

Paul A. DeBenedictis (Chair), Donna L. Dittmann, Jon L. Dunn, Kimball Garrett, Greg Lasley, Stuart Tingley, and Thede Tobish

1995 ABA Checklist Report

PAUL A. DEBENEDICTIS*

THIS IS THE LAST SUPPLEMENT to the fourth edition of the *ABA Checklist* and reports all changes adopted since our last report (*Birding* 1995, 27: 367–368), including changes adopted from the Fortieth Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union *Check-list of North American Birds* (1995). With this report, the *ABA Checklist* contains 906 species, plus four listed as "Origin Uncertain." For convenience, we refer to the AOU Committee on Nomenclature and Classification as the "AOU Check-list Committee" throughout. All observers who submitted documentation examined by this committee are listed in the accounts of species; those who discovered the bird are listed first.

Taxonomic Changes Accepted—

Changes adopted in the Fortieth Supplement to the *American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds* [hereafter, Fortieth Supplement] (*Auk*

1995, 112: 819–830) are here adopted in the *ABA Checklist*. Seven species are added as a result of the AOU Check-list Committee's splitting of forms previously considered to be single species.



Baltimore and Bullock's Orioles are once again considered separate species. This immature male Bullock's was photographed in Eldorado County, California, May 1992.

JACK WILBURN

No presently recognized species are combined. A review of the reasons for these changes appears in *Birding* 1996, 28: 228–231 and in the Fortieth Supplement.

Gilded Flicker (*Colaptes chrysoides*) [Status: N, Birding Code: 1] is split from *Northern Flicker*. *Scrub Jay* is split into *Florida*

Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) [Status: N, Birding Code: 2], *Island Scrub-Jay* (*Aphelocoma insularis*) [Status: N, Birding Code: 2], and *Western Scrub-Jay* (*Aphelocoma californica*) [Status: N, Code: 1]. *Bicknell's Thrush* (*Catharus bicknelli*) [Status: N, Birding Code: 2] is split from *Gray-cheeked Thrush* (*Catharus minimus*). *Rufous-sided Towhee* is split into *Spotted Towhee* (*Pipilo maculatus*) [Status: N, Birding Code: 1] and *Eastern Towhee* (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) [Status: N, Birding Code: 1]. *Sharp-tailed Sparrow* is split into *Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow* (*Ammodramus caudatus*) [Status: N, Birding Code: 1] and

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammodramus nelsoni*) [Status: N, Birding Code: 1]. *Northern Oriole* is split into *Baltimore Oriole* (*Icterus galbula*) [Status: N, Birding Code: 1] and *Bullock's Oriole* (*Icterus bullockii*) [Status: N, Birding Code: 1].

Changes in English Names—

The English names of several species changed in the Fortieth Supplement are likewise changed

*Educational Communications, SUNY Health Science Center at Syracuse, 750 East Adams, Syracuse, New York 13120



JOHN MULDROW

Collared Forest-Falcon, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park, Texas,
31 January 1994.

in the *ABA Checklist*. These changes are summarized in *Birding* 1996, 28: 228–231.

British Storm-Petrel becomes *European Storm-Petrel*, to agree with the *British Ornithologists' Union* [B.O.U.] *Checklist of Birds of Britain and Ireland*. *American Swallow-tailed Kite* becomes *Swallow-tailed Kite*, because, as a result of the name-change of an African kite, the modifier "American" no longer is required. *Northern Hobby* becomes *Eurasian Hobby*, to agree with the B.O.U. *Checklist*. *Greater Golden-Plover* becomes *European Golden-Plover*, to agree with the B.O.U. *Checklist*, and in recognition of the earlier split of Lesser Golden-Plover into American and Pacific Golden-Plovers. *Rufous-necked Stint* be-

comes *Red-necked Stint*, to agree with the B.O.U. and *Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union Checklists*. *Common Black-headed Gull* becomes *Black-headed Gull*, to agree with the B.O.U. *Checklist*. *Common Skylark* becomes *Sky Lark*, to agree with the B.O.U. *Checklist*. *Gray-breasted Jay* becomes *Mexican Jay*, to restore a name that had had many years of use. *Brown Tree-Pipit* becomes *Tree Pipit*, to agree with the B.O.U. *Checklist*. *Olive Tree-Pipit* becomes *Olive-backed Pipit*, to agree with the B.O.U. *Checklist*. *Pallas's Reed-Bunting* becomes *Pallas's Bunting*, to agree with the B.O.U. *Checklist*. *Common Reed-Bunting* becomes *Reed Bunting*, to agree with the B.O.U. *Checklist*.

