

REPORT OF THE GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY CHECKLIST AND RECORDS COMMITTEE

JANUARY 2010 THROUGH DECEMBER 2010

Committee Members

(Reviewed records 2010-01A through 2010-39)

Giff Beaton (Chairman), Jim Flynn (Secretary), Steve Barlow,
Walt Chambers, Pierre Howard, Ty Ivey

Review Species Report Summary

Forty-one reports representing 24 species were received by the GCRC for review in 2010. Of these reports, 34 were accepted, four were not accepted, and three were deferred to a second round of review. Two species, Ivory Gull and Red-faced Warbler, were added to the Official Checklist, and one species, Virginia's Warbler, was moved from the Provisional List to the Regular List. The Official Checklist as of the end of 2010 stands at 424 species: 417 on the Regular List (includes 3 species considered extinct: Passenger Pigeon, Carolina Parakeet and Bachman's Warbler) and 7 species on the Provisional List.

Conventions used in this report include:

- GCRC Record Identifier: Year of the report submission (not the year of the observation) followed by a hyphen and a unique sequential identifier (e.g., 2010-21). If more than one report was submitted by different individuals for the same observation event, a letter is attached to the sequential identifier (e.g., 2010-34A, 2010-34B, etc.).
- Species Name: Follows The American Ornithologists' Union's (AOU) *Check-list of North American Birds, Seventh Edition* (AOU, 1998) and incorporates changes in subsequent Supplements through the *Fifty-first Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds* (AOU, 2010).
- Location of observation.
- Date(s) of observation.
- Only observers authoring reports or providing supplementary materials (such as photographs) are mentioned in this summary. Other sources, such as "From the Field" (published in *The Oriole*), should be consulted for proper credit of initial discovery.

- Where applicable, the committee voting results are included with the record, in the form of 'accept votes – not accept votes – abstain votes'. For example, a vote of '5-0-1' signifies 5 accept votes, 0 not accept votes and 1 abstain vote.
- Committee members must abstain from voting on their own records.

2010-01A, 2010-01B Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*): Carters Lake, Murray Co., 4 and 5 Jan 2010. Joshua Spence and David Hollie, respectively, submitted sight-only reports describing a female observed on the Re-regulation Lake at Carters Lake. The committee accepted the reports unanimously.

2010-02 Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*): Carters Lake Dam, Murray Co., 22 Dec 2009. Charlie Muise submitted a description with several diagnostic photographs taken by Tracey Muise and Charlie Muise of an individual of this species discovered on the Carters Lake Christmas Bird Count. The report was accepted unanimously by the committee.

2010-03 Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*): Tift/Turner Co. line, 22 Dec 2009. A sight-only report describing this species was submitted for consideration. While the report contained some field marks characteristic of this species, the circumstances of the observation (brief sighting from a moving vehicle at interstate speed without corroborating photographs or video evidence) caused most committee members to choose to not accept the record, especially since the occurrence would be a first state record, 1-5.

2010-04 Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*): Altamaha WMA, McIntosh Co., 24 Feb 2009. Jeff Sewell submitted a belated sight-only report of an adult male of this species observed with a sizeable flock of Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*). Unanimously accepted by the committee.

2010-05 Razorbill (*Alca torda*): Gray's Reef, Pelagic, 16 Feb 2008. Several photos of this species, taken by GA DNR Biologist Clay George observed during Cetacean surveys off of the Georgia coast, were belatedly submitted without a description for consideration. The photos showed the pertinent characteristics of the species and the committee unanimously accepted the record.

2010-06 Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*): Pelagic, 10 Jan 2009. Several

photos of this species were belatedly submitted for consideration by the committee. The photos, taken by GA DNR Biologist Clay George approximately four miles off of the south end of Cumberland Island, showed the pertinent field marks of this species. The committee unanimously accepted the record.

2010-07 Razorbill (*Alca torda*): Pelagic, 9 Feb 2009. Several photographs of two individuals of this species, taken by GA DNR Biologist Clay George while performing Cetacean surveys approximately 10 miles off of the south end of Cumberland Island, were belatedly submitted for consideration. Although the photos were not accompanied by a written description, the diagnostic characteristics of the species were clearly evident and the committee accepted the record unanimously.

2010-08 Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*): Lake Mayer, Chatham Co., 23 Jan 2009. A sight-only written description was submitted for review. While the description contained elements that can be attributed to this species (one committee member termed them "Ross-ish Geese"), most committee members commented that issues with hybridization between Ross's Goose and Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens*) continue to confuse the factors that are used to determine a "pure" Ross's Goose, especially without the benefit of a series of photos. The committee conservatively declined to accept the record, 0-6.

2010-09 Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*): Boukarts Sod Farm, Murray Co., 22 Sep 2009. A written report describing an adult of this species, accompanied by photographs by Dan Vickers, was submitted the committee by Joshua Spence. The report was accepted unanimously. This distinctive species was subsequently photographed by many observers at this location.

