



Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee

1996 Annual Meeting

February 24, 1996

Minutes

The Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee (MD/DCRC) 1996 Annual Meeting was called to order by the Chair, Bruce Peterjohn at 9:25 am. Present were Gail Mackiernan, Michael O'Brien, Mark Hoffman, Bob Dixon, Mary Gustafson, Ottavio Janni, Willem Maane and Phil Davis (Secretary). Not able to attend were Robert Norton and David Holmes.

1. SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Workload: The Secretary reported on the committee's workload since last year's annual meeting:

	<u>AM</u> <u>96</u>	<u>AM</u> <u>95</u>	<u>AM</u> <u>94</u>
# Packages Started Since Last Meeting:	4	6	3
# Records Placed into Circulation:	55	77	27
# New Records Circulated:	39	55	12
# Packages Tabulated:	4	3	3
# Final Decisions	40	20	21

Database Status: The Secretary provided summary statistics on the committee's database as of February 24, 1996. The total number of records in the database is 619.

MD:

Accepted	180
Not Accepted	103
Genus only	1
ID OK/?? Origin	4
Circulating	55
Recirculate	12
Not Reviewable	77
Pending	164
Withdrawn	1
Total	597

DC:

Accepted	11
Not Reviewable	4
Pending	7
Total	22

The number of records awaiting review decreased by 81 as a result of our adoption of last year's "review list". However, the past year's efforts by Marshall Iliff and Harvey Mudd to canvass Maryland Birdlife, American Birds and Audubon Naturalist for old unreported sightings has added more than that number to the backlog. There are currently 171 records awaiting review.

Quality Review: Marshall Iliff continues to periodically review the database to perform "quality audits". Discrepancies and other errors (such as typographical errors) are addressed and resolved.

Budget: The committee budget for MOS FY 96 was submitted as \$250.

Outside correspondence: Outside correspondence of note during the previous year included:

- NJ Records Committee - Provided information to assist them in start up (again).
- ABA Checklist Committee - Responding to query on status of Code 4-6 species.
- Iowa Committee - A copy of their new procedures was received.

Action Items from the 1995 Annual Meeting:

- Bryon Swift was contacted regarding the DC Records Committee archives. He is in possession of these records and will provide them to the MD/DCRC Secretary.
- The Secretary recently placed a data call on Internet regarding the Oregon Audubon Society ID article index. Several years ago, It was recommended that committee obtain a copy of this for the committee's files; however, nothing is known about it.
- A request has been sent to Ron Naveen for a copy of "Birds of the Chesapeake Blight". This was also recommended to be added to the committee's files.

Projects status:

- The Secretary has generated a computerized Index of the committee's ID articles (done).
- Automation of the committee's observer data has begun. Further automation of letters, reports, will be possible when these data are automated (underway). It was decided, where possible, to try to put the "finder(s)" of a bird first in the list of observers, or to add a comment regarding who found the bird. "Et al." will be used to mean that other observers are reported to have been present during the observation, but did not submit documentation to the committee.
- The secretary still needs to "dissect" ballots from first few packages and file them with each individual record (open).
- Modify database to accommodate "multi-jurisdictional" records (underway).

Start and end date for records: This issue was again discussed. It was decided that the committee's files will continue to reflect record start and end dates that are substantiated only by direct information in the committee's files.

Documentation campaign status (open items):

- Hoary Redpoll (Hart-Miller Island) - additional details: D. Holmes; photos: M. Hoffman
- Le Conte's Sparrow (Girdletree) - D. Czaplak has photos (M.O. has a copy)
- Painted Bunting (Berlin) details/photos - check with Mary Humphrey
- Fulvous Whistling-Duck (Cambridge) -- Gail MacKiernan will follow up
- Barrow's Goldeneye (Annapolis, Kent Narrows) - check with Hal Wierenga
- Trumpeter Swan (Mont/Ho Co) - photos - check with Dave Czaplak, Robert Hilton
- Pine Grosbeaks in Garrett Co, 1994 - ask Kevin Dodge (his in-laws?)
- White-winged Crossbills in (PGCO, 1994) - ask Dave Brinker.
- White-winged Tern in OC (resubmission - was Arctic Tern) - Stasz, Iliff
- Common Murre (March 95 pelagic) - Michael O'Brien
- Thick-billed Murre (March 95 pelagic) - Michael O'Brien
- Both murre (March 96 pelagic) - Michael O'Brien
- Razorbill (oiled bird) - David Holmes
- Thayer's Gull (Howard Co landfill) - Bob Ringler has photos
- Ruff (Lock Raven, 1981 May Count) - Bob Dixon has info
- Ruff (East Baltimore County) - check with David Holmes
- Ivory Gull (19th century record) - Bruce Peterjohn is searching for this.

