

## FIRST REPORT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE (MARC)

by Wayne R. Petersen, MARC Chairman

In the June 1992 issue of *Bird Observer*, the establishment of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (MARC) was announced, and a brief history of the need and rationale for such a Committee was presented. The article indicated that since its inception in 1989, the primary objectives of the MARC were to: (1) establish a protocol for processing unusual bird reports; (2) finalize a set of bylaws that would direct the activities of the Committee; and (3) produce the MARC's state list of Massachusetts birds.

Since the 1992 article appeared, the MARC has been actively working on examining and, in some cases, reevaluating old Massachusetts bird records, along with processing more recent records that have not previously been subjected to rigorous scrutiny. During this time-consuming and often frustrating process, inevitable inconsistencies and discrepancies appeared in the bylaws. Consequently, the bylaws have been refined and improved during the workings of the Committee. Also, after great deliberation, the MARC has produced a state bird list that should prove useful to anyone with an interest in Massachusetts birdlife. Obviously, a state list is never complete; however, the enclosed copy reflects the activities of the MARC as of May 1994. Although the MARC State List is enclosed as a removable tear-out from the current issue of *Bird Observer*, the MARC and the Massachusetts Audubon Society will eventually publish a more compact version of the list, which can be used as a replacement for or a supplement to the existing Massachusetts Audubon Daily Field Card.

While the procedure used in the record review process and the mechanics of the MARC might be of interest to some readers, space does not permit a full detailing of the Committee's bylaws. However, a set of the printed bylaws will be distributed to all Massachusetts bird clubs and local bird record-keepers; individuals who want to obtain a copy may send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the Secretary (Marjorie Rines, 48 Robinhood Road, Arlington, MA 02174).

**The MARC List:** The enclosed list represents the product of a careful and thoughtful analysis of a number of bird records, some old and some more recent. Not every species on the list has been evaluated by the MARC. Most of those species for which there is no state specimen or recognizable photograph, or those records where existing evidence has never been formally evaluated, were processed by the MARC. For records of birds new to the state, the MARC requires either a unanimous vote or a vote of 8:1 for the record to be accepted.

In addition to species new to Massachusetts, the MARC has also taken action on a number of reports that are defined in the bylaws as: (a) any species

recorded in Massachusetts fewer than ten times overall or fewer than five times in the last twenty years; (b) any rare or difficult to identify species as designated by the Committee; or (c) any record of a species that is judged by the MARC to be geographically or temporally rare. The results of these MARC activities are presented in the tabulation that follows.

Birds marked by an "\*" (e.g., Pacific/Arctic Loon) represent pairs of species where, based on evidence before the MARC, one or the other species of the pair unquestionably has occurred in the state, but it was impossible to positively determine which of the species in each pair was present. In each case, the species listed first is the one judged by the MARC to be more likely.

Birds on the supplemental list (e.g., Barnacle Goose) are species of questionable origin. The MARC feels that wild origin of these species is probable, but enough doubt exists that a supplemental designation is the most appropriate way of listing the species.

**Actions taken by the MARC since 1989:** As indicated above, the MARC has processed a variety of records, each for slightly differing reasons. For records that were accepted by the MARC, information in the tabulation that follows includes the: (a) MARC file number; (b) species (or species pair) name; (c) first date of the appearance of the species; (d) specific locality where the species was recorded; and (e) name of the observer credited with the species' discovery. Species are listed in taxonomic order.

For records not accepted by the MARC, the format is similar to that used for accepted records, with the following exceptions: (1) observer names are omitted; (2) reasons for the record's rejection are listed as [a] identification questionable, [b] natural occurrence questionable, or [c] establishment of introduced population questionable. A First Annual Report of the MARC, to be published in the future, will include more details on the rationale for not accepting certain records.

Three species, Common Ringed Plover, Thayer's Gull, and Black-billed Magpie, which would affect the state list, are currently under consideration.

The **Massachusetts Avian Records Committee** comprises nine voting members and a nonvoting secretary. Voting members include Kathleen Anderson, Bradford Blodget, Richard Forster, Seth Kellogg, Mark Lynch, Blair Nikula, Simon Perkins, Wayne Petersen (Chairman), and Robert Stymeist. The secretary is Marjorie Rines.

The MARC accepted the following records:

