Check-list Supplement

2016 Listing Snapshot

6,833 New Big Year World Record

Amazon Big Day

Introducing the American Ornithological Society

Mexico Big Day | Adding "Hawaii-only" Species | Listing Central Update
ABA Event

Tanzania Birds & Big Game Safari

When: March 31–April 10, 2018
Where: Arusha, Tarangire National Park, Ngorongoro Crater, and Serengeti National Park
Hosts: Jeff & Liz Gordon, Adam Riley, George Armistead and others
Cost: $4250 (single supplement $495)
Limit: 120 (small field groups of 12 people)

Tanzania is without doubt one of the most exciting trips a birder can make, with hundreds of species of birds, many of them large, tame, and colorful. Add to that the iconic mammals, scenery, and culture and you have an experience that will rank as among the most memorable of a lifetime. Our itinerary includes the Serengeti, famous for its extravagant megafauna, but also home to star birds like Gray-crested Helmetshrike, Red-throated Tit, and Steel-blue Whydah. Our tour is timed with hopes to see the magnificent migration of wildebeest, zebra and antelope. We will also visit Ngorongoro crater, Earth’s largest intact volcanic caldera, which also harbors dense populations of large mammals, as well as forest brimming with birds such as Hildebrandt’s Francolin, Schalow’s Turaco, and dazzling Tacazze Sunbirds, among others. For superb birding, masses of iconic animals, and photo ops galore, join the ABA and Rockjumper for an incredible adventure into the heart of Africa.

For more details and registration, go to: events.aba.org
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Correspondence

3 From the President
JEFFREY A. GORDON

3 From the Editor
MICHAEL L. P. RETTER

5 About the Contributors

Articles

6 Introducing the American Ornithological Society
PAUL HESS

8 The Story and Strategy of a Record-Breaking Big Day in Amazonia
SEAN M. WILLIAMS

18 My Biggest Year
ARJAN DWARSHUIS

24 A Little Big Day in Mexico
STEVE N. G. HOWELL & JONATHAN VARGAS

28 ABA Checklist Committee Update: Adding “Hawaii-only” Species
PETER PYLE

36 Check-list Supplement Redux, v. 2017
MICHAEL L. P. RETTER

43 2016 Listing Snapshot

48 Listing Central Update
GREG NEISE

On the cover: Alex Warnick created the wonderful artwork on this issue’s cover. It depicts an array of birds for which taxonomic fortunes have changed this year. Birder’s Guide to Listing & Taxonomy aims to explain these changes in straightforward language.

1 • “Kumlien’s” Iceland Gull; 2 • “Thayer’s” Iceland Gull; 3 • Cassia Crossbill; 4 • Yellow-breasted Chat; 5 • Rivoli’s Hummingbird; 6 • Northern Shrike; 7 • Yellow-fronted Canary.

Artwork © Alex Warnick
From the President

The American Birding Association strives to offer birders of all sorts both information and inspiration that will help them get more from their birding. Each year in the Birder’s Guide to Listing and Taxonomy, we aim to illuminate the sometimes confusing science that is so central to birding, as well as to inspire you to get out and conquer new birding challenges, be they in your backyard or across the continent.

Birding takes in so many things—it’s part sport, part science, part contemplation of Nature and our place in it, part pure sensory delight. It is by turns social and solitary. At the ABA, we’re proud to support all of it and all of you.

The Birder’s Guide series, which is free online to all at aba.org/birdersguide, is just one way the American Birding Association works to fulfill its mission to inspire all people to enjoy and protect wild birds. To those of you who support our work through membership and donations, my sincere thanks. And if you’re not an ABA member yet, I cordially invite you to consider joining at aba.org/join or by calling us at 800-850-2473.

Good birding,

Jeffrey A. Gordon
President, American Birding Association

From the Editor

Listing and taxonomy may not immediately seem related, but dive a bit deeper, and it soon becomes apparent. Of course, ABA Area listers depend on the American Ornithologists’ Union to maintain its checklist because they use its taxonomy as the scorecard for their listing endeavors. Rather, they used to. Paul Hess explains what led to the birth of the American Ornithological Society in this issue. Our annual “Check-list Redux” explains in simple terms all that’s changed on the (now) AOS Check-list in 2017.

You can use this information to update your list totals in ABA’s Listing Central. Greg Neise tells us what’s new there in the “Listing Central Update”, and last year’s top totals are found in the “Listing Snapshot”. Other listing articles in this issue include details on a new world-record Big Year, an impressive Big Day effort in South America, and an update from ABA Checklist Committee chair Peter Pyle on the progress of incorporating Hawaiian species into the ABA Checklist.

Whether your passion is attending bird walks in a local park, competing in Big Days, or keeping up-to-date on the latest details of duck taxonomy, I hope you will find something of interest in this issue. Please take a moment to let us know what you did and didn’t like, and what was missing. Even better, write something for us! And, finally, be sure to check in at aba.org/birdersguide, where you will find links to discussions about the articles you see here. We look forward to hearing from you!

Good birding,

Michael L. P. Retter
Editor, Birder’s Guide
Birder’s Guide is published by the American Birding Association, Inc., a not-for-profit organization that inspires all people to enjoy and protect wild birds.

The American Birding Association, Inc., seeks to encourage and represent the North American birding community and to provide resources through publications, meetings, partnerships, and birder networks. The ABA’s education programs develop birding skills, an understanding of birds, and the will to conserve. The ABA’s conservation programs offer birders unique ways to protect birds and their habitats.

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About the Contributors

Arjan Dwarshuis is the 30-year-old owner of The Birding Experience with Arjan Dwarshuis, a Netherlands-based birding company that offers custom guiding, talks, workshops, and excursions around the world. He has a bachelor’s degree in Northwest European archaeology and is studying landscape archaeology at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. In 2016 he set a world Big Year record, ticking off 6,851 species in one calendar year, following the latest IOC World Bird List taxonomy. Through his Big Year, he raised over €31,000 for BirdLife International’s Preventing Extinctions program.

Paul Hess, a retired newspaper editor residing in southwestern Pennsylvania, has written 305 articles since 2003 for ABA’s News and Notes column in Birding and the former Winging It newsletter. He has coauthored and edited numerous publications for National Geographic Books and other publishers, and he currently edits The Peregrine, the newsletter of the 350-member Three Rivers Birding Club in Pittsburgh. He would be happier to add a species to his (currently 185-species) local park list than to get an ABA Area lifer.

Steve N. G. Howell has been watching birds for as long as he can remember—of course, this may simply mean that his memory is not very good… He is an international bird tour leader with WINGS and a popular speaker and trip leader at birding festivals. Steve has authored numerous books and articles, mainly about birds, and the common thread to his life is that birding should be fun. He has been birding in Mexico for over 30 years and still finds the country magical, with something new to learn on every trip.

Peter Pyle grew up primarily in Hawaii. He has worked as an ornithologist and a marine biologist. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Peter partook in the Hawaii, Micronesia, and Samoa Forest Bird Surveys; during the 1980s and through the early 2000s he did research on birds and white sharks at the Farallon Islands off San Francisco. Currently, he is a staff biologist at The Institute for Bird Populations in Point Reyes Station, California, where he specializes in bird molts and plumages. Peter is a Research Associate at the B.P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu, and the California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, and is currently Chair of the ABA Checklist Committee. In that capacity, he is overseeing the integration of Hawaiian bird species onto the forthcoming ABA Checklist.

Michael L. P. Retter is the editor of Birder’s Guide magazine and the author of the ABA Field Guide to Birds of Illinois. A former full-time and now part-time birding tour leader (with BRANT), he has traveled extensively in the northern half of the Americas. Michael is a past chair and current member of the Indiana Bird Records Committee, reviews eBird records for Illinois, Indiana, and Mexico; and runs the continent’s informal LGBTQ birders’ club, QBNA. He lives and gardens in Fort Worth, Texas, where he now spends much of his time writing an upcoming Princeton guide to the birds of Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize.

Jonathan Vargas is a shorebird biologist and Mexican birding guide born in San Blas, Nayarit, where he started guiding 10 years ago. From 2014–2016 he guided in La Paz, Baja California Sur, and he recently moved to Ensenada, Baja California, where he works at Terra Peninsular, A.C., an organization that preserves and protects natural ecosystems in the Baja California Peninsula. Jonathan’s duties at Terra include conducting bird surveys, guiding birding trips, and promoting birding tours and eco-tours in the communities and natural protected areas of the Sierra de San Pedro Mártir National Park and San Quintín Bay.

Alex Warnick is a natural history artist based in southern Indiana. She works with conservation efforts in order to foster a greater awareness of a location’s unique avifauna. While the style of her work pays homage to artist-naturalists of the 19th century, each painting is based on her own personal experiences in the field. She recently completed an artist residency with a national wildlife refuge and was the recipient of the Donald Eckleberry Endowment. Currently, Alex is working on a project highlighting the endemic birds of Hispaniola.

Sean Williams grew up in the monotonously gray concrete jungle of South Boston, Massachusetts. Nature was a precious commodity in such an urban community, so he greatly appreciated the rare instances in which he encountered native birds. Encouraged by local ornithological philanthropists Wayne and Betty Petersen, Sean studied ornithology and ecology at Ohio Wesleyan University for his bachelor’s degree and at Michigan State University for his Ph.D. His dissertation examined the behavioral ecology of antshrike-antwren flocks of the Neotropical rainforest understory. Sean currently resides in Westborough, Massachusetts and finds immense joy in birding Cape Cod and other coastal areas of the state.
Introducing the American Ornithological Society

ew World ornithology made a major advance in 2016 with a merger of the American Ornithologists’ Union and the Cooper Ornithological Society. For science, for birds’ environmental future, and for educating a new generation of researchers, the new American Ornithological Society (AOS) is more than a combination of names.

We now have an important new scientific organization “dedicated to the study and conservation of birds” (americanornithology.org). Each of the two venerable organizations was born more than a century ago, and current members were clearly enthusiastic about moving far beyond that old age. More than 90% of the two organizations’ membership voted for the merger.

As this is written, the AOS has 2,990 members who range from esteemed professors to enthusiastic young researchers—and, yes, to many people who consider themselves just plain birders. Steven R. Beissinger, the AOS president, tells us ABA members, “We believe that we can better serve ornithologists and advance ornithology by combining our assets to working together as a single merged society.”

Which brings us to the question, what does the merger mean to the broad American Birding Association community? The answers are: superficially, almost nothing; fundamentally, a lot.

