

# Coming! A new official checklist of North American Birds —a revolution in avian nomenclature

*Be prepared to re-learn many names and  
a new sequence in our list of birds*

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**A**N IMPORTANT NEW checklist of North American birds was published in an abridged, preview version in 1982. Many readers of *American Birds* may be disturbed by what follows, since the new list changes the classification of North American birds even more than the two prior supplements to the A.O.U. Check-list<sup>1</sup> of North American Birds (Fifth Edition), and it also changes the "English" (= vernacular) names of many species, including some whose taxonomic status went unaltered. Further, this list may not be ignored, since it represents in reduced form the names and sequence of listing that will be published later this year as the official Sixth Edition of the Checklist of North American Birds, of the American Ornithologists' Union.

The 34th Supplement, as the preview version was called, arrived as an unexpected addition to the July, 1982 *Auk*.

The Supplement was produced in response to numerous requests for an official preview of the classification of North American Birds, in advance of publication of the Sixth Edition. The Supplement comprises three introductory paragraphs and a skeletal list of the "English" and scientific names of the birds known from the area covered by the Fifth Edition, less Greenland, Bermuda, and Baja California, Mexico, but including Hawaii. The Supplement omits species known from this area only from sight records, but these will be included in an appendix to the Sixth Edition. The Supplement owes some of its new "English" names to the input of amateurs and a committee of the American Birding Association, which has published its own Checklist (1982). This list does not differ greatly, at least in nomenclature, from the official list. So the shock has been somewhat ameliorated.

With this introduction, let me summarize the significant changes in the order which I think most readers of these pages will want to know: first the changes in species status, then other changes to English names; and last the revision of the systematic arrangement of species within the Check-list and the changes in scientific nomenclature.

Changes adopted in the Thirty-second Supplement to the A.O.U. Check-list (1973) already have been summarized in these pages (Tate and Kibbe, 1974). The changes to species status (involving Brant, Green Heron, [Hawaiian] Stilt and Tufted Titmouse) and to English names adopted in the 33rd Supplement (1976) are followed in this journal, but the changes to scientific nomenclature made in that Supplement have not been summarized here. They are included in the following summary.

## CHANGES IN SPECIES STATUS

**T**HE SPECIFIC STATUS of over two dozen forms is altered in the Supplement. In about half of these, only one of the forms affected by the change occurs within the geographic region covered by *American Birds*.

- 1) Black-vented Shearwater, *Puffinus opisthomelas*, is split from Manx Shearwater, *Puffinus puffinus*; all substantiated Pacific Coast records of "Manx Shearwater" refer to the former species, although some sightings of the latter now are claimed.
- 2) Newell's Shearwater of Hawaii is treated as a race of Townsend's Shearwater, *Puffinus auricularis*, rather than of Manx Shearwater.

<sup>1</sup>Ever since the First Edition in 1886, the word has been hyphenated, and will so remain in the title, although current usage favors checklist or check list.

- 3) Bewick's Swan is merged with Whistling Swan; the enlarged species is called Tundra Swan, *Cygnus columbianus*.
- 4) Pink-footed Goose, *Anser brachyrhynchus*, is split from Bean Goose, *Anser fabalis*, following the present fashion in Europe.
- 5) Mexican Duck, *Anas diazi*, which probably no longer occurs north of Mexico in pure form, is merged into Mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos*.
- 6) White-winged Scoter is merged with the European Velvet Scoter; the enlarged species is called White-winged Scoter, *Melanitta fusca*.
- 7) White-tailed Kite is merged with its Old World relatives; the enlarged species is called Black-shouldered Kite, *Elanus caeruleus*.
- 8) Caracara is merged into the Crested Caracara of South America; the enlarged species is called Crested Caracara, *Polyborus plancus*.

