

REPORT OF THE NEW YORK STATE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE FOR 2013

The New York State Avian Records Committee (hereafter “NYSARC” or the “Committee”) reviewed 86 records from 2013 involving 136 reports, and 28 records from previous years involving 28 reports. Reports were received from across the state, with 28 of the 62 counties and the pelagic zone represented. The number of reports accompanied by photographs remains high, which benefits the value of the archive and often makes our work easier. The Committee wishes to remind readers that reports submitted to listservs, local bird clubs, rare bird alerts (RBAs) and even *The Kingbird* Regional Editors are not necessarily passed along to NYSARC. Doing so, therefore, remains the responsibility of the observer(s). When possible, the submission of multiple independent reports from co-observers is encouraged, as this provides a much fuller documentation of the sighting and can increase the likelihood of acceptance. ALL observers, not just the finder, are urged to submit written reports and/or photographs. The names of the 100 people who contributed materials (written reports, photographs, sketches, and audio files) are listed alongside accepted reports and again at the end of this document. Where possible, the name(s) of the original finder(s) is (are) included in the narratives. In addition to the contributors referenced above, several *Kingbird* Regional Editors have helped observers to prepare and submit documentation.

For this 2013 annual report, the Committee has used eBird reports to supplement the documentation in our formal reviews. In most cases, the eBird report(s) added valuable photographic documentation, making it easier to accept the record. In addition, eBird records often helped to more thoroughly establish the date range of occurrence of a particular rarity. Date ranges that are supplemented by eBird reports are indicated by the word, eBird.

HOW TO SUBMIT REPORTS

Advice on how to prepare and submit a report is provided on the NYSARC pages within the NYSOA web site: <http://nybirds.org/NYSARC/index.htm> Here, a list of species requested for review by NYSARC (the “Review List”) is provided, along with illustrated copies of previous annual reports. The Committee is very grateful to Carena Pooth (NYSOA Web Master) for updating and continuously improving the NYSARC web site. An on-line reporting form allows observers to compose a written report and attach up to five digital image files (the file size limit has been increased to 3 megabytes per photo). Documentation (written reports and photographs) and any other correspondence for the Committee can also be sent via email to NYSARC secretary, Gary Chapin, at: nysarc44@nybirds.org As a last resort, you can also use regular mail to send your report to: Gary Chapin, 125 Pine Springs Drive, Ticonderoga, NY 12883.

HIGHLIGHTS

With such a long history of bird study within New York, one would expect the addition of new species to the State Checklist to be nearly at a standstill. However, such is not the case, and once again in 2013, multiple species were added to the list: Elegant Tern (*Thalasseus elegans*) and Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*). Both of these records were accepted under our accelerated review process, whereby reports of potential new species are reviewed ahead of the main body of reports, so that a decision can be rendered and made public as soon as possible. See Wilson *et al.* (2016) for a full discussion of both of these first State records. Amazingly, there were actually two Elegant Tern records accepted for 2013—the second record is discussed in this report. Perhaps the most astonishing record was provided by a “Black” Merlin (*Falco columbarius suckleyi*), found in 2009. Other highlights were the first accepted fall record of Swainson’s Warbler, the first accepted spring record of Smith’s Longspur, and only the second record of Long-billed Curlew reviewed and accepted by the Committee.

COMMITTEE NEWS

After 18 consecutive years on NYSARC, all of that as the Chair, Angus Wilson rotated off the Committee at the end of his term in 2016 to devote more time to personal endeavors. Angus was a stalwart on the Committee. He is an expert on the status and distribution of all bird species in New York and on many in North America and the world. He changed the format of the annual report to make it a much more enjoyable and highly informative read. He spearheaded the development and expansion of the NYSARC section of the NYSOA web site, successfully pushed for online submissions of rare bird reports, and helped to create a database of NYSARC sightings and decisions, available to the public online. The Committee was most pleased to learn that Angus was recently chosen as a recipient of the Gordon M. Meade Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding service to NYSOA. Willie D’Anna took over as Chair in January 2017 and stepping into the empty slot left by Angus was Patricia Lindsay. Based on Long Island, Pat is a long-time birder in the State. She is well-known in the State and has turned up several great rarities over the years, most recently the 2017 Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*) at Robert Moses State Park and the 2018 Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*) at Timber Point Golf Course, pending acceptance by NYSARC, of course. Her knowledge of bird distribution and identification is extensive and she has already proved herself a valuable addition to the Committee. Pat deserves special thanks for successfully reviewing the entire 2013 review package on extremely short notice. With a heavy work schedule, Chris Wood has decided to resign from the Committee. We will miss his bird distribution and identification expertise. Stepping in to fill the remainder of Chris’s term is Derek Rogers. Derek is well-known to many in

the State due to the rarities he has found on Long Island and documented with his superb photos, as well as for his work on the NYSOA Board of Directors. In the pelagic zone, Derek is a pioneer in the State, alongside John Shemilt, Angus Wilson, Paul Guris, Doug Gochfeld, and Sean Sime, documenting the rapidly changing knowledge of seabird distribution in our offshore waters. Derek is already fully immersed in Committee activities.

Thanks once again to the efforts of long-time Committee supporter, Rich Guthrie, NYSARC was able to hold its annual meeting this past September at the IDA Building of Greene County. This is an excellent facility for our Committee meetings, providing ample space, electrical outlets, and Wi-Fi for the invaluable use of our laptop computers. At the meeting, voting on the 2013 reports was finalized, as well as on the 2015-2016 accelerated reviews. After initially establishing a “pelagic zone” a few years ago, with more data available from the increased offshore birding observations, the Committee established a list of “pelagic zone” species: Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*), Common Murre (*Uria aalge*), Audubon’s Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*), and Leach’s Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*). These four species occur regularly in offshore waters and will only require documentation when found *outside* of the pelagic zone in the State. Lastly, at the 2017 Committee meeting, it was agreed to have current members, Tom Burke and Willie D’Anna, continue for another term. This proposal was made to the NYSOA President and Board of Directors and subsequently approved. Willie will continue as Chair.

In addition to the changes for the pelagic zone, several other changes to the Review List were agreed upon. All of the changes to the Review List are summarized here:

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) (N) - change to upstate only (U). Barnacle Goose populations have greatly increased in Greenland compared to historic levels and, as a result, there has been a coincident increase in records in Eastern North America (Sherony 2014). In New York the species has become annual during migration and winter, primarily in coastal regions. Upstate regions have seen an increase as well but the species is still very rare there.

Gray Partridge (*Perdix perdix*) (not reviewed) - change to statewide (N). This introduced species has declined markedly. Formerly a resident in many areas of the State, Gray Partridge has been extirpated from all but northern New York in recent decades and may no longer breed even there. Since 2001, there have only been two eBird records in the State. Predation, weather, and agricultural practices are blamed for the decline (Carroll 1993).

Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) (U) - change to statewide (N). Formerly a rare breeder along the south shore of Long Island, this small rail is now a great rarity even there. Highly sought by birders but extremely secretive, Black Rail has only been found three times in New York since 1999, according to eBird records.

Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*) (U) - remove from review list for entire state. Records of this species in New York were first noticed increasing in coastal areas. However, in more recent years, upstate records have also shown a marked increase.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) (N) - change to outside Pelagic Zone only (P).

Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) (N) - change to outside Pelagic Zone only (P).

Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) (S) - change to Spring everywhere, Downstate only rest of year (S, D). This beautiful small gull is regular during the fall in the Great Lakes regions but spring records are practically non-existent in the State. In coastal regions, it is quite rare and some Committee members were surprised to learn that it was not on the NYSARC review list for Downstate areas. This change addresses that oversight.

Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) (N) - change to Downstate only (D). Published population trends for this species have been somewhat controversial. Sampling methods, such as the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Breeding Bird Surveys, may not be in the best areas for detecting the species and even when high numbers are detected, it has been suggested that this could mean that the species had abandoned breeding attempts for that particular year (Burger and Gochfeld 2009). In New York, sightings of this migrant peaked in the late 1960s and 1970s (Brock 1998). But by 2000, sightings in New York were down considerably, prompting NYSARC to place the species on its review list statewide. Since then, however, there seems to have been a slight rebound. Franklin's Gull has always occurred with greater frequency in upstate areas, especially along the Niagara River, and with more records in recent years, the Committee felt that upstate areas could be dropped from the review list. Caution is warranted in reporting this species, however, even in upstate areas, as the probability of occurrence there is only marginally greater than that of the similar Laughing Gull (*L. atricilla*).

