

**BYLAWS OF THE MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S
MISSISSIPPI BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE**

I. Name and Affiliation

A. Name. The official name of this organization shall be the "Mississippi Ornithological Society's Mississippi Bird Records Committee" which may be shortened to the "Mississippi Bird Records Committee" and is hereafter referred to as the "Committee".

B. Affiliation. This is a committee of the Mississippi Ornithological Society.

II. Purposes

A. Evaluate records of birds from only the State of Mississippi and adjacent waters. "Adjacent waters" is herein defined as that area that is within a longitudinal line drawn as an extension of the border with Alabama and a line drawn halfway between the closest points of Mississippi and Louisiana.

B. Maintain permanently the original bird records and all Committee votes and comments for use in the future by interested parties.

C. Publish at least minimal data on all records receiving a decision.

D. Provide a means by which the value of sight records as scientific data can be enhanced.

E. Increase knowledge of the birds of Mississippi.

F. Establish standards of observation and reporting against which field observers may compare their own techniques.

G. Keep the official Mississippi State List.

III. Membership

A. Number and Definitions. The Committee shall consist of five people, as follows: four "Members" plus a "Committee Chair," each with one vote. For the purposes of these Bylaws, the Committee Chair is not considered a "Member." The term "Voting Member" includes all four Members and the Committee Chair.

B. Qualifications. Anyone is eligible to become a Voting Member if, in the estimation of the existing Voting Members, that person has demonstrated an expert ability to objectively analyze records of rarities, is an active field observer with a competent knowledge of identification of birds, has conscientiously submitted reports to the MBRC of Review List species, and is a member in good standing of the Mississippi Ornithological Society.

C. Members.

1. Election and Term of Office.

a. The four Members shall be elected on a staggered basis, each for a term of three years (except in the case of the Committee Chair, as defined below). Election shall be by vote of a quorum present in person or represented by written ballot at the Annual Meeting of the Committee. Proxies shall not be used in this election, but an absent Voting Member may vote by indicating her/his choices in writing prior to the meeting. The candidates receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected; if necessary, ties shall be decided by an additional ballot(s) listing only those persons tied. At least one alternate will be selected at this time based on the number of votes received. Election should be by secret ballot if there are more nominees than available positions.

b. Members take office at the close of the Annual Meeting at which they were elected and serve until the close of the third Annual Meeting after election. The Members-Elect may, at the discretion of the Committee, be seated, without vote, during the remainder of the Annual Meeting at which they were elected.

c. Members must retire for one year before they may be considered for re-election.

d. During the initial five years of operation of the Committee under these Bylaws, four Members will have terms more than three years. One will retire after three years, two after four years, and two more after five years. Decision as to who will retire will be made by first calling for volunteers. If less than one person the third year or two persons the fourth year volunteer for retirement, then a random selection will be made (but will exclude the most recently elected Members at the end of the fourth year of operation).

e. The results of Committee elections are subject to the approval of the Mississippi Ornithological Society's Board of Directors.

2. Nominations. An announcement of a pending vacancy in the Committee membership shall be made in the MOS Newsletter. Nomination of Members shall be made only by existing members and only to the Committee Chair prior to the Annual Meeting. If the total number of nominees is not sufficient to fill the vacant seats, it is the responsibility of the Committee Chair to nominate the number of persons required. The Committee Chair shall mail the names of the nominees to all Members at least three weeks in advance of the Annual Meeting.

D. Committee Chair.

1. Qualifications.

a. In addition to the Qualifications of Membership above, the Committee Chair must not be both Committee Chair and one of the four Members.

b. The Committee Chair must have been a Member for at least one year (not necessarily the previous year).

c. The Committee Chair cannot take office if he/she has just completed three consecutive years of service on the Committee, except in cases where no other Member is qualified and/or available to serve as Committee Chair.

