

WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2004

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The WSO Records Committee reviewed 57 records of 25 species for the spring season, accepting 42 of them. Highlights of the season included Wisconsin's first record of a Wilson's Plover, second record for White-winged Dove, and eleventh and twelfth Painted Bunting records. The state list reaches 423 species with the addition of the Wilson's Plover.

Observers were notified of the committee's decisions by postcard in the instance of accepted records and by personal letter in the case of records not accepted.

ACCEPTED

Glossy Ibis—

#2004-038 Fond du Lac Co., 29 May 2004, Bahls (photo).

A long-legged, long-necked wader, with a long, gray, decurved bill was reported. The head, neck, and upper back was iridescent bronze-maroon in color while the lower back was greener. A thin, but noticeable, broken white border almost surrounded the eyes and the bluish facial skin.

This white line disappeared behind the dark eye. The legs were gray. (The bluish facial skin, dark eyes, gray legs, and broken, white, facial skin border distinguish this species from the White-faced Ibis with its red-pink facial skin, red eyes, red legs, and complete, white, facial skin border)

This is Wisconsin's eighth record, only the second in the past 15 years, and the only spring record in the past 39 years.

***Plegadis Ibis* (species?)—**

#2004-014 Marathon Co., 16 May 2004, Belter.

Viewed only in flight, this dark brown, small heron-sized bird had a long neck and long down curved bill. Unless ibises are seen well and in breeding plumage, most of these identifications can only be taken as far as a genus identification.

Barrow's Goldeneye—

#2003-037 Milwaukee Co., 3 March 2004, Gustafson.

This male duck was similar to a Common Goldeneye, but the fore-

head rose steeper, the white facial spot was crescent-shaped, the black of the back extended down lower at the shoulder, and the black of the back extended lower down the sides. This extension of the back's black on the sides encompassed some white spots, in contrast to the Common Goldeneye's flanks being white encompassing some black spots.

This was the latest winter sighting of the Barrow's Goldeneye, now reported for three consecutive winters at Doctor's Park after seven consecutive winters being reported 2 miles north at Virmond Park.

Swainson's Hawk—

#2004-018 Barron Co., 8 April 2004, Betchkal.

#2004-019 Bayfield Co., 23 April 2004, Brady.

The Bayfield County bird was a long-winged buteo, soaring with a slight dihedral to the wings. A dark head, white throat, and rufous breast and belly were evident. The underwing coverts were rufous with some pale markings, but the flight feathers were gray-black. The tail was grayish with faint, narrow bands, but a dark subterminal band.

The Barron Co. individual was dark only on the upper chest, with white on the remainder of the breast, belly and underwing coverts. These white underwing coverts contrasted with the dark flight feathers again.

Wilson's Plover—

#2004-020 Douglas Co., 9 May 2004, Stensaas (photo, see "By the Wayside"), R. Johnson (photo).

This small plover had a brown back, intermediate in color between the

mantle color of a Semipalmated Plover and that of a Piping Plover. The white breast was broken by a single, brownish, upper breast band. Above this upper breast band, a white band completely encircled the neck. Above the eye was a light superciliary line, fading to buff behind and above the eye. The most striking characteristic was the disproportionately heavy, longer, black bill.

This is Wisconsin's first record of a Wilson's Plover. Minnesota has two records from 1981 and 1982 at Duluth's Minnesota Point, only a couple of miles from this sighting.

Black-necked Stilt—

#2004-021 Trempealeau Co., 15 April 2004, Ruhser.

#2004-022 Dane Co., 13-17 May 2004, Ashman (2 birds); 13-16 May 2004, Heikkinen, Unson (2 birds); 13-16 May 2004, Stutz; 14 May 2004, A.Holschbach (2 birds); 15 May 2004, T. Wood; 17 May 2004, Hilsenhoff (2 birds); ? May 2004, McDowell (photo).

#2004-045 Columbia Co., 14 May 2004, S. Cutright (2 birds).

#2004-0237 Dodge Co., 16 May 2004, T. Wood, Tessen; 18 May 2004, Gustafson (3 birds).

Noted were the overall tall and slender appearance of the birds. In addition, the long, pink-red legs, the black crown, nape, back, and wings in contrast to the white throat, foreneck, breast, and belly were noted. Also reported was the thin, relatively long, black bill.

At least 6 if not 8 individuals were involved in this unprecedented invasion of Wisconsin.

Ruff—

#2004-024 Brown Co., 22 May 2004, Baumann, Baumann; 22 May 2004, Tessen.

