

Third Report of the Alberta Bird Record Committee

Andrew Slater

Since publication of the second report of the Alberta Bird Record Committee (hereafter the Committee), the Committee met three times and came to a decision on the following records.

Records accepted

Yellow-crowned night-heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) near Nanton; 28 May-1 June 1999; video film (Collen Kindt), descriptions with sketches (Colleen Kindt, Jason Attwell). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 1 record.

Green heron (*Butorides virescens*) at Elizabeth Hall Wetlands, Lethbridge; 4 – 7 June 2000; photograph and description (Douglas and Teresa Dolman). Code 1 record; this species previously had only a code 2 record.

Tufted duck (*Aythya fuligula*) at McElroy Slough near Calgary; 3-5 May 1992; two descriptions, one with sketch (Ross Dickson, Ray Wershler). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 2 record.

Common eider (*Somateria mollissima*) at Cold Lake; 11 November 1993; description with sketches (Richard Klauke). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 3 record.

Snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) at Chappice Lake near Medicine Hat; 7 June 1990; three photographs (Wayne Smith), article in *Northwestern Naturalist* 75:20(1994) (Paul Goossen, Cleve Wershler and Wayne Smith). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 1 record.

Spotted redshank (*Tringa erythropus*) at Dalemead (now Langdon) Reservoir, near Calgary; 19 September 1987; description with sketch (Michael Harrison). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 3 record.

Black turnstone (*Arenaria melanocephala*) at Langdon Reservoir near Calgary; 16-19 October 1998; two photographs (Bill Walker), seven descriptions, most with sketches (Reid Barclay, John Riddell, Lynn Vogt, Ray Wershler, Bill Walker). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 1 record.

Little stint (*Calidris minuta*) at Jessie Lake, Bonnyville, 23 September 2000; Video tape and written description (Richard Klauke). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 1 record.

Long-tailed jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) near Beaverlodge; 11 August 2000; specimen (Dave Robertson). Code 1 record.

Little gull (*Larus minutus*) two at Namaka and Eagle Lakes; 22-29 September 1985; five descriptions, some with sketches (Louis Guillemette, Jamey Podlubney, Andrew Slater, John Steeves, William Wilson). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 2 record.

One at Namaka Lake; 23 October 1988 description with sketch (Ian Halladay). Code 3 record.

One at Glenmore Reservoir, Calgary; 24-25 October 1991; two descriptions with sketches (Ross Dickson, Terry Korolyk). Code 2 record.

Lesser black-backed gull (*Larus fuscus*) at Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 9-19 April 1989; four descriptions, two with sketches. (Ian Halladay, Andrew Slater, Bob Storms, Doug Collister). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 2 record.

Greater black-backed gull (*Larus marinus*) at Cold Lake; 26-27 October 1986; photograph and description (Richard Klauke). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 1 record.

Ivory gull (*Pagophila eburnea*) in Innisfail; 3 January 1999; description (David L. Williams). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 4 record.

Barn owl (*Tyto alba*) in Ponoka County; 23 December 1999; Specimen (Greta Millenaar). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 1 record.

Near Langdon; 17 January 2000; specimen (Annette Born). Code 1 record.

Costa's hummingbird (*Calypte costae*) in Sherwood Park; 9 August 1998; specimen (Mrs. S. Barnett). Code 1 record.

Williamson's sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*) in northeast Calgary; 23 June 1992; specimen (Beverly Lane). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 1 record.

Gray flycatcher (*Empidonax wrightii*) at Bowmont Flats, Calgary 1-20 July 1999; twelve photographs (Greg Ohm), sonograms with description (Ross Lein), four descriptions, some with sketches (Greg Ohm, Andrew Slater, Lynn Vogt, Ray Wershler). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 1 record.

Wood thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) in Edmonton; 12 October 1997; three photographs, article in *Alberta Naturalist* 27(4):68, black and white photograph in *Alberta Naturalist* 28 (1):1 (Ernie Kuyt). Code 1 record.

Bendire's thrasher (*Toxostoma bendirei*) at Buffalo Prairie, Jasper National Park; 28-30 May 1988; two transparencies and article in "The Canadian Field Naturalist" 106:404(1992)(Alexander Mills), one description (Roy Richards). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 1 record.

Curve-billed thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) in Barrhead ; August 1998-April 1999 (when taken to a rehab centre and subsequently to the Calgary Zoo); seven photographs (Betty Fisher, Sheila Hardy, Jerry Orlacher), articles in *Edmonton Naturalist* 27(1):20-21(1999) and 27(2):13 (Randal Hoscheit). First documented occurrence

in the province. Code 1 record.

Blue-winged warbler (*Vermivora pinus*) at Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 18 August 1996; two descriptions, one with sketch (Steven Mlodinow, John Riddell). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 2 record.

Golden-winged warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) in the Porcupine Hills; 10 June 1994; field notes and mention in Alberta Naturalist 26(3):48(1996) (Ross Munro). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 3 record.