- 9) South Polar Skua, *Catharacta maccormicki*, is recognized as a species distinct from the Great Skua, *Catharacta skua*.
- 10) Yellow-footed Gull, *Larus livens*, is split from the Western Gull, *Larus occidentalis*. Hand (1981) has published a study of vocal and non-vocal differences in the two gulls which, however, is not a convenient field guide.
- 11) Least Tern, *Sterna antillarum*, is split from the Little Tern, *Sterna albifrons*, which is confined to the Old World.
- 12) Black Noddy, *Anous minutus*, is split from the Lesser Noddy, *Anous tenuirostris*, which is confined to the Indian Ocean.
- 13) Oriental Scops-Owl, *Otus sunia*, is split from the extralimital Common Scops-Owl, *Otus scops*.
- 14) Screech Owl is divided into two species, Eastern Screech-Owl, *Otus asio*, and Western Screech-Owl, *Otus kennicottii*, best distinguished by their vocalizations.
- 15) Antillean Nighthawk, *Chordeiles gundlachii*, is split from the Common Nighthawk, *Chordeiles minor*. The two overlap throughout the Florida range of the former, and are best identified by their vocalizations.
- 16) Red-breasted Sapsucker, *Sphyrapicus ruber*, is split from Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, *Sphyrapicus varius*. The race *daggetti* is included in *ruber* and the race *nuchalis* (Red-naped Sapsucker) in *varius*.
- 17) Arizona ("Brown-backed") Woodpecker is merged into Strickland's Woodpecker, *Picoides stricklandi*, of Mexico, and it gets the latter's name.
- 18) La Sagra's Flycatcher, *Myiarchus sagrae*, is split from Stolid Flycatcher, *Myiarchus stolidus*. This change signals the adoption of the classification of the genus *Myiarchus* as advocated by Wesley Lanyon and adopted by Traylor (1979). The Middle American forms are correctly classified in A Field Guide to the Birds of Mexico (1973), and A Guide to the Birds of Panama (1976). The form on Puerto Rico becomes a species *Myiarchus antillarum*, separate from *M. stolidus*; the forms from the northern Lesser Antilles previously allocated to *M. tyrannulus* or *M. stolidus*, form the species *Myiarchus oberi*; and *Myiarchus nugator* from St. Vincent to Grenada is split from *M. tyrannulus*. We will have to await the Sixth Edition of the Check-list to learn their official "English" names
- 19) Couch's Kingbird, *Tyrannus couchii*, is split from the Tropical Kingbird, *Tyrannus melancholicus*. Only vocalizations are established as field characteristics of the two species.
- 20) Southern Martin, *Progne elegans*, is split from the extralimital Galapagos Martin, *Progne modesta*.
- 21) Northern Rough-winged Swallow, *Stelgidopteryx serripennis* [just try saying that before the bird flies out of sight!] is split from the extralimital Southern Rough-winged Swallow, *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*.
- 22) Brown Creeper, *Certhia americana*, is split from the extralimital Treecreeper, *Certhia familiaris*.
- 23) Brown-throated Wren is merged with House Wren, *Troglodytes aedon*.
- 24) Black-backed Wagtail, *Motacilla lugens*, is split from White Wagtail, *Motacilla alba*. The two may not be separable in the field when in immature plumages, for a discussion see Morlan, 1981.
- 25) Yellow-green Vireo is merged into Red-eyed Vireo, *Vireo olivaceus*.
- 26) Gray-headed Junco is merged into Dark-eyed Junco, *Junco hyemalis*.
- 27) Gray-crowned Rosy Finch, Black Rosy Finch and Brown Rosy Finch are merged with a similar Asian form; the combined species is called Rosy Finch, *Leucosticte arctoa*.
- 28) The arrangement of Hawaiian Honeycreepers is modified from that in A Field Guide to Western Birds (1961). Nihoa Finch, *Telespyza ultima*, is split from Laysan Finch, *Telespyza cantans*. Creeper is split into five species divided among two genera: Kauai Creeper, *Oreomystis bairdi*, Hawaii Creeper, *Oreomystis mana*, Maui Creeper, *Paroreomyza montana*, Molokai Creeper, *Paroreomyza flammea*, and Oahu Creeper, *Paroreomyza maculata*!

The net effect of these changes is that the number of species in the Supplement is increased by two (omitting the changes to Hawaiian species) owing to changes in species status. There are a few more forms on the Supplement whose systematic status is not yet resolved, but most changes which one might have anticipated now have been made. We will have to await the Sixth Edition of the Check-list to see what changes in the status of Middle American and Caribbean species have been adopted.

#### CHANGES IN "ENGLISH" NAMES

MANY "ENGLISH" NAMES were changed in an effort to provide a unique common name for each species of bird rather than because of change in systematic status. Some of the new names have been widely used by birders, but only now are made "official." As will be noted below, I am not completely sympathetic with this effort.

Names marked with a dagger (†) also may reflect a taxonomic change which would not otherwise have affected the form in the Supplement. Names marked with a double dagger (††) are newly adopted names of birds found in North

America since the Fifth Edition and which differ from the name commonly used in *American Birds* and popular field guides.

