felt additional details on head and underwing pattern should be provided when identifying a female Eurasian Wigeon, since ruling out female hybrids would be extremely challenging.

**Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)**

vote: 7-0

*description and photo files:* [Michael Boston](#)

One male was at the Muskegon Wastewater Management System, Muskegon County, on 3-6 June 2015 (55<sup>th</sup> state record, fifth county record).

**“Eurasian” Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca crecca*)**

vote: 7-0

*description and photo files:* [Louis J. Dombroski](#)

One male was in a flooded field southeast of Rudyard, Chippewa County, on 22 April 2015 (second state record, first county record).

**King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*)**

vote: 7-0

*descriptions:* Tom Gass, Pam Rasmussen, Jack Rogers, Larry Urbanski, Kimberly Warner, Gerald Ziarno

*photo files:* Adam M. Byrne, Thomas Gass, Ross Green, Lyle Hamilton, Don Henise, Scott Jennex, Brandon Ndiffier, Karl Overman, Ken Sapkowski, Jeff Steinmetz, Dave Stimac, Joan Tisdale

One female found during an Oakland Audubon field trip along the St. Clair River, St. Clair County, was present from 24 January – 15 March 2015 (61<sup>st</sup> state record, 11<sup>th</sup> county record).

**Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*)**

vote: 7-0

*descriptions:* Dave Dister, Darrell Lawson, David Pavlik *photo files:* Rick Brigham, Adam M. Byrne, [Charlie DeWitt](#), Dave Dister, Jeff Fossmo, Dan Fox, Chip Francke, Thomas Gass, Gordon Green, Ross Green, Scott Jennex, Brian Johnson, Aaron Kortenhoven, Jamie Krupka, Darrell Lawson, Carl Manning, Chris McCreedy, Myles McNally, Marc Miedema, Philip Odum, Tom Pavlik, Alex Pitt, Caleb Putnam, Chace Scholten, Linda Scribner, Kevin Vande Vusse, Mark Wolch  
One was first found at Grand Haven State Park, Ottawa County from 22 December 2014 – 3 January 2015, later located at Ludington, Mason County on 16-23 January, was present at Pere Marquette Park, Muskegon County on 17 February – 12 March 2015, and last observed back at Ludington on 3-4 May 2015. It was

originally reviewed and rejected as a “Pacific” Common Eider (*S. m. v-nigrum*) with a 3-4 vote. Several members felt the photos were sufficient to allow a subspecific identification, while others found the literature too subjective to draw a firm conclusion. Regardless, the photos clearly showed a Common Eider, making it easy to accept under this broader category.

**Barrow’s Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*)**

vote: 6-1

description: Tom Kemp

photo files: Greg Bodker

One adult male was found by Tom Kemp at Higgins Lake, Roscommon County, on 20 December 2014 (19<sup>th</sup> state record, first county record).

**Barrow’s Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*)**

vote: 7-0

descriptions: Thomas Gass, Tom Hince, Randall Kling

photo files: Thomas Gass, Joan Tisdale

One adult male was along the St. Clair River, St. Clair County, on 16 January – 16 February 2015 (20<sup>th</sup> state record, first county record).

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

vote: 6-1

photo files: Judi Manning, Myles McNally, Chace Scholten

One was found by Simon Kiacz at Holland State Park, Ottawa County,

on 15-20 December 2014 (47<sup>th</sup> state record, fourth county record).

**Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)**

vote: 7-0 for one bird

descriptions: Philip C. Chu, Jacco Gelderloos

photo files: Jacco Gelderloos, Kip Miller, Andre Moncrieff

Up to 14 birds were claimed at Three Oaks, Berrien County, from 30 March – present. Of the 14 claimed, only one was acceptable based on the documentation provided. The 13 additional birds were only shown in photographs from a distance, which did not allow one to assess the color of the primaries, body, under tail coverts, or underside of the rectrices; 10 were rejected with a 0-7 vote, one with a 3-4 vote, one with a 4-3 vote, and the last two with a 1-6 vote, in the second round.

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

vote: 7-0

photo files: Tom Collins

One was in Spring Lake Township, Ottawa County, on 7-11 May 1999 (fifth state record, first county record).

**Chuck-will’s-widow (*Antrostomus carolinensis*)**

vote: 7-0

descriptions: Adam M. Byrne, Scott Terry

video files: Scott Jennex, Myles McNally



One was at the Sharonville State Game Area, Jackson County, on 10 May – 10 June 2015 (19<sup>th</sup> state record, fifth county record).

**Costa’s Hummingbird (*Calypte costae*)**

vote: 7-0

*descriptions:* Brian Allen, Allen Chartier, Philip C. Chu, James Dawe, Darrell Lawson

*photo files:* Kirby Adams, Adam M. Byrne, Rick Brigham, Joe Brooks, Allen Chartier, Nathan DeBruine, Jeff Fossmo, Carl Freeman, Darlene Friedman, Andrew Galbraith, Diane Garlick, Thomas Gass, Lyle Hamilton, Matt Hysell, Scott Jennex, Ed Kaminski, Darrell Lawson, Myles McNally, Brad Murphy, Jeff Pavlik, Alex Pitt, Chace Scholten, Linda Scribner, Scott Terry, Mary Trombley, Warren Whaley

One young male was coming to a feeder at the home of Ron and Jan Joslyn in Onekama, Manistee County, from early October – 18 November 2014 (first state record, first county record).

**King Rail (*Rallus elegans*)**

vote: 6-1 for one individual, in the second round

*description and video file:* John Brennenman

Two were reported at Fort Custer Military Training Center, Kalamazoo County, from 10 May – 19 June 2014 (142<sup>nd</sup> state record, sixth county record). One individual was accepted in 2014 (Terry 2015).

**King Rail (*Rallus elegans*)**

vote: 7-0

*descriptions:* James C. Dawe, Ryan Dziedzic, Mary Trombley  
*video files:* Tom Baumgart, Glenn Peterson

One was at Nayanquing Point State Wildlife Area, Bay County, on 15 June – 2 July 2015 (148<sup>th</sup> state record, 11<sup>th</sup> county record).

**King Rail (*Rallus elegans*)**

vote: 7-0

*description:* Cody Porter

*photo files:* Kirby Adams, John Parker

One was at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe County, on 2 August 2015 (149<sup>th</sup> state record, 39<sup>th</sup> county record).

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

vote: 7-0 for two individuals

*description:* David Peters

*photo files:* David Peters, Joe Soehnel

Two, a male and a female, were at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Saginaw County, from 29 April – 19 May 2015 (12<sup>th</sup> state record, fifth county record).

**“Black-necked” Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus mexicanus*)**

vote: 6-1 for two individuals

*descriptions:* Adam M. Byrne, Philip C. Chu, Scott Terry

*photo files:* Kirby Adams, Rick Brigham, Allen Chartier, Ross Green, Wayne Hoch, Scott Jennex, Jerome

Jourdan, Myles McNally, Brandon Nidiffer, Phil Odum, Scott Terry, Larry Urbanski

Up to four birds were reported at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe County, from 30 April – 22 June 2015. One was co-found by Mary Trombley on 30 April; the first report of multiple individuals came on 18 May. Two birds were well photographed and were accepted in the first round of voting (13<sup>th</sup> state record, fifth county record). The majority of the committee felt the third individual was adequately described and it was eventually accepted in 2016. The fourth individual was never described, only mentioned in passing, so was not accepted with a 0-7 vote.

