

REPORT OF THE NEW YORK STATE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE FOR 2016

The New York State Avian Records Committee (hereafter “NYSARC” or the “Committee”) evaluated 68 submissions involving 59 occurrences of New York State review species from 2016. Additionally, the Committee evaluated eight submissions involving eight occurrences of New York State review species from previous years. Reports were received from 35 of the 62 counties in the State. The names of the 62 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 people have encouraged and/or helped observers to prepare and submit documentation. We offer sincere gratitude for their assistance to our cause.

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>. Please also see the discussion on this subject under Committee News, below.

On the NYSARC web pages, a list of species requested for review (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 three digital image files (maximum size 7 MB per photo). Documentation (written reports and photographs) and any other correspondence for the Committee can also be sent via email to the NYSARC Secretary, Gary Chapin, at: nysarc44@nybirds.org. As a last resort, you can also use regular mail to get your report to Gary at 125 Pine Springs Drive, Ticonderoga, NY 12883.

HIGHLIGHTS

After adding eight new species to the State list in the previous two years, things settled down to what would be considered more typical, with just one new addition in 2016, thanks to a Garganey (*Spatula querquedula*) at Montezuma NWR. At the close of 2016, this brought the State list up to 494 species. [Note: subsequent to 2016, the addition of Clark’s Grebe (*Aechmophorus clarkii*) and the 2017 demotion of Thayer’s Gull (*Larus glaucoides thayeri*) to subspecific status, leaves the State list currently at 494, with NYSARC still to vote on other potential additions.] A resubmission of a Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*) record from 2005 resulted in the addition of a new subspecies for New York, *Somateria mollissima v-nigrum*, also known as Pacific Common Eider. And finally, the Committee voted to add Carolina Parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*) to the hypothetical list for the State.

COMMITTEE NEWS

The 2016 annual meeting was held via Skype on 10 Feb 2019, six months after the 2015 annual meeting. Note that the annual meeting year refers to the latest reports reviewed at that meeting. For example, at the 2016 annual meeting we mainly reviewed reports of birds

seen in 2016, along with a few reports from earlier years. During the annual meeting we discussed or completed the voting on 11 records. Changes to the review list were also discussed, and it was decided that none were needed at this time. The terms of Patricia Lindsay and James Pawlicki expired at the end of 2019. Pat agreed to take on another three-year term with the Committee, while Jim opted to step down after serving two consecutive three-year terms. A native of the Buffalo area, Jim has been living and working in San Diego for the last couple of years and he thought it appropriate for another New Yorker to take his place at this time. Jim is known for his fantastic field skills, as well as his in-depth knowledge of many difficult identification challenges. And yet, it may have been his level-headed approach to reviewing records that was his most valuable contribution to NYSARC. His practicality on difficult records, as well as his ability to fully grasp the views of those that differed from his own, belied his youth, and made him a valuable, persuasive member of the Committee. There is no question that New York's loss is California's gain. We wish Jim only the best. The newest member of NYSARC is Shawn Billerman. Shawn hails from Long Island and graduated from Cornell University with a B. S. in Biological Sciences. He went on to earn his Ph. D. from the University of Wyoming. Shawn found Wyoming birding to his liking, as he uncovered several significant records in this lightly birded state. He is now back in New York and working at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, as a science editor for the Birds of the World project. We look forward to working with Shawn, who is already fully involved in Committee activities.

Perhaps the most exciting news for the Committee is that we have started reviewing eBird records. We have known for a few years that this is something that we needed to do. Formal submissions to NYSARC have steadily declined while eBird records have grown exponentially. There is clearly a correlation, as eBird has made it easy to not only report a rarity but also to provide documentation for the sighting. Understandably, most birders are not that interested in or do not have the time to make a formal submission to NYSARC, as well as reporting it to eBird. The logistical and technical aspects of eBird review for a Committee composed of only seven voting members and a secretary has proved daunting. However, after much discussion and computer programming assistance from Dean DiTommaso, a path forward became clear. Jay McGowan has taken over the programming aspect and has compiled several spreadsheets, each with a year's worth of eBird reports of species on NYSARC's review list. To give one example, the 2019 spreadsheet contains 2804 individual eBird reports to review. Compare this to the number of formal submissions that NYSARC reviewed for this annual report—only 76! To keep from being overwhelmed by such a workload, the Committee has decided to take some measures to keep it manageable and yet still maintain the high standards of review that is expected of us. These measures will likely change as we gain experience with eBird review, the details of which will be shared in the associated annual reports. Our first year of eBird review is for records from 2019, which we are currently reviewing alongside formal submissions of the same year.

Those faithful contributors to NYSARC, who have made formal submissions to the Committee since its inception in 1977, may now be wondering what they should do. Should they continue to submit reports to NYSARC, report only to eBird, or both? It is apparent that, when it comes to written details, eBird reports of rarities usually do not include the level of detail that formal submissions do. This may be because the report form on the NYSARC web page has several prompts, which serve to remind submitters of what they should include. These prompts are lacking when you fill out an eBird checklist. So, the short answer is that, although it really does not matter if you submit a formal report to NYSARC or if you make out an eBird checklist report, we ask that you include as much

detail as possible no matter how you report. We would urge you to refer to the NYSARC submission form as a reminder for what information to include. Or, better yet, look over the information available on the “How to Document a Rare Bird” page of our web site, <https://nybirds.org/NYSARC/goodreport.htm>.

NYSARC has made tremendous progress on the backlog of formal submissions and we can now claim to have caught up with formal submissions review. As of this writing (June 2020), we are reviewing 2019 formal submissions and 2019 eBird reports. At some point in the future, it may be possible to review records during the same year that they occurred but after being behind for so long, it feels great to have gotten to this point. As we have also spent so much time on getting started with eBird review, we have not yet caught up on our annual reports but we are getting closer. And, of course, it must be remembered that eBird started in 2002 so, going forward, we will have to review past eBird reports, in addition to reports from the current year under review. We have our work cut out for us!

