

# **CALIFORNIA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE (CBRC) ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES**

**Los Gatos, CA 19-20 January 2018**

**19 JANUARY 2018**

Meeting called to order at 13:05, 19 January 2018 (Chair presiding). Members: Steve Rottenborn (Chair), Scott Terrill (Vice-Chair), Tom Benson (non-voting Secretary), Jon Dunn, Jonathan Feenstra, Rob Fowler, Lauren Harter, Guy McCaskie, Kristie Nelson, Justyn Stahl.

Welcome and introductory comments by Rottenborn.

## **1. REVIEW OF MINUTES OF 2017 MEETING**

With the correction of a typo, the 2017 minutes from the annual meeting held on 27-28 January 2017 in Pasadena, California were approved without additional changes (Terrill, Dunn); passed 9-0.

## **2. CLOSED SESSION: ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

- a. Election of members** (three-year terms). The terms of Harter, Nelson, and Terrill expire after the 2018 meeting.

Nominations:

Chris Howard  
Gary Nunn  
Jim Pike  
Peter Pyle  
Adam Searcy  
Dan Singer  
Ryan Terrill  
Steve Tucker  
Alex Rinkert

Jim Pike, Peter Pyle, Dan Singer were elected.

A formal letter or note will be sent to each nominee by the Secretary informing them of the election results. Precise wording of this will be at the Secretary's discretion, but at a minimum should include an introductory comment, a list of all nominees, and those elected. Voting details shall not be included.

- b. Election of Chair** (one-year term) – nomination: Steve Rottenborn (Dunn, Terrill). Rottenborn elected.
- c. Election of Vice-Chair** (one-year term) – nomination: Dan Singer (Dunn, McCaskie). Singer elected.
- d. Election of the Secretary** (one-year term) – nomination: Tom Benson (Rottenborn, Terrill). Benson elected.
- e. Discussion of member nomination and selection process** – Rottenborn led a Committee discussion of general considerations of potential Committee members.
  - 1) Experience and knowledge of avian identification criteria
  - 2) Ability to meet workload requirements
  - 3) State regional balance and representation
  - 4) Age balance
  - 5) Gender balance
  - 6) Balance between experienced Committee members and new members
  - 7) Members should be supportive of the Committee process.

For the sake of discussion, the Committee reviewed the following criteria for Committee membership considered by the British Birds Records Committee (as published in *British Birds* in April 2017):

- 1) A widely acknowledged expertise in identification
- 2) Proven reliability in the field
- 3) A track record of high-quality submissions of descriptions of scarce and rare birds to county records committees and BBRC
- 4) Experience of record assessment
- 5) Regional credibility
- 6) The capacity to handle the volume of work involved in assessing upwards of 700 records per year
- 7) The capacity to work quickly and efficiently
- 8) Easy access to the internet

Dunn extended the conversation to a discussion of criteria for individuals who would serve well as Chair.

- f. **Discussion of Potential Future Members** - A number of potential future members were discussed. Once again, there was consensus that the Committee is fortunate to have a very strong field of potential qualified candidates that are willing to serve on the Committee.

### **3. OPEN SESSION: CALIFORNIA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE WEBSITE**

Joe Morlan gave a presentation on recent changes to the CBRC website. The Committee held a general discussion of the updated website, with Morlan planning on making any changes based on Committee input. It was noted that PDFs of all the past CBRC annual reports are available on line on the web site. In addition, the annual meeting minutes back to 1973 are available on line (and include a digest of minutes from 1973 to 1995). Rottenborn will follow up and double check annotations to the species list with respect to records supported by specimens, photos, or audio recordings.

In general, the Committee members agreed that the web site looked excellent and thanked Joe for all his work on the website over the years.

Based on feedback from the committee at the meeting, the following changes have been made to the online report form.

1. "Date first seen" changed to "Date"
2. "Date last seen" removed.
3. Description box asks to include "circumstances" of the observations.
4. 100% was removed from the "Is the ID 100% certain?" question.

### **4. BYLAW PROPOSALS**

No changes to any bylaws were proposed or discussed.

### **5. PROCEDURAL ISSUES**

- a. A number of records of CBRC review species are now being documented in eBird checklists, and this documentation is not necessarily being forwarded to the Secretary by the observer. Currently, the practice of the Secretary includes pulling eBird documentation provided in record-relevant eBird checklists to provide/supplement documentation for a particular record for which not all documentation is submitted

directly to the Secretary. The Secretary uses his discretion in selecting the documentation to include with the circulated record, and currently attempts to pull the documentation necessary to support a record without necessarily pulling all the documentation available (e.g., from multiple checklists). The Secretary alone determines whether the documentation in an eBird checklist is potentially acceptable. The CBRC has no interest in reviewing (and likely not accepting) documentation of review species if the eBird checklist does not contain adequate documentation; that is the responsibility/prerogative of eBird reviewers. The Committee agreed to continue the current practice and not request the Secretary to include all the documentation available for a particular record at the Secretary's discretion.

No motion was made.

- b.** Currently, any observers whose documentation is listed on a batch cover sheet in support of a record are cited in the CBRC annual report. The Committee discussed whether to cite only those observers who directly submit documentation to the Committee, rather than those whose eBird documentation has been pulled by the Secretary. A straw vote was held, and a narrow majority of members favored continuing to publish the initials of any observer whose documentation is listed on a batch cover sheet. The Committee agreed to maintain the status quo.

