

Maryland Ornithological Society



FIRST REPORT OF THE MARYLAND/DC RECORDS COMMITTEE

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The Maryland/DC Records Committee (MD/DCRC) was established in 1982 as a committee of the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS). The MD/DCRC currently consists of nine voting members, a Chair elected by the members who may or may not be a voting member of the committee, and a non-voting Secretary. Voting members serve three-year terms, and are elected by the committee. After completing their terms, members must remain off of the committee for at least one year before being eligible for re-election. The voting members review the documentation for each report and assess whether or not this information adequately supports the claimed identification. The Secretary is responsible for cataloging the documentation received, circulating the records through the committee, and compiling the final decision once the review has been completed. The committee membership during the preparation of this summary consisted of Robert Dixon, Mary Gustafson, Mark Hoffman, David Holmes, Ottavio Janni, Willem Maane, Gail MacKiernan, Robert Norton, and Michael O'Brien as the voting members, Phil Davis as its Secretary, and Bruce Peterjohn as the non-voting Chair.

The primary function of the MD/DCRC is to develop and maintain a list of bird species whose occurrence has been documented within Maryland and the District of Columbia. However, these functions have evolved somewhat since its inception. Initially, the committee reviewed reports of rare birds that had been discovered after the publication of the "Field List of the Birds of Maryland" by Robbins and Bystrak (1977). The review of recent reports of rare birds remains one of its important functions. In order to develop an authoritative list of species that have been documented in Maryland and DC, the committee recognized the need to review some of the records published by Robbins and Bystrak (1977), and for some species, reports cited in Stewart and Robbins (1958). This review of older reports requires considerable time and effort, since the supporting evidence is not easily obtained. The committee has recently expended considerable effort to obtain the available information for many of these older reports, but their review will not be completed for several years.

During its existence, the committee has also reviewed reports of regional and local significance in addition to reviewing reports of statewide significance. For example, it formerly reviewed first county records of species as well as reports of species outside of their normal seasonal occurrence in the region. Such reports are no longer reviewed by the committee. The current emphasis of the committee is its review of reports of statewide and regional significance; a current list of the review species can be obtained from the Secretary. Additionally, all first reports for the District of Columbia are reviewed.

At its inception, the committee only reviewed reports from Maryland. When the District of Columbia records committee ceased functioning, the committee assumed responsibility for reports from that jurisdiction. The committee also reviews reports from all waters of the Atlantic Ocean within the 200 mile exclusive economic zone that are directly east of Maryland.

This article provides the first published summary since its inception in 1982 of all reports for which the committee has completed its review. A total of 303 reports are discussed below, some from as early as 1956 although most are after 1977. Of these reports, 198 (65%) were accepted. A number of additional reports are currently under review by the committee, and many more have been submitted to the committee and are awaiting review. The MD/DCRC hopes to publish similar summaries of its decisions on a regular basis in the future.

All reports reviewed by the MD/DCRC and related comments are available for public review. Requests for this information, copies of the goals and procedures of the committee, and the submission of all documentation for the committee's review should be directed to Phil Davis, MD/DCRC Secretary, 2549 Vale Court, Davidsonville, MD 21035. All reports reviewed by the committee are currently archived with the Secretary, although the committee is working with the MOS to develop a permanent location for storing this information.

THE ROLE OF THE MD/DC BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

All opinions in this section are those of the senior author, and may not represent those of the current or former committee members. The format for this discussion was provided by a similar discussion for the California Birds Record Committee by Heindel and Garrett (1995).

Just as the merits of individual bird sightings are frequently debated by members of the birding community, so have the roles of bird records committees been the subject of extensive debate. Unfortunately, the functions of bird records committees are frequently misunderstood. The general perception that these committees serve as "rarities police," whose only function is to sit in judgement over the sightings of other birders, is not accurate for the MD/DCRC. This section discusses the current role of the MD/DCRC, how the committee has interacted with the birding community in the past, and how we hope to improve these interactions in the future.

At the outset, it is important to recognize that the function of the MD/DCRC is not to "prove" or "disprove" any report. Providing such proof is normally beyond our means. Additionally, the fact that a report was not accepted does not mean that the bird in question was not present. Rather, the committee provides a collective decision as to whether the available evidence supports the claimed identification at a certain threshold of confidence, a threshold that varies from member to member depending upon their experiences with the species in question. The significance of the record also has a very important influence on establishing this confidence threshold. The more difficult the identification, or the more unexpected the report on the basis of date or geography, the more cautious some members may be in accepting reports. The importance attributed to these factors may vary from species to species. A continuum exists within the committee, from members requiring the same high level of documentation for all reports to other members requiring less documentation for some species but much greater

levels for others. There is no "right" or "wrong" approach, just nine individuals using their own philosophies to determine the confidence threshold of individual records.

The most important factor influencing the acceptance of a report is the "available evidence," not the philosophies of individual committee members. When the available evidence is compelling, even the most skeptical committee members readily vote for acceptance. The type of information necessary to exceed a member's confidence threshold certainly varies from species to species. Photographs, video tapes, and audio recordings are very helpful in the committee's deliberations, and by themselves may provide adequate documentation for many reports. For other reports, these materials may be insufficient to establish a bird's identity and must be supplemented with written descriptions. Obtaining photographs may not be possible in many cases, for which written documentation provides the evidence reviewed by the committee. While a combination of photographic and written documentation provide the ideal types of evidence to support a report, reports supported only by photographs or only by written documentation are given equal consideration by the committee.

An important component of written documentation is the description of the bird. This point may seem self-evident, yet some documentation received by the committee provides very brief and inadequate descriptions. A simple listing of several important field marks may not be very helpful, as these field marks may eliminate some but not all of the similar species. Statements such as "the bird had a typical tail pattern of an immature Mew Gull (*Larus canus*)" are not nearly as useful as an actual description of the color pattern on the tail. Hence, observers should try to provide descriptions of the entire bird including characteristics that may not seem important at the time of the observation. While the preparation of written documentation requires a fair amount of time, this time is well spent as it frequently results in improved identification skills and appreciation for the amount of variation exhibited in bird plumages. While the committee does not expect to receive voluminous descriptions for easily identified species such as Wood Storks (*Mycteria americana*), detailed descriptions are essential for difficult to identify species such as stints (*Calidris* sp.) or vagrant empidonax (*Empidonax* sp.) flycatchers.

An equally important component of written documentation is a description of the circumstances under which the observation occurred. The better each committee member understands the circumstances of the observation, the more comfortable and confident they become in evaluating the described field marks.

For reports that are not accepted, the available evidence may not mention certain important field marks or may suggest that the conditions of the sighting did not permit for the proper study of all necessary field marks. Only in rare instances does the available evidence suggest to the committee that a species was misidentified.

Hence, one of the important roles performed by the committee is to seek to obtain all of the available evidence before it reviews a report. Obtaining this evidence requires the cooperation of the committee and birding community. If the necessary

information is not immediately provided, then the committee is making an effort to obtain it. Admittedly, the committee did not perform this function consistently in the past. Recently, it has collaborated with Marshall Iliff, Jim Stasz, and Bob Ringer (authors of the forthcoming revised checklist of Maryland birds) in undertaking considerable efforts to obtain evidence from both recent as well as numerous historic reports of unusual birds in the area. The cooperation from the birding community in providing this material is greatly appreciated.

The birding community should recognize its role in this process. Whenever a species is discovered that is subject to review by the committee, the birding community should make an effort to provide the compelling evidence. The committee is frequently frustrated by reports of birds that were seen by "many individuals" or statements that photographs were taken, yet only a single brief written description is all that can be obtained. If this documentation is insufficient to meet the committee's confidence threshold for the species, then the report may not be accepted even though the committee believes that the bird was probably correctly identified. This scenario may apply to a number of the "Not Accepted" reports listed below. If birders have written descriptions, photographs, or other evidence for these reports that have not been previously submitted to the committee, please send this information to the Secretary and the report will be re-reviewed.

The following example illustrates the importance of providing detailed descriptions and other evidence for rare birds, and how this evidence provides important scientific records of patterns of bird distribution. In the early 1970s, a relatively small number of Rufous Hummingbirds (*Selasphorus rufus*) had been confirmed in eastern North America. At that time, few other extralimital hummingbird species had been reported in the east, and the documentation for Rufous Hummingbirds normally emphasized the characteristics used to distinguish them from Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*). Within the past twenty years, however, the number of reports of extralimital hummingbirds in eastern North America has increased phenomenally. While Rufous remain the most widely reported of the western hummingbirds in the east, confirmed records of Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*) in Massachusetts, Broad-billed Hummingbird (*Cyananthus latirostris*) in Ontario, and Green Violet-ear (*Colibri thalassinus*) in North Carolina suggest that any species could appear almost anywhere.

Since the vagrancy pattern of hummingbirds is much more complex than previously thought, the older records of Rufous Hummingbird need to be re-assessed. Were these individuals correctly identified, or could they have been a similar species that was not even considered to be a possible vagrant in the area at that time? Only the information used to establish the identity of Rufous Hummingbirds in the 1970s exists today to eliminate all potential vagrant species. If the documentation includes only those field marks used to distinguish these individuals from Ruby-throateds, then that information would not be sufficient to eliminate other *Selasphorus* hummingbirds and the identification of these records would currently be considered acceptable only as *Selasphorus* sp. However, if a complete description of the bird is available, then a

positive identification may be possible (although in the case of adult female and immature Rufous Hummingbirds, such identification would usually require data obtained in the hand).

As new bird identification information becomes available, the committee may occasionally re-review reports that have been "accepted" or "not accepted." Such reviews are important to ensure that all reports of a species are subject to the same level of scrutiny. For species whose characteristics may have been imperfectly known at the time of their discovery, such as extralimital stints (*Calidris* sp.), these additional reviews ensure that the original identification was consistent with the current identification criteria.

These examples illustrate the importance of providing complete descriptions of all species subject to committee review, and also explains why some of the "older" records are no longer considered acceptable by the committee. The standards of "available evidence", used to accept sightings, has evolved within bird records committees. In the past, an observer's reputation was the primary factor used to determine the acceptability of a report. If persons were believed to be reliable observers, then all of their reports were generally accepted even though the details and circumstances of the identifications remained unknown. Reports from newer birders were frequently omitted until their reputations were "proven." Today, bird records committees operate differently, requiring documentation for all rarities whether they are observed by the most experienced birders or by beginners. A birder's reputation by itself, in the absence of acceptable documentation, will never cause a report to be accepted.

An observer's experience and reputation are important factors considered by the committee in its review of reports. If individuals have previously shown that they can correctly identify difficult species, and understand how factors such as plumage variation and lighting conditions can influence their perceptions of field marks, then that experience will weigh in the favor of accepting a report. Such judgments may appear "unfair" to observers who provide similar descriptions of the same species, but do not receive the benefit of the doubt causing their reports to not be accepted. There are no easy answers to this problem, but perhaps an understanding of how the committee attempts to objectively consider an observer's experience during its reviews may be of value.

