



**MD/DC Records Committee
1998 Annual Meeting
February 21, 1998**

Meeting Minutes and Annual Business Report

The 1998 Annual Meeting of the Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee (MD/DCRC) was called to order at 9:20 a.m. Present were Harvey Mudd (Chair), Phil Davis (Secretary), Mary Gustafson, Rob Hilton, Paul O'Brien, Paul Pisano, Sue Ricciardi, and Mary Ann Todd. Absent were Marshall Iliff and Willem Maane. Also in attendance was Norm Saunders, Vice President of the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS).

By way of introduction, the MOS Charter for the MD/DC Records Committee was reviewed. The "duty" portion of the charter reads:

"The main duty of the Records Committee will be to evaluate reports of sightings of birds in Maryland and the District of Columbia. The Committee will establish procedures for the submission of reports, publish a list of species being considered, and types of reports desired or not desired; publish the results of its work periodically in the Maryland Yellowthroat; review records published in Maryland Birdlife which have not been reviewed in Stewart and Robbins, 1958, Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia; and maintain an official list of Maryland birds."

1. Secretary's Report. The Secretary presented the following information:

New Classification System. One field in the committee database is the "decision" field. This field is used to track the status of each report from the time it enters the committee's purview and as it moves through the various deliberative stages, until a final decision is rendered. The existing system of classifying reports and records was slightly modified to clarify some ambiguities in the names of existing status categories and to provide additional categories that will help the committee better track and maintain the status of all items in the database. A diagram that shows how reports change status, using the current terminology, is shown in **Figure 1**.

Status Definitions: The resulting status definitions are as follows:

Unofficial Report: A report provided to the committee indirectly, i.e., it was not submitted by the original observer. Reports in this category are typically forwarded to the committee by various third party sources, such as the Audubon Field Notes regional editor, the Maryland Birdlife "Changing Seasons" editor, the Voice of the Naturalist (the local rare bird alert tape), or via e-mail discussion groups. The committee's new policy is to not review these second-hand reports unless the consent of the original observer is granted to the committee or unless we are unable to establish contact with that person. (The committee has found that the original observer may also have additional data to add the file).

