

# 1996-1997 ABA Checklist Report

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THIS SUPPLEMENT IS THE FIRST one since the publication of the fifth edition of the *ABA Checklist* (1996).

In September 1996 Committee Chair Paul DeBenedictis suffered a serious heart attack, from which he is still recovering. In November 1996, Jon Dunn was appointed temporary Chair, and he assumed full duties when Paul's term expired at the end of 1996. Paul had served as Chair since 1990, and we are greatly indebted for his years of tireless and able service. This work was in addition to his regular and insightful deciphering of the scientific literature in his Gleanings column. His input on the committee will be sorely missed.

The only species added to the *ABA Checklist* during 1996 and early 1997 was Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*). Additionally, the Committee considered whether Red-crowned Parrot (*Amazona viridigenalis*) should be removed. This species was originally added to the *ABA Checklist* based on the populations in south Texas, yet the Texas Bird Records Committee (hereafter TBRC) had not added the species to the official Texas list. For our review, we received extensive documentation from the TBRC indicating a large breeding population in the lower Rio Grande Valley. They have

since added the species to their state list, along with Green Parakeet (*Aratinga holochlora*), as established introduced populations. With this new information, the ABA Checklist Committee (hereafter ABA CLC) declined to remove the Red-crowned Parrot, retaining its status as Introduced. In the near future the ABA CLC will consider the status of Green Parakeet, the issue being whether any of the Texas population is satisfactorily established under our criteria for introduced species. Many in the birding community, including some members of both the TBRC and ABA CLC, believe that some individuals of both of the above species seen in the lower Rio Grande Valley represent genuine wanderers from native populations in northeastern Mexico. Other members believe that all these birds are likely escapes or descendants of captives. These issues probably will not be fully resolved. In any event, Red-crowned Parrots and Green Parakeets are now present year round in southern Texas and are actively breeding. Issues surrounding feral populations of Red-crowned Parrots and other *Amazona* parrots and *Aratinga* parakeets established in southern Florida and southern California have not yet been addressed by the respective state committees.

In late 1997 the ABA CLC will be considering the following new additions to the *Checklist*: Light-

mantled Albatross (*Phoebastria palpebrata*), Dark-rumped Petrel (*Pterodroma phaeopygia*), Chinese Pond-Heron (*Ardeola bacchus*), Green Parakeet (as an established introduced species), Cuban Pewee (*Contopus caribaeus*), and Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus auranti-rostris*). In addition, we will reconsider adding Fea's Petrel (*Pterodroma feae*). Our previous handling of the Soft-plumaged Petrel complex (DeBenedictis 1996) was tentative. Since then, there have been additional well-documented records; we have received extensive documentation from David Lee and Harry LeGrand concerning North Carolina records, and a detailed two-part article concerning the identification and status of Fea's Petrel has been published in *Birding* (Tove 1997a, 1997b). The AOU Committee on Classification and Nomenclature (hereafter AOU CLC) has followed most European authorities in recognizing *P. feae* as distinct from the Soft-plumaged Petrel (*P. mollis*) and in agreeing that Fea's Petrel should be the English name used (AOU 1997). Finally, we will be reconsidering our decision to add Azure Gallinule (*Porphyryla flavirostris*) to the *ABA Checklist* in light of new information concerning this sole record.

In February 1997, the full Committee (except Stuart Tingley) met

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in Austin, Texas, to discuss fully our procedures and to produce written by-laws. It was the first meeting of the ABA CLC in more than a decade. Steve Cardiff, Greg Lasley (a recent former member), and Dan Williams also attended the meeting and offered much constructive advice, for which we are grateful. The complete by-laws will be published soon in *Winging It*, but we wish to summarize here some of our decisions and policies.

By late 1997 the ABA CLC will have expanded in size from the current seven to eight members, in accordance with the Committee's former size. Members will serve a four-year term and will be eligible to serve a second four-year term if re-elected. The Chair is elected annually, but all members, including the Chair, must sit off the ABA CLC for at least one year after serving for eight consecutive years. Beginning in 1998, and continuing each year thereafter, there will always be openings on the Committee. These vacancies will be filled by an election held by the standing Committee, by either written or electronic ballot.