2010-10 Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*): EL Huie, Clayton Co., 21 Jan 2009. Jeff Sewell submitted a belated report with a photograph by Darlene Moore. Most committee members felt that the photo was enough to accept the report as a "pure" Ross's Goose, 5-1. Interestingly, the bird possessed a yellow neck collar with the black letters "X" and "NF" and a silver band on the right foot with the engraved characters "-59" visible. Several attempts by Carol Lambert to determine who banded the bird were unsuccessful.

2010-11A, 2010-11B Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*): West Point Dam, Troup Co., 25-26 Jan 2010. Reports authored by Earl Horn (from 26 Jan 2010) and

Walt Chambers (from 25 Jan 2010), both containing photographs of an adult of this species taken by the respective authors, were submitted to the committee. The bird was discovered by Walt just off West Point Dam and was subsequently enjoyed and photographed by many observers. Unfortunately, four days after its discovery the bird was observed in obvious distress near the dam. The bird died later in the day, but was recovered and preserved as a specimen (Georgia Museum of Natural History Specimen #6289). Both records were unanimously accepted by the committee. These reports constitute the first documented occurrence of the species in Georgia.

2010-12 Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*): West Point Dam, Troup Co., 26 Jan 2010. Michael Todd submitted a report with many photographs to the committee for consideration. The photos depicted a first cycle individual mostly in flight and the accompanying report contained a detailed analysis of the bird that each committee member felt was sufficient to unanimously accept the record.

2010-13 Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*): St. Catherines I., Liberty Co., 14 Dec 2008. A belated written report was submitted by biologist Brad Winn. The bird was flushed twice and observed by multiple individuals during an attempt to locate marsh sparrows. While the sighting was brief, the committee members felt that the author had noted enough diagnostic details (including the "striking" white patch on the secondaries) to accept the report unanimously.

2010-14 Virginia's Warbler (*Vermivora virginiae*): Valdosta, Lowndes Co., 15 Jan 2010. John Swiderski submitted a written report with video taken by Kate Swiderski of an individual of this species that periodically visited their hummingbird feeder. The bird was subsequently observed and photographed by many people. The report was unanimously accepted by the committee. This species previously appeared on the GOS Provisional List due to an accepted multi-observer sight-only record from Kennesaw Mt. NBP in mid-September 1997 (GCRC 1997-9A/C/D). The acceptance of the Swiderski's record provided the documentation necessary to move Virginia's Warbler to the GOS Regular List.

2010-15 Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*): Athens, Clarke Co., 20 Mar 2010. Angie Maxted and Mark Nipper submitted a written report accompanied by several photos of a male of this species that visited a feeder at a local residence. Unanimously accepted by the committee.

2010-16 Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*): Walter F. George Dam, Clay Co., 27 Feb 2010. Walt Chambers submitted a sight-only written report describing his observation of this species. The bird had been present in the Walter F. George Dam area since at least early Dec 2009 and was likely the same individual that spent the previous winter at this location. Accepted by the committee 5-0-1, with committee member Walt Chambers abstaining.

2010-17 Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*): Marshallville Super Sod, Macon Co., 15 Dec 2009. A belated sight-only written report was submitted by Walt Chambers. The report contained enough details for the committee to comfortably accept the record, 5-0-1, with committee member Walt Chambers abstaining.

2010-18 California Gull (*Larus californicus*): Walter F. George Dam, Clay Co., 29 Jan 2010. Walt Chambers submitted a written report, including several photographs, of a large first cycle Larid observed below Walter F. George Dam. This was a difficult record to review for each of the committee members, even with reasonably good photographs. Three committee members accepted the record and two of the committee members commented that the bird more closely resembled a first cycle Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*). Committee member Walt Chambers abstained from voting. Due to the split results (3-2-1), the report will follow GCRC procedure and will be submitted for a second round in the future.

2010-19 Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*): St. Catherines I., Liberty Co., 24 Apr 2010. Jim Flynn submitted a sight-only written report accompanied with a field sketch and notes describing a male of this species observed during a St. Catherines Island Spring Migration Count. The report was accepted 5-0-1, with committee member Jim Flynn abstaining.

2010-20 Brant (*Branta bernicla*): Pooler, Chatham Co., 21-29 Apr 2010. A written report with diagnostic photographs was submitted by Amy Roberts. The bird, accompanied by a small flock of Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*), visited a neighborhood pond primarily during the evening hours. The committee accepted the record 5-1, with one member questioning the provenance of the bird.

2010-21 White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*): Little St. Simons I., Glynn Co., 24 and 26 Apr 2010. A detailed description with photographs of an immature of this species accompanying an immature Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) was submitted to the committee by noted author and illustrator, David Sibley. The report was unanimously accepted by the committee, with one member humorously quipping, "Even without a photo, I lack the temerity to question this observer's sighting, even if he had reported a Kiwi."

2010-22 Red-faced Warbler (*Cardellina rubrifrons*): Dowdells Knob, Meriwether Co., 27 Apr 2010. A written report with photographs was submitted by Walt Chambers. A seemingly unlikely stray to the state, the diagnostic photos corroborated the author's description and provided plenty of evidence for the committee to accept the report 5-0-1, with committee member Walt Chambers abstaining. The report furnishes the first documented occurrence of this species in Georgia.

