

Records Committee

Secretary's Report
Submitted by Reed Bowman
Board of Directors Meeting, 29 September 2003

Accomplishments

The Records Committee of the Florida Ornithological Society met at the Archbold Biological Station 18-19 July 2003. Members present and their term of expiration on the FOSRC were Reed Bowman, Secretary (2005), Lyn Atherton (2003), Andy Kratter (2004), Jon Greenlaw (2006), Fred Lohrer (2007), Mickey Wheeler (2008), Todd Engstrom (2009), were present.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting (21-22 June 2002) were accepted without modification.
2. The committee considered the following reports submitted since our previous meeting:
 - 02-491 Bewick's Wren, Ft. Walton Beach (Okaloosa). Not Accepted 0-7. Not on review list, but collapse of eastern North American population justifies review. Report submitted >3 yrs after 4-6 sec sighting. Committee felt the observer likely saw a Bewick's Wren, but written description somewhat vague and lacked some important details, such as back color.
 - 02-492 Red-billed Tropicbird, Destin (Okaloosa). Not Accepted 0-7. Written description of bird seen under rough conditions at over 500 m. Details insufficient to eliminate immature White-tailed Tropicbird or other potentially similar species. Tail streamers not seen and reported of red bill only secondhand. Other comments vague and sometimes confusing, such as a description of the bird as "large".
 - 02-493 Black-headed Gull, Pensacola Beach (Escambia). Not Accepted 0-7. Written description insufficient to differentiate from aberrant Laughing Gulls, which occasionally have red bills and legs; no mention of tail or wing tip patterns.
 - [02-494](#) Hooded Oriole, Gulf Breeze (Santa Rosa), photos. Accepted 7-0. First state record. Inadequate written description but photographs were diagnostic, showing orange head with black bib to upper breast, black back, white on upper coverts, but the median coverts black, bill appeared slightly decurved.
 - [03-495](#) Iceland Gull, Jacksonville (Duval), photos. Accepted 7-0. Clear written description and excellent photos were diagnostic of first-winter bird. Photos clearly showed small head and dark bill, pink legs, uniform light color, but with distinct mottling in coverts, distinguishing it from a Thayer's Gull.
 - [03-496](#) Mountain Bluebird, Research Road, Everglades National Park (Dade), photos. Accepted 7-0. First state record. Detailed written description and excellent photographs confirm identity. Overall color and shape, especially long primary extension, rule out other similar species.
 - [03-497](#) Western Grebe, Ft. Myers (Lee), photos. Accepted 7-0. Detailed written description and photographs confirmed identity of bird. Photos clearly showed dark lores with the black extending below the eye, ruling out a potential Clark's/Western hybrid.
 - 03-498 Calliope Hummingbird, Tallahassee (Leon), photos, measurements. Accepted 7-0. Photos and mensural characteristics diagnostic of first-winter male.
 - 03-499 Calliope Hummingbird, Tallahassee (Leon), photos, measurements. Accepted 7-0. Photos and mensural characteristics diagnostic of second-year male.
 - [03-500](#) Allen's Hummingbird, Pensacola (Escambia), photos, measurements. Accepted 7-0. Photos and mensural characteristics diagnostic of hatch-year male.
 - [03-501](#) Red-legged Honeycreeper, Boca Chita, Biscayne national Park (Dade), photos. Not Accepted 0-7. Photos clearly show an adult male Red-legged Honeycreeper, thus only ambiguity was origin. Possible dispersal from Cuba considered, where populations may be increasing or Yucatan. Strong winds from southeast present prior to sightings. However, adult dispersal less likely during breeding season, March - July. Species commonly bred in aviculture in Miami area, but no obvious signs of having been in

captivity. Decided that given its history in local aviculture, provenance too uncertain.

