

**GUIDELINES OF THE
NEW YORK STATE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE
A COMMITTEE OF THE
FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS**

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I. Introduction

The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, recognizing the proliferation of sight reports of birds in New York State, the increasing dependence on such records due to legal and ethical restrictions on collecting, and the need for documentation and evaluation of such reports, in 1977 established a Committee to perform this evaluation to be known as the New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC). A "report" as used in these guidelines refers to an observation submitted voluntarily to the Committee which if accepted is then referred to as a "record." Non-acceptance does not preclude publication, anywhere, anytime.

II. Duties and Responsibilities. NYSARC will

- A. Establish procedures for submitting reports to NYSARC.
- B. Publish a list of species or types of reports which are desired or not desired once per year in either *The Kingbird* or *New York Birders*.
- C. Prepare reports of its proceedings and publish the results of its work annually in *The Kingbird*, including rejected reports, without identifying the observers of those reports not accepted.
- D. Maintain the official list of species of birds known to occur or have occurred (in the case of extinct species) in New York State. The list will be made available to Federation members through the Publications Committee of the FNYSBC.

III. Composition

- A. A member of NYSARC must be an individual member of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs.
- B. NYSARC will consist of five members appointed by the President of the Federation with consideration of geographical representation though not rigidly so.
- C. The President will appoint a Chair from the five members.
- D. The term of office will be five years.
- E. Should a vacancy occur the President shall fill such vacancy within 60 days.
- F. The Chair will appoint a non-voting Secretary.

IV. Chair

The Chair will perform the functions usually associated with such office, and will report to the Federation Board of Directors once per year. This report will document the activities of NYSARC for that year, and at the discretion of the Chairman, may be the same as the report prepared annually for appearance in *The Kingbird*.

V. Members

- A. Each member will separately study the reports received by NYSARC and submit an opinion as to their acceptability. Members will assist the Chair in preparation of NYSARC reports.
- B. Members will clearly indicate their reasons for acceptance or rejection of each report. Opinions should be frank, unbiased, and professional, based on the member's best judgement. Such opinions will be confidential and not be made public at any time.
- C. Members' opinions will not be discussed with other members until the report has been reviewed by all members of NYSARC. Members may, however, consult other persons who may have special knowledge of the species or individual bird in question.
- D. Members will not render opinions on their own submitted reports. These will be evaluated by the remainder of the members.

VI. Procedures

- A. The Secretary may assign numbers to each report to replace the observers' names so that each report will be anonymous and thus judged on its intrinsic merits alone.
- B. Submitted reports will be stamped with the date received and receipt will be acknowledged by the Secretary in writing to the observer within seven working days.
- C. Reports should be submitted on standard forms, made available to clubs and individuals. While submission of each report in standard form is encouraged, it is not required. Details of reports should be submitted on one or more 8 1/2 x 11 inch pages, with no more than one report per page. If available, photographs should be submitted with reports. Photographs should include as much technical data as possible. If reports are substantiated by tape recording(s) and/or specimen(s), they should indicate where such evidence is deposited. Photographs and/or sound recordings are intended to supplement, not replace, a written report. After a reasonable length of time has transpired after the evaluation of the report has been completed, the Secretary will transfer the file to the Federation archives at Cornell University. Access to these records may be granted

only by the President of the Federation or the Chairman of NYSARC and then only after receiving a written request stating reasons for such access.

D. Evaluation of reports

1. All reports shall be circulated no later than four months after submission.
2. Reports substantiated by specimens or tape recordings should be verified by at least one NYSARC member or designate. Primary concern for such will be adequacy of identification and documentation as a specimen, photograph, video or recording taken in New York State.
3. A "report" becomes a "record" if all NYSARC members, or all but one NYSARC member, accept it. If a majority for whatever reasons does not accept the report, it is then rejected. However, if the rejection is by a vote of 3 to 2, and not 4 to 1 or 5 to 0, then the report will be recirculated within four months to all members along with all comments made on its first review. Then a second vote will be taken. If the report is again rejected, this vote is final unless a member of NYSARC requests that the Secretary circulate the report a third time, at which time the ultimate vote will be taken. All reports remain pending until a decision is reached, and pending reports will be identified as such in the annual report of the Chair to the Federation Board of Directors.
5. Decisions of individual members will be confidential within NYSARC. The Chair will report decisions of NYSARC as a whole.
6. The Secretary will advise the observer(s) as promptly as possible of the acceptance or non-acceptance of a report through the use of a simple printed form letter. For the benefit of the observer whose report has been rejected, the form will carry the advice, "If you wish to learn the specific reason(s) for the non-acceptance of this report, please contact the Chair of NYSARC in writing." The name and address of the then current Chair will be included.
7. No species may be added to the New York State checklist as the result of a single observer report without an unequivocal photograph, video, sound recording, or specimen.
8. No species may be added to the New York State checklist without the unanimous approval of the NYSARC.
9. Records of NYSARC proceedings will be maintained in a standard form to be established by its membership.

VII. Committee Rules

- A. These guidelines may be amended by the Board of Directors of the Federation at their discretion.
- B. The Federation welcomes and encourages the formation of local record committees by its member clubs to review reports of local interest. However, all persons are encouraged to submit their individual reports to NYSARC.

VIII. Meetings

NYSARC shall meet physically as a body at least once a year.

IX. New York State Record Boundaries

We follow national and state boundaries inland and on the Great Lakes, and extend present legal marine boundaries outward to the 1000 fathom line (approximately 100 miles offshore). The south (west) boundary extends from the Ambrose Lightship along the Separation Zone of the Ambrose-Hudson Canyon Traffic Lane to the 1000 fathom line; the north (east) boundary extends at an angle of 150 degrees (from true north) from a point midway between the east end of Fisher's Island and Watch Hill, R.I., to the 1000 fathom line (Reference: Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart 1108; Approaches to New York). The Hudson Sea Canyon (proper) lies just within the south boundary and Block Canyon is within the north boundary; Cox's Ledge is in Rhode Island waters.

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CORRECTIONS

In: *The New Checklist of the Birds of New York State. The Kingbird* 1998 Mar; 48(1): 2-15. Correction locations are underlined.

- . On page 3, line 2 from the top should be:
American Golden-Plover has been changed from *dominicus* to *dominica*.
- . On page 3, line 4 from the bottom should be:
In the Family Tyrannidae ...
- . On page 8, line 12 from the bottom should be:
White-rumped Sandpiper *C. fuscicollis*

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