

CBRC ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

18-19 January 2012

Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, Camarillo, California

Friday, 18 January

Meeting called to order at 1:20 p.m. (Chair presiding). Members: Kimball Garrett (Chair), Dave Compton (Vice-chair), Guy McCaskie (non-voting Secretary), Jon Dunn, Oscar Johnson, Kristie Nelson, Jim Pike, Peter Pyle, Steve Rottenborn, Scott Terrill.

Welcome and introductory comments by Garrett.

Garrett urges members to support the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, which is hosting the meeting and houses the Committee's records.

Dedication: The Committee acknowledges the contributions of the late Rich Stallcup to the CBRC, on which he served two terms; Western Field Ornithologists (the Committee's parent organization), which Rich helped found; generally in California field ornithology, education, and conservation; and in inspiring many younger birders.

GENERAL TOPICS

CBRC online description form – potential improvements. Dunn and Garrett initiated a general discussion on problems with and potential improvements to the online rare bird report form that is provided on the CBRC website. As Joe Morlan is the person likely to make any changes to the form, the committee agreed that any suggested changes should be sent to Garrett, who would forward them to Morlan. During the discussion, the following suggestions and issues were discussed:

- Add a line asking how long the bird was viewed.
- Modify p. 2 to remove the "Please cover" text at the top and add text after the "Description" heading suggesting what the submitter discuss in this section.
- Remove the notation "keep it brief" from the line asking the submitter to described the circumstances of the observation.
- The name of the person submitting is not prominent enough on the form, coming too far down the first page.
- The form should ask for the description near the beginning, then ask for much of the circumstantial information that is currently requested on p. 1.

Combating the trend of "photo-only" submissions. Because an increasing number of records are submitted with photos only, a lot of information is being lost. In particular, information on the circumstances of sightings is potentially lost, and the date and locality of observations are in many cases questionable (as photographers submit photos with no additional information or photos are taken from websites that may not include this information). While the Committee may have to accept that this is a generational change in birding, efforts should be made to combat the trend to the extent possible. Suggestions for doing so included:

- Members could use email lists such as Calbirds and county lists to note the problem to the birding public.

- A basic form related to submitting photos and asking for additional information that may be relevant to the sighting could be included on the CBRC website.
- The annual report could be used to decry the decline of written description and the problems this engenders. The annual reports might also more often publish sketches of records to emphasize this as an alternative to merely taking photos.

The above suggestions were discussed, and opinions varied on the potential effectiveness of each. No specific action was agreed upon.

North American Birds (NAB) Regional Editors publishing records without Committee submittal and date Discrepancies. This issue pertains more to records from northern California. The situation has improved and McCaskie will continue to remind editors when documentation is needed.

When should a record be circulated? (i.e., balancing waiting for as much documentation as possible vs. expediting processing of records). The Committee discussed the appropriate time for beginning circulation of records of birds that are still present or for which all documentation may not have been received. Do we really need to wait until the last date a bird is present? Normally, for long-staying birds we use the final date in the range published in NAB. The Secretary currently waits until he has enough information on which a record can be judged. After announcing a record is circulating, he then waits 7 to 14 days for additional documentation.

It was also noted that documentation received earlier, particularly descriptions, is better than documentation received later, which may not have been written from notes recorded at the time of an observation and may instead have been written from memory long after the observation. Early circulation can encourage people to submit early, so we don't get documentation well after the fact.

The Committee agreed that it should be up to the Secretary to determine when to begin circulation. The Committee also agreed that occasional posts to Calbirds before records are circulated, so that people have a chance to submit additional documentation, would help solve the problem of records circulating before all documentation has been submitted.

Other reminders to Committee members from the Secretary:

Following cover sheet instructions – While overall members are following cover sheet instructions better than in the past, some members do not always follow the instructions, particularly with regard to instructions to address “same bird” issues.

Please put your name or initials on the file name when votes are sent to the Secretary – When sending votes to the Secretary, members should always include their initials in the name of the file.

Don't write long comments on the voting cover sheet – As the Secretary has to manually enter comments entered on the voting cover sheet, members should use the voting form for comments of more than three or four words.

Please download electronic batches from YouSendIt within the 14-day timeframe – If batches are not downloaded within this timeframe, the Secretary later must place the material for the batch back on YouSendIt to accommodate the tardy members.

Submitting votes on records to facilitate potential electronic circulation of 2nd and subsequent rounds.

