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## 2017 (29th) REPORT OF THE NOU RECORDS COMMITTEE

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## 2017 (29th) REPORT OF THE NOU RECORDS COMMITTEE

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The functions and methods of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (NOURC) are described in its bylaws (NOURC 2010). The committee's purpose is to provide a procedure for documenting unusual bird sightings and to establish a list of all documented birds for Nebraska. Accidental and casual species for which the NOURC seeks documentation (NOURC Review List) can be found at the NOU website [www.NOUbirds.org](http://www.NOUbirds.org).

All records mentioned here are available to interested persons at the NOU archives at the University of Nebraska State Museum (UNSM), Lincoln, NE. Interested parties should contact the current NOU Librarian, whose address can be found in the latest issue of The Nebraska Bird Review (NBR).

**State List:**

The following summarizes all revisions made by the American Ornithological Society (Chesser et al. 2017) in 2017 including scientific name changes and taxonomic realignment that affect the current published "Official List of the Birds of Nebraska: 2017" (NOURC 2017, [www.NOUbirds.org](http://www.NOUbirds.org)). This report includes all accounts submitted during the 2017 calendar year covering 114 records with accession numbers 1858 - 1971.

**Criteria for Accepted Records:**

In order for a record to be accepted, a minimum of six votes in favor is required with no more than one dissenting vote (NOURC 2010). Records in the following categories are classified as accepted:

- I-S - a diagnostic, labeled specimen exists
- I-P - diagnostic, labeled photographic evidence exists
- I-R - a diagnostic, labeled recording exists
- II - three or more independently written diagnostic documentations of the same bird exist
- III - one or two independently written diagnostic documentations of the same bird exist

Each account of an accepted record includes a brief statement noting the species, class, date, location, and initial(s) of observers. This report summarizes all

records accessioned in 2017, discusses any new additions to the state list, and reports any changes in firmness of data (i.e. placement in the above acceptance categories) of Nebraska birds. Additionally, the list reflects changes in frequency of occurrence, as determined by the NOU Records Committee, which reviewed records of bird occurrences in Nebraska for 2008 - 2017. Frequency of occurrence is indicated by the following terms (NOURC 2017):

- Regular - acceptably reported in 9-10 of the past 10 years.
- Casual - acceptably reported in 4-7 of the past 10 years.
- Accidental - acceptably reported in 0-2 of the past 10 years.
- Extirpated - not acceptably reported in the past 50 years.
- Extinct - no longer found alive anywhere in the world.

The frequency of occurrence for any species that is acceptably reported in 3 or 8 of the last 10 years is discussed by the committee and placed in a category felt most appropriate by the committee.

With this report, the following changes are made to the “Official List of the Birds of Nebraska: 2017” (NOURC 2017).

#### **2017 Additions/Deletions to the “Official List of the Birds of Nebraska”:**

There was one new species added in 2017.

1. Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*)

One species was deleted in 2017: Thayer’s Gull is now treated as a subspecies of Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*).

1. *Larus thayeri* becomes *Larus glaucooides thayeri*.

With these revisions, the “Official List of the Birds of Nebraska” continues at **462** species.

#### **Changes Involving Nebraska Species Due to Taxonomic Revisions:**

The Fifty-eighth supplement to the American Ornithological Society’s Check-list of North American Birds (Chesser et al. 2017) effected the following changes to the “Official List” of Nebraska Birds.

The genus *Chen* has been lumped into the genus *Anser*. The sequence and scientific names for the *Anser* geese are now as follows.

Emperor Goose (*Chen canagicus* becomes *Anser canagicus*)  
Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens* becomes *Anser caerulescens*)  
Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii* becomes *Anser rossii*)  
Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)  
Taiga Bean-Goose (*Anser fabalis*)

The genus *Anas* was found to be paraphyletic and has now been split into several new genera. The new sequence and scientific names affecting Nebraska species are as follows.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula* becomes *Spatula querquedula*)  
Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors* becomes *Spatula discors*)  
Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera* becomes *Spatula cyanoptera*)  
Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata* becomes *Spatula clypeata*)  
Gadwall (*Anas strepera* becomes *Mareca strepera*)  
Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas Penelope* becomes *Mareca penelope*)  
American Wigeon (*Anas Americana* becomes *Mareca americana*)  
Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)  
American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*)  
Mottled Duck (*Anas fulvigula*)  
Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*)  
Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*)

