

# BYLAWS of the Washington Bird Records Committee

## **Part 1. NAME**

A. The official name of this standing committee of the Washington Ornithological Society, hereafter referred to as "WOS", shall be the "Washington Bird Records Committee" hereafter referred to as "WBRC".

## **Part 2. PURPOSES**

A. Evaluate records of selected birds from the State of Washington and adjacent ocean, including, but not limited to, all such records submitted for publication to any official journal or checklist. "Adjacent Ocean" is herein defined as that area within 200 nautical miles of the Washington coast and for which Washington is the nearest point of land.

B. Maintain and archive the Committee's votes and comments.

C. Release for publication at least minimal data on all records receiving a decision.

D. Provide a means by which the records can gain acceptance as valuable scientific data.

E. Increase knowledge of the birds of Washington.

F. Keep or cause to keep the official Washington State Bird List.

## **PART 3. COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

A. The committee shall consist of seven voting members, all of whom shall be members of WOS throughout their tenure on the committee.

B. A member of the WBRC shall serve a seven-year term beginning January 1 and ending December 31.

C. After serving a seven-year term, committee members will leave the committee and must remain off of the committee for a period of at least one calendar year before he or she can be nominated for another seven-year term.

D. There is no limit to the number of seven-year terms that an individual can serve.

E. Each year one of the seven WBRC members will leave the committee. The one will normally be the member with the most seniority.

F. Each year a new member will be elected to the WBRC, bringing the total number of committee members back to seven.

G. At every meeting of the WBRC, five voting members shall constitute a quorum. Members may attend electronically if unable to physically attend the meeting, though they are encouraged to attend in person. If a member is unable to attend a meeting or call in, they may indicate to the Secretary their votes prior to the meeting and deem them a proxy.

#### **PART 4. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF COMMITTEE**

A. Election of new committee members may take place during the annual meeting of the WBRC, or via a vote conducted by the Secretary via email.

B. In the summer, preceding the WBRC annual meeting, a call for nominations will be publicized through the WOS newsletter and/or monthly meeting. A form will be available on the WOS website, under the WBRC tab, which members interested in committee participation may fill out and submit electronically to the committee.

C. Qualifications for membership include an expert ability in the fundamentals of identification (molt, structure, ecology, behavior, distribution), mechanisms of vagrancy, and records committee operations. Additionally, candidates should have first-hand field experience with many of the species on the Review list as well as in the birds that are most likely to contribute new records, and an understanding of how to assess whether documentation is accurate.

D. Replacement of committee members shall be by a majority vote of the members of the committee from names submitted for consideration by committee members, or the WOS board or WOS membership. Nominees shall be persons willing and able to serve on the WBRC.

E. The merits of any nominee will be discussed openly.

F. If there is only one nominee, and the nominee is acceptable to the existing committee, then the nominee will automatically be elected to the WBRC, and no vote is needed.

G. WBRC elected nominees are then presented to the WOS Board for final approval.

H. Nominees should be able and willing to vote on records in a timely manner and be able to attend the annual meeting, whether that is in person or remotely.

I. If a member of the committee is considered extremely delinquent or unable to fulfill their role, they may be voted off the committee by a unanimous vote by the rest of the committee. An emergency election may be held for a new voting member to fulfill the rest of the term, with WOS Board approval.

#### **PART 5. SECRETARY**

A. The Secretary is appointed by the unanimous votes of approval by committee members and then final approval by the WOS board.

B. The Secretary is eligible to serve an unlimited number of years.

C. The Secretary shall coordinate and maintain the circulation of bird reports among the committee members.

D. The Secretary shall organize and preside over an annual meeting, and any additional in-person, telephone, or videoconference meetings.

E. The Secretary and/or any committee member shall prepare the reports of accepted and non-accepted records, and submit these reports for publication to *Western Birds*, or another appropriate journal if this journal is unavailable. The report shall be reviewed by the members of the WBRC before it is submitted for publication.

F. The Secretary shall keep a file including copies of all records that have been considered by the WBRC.

G. The Secretary position is non-voting, unless the Secretary is included in the seven voting members and is approved as other committee members through the processes of Part 4.

## **PART 6. CHAIRPERSON**

A. The committee members may appoint a Chairperson to assist the Secretary with certain duties, which may include, but are not limited to, encouraging the submission of records, encouraging the review of records, coordinating the scheduling of meetings, and serving as a liaison with committee members, the WOS board and membership, and the general public.