The most important function performed by the MD/DCRC is not its decisions on reports, but the creation of a historical data base documenting the status of rare birds in the area. As the number of records accumulates over the years, this data base will provide valuable knowledge on avian vagrancy and range expansions. The documentation associated with these reports will allow future researchers to make their own assessments of the validity of the records, since the criteria used to identify some species fifty years from now may be very different from what is used today. Through their cooperation with the MD/DCRC, the birding community provides a very important historical record in a more scientific manner than in the past. This system is by no

means perfect, but it allows individuals to assess the merits of each report in a more objective fashion, and not based solely on an observer's "reputation."

The MD/DCRC recognizes that its decisions are one of its important functions, but these decisions may have some undesired results such as discouraging observers from submitting additional reports. Observers who take the time to submit documentation to the committee certainly care whether or not their reports are accepted. Most people probably experience a mixture of anger and/or frustration when their records are not accepted, which is understandable. Service on the committee does not necessarily mean automatic acceptance of one's reports; most committee members have one or more sightings in the list of "Not Accepted" reports. While removing one's ego from the process may not be entirely possible, it is a worthwhile goal. Feedback makes a person a better birder in the future, and an increased awareness of identification information available in the literature makes one more likely to provide better documentation. To that end, the committee needs to provide observers with better information about the rationale used in its decisions. Some of that information is provided in the accounts below.

Through improved communication, the MD/DCRC hopes that a larger segment of the birding community will cooperate with its functions. The "human" qualities of both birders and bird records committees can never be entirely removed from the process. The actions and decisions of the committee are by no means perfect and hopefully future ornithologists will find few errors among the records that it has accepted. Rather than emphasizing past decisions, the committee is attempting through these summaries to provide the birding community with better identification information to help improve future documentation. As the birding community provides more and even better documentation, our collective knowledge of the status of Maryland and District of Columbia birds will correspondingly improve. Attaining this better knowledge is a worthwhile goal that everyone can help achieve.

The following abbreviations are used for Maryland counties: ALGY, Allegany; ANAR, Anne Arundel; BALT, Baltimore; CLVT, Calvert; CRLN, Caroline; CARR, Carroll; CECL, Cecil; CHAS, Charles; DORC, Dorchester; FRDK, Frederick; GARR, Garrett; HARF, Harford; HWRD, Howard; KENT, Kent; MONT, Montgomery; PGEO, Prince Georges; QUAN, Queen Anne's; STMA, St. Mary's; SMST, Somerset; TLBT, Talbot; WASH, Washington; WICO, Wicomico; WORC, Worcester. In the following accounts, * indicates that photographs were submitted for a record; + indicates a record of a specimen. The committee reference number for each record is included in parentheses.

Observer abbreviations are also included within the parentheses. All individuals who provided written descriptions, photographs, or other documentation to the committee are cited for each record. The observer who provided the most thorough documentation for a record is generally cited first; this observer may or may not have initially discovered the bird. For many records, the person who discovered the bird may not have provided any documentation to the committee, while for some records, the

identity of the discoverer is not even known to the committee. Our intention is not to deny recognition to observers who discover rare birds, but only to indicate those individuals who provided information to the committee. The term et al. is used for reports where multiple observers were known to have been present but only the cited individual(s) actually provided documentation to the committee.

Reports of species whose names are surrounded by brackets are no longer reviewed by the committee. The committee does not normally resolve identification issues below the species level, except for a few well-marked subspecies that were considered full species prior to recent taxonomic revisions. In the following accounts, comments on identification, age, and sex are the responsibility of the senior author, but are usually based on comments made by committee members during review of the record. All taxonomy follows the most recent (Sixth Edition) AOU Check-list (1983) and its subsequent supplements.

ACCEPTED RECORDS

This section includes all records accepted by the MD/DCRC since its inception in 1982. For some species, these records constitute all of their known occurrences within Maryland and the District of Columbia. For most species, however, these records represent only a portion of their occurrences reported in the literature.

EARED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*

Masonville, BALT, 7-15 April 1981 (RB, *RR et al.; 86-11); Piney Run Reservoir, CARR, 27 September 1982 (RR; 86-12); Ft. Smallwood Park, ANAR, 28 April 1983 (HW, WK et al.; 86-13); Hart-Miller Island, BALT, 16 October 1983 (RB, *RR et al.; 86-15); Back River, BALT, 16 January 1984 (*RR; 87-18); North Beach, CLVT, 13-18 April 1987 (JS; 87-28); Chesapeake Beach, CLVT, 2 May 1987 (EB, *JS; 87-29); Hart-Miller Island, BALT, 30 August 1987, (RR et al.; 88-25); Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 22 August--21 December 1989 (*AH, RH, SR et al.; 92-01); South River, ANAR, 27 March 1990 (MI; 92-20); Hains Point, DC, 15 April 1990 (*DC, GG; DC009); Ocean City, WORC, 10-16 February 1991 (*MO; 92-06).

A fairly typical set of records for a species known to be a rare but regular migrant and winter visitor in eastern North America, where the majority of reports occur between October and April (Buckley 1968, Banks and Clapp 1987). The number of Maryland reports has increased steadily since 1967, with most from the Coastal Plain. Reports of Eared Grebes from the Coastal Plain and Piedmont of Maryland are no longer reviewed by the committee.

Molting Eared Grebes remain a challenge to positively identify, especially during spring. In these transitional plumages, none of the plumage characteristics may be adequate to conclusively distinguish Eared Grebes from the much more numerous Horned Grebes. Even differences in head shape may not be useful in molting birds. Differences in bill size and shape are crucial for identification of these individuals.

WESTERN GREBE *Aechmophorus occidentalis*

Broadford Reservoir, GARR, 11 June 1981 (FP, *CPh et al.; 83-02); Loch Raven Reservoir, BALT, 16 December 1984--6 January 1985 (RR, *PN et al.; 88-01).

Both individuals were photographed, clearly eliminating the similar Clark's Grebe. Even though vagrant Clark's Grebes are virtually unknown along the Atlantic coast, all *Aechmophorus* grebes in Maryland should be identified on the basis of a careful study of all field marks, paying special attention to bill color and face pattern. See Eckert (1993) for the most recent discussion of the identification of Western and Clark's Grebes.

The Garrett County record is exceptional, furnishing one of very few summer records from eastern North America. The Baltimore County grebe is more typical of vagrant Western Grebes along the Atlantic coast, where most have been found between November and April as migrants and winter visitors.

YELLOW-NOSED ALBATROSS *Diomedea chlororhynchos*

Atlantic Ocean off Ocean City, 1 February 1975 (RRo, *JK et al.; 90-06).

Many birders have sailed out of Ocean City during subsequent winters, waiting in vain for a repeat of this record. It remains the only substantiated winter record for this species in the western North Atlantic. Off North America, most vagrant Yellow-nosed Albatrosses have been noted between April and October, especially during July and August (McDaniel 1973, Hoffman 1994).

WILSON'S STORM-PETREL *Oceanites oceanicus*

Chesapeake Bay off WICO, 23 July 1991 (POs et al.; 92-16).

Small numbers of Wilson's Storm-Petrels regularly wander into Chesapeake Bay during the summer, especially between late June and mid-August. On the bay, reports within and south of Anne Arundel and Queen Anne's Counties south are no longer reviewed by the committee.

WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL *Pelagodroma marina*

Baltimore Canyon in the Atlantic Ocean, 22 August 1993 (*LL et al.; 94-04).

Another pelagic trip that many Maryland birders wish they had taken. This species has proven to be a rare but regular visitor to the western North Atlantic from North Carolina north to southern New England (Lee 1995, Watson et al. 1986), so additional records from Maryland waters are possible. These storm-petrels are most likely to be found over the continental slope at depths of at least 300-500 fathoms from early August through early October.

BROWN PELICAN *Pelecanus occidentalis*

Liberty Reservoir, BALT, 14-18 Oct. 1981 (HK, *RR, et al.; 92-17);
Conowingo Dam, HARF, 22 December 1986 (*RF; 92-18).

Despite increasing numbers of Brown Pelicans along the Mid-Atlantic coast and the lower Chesapeake Bay, inland occurrences remain very unusual. The Conowingo Dam pelican was exceptionally late, as this species is quite rare along the Maryland coast during late December.

GREAT CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Martinak State Park, CRLN, 7 March 1981 (ES et al.; 83-03); Conowingo Dam, HARF, 29 January 1989 (RS, et al.; 89-06); Sycamore Landing, MONT, 26 September 1989 (MO; 91-20).

While Great Cormorants regularly occur on freshwater habitats in Europe, they remain rare visitors to these habitats in North America. Any suspected Great Cormorant on freshwater should be carefully distinguished from the much more numerous Double-crested Cormorant (*P. auritus*). The identification of adults poses few problems, but immatures are more troublesome as their plumages are more variable than shown in most field guides. In the absence of meaningful size comparisons, observers should concentrate on color of the bill, lores, and gular pouch to conclusively establish the identity of immatures. The committee currently reviews reports of this species only from locations west of the Coastal Plain and upstream from Conowingo Dam on the Susquehanna River.

ANHINGA *Anhinga anhinga*

Ft. Smallwood Park, ANAR, 9 May 1981 (RB, JOr et al.; 85-12); Berlin, WORC, 7-8 May 1983 (MH, *FB; 85-14).

Even though summering Anhingas regularly occur north to the southeast corner of Virginia, they very infrequently wander north of their established range in the Mid-Atlantic states. Most vagrants appear during spring, primarily between mid-April and mid-May; these records represent typical spring dates.

FRIGATEBIRD SP. *Fregata* sp.

Assateague Island, WORC, 30 April 1984 (MHo; 87-19); Potomac River, DC, 3 Oct. 1988 (*RC, JWI; DC005).

The committee has taken a conservative stance towards the identification of vagrant frigatebirds in Maryland and DC. Even though Magnificent Frigatebird (*F. magnificens*) is the most likely candidate for vagrancy based on geographic

probabilities, the committee is unwilling to assume that this species is the only one to occur within the area since there are also records of vagrant Great Frigatebirds (*F. minor*) from North America. The field identification of frigatebirds poses a significant challenge, especially since soaring individuals seldom provide an opportunity to carefully study the field marks needed to distinguish the two species. Positive identification of photographed frigatebirds may not be even possible under most circumstances. Hence, most records of vagrant frigatebirds will not be identifiable to species. For additional information on field identification of these two species of frigatebirds, see Howell (1994).

[LEAST BITTERN *Ixobrychus exilis*]

Lilypons, FRDK, 9 February 1992 (TW et al.; 92-32).

The only February record for Maryland, surprisingly from a regular nesting location on the Piedmont rather than from marshes along the Eastern Shore.

[WHITE IBIS *Eudocimus albus*]

Blackwater NWR, DORC, 7-28 March 1988 (BJ, SE, ML, DLo et al.; 89-04).

The earliest Maryland spring record, during a season when this species is a rare visitor to the state. Most White Ibis appear as post-breeding visitors between late June and early September.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL *Ajaia ajaja*

Smith Island, SMST, 14 April-19 September 1979 (DB et al.; 83-01).

