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## 2021 (33rd) REPORT OF THE NOU RECORDS COMMITTEE

Mark A. Brogie

Nebraska Ornithologists' Union, mbrogie@esu1.org

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**2021 (33rd) REPORT OF THE NOU RECORDS COMMITTEE**

Mark A. Brogie - NOU Records Committee Chairperson  
508 Seeley Street  
Creighton, Nebraska 68729

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. Species for which the NOURC seeks documentation (NOURC Review List) can be found at the NOU website [www.NOUbirds.org](http://www.NOUbirds.org).

Starting in 2020, the NOURC decided to deal mainly with those species deemed as Accidental on the "Official List of the Birds of Nebraska". Casual species and out-of-range species are now summarized in the "Seasonal Reports" of the Nebraska Bird Review and will be evaluated by Nebraska e-Bird reviewers (if submitted on that platform).

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).

**NOURC 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 2021, 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 2012 - 2021. 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).

#### **Nebraska State List:**

The following includes all revisions made by the American Ornithological Society (Chesser et al. 2021) in 2021 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 2021 calendar year covering 68 records with accession numbers 2287 - 2354.

#### **2021 Additions/Deletions to the "Official List of the Birds of Nebraska":**

One new species was added in 2021.

##### **Broad-billed Hummingbird (*Cynanthus latirostris*)**

A female bird was photographed (Class 1-P, CS) 15 May 2021 at Wilderness Park, Lancaster Co. Accession # 2298. The above bird was rediscovered and photographed (Class 1-P, JGJ), (Class 1-P, MW) later in the afternoon. Accession # 2299; Accession # 2300.

With this addition the "Official List of the Birds of Nebraska" stands at **466** species.

**Changes Involving Nebraska Species Due to Taxonomic Revisions (2021):**

The Sixty-second supplement to the American Ornithological Society's Check-list of North American Birds (Chesser et al. 2021) effected the following changes to the "Official List" of Nebraska Birds.

**Split of Mew Gull:**

All Old-World breeding species are included within Common Gull (*Larus canus*), making the New-World breeding Short-billed Gull (*Larus brachyrhynchus*) monotypic.

Mew Gull (*Larus canus*) becomes Short-billed Gull (*Larus brachyrhynchus*).

**New Genera for Cormorants:**

The genus *Phalacrocorax* has been split, with the Nebraska cormorants now being placed in the genus *Nannopterum*. The specific epithets of Double-crested and Neotropic Cormorant has also changed.

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auratus*) becomes (*Nannopterum auritum*).

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) becomes (*Nannopterum brasilianum*).

**Lump of Caracaras:**

As a result of a lump of Crested and Southern caracaras the scientific name for Crested Caracara is changed:

Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) becomes (*Caracara plancus*).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet Genus Change:**

Due to the difference between the kinglets, Ruby crowned is now in its own genus:

Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*) becomes (*Corthylio calendula*).

### Split of Sedge Wren:

The non-migratory Neotropical populations of Sedge Wren are now treated as a different species: Grass Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*). In the ABA Area, this effectively changes the scientific name of Sedge Wren.

Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) becomes (*Cistothorus stellaris*).

### Major Passerine Family Reshuffle

The sequence of the passerines has once again been changed.

The new sequence for Nebraska passerines is as follows:

Tyrannidae (tyrant flycatchers)  
Vireonidae (vireos)  
Laniidae (shrikes)  
Corvidae (corvids)  
Paridae (tits)  
Alaudidae (larks)  
Hirundinidae (swallows)  
Regulidae (kinglets)  
Bombycillidae (waxwings)  
Ptilionotidae (silky-flycatchers)  
Sittidae (nuthatches)  
Certhiidae (treecreepers)  
Polioptilidae (gnatcatchers)  
Troglodytidae (wrens)  
Mimidae (mimids)  
Sturnidae (starlings)  
Cinclidae (dippers)  
Turdidae (thrushes)  
Passeridae (Old World sparrows)  
Motacillidae (pipits)  
Fringillidae (true finches)  
Calcariidae (longspurs and snow buntings)  
Emberizidae (true buntings)  
Passerellidae (New World sparrows)  
Icteriidae (yellow-breasted chats)  
Icteridae (icterids)  
Parulidae (New World warblers)  
Cardinalidae (cardinalids)

**2021 Changes in Firmness of Data:**

1. Common Raven (*Corvus corax*): Change from Class III to Class 1-P.

**2021 Changes in Frequency of Occurrence:**

There were no changes in frequency of occurrence in 2021.

**NOURC Accepted Records (Received in 2021):****Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)**

Despite efforts to document sightings and determine provenance, uncertainty remains about the true status of any Nebraska Mute Swan record, although there now appears to be an established pattern of vagrancy for the species as a whole. Brogie et al. (2016) recommended three criteria for judging whether free-flying Mute Swans are more likely to be wild birds, which are listed in order of strength of evidence:

1. A marked bird (banded, collared, tagged), that can thus be determined to be from an established wild population. Certain markers may also prove derivation from a captive or research population.
2. An unmarked bird (not banded, collared, or tagged; halluces present) not associating with birds at a location where known captive birds are present, especially if the bird remains for an extended period during the winter.
3. Behavior appropriate for a wild bird (wary, does not approach humans, associated with other wild waterfowl).