First, the superficials: The long-familiar American Ornithologists’ Union Check-list of North American Birds is newly named The American Ornithological Society’s Check-list of North American Birds. It remains the official source on taxonomy of species found in the region and on which the ABA Checklist is based. It is produced by what is now named the AOS Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of North and Middle American Birds, but its organizational structure is unchanged because there was no counterpart within the Cooper Ornithological Society.

With one exception, the vast regions of coverage continue to extend “from the Arctic through Panama, including the West Indies and Hawaiian Islands”. The exception is newly added Greenland, which had been absent from the covered area since 1983. This return is appropriate in the AOS committee’s view because it is “geographically, physiographically, and tectonically part of North America”. (Note: The ABA Area does not include Greenland.)

Subspecies are a perennial topic of interest (and, heaven knows, dispute) in classification. There has been no coverage of the subject since the 1957 AOU Check-list edition. The AOS website refers us to online resources of Avibase (tinyurl.com/Avibase-home) and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Birds of North America (tinyurl.com/BNA-subspecies) for up-to-date treatments.

Now, the fundamentals, which are certainly important to birders as well:

In a November 2016 message, Beissinger told members, “Coming together to form the AOS, we are now a stronger society, and we will need this strength to take on the formidable challenges ahead. With the growing gap between what the public believes about the world and how science tells us it works, and the growing threats to science and birds, our mission is more important than ever.”

The AOS mission statement is clear: “advancing scientific knowledge and conservation of birds.” Goals include openly accessible ornithological research, organizing and hosting annual conferences that meet the ever-changing needs of ornithology and ornithologists, recognizing and promoting significant accomplishments in ornithology, developing and encouraging young scientists through student and postdoctoral research awards, and sustaining scientific impact through financial support for ornithological research.

Another aspect of the mission is equally clear. It is the pursuit of a global perspective—recognition that research is not restricted to particular political boundaries. Readers of The Auk and The Condor are already well aware of the crucial links among not only New World avian conditions but also for worldwide knowledge of birds’ seasonal breeding, migration, and wintering patterns. The ultimate effect of all this research might well be summarized in a single, practical goal: conservation.

Collaboration between the two venerable organizations began six years ago when leaders wondered about the prospects of a merger. Before long, a scientific sign of things to come was a new thematic link between The Auk and The Condor (described in the January/February 2014 issue of Birding, pp.32–33). The Auk is now subtitled “Ornithological Advances”, focusing on basic research—the source of all knowledge. The Condor’s subtitle is “Ornithological Applications”, translating those findings into practical concerns of population dynamics, diverse threats to species’ future, and conservation.

In the first issue of The Auk in 1884, the eminent ornithologist Elliott Coues told us in 10 detail-crammed pages about “Ornithophilologicalities” (no joke), but the issue had nary a pointed mention of conservation. Other than oddities like that, the main themes were birds’ distribution and abundance. Truth be told, though, it was not long before the topic did receive increasing attention.

For example, topics of two recent papers in The Auk point implicitly to possible conservation concerns: “Habitat quality and
nest-box occupancy by five species of oak woodland birds” and “Stopover biology of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds during autumn migration”.

The first issue of The Condor in 1899, then named Bulletin of the Cooper Ornithological Society of California, did proclaim that “The Bulletin stands for bird protection, and will strenuously oppose wanton slaughter at all times regardless of its source.”

That tradition continues today, embodied in recent research papers in The Condor: Ornithological Applications. These include extensive studies examining threats to birds as diverse as Greater Sage-Grouse, Spectacled Eider, Snowy Plover, Alaska’s shorebirds in general, Smith’s Longspur, and many other troubled species.

Such subjects can enrich birders’ understanding of what is needed for protection of birds. President Beissinger tells birders, “The first meeting of the AOS was held in August of this this year. Please come join us in future years!”

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The Story and Strategy of a Record-Breaking Big Day in Amazonia

Amazonian Streaked-Antwrens, like this female, are common around oxbow lakes, foraging low to the water among the bushes.

Photo © Sean Williams
Screaming Pihas are a nuisance to any serious attempt at an Amazonian Big Day. Though they are commonly cited as “the voice of Amazonia” (Schulenberg et al. 2010), on 23 July 2015 at Los Amigos Biological Station during a Big Day in the Peruvian Amazon, I strategically avoided the stentorian Screaming Piha leks because no other birds could be heard over the rau-cous terrors.

This station in southern Peru lies within a land grant of hundreds of square miles of pristine Amazonian rainforest, where charismatic fauna roam. Routinely sighted are jaguars, tapirs, anacondas, Harpy Eagles, poison dart frogs, and 10 monkey species. The reserve is home to about 600 avian species, all found within walking distance of the station. It is a five-hour boat ride away from the nearest city and composed of several open-air buildings with metal roofs and walls of mosquito screen.

Over three field seasons at Los Amigos, each three months long, I investigated the behavioral ecology of the profoundly fascinating understory mixed-species flocks as part of my doctoral thesis at Michigan State University. As involved as I was with my research, the birder in me could not turn my eyes away from the unique birding opportunities in my Amazonian back-yard.

Finding as many species as possible in 24 hours is one of the most exhilarating challenges for avid birders, but it is far from easy in the tropical rainforest. Seeing any bird well enough to identify is an accomplishment due to the darkness of the densely foliaged understory and the height of the canopy. Therefore, finding birds by voice is critically important.

Tropical birds tend to be extremely sedentary by virtue of their long lives and year-round territory occupation (Martinez and Zenil 2012). An individual bird down to the size of a chickadee may be found in the same territory for over 10 years (Snow and Lill 1974)! Staking out birds in territories, nest sites, and at roosts is a significant component in the Neotropical Big Day bird-finding algo-rithm. During many long days of following flocks for my research, the birds and I became close friends. Not only had I learned to identify the avian sounds of the forest, but also learned the exact locations of many rare species. The three field seasons prepared me for this day, the biggest of all my Big Days.

Over the course of my field seasons, fierce friajes—bone-chilling and blustery winter storms occurring in May through
Amazonian Big Day

August—ravaged the typically hot and humid forest. Tropical birds are normally active in the cool, early morning hours but are so incredibly slow in the hot afternoon that one wonders if the birds have all collapsed from heat exhaustion! However, as the days warm up following a friaje, the winds are calm, the skies are clear, and temperatures are cool; in turn, birds actively forage and sing throughout the day. In addition, the ear-splitting cicadas that often preclude hearing faint or distant birds are silent on these cool days, which greatly extends the audibility of distant birdsong.

Thus, I was well equipped with the ultimate tools for finding birds in the ultimate location—I had learned how to find the birds, where to find them, and when to find them. On 23 July 2015, a day after a friaje, the perfect birding storm emerged, and I knew it could be my biggest day ever.

At 4 a.m. on 23 July, the eerie whistle of a distant Variegated Tinamou woke me—the first bird of the day. I relinquished the remaining hours of darkness to search for nocturnal birds since I was too anxious to sleep. I left the station at 4:15 a.m. and crept along a forested trail that bordered the uplands and lowlands, which contain different suites of species. Aside from the most common owls and nightjars, the only challenging pickup was a Lined Forest-Falcon found in its regular roost. During nocturnal searches for jaguars a month before, I accidently flushed this falcon from a roost. The falcon remained faithful to this tree each night, and so it became one of many stakeout birds that led to the Big Day’s success.

At 5:30 a.m., the first sounds of day commenced. A Wing-barred Piprites was the first passerine to sing. I stood motionlessly in an area that I strategically selected because it bordered forest and bamboo, where I could hear rare species that sing only at dawn.

Los Amigos Biological Station is home to many habitats that can be accessed easily in a single day: upper and lower terrace forests, bamboo, marsh, thickets, river and riparian forest, palm swamp, and several high overlooks for scanning the canopy and the skies. The overall strategy was to visit all possible types of habitats. A different array of specialist species is found in each habitat, and so rounding up those specialists played a most important part in the algorithm of a Big Day in the tropical rainforest.

I stood humbled by hundreds of towering trees and mentally sorted through the cacophony of voices. I searched for several target species, including the Blue-backed Manakin, Banded Antbird, and Collared Puffbird. This location had been a reliable spot to hear Great Jacamar and Collared and Buckley’s forest-falcons, but those species never audibly vocalized and, surprisingly, I missed them the rest of the day. A Laughing Falcon distantly wailed, a bonus to partially make up for the misses.

Collared Puffbirds are rare, but a few pairs are reliable at Los Amigos. Photo © Sean Williams
By 6 a.m., the Amazonian avian chorus was deafening. It is possible for 100 species to be heard by an observer standing in the right spot for 15 minutes. My mind was struggling to keep up with identifying the diversity of species resonating throughout the forest. It was difficult to tune out the louder species, such as a nearby group of common Purple-throated Fruitcrows (which sound like many muffled voices caroling “bow-ow”), in order to focus on the inconspicuously voiced Fiery-capped Manakin (easily mistaken for the tinking of an insect).

At 6:15 a.m., I sauntered deep into the spiny bamboo. Almost all the bamboo specialists were singing right on cue, including the endemic Peruvian Recurvebill, Long-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, and Flammulated Bamboo Tyrant. Three species of flatbills serenaded, an unexpected White-browed/Black-faced Hawk whistled, and a trio of Lettered Araçaris bounced among some nearby branches.

In a large gap, I was treated to a group of rare and nomadic White-thighed Swallows, a species I had seen only once in the previous three months.

At 7 a.m., I descended onto the lower terrace, where many ripe, low-hanging avian fruits waited for me to pluck them from the bushes. Cocha Seca, an area consisting of dense thickets in standing water, held many more niched species, such as the Blackish Antbird and Black Bushbird. The Black Bushbird and aforementioned Black-faced Hawk have puzzling range distributions. They were once thought to occur only north of the Amazon River but more recently have been found in previously overlooked, scattered patches south of the Amazon, including the forest at Los Amigos (Schulenberg et al. 2010). To this day, there is no satisfactory explanation for these anomalous distributions, adding to the long list of unsolved mysteries in the vast Amazon basin.

Unfortunately, neither the Dot-backed nor the Spot-backed antbird along Cocha Seca was cooperating. Farther into the forest, I passed through the territory of a particular mixed-species flock that I study in my research. Due to the strong predictability of this flock’s location and its species composition, I knew it would be worth the time to pry out two formidable foliage-gleaners—Rufous-tailed and Cinnamon-rumped foliage-gleaners. Cocha Lobo, an oxbow lake, and the Los Amigos River held many more lake and river specialists, including the...
Amazonian Big Day

Amazonian Streaked-Antwren, Striped Woodcreeper, and Little Ground-Tyrant.

