

## **TWENTY-FIFTH REPORT OF THE FLORIDA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY RECORDS COMMITTEE: 2015**

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**Abstract.**—The Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee held its annual summer meeting in Gainesville on 8 August 2015. As Old Business, the Committee revisited five (two unresolved, and three tabled) old reports, and resolved four of them. The previously unresolved reports of a Black-crested Titmouse in Sarasota County and a song-identified Western Meadowlark in Escambia County were not accepted. Two of the three tabled reports, one of which had been re-opened for review in 2014, were accepted. These were a re-assessment of “Cayenne” (Sandwich) Tern accepted as that taxon, and acceptance of Lesser Goldfinch, which added a new species to the list. The third tabled item, a report of an Elegant Tern submitted in 2013, represented two different individuals and both were accepted. Forty-four new reports were evaluated by the committee this year. Of these reports, 40 were accepted (35 [87%] of which were records verified by specimens, diagnostic photographs, or sound recordings), 3 not accepted, and 1 unresolved. Two new species were added to the official Florida birdlist (“Western” Flycatcher, Lesser Goldfinch) and one (Budgerigar) was delisted under our disestablishment rule based on extirpation in its range in Florida. This brings the total number of species on our state list to 521. Two free-flying, exotic species were added to the committee’s new log of verifiable avian exotics known in Florida.

The twenty-fifth report of the Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee (FOSRC) summarizes decisions made by the committee for the submission year ending in August 2015. Committee activity and operations are guided by our “Rules and Procedures,” which are found on the Florida Ornithological Society website under the Records tab at <http://www.fosbirds.org/>. The rules and procedures were last changed in 2012 (Greenlaw 2014). Recent reports (e.g., Greenlaw 2016) summarized applicable portions of these guidelines that continued to apply to our meetings through 2015.

At its annual meeting on 8 August 2015 in Gainesville, the FOSRC attended to two unresolved and three tabled old reports. Two of these (2012-912, 2013-979) involved a re-appraisal of yellow-billed *Thalasseus* terns in Sarasota County; 2013-979 was re-opened for review last year and immediately tabled for consideration in relation to 2013-912. Another record (2014-1042) was the Lesser Goldfinch, which was tabled pending information on plumage and molt. The remaining two reports (2014-1010, 2014-1033) were unresolved and were revisited this year. The results of the committee’s evaluations are covered below in appropriate sections. Forty-four new reports were

considered this year. Ten of these were sent out to committee members individually before the meeting for an email vote; all were accepted unanimously. Among the 44 new reports, 40 were accepted, 34 (87%) of which were records verified by specimens, diagnostic photographs, or sound recordings. Three others were not accepted and one remained unresolved. As in the past several years, our acceptance rate is high chiefly because of supporting, diagnostic digital photographs made available by observers. Two new species were added to the official list of Florida's birds ("Western" Flycatcher, Lesser Goldfinch) and one (Budgerigar) was delisted under our new disestablishment rule (extirpation in its previously accepted Florida range), thus bringing the total number of species on our list to 521.

All documentation reviewed by the FOSRC is archived in the Ornithology Division of the Florida Museum of Natural History (FLMNH), University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. Observers of review-listed species in Florida, and of birds that may be new to the State List, should submit reports to the FOSRC, either by using the online form or by requesting a form directly from the managing Secretary of the Committee (see [www.fosbirds.org/](http://www.fosbirds.org/)). A report to the managing Secretary that includes the basic information on field observations of a review listed or new species (who, where, when, and diagnostic description based on what the observer saw), together with any photographs provided as attachments, also is acceptable. We request that photographs not be sent without a detailed description of the bird, as photographs are not always diagnostic for varying reasons.

This report was prepared on behalf of all members of the FOSRC serving during the 2014-15 reporting year. The members serving during these reviews and their last year of tenure on the Committee were Jon Greenlaw (2015), Ed Kwater (2016), Michael Brothers (2017), Rafael Galvez (2018), Dave Goodwin (2019), Andy Kratter (2020), and Cameron Cox (2021). See the FOS website (above) for a list of the current members of the FOSRC and their addresses.

Submitters of reports (only those reports that are accepted include initials of the submitter here): Brian Ahern (BA), Danny Arnette (DA), Mark Berney (MBe), Michael Brothers (MBr), Jennifer Burris (JB), Cameron Cox (CC), Michelle Davis (MD), Gail Deterra (GD), Diana Doyle (DD), Lucy Duncan (LD), Jim Eager (JE), Carl Edwards (CE), Gil Ewing (GE), Mitch Fox (MF), Rafael Galvez (RGa), Richard Greenspun (RGr), David Goodwin (DG), Erik Haney (EH), Alexander Harper (AH), Frank Izaguirre (FI), Rick Kittinger (RK), Andy Kratter (AKR), Doris & Patrick Leary (D&PL), Todd Legath (TL), Trey Mitchell (TM), Russ & Sue Neshek (R&SN), Chris Newton (CN), Robin Potvin (RP), Bill Pranty (BP), Leslie Pernas-Gis (LP-G), Diane Reed (DR), Kerry Ross (KR), Bonnie Samuelson (BS), Carlos Sanchez (CS), Elliot Schunke (ES), David Simpson (DS), Malcolm Mark Swan (MMS), Joe Thomassen (JT), Graham Williams (GW), and Stu Wilson (SW).

