

BYLAWS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE

ARTICLE I. Name and affiliation

- A. The official name of this organization shall be the “Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee” (PORC) (hereafter, the Committee).
- B. This is a special committee of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

ARTICLE II. Purpose

- A. To determine the authenticity of rare or unusual bird sightings
- B. To maintain the official checklist of the birds of Pennsylvania
- C. To maintain permanently the original bird records and all Committee votes and comments for use by present and future ornithological students.
- D. To publish data on all records receiving a decision.

ARTICLE III. Membership

- A. The Committee shall consist of seven voting members, one of whom is the “Chair,” and one of whom may be the “Secretary” or at the discretion of the Committee, an eighth and/or ninth member may be appointed to serve as a non-voting Chair or Secretary.
- B. Qualifications for Committee membership should include expertise in identification of birds, knowledge of Pennsylvania birds, familiarity with localities in Pennsylvania, and an ability to keep up with the committee workload. A geographical balance to the Committee is desirable, but should not override the criteria above.

C. Members

1. Election and term of office.

Elections shall occur annually.

Members of the sitting committee will seek nominations from willing qualified candidates of the state’s professional and amateur birding community to serve in either a voting or non-voting role (in the case of the Chair and/or Secretary serving as an eighth and/or ninth member of the Committee). The elected term for voting members shall be for three years. (Upon the inception of PORC, the elected terms were staggered so that in the first year three members were elected to three-year terms, two members were elected to two-year terms, and two members were elected to one-year terms.)

A committee member may serve up to two consecutive three-year terms. After those terms are completed, that individual is then prohibited from serving as a committee member for three years (one term).

The sitting committee will discuss the qualifications of the nominees at or prior to the annual meeting and vote accordingly.

Members take office at the beginning of the year, January 1st, or when they have accepted the position on the committee in the case of a special election.

2. Nominations.

Nominations of members shall be made by current committee members and the PSO Board of Directors. Recommendations for nominations may be made by any person

interested in the Committee. It is the responsibility of the nominator to obtain approval of willingness to serve from the nominees submitted, and may not nominate oneself. If the total number of nominees is not sufficient to fill the vacant seats, it is the responsibility of the Chair to nominate the number of persons required. The Secretary shall send the names of the nominees to all members at least three weeks in advance of the Election.

D. Secretary

1. Election and term of office

The Secretary shall be elected for a term of one year. Election shall be by a vote of five or more members. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected. If necessary, a tie shall be decided by an additional ballot listing only those persons tied. The Secretary may be a voting or non-voting member of the Committee. The Secretary shall take office at the beginning of the year, January 1st, or when they have accepted the position on the committee in the case of a special election.

2. Duties

- a. Receive, circulate, re-circulate, and file all bird records and supporting data submitted to the Committee.
- b. Tabulate results of all votes of the Committee.
- c. Keep or cause to keep minutes of Committee meetings.
- d. Furnish members with a list of nominees for election.
- e. Furnish anyone, upon request, with all evidence, including Committee comments, concerning any submitted bird record.

E. Chair

1. Election and term of office.

The Chair shall be elected for a term of one year. Election shall be by a vote of five or more members. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected. If necessary, a tie shall be decided by an additional ballot listing only those persons tied. The Chair may be a voting or non-voting member of the Committee. The Chair shall take office at the beginning of the year, January 1st, or when they have accepted the position on the Committee in the case of a special election.

2. Duties

- a. Call and preside at Committee meetings.
- b. Appoint chair of subcommittees.
- c. Assure that bylaws are current and properly applied.
- d. Request committee review and suggest any revisions to the bylaws at the Annual Meeting.

F. Removals

The Committee may remove, for cause, members who are delinquent in their duties. Such action requires a vote of the majority of all other members, including non-voting Chair and/or Secretary.

G. Vacancies

If the Committee loses a member during mid-term, the Secretary shall immediately conduct an election, termed a Special Election, for the purpose of filling the vacancy. A Special Election may be conducted at a meeting or by individual contact, whichever is most expedient in the opinion of the Secretary. The person elected shall serve the unexpired term of the person being replaced.

ARTICLE IV. Meetings

A. Annual Meeting

An Annual Meeting of the Committee shall be held each year, at a time and place set by the Chair, in consultation with the members, for the purpose of election and/or for transacting such other business as may be brought before the meeting. The Secretary must give to all members notice of the Annual Meeting, an agenda, and a list of nominees at least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.

B. Special Meetings

Special Meetings may be called by the Chair or by the agreement of four or more members. Whoever calls the meeting must notify and provide an agenda to all other members prior to the meeting.

C. Quorum

Four members, present in person, not by proxy, shall constitute a quorum for any meeting of the Committee.

D. Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology (PSO) Annual Meetings

A representative of the Committee shall be present for all PSO Annual Meetings.

ARTICLE V. Bylaws

A. Formation

All bylaws and other procedures of the Committee are to be determined by the Committee.

B. Changes

These bylaws may be changed by a subcommittee and ratified by a majority vote of all members of the Committee (not merely a quorum).

ARTICLE VI. Classification of Records

A. The classification of bird species and observations is based on the following outline:

Class I-S: An existing identifiable specimen adequately labeled as to date, place, and collector.

Class I-P: A diagnostic photograph(s) and/or video recording adequately labeled as to date, place, and photographer, a copy of which is deposited with the Committee.

