

Bylaws of the  
Western Field Ornithologists'  
CALIFORNIA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

I. *Name and Affiliation*

- A. *Name.* The official name of this organization shall be the "Western Field Ornithologists' California Bird Records Committee," which may be shortened to the "California Bird Records Committee" and is hereafter referred to as the "Committee."
- B. *Affiliation.* This is a committee of the Society known as the "Western Field Ornithologists."

II. *Purposes*

- A. Validate records of birds from only the State of California and adjacent ocean. "Adjacent ocean" is herein defined as that area within 100 statute miles of the nearest part of the mainland and between latitudinal lines drawn westward from the two western corners of the State.
- B. Maintain permanently the original bird records and all Committee votes and comments for use by future bird students.
- C. Publish at least minimal data on all records receiving a decision.
- D. Provide a means by which sight records can gain universal acceptance as valuable scientific data.
- E. Increase knowledge of the birds of California.
- F. Establish standards of observation and reporting against which field observers may compare their own techniques.
- G. Keep or cause to keep the official California State List.

III. *Membership*

- A. *Number and Definitions.* The committee shall consist of ten people, as follows: nine "Members," one of whom is the "Vice-Secretary," plus a "Secretary," each with one vote. For the purposes of these Bylaws, the Secretary is not considered a "Member," but the Vice-Secretary is. The term "Voting Member" includes all nine Members and the Secretary.
- B. *Qualifications.* Anyone is eligible to become a Voting Member if, in the estimation of the existing Voting Members, that person has demonstrated an expert ability in and knowledge of field identification of birds and is a member in good standing of Western Field Ornithologists.
- C. *Members.*
  - (1) *Election and Term of Office.*
    - (a) The nine Members shall be elected on a staggered basis, each for a term of three years, so that three will be elected each year. Election shall be by vote of a quorum present in person or represented by written ballot at the Annual Meeting or the Committee; proxies shall not be used in this election, but an absent Voting Member may vote by indicating his choices to the Secretary in writing prior to the meeting. The three candidates receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected; if necessary, ties shall be decided by an additional ballot(s) listing only those persons tied.
    - (b) Members take office at the close of the Annual Meeting at which they were elected and serve until the close of the third Annual Meeting after election or until their successors are elected. The Members-Elect may, at the discretion of the existing Committee, be seated, without vote, during the remainder of the Annual Meeting at which they were elected.
    - (c) Members may serve two consecutive full terms, after which they must retire for one year before they may be considered for re-election.
  - (2) *Nominations.* Nomination of Members shall be made only by Voting Members and only in writing to the Secretary at least 30 days prior to the Annual Meeting. It is the responsibility of the nominator to obtain approval of willingness to serve from the nominees he submits. Each nominator may make a maximum of one nomination per each vacancy, and may not nominate himself. If the total number of nominees is not sufficient to fill the vacant seats, it is the responsibility of the Secretary to nominate the number of persons required. The Secretary shall mail the names of the nominees to all Members at least three weeks in advance of the Annual Meeting.

D. *Secretary.*

- (1) *Qualifications.* In addition to the Qualifications of Membership above, the Secretary must not at the same time be both Secretary and one of the nine Members.
- (2) *Election and Term of Office.*
  - (a) The Secretary shall be elected for a term of one year. Election shall be by vote of five or more Members (a quorum being formed by the presence of the Secretary, who may not vote) present in person, not by proxy or ballot, at the Annual Meeting of the Committee. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected; if necessary, a tie shall be decided by an additional ballot(s) listing only those persons tied. The Vice-Secretary or, in his absence, a Member shall conduct the election.
  - (b) The Secretary takes office at the close of the Annual Meeting at which he was elected and serves until the close of the next Annual Meeting or until his successor is elected.
  - (c) The Secretary may serve an unlimited number of terms.
- (3) *Nominations.* Nominations for Secretary shall be made only by Members (not the Secretary or other persons) and only at the Annual Meeting, either in person or by letter to an attending Member. It is the responsibility of the nominator to obtain approval of willingness to serve from the nominee he submits. Each nominator may make a maximum of one nomination, and may not nominate himself.
- (4) *Duties.*
  - (a) Receive, circulate, recirculate and file all bird records and supporting data submitted to the Committee. Whenever possible the records filed should be the originals, as copies fade with age.
  - (b) Vote on bird records (see Voting) and in all elections except that for the Secretaryship.
  - (c) Procure additional data on records when deemed desirable and possible by a Voting Member and especially when a record is to come up for discussion at a meeting of the Committee; prior to any meeting, furnish Members with a list of post-third-circulation records to be discussed.
  - (d) Tabulate results of all votes of the Committee, including votes on bird records, but excepting the election of the Secretary.
  - (e) With the approval of the Members, appoint chairpersons of subcommittees.
  - (f) Call and preside at Committee meetings.
  - (g) Keep or cause to keep minutes of Committee meetings.
  - (h) Keep current the Review List, furnish it to anyone upon request, and publish it in *Western Birds*, preferably with each Annual Report.
  - (i) Furnish Members with such equipment as needed, including Validation Forms.
  - (j) Furnish Members with a list of nominees for election to Member at least three weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.
  - (k) Furnish anyone, upon request, with all evidence, including Committee comments, concerning any accepted or rejected bird record.
  - (l) Furnish Report Forms to anyone upon request and free of charge.
  - (m) Keep current a master copy of these Bylaws and assure that they are properly applied.