## COMMITTEE NEWS, FORMATS, AND TERMINOLOGY

*Committee news.*—During 2015, the FOSRC met once on 8 August at the Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville. Jon Greenlaw, managing Secretary at the meeting, completed his seventh year on the committee and was due to cycle off in October. He was replaced by Elliot Schunke (Tallahassee), who brings good experience and a critical perspective to the committee.

No species were removed from the Review List this year, pending consideration of suitable guidelines to use in the future. The committee's Rules provide no guidance on this matter, and we have used 10 and 15 accepted reports as thresholds for removal in our past practices. Andrew Kratter's report, which suggested policy changes concerning Review List species, was submitted this year and approved. As the incoming committee chair, he will implement the policies beginning this coming review year (2016).

*Formats and terminology.*—We followed the current nomenclature and sequence used in the American Ornithologists' Union check-list (AOU 1998) and its supplements through July 2014 (<http://checklist.aou.org>) in the species accounts. Within accounts with more than one submission for a species, each report is introduced sequentially by catalog number. The initials following the catalog number refer to one or more contributors who supplied information to the committee on accepted reports (see list above). We employ the terminology for age of birds outlined by Kratter (2012). We normally do not review subspecies, but we have accepted submissions on distinctive, field-identifiable subspecies whose taxonomic rank may be reevaluated by the AOU in the future. Our use of the words "report" and "record" to describe occurrences of species in Florida follow Robertson and Woolfenden (1992), a distinction that has been followed by subsequent major reviews of the Florida avifauna, and by the FOS Field Observations Committee. All submissions to the committee are characterized as reports. Among them, only submissions that are approved because they are independently verifiable (specimen, diagnostic photograph, or an audio or video file) are regarded as "records." Accepted reports that are not independently verifiable are special only in the sense that the non-verifiable documentation is deemed to be fully supportive of the identification once a species has passed the higher bar to be included on the Florida List of birds. In past practice, additions to Florida's state list represent verifiable records. After this initial hurdle has been met, reports are considered based on available physical evidence and circumstance (provenance not an issue). For each accepted species below, I provide a review of its status in Florida chiefly based on FOSRC data through August 2015.

Abbreviations used here in the species accounts are AOU (American Ornithologists' Union), FLMNH (Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville), FOSRC (Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee), nm (nautical miles), NP (National Park), NWR (National Wildlife Refuge), SP (State Park), TTRS (Tall Timbers Research Station, Tallahassee), UF (University of Florida, Gainesville).

SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED

COMMON MERGANSER, *Mergus merganser*

FOSRC 2015-1057 (MBr). A hen-plumaged merganser was found and photographed on 2 December 2014 in the Halifax River south of Dunlawton Avenue, Port Orange, Volusia County. It was present until at least 17 January 2015 (B. Pranty, in litt.).

This occurrence represents the eighth record of the species in Florida. Among these, an early specimen was taken in December 1953 (Greenlaw et al. 2014), and another individual was shot in Pasco County in 1968 and preserved as a privately owned mount (documented by a photograph of the mount, which is now lost). Six of these records occurred since 2008 and verified by one or more photographs, indicating that they may be increasing in our region.

YELLOW-NOSED ALBATROSS, *Thalassarche chlororhynchos*

FOSRC 2015-1047 (TL, MF). This albatross was encountered and photographed on 9 November 2014 about 24 km (13 nm) southwest of Clearwater, Pinellas County, in the Gulf of Mexico. The captain (TL) of the fishing vessel "Super Queen" spotted the bird and mate MF photographed it. The bird displayed the typical dark bill with a longitudinal, yellow culmen stripe. It approached the boat and associated with a group of gulls before flying off over open water.

This is the fifth record from Florida. Two were photographed in 2000 and 2009 and accepted by the committee. A specimen in the Archbold Biological Station's collection, was obtained in 1992 on Key Largo, Monroe County (Hoffman 1994). A photograph in the Tall Timbers Research Station archives of another bird encountered in 1983 in the northeastern Gulf of Mexico represents the earliest record (Greenlaw et al. 2014).

RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD, *Phaethon aethereus*

FOSRC 2015-1066 (BP). An adult tropicbird was observed during a pelagic trip on 16 April 2015 off Boynton Inlet at about 5 mi (8 km; 4 nm), Palm Beach County. The bird was photographed.

FOSRC 2015-1067 (DD). Another adult was encountered on 6 May 2015 during a boat excursion between Marco Island and Key West in Monroe County waters. Its location was estimated at about 20 mi (32 km; 17 nm) north of Key West in the Gulf of Mexico. A photograph of the bird flying away supported identification as *Phaethon*, and the description was diagnostic for the species.

Including the two birds detailed here, 12 reports have been accepted for Florida since 1995. Seven are records supported by diagnostic photographs and two specimens. Two earlier specimens are known from 1975 and 1979 (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). This corrects the report of 14 "records" from Florida (through 2012; Greenlaw et al. 2014) to 11 through 2015.

