

Wyoming Bird Records Committee Bylaws

I. Name

The name of this committee is the Wyoming Bird Records Committee.

II. Duties

A. The Committee shall have the following functions:

1. To solicit, organize, and maintain records, documentations, photographs, tape recordings, and any other material relative to the occurrence of birds in Wyoming. These materials are maintained to serve as reference and research materials for professional and amateur ornithologists. Two duplicate sets of records will be maintained. One is to be kept by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's Nongame Program. The second set of records shall be maintained in the University of Wyoming's archives. Interested persons may review this second set after receiving prior, written approval by the Chairperson. The Committee reserves the right to determine where each copy of the records is to be kept.
2. To review reports of rare species or species new to the state; to offer an intelligent, unbiased opinion of the validity of these reports; and to maintain an official list of the birds recorded in Wyoming. The Official State List of Wyoming Birds will be maintained in a single list, with the following information annotated for every species:
 - a. Each species is placed into one of the following categories based on the type of documentation that has been provided:

Category 1SLK – This category is for species whose occurrence in Wyoming is documented by the presence or reported presence of a specimen whose identification has been determined by an ornithologist and whose location is known.

Category 1SLU – This category is for species whose occurrence in Wyoming is documented by the presence or reported presence of a specimen whose identification has been determined by an ornithologist and whose location is unknown.

Category 2PLK – This category is for species whose occurrence is documented by a photograph or video and whose location is known.

Category 2PLU – This category is for species whose occurrence is documented by a photograph or video and whose location is unknown.

Category 2TLK – This category is for species whose occurrence is documented by an audio recording and whose location is known.

Category 2TLU – This category is for species whose occurrence is documented by an audio recording and whose location is unknown.

II. Duties, continued

Category 3 – This category is for species whose occurrence is documented by three (3) or more detailed, written descriptions of different observations. The three records must be separated from one another by sufficient periods of time and by sufficient distance to clearly indicate separate occurrences and/or separate birds.

Category 4 – Provisional Species. This category is for naturally occurring species documented by two (2) or fewer detailed, written descriptions of separate observations. Once three (3) records are received, species will be placed in Category 3. When more than one (1) written description is submitted to the Committee by different persons of the same rare species observed within the same approximate location and time period, the Committee will use its judgment in determining whether to treat these as separate records or as part of the same record for purposes of elevating a species from Category 4 to some higher category.

Category 4P – Provisional Species. This category is for naturally occurring species documented by two (2) or fewer observations and for which a photograph is located in the Committee's photograph file. Once three (3) records are received, species will be removed from the 4P category and placed in the 2PLK category.

Category 5 – Unverified Status. This is a category for naturally occurring species that have been reported in the literature but for which further details were unavailable to the Committee. If additional documentation becomes available to the Committee at a later date, Category 5 species may be placed in another appropriate category in accordance with regular Committee voting procedures. Where no opportunity exists to obtain further documentation, all such records shall be placed in Category 5 as historical records. Recent, unverified records for which no additional documentation can be obtained shall be placed in this category.

Category 6 – Escapees/Introduced/or other Human Assisted Species. This category is for species whose occurrence is most likely the result of an escaped captive or domesticated bird, or any species whose presence in Wyoming is the result of human intervention. This would include any population of an introduced species which has not become self-sustaining for at least ten (10) years. Introduced species whose populations have achieved self-sustaining status for greater than ten (10) years may be considered naturalized and will be placed in categories 1, 2, or 3, depending upon the appropriate documentation required by those categories.

Category 6P – This category is for species whose occurrence is most likely the result of an escaped captive or domesticated bird, or any species whose presence in Wyoming is the result of human intervention, and for which a photograph is located in the Committee's photograph file.

- b. The number of accepted records from Wyoming for each species is included in the official list.

II. Duties, continued

- c. A notation indicating for which species the Committee desires documentation is included.
 3. To disseminate useful and pertinent material concerning the field identification of Wyoming birds in order to assist Wyoming ornithologists in increasing their knowledge and skill.
- B. The following is a statement of the philosophy behind the existence and operation of the Committee: The Committee exists to serve ornithologists by promoting and maintaining a high degree of quality, integrity, and professionalism in reporting birds in Wyoming. All Wyoming ornithologists should realize that, in order for the Committee to achieve this purpose, it needs the complete support of all interested persons in the state. The Committee should be regarded as a logical and convenient central clearinghouse for records pertaining to Wyoming birds.