In the Amazon, antbirds, ovenbirds, and flycatchers make up almost half the total avian diversity. Therefore, a Big Day in the southern lowlands of Peru is largely a game of keying into unmusical, relatively similarly-sounding and -appearing species. After having swept much of the riverine specialists, I returned to the forest and found a male Ash-throated Gnateter incubating eggs on a previously found nest, a species that I missed otherwise.

The lunch hour was looming, so I traveled back to the station along a ridgeside that helped me clean up some missed species from earlier in the day. A usually reliable Thrush-like Antpitta apparently had other business to conduct rather than respond to my playback. Missing that antpitta pained me because it was the only chance I had for that species.

Many of these misses occurred throughout the day, but I carried on. Other parts of the algorithm demanded attention. Just a bit beyond the non-antpitta, two species surprised me—the uncommon Yellow-billed Nunbird was catching flies in the broken canopy, and a rare pack of four Ivory-billed Araçaris were foraging on the ground just off trail! I booked it back to the station to scan for raptors, which were markedly absent.

At this point in the day, I ran a quick tally and had around 270 species—fantastic! The cool temperatures throughout the morning had prolonged foraging and singing activity. Several large gaps in my list remained, though. I had intentionally ignored canopy flocks containing tanagers, flycatchers, and ovenbirds in the morning because (a) those often remain active throughout the day on cool and hot days alike, and (b) I was focused on traversing the strategic route through the various habitats of the morning. Marsh birds were completely untouched. Many easy species still eluded me, such as the Great Antshrike and either the Scarlet or Red-and-green macaw.

After scarfing a mess hall lunch of the usual rice and beans (although sometimes they serve beans and rice), I passed a high overlook of the Madre de Dios River, where the clear skies allowed views of the snow-capped Andes more than 100 miles away. The omnipresent Black-banded Crake and Chestnut-bellied Seed-Finch were procured quickly in the wet grassy margins below the cliff side. The assortment of herons and egrets that had danced along a large sandy beach every day for the past month was absent! And despite almost an hour of scanning, raptors were still mostly M.I.A. An Ornate Hawk-Eagle flew over calling, a small consolation for missing other raptors and the waders.

Luckily, the airstrip held some targets,
such as Long-billed Gnatwren, Chestnut-headed Crake, and Blue-black Grassquit. I walked a ridge that bordered a palm swamp, where I did not need to wait long for a Point-tailed Palmcreeper to sing. The handsome Orange-cheeked Parrot remained on its nest from previous weeks and provided a quick tick as I slipped in and out of its view. I still had not encountered any canopy flocks, and there were only three hours until sunset at 5:28 p.m.

I strode trails and listened for Dusky-capped Greenlets and White-winged Shrike-Tanagers, which serve as indicator species for the presence of a canopy mixed-species flock. Fortunately, several flocks were along the most northern trail in the forest, which held a couple surprises—an elusive Black-bellied Cuckoo, whose abundance thins out in southern Peru. A trio of very rare Yellow-shouldered Grosbeaks appeared, which was not only the first record for the Los Amigos area but also a life bird for me. It was tempting to pause to admire at length such a rare treat, but I had to forge on.

From an ornithological perspective, the best find of the day followed shortly thereafter. While I was listening for greenlets and shrike-tanagers, a small bird flushed from a short palm less than a meter from my legs, an almost

Always abundant at the station, Blue-and-yellow Macaws stream their long tails across the sky at dawn and dusk while simultaneously belting out their cacophonous chortles. Photo © Sean Williams
guaranteed sign of a nest. I got on the bird with my binoculars—a male Madeira Antwren (then known as Stipple-throated Antwren)—and easily found the roofed, cup-shaped nest with two magenta-spotted white eggs 30 cm (about a foot) from the ground. The nest of this species was previously unknown to science (Williams 2016). The following day, I returned to formally describe the nest and record breeding behavior; there is no time for such frivolities on a Big Day.

At last, I arrived at Cocha Raya, my final destination in daylight. I perched high on a cliff that viewed miles of canopy broken by a grassy marsh mixed with bushes in the foreground. Many key marsh and scrub specialists were in full song, such as the Gray-breasted Crake, Little Cuckoo, Plain-crowned Spinetail, Black-billed Seed-Finch, and Solitary Black Cacique. A pair of regal Horned Screamers occupied their nest, and dozens of tanagers, including Turquoise, Paradise, and Opal-crowned, chipped and streamed through the trees overhead. With the sun at my back, I scanned the skies for distant flying species as they headed into their roosts, which including a Black Caracara, a high-flying Giant Cowbird, and two Crested Oropendolas, each converted into a saffron hue by the low sun.

After an uneventful walk back to the

BACKGROUND: The overlook by the front cabins of the station offers spectacular scenes above the Río Madre de Dios. Sometimes you can even see snow atop Andean mountain peaks over 100 miles away. Photo © Sean Williams

BELOW: Scissor-tailed Nightjar is a poorly known austral migrant to southern Peru, so I was thrilled to find this individual on 2 June 2015. A month and a half later, the bird could be found in the same exact spot on the trail. Photo © Sean Williams
station, I dined and headed out one last time in hopes of wringing out a final few birds. A Scissor-tailed Nightjar, which was a continuing first record for the station, could always be found in the airstrip, and tonight was no exception. Two other species cried into the night—a Great Potoo, and my final new species of the day, a Spectacled Owl. At this point, there wasn’t much left to hope for, so I called it quits at 11 p.m.

Perplexingly, my body did not feel a hint of exhaustion. My mind was still racing, ready to spring for the next sound. Flurries of calls from earlier in the day whizzed around my head at 100 mph. Phantom voices of Rusty-fronted Tody-Flycatcher and Dwarf Tyrant-Manakin called late into the night... but wait! Those are strictly diurnal species. I knew in reality these species were not actually present, and I was experiencing the odd ghost bird effect that plagues birders at the end of Big Days. The all-consuming devotion of my mind and body to finding birds for the previous 19 hours was beginning to catch up with my physical limitations.

By midnight, I made the final tally on my computer’s spreadsheet. After a full-on 19 hours and 11 miles, I had logged 345 species! My heart leapt with great surprise when I saw that number. In

At stagnant bodies of water, the folivorous (leaf-eating), Suess-like, stink-turkeys—otherwise known as Hoatzins—nervously snort, spread their wings, and tip forward when people get too close. The young are equally bizarre in having “hand” claws and the ability to swim. Photo © Sean Williams
Amazonian Big Day

1982, the on-foot Big Day record was set at 331 species, recorded at Cocha Cashu Biological Station, 100 miles northwest of Los Amigos Biological Station. The venerable ornithologists Scott Robinson and Ted Parker had marched through their forest in a similar fashion, during a time when Neotropical ornithology was still in its infancy. I ran through the numbers three times in disbelief, although some part of me must have believed it because I was grinning ear to ear. Every detail of that day vividly blazed in my mind, fueling my intense love for the Amazon.

Each factor in the Amazonian Big Day algorithm produced its unique effects in augmenting the species total of 345. The most important factors included: (a) familiarity with calls, especially of flycatchers, furnariids, and antbirds; (b) visiting as many habitats as possible; (c) staking out birds; (d) timing certain species correctly, especially early-morning rare singers and tanager flocks; (e) timing the Big Day after a friaje; and (f) avoiding Screaming Pihas.

Although many factors worked toward an impressive total, my record can be broken. My biggest strategic bungle was the lack of teammates. One person cannot possibly see and hear every available species on a Big Day, and a small group of three to five people could maximize the number of possible species. In addition, more people can help in staking out birds, share list-keeping duties, and carry food supplies so that returns to the station are not necessary. Finally, five of the 24 total hours were unbirded, which potentially could be used for locating roosting riverine species and perhaps a few more rare nocturnal species. I believe 360 or 370 avian species is possible on foot in one day at Los Amigos. The right people, time, and strategy will break the record.

Acknowledgments

I thank my wife for perpetually cheering me on from Michigan while I explored the vast Peruvian Amazon. Jack Stenger provided insightful ideas and critical edits in the final draft of this article. The staff of the Asociación para la Conservación de la Cuenca Amazónica has excelled in providing comfortable accommodations in a remote area and harsh climate.

For the full eBird checklist of the Big Day with more details and photos, visit ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=524475056

Literature Cited


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My Biggest Year
A Record-Breaking Global Journey
2016 was a roller-coaster year for me. I recorded 6,833 different bird species, following the IOC World Bird List taxonomy (Gill & Donsker 2016), in an insane nonstop round-the-world birding adventure, which took me to 40 countries and all continents except Antarctica. As I’m writing this, the number has already grown to 6,851 species due to recent splitting. For just this reason, I meticulously kept track of every distinct subspecies I came across during the year.

A world Big Year is the birder’s equivalent of playing in the Super Bowl, and I would be lying if I told you that I didn’t do it simply for the kick and my love for traveling and birding. However, I also wanted to use this record attempt to give something back to all those amazing birds and the ecosystems they thrive in. For this reason, I decided to raise funding and awareness for BirdLife International’s ground-breaking Preventing Extinctions conservation program, which aims to counteract the extinction of more than 500 critically endangered bird species.

So far, I have raised €31,340, but after observing so many critically endangered birds last year, I feel obliged to keep my fundraiser going. For this reason, I’m donating a percentage of the revenue generated from my talks and workshops to the BirdLife International Preventing Extinctions. I will do the same with my book, which I hope will be finished before spring 2018. You can donate to the program via my web portal at arjandwarshuis.com/donate.

Let me briefly explain how my idea of doing a world Big Year came about. Birding is my greatest passion; it gives me enormous fulfillment, and I could not imagine life without it. When I was a toddler, and other kids drew houses and cars, I drew birds. Since I was nine years old, I have kept track of all my sightings in logbooks, and I watched birds almost every day before school, after school, and often during school. When I was just 14, I traveled to Turkey with a friend to look for Caucasian Grouse and Caspian Snowcock (members of two genera I dipped on completely in 2016), and after finishing high school, I embarked on a seven-month birding trip through Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and South America. Over those seven months in 2006, I recorded well over 2,000 species, mostly while hitchhiking, without any proper planning, and with zero birding in Africa, Europe, Central, or North America.

In 2006, the world Big Year record stood at 3,662 species, set in 1989 by the legendary American ornithologist James Clements. I realised that Clements’s record was beatable and I promised myself that one day I would do my own world Big Year—on a budget and with limited...
use of guides. Because of a young American birder named Noah Strycker, I had to alter these humble plans just a tiny bit.

