

ADDITIONS TO THE MANITOBA BIRD LIST (2008 -2014)

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It is nine years since a list of bird species newly recorded in the province of Manitoba was last published in *Blue Jay*.¹ Various projects, including the completion of field work for the forthcoming *Manitoba Breeding Bird Atlas*, have taken precedence for members of the Manitoba Ornithological Records Committee (MORC) during the intervening years. MORC is the group that evaluates the validity of reports of extremely rare birds, including potential new species for the province, and currently consists of Christian Artuso, Andy Courcelles, Rudolf Koes and Peter Taylor. Accepted (or confirmed) species are those for which evidence exists in the form of a specimen, diagnostic photograph or sound recording, or for a sighting by two or more competent observers for which a convincing written report exists. Unconfirmed records are those that involve well-described sightings by a single, experienced observer. All other records are deemed hypothetical.

Below we provide a list of nine species newly accepted to the official provincial list by MORC in March 2015. Of these nine species, five were first reported after

2007 and three were previously considered hypothetical. This brings the total list of accepted species for Manitoba to 397. One species has since been added to the hypothetical list. I would welcome information about any missing, incomplete or incorrect information in this list.

Accepted species:

Tufted Duck. A male was photographed on 27 April 2008 on the Red River between Selkirk and Breezy Point by Nia Massey.² No other observers saw this bird. There are two hypothetical records, which lack details: a male was seen near Flin Flon on 19 May 2004 (*fide* B. Schmidt)³ and two males were reportedly seen on the Red River in Winnipeg on or about 19 May 2008, but no other details are known (*fide* Paula Grief). Tufted Duck is a Eurasian species that regularly shows up in small numbers in North America, primarily on the east and west coasts, with smaller numbers on the Great Lakes. Elsewhere it is extremely rare in North America.⁴

Swallow-tailed Kite. Although there are several Manitoban records for Swallow-tailed Kite



