

CALIFORNIA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Minutes for the 1996 annual meeting  
Saturday, 13 January, Camarillo, California

1. Called to order (Michael Patten presiding) at 0910. All members were present.
2. Approval of 1995 minutes. Patten/Heindel motion- 10-0.
3. Election of Secretary (Vice-Secretary Heindel presiding). Michael Patten was renominated and re-elected.
4. Election of members (Secretary presiding henceforth). The terms of Erickson, Finnegan, and Garrett expire; Finnegan and Garrett are eligible for reelection. Nominees formally submitted before the deadline (nominators are listed in parentheses):

- Chris Corben (Morlan)
- Kimball L. Garrett (Erickson)
- Robert A. Hamilton (Erickson)
- Alvaro Jaramillo (Morlan)
- Stephen C. Rottenborn (Morlan, Terrill)
- Mike San Miguel (Garrett, Patten)
- Dan Singer (Finnegan, Terrill)

On the first ballot, elected were Garrett, Singer and San Miguel.

5. Election of Vice-Secretary. Patten/Erickson motion for Heindel as Vice Secretary. Consensus.
6. State of the Committee (= report from the Secretary)
  - A. Annual reports
    - i. 17th report - published in *W. Birds* 26(3)
    - ii. 18th report - in press for *W. Birds* 27(1)
    - iii. 19th report - in progress; Erickson and Terrill are authors; target issue is *W. Birds* 27(3). This needs to be to Unitt by April 30, so needs to get to members for review by March 15.
    - iv. 20th report - Pyle and Howell (or vice-versa!) will author.
  - B. Circulation
    - i. timeliness - fine for the most part, get your votes/comments to Patten immediately; he does not have time/money to request votes that are months "past due"
    - ii. handling of batches - okay, but a little water damage on one recent batch (USPS's fault?)
    - iii. voting - you cannot abstain from voting; read the bylaws if you are unclear on this issue; also, remember to photocopy "collective" comments (e.g., when voting on 4 Manx Shearwater records), and please make separate "accept without comment" sheets for each batch
  - C. Budget - Patten has had to resend packages many times and cannot afford to do so anymore. The Committee encourages the Secretary to ensure his expenses for this are covered. Patten and Garrett will discuss this to see what can be done in this regard.
7. Introduced Bird Subcommittee.
  - A. Report from Chairman (Garrett) was given. This included an update on our newer visitors, a Western Tanager article he had written and forms for reporting these species.
  - B. Appointment of 1995 Subcommittee. Garrett was asked to continue his appointment as Chairman. He appointed Morlan and San Miguel to the 'Subcommittee.'

8. A. Proposed bylaw revisions. A revisit of the issue about reject on natural occurrence questionable vs. accepting the identification (see the 1993 minutes). Pyle/Patten motion to ensure it was understood that birds rejected due to questionable natural occurrence must be accepted on identification. The following bylaw will be added: "a vote of 'reject- natural occurrence' denotes the identification is accepted." 10-0.

B. A very spirited discussion centered in whether to have verbiage that states what the committee is saying when it rejects a record based on natural occurrence. Erickson led the argument that says currently people interested in these records can only guess what is implied by a reject vote. He suggests a statement that does not tell members how to vote but that would tell readers what the Committee is saying by their vote. So, this statement could be, as examples, 'the committee decides whether the bird more likely got here under its own means or not, a simple 50-50 probability test', or "the Committee decides whether there is overwhelming evidence that the bird did/did not get here on its own." The key is less what the verbiage is and more having something that readers can point to as a yardstick. As with any topic of natural occurrence, nothing goes smoothly and agreement was hard to find. In the end, it was determined that we need to consider this and perhaps work on some verbiage in the 'off-season' as it would certainly arise again at the next meeting.

C. Morlan/Patten motion that changes the current by-law on natural occurrence voting. Currently, an 8-2 accept is only 'accepted' in a fourth round vote. An 8-2 vote in rounds 1-3 will result in recirculation. The new by-law is "any round in which there is an 8-2 vote on natural occurrence will mean the record will be accepted. 9-0, 1 abstention.

D. The Committee discussed adding a term in our reports, to better communicate our feeling about rejected records. Specifically, we have added the term "not accepted, identification not established". This will be used in place of identification questionable, as in many cases it more closely describes the vote. 10-0.

