



**Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee  
2002 Annual Meeting  
Saturday, February 23, 2002**

**Meeting Minutes and Annual Business Report**

The 2002 Annual Meeting of the Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee (MD/DCRC) was called to order at 10:00 am at the home of Phil Davis in Davidsonville, MD. Members present included Paul O'Brien (Chair), Phil Davis (Secretary), Jonathan Alderfer, Patty Craig, Mark Hoffman, Fran Pope, Bob Ringler, and Sherman Suter. Absent were Rick Blom and Marshall Iliff. Also attending were MOS President, Karen Morley and MD/DCRC Past-Chair, Harvey Mudd.

**1. Secretary's Report. The Secretary presented the following report:**

- a. **Database Status Report.** Figure 1 summarizes the current contents of the MD/DCRC database and the changes ("deltas") from last year:

**Figure 1. MD/DCRC Database Summary as of 02/23/2002 and Changes from Previous Annual Meetings**

State	Category/Status	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Delta
MD	Accepted	258	333	365	380	387	7
	Stewart & Robbins	9	9	100	85	83	-2
	Accepted: Group	2	2	9	9	10	1
	ID OK/?? Origin	5	6	6	6	7	1
	Not Accepted	119	124	127	132	133	1
	Circulating	45	28	9	15	49	34
	Recirculate	22	21	27	25	23	-2
	Ready	102	49	64	61	69	8
	Reviewable	35	45	36	35	42	7
	US Museum of Natural History	-	-	6	26	21	-5
	Hold	11	11	16	15	15	0
	Report	0	3	5	0	0	0
	Unreviewable	221	224	238	246	248	2
	Non-Review Species	109	112	119	136	139	3
	Reopened	-	-	5	5	6	1
	Withdrawn	4	5	7	7	8	1
<b>MD Totals</b>		<b>942</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>1139</b>	<b>1183</b>	<b>1240</b>	<b>57</b>
DC	Accepted	14	16	19	20	20	0
	Stewart & Robbins	-	-	25	8	8	0
	Accepted: Group	0	0	0	2	2	0
	Not Accepted	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Circulating	1	4	1	2	7	5
	Recirculate	1	2	4	4	5	1
	Ready	6	2	3	7	14	7
	Reviewable	1	7	9	5	6	1
	US Museum of Natural History	-	-	4	26	27	1
	Report	0	10	10	2	2	0
	Unreviewable	8	13	17	16	28	12
	Non-Review Species	3	3	3	6	7	1
	<b>DC Totals</b>		<b>34</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>126</b>
??	US Museum of Natural History				<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>976</b>	<b>1029</b>	<b>1235</b>	<b>1283</b>	<b>1366</b>	<b>83</b>

b. **Review Package Status Report:**

- i. **Completed package statistics.** Figure 2 presents a summary of review package statistics by calendar year of the packages that completed circulation. The table shows the total and average number of reports circulated, the total and average number of new reports, and the total and average number of decisions reached. Decisions include "Accepted", "Accepted-Group", "Not Accepted", and "ID OK/Questionable Origin" (which also includes "exotic origin").

**Figure 2. Package Statistics Summary**

Year	Pkgs	Weeks	# Items	# New	# Decisions	Dec %	Avg #Items	Avg #New	Avg #Decs
1985	3	72.0	40	40	17	49%	13	13	6
1986	6	24.4	60	35	34	57%	10	6	6
1987	5	21.1	54	27	43	80%	11	5	9
1988	3	20.0	30	25	17	57%	10	8	6
1989	4	26.6	35	20	18	57%	9	5	5
1990	3	35.1	30	15	12	40%	10	5	4
1991	7	18.9	65	35	39	64%	9	5	6
1992	8	20.6	73	43	37	55%	9	5	5
1993	4	13.3	41	22	26	69%	10	6	7
1994	4	25.6	39	20	28	77%	10	5	7
1995	4	25.8	63	50	33	52%	16	13	8
1996	4	25.2	51	37	33	65%	13	9	8
1997	5	21.1	68	47	50	74%	14	9	10
1998	7	19.3	107	84	83	78%	15	12	12
1999	6	17.8	84	61	48	63%	14	10	8
2000	2	22.7	26	15	17	66%	13	8	9
2001	3	25.8	44	30	26	60%	15	10	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>

- ii. **Packages in Circulation Statistics.** Table 3 indicates the contents of the packages that are currently in circulation.

**Figure 3. Status of Packages Currently in Circulation.**

Year	Pkg#	Start	#Items	#New
2001	78	09/01/2001	14	8
		<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>
		<b>Average</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>
2002	79	01/24/2002	25	25
	80	02/22/2002	17	17
		<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>42</b>
		<b>Average</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Grand Totals</b>			<b>56</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Grand Averages</b>			<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>

- c. **Internal Communications Report.** Acknowledgements and Decision Notices will be sent out shortly after the meeting.
- d. **External Communications Report.** Figure 4 presents a summary of significant communications with people or organizations outside of the committee's business interfaces.