Changes in Scientific Names—

The scientific names of two species are changed because of generic reclassification of the species; that of a third species has been corrected. *Great Egret* becomes *Ardea alba*. *American Golden-Plover* becomes *Pluvialis dominicus*. *Brown-chested Martin* becomes *Progne tapera*. (See *Birding* 1996, 28: 228–231.)

New Species Accepted—Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)

Where. Attu Island, Alaska.

When. 5 June 1994.

Observers. Daniel G. Gibson.

Published Details. *National Audubon Society Field Notes* 1994, 48: 330.

Documentation. Photographs of specimen, University of Alaska Museum #6518, on file with the ABA Checklist Committee.

Identification. This smaller version of the Greater White-fronted Goose has more white on the forehead and a yellow eye-ring.

Origin. Nests from northern Europe to northeastern Siberia; migratory, wintering primarily in the Middle East and China. This species is commonly held in captivity, and earlier reports from Delaware, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and British Columbia are all suspect. The species was perhaps overdue in the western Aleutian Islands.

Motion to add. Tobish/DeBenedictis.

Vote. 7/0

Placement on the ABA Checklist. Insert after Greater White-fronted Goose.

Status. A.

Birding code. 5.

**New Species Accepted—
Collared Forest-Falcon
(*Micrastur semitorquatus*)**

Where. Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park, Hidalgo County, Texas.

When. 22 January–12 February 1994.

Observers. Charles W. and Louise Gambill; Mike Austin, Jeanne Ayers, Chris Corben, Elizabeth M. Dumont, Mark Elwonger, Jeff Gordon, Carl Haynie, Lisa Hug, Jane Kittleman, Sandy Komito, Greg Lasley, John Muldrow, Brad McKinney, Brent Ortego, Chuck Sexton, Gail Yovanovich.

Published Details. *National Audubon Society Field Notes* 1994, 48: 225.

Documentation. Photographs, published in the reference above, and video- and audiotape recordings on file.

Identification. A large, short-winged, long-tailed falcon that resembles an accipiter; black above, starkly white (as in this bird), buff, or black below. It is illustrated in most guides to Mexican birds.

Origin. Resident in the lowlands of Central and South America from southern Tamaulipas and southern Sinaloa to northern Argentina.

Motion to add. Lasley/DeBenedictis.

Vote. 7/0

Placement on the ABA Checklist. Insert between Crested Caracara and Eurasian Kestrel.

Status. A.

Birding code. 5.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

TAXONOMIC CHANGES ACCEPTED

Gilded Flicker (*Colaptes chrysoides*) is split from Northern Flicker
Scrub Jay is split into Florida Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*),
Island Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma insularis*),
and Western Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma californica*)

Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*) is split
from Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*)

Rufous-sided Towhee is split into Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*)
and Eastern Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*)

Sharp-tailed Sparrow is split into
Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammodramus caudacutus*)
and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammodramus nelsoni*)
Northern Oriole is split into Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*)
and Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*)

CHANGES IN ENGLISH NAMES

European Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates pelagica*)
Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*)
Eurasian Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)
European Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)
Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*)
Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)
Sky Lark (*Alauda arvensis*)
Mexican Jay (*Aphelocoma ultramarina*)
Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*)
Olive-backed Pipit (*Anthus hodgsoni*)
Pallas's Bunting (*Emberiza pallasi*)
Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

CHANGES IN SCIENTIFIC NAMES

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)
American Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis dominicus*)
Brown-chested Martin (*Progne tapera*)

NEW SPECIES ACCEPTED

Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)
Collared Forest-Falcon (*Micrastur semitorquatus*)
Eurasian Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)
Eurasian Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)
Blue Mockingbird (*Melanotis caerulescens*)
Common Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

NEW SPECIES NOT ACCEPTED

Cape Verde Islands Petrel (*Pterodroma feae*)
Swallow-tailed Gull (*Creagrus furcatus*)

CHANGE IN STATUS

Streaked-backed Oriole (*Icterus pustulatus*)

New Species Accepted—Eurasian Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

Where. Fox Island, off Tors Cove, Avalon Peninsula, Newfoundland.

When. 24–25 May 1994.

Observers. Chris Brown, Ken Knowles, Paul Linegar, Bruce Mactavish.

Published Details. *Birders Journal* 1994, 3: 168–171.

Documentation. Photographs in the above article on file.

Identification. This widespread Old World oystercatcher resembles the larger American Oystercatcher but has black rather than brown upperparts, with a white rather than a brown lower back. It is illustrated in guides to European birds.

Origin. Breeds from Europe to eastern China; interior and northern populations migratory. This bird appeared during a major influx of European vagrants to Newfoundland.

Motion to add. Tingley/DeBenedictis.

Vote. 7/0

Placement on the ABA Checklist. Insert before American Oystercatcher.

Status. A.

Birding code. 5.

New Species Accepted—Eurasian Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)

Where. One found dead, Bonavista, Newfoundland.