E. *Vice-Secretary.*

- (1) *Qualifications.* In addition to the Qualifications of Membership given above, the Vice-Secretary must be one of the nine Members.
- (2) *Election and Term of Office.*
  - (a) The Vice-Secretary shall be elected for a term of one year. Election shall be by vote of a quorum present in person, not by proxy or ballot, at the Annual Meeting of the Committee. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected; if necessary, ties shall be decided by an additional ballot(s) listing only those persons tied. The Secretary, or in his absence, a Member other than the Vice-Secretary, shall conduct this election. All Voting Members, including the current Vice-Secretary and all candidates, may vote.
  - (b) The Vice-Secretary takes office at the close of the Annual Meeting at which he was elected and serves until the close of the next Annual Meeting or until his successor is elected.
  - (c) The Vice-Secretary may serve an unlimited number of terms, except as provided in the Bylaws controlling the number of terms that a Member may serve.
- (3) *Nominations.* Nominations for Vice-Secretary shall be made only by Voting Members, and only at the Annual Meeting, either in person or by letter to an attending Voting Member. It is the responsibility of the nominator to obtain approval of willingness to serve from the nominee he submits. Each nominator may make a maximum of one nomination, and may not nominate himself.
- (4) *Duties.* The Vice-Secretary shall, at the Secretary's request, assist him in carrying out his duties. If the Secretary shall be unable to serve, then the Vice-Secretary shall act as Secretary in all respects. The Vice-Secretary, or his representative Member, shall conduct the election of the Secretary.

- F. *Removals.* The Committee may remove, for cause, the Secretary or Members who are delinquent in their duties. Such action requires a vote of the majority of all other Voting Members, not merely of a quorum. A removal must be accomplished at a meeting of the Committee; absent Voting Members may vote by written ballot to the Committee.

- G. *Vacancies and Special Elections.* If the Committee loses a Voting Member during mid-term (through death, resignation, removal, etc.), the Secretary shall immediately conduct an election, termed a Special Election, for the purpose of filling the vacancy. A Special Election may be conducted at a meeting or by individual contact (mail, telephone, etc.), whichever is most expedient in the opinion of the Secretary. The manner of nomination and election shall be similar, with appropriate exceptions, to the regular selection of a Member or Secretary, whichever pertains. The person elected shall serve the unexpired term of the person being replaced.
- H. *Compensation.* Neither the Secretary nor a Member may receive compensation for his services, but may be reimbursed by the Treasurer of the Western Field Ornithologists for expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of his duties.

#### IV. Meetings

- A. *Annual Meeting.* An Annual Meeting of the Committee shall be held once a year, at a time and place set by the Secretary, in consultation with the Members, for the purpose of election and for transacting such other business as may be brought before the meeting. The Secretary must give to all Members prior notice of the Annual Meeting, together with an agenda and list of nominees for Member.
- B. *Special Meetings.* Special Meetings of the Committee may be called by the Secretary or by agreement of six or more Members, or in the Secretary's absence by the Vice-Secretary. Whoever calls the meeting must notify and provide an agenda to each Voting Member prior to the meeting.
- C. *Quorum.* Six Voting Members in good standing, present in person, not by proxy, shall constitute a quorum for any meeting of the Committee.

