

REPORT OF THE NEW YORK STATE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE FOR 2014

The New York State Avian Records Committee (hereafter “NYSARC” or the “Committee”) evaluated 123 submissions involving 69 occurrences of New York State review species from 2014, including 30 submissions involving four occurrences of potential first State records. Additionally, the Committee evaluated 4 submissions involving four occurrences of New York State review species from previous years. Reports were received from across the state, with 25 of the 62 counties represented plus the pelagic zone. The number of reports accompanied by photographs remains high and naturally benefits the value of the archive. The Committee wishes to remind readers that reports submitted to eBird, 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). The growing use of the Internet and mobile phones has had a very positive impact on the timely dissemination of rare bird sightings and has made it easier for birders to locate rarities found by others. The Committee has always held that receipt of multiple independent reports provides a much fuller documentation of the sighting and can in some cases increase the likelihood of acceptance. We therefore urge ALL observers, not just the finder, to submit written reports and/or photographs. The names of the 90 contributors that submitted materials (written reports, photographs, video and audio recordings, and sketches) 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. Production of this Annual Report is a team effort. In addition to the contributors referenced above, several *Kingbird* Regional Editors have helped observers to prepare and submit documentation.

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. 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 get your report to Gary:

Gary Chapin
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Ticonderoga, NY 12883
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HIGHLIGHTS

It was another remarkable year for vagrants in New York State. A mind-boggling four species were added to the official checklist – Willow Ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*), Fea's Petrel (*Pterodroma feae*), Couch's Kingbird (*Tyrannus couchii*), and Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*). Nearly as amazing, there were four species that appeared for just the second time – Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), Common Ground Dove (*Columbina passerina*), Cassin's Kingbird (*Tyrannus vociferans*), and only a few days after the first State record, Kirtland's Warbler. Throw in the three seabirds that turned up far inland and you would have to call 2014 a truly phenomenal year for birds in New York. And this does not even include the 56 Band-rumped Storm-Petrels (*Oceanodroma castro*) that were found on a single pelagic trip!

COMMITTEE NEWS

The 2014 annual meeting was held via Skype on 3 Mar 2018, less than six months after the 2013 annual meeting. Note that the meeting year refers to the latest reports reviewed at that meeting. For example, at the 2014 annual meeting we mainly reviewed reports of birds seen in 2014 along with a few reports from earlier years. As many readers are aware, Skype allows two or more people to meet remotely through the use of their computers. Although there were a few technical difficulties, the consensus from the eight Committee members was that the Skype meeting was a great success. With Committee members at both ends of the state, physical meetings are much more difficult for everyone involved. The use of Skype should allow the Committee to meet more frequently and to make headway on the review backlog. In the 2014 annual meeting the Committee discussed and completed the voting for about two dozen reports that were not finalized prior to the meeting. Review of eBird reports was discussed again. NYSARC has already started using eBird to help establish the full date range of occurrence of individual rarities that have been accepted by the Committee. In addition at times we have used eBird reports to supplement formal submissions to NYSARC, as with better or additional photographs, for

example. With the vastly increased use of eBird, it has become evident that NYSARC will need to more fully incorporate eBird into the review process in order to maintain a complete picture of the status of review species in the state. A few other state committees have incorporated review of eBird records, and NYSARC is hoping to leverage these efforts to bring more eBird records into the Committee's review process. After the extensive changes to the review list agreed upon in the 2013 annual meeting, the Committee decided that further changes were not necessary at this time. The terms of Andy Guthrie, Doug Gochfeld, and Derek Rogers were noted as ending at the end of 2018. Potential new Committee members were discussed. Further actions concerning the Committee make-up were tabled pending email discussion in the ensuing weeks and will be detailed in the 2015 annual report.

2014 Reports Accepted

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*)

2014-21-A/C Six, Morningside Park, **Sullivan**, 24 Jun (John H. Haas, Renee Davis, Kenneth M. McDermott, ph J. Haas, Mary Collier)

Six unusual-looking ducks were discovered by Carl Lindsley at Morningside Park on 24 Jun. He brought Renee Davis to see them, and she immediately recognized them as Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks. Others were alerted and got to see and photograph these birds, which were not found after this day. Records of this southern species in the East have exploded in recent years. This is the eighth accepted record in New York from 2010 through 2014.

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

2014-3-A/B One, Riverhead, **Suffolk**, 16, 27 Jan (Arie Gilbert, Eileen Schwinn, ph A. Gilbert, E. Schwinn). eBird 16 Jan-19 Mar

2014-45-A One, Riverhead, **Suffolk**, 9 Nov (Derek Rogers, ph D. Rogers)

2014-71-A Two, Riverhead, **Suffolk**, 1-2 Mar (Derek Rogers, ph D. Rogers)

The Riverhead area of eastern Long Island has garnered the most records of this relatively recent addition to New York's avifauna. The first bird found there in 2014 was discovered in January by Arie Gilbert and his companions, who quickly posted the sighting, allowing many others to see it that day and into March. On 1 and 2 Mar, Derek Rogers found two Pink-footed Geese at the Riverhead fields, one assumed to be the bird found by Gilbert and the other a new arrival. One bird was subsequently reported to eBird in the area as late as 19 Mar, though it is not possible to tell whether this was the long-staying bird or the newer arrival. On 9 Nov, Rogers found the first fall/winter migrant of 2014 at the Riverhead fields. Despite getting the word out immediately, apparently he was the only observer. Rogers was excited to have the opportunity to hear the bird call on several occasions.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

2014-54-A One, Smithtown, **Suffolk**, 29 Nov (Derek Rogers, ph D. Rogers)

