

MINUTES FOR THE 2010 CBRC ANNUAL MEETING
Los Gatos, 8-9 January 2010

8 JANUARY 2010

Meeting called to order at 2:20pm, 8 January 2010 (Chair presiding). Members Paul Lehman (Chair), Joseph Morlan, Jon Dunn, Jim Pike, Brian Sullivan, Jim Tietz, Dan Singer (Vice-Chair), Peter Pyle and Guy McCaskie (non-voting Secretary) present. Kristie Nelson absent due to emergency; arrived at 4:20pm.

Welcome and introduction by Lehman. Matters requiring a vote postponed until Kristie Nelson's arrival.

1. **“Off shore” versus “from shore”**: short discussion on terminology used for describing birds seen at sea. Birds seen from boat or plane while observer at sea should be described as “off shore”, those seen by observer on land (sea watch) should be described as “from shore”.
2. **Michael Force records**: Lehman and McCaskie reviewed recently received records from Force and used Google Earth to determine that two were beyond the 200nm limit. Sullivan offered to review the coordinates using more sophisticated software to make a more precise determination, though these records appear to be at least several nm beyond the 200 nm limit.

Force record of Dark-rumped Petrel just below 42nd parallel (CA/OR boundary used by both state committees) – closest point of land is in Oregon (Singer rejected for this reason). Record to be circulated a third time – based on by-laws must be accepted as in CA waters. CBRC adapted 42nd parallel as north boundary (inconsistent with south border). Pyle in favor of using consistent criteria (nearest point of land) but any change to by laws should be done in conjunction with Oregon committee which currently also uses 42nd parallel. In inconsistent treatment of how the north and south offshore boundaries are handled was noted.

Consensus that CBRC function should not be involved with establishing, supporting or commenting on listing issues

3. **Discussion of use of terms “naturalized” vs. “established” and “non-native” vs. “established”**. Consensus that is “established introduced” preferable wording when referring to populations of introduced species.
4. **Introduced Bird Subcommittee report** submitted by Kimball Garrett and distributed to members at meeting. Discussion to follow on Saturday, 9 Jan 2010 after members have read the report.
5. **Order of observer names** in reports if more than one “finder”. Discussion on whether the committee should be more concerned with how names are ordered so that submitting observers are properly recognized. Dunn proposed and the committee agreed that if known, observer order should be as follows: finder; identifier (if different than finder); followed by other submitting observers listed in alphabetical order.

Side discussion on pulling email documentation and photos from the internet. Some states recognize finder even if that person didn't submit documentation.

6. Changing names of geographic locations over time. Goleta and Isla Vista cited as an example. Should we be more specific, perhaps adding coordinates? No resolution or consensus reached. Guy expressed emphatically that he often does not receive precise information. Recommended that members be aware of possible confusion but no action taken.

7. Reviewing hybrids when one parent not on review list (Magnificent Hummingbird x Anna's, Surfknott). Considered the notion of adding hybrid combinations to the review list and whether it is appropriate. Agreed that records of hybrids in which both parental species are on the review list should be brought to a meeting for discussion and a decision will be made to add to the review list by motion. There was no motion to add hybrids in which only one parent is on the review list. It was agreed that the claimed Magnificent Hummingbird X Anna's Hummingbird was circulated in error. The results of the vote will be provided to the observer, but it was agreed the record would not be published in an Annual Report.

8. CBRC files at WFVZ. Should files be open to the public? Agreement that, yes, files should be available to public, but access should be controlled and files should not be removed from WFVZ except by Chair or Secretary. Requests from the public for access to files should be directed to the Chair.

9. Website – database records available to the public have been limited to records reviewed since the publication of the book in an effort to promote book sales. Consensus reached that it was no longer necessary to restrict access to pre-publication records and that all records in the database should be accessible to the public. Dunn informed Committee that the WFO Board approved putting the entire book online at some point. Committee agreed with Dunn/Morlan suggestion to add link to accepted records in database that displays list of observers. Committee consensus to not add old records to database as this information is available in the book.

10. Election of Members

10a. Discussion of future members. Members discussed California birders considered to be good candidates for future membership on the Committee.

10b. Election. The terms of Nelson, Pike and Pyle expire.

Nominations:

Ken Able (Morlan)

Dave Compton (Dunn, Morlan)

Jeff Davis (Tietz)

Kimball Garrett (Dunn)

Lisa Hug (Morlan)

Oscar Johnson (Lehman, Nelson)

Susan Steele (Dunn)

John Sterling (Singer)

Lengthy and productive discussion on nominees. Members elected Compton, Garrett, Johnson.