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT, *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

FOSRC 2015-1085 (MBe). This and the following two accounts continue the saga of *P. brasilianus* at Wakodahatchee Wetlands, Delray Beach, Palm Beach County.

This bird was an adult male known to be present in the wetlands this year from 19 October 2014 through 1 February 2015. Sex was determined by the bird's use of a species-typical wing-waving display and territorial behavior. It was distinctively and uniquely marked as an individual by a small, white crescent-shaped patch on its foreneck, and was present in two previous seasons (2013-970, 2014-1036). This year it paired with a Double-crested Cormorant (*P. auritus*) that showed no evidence of hybrid features. Incubation continued at the mixed pair nest for a time, but the nest did not produce young.

FOSRC 2015-1086 (MBe). This individual, also a male (verified by copulation and territorial behavior), was present this year from 1 November 2014 through 18 January 2015. It ultimately paired with a well-marked *P. auritus*, and fledged three hybrid offspring.

FOSRC 2015-1087 (MBe). The third individual at the wetlands was an adult female found at the wetlands from 6 December 2014 through 1 February 2015. She was probably present there as early as 19 October when three adults first were observed. She paired with a well-marked *P. auritus*, and copulation was observed on several occasions. The pair successfully fledged three hybrid young. To date, no pure *P. brasilianus* pairing has been observed at the wetlands.

Including these three birds, the committee has accepted 22 records of the species in Florida since the first in April 2007 in the Florida Keys. At least in one or two cases, affirmed records in two or three different years may have represented the same individual.

#### RAZORBILL, *Alca torda*

FOSRC 2015-1065 (DR). This alcid was found on 14 March 2015 as a carcass on the Atlantic Ocean beach at the North Beach Access of the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve north of St. Augustine, St. Johns County.

The species seems to have resumed its usual rarity status in Florida following its major invasion of the state's marine waters during the 2012-13 winter. No evidence of an "echo" effect arose following this historic avian event. Nine reports accepted by FOSRC accumulated before the incursion; this is the first since then. We can only speculate about the numbers that visited Florida during the incursion winter. Although 21 geographically representative reports were affirmed by the committee during that period, nearly 450 individuals were tallied in a few hours during a Christmas Bird Count as they passed the coast near Miami in mid-December 2012 (R. Galvez in Greenlaw 2016). No comprehensive account of this notable invasion event has been published from the perspective of Florida after it unfolded.

#### LITTLE GULL, *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

FOSRC 2015-1055 (D&PL). This small gull was observed and photographed standing and in flight on 28 October 2014 at the west tip of Bird Island in lower Nassau Sound and vicinity, Duval County. It was a first-cycle bird in transitional juvenal and formative plumages, still with a black hindneck collar and mostly white back and scapulars, and a bold, black pattern on the wings above.

The species is accidental or casual in Florida. Only two previous reports (both records) are known: one based on a specimen taken in December 1958 in Escambia County, and a photographed individual encountered in December 1990 in Seminole County (Greenlaw et al. 2014).

#### CALIFORNIA GULL, *Larus californicus*

FOSRC 2015-1072 (MBr). This adult gull was observed and photographed on 26 February 2015 at Daytona Beach Shores, Volusia County.

FOSRC 2015-1078 (MBr). This first-cycle gull was observed and photographed

on 7 January 2015 on the beach at Daytona Beach Shores. In both these cases, identification was based on field characters of the body and extended wings documented in an excellent series of photographs.

Including the two birds documented here, 13 reports (all photographic records) have been accepted from Florida. Eight of these were from Volusia County, and were associated with one or more large landfills in the area.

THAYER'S GULL, *Larus thayeri*

FOSRC 2015-1061 (MBr). This first-cycle gull was observed and well photographed on 9 December 2014 on the Atlantic beach at Frank Rendon Park, Daytona Beach Shores, Volusia County.

FOSRC 2015-1079 (MBr). Another first-cycle bird was observed and photographed on 25 February 2015 on the beach at Daytona Beach Shores.

FOSRC 2015-1080 (MBr). This gull, in its second-cycle plumage, was observed and photographed on 27 January 2015 on the Atlantic beach in Daytona Beach Shores.

FOSRC 2015-1081 (MBr). This first adult gull for the season was observed and photographed on 22 January 2015 on the beach at Daytona Beach Shores. In this case, and in the three others above, photographs documented body and extended wing characters important for diagnosing this species in the field.

Including the four birds documented here, 14 reports have been accepted by the Records Committee for Florida since 1985. Eleven of these are records. The earliest record is a specimen taken in 1983 (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). Since 2008, this species has been found annually with the exception of 2010. This season's four records from one locality is notable.