### **Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*)**

vote: 7-0

photo files: [Andy Dettling](#), Thomas Gass, Ross Green, Lyle Hamilton, Scott Jennex, Myles McNally, Tom Pavlik, Scott Terry

One was at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe County, on 1-2 May 2015 (56<sup>th</sup> state record, 27<sup>th</sup> county record).

### **Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*)**

vote: 7-0

descriptions: Ray Bontrager, James C. Dawe

photo files: [John Parker](#), Jeff Pavlik  
One was at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe County, on 26 – 31 July 2015 (57<sup>th</sup> state record, 28<sup>th</sup> county record).

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

vote: 7-0

description: [Philip C. Chu](#)

photo file: Chris Neri

One was at Whitefish Point, Chippewa County, on 30 May 2015 (17<sup>th</sup> state spring record, third county spring record).

### **Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*)**

vote: 7-0

description: Allen Chartier, Gordon Fitch

photo files: Thomas Gass

video file: Tom Hince

One was at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe County, on 7-22 May 2015 (226<sup>th</sup> state record, 75<sup>th</sup> county record).

### **Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*)**

vote: 7-0

photo files: Scott Jennex, John Lowry

One, found during a Washtenaw Audubon Society field trip, was at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe County, on 15 August 2015 (227<sup>th</sup> state record, 76<sup>th</sup> county record).

### **Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*)**

vote: 7-0

photo file: [Skye Haas](#)

One was at Marquette, Marquette County, on 17 August 2015 (228<sup>th</sup> state record, seventh county record).

### **Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*)**

vote: 6-1

photo files: [Charlie DeWitt](#)

One was at Muskegon Wastewater



Management System, Muskegon County, on 24 August 2015 (229<sup>th</sup> state record, 41<sup>st</sup> county record).

**Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*)**

vote: 5-2 for two individuals, in the second round

description: Tom Hince

Two were at Harley Ensign DNR Memorial Boat Launch, Macomb County, on 22 September 2014 (100<sup>th</sup> state record, second county record).

**Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*)**

vote: 6-1

description: David Stimac

One was at Shiawassee River State Game Area, Saginaw County, on 31 October 2014 (102<sup>nd</sup> state record, first county record).

**Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*)**

vote: 7-0

descriptions: Philip C. Chu, Andre Moncrieff, Andrew Theus

photo files: Diane Garlick, Matt Hysell, Andre Moncrieff

One was at the Three Oaks sewage ponds, Berrien County, on 8-11 November 2014 (103<sup>rd</sup> state record, 21<sup>st</sup> county record).

**Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*)**

vote: 7-0 for two individuals

description: Mike Bourdon, Philip C. Chu

photo files: Mike Bourdon, Rhoda

Johnson

Two, co-found by Mike Mahler, were at New Buffalo harbor, Berrien County, on 9 November 2014 (104<sup>th</sup> state record, 22<sup>nd</sup> county record).

**Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*)**

vote: 7-0

description, photo files, and video

file: Louis J. Dombroski

One was at Bay City State Recreation Area, Bay County, on 3 October 2015 (106<sup>th</sup> state record, second county record).

**Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*)**

vote: 7-0

descriptions: Brandon Aho, Allen Chartier

photo files: Wayne Hoch, Scott Jennex, Brain McGee, Andrea Meldrum, Mike Mencotti, Philip Odum, Paul Poronto, Kevin Ryziewski, Greg Smith

One was at Lake St. Clair Metropark, Macomb County, on 30 October – 6 November 2015 (108<sup>th</sup> state record, third county record).

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

vote: 7-0

description: Andrew Theus

photo files: Matt Hysell, Andrew Theus

One young bird flew past New Buffalo harbor, Berrien County, on 29 September 2015 (32<sup>nd</sup> state record, fifth county record).



**Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)**

vote: 7-0

*descriptions:* Adam M. Byrne, Allen Chartier, Philip C. Chu*photo files:* Allen Chariter, Scott Jennex

One was at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe County, from 9 May – 22 June 2015 (15<sup>th</sup> state record, eighth county record).

**Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)**

vote: 7-0

*photo files:* Adam M. Byrne, Scott Terry

One adult was at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe County, on 4 October 2015 (16<sup>th</sup> state record, 9<sup>th</sup> county record).

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

vote: 7-0

*photo files:* Rick Brigham, Judi Manning

One, in its second cycle, was at Holland State Park, Ottawa County, on 6-7 October 2015 (26<sup>th</sup> state record, first county record).

**Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*)**

vote: 7-0

*photo files:* Bruce Moorman

One adult was at Ford Lake, Washtenaw County, on 26 November 2014 (seventh state record, first county record).

**Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*)**

vote: 7-0

*descriptions and photo files:* Adam M. Byrne, Curt Powell, Scott Terry

One adult was at both Grace Lake and later at Crosswinds Marsh, Wayne County, from 28 December 2014 – 2 January 2015 (8<sup>th</sup> state record, second county record).

**Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*)**

vote: 7-0

*description:* J.D. Phillips*photo files:* Skye Haas, J.D. Phillips

One was at Marquette, Marquette County, on 22-28 March 2015 (9<sup>th</sup> state record, third county record).

**Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*)**

vote: 7-0

*description:* Curt Powell*photo files:* John Lowry, Curt Powell

One adult was at Grace Lake, Wayne County, on 2 May 2015 (10<sup>th</sup> state record, third county record).

**Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*)**

vote: 7-0

*description:* Don Gorney

*photo files:* Steven Bayer, Adam M. Byrne, Ken Conrad, Mike Cook, Nathan DeBruine, Andy Dettling, Rob Emelander, Don Gorney, Gordon Green, Scott Jennex, Jim Keller, Carl Manning, Myles McNally, Marc North



One adult female, found by Tim Baerwald, spent most of its time at Tiscornia Park, St. Joseph, Berrien Co, from 9-13 July 2015, but was also seen at South Haven, Van Buren County, on 11 July 2015, representing the fifth state record, third for Berrien County, and first for Van Buren County

**Neotropic Cormorant**  
(*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)

vote: 7-0

photo files: Robert Bochenek

One, co-found by Dea Armstrong, was at Port Huron, St. Clair County, on 17 October 2015 (second state record, first county record).

**Anhinga** (*Anhinga anhinga*)

vote: 6-1

description: Joe Kaplan

One was seen soaring over Portage Marsh, Escanaba, Delta County, on 9 May 2015 (fourth state record, first county record).

**Little Blue Heron** (*Egretta caerulea*)

vote: 7-0

photo files: Kirby Adams, Linda Ar, Robert Bochenek, Allen Chartier, Ross Green, Jeff Hendricks, Brian McGee, Myles McNally, James Muller, Craig Robson, Norka Saldana, Chace Scholten, Mike Sefton, Bill VanderMolen  
One was found at Lillie Park, Washtenaw County, on 9-14 June 2015 (136<sup>th</sup> state record, fifth county record).

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

vote: 7-0

description: James C. Dawe

photo files: Ross Green, Jim Keller, Greg Smith, Joe Soehnel

One, found by Damon Haan, was at Tawas Point State Park, Iosco County, on 21 June – 14 July 2015 (49<sup>th</sup> state record, third county record).