Initially reported earlier in the day by David La Magna, this Barnacle Goose was nicely documented by Derek Rogers. It was not reported in the area after this day. Due to numerous records in recent years, it was decided at the September 2017 NYSARC meeting that reports of this species in downstate areas will no longer be reviewed. Documentation for upstate occurrences is still encouraged.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

2014-2-A One, Buffalo, **Erie**, 9 Jan (William Watson)

2014-12-A/B One, Buffalo, **Erie**, 6 Apr (William Watson, James Pawlicki, ph J. Pawlicki, Rick Bacher)

2014-55-A One, Buffalo, **Erie**, 23 Nov (William Watson, ph W. Watson). eBird 23-25 Nov

Bill Watson and Jim Pawlicki documented three sightings of female/immature male Tufted Ducks at the headwaters of the Niagara River in Buffalo during 2014. The January and November sightings involved a bird with a noticeable tuft, believed by some to be the same bird seen in the area during 2012 and 2013. The April bird had a negligible tuft and is considered likely to be a different individual. The November discovery was made by Alec Humann.

Willow Ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*)

2014-8-A/H One, Point Peninsula, **Jefferson**, 25-27 Apr (Kevin McGann, Derek H. Rogers, Kimberly Sucy, Arie Gilbert, Mark Magistro Jr., William Watson, Bernie Carr, Jeff Bolsinger, ph Alex Lamoreaux, D. Rogers, K. Sucy, A. Gilbert, M. Magistro Jr., J. Bolsinger)

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

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)

2014-67-A One, Barker Bicentennial Park, **Niagara**, 18 Apr (Willie D'Anna, ph W. D'Anna)

While scoping and counting Red-necked Grebes (*Podiceps grisegena*) well out on Lake Ontario, Willie D'Anna came across this Western Grebe. He watched the bird for two hours until two other birders arrived, and he was able to obtain some diagnostic digiscoped images. It was only seen by these three birders on the one day.

Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

2014-20-A/C One, Chelsea Waterside Park and Piers, Manhattan, **New York**, 22 Jun, 3 Jul (David J. Ringer, Patrick Baglee, Angus Wilson, ph D. Ringer, P. Baglee). eBird 4 Jul-24 Jul, 9 Aug, 16, 28 Nov, 12, 27 Dec

2014-59-A One, Wilson-Tuscarora State Park, **Niagara**, 29 Aug (Betsy Potter)

While birding at Wilson-Tuscarora State Park next to Wilson Harbor, Betsy Potter heard the song of the Eurasian Collared-Dove, a species she recognized from her visits to Florida. She was able to track the bird down and get a brief view of it before it flew off. Although there were no more sightings here, a bird was photographed at a feeding station a little over a mile from there the following December, perhaps suggesting that this individual stayed in the general area. Manhattan's first-ever Eurasian Collared-Dove was discovered by David Ringer and documented by Ringer, Patrick Baglee, and Angus Wilson. The bird apparently stayed in the area for months, as there are eBird reports from the area up until 27 Dec 2014, albeit with long gaps of up to two plus months between sightings. Interestingly, there are two validated eBird reports from Inwood Hill Park in northern Manhattan from 16 Jul and 3 Sep, which, based upon the descriptions of missing tail feathers, would be a different individual.

Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*)

2014-61-A One, Jones Beach, **Nassau**, 11, 16, 29 Nov (Arie Gilbert, ph A. Gilbert). eBird 2 Nov-8 Dec

Initially discovered by Sam Janazzo at Jones Beach State Park West End, this Common Ground-Dove was documented by Arie Gilbert. The many eBird reports indicated that the bird stayed for over a month, with the last sighting on 8 Dec. The bird was missing its tail feathers, which may have induced it to stay longer than it might have otherwise. That said, New York's first Common Ground-Dove in 2010 also stayed a lengthy three weeks. This was only the second record for the state, with the first appearing at nearby Captree State Park (Wilson *et al.* 2012).

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*)

2014-50-A/B One, Westhampton Beach, **Suffolk**, 16 Nov (David Klauber, Pat Palladino, ph Derek Rogers)

2014-58-A One, Blasdell, **Erie**, 25 Aug (Mike Zebehazy, ph Dennis Russell)

2014-68-A One, Cupsogue County Park, **Suffolk**, 10 Jun (Willie D'Anna, ph Sue Barth)

White-winged Dove has a history of showing up on Long Island, likely dispersants from the burgeoning population in the southeastern United States. In 2014 two Long Island records were documented for NYSARC. The first was at Cupsogue County Park on 10 Jun, discovered by Sue Barth, Celeste Morien, and Willie D'Anna, and the second was at Westhampton Beach on 16 Nov, found by David Klauber and Bobby Rosetti. Both were one-day-only sightings. There are two other Long Island records in 2014 in eBird, one at Montauk and one at Fort Tilden, both supported by clear photographs. Another White-winged Dove, this one just south of Buffalo, was documented for NYSARC by Michael Zebehazy on behalf of the observer/photographer, Dennis Russell.

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)

2014-38-A One, Smyrna, **Chenango**, 30 Sep (Robert P. Yunick)

Master bander, Robert Yunick, was invited to Gertrude Federici's residence to capture and band this bird. Yunick identified the bird from measurements as a hatch-year female Rufous Hummingbird. According to the homeowner the bird was present from 25 Sep to 1 Oct.

Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinicus*)

2014-70-A One, Peru, **Clinton**, 17 Aug (William Krueger, ph W. Krueger)

This Purple Gallinule specimen was found by Elizabeth Cummings along State Route 9 in Clinton County and subsequently collected by Jacob Straub and placed into the SUNY Plattsburgh collection. The record was documented with a report and a photo by Bill Krueger. While the majority of records are from late summer and fall, as is this one, they span over most of the year, including the winter months (DiCostanzo 1998). Unfortunately, a relatively high proportion of records of this species involve specimens.

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*)

2014-16-A One, Staten Island, **Richmond**, 5, 10 May (Catherine Barron). eBird 4-11 May

Found by Richard Veit on 4 May, this Black-necked Stilt on Staten Island was observed and documented by Catherine Barron on 5 and 10 May. There are also multiple eBird reports, including some with diagnostic photos.

Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*)

2014-9-A One, Cupsogue County Park, **Suffolk**, 29 Apr (Justin LeClaire, ph J. LeClaire). eBird 6 May

This bird was discovered by Justin LeClaire as he was monitoring Piping Plovers (*C. melodus*) as part of a team from Virginia Tech. LeClaire observed this or another bird again on 6 May (eBird 2018).

Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

2014-30-A/C One, Cupsogue County Park, **Suffolk**, 24 Aug (John Gluth, Arie Gilbert, Douglas J. Futuyma, ph J. Gluth, D. Futuyma)

This one-day wonder was found by Andrew Baksh on the Moriches Inlet mud flats off of Cupsogue County Park. A difficult identification, with Semipalmated Plover (*C. semipalmatus*) being very similar, this remarkable record is only the second for New York, with the first at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge on 13 Sep 2005. The Moriches Inlet bird was an adult male.

Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*)

2014-27-A/B One, Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area, **Niagara**, 28 Jul (William Watson, Willie D'Anna, ph W. D'Anna, Sue Barth)

Reports of Ruff have been on the uptick in recent years, with the 2014 record marking the ninth accepted by the Committee in only three years. This year's record was discovered by Alec Humann at Tonawanda WMA in Niagara County. Humann got the word out quickly, allowing several birders to see it before it disappeared the following day. This bird was either a female or a faeder-type male. Faeder males are believed to permanently mimic the plumage of females in order to surreptitiously steal matings on the lek when a female crouches to solicit copulation (Jukema and Piersma 2006). Distinguishing faeder males from females by plumage alone may not be possible in the field. In the hand a faeder male may be told by its wing length, which is intermediate between those of displaying males and females (Karlionova *et al.* 2007).

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

2014-37-A One, Fort Niagara State Park, **Niagara**, 24 Aug (James Pawlicki, ph J. Pawlicki)

This juvenile Long-tailed Jaeger was seen by Jim Pawlicki as it was flying by over a half-mile out on Lake Ontario. Surprisingly, the jaeger turned in toward shore and came within 100 yards of Pawlicki, allowing him to snap some beautiful diagnostic images. Long-tailed Jaeger has been shown to be a regular migrant on Lake Ontario from annual observations at the west end of the lake in Hamilton, Ontario. In more recent years, multiple records have been captured at the southeastern corner of the lake from Derby Hill and from Hamlin Beach State Park near Rochester. Identifying distant jaegers over the lake remains challenging, however, and observers are urged to carefully consider the more likely and very similar Parasitic Jaeger (*S. parasiticus*) before claiming a record of this species. Naturally, photographs can be of immense value in helping to confirm a Long-tailed Jaeger.

Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*)

2014-28-A One, Fort Ann, **Washington**, 27 May (Jeremy J. Kirchman, ph J. Kirchman)

A worker on the farm of Alex Parent in Fort Ann, Washington County, found this adult female Atlantic Puffin alive in the yard by the homestead. The DEC picked the bird up and took it to a bird rehabilitation center, but, unfortunately, it did not survive the day. The pathology report concluded that the bird likely died of starvation. The specimen is now at the New York State Museum (NYSM 16642). The Committee is indebted to the Museum's Curator of Birds, Jeremy Kirchman, for these details as well as the report with photos that documented the record. There is one other record of this species occurring inland in New York. That record concerned a bird that was found alive in a weakened condition near Rhinebeck, Dutchess Co., on 27 Sep 1963 but which died the following day (Bull 1974). The specimen was mounted and placed in the collection of the State University of New York at New Paltz, Ulster Co. While noting this record, Bull placed doubts on its legitimacy by citing the inland locality and the "remarkably

early date” as raising the possibility that it was a captive bird (Bull 1974). This does not seem very likely, however. In support of the likelihood that this was a legitimate vagrant are North Carolina’s first state record, found on a pelagic trip on 14 Aug 1993, and a specimen record from Florida found on 1 Oct 1998 (eBird 2018, Pranty 1999). There are other Aug and Sep reports of this species from off the coast of Massachusetts (eBird 2018). Perhaps Bull’s concerns influenced the authors and editors of Bull’s Birds of New York State, who also suggested that it could have been a captive bird (Lolya 1998).

