

Eleventh Report of the Alberta Bird Record Committee

BY JOCELYN HUDON, RICHARD KLAUKE, RICHARD KNAPTON, M. ROSS LEIN, JOHN RIDDELL, BRIAN RITCHIE AND RAY WERSHLER

Since publication of its Tenth Report (Hudon et al. 2011), the Alberta Bird Record Committee (hereafter the Committee) considered 61 records of species of great rarity for the province. With this adjudication, the provincial list grows by six species: Rock Ptarmigan, Black Vulture, Black-headed Gull, Purple Sandpiper, White-eyed Vireo and Prothonotary Warbler. This continues the trend of adding about two species per year, a rate that the Committee judged to be unsustainable a few years ago (Hudon et al. 2008).

While it would be easy to attribute this trend partly to changes in bird distributions and movements as a result of global environmental changes, we note a vast improvement in the quality of photographic evidence that is being provided by observers compared to even ten years ago. The Official List of the Birds of Alberta now stands at 421 species. Documentation of an incontrovertible record of Vaux's Swift is still eluding the Committee.

The Committee also considered evidence for occurrence of California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) in Alberta, demanded by a recent publication (Sharp 2012), as well as an older publication (Schaeffer 1951), presupposing such occurrence. The Committee took into consideration correspondence

suggesting the existence of a 1931 letter from J. Fannin to Maj. Allan Brooks in which he admitted to being mistaken about the 1896 sightings (Fannin 1897), because at that time he did not realize that immature Golden Eagles had white underwing patches (Brooks 1931, Sanford Wilbur, pers. comm.). California Condor was listed as hypothetical by Salt and Salt (1976), but the basis of this assessment was unknown to the Committee until contacted by Wilbur.

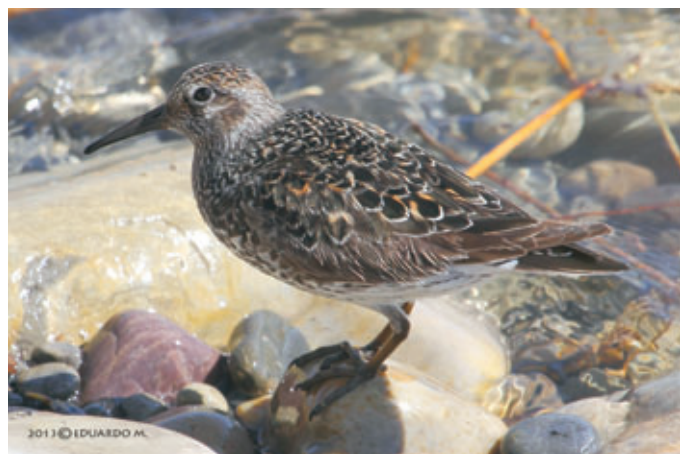
The Committee now drops several species from its review list (www.royalalbertamuseum.ca/_include/document/research/lifeSciences/ornithology/ABRCreviewlist.pdf). These are primarily species known to have bred, even if only sporadically, in the province: Red-throated Loon, Mountain Plover, Arctic Tern, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Common Poorwill, Eastern Bluebird, Sage Thrasher and Indigo Bunting. Lesser Black-backed Gull is also removed from the review list because of its almost annual occurrence along the Bow River in Calgary. The ABRC archives will continue to accept documentation on these species, but the records

will no longer be adjudicated by the Committee.

Finally, the provincial list is amended to bring it in line with the 53rd and 54th supplements to the American Ornithologists' Union's (AOU) "Checklist of North American Birds" (Chesser et al. 2012 and 2013) which have appeared since publication of the Tenth Report of the ABRC. Recent implemented changes include generic reassignments of Calliope Hummingbird to *Selasphorus*, Flammulated Owl to *Psiloscoops*, and three genera of sandpipers (*Aphriza*, *Tryngites* and *Philomachus*) to *Calidris*. Falconiformes is moved to a position immediately before the Passeriformes. Finally, the linear sequence of families in Charadriiformes, genera and species in Trochilidae, Troglodytidae and Mimidae, and species in *Calidris* and *Haemorbous* are modified.

PURPLE SANDPIPER: ONE OF SIX NEW SPECIES TO THE PROVINCIAL LIST.

EDUARDO MATUOD



The authors are members of the Alberta Bird Record Committee, chaired by Jocelyn Hudon, Curator of Ornithology at The Royal Alberta Museum.

