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COVER PHOTO: Snowy Owl at Sandy Hook November 8, 1991, by Rich Ditch (color).

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New Jersey Birds Records Committee Annual Report, 1991

by KEVIN KARLSON

The annual meeting of the New Jersey Birds Records Committee took place on Sept. 21, 1991 in Rio Grande, Cape May County, NJ. We wish to express warm thanks to those who took the time to write up and send in their sight reports. Without those efforts, our attempts to organize and preserve important bird sighting information would be greatly compromised.

A final review of the recently revised New Jersey State Bird List has been nearly completed. To date, an accurate account of the number of bird species seen in New Jersey did not exist. By using the information in possession of Committee members, by researching available historical records, and by making use of the information supplied by many members of the New Jersey birding community, we have documented the most accurate list of species to date. The species count presently stands at 421, with five additional species still under consideration. The list appears in this issue of *Records of N.J. Birds*. A checklist of birds with seasonal status is also in the planning stages.

The committee received 26 sight reports in 1991. We voted on 21 of those, representing 17 species. The other five reports were not reviewed, either because the birds were of uncertain origin or because the species was not on the Review List (a copy of the Review List and sight report form can be found in *Records of N.J. Birds*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Autumn) 1990). The following records were accepted (no more than one no vote):

1. Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*)-Cape May, Apr. 20, 1991 (first record).
2. Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)-Brigantine (Forsythe) Refuge, July 22, 1985 (first record).
3. Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)-New Lisbon, July 2, 1991 (first record).
4. Band-tailed Pigeon (*Columba fasciata*)-Kittatinny Ridge, Sussex Co., Sept. 29, 1980 (first record).
5. Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*)-Sandy Hook and Manasquan Inlet, Jan. 20, 1991.
6. Common Murre (*Uria aalge*)-Manasquan Inlet, January 21, 1991.
7. Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*)-Ocean City, December 16, 1990.
8. Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*)-Sandy Hook, Jan. 19, 1991.
9. non-maccormicki *Catharacta skua*: We reviewed four Great Skua reports.

After much discussion and review of important identification information provided by Paul A. Buckley, it was agreed that the available information concerning the identification and distribution of the *Catharacta* group (other than South Polar Skua) is inadequate to identify with certainty birds of this group in the field or sometimes even in the hand. Little is known of the wandering behavior of the 1-5 year old non-breeding skuas. This fact makes the elimination of similar species very difficult, even though the similar species (Antarctic and Chilean Skua) are presumably less likely to occur here. Therefore we have decided to accept these sightings as non-maccormicki *Catharacta skua*. This is how it appears on the State List.

The following records were not accepted, but not rejected (more than one but fewer than five no votes, resubmitted for future discussion and vote):

1. Black-browed Albatross (*Diomedea melanophris*)-Manasquan Inlet, Oct. 24, 1989 (5-4).
2. Reddish Egret (*Egretta rufescens*)-Ocean City, April 24, 1991 (5-4).
3. Rufous-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*)-Brigantine (Forsythe) Refuge, May 18, 1991 (6-3).
4. Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*)-Carteret Canyon, Sept. 10, 1990 (7-2).
5. Bachman's Sparrow (*Aimophila aestivalis illinoensis*)-Cape May, Nov. 2, 1989 (7-2, second vote).
6. Swainson's Warbler (*Limothlypis swainsonii*)-Belleplain Forest, May 14, 1989 (6-3, second vote).

One record was not accepted (more than 5 no votes):

1. Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*)-Cape May, Sept. 28, 1990 (0-9).

Records not voted because of uncertain origin of bird were Great Kiskadee, Greater Flamingo and European Goldfinch.