B. The Chairperson must be a committee member and will be appointed based upon a majority vote of the committee members, subject to an annual review by the committee.

C. The Chairperson may serve an unlimited term as Chairperson.

D. In the absence of a Chairperson, any duties delegated by the Secretary to the Chairperson will revert to the Secretary.

## **PART 7. VOTING ON RECORDS**

A. Committee members will vote on each record being circulated around the committee. The Secretary will circulate records to the committee members electronically for each record to be voted on by each committee member.

B. A record is accepted by the WBRC if the record receives unanimous approval or one dissenting vote and there are no requests for recirculation. If a record receives four no accept votes and there are no requests for recirculation the record will be considered Not Accepted. Any other records with mixed results or with requests for recirculation will be held over for discussion at the next in-person meeting.

C. A record that receives two or three dissenting votes will be placed for discussion at the in-person WBRC meeting with then a follow-up second round of voting. This is to ensure that every committee member has the opportunity to view all of the comments, particularly on controversial records, and then have the opportunity to vote again. If after the second round a record still has two or more negative votes, then it is not accepted by the committee.

D. Committee members will record their votes where provided with the individual record. Each committee member shall vote "Accept", "Non-Accept", or "Abstain" for each record.

Committee members are also encouraged to include at least brief comments along with their vote, particularly on records that they vote "Non-Accept" or "Abstain" on. These comments will be valuable if a record is recirculated. A vote of "Abstain" is intended for use by committee members needing further research effort or input and or discussion with members at the in-person meeting.

E. Each committee member is encouraged to vote on records within three weeks of receiving the seasonal voting packet and to complete the voting packet by the due date as set forth by the Secretary.

F. At any time during the first round of voting, a committee member may request that a record be recirculated or brought to a meeting for further discussion. Additionally, during a meeting discussion time, a committee member can request to have a record tabled until the next meeting date if it is deemed that further information and research is needed. A unanimous vote by the rest of the committee is required to table a record.

G. In the event that a committee member believes there is reason to reconsider any previously decided record, the committee member may nominate the record to the Secretary to be re-submitted. The Secretary will query the committee members to vote on the question of re-submission of the record. If a majority of the committee members agree that there is just reason for re-submission, the Secretary will submit the record for ordinary review.

## **PART 8. GUIDELINES AND TAXONOMY**

A. The WBRC shall use the American Birding Association Checklist Committee Guidelines for established exotics as the standard for accepting exotics onto the Washington State List.

B. The WBRC shall follow American Ornithological Society taxonomy in keeping the state list and in published reports.

## **PART 9. REVIEW LIST**

A. The WBRC shall maintain a list of species requiring documentation, referred to as the Review List. In general, the Review List will consist of species that have occurred within Washington and adjacent ocean on an average of two or fewer times per year during the ten-year period immediately preceding revision of the Review List. In some cases, a species may be removed from the list prior to reaching this standard if the actual presence is not reflected in the number of accepted records, and a species may be maintained on the Review List after this standard has been met if identification or status questions remain.

B. A yes vote from at least six (6) voting members is needed to remove a species from the Review List.

C. Any species newly added to the Washington State Bird List will automatically be added to the Review List, excluding non-native species or those added to the state list based on a taxonomic change.

D. Once removed from the Review List, any species may be added back to the Review List at an in-person meeting with a vote of approval from at least six (6) voting members.

E. The WBRC may wish to review subspecies in the same matter as species. The committee shall decide on a case by case basis if it wishes to review subspecies that qualify for the Review List.

#### **PART 10. WBRC BYLAWS**

A. All WBRC Bylaws and other procedures of the WBRC are to be determined by the WBRC in consultation and collaboration with the WOS Board of Directors. Both groups must approve any changes in these bylaws or procedures.

B. The WBRC Bylaws shall be reviewed regularly, at least once every three years, by the WBRC. They will be available for anyone to view on the WOS website under the WBRC tab.

C. These WBRC Bylaws shall be changed or amended by a majority vote at any WBRC meeting and forwarded to the WOS Board for approval.

D. The WOS Board, in collaboration with the WBRC, will review the WOS Bylaws to determine if changes to the WOS Bylaws are required to make them consistent with the approved changes to the WBRC Bylaws. If changes to the WOS Bylaws are required, the WOS Board will follow its bylaw provisions and request a vote of the WOS membership.

Approved by the Board of the Washington Ornithological Society, June 6, 2020