2. Election and Term of Office.

a. The Committee Chair shall be elected for a term of two years. Election shall be by vote of a quorum, present in person, not by proxy or absentee ballot, at the Annual Meeting of the Committee. Election should be by written ballot of those present. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected; if necessary, a tie shall be decided by an additional ballot(s) listing only those persons tied. The Committee Chair, if present, shall conduct the election. All voting Members, including the candidate, may vote.

b. The Committee Chair takes office at the close of the Annual Meeting at which he is elected and serves until the close of the second Annual Meeting after election.

c. If the Committee Chair's term exceeds his elected term as a Member, his term as a Member shall be extended to be concurrent with his term as Committee Chair.

3. Nominations. Nominations for Committee Chair shall be made only by Voting Members and only at the Annual Meeting, either in person or by letter to an attending Member. Each nominator may make a maximum of one nomination, and may not nominate himself.

4. Duties.

a. Receive, circulate, and file all bird records and supporting data submitted to the Committee. Whenever possible the records filed should be originals as copies fade with age.

b. Vote on bird records (see Voting) and in all elections.

c. When possible, procure additional data on records when deemed desirable by a Voting Member, and especially when a record is to come up for discussion at a meeting of the Committee.

d. Prior to any meeting, furnish Members with a list of post-second-circulation records to be discussed.

e. Tabulate the results of all votes of the Committee.

f. With the approval of the Members, appoint chairpersons of subcommittees.

g. Call and preside at Committee meetings.

h. Keep current the Review List (see VI.A), furnish it to anyone upon request, and occasionally publish it in The Mississippi Kite or MOS Newsletter.

i. Furnish Members with such supplies as needed, including Evaluation Forms (see VII.1).

j. Furnish Members with a list of nominees for membership election at least three weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.

k. Furnish anyone, upon request, with copies of all evidence, including Committee comments (without Members' names), concerning any accepted or rejected bird record.

l. Furnish Report Forms to anyone upon request and free of charge.

m. Keep current a master copy of these Bylaws and assure that they are appropriately applied.

n. Keep or cause to keep minutes of meetings of the Committee.

E. Removals. The Committee may remove, for cause, the Committee Chair or Members who are delinquent in their duties. Such action requires a vote of the majority of all other Voting Members, not merely of a quorum. A removal must be accomplished at a meeting of the Committee; absent Voting Members may vote by written ballot to the Committee.

F. Vacancies and Special Elections. If the Committee loses a Voting Member during mid-term (through death, resignation, removal, etc.), the alternate will take his place. If no alternate exists, the Committee Chair 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 (mail, email, telephone, etc.), whichever is most expedient in the opinion of the Committee Chair. The manner of nomination and election shall be similar, with appropriate exceptions, to the regular selection of a Member or Committee Chair, whichever pertains. The person elected shall serve the unexpired term of the person being replaced.

G. Compensation. Neither the Committee Chair nor a Member may receive compensation for his services, but may be reimbursed by the Treasurer of the Mississippi Ornithological Society for expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of her/his duties (i. e. postage and photocopying, not travel and lodging).

IV. Meetings

A. Annual Meeting. An Annual Meeting of the Committee shall be held once a year, at a time and place set by the Committee Chair, in consultation with the Members, for the purpose of election and for transacting such other business as may be brought before the Committee. The Committee Chair must give to all Members prior notice of the Annual Meeting, together with an agenda and list of nominees for Members.

B. Special Meetings. Special Meetings of the Committee may be called by the Committee Chair or by agreement of three or more Members. Whoever calls the meeting must notify and provide an agenda to each Voting Member prior to the meeting.

C. Quorum. Four Voting Members in good standing, present in person, not by proxy, shall constitute a quorum for any meeting of the Committee.

V. Bylaws

A. Formation. All Bylaws and other procedures of the Committee are to be determined by the Committee, except that they may not be inconsistent with the Bylaws of the Mississippi Ornithological Society or with rules adopted by its Board of Directors.

B. Review. The Bylaws shall be reviewed regularly, at least once every five years, by the Committee.

C. Changes. These Bylaws may be changed by a majority vote of a quorum at any Committee meeting subject to the approval of the Mississippi Ornithological Society's Board of Directors.

VI. Bird Records

A. Definitions. For the purposes of this Committee and these Bylaws, a “record” is considered to be written documentation submitted to the Committee as proof of the identity of a sighted, heard, collected, banded, audio-recorded, or photographed bird. The “Review List” is that most recent list of species that will be accepted for review by the Committee.