No motion was made.

- c.** There is an eBird record of a ship-assisted Hawfinch in California waters, clearly documenting the bird's trip across the Pacific Ocean on a vessel. The Committee discussed whether to review the record. Although members were generally unsupportive of accepting records of birds that were clearly ship-assisted, the Committee decided to pull eBird documentation of the Hawfinch record and review it.
- d.** The Committee discussed the current procedure by which eBird reviewers do not confirm/accept eBird records of CBRC review species unless the CBRC has accepted the record. The Committee affirmed its support for that approach. The question was raised whether a record that leads to the placement of a species on the CBRC's Supplemental List should be confirmed by eBird reviewers, because such records are technically not accepted by the CBRC. The Committee agreed that eBird reviewers should probably consider such records confirmed but that this is an eBird issue and not something that the CBRC should weigh in on.
- e.** The CBRC discussed whether to make electronic copies of records (including documentation and CBRC deliberations) available through the CBRC website. It was noted that records predating electronic circulation of batches would still have to be

looked up manually (at the WFVZ) unless a volunteer wants to update entries for old records.

An issue is that there is a CBRC bylaw that the Committee will not reveal the names of observers of rejected records on the website or in publications. If the records are posted on the website, people can search for rejected records and see the observer names. If the Committee decides to make the records available online to the general public or include links to rejected records, it may require a bylaw modification.

There was no motion to alter the status quo and make records electronically available.

- f. Iceland Gull has been removed from the Review List and no records from 2017 on will be reviewed. The Committee discussed how to handle the review of unreviewed historical records, should any be submitted. The problem is that birds representing *kumlieni* and nominate *glaucoides*, which were reviewed prior to the lump with *thayeri*, are now only considered subspecies of a regularly occurring species, and the CBRC does not review records of rare subspecies, so this situation differs from review of historical records of full species. The Committee discussed bringing any such records to a meeting to discuss how to deal with them. Rottenborn and Benson noted that, in any case, such records should be archived.

There was no motion on dealing with historical Iceland Gull records.

- g. The Committee discussed whether birds present continuously should be reviewed every year. Two approaches, annually reviewing birds believed to have remained continuously under separate record numbers, and simply extending the date span for the record without multiple reviews, have been used by the Committee. For example, the long-staying Northern Gannet has not received any additional review, or new record numbers, since it was first accepted. Additional dates have just been tacked on to the existing accepted record for the last five years. The same is true for the Inyo Curve-billed Thrasher for a four-year period.

Other records have been treated differently. For example, the Santa Rosa Common Black Hawk was reviewed the first year under 2007-080, but during years 2008-2016 it was reviewed again under a new record number, possibly because it was thought to be returning rather than resident. Another example was the 1984 Crescent City Barred Owl, which never left its territory but got new record numbers and new reviews in 1986 and 1987. An even more pertinent case was the Black-backed Oriole found in the Tijuana R. Valley, San Diego, in the spring of 2000 and "returning" the following year. Both years were assigned new record numbers and votes, and the records were accepted. After the voting was complete, but before the result was published, the bird showed up in the winter of 2002, suggesting that it never actually left. The final winter record was assigned a new record number and all three records (all of the same bird) were

ultimately rejected on grounds of questionable natural occurrence, largely because this bird was now thought to be resident rather than returning.

The Committee discussed these alternative approaches with respect to some additional contemporary records including, for example, the Black Vulture records in the North Bay counties. It has been voted on as one bird under many different record numbers. We know about the Common Black Hawk nesting near Santa Rosa, but we know very little if anything about what it does when not on its nesting territory. Part of the reason is that the winery is closed to the public for half the year, in fall and winter. The bird is generally now considered resident, but a record (2008-055) submitted from San Benito County was considered the same bird as the Santa Rosa bird.

In recent years the Committee has just been adding a paragraph at the end of the CBRC's reports indicating which long-staying birds remained during the year covered by the report, and until when.

The Committee discussed whether long-staying birds need to be reviewed annually. In general, the approach of treating a bird that remains continuously as a single record, but reviewing birds that appear to leave and return to a site in subsequent years as separate records, seems like a good approach. It was noted that some records may be difficult to interpret and treatment of such records should depend on particular aspects of those records. Committee members can request that such records be re-evaluated or discussed at a meeting.

It was agreed that the Committee would discuss the Santa Rosa, San Benito, and Tiburon Common Black Hawk records with respect to the same bird issue at the next annual meeting (Dunn will look into these records and make a recommendation). The bylaws state: "Accepted records of individual birds returning or continuing through subsequent years shall be treated the same as any other resubmission of an accepted record. A majority vote determines whether a record is to be treated as a resubmission of a returning or continuing bird."

No motion was made.

## **6. EXPEDITED REVIEW**

Three batches (17Bx, 17Hx, and 17Px) were circulated via the Expedited Review procedures since the 2017 meeting. These batches contained 53 records, and only one was requested to be removed and evaluated per normal procedures.

The past year (2017) was the first year during which the Committee tried a new, expedited review process (see the minutes from the 2017 annual meeting). These are records that appear straightforward to the Committee Secretary and are selected as such at the Secretary's discretion. The Committee discussed the process and generally agreed that it

went quite well. Expedited review reduces the work load for the Secretary and the Committee members in general, and accelerates the review process. It was unanimously considered a success, and no changes to these procedures were requested.

