

**Delaware Bird Records Committee Annual Report for 2014**

Frank Rohrbacher  
on behalf of the Delaware Bird Records Committee

This is the 18th report of the Delaware Bird Records Committee. The Committee members for 2013–2014 were Jim White (President), Frank Rohrbacher (Secretary), Anthony Gonzon, Jean Woods and John Janowski. At the 28 August 2014 annual meeting, Jean Woods stepped down as a review member and was replaced by Chris Bennett. Frank Rohrbacher continued as Secretary and Jim White continued as President. The Committee updated the Delaware State List of Bird Species, the Delaware Review List and the Index of all records adjudicated as of 1 November 2014. It has distributed these documents to the birding community via the DOS Website, de-birds and the 2015 Delmarva Ornithologist.

This year's summary consists of 27 reports forming 19 records involving 17 different species including first state records for Anhinga and Gray Kingbird. These additions increase the official Delaware Bird State List to 412 species. The Anna's Hummingbird record was accepted by the Committee earlier this year and would have been a first Delaware record, but some digital images of the bird were taken after it had completed its molt and just before it migrated. The photographs were published and have raised the possibility that the bird may have been a hybrid. As a result, the record has been put on hold, and a new record with this new data added will be reviewed by the Committee again before a final decision is made.

For the summary below, date, location, DBRC reference number, and documentation received are listed for all records; photographers and reporters are credited only for accepted records. Accepted records use the standard taxonomic order as of 1 November 2014. The DBRC emphasizes that reports deemed "not accepted" does not necessarily mean that the Committee believes the species was misidentified, but rather that the documentation submitted was insufficient to establish the claimed identity.

**Accepted Records****Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*)

15 July 2013

DBRC #13/09

Rehoboth Beach

Notes, Photographs (SL)

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks have become a common vagrant along the East Coast as the Florida population has increased and expanded. The first bird appeared in Delaware in August 2000. Unfortunately, the two birds in this record were at a private golf club so most birders missed them, but Lynn was not only able to see them but took some great photographs and saved the record for posterity. This record is the 8th accepted record and very typical of our experience with this species. Birds have been in all three counties but most (6) were found in Sussex County. They are usually single birds but groups of two or three have been recorded. They normally arrive in June, July or August, stay but a short period and leave. One bird was not like the others: that bird showed up in November 2008 at Silver Lake, Rehoboth Beach, and left in August 2009.

**Barnacle Goose** (*Branta leucopsis*)

22 Feb 2014

DBRC #14/01

Route 9 at Walker School Road

Notes, Photographs (TS)

Barnacle Geese on the East Coast were routinely rejected on the basis of provenance until 2003 and reporters rarely submitted the species to records committees, so we have little history in Delaware before then. This record was only the second accepted by the DBRC. So it was a great find when a couple of birders stopped and found this bird in a group of ca. 300 Canada Geese. Better yet, they noted that it was accompanied by two hybrid young Barnacle x (Canada or Cackling) Geese and Tim managed to photograph the entire family. This Barnacle Goose family was undoubtedly the same that was recorded in December 2013 at Spruce Run Reservoir, Hunterdon Co., NJ, as being with two Barnacle x Cackling Goose hybrid young (Frank Sencher) moving south and later, at Rahway River Park, Union Co., NJ on 1 Mar as being with two Barnacle x Cackling Goose hybrids (Davis Bernstein) moving north.

**Green-winged "Common" Teal** (*Anas crecca crecca*)

13–17 April 2014

DBRC #12/04

Bombay Hook NWR

Notes, Photographs (JamE, HBE)

Since 2004, when the Eurasian Green-winged (Common Teal) was put on the Review Species List as a subspecies of the American Green-

winged Teal, it has become obvious that this is a rather common bird in Delaware. This is only the 8th state record but it is apparent that if this were a full species as it has been in Europe, Delaware would be a great spot to find one. Thousands of Green-winged Teal mass in the freshwater impoundments from Prime Hook NWR to Bombay Hook NWR each March within easy viewing of dikes and roads, and the only thing that is missing is viewers. I am confident that if we searched the flocks of Green-winged Teal with the same enthusiasm that we search the flocks of American Wigeon, the numbers of Eurasian migrants found would be comparable. As a result, this subspecies will not be reviewed in the future.