Sometime in September 2014, I tweeted that 2016 would be my Biggest Year. I would try to beat the standing world record of 4,341 species, set in 2008 by the British couple Ruth Miller and Alan Davies. Half an hour later, I received a phone call from Swarovski Optik offering to sponsor me with their sublime optics, an excellent start! That night I couldn’t sleep as I thought about the huge task at hand. Exactly how huge became apparent the next day when a friend sent me the following text: “Do you know that some American kid will be doing a world Big Year in 2015?” I immediately looked up Noah’s custom page on the Audubon website, and a quick glance at his itinerary made me realize that “this kid” was serious.

I had to step up my game. Over the course of 2015, I contacted guides all over the world, made deals with multiple sponsors, and constructed a mammoth itinerary. Meanwhile, Noah’s list kept growing and growing, and on the 31st of December 2015, he finished his Big Year with a whopping 6,042 species. He had successfully completed his quest. Mine was just hours away from beginning.

The following are just a few excerpts from the travelog of my Big Year.

1 January 2016
THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS
117 species
I just spent most of New Year’s Eve folded over the toilet. I don’t think I have ever felt this nervous in my entire life. Around 3 a.m. I decide to grab some fresh air, and as I open the door to my rooftop terrace, I hear a familiar sound, a Eurasian Robin! I grab my phone and add the sighting on iObs [a European analog to eBird and iNaturalist]; bird species number one is a fact. I finish day one with no less than 117 species, a huge number for a winter day in the Netherlands.

20 January 2016
EAGLE NEST WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, ARUNACHAL PRADESH, INDIA
667 species
“That looks like a landslide,” says Peter Lobo, a legendary pioneering bird guide and expedition leader for northeast India. Indeed, there is a huge mass of snow and fallen logs blocking the only road back to civilization. We clear the landslide with our bare hands and battle on. The Himalayas have just been hit by a freak blizzard, mak-
ing it impossible to visit the legendary Sela Pass; this means no Himalayan Monal, no Blood Pheasant, and no Grandala. I observe just five new species today, but luckily we manage to exit the Eagle Nest Valley in one piece and make it to Kaziranga National Park before midnight.

All is well the next day when we see a huge male Bengal tiger take down prey less than 200 feet away from us. Without the blizzard, we’d not have seen it. It’s like it was meant to be.

22 February 2016
NEAR DAVAO, MINDANAO, PHILIPPINES
1,193 species

In collaboration with Pete Simpson [the owner of Birding Mindanao and a guide for Birdtour Asia] and the Philippine Eagle Foundation, we’ve managed to arrange a visit to a Philippine Eagle nesting site. Two weeks prior to our arrival in the Philippines, [my travel buddy] Max and I receive news from Pete that a one-and-a-half-year-old juvenile bird has reappeared at its nest near Davao City. Against all odds we are suddenly in play to connect with one of the world’s rarest and most sought-after birds.

Tension rises as we wait on a hillside overlooking a forested valley. Down below us, we can see a huge empty nest. Suddenly a group of macaques in a tree on the opposite side of the valley starts going crazy, and seconds later the king of all birds soars past. The juvenile eagle perches near the nest, and we have prolonged views through the telescope. Moments later, the adult female joins the party. We have seen our all-time most-wanted species. What an incredible feeling.

Unfortunately, the future for our planet’s most incredible bird of prey looks grim. With a population of 180 to 500 birds left in the wild (BirdLife International 2017), the Philippine Eagle faces extinction in the near future. These majestic birds occupy territories of at least 10 square kilometers of pristine rainforest. Unfortunately, areas meeting these nesting requirements are nowadays hard to find on the islands of Mindanao and Luzon, which comprise this bird’s entire range. The BirdLife International Preventing Extinctions conservation program and the Philippine Eagle Foundation are the last shreds of hope for the species. To give you my honest opinion: If we lose the Philippine Eagle, then we, as humans, have failed ourselves and our planet.

12 March 2016
NEAR EKAME LODGE, PAPUA NEW GUINEA
1,592 species

We are on a small wooden boat floating downstream on a tributary of the Fly River. It is well past sunset and it feels like Max, our guide Samuel [Kepuknat], and I are the only three people in the world. Pristine forest borders the ink-black water we float on, and the sky is littered with thousands of stars. Suddenly we hear a loud, spooky, foghorn-like booming echoing over the water. A Forest Bittern! The mythical bird is so close we can almost touch it, yet it is so far away since water levels are high and the forest from where it’s calling is completely flooded. Despite not seeing the bird, this experience goes down as one of our best moments in the remote lowlands of Papua New Guinea. The next day, we see a
displaying Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise and a Southern Crowned-Pigeon. It hardly gets any better.

1 April 2016
OPMEER, NETHERLANDS
2,069 species
Just after I left home, I received news that the first-ever Siberian Rubythroat for the Netherlands was wintering in someone’s back garden in the tiny village of Opmeer. Despite all the amazing birds I’ve seen on a daily basis, missing this long-awaited mega felt a bit sore, but against all odds, the beautiful male rubythroat is still present during my layover in the Netherlands on the first of April.

Straight after arriving at Schiphol Airport, I drive to Opmeer with my girlfriend and my parents, and after some searching, we are treated to eyeball-to-eyeball views of this Siberian vagrant. Unbelievable, even though I’m gone for almost an entire year, I still get to see the best bird of the year in the Netherlands!

20 May 2016
ANDASIBE-MANTADIA NATIONAL PARK, MADAGASCAR
3,123 species
One of my most-wanted birds this year is the Helmet Vanga, a rare and spectacular bird with a grotesque, fluorescent blue bill. Despite terrible cold and wet weather, we head out to a remote corner of Andasibe-Mantadia National Park. After driving for two hours with a 4x4 across the worst road imaginable, we arrive at the start of the trail. It is still dark when we start walking. Half an hour later, we leave the trail. Right then I notice that I’ve forgotten my lunchbox and water bottle. For 10 hours straight, we battle our way with a machete through a soaking wet and seemingly impenetrable forest with hardly any birds. When we finally get back to the vehicle, of course without seeing the vanga, I am wet to the bone, starving, and completely broken. I guess it comes with the territory when doing a world Big Year.

22 June 2016
NEAR NYAMIBE, GHANA
3,479 species
The globally endangered White-necked Picathartes was the bird that launched my hero David Attenborough into the limelight in 1954. [He worked behind the screen for a program called Zoo Quest. The host became ill while filming an episode about the picathartes, so Attenborough subbed for him.] Now, 62 years later, I have a chance to come face to face with this legendary species.

It is late afternoon, and my dad, the film crew, and I are waiting on a wooden bench next to an overhanging rockface in the middle of the Ghanaian rainforest. We are not allowed to produce any sound, so we are communicating through sign language. Suddenly, Michiel [van den Bergh], the director of the documentary film about my Biggest Year, starts frantically pointing at the forest edge behind the rock face. Before I can grasp what’s happening, a pair of Picathartes hop into view. I marvel for a full minute at the drop-dead gorgeous birds, but then it is time to fill Attenborough’s shoes. In front of the camera, with the birds attending their nest behind me, I narrate the story of the Picathartes.

With this footage, we hope to reach out to a wider audience. Hopefully our documentary will help create some public support for the conservation of this unique bird, because the West African rainforest in which it thrives is disappearing at an alarming rate. Birdlife International works hard to create public awareness and to involve local communities in the conservation of the species; sustainable ecotourism to the Picathartes breeding sites plays an important role in this process.

23 July 2016
RIO AZUL JUNGLE LODGE, MATO GROSSO, BRAZIL
4,333 species
We have been working the trail for just half an hour when a huge eagle with jet-black
underwing covers flies past below the canopy, a Harpy Eagle. Ecstatic after this observation, we continue, when suddenly a Cryptic Forest-Falcon starts calling. We tape in this recently discovered species in and have incredible views. Half an hour later, we run into an ant swarm with the star bird being the rare Bare-eyed Antbird. On the way back to the lodge, we flush another huge eagle from the trail; it perches 50 feet away from us, and to my amazement, it’s a freaking adult Crested Eagle! During the heat of the day, I manage to photograph the very rare Para Gnatcatcher in a canopy flock. After an absolutely crazy day, we decide that we deserve a relaxing boat ride on the river. First we have a displaying male Crimson Topaz, next a flock of the recently described Bald Parrot flies past, and then we finish the day with incredible views of a male Zigzag Heron. This must have been the most incredible day of birding I’ve ever experienced.

10 September 2016
BOSQUE UNCHOG, PERU
5,192 species
Ten years ago I visited the elfin forest of Bosque Unchog to look for the Golden-backed Mountain-Tanager. Back then, we searched in vain for a full day in the pouring rain—a dip that hurts to this day. Today I finally have the chance to redeem myself. We wake up in the tent after a freezing night at almost 4,000 meters altitude. Luckily the weather is good, and one of the first birds we find is the endemic Bay-vented Cotinga, a species I dipped on last time as well. The mountain-tanager has different plans in store for us, and after 10 hours of extensive searching, we haven’t even heard one. At 4 p.m., it is time to give up and I’m almost crying as we walk back to the car. Barely half a mile from the car, at the last patch of elfin forest, I suddenly hear a weird, high-pitched call. And there, to my astonishment, is a family of three Golden-backed Mountain-Tanagers! I call my girlfriend Camilla through the walkie-talkie and together we have gorgeous views of this gripping species. Finding the bird when all hope seems lost—that is the ultimate feeling of victory.

November 11, 2016
NEAR PARAÍSO, COSTA RICA
6,102 species
Three of my best friends decided to join me and Pieter Westra for three days in Costa Rica. As luck would have it, they are there with me when I break the record. The record-breaking bird is a Buffy-crowned Wood-Partridge that gave excellent views. My friends have taken along a bottle of champagne and a box of cigars to celebrate this milestone. So in the middle of the Costa Rican rainforest, with a glass of champagne in my hand and a cigar in the corner of my mouth, I quote Colonel Hannibal Smith: “I love it when a plan comes together.”

2 January 2017
AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS
6,833 species
What an incredible feeling to come home after traveling and birding for a year. My girlfriend, parents, and friends are there to welcome me at Schiphol Airport. Without them, my Biggest Year would never have been possible, and I am eternally grateful for their unconditional support. This was the adventure of a lifetime. I consider myself extremely lucky for staying healthy throughout the year and being able to thoroughly enjoy myself right until the end of my journey.

Over the course of the past three months, people have repeatedly asked me the question: Would you do it again? I have to answer “no” to this question. It was a one-time gig, but I will continue to raise awareness and funding for conservation. So please feel free to visit my website (arjandwarshuis.com) and make a donation for BirdLife’s Preventing Extinctions conservation program.
A Little
Big Day
in
Mexico
Background

There are around 1,100 bird species in Mexico, but how many can you find in one day? Back in December 1983, Peter Pyle and Steve Howell talked about this over dinner and beers one night in San Blas, Nayarit, and thought 200 might be possible (remember, birds and birding sites weren’t as well known then, and field guides were pretty basic). The next day, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., they found 210 species within 20 miles of town, no playback and no scouting. Steve was pretty happy, especially as this was more species than he’d seen in his home country of Wales in 12 years, not 12 hours!