84-4	Pacific/Arctic Loon	4/27/84	Manomet	J. Loughlin
84-5	Pacific/Arctic Loon	10/29/84	Plymouth	D. Evered
87-3	Pacific/Arctic Loon	12/12/87	Rockport	S. Perkins
88-2	Pacific/Arctic Loon	7/24/88	Plum Island	M. Lynch
93-7	Eared Grebe	9/18/93	Duxbury	R. Fox
73-1	Black-browed Albatross	9/16/73	Nantucket Sound	R. Veit
76-1	Black-browed Albatross	7/11/76	Jeffreys Ledge	R. Heil
71-1	Yellow-nosed Albatross	5/7/71	Buzzard's Bay	I. Nisbet
76-2	Diomedea species	7/24/76	Newburyport	R. Heil
91-1	Black-capped Petrel	4/22/91	Stellwagen Bank	S. Highley
91-2	Black-capped Petrel	8/19/91	N. Eastham	R. Heil
93-16	White-faced Storm-Petrel	8/24/93	Nantucket Sound	S. Highley
84-1	Band-rumped Storm-Petrel	8/20/84	Hydrographer Canyon	R. Veit
87-1	Anhinga	5/25/87	Nahant	R. Forster
91-3	Anhinga	4/18/91	Lincoln	I. Nisbet
89-1	Little Egret	8/12/89	Plum Island	R. Forster
84-2	White-faced Ibis	4/24/84	Essex	R. Forster
90-2	White-faced Ibis	6/24/90	Topsfield	S. Perkins
90-3	White-faced Ibis	7/25/90	Holden	B. Blodget
23-1	Grtr. White-fronted Goose	11/1/23	N. Truro	J. Peters
54-3	Tufted Duck	1/24/54	Newburyport	S. Eliot
92-8	Tufted Duck	4/19/92	Plymouth	S. Arena
1889-1	Masked Duck	8/27/1889	Malden	C. Corey
10-1	White-tailed Kite	5/30/10	Martha's Vineyard	S. P. Fay
90-1	Terek Sandpiper	6/23/90	Plum Island	D. Stemple
93-5	Black-tailed Godwit	6/23/93	Monomoy Island	B. Nikula
91-5	Bar-tailed Godwit	5/19/91	Monomoy Island	B. Nikula
91-7	Bar-tailed Godwit	8/11/91	Monomoy Island	B. Nikula
92-9	Bar-tailed Godwit	6/3/92	Monomoy Island	B. Nikula
92-10	Bar-tailed Godwit	7/8/92	Monomoy Island	B. Nikula
80-1	Rufous-necked Stint	6/24/80	Monomoy Island	R. Veit
80-2	Rufous-necked Stint	7/17/80	Scituate	W. Petersen
85-1	Little Stint	7/25/85	Scituate	W. Petersen
91-4	Baird's Sandpiper	11/17/91	Newburyport	T. Leukering
91-6	Franklin's Gull	8/5/91	Barnstable	B. Nikula
88-1	California Gull	4/24/88	Newburyport	R. Forster
54-1	White-winged Tern	5/25/54	N. Scituate	J. May
92-5	Ancient Murrelet	11/8/92	Rockport	L. Brinker
73-2	Common Ground-Dove	10/7/73	Monomoy Island	T. Howell
92-4	Rufous Hummingbird	10/18/92	Holyoke	L. Uphatham

78-1	Selasphorous species	4/15/78	Newton	A. McGowan
82-4	Jackdaw	11/28/82	Nantucket	S. Perkins
75-1	Bewick's Wren	9/27/75	Cuttyhunk Island	W. Petersen
93-9	Townsend's Solitaire	11/13/93	Hingham	D. Cooper
77-1	Phainopepla	10/7/77	Tuckernuck	M. Lafarge
79-1	Lucy's Warbler	12/1/79	Ipswich	R. Heil
64-1	Hermit Warbler	5/16/64	Cambridge	O. Earle
93-17	Ash-throated Flycatcher	11/7/93	Arlington	L. Taylor
83-2	Sulphur-bellied/ Streaked Flycatcher	11/12/83	Martha's Vineyard	W. Manter
93-1	Le Conte's Sparrow	3/20/93	Middleboro	M. Sylvia
93-14	Le Conte's Sparrow	10/30/93	Marshfield	D. Brown
68-1	Smith's Longspur	10/12/68	Salisbury	C. Leahy
86-2	Boat-tailed/ Great-tailed Grackle	4/24/86	Newbury	R. Forster

For the following records, the MARC believes that wild individuals of these species may have occurred in the state. However, a captive origin cannot be discounted.

1885-1	Barnacle Goose	11/1/1885	N. Eastham	N. Vickary
68-2	Garganey	5/4/68	Plum Island	P. Wade
78-2	Cinnamon Teal	5/11/78	Monomoy Island	S. Mott
77-2	Steller's Eider	3/29/77	Scituate	R. Vernon
61-1	Common Chaffinch	4/1/61	Chatham	Reynolds
79-2	Brambling	2/79	Mansfield	R. Everett
93-12	Brambling	11/8/93	Groveland	L. Cooper
83-3	Eurasian Siskin	5/5/83	Rockport	O. Norris

The MARC did not accept the following records based on "identification questionable." In some cases identification may have been correct, but the documentation provided was not sufficient to allow acceptance.

83-1	Arctic Loon	1/21/83	Rockport	
82-3	Yellow-billed Loon	11/14/82	Salisbury	
85-2	Yellow-billed Loon	3/16/85	Nantucket Sound	
87-2	Yellow-billed Loon	4/14/87	Tuckernuck	
93-2	Brown Pelican	3/21/93	Erving	
81-1	Anhinga	6/13/81	N. of Boston	
93-14	Magnificent Frigatebird	5/21/93	W. Newbury	
93-13	Mississippi Kite	9/12/93	Ipswich	
92-7	Swainson's Hawk	11/29/92	Wareham	

86-1	Northern Hobby	9/28/86	Monomoy Island
86-3	Greater Golden-Plover	11/23/86	Monomoy Island
93-8	Bar-tailed Godwit	9/2/93	Monomoy Island
92-11	Franklin's Gull	9/7/92	Wellesley
93-3	Ivory Gull	3/14/93	Nantucket
54-2	Vermilion Flycatcher	10/22/54	Plum Island
92-6	Hermit Warbler	10/20/92	Martha's Vineyard
92-1	Black-headed Grosbeak	5/20/92	Rockland
92-3	Black-headed Grosbeak	5/14/92	Leverett
59-1	Black-throated Sparrow	11/4/59	Deerfield
63-1	Black-throated Sparrow	4/12/63	N. Amherst
93-10	Henslow's Sparrow	10/16/93	Salem
93-4	Harris' Sparrow	4/18/93	Newton
93-11	Scott's Oriole	5/22/93	Cambridge
90-4	Cassin's Finch	1/29/90	Athol

The MARC did not accept any records of the following species based on "questionable origin."

Greater Flamingo  
Common Shelduck  
European Goldfinch

*Rip Ryder*  
**MONOMOY ISLAND  
 FERRY**

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