NOTE: In the reports accepted, listed below, the range of dates for a record may not be known based only on the documents submitted to NYSARC. Accepted eBird reports may extend the known range of dates and if NYSARC also found these reports acceptable, the eBird range of dates are listed along with those from the NYSARC record submission.

2016 Reports Accepted

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

2016-50-A/C One, Arthur J. Hendrickson Park, **Nassau**, 1, 2, 5 Nov 2016, 22 Jan 2017 (Sean Sime, Tim Healy, Linda Rudolph, ph S. Sime, T. Healy, L. Rudolph). eBird 2, 5, 14, 24 Nov, 21, 23, 26 Dec 2016, 1, 6, 18 Jan 2017, 18-22 Feb 2017

Discovered by Tim Healy, Sr., this is believed to be the first record for Nassau County. Although this goose was reported over a nearly four-month period, starting on 1 Nov 2016, there were significant gaps in its dates of occurrence, most notably between 24 Nov and 21 Dec 2016 and between 22 Jan and 18 Feb 2017. This may be due to observers simply not bothering to report it but that is unusual in this age of eBird. It seems more likely that it had other undiscovered locations that it also liked to frequent.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

2016-4-A One, Centerport, **Suffolk**, 14-15 Jan (Charleen Turner, ph C. Turner). eBird 15-17, 26, 28, 30, 31 Jan, 2 Feb

2016-7-A Three, Riverhead, **Suffolk**, 7 Feb (Derek H. Rogers, ph D. Rogers). eBird 7, 18 Feb

2016-47-A/B Two, Litchfield, **Herkimer**, 25, 29 Oct (Thomas Williams, Bill Purcell, ph T. Williams, B. Purcell). eBird 24-29 Oct

The Centerport bird was found by Charlene Turner and seen in the area for about two and a half weeks. A presumed family group of two adults and one immature was found in the Riverhead area by John Sepenoski. Derek Rogers documented these birds with photos and also showed that they were very likely to be the same three birds seen in Connecticut on 3 Jan 2016. The two birds in Herkimer County were found by Thomas Schmidt on 24 Oct and documented for NYSARC by Thomas Williams and Bill Purcell. Starting in the fall of 2017, NYSARC will no longer review reports of this species from the downstate region but will still welcome reports from upstate.

Garganey (*Spatula querquedula*)

2016-21-A/D One, Montezuma NWR, **Seneca**, 5, 8, 12 Jun (Kimberly Sucy, Sean Sime, Richard Guthrie, Dominic Sherony, ph K. Sucy, Doug Happ). eBird 5-8, 10-12, 16 Jun
This first record for New York State was discovered by Jay McGowan and Livia Santana. For a full account of this record, see D'Anna, *et al* (2017).

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

2016-11-A One, Port Henry, **Essex**, 7 Apr (Stacy Robinson, ph S. Robinson, Malinda & Glen Chapman). eBird 6, 7, 16, 20, 30 Dec 2015, 1, 3 Jan 2016, 3-8, 13 Feb 2016, 8 Mar 2016, 7, 12, 13, 28, 29 Apr 2016 (includes sightings from Vermont side of lake)

2016-49-A One, Conesus Lake, **Livingston**, 4, 5, 11 Apr (Mike Wasilco, ph M. Wasilco). eBird 4-14 Apr

Reports of Tufted Duck in New York have increased in the current century. The species is no longer on NYSARC's review list for downstate areas and upstate regions have seen an increase as well, particularly around Lake Champlain and the Finger Lakes. The long-tufted drake on Lake Champlain was seen over several months on both the New York and Vermont sides (eBird Apr 2020) and documented for NYSARC by Stacy Robinson. Another long-tufted drake was found and documented on Conesus Lake by Mike Wasilco, lingering for eleven days.

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)

2016-2-A/B One, Piermont Pier, **Rockland**, 7 Jan (Kenneth M. McDermott, John H. Haas, ph Bruce Nott, J. Haas). eBird 7-10 Jan

Reports of Western Grebe seem to be increasing. The Rockland County bird on the Hudson River was found by John Haas and documented for NYSARC by Haas and Ken McDermott.

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*)

2016-17-A One, Jones Beach, **Nassau**, 12 May (Brendan Fogarty, ph B. Fogarty). eBird 12 May

This White-winged Dove was seen in flight by Brendan Fogarty for only ten seconds but that was enough time for him to document the sighting with diagnostic photos. This continues a pattern of this species showing up very briefly in a location, especially on Long Island, with follow-up sighting attempts usually unsuccessful.

Chuck-will's-widow (*Antrostomus carolinensis*)

2016-29-A One, Queensbury, **Warren**, 17-18 Jun (Ramona Bearor, audio R. Bearor). eBird 17 Jun

This heard-only Chuck-wills-widow was found on a ski hill outside of Glens Falls. A homeowner who lives in the area, Cindy Bishop, was seeking confirmation in identifying an unknown sound, which was unlike the call of the Whip-poor-wills in the area but which, after research, seemed correct for this species. Eventually, Ramona Bearor was contacted and she was able to confirm the identification and obtain a clear audio recording to document the bird for NYSARC. Ms. Bishop related to Ms. Bearor that she had first heard the bird on 26 May and last heard it on 22 Jun. Away from Long Island and New York City, there are very few records of this species in the State.

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)

2016-54-A One, Greece, **Monroe**, 13 Dec (Robert P. Yunick)

Homeowners Margaret and Steve Abbott hosted this young female Rufous Hummingbird in their yard. They used a heat lamp to keep the bird's sugar water from freezing. Hummingbird bander, Robert Yunick, was contacted and allowed to capture, measure, and band the bird. Yunick identified it, from appearance and measurements, as a hatching year female Rufous Hummingbird. Unfortunately, only the date of capture of this individual was indicated in the report, so the Committee does not know for how long it was present.