The ABA CLC will no longer vote on taxonomic and nomenclatural issues. Rather, we will automatically follow AOU CLC decisions and will report on these changes in our annual reports. In practice the Committee had rubber-stamped all previous AOU CLC decisions dealing with such

### The Forty-first Supplement to the AOU Check-list

Recent taxonomic revisions published by the American Ornithologists' Union Committee on Classification and Nomenclature affect English Names, scientific binomials, assignments to family (and even to order), and sequences of families, of genera within families, and of species within genera (AOU 1997). Many changes affect the ABA Area. Some of them were summarized in *Winging It* 1997, 9(8): 6-7.

Here we summarize all changes affecting English names, scientific names, and assignments to family and order for birds in the ABA Area; many additional changes affect Neotropical species not occurring within the ABA Area. Additionally, there will be numerous changes in species sequences (such as within the waterfowl). Because some of these changes will not be published until the forthcoming 7th addition of the *AOU Check-list* appears, we will not present piecemeal sequence changes in advance of that publication.

Page numbers refer to those in the fifth edition of the *ABA Checklist* (American Birding Association 1996).

#### Species Splits

Marbled Murrelet (p. 43) is split into Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) and Long-

billed Murrelet (*B. perdix*). ABA code 1 still applies to Marbled Murrelet; Long-billed Murrelet will be given code 4 with no N annotation. See the article by Steven Mlodinow in this issue of *Birding*.

Plain Titmouse (p. 61) is split into Oak Titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*) and Juniper Titmouse (*B. ridgwayi*). Both species retain ABA code 1 and have an N annotation. For a discussion of this treatment, see DeBenedictis (1997), as well as the monograph by Cicero (1996).

Solitary Vireo (p. 69) is split into Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*), Cassin's Vireo (*V. cassinii*), and Plumbeous Vireo (*V. plumbeus*). All three species have ABA code 1 and N designations. For identification criteria and distribution information, see Heindel (1996).

The Canary-winged Parakeet (p. 46) is split into Yellow-chevroned Parakeet (*Brotogeris chiriri*) and the Canary-winged (or "White-winged") Parakeet (*B. versicolurus*). It is the former species that is now most solidly established in southern Florida (Smith and Smith 1993), but the ABA Checklist committee will reassess the placement of one or both of these taxa on the ABA

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matters. We believe that deviations from those decisions are most unwise and would contribute little other than creating taxonomic and nomenclatural confusion.

Before considering adding a new species to the *ABA Checklist*, the Committee generally will await decisions by the relevant state and provincial committees, if they exist, and then ask to receive a copy of their deliberations. If potential new additions are rejected by these committees, we will not normally review the record unless there is a request to do so by one or more ABA CLC members.

The ABA CLC is willing to review all records of potential first ABA Area records, even those that represent single-observer sight-records. We cannot stress strongly enough, however, that “tangible” archival evidence in the form of a specimen, photo, video, or audio tape is the best form of documentation. Obtaining such documentation should be the observer’s first priority when encountering any exceptional record. Some states (e.g., Texas and Alaska) require “tangible” evidence before a new species is added to the main state list.

At the February 1997 meeting the Committee voted unanimously to drop the “Origin Uncertain” list (identification accepted but origin questioned by at least two, but fewer than four, members), which was established by the Committee in 1992 (DeBenedictis 1994). It was agreed that the category has led to confusion and misapplication counter to the original intent. The three species on that list were White-chinned Petrel

(*Procellaria aequinoctialis*), Band-tailed Gull (*Larus belcheri*), and Black Catbird (*Melanoptila glabrirostris*). These species are now all treated as “not accepted” on the basis of questionable origin.

The Committee also backed away from some of the wording of the previous Chair (ABA 1996) on the thorny issue of ship assistance or restraint. It believes that each member should vote based on his or her own overall philosophy.