B. Classification of Records. The classification of bird species and observations is based on the following categories where I-S is the highest and IV is the lowest.

1. **Class I-S.** An existing identifiable specimen adequately labeled as to date, place, and collector, and available for public inspection.

2. **Class I-P.** A diagnostic photograph adequately labeled as to date, place and photographer, a copy of which is deposited with the Committee.

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

4. **Class II.** An accepted sight record documented independently by two or more observers.

5. **Class III.** An accepted sight record documented by one observer.

6. **Class IV.** A record not accepted by the Committee.

C. Official State List. Species on The Official State List of Mississippi must meet Class I, II, or III criteria to be listed and will be listed according to Class.

D. Occurrence Status. The status of each species on the state list will be reviewed at least once every five years and is based on the following definitions.

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

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

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

4. **Extirpated.** A previously regularly occurring species that has not been recorded in the state in fifty years.

5. **Extinct.** Species which no longer exist.

E. Records Treated.

1. Records only from the State of Mississippi and adjacent waters (as defined in II.A) will be treated.

2. The species treated will be determined from time to time by the Committee. In general, the Review List will initially consist of species that have occurred within Mississippi and adjacent waters on a casual or accidental basis in the ten years immediately preceding the last revision of the Review List. By majority vote of a quorum at a meeting, the Committee may, as it sees fit, revise the Review List. Records of species not on the Review List, but for which there are no accepted records for Mississippi, will be treated.

3. The criteria for inclusion on the Review List, and the species listed, will be reviewed at least once every five years.

4. The Committee Chair will be sure that the Review List is duplicated, made available to all who request it, and occasionally published in The Mississippi Kite and/or MOS Newsletter.

5. Records based on specimens, audio recordings, or bandings will be accepted and treated in the same manner as other records.

6. Any record, whether published or not, old or new, may be submitted by a Voting Member or other person, whether or not an observer, if he has first attempted to obtain details from the observer(s). An exception to this is a record that has received a previous Committee decision (see Resubmission).

7. Records concerning species that are only locally or temporally rare in Mississippi will not be treated.

8. Subspecies will not be treated unless listed as such on the Review List.

F. Submission. Records should be, but need not be, submitted on the Committee's official Report Form. The Committee Chair should see that these forms are readily available at no charge to all that request them.

G. Resubmission. A record that has received a final Committee decision, whether accepted or rejected, and even though published in the Committee Annual Report, may be resubmitted by the Committee Chair, a Member, an observer, or any other person, if and only if there becomes available new and substantial documentary evidence that might reverse the decision. For a record rejected because of questionable origin, such evidence might include the recognition of a natural pattern of occurrence. Such a record must be resubmitted and circulated as if never before submitted, except that it should be accompanied by all previous votes and comments of the Committee, its publication status, and all new evidence marked as such.

H. Circulation Procedures.

1. Initial Receipt by the Committee Chair. Upon receipt of a record, the Committee Chair should do the following:

a. Affix to it a unique number, consisting of the year of receipt (not the year of observation) followed by a hyphen and the next available unused number, starting with "1", for that year. Records predating the formation of the Committee should be labeled in a similar fashion except that the year should be replaced by "XX". If a record is represented by descriptions from more than one person, each description should receive the same number followed by a capital letter in sequence beginning with "A".

b. Record in a safe place at least the name of the reporter, the name of the bird species, the date and locality of the record, and the record's number.

c. Include the record in a round for circulation.

2. To Circulate by Mail

a. Make duplicates of, and keep in a secure place, all record documentation and completed Evaluation Forms.

b. Check the description for completeness and clarity and, if deemed desirable, request additional information from the reporter or other observers. Details thus acquired must be clearly marked as such and kept separate from the original submission; the original submission should not be returned to the reporter except in copy form.

c. Vote on the record (see Voting).

d. Send the record (along with other records, if desired), to a Member along with cover sheet, which must list in order of circulation, the names and addresses of all Voting Members, with the Committee Chair listed last, as well as the numbers both of the record(s) and the circulation round.