Currently, the Committee circulates electronically records in their first round of circulation only. Records being circulated for additional rounds must include comments from previous rounds. These comments are normally included in files with a voting cover sheet and comments on additional records in the batch with which they were previously circulated. Therefore, circulating these comments with an electronic batch would involve breaking out separate comments from the original files beforehand. One possibility is to

submit each record comment in an individual file so the Secretary can more easily include recirculated records in batches.

No change to current practices was suggested. At some point in the relatively near future, batch circulation practices will likely change to accommodate recirculation of records electronically, likely through a web-based system.

Expenses

About \$500 in expenses are incurred each year, about \$270 of which are reimbursable (\$220 for the P.O. Box and the remaining for YouSendIt). The Secretary has absorbed additional costs for postage. Members also incur costs for postage in the case of batches circulated by mail.

ELECTIONS

Prior to discussion of nominees and potential new members, discussion was held on the requirements members must meet in order to make nominations. Per the bylaws, nominations must be made in writing to the Chair at least thirty days prior to the Annual Meeting.

Election of New Members. The terms of Compton, Garrett, and Johnson expire.

Nominees:

Thomas A. Benson
Joseph Morlan
Adam J. Searcy
Daniel S. Singer
David Vander Pluym

Discussion of future members: Prior to the election, the Committee discussed a variety of potential future nominees, including past members, some who have been nominated before but were not elected, and some who have never been nominated.

Morlan, Singer, and Searcy are elected.

It was determined that, for those nominated but not elected, the person nominating would inform the nominee of the results, and that the Chair would inform those elected. [*Note: During the 2012 meeting, it was decided that the CBRC would develop a form letter to inform those nominated of the results. This letter was not developed, so no such letter was sent to the nominees after the 2013 meeting.*]

Election of Chair (one-year term) – nomination: Joe Morlan (Dunn, Nelson) Elected 9-0

Election of Vice-Chair (one-year term) – nomination: Dan Singer (Dunn, Johnson) Elected 9-0

Election of Secretary: (one-year term) – nomination: Guy McCaskie (Garrett, Pike) Elected 9-0

SPECIES DISCUSSIONS

Bean-geese (2010-141)

The Committee reviewed the issues relating to the bean goose at length, based on a proposal by Morlan (See attached: “Draft Proposals for CBRC Meeting: Adding Taiga/Tundra Bean –Goose to the California State List). Garrett outlines the issues as:

- Has a legitimate decision already been reached?

- If so, (1) then is there a motion to re-review? (2) How will this species pair be handled on the state list and web site?
- If not, then what is the course of action? (see Morlan's five options on p. 4)

The Committee agreed that each the following had already been resolved and no additional vote was necessary:

1. The record had been accepted. The initial vote in favor of Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose was 6-3 (with 1 accepting as Taiga/Tundra, if the record did not pass as Taiga). A 2nd circulation as Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose by email passed 8-1.
2. Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose has therefore been accepted to the state list. There is no additional step to accomplish this.
3. At the 2012 meeting, the Committee decided that inclusion of species pairs indicated by “/” (referring to species that are each other's closest relatives) on the state list was acceptable (7-2 vote; see 2012 meeting minutes).
4. No change to the bylaws is necessary to permit inclusion of such species pairs on the state list.
5. No rewrite of state list headers, bylaws, or other documents is necessary.

Motion to recirculate record #2010-141 of Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose because of the possibility the bird was a hybrid, and therefore that the record could be rejected as Taiga/Tundra based on identification (Dunn/Pike). Motion fails 2-7 (Dunn, Pike voting in favor)

The Committee reviewed options, outlined on p. 4 of Morlan's proposal, for including Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose on the state list. The Committee chooses Option 4, as follows:

“We rewrite the ASP script to make an exception for Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose so that it will appear on the main list, but not on the main part of the review list, instead adding it only to the “species pairs” list at the end of the review list. Under this plan, the number of review species would be different between the two lists. Taiga/Tundra would be counted on the main list, but not on the review list. It might be possible to write an additional exception into the script to handle this if the committee desires and if a volunteer can be found to implement it.”

The Committee, however, did not directly address the programming issues, instead only agreeing that the entry should be on the main list and the “species pair” list at the end of the review list. Therefore, if the programming issue proves to be insurmountable, a fallback option should be #2 (inclusion on the state list and the main part of the review list, but not the “species pair” list).

Common Crane (2011-065)

Stands 7-2 (the two not accept votes on the basis of natural origin questionable), after 2nd round.

