

## MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.



### MD/DC Records Committee 1998 Skins Workshop December 13, 1997

#### Minutes

The MD/DC Records Committee held its annual Skins Workshop at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Department of Birds on December 13, 1997. The 1998 meeting was rescheduled to this date from the original March 22, 1998 date because the Bird Division of the Smithsonian Institution will close in early January for approximately a year for renovation. In attendance were Harvey Mudd (Chair), Phil Davis (Secretary), Mary Gustafson, Rob Hilton, Paul O'Brien, Marshall Iliff, Paul Pisano, Sue Ricciardi, and Mary Ann Todd. Roger Clapp of the Bird Division staff served as our host. The members assembled at 9:30 a.m.

Skins studied were:

**#1 King and Clapper Rails** (immatures). Mary Gustafson moderated this discussion. Clapper Rail reports MD/1996-015 and MD/1996-016 (both immature birds) have previously circulated without resolution. Mary showed some slides of immature Clappers and Kings. Trays of King and Clapper immatures show the obvious difference in color--Kings are generally brown and Clappers are generally gray. The wing measurement of the 1996-015 Clapper was 145mm. Brooke Meanley's book, "Natural History of the King Rail" indicates that wing measurements of Kings begin at 147mm.

**#2 Gyrfalcons, Peregrines, and Sakers.** Rob Hilton reported on his research that indicated that Gyrfalcons have streaked undertail coverts, however this was not reported by any observers on the MD/1995-017 bird. Paul O'Brien pointed out that the undertail coverts are faintly streaked and in comparison to the rest of the underparts, the undertail coverts could appear to be unstreaked at the typical distance from which this bird was observed.

Mary Gustafson discussed how all captive falcons are banded with a type of band that cannot be removed. Since this bird was trapped and held in the hand, any band would have been noticed. This should eliminate any possibility of a hybrid--an earlier concern of some committee members.

**#3 Bewick's (eastern) and Carolina Wrens.** Harvey Mudd opened this discussion that focused on the MD/1996-020 report. Mary Gustafson showed some slides of an Ohio Carolina Wren that looked very much like a Bewick's Wren from a coloration perspective. The Ohio bird, however, did have large feet and thick legs, which help identify it as a Carolina. Carolinas weigh about 20 grams, whereas Bewick's only weigh about 10 grams, however for a single bird in the field, this characteristic is generally not very helpful. The shorter bill of a Bewick's can be a helpful field mark, but must be noted.

**#4 Sabine Gulls (winter plumage).** The committee will soon be reviewing a winter-plumaged bird, MD/1997-459. Mary showed photos of the Cleveland, Ohio Sabine's Gull that stayed for two years, allowing a rare study of the species' complete plumage cycle. The "double" eye ring on this bird was carefully noted.

**#5 South Polar, Great, and Brown Skuas.** The tan/gold collar ring of the South Polar Skua was noted.

**#6 Western and Eastern Wood-Pewees.** There are two MD specimens of Western Wood-Pewees (MD/1997-361 and MD/1997-362). The gape color is one of the few easily visible differences between these species. Willem Maane is working up a measurement analysis of these skins. The committee decided to wait for at least of a year since John Hubbard of New Mexico is reported to be working on a definitive measurement system for separating Western and Eastern Wood-Pewees.

**#7 Ivory Gull** (possible Maryland/DC specimen from 1845!). The committee looked at the specimen. It is NMNH specimen #2033 and was logged in on 03/18/1845. The issue is that the available documentation does not isolate whether this "near the Potomac" specimen was from MD, DC, or VA.

**Action items:**

1. Dupe the Kodachrome slide of the 1996-015 Clapper Rail and bring the original to the Annual Meeting on February 21, 1998. **Action: Mary Gustafson.**
2. Reverify the wing measurement of the 1996-016 Clapper Rail. **Action: Mary Gustafson.**
3. Copy the pages of Brooke Meanley's Natural History of the King Rail that contain King and Clapper Rail measurement. Provide to the Secretary. **Action: Sue Ricciardi.**
4. Make a color copy of the Skua plates from the new book, Skuas and Jaegers of the World for the committee's files. **Action: Rob Hilton.**

The workshop was adjourned at 2:00 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Davis  
MD/DCRC Secretary  
March 30, 1997

cc:

MOS President  
MOS Vice-President

MOS Executive Secretary  
MOS Publications Committee Chair