3. To Circulate by E-mail

- a. Check the description for completeness and clarity and, if deemed desirable, request additional information from the reporter or other observers. Details thus acquired must be clearly marked as such and kept separate from the original submission; the original submission should not be returned to the reporter except in copy form.
- b. Scan originals and retain these in a secure place.
- c. Assemble records into a round. Send an e-mail to Members which includes: Evaluation Form, written documentation/s, and photos.

4. Receipt by Member of Rounds sent by Mail. Upon receipt of a record, the Member should do the following:

- a. Evaluate it, vote on it, and initial it.
- b. Send the record to the next Member as soon as possible.
- c. Send the completed Evaluation Form to the Committee Chair.
- d. The last Member to vote should return the record to the Committee Chair.
- e. Proposed lengthy absences from a Member's mailing address should be reported to the Committee Chair. The circulation may be rerouted to accommodate such absences.

5. Receipt by Member of Rounds by E-mail. Upon receipt of a record, the Member should do the following:

- a. Open all files and make sure that all record materials can be viewed. Notify the Chairman that all files can be accessed or whether there are any problems attempting to access any files.
- b. Judge each record's validity, vote, initial, and make comments when appropriate.
- c. E-mail the completed Evaluation Form to the Chairman.
- d. Lengthy absences from a Member's e-mail address or computer problems should be reported to the Chairman.

6. Recirculation.

a. A record shall be recirculated automatically, together with the votes and comments of every Member from the previous circulation (without the Members' names), if it does not receive a decision vote on the first round.

b. If after recirculation the record still has not received a decision vote, it will be kept by the Committee Chair until it can be discussed at a meeting of the Committee.

c. The Committee Chair should solicit additional information from the reporter or other observers for any record scheduled to come before the assembled Committee.

d. Prior to each meeting, the Committee Chair should inform Members of any post-recirculation records scheduled for discussion.

e. A record that has not received a decision vote after two circulations is to be discussed and voted upon at a meeting of the Committee. The final decision must be made at the first meeting in which the record is discussed and will be made by a majority vote of a quorum, present in person.

f. Regardless of whether or not a “final” decision is reached during the two circulations (but not at a meeting), any Voting Member may bring up a controversial record for discussion at a meeting of the Committee.

g. Regardless of whether or not a “final” decision is reached during the first circulation (but not during the recirculation or at a meeting), the Committee Chair may recirculate a record if he feels that the Committee’s comments might alter the decision.

h. All decisions are final unless a record is to be resubmitted.

7. Supplemental Circulation. A record predating the formation of the Committee, for which a “final” “non-accept” decision is reached, will be circulated again with a Supplemental Evaluation Form. The procedure for supplemental circulation is analogous to regular circulation, including the recirculation of the record if it does not receive a decision vote on the first round of supplemental circulation.

8. Exceptions to Circulation. A record supported by specimen, photograph, or recording should not be circulated in the usual way. Instead, copies of the written portion of the record should be distributed to each Member for review prior to a Committee meeting. Voting on the record will be conducted in the usual way at a meeting of the Committee (see Voting).

9. Records supported by Specimens, Photographs, and Audio Recordings

a. Specimen records. At an Annual Meeting, specimens will be evaluated and voted on independently by each member. This constitutes the record’s first circulation; votes will be tabulated and, if the vote is unanimous, then the identification of the specimen can be discussed among the Members. Members may also request that pertinent specimen identification criteria be discussed prior to the vote. If a unanimous vote is not reached, then an expert opinion shall be obtained and this information circulated as a written report of the record. The circulation would represent the record’s first circulation.

b. Records supported by Photographic or Audio Documentation. Unambiguous photographic records and audio recordings (as judged by the Chairman) can be reviewed at the Annual Meeting. Members will independently review the report/s, photograph/s, and/or recording/s at the Annual Meeting, and will record their votes on an Evaluation Form provided by the Chairman. This is a secret vote and the Chairman will later tally votes. The record will be accepted only when it receives a unanimous accept vote. If the vote is not unanimous, the record will be circulated by normal procedures beginning with its first circulation.

