

Twenty-sixth Report of the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee
2019 Records
February 2021
Mike Fialkovich for the Committee

The Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee (hereafter "PORC" or "the committee") evaluates and archives documentation it receives of any species or recognizable form that is on the official Review List for Pennsylvania. In addition, the committee reviews documentation for species or subspecies that were previously unrecorded in the Commonwealth. This report covers submissions for 2019 that include 67 records of 43 species. The 56 accepted records represented an 84% acceptance rate. Reports were received from 28 counties.

Highlights include: Several Black-bellied Whistling Duck submissions, first state record of Common Shelduck, second and third state records of Brown Booby, several records of Mississippi Kite, third record of Anna's Hummingbird, first state record for Corn Crane and Snail Kite, three records of Varied Thrush, a belated report of Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, Western Meadowlark and Harris's Sparrow.

PORC encourages observers to document their sightings with photos, video, or audio whenever possible. Even poor photos can be diagnostic and elevate a report from Class III to Class I. However, written documentation is also extremely important, as there have been instances where a photograph was not diagnostic, but the report was still accepted as a Class III (sight record) based on the supporting information of the observer's written account.

Documentation can be submitted on the PORC section of the PSO Website at this address <http://pabirds.org/records/> Click on **Submit A Report**.

The Committee

Committee Members and terms for 2019 are as follows:

Holly Merker – Chair, second term (2018-2021)
George Armistead – first term (2018-2022)
Dave DeReamus – third term (2016-2019)
Devich Farbotnik – third term (2016-2019)
Mike Fialkovich – third term (2016-2019)
Ian Gardner – Non-voting Secretary (2015 – 2019)
Greg Grove – first term (2018–2021)
Billy Weber – second term (2019-2021)

The committee meets face to face annually to discuss committee activities, procedures, second round voting, etc. Ongoing business is covered through email exchanges throughout the year as necessary.

Committee News

While this report covers 2019 records, there were changes to committee members in 2020 that I would like to mention in this report.

In January 2020 Dave DeReamus rotated off the committee after eight years of service. Dave provided thoughtful analysis to evaluations and his contributions were highly valued. The committee thanks Dave for serving three consecutive terms. He was replaced by David Yeany II from Allegheny County.

Ian Gardner served as Non-voting Secretary since 2015 and decided to leave the committee during in the summer of 2020. Ian maintained the website, organized and sent submissions to the

committee for voting, tabulated the votes and performed numerous other essential duties. The committee thanks Ian for all the work he has done, particularly keeping us on schedule and assisting the incoming secretary during the transition. He was replaced by Tessa Rhinehart from Allegheny County.

Classification of Records

Class I: An accepted record based on an existing identifiable specimen, a diagnostic photograph, or a diagnostic recording. Abbreviations are (P) photograph, (R) sound recording, (V) video clip, (S) specimen.

Class II: An accepted sight record written up independently by two or more observers.

Class III: An accepted sight record documented by one observer.

Class IV-A: A record for which there exists a majority of evidence in support of the observer's identification: the record is probably correct, but not beyond reasonable doubts.

Class IV-B: A record for which there exists insufficient evidence for evaluation.

Class IV-C: A record for which there exists a majority of evidence in favor of an identification other than what was submitted.

Class V: The identification is correct, but the bird represents or may represent an escapee from artificial aviculture or an introduced bird not yet established in Pennsylvania.

Class I-Pe*: A record accepted through the ebird expedited review process.

*Class I-Pe is new for 2019 and was added to the Bylaws. See the Procedures <<https://pabirds.org/records/index.php/purpose/#procedures>> for an explanation of the new classification.

