



MD/DC RECORDS COMMITTEE

ANNUAL MEETING: 1994

March 26, 1994

MINUTES

The Maryland/DC Records Committee 1994 Annual Meeting was called to order by the Chair, Claudia Wilds at 9:15 am. Present were Bob Ringler, Willem Maane, Harvey Mudd, Bruce Peterjohn, Gail Mackiernan, Robert Hilton, Michael O'Brien, and Phil Davis (Secretary).

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

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

- 3 packages started since last annual meeting
- 3 packages tabulated
- 27 records circulated
- 21 final decisions
- 12 new records circulated

The committee's workload this past year was relatively light compared to previous years. This was largely due to the secretary transition in mid-year, and a subsequent hold on new packages due to impending committee member elections. The Secretary reported that packages can be circulated at whatever rate the committee wishes.

There are approximately 105 records awaiting review. When the committee's new review criteria are finalized, many of these will not require any action. In such cases, the observers will be notified.

Database: The committee database is now totally integrated - all active and historical, as well as pending records (those submitted, but not selected for review), are in one database in a standard format. This enhances the ability to produce reports and statistics. All submitted reports have now been entered into the database, including all Franklin's and Thayer's Gull reports.

Physical files: The files have been reorganized so that each record/report is in a separate jacket. All photo documentation is incorporated within each record. Automated reports will now be used to generate acknowledgements for reports received, record cover sheets to accompany each record, package contents reports, and package summary reports. We now have the capability to generate a backlog report which lists the chronological order of the pending reports -- this will aid us in servicing the oldest records.

Budget: The committee budget for MOS FY 94 was submitted as \$250.

Outside correspondence: Outside correspondence during the previous year included:

- o An outside opinion request to Bill Clark for an opinion on the dark/rufous morph Swainson's Hawk record. Bill's opinion is now part of that record.
- o Several "listing" software checklist authors requested the official Maryland/DC state checklist.
- o Requests to review both the committee's MD (J. Stasz) and DC (Dave Czaplak) draft checklists.
- o Resulting communications with the new "Yellow Book" committee.

Report screening: The secretary will continue to screen reports submitted for legibility. It was agreed that requests for information from observers should be limited to clarifications and whether original field notes exist - the committee will not request additional descriptions after the record is submitted.

Workload guidelines: The committee agreed to circulate three packages at once as an experiment to help work off some of the backlog. The committee will later determine whether to continue at that rate. Packages will consist of about 10-12 records.

Package contents: Records selected for new packages will consist of about half new records and half recirculations. No more than two new state record candidates will be included in any one package. The remaining records will be selected in the chronological order of receipt, however, all pending records for a given species will be circulated together. The Secretary and the Chair will consult on the contents of new packages. A sample ballot will be included in each packet -- members should make their own copies, if not using a computer to prepare their ballots. ID/distribution information received from non-requested sources (such as BIRDCHAT/Internet) will not be included on the first circulation. Such sources may be circulated on subsequent rounds, as coordinated with the Chair.

Package 44 results: The Secretary distributed the summary of Package 44 -- committee concurrence was given to summarize these results in the May issue of the Maryland Yellowthroat without the normal two-week waiting period since inputs for this issue are due on April 1.

Documentation campaign: Documentation is needed for the following known recent rarities sightings -

- Rock Wren - M. Hoffman
- Bohemian Waxwing - photos - D. Czaplak, G. Jett
- Germantown Hoary Redpoll - photos - D. Czaplak
- Hart-Miller Island Hoary Redpoll additional details (D. Holmes) - photos - M. Hoffman
- Gryfalcon - photos - M. Hoffman
- Le Compte's Sparrow - photos - D. Czaplak
- Berlin Painted Bunting details/photos - check with Mary Humphrey (Wicomico Co) - H. Mudd and M. O'Brien can write from memory if needed.
- Elkton Rufous Hummingbird - photos - Gary Griffin
- Fulvous Whistling-Duck -- Gail McKiernan will follow up
- Black-bellied Whistling Duck - Patty Craig (St M Co)
- Pine Grosbeak - check with Kevin Dodge

- White-winged Crossbills - check with Dave Brinker
- Barrow's Goldeneye - check with Hal Werienga
- Trumpeter Swan (Mont/Ho Co) - photos - check with Dave Czaplak, Mark Hoffman, Robert Hilton
- Bridled Tern (1992 OC Pelagic) - ???