I. Voting.

1. Evaluation Forms. The vote of each Voting Member, together with his comments, if any, must be submitted on an official Evaluation Form. This form must include spaces for at least the: (a) record number, (b) name of the species, (c) name of the Voting Member, (d) date of review, (e) number of the circulation, (f) Voting Member’s decision, and (g) comments.

2. Voting Categories.

- a. Accept
- b. Reject, origin questionable.

c. Reject, identification questionable.

Note: (b) and (c) are both termed “non-accept” votes.

3. Abstentions. Voting Members may not abstain from voting.

4. Committee Chair Vote. The Committee Chair must vote. On the first circulation, he/she must vote prior to sending the record to Members (thus without seeing Members’ comments).

5. Comments. On the first circulation, a “reject” vote should be supported by appropriate comments. On the second circulation, either a “reject” or “accept” vote should be supported by comments.

6. Consultations. On the first circulation, a Voting Member should not discuss a record with another Voting Member prior to both having voted. On the second circulation, prevote discussions with other Voting Members are acceptable. On any circulation, a Voting Member may consult anyone outside the Committee before voting.

7. Voting Criteria. The criteria used by a Voting Member for acceptance or rejection of a record are an individual matter and should not be treated by these Bylaws except that reasons for a “non-accept” vote must meet the criteria of VI.I.2.b,c.

8. Change in Members. A circulation in progress at the time a new member(s) is elected should be completed by the retired Member (except that removed Members do not qualify). Subsequent circulations, and hence in some cases final voting, should be completed by the new Member (s).

9. Tabulation. The voting results are tabulated by the Committee Chair after all Voting Members have voted.

10. Decision from Circulations.

a. On the first circulation, with all Voting Members voting, a record is considered accepted if it receives a unanimous “accept” vote. A record is considered rejected if it receives a unanimous “non-accept” vote. The record is recirculated if it receives any other combination of votes.

b. On the second circulation, with all Voting Members voting, a record is considered accepted if it receives a unanimous “accept” vote or if it receives no more than one “non-accept” vote. A record is considered rejected if it receives a unanimous “non-accept” vote or if it receives no more than one “accept” vote.

c. After the second circulation, a record is to be presented at a meeting if it receives votes in any combination other than in (b) above. If a record receives a tie vote when presented at a meeting, the results of the second circulation vote should be used to break the tie.

11. Voting at Meetings. Voting on records at meetings should be by written ballot of those present.

12. Rejected Records. Any rejected record that receives two or more “reject, identification questionable” votes will be published as “unaccepted, identification questionable.” All other rejected records will be published as “unaccepted, origin questionable.”

13. Accepted Records. Any accepted record that receives “accept” votes in more than one Class of record should be assigned to the Class that receives the majority of votes.

14. Supplemental Evaluation Forms. In supplemental circulation, the vote of each Voting Member, together with his comments, if any, must be submitted on an official Supplemental Evaluation

Form. This form is similar to the regular Evaluation Form, except that voting categories are “not accepted, but likely to be correct” and “not accepted, possibly incorrect”.

15. Voting on Supplemental Circulations. Voting on supplemental circulations is conducted in the same manner as for regular circulation, except that a Supplemental Evaluation Form is used. Decisions from supplemental circulation are determined in a manner analogous to regular circulation.

J. Publication.

1. The decisions of the Committee shall be published annually, under the authorship of the Committee Chair and others if desired, in the form of an Annual Report, in The Mississippi Kite. A section of this Annual Report shall be devoted to bringing the Mississippi State List up to date.

2. The published data for accepted and rejected records should include at least the name of the species, date(s) of observation, and locality. Names of observers should not be published with rejected records. The term “unaccepted” should be used instead of “rejected.” Other data may be added at the discretion of the Committee Chair and Members.

3. “Pending records” should not be published in The Mississippi Kite.

These Bylaws are a modification of the Bylaws of the Western Field Ornithologists’ California Bird Records Committee as modified by the Alabama Ornithological Society’s Alabama Bird Records Committee.

Gene C. Knight
21 February 2009

Incorporating revisions of 20 March 1999, 20 April 2001, 23 February 2002, 4 December 2004, and 21 February 2009