Tufted Duck - 23 April 2008 - Breezy Point area

- Nia Massey



Mississippi Kite - 31 July 2014 - Winnipeg

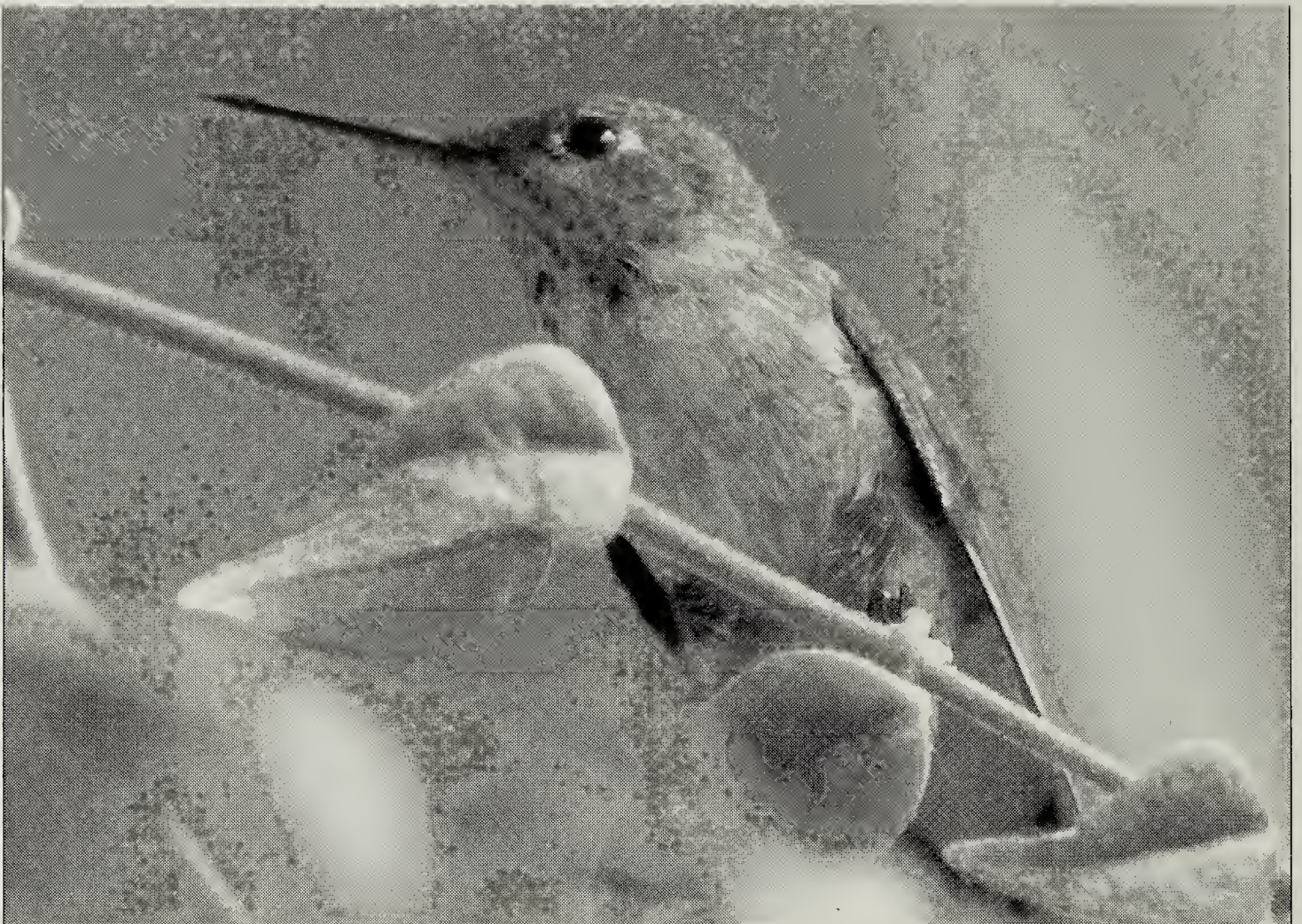
- Michael Loyd

dating back to the late 1800s and early 1900s, the details are minimal and two specimens (apparently shot in 1889 and 1892) have been lost.^{5, 6} An individual seen cruising over a Winnipeg park for about an hour on 22 May 2014 therefore represents the first confirmed record for the province.⁷ The bird was seen by several flag football players, their coaches and parents.⁸ Although no experienced observers were involved, a rare bird report submitted to MORC by Kyle Kushnier leaves no doubt about the veracity of this record.

Mississippi Kite. From late July to mid-August 2014, a pair of Mississippi Kites established a territory in a well-wooded residential area of Winnipeg. Initially spotted 18 July by Michael Lloyd, but not identified until 27 July, the birds attracted a great deal of attention from birders and local media when a nest was located.⁹ It contained one young, which unfortunately fell to the ground when both parents landed simultaneously on the nest, on 8 August. The parents then abandoned the nest and the young was taken in for rehabilitation (Artuso and Koes).¹⁰ This represents the first known breeding record for this species in Canada. It is undergoing a substantial range expansion in the United States.¹⁰

Calliope Hummingbird. A hummingbird which was first observed at the Selkirk, MB feeder of June Minish around 21 October 2013 was photographed by Gerald Machnee on 25 October. The bird was initially believed to be a Ruby-throated Hummingbird, but closer inspection of the images, which were circulated on the Internet, convinced Christian Artuso that it might be a Calliope Hummingbird. It was subsequently identified as such and seen and photographed by many. With colder weather approaching it was captured on 10 November for rehabilitation, but unfortunately did not survive.¹¹ The breeding range of this species extends north to the mountains of British Columbia and Alberta; in Saskatchewan it is accidental.¹²

Black-throated Gray Warbler. A male Black-throated Gray Warbler visited the Winnipeg garden of Richard Staniforth, and vicinity, on 21 and 22 May 2008. It was seen and photographed by many.¹³ Considering how frequently this western species has wandered east in the past, with numerous records along the Eastern Seaboard and in virtually all provinces and states, the species is long-overdue to be added to the official list for Manitoba.⁴ A second record came on 17 May 2009, when a bird was seen at St. Ambroise by Gord and Jaye Grief.¹⁴



Calliope Hummingbird - 9 November 2013 - Selkirk

- Garry Budyk

MacGillivray's Warbler.

