California Bird Records Committee (CBRC) Annual Meeting Minutes
10 January 2026

Meeting Location: Online via Zoom

Meeting called to order at 9:31 a.m. on 10 January 2026 (Chair presiding). Members present: Tom Benson (non-voting secretary), Andrew Birch (Vice Chair), Matt Brady, Lynette Williams Duman, Jon Dunn, Kimball Garrett (Chair), Peter Pyle, Adam Searcy, and Dessi Sieburth
Not present: Marky Mutchler (who joined, after the lunch break). Sieburth had to leave the meeting around 4:00 p.m.

Review of Minutes of 2025 Meeting

Approved via email on 15 Feb 2025. No comments were made and no changes were proposed.

Minute Keeping for the 2026 meeting

Garrett and Benson kept notes for the meeting. The open session of the meeting was recorded.

--CLOSED SESSION—

Election of New Members

Election of members (three-year terms). The terms of Kimball Garrett, Peter Pyle, and Marky Mutchler expire after the 2026 meeting.

Nominations
Marty Freeland (Garrett, Dunn, Pyle, Sieburth)
Ethan Monk (Dunn, Pyle, Sieburth)
Ryan Terrill (Brady)
Jim Tietz (Benson, Dunn)

Prior to voting there was a discussion of the difficulty experienced this year in finding candidates willing to be nominated. We discussed who was contacted but declined nominations, and members' thoughts on potential future committee nominees. Members agreed to poll past Committee members to see which ones might be interested in being nominated again.

The election was held (Mutchler's vote was sent to Secretary and Chair prior to the meeting) and the newly elected members were Marty Freeland, Ethan Monk, and Jim Tietz.

Nominators agreed to notify nominees whether or not they were elected. A formal email was sent to each nominee by the Secretary informing them of election results.

Election of Chair (one-year term): Andrew Birch nominated by Garrett; nomination seconded by Benson. Birch elected 9-0 (Mutchler absent).

Election of Vice-Chair (one-year term): Marty Freeland nominated by Dunn; nomination seconded by Brady. Freeland elected 9-0 (Mutchler absent).

Election of Secretary (one-year term): Tom Benson was nominated by Garrett; nomination seconded by Brady. Benson elected 9-0 (Mutchler absent).

Closed session ended at 10:55 a.m.

--OPEN SESSION--

Bylaw proposals

- Expand the number of voting members to 12. Benson proposed that, given the dearth of nominees this year, this issue be relegated to a brief discussion over whether the committee is still in favor of implementing this and whether there are enough potential members for expansion. We agreed to defer any action on this issue until next meeting.

- VI.F.3.(d) Recirculation: "A record that has received a "final" decision during its first circulation (but not during subsequent circulations) shall nevertheless be recirculated upon request of any Voting Member or if the Secretary or Chair feels that the Committee's first-circulation comments might alter the decision within one month of the Secretary announcing the decision."
  Dunn questioned what the role of the non-voting Secretary is in being able to determine recirculation based on his/her own views rather than how members voted. The committee determined that if the Secretary felt that a record should be recirculated but there were no member comments on which to base that decision, the Secretary could lobby a voting member to request recirculation or bring the record to the meeting to lobby for recirculation. No action was taken to amend the bylaw.

- While the CBRC has always used the AOS-NACC checklist as its taxonomic authority, the committee discussed the need to encode it in its bylaws. The committee was in favor of this, citing the more rigorous approach to taxonomic changes by the NACC. The following by-law was added: VI.J.7. "Any report or list published by the committee shall follow the taxonomic treatment of the most current American Ornithological Society – North American Checklist Committee (AOS-NACC) checklist. If a committee publication includes a species not on the AOS-NACC checklist, a different taxonomic authority may be followed for that species."
  Brady moved and Dunn seconded that we adopt this by-law; motion carried 9-0 (Mutchler absent)

There were no other proposed changes to bylaws.