## 7. REVIEW LIST

### Proposed Deletions:

- a) **Iceland Gull.** On 5 Jul 2017, the Committee voted by email 9-0 in favor of removing Iceland Gull from the Review List retroactively to January 1, 2017. No action was needed at the 2018 Annual Meeting; the Committee wanted this decision reflected in the 2018 meeting minutes.
- b) **Broad-billed Hummingbird:** 98 accepted records (+4 awaiting review), 90% acceptance rate. Average 2.7 records per year over last 10 years. Generally not an identification issue. Motion to remove (Feenstra, Terrill); failed 2-7.
- c) **Dusky-capped Flycatcher:** 110 accepted records (+6 awaiting review), 89% acceptance rate. Average 4.3 records per year over last 10 years. Generally not an identification issue if seen well. Motion to remove (McCaskie, Stahl); passed 8-1.
- d) **Mourning Warbler:** 159 accepted records, 81% acceptance rate. Average 2.3 records per year over the last 10 years, but average is 3.5 records per year over the last 45 years. Generally not an identification issue if seen well, and most birds now are photographed; 42% of all records are from SEFI, but only 30% in the last 10 years. Motion to remove (Rottenborn, no second).

There was discussion of potentially adding Kentucky Warbler back on the review list. Stahl volunteered to examine the status of Kentucky Warbler since it was removed from the Review List. There was also discussion of possibly adding Wood Stork, Bohemian Waxwing, and Northern Cardinal to the Review List and additional discussion of the difficulty (questionable origin) in dealing with Northern Cardinal records.

**First day's (19 January 2018) meeting adjourned at 20:40**

## 20 JANUARY 2018

Second day's meeting called to order by Committee Chair Rottenborn at 08:40 with all members present.

## 8. MASKED AND NAZCA BOOBIES

At its 2017 Annual Meeting, the Committee had an extended discussion and review of the criteria used by members when accepting birds as pure Masked or Nazca Boobies and how the existence of hybrids influences Committee decisions. The reliability of bill color, and the age at which adult bill color tones begin to come into the bill of young birds was discussed.

In addition, the variability and relative extent of white in the tails of the two species was discussed. The pivotal paper by Pitman and Jehl (1998, Geographic Variation and Reassessment of Species Limits in the “Masked” Boobies of the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Wilson Bulletin 110:155-170) was examined and discussed. Comments by Pitman on specific records were reviewed and discussed.

The Committee agreed that more information about the relative abundance of hybrids, as well as photos of bird identified as hybrids by Pitman and others, if they exist, would be potentially helpful in informing Committee evaluations of (primarily young) birds. With respect to hybrids, Pitman and Jehl indicate that they are rare; however, newer information indicates that Masked and Nazca boobies may hybridize more frequently at the northern part of the range and that Nazca Booby is expanding its range north.

McCaskie and Rottenborn contacted Pitman, Mike Force, and Sophie Webb to try to obtain more information. In light of the information that was received, the Committee re-evaluated the approach to assessing records in this species pair, particularly subadults.

With respect to bill color, Mike Force indicated that “the colour was apparent by the end of the first year in most cases”, and Bob Pitman indicated that “The juvs [Nazca] start to get orange in their bill pretty early in most cases”, and that by 1 year “juvs should be separable by bill color. Once the bill starts to turn pinkish or greenish I think the die is cast”.

With respect to the amount of white in the tail, this is variable in both species, although white in the central rectrices is clearly more dominant in Nazca Boobies. The Committee viewed photos of a Masked Booby with white in the central rectrices from Dry Tortugas and a green-billed subadult Masked Booby photo from Pitman that had extensively white central rectrices. Likewise, photos of juvenile Nazca Boobies from the Galapagos were quite variable with respect to the amount of white in the tail, with some birds showing virtually no white. Extensive white in the tail is likely supportive of Nazca Booby, but does not eliminate Masked Booby.

With respect to hybrids, Pitman noted the following:

- a) Pitman and Jehl (1998) noted two possible hybrids and a few mixed pairs.
- b) The closest nesting colony to southern California is Alijos Rocks where he has counted 65-100 over the years, primarily Masked, but also some Nazca and a few hybrids occur there.
- c) In a pers. comm. to Don Roberson provided to the Committee, Pitman indicated that “I think the number of Nazca x Masked hybrids is probably considerably less than 1%. There are no Masked Boobies at the two major Nazca colonies (Malpelo, Galapagos) that I am aware of. And there are only a handful of Nazcas at Clipperton, San Benedicto



and Alijos, combined, and most of those find their own kind. I have seen several hybrids at all three of those locations, however."

Don Roberson and Alvaro Jaramillo have also weighed in that they think the frequency of hybrids is low.

Based on these comments, the frequency of occurrence of hybrids, relative to pure Masked or Nazca Boobies, is expected to be very low.

After reviewing dozens of photos, many provided by Pitman, the Committee reached a consensus that while many young birds are not identifiable, if the bill appears greenish (yellowish-green) it is identifiable as a Masked Booby, and if the bill appears pinkish or orangeish it is identifiable as a Nazca Booby. The Committee noted, however, that the bill colors of birds can vary depending on the monitor being used, with birds appearing on one monitor to barely have a dull pink/orange cast and on another appearing much brighter pink/orange.

