

# Recent Actions of the Ohio Bird Records Committee

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The Ohio Bird Records Committee exists to increase knowledge of Ohio's birdlife by validating records, maintaining archives for researchers of Ohio records of occurrences of rare bird species, and establishing the official list of Ohio bird species. The OBRC relies vitally on help from Ohio's field birders who send in details of their sightings of rare birds. Birds unsatisfactorily documented or not subjected to peer review by the Committee cannot be added to official Ohio records, nor will they be attributed in *The Ohio Cardinal*. The OBRC establishes the Review List, which includes all species encountered infrequently enough in the state as to require documentation (specimen, photo, sound recording, and/or full written descriptions from witnesses) for their inclusion in the scientific record.

The OBRC does not review sightings as such, of course, only documentations of sightings. The Committee cannot decide if a given species was seen and correctly identified, but only if the documentation made available from those present at the sighting verifies, for the historical record, the species' occurrence at the time. All documentations received, together with Committee actions thereon, are archived for researchers. All these records—with the sole exception of the identities of Committee members on vote sheets—are available to the public upon request of the Secretary.

The current members of the Ohio Bird Records Committee are Micki Dunakin (Antwerp), Joe Hammond (Columbus), Rob Harlan (Parma Heights), Ned Keller (Cleves), Jay Lehman (Cincinnati), Greg Links (Temperance, MI), Jim McCormac (Columbus), Kevin Metcalf (Chardon), Sue Tackett (Brookville), Elliot Tramer (Whitehouse), and Sean Zadar (Parma Heights). A summary of actions taken since the last published report follows. Names of observers submitting acceptable documentation are supplied in each case.

## Accepted Records

In order to be accepted, records require a minimum of nine accept votes from the 11-member committee.

**Common Eider** *Somateria mollissima*—Lake County, 25 September 2003. Observer: John Pogacnik (ph). Amazingly, this bird appeared at the exact locale of last winter's common eider, although this may not be the same individual! Only the third accepted record ever for Ohio.

**Tricolored Heron** *Egretta tricolor*—Cuyahoga County, 16 April 2003. Observer: Suzanne Wagner. Thirtieth record since 1980.

**Tricolored Heron** *E. tricolor*—Washington County, 24 April 2003. Observers: Bill Thompson III (ph), Jon Benedetti, Jeanette Esker, Norbert Esker, Dick Esker, Barbara Hohman, Ann Pyle, Glenn Haynes, Mary Shepherd, Lynn Beardmore. Thirty-first record since 1980.

**Tricolored Heron** *E. tricolor*—Erie County, 9 July through 3 August 2003. Observers: Troy Shively (ph), Dan Sanders, Su Snyder, Tim Leslie, Don Plant, Gary Cowell Jr., Ned Bixler. What was presumed to be the same bird was seen at three locales within close proximity between the dates listed. Thirty-second record since 1980.

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*—Wayne County, 16 May 2003. Observers: Perry Yoder, Bruce Glick, Lowell Crilow, Mose Weaver, Ervin Miller. At least the 22<sup>nd</sup> record since 1980.

**White-faced Ibis** *P. chihi*—Sandusky County, 17 May 2003. Observers: Greg Links, Jeff Cullen, Becky Cullen, Brad Cullen. Tenth record since 1980.

**Black Rail** *Laterallus jamaicensis*—Holmes County, 14 June 2003. Observers: David Kline, Dennis Kline, Kevin Kline, Joel Kline, and Kenneth Kline, Brian Miller, Morris Miller (ph), Wayne Yoder. First Holmes County record and only the fifth since 1980.

**Piping Plover** *Charadrius melodus*—Lucas County, 3 May 2003. Observer: R. Christopher Vest. Forty-fifth record since 1980.

**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*—Lucas County, 11 November 2003. Observers: Bill Whan, Bob Conlon, Dave Horn. Thirty-fourth record since 1980.

**Least Tern** *Sterna antillarum*—Ottawa County, 17 May 2003. Observer: Matt Anderson. Eighteenth record since 1980.

**Loggerhead Shrike** *Lanius ludovicianus*—Adams County, 10 May through 16 July 2003. Observers: Jay Lehman (ph), Randy Lakes, Karl Maslowski, Hank Armstrong, Pete Whan, Neill Cade, Jason Cade, Dan Sanders, Greg Miller, Andy Bess. Recently added to the review list due to precipitous declines in recent years, this was the only reported nesting in 2003.

