

Ninth Report of the Alberta Bird Record Committee

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The past year (2008) produced not only firsts for Alberta, but also one for Canada! Indeed, the documentation of a Lucy's Warbler (*Vermivora luciae*) in a yard in Fort McMurray (of all places!) in November becomes the first confirmed report of the species in Canada. This is an incredible record considering that the species breeds in the dense lowland riparian mesquite woodlands of the hot lower Sonoran desert of the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico, and winters in a narrow band along the Pacific slope of Mexico (Johnson et al. 1997). The possibility that the bird received some assistance on its travels to Alberta was ruled as highly improbable by the Committee.

The bird was first identified by David Sibley after he received a series of pictures from Cathy Mountain, the sole observer of the bird (for a full account check <http://sibleyguides.blogspot.com/2008/11/how-many-rare-birds-did-we-miss-before.html>).

The past year also saw the addition of Pygmy Nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*) to the provincial list, after a few previous reports failed to meet the standard for a provincial first. The Official List of the birds of Alberta now stands at 415 species.

Since publication of the Eighth Report (Hudon et al. 2008), the Alberta Bird Record Committee (ABRC) has reviewed and reached decisions on 87 records, including multiple sightings of Iceland

Gulls, Glaucous-winged Gulls, Eastern Bluebirds and Indigo Buntings from the back-log of unadjudicated records from the 1980s and 1990s.

Finally, the provincial list is amended to bring it in line with the 49th supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union's "Check-list of North American Birds" (Banks et al. 2008). This entailed altering the generic assignment and sequence of genera and species of gulls in the subfamily Larinae. The scientific names of the following species become: Bonaparte's Gull (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*), Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*) and Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*).

RECORDS ACCEPTED

Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*), Glenmore Reservoir, Calgary; 14 – 19 November 2007; written report (Ray Wershler), 2 digital images (Bill Walker). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*), Clear Lake; 24 May 2003; written report (Gilles Turcotte fide Teresa Dolman). From the files of "The Atlas of Breeding Birds of Alberta. A Second Look". **CODE 3 RECORD.** Weed Lake, Calgary; 7 July 2007; 3 digital images posted on Albertabird Yahoo! website (Reid Barclay). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), Muriel Lake; 30 May 2008; written report and 1 image (Roy Schmelzeisen and Velma Hudson). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*), Namaka Lake; 25 – 26 September 1995, 6 October 1995; written reports (Olga Droppo, Andrew Slater, John B. Steeves). **CODE 2 RECORD.** Trapper's Lake; 4 August 1997; written report (Fred Whitley). **CODE 3 RECORD.**

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*), sloughs along RR284 just S of TR231 SE of Shepard; 16 August 2007; 1 digital image posted on Albertabird Yahoo! website (Randy Kimura). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*), Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 12 August 1990; 1 slide (Ken Rose). Photo courtesy of "Inglewood Bird Sanctuary" (Calgary). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Therien

Lake, near St. Paul; 5 November 1992; 1 photograph (Richard Klauke). Photo courtesy of "WildBird General Store" (Edmonton). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Ovens' slough, NW of Cochrane; 25 October 2006; written report (Jerry Pilny). **CODE 3 RECORD.**

Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*), ranch along Montagneuse River, W of Hines Creek; 17 January 2008; multiple [22] digital images (Curt & Patty Hale). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*), Clover Bar landfill, Edmonton; 17 October 2000; 1 slide (Randal Hoscheit). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Cold Lake; 12 November 2005; digital images posted on Albertabird Yahoo! website (Richard Klauke [1], Ted Hindmarch [1]). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Inglewood Bird Sanctuary,

RECORDS ACCEPTED...continued

Calgary; 29 March 2008; 2 digital images (Brian Elder) and written report (Brian Elder, Ray Woods and Bob Storms). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Near Crowchild Trail bridge, Calgary. 1 April 2008; written report (Hank Vanderpol). Possibly the bird seen a few days earlier. **CODE 3 RECORD.**