[Addendum on 19 April 2019, from Peter Pyle: "a decade or so ago I looked at bill color in first-cycle Masked and Nazca booby specimens as related to primary molt progression and found some birds showing indicative bill color before juvenile primaries had been replaced. Based on this along with body-feather wear and such, I estimated that: 'Bill color can begin to tinge orange in Nazca Booby at 4-8 months of age and is the most diagnostic criterion at any age' (Pyle 2008:300)."]

## 9. BLUE-HEADED AND CASSIN'S VIREOS

While the identification of many individuals of these two species can be relatively straightforward, birds that appear intermediate are problematic. The various identification issues involving these birds were discussed. Song seems not be an issue, with both species having distinct songs. It was noted (Dunn) that *alticola* Blue-headed Vireos have more blended backs than *solitarius*.

The Committee looked at multiple photos of the same birds and noted that the apparent degree of throat/malar contrast may vary among photos. Having multiple photos from different angles is best when reviewing records of claimed Blue-headed Vireos.

## 10. FOURTH AND FINAL RECORDS

The following records without a decision after three rounds of voting were discussed and then voted upon at the meeting:

**2015-081 Magnificent Frigatebird** at Santa Cruz I. SBA, 7 Jul 2015. [Note: this record is listed in the online update as not accepted, but it needed to undergo a 4<sup>th</sup>-round vote.] One of the concerns regarding this record was that the observer was not known. The bylaws state,

“The published data for accepted records should include at least the species name, date(s) of observation, locality, and reporting observers”, they do not state that all these data are mandatory (e.g., the observer doesn’t absolutely have to be known). Accepted 9-0.

**2015-088 Nazca Booby** at Point Loma SD, 1 Sep 2015. Whether the base of the bill shows pink or green varied from photo to photo, depending on saturation and lightening, so that it was difficult to reliably assess the bill color. Rejected 1-8.

**2015-167 Nazca Booby** at Oceanside SD, 30 Oct 2015. Accepted 9-0.

## 11. RECORDS BROUGHT TO THE MEETING BY REQUEST

**1986-025 and later Greater Pewee** at Balboa Park SD (McCaskie) – The Committee endorsed a record at that location during the winter of 1985-1986, considering that record to be of a different bird from an individual endorsed from the winters of 1987-1988, 1988-1989, 1989-1990 and 1991-1992 (with the same bird being present these latter four years). In addition, the species was reportedly present at this location during the following two winters, though no documentation had yet been submitted:

1986-1987 – 23 Nov 1986-28 Mar 1987 (AB 41:331, 489 and 1281)

1990-1991 – 18 Oct 1990-29 Mar 1991 (AB:45:152 and 497)

Should the CBRC consider the 1986-1987 and 1990-1991 occurrences formally and/or consider the 1985-1986 record to be the same as those present in subsequent winters? McCaskie provided documentation for the two records and the Secretary will circulate them for Committee evaluation as two new records. There was no additional action on an unsubmitted record from the same location 26 Sep 1994.

**2014-060 Broad-billed Hummingbird** at Montecito SBA (Benson) – accepted, published dates were 26-27 Mar 2014, but the bird was present 26-29 March, which was the date range published in NAB. Because the record was published before the discrepancy was noticed, a Committee vote of 9-0 or 8-1 was needed to change the date span. A motion to extend the date (McCaskie, Nelson) passed; 9-0. The Committee will publish the corrected date span in the next annual report.

**2004-592/593/594 King Eider** at Monterey MON (McCaskie, Benson) – These three records of King Eiders in Monterey 1 January to 25 March 1971, 1 January 1972 to 11 March 1972, and 21 March 1973, clearly pertain to a female King Eider returning to Monterey Harbor for four consecutive winters: 24 Dec 1969-7 Mar 1970 (black-and-white photo in Roberson 1980), 1 Jan-28 Mar 1971, Jan-11 Mar 1972, and 21 Mar 1973 as reported by Don Roberson (Monterey Birds, second edition. 2002 – page142). The CBRC reviewed and endorsed the 24

Dec 1969-7 Mar 1970 record (CBRC Record 1977-127), but evidently never received documentation for the presence of this returning bird during the next three winters. These reports were discussed so the Committee could decide whether it wished to endorse them as the same bird as CBRC Record 1977-127 returning for the next three winters, or continue to consider them as “Not submitted” as listed in Rare Birds of California. Because there was no extant documentation for the subsequent 3 years, the record numbers for those years will be voided.

**2016-003A Masked/Nazca Booby**, Pt Pinos MTY, 1 Feb 2016 (Rottenborn) –This record was not accepted as Nazca Booby (2016-003), but was accepted as Masked/Nazca Booby; the Committee discussed the record in terms of a potential re-evaluation as a Nazca Booby in light of information on identification of Masked vs. Nazca boobies obtained from experts since the 2017 meeting. It was interesting for the Committee to note that the hue on the bill was a function of the monitor used to view photos of the bird. A motion to circulate the record as a Nazca Booby based on substantial new information (reliance primarily on bill color and low incidence of hybridization) (Stahl, Terrill); passed 9-0.