Previously on the hypothetical list, based on reports from 1925 and 1943,⁶ this western species was formally added to the list when a second-year female was captured and banded at Delta Marsh on 24 May 2014 and subsequently recaptured, measured and photographed on 26 May 2014.¹⁰ MacGillivray's Warbler breeds as close to Manitoba as the Saskatchewan portion of the Cypress Hills, so its occurrence in MB is not surprising. It is possibly somewhat more common than this account would seem to indicate, but its similarity to Mourning and Connecticut Warblers and its skulking habits may partly account

for the scarcity of sightings in Manitoba.

Black-throated Sparrow. An individual visited the feeder of Barry and Joy Snyder-Manikel near St. Jean Baptiste, about 60 km south of Winnipeg, on 6 and 7 June 2014. During its relatively short stay it was seen and photographed by a number of observers, including the home owners. Primarily a bird of western North America, the species has been recorded in several Canadian provinces, including British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario.⁴ Saskatchewan's first sighting took place near Hodgeville on 6 June 1991.¹⁵



Black-throated Gray Warbler - 21 May 2008 - Winnipeg - Garry Budyk



McGillivray's Warbler - 26 May 2014 - Delta - Amanda Guercio



Black-throated Sparrow - 6 June 2014 - St. Jean Baptiste

- Joy Snyder-Manikel

Painted Bunting. Males of this species are unmistakable and even a casual birder would take notice. Such observations, both at feeders, accounted for the two confirmed records for the province. The first took place 24 May 2008 in The Pas, where a male was photographed by P. Tonn.¹⁶ Another male visited the feeder of R. and I. Boulet in St. Georges from late May until 6 June 2009; it was seen and photographed by many.¹⁶ An unconfirmed sighting took place in Winnipeg on 15 June 2010.¹⁷ Saskatchewan added the species to its list in 1997 and Alberta did so in 2000.¹⁸

The timing of sightings fits those elsewhere in the mid-continent, with the majority of Prairie records occurring in spring.¹⁸

Great-tailed Grackle. While training for the 2015 *Manitoba Breeding Bird Atlas* field season, Amanda Thornhill observed a female Great-tailed Grackle at Quesnel Lake, near Bissett in eastern Manitoba, on 18 May 2013.¹⁹ The bird was photographed later that day by Christian Artuso, but it was not relocated subsequently. Given the northward spread of the breeding range and accidental occurrences of this grackle during the past few



Painted Bunting - 6 June 2009 - St. Georges

- Doug Dance

decades, its appearance in the province has been anticipated.¹²

Hypothetical species.

Neotropic Cormorant. While conducting point-count surveys for the *Manitoba Breeding Bird Atlas* on 14 June 2013, Peter Taylor observed an unusually small cormorant in a group of six flying birds. Most, including the small bird, were sub-adults, based on the relatively pale underparts. The size contrast was comparable to that of a Ross's Goose in a flock of Snow Geese, suggesting a possible Neotropic Cormorant with five Double-crested Cormorants.

Unfortunately, the birds were too distant (approximately 200 m) and the sighting too brief for diagnostic details to be seen. The breeding range, and especially the extent of post-breeding dispersal, has extended northward in recent years, making its occasional occurrence in the Prairie Provinces plausible. There is one report for Saskatchewan, which is also considered hypothetical.²⁰

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Great-tailed Grackle - 18 May 2013 - Quesnel Lake - Christian Artuso

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