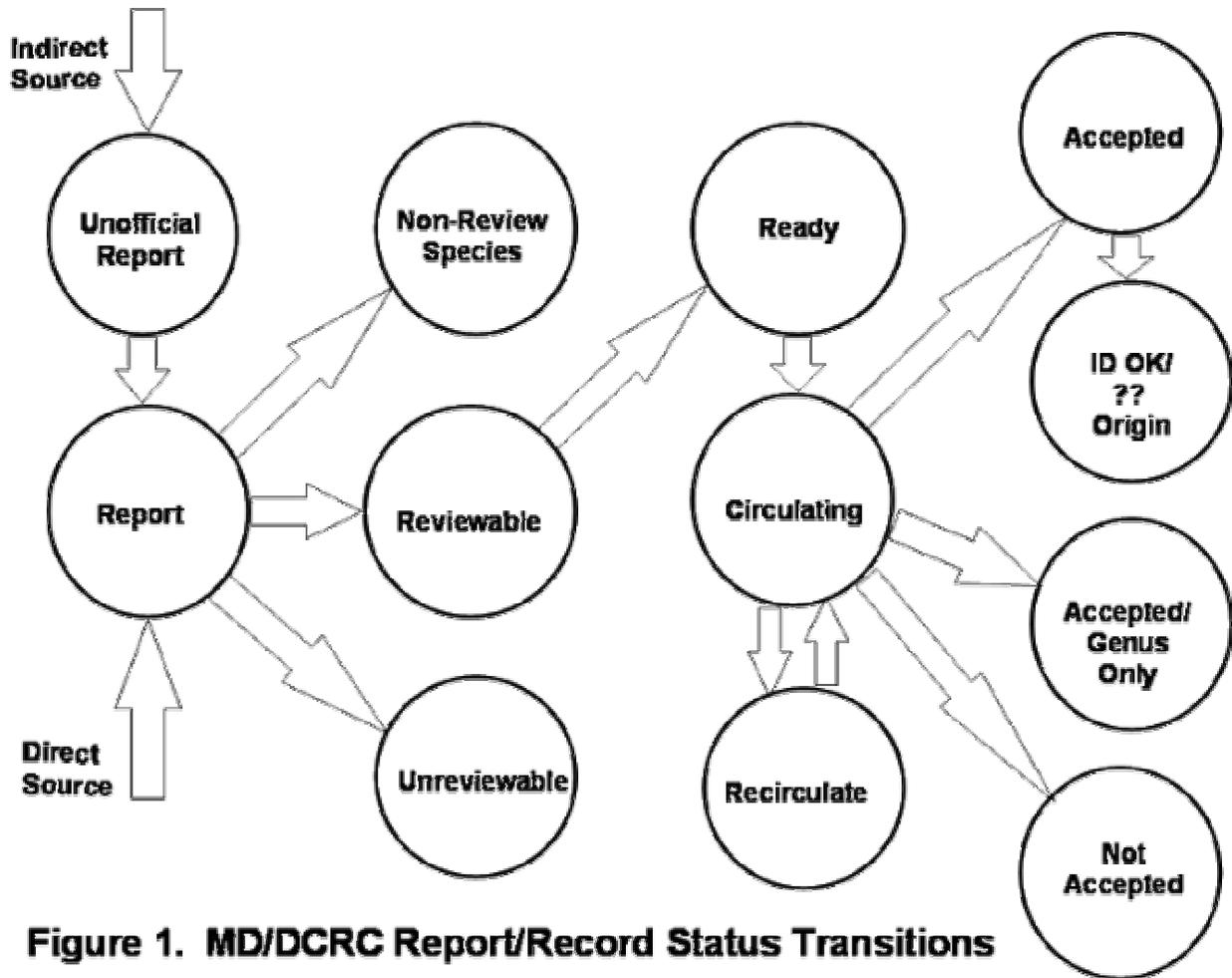


Figure 1. MD/DCRC Report/Record Status Transitions

Report: A report submitted directly to the committee.

Non-Review Species: A report of a species/location that **does not** fall within the committee's review criteria, in accordance with the current MD/DCRC Review List.

Reviewable: A report of a species/location that **does** fall within the committee's review criteria, in accordance with the current MD/DCRC Review List. Reports may remain in this category as "open" for a period of time to wait for additional reports to be received from other observers.

Unreviewable: A report with insufficient descriptive identification details to permit a review by the committee. This case is typical for many older published sight records.

Ready: A "Reviewable" report that is ready to begin circulating. The committee Chair and/or Secretary believe that all relevant reports, or a sufficient number of reports, have been submitted.

Circulating: The report is actively circulating.

Recirculate: The report requires recirculation. No decision was reached during the latest circulation.

Accepted: The committee accepted the species reported.

ID OK/?? Origin: The committee accepted the species reported, however, a majority of the committee questioned whether the bird was a "natural" vagrant, or a "wild" bird.

Accepted/Genus Only: The committee accepted the identification of only the genus reported--where all other species of this genus are reviewable at the observed location.

Not Accepted: The report was not accepted.

Withdrawn: Used when previously submitted report(s) were withdrawn by the original observer(s).

S&R: This category describes records from the committee's baseline document: Stewart & Robbins, *The Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia*, 1958.

Database Status Report. Figure 2, below, summarizes the current contents of the MD/DCRC database, consistent with the status categories described above

Figure 2. MD/DCRC Database Summary as of 02/21/1998

| State | Status | Number | Totals |
|-----------|--------------------|--------|--------|
| MD | Accepted | 258 | |
| | Circulating | 45 | |
| | Genus Only | 2 | |
| | Hold | 11 | |
| | ID OK/?? Origin | 5 | |
| | Non-Review Species | 109 | |
| | Not Accepted | 119 | |
| | Ready | 102 | |
| | Recirculate | 22 | |
| | Reviewable | 35 | |
| | S&R | 9 | |
| | Unreviewable | 221 | |
| | Withdrawn | 4 | |
| MD Totals | | | 942 |
| DC | Accepted | 14 | |
| | Circulating | 1 | |
| | Non-Review Species | 3 | |
| | Ready | 6 | |
| | Recirculate | 1 | |
| | Reviewable | 1 | |
| | Unreviewable | 8 | |
| DC Totals | | | 34 |
| Total | | | 976 |

Package Review Status. Figure 3, below, summarizes the statistics of the package review process, including the packages reviewed over the past year.

