

# Fifth Report of the Alberta Bird Record Committee

BY ANDREW SLATER AND JOCELYN HUDON

*The Alberta Bird Record Committee (ABRC) continues to adjudicate provincial records of rare birds and to maintain the Official List of Birds of Alberta.*

*With this report, the provincial list reaches a major milestone. The addition of three species (Eurasian Collared-Dove, Siberian Accentor and Hermit Warbler) to the Official List pushes the species total past the 400 mark.*

Since publication of the fourth report of the ABRC (Slater and Hudon 2002), the ABRC has reached a decision on the following records. Rejection of a record by the ABRC does not necessarily imply that the species did not occur at the reported time and place, only that the documentation or circumstances of the observation were judged inadequate for the ABRC to endorse occurrence in the province.

## RECORDS ACCEPTED

**Tricolored Heron** (*Egretta tricolor*) near Bashaw; 22 May 1981; reported in *American Birds* 35: 834-837 (1981) (Bernard Gollop) with black and white photograph (Rudi Butot). Code 1 record.

**Green Heron** (*Butorides virescens*) at Frank Lake; 26 May 2001; description (Dave Gibson, Ian Halladay and Don Magnusson). Code 3 record.

- in Fish Creek Provincial Park, Calgary; 5-9 August 2002; photograph (Bill Walker) and description (Brian and Nancy Ritchie). Code 1 record.

**Garganey** (*Anas querquedula*) near Strathmore; 12-15 June 1982; description (Moray J. Lewis). Code 3 record.

- near Taber; 6-28 May 1990; article in *Alberta Bird Atlas Newsletter* 5(1): 3-4 (1991) and *Alberta Naturalist* 25(1): 12 (1993) (Lloyd Bennett), two descriptions (Ross D. Dickson, Doug Collister). Code 2 record.

- in Winagami Lake Provincial Park; 15 May 1992; description with sketch (John B. and Marion E. Steeves). Code 3 record.

- near Taber; 17 May 1993; article in *Alberta Naturalist* 25(1): 12 (1993) (Lloyd Bennett). Code 3 record; the ABRC was not satisfied that the photo which accompanied the article was of this individual.

**Ruff** (*Philomachus pugnax*) near Crossfield; 15 May 2001; photographs and description (M. Ross Lein and Valerie A. Haines). Code 1 record.

**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** (*Calidris acuminata*) at Langdon Reservoir; 30 September 2001; photograph (Bill Walker), four descriptions (Mike Mulligan, Phil Cram, Alan Fishkin, M. Ross Lein and Valerie A. Haines). Code 1 record.

**Long-tailed Jaeger** (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) at Pine Lake, Wood Buffalo National Park; 8 June 2002; four photographs and description (Paul Jones). Code 1 record.

**Little Gull** (*Larus minutus*) at Hastings Lake; 13-14 September 1998; description (Brian Ritchie). Code 3 record.

- near Irricana; 4-10 May 2002; three photographs (Bill Walker), two descriptions, (Andrew Slater, Brian Ritchie). Code 1 record.

- near Cold Lake; 30-31 August 2002; five images captured from video and brief description (Richard Klauke). Code 1 record.

**Iceland Gull** (*Larus glaucooides*) at Inglewood Golf Course, Calgary; 9 November 1996; description with sketch (Michael Harrison). Code 3 record.

- at Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 9 May 2000; description (M. Ross Lein and Valerie A. Haines). Code 3 record.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*), Inglewood Bird Sanctuary; 23 August-20 September 2001; two photographs with description (M. Ross Lein and Valerie A. Haines). Code 1 record.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** (*Streptopelia decaocto*) in Red Deer; June-July 2002; VHS video with vocalizations, several photographs and brief description (David Prescott).

**First documented occurrence in the province.** Code 1 record.

- near Beaverhill Lake; 23 September 2002; description (Fred Whiley and Betty Rogers). Code 3 record.

**Barn Owl** (*Tyto alba*) near Bashaw; mid-December 1999-early January 2000; article in *Blue Jay* 59(3): 122-3 (2001) (Lisa Takats and Gordon Court) with photograph (Jim Whitehouse). Code 1 record.

**Anna's Hummingbird** (*Calypte anna*) near Cremona; 20 August-27 September 1990; two descriptions (Ross D. Dickson, Doug Collister). Code 2 record.

- near Turner Valley; 20 August-7 October 1991; description (Ross D. Dickson). Code 3 record.