Format of This Report

The records in each section are arranged taxonomically following the 2017 American Ornithological Society Check-list of North American Birds. The number in parentheses after the species name represents the number of accepted records, including those in this report, since the establishment of PORC in 1989. A (+) after the number signifies accepted historical records prior to the formation of PORC. Each accepted record includes the location, county and date(s) when known. In some cases, dates are taken from the seasonal reports published in Pennsylvania Birds, and from incidental information gleaned from the PABIRDS email listserv, the Pennsylvania Birders Facebook Group, the PARBA GroupMe text message alert service, and its regional sub-groups and the eBird database. Enclosed in parentheses following the date are the name(s) of the observer(s) who submitted documentation. Following the list of observers is the PORC record number, the record's classification and the votes for/against. Records submitted from previous years are indicated in the description. All photographs, video, and sound recordings are currently being held with the Secretary and archived on the PORC section of the PSO Website.

Abbreviations: N (Number), PB (Pennsylvania Birds), Twp. (Township), V (Volume).

2019 ACCEPTED RECORDS

Black-bellied Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) (18)

A flock of 37 at the Route 54 Wetlands in Turbotville, *Montour* 18 May 2019 (Bobby Brown; 102-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.

Eight at Newmanstown, *Lebanon* 20 May 2019 (Jonathan Heller; 102-02-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.

Eleven at Leesport, *Berks* 4 July 2019 (David Robson; 102-03-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.

One at Central Mountain High School Wetlands, Mill Hall, *Clinton* 12 July 2019 (Brian Schmoke; 102-04-2019; Class I-P). 7/0. Photograph published in PB V33:N3.

Four at John Heinz NWR at Tinicum, *Philadelphia* 21 July 2019 (Martin Dellwo; 102-05-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.

It was quite a year for this species in the state.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) (40)

One at Yardley Corners Pond, *Bucks* 11-12 December 2019 (August Mirabella (p), William Kein (p), Mark Gallagher (p); 115-01-2019; Class I-Pe). 7/0.

One at Coatsville Res., *Chester* 1 January 2019 (Joe Sebastiani (p), John Daniel (p); 115-02-2019; Class I-Pe). 7/0.

Green-winged Teal (Eurasian) (*Anas crecca crecca*) (36)

A male at Peace Valley Park, *Bucks* 8 February 2019 (August Mirabella (p) 119a-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0. The photograph submitted clearly shows the horizontal white line on the side and the lack of a short vertical white stripe on the side of the breast. American Green-winged Teals are also in the photograph for comparison.

Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) (1)

One at Plymouth Flats/Hanover Nursery, Route 11 *Luzerne* 16 September 2017 (Rick Koval; 117-01-2017; Class I-P). 6/1. Record submitted 11 March 2019. An adult was photographed and noted to be wary of people. In addition there was no evidence of captivity based on the plumage, lack of a leg band and lack of a clipped toe. Also of note, an individual was photographed earlier in the month in New Hampshire. There are several previous records from Northeastern North America including Newfoundland, Quebec, New Brunswick, New York, Vermont, and Massachusetts. This species was added to the ABA Checklist in 2017. See the 28th ABA Checklist Committee Report in *Birding* Vol. 49, No. 6, December 2017.

Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) (35)

An immature male on the Susquehanna River in Williamsport, *Lycoming* 13 November 2019 through the end of the year (Bobby Brown (p); 149-01-2019; Class I-P). 6/0. Photo published in PB V33:N4.

A female or immature at Blawnox, *Allegheny* 16 November 2019 (Michael David (p); 149-02-2019; Class I-P). 6/0.

One on the Susquehanna River at Pittston, *Luzerne* 25-26 November 2019 (Rick Koval (p), Eric Zawatski (p), Jonathan DeBalko (p); 149-03-2019; Class I-Pe). 7/0.

Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*) (16)

A female at Nockamixon SP, *Bucks* 22 January 2019 (August Mirabella (p) 155-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.



Image 1. **Harlequin Duck**, Blawnox, *Allegheny* 16 November 2019. Photo by Michael David.

Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) (97+)

One at Moraine SP, *Butler* 2 March 2019 (Glenn Koppel (p), Mary Alice Koenke, 009-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.

One at Presque Isle SP, *Erie* 11 May 2019 (Michael David (p); 009-02-2019; Class I-P). 6/0.



