



**Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee
2005 Annual Meeting
Saturday, March 5, 2005**

Meeting Minutes and Annual Business Report

The 2005 Annual Meeting of the Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee (MD/DCRC) was called to order at 10:15 am at the home of Phil Davis in Davidsonville, MD. Members present included Paul O'Brien (Chair), Phil Davis (Secretary), Ed Boyd, J.B. Churchill, Matt Hafner, Paul Pisano and Sherman Suter. Absent were Don Broderick, Patty Craig, Barry Cooper, and Bonnie Ott. Also in attendance were MOS President, Janet Millenson, and MOS Vice President, Marcia Balestri.

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

a. Database Status Report.

- i. **Database Contents. Figure 1** presents a glossary of the status/decision categories currently used in the MD/DCRC database. **Figure 2** summarizes the current contents of the MD/DCRC database by status/decision category and indicates the changes ("deltas") since last year. Prior to last year's Annual Meeting (2004) more than 400 "historical" reports were added to the database, largely from the data provided by former member, Marshall Iliff, and also from data retrieved from the former DC Records Committee's file. Between last year's meeting and this year's, over 300 of those reports were validated and moved out of the "Research" or "USNM" states and into either the "Reviewable," "Ready," or "Non-Review Species" categories. The latter category is for reports of species that were formerly reviewable but are no longer. During this coming year, the 249 "Reviewable" reports (indicating that the sightings were published in MB or AB/NAB) and the 46 reports remaining in the "Research" category will be pursued and resolved. Reports without supporting documentation will become "Unreviewable," meaning that they were published but no or insufficient documentation exists for a committee review. The completion of this canvass of old records should bring the committee's database up to date.
- ii. **Reports Received Per Year. Figure 3** indicates the number of reports the MD/DCRC receives each year. The table separates "current" reports (defined as initial documentation received within six months after the first sighting date) and "historical" reports (documentation received more than six months after the first sighting date). The committee's emphasis in locating and obtaining old published historical reports during the period from 1995 through 2004 can be easily seen from the numbers of historical reports received during this period. From 1991 through 2004, the number of current reports received per year has averaged just fewer than 39.

b. Review Package Status Report.

- i. **Completed Packages. Figure 4** presents a statistical summary by calendar year of completed review packages. The table shows the yearly 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 the "Accepted," "Accepted-Group," "Accepted-Form," "Not Accepted," "ID OK/Questionable Origin," and "ID OK/Exotic Origin" categories.

Decision	Decision / Status Description
S&R	Records from the committee's baseline document: Stewart & Robbins, The Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia, 1958.
Accepted	Reports accepted by the committee.
Accepted-Group	Reports accepted only as to a species complex or genus--where all other species of this group are reviewable at the observed location.
Accepted-Form	Reports accepted as an unusual subspecies or form.
ID OK?? Origin	Reports accepted for the species/group reported, however, a majority of the committee questioned whether the bird was a "natural" vagrant or a "wild" bird.
ID OK/Exotic Origin	Reports accepted for the species/group reported, however, a majority of the committee felt the bird was of exotic (i.e., captive) origin.
Not Accepted	Reports not accepted by the committee.
Circulating	Reports currently in circulation and under review by the committee.
Recirculate	Reports where no committee decision was reached during the latest circulation. The report will be circulated again.
Ready	Reports ready for circulation. All relevant reports, or a sufficient number of reports, have been submitted.
Reviewable	Reports of a species/location that meets the committee's Review List criteria. Additional observer data is believed to be outstanding.
USNM	Reports of specimens in the US Museum of Natural History that have not otherwise been published. Specimens are to be verified and reviewed by the committee.
Hold	Reports where review of this species or genus/group has been suspended pending resolution of taxonomy or field identification issues.
Unreviewable	Reports with insufficient descriptive identification details to permit a review by the committee. Typical for many older published sight records.
Report	Reports submitted indirectly to the committee (e.g., via NA Birds, Voice of the Naturalist, etc.). Observer concurrence is required prior to committee review.
Non-Review Species	Reports submitted for a species/location that does not fall within the committee's Review List criteria.
Reopened	Reports reopened for consideration by the committee. Reopened reports are "removed" from the committee's database statistics and replaced by the reopened report.
Research	Reports previously published - investigation in process to determine if documentation exists.
DCRC	Reports from the defunct DC Records Committee files - being investigated.
Withdrawn	Reports withdrawn by the original observer(s).

Figure 1. MD/DCRC Database Status/Decision Definitions

- ii. **Packages in Circulation.** **Figure 5** summarizes the contents of the packages that are currently in circulation at the time of this Annual Meeting.
- iii. **Acceptance Rate.** From last year to this year, the committee's cumulative acceptance rate rose from 77 to 78 percent. The rate, shown in **Figure 6**, is determined by dividing the total number of accepted decisions (which includes "Accepted", "Accepted-Group", "Accepted-Form", "ID OK?? Origin", and "ID OK/Exotic Origin") by the total number of decisions--which includes the "Not Accepted" decisions).
- c. **External Communications Status Report.** **Figure 7** presents a summary of significant communications with people or organizations outside of the committee's routine MD and DC sighting report communications.
- d. **Internal Communications Status Report.**
 - i. **Email Traffic.** **Figure 8** summarizes the secretary's MD/DCRC-related email message communications over the past years, reflecting an increase in relevant email, listserver messages, digital image communications, and efforts to track down historical documentation.
 - ii. **Acknowledgements.** Ninety-nine (99) report acknowledgements were sent to observers during the past year (109 were sent last year).