- in Calgary; 14 September 1995; description with sketch (John Riddell). Code 3 record.

- in Lethbridge; mid-September-30 October 2002; several photographs (Teresa and Doug Dolman, Lloyd Bennett), description with sketch (Teresa and Doug Dolman). Code 1 record.

**Red-breasted Sapsucker** (*Sphyrapicus ruber*) at Alliance; May 2000; two photographs and colour sketches (Norm Johnston), courtesy of Wildbird General Store, Edmonton. Code 1 record.

**Chestnut-backed Chickadee** (*Poecile rufescens*) along Alderson Lake Trail, Waterton Lakes National Park; 8 October 1984; description (Robert W. Storms and K. M. Mleziva). Code 3 record.

- in Bowness Park, Calgary; 22 April 1988; description with sketch (John W. Thompson). Code 4 record.

- in Waterton Lakes National Park; 27 February 1999; two photographs (Randal Hoscheit). Code 1 record.

**Western Bluebird** (*Sialia mexicana*) nesting near Turner Valley (two pairs); 30 March-27 June 1984; illustrated article in *Alberta Naturalist* 14(3): 97-98 (1984) (Dave Elphinstone, Ena Spalding and John Bargman). Code 1 record.

- at Saskatchewan Crossing in Banff National Park; 10-12 July 1991; description (Ross D. Dickson). Code 3 record.

- at Rafter Six Ranch near Exshaw; 2-20 June 1992; two descriptions (Ross D. Dickson, Ray M. Wershler). Code 2 record.

#### THE CODE DEFINITIONS REPORTED HERE ARE:

ACCEPTED, CODE 1. Records supported by material evidence, i.e. specimens, identifiable body parts, identifiable photographs or sound recordings, whose origin from within the borders of Alberta is in no doubt, that are accompanied by written reports of the circumstances of the observation.

ACCEPTED, CODE 2. Sight records (without supporting material evidence) by multiple observers that are supported by written descriptions that leave no doubt as to the species identity. A Code 1 or 2 sighting must receive four favourable votes and no more than one dissenting vote to be accepted.

ACCEPTED, CODE 3. Sight records by single observers that are supported by a written description that leaves no doubt as to species identity, and which receive five favourable votes and no dissenting vote. A Code 3 is the minimum for inclusion in the official provincial list.

ACCEPTED, CODE 4. Sight records by single observers that receive four favourable votes and no more than one

Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) near Keoma; 19 May 1986; description (Bill Wilson, Kenneth Parker). Code 3 record.

- at Buffalo Prairie, Jasper National Park; 11 May 1995; field notes and written description (Gordon Ruddy, Roy Richards). Code 2 record.

- near Brooks; 16 June 1999; photograph and brief description (Bill Walker). Code 1 record.

Siberian Accentor (*Prunella montanella*) in Calgary; 20 March-5 April 2002; two photographs (Walter Zwick).

**First documented occurrence in the province.** Code 1 record.

Hermit Warbler (*Dendroica occidentalis*) by Tawayik Lake, Elk Island National Park; 15 May 2002; description (Martin Sharp and Peter Nienow). **First documented occurrence in the province.** Code 3 record.

Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*) in Lethbridge; 17 June 1993; two descriptions (Randy A. Nystrom, Ross Munro). Code 2 record.

Black-throated Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata*) in Jasper, Jasper National Park; 30-31 August 1993; photograph (Gloria Martin), courtesy of Wildbird General Store. **This becomes the first documented occurrence in the province.** Code 1 record.

**RECORDS INSUFFICIENTLY DOCUMENTED.**

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*) near Taber; 25 July 1991; brief description in article in *Alberta Naturalist* 25(1): 12 (1993) (Lloyd Bennett). The ABRC felt that the documentation did not eliminate other duck species in eclipse plumage.

Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*) at Namaka Lake; 20 September 1992; description (John B. Steeves). The ABRC felt that American Golden-Plover (*P. dominica*) was not eliminated by the evidence.

- near Dalroy; 22 May 1997; description (John B. Steeves). The ABRC again felt that American Golden-Plover was not eliminated.

Temmink's Stint (*Calidris temminckii*) at Wyndham-Carseland Provincial Park; 8 October 1990; description with sketches (John B. Steeves and Marion E. Steeves). The ABRC felt that, though the evidence was very suggestive, the description provided did not rule out other species, particularly Least Sandpiper (*C. minutilla*).

Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*) in Priddis Greens; 26-27 July 1995; description with sketch (Lorraine Smith). The ABRC felt that Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*A. colubris*) was not eliminated by the evidence.

Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) at Highwood House, Kananaskis Country; 19-23 June 1994; written description (Terry Korolyk). The ABRC felt that more common species were not eliminated by the evidence and that the date of the sighting was out of season for expected occurrences of this species in the province.

dissenting vote. For record adjudication purposes, such a record is acceptable, but does not pass the more stringent requirements for inclusion on the official provincial list. A list of species that have no higher than a Code 4 record may be published as an appendix to the official list.

INSUFFICIENTLY DOCUMENTED. Records supported by material evidence or written descriptions that are not

detailed enough to eliminate all other possibilities, or to support conclusively the identification of the species as presented. Placement in this category should in no way be interpreted as a reflection on the veracity of the observation, but should be looked upon as an encouragement to substantiate occurrence of the species in the province more fully.

ERROR IN IDENTIFICATION. Records that are not supported by the documentation available to the committee, or that describe another species from that suggested.

QUESTIONABLE ORIGIN. Records that concern species that are of questionable origin, possibly escapees, and whose wild status cannot be determined accurately.

**Chestnut-backed Chickadee** (*Poecile rufescens*) in Calgary; 23 January 2000; description (Rhys and Terry Harrison). The ABRC felt that the documentation did not eliminate Boreal Chickadee (*P. hudsonica*).

**Western Bluebird** (*Sialia mexicana*) at Bragg Creek; 17 June 1994; photograph with brief description (Olga Droppo). The ABRC felt that the evidence at hand did not eliminate other bluebird species.

**Green-tailed Towhee** in Thompson Creek campground along Hwy 11, north-east of Banff National Park; 24 September 1998; description (Myles Willard). The ABRC felt that, considering the length of time which elapsed between the date of the sighting and submission of the report, and while there is a strong possibility that the identification was correct, the description did not completely eliminate other species.

- near Taber; 27 July 2000; description (Lloyd Bennett). The ABRC felt that, while it is very possible, or even likely, that the bird observed was a Green-tailed Towhee, the description as given is not detailed enough to eliminate other species.

#### **ERROR IN IDENTIFICATION**

**Chestnut-backed Chickadee** (*Poecile rufescens*) near Erskine; 22 October-20 November 1994; description (Lloyd Lohr). This bird was identified as a Boreal Chickadee (*P. hudsonica*) by others and the observer withdrew the report.

Since the fourth report was published, Bob Carroll stepped down from the Committee and Richard Knapton joined it. With this writing Andrew Slater retires from the Committee. The current members of the Committee are Jocelyn Hudon (Provincial Museum of Alberta), Richard Klauke (Vilna), Richard Knapton (Edmonton), M. Ross Lein (Calgary), John Riddell (Calgary) and Brian Ritchie (Calgary).

#### **CORRIGENDUM**

Information pertaining to several records in the fourth report of the ABRC (Slater and Hudon 2002) were inadvertently left out. The fourth report should be amended to read as follows:

#### **RECORDS ACCEPTED**

**Black-legged Kittiwake** (*Rissa tridactyla*) in Elk Island National Park; 22-23 October 1999; two photographs (Bob Carroll,

Randal Hoscheit), two descriptions (Bob Carroll, Richard Thomas).

**Flammulated Owl** (*Otus flammeolus*) found dead in Edmonton (Al Gartke); late fall 2000; specimen at the Provincial Museum: Z01.7.1.

#### **RECORDS INSUFFICIENTLY DOCUMENTED**

**Chimney Swifts** (*Chaetura pelagica*) at Sylvan Lake; 23 June 1960; article in *Blue Jay* 18(4): 185 (Helge Abrahamson).

**Canyon Wren** (*Catherpes mexicanus*) in the Milk River Valley; 5 July 1971; article in *Blue Jay* 30(1): 49-51 (Wayne Smith).

#### **REFERENCE**

Slater, A. and J. Hudon. 2002. Fourth Report of the Alberta Bird Record Committee. *Alberta Naturalist* 32(3): 116-117.

*Andrew Slater is retiring Secretary of the ABRC; Jocelyn Hudon is its Chairman.*

“If a man walks in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer. But if he spends his days as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making the earth bald before her time, he is deemed an industrious and enterprising citizen.”

HENRY DAVID THOREAU 1817-1862