

What the A.O.U. Check-list Committee has done to your life list

Judging from the volume of chatter from coast-to-coast in recent weeks, North American birders have had nothing quite as traumatic happen to them in years as the recent Thirty-second Supplement to the A.O.U. Check-List, published in *The Auk* in April (90: 411-419). Long-familiar species disappeared completely in mergers; unfamiliar names suddenly became required for other species; bird golfers found life lists and A.O.U.-area lists mercilessly reduced, by as many as thirteen species. Joseph Taylor, of Rochester, the sole member of the "700 Club" found his organization, like some illicit nightclub, summarily closed down. Mr. Taylor, still riding the somewhat reduced summit of listing, may soon be the only human being to reach the 700 plateau twice, but with the A.O.U. Check-list committee still hard at work, Taylor might even find himself reaching and then striving again and again for that elusive summit.

American Birds will have no comment to make on the substance of the changes, since taxonomy is not one of our active, primary concerns. We do mourn the passing of old and friendly names like Oregon Junco, Baltimore Oriole, and Myrtle Warbler. We fear too, that species reduced in rank to races lose greatly in ornithologist concern; the numerous studies and high conservation interest in such birds as the Ipswich and Cape Sable Sparrows will surely fade now that they are merely Savannah and Seaside Sparrows. Westerners who have developed high skills in detecting "Baltimore" Orioles at their feeders will surely be less enthusiastic, or careful, when the visitor can only be some kind of a Northern Oriole.

Since the policy of *American Birds* is to follow current A.O.U. usage, readers will find the new nomenclature incorporated into the reports and censuses in this and forthcoming issues. Those interested in the taxonomy and in the changes in scientific names are referred to the original article and its numerous references to the literature. For the readers of *American Birds*, and the majority of birdwatchers everywhere, the summary that follows will give the newly adopted names that we will use in common practice.

The following new or revised names result from important changes in status of some former species—either the merging of two or more former species into a single species ("lumping")—or the separation of a single species into two or more species ("splitting"), with the attendant changes in nomenclature. In the following list, the name with the asterisk is the newly designated species name.

Great White Heron is now considered a morph of Great Blue Heron*.

Blue Goose is now considered a morph of Snow Goose*.

Green-winged Teal* and Common (Eurasian) Teal are considered a single species.

Harlan's Hawk is considered a morph of Red-tailed Hawk*.

Thayer's Gull* now attains species rank.

Red-shafted, Yellow-shafted, and Gilded Flickers are now considered races of the single species Common Flicker*.

Traill's Flycatcher (*Empidonax trallii*) is now separated into two full species, *Empidonax traillii* (southwestern fitz-bew song type) to be known as the Willow Flycatcher*, and *Empidonax alnorum*, (northeastern fee-bee-o type) to be called the Alder Flycatcher*.

The Black-eared Bushtit is considered a race of the Common Bushtit*.

The San Lucas Robin is considered a race of the Robin, which is renamed American Robin*.

Bahama Honeycreeper is considered a race of the Bananaquit*.

Socorro Warbler and Olive-backed Warbler are to be considered races of the Tropical Parula*.

Audubon's and Myrtle Warblers are considered races of a single species, the Yellow-rumped Warbler*.

Bullock's and Baltimore Orioles are considered races of the Northern Oriole*.

The long-tailed grackles are now separated into two species, *Cassidix mexicanus*, the Great-tailed Grackle*, and *Cassidix major*, the Boat-tailed Grackle*.

McGregor's House Finch and Guadalupe House Finch are now considered races of House Finch*.

Dusky Seaside Sparrow and Cape Sable Sparrow are now considered races of the Seaside Sparrow*.

Slate-colored, White-winged, Oregon, and Guadalupe Juncos now are races of the one species, Dark-eyed Junco*.

Upland Plover becomes Upland Sandpiper*.

Knot becomes Red Knot*.

Mexican Junco and Baird's Junco are both considered races of the Yellow-eyed Junco*.

In addition to the above changes, some other common names were altered, for clarity or to conform with international usage.

Fulmar becomes Northern Fulmar*.