**2015-163 Masked/Nazca Booby**, west of San Diego LA, 31 Aug 2015 (Rottenborn) – accepted; the Committee considered whether to evaluate this record as a Nazca Booby. The bird had extensive white in its central rectrices, and the bill has some orange tones. The Committee had not previously voted on this record to species. The Committee discussed the observation and decided that there was not enough adult color in the bill (although there was a significant amount of white in the tail, which was suggestive but not conclusive for Nazca Booby) to lead to a motion to review this to species. No motion.

**2015-126 Masked Booby**, Sutil Rock SBA, 26 Oct 2015 (Rottenborn) – not accepted as Masked. The Committee discussed whether the record should be re-submitted as a Masked/Nazca Booby under record #2015-126A, or whether it should continue to evaluate this record as a Masked Booby in light of information on identification of Masked vs. Nazca boobies obtained from experts since the 2017 meeting? The Committee decided to continue the circulation for a third round (McCaskie, Stahl); no vote needed.

**2017-112 Masked Booby**, La Jolla Cove SD, 23 Sep 2017 – endorsed (8-1) with JLD requesting recirculation. The record was discussed and it will recirculate.

**2016-087A Nazca Booby**, near Catalina Island LA, 15 Sep 2016 (Dunn) – endorsed (8-1), so the record is ACCEPTED. The record was discussed with a motion to recirculate (Dunn, no second).

**2016-141 Nazca Booby**, Point Pinos MTY, 14 Nov 2016 (Dunn) – endorsed by seven (7-2), so the record will be RECIRCULATED. It was also brought to the 2018 meeting to discuss

apparent discrepancies in descriptions of viewing conditions and ability of the observers to assess bill color. During the meeting, Rottenborn emailed one of the observers and obtained clarification regarding why one observer was able to see the bird better and longer than the other. The record will recirculate and will be evaluated for the same bird issue.

The Committee discussed the same-bird issues with the four records below (Garrett, Dunn):

**2016-055 Nazca Booby**, Soquel Canyon SCZ, 16 Jul 2016 – accepted

**2016-089 Nazca Booby**, 112 km off Pt. Sur MTY, 3 Sep 2016 – accepted

**2016-141 Nazca Booby**, Point Pinos MTY, 14 Nov 2016 – in circulation

**2016-003A Masked/Nazca Booby**, Pt. Pinos MTY, 1 Feb 2016 – accepted as Masked/Nazca Booby

2016-055 and 2016-089 did not involve the same bird (9-0). 2016-141 will continue in circulation and Committee members will be asked to address the same-bird issue with respect to 2016-003A.

**2017-062 Nazca Booby**, Point Pinos MTY, 18-21 Jul 2017 (Rottenborn) – rejected by six (3-6), so the record is NOT ACCEPTED. This record was brought to the meeting to discuss identification in the context of other records of subadult boobies. The Committee noted that the bill color seemed variable in different lighting conditions and at best was a pale or dull pinkish but not obviously pink enough for acceptance. There was no motion and the record will be circulated as a Masked/Nazca Booby.

**2017-068 Masked Booby**, near Seal Rocks SF, 6 Aug 2017 (Rottenborn) – endorsed by eight (8-1), so the record is ACCEPTED. This record was brought to the meeting to discuss identification in the context of other records of subadult boobies. The record will recirculate at Rottenborn's request.

**2002-227 Yellow-billed Loon**, Monterey Bay MTY, 24 Mar 2002(Nelson, Stahl) – endorsed by five (5-4), so the record will be recirculated, but it was brought to the 2018 Annual Meeting to discuss. The record will be evaluated for same-bird issues.

**2016-140 Great Frigatebird**, Point Pinos MTY (Dunn) – endorsed by eight (8-1) with KNN requesting recirculation, so the record will be recirculated, but it was brought to the 2018 Annual Meeting to discuss identification. The Committee also will need to determine the date span.

**2015-176 Jouanin's Petrel**, 15 km off Strawberry Beach SCZ, 12 Sep 2015 (Dunn) – endorsed by seven (7-2), so the record will be recirculated, but it was brought to the 2018 Annual Meeting to discuss identification.

**2016-058 Jouanin's Petrel**, Santa Barbara Island SBA, 1 Jun 2016 (Dunn) – endorsed by eight (8-1), so the record is accepted. The record was brought to the 2018 Annual Meeting to discuss identification.

**2016-067 Mourning Warbler**, SE Farallon Island SF, 23 Aug 2016 (Dunn) – endorsed by eight (8-1), so the record is accepted, but it was brought to the 2018 Annual Meeting to discuss identification and to request a recirculation.

**2011-065 Common Crane**, L. Earl DN, 5-8 May 2011 and **2012-231 Common Crane**, Modoc NWR MOD, 27 Dec 2012 (Dunn); this record was brought to the meeting to discuss provenance. A motion to reconsider 2011-065 (Dunn, Terrill); failed 2-7.

**2003-133 Rivoli's Hummingbird**, Pacific Beach SD, 11 Oct–29 Nov 2003 and **2004-054 Rivoli's Hummingbird**, Eureka HUM, 8 Apr-17 May and 21 Jun 2004 (Dunn); were brought to the meeting to discuss identification, and whether the Committee is concerned about eliminating Talamanca Hummingbird. Based on the current information regarding morphological differences, the Committee is not sure that Talamanca Hummingbird can definitively be eliminated for the California records of Rivoli's. There was no motion to re-evaluate either of the state records with respect to this issue.