**Figure 4. Summary of the Past Year's External Communications.**

Mon	Year	Contact	St	Topic
Feb	2001	Dole, John	NC	Details on MD/DC Common Murre records for an upcoming article.
Feb	2001	Mlodinow, Steve	WA	Background on Red-cockaded Woodpecker records for an upcoming article.
Feb	2001	Brady, Alan	PA	Query regarding any MD reports of Fea's Petrel or Masked Booby.
Feb	2001	Lehman, Jay	DE	Query on 1975 records of a Le Conte's Sparrows that have crossed the state line into Delaware.
May	2001	Jones, Stephen	DC	Report of a Canada Warbler at Battery Kimble
Jul	2001	Cole, Wanda	MD	Trumpeter Swans on the MD May Count
Jul	2001	Estrada, Raul Alberto Duran	MX	Conservation issues in Mexico
Sep	2001	Winkler, Jonathan	CT	Report of breeding Red-tailed Hawks on the DC Mall
Sep	2001	Schilling, Mark	MD	Information on birding in Rocky Gap State Park
Nov	2001	Mark, David	NY	Status of Kelp Gull
Dec	2001	Hunt, Grev	MD	Advice on what do to with a road-killed Osprey
Dec	2001	Haverman, Judy	DC	Advice for a weekly nature series for the Washington Post
Dec	2001	Steury, Brent	DC	Information on the DC Ash-throated Flycatcher for the NPS KAG Checklist
Jan	2002	Maynard, Virginia	CO	Research on Yellow-legged Gull 1994-1995 sightings
Jan	2002	Burchick, Mike	MD	MD environmental information and Christmas Count / BBS POCs
Jan	2002	Bertrand, Michel	QB	Research on Eurasian Collared-Doves
Feb	2002	Willms, Mark	GA	Status of Kelp Gull and DC Tufted Duck
Feb	2002	Tibbets, Richard	MD	Obtaining MOS Checklists

**e. Internet Communications Report.**

- i. **MOS MD/DCRC Web Site Updates.** The Secretary has continued to roll out MD/DCRC data products to the committee's web pages on the MOS web site. The local birding community has also been reminded via e-mail messages on the local birding listserver (MD Osprey) that this data is available for their reference. The link to the committee's web pages is:

<http://www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/rcindex.html>

- ii. **Quantitative Status System.** The committee has developed a "quick look" species status system based on the totals of various categories of reports, similar to a system that California uses. At last year's annual meeting, the committee decided to include "exotic" and "questionable origin" votes in a separate column within the status system nomenclature. A separate tally of the S&R records was also added. A copy of this report was provided for the members to review. A few questions were raised about the data associated with several of the species. The Secretary will investigate and resolve these questions. The final version will be posted on the MD/DCRC web pages on the MOS web site.

**f. Database Projects:**

- i. **Projects Completed.** The following database projects were completed since the last Annual Meeting:
1. **Review Package Database.** Previously, data parameters associated with review packages was not a part of the committee's database structure, but was handled via external spreadsheets. The Secretary has transformed all package-related data into linked data tables that are now used to produce reports and ad hoc queries. The tables in Review Package Status (1.b, i and ii, above) were generated from those data tables.

2. **Common Names of Subspecies/Forms.** Since AOU-based names, such as “Green-winged Teal (Eurasian Form)” are too long and awkward for many of the committee reports so subspecies common names have been used instead. A suggestion was made to put the common names in quotes (e.g., “Bewick’s” Swan). The Secretary has made these database changes. The committee will continue to use the name “Common Teal” even though the British BOURC used the name “Eurasian Teal” when it split the Green-winged Teal. (At this point in time, the AOU has not split this species.)
  3. **Records Received per Year Report.** The secretary generated a report to compute and present the number of reports received each year (not including “historical reports” added to the database later in time). A copy of this report was presented to the committee. This report shows that in recent years the committee receives approximately 45 reports each year.
  4. **Historical Growth of the MD/DC Lists.** This was a project to produce a report that tabulates the new species added each year to the official Maryland and DC lists. A preliminary report was provided for the committee’s review. Some refinements remain to be implemented. A final version will be rolled out to the committee’s web pages.
  5. **AOU Check-List 42nd Supplement Update.** The committee’s taxonomy database was updated to comply with the 42<sup>nd</sup> supplement. Primary changes that affect MD and DC species include the change of the name “Oldsquaw” to “Long-tailed Duck”; merging all jaegers and skuas into the genus *Stercorarius*; changes to the scientific names of some of the chickadees; and a change to the placement of Bullock’s Oriole.
  6. **Database Cleanup of Scientific Names.** The database contained some duplicate fields for scientific names. This redundancy has been eliminated and a field has been added for trinomial names associated with subspecies and forms.
- ii. **Projects In Progress.** The following database projects are still in work:
1. **Decision Text from Old Records.** This project involves electronically “cutting” decision summaries from older “letter-to-observer” word processing files and “pasting” them into the “decision summary” database record field. This project has been started but is not yet complete.
  2. **Dissection of Early Package Ballots.** In the early days of the committee, members wrote their ballots sequentially on sheets of paper. These early ballots are being decollated so that all ballots for any given record/report will be contained in the physical file jacket for that record/report. Some paper manipulation remains to be completed on this project.
  3. **Stewart and Robbins Species Research.** Some of the species included in the committee’s baseline document, Stewart and Robbins (1958), need some additional research to determine which records should be added to the MD/DCRC database—typically these questions deal with breeding species that are extirpated from Maryland, such as:
    - i. Bachman’s Sparrow
    - ii. Bewick’s WrenAlso, a Northern Shrike historical review needs to be completed to ensure that all records have been captured in the database.
  4. **Citation Database.** The Secretary began a project to identify and physically obtain copies of citations for records and reports where the citation is not already included in the existing hardcopy files. This project has been started but is not yet complete.