Procedural Issues

- For first state records, if the record is not accepted unanimously, the secretary shall ask the dissenting member if he/she would like to request recirculation before announcing the results of the batch if this request is not explicitly stated in the dissenting vote. Searcy moved and Dunn seconded adoption of this procedure; motion carried 9-0 (Mutchler absent).

- From the 2025 meeting minutes: "There was a consensus (8-0) that some form of relief from WFO membership dues for incoming members who could not afford membership should be pursued." Kimball has contacted Debbie Van Dooremolen and opened up a discussion with WFO regarding this issue. No additional action on this item at 2026 meeting.

Expedited Review

Two batches (25Fx and 25Lx) were circulated via Expedited Review procedures since the 2025 meeting. These batches contained 39 records and no records were requested to be recirculated. There were no comments or issues regarding the Expedited Review batches.

Potential Changes to Expedited Review Species List

No additions or deletions to the list of Expedited Review species were suggested.

Dunn requested that there be an easy way for members to include comments on records in the Expedited Review batches, namely, a batch-specific voting form as a Word document; even though identification is not an issue, members may have comments about age, sex, context of record, etc., that could potentially be useful to authors of CBRC reports or other researchers. Following a brief discussion, no conclusive action was taken by the committee.

Review List

In general, review species are those that have occurred in California 50 or fewer times or have averaged fewer than two occurrences per year over the past 10 years. To add/delete a form to/from the Review List requires at least eight (seven, if the Secretary is a Voting Member) votes.

Additions

Connecticut Warbler (removed in 2022; two records since, both in 2022; 128 CBRC-accepted records; 10-year avg. 0.9/year). Sieburth moved and Dunn seconded that Connecticut Warbler be re-added to the Review List; the motion carried 8-2 (Benson and Searcy opposed).

Northern Cardinal (probably <5 over last 20 years). Brady moved and Benson seconded that Northern Cardinal be added to the Review List; the motion carried 10-0. Members were concerned about submissions of records from the remnant or incipient introduced populations in coastal slope urban areas (e.g., in Los Angeles and San Diego Counties). Natural occurrences in California would almost certainly pertain to the nearest resident subspecies *Cardinalis cardinalis superbus*) whereas introduced populations are mainly from the nominate and related

subspecies group from central and eastern United States. The committee considered adding only the subspecies *C. c. superbus* to the review list but ultimately decided against that. Submissions of obvious escapees and birds from introduced populations will be discouraged, but if they are received they will be reviewed and can simply deemed Not Accepted – Questionable Natural Occurrence, if appropriate.

Vega Gull (52 confirmed eBird reports [individuals], 10-year avg. 3.1/year) .The proposed addition of this species to the review list was tabled. The first and only record to be circulated to the Committee has gone one round (see below) and a second round will be delayed until there is further outreach from the Committee (e.g., to experts in Asia) regarding species identification of the various age groups and until a suite of the best documented records can be assembled for circulation. Birch will head up a sub-committee to do this research.

Deletions

Mexican Duck (52 accepted records, 10-year avg. = 2.0/year). While this species barely meets the criteria for removal from the review list, several committee members felt we still had more to learn about the status and distribution of this species in the state and that removal would be premature. No motion to remove.

Short-tailed Albatross (65 accepted records, 10-year avg. = 2.5/year). The breeding population is increasing as are the number of birds occurring off the California coast. Pyle moved and Benson seconded that this species be removed from the Review List; motion carried 10-0.

Glossy Ibis (52 accepted records, 10-year avg. = 1.8/year). After a discussion of ibis phenotype vs. genotype issues (e.g., that it is impossible to know genetic make-up from field observations), Searcy moved and Benson seconded that Glossy Ibis be removed from the Review List; the motion carried 9-1 (Sieburth opposed).

Crested Caracara (92 accepted records [>28 individuals], 10-year avg. = 1.9/year). After a discussion of vexing “same bird” issues and noting the gap in records between 2016 and 2023, there was no motion to remove.