Image 2. **Eared Grebe**, Presque Isle SP, *Erie* 11 May 2019. Photo by Michael David.

Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) (3)

One in West Chester, *Chester* 9 November 2019 (Pamela Fisher; 490-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0. Not only was this bird photographed, it was also banded, confirming the identification. It was observed and photographed by many. Photo published in PB V33:N4.

Corn Crake (*Crex crex*) (1)

One collected in Honesdale, *Wayne* 1 January 2016 (Benjamin Van Doren; submitted by George Armistead; 233-01-2016; Class I-S). 7/0. Record submitted 4 February 2019. The bird was found by a cat and brought to the owner. The bird did not have any external injuries but was very weak. Efforts to take it to a wildlife rehab center were in progress but the bird died before efforts to save it could be attempted. The specimen is housed at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia.

King Rail (*Rallus elegans*) (27)

One at Dixon Meadow Preserve, *Montgomery* 31 August 2019 (Zach Millen (p), Kenneth Rieker, (p), Jason Horn (p), Michael

Rosengarten (p); 235-01-2019; Class I-Pe). 7/0. Good photographic documentation of this elusive species was entered into ebird.

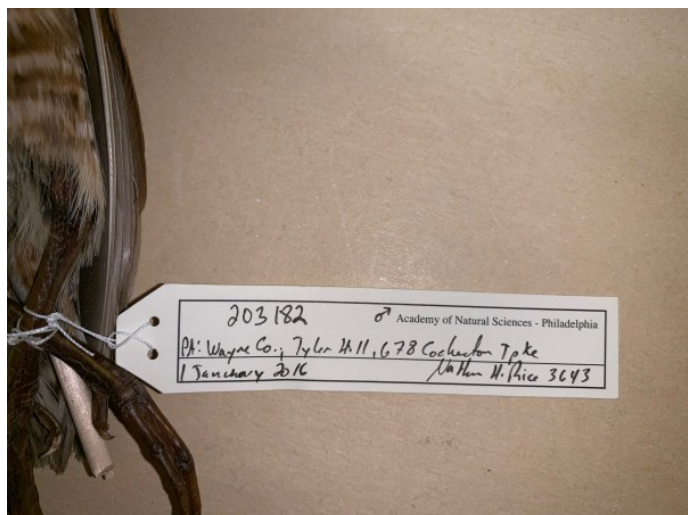


Image 3. **Corn Crake** specimen tag showing the collection date and location. Photo courtesy of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia.



Image 4. **Corn Crake** specimen. Photo courtesy of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia.

Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*) (11)

An immature at John Heinz NWR, *Philadelphia* 16 September 2019 (Michael David (p); 242-01-2019; Class I-P). 6/0.

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) (24+)

Two at Presque Isle SP, *Erie* 1 June 2019 (Eric Zawatski (p), Carl Engstrom; 261-01-2019; Class I-Pe). 7/0. A mated pair observed at Gull Point.

Two at Presque Isle SP, *Erie* 1 June 2019 (Eric Zawatski (p), Carl Engstrom; 261-01-2019; Class I-Pe). 7/0. A mated pair observed at Gull Point.

Four at Presque Isle SP, *Erie* 16 July 2019 (Justin Berkheimer (p); 261-02-2019; Class I-Pe). 7/0. An adult and three juveniles at Gull Point.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) (11+)

One at the Balmer Farm Ponds in Heidelberg Twp., *Lebanon* 23 April 2019 (Ted Nichols II; 321-01-2019; Class III). 6/1.



Image 5. **Purple Gallinule**, John Heinz NWR, *Philadelphia* 16 September 2019. Photo by Michael David.