5. **Observer Database.** This project links the main report/record data tables to another table of observer entries. This data will be used to automate observer acknowledgements, decision reports, etc. It will also avoid the current two-observer field limitation of the existing database. This project has been started but is not yet totally operational.
  6. **Extinct Species Research.** This scope of this project includes researching species that are extinct or extirpated from Maryland. Examples include Eskimo Curlew and Ivory-billed Woodpecker. The objective is to capture any documented sightings and build documentation files. It was pointed out that extirpated species that still exist (such as Greater Prairie Chicken and, maybe, Eskimo Curlew) will require special handling.
  7. **Four-letter Codes.** The Secretary has compiled a standardized set of four-letter species codes (using the codes from the Bird Banding Laboratory, the Breeding Bird Survey program, and other sources). These codes have been compiled but have not yet been merged into the committee's data structure. These codes will be used with some internal reports, not will not be used for public dissemination.
  8. **Update "Rdate" Fields.** Some of the "received dates" fields are still missing from older records. These will be researched and filled-in. This field is used for some committee internal reports.
  9. **Update MD Yellowthroat Field.** This project is to check all MD Yellowthroat date fields (indicating when decision summaries were published in the MD Yellowthroat) in the database and fill-in missing fields, as needed. This is a bookkeeping function.
  10. **County Fields.** This project is to eliminate the redundancy between the "Co" and "County" fields. The former is a four-letter abbreviation while the latter is a full spelling of the county name. Both are not needed since the full name can be looked up in a table. The vision is to standardize on the Maryland Historical Society's two-character county abbreviations rather than the homemade four-character abbreviation developed years ago.
  11. **Loss Prevention Plan/Permanent Storage Status.** This project deals with preservation of the committee data repository in case of fire or other disaster. Currently, electronic data is archived and stored off-site. For the long-term, the original paper records will be moved to the MOS controlled storage facility in Central Maryland. In the interim, it was suggested that the Secretary investigate obtaining fireproof document boxes. The Secretary will report on this project at the next meeting.
- iii. **Future Projects.** The following database projects have not yet been started.
1. **Future Web-based Records Committee Vision.** The Secretary plans to implement the following functions:
    - i. **On-line Photo Gallery.** This project will publish, on-line, accepted record photographs, images, and other documentation. The plan is to begin with first state records.
    - ii. **On-line Database.** This project will provide MD/DCRC database access to interested parties on-line via the web.
    - iii. **Review Process via the Web.** This project will allow committee members to access an "intranet" (not accessible to the general public) to review records on-line.

It was suggested that the Secretary coordinate these plans with the MOS Web Director.

2. **Species Status Change History.** The Secretary plans to compile a chronological history of the change in species review status—for example, when Clay-colored Sparrow was dropped from the review list; when the review range of Franklin’s Gull was redefined, etc. This information is becoming lost and should be captured for posterity.
  3. **DC Reports.** The Secretary plans to review the defunct DC Records Committee files and merge or add anything of relevance to the MD/DCRC database.
  4. **Imprecise Date Capability:** This is a project to add separate database year, month, and day fields for record start dates. This requirement stems from historical records with incomplete start dates (e.g., year only, or year and month only). Currently, the Secretary estimates a day of month and annotates the records, but this can be misleading on many tabular reports. This capability will correct this condition.
  5. **Periodic Acknowledgements.** At a previous annual meeting it was suggested that the Secretary consider publishing a periodic (quarterly or monthly) list of reports submitted to the committee with the observers names and thank them, in lieu of mailing individual acknowledgements. The Secretary mentioned that he may be able to also use a report writer software feature to e-mail individual acknowledgements directly from the database. This project has yet to be started.
  6. **Data Dictionary and Standardization.** The Secretary plans to define a formal data dictionary and schema for all committee data fields and data tables. This project will include a data normalization exercise to clean up the data structures (eliminate duplicate fields, etc.).
  7. **Quality Review.** Once the committee data structure is fully stable, the Secretary plans to review each individual folder jacket to ensure that all fields in the database are fully populated, are correct, and that all photographic documentation is present, etc. Once this review is completed, record hardcopy files will be ready for digital and physical archiving.
  8. **Business Processes Definition and Documentation.** For posterity, and to share with other state/provincial records committees, the Secretary intends to document the MD/DCRC Level 2 and Level 3 business processes using process flow diagrams.
  9. **Table Lookups and Data Entry Forms.** This is a project to add table look-ups and create multi-table linked forms to facilitate data entry and reduce potential errors.
- g. **Unsubmitted Reports and Outstanding Documentation Status.** The committee discussed its working list of sightings where documentation is known to still be outstanding. Bob Ringle has 17-years of the *Maryland Birdlife* Changing Seasons database and will look over the list for any possible reports that may be in his file. The Secretary will also send him a list of all of the “Reviewable” reports in case he has documentation that can be reviewed. Bob also reminded the committee that he has many years of CBC rare bird reports in his files in case we are looking for any missing write-ups.

