

The Ninth Report of the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee

by Douglas F. Stotz and David B. Johnson

Evaluations by the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee (IORC, or the Committee) are reported here for a total of 77 records, including 63 accepted records of 44 species plus a hybrid, and 14 unaccepted records of 14 species. A total of 62 observers contributed descriptions or photographs documenting the records included in this report. Included herein are reviewed

species evaluations by the current committee from 2000 through 2003, plus some earlier records that earlier incarnations of the committee evaluated, but never published, including many historical records prior to 1985. The Committee is examining the archives of IORC to bring the publications of the Committee up-to-date. We will publish

early records that the committee has already evaluated without further evaluation by the committee. Records that have been assigned an IORC reference number, but have not been evaluated previously by the committee, will be evaluated by the current committee. We anticipate being current with the historical records within two to three years.

Format: The format of this report follows the conventions used in the first through eighth reports of the Committee (Goetz and Robinson 1988; Goetz 1989; Goetz 1990; Johnson, Deaton and Clyne 1998; Johnson and Stotz 1999; Stotz and Johnson 2000; Stotz 2001; Stotz and Johnson 2002). The records below are divided into two major groups: Accepted and Unaccepted. Each of these groups is then further divided into Review List Records, and Other Records. The sequence of species conforms to that of the seventh edition of the American Ornithologists' Union's checklist (1998) and its supplements, through the 44th (Banks et al. 2003).

An accepted record is entered with the locality (including the standard abbreviation for the county), the date, and (in parentheses) the IORC record number (the first four characters of which give the year of the first observation), and the initials of the primary observer(s) who contributed specimens, descriptions, and/or photographs. Similar information is provided for unaccepted records, except the observers remain anonymous, and a brief explanation of why the record was not accepted is given. Photographic evidence is noted following a contributor's name by an asterisk (*); when the photographic evidence is known to be a videotape, a "v" is appended (*v); *p, v indicates both photographic and video evidence presented by same contributor. Many contributing photographers also submitted written descriptions, a practice the Committee encourages. If the observer(s) who first discovered the bird submitted documentation, their initials are set off from the initials of other contributors by a semicolon. Initial observers who did not submit documentations are not always listed. For specimen

records, a sharp (#) follows an abbreviation for the institution holding the specimen, along with that institution's catalogue number of the specimen.

We have made an attempt to reference published photographs and brief accounts (such as articles published in the *Meadowlark*) by journal number and page. Articles are cited by author and date and are indexed in the list of references. If a photograph was published in *North American Birds*, or the *Meadowlark*, an attempt has been made to reference the publication of those photographs. Any errors of omission are the fault of the authors.

Several records that were seen by several to many observers were documented by only one or two of these observers. The committee would like to encourage all observers to document all the review list species they see. Documentation by multiple observers can provide additional evidence and support for the identity of rarities. Often unaccepted records suffer from incomplete information, a problem which additional documentation by other observers could help overcome.

Information on the age and sex of the birds reported may be an opinion of the person(s) submitting the evidence and is not necessarily an accepted position of the Committee. All other remarks are the authors', although most of the information comes from the Committee files, which are now stored in Chicago, Illinois, in the Bird Division of the Field Museum.

In several cases there are discrepancies between the details presented here vs. other published sources, especially regarding dates of occurrence. The data in this

report provide the Committee's best assessment of all available information. We have not generally commented on records that are published elsewhere with more limited data than contained here, but we have made explicit note of apparent errors in published data. The Committee accepts responsibility for any inaccuracies or misrepresentations of information herein. Errors that come to our attention will be published as corrigenda in a future IORC report.

Abbreviations: References to seasonal reports in the journals *Illinois Birds and Birding*; *Meadowlark*, *A Journal of Illinois Birds*; *American Birds* and *North American Birds* are abbreviated by IBB, MJIB, AB, and NAB, respectively, followed by volume and page numbers. Months are abbreviated by their first three letters. County abbreviations largely follow those adopted in Johnson, Deaton and Clyne (1998).

"Northern", "central", and "southern Illinois" refer to specific subsections of the state as first defined by Gault (1922); see also Bohlen (1978). The terms "region" and "regional" apply to the Middlewestern Prairie Region as used in FN and NAB and include Illinois as well as Iowa, Missouri, Indiana, and most of Ohio and Kentucky.