Winter Wren (53 accepted records, 10-year avg. = 3.4/year). Benson moved and Sieburth seconded that this species be removed from the Review List; after extensive discussion the motion failed 2-8 (Benson and Sieburth in favor).

Fourth & Final Records

The following records without a decision after three rounds of voting were discussed at the meeting, and are being circulated in Batch 25M to the current committee immediately following the meeting:

- **2012-260 Mexican Duck**, (2) Parker Strip SBE, 1 Jul-9 Sep 2012
- **2018-263 Mexican Duck**, Parker Dam SBE, 20 Dec 2018

- **2012-018A Slaty-backed Gull**, Fort Baker MRN/SF, 7-9 Feb 2012
- **2023-117 Winter Wren**, Southeast Farallon Island SF, 23-24 Nov 2023
- **2025-004 Winter Wren**, Creekside Park ALA, 14-20 Jan 2025
- **2002-228 Siberian Pipit**, McClusky Slough fields MTY, 13 -18 Oct 2003
- **2003-216 Siberian Pipit**, McClusky Slough fields MTY, 26 Oct 2003

Records Brought to Meeting by Request

Records held for/brought to meeting

- **2025-042 Mexican Violetear**, Petaluma, SON, 16-17 Jun 2025. Rejected 3-6 in 1st round. [Brady]; it was unclear if all voting members were aware that the sound recording was actually from pre-recorded playback rather than from the bird in question. No motion.
- **2023-143 Vega Gull**, Half Moon Bay, SM, 14 Jan-7 Apr 2023. "Accepted" 8-1 in 1st round with JLD requesting recirculation and discussion at meeting. [Dunn]. This issue was discussed earlier in the meeting under Review List additions. Recirculation to a second round is suspended pending more research on Vega Gull identification (see above).
- **2025-035 Herald Petrel**, 12.7 km W of Kibesillah Rock, MEN, 24 May 2025. Rejected 3-6 in 1st round. [multiple]; since the record circulated Hadoram Shirihai gave a full endorsement of the bird in question as a Herald Petrel; Pyle requested recirculation to a second round in Batch 25M.
- **2024-127 Glossy Ibis**, Calipatria, IMP, 11 Dec 2024. Accepted 8-1 in 1st round. Requesting recirculation to second round. This would be only the second California record of a bird in winter or a bird in basic plumage. The committee has been fairly critical of such records in the past (thus we have only one accepted record), and it seems inconsistent with past committee decisions to accept this record based only on a single back-of-camera photo showing only the face, which does not allow scrutiny of other field marks that might suggest an identification different than Glossy Ibis. This may well be a Glossy Ibis deserving of acceptance, but I think the committee should do its due diligence and request the original photo(s) and more documentation (if it exists) from the observer before accepting this record. [Benson]. Williams Duman requested recirculation to a second round pending receipt of original/additional photos from observer.
- **2024-074 Gray-cheeked Thrush**, Crab Park, HUM, 19-22 Aug 2024. Rejected 4-5 in 2nd round. [Dunn]. Dunn suggested the face pattern was diagnostic and Sieburth noted that some observers heard calls that may be diagnostic, but most members felt the documentation was poor and the observations were too brief for a record that would represent the earliest fall migrant for the state by 22 days. No action.

- **2024-143 Siberian Pipit**, Salinas water treatment plant, MTY, 13-16 Oct 2024. No decision after two rounds. [Dunn]. Since field identification criteria of Siberian Pipit vs. American Pipit remains problematic, Andrew Birch prepared a photo-illustrated discussion of this challenge, with specific reference to 2024-143 and certain other records. Record will recirculate in Batch 25M.

