

**MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.**



**Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee  
2017 Annual Meeting  
Saturday, February 25, 2017**

**Meeting Minutes and Annual Business Report**

**Contents**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction.....  | 4  |
| 1. Secretary's Report .....  | 5  |
| 1.1 Official Lists Changes and Status.....                           | 5  |
| 1.2 Review Package Status.....                                       | 6  |
| 1.2.1 Package Statistics.....  | 6  |
| 1.2.2 Packages in Circulation.....                                   | 6  |
| 1.2.3 Acceptance Rate .....  | 7  |
| 1.3 Database Contents Report .....                                   | 7  |
| 1.3.1 Database Categories.....                                       | 7  |
| 1.3.2 Database Contents.....   | 8  |
| 1.3.3 Reports Received Per Year.....                                 | 9  |
| 1.3.4 eBird Referrals.....   | 9  |
| 1.3.5 Identification and Reference Articles and Index.....           | 9  |
| 1.4 Communications .....   | 10 |
| 1.4.1 Acknowledgements and Decisions .....                           | 10 |
| 1.4.2 Email Traffic.....   | 10 |
| 1.4.3 External Communications Status Report .....                    | 11 |
| 1.4.4 Maryland Yellowthroat Articles .....                           | 11 |
| 1.5 MD/DCRC Storage Summary.....                                     | 11 |
| 1.6 MD/DCRC Office and Information Technology Resources Summary..... | 11 |
| 1.7 Member Package Review Performance.....                           | 12 |
| 1.8 MOS Liaison .....  | 12 |
| 1.8.1 Budget .....   | 12 |
| 2. MD/DCRC Processes and Sustaining Activities .....                 | 12 |
| 2.1 Taxonomy .....   | 12 |
| 2.1.1 AOU Taxonomy Updates .....                                     | 12 |
| 2.1.2 Other Taxonomy News.....                                       | 14 |
| 2.1.3 An Alternate Phylogeny Proposal.....                           | 14 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 3. MD/DCRC Report and Records [Inputs] .....   | 15 |
| 3.1 Current Reports .....  | 15 |
| 3.1.1 eBird .....  | 15 |
| 3.1.2 MD/DCRC Web Reporting Form .....   | 15 |
| 3.2 Historical Reports Canvass .....   | 15 |
| 4. MD/DCRC Outputs.....  | 16 |
| 4.1 Committee Decision Reports .....   | 16 |
| 4.1.1 Maryland Birdlife Decision Report .....  | 16 |
| 4.1.2 The [History of] the Rare Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia (RBMDC) ... | 16 |
| 4.2 Reports/Records Digitization Plan .....  | 16 |
| 4.3 Review List Chronology .....   | 16 |
| 4.4 MD/DCRC Web Page .....   | 16 |
| 4.4.1 MOS MD/DCRC Redesign .....   | 16 |
| 4.4.2 Adjunct MD/DCRC Web Pages .....  | 17 |
| 4.5 Outreach .....   | 17 |
| 4.5.1 MD/DCRC Presentations .....  | 17 |
| 4.5.2 MD/DCRC Contribution Recognition Award.....  | 18 |
| 4.6 Historical Checklist Project .....   | 18 |
| 4.6.1 Historical Bibliography .....  | 18 |
| 4.6.2 Integrated Historical Checklist.....   | 18 |
| 4.7 Other Publications .....   | 18 |
| 5. Old Business .....  | 19 |
| 5.1 Goals, Policies, and Procedures Document Revision .....                                | 19 |
| 5.2 Cylburn Collections Task Force.....  | 19 |
| 5.2.1 Journal Summaries .....  | 19 |
| 5.2.2 Kirkwood Collection .....  | 19 |
| 5.3 Exotics/Introduced/Questionable Species Review Policy .....                            | 19 |
| 5.4 Pelagic Boundaries .....   | 19 |
| 5.5 Review of DC Records Committee Records .....   | 20 |
| 5.6 Garrett Arctic Terns [2013-030] .....  | 20 |
| 5.7 eBird Impact on Records Committee Documentation .....                                  | 20 |
| 5.8 Issue with Printing eBird Checklist with Embedded Photos .....                         | 20 |
| 5.9 2016 Skins Workshop.....   | 20 |
| 5.10 Scopoli's Shearwaters .....   | 20 |
| 5.11 Recent Review Policy Changes .....  | 23 |
| 5.11.1 Fourth-Round Review Process .....   | 23 |
| 5.11.2 Resolving Group and Origin Votes.....   | 23 |
| 5.12 Franklin's Gulls .....  | 23 |
| 5.13 Circulation/Species Issues and Concerns .....   | 23 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 5.13.1 Problem Taxa - Species .....   | 23 |
| 5.13.2 Problem MD Specific Records .....  | 23 |
| 5.13.3 Observer Open Report Issues.....   | 24 |
| 5.14 Previous Record Re-Openings .....  | 24 |
| 5.14.1 2006-033 Lesser Black-Backed Gull; Washington County, C&O Canal, Lock 38; 25<br>Mar 2006 ..... | 24 |
| 5.14.2 2006 Cape Verde Shearwater.....  | 24 |
| 5.14.3 Slaty-Backed Gull.....   | 24 |
| 5.15 Unusual Subspecies/Forms Reviews .....   | 25 |
| 5.16 Regional or Range Reviews .....  | 25 |
| 6. New Business .....   | 25 |
| 6.1 Voting Standards – proposed by Russ [who was not able to attend at the meeting] .....             | 25 |
| 6.2 Group vs Species votes - Hugh.....  | 29 |
| 6.3 Revised Voting Process Diagram.....   | 29 |
| 6.4 eBird Data.....   | 31 |
| 7. Standing Agenda Items.....   | 31 |
| 7.1 Fourth Rounds .....   | 31 |
| 7.2 Record Re-Openings .....  | 31 |
| 7.3 Review List Changes .....   | 31 |
| 7.4 Records Separations/Combinations .....  | 31 |
| 7.5 Circulation/Species Issues and Concerns .....   | 32 |
| 8. Elections.....   | 32 |
| 8.1 New Members.....  | 32 |
| 8.2 Chair .....   | 32 |
| 8.3 Secretary.....  | 32 |
| 9. Next Meeting Dates.....  | 32 |
| 9.1 2016 Skins Workshop.....  | 32 |
| 9.2 2017 Annual Meeting.....  | 33 |
| 9.3 2017 Skins Workshop.....  | 34 |
| 10. Adjournment.....  | 34 |

## **Introduction**

The 2017 Annual Meeting of the Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee (MD/DCRC) was called to order on 25 February 2017 at 10:20 am at the home of the Secretary, Phil Davis, in Davidsonville, MD. Members present included Secretary, Phil Davis (Anne Arundel); and members Marcia Balestri (Worcester), Kathy Calvert (Frederick), Tim Carney (Baltimore), John Hubbell (DC), and Hugh McGuinness (DC). Unable to attend were Chair, Matt Hafner (Harford County); Russ Ruffing (Howard) and Mike Ostrowski (At Large). Mike and Matt participated on some topics via texting. MOS President, Barbara Johnson (Anne Arundel) and MOS Vice President, Robin Todd (Howard) also attended.

## 1. Secretary's Report

The Secretary reported the following information regarding last year's committee operations and the current committee status.

### 1.1 Official Lists Changes and Status

**Exhibit 1.1-1** summarizes recent annual additions of taxa to the Official List of the Birds of Maryland and the Official List of the Birds of the District of Columbia. The total numbers of species on the MD and DC lists now stand at 450 and 336, respectively. The July 2016 AOU [AOS] 57<sup>th</sup> Checklist Supplement changed the common names in bold.

| State | Calendar Year:             | 2009   | 2010                 | 2011                                    | 2012   | 2013  | 2014   | 2015                           | 2016                                   | 2017 (so far) |
|-------|----------------------------|--------|----------------------|---|--|---|--------|--------------------------------|--|---------------|
| MD    | MD List Total              | 435    | 436                  | 438                                     | 445  | 447   | 447    | 448                            | 450                                    | 450           |
|       | Species / Groups Added     | (none) | •Allen's Hummingbird | •Brown Booby<br>•Golden-crowned Sparrow | •Pink-footed Goose<br>•Barnacle Goose<br>• <b>Mexican [Green] Violetear</b><br>•White-tailed Kite<br>•Bell's Vireo<br>•Virginia's Warbler<br>•Cassin's Sparrow | •White-tailed Tropicbird<br>• <b>Trinidad [Herald] Petrel</b> | (none) | •Couch's Kingbird              | •Snowy Plover<br>•"Western" Flycatcher | (none)        |
|       | Subspecies or Forms Added  | (none) | (none)               | (none)                                  | (none)   | (none)  | (none) | (none)                         | (none)                                 | (none)        |
|       | Questionable Origins Added | (none) | (none)               | (none)                                  | •European Greenfinch   | • <i>Calipepla</i> species                                    | (none) | (none)                         | (none)                                 | (none)        |
|       | Exotic Origins Added       | (none) | (none)               | (none)                                  | (none)   | (none)  | (none) | (none)                         | (none)                                 | (none)        |
| DC    | DC List Total              | 330    | 330                  | 331                                     | 331  | 332   | 332    | 334                            | 336                                    | 336           |
|       | Species / Groups Added     | (none) | (none)               | •Painted Bunting                        | (none)   | •Arctic Tern  | (none) | •Ross's Goose<br>•Cave Swallow | •Thayer's Gull<br>•Bell's Vireo        | (none)        |
|       | Subspecies or Forms Added  | (none) | (none)               | (none)                                  | (none)   | (none)  | (none) | (none)                         | (none)                                 | (none)        |
|       | Questionable Origins Added | (none) | (none)               | (none)                                  | •Barnacle Goose  | (none)  | (none) | (none)                         | (none)                                 | (none)        |
|       | Exotics Added              | (none) | (none)               | (none)                                  | (none)   | (none)  | (none) | (none)                         | (none)                                 | (none)        |

**Exhibit 1.1-1. Annual Additions to the Official List of the Birds of Maryland and the Official List of the Birds of the District of Columbia.**

## 1.2 Review Package Status

### 1.2.1 Package Statistics

Exhibit 1.2.1-1 presents a calendar year summary 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. Decision categories consist of: "Accepted," "Accepted-Group," "Accepted-Form," "ID OK/Questionable Origin," "ID OK/Exotic Origin," and "Not Accepted."

| Year         | #Pkgs      | Avg 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        |
| 2003         | 8          | 37.6        | 79          | 69          | 45          | 57%        | 10        | 9        | 6        |
| 2004         | 7          | 45.9        | 90          | 63          | 52          | 58%        | 13        | 9        | 7        |
| 2005         | 5          | 26.3        | 95          | 63          | 70          | 74%        | 19        | 13       | 14       |
| 2006         | 7          | 22.6        | 110         | 66          | 85          | 77%        | 16        | 9        | 12       |
| 2007         | 9          | 21.9        | 124         | 80          | 78          | 63%        | 14        | 9        | 9        |
| 2008         | 9          | 13.3        | 146         | 79          | 82          | 56%        | 16        | 9        | 9        |
| 2009         | 6          | 15.0        | 83          | 37          | 49          | 59%        | 14        | 6        | 8        |
| 2010         | 5          | 21.9        | 67          | 45          | 41          | 61%        | 13        | 9        | 8        |
| 2011         | 7          | 29.1        | 101         | 74          | 55          | 54%        | 14        | 11       | 8        |
| 2012         | 6          | 18.1        | 105         | 46          | 79          | 75%        | 18        | 8        | 13       |
| 2013         | 8          | 11.5        | 129         | 80          | 87          | 67%        | 16        | 10       | 11       |
| 2014         | 4          | 7.0         | 72          | 43          | 46          | 64%        | 18        | 11       | 12       |
| 2015         | 3          | 6.1         | 56          | 48          | 44          | 79%        | 19        | 16       | 15       |
| 2016         | 5          | 15.5        | 96          | 77          | 75          | 78%        | 19        | 15       | 15       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>172</b> | <b>22.8</b> | <b>2275</b> | <b>1476</b> | <b>1451</b> | <b>64%</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>8</b> |

Exhibit 1.2.1-1. Annual Package Statistics Summary

### 1.2.2 Packages in Circulation

Exhibit 1.2.2-1 summarizes the contents of the packages that are in circulation at the time of this year's Annual Meeting.