Garrett raised the issue of whether the record should be re-reviewed, based on potential origin issues. Asking for re-review was not an option after the 2nd round, according to the bylaws. Given rejection of a record of Demoiselle Crane, a Eurasian species that would also have been a first state record, consistency is an issue. However, because of the recent record of one in Modoc County, with Sandhill Cranes, re-circulation is not necessary.

White Ibis (1981-014, 1978-105)

These coastal records were rejected because of questionable origin, based on the belief that the species was kept in captivity in southern California. Dunn asks whether information about escaped individuals at Busch Gardens in the San Fernando Valley at the time was correct and whether there really were other known instances of the species occurring in captivity in southern California. Should the recent Carpinteria bird be accepted, the Committee would then appear to be inconsistent in its treatment of this species.

Garrett shares contemporary promotional literature showing that Busch Gardens included the species in its collection. However, the species has increased greatly in Arizona in recent years, and evidence is that it wanders in the southwest.

Motion to recirculate both records (Dunn, Terrill). Motion passes 9-0. Committee is cautioned to consider the context that influenced the initial decisions, as the Committee may have had an understanding of factors at the time that may not now be fully appreciated.

Winter Wren - Review of current status of records, ID criteria

McCaskie asks for a review of the rate of records being submitted and accepted. Eight have been accepted, four are in circulation, and three have not been accepted based on identification. No action related to this item was taken.

INTRODUCED BIRDS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT (Garrett)

Terminology

From Ted Floyd, 23 Oct 2012:

Based on comments to Garrett by Ted Floyd, the Committee discussed the validity and use of the term “non-native” for birds not occurring naturally, versus Floyd’s suggested “non-established exotic.” The Committee determined that the term “non-native” has occurred in some annual reports and in committee publicity emails. The Committee will now use only “established introduced species” in annual reports.

Nutmeg Mannikin listing package status

Garrett will circulate a package in approximately the next two months to the new committee proposing to include the species on the state list. The package will be based in part on information compiled from eBird with the help of Brian Sullivan. Specimens confirm that the subspecies involved is the nominate *L.p. punctulata*. Ecological evidence supporting the species’ establishment is that Pintail Whydahs, which are becoming more common in parts of Orange County, are now relying heavily on Nutmeg Mannikins as brood parasites.

Species on the horizon

Several parrot species are candidates

Pintail Whydah increasing in Orange County and could eventually parasitize native species

CHANGES TO REVIEW LIST

ADDITIONS

“frigatebird sp. (*Fregata* sp.)

Discussion revolved around whether

- “Frigatebird sp.” acknowledges that a frigatebird occurred.
- Don’t want to appear to suggest that all frigatebirds that occur are Magnificent.
- Annual reports already acknowledge whether rejected records involved frigatebird sp.
- With the fall 2012 influx of Magnificent Frigatebirds, that species could be removed from the list. In that case, we should also remove “frigatebird sp.” if it is added.

- If the Committee adds “frigatebird sp.” it may have to consider a variety of other, similar possibilities, such as “*Phyloscopus* sp.” and “wagtail sp.”

Motion to add “frigatebird sp.” to the review list (Dunn, Compton). Motion passes 7-2 (Garrett, Pike opposing). However, implementation will be delayed until the 2014 meeting, so that any concerns over potential complications may be aired.

Guadalupe Murrelet

Considered as a future possibility. eBird suggests the species occurs regularly. No motion to add the species to the list was proposed.

Craveri’s Murrelet

Pyle notes that the species occurs cyclically. In addition, 14 were off San Diego County in the fall 2012, although eBird shows the trend has been toward low numbers in recent years. The annual report will include a note that the situation with this species will be closely monitored and that documentation should be submitted with reports of this species. No motion to add was proposed.

REMOVALS

The Secretary offered several possibilities for discussion, but voting members should present a case in order for a formal discussion to take place.

Neotropic Cormorant

34 accepted records, 7 under review; breeding recorded. Small numbers appear to be present in the Imperial and Colorado Valleys, but they are not being recorded elsewhere. No motion to remove is proposed.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

56 accepted records; breeding population in San Diego County, breeding records in Ventura County (6 at Pt. Mugu, with nesting supposedly occurring on base). Tracking the number and identity of the various birds in Imperial Beach and Seaworld/Famosa Slough is impossible. We are not learning anything by continuing to vote on records of this species.

Motion to removed Yellow-crowned Night-Heron from the review list (Garrett, Terrill). Motion passes 9-0.

