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Third Report of the N.O.U. Records Committee

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THIRD REPORT OF THE N.O.U. RECORDS COMMITTEE

The functions and methods of the N.O.U. Records Committee (henceforth, "the committee") have been described previously (NBR 54:72-4).

This report includes accounts of records evaluated by the committee in the last year, covering mostly records with accessions numbers 151-245. All records mentioned here are available to interested persons at the N.O.U. archives at the University of Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln.

State List

With this report, the following changes are made in the official list of the birds of Nebraska. These include changes in common and scientific names (American Ornithologists Union (AOU), 1989, NBR57:58), additions to the state list, and changes in firmness of evidence:

- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (change from Nycticorax violaceus to Nyctanassa violacea): Regular, I-S
- Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (Dendrocygna autumnalis): Accidental, I-S, insert before Tundra Swan
- Sage Grouse (Centrocercus urophasianus): Accidental, III, insert before Greater Prairie-Chicken
- Iceland Gull (Larus glaucoides): Accidental, change from III to I-P
- Inca Dove (Columbina inca): Accidental, change from III to I-P
- change from Common Barn-Owl to Barn Owl (Tyto alba): Regular, I-S
- change from Northern Hawk-Owl to Northern Hawk Owl (Surnia ulula): Accidental, I-S
- Broad-tailed Hummingbird (Selasphorus platycercus): Casual, change from undocumented to I-P
- Williamson's Sapsucker (Sphyrapicus thyroideus): Accidental, change from III to I-S
- change from Western Flycatcher (Empidonax difficilis) to Cordilleran Flycatcher (Empidonax occidentalis): Regular, undocumented
- change from Water Pipit (Anthus spinoletta) to American Pipit (Anthus rebiens): Regular, I-S
- Connecticut Warbler (Oporornis agilis): Casual, change from III to I-P
- Cassin's Sparrow (Aimophila cassinii): Accidental, change from II to I-P
- Sage Sparrow (Amphispiza belli): Accidental, III, insert before Lark Bunting
- Brown Towhee (Pipilo fuscus) (Accidental, III) has been recognized by the AOU as including two species; the status of these taxa in Nebraska will be reviewed by the committee.
Accepted Records

Briefly, records in the following classes are listed as accepted: I-S, a diagnostic, labeled specimen exists; I-P, a diagnostic, labeled photograph exists; II, three or more independently written diagnostic documentations exist; III, one or two independently written diagnostic documentations exist. Each account of an accepted record includes a brief statement about the encounter, noting the species, class, date, approximate location, and initials of the observer(s).

Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*). class III. One in basic plumage was seen 17 November 1988 at the Offutt Air Force Base (AFB) Lake, Sarpy Co. (*Am. Birds* 43:124, *NBR* 57:10); GT.

Clark’s Grebe (*Aechmophorus clarkii*), class III. One was seen 1 July 1988 southeast of Alliance, Morrill Co.; WM. Another was found 20 July 1988 on Black Steer Lake, Garden Co., WM.

Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*). class III. One was seen 9 June 1989 near Gering, Scotts Bluff Co. (*NBR* 57:58, 63); AK.

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*). class III. One was seen 12 June 1989 in Scotts Bluff Co. (*NBR* 57:58, 63); AK.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*). class I-S. A bird shot in Clay Co. on 29 October 1989 was prepared as specimen ZM-16079 at the University of Nebraska State Museum. Photographs and a description have been placed in the NOU files. No evidence was found of this bird having a captive origin, but it may not be possible to completely eliminate this possibility. This is the first accepted record for Nebraska (*Am. Birds* 44:115, *NBR* 58:49, 87); JA, TL, SP.

Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*). Class III. An adult was seen 24 November 1988 at Crystal Cove, South Sioux City (*NBR* 57:11); BH.

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*). class III. An immature bird was seen 13 November 1988 at Branched Oak Lake, Lancaster Co. (*Am. Birds* 43:124, *NBR* 57:11); TL.