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) (U) - change to statewide (N) with a note "Except Cupsogue County Park birds". Formerly on the review list statewide, NYSARC changed this to upstate only after Arctic Terns were documented to be of regular occurrence in late spring on the mudflats of Moriches Inlet at Cupsogue County Park in Suffolk County (Mittra 2009). However, due to the extreme rarity of this species elsewhere on Long Island and the difficulty of identification, this did not sit well with Committee members, so we have opted to single out Cupsogue County Park as the only location where documentation is not currently necessary.

Audubon's Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*) (N) - change to outside Pelagic Zone only (P).

Leach's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) (N) - change to outside Pelagic Zone only (P).

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) (D) - remove from review list for entire state. Highly visible and easily identified, records of this species continue to increase in downstate regions as well as upstate.

American Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides dorsalis*) (A) - change to statewide (N). Over the past two decades, there have been fewer reports of this species, a now very rare resident and winter visitant in New York. In addition, the second atlas of breeding birds in New York State noted a 32% decrease in occurrence from the first atlas, which was conducted twenty years earlier (Peterson 2008). Due to this decline, the Committee felt that it was time to place this species on the review list for the entire State. Reports from the Adirondacks are likely to continue and the Committee strongly encourages these reports to be documented with photos.

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) (N) - remove from review list for entire state. This species has shown a gradual increase throughout the State and has gotten to the point where it is nearly annual downstate as well as upstate. The species is usually not difficult to identify and the Committee felt that it was now appropriate to remove it from the review list statewide.

For definitions of the notations used above, please refer to the printed *Checklist of the Birds of New York State* or to the online version, available on the NYSOA web site at: <http://nybirds.org/Publications/ChecklistNYS.htm>

2013 Reports Accepted

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

2013-24-A/E One, Pennellville, Schroepel, Hastings, **Oswego**, Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, **Seneca**, 18, 19, 26 Mar (David Wheeler, William Watson, Bill Purcell, Ken Burdick, ph D. Wheeler, B. Purcell, K. Burdick)

Since the first fully accepted State record in 2007, this species has been found every year in New York, except for 2010. The 2013 record here, presumably involving the same bird at both locations, was the furthest record away from the coast accepted in New York at that point in time. The bird was discovered in Pennellville by David Wheeler who, earlier in the day, had been discussing with other birders the strong possibility of this species occurring in the Region! This goose was rediscovered at Montezuma NWR, some 40 miles away, on 26 Mar by Steve Kolbe, D. Wheeler, Joe Brin, and Jim Tarolli.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

2013-86-A One, Westport, **Essex**, 1 Dec (Gary Chapin, ph Eric Damour); eBird 7 Dec

This is another goose that has increased rather dramatically and, as a result, the Committee will no longer review sightings from downstate after 2017. Inland sightings have also increased, though the species remains quite rare there. This bird on Lake Champlain was well documented by Gary Chapin, with photos by Eric Damour.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

2013-8-A/D One, Oswego harbor, **Oswego**, 7-13, 23 Feb (Kevin McGann, Bill Purcell, William Watson, David Wheeler, ph K. McGann, B. Purcell, Jim Tarolli); eBird 14-16 Feb, 28 Feb - 6 Mar

2013-11-A/B One, Buffalo, **Erie**, 18 Feb (William Watson, James Pawlicki, ph J. Pawlicki)

This species, which is only reviewable in upstate regions, is being found with a slightly greater frequency in recent years, perhaps as a result of birders becoming aware of how to search for the species and being more adept at picking it out of the large rafts of diving ducks that it typically associates with. Both of these records involved birds in female plumage with noticeable crests. The Buffalo bird was found by Jim Pawlicki and Bill Watson and the Oswego bird by Andrew VanNorstrand.

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)

2013-3-A One, Kirk Park, **Suffolk**, 9 Jan (Eileen Schwinn, ph E. Schwinn)

2013-14-A One, Irondequoit Bay Outlet, **Monroe**, 14 Mar (William Watson); eBird 19 Jan, 9, 12-21 Mar

2013-25-A One, Sodus Bay, **Wayne**, 17 Mar (David Wheeler, ph D. Wheeler); eBird 16, 17, 18 Mar

This is another species that is being reported with increasing frequency. Three records were accepted for 2013, two upstate and one downstate. The two upstate records were less than 30 miles apart and overlapped in occurrence, with sightings of both birds at virtually the same time on 18 Mar, according to eBird checklists. The Irondequoit bird was found by Robert Spahn on 19 Jan but then not reported again until 9 Mar, raising the possibility that different birds were involved. The Sodus bird was found by Donna Carter on 16 Mar. The downstate record comes from Kirk Park in Montauk, a bird apparently discovered by Bill Hollweg.

Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

2013-82-A Four, Hilton, **Monroe**, 6 Nov (Dominic Sherony, ph D. Sherony); eBird 2 Jan - 29 Dec (11 dates)

The Greenwell Farm in the Town of Hamlin, Monroe County, has hosted this species for several years. At first, it was assumed that the species would spread from here as it has in many southern and western states. Although that has not occurred, the dove maintains a toehold at this location, often with months between sporadic sightings.

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)

2013-69-A/B One, Southold, **Suffolk**, 4-14 Oct (Eileen Schwinn, Richard Willott, ph E. Schwinn, R. Willott); eBird 5 Oct - 28 Dec

2013-84-A One, Bainbridge, **Chenango**, 17 Nov (Robert P. Yunick); eBird 9 Nov, 7 Dec The Chenango County hummingbird was found at the residence of Rich and Patty Howe in Bainbridge. It was banded and documented by master bander, Robert Yunich, who identified it by plumage and measurements as an after-

hatching year female Rufous Hummingbird. Patty Howe indicated that after the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*) had departed their feeders in early Sep, this bird was the only individual to remain. She indicated that it may have arrived in late Aug. There are two eBird reports of this bird from 9 Nov and 7 Dec. Unfortunately, we received no information about what happened to the bird with winter looming. The Southold, Suffolk County bird was identified by birders as a Rufous Hummingbird, with thicker outer rectrices than an Allen's Hummingbird (*S. sasin*) would show. The homeowners, Richard and Nancy Willott, first noticed the bird on 4 Oct. It was last reported to eBird on 28 Dec.

King Rail (*Rallus elegans*)

2013-41-A/D One, Great Vly Swamp, **Ulster**, 19 May - 14 Jun (Gilbert Thomson, Richard Guthrie, Kenneth McDermott, Bill Purcell, ph Aaron Paul, R. Guthrie, Deborah Tracy-Kral); eBird 19 May - 15 Jun

Discovered by Gilbert Thomson on 19 May and lingering until at least 15 Jun, this marks a rare record for recent years and suggests the possibility of breeding. This bird, which was heard calling on multiple occasions, would occasionally come right out into the open and walk across the road, allowing for some clear unobstructed photos.

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)

2013-56-A One, Batavia Waste Water Treatment Plant, **Genesee**, 11 May (James Pawlicki, ph J. Pawlicki)

This adult Piping Plover in alternate plumage was found at the Batavia Wastewater Treatment Plant, a place that has become well-known for the great number of rarities it has attracted. It stayed only the one day. The band information was recorded by the finder, Jim Pawlicki, and submitted to the US Geological Survey, which responded with a certificate indicating that the bird was hatched the previous year in Michigan but did not indicate the region of the state.

Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*)

2013-35-A/C One, Millville, **Orleans**, Cayuga Pool, Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, **Genesee**, 24, 28, 30 Apr (William Watson, Willie D'Anna, Mike Morgante, ph W. D'Anna); eBird 18, 24-26, 28, 30 Apr

2013-39-A/C One, Howland Island, **Cayuga**, 13 May (David Wheeler, Ken Burdick, Bill Purcell, ph D. Wheeler, K. Burdick, B. Purcell); eBird 10, 12-14 May

2013-52-A One, Timber Point Golf Course, **Suffolk**, 13 Apr (Andrew Baksh, ph A. Baksh); eBird 13-26 Apr, 7 May

A molting black male Ruff was found by Melissa Mance and Greg Coniglio at Kumpf Marsh, Iroquois NWR on 18 Apr. Six days later on 24 Apr, what was almost certainly the same bird, based upon a comparison of photographs, was found by Greg Lawrence in Millville, about ten miles from Kumpf Marsh. Surprisingly, the Ruff returned to Kumpf Marsh the next day, then went back to Millville again the day after that, only to return for a third time to Kumpf Marsh

and nearby Cayuga Pool on 28 Apr. A lovely chestnut and black Ruff was photographed at Howland Island on 13 May after being found originally on 10 May at Montezuma NWR by Tim Lenz. Remarkably, two Ruffs were seen at a golf course in Suffolk County on 13 Apr, a black and white male found by Michael McBrien and his father and a faeder-type male (that is, a male sporting female-like plumage) found by Andrew Baksh and John Gluth. Both birds were reported regularly to eBird until 26 Apr with a disjunct report of both birds, supported by a photo of the black and white male, on 7 May.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

2013-61-A One, Mecox Inlet, **Suffolk**, 24 Aug (Angus Wilson, ph A. Wilson); eBird 18-24 Aug

Possibly a male in transitioning plumage, based upon the relatively short bill, this Curlew Sandpiper was found by Jim Ash on 18 Aug and lingered for a week.

Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*)

2013-49-A/C One, Cupsogue County Park, **Suffolk**, 30 Jun (John Gluth, John Shemilt, Angus Wilson, ph J. Gluth, J. Shemilt); eBird 30 Jun - 4 Jul

This adult Red-necked Stint in bright alternate plumage was found at the productive sand flats of Cupsogue County Park by John Gluth and Andrew Baksh. It stayed until 4 Jul. Remarkably, this individual was seen only two days prior to its discovery here, at Plum Island in Massachusetts, as conclusively shown in a photographic comparison made by Angus Wilson. This marks the sixth record in New York. On 3 Jul, the stint was one of three exceptional rarities found at Cupsogue, the others being a hybrid Dunlin X White-rumped Sandpiper (*C. alpine* X *C. fuscicollis*) and an Elegant Tern (*Thalasseus elegans*), the latter a first State record. In addition, four Arctic Terns (*Sterna paradisaea*) were present on the flats that day.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

2013-54-A One, Amagansett, **Suffolk**, 8 Jun (Angus Wilson)

2013-60-A One, Derby Hill, **Oswego**, 14 Aug (David Wheeler)

The subadult Long-tailed Jaeger at Amagansett was seen on 8 Jun after the passage of Tropical Storm Andrea. The adult at Derby Hill was seen over Lake Ontario on 14 Aug, an early fall migrant.

“Thayer’s” Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides thayeri*)

2013-17-A One, Devil’s Hole SP, **Niagara**, 7 Jan (James Pawlicki, ph J. Pawlicki)

2013-18-A One, Goat Island SP, **Niagara**, 21 Jan (James Pawlicki, ph J. Pawlicki)

2013-19-A One, Goat Island SP, **Niagara**, 23 Jan (James Pawlicki, ph J. Pawlicki)

2013-74-A/B One, Goat Island SP, **Niagara**, 29 Oct (William Watson, ph J. Pawlicki)

In 2017 the American Ornithological Society (AOS, formerly the AOU) relegated Thayer’s Gull (*L. thayeri*) to a subspecies of Iceland Gull (*L. g. thayeri*). The Committee is still interested in reviewing well-documented reports of this subspecies, preferably accompanied by photographs. The Niagara River

is the only location in the State where this form is seen every year. Due to the difficulty of identification of this form, as well as the difficulty of documenting it on the Niagara River, where gulls are seldom close, relatively few are photographed sufficiently for acceptance by NYSARC. However, Jim Pawlicki nicely photo-documented four adult birds on the Niagara River in 2013.

Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*)

2013-9-A/B One, Buffalo, **Erie**, 10, 11 Feb (William Watson, James Pawlicki); eBird 10, 11, 16, 17 Feb

2013-20-A One, Lewiston, Niagara River, **Niagara**, 25 Jan (James Pawlicki)

2013-21-A One, Lewiston Reservoir, **Niagara**, 26 Jan, 9 Feb (James Pawlicki)

2013-23-A One, Oswego, **Oswego**, 28 Feb (David Wheeler, ph D. Wheeler)

An adult Slaty-backed Gull was found by Jim Pawlicki and Joe Mitchell on the lower Niagara River in Lewiston on 25 Jan. Initially seen standing on an ice floe drifting down the river, the bird eventually took flight, revealing several features and allowing Pawlicki to conclusively eliminate other similar species and “dark-mantled” *Larus* hybrids. The very next day on 26 Jan, Pawlicki was birding at the Lewiston Reservoir and discovered another adult Slaty-backed Gull.

Pawlicki’s notes indicate this appeared to be the same individual photographed by Willie D’Anna, Jean Iron, and others above Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada earlier in the winter on 30 Dec 2012. Pawlicki returned to this location about two weeks later on 9 Feb and observed this same Slaty-backed Gull again.

While Pawlicki and Bill Watson were viewing Buffalo Harbor from Erie Basin Marina on 10 Feb, Pawlicki found a “dark-mantled gull” sleeping on the ice. A patient vigil was rewarded when the bird eventually awoke and began foraging nearby, revealing another adult Slaty-backed Gull. Pawlicki and others returned to the location the next day where the gull was seen again. This individual appeared similar to the one observed by Pawlicki on the lower Niagara River in Lewiston on 25 Jan, but views during the observation in Lewiston prevented photographs and details of plumage and bare parts to be seen that would allow for a sufficient comparison. This represents the first record for Erie County. Lastly, while birding late in the day at Oswego Harbor on 28 Feb, David Wheeler and Jim Tarolli found and photographed an adult Slaty-backed Gull standing amongst other large gulls. The single photo and description ruled out other similar “dark-mantled” *Larus* hybrids. This represents the first record for NYSOA Region 5 and Oswego County. Whether there were only three Slaty-backed Gulls or four, 2013 was a remarkable and unprecedented year for the species in the State.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

2013-42-A One, Cupsogue County Park, **Suffolk**, 1 Jun (Derek Rogers, ph D. Rogers)

2013-43-A One, Cupsogue County Park, **Suffolk**, 5 Jun (Derek Rogers, ph D. Rogers)

2013-45-A One, Cupsogue County Park, **Suffolk**, 8 Jun (Derek Rogers, ph D. Rogers)

2013-46-A One, Cupsogue County Park, **Suffolk**, 8 Jun (Derek Rogers, ph D. Rogers)

2013-47-A Three, Cupsogue County Park, **Suffolk**, 8 Jun (Derek Rogers, ph D. Rogers)

2013-48-A One, Nickerson Beach, **Nassau**, 11 Jun (Brendan Fogarty)

2013-50-A One, Nickerson Beach, **Nassau**, 18 Jun (Brendan Fogarty, ph B. Fogarty)

Late May through mid July is the time-frame when Arctic Tern appears in New York State. This year, the Committee received seven reports documenting nine individuals with all but two reports coming from the flats at Cupsogue County Park, where the species is now annually documented in small numbers. Aside from the Cupsogue reports received by the Committee, there were many additional, well-documented reports in eBird from this location ranging from 20 May through 17 Jul. Given our current understanding of the well-established patterns of Arctic Tern, NYSARC decided at the 2017 annual meeting to remove Arctic Tern as a reviewable species when found at Cupsogue. However, the Committee still welcomes reports from the rest of the State, including other downstate areas. While Arctic Tern is no longer a reviewable species at Cupsogue, care should always be taken when searching for this species, given the challenges associated with the identification. Two of the nine documented individuals in 2013 came from Nickerson Beach, both of which represented first summer individuals discovered by Brendan Fogarty on 11 and 18 Jun. Nickerson Beach Park is located in Nassau County approximately one mile west of Jones Inlet. The park hosts a large breeding colony of Common Terns and may prove to be a promising stopover location for small numbers of Arctic Terns in western parts of Long Island.

Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*)

2013-51-A/B One, Nickerson Beach, **Nassau**, 10 Jul (Brendan Fogarty, Pat Palladino, ph B. Fogarty)

2013-78-A Two, Cupsogue County Park, **Suffolk**, 27 Jun (Arie Gilbert, ph A. Gilbert); eBird 22, 27 Jun, 8, 24, 27 Jul

For the seventh consecutive year, Sandwich Tern was found in the state. Like all but one of the previous records, this year's reports came from coastal areas. The bird at Nickerson Beach appears to have been a second year individual while the two birds at Cupsogue were adults. An adult Sandwich Tern reported to eBird on 13 and 20 Jul at Mecox Inlet and Sagaponack Pond, some 20+ miles east of Cupsogue, could possibly have been one of these birds.