Documentors: Richard Anderson, Lawrence Balch (LBa), Frank Bennett, Nancy Bent, Laurence Binford (LBi), Richard Biss, H. D. Bohlen, Paul Bauer, Brian Chandler, Robert Chapel, Charles Clark, Paul Clyne, Joan Dowler, Robert Fisher, Urs Geiser, Glenn Giacinto, Eric Goldman, Leroy Harrison, Ann Haverstock, Brian Herriott, Scott Hickman, Margaret Horsman, Robert Hughes, Cathy Hutcheson, David B. Johnson, George and Rosaline Johnson, David Jones (DJs), Dan Kassebaum, Vernon Kleen, Jerry Kumery, Greg Lambeth, John Leonard, Travis Mahan (TMh), Tom Marquardt (TMr), Carolyn Marsh, Jeff McCoy, Keith McMullen, Steve Mlodinow, Joanne Mueller, James Neal, Bruce Peterjohn, Lee Ramsey, Robert Randall,

Michael Retter, Charlene Robinson, Bruce Rowland, William Rudden, Dan Scheiman, Eric Secker, Wes Serafin, Jonathan Simms, Phoebe Snetsinger, Larry Sowers, Jim Sullivan, Robert Timm, Ken Vail, Jenny Vogt, Patrick Ward (PWrd), Peter Weber (PWb), Dave Willard, Geoff Williamson, Ken Wysocki .

Membership: Current members of the IORC are: Steven D. Bailey, Paul Clyne, Robert Hughes, David B. Johnson (Vice-Secretary), Dan Kassebaum, Keith McMullen, and Douglas Stotz (Secretary). Alternates on the Committee are: Richard Biss, Robert E. Fisher, Joe B. Milosevich, and David Willard.

Review List: The Review List includes species for which the committee will review all records or all records outside of some determined range within the state. These are species that, in general, average two or fewer records per year in the state, or which are extremely rare in all but a few counties in the state. The current review list was approved at the 18 January 2003 committee meeting. IORC requests and welcomes evidence concerning all records for the review species listed on the review list on the IOS/ IORC website: <http://www.illinoisbirds.org/iorc.html>. In addition, any species not listed in the checklist of Illinois state birds (IORC 1999) should be documented. Documentation of regular species may be appropriate when they occur out of season—i.e., exceptionally early arrival dates or late departure dates for migratory species. All first state nesting records should also be documented. Exceptionally high counts of species may also merit documentation. These documentations should generally be sent to the seasonal editor of the Field Notes in the Meadowlark.

Acknowledgments: This report is made possible by the thoughtful, careful, and timely review by all Committee members both past and current, and by the support of Illinois birders and institutions which contributed evidence of Illinois birds by specimens, documentations, photographs, and/or videotapes.

ACCEPTED RECORDS — Review List Records Accepted (57 records of 42 species)

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) One shot at Highland Silver Lake MAD on 2 Nov (2001.061; EG). The committee examined photos of the bird before mounting as well as the taxidermied mount of this extraordinary bird. There was no evidence of wear on the plumage, bill or toenails, as might be expected in captivity. The species is increasing dramatically in Florida, and with that increase, vagrant records in the eastern US are on the increase as well. This is the first accepted record for Illinois.

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) R. M. Barnes collected a female at Lacon MAR on 1 Dec (1917.002, FMNH # 96677) and an undated male also from Lacon MAR (1917.001, FMNH # 96676). These represent the most recent specimens of the original population of Trumpeter Swan in Illinois. Currently, there are annual reports of Trumpeter swans as migrants and wintering birds from the reintroductions north of Illinois. At this point, the committee considers these populations to be unestablished, so these records are treated as exotics.

Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*) A pair at Carlyle Lake CLI on 21 Apr (2002.040; DK*). Male Cinnamon Teal no longer is reviewed by the committee. However, the female of this pair is the first documented record of a female Cinnamon Teal in Illinois. Details of this observation, including photographs, are provided by Kassebaum (2002).

Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) A male at East Fork Lake RIC on 1 Nov (2002.018; LH). This bird appears to have been an adult male

that had not completely molted out of eclipse plumage.

Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) A male in ADA on 12 Jan (2002.003; KV*). This species remains quite unusual away from Lake Michigan. See MJIB 11:113.

Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*) A male at Chain-of-Rocks MAD on 8 Jan (1977.002; JE, DJS).

King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*) W. I. Lyon collected a specimen at Waukegan LAK on 16 Nov (1936.001; CAS #9067); one at Lake Springfield, SAN from 6 Dec (2000.061; DO*) to 21 January 2001.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*) One in basic plumage at Illinois Beach SP on 23 Nov (2001.063; AS); one at Rend Lake, FRA during the Rend Lake CBC on 14 Dec (2002.039; LH; DK*). This species has been removed from the Review list. It is currently being reported annually in the fall along the Lake Michigan lakefront and at large downstate lakes.