However, the Committee should not regard itself, or be regarded by others, as a binding, absolute arbiter in any of the matters in which it is involved. Individuals are free to independently publish matters regarding any facet of Wyoming birds, and the Committee should welcome this as an alternate manner of contribution to Wyoming ornithology. Individuals are free to dispute, in the open literature, the published opinions of the Committee, and vice versa.

III. Membership

- A. The Committee shall contain five voting members. The University of Wyoming shall be represented by either a voting or non-voting member and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department shall be represented by a non-voting member.
1. Voting members are those who evaluate and offer opinions on records of unusual or new species to Wyoming.
 2. Voting members will serve a three (3) year term on a staggered basis [initially two (2) members for three (3) years, two (2) members for two (2) years, and one (1) member for one (1) year]. Members will take office at the close of the annual meeting at which they were elected and serve until the close of the appropriate annual meeting. Records being recirculated when a new member takes office will be reviewed by the retired member unless special circumstances prevent it, in which case the new member will review the recirculated records. Members can serve for two (2) consecutive terms and then must take a mandatory one (1) year retirement. This cycle can be repeated any number of times. Members who begin service by completing the term of a member who has resigned prior to term completion can finish out the replacement term and then serve for two (2) consecutive terms before taking a mandatory one (1) year retirement.

III. Membership, continued

3. The Committee shall elect from the voting members a Chairperson, for a three (3) year term, who shall be responsible for the secretarial and administrative duties of the Committee. Election to Chairperson is not permitted when such election would extend that member's term of office beyond six (6) consecutive years without leave. The Chairperson may appoint a non-voting secretary to assist in performing the above-mentioned duties. A Vice-chairperson shall be elected from the remaining voting members at the annual meeting and serve for a term of one (1) year, repeatable any number of years. The Vice-chairperson shall act as Chair when the elected Chairperson is unable to perform his/her duties.
- B. A new member shall be nominated by a current voting member. The nominee must be willing and must have given approval prior to the nomination. In considering new members, the following general qualifications should be kept in mind:
1. General knowledge of ornithology, specifically of Wyoming birds.
 2. Experience and care in field identification.
 3. Place of residence so that, as far as possible, the Committee will have a balanced geographical representation.
 4. Acquaintance with other birders, so that the Committee is not aloof from the rest of the ornithological community in Wyoming.
 5. Personal integrity and willingness to serve.
- C. In case a member appears to be either unwilling or incapable of carrying out their part of the Committee work, the Committee shall vote to remove the member. A unanimous vote is necessary for such action.
- D. When appropriate, Committee members may consult persons with significant expertise on a particular species or group of species. Such consultants will be considered non-voting members in regard to reviewing records. Such members may serve indefinitely.

IV. Meetings

- A. The Committee will ordinarily hold one (1) meeting per year. The place and time for the meeting will be decided by the Chairperson who will then give the members adequate notice and an agenda.
- B. Other meetings may be held, if indicated, on call of the Chairperson. If calling such meetings, the Chairperson will give the members adequate notice and an agenda.

IV. Meetings, continued

- C. Four (4) members present constitute a quorum, and three (3) affirmative votes are required for conducting Committee business. All members must have submitted their votes on documentations being reviewed.

V. Procedures

- A. The majority of the work of the Committee will be done by correspondence.
- B. Administrative matters may be brought up by any member of the Committee, who should send copies of the correspondence to all members. Correspondence should be continued until there is general agreement on the subject. If no agreement is reached, the matter should be discussed at the annual meeting.

VI. Records

- A. The records of the Committee should be maintained on standard forms. Such forms shall be made available for the use of reporters in the submission of records. Reporters are encouraged, but not required, to submit their records on such forms.
- B. The Committee solicits the following types of documentations for future observations:
 - 1. Full documentation (written description, photos, audio recordings, etc.) is requested for all species seen in Wyoming that are not on the Official State List of Wyoming Birds at the time of the observation. In addition, the Committee will designate species from the list requiring full documentation; these designations will be updated periodically. As a general consideration, a species seen three (3) or fewer times should require full documentation.
 - 2. Full documentation is requested for species common in some parts of the state or at some seasons but not common in other parts of the state or at other seasons, and for species difficult to identify.
 - 3. Information is needed to determine the distribution and abundance of special interest species. The information requested for this type of documentation is: species, date, number seen, sex, age, location, and observers, but not full documentation.
 - 4. Good quality photographs can be submitted in lieu of a full written description, providing the following information is also included: species common and scientific names, observation date, legal location of observation (preferably in UTM coordinates, including datum), observer's name, and a description of the specific location of the observation.
- C. The above solicited documentation types shall be published in conjunction with the Official State List of Wyoming Birds. Such lists will be available upon request from the Chairperson or the Wyoming Game and Fish Department Nongame Program.