Figure 3. MD/DCRC Package Summary: 1994 - 02/21/1998

| Annual Mtg | Pkg | Start | End | Duration (wks) | # Items | # New | # Decisions | Decision % |
|------------|-----|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| 94 | 42 | 04/20/1993 | 06/20/1993 | 8.7 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 100% |
| | 43 | 06/10/1993 | 10/01/1993 | 16.1 | 13 | 7 | 9 | 69% |
| | 44 | 11/03/1993 | 03/14/1994 | 18.7 | 10 | 5 | 8 | 80% |
| | | | | 14.5 | 27 | 12 | 21 | 78% |
| 95 | 45 | 04/18/1994 | 11/12/1994 | 29.7 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 100% |
| | 46 | 04/18/1994 | 11/21/1994 | 31.0 | 12 | 7 | 8 | 67% |
| | 47 | 04/18/1994 | 09/27/1994 | 23.1 | 13 | 8 | 8 | 62% |
| | 48 | 11/14/1994 | 06/06/1995 | 29.1 | 16 | 12 | 10 | 63% |
| | 49 | 11/14/1994 | 07/22/1995 | 35.7 | 17 | 13 | 10 | 59% |
| | 50 | 03/01/1995 | 07/01/1995 | 17.4 | 15 | 15 | 4 | 27% |
| | | | 27.7 | 77 | 55 | 44 | 57% | |
| 96 | 51 | 07/24/1995 | 12/16/1995 | 20.7 | 15 | 10 | 9 | 60% |
| | 52 | 09/25/1995 | 03/09/1996 | 23.7 | 15 | 10 | 7 | 47% |
| | 53 | 11/13/1995 | 03/11/1996 | 17.0 | 11 | 6 | 10 | 91% |
| | 54 | 02/14/1996 | 09/20/1996 | 31.3 | 14 | 13 | 11 | 79% |
| | | | 23.2 | 55 | 39 | 37 | 67% | |
| 97 | 55 | 04/05/1996 | 10/23/1996 | 28.7 | 11 | 8 | 5 | 45% |
| | 56 | 08/26/1996 | 03/11/1997 | 28.1 | 14 | 8 | 11 | 79% |
| | 57 | 10/15/1996 | 02/22/1997 | 18.6 | 12 | 10 | 9 | 75% |
| | 58 | 12/01/1996 | 03/05/1997 | 13.4 | 14 | 13 | 10 | 71% |
| | | | 22.2 | 51 | 39 | 35 | 69% | |
| 98 | 59 | 04/11/1997 | 10/07/1997 | 25.6 | 12 | 6 | 9 | 75% |
| | 60 | 06/13/1997 | 10/31/1997 | 20.0 | 16 | 10 | 11 | 69% |
| | 61 | 08/06/1997 | 01/08/1998 | 22.1 | 16 | 13 | 10 | 63% |
| | 62 | 10/27/1997 | | | 12 | 9 | | |
| | 63 | 11/30/1997 | | | 18 | 17 | | |
| | 64 | 01/18/1998 | | | 15 | 11 | | |
| | | | | 22.6 | 89 | 66 | 30 | 68% |

Database Projects Completed. Database projects completed over the past year include:

Year 2000 Conversion. The database was converted to use four-digit years for all dates in the database. Also, reports were modified to display full four-digit year dates.

New Numbering System. The committee report/record numbering system was modified to accommodate the "Year 2000 problem" (i.e., the use of only two-digit years).

