

# FIFTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MISSOURI BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

William C. Rowe, Secretary

This report summarizes records evaluated by the Committee between 1 October 2001 and 5 October 2002. It is divided into two sections: Accepted and Not Accepted.

Birds are listed in phylogenetic order under each of the above two categories. Taxonomy and nomenclature follow the American Ornithologists' Union's *Checklist of North American Birds*, Seventh Edition (1998), and subsequent supplements. For Accepted records, comments are added to indicate the record's significance, and sometimes to mention the details that made it persuasive. For Not Accepted records, observers' names are omitted, and a brief explanation is provided as to why the record was not accepted. All photographs will be archived in Mylar envelopes and deposited in the Committee's files, which are currently housed in the Division of Ornithology, University of Kansas Natural History Museum, Lawrence, Kansas.

Of the 75 records that were finalized during this period, 61 were accepted and 14 were not accepted, for an acceptance rate of 81%. Two records (Red-necked Stint, 2002-46 and 2002-50) were carried over into 2002-2003 due to the time required for outside review. Members participating in the decisions were Bill Eddleman (Chair), Bill Rowe (Secretary), Bill Godge, Brad Jacobs, Paul McKenzie, Roger McNeill, and Mark Robbins.

From the records covered by this report, no new species have been added to the state list; thus Missouri's total still stands at 400 fully accepted species, including 6 formerly occurring species that have been extirpated from the state and 2 extinct species. There are also an additional 18 hypothetical species on the list. "Hypothetical" means that there are one or more reports of the species that are probably valid and would meet normal acceptance criteria, but none that meet the more stringent criteria for a first state record.

In general, the Committee reviews records of species that have been found fewer than 15 times in Missouri and are thus considered "casual" or "accidental" statewide (examples: casual, Brown Pelican; accidental, Lewis's Woodpecker). It also reviews records of species that are casual or accidental for the season when reported (example: Northern Parula in winter); records of species that are casual or accidental in the part of Missouri where reported (example: Painted Bunting at St. Louis); and other records of unusual interest, including first nesting records.

The Committee extends its thanks to the many birders throughout Missouri who submitted their observations, and to the Audubon Society of Missouri for its continued support and funding of the Committee's efforts. Observers who would like a status report on their current submissions can write the Secretary. The next report will appear in the March 2004 issue of *The Bluebird*.

REDA = Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area

SCNWR = Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge

## **RECORDS ACCEPTED**

**COMMON LOON** (*Gavia immer*), 2002-43: One adult in alternate plumage and one bird in apparent first-summer plumage, 17-18 June 2002, Maryville Water Plant Lake, Nodaway Co. David Easterla. Rare summer visitor.

**EARED GREBE** (*Podiceps nigricollis*), 2001-80: One, 18 December 2001, SCNWR, Holt Co. Brad Jacobs (documentation), Ron Bell. Casual in winter; this is the eighth documented record for that season. Christmas Bird Count record.

**BROWN PELICAN** (*Pelecanus occidentalis*), 2002-52: One, 19-24 August 2002, Schell-Osage Conservation Area, Vernon Co. Found by Lester Pannell (documentation), Charlene Pannell; also documented by Jean Leonatti. Casual transient and summer visitor; the sixth state record, and the third since 1950.

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*), 2002-12: Two, 15 December 2001, Lake Springfield, Greene Co. Lisa Berger (documentation), Dorothy Thurman, Jo Strange, Emily Farr. Casual in winter. Christmas Bird Count record.

***Plegadis, sp.***, 2001-71: One, 14 December 2001, Four Rivers Conservation Area, Vernon Co. Roger McNeill (documentation), Mark Robbins. First Missouri winter record of a dark ibis, which could not be identified to species. Christmas Bird Count record.

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*), 2002-44: One, 25 May 2002, near Prairie State Park, Barton Co. Steve Kinder (documentation), Ron Obermon, Seth Cole. Accidental transient; fourth state record. Although this observation was brief, the observer noted enough details to confirm the identification: size, profile, pink legs, dark body, white on upperwing, and whistling call. The Committee considered the possibility of an escape, but with a recent pattern of expansion and vagrancy it seemed highly likely that this was a natural occurrence.