Elegant Tern (*Thalasseus elegans*)

2013-55-A/F One, Cupsogue County Park and Tiana Beach Recreation Area, **Suffolk**, 3, 4, 6, 7 Jul (Brett Gleitsmann, Brendan Fogarty, Angus Wilson, Arie Gilbert, Thomas W. Burke, Andy Guthrie, ph B. Gleitsmann, B. Fogarty, A. Wilson, T. Burke, Gail Benson, A. Guthrie)

2013-76-A/E One, Grand Island and Unity Island, Buffalo, **Erie**, 20-23 Nov (William Watson, Dominic Sherony, Willie D'Anna, James Pawlicki, Alan Wormington, ph D. Sherony, W. D'Anna, J. Pawlicki, A. Wormington)

The Suffolk County bird was accepted as the first record for New York State. See Wilson *et al.* (2016) for a full account. Just as remarkable as the State's first record was the second one, involving a bird in first-basic plumage at Grand Island on the Niagara River, found by Vicki Rothman. Rothman immediately contacted Jim Pawlicki who made it to the site in time to confirm the

identification, before the bird soon departed. The tern was relocated at Unity Island (formerly Squaw Island) the next day, over two miles from the Grand Island site. The Elegant Tern associated mainly with Bonaparte's Gulls (*Croicocephalus philadelphia*), though there were a few lingering Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) as well. This bird was seen by many birders and was well-photographed. It was last reported on 24 Nov across the river from Unity Island in Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada (Holden 2014).

Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*)

2013-67-A One, Glenmere Lake, **Orange**, 7 Oct (Kenneth M. McDermott, ph John Haas)

This sighting marks a very rare inland record of this species, well away from coastal areas. It was discovered by Rob Stone at Glenmere Lake and is a first record for Orange County. A check of the weather before and during the time of the sighting did not reveal any weather systems that might account for bringing this coastal species so far inland. It was only seen the one day.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)

2013-81-A One, Eatons Neck, **Suffolk**, 1 Dec (Brent Bomkamp)

2013-85-A One, Golden Hill SP, **Niagara**, 18 Oct (Willie D'Anna)

We have come a long way since the days of John Bull rejecting all sight reports of Pacific Loon in basic plumage. More and more birders understand the complexities of loon identification, and this species is now increasingly identified correctly when in its more cryptic plumage. The loon in Suffolk County was in basic plumage and thoroughly described by the finder, Brent Bomkamp, but the bird that flew by Golden Hill State Park in Oct, spotted by Betsy Potter and also observed by Willie D'Anna and Sue Barth, still retained much of its alternate plumage.

Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*)

2013-57-A One, Hudson River, **Dutchess/Orange**, 7 Aug (Susan Joseph, ph Walter Joseph)

This was a very rare occurrence of Manx Shearwater away from coastal regions. Found in the middle of the Hudson River near Newburgh by Walter Joseph, he photographed it with a cell phone. He phoned his wife, Susan Joseph, who was at home. Walter texted photos of the bird to Susan and she texted field guide plate images to Walter. The two discussed the bird while analyzing the photos and concluded that it must be a Manx Shearwater. The images submitted with their joint report are diagnostic for this species. This is an excellent example of remote collaboration used to come up with the correct identification of a very rare bird.

White-faced Storm-Petrel (*Pelagodroma marina*)

2013-64-A/B One, **Suffolk, Pelagic**, 20 Aug (John Shemilt, Derek Rogers, ph J. Shemilt, D. Rogers)

As more and more pelagic trips go out to appropriate areas at the right time of the year, this distinctive species is being found with increasing frequency. John

Shemilt has previously documented several White-faced Storm-Petrels in New York and his photograph of this bird is not only diagnostic but absolutely stunning.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*)

2013-68-A/D One, Buffalo, **Erie**, 7-9 Oct (William Watson, Dominic Sherony, James Pawlicki, Willie D'Anna, ph D. Sherony, J. Pawlicki); eBird 7-22 Oct

This adult female Brown Booby was discovered in Buffalo by Jim Pawlicki while lake-watching on Lake Erie near the source of the Niagara River on 7 Oct. Word spread quickly and numerous birders were able to see this first record for the Great Lakes and first inland record for the State, as the bird stayed in the area until last reported on 22 Oct. Pawlicki and Sherony were able to take a boat out to get closer to the booby, allowing them the opportunity to obtain some excellent photographs. See Pawlicki (2014) for a full account of this record. While 22 Oct was the last date that the bird was seen in the Buffalo area, it was found roosting on shoreline rocks of Lake Erie at Mohawk Point, Ontario on 2 and 3 Nov. This is about 30 miles due west of Buffalo. Observers watching it there assumed that it was moribund, as it allowed exceptionally close approach. They were stunned when it suddenly woke up and took flight. Interestingly, a fecal sample was collected from this location, which, from DNA analysis, confirmed the belief that this bird was of the nominate Atlantic subspecies (Skevington *et al.* 2015). Many had speculated that it was of the Pacific subspecies, *brewsteri*, because of the extensive pattern of vagrancy of this race that had been witnessed in 2013.

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)

2013-91-A One, Hamlin Beach SP, **Monroe**, 14 Aug (Andy Guthrie, ph A. Guthrie)

This record was accepted as the first for New York State. See Wilson *et al.* (2016) for a full account.

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)

2013-88-A One, Seaford Harbor, **Nassau**, 24 Dec (Captain Donald Popella, ph D. Popella)

This White Pelican was seen and photographed on the late date of 24 Dec by a boat captain as it was flying overhead. Due to numerous reports of this species during the past decade, NYSARC recently removed it from the review list for the entire State.

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*)

2013-36-A One, Kissena Park, **Queens**, 10 May (César Castillo, ph C. Castillo)

After four records of this species in New York in 2012, only one was seen this year, a bird that was clearly photographed over Kissena Park in Queens County.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

2013-44-A/B One, Kaatsbaan, **Ulster**, 9 Jun (Richard Guthrie, Kenneth McDermott, ph R. Guthrie, Steve Schuyler); eBird 8-11 Jun

This species is recorded more frequently in New York than the former, with records mounting at hawk-watches, in the New York City area, and at other widely scattered parts of the State. As with most other records of the species, this bird was seen in the May-June time period, when individuals appear to overshoot the southern breeding grounds; recent nesting records from New York and nearby states indicate that birds prospecting for new breeding territories could also be involved. This adult bird, discovered by Peter Schoenberger, was observed both perched and in flight. Due to the multi-day presence of this species during the breeding season, the possibility of a very rare breeding attempt in the State should be considered. Unfortunately, with no reports after 11 Jun, it seems unlikely that such was the case here.

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis calurus*)

2013-6-A One, Erieville, **Madison**, 19 Jan (Kevin Pace, ph K. Pace)

2013-37-A/B One, Braddock Bay Hawk Watch, **Monroe**, 15 May (Dominic Sherony, Luke Tiller, ph D. Sherony); eBird 17 May

The *calurus* subspecies of Red-tailed Hawk is a form that is occasionally reported in New York, especially at hawk-watches. The record from Madison County is an interesting example of a bird that was not observed by anyone while present but which had its image captured by a motion-sensing camera in an area baited with deer carcasses. The photos show a very dark hawk that appeared fairly uniformly dark brownish. Although the color of the tail is difficult to discern in the photos, it appears to be banded, typical of not only immatures but many adults of this subspecies. In addition, the iris appears quite dark, indicating an adult. The bird at Braddock Bay was observed during migration by Dominic Sherony, who submitted the documentation, as well as the official hawk-watch counter, Luke Tiller. The photos appear to show a juvenile with a banded tail that lacks rufous. The underside of the tail looks whitish, which could suggest the Harlan's race of Red-tailed Hawk. However, raptor expert, Brian Sullivan, commented that this was a fairly typical first-spring rufous-morph of the *calurus* subspecies, noting that the fairly light banding in the flight feathers and the unbarred outer primaries helped to rule out Harlan's. Atypically, the Braddock Bay bird did not simply migrate past, like most of the raptors seen here, but remained in the area for a few days.

Northern Hawk Owl (*Surnia ulula*)

2013-4-A One, West Milton, **Saratoga**, 7 Dec 2012, 11, 14-16 Jan (Brendan Hathaway)

Found on a restricted access site in Saratoga County on 7 Dec 2012, this rare northern owl was only seen by one birder and three of his coworkers. It remained in the area for over five weeks.