Mew Gull (*Larus canus canus*)

2014-64-A One, Brooklyn, **Kings**, 26 Jan (Andrew Baksh, ph A. Baksh). eBird 24-26 Jan

This adult Mew Gull was found on 24 Jan by Shane Blodgett. It was documented for NYSARC by Andrew Baksh, who included three helpful photos. As is typical of coastal records of this species, it belonged to the nominate European race, *L. c. canus*, also known as Common Gull and recognized by some authorities (e.g. Sibley 1996) as a separate species from the North American race, *L. c. brachyrhynchus*.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

2014-24-A One, Somerset Lake, **Delaware**, 27 Jun (Alan Ryff)

From her dock on Somerset Lake in Delaware County, Margaret Jewitt spotted a tern flying over the water. Any kind of gull or tern was unusual there, so she asked Alan Ryff to come see the bird. Ryff immediately recognized the bird as a small *Sterna* tern, likely a Common (*S. hirundo*) or Forster’s (*S. forsteri*), species that he was very familiar with from 55 years of birding in the Great Lakes area. Since the bird was in poor light, the two observers drove to a different vantage point on the lake, where they obtained excellent close views in binoculars and spotting scope as the bird flew about and foraged. After several minutes of study, the bird gained elevation and appeared to depart the lake. Ryff’s thorough, detailed description described an adult Arctic Tern in alternate plumage and convincingly ruled out other possibilities. Although now a regular early summer migrant to the outer beaches of Long Island, inland reports of Arctic Tern in New York are exceptionally rare, with only four prior reports from there that have been reviewed and accepted by NYSARC.

Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*)

2014-32-A One, Sagaponack, **Suffolk**, 2 Sep (Arie Gilbert, Philip Uruburu, ph A. Gilbert)

This basic plumaged adult Sandwich Tern was found by Arie Gilbert, with Phil Uruburu. This extends the streak of consecutive years with an acceptable record of this species in the state to eight.

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

2014-51-A One, Hudson Canyon, **Pelagic (Suffolk)**, 12 Aug (Sean Sime, ph S. Sime)

Continuing the trend of late summer sightings in recent years, this White-faced Storm-Petrel was found during a See Life Paulagics trip, organized by Paul Guris. The documentation, provided by Sean Sime, included two diagnostic photos.

Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*)

2014-52-A Fifty-six, Hudson Canyon, **Pelagic (Suffolk)**, 12 Aug (Sean Sime, ph S. Sime)

With only two prior records accepted by NYSARC, few people were expecting 56 Band-rumped Storm-Petrels to be found in New York waters on a single pelagic trip. This remarkable number was seen on a See Life Paulagics trip and is another testament to the fine work that “pelagic pioneers” are doing in the exploration of New York’s pelagic zone. Sean Sime documented these birds and included several photos. Although he only personally saw “roughly 40,” the official trip total was 56. This number is supported by eBird reports from three locations with totals of 52, two, and two individuals.

Fea’s Petrel (*Pterodroma feae*)

2014-48-A/B One, Coordinates of 39.41 degrees North, 72.16667 West, **Pelagic (Suffolk)**, 12 Aug (Doug Gochfeld, Sean Sime, ph D. Gochfeld, S. Sime)

This Fea’s Petrel, discovered on an organized pelagic trip, was the first fully accepted record in New York State. See Wilson *et al.* (2016) for a full account.

Great Shearwater (*Ardenna gravis*)

2014-49-A One, DeRuyter Reservoir, **Madison**, 18 Jul (Bill Purcell, ph B. Purcell)

This is a remarkable record of a highly pelagic species found in the woods alongside a tributary of the DeRuyter Reservoir in Madison County. The finder, Gian Dodici, photographed the bird and then picked it up and released it on the nearby reservoir. It was seen by numerous birders that day but did not appear to be in good health and was captured by a rehabilitator. Unfortunately, it died the following day. The documentation, provided by Bill Purcell, included a close photo of the shearwater on the water. Additional details of this event, including other inland records in and around New York, are discussed by Perry and Wheeler (2014). There are only two prior inland records of Great Shearwater in the state (Askildsen 1998).

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*)

2014-31-A One, Fort Tilden, **Queens**, 29 Aug (Lukas Musher, ph L. Musher)

2014-39-A One, Crown Point State Historic Site, **Essex**, 23 Aug (Gary Chapin, ph G. Chapin). eBird 23-26 Aug and 2 Sep. Note: the 2 Sep record was from

Noblewood Park, further north in Essex County.

The Brown Booby seen at a great distance from Fort Tilden was documented by Lukas Musher, who watched the bird with Corey Finger. Musher is an experienced seabird watcher, having gained experience at Southeast Farallon Island off California, as well as at several places on the Atlantic Ocean. Despite the great distance, estimated at four to seven kilometers (2.5-4 miles), Musher recognized the species almost immediately as being different from a Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*), the expected sulid on the east coast, by its flight style. The dark head and neck, sharply demarcated from the clean white belly, and the lack of white on the uppertail coverts helped to firmly rule out a gannet. In 2013, New York had its first inland record of Brown Booby when one showed up on Lake Erie at the source of the Niagara River in Buffalo (Pawlicki 2014). That individual was part of a larger incursion of the species up the East coast and in the Southwest. Less than one year later, New York's second inland occurrence was found by Gary Chapin on Lake Champlain. Chapin's documentation included photographs of the Booby, both on the ground and in flight.

Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*)

2014-18-A/B One, Town of Wilson, **Niagara**, 24-25 May (William Watson, Willie D'Anna, ph W. D'Anna). eBird 24-30 May

While birding with Betsy Potter and Sue Barth, Willie D'Anna found this Tricolored Heron foraging from some docks and a large willow tree on the west side of Twelve Mile Creek, close to where it empties into Lake Ontario. Numerous birders were able to see this locally rare heron during its one-week stay.

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*)

2014-23-A/B One, Captree Island, **Suffolk**, 22 May & 11 Jun (Derek H. Rogers, Willie D'Anna, ph D. Rogers, Sue Barth). eBird 16 May-13 Jun

This bird was found by Ken Feustel on 16 May and seen by many over the course of its nearly four-week stay. It was often easy to pick out among the Glossy Ibis (*P. falcinellus*) it associated with by its non-breeding plumage. Birders could then look for the red iris and facial skin to confirm the identification.