State	Category / Status	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Delta
MD	Accepted	258	332	362	377	381	380	424	464	40
	Stewart & Robbins	9	9	100	85	83	81	82	81	-1
	Accepted-Group	2	2	9	9	10	10	10	11	1
	Accepted-Form	-	1	3	3	3	6	7	10	3
	ID OK/?? Origin	5	5	5	5	6	7	8	8	0
	ID OK/Exotic Origin	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
	Not Accepted	119	124	127	132	133	132	140	147	7
	Circulating	45	28	9	15	49	78	29	13	-16
	Recirculate	22	21	27	25	23	18	49	54	5
	Ready	102	49	64	61	69	78	77	112	35
	Reviewable	35	45	36	35	42	44	66	249	183
	USNM	-	-	6	26	21	14	14	11	-3
	Hold	11	11	16	15	15	15	15	-	-15
	Report	0	3	5	0	0	0	1	-	-1
	Unreviewable	221	224	238	246	248	255	257	287	30
	Non-Review Species	109	112	119	136	139	140	139	357	218
	Reopened	-	-	5	5	6	7	4	8	4
	Withdrawn	4	5	7	7	8	9	9	11	2
	Research	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	361	46
	MD Totals	942	970	1135	1179	1233	1275	1693	1871	178
DC	Accepted	14	16	19	20	20	20	25	35	10
	Stewart & Robbins	-	-	25	8	8	8	7	9	2
	Accepted-Group	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	0
	Not Accepted	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2
	Circulating	1	4	1	2	7	13	4	5	1
	Recirculate	1	2	4	4	5	2	9	3	-6
	Ready	6	2	3	7	14	21	15	19	4
	Reviewable	1	7	9	5	6	4	10	45	35
	USNM	-	-	4	26	27	15	14	31	17
	Report	0	10	10	2	2	2	4	-	-4
	DCRC	-	-	-	-	-	-	75	10	-65
	Unreviewable	8	13	17	16	28	30	27	37	10
	Non-Review Species	3	3	3	6	7	7	11	26	15
	Withdrawn	-	-	-	-	0	1	2	3	1
	DC Totals	34	57	95	98	126	125	206	228	22
DE	Withdrawn							1	1	0
VA	USNM						1	1	2	1
	Report							1	-	-1
	DCRC							1	-	-1
	Withdrawn							1	4	3
NY	Withdrawn							1	1	0
??	USNM				2	3	5	7	3	-4
	Unreviewable							1	2	1
	Research							2	2	0
	DCRC							7	-	-7
	Withdrawn						2		-	
	Grand Totals	976	1029	1234	1283	1369	1409	1922	2126	204

Figure 2. MD/DCRC Database Summary as of 03/03/2005 and Changes from Previous Annual Meetings

Year	Reports Received	"Current" Reports	Historical Reports
1966	1	0	1
1979	2	2	0
1980	1	1	0
1982	1	1	0
1983	2	1	1
1984	3	3	0
1985	4	4	0
1986	3	3	0
1988	2	0	2
1989	2	2	0
1990	3	3	0
1991	25	25	0
1992	13	12	1
1993	26	24	2
1994	58	47	11
1995	187	45	142
1996	104	47	57
1997	267	43	224
1998	44	30	14
1999	198	44	154
2000	53	48	5
2001	81	41	40
2002	39	27	12
2003	477	42	435
2004	189	65	124
2005	9	9	0
Totals	1794	569	1225
Average		22	

Figure 3. MD/DCRC Reports Received per Year

Year	Pkgs	Weeks	#Items	#New	#Decisions	Dec%	Avg#Items	Avg#New	Avg#Decs
1985	3	72.0	40	40	13	33%	13	13	4
1986	7	21.0	61	35	35	57%	9	5	5
1987	6	17.6	59	27	43	73%	10	5	7
1988	4	15.0	33	25	20	61%	8	6	5
1989	4	26.6	35	20	17	49%	9	5	4
1990	3	35.1	30	15	12	40%	10	5	4
1991	7	18.9	65	35	36	55%	9	5	5
1992	9	18.3	75	43	39	52%	8	5	4
1993	4	13.3	41	22	27	66%	10	6	7
1994	4	25.6	39	20	28	72%	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	49	72%	14	9	10
1998	7	19.3	107	84	81	76%	15	12	12
1999	6	17.8	84	61	50	60%	14	10	8
2000	3	15.2	27	15	20	74%	9	5	7
2001	3	25.8	44	30	27	61%	15	10	9
2002	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2003	8	37.6	79	69	45	57%	10	9	6
2004	7	45.9	90	63	52	58%	17	10	14
2005	2	23.6	33	20	28	85%	17	10	14
Total	100	26.0	1124	758	688	61%	11	8	7

Figure 4. Package Statistics Summary

Year	Pkg	Start Date	# Items	# New
2005	95	03/03/2005	18	7
	Totals 1		18	7
	Averages		18	7
	Grand Totals		18	7
	Grand Averages		18	7

Figure 5. Status of Packages Currently in Circulation

Decision/Status	AM 2004 #Records	AM 2005 #Records
Accepted	453	499
Accepted-Group	12	13
Accepted-Form	3	10
ID OK/?? Origin	8	8
ID OK/Exotic Origin	1	2
Not Accepted	141	150
Grand Total	618	682
Acceptance Rate:	77%	78%