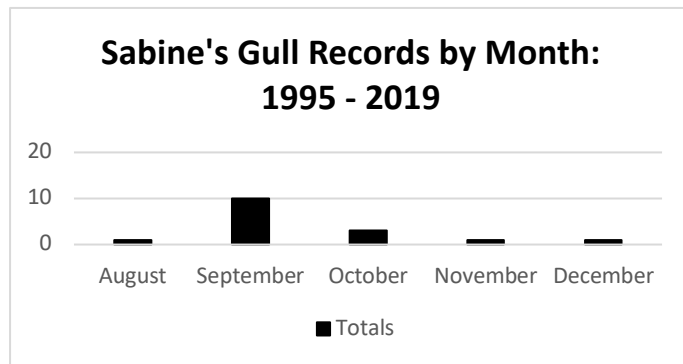
Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipixcan*) (21+)

One at Pymatuning SP, *Crawford* 31 May 2019 (Mark Vass (p); 338-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0. One in a large flock of Ring-billed Gulls loafing on a breakwater. Several ebird checklists also contained photographs of this individual. Photograph published in PB V33:N2.

One at the Route 15 Overlook, *Lycoming* 4 October 2019 (Bobby Brown (p); 338-02-2019; Class I-P). 6/0. Not an expected rarity on top of a ridge at a hawk watch site, but the Susquehanna River is in the valley below.

Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) (17+)

One at the Conejohela Flats, *Lancaster* 2 September 2019 (Zachary Millen (p); 360-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0. This record falls right in line as most records of this species are from September. Photo published in PB V33:N4.



Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) (28)

Two at Marsh Creek SP, *Chester* 15 June 2019 (Michael Hartshorne (p); 372-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*) (17)

One at Beltzville SP, *Carbon* 23-26 April 2019 (Billy Weber (p), Bert Filemyr (p); 002a-01-2019; Class I-P). 6/0.

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) (10)

One at Haldeman Island, *Dauphin* 29 May 2019 (Clay Lutz (p); 099-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0. This is the second year in a row this species was found in *Dauphin*.

One in Jackson Twp., *Luzerne* 22 September 2019 (Annette Parmelee (p); 099-02-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.



Image 6. **Least Tern**, one of two at Marsh Creek SP, *Chester* 15 June 2019. Photo by Michael Hartshorne. The photo shows the yellow bill, black legs and feet and white forehead patch.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) (3)

One in Easton, *Northampton* 20 August 2019 (Jessie Serry (p); 063-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0. A surprising discovery just about four years after the first state record.



Image 8. **Brown Booby**, Easton, *Northampton* 20 August 2019. Photo by Jessie Serry. The bird was discovered resting on a stump along the Delaware River. The mottled breast and gray bill indicates this individual is immature.

One on the Susquehanna River near the Isle of Que, *Northumberland* 6 July 2019 (Jeanetta Wanner (p); 063-02-2019; Class I-Pe). 7/0. This bird approached the observer's canoe and followed it for a short distance, allowing photographs to be taken.

Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) (45)

One at Octoraro Res., *Lancaster* 27 July 2019 (Pamela Fisher (p); 087-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.



Image 7. **Pacific Loon**, Beltzville SP, *Carbon* 26 April 2019. Photo by Bret Filemyr.

Cattle Egret (*Bulbicus ibis*) (151)

One at Middle Creek WMA, *Lancaster* 18 May 2019 (Pamela Fisher (p); 089-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.

One in Jackson Twp., *Luzerne* 22 September 2019 (Annette Parmelee (p); 099-02-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) (30)

One at Trexler Nature Preserve, *Lehigh* 28 August 2019 (Pamela Fisher; 168-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0. One of the few occurrences of this species remaining at a location for several days allowing numerous people to observe it.

Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) (1)

An immature at Presque Isle SP, *Erie* 22 October 2019 (Connor Vara; 170-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0. A stunning first state record. The bird was only seen twice the day it was discovered and never seen again. Photo published on the cover of PB V33:N4.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) (117)

One in Doylestown Twp., *Bucks* 19 June 2019 (Karin Isett; 171-01-2019; Class III). 6/1.

One in Montoursville, *Lycoming* 28 June 2019 (Bobby Brown; 171-02-2019; Class I-P). 7/0. Discovered while the observer was playing tennis! Fortunately a camera was available and good photographs documented the sighting.