Green-tailed towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*) at Tilly "O" Reservoir east of Brooks; 19 May 2000; photograph (Lynn Vogt), three descriptions with sketches (Lynn Vogt, John Riddell, Ray Wershler). Code 1 record; this species previously had only a Code 3 record.

Eastern towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) at Jackfish Lake; 4 December 1994; photograph (Reg Kirkham). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 1 record.

Field sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*) at Bryant Creek Crossing on Sibbald Creek Road, Kananaskis Country; 08 June to early July 2000; video film (Richard Klauke), six photographs (Doug Collister), three descriptions, some with sketches (William Wilson, Ross Dickson, Andrew Slater). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 1 record.

Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) in Drayton Valley; 28-29 May 2000; five photographs (Ian Wallis and Wendy Blackwell). Code 1 record.

Painted bunting (*Passerina ciris*) in Bowden; 19-22 July 2000; six photographs and five digital images (Greg and Valerie Pyle). First documented occurrence on the province. Code 1 record.

Eastern meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) near Rocky Mountain House; 7 May 1989; two photographs and audio tape and description (Richard Klauke). First documented occurrence in the province. Code 1 record.

Records insufficiently documented

Ross's gull (*Rhodestethia rosea*). Small flock near Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park; early June 1994; description (Jason Rodgers, reported by Richard Chabaylo). The committee felt that the documentation was insufficient to permit inclusion of the species on the provincial list.

Slaty-backed gull (*Larus schistisagus*) at Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 4 November 1995; description with sketches (Terry Korolyk). The committee felt that the documentation was insufficient to eliminate some sub-species of herring gull (*L. argentatus*), at least in the current state of knowledge of these birds and age group.

Lesser black-backed gull (*Larus fuscus*) at Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 29 August-3 September 1989; description (Andrew Slater). The committee felt that the documentation was insufficient to

eliminate the possibility, however remote, of similar species such as yellow-footed gull (*L. livens*).

At Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 19 October 1995; description with sketches (Terry Korolyk). The committee felt that the documentation was insufficient to rule out similar species, particularly California gull (*L. californicus*), a currently under-appreciated problem.

Eurasian collared-dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) at Breton; late July-27 December 1997; photograph (Ian and Winifred McNab). The committee felt that the bird photographed could have been a different species of dove, most probably an escaped ringed turtle dove (*S. risoria*).

Pinyon jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*) in the Cypress Hills; 15 to 17 June 1997; description (Terry Thormin). The committee felt that the documentation was insufficient to rule out other species.

Eye-browed thrush (*Turdus obscurus*). Two in Briar Hill, Calgary; 3 October 1999; description (Gordon and Marilyn Kerr). The committee felt that the documentation was insufficient to eliminate the highly variable immature American robin (*T. migratorius*) or varied thrush (*Ixorius naevius*).

White wagtail (*Motacilla alba*). Two near Water Valley; 14 September 1984; description (Clay Hunt). The committee accepted that the birds described were some species of wagtail, but felt that neither black-backed (*M. lugens*) nor yellow (*M. flava*) were completely eliminated by the evidence.

Black-throated gray warbler (*Dendroica nigriscens*) at Galatea Creek, Kananaskis Country; 1 July 1997; brief description with sketch (Ian Halladay). The committee felt that the documentation was insufficient to permit inclusion of the species on the provincial list. In particular, the possibility of an aberrantly coloured Townsend's warbler (*D. townsendi*) was discussed.

Error in identification

California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) at Beaverhill Lake 15 April 2000; description with sketch (Clive Jackson). The committee felt that this sighting was, in all likelihood, a misidentified Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*).

Records of questionable origin

Mute swan (*Cygnus olor*) near Camrose; 12 May 1998; photograph (Greg Ohm). The committee felt that, as this species is kept widely in parks, zoos and collections throughout North America, including in the Camrose area, the photographed bird was probably an escape.

European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) in Fish Creek Provincial Park, Calgary; 30 August 1998; photograph (Bill Walker), description (Gus Yaki). The committee felt that this bird was most probably an escape, since the species is widely kept in captivity, there have been no accepted wild sightings in western North America, and there is no established population on the continent.

For readers' reference, the code definitions used

by the committee are given below.

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 independent observers that are supported by written descriptions that leave no doubt as to the species identity. A Code 1 or Code 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 dissenting vote. For record adjudication purposes such a record is acceptable, but does not pass the more stringent requirements for inclusion in 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 submitted for adjudication that are not supported by the documentation, 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.

Since the second report was published, Doug Collister and Pat Marklevitz have left the committee, Brian Ritchie, Ross Lein and John Riddell have been appointed to it and Richard Klauke has returned.

The current committee members are:

Jocelyn Hudon, Chair,	Provincial Museum, Edmonton
Richard Klauke,	Vilna
M. Ross Lein,	Calgary
John Riddell,	Calgary
Brian Ritchie,	Calgary
Andrew Slater,	Calgary
Terry Thormin,	Edmonton.

Prepared by Andrew Slater, Secretary of A.B.R.C.