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) An adult and subadult at Lake Carlyle CLI. The adult was present 27 Jul-5 Oct, and the subadult 17 Aug-7 Oct (2002.017; DK*; TMh).

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) one adult near Fountain MON on 5-6 May (1978.005; WR, RA).

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) An imm. at West Dundee KAN on 19 Aug (2001.036; G&RJ*v); one imm. in Lombard DUP on 5-25 Aug (2001.037; JM, specimen FMNH #430571). For details of the DuPage County bird, and a photograph, see Bent and Woltman (2002). Montgomery (2002) reported the Kane County bird and provided a good summary of Illinois records. After a period of more than two decades without records of Wood Storks in Illinois, their numbers here appear to be on the increase, with six accepted records since 1989 (Montgomery 2002).

Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*) One near LaSalle Lake LAS on 4-30 January (2003.001; GL*, JK*, WS).



Ruff (adult female, also called *Reeve*) at Carlyle Lake, 18 August 2002. Photo by Dan Kassebaum.

Throughout the month of January, a parade of birders observed a chocolate-brown immature Gyrfalcon in the vicinity of the LaSalle Nuclear Generating Plant. Several observers thought that they may have observed a second grayer bird in the area as well. The digital photo, referenced above as taken by Jerry Kumery, may have been of this second bird, different from the bird photographed by Greg Lambeth. However, the committee in reviewing the photos did not feel that they could be certain that these were not photos of the same individual. Given that as far as the committee is aware, no observer saw two Gyrfalcons at the same time; in the absence of clear documentation of a second bird, we consider there to have been only a single Gyrfalcon present in January 2003. The committee welcomes additional data from observers on this point.

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) A specimen (CAS # 15124) Highland Park LAK on 29 Mar (1905.001) collected by Elmer Evans. Coale (1912) indicates that three specimens were taken at this time, but only the specimen listed above appears to remain in museum collections.

Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) One found dead at McCormick Place,

Chicago COO on 19 May (1984.024; RT, specimen, FMNH #316952); one found dead at McCormick Place, Chicago COO on 31 May (1989.106; DW, specimen, FMNH #350613); one found dead at McCormick Place, Chicago COO on 8 Oct (1993.078; DW, specimen, FMNH #362610). Although a small number of specimens, three window kills at McCormick Place remains striking given the almost complete lack of recent records of this species, recorded in life, in Illinois or indeed the upper Midwest. It seems clear that a remnant breeding population must exist somewhere in the upper Midwest.

Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*) An adult female specimen (ISU#180) obtained by Mrs. Wayne Patkunas at Hudson McL on 13 Apr (1964.001); an adult at L. Mermet MSS on 1 Sep (2002.019; FB). The McLean County bird was found alive in a backyard and then was taken to a local zoo where it died (*vide* A. Capparella). This species appears to be regular in summer at Lake Mermet in very small numbers. It remains casual elsewhere in the state.

Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*) One basic-plumaged at Waukegan LAK on 23 Feb-2 Mar (2002.002; DBJ). A Purple Sandpiper was also seen on 8 Dec 2001 at this site. The observer believes that bird to have been different from this accepted record. However, the December 2001 bird was not documented.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) One adult female at Carlyle Lake CLI on 17-19 Aug (2002.020; DK*). See photo.

Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) One adult at Gillson Park, Wilmette COO on 10 Nov (1951.002; LBi).

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) One juvenile at Carlyle Lake CLI on 7 Sep (2002.021; DK). This is the fifth accepted record of Long-tailed Jaeger in Illinois, all juveniles and all since 1999. Four of these came from Carlyle Lake, and one from Lake Chautauqua (Bailey

2001, Kassebaum 2001, Stotz 2001, Stotz and Johnson 2002). The lack of Lake Michigan records in Illinois is surprising, as the species is regularly reported in very small numbers from the Indiana Lake Michigan shoreline.

California Gull (*Larus californicus*) One adult at Great Lakes Naval Training Center LAK on 13 June (2002.022; DBJ). This is the third accepted record of this species in Illinois during the summer.

Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*) One at Joppa MSS on 4 Oct (2002.024; FB). This is the first record of this species in Illinois. The tern immediately appeared following the passage of Hurricane Lili, which moved up the Mississippi Valley after making landfall the previous day. Other Sooty Terns were found on the same day in Tennessee and Kentucky (Brinkley and Lehman 2003). See an article in the next issue by Frank K. Bennett with sketches.