RECORDS ACCEPTED

Black Scoter (*Melanitta americana*): 6 females/immatures on Glenmore Reservoir, Calgary; 23 October 2012; written report (Ray Wershler). **CODE 3 RECORD.** Female or immature on Glenmore Reservoir, Calgary; 5 November 2012; written report (Ray Wershler). **CODE 3 RECORD.**

Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta*): 15 km W of Garden River, just outside Wood Buffalo National Park; 18 December 2011; written report (Kevin Kuipers) and 2 images (Peter Storer); also publication: K. Kuipers, N. Kuipers and P. Storer. 2012. Rock Ptarmigan – a new bird for Alberta. Blue Jay 70(1): 56-57. **CODE 1 RECORD. First documented occurrence in the province.**

Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*): Glenmore Reservoir, Calgary; 16 October 2011; 1 image (Brian Elder). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Glenmore Reservoir, Calgary; 19 October 2012; written report (Ray Wershler). **CODE 3 RECORD.** Glenmore Reservoir, Calgary; 28 October to 5 November 2012; written report (Ray Wershler). **CODE 3 RECORD.** Slough at intersection of Hwys 2A and 22X; 1 November 2012; brief description (Terry Korolyk). **CODE 3 RECORD.**

Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*): Horseshoe Bay, Cold Lake; 24 May 2012; written report (Ted Hindmarch). **CODE 3 RECORD.**

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*): along Hwy 4, 3.4 km S of junction with SR 845, S of Lethbridge; 27 June 2011; 8 images (Ken Orich). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*): Raymond, SE of Lethbridge; 22–23 September 2011; written report (Lori, Noel, Tane, Peter, Nyree and Kingi Smith), several [10] images (Nyree and Lori Smith), also 3 rough sketches (Peter Smith). **CODE 1 RECORD. First documented occurrence in the province.**

Common Crane (*Grus grus*): Deadhorse Lake, near Hussar; 6 October 2012; brief description (Sheila Clark) and 4 images (Bruce Anderson [3], Sheila Clark [1]). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*): Alberta Beach (E shore of Lac Ste. Anne); 8 October 2011; several images on Nikonians (Steve Knight [8]) and PBase (Gerald Romanchuk [4]). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*): Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 9–10 May 2013; written report and images posted in Eduardo folder on Yahoo! Albertabird website, also at www.flickr.com/photos/mama_lumen/8725118374/in/photostream (Eduardo Matuod), images posted at <http://calgarybirder.blogspot.ca/2013/05/mega-rarity-purple-sandpiper-at.html> (David Pugh) and 1 submitted (Brian Elder) **CODE 1 RECORD. First documented occurrence in the province.**

Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*): 3 (perhaps 4) juveniles at Brant Slough (5 km S of Hwy 804 from hamlet of Brant, 1 km W on 658 Ave. E); 4 August 2012; written report (Howard Heffler, Tony Timmons and Al Borgardt). **CODE 3 RECORD.**

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*): along Twp Rd 300 south of Hanna, several km east of Hwy 9; 4 June 2011; brief description (Dan Sawatzky). **CODE 3 RECORD.** Cooking Lake, E of Edmonton; 3 September 2012; 2 images (Gerald Romanchuk). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*): along Hwy 885 where it crosses NW arm of Pakowki Lake; 20–31 July 2012; 2 images (Jukka Jantunen), 1 on Albertabird Yahoo! website. **CODE 1 RECORD. First documented occurrence in the province.**

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*): Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 10–11 October 2011; written report with 2 images (Ilya Povalyaev); 5 images posted on Albertabird Yahoo! website (Ilya Povalyaev). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 23 March–6 April 2012; written report with 3 images (Ilya Povalyaev); images posted on Albertabird Yahoo! website (Ilya Povalyaev [1]; Daniel Arndt [1]); 1 image posted on blog at <http://victoriabirder.blogspot.ca/2012/03/eastward-bound.html> (Jeremy Kimm). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 11–30 April 2012; written report with 3 images (Ilya Povalyaev), 2 images posted on Albertabird Yahoo! website (Ilya Povalyaev); also detailed description (Philip Taylor, Margot Taylor, Ken Hryciw) with 6 images (Philip Taylor). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 5 May 2012; written report with 3 images (Ilya Povalyaev); 2 images posted on Albertabird Yahoo! website (Ilya Povalyaev). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 25 October 2012; written report (Ray Wershler). **CODE 3 RECORD.**