Figure 6. MD/DCRC Acceptance Rate Report

Mon	Year	Contact	St	Topic
Mar	2004	Banks, Richard	DC	Definition of a "record"
Mar	2004	Gilbert, Arie	NY	Audio editing of Montgomery County Black Rail recording
Mar	2004	Johnson, Rick	CA	Audio editing of Montgomery County Black Rail recording
Mar	2004	Von Gausig, Doug	AZ	Audio editing of Montgomery County Black Rail recording
Apr	2004	Schimpf, Jill	MD	Protection status of ravens
Apr	2004	Ednie, Andrew	DE	Pelagic boundaries
Apr	2004	Barnhill, Maurice	DE	Pelagic boundaries
Jun	2004	Shearwater, Debi	CA	History of MD pelagics - for a Birding article
Jun	2004	Adamson, Nancy Lee	VA	Development of a wildlife database
Jul	2004	Damewood, Karon	MD	Indigenous birds of MD
Aug	2004	Clapp, Roger	DC	USNM MD database corrections
Aug	2004	Campbell, Colin	DE	Historical MD Corn Crake reference
Aug	2004	Lockwood, Mark	TX	Records committee website questions
Sep	2004	Felton, Gary	WV	Decision and status categories
Sep	2004	Sharp, Matt	PA	Publication of Assateague juvenile Sooty Tern image in NAB
Sep	2004	Curson, David	MD	Patterson Park (Baltimore) records
Sep	2004	Clapp, Roger	DC	DC USNM specimen record date questions
Oct	2004	Stickler, Tamara	MD	Reporting endangered species in MD (shrews)
Dec	2004	Graves, Gary	DC	Status of blue-morph Ross's Goose in the mid-Atlantic
Jan	2005	Alt, Mark	MN	Great Gray Owl report in MD
Jan	2005	Steury, Brent	VA	DC Ash-throated Flycatcher record
Feb	2005	Toomey, Patrick	MT	State checklist project
Feb	2005	Brinkley, Ned	VA	MD Painted Bunting records
Feb	2005	Wilson, Angus	NY	Adjacent state Northern Lapwing records
Feb	2005	Heath, Sue	VA	Adjacent state Northern Lapwing records
Feb	2005	Pulcinella, Nick	PA	Adjacent state Northern Lapwing records
Feb	2005	Peterjohn, Bruce	DE	Adjacent state Northern Lapwing records

Figure 7. Summary of the Past Year's External Communications

Calendar Year	# MD/DCRC Email Messages Sent
2004	610
2003	731
2002	570
2001	287
2000	128
1999	307
1998	66
1997	64

Figure 8. Number of MD/DCRC Secretary Email Messages Sent by Calendar Year

- iii. **Decision Reports.** After last year's Annual Meeting, 23 decision notices were sent to observers for Packages 87 and 89. After this year's meeting, 123 notices will be mailed to observers for the decision reached in packages 89-94.
- iv. **MOS MD/DCRC Web Site Updates.** The Secretary has continued to update and publish MD/DCRC data products to the committee's web pages on the MOS web site. Thanks to Fran Saunders, the MOS Webmaster for maintaining these pages. The Secretary occasionally reminds the local birding community via e-mail messages on the local birding listserver (MD Osprey) that the web site information is available for reference. After this year's meeting, the web site will be updated with new Review Lists, Official Lists, Database Contents and other related documents. The link to the committee's web pages is:

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

- e. **Storage Status Report.** A summary of the amount of MD/DCRC storage (both hardcopy/paper and electronic) is shown in **Figure 9**. The committee's files currently fill the equivalent of approximately 37 document boxes. Additional committee reference material is not boxed, but is on bookshelves. These items include a library of Maryland Birdlife and American Birds/Field Notes/North American Birds. Other non-boxed reference material includes baseline publications such as Stewart and Robbins (1958), the Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas, and historical publications such as Kirkwood (1895), and Coues and Prentiss (1863 and 1883). The committee's electronic data files currently consume over 3GBs of data storage. Currently, all electronic data is periodically duplicated and stored both on-site (in the Secretary's home in a fire-retardant safe) and off-site, typically with the Chair.

Media	Contents	Amount of Storage
Paper/Hardcopy	Reports/records/packages files	22 document boxes
	Video/audio tapes	1 document box
	Identification/reference files	3 document boxes
	Correspondence/miscellaneous files	8 document boxes
	Supplies	3 document boxes
	Maryland Birdlife journals	2 feet of shelf space
	American Birds journals	2 feet of shelf space
	Historical references (S&R, AOU, etc.)	1.5 feet of shelf space
Electronic	Documents and databases, etc.	1.40 GB
	Electronic sighting documentation	2.22 GB

Figure 9. MD/DCRC Storage Status

- f. **Database Projects Status Report.**
 - i. **Projects Completed.** The following database projects were completed since the last Annual Meeting:

1. **Historical Growth of the MD/DC Lists.** This project produced a report that presents, in chronological order, the new species added each year to the official Maryland and DC lists. Last year, Marshall Iloff suggested that instead of the year of acceptance of each record, the report should show the year the species was first sighted. The secretary has implemented that change and this report is now operational. The final version is now published on the committee's web pages. This project is now complete.
2. **Decision Text from Old Records.** This project involved electronically "cutting" decision summaries from older (pre-1995) "letter-to-observer" word processing files and "pasting" them into the "decision summary" database record field to provide a decision summary for each record and not accepted report. (All current decision summaries are entered directly into the database and observer decision notices are generated directly from the database). This project is now complete.
3. **Dissection of Early Package Ballots.** In the very early days of the committee, members wrote their ballots sequentially on single sheets of paper. This project involved decollating and reassembling these early ballots so that all ballots for any given record/report are contained in the physical file jacket for that record/report. After researching this further, the Secretary realized that this decollation was performed by the previous Secretary. This project is now closed.
4. **DC Reports.** The Secretary dissected and reviewed the defunct DC Records Committee files, captured the reviewed and accepted records, and added them to the MD/DCRC database. A number of reports; however, were of uncertain status. These reports were added to the committee database in a "DCRC" (DC Records Committee) status category. These reports require additional validation research before they can be placed into any of the regular MD/DCRC status categories. Many of the DC reports have been researched and properly categorized. Some remain to be researched; however, these remaining reports are mostly for species that are no longer reviewable. This research project should be completed during the coming year.
5. **Imprecise Date Capability.** This was a project to change the format of the database year, month, and day fields for record start dates. This requirement emanates from records (mostly historical) with incomplete start dates (e.g., year only, or year and month only). Primarily for sorting purposes, the Secretary would estimate a day of month and annotate the data record, but this can be misleading, confusing, and is inaccurate—especially in summary reports. With a newly implemented, incomplete dates are still assigned an estimated date for sorting purposes and that date is preceded with a tilde ("~") to indicate an approximated date. However, below that estimated date, the known date information is shown, in red font. For example:

Start
 ~04/15/1985
 Apr1985

This capability has been added to most of the key committee reports and the remaining affected operational reports will be changed as they are used during the coming year.

6. **Additional Database Fields.** In addition to the date capability, above, the following fields were added to the MD/DCRC database: "Details" (for number/age/sex/plumage/etc.), "Publication Changes" (to annotated any differences between published accounts and MD/DCRC information), "Specifics" (another level of location detail), "Private" (for street addressed of sightings), "Zip" (for future zip coding), and fields for latitude and longitude (for future geocoding of data).

7. **AOU Check-List 44th and 45th Supplement Update.** The committee's taxonomy database was updated twice last year and now complies with the new AOU 45th supplement, including the addition of Cackling Goose. AOU supplements are now published on an annual basis, instead of bi-annually.
 8. **Audubon Naturalist Citation Data Table.** In addition to data tables for *Maryland Birdlife* "The Season" reports, and *AFN/AB/FN/NAB* regional reports, the Secretary also created one last year for the *Audubon Naturalist* "Birds of the Season" reports. These data tables facilitate the historical record research by allowing automated report generation to correlate sighting dates with the seasonal reports in which a given sighting should have appeared.
 9. **Observer Reports.** With the improved database capabilities now operational, the MD/DCRC can, "with the push of a button," generate a complete detailed report of records and reports for any given observer. The Secretary plans to offer such reports to observers with large numbers of database entries as a means to detect and correct any errors and to stimulate the submission of outstanding documentation.
 10. **County Reports.** The Secretary has provided database reports to support the efforts of counties with active county lists, specifically Howard and Harford. With the new database capabilities, the hope is to deal with someone from each county who can review and comment on the local records.
- ii. **Projects In-Progress.** The following database projects are still in work:
1. **Quantitative Status System.** Over the past few years, the committee approved a "quick look" species status system that presents an "at a glance" view of a species status using total numbers of reports/records and numbers in certain decision/status categories, similar to a California system. The report format is ready but this project is on hold until the historical database research is completed, since the quantitative summary data will be incorrect for many species until all historical reports/records are captured and the database is fully updated.
 2. **Species Review Status Change History.** The Secretary is working on compiling a chronology of the historical changes to the review lists— to capture, for example, when Clay-colored Sparrow (*Spizella pallida*) was dropped from the review list; or when the review range of Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipixcan*) was redefined, etc. This information is becoming lost and should be captured for posterity. All old review lists have been located and copied and the compilation of the data into a data table has begun. This project will be completed by next year's annual meeting.
 3. **Historical Records Research.** Research is continuing for the following species: Sandhill Crane, Ruff, Franklin's Gull, Thayer's Gull, Clay-colored Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, and Brewer's Blackbird. This research is related to the capture of the chronology of the Review List, so that sightings when each species was reviewable can be pursued for documentation. The Secretary is still trying to straighten out some dates for DC Storm-Petrels (Leach's, Wilson's and Band-rumped). Also, some outstanding published citation references remain unresolved. Trips to the PWRC library and the library at the USNM Bird Division will be undertaken to try and resolve these issues.
 4. **Quality Assurance/Loss Prevention Plan/Permanent Storage Plan.** The MD/DCRC Quality Assurance and Loss Prevention Plan is moving forward. All reports and records for which decisions have been reached have been physically segregated and for a large percentage of them, a quality audit has been conducted. All information with each file has been photoduplicated. The Secretary plans to scan and electronically capture all photo documentation, then the original files can be moved into the MOS controlled storage.

This is a project in-process. The MD/DCRC QA Plan is described in a separate document.

iii. Future Projects. The following database projects have not yet been started.

1. **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 interactive, query-based 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.

The Secretary will coordinate these web-based plans with the MOS Web Site Director. These projects are currently secondary to the historical canvass.