Fast forward to today, the era of instant communication, xeno-canto, eBird, and such, and the published Big Day record for Mexico (listing.aba.org/bigday/reports/tt/intl) is 266, again from the San Blas area of Nayarit (3 March 2013), with 260 from southern Oaxaca a close second (16 April 2013). Those were more serious Big Days, starting at O-dark-thirty and using playback.

Since that 1983 day, Steve has wondered about another Big Day near San Blas, especially now that the birding sites are much better known. In July 2015, San Blas native Jonathan Vargas, a biologist and bird guide, visited California for some shorebird work, and we birded together and talked about a Big Day around San Blas.

In January 2016, we banded the San Blas area for a few days and talked a bit more about it, but talk is cheap. We figured 200 species should be straightforward in one day, 225 would be fairly easy, but 250 would be tough—the classic curve of diminishing returns. To make it “purer” (read: more challenging), we decided we wouldn’t use playback, although pishing, whistling, squeaking, and such would be OK, and we penciled it in for the next year.
Big Day in Mexico

And So?
In January 2017, Steve came down a few days before leading his regular WINGS birding tour to San Blas, and we planned a route, scouted a couple of days to get a sense for driving times, and then took the plunge. It still wasn’t a really hard-core Big Day: We didn’t leave the hotel until 5:30 a.m., and we were eating shrimp burgers and drinking beer back at the hotel by 8:45 p.m. Call us “soft”, perhaps, but remember, birding is supposed to be fun.

We awoke to clear skies and mild temperatures (the cold, damp fog that had blanketed the coastal lowlands yesterday morning was gone), so our hopes were high. The first bird (other than roosters) was a Pauraque as we drove away from the hotel. Along the road, Boat-billed Herons clucked from the mangroves before Mottled Owls and a Collared Forest-Falcon bracketed the dawn. Then a few chips—Least Flycatcher, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, MacGillivray’s Warbler—and birds were upon us. Seventy species in the first hour of light and it was looking good, but then the fog rolled in. Still, 110 species by 7:40 a.m. as we lucked into a fog-free waterbird pond. Even at the beach, the fog followed us and blotted out the inshore booby rock—but we still managed a couple of Blue-footed Boobies flying offshore = 134 species.

Along the coast southward, and away from the fog, we realized we’d somehow managed to miss Osprey (along with other fog-bound species), a bit like missing Red-tailed Hawk on a California Big Day! Oh well, that’s part of the unpredictability that makes birding fun. The most bizarre sighting of the day came at about 9 a.m., when a kettle of vultures included a Great Black Hawk and a whitish bird, flapping around and circling. It took us a few moments to identify it, so out of context—a Barn Owl, hundreds of feet up in the morning sun! A real Whiskey Tango Foxtrot moment, but one more species.

Up in the hills, a streamside stop netted Louisiana Waterthrush, Orange-fronted Parakeet, and Violet-crowned Hummingbird = 156 species by 9:55 a.m., and now it would get harder. You can’t be everywhere in the 7–9 a.m. window, and when we reached the coffee plantations it was pretty quiet, and hot. Finally, a flock pushed us past 180 species, and then we worked steadily up into the hills, in the constant search for flocks in the forest and raptors from the vistas. Our second surprise of the day was a gleaming snow-white spot in another vulture kettle—a white hawk (note the lowercase W and H: it was a leucistic Red-tailed Hawk, not a White Hawk, which is unknown in west Mexico). Then a really nice flock with Golden-crowned Warbler, Red-headed Tanager, and friends = 196 species by noon, but the clock was ticking...

Into the drier pine-oak zone and a few more species, with number 200 a nice male Rufous Hummingbird. Basically, 200 species in 6.5 hours, but what next? A large volcanic lake about 45 minutes’ drive to the north meant some time “lost” driving (thank goodness, though, for the new toll highway), but the new habitat kicked in a bunch more birds, which compensated—Bridled Titmouse in the oaks, Clark’s Grebe at the lake, House Finches in the brush, and we were up to 241 species on leaving at 3:45 p.m. Well, 250 would seem quite possible (although we weren’t counting as we went—no time for that—and had no idea of our running total). But, figure in the drive back to any decent habitat, and the facts that we’d seen most of the species there, that sunset was at 5:34 p.m., and that we were on the shaded (= cold) side of the mountain, and all we added before dark were White-tailed Kite, Violet-green Swallow, and Colima Pygmy-Owl = 244.

A sunset cold beer and “lunch” (never had time to eat those sandwiches earlier)
as we waited for dark, and then seemingly perfect owling conditions—but nothing much was calling, only Whiskered Screech-Owl (245) and no big owls (several were possible). Our last bird was a female Mexican Whip-poor-will (246) that hunted from perches in the trees by our car as we ate and waited in vain for owls—great scope studies of it (and nice to have time to actually watch a bird), and a good chance to become familiar with its frequently given soft call (not the onomatopoetic song). But then it was time to leave. We couldn’t pull out anything else on the drive back to the hotel, not a potoo on a fence post, nothing... Dinner and our tally revealed the total, and how close we had come to the 250 target. If only no fog, if only a Red-faced Warbler had been in one of the flocks, if only the Eastern Phoebe and Western Kingbird we found when scouting had been there. If only.

Out of interest, we found 31 additional species in our previous two days scouting in the very same places, for a total of 277, and with playback I’d guess we could have added another 10–15 species on the day (think rails, owls, some skulkers we know were there but just not vocal when we passed by). Still, we didn’t feel too bad for a first try, and we came in above the number 3 Mexico Big Day total of 244 species from Oaxaca (30 April 2012). You’ll perhaps notice the other Big Days were all in spring, when birds are more vocal, plus there’s another hour of daylight and passing migrants can swell the totals (OK, enough excuses). But surely we have a non-playback record Big Day for Mexico? Until 2018, that is... 🤔

Distance covered:
295 km (about 185 mi.) driven,
3 km (about 2 miles) on foot

Species detected:
Steve - 245 species, Jonathan - 245 species

99.6% of species were shared
In November 2016, members of the ABA voted overwhelmingly to add the Hawaiian Islands to the ABA Area. Thus, species that occur in the Hawaiian Islands but not in the “Old ABA Area,” now referred to as the “Continental (Traditional) Area” for listing purposes, must be added to the primary ABA Checklist. As a member of the ABA Checklist Committee (ABA-CLC), I agreed to chair the committee during 2017 to integrate Hawaii-only species to the Checklist.

My job has greatly been assisted by the formation of the Hawaii Bird Records Committee (HBRC) in 2014, chaired by Eric VanderWerf, which had established an official Hawaiian Island Checklist by early 2017. I also thank the seven other current members of the ABA-CLC, Mary Gustafson, Tom Johnson, Andy Kratter, Aaron Lang, Mark Lockwood, Ron Pittaway, and David Sibley, for their excellent work and for bearing with me through this process.

The HBRC began its compilation of the Hawaiian Island Checklist (which includes Midway Atoll, not officially part of the state of Hawaii) by reviewing all species on the Primary Checklist at the B. P. Bishop Museum website “The Birds of the Hawaiian Islands: Occurrence, History, Distribution, and Status” (Pyle and Pyle 2009, see tinyurl.com/pylepyle). In the absence of a Hawaiian bird records committee during the mid-to-late 2000s, my father and I served as a de facto records committee, deciding to accept species to the Primary Checklist, or not, based on the documentation available. We used the standards of the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC), of which I had been a member, on and off, for 20 years.

Pyle and Pyle (2009) accepted 317 species to the Primary Checklist and relegated 44 species to a Hypothetical List, which included species with erroneous reports, non-native species (“exotics” in ABA parlance) with populations that they did not consider established, species that had questionable natural occurrence in Hawaii, and species that were reported but for which the documentation did not fully substantiate the identification.

Members of the HBRC reviewed the documentation for the 317 species on the Primary Checklist and some of the 44 species on the Hypothetical List and, at the request of any member, they separately reviewed documentation for acceptance or not to the HBRC Hawaiian Islands Checklist. In the absence of a request, the status listed in Pyle and Pyle (2009) remained unchanged. The HBRC review included nine species accepted by Pyle and Pyle (2009) that lacked evidence in the form of photograph or specimen (sight-only records), two exotic species to judge if they had met population establishment criteria (see p. 32), and records of 20 new species that had been documented between 2009 and 2016. Along with splits of several...
Species

White-necked Petrel (front) and Black-winged Petrel (rear), off Kona, Hawaii Island, 24 November 2014, two species recently added to the ABA Checklist based on records from Hawaii. Photo © Daniel L. Webster/Cascadia Research Collective
Adding “Hawaii-only” Species

Hawaiian endemic species by the AOU since 2009, this review resulted in 338 species on the current Hawaiian Islands Checklist. (Our website on the birds of Hawaii, now Pyle and Pyle 2017, has been fully updated for records through 2016, including the incorporation of all HBRC decisions.) Of these 338 species, 111 are “Hawaii-only” species (that is, they were not on the ABA Checklist as of 2016).

The ABA-CLC could not review all 111 of these species individually, so I parceled them into batches of records with various levels of documentation and by whether or not they had been accepted to the AOU (now part of the American Ornithological Society; see p. 6) Check-list as of the 57th Supplement (AOU 2016).

The first batch (Batch A) contained 105 (of these 111) species which had specimen documentation from Hawaii, were accepted by the HBRC, and were also accepted by the AOU to their Check-list. (Although the ABA-CLC is not bound to follow bird records committee decisions, the committee generally endorses them and at least weighs local decisions heavily.) ABA-CLC members were asked to review the documentation in Pyle and Pyle (2009) for these 105 species and, at any member’s request, the record would be pulled from Batch A for individual review. ABA-CLC members requested 7
species be pulled (see far right column), resulting in 98 Hawaii-only species that were accepted to the ABA Checklist in March 2017. These 98 species included 61 endemic Hawaii species (e.g., Hawaiian Duck, Hawaiian Hawk, O’ahu ‘Elepaio, ‘I‘iwi); 6 indigenous breeding species (e.g., White Tern, Little Tern, Bonin Petrel, Christmas Shearwater); 25 exotic species (e.g., Kalij Pheasant, Zebra Dove, Mariana Swiftlet, Red-crested Cardinal); and 6 migrants and vagrants (e.g., Bryan’s Shearwater, Kermadec Petrel, Black-winged Petrel, Chinese Sparrowhawk).