Date issues with unpublished records

- **2025-057 King Eider**, Morro Bay State Park, SLO, 17 Aug - 14 Dec 2025. Accepted, seen sporadically on 17-23 Aug, 7-8 October, and 14 Dec 2025. Additional written documentation was received for Santa Maria River mouth, SBA, 16-17 Dec 2025, ~50 km south of original sighting. The committee voted to consider the SLO and SBA records as pertaining to the same bird, extending the date (and location) of the previously accepted record; 5-3 (Brady, Dunn, and Pyle opposed; Sieburth absent). [Note that the committee subsequently voted to reverse this decision and evaluate the Santa Barbara reports separately from the Morro Bay record.]

Date corrections to published records

- **2010-133 Yellow-billed Loon**, Lake Havasu SBE, 28 Mar 2002. The 36th CBRC report (Johnson et al. 2012) lists only 28 Mar 2002. The date range published in NAB 56:356 is 4 Mar-8 Apr 2002. There is a listserv post and ebird checklist from Brennan Mulrooney for 4 March, and an ebird checklist from Nathan Moorhatch for 8 April, corroborating the dates in NAB. Given that this bird was present in Arizona 1 Feb-13 Apr 2002 (AZ Bird Committee Report, Western Birds 38:76) I see no issue with endorsing the date range as published in NAB. [Benson]. Date span for the record extended from 4 Mar 2002 to 8 Apr 2002 on an 8-0 vote (Sieburth absent).
- **1991-001 Buff-breasted Sandpiper**, Tijuana River Valley SD, 17-23 Nov 1990. Two "confirmed" eBird reports from 24 Nov 1990 extend the end date of this record by one day: https://ebird.org/checklist/S222149672, https://ebird.org/checklist/S5355092. [Lehman]. Last date extended to 24 Nov 1990 by 8-0 vote (Sieburth absent).
- **2005-069 Greater Pewee**, Laguna Mountains, 11 Jun-3 Jul 2005. A "confirmed" eBird report from 4 Jul 2005 extends the date of this record by one day: https://ebird.org/checklist/S127712857. [Lehman]. Last date extended to 4 Jul 2005 by 8-0 vote (Sieburth absent).

Same bird issues

- **2012-263 Crested Caracara**, La Grange STA, 9-14 Apr 2012 (same as 2011-239 et al.) [Dunn]; no motion to reconsider same bird issue.

- **2025-020 Crested Caracara**, Aguajito Canyon SBA, 22 Apr 2025. This record is still in circulation; no motion to consider same bird issues for this record at this time.
- **2025-038 Crested Caracara**, Santa Clara River Preserve VEN, 5 Jun 2025. No motion to consider same bird issues with any previous records at this time.
- **2025-040 Crested Caracara**, Camp Pendleton SD, 8-11 Jun 2025 (same as 2023-140?). Vote to consider this the same bird as 2025-038 was 8-0 (Sieburth absent).

Winter Wren Re-evaluations

Ethan Monk and Marty Freeland have submitted research articles to *Western Birds* that elucidate the challenge of aurally and visually identifying Winter Wrens in California. They have also provided a list of eight accepted CBRC records that they are recommending for re-evaluation. Please see the attached document detailing their analysis and the records they are recommending for re-evaluation. A majority vote is required to re-evaluate each record.

2010-164 Point Dume LA, 18 Dec 2005
2013-204 Blythe RIV, 6-7 Nov 2013
2022-093 Southeast Farallon Island SF, 31 Oct – 5 Nov 2022

Since there was no tangible evidence (photos or audio recordings) to reconsider, the committee had no interest in re-evaluating these three records.

2011-219 American River Parkway SAC, 28 Sep – 5 Dec 2009
2018-247 Rincon Creek VEN, 21 Jan – 18 Feb 2018
2021-153 Bolinas Lagoon MRN, 25 Nov 2021 – 14 Mar 2022
2022-105 Point Reyes Station MRN, 12 Nov – 23 Dec 2022
2022-118 UC Riverside RIV, 29 Nov 2022 – 21 Jan 2023

The Committee considered each of these five records and voted 7-1 (Birch opposed; Sieburth absent) to re-evaluate 2011-219, 2018-247, 2021-153, 2022-105, and 2022-118 based on the recommendation of Freeland and Monk.