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

vote: 7-0 for two individuals

descriptions: Adam M. Byrne, Allen Chartier, Philip C. Chu, Andrea Meldrum, Jared Zaporski

photo files: Robert Bochenek, Rick Brigham, Allen Chartier, Andy Dettling, Thomas Gass, Ross Green, Scott Jennex, Aaron Kortenhoven, Myles McNally, Andrea Meldrum, Jeff Stacey, Scott Terry, Larry Urbanski

Two were at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe County, from 23 April – 31 August 2015 (48<sup>th</sup> state record, 21<sup>st</sup> county record).

Two were at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe County, from 23 April – 31 August 2015 (48<sup>th</sup> state record, 21<sup>st</sup> county record).

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

vote: 7-0

photo and video files: Dixie Burkhart

One adult was found at a private residence in Arlington Township, Van Buren County, on 6 May 2015 (113<sup>th</sup> state record, fourth county record). Round 145 2014-1860-04

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

vote: 7-0 for three individuals, in the second round

*descriptions:* David Amamoto, Allen Chartier, Wayne Fisher, Ross Green, Darrell Lawson, Caleb Putnam, John Whitehead

*photo files:* David Amamoto, Karen Brown, Allen Chartier, Wayne Fisher, Dan Fox, Diane Garlick, Ross Green, David Jamison, Scott Jennex, Kim Leedom, Brad Murphy, Caleb Putnam, Jim VanAllen

*video files:* David Amamoto, Allen Chartier

Three were at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe County, on 21-29 August 2014 (23<sup>rd</sup> state record, eighth county record).

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

*vote:* 7-0 for two individuals, 6-1 for a third individual

*descriptions:* Adam M. Byrne, Philip C. Chu, Wayne Hoch, Paul Poronto, Jeff Stacey

*photo files:* Robert Bochenek, Thomas Gass, Ross Green, Lyle Hamilton, Tom Hince, Scott Jennex, Aaron Kortenhoven, Myles McNally, Karl Overman, Tom Pavlik, Jeff Stacey, Scott Terry, Joan Tisdale, Margaret Tittyung, John Whitehead

Three were at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe County, on 30 April – 15 July 2015 (24<sup>th</sup> state record, 9<sup>th</sup> county record). At least one observer claimed up to six individuals, while most observed up to five *Plegadis* ibis, two of which were clearly White-faced Ibis (see below). The claim of more than three Glossy Ibis was rejected with

a 0-7 vote. Since no details were provided to substantiate a sixth ibis, the sixth individual was rejected under the broader category of *Plegadis* ibis in 2016.

### **White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihii*)**

*vote:* 7-0 for one individual, in the second round

*description:* Mary Trombley

*photo files:* Rick Brigham, Scott Jennex, Jerome Jourdan, Myles McNally, Karl Overman, Paul Poronto, Mary Trombley

Four *Plegadis* ibis were at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe County, on 12-23 May 2014.

In 2014, two individuals were accepted as White-faced Ibis (Terry 2015), a third was resubmitted, and the fourth bird was rejected. In 2015, the resubmitted bird was accepted, bringing the accepted total to three White-faced Ibises. The rejected individual was later reevaluated and accepted as a *Plegadis* ibis with a 7-0 vote.

### **White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihii*)**

*vote:* 7-0 for two individuals

*descriptions:* Adam M. Byrne, Philip C. Chu, Todd Palgut, Scott Terry, Mary Trombley, Charlie Weaver, Will Weber

*photo files:* Andy Dettling, Thomas Gass, Ross Green, Pat Jakel, Scott Jennex, Aaron Kortenhoven, Myles McNally, Phil Odum, Karl Overman, Jeff Stacey, Scott Terry, Margaret Tittyung, John Whitehead  
Two, co-found by Brad Murphy,



were at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Monroe County, on 1 May – 10 July 2015 (32<sup>nd</sup> state record, 13<sup>th</sup> county record).

**Plegadis ibis**

vote: 7-0 for two individuals

description: Joe Soehnel

Two were at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Saginaw County, on 27 May – 10 June 2014.

Originally submitted as three

White-faced Ibis, but, in 2014, only one was accepted (Terry 2015). In

2015, the additional two birds were considered and accepted under this broader category.

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

vote: 7-0

descriptions: Darrell Lawson, Sean Williams

photo files: Greg Bodker, Adam M. Byrne, Ross Green, Aaron Kortenhoven, Darrell Lawson, Brendan Leddy, Dave Leddy, Stan Lilley, John Lowry, Myles McNally, Mike Mencotti, Karl Overman, David Pavlik, Alan Ryff, Linda Scribner, Scott Terry, Jim VanAllen, Sean Williams

One was seen along US-127, near St. Johns, Clinton County, on 23 August – 7 September 2015 (10<sup>th</sup> state record, first county record).

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

vote: 7-0

photo files: Dan Duso

One was at Port Crescent State Park, Huron County, on 18 May 2015 (38<sup>th</sup> state record, third county record).

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

vote: 7-0

description: Doug McWhirter

One was at the intersection of Port Sheldon and 28<sup>th</sup> streets, Ottawa County, on 4 April 2015 (10<sup>th</sup> state record, first county record).

**Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*)**

vote: 7-0

photo files: Rick Brigham, Chris Neri

One was at Whitefish Point, Chippewa County, on 26-27 May 2015 (21<sup>st</sup> state record, eighth county record).

**Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)**

vote: 6-1

photo files: Steven Joyner

One was at Boyne Falls, Charlevoix County, on 19 April 2015 (164<sup>th</sup> state record, third county record).

**Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)**

vote: 7-0

description: Mark North

photo files: Patrick Jakel, Michael Weaver

One, co-found by Jim Law, was at Tawas Point State Park, Iosco County, on 23 May – 3 June 2015 (165<sup>th</sup> state record, third county record).

**Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*)**

vote: 7-0 for one individual

descriptions: Philip C. Chu, Nathan Goldberg

audio files: Pamela Rasmussen

video files: Adam M. Byrne, Scott Jennex

photo files: Thomas Gass, Scott Jennex

Up to three birds were claimed at St. Joseph High School, St. Joseph, Berrien County, from 11 April – 2 August 2015. The various forms of documentation clearly supported the presences of one individual (sixth state record, sixth county record). The committee struggled, however, to decipher how many individuals were heard calling, with most feeling no more than two could be supported by the documentation. One individual was rejected with a 3-4 vote and the last individual eventually rejected in 2016.

**Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*)**

vote: 5-2, in the second round

description: Kip Miller

One was at Warren Dunes State Park, Berrien County, on 3 May 2015 (seventh state record, seventh county record).

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

vote: 5-2, in the second round

description: Calvin Brennan

One was at Copper Harbor, Keweenaw County, on 21-23 May 2014 (15<sup>th</sup> state record, third county record).

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

vote: 6-1

description: Cathy Waller

One was at a private residence in Marquette, Marquette County, on 9 May 2015 (16<sup>th</sup> state record, second county record).

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

vote: 7-0

photo files: Skye Haas

One, found by Jenny Rutherford, was at Peninsula Point, Delta County, on 9-10 May 2015 (17<sup>th</sup> state record, first county record).

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

vote: 7-0

descriptions: Kevin Groeneweg, Charlie Weaver, William Zwartjes  
photo files: Rick Brigham, Kevin Groeneweg, Scott Jennex, Chris Neri

Two were at Whitefish Point, Chippewa County, on 24-29 May 2015 (18<sup>th</sup> state record, seventh county record).

**Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)**

vote: 7-0

photo files: Christine Brackett

One was coming to a feeder at a private residence in Harrisville, Alcona County, on 17-28 April 2015 (fifth state record, first county record).