Class I-R: A diagnostic audio recording or sonogram adequately labeled as to date, place, and recorder, and available for public inspection.

Records must meet Class I to be added to the Official State List.

Class II: An accepted sight record documented and submitted independently by two or more observers.

Class III: An accepted sight record documented and submitted 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 doubt.

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 escape or an introduced bird not yet established in Pennsylvania.

- B. The Official State List of Pennsylvania will include all species in Class I above. Species in Class II, and Class III above are accepted provisionally subject to submission of physical evidence (specimen, photograph, video recording, sound recording). The status of all species on the list will be reviewed five years after the establishment of the list and every five years thereafter.

Status Definition

Regular – Species recorded 8, 9, or 10 of the last ten years.

Casual – Species recorded 4, 5, 6, or 7 of the last ten years.

Accidental – Species recorded 3 or fewer of the last ten years.

Extirpated – A previously regularly occurring species that has not been recorded in fifty years.

Extinct – Species which no longer exist.

ARTICLE VII. Voting

- A. The authenticity of records of rare or unusual bird sightings will be determined by votes cast by all seven members of the Committee using five Classes discussed in Article VI above.
- B. All written descriptions, photographs, video recordings, sound recordings, or other evidence submitted by a given observer for a particular sighting will be gathered into a report by the Secretary and assigned a record number. More than one report (i.e. more than one observer submitting evidence) may make up a record.
- C. Records will be distributed by the Secretary and sent to all other members of the Committee simultaneously.
- D. The voting process shall consist of one or two rounds. The first round votes will be cast without discussion between Committee members. If no decision is reached on the first round, (see Article VII(F) below) the record, along with documentation of all completed first round tabulation forms, shall be distributed to all members for a second vote. Second round votes are final except as noted in Article VII(I).
- E. When a Committee member has seen or heard a bird submitted as a record, the member should not be denied a vote on any report of any bird the member has observed.
- F. 1. A bird sighting is officially accepted when a primary vote results in at least six Class III or higher votes and any negative voter fails to provide any arguments for his/her vote that might influence others to change their vote.
2. Primary votes of 4/3 and 5/2, shall be re-evaluated via a second vote. A final vote for Class III or higher of 7/0, 6/0, or 6/1 is required for a record to be permanently accepted by the Committee.

- G. The Class of any given record will be the highest level for which there are six votes.
- H. Members may request in writing on the tabulation form that a given record be split into two separate records or combined with another record.
- I. After a final vote has been cast, members may request that a given record be reconsidered and voted on. The Secretary shall schedule reconsideration of a record if additional evidence has been received or new circumstances have arisen since the record was voted on.
- J. A simple majority vote is required for acceptance of policy, procedure, or other matter unrelated to the evaluation of a record. In order to vote on policies or procedures, five members shall constitute a quorum.
- K. A voting deadline for record batches, will be set, upheld, or reconsidered through vote at the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE VIII. Publication of results

- A. The results of all accepted bird sighting evaluations conducted by the Committee shall be published annually in *PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS*.
- B. The format for accepted records will be: species, record number, date(s) seen, location, observer, where published (if applicable).
- C. A file of all Committee procedures, policies, and bird record evaluations shall be maintained by the Secretary.
- D. Records accepted by the Committee which are indicative of a noteworthy change in numbers, range, or behavior of a species will be submitted in appropriate format to the editors of *PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS* and *NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS*. Notification will also be given to said editors when a record previously printed in those publications is later determined unacceptable by the Committee.

ARTICLE IX. Species to be documented

- A. Any species observed which does not appear on the current Pennsylvania checklist as published by the Committee.
- B. Any species observed which is listed on the Review List.
- C. Any observation which represents a significant contribution to the files of Pennsylvania bird records.

ARTICLE X. Expedited review of eBird records

- A. An eBird record shall be accepted so long as it meets the following criteria:
 - 1. The bird species or subspecies is included in the Pennsylvania Review List and is assigned with a numerical abundance code of 4 or 5 on the [Pennsylvania Bird List](#).
 - 2. The record contains diagnostic photograph(s), audio, and/or video evidence.
 - 3. The eBird record has been reviewed and confirmed by the regional eBird Reviewer according to the eBird review process.
- B. Expedited review process
 - 1. The Secretary and/or any member of the Committee shall review eBird records for Pennsylvania and identify eligible records for expedited review.

2. Eligible records as identified above shall be provisionally accepted and regularly (i.e. every 1-2 months) provided to the Committee.
3. Any member of the Committee may object to any provisionally accepted eBird record and subject said record to full Committee review. If no Committee member objects, the record shall be formally accepted by the Committee.
4. If a committee member objects to a record provisionally accepted through the expedited review process, the Secretary shall prepare said record for formal review by the Committee.

C. Publication

1. All records formally accepted through the expedited review process shall be published annually by the Committee in the same fashion as other records that undergo the formal review process (Article VIII).
2. Formally accepted records through eBird shall be designated with the corresponding class (as identified in Article VI) with the additional designation “e” (e.g. Class I-Pe) to indicate the record was accepted through the expedited review process.
3. Formally accepted eBird records shall contain the following information:
 - i. Bird species and/or subspecies, name of the observer(s), number of bird(s) observed, and location where the bird(s) was observed.
 - ii. A link to the eligible eBird checklist.

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