Pale-footed Shearwater becomes Flesh-footed Shearwater*.

Slender-billed Shearwater becomes Short-tailed Shearwater*.

Leach's Petrel becomes Leach's Storm-Petrel*.

Wilson's Petrel becomes Wilson's Storm-Petrel*.

Other members of the Family Hydrobatidae become Storm-Petrels, Note the hyphen, omitted by error from the A.O.U. Supplement.

Common Egret becomes Great Egret*.

Wood Ibis becomes Wood Stork*.

Widgeon is now to be spelled Wigeon*.

Shoveler becomes Northern Shoveler*.

Gray Sea Eagle becomes White-tailed Eagle.*

Pigeon Hawk becomes Merlin*.

Sparrow Hawk becomes American Kestrel*.

Harlequin Quail becomes Montezuma Quail*.

Catbird becomes Gray Catbird*.

Yellowthroat becomes Common Yellowthroat*.

Parula Warbler becomes Northern Parula*.

In the pages that follow, no one style has as yet been imposed on our authors. Readers will find Audubon's-type Yellow-rumped Warblers, Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warblers, Yellow-rumped (Audubon's race) Warblers, white morph of the Great Blue Heron, and other awkward variations. In future issues we will try to develop a standard, abbreviated nomenclature.

—Robert Arbib

Information Urgently Needed on Arid Habitat Bird Use

A note from Roland Clement, Vice President for Biology, National Audubon Society, reminds us that there is urgent need for more intensive field work, including Breeding Bird Censuses, Winter Bird-Population Studies and Christmas Bird Counts in the more arid regions of the West. His words are worth full reproduction here.

"I recently joined an active group of the Bureau of Land Management's wildlife managers in Washington to discuss how to extend wildlife protection and management to the larger Federal holdings this bureau oversees.

They begged for information on the habitats that various species are dependent upon in the arid and semi-arid West. As you know, there are thousands of square miles of such desert—not shifting sands but creosote bush country, sagebrush, etc. In that country vegetation of a more substantial nature is restricted to riverbottoms.

There is much pressure to eliminate this riverine habitat under the guise of water salvage.

If field ornithologists, for a few seasons, would report on the vegetation and habitats migrating birds use—for food, roosting, etc.—this could provide important contributions to the defense of this habitat against economically-determined interests.

We know the importance of this vegetation, but lack systematic (quantitative) data to make our concerns accepted in court and in other decision-making areas."

—CORRIGENDUM—

Readers of the profile of ornithology at Harvard, by Raymond A. Paynter, Jr. (*Am. Birds* 27:18, 130) who were puzzled slightly by its strange sequence, and the author himself are due an apology. The editor assumes full responsibility (and blame!) for an error which pied the paragraphs in such a manner that Dr. Paynter's friends at MCZ were commenting "Gee, you write funny." Dr. Paynter actually writes good, as the ornithological world knows, and if the reader will begin the article with the fourth paragraph "The Museum of Comparative Zoology . . .", continue to the end of the piece, and then revert to the opening paragraph, the progression of thought will be seen to be clear, logical and literate. Our sincerest regrets to Harvard, MCZ, to Dr Paynter, and our readers.

EDITORIAL CHANGES

We regret to announce that Gale Monson has asked that he be relieved of his assignment as Regional Editor for the Southwest Region, as of this issue of *American Birds*. We are grateful for the series of fine reports by Dr. Monson, and we trust that observers of this Region will show his successor the same interest and cooperation in making their Region's reports truly authoritative. Dr. Monson's successor will be Theodore (Ted) Parker, III, now in residence at the University of Arizona, Tucson, in quest of a bachelor's degree in zoology. One of the keenest young birders in the Southwest, Ted Parker, a Pennsylvanian, already has a wide familiarity with the Region and its birdlife. Reports should be sent to him at S.U.P.O. Box 10510, Tucson, Arizona 85720.

In another editorial change, (Irma) Mrs. Merwood Chipman, of Wautoma, Wisconsin, has relinquished her role as editor for the Western Great Lakes Region. Her generosity and devotion in stepping unprepared into a difficult assign-

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