The new sequence for the sandpiper family (Scolopacidae) is as follows:

Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*)  
Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)  
Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*)  
Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*)  
Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*)  
Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*)  
Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)  
Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*)  
Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*)  
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*)  
Stilt Sandpiper (*Calidris himantopus*)  
Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)  
Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)  
Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)  
Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*)  
Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*)  
White-rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*)  
Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Calidris subruficollis*)  
Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*)

Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*)  
Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*)  
Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*)  
Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)  
American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*)  
Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*)  
Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*)  
Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria*)  
Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*)  
Willet (*Tringa semipalmata*)  
Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*)  
Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*)  
Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*)  
Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*)

Northern Harrier has a scientific name change that separates New World and Old World populations.

Northern Harrier (*Circus hudsonius*) is the species found in Nebraska.

Northern Shrike has a scientific name change that separates New World and Old World populations.

Northern Shrike (*Lanius borealis*) is the species found in Nebraska.

The new sequence for the Finch genera is as follows:

*Fringilla* (Brambling)  
*Coccothraustes* (Evening Grosbeak)  
*Pinicola* (Pine Grosbeak)  
*Leucosticte* (rosy-finches)  
*Haemorhous* (House, Purple and Cassin's Finches)  
*Acanthis* (redpolls)  
*Loxia* (crossbills)  
*Spinus* (Pine Siskin and goldfinches)

The common name LeConte's becomes one word:

Le Conte's Thrasher becomes LeConte's Thrasher  
Le Conte's Sparrow becomes LeConte's Sparrow

The new sequence and new families for Yellow-breasted Chat, and a number of other passerines are as follows:

Passerellidae (New World sparrows and towhees)

Icteriidae (Yellow-breasted Chat)

Icteridae (New World blackbirds)

Parulidae (New World warblers)

Cardinalidae (cardinals and allies)

### Accepted Records (Received in 2017):

#### Brant (*Branta bernicla*)

1. Photographs (Class 1-P, fide EB) were received of an apparent *B.b. hrota* (eastern subspecies) shot in Burt Co., 28 October 2017. Accession # 1926.

#### Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*)

An immature male discovered at Summit Lake SRA, Burt County, was well documented.

1. Photographs (Class 1-P, BP) by the initial observer 23 December 2017. Accession # 1961.
2. Photograph (Class 1-P, JR) 23 December 2017. Accession # 1962.
3. Photograph (Class 1-P, MW) 23 December 2017. Accession # 1963.
4. Photograph (Class 1-P, JGJ) 24 December 2017. Accession # 1964.
5. Photograph (Class 1-P, SM) 26 December 2017. Accession # 1966.
6. Photograph (Class 1-P, SB) 27 December 2017. Accession # 1967.
7. Photograph (Class 1-P, WF) 28 December 2017. Accession # 1968.
8. Photograph (Class 1-P, SS) 28 December 2017. Accession # 1969.
9. Photograph (Class 1-P, ER) 29 December 2017. Accession # 1970.
10. Photograph (Class 1-P, ShM) 30 December 2017. Accession # 1971.

#### Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*)

1. A photograph (Class 1-P, JB) of an adult male south of Blair, Washington Co., present for about one month and last seen 5 July 2017, provided Nebraska's 4th accepted record. Accession # 1912.

#### Mew Gull (*Larus canus*)

A juvenile observed at Harlan County Reservoir, Harlan County, was well documented.

1. Photographs (Class 1-P, JGJ) by the initial observer 13 December 2017. Accession # 1957.
2. Photographs (Class 1-P, RS) 14 December 2017. Accession # 1958.
3. Photographs (Class 1-P, NV) 14 December 2017. Accession # 1959.

Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*)

A bird discovered at Offutt Base Lake, Sarpy Co., was well documented.

1. Photographs (Class 1-P, JGJ) by the initial observer 29 October 2017. Accession # 1927.
2. Photograph (Class 1-P, CO) 29 October 2017. Accession # 1928.
3. Photograph (Class 1-P, BP) 29 October 2017. Accession # 1929.
4. Photograph (Class 1-P, ER) 29 October 2017. Accession # 1930.
5. Photograph (Class 1-P, JG) 31 October 2017. Accession # 1931.
6. Photograph (Class 1-P, MB) 31 October 2017. Accession # 1932.
7. Photograph (Class 1-P, EW) 31 October 2017. Accession # 1933.
8. Photograph (Class 1-P, JeJ) 05 November 2017. Accession # 1936.
9. Photograph (Class 1-P, SB) 05 November 2017. Accession # 1937.
10. Photograph (Class 1-P, SM) 03 November 2017. Accession # 1938.
11. Photograph (Class 1-P, ShM) 06 November 2017. Accession # 1939.