Although I like the adoption of 'foreign' "English" names for birds like Shy Albatross which are marginal members of our avifauna and which appear in the ornithological literature primarily under the English name now adapted by the A.O.U., I am unenthusiastic when the change involves a form that is an integral member of the North American avifauna, and for which there is an extensive literature under its former English name.

<i>Former Name</i>	<i>New Name</i>	<i>Former Name</i>	<i>New Name</i>
White-capped Albatross	Shy Albatross	Black-headed Gull	Common Black-headed Gull
Scaled Petrel	Mottled Petrel	White-winged Black Tern	White-winged Tern
South Trinidad Petrel	Herald Petrel†	Noddy Tern	Brown Noddy
New Zealand Shearwater	Buller's Shearwater	Ringed Turtle Dove	Ringed Turtle-Dove
Harcourt's Storm-Petrel	Band-rumped Storm-Petrel	Barred Dove	Zebra Dove††
Galapagos Storm-Petrel	Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel	Ground Dove	Common Ground-Dove
Blue-faced Booby	Masked Booby	Ruddy Ground Dove	Ruddy Ground-Dove
Gannet	Northern Gannet	White-fronted Dove	White-tipped Dove
White Pelican	American White Pelican	Roadrunner	Greater Roadrunner
Louisiana Heron	Tricolored Heron	Barn Owl	Common Barn-Owl
Green Heron	Green-backed Heron	Whiskered Owl	Whiskered Screech-Owl
Black-crowned Night Heron	Black-crowned Night-Heron	Hawk-Owl	Northern Hawk-Owl
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Pygmy Owl	Northern Pygmy-Owl
American Flamingo	Greater Flamingo†	Ferruginous Owl	Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl
White-fronted Goose	Greater White-fronted Goose	Saw-whet Owl	Northern Saw-whet Owl
Black Duck	American Black Duck	Ridgway's Whip-poor-will	Buff-collared Nightjar††
Pintail	Northern Pintail	Poor-will	Common Poorwill
European Wigeon	Eurasian Wigeon	Pauraque	Common Pauraque
White-tailed Kite	Black-shouldered Kite	White-throated Needle-tailed	White-throated Needletail††
Swallow-tailed Kite	American Swallow-tailed Kite	Swift	
Everglade Kite	Snail Kite	White-rumped Swift	Fork-tailed Swift
Goshawk	Northern Goshawk	Rivoli's Hummingbird	Magnificent Hummingbird†
Steller's Sea Eagle	Steller's Sea-Eagle	Heloise's Hummingbird	Bumblebee Hummingbird
Marsh Hawk	Northern Harrier	Rieffer's Hummingbird	Rufous-tailed Hummingbird
Black Hawk	Common Black-Hawk†	Coppery-tailed Trogon	Elegant Trogon
European Kestrel	Eurasian Kestrel	Wryneck	Eurasian Wryneck
Chachalaca	Plain Chachalaca†	Northern Three-toed	Three-toed Woodpecker
Red Jungle Fowl	Red Junglefowl	Woodpecker	
Greater Prairie Chicken	Greater Prairie-Chicken	Black-backed Three-toed	Black-backed Woodpecker
Lesser Prairie Chicken	Lesser Prairie-Chicken	Woodpecker	
Turkey	Wild Turkey	Common Flicker	Northern Flicker
Bobwhite	Northern Bobwhite	Beardless Flycatcher	Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet
Harlequin Quail	Montezuma Quail	Coues' Flycatcher	Greater Pewee
Common Gallinule	Common Moorhen	Eastern Wood Pewee	Eastern Wood-Pewee
European Coot	Eurasian Coot	Western Wood Pewee	Western Wood-Pewee
Lapwing	Northern Lapwing	Olivaceous Flycatcher	Dusky-capped Flycatcher
Eurasian Golden Plover	Greater Golden-Plover	Wied's Crested Flycatcher	Brown-crested Flycatcher
American Golden Plover	Lesser Golden-Plover	Kiskadee Flycatcher	Great Kiskadee
Ringed Plover	Common Ringed Plover	Skylark	Eurasian Skylark
Dotterel	Eurasian Dotterel	House Martin	Common House-Martin
Black Oystercatcher	American Black Oystercatcher	Mexican Jay	Gray-breasted Jay
Jaçana	Northern Jacana	Common Crow	American Crow
Greenshank	Common Greenshank	Common Raven	Northern Raven
Polynesian Tattler	Gray-tailed Tattler	White-necked Raven	Chihuahuan Raven
Rufous-necked Sandpiper	Rufous-necked Stint	Gray-headed Chickadee	Siberian Tit
European Jacksnipe	Jack Snipe	Dipper	American Dipper
European Woodcock	Eurasian Woodcock	Middendorf's Grasshopper	Middendorf's Grasshopper-
Northern Phalarope	Red-necked Phalarope	Warbler	Warbler