"CAYENNE" (SANDWICH) TERN, *Thalasseus sandvicensis eurygnathus*

FOSRC 2012-912 (SW, MBr). This old report was initially tabled before it was assessed as an unidentified yellow-billed *Thalasseus* tern or an odd "Cabot's" Tern (North American populations of Sandwich Tern) and not accepted in 2013. Recently, we received new information on morphological and plumage variation in American *Thalasseus* terns in Texas ([www.pbse.com/mbb/](http://www.pbse.com/mbb/)), and input from a research biologist on "Cayenne" Terns (Adrian J. Delnevo, in litt. to MBr), which caused the committee to reopen the report (2014) for re-assessment in relation to one or more orange-billed terns reported from the same area (see below). The yellow-billed tern was discovered and photographed by SW on 10 August 2012 on the south half of Longboat Key, 2-3 mi (3-5 km; 1.6-2.7 nm) north of New Pass on a Gulf of Mexico beach, Sarasota County. Again, on 23 October 2012, what may have been the same bird was photographed by MBr on Siesta Beach in the same county. Key features were the fully yellow beak with a distinctive greenish tint, bill shape (no downward curvature, heavier) that conforms to that of a "Cayenne" Tern but not to that of an Elegant Tern, and all-dark legs. Dr. Delveno noted that if he had seen the Florida bird in a "Cayenne" Tern colony on Aruba, he "would probably not look at it twice."

This added information and new photographs of apparently the same bird at a nearby location in October swayed the committee to accept Florida's first record of this West Indian and South American taxon. Without genetic evidence on population structure, and more information on plumage- and soft-part variation within and among populations, it remains unclear whether the yellow-billed "Cayenne" Terns and North American Sandwich (Cabot's) Terns are best treated as one (current view) or two species. The acceptance here of occurrence in Florida does not change the formal count of species on the Florida birdlist.



ELEGANT TERN, *Thalasseus elegans*

FOSRC 2013-979 (SW, BS). In 2012, the records committee received two reports (4 and 22 October) of single, orange-billed *Thalasseus* terns from coastal Sarasota County that may have represented the same or different individuals. We received new information (with excellent photographs) in 2015 based on observations made on 23 October 2012; we assumed that this information represented the bird photographed the day before. As a result, we finally were able to re-evaluate two earlier reports that had come to us. This assessment supported the conclusion that two different terns were verifiably documented on 4 and 23 October 2012. The orange-billed tern photographed on 22 October could not be definitely assigned to either of these two different individuals and may have involved still another bird. The report cataloged here as 2013-979 was restricted to the bird photographed by BS on 4 October. The individual documented on 23 October is reported below as 2015-1089.

FOSRC 2015-1060 (RGr). This tern was discovered and photographed on 27 October 2014 on Siesta Beach, Sarasota County. It was an adult in non-breeding (basic) plumage.

FOSRC 2015-1071 (R&SN). Another orange-billed tern judged to be this species was observed and photographed on 15 April 2015 on Pigeon Key south of Marathon, Monroe County.

FOSRC 2015-1089 (MBr). Until the current meeting, this orange-billed tern, observed and photographed at Siesta Beach on 23 October 2012, was considered to be the same individual seen at this location or nearby on 4 and 22 October. As noted above (2013-979), the committee concluded that the birds photographed on 4 and 23 October were different individuals. Consequently, the bird represented by photographs taken by MBr on the 23rd is treated here separately in this report.

The orange-billed terns in the above accounts appeared to be typical representatives of Elegant Terns. We detected no evidence of apparent hybridization or intermediacy with Sandwich Terns ("Cabot's" Tern) in North American populations (e.g., see [www.pbase.com/mbb](http://www.pbase.com/mbb)). Bill shape and color, relative body size, length of legs, and bushiness of the crest were compared directly with Sandwich Terns in the same photographs. The committee understood that hybrids resulting from backcrossing may be cryptic, but as a records committee, we treated the issue operationally from a phenotypic perspective. Before October 2012, four reports (all records) were accepted by the committee between October 1999 and May 2012. The first three of these (1999-2002) from Pinellas and Hillsborough counties included the first individual of the species ever documented in Florida and may have been the same individual. A group of three birds in Lee County, found in April 2013, represents the only other record to date, apart from the four discussed here.

INCA DOVE, *Columbina inca*

FOSRC 2015-1074 (JT). This dove was found and photographed on 1 May 2015 near the North Pavilion in Big Lagoon SP, Pensacola, Escambia County.

The committee has now accepted four Florida records of Inca Dove, including this one. Another report is unresolved (see below). All reports are from northern Florida since 2011, mostly from the Panhandle.

FLAMMULATED OWL, *Psiloscoops flammeolus*

FOSRC 2015-1082 (AKr). This hatch-year, female owl was found in a suburban yard in Miami on 10 December 2014, and died in captivity on 13 December at Pelican Harbor Seabird Station, 10321 NW 29th Avenue, Miami, Miami-Dade County. Identification was verified from the specimen (UF 50809; photograph archived) deposited in the Florida Museum of Natural History in

Gainesville.

This is the third record (and first specimen) of the species from Florida. The first was discovered in November 2001 in Santa Rosa County.

LONG-EARED OWL, *Asio otus*

FOSRC 2015-1083 (DA, AKr). This owl, a female, was found dead entangled on barbed wire fencing on 13 December 2014 on a farm north of Karick Lake, Okaloosa County. Identification was verified from the specimen (UF 50809; photograph archived) deposited in the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville.

Including this individual, eight reports (seven records) have been accepted by FOSRC from Florida since 1995. Only one earlier record is known in the state from December 1992 (specimen; Greenlaw et al. 2014).