Previous system (examples):

MD/96-04, where:

96 = the year the record started circulation (1996)

04 = a sequential number of records started into circulation that year

DC012, which represents the 12th DC record accepted by the MD/DCRC

New system (examples):

MD/1997-031, which represents the 31st report submitted to the MD/DCRC in 1997, in this case, a MD report.

DC/1998-004, which represents the 4th report submitted to the MD/DCRC in 1998, in this case, a DC report. (Note, under the earlier system, DC records did not have years associated with the ID field. Therefore, under the new system, old DC records will be shown as DC/0000-012, which corresponds to record DC012 under the old system).

Decision Summary Text. The database now contains a short text field to contain a summary of the committee's final decision rationale. This is the same information provide as feedback to the observer(s).

Database Reports. More reports are now generated directly from the database. These reports include the acknowledgment notices and decision notices. Many other reports can be run on an ad hoc basis. For example, the Secretary recently generated a report for the Maryland Partners in Flight committee based on location fields. This report was to help identify "Important Bird Areas" (IBAs) in Maryland.

ID Article Index. A database was built to index and list all identification (ID) articles that exist in the committee's files. These articles were collected over the years to support various specific identification issues. There are currently 156 articles indexed in the database.

Observer Database. A database was built to index and list all the observers that have contributed reports over the years. This database is used to generate some of the committee reports and will be used even more in the future. There are currently 456 entries in the observer database (many are historical, only).

Maryland "Two County" Reports: Some Maryland reports include two counties, such as Harford County and Cecil County sightings at Conowingo Dam. A field has been added to the database to capture a second county of record.

Observer Data for Old Records. Observer initials taken from the first Committee Decision Report (that appeared in Maryland Birdlife) were added each accepted record in the database.

Database Plans. Plans for future database projects include:

Dissect Early Package Decisions. Very early committee ballots were just written out in sequence on a piece of paper by the members. At some time in the future, these will be dissected and collated so that all ballots for a given record/report will be contained in the physical file jacket for that record/report.

Add Decision Summary Text for Old Records. In the past, decision letters were individually prepared and mailed to observers. An attempt will be made to cut these decision summaries from the word processing files and to paste them into the

associated database field. This will help complete the historical background of old reports/records.

AOU 41st Supplement Changes. The 41st supplement to the AOU *Check-list of North American Birds* contained many name and taxonomy changes. A major change to the database is necessary to comply with the 41st supplement.

AOU 7th Edition Changes. The new 7th Edition is due out momentarily. It is expected that only the changes provided in the 41st supplement will be contained in the new 7th Edition. This will need to be verified when the 7th Edition is released.

Loss Prevention Plan/Permanent Storage Status Update. This is an open project. The committee's baseline plan is to eventually store original records, not actively in use, at Cylburn Mansion, preferably in fire-proof files. Although this is an very important project, it is not expected that the committee can get this done before the flurry of activity associated with the canvass of old records is completed. Mary Gustafson suggested that another alternative might be to use the scanners and facilities of Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (PWRC) with intern and MOS volunteer help to put all the data into electronic format so that it can be stored on CD-ROM. The committee thought this was a good idea and it will be explored more thoroughly by Harvey Mudd, Mary Gustafson, and Phil Davis.

MOS By-Laws Status: The Secretary owes the MOS By-Laws Chairman suggested wording to correct the Manual of Operations to indicate that the Committee Chair can be a voting member, as well as a non-voting member.

Review/Status of Unsubmitted Reports. A rough listing of unsubmitted reports, compiled from various sources, was distributed. Members were asked to help gather documentation for these observations.

2. Status of Previous Action Items. The follow actions were taken at the 1997 Annual Meeting:

"Birds of the Chesapeake Bight". Closed: Paul O'Brien provided a copy for the committee's files of this Rich Rowlett document on Maryland pelagic birding.

DC Records Committee Files Review. Open: A review of the files provided by the defunct DC Records Committee will be undertaken to see if any outstanding reports should be reviewed and if there is other data to add the MD/DCRC database. Also, an exercise to baseline the *Official List of the Birds of the District of Columbia* will be undertaken in the future.