#### V. Bylaws

- A. *Formation.* All Bylaws and other procedures of the Committee are to be as determined by and only by the Committee, except that they may not be inconsistent with the Bylaws of the Western Field Ornithologists or with rules adopted by its Board of Directors.
- B. *Review.* The Bylaws shall be reviewed regularly, at least once every five years, by the Committee.
- C. *Changes.* These Bylaws may be changed by a majority vote of a quorum at any Committee meeting.

#### VI. Bird Records

- A. *Definitions.* For the purposes of this Committee and these Bylaws, a "record" is considered to be written documentation submitted to the Committee as proof of the identity of a sighted, heard, collected, banded or photographed bird. The "Review List" is that most recent list of species that will be accepted for review by the Committee.
- B. *Records Treated.*
  - (1) Records only from the State of California and adjacent ocean (as defined in II.A.) will be treated.
  - (2) The species treated will be as determined from time to time by the Committee. In general, the Review List will consist of species that have occurred within California and adjacent ocean four or fewer times per year in each of the ten years immediately preceding revision of the Review List. By majority vote of a quorum at a meeting, the Committee may, as it sees fit, add other species to the Review List, such as those whose identification is difficult. Records of species not on the Review List, but for which there is no accepted record for California, will be treated.
  - (3) The criteria for inclusion on the Review List, and the species listed, will be reviewed at least once every five years.
  - (4) The Secretary will be sure that the Review List is duplicated, made available to all who request it, and published in *Western Birds*, preferably with each Annual Report.
  - (5) Records based on specimens or bandings will be accepted and treated in the same manner as other records.
  - (6) Any record, whether published or not, old or new, may be submitted by a Voting Member or other person, whether or not an observer, if he has first attempted to obtain details from the observer(s). An exception to this is a record that has received a previous Committee Decision (see Resubmission).
  - (7) Records concerning species that are only locally or temporally rare in California will not be treated.
  - (8) Subspecies will not be treated unless listed as such on the Review List.
- C. *Submission.* Records should be, but need not be, submitted on the Committee's official Report Form. The Secretary should see that these forms are readily available at no charge to all that request them.
- D. *Resubmission.* A record that has received a final Committee decision, whether accepted or rejected, and even though published in the Committee Annual Report, may be resubmitted by the Secretary, a Member, an observer, or any other person, if and only if there becomes available new and substantial documentary evidence that might reverse the decision. For a record rejected because of questionable origin, such evidence might include the recognition of a natural pattern of occurrence. Such a record must be resubmitted and circulated as if never before submitted, except that it should be accompanied by all previous votes and comments of the Committee, its publication status, and all new evidence marked as such.

E. *Circulation Procedures.*

- (1) *Initial Receipt by Secretary.* Upon receipt of a record, the Secretary should do the following:
  - (a) Affix to it a unique number, consisting of the year of receipt (not the year of sighting) followed by a hyphen and the next available unused number, starting with "1", for that year. If a record is represented by descriptions from more than one person, each description should receive the same number followed by a capital letter in sequence beginning with "A."
  - (b) Record in a safe place at least the name of the reporter, the name of the bird species, the date and locality of the record, and the record's number.
  - (c) Check the description for completeness and clarity and; if deemed desirable, request additional information from the reporter or other observers. Details thus acquired must be clearly marked as such and kept separate from the original submission; the original submission should not be returned to the reporter except in copy form.
  - (d) Vote on the record (see Voting).
  - (e) Send the record (along with other records, if desired) to a Member along with a cover sheet, which must list, in order of circulation, the names and addresses of all Voting Members, with the Secretary listed last, as well as the numbers both of the record(s) and the circulation round.
- (2) *Receipt by Member.* Upon receipt of a record, the Member should do the following:
  - (a) Judge its validity and vote.
  - (b) Send the record to the next Member as soon as possible.
  - (c) Send the completed Validation Form to the Secretary.
  - (d) The last Member to vote should return the record to the Secretary.
  - (e) Proposed lengthy absences from a Member's mailing address should be reported to the Secretary. The circulation may be rerouted to accommodate such absences.
- (3) *Recirculation.*
  - (a) A record shall be recirculated automatically, together with the votes and comments of every Member from previous circulations, until it has received a decision vote or until three circulations (two recirculations) have been completed, whichever comes first.
  - (b) If after the third circulation the record still has not received a decision vote, it will be kept by the Secretary until it can be discussed at a meeting of the Committee.
  - (c) The Secretary should solicit additional information from the reporter or other observers for any record scheduled to come before the assembled Committee.
  - (d) Prior to each meeting, the Secretary should inform Members of any post-third-circulation records scheduled for discussion.
  - (e) A record that has not received a decision vote after three circulations is to be discussed and voted upon at a meeting of the Committee. The final decision must be made at the first meeting in which the record is discussed.
  - (f) Regardless of whether or not a "final" decision is reached during the three circulations (but not at a meeting), any Voting Member may bring up a controversial record for discussion at a meeting of the Committee.
  - (g) Regardless of whether or not a "final" decision is reached during the first circulation (but not during the second or third circulation or at a meeting), the Secretary may recirculate a record if he feels that the Committee's comments might alter the decision.
  - (h) All decisions are final unless a record is to be resubmitted.