This shorebird was similar in size to the Lesser Yellowlegs in this pond and larger than a Killdeer. This bird was brown in overall color and had a bulkier body in proportion to the head. The legs were orange. The breast was black, contrasting with a white belly. The back had dark markings in the overall brownish coloration. The bill was slightly longer than the length of the head and gray in color. In flight, the U-shaped, white rump patch was evident.

This is the second consecutive spring sighting at the exact same pond in Brown Co.

Eurasian Collared-Dove—

#2003-066 Columbia Co., 27 March 2004, T. Wood.

This dove was slightly larger and bulkier than the associated Mourning Doves. The tail was wider and squared at the end. Its overall color was light beige-gray with a black crescent on the nape and primaries darker in color than the general plumage. The undertail was black proximally with dark gray undertail coverts.

White-winged Dove—

#2004-025 Milwaukee Co., 12 May 2004, Gustafson, Tessen, Idzikowski (photo), Boldt (photo), Prestby (photo); 13 May 2004, T. Wood; 14, 15 May 2004, Bontly.

This dove was similar in size to a Mourning Dove, but slightly plumper and a bit shorter tailed. The body color was similar, but slightly grayer than that of a Mourning Dove. A read-

ily apparent white edge to the folded wing was noted. The primaries were very dark gray and a black sideways teardrop was seen on the lower cheek. A black bill and orange feet completed the description. In flight, the white wing patch extended from front to back on the wing along the lateral edge of the upper wing coverts, contrasting noticeably with the dark gray flight feathers. A white edge to the tail was noted on the lateral two-thirds of each side. The tail was more squared off, not pointed like a Mourning Dove.

This is Wisconsin's second record of a White-winged Dove coming on the heels of the first report in June of 2000.

Chuck-will's-widow—

#2004-026 Vernon Co., 29 May 2004, J. Peterson.

These "heard only" reports were of a song a bit different in cadence to a Whip-poor-will. This song had a very soft "chuck" beginning note, followed by two "weeoo" notes; the second decidedly more emphatic than the first. The last two notes in a Whip-poor-will's song are single syllables, and its first note is more emphatic than the soft "chuck" of the Chuck-will's-widow.

Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warbler—

#2004-027 Dane Co., 28 April 2004, Stutz.

Initially, this warbler suggested a Black-throated Green Warbler because of the extensive black on the upper breast. Further observation showed the throat to be yellow and not black. Otherwise the markings were of a Yellow-rumped Warbler.

Yellow-throated Warbler—

#2004-029 Dane Co., 6 April 2004, Spalding; 11 April 2004, Weber, J. Peterson, Heikkinen, Unson.

This warbler had a gray back, white breast, yellow throat, black forehead, black mask, white superciliary line, black streaks on the flanks, and two white wingbars. The bill was a bit longer than typical for a warbler of similar size.

This early date of April 6th broke the previous early spring arrival date by 8 days.

Painted Bunting—

#2004-032 Door Co., 12 May 2004, Osinski (photo).
#2004-042 Calumet Co., 4–19 May 2004, Funk, Jodar (photo).

This small, sparrow-sized bird had a purple-blue head, red underparts, a yellow-green upper back, rosy rump, red eyering, brown wings, and brown tail. The bill was finch-shaped.

These are Wisconsin's eleventh and twelfth records, the last four of these twelve records occurring in the last three consecutive spring seasons.

Spotted Towhee—

#2003-062 Waukesha Co., 19 April 2004, Gustafson.

This is the last report of the 5 month visit of this bird. It differed from the Eastern Towhee in having extensive white spots on the otherwise black wings and mantle. Its call note was more catbird-like than towhee-like. The observer felt this species finally left the area with the arrival of the "summer resident" Eastern Towhee for its breeding season.

Blue Grosbeak—

#2004-033 Racine Co., 11 May 2004, Fitzgerald; 12 May 2004, Gustafson.

Initially this bird was noted as a cowbird-sized, dark blue bird flushing from a roadside. At rest, the dark blue body with contrasting chestnut wingbars were seen, in addition to the large, gray beak.

The song was a finch-like warble, reminiscent of a Purple Finch and an Orchard Oriole.

Hoary Redpoll—

#2004-008 Manitowoc Co., 3 March 2004, Sontag.
#2004-009 Ashland Co., 25 March 2004, Bruhnke.
#2004-010 Douglas Co., 4 April 2004, R. Johnson.