Other re-evaluation requests

A simple majority is required to re-evaluate each record.

1978-083 Kittlitz's Murrelet, La Jolla SD, 16 Aug 1969
I am fully confident based on the new photos and my research that the bird was aged correctly by Devillers as a juvenile and was not a first-summer bird, which would be more plausible in California. I continue to believe that the bird is too young to have flown to San Diego on its own by August 16th. I propose that we re-evaluate this Kittlitz's Murrelet record and, if not accepted due to questionable natural occurrence, remove this species from the main California State List and put it on the Supplemental List. I believe this treatment would be consistent with other

birds that we have rejected based on possible ship assistance (Snowy Owl, Hawfinch, Brambling, etc.) and would be consistent treatment as a species in California with others on our Supplemental List. [Pyle]
The Committee voted 7-1 (Dunn opposed; Sieburth absent) to re-evaluate this accepted record.

1983-092 Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Monterey Bay MTY, 1 May 1978
1989-106 Wilson's Storm-Petrel, ~16 nmi. nw North Farallon I. SF, 10 Jun 1989
Over the past 50 years, there have been only a handful of spring reports of Wilson's Storm-Petrel in California (or anywhere in the eastern North Pacific, for that matter), with apparently only one supported by photographs, from 14 Jun 2015 off SD (ebird.org/checklist/S23925290). Through 1989 (the last year of committee review of this species), fall California records spanned 7 August – 14 November, with three additional records considered early, non-breeding visitors: 1 May 1978, 10 Jun 1989, and 13 Jul 1986 (CBRC 2007). As of May 2025, confirmed California eBird records in fall spanned 6 July – 17 November. We should consider re-evaluating these two spring sight records in light of our current understanding of this species' status and distribution in California. This issue was brought to the attention of the Secretary by Curtis Marantz and Paul Lehman. [Benson].
The Committee voted 8-0 (Sieburth absent) to re-evaluate 1983-092 and 1989-106.

2015-019 Brown Shrike, Alder Creek mouth, Manchester State Park MEN, 5 Mar – 22 Apr 2015 (Not accepted). "Re-evaluate" as Red-backed × Turkestan Shrike. [Pyle] [TAB note: Since it would be submitted as a different taxon, I don't think a majority/committee approval is needed to evaluate this record as a hybrid.] Pyle plans to resubmit as a Red-backed × Turkestan Shrike.

1993-215 Siberian Pipit, Abbotts Lagoon MEN, 26 Jan 1993
July 17: "This is a re-submission of a sighting of Siberian Pipit I saw at Abbott's Lagoon, Marin Co. on 2 February 1993. I am enclosing a more ample description than in my first submission, hoping that this will clarify my sighting.
The pipit was seen in the company of two American Pipits, and stood out immediately because of its striking, bright pink-orange legs. It was also boldly streaked below, but its leg color was what struck me most."
November 11: "The bird was seen in the company of two American Pipits, and stood out immediately because of its striking, bright pink-orange legs. The underparts from chest down to lower belly were of a whitish ground color, with no hint of buffy or any suffusion of reddish anywhere on the face, throat or chest. Underparts boldly streaked blackish." [Tony Briggs].
The Committee did not feel that the revised details constituted new and substantial evidence and the vote to re-evaluate was 0-8 (Sieburth absent); the record will not be reconsidered.

2014-187 Stejneger's Scoter, Zils Road in Watsonville SCZ, 15 Jan 2014
Following discussion at last year's meeting, Jon Dunn requested re-evaluation of a not accepted Stejneger's Scoter record (2014-187). The current committee voted by email and unanimously agreed to re-evaluate this record. It circulated as 2014-187A in Batch 25E and was accepted.