Of the original 111 species, this left 13 that were reviewed separately. Three of these species were that have been accepted by the HBRC and the AOU, based on records in Hawaii, that included photographic but not specimen evidence: Great Crested Tern, White-necked Petrel, and Black Kite. All three of these species were accepted to the ABA Checklist in March 2017. Two additional species, Nazca Booby and Tahiti Petrel, had been accepted to the Hawaiian Islands Checklist by the HBRC, and by the AOU based on records outside of but not within the Hawaiian Islands jurisdiction. Both were accepted by the ABA-CLC to the ABA Checklist (in mid-2017). This left only one non-exotic species, Herald Petrel, which was pulled from Batch A because an ABA-CLC member wanted to ensure that the single specimen collected in Hawaii was correctly identified—especially to the exclusion of the recently split Trindade Petrel. This record was also recently accepted to the ABA Checklist in July 2017.

It is interesting to note that four of the newly accepted species to the ABA Checklist also now have records from the Continental Area: Nazca Booby (from California in 2013–2016), Jouannin’s Petrel (California in 2015 and 2016), Juan Fernandez Petrel (Arizona in 2016), and Black Kite (Alaska in 2017). Even though their acceptance onto the ABA Checklist resulted from Hawaiian records, ABA members may now count these on state and Continental ABA Area lists, as long as they adhere to the rules of ABA’s Recording Standards and Ethics Committee (RSEC: listing.aba.org/rsec).

As we anticipated, the most difficult Hawaii-only species for the ABA-CLC to review were certain exotic species, specifically, whether the populations of these species in Hawaii are currently, or ever were, established according to ABA acceptance criteria. Such account for the remaining seven species that were or are being reviewed independently by the ABA-CLC at the request of one or more members: Japanese Quail, Indian Peafowl, Red-masked Parakeet, Mitred Parakeet, Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush, Lavender Waxbill, and Orange-cheeked Waxbill. All seven of these species have been accepted to the Hawaiian Islands Checklist by the HBRC, and six have been accepted by the AOU based on populations in Hawaii (all but Red-masked Parakeet, which has not been considered yet by the AOU). I put these seven species into a second batch (Batch B). The first round of voting, completed in July 2017, resulted in the acceptance of Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush to the ABA Checklist, the non-acceptance of Mitred Parakeet, and split votes requiring further consideration of
Adding “Hawaii-only” Species

The remaining five species.

An overall problem is that acceptance criteria for population establishment differs among the HBRC, AOU, and ABA-CLC, while various state and provincial bird records committees are all over the place, in terms of both acceptance criteria and the motivation to even deal with exotic species. The HBRC adopted the criteria of Pyle and Pyle (2009), which used to reflect those of the ABA (my father formerly overseeing the rules for both checklists): “To be judged viable, a population must: (i) have bred in the Hawaiian Islands for fifteen (15) consecutive years, (ii) be increasing or stable in number after an initial period of increase, and (iii) be judged to have occupied sufficient suitable habitat that it seems likely to persist for the foreseeable future.” The AOU uses essentially the same criteria except that they are even more lenient, requiring only 10 consec-
utive years of breeding and population stability or increase (AOU 1998: xiii).

Prior to publication of the previous ABA Checklist, the ABA decided to add more criteria to presume a population was established (Pranty et al. 2008: 11-16), thereby making acceptance to the ABA Checklist more stringent. This change was based, in part, on previously accepted exotic species that had since become extirpated in the ABA Area (such as Black Francolin, Crested Myna, and Blue-gray Tanager) and the desire not to add and then remove such species in the future. However, even with the more-stringent criteria, at least one species, Budgerigar, took the same journey on and then off the ABA Checklist. These species are now listed in an Appendix to the ABA Checklist (Pranty et al. 2008:183-184).

The result of this is that there may be exotic species that are accepted to the HBRC or AOS checklists that are not or may not be accepted to the ABA Checklist. Even before our Hawaii-only review, there were a couple of species like this: Rose-ringed Parakeet, accepted by the AOS based on populations in southern Florida, and Mitred Parakeet, accepted by the AOS based on populations in California, that were not on the ABA Checklist (see Pranty and Garrett 2011 for a full discussion of these and other borderline cases). Rose-ringed Parakeet was one of the 98 species now accepted to the ABA Checklist by the ABA-CLC based on populations in Hawaii, whereas Mitred Parakeet was recently rejected based solely on populations in Hawaii.

Are Rose-ringed Parakeet populations in southern Florida and California’s Central Valley established and/or countable? The ABA-CLC does not take a position on this. According to the ABA-RSEC’s rules, any individual of a species is countable across the entirety of the ABA Area, as long as it has been accepted to the ABA Checklist and the observer believes it originated from an established population. (For more on this topic, see Nick Block’s article in the 2016 issue of Birder’s Guide to Listing & Taxonomy.) So what about the Mitred Parakeet population in California, accepted as established by the AOS? The ABA-CLC may or may not take up this question but would prefer the CBRC to first consider the species as established there before doing so.

One final bit of business for the Hawaii-only review will be to decide if any Hawaii-only species should be added to the ABA appendix of exotic species that were established at one time but have since become extirpated. The HBRC accepts two such species to the Hawaiian Islands Checklist: Varied Tit and Pale-

![Rose-ringed Parakeets, Foster Gardens, Oahu, 24 January 2008. Although this species has been accepted to the American Ornithological Society’s (AOS, formerly AOU) Check-list based on populations in Florida, it has only recently been added to the ABA Checklist based on established populations in Hawaii. Photo © Jack Jeffrey](image)
headled Rosella. Three other species in this category were recently removed by the HBRC: Gray-sided Laughingthrush (the reported Hawaii population is now considered split, as Buffy Laughingthrush), Black-rumped Waxbill, and Red-cheeked Cordonbleu. This, even though all three were accepted by Pyle and Pyle (2009) and the last two accepted by the AOU (1998).

This last task is of lesser importance than accepting Hawaii-only species to the ABA Checklist, and while we hope to have the Hawaii-only additions completed by the fall of 2017, the listing of these two species in the ABA Checklist appendix may take longer, if we decide to deal with them at all. We may decide to restrict this appendix to species that have been on the ABA Checklist at some time.

Finally, lest we forget, the ABA-CLC is considering records outside of Hawaii. Of these, Cuban Vireo (Florida) was accepted to the ABA Checklist in February 2017. Two other species, Common Shelduck (Newfoundland) and Amethyst-throated Hummingbird (Québec and Texas), are in circulation, and two more species, Pied Wheatear (Alaska) and House Swift (British Columbia), are on our radar. We will also be adjusting the checklist according to the recently released AOS (2017) 58th supplement, including the removal of Thayer’s Gull and the addition of Cassiar Crossbill, as all AOS Check-list changes on taxonomy and nomenclature are automatically adopted by the ABA-CLC.

**Literature Cited**


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Every summer, birders anxiously await publication of the “Check-list Supplement” by the American Ornithological Society’s Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of North and Middle American Birds (a.k.a. the NACC). The supplement details revisions to the NACC’s Check-list. This “Check-list Redux”, the seventh annual summary appearing in ABA publications, aims to explain in straightforward terms what has changed and how those changes impact anyone birding in the U.S. or Canada. Illustrations, photos, charts, and maps are employed where applicable. You can read all the proposals on which the NACC voted this year at checklist.aou.org. Species marked with asterisks (*) below are those which do not appear on the ABA Checklist, either because there are no currently accepted records in the ABA Area or because they are non-natives that have not yet been admitted to the list. Daggers (†) denote extinct species. Nowadays, it can be assumed that any change in taxonomy is due (at least partly) to analysis of new genetic data, so that is not always mentioned below. As a general policy, the NACC accepts as additions to its North American Check-list any species the ABA’s Checklist Committee adds to its list. Those changes are not listed here.

This year, the topics most likely to generate discussion are splits of Red Crossbill and Magnificent Hummingbird, a lump of Thayer’s and Iceland gulls, and a resolution of sorts into the taxonomic affiliations of the unique Yellow-breasted Chat.

There are also many changes that affect species found only in the Caribbean or south of the U.S.–Mexico border. They are detailed on the ABA Blog at tinyurl.com/AOU2017.

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Hello to the Cassia Crossbill

- Red Crossbill (Loxia curvirostra)
- Cassia Crossbill (Loxia sinesciuris)

In the Albion Mountains and South Hills of Cassia County, Idaho, there are no tree squirrels. Scientists have convincingly argued that this novel situation has allowed for the evolution of the area’s very own resident species of crossbill: Loxia sinesciuris, known as the Cassia Crossbill. Indeed, sinesciuris means “without squirrels”. In most of the Rockies, the seeds of lodgepole pine (Pinus contorta) are eaten, stored, and buried by tree squirrels such as the red squirrel (Tamiasciurus hudsonicus). In Cassia County, however, there are no squirrels, so the pines have been locked in an evolutionary arms race with but one main predator: the crossbill. Over thousands of years, the pine evolved bigger and harder cones to prevent the crossbill from accessing its seeds. And the crossbill evolved a bigger, deeper bill and stronger facial muscles in order to pull the seeds out of the cones.

This situation is remarkable because it happened in the presence of other crossbills. Two “types” of Red Crossbill (2 and 5), from which Cassia Crossbill was split, still commonly visit the area. But crossbill flocks are very cohesive and seem to form regional dialects quickly. The Cassia Crossbill not only has a different bill structure compared to the Red Crossbills with...
Goodbye to Thayer’s Gull

- *Larus thayeri* ➔ *Larus glaucoides thayeri*

Thayer’s Gull is now treated as a subspecies of Iceland Gull. The authors of the Supplement state that more research is needed to determine if *kumlieni* should still be maintained as a valid subspecies; many birders and scientists believe it is instead a hybrid swarm between *L. g. glaucoides* and *L. g. thayeri*. Whatever you believe, your ABA Area list just decreased by one if you’ve seen both.

Unfortunately, this lump breaks the NACC’s own “A=B+C Rule”, which states that unique English names should be used for splits and lumps so as to avoid confusion. When someone shouts “Iceland Gull” at the lake watch this winter, what does it mean? Does the speaker intend a purely white-winged bird (*glaucoides sensu stricto*), as I would? *L. g. glaucoides* or *L. g. kumlieni*? *Or glaucoides, kumlieni, or thayeri? It seems that Baffin Gull, Arctic Gull, Inuit Gull, Green-billed Gull, and Silver-winged Gull could have been workable and confusion-saving alternatives for naming the more-inclusive taxon.