One at Chickies Rock County Park, *Lancaster* 20 May 2019 (Meredith Lombard (p); 171-03-2019; Class I-Pe). 7/0.



Image 9. **Mississippi Kite**, Chickies Rock County Park, *Lancaster* 20 May 2019. Photo by Meredith Lombard. The banded tail indicates this bird is a sub-adult and the short outer primaries can be clearly seen in the photo.

One in Mehoopany, *Wyoming* 7 September 2019 (David LaVerne (p), David Trently; 171-04-2019; Class I-Pe). 7/0. This individual was an immature; excellent photographs on ebird.

One in Bethel Springs, *Delaware* 31 May 2019 (Brian Quindlen (p); 171-05-2019; Class I-Pe). 7/0. Another individual well-photographed from various angles showing the gray head, black tail, short outer primaries and white secondaries.

One at Haverford Reserve, *Delaware* 22 May 2019 (Liam Hart (p); 171-06-2019; Class I-Pe). 7/0. Another sub-adult with photographic documentation.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) (8)

One in Breinigsville, *Lehigh* 17 November 2019 (James Funk; 545-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) (31+)

One at Chestnut Grove Natural Area, Manor Twp., *Lancaster* 4-6 November 2019 (Randall Nett, Pamela Fisher (p), Kim Morelock (p); 557-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) (68)

One in Lock Haven, *Clinton* 1 May 2019 (Brian Schmoke; 699-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0. Photograph published in PB V33:N2.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*) (28)

A male in Bethlehem, *Northampton* 26 February and 3 March 2019 (Jeff Hopkins (p), Ian Gardner (p), Bert Filemyr (p); 666-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0. Found in a row of ornamental trees in an industrial park, far from the expected woodland habitat. The bird was associating with American Robins. Photo published on the cover of PB V33:N1.

One at Spring Valley Road, *Lancaster* 4-11 December 2019 (Jack Reese, Pamela Fisher (p) (v); 666-02-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.

One visiting a feeder at a home near Hills Creek SP, *Tioga* 8 December 2019 (Michael David (p); 666-03-2019; Class I-P). 6/0.



Image 10. **Varied Thrush**, *Tioga* 8 December 2019. Photo by Michael David.

Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*) (5)

One at Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust, *Montgomery* 7 December 2019 (Michael David (p); 799-01-2019; Class I-P). 6/0.

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*) (25)

One at Pennypack on the Delaware, *Philadelphia* 17 August 2019 (Holger Pflücke (p); 820-01-2019; Class I-Pe). 7/0.

Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*) (37+)

One at Lykens, *Dauphin* 13 February 2019 (Ian Gardner (p); 839-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0. A bird in basic plumage was feeding with a flock of various sparrows



Image 11. **Harris's Sparrow**, Lykens, *Dauphin* 13 February 2019. Photo by Ian Gardner.

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (*Leucosticte tephrocotis*) (2)

One visiting a feeder in Kempton, *Berks* 12-19-2009 (Janina Brown (p); 878-01-2009; Class I-P). 6/0. Record submitted 10 February 2020. This surprising discovery was made only recently by a relative of the original observer who is now deceased. Several diagnostic photos were submitted as well as a short video of the bird at a feeder. The bird was present for four days. So this was actually the first state record and the one in *Crawford* in 2018 was the second.



Image 12. **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch**, Kempton, *Berks* 19 December 2009. Photo by Janina Brown. The discovery of this individual establishes this as the first documented state record for Pennsylvania.

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) (51)

One in Little Britain Twp., *Lancaster* 28 January 2019 (Zachary Millen; 859-01-2019; Class III). 7/0. An adult male in a mixed flock of blackbirds.

Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) (6+)

One in Belleville, *Mifflin* 27 June 2019 (Rob Dickerson (p) (r); 858-01-2019; Class I-R). 7/0. While the photograph is not diagnostic the recording certainly is, so the evaluation of this record is based on the recording. Photo published in PB V33:N3.