9. Review List changes.

A. For the nth year running, there was lively discussion on the review of subspecies. As a follow-up to the 95 meeting, Patten, Erickson, and Heindel (the Subcommittee formed at the meeting) discussed the concept with Ohio Records Committee member Jon L. Dunn. Instead of voting on these subspecies in typical fashion, it was felt an individual review of these reports over the years could be a valuable way to get the information out to the field. A Patten/Heindel motion that certain members would head an effort to collect records of, review and publish papers summarizing the occurrences of certain subspecies or subspecies groups that are potentially identifiable in the field. Each paper would be reviewed by the Committee and published in *Western Birds*. Furthermore, each paper will address the concerns the CBRC would have in attempting to review this group of birds owing to the danger of field identification of subspecies, a statement that the collected records would be archived, and a request for the submission of documentation. The following list was considered suitable for review:

- Bewick's Swan - Heindel, Patten
- Atlantic Brant
- *variegatus*-type Whimbrel - Erickson
- *longipennis* Common Tern
- *perdix* Marbled Murrelet - Erickson, Patten
- "eastern" Winter Wren - Dunn
- *faxonii* Hermit Thrush - Dunn
- *japonicus* American Pipit - Pyle?
- "eastern" Bell's Vireo - Patten
- Blue-headed Vireo - Heindel
- Yellow Palm Warbler

- "eastern" Rufous-sided Towhee
- White-winged Junco - Bailey?
- "eastern" Purple Finch - Morlan?

There were a number of concerns regarding the process, the involvement of the entire CBRC, etc. In the end the motion failed 7-3.

B. An alternative motion by Morlan/Erickson was made to publish a note to request documentation as they have been published as having occurred, to gather records of well-marked subspecies and subspecies groups that are potentially identifiable in the field for archiving. Motion passed 9-0, 1 abstention.

C. Yet another year with some discussion on altering the Review List with some temporal considerations. Heindel led a discussion on a change from previous discussion where, instead of adding certain species from a geographic perspective, we look at eliminating the need to vote on a very select group of bird. Examples, include Zone-tailed Hawk in fall/winter from coastal Orange and San Diego counties; Reddish Egret from coastal San Diego (and Orange?) counties; Mourning and Connecticut Warblers from SEFI, etc. There was concern over what this would do to record totals, the confusion and the thought of change our Review List in a casual fashion. No action taken.

10. Records for which the Secretary needs direction.

A.) Bulwer's Petrel (138-1993) - 10 Jul 1993 : NESS RIV. McCaskie/Pyle motion to re-review. The information added was not considered new and substantial.

B.) Brown Booby (177-1991) - 26 Sep 1991 : Santa Cruz SCZ (only 9 votes received). Bylaws allow for this; it stands as accepted.

C.) Harris' Hawk (no record number yet) - 15 Jun 1993 : Jawbone Canyon KER. The decision was to not review it and await the outcome of the current batch.

D.) Crested Caracara (no record number yet) - Jul 1994 : Anza Borrego SD- will review.

E.) Red-throated Pipit (156-1991) - 5 Oct 1991 : SE Farallon I. (only 9 votes received)- see 10B.

11. Records brought to the meeting at the request of a member.

A.) Tricolored Heron (112-1994) - 23 May 1994 : Tijuana R. estuary SD. Treated as a date extension.

B.) Tricolored Heron (126-1994) - 6-14 Aug 1994 : Ramer Lake IMP. The concern is whether the three birds (an adult and 2 young at Ramer, may in part duplicate three seen near Obsidian Butte. First, the three at Ramer should be written as "at least one adult and two young, and probably bred." Second, it should state that these may involve birds seen at the Alamo R. mouth.

C.) Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (140-1993) - 12 Jul-20 Aug 1993 : NESS (Patten). To recirculate.

D.) Trumpeter Swan (4-1994) - 30 Nov 1993 : Modoc NWR (Patten). To recirculate.

E.) Zone-tailed Hawk (34A-1992/34B-1992) - winter 1991/1992 : Santee Lakes (Erickson). A note will be attached to clarify the date range.

F.) Zone-tailed Hawk (128-1994) - 24 Aug 1994-15 Jan 1995 : Santa Barbara SBA. Howell gave us a primer on ZTHA, or at least how to write descriptions of them!

G.) Little Stint (259-1992) - 27 Jul 1992 : Bodega Bay SON. Patten/Heindel motion for Heindel to take to Hong Kong and review with Paul Leader and Geoff Carey. If valuable input is received that could alter the vote, we will recirculate. Consensus.

H.) Ruddy Ground-Dove (108-1993) - 31 May 1993 : 22 km n. of Blythe RIV. 2nd bird was rejected.

I.) Kentucky Warbler (173-1993) - 10 Oct 1993 : Galileo Hill KER. Heindel will get dupe of slide.

J.) Scarlet Tanager (178-1993) - 23 Oct 1992 : Pt. Reyes MRN. It was agreed that this was a female as it was rather green and certainly lacked the black patch of a male, although it did look dark on the wing from certain angles.

K.) Snow Bunting (10-1992) - 22 Oct 1991 : SE Farallon I. Video was seen, resolved.