| Year | Pkg#         | Start           | #Items    | #New      |
|------|--------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| 2017 | 167          | 01/18/2017      | 18        | 6         |
|      |              | <b>Totals</b>   | <b>1</b>  | <b>18</b> |
|      |              | <b>Averages</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>6</b>  |
|      | <b>Grand</b> | <b>Totals</b>   | <b>18</b> | <b>6</b>  |
|      | <b>Grand</b> | <b>Averages</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>6</b>  |

Exhibit 1.2.2-1. Summary of Packages Currently in Circulation

### 1.2.3 Acceptance Rate

As of this year's Annual Meeting, the committee's cumulative acceptance rate was 76.2 percent, down slightly from last year's 76.6 percent. This rate, shown in **Exhibit 1.2.3-1**, 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).

| Decision/<br>Status                               | # Decisions – Cumulative |            |            |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
|---|--------------------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|   | AM<br>2006               | AM<br>2007 | AM<br>2008 | AM<br>2009   | AM<br>2010   | AM<br>2011   | AM<br>2012   | AM<br>2013   | AM<br>2014   | AM<br>2015   | AM<br>2016   | AM<br>2017   |
| Accepted  | 521                      | 610        | 665        | 723          | 760          | 779          | 812          | 858          | 910          | 940          | 986          | 1018         |
| Accepted-Group                                    | 19                       | 25         | 28         | 31           | 33           | 33           | 33           | 33           | 34           | 35           | 35           | 35           |
| Accepted-Form                                     | 11                       | 13         | 15         | 16           | 16           | 16           | 16           | 16           | 16           | 16           | 16           | 16           |
| ID OK/<br>?? Origin                               | 8                        | 8          | 9          | 10           | 10           | 10           | 9            | 18           | 19           | 19           | 22           | 22           |
| ID OK/<br>Exotic Origin                           | 2                        | 2          | 2          | 2            | 2            | 2            | 2            | 2            | 2            | 2            | 10           | 10           |
| Not Accepted                                      | 152                      | 165        | 180        | 203          | 211          | 223          | 245          | 268          | 301          | 316          | 326          | 344          |
| <b>Cumulative<br/>Decisions<br/>Grand Totals:</b> | <b>723</b>               | <b>823</b> | <b>899</b> | <b>985</b>   | <b>1032</b>  | <b>1063</b>  | <b>1117</b>  | <b>1195</b>  | <b>1282</b>  | <b>1328</b>  | <b>1395</b>  | <b>1445</b>  |
| <b>Cumulative<br/>Acceptance<br/>Rate:</b>        | <b>79%</b>               | <b>80%</b> | <b>80%</b> | <b>79.4%</b> | <b>79.6%</b> | <b>79.0%</b> | <b>78.1%</b> | <b>77.6%</b> | <b>76.5%</b> | <b>76.2%</b> | <b>76.6%</b> | <b>76.2%</b> |

**Exhibit 1.2.3-1. MD/DCRC Acceptance Rate**

## 1.3 Database Contents Report

### 1.3.1 Database Categories

**Exhibit 1.3.1-1** defines the status/decision categories used in the MD/DCRC database.

| Decision                   | Decision / Status Description   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>S&amp;R</b>             | Sight records from the committee's baseline document: Stewart & Robbins, 1958, <i>The Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia</i> .                        |
| <b>DCRC</b>                | Records from the (defunct) DC Records Committee baseline (1984).  |
| <b>Accepted</b>            | Reports accepted by the committee.  |
| <b>Accepted-Group</b>      | Reports accepted only as to a species group or genus--where all other species of this group are reviewable at the observed location.                              |
| <b>Accepted-Form</b>       | Reports accepted as an unusual subspecies or form.  |
| <b>ID OK/?? Origin</b>     | Reports accepted for the species/group reported, however, the committee questioned whether the bird was a "natural" vagrant or a "wild" bird.                     |
| <b>ID OK/Exotic Origin</b> | Reports accepted for the species/group reported, however, a majority of the committee felt the bird was of exotic (i.e., captive) origin.                         |
| <b>Not Accepted</b>        | Reports not accepted by the committee.  |
| <b>Circulating</b>         | Reports currently in circulation and under review by the committee.   |
| <b>Recirculate</b>         | Reports where no committee decision was reached during the latest circulation. The report will be circulated again.   |
| <b>Ready</b>               | Reports ready for circulation. All relevant reports, or a sufficient number of reports, have been submitted.  |
| <b>Reviewable</b>          | Reports of a species/location that meets the committee's Review List criteria. Additional observer data is believed to be or may be outstanding.                  |
| <b>Unreviewable</b>        | Reports with insufficient descriptive identification details to permit a review by the committee. Typical for many older published sight records.                 |
| <b>Non-Review Species</b>  | Reports submitted for a species that does not meet the committee's Review List criteria.  |
| <b>Reopened</b>            | Reports reopened for consideration by the committee. Reopened reports are "removed" from the committee's database statistics and replaced by the reopened report. |
| <b>Withdrawn</b>           | Reports withdrawn by the original observer(s).  |
| <b>Retracted</b>           | Published reports - subsequently retracted by the observer(s).  |

**Exhibit 1.3.1-1. MD/DCRC Database Status/Decision Definitions**

### 1.3.2 Database Contents

Exhibit 1.3.2-1 summarizes the total current MD/DCRC database data records by status/decision category and indicates changes in the totals from the previous year. (Note: some of the earlier years' totals will differ from the sums shown since some unused historical status categories were deleted to conserve space.)

| State            | Category / Status           | 1998       | 1999        | 2000        | 2001        | 2002        | 2003        | 2004        | 2005        | 2006        | 2007        | 2008        | 2009        | 2010        | 2011        | 2012        | 2013        | 2014        | 2015        | 2016        | 2017        | Delta      |          |
|------------------|-----------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|----------|
| MD               | Stewart & Robbins           | 9          | 9           | 100         | 85          | 83          | 81          | 82          | 81          | 87          | 87          | 90          | 116         | 116         | 115         | 111         | 109         | 109         | 109         | 109         | 109         | 0          |          |
|                  | Accepted                    | 258        | 332         | 362         | 377         | 381         | 380         | 424         | 464         | 486         | 560         | 609         | 661         | 667         | 716         | 745         | 787         | 834         | 858         | 904         | 932         | 28         |          |
|                  | Accepted-Group              | 2          | 2           | 9           | 9           | 10          | 10          | 10          | 11          | 15          | 21          | 24          | 26          | 28          | 28          | 28          | 28          | 29          | 30          | 30          | 30          | 0          |          |
|                  | Accepted-Form               | -          | 1           | 3           | 3           | 3           | 6           | 7           | 10          | 11          | 13          | 15          | 16          | 16          | 16          | 16          | 16          | 16          | 16          | 16          | 16          | 16         | 0        |
|                  | ID OK?? Origin              | 5          | 5           | 5           | 5           | 6           | 7           | 8           | 8           | 8           | 8           | 9           | 10          | 10          | 10          | 10          | 9           | 17          | 18          | 18          | 21          | 21         | 0        |
|                  | ID OK/Exotic Origin         | -          | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 10          | 10         | 0        |
|                  | Not Accepted                | 119        | 124         | 127         | 132         | 133         | 132         | 140         | 147         | 149         | 161         | 174         | 193         | 200         | 212         | 232         | 251         | 283         | 298         | 308         | 326         | 18         |          |
|                  | Circulating                 | 45         | 28          | 9           | 15          | 49          | 78          | 29          | 13          | 84          | 57          | 33          | 35          | 32          | 57          | 62          | 49          | -           | 17          | 0           | 15          | 15         |          |
|                  | Recirculate                 | 22         | 21          | 27          | 25          | 23          | 18          | 49          | 54          | 34          | 25          | 38          | 19          | 26          | 15          | 24          | 15          | 23          | 17          | 23          | 16          | -7         |          |
|                  | Ready                       | 102        | 49          | 64          | 61          | 69          | 78          | 77          | 112         | 82          | 126         | 163         | 162         | 172         | 209         | 255         | 296         | 300         | 338         | 360         | 358         | -2         |          |
|                  | Reviewable                  | 35         | 45          | 36          | 35          | 42          | 44          | 66          | 249         | 520         | 679         | 694         | 757         | 764         | 855         | 981         | 1087        | 1118        | 1125        | 1131        | 1132        | 1          |          |
|                  | Reopened                    | -          | -           | 5           | 5           | 6           | 7           | 4           | 8           | 8           | 8           | 8           | 8           | 9           | 10          | 11          | 12          | 12          | 12          | 12          | 14          | 2          |          |
|                  | Non-Review Species          | 109        | 112         | 119         | 136         | 139         | 140         | 139         | 357         | 164         | 174         | 176         | 185         | 185         | 191         | 194         | 194         | 194         | 195         | 196         | 196         | 0          |          |
|                  | Withdrawn                   | 4          | 5           | 7           | 7           | 8           | 9           | 9           | 11          | 11          | 13          | 10          | 9           | 11          | 18          | 21          | 26          | 26          | 28          | 28          | 32          | 4          |          |
|                  | Retracted                   | -          | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | 1           | 5           | 5           | 8           | 13          | 16          | 17          | 17          | 18          | 18          | 0          |          |
| <b>MD Totals</b> |                             | <b>942</b> | <b>970</b>  | <b>1135</b> | <b>1179</b> | <b>1233</b> | <b>1275</b> | <b>1693</b> | <b>1871</b> | <b>2003</b> | <b>2289</b> | <b>2365</b> | <b>2523</b> | <b>2607</b> | <b>2816</b> | <b>3104</b> | <b>3302</b> | <b>3384</b> | <b>3499</b> | <b>3589</b> | <b>3648</b> | <b>59</b>  |          |
| DC               | Stewart & Robbins           | -          | -           | 25          | 8           | 8           | 8           | 7           | 9           | 9           | 10          | 12          | 24          | 23          | 22          | 18          | 17          | 17          | 17          | 17          | 17          | 0          |          |
|                  | DCRC                        | -          | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | 75          | 10          | 10          | 10          | 10          | 10          | 10          | 10          | 10          | 10          | 10          | 10          | 10          | 10          | 0          |          |
|                  | Accepted                    | 14         | 16          | 19          | 20          | 20          | 20          | 25          | 35          | 45          | 50          | 56          | 62          | 63          | 63          | 67          | 71          | 76          | 82          | 82          | 86          | 4          |          |
|                  | Accepted-Group              | 0          | 0           | 0           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 4           | 4           | 4           | 5           | 5           | 5           | 5           | 5           | 5           | 5           | 5           | 5           | 5           | 0          |          |
|                  | ID OK/Exotic Origin         | 0          | 0           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 0          |          |
|                  | Not Accepted                | 0          | 0           | 0           | 0           | 0           | 0           | 1           | 3           | 3           | 4           | 6           | 10          | 11          | 11          | 13          | 17          | 18          | 18          | 18          | 18          | 0          |          |
|                  | Circulating                 | 1          | 4           | 1           | 2           | 7           | 13          | 4           | 5           | 6           | 2           | 5           | 2           | -           | 11          | 8           | 5           | -           | -           | -           | 3           | 0          |          |
|                  | Recirculate                 | 1          | 2           | 4           | 4           | 5           | 2           | 9           | 3           | 4           | 4           | 3           | -           | 1           | -           | 2           | -           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 0          |          |
|                  | Ready                       | 6          | 2           | 3           | 7           | 14          | 21          | 15          | 19          | 8           | 11          | 10          | 11          | 12          | 15          | 22          | 21          | 27          | 29          | 36          | 30          | -6         |          |
|                  | Reviewable                  | 1          | 7           | 9           | 5           | 6           | 4           | 10          | 45          | 62          | 71          | 80          | 75          | 75          | 79          | 122         | 127         | 126         | 124         | 124         | 125         | 1          |          |
|                  | Unreviewable                | 8          | 13          | 17          | 16          | 28          | 30          | 27          | 37          | 33          | 33          | 34          | 32          | 33          | 39          | 43          | 43          | 43          | 44          | 44          | 44          | 0          |          |
|                  | Non-Review Species          | 3          | 3           | 3           | 6           | 7           | 7           | 11          | 26          | 20          | 20          | 30          | 39          | 42          | 49          | 51          | 55          | 53          | 53          | 53          | 53          | 0          |          |
|                  | Retracted                   | -          | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | 4           | 4           | 4           | 4           | 5           | 1          |          |
|                  | Withdrawn                   | -          | -           | -           | -           | 0           | 1           | 2           | 3           | 4           | 4           | 4           | 4           | 4           | 4           | 7           | 7           | 8           | 8           | 8           | 9           | 1          |          |
|                  | <b>DC Totals</b>            |            | <b>34</b>   | <b>57</b>   | <b>95</b>   | <b>98</b>   | <b>126</b>  | <b>125</b>  | <b>206</b>  | <b>228</b>  | <b>240</b>  | <b>261</b>  | <b>260</b>  | <b>283</b>  | <b>283</b>  | <b>315</b>  | <b>375</b>  | <b>383</b>  | <b>389</b>  | <b>396</b>  | <b>403</b>  | <b>407</b> | <b>4</b> |
| ??               | Stewart & Robbins           | -          | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | 3           | 3           | 2           | 2           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 0          |          |
|                  | Ready                       | -          | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 0           | 0           | 0          |          |
|                  | Reviewable                  | -          | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | 10          | 5           | 4           | 3           | 14          | 14          | 14          | 14          | 13          | 13          | 0          |          |
|                  | Unreviewable                | -          | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | 1           | 2           | 2           | 4           | 8           | 7           | 7           | 7           | 4           | 4           | 4           | 4           | 4           | 4           | 0          |          |
|                  | Non-Review Species          | -          | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 0           | 0           | 0          |          |
|                  | Retracted                   | -          | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 0          |          |
|                  | Withdrawn                   | -          | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 0          |          |
| <b>?? Totals</b> |                             |            |             | <b>2</b>    | <b>3</b>    | <b>5</b>    | <b>17</b>   | <b>7</b>    | <b>7</b>    | <b>11</b>   | <b>21</b>   | <b>15</b>   | <b>13</b>   | <b>13</b>   | <b>21</b>   | <b>23</b>   | <b>23</b>   | <b>23</b>   | <b>21</b>   | <b>21</b>   | <b>0</b>    |            |          |
| DE               | Withdrawn                   | -          | -           | -           | -           | -           | 2           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | -           | 2           | 2           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 0          |          |
| VA               | (Various)                   | 0          | 0           | 0           | 4           | 6           | 12          | 34          | 14          | 14          | 22          | 21          | 15          | 13          | 13          | 13          | 16          | 15          | 15          | 15          | 15          | 0          |          |
| NY/<br>NJ        | Withdrawn                   |            |             |             |             |             |             | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 1           | 2           | 2           | 2           | 0          |          |
|                  | <b>Outside State Totals</b> |            |             |             | <b>4</b>    | <b>6</b>    | <b>14</b>   | <b>35</b>   | <b>15</b>   | <b>15</b>   | <b>23</b>   | <b>22</b>   | <b>16</b>   | <b>14</b>   | <b>14</b>   | <b>19</b>   | <b>18</b>   | <b>18</b>   | <b>18</b>   | <b>18</b>   | <b>18</b>   | <b>0</b>   |          |
|                  | <b>Grand Totals</b>         | <b>976</b> | <b>1029</b> | <b>1234</b> | <b>1283</b> | <b>1369</b> | <b>1409</b> | <b>1922</b> | <b>2126</b> | <b>2270</b> | <b>2574</b> | <b>2655</b> | <b>2834</b> | <b>2924</b> | <b>3160</b> | <b>3523</b> | <b>3726</b> | <b>3815</b> | <b>3936</b> | <b>4031</b> | <b>4094</b> | <b>63</b>  |          |