## 2. Subcommittee/Project Reports

- a. **Outreach Subcommittee.** Paul O’Brien reported that no MD/DCRC outreach presentations were given to MOS Chapters last year. Eight presentations were given the year before to MOS Chapters and other local groups (such as Audubon Chapters). Ten MOS chapters have not received the presentation yet. Paul has asked the MD Yellowthroat editor to run a program reminder in a future issue.

- b. **DC Review List.** At an earlier meeting the committee discussed whether to develop a separate DC Review List, or keep MD and DC combined. Paul Pisano agreed to work with Ottavio Janni and Rob Hilton to develop a draft for the committee to consider. At last year's meeting Paul reported on the results of this work and presented a draft Review List to the committee for review. For this meeting, Paul submitted a revised list for the committee to consider. The committee thinks that the list looks good, however, minor corrections were noted. The list should be checked by one or two more people before publishing it on the committee's web pages. A final version will be circulated to the members via e-mail prior to posting on the web pages. The list presented is included as an Appendix to these minutes.
- c. **Subspecies/Distinct Forms Subcommittee.** Marshall Iliff has drafted a comprehensive Annotated List of Bird Subspecies Known from the State of Maryland. He is currently discussing alternatives for publishing this work with the MOS. He forwarded to the committee a draft abbreviated checklist that might be suitable for interim publication in a shorter form that would indicate for which species the MD/DCRC would be interested in receiving reports. Committee discussion focused on the following issues:

- **Archival Only.** The committee probably does not want to encourage the submission of reports that it does not plan to review.
- **Identification Difficulty.** Some of the subspecies/forms are not field separable, or are not easily field separable. The committee probably does not want to encourage observers to submit reports that have a high likelihood of being not accepted. Reviews of such subspecies and forms would be most appropriate for banders and collected specimens. The checklist should probably make this distinction. Subspecies/form reviewability guidance for banders would be a valuable contribution.
- **Subspecies/form Selection.** The committee would prefer to deal with the question which species it wishes to review after Marshall's complete work is published. Then the committee can operate from the complete and final annotated checklist. Proceeding in this manner, the committee's published subspecies/forms review list should be more authoritative and stable.

In summary, the result of the discussion was that the committee suggests that Marshall first publish the complete (annotated) work. Then, the committee could use the complete work as the basis for the adoption of a list of subspecies/forms for which it would want to receive reports and review.

For the time being, the committee agreed to retain Section 3 of the MD/DCRC Review List comprised of only subspecies/forms that the committee has accepted.

- d. **Specimens.** Phil Davis discussed the following efforts:
1. **Museum Specimens in the USNM Database.** The Secretary has worked with the US National Museum of Natural History to determine if any reviewable specimens identified in their collection database have not come to the committee's attention. A number of candidate specimens were identified from these database searches. These specimens were then added to the list of specimens to be located and photographed for the committee's review.
  2. **Location and Photography of Extant Specimens.** On October 22, 2002, Mary Gustafson and Phil Davis visited the Bird Division of the US National Museum of Natural History (the "Smithsonian Institution"). The purpose of the visit was to locate USNM specimens referenced in the MD/DCRC database and photograph them for future committee review. There were approximately 60 targets on the list. In the museum's drawers, we also found and photographed some "bonus birds" -- specimens we did not

know existed. We ran out of time to look for all of the targets on this trip, but what follows is the results of our efforts:

**Species (DC and MD targets) - Comments**

- **Wilson's Storm-Petrel** (1 DC/1 MD target) – Did not get a chance to search for these.
- **Leach's Storm-Petrel** (4 DC/1 MD) – Did not get a chance to search for these.
- **Band-rumped Storm-Petrel** (2 DC) – Found and photographed both of the targets.
- **American White Pelican** (1 DC) – Did not get a chance to search for this.
- **Wood Stork** (1 DC) - Found and photographed the adult of a reported adult/immature pair.
- **Swallow-tailed Kite** (2 MD) - Unable to locate.
- **Yellow Rail** (5 DC/5 MD) - Did not get a chance to search for these.
- **Purple Gallinule** (1 DC) - Did not get a chance to search for this.
- **Eskimo Curlew** (1 "Potomac River") - Unable to locate.
- **Long-billed Curlew** (1 DC) - Unable to locate the target, but did find and photograph two MD bonus birds.
- **Red Phalarope** (1 DC) - Unable to locate.
- **Ivory Gull** (1 "Potomac River") - Photographed.
- **Thick-billed Murre** (7 DC/ 1 MD) - Found and photographed only two of these.
- **White-winged Dove** (1 DC) - Found and photographed. [First report for DC].
- **Common Ground-Dove** (1 DC / 1 MD) - Found and photographed one of these.
- **Rufous Hummingbird** (1 MD) - Previously photographed; needs to be measured. Did not get a chance to do this.
- **Western Wood-Pewee** (1 DC / 2 MD) - Did not get a chance to look for these. Will also need to measure.
- **Ash-throated Flycatcher** (1 MD) - Located and photographed.
- **Northern Shrike** (4 DC / 1 MD) - Located one of these. One is a sternum specimen - did not get a chance to search for it. Unable to locate the other three. However, found and photographed four bonus birds.
- **Black-capped Chickadee** (2 DC) - Unable to locate the two targets, but did find three DC bonus birds.
- **Boreal Chickadee** (1 MD) - Located and photographed.
- **Bewick's Wren** (1 MD) - Located and photographed.
- **Bachman's Sparrow** (1 MD) - Unable to locate.
- **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** (1 DC) - Located and photographed.
- **Oregon Junco** (*shufeldti*) (1 MD) - Unable to locate.
- **Pine Grosbeak** (2 MD) - Located and photographed both targets. Also found a new MD bonus bird.
- **House Finch** (1 MD) - Unable to locate [First MD specimen]
- **Hoary Redpoll** (1 MD) - Located and photographed.