11. Election of the Secretary (one year term) – nomination: Guy McCaskie (Lehman). Elected 8-0

12. Election of Chair (one year term) – nomination: Paul Lehman (Singer). Elected 8-0.

13. Election of Vice Chair (one year term) – nomination: Dan Singer (Lehman). Elected 8-0.

14. Miscellaneous discussion topics:

- a. Minutes will circulate by email to members for approval. Approval must be made within six weeks of receipt.
- b. Budget – only item is post office box used by Secretary.
- c. Donations and funding for publishing CBRC reports – Singer summarized a letter from Phil Unitt detailing page charges for report publication. Some WFO board members from out of state believe the CBRC should pay page charges much as any other author(s) do. After discussion, a consensus emerged that members, on a voluntary basis, should strive to donate something towards the cost of publication. One month after the conclusion of the meeting, an email reminder will be sent to the 2009 members to make a donation. Donations of any amount, from very small to very large are welcome. Donors and their donation amounts will remain anonymous. A link from the CBRC website to the WFO website donation page will be created. Some mentioned obtaining the WFO member list for soliciting donations.
- d. Committee reminded that the next WFO meeting is in Coachella on 17-19 Oct 2010.

15. Clarification of selected records for 34th Report:

- a. Rusty Blackbird 2008-121, a 1970 record from MRN circulated and was accepted, though it was outside the review period of 1972-1974. The committee discussed whether pre-review list period records should be reviewed. Most members felt such records should not be reviewed. Motion to remove 2008-121 from the 34th report passed 8-1, with JLD opposed. Lehman will send a letter to observers Chandik and Winter stating the record was reviewed and endorsed, but it will not be published in an annual report because it was outside the review periods.
- b. American Oystercatcher records 2008-122 and 2008-220 considered to represent same individual seen at different sites at Pt. Loma, SD. Motion to combine records passed 9-0.
- c. Lesser Black-backed Gull 2008-215. Change date span to 16 Dec 2007 – 30 Jan 2008 to include Henry Detweiler observation date. Approved 9-0.

d. Smew returned to Soulsbyville (see 33rd report) for a third winter but the committee received no documentation in support. Committee voted 8-1 to not accept the bird's presence for a 3rd winter with no documentation.

16a. Proposed Review List Additions:

Ruddy Ground-Dove – after declining for several years, there were 4 records in fall/winter 2009 and more in nearby AZ. No motion to add.

Elf Owl – members voted 9-0 to add to review list. Dunn to consult with Curtis Marantz and others and recommend a start date for the review period, but pending this discussion, the review period will begin 1 January 2010.

Cape May Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler – Dunn agreed to review records for the past 10 years and present results at 2011 meeting.

Northern Cardinal – Dunn proposed the southwest race, C.c. superbus, for addition. This taxon is probably extirpated from the state as a breeder. Discussion followed focusing on problem involving widespread occurrence in coastal LA-OR-SD region of introduced birds of various subspecies. Ultimately, a consensus emerged that confusion over introduced birds along the coastal slope versus those from the southeastern deserts could result in the secretary being inundated with reports the committee doesn't want.

The Committee adjourned for the evening at approximately 9pm.

9 JANUARY 2009

The Committee was called to order on 9 January 2009 at 08:55. All Members present except Nelson, who arrived at approximately 1030.

Morlan noted that the new secretary email address for documentation submissions is secretary@californiabirds.org.

16a. Proposed Review List Additions continued:

Tufted Duck – Members agreed this species occurrence in CA has declined and may deserve to be added to the review list. Singer to review records for the past 10 years and present results at 2011 meeting.

16b. Proposed Review List Deletions:

American Golden-Plover – averaging 8.6 records per year. Pyle motion to remove; Singer second. Members voted 9-0 to remove. Committee will review records through 2009.

Pyle commented that the review process for this species was very useful and he intends to write a paper for Western Birds on status and identification.

Yellow-throated Warbler – Pike motion to remove; Morlan second. Motion failed 4-5.

In addition to the above two species, the committee also discussed removing Little Gull, Worm-eating Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, and Snow Bunting. The committee has accepted well over 100 records for each of these species, but in each case the average number of records per year is below 4. Members recognize that in time, many species will accumulate 100+ accepted records, and agreed that the average number of

records per year is the most important criteria for considering deletion from the review list. No motion was made to remove other species.