Split of Magnificent Hummingbird

- *Rivoli’s Hummingbird* (*Eugenes fulgens*)
- *Talamanca Hummingbird* (*)Eugenes spectabilis*)

This split separates birds of southern Central America from those of the U.S. and northern Middle America. Rivoli’s Hummingbird is found in pine-oak woodlands from the southwestern U.S. south to northern Nicaragua; adult males have a peridot-colored (yellow-green) throat and blackish underparts. Talamanca Hummingbird is found in cloudforest and high oak forests of Costa Rica and western Panama; adult males have a turquoise- or teal-colored throat and dark green underparts. The latter was originally named

A female Cassia Crossbill uses its unique bill to open a lodgepole pinecone and extract a seed with its tongue. Photo © Craig Benkman

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Check-list Supplement Redux, v. 2017

“Admirable Hummingbird” by Robert Ridgway, but his suggestion was unheeded. Instead, *Eugenes spectabilis* has been named for the Talamanca Mountains of eastern Costa Rica.

This split raises the not particularly serious question of what to call a Berylline x Magnificent hybrid, which birders had playfully dubbed “Beryificent Hummingbird”. Berivoli’s? Riviline?

### Split of Northern Harrier

- **Northern Harrier** (*Circus hudsonius*)
- **Hen Harrier** (*Circus cyaneus*)

This split separates New World and Old World populations. It seems that the Northern Shrikes from North America and northeast Asia are more closely related to Loggerhead Shrikes than they are to Great Gray Shrikes from western and central Eurasia. The effect on most ABA Area birders is that of a scientific name change for Northern Shrike.

The Northern Shrike race *sibiricus* nests in northeastern Siberia. As an adult, it differs from *borealis* in having pale lores and no white borders over the black mask. It also tends to be slightly paler gray above and lack a white spot on the lower eyelid. Identification of young birds seems less straightforward; juvenile *sibiricus* may have a pale border over the mask, but wholly pale lores may warrant scrutiny.

Compared to Northern Shrike *sensu lato*, adult Great Gray Shrike averages a darker rump and uppertail coverts, less prominent supercilium (but *sibiricus* usually lacks a supercilium—making this mark rather meaningless!), more extensive white in the wing (including the bases of some secondaries), and whiter and less patterned underparts. Juvenile Great Gray Shrikes average paler and less brown, with weaker barring below than juvenile

### Split of Northern Shrike

- **Northern Shrike** (*Lanius borealis*)
- **Great Gray Shrike** (*Lanius excubitor*)

This split separates New World and Old World populations. The main effect on ABA Area birders is that of a scientific name change for Northern Shrike.

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Northern Shrikes.

There are no accepted records of Great Gray Shrike from the ABA Area. In vol. 46, no. 2 of *Western Birds*, Gibson and Withrow write that *sibiricus* is “casual in [the western] Aleutians…[with] two specimens [at the University of Alaska Museum and] published photos [by] Schwitters.” Migrant “gray shrikes” in western Alaska deserve extra scrutiny.

**LeConte’s Is One Word**

- Le Conte’s Thrasher ➔
- LeConte’s Sparrow ➔

Historical evidence strongly suggests that 19th-century entomologist John Lawrence LeConte, after whom the sparrow and the thrasher are named, did not usually write his last name with a space in it.

**Split of Anas and New Sequence for the Dabbling Ducks**

The genus *Anas* was found to be paraphyletic, so it has now been split into four genera: *Sibirionetta* (Baikal Teal), *Spatula* (shovelers, including false teal), *Mareca* (Gadwall, Falcated Duck, and wigeons), and *Anas* (mallards, pintail, and true teal). Surely unsurprising to some birders familiar with the appearance of many hybrid dabbling ducks will be that among these species, Baikal Teal’s lineage is distinct and split off first from the others. Many male hybrid dabbling ducks (for instance, Mallard x Gadwall, Gadwall x Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon x Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal x Green-winged Teal) display a facial pattern strikingly similar to that of Baikal Teal, and this is believed to be an ancestral trait that sometimes reappears with hybridization. The new sequence and scientific names are as follows.

- Baikal Teal (*Anas formosa ➔ Sibirionetta formosa*)
- Garganey (*Anas querquedula ➔ Spatula querquedula*)
- Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors ➔ Spatula discors*)
- Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera ➔ Spatula cyanoptera*)
- Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata ➔ Mareca strepera ➔ Spatula clypeata*)
- Falcated Duck (*Anas falcata ➔ Mareca falcata*)
- Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope ➔ Mareca penelope ➔ Anser penelope*)
- American Wigeon (*Anas americana ➔ Mareca americana*)
- Laysan Duck (*Anas laysanensis*)
- Hawaiian Duck (*Anas wvilliana*)
- Eastern Spot-billed Duck (*Anas zonorhyncha*)
- Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)
- American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*)
- Mottled Duck (*Anas fulvigula*)
- White-cheeked Pintail (*Anas bahamensis*)
- Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

- Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*)

**Goodbye, Chen**

The genus *Anser* was found to be paraphyletic, so the “white goose” genus, *Chen*, has been lumped into the “gray goose” genus, *Anser*. This means that Emperor Goose is now the first species on the ABA Checklist. The sequence and scientific names for the *Anser* geese are now as follows.

- Emperor Goose (*Chen canagicus ➔ Anser canagicus*)
- Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens ➔ Anser caerulescens*)
- Ross’s Goose (*Chen rossii ➔ Anser rossii*)
- Graylag Goose (*Anser anser*)
- Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)
- Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)
- Taiga Bean-Goose (*Anser fabalis*)
- Tundra Bean-Goose (*Anser serrirostris*)
- Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

**Sparrows, Spindalises, and Yellow-breasted Chat Get Their Own Families**

- **Passerellidae** (New World Sparrows)
- **Spindalidae** (Spindalises)
- **Icteriidae** (Yellow-breasted Chat)

Studies of higher-level taxonomy in the perching birds has revealed deep evolutionary divisions, warranting that these groups (and many more in the Neotropics)
be put in their own families. Birders and ornithologists have long known that Yellow-breasted Chat is an odd bird, and now we have the proof. A warbler it is not.

Beware the similarity between the words Icteridae (the New World Blackbird family) and Icteriidae (the Yellow-breasted Chat family)—the latter has only an extra i to differentiate it! As for pronunciation, I imagine the blackbird family will be most commonly pronounced *ICK-ter-ih-day*, and the Yellow-breasted Chat family *ick-TEHR-ee-ih-day*.

Goodbye, *Mesophoyx*

- Intermediate Egret
  (*Mesophoyx intermedia* → *Ardea intermedia*)

The genus *Ardea* was found to be paraphyletic with respect to *Mesophoyx*.

New Genus for Yellow-fronted Canary

- *Serinus mozambicus* → *Crithagra mozambica*

Established in Hawaii, Yellow-fronted Canary has been moved from the genus *Serinus* to *Crithagra*.

Goodbye, *Procelsterna*

- Blue-gray Noddy
  (*Procelsterna cerulea* → *Anous ceruleus*)

The noddy genus *Anous* was found to be paraphyletic, so the genus *Procelsterna* has been absorbed into it. Blue-gray Noddy occurs in Hawaiian waters.

New Sequence for Sandpipers

Upland Sandpiper  
Bristle-thighed Curlew  
Whimbrel  
Little Curlew  
Eskimo Curlew  
Long-billed Curlew  
Far Eastern Curlew  
Slender-billed Curlew  
Eurasian Curlew  
Bar-tailed Godwit  
Black-tailed Godwit  
Hudsonian Godwit  
Marbled Godwit  
Ruddy Turnstone  
Black Turnstone  
Great Knot  
Red Knot  
Surfbird  
Ruff  
Broad-billed Sandpiper  
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper  
Stilt Sandpiper  
Curlew Sandpiper  
Temminck's Stint  
Long-toed Stint  
Spoon-billed Sandpiper  
Red-necked Stint  
Sanderling  
Dunlin  
Rock Sandpiper  
Purple Sandpiper  
Baird's Sandpiper  
Little Stint  
Least Sandpiper

New Sequence for Finch Genera

*Fringilla*  
*Chlorophonia*  
*Euphonia*  
*Coccothraustes*
Changes to Sequence and Subfamily Classification within the New World Blackbirds

- **Xanthocephalinae** (Yellow-headed Blackbird)
  - *Xanthocephalus*

- **Dolichonychinae** (Bobolink)
  - *Dolichonyx*

- **Sturnellinae** (Meadowlarks)
  - *Sturnella*
  - *Leistes*

- **Ambylcercinae** (Yellow-billed Cacique)
  - *Amblycercus*

- **Cacicinae** (Oropendolas and true caciques)
  - *Cassicus*
  - *Psarocolius*
  - *Cacicus*

- **Icterinae** (New World Orioles)
  - *Icterus*

### Notable Changes That Were Not Accepted

- Split of Willet into Eastern and Western willets
- Two-way split of Bell’s Vireo
- Two-way split of Brown Creeper
- Three-way split of Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Lump of Yellow-eyed and Dark-eyed juncos
- Lump of Common and Hoary redpolls
- Changing English name of Ring-necked Duck to Ring-billed Duck

### On the Horizon

Topics which may be considered next year include splitting Naumann’s Thrush from Dusky Thrush, splitting White-winged Scoter, splitting Cuban from Eastern Meadowlark, lumping Gilded Flicker

This distinctive “Goldman’s” Yellow-rumped Warbler from Guatemala has a distinctly different call, habitat, and distribution, but it is still considered the same species as “Myrtle” Yellow-rumped Warbler.

*[Photo © Knut Eiermann - Cayaya Birding]*

For now, there are still two species shown in this photo. (Hoary and Common redpolls.)

*[Photo © D. Faulder]*

“Naumann’s” Dusky Thrush may be overdue for a split.

*[Photo © Vadim Ivushkin]*
back into Northern Flicker, and lumping Bicknell’s Thrush back into Gray-cheeked Thrush. Major revisions of higher-level hummingbird and vireo taxonomy are also anticipated.

Many thanks to Jon Dunn, Oscar Johnson, Paul Lehman, Cody Porter, and Tom Schulenberg for assisting with the preparation of this manuscript.

GLOSSARY

Hybrid Swarm. A large population of organisms that derives from interbreeding between two otherwise distinct populations. “Olympic Gull” is a well-known hybrid swarm of Glaucous-winged and Western gulls.

Nominate. The nominate subspecies is the subspecies that shares its scientific name with the species as a whole. For instance, *Empidonax trailli trailli* is the nominate subspecies of Willow Flycatcher. Pronounced NAHM-uh-nit.

Paraphyletic. A taxonomic grouping whose members are not each other’s closest relatives. This is generally discouraged among taxonomists. For a great explanation of this concept, see Nick Block’s article in the 2015 issue of *Birder’s Guide to Listing & Taxonomy*.