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*)

2014-6-A One, North Bellmore, **Nassau**, 14 Apr (Robert Proniewych)

2014-7-A One, Prospect Park, **Kings**, 14 Apr (Jennifer Kepler, ph J. Kepler)

2014-15-A One, Geneva, **Ontario**, 15 May (Charles Rouse)

The three records of Swallow-tailed Kite in 2014 make a total of eight in just three years that have been accepted by NYSARC. The birds in North Bellmore and Prospect Park were seen on the same day and around the same time, precluding the possibility of there being just one individual involved. Both were naked-eye observations, with the Prospect Park bird photographed by the

observer, Jennifer Kepler. Though binoculars were not used in either observation, this species is so distinctive that the important distinguishing features were still well seen and noted by the observers. Much rarer than the downstate sightings, Charlie Rouse observed a Swallow-tailed Kite in Ontario County in central New York State. Like the others, Rouse had no binoculars, but he was able to follow the Kite in his car and to stop and get out to observe it flying overhead multiple times.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

2014-13-A One, Greenwood Cemetery, **Kings**, 10 May (Jennifer Kepler, ph J. Kepler). eBird 11 May

2014-14-A Two, Town of Root, **Montgomery**, 13 May (Chris Keefer, ph C. Keefer)

2014-25-A One, New York Botanical Garden, **Bronx**, 11 July (James C. Dawe)

2014-69-A One, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, **Queens**, 17 May (Doug Gochfeld, ph D. Gochfeld)

Records of Mississippi Kite continue to accrue in New York, with a good proportion coming from the New York City metro area. On 10 May, Jennifer Kepler photographed one over Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn. On 17 May, Doug Gochfeld photographed an apparent second year bird over Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. On 11 July, a Michigan birder saw an apparent adult over the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx. The latter sighting was by a very experienced birder who was at the gardens to study the plants and thus, did not have binoculars with him. However, his lengthy study and description were compelling to the Committee. Finally, two birds were photographed 13 May while perched a few miles from the only confirmed successful breeding site in the state, in Montgomery County. One bird was observed bringing food to the other, a behavior typical of pair-bonding between mates. Unfortunately, the birds were apparently not found afterward, as there are no validated eBird reports and no reports in *The Kingbird*.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

2014-65-A One, Braddock Bay, **Monroe**, 10 Apr (Willie D'Anna)

This dark-morph Swainson's Hawk was seen migrating with Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) at the venerable Braddock Bay hawk-watch. There was a heavy flight of raptors and vultures on this day, with many observers present to witness the spectacle. Long-time hawk-watcher Frank Nicoletti, who was visiting the site where he had been the official counter many years ago, spotted and identified the Swainson's, whereupon the assembled throng of birders oohed and aahed as it passed by overhead.

Great Gray Owl (*Strix nebulosa*)

2014-4-A One, Town of Orleans, **Jefferson**, 3 Feb (Ed Sykes, ph E. Sykes)

This submission, from Ed Sykes, included a diagnostic photo of a Great Gray

Owl on a branch right next to the trunk of a deciduous tree. Sykes was the only observer, and the bird was never seen again (Jeff Bolsinger, pers. comm.).

Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*)

2014-5-A One, Fort Edward, **Washington**, 6 Apr (Robert P. Yunick, ph Gordon Ellmers)

Robert Yunick was trapping and banding raptors with Alison Van Keuren when Van Keuren noticed a large raptor perched on a snag in a nearby field. Yunick took a brief look at the bird and suspected it could be a Gyr Falcon, but he had to finish processing the American Kestrel (*F. sparverius*) in his trap before he could study it further. Around this time Gordie Ellmers stopped to talk with the two men and was told of the possible Gyr. He went down the road a short ways and began taking photographs, some of which accompany Yunick's NYSARC submission. Eventually, Yunick was able to study the bird and confirm his initial impression, and the word was quickly spread to other birders. From the photographs, this appears to be a rather pale Gyr Falcon of intermediate morph-type. It should be noted that Gyr Falcons do not really show three discrete plumages of dark, gray, and white but rather a continuum from dark to light, such that some birds are difficult to place in one or the other category. The bird appeared to be a juvenile, based on the blue ceres.

Couch's Kingbird (*Tyrannus couchii*)

2014-62-A/N One, Manhattan, **New York**, 23 Dec-9 Jan 2015 (Zack Winestine, Joanne Pawlowski, Richard Guthrie, Angus Wilson, Phil Uruburu, Ardith Bondi, Jamie Koufnan, Klemens Gasser, Thomas W. Burke, Doug Gochfeld, Shawn Billerman, Arie Gilbert, ph Z. Winestine, R. Guthrie, P. Uruburu, A. Bondi, J. Koufnan, Lloyd Spitalnik, Gail Benson, D. Gochfeld, S. Billerman, A. Gilbert, Video Cathy Weiner, Pat Dubren, D. Gochfeld, Sound Recording K. Gasser)

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

Cassin's Kingbird (*Tyrannus vociferans*)

2014-47-A/G One, Floyd Bennett Field, **Kings**, 15, 22-25, 28, 30 Nov, 28 Dec 2014, 1, 2 Jan 2015 (Kai Sheffield, Sean Sime, Richard Guthrie, Arie Gilbert, Thomas W. Burke, Shawn Billerman, Willie D'Anna, ph K. Sheffield, S. Sime, A. Gilbert, Gail Benson, Lloyd Spitalnik, David Speiser, S. Billerman, W. D'Anna). eBird 27, 29 Nov, 1, 4-7, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 23, 27, 30, 31 Dec 2014, 4, 5 Jan 2015