2. **Package Number Field Expansion.** The Secretary needs to implement a “Y2K” type of fix to expand the package number field from two to three digits. We are up currently to Package 95.
 3. **New Database Category.** The Secretary is considering adding a “Non-Review Sighting” status category in addition to “Non-Review Species.” The former would be used for reports received or for previously published sighting for species that are not in a reviewable range, in accordance with the review lists.
 4. **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 or obsolete fields, etc.). Steps were recently taken to begin this process however, more work remains to be completed on this project.
 5. **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. Efforts were briefly begun on this project, but more remains to be done.
 6. **Extinct/Extripated Species Research.** This project involves researching historical species that are extinct or extirpated from Maryland. Examples include Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*), Passenger Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*), and “Heath Hen” [Greater Prairie Chicken] (*Tympanuchus cupido cupido*). The objective is to capture all historical documentation for the committee’s files. Some information has been gathered but a detailed canvass of the literature and analysis of the results is still pending. This is a low priority project.
- g. **Unsubmitted and Outstanding Documentation Status.** After the historical analysis and research is complete, the committee will be ready to publish a list of sightings in the Maryland Yellowthroat for which no documentation exists. Current sighting documentation issues are being pursued with individual observers.
 - h. **Member Package Review Performance.** The Secretary compiles and analyzes the length of time each member retain each review package. A handout was provided that summarizes the

average turnaround time of all MD/DCRC members. Individual members were also provided with specifics of their package by package performance.

- i. **Single Observer / Single Report Analysis.** Some European birding journals have recently analyzed and discussed the instances of single observer records committee reports. As an item of curiosity, the Secretary is generating an ad hoc report to analyze this data.
- j. **ID Articles and Index.** The committee now has 400 identification and reference articles in its files. This past year, the Secretary created an index number scheme and has assigned an index number to each article. During the next year, the Secretary plans to inventory, sort, and better organize these files.

2. Subcommittee/Project Reports

- a. **Outreach Subcommittee.** Paul O'Brien reported that during the past year, no additional MD/DCRC Outreach programs were requested by the MOS chapters. A summary of the Outreach Subcommittee presentations shown in **Figure 10**. This subcommittee is dissolved, at least for now.

Date	Chapter/Group	Presenter	Attendance
12/01/1999	Carroll County Bird Club/MOS	Paul O'Brien	6
01/24/2000	Tri-County Chapter/MOS	Paul O'Brien	18
02/01/2000	Baltimore Bird Club/MOS	Paul O'Brien	16
03/03/2000	Anne Arundel Bird Club/MOS	Sue Ricciardi	~35
10/26/2000	Caroline County Chapter/MOS	Paul O'Brien	15
11/09/2000	Montgomery County Chapter/MOS	Paul O'Brien	45
01/04/2001	Frederick County Chapter/MOS	Paul O'Brien	18
02/07/2002	Southern Maryland Audubon Society	Sue Ricciardi	15
10/15/2002	Allegany County Chapter/MOS	Paul O'Brien	15
09/11/2003	Howard County Bird Club/MOS	Paul O'Brien	53
11/25/2003	Washington County Chapter/MOS	Paul O'Brien	23

Figure 10. Outreach Subcommittee Presentations

- b. **Subspecies/Distinct Forms Subcommittee.** At the 1998 Annual Meeting, the MD/DCRC established a Subcommittee on Subspecies and Distinct Forms. As an outgrowth of this subcommittee, Marshall Iliff, the subcommittee chair, has written a comprehensive manuscript, "An Annotated List of Bird Subspecies Known from the State of Maryland". He is now investigating alternatives for publishing this work. To support this project, the Secretary developed a report to summarize the USNM MD and DC collection data by subspecies. Currently, the Maryland review list includes only subspecies or forms that have been accepted by the committee ("Common" Green-winged Teal—*Anas crecca crecca*, "Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler—*Dendroica coronata auduboni*, and "Gambel's" White-crowned Sparrow—*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*). Marshall has provided recommendations to the MD/DCRC for a proactive review list of subspecies/forms for which the committee would want to receive observer reports. This list was distributed to the members prior to the meeting for consideration. A list of reviewable species/forms, including potential AOU splits, was adopted at the meeting. This list will be prepared and distributed to the members for review and then it will be published on the MD/DCRC web pages.
- c. **Museum Collection Specimens.**
 - a. **USNM.** There are still a number of "reported" USNM specimens on our target list. We were successful in finding and photographing many of specimens last year. We will continue to try and track the remaining specimens and look for more of them at this year's Skins Workshop at the Smithsonian Institution. Last year, we also found errors in the USNM database and corrected them, notably Southern Rough-winged Swallows

(*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) and a Bachman's Warbler (*Vermivora bachmani*) sightings attributed to Maryland.