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** (*Anser albifrons*), 2002-47: One, 5 August 2002, Otter Slough Conservation Area, Stoddard Co. Doug Willis. Accidental in summer.

**ROSS'S GOOSE** (*Chen rossii*), 2002-40: One, 30 May to 1 June 2002, Holt Co. David Easterla (documentation), Peter Kondrashov. Latest spring and first summer record.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** (*Anas discors*), 2002-6: Male, 30 December 2001, Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge, Pike Co. Scott Schuette (documentation), Sandra Walters, Myrna Prenger, Florence Cocayne. Casual in winter outside southern Missouri. Christmas Bird Count record.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL**, 2002-5: 2 males and 3 females, 1 January 2002, Fountain Lake, St. Charles Co. Yvonne Homeyer (documentation), Cheryl and Don Delashmit. Casual in winter outside southern Missouri. Christmas Bird Count record.

**GREATER SCAUP** (*Aythya marila*), 2002-7: 22, males and females, 15 December 2001, Maryville sewage lagoons, Nodaway Co. David Easterla (documentation), Peter Kondrashov. Christmas Bird Count record (documentation required statewide).

**BUFFLEHEAD** (*Bucephala albeola*), 2002-37: Female, 20 May 2002, SCNWR, Holt Co. David Easterla. Latest spring record.

**COMMON GOLDENEYE** (*Bucephala clangula*), 2002-41: Female, 30 May to 1 June 2002, SCNWR, Holt Co. David Easterla (documentation), Peter Kondrashov. Latest spring and second summer record.

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** (*Mergus serrator*), 2002-39: Female, 30 May 2002, Bigelow Marsh, Holt Co. David Easterla. Latest spring record.

**RUDDY DUCK** (*Oxyura jamaicensis*), 2002-42: 18, males and females, 16 June 2002, Maryville sewage lagoons, Nodaway Co. David Easterla. Highest count for Missouri in summer.

**PRAIRIE FALCON** (*Falco mexicanus*), 2002-22: One, 26 March 2002, Lincoln Co. Scott Schuette (documentation), Bruce Schuette. Casual in eastern Missouri.

**SORA** (*Porzana carolina*), 2002-49: Two, 24 July 2002, Mound City, Holt Co. David Easterla.

Casual summer resident.

**SORA**, 2002-53: One to three birds, 4 June to 16 August 2002, McBaine, Boone Co. Bill Godge. Casual summer resident. These Soras, identified by voice, were heard repeatedly through the summer in water treatment cells with extensive cattail marsh.

**SANDHILL CRANE** (*Grus canadensis*), 2002-14: One, 27 April 2001, REDA, St. Charles Co. Paul Bauer (with photographs). Previously considered casual in eastern Missouri; now considered only rare.

**SANDHILL CRANE**, 2002-18: 42 birds, 18 February 2002, Duck Creek Conservation Area, Bollinger and Stoddard Cos. Neal Young. The observer reported that Sandhill Cranes had been observed at this location by others during the preceding three weeks, and also a flock of 70 the previous year.

**BLACK-NECKED STILT** (*Himantopus mexicanus*), 2002-45: Adult, 10 July 2002, St. Charles Co. David Rogles. Casual outside southeast Missouri. This bird had been seen several days before by other observers.

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleuca*), 2001-78: One, 14 December 2001, Four Rivers Conservation Area, Vernon Co. Mark Robbins (documentation), Roger McNeill. Fourth winter record. Christmas Bird Count record.

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS**, 2001-79: Three, 18 December 2001, SCNWR, Holt Co. Brad Jacobs (documentation), Ron Bell. Fifth winter record, moving the species from accidental to casual at that season. Christmas Bird Count record.

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS**, 2002-10: One, 28 January 2002, Otter Slough Conservation Area, Stoddard Co. Doug Willis (documentation), Bob Lewis, Mike Cravens. Casual in winter; sixth record.

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularia*), 2002-1: One, 5 January 2002, Smithville Lake, Clay Co. Jo Ann Eldridge (documentation), John Harter, Jim Zellmer. A remarkable first winter record of this species, which seldom lingers even into October.

