

Utah Bird Records Committee Bylaws

(Passed, June 2002 and last amended, August 2006)

Index

- I. Name and Affiliation
 - II. Purposes
 - III. Membership
 - IV. Records and Voting
 - A. Submissions
 - B. Circulation Procedures
 - C. Voting and Acceptance Criteria
 - D. Publication
 - V. Official Checklist and Review List
 - A. Official Checklist
 - B. Review List
 - VI. Bylaws
-

I. Name and Affiliation

- A. Name.** The official name of this committee shall be the "Utah Bird Records Committee" and is hereafter referred to as the "Committee."
- B. Affiliation.** This is a committee of the society known as the "Utah Ornithological Society." The Committee is established under the auspices of the Utah Ornithological Society (hereafter, "UOS").

II. Purposes

- A. Evaluate and publish reports of rare or unusual bird sightings from the state of Utah.
- B. Maintain those original bird records and all Committee votes and comments for the use of any future bird students or enthusiasts.
- C. Maintain and publish official UOS Checklist of Birds of Utah.
- D. Maintain and publish official UOS List of Review Species (hereafter, "Review List")
- E. Establish standards of observation and reporting for improving the quality and quantity of our knowledge of Utah birds.

III. Membership

- A. Number and Offices.** The Committee shall consist of seven regular voting members (hereafter, "Voting Members") and one secretary, a non-voting member of the Committee and acting chairman (hereafter, "Secretary") . For purposes of these Bylaws, the term "Member" includes all seven Voting Members plus the Secretary.

- B. Qualifications. 1. A Voting Member should possess expertise in identification of Utah birds, knowledge of Utah bird distribution, and familiarity with birders and localities in Utah.
2. The Secretary should be knowledgeable about the birds, birders and localities in Utah and possess clerical, organizational and computer skill necessary to perform the responsibilities listed in Section III, E, 2.

C. Elections

1. Any Member of the Committee may nominate individuals to open positions
- It is the responsibility of the nominating Member to check with nominees and determine willingness to serve prior to submitting the name
 - Each Member may nominate up to three individuals
 - If there are four or more nominees, above the number of open positions to be filled, there shall be a preliminary vote to determine the finalists reducing the number of nominees to two more than the number of open positions.
2. Nominees will be voted on as follows
- Voting Members will rank nominees from 1 to 3.
 - Points will be assigned in reverse x to 1, so with 3 nominees a vote of 1 would equate to 3 points
 - Votes will be compiled by the Secretary and the nominee with the most points will be asked to serve
 - If there are two open positions, the top two vote takers will be asked to serve

D. Term of Office and Responsibilities: Voting Member.

1. The Utah Bird Records Committee shall include seven Voting Members.
- Voting Members will be elected to three year terms.
 - Voting Members of the Committee may be nominated for a second consecutive term. After a second consecutive term there must be a one-year or longer absence from the Committee before a member is eligible for nomination again.
 - There shall be no limit to the number of separate six-year periods (two terms) that any one person may serve on the Committee.
 - Two or three Members will be up for reselection or replacement each year (I.E. Two in year one, two in year two, and three in year three.)
2. Responsibilities
- Vote on all records in a timely manner. Although each Voting Member is expected to vote on each record expeditiously, there will be a final deadline of two months for each individual record from the time it is posted. If there are unusual circumstances, an extension may be granted either to the Committee as a whole, (i.e. for a difficult record), or to an individual for any valid reason (upon request by that individual to the Secretary).
 - Vote in all elections and on all proposals in a timely manner or before any reasonable deadline which might be established by the Secretary

E. Election, Term of Office, and Responsibilities: Secretary

1. Election and Term: Same as Voting Members
2. Responsibilities
- Receive, circulate, recirculate, file, and maintain all bird records and supporting data submitted to the Committee.

- b. Tabulate results of all votes of the Committee, including votes on bird records, but excepting the election of the Secretary.
- c. Keep or cause to keep minutes of Committee meetings.
- d. Furnish to anyone, upon request, any accepted or rejected bird record with all evidence, including Committee comments.
- e. Produce an Annual Report of the Committee's decisions and submit it for publication to the editor of The UOS Bulletin.
- f. Call and preside over all meetings required by these Bylaws

F. Removals.

1. The Committee may remove, for cause, any Member who is delinquent in his/her duties.
2. Such action requires a super-majority vote of all other Members, i.e., 6-1 or 7-0 for removal.

G. Vacancies and Special Elections. If the Committee loses a Voting Member or alternate during mid-term (through death, resignation, removal, etc.) normal election procedures will be instituted and a new member elected to a three year term.

H. Meetings.

1. At the annual UOS meeting a meeting of the records committee will be held. The purpose of this meeting shall be to conduct any elections and such other business as may be brought before the Committee. The Secretary must give prior notice of the annual meeting to all members.
2. Quorum. Five Voting Members present at the meeting, not by proxy, shall constitute a quorum for any meeting of the Committee. Any meeting of the Committee is not considered "valid" unless it has a quorum present.
3. "Meetings" may be held electronically (by conference call, email communication or internet vote or query) that will augment or replace other meetings. In the case of e-mail and internet "meetings" a quorum will be attained only by the response of all Members of the Committee.