Calliope Hummingbird (*Selasphorus calliope*)

2016-58-A One, Water Mill, **Suffolk**, 15 Nov – 9 Dec (John Shemilt, ph J. Shemilt). eBird 18, 19, 28 Nov.

A juvenile male Calliope Hummingbird frequented the yard of John Shemilt over a 24-day period. Shemilt obtained some excellent photographs to document the occurrence. Adult males are known for their elongated magenta gorget feathers and this bird of the year showed only one such feather but that is diagnostic for this species. There were a few shorter magenta feathers in the center of the gorget. This is only the fourth record for the State and the first since 2004. It is also the first record for Long Island. All four records have been in November-December.

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*)

2016-23-A/B One, Montezuma NWR, **Seneca**, 18 Jun (Kimberly Sucy, Stacy Robinson, ph K. Sucy, Stacy & Mark Robinson). eBird 18-21 Jun

Although a statewide rarity, Black-necked Stilt is much rarer inland than in coastal regions. Found by Stacy Robinson, this is the first record for the Montezuma NWR wetland complex. It was enjoyed by many over its four-day stay.

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)

2016-18-A One, Brewerton, **Onondaga**, 7 May (Dennis Anderson, ph D. Anderson). eBird 7 May

Reports of Piping Plover are increasing in the Great Lakes region, as this species is starting to return to its former nesting locations after being extirpated for decades. Although this bird, found and photographed by Dennis Anderson along the shore of Oneida Lake, was just a one-day migrant, it is a small indicator of the comeback that this species has made.

Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*)

2016-12-A One, Smith Point County Park, **Suffolk**, 14 Apr (Samantha Robinson)

The Long Island barrier beaches are the most likely place for this species to show up in New York. Fitting the pattern was this bird, discovered by Piping Plover researchers at Smith Point County Park on 14 Apr and documented for NYSARC by Samantha Robinson. The bird apparently was not seen again. This is a record early date in the NYSARC archives but there is one earlier record in eBird, which will be reviewed by NYSARC at a later date.

Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*)

2016-14-A One, Timber Point Golf Course, Great River, **Suffolk**, 26 Apr (Philip Uruburu, ph P. Uruburu). eBird 26 Apr

Philip Uruburu found this chestnut and black Ruff, which apparently did not linger. Timber Point is well known for the fabulous shorebirds that have been found there and this lovely bird continues that tradition.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

2016-36-A One, Derby Hill, **Oswego**, 11 Sep (Bill Purcell, ph B. Purcell). eBird 11 Sep

Bill Purcell and Gregg Dashnau had a juvenile Long-tailed Jaeger fly close by as they watched from the famed Derby Hill lookout on the southeastern corner of Lake Ontario. Purcell snapped a diagnostic photo, which he included with his documentation.

Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*)

2016-6-A One, Coney Island, Brooklyn, **Kings**, 21 Feb (Joshua Malbin, ph J. Malbin). eBird 21 Feb

While the rarer of the two murre species in the State, Thick-billed Murre is much more likely to be seen from shore than its close cousin, Common Murre (*Uria aalge*), which winters in good numbers ten miles or more off shore. This Thick-billed Murre was first found by Linda Ewing and reported quickly by Joshua Malbin, allowing many people to come and see this one-day wonder. This was the third winter out of the prior four that this species made a winter appearance in coastal Brooklyn, with every one of those sightings being only on one day. In addition to the Brooklyn sighting there were several eBird reports of other birds in 2016, including one at Jamaica Bay, Queens, one at Great Kills Park, Staten Island, four in the Montauk area, and one in Westhampton Beach (eBird Oct 2020). These reports will be reviewed by NYSARC at a future date.

California Gull (*Larus californicus*)

2016-5-A One, Brooklyn, **Kings**, 19 Jan (Daniel Frazer, ph D. Frazer). eBird 19 Jan

This first-cycle gull was found by Daniel Frazer on a morning walk along the promenade at Gravesend Bay, and intrigued by it, he took some photos. Later that evening, with the help and confirmation of several gull experts, it was securely identified as a California Gull, the first record for Kings County, and one of very few records (and the only one with physical documentation) on Long Island. It was not seen again, locally at least. Two months later, however, Connecticut was furnished with its first state record, and there is some suggestion that it was this very same individual.

Bridled Tern (*Onychoprion anaethetus*)

2016-42-A One, “The Claw”, **Pelagic Zone**, 19 Aug (John Shemilt, ph J. Shemilt). eBird 19 Aug

2016-57-A One, Great Gull Island, **Suffolk**, 13 Aug (Joseph DiCostanzo, ph J. DiCostanzo). eBird 13 Aug

Two Bridled Terns were reported within the confines of New York State this year. One was in the expected context, well offshore, around 90 nautical miles SSE of Shinnecock on Long Island, where a non-adult was found floating on a fishing gear buoy by Shemilt and company. The other was found by tern researchers on Great Gull Island between Orient Point and Connecticut—first spotted by Catherine Neal and then identified by “The Godfather of Great Gull” tern banding, Joe DiCostanzo. This individual was the first of this species detected in the 40 years of every-summer tern banding on the island, and it would herald the start of several summers in a row (as of this writing) where the species was detected on the island, very likely this same individual.

Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*)

2016-24-A One, Moriches Inlet, **Suffolk**, 25 Jun (Pete Morris, ph P. Morris, Shai Mitra). eBird 25 Jun

2016-31-A One, Ambrose Channel, **Queens**, 23 Jul (Tom Brown)

Pete Morris documented an adult Sandwich Tern from the flats at Moriches Inlet. The barrier beaches of Long Island are the most likely location for this species to appear in the State. Another adult was documented from New York harbor by Tom Brown, who was in

a boat with three other observers. Due to an uptick in records of this species in recent years, NYSARC has removed Sandwich Tern from the review list for downstate areas. However, we still request documentation for this species when seen in upstate areas, where it is extremely rare.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)

2016-25-A One, Robert Moses State Park, **Suffolk**, 22 May (Pete Morris). eBird 22 May
2016-56-A One, Brownville, **Jefferson**, 6 Dec (Nick Leone)

While seawatching at Robert Moses State Park, Pete Morris and others had an alternate-plumaged Pacific Loon fly past with two Common Loons, providing an excellent comparison. In Guffin Bay on Lake Ontario, Nick Leone had close views of a Pacific Loon, as it swam nearby with Common Loons. Leone aged the bird as an adult in basic plumage, lacking the pale edgings on the back that a juvenile would show. It also had a well-defined chin strap, typical of an adult.

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

2016-38-A One, **Pelagic Zone**, 15 Aug (John Shemilt, ph J. Shemilt). eBird 15 Aug

2016-39-A Two, **Pelagic Zone**, 18 Aug (John Shemilt, ph J. Shemilt). eBird 18 Aug

2016-40-A One, **Pelagic Zone**, 19 Aug (John Shemilt, ph J. Shemilt). eBird 19 Aug

2016-41-A One, **Pelagic Zone**, 19 Aug (John Shemilt, ph J. Shemilt). eBird 19 Aug

Formerly a real “grail” bird for birders in North America, a regular pattern of occurrence off of northeastern North America has now been established, thanks to the advent of regular late-summer boat trips that travel far off shore. This August was particularly good for the species around the shelf edge south of Long Island, as John Shemilt detected five individuals during three trips to “The Claw” (an underwater feature along the edge of the continental shelf) over the course of five days. An especially nice contribution was the photo series of two individuals together. An organized pelagic with more than 40 observers on 29 Aug also detected three individuals a bit farther southwest along the shelf edge at the end of the month, but unfortunately nobody on board submitted those records to the Committee.

Leach’s Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates leucorhous*)

2016-35-A One, Hampton Bays, **Suffolk**, 10 Jul (Taylor Sturm, sketch T. Sturm)

This very unexpected coastal record was furnished by Taylor Sturm and Pete Morris, who found this bird flying inside Shinnecock Bay on a lovely sunny summer day, without any obvious causal weather event. One hypothesis for the sporadic summertime reports of this species inside Suffolk County bays, so far from the offshore waters where it is normally found within the State, is that they land on fishing boats at night well off shore, and are discovered and released or simply fly off once the ships return to port. Their natural occurrence is plausible though, since they do breed in nearby Massachusetts, and so occasional in-shore records during breeding season are possible.

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

2016-45-A Three, “The Claw”, **Pelagic Zone**, 19 Aug (John Shemilt, ph J. Shemilt). eBird 19 Aug

Band-rumped Storm-Petrels are deep and warm water specialists which are very rarely seen from shore, but in the past decade or so their distribution off of New York State has been clarified, thanks to the increase in late summer offshore pelagic trips. John Shemilt and company found as many as eight Band-rumped Storm-Petrels in deep water off the continental shelf on 19 Aug, with Shemilt documenting these three birds for NYSARC.

The previously mentioned pelagic trip later in the month also reported a couple of dozen, coming to a fish oil slick, though no reports of these were submitted to NYSARC.

Black-capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*)

2016-44-A One, “The Claw”, **Pelagic Zone**, 19 Aug (John Shemilt, ph J. Shemilt). eBird 19 Aug

Until the past decade, the true occurrence of Black-capped Petrel within New York waters was poorly known, but as in several of the above species accounts (White-faced Storm-Petrel, Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, for example), increased coverage in their typical habitat has shown us that they are to be expected in some quantity off of the continental shelf. Because the increased pelagic coverage has coincided with a dramatic warming of ocean temperatures off shore, it is impossible to know how much of the prior absence of Black-capped Petrel records from off shore was because of true scarcity, or a simple result of insufficient coverage. On the same trip where they scored the Bridled Tern, and White-faced and Band-rumped Storm-Petrels mentioned above, John Shemilt, with Keegan Corcoran and Derek Rogers, encountered and photographed a Black-capped Petrel in the middle of The Claw, 76 nautical miles SSE of Shinnecock Inlet. The aforementioned organized pelagic trip later in August scored double digits of this species, but, alas, the Committee received no timely reports of these.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*)

2016-51-A One, Cayuga Lake, **Seneca**, 17-30 Sep (Gary Chapin, ph G. Chapin). eBird 28 Aug, 17-23, 25, 27, 29, 30 Sep (Cayuga and Seneca Counties); 24 Sep (Tompkins Co.)

This sighting initially came to light for the birding community on 28 Aug, when posted with a photograph on the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Facebook page by the finder, Michele Merritt. It was not seen again until 17 Sep, when Sarah Toner re-found it while competing in the Montezuma Muckrace with Logan Kahle and Alex Wiebe. It then stuck around the area for two weeks, delighting many upstate birders. It furnished a first Cayuga County record, and then once it resurfaced, provided Seneca County with its first record as well. It seemed very faithful to the north end of Cayuga Lake during its stay, but on 24 Sep, it was seen farther south on the lake, providing Tompkins County with its first record of the species.

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*)

2016-30-A One, North Tonawanda, **Niagara**, 18 Jul (Chris Kundl, ph C. Kundl). eBird 18 Jul (Niagara Co.); 15 Jul (Erie Co.)

Chris Kundl was birding with Stefanie Hake at Gratwick Park on the Niagara River, when they were startled to find this one-year-old White Ibis. Based on photographs, this same bird was found three days before this, 33 miles SSW of here at Evangola State Park (Erie Co.), by Matt Nusstein (eBird June 2020).