- b. **NHSM Specimens.** The Secretary has made contact with Charlie Davis of the Natural History Society of Maryland. We are working to get a collection listing. Bob Ringer was recently there and saw the Dundalk Dovekie (*Alle alle*) specimen [MD/1997-309].
- c. **Other Institution Specimens.** The Secretary has begun to contact other museums to obtain copies of their MD and DC collections databases. These databases will then be searched to determine if they include any reviewable records. A Maryland Passenger Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*) specimen has been already been located in a Midwestern museum. More museum contacts have yet to be made and more data processing will be performed to analyze this data.
- d. **MD/DCRC Decision Reports.** Since last year's meeting, all decision files have been resorted into storage boxes corresponding to each past and future decision report. Also, all paperwork has been duplicated in preparation for scanning of images and shipping originals to off-site storage. Specifics on the next MD/DCRC decision reports follows:
 - a. **Third MD/DCRC Decision Report.** A past member had volunteered to be the senior author of the next committee decision report. An extensive report framework was generated directly from the MD/DCRC database and the secretary has summarized much of the "front-end" facts and figures to support this report. To date, however, no work has begun on the ornithological editing of this report. The MD/DCRC, the Publications Committee, and MOS Executives are discussing the volume of information (i.e., the number of pages) associated with the new report format and options for publication. The Secretary circulated a copy of the Decision Report #3 framework, illustrating the format and amount of data that is produced directly from the committee's database. Past member Marshall Iliff has volunteered to take authorship of this report and the tentative decision is that it will be published on CD-ROM media as an issue in the Maryland Avifauna series. This decision will be finalized at the MOS Board of Directors meeting on March 12, 2005.
 - b. **Fourth MD/DCRC Decision Report.** The Kelp Gull (*Larus dominicanus*) decision will be expanded and published in Maryland Birdlife as a decision report. Paul O'Brien and Phil Davis have volunteered to author this report. The ending date referenced in this report will need to be coordinated to be synchronized with the appropriate issue of Maryland Birdlife in which it appears.
 - c. **Fifth MD/DCRC Decision Report.** Sherman Suter has volunteered to author the next general decision report.

3. Committee Procedures and Processes:

a. New First State Taxa:

Since the last Annual Meeting, the following state firsts have been added:

Maryland (the species count now stands at 424):

Species added:

Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*)
Reddish Egret (*Egretta rufescens*)
Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*)
Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Subspecies/Forms added:

"Ipswich" [Savannah] Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis princeps*) [from S&R]
"Great White" [Great Blue] Heron (*Ardea herodias occidentalis*)

Exotics added:

European Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

District of Columbia (the species count now stands at 325):

Species added:

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)
Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*)

b. Review List Changes:

1. **MD List Changes.** The following discussion and changes related to the MD Review List:
 - a. **American White Pelican** (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*). Remove from the review list, effective 30 March 2005. All reports thorough 30 March 2005 will be reviewed.
 - b. **California Gull** (*Larus californicus*). Retain. Reports in recent years have been sparse.
 - c. **Painted Bunting** (*Passerina ciris*). Retain, at least until all current reports are evaluated. There is some discussion of the differences in eastern and western populations (based primarily on molt differenced and timing) and the Maryland distribution is not that well understood at this time.
 - d. **Anhinga** (*Anhinga anhinga*). Retain (at least until all current reports are evaluated). Many reports are of birds in flight and separation from Double-crested Cormorant can be problematic.
 - e. **Rufous Hummingbird** (*Selasphorus rufus*). Remove from the review list, effective 30 March 2005. All reports thorough 30 March 2005 will be reviewed. Observers and banders are encouraged to continue banding, due to the similarity of other *Selasphorus* and similar species.
 - f. **Yellow Rail** (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*). Retain. Reports in recent years have been sparse.
 - g. **Le Conte's Sparrow** (*Ammodramus leconteii*). Retain, at least until all current reports have been reviewed. Reports from the last few years have been sparse.
 - h. **Swallow-tailed Kite** (*Elanoides forficatus*). Remove, effective 30 March 2005. Its numbers have increased, it is virtually an annual visitor, and it is not difficult to identify.
 - i. **Common Murre** (*Uria aalge*). Retain.
 - j. **Harris's Sparrow** (*Zonotrichia querula*). Retain.
 - k. **Common Raven** (*Corvus corax*). Change the reviewable range to exclude Montgomery County, effective 30 March 2005.

4. Decision Issues.

- a. **New fourth round discussions.** There are no reports that qualify for fourth round discussion.
- b. **Record reopenings.** One record was reopened due to a previous procedural error:

Prairie Falcon [MD/1984-027, Jug Bay]. The first round vote on this report was 1-2-6 and a falconer's Prairie Falcon was reported lost from VA shortly before this sighting. Technically, this should have been recirculated (due to the one Accept vote). Since, this decision has already been published in the first MD/DCRC Decision Report the Secretary proposed reopening this report under the "new information" provision to achieve a proper disposition.

5. Circulation Issues.

a. Species issues:

1. **European Greenfinch** (*Carduelis chloris*). Package 88. [MD/2002-004] Origin: Exotic vs. Questionable. The committee revisited the differences between the "Questionable Origin" and "Exotic Origin" findings. Basically, "questionable" is used when the origin of the bird cannot be determined with certainty; "exotic" is used when is virtually certain that the bird is an escapee/releasee.
2. **Common Gull** (*Larus canus canus*). At the 1999 Annual Meeting, members petitioned to reopen the previously accepted Conowingo "Common" Mew Gull (*Larus canus canus*) record [MD/1995-033] due to recently more fully understood variations in Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) plumages. In keeping with the new procedure, a narrative providing rationale for the reopening was provided by Marshall Iloff; however, additional analysis that was anticipated has not yet been submitted to the committee by other members. Jonathan Alderfer indicated that the status of identification issues between Common Gulls and Ring-billed Gulls is still not settled. He had previously indicated that he might submit the second Conowingo bird as a Common Gull to the committee (this bird was initially called a Common Gull, but was later thought by some to be an immature Ring-billed Gull and was never submitted to the committee). The committee dedicated some of time at last year's Skins Workshop to study immature Common v. Ringed-billed Gull specimens at the Smithsonian to try to determine the variability of the upper wing coverts and tail pattern in Common and Ringed-billed Gull. The latest literature was also searched. Paul O'Brien took the files on these two sightings and will make a recommendation as to course of action.
3. **Cave Swallow** (*Petrochelidon fulva*). Ed Boyd discussed Cave Swallows and Cliff Swallows, especially SW/Mexican Cliff Swallows, in regard to the Carroll County bird from two years ago. It was mentioned that the illustration of Caribbean Cave Swallow in some of the recent literature (Sibley) portrays the throat as too dark. The work of Townsend Peterson at the University of Kansas was also mentioned as a possible reference. The committee will examine appropriate specimens at this year's Skins Workshop.
4. **Slaty-backed Gull** (*Larus schistisagus*). For the Conowingo possible Slaty-backed Gull [MD/1999-052] review packages were provided to six outside experts: Mark Brazil (Japan), Jon King (CA), Steve Mlodinow (WA), Martin Reid (TX), Jon Dunn (CA), and Paul Lehman (NJ). As of this date, four reviewers have responded and there is no clear consensus in their views. A review of the file shows that Marshall Iloff's latest position is that the bird is a hybrid. The committee's current general position is to not review hybrids unless both of the suspected parents are review species. The committee agreed to