IV. Records and Voting

A. Submissions

1. Submission. Records should be submitted on the Committee's Official Report Form or a reasonable facsimile thereof. Report forms may be filled out at the Utah Records Committee web site. They shall also be readily available from at www.utahbirds.org and from the secretary.
2. Resubmission. A record that has received a final Committee decision, whether accepted or rejected and even though published as such, may be resubmitted by anyone if there becomes available new and substantial evidence that might reverse that decision. Furthermore, records involving taxa that have since undergone taxonomic revision by the American Ornithologists' Union may be resubmitted to determine the status of any changed taxa. Any resubmitted record shall be circulated with all previous votes, Committee comments, publication status, and all new evidence marked as such.

3. Any record, whether published or not, old or new, may be submitted by a Voting Member or other person, whether or not an observer, if he has first attempted to obtain details from the observer(s). An exception to this is a record that has received previous Committee decision (see Resubmission above).

B. Circulation Procedures

1. Initial Receipt by Secretary. Upon receipt of a record, the Secretary shall do the following:
 - a. Determine if the record meets circulation criteria (is it on the Review Species Lists)
 - b. If it is on the list, follow below procedures
 - c. If it is not on the list send letter to submitter thanking for the record and explain that it will not be voted on.
 - d. Give the record a unique number, consisting of the year of receipt (not the year of sighting) followed by a hyphen and the next unused number, starting with "01," for each calendar year.
2. Distribution to Voting Members
 - a. All records will be posted to the Utah Records Committee web site within one week of reception
 - b. After posting, the Secretary will send an email to the Committee explaining that there is a new record for voting
 - c. If a member has opted for hard copy, the Secretary will distribute materials to that member via mail
3. Receipt by Voting Members
 - a. Judge the record's validity and vote on it.
 - b. Complete on-line voting form and hit submit for compilation.
 - c. If member has elected to receive and submit hard documentation, voting form will be sent to the secretary via mail.
 - d. Members are strongly encouraged to evaluate and vote on the Utah Records Committee web site
4. Recirculation.
 - a. If a non-decisive vote is obtained during the first round the Secretary shall move the record to the second round with first round votes and comments posted to the records committee web site. If a non-decisive vote is obtained during the second round the Secretary shall move the record to the third round. If after the third round, the record still has not received a decisive vote, the record will be rejected and would have to be resubmitted for further consideration.
 - b. The Secretary may move a record to a second round of voting if he/she feels the Committee's comments might alter the decision.

C. Voting and Acceptance Criteria

1. Voting Form: The vote of each member together with his/her comments, if any, must be submitted to the Secretary on the official voting form.
 - a. The official form is available on the web
 - b. Hard copies of the form may be requested from the secretary
2. This form must include spaces for at least the (a) record number, (b) name of the species, (c) name of the voting Committee member, (d) date of the vote, (e) member's vote, and (f) comments.

3. Voting Categories:
 - a. Accept
 - b. Reject, specific identification not established.
 - c. Reject, natural occurrence questionable
 - d. Reject, establishment of introduced population questionable.
4. Disqualification and Abstentions. Members must vote on all submissions, including their own.
5. Comments. On the first circulation a "reject/no" vote must be supported by appropriate comments. Comments must be supplied for a recirculation for either a "reject/no" or "accept/yes" vote.
6. Consultations. On the first circulation, a member shall not discuss a record with another member until both have voted. Pre-vote consultations are encouraged among members for a recirculation.
7. Voting Criteria. The criteria used by a member for acceptance or rejection of a record are based on that member's knowledge and experience and will not be specifically addressed in these rules. However, members are encouraged to accept or reject records on the basis of more-or-less objective criteria such as the adequacy of the field marks reported or the conditions under which the observations were made (e.g., lighting, weather, optical equipment, etc.) The veracity of the observer should not normally be questioned without good cause.
8. Voting Members should accept or reject the sighting as a whole as opposed to accepting or rejecting an individual sight record. This means that all photographs, sight records, additional materials, expert opinions, and testimonials of Records Committee members or others, should be taken into account when deciding how to vote.
9. Tabulation. The Secretary shall tabulate the voting results after all members have voted.
10. Decisive and Non-decisive Votes.
 - a. First Round votes have to be unanimous (7-0 or 0-7). If a first round record receives either of these votes then it is considered decisive and no second round is needed. If anything less than this it goes to second round.
 - b. Second Round votes to be decisive and stop the record from going to third round has to be 5-2 (or higher) or 2-5 (or lower). If it is 4-3 or 3-4 then the record goes to third round.
 - c. Third round votes have to change a 4-3 or 3-4 second round vote to 5-2 or 2-5 to be decisive. If it stays 4-3 or 3-4 vote then it is considered rejected. Likewise if it receives a 5-2 or 2-5 on third round then it is accepted or rejected.