Exhibit 1.3.2-1. MD/DCRC Database Summary as of 02/23/2017 and Changes from Previous Annual Meetings.

The questionable jurisdiction data records ("??") typically deal with historical records, mostly from the Potomac River, which cannot be determined to be MD, DC, or VA.



### 1.3.3 Reports Received Per Year

**Exhibit 1.3.3-1** indicates the number of reports the MD/DCRC has received each year, beginning with 1995 when the committee began recording dates-of-receipt. The table separates “current” reports (defined as initial documentation received within twenty-four months after the first sighting date) and “historical” reports (documentation received more than twenty-four months after the first sighting date). The committee’s emphasis in locating old published historical reports during the period from 1995 through 2016 can be seen in the totals of historical reports received during this period. From 1995 through 2016 (since 2017 is still incomplete), the number of “current” (i.e., contemporary) reports received per year has averaged approximately 67.

| Year           | Total Reports | Historical Reports | "Current" Reports |
|----------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1995           | 186           | 135                | 51                |
| 1996           | 103           | 50                 | 53                |
| 1997           | 264           | 211                | 53                |
| 1998           | 44            | 14                 | 30                |
| 1999           | 200           | 151                | 49                |
| 2000           | 56            | 5                  | 51                |
| 2001           | 80            | 34                 | 46                |
| 2002           | 42            | 10                 | 32                |
| 2003           | 447           | 392                | 55                |
| 2004           | 194           | 111                | 83                |
| 2005           | 152           | 84                 | 68                |
| 2006           | 272           | 183                | 89                |
| 2007           | 140           | 55                 | 85                |
| 2008           | 171           | 107                | 64                |
| 2009           | 105           | 16                 | 89                |
| 2010           | 192           | 116                | 76                |
| 2011           | 413           | 308                | 105               |
| 2012           | 197           | 117                | 80                |
| 2013           | 98            | 9                  | 89                |
| 2014           | 115           | 23                 | 92                |
| 2015           | 99            | 25                 | 74                |
| 2016           | 62            | 3                  | 59                |
| <b>Totals</b>  | <b>3632</b>   | <b>2159</b>        | <b>1473</b>       |
| <b>Average</b> |               |                    | <b>67</b>         |

**Exhibit 1.3.3-1. MD/DCRC Total, Current, and Historical Reports Received per Year**

### 1.3.4 eBird Referrals

During 2016, 12 reports were referred by eBird (i.e., not initially, or in parallel, posted to MDBirding).

### 1.3.5 Identification and Reference Articles and Index

The committee now has 1912 identification and distribution references in its files for 153 taxa. The trend of these references is summarized in **Exhibit 1.3.4-1**.

| Annual Meeting | Number of ID and Reference Articles Indexed | # Taxa |
|----------------|---|--------|
| 2006           | 445   | n/a    |
| 2007           | 574   | 81     |
| 2008           | 639   | 93     |
| 2009           | 681   | 100    |
| 2010           | 741   | 104    |
| 2011           | 847   | 109    |
| 2012           | 916   | 116    |
| 2013           | 1100  | 126    |
| 2014           | 1240  | 133    |
| 2015           | 1420  | 140    |
| 2016           | 1574  | 147    |
| 2017           | 1912  | 153    |

**Exhibit 1.3.4-1. MD/DCRC Identification and References Captured**

**1.4 Communications**

**1.4.1 Acknowledgements and Decisions**

The committee previously discontinued direct USPS mail (“snail mail”) of hardcopy acknowledgements to observers consistent with its revised communications policies. The total number of observer documentation captures as of the date of each Annual Meeting is shown in **Exhibit 1.4.1-1**. Also shown are the number of decisions rendered and the related number of observers as of the date of each Annual Meeting.

| Annual Meeting | # Observer Documentation Captures | Decisions   |             |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                |                                   | # Decisions | # Observers |
| 2006           | 119                               | 105         | 359         |
| 2007           | 181                               | 13          | 33          |
| 2008           | 125                               | 74          | 207         |
| 2009           | 137                               | 67          | 182         |
| 2010           | 141                               | 42          | 121         |
| 2011           | 177                               | 29          | 110         |
| 2012           | 242                               | 79          | 294         |
| 2013           | 203                               | 20          | 60          |
| 2014           | 208                               | 63          | 194         |
| 2015           | 383                               | 29          | 77          |
| 2016           | 310                               | 41          | 329         |
| 2017           | 197                               | 50          | 328         |

**Exhibit 1.4.1-1. Acknowledgements and Decision Notices Mailed.**

**1.4.2 Email Traffic**

**Exhibit 1.4.2-1** summarizes the Secretary’s outgoing MD/DCRC-related email messages over the past years.

| Calendar Year | # MD/DCRC Email Messages Sent |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| 2000          | 128                           |
| 2001          | 287                           |
| 2002          | 570                           |
| 2003          | 731                           |
| 2004          | 610                           |
| 2005          | 1212                          |
| 2006          | 1472                          |
| 2007          | 1647                          |
| 2008          | 1981                          |
| 2009          | 1562                          |
| 2010          | 1492                          |
| 2011          | 2251                          |
| 2012          | 1790                          |
| 2013          | 1248                          |
| 2014          | 1173                          |
| 2015          | 1207                          |
| 2016          | 1275                          |

**Exhibit 1.4.2-1. Secretary Email Messages Sent by Calendar Year**

### 1.4.3 External Communications Status Report

Each year, the Secretary receives queries that are outside the routine scope of the committee's operations. Some of these contacts are notable since they typically support the scientific community and/or other records committees. During the past year, some of the notable queries received are shown in **Exhibit 1.4.3-1**.

| Date | Subject                               | Correspondent                |
|------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Jan  | Book: Birds of MD, DE, and DC         | B Beehler (Smithsonian)      |
| Jan  | Checklist: Mid-Atlantic Region        | D Sommers (Aud Soc of No VA) |
| Feb  | Book: Birds of MD, DE, and DC         | B Beehler (Smithsonian)      |
| Feb  | Burrowing Owl ssp ID                  | Birdwg01                     |
| Apr  | AOU Supplement questions              | T Chesser (Smithsonian/AOU)  |
| Sep  | Heard only and eBird report processes | I Gardner (PAORC)            |

**Exhibit 1.4.3-1. External Communications (non-routine) Highlights.**

**Extirpated Species Status.** Recently, the Secretary was contacted by Jim McCann of Maryland DNR regarding the status of extirpated species in Maryland. The Secretary will reply to him after the Annual Meeting. **OPEN.**

### 1.4.4 Maryland Yellowthroat Articles

Articles published during the last calendar year in the MOS newsletter, *The Maryland Yellowthroat*, are shown in **Exhibit 1.4.4-1**.

| Article                          | Issue Date   |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| MD/DCRC Decisions (Pkgs 162-164) | Nov-Dec 2016 |

**Exhibit 1.4.4-1. Maryland Yellowthroat Articles Published during 2013.**

### 1.5 MD/DCRC Storage Summary

A summary of the amount of MD/DCRC storage, both hardcopy/paper and electronic, is shown in **Exhibit 1.5-1**.

| Media                                  | Contents  | Amount of Storage     |
|--|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Physical<br/>(Paper/Hardcopy)</b>   | Archived Decisions  | 28 document boxes     |
|  | Active Queue reports  | 14 document boxes     |
|  | Previous package reports  | 4 document boxes      |
|  | Current packages (in circulation)   | 1 document boxes      |
|  | Current/active projects   | 1 document box        |
|  | Video/audio tapes (older analog media)  | 1 document box        |
|  | Identification/reference files  | 6 document boxes      |
|  | Correspondence/miscellaneous files  | 14 document boxes     |
|  | Supplies  | 2 document boxes      |
|  | <i>Maryland Birdlife</i> journals /<br><i>Maryland Yellowthroat</i> newsletters | 3 feet of shelf space |
|  | <i>American Birds</i> journals  | 3 feet of shelf space |
| Historical references (S&R, AOU, etc.) | 4 feet of shelf space   |                       |
| <b>Electronic</b>                      | Documentation, references, databases, etc.                                      | 54.3 GB               |

**Exhibit 1.5-1. MD/DCRC Storage Summary**

### 1.6 MD/DCRC Office and Information Technology Resources Summary

Summarized in **Exhibit 1.6-1** are the various office and information technology resources that are required to operate and support the committee.

| Type                    | Resources   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Communications Services | Internet, email, phone  |
| Reproduction Services   | Occasional bulk copying, (previously) film duplication  |
| Office Supplies         | File folders, file jackets, storage boxes, envelopes (letter size and flat), mailing labels, CD labels, file labels, photo marking pens, highlighters, ink pens, staplers   |
| Consumables             | Printer/copier paper, staples, copier/printer toner cartridges, copier/printer drum, laser toner cartridges, print heads, blank CDs, blank DVDs   |
| Hardware                | Desktop computer, black & white laser printer, color laser printer, duplex copiers, flatbed scanner, film scanner, CD/DVD burner, external backup disks, video capture interface  |
| Software                | Operating system (MS Windows 10); Anti-virus (Norton 360); Anti-malware (Malware Bytes); Online backups (local and remote): MozyPro File manager (Power Desk Pro 9); Email client (Eudora 7.1); Office suites (MS Office 365, Office Perfect X8); Browsers (IE, Firefox, Chrome, and others); Database (Paradox 11); Relational report writer (R&R 12.5); Screen/video capture (SnagIt 13); CD/DVD burner (HP SmartMedia, Roxio Burn); CD/DVD Labeling (exPressit SE 2.1); Media players (Windows Media Player, WinDVD); Video capture (YouTube Downloader); Video editor (Pinnacle Studio 20); Audio editor (Replay Converter 5, Replay Media Splitter); PDF applications (Adobe Acrobat 9 Standard, Power PDF Standard, and others); Photo processing (Adobe Photoshop Elements 15); Scanning software (HP Director, VueScan x64, NikonScan 4); OCR programs (Readiris Pro 15, OmniPage Professional 18); Geobrowser (Google Earth Pro); Mindmapping: MindManager 2017; |

**Exhibit 1.6-1. MD/DCRC Office and Information Technology Resources**

### 1.7 Member Package Review Performance

The Secretary compiled and distributed to each member an overall averaged summary report and a package detail report that provides the length of time each member retained each review package.