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*)

2013-33-A/C One, Prospect Park, **Kings**, 26, 27 Apr (Michael Yuan, Tinsley Perky, Ryan Bass, ph M. Yuan, T. Perky, R. Bass)

2013-66-A One, Jones Beach, **Nassau**, 20 Sep (Stan Furtak, ph S. Furtak); eBird 18 Sep, 2 Oct

The Prospect Park bird was found by Tinsley Perky on 26 Apr, furnishing the first spring record for New York and a very rare spring record for anywhere in the East. Stan Furtak found the bird at Jones Beach SP and he was the only observer at this location. However, two days prior, there was an eBird report with a diagnostic photo from nearby Robert Moses SP, also on the barrier beach about 15 miles east of Jones Beach. The report indicated that the bird was moving from east to west and could not be refound. Based on this, it would seem likely that the same individual was seen at both locations. A final sighting at Robert Moses SP on 2 Oct of a bird flying from east to west (eBird) may suggest that the same bird had returned to its original location, though it would seem unusual that it was not detected during the nearly two-week interim.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*)

2013-12-A/D One, Prospect Park, **Kings**, 8, 9, 17 Mar (Peter Dorosh, Sean Zimmer, Chellie Bowman, Jesse Jaycox, ph Rob Bate, Juan Salas); eBird 8 Mar - 5 Apr

Reportedly found by Mark Salvadalena at Prospect Park on 7 Mar, this bird was last reported to eBird on 5 Apr. Varied Thrush is a very rare migrant and winter visitor in New York. There are at least a couple of individuals that have stayed for most of the winter in the State. The range of occurrence for accepted NYSARC records is from 20 Nov to 22 Apr. The Prospect Park date of 5 Apr makes this the second latest record in spring for this species in New York.

Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*)

2013-34-A/B One, Shawangunk Grasslands NWR, **Ulster**, 28, 30 Apr (Kenneth McDermott, Thomas W. Burke, ph Jeff Goulding, T. Burke, Lloyd Spitalnik, David Speiser); eBird 28-30 Apr

Found by Tom Burke and Gail Benson at the Shawangunk Grasslands, this Smith's Longspur was a lovely bird nearly in full alternate plumage. It is only the third record for the State and the first in spring. The others were 22 Sep 1974, a bird collected at Robert Moses S. P. (DiCostanzo 1998), and a bird that lingered at Jones Beach S. P. 2 Feb to 18 Mar 2007 (Wilson *et al.* 2009).

Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*)

2013-87-A One, Fort Drum, **Jefferson**, 10, 11 Oct (Jeff Bolsinger, ph J. Bolsinger) Jeff Bolsinger found this bird at Fort Drum on 10 Oct but saw the bird only briefly. He returned the following morning with a camera and obtained diagnostic photos. The October dates fit into the expected pattern for this species, with nearly half of the accepted records occurring during that month.

Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*)

2013-83-A One, Campbell Hall, **Orange**, 14 Dec (Kenneth M. McDermott, ph Francis & Janet Fitzpatrick, John Haas); eBird 17-18 Dec

This immature Harris's Sparrow was found at the feeding station of Francis and Janet Fitzpatrick in Orange County on 14 Dec. A number of birders were reported to have seen this bird. The last eBird report was on 18 Dec.

Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis* – *oreganus* group)

2013-15-A One, Baldwinsville, **Onondaga**, 7 Jan (David Wheeler, ph D. Wheeler)

This “Oregon-type” Dark-eyed Junco report lacked a description but was supported by photographs. The bird appears to have been an immature, though it could possibly have been an adult female. Dark-eyed Juncos are problematic. While some individuals, particularly adult males, are clear-cut and can be easily placed in the appropriate subspecies group, others are more difficult. There was some discussion among Committee members about this bird and whether it could possibly represent an intergrade. In the end, the Committee decided that most of the characters on this bird were in line with the Oregon-type and voted to accept.

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)

2013-7-A One, Honeoye Falls, **Monroe**, 28 Dec 2012 - 7 Jan (Brad Carlson, ph B. Carlson)

2013-26-A One, Clinton, **Oneida**, 14, 15, 23 Mar (Matt Perry, ph M. Perry); eBird 14, 22 Mar

2013-80-A One, Middletown, **Orange**, 4, 5 Dec (Kenneth M. McDermott, ph Tom Bushey)

It is remarkable that the same yard in New York has hosted three recognizably different Yellow-headed Blackbirds. That is what has occurred in Brad Carlson’s yard in Monroe County, all during the winter months between Dec 2009 and Jan 2013. The 2013 bird was an adult male, nicely photographed. Another adult male was photographed in Oneida County during Mar 2013 by Matt Perry. The latter report was submitted by David Wheeler on behalf of Perry. Yet another record of an adult male was found amidst a large flock of mainly Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Melothrus ater*) and European Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) in Orange County on 4 Dec, discovered by Tom Bushey. It was seen again the next day by Ken McDermott, who documented the sighting for NYSARC. Due to an increase in sightings in recent years, NYSARC no longer requests reports of Yellow-headed Blackbird to be submitted from anywhere in the State.

Brewer’s Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

2013-73-A One, Caumsett SP, **Suffolk**, 28 Oct (John Gluth, ph J. Gluth)

Records of Brewer’s Blackbirds have declined in the State and this is the first one that NYSARC has accepted since 2010. The bird was found and photographed by John Gluth at Caumsett State Park on Long Island Sound. It apparently did not stay long, as it was not reported by anyone else.

Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Setophaga nigrescens*)

2013-31-A/C One, Scriba, **Oswego**, 17 Apr (Kevin McGann, David Wheeler, Bill Purcell, ph K. McGann, Steve Kolbe, B. Purcell)

Found in a park on Lake Ontario by Barb Reuter, the Oswego County bird furnished one of very few spring records for the State. It stayed for only one day.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)

2013-32-A/D One, Irving, **Chautauqua**, 23, 24 Apr (William Watson, Willie D’Anna, Mike & Sylvia Galas, Jim Landau, ph W. D’Anna); eBird 23-26 Apr

2013-75-A One, Prospect Park, **Kings**, 20 Nov (Kenneth Pearlman, ph K. Pearlman)

The adult male Western Tanager in Chautauqua County appeared at the home of Pauline Fox and stayed for a few days, allowing many birders to see it. Prospect Park in Brooklyn was the site of still another rare bird in 2013, a female or immature male Western Tanager found and photographed by Kenneth Pearlman. Pearlman may have been the only observer, as there were no other reports of this individual.

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)

2013-13-A One, Montauk, **Suffolk**, 12-13 Mar (Hannah Mirando, ph H. Mirando)

2013-27-A One, Ridge, **Suffolk**, 4-5 Apr (Melissa Hahn, ph M. Hahn)

On 12 and 13 Mar, an adult male Painted Bunting came to the feeding station of Hannah Mirando in Montauk. About three weeks later, another or perhaps the same adult male came to the feeding station of Melissa Hahn in Ridge, about 50 miles west of Montauk. Like the bird in Montauk, it only stayed two days before disappearing. Both birds appeared to be in excellent plumage and no bands could be seen in the photos, alleviating any concerns about origin. Birders should be aware that male Painted Buntings in “dilute plumage” occasionally are seen in the wild and such birds could well be escapes. Apparently, Painted Buntings need certain foods that are available in the wild but not usually fed to caged birds in order to retain their brilliant plumage, especially the red feathers. A bird with dilute plumage (yellow-orange ventral body) was observed outside of Toronto, Ontario in Dec 2014. This bird also had a damaged bill, consistent with some caged birds. The Toronto record was not accepted by the Ontario Bird Records Committee because of a concern for captive origin (Burrell and Charlton 2015).

**2013 Identification Accepted
But Origins Unknown or Unnatural**

Egyptian Goose (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*)

2013-29-A Two, Harrison, **Westchester**, 9 Apr (Lee Carilli, ph L. Carilli)

The committee was unanimous in its opinion that these two Egyptian Geese were, in all likelihood, escapes or releases. The species is possibly established in parts of Florida or Texas but has not shown a pattern of vagrancy to places far from those states.

Common Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

2013-1-A One, Champlain Bridge, Crown Point, **Essex**, 1 Jan - 10 Feb (Ted Murin, ph T. Murin, Tom Berriman)

The Committee is extremely grateful to Ted Murin for his exceptionally thorough report, which included photographs and extensive research into the origin of this adult male Pochard. The identification was not in question for the Committee. This duck was banded and Murin included a photo of the band, taken by Tom Berriman. The duck was photographed in a raft that contained Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*), Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*), and Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and perhaps other species not visible in the photos. Unfortunately, the duck was not quite close enough to be able to read the band number from the photograph. After some research, Murin concluded that the band was probably too narrow to be of the type used in North America or the United Kingdom on wild waterfowl. It seemed more likely that the band was placed on the bird by an aviculturist, though there is some uncertainty in this conclusion—for example, the Bird Ringing Centre at the Swedish Museum of Natural History did not discount the band offhand as being one of theirs. It is conceivable that Pochard could reach North America on its own from its European/Asian range. Two Tufted Ducks (*Aythya fuligula*) in the vicinity of the Pochard sighting on Lake Champlain might even suggest that the same forces that brought them to New York could also bring a Pochard. However, there has not been an increased frequency of sightings of Common Pochard in intermediate locations, such as Iceland. There was also a posting to the Vermont birding listserv that an aviculturist who raised Common Pochards recognized the band in the photo as likely one of his own and that he had sold some ducks to an aviary about 80 miles south of where the bird was being seen. In the end, the Committee came to the same conclusion as Murin, that this bird is, at best, a species of uncertain origin, and at worst, a likely escape or release.