In 1982 Benton Basham developed the system of ABA listing codes (1 through 6), the definitions of which the ABA CLC has followed since then. There was broad consensus at the February meeting that these codes needed modification to more accurately reflect true status rather than the ease with which the given species can be located. After much discussion and continued correspondence after the meeting, we have settled on the definitions for the listing codes which are detailed below. Beginning with Common Redshank, all future additions to the checklist will reflect these new codes. Obviously, the codes given the species on the current *ABA Checklist* will have to be overhauled prior to publication of its 6th edition (anticipated for 1999).

**Code 6: Cannot be found.** The species is probably or actually extinct or extirpated from the ABA Checklist Area, or all survivors are held in captivity (or releases are not yet naturally re-established).

**Code 5: Accidental.** Species that are recorded five or fewer times in the ABA Checklist Area, or fewer than three records in the past 30 years.

**Code 4: Casual.** Species not recorded annually in the ABA Checklist Area, but with six or more total records—including three or more in the past 30 years—reflecting some pattern of occurrence.

**Code 3: Rare.** Species that occur annually in very low numbers in the ABA Checklist Area; there may be occasional breeding records.

**Codes 1 and 2: Regularly occurring North American avifauna.** Includes regular breeding species and visitors. Code-2 designations are reserved for those species that are found only in remote and/or difficult-to-access areas. Some Code-2 species may be more difficult to find than some species with higher code designations.

## New Species Accepted— Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

**When.** 24 April–14 May 1995.

**Number, Location, and Documentation.** At least five individuals at three different locations in Newfoundland. The first individual was located on 28 April at Bonavista. It was joined by a second individual on 29 April, and these two remained sporadically through 1 May. In addition, a bird in largely basic plumage was seen at the same location on 30 April. Another bird was found at Port Union, Bonavista Peninsula (20 km south of Bonavista), on 29 April, and it remained until 7 May. Finally, one was found at Cape Broyle, Avalon Peninsula, on 4 May and remained until 14 May. All of these individuals were photographed. For detailed accounts

of these records, including color photos, see especially Knowles (1995) and Mactavish (1996).

**Vote.** 7/0.

**Placement on the ABA Checklist.**

Insert after Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*).

**Birding code.** 5.

**Discussion.** This widespread and migratory (some populations) Palearctic species has long been predicted to occur in North America (Roberson 1988). Indeed, there are previous unsubstantiated sightings from Canada detailed by Godfrey (1986). Large numbers breed in Iceland (Cramp and Simmons 1983), and it has been recorded on at least 16 occasions from the southeast (3), northeast (9), and western (4) parts of Greenland from April through August (Boertmann 1994). Thus its occurrence in Newfoundland is not surprising. The five birds recorded in Newfoundland followed a prolonged period of strong northeast winds. Large numbers of European Golden-Plovers (*Pluvialis apricaria*), five Pink-footed Geese (*Anser brachyrhynchus*), and other records of primarily Western Palearctic species occurred in this region following that same meteorological event (Knowles 1995, Mactavish 1996).

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## The Forty-first Supplement to the AOU Check-list (continued)

**Checklist and evaluate their status in both Florida and California.**

Band-tailed Gull (p. 87, "Species of Uncertain Origin") is split into Belcher's Gull (*Larus belcheri*) and Olrog's Gull (*Larus atlantucus*). Reports in the ABA Checklist Area that can be determined to species level involve Belcher's Gull.

### Changes in Scientific Names due to Generic Reallocations

Short-tailed Albatross (p. 14) becomes *Phoebastria albatrus*; Black-footed Albatross (p. 14) becomes *Phoebastria nigripes*; Laysan Albatross (p. 14) becomes *Phoebastria immutabilis*; Black-browed Albatross (p. 14) becomes *Thalassarche melanophris*; Shy Albatross (p. 14) becomes *Thalassarche cauta*; Yellow-nosed Albatross (p. 14) becomes *Thalassarche chlororhynchus*; Masked Duck (p. 25) becomes *Nomonyx dominicus*; Gray Hawk (p. 27) becomes *Asturina nitida*; Spruce Grouse (p. 29) becomes *Falcapennis canadensis*; Parakeet Auklet (p. 43) becomes *Aethia psittacula*; Burrowing Owl (p. 48) becomes