### 1.8 MOS Liaison

#### 1.8.1 Budget

This year (2017-2018), the committee budget was approved at \$100 by the MOS. Future budgets will be carefully developed as we move into the data digitization phase in our planning for *The Rare Birds of Maryland and District of Columbia*.

## 2. MD/DCRC Processes and Sustaining Activities

### 2.1 Taxonomy

#### 2.1.1 AOU Taxonomy Updates

The Secretary has upgraded the MD/DCRC database to reflect changes based on the AOS's 57th Supplement. **CLOSED**. [The AOU has changed its name to the American Ornithological Society (AOS). Over the next year, the Secretary will make administrative changes to committee documents to reflect this change.]

Highlights of the 57<sup>th</sup> Supplement changes, that pertain to our region, are:

**Compliance with the Latest AOS 57th Supplement Taxonomy Common and Scientific Name Changes - affecting the MD and DC Database**

The common name of the Maryland record of Green Violetear is now the Mexican Violetear (*Colibri thalassinus*) due to an extralimital split.

An earlier 1984 Not Accepted Maryland report of Caribbean Coot has now been lumped with American Coot (*Fulica americana*).

The Sandhill Crane genus has been changed to *Antigone*.

The genus of Sooty Shearwater and Great Shearwater has been changed to *Ardenna*.

The common name of Orange Bishop changed to Northern Red Bishop (*Euplectes franciscanus*).

### **Compliance with the Latest Taxonomy Order - the AOS 57th Supplement**

The AOU North American Checklist 57th Supplement, issued in July 2016, included major changes to the order of the complete North American checklist. The MD/DCRC data products on the committee's web page now conform to these new changes. These changes to the order of MD and DC species are extensive and there are really no good "anchor points" to refer to when describing the changes. However, a quick, unofficial attempt at a summary follows:

The loons now immediately follow the White-tailed Tropicbird, after the gulls and terns.

The American Flamingo now immediately follows the Wild Turkey, and occurs before the grebes.

The seabirds (albatrosses, petrels, shearwaters, storm-petrels) now immediately follow the previously moved loons.

The White-tailed Tropicbird now immediately follows the Black Skimmer.

The Wood Stork, Magnificent Frigatebird, Brown Booby, Northern Gannet, cormorants, Anhinga, pelicans, bitterns, herons, egrets, ibis, spoonbill, vultures, Osprey, kites, eagles and hawks now immediately follow the seabirds.

The rail-like birds, Limpkin, Sandhill Crane, shorebirds, skuas, jaegers, auk-like seabirds, gulls, terns, and Black Skimmer now immediately follow the hummingbirds.

The pigeons, doves, cuckoos, ani, owls, nightjars, swift, and hummingbirds now immediately follow the grebes.

The order of the some of the vireo species changed.

The American Pipit now immediately follows the House Sparrow.

The longspurs, Snow Bunting, warblers, sparrows, tanagers, cardinals, grosbeaks, buntings, Dickcissel, Bobolink, and the blackbirds now immediately follow the Evening Grosbeak.

The Pine Grosbeak, Purple and House Finch, crossbills, redpolls, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, and Evening Grosbeak now immediately follow the American Pipit.

House Sparrow now immediately follows the waxwings.

### 2.1.2 Other Taxonomy News

On January 20, 2017, the British Ornithological Union (BOU) announced that they would adopt the IOC World List as their taxonomic authority.

The summary of the BOU decision follows:

(<https://www.bou.org.uk/about-the-bou/bou-adopt-ioc-world-bird-list/>):

The British Ornithologists' Union (BOU) recognises the value of, and is keen to move towards, a standardised global avian taxonomy. As such we wish to adopt one of the current global taxonomies, and use this for all BOU activities, including the British List.

From 1 January 2018 the BOU will adopt the International Ornithological Congress (IOC) World Bird List for all its taxonomic needs, including the British List. This follows a detailed review by the BOU's Records Committee (BOURC).

From the BOU Records Committee (BOURC) via Birdguides:

(<http://www.birdguides.com/webzine/article.asp?a=6151>):

#### Impact to the British List

BOURC's landmark decision to adopt IOC taxonomy will inevitably mean changes for its British list. Overall it would appear that the total of species recorded in Britain is likely to increase slightly, with a number of "splits" recognised by IOC but not currently by BOU. For example, Isabelline (*Lanius isabellinus*) and Red-tailed (*L. phoenicuroides*) Shrikes are considered two separate species, and Bean Goose becomes Taiga (*Anser fabalis*) and Tundra Bean Goose (*A. rossicus*). Fea's Petrel (*Pterodroma feae*) and Desertas Petrel (*P. deserta*) become two species. Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*) is also recognised by IOC as a full species, and not as a subspecies of Iceland Gull (*L. glaucooides*).

However, one significant loss from the future British list is Hudsonian Whimbrel, which remains a subspecies of Whimbrel, despite a review of its taxonomic position. The redpoll complex is reduced from three species to two — Common and Arctic — meaning the loss of Lesser Redpoll as a species. IOC's handling of two taxonomic minefields, crossbills and subalpine warblers, remains in line with current BOURC treatment.

(<https://www.bou.org.uk/about-the-bou/bou-adopt-ioc-world-bird-list/>)

### 2.1.3 An Alternate Phylogeny Proposal

Hugh and Andy related that another new taxonomy proposal has been put forward that would drastically alter the taxonomic order, if adopted.

The citation is:

Richard O. Prum, Jacob S. Berv, Alex Dornburg, Daniel J. Field, Jeffrey P. Townsend, Emily Moriarty Lemmon & Alan R. Lemmon. 2015. A comprehensive phylogeny of birds (Aves) using targeted next-generation DNA sequencing. *Nature* 526, 569–573.

The abstract reads:

Although reconstruction of the phylogeny of living birds has progressed tremendously in the last decade, the evolutionary history of Neoaves—a clade that encompasses nearly all living bird species—remains the greatest unresolved challenge in dinosaur systematics. Here we investigate avian phylogeny with an unprecedented scale of data: >390,000 bases of genomic sequence data from each of 198 species of living birds, representing all major avian lineages, and two crocodylian outgroups. Sequence data were collected using anchored hybrid enrichment, yielding 259 nuclear loci with an average length of 1,523 bases for a total data set of over  $7.8 \times 10^7$  bases. Bayesian and

maximum likelihood analyses yielded highly supported and nearly identical phylogenetic trees for all major avian lineages. Five major clades form successive sister groups to the rest of Neoaves: (1) a clade including nightjars, other caprimulgiforms, swifts, and hummingbirds; (2) a clade uniting cuckoos, bustards, and turacos with pigeons, mesites, and sandgrouse; (3) cranes and their relatives; (4) a comprehensive waterbird clade, including all diving, wading, and shorebirds; and (5) a comprehensive landbird clade with the enigmatic hoatzin (*Opisthocomus hoazin*) as the sister group to the rest. Neither of the two main, recently proposed Neoavian clades—Columbea and Passerea<sup>1</sup>—were supported as monophyletic. The results of our divergence time analyses are congruent with the palaeontological record, supporting a major radiation of crown birds in the wake of the Cretaceous–Palaeogene (K–Pg) mass extinction.

Additional information can be found here ...

<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v526/n7574/full/nature15697.html>

### **3. MD/DCRC Report and Records [Inputs]**

#### **3.1 Current Reports**

Current reports are contemporaneous reports, vs. older, historical reports.

##### **3.1.1 eBird**

The committee and the eBird Team continue to collaborate on historical and current rarity reports regarding information that does not come directly to the committee. Non-confirmed reviewable reports, including historical reports filed by observers, are referred to the MD/DCRC.

##### **3.1.2 MD/DCRC Web Reporting Form**

At last year's Annual Meeting, it was suggested that the current MD/DCRC web reporting form may be an artifact of the pre-digital camera era and could be revamped. This was taken as a good opportunity for a best practice survey to see how other records committee are handling reporting forms in this highly digital era.

The Secretary conducted a survey of other records committees' best practices regarding reporting form. Each of US committee's web site was visited and a screen capture was taken of their web reporting form. This information has not yet been extensively evaluated, however, a quick inspection of the other committee's forms seems to indicate that the contents of our form is in line with the forms of others.

The raw screen captures, including committee home pages, can be found here ...

<https://mddcresources.wordpress.com/2017/02/06/records-committees-web-sites-best-practices-survey/>

#### **3.2 Historical Reports Canvass**

The Secretary presented selected status reports to the committee and answered committee questions on the Historical Canvass. Historical projects include:

- M Iliff/H Mudd Historical Reports Canvass – Done; not documented
- BBL Reconciliation – Done; documented [PCD reported on a recent update to BBL data]
- BBS Reconciliation – Done; documented
- N.A. BPP Reconciliation – Done; not documented
- PWRC Nest Cards – Done; not documented
- Royal Navy Bird Watching Society Canvass – Done; documented
- Christmas Bird Count Canvass – Done; not documented
- May Count Canvass – Done; not documented

- PWRC/CS Robbins Archives – Data pulled; not integrated yet, not documented
- Lighthouse Survey Records – Done; not documented
- USNM Specimens – In progress; not documented
- DC Records Committee files – Revisit; not documented
- MD/DC Baseline Survey (S&R 1958) – Done; not documented
- Ornithological Collections Database Survey – In progress; not documented
- Cylburn Journals Canvass – Done; documentation in progress
- Biological Survey Bird Stomach Contents Survey – In progress; not documented
- eBird Reconciliation – In progress (as observers report); not documented
- Historical Ornithology Canvass – Done; not documented
- Maryland Birdlife “The Season” Report Database Reconciliation – In progress; not documented
- Exotics/Introduced Canvass (MB/eBird) – Done; not documented
- Smithsonian (Birds Division and Archives Unit) References Canvass – In progress
- General Ornithology Canvass – In progress

## 4. MD/DCRC Outputs

Since three members of the committee turnover each year, the following list of committee output products and planned output projects is presented as an opportunity for questions or comments by the members:

### 4.1 Committee Decision Reports

#### 4.1.1 *Maryland Birdlife Decision Report*

Years ago, the MD/DCRC published three formal decision reports in *Maryland Birdlife*; however, this series of reports stalled due to lack of volunteers. Instead, the Secretary now publishes decision summaries, without editorial comment, in the MOS newsletter, *The Maryland Yellowthroat*. The strategy to overcome this deficient is the next item, below.

#### 4.1.2 *The [History of] the Rare Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia (RBMDC)*

This committee output is envisioned as a future publication that captures the complete results of the committee’s decisions, since inception.

### 4.2 Reports/Records Digitization Plan

To prepare for the RBMDC and to distribute the workload among various species account authors, the plan is to digitize all MD/DCRC documentation. The scope of digitization will include slides, photos, text, and references material. As we get ready to plan this project, we will seek the advice of MOS members who have experience in this area. **CONTINUING/OPEN**.