Harris’s Hawk

67 accepted records; breeding population in southern San Diego County. Bred historically in the state. Dunn notes that we aren’t learning anything and we aren’t achieving anything in our discussions of origin. Also, there are many of this species in adjacent areas.

Motion to remove Harris’s Hawk from the review list (Garrett, Terrill). Motion passes 7-2 (Pike, Compton opposing).

Yellow-billed Loon

93 accepted records, 2.2 per year in past 10 years. No motion to remove is proposed.

Little Gull

108 accepted records, approximately 2 per year in the past 10 years. No motion to remove is proposed.

Lesser Black-backed Gull

105 records, 8 pending. 12.4 per year over the past 5 years, 7 to 8 over the past 10 years. Garrett and Pyle note that, if the Committee removes the species from the list, it wouldn't be teasing out records of Heuglin's Gull, but it is generally agreed that this is not being accomplished, anyway. Motion to remove Lesser Black-backed Gull from the review list (Johnson, Nelson). Motion passes 9-0.

Parakeet Auklet

Records were formerly scarce, but numbers reported have increased dramatically in the past year or two, since birders have begun going on repositioning cruises. The CBRC has now endorsed 291 and is receiving far fewer submissions than there are reports. Compton argues that we shouldn't assume information gathered in such a short period is indicative of the true status of the species, and that we should probably wait a little longer. Motion to remove Parakeet Auklet from the review list (Dunn, Terrill). Motion passes 8-1 (Compton opposing).

Snow Bunting

7 records in 5 years. No motion to remove is proposed.

Worm-eating Warbler

3.4 per year for the past 5 years; 2.5 for the past 10 years. No motion to remove is proposed.

Connecticut Warbler

1.8 records per year. No motion to remove is proposed.

Mourning Warbler

1.2 records per year for the past 5 years. No motion to remove is proposed.

Pine Warbler

104 total, 12 pending, 5 per year for the past 5 years, 3.9 for the past 10 years. Motion to remove Pine Warbler from the review list (Pike, Nelson). Motion is defeated 2-6 (Pyle abstaining).

Saturday, 19 January

Meeting reconvenes at 10:15 am.

RECORDS BROUGHT TO MEETING PER MEMBER'S REQUEST, OR WITH OTHER ISSUES

Crested Caracara; outstanding "same bird" issues and summary of records

An adult at Sonoma State in Sonoma County (2012-032) was reported by a single observer in a well-birded area, with the date uncertain (the date of the email report, 2 March 2012, was attached to the record). The first-round vote went 8-1, with Garrett not accepting due to questions of origin. Pyle noted that, based on the single photo and comparison with other photos, this individual had not previously been reported. It was agreed that the observer should be contacted to provide the date and additional photos if available. The record will be recirculated with any additional information.

Black Vulture: summary of records, same-bird issues

Since the Committee accepted a scenario covering same bird issues compiled by Compton, Johnson, and Pyle for the January 2012 meeting, additional reports have come from Goleta, Santa Barbara County (2012-106), Lake Casitas, Ventura County (2011-158), Lompoc, Santa Barbara County (present through 16 December 2012), and Los Angeles (2012-179). Johnson and Compton will update the previously

prepared table of records for approval of the 2012 Committee. If the revised scenario is accepted, the on-line table of records will be updated.

Neotropic Cormorant: outstanding “same bird” issues, e.g. with 2012-11

At issue are records from the Salton Sea and vicinity, including 2012-157 (1 adult), 2012-107 (brown immature), 2012-110 (up to 2 adults, 1 immature), and 2012-099 (immature—2nd-cycle, per Pyle). It was decided that:

- 2012-099 should include 2 individuals (including an adult and an immature)
- Two of the three individuals reported in 2012-110 are the same as the individuals reported in 2012-099.
- 2012-107 will stand as a distinct record.
- 2012-157 will stand as a distinct record.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (2009-233); same/different bird issues, Salton Sea State Recreation Area, Riverside County 2011-248. These individuals were accepted as the same bird, but Johnson questions this decision, based on two years between observations and the large number of this species around the Salton Sea. It is agreed that the birds should be considered different individuals.