Brant (*Branta bernicla*). One of a light form was photographed 2 January 1989 at DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Washington Co. (*Am. Birds* 43:331, *NBR* 57:61, 65); class I-P, AG. Another light bird was seen 22 April 1990 in Phelps Co.; class III, MU.

American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*). class III. One was seen 20 January 1989 near Petersburg, Boone Co.; WM.

Oldsquaw (*Clangula hyemalis*). class I-P. A bird in a mostly basic plumage was photographed 19 November 1989 in Cedar Co. (*Am. Birds* 44:115, *NBR* 58:14); MB.

Black Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*). class III. Two birds in female/immature plumage were seen 13 November 1988 at Papio Dam Site 20, Sarpy Co. (*Am. Birds* 43:125, *NBR* 57:12); TB, BP, LP.

Surf Scoter (*Melanitta Perspicillata*). class I-P. A bird in probably female plumage was photographed 4 November 1989 in Cedar Co. (*Am. Birds* 44:115, *NBR* 58:14); MB.
White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*). Class III. One bird in probably adult female plumage was seen 29 October 1988 at the Offutt (AFB) Base Lake, Sarpy Co. (*Am. Birds* 43:125, *NBR* 57:12); AG.

Barrow’s Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*). Single adult males were seen 21 and 28 March 1988 at Branched Oak and Wagon Train Lakes, respectively, Lancaster Co. (*NBR* 56:57, 69); class III, NJ. Another adult male was seen 2 January 1989 at DeSoto NWR Washington Co. (class III, TB), and was probably the one photographed there 8 January 1990 (*Am. Birds* 43:331, *NBR* 57:61, 65); class I-P, LP.

Sage Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*). Class III. A description was submitted of a bird seen circa 6 September 1987 in northern Sioux Co. This is the first accepted record for Nebraska, DK.

King Rail (*Rallus elegans*). Class III. Perhaps as many as five were seen 18 August 1984 at the Capitol Beach marshes, Lancaster Co. (*Am. Birds* 39:73); AG.

Common Crane (*Grus grus*). Class I-P. Photographs taken of one 16 March 1974 in Buffalo Co. (*NBR* 42:63-4) have been placed in the NOU archives; CC, DC.

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*). Class III. Three birds were seen east of Gering, Scotts Bluff Co., on 15 May 1988 (*NBR* 56:60); AK.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*). Class I-P. Two birds were photographed in southeastern Cherry Co. on 20 May 1989 (*Am. Birds* 43:500, *NBR* 57:95); MB.

Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*). A bird near Albion, Boone Co., was photographed 21 July 1987; class III (photograph alone was not considered diagnostic), WM. Another was seen and heard 13 May 1988 near Albion, Boone Co. (*NBR* 56:63); class III WM.

Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicaria*). Class I-P. A bird entering first basic plumage was photographed 26 September 1987 in Pierce Co. (*Am. Birds* 42:99, *NBR* 56:22, 24); MB.

Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*). Class III. A bird in an immature plumage was seen 10 January 1990 near Gavin’s Point Dam, Cedar Co. (*NBR* 58:68); BKH, SV (photographs, but not considered diagnostic alone).

Franklin’s Gull (*Larus pipixcan*). A photograph of a bird in alternate plumage taken 17 December 1988 at Gavin’s Point Dam, Cedar Co. (*NBR* 57:16, class I-P, BR), and a description of another in similar plumage seen 14 January 1989 at Sutherland Reservoir, Lincoln Co. (Class III, RR) documented two of several reports in the region that winter (*Am. Birds* 43:331).

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*). A first-winter bird downstream of Gavin’s Point Dam, Cedar Co. was photographed 4 December 1988 and described; class I-P (*NBR* 57:52-3), EB, MB. This was probably the same bird as the one carefully documented 10 December (class III, BH, JP) and photographed (BR) and described (TB, BP, LP) there on 11 December 1988 (*Am. Birds* 43:331, 44:453); class I-P.
Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*). An immature was photographed downstream of Gavin's Point Dam, Cedar Co., on 4 December 1988 (*NBR 57:54*, class I-P, EB, MB). Two immatures were seen there 5 December 1988 (class III, BH), and five immatures were seen there 11 December 1988 (*NBR 57:16*); class III, TB, BP, LP. Another immature was seen 15 January 1989 at Lake McConaughy, Keith Co.; class III, RR.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*). class III. An immature was seen 14 January 1989 at Sutherland Reservoir, Lincoln Co. (*Am. Birds* 43:331); RR.

Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*). A first-winter bird was seen 30 October 1988 at the Offutt AFB Lake, Sarpy Co.; class III, DB. Another first-winter bird was seen 26 November 1988 downstream of Gavin's Point Dam, Cedar Co. (class III, BH), and was probably the bird photographed there 4 December 1988 (*Am. Birds* 43:331, *NBR 57:16*, 53-54); class I-P, MB.

Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*). Photographs of the bird that wintered in Kearney taken 23 December 1987 (class I-P, RG), and 1 January 1988 (class I-P *NBR 56:3*, MB), have been placed in the committee files (*Am. Birds* 42:284). Another in Keya Paha Co. 23 through 25 November 1989 was photographed (*Am. Birds* 44:116, class I-P, JB).

Broad-Tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*). class I-P. A male at a feeder in Hastings from 22 to 30 August 1987 was photographed. GK. This is probably the same bird reported under Unaccepted Records.

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufous*). class III. An adult male was seen in Hastings on 13 September 1987 (*NBR 56:14*); JK.

Lewis' Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*). A bird was seen 15 May 1988 in Carter Canyon, Scotts Bluff Co. (*NBR 56:73*, class III, AK). Another was seen 23 September 1989 near Niobrara, Knox Co. (class III KB, WB).

Williamson's Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*). class I-S. A male found dead 13 May 1988 on the Creighton University campus, Omaha, is now the state's first specimen. ZM-15986 at the Univ. of Nebr. State Museum. Photographs and a written description are in the NOU archives (*Am. Birds* 42:455, *NBR 57:30*); JJB, TL, BW.

Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*). What probably was just one bird patronized a feeder in Sow Belly Canyon, Sioux Co., 24 November 1989 through 7 May 1990. It was photographed 24 November (class I-P, BH) and 9 December 1989 (class I-P, MB), (*Am. Birds* 44:452, 456, *NBR 58:24*).

Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus palustris*). class III. One seen and heard 1 January 1988 near Loup City, Sherman Co., may be the first mid-winter record (*NBR 56:69*); WM.

Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*). One was seen 1 September 1988 near Gering, Scotts Bluff Co. (*NBR* 57:21, 29); class III, AK. Another was photographed 6 August 1989 in Sioux Co.; class I-P, DS.

Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*). class I-P. A photograph taken 1 October 1988 near Chambers, Holt Co., and published (*NBR* 57:32) has been, together with description, placed in the committee files (*Am. Birds* 43:126); LB.

Golden-Winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*). class III. An adult male was seen 7 May 1988 east of Homer, Dakota Co. (*NBR* 56:71); BH.

Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*). class III. One seen 16 December 1988 near Loretto may be the first winter record in Boone Co.; WM.

Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*). class I-P. A photograph of one in hand 23 August 1986 in Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co. has been placed in the committee files (*NBR* 55:22); RG.

Prairie Warbler (*Dendroica discolor*). class I-P. A photograph of one seen 31 May 1982 at the Niobrara Valley Preserve, Brown Co., has been placed in the committee files (*NBR* 51:49); DP.

Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorus*). class I-P. A bird photographed northwest of Wisner, Cuming Co., on 2 May 1968 was placed in the archives: JL.

Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*). class I-P. A photograph taken 25 May 1988 near Chambers, Holt Co., has been, together with a description, placed in the committee files (*NBR* 56:99, 57-54); LB.

Cassin's Sparrow (*Aimophila cassinii*). A sighting 3 June 1989 in southwest Dundy Co. was documented (class III, TB, RS). Sightings 21 and 22 June 1989 in Dundy Co. were also documented (*NBR* 57:67, 69 71), including photographs taken of a bird captured and banded (class I-P, MB, *Am. Birds* 43:1336).