17. Introduced Bird Subcommittee:

Garrett, Morlan, Pike and Sullivan volunteered to be on the 2010 subcommittee and Garrett volunteered to continue serving as Chair. Kimball Garrett's report was passed out to committee members the previous evening. Garrett outlined issues of concern the subcommittee faces, discussed progress made during 2009, and suggested action items. The committee endorsed its role in confirming the identification of established introduced species and discussed having an annotated list of naturalizing and naturalized (established introduced) current populations in the state. The subcommittee will produce a list with details on population location, size and status and present at the next meeting for discussion. Additionally, the subcommittee will review the by-laws and determine if modification is needed to sufficiently address how introduced species are handled by the committee.

18. Record review process (Blue-headed Vireo):

Discussion on the committee's handling of historic records of species added to the review list as a result of taxonomic decisions (e.g. Solitary Vireo split). While recognizing the inevitable divergent opinions on how these records should be treated, with some members being more conservative than others and the inconsistency differing approaches may bring, members generally agreed that historic records should be reviewed when a species is added to the review list as a result of taxonomic changes. Conversely, members generally agreed that in cases where species are added to the review list because of increasing rareness (e.g. Rusty Blackbird), historic records will not be reviewed. An exception to this would include the addition to the review list of a species that formerly bred in the state and has been or is believed to have been extirpated (e.g. Elf Owl).

19. American Oystercatcher removal process from review list:

Jon Dunn provided a brief recap of the reasons for this species removal from the review list in 2009, noting that there is probably a small resident population in Southern California that moves between the Channel Islands and the mainland, that the review process is not productive in furthering our understanding of the species status, and a hybrid scoring system to assess purity is not used for any other species.

20. Subspecies list:

Joe Morlan provided a historic review of the subspecies list developed by the committee and the objective of the committee in collecting data on subspecies. The Secretary currently archives records but none have been reviewed. At the request of the Secretary the subspecies list on the website was removed and the committee agreed to leave it off. A consensus by the committee emerged that the CBRC should not solicit documentation on subspecies at this time.

21. Annual Report:

Pyle to continue working on a tabular format as discussed at the 2009 meeting for eventual use, but nothing substantive happened during the past year and implementation

won't occur before the 35th report. A streamlined report which eliminates redundant information and is easier to read is desired by members.

The committee agreed that henceforth all reports should have Guy McCaskie listed as a co-author based on the significant contributions the secretary makes to each report.

Morlan expressed the need for a volunteer with expertise in the database software Access to construct an export feature that will generate tabular reports from the database.

Pyle reminded the committee that report authors are supposed to utilize the age descriptors used in the CBRC book: first fall, first winter, first spring, one year old; second fall, second winter, second spring, two years old, etc.

2008 records: Pike and Compton provided a very polished draft to the committee for review and requested comments no later than 31 January.

2009 records: Pyle and Tietz

22. CBRC and WFO relationship:

A general discussion was had about the need to have a committee presence at WFO annual meetings and some type of program should be presented, at least during the years the meeting is in California. Some on the WFO board desire a more formal relation between WFO and the CBRC. A suggestion (by Cat Waters?) was made to appoint a board member to be a committee liaison. This individual would attend meetings and present necessary information. This may or may not require a by-law change. Waters, Paul Lehman and Kimball Garrett will come up with appropriate wording, which will eventually be circulated to the committee for comments. In any event, the committee will reserve the right to have closed sessions as it deems necessary.

23. Digitizing records and votes:

Jim Tietz inquired about the possibility of getting records in recirculation digitized in order to speed the review process and make it easier for members without easy access to photocopiers to send batches before they have finished voting to the next member without having to duplicate hard copies. Though desirable, and while all members agreed the eventuality of all records and votes would be processed electronically, the majority of members agreed that the current system works fine and will not be changed before the current secretary retires.