Identification challenges with current records

"I would like to have a discussion on identification of Siberian Pipits and the scoring system of Birch et al. (2024). Photos of Siberian and American Pipit would be helpful. I would also like to have a similar discussion on identification of Eastern Warbling-Vireo vs. Western Warbling-Vireo. The same with Vega Gull. My own thinking on Vega Gull is before actually accepting an actual record, we should have one solidly endorsed by an outside expert. Odaya's view from Japan where they winter might be appropriate." [Dunn]
The pipit and gull identification issues were discussed earlier in the meeting. Pyle noted that Steve Mlodinow and he are working on a paper on the identification of Eastern and Western warbling-vireos.

WFO/CBRC checklist

Status of California Condor. On the Official California Checklist and printed WFO Checklist (October 2023), California Condor is coded "RI" (Reintroduction in progress - not yet established). I think the CBRC should establish how and when we will decide when the effort was successful. There are more in the wild now, I think, than at any point in my lifetime. [Dunn]

Dunn indicated that there were ongoing issues with the success of the re-introduction program, and that any suggestion by the committee that condors have become re-established could impact funding for conservation efforts. As a result, no changes were recommended. A procedure for dealing with introduced species that have blinked out was discussed at a previous committee meeting.

Annual Reports

- **48th report** (2022 records) – authored by Benson, Feenstra, House, Stahl, and Terrill. Published in Western Birds, vol 56, no. 2.
- **49th report** (2023 records) – authored by Benson, Garrett, and Mutchler. Published in Western Birds, vol. 56, no. 4.
- **50th report** (2024 records) – authored by Benson, Birch, and Brady. Manuscript almost ready to be submitted to Western Birds; authors are awaiting final pre-submission comments.
- **51st report** (2025 records) – to be authored by Benson, Williams Duman, and Searcy.

It was noted that usually only about one-third of Committee members comment on drafts of CBRC reports, the secretary and chair and Dunn emphasized that this is one of the roles expected of members.

Budget

The 2026 budget includes $1500 for page charges for the 50th and 51st reports and $200 for the CBRC's miscellaneous expenses (e.g., Dropbox, other costs). In 2025, the CBRC's expenditures included $690 for page charges for the 48th report, $720 for the 49th report, and $120 for Dropbox. WFVZ file maintenance costs are covered by WFO's annual donation of $250.

Donations are strongly encouraged, no matter the amount. The simplest way to donate, if you'd like to do so, is through the WFO website: https://app.aplos.com/aws/give/WesternFieldOrnithologists/CBRC.

Introduced Birds Subcommittee Report

Report from the Introduced Birds Subcommittee – Kimball Garrett, Adam Searcy, and Tom Benson. Draft proposals to add naturalized populations of the Pin-tailed Whydah and the Swinhoe's White-eye to the state list have been prepared and will circulate to the full Committee early in 2026. Once these are completed, the subcommittee will investigate the status of Mute Swan and Egyptian Goose populations to determine if they qualify for addition to the state list and take appropriate action as necessary.

Outreach and Public Relations

Marky Mutchler provided the committee with a summary she wrote about engaging more women in circles such as records committees, based on a panel discussion with several women birders at the Rio Grande Birding Festival in November 2025.

Website

There were no concerns or comments regarding the CBRC website.

Next Meetings

- WFO conference – Ashland, OR, 17-20 Sep 2026. No volunteer yet to present a CBRC update.
- CBRC annual meeting – Saturday, 9 Jan 2027 to be held in person in southern California.

Appreciations

- Kimball Garrett, Marky Mutchler, and Peter Pyle for their service to the CBRC
- Tom Benson for his critical work as Secretary
- Joe Morlan for his work updating the CBRC website
- Jim Tietz for maintaining updates to "Rare Birds" on our web site
- WFVZ and Linnea Hall for their archiving services
- Phil Unitt and Western Birds reviewers for editing and publishing CBRC reports

Adjournment and Group Photo

The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m. A screen-grab photo of the meeting's attendees has been posted to the CBRC website.