

## Maryland Ornithological Society



MD/DCRC

### Study Skin Workshop

23 February 1991

Members Present:        Roger Clapp  
                              Dave Czaplak  
                              Harvey Mudd  
                              Paul O'Brien  
                              Bob Ringler  
                              Claudia Wilds, Chair  
                              Erika Wilson, Secretary

This is a brief summary of the workshop. Please let me know if anything needs to be added. Color designations are, of course, approximate.

**RED PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus fulicaria*): birds in basic plumage had grey backs which contrasted somewhat with their dark folded wings. Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*) specimens had slightly darker grey backs, which contrasted only a little with their wings. In both species the nape stripe was dark, but Red Phalaropes on average showed more extensive white on their crowns. Claudia noted that the wing stripe isn't a useful character for separating this species pair. Bill shape and relative size is lacking for record 90-04; we should ask the observer for more information on this point.

In regard to fall birds, Claudia noted that a deep pink-buff suffusion on the face and neck in September indicates a juvenile bird. Red Phalarope backs at this age would have a mixture of dark brown feathers with pale edges, as well as pale grey feathers. One Red Phalarope specimen had the "peachy" wash shown by a fall Frederick Co. bird in photos brought to the meeting.

**RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER** (*Picoides borealis*): museum specimens had black spotting along the flanks and most showed a solid white outer vane on the outermost rectrix. Belly color was often off-white, being washed with grey. The large white cheek patch was distinctly outlined with black. Comparing this species with juvenile Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*), it was pointed out that juvenile Red-bellies lack spotting on the flanks and that their bellies are pale buff (not greyish). In addition, Red-bellies have pale faces lacking any dark outline, especially between the face and neck, although they have dark caps. A juvenile Red-cockaded specimen (June date) had strong spotting on the flanks and a greyish brown belly (more grey than brown), similar to an adult Cockaded's greyish belly color.

**"BULLOCK'S" NORTHERN ORIOLE** (*Icterus galbula bullocki*): female Baltimore and Bullock's were appraised for consistent differences, but so much color variation was noted that few conclusions were reached. Harvey pointed out that all Baltimores had orange and/or yellow undertail coverts, none were white. In contrast, Bullock's females ranged from yellow to white; none showed the darker orange tones of some Baltimores. Claudia commented that Baltimore's faces were grayish, while Bullock's faces were more yellowish, with a noticeable yellow supercillium. On average, Bullock's breast color was more lemon yellow, compared to

the more orange yellow color on Baltimore specimens. Some Baltimores had mottled backs, but Bullock's specimens seemed to be consistently even-toned.

Van Remsen commented that the written description was accurate for female Bullock's Oriole, but he also said he would be reluctant to accept it as a first state record because it was basically a single observer report without photographs. He commented favorably on the inclusion of detailed behavior, but noted that didn't help separate Baltimore from Bullock's.

**YELLOW-NOSED ALBATROSS** (*Diomedea chlororhynchos*): only single specimens of Yellow-nosed, Grey-headed (*D. chrysostoma*), Buller's (*D. bulleri*) and Shy/White-capped Albatross (*D. cauta*) were available; there was also a Yellow-nosed extended wing. Dave noted that the Yellow-nosed specimen had a slightly narrower bill overall than the other albatrosses, with this difference most noticeable at the base of its bill. White-capped seemed to be eliminated on the basis of its pale bill. The yellow ramicorn on the adult Buller's was noted; references indicated that immatures also have this character. Burt Monroe pointed out that Grey-headed differed from the photos of 90-06 by having a dark pattern around the eye in all plumages. Because the photos show a grey collar, the Ocean City bird was presumably a nominate race bird.

**BRIDLED TERN** (*Sterna anaethetus*): Chan Robbins and Claudia's questions about back color and underwing pattern were discussed. Bob said he would ask the observer to submit additional, explanatory information for 88-13 in time for the March annual meeting.

**WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE** (*Contopus sordidulus*): Van Remsen looked at two specimens from Maryland [NMNH #478783, collected by Chan Robbins at Ocean City, MD, 9/13/61; and NMNH #530823, collected by Chan Robbins at Ocean City, MD, 9/1/67] and one from the District of Columbia [NMNH #523922, collected by Paul Bartsch at Washington, DC, 9/18/1899]. He compared these three specimens with both E. Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*) and other W. Wood-Pewees.

Remsen pointed out the greenish cast of E. Wood-Pewee backs, compared to the browner W. Wood-Pewee backs. He noted the tendency for Westerns to have a more extensive dark tip to the lower mandible than Eastern birds. He pointed out juvenile Westerns have narrow buff wingbars and that W. Wood-Pewee show an ochraceous color on the inside bend of the wing. Eastern juveniles in contrast had broader buff wingbars and E. Wood-Pewee show a greyer color on inside bend of the wing.

Based on these comparisons, Van Remsen said he agreed with Allan Phillips that the two Maryland specimens were Western Wood-Pewees. He said the District of Columbia bird was somewhat indeterminate on one character--its wingbars were broader than the Maryland specimens, but still narrower than the average E. Wood-Pewee. He suggested we ask Phillips to look at the DC specimen the next time he is at the museum.

**MISSISSIPPI KITE** (*Ictinia mississippiensis*): Dave pointed out several one year old specimens which had one or two pale secondaries, forming a mottled pattern across the trailing edge of the wing. However, because we couldn't see an open wing, the overall pattern couldn't be definitively established. These specimens still retained a banded tail and other immature plumage features.

Erika Wilson  
MD/DCRC Secretary