### 4.3 Review List Chronology

This project is to create a data table that captures the change in status of taxa on the MD/DCRC Review Lists, over time. This table can be used in many committee reports and in the RBMDC species accounts. This project is in-work. **OPEN**.

### 4.4 MD/DCRC Web Page

#### 4.4.1 *MOS MD/DCRC Redesign*

MOS President Barbara Johnson reported that the MOS web site is about to undergo a total redesign. The Secretary noted that the on-line reporting form does not automatically echo information back to the submitter and the format of the on-line reporting form is not the same as the latest version found in the MS Word and PDF versions.



The Secretary has marked up the design of the current MD/DCRC web page, providing new links and information. A copy of this markup is available for the members to review; however, the update has not yet been provided to the MOS Webmaster. **OPEN**.

At the 2016 MD/DC Records Committee Annual Meeting, the Secretary took an action item to survey current best practices from other records committees regarding (1) committee web site appearances and functions, (2) sighting reporting forms and (3) user database access. In response to the action item, the MD/DCRC Secretary visited each United States records committee web page and captured screen images of (1) the home page, (2) available reporting forms, and (3) any database search pages or forms. These screen captures were compiled into a large (155 page) Word document, which was then saved as a PDF. A state contents list was added to the front of the document for the convenience of users. This document is raw data and is provided without comment. The Secretary has quickly reviewed this information to identify what are current best practices. The Secretary plans to summarize these findings. **OPEN**. In the meantime, this information might provide some benefit to other records committees, therefore, the screen captures are contained in the PDF document posted at the link below ...

<https://mddcrcresources.wordpress.com/2017/02/06/records-committees-web-sites-best-practices-survey/>

#### **4.4.2 Adjunct MD/DCRC Web Pages**

The following MD/DCRC-related web pages currently reside in a commercial blog space (Word Press) web site:

##### **MD/DCRC Blog**

<https://mddcrcblog.wordpress.com/>

##### **MD/DCRC Resources**

<https://mddcrcresources.wordpress.com/>

### **4.5 Outreach**

#### **4.5.1 MD/DCRC Presentations**

There are two MD/DCRC-related presentations available for local chapters and clubs:

**Behind the Scenes of the MD/DC Records Committee.** Last year, the Secretary gave the presentation, "Behind the Scenes of the MD/DC Records Committee" to the Frederick Chapter in May 2016. The synopsis of the presentation is ...

Phil Davis has been the Secretary of the MD/DC Records Committee for over 20 years. In this presentation, he first addresses some obligatory "dull" records committee topics, including the history, role, and functions of the committee. Next, he segues into describing the committee's "historical canvass" and shares intriguing images of and anecdotes about some of our region's more unusual and interesting records. Finally, in a masterful crescendo, he divulges some behind the scenes "dirty little secrets" through some tales of MD and DC's little-known vintage records that will eventually comprise the committee's future publication, *The History of the Rare Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia*.

**Maryland's Next Species.** The Secretary also has a MD/DCRC presentation entitled, "Maryland's Next Species." The synopsis of this presentation is ...

Periodically, the editors of the *Maryland Yellowthroat* poll Maryland birders to determine which species they predict will be the next to be observed in our state. This presentation provides an update to the latest survey, indicating which species have since been recorded in the state, which ones are currently under review by the MD/DC Records Committee, and which ones are still predicted. For the still-predicted species, field identification is discussed,

including key field marks with emphasis on how to separate similar species. This multi-media presentation includes both images and vocalizations. Tips on where and when to look are also covered.

#### **4.5.2 MD/DCRC Contribution Recognition Award**

At the 2009 Annual Meeting, the committee established an MD/DCRC occasional award to recognize field birders that have provide exceptional support to the committee over the years with documentation (written and photographs) of review species to document the status and history of MD/DC birding. The permanent name of this award will be taken from the first recipient. The Secretary has, after considerable unwarranted delays, reinitiated the efforts to go forward with this award. A draft of the presentation information was provided to the committee members. The presenting of this award is being coordinated with the MOS Executive Board. **OPEN.**

#### **4.6 Historical Checklist Project**

The following projects are personal pet projects of the committee Secretary. They are related to work of the MD/DCRC but are more historical in nature. The Secretary plans to continue work on these projects as time allows.

##### **4.6.1 Historical Bibliography**

A master bibliography is being compiled of historical checklists that encompass Maryland and/or DC. The hope is that these checklists can eventually be posted to the web as PDF documents. Some are already available online. **OPEN.**

##### **4.6.2 Integrated Historical Checklist**

The Secretary is planning to generate an integrated master checklist that indicates when and by which authority each species was added (as a “first”) to the “official” state checklists (for MD and DC) over time, beginning with the earliest checklists. **OPEN.**

#### **4.7 Other Publications**

Now that *Maryland Birdlife* has resumed publication, there are many committee-related articles that can be developed and submitted, for example:

- Maryland's Great Gray Owl
- The Potomac River Ivory Gull
- The Accokeek Trumpeter Swan Tibia Bone
- Unpublished USNM Regional Rarities
- MD/DC Ornithological Pioneer Bios (by Dave Bridge)
- Maryland and DC's "Firsts"
- Results of the MD/DCRC BBL Historical Canvass
- Results of the MD/DCRC BPP Historical Canvass
- Results of the MD/DCRC BBS Historical Canvass
- Results of the MD/DCRC RNBWS Historical Canvass
- A Summary the DC Records Committee Activities
- Regional Passenger Pigeon Records
- Regional Carolina Parakeet Records
- Regional Heath Hen Records
- The Potomac River 1915 Barrow's Goldeneye
- Observations of Rev. White (1600s)
- and more

## 5. Old Business

### 5.1 Goals, Policies, and Procedures Document Revision

A minor update will be required to the MD/DCRC Goals, Policies, and Procedures document to change references from the AOU to the AOS. The Secretary will wait until after this year's Annual Meeting to see if any other changes to the document are adopted. **OPEN.**

### 5.2 Cylburn Collections Task Force

The Secretary participated on this MOS/Baltimore Bird Club task force primarily to locate and preserve records related to reviewable historic records.

#### 5.2.1 Journal Summaries

This project by the Secretary is still in progress. Field journals have been analyzed and summary documents prepared for several of the Baltimore field journal contributors: Kirkwood, Fisher, Cook, Sommers. Work on Hoen is in process. A few others have yet to be done, including Wholey. **OPEN.**

#### 5.2.2 Kirkwood Collection

In January 2016, the Secretary and the Cylburn Collections Manager, John Denehey, visited the Mt. Aetna Nature Center in Smithville, MD and met with Floyd Murdoch to see the Kirkwood egg collection and catalogs that reside there. Some of the Kirkwood catalogs were borrowed for scanning. Additional details are here ...

<https://mddcrcresources.wordpress.com/2016/07/05/journals-and-catalogs-of-frank-c-kirkwood-from-the-mt-aetna-nature-center/>

These documents have been scanned and the documents can now be returned. **OPEN.**

### 5.3 Exotics/Introduced/Questionable Species Review Policy

All eBird exotic reports were captured in the MD/DCRC database. A white paper dealing with records committee best practices related to exotic species is in work by the Secretary. Progress was made prior to this year's Annual Meeting; however, the task was completed due to other priorities. Deferred, one more year (!). **OPEN.**

However, one "best practice" that was identified from surveying other records committee (FOSRC) is the concept of an Exotic Species "Log." This concept provides a mechanism to request and capture documentation on exotic species without having to subject them to the formal committee review process. Expect the Secretary to propose this next year with the completion of the "exotics white paper." **OPEN.**

### 5.4 Pelagic Boundaries

The next phase of research, due to our recent change of Maryland's pelagic boundaries, focuses on MD records from Wilmington Canyon. At the 2016 Annual Meeting, Matt Hafner reported the following:

For historical pelagic records, most rarities were reported according to the canyon where they were observed. With the new boundaries, Poor Man's Canyon moves from Virginia to Maryland, Wilmington Canyon is no longer in Maryland, and Baltimore Canyon remains in Maryland. Accepted records from Wilmington Canyon will need to be researched and likely removed.

Hafner compiled a list of records of interest in 2014 and during that annual meeting, some records were voted to be "grandfathered" in by their acceptance through VARCOM. The committee has now decided against that approach and Hafner will contact VARCOM to obtain the

relevant information so these records can be reviewed by the MD/DCRC. This action remains **OPEN**.

### **5.5 Review of DC Records Committee Records**

At last year's meeting, the Secretary raised a question about the committee's earlier decision to grandfather-in the accepted records of the defunct DC Records Committee (DCRC), similar to the related question regarding grandfathering-in pelagic records from other states due to the pelagic boundary changes. A list of DCRC records was distributed to the members. It was noted that many of the members of the DC committee also served, at some time, on the MD committee.

**Action:** The committee decided to appoint a subcommittee, headed by Hugh McGuiness, to review this list of records and then use the committee's normal re-opening procedure for any records that they find warrant a re-evaluation. **OPEN**.

### **5.6 Garrett Arctic Terns [2013-030]**

At last year's meeting, the committee discussed how to handle this report of a large flock of mix terns for the next round. **Action:** Matt Hafner will try to get better photos from Mikey Lutmerding, who also has some notes. **Action:** Hugh McGuiness offered to show the photos to an outside expert he knows who has extensive experience in identifying Arctic Terns from photos. The committee will hold for this update. **OPEN**.

### **5.7 eBird Impact on Records Committee Documentation**

**Monthly Reviewable Alerts.** In addition to the recent Documentation and Communications White Paper and related changes to committee procedures, discussed above, the Secretary suggested again that eBird data could drastically help with the documentation mining volume challenge by extending the eBird Alert process to a monthly report that aggregates and sorts all of the committee-reviewable taxa reports to include text comments and links to A/V files. This would save a great deal of work on the part of the Secretary. However, such a capability does not seem to currently be in the offing. [This item was held over from last year's meeting. The Secretary wants to pursue this again during the coming year.] **OPEN**.

### **5.8 Issue with Printing eBird Checklist with Embedded Photos**

The Secretary began to experience a problem around 11 Jan 2016 dealing with printing eBird checklist. This was discussed at last year's meeting. However, recently (in early 2017) the problem disappeared. It is still not known if this was a browser, printing, or eBird checklist issue. Regardless, the problem is gone. **CLOSED**.

### **5.9 2016 Skins Workshop**

Skins studied at last year's 2016 Skins Workshop included the following:

- Western-type/juv Yellow-bellied Flycatchers (Kathy, but unable to attend the workshop)
- Lazuli Bunting (Hugh)
- Nelson's/Sharp-tailed/Le Conte Sparrow (Marcia)
- Tropical/Couch's Kingbird
- Thayer's Gull
- Snowy/Kentish Plover (Phil)

No action has yet been taken to produce a set of minutes from this workshop. **OPEN**.

### **5.10 Scopoli's Shearwaters**

**Background.** This taxon was discussed at the last year's Annual Meeting. The Secretary reported that this taxon is now being reported and generally "accepted" in Maryland waters by eBird and others, but generally not documented. This taxon is not currently on the Maryland Unusual Subspecies/Form Review List (<http://www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/pdf/mdsubrev.pdf>).

**ACTION:** The Secretary will check with regional states to see what their review policy is on Scopoli's Shearwaters. The summary of other committee's responses is summarized, below.  
**CLOSED.**

**Request for Information.** The Secretary researched the taxonomic status of taxon and found that a number of authorities have already split the nominate eastern Scopoli's and the western Cory's, arguing for increased attention to the presence of this taxon in our regional waters. An information request was posted to the Birds Records Committee Forum-Listserver to see how other committees were regarding Scopoli's:

Date: Mon, 06 Feb 2017  
To: Bird Records Committee Listserv <BRCF-L@INDIANA.EDU>  
From: Phil Davis <pdavis@ix.netcom.com>  
Subject: [BRCF] RFI: North American Records Committees' Treatment of Scopoli's Shearwater

Hi BRCF-L:

The MD/DC Records Committee is preparing for our upcoming annual meeting later this month.

I would appreciate information to support a quick survey regarding the practices of other committees in terms of how you currently treat records of Scopoli's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*, or *C. d. diomedea*).