2010-23 Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*): Hardman Rd. Sod, Habersham Co., 29 Aug 2010. Jim Flynn submitted a written report and photographs of this species for consideration. Although the photographs clearly showed a "Traill's" type Empid, the description of the call notes and circumstances of the bird's response convinced the committee to accept the record 5-0-1, with committee member Jim Flynn abstaining.

2010-24 Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*): Wall Bridge Loop Rd. Sod, Habersham Co., 29 Aug 2010. A written report that included photographs was submitted by Jim Flynn for review. As with record 2010-23, the description of the call notes and circumstances of the response allowed the committee to accept the record 5-0-1, with committee member Jim Flynn abstaining.

2010-25 Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*): American Proteins, Forsyth Co., 4, 6 and 8 Sep 2010. Jim Flynn submitted a written account, with definitive audio recordings of the call notes, to the committee for consideration. Presumably, at least one of the two birds was present for four days at the stated location, which does not permit photography. The record was accepted 5-0-1, with committee member Jim Flynn abstaining.

2010-26 Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*): Eufaula NWR-Bradley Unit, Stewart Co., 5 Sep 2010. A written report that included a description of the

calls and photographs was submitted by Jim Flynn. The record was accepted 5-0-1 by the committee, with committee member Jim Flynn abstaining.

2010-27 Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*): Cochran Shoals, Cobb Co., 23 Sep 2010. A sight-only written report was submitted by Ken Blankenship. Citing the description of the calls heard in comparison with a recording available at the time of the encounter, the committee accepted the record 5-1.

2010-28 Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*): Henderson Park, DeKalb Co., 20 Sep 2010. Jeff Sewell submitted a sight-only written report for consideration. Most committee members accepted the record based on the vocalizations described in the report, but two committee members were not fully convinced. Since the final tally was 4-2, the report will be submitted to the committee for a second review, per GCRC protocol.

2010-29 Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*): Sapelo I., McIntosh Co., 3 Dec 2010. A written report of at least two of this species that were observed during a shorebird workshop was submitted by Tim Keyes for review. The report included diagnostic photographs which aided in the unanimous acceptance of the record by the committee.

2010-30 Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*): Jekyll I., Glynn Co., 27 Nov 2010. Aaron Boone submitted a written sight-only account for consideration. Though photographs were not taken, the thorough and detailed description, reportedly based on field notes taken at the time of observation, prompted a unanimous acceptance of the record by the committee.

2010-31 Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*): Pine Chapel Rd., Gordon Co., 5 Dec 2010. A written report with digiscoped photographs was submitted to the committee by Ken Blankenship. The putative Ross's Goose was observed in the company of a small flock of Snow Geese (*Chen caerulescens*) and most committee members felt that the description and photographs were sufficient to accept the record. However, two committee members were not quite convinced given the unresolved identification issues with Ross's Goose x Snow Goose hybrids. The resulting 4-2 outcome will prompt a second round GCRC review of the report.

2010-32 Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*): Ringgold, Catoosa Co., 16 Sep 2010. A written report with field sketches and notes

was submitted by David Hollie. Although the encounter was brief, the committee felt that enough diagnostic field marks were described to accept the report unanimously.

2010-33 Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*): Ringgold, Catoosa Co., 19 Sep 2010. David Hollie submitted a written report, including a description of the call notes heard many times by the observer, with two photographs. The committee unanimously accepted the record.

2010-34A, 2010-34B Buff-bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia yucatanensis*): St. Simons I., Glynn Co., 5 and 12 Jan 2010. A belated written report, which included an excellent photograph taken on 12 Jan 2010, was submitted by Bob Churi. A second belated report, authored by bander Doreen Cubie, was submitted for consideration. Doreen banded the bird on 5 Jan 2010, and photographs of the bird in-hand accompanied her report. The committee accepted both records unanimously.

2010-35 Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*): Fagala Rd., Murray Co., 27 Apr 2010. Joshua Spence authored a report describing an individual of this species associating with a flock of Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*). The report included a photograph with both species present for comparison. The committee accepted the record unanimously.

2010-36 Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*): Pelagic, 28 May 2010. A belated sight-only written description of a bird observed near GPS coordinates N31.86586 W79.02695 was submitted by Joshua Spence. The report was accepted 5-1 by the committee due to several features often attributed to this species, but committee members lamented that more experienced pelagic birders present on the trip did not submit corroborating descriptions of this difficult taxon.

2010-37 Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*): Pine Chapel Rd., Gordon Co., 27 Nov 2010. A written report describing an adult of this species in the presence of a bird thought to be a hybrid Ross's Goose x Snow Goose (*C. caerulescens*) was submitted for consideration. The committee decided to not accept the record by a split vote of 3-3, with the dissenting members citing the lack of photographs and the confusion surrounding the separation of "pure" individuals from hybrids.

2010-38 Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*): Pine Chapel Rd., Gordon Co., 9 Dec 2010. A written description of three adults accompanied by a suspected Ross Goose x Snow Goose (*C. caerulescens*) hybrid and a small flock of Snow Geese was submitted to the committee. As has happened with other sight-only reports of this species, the committee did not accept the report by a split vote of 3-3.