Smew (*Mergellus albellus*)

2013-10-A One, Lisbon Beach, **St. Lawrence**, 16 Feb (Jeff Bolsinger, ph J. Bolsinger)

The question of origin is often a difficult one for records committees. In northeastern North America, the most difficult decisions often involve waterfowl—many exotic species are widely available for sale and frequently kept in captivity. Wild vagrants are often possible and many would agree that a few Smew are likely to have reached eastern North America on their own accord. A few states include this species on their checklists, with New York being one of them (Lincoln 1998). However, this female/immature male Smew, found by Jeff Bolsinger, was voted to be of uncertain origin by the Committee. The escape of multiple Smew from an aviary in Western New York after a flood event, some four years previous to this sighting, led in part to the Committee taking this more conservative stance. This opinion was not unanimous, as it often is not, as some felt that a wild origin was more likely.

Eurasian Linnet (*Linaria cannabina*)

2013-79-A One, Kissena Corridor Park, **Queens**, 9 Oct (Seth Ausubel, ph Eric Miller, Peter Reisfeld, Jeff Ritter)

This old world species is considered much more likely to be an escape or release in North America than it is a natural vagrant. At present there are no accepted records of naturally occurring birds in North America. Finding one while out birding can still be interesting. Veteran birder, Seth Ausubel, had the unusual experience of not knowing what species he was looking at when he came upon this bird in Kissena Park. With the aid of photographs taken by birders after his initial observation, he was able to rule out the very similar Twite (*L. flavirostris*), another species not officially recorded in North America. Identification of these small brownish finches is covered by Svensson *et al.* (2009).

Northern Red Bishop (*Euplectes franciscanus*)

2013-62-A Two, Shinnecock Inlet, **Suffolk**, 15 Sep (Stephen Savage)

Although there are a few populations in warm-weather states, such as Florida, Texas, and California, that have been established from releases, this African species has not shown a pattern of vagrancy outside of those areas. Thus, the Committee voted to classify these two birds as likely to be of unnatural origin.

2012 Reports Accepted

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)

2012-121-A One, Water Mill, **Suffolk**, 29 Nov 2012 - 6 Jan (John Shemilt, ph J. Shemilt)

This female/immature male Rufous Hummingbird was beautifully documented with photos by John Shemilt. The bird stayed for over five weeks at his feeding station. Committee members were in agreement that the width of the outer tail feathers was sufficiently wide to confidently rule out Allen's Hummingbird (*S. sasin*).

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

2012-111-B One, Derby Hill, **Oswego**, 21 Oct (Ken Burdick, ph Drew Weber, Bill Purcell)

This bird was observed from Derby Hill, the venerable spring hawk-watch site on Lake Ontario, which many birders also know to be an excellent vantage for observing fall migrant waterbirds as well. Long-tailed Jaeger has been recorded on multiple occasions from here and this juvenile intermediate morph was admirably documented by Ken Burdick's report and the accompanying photographs by Weber and Purcell. This report documented the same bird previously accepted by the Committee as 2012-111-A.

Black-capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*)

2012-122-A One, **Suffolk**, 1 Aug (Jon Feenstra, ph J. Feenstra)

This Black-capped Petrel was identified and photographed from a Royal Caribbean cruise ship while traversing New York's pelagic waters. Records of this Caribbean species in New York have been increasing due to increased exploration of more distant warmer offshore waters.

2012 Report Accepted in Revised Form

Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus/S. sasin*)

2012-124-A One, Ellenville, **Ulster**, 14 Nov (Valerie Freer, ph Mary Collier); eBird 15 Nov

Although the width of the outer tail feathers can sometimes be used to help identify a female/immature male Rufous Hummingbird, when they appear sufficiently wide to rule out the very similar Allen's Hummingbird, such is not always the case, even when the bird is photographed. Some individual Rufous Hummingbirds have narrower outer tail feathers, making the identification more tenuous. After the first round of review, some on the Committee felt that the outer tail feathers were sufficiently wide to identify this bird as a Rufous. However, others on the Committee were less sure and they persuaded the rest to accept this bird as the species pair, rather than Rufous Hummingbird, as it was submitted.

2011 Reports Accepted

Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*)

2011-45-B One, Southwick SP, **Jefferson**, 3 Jun (David Wheeler, ph D. Wheeler); eBird 4 Jun

This report documented the same bird previously accepted by the Committee as 2011-45-A.

Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*)

2011-154-A One, Derby Hill, **Oswego**, 17 Oct (David Wheeler)

This first basic Franklin's Gull was spotted by David Wheeler as it was flying past the bluff at Derby Hill. Having found the species on multiple prior occasions, Wheeler knew immediately what it was. The bird even came by for an encore view, going back in the direction from which it came.

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*)

2011-153-A One, Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, **Seneca**, 16 May (David Wheeler, ph D. Wheeler)

While checking out new shorebird habitat at Montezuma NWR, David Wheeler had a 15-minute encounter with this alternate plumaged White-faced Ibis, before it flew off to the north. Attempts by Wheeler to relocate it were unsuccessful and, apparently, the bird was not seen by anyone else. Reports of White-faced Ibis in the East have exploded since the turn of the century. Most records in New York come from downstate but inland areas are slowly accumulating records as well. This is the second one from Montezuma NWR that the Committee has accepted.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

2011-39-B One, Derby Hill, **Oswego**, 22 May (David Wheeler, ph Tom Carollan)

This report documented the same bird previously accepted by the Committee as 2011-39-A.

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*)

2011-62-B One, Fairhaven SP, **Cayuga**, 11 Sep (David Wheeler, ph D. Wheeler)

This Lark Sparrow was found by David Wheeler at Fair Haven State Park on Lake Ontario. Diagnostic photos were obtained. Apparently, the bird was only seen the one day. This report documented the same bird previously accepted by the Committee as 2011-62-A.

2010 Reports Accepted

California Gull (*Larus californicus*)

2010-69-D One, Niagara Falls SP, **Niagara**, 29 Oct (David Wheeler, ph D. Wheeler)

Seen from Goat Island, this report documented the same bird previously accepted by the Committee as 2010-69-A-C.

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*)

2010-106-A One, Mohonk Preserve, **Ulster**, 21 Mar (Malcolm Grant, ph Jamie Deppen)

This Townsend's Solitaire was found by Malcolm Grant and Anne Bloomfield. Grant alerted others who were able to see the bird that day but, apparently, it was not seen afterwards.

2009 Reports Accepted

California Gull (*Larus californicus*)

2009-62-C One, Devil's Hole SP, **Niagara**, 18 Nov (David Wheeler, ph D. Wheeler)

This report documented the same bird previously accepted by the Committee as 2009-62-A/B.

"Black" Merlin (*Falco columbarius suckleyi*)

2009-92-A One, Aurora, **Cayuga**, 2 Nov (Thomas B. Johnson, ph T. Johnson)

There are currently three subspecies of Merlin recognized in North America (Warkentin *et al.* 2005). The most widespread and the one expected in our area is the nominate race, *F. c. columbarius*. The "Prairie" Merlin, *F. c. richardsonii*, breeds in south-central Canada and northern U.S. prairie states. The "Black" Merlin, *F. c. suckleyi*, breeds in humid forests of the Pacific northwest and is thought to be generally nonmigratory. However, some individuals have been found as far south as southern California and New Mexico during the winter (Warkentin *et al.* 2005). A record in upstate New York, however, would be extraordinary. In reviewing this report, the Committee had to rely heavily on the paper by Stanley Temple (1972). In addition expert opinions were sought and Committee member, Doug Gochfeld, examined specimens at the American Museum of Natural History. The greatest difficulty in accepting this record was not knowing the extremes in variation of the nominate subspecies. One expert

was reluctant to sign off on this bird as belonging to *suckleyi*, suggesting that there is overlap between the darkest *columbarius* and *suckleyi*. However, other expert opinions were strongly in favor of it and Committee members felt that all characters were typical of the form, in particular the virtually unmarked primaries and the limited tail banding. Gochfeld's specimen search revealed that the Aurora bird lines up quite well with *suckleyi*. While it may be that some *columbarius* do look extremely similar to *suckleyi*, it is not clear that individuals that are known to be *columbarius* and which are as extreme in appearance and specific characters as the Aurora bird, have been documented. Since this bird fits so neatly into the *suckleyi* subspecies, and lacking clear evidence of overlap, the Committee decided that the record should be accepted. Excellent in-flight photos were provided by Johnson, who found the bird along with Tim Lenz. We thank the following for offering their thoughts about this record: Marshall Iliff, Tony Leukering, Jerry Liguori, Brian Sullivan, and Brian Wheeler.

