

# Seventeenth Report of the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee

By Douglas F. Stotz

Evaluations by the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee ("IORC," or "the Committee") are reported here for a total of 36 records, including 33 accepted records of 25 species, and three unaccepted records of three species. A total of 54 observers contributed reports, including descriptions or photographs documenting the records included in this report. Included are reviewed species evaluations by the Committee from 2010 through 2012. The format of this report generally follows the conventions used in the first through sixteenth reports of the Committee (e. g. Goetz and Robinson 1988; Goetz 1990; Johnson et al 1998; Johnson and Stotz 1999; Stotz and Johnson 2000; Stotz and Johnson 2003; Stotz 2001; Stotz 2009; Stotz 2010). The records below are divided into two major groups: Accepted and Unaccepted. Each of these groups is then further divided into First State Records, Review List Records, and Other Records. The nomenclature, English names and sequence of species conforms to that of the seventh edition of the American Ornithologists' Union's checklist, (1998) and its supplements, through the 53rd (Chesser et al. 2012).

An accepted record is entered with the locality, including 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. The initials of a contributor without any further modification, indicates that no more than written documentation was provided by that observer. When additional evidence exists, a colon follows the observers name with the following codes: p for photographic evidence, v for video, s for sound recording. Many contributing photographers also submitted written descriptions—a practice the Committee encourages. If the observer who first discovered the bird is known to the committee, 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 catalog number of the specimen if available.

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 records that have not been accepted 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 author's, 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. 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.

"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 NAB and include Illinois as well as Iowa, Missouri, Indiana, and most of Ohio and Kentucky.

## Observers and Documentors:

Amar A. Ayyash, Alex Bloss, H. David Bohlen, Larry G. Balch, Don Blecha, Ron Bradley, Matthew M. Cvetas, Rob Curtis, Carl & Penelope DauBach, Joshua I. Engel,

Matthew E. Fraker, Michael Ferguson, Sean Fitzgerald, Aaron Gyllenhaal, Ethan Gyllenhaal, Jerry Goldner, Nathan Goldberg, Ann & John Hayes, Bruce Heimer, Frank L. Holmes, Glen Hawley, Robert D. Hughes, Ted Harzler, David B. Johnson, Dan M. Kassebaum, Gregory S. Lambeth, Nolan Lameka, Rich Larimore, Fran Morel, Lee Marin, Marion Miller, Travis A. Mahan, Walter J. Marcisz, Greg Neise, Yan-Yi Peng, Bill Rudden, Kevin B. Richmond, Andrew P. Sigler, Adam Sell, Beau J. Schaefer, Douglas F. Stotz, Emily Salo, Janice Sweet, Mark Scheel, Mark S. Seiffert, Nate Shirmacher, Paul Sweet, Randy L. Shonkwiler, Ryan Sanderson, Craig A. Taylor, David E. Willard, Daniel T. Williams, Eric W. Walters, Geoffrey A. Williamson, Matthew J. Winks.

### Review List:

The Review List includes species for which the committee will review all records or all records outside of some determined range or range of dates 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 21 September 2008 committee meeting. IORC requests and welcomes evidence concerning all records for the review species listed on the review list on the IOS/IORC website: [www.illinoisbirds.org/iorc.html](http://www.illinoisbirds.org/iorc.html).

In addition, any species not listed in the checklist of Illinois state birds (IORC 1999, see also list on IOS website at [http://www.illinoisbirds.org/birds\\_of\\_illinois1.html](http://www.illinoisbirds.org/birds_of_illinois1.html)) 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 of non-review list species should generally be sent to the seasonal editor of the Field Notes in the Meadowlark. Both the Christmas Bird Count and Spring Bird Count require documentation of a greater range of species. Such documentations should be sent to the appropriate compiler. Some records from each of these long-term projects are reviewed by IORC, and the documentations supporting observations of rare birds on them are largely stored at the Field Museum with the other IORC archives.

### Acknowledgements.

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 videos. Thanks to the committee members who reviewed these records for intelligent, thoughtful reviews. These committee members were Bob Hughes, Dan Kassebaum, Travis Mahan, Paul Sweet, Mike Ward, and Geoff Williamson;

Bob Fisher, acting as an alternate member of IORC also reviewed some records included in this report. The author served as committee secretary.

## ACCEPTED RECORDS

### New State Records

(one record of one species)

**Anna's Hummingbird** (*Calypte anna*) One at a feeder in Chillicothe, Peoria Co. on 21 Nov-13 Dec (2010.025; A&JH:p; CAT:p). This is the first accepted record of this species in Illinois. There is a previous report that was not accepted by IORC of a bird at a feeder in Carbondale 17-29 Sep 1990 (Robinson 1996, Johnson et al. 1998).

### Review List Species

(32 records of 24 species)

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) Two birds photographed in flight at Ware, Union Co. on 13 Jul (2011.001; AG:p). Two birds were seen and photographed at a small pond in Tinley Park, Cook Co. on 17 Jun (2011.034; ES:p). This species seems to be continuing to increase in Illinois. These are the 9th and 10th accepted records for the state, all since 2001. Eight of the records have occurred since 2008.