Coordination with PWRC Waterfowl Harvest Section. Closed. The report that yielded Maryland's first Barrow's Goldeneye (MD/1995-029) came from a wing return to the Waterfowl Harvest Project at Patuxent WRC. Mary Gustafson has coordinated with Woody Martin about the role of the MD/DCRC and how state records committees deal with specimens and documentation. A good liaison has been established and Mary will continue to work with Woody to ensure that any relevant data are provided to the MD/DCRC or other state records committees, as appropriate. Mary will check with

Woody on the status of this year's harvest to see if anything of interest was returned. Woody has also been advised of which species the National Museum of Natural History has an interest. Mary will continue to coordinate with the Waterfowl Harvest Section on the Committee's behalf.

3. Committee Procedures. The topics below deal with how the committee conducts business:

“Genus Only” Votes. This topic was discussed to clarify the procedure adopted at last year's meeting. A vote of “Accept/Genus Only” is an allowable vote when all of the species of that genus are review species for the location where the observation occurred. Members have reviewed their votes for the murrelets of Package 61 in view of this clarification and have provided changes to the Secretary. This vote type will be clarified in the “Goals and Procedures” Document and the ballot format will be clarified. The Secretary will plan to indicate in future packages where a “genus only” vote would be permitted.

Confidence Experiment. Paul O'Brien presented his analysis of the committee's Confidence Experiment that was begun in 1996. The committee agreed to continue the experiment for another year. A subcommittee, chaired by Paul O'Brien, was tasked to prepare a draft plan and report back of how the committee “might” use a confidence-based system as an alternative to “accepted”, or “not accepted” records. If this approach appears to have merit, the committee would solicit opinions of the Maryland birding community before ever moving toward such a system.

Preparation of Next MD/DCRC Decisions Report for *Maryland Birdlife*. Mark Hoffman is preparing the committee's Second Decision Report for *Maryland Birdlife*. It was decided that the committee would coordinate with Mark and with the MOS Publications Chair to see what timing considerations exist for publication of the next report. There is a question as to whether the next report should stop with package 58 (i.e., the data already provided to Mark) or to try to catch up to package 62, the latest, recently completed package. It was discussed whether it is better to try to publish a report each year, or every two years, the difference being that a bi-annual report may have more substance and variety of records. It was also agreed that the next report should be distributed for review to committee members that served during the period covered by the report. A quick time frame (e.g., not more than two weeks) should be provided for review and comment. Distribution by e-mail was acceptable by the committee.

Official List of the Birds of Maryland . Several items dealt with this topic.

Proposed Official List. An up-to-date version of the proposed *Official List of the Birds of Maryland* was presented to and reviewed by the committee. Several species were added by the committee “by proclamation” to the Maryland list to resolve past inconsistencies. The species accepted “by proclamation” include Mute Swan, which was only a hypothetical in Stewart & Robbins; and Willow and Alder Flycatcher, which were split after Stewart & Robbins was published. With these changes, the *Official List of the Birds of Maryland* was adopted. It consists of 406 species. (Note: the current list is consistent with the 40th Supplement to the AOU Checklist--it has not yet been adapted to the major taxonomy changes of the 41st Supplement).

Mary Gustafson volunteered to do a final proof of the genus species names before final publication.

It was decided that species accepted as “ID OK/?? Origin” (such as exotics and escapees) will appear as an appendix to the main list.

Sue Ricciardi volunteered to try to collect photographs for species that have been added to the Maryland list by proclamation, where no such photographs currently exist in the committee’s files.

Future Official List Policy. In the future, any new Maryland species accepted by the committee will automatically be added to the *Official List of Maryland Birds* at that time.

Trumpeter Swan Status. Harvey Mudd presented the results of his research that provides descriptive evidence of Trumpeter Swans in Maryland in historical times. A 1835 account describes the presence of Trumpeter Swans on the Potomac River “at the mouth of the Occoquan River ... and for some 30-40 miles below”. The committee voted “by proclamation” to add Trumpeter Swan to the *Official List of the Birds of Maryland* as an extirpated species. This brings the current Maryland species total to 407.