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD, *Calypte anna*

FOSRC 2015-1056 (FB). An adult female of this hummingbird was banded and photographed on 22 November 2014 at a residence on Tommy Street, Pensacola, Escambia County.

This individual brings the number of records (all photographed) in Florida to three, beginning in January-early February 1988. All occurred in Escambia, Walton, and Leon counties in the Panhandle.

BUDGERIGAR, *Melopsittacus undulatus*

FOSRC 2015-1049 (BP). This account records the committee's approval to remove *Melopsittacus undulatus* from the Florida list. It also briefly reviews the history of this Australian parakeet in the state and summarizes details on its final demise from its former stronghold along the central, peninsular Gulf coast. BP (Pranty 2015a) recommended that the committee recognize the extirpation of the species from its range in Florida by applying its new rule (de-listing based on extirpation) to declare it "disestablished." For historical purposes, the name Budgerigar will remain on the list as a special status species (annotated as "d" for disestablished), but it will not be counted in the total number of species currently recognized on the state's formal birdlist. Extinct, native species previously known from Florida are still counted, but disestablished, exotic species are not.

The following summary of the species' history in Florida is based upon the accounts by Pranty (2001, 2015a, 2015b). The species has been present along the central Gulf coast from the 1950s. Its maximum established range in the late 1970s, reportedly derived mostly from intentional releases of thousands of individuals, extended from Hudson, Pasco County, to Venice, Sarasota County. The overall pattern of occurrence in the state along both coasts primarily, plus scattered individuals in larger human population centers in the peninsular interior, included areas where escapes and local groups of birds failed to become established outside of its putative range on the gulf coast. Presence in most areas was transitory. In its apparent, established range, the parakeets were almost strictly coastal or subcoastal (within 5-10 km of the Gulf of Mexico). This distribution correlated with dense populations of Floridians who had settled on or near the coast, and who in the beginning often supported the birds with abundant food at feeding stations and with nest boxes. The decline of the species began in the 1980s and continued until its final disappearance over three decades later, documented chiefly by local, annual Christmas Bird Counts. The two last flocks were in residential subdivisions in Pasco and Hernando counties within about 15 km of one another. These flocks persisted in diminishing numbers from the mid-1990s until, twenty years later, BP announced that the final survivors in the two localities had "died out within days of each other" in April 2015 (Pranty 2015a). None have been reported since then in the area.



A comment on the apparent inevitability of this population's trajectory is worth making. In hindsight, it seems clear that the chief factors in the failure of this population 'experiment' were a combination of the rise and fall of human interest and support, and an annual deficit of surviving Budgerigars after support waned. Multiple unknown proximate factors probably prevailed as cumulative mortality (unbalanced by recruitment) winnowed the populations (Pranty 2015a, 2015b). But, underlying at least some of the factors (e.g., disease, competition for artificial nest sites) was the likely unmitigated challenge of living in Florida outside of the climatic and biotic milieu in which the species evolved. Its native range in Australia is confined to arid and semi-arid woodlands and grasslands where it is nomadic in the center of the continent (Simpson and Day 2010). The gulf coast of Florida from Hudson southward is essentially a rainfall-seasonal, subtropical, marine environment with no grasslands. Cairn's, Queensland, and Darwin, Northern Territory, which offer similar urbanized, wet-dry season humid climates and settings in Australia, are not occupied by Budgerigars, even though in each case the species' range enters the drier, more open peripheries of these humid regions and abruptly reaches limits (Forshaw 2010). Under the circumstances, perhaps we should have anticipated the eventual outcome in this case.

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE, *Contopus sordidulus*

FOSRC 2015-1059 (BA, CC, DG, EH, DS). This pewee was discovered on 1 October 2014 and was still present the next day at Alafia River SP in southeastern Hillsborough County. Ordinarily, the species is regarded as difficult to identify, but in this case, observers heard the bird's distinctive hoarse call, and studied it closely. Important plumage and bill color differences emphasized as useful in a recent article (Lee et al. 2008) on field identification of this pewee relative to Eastern Wood-Pewee (*C. virens*) were noted by the observers and were visible in photographs.

No issues arose on the identification of the pewee. This is only the second record of the species for Florida. The first based on a sound recording was from Highlands County in June 1995. An earlier report from Wakulla County in October 1986 was initially accepted by FOSRC, but later reevaluations of the evidence discounted the identification (see Greenlaw et al. 2014).

ALDER FLYCATCHER, *Empidonax alnorum*

FOSRC 2015-1048 (MMS). This flycatcher was found on 20 September 2014 near Wright, Okaloosa County. The bird's diagnostic call was well described and circumstances of the sight observation were detailed. The description provided information that supported identification in the "Traill's" flycatcher group. FOSRC 2015-1050 (GW). This individual was observed on 3 September 2014 when it was discovered along La Chua Trail in Paynes Prairie Preserve SP, Alachua County. Photographs documented a "Traill's" flycatcher-type *Empidonax*, and described calls were indicative of *E. alnorum*. A voice recording by GW posted to xeno-canto.org verified the identification.