MOS By-Laws: When the MOS revised the By Laws to reflect the committee's current mode of operation, it was not considered that the Chair could be non-voting member of the committee. The secretary will work with the MOS Board of Directors to make another change to accurately reflect the Committee's Procedures.

Permanent Storage: The secretary is working with the MOS Board of Directors to obtain permanent storage for the committee's records. This will probably be a Cylburn Mansion in Baltimore. This will be a long-term project to make copies and deposit the material at Cylburn in a suitable (ie, fireproof) container. The committee also suggested looking to electronic media for storage, such as CD-ROM. This would ultimately need to become a special project, with a separate budget.

Next packages: Package 55 will be the next one circulated. It will include the 4th round circulation Ross's Goose, and the banded Tufted Duck.

Status of Reviewable Species: The current comments in the "Distributional Notes" field of the database are inconsistent and in some cases, not accurate. These comments will be eliminated and in their place, comments that relate to the review list will be incorporated (on a species-by-species basis).

2. **DECISION SUMMARY MANUSCRIPT.** This was discussed and a number of recommended changes were discussed. The plan is for this to be published in the March issue of Maryland Birdlife. Mark Hoffman volunteered to author the next annual report.

3. COMMITTEE PROCEDURES.

- **“Origin” Votes and Genus Only Votes:** The committee decided that the same criteria that applies to “accepted” and “non-accepted” votes will apply to these categories. A vote to “accept” will be considered to also be a vote to “accept genus only” in cases of mixed results.
- **Abstentions:** The committee reaffirmed its policy that members cannot abstain from voting for any reason. Members should be sure to provide related comments that deal with obvious problems, missing or not available ID reference information, etc.
- **Documentation / Research:** Members are encouraged to provide research for records. During the first round, articles and other references of relevance are encouraged to be submitted to the Secretary for circulation in subsequent rounds. Also, Bruce Peterjohn has ordered a copy of a Swedish World Bird ID Index of over 12,000 references. He will review it’s relevance to the records committee when it arrives.
- **Pelagic Boundaries:** The ABA has adopted a boundary policy based on the “nearest point of land”. The committee agreed to not follow this policy, but instead, formally adopted the following as Maryland’s pelagic boundaries: Due east of the DE/MD and MD/VA borders at the Atlantic Ocean for a distance of 200 miles.
- **Timely Review of Records:** The committee adopted the following procedure: Members will be monitored on the average time it takes to process packages. If the average exceeds 2.5 weeks (barring extenuating circumstances), between annual meetings, the member will be replaced.
- **Unreviewable Reports:** As a result of the recent research into old Maryland Birdlife, American Birds, Audubon Naturalist issues, a number of old reports were discovered that did provide minimal or no descriptive data. Following up these reports, in many cases, has provided additional details or photographs. However, in many cases, the researchers have run into dead ends. The committee agreed that it will create a new category called “Unreviewable” and these reports will not be circulated for review. First state records will still require adequate levels of documentation in order to be added to the state list. Old reports that do have some descriptive data in them will be circulated and the members will be asked to consider the time frame and context of these reports, specifically that no records committee existed at this time and that the standards of documentation were much less stringent.
- **Coordination with Maryland Birdlife and Audubon Field Notes:** Since these publications are produced on a short time frame, the secretary will contact the Seasonal and Regional editors of these publications and ask that reports of reviewable species be annotated (either with a comment, or a graphical notation) to indicate that the report in question requires review by the MD/DC Records Committee.
- **Hypothetical Species:** The committee reaffirmed its position that it will not maintain a hypothetical list. Work will continue with the authors of the new “Yellow Book” to

resolve the status of these species on a case by case basis.