- 03-502 Northern Goshawk, Switzerland (St. Johns). Not Accepted 0-7. Written report prepared from memory two months after sighting. Description nearly complete, but a few key details missing, such as white undertail coverts.
- 03-503 Long-eared Owl, Garden Key, Dry Tortugas (Dade), photos. Accepted 7-0. Photos diagnostic. Clearly showed forehead and facial disc colors differentiating from a Stygian Owl.
- 03-504 White-tipped Dove, Garden Key, Dry Tortugas (Dade), photos. Tabled. Committee reviewed three photographs and a written description. Color and lighting varied among photographs making direct comparisons difficult. Additional photos thought to exist so report tabled until they could be obtained.
- [03-505](#) Elegant Tern, Loggerhead Key, Dry Tortugas (Dade), photos. Not Accepted 0-7. Bill shape and the extensive black on bill, short crest, bill not as long and decurved, suggests a Elegant-Sandwich Tern hybrid.
- [03-506](#) Red-legged Honeycreeper, Garden Key, Dry Tortugas (Monroe), photos. Not Accepted 0-7. See discussion for 03-501. Could not rule out that this bird was the same individual seen at Boca Chita a month earlier.
- [03-507](#) Mangrove Swallow, Viera Wetlands (Brevard), photos. Accepted 7-0. Detailed manuscript of this first North American and Florida record. Smaller overall body size and shorter wings than Tree or Cave Swallows or several other similar swallow species. White supraloral stripe joining forehead patch is characteristic of both Mangrove and White-rumped swallows, but White-rumped larger and about the same size as Tree Swallows. Prominent spots on rump patch distinguish from White-rumped. Tertiaries prominently edged with white on both sides; white less extensive in White-rumped Swallow.
- 03-508 Heermann's Gull, Destin Pass (Okaloosa). Not reviewed. The committee decided that the plumage was consistent with the Heermann's Gull that had been resident at Ft. DeSoto. Occurrence in the panhandle is consistent with vagrancy patterns of the Ft. DeSoto bird and with the date of its last sighting at Ft. DeSoto.
- 03-509 Slaty-backed Gull, Key West (Monroe), photos. Accepted 7-0. First state record. Photographs diagnostic of a third-year bird entering fourth-winter plumage. Plumage, bill, and leg color consistent. Dark smudge behind eye and light subterminal spotting on trailing edges of primaries diagnostic.
- 03-510 Tamaulipas Crow, Flamingo, Everglades national Park (Monroe), photos. Not Accepted 0-7. Photos and vocal description could not eliminate Fish Crow.
- [03-511](#) Green-tailed Towhee, Honeymoon Island State Park (Pinellas), photos, taped vocalization. Accepted 7-0. Photographs diagnostic showed a large, long-tailed towhee with dull green upperparts and a bright orange-rufous crown patch.
- [03-512](#) Eurasian Kestrel, Zellwood, Lake Apopka (Orange), photos. Accepted 7-0. First state record. Photos diagnostic of adult female. Wing/tail ratio and dark toenails distinguish this bird from Lesser Kestrel. Not likely to be an escape because most or all would be banded or wearing jesses.
- 03-513 Harris's Sparrow, Lake Jessup (Seminole), photos. Accepted 7-0. Photos diagnostic of an adult bird. A large, chunky sparrow with a pink bill. Brown head with a characteristic dark auricular patch, black forehead and upper crown, with white spotting on hind crown.
- [03-514](#) Red-billed Tropicbird, Destin Beach (Okaloosa). Tabled, pending receipt of photographs that are thought to exist.
- 03-515 Yellow-green Vireo, Ft. Desoto Park (Pinellas). Accepted 6-0-1. Written description consistent with species. Seen with Red-eyed Vireo for comparison. Bright yellow flanks, lower breast, belly and undertail coverts. Yellow-green dorsally with gray crown. Eye stripe less prominent and lower mandible distinctly horn-colored.
- 03-516 Cassin's Kingbird, Zellwood, Lake Apopka (Orange), photos. Accepted 7-0. Photos diagnostic for species. Yellow belly and dark breast contrasting with white throat and malars. Pale terminal tail tip not visible in photographs but mentioned in written description.
3. The committee evaluated the following unresolved reports to determine some specific action necessary for resolution:

01-446 Western Grebe, Ft. Clinch State Park (Nassau). Accepted (to genus only) 7-0; previous review, 3-3-1,

not resolved. Many attempts made to obtain photographs thought to exist, none successful.