In summary, during the time that we had available, we found 16 of the targets and also nine "bonus" birds. Another visit will be scheduled to continue the search.

3. **Measurement of Specimens.** It was mentioned that some of the members that photographs (only) of specimens are difficult to review, specifically, the Leach's Storm-Petrels that are currently circulating. The members asked that in the future, where appropriate, measurements of such species would be appreciated.
4. **Piney Run Swallow-tailed Kite.** Bob Ringler agreed to photograph the specimen of the Maryland Swallow-tailed Kite at the Piney Run Nature Center in Carroll County.

- e. **Third MD/DCRC Decision Report.** Michael O'Brien has agreed to be the senior author of the next committee decision report. The Secretary has not yet begun this project. One open issue deals with the prior practice of listing observer's initials. In a previous year, the committee agreed that using the observer's database keys (e.g. "Davis\_P" vs. "PD") would be acceptable. The committee reaffirmed that this is still a reasonable approach. This effort can be initiated shortly after this year's Annual Meeting. A suggestion was made to include the new Quantitative Species System nomenclature data (see above) in the report.

### 3. Action Item Review:

- a. **Reopened Common Gull Narrative.** At last year's meeting, five members petitioned to reopen the previously accepted Conowingo Common Gull record [MD/1995-033] due to recent, more fully understood variations in Ring-billed Gull plumages. In keeping with the new procedure, a narrative providing rationale for the reopening is required and the requestors are expected to work up any analysis or provide reference material to be circulated with the reopened report. Marshall Iliff recently provided a narrative, however, Mark Hoffman plans to add additional data to the file before the review begins. Sherman Suter agreed to help, if needed.

- b. **Official Lists of the Birds of Maryland and DC.**

- 1. **Multipart Lists.** The Secretary presented a prototype of a "multi-part" list, which organizes the list into various sections. The committee agreed to the concept of a multi-part list with the following sections:
  - i. Accepted Species
  - ii. Accepted Subspecies/Recognizable Forms
  - iii. Species of Questionable Origin
- 2. **Official List Beginning Dates.** Mark Hoffman suggested that the committee could associate a beginning date with each of the official lists, similar to how the British annotate their "A" list. In doing this, the lists would be entitled "Official List of the Birds of Maryland since 18xx". The Secretary will develop this idea.

These changes will be implemented and the final list will be posted in the committee web pages.

- c. **Goals Document Structure.** The current Goals and Procedures document is currently over nine pages in length. At last year's meeting an idea was presented of dividing the document into two or more shorter and more focused documents. Suggestions included separating policies from procedures, or separating topics that the members need to know from items that apply primarily to just the Secretary and/or the Chair. A review of this idea showed that separating the document into parts may not be as straightforward as was envisioned. The Secretary will take another look at this before next year's Annual Meeting.
- d. **Administrative Voting by the Chair and Secretary.** At last year's meeting a proposal was discussed to clarify the committee's procedures to ensure that a "non-voting" Chair and the Secretary had the right to vote in committee administrative matters and member elections, even though they do not vote on MD/DCRC records. The committee adopted the following language for inclusion into the Goals document:

Whereas the Chair and Secretary do not vote on records (unless the Chair has also been elected as a voting member), the Chair and Secretary are permitted to vote on all other committee administrative matters.

- e. **Multiple vs. Single Records Policy.** The committee discussed what constitutes a "record". For example, does the case of a returning banded wintering bird (such as the Greenbelt Harris's

Sparrow) constitute one or more than one record. It was agreed that, in this case, multiple records would be indicated. On the other hand, the Sandgates Kelp Gull that has been more or less continuously present for several years should be treated as a single record. The following language was drafted:

The secretary will organize sighting reports into contiguous blocks of time that are indicative of the period when a bird (or flocks of birds) is within the state (Maryland or DC). In other words, reports of wintering birds returning for multiple seasons (such as when indicated by banding data) will be considered as one report for each season that bird is present.

It was decided that it is not necessary to actually add this language to the committee's Goals document. However, by publishing this item in these minutes, the policy will be captured for posterity.

- f. **Research for Reopened Reports.** The committee considered and adopted the following language to document a policy that was adopted two years ago:

When reports are reopened via the consensus method (a petition by at least five voting members of the committee), it is expected that one or more of these members will serve as the "advocate" for reopening the report and prepare a summary of the arguments that support the reopening.

This language will be added to the committee's Goals document.

- g. **Indirect Reports.** The committee considered and adopted the following language to document a policy that was adopted several years ago:

The committee will not review observers' reports that were submitted indirectly (that is, via another party). In such cases the committee will obtain the permission of the observer and also ask the observer if any additional relevant information exists before using the original information for review purposes. This policy is especially relevant to written reports from bird counts and to messages taken from the Internet.