*Athene cunicularia*; Cliff Swallow (p. 58) becomes *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*; Cave Swallow (p. 58) becomes *Petrochelidon fulva*; Black-capped Chickadee (p. 60) becomes *Poecile atricapillus*; Carolina Chickadee (p. 60) becomes *Poecile carolinensis*; Mexican Chickadee (p. 60) becomes *Poecile sclateri*; Mountain Chickadee (p. 60) becomes *Poecile gambeli*; Siberian Tit (p. 61) becomes *Poecile cinctus*; Boreal Chickadee (p. 61) becomes *Poecile hudsonicus*; Chestnut-backed Chickadee (p. 61) becomes *Poecile rufescens*; Bridled Titmouse (p. 61) becomes *Baeolophus wollweberi*; Oak Titmouse and Juniper Titmouse (p. 61, formerly "Plain Titmouse") are placed in the genus *Baeolophus*, as noted above; Tufted Titmouse (p. 61) becomes *Baeolophus bicolor*; and Five-striped Sparrow (p. 77) becomes *Aimophila quinquestriata*.

### Changes in Scientific Names Dictated by Nomenclatural Rules

The scientific name of American Golden-Plover (p. 32) is restored

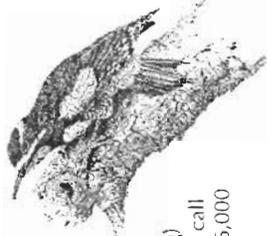
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to *Pluvialis dominica*; that of Olive-sided Flycatcher (p. 55) is changed to *Contopus cooperi*.

### Changes in English Names

Falcatad Teal (p. 22) becomes Falcatad Duck. Mexican Crow (p. 60) becomes Tamaulipas Crow.

### Changes at the Level of Family and Order

The New World Vultures (family Cathartidae, p. 25) are removed from the order Falconiformes and put in the order Ciconiiformes, after the storks (p. 20). The New World Quail (Montezuma Quail through Mountain Quail, p. 30) are elevated to family status, as family Odontophoridae. The family Upupidae (p. 52) is placed in its own order, Upupiformes. The genera *Pachyrampus* (Rose-throated Becard, p. 57) and *Tityra* (Masked Tityra, p. 57) are removed from the family Tyrannidae and placed as *incertae sedis* ("place uncertain") immediately after that family. The shrikes (Laniidae, pp. 68-69), vireos (Vireonidae, pp. 69-70), and crows, jays, and allies (Corvidae, pp. 59-60) will now be placed, in that sequence, immediately before the larks (p. 57). The starlings (Sturnidae, p. 69) will be placed immediately after the mockingbirds and thrashers (Mimidae, p. 67). The subfamilies of the family Muscicapidae (thrushes and allies) are restored to family level. Old World Warblers (Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler through Arctic Warbler, p. 63) become family Sylviidae. The kinglets (p. 63) are placed in their own family Regulidae. The Old World Flycatchers (Narcissus Flycatcher through Asian Brown Flycatcher, p. 64) are retained in the family Muscicapidae. The true thrushes, Siberian Rubythroat (p.

64) through Aztec Thrush (p. 66), become family Turdidae. The Wrenit (p. 66) is placed in the family Timaliidae. The Olive Warbler (p. 74) is placed in its own family Peucedramidae, which precedes the wood-warblers (p. 70). The subfamilies within the family Emberizidae are restored to family rank. The wood-warblers (pp. 70-74) become family Parulidae. The Bananaquit (p. 74) becomes family Coerebidae. The tanagers (pp. 74-75) become family Thraupidae. The cardinals, buntings, and grosbeaks (Northern Cardinal, p. 75, through Dickcissel, p. 76) are elevated to family Cardinalidae and placed after the family Emberizidae. The New World Sparrows and allies (Olive Sparrow, p. 76, through McKay's Bunting, p. 80) are retained as family Emberizidae. The blackbirds and orioles (Bobolink, p. 80, through Scott's Oriole, p. 82) become family Icteridae.

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