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

2016-43-A One, Bronx Zoo, **Bronx**, 21 Sep (Todd Olson). eBird 21 Sep

Todd Olson spotted a Mississippi Kite heading west over the Bronx Zoo parking lot around midday. Historically a spring migration overshoot phenomenon, Mississippi Kite’s occurrence in the region has increased steadily over the past decade, and there are now irregular nesting records at several locations to the north of Region 10 (Long Island and New York City), so their occurrence in late summer and fall is now much more on the table than it used to be. Still, it is exceptional in the region in autumn, so this 21 Sep record was a fantastic one indeed!

Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*)

2016-9-A One, Wallkill National Wildlife Preserve, **Orange**, 26 Feb (Linda Scrima, ph L. Scrima)

This adult gray-morph bird was observed for only a brief time before being driven off by Northern Harriers, and not seen again. Fortunately, the observer, Linda Scrima, was able to obtain several diagnostic photos to document the sighting.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*)

2016-53-A One, Lido West Preserve, **Nassau**, 13 Nov (Brent Bomkamp, ph B. Bomkamp). eBird 13-14, 16-20, 23-27 Nov, 3-4 Dec

Found by Robert Berlinger on 13 Nov, this bird lingered at this location into early December, allowing many observers to see and photograph it, including Brent Bomkamp, who submitted the record to NYSARC. There was some speculation that a bird found less than three miles away at a known migrant trap during the Southern Nassau CBC on 1 Jan 2017 might have been the same bird. In New York, this vagrant is found almost exclusively in the coastal region, mainly along the outer coast. Here, a general trend of increasing frequency has been documented, but numbers vary greatly year to year. There were two other reports of Ash-throats in eBird this season, both from Kings County, to be reviewed by NYSARC at a later date.

Gray Kingbird (*Tyrannus dominicensis*)

2016-15-A One, Conesus Inlet WMA, **Livingston**, 3 May (Mike Wasilco, ph M. Wasilco). eBird 2-6 May

2016-48-A/B One, Bergen, **Genesee**, 28, 31 Oct (Melissa Mance-Coniglio, Mike Wasilco, ph M. Mance-Coniglio, M. Wasilco). eBird 28-31 Oct, 1-6, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23 Nov

Discovered by Ethan Gyllenhaal and Greg Lawrence, the Conesus Inlet bird was a first record for Livingston County and the fourteenth documented in the State. The vast majority of New York's records occur in the fall, as they do in nearby states of New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts (Burke 1998). Thus, the May date is an unusual one. Though only one report was submitted to NYSARC, by Mike Wasilco, the bird was well-documented and photographed over its five-day stay. Melissa Mance-Coniglio found the Gray Kingbird in Bergen. This long-staying bird was a first Genesee County record and the fifteenth for New York. Of the first nine records in the State, seven were along or near the coast (Burke 1998). However, six of the last seven records have been upstate, making for a rather dramatic shift in location for the species occurrence within the State. Perhaps even more surprising is that of the seven upstate records, six are from a relatively small area near a roughly 75-mile stretch of the New York State Thruway between Batavia and Montezuma, or more simply, in the Erie-Ontario Plain ecozone, as defined in Andrie and Carroll (1988).

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*)

2016-26-A One, Rainbow Lake, **Franklin**, 19 Feb (Stacy Robinson, ph S. Robinson). eBird 12 Jan, 19 Feb

Favoring a feeding station on private property where the homeowner asked that it not be advertised, this bird was seen and photographed by only a few lucky birders, and the initial eBird report was withheld until it was thought to have departed in mid-January (eBird Jun 2020). In her documentation for NYSARC, Stacy Robinson reported that the bird had been present for approximately two months. Her 19 Feb sighting is the latest date that we are

aware of. A comment in an eBird report mentions that the bird appeared to have an injured leg (eBird Jun 2020). Interestingly, only 45 miles west of here, near Canton in St. Lawrence County, a Varied Thrush was reported in late January and late February of 2016 (eBird Jun 2020). Since the dates of occurrence of the thrushes at the two locations overlapped, and it is highly unlikely for a passerine to range so widely, it is virtually certain that this was a different individual. And indeed, this is supported by photographs, which show the Canton bird to have much blacker head and breast markings.

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*)

2016-1-A One, Brunswick, **Rensselaer**, 2 Jan (Naomi Lloyd, ph N. Lloyd). eBird 2 Jan
This bird was discovered by Naomi Lloyd, Kathryn Schneider, and Jim de Waal Malefyt during the Troy Christmas Bird Count. Historically very rare in winter, Lark Sparrows have increased at that season in recent years, occurring annually in the State since 2012. It is still rare at any season away from the outer coast.

Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*)

2016-16-A One, Greece, **Monroe**, 11 May (Bob & Cathy Marcotte, ph C. Marcotte)
This striking bird was seen and photographed during the course of only one day at the reporters' feeding station.

Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*)

2016-8-A One, Milton, **Ulster**, 23 Feb (Pat Palladino, ph P. Palladino). eBird 18, 22, 23, 27-29 Feb, 1-3, 5, 6 Mar
Identified as an immature male, this bird visited David Baxter's feeding station where many birders were welcome to come and enjoy it. The homeowner first eBirded it on 18 Feb and Pat Palladino submitted documentation to NYSARC. There are fewer than a dozen documented records of this western North American species in the State.

Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*)

2016-27-A One, Central Park, **New York**, 28 Apr (Deborah Allen, ph D. Allen). eBird 28 Apr
Katie Kleinpeter spied this mega rarity while birding with Alice Deutsch and Andrew Rubinfeld, who aided in the identification. It was subsequently seen by mobs of birders, some of whom lay belly-down on the ground to get better looks and photos of this skulking and cryptic bird. There are about a dozen accepted reports in the State from 1950 through 2016, in addition to several other published and eBird reports which may be correct. This record is the first since 2006. All records but one are from April and May.