Quantitative Status System. A proposal was presented by Phil Davis and Marshall Iliff to develop a “quantitative” system for describing the number of reported, accepted, and not accepted records in the state. This idea is based on a system used in California. Such a system can also be used to help define when to stop reviewing species. It was agreed that Marshall and Phil would work up the system and the data and present it at the next annual meeting.

Review List. The Review List will be changed to reference the new *Official List of Maryland Birds* rather than the *Field List of the Birds of Maryland* (i.e., the “Yellow Book”). Likewise, species that do not appear on the new official list will be removed from Category 3. (Note: Several potential new state birds are currently in circulation and may be added to the list before it is published in final format). Related topics discussed include:

Review Category Changes. Several changes were made to the definition of Review List categories:

Review Category 5B. This category will be changed to read: “These species if seen along the Potomac River north of Charles County, or inland **away from the major tidal Chesapeake Bay tributaries**”.

Review Category 5C: This category will be changed to read: “These species if seen in the Coastal Plain, **except** along the Susquehanna River”.

Species Review Status Changes. Various species changes were discussed, including several by Marshall Iliff, who was unable to attend the meeting:

Mississippi Kite: Even though the committee has quite a many reports ready to review, there are only a few accepted records. This species will be left on the review list.

Franklin's Gull: It was decided to leave this species as is.

Brown-headed Nuthatch: The Category 5E description of this species' review range will be changed to read: "... except in Saint Mary's County **and the Solomon's area of Calvert County.**" This is an historical breeding area for the species, even though observers have not looked for the species in recent years.

Carolina Chickadee: It was considered to add this species if observed west of Washington County. However, given the difficulty of definitively separating Black-capped and Carolina Chickadees in the field, even via vocalization, especially considering the problem of hybridization, it was decided to not include the species on the review list.

Western Maryland Species. Various western Maryland species were considered for removal from the list (Eared Grebe, Sandhill Crane, Western Kingbird, Clay-colored Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Brewer's Blackbird, and Yellow-headed Blackbird). It was decided to leave these on the Review List for now. As a point of information, it was noted that all of these species are reviewable in Pennsylvania.

Consistency with the New Official Maryland List. Since the new *Official List of the Birds of Maryland* also contains the review code for each species, the Secretary will ensure that the Review List and Official List are consistent before final publication.

Subspecies and Distinct Forms. It was decided to form a subcommittee to review and report back on a list of field-identifiable subspecies and distinct forms to include on the Review List. Marshall Iliff will chair this subcommittee. Rob Hilton and Mary Gustafson are willing to serve on this subcommittee.

Pelagic Boundaries. Phil Davis reported on his attempts to obtain the exact Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates of the MD/DE and MD/VA boundaries at the Atlantic Ocean for the purposes of projecting the Maryland pelagic zone eastward for 200 miles. As navigation becomes more accurate, the question of exact boundaries becomes more important for observations that may occur close the Maryland pelagic boundaries with the other states. It seems that Maryland and Delaware are currently in a Federal boundary dispute. This action remains open.

Pelagic Zone. A proposal by Marshall Iliff was discussed to define a pelagic zone that begins three miles offshore. The committee decided that it will retain the practice of considering the pelagic area to be associated with the contiguous county (in this case, Worcester).

Annual Report "Observer Initials" Practice. Phil Davis discussed the practice of using observer initials in sighting accounts, with a legend at the end of the account that lists the observers. This process is a cumbersome one. The committee saw no problem with imbedding the observers' name(s), such as first initial and full last name, within each specific record.

Joint MD/DC Records Procedure. Phil Davis discussed the case where a bird is seen on a MD/DC boundary. In such cases, two records will be opened to deal with the two jurisdictions. This is because the committee treats DC separate from MD, rather than as a “24th county”.

MOS-MD/DCRC Web Site. Phil Davis reported that he has been working closely with Fran Saunders, MOS webmaster, to roll-out more MD/DCRC information the committee’s web pages. (The MOS URL is: <http://www2.ari.net/saunderf/mos/mos.html>). Topics discussed were:

Publication Guidelines. It was agreed that any reports (such as decision reports) would not be placed on the web site until about six months after the report appear in *Maryland Birdlife*.