**Yellow-rumped "Audubon's" Warbler** *Dendroica coronata auduboni*—Franklin County, 4 April 2003. Observers: Jim McCormac, Mike McCormac, Peter King. While not an official review species, there have only been about four published records of the western counterpart to the "myrtle" warbler, and it was formerly considered a distinct species. Any sightings of this subspecies should be thoroughly documented.

**Harris's Sparrow** *Zonotrichia querula*—Lake County, 12 October 2003. Observer: Ben Fambrough. About the 20<sup>th</sup> record since 1980.

**Smith's Longspur** *Calcarius pictus*—Tuscarawas County, 8 April 2003. Observers: Robert Schlabach, Ed Schlabach, Leroy Schlabach, Bruce Glick, Leon Miller. Only the seventh record since 1980 and the first since 1991.

## Records Not Accepted

Documentations received for the following reports received fewer than six votes to accept, and were hence not accepted.

**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*—Licking County, 16 April 2003. Observers: Jim Stafford (ph), Curt Dusthimer. While this bird was identified correctly—the observers took excellent photos—the record was not accepted on the basis of uncertain origin. This species is a rare wild vagrant to Alaska and the western U.S., but reports from elsewhere are generally discounted as escapes. Whooper swans are kept in captivity, and like other captive waterfowl can and do escape. It's probably far more likely that a free-flying Ohio bird would be an escape, and without some hard evidence such as a traceable band, it would be difficult to accept an Ohio record of this species as wild.

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*—Cuyahoga County, 11 May 2003. A fascinating report, and one which almost all members felt may well have been accurate. However, the bird was seen only briefly from a moving vehicle, and no extended observation could be made. It is unfortunate that circumstances

did not allow for thorough study and documentation of this sighting, and even though the documentation describes well what was seen in that brief view, it wasn't enough to allow for acceptance of such a rarity. There have only been two accepted records since 1946.

**Hoary Redpoll** *Carduelis hornemanni*—Wayne County, 19 February 1981. It was requested that the committee review this historic record, as the sighting preceded formation of the OBRC. Almost all members felt that the documentation—which did not include photos—was simply too sparse in detail to adequately distinguish the rather blurry suite of characters that separate hoary from common redpoll. Under the best of circumstances, these two can be hard to differentiate, and very careful study and recording of details such as bill structure and plumage patterns are vital. Compounding difficulties are intermediate birds, and only hoary redpolls at the extreme end of this common/hoary species complex seem readily separated.

### Records in Recirculation

Records are recirculated when they have received from the Committee between six and eight votes to accept, or if any member requests recirculation.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*—Wyandot County, 18 July 2003. Seeking additional details before a final decision.

**Long-tailed Jaeger** *Stercorarius longicaudus*—Franklin County, 8 October 2003. There's no question this bird was a subadult jaeger, but some members are as yet uncertain which species was involved.

**Western Gull** *Larus occidentalis*—Seen on two different dates in March 2003, in Cuyahoga and Lorain counties on Lake Erie. A series of very good photographs was taken. This record has now been reviewed twice. Much expert opinion has been gathered from outside Ohio, and these comments will help guide the committee in coming to a decision in the third and final round of circulation.

**Loggerhead Shrike** *Lanius ludovicianus*—Wyandot County, 9 November 2003. Seeking additional details and photographs before a final decision.

### Records Pending Review

We await details on some of these reports.

**Ross's Goose** *Chen rossii*—Stark County, December 2003/January 2004.

**Ross's Goose** *C. rossii*—Hamilton County, 30 November 2003.

**Swainson's Hawk** *Buteo swainsoni*—Lake County, 20 November 2003.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*—Wayne County, 6 September 2003.

**Rufous Hummingbird** *Selasphorus rufus*—Franklin County, November-December 2003.

**Rufous Hummingbird** *S. rufus*—Muskingum County, November 2003.

**Rufous Hummingbird** *S. rufus*—Lorain County, October-November 2003.

**Rufous Hummingbird** *S. rufus*—Summit County, October-December 2003.

**Rufous Hummingbird** *S. rufus*—Lucas County, November-December 2003.

**Rufous Hummingbird** *S. rufus*—Darke County, September-December 2003.

**Rufous Hummingbird** *S. rufus*—Butler County, November-December 2003. 🐦



Gary Meszaros photographed this red phalarope at Conneaut Harbor in Ashtabula County on 6 October 2003.