12. Records without a decision after completion of the third round.
  - A.) Dark-rumped Petrel (130-1992) - 3 May 1992 : 75 mi SW Pt. Reyes MRN
  - B.) Murphy's Petrels, etc. (401-1986, etc.) - June 1986 : Cordell Bank MRN
  - C.) Whooper Swan (197-1991) - 30 Nov 1991-18 Jan 1992 : Lower Klamath NWR
  - D.) Tufted Duck (4-1992) - 8 Sep-5 Oct 1991 : Hayward Reg. Shoreline ALA
  - E.) Ruddy Ground-Dove (31-1981) - 24-26 Nov 1978 : Fillmore VEN
  - F.) Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (251-1992) - 25 Aug 1992 : SE Farallon I.
  - G.) Northern Wheatear (258-1992) - 27-? Sep 1992 : Nicasio MRN
  - H.) Veery (144-1992) - 4 Jun 1992 : Pt. Reyes MRN
  - I.) "White" Wagtail (130-1989) - 1 Oct 1989 : Rodeo Lagoon MRN
  - J.) "White" Wagtail (290-1988) - 23 Dec 88-21 Jan 89 : Moss Landing MTY
  - K.) "White" Wagtail (210-1989) - 3-11 Dec 1989 : Pajaro R./Sunset SB SCZ/MTY
  - L.) "White" Wagtail (89-1990) - 7 Nov-3 Dec 1990 : Pajaro R. mouth/Sunset SB SCZ/MTY
  - M.) "White" Wagtail (200-1990) - 21 Dec 1990-19 Jan 1991 : Moss Landing MTY
  - N.) Yellow-throated Vireo (181-1992) - 28 Apr 1992 : San Rafael MRN
  - O.) Yellow-green Vireo (310-1992) - 20 Oct 1992 : Carmel R. mouth MTY
  - P.) Golden-winged Warbler (172-1992) - 8 May 1992 : Oasis MNO
  - Q.) Worm-eating Warbler (192-1992) - 26 May 1992 : Redondo Beach LA
  - R.) Kentucky Warbler (199-1992) - 15 Jun 1992 : Chilao Flats LA
  
13. Supplemental List.
  - A.)nothing!
  
14. Miscellaneous items.
  - A.) "Old" White and Black-backed wagtail records. Steve N. G. Howell and David A. Sibley reviewed each. Should we take action on those the CBRC has accepted as "sp." that Howell and Sibley identify to species? We will wait to see comments and make this a candidate to share with the Hong Kong Committee.
  - B.) The California Rarities Book - Progress report. Roberson has done a terrific job with his section, but some members are behind. There was some confusion as to how to proceed and how to ensure consistency. Garrett will look at various input and send a potential outline for us to follow to ensure consistency. This may include comments on the significance of the record(s), subspecies, age/sex, where photos are published, timing of records, and adjacent state records. In addition, for species no longer reviewed, a general statement on the number of records may be in order. Patten suggested we review the 9th report on to ensure the information is accurate in terms of what was published vs. the Master List. We will include all records in circulation through 1995. All members must have their drafts done by July 1 as we hope to publish by year-end. I might suggest that we use May 31 as a deadline for rough drafts to ensure momentum is not lost.
  - C.) Review of old records that were not accepted by Grinnell and Miller (1944). Do we have a policy? What do we do with records like the 1883 Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*) or the 1891 Eurasian Blackbird (*Turdus melanura*) as both have published "details"? We agreed to follow Grinnell and Miller unless there is evidence to the contrary.
  - D.) An update regarding the "old records review" (see item 14.F from the 1995 minutes). This was really part of the 14B discussion.
  - E.) Discussion led by Morlan regarding notifying observers of rejected records; see recent e-mail correspondence about this issue. A form letter will be developed for review. Heindel suggested a template format where paragraphs can be substituted to make it a bit more personal. This will also allow for a more generous letter where that is deemed appropriate. McCaskie, Heindel, and? are working on drafts.

F.) Heindel noted in his review of the minutes we had agreed in 1992 to add "CBRC Publication X" to all publications, including CBRC reports, etc., yet to date we have not done so. Patten will compile a list of these publications so we can determine what number should follow the 19th report. We can publish a list of the publications in the CBRC book.

G. Heindel distributed the digest of the minutes of all meetings from 1973-1995. Members can ask for updates and disk copies from Heindel.

15. Closing

A. Site and date of next meeting was set on 18 January 1997 at the Western Foundation for Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo.

B. Appreciations:

to Dick Erickson for years of service

to Shawneen Finnegan for years of service

to Matt Heindel for the Digest of the Minutes

to Joe Morlan for helping the Committee through a tough spot

the Western Foundation for their generous hospitality and use of their facility

to Don Desjardin for his help with the television and video machine

C. Adjournment at 7 PM

- Matthew T. Heindel, Vice-Secretary, 26 February 1996