Committee Members List. Current committee members’ names will be listed on the web site.

Annual Decision Report. Mary Gustafson suggested that a virtual *Maryland Birdlife* format be used to simulate the layout and turning of the pages of that journal.

Minutes of Annual Meetings/Annual Business Reports. These reports will be put on the web site.

Skins Workshop Minutes. These minutes will also be added to the web site.

Database Access. Eventually, it is envisioned that the committee database will be accessible on-line to the general public.

Policy on Indirect Reports. Harvey Mudd elaborated on the proposed policy to not review reports that were provided to the committee via third parties. One record, (e.g., MD/1997-395, Anhinga) was reviewed without consulting with the observer and all relevant data was not available to the committee. It was decided to abort the review of this report and change its status to “Unreviewable” at this time.

4. **Fourth Round Circulations:** There are no fourth round circulations to discuss this year.

5. **Old Business.** Topics of new business included:

Review of Previous Decisions. A majority of the committee members requested to reopen two previous “not accepted” records:

| | |
|----------|-------------------|
| 1987-030 | Mississippi Kite |
| 1985-016 | Black-tailed Gull |

Requests to Combine Records. During the past year, several members commented that they would like to combine several reports--that is, if certain reports were combined, the members would accept the aggregated report. These included:

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Common Gull (Conowingo) | (1995-031, 1995-032, 1995-033) |
| Ross' Goose (Blackwater) | (1992-035, 1992-039) |
| Swallow-tailed Kite (PG County) | (1996-007, 1996-008) |

The committee decided to continue to take a conservative approach to such reports and treat them separately, unless there is compelling evidence to combine them, prior to circulation.

Outreach to MD/DC Birders. The committee has continued to try to be visible and active in the birding community by publications in the Maryland Yellowthroat, being present at MOS Board of Directors Meetings, and by including MD/DCRC Review Lists and Documentation Guides in its mailings to observers. Other future ideas include developing a database, in conjunction with the MOS Publicity Committee, to provide Review Lists and Documentation Guidelines to places where birders are present. Such places would include, parks and nature centers, National Wildlife Refuges, wild bird stores, DoD facility wildlife biologists, etc. It was also decided to form a subcommittee to develop a presentation that could be given to local chapter meetings on rare birds and how the committee operates. Mary Ann Todd will chair this subcommittee. Other members who volunteered to assist included Paul O'Brien, Paul Pisano, Sue Ricciardi, and Phil Davis.

Goals and Procedures Document. It was decided to add the following to the document:

Criteria for Acceptance, Considerations, Section 4.4.h: "Other considerations deemed relevant by the individual member, **such as escapes and hybridism.**"

Procedures, Additional Information, Section 9.3.2: "However, if any member wishes to contact an observer to see if any additional documentation may exist, he or she is free to explore this avenue **and any information received shall be included in subsequent circulations**".

6. New Business.

Anecdotes from Committee Research for *Maryland Yellowthroat* Article. Many interesting and humorous anecdotes resulted from Harvey Mudd's canvass of the Maryland birding community over the past several years while tracking down old documentation. It was suggested that this would make a great article or series of columns for the *Maryland Yellowthroat*.

Yellowthroat "Plea" for Additional Documentation. "Unreviewable" records will be analyzed to determine which of them might be addressed in the *Maryland Yellowthroat* as the subject of a plea for Maryland birders to see if they have any existing notes or photographs of these observations.

7. Skins Meeting/Identification Issues

Red Crossbills. The committee is soliciting tape recordings of Red Crossbills for subspecies analysis, since the AOU may split them in the future, The following announcement was recently posted on various e-mail list servers:

The current irruption of Red Crossbills into Maryland presents area birders with an opportunity to help unravel one of the more complex biological situations in current North American ornithology.