**WHIMBREL** (*Numenius phaeopus*), 2002-25: One, 22 May 2002, Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area, Boone Co. Edge Wade (documentation), Jean Leonatti, Susan Hazelwood, Lee Schiffel. Whimbrels are rare spring transients in western Missouri, accidental in eastern Missouri; a record at Columbia is worthy of documentation.

**MARbled GODWIT** (*Limosa fedoa*), 2002-31: One, 21 April 2002, REDA, St. Charles Co. Joshua Uffman. Casual in eastern Missouri. Female Hudsonian Godwit was eliminated by cinnamon underwing.

**MARbled GODWIT**, 2002-48: 12 birds, 27 April 2002, REDA, St. Charles Co. Joshua Uffman. Casual in eastern Missouri. Cinnamon underwing and lack of white rump patch were observed on all

birds in the flock.

**LEAST SANDPIPER** (*Calidris minutilla*), 2001-77: 11 birds in basic plumage, 14 December 2001, Four Rivers Conservation Area, Vernon Co. Mark Robbins (documentation), Roger McNeill. Casual in winter. Christmas Bird Count record.

**LEAST SANDPIPER**, 2002-21: 15 birds, 16 and 22 February 2002, near Winfield Dam, Lincoln Co. Scott Schuette (documentation), Bruce Schuette. Casual in winter.

**WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris fuscicollis*), 2001-69: Adult in basic plumage, 3-4 September 1994, Little Creve Coeur Lake, St. Louis Co. Bill Rowe (with photographs). With very few documented and accepted records for fall migration, this species appears to be casual or accidental during that period.

**RUFF** (*Philomachus pugnax*), 2001-65: One, apparently adult male still mostly (?) in alternate plumage, 23-24 August 2001, Hayford Road, St. Charles Co. Found and documented by Charlene Malone; also documented by Edge Wade; photographed by Jim Malone. Casual transient; twelfth state record.

**RUFF**, 2002-30: Female (Reeve), 24 May 2002, Lake Contrary, Buchanan Co. Documented by Larry Lade, Tom Nagle, and John Rushin (including photographs by Rushin). Casual transient; thirteenth state record.

**THAYER'S GULL** (*Larus thayeri*), 2001-66: One, juvenile/first-winter plumage, 10 October 2001, Horseshoe Lake, Buchanan Co. Mark Robbins. Accidental away from Mississippi River, and earliest fall record.

**BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO** (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*), 2001-70: Adult, 23 October 2001, Schell-Osage Conservation Area, St. Clair Co. Paul McKenzie. Latest record for Missouri.

**NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL** (*Aegolius acadicus*), 2001-81: One, 14 December 2001, Vernon Co. Roger McNeill. Casual in winter in southern Missouri. Christmas Bird Count record.

**LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes lewis*), 2001-67: Adult, 20 October 2001 to 4 May 2002, Schell-Osage Conservation Area, St. Clair Co. Found by Jim and Ellen Zellmer (photographs) and others; documented by Robert Fisher, Paul McKenzie; also photographed by Jim Rathert. Accidental; third state record.

**EASTERN PHOEBE** (*Sayornis phoebe*), 2002-2: One, 3 January 2002, Watkins Mill State Park, Clay Co. Kristi Mayo. Casual in winter outside extreme southern Missouri.

**WESTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus verticalis*), 2002-23: Nesting pair, 10 May 2002, Charleston, Mississippi Co. Leslie Koller (documentation with photographs), Pam Rice. Previously considered a casual nesting species away from northwestern Missouri. As of October 2002, the Committee has revised the status of Western Kingbird to "rare" statewide, both as a transient and as a summer resident. In the future, Committee review of nesting and migration records is unnecessary except for possible records outside the normal dates of occurrence. Nesting records, however, should be reported to the seasonal editors for the *Bluebird* so that the species' breeding range can be monitored.

**WESTERN KINGBIRD**, 2002-51: One, 12 August 2002, Otter Slough Conservation Area, Stoddard Co. Doug Willis. Previously considered casual away from northwestern Missouri. See comments on

2002-23.

**BEWICK'S WREN** (*Thryomanes bewickii*), 2002-19: One, 23-24 February 2002, near Prairie State Park, Barton Co. Paul McKenzie (documentation), Bill Goodge, m.ob.