Sequence. The sequence in which species appear on a checklist reveals evolutionary relationships. Generally speaking, the closer two species are to one another in the checklist sequence, the more closely related to one another. Not to be confused with order, which is a taxonomic level between family and class.

Sympatric. Describes two taxa that overlap in range. *Sensu lato*. In the broad sense. For example, “Canada Goose sensu lato” refers to what we called Canada Goose before the split—it includes Cackling Goose.

*Sensu stricto*. In the strict sense. For instance, “Canada Goose sensu stricto” means what we call Canada Goose today, after the split—just the large birds.

Sympatric speciation. The evolution of two species from one while in geographic contact with one another.

Taxa. Plural of taxon. A taxon is a biological group or classification of organisms. Classes, orders, families, genera, species, and subspecies are all various levels of taxon.

Taxonomic. Pertaining to taxonomy, which is the study of classification.
2016 Year Lists

ABA Area - Top 25

779 John Weigel
776 Olaf Danielson
759 Laura Keene
642 Barb & Dean Stewman
622 Steven Tracey
621 Warren Leow
621 Karen Leow
608 Roger Clark
605 David McQuade
590 Dennis Shepler
568 Ethan Goodman
542 Leo Miller
528 Hugh David Fleischmann
510 Sam Fried
493 Joe Hanfman
478 Frank Mantlik
465 Harold Bond
416 Patricia Lueders
412 Charles Mills
409 David C. Chaffin
409 Edward Slattery
402 Judd Patterson
401 Joanne (Joanie) Hubinger

United States - Top 25

828 Olaf Danielson
808 Laura Keene
642 Barb & Dean Stewman
622 Steven Tracey
619 Warren Leow
605 David McQuade
568 Ethan Goodman
551 Shawn Miller
538 Leo Miller
465 Harold Bond
416 Patricia Lueders
412 Charles Mills
409 David C. Chaffin
409 Edward Slattery
402 Judd Patterson
401 Joanne (Joanie) Hubinger
401 Mark W. Hubinger
395 Rodney Murray
366 Mike Austin
364 Brandon Percival
346 Michael Stewart
341 John Collins
337 Steve Brown
332 Lance Runion
327 Dave Grise

North America - Top 10

692 Joanne (Joanie) Hubinger
628 Mark W. Hubinger
624 Leo Miller
488 Charles Mills
465 Harold Bond
416 Patricia Lueders
402 Theresa Schwinghammer
341 John Collins
322 Stephen Zipperer
287 Joy Peters

World - Top 10

2429 Craig Caldwell

2016 Listing Snapshot

Printed here are some of the top lists from Listing Central <listing.aba.org>. To make sure your lists qualify for inclusion in next year’s Listing Snapshot, be sure to have your 2017 totals uploaded by 1 June 2018.

ABA Area - Top 100

917 Macklin Smith
905 Larry Peavler
904 Paul Sykes
881 Benton Basham
875 Ebbie Banstorp
866 David Narins
860 Monte Taylor
853 Bruce Barrett
850 Steve Kornfield
847 Mike Austin
845 Mark Cudney
845 Timothy Steurer
845 Barrett Pierce
834 Keith Camburn
833 Gary Stitzinger
832 Louise McCullough
832 Ted Peterson
830 Lucie Bruce
830 Bob Funston
825 Dan Sanders
824 David C. Chaffin
824 David Silverman
823 Kenneth Burden
823 Edward Borowik
820 William Drummond
819 Karen Shadrer
819 Dorothy Robbins
818 John Shadrer
818 Ian McGregor
816 Greg Bretz
816 Bud Johnson
815 Nick Cooney
815 Jay Lehman
813 Alan Schmierer
812 William Lindley
812 William Lindley
811 Martin Meyers
810 Colin Campbell
809 Bill Brooks
808 Paul O’Brien
808 Lynn Hemink
808 David W. Nelson
808 Stephen Moore
808 Ron Howard
807 Howard Eisnach
807 Richard Wachtler
807 Gloria Wachtler

Life Lists

United States - Top 100

805 Bill Grossi
805 Grace Steurer
804 Jim Holmes
804 Paul Berrigan
804 Christopher Hitt
801 Carl Haynie
801 Thomas Heatey
801 Neil Hayward
800 Michael Schwitter
800 Charles Biggs
798 Bob Morse
797 Glenn Belyea
797 David Crowe
796 Bob Ake
796 Matthew Matthiessen
795 Dollyann Myers
794 Lee Johnson
794 Shawneen Finnegan
793 Bernard Master
792 Norman Erthal
791 M.K. Edge Wade
791 Hank Vanderpol
791 Olaf Danielson
790 Bruce MacK
790 Jerry Theis
789 Thor Manson
789 Ken Hollinga
789 John Hirth
788 Bill Bouton
788 Laura Keene
787 Richard Cimino
787 Chuck Probst
786 Steve Matherly
785 Thomas Prince
784 John Vanderpoel
783 Tommie Rogers
783 Roger Foxall
779 Barbara Vollke
779 James Fuller
778 Gary Chapin
777 Dave DeReamus
777 Forrest Rowland
777 David B. Wright
776 Kevin Calhoon
775 Don Roberson
775 Mike Mulligan
774 Robert Ohmart
773 Bob Sites
772 Roger Clark
771 Don Chaffant
771 Stanley Wuikowicz
770 Martha Hirth
770 Doreene Linzell
769 Mark Oberle

World - Top 100

805 Bill Grossi
805 Grace Steurer
804 Jim Holmes
804 Paul Berrigan
804 Christopher Hitt
801 Carl Haynie
801 Thomas Heatey
801 Neil Hayward
800 Michael Schwitter
800 Charles Biggs
798 Bob Morse
797 Glenn Belyea
797 David Crowe
796 Bob Ake
796 Matthew Matthiessen
795 Dollyann Myers
794 Lee Johnson
794 Shawneen Finnegan
793 Bernard Master
792 Norman Erthal
791 M.K. Edge Wade
791 Hank Vanderpol
791 Olaf Danielson
790 Bruce MacK
790 Jerry Theis
789 Thor Manson
789 Ken Hollinga
789 John Hirth
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779 James Fuller
778 Gary Chapin
777 Dave DeReamus
777 Forrest Rowland
777 David B. Wright
776 Kevin Calhoon
775 Don Roberson
775 Mike Mulligan
774 Robert Ohmart
773 Bob Sites
772 Roger Clark
771 Don Chaffant
771 Stanley Wuikowicz
770 Martha Hirth
770 Doreene Linzell
769 Mark Oberle

North America - Top 25

852 Monte Taylor
800 David W. Nelson
774 Martin Meyers
773 Laura Keene
### United States - Top 50

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### Canada - Top 25

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<td>David Bell</td>
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Hawaii - Top 10

239 Reginald David
212 H. Douglas Pratt
208 David Kuhn
202 Lance Tanino
197 Michael Walther
196 Kurt Pohlman
179 Bud Johnson
176 Thomas Snetsinger
169 Chuck Probst
143 C. Fred Zeillemaker

Mexico - Top 10

1036 Jorge Montejo
1000 Amy McAndrews
959 Ronald Huffman
958 Kurt Radamaker
921 Ebbe Bangtsoe
918 Rene Valdes
916 Rick Taylor
910 Michael Retter
901 Mike Mulligan
860 John Shrader

North America - Top 25

1927 Macklin Smith

World - Top 50

9053 Hugh Buck
8765 Claes-Goran Cederlund
8735 Peter Kaestner
8711 Robert Walton
8508 Joe Thompson
8464 Bob Bates
## 2016 Listing Snapshot

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### World [Photographed] - Top 25

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2016 came with quite a bit of excitement—and a bit of drama—as four birders undertook ABA Big Year efforts. Christian Hagenlocher, Laura Keene, Olaf Danielson, and John Weigel all made a successful run at Neal Hayward’s 2013 ABA Area record of 749 species.

In the newly minted (but same as always) ABA Continental Area, Hagenlocher came in with 750 species (+2 provisionals), Keene with 759 species (+3 provisionals), Danielson with 776 (+2 provisionals), and Weigel with 780 (+3 provisionals). The provisionals are Cuban Vireo, Pine Flycatcher, and Common Shelduck.

The ABA membership voted to include Hawaii within the ABA Area in October 2016. While the change was immediate upon a tally of the votes, updating the ABA Checklist to reflect the new area (by adding “Hawaii-only” species) takes some time. (See Peter Pyle’s article on p. 28). Because of this, beginning in August 2016, all communication from the ABA (including the ABA Blog and the letter and proxy ballot mailed to members) stated that Hawaii was not in play for the purposes of 2016 ABA Area Big Years.

Yet three of the four birders above made last-minute runs to the islands just in case. After the dust settled, toasts were clinked, and long, well-deserved rests were had, John Weigel wrote to the ABA Recording Standards and Ethics Committee (RSEC) asking that the species he and the others saw in Hawaii be allowed as provisionals (in the same way that new additions to the ABA Checklist via vagrancy would be handled).

As we go to press, the RSEC has not yet released a determination.

The new, expanded ABA Area and ABA Continental Area are available for input on Listing Central, even though the updated ABA Checklist with the added species has not yet been released. This is because the computer programmer who built the Listing Central software is spending the year abroad and was available to do the updates as of this summer. I thought it prudent to have the categories waiting for input once the updates were made.

In the meantime, I suggest using The Birds of the Hawaiian Islands: Occurrence, History, Distribution, and Status (http://bit.ly/29JTfjr) to approximate list totals that include Hawaii. Note, however, that a small number of the exotics accepted therein may not make it onto the ABA Checklist.

Flying somewhat under the radar with all of the Big Year news in the air was Laura Keene’s amazing ABA Continental-Photographed record in 2016. Laura photographed 746 species last year, beating Paul Biddle’s 2015 effort by 141 species. If we include audio recordings, Laura documented 751 species last year (plus an additional 51 in Hawaii). Outstanding!

But it wasn’t all about Big Years last year. A new Big Day record for Nevada was set by Paul Hurtado, David Kozlovsky, Rob Lowry, and Brian Steger. The team recorded 171 species, beating the May 1992 record of 162 species by L.A. Neel, G. Chisholm, K. Geluso, and B. Flores.

Be sure to check out Listing Central at listing.aba.org for the latest version of the ABA Checklist as well as ABA Checklist Committee reports, ABA Recording Rules, the ABA Birding Code of Ethics, reports and updates from the Recording Standards & Ethics Committee—and, of course—the complete life, year, month, and Big Day list totals from more than 2,000 ABA members.
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