circulate this file as a Slaty-backed Gull for review to get the observation into the committee record.

5. **Barnacle Goose** (*Branta leucopsis*). Previously, the committee decided to review the reports of this species that are in the “ready” category. However, upon reflection, it was decided that the current literature and recent thinking be encapsulated into a position paper for the members and that this paper should be circulated with the reports. Paul O’Brien has summarized his opinions and findings on the problem. Phil Davis has some notes on this subject, too, and will write them up. Marshall Iliff is also working on a paper. A check with other records committees will be made to see if any of them has any recent news on this subject.
 6. **Western Wood-Pewee** (*Contopus sordidulus*). Previously, the Secretary located a recent paper on Wood-Pewee identification and the MD and DC specimens were then inspected at last year’s Skins Workshop. Jonathan Alderfer measured the specimens and applied the identification keys, however, neither bird keys fully at the 100 percent level. Jonathan has a question on the paper that he wanted to ask the author. When we receive the measurements and final write-up from Jonathan we can begin the review process. The idea of trying to have a future DNA analysis performed on these specimens was also discussed. These specimens will be photographed at this year’s Skins Workshop.
 7. **Dark-eyed Junco** (*Junco hyemalis*). Previously, the committee decided to proceed with review of the submitted Oregon/Pink-sided Juncos (*J. h. oregonus* / *J. h. mearnsi*). However, there are some open Junco taxonomy issues. The committee previously decided to prepare a position paper on the current status of Juncos and include this paper with the review package. Marshall Iliff volunteered to author this paper. However, the committee decided to go ahead and review MD/DCRC reports of the junco complex based on the current literature.
 8. **Redpolls**. The question was discussed of how to handle the review of the Dave Czaplak Birding article with up to 15 individual birds mentioned in it. The Secretary has decomposed the article and split each reviewable taxa photograph into separate database records and identified the reviewable photograph numbers. This package of reviewable redpolls (*exilipes*, *hornemanni*, and *rostrata*) is now ready for review.
 9. **Arctic Loon**. It was discussed whether the committee should change the older Arctic Loon “Not Accepted” reports to reflect Pacific Loon [MD/1983-016 and MD/1985-021]. These reports predated the AOU split of Pacific and Arctic Loon. The decision was made to not change the taxon references.
 10. **California Gull** [MD/1983-024]. There was a procedural issue with this report, which was not accepted. The Secretary has discussed this with the observer and it was agreed to leave the record, as is, in the MD/DCRC database.
- b. **Records Splits**. Some administrative report splits were made during the year following members’ recommendations from the ballot/comment forms. These included the Point Lookout Wood Storks, the Ripley Gardens Rufous Hummingbirds from last winter, the Talbot County Painted Buntings, and the Saint Mary’s County Cave Swallows from last fall. All Cave Swallows from this fall were logged as individual birds.
6. **Skins Meeting**. The 2005 Skins Workshop is scheduled at the US National Museum of History (Smithsonian Institution). Preliminary information follows:
 1. **Date and Time**. Saturday, March 26, 2005; 10 am.
 2. **Species List**. The following is a list of candidate species/skins to review:

- i. Cave Swallow vs. Cliff Swallow. Including Mexican Cave Swallow and Caribbean Cliff Swallow. In support of the past two year's Maryland sightings.
- ii. Trumpeter and Tundra Swans. To include forehead shape, especially as they related to hybrid "Trumpling" Swans. In support of the Black Hills Regional Park bird.
- iii. Western and Clark's Grebes. In support of several reports of Western Grebe reports.
- iv. Western Wood-Pewee. Need to photograph them; in support the reports in the queue.
- v. Immature Gambel's White-crowned Sparrows. In support of several reports of MD immatures.
- vi. White-winged Junco. For the published record [Beckham, C.W. 1885. Auk 2(3):306] awaiting review (MD/Howard County, USNM specimen #102219 [MD/2004-110]).
- vii. Calliope Hummingbird. In support of the Laurel bird [MD/2004-173].