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*): "Gull pond" along 170 Street, Edmonton; 7–18 November 2008; written report (Gerald Romanchuk); several images (Gerald Romanchuk [2 provided; 3 more on PBase], Brian Elder [1]). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Cold Lake; 14 January 2012; brief report and 4 images (Richard Klauke). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*): Cattleland, N of Strathmore; 27 May 2011; written report with 2 images (Yousif Attia). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Band-tailed Pigeon (*Patagioenas fasciata*): feeder in Dorothy, near Brooks; had been there for about a week on 13 June 2011, not seen after 15 June 2011; 3 images (Carrie Mashon). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*): Claresholm; 7–8 October 2011; written report (Jason Attwell) with 1 image (Hanna Tweedy). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*): farm SE of Breton; may have been at location from summer, but first confirmed on 26 November 2011; last seen 26 December 2011; 2 images (Sue and Brad Stout [1], Myrna Pearman [1]). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Common Poorwill (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*): Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park; 2 July 2011; 1 image on PBase (Gerald Romanchuk), 1 on Nikonians (Steve Knight). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*): feeder in Bowness, Calgary; from about June to mid-October 2012; several photos taken, 2 made available (Joe Zarowski). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Feeder in SW Calgary; from about 22 October to at least 6 November 2012; written report (Ray Wershler), several images (Dan Arndt [15] at www.flickr.com/photos/uberoogle/sets/72157631948425330/with/8162595319/), Lloyd and Barbara Trevors [1], Ray Wershler [1]). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Feeder in NW Calgary; 25 September 2013; written report, 5 images and 2 videos (Sydney Mohr). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*): Elkwater; 28 May 2012; written report (Leena Tirrul). **CODE 3 RECORD.** Just S of Medicine Hat; 28 May 2012; written report (Mackenzie Fai); 1 image posted on Albertabird Yahoo! website (Mackenzie Fai). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Vermilion; 1 June to at least 4 June 2012; written report and 3 images (Charlotte Wasylik); additional images and information on blog at <http://prairiebirder.wordpress.com/2012/06/01/red-headed-woodpecker/>. **CODE 1 RECORD.**

RECORDS ACCEPTED...continued

Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*): High River. First seen in October 2011, seen until at least 18 March 2012; several images: Kirk Davis [1], Mike Sturk [2], David Pugh [3 images on blog at <http://calgarybirder.blogspot.com/>], also on Albertabird Yahoo! website (Bev Maksymiw [1], Ken Havard [2], Ron Kube [1]; Daniel Arndt [1]). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Feeder in Etzikom; spent the winter there and was seen until at least 28 March 2013; written report with 2 images (Milt Spitzer, Phil Cram and Mike Mulligan). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*): Wyndham-Carseland Provincial Park; 21 May 2012; 2 images posted on Albertabird Yahoo! website (Nick Bartok). **CODE 1 RECORD. First documented occurrence in the province.**

Chestnut-backed Chickadee (*Poecile rufescens*): feeder in Hinton; December 2012 to at least 3 January 2013; written report and 2 images (Natalie and Don Groat). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Feeder in Waterton, Waterton Lakes National Park; from 31 December 2012 to at least 14 March 2013; written report with several (4) images (Malcolm and Joan McDonald). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Feeder on acreage about 10 km W of hamlet of Priddis; 1 April 2013; written report and 1 image (Pat Diehl). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliptila caerulea*): Elkwater, Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park; from 9 August to at least 14 September 2011; written report with 4 images (Jeremiah Kennedy, Yousif Attia). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*): pair in Ajax Coulee, Medicine Hat; 1 to at least 4 December 2012; possibly overwintered there; written report (Milt Spitzer) and images (Milt Spitzer [1] and Barry Anderson [2]). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*): pair 6 km SW of Turner Valley; 26 May to at least 30 May 2012; pair seen carrying food to nest box and removing fecal sacs; written report (Linda Bailey and Colin Young), 2 distant images (Colin Young). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Along Twp Rd 101, about 2 km outside of Maycroft, in Crownsnest Pass; 26 March 2013; written report (Duane Starr and Dave Breckon) and several [6] images at www.duanestarrphotography.com/photos/swfpopug.mg?AlbumID=28622504&AlbumKey=p4VHn9 (Duane Starr). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*): E of Milo, near Taber; 13 May 2011; written report and 2 images (Ilya Povalyaev). **CODE 1 RECORD.** W of Redcliff; 7 April 2013; written report and 3 images (Colton Prins), also posted on Albertabird Yahoo! website. **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*): along Dogpound Creek just W of Horse Creek Rd, NW of Cochrane, S of Water Valley; 31 October and 1 November 2011; written description with 1 image (Keith and Sandy Logan). **CODE 1 RECORD. First documented occurrence in the province.**

Lucy's Warbler (*Oreothlypis luciae*): Confederation Park, Calgary; 22–23 August 2012; 2 written reports (Colin Young and Linda Bailey; and Ray Wershler). **CODE 2 RECORD.**