The following 2021 Mute Swan records were classified as accepted.

Two sub-adult swans (traveling together) were observed along the Missouri River in northeast Nebraska from mid-June to mid-November 2021.

1. Photographs (Class 1-P, MAB, CS) 11 June 2021, Lake Yankton, Cedar County. Accession # 2305.
2. Photographs (Class 1-P, MAB) 11 June 2021, Gavins Pt. Dam area, Knox County. Accession # 2306.
3. Photographs (Class 1-P, EMB) 11 June 2021, Lake Yankton, Cedar County. Accession # 2307.
4. Photographs (Class 1-P, TW via JJ) 27 June 2021. Weigand Marina, Lewis and Clark SRA, Knox County. Accession # 2312.
5. Photographs (Class 1-P, GP) 01 July 2021, Lake Yankton, Cedar County. Accession # 2313.
6. Photographs (Class 1-P, BH) 05 August 2021, Jackson sewage lagoon, Dakota County. Accession # 2314.

7. Photographs (Class 1-P, PR) 05 August 2021, Jackson sewage lagoon, Dakota County. Accession # 2315.
8. Photographs (Class 1-P, MC) 06 August 2021, Jackson sewage lagoon, Dakota County. Accession # 2316.
9. Photographs (Class 1-P, PP) 07 August 2021, Jackson sewage lagoon, Dakota County. Accession # 2317.
10. Photographs (Class 1-P, MAB) 07 August 2021, Jackson sewage lagoon, Dakota County. Accession # 2318.
11. Photographs (Class 1-P, EMB) 07 August 2021, Jackson sewage lagoon, Dakota County. Accession # 2319.
12. Photographs (Class 1-P, TG) 10 August 2021, Jackson sewage lagoon, Dakota County. Accession # 2320.
13. Photographs (Class 1-P, MAB) 21 August 2021, Ponca State Park, Dixon County. Accession # 2322.
14. Photographs (Class 1-P, EMB) 21 August 2021, Ponca State Park, Dixon County. Accession # 2323.
15. Photographs (Class 1-P, BH) 22 August 2021, Ponca State Park, Dixon County. Accession # 2324.
16. Photographs (Class 1-P, EW) 22 August 2021, Ponca State Park, Dixon County. Accession # 2325.
17. Photographs (Class 1-P, EMB) 22 August 2021, Ponca State Park, Dixon County. Accession # 2326.
18. Photographs (Class 1-P, GP) 29 October 2021, Lake Yankton, Cedar County. Accession # 2342.
19. Photographs (Class 1-P, MAB) 30 October 2021, Lake Yankton, Cedar County. Accession # 2343.
20. Photographs (Class 1-P, MAB) 04 November 2021. Weigand Marina, Lewis and Clark SRA, Knox County. Accession # 2345.

A single bird was observed at the Jackson sewage lagoon, Dakota County at the same date the above two birds were being observed at Lake Yankton, Cedar County.

1. Photographs (Class 1-P, BH) 30 October 2021, Jackson sewage lagoon, Dakota County. Accession # 2344.
2. Photographs (Class 1-P, TD) 06 November 2021, Jackson sewage lagoon, Dakota County. Accession # 2346.

#### Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*)

1. Photographs (Class 1-P, CG via JGJ) were received of a bird found 25 November 2021 east of Valentine, Cherry County. Accession # 2347.

#### Gray Flycatcher (*Empidonax wrightii*)

1. Photographs (Class III, SMI) were received of a single bird observed 24 August 2021 at Oliver Reservoir SRA, Kimball County. Accession # 2353.
2. Photographs (Class III, SMI) were received of a single bird observed 06 September 2021 south of I-80, Exit 1 road, Kimball County. Accession # 2354.

*Vermilion Flycatcher (Pyrocephalus rubinus)*

An adult male bird was well documented from mid-August through early September 2021 at a farmstead southwest of Tecumseh, Johnson County.

1. Photographs by the original observer (Class 1-P, MG), 21 August 2021. Accession # 2321.
2. Photographs (Class 1-P, JGJ) 03 September 2021. Accession # 2327.
3. Photographs (Class 1-P, MW) 03 September 2021. Accession # 2328.
4. Photographs (Class 1-P, MC) 04 September 2021. Accession # 2329.
5. Photographs (Class 1-P, BP) 04 September 2021. Accession # 2330.
6. Photographs (Class 1-P, KH) 04 September 2021. Accession # 2331.
7. Photographs (Class 1-P, PS) 05 September 2021. Accession # 2332.
8. Photographs (Class 1-P, JG) 05 September 2021. Accession # 2333.
9. Photographs (Class 1-P, EMB) 06 September 2021. Accession # 2334.
10. Photographs (Class 1-P, MAB) 06 September 2021. Accession # 2335.
11. Photographs (Class 1-P, BE) 06 September 2021. Accession # 2336.
12. Photographs (Class 1-P, PR) 07 September 2021. Accession # 2337.