This language will be added to the committee's Goals document.

- h. **Policy on the Review of Exotic/Introduced Species.** Phil Davis presented language for consideration to be included in the committee's goals document:

- i. **Language.** The highlighted sections represent the new language:

**2. REPORTS TO BE REVIEWED:** [Goals document section 2]

***2.1 Review List:*** The Committee maintains and publishes a list of criteria specifying the sorts of reports it wishes to review. This "***Review List***" is revised periodically. The intent is to review reports only of sightings that are truly unusual in the area of coverage, including:

- a. any species not previously documented, or documented only rarely in the area of coverage.
- b. well-marked subspecies of unusual interest.

***2.2 Reviewable Species:*** *Any species not included in the MD/DCRC Review List that appears in the AOU Check-List or its Appendix may be reviewed. For species reports submitted to the committee that do not appear in the AOU Check-List or its Appendix, the Chair and the Secretary may make a preliminary determination as to whether the species is probably exotic or a potential new species to the AOU area. Submitted reports of exotics may not be reviewed but will be retained in the committee's file. Reports of*

*potential new species will be reviewed. Species that fall into either of these categories will also be presented to the members at each Annual Meeting.*

- ii. **Species to be Included.** This language would enable reviews of the following species from the indicated portions of the AOU Checklist:

**1. Main Check-List:**

- Greater Flamingo
- Ringed Turtle-Dove
- Chukkar
- Budgerigar
- Monk Parakeet
- Bananaquit
- European Goldfinch

**2. Appendix Part 1:**

- Fea's Petrel
- Graylag Goose
- Bar-headed Goose
- Ruddy Shelduck
- Common Shelduck
- Mandarin Duck
- Purple Swamphen
- Kelp Gull
- Silver Gull
- European Greenfinch

- iii. **Species to be Excluded.** The following would be excluded from review since they are not included in the main checklist or Appendix Part 1:

- Black Swan
- Egyptian Goose

- iv. **Hybrids.** Recognized hybrids are listed in Part 2 of the Appendix. Two hybrids occur regularly in Maryland/DC and as such are not reviewable. They are:

- Lawrence's Warbler
- Brewster's Warbler

It was suggested that this approach could provide a starting point from which the committee could make changes in a list of species to be considered exotic and not reviewed. The committee discussed the proposal and decided to continue to work on this and review it at next year's annual meeting. Bob Ringler will compile a list of all exotics reported to the Maryland Birdlife Changing Seasons editor from his database.

- i. **Internet Policies.** Phil Davis presented the following items:

- i. **Policies on Digital/Scanned Photos.** The following draft language was presented and discussed:

**Policy on Digital Image Submissions:** The Committee requests that observers who submit to the committee digital images (such as digital photographs and video "grabs") either include graphics annotations directly on the images or place the images into electronic documents with the annotations as accompanying text. Appropriate annotations are the same as those for a photographic slide or print, including the name of the photographer/videographer, date, location, and species. By submitting images placed within a document, the photographer/videographer can ensure that image is labeled and sized consistent with the photographer/videographer's original

intent. When a document is not submitted, such as when an Internet image is downloaded (with the photographer's consent) the Secretary will paste the image(s) into a document with appropriate annotations from original web pages and/or e-mails.

Discussion topics included that the process of imbedding images inside documents can cause later software and processing problems and that software standards may change. The committee decided to hold this issue until next year's meeting. The Secretary will circulate this draft policy to MD/DCRC frequent photographic contributors for comment.

- ii. **Policy on Internet Documentation.** The following draft language was presented and adopted for inclusion into the Goals document.

**Internet and World Wide Web (www) Information:** The Committee will not review sighting report information published on the Internet/www without the consent of the author. Identification, taxonomy and distribution reference material from Internet sources may be used for Committee deliberations with discretion, recognizing that much of the material on the Internet is not peer-reviewed. [Goals document 7.3.5]

#### 4. Committee Procedures:

- a. **Review List.** Two changes were proposed to the MD/DCRC Review List:

- **Roseate Tern.** Marshall Iliff proposed to move this species from Section 5A to Section 3 since it is reported on a less than annual basis in Maryland with about five reports from 1994-2002. The committee decided to leave this species in Section 5A. Even though it is not often reported, the species is certainly annual in Maryland as it migrates to the Northeast US.
- **Wilson's Plover.** Marshall Iliff proposed to move this species from Section 5A to Section 3. The species is unreported in Maryland since 1992. The committee agreed to make this change since the status of this species in Maryland has obviously changed in recent years.
- **Various Subspecies Changes.** Marshall Iliff proposed a number of changes of subspecies in Section 3 of the Review List. In view of the discussion (above) dealing with the Subspecies/Form Subcommittee, the committee decided to not act on these proposed changes until Marshall's annotated checklist of subspecies/forms is published. For the record, his proposed changes follow:

1) Absorb well-marked subspecies into the main review list section (section 3) and delete section D.