These birds were the late dates for previously reported wintering birds at these sites. The overall paler appearance, stubbier bill, white, unmarked rump, and white unmarked undertail coverts were noted.

NOT ACCEPTED**Anhinga—**

#2004-013 Ozaukee Co., 14 May 2004.

Viewed directly overhead, without binoculars, this solitary bird was seen in flight. Identification was based on the narrow head, although a cormorant viewed from directly below won't show the full contour of its head, and on its longer, fanned tail, also possible in a description of a cormorant.

Distinguishing the two species in words can be challenging, but the wings of an Anhinga are positioned more centrally between the beak and

tail. The wings of a cormorant sit more caudally, giving the bird a shorter-tailed look. In addition, the wings of an Anhinga are more straightened; on a cormorant, a bit more bowed.

King Eider—

#2003-015 Manitowoc Co., 3 April 2004.

The limited description simply reports a brownish duck among others to be fatter and squatter. A round head and crescents on the sides complete the report. Viewing conditions were listed as very windy and the distance from the bird "varied." Without head and bill profile description, the identification as an eider isn't quite adequately presented. Without nostril and cheek feathering locations, the species identification would not be possible either.

White-tailed Kite—

#2004-016 Burnett Co., 12 April 2004.

This information came more as an e-mail indicating an unusual sighting than as a documentation. This information contained no description of the bird so the report could not be reviewed or accepted.

Swainson's Hawk—

#2004-017 Dodge Co., 28 March 2004.

This sighting consisted of two birds, one reported as dark phase, the other light phase. They were seen perched on fence posts and flying low between perches. As they were not seen soaring, the characteristic dihedral to the wings was not seen. Although they were felt to be Red-tailed Hawk-sized, no mention was made of them being longer winged than a Red-tail. The

dark phase bird was indicated to be dark bodied, with the exception of a white patch above the nares and a banded tail. Specific mention of the wing color was not made. The expected light undertail coverts were not noted. The light phase bird was described as having a white throat, dark breast, light belly, and banded tail. Flight feathers were indicated to be dark, but no specific mention was made of the underwing coverts and the anticipated lightness to them.

The hunting patterns and much of the color patterns suggest these birds were Swainson's Hawks. Wisconsin has only one previous March record and the sighting of two birds itself would be extremely unusual. Not being able to see the light undertail coverts on the dark bird and not indicating the condition of the underwing coverts on the lighter bird left some doubts in the identification. The only comparative statements to other species involved the lack of the dark wrist marks of Rough-legged Hawks. A bit more information would likely have locked this identification as Swainson's Hawks.

Ruff—

#2004-024 Brown Co., 22 May 2004.

This bird was reported to be "yellowlegs-sized," but not specifically which yellowlegs. It had a "darkish" breast, "brownish" back, and orange legs. Without body shape, bill characteristics, and more specific color information, the description doesn't completely portray a Ruff.

Chuck-will's-widow—

#2004-026 Vernon Co., 30 May 2004.

No description of the song was attempted by the observer. Although

the bird was almost undoubtedly heard, the necessary evidence was not presented.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher—

#2004-044 Racine Co., 12 May 2004.

This bird was not directly reported by the observer. Minimal descriptive evidence was given secondhand in an attempt to gather information to document this sighting. Unfortunately a more-than-likely valid sighting is thus lost. An additional observer on the following day also did not document a report of this bird.

Black-billed Magpie—

#2004-043 Shawano Co., ? March 2004.

Unfortunately this is felt to be a valid sighting, but the limited description doesn't provide the needed evidence to prove the identification. The bird was apparently briefly seen on a roadside almost next to the car, but the black and white jay appearance to the bird was the only information obtained for documentation.

Yellow-throated Warbler—

#2004-028 Waukesha Co., 12 April 2004.

#2004-029 Dane Co., 7 April 2004.

The Waukesha bird was simply reported as a bird at a ground feeder with a yellow throat. With no size/body type of information and no other description, of course numerous birds could fit into that limited bit of information.

The second report again gave no size/body type of description. It did report a long, narrow beak, yellow throat, white belly, black auriculars, and white supercilium. Without more information, a case could be made for

a Magnolia Warbler, a Common Yellowthroat, a Yellow-breasted Chat, or even an Eastern Meadowlark.

Kirtland's Warbler—

#2004-030 Barron Co., 8 May 2004.