**2015-151 Rusty Blackbird**, Furnace Creek Ranch INY, 5 Nov 2015 (Dunn) – this record was not accepted, but a better version of the photo was obtained by Dunn by way of Louis Bevier. Dunn requested re-evaluation of the record on the basis of the higher-quality image being new and substantial information. The image that was previously reviewed by the CBRC was a low-resolution image, even lower than the original eBird image that Louis Bevier was then able to enhance. Here is an explanation (which might be generally helpful to the birding community) from Louis Bevier regarding how the higher resolution photo of the Rusty Blackbird was achieved:

“When I look at these photos on eBird, I click on the image in the list and then drag (download) the full-size that eBird offers. You can do the same by clicking on the Macaulay link and then opening (“bigifying”) the image there. That seems to be the maximum size they offer to the public. Be aware that this image is the Macaulay “public” version. Those don’t have the EXIF data, which they strip in the conversion process for web display. (You should probably get the details of that from them.) To get the EXIF data, you’ll have to request the original image that was uploaded. If that original was not modified by the observer, you should be able to get the EXIF data. Some members who are savvy might wonder why the image circulated doesn’t have full EXIF information, and they might therefore question its authenticity. If that is an issue, I guess you would have to request the original archived version.

Once I have a copy that is the best public resolution, as in this case, I might crop it further. That's what I did with the blackbird. The bird was still rather small; so I increased the size 200% at 72 dpi (for screen) using photo editing software. That doesn't change things much, but does resample the pixels to fill in. That really should not be an issue on something like this where the original (online version) had a lot of information (pixel depth) in what I could nab. (It helps if observers do that themselves!) I don't go much above 2x, but if you really want to look for detail, then try 3x. This works best through one cycle because the JPG file degrades with each successive save. I compare what I see in the zoomed/modified image to the original to see if any artifacts have been introduced. I did not see any in the blackbird. So that is what I sent to Jon.

This all sounds like a lot, but it only takes a few seconds. On some tricky images where there is a dispute about color, I will attempt to process the image so that the color balance (white balance and to some extent individual colors) of a background plant or branch or soil looks realistic. Sometimes, if strongly backlit in the shade of a leafy green tree, one needs to balance the bird itself, looking for elements you can trust (eyering color or the like)."

A request was made to re-submit this record as 2015-151A (Stahl, Nelson), so it will circulate as such.

**1976-062, 1980-073, and 1988-075 Cassin's Sparrow**, El Cajon SD (McCaskie) – From McCaskie: "A singing Cassin's Sparrow in El Cajon, San Diego County, 15-30 May 1970, 8-11 May 1976 and 10-12 Jun 1978 is listed as three different birds in the Table of Records in Rare Birds of California (California Bird Records Committee. 2007), but considered by Philip Unitt (San Diego County Bird Atlas. 2004) as one bird returning to the exact same site in three different years. I believe the Committee should review the treatment of these three individual singing Cassin's Sparrows at the exact same site in El Cajon in the 1970's, and treat them as the same bird returning." Dunn noted that this bird did not summer, it was recorded in the same patch of unsuitable chamise habitat for brief periods each year. The Committee voted (7-2) to consider these records as involving the same returning bird.

**2017-029 White Wagtail**, Camp Pendleton SD, 18 Apr 2017 and **2017-030 White Wagtail**, San Diego River SD, 23-26 Apr 2017 (Benson) – endorsed by all (9-0). The majority of members (6-3) initially considered these birds the same individual, however, at the secretary's discretion, these records were brought to the meeting to discuss the same-bird issue. After viewing side-by-side photos of both records and noting multiple subtle plumage differences, the Committee voted that the two records did not involve the same bird (8-1).

**2017-001 Eurasian Kestrel**, Fields Landing HUM, 6 Jan 2017 (Dunn) – on second round, rejected by six (3-6), so the record is NOT ACCEPTED on the basis of QUESTIONABLE NATURAL OCCURRENCE. No motion to re-evaluate.

**2017-078 Kermadec Petrel**, Southeast Farallon Island SF, 8 Sep 2017 (Dunn) – endorsed by eight (8-1), so the record is ACCEPTED. It was brought to the meeting to discuss identification. One mark not discussed in circulation, but one that looked diagnostic from the photos, was that the underwing white patch extended to the outer primary as it should on Kermadec, whereas it is more restricted on Providence. The record was accepted 8-1, with Dunn being the lone dissenter, but after extensive discussion at the meeting there was a unanimous consensus that the bird was a Kermadec Petrel.

**2017-047 and 2017-051 White-eyed Vireos**, Orange County, 2017 (Benson) – these records were brought to the meeting to resolve the same-bird issue. The two birds were 700 yards apart and were possibly missing same greater covert on left side, but the later bird was missing feathers on its throat. The Committee voted that these records involved different individuals (9-0).

**2017-075 Golden-winged Warbler**, Blue Lake HUM, 29-30 Aug 2017 (Fowler) was endorsed by eight (8-1) with Fowler requesting recirculation. The record was brought to the meeting for discussion. After discussion, Fowler withdrew his request for recirculation, so the record is accepted.