**SEDGE WREN** (*Cistothorus platensis*), 2002-3: One, 2 January 2002, Prairie State Park, Barton Co. Barry Jones (documentation), Cyndi Evans. Casual in winter.

**GRAY CATBIRD** (*Dumetella carolinensis*), 2002-15: One, 16 December 2001, Johnson Co. John Belshe. Casual in winter. Christmas Bird Count record.

**GRAY CATBIRD**, 2002-17: One, 21 February 2002, Andrew Co. Ruth and Leo Galloway. Casual in winter.

**AMERICAN PIPIT** (*Anthus rubescens*), 2001-85: 18 birds, 18 December 2001, Ten Mile Pond Conservation Area, Mississippi Co. Bill Eddleman. Christmas Bird Count record. Note: As of October 2002, the Committee has revised the American Pipit's status from "casual" to "rare" in southeastern Missouri in winter; thus documentation is no longer required there.

**AMERICAN PIPIT**, 2002-16: One, 24 February 2002, Four Rivers Conservation Area, Vernon Co. Jim and Ellen Zellmer. Casual in winter outside southeastern Missouri.

**SPRAGUE'S PIPIT** (*Anthus spragueii*), 2001-76: One, 13 December 2001, Prairie State Park, Barton Co. Mark Robbins. Accidental in winter. There is only one previous documented and accepted winter (December) record of this species. The same observer found two Sprague's Pipits at the same location on 20 November 2001.

**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Vermivora celata*), 2001-84: One, 29 December 2001, Mingo National Wildlife Refuge, Stoddard Co. Bob Stillwell (documentation), Bill Reeves, Jim Kelley, Debbie Reeves. Casual in winter in southern Missouri. Christmas Bird Count record.

**NORTHERN PARULA** (*Parula americana*), 2001-86: Male, 18 December 2001, Big Oak Tree State Park, Mississippi Co. Neal Young. This well-described bird provided a remarkable first winter record for Missouri; the previous late date for the species was October 22. Christmas Bird Count record.

**VESPER SPARROW** (*Pooecetes gramineus*), 2001-75: One, 18 December 2001, Holt County. Mike Beck (documentation), Steve Reese, Byron Berger. Accidental in winter in northern Missouri. Christmas Bird Count record.

**VESPER SPARROW**, 2001-83: Two, 29 December 2001, Mingo National Wildlife Refuge, Stoddard Co. Bill Reeves (documentation), Bob Stillwell, Jim Kelly. Casual in winter in southern Missouri. Christmas Bird Count record.

**WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia albicollis*), 2002-35: One, 10 June 2002, Watkins Mill State Park, Clay Co. Kristi Mayo (documentation), Marti Gulick. Accidental in summer.

**LAZULI BUNTING** (*Passerina amoena*), 2002-36: First-spring male, 4 May 2002, Fairfax, Atchison Co. David Easterla (documentation), Evonne and Wilbur Wright, Peter Kondrashov, m.ob. Casual transient. This bird showed buffy wingbars and scattered patches of rust or buff on the blue of the head, unlike the adult male(s) reported for the previous six consecutive years at the Wrights' feeder. On 6 May 2002, Mrs. Wright reported the presence of two males simultaneously.

**PAINTED BUNTING** (*Passerina ciris*), 2002-34: Adult male, 8 June to 8 August 2002, Katy Trail State Park, St. Charles Co. Found and documented by Theresa Wojtanowski (visiting birder from Connecticut!); also documented by Jim Malone and Bill Rowe (photograph). Accidental in summer outside southwestern Missouri. There was at least one report of a female observed at the same site during this male's sojourn.

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*), 2002-9: One male and two females, 15 December 2001, Boone Co. Brad Jacobs (documentation), Amy Salveter. Casual in most of Missouri in winter. Both sexes seen at close range and described accurately, including size comparison with Common Grackle and Red-winged Blackbird, contrasting iridescent colors on male (purplish on head, greenish on body), and gray color of females, with dark eye. Christmas Bird Count record (documentation required on all Missouri CBC's).

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD**, 2002-82: Flock of 300, males and females, 29 December 2001, Stoddard Co. Bill Eddleman (documentation), Wes Mueller. Casual in most of Missouri in winter. Both sexes in this large group were seen and described well, including direct visual comparison with Common Grackle and Brown-headed Cowbird. Christmas Bird Count record (documentation required on all Missouri CBC's).