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) (46)

A male in Linden, *Lycoming* 1 May 2019 (Mark Lengel; 780-01-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.

A first spring male in Montoursville, *Lycoming* 3 May 2019 (Bobby Brown; 780-02-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.

A first spring male at a private residence on Park Road, *Chester* 6 May 2019 (Evan Coates; 780-03-2019; Class I-P). 7/0.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, identification not established.

(Votes are listed as for/against. A vote of 6/1 or 7/0 is required for acceptance).

American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*)

One at John Heinz NWR, *Philadelphia* 26 August 2019 (266-01-2019; Class IV-B). 0/7. Observer expressed uncertainty on identification due to a very brief view of bird in flight. The bill was not visible which leaves a large gap in the features of this species. Due to the brief view, uncertainty, and lack of details in the description the committee unanimously agreed the identification of such a rarity requires more than what was provided.

Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*)

One at Lake Somerset, *Somerset* 25 August 2019 (231-01-2019; Class IV-C). 0/7. Committee members noted the description mentioned an unstreaked back which is uncharacteristic of this species, the date is not consistent with the known time this species moves through the state, and the view was apparently brief. Committee members thought this was a misidentification as the observer also mentioned the bird hopping that is inconsistent with the mobility of a rail.

Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*)

One at Presque Isle SP, *Erie* 2 September 2019 (333-01-2019; Class IV-A). 5/2. This record went through two rounds of voting. The description submitted led some committee members to vote to accept the record while some thought the distance was too great for a conclusive identification to species.

Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*)

One at Beaver Run Reservoir, *Westmoreland* 18 September 2019 (361-01-2019; Class IV-C). 0/7. Unfortunately, photos submitted were taken in harsh lighting conditions at some distance from a side and rear angle so the bill is not clearly visible and the distance makes details nearly impossible to determine. In addition, the time of year is not that expected for this species this far south. Acceptance of a first state record of such a rare species requires conclusive details.

Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*)

An immature at Shenango Reservoir, *Mercer* 12 August 2001 (372-01-2001; Class IV-B). 2/5. Unfortunately, photographs were taken in harsh light and from a distance, so an evaluation could not be made based on the photographs. The written description lacks several critical details for Least Tern plumage characteristics at the time of year and age.

Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*)

One observed in flight at the intersection of Route 202 and Morris Road, *Montgomery* 29 August 2019 (074-01-2019; Class IV-B). 1/5. While the observer mentioned experience with this species (which was acknowledged by the committee) the observation was made without optics and lacked details, leading most committee members to vote against the record through two rounds of voting.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

One at Pennypack on the Delaware, *Philadelphia* 22 May 2019; 171-07-2019; Class IV-B). 1/6. The identification may very well be

correct but very limited details were submitted and the photographs show the bird from behind that made identification nearly impossible. Unfortunately, the circumstances for photography were less than ideal.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

One at Stone Mountain Hawk Watch, *Mifflin* 15 October 2019 (186-01-2019; Class IV-A). 5/2. Some committee members would have been more comfortable accepting if the description included more plumage details, leading some committee members to vote against acceptance. This record went through two rounds of voting.

LeConte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*)

One at Dixon Meadow Preserve, *Montgomery* 6 October 2019 (829-01-2019; Class IV-A). 3/4. This one had the committee split. Some members voting against it thought the identification was probably correct but some fine details were lacking in the description to conclusively separate it from Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco (*Junco hyemalos oregonus*)

One at Townville, *Crawford* 7 November 2019 (840a-01-2019; Class IV-C). 1/6. The committee carefully thought this out due to the difficulties identifying an intermediately plumaged female junco. Most of the committee members noted the definition and contrast of the hood did not appear strong enough for Oregon and thus could be a female Cassiar junco. The difficulty of this subtle identification was noted by all committee members. Often birds in this group can't be identified with certainty.

The PORC would like to thank all the observers for submitting rare bird documentation to the committee for review.

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