When. About 16 November 1994.

Salvager. Jonathan Joy.

Published Details. *Birders Journal* 1995, 4: 82–83.



MARTY CORDANO

The English name of Gray-breasted Jay is changed back to Mexican Jay. These two Mexican Jays at Chiricahua National Monument, Arizona, February 1991, includes a yearling, which has irregular, blotchy patches of light pink or horn color on the bill.

Documentation. Specimen at Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's; photograph in the above article.

Identification. This all-black version of an American Robin, with yellow bill, eye-ring, and legs, is illustrated in guides to European birds.

Origin. Breeds from Europe across Eurasia to China; northern and interior populations migratory. Earlier reports from North America all are tainted as possible escapes from captivity (*Birding* 1991, 23: 194), but the species has been expected as a potential vagrant. The date and locale of this record are entirely in accordance with this expectation.

Motion to add. Tingley/DeBenedictis.

Vote. 7/0

Placement on the ABA Checklist. Insert between Wood Thrush and Eyebrowed Thrush.

Status. A.

Birding code. 5.

New Species Accepted—Blue Mockingbird (*Melanotis caerulescens*)

Where. Along Sonoita Creek, near Patagonia, Santa Cruz County, Arizona.

When. 21 December 1991–6 March 1992.

Observers. Deborah Treadway, Gary Rosenberg; Jon L. Dunn, Guy McCaskie, Michael Patten.

Published Details. *American Birds* 1992, 46: 297, 332, 459.

Documentation. Photograph published in *American Birds* 1992, 46: 332.

Identification. An entirely bluish mockingbird with a black facial mask; illustrated in guides to Mexican birds.

Origin. Breeds in western and central Mexico. The long delay in accepting this record was mainly the result of nagging doubts that it might have escaped from a trader in Mexican birds at the nearby border. Remarkably little documentation was submitted for this

record, as well. These doubts were dispelled, however, by a second well-documented record in early 1995, at Cave Creek Canyon, Cochise County, Arizona; and the Arizona Bird Records Committee informed us that field work in Sonora by Stephen M. Russell found northern populations of this species to be somewhat migratory in winter, when they appear rather regularly in lowland riparian habitat about 100 miles from the border.

Motion to add. Dunn/

DeBenedictis.

Vote. 7/0

Placement on the ABA Checklist.

Insert after Le Conte's Thrasher.

Status: A.

Birding code. 5.

New Species Accepted—Common Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Where. Middle Cove, Newfoundland.

When. 21 May 1994.

Observers. Ken Knowles.

Published Details. *National Audubon Society Field Notes* 1994, 48: 271.

Documentation. Photographs on file and in *Birders Journal* 1995, 4: 308.

Identification. A finch the size of a House Sparrow; breast plain, buffy in males, paler in females; back plain, brownish; strong white wingbars; crown gray in males, brown in females; illustrated in all guides to European birds.

Origin. Breeds from Europe to central Asia; northern and interior populations migratory. Small and varying numbers of migrants from Scandinavia reach Iceland annual-



JULIAN HOUGH

The English name of Pallas's Reed-Bunting was shortened to Pallas's Bunting. This female Pallas's was photographed at Beidaihe, China, in May 1995. Bill shape and color, color of the lesser wing-coverts, and call-notes are three important distinctions from Reed Bunting (formerly "Common Reed-Bunting").



Blue Mockingbird at Portal, Arizona, in early 1995, established the second documented record for the ABA Area and helped to dispel doubts about the origin of the first bird near Patagonia three years earlier.

BRIAN E. SMALL

ly (Cramp, S., and C.M. Perrins. 1994. *The Birds of the Western Palearctic, Volume III: Crows to Finches*. Oxford University Press.) There have been about a dozen prior reports, primarily from mid-November to mid-May, and a December specimen from Louisiana, that have variably been treated as natural vagrants or escapes from captivity. The locale and date of this record, coincident with a major influx of European birds, found favor with the ABA Checklist Committee, which has not seen details for any other reports.

Motion to add. Tingley/DeBenedictis.

Vote. 7/0

Placement on the ABA Checklist. Insert before Brambling.

Status. A.

Birding code. 5.

**Change in Status—
Streak-backed Oriole
(*Icterus pustulatus*)**

This species has been found casually in late fall and winter in recent years in the Southwest. One to two pairs were found nesting near Dudleyville, Pinal County, Arizona, in 1993 and 1994 [and again in 1995 and 1996], and an unsuccessful attempt was observed in 1994 near Marana, Santa Cruz County (T. Corman and G. Monson. 1995. *Western Birds* 26: 49–53). Change Status from V to N.

**New Species Not
Accepted—Cape Verde
Islands Petrel
(*Pterodroma feae*)**

Where. Several reports from Gulf Stream waters off North Carolina.