Sandwich Tern (2012-050)

This record was not accepted due to the potential that the individual was a hybrid between Sandwich and Elegant Terns (it was also determined to be the same as 2009-086, which was also not accepted). Pyle notes the unlikelihood the bird was an F1 hybrid and questions where the combination of Sandwich x Elegant breeding with an Sandwich Tern could occur. The possibilities are raised that the bird originated in the Gulf of Mexico as a cross between Sandwich x Elegant and a Sandwich Tern or includes Cayenne Tern parentage, and thus would still be a Sandwich Tern. As the implications of this records' rejection are important, it is agreed that the parentage of this individual should be addressed in annual report addressing 2012 records. Authors should refer to the 35th annual report for previously published information.

Hawaiian Petrel (2012-125).

During the first round, the vote on this record went 7-2 as Hawaiian, but was accepted by 2 “Not Accept – ID” voters as “Dark-rumped.” The record will continue circulating, but Pyle notes that we should exercise caution due to the possibility that the bird could have been a Galapagos Petrel.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (2011-254); same bird issues (see also “Review List Changes” above)

The results of votes on same bird issues for these four adults were inconclusive when the record was circulated. Some members noted “same bird” but didn’t specify previous records. Only 2 adults had been accepted from this location previously, so the other 2 adults could only have been birds present here previously as offspring of the original adults. The Committee agreed that the two additional adults were new birds, so only two were continuing birds.

Gyr Falcon (2012-056), Owens Lake, Inyo County, and (2012-007), Lakeview, Riverside County; same bird issues

Pyle and Nelson present a photographic comparison addressing whether these records involved the same bird. The Committee voted 9-0 in favor of considering the birds involved as the same.

Whooper Swan (2011-179)

This record was rejected 0-9, but the single observer subsequently submitted extensive documentation that was not part of the circulation, which included only a brief account that the observer may not have realized was being used to support the record. The Committee voted 8-1 to consider the new

documentation as new and substantial information, so the record will be recirculated through the 2012 Committee.

Common Snipe (2011-215). Annotation for the species on the state list.

This accepted record is of a bird collected by a hunter, but only photographs of the dead bird and a small tissue sample (LACM) are available. Is proper annotation on the state list P (for photo) or S (for specimen)? In the future, some code representing genetic data might be useful. The Committee agrees that, at this time, the proper notation on the state list should indicate that photos of the species, and not a specimen, support its inclusion.

Glossy Ibis (2009-125); non-acceptance of 12 July date (better photos available).

Currently, the final date associated with the submittal (12 July 2009) is not accepted. The Committee reviewed new photos and voted 9-0 to extend the date through 12 July, an extension of one day.

Iceland Gull (2012-036; Davis, YOL); photodocumentation to extend date

An eBird submission for 19 March 2012 included a photo of this individual, previously accepted as occurring 12-15 March 2012. The Committee voted 9-0 to extend the date to 19 March 2012.

Green Violetear (2005-150); in which county did this record occur?

The on-line database says this individual occurred in Ventura County, but the CBRC book says it occurred in Kern. D. Vander Pluym has said Ventura probably is correct. Dunn described the location of the bird to the Committee, and A. Searcy, sitting in on the meeting, confirmed that the location is Ventura. It is agreed that the on-line corrigenda should reflect the Ventura location.

Submission of Common Black-Hawk x hawk sp. hybrid

McCaskie asks how to proceed in the case of the offspring of the long-staying Common Black-Hawk in Sonoma County and an unknown buteo. No motion is proposed to circulate the record of the offspring.

Louisiana Waterthrush (2011-116)

This historic record from Cottonwood Springs, Riverside County, 8 May 1960, would provide the second state record, if accepted. The record was supported by a vote of 8-1 during the first round, but questions were raised relating to the practices of the reporter Donald L. Bleitz, who received many live birds from around the United States, photographed them, and released them into the wild. A discussion ensued relating to Bleitz's practices, the role of his students in reports associated with some of his records, the lack of a paper trail tracing the provenance of the record, and the circumstances surrounding record 2011-116, which involved a bird found dead, according to the tag attached to the specimen at the Western Foundation. It was agreed that Jay Shephard, who worked with Bleitz at the time, would be contacted for potential further information. Motion to re-circulate the record, but not until after Shephard is contacted (Dunn, Terrill). Motion passes 9-0. In addition, A. Searcy will provide additional information attached to this specimen at the Western Foundation, to be attached to the record.