Our committee has previously treated it as a subspecies of Cory's Shearwater that is reviewable in Maryland waters due to it being a rare or unusual subspecies/form to our region. We have reviewed and accepted one record in 2007 as a unusual subspecies and we also have a handful of other reports in our queue. This taxon is being reported on Maryland water pelagics, but sometimes rather casually, often without details or photos.

Since some authorities have split Scopoli's from Cory's, and others may be moving in that direction, we think the prudent thing to do it to strongly emphasize that it is currently a reviewable Maryland subspecies, with the possibility of it being elevated to species level if should be so determined by our taxonomy authority, the AOU (now, AOS).

Below is one international statement on taxonomy from Birdlife.org ...

<http://www.birdlife.org/globally-threatened-bird-forums/2014/08/cory%E2%80%99s-shearwater-calonectris-diomedea-is-being-split-request-for-information-on-c-diomedea-and-c-borealis/>  
"Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* is being split into *C. diomedea* and *C. borealis*, following the application of criteria set out by Tobias et al. (2010) and consultation of genetic evidence (Gómez-Díaz et al. 2009, Genovart et al. 2013)."

The IOC (recently named as the new taxonomic authority for the BOU!) has split Scopoli's on the basis of Robb & Mullarney 2008, Howell 2012, and Sangster et al. 2012.

eBird shows records from the Bay of Fundy and along the Eastern Seaboard from Massachusetts to Florida and in the Gulf of Mexico off of Florida, Louisiana, and Texas.

So, we are curious if other North American records committees are currently reviewing Scopoli's, or do you consider them to already be a common subspecies visitor and not reviewable in your pelagic region?

I will consolidate all comments, on a state/province basis, whether posted to this list or provided directly to me.

Thanks, in advance.

Phil

**Lit Cited:**

Genovart, M., Thibault, J.-C., Igual, J. M., Bauzá-Ribot, M. del M., Rabouam, C. and Bretagnolle, V. (2013) Population structure and dispersal patterns within and between Atlantic and Mediterranean populations of a large-range pelagic seabird. *PLoS ONE* 8(8): e70711. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0070711.

Gómez-Díaz, E., González-Solís, J. and Peinado, M. A. (2009) Population structure in a highly pelagic seabird, the Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*: an examination of genetics, morphology and ecology. *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 382: 197–209.

Howell, S.N.G. (2012) *Petrels, Albatrosses, and Storm-Petrels of North America: A Photographic Guide*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

Robb, M., Mullarney, K. & The Sound Approach (2008) *Petrels night and day. The Sound Approach*, Poole, Dorset, UK.

Sangster, G., Collinson, J.M., Crochet, P.A., Knox, A.G., Parkin, D.T. & Votier, S.C. (2012) Taxonomic recommendations for British birds: eighth report. *Ibis* 154(4): 874–883.

Tobias, J. A., Seddon, N., Spottiswoode, C. N., Pilgrim, J. D., Fishpool, L. D. C. and Collar, N. J. (2010) Quantitative criteria for species delimitation. *Ibis* 152: 724–746.

**Reponses.** As of 23 Feb 2107, a few responses were received from other records committees. These responses are shown below ...

| State/Province | Respondent  | Date       | Comments  |
|----------------|---|------------|---|
| NC             | Nate Swick<br><nswick@aba.org><br>Chair, former<br>North Carolina Bird Records Committee  | 02/21/2017 | I will share what North Carolina has done, as we are likely the state that sees the most Scopoli's Shearwaters on an annual basis. Like Andy Kratter in Florida, we've seen that Scopoli's represents between 5-10% of Cory's identified on any given warm season trip to the Gulf Stream. The NC BRC recently voted on and accepted a number of photos taken in NC waters to document its existence in NC, and Scopoli's is listed on our "subspecies" list and banked, as it were, in the event of a split. The subspecies list includes things like European Whimbrel, Common and Mew Gull, etc.                             |
| FL             | Andrew W Kratter<br><kratter@flmnh.ufl.edu><br>Florida Museum of Natural History<br>AOS North American Classification Committee | 02/06/2017 | In Florida, Scopoli's appears to be an uncommon regular visitor. They make up about 10% based on specimen records, but are claimed more frequently on the basis of photographs. If records committees choose to assess Scopoli's I think they should be aware that a large (between 10-20%) of Cory's (sensu lato) are intermediate in extent of white on the underside of the primaries, size, or dark spots on the primary coverts. I am working on this based on FL specimens and genetics. These intermediates were acknowledged by Howell and Patteson (2008), but that did not stop them for recommending species status. |
| LA             | Donna L Dittmann<br><donnaldittmann@gmail.com><br>Secretary, Louisiana Birds Records Committee                                  | 02/21/2017 | The LBRC will address the subspecies-species issue during discussion at its upcoming annual meeting on 11 March. We have a number of records supported by photographs, as well as specimens, to review in advance of and at this meeting. Both subspecies are represented by specimens in Louisiana waters.   |
| TX             | Mark Lockwood<br><Mark.Lockwood@tpwd.texas.gov><br>Texas Bird Records Committee   | 02/06/2017 | In Texas both taxa appear to be well represented based on photos, so I would postulate that if the AOU followed the trend in splitting these that Scopoli's would simply be added to the Texas list as regularly occurring.   |
| MO             | William Rowe<br><rowemb45@gmail.com><br>Secretary<br>Missouri Bird Records Committee  | 02/06/2017 | Missouri, however, has zero records of shearwaters, so I can't comment  |

The committee suggests that Maryland waters pelagic organizers and trip leaders remind observers to specifically call out and photograph any putative Scopoli's Shearwaters.

## 5.11 Recent Review Policy Changes

### 5.11.1 Fourth-Round Review Process

A revised fourth-round procedure was discussed briefly at the 2015 Annual Meeting. The committee agreed to wait for the next fourth-round candidate to formally test this process, below, in real-time. However, no fourth rounds recirculations have happened since our 2015 meeting. **OPEN.**

### 5.11.2 Resolving Group and Origin Votes

The Secretary also suggested that this same “real-time” process could be used for recirculation cases to resolve split Accept-Group and Accept-Origin votes. Likewise, we can look at first implementing this process when the next split Group or Origin situation arises.

## 5.12 Franklin's Gulls

Matt consolidated the 2015 invasion reports and presented options at the 2015 meeting of how to handle them. The committee decided on Option 2, (“Lump all the Friday reports into one record. I could gather up all the photos from the day and create a timeline to say: “X birds were seen at the inlet over the course of the day on Friday as part of the larger Mid-Atlantic invasion” (Probably what will be written in NAB”). That is, we will review all the Friday reports from the inlet as one record. All other sightings from the invasion will be reviewed independently. **ACTION:** Matt will send a compilation of all the records and photos that he has received and hunt down the ones we are missing. **OPEN.**

## 5.13 Circulation/Species Issues and Concerns

General discussion is encouraged regarding any of the following pending reports or groups of reports:

### 5.13.1 Problem Taxa - Species

#### Thayer's Gull:

Last year, the committee decided to go forward and review the “ready” DC Thayer’s Gull reports and two of these reports were accepted. This taxon has now been added to the Official List of the Birds of the District of Columbia. **CLOSED.**

**Hoary Redpolls** - May be lumped with Common - continue to hold off on reviews for now.

### 5.13.2 Problem MD Specific Records

**Common Snipe** [MD/2013-018] – The outside expert opinions were equivocal. Still waiting on final inputs from Mikey Lutmerding. **ACTION:** The Chair will contact him. **OPEN.**

**Zino's/Fea's Petrel** [MD/2013-042] - Still waiting on final inputs from Tom Johnson. **ACTION:** The Chair will contact him. **OPEN.**

**Trindade [formerly Herald] Petrels** [8 reports - 2013] - Not sure if we have everything on these from Tom Johnson. **ACTION:** The Chair will contact him. **OPEN.**

**Eurasian Collared Dove** [MD/2012-090; 09/18/2012] - Mark Hoffman - still awaiting photos. **ACTION:** The Chair will contact him. **OPEN.**

**"Interesting Gull - Salisbury Landfill"** (Feb 2011; European Herring Gull, Vega Gull?) - Mikey Lutmerding. These photos are online. **ACTION:** The Chair will contact him. **OPEN.**

### **5.13.3 Observer Open Report Issues**

**Kyle Klotz** - several reviewable western MD reports. **ACTION:** Tim Carney contacted him. One report was provided. **CLOSED.**

### **5.14 Previous Record Re-Openings**

Specific re-openings considered at the meeting were:

#### **5.14.1 2006-033 Lesser Black-Backed Gull; Washington County, C&O Canal, Lock 38; 25 Mar 2006**

This report was voted to be reopened at last year's Annual Meeting. It is ready for a new review as MD/2016-017. **CLOSED [Ready for review in accordance with regular operations].**

#### **5.14.2 2006 Cape Verde Shearwater**

Past committee members, Sherman Suter and Jonathan Alderfer (National Geographic Field Guides editor), suggested that the committee consider re-opening its 2006 accepted record of Cape Verde Shearwater [MD/2006-264], the second record for North America. At the 2015 Annual Meeting, after a lengthy discussion, the committee used its "majority rule" procedure to decide to re-open this record. The vote was 5-4. However, before reviewing this reopened record, the committee requested that the Secretary place the photos on the web and ask for expert opinions from appropriate venues, including Birdwg01 (Frontiers of Bird Identification) and the Seabird listserver. The comments received prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting were distributed to the members and the committee decided to move forward with its reopening of this record. The outside comments that were received prior to the 2016 meeting have now been posted here ...

<https://mddcrcresources.wordpress.com/2017/02/20/update-reopening-marylands-2006-cape-verde-shearwater-record/>

... and the photographer of record (G Jett) was notified of the committee's intent to reopen the record.

Since the 2016 meeting, Jett was provided with all of the outside expert comments and was asked if he wished to provide any other information prior to the reopening. Jett indicated that he would provide some additional comments prior to the reopening review and he has asked to attend the committee's 2017 Skins Workshop at the Smithsonian to study some specimens. After the Skins Workshop and after Jett's final comments are received, the reopening review will start. **IN PROCESS/OPEN.**

#### **5.14.3 Slaty-Backed Gull**

At the 2014 Annual Meeting, Matt Hafner expressed a desire for the committee to post on the web the reports and discussions related to the 1999 Conowingo Slaty-backed Gull [MD/1999-052] for the committee members (and others) to review. Reasons for this action are that (1) this is basically an interesting bird and also, (2) more relevant reference information has become available over the past years, for example information on hybrids and Slaty-backed vs. Vega Gull separation.

The Secretary reviewed and scanned all of the report material and organized it more effectively (however, since this report was from an earlier timeframe, the emails are not very clean in terms of formatting). The Secretary has posted this material, for now, as a folder on our committee Google Drive server for committee member only access. The following link should take the members directly there ...

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B1Zlp94H5iFQNUladm1YaHo4NTA>



One informational note: The original observers, Rick Blom and Dave Czaplak, withdrew their support of SBGU and they did not provide additional documentation; however, their original emails are in the file. The most support for identification came from Marshall Iliff. A number of outside expert opinions were also sought and obtained and those comments are included in the material.

After this year's Annual Meeting, the Secretary will consult with the Chair, who initiated this action, to decide exactly which material to post and where it [e.g., to NA Gulls FB Group? Advanced Bird ID FB?, Birdwg01?]. The material will then be moved to an appropriate web page. **OPEN.**

### 5.15 Unusual Subspecies/Forms Reviews

At the 2016 annual meeting, Matt Hafner volunteered to review and suggest updates to the Maryland Unusual Subspecies/Forms Review List. **Action:** Matt will coordinate with Clive and consider the Greater White-fronted Goose issue as well as other updates. **OPEN.**

### 5.16 Regional or Range Reviews

At the 2016 annual meeting, Matt Hafner suggested that the Maryland Review List could use an overhaul of its "Review by Range" criteria. **ACTION:** He volunteered to look at this before this year's Annual Meeting. **OPEN.**

## 6. New Business

### 6.1 Voting Standards – proposed by Russ [who was not able to attend at the meeting]

On Fri, Dec 9, 2016, **Russ Ruffing** <ruff2@verizon.net> wrote:

Am I missing something or should the scarcity of a record - either temporally or spatially - always be factored into our decisions? When I review, I try to go only by the identification evidence presented, not the significance of a record. One could argue that if it's reviewable in the first place then it's significant and thus all records should be held to the same standard. Yet reviewers routinely write that they held this or that record to a higher review standard for any number of reasons. I don't believe this adheres to the true intent of our charge as a Records Committee. I put a similar comment in one of my ballots this package. It seems like this is always included as a review factor in many of the ballots that I've read the last 2 years on the committee.

