

MARYLAND/DC RECORDS COMMITTEE

Annual Meeting Minutes 10 April 1993

The MD/DC Records Committee's annual meeting was held 10 April 1993 in Rockville, MD (hosted by member Paul O'Brien). The following were present: committee members Robert Hilton, Willem Maane, Harvey Mudd, Paul O'Brien, Bruce Peterjohn, Bob Ringler, Claudia Wilds (Chair), and secretary Erika Wilson. Chan Robbins and Hank Kaestner sent word that they could not attend.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

- 1. Since the last annual meeting six packages were sent out. Eight packages were tabulated, with final decisions reached on forty records. Forty new records were circulated during the 1992 calendar year. The committee's acceptance rate has increased to 63% on 232 decisions, with the recent rate running even higher, due to better documentation by observers.
- 2. Various printouts of the MDDCRC databases were circulated and discussed. Members can request current printouts anytime from the secretary.
 - 3. The committee's budget for the coming year will be \$240.
- 4. Outside correspondence during the year covered--a) a request for information about the Roseate Spoonbill record; b) questions about policy to the British committee; and c) requests for outside opinions.

CHAIR'S REPORT: Claudia Wilds summarized the current status of the Yellow-legged Gull records. The AOU has accepted Yellow-legged Gull for its next *Check-list*, based on the Canadian specimen plus the DC and Maryland records (the Newfoundland sighting was also included in the documentation). The ABA will take up the record, but not until 1994 because they have a backlog of records.

POLICY ISSUES:

- 1. Goals of the committee. Harvey Mudd's correspondence with several committees was mailed to members before the meeting. Discussion followed and Harvey Mudd agreed to summarize and distribute for comments the goals of this committee. These include a) placing the responsibility for substantiation of state records on a group, rather than one or two individuals; b) maintaining a historical record for future reference and analysis by interested persons; and c) improving reporting and identification skills of birders.
- 2. Outreach to field birders. Discussion about how the committee is perceived by state birders led to a renewed desire to have more written materials in MOS and local newsletters. Claudia Wilds and Robert Hilton agreed to write an article for *Maryland Birdlife* about documentation and how to provide good documentation. It would include examples of an accepted record (?91-06) and a failed record (88-08). This article would precede the projected annual reports (see below).

- 3. Guidelines for evaluating records. Harvey Mudd agreed to set out some guidelines, especially for new members, on evaluating records, including the issues of a) difficulty of identification; b) reviewer's experience with species; c) observer's experience with species; d) questions of bird's origin; and e) quality of submitted documentation.
- 4. Criteria for review. Bruce Peterjohn recommended a simplification of the criteria, which he feels are currently a barrier to getting documentation from observers. Bruce Peterjohn and Bob Ringler will revise the criteria for review and circulate for comments from the committee before publishing in *The Maryland Yellowthroat*.
- 5. Requests for information from observers. Erika Wilson noted that requests for further information, especially plumage descriptions, have not helped to clarify records. Requests for field notes from additional observers, on the other hand, have been helpful. It was agreed that the form for requesting information be withdrawn, although requests for objective information should still be directed to the secretary.
- 5. Single observer records of extreme rarities. Discussion resulted in no change in current policy. The committee will still accept such records.

PROCEDURES:

- 1. The one year trial of excluding one or two member's votes when they had documentation under review resulted in no change in decisions reached when compared to adding these votes to the tally. It was agreed to re-instate the policy of all members voting on all records.
- 2. Re-opening a decided record. Requests to re-open Ross' Goose (85-11) and Yellow-legged Gull (91-01) were discussed. Erika Wilson requested that an explanatory cover sheet be provided for each of these records. It was decided reopened records merited the same circulation procedures as a new record, and that the old votes and comments should accompany these records.
- 3. Splitting records under review. a) King Eider (92-36) covered a long span of time, but since the recorded was unanimously accepted, no action is warranted. b) Red Phalarope (91-05) has notes for two consecutive days at the same general location, so a split is unwarranted; this record will be recirculated. c) Franklin's Gull (88-07) will be split into 88-07, consisting of written material only, and a new record consisting of the slide only. Both will be circulated soon, with 88-07 being a second circulation.

PUBLICATION OF COMMITTEE DECISIONS: The desirability of reporting committee decisions in a fuller manner than the current listing in *The Maryland Yellowthroat* was discussed. Bob Ringler reported he will now have time to prepare a series of reports for *Maryland Birdlife*, starting with the older records (decisions reached 1986-87). Dave Czaplak needs to be contacted again about writing up decisions reached in 1988-89. Paul O'Brien volunteered to summarize decisions reached in 1990-91 for upcoming issues of *Maryland Birdlife*, and Robert Hilton agreed to do the same for 1992 decisions.

FOURTH CIRCULATION RECORDS: The committee discussed Harris's Sparrow (90-20); Red Phalarope (91-05), and Sandhill Crane (91-15). These will be circulated for the fourth and final round within the month. The committee agreed to Erika Wilson's request that Yellow-legged Gull (DC007), on its third circulation, also be included in this package, so that the sitting committee members, who have seen all of the copious

outside opinions and identification articles, can vote without her having to mail all this extra material again.

ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS AND OFFICERS: The committee discussed new ways to approach nomination and election of members. Of particular concern was having nominees feel rejected when more nominees were received than positions available. It was suggested that a longer list of nominees be discussed, without seeking the consent of the nominees to serve. Nominations would still be open to all MOS members, and the secretary would continue to solicit nominations from chapters and the general membership. Members would vote by ranking all the candidates; the Chair would then approach the three top nominees, asking if they will serve. If a candidate declined, the next highest ranked nominee would be approached. By a narrow vote of 4-3, it was agreed to try this method for the 1994 election [Yes-Mudd, O'Brien, Peterjohn, Wilds; No-Hilton, Manne, and Ringler].

Three candidates were nominated for the three openings. Gail MacKiernan, Robert Norton, and Michael O'Brien were elected to three-year terms. Claudia Wilds was re-elected to chair the committee. Erika Wilson wishes to step down as secretary; she will continue until a replacement is found, up through September 1993.

The next MDDCRC meeting will be at the NMNH to study skins on Saturday, 26 February 1994; the next annual meeting will be Saturday, 26 March 1994.

Erika Wilson MDDCRC Secretary