This individual was observed sporadically during the period, during which it molted into adult plumage. This record was unprecedented at the time. However, Roseate Spoonbill populations have been slowly increasing during subsequent years, and additional extralimital individuals have been noted north to the lower Great Lakes region. The possibility of another non-breeding spoonbill appearing in Maryland is not out of the question.

WOOD STORK *Mycteria americana*

Hampton, BALT, 11-25 July 1989 (*DC, HM, EW et al.; 90-08); Cove Point, CLVT, 5 August 1989 (*MO; 91-30).

Along the Mid-Atlantic coast, Wood Storks are primarily known as post-breeding visitors with most sightings between late June and mid-August. These two records represent typical dates. The number of extralimital Wood Stork sightings has noticeably decreased during recent decades, reflecting declines in breeding populations in the southeastern U.S.

FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK *Dendrocygna bicolor*

Eastern Neck NWR, KENT, 24 November 1979 (RR et al.; 86-22); Blackwater NWR, DORC, 11-20 November 1989 (HM, *GA, RH, *MMu, *SS et al.; 91-02).

When they wander into Maryland, Fulvous Whistling-Ducks may appear as individuals or flocks. At least 35 were present at Eastern Neck N.W.R., while the Blackwater N.W.R. record initially involved a flock of 36 whistling-ducks. Both of these records were during November, however, this species is nomadic and could appear in Maryland during any month of the year.

ROSS' GOOSE *Chen rossii*

Blackwater NWR, DORC, 27 November 1981 (PO, *MO et al.; 94-17); Blackwater NWR, DORC, 31 December 1984 (MO et al.; 92-34); Blackwater NWR, DORC, 25 November--11 December 1989 (HA, GA, *DC, HM, PO, MO et al.; 90-09); Blackwater NWR, DORC, 4 January--8 February 1992 (*MG et al.; 92-39); Blackwater NWR, DORC, 17 January 1993 (*MG et al.; 94-11); Starr, QUAN, 28 November 1993 (MI, JS; 94-41); Snow Hill, WORC, 15 October 1994 (MO et al.; 94-42).

The field identification of Ross' Geese initially posed problems for the committee, especially distinguishing this species from Ross' X Snow Goose hybrids. For example, the 1981 record from Blackwater N.W.R. was not accepted initially, since the possibility of its being a hybrid was not satisfactorily eliminated at that time. Once additional information on the identification of these hybrids became available (see Trauger et al. 1971, Roberson 1993), this record was re-reviewed and accepted.

North American populations of Ross' Geese have been increasing throughout the twentieth century (Ryder 1969), resulting in a dramatic eastward expansion in both the breeding and wintering ranges. In recent years, small numbers have regularly wintered among the Snow Goose (*C. caerulescens*) flocks along the Atlantic coast from New Jersey to North Carolina. Ross' Geese could occur in any large flock of Snow Geese encountered along the Coastal Plain of Maryland. Given their regular occurrence on portions of the Coastal Plain, the committee no longer reviews reports from the Eastern Shore. However, we urge that all Ross' Geese on the Coastal Plain should still be carefully identified with an emphasis on the bill and head characteristics needed to eliminate the possibility of hybrids.

CINNAMON TEAL *Anas cyanoptera*

Horsehead Farm Sanctuary, QUAN, 15 September--4 November 1987 (*RR, BH et al.; 88-21).

While the identification of this male was not questioned, its origins generated considerable debate within the committee. Cinnamon Teal are regularly kept in captivity, which complicates the assessment of extralimital reports of this species and many other waterfowl. Since this individual was associated with Blue-winged Teal (*A.*

discors) during the normal fall migration periods for both species, and appeared following a drought year within its normal range when there were other extralimital records of Cinnamon Teal in eastern North America, the committee believed that this individual was most likely a wild bird.

[EURASIAN WIGEON *Anas penelope*]

Piney Run Park, CARR, 2 April 1985, (EW, MHa; 88-22); Loch Raven Reservoir, BALT, 15-19 March 1988 (HK, RB, HM, MMu et al.; 88-23).

Typical spring dates for this rare but regular migrant and winter visitor in Maryland.

KING EIDER *Somateria spectabilis*

Ocean City, WORC, 18 May--2 August 1991 (*MO et al.; 92-36); Laytonsville, MONT, 5-9 November 1991 (*MO, RH et al.; 92-37).

The Ocean City eider provided one of very few summering records from the Mid-Atlantic region, at a location where small numbers appear during most winters. Since most Maryland records are from the Atlantic coast or Chesapeake Bay, the Laytonsville record was remarkable for the Piedmont region.

HARELQUIN DUCK *Histrionicus histrionicus*

Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 4 November 1989 (*MI et al.; 91-03); Elliott Island, DORC, 9 May 1992 (HA; 92-38).

The Elliott Island record represents the latest spring occurrence in Maryland. On Chesapeake Bay, the committee currently reviews reports only north of Anne Arundel and Queen Anne's counties.

[BLACK SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*]

Hains Point, DC, 1 November 1988 (DC; DC006).

A first record for DC, on a typical date for an inland fall migrant.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE *Elanoides forficatus*

Owings Mills, BALT, 25 May 1978 (JSm; 86-06); Tanyard, CRLN, 13 May 1983 (KT; 86-08).

Additional reports are under review by the committee. The number of extralimital records of these kites has noticeably increased during recent years within the mid-Atlantic region. They have become very rare but fairly regular spring visitors, with most

records from the Coastal Plain and Piedmont during May and early June; these records fit this pattern of vagrancy.

MISSISSIPPI KITE *Ictinia mississippiensis*

Rockville, MONT, 11 May 1990 (MO; 91-22); Fort Smallwood Park, ANAR, 7 June 1994 (SR; 94-39).

Many additional reports are under review by the committee. These kites are primarily late spring and summer visitors to the Mid-Atlantic Region, with most records during May and June from the Coastal Plain and Piedmont. The number of reports has markedly increased during the 1990s, perhaps reflecting increased populations in the southeastern U.S. Their breeding range currently extends northward to southern Virginia, but as the number of late spring and summer records increases north of this range, breeding in Maryland is a possibility.

If seen well, Mississippi Kites are not likely to be confused with any other North American hawk. However, many reports have generated considerable debate within the committee since they pertain to individuals seen very briefly in flight, frequently in poor lighting conditions, with the observers not having an opportunity to study and describe all of the important field marks. These factors have resulted in a fairly high rate of "not accepted" reports.

SWAINSON'S HAWK *Buteo swainsoni*

Ft. Smallwood Park, ANAR, 17 April 1984 (WK; 85-17).

This record is remarkable, as there are very few additional spring reports east of the Appalachian Mountains. Most Coastal Plain reports are during fall migration, when small numbers pass through Cape May, New Jersey each year and probably fly over eastern Maryland as they head toward their South American winter range. Fall migrants in Maryland should be looked for during September and October.

Swainson's Hawks also have a relatively high rate of "not accepted" reports, a result of the limited opportunity to carefully study the critical field marks as the hawks quickly pass by in migration. Immatures are the most likely age class to appear in Maryland. Observers should pay close attention to the wing pattern and other characteristics of these individuals because they are not as readily identifiable as adults.

[GOLDEN EAGLE *Aquila chrysaetos*]

Georgetown Reservoir, DC, 22 October 1988 (*DC, TW; DC004).

The first record for DC, but a very typical fall migration date for this species.

YELLOW RAIL *Coturnicops noveboracensis*

Pinto Marsh, ALGY, 17 October 1993 (+SM, 94-33); Jug Bay, ANAR, 4 October 1980

(+WM, MPe, 95-18).

As a result of their very secretive habits, the status and habitat preferences of Yellow Rails in Maryland remain poorly understood. The Allegany County record is the first west of the Piedmont, and may show that Yellow Rails are more widely distributed than the few previous reports indicate.

LIMPKIN *Aramus guarauna*

Lilypons, FRDK, 25 May--8 June 1971 (*RRo et al.; 95-14); Lake Way Drive (Benson Branch), HWRD, 26 May--10 June 1985 (JSo, *MM et al.; 86-26).

These records represent the most northerly occurrences of Limpkins in North America (AOU 1983). The similarity of dates, separated by 14 years, is remarkable.

SANDHILL CRANE *Grus canadensis*

Tilghman, TLBT, 27 November 1982 (*LR; 85-19); Pinto Marsh, ALGY, 26 April 1984 (TS, *DJ et al.; 87-08); Woodbine, HWRD, 28 March 1986 (*DS; 87-09); Little Bennett Regional Park, MONT, 2 May 1987 (ED et al.; 87-33); Bittinger, GARR, 16 August--15 September 1989 (*BT et al.; 91-16); Trappe, TLBT, 28 February--20 March 1991 (*MO et al.; 94-12); Wye Mills, QUAN, 4-9 January 1994 (GT; 94-13).

Of these records, the crane at Bittinger, Garrett County is most noteworthy as the only accepted summer report for the state. While Sandhill Cranes could potentially appear anywhere in Maryland during any month of the year, most records pertain to migrants and winter visitors between late October and March from the Coastal Plain and Piedmont. The eastern population of Sandhill Cranes has noticeably increased and expanded its breeding range in recent decades (Hoffman 1989; Tebbel and Ankeny 1982), as reflected in the increased numbers of reports from Maryland since 1980. The committee no longer reviews reports from the Coastal Plain and Piedmont.

PIPING PLOVER *Charadrius melodus*

Cove Point, CLVT, 2 May 1987 (EB, JS et al.; 87-34).

This individual was probably a spring migrant. The committee currently reviews records of Piping Plovers along Chesapeake Bay north of Anne Arundel and Queen Anne's counties.

BLACK-NECKED STILT *Himantopus mexicanus*

Hart-Miller Island, BALT, 25 May--1 June 1986 (HK, *RR et al.; 87-22); Cove Point, CLVT, 17 May 1987 (JS; 87-35); Potomac River, DC 21 July 1991 (MJ; DC010).

The record from the Potomac River near National Airport is the first for DC. The stilt population breeding along the Mid-Atlantic coast has markedly increased during

recent decades, resulting in increased numbers of reports from Maryland's Eastern Shore. The committee no longer reviews reports from the Coastal Plain.

[AMERICAN AVOCET *Recurvirostra americana*]

Lake Elkhorn, HWRD, 15 March 1987 (D&MW, *RSo, DHe; 87-36); Potomac River, DC, 26 August 1990 (DC, RH; DC008).

Four avocets on the Potomac River provided the first well documented record for DC.

[LESSER YELLOWLEGS *Tringa flavipes*]

Lilypons, FRDK, 9 January 1985 (MO;91-28).

An unusual mid-winter record from the Piedmont.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW *Numenius americanus*

Deal Island WMA, SMST, 12 June 1976 (PP; 88-03); Brandywine, PGEO, 30 August-12 September 1987 (*EW, *DC, RR, CSw et al.; 88-04).

The only documented twentieth century records from Maryland. Along the Atlantic coast north of North Carolina, these curlews remain accidental visitors with most recent records pertaining to fall migrants.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Hart-Miller Island, BALT, 20 September 1987 (HK; 89-01).