**Band-rumped Storm-Petrel** (*Oceanodroma castro*)

20 August 2010  
DBRC #10/10

Pelagic in Delaware waters  
Notes, Photographs (PAG)

No one writes up pelagic birds like Paul Guris. For this record of three birds seen in Delaware waters during a pelagic trip to the Baltimore Canyon in late August 2010, he pulled out all the stops by describing the birds in great detail and including three diagnostic photographs of one of them. This is only the 5th accepted record, but the Committee removed this species in 2013 from the Review Species List. After three straight years of seeing multiple birds in the Wilmington and Baltimore canyons in Delaware waters during pelagic trips with no documentation, it was time to assume that they are common in August.

**Anhinga** (*Anhinga anhinga*)

14 July 2013  
DBRC #13/10

Prime Hook NWR  
Notes (BGP)

Anhinga was thought by many Delawareans to be long overdue. From 1995 to 2011, four reports of Anhinga were written up and submitted to the Committee. Most of these went through three rounds of voting and had one or two votes at the end to accept but they needed 4 out of 5. The Committee knew that it was likely that one or more of these could have been an Anhinga but felt that describing the shape of a very high altitude bird or at very short viewing times was not enough for a first state record. We began to think that we would need a diagnostic photograph, but it turns out that with a good scope and twenty minutes of study by a good observer, you can produce the types of detailed information to establish that this bird was, in fact, an adult male Anhinga.

**Swallow-tailed Kite** (*Elanoides forficatus*)

6 September 2009  
DBRC #09/13

Ashland Hawk Watch  
Notes (DS)

Even after a species loses its status as a Delaware Review Species, the Committee reviews all outstanding records. Now, after this, the 13th record, we are done with the backlog and will not have to review it any more. This means that we will no longer confirm that you saw one of these hard to identify birds. You are on your own; I hope that you can handle the responsibility.

**Sandhill Crane** (*Grus canadensis*)

2 November 2009  
DBRC #09/25

Fowler Beach Road  
Notes (JJ, CDC)

16 December 2013 – 18 February 2014  
DBRC #13/17

Port Penn Road  
Notes, Photographs (AK, JJ)

Sandhill Crane numbers are increasing and this fact is being reflected in increased sightings over the past several years. This year, several birds wintered over and were reported many times but were very rarely documented. The main problem is that most of these sightings are flyovers and reporters are not willing to try to document this type of record. The above records are only the 7th and 8th accepted for the state of Delaware.

**Red-necked Stint** (*Calidris ruficollis*)

31 July 2004  
DBRC #04/17

Bombay Hook NWR  
Notes, Photographs (LG, AD, BGP)

A Red-necked Stint in faded end of breeding season plumage is not an easy bird to identify, so when a potential candidate was found in Shearneck Pool at Bombay Hook NWR on 31 July 2004 a crowd quickly gathered. The bird was standing with its head tucked about 100 yards away mixed in with hundreds of peeps, mostly Semipalmated Sandpipers and Western Sandpipers. Photographs were taken and documentation sent to the Committee. Then, after three hard fought votes, a winner was declared and the Committee accepted this record as the second state record for this species.

**Long-tailed Jaeger** (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

27 August 2004  
DBRC #04/08

Wilmington Canyon  
Notes, Photographs (EPS, RR)

During a 22 hour fishing/birding pelagic on the Lewestown Lady to Wilmington Canyon in Delaware waters a young Long-tailed Jaeger sat on the water. The boat slowly approached the bird to within 40 feet before it took flight. Bob Rufe and Ed Sigda took this unique opportunity to take some spectacular photographs. This species is no longer on Delaware Review Species because if you get out to the canyons in August, you have a very good chance of seeing one. However, the Committee would like to know if you see one from the shore.

**Black Guillemot** (*Cepphus grylle*)

3 February 2013  
DBRC #13/14

Broadkill Beach  
Notes (BGP)

A stop at Broadkill Beach for an impromptu sea watch resulted in this great find for two local birders. A white bird was spotted north of their position flying towards them just over the water. For 2–3 minutes, the bird was studied as it flew by and south toward Cape Henlopen Point. A very well written description was provided to the Committee that spoke of the rapid flight, white body with a black bill, blackish crown and black tail, brownish back, large white patches on the upper wing coverts and other details. In the end, the Committee wholeheartedly agreed that the bird was a Black Guillemot in basic plumage for the 3rd state record of this species.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher** (*Myiarchus cinerascens*)

23 October 2012  
DBRC #12/18

Fowler Beach Road  
Notes, photographs (KB)

Ash-throated Flycatcher is a very rare late fall-early winter vagrant in Delaware. This is the 3rd Delaware state record. Ken Bass has become the go-to person for this species as he has found the last two birds, this one and the Prime Hook NWR Headquarter bird in 2009. For this he had some good, diagnostic photographs so it was an easy call for the Committee.