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) One at Lincoln Park, Chicago COO on 28 May (2002.007; JL*, WS). Sixth record for a dove that is being recorded with more frequency recently in the state.

Carolina Parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*) An old specimen from UNI, May (1857.001, CAS # 3095) collected by Robert Kennicott, founder of the Chicago Academy of Science. Although many early naturalists reported this extinct species in Illinois, this specimen represents one of only four specimens collected in the state. There is some doubt as to the date and locality of this specimen. Bohlen (1989) suggests that the specimen may be from 1855, and that the locality may be Union, McHenry Co. The Chicago Academy of Sciences tag on the specimen clearly states Union County and 1857; however, it was added much after the fact, and we are continuing to look for independent evidence confirming the date and locality of this specimen.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) One at Lanesville SAN on 2 Mar (1976.002; VK*).

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cucularia*) One nw of Ellsworth McL on 12-15 Apr (1978.013; TMr ; VK*).

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) A female was at a feeder in Springfield SAN on 16-21 Nov (2000.063; DO*); one adult female captured and banded at a feeder in Mount Vernon, JEF on 14 Nov (2002.025; CH); an adult male at a feeder in Pinckneyville PER was present late October to 25 Dec (2002.034; BC*).

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) One at Evanston COO on 23 Sep (1978.013; RB*).

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) One at Montrose Point, Chicago COO on 10 Nov (2002.030; RH). This is the third record for Illinois.

Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*) One at Siloam Springs SP, ADA on 12 June (2002.038; KM). Siloam Springs remains the only known breeding site for this species in Illinois. The Committee requests documentation of records from this site, as well as any other records, to assist in the continued monitoring of the status of this species that is disappearing from Illinois.

Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) One at Horseshoe Lake MAD on 11-19 Oct (1978.014; PS, WR, PB*).

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) C. H. Douglas collected one of the two Illinois specimens (Bohlen 1989) at Waukegan LAK on 16 Dec (1875.002; CAS # 16235).

Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spraguei*) One sw of Jacksonville MOR on 22 Apr (1972.008; HDB).

Hermit Warbler (*Dendroica occidentalis*) One female at Morton Arboretum DUP on 8 Dec (2002.032; ES; JM*, JK*, RF, UG, AH, BH, DBJ, JL, CM, BR, DS, JV, PWb, SB) to 2 Feb 2003. A remarkable first confirmed state record, a black and white photo appears in 103rd Christmas Bird Count Issue, AB: 82. This was a first Illinois wintering record for the

species and a new addition to the Illinois Christmas Bird Count species list. See the next issue of *Meadowlark* for an article and photos regarding this rarity.

Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*) One at Montrose Point, Chicago COO on 12 Oct (2002.031; GG; RH, GW).



The first state record of Hermit Warbler was recorded at Morton Arboretum, Du Page County. 9 December 2002. Photo by Jerry Kumery. An article on this species in Illinois is scheduled for *Meadowlark*, Vol 12 No. 3.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) A male collected by B. T. Gault at Glen Ellyn DUP on 7 May (1894.001; CAS #17308) is one of three specimens from Illinois. All were collected during the 1890s.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) A female found dead at Chicago COO on 12 May (2002.008; KW specimen FMNH #434304). This is the first specimen for the state. Most records of Western Tanager in Illinois have been found during May.

Black-throated Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata*) One photographed at Shirland, WIN at the Sugar River FP on 3-4 May (1959.001). The photographs were published in Morse (1960).



A young male Lazuli Bunting was seen at a feeder in Winchester, Illinois, 24-26 June 2002. Photo by Charlene Robinson.

Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) One collected by W. I. Lyon at Waukegan LAK on 28 Nov (1935.001; CAS #8175).

Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) A male at a feeder in Pecatonica WIN on 12-17 Jan (1965.001; JS*); an immature male at a feeder in Carbondale JAC from mid-Feb to 23 Mar (1972.004; VK*); a male at Carpenter Park, Springfield SAN on 24 Nov (1973.005; HDB); a male at a feeder in Salem MAR on 29 Jan-24 Mar (1976.001, MH; BP*); a male at a feeder in Des Plaines COO on 4-8 Jan (1978.011; MC; DBJ*); a male at Waterfall Glen FP, DUP on 8 May (2002.013; RF). The Jackson County and Winnebago County re-

cords are reported in Kleen (1972), where a photo of the Jackson County bird was published.

Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*) One young male at a feeder at Winchester SCO on 24-26 June (2002.015; CR* p,v). This is only the third accepted record of this western species in Illinois. See photo, left.

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) One female at Urbana CHA on 28 May (2001.062; RC); birds photographed at E. St. Louis STC was present 7 May - 3 Aug (2002.014; DK*) At least two males were present, as was a female, but the female was not documented. A male was at a feeder in ca. 5 miles w. of Hidalgo, nw JAS on 4-15 Jan (2003.003; LS*). The St. Clair County birds were at the same site where nesting was documented in 1999, and where the species has been recorded annually since then in the summer. This species continues to spread in Illinois, but the winter record in Newton County was extraordinarily out-of-season.

Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) An adult female at a sewage treatment plant in Jackson-ville MOR on 5-7 Oct (1974.003; HDB specimen ISM#605929, RRa*, VK, LBa, CC, PWr). This constituted the first record of this expanding species for Illinois. Two brief papers

reported this record (Randall 1975, Bohlen 1976). The specimen was determined (Bohlen 1976) to belong to the geographically closest subspecies *prospidicola*. This species continues to expand its range northward and eastward. It probably remains under-reported in Illinois.

OTHER ACCEPTED RECORDS

— (6 records of 2 species, plus a hybrid)

Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) One at Waukegan LAK on 23-25 Nov (1972.006; LBa*); one at Lake Chautauqua on 18 Nov (1972.007; LBa*); one at Waukegan LAK on 25-28 Nov (1978.015; JN*, LBa*); one at Montrose, Chicago COO on 24-26 Nov (1978.016; DBJ*, SM).

Laughing X Ring-billed Gull (*Larus atricilla* x *delawarensis*) One at Montrose Beach, Chicago COO on 2 Aug (1995.069; RH*).

Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) A Gray-headed Junco (race *caniceps*) was west of Springfield SAN on 12 Dec (2000.062; HDB, DO*). The committee remains interested in documentation of Dark-eyed Junco forms other than the more common Slate-colored and regular Oregon.

UNACCEPTED RECORDS —Review List Records Unaccepted (13 records of 13 species)

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) One reportedly killed by a hunter at LaSalle LAS on 15 Sep (1930.001; Moyer 1931). The committee voted not to accept this record because there is no trace of the specimen, so the identification cannot be checked and because even if correctly identified, the question of origin cannot be evaluated. The report by Moyer is not detailed, and it is unclear whether he actually saw the specimen, or whether the report was entirely secondhand. Moyer also mentions a Fulvous Whistling-Duck, also shot by a hunter on 7 December 1919.

Because the Fulvous Whistling-Duck report is certainly secondhand, the committee has not evaluated it.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) four birds were reported from Jackson Park, Chicago COO on 20 Feb (1980.012). The report consisted of two males and two females. The committee voted not to accept this record because no head tufts were seen on the birds, the coloration of the bill did not fit this species, light conditions for the observation were poor, and the presence of multiple Tufted Ducks together in Illinois seemed very unlikely.

Smew (*Mergus albeola*) One male n. of Hamilton HAN on 14 Dec (2002.037). The committee was unanimous in not accepting this record. All agreed that question of origin of the bird was a concern. Other exotic waterfowl observed in this area have apparently escaped from nearby collections. Additionally, the limited description led a majority of the committee to be uncertain that the bird seen was in fact a Smew. The male Smew present on the Mississippi River near Alton from 13 January to 5 March 2001 is still being reviewed by the committee. That bird was unques-

tionably a Smew, and, although it spent most of its time in Missouri waters, was definitely seen on multiple occasions in Illinois. The question of origin of the Alton bird remains the main point of contention.

Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) One reported from East Moline ROC on 22 Nov (1973.004). This bird was seen briefly in flight along the Mississippi River. Most committee members did not think that the brief description provided ruled out terns or gulls, so the record was not accepted, even as an unidentified jaeger.

Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*) One adult at Waukegan Harbor LAK on 1 Jan (1949.002). This record may very well be correct, as it was seen by a number of observers. However, the only documentation available to the committee was a handwritten letter to Parmalee in 1954, nearly six years after the observation. In this letter, the bird is described only as a white gull with dark legs and feet. Contributing to the mystery surrounding this record, we are unable to make out the name of the letter's author. Attempts by the committee to contact other people who saw the bird in 1990 did not produce any additional details of the sighting.

Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*) One reported from Chicago COO 24 to 26 May (1923.001). This sighting was reported in Hine (1924). Unfortunately, while the conditions of the sighting are given, no description of any type is provided. In the absence of any description, the committee could not accept this record. It would be the easternmost record for this species. Although Lewis's Woodpecker does engage in long-distance movements, the species is typically back on its breeding grounds much earlier in the spring.

Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*) One reported at Glencoe COO in a spruce grove on 6 Mar (1898.002). This sighting was first published by Russell (1984; Illinois Audubon Bulletin no. 207 32-33

A possible Three-toed Woodpecker sight record for Illinois), who discovered the sighting in the personal notes of the observer. The notes included a brief description of the bird's plumage and its voice and the notation that the bird was in a spruce area. Although the report is clearly intriguing, the limited description that the observer provided was not sufficient for the committee. Further, the description of the voice as a "croak" does not match that of this species. There are no accepted records of this species for Illinois.

Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) One was reportedly seen along the North Branch of the Chicago River in Evanston COO on 3 Apr (1974.006). The documentation for this record was provided by the observer in 1990, over 15 years after the observation. Although the details provided by the observer are consistent with the identification, the extraordinary time lag makes it impossible to guess how much the passage of time had influenced the description. Especially given that this was a single observer record, the committee did not consider the report acceptable as the first record for the state.

Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) One specimen collected in Chicago COO on 12 Jun (1911.001; CAS#414) by C. W. Borggren. Although the specimen clearly belongs to this species, the date is not consistent with a natural vagrant. Natural wanderers of this species typically occur in the fall. Additionally, the committee considered the specimen very worn with a damaged tail, consistent with the individual being an escape from captivity. Woodruff (1912) in reporting the collection of this specimen, indicated that the plumage was in good condition, contrary to the findings of IORC. The basis for this inconsistency is not clear.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*) An immature at Lake Chautauqua NWR MSN on 12-17 Oct (2002.029). This single observer report, while very suggestive, had several features that

made a majority of the committee unable to accept it as a first state record. Yellow Wagtails have a very complex pattern of geographic variation, and some of the details of the plumage described were not consistent with the immature plumage of the geographically most likely subspecies. Additionally the fact that the observer identified the bird after the fact, and that while the bird was present for several days, the Illinois birding community was not made aware of its presence weighed against the record.

Virginia's Warbler (*Vermivora virginiae*) One was reported from Perkins Woods, Evanston COO on 6 May (1979.002). Two observers provided documentation of this sighting. The reasoning of the committee in not accepting this record is not entirely clear, because the original evaluations (from 1988) of the committee members are not in the IORC files. However, it appears that inconsistencies in the description of the bird by the two observers, the fact that the initial observer did not identify the bird in the field, but only subsequent to leaving the field, and that the second observer saw the bird only very briefly left the committee unable to accept this as the first record for the state. Some subsequent reports of this species remain in review, but there are no accepted records for Illinois.

Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) A female was reported from Jackson Park, Chicago COO on 24 May (2002.012). The majority of the committee believed that this sparse description of this bird was insufficient to rule out a female-plumaged Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Cassin's Finch (*Carpodacus cassinii*) One female at a feeder in Decatur MAC on 25 Dec (2002.035). A detailed description of this bird unfortunately lacked details of the undertail coverts, the one diagnostic character distinguishing this species from Purple Finch. Although portions of the description were suggestive of this species, the committee was unable to

accept a single-observer report that lacked the crucial field mark for identification.

OTHER UNACCEPTED RECORDS

— (1 record of 1 species)

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus vegae*) One probably 4th year at Winthrop Harbor on 26 Nov to 5 December (2001.057). This bird was seen by many observers and generated much controversy. The only photographs obtained were of the bird perched at a significant distance. Despite the number of observers, only three observers documented their sightings to IORC. Despite some very detailed written documentation, in the end, the committee could not currently accept an identification of this gull to subspecies. In part this reflects a lack of knowledge of the identification criteria for some of these subspecies. It also reflects the sense of the committee that, given the lack of confirmed records of this subspecies for the lower forty-eight states, the photographic evidence needed to be diagnostic for acceptance.

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See page 56 for journal abbreviations.

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— Douglas F. Stotz
*Conservation Ecologist/
Ornithologist, Environmental
and Conservation Programs
Field Museum of Natural History
1400 S. Lake Shore Dr.
Chicago, IL 60605
dstotz@fmnh.org*

— David B. Johnson
*504 Crown Point Drive
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089
djohnsoda@attbi.com*