2008 Reports Accepted

Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*)

2008-106-A One, Vicinity of Cedar Point SP, **Jefferson**, 1 Aug (Nick Leone)

The lone observer of this Long-billed Curlew did not have optics at the time of the sighting. Although he started his NYSARC submission shortly after the sighting, the report was not submitted for several years because of a residence change, and it was unknown to the Committee just what had been written shortly after the sighting. These are important shortcomings which, along with the extreme rarity of the species in New York, almost kept the record from being accepted. In trying to observe as much detail as possible, the observer wound up flushing the bird which, unfortunately, was never seen again. In doing so, however, he managed to see the cinnamon underwing color, which helps to rule out a Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*). The observer also considered Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*), which is appropriate because that species also has cinnamon-colored underwings. The Godwit, of course, also has a slightly upturned bill, not a long decurved bill as on a Curlew. In the end, NYSARC found this report from an experienced birder believable and voted to accept the record in the final round of review. In the first half of the 19th century, the Long-billed Curlew was a regular migrant along the coast of Long Island (Feustel 1998) but overharvest and elimination of breeding habitat are believed responsible for the precipitous decline of this species in the Eastern U.S. (Dugger and Dugger 2002). Feustel (1998) cites two records of Long-billed Curlew in New York since 1938. However, one of those was not accepted by NYSARC and the other from 1975 was never reviewed. A 1998 record at Oak Beach on Long Island is the only prior record reviewed and accepted by the Committee, highlighting just how exceptional the Jefferson County record is.

Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*)

2008-107-A One, Dunkirk, **Chautauqua**, 20 Jul (David Wheeler, ph D. Wheeler); eBird 21 Jul

This record marks a rare summer occurrence of this species. A diagnostic photo by Wheeler accompanied his report. The bird was originally found by Peter Yoerg.

2007 Reports Accepted

Common Murre (*Uria aalge*)

2007-82-A "Several", **Suffolk**, 10 Feb (Paul Guris, ph Gary Chapin)

This report was written long after the sighting and, as a result, many of the details of the sighting were forgotten by the observer, including the number of individuals observed. However, a diagnostic photo of a Common Murre by Gary Chapin accompanied the report, so the Committee agreed that the identification was correct, even if the number observed was uncertain. The birds were observed during a pelagic trip organized by See Life Paulagics, whose owner, Paul Guris, submitted the report. From eBird and from Committee members who were on the trip, the number of individuals observed is believed to be seven. Due to regular reports of Common Murre, documented mainly from See Life Paulagics trips, NYSARC has removed the species from its review list for sightings that occur within the pelagic zone. All near-shore and other sightings should still be documented carefully and submitted to NYSARC.

Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*)

2007-84-A One, Dunkirk, **Chautauqua**, 23 Dec (David Wheeler); eBird 26 Dec - 2 Jan 2008

David Wheeler found this late Franklin's Gull at Dunkirk Harbor. Interestingly, a very rare adult Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) overlapped the appearance of this bird at this location.

2006 Report Accepted

"Thayer's" Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides thayeri*)

2006-81-A One, Perinton, **Monroe**, 22 Feb (David Wheeler, ph D. Wheeler)

Found by David Wheeler and Brad Carlson near a landfill in Monroe County, this juvenile "Thayer's" Gull was nicely photographed. Although spread-wing shots of this species are always desirable, these were not obtained in this instance. However, the Committee felt that all visible features on this bird were consistent with this subspecies and outside of the range displayed by Kumlien's Iceland Gulls (*L. g. kumlieni*). In 2017, the American Ornithological Society (AOS, formerly the AOU) relegated Thayer's Gull (*L. thayeri*) to a subspecies of Iceland Gull (*L. g. thayeri*). The Committee is still interested in reviewing well-documented reports of this subspecies, preferably accompanied by photographs.

2005 Report Accepted

Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*)

2005-78-B One, Derby Hill, **Oswego**, 11 May (David Wheeler, ph Gerard Phillips)

This report documented the same bird previously accepted by the Committee as 2005-78-A.

2004 Reports Accepted

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

2004-23-B One, Fair Haven SP, **Cayuga**, 5 Mar (David Wheeler, ph D. Wheeler); eBird 6, 7 Mar

This report documented the same bird previously accepted by the Committee as 2004-23-A.

Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*)

2004-93-A One, Pennellville, **Oswego**, 25 May (David Wheeler, ph D. Wheeler)

This Franklin's Gull was found by Kevin McGann in a flooded farm field in late May. From Wheeler's photo, it appears to be an adult in basic plumage.

2003 Report Accepted

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

2003-11-D One, Oswego, **Oswego**, 2 Mar (David Wheeler, ph Gerard Phillips); eBird 1, 2 Mar

This report documented the same bird previously accepted by the Committee as 2003-11-A/C. Through correspondence with David Wheeler, who found this bird, he saw it on 1 and 2 Mar, though his NYSARC submission only indicates observation on 2 Mar. Wheeler indicated that that all of his photos that were taken on 1 Mar were out of focus, which may be why he only indicated 2 Mar as the date of observation in his submission. However, Wheeler did report the bird to eBird for 1 Mar.

1988 Report Accepted

Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*)

1988-19-A One, Tift Nature Preserve, **Erie**, 5 Sep (Alec Humann)

This old report was written shortly after the sighting. It was reviewed and accepted by the records committee of the Buffalo Ornithological Society in 1988 but was not submitted to NYSARC until recently. This is a very rare species in the State, with only seven reports reviewed and accepted by NYSARC. What makes this report even more unusual is that it was in the fall, when there have been no other records in New York and very few for the Northeast. Although the observer was relatively inexperienced at the time, his thorough description was

convincing to the Committee. The bird was foraging in dense undergrowth, where it was patiently and carefully studied for about ten minutes.

2013 Reports Not Accepted

Frigatebird species (*Fregata species*)

2013-40-A One, Holtsville, Suffolk, 21 May

This bird was observed in flight very briefly from a vehicle moving along the Long Island Expressway. The description was also very brief, though a sketch was included in the report to show the shape of the bird that was observed. Presumably the observer did not have enough time or a good enough view to study the plumage pattern. Although some Committee members thought the report could be correct, giving credence to the observer's experience with Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregatta magnificens*) in Florida and Central America, there was not enough support to accept it.

Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*)

2013-63-A One, Spencerport, Monroe, 10 Sep

This was another very brief observation made while driving. The bird was on a rock with its wings spread, as if drying them. There was no discussion of how similar species were ruled out, in particular, Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*).

Zone-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albonotatus*)

2013-59-A One, Brooklyn, Kings, no date given

This was another very brief report by an inexperienced birder that did not include a date. No attempt was made to rule out more likely species and the report did not even convincingly describe a hawk.

Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*)

2013-70-A One, Wappingers Falls, Dutchess, 2 Sep

This report included a minimal description of a bird in flight. Although the observer considered Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*), Committee members could not be sure that this was even a shorebird.

Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*)

2013-65-A One, Bellmore, Nassau, 30 Sep

This small gull was seen on the water and in flight with Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*). The bill was described as black and tipped yellow, suggesting an adult Sabine's Gull. A darker gray mantle than the Ring-billed Gulls also supports the identification as an adult Sabine's Gull. The gull lacked a hood with a dark smudge noted behind the eye and on the neck. The great rarity of this species on Long Island, especially at a freshwater pond several miles away from the coast, led the Committee to be especially cautious about this record. Committee members were troubled by the incomplete and rather vague

description of the wing pattern, with no mention at all of any white, which is a striking feature of this species. The length of view was relatively brief, only a couple of minutes, and Committee members were concerned that a Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) with an aberrant bill pattern was not ruled out. After much discussion, the report was not accepted.

“Thayer’s” Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides thayeri*)

2013-16-A One, Syracuse, **Onondaga**, 26 Jan

In 2017 the American Ornithological Society (AOS, formerly the AOU) relegated Thayer’s Gull (*L. thayeri*) to a subspecies of Iceland Gull (*L. g. thayeri*). The Committee is still interested in reviewing well-documented reports of this subspecies, preferably accompanied by photographs. This report of a first cycle “white-winged” gull was accompanied by helpful photos. Some on the Committee noted that it was possible that the bird could belong to this subspecies but, if so, it was an individual at the pale end of the spectrum. However, all agreed that a dark “Kumlien’s” Iceland Gull (*L. g. kumlieni*) could not be ruled out.

