

OBRC Bylaws Revision: Member Elections

Formed in 1991, the Ohio Bird Records Committee (OBRC) serves as a peer-review panel designed to evaluate and endorse records of rare birds found in Ohio. As such, it maintains the official Ohio state bird list, fosters the historical record, and compiles the Review List of rare Ohio bird species. The OBRC preserves original documentary evidence submitted for the records it reviews, as well as the votes and comments made by its members, thereby allowing study by future bird researchers. OBRC actions are published regularly in *The Ohio Cardinal*. Although governed by its own bylaws, the OBRC has since its beginnings prospered from a close relationship with the *Cardinal*.

OBRC Bylaws are reviewed periodically by the Committee, and a special meeting was held on 8 October 2006 for this purpose. This meeting was called to discuss changes under consideration since 2003, which, when approved, ultimately granted the OBRC a greater level of independence from *The Ohio Cardinal*. While maintaining a long-term professional relationship with the *Cardinal*, and now as well as a standing committee of the Ohio Ornithological Society (OOS), the OBRC is now a truly independent organization with autonomous self-control.

Formerly, the editor and publisher of *The Ohio Cardinal* had primary roles in choosing the members of the OBRC, but the newly amended bylaws provide that the Committee itself will vote to choose its Secretary and members. In addition, the bylaws formerly gave to subscribers of *The Ohio Cardinal* the option to nominate members to the Committee, whereupon a vote was held among *Cardinal* subscribers to elect new members. This subscriber vote was a somewhat unusual, and possibly unique, method of electing members to a state rare birds committee. However, although several such votes have been held over the past 16 years, in general this system has not seen much use.

Since 2004, when *The Ohio Cardinal* became a partner with the OOS, the *Cardinal* subscriber base has increased considerably. This growth has made it less likely a subscriber electorate would be as familiar with the qualifications of nominees, and promised to make the entire process extremely unwieldy.

Further, upon approval of a proposed unification between the *Cardinal* and the OOS, the status of publisher of the *Cardinal* would shift from an individual person to a corporate entity, further complicating previous OBRC nomination procedures. For these reasons, the OBRC, in cooperation with *The Ohio Cardinal*, voted on the aforementioned date to adopt the method of electing its own members.

Other familiar features of the OBRC remain the same, including the number of voting members (seven), their terms of office, and accountability via publicly accessible vote sheets, recirculation procedures, regular publications of decisions, and ongoing revisions of the state list. The updated OBRC Bylaws may be consulted online at <http://www.ohiobirds.org/records/Bylaws.pdf>, or by requesting a copy from OBRC Secretary Tom Kemp at 1507 Napoleon Road, Bowling Green, Ohio, 43402, or at andigena@aol.com.

The OBRC greatly values and relies upon the support of Ohio's birders, and would be of little value without it. We encourage everyone to document observations of rare birds, and submit them to the Secretary. More information about the Committee is available at <http://www.ohiobirds.org/records/aboutobrc.php>. We look forward to serving Ohio's birds and birders as an independent organization, long into the future.

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The 2006-2007 Christmas Bird Counts

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We were able to obtain results from 64 Christmas Bird Counts this year, the same number as last year. The results include a new circle, Rudolph, located in Wood County (circle number 17 on the accompanying map). It seems only fitting that the same number of circles should produce the same number of species; and indeed, our 155 species found statewide did match last year's total. It was rather surprising that no more species were found during count week this year. For those who enjoy the competitive aspect of Christmas counts, Toledo led the race for the most species with 90, followed by Cincinnati with 86, Ottawa NWR with 84, Millersburg with 82, Lake Erie Islands and Wilmot with 81, and Adams County, Caesar Creek / Spring Valley, and Wilmot, all with 80.

Seventeen species were found in all 64 counts, and four others were missed in only a single circle. No Canada geese or great blue herons were found in Preble County, no American crows at Grand Lake St. Marys, and no (as is nearly always the case) tufted titmice on the Lake Erie Islands. At the other extreme, 21 species were found on only one count. It's difficult to single out the rarest of the rare, but surely brant at Lake Erie Islands, king eider at Mentor, our nearly extirpated loggerhead shrike at Brown Family Environmental Center, western tanager at Columbus, two rose-breasted grosbeaks at Lake Erie Islands, an indigo bunting at Wilmot, and Baltimore oriole at Cuyahoga Falls are worthy of mention.

Winter invasives were particularly difficult to find on the Christmas counts this year. Although red-breasted nuthatches were found on 30 counts, they amounted to only 77 individuals. The only winter finches reported were 43 purple finches from eleven circles, 33 pine siskins from six circles and 4 evening grosbeaks from two circles. Check the Reports elsewhere in this issue to see whether these results were typical of the season. Pine warbler and common yellowthroat were the only rarities among the warbler clan this year, but unusual sparrows included vesper, Nelson's sharp-tailed, and Lincoln's.

We normally report results exactly as we receive them. This year, I have taken the liberty of changing a report of common snipe to Wilson's snipe, assuming that the compiler simply used the old name. With that exception, I have not made any attempt to edit out other potentially dubious records. I leave that exercise to the reader.