**Brant** (*Branta bernicla*) One found at Lake Renwick and also seen in surrounding areas near Plainfield, Will Co. on 25-28 Nov (2010.024; DFS; EWW:p, BH:p). One at Clinton Lake, DeWitt Co., on 4 Nov (2011.033; MEF:p).

**Eurasian Wigeon** (*Anas penelope*) An adult male was seen and photographed at Kenneth Schroeder Nature Sanctuary, McLean Co. on 21-23 March (2011.009; TH; MEF:p).



Brant. 4 November 2011. Clinton Lake, DeWitt County. Photo by Matt Fraker.



*Purple Sandpiper*. 31 October 2011. Lake Decatur, Macon County. Photo by Ron Bradley.

**Mottled Duck** (*Anas fulvigula*) One male was present and photographed at Ware, Union Co. 2 Jul-8 Aug (2011.020; DMK:p). It was accompanied by a female bird that some thought was a Mottled Duck and others thought was a hybrid Mallard X Mottled Duck. Currently the committee is split on the identity of this female-plumaged bird. This is the fourth accepted record for Illinois. Another photographic record of this species from 2011 remains under review.

**Barrow's Goldeneye** (*Bucephala islandica*) An adult male was seen by a number of observers at Montrose Harbor, Lincoln Park, Chicago, Cook Co. on 8 March (2009.071; RDH, GAW).

#### Neotropic Cormorant

(*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) One adult seen at Emiquon NWR, Fulton Co. Jul 29-1 Aug (2010.026; GN:p, KBR, APS). An adult was present at Burnham Prairie, Burnham, Cook Co. from 21 Jun to 27 Aug (2011.023; WJM:p), while an immature bird accompanied it until at least 31 Jul 2011 (WJM:p). The adult was reported from other sites within the Calumet region during its period of residency at Burnham Prairie. The cormorants clearly left Burnham Prairie at times, but none of these other sightings were documented.

**White Ibis** (*Eudocimus albus*) Two immatures were at Cahokia Mounds, St. Clair Co. 23 Jul-7 Aug (2010.023; BR:p).

**Purple Gallinule** (*Porphyrio martinicus*) One adult photographed at American Bottoms, Monroe Co. on 27-28 Jun (2011.027; DMK).

**Purple Sandpiper** (*Calidris maritima*) One photographed at Lake Decatur, Macon Co. on 30-31 Oct (2011.028; TAM:p, RB:p); one photographed at Clinton Lake, DeWitt Co. on 20-23 Nov (2011.029; RB:p; GSL:p, TAM:p). Purple Sandpiper is regular in small numbers

along the Lake Michigan lakefront, but inland records are very few. These are the second and third accepted inland records in Illinois. The only previous record away from the Lake Michigan lakefront was one at Rock Cut SP, Winnebago Co. on 22 Nov 1997 (Johnson and Stotz 1999).

**Ross's Gull** (*Rhodostethia rosea*) One photographed at Montrose, Chicago, Cook Co. on 27 Mar (2011.029; YYP). This stunning record is only the second for Illinois. The first record was a bird in basic plumage 19 Nov-1 Dec 1978 on the Chicago lakefront (Goetz 1990).

**Little Gull** (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*) An adult in basic plumage was photographed at Lake Charleston, Coles Co. on 23-30 Nov (2011.013; RB:p; AAA:p, EtG:p).



*Little Gull*. 26 November 2011. Charleston Lake, Coles County. Photo by Ron Bradley.



*Prairie Falcon*. 16 March 2011. Country Lakes Forest Preserve, DuPage County. Photo by Sean Fitzgerald.

**Glaucous-winged Gull** (*Larus glaucescens*) A first-cycle bird was photographed and remained at North Point Marina, Winthrop Harbor, Lake Co. between 25-30 Jan (2011.011; PS:p; EWW:p, MMC:p, NL:p).

**Slaty-backed Gull** (*Larus schistisagus*) One adult at Calumet Park, Chicago, Cook Co. on 30 Dec (2010.028; AAA:p, MS:p) to 30 Jan 2011 (DTW, LGB). This bird was found first in Indiana waters on 29 Dec 2010. It spent most of its time in the area on the Indiana side of the border, but was seen and photographed in Illinois on several occasions. Another record of an immature Slaty-backed Gull in June 2011 is still under review by the committee.

**Prairie Falcon** (*Falco mexicanus*) One photographed at Country Lakes FP, DuPage Co. on 16 Mar (2011.026; SFi:p).

**Bewick's Wren** (*Thryomanes bewickii*) One photographed at Riverside Park, Springfield, Sangamon Co. on 23 Mar (2011.002; HDB:p).