Cave Swallow (2011-113)

This record involved an individual reported on 4 August 2011, in Mountain View, Santa Clara County. The Committee voted 5-4 in favor of the record in round 1 and 4-5 in favor in round 2, and Pyle requested it be brought to the meeting. Discussion revolved around whether a recent paper on molt and photos of similar individuals that were known Cave Swallows, neither circulated with the record, constituted new and substantial information and thus justified a motion to recirculate the record. The bylaws do not currently support recirculation on this basis. It is generally agreed that a motion changing the bylaws could be introduced at the 2014 meeting, but that such a motion should not be introduced during the meeting, without inclusion on the agenda, in 2013. Therefore, no action was taken, but it was noted that a

recirculation of the record following a bylaw change in 2014 should be done as a third round and not a re-review, which would start over with round 1.

FOURTH-AND-FINAL RECORDS

2011-033 Black Vulture (Lompoc, Santa Barbara County, 22 Feb 2011)

1st round: 5-4

2nd round: 4-5

3rd round: 5-4 (Garrett, Johnson, Nelson, Pike voted “not accept”)

Discussion of this record revolved around the experience of the observer, who has seen many of this species, and presence of a Black Vulture in the same roost in the fall and early winter 2012. The Committee voted 9-0 in the fourth and final round, so the record is ACCEPTED.

ANNUAL REPORT AUTHOR ASSIGNMENTS

Garrett notes that authors should return records to the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology as soon as possible after final proofs of the annual report are approved.

The current report (2011 records) is being authored by Nelson, Rottenborn, Terrill. All members of the 2012 Committee are asked to review the draft when it is available.

Pike, Garrett, and Searcy all volunteer to author the report on 2012 records.

NEXT (2014) MEETING

The 2014 meeting is scheduled to occur at a northern California site. Terrill informs the Committee that H. T. Harvey and Associates is willing to host the meeting in Los Gatos, so the meeting is set for that location, at a date to be determined.

APPRECIATIONS

The Committee's appreciation is expressed to the following:

To Garrett, Johnson, and Compton for time served.

To McCaskie for his continuing, critical work as Secretary.

To the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, Linnea Hall, and Adam Searcy for hosting the meeting, and to Adam Searcy for making the meeting possible. In addition, Garrett solicits membership and donations on behalf of WFVZ.

The meeting is adjourned at 2:05pm.

--DRAFT PROPOSALS FOR CBRC MEETING --

Adding Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose to the California State List

Background

With the tentative acceptance of Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose there remains the issue of exactly how to add it to the State List. At the last meeting in January 2012, I proposed that a by-law change was needed to implement adding taxa other than species to the state list. My proposal was defeated by a vote of 7-2. According to the minutes, "The Committee voted 7-2 to allow "slash" species (e.g. Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose) on the state bird list without amending the bylaws."

It was my contention that a bylaw change was needed to provide a mechanism by which slash species could be added to the state list. The committee felt that the current description of the state list in the by-laws was broad enough not to require a by-law change.

"(6) Periodically, the Committee shall publish or cause to be published the official California State Bird List, as mandated by Article II, Section G. At a minimum, this list will include a Main List of all accepted species and the Supplemental List of those species "not accepted, natural occurrence questionable" as defined by Article VI, Section G, and Paragraph 13. All species on the State List will be annotated to indicate the highest level of documentation supporting their acceptance."

The committee interpreted the phrase "at a minimum" very broadly, allowing taxa other than species to be on the state list without a bylaw change. My understanding is that this was not a vote to decide the fate of the Bean Goose or any other record. Bean Goose was only an example. In fact Bean Goose was still in circulation at the time of this vote and no final decision had been reached. I mention this, because some members may have interpreted this vote to mean the committee approved adding Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose to the state list.

"ACCEPTANCE" OF THE BEAN GOOSE

The "final" vote on the Bean Goose was 6 votes in favor of Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose, and three votes in favor of Taiga Bean-Goose. Of the three accepting as a Taiga, one member also indicated acceptance as Taiga/Tundra, one member (me) opposed it as a Taiga/Tundra and one member voted to accept as Taiga without further comment. I specifically rejected it as Taiga/Tundra, endorsing it only as a Taiga Bean-Goose. From my voting page dated 21 February 2012:

*VOTING DECISION: 1 Accept only as Taiga Bean-Goose
x Not Accept - Not accepted as Taiga/Tundra
x identification not established*

With one member voting Taiga silent on the Taiga/Tundra subject, I think Taiga/Tundra received only a 7-2 which means it did not pass. It may seem like a vote to accept as Taiga automatically confers

acceptance as Taiga/Tundra, but that is not the case. There are a variety of reasons why a member may wish to accept it as Taiga but reject it as Taiga/Tundra.