2) Add the following well-marked subspecies (or morphs) to section 3:

- **Least Bittern (dark morph)** [no state records]
- **Great Blue (Great White) Heron** (pending acceptance of this year's record)
- **Ross's Goose (blue morph)**
- **Greater White-fronted Goose (pink-billed forms)** [one well-documented report is pending acceptance]
- **Green-winged (Common) Teal**
- **Broad-winged Hawk (dark morph)** [no state records]
- **Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler**
- **Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow**
- **Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco** [Although the current review list does not contain this subspecies, note that the three records cited in Stewart & Robbins 1958, one of which is an extant specimen we have yet to review, should place this form on the state list]

3) Add the following well-marked subspecies to section 5A

- **Ipswich Sparrow**

4) Add the following well-marked subspecies to section 5C

- **(Eastern) Willet**
- **(Acadian) Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow**

It may be worthwhile to italicize the subspecies in the Review List, or place their names in quotation marks, so as to set them apart from the species listed as well.

## 5. Decision Issues: Fourth Rounds/Other Open Issues:

a. **New Fourth Round Discussions.** None

b. **Previous Fourth Round Issue.** The Little Gull [DC/1997-096] from Package 75 was not circulated after discussion at last year's Annual Meeting because of some logistical issues. The report will be circulated shortly to the members that original reviewed Package 75.

c. **Record Reopenings:**

- **Existing.** Two reopenings are waiting to be reviewed by the committee:
  - **Common Raven** [MD/2001-013]
  - **Greater Flamingo** [MD/2001-088]
- **New Reopenings.** The committee discussed the "not accepted" 1989 Black Guillemot [MD/1990-017] record. A review of the file indicates that when this report was reviewed the members did not seem to have the choice of voting for a "genus only" acceptance. Also, since that time, the committee has accepted a "genus only" *Cepphus*, sp, onto the Maryland list. Finally, more field identification information is available now on the underwing coverts of guillemots. In view of these facts, the Committee decided to reopen this report on the basis of new information.

6. **Circulation Issues.** The committee discussed issues associated with the following:

a. **Species Issues:**

- **Kelp Gull.** The Maryland Kelp Gull [MD/1999-035] was discussed at length including the status of DNA testing, subspeciation and the future course of action. Paul O'Brien will compose a separate "status report" for dissemination to the birding community.
- **Slaty-backed Gull.** The Conowingo Slaty-backed Gull [MD/1999-042] was discussed. Even though the literature on Slaty-backed Gull identification is still wanting, the decision was made to proceed with getting two outside expert opinions on this bird.
- **Bewick's/Whooper Swan.** Since we have photos that were submitted for this bird [MD/2001-009] as a Whooper Swan, the committee agreed to go ahead and review it as such.
- **Barnacle Goose.** The committee decided to go ahead and review the reports that are in the "ready" category.

- **Western Wood-Pewee.** The committee was expecting a new paper to be published in Wood-Pewee identification, but it has not been forthcoming. Jonathan Aldefer will measure the three specimens that are in the USNM.
  - **Dark-eyed Junco.** The committee will proceed with review of the Oregon/Pink-sided Juncos that have been submitted.
  - **White-winged Crossbill.** A number of the White-winged Crossbill reports submitted to the committee deal with flocks of birds, which can cause review problems. In spite of this, the committee decided to proceed with the reviews of this species.
  - **Hoary Redpoll.** We still have to nail down dates of reviewable Hoary Redpolls from Dave Czaplak's article in *Birding*.
  - **Northern Shrike.** When the committee took this species off the review list a year ago, some confusion was created over which reports were still reviewable and which ones were not. This will be clarified. It was decided to not review the older specimens that were recently found in the USNM. The photographs of the specimens will be retained in the committee's files, however. Such reports will be placed in the "Non-Review Species" category.
  - **Mississippi Kite.** There was discussion on that fact that this species does not have an accepted record with a photograph (or specimen) yet it has been taken off the Review List. Marshall Iliff has photographed and submitted the Caroline County birds and the PWRC bird was also photographed this year (although no photograph has yet been provided to the committee). Patty Craig reminded the committee that she also has submitted flight photos of this species. The Chair and Secretary will review this matter. (See discussion below under New Business regarding "elevating the status of documentation").
- b. **Records Splits.** Whether to split the Worcester County Harris's Sparrow [MD/2000-001] report into two was not discussed due to time constraints.
- c. **"Group Only" Mixed Votes.** This topic was not discussed due to lack of time. Recent reports dealing with this included:
- i. Parasitic Jaegers - Several in Package 77
  - ii. American White Pelican - [MD/1997-333]
- d. **Origin issue discussion (Package 78).** Marshall Iliff made extensive origin comments during his review of Package 78. These issues were not discussed since he was not present and time was running short. The members will see his comments when the reports are recirculated. The reports in question were:
- Cinnamon Teal MD/1999-018
  - Tufted Duck MD/2001-011
  - Tufted Duck DC/2001-010
  - Silver Gull MD/2000-064
  - Black-tailed Gull MD/1998-014 / MD/2000-055
7. **Skins Meeting.** The scheduling of a Skins Workshop is still being worked. Tentative information includes:
- a. **Date:** March 9, 2002 (?)
  - b. **Species List.** The following is a first cut list of candidate species (however, this is obviously too long for one meeting and will need to be cut down):
    - Western Tanager

- Bullock's Oriole
- California Gull
- Thayer's Gull
- Jaegers (all three)
- Trumpeter Swan
- Whooper Swan
- Greater White-fronted Geese (pink- and orange-billed)
- Brent Goose (vs. Black Brant / Atlantic Brant)
- Arctic vs. Pacific Loon
- Magnificent Frigatebird
- Bewick's Wren
- LeConte's Sparrow
- Henslow's Sparrow
- Redpolls (Common, Hoary)
- Scoters (Common vs. Black and Velvet vs. White-winged)
- Mergansers (Common vs. Goosander)

8. **Old Business:** None was raised.