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD**, 2002-4: Flock of 65, males and females, 2 January 2002, Barton Co. Barry Jones (documentation), Cyndi Evans, Larry Herbert. Casual in winter in most of Missouri. Important features noted.

**GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*), 2001-68: Adult male, 27 October 2001, Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge, Pike Co. Bill Rowe. Casual in eastern Missouri. This bird was seen in exactly the same location, and on almost the same date, as one the preceding year.

**WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL** (*Loxia leucoptera*), 2002-38: First-year male, 20 April 2002, Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Holt Co. David Easterla. Latest spring record. This bird had been present through much of the winter and spring.

**PINE SISKIN** (*Carduelis pinus*), 2002-20: Nesting by two birds, 5-30 April, 2002, Rockwoods Reservation, St. Louis Co. Sherry McCowan (documentation), m.ob. There are apparently five previous definite nesting records of Pine Siskins in Missouri (Robbins and Easterla, *Birds of Missouri*, 1992). Beginning April 5, the observer watched the birds building a nest and incubating; she saw hatchlings in the nest on April 30.

**EURASIAN TREE SPARROW** (*Passer montanus*), 2002-27: One, 11 May 2002, Knox County. Anne Downing (documentation), Ann Sue Campbell, Cack Strickler. Casual away from St. Louis and the Mississippi River corridor.

### **RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED**

It should be understood that "not accepted" does not always mean that the identification was considered to be incorrect. In some cases the Committee did believe the bird was misidentified, but in other cases, while it seemed possible or even probable that the identification was correct, the information provided was insufficient to rule out other species completely. The committee may be unable to accept even a very likely record if the description is too sketchy or vague, or if it fails to mention critical field marks that would distinguish that species from all others. Our belief is that a report should go into the permanent scientific record only if it is free of reasonable doubt. This is the standard approach of bird record committees everywhere.

**MOTTLED DUCK/AMERICAN BLACK DUCK** (*Anas fulvigula/rubripes*), 2002-24: Four birds, 22 May 2002, Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area, Boone Co. These birds, documented as Mottled Ducks by one set of observers and as American Black Ducks by another, were not firmly assignable to either species based on the descriptions provided. The bill color was reported variably as yellowish to olive green, without dark markings (consistent with both species; Texas Mottled Ducks have olive-green bills); body color was reported as dark brown, much darker than female Mallard (consistent with both; Texas Mottled Ducks are darker than Florida birds); the throat was reported as unstreaked by two observers, but at considerable distance; and the speculum color was noted as teal blue with a thin white outer fringe, but this is variable and not diagnostic. None of the observers was close enough to provide exact details about the pattern of the flank feathers, though two of them did refer to chevron-shaped markings there. The late date and the characters described were more suggestive of Mottled Duck, but this is a subtle and difficult separation. In the absence of photographs (or more detailed descriptions from closer-range observation), the Committee found it impossible to be sure, especially for a first state record.

**WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER**, 2002-55: One, 2 August 2002, Holt Co. This may have been a White-rumped Sandpiper, but the description was problematic. Barring on the sides and upper breast, as described, suggested the possibility of a Stilt Sandpiper in transitional plumage (both species have white uppertail coverts). Since White-rumped Sandpipers are apparently casual or accidental in fall migration, full and unambiguous details are needed for acceptance.

**BLACK-HEADED GULL** (*Larus ridibundus*), 2001-74: First-winter bird, 24 November 2001, Smithville Lake, Clay Co. After much discussion, the Committee concluded that the description of this bird did not fully support the identification of this accidental species (two prior records for Missouri). Size, manner of flight, and a plumage feature noted by just one observer (dark under the primaries) were suggestive of Black-headed Gull. On the other hand, two observers described the bill as all black; this argues against Black-headed Gull, since one main field mark of that species in first-winter plumage is its strongly bicolored bill (orangey base and black tip). With this contradiction in field marks, the bird's identity remained uncertain.

**TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE** (*Myadestes townsendi*), 2001-73: 3-4 birds, 1 October 2001, St. Louis University campus, city of St. Louis. The description, while vaguely suggestive of Townsend's Solitaire, did not mention key details like an eye ring and did not eliminate Northern Mockingbird. The date, location, and number of birds made the record extremely improbable; moreover, the observation was made without binoculars and was written up almost two months later. Whatever these birds may have been, the Committee was convinced they were not Townsend's Solitaires.