The field identification of extralimital small *Calidris* sandpipers in North America poses a very difficult challenge, as the distinguishing field marks tend to be subtle and require careful study. The differences between species are frequently based on subjective characteristics, and may require corroboration by photographs or specimens to conclusively establish an identification. While the identification of these species has been discussed in considerable detail by Grant (1984) and Veit and Jonsson (1984), much remains to be learned about them.

[WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER *Calidris fuscicollis*]

Lilypons, FRDK, 3-6 December 1988 (SW; 90-10).

A very late fall record for Maryland, especially on the Piedmont.

[BAIRD'S SANDPIPER *Calidris bairdii*]

Triadelphia Reservoir, HWRD, 12 September 1982 (HM, MMu, *RSo, *DH; 83-10); Hart-Miller Island, BALT, 10 December 1983 (*RR et al.; 88-05).

The Hart-Miller Island record is easily the latest fall date for Maryland, and provides one of very few photographically confirmed December records from North America (see Jehl 1979). The bird at Triadelphia Reservoir provided a first Howard County record.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Hart-Miller Island, BALT, 19 October 1985 (HK, *RR, RB, HM et al.; 86-27); Hart-Miller Island, BALT, 17 May 1992 (SR, *OJ, JS et al.; 94-34).

The only two accepted records for Maryland. The May date is fairly typical for a spring migrant, while the juvenile in October provided a relatively late fall date for the Mid-Atlantic region. Given their regular occurrence in small numbers along Delaware Bay during spring and fall, the paucity of accepted records from Maryland is somewhat surprising.

While the identification of breeding-plumaged adults poses few challenges, juveniles and winter-plumaged adults are more difficult. Additionally, these non-breeding plumages are poorly described in most field guides. Claims of Curlew Sandpipers in these plumages should rely on more than just the white rump patch for identification, since this field mark can be difficult to observe accurately under many circumstances. Observers should also describe the underparts, upperparts, and differences in shape as compared with Dunlin (*C. alpina*) in order to provide a convincing description.

[BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER *Tryngites subruficollis*]

Green Manor Turf Farm, HWRD, 15 September 1979 (RB; 83-21).

The first county record, but on a typical date for a fall migrant.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Blackwater NWR, DORC, 16-17 April 1982 (WE et al.; 87-23); Blackwater NWR, DORC, 23-25 April 1982 (LC et al.; 87-24); Lilypons, FRDK, 17 April 1988 (BV et al.; 89-07); Jug Bay Wetlands, ANAR, 9 April 1991 (DM et al.; 94-08); Hart-Miller Island, BALT, 4 September 1991 (MO et al.; 94-09).

The Lilypons record is unusual for the Piedmont, since most Maryland Ruffs appear on the Coastal Plain. These dates are representative of spring and fall occurrences within the state. This species is a rare but regular migrant along the Coastal Plain of the entire Mid-Atlantic region, and the committee no longer reviews records from the Maryland Coastal Plain.

[RED-NECKED PHALAROPE *Phalaropus lobatus*]

Seneca, MONT, 26-29 September 1991 (MO, PO et al.; 94-14); Elliot Island, DORC, 9 May 1992 (HA; 94-16); Emmitsburg, FRDK, 31 August-4 September 1993 (PO; 94-15).

Typical dates for Maryland, but the records from Seneca and Emmitsburg are noteworthy from the Piedmont where these phalaropes are rare migrants.

RED PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicaria*

Columbia, HWRD, 1-12 October 1982 (SEc, JSo, *EW, *DH, MC et al.; 92-23); Hart-Miller Island, BALT, 14 August--2 October 1988 (HK, PK et al.; 90-05); Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 24 September 1989 (SR, LD et al.; 91-05); Centennial Park, HWRD, 21 October 1989 (JW; 91-06); Frederick, FRDK, 22-23 September 1990 (*SM, *ET; 91-07); Sycamore Landing, MONT, 26 September 1991 (MO, PO et al.; 94-22).

The 14 August date from Hart-Miller Island is exceptionally early for an inland migrant during autumn; the other dates are more typical for fall migration. While it is a regular migrant offshore, this species remains the rarest phalarope within inland counties. The committee no longer reviews reports from the Coastal Plain and Piedmont.

POMARINE JAEGER *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Seneca, MONT, 8-9 July 1990 (PO, *DC; 92-25).

Even though this species may be encountered offshore during the summer months, this record is truly remarkable as there are very few early July reports anywhere from the interior of the United States.

LONG-TAILED JAEGER *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Atlantic Ocean off Ocean City, 28 September 1991 (*DC, *MO et al.; 92-27).

The status of Long-tailed Jaegers in Maryland's offshore waters remains to be conclusively determined. This species is a regular and fairly common migrant in the offshore waters of North Carolina (Lee 1986, 1989, 1995). Hence, their status is probably fairly similar far offshore in Maryland waters, perhaps beyond the range of most pelagic birding trips.

The identification of adult Long-tailed Jaegers is not difficult under reasonable viewing conditions. However, identifying immatures in the field has always posed a difficult challenge, and most reports from the western North Atlantic pertain to immatures. Identification of birds in the hand has fooled many ornithologists, and a number of skins have been recently re-identified based on current knowledge of the characteristics used to distinguish immature jaegers (Lee 1989). The plumages of immature Long-taileds are variable, and while some of these plumages are fairly

distinctive, others are similar to immature Parasitic Jaegers (*S. parasiticus*) (see Olsen (1989) for discussions of the field identification of immature Long-tailed Jaegers). These field identification problems are complicated by the challenge of observing detailed plumage characters of fast-flying jaegers from a moving boat. Depending upon the plumage of the individual jaeger, observation of the necessary field marks and obtaining convincing documentation of birds believed to be immature Long-tailed Jaegers may not be possible under some circumstances.

FRANKLIN'S GULL *Larus pipixcan*

Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 11-17 May 1976 (HW et al.; 88-07); Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 21 May 1976 (*CW et al.; 93-01); Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 19 June 1987 (*MO; 88-09); Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 1 July 1987 (*MO; 88-10).

In Maryland, most Franklin's Gulls have been discovered between May and October on the upper Chesapeake Bay and its western tributaries. These accepted records are consistent with this pattern of occurrence. The majority of reports were during the 1970s and 1980s, including many that have not been reviewed by the committee, but the number of sightings has sharply decreased during the 1990s. Despite this recent decrease, the committee no longer reviews reports from the western tributaries of Chesapeake Bay from Anne Arundel and Prince Georges counties northward.

This species is most likely to be confused with Laughing Gulls (*L. atricilla*). While distinguishing between the immatures of these two species posed a problem during the 1970s, their identification is now well covered in the standard field guides.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

Conowingo Dam, HARF, 6 December 1987 (RB; 88-20).

Although slightly inland from Chesapeake Bay where this species appears regularly in small numbers, this individual was discovered at a location known to attract unusual gulls. The committee no longer reviews reports from the Susquehanna River below Conowingo Dam.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Conowingo Dam, CECL, 6-9 December 1987 (RB et al.; 89-02); Conowingo Dam, HARF, 6-9 December 1987 (RB et al.; 89-02).

A single individual produced both county records. Small numbers of Common Black-headed Gulls have been fairly regular visitors to Conowingo Dam during late fall and winter of recent years, and the committee no longer reviews reports from this location.

CALIFORNIA GULL *Larus californicus*

Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 11 July 1984 (DSi, HW et al.; 88-15); Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 14 August 1984 (MO, *JO; 87-25); Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 29 October 1990 (*MO, RB et al.; 91-27).

As more observers spend more time searching through large concentrations of gulls in recent years, this species has been more frequently reported from the Mid-Atlantic region. It remains a very rare visitor with most reports during fall and winter. However, as the first two records from Sandy Point State Park indicate, California Gulls can appear during any season.

The identification of California Gulls in eastern North America remains a difficult challenge, especially in sub-adult plumages. The plumages of immature Herring Gulls (*L. argentatus*) are extremely variable, and can appear very similar to immature California Gulls. Adult California Gulls are also more variable than indicated in most field guides, especially the larger and paler-mantled race (*L. californicus albertaensis*) which breeds in the eastern portion of its range (Jehl 1986). Hence, descriptions of all relevant field marks should accompany any claim of California Gull from Maryland.

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus cachinnans*

Georgetown Reservoir, DC, 1-6 February 1990 (*DC, CW, WMa, RH et al.; DC001); Georgetown Reservoir, DC, 18 December 1990--21 March 1991 (*DC, *OJ, RH et al.; DC003); Laytonsville, MONT, 5 January--16 March 1991 (MO, PO, DC, RH et al.; 91-24); Georgetown Reservoir, DC, 26 December 1991--23 February 1992 (RH, *MG et al.; DC007).

A single individual is believed to be responsible for all of these records, establishing the third confirmed North American record of this species. Despite extensive descriptions and photographs, its subspecific identification remains in question. See Wilds and Czaplak (1994) for a detailed description of this individual and a summary of the North American status of Yellow-legged Gull.

Sub-adult Herring Gulls (*L. argentatus*) will occasionally show a yellowish tinge to their legs, and there have even been a few reports of adults with yellow legs but otherwise typical characteristics of that species. Additionally, some Yellow-legged Gulls may not have yellow legs. Hence, leg color by itself is insufficient for the identification of Yellow-legged Gulls which also differ with regards to mantle color, extent of head streaking, wing-tip pattern, and other characteristics.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Hart-Miller Island, BALT, 23 October 1983 (RB, RR; 86-28); North Beach, CLVT, 1 November 1985 (*JS; 94-30); Bellevue, TLBT, 9 October 1988 (HA et al.; 89-08); Conowingo Dam, HARF, 14 December 1992 (*MG, BO, JWo et al.; 94-31).

Despite its regular occurrence offshore, Black-legged Kittiwakes remain very rare visitors anywhere on Chesapeake Bay. The Conowingo Dam record is exceptional for

an inland location. The Bellevue record is very early for a fall migrant, as most do not appear until November or December.

ROSS' GULL *Rhodostethia rosea*

Back River Sewage Plant, BALT, 3 March--24 April 1990 (but not between 12 March-13 April) (ESc, *DC, *GJ, MO, CRo et al.; 91-04).

To date, this record remains the most southerly occurrence of Ross' Gull documented by photographs along the Atlantic coast. Once an exceptional rarity in North America away from northern Alaska, the number of extralimital reports has increased during recent years. They are most likely to be discovered during late fall/early winter and as spring migrants during March and April (Bledsoe and Sibley 1985). Perhaps another individual will grace Maryland waters in the near future.

SABINE'S GULL *Xema sabini*

Atlantic Ocean east of Ocean City, 9 May 1976 (RRo et al.; 86-17); Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 21 May 1976 (CC, HW et al.; 86-18).

Sabine's Gulls remain extremely rare migrants anywhere along the Atlantic coast, both in onshore and offshore waters. The May dates are typical of its spring passage, although the appearance of one at Sandy Point State Park was totally unexpected away from the immediate coast. Because this species is a rare but fairly regular fall migrant on the eastern Great Lakes, its appearance in Maryland during that season is not out of the question when it is most likely to be discovered during late September or October.