Another sighting was that of a bird at Pawnee Lake, Lancaster County.

12. Photographs (Class 1-P, CV, MV) 04 November 2017. Accession # 1934.

Frigatebird species (*Fregata sp.*)

1. Distant photographs (Class 1-P, TS) taken 23 September 2017 were received of a frigatebird (not identifiable to species) that was present for “a couple weeks” at Copper Dollar Cove, Plattsmouth, Cass County. Accession # 1923.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*)

Nebraska's second record was found (JD) 29 May 2017 at Harlan County Reservoir and reported (LB) to NEBIRDS. The apparent female was well documented through 24 June 2017.

1. Photographs (Class 1-P, JGJ) 31 May 2017. Accession # 1894.
2. Photograph (Class 1-P, RS) and written description 01 June 2017. Accession # 1895.
3. Written description (Class III, MAB, EMB) 01 June 2017. Accession # 1896.
4. Photograph (Class 1-P, BaB) 02 June 2017. Accession # 1897.
5. Photograph (Class 1-P, BP) 02 June 2017. Accession # 1898.
6. Photograph (Class 1-P, MW) 03 June 2017. Accession # 1899.
7. Photograph (Class 1-P, WF) 03 June 2017. Accession # 1900.
8. Photograph (Class 1-P, TG) 06 June 2017. Accession # 1901.
9. Written description (Class III, DE) 07 June 2017. Accession # 1902.
10. Photograph (Class 1-P, RuS) 08 June 2017. Accession # 1903.
11. Photograph (Class 1-P, ER) 10 June 2017. Accession # 1904.
12. Photograph (Class 1-P, JS) 12 June 2017. Accession # 1905.
13. Photograph (Class 1-P, BP) 17 June 2017. Accession # 1906.
14. Photograph (Class 1-P, GR) 18 June 2017. Accession # 1907.
15. Photograph (Class 1-P, GW) 19 June 2017. Accession # 1908.
16. Photograph (Class 1-P, SM) 24 June 2017. Accession # 1909.

17. Photograph (Class 1-P, JK) 24 June 2017. Accession # 1910.
18. Photograph (Class 1-P, AB) 09 June 2017. Accession # 1914.

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)

A single bird present during the spring and summer at Branched Oak SRA, Lancaster County, was documented multiple times.

1. Photograph (Class 1-P, MW) 01 April 2017. Accession # 1881.
  2. Photograph (Class 1-P, MW) 08 April 2017. Accession # 1883.
  3. Photograph (Class 1-P, SK) 26 April 2017. Accession # 1885.
  4. Photograph (Class 1-P, MW) 22 July 2017. Accession # 1913.
- The NOURC no longer seeks documentation on this species.

Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*)

1. A soaring bird was photographed (Class 1-P, WF) 18 May, 2017 at Swan Creek WMA, Saline County. Accession # 1878.

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)

1. Nebraska's first record in over 100 years was an uninjured bird found in a yard in Lincoln, Lancaster Co., 23 September 2017. The bird was transferred to the Raptor Recovery Center in Elmwood where it was photographed (Class 1-P, BF via JGJ) and held until it was transported to Oklahoma where it was released back into the wild on 23 November 2017. Accession # 1921.

Harris's Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*)

A bird discovered at Niobrara State Park, Knox Co., was well documented.

1. Photographs (Class 1-P, WF) by the initial observer 05 November 2017. Accession # 1935.
2. Written description (Class III, RS) 06 November 2017. Accession # 1940.
3. Written description (Class III, MAB) 07 November 2017. Accession # 1941.

Another sighting was that of a bird at Swanton SRA, Saline County. This location is 200 miles south of the Niobrara bird.

4. Photograph (Class 1-P, TJW) 16 November 2017. Accession # 1951.

Williamson's Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*)

A female discovered at State Farm, North Platte, Lincoln Co., was well documented.