**“Yellow” Palm Warbler (*Setophaga palmarum hypochrysea*)**

vote: 7-0

photo files: Ben Lucking, Brandon Ndiffier

One was at the Dolph Nature Area, Washtenaw County, on 4 May 2015 (sixth state record, first county record).

**Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Setophaga nigrescens*)**

vote: 5-2, in the second round

description: Tim Gacicio

One was at Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, on 16 May 2014 (9<sup>th</sup> state record, third county record).

**Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Setophaga nigrescens*)**

vote: 6-1

description: Don Henise

One was at the Dahlem Environmental Education Center, Jackson County, on 7 September 2015 (10<sup>th</sup> state record, first county record).

**Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*)**

vote: 7-0

photo files: Terry Dreves

One was at Copper Harbor, Keweenaw County, on 23 September 2015 (12<sup>th</sup> state record, first county record).

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

vote: 7-0

descriptions: Kevin Groeneweg, Charlie Weaver

photo files: Rick Brigham, Kevin Groeneweg, Scott Jennex, Chris Neri, Tom Wheeler

One was at Whitefish Point, Chippewa County, on 25-27 May 2015 (26<sup>th</sup> state record, eighth county record).

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

vote: 7-0

descriptions: James Dawe, Rob & Susan Emelander

photo files: Rick Brigham, Lisa Casler, Rob Emelander, Darlene Friedman, Gordon Green, Lyle Hamilton, Matt Hysell, Scott Jennex, Myles McNally, Caleb Putnam, Warren Whaley

One was at Allegan State Game Area, Allegan County, on 14-30 June 2015 (27<sup>th</sup> state record, fourth county record). Round 151 2015-6050-03

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

vote: 7-0

photo file: Chris Neri

One was at Whitefish Point, Chippewa County, on 17 September 2015 (28<sup>th</sup> state record, 9<sup>th</sup> county record).

**“Interior” Nelson’s Sparrow (*Ammodramus nelsoni nelsoni*)**

vote: 6-1

descriptions: Rick Brigham, Matt Hysell

photo files: Tim Baerwald, Rick Brigham, Matt Hysell

One at the New Buffalo marsh, Berrien County, on 28 May 2009. This record was reviewed and accepted in 2009, as a Nelson's Sparrow (Putnam 2010), but reconsidered in 2015, at the subspecific level. During the review process, one member noticed that the documentation actually showed two different individuals, so this record pertains to the bird photographed on 28 May 2009, while the photos acquired on 31 May 2009 were reviewed as a separate record (see below).

**Nelson's Sparrow (*Ammodramus nelsoni*)**

vote: 7-0

*description* and *photo files*: Rick Brigham

One was at the New Buffalo marsh, Berrien County, on 31 May 2009. During the reevaluation of the previous record, it was determined that this individual was different from the one photographed on 28 May 2009. The committee voted 8-1 to treat this individual as a separate record.

**Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*)**

vote: 7-0

*description* and *photo files*: Jerome Jourdan

One adult in basic plumage was coming to a feeder in Brownstown Township, Wayne County, from 18 October – 16 April 2016 (seventh state record, second county record).

**Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*)**

vote: 7-0

*descriptions*: Adam M. Byrne, Philip C. Chu

*photo files*: Robert Bochenek, Karen Bonnell, Ross Green, Curt Hofer, Scott Jennex, Greg Links, Myles McNally

One, found by Tim Thompson, was at Whiteford Park, Monroe County, on 24 June – 12 July 2015 (29<sup>th</sup> state record, second county record).

**Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*)**

vote: 7-0

*description*: Louis Dombroski

*photofiles*: Joe Kaplan

One was at Norway, Dickinson County, on 27-28 June 2015 (30<sup>th</sup> state record, second county record).

**Records Not Accepted**

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*)**

vote: 3-4 for seven individuals, 2-5 for three more  
one description

A group of 10 were claimed very early in the morning (only four minutes after civil twilight) flying along Lee Road, Wayne County, on 21 July 2015. The observer had the duck flock fly over, providing a "brief binocular view as they [the ducks] descended through the trees." During this brief view, the observer noted "OVERALL JET BLACK UPPER PARTS, BREAST AND UNDERWINGS WITH MUCH PALER CHEST AND NECK (CONTRASTED SHARPLY)."



This description, however, is not accurate. Black-bellied Whistling Ducks have all dark underwings and their upper back is similar to the neck. So, given concerns over low light, a brief view, obstructing trees, and inaccurate plumage details, most members were unwilling to vote for acceptance.

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

vote: 0-7 for one individual  
one description

Two Ross's Geese were previously accepted from the Allegan State Game Area, Allegan County, on 25 October 1986 (Byrne 2002). In 2015, new documentation was provided that claimed three individuals on 1 November 1986 at the same location. The new documentation was very brief and only claims "stubby pink bill, no grin mark, bluish at base," without any description of the delineation between the bill and face, or overall size. As such, members were not comfortable accepting a third individual.

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

vote: 2-5  
one description

One was claimed at the intersection of 23 Mile Road and North Avenue, Macomb County, on 7 November 2009. There were several features that troubled committee members. First was the time delay of over 5 years between the sighting and providing the written description,

without any mention of field notes. Second, the bird was observed with only binoculars at a distance of about 300 yards, causing the observer to state they "couldn't make out fine scale patterning on the bill." The bill was said to be all pink, but a Ross's Gull with a pink bill should show some blue-gray coloration basally. Also, the inability to see fine details led some members to wonder if all bill features could be assessed critically.

**Brant (*Branta bernicla*)**

vote: 1-6  
one description

One was claimed at Lighthouse Park, Port Huron, St. Clair County, on 1 November 2014. Some members felt the observer provided a reasonable description of a Brant, while others were troubled by a few details. First the observer stated that his "initial sense of the goose was that it was likely a Brant" and that the white on the head was reminiscent of the chin strap of a Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*). To some, the expressed uncertainty and potential for excessive white on the head were troublesome. Lastly, the observer failed to clearly establish that the bird was within Michigan boundaries, a concern since the mouth of the St. Clair River is the international boundary with Canada. These concerns prevented most members from voting for acceptance.



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

vote: 2-5, in the second round  
one description

One was claimed flying past Tiscornia Park, St. Joseph, Berrien County, on 14 December 2014. The bird was described as a large “dark-barred brown duck” with white axillaries, pale underwing coverts, a dark speculum bordered by thin white lines, and a dark bill. Members were concerned about the distance (400 yards) and foggy observation conditions, coupled with the lack of information on duration of the sighting and what, if any, optics were used. Given these unknown conditions, some felt it was not possible to be sure how well the observer would be able to accurately see the details provided.