This species and Willow Flycatcher (*E. traillii*), both poorly known in Florida, were initially placed on the committee's Review List to obtain vocally-documented information to seek better understanding of their timing of occurrence and transient distribution in the state. Including these two individuals, nine reports supported by described calls or voice recordings are known from Florida. All except one (Okaloosa County) were found in Alachua and Miami-Dade counties. One other individual that was voice-recorded remains from its discovery in mid-August 2015 to be evaluated by the committee.

“WESTERN” FLYCATCHER, *Empidonax difficilis/E. occidentalis*

FOSRC 2015-1063 (ES). This individual was regarded as either a Cordilleran Flycatcher (*E. difficilis*; central Rocky Mountains south into northern Mexico) or a Pacific-slope Flycatcher (*E. occidentalis*; southwestern Alberta and western British Columbia south through coast ranges of California and Sierra Nevada Mountains to northern Baja California). Collectively they represent a pair of closely related, cryptic species that are indistinguishable from one another except by some calls of the males. It was found and photographed on 8 January 2015 at a residence on Chocksacka Nene, Tallahassee, Leon County. ES initially identified the bird based on photographs that illustrated key supportive, group plumage features; these photographs allowed separation of the two-species group from its most challenging look-alike, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*E. flaviventris*), and other western species in the genus. The former is expected in the East, but the others are not. A consensus on the identification of this challenging individual was reached by convergence of supportive evidence from different sources and independent evaluations by both ES and P. Pyle, the latter having experience with taxa in the west and with specimens. Photographs of the Florida bird permitted assessment of exposed primary tip distribution on the folded wing (Heindel and Pyle 1999) and length of the buffy fringing on the outer secondaries in the closed wing (Baumann et al. 2014), and of other aspects of color and pattern (e.g., eye-ring shape). This is the first record of a bird of this species pair from Florida, and thus enters the Florida birdlist as this group taxon.

SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER, *Myiodynastes luteiventris*

FOSRC 2015-1052 (RGa, KR). This flycatcher was discovered on 17 September 2014 and provides the first record for the Florida Keys. It was in a West Indian hardwood hammock in Long Key SP, Monroe County. RGa provided a timely sketch and KR photographed it.

FOSRC 2015-1054 (FI, CS, TM). This individual was found and photographed on 4 October 2014 in Matheson Hammock Park, south Miami, Miami-Dade County. It was seen in semi-open parklike hammock vegetation where it stayed in the canopy, and was gone by the next day.

Including the two individuals just described, 12 reports (all except one verifiable) have been accepted by the committee since October 1995. Ten of these reports were of birds encountered in the peninsula from Pinellas County south, while two were from the Panhandle. JSG suspects that the birds are arriving in Florida following a Gulf crossing from Mexico. Two earlier reports of *Myiodynastes*-type flycatchers in Florida were not identified to species and were regarded as “unverified” (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992).

YELLOW-GREEN VIREO, *Vireo flavoviridis*

FOSRC 2015-1058 (AH). This tropical vireo was discovered on 24 September 2014 in Long Key SP, Layton, Monroe County. The bird was well observed in a tropical hardwood hammock, apparently remaining for one day.

FOSRC 2015-1076 (LD). This individual was closely observed on 27 May 2015, after it was only heard on the 26th, in a treed suburban neighborhood on Fairpoint Drive, Gulf Breeze, Santa Rosa County. LD reported the present bird as the seventh occurrence for the three westernmost counties of the Panhandle, and the third in her suburban yard.

Including the occurrences here, twelve reports (three records) have been accepted by the committee since 1984. An earlier specimen from May 1958, not included in the preceding count, also was from Gulf Breeze.

BAHAMA SWALLOW, *Tachycineta cyaneoviridis*

FOSRC 2015-1069 (KR, RGa). Three Bahama Swallows, representing adult and immature ages, were observed and photographed on 26 October 2014 over the Curry Hammock hawk-watch station north of Marathon, Monroe County.

FOSRC 2015-1088 (RGa, KW). On the same day 134 km north of Curry Hammock, an individual of this species also was discovered and photographed by a United Kingdom resident in Bill Baggs Cape Florida SP, Key Biscayne, Miami-Dade County. After the observation date, a copy of the photograph and occurrence details came to RGa, who reported the event to the committee.

Including the two occurrences reported here, six reports (two records) have been accepted by the committee since 1983, but these are the first since 1988. In addition, an early specimen is known from the Dry Tortugas, where it was obtained in April 1890. Another specimen not examined by the committee, was found dead in April 1992 in Cutler Ridge, Miami-Dade County (Greenlaw et al. 2014), where at least one individual spent one or more summers in a Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*) colony at this location (Smith and Smith 1990). A published photograph (Smith and Smith 1990), also not examined by the committee, of a bird found on Big Pine Key, Monroe County, in July 1986, represents another record (Greenlaw et al. 2014). An unresolved report of a Bahama Swallow (see below, FOSRC 2015-1053), observed just one day (25 October) before the observations of *T. cyaneoviridis* passing over Curry Hammock at Long Pine Key SP (18 km northeast of Curry Hammock) and over Key Biscayne, probably were of this species and part of the same regional, off-course movement.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR, *Oenanthe oenanthe*

FOSRC 2015-1068 (JB, RGa). This wheatear was discovered on 24 October 2014 in Long Key SP, Layton, Monroe County. The discovery by a non-birder (JB) from Europe, and photographs by an anonymous park ranger, together with details came to RGa. The individual was not seen again.