Representing only the second record for New York State, this Cassin's Kingbird was found by Kai Sheffield on 15 Nov. Although birders looked for it during the next few days, it was not until a week later that it was seen again in the same spot it had been observed originally. During the course of its more than seven week stay, the kingbird would disappear for periods of time but always showed

up again at the same spot, the community garden at Floyd Bennett Field. The first record for New York was a bird found at Montauk on 13 Oct 2007 (Wilson *et al.* 2009).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*)

2014-63-A One, Sands Point, **Nassau**, 19 Oct (Glenn Quinn, ph G. Quinn)

While birding at Sands Point on Long Island Sound, Glenn Quinn came across this Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, which he was able to photograph as the bird foraged. It appears to have been an adult with a relatively long tail and obvious pink underwing coverts. Unfortunately, the bird was not seen by anyone else. This record marks the fourteenth accepted in New York State in the previous 18 years.

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*)

2014-35-A One, Hamlin, **Monroe**, 5 Sep (Dominic Sherony, ph D. Sherony)

2014-60-A One, Rockaway Community Park, **Queens**, 5 Oct (Arie Gilbert, ph A. Gilbert)

Andy Guthrie found the Say's Phoebe in Monroe County in the early evening, down the road from his home, and got the word out immediately. This enabled a handful of birders to see it before sunset. The record was documented for NYSARC by Dominic Sherony and appears to be the earliest fall record in the state. The Say's Phoebe at Rockaway Community Park was found by Corey Finger and documented by Arie Gilbert. With both of these records, the bird was only seen the one day.

Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

2014-34-A/C One, Town of Henderson, **Jefferson**, 21-22 Sep (Kevin McGann, Tony Shrimpton, Bill Purcell, ph K. McGann, T. Shrimpton, B. Purcell)

2014-40-A/B One, Plumb Beach Park, **Kings**, 2, 4 Oct (Philip Uruburu, Arie Gilbert, ph A. Gilbert). eBird 1-8 Oct

The Jefferson County Northern Wheatear was found by Tony Shrimpton, who immediately alerted other birders. The bird was seen into the following day before presumably departing. Shane Blodgett found the Plumb Beach Wheatear, and the bird stayed around for several days, allowing it to be seen and documented by Phil Uruburu and Arie Gilbert. The late September-early October time frame is the peak period for this species to appear in New York, and these two records fit nicely into that pattern.

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*)

2014-56-A One, Town of Nelson, **Madison**, 3 Dec (Bill Purcell, ph B. Purcell). eBird 22, 29 Nov-4 Dec, 7 Dec

Brian White first noticed this bird outside a window in his yard. Birders were able to see the Solitaire on White's property up until 7 Dec. Bill Purcell documented the bird for NYSARC.

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*)

2014-29-A/E One, Town of Stanford, **Dutchess**, 22-23 Aug (Frank Margiotta, Liz Martens, Carena Pooth, Barbara Mansell, Barbara Butler, ph C. Pooth, B. Mansell)

While driving, Barbara Mansell received a call on her cell phone. She pulled over to answer it, and, while on the phone, she noticed a Lark Sparrow on a nearby power line! Other birders were alerted and were able to see the bird that day and the next. Mansell and four others submitted documentation to NYSARC. Lark Sparrow is a rare but regular fall visitor to Long Island. Although NYSARC does not request documentation for downstate reports, documentation for upstate sightings such as this are strongly encouraged.

LeConte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*)

2014-42-A/C One, Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, **Genesee**, 22 Oct (William Watson, Kurt A. Fox, James Pawlicki, ph W. Watson, J. Pawlicki)

While successfully searching for Nelson's Sparrows (*A. nelsoni*) at Iroquois NWR, Jim Pawlicki and Joe Mitchell also discovered this LeConte's Sparrow. Pawlicki was able to obtain diagnostic photos and show the bird to others, including Bill Watson and Kurt Fox, who also documented the sighting. Almost all of the non-coastal records of LeConte's Sparrow in New York have occurred in April, May, and October—thus, this record fits neatly into that pattern.

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)

2014-1-A One, Riverhead, **Suffolk**, 7 Jan (Eileen Schwinn). eBird 2 Feb

2014-10-A One, Blasdell, **Erie**, 24 Apr (William Watson)

Ken and Sue Feustel found the likely female Yellow-headed Blackbird at Riverhead on 7 Jan, and Eileen Schwinn was one of a few birders who also got to see it that day. The adult male in Blasdell was reported to the local Audubon chapter and confirmed by Tom Kerr. Bill Watson and a few others were able to see the bird that day, but it was not reported afterwards. Due to an increase in reports of this species, both downstate and upstate, NYSARC will no longer review documentation for this species, effective in 2018.

Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

2014-66-A One, Town of Porter, **Niagara**, 13 Apr (Willie D'Anna)

Brewer's Blackbird formerly occurred in New York State much more frequently, but after the mid 90s, reports have dropped off considerably. Pastures are the most likely habitat to find this species in, and Willie D'Anna was checking one of the relatively few remaining sites in Niagara County when he came across this individual with a mixed flock of Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), Common Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*), and European Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*). Unfortunately, the bird was not in a good position to be digiscoped and before long, the flock took flight. D'Anna and Betsy Potter

spent several minutes trying to relocate the Brewer's Blackbird without success. Although the discovery was put out on local listservs and text alerts, the bird was not seen again.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*)

2014-19-A/F One, Hamlin Beach State Park, **Monroe**, 1 Jun (William Watson, Kimberly Sucy, Dominic Sherony, Glenn Miller, Patricia Martin, Andy Guthrie, ph K. Sucy, D. Sherony, G. Miller, A. Guthrie)

2014-43-A One, Fort Drum, **Jefferson**, 4-18 Jun (Jeffrey S. Bolsinger, ph J. Bolsinger)

The Hamlin Beach record was accepted as the first for New York State. See Wilson *et al.* (2016) for a full account. Appearing just three days after the bird at Hamlin Beach, the Kirtland's Warbler at Fort Drum acted as though it was on breeding territory (Bolsinger 2014). This singing male lingered for two weeks. Until a relatively short time ago, this formerly endangered species had never been found nesting outside of Michigan. In recent years, Kirtland's Warbler has increased in population rather dramatically, nesting now in Wisconsin and southeastern Ontario (Bocetti *et al.* 2014), and the possibility of future occurrences in New York would seem to be very good. As Bolsinger states in his article, although it may seem unlikely, future breeding in New York State is possible.

Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*)

2014-53-A One, Heckscher State Park, **Suffolk**, 8 Oct (Patricia Lindsay)

What Pat Lindsay had planned as a brief check of Heckscher State Park before work turned into a few moments of high excitement when she found a Black-headed Grosbeak. Although she was alone and did not have a camera, she studied the bird as well as she could, carefully noting as much as possible. Being very familiar with the call of the similar Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*P. ludovicianus*) enabled her to immediately cue in on this bird as a possible Black-headed Grosbeak. Her thorough study of the bird in a relatively short period of time and subsequent research afterward convinced her and the Committee that this was an adult female/immature Black-headed Grosbeak. Unfortunately for those who searched afterwards, it could not be relocated. Unlike several other western passerines that stray to the coast with some regularity (e.g. Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*), Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*), Black-headed Grosbeak occurs much less frequently. In addition, it is much more likely to be found in winter or spring than the fall (D'Anna 1998), which is when the other species are found most frequently. The early October date of this record is very unusual and makes this the second earliest ever recorded in New York, the earliest being a sight record on 28 Sep 1945 by John Bull (Bull 1964).

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)

2014-57-A One, Rotterdam, **Schenectady**, 26-28 Nov (Jenny Murtaugh, ph Janice Lengvarsky)

A male Painted Bunting visited the feeding station of Janice Lengvarsky in Rotterdam, and she was able to take photos with her point and shoot camera. DEC wildlife technician Jenny Murtaugh submitted the documentation on behalf of Lengvarsky. Although it is not possible to be certain from the photos, it appears that this bird was unbanded, and it did not show any obvious signs of captivity. For example, the plumage appeared to be in excellent condition. As a result, Committee members did not raise any concerns about origin.

**2014 Report Accepted
But Origins Unknown or Unnatural**

Scaly-breasted Munia (*Lonchura punctulata*)

2014-26-A One, Brooklyn Botanical Garden, **Kings**, 16 Jul (Terry Rogers)

One Committee member expressed a concern that this bird may not have been identified correctly. However, the remainder of the Committee accepted the identification but considered the origin unlikely to be natural. Although there are some local populations that either are or could become established in Florida and along the Gulf coast, Committee members are of the opinion that the odds of a genuine vagrant to New York from these populations are very small at this time.

2013 Reports Accepted

Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*)

2013-89-A Two, Buffalo, **Erie**, 10-11 Nov (James Pawlicki, ph J. Pawlicki)

The Niagara River is the premier site to see this species in New York, with fall migration being the best time by far to find it. Jim Pawlicki found these two immature birds, though on the first day of observation he was only aware of a single individual. However, while examining his photos, he noticed slight plumage differences and realized that he had seen two different first-winter Franklin's Gulls. Returning the following day, he was able to see both birds again. Starting in 2018, NYSARC will no longer review upstate sightings of this species, which has shown a slight increase in reports in recent years. Downstate sightings should still be submitted to NYSARC, as the species remains quite rare there.

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

2013-90-A One, Goat Island State Park, **Niagara**, 23 Dec (James Pawlicki, ph J. Pawlicki)

Although no longer considered a separate species, the status of this subspecies of Iceland Gull has remained fairly consistent in the state. It is annual in small numbers on the Niagara River and quite rare in the rest of the State, especially the downstate area. Identification is difficult, and birders are encouraged to photograph any individuals believed to be of this form. Jim Pawlicki's submission included one photo of the bird standing among Herring Gulls (*L. argentatus*) and another of the bird with its wings spread. The latter shows blackish tips on the six outermost primaries of the left wing, a helpful feature for identifying this subspecies, as "Kumlien's" Iceland Gull (*L. g. kumlieni*) typically shows blackish or grayish on five or fewer primaries.

2013 Reports Accepted in Revised Form

White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii* or *gambelii* intergrade)

2013-96-A One, Braddock Bay, **Monroe**, 3 Oct (Emily Patterson)

This was a submission of a "Gambel's" White-crowned Sparrow, and it involved a bird that was captured and banded at the Braddock Bay Bird Observatory. The report was brief, but a clear close-up photo of the head and breast of the bird was included. Although the well-known field marks for identifying this subspecies are shown, NYSARC strongly encourages multiple photos that show the entire bird clearly, as important additional features unknown to the person(s) submitting documentation could help to make a firmer identification. The key features for separating the *gambelii* subspecies from the expected nominate race are the pattern on the lores and the color of the bill. This bird had completely unmarked lores, as expected for *gambelii*. However, the bill color was not as orange as shown by clear examples of this subspecies. The problem, as it often is when subspecies are involved, is that intergrades between the various subspecies are common. Although some Committee members still considered the bill color within range of *gambelii*, others felt that an intergrade was not ruled out. The Committee was unable to muster enough votes to pass the record as submitted. However, the Committee was convinced that this bird was either *gambelii* or a *gambelii* intergrade, and a vote for that form was unanimously accepted.