Virginia's Warbler (*Leiothlypis virginiae*)

2016-59-A One, Rye, **Westchester**, 1 Nov (Thomas W. Burke, ph Stefan Martin). eBird 1 Nov
Following up on a suspicious chip note while birding at Marshlands Conservancy, Tom Burke was thrilled to discover this super-rarity, only the second accepted State record and an outstanding first record for Westchester County. Fortunately, one diagnostic photo by Stefan Martin was obtained to supplement the excellent description. A second Virginia's Warbler was found this same year in Glenmont, Albany County, on 10 Dec. The report was not submitted to NYSARC but is documented with an article in *The Kingbird*, Vol. 67 (1), pp. 2-6, and a report with photo in eBird will be reviewed by the Committee at a future date.

“Audubon’s” Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*)

2016-52-A One, Robert Moses SP, Fire Island, **Suffolk**, 6 Nov (Taylor Sturm, ph T. Sturm). eBird 6 Nov

The barrier beaches of Long Island are known for holding an abundance of Yellow-rumped Warblers during migration and at times during winter but the western subspecies, known as “Audubon’s Warbler”, is rarely found there or elsewhere in the State. Birding alone at Robert Moses State Park, Taylor Sturm found this bird skulking in the bayberry, which he was able to lure out for photos by spishing. This female showed the characteristic plain face pattern with two white eye-arcs and restricted pale yellowish throat that did not wrap around to the auriculars. Although a few others were able to see the bird the same day, it was not reported afterwards.

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*)

2016-3-A One, Constantia, **Oswego**, 5 Jan (Bill Purcell, ph B. Purcell). eBird 5 Jan

This female/immature Summer Tanager turned up at the feeding station of Jeanne DuPre in Oswego County in early winter. Photos were taken that were eventually seen by experienced birders who correctly identified it as this species. Bill Purcell documented the bird for NYSARC, which reportedly had been seen in the yard for about a week. A few other birders saw the tanager along with Purcell on the same day but there are no other reports after this date that we are aware of.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)

2016-13-A One, Rosendale, **Ulster**, 29 Mar (Kenneth M. McDermott, ph Matt Corsaro, Peter Schoenberger). eBird 27-31 Mar, 2-4, 6, 8 Apr

Discovered at their feeding station by homeowners Matt Corsaro and Mira Bowin, this male Western Tanager stayed from about 23 Mar to 10 Apr. It was documented for NYSARC by Ken McDermott. This species is nearly annual in the State, with records roughly evenly split between downstate and upstate regions.

2016 Reports Accepted in Revised Form

Rufous/Allen’s Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus/sasin*)

2016-33-A One, Elizabeth Morton NWR, **Suffolk**, 29 Aug (Eileen Schwinn, ph E. Schwinn). eBird 28, 29 Aug

This record turned out to be one of the more interesting that we reviewed for 2016. Eileen Schwinn documented the bird for NYSARC, including some nice photos that showed the back and spread tail fairly well. In addition there were other excellent photos in eBird reports. After first round review, the Committee was nearly unanimous that we should accept this as how it was submitted—as a Rufous Hummingbird. This was based on the apparent age of the bird, which most of the Committee believed was an adult male in molt, and the apparent width of the outer rectrices. One reviewer, however, did not feel comfortable with this and convinced the others that we needed expert opinions. So, requests were sent out to hummingbird experts, Sheri Williamson, Steve Howell, Scott Weidensaul, and Fred Bassett. The responses were surprising to the Committee. One thought that it was Rufous, two would not say beyond Rufous/Allen’s, and another believed it was an Allen’s, which has never been confirmed in New York State! The fact that the bird was never captured for measurements is likely the reason that these experts could not reach agreement. Unlike most adult male Rufous Hummingbirds, this bird showed many green feathers on the back. Although this could suggest that this was an Allen’s Hummingbird, adult male Rufous are quite variable and can show a back color from totally rufous to

totally green, although the latter occurs only rarely. The only reliable way to separate adult males of these two species with green backs is by the shape of the tip of rectrix two and the width of rectrix five. Unfortunately, the experts could not agree that the photos showed these features well enough so that they could make a confident identification without measurements. After reviewing the experts' comments, the Committee voted unanimously to accept this record as a Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird.

***Pterodroma* species**

2016-55-A One, Shinnecock Inlet, **Suffolk**, 5 Sep (Pete Morris)

Formerly considered exceptionally rare anywhere in New York, including pelagic waters, Black-capped Petrel has recently shown itself to be of regular occurrence in offshore waters from about late July to early September. This knowledge has been gained thanks to the efforts of various people who have either organized pelagic trips for birders, particularly See-Life Paulagics, or undertaken such trips on their own, with John Shemilt being at the forefront of the latter. Reports from shore, however, are still exceedingly rare and almost always associated with direct hits or passage very nearby by tropical storms. Peter Morris and company were ocean-watching at Shinnecock Inlet when they encountered this bird. Hurricane Hermine was slowly moving around offshore well to the south and likely accounted for this bird's appearance off the barrier beaches, although it was by no means expected with a storm that was not really that close. It was identified and submitted as a Black-capped Petrel but the bird was distant and the observer admitted that the very similar endangered Bermuda Petrel (*Pterodroma cahow*), also known as Cahow, could not be ruled out. The Committee was also concerned about the possibility that this could have been a Fea's/Zino's Petrel (*Pterodroma feae/madeira*). Although these other possibilities are exceedingly rare in the State (no records of the former and only three of the latter), the Committee felt that these needed to be firmly ruled out. By a unanimous vote, they decided to accept this in a revised form, as *Pterodroma* species.