GULL-BILLED TERN *Sterna nilocta*

Hurlock sewage ponds, DORC, 6 August 1989 (MO; 92-02); Hart-Miller Island, BALT, 9 June 1991 (HK et al.; 92-03); Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 10 July 1985 (*MO, 94-07).

While Gull-billed Terns regularly forage over fields and marshes near the coast, the Hurlock record was unusually far inland. However, its appearance coincided with the normal post-breeding movements of this species. The record from Hart-Miller Island was remarkable for the upper Chesapeake Bay. The committee no longer reviews reports from the Chesapeake Bay within and south from Anne Arundel and Queen Anne's counties.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Pt. Lookout, STMA, 31 August 1983 (EW et al.; 87-15). Hart-Miller Island, BALT, 8 June 1986 (HK, PK, MP; 87-14); North Beach, CLVT, 20 August 1987 (JS; 88-19).

Small numbers of post-breeding Sandwich Terns are known to move regularly

into portions of Chesapeake Bay. The August dates from Pt. Lookout and North Beach are typical of these movements, and the committee no longer reviews reports from the Chesapeake Bay within and south from Anne Arundel and Queen Anne's counties. The record from Hart-Miller Island was very unusual for upper Chesapeake Bay, especially during early June as they would be most likely to appear in late summer or early autumn.

ROSEATE TERN *Sterna dougallii*

Ocean City inlet, WORC, 18 June 1991 (MO; 94-18); Fourth Street flats at Ocean City, WORC, 7-8 June 1992 (MO, *MHo et al.; 94-19); Fourth Street flats at Ocean City, WORC, 18 June--9 July 1994 (MI, *MHo, *GJ et al.; 94-20).

The individuals in 1992 and 1994 were associated with the large nesting colony of Common Terns (*S. hirundo*) and other species at Ocean City. Since Roseate Terns have sporadically nested in the Mid-Atlantic region (Clapp et al. 1983), a breeding attempt at the Ocean City colony is possible. However, most Roseate Terns in the United States breed in colonies in New England and the Florida Keys (AOU 1983).

BRIDLED TERN *Sterna anaethetus*

Atlantic Ocean east of Ocean City, 7 June 1986 (DC, WK, *MO, MB et al.; 87-10).

Bridled Terns are rather common summer and fall visitors to the warm offshore waters of North Carolina, becoming most numerous during August and September (Lee and Booth 1979, Lee 1986, 1995). Only small numbers of these terns have been reported farther north, primarily reflecting the paucity of pelagic birding trips taken from the Mid-Atlantic states during the months when they are most likely to appear. Bridled Terns are most frequently found along the inner edge of the Gulf Stream and where warm Gulf Stream eddies meet the continental shelf (Lee 1995), conditions that occur annually in Maryland's offshore waters. Hence, the committee no longer reviews pelagic reports of this species.

The June date was relatively early for the appearance of two Bridled Terns. However, this species has been reported as early as 17 April off North Carolina (Lee 1995).

SOOTY TERN *Sterna fuscata*

Plum Point, CLVT, 6 September 1979 (*JF et al.; 95-10).

As is true for most inland records of Sooty Terns, the capture of this individual along Chesapeake Bay followed the passage of a strong tropical storm.

GUILLEMOT sp. *Cephus* sp.

Chesapeake Bay near the Bay Bridge, ANAR, 11 March 1993 (JWh et al.; 94-03).

The committee took a conservative stance on this record. While the written description suggested that a guillemot was present at this location, this description did not provide adequate information on the coloration of the underwing coverts and the features of the white patch on the upper wing coverts to positively distinguish between the two very similar species of guillemots. Black Guillemot (*C. grylle*) is the more likely species to appear in Maryland based on geographic probability and the fact that Pigeon Guillemot (*C. columba*) is unknown as a vagrant away from the Pacific coast. However, the appearance of any alcid on this portion of Chesapeake Bay is exceptional, and the committee decided not to accept a specific identification based solely on geographic probability.

[ATLANTIC PUFFIN *Fratercula arctica*]

Atlantic Ocean east of Ocean City, 16 March 1975 (*RR et al.;90-07).

The first documented record for Maryland, but subsequent pelagic trips have shown this species to be a fairly regular winter visitor far offshore.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE *Zenaida asiatica*

Patuxent Naval Air Station, STMA, 4 November, 1988 (*KR, MBr; 95-03); Appleton, CECL, 9-27 March 1989 (PO, MO, *PB et al.; 90-11).

As a vagrant in eastern North America, most records of White-winged Doves are during June-August and late October-November. Hence, the record from Appleton was unexpected during spring. Reports of vagrant White-winged Doves have increased during recent years, especially in New England and the Maritime Provinces of Canada (Veit and Petersen 1993), although smaller numbers have appeared in the Mid-Atlantic states. Whether or not these vagrants represent wandering individuals from the southwestern United States or from the recently established population in Florida is unknown.

BURROWING OWL *Athene cunicularia*

Gortner, GARR, 18-20 May 1983 (*FP et al.; 85-20).

Wandering Burrowing Owls have been widely reported from eastern North America (AOU 1983), although the number of reports has declined during recent decades. They are most likely to appear during the spring and fall migrations, perhaps indicating these vagrants originated from the highly migratory populations in western North America. However, the racial identities of most of these vagrants is unknown, and some may have come from the resident population in Florida.

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD *Selasphorus rufus*

Lilypons, FRDK, 1 May 1971 (RRo; 90-13); Takoma Park, PGEO 9 November 1988--17 April 1989 (KK, HM, *TO, *MO, *DC, DGr et al.; 90-14).

This species is the most widely reported western hummingbird in eastern North America. Its status in the east was originally summarized by Conway and Drennan (1979), and subsequent reports have firmly established Rufous Hummingbird as a rare but regular vagrant. An increase in the popularity of hummingbird feeders, and the practice of keeping them full into late autumn may contribute to the increased numbers of reports in recent years.

While adults have appeared as early as July and August, most records pertain to individuals discovered during November and December. In the Mid-Atlantic states, most Rufous Hummingbirds disappear during the winter, probably succumbing from the effects of severe weather. The Takoma Park hummingbird is one of very few to have overwintered in the Mid-Atlantic states, although wintering records are not unusual farther south. The May record from Lilypons is exceptional, providing one of very few reports of a spring migrant from eastern North America. In addition to these two records, additional reports of Rufous Hummingbirds and unidentified *Selasphorus* hummingbirds are under review by the committee. Observers are encouraged to submit all reports of *Selasphorus* hummingbirds, even if they cannot obtain the necessary information to specifically identify these individuals.

Other than adult males, distinguishing between Rufous and Allen's (*S. sasin*) hummingbirds poses one of the most difficult field identification challenges of all North American birds. In fact, most adult females and immatures cannot be positively identified in the field, although they can be separated in the hand (Stiles 1972). Even though Rufous is the more likely species to appear in Maryland, there have been a few confirmed records of Allen's in eastern North America. Hence, the committee is not willing to assume that all vagrant *Selasphorus* hummingbirds in the east are Rufous, and requires sufficient information to positively identify these individuals.

HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER *Empidonax hammondii*
Ocean City, WORC, 9 October 1963 (+DG; 89-09).

This museum specimen was originally identified as a Least Flycatcher (*E. minimus*), but was subsequently re-identified as a Hammond's Flycatcher (Gibson 1987). The record is one of a handful of confirmed reports of Hammond's Flycatcher from eastern North America. However, given the notoriously difficult problems in the field identification of *Empidonax* flycatchers during autumn (Whitney and Kaufman 1985), especially confirming the identities of extralimital individuals, its true vagrant status in the east remains to be determined.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER *Pyrocephalus rubinus*
Assateague Island, WORC, 29 September 1991 (*DC, MAT et al.; 92-28).

Vermilion Flycatchers are known to wander widely from their established range in

the southwestern United States and Mexico, although there are relatively few reports from along the Atlantic Coast. Most vagrants are detected during spring or fall migration, but one has overwintered on the Eastern Shore of Virginia in recent years.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus cinerascens*

Blackwater NWR, DORC, 4-5 December 1992 (*OJ, HM, *DC, et al.; 93-09).

In eastern North America, the Ash-throated Flycatcher is a rare but fairly regular vagrant within the Atlantic coastal states, primarily as a late fall vagrant between late October and December (Murphy 1982). This record fits a well-established pattern of vagrancy.

WESTERN KINGBIRD *Tyrannus verticalis*

McKee-Beshers WMA, MONT, 1 July 1979 (DC, RP; 83-29); Berlin, WORC, 28 December 1985 (MO; 91-17).

Because Western Kingbirds are generally known as rare fall migrants in eastern North America, the summer record from McKee-Beshers WMA was unexpected and one of very few to appear during that season in the Mid-Atlantic states. The kingbird at Berlin was fairly late, although there are other early winter reports from the region.

GRAY KINGBIRD *Tyrannus dominicensis*

Girdletree, WORC, 14 June 1975 (*DH et al.; 95-21); Arnold, ANAR, 3 May 1983 (*GV, SV; 95-22).

Vagrant Gray Kingbirds have been discovered at a number of locations in the Atlantic coastal states and provinces, especially during late summer and autumn although spring records are not unprecedented. The Arnold kingbird was not accepted initially by the committee. However, a re-examination of the photo clearly shows a kingbird with white underparts and a forked tail, a combination of traits eliminating all other kingbirds except for the Giant (*T. cubensis*) (Phillips 1994). The latter species was eliminated by its much larger bill and head, as well as the fact that it is a non-migratory endemic to Cuba that has never wandered to the United States and is very unlikely to ever appear in Maryland.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER *Tyrannus forficatus*

Bailey's Neck, TLBT, 2 June 1963 (DO et al.; 86-24); Blackwater NWR, DORC, 16 May 1984 (BR et al.; 87-26); Antietam National Battlefield, WASH, 3-18 October 1987 (*DC, *GJ, LG et al.; 88-06) Lilypons, FRDK, 30-31 May 1988 (*MO, HM, EW et al.; 91-08).

This flycatcher regularly wanders from its established breeding range in the central United States. Most Scissor-tailed Flycatchers are discovered during late spring

and early summer; the May and June dates from Maryland are typical of these records. However, the October record is not completely unexpected, since this species is known to be a fairly late fall migrant to its winter range in Florida (Duncan 1995).

FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER *Tyrannus savana*

Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 23 September 1978 (HW et al.; 83-05).

In North America, most Fork-tailed Flycatchers are observed during July-November within the eastern states, a pattern of vagrancy that is shown by the record from Sandy Point State Park. However, a few have also appeared during late spring. These individuals are believed to be mis-directed migrants of the race *T. s. savana*, that mistakenly migrate north from their winter range in northern South America rather than south to their normal breeding range (McCaskie and Patten 1994, Monroe and Barron 1980).

BOREAL CHICKADEE *Parus hudsonicus*

Back River Sewage Plant, BALT, 9 December 1977--23 April 1978 (*JS, *RR et al.; 87-01).