**2017-108 Mourning Warbler**, Arcata Marsh HUM, 12-13 Oct 2017 (Fowler) was endorsed by eight (8-1) with Fowler requesting recirculation. The record was brought to the meeting for discussion and will be recirculated.

## 12. OTHER RECORDS

**2016-077 and 2016-078, Magnificent Frigatebird**, south end of Salton Sea IMP – In March 2017, the Committee voted by email 8-1 in favor (LBH dissenting) of combining these two records into a single record. Record 2016-077 now represents an accepted record of 13 Magnificent Frigatebirds at the south end of the Salton Sea on 11 Sep 2016; record 2016-078 is voided. No action was needed, but this decision is reflected in the meeting minutes.

**2016-087 Masked/Nazca Booby**, near Catalina Island LA, 15 Sep 2016 – In March 2017, the Committee voted by email 8-1 in favor of re-submitting record 2016-087 as a Nazca Booby (2016-087A). The decision for record 2016-087 (Masked/Nazca Booby) is temporarily suspended pending the outcome of record 2016-087A. No action was needed, but this decision is reflected in the meeting minutes.

**2007-243 Bulwer's Petrel**, Santa Barbara Channel, VEN 5 Sep 2007 and **1993-118 Bulwer's Petrel**, Whitewater River, Salton Sea RIV, 10 Jul 1993 – Some members did not accept these records because Jouanin's was not eliminated. Because Jouanin's has been accepted, the Committee considered whether to circulate these records as Bulwer's/Jouanin's Petrels. A motion to circulate the VEN bird (2007-243) as a Bulwer's/Jouanin's Petrel (Rottenborn, Harter); passed, 8-1. There was no motion on the RIV bird (1993-118).

**1986-450 Oriental Greenfinch at Arcata, HUM 4 Dec 1986-3 Apr 1987** – One was on St. Paul Island, AK on 12 June 1996 and another was in southwestern B.C. in the fall of 2015. The Committee considered whether these records represent “new and substantial evidence” that would support re-evaluating the Arcata record. From *Rare Birds of California*: “*The record of a widely seen Oriental Greenfinch present from 4 December 1986 to 3 April 1987 in Arcata, Humboldt County, circulated four times through the Committee and gained five or six votes of acceptance during each round (9 of the 16 members to vote on the record never took this position). Members generally agreed that the record pertains to Chloris sinica kawarahiba, a requisite for consideration as a genuine vagrant. Factors weighing against the bird's natural occurrence include the species' failure to establish a pattern of vagrancy in the Old World, known instances of captivity in the United States, and perhaps this individual's unusual association with House Finches. Thus, while most members considered the odds of this bird being an escapee to be small, the record never mustered the support needed for the CBRC to endorse it as involving a naturally occurring vagrant. In Taiwan, wintering birds are apparently captured and kept (Yen 1984). In the United States, the species is rare, but not unknown, in captivity. A 10 March 2005 query of the International Species Information System yielded a total of eight captive Oriental Greenfinches at zoos and other participating institutions in North America: five in Quebec and three in Manitoba.*”

At the 2017 Annual Meeting, the Committee discussed whether it wanted to re-review the record in light of the recent accepted record for British Columbia. The Committee decided to try and obtain more information on the identification of subspecies, and the evaluation of the British Columbia bird to subspecies, and then revisit the record. This information was discussed at the 2018 meeting.

A motion to re-evaluate the Arcata record based on additional records from Alaska and the British Columbia record establishing more information on a pattern of vagrancy (Dunn, Rottenborn); passed 9-0.

### 13. ANNUAL REPORTS

- a) **41<sup>st</sup> report** (2015 records) – authored by Searcy, Tietz, Daniels, Feenstra, and Benson, final/revised draft sent to Phil Unitt on 17 Dec 2017.



- b) **42<sup>nd</sup> report** (2016 records) – to be authored by McCaskie, Terrill, Rottenborn, and Benson. Draft will be circulated to the committee for review in March 2018.
- c) **43<sup>rd</sup> report** (2017 records) – to be authored by Singer, Stahl, McCaskie, Dunn and Benson.

#### 14. BUDGET

The 2017 WFO budget included \$300 for web hosting/domain name costs for all WFO websites, \$200 for the CBRC's miscellaneous expenses (\$150 for postage and \$50 for any Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology [WVZ] or other costs), and \$200 for the new California bird checklist. Expenditures were \$99 for the annual Dropbox Plus fee and \$30 for web hosting. The preliminary 2018 WFO budget includes \$200 for whatever CBRC expenses the Committee has (Dropbox, web hosting).

Page charges for annual reports. Two CBRC reports were published in 2016, and the CBRC funded \$1,310 of the \$1,440 in page charges for the two 2016 CBRC reports.

No CBRC reports were published in 2017, but two reports are expected in 2018. The Committee does not yet know how much page charges for these two reports will be. So far, donations by Terrill and Benson totaling \$167.71 have been made toward the 41<sup>st</sup> report. Donations are strongly encouraged, no matter the amount. The simplest way to donate is to visit <https://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/pagecharges.php>. Indicate which report you are donating toward.