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*), Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 2 May 2007; brief description posted on Albertabird and 8 digital images (Doug Faulder). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Glaucous-winged Gull (*Larus glaucescens*), Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 9 May 1984; written reports (John B. Steeves, Doug Collister). **CODE 2 RECORD.** Carburn Park; 3 – 5 November 1984; written reports (R.W. Storms, John B. Steeves). **CODE 2 RECORD.** Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 17 – 22 April 1985; written reports (Andrew Slater, Doug Collister). **CODE 2 RECORD.** Clover Bar landfill, Edmonton; 9 November 1998; 3 slides (Randal Hoscheit). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Inglewood Bird Sanctuary; 6 – 9 May 2000; written report (M. Ross Lein and Valerie A. Haines). **CODE 3 RECORD.** Cold Lake landfill; 27 May 2002; digital image posted on Albertabird Yahoo! website (Ted Hindmarch). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Inland Cement ponds along 170 Street, Edmonton; 1 – 2 May 2006; 2 digital images (Terry Thormin). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*), 8 – 9 adults and three nests with eggs within the Athabasca Dunes Ecological Reserve (in extreme NE Alberta) on 19 June 2000; there were four, possibly five, nests with eggs at the site that year (Thomas and Carroll 2001); 2 images (Bob Carroll). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Kinosoo Beach, Cold Lake; 28 August 2003; multiple [8] images captured from video (Richard Klauke). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Eagle Lake, SE of Strathmore; 18 – 19 July 2005; written report with 4 photographs (Brian Ritchie, Malcolm & Joan McDonald). **CODE 1 RECORD.** At the weir on the Lesser Slave River N of town of Slave Lake; 5 – 8 September 2005; 4 images captured from video (Richard Klauke). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Chestermere Lake; 2 – 6 September 2006; several images (Bill Walker [3]; Reid Barclay [2]).

CODE 1 RECORD. Wakamao Lake, near Clyde; 3 June 2007; 2 images (Gerald Romanchuk). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Astotin Lake, Elk Island National Park; 16 May 2008; 1 image (Terry Thormin). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Band-tailed Pigeon (*Patagioenas fasciata*), Ogden neighbourhood, Calgary; first half of May 1999; 1 image (Bill Walker). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Lakeview district, Calgary; 31 July – 5 August 2002; 3 images (Donna & William Lentjes). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Brule (hamlet); 29 April 2007; written report (Bob and Linda Morgan) and 2 images (Beth MacCallum). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Vermilion; 4 – 16 June 2007; 2 images (Greg & Christine Smith). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*), about 16 km S of Grassy Lake; 28 February 2005; written report (Lloyd Bennett). **CODE 3 RECORD.** Village of Grassy Lake; 8 June 2005; written report (Lloyd Bennett). **CODE 3 RECORD.** Fort Macleod; 19 June 2005; written report (Teresa and Douglas Dolman). From the files of "The Atlas of Breeding Birds of Alberta. A Second Look". **CODE 3 RECORD.** Near Taber; 19 October 2005; written report (Lloyd Bennett). **CODE 3 RECORD.** Several birds, Claresholm; observed since 2005; written report (Ruth and Jason Attwell) with 4 photographs (Grace Norgard). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Several (5) birds, Taber; 17 February 2007 ("Great Backyard Bird Count"); 6 images (Sharon Solvey). **CODE 1 RECORD.** W Edmonton; 1 April 2007; written report and 1 image (Terry Thormin). **CODE 1 RECORD.** High River; first week of April 2007 to at least 17 April, 2007, also, 8 March 2008; multiple images (Robert Parker [5]; Eduardo Matoud [6] posted at http://www.flickr.com/photos/mama_lumen/). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Acreage between Airdrie and Irricana; 17 May 2008; 1 image posted at <http://talkaboutwildlife.ca/photos/d/6034-1/Eurasian+Collared+Dove.JPG> (Douglas McQueen). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Pair in Ralston; 3, 4 and 9 June 2008; written report (Robin Bloom, Beverly Gingras, Brenda Dale). **CODE 3 RECORD.** Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary; 30 August 2008; 1 image posted on Albertabird Yahoo! website, another