24. Comments on Batch Circulation and Voting:

a) Routing Sheets – members were reminded to pay attention to the routing sheet. Do not send batches back to the Secretary if the routing sheet doesn't include possession dates for each member. If possession dates are blank for a member listed before you in the circulation order, the member possessing the batch should contact that member with missing dates and, if necessary, send the batch to this member. The Chair also reminded the Committee to skip members if they are out of town for more than two weeks, and that all members should add "away" information to the routing sheet for any committee member when such information is received while they have any batch in their possession.

b) Request for Information from Secretary – the Chair and Secretary led a discussion on the importance of members answering any specific questions in their votes that are in the record cover sheet. It is mandatory that vote comments address all questions by the Secretary.

c) Please keep records in a batch in correct order and make sure the CD is included with the batch before forwarding it to the next member.

d) Recirculation requests should be conspicuous to ensure the secretary does not overlook them. Use bold and/or enlarged lettering; use an asterisk. Make it prominent.

e) Members agreed it would be helpful when reviewing records involving “same bird issues” if back-up information from a prior record or occurrence was provided.

f) Complaint from public – a contributor expressed his concern that records were beginning circulation too quickly, before contributors were able to send their documentation to the Secretary, thereby having their documentation omitted from the review process. The suggestion was made that record circulation not begin until after the end of the current season (as defined by North American Birds). The Committee disagreed and believes the benefits of a speedy circulation outweigh the drawbacks.

25. Ship Assisted Birds:

Lehman led a discussion on the inconsistent treatment records involving ship assisted birds receive during the voting process, as highlighted by recent records involving Nazca and Red-footed Booby, which road ships into California waters. After much debate it was apparent that philosophical positions between members were not likely resolvable. Members expressed no interest in codifying voting criteria for such records and most members felt this issue could be hashed out during the voting process and further explained by report authors as necessary.

26. eBird:

Brian Sullivan agreed to work with county reviewers to ensure that documentation of review species is submitted to the CBRC. Brian noted that eBird follows CBRC decisions when validating records.

27. Bylaws Amendment:

Morlan led a discussion on how best to handle ‘returning and continuing birds’ and the potential for inconsistent decisions by different committees. The main purpose of this bylaw change is to protect accepted records from having differing decisions in subsequent years. By treating them as resubmissions, a majority vote is required to overturn a previously accepted record. The committee endorsed the change with the following wording added to Section VI Bird Records, Subsection D, item 3:

"Accepted records of individual birds returning or continuing through subsequent years shall be treated the same as any other resubmission of an accepted record. A majority

vote determines whether a record is to be treated as a resubmission of a returning or continuing bird."

An additional amendment was approved allowing mention of potential new State Records not yet approved within the text of our Annual Report.

“(4) “Pending records” should not be published although potential future additions to the State List may be mentioned within the text of our annual reports.”

28. Records brought to the meeting at the request of a member:

Trumpeter Swan specimens (2) at Oregon collection, photos by R. Browning (Dunn). Committee agreed to let stand as rejected. Pyle will contact Browning about additional details and report back if new and substantial information is available.

Smew in Tuolumne Co. (McCaskie). This record was published in North American Birds as returned for 3rd winter, but Committee agreed not to include year three as no documentation exists.

Yellow-billed Loon. Tomales Bay 25 Jan-30Aug 09 (2009-038: 1 or 2 birds – McCaskie and Morlan) and Bodega Bay (2008-174 [8-30 Nov 08] and 2009-117 [25 Jun-31 July 09] the same as each other and/or Tomales birds – Pyle). Pyle provided an analysis of photos showing how many birds were present and which ones represent the same individual. Records 2008-174, 2009-038 and 2009-117 will circulate through the committee for review and possible acceptance. Documentation for a second bird on Tomales Bay (CBRC Record 2009-216) will also be circulated for review by the committee.

Short-tailed Albatross. Record 2009-182 of a transmittered bird seen off Half Moon Bay in October 2009, generated discussion on human handling and transplant issues. This individual was translocated at birth to another island and eventually flew to California waters, leading some to question the issue of natural occurrence. Most members agreed this type of issue was best dealt with during the voting process.

Hawaiian and Galapagos Petrels (Pyle). Pyle reviewed accepted records of Dark-rumped Petrel records dating back to 1992 in order to determine which, if any, might be acceptable to species based on current understanding of identification criteria. Pyle recommended acceptance of 11 records as pertaining to Hawaiian Petrel, with the remaining records to be retained as “Dark-rumped Petrels”. The committee voted 9-0 to review the 11 records Pyle concluded were Hawaiian Petrel; the records will circulate with Pyle’s analysis.

Bulwer’s Petrel 2003-169 (Dunn). Record was rejected 8-2 after four rounds. Dunn will seek additional documentation from experienced observer who was on the boat and who has expressed strong opposition to the record. Given the narrow vote to reject, the

committee agreed Dunn should solicit a written statement from the observer to include with the record.

Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel 1997-137 (Morlan). Morlan expressed concern that this record may have been incorrectly rejected based on his recent experience with the species in the Galapagos and suggested it should be re-reviewed. Pyle and Sullivan suggested one of the southern Leach's Storm-Petrel subspecies might have been involved. There was no vote to resubmit the record.

