

**Delaware Bird Records Committee Annual
Report for 2016, 2017**

Frank Rohrbacher
on behalf of the Delaware Bird Records Committee

This is the 21st report of the Delaware Bird Records Committee. The Committee members for 2015 – 2017 were Jim White (President), Frank Rohrbacher (Secretary), Anthony Gonzon, Chris Bennett and Jean Woods. At the 31 August 2017 DBRC Annual Meeting, Jim White stepped down as a review member and was replaced by John Janowski. Frank Rohrbacher continues as Secretary and Jim White continues 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 September 2017. It has distributed these documents to the birding community via the DOS Website and the 2017 *Delmarva Ornithologist*.

In 2016, we did not have an annual meeting due to illness; as a result, we ended up losing a year of reviews. Significant changes have been made in the Delaware State Bird and Review Species Lists because of the major changes in the AOU/ABA Taxonomy that have occurred over the past two years. AOU changed the status of Thayer's Gull from a full species to a subspecies of Iceland Gull. The Committee has voted to remove Black Rail, Sandhill Crane, Roseate Tern, Arctic Tern and Cave Swallow from the Review Species Bird List. Common Murre and Atlantic Puffin are still on the State Review List but only if they are seen from shore and the Eurasian Collared-Dove continues to be reportable outside of Selbyville. This year's summary consists of 21 records involving 16 different species including the first state record for Trumpeter Swan and Monk Parakeet. These additions increase the official Delaware Bird State List to 418 species.

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 July 2017 of the AOU and the ABA. The DBRC emphasizes that a report 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' Brant (*Branta bernicla nigricans*)
9 December 2007
DBRC #07/18

Indian River Inlet
Notes, Photographs (FR)

During the winters of 2004 – 2005, 2005 – 2006 and 2006 – 2007, a 'Black' Brant was found in the area of Indian River Inlet with the wintering flock of 'Pale-bellied' Brant. On 9 December 2007, the flock returned and with it came undoubtedly the same 'Black' Brant for the fourth year. The photograph clearly showed the complete white collar, blackish breast and the white flanks with dark barring that separated this bird from the rest of the flock.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

19, 21 December 2015
DBRC #15/25A-C Notes, Photographs (AG, KS, MH, BS, DS, JW, FR)

Guyencourt Road/Route 100

Two Barnacle Geese were found on private land during the Wilmington CBC. A search two days later relocated the birds again on route 100. These birds were well photographed and obviously Barnacle Geese. The birds acted wild, had no bands on their legs and had intact halluces to establish their providence. This is the 3rd Delaware record.

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*)

3 January 2016
DBRC #16/01

Prime Hook Road Impoundment
Notes (BGP)

During the Cape Henlopen CBC, much of the Prime Hook Road Impoundments were covered with a thin layer of ice which concentrated most of the waterfowl into some open water at the east end of the impoundments. In the mix were about 100 Tundra Swans and two much larger swans. A well written description established that these larger birds were Trumpeter Swans. This is a new, long overdue species for Delaware.

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*)

29 May 2015
DBRC #15/08

Camden-Wyoming
Notes, Photographs (BEM)

In May, an obvious White-winged Dove was found and well photographed at a feeder in Camden-Wyoming. The Committee had no prob-

lem accepting this report. However, on 17 February, a mere four months earlier, a White-winged Dove was photographed at the very same feeder. Both of these birds remained only one day. Given the rarity of the species, this was most likely the same bird, so a note linking this record with DBRC 15/01, previously accepted, will be inserted in both records, making this and the previous record the 8th accepted record in Delaware for this species.

Sandhill Crane (*Antigone canadensis*)

1, 20 March 2016
DBRC #16/04

Thousand Acre Marsh
Notes, Photographs (SS)

Over the past couple of years, Sandhill Crane sightings in Delaware have increased astronomically. Birds have been seen in every season particularly in the Dragon Run, Thousand Acre Marsh, the Port Penn Impoundments and the surrounding agricultural fields. This area has become a staging area for migrating birds. In this report we had two fantastic photographs of three birds flying over the Ashton Tract and one bird feeding in corn stubble near Greer's Pond. Though this record is only the 8th accepted record for this species, we still have a number of reports to adjudicate. The Committee has removed this species from the Delaware Review Species List.

Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*)

11 February 2015
DBRC #15/06

Rehoboth Beach
Photograph (unknown)

This record consisted of a photograph showing a Thick-billed Murre on eBird that said that the bird was up picked on the beach. Attempts to find out the fate of the bird were unsuccessful. However, on 31 January – 2 February, a mere nine days earlier, a Thick-billed Murre was photographed at Rehoboth Beach. Given the rarity of the species, most likely this was the same bird so this record will be recorded as part of DBRC 15/03, previously accepted. The entire Delaware history consists of two specimens, collected 1896 and 1987, and now two accepted records; DBRC 05/02 and this record, DBRC 15/03, 15/06.

Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*)

17 November 2015
DBRC #15/19

Cape Henlopen Point
Notes, Photograph (GS, DM)

13 November 2015

Newark Reservoir

DBRC #15/22

Notes, Photographs (TF)

This November an offshore storm pushed hundreds of Franklin's Gulls onto Cape May which dribbled into Delaware from Delaware City to Cape Henlopen to Indian River Inlet. The four birds in these two records were photographed and were part of that invasion. The photographs were diagnostic. These records were the 14th and 15th accepted records in Delaware.

Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*)

4 July 2015
DBRC #15/12A–B

Fowler Beach
Notes, photographs (AK, TS)

The good description and great photographs easily established that two Roseate Terns were present at Fowler Beach on 4 July 2015. Roseate Tern is a good bird at any time. However, after ten accepted records with several more in the pipeline, DBRC has decided to remove this species from the Delaware Review List.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

23 November 2015
DBRC #15/26

Cape Henlopen Hawk Watch
Notes (BGP)

Though the bird was distant, the reporter was able to see and report it well enough to establish that the bird was a Swainson's Hawk. This was only the seventh state record and the first in 3 – 4 years. Swainson's Hawks have proven to be a very rare Hawk Watch bird. Of the seven accepted records, four were seen at the Cape Henlopen Hawk Watch and one was at the Ashland Nature Center Hawk Watch.

Monk Parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*)

15 August to 1 September 2009
DBRC #09/14

Delaware Aquatic Resources Education Center
Notes, Sketches, Photographs (JWH, FM, AG)

Monk Parakeet is now an accepted species in both New York and New Jersey based on the large colonies on both sides of the George Washington Bridge. This record is of a bird that was reported at the Delaware Aquatic Resources Educational Center. It appeared to be wild with no bands and no damaged feathers and was feeding itself on the native plants. It remained for two weeks during which it was observed bringing sticks to a transformer on the electric wires next to the Center.

This suggests that the bird was aware that if you want to survive in the cold northern region, you better build a nest on a transformer to keep warm. In any event the DBRC has accepted the record.

Common Raven (*Corvus corax*)

9 November 2015 Ashland Nature Center Hawk Watch
DBRC #15/18 Notes, Photographs (JS)

1 February 2016 Yorklyn NFV, Yorklyn
DBRC #16/02 Notes, Photographs JS

13 March 2016 Bancroft Mills, Alapocas
DBRC E16/06 Notes, Photographs (SO, KS)

8 May 2016 Newark
DBRC #16/07 Notes (BSt)

Common Raven is a new arrival in Delaware. The first and only accepted record before these four was one at the Ashland Nature Center Hawk Watch in November 2011. There has been an increase in reported sightings since that time but none were documented. Between November 2015 and May 2016, the rate of reports has exploded. These four records are just the beginning as Common Raven reports are increasing throughout New Castle County.

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)

1 March 2015 Devon Drive, Newark
DBRC #16/03 Photograph (DH)

Painted Buntings are beautiful birds whether male or female. This female 'green' bird was striking enough to catch the eye of a house owner when it came to his feeder. He took a great photograph. A year later the photograph was forwarded to Joe Sebastiani who sent it on to the DBRC.

Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

4 January 2015 Thirteen Curves Road
DBRC #15/15 Notes (FR, BGP)

Brewer's Blackbirds are very rare in the mid-Atlantic State each

winter. In the past, Delaware was spoiled by the flock that wintered at a cattle farm on Texas Lane, Leipsic, and before that at a pig farm nearby. For the last four years a few birds have been found in the Cods Road and Thirteen Curves Road area. Photographs and write ups would be appreciated.

Records Not Accepted

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

28 June 2010 Assawoman Bay WMA
DBRC #10/08 Photographs

Three Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were seen and photographed at Miller Creek, Assawoman Bay WMA and posted on a kayaking site. Photographer and reporter are unknown and could not be located to confirm any of the data presented. The photographs showed three Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks but nothing else could be verified, so the Committee voted it down as an insufficient record.

Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*)

29 July 2007 Lewes Yacht Club
DBRC #07/08 Photograph

30 May 2008 Prime Hook State Wildlife Area
DBRC #08/15 Photographs

Every frigatebird seen in Delaware is undoubtedly a Magnificent Frigatebird. However, in order to be accepted as such the written description and/or photographs must show that the bird was in fact a Magnificent Frigatebird and could not be either a Great or a Lesser Frigatebird. These two records were voted on three times each – the first ended in 2 accepts/3 rejects and the second 3 accepts/2 rejects. The photographs were just not clear enough to prove the case. All agreed that both birds were *Fegata* species, and will be archived as such.

'Gambel's' White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*)

7 October 2011 Cape Henlopen SP
DBRC #12/16 Notes, photograph

This bird was beautifully photographed and is certainly a White-crowned Sparrow. Unfortunately, the photograph shows dark lores,

eliminating *Z. l. gambelli*.

Reporters

Bill Fintel, Timothy Freiday, Chuck M. Fullmer, Anthony Gonzon, Jennifer W. Hanson, Mike Hudson, Doug Holveck, Alan Kneidel, Frank Marengi, Richard Martin, Brian E. McCaffrey, Dennis Murphy, Sally O'Byrne, Bruce G. Peterjohn, Frank Rohrbacher, Tim Schreckengost, Joe Sebastiani, Gina Sheridan, Ed Sigda, Stacey Steinberg, Kim Steinger, Bill Stewart, Derek Stoner, Bob Strahorn (BSt), Jim White.