As detailed by Paul DeBenedictis in his article "Red Crossbills, one through eight" [Birding 27(#6), 494-501, 1995], crossbills have recently been under intensive study by, among others, Jeffrey Groth who, in 1993, published a monograph on them ("Evolutionary Differentiation in Morphology, Vocalizations, and Allozymes among Nomadic Sibling Species in the North American Red Crossbill": Univ. of California Publications in Zoology, 127, 1-143, 1993). Charles Sibley in his computerized "Birds of the World", 1996, mentions that, in a personal communication Groth had told him he intended to propose splitting the North American forms of Red Crossbill into 9 species.

At some time in the future, the AOU may accept some or all of these splits. The policy of the Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee (MD/DCRC) is to follow AOU taxonomy. The question will then arise "Which of these species has been recorded in Maryland and/or the District of Columbia?" At present, Red Crossbill is not on the list of species that MD/DCRC seeks to review.

However, rather than await the next crossbill invasion (scheduled for roughly 20 years from now), MD/DCRC is attempting to get ahead of the curve by soliciting tapes of the calls of the current invaders. We will undertake to have sonograms prepared from the tapes in a centralized, uniform manner, and deposit these sonograms in the MD/DCRC files for possible future use.

The call types appear to be a major criterion for distinguishing the Groth-proposed species, and according to DeBenedictis the races currently recognized in specimens on morphological grounds cannot at the moment be associated with certainty with call types. Thus, even study of museum specimens might not permit resolution of the problem for MD and DC.

Since the opportunity to obtain such tapes may pass us by at any moment, MD/DCRC urgently requests that observers who tape crossbill calls in Maryland or DC send the tapes (or high quality copies of the originals) to Phil Davis (2549 Vale Court, Davidsonville, MD 21035). If requested, after sonograms have been prepared Phil will return the original material submitted as well as copies of the sonograms themselves for the use of the observer in sorting out the "species" he/she has recorded. If anyone prefers to do the conversion to sonograms him/herself, he/she should please send copies of the sonograms directly to Phil, with a notation as to what program was used for the conversion. For all tapes or sonograms, it would be most helpful if the observer were to note the exact locality, time, flock size and even sex ratios, as well as the types of trees in which the crossbills were feeding and the number (if any) of other species (i.e. White-winged Crossbills) in the flocks.

To date, we are aware of type 3 and 4 calls having been identified in Maryland. Tapes of other call types would certainly be of great interest. However, our aim is to obtain a representative sampling of the calls from various areas where crossbills are seen or heard in MD and DC. The help and cooperation of all area birders will be most appreciated in accomplishing this goal.

Thanks in advance to all who participate.

Harvey Mudd, Chair MD/DCRC
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P.S. Much additional information about the red crossbill situation is available at the internet web site of the American Museum of Natural History, "Crossbills: audiovisual guide", at: <http://research.amnh.org/ornithology/crossbills>.

Trumpeter Swan Reintroduction Program. The committee will soon tackle the problem of recent Trumpeter Swan observations in Maryland. There have also been hundreds of reintroduced swans into the northern Midwest and northeastern states over the past years and none of the populations are currently self-sustaining. Mary Gustafson commented that currently there is about a 25% band loss on reintroduced Trumpeters Swans over a 3-4 year period. Some birds are also reportedly being introduced without bands. This is a preview of some of the issues the committee will have to contend with in the near future.

8. Election of New Members and Chair. Harvey Mudd was elected to another term as Committee Chair. The members whose three-year terms expire this year are Mary Gustafson, Rob Hilton, and Willem Maane. The committee wished to thank them for all their support over the past three years. The new members of the committee are: Sam Dyke, Gail Mackiernan, and Michael O'Brien.

9. Next Year's Meetings. Next year's meetings are scheduled as follows:

| | | |
|----------------|----------|---|
| Annual Meeting | Saturday | February 27, 1999 |
| Skins Workshop | Saturday | March 27, 1999 (tentative - subject to the reopening of the NMNH Bird Division) |

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Davis
MD/DCRC Secretary
March 1, 1998

cc:
MOS President
MOS Vice-President
MOS Executive Secretary
MOS Publications Committee Chair
MOS Library Committee Chair
MOS By-Laws Committee Chair