I'd love to hear other thoughts as they pertain to what our bylaws say, or to be otherwise set straight.

=====  
On Dec 9, 2016, at 2:20 PM, **Tim Carney** <timm83@gmail.com> wrote:

I absolutely factor in previous records. Many reviewable species have an established pattern of vagrancy, like BBWD in late May and early June, rare flycatchers appearing after nearly all of the non-MYWA warblers have departed, etc. But that's just me, and you have a valid point of approaching every single record with the same level of importance.

=====  
On Fri, Dec 9, 2016 at 2:29 PM, **Russ Ruffing** <ruff2@verizon.net> wrote:

I know folks factor it in, but I'm wondering whether we SHOULD be doing that - asking more from a bylaws or committee instruction perspective rather than one's personal approach.

=====  
On Dec 9, 2016, at 3:28 PM, **Matt Hafner** <hafner.matt@gmail.com> wrote:

The bylaws absolutely allow it, but I admit the wording 4.6.4(b) is seemingly contradicting 4.6.4(h).

Pages 8-10 - <http://mdbirds.org/mddcrc/pdf/rcgoals.pdf>

4.6.4(b) was edited in 2011 and the potential contradictory nature was discussed at the time. The committee (my opinion only, I wasn't there) was trying to emphasize the "100 Year Rule" with regard to record documentation, and reduce emphasis on some of the other elements of the review criteria.

In my opinion, considering the absolute rarity of the report should factor significantly, and I don't think this necessarily contradicts the "100 Year Rule". When evaluating records 100 years past, I think we need to consider the absolute rarity of the report at the time of evaluation. To use an extreme example, we shouldn't discard records of Evening Grosbeaks from 40 years ago because no one documented them well. At the time, they were very regular so the standard of documentation was much lower. Occasionally, there will need to be reevaluations of historical consensus and that's okay. We have already started to broach this topic with regard to some subspecies, specifically Greater White-fronted Goose.

I do think there are real lessons to be taken from 4.6.4(b), such as a pulse of records of a species (say FRGU in Nov 2015), doesn't necessarily mean that the species will be regular now. On the other hand, I don't think it would be unreasonable to hold FRGU records from Nov 2015 to slightly lower standard than FRGU records from Nov 2016. We do this regularly with irruptive species.

I think this is fine topic to discuss at the meeting if the interest is there.

=====

On Fri, Dec 9, 2016 at 10:05 PM, **Russ Ruffing** <ruff2@verizon.net> wrote:

I just read the entire bylaws and I read nothing in there that allows for elevating the burden of proof for any record. Item 5 of 4.6.4(h) is the only applicable section on the subject and it simply allows as a consideration "a pattern of vagrancy or distribution of the species in the region." It's one thing to consider vagrancy patterns and quite another to hold a record to a higher burden of proof. All other considerations in the bylaws pertain only to the evidence presented by the observer(s).

So as an example - a potential new state record shows up in MD but the species has been seen several times in surrounding states. Does that mean that we should have a higher burden of proof just because it's a first record in OUR state despite the known pattern of vagrancy in the region? I would say no. Yet I've seen comments on ballots that do this very thing on a smaller scale, even for first county records when there are many other records of the same species within the state.

Not to go down the rabbit hole too far, but I feel strongly that this issue needs to have more discussion. I'll probably only get one more review package before I'm off the committee, but I feel it is a real issue that needs resolved.

=====

At 10:37 PM 12/09/2016, **Matt Hafner** wrote:

I agree 100 percent with your statement: "So as an example - a potential new state record shows up in MD but the species has been seen several times in surrounding states. Does that mean that we should have a higher burden of proof just because it's a first record in OUR state despite the known pattern of vagrancy in the region? I would say no."

That's how I apply Item 5 of 4.6.4(h) into my voting criteria. Established vagrancy pattern is one of many factors I consider when evaluating the record and I weight it heavily.

I think this would be a good issue to discuss at the meeting just to make sure everyone is on the same page.

=====

At 10:06 PM 12/10/2016, **Phil Davis** wrote:

**1. Personal Recollections**

I remember that long-time Chair, Paul O'Brien, always argued vehemently for reviewing records independent of whether the record was a state first or the 21st.

**2. Research.** I searched the Annual Minutes (AM) and found the following relevant references to "standards" ... Matt talked to some of this ...

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**AM 2008:**

**First State Records Standards.**

The case of first state records was discussed. Some members felt that higher standards should be involved; however, other members felt that the review standards should remain constant for all reviews." [Note: This was the only reference in the minutes. Apparently, the topic was discussed but no consensus or action was taken. PCD]

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**AM 2010:**

**Voting Approach.**

Dave Ziolkowski and Bill Hubick facilitated a very interesting discussion about the committee voting approach, particularly as oriented toward new members, who may need several packages to "get the feel" for the voting process and voting standards.

Dave manages the Breeding Bird Survey program, has a great deal of experience with and views on working with data quality and data standards. Dave submits that, outside of actual descriptions in reports, our review comments suggest that we evaluate the same types of information (probability of occurrence, skill level, etc.) but often end up at contrasting votes simply because we may have differing ideas of what the committee is looking for in terms of weighting and/or ordering this information. While the Goals and Procedures document advocates a "mix" approach, it does not address weighting considerations, and Dave suggests that doing so could improve the committee's long-term consistency and thus record quality, without adding reviewer work or additional scrutiny. Also, we frequently internally cite the "100 year rule" (will the documentation sustain the record 100 years from now, when all of the observer and committee personalities are no longer around?); however, this 100 year rule is not described in our Goals and Procedures document. Another issue we continually wrestle with is whether a first state record is subject to a higher level of scrutiny than subsequent records. The other side of this issue is that the committee is comprised of nine voting members who do intentionally bring differing views and approaches to the voting process.

The committee suggested that Dave and Bill review the MD/DCRC governance documents and report back before next year's Annual Meeting with any recommended policy changes or perhaps develop some instructional material on the voting process for new members. Relevant documents are the MD/DCRC charter from the MOS By-Laws and Manual of Operations, section 4.6.4.h of the committee Goals and Policies document, and the MD/DCRC background paper on Not Accepted Records that was adopted from the first MD/DCRC Decision Report (Peterjohn and Davis, 1996).

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**AM 2011:**

**Voting Procedures/Voting Approach.**

At last year's meeting, Dave Ziolkowski and Bill Hubick facilitated a very interesting discussion about the committee voting approach, particularly as oriented toward new members, who may need several packages to "get the feel" for the voting process and voting standards.

Bill Hubick provided the following comments and suggestions for changes to our "Goals and Procedures" document. He stated, "The comments regarding 4.6.4.h touch on the complexity of what goes into the appropriate voting considerations, balancing the 100 Year Rule and natural biases, some of which are surprisingly encouraged in our current document." Specific suggestions include:

Section 4.6.4.b Acceptance Criteria - Consistency: I recommend adding our first official reference to the "100 Year Rule" in Section b.

"Members should strive to judge each report with the same stringency and with uniform rigor. Use of a "sliding scale" as the number of records of a given species increases is discouraged. One aim of this practice is to minimize circularity of reasoning. Members should consider the "100 Year Rule," which dictates that an accepted record should be able to stand on its own merit after 100 years. This consideration encourages a focus on the documentation itself rather than observer experience and other supplementary details."

Section 4.6.4.h Acceptance Criteria - Voting Considerations: This is a helpful section, but I was somewhat surprised to see multiple references encouraging consideration of observer experience. We often pay lip service to the record standing fully on its own (in fact, I call this out above, albeit only minimizing it, not eliminating it); however, see the following sentences: "Comments about observer experience, reliability, and whether allowance should be made for writing skills are important since such comments will permit future reviewers to be better informed about these matters based on the first-hand experience of the observer's contemporaries."

"Typical considerations may include the following: ... (6) The experience of the observer in general and with the species under consideration in particular. (7) The reliability of the observer, and his or her ability and experience in writing a clear, accurate, and precise description, as far as these factors are known to the members."

It seems that there's some disagreement between the 100 Year Rule and our current policy document regarding considering observer experience. Or is there? If we consider the finished record, including member comments, perhaps the detailed comments by members, including notes on an observer's careful nature could be enough to make a record 100-year-worthy. To be honest, I think it is impossible to fully avoid personal biases (positive and negative), and that in many cases they are part of the strength of a diverse and experienced nine-person committee. I am very willing to discuss any of this, but I do think we should drop (7) and consider it part of (6). In addition to finding it dangerous to highlight "reliability" directly, I think the second half of (7), pertaining to writing skills, need not be addressed. The clarity and accuracy of writing skills will be obvious in the submitted report, and their presence alone do not strengthen a report. Only with the proper details should they become a force enabler. Anyway, I recommend dropping (7) and keeping (6).

+++++

We will put these proposed changes to the MD/DCRC Goals and Procedures document up for a vote at next year's Annual Meeting."

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**Summary**

After the discussion, no proposal was put forward to define or establish a new policy dealing with variable or adjustable voting standards. The consensus seemed to be that one of the reasons that there are nine voting members on the committee is to achieve various points of view on matter such as this based on personal experiences and approaches.

## 6.2 Group vs Species votes - Hugh

From a Pkg 166 Ballot by **Hugh McGuinness**:

There are two issues that face the committee with this record. The first is should we accept a record in which the details are entirely a recollection long after the fact? The second is when should a MD sighting of a "Frigatebird" be accepted as "*Fregata* species" and when should the default position be that all Frigatebirds seen in MD are Magnificent Frigatebird?

Dealing with the second issue. A Frigatebird in Maryland has overwhelming odds of being Magnificent. Unless there is evidence that the bird better fits the characters of another species, then the default position should be that it is Magnificent. To do otherwise, takes the observer down a rabbit hole of possibility. Should all Barn Swallows be "swallow sp." unless the marks separating it from European Swallow are observed? What about non-singing Winter Wrens. On the eastern shore, any chickadee is a Carolina unless there is positive evidence that it is a Black-capped. As a result, I am willing to accept this as Magnificent Frigatebird, and not as *Fregata* sp.

=====

At 08:23 PM, 12/04/2016 **Phil Davis** wrote:

We can certainly put the topic of "prevailing likelihood," or whatever we want to call it, on the agenda for the annual meeting. However, it seems to me that a records committee should probably not be in the business of maximum likelihoods.

## 6.3 Revised Voting Process Diagram

At 12:52 on 02/11/2017, **Phil Davis** wrote:

The Secretary asked members to look at a voting process mindmap he provided before the Annual Meeting.

**Phil:** "[This diagram] represents the latest generation of what I think our voting process either currently is, or should be.

I created this version as a result of the "Exotics" white paper that I am trying to finally get off the table before the Annual Meeting.

I realized during our Trumpeter Swan deliberations that the word "origin" rightfully created considerable member confusion. The "origin" issue is really one more related to what population a bird came from (if any) and the status of that population.

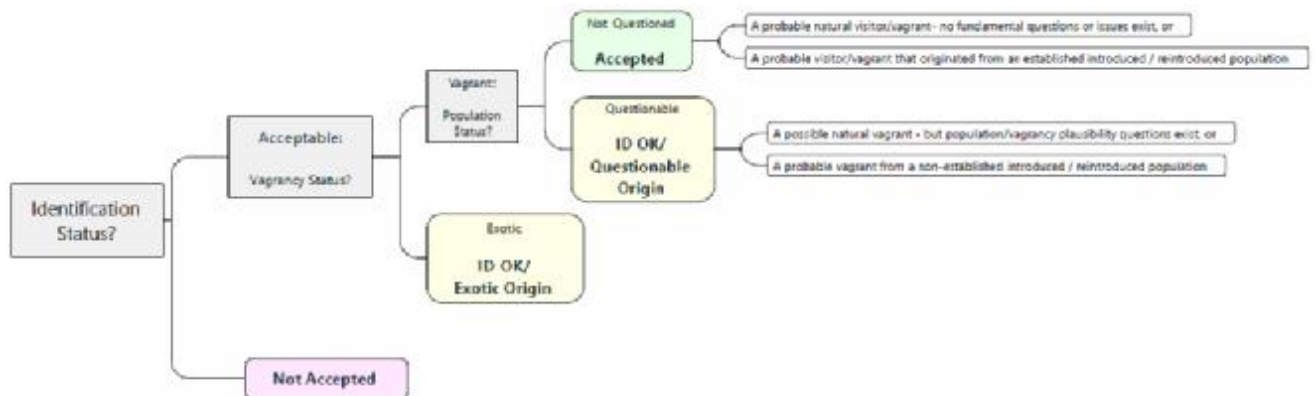
Also, the application of the term "questionable" always seems to create confusion, so I tried to elaborate on that issue in a more formal manner in terms of probability and possibility (and even plausibility!).