F. *Voting.*

- (1) *Validation Forms.* The vote of each Voting Member, together with his comments, if any, must be submitted on an official Validation Form. This form must include spaces for at least the (a) record number, (b) name of the species, (c) name of the Committee Voting Member, (d) date of review, (e) number of the circulation, (f) Voting Member's decision, and (g) comments.
- (2) *Voting Categories.*
  - (a) Accept.
  - (b) Reject, origin questionable.
  - (c) Reject, identification questionable.Note: (b) and (c) together are termed a "non-accept" vote.
- (3) *Abstentions.* Voting Members may not abstain from voting.
- (4) *Secretary Vote.* The Secretary must vote. On the first circulation, he must vote prior to sending the record to Members (thus without seeing Members' comments).
- (5) *Comments.* On the first circulation, a "reject" vote should be supported by appropriate comments. On the second and third circulations, either a "reject" or "accept" vote should be supported by comments.
- (6) *Consultations.* On the first circulation, a Voting Member should not discuss a record with another Voting Member prior to both having voted. On the second and third circulations, pre-vote discussions with other Voting Members are acceptable. On any circulation, a Voting Member may consult anyone outside the Committee before voting.
- (7) *Voting Criteria.* The criteria used by a Voting Member for acceptance or rejection of a record are an individual matter and should not be treated by these Bylaws. Such criteria might include records by single or untrustworthy observers, or records not identified to the satisfaction of the reporter.
- (8) *Change in Members.* A circulation in progress at the time a new Member(s) is elected should be completed by the retired Member (except that removed Members do not qualify); subsequent circulations, and hence in some cases final voting, should be completed by the new Member(s).

- (9) *Tabulation.* The voting results are tabulated by the Secretary after all Voting Members have voted.
  - (10) *Decision from Circulations.* On any circulation round, with all Voting Members voting,
    - (a) a record is considered accepted if it receives an unanimous "accept" vote or it receives no more than one "non-accept" vote.
    - (b) a record is considered rejected if it receives any combination of six or more "non-accept" votes.
    - (c) a record is to be recirculated, or after three circulations is to be presented at a meeting, if it receives votes in any combination other than in (a) or (b) above.
  - (11) *Decisions at Meetings.* A record will be "accepted" if, at a legal meeting of the Committee, it receives no more than one "non-accept" vote from those Voting Members present in person. Proxies shall not be allowed as votes. Records not "accepted" as above are "rejected."
  - (12) *Rejected Records.* Any rejected record that receives two or more "reject, identification questionable" votes will be published as "unaccepted, identification questionable." All other rejected records will be published as "unaccepted, origin questionable."
- G. *Publication.*
- (1) The decisions of the Committee shall be published annually, under the authorship of the Secretary and others if desired, in the form of an Annual Report, in *Western Birds*. A section of this Annual Report shall be devoted to bringing the California State List up to date.
  - (2) The published data for accepted records should include at least the name of the species, date(s) of observation, locality, and reporting observers. Other data may be added at the discretion of the Secretary and Members.
  - (3) Rejected records should also be published, with a minimum of the above data, except that observers' names should not be included (see Voting, Rejected Records). In publications, the term "unaccepted" should be used instead of "rejected."
  - (4) "Pending records" should not be published.

Compiled by Laurence C. Binford, Vice-Secretary, and the Committee:

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