**Mountain Bluebird** (*Sialia currucoides*) An almost unbelievable five accepted records, all photographed, in 2011 bring the total number of accepted records from the state to ten. Three of the records in 2011 come from the Lake Co. lakefront including an adult male at Waukegan Beach on 8 May (2011.015; NS:p; AS:p), an immature female at IBSP-North on 9-14 Nov (2011.016; JS:p; EWW:p, MMC:p), and a male that showed up at the same location as the previous record/location at IBSP on the day following the female, 15 Nov (2011.017: PS:p). The other two records in 2011 were an adult male at Towanda, McLean Co. 9-13 Apr (2011.019; MJW:p) and a female along Bischoff Rd., near Horseshoe Lake SP, Madison Co. 12 Dec. (2011.018; MSS, FLH; BR:p, GH:p, DMK:p) to at least 29 Feb 2012 (RL:p).



Male Mountain Bluebird. 8 May 2011.  
Waukegan, Lake County.  
Photo by Adam Sell.

**Townsend's Solitaire** (*Myadestes townsendi*) One was at Montrose, Chicago, Cook Co. on the morning of 16 Nov (2011.032; JIE:p; MF:p).

**Sage Thrasher** (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) One lingered at Montrose, Chicago, Cook Co. during the period 29 Oct-20 Nov (2011.029; RCs:p; AAA:p, MMC:p, MM:p). There are only three records previously accepted by the records committee. All four accepted records have occurred on the Lake Michigan lakefront, two since fall 2009.

**Bohemian Waxwing** (*Bombycilla garrulus*) One was photographed at the Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe, Cook Co. on 9 Jan (2011.004; BJS:p, FM:p; LM:p).

**Western Tanager** (*Piranga ludoviciana*) An adult male was seen at McCormick Place Sanctuary, Burnham Park, Chicago, Cook Co. on 1 May (2009.069; DEW).

**Green-tailed Towhee** (*Pipilo chlorurus*) One was seen and photographed at Jackson Park, Chicago, Cook Co. on 1 Oct (2011.010; RLS; GN:p, NG:p).

**Cassin's Sparrow** (*Peucaea cassinii*) One photographed at North Point Marina, Winthrop Harbor, Lake Co. on 5-6 May (2011.006; EWW:p; NL:p) represents the second state record of this species. The other record was a bird caught, banded, and photographed at Olive Park, Chicago from 27 May to 6 June 1983 (Landing and Patti 1986, Goetz 1990).

**Brewer's Sparrow** (*Spizella breweri*) One photographed at Northerly Is., Chicago, Cook Co. on 12 Nov (2011.005; JIE:p; JG:p, NG:p). This is the fifth accepted record of Brewer's Sparrow for Illinois; four of these have been on Chicago's lakefront. The other records were one photographed at Jackson Park in May 1982, a specimen found dead at McCormick Place in May 1986, a bird that wintered at Jarvis Sanctuary in Lincoln Park from November 1997 to May 1998 (Johnson et al. 1998), and a bird at Midewin NTP in Dec 1998 (Johnson and Stotz 1999).



Brewer's Sparrow. 12 November 2011.  
Northerly Island, Cook County.  
Photo by Nathan Goldberg.

**Lark Bunting** (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) A female-plumaged bird with a deformed bill was photographed at Montrose, Chicago, Cook Co on 31 Aug-3 Sep (2011.012; AB; JIE:p, RS:p).

## UNACCEPTED RECORDS

### Review List Records Unaccepted (two records of two species)

**Bewick's Wren** (*Thryomanes bewickii*) A wren photographed in Monroe Co. on 24 Sep (2010.003) was identified by the observers as a Bewick's Wren. The committee unanimously thought that the photo was actually



*Lark Bunting*. 31 August 2011.  
 Montrose, Cook County. Photo by Josh Engel.  
 Note the severe deformity in this bird's bill.

of a Marsh Wren. The bird was in marsh vegetation, and differed from a Bewick's Wren by being too reddish above, too bright white with buffy sides below, and lacked white corners to the tail. Additionally, some of the back streaking typical of a Marsh Wren could be seen in the photo.

**Black-headed Grosbeak** (*Phoebastria melanocapillus*) A bird coming to a feeder in Belvidere, Boone Co. was seen for multiple days and documented as this species based on a sighting on 23 May (2009.065). While the committee agreed that the bird may very well have been a male Black-headed Grosbeak, the limited description and the fact that the bird was documented from memory more than a year after the sighting made it impossible for the committee to accept the record.

### Other unaccepted records (one record of one subspecies)

**American Pipit** (*Anthus rubescens japonicus*) A bird identified as this subspecies was photographed at Fullerton Beach, Chicago, Cook Co. on 10 December (2009.068). It accompanied other American Pipits. Its plumage and soft part colors were clearly, but subtly, different from a typical American Pipit. However, the committee examined specimens in the Field Museum collection and looked at other on-line resources, and a majority concluded that this bird could not be definitively identified as being of a subspecies other than the widespread North American form, *A. r. rubescens*. The status of *A. r. japonicus* in North America remains unclear, adding to the difficulty with accepting this record.

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