Details of reports of the species in Florida through 1994 were re-evaluated by Smith and Woolfenden (1995), and four records were accepted. The four were of two specimens and archival photographs of two other individuals. The earliest record is from November 1955 in Collier County. Seven reports (five records) of this species in Florida have been accepted by the committee, beginning with one of the two specimens (September 1982, Franklin County). Of these, five represent post-1994 occurrences; so altogether, nine reports (seven records) are now known from Florida since 1955 when the earliest specimen was taken. These occurrences are distributed from Gulf County on the panhandle to Monroe County (three cases) in the Florida Keys. Most (seven) reports are from the peninsula and Keys.

KIRTLAND'S WARBLER, *Setophaga kirtlandii*

FOSRC 2015-1073 (MD, CE). This wood-warbler was observed and video-recorded on 7 May 2015 in Lantana Nature Preserve, 206 North Atlantic Drive, South Palm Beach, Palm Beach County. It appeared here on an apparent one-day stopover on its way northwest from its Bahamian wintering grounds to its breeding grounds in Michigan.

This record, together with seven others (photographs) accepted by FOSRC, constitute the recent verifiable evidence for the species in Florida. Also, a specimen taken in Palm Beach County in late April 1896 established the state's original record (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). Two sight reports were affirmed by FOSRC from April 1982 and April 1993.

BLACK-FACED GRASSQUIT, *Tiaris bicolor*

FOSRC 2015-1062 (GE). This hen-plumaged bird was discovered and photographed on 23 February 2015 in Bahia Honda SP on Bahia Honda Key, Monroe County.

The species occurs on islands in the West Indies; the populations nearest to Florida are in the Bahamas. It is very rare in Cuba, where it is a local resident on an island off the north-central coast (Garrido and Kirkconnell 2000). Unlike *T. olivacea* with which it is sometimes confused in avicultural circles, it is rarely kept in captivity (Greenlaw 2016; L. Manfredi, in litt.). Its occurrence in this case opposite nearby sources in the Bahamas, and away from urbanized human population centers, is regarded as natural vagrancy. Six reports (five records), including the present bird, have been accepted by FOSRC. Three specimens also are known from Florida, the earliest from January 1871 in Miami, Miami-Dade County Greenlaw et al. 2014).

“OREGON” JUNCO, *Junco hyemalis oregonus* group

FOSRC 2015-1045 (BP). This junco was found at a remote offshore location on 30 June 2014 at North Anclote Bar, Anclote Keys Preserve SP, Pasco County. The bird was studied closely by three birders. It showed no evidence of intermediacy with members of geographic neighbors in the Dark-eyed Junco complex (Pranty et al. 2015).

FOSRC 2015-1084 (RK). This individual was observed and photographed on 4 July 2015 on Mandalay Road, Lamont, Taylor County.

The typical form of “Oregon” Junco is widespread in the northwestern Pacific states in mountainous habitats northward in the Rocky Mountains to its contact with the eastern group. Late June and early July records seem unlikely, but June records of several other species even earlier in the month suggest some eastward movement of passerines during this period (Pranty et al. 2015). These two individuals constitute the first and second records of the taxon in Florida. Stevenson and Anderson (1994) review unverified reports of western juncos in the state from this complex, but no archived material exists that describes them.

LAZULI BUNTING, *Passerina amoena*

FOSRC 2015-1070 (RP). This male in non-breeding plumage was observed and initially photographed on 28 December 2014 in a residential yard on Fishermans Wharf Drive, Stuart, Martin County. It wintered at the location and was last reported on 15 April 2015.

*P. amoena* is regarded as a very rare, out-of-area migrant and winter resident in Florida, where it was first encountered in 1977 (Greenlaw et al. 2014). Including this bird, 15 reports (11 records) of occurrences in the state have been accepted by the records committee.

BULLOCK’S ORIOLE, *Icterus bullockii*

FOSRC 2015-1064 (DG, JE, CN). This adult oriole was observed and photographed initially on 25 January 2015 at the public boat ramp on Lake Marian, Kenansville, Osceola County. It was refound several times at the same location on later unspecified dates.

This species often has been confused with *I. galbula* in the past (Greenlaw et al. 2014), so the committee has kept it on its Review List since the “Northern Oriole” was split into two species-level taxa. Critical reviews of specimens (Pranty et al. 2005; FOSRC) and reports have resulted in the affirmation of 20 reports (15 records) for Florida; the earliest is a record from Miami-Dade County in 1957 (Greenlaw et al. 2014).

LESSER GOLDFINCH, *Spinus psaltria*

FOSRC 2015-1042 (LP-G). This goldfinch, a green-backed and green-eared male, appeared at a residential feeder on 15 July 2014 on Crescent Drive, Melbourne, Brevard County. It re-appeared at the same location on 18 July. It was photographed and correctly identified, but several issues caused the committee to table the report in 2014 until they could be resolved. P. Pyle reviewed the photographs and commented that molt was within the range of variation of the species, and that he could detect no unusual feather wear that might suggest earlier captivity. Moreover, Maine had reported its third record of the species for early August (2015). An earlier record in this state was found in early July (L. Bevier, in litt.). Thus, the timing of occurrence of the Florida bird in mid-July was not unusual. Bevier speculated that some mid-summer appearances in the eastern United States may result from drought-induced wandering in the Southwest. This occurrence is the first of the species known from Florida.