4. **FOURTH ROUND CIRCULATIONS.** Record 94-35, Ross's Goose, was discussed. This record will now be recirculated in the next package (55). This package will be circulated to the existing term committee members.

5. **OLD BUSINESS.**

- **Confidence Experiment.** At this time, only one package has completed circulation since the confidence experiment was begun. It was agreed to continue the experiment for another year.
- **Yellow Book Status.** The new AOU checklist is still at least a year away. There is pressure from the MOS Board of Directors to publish it soon. The records committee is continuing to give priority to reviews that close gaps in the two groups databases.
- **Maryland Checklist.** The Secretary will update the committee's database to reflect the status of non-hypothetical birds baselined in the 1977 Field List of the Birds of Maryland (Robbins and Bystrak). To this, all records committee accepted species will be added. This will reflect the official List of Maryland Birds, as the committee is chartered by the MOS By Laws to maintain.
- **DC Checklist:** The Secretary will use the 1985 Audubon Naturalist article by Czaplak and Hayes as the baseline. To this, DC species accepted by the committee will be added to form the official List of DC Birds.
- **Review List:** The committee made the following changes to the MD/DCRC Review List:
 - a. Franklin's Gull - move to category 5.e. This species has only been found once in Maryland outside of the western tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. Therefore, the conditions for review will read "Reviewable if found in areas other than on the coastal plain west of the Chesapeake Bay (including the Susquehanna River up to Conowingo) from Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties north".
 - b. White-winged Crossbill - While this species may have been more common decades ago, it is not now. Therefore, it will be added to the list in category 3.

6. **NEW BUSINESS.**

Reopening of records: Several records were discussed as candidates to reopen.

- A copy of the California decision accepting their Black-tailed Gull has been received. This may provide justification for reopening the Maryland record. It was, however, decided to wait until the Virginia and Rhode Island committees have acted on their respective reports before taking action.

- A second report on the Montgomery County Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was found in an old issue of the Audubon Naturalist. This appears to be new information and may justify reopening this record.
- Mississippi Kites may be looked at after the current batch of kite records (in circulation) is complete.
- Stint identification generated considerable discussion within the committee. A package of Little Stint identification articles published after the Maryland record was accepted will be assembled and circulated to the members for consideration as to whether to reopen this record. A vote to reopen or not will be taken from the committee members when this material is circulated.

Miscellaneous:

- Gyrfalcon. Mary Gustafson is tracking down information and comments dealing with falconer's hybrid birds before this report is recirculated.

7. ID ISSUES / SKINS TO REVIEW. For next month's skins workshop at the National Museum of Natural History, the skins the committee will review are:

Western Wood-Pewee
 Grove-billed Ani
 Ash-throated Flycatcher
 Nutting's Flycatcher
 Little Stint
 Bullock's Oriole
 White-winged Tern
 Oregon Junco

8. ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS AND CHAIR.

Membership: The Chair will contact the nominated candidates to determine if they will serve. [New committee members are Marshall Iliff, Harvey Mudd and Paul O'Brien].

Chair: Bruce Peterjohn was elected to serve as the Chair for the next year. Since he is not currently a voting member, he will serve as a non-voting Chair.

9. OTHER ISSUES:

Appreciation: The committee extended a round of thanks to retiring committee members, Gail MacKiernan, Robert Norton, and Michael O'Brien.

10. NEXT MEETING DATES:

Annual Meeting: The 1997 Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, February 22, 1997.

Skins Workshop: The 1997 Skins Workshop will be held on Saturday, March 29, 1997.

ADJOURNMENT. The meeting was adjourned at 5:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Davis
MD/DC Records Committee Secretary

cc: MOS President
MOS Vice President
MOS Secretary
MOS Executive Secretary
MOS Publications Committee