**Barrow’s Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*)**

vote: 3-4

2 descriptions, 9 photo files

One female was claimed along the Grand River, Lansing, Ingham County, on 13 February – 2 March 2015. Several members felt comfortable with the details provided, while dissenting members presented a detailed analyses of the features noted. For the bird in question, none of the important color characters – bill color (“All bright yellow-orange, except for the nail, which was large and black”) and wing pattern (uncertain

number of inner secondaries white, greater upper-secondary coverts white with broad black tips, median upper secondary-coverts dark, posterior upper secondary-coverts white but others dark) – were inconsistent with a Barrow’s Goldeneye; however, none were diagnostic for a Barrow’s, either. Di Labio et al. (1997) imply that some yellow-billed female Common Goldeneyes (*Bucephala clangula*) can have a dark nail, and Carney (1983) indicates that after-hatch-year female Commons have a similar wing pattern to after-hatch-year female Barrow’s, with broad black tips to the greater upper secondary-coverts and a restricted white area in the lesser upper secondary-coverts. While the pattern of the upper secondary coverts does favor Barrow’s, one member noted a discrepancy in the description, where the median coverts had “no black”, but later said to be “all dark.” This illustrated the difficulty in assessing these small feather tracts in the field, a concern shared by other members. The observer presented a number of sketches of the head and a verbal description of head shape, and the sketches and description are more like a stereotypical Barrow’s. In contrast, though, several members felt they sketches did not match the shape captured in the photos. Finally, the observer also noted that, in direct comparison, the



bill was both “much smaller” and proportionally shorter than that of nearby female Commons, and that the ratio of bill length (“length of the edge of the lower mandible”) to bill depth (“length of the base of the bill [where the bill meets the facial feathers, from lower to upper mandible]”) was “1-1.5,” in comparison to a ratio of two for the Commons. Unfortunately, there’s considerable overlap in bill ratios between Common and Barrow’s, suggesting that the bill of this bird might be consistent with that of a smaller-billed Common.

**Barrow’s Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*)**

vote: 0-7

one description

One female was claimed along the Kalamazoo River, Otsego, Allegan County, on 23 February 2015. The observer noted an all yellow bill and a head shape that was more forward protruding. However, the observer also stated the bird’s shape and plumage was otherwise identical to nearby Common Goldeneyes. Identification of female goldeneyes is complicated and this identification was made primarily on the bill color and head shape. While suggestive, these features are not exclusive to Barrow’s Goldeneye. Female Commons can have all yellow bills and head shape can vary based on posture and behavior. Other

useful features, like bill size/shape, wing pattern, and head color were not noted, or, were identical to the nearby Commons. These concerns led all members to vote against acceptance.

***Aechmophorus grebe***

vote: 3-4

one description

One was claimed from just north of Seagull Point, Roger’s City, Presque Isle County, on 16 November 2014. In 2014, this record was reviewed and rejected, with a 0-7 vote, as a Western Grebe (Terry 2015). While the details did suggest an *Aechmophorus* grebe, the majority of the committee remained concerned with the description of a white stripe on the forehead and white rump; features that are not consistent with either *Aechmophorus* species.

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

vote: 3-4

one description and one photo file

One was claimed at Three Rivers, St. Joseph County, on 11 July 2015. The bird in the photo provided was too distant to discern any field marks. The brief description failed to rule out the possibility of an oddly plumaged Rock Pigeon with white wing patches.

**Chuck-will’s-widow (*Antrostomus carolinensis*)**

vote: 0-7

one description

One was claimed in Berrien County, on 15 July 2015. The observer described a three note call as “Faa—then a quick SO- Doh.” Members felt this description did not accurately match the call of a Chuck-will’s-widow.

**Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*)**

vote: 0-7

two descriptions

One was claimed at Fife Lake, Grand Traverse County, on 26 June 2015. The description of the call was very brief, just a loud “kick ik der.” In addition, a second observer strongly felt the bird in question was a Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*) and documented the bird, as such. Given these discrepancies, the committee could not vote for acceptance.

**King Rail (*Rallus elegans*)**

vote: 3-4, in the second round

one description

Two were claimed at Houghton Lake Wildlife Research Area, Roscommon County, on 25 May 2010. In 2014, this record one individual was rejected, with a 2-5 vote, and the other resubmitted (Terry 2015). The identification was based solely on hearing six consecutive “kuk” calls. While this could fit King Rail, it does not eliminate the possibility that the birds were Virginia Rails (*Rallus limicola*).

**King Rail (*Rallus elegans*)**

vote: 3-4 for one individual  
one description and audio file

One bird was claimed at Ionia State Park, Ionia County, on 20 May 2014. The observer recorded and claimed one bird and that individual was accepted by the committee in 2014 (Terry 2015). However, during the review process, one member felt there were two distinct birds in the recording and submitted a request to re-review the documentation for two birds, which passed with a 7-2 vote. Upon reconsideration, the majority of the committee felt they could not distinguish two distinct individuals in the recording.

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

vote: 0-7

one description

One was claimed in Macomb County, on 4 May 2015. One was claimed calling three times during nocturnal migration at 2:45 am EST. No actual description of the call was provided, just that the observer was very familiar with the call and was confident in the identification.

**Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)**

vote: 0-7

two descriptions

One was claimed at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Saginaw County, on 8-9 August 2015. The reports described a distant shorebird with predominately white breast, neck, and head. One observer stated it was significantly larger than a nearby Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*), while



the other said it was roughly the same size as a Lesser Yellowlegs. Some members also wondered how an aberrant plumaged yellowlegs could be eliminated from consideration, citing an example from Pointe Mouillee, years ago, when an albino yellowlegs was mistakenly identified as a Ruff.

**“Eastern” Willet (*Tringa semipalmata semipalmata*)**

vote: 0-7

one description

One was claimed at New Buffalo, Berrien County, on 10 September 2013. The brief description was accurate for a Willet, but not detailed enough to distinguish between “Eastern” and “Western” (*T. s. inornata*) Willet. Given the lack of details provided, it seems likely the observer assumed “Eastern” Willet was the expected subspecies in Michigan, while, in fact, “Western” Willet is the form found in the Great Lakes region.

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

vote: 0-7

two descriptions

One was claimed at Brandenburg Park, Macomb County, on 6 November 2014. The identification was based mostly on size and shape impressions. The bird was said to be roughly the size of a Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*), with “thick” wings, heavily built neck, and bulky chest. Such impressions,

however, may be suggestive, but can also be misleading. For example, larger female Parasitic Jaegers (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) can be heavier than most Ring-billed Gulls, so the description provided doesn’t exclude a Parasitic Jaeger. Its plumage was said to be dark with white flashes in the wings. Without being able to confidently age this individual, these plumage details could describe either a juvenile Pomarine Jaeger or older Parasitic Jaeger. Distance was an issue, likely preventing the observers from determining the shape of the central rectrices, a feature that would have aided in the identification process.

**Mew Gull (*Larus canus*)**

vote: 2-5

one description

One was claimed at the Muskegon Lake beach at Fulton Ave, Muskegon County, on 22 December 1997. Despite being accurate, the description troubled most members. First, it was submitted 18 years after the observation, with no indication that field notes were recorded. Second, there was no information on the distance, length of observation, or whether optics were used. Without these details, most members felt the information provided wasn’t enough to warrant acceptance.

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

vote: 0-7

one photo file

One was claimed at the Dafter Dump, Chippewa County, on 4 November 2014. The photo shows a first-cycle gull lying on the ground. Some members felt the bird's primary extension and bill shape was suggestive of a California Gull, while others felt the bill seemed to hefty. Without details of the wing pattern or leg coloration, the entire committee felt these features could also apply to a Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*).

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

vote: 0-7

one description and photo file  
One was claimed at Ruedisale Point Park, New Baltimore, Macomb County, on 23 March 2015; this individual was also seen flying into St. Clair County. The photo was so poor as to be uninformative. The description was suggestive, but lacking details on distance, viewing conditions, length of observation, or whether optics were used. Given the possibility that this bird was distant and seen only briefly, members were unwilling to vote for acceptance.

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

vote: 0-7

two descriptions and nine photo files  
One first-cycle individual was claimed at New Buffalo, Berrien County, on 3-5 October 2015. The photo files show a young gull with an overall dark coloration, pink bill with a dark tip, intermediate size,

and shorter than Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) legs. Members felt these features could also describe a small Herring Gull.

**Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*)**

vote: 0-7

one description

Several were claimed at Point Aux Pins, Mackinac County, from late June – 23 July 2015. The very brief description only states the birds were smaller than Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*). Members were troubled by the lack of details, with some stating Black Terns or shorebirds could not be eliminated from consideration.

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

vote: 0-7, in the second round

one description

One was claimed from the west side of Harbor Point, Emmet County, on 14 December 2013. In 2014, this record was reviewed and rejected, with a 1-6 vote, as a Pacific Loon (Terry 2015). As with the previous review, members felt the description of a small loon with a straight bill, dark back, and definite delineation between the throat and back of the neck did not eliminate the possibility of a young Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*).

**Fregata species**

vote: 0-7

one description

One, claimed as a Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*),



was reported at Lake Macatawa, Ottawa County, on 25 August 2007. The record was first reviewed and not accepted with a 0-7 vote, and then reconsidered as a *Fregata* species. Even under this broader category, the committee was unconvinced by the brief description, limited to a claim of a soaring bird with a red throat patch, and the report being produced, from memory, eight years after the observation.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**

(*Nyctanassa violacea*)

vote: 0-7

one description

One adult was claimed near Troy, Oakland County, on 23 July 2015. The bird, seen only in flight, had a black face, white cheek, and yellow tassels hanging from its head. Some members pointed out the plumes on a night-heron do not hang down when in flight, rather they rest on the back and are difficult to see from below. Further, the tassels should be white, not yellow. Other members were also bothered by the lack of information regarding length of observation, distance from the bird, and whether optical equipment was used.

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

vote: 0-7 for one individual

three descriptions and two photo files

Up to three *Plegadis* ibis were reported at Nayanquing Point State

Wildlife Area, Bay County, from 5 May – 2 June 2015. Complicating things, one observer claimed two Glossy Ibis, while another reported two White-faced and one Glossy. One photo showed all three ibis in flight, two of which had white feathering around the facial skin. Based on this, it was evident that there were not two Glossy Ibis, resulting in the unanimous rejection of one individual. One of the remaining ibis did resemble a Glossy and received a 5-2 vote, meaning it will require discussion and a second round of voting in 2016.

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

vote: 3-4 for one individual

two photo files

As discussed above, up to three *Plegadis* ibis were reported at Nayanquing Point State Wildlife Area, Bay County, from 5 May – 2 June 2015. Complicating things, one observer claimed two Glossy Ibis, while another reported two White-faced and one Glossy. One photo, taken on 2 June, showed all three ibis in flight, two of which had white feathering around the facial skin. One of the two had an obvious red eye and received a 5-2 vote, meaning it will require discussion and a second round of voting in 2016. Eye color was not discernable on the other individual, causing most members to vote against acceptance.

**White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*)**

vote: 2-5

two descriptions

One was claimed at Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport, Oscoda, Iosco County, on 6 May 2015 and again on 9 May, by different observers, in a field to the southwest. While all agreed that the descriptions were suggestive, most were troubled by a few features. Despite claiming the bird was close enough to see its hooked bill, none of the observers mentioned dark eye patches or dark wrist spots on the underwing. Also, one observer described the bill as having “a dark yellowish raptor like hook,” but the hooked portion of the bill is not yellow, but black.

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

vote: 0-7

one description

One was claimed at Lansing, Ingham County, on 13 April 2015. This report – from an observer who saw the bird in question while stopped at a stoplight – refers only to “falcon-like” wings and “lazy/loose wing beats” whose action was “very similar to a night hawk flight pattern.” Given this description, the committee was concerned a Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) could not be eliminated.

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

vote: 1-6

one description

One was claimed at East End Park, Grand Haven, Ottawa County, on 18 May 2015. Despite being in view for 20 minutes, the observer was unable to make out plumage details, due to poor lighting. Thus, the identification was based predominately on shape and flight style. It was said to have pointed wings, yet the observer did not note the shortened outermost primaries, leaving most to wonder if a distant Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) or Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) could be eliminated.

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

vote: 2-5

two descriptions

One immature bird was claimed at Port Crescent State Park, Huron County, on 26 May 2015. Most committee members were concerned that there were no details on the circumstances of the observation. In other words, were optics used, how long was the bird in view, and to what extent were the observers looking into the sun? Without this information, most members felt the very brief details were insufficient to provide conclusive support for the species claimed.

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

vote: 1-6

one description



One was claimed in Thetford Township, Genesee County, on 1 February 2015. The observer described an all dark buteo, with a little on its face and a smoky gray tail that had a narrow dark terminal band. The description was inconsistent with any age of “Harlan’s” Hawk, which should have some amounts of white on the underparts. Most members felt the description could apply to either a “Western” Red-tailed Hawk (*B. j. calurus*) or a Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*).

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

vote: 0-7

one description

One was claimed at Rockwood, Monroe County, on 10 October 2015. The observer stated the bird was completely dark except for a white tail, however, the undersurface of the remiges on a “Harlan’s” should be white. This inaccuracy left the committee concerned the bird was either observed poorly or misidentified.

**“Kriders” Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)**

vote: 2-5

one description and eight photo files

One was claimed just north of Clarion, Emmet County, on 14 December 2014. While the photos and description were suggestive and possibly within the range of acceptable for a “Kriders”, the

majority of the committee felt that too many features were outside of the range of classic “Kriders” and an intergrade could not be eliminated. Ligouri and Sullivan (2010) provide the most recent discussion on the identification criteria for “Kriders” Red-tailed Hawks. They discussed the wide range of variation they’ve observed, concluding that it’s often difficult to determine the range of normal variation within a subspecies. During their field survey, they classified birds that have at least three of the following field marks as Kriders – birds with fewer than three were thought to be potential intergrades. The field marks were:

- 1) extensively white head,
- 2) extensively white tail,
- 3) extensively pale-mottled upperwing coverts, and
- 4) restricted patagial bars/bellyband.

Of the above traits, members were not convinced the bird fit any of these traits cleanly. Its head was certainly pale, but the crown was rather dark. Ligouri and Sullivan state the crown should be white with fine dark streaks, a pattern that would be much paler than this individual. The upperwing coverts were mottled white, but really didn’t appear to be any more extensive than many non-Kriders Red-tailed Hawks. Lastly, the patagial marks appeared quite defined, rather



than indistinct. Wheeler (2003) provides a more restrictive set of criteria, also suggesting the head pattern, upperwing coverts, and patagial marks are outside the normal range of acceptable for a Krider's. Of course, anytime one deals with subspecific identifications, there are birds that are suggestive, but difficult to conclusively identify, which seems to be the case with this individual. It was clearly paler than an average Red-tailed Hawk, but there were enough features that prevented members from endorsing it as a pure Krider's.

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

vote: 0-7

one description

One was claimed from Allegan Township, Allegan County, on 28 October 2014. The observer only heard a "screaming sound." Without any other details about the quality or duration of the sound, the entire committee concluded a young Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) or some odd mammal could not be eliminated.

### **Red-naped Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*)**

vote: 0-7

one description

One was claimed in Kent County, on 5 April 2015. The identification seemed to be based on the presence of a red patch on the nape and a more organized pattern of white on its back.

Unfortunately, a red nape patch can also be present in Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (*Sphyrapicus varius*). Hybridization is also a concern, making it essential to assess multiple traits, including the throat and malar regions. In this case, those areas were not described, leaving committee members unable to rule out the possibility this was a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker or hybrid.