**HERMIT THRUSH** (*Catharus guttatus*), 2002-28: One 11 May 2002, Tower Grove Park, St. Louis City. While this may have been a Hermit Thrush, the date was quite late for that species and the details were sketchy. The tail, described as red, suggested Hermit, but buffy color on the breast suggested Swainson's Thrush or Veery. No mention was made of call note or tail-flicking behavior. The *Catharus* thrushes can pose difficult identification problems, especially when not calling, and an out-of-season bird needs to be studied with great care.

**SPRAGUE'S PIPIT**, 2002-26: One, 11 May 2002, Barton Co. All details that were presented in this report — plowed-field habitat, long-tailed look, and plumage features like scaled appearance of back, streaky breast, and thin wingbars — suggested that the bird may have been a juvenile Horned Lark. No features that would clearly indicate Sprague's Pipit (such as pink legs or the extent of white in the tail) were mentioned.

**CONNECTICUT WARBLER** (*Oporornis agilis*), 2001-64: One, 17 September 2001, Walter Woods Conservation Area, Newton Co. This may well have been a Connecticut Warbler, but the details cited

were not conclusive and did not fully eliminate an immature Mourning Warbler. The bird was described as having a solid eye ring (Mourning can have a virtually complete thin eye ring) and as having a faint brownish/grayish hood (more obvious and complete in Connecticut). No mention was made of the length of the undertail coverts, and the bird was not seen to walk on the ground; moreover, the description was written two weeks after the observation, from memory. A majority of the committee felt that the identification was not proven.

**AMERICAN TREE SPARROW** (*Spizella arborea*), 2002-32: One, 11 May 2002, Clay Co. There was little detail to support such an incredibly late record of this far-northern breeder. The report was written 18 days later and secondhand, by someone other than the observers. The few details offered did not eliminate other, more expectable sparrows.

**CHIPPING SPARROW** (*Spizella passerina*), 2002-8: 18 birds, 29 December 2001, Taney Co. This would be an unprecedented number of Chipping Sparrows for Missouri in winter; the previous high is two. Moreover, while the details were suggestive of that species, a majority of the committee believed that the observer did not fully eliminate American Tree Sparrow or immature White-crowned Sparrow, both common in winter.

**SWAMP SPARROW** (*Melospiza georgiana*), 2002-54: One, 15 August 2002, Henry Co. Hardly any description was offered. The observer noted rusty wings, but this can be shown to some degree by a Song Sparrow.

**DARK-EYED JUNCO** (*Junco hyemalis*), 2002-33: Ten birds, 11 May 2002, Clay Co. The report was written 18 days later and secondhand, by someone other than the observers. Details were very sketchy for such a surprising report (a flock of juncos at a time when even one is unusual).

**RUSTY BLACKBIRD** (*Euphagus carolinus*), 2002-29: Male, 11 May 2002, Boone Co. Such an extremely late record of this species (it would be the latest for Missouri by about three weeks) would require details not noted in this report. Pale eye color would be a key feature but was not mentioned. Moreover, the bird had rusty tips to some wing feathers, which would have long since worn off on a male Rusty Blackbird by this date. All reported features can be accounted for by a first-year male Red-winged Blackbird, considering that it apparently remained hidden in willows and did not fly.

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD**, 2002-11: Male, 17 December 2001, Greene Co. The description provided too little information to rule out other blackbird species. The bird was seen up in a tree against a cloudy sky, and no iridescent colors were noted; moreover, there was apparently no direct comparison of size or structure with other species.

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD**, 2002-13: Three, 1 January 2002, Dallas Co. The description of these birds was unclear. Two of them were described as brownish with blackish wings and a yellow eye, leading the committee to conclude that they were probably Rusty Blackbirds. The third bird was described as all black, with an ambiguously described gloss color. Since some male Rusties are black in winter, Rusties and Brewer's seldom mix, and the observers were unable to make any direct comparison of shape or proportions, the Committee believed that Rusty Blackbird and perhaps Common Grackle were not eliminated.