Description diagnostic of *Aechmophorus* grebe, but could not rule out possible hybrid between Clark's and Western.

- 02-459 Tropical Kingbird, Englewood (Charlotte). Not Accepted 0-7; previous review, 5-2, not resolved. Written description consistent with Tropical or Couch's Kingbird. Vocalization stated to be Tropical, but not described at all in report. Most agreed too ambiguous to accept.
- 02-461 Flammulated Owl, St. George Island (Franklin), photo. Accepted 7-0; previous review, 1-1-5, tabled. Bill size and ear tufts consistent with Flammulated Owl. Scapular coverts rufous in photos and specimens examined. In contrast to gray-morph Screech Owl, Flammulated has more distinct rusty-brown on facial disk that contrasts with lighter inner facial feathers.
- 02-463 Caribbean Martin, Key West (Monroe), photo. Not Accepted 0-7; previous review, 0-0-7, tabled. Video difficult to review, written description of males, but no clear view of males in video, mostly of females, of which several species are too similar (Purple, Cuban, and Sinaloa martins) to distinguish from the video. Sighting followed storm so likely a rarity, but unable to confirm species identity.
- 02-469 Common Merganser, Aripeka (Pasco), photo. Not Accepted 0-7; previous review, 1-0-6, tabled. Photo of a mounted specimen which has been subsequently lost. Species identification certain, but original data about collection locale, date, etc. lost and information in submitted report second-hand. Written description or notes from original collector not available, thus provenance uncertain.
- 02-481 Thayer's Gull. Tallahassee (Leon). The Committee was petitioned to reevaluate this report. Additional material was provided but did not aid in resolving the birds identity and the Committee decided not to reevaluate. Its previous review stands, Not Accepted 0-7.
- 02-489 Cuban Pewee, Dry Tortugas (Monroe). Not Accepted 0-7; previous review, 2-5, not resolved. Written description of behavior and plumage published in Field Notes (1993 50(3): 272) suggests Cuban Pewee, but no description of vocalization or mention of primary extension. Written description not sufficient to confirm identity, especially to rule out Eastern Wood Pewee (*Contopus virens*).

4. The committee considered the following information about Florida birds:

a) Based on a paper by P. W. Smith, G. E. Woolfenden, and A. Sprunt, Jr., recently published in *North American Birds* (2000, 54:235-240), which reevaluated the evidence for the occurrence of Loggerhead Kingbird in Florida, the Committee continued its reevaluation of the inclusion of this species on the state list. The FOSRC added the Loggerhead Kingbird to its list of species occurring in Florida based on its inclusion in the list of verified species in Robertson and Woolfenden (1991). The Committee reviewed original photographs used by Robertson and Woolfenden and, more recently, by Smith et al in their reevaluation. In addition, the Committee evaluated new photographs by Brooks Atherton that had not been previously used by Robertson and Woolfenden or by Smith et al. None of the photos reviewed appeared diagnostic for Loggerhead Kingbird. In most cases, the birds in the photographs tended to show rounder heads and shorter, more wedge-shaped bills, than is typical of Loggerhead Kingbird. The accumulated documentation was assigned a catalog number, 03-517 and the vote was 0-7 to Not Accept. Thus Loggerhead Kingbird was removed from the official FOSRC state list.

b) The Committee voted to reevaluate record 91-222, Variegated Flycatcher, seen 15 March 1991 in the Dry Tortugas (Monroe). The committee reviewed published photographs of this bird. The evidence suggested Piratic rather than Variegated Flycatcher, but the originally-submitted documentation was not available and the committee voted to table this evaluation until its January 2004 meeting at Gainesville, where the original documentation is archived and where we can examine specimens.