**Crowd-funding CBRC reports.** Gary Rosenberg created a “GoFundMe” campaign to raise the funds for the page costs for the Arizona Bird Records Committee report. It worked very well, as a number of Arizona birders contributed. In light of this success, the Committee will approach the California Birding Committee about creating a “GoFundMe” account to fund Committee reports. Stahl drafted some language for an appeal to cover the costs of the annual report. Rottenborn will work with Stahl to publicize the appeal.

**Dropbox account.** The Committee decided to upgrade to an individual Dropbox “Plus” account for a cost of \$99/year. Funding (e.g., through donations/fundraising by the CBRC vs. annual allocation by the WFO) was discussed.

#### 15. NEW CALIFORNIA CHECKLIST

The WFO Board requested that the CBRC compile a new state checklist, and at the 2017 meeting (see minutes from that meeting for details), Rottenborn agreed to produce this. Rottenborn will be finalizing two versions incorporating any relevant changes associated

with the Fifty-ninth Supplement to the American Ornithological Society's Check-list of North American Birds.

## 16. INTRODUCED BIRDS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Following the recommendation of the Introduced Birds Subcommittee, the Committee, a motion to add the following species to the Introduced Birds Watch List (Feenstra, Nelson); passed (9-0):

Red-lored Parrot, *Amazona autumnalis*

Japanese White-eye, *Zosterops japonicus*

Bronze Mannikin, *Spermestes cucullata*

Orange-cheeked Waxbill, *Estrilda melpoda*

Mandarin Duck, *Aix galericulata*

Blue-crowned Parakeet, *Thectocercus acuticaudatus*

Turquoise-fronted Parrot, *Amazona aestiva*

Yellow-headed Parrot, *Amazona oratrix*

Black-throated Magpie-jay, *Calocitta colliei*

White-collared Seedeater, *Sporophila torqueola*

European Goldfinch, *Carduelis carduelis*

The 2017 Introduced Birds Subcommittee (IBSC) consisted of Kimball Garrett, Jim Tietz, John Garrett, and Thomas Benson. The Introduced Bird Subcommittee going forward will consist of Kimball Garrett, Adam Searcy, John Garrett, Kristie Nelson, John Feenstra, and Thomas Benson. Tietz will be asked if he wishes to continue on the Subcommittee.

[After the meeting, while preparing the updated Watch List for the website, Kimball added Monk Parakeet (*Myiopsitta monacha*), saying, "There is recent evidence of the clear establishment of Monk Parakeets, *Myiopsitta monacha* in Calexico CA (with the population across the border in Mexicali even larger)."]

The Watch List has been updated on the website to include the additional species.

## 17. FIELD-IDENTIFIABLE SUBSPECIES SUBCOMMITTEE

At the 2017 Annual Meeting, the Committee discussed whether there was interest in forming a subcommittee to investigate issues related to the possible tracking (and archival, perhaps review) of records of vagrant, field-identifiable subspecies (see the 2017 meeting minutes for details). Lauren Harter and John Garrett expressed an interest in participating,

and it was suggested that Steve Hampton might contribute given his interest in subspecies identification. Lauren and John coordinated on this and reached out to Steve Hampton and Adam Searcy about chairing the subcommittee. Hampton indicated that he is too busy but that he might provide advice on Fox Sparrow and gull subspecies. Searcy indicated that he is interested but too busy to chair the subcommittee at this time.

## **18. RARE BIRDS ONLINE**

Rottenborn has corrections to the online version of the book and will approach the WFO publications committee about making those corrections in the online version.

## **19. OUTREACH AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

- a) Kimball Garrett has agreed to continue as CBRC spokesperson on Calbirds.
- b) The Committee discussed the possibility of additional outreach and a Public Relations Subcommittee. The Committee discussed some public relations issues that have arisen over time and how to address those.
- c) At the 2017 meeting, Lauren Harter volunteered to provide CBRC material to Frances Oliver to represent the Committee on the Western Field Ornithologists' (WFO) Facebook page. She will now be sending this to Cliff Hawley, who posts on the WFO website.
- d) As in 2017, the Committee discussed giving more presentations about the Committee to local organizations and events in addition to the WFO annual meetings. A prepared Power Point Presentation that could server such a purpose was discussed.

## **20. CBRC'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

The year 2019 will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CBRC. The Committee discussed the possibility of publishing an article in Western Birds. McCaskie and Rottenborn will prepare a brief (2-3 page) article for Western Birds on this after first asking Phil Unitt whether he would publish it.

## **21. NEXT MEETINGS**

- a) WFO conference – Ventura, CA 26-30 Sep 2018. Steve Rottenborn will present a CBRC update to the WFO membership.
- b) CBRC annual meeting – 25-26 January 2019. The meeting will be in southern California, but the precise location has yet to be determined.

## **22. APPRECIATIONS**

Lauren Harter, Kristie Nelson, and Scott Terrill for their service to the CBRC.

Steve Rottenborn, Scott Terrill and H.T. Harvey & Associates for hosting the meeting.

Tom Benson for his critical work as Secretary.

Joe Morlan for his work updating the CBRC website and presenting the update to the Committee at the 2018 meeting.

Jim Tietz for maintaining updates to "Rare Birds" on our web site.

WFVZ and Linnea Hall for their archiving services.

**23. ADJOURNMENT 16:05 20 January 2018**

Minutes prepared by Scott B. Terrill (reviewed by Tom Benson and Steve Rottenborn).