Brown Boobies on Southeast Farallon Island (McCaskie, Pyle, Tietz, Nelson). Pyle will review aerial photos, discuss number of individuals involved with Phil Capitolo, and present findings to the committee.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (McCaskie). McCaskie asked for direction on records of an adult from Famosa Slough and the San Diego River channel, SD dating back to 2001 and whether records pertained to just one individual. A motion by Dunn, seconded by Singer, to regard all records as pertaining to one individual, failed 4-5. The committee agreed that the 2001 record is best considered a different individual, while the 2006 through 2009 records pertain to the same bird. The committee agreed 9-0 to consider a new report as a resubmission of a previously accepted record.

Glossy Ibis 2009-041 (Tietz). Tietz raised the question of whether first cycle birds get white head/neck streaking by early September. It was agreed photos from members would be added to the record. Dunn motion and Pyle second to circulate record a third time passed.

Harris's Hawk 2007-044 and 2008-085 (Lehman). A bird along the Riverside / San Diego line was considered the same individual, with the 2007 record being accepted and the 2008 record being rejected on questionable natural occurrence. A motion to recirculate 2008-085 by Lehman and seconded by Singer was accepted. The record will circulate with 2007-044 so that this inconsistency might be resolved.

Crested Caracara – Nelson to review 2009 records and try and resolve 'same bird' issues.

Sandwich Tern 1995-084 (Morlan). Morlan pointed out 1995-084 was not accepted because it had a potential hybrid character – an orange tomial stripe, yet a recent record from San Diego, 2007-157 was accepted as a pure bird despite showing the same character. A motion to recirculate 2007-157 by Dunn, second my Morlan, passed 8-1 and it was agreed it will circulate with the San Diego record 2009-086.

“Yellow-bellied” Flycatcher 2008-167 (Dunn). Some interest was expressed in reviewing this record as an Acadian Flycatcher but little support was generated. No motion was made.

Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers (McCaskie). Some records of birds showing hybrid traits have been accepted in the past as pure birds, i.e. one species or the other, in

contrast to a recent SEFI record of Blue-winged, which was rejected as a hybrid. Despite concerns of inconsistency, it was generally agreed that issues pertaining to a specific record should be addressed by the authors of an annual report. This discussion led to a motion by Tietz, seconded by Nelson, to re-review an accepted Blue-winged record from Santa Rosa in 1999 (1999-131) which arguably had hybrid traits. Motion was accepted 7-2.

Field Sparrow 2001-013 (Dunn). Record involving a bird from Furnace Creek Ranch on 5 Oct. 2000. Concern over the possibility this record involved an incorrectly identified bird was raised. A Dunn motion to re-review was seconded by Morlan, and the motion passed 9-0. Dunn to provide a position paper to attach to the record before circulation.

Snow Bunting 2009-083 from San Diego and 2009-091 from Monterey (Pyle). The record will be held until Pyle further evaluates the photographs to try and determine if the same bird was involved with both records. His conclusion will be added to the record, after which the record will recirculate.

29. Miscellaneous Species Discussion.

Tattlers. A recent record of Gray-tailed Tattler from SEFI generated discussion on separating this species from Wandering. Discussion was aided by photos from Pyle. Pyle noted that Wandering appear large-billed while Great-tailed have thinner, straighter bills. Lehman noted he doesn't see bill size differences between the two species in fresh juveniles on Gambell. Calls are not considered to be diagnostic – some Wanderings give an upward inflected “chu-reee” type call. Dunn mentioned the difficulty of separating the calls of Gray-tailed and Common Ringed Plover.

Iceland Gull. A short discussion about whether the CBRC treated past records as conservatively as recent records was had with members generally agreeing they had.

30. Closing

a. Date for 2011 meeting to be 14-16 January 2011. The site for the 2011 meeting is the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History in Santa Barbara.

b. Appreciations:

Linnea Hall and staff, and WFVZ for ongoing support and archiving records.

Joe Morlan and Jeff Morlan for website work.

Nelson, Pike and Pyle for time served.

Steve Rottenborn and H.T. Harvey and Associates for hosting.

Deceased past members Laurence C. Binford and Luke Cole were remembered for their contributions to the Committee.

c. Adjournment

7:30 pm, 9 January 2010.

Minutes by Dan Singer, Vice-Chair.

Approved 4 May 2010