

## FOURTH REPORT OF THE UTAH BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE\*

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On February 15, 1986, the Utah Bird Records Committee held its first meeting. At that meeting, records that had not received a unanimous vote to "accept" or "not accept" through a previous mail circulation were discussed further and revoted upon. The results of that vote are included in this report. Also in this report are several records which received a unanimous vote on a second mail recirculation through the Committee. This report also includes some records with photographs that were received prior to the Committee meeting and voted on at the meeting. The format of this report follows that of previous Records Committee reports.

### ACCEPTED RECORDS

HARLEQUIN DUCK (*Histrionicus histrionicus*). One female (52~985); 21 Dec 1985-21 Feb 1986; First Dam, Logan River, Cache Co.; (PB, many obs.); documented: PB; photo: ES.  
See *Utah Birds* 1(4):90 for a discussion of this record.

LONG-TAILED JAEGER (*Stercorarius longicaudus*). One adult (46-1985); 13 June 1985; Ouray NWR, Uintah Co.; (JH); documented: JH.

This bird was observed for about 30 minutes as it ate a large dead fish. A photograph was taken of the bird on the ground, but unfortunately was lost before anyone on the Committee had an opportunity to review it. Hugh Kingery, who studied the photo, suggested that the bird was correctly identified as a Long-tailed Jaeger. On 29 May 1963, an adult Long-tailed Jaeger was photographed in Colorado (Bailey and Niedrach 1965), indicating that adults occur accidentally inland at this time of year. This sighting represents the fourth accepted record for Utah, two of which are specimens. Larry Balch and Guy McCaskie were consulted on this record.

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Calypte anna*). One immature male (54-1985); 15-25 Nov 1985; Holiday, Salt Lake Co.; (C&HC, many obs.); documented: ES; photo. JB,CC,ES.

This record was discussed in *Utah Birds* 2(3):73.

PALM WARBLER (*Dendroica palmarum*). One (49-1985); 24 Nov 1985; Smithfield, Cache Co.; (JS) ; documented: JS.

All key fieldmarks were observed including tail wagging which is typical of this species. It was seen in the lower branches of shrubs by an observer who was familiar with Palm Warbler.

BLACKPOLL WARBLER (*Dendroica striata*) . One (38-1985); 29 Sep 1985; Park Valley, Box Elder Co.; (JB,CM); documented: (JB,CM).

This warbler was identified by a combination of characters: grayish-green upperparts, especially the top of the head which had a greenish cap, yellow underparts especially on the throat and upper breast, white undertail coverts, and faint streaking on the sides. There were also two very

prominent wingbars, a yellowish stripe above the eye, no eyering, and light-colored legs. Two good fieldmarks, light feet and streaked back, were not observed. All experts who were consulted felt that the above combination of characters ruled out the similar fall-plumaged species: Bay-breasted and Pine warblers.

OVENBIRD (*Seiurus aurocapillus*). One (48-1985); 6 Sep 1985; Kaufman Ranch, Blackrock, Millard Co.; (PL); documented: PL.

The observation was brief (15-20 seconds) and the orange crown patch was not observed because of the angle of observation. The Committee felt that this species is distinctive and the observer has had extensive experience with the species, so the record was accepted. Ovenbirds are probably rare but regular fall and spring migrants through Utah as they are in adjacent states.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (*Seiurus noveboracensis*). One (13-1985); 4 Sep 1985; Ogden, Weber Co.; (MK); documented: MK; photo: MK. One (15-1985); 14 Sep 1985; Lambs Canyon, Salt Lake Co.; (BP,RH,DE); documented: BP,RH,DE.

Northern Waterthrushes are proving to be a rather regular fall and spring migrants. Most Committee members feel that it is time to discontinue evaluating records of this species. One Committee member observed five Northern Waterthrushes during an eight-day period in September 1986 in widely separated locations of Utah.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (*Ammodramus savannarum*). One adult (4-1983); 17 July 1983; Logan, Cache Co.; (HW); documented: HW.

The observer who was familiar with this species from Kansas relied largely on the song for identification. The description included a narrow white median stripe and yellow lores, two characters shared by the Savannah Sparrow. (However, the yellow on lores is confined to a spot on the Grasshopper Sparrow, while on the Savannah Sparrow the yellow includes the lores and much of the anterior portion of the supercilium.) The bird was differentiated from Savannah Sparrow by the unstreaked breast and "bill and forehead forming a straight line." Grasshopper Sparrows were formerly common summer residents until their tall grassland habitat was largely obliterated. A small but thriving breeding population was discovered in 1981 near Golden Spike National Monument. This record is in suitable habitat and may represent an additional breeding site.

BRAMBLING (*Fringilla montifringilla*). One (54-1985); 28 Nov 1985-20 Jan 1986; Brigham City, Box Elder Co.; (C&SA); documented: SA,ES; photo: CA,ES.

See *Utah Birds* 2(2):30 for a discussion of this record.

## UNACCEPTED RECORDS

GREAT EGRET (*Casmerodius albus*). One (25-1984); 7 Sep 1984; Escalante River Canyon, Garfield Co.

This bird was observed momentarily from a helicopter. The identification was based on large size and slow wingbeat. The Committee felt that the bill and leg/feet color were needed to be absolutely certain of the identification, especially at the distance involved.

WHITE IBIS (*Guara alba*). One adult (27-1985); 9 June 1985; Santaquin, Utah Co.