Sage Sparrow (*Amphispiza belli*). class III. An adult was seen 6 August 1989 in Sow Belly Canyon, Sioux Co. This is the first accepted record for Nebraska (*Am. Birds* 44:117, *NBR* 58:27, 30); DSt.

Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola enucleator*). class III. A female was seen 22 May 1988 southwest of Gering, Scotts Bluff Co. (*NBR* 56:73, 76); AK.


Lesser Goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*). A photograph of a black-backed male near Harrison, Sioux Co., 20 May 1984 which documents the first state record, has been placed in the NOU archives (*Am. Birds* 38:931, *NBR* 52:41, 42, 59); class I-P, PS. A male with a green back was seen 9 July 1988 in Carter Canyon, Scotts Bluff Co. (*NBR* 56:82, 83, 57:27); class III, AK.
Unaccepted Records

Briefly, records in the following classes are listed as unaccepted: class IV, probably correct but not beyond reasonable doubt; class V, insufficient evidence; class VI, probably released, escaped, or misidentified. Each account includes the species, date, approximate location, reasons for the committee’s failure to accept, and class.

Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*). A description of an immature *Buteo* seen briefly 29 April 1989 near Scottsbluff was suggestive but not diagnostic and placed in class IV (*NBR* 57:62, 63).

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*). A description of a bird seen briefly at Fontenelle Forest Nature Center, Sarpy Co., on 12 July 1987 was lacking in detail and placed in class V. This report preceded releases of this species in Omaha (*NBR* 56:15, 16).

Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*). A description of a bird seen briefly in Loup Co. on 8 January 1990 lacked detail and was placed in class V.

Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*). A description of a bird seen 16 May 1988 in Buffalo Co. was placed in class VI, as probably describing a basic plumage Lesser Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*).

Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*). A report of an observation 16 April 1987 at the Mormon Island Crane Meadows, Hall Co., in the *Omaha World Herald* of 1 November 1987, and repeated in part in *NBR* 55:78, includes no substantiating details and was placed in class VI.

Thayer’s Gull (*Larus thayen*). A single photograph taken 17 December 1988 at Gavin’s Point Dam, Cedar Co., was placed in class IV, not being diagnostic without additional details.

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*). Descriptive material regarding a bird seen 3 July 1988 near Cozad, Dawson Co., was placed in class V, primarily due to poor conditions of sighting (*NBR* 56:54).

Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*). Photographs of a bird seen 16 May 1987 near Valentine, Cherry Co., were placed in class V, as the quality of the images did not allow elimination of all similar species.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus Platycercus*). A documentation of a bird seen in a yard in Hastings on 21-27 August 1987 was found to lack sufficient detail and placed in class IV. This was probably the same bird reported under Accepted Records.

Bewick’s Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*). A description written recently of a bird seen 19 April 1980 in Knox Co. was placed in class IV because of sparse details and the time elapsed between the sighting and the writing of the description.

Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*). A description of a bird seen in Fontenelle Park, Omaha, 8 August 1989 was suggestive but not definitive and placed in class IV.

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*). A published description (*NBR* 58:54-56) of a brief encounter with a bird on 21 May 1988 lacks sufficient detail to
eliminate similar species, especially warblers, lacks mention of the differing account of another observer present, and was placed in class VI.

Baird's Sparrow (*Ammodramus bairdii*). A description published (*NBR* 56:80-81) of two birds seen 25 March 1988 near Raymond, Lancaster Co., does not eliminate similar species beyond reasonable doubt and was placed in class IV.

Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*). Photographs taken 23 May 1978 near Grand Island were not clear enough to allow elimination of similar species. No additional information being available, this record was placed in class IV.

In addition to the above records, the committee has also received and filed documentations of the following species (p=photograph, w=written): Mississippi Kite (p, *NBR* 51:91), Peregrine Falcon (p), Great Horned Owl of a northern subspecies (p), Snowy Owl (p, *NBR* 56:18, 20, 1988), Northern Saw-whet Owl (p), Rock Wren (w), Purple Finch (p, *NBR* 56:51, 1988, see also *NBR* 57:49-51, 1989), White-winged Crossbill (p, *NBR* 40:84, 1972).

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**References**


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