posted on "flickr" [http://www.flickr.com/photos/mama_lumen/2814892348/] (Eduardo Matoud). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Eastern Screech-Owl (*Megascops asio*), Strathcona Island Park and Police Point Park, Medicine Hat; from 9 April to at least 27 December 2007, 14 April 2008, then again in September 2008; written reports with images (Milt Spitzer [3], Joan & Malcolm McDonald [2]), several images (Gord Court [1], Ken Havard [1], Richard Klauke), description of song (Phil Horch). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Probably of the same bird; only the description of the song identifies the species.

Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*), atlas square PG61; 18 May 1989; 1 photograph (Ken Lange). From the files of the first "Atlas of Breeding Birds of Alberta". **CODE 1 RECORD.** S of Bragg Creek; 20 – 26 May 1991; written description (Ross Dickson). From the files of the first "Atlas of Breeding Birds of Alberta". **CODE 3 RECORD.** Windy Point, W of Turner Valley; 25 June 2006; 1 image (Bill Walker). **CODE 1 RECORD.** S of Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park; 25 May 2007; video posted at <http://www.webfoundations.com/webfx/RareBirds/Lewis's%20Woodpecker.wmv> (Brooke Clibbon). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Red-breasted Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus ruber*), Banff, Banff National Park; 24 April 2008; 3 images (Jim Davies). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Chestnut-backed Chickadee (*Poecile rufescens*), near Cameron Falls, Waterton Lakes National Park; 28 September 2008; written report (Ray Wershler). **CODE 3 RECORD.**

Pygmy Nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*), Mountain View; 2 to about 10 October 2008; written report (Nancy West) and several images (Nancy West [4], Ken Havard [1]; Malcolm McDonald [1]). **CODE 1 RECORD.** First documented occurrence in the province.

Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) NE of Blackfalds (Ellis Bird Farm Management Area); late June to at least 23 July 1991, when the only young fledged; written report (Ross D. Dickson) and 2 photographs (D. Murray Mackay). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Pair S of Ponoka; from 25

RECORDS ACCEPTED...continued

May to at least 2 July 1998 (raised 1 or 2 young); 4 photographs (Murray Mackay). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Pair about 10 km E of Millet; from 3 July to at least 24 July 1998; raised 3 young; 1 photograph of male (Linda Morgan). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Aitkens Acres, near Redwater; summer of 1998; 1 photograph (Bob Carroll). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Family, including 2 fledglings, near Turner Valley; 13 – 15 September 1998; written report with drawings (Lynn Vogt). **CODE 3 RECORD.** Near Lindbrook, W of Tofield; from 22 April to at least 7 June 1999; several slides (Randal Hoscheit) and image captured from video (Richard Klauke). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Pair and nest with eggs in the Cypress Hills; 6 – 7 June 2000; 5 images captured from video (Richard Klauke). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Female near Madden, NE of Cochrane; 13 and 21 June 2004; written report with 2 photographs (Rob Worona). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Near Empress; from 12 June 2004 for about three weeks; brief written report (Laura O'Connor). **CODE 3 RECORD.** Pair nesting at Stoney Mountain, near Anzac; discovered on 9 July 2006, also seen on 16 July 2006; fledged at least 2 young; written report with several [6] images (Dawn Hall and Jane Elser). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Along Eagle Butte Road, S of Medicine Hat, W of Elkwater; 29 June 2008; 1 image (Gerald Romanchuk). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Western Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*), along Hwy 541 W of the Eden Valley access Rd., near Longview; 6 and 8 March 2005; image posted on Albertabird Yahoo! website (Reid Barclay), and written report with 2 images (Joan & Malcolm McDonald). **CODE 1 RECORD.** W from the access to Eden Valley, near Longview; 25 – 26 May 2007; written report (Jim H Davis). **CODE 3 RECORD.**

Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*), W of Rolling Hills; 21 May 2006; written report with 1 image plus 2 close-ups (Simone Marler). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Lucy's Warbler (*Vermivora luciae*), Fort McMurray; 8 – 10 November 2008; 7 images (Cathy Mountain). **CODE 1 RECORD.** First documented occurrence in the province and the country!.

Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*), Medicine Hat; 7 November 2008; 4 images (Pat Harding). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*), Cave and Basin, Banff National Park; 10 June 2008; brief written description posted on bcintbird Yahoo! group (Chris Charlesworth). **CODE 3 RECORD.**

Eastern Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*), Red Deer; first half of January 2009; several images (G. Murray [3], Bill Heinsen [1], Richard Klauke [1]). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) North Glenmore Park, Calgary; 15 July 1988; written report (F.J. Walker). **CODE 3 RECORD.** Beaverhill Lake; 24 May 1990; 1 slide (Edgar T. Jones). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Near Dewinton; 25 May 1994; written report (Allan Shoults). **CODE 3 RECORD.** Jasper, Jasper National Park; 23 and 24 May 1997; 2 images (Gord Ruddy). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Near Knight Lake, Waterton Lakes National Park; 8 June 1998; written report (Burke Korol). **CODE 3 RECORD.** Devon; 13 – 15 May 2003; written report with 6 photographs (Shirley Hayday). **CODE 1 RECORD.** Claresholm; 24 May 2008; written report (Jason Attwell); 3 photographs (Rob Macodrum). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*), E Drumheller; 4 – 5 May 2008; written report with several [5] photos (Lena and Dennis Braman, Jim McCabe). **CODE 1 RECORD.**

RECORDS INSUFFICIENTLY DOCUMENTED

Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*), Red Deer; 3 October 2003; written report (Helga Sinton). From the files of "The Atlas of Breeding Birds of Alberta. A Second Look".

Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*), second Vermilion Lake, Banff National Park; 27 October 2007; written report (Jerry Pilny and Alan Fishkin).

Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*), Chestermere Lake; 23 September 2008; brief description (Terry Korolyk, transcribed by Mike Mulligan).

Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*), Moraine Lake, Banff National Park; 16 June 2008; written report (Pat and Jim Woodford).

Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*), female near Dewberry, NE of Vermilion; 30 April – 30 July 2000; paired with male Mountain Bluebird; fledged one young; written report and 3 photographs (Iris & Ralph Davies). Hybrid could not be ruled out.

Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*), NE Calgary; June 1989; brief description (W.T. Korolyk). Along Hwy 533, about 20 km W of Nanton; 2 December 2006; description in posting on Albertabird "Yahoo" (Bill Wilson).

ERROR IN IDENTIFICATION

Grey-headed Chickadee (*Poecile cinctus*), acreage W of Rocky Mountain House; 25 December 2008; brief description on bcbirdingvanisland Yahoo! group and written report (Neil Robins).

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

Literature Cited

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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 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 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 escapees, and whose wild status cannot be determined accurately.

**PUBLICATION AVAILABLE:**

Turkey Vultures: A Photographic Guide for Aging Nestlings. R. W. Nelson, D. Moore, F. Kunnas, and R. Morse. 2009. Fish and Wildlife Division, Alberta Species at Risk Report No. 124. Edmonton, AB. 44 pp.

Descriptions and 80+ color photos of known-age nestlings, "... are intended to allow users... to estimate the age of nestling Turkey Vultures, from their own photographs, to within +/- two days, without handling the young birds." Part of an ongoing study at the northern edge of the breeding range. Available as a pdf download at: <http://srd.alberta.ca/fishwildlife/speciesatrisk/projectreports.aspx>

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