Many different opinions were expressed about this record, both by Committee members and authorities consulted. All agreed that the brief description fit an adult White Ibis. The species wanders widely and has occurred in adjacent states. The bird was seen briefly without binoculars while the observer was traveling on a freeway. Committee members felt that an escapee or albino White-faced Ibis were not adequately ruled out. All felt that a longer observation period would be necessary for this record to be accepted as a state first.

It is interesting to note that Colorado had its first accepted record of White Ibis, an immature that was observed 20 July 1985 through August 1985 (Gent 1986).

PALM WARBLER (*Dendroica palmarum*). One (29-1985); 21 June 1985; Logan Canyon, Cache Co.

The date would be unusual for an occurrence of a Palm Warbler in the West. Washington and Oregon recently had an average of nearly seven sightings per year, mostly from September through November with a few lingering into winter. In California, Palm Warblers occur on average over 170 times per year, and 150 of those sightings are in fall with some wintering (Roberson 1980). It is very rare in late spring in California, averaging fewer than three records per year. There are a few late June records for the Farallon Islands (Jon Dunn).

Pinyon-juniper is atypical habitat for this species. In the West Palm Warblers are usually found in "migrant traps" or along the coast. The bird was observed briefly over a one-two minute period and there was no mention of breast streaking, an important fieldmark. Palm Warblers normally forage in the lower branches, not in the canopy. Palm Warblers are generally noisy birds which call frequently.

MOURNING WARBLER (*Oporornis philadelphia*). One (45-1985); 6 Sep 1985; Wah Wah Ranch, Beaver Co.

This bird was identified as an *Oporornis* warbler on the basis of "a fairly large warbler size, fairly plump build, short tail (due in part to long yellow undertail coverts), and fairly thick-based (for a warbler) bill, and rather stout fleshy legs, as well as general coloration overall." The observer ruled out MacGillivray's Warbler by the lack of hood, bright yellow extending up through the breast to include the throat, lack of any gray in the plumage, and a less broken eyering.

Most immature/female MacGillivray's Warblers in the Utah Museum of Natural History collection have whitish or grayish throats, but a few have throats which are washed with yellow. One specimen collected on 16 August 1936 in southeastern Utah has a throat which is predominantly yellow with some yellow continuing down through the center of the breast. (Details of this specimen will be published elsewhere.)

Before this specimen was discovered, several authorities stated that they had never heard of a yellow throat on a MacGillivray's Warbler and felt that this was a good field mark for separating the two species. Other authorities expressed mild to strong sentiment against birders attempting to distinguish female/immature MacGillivray's and Mourning warblers in the field. Since there seems to be no general consensus on whether immature Mourning and MacGillivray's warblers can be distinguished in the field, plus the discovery that immature MacGillivray's Warbler can have a bright yellow throat -- a character previously thought to occur only in Mourning Warbler -- the Committee decided to wait for further information on these two species. The Committee also felt that the bird was observed too briefly to constitute a first state record. UOS members are

urged to submit details on their observations of MacGillivray's Warbler, especially immature birds.

HOODED WARBLER (*Wilsonia citrina*). One female (22-1985); 4 Sep 1985; Promontory Peninsula Box Elder Co.

This record was accepted twice by the Committee, once on the first round of review and again at the annual meeting following additional discussion. Subsequently, Sorensen retracted her record. The habitat -- an isolated clump of deciduous trees with abundant undergrowth and a shallow, slow-moving stream -- was ideal for this species, and the bird was observed on the ground and on low branches near the shallow stream. The description fit a Hooded Warbler, but the observer withdrew the record because the bird was seen very briefly. As one of the greatest critics against acceptance of records of briefly viewed birds, she felt that it was hypocritical to even submit the record.

A second documentation submitted on the same bird was based only on its call. The observer stated that "my hearing the bird alone is certainly not sufficient to accept the record." The Committee agreed and voted not to accept the record.

SCARLET TANAGER (*Piranga olivacea*). One; 7 Sep 1985; Promontory Peninsula, Box Elder Co.

The Committee was evenly split on whether or not to accept this record. Those in favor of acceptance felt that the observer had sufficient experience with Western and Scarlet tanagers. Those voting against acceptance felt that the bird had been observed too briefly. Some Western Tanagers in early September have wingbars that are worn away. There was also the concern that while the observer did not actually see the tanager give its call (a low mono-syllabic note), the call is not diagnostic. The date is also early for a vagrant Scarlet Tanager in the Far West. Since this would have been only the second state record (see *Utah Birds* 1(2):54), a longer observation period was necessary for acceptance.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW (*Spizella pallida*). One (42-1985); 15 Sep 1985; near Salt Lake International Airport, Salt Lake Co.

See *Utah Birds* 1(3):52 for a discussion of this record.

## UNRESOLVED RECORDS

GREATER SCAUP (*Aythya marila*). All previously submitted records.

Records of this species, submitted mainly from two Committee members, have always brought a split vote. There is disagreement among Committee members on whether Greater and Lesser scaup can be safely distinguished in the field. The Committee decided to solicit the opinion of several outside experts before discussing further these records.

OBSERVERS: Sharon and Calvin Andrus, Patricia Bahler, Joelle Buffa, Carl and Helen Chindgren, Dorothy Egan, Jim Hampson, Ruth Henson, Merlin Killpack, Paul Lehman, Clyde Morris, Bill Payne, Jeff Smith, Ella Sorensen, Herman Wiebe.

CONSULTANTS: Larry Balch, William Behle, David DeSante, Jon Dunn, Ned Johnson, Hugh Kingery, Wesley Lanyon, Paul Lehman, Guy McCaskie, Allan Phillips, Van Remsen, Don Roberson, Richard Webster.

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\*Source: *Utah Birds* 2(4):102-108.