This bird was seen with three Magnolia Warblers in a maple tree. It was larger than the magnolias with a broken eye-ring, black streaks in the yellow below the wings. Specific reference was made that there were no wingbars. The primaries and tail feathers were uniform in color, but no specific color was described. The area below the eye was black. Notation of tail wagging was also made.

The tail wagging and broken eye-ring are intriguing, but a Canada Warbler hasn't been eliminated from consideration. A Kirtland's Warbler should have indistinct wingbars, but of course this "indistinction" could be missed. Reference to the color of the back and the expected black streaking would have helped the identification.

Lazuli Bunting—

#2004-032 Door Co., 12 May 2004.

This tiny bird had a blue head, bluish wings, and a bluish tail. The upper breast was orange and white wingbars were noted. The beak was black, but no size or shape information was listed. This bird was more than likely correctly identified, but without more information in the evidence supplied, a case could be made for a Northern Parula Warbler. Without specifically stating that the throat was blue and the lower breast and belly were white, we are left to suppose what color they were. In addition, the beak structure would have been important in identifying the family of this bird.

Blue Grosbeak—

#2004-033 Racine Co., 12 May 2004.

The bird was heard only. The song was described as Orchard Oriole-like. Interestingly, an Orchard Oriole appeared while this individual continued to sing. Without an attempt to describe the song more completely (a challenging proposition in itself), confirming the identification of a song with similarity to a number of other species is a tough call.

Chestnut-collared Longspur—

#2004-034 Portage Co., 25 April 2004.

Two longspurs were seen, one in male breeding plumage. Reported were chestnut collar, facial markings like a White-throated Sparrow, and a black belly. Lapland Longspurs of course have a chestnut collar and the black of the breast is variable in extent. More specific language would be

needed regarding the face and throat coloration/pattern to confirm a Chestnut-collared Longspur. No mention was made of the yellow face and gray bill as opposed to the black face and yellow bill of a Lapland Longspur. With a more thorough description, this could have been confirmed as a Chestnut-collared Longspur.

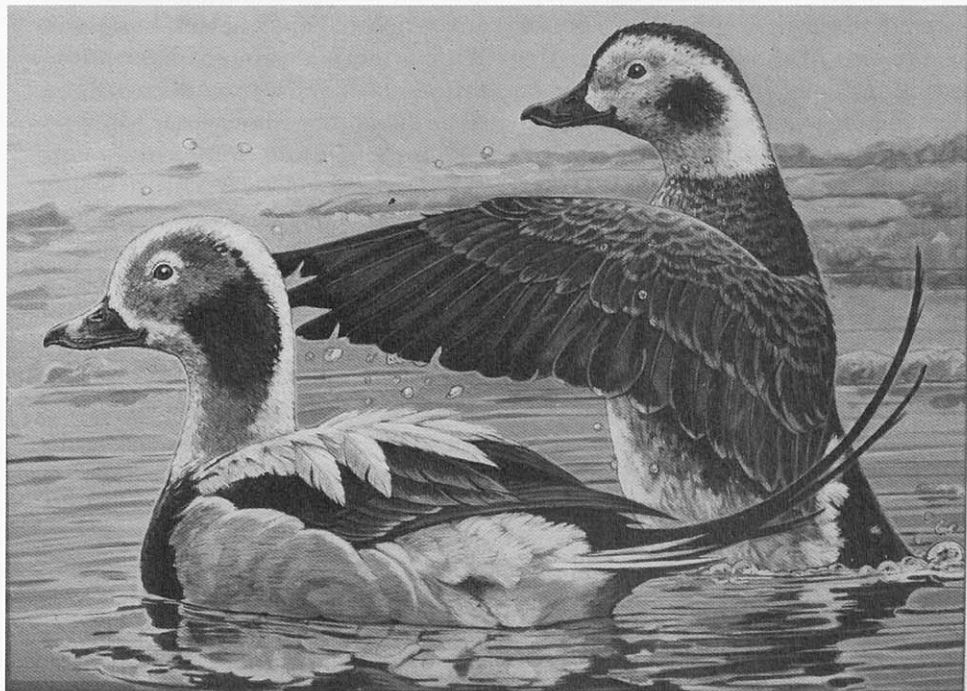
Eurasian Siskin—

#2004-035 Outagamie Co., 23,24 May 2004.

Photos of this bird show a siskin that was yellow-green overall, with darker streaks on the back, black wings with light wingbars, and a black crown and chin. The identification is not in question, but the origin of this species is. This would appear to be yet another released European species for Wisconsin.

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Long-tailed Ducks by Dave Brandon

Yellow-throated Warbler—
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