11. First State Records. It is preferable that a first state record have some form of physical documentation. Acceptable evidence could consist of photographs, sound recordings, specimens, verified band numbers, etc. However, a first state record may be accepted without physical documentation with these considerations in mind:
 - (1) The species is obvious and easy to identify and cannot be confused with a similar species.
 - (2) The observer is familiar with the species.
 - (3) The observer is known by the committee members as a careful competent observer with experience in documenting rare birds.
 - (4) There are multiple competent observers that submit separate, careful documentation.

Accepted records will be listed as either "verified with physical evidence" or "accepted but not verified with physical evidence." First state record submissions that involve only a single observer, may be accepted as "hypothetical" and added to the UOS Checklist of Birds of Utah as such. Species shall remain on the hypothetical list until a record meeting the above criteria is accepted by the committee.

D. Publication

1. All records will be published upon completion on the Records Committee web site.
2. The decisions of the Committee shall be published annually, under the supervision of the Secretary in the form of an Annual Report, in the UOS Newsletter.
3. The published data for accepted records should include at least the name of the species, date(s) of observation, locality, and reporting observers. Other data may be added at the discretion of the Committee.
4. Rejected records should also be published, with a minimum of the above data, except that the observers' names should not be included. In publications, the term "not accepted" should be used instead of "rejected."

V. Official Checklist and Review Species List

A. Official Checklist

1. The official checklist shall be reviewed and amended at least every three years
 - a. A committee shall be formed and the checklist reviewed at least every three years
 - b. The committee will consist of the Secretary and two Members of the Committee
 - c. The committee will propose changes to species, abundance and status codes, which shall be voted on by the Committee and accepted by majority vote
 - d. Upon acceptance of the changes, the Secretary will be responsible for publication of the revised checklist
2. Changes to the checklist may be proposed by any Member of the Committee
 - a. Proposed changes will be voted on by the Voting Members and accepted by majority vote
 - b. Members may propose a change in status, abundance code, regional code (ie #)
 - c. Any changes will be made immediately on the records committee web site
 - d. Changes will be published in the following revision of the checklist

3. First state records accepted by the Committee will be added immediately to the records committee web site and to the following publication of the official checklist
4. The official checklist will include the following
 - a. Species common name
 - b. Abundance code
 - c. Status code
 - d. Review species indicator (#)
 - e. Washington County Specialty indicator (*)
 - f. Northern Utah Specialty indicator (^)

B. Review List

1. The Review List will be updated from time to time by the Committee.
 - a. In general, the Review List will consist of species that have occurred within Utah on average two or fewer times per year in each of the ten years immediately preceding revision of the Review List.
 - b. The Committee may, as it sees fit, add species to the Review List, such as those whose identification is difficult. Such additions will be added by majority vote. Any species for which there are no accepted record for Utah, are considered review species.
 - c. The Committee may, as it sees fit, delete species from the Review List. Such deletions will be made by majority vote.
 - d. Any species for which there are no accepted records in Utah, are considered review species.
2. Special rule for changing status and/or observer coverage.
 - a. Notwithstanding the criterion above, any committee member may petition the Committee to remove a species from the Review List if the species can be demonstrated or comfortably presumed to be more abundant than the number of accepted records presently indicates. Such cases will generally fall into two categories:
 - i. Increasing Abundance. A species which, because of actual increasing abundance shows a clear upward trend in numbers of accepted records (per year) presumed by the Committee not to be part of a short-term cyclical trend and which is anticipated to continue to exceed the criterion for retention on the List (i.e., more than four records per year).
 - ii. Under-Reported Species. A species historically and regularly occurring in Utah in small to moderate numbers but which for reasons of limited observer coverage, access, and/or limited reporting, has not exceeded the criterion for retention on the List. A significant upward trend in numbers of accepted records (per year) must be demonstrated. (An implicit assumption is that at full coverage or optimal reporting levels, the species would well exceed the criterion for retention on the List.).
 - b. The petitioning member must submit written documentation to substantiate the purported patterns of historical abundance, and/or recent trends in abundance and/or access, coverage, or reporting.
 - c. Any such petition to remove a species by this special rule shall be voted on and accepted with a vote of 5-2 or greater.
3. The Secretary will make sure that the Review List is available on the Utah Records Committee web site and by request.

4. Review species shall be designated with a pound (#) on the UOS Checklist of Birds of Utah. Furthermore, any species not listed on the Checklist shall require documentation. In addition, any species occurring on the Checklist but seen at an unusual time of year (e.g., Western Tanager in December) or at an unusual location (e.g., Inca Dove outside the southwestern corner of the state) shall require documentation.
5. Records concerning species that are only locally or temporally rare in Utah will be treated at the discretion of the Committee. In general, the Committee will only treat species that are included in the Review List, however, because of the size and habitat diversity of Utah, a record of great rarity in a specific region of Utah may be accepted for review at the request of any Committee Member.
6. Forms or subspecies will not be treated unless listed as such on the Review List.

VI. Bylaws

- A. **FORMATION.** All Bylaws and other procedures of the Committee are to be determined by and only by the Committee, except that they may not be inconsistent with the Bylaws of the Utah Ornithological Society or with rules of the Executive Board of UOS.
- B. **REVIEW.** The Committee shall review the Bylaws regularly, at least once every three years.
- C. **CHANGES.** These Bylaws may be changed by a majority vote of the Committee.