2015 Reports Accepted

Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

2015-71-A One, Wilson, **Niagara**, 1, 3 May, 4, 13, 14 Jun (Willie D'Anna, ph W. D'Anna). eBird 1-3, 5 May, 3-6, 9, 13, 14 Jun, 5, 15 Jul

2015-72-A Two, Wilson, **Niagara**, 19 Jun (Willie D'Anna, ph W. D'Anna). eBird 16, 17, 19, 20, 25, 30 Jun

While birding at the small boat harbor in Wilson, Niagara County, on 1 May, Betsy Potter heard the distinctive song of a Eurasian Collared-Dove. She called Willie D'Anna over and the two of them were able to locate the bird and obtain photographs. This bird was seen by multiple observers over the next six to ten weeks. Hoping for another sighting of the Eurasian Collared-Dove, D'Anna was surprised to hear two birds singing at the site on 19 Jun. He was able to track them down and obtain photos of both birds. This species has undergone a tremendous range expansion within the United States, especially in the south and west, after it colonized Florida from an introduced population in the Bahamas. There was a small colony of this species in Hamlin, Monroe County, for several years but the last sighting was on 3 Jan 2018 (eBird June 2020). Birders were anticipating that the Wilson birds would establish another colony. This was based in part on nearby sightings of this species in May 2014 (Betsy Potter, pers. comm.) and Christmas 2014 (photographed by Charlie Horton). However, this was not to be and shortly after the discovery of the second individual at the site, they disappeared, and there have been no sightings anywhere nearby since 15 Jul 2015 (eBird June 2020). It should be noted that for eBird dates listed above,

only reports of two birds are shown for 2015-72-A, starting with 16 Jun, when Michael McBrien was the first to note two birds at the location (eBird June 2020). All eBird reports of one individual are listed with 2015-71-A. Since it was not possible to distinguish the two birds, it is possible that two birds were present prior to 16 Jun, as well.

Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*)

2015-73-A Two, Golden Hill SP, **Niagara**, 12 Nov (Willie D'Anna)

While watching the migration over Lake Ontario, Willie D'Anna and Celeste Morien had two Cave Swallows fly past. A third swallow flying with them was not identified but could well have been this species. This sighting fits into a pattern, over roughly the last two decades, of sightings of this species in November along Lake Ontario, as well as at coastal sites, usually associated with the passage of a strong cold front, as was the case here.

2013 Reports Accepted

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)

2013-95-A One, Fire Island, **Suffolk**, 16 Sep (Pat Palladino, ph P. Palladino). eBird 16 Sep

While observing the raptor migration at the Fire Island Hawk Watch, Pat Palladino and several others were able to watch and photograph this female/immature male Yellow-headed Blackbird, which remained in the area for only about 15 minutes. Birders looking for this rarity later were not successful in finding it until Shai Mitra decided to check the other side of the inlet at Captree State Park. Photos suggest that the Fire Island and Captree birds were one and the same. The bird was only seen on the one day.

2005 Reports Accepted

Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima v-nigrum*)

2005-62-B One, Irondequoit Bay, **Monroe**, 13, 17 Nov (Dominic Sherony, ph D. Sherony). eBird 11, 13-15, 20, 21, 23, 27 Nov, 3 Dec

This record was previously accepted by NYSARC. However, the Committee did not vote on the subspecies involved. Dominic Sherony resubmitted the record, identifying the bird as the Pacific subspecies of Common Eider, *S. m. v-nigrum*. The expected subspecies in coastal New York, the only area where Common Eider is of regular occurrence in the State, is *S. m. dresseri*. There are single specimen records of *S. m. borealis* and *S. m. sedentaria* from Long Island and the Niagara River, respectively. Prior to the Irondequoit bird, there had never been a record of *v-nigrum* in New York, and the only records from the eastern third of North America came from Newfoundland, according to eBird (June 2020). Thus, this is quite a remarkable record. The Committee is grateful to Sherony for his efforts in establishing the subspecific identification of this individual, which he has nicely documented in a paper that was published in *The Kingbird* (Sherony and Able 2016). The bird was identified as a female and believed to be in its first year.

1966 Reports Accepted, But Origins Uncertain or Unnatural

White-cheeked Pintail (*Anas bahamensis*)

1966-1-A One, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, **Queens**, 26 Nov (William C. Rowe)

A distinctive and attractive duck, the White-cheeked Pintail is, not surprisingly, sometimes kept in captivity. As with most vagrant waterfowl, this must be borne in mind whenever there is an extralimital record. This species is spottily distributed throughout South America and the West Indies. At the time of this sighting, it was known as Bahama Duck.

William Rowe was birding with R. Haven Wiley when they encountered this duck and they knew immediately, from having studied their field guides, what species it was. Afterwards, Wiley wrote to John Bull about their sighting. Bull was apparently aware that the species was reported at Jamaica Bay on that one day only and he indicated that it was presumed to be an escape. Since that time, the species has been added to the State lists of Florida, Virginia, and North Carolina. It certainly seems plausible that a White-cheeked Pintail could arrive naturally from the West Indies to Jamaica Bay, although at this point in time, there is no established pattern of records to the northeast. Lacking that, and with the bird occurring in such a heavily populated area, where the possibility of an escape is greater than most other areas, as well as not knowing whether the bird was banded or had a clipped hallux, the Committee voted unanimously to accept this as origin unnatural or uncertain.

Species Accepted to the Hypothetical List

Carolina Parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*)

1780-1-A “A large flight”, Albany area, Jan 1780; 13 Buffalo, **Erie**, before 20 Dec 1889; “a lot”, West Seneca, **Erie**, various dates before 20 Dec 1889 (Kathryn J. Schneider) Based on a thoroughly researched paper by Kathryn Schneider, the Committee decided to add Carolina Parakeet to the State’s hypothetical list. For a full account of this submission, see D’Anna, *et al* (2017).

