

## RECENT ACTIONS BY THE OHIO BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE, Four new state records

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The purpose of the Ohio Bird Records Committee (OBRC) is to endorse records of birds in Ohio. The Committee bases its decisions on the documentation submitted. Secondly, photographs and descriptions posted to on-line venues can sometimes be evaluated. By applying peer review to observational records, these sightings become valuable scientific data and part of Ohio's ornithological record. We also maintain the official Ohio State Bird List and publish all committee decisions. Here we provide an update on recent activity of the committee.

### Accepted Records

In the most recent round of voting the committee unanimously voted to accept four new state records, of three species and one superspecies.

**Great Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – Cleveland Harbor, *Cuyahoga*. First reported on 04 Mar 2016. Formally documented by Craig Caldwell on 07 Mar. Photographs and descriptions were posted on-line between 04 and 08 Mar.

**Kelp Gull** (*Larus dominicanus*) – Springfield Lake, *Summit*. Formally documented by Kent Miller and Ben Morrison between 05 and 07 Dec 2015. Photographs and descriptions were posted to on-line venues until 06 Mar 2016.

**Western Flycatcher** (*Empidonax sp.*) – Thompson Residence, *Washington*. Formally documented by Bill Thompson III on 13 Dec 2015 and by others online until 17 Dec. In 1989 the AOU Checklist committee split the Western Flycatcher (then *Empidonax difficilis*) into Pacific-slope Flycatcher (*E. difficilis*) and Cordilleran Flycatcher (*E. occidentalis*). Thompson documented the bird as the superspecies Western Flycatcher, since Cordilleran and Pacific-slope Flycatchers are virtually indistinguishable in the field, especially without vocal recordings. Since neither of these species has previously been recorded in Ohio, this is a first state record. In the event that the AOU lumps these two species back into one species (a distinct possibility), Western Flycatcher will be added to the Official State Bird List as a fully recognized species.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** (*Passer montanus*)

– Seiberling Nature Realm, *Summit*. Formally documented by Nancy Hooper on 10 January 2016.

### Pending Records

In the past year, no documentations were circulated to the committee due to the inaction of the former secretary. Because of this we have a backlog of records dating back to early 2015. We aim to process all of these records by the end of 2016. If you have any questions about pending records, please contact the secretary at [ohiobirdrecords@gmail.com](mailto:ohiobirdrecords@gmail.com)

### Notes from the Annual Meeting held on 12 Jun 2016

We thank Sue Tackett and Rob Harlan, whose terms ended at the 2016 meeting, and welcome Jay Lehman, Ben Warner, and Bill Whan, whose terms began at the meeting. Jack Stenger was elected to the position of Secretary and Bill Whan appointed Vice Secretary. Current members of the committee are: Jay Lehman, Rick Nirschl, Dan Sanders, Su Snyder, Jay Stenger, Douglas Vogus, Ben Warner, Bill Whan (Vice Secretary), and Jack Stenger (Secretary).

At the time of the meeting a year had passed without any formal action. We discussed the best way to obtain and process the backlog of documentations and how to avoid this situation in the future. We amended the OBRC by-laws in two ways to ensure that a lapse in activity does not happen again:

- The Secretary now must appoint a Vice Secretary. The Vice Secretary will be copied on all documentations and will become acting secretary in the event that the Secretary is inactive for six months.
- Previously the Secretary or Members could only be removed by vote at an official meeting. We relaxed that criterion so that voting on removals need not happen at a meeting.

We are also creating an OBRC Facebook page to allow for easier and quick communication with the Ohio birding community. We look forward to streamlining our review process so that current records are voted on with minimal turn around. Please visit the OBRC webpage (<http://ohio-birds.org/rare-birds/ohio-bird-records-committee/>) instructions for submitting rare bird documentations.