- D. No absolute rules shall be established for the inclusion of species in solicited documentation types. The species included in each type shall be reviewed at the annual meeting and changes made when appropriate. A species may be removed or added to the solicited documentation types by a simple majority.

VII. Rendering of Opinions

- A. Since professional ornithologists are more qualified to identify specimens than are most non-professionals, the Committee will abide by the identifications of specimens made by professionals. The Committee shall limit consideration of specimens to matters of specimen origin. Any specimens sent to the Committee shall be forwarded to the University of Wyoming Zoological Museum for identification and deposition.
- B. Photographic documentation shall be sent to the Committee members and be evaluated as sight records. When deemed appropriate, photographs shall be forwarded to experts for identification. Whenever possible, original photographs shall be placed in the University of Wyoming's archives.
- C. Records of new species and species within the solicited documentations shall be sent to each Committee member for evaluation. They should be evaluated by each member in a frank and unbiased manner, based on that member's best judgment with an open, but rigorous, mind.

All sight records shall be categorized as follows:

1. The submitted documentation supports the stated or claimed identification and the record is accepted. Accepted records are placed in the proper Category, described on pages 1 and 2, depending upon circumstances.
2. The record is not accepted because the identification is questionable or details are incomplete.

Reports published by the Committee shall state the results of the Committee's vote for each record, and shall furnish the details of the observation that lead the Committee to reject the record.

The decision whether or not a record is accepted is based on the vote tally. At least four (4) "accept" votes are necessary for the record to be accepted. A record is not accepted if it has received three (3) or more reject votes. A record receiving two (2) reject votes is recirculated along with the validation form from the previous round for further consideration.

VIII. Submission and Circulation of Records

- A. Records shall be circulated as received.

VIII. Submission and Circulation of Records, continued

- B. If appropriate, the Chairperson will ask the reporter for additional details, which are kept with, but separate from, the original record. This may be done before or after circulation of a record.
- C. Records may be recirculated any number of times, providing there is some reasonable justification for doing so.
- D. Each record receives a permanent document number as follows:
 - 1. The first number is the year in which the record is received (not the year the observation was made).
 - 2. The second number (preceded by a hyphen) is the next available unused number for the year, starting with "001". For example, the first record received in 1988 would be 88-001. If the same bird(s) is (are) described by more than one person, each description should receive the same number.
- E. Records and validation forms are sent to each member of the Committee, who then evaluates the documentation according to the standards set above, and then returns the validation form to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department Nongame Bird Biologist (non-voting secretary).
- F. Members should not discuss the record amongst themselves during the first circulation of the documentation. They are free to talk with an outside expert or the reporter. If such discussion yields any information significant to the consideration of the record, it is to be passed on to all other members.
- G. If a decision is not made on the first round, a record (along with the comments of each member from the first round) is recirculated for a second round. If a decision is not made on the second round, the record should be held for discussion at the annual meeting.
- H. Voting Committee members shall vote on their own reports, but such reports and votes will be identified as belonging to a specific Committee member. Committee members may not abstain from voting on any record.
- I. If most or all voting Committee members submitted a report on a given bird, then the reports should be sent to an outside expert for an opinion.

IX. Publication

- A. An annual report describing the activities and results of the Committee shall be produced and made available to those interested.

IX. Publication, continued

- B. At least every three (3) years, the Official State List of Wyoming Birds, along with solicited documentation types, shall be published in an appropriate journal or report.

X. State List

- A. The Committee shall maintain the Official State List of Wyoming Birds. Each species on the list shall be placed into one of the six (6) categories (see II.A.2.a. on pages 1 and 2). This list shall be made available to all who request it.
- B. A species may be added to or deleted from the Official State List of Wyoming Birds if a majority of the Committee members support such an action (a unanimous vote is not required). As soon as is feasible after such an action is taken, the action and the reasons behind it shall be published.