The appearance of Boreal Chickadees south of their normal range is usually associated with large southward invasions of Black-capped Chickadees (*P. atricapillus*). When Boreal Chickadees do appear, they may overwinter.

ROCK WREN *Salpinctes obsoletus*

Assateague National Seashore, WORC, 11-14 October 1993 (*MHo, ESc et al.; 94-29).

A widespread summer resident in western North America, vagrant Rock Wrens are most likely to appear in the eastern states during fall or winter. The Assateague Island wren fits this pattern of vagrancy, and provided one of relatively few reports from the Mid-Atlantic region.

[SEdge WREN *Cistothorus platensis*]

Rockville, MONT, 19 August--1 September 1983 (*MO et al.; 92-30).

An unusual nesting record from the Piedmont, as most breeding has been reported from the Coastal Plain.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Hog Island Marsh, CRLN, 11-13 September 1990 (*MO et al.; 91-09).

Northern Wheatears are primarily known as rare but annual fall migrants in

eastern North America, primarily in September. Many fewer have been reported during spring (Bruun 1980). Most reports are from New Jersey northward along or near the coast, although there have been a few records from the Great Lakes region and other inland locations during recent years. The bird at Hog Island Marsh fits this established pattern of vagrancy. It provided one of very few records from the Mid-Atlantic region.

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD *Sialia currucoides*
Oldtown, ALGY, 23 December 1970 (JP; 85-24).

A highly migratory species in western North America, Mountain Bluebirds are primarily known as late fall and winter visitors east of the Mississippi River with scattered reports east to the Atlantic coast. Maryland's only record was one of the first of a growing number of sightings from eastern North America, and another occurrence within the state is overdue.

VARIED THRUSH *Ixoreus naevius*
Savage, HWRD, 11-15 December 1977 (JSo et al.; 94-25); Bethesda, MONT, 1 February 1987 (HAI, JPo; 87-11).

Several additional reports are currently under review. This occupant of forested habitats along the Pacific coast is well known as a rare but regular winter visitor to eastern North America (Keith 1968). Most are discovered at feeders, as were these two individuals in Maryland. Vagrant Varied Thrushes are more often reported from New England, the upper Great Lakes states, and southern Canada than from states to the south, perhaps reflecting their increased reliance on feeders in the harsher northern climates.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*
Berlin, WORC, 13-15 February 1994 (MHo, PO, *GJ et al.; 94-28).

While Bohemian Waxwings appear in varying numbers in portions of eastern Canada and northern New England each year, they seldom wander farther south except during years when they are very plentiful. This record of a single bird from Maryland is one of very few reports from the mid-Atlantic region.

NORTHERN SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*
Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, PGEO, 3 January--7 February 1988 (*KK et al.; 90-15); Schooley Mill Park, HWRD, 5 January--28 February 1991 (NM, BOt, MC et al.; 91-25); Lilypons, FRDK, 20 January--8 March 1991 (*DC, MO, RH et al.; 91-26).

Typical wintering records for this rare visitor from Canada. The number of Northern Shrikes moving southward varies considerably from winter to winter. Their appearance in Maryland is most likely during years when relatively large numbers move

into the northern United States such as the winter of 1990-1991. While this species has been reported with some regularity within the past eight years, there were very few reports between 1970 and the mid-1980s.

While the field identification of immature Northern Shrikes should not cause too much trouble given reasonable viewing conditions, adults can exhibit more variation than indicated in most field guides (Zimmerman 1955). Many characteristics can be similar to those of Loggerhead Shrikes (*L. ludovicianus*); hence, identifications should be based on careful descriptions of the entire bird and not one or two field marks. Special attention should be paid to the face patterns and bill shapes of problematic individuals.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER *Dendroica nigrescens*
Easton, TLBT, 30 September 1994 (*JS; 95-01).

Along the Atlantic coast, this visitor from western North America has been most frequently discovered during late autumn and early winter. This individual was clearly a fall migrant.

SWAINSON'S WARBLER *Lymnolthypis swainsonii*
St. Timothy's School, BALT, 24-28 May 1983 (*BRo, RR, MRe et al.; 86-29); Phoenix, BALT, 3 May--12 July 1987 (*HK, #SS et al.; 88-14).

While small numbers of Swainson's Warblers occur along the Pocomoke River drainage during most years, this species is seldom encountered elsewhere in Maryland. These extralimital birds are most likely to appear during spring, but may establish territories such as the Phoenix individual.

LAZULI BUNTING *Passerina amoena*
Timonium, BALT, 1 February--19 April 1963 (MGa, *JRa et al.; 95-23).

One of very few confirmed records of Lazuli Bunting from eastern North America. This species will hybridize with Indigo Buntings (*P. cyanea*) where their ranges overlap on the Great Plains (Sibley and Short 1959), so any claims of extralimital Lazuli Buntings require sufficient documentation to eliminate these hybrids from consideration.

PAINTED BUNTING *Passerina ciris*
Stockton, WORC, 29 December 1991--19 April 1992 (MHo, RH et al.; 93-07); Beltsville, PGEO, 28 November--2 December 1992 (*TWi, HWa et al.; 93-08).

A number of additional reports are currently under review by the committee. Along the Atlantic coast, vagrant Painted Buntings are most likely to appear during late November or December, and may overwinter. These records are typical of this pattern

of vagrancy. Most are discovered at feeders.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW *Spizella pallida*

Rockville, MONT, 19-21 October 1981 (*MO; 85-13); Rockville, MONT, 9 October 1982 (*MO; 91-10); Rockville, MONT, 9-17 May 1984 (MO, *BA; 91-11); Stablers Church Road, BALT, 6-8 March 1985 (BD, HK et al.; 87-02); Rockville, MONT, 1-5 October 1985 (MO et al.; 91-12); Assateague Island, WORC, 14 September--4 October 1986 (JO, *MO, RB et al.; 87-12); Assateague Island, WORC, 14 September 1986 (MO, JO et al.; 92-05); Rockville, MONT, 10 October 1987 (MO; 91-13); Assateague Island, WORC, 16 September 1990 (*MO; 91-14).

Clay-colored Sparrows are rare but regular fall migrants along the Mid-Atlantic coast, especially between mid-September and late October. Small numbers have also been found with some regularity during winter in Worcester County. Spring reports remain exceptional. In addition to records along and near the coast, these sparrows have appeared with some regularity elsewhere on the Coastal Plain and Piedmont as fall migrants. The committee currently reviews reports only from locations west of the Piedmont.

LARK SPARROW *Chondestes grammacus*

Rouge Lagoon, North Branch, ALGY, 11 August 1979 (JP; 86-10); Denton, CRLN, 9 February 1986 (RB, HW et al.; 88-18); Denton, CRLN, 16 February 1986 (*MO et al.; 90-01); Loch Raven Reservoir, BALT, 8-15 March 1986 (HK et al.; 87-27); Clarksville, HWRD, 12 October 1988 (MWa; 90-02); Rock Creek Park, DC, 4-6 October 1991 (*OJ; DC011).

In the mid-Atlantic states, Lark Sparrows are rare but fairly regular fall migrants between mid-August and mid-October on the Coastal Plain and Piedmont. Winter records, such as the two at Denton in 1986 and the Loch Raven Reservoir bird, are exceptionally rare as are spring migrants. The committee no longer reviews reports from the Coastal Plain and Piedmont.

LE CONTE'S SPARROW *Ammodramus leconteii*

Ocean City, WORC, 23 October 1977 (RRo et al.; 83-07).

As a result of its very secretive behavior, the true status of LeConte's Sparrow in Maryland remains to be determined. This individual was apparently a fall migrant, as it was not subsequently relocated.

Its secretive behavior complicates the field identification of LeConte's Sparrows, since observing the important field marks can be rather difficult. They are also fairly similar to several other *Ammodramus* sparrows, especially as immatures, so observers may have to be fairly persistent in order to view all of the important field marks. While most field guides depict the central crown stripe as entirely white, this stripe is actually

ochre on the forecrown; this contrast on the central crown stripe is not found on other *Ammodramus* sparrows except Grasshopper.

SEASIDE SPARROW *Ammodramus maritimus*
Anacostia Naval Air Station, DC 7 May 1988 (*DC; DC002).

Unusual so far upstream along the Potomac River, and the first record for DC.

[**LINCOLN'S SPARROW** *Melospiza lincolni*]
Ocean City, WORC, 29 December 1987 (MO; 92-04).

An unusual winter occurrence for a species that is an uncommon migrant through Maryland.

[**SNOW BUNTING** *Plectrophenax nivalis*]
Skylesville, CARR, 17 December 1981 (BE; 83-09).

The first county record, but on a very typical date of occurrence.

[**BOBOLINK** *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*]
Seneca, MONT, 22 December 1985 (MO; 92-14).

An exceptionally late date for a species that should have been south of the equator in South America during that season. This record is one of very few from anywhere in North America during the early winter.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*
Columbia, HWRD, 28 January--8 February 1979 (JSo, *MKr et al.; 92-24); Fulton, HWRD, 9 November 1985 (MC; 87-03); Sunshine, MONT, 19 December 1985 (MC, DD; 87-04); Back River Neck, BALT, 31 March--1 April 1986 (CD, AE; 87-05); Chase, BALT, 14-17 February 1988 (RB, HK et al. 91-31); Rising Sun, CECL, 4 March 1989 (HF; 91-32); Assateague National Seashore, WORC, 19 September 1990 (JC et al.; 91-33); Blackwater NWR, DORC, 25 January 1992 (DMo; 92-10).

A rare but fairly regular visitor to the Mid-Atlantic region, Yellow-headed Blackbirds are most likely to be discovered during fall and winter. These records represent typical dates of occurrence. The committee no longer reviews reports from the Coastal Plain and Piedmont.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD *Euphagus cyanocephalus*

Back River Sewage Plant, BALT, 8 December 1979 (RB, JOr; 88-17); Shorter's Wharf, DORC, 28 February--10 March 1991 (*MO, *BA et al.; 92-11); Hog Island Marsh, CRLN, 2 April 1991 (MO; 92-12); Shorter's Wharf, DORC, 14 November 1991 (*EW; 92-13).

Another rare but regular visitor to the Mid-Atlantic region, especially along the Coastal Plain. They are most likely to be discovered between November and March as represented by these dates of occurrence. The committee no longer reviews reports from the Coastal Plain and Piedmont.

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE *Icterus bullockii*

Blackwater NWR, DORC, 25 Sept. 1994 (BP et al.; 95-25).

Bullock's Orioles are very rare but fairly regular vagrants to eastern North America, with the majority of reports from North Carolina southward in the southeastern U.S. They are most likely to be discovered during late fall and winter, primarily as visitors to feeders. This individual at Blackwater N.W.R. was clearly a fall migrant.

The identification of vagrant Bullock's Orioles is complicated by variation exhibited by Baltimore Orioles (*I. galbula*), especially some females which may show fairly extensive grayish bellies. Detailed descriptions of the upperparts, head pattern, and underpart coloration are important for claims of female Bullock's Orioles. Hybrids between these two species are regularly reported from the Great Plains (Sibley and Short 1964), and further complicate the field identification of extralimital individuals.