7. Old Business:

- a. **Long-range Planning.** The MD/DCRC prepared a first draft and distributed it to the committee members before the 2003 Annual Meeting. Since the committee is actively pursuing a number of significant projects, a second draft has not yet been drafted. The committee database activities are consuming all available resources for the short- and mid-term. [This action will formally remain open, however]
- b. **Exotics Review Policy.** The committee does not have a policy to govern the review of exotic (or probably exotic) species. In January, 2005, the USFWS released a proposed list of avian species to be excluded from MBTA protection. Perhaps this list, which includes eight (8) status categories, can be used for the basis of reviews of non-native species. For example, Black Swan is a category 4, which is not known to breed in the wild. This will be reviewed over the coming year.
- c. **Internet Documentation Standards and Policies.** [This item remains open.] The Secretary has researched policies and standards related to digital documentation. This may turn into a published paper in the future. Some additional reference material was obtained since the last meeting, but otherwise, little progress was made during the past year on this project. The tentative outline of the paper is:
 - 1. Introduction
 - 2. Written Documentation Guidelines
 - 3. Sketches and Artwork Guidelines
 - 4. Photographic Images Guidelines
 - 5. Video Recordings Guidelines
 - 6. Audio Recordings Guidelines
 - 7. Taxonomy and Nomenclature Guidelines
 - 8. Geospatial Information Guidelines
 - 9. Software and Hardware Platform Guidelines
 - 10. Data Transmission Guidelines
 - 11. Data Processing and Data Management
 - 12. Data Archiving
 - 13. Intellectual Property Rights
 - 14. Privacy
 - 15. Security
 - 16. Literature Cited

8. New Business:

- a. **State Bird Checklist Project.** The committee discussed the "State Bird Checklist Project" that is being organized by Patrick Toomey of Montana. The MD/DCRC and MOS President/Vice President all agree that we do not want to have our official data republished on another web site where it is not under our direct control. We are certainly supportive of this project including a link to our official checklists which are published on the MD/DCRC web pages of our MOS web site.
- b. **Identification Workshops.** The committee discussed the idea of one or a series "outreach" identification workshops focused on regional ID challenges and targeting advanced-intermediate birders. The vision is:
 1. Organize a half-day activity on a Saturday afternoon (perhaps from 1-5), during the slower birding seasons. There is currently neither the time nor the proper setting to implement this concept either at the annual convention or at local club meetings.
 2. Hold the workshop at venues, such as where the MOS Board Meeting are held.
 3. Centrally locate the workshop in MD (at least for the first one).
 4. Make the event free. (Let the MOS subsidize any refreshments).
 5. Open it to all, but target advanced-intermediate birders and make the agenda relate to the upcoming season (or pelagic species, before a scheduled pelagic trip). By targeting intermediate birders, we will probably also draw some beginners and advanced birders, too.
 6. Publicize a set planned agenda of ID challenge presentations and allow time for Q&A from the floor.
 7. Key the workshop to presentations and discussions based on the use of projected scanned graphics from the field guides and photos with comparisons presented. The MOS would have to get authorization to use scanned images from the field guide publishers, but for an educational event, we hope that this would not be a problem. With scanned images, we can manipulate the references to place two or more next to each other on the same screen, flip them to the same orientation, add highlight arrows, etc.
 8. Possible ID challenges could include the following... and, as the records committee, we might want to focus on taxa where one of the challenge is "reviewable":
 - Shiny Cowbird vs Brown-headed Cowbird
 - Eurasian Collared-Dove vs Ringed Turtle-Dove
 - White-faced vs Glossy Ibis
 - Yellow-legged vs Herring Gull
 - Kelp vs Greater/Lesser Black-backed Gulls
 - Thick-billed vs Common Murre
 - Great White Heron vs Great Egret
 - Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow vs. nominate
 - Audubon's vs. Myrtle Warbler
 - Ross's vs. Snow Goose
 - Tufted Duck vs scaup
 - Pacific vs Common Loon
 - Yellow-billed vs Common Loon
 - Western vs Clark's Grebe
 - Reddish Egret vs other herons/egrets

- Mountain Bluebird vs Eastern Bluebird (females)
- Bewick's vs. Carolina Wren

and the list goes on and on ...

About 15 or 20 minutes could be dedicated to each challenge. Committee members would volunteer in advance to lead each challenge discussion and questions would be encouraged. The committee could also ask or invite other "senior" birders to lead challenge presentations. The person that leads the discussion would coordinate with the Secretary as to which graphics they would want to be scanned/projected or audio to be played. Also, photos or sketches (MD/DCRC files or others) can be scanned and projected. Internet references could also be used, with permissions.

The benefits of these workshops would be to:

1. Stimulate field birders to find and document challenging species/subspecies.
2. Provide a social setting for "old and new" birders to get to know each other better.
3. Get the committee more visible in front of the state birders, especially the so called "young turks" who might have the most interest in this type of program.
4. Be a "plug" for committee support.

This idea was discussed and will be coordinated with the newly chartered MOS Education Committee. No one has volunteered for a leadership position, at this time. This idea will be allowed to germinate for a while.

9. Elections:

- a. **New members.** Members completing their voting terms are Barry Cooper, Matt Hafner, and Bonnie Ott. The committee thanks them for all their efforts over the past three years. The new members elected were: Hans Holbrook, John Hubbell, and George Jett.
- b. **Secretary.** Phil Davis was reelected as the Secretary.
- c. **Chair.** Paul O'Brien was reelected as the Chair.

10. Next Year's Meetings Dates:

- a. **Annual Meeting:** Saturday, March 4, 2006 (shifted from the last Saturday in February to the first Saturday in March due to annual conflicts with Lewes, DE pelagic trips)
- b. **Skins Workshop:** Saturday, March 25, 2006 (tentative)

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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