## SUBMISSIONS NOT ACCEPTED

COMMON MERGANSER, *Mergus merganser*

FOSRC 2015-1075. Bird observed on 2 Jun 2015 off Celadon Beach Resort, Panama City Beach, Bay County. Insufficient details.

BAHAMA SWALLOW, *Tachycineta cyaneoviridis*

FOSRC 2015-1046. Two individuals observed separately over beach on 3 July 2014, north of the jetty at St. Augustine Inlet, St. Johns County. Sightings seem credible but insufficient details were provided.

BLACK-CRESTED TITMOUSE, *Baeolophus atricristatus*

FOSRC 2014-1010. Observed in a residential backyard on 5 March 2013 on Poplar Street, Sarasota, Sarasota County. About six weeks later, apparently the same bird returned to the same yard, but it was not verified. Based on the description, the identification was not an issue. In early October 2013, another observer independently observed the species six kilometers east on St. Armand's Key, Sarasota County (2014-1011). The St. Armand's Key bird was not accepted previously (Greenlaw 2016), while the current (original) report (probably the same bird) was left unresolved until now. Given the final disposition, both reports were not accepted because they were unverifiable (by past practice, required by the committee for Florida listing; see above) and because their provenance was an issue. No evidence for distant dispersal or vagrancy is known for the species, which is separated from Florida by the Gulf of Mexico or a long circum-Gulf northern route from which no previous records are known.

RED-LEGGED THRUSH, *Turdus plumbeus*

FOSRC 2015-1051. This report came to the committee third-hand through a friend of a friend of the original observer, who lived in Homestead just before Hurricane Andrew in 1992. A brief but specific narrative without date of observation, including a succinct description, by the original observer was our only connection to the occurrence event. The observer's home was destroyed in the hurricane, and the friend never heard from the observer again. The report was sufficiently intriguing that we felt the report should be available for historical purposes. As expected, the brevity of the sight report, and its indirect origin led to non-acceptance.

WESTERN MEADOWLARK, *Sturnella neglecta*

FOSRC 2015-1033. This bird was observed on 9 December 2013 in a grazed pasture on van Pelt Dairy farmland near the intersection of Pelt Road and SR-97, Escambia County. It was thought to be this species based on songs that were of the type sung by *S. neglecta*. Committee members were wary of the possibility of misidentification by voice, as some individuals of this species and *S. magna* do mimic the other's song (e.g., Lanyon 1957). Available details on plumage color and pattern details were insufficient.

## SUBMISSIONS UNRESOLVED

INCA DOVE, *Columbina inca*

FOSRC 2015-1077. Five doves of this species were reported for 26 May 2015 near Jay, Santa Rosa County. The description was diagnostic but few supporting details, especially on two doves that were observed copulating under pre-sunrise lighting conditions, led to two dissenting ballots.

BAHAMA SWALLOW, *Tachycineta cyaneoviridis*

FOSRC 2015-1053. A single swallow of this species was observed as closely as 50 ft (15 m), and was viewable for about 20 s on 25 October 2014 in Long Key SP, Monroe County. The description mentioned bright white underparts extending "well onto the cheeks," greenish tone above, and a "long deeply forked tail" that was judged to be longer than the tail of a Violet-green Swallow. The observers discounted the latter species based on the deep tail fork, but they did not notice the color of the wing lining. Contrary to a skeptical view on the committee, the white on the throat of Bahama Swallows extends onto the "cheek" (or "face") (Proctor and Lynch 1993:64) to just under the eye (Sibley 2014). The presence of verifiable Bahama Swallows in the area the next day on Curry Hammock (see above) and on Key Biscayne supports the likelihood that this individual was correctly identified.

## EXOTIC SPECIES LOG

This year, the committee implemented the beginning of an exotic species log, which has been specified in its Rules as an obligation but never undertaken until now. Until recently, we have not had a list of verifiable exotic species found free-flying in the wild in Florida to use as a baseline for a continuing log. In 2014, the committee agreed to employ the vetted list entitled "Appendix B, Part I: Verifiable, Non-established Exotics," in Greenlaw et al. (2014:274-323), compiled from a review of the literature and examination of photographs by Bill Pranty, as our baseline list for the exotics log. Our rules specify that we examine the evidence for potential new additions and to maintain the list by adding unlisted species when the evidence is verifiable and supportive.

This year, we added Magpie Goose (*Anseranas semipalmata*; lowland south-central New Guinea and coastal northeastern Australia: 19 July 2014, Volusia County) and Blue-winged Goose (*Cyanochen cyanoptera*; highlands of Ethiopia: 16 April 2015, Martin County). Both



were photographed in the wild. New additions are reviewed informally and are not assigned a catalog number. The two species here increase the 2012 total in the Appendix to 127 species.

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