### **Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*)**

vote: 3-4

one description

One was claimed at Port Crescent State Park, Huron County, on 29 March 2015. While suggestive, some members felt the description was not sufficient to rule out a hybrid. Others argued the description of dark wing linings, streaking, and a white chin could also apply to other more likely falcon species. Lastly, at least one member was concerned that no information about optics was provided, commenting that a lack of optical equipment would limit the observer's ability to accurately discern field marks.

### **Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*)**

vote: 1-6

one photo file

One was claimed at Harrisville, Alcona County, on 7 April 2015. The lone photo appeared to show a Prairie Falcon. However, during the review process, one committee member discovered a website with



the exact same photo, taken by a different individual in Arizona. The committee corresponded with submitting observer and they stood by their claim that they took the photo in Michigan. Given the long history of extremely rare claims from this location and the evidence of falsified documentation, members were not willing to accept this record.

**Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*)**

vote: 1-6, in the second round  
one description

An immature was claimed at Tawas Point State Park, Iosco County, on 19 September 2014. The bird was described to have a bill similar to a Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*), a dark eye line, tawny underparts, and dark tail and wings. Further, the bird was partially concealed and seen rather briefly (about a minute). Given these concerns, some members felt a Rusty Blackbird could fit the description provided.

**Scissor-tailed/Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus/savana*)**

vote: 3-4 two descriptions  
One was claimed at Whitefish Point, Chippewa County, on 26 October 1995. This record was initially reviewed and rejected as a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, also with a 3-4 vote. While the descriptions were accurate, most of the committee was concerned that they were prepared from 19-year old memories. In

addition, some members felt the description did not eliminate the possibility of a hybrid Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) x Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.

**Scissor-tailed/Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus/savana*)**

vote: 1-6  
one description  
One was claimed at Tawas Point State Park, Iosco County, on 14 April 2014. This bird, seen in flight only, was tersely described as "Light bird, dark wings with extremely long thin tail (maybe 2x length of body)." Such details match a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher or a Fork-tailed Flycatcher, but they could also match an escaped parrot or some other passerine carrying nesting material.

**Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)**

vote: 3-4, in the second round  
one description  
One was claimed at Keystone Rapids Trail, Grand Traverse County, on 11 August 2014. While some of the committee felt the date alone was enough to rule out the possibility of Northern Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*). Some were concerned over the vagueness related to the description of the black mask. Did it encompass or run through the eyes? How much white was there above the black mask – just a little (Loggerhead) or a complete white

border (Northern Shrike [*Lanius excubitor*]?) Was the mask wholly black along the underside of the eye (Loggerhead), or was there a suggestion of a white suborbital crescent (Northern)? Without these details, several members were unwilling to vote for acceptance.

**Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)**

vote: 2-5

one description

One was claimed along Garvey Road, Washtenaw County, from 31 March – 6 April 2015. The majority of the committee was concerned the field marks used to identify this shrike overlap with Northern Shrike, specifically the all black bill, the shape of the bill, and the extent of the mask. In addition, the description of light barring on the breast is more likely on a spring Northern Shrike. To sum up, most of the characteristics used to identify the present bird as a Loggerhead are either unreliable or are shared with at least some Northerns – and a couple of the bird's features are more likely in a Northern than in a Loggerhead.

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

vote: 0-7

one description

One was claimed at Lake St. Clair Metropark, Macomb County, on 7 May 2015. All members felt the description of a gray-blue head, olive back, and yellow wash on the

flanks was a much better match for a Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*).

**Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*)**

vote: 1-6

two new descriptions

Three were claimed at Forest Lawn Landfill, Berrien County, on 20 April 2014. Previously two birds were accepted in 2014, based on observations since 11 April 2011, however new documentation was submitted that claimed up to three individuals. In the end, the committee felt the new documentation did not clearly establish the presence of a third bird, because only two of the birds were heard and the observers assumed the third bird was a Fish Crow based on overall size.

**Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*)**

vote: 4-3 for one individual, in the second round

one description

Two to three were heard while the observer was running in Chikaming Township, Berrien County, on 12 July 2014. Review of this record in 2014 resulted in two Fish Crows being rejected (one with a 0-7 vote and the other a 3-4 vote) and one resubmitted (with at 4-3 vote). In the end, some members were troubled by the brief description, questioning how well these birds were heard, total distance involved, and whether the observer stopped running to make sure they were hearing them well enough.



**Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*)**

vote: 4-3 for one individual, in the second round  
one description

Similar to the previous record, 2 to 3 birds were heard while running at Union Pier, Berrien County, on 12 July 2014. Review of this record in 2014 also resulted in two Fish Crows being rejected (one with a 0-7 vote and the other a 3-4 vote) and one resubmitted (with at 4-3 vote). Members were again troubled by the circumstances surrounding this record and very brief details.

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

vote: 0-7  
one description

One was claimed at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Saginaw County, on 29 June 2015. The description was very limited, lacking details on the tail/rump, the auriculars, and there was no description of size or shape. Of the field marks provided, many members felt they could be attributed to a juvenile Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*).

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

vote: 0-7  
one description

One was claimed at the Au Sable River breakwall, Iosco County, on 15 November 2015. Many members felt the description was suggestive of this species, however there was concern the observer did not mention the pale rump or collar, two

obvious field marks. Other members were concerned the observation was brief and partially while driving.

**Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*)**

vote: 2-5 for two individuals, in the second round  
five descriptions and 13 photo files  
Twelve were claimed along Buffalo Road, Berrien County, from 11-26 April 2014. In 2014, 10 individuals were accepted and two resubmitted (Terry 2015). Clearly there were many different Smith's Longspurs present, as depicted in the many photos provided. However, determining the exact number of individuals was not simple. One observer claimed up to 12 or more, while another reported at least 10 different birds. Unfortunately, the photos never show more than 10 birds at any given time, making it impossible to be certain they didn't repeatedly depict the same individuals. So, the majority felt sticking with 10 accepted individuals was the safest approach, resulting in the rejection of the additional two individuals.

**"Yellow" Palm Warbler (*Setophaga palmarum hypochrysea*)**

vote: 1-6, in the second round  
one description

One was claimed at Roger's Family Homestead Nature Preserve, near East Jordan, Charlevoix County, on 24 September 2014. While the

description suggests a bird more yellow than a typical “Western” Palm Warbler (*S. p. palmarum*), the committee was concerned the streaks were not bold enough and the presence of a contrast between the undertail coverts and the belly might suggest an intergrade, rather than a pure “Yellow” Palm Warbler.

**“Audubon’s” Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*)**

vote: 0-7

one description

One was claimed at Stafford County Park, Port Hope, Huron County, on 9 May 2015. The description of a yellow throat was suggestive for this subspecies, however, none of the other characteristics (pattern of the face, secondary coverts, and tail) important in ruling out a hybrid were described. In fact, the description of the wings with “less white” is more fitting of the “Myrtle’s” subspecies (*S. c. coronata*).

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

vote: 3-4

one description

One was claimed at Fort Custer Training Center, Kalamazoo County, on 3 June 2005. While the description was suggestive of Lark Sparrow, the majority of the committee was concerned that the sighting took place 10 years prior

to the submission of documentation and there was no mention of field notes.