A WHITE-EYED VIREO, ANOTHER FIRST FOR ALBERTA. NICK BARTOK

Northern Parula (*Setophaga americana*): feeder about 7 km E of Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park; 29 May 2011; written report (Arthur and Donna Wieckowski, Bob Parsons, Lois Gilchrist), 3 images (Arthur Wieckowski). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*): juvenile at migration monitoring station in Elkwater, Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park; 30 August 2012; 3 images (Leena Tirrul). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*): Elkwater, Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park; 25 May 2011; written report (Jeremiah Kennedy and Callum Duncan); several [8] images at www.flickr.com/photos/redcappedmyna/ (Jeremiah Kennedy). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Adult male, Windy Point along Sheep River, W of Turner Valley; 13–14 June 2011; written reports (Colin Young and Linda Bailey; Ray Wershler). **CODE 2 RECORD.**

Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*): Mosquito Creek Campground, Banff National Park; 8 July 2011; field notes and journal entries (Neil Scott) and 1 image (Fred and Eleanor Esslinger). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED

California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*): species is mentioned in several papers (Fannin 1897, Schaeffer 1951, Sharp 2012). However, by Fannin's own admission, the birds may have been misidentified (Brooks 1931, fide Sanford "Sandy" Wilbur, author of "California Condors: Past, Present, Future", also see www.condortales.com/Resources/northwestcondors6%201.html).

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*): Frank Lake; 22 April 2012; written report (Daryl and Linda Light).

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*): Glenmore Reservoir, Calgary; 26 September 2011; brief description (Gus Yaki).

Gray Flycatcher (*Empidonax wrightii*): near Jasper National Park E gate; 14 May 2011; 1 image (Gary Gulash) and brief accounts of the encounter (Rick Bonar, Jason Rogers).

Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) W of Cold Lake Provincial Park; 4 June 2012; written report (Yousif Attia and Stuart Mackenzie).

ERROR IN IDENTIFICATION

Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*): Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 16 June 2012; 4 images (Joerg Gueldenpennig). Images submitted clearly rule out Least Tern; likely Forster's Tern.

ADDITIONAL TAXA

Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*): SE of Lethbridge; 29 October 2011; 2 images (Ken Orich). **CODE 1 RECORD.**



A BLACK VULTURE IN RAYMOND AB, THE PROVINCE'S FIRST DOCUMENTED RECORD. LORI SMITH

Acknowledgements

The ABRC would not exist without the cooperation of birders and ornithologists throughout Alberta. We especially want to thank the following individuals for contributing leads or observations for records included in this report: Barry Anderson, Bruce Anderson, Daniel Arndt, Yousif Attia, Jason Attwell, Linda Bailey, Nick Bartok, Rick Bonar, Al Borgardt, Dave Breckon, Dick Cannings, Russell Cannings, Sheila Clark, Phil Cram, Kirk Davis, Pat Diehl, Theresa and Doug Dolman, Callum Duncan, Brian Elder, Fred and Eleanor Esslinger, Mackenzie Fai, Lois Gilchrist, Joerg Gueldenpennig, Gary Gulash, Natalie and Don Groat, Ken Havard, Howard Heffler, Ted Hindmarch, Ken Hryciw, Jukka Jantunen, Jeremiah Kennedy, Jeremy Kimm, Steve Knight, Terry Korolyk, Ron Kube, Kevin and Natalie Kuipers, Daryl and Linda Light, Keith and Sandy Logan, Stuart Mackenzie, Bev and Peter Maksymiw, Carrie Mashon, Eddy (Eduardo) Matuod, Joan and Malcolm McDonald, Sydney Mohr, Mike Mulligan, Ken Orich, Bob Parsons, Myrna Pearman, Philip Penner, Ilya Povalyayev, Colton Prins, David Pugh, Jason Rogers, Gerald Romanchuk, Dan Sawatzky, Neil Scott, Lori, Noel, Tane, Peter, Nyree and Kingi Smith, Penny Smith, Milt Spitzer, Duane Starr, Peter Storer,

Sue and Brad Stout, Mike Sturk, Philip and Margot Taylor, Tony Timmons, Leena Tirrul, Lloyd and Barbara Trevors, Hanna Tweedy, Charlotte Wasylik, Ray Wershler, Arthur and Donna Wieckowski, Gus Yaki, Colin Young and Joe Zarowski.

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ALBERTA'S FIRST RECORDED BLACK-HEADED GULL, AT PAKOWKI LAKE. JUKKA JANTUNEN



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 independent written descriptions that leave no doubt as to the species identity. A Code 1 or 2 sighting must receive four favourable votes and no more than one dissenting vote to be accepted.

ACCEPTED, CODE 3. Sight records by one or more observers that are supported by a single 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.

IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED. 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 where the documentation available to the committee runs counter to the stated identification, whether it identifies another species or not.

QUESTIONABLE ORIGIN. Records that concern species that are of questionable origin, possibly escapees, and whose wild status cannot be determined accurately.