Why accepting as one species does not automatically confer accepting as a species pair.

Some members have expressed confusion about how a member might vote to accept a record as one species, but not be willing to endorse it more broadly as a species pair. Taiga Bean-Goose is part of the set that includes Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose so it may seem logical that a vote for the smaller set must include the larger set. This is not the case and I believe it is a logical fallacy to make such an assumption. In fact, rejection of only part of the set permits rejection of the entire set. More formally, according to the rules of modal logic, if we have statement A which says that either X or Y may be true; and we have statement B which says that Y is false, then statement A is false.

My position is that the measurements done on the photographed bill by one of the leading authorities of this species complex is adequate to reject the possibility that the bird was a Tundra and confirms that the bird was a Taiga. Because I reject the notion that the bird was a Tundra, I therefore feel obligated to reject the combined Taiga/Tundra set as not representing what the bird actually was. I think eliminating similar species is still a reasonable way to identify birds, and I am more than satisfied that Tundra Bean-Goose has been eliminated. Once we have eliminated Tundra Bean-Goose, we have also eliminated the set Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose.

If the bird had been poorly seen, or if the photos were equivocal, or if the measurements were inconclusive, I would be more than happy to accept it as a Taiga/Tundra because we would not have been able to eliminate either species. To me, that's the real purpose of the "slash" species category. It is to allow acceptance of important records when it is not possible to eliminate one or the other species, either because of lack of knowledge or lack of adequate documentation. To me, the Bean Goose does not fall into that category. This is also why I opposed adding it to the review list when that vote was taken.

Specifically, I remain unconcerned by the supposed small size of the Salton Sea bird. I think the problem with overall size goes away when we stop thinking that it must be *middendorffi*" which I don't think it is. But just because it isn't *middendorffi* doesn't mean that it's not another race of *fabalis*. The argument has also been made that birds that look like our bird apparently breed in tundra habitat and may thus be misclassified. I agree this is very interesting but ultimately it is a taxonomic issue beyond the scope of the California Committee. Many of us have reasonable doubts about the validity of various taxa such as Iceland Gull or Taiga Bean-Goose. Although we might prefer not to deal with them, we agree to follow AOU taxonomy and vote as best we can.

Because the status of this record is not clearly resolved in my view, I asked the chair to set aside the announced decision that it had been accepted, and bring the record to the next meeting. I request that the committee first decide whether the record actually passed as Taiga/Tundra based on the record. I would argue that it did not, but the committee may decide otherwise. If the committee decides that the record did pass with all or all-but-one vote as a Taiga/Tundra, then additional decisions must be made whether and by what means Taiga/Tundra should be added to the California State List. In my opinion

the acceptance of Taiga/Tundra does not automatically add a species to the state list because the taxon which has been accepted is not a species.

MECHANISMS FOR ADDING NON-SPECIES TO THE CALIFORNIA STATE LIST

The bylaws provide ways by which slash species, hybrids or other non-species taxa may be added to the review list, but they do not provide a similar mechanism for adding such non-species to the state list. Historically the state list has been a list of species. In practice the committee has followed the AOU in all questions of taxonomy. Taiga/Tundra is not on the AOU list, so I think putting it on our list creates an exception to our policy of abiding by AOU decisions.

Aside from that, I would argue that we need a very high bar before any non-species be added to the state list. The 7-2 vote at the last meeting said we could do it without changing the bylaws, but failed to establish a mechanism of how to do it within the existing bylaws. The mechanism by which new species are added to the state list is described in the heading to the list itself.

“For new species to be added to the main list, at least one record of the species must be reviewed and accepted by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC).”

Assuming the committee still thinks adding non-species to the state list is a good idea, my recommendation is that if a non-species is added to the review list and is accepted, and if it is new to the state (no member of the component taxa has been accepted), that in addition to voting whether to accept or reject the record, committee members must also agree by all or by all-but-one vote to add this non-species to the state list. This is a separate issue from simply accepting or rejecting the record. E.g. some members may be willing to accept the record, but not want to see it added to the state list because it is not a species.

It is true that doing this on a case-by-case basis could lead to inconsistent decisions in the future as committee membership changes. For this reason the committee may wish to make addition or non-addition of new non-species automatic without requiring a separate vote. However, unless the by-law change is carefully drafted, that could lead to automatic addition to the state list of other types of non-species such as hybrids or subspecies. My preference is to simply disallow adding non-species to the state list. Otherwise, I think there should be case-by-case voting to prevent adding other types of non-species without forcing their automatic addition to the state list.