Nutting’s Flycatcher (*Myiarchus nuttingi*)

2013-77-A One, Jones Beach, **Nassau**, 16 Nov

Nutting’s Flycatcher is a Mexican species that has no history of vagrancy in North America outside of the Southwestern U.S., so a record in New York would be extraordinary. This bird was viewed by many. Photos were obtained by others but none were submitted with this report. The bird was originally identified as an Ash-throated Flycatcher (*M. cinerascens*), and most of the people who viewed it and also submitted it to eBird identified it as that species. Nutting’s and Ash-throated Flycatchers are extremely similar with subtle structural and plumage differences. Some characters which may be helpful in identification, such as the color of the wing edgings and the pattern of the undertail, are not helpful in ruling out a juvenile/first-winter Ash-throated, which this bird was believed to be based upon retained greater coverts. The two species are best separated by voice (Howell *et al.* 2014), which, on this bird, reportedly was not heard by anyone. The color of the mouth lining is reported by some guides as being a helpful separating feature (e.g. *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, third edition) but it is not mentioned in Sibley (2014) or Howell *et al.* (2014). The observer indicated that there were reports that some photos showed this feature but we were unable to turn up any such photos during this review. The Committee felt that the identification of this bird as a Nutting’s Flycatcher was not supported and that no features were inconsistent with juvenile/first-winter Ash-throated Flycatcher.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*)

2013-38-A/B One, Williamstown, **Oswego**, 18 May

This was a brief sighting by two observers in a van, who watched the bird fly across the road in front of them, then fly back to the same side from which it

came, and then fly out of sight. Views were without the aid of optics but both observers were quite familiar with the species from many visits to Texas. They both exclaimed and identified the bird at the same time. The description noted a “scissor tail” that was about twice as long as the body and that the head and body were white. Although some on the Committee felt that experienced birders were unlikely to misidentify such a distinctive species, even with such a brief view, others were concerned by the lack of details. In particular, not noting the distinctive salmon color on the belly or underwing seemed to be a major omission. The second report received did not add any independent details but instead recounted a failed attempt to locate the bird two days later, as well as notes on correspondence with the original reporters. Birders need to be aware that birds with missing feathers can occasionally appear to be “scissor-tailed.” While this is a distinctive feature of this species, it is not diagnostic, in and of itself. The Committee was split on this report and could not muster the votes to accept it.

Cassin’s Vireo (*Vireo cassinii*)

2013-72-A One, Wappingers Falls, **Dutchess**, 19 Oct

This report from an experienced observer was relatively brief and unaccompanied by additional supporting evidence, such as photos. For such a difficult identification, Committee members were in agreement that this was far short of what is required for what would be only the second record of this species in the State.

McKay’s Bunting (*Plectrophenax hyperboreus*)

2013-2-A/B Three, Harrisville, **Lewis**, 8, 9 Jan

This report included brief descriptions from two observers that did not rule out nor, it seems, even consider Snow Bunting (*P. nivalis*). There has never been an acceptable record of McKay’s Bunting in New York, and with only very few records in states and provinces outside of Alaska. Its occurrence in New York is not to be expected and could be difficult to prove, even with good photos.

Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis aikenii*)

2013-28-A One, Stony Point, **Rockland**, 25 Jan

Known as the “White-winged” Junco, this subspecies of Dark-eyed Junco has a restricted breeding range from southeastern Montana to northwestern Nebraska (Nolan *et al.* 2002). Records in the East are exceedingly rare. Described as being larger than the regular juncos at the feeding station with two very distinct wingbars, this bird made for an intriguing report. Unfortunately, without photos, corroborating reports, or additional description such as the shade of gray in comparison to the other juncos, the Committee voted not to accept it. It should be noted that “Slate-colored” Junco (*J. h. hyemalis*), the subspecies expected in the State, can sometimes show wingbars.

Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Setophaga nigrescens*)

2013-71-A One, Wappingers Falls, **Dutchess**, 20 Sep

This bird was seen with a flock of fall warblers, including the superficially similar Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*). The report lacked photos but was somewhat suggestive. However, the description was brief and incomplete, falling short of what is needed to confirm such a rare species.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)

2013-58-A One, Brooklyn, **Kings**, no date given

This bird was found by a new but avid birder. Although the description provided was not unlike that of a male Western Tanager, the size of the bird and the shape, and notably the bill-shape, were omitted from the description. The date was also omitted. Without these important details, the Committee could not accept the report.

Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

2013-53-A Eight, Southwick Beach SP, **Jefferson**, 20-26 Jun

Males, females, and adults feeding young were reported at the observer's campsite, being seen multiple times each day over a one-week period. While the report considers Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), "Grackles", and Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) as possible identifications, the size being smaller than a Red-winged Blackbird is not appropriate for this species. Of course, the most likely confusion species, Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*), would be even larger. Thus, the description of a very dark black shiny bird with whitish eyes, along with purple head and green body iridescence, is certainly suggestive of a male Brewer's Blackbird. The females were described as "dull gray/brown with dark eyes," again not at odds for a female Brewer's Blackbird. However, eight individuals, apparently breeding, would indicate a significant range extension for a species that has been retracting its range in the East in recent years. This fact, the oddly small size noted, the inappropriate habitat, and the lack of photos to support the record led the Committee to not accept in the first round of review.

2012 Report Not Accepted

Herald (Trinidad) Petrel (*Pterodroma arminjoniana*)

2012-123-A One, **Suffolk**, 1 Aug

While on a cruise ship from Bermuda to Port Newark, N.J., this experienced birder saw and photographed this bird, using GPS coordinates to confirm the location as being in New York's pelagic waters. Four photos were submitted along with the report. The observer noted that Cory's (*Calonectris diomedea*) and Great (*Ardenna gravis*) Shearwaters, seen in proximity to this bird, were markedly larger and this is supported by one photo showing the bird in question being practically dwarfed by a Great Shearwater. Though other aspects of the photos appeared to support the identification, the size difference was deemed to

be too great and some felt that Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) could not be ruled out. The Committee voted not to accept in the second round of review.

2008 Report Not Accepted

Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*)

2008-105-A One, Pelagic, 3 Feb

This was a bird that was poorly seen on the water, then in flight, during an organized pelagic trip. The description was brief and the Committee was unable to find anything in eBird to corroborate the report. Given these difficulties, the Committee felt that Common Murre could not be ruled out and opted not to accept.

2005 Report Not Accepted

Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis* – *oreganus* group)

2005-85-A One, Derby Hill, Oswego, 15 Apr

This report lacked a description and relied on the photos. Some on the Committee thought that this bird was unlikely to be a “Slate-colored” Junco (*J. h. hyemalis*), the expected subspecies in the State but they were also not convinced that this was an “Oregon” Junco or of the *oreganus* group of subspecies. Some felt that a “Cassiar” Junco (*J. h. cismontanus*) was not ruled out. Lacking support for the *oreganus* group, the report was not accepted.

1994 Report Not Accepted

Swainson’s Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

1994-15-A One, Hamlin, Monroe, 12 Mar

This report was previously accepted by the Committee (see Andrle *et al.* 1996). Noted raptor expert, Jerry Liguori, requested that the Committee reexamine the report, citing what is now known to be an extraordinarily early date. Under NYSARC Guidelines, a report may be reopened for review if at least three Committee members agree that it should be. The threshold was met and the review process was restarted. The documentation consisted of a written submission from one observer. As part of the review, the Committee contacted another birder, who was with the person who submitted the report during the observation of the bird in question. While the description was generally consistent with the species, some points raised questions among the Committee, including the failure to fully address likely confusion species, as well as conflicting information from the second observer, which ultimately led the Committee to unanimously overturn the previous accept vote.

1986 Report Not Accepted

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*)

1983-16-B One, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, **Queens**, 16 Jul

This report documented the same bird previously rejected by the Committee as 1983-16-A, which at the time was only the second claim of this species in New York. The observer used his notes at the time of the sighting to write his report, which he submitted nearly 30 years after the sighting. While the initial report, report A, was widely believed to be correct, due to the well-known reputation of the person reporting it, the lack of description or other supporting evidence prevented the earlier Committee from accepting it. Although the original report called the bird an adult, report B referred to the bird as a juvenile on multiple occasions, despite the distinct difference in appearance between the two age classes, and despite being shown the bird by the original observer who submitted report A. In addition some Committee members felt that report B also did not really describe an adult that well and suspected that he may have been studying the wrong bird. With this discrepancy, the Committee was unable to overturn the previous decision to reject the record.

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