Species added to the state and review list

Eurasian Kestrel

Slaty-backed Gull

Mangrove Swallow

Mountain Bluebird

Hooded Oriole

Species removed from the state list

Loggerhead Kingbird

5. The Committee evaluated the following information about the establishment of exotic species in Florida:

The committee reviewed a pre-publication manuscript documenting the size and trends of Black-hooded Parakeets in Florida. Appendix A of the FOSRC's Rules and Procedures states that "Introduced species (deliberate or inadvertent) are deemed to be established if there are persistent records for at least 10 years and satisfactory evidence of maintaining a reasonably stable or increasing population through successful reproduction."

The Rules further define "satisfactory evidence" as:

"evidence that the population has reached and is maintaining a size large enough that it is not in serious danger of collapse due to genetic deterioration through inbreeding... "Satisfactory evidence" normally means that at least one detailed study of local population size and breeding biology has been published in a reputable scientific source such as a peer-reviewed journal or technical book. However, explosive population growth by widely evident natural reproduction may be considered "satisfactory evidence" if the population after 10 years can be shown to consist of several thousand freely breeding adults over a wide geographic area."

The Committee agreed that the evidence presented in the manuscript was insufficient to conclude establishment by "explosive population growth by widely evident natural reproduction" but to be consistent with the FOSRC's Rules and Procedures, the Committee agreed to table the review until the manuscript is revised or appears in a peer-reviewed publication.

The Committee also agreed to review Appendix A of the Rules and Procedures and formed a subcommittee consisting of Jon Greenlaw, Fred Lohrer, and Andy Kratter to reevaluate the criteria for recognizing the establishment of exotic species in Florida.

6. The Committee discussed increasing its meeting frequency from annually to twice-annually. It was also suggested that this second meeting occur in January at the Florida Museum of Natural History at Gainesville, where the Committee would have access to the FOSRC archives as well as museum specimens. All agreed that this would allow reports to be evaluated more rapidly and efficiently and that reevaluations would be easier because archived materials would be at hand. The Committee also agreed to formally request a budget for the FOSRC, in part to help subsidize travel costs for members of the FOSRC, and to meet expected costs of the Committee (see # 7 below). A copy of that budget was submitted to the FOS President Fran James and is included with this report.

7. The Committee discussed the problem of archiving the various forms of media in which submitted documentation for reports is received. Increasing photographs are received in digital format, but we also receive audio and video tapes, original photographs and slides, original field notes and xerox copies, etc. The archived documentation included in reports evaluated by the FOSRC is one of the most valuable functions of the Committee. We agreed to form a subcommittee (Reed Bowman, Fred Lohrer, Andy Kratter, Todd Engstrom) to research the most effective archival methods for these various forms of media, to prepare recommendations for implementing these methods, and for applying these methods to all the documentation that currently exists in the FOSRC archives. This process is likely to include some costs for various archival materials and those costs are to be included in the budget submitted to the FOS Board for the 2004 FY.

8. Lyn Atherton's term on the FOSRC is expiring. The Committee will sorely miss Lyn and her many contributions and thanks her for her many years of service. After much discussion about the need to maintain a balance of professional and amateur ornithologists on the Committee, we unanimously agreed to ask President Fran James to nominate Sally Jue to the FOSRC. Sally has been a long-standing member of the FOS, is an active and knowledgeable birder in the state, and works for the Florida Natural Areas Inventory in Tallahassee.

9. Reed has worked with Peter Merritt on developing the FOSRC web page. We discussed other Committee's web pages and potential changes to ours. Reed will discuss these potential changes with Fran James and Eugene Stoccardo, including the logical server host for the web page.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on 19 July at 1400.

Respectfully submitted,

Reed Bowman

Secretary, FOSRC

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