Lastly a mechanism needs to be developed to remove non-species from the state list once they have been added. Currently species can be removed if there is no longer an accepted record after re-review. But in the case of non-species, there can still be accepted records of the species pair and one or the other of the component species. In these cases I think the committee would want to remove the species pair in favor of the single species. That mechanism should also be addressed in the by-laws.

ADDITIONAL DECISIONS THAT NEED TO BE MADE

If the committee decides that non-species should be added to the state list, either by a separate vote as I recommend, or by some other approved automatic mechanism, then other related issues should be resolved by committee decision.

There are technical problems adding non-species to the web site. E.g. if we were to add Taiga/Tundra to the State List on the web site, it would automatically appear on the main part of the review list. It would not appear where it belongs at the end of the list where we now have two other species pairs, Galapagos/Hawaiian Petrel and Masked/Nazca Booby.

Alternatively it could appear in both places on the review list, but that would create the only case where a taxon appears twice on the review list. It would also mess up the number of "species" on the review list by being counted as a species, unlike the current "species pairs and hybrids" which are not counted in the number of review species.

Currently every review species on the main list is displayed on the review list by virtue of a script which would have to be rewritten if it is desired to prevent Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose from appearing in the main part of the review list. Neither the main list nor the review list exist as separate entities, but are generated by an Active Server Pages (ASP) script which creates them at run-time. In addition to keeping our lists accurate and synchronized, this script automatically inserts the correct number of species, number of review species, and the date the list was updated into the headers automatically.

If the committee decides it wants Taiga/Tundra on the state list, we have several choices.

1. We add Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose to the main list, the review list and to the "species pairs" list at the end of the review list.
2. We add Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose to the main list and the main part of the review list, but leave it off the "species pairs" list.
3. We add it only to the "species pairs" list at the end of the review list. This is the way it is now. It is not currently on the main list.
4. We rewrite the ASP script to make an exception for Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose so that it will appear on the main list, but not on the main part of the review list, instead adding it only to the "species pairs" list at the end of the review list. Under this plan, the number of review species would be different between the two lists. Taiga/Tundra would be counted on the main list, but not on the review list. It might be possible to write an additional exception into the script to handle this if the committee desires and if a volunteer can be found to implement it.
5. We do away with the ASP script and go back to the old way of maintaining the list.

Number 1 is messy creating an inconsistent double entry on the review list. Number 2 puts a species pair on the main review list without it being listed with the other species pairs where it belongs. Number 4 will require finding a volunteer programmer familiar with ASP who would be willing to modify the script to create exceptions for this one bird. My son wrote the existing script but is not available (or interested) in making any changes. Unfortunately, the programming required is well beyond my abilities, so I cannot implement #4 unless the committee finds a qualified volunteer to make the changes.

Doing away with the script and reverting to separate documents (option #5) is problematic. Maintaining the lists as separate entities was a big headache in the past. It was very difficult to keep the lists synchronized and they were chronically error-prone and often seriously out-of-date. I do not recommend it. My personal preference is for number 3 which has already been done.

Also if the committee decides to add Taiga/Tundra to the State List, there will need to be a rewrite of the headers for both lists. Currently the text talks only about species. It would be necessary to change the word “species” to “species and non-species” or “species and species-pairs” throughout. We would need someone to volunteer to rewrite the web page text. Also there may be other documents and pages on the site including the by-laws which would also have to be checked and modified for similar changes.

Action Summary

1. Decide whether the Taiga/Tundra Bean-Goose passed (all or all-but one vote needed).
2. If so, decide whether the committee agrees it belongs on the state list (simple majority)
3. If so, decide on mechanisms by which non-species can be added to or removed from the state list. (Recommend a new by-law requiring a separate vote with all or all-but one needed for approval to add accepted non-species to the state list with automatic removal of non-species when/if one of the component species is accepted or when/if the accepted non-species becomes not accepted after re-review.
4. Implement the mechanism to add Taiga/Tundra to the state list. (Have the vote if needed).
5. If approved, decide which of five alternatives to listing Taiga/Tundra on the review list are desired (simple majority)
6. If list options #4 or #5 are chosen, find a volunteer to assist the webmaster.
7. Provide the webmaster with a rewrite of the list headers, by-laws, and other documents to indicate that we also have non-species (or species groups) on the state list.

■ Joseph Morlan