**Henslow’s Sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*)**

vote: 2-5, in the second round one description

One was claimed at Whitefish Point, Chippewa County, on 20 May 2010. The committee was concerned about the lack of details regarding the circumstances of the sighting. How far was the bird the observer? How long was the bird under observation? The observer claimed the bird was “skulking in grass” and “peeked” out before flying away, calling into question how well the bird was seen. Overall the majority of the committee was confused by the mixture of vague circumstances and field marks observed, leading them to not accept this record.

**“Interior” Nelson’s Sparrow (*Ammodramus nelsoni nelsoni*)**

vote: 1-6

two descriptions

One was claimed at the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club, Wayne County, on 14 September 2005. This report was originally submitted as an “Interior” Nelson’s Sparrow, however the committee only reviewed and accepted it as a Nelson’s Sparrow (Chu 2006). Now that the committee is making a more concerted effort to evaluate things at the subspecies level, this record was reconsidered as originally reported. Members,



however, felt the details did not provide enough information about back/scapular appearance or flank appearance to confirm the bird in question as *A. n. nelsoni*. Regardless, this record will still be recognized as an accepted Nelson's Sparrow, based on the 2005 acceptance.

**“Interior” Nelson’s Sparrow  
(*Ammodramus nelsoni nelsoni*)**

vote: 3-4, in the second round one description

One was claimed at Presque Isle Park, Marquette County, on 11 October 2007. This report was originally submitted as an “Interior” Nelson’s Sparrow, however the committee only reviewed and accepted it as a Nelson’s Sparrow (Putnam 2008). For the bird in question, the observer described the upperbody as having “alternate bold dark...and white vertical streaking running lengthwise down the back;” regarding the dark areas, they elaborated that they were “perhaps a blackish-brown or dark grayish-brown, it was somewhat hard to determine the color exactly.” Unfortunately, the exact color of the back, and, specifically, the amount of black there, is critical for differentiating *nelsoni* from *A. n. alterus*. In sum, although the underbody was correct for *nelsoni*, the upperbody could be consistent with either *nelsoni* or *alterus*, making it hard to be sure of subspecific identification.

Indeed, Smith (2011) reported individuals with strong flank streaking in combination with *alterus*-like upperparts, showing that individuals with mixed characters do exist; Smith declined to identify such individuals to subspecies, categorizing them as “*alterus* or *nelsoni*.” So, while most members felt the details did not support the identification to the subspecific level, the record will still be recognized as an accepted Nelson’s Sparrow, based on the 2008 acceptance.

**“Pink-sided” Dark-eyed Junco  
(*Junco hyemalis mearnsi*)**

vote: 3-4, in the second round two photo files

One was claimed coming to a feeder in Cheboygan County, from 15-20 November 2014. The photos provided were suggestive of this subspecies, with both the head and flank patterns matching a “Pink-sided.” However, the back was rather bright rusty brown color, appearing too bright and too rusty for a Pink-sided, possibly indicating the presence of alleles from the “Gray-headed” Junco group (*J. h. caniceps* and *dorsalis*). Indeed, Dunn (2002) writes, “Juncos with the redder back of Gray-headed and the flank color (or at least mixed cinnamon-buff) of Pink-sided are no doubt hybrids.” Concern over the back coloration led most members to vote against acceptance.

**“Pink-sided” Dark-eyed Junco**  
*(Junco hyemalis mearnsi)*

vote: 0-7

four photo files

One was claimed at Warren Dunes State Park, Berrien County, on 5-23 December 2014. According to Dunn (2002), male “Pink-sided” Juncos have a light gray hood with contrasting black lores, a brown back, and pinkish flanks that are both paler and warmer than the back; females are browner on the head, have lores that are not quite as contrastingly dark, and have flanks that are less pinkish and more buff-brownish. Turning to the present record, the documentation consists of photo files taken on 5, 13, and 23 December. Those taken on 5 and 13 December could pertain to a single bird, but that bird looks too dark-hooded for a “Pink-sided,” and its flanks are pale brownish rather than pinkish. As for the photos taken on 23 December, it’s unclear if they show a different individual, one with a paler hood and pinker flanks; however, even in those photos, the hood is not clearly pale enough, and the back has a rufous cast that is inappropriate for a “Pink-sided.” In sum, however many birds the photo files depict, members felt none of them clearly matches a “Pink-sided.”

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

vote: 4-3, in the second round  
 one description

One was claimed at West Olive, Ottawa County, on 5 May 2015. Several members were troubled by a variety of factors. First, the bird in question was judged to be “About [the] same size as” a Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), whereas the average male Western Tanager (at 30.3 g, marginally the larger sex [Hudon 1999]) is only three-fourths the mass of the average female cardinal (at 43.0 g, the smaller sex [Laskey 1944]). Second, the bird in question was said to be “yellow/orange-red on upper body,” a phrase suggesting that the back and scapulars were yellow, orange-red, or a mix of the two – and not black, as would be expected for a Western Tanager. And third, the present bird was said to have a “White wingbar on [a] dark wing,” whereas Western Tanagers have not only one white wing bar, but also one yellow wing bar. Given these concerns, some members were unwilling to endorse this record.

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

vote: 0-7

one description

One was claimed in Dickinson County, on 9 May 2015. The committee was concerned about several details of the sighting. First, the observer described the wings as rusty brown and barred. It’s possible the wings could be



brownish due to wear, but they should not appear rusty or barred. Second, there was no mention of back coloration. Lastly, size was said to be slightly smaller than a robin, but a tanager is actually quite a bit smaller (in mass) than a robin.

**Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*)**

vote: 2-5

one description

One was claimed in York Township, Washtenaw County, on 9 May 2015. This confusing report was submitted by someone who did not see the bird, but instead was presenting an account of what two other observers saw. Some of the statements are in quotes, presumably direct quotes from the observers, while other statements are likely second-hand information. Given these circumstances, and the propensity for individuals to modify/alter information during the transcription process, most members were not willing to vote for acceptance.

**Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*)**

vote: 1-6

one description

One was claimed at Betsie Valley Trailway, near Thompsonville, Benzie County, on 16 July 2015. The observer described a uniformly brown bird with a long tail, large head, blue shoulder, and “chestnut/red wing bar.” When first noticed, the observer commented that they thought it was a Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*). Members were confused by the combination of traits, especially the long tail.

**Scott's Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*)**

vote: 0-7

one description

One was claimed at the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary, Kalamazoo County, on 22 May 2014. While an interesting description, the observer failed to mention what should be a very obvious field mark; the black breast and back were not mentioned. Given the observer compared the bird to Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) and Lesser Goldfinch (*Spinus psaltria*), the bird's size and structure were never established, leaving the entire committee uncertain what was really observed.



## Corrigenda

Several items in Terry (2015) require correction. First, for the Berrien County records of Black-bellied Whistling-Duck on 18-27 April 2014 and Snowy Plover on 22-27 April 2014, photo credits attributed to Carl Manning should have been for Judi Manning. Second, for the King Eider in Muskegon County on 4 February – 15 March 2014, “Ken Martin” should be Kent Martin, “Mike Sparague” should be Mike Sprague, and Darrell Lawson should be listed as providing a description. Third, for the Barrow’s Goldeneye in Muskegon County on 2-22 February 2014, Darrell Lawson should also be credited for providing a written description. Fourth, the “Kriider’s” Red-tailed Hawk in Berrien County on 14 April 2013 was accepted in the second round. Lastly, for the Blue Grosbeaks in Kalamazoo County on 12 June – 14 August 2014, five individuals, not “six”, were accepted.

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