2011 Report Accepted

Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*)

2011-155-A One, Manhattan, **New York**, 28 Aug (Sam Stuart, ph Rhys Marsh)
Hurricane Irene was a destructive 2011 hurricane along the Atlantic coast that had weakened to a tropical storm by the time it made landfall in Brooklyn. Sam Stuart and Rhys Marsh were watching the Hudson River from Pier 63 in lower

Manhattan. They had already seen a Wilson's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*) that Irene had brought to the area, and they even had a second Wilson's later. In between those sightings they watched this Band-rumped Storm-Petrel flying low up the river. Marsh's photos show that the feet did not project beyond the tail as they would on a Wilson's and that the tail was not forked as on a Leach's Storm-Petrel (*O. leucorhoa*). The shape of the rump patch, clearly wider than the length, also supported the identification.

1984 Report Accepted

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*)

1984-49-A One, Wolfe's Pond, Staten Island, **Richmond**, 20 Dec (Norma and William Siebenheller)

At the time when this report was reviewed in 1985, this was the latest accepted record in New York. There have since been later records. Though voted on and accepted by the Committee years ago, it recently came to our attention that this record was never published in any NYSARC report. Publication here and now corrects that oversight. The Committee encourages anyone who has noticed errors of omission or commission by NYSARC to contact us, no matter how long after the fact. We apologize to Norma and William for this oversight.

2014 Reports Not Accepted

Rufous/Calliope Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus/calliope*)

2014-33-A One, Manhattan, **New York**, 16 Sep

This report of a hummingbird hovering at a fifth floor apartment window box in midtown Manhattan was submitted by someone who claimed familiarity with western hummingbirds, particularly Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), from his time living in California. Unfortunately, the only description provided was that the bird showed a green iridescent back and a pale brownish front. While these features may be consistent with a Rufous or Calliope Hummingbird, without more detail, Committee members could not even be sure that this was not the much more expected Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*).

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

2014-36-A One, Poughkeepsie, **Dutchess**, 23 Sep

This report involved a brief observation of a bird that flew up to a branch, stayed for a couple of minutes, and then flew away from the observer. Although parts of the report were suggestive of this species, Committee members were concerned by the missing details, such as the wing shape, tail pattern, and the color of the secondaries. Some Committee members were willing to give this

relatively experienced birder the benefit of the doubt, but the majority felt that the details provided simply were not enough.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

2014-41-A One, Mount Kisco, **Westchester**, 12 Oct

This report, submitted by an experienced hawk-watcher, involved a raptor that flew by the Chestnut Ridge Hawkwatch at a distance of about a half mile. As the bird was below the observers, only the upperparts color and pattern were observed. The upperparts appeared uniformly dark, including the uppertail coverts, implying to the observer that this was a dark-morph individual. Appropriately, the description included much detail of the bird's shape and flight style, which are frequently the most conspicuous features of a migrating raptor at a hawkwatch. Committee members were on the fence with this one, but most felt that it was just not quite convincing enough for acceptance.

Western Kingbird x Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis* x *T. tyrannus*)

2014-17-A One, Riverhead, **Suffolk**, 17 May

This interesting kingbird was found by a group of birders on a field trip. The documentation consisted of description and four photos, although only one soft photo was of much usefulness. The bird was with an Eastern Kingbird, and it showed an obvious white tail tip, dark head, white throat, gray breast, and yellow belly. In the field it was identified as a very rare Cassin's Kingbird (*T. vociferans*). The observers very quickly sent out photos and descriptions to various experienced birders, who determined that this was not a Cassin's Kingbird but most likely a Western x Eastern Kingbird hybrid. The Eastern Kingbird influence is obvious, as evidenced by the white tail tip and dark head. The Western Kingbird influence is shown by the yellow belly. Most on the Committee were in agreement that the bird was a hybrid but believed that other hybrid combinations were not ruled out, such as Cassin's x Eastern Kingbird. Western x Eastern hybrids are known from several records, whereas other western species of kingbird x Eastern hybrids are not well documented. Thus, based on likelihood, this may well have been a Western x Eastern Kingbird. However, without better documentation this is unknown and, unfortunately, the Committee could not accept the record.

"Gray-headed" Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis caniceps*)

2014-46-A One, Robert Moses State Park, **Suffolk**, 24 Oct

This was an intriguing report from experienced observers of a junco with a red back, contrasting black mask, and ventral body lacking browns or pinks. "Gray-headed" Junco is extremely rare in the east, with only four eBird records east of the Mississippi River and none along the Atlantic coast. Identification of the junco forms is also complicated by the possibility of intergrades. Thus, a record of this form in New York would need very strong documentation. Unfortunately, the view of this bird was relatively brief, and some details were

not clearly observed, such as the color and pattern of the bill, which would be helpful for ruling out the similar “Red-backed” Junco (*J. h. dorsalis*). It is regrettable that photo documentation was not obtained for this potentially significant record. Without stronger documentation, the Committee was unable to accept the record.

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*)

2014-22-A One, Ithaca, **Tompkins**, 27 Jun

This report of a red bird lacking the black wings of a Scarlet Tanager (*P. olivacea*) could have been a Summer Tanager, but Committee members surmised that this was a relatively inexperienced birder and wondered if it was actually a Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*). The bill was described as thin, which is unlike either a tanager or a cardinal. The late June timing would be very unusual for an upstate sighting of this species. Given these shortcomings and the brevity of the report, the Committee decided not to accept it.

CONTRIBUTORS

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