When. The best documented observations occurred on 25 May 1991 and 24 May 1992; most reports are from the last week of May and early June.

Published Details. A full account of these records has not been published; brief details appear in *American Birds* 1992, 46: 1136 and in *The Chat* 1992, 56: 52.

Documentation. Photographs on file; one was published in *American Birds*. Expert opinions provided by W.R.P. Bourne, David Fisher, Peter Harrison, Steve Madge, and Francis Zino.

Identification. A medium-sized gadfly petrel with a dark M-shaped pattern on the back and upperwing surface, light underparts, dark underwings, and a variable breastband. The two best-documented reports involve birds with a pale rump and tail and an incomplete breastband, characteristic of the North Atlantic members of the Soft-plumaged Petrel complex, which includes three population groups now generally treated as separate species. Two very similar forms nest in the tropical Atlantic. The smaller, and highly endangered, species—Madeira Petrel (*Pterodroma madeira*)—nests on islets in the Madeira Islands. The larger, and threatened, species—Cape Verde Islands Petrel (*Pterodroma feae*)—nests on the Cape Verde and Madeira Islands, and perhaps in the Azores. Both of these taxa are paler on the rump and tail than is the southern-hemisphere Soft-plumaged Petrel (*Pterodroma molis*), and they have variable but incomplete breastbands. Because of vocal similarities, a proposal (*Ibis* 1995, 137: 207–218) that the two northern types be combined into one species, which we would call Fea’s Petrel, was considered but not adopted, following similar action by the AOU Check-list Committee.

The two northern species differ primarily by wing and bill length.

F. Zino, the world authority on these forms, doubts that it is possible to make this distinction in the field except under the most exceptional circumstances. The ABA Checklist Committee and our reviewers have no doubt that some form of “soft-plumaged petrel” is represented by these North Carolina reports. We generally agree that the best descriptions, photographs, and videotape are consistent with *feae*, which is the most likely species on the basis of a combination of geographic grounds and population size.

After a tortuous path through the ABA Checklist Committee, complicated by the intermixing of several records and taxonomic uncertainties, the ABA Checklist Committee finally agreed that none of these reports could confidently be assigned to a particular species and that we would not add any species to the *ABA Checklist* when its specific identification is only probable. From the ABA Checklist Area, where it is probably a regular visitor well offshore in the Gulf Stream (particularly in late spring), there are now about twenty reports of birds that belong to some member of this complex.

We encourage continued publication of reports, and hope that some satisfactory way to ascertain the identity of these birds in our area eventually will be found. The ABA Checklist Committee expects to evaluate some of the more recent well-documented records, but the probability of resolving the identity of these birds beyond question appears to be low.

Motion to add. DeBenedictis/Dunn.

Vote. 6/1 (as “Soft-plumaged” Petrel); 4/3, 2/5 (as Cape Verde Islands Petrel).

**New Species Not Accepted—
Swallow-tailed Gull
(*Creagrus furcatus*)**

Where. Pacific Grove and Moss Landing, Monterey County, California.

When. 6–8 June 1985.

Published Details. *American Birds* 1985, 39: 879–880, 958–959; Roberson, D. 1985. *Monterey Birds*. Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society, Carmel, California.

Documentation. Photographs in above references.

Identification. Suggests a large Sabine's Gull, with larger eyes, more deeply forked tail, long bill.

Origin. Nests in the Galapagos Archipelago and Malpelo Island, Colombia; disperses to the Humboldt Current off western South America. The identity of this bird has not been in question.

From the start reviewers have fallen into two camps. One stresses the apparent migratory nature of the species, the absence of land barriers, its atypical gull behavior/nocturnal foraging, and general indifference to human activities. The other group notes that the species has not been verified (though reported) even as far north as the Bay of Panama, the possibility of capture by a squid boat, and, as a cold-water species, the improbability that it would venture north. The California Bird Records Committee, after four rounds of arduous debate, ultimately relegated it the status of Natural Occurrence Questionable (Identity Accepted). The species failed to get even majority support for full inclusion on the *ABA Checklist*, and so failed to qualify as a species listed as "Origin Uncertain."

Motion to add. DeBenedictis/Dunn.

Votes. 3/4, 2/5.

Other Matters

With this report, Greg Lasley's term on the ABA Checklist Committee ends. His able contributions have been much appreciated. He will be missed. We welcome Chuck Sexton, also of Austin, Texas, as his replacement. The ABA Checklist Committee continues to consult with the AOU Check-list Committee on a number of matters pertinent to the upcoming revision of the *A.O.U. Check-list*. In addition, we are considering motions to delete Scarlet Ibis and Red-crowned Parrot from the *ABA Checklist*, and to add Common Redshank and Green Parakeet.