Future projects: Future projects include building an index of ID articles and increased automation of letters and reports.

Loss prevention plan: The Secretary will make provisions for loss prevention by duplicating record data and storing it at second location (for example the National Museum of Natural History, or someone else's house).

Meeting minutes: Highlights of this Annual Meeting will also be reported in the May issue of the Maryland Yellowthroat.

CHAIR's REPORT:

Franklin's Gull issue. It was decided that the Franklin's Gull record 88-07 will be split into three separate records, based on the age of the birds described. This, with the Franklin's Gull photo record 93-01, will be considered to be a fourth round record and circulated to the incumbent committee (retiring members will be put at the top of the list.)

Thayer's Gull issue. The AOU checklist committee met during the last week in March and decided not to lump Thayer's Gull at this time - although they may do it next year. The committee decided to hold off on reviewing Thayer's Gull reports for one more year to see what action the AOU takes.

Photo-only documentation policy. There was no objection to this policy as previously circulated.

Birder "outreach" program: The article in Maryland Birdlife coauthored by Claudia Wilds may be reprinted in BIRDING magazine. A supply of MD/DCRC Documentation Guideline forms will be printed and made available at the MOS convention.

POLICY ISSUES:

OLD BUSINESS:

Committee goals: The draft "Goals of the Committee" document prepared by Harvey Mudd was discussed. Some minor changes were adopted. Harvey will update the draft with these changes and integrate the existing committee procedures into one document. The final version will be distributed to the new committee members. After this document is ready, the Secretary will draft a proposed change to the MOS Bylaws to reflect our actual operation and submit it to the MOS Bylaws committee.

Revised review criteria: The revised committee review criteria, prepared by Bob Ringler and Bruce Peterjohn, was discussed. The committee felt that the more detailed approach used in the previous review criteria should be continued. Revisions to these criteria were proposed and

discussed. Bob, Bruce and Michael O'Brien will prepare another draft version, in keeping with the committee's direction. When this document is finalized it will be submitted to the Maryland Yellowthroat for publication.

Consultative opinions: The committee's policy on outside consultative opinion requests is that any member may request such an opinion. The requesting member should provide suggestions of experts who could provide such opinions.

NEW BUSINESS:

Database purge: When the review criteria is finalized, the database will be cleaned of non-reviewable records. These records will be retained for the archives and letters will be sent to the observers.

Publication of observer names: Since observers names will be published in the committee's annual report in Maryland Birdlife, it was agreed that observer names will not be published in the Maryland Yellowthroat listings.

Boundary issues: When a report is submitted that can result in a record for both MD and DC (i.e., a bird was seen on the Potomac River, in both DC and MD jurisdictions), two records will be entered into the database, one for MD and one for DC. The second will be treated as an administrative record, echoing the decision of the first record.

Where "boundary reports" occur within Maryland (i.e., a bird was present in two counties during a single sighting), only one record will be tracked, however, an annotation will be made in the database to indicate the bird was also seen in the second county.

County checklists: The committee reaffirmed that it will not deal with county records issues (such as first county records, etc.) that do not otherwise meet its review criteria guidelines.

Records "terminology": The terminology used in the process of the committee deliberations is sometimes confusing: Field observers bird SIGHTINGS sometimes result in written REPORTS that are submitted to the MD/DC Records Committee (as well as other parties, such as the editors of Maryland Birdlife, the Voice of the Naturalist, and the regional editors of American Birds). Reports provided to the records committee are then selected for deliberations. Accepted reports become RECORDS.