*Ash-throated Flycatcher (Myiarchus cinerascens)*

A single bird was documented south of I-80, Exit 1 road, Kimball County.

1. Photographs (Class 1-P, SMI) 23 June 2021. Accession # 2310.
2. Photographs (Class 1-P, MC) 27 June 2021. Accession # 2311.

*Common Raven (Corvus corax)*

The first-ever photographic documentation for this species in Nebraska occurred in January 2021 and observations continued throughout the year.

A bird found along Highway 29, about five miles south of Harrison, Sioux County, was well documented.

1. Photographs (Class 1-P, KD) 01 January 2021. Accession # 2287.
2. Photographs (Class 1-P, CC, BE) 02 January 2021. Accession # 2288.
3. Photographs (Class 1-P, CS) 03 January 2021. Accession # 2289.
4. Photographs (Class 1-P, SBy, JR) 03 January 2021. Accession # 2290.
5. Photographs (Class 1-P, EMB, BH) 04 January 2021. Accession # 2291.
6. Photographs (Class 1-P, PR) 04 January 2021. Accession # 2292.

A pair of birds observed in the Buckley Road area, Sioux County (around 12 miles southeast of above location) were also documented.

7. First observed (CCr) at this location on 04/04/21 and then photographed (Class 1-P, CCr) 25 April 2021. Accession # 2294.
8. Photographs (Class 1-P, MW) 30 April 2021. Accession # 2296.
9. Photographs (Class 1-P, EMB, MAB) 31 May 2021. Accession # 2303.
10. Photographs (Class 1-P, SMI) 14 June 2021. Accession # 2308.



11. A single bird photographed (Class 1-P, CCr) 23 October 2021. Accession # 2341.
- 12, 13, & 14. Photographic records at this location inadvertently not assigned accession numbers: 24 May 2021 (MC), 29 May 2021 (SM), 13 June 2021 (ER).

Additional Common Raven sightings in Sioux County in 2021.

15. A single bird photographed (Class 1-P, SB, JGJ) 25 May 2021, near 3767-4055 Henry Rd, Sioux County. Accession # 2301.
16. Two birds observed (Class III, SB, JGJ) 25 May 2021, near 4056-4166 Henry Rd, Sioux County. Accession # 2302.
17. Two birds photographed (Class 1-P, SB, SMI) 18 December 2021 along Highway 20, east of Harrison near mile marker 18. Accession # 2350 & Accession # 2351.

Hoary Redpoll (*Acanthis hornemanni*)

1. Photographs (Class 1-P, SMI) along with a written description was received of a bird observed 03 December 2021 at Wind Springs Ranch, Sioux County. Accession # 2349.

Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Setophaga nigrescens*).

1. A single first-year male/female was photographed (Class 1-P, MAB) 14 September 2021 south of Verdigre, along Creek Road, Knox County. Accession # 2338.

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)

1. A female bird was captured, banded, photographed (Class 1-P, TR via DS), and released 08 June 2021 on Goat Island, Cedar County. Accession # 2304.

### **NOURC 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.

### **NOURC Unaccepted Records (Received in 2021):**

Glaucous-winged Gull (*Larus glaucescens*)

1. A written description was received of a bird observed at Kingsley Dam, Keith Co., 23 December 2021. Although very suggestive, the description was lacking

in detail for approval. Class IV - Accession # 2352.

Western Gull (*Larus occidentalis*)

1. A written description was received of a single bird observed at Kingsley Dam, Keith Co., 26 April 2021. Although extremely suggestive of the species, the documentation provided lacked substantive evidence for a first state record of Western Gull for Nebraska. Class IV - Accession # 2295.

Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)

1. A report of a bird observed 07 May 2021 at the Bartley WTP, Red Willow County, was lacking in detail for acceptance. Class IV - Accession # 2297.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*)

1. Photographs of a bird observed 19 June 2021 south of I-80, Exit 1 road, Kimball County, were deemed inconclusive as to species identification. Class IV - Accession # 2309.

Common Raven (*Corvus corax*)

1. A report of a bird observed 16 October 2021 in Kearney, Buffalo County, was lacking in detail for acceptance. Class V - Accession # 2340.
2. A report of a bird observed 27 November 2021 just east of Harrison, Sioux County, was deemed inconclusive as to species identification. Class VI - Accession # 2348.

Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*)

1. A report of a bird observed 18 January 2021 at Diamond Lake WMA, Gage County, lacked detail for approval. Class V - Accession # 2293.
2. A report of a bird observed 15 September 2021 at Fort Niobrara NWR, Cherry County, lacked detail for approval. Class V - Accession # 2339.

**Acknowledgments:**

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**2021 NOURC Members:**

Mark A. Brogie (chair), Joe Gubanyi, Bill Huser, Joel G. Jorgensen, Sam Manning, Justin Rink, T.J. Walker, and Michael Willison.

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