If members think that the attached process reflects reality, I might be so moved to proposed that we replace the word "Origin" with something like "Status" in the names of our voting options (which are in bold on the chart).

There might be better definitions to use than those that I quickly pulled off the web, but the ones on the chart seem to do the job.

You might want to think of some recent examples of difficult votes and mentally run them through this decision process to see if you end up at the correct place.

I'm not proposing that we "adopt" this at the meeting, but we can discuss it. I plan to introduce it in conjunction with my "Exotics" white paper, assuming I get it done."



**Definitions :**

**Vagrant.** Vagrancy is a phenomenon in biology whereby individual animals appear well outside their normal range; individual animals which exhibit vagrancy are known as vagrants. The term accidental is sometimes also used. There are a number of factors which might cause an individual to become a vagrant — genetic factors and weather conditions are two — but the causes are overall poorly understood. Vagrancy can be a precursor to colonization if individuals survive.

**Exotic.** An exotic species is a species that historically lives in one place, but that has been moved to a new geographic location due to human interference. There are other terms for an "exotic" species including non-native, non-indigenous and alien species.

**Population.** A population is a group of individuals of the same species that have a high probability of interacting with each other.

**Established.** Having existed for a long time, and therefore recognized as good or successful.

**Introduced.** Not indigenous, not native to the area in which it now occurs.

**Reintroduced.** Species reintroduction is the deliberate release of a species into the wild, from captivity or other areas where the animal survives. A species that needs reintroduction is usually one whose existence has become threatened or endangered in the wild.

**Probable.** To say that something is probable means that it is very likely to be the case, that it has a high degree of probability. To refer to something as proven implies that a claim is definitely true, though given the ever present possibilities of faulty observation (even systematic faulty observation), partial understanding or misunderstanding of empirical materials, nothing (at least outside the abstract realm of pure logic and mathematics) is ever demonstrated to be completely and irrevocably true. Instead, to say something is proven is really to say that it has such a high degree of probability of truth that we can pragmatically assume it to be true (though ideally keeping an open mind towards potential counter-evidence).

**Possible.** Saying that something is possible simply means that it does not violate the basic laws of logic. In the realm of empirical scholarship, one could also add that it does not violate basic physical laws, that something is both logically and physically possible.

**Plausible.** To say that something is plausible is to indicate that it has a higher probability than the merely possible - it is believable, it makes sense. But claims that are merely plausible (that is, that are not also probable) lack the evidence to be taken as having a high degree of probability of truth.

**Matt** provided the following comments prior to the meeting:

Overall, I think this process is how I approach most records. I actually like the term "Origin" for our purposes and perhaps have a minor quibble with the definition of "Exotic" in this context. I wish I could discuss this more at the meeting, but here is my basic break down of votes:

**Accepted** - probable natural vagrant or probable vagrant from an established population

**Questionable Origin** - both natural vagrancy and exotic origin are plausible, difficult to decide if one is more likely than the other

**Exotic Origin** - probable vagrant from a non-established population or a probable recent release/escape of a captive bird.

**Not Accepted** - Identification not sufficiently documented

The exotic definition on the mindmap can apply to established non-natives as well as recent escapees. I think in terms of voting, our definition of "exotic" should be limited to escapees and non-established populations.

I think with some more member input, this could be handy for new members.

**Summary/Action:** This diagram and any revised definitions will be proposed as a change to our goals and procedures document at next year's annual meeting. **OPEN.**

## 6.4 eBird Data

**Topic Thread:** The following thread was generated prior to the annual meeting:

Tim: I've seen several other states (Pennsylvania, West Virginia, etc.) entering historic and RC data on eBird. Maryland does not have all of the RC data entered in here. I'm sure there are reasons for this.

Here's an example from WV: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S21871119>

And one from PA: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S11319420>

No need for anything lengthy. Just species, location, date, record #, observer name, and maybe a link to the MD/DCRC website would suffice. I think this would really beef up the existing eBird database and be a valuable tool to the general public.

Matt: I just want to chime in here that I support the effort. Like Tim said, I think we could do something simple with just the database #, or add a little more info like PA.

Massachusetts also has their data in: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S4819698>

**Meeting Discussion:** The Secretary thought that the past Chair, Bill Hubick, had already entered some of this data, but this is apparently not correct. The Secretary will take an action to provide a download of accepted records to Tim. **OPEN.**

## 7. Standing Agenda Items

### 7.1 Fourth Rounds

No fourth-round votes were slated for discussion at this year's annual meeting.

### 7.2 Record Re-Openings

A standing agenda item is to solicit from the members if any previous reports or records should be reopened. The committee can re-open records via one of two methods, defined in our Goals and Procedures document. No new reports/records were proposed for reopening.

### 7.3 Review List Changes

No Review List changes were proposed at this year's annual meeting.

### 7.4 Records Separations/Combinations

The floor is open each year for members to suggest or comment on MD/DCRC reports or records that should be considered for separation (i.e., multiple birds separated into individual reports/records) or combined (i.e., individual records grouped together). Reports/records discussed at the meeting for separation/combination include: None were proposed.

## 7.5 Circulation/Species Issues and Concerns

General discussion is encouraged regarding any of the following pending reports or groups of reports. The following shows the status of reports awaiting recirculation:

| St | Rec#     | Species                           | Start      | Co   | Location                 | Apkg | Vote1 | Vote2 | Vote3 |
|----|----------|-----------------------------------|------------|------|--------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| MD | 2009-003 | Green-winged Teal (Eurasian)      | 01/03/2009 | WORC | Berlin                   | 130  | 7-2-0 | 6-3-0 |       |
| MD | 2000-017 | Chukar                            | 03/24/2000 | CECL | Port Deposit             | 082  | 0-2-7 |       |       |
| MD | 1997-333 | American White Pelican            | 07/11/1980 | SMST | Crisfield                | 076  | 5-1-3 | 5-0-4 |       |
| MD | 2000-033 | Ruff                              | 07/26/1997 | BALT | Paper Mill Flats         | 084  | 4-5-0 |       |       |
| MD | 2015-055 | Franklin's Gull                   | 08/21/2015 | BALT | Masonville               | 166  | 8-1-0 |       |       |
| DC | 2009-022 | Thayer's Gull                     | 02/08/2009 |      | Tidal Basin              | 165  | 2-7-0 |       |       |
| MD | 2009-101 | Arctic Tern                       | 07/25/2009 | WORC | Assateague Island        | 155  | 6-3-0 | 5-4-0 |       |
| MD | 2010-149 | Arctic Tern                       | 08/22/2010 | WORC | Skimmer Island           | 155  | 5-4-0 | 6-3-0 |       |
| MD | 2013-030 | Arctic Tern                       | 05/11/2013 | GRTT | Deep Creek Lake          | 155  | 3-6-0 |       |       |
| MD | 2000-020 | Western Wood-Pewee                | 10/05/1992 | PGEO | Laurel                   | 076  | 6-3-0 |       |       |
| MD | 2008-079 | Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's) | 09/26/2008 | CARR | Westminster              | 125  | 6-3-0 |       |       |
| MD | 2008-094 | Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's) | 11/15/2008 | WORC | West Ocean City          | 125  | 8-1-0 |       |       |
| MD | 2002-026 | White-crowned Sparrow (Gambel's)  | 11/08/1944 | PGEO | Patuxent Research Refuge | 082  | 8-1-0 |       |       |
| MD | 2000-061 | White-crowned Sparrow (Gambel's)  | 11/11/2000 | WORC | E. A. Vaughn WMA         | 080  | 8-1-0 |       |       |
| MD | 2001-081 | White-crowned Sparrow (Gambel's)  | 11/12/2001 | MONT | Black Hill Regional Park | 079  | 8-1-0 |       |       |
| MD | 1995-024 | Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)          | 01/17/1971 | BALT | Cockeysville             | 051  | 8-1-0 |       |       |
| MD | 1994-006 | Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)          | 03/28/1980 | BALT | Baltimore City           | 051  | 3-6-0 | 0-9-0 |       |

**Note on MD/1994-006:** The second-round vote of 0-9-0 for this report should have resulted in a Not Accept decision; however, in the ballots comments there is a reference to extant photographs of the bird. The report was therefore administratively left "open" until a search for the photograph(s) could be completed. The Secretary will investigate. **OPEN.**

## 8. Elections

### 8.1 New Members

Members completing their voting terms are Marcia Balestri, Hugh McGuinness, and Russ Ruffing. The committee thanks them for all their efforts over the past years. The new members elected for three-year terms were: Barry Cooper (Montgomery), Keith Costley (Baltimore), and Sean McCandless (Cecil).

### 8.2 Chair

Matt Hafner was re-elected as the Chair.

### 8.3 Secretary

Phil Davis was re-elected as the Secretary.

## 9. Next Meeting Dates

### 9.1 2016 Skins Workshop

This year's workshop, hosted by Dave Bridge, will be held on March 18, 2017. The Chair will invite the new members. Logistic details will be emailed to both the old term and new term members.

**Initial Study Requests.** Members are asked for suggestions of skins to study. Initial requests were:

- **Cape Verde Shearwater.** George Jett has asked to attend to study Cape Verde Shearwater skins [also, Scopoli's and Cory's].
- **Black-throated Gray Warbler** subspecies. Phil and Kathy would like to look at the two subspecies of Black-throated Gray Warbler.



**Subsequent Requests.** The following taxa were added to the study list after the Annual Meeting:

**[Second Tier Suggestions:]**

- **The Petrels:** Kathy would like to look at Zino's/Feas, Trindade, and even Band-rumped. White-faced Storm-Petrels too, if possible.
- **The Murres:** Kathy would like to look at Thick-billed and Common Murres
- **Accipiters:** Kathy would like to look at Northern Goshawk and Cooper's Hawk
- **Empids:** Sean would like to look at Willow Flycatcher ssp. including Western, also a few other fall empids: Least, Yellow-bellied, and Acadian
- **Blackbirds:** Sean would like to look at female Brewer's Blackbirds and other blackbirds
- **Curlew Sandpiper/Dunlin:** Sean would like to look at these in both summer and winter plumages
- **Gulls:** Sean is interested in Iceland Gulls, especially in where they were collected. Are there dark-winged birds that were collected from Greenland or Iceland? Are there pale birds that were collected in British Columbia or Alaska?
- **Teal:** Barry is interested in comparing eclipse/female/first winter Garganey with similar age Blue-winged Teal. Garganey have been recorded in several east coast States from Virginia north to the Canadian provinces.

**[Third Tier Suggestions:]**

The following are some other suggestions based on the committee's review backlog:

**[Seabirds:]**

- **Black-capped Petrels:** white-face and dark-faced forms

**[Subspecies:]**

- **Fox Sparrow subspecies,** including Sooty and Slate-colored
- **Yellow-rumped Warbler ssp.,** including Myrtle and Audubon's
- **Barn Swallow ssp.,** including Eurasian
- **Cave Swallow, ssp,** including West Indian
- **Common Nighthawk ssp.** including the USNM Maryland specimen of Sennett's

**[Misc:]**

- **Loggerhead and Northern Shrike**
- **Laughing and Franklin's Gulls**

**[Exotics:]**

- **Female Mandarin and Wood Ducks**

## **9.2 2017 Annual Meeting**

The planning date for the 2018 Annual Meeting is Saturday, 24 Feb 2018. This date should not conflict the MOS Board Meeting schedule. If a pelagic trip into Maryland waters should become scheduled for this date, we will reschedule the meeting date.

### **9.3 2017 Skins Workshop**

**TBD.** We will try to schedule next year's workshop, with our host, for about two-three weeks after the Annual Meeting. Let's use a planning date of Saturday, 10 Mar 2018.

### **10. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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06 June 2017