1. Photographs (Class 1-P, BE) by the initial observer 13 November 2017. Accession # 1943.
2. Photograph (Class 1-P, RS) 14 November 2017. Accession # 1944.
3. Photograph (Class 1-P, JGJ) 14 November 2017. Accession # 1945.
4. Written description (Class III, MAB, EMB) 15 November 2017. Accession # 1949.
5. Photograph (Class 1-P, JR) 16 November 2017. Accession # 1950.



6. Photograph (Class 1-P, RuS) 17 November 2017. Accession # 1952.
7. Photograph (Class 1-P, WB) 19 November 2017. Accession # 1953.
8. Photograph (Class 1-P, SM) 22 November 2017. Accession # 1954.
9. Photograph (Class 1-P, AB) 24 November 2017. Accession # 1955.
10. Photograph (Class 1-P, BP) 24 November 2017. Accession # 1956.

Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)

1. An adult female (present 31 March – 04 April 2017) was photographed (Class 1-P, KS) at Rowe Sanctuary, Buffalo County. Accession # 1884.
2. A single bird was photographed (Class 1-P, AF) 25 October 2017 in northern Phelps County. Accession # 1925.

White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*)

1. A single bird was photographed (Class 1-P, NA) 26 September 2017 at UNL East Campus, Lincoln, Lancaster County. Accession # 1920.

Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*)

1. Nebraska's first accepted record was a bird photographed (Class 1-P, AH), measured, and banded 14 September 2017 at Chadron State Park, Dawes County. Accession # 1918.
2. Nebraska's second accepted record was a bird recorded/photographed (Class 1-R, SM), 24 December 2017 at Chadron Creek Ranch WMA, Dawes County. Accession # 1965.

Curve-billed Thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre*)

1. An adult singing bird was photographed (Class 1-P, KMD) 14 May 2017 at Crescent Lake Headquarters, Garden County. Eye color, lack of distinct tail spotting, and three noted "whit-whit-whit" call identify the bird as belonging to the westernmost subspecies *T. c. palmeri*. Accession # 1891.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

A male bird coming to a feeder in Bellevue, Sarpy County, was well documented. This represents the third accepted record for the species in Nebraska.

1. Photograph (Class 1-P, BaP, LP) 08 January 2017 by the initial observers. Accession # 1861.
2. Photograph (Class 1-P, ER) 08 January 2017. Accession # 1862.
3. Photograph (Class 1-P, SM) 08 January 2017. Accession # 1863.
4. Photograph (Class 1-P, BP) 08 January 2017. Accession # 1864.
5. Photograph (Class 1-P, JJ) 09 January 2017. Accession # 1865.
6. Photograph (Class 1-P, KH) 09 January 2017. Accession # 1866.
7. Photograph (Class 1-P, EMB) 08 January 2017. Accession # 1870.

Evening Grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*)

1. An immature male bird was photographed (Class 1-P, LH) 13 September 2017 at Wildcat Hills Nature Center, Scottsbluff, Scotts Bluff County. Accession # 1916.
2. An immature was photographed (Class 1-P, BP) 13 September 2017 at Wildcat Hills Nature Center, Scottsbluff, Scotts Bluff County. Accession # 1917.
3. A description (Class III, MW) was received of a male and female bird observed 25 October 2017 in Gordon, Sheridan County. Accession # 1924.

Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola enucleator*)

1. A description (Class III, DM) was received of eight birds observed at a feeder in Loup Co., 25 March 2017. Accession # 1880.

White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*)

1. Photographs (Class 1-P, BM) of two birds present at a feeder 08 November 2017 in Lincoln, Lancaster County. Accession # 1942.

Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*)

A single bird was found 01 January 2017 in a brush-pile north of Creighton, Knox County, and continued into May 2017 was well documented.

1. Photograph (Class I-P, MAB) 01 January 2017. Accession # 1858.
2. Photographs (Class 1-P, BP) 07 January 2017. Accession # 1859.
3. Photograph (Class 1-P, MW) 07 January 2017. Accession # 1860.
4. Photograph (Class 1-P, JJ) 12 January 2017. Accession # 1867.
5. Photograph (Class 1-P, WF) 12 January 2017. Accession # 1868.
6. Photograph (Class 1-P, RuS) 13 January 2017. Accession # 1869.
7. Photograph (Class 1-P, EMB) 11 January 2017. Accession # 1872.
8. Photograph (Class 1-P, ER) 05 March 2017. Accession # 18676.
9. Photograph (Class 1-P, SM) 20 March 2017. Accession # 1879.
10. Photograph (Class 1-P, BB) 01 April 2017. Accession # 1882.
11. Photograph (Class I-P, MAB) 09 May 2017. Accession # 1887.

Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorum*)

1. A single bird was photographed (Class 1-P, KK) 10 May 2017 at Heron Haven, Omaha, Douglas County. Accession # 1888.

Cape May Warbler (*Setophaga tigrina*)

1. A male bird was photographed (Class 1-P, JR) and recorded 17 May 2017 at Mercer Woods, Omaha, Douglas County. Accession # 1890.

**Unaccepted Records:**

Records in the following categories are considered unaccepted (NOURC 2010):

IV - probably correct, but not beyond reasonable doubt.

V - a record with insufficient evidence to support the identification claimed.

VI - a probable released or escaped bird or mistaken identification.

Each account of an unaccepted record includes a brief statement noting the species, class, date, location, and reasons for the committee's non-acceptance of the record.

**Unaccepted Records (Received in 2017):****Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)**

Several committee members questioned the following records due to the lack of detailed descriptions and features of the bird relating to possible wild origin.

1. Photographs (Class VI) of an adult bird 16 May 2017 at Conagra Pond, Douglas County. Accession # 1889.

2. Photographs (Class VI) of an adult bird 21 October 2017 at Heartland Park, Douglas County. Accession # 1922.

**Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*)**

1. A description of a single bird in Scotts Bluff Co., 15 August 2017 was suggestive of the species but lacked in detail. Class V - Accession # 1915.

**Jaeger species (*Stercorarius sp.*)**

1. A description of a single bird observed 14 November 2017 at Lake North/Babcock, Platte County, lacked detail for acceptance. Class VI - Accession # 1947.

**Mew Gull (*Larus canus*)**

1. A description of two birds observed at Kingsley Dam, Keith Co., 12 March 2017 was lacking in detail for acceptance. Class V - Accession # 1877.

**Common Raven (*Corvus corax*)**

1. A description of four birds observed 26, May 2017 east of Bassett, Rock County, lacked detail for acceptance. Class VI - Accession # 1893.

*Mountain Chickadee (Poecile gambeli)*

1. A description of a bird found in Chadron State Park, Dawes Co., 25 May 2017 was suggestive of the species but lacked in detail for acceptance. Class V - Accession # 1892.

*Varied Thrush (Ixoreus naevius)*

1. A description of a single bird in Sarpy Co., 20 December 2017 was suggestive of the species but lacked in detail for acceptance. Class V - Accession # 1960.

*Hooded Oriole (Icterus cucullatus)*

1. A description of a single bird observed 30 June 2017 at Gothenburg, Dawson County, lacked detail to eliminate similar species. Class VI - Accession # 1911.

**Non-Review List Records (Received in 2017): Filed Without Votes:**

The following records are those of species not on the NOURC Review List but which have been accessioned due to other circumstances (out-of range, non-normal date of occurrence, unusual nesting record, etc.). These records have been filed without NOURC votes.

*Pygmy Nuthatch (Sitta pygmaea)*

Photographs were filed of a bird observed at State Farm, North Platte, Lincoln County.

1. Photographs (JGJ) 14 November 2017. Accession # 1946.
2. Photographs (BE) 15 November 2017. Accession # 1948.

*Hermit Thrush (Catharus guttatus)*

1. Photos (MAB) of a grayish-colored bird 19 February 2017 in Frontier County were filed. Accession # 1875.

*Lesser Goldfinch (Spinus psaltria)*

Photographs were filed of a green-backed male coming to a feeder in Murray, Cass County.

1. Photographs (MAB) 14 January 2017. Accession # 1871.
2. Additional photographs (EMB) 14 January 2017. Accession # 1873.
3. Additional photographs (BP) 14 January 2017. Accession # 1874.

*Black-throated Blue Warbler (Setophaga caerulescens)*

1. A photograph (PD) of an adult female observed 23 September 2017 in Hastings, Adams County, was filed. Accession # 1919.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)

1. A written description (EH) of an eastward adult male observed 07 May 2107 in Pawnee County was filed. Accession # 1886.

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**2017 NOURC Members:**

Mark A. Brogie (chair), Tim Hajda, Loren Padelford, Justin Rink, W. Ross Silcock, Kent Skaggs, T.J. Walker, and Michael Willison.

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