2016 Reports Not Accepted

King Rail (*Rallus elegans*)

2016-10-A One, Glenmont, **Albany**, 2 Apr

This report involved a bird seen briefly after it flushed from low brush or the ground in front of the observers and dropped into a wetland. The description of what was seen is not at odds with a King Rail and one of the two observers noted that it was larger than the similar Virginia Rail. However, the Committee felt that such a rare bird seen so briefly in flight needed stronger documentation.

Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*)

2016-28-A One, Syracuse, **Onondaga**, 7 May

This was an observation of a bird in flight, flying over the NYS Thruway, seen while driving. Although frigatebirds have a very distinctive shape and might well be recognized with a naked-eye observation, the great rarity of such a sighting mandates that a very strong description and/or photos would be needed for the Committee to accept it. The observer noted a large and black bird with a red throat pouch but did not describe the shape of the bird, other than it being distinctive. The description is certainly intriguing but without additional details, the Committee could not be certain that other possibilities were clearly ruled out and they decided against accepting the record.

Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*)

2016-32-A One, **Dutchess**, 26 August

This sighting, east of the Hudson River in Dutchess County, was made by a long-time birder and his wife. They watched it soaring over a swamp but this was a naked-eye observation. Although somewhat suggestive of this species, a first State record would need considerably greater detail, probably in addition to photos, to be accepted.

Nuttall's Woodpecker (*Dryobates nuttallii*)

2016-37-A Four to five, Schenectady, **Schenectady**, summers of 2015 & 2016

Although some of the written details in this report suggested this species, the included photos were diagnostic for Downy Woodpecker.

Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*)

2016-20-A One, Hadley, **Saratoga**, 17 May

This was a very brief description of a very rare species. The description was somewhat suggestive of a male Mountain Bluebird. However, the observation that it appeared darker than an Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) is at odds for the species. Though the description was also incorrect for Eastern Bluebird, the Committee decided that the documentation was insufficient for acceptance.

Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*)

2016-19-A One, Prospect Park, **Kings**, 18 May

Bicknell's Thrush is a notoriously difficult species to identify in migration, being very similar to Gray-cheeked Thrush, both in appearance and vocalizations. The species has a small population and a very restricted breeding range, which includes higher elevations in the Catskills and Adirondacks, as well as Quebec and New Brunswick in Canada (Sibley 2014). If one looks at Bicknell's Thrush in eBird for just the month of May, when it is migrating north from its wintering grounds in the Caribbean, one can see that there are a few records in Florida and several more from Virginia to New Brunswick. Though there are not many records, the migratory corridor is clearly shown by eBird to go right through the New York City metro area, as one might expect. The report that was reviewed, from Prospect Park in Brooklyn, was based upon the song that was heard. The observer reported that he also had Gray-cheeked Thrushes singing in the same area. The difference between the songs of the two species is subtle, with Bicknell's slightly rising in pitch at the end and Gray-cheeked slightly falling. Although the song was not described in much detail, the observer noted that the song "clearly went up at the end" and that the song of the Gray-cheeked "went down". An attempt was apparently made to record the song but that was unsuccessful. Discussion on this record within the Committee was contentious. Some felt that this was a careful observer who accurately described the difference in song between the two species and that the description of this bird's song as rising at the end should be enough for us to accept the record. Others felt strongly that the difference between the songs was subtle and that identification was subject to error by most observers. They argued that records of this species need hard documentation, such as a recording of the song. It was also pointed out that recent research is suggesting that a dramatic decline in the species may be imminent, due to climate change and loss of habitat on the wintering grounds (Townsend, *et al* 2020), and that as this happens, the migratory pathways could change, particularly if local populations start to blink out. As a result, they argued, the requirement for stronger documentation of records of this species becomes even more important. The latter argument won out and the record failed to pass.

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)

2016-34-A One, Wanakena, **St. Lawrence**, 26 May

This bird, apparently, allowed close approach but the description was very brief—a bright yellow head and a dark brown body. Unfortunately, there was no mention of white in the wings, which is important for ruling out an aberrant plumage of a common species. Although some Committee members thought this may well have been this species, without additional details, it could not be accepted.

Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*)

2016-22-A One, Fort Edward, **Washington**, 20, 26 May

Although this very experienced birder may have seen a male Blue Grosbeak, the description lacked important details, such as the shape of the bill, and whether or not there were rufous wingbars, which the observer admitted he was unable to see. He also heard the bird singing, about a week apart, which might suggest that it was on territory. It seems that the identification was based mainly on the song, which was not described or recorded. Lacking these important details, the Committee decided not to accept the record.

2013 Reports Not Accepted

Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria cinnamomea*)

2013-96-A One, Manhasset Valley County Park, **Nassau**, 23 Sep

This was a report of the “western” subspecies of Solitary Sandpiper, *T. s. cinnamomea*. The expected form in the East is the nominate race, *T. s. solitaria*. However, O’Brien, et al (2006) indicate that the winter ranges of the two subspecies apparently broadly overlap, with *cinnamomea* generally in the West and *solitaria* in the East. As is usually the case with subspecies, there is much overlap in the appearance of the two forms, which, obviously, makes it more difficult to know the extent to which *cinnamomea* occurs in the East and, specifically, in New York. This sight report from an experienced observer was intriguing, as the observer emphasized that the spotting on this bird was cinnamon-colored and clearly not whitish. Juveniles of *cinnamomea* show cinnamon spots, whereas *solitaria* show whitish spots. However, the Committee does not know if *solitaria* can sometimes also show cinnamon spots. Other features to look for on a potential *cinnamomea*, in comparison to *solitaria*, are its slightly paler color, broader black tail bars, weaker loreal stripe, and white mottling on the underside of primary 10. With such a difficult identification and, as indicated, not knowing the extent of variation in *solitaria*, photographs are probably necessary for acceptance of this form. After two rounds of review, the Committee decided not to accept this.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Submitted on behalf of the New York State Avian Records Committee:

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