**Gray Kingbird** (*Tyrannus dominicensis*)

6 November 2013  
DBRC #13/15

Thirteen Curves Road  
Notes, photographs (CDC, CMF, FR)

6 November 2013 was a good day for Dirk Robinson as he found this Gray Kingbird on Thirteen Curves Road for a 1st Delaware Record. He called me; I sent a note to DE-birds and, on my way down to Sussex County, called everyone on my phone list. As a result, there was a good crowd when I arrived. The bird put on a great show of fly catching up and down the road from the wires and trees. Many were able to see this bird until it went to roost in the evening and was gone the next day. The photographs were spectacular.

**Cave Swallow** (*Petrochelidon fulva*)

14 November 2012  
DBRC #12/22

Calpine plant, Edgemoor  
Notes, Specimen, Photograph (SO, APE)

Cave Swallow is a relatively new species to Delaware. Twenty years ago it began collecting in large numbers at Cape May in the fall. It was first reported in Delaware in 1999. Sally O'Byrne, while leading a Delaware Nature Society Field Trip at the Calpine Water Treatment Plant in Edgemoor, found a dead bird outside of the Administration Building that had apparently struck a window. The specimen was photographed by Andy Ednie and turned over to Jean Woods at the Delaware Museum of Natural History. This specimen was a great find of a Cave Swallow for the Committee, as it allowed close examination showing that it was of the Mexican subspecies. Unfortunately, Sally still had to find a live one for her year list!

**Le Conte's Sparrow** (*Ammodramus leconteii*)

17 October 2013  
DBRC #13/13

Bombay Hook NWR  
Notes, Photographs (HT)

Le Conte's Sparrows are likely annual in Delaware but they are such skulkers that they are very hard to put on your Delaware list. Fortunately, when they are found every few years they are usually wintering here. Unfortunately, this particular individual was not thinking of wintering when it was seen and photographed in the weeds on Bear Swamp dike. This was only the 7th record accepted, but in the Committee's opinion it was great because Harry Tiebout got the best photographs of a Le Conte's Sparrow that I ever saw posing on weedy brush – I'm thinking that he is a "bird whisperer".

**Painted Bunting** (*Passerina ciris*)

16 January 2014  
DBRC #14/02

Fawkes Drive, Pike Creek  
Photographs (AB)

This is the 10th accepted state record but like several other records, this one was only seen by the homeowner. A male Painted Bunting is so different from our usual feeder birds that one is compelled to photograph it. If you are not a birder you might show the photograph to friends but it sometimes takes a couple of weeks before it is reported to birders and by then it is likely that the bunting is long gone. None the less, it is always great to see the photographs, and a good photograph is worth a thousand words, for the Committee at least.

**Brewer's Blackbird** (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

30 December 2012  
DBRC #13/01

Thirteen Curves Road  
Notes (BGP)

For years Brewer's Blackbirds were a sure thing in Delaware even though they are extremely rare in all the East Coast states. Dozens of Brewer's Blackbirds associated with the cows on Texas Lane in Leipsic. When the farmer stopped raising cows six years ago, these birds no longer wintered in Delaware and it was put back on the Delaware Review Species List. This is the first report of this species since then. The written report accurately described both the males and females of the species.

**Records Not Accepted**

**Green-winged "Common" Teal** (*Anas crecca crecca*)

13 April 2014  
DBRC #12/05

Bombay Hook NWR  
Notes, Photographs

In an attempt to produce a record of a female Eurasian Green-winged Teal, the Committee looked at the photograph that Jerry am Ende took that showed a male Eurasian Green-winged Teal that was accepted above in DBRC#12/04 with what had appeared as its mate. Unfortunately, the Committee voted unanimously that the female was American Green-winged Teal.

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

25–27 July 2009  
DBRC #09/12

Lincoln  
Notes, Photographs

This was a well-documented record with several photographs. However, after three rounds of voting, the Committee could not defini-

tively separate this female hummingbird from a very similar Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

**Reporters**

Amber Beatty, Ken Bass, David Bernstein, Colin D. Campbell, Adam Dudley, Jerry am Ende, Howard B. Eskin, Chuck M. Fullmer, Larry Graff, Paul A. Guris, John Janowski, Alan Kneidel, Sharon Lynn, Sally O'Byrne, Bruce G. Peterjohn, Frank Rohrbacher, Robert Rufe, Tim Schreckengost, Frank Sencher, Ed P. Sigda, Derek Stoner, Harry Tiebout.