Sixth Report of the Alberta Bird Record Committee

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The Alberta Bird Record Committee (ABRC; hereafter the Committee) continues to adjudicate provincial records of rare birds and update the “Official List of the Birds of Alberta”.

With this report, the sixth since creation of the Committee in 1995, and the first since publication of the “Official List” (posted at http://www.royalalbertamuseum.ca/natural/birds/birdlist/intro.htm), the provincial list reaches 404 species, with the addition of one contemporary species (the Yellow-throated Vireo), and extinct one (Passenger Pigeon) previously omitted on invalid grounds. Since publication of the Fifth Report of the Committee (Slater and Hudon 2004), the Committee has reviewed, and reached a decision on 54 records, and has evaluated evidence for the occurrence of the Passenger Pigeon (Ectopistes migratorius) and Cackling Goose (Branta hutchinsii) in the province.

RECORDS ACCEPTED

Cackling Goose (Branta hutchinsii), created as a result of a recent split of the Canada Goose (Branta canadensis) by the AOU’s Committee on Classification and Nomenclature (Banks et al. 2004), this species is added to the List on the basis of two specimens housed at The Royal Alberta Museum (accessions Z79.136.1 and Z00.20.1) and band recoveries in Alberta from hunter-killed “Canada Geese” banded on the breeding grounds on Victoria Island (Hines et al. 2000). The Cackling Goose would appear to be a not-uncommon migrant in the fall and, to a lesser degree, spring in Alberta.

Common Eider (Somateria mollissima), Cold Lake; late November to mid-December 2001; brief note with 5 images captured from video (Richard Klauke; 8 December 2001). CODE 1 RECORD.

Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea), Kininvie Marsh, E of Tilley; 22 - 24 May 2004; 4 images captured from video (Richard Klauke). CODE 1 RECORD.

Green Heron (Butorides virescens), Vista Lake, Banff National Park; 5 June 1975; written description (M. Scott O’Keeffe). This becomes the earliest documented occurrence in the province. CODE 3 RECORD.

Black-legged Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla), Mildred Lake, Jasper National Park; 19 July 1984; written description and photograph in Connelly (1986). CODE 1 RECORD.

Eurasian Collared-Dove (Streptopelia decaocto), Red Deer (Onslow Square); several individuals; 2003; 3 images captured from video (Richard Klauke; 17 February 2003); written description (Andrew Slater; 1 March 2003), 3 photographs posted on the Albertabird Yahoo! web site (Dwight Arthur; 22 March 2003), 2 photographs (Ross Lein; 7 September 2003). CODE 1 RECORD.

Request for Information

The ABRC is currently compiling records of Chaetura swifts for the province, particularly southwestern Alberta, to build a case that Vaux’s Swift (Chaetura vauxi) is in all probability involved and should be added to the Official List of the Birds of Alberta. Please submit your observations of Chaetura swifts, even passing notes, to the ABRC.

Medicine Hat; from 18 May 2003 to at least mid-July; 5 images captured from video (Richard Klauke). CODE 1 RECORD.

Nanton; from 19 February 2004; written description (Greg Wagner); photograph (Jack Shier), 3 photographs (Ken Havard). CODE 1 RECORD.
### RESULTS ACCEPTED...continued

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**THE CODE DEFINITIONS REPORTED ARE:**

- **ACCEPTED. CODE 1.** Records supported by material evidence, i.e. specimens, identifiable body parts, identifiable photographs or sound recordings, whose origin from within the borders of Alberta is in no doubt, that are accompanied by written reports of the circumstances of the observation.

- **ACCEPTED. CODE 2.** Sight records (without supporting material evidence) by multiple observers that are supported by written descriptions that leave no doubt as to the species identity. A Code 2 or 2 sighting must receive four favourable votes and no more than one dissenting vote to be accepted.

- **ACCEPTED. CODE 3.** Sight records by single observers that are supported by a written description that leaves no doubt as to species identity, and which receive five favourable votes and no dissenting vote. A Code 3 is the minimum for inclusion in the official provincial list.

- **ACCEPTED. CODE 4.** Sight records by single observers that receive four favourable votes and no more than one dissenting vote. For record adjudication purposes, such a record is acceptable, but does not pass the more stringent requirements for inclusion on the official provincial list. A list of species that have no higher than a Code 4 record may be published as an appendix to the official list.

- **INSUFFICIENTLY DOCUMENTED.** Records supported by material evidence or written descriptions that are not detailed enough to eliminate all other possibilities, or to support conclusively the identification of the species as presented. Placement in this category should in no way be interpreted as a reflection on the veracity of the observation, but should be looked upon as an encouragement to substantiate occurrence of the species in the province more fully.

- **ERROR IN IDENTIFICATION.** Records that are not supported by the documentation available to the committee, or that describe another species from that suggested.

- **QUESTIONABLE ORIGIN.** Records that concern species that are of questionable origin, possibly escapes, and whose wild status cannot be determined accurately.
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### RECORDS INSUFFICIENTLY DOCUMENTED

**Smew** (*Mergus albellus*), Whitemud Creek Ravine, Edmonton; second or third week of October 1999; written description (Thelma Pirot).

**Least Grebe** (*Tachybaptus dominicus*), Clear Lake; 1 July, 16 July and 6 August 2003; written description, video footage (Richard Fyle).

**Sooty Shearwater** (*Puffinus griseus*), Lac La Biche; 1 July, 16 July and 6 August 2003; written description, video footage (Richard Fyle).

**Snowy Plover** (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), NW Calgary; 10 October 1984; brief description (Lottie G. Garland). Just off Bearspaw Road; 16 August 1991; field notes (Peter Sherrington). SE Calgary; 21 September 1993; written description (Cedric Hitchon).


### QUESTIONABLE ORIGIN

**Fulvous Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna bicolor*), NE Calgary (intersection of Barlow Tr. and Country Hills Blvd); 25 May - June 2003; web page with 7 images (Royce Howland), photograph posted on Albertabird Yahoo! web site (Alan MacKeigan), written description (Andrew Slater). The Committee could not rule out a captive origin for this bird.

**Greater Flamingo** (*Phoenicopterus ruber*), Clover Bar, Edmonton; 10 October 1979; University of Alberta Museum of Zoology specimen (UAMZ 5391); found dead, donated by Alberta Fish & Wildlife. Most likely an escapee.

**Western Bluebird** (*Sialia mexicana*) pair at Saskatchewan Crossing; 10-12 July 1991. Photographic documentation of the pair (12 July 2001) was produced by Richard Klauke, elevating the level of support to Code 1 from Code 3 (Slater and Hudon 2004).

### CORRIGENDA

**Brambling** (*Fringilla montifringilla*) at Edson. The date of the observation was incorrectly reported in Slater (1997) as November 1988 - January 1989, when it should have been November 1989 - January 1990. Also see Quinlan and Kennedy (2005).

**Smith’s Longspur** (*Calcarius pictus*) N of Nanton; 30 December 2002 - 7 January 2003; brief written descriptions posted on Albertabird (Bill Wilson, Malcolm McDonald).

### References