9. **New Business:**

- a. **“Elevating the status of photos.** [1999-024/Yellow-legged Gull] – Marshall Iloff raised the idea of “elevating” the status of an accepted record when additional documentation is discovered after the review. Phil Davis proposed to add a feature to the new “Multi-part Official Lists” (see above). The following language was discussed and proposed for future inclusion into the Goals document.

**Acceptance onto the Official Lists.** Species accepted by the MD/DCRC that are new to Maryland and the District of Columbia will be added to the Official List of the Birds of Maryland and the Official List of the Birds of the District of Columbia. For each species added to the official lists, the committee will indicate the type of evidence associated with the species. Evidence types are:

- **Specimen** – An unequivocal specimen, or photograph of a specimen.
- **Image** - An unequivocal photographic slide, print, or digital image; or a video sequence or a still frame taken from a video.
- **Audio** – An unequivocal analog or digital recording of the bird vocalizing.
- **Report** – A written report, based on field notes. It may also include sketches or banding measurements.

On the official lists, the committee will cite the form of evidence for each species. This process may be dynamic. For example, if the committee adds a species onto an official list based on a written report and then later accepts a photographic record, the committee will modify the evidence type for that species. A similar change would also be made if the committee subsequently accepts a specimen record

A prototype report using this system will be drafted for next year's Annual Meeting and the process will be more fully thought through.

- b. **Acceptance: Species vis a vis Age or Sex?** [Wood Stork – MD/2000-019] The committee reaffirmed that it reviews and accepts species and not species and age or sex. That is, if a committee member finds only that the reported age or sex of a bird to be an issue, the member should accept the identification of the species. Any member's comments may be recorded in their ballot discussion. Should such issues be related to ambiguity over the presence of different birds, for example, then the issues would become relevant to the voting process. The vote in question

on this Wood Stork record, however, may have been a mistake. The Chair will research the question.

- c. **Members Submitting Reports.** Rick Blom reminded committee members via a ballot comment to be sure to document any observations that they witness, whether or not other observers plan to submit reports.
- d. **Computer Capabilities Inventory.** This was not discussed and was deferred.
- e. **Video Format(s) for Members Reviews.** This was not discussed and was deferred. (VHS, MPEG, AVI, etc.)
- f. **Long-range Planning.** This item was not discussed and was deferred. MOS committees are currently preparing long-range plans. MOS President Karen Morley indicated that the MD/DC Records Committee is quite active in terms of future planning and does not need to perform the exercise outlined for other committees.
- g. **MOS Outreach.** This was not discussed and was deferred. The idea is to work with the Publicity Committee to try and get the MD/DCRC Review List and Documentation Guidelines form out to places where MD and DC birders visit, including parks, National Wildlife Refuges, nature centers, wild bird stores, professional wildlife biologists offices, etc. The MOS is looking for a new Publicity Chair and this idea will be passed on to the new chair of that committee.
- h. **New Status Categories?** There was a suggestion to split published unreviewable reports (e.g. old sight records) into “unreviewable” and “unpublished” reports. Due to the lack of time, this was not discussed and was deferred.

#### 10. Elections:

- a. **New members.** Members completing their terms are Patty Craig, Mark Hoffman, and Sherman Suter. The committee thanks them for all their efforts over the past three years. The new members elected were: Barry Cooper, Matt Hafner, and Bonnie Ott.
- b. **Chair.** Paul O'Brien was reelected as the Chair.
- c. **Secretary.** Phil Davis was reelected as the Secretary.

#### 11. Next Year's Meetings Dates:

- a. **Annual Meeting:** Saturday, February 22, 2003
- b. **Skins Workshop:** Saturday, March 29, 2003 (tentative)

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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## Appendix

Paul Pisano submitted the following version of a DC Review List to the Committee:

### District of Columbia

### Species Review List

(Draft 02/23/2002)

The MD/DC Records Committee of the Maryland Ornithological Society will review reports of birds observed in the District of Columbia that meet any of the following criteria:

**1. Any species observed in the District of Columbia that is not on the official District of Columbia List.**

**2. Any of the following species:**

Pacific Loon	Ruff
Leach's Storm-Petrel	Parasitic Jaeger
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel	California Gull
American White Pelican	Yellow-legged Gull
Anhinga	Gull-billed Tern
frigatebird, species	Sooty Tern
Wood Stork	Black Skimmer
Eurasian Wigeon	Thick-billed Murre
Tufted Duck	Common Ground-Dove
Ruffed Grouse	Selasphorus, species
Yellow Rail	Common Raven
Black Rail	Bewick's Wren
Clapper Rail	Bohemian Waxwing
Purple Gallinule	Bachman's Sparrow
Piping Plover	Henslow's Sparrow
Black-necked Stilt	Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow
American Avocet	Seaside Sparrow
Long-billed Curlew	Black-headed Grosbeak
Red Knot	White-winged Crossbill

**3. Any subspecies or forms of species not known to occur regularly in the District of Columbia.**