IDENTIFICATION ACCEPTED, NATURAL OCCURRENCE QUESTIONABLE

Based on the information provided to the committee, the identification of the following records was judged to be correct. The committee felt, however, that their escape from captivity was the most likely explanation for their appearance in the area rather than a natural origin.

FALCATED TEAL *Anas falcata*

Laytonsville, MONT, 2-16 March 1991 (RH; 94-21).

This teal breeds in eastern Siberia and winters from Japan and Korea to India. While reports from the Aleutian Islands and other locations in western Alaska probably pertain to vagrants from Asia (AOU 1983), reports from elsewhere in North America are generally believed to be escapes, especially those appearing in the eastern states. Additionally, Falcated Teal are commonly kept in captivity, providing a source for the stray individuals that have been occasionally encountered in eastern North America.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Fruitland, WICO, 13 October 1986 (RR; 88-24).

While these geese normally breed in Greenland and winter in northern Europe, their status as potential vagrants to North America has been the subject of considerable debate. Because Barnacle Geese are long-distance migrants, there is a possibility that stray individuals could join flocks of Brant (*B. bernicla*) in Greenland and migrate with them to North America, or they may not be associated with any other species. Ryff (1984) summarized the argument against natural vagrancy to North America, based primarily on the large numbers of Barnacle Geese kept in captivity on this continent and the likelihood that escapes are responsible for many of the reports. At this time, the committee has not formally endorsed either side of this debate, and will consider the merits of each report as it is submitted. The circumstances of this report suggested that the probability it was a natural vagrant seemed less likely than an origin as an escape.

PRAIRIE FALCON *Falco mexicanus*

Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary, ANAR, 14 February 1994 (CS; 94-27).

In recent years, very small numbers of wintering Prairie Falcons have been discovered east of their normal range, appearing as far east as Illinois and western Kentucky. However, vagrant Prairie Falcons are almost unknown east of the Appalachian Mountains. In the absence of a defined pattern of vagrancy in the east, the fact that a Prairie Falcon had been reported as lost by a local falconer during the previous summer cast doubts upon the potential origins of this individual.

SANDHILL CRANE *Grus canadensis*

Poolesville, MONT, 25 May 1988--16 December 1990 (HM, *DC, *BDa, EW, MAT et al.; 91-15).

This record generated considerable debate within the committee. None of the potential local sources of captive birds had lost any cranes, but escapes do not necessarily come from the local area. The bird's overall tame behavior, close association with domestic livestock in a small area, and the fact that it did not migrate for a period in excess of 2.5 years suggested that its origins were probably not natural.

BLACK-TAILED GULL *Larus crassirostris*

Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 4-7 July 1984 (JO, *CW, MO, HM et al.; 85-16).

At the time of the discovery of this individual, vagrant Black-tailed Gulls were unknown in North America outside of Alaska except for a single report from southern California that was believed to be "ship-assisted." During subsequent years, the only additional extralimital sightings outside of Alaska have been two reports from the Atlantic coast in 1995. In the absence of a defined pattern of vagrancy, the origins of these eastern North American records remain the subject of considerable speculation and debate.

The arguments for accepting the Maryland report (O'Brien 1986) as a vagrant largely center on the fact that other Siberian long-distance migrants have proven to be rare but somewhat regular vagrants in portions of eastern North America, most notably the Slaty-backed Gull (*L. schistisagus*). Additionally, the Maryland gull appeared following a winter when a number of vagrant birds from Siberia were detected in eastern North America. The arguments against accepting this report as a wild bird are based on the fact that the bird was discovered during mid-summer, not during the winter when most other Siberian vagrants have been detected. Unlike other Siberian vagrants, there are no records of vagrant Black-tailed Gulls from the interior of North America or the Pacific coast, so there is no clear picture of movements across the continent. Additionally, gulls are notorious for their ability to "ride ships" for considerable distances, and the fact that this individual appeared near very busy international shipping lanes may not be a coincidence.

At the time, the committee felt the most reasonable treatment was as a bird of questionable origin. However, the California report has been recently re-reviewed and accepted as a naturally-occurring vagrant (Heindel and Patten 1996). As the pattern of vagrancy for Black-tailed Gulls in North America becomes better established, then this report may require additional review.

REPORTS NOT ACCEPTED

This list contains all reports that to date have completed review, but have not been accepted by the committee. In the vast majority of these cases, the reports were not accepted because the evidence provided to the committee did not convince the members that the identifications were conclusively established. In only a very few cases was it felt that an identification was incorrect.

Pacific/Arctic Loon (*Gavia pacifica/G. arctica*) Ocean City, WORC, 10 January 1971 (83-16); Potomac River at Ft. Washington, PGEO, 27 October 1983 (85-21).

Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) North Beach, CLVT, 28 April 1983 (86-14); Chesapeake Beach, CLVT, 28 March 1991 (92-07); Bay Ridge, ANAR, 22 March 1992 (92-21); South River, ANAR, 25 March 1992 (92-22). **Black-capped Petrel**

(*Pterodroma hasitata*) Atlantic Ocean east of Ocean City, 14 June 1980 (83-17).

Wilson's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*) Chesapeake Bay off WICO, 15 July

1991 (92-15). **Great Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) Seneca, MONT, 11 May 1991

(91-21). **Anhinga** (*Anhinga anhinga*) Ferry Neck, TLBT, 2 September 1978 (83-06); Big

Mill Pond, WORC, 22 May 1988 (89-05). **Magnificent Frigatebird** (*Fregata*

magnificens) Assawoman Bay, WORC, 12 May 1978 (86-21).

Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) Assateague Island, WORC, 8 August-3 September 1972 (87-13). **Wood Stork** (*Mycteria americana*) Barnesville, MONT, 28

August 1987 (87-37). **Fulvous Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) Hughes Hollow,

MONT, 29 August 1991 (92-33). **"Bewick's" Tundra Swan** (*Cygnus columbianus*

bewickii) West Ocean City, WORC, 13-20 February 1982 (88-11). **Whooper Swan**

(*Cygnus cygnus*) Greensboro, CRLN, 11 December 1983 (85-18). **Common Eider**

(*Somateria mollissima*) Pt. Lookout, STMA, 7 October 1978 (83-04). **Barrow's Goldeneye** (*Bucephala islandica*) Ocean City, WORC, 10 April 1971 (85-07); Chester River, KENT, 16 December 1979 (83-13); Pt. Lookout State Park, STMA, 13 March 1983 (85-05); Patuxent River, CLVT, 27 March 1984 (85-09).

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) Jacksonville, BALT, 1 June 1979 (86-07). **White-tailed Kite** (*Elanus caeruleus*) Town Hill, ALGY, 26 October 1990 (91-29). **Mississippi Kite** (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) Owings Mills, BALT, 24 June 1978 (83-14); Wittman, TLBT, 9 July 1982 (83-15); Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, PGEO, 3 June 1987 (87-30); Lanham, PGEO, 27 June 1987 (87-31); Ft. Smallwood Park, ANAR, 28 April 1990 (91-23). **Broad-winged Hawk** (*Buteo platypterus*) West Ocean City, WORC, 29 December 1986 (87-20). **Swainson's Hawk** (*Buteo swainsoni*) Elkton, CECL, 11 November 1982 (83-27); Washington Monument State Park, FRDK, 24 October 1989 (90-16); Ft. Smallwood Park, ANAR, 28 April 1990 (93-02); Hancock, WASH, 4 November 1991 (93-03); Laytonsville, MONT, 14 March 1992 (93-04).

Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) Ft. McHenry Natl. Mon., BALT, 5 September 1981 (83-11). **Caribbean Coot** (*Fulica caribaea*) Hughes Hollow, MONT, 11 May 1984 (87-21). **Sandhill Crane** (*Grus canadensis*) Annapolis, ANAR, 24 February 1987 (87-32). **Piping Plover** (*Charadrius melodus*) Triadelphia Reservoir, HWRD, 27 August 1986 (88-02). **Common Redshank** (*Tringa totanus*) Worton, KENT, 17 May 1981 (85-08). **Spotted Redshank** (*Tringa erythropus*) Chesapeake Beach, CLVT, 7 November 1981 (83-12). **Little Stint** (*Calidris minuta*) Horsehead Farm Sanctuary, QUAN, 19 October 1982 (85-04). **Curlew Sandpiper** (*Calidris ferruginea*) West Ocean City, WORC, 2 May 1959 (83-18); Blackwater NWR, DORC, 19 November 1976 (83-19); Ocean City, WORC, 15 October 1977 (83-20); North Beach, CLVT, 28 March 1987 (88-12). **Long-billed Dowitcher** (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) Rouge Lagoon, North Branch, ALGY, 21 July 1979 (85-06). **Red Phalarope** (*Phalaropus fulicaria*) Great Falls, MONT, 12 March 1989 (90-04).

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) Assateague Island, WORC, 16 November 1982 (85-02); Atlantic Ocean off Ocean City, 6 October 1990 (92-26). **Great Skua** (*Catharacta skua*) Chesapeake Beach, CLVT, 13 November 1983 (86-23). **Franklin's Gull** (*Larus pipixcan*) Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 18-30 May 1976 (94-01, 94-02); Loch Raven Reservoir, BALT, 27 October 1985 (88-08). **Mew Gull** (*Larus canus*) Back River Sewage Plant, BALT, 3 January 1978 (87-06); Back River Sewage Plant, BALT, 16 December 1979 (87-07). **California Gull** (*Larus californicus*) Back River Sewage Treatment Plant, BALT, 18 March 1978 (83-22); Cabin Branch, Curtis Bay, BALT, 4 March 1980 (83-23); Back River, BALT, 26 October 1980 (83-24); Pleasure Island, BALT, 10 May 1981 (83-25). **Yellow-legged Gull** (*Larus cachinnans*) Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 13 September 1990 (91-01). **Sabine's Gull** (*Xema sabini*) Assateague Island, WORC, 28 May 1973 (86-16).

Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) Back River, BALT, 12 April 1977 (85-25). **Arctic Tern** (*Sterna paradisaea*) Assateague Island, WORC, 28 May 1973 (86-19); Fourth Street Flats, Ocean City, WORC, 28 April 1991 (93-06). **Bridled Tern** (*Sterna anaethetus*) Ocean City, WORC, 18 August 1986 (88-13). **Black Guillemot** (*Cephus grylle*) Assateague Island, WORC, 28 December 1989 (90-17). **Common Ground-Dove** (*Columbina passerina*) Bel Air, HARF, 18 September 1978 (85-01). **Lesser Nighthawk** (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) Plum Point, CLVT, 3 December 1974 (83-26);

Memorial Stadium, Baltimore, BALT, 11 October 1979 (86-01). **Rufous Hummingbird** (*Selasphorus rufus*) Emmitsburg, FRDK, 8 November 1952 (90-12). **Red-breasted Sapsucker** (*Sphyrapicus ruber*) Pocomoke River State Park, WORC, 8 April 1974 (85-23). **Red-cockaded Woodpecker** (*Picoides borealis*) Battle Creek Cypress Swamp, CLVT, 18 August 1979 (86-02); Pt. Lookout State Park, STMA, 22 June 1984 (89-03); Waldorf, CHAS, 22 December 1989 (90-18).

Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*) Damsite, KENT, 20 September 1980 (85-03). **Vermilion Flycatcher** (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) Elk Neck State Park, CECL, 3 October 1981 (86-03). **Western Kingbird** (*Tyrannus verticalis*) Pennyfield Lock, C & O Canal, MONT, 21 August 1990 (91-18). **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** (*Tyrannus forficatus*) Elkton, CECL, 28 May 1982 (83-28); Savage, HWRD, 10 November 1989 (91-19). **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** (*Regulus calendula*) Athol Road, Farrington Neck, WICO, 13 July 1980 (86-25). **Northern Wheatear** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) McDonogh School, BALT, 15 October 1985 (86-30). **Varied Thrush** (*Ixoreus naevius*) Wheaton, MONT, 7 May 1989 (90-03). **Sprague's Pipit** (*Anthus spragueii*) New Design Road, FRDK, 9 May 1985 (86-09); Lilypons, FRDK, 15-17 March 1992 (92-31). **Northern Shrike** (*Lanius excubitor*) Marriottsville, HWRD, 26 January 1991 (92-19).

Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*) Assateague Island, WORC, 8 September 1956 (87-16); Elliott Island, DORC, 30 April 1982 (87-17). **Townsend's Warbler** (*Dendroica townsendi*) Cockeysville, BALT, 30 April 1983 (86-04). **Black-headed Grosbeak** (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) Fulton, HWRD, 17 October 1982 (86-05). **Indigo Bunting** (*Passerina cyanea*) Whalesville, WICO, 29 January 1989 (89-10). **LeConte's Sparrow** (*Ammodramus leconteii*) Antietam National Battlefield, WASH, 26 April 1980 (83-08). **Harris' Sparrow** (*Zonotrichia querula*) Nassawango Iron Furnace, WORC, 4 February 1989 (90-20). **"Oregon" Dark-eyed Junco** (*Junco hyemalis oregonus*) Baltimore, BALT, 28 March 1980. **Chestnut-collared Longspur** (*Calcarius ornatus*) Sandy Point State Park, ANAR, 30-31 October 1970 (83-30). **Yellow-headed Blackbird** (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) Blackwater NWR, DORC, 13 August 1988 (92-08); Triadelphia Reservoir, HWRD, 20 October 1991. **Bronzed Cowbird** (*Molothrus aeneus*) Ft. Meade, ANAR, 24 February 1994. **Bullock's Oriole** (*Icterus bullockii*) Blackwalnut Point, TLBT, 6 December 1987 (88-16). **Pine Grosbeak** (*Pinicola enucleator*) Timonium, BALT, 2 November 1983 (85-10).

Additional comments are provided for some of the "Not Accepted" reports listed above. These comments include some information on patterns of vagrancy as an indication of when these species might be expected to appear in the Maryland/DC area. Identification information is also provided for some species to emphasize the level of information that may be needed to adequately document their occurrence in the area and the references relevant to the review. However, this information is not meant to specifically criticise the materials submitted for any of the "Not Accepted" reports.

Pacific/Arctic Loon: The Maryland records were submitted prior to the split of Arctic Loon into the Pacific (*Gavia pacifica*) and Arctic (*G. arctica*) species. To date, the few documented records of this species group from the Atlantic coast have all pertained

to Pacific Loons, although Arctic Loons are considered to be potential vagrants from Europe. Any claim of Pacific Loon from Maryland should carefully eliminate all similar species. While the distinctions between Pacific and Common loons are treated in the recent field guides, separating Pacific from Arctic loons requires attention to the field marks discussed by McCaskie et al. (1990), Roberson (1989), Schulenberg (1989), and Walsh (1988).

Black-capped Petrel: This species is a common visitor to the Gulf Stream off North Carolina, most numerous during May, August and December-January (Lee 1986, 1995). While relatively few have been reported north of North Carolina, the documentation of its occurrence in Maryland waters is expected.

Greater Flamingo: Observers should not necessarily assume that any flamingo is automatically this species. Other species of flamingos are regularly kept in captivity, and could occur as escapes in this area. Hence, detailed descriptions of these individuals are important, placing emphasis on leg color and the extent of pink on the body.

This individual appeared shortly after the passage of a tropical storm. This timing, the bird's wild behavior, and its bright pink coloration were believed to indicate a possible wild origin for this flamingo. However, sufficient information to positively establish its identity was not provided. Even if the identification were correct, this species is commonly kept in captivity and fairly regularly escapes. The committee believed that its escape from captivity was a likely explanation for its appearance so far from its normal range.

"Bewick's" Tundra Swan: The extent of yellow on the bills of "Bewick's" Swans and Tundra Swans (*Cygnus c. columbianus*) is more variable than indicated in the field guides, and individuals of both races can appear quite similar in the field (Evans and Sladen 1980). These races hybridize in portions of their range, and intermediate individuals further complicate extralimital claims of either race. Any claims of "Bewick's" Swans from Maryland should be accompanied by detailed descriptions of the pattern of yellow on the bill, and hopefully some photographs.

Whooper Swan: While the photographs accompanying this record strongly suggested this species, a review of these photos by outside experts concluded that they did not completely eliminate "Bewick's" Tundra Swan from consideration. Even if the identification were accepted, the origins were questioned by most committee members. Vagrant Whooper Swans are virtually unknown from eastern North America, while this species is regularly kept in captivity and escapes have been reported on several occasions.

Barrow's Goldeneye: Except for adult males in alternate plumage, the field identification of Common (*Bucephala clangula*) and Barrow's goldeneyes poses considerable challenges. Immature males are troublesome, since head shape and shape of the facial crescent of young Commons can appear very similar to a Barrow's Goldeneye. Females are equally troublesome, since Commons with extensively yellow

bills have been encountered in the field. Additionally, hybrids between the two species have been reported but apparently are fairly rare (Martin and DiLabio 1994), further complicating extralimital claims of Barrow's Goldeneyes. All claims of extralimital Barrow's Goldeneyes should include detailed descriptions of the extent of white on the upper wing coverts, the only characteristic that may conclusively establish the identities of some individuals (Carney 1983).

Caribbean Coot: American Coots (*Fulica americana*) can exhibit considerable variation in the size and shape of their frontal shields (Gullion 1951), and some males can appear very similar to Caribbean Coots. All reports of "Caribbean Coots" from the United States are currently believed to be American Coots with extremely large frontal shields (Clark 1985, Roberson and Baptista 1988).

Mew Gull: Reports of Mew Gulls from the Atlantic coast include individuals of the Common Gull (*Larus c. canus*), vagrants from Europe, and the Mew Gull (*L. c. brachyrhynchos*) which occurs in western North America. Claims of this species in Maryland should be sufficiently detailed to establish which race is involved, which may require very careful attention to the wing-tip pattern and other subtle characteristics. Grant (1986) remains the standard reference for identification information on these races, although additional information is provided by Lauro and Spencer (1980) and Tove (1993).

Arctic Tern: Despite the fact that the identification of this species is fairly well covered in the standard field guides, convincing descriptions have been difficult to obtain for the Maryland reports. This problem results in part from the fact that most characteristics distinguishing Arctic Terns from Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) are subjective, and are most apparent when both species are available for direct comparison. Additionally, many characteristics may not be very apparent on flying birds briefly observed from a moving boat. All reports of Arctic Terns should include careful descriptions of the wing patterns (both above and below), although other field marks should not be ignored.

In the western North Atlantic, Arctic Terns are generally uncommon spring migrants from North Carolina northward, with most reports between mid-May and mid-June (Lee 1986). This passage is normally far offshore, frequently beyond the range of most pelagic birding trips. After the breeding season, Arctic Terns are believed to fly across the Atlantic Ocean and migrate south along the coasts of Europe and Africa (Cramp 1985). Hence, there are very few reports of fall migrants from the western North Atlantic south of the breeding range.

Lesser Nighthawk: There are very few confirmed records of this species in eastern North America outside of Florida, although its true vagrant status remains to be determined. Of the reports of lingering fall nighthawks in the east, those specifically identified have proven to be Commons (*Chordeiles minor*) (see Czaplak and Wilds 1986). However, many of these individuals have never been positively identified. The field identification of silent nighthawks poses a significant challenge, especially given the plumage variation exhibited by Common Nighthawks. Any claims of Lesser

Nighthawk from Maryland should be accompanied by detailed descriptions of the entire plumage, emphasizing the characteristics discussed in Czaplak and Wilds (1986).

Red-breasted Sapsucker: This species is largely non-migratory and unknown as a vagrant in central or eastern North America. The fact that the documentation was prepared more than a decade after the observation, as well as the absence of a defined pattern of vagrancy for this species, concerned the committee.

The identification of sapsuckers is complicated by the existence of hybrids between the various species. Hence, detailed descriptions prepared at the time of observation are essential to establish the identities of extralimital individuals. Sapsucker identification is discussed in detail by Devillers (1970), with additional information in Lehman (1991).

Western Wood-Pewee: Separating the wood-pewees poses a significant challenge, both in the field and in the hand. In fact, some specimens may not be positively identified based solely on physical characteristics (Rising and Schueler 1980). Claims of Western Wood-Pewees in the field should include detailed descriptions, and hopefully tape recordings of vocalizations, which are the best characteristics for distinguishing between the two species. In addition to the report mentioned above, several other reports of Western Wood-Pewee from Maryland await consideration by the committee.

Sprague's Pipit: There are very few confirmed records of vagrant Sprague's Pipits from eastern North America. Its field identification is described in detail by King (1981). This shy species has very specific habitat requirements, preferring upland fields with short but thick grassy cover. It would not be expected to occur in the more open wet habitats preferred by American Pipits (*Anthus rubescens*).

Bell's Vireo: Some White-eyed Vireos (*Vireo griseus*) can approach this species in appearance and some vocalizations, so any potential Bell's Vireo should be identified on the basis of all plumage, vocal, and structural characteristics.

Black-headed Grosbeak: While the identification of adult males should not be difficult under most circumstances, females and immatures pose a greater challenge. Variability in female Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) can be greater than depicted in most field guides (Morlan 1991), and some individuals can have rather buffy underparts with limited dark streaking. Some of this variation is related to age (Pyle et al. 1987). Additionally, the two species regularly hybridize (West 1962), and any aberrant individuals would have to be distinguished from potential hybrids.

"Oregon" Dark-eyed Junco: The hybridization occurring between the various races of this species greatly complicates the field identification of extralimital individuals. While typical adult male "Oregon" Juncos can be positively identified given good views, the identity of other age/sex classes is much more difficult to establish. All claims of this race should be accompanied by detailed descriptions in order to eliminate potential hybrids.

Chestnut-collared Longspur: The committee's review of this report was hampered by the loss of the original field notes of one of the observers. If anyone has original field notes for this bird, the committee would like to see them. Unfortunately, the call notes of this longspur were not heard, which would have simplified its identification. Fall immature longspurs are not thoroughly treated in most field guides, so their positive identification requires a detailed description of all field marks in addition to the tail pattern.

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