Genus only status: The database will be modified such that Genus only records are listed after species for that genus (i.e., "frigateae, sp" will follow Magnificent Frigatebird in reports).

PROCEDURES:

Voting: The concept of voting on round 2 using the British procedures was discussed. This involves forwarding the committee members votes and comments along with circulating record. It was decided to not adopt this system.

Confidence scale experiment: The idea of trying an experiment similar to a system used by the

Iowa Records Committee was discussed. The committee authorized Harvey Mudd to develop a set of measurement techniques to present to the committee at the next annual meeting. The intention is that any resulting metrics be used as an experiment, in parallel with the committee's existing procedures. Bruce Peterjohn and Michael O'Brien will work with Harvey on this.

PUBLICATION OF COMMITTEE DECISIONS:

Maryland Yellowthroat reports: MD and DC records are now reported separately in the reports in the Maryland Yellowthroat. Record numbers are also included for reference. A correction will be published for the Howard County Sharp-tailed Sparrow record, which was inadvertently listed as a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.

Maryland Birdlife reports: The Committee's actions will be summarized each year in Annual Reports for Maryland Birdlife. Previous year's reports are being prepared as follows:

--	Bob Ringler:	82-89
--	Paul O'Brien:	90
--	Willem Maane	91
--	Robert Hilton:	92
--	(open)	93

Drafts of Bob and Paul's annual reports were circulated for comment and review. A common style will be adopted.

FOURTH CIRCULATION RECORDS: None. No records reached a fourth circulation this year.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS:

Reopening of records: At last year's meeting, the reopening of two records was discussed. A written request was received to reopen one of these, the Ross' Goose. Additional information was received with the request. The committee will treat this as a first record, circulating all existing previous votes and comments with the record.

Coordination with the new "Yellow Book": Follow-up on unsubmitted State records is needed:

- South Polar Skua - Bob Ringler has a Rowlett photo.
- Thayer's Gull - Bob Ringler has photos from Howard County landfill.
- Arctic Tern - Michael O'Brien has photo from Brian Pattison from a 1992 pelagic.
- Tufted Duck - Ask Hal Weirenga about this 1976 (?) banding record. Bruce will follow up from the Bird Banding Lab.
- Black-capped Petrel - no descriptions were ever documented.

Others species mentioned were never documented or are known to have been in error: Kirtland's Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Green-tailed Towhee, Black-billed Magpie.

Exotics: The committee will not keep track of exotic species.

Breeding status: The committee will track the status of breeding birds. When the Atlas is

published, it will define the baseline from which the committee will work. The committee will review first nesting records. A field will be added to the database to indicate breeding birds.

Subspecies: The committee reaffirmed its position to only review selected, well-marked subspecies whose occurrence falls within the committee's review criteria. It will continue to follow the AOU's lead in term of taxonomy. It will also not review hybrids (such as Brewster's and Lawrence's Warblers).

Reference material: The Secretary will attempt to get a copy the Oregon ID article index for the committee's files.

ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS AND OFFICERS:

Membership: The committee is pleased to have Robert Norton continue on the committee and finish his term, despite his moving to Florida. For future situations, however, the committee will establish a procedure that calls for committee members to be replaced if they move from the local area. Nominations were held in conformance with the revised procedures adopted at last year's annual meeting. The new Chair will contact the nominated candidates to determine if they will serve. [New committee members are Bob Dixon, Mark Hoffman, and David Holmes.]

New Chair: Bruce Peterjohn was elected as the new Chair.

Appreciation: The committee extended a round of thanks to retiring committee members, Bob Ringler, Willem Maane, and special thanks to Claudia Wilds who had served as the original Chair for the committee's first eight years of existence.

NEXT MEETING DATES:

Skins Workshop: The committee's "Skins Workshop" at the National Museum of natural History will be scheduled after the AOU Checklist Committee's plans are known. Typically this is held in late February.

Annual Meeting: Next year's annual meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 25, 1995.

ADJOURNMENT. The meeting was adjourned at 5:15pm.

Phil Davis
Secretary