<i>Former Name</i>	<i>New Name</i>	<i>Former Name</i>	<i>New Name</i>
Short-billed Marsh Wren	Sedge Wren	Ground-chat	Gray-crowned Yellowthroat
Long-billed Marsh Wren	Marsh Wren	Cardinal	Northern Cardinal
Wheatear	Northern Wheatear	Tree Sparrow	American Tree Sparrow
Blackbird	Eurasian Blackbird	Scarlet-headed Oriole	Streak-backed Oriole
Mockingbird	Northern Mockingbird	Spotted-breasted Oriole	Spot-breasted Oriole
Mountain Accentor	Siberian Accentor	Lichtenstein's Oriole	Altamira Oriole
Tree Pipit	Brown Tree-Pipit††	Black-headed Oriole	Audubon's Oriole
Indian Tree Pipit	Olive Tree-Pipit††	European Tree Sparrow	Eurasian Tree Sparrow
Starling	European Starling		

## CHANGES IN SYSTEMATIC ARRANGEMENT

CHANGES TO THE SYSTEMATIC arrangement are sweeping, and the order of birds in checklists will be altered. However, the changes are not quite as extensive as were adopted between the Third and Fourth Editions of the A.O.U. Check-list. Just examine any turn-of-the-century ornithological text to see what the earlier classification was. Moreover, many other changes to

the classification of birds that have been proposed in recent years were not adopted by the A.O.U. The degree of change is generally less as one ascends the taxonomic hierarchy. Thus, most large genera have been reordered, many changes in generic bounds have been made, a few families are re-arranged, but almost no changes at the ordinal level of classification are made. In the synopsis that follows, space limitations preclude listing the changes to the se-

quence of species within a genus when the bounds of that genus are unaltered from the Fifth Edition of the A.O.U. Check-list. Inclusion of such changes would easily double the length of this section! Scientific names marked with an asterisk were changed in the 33rd Supplement to the A.O.U. Check-list. I take the classification in *A Field Guide to Western Birds* (op. cit.) as the prior "standard" for Hawaiian species and ignore species recently introduced to Hawaii.

Least Grebe becomes *Tachybaptus dominicus* and is the first grebe listed. Pied-billed Grebe is listed next.

Petrels of the genera *Pterodroma* and *Bulweria* now follow the fulmars instead of the shearwaters. Streaked Shearwater becomes *Calonectris leucomelas* and Cory's Shearwater becomes *Calonectris diomedea*.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel is the first storm-petrel listed. British Storm-Petrel is listed between the genera *Pelagodroma* and *Oceanodroma*. Least Storm-Petrel becomes *Oceanodroma microsoma*, and is listed last in the genus.

The boobies are listed before the pelicans. Northern Gannet becomes *Sula bassanus*.

The bitterns are listed first in the Ardeidae. Little Blue Heron becomes *Egretta caerulea*. Tricolored Heron becomes *Egretta tricolor*. Reddish Egret becomes *Egretta rufescens*. Cattle Egret is listed after Reddish Egret and Green-backed Heron after Cattle Egret. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron becomes *Nycticorax violaceus*.

The ibises and spoonbills are listed between the herons and the storks.

The flamingoes are moved to a separate order Phoenicopteriformes, listed between the storks and the waterfowl.

A "new" sequence of waterfowl is adopted, which follows, with modifications, that proposed by Delacour and Mayr (1945) and later revised by Johnsgard (1975). Whistling-ducks come first, then swans, geese (in reversed generic order from the current list), [shelducks would follow if any were still listed], Wood Duck, dabbling ducks, diving ducks, eiders, sea ducks and the mergansers, and stiff-tailed ducks are last. Whooper Swan becomes *Cygnus cygnus*. Trumpeter Swan becomes *Cygnus buccinator*. Emperor Goose becomes *Chen canagica*. Hawaiian

Goose (not Nene), *Nesochen sandvicensis*, is the last goose listed. Most ornithologists who adopt this sequence also merge the genus *Chen* into the genus *Anser*, *Nesochen* into *Branta*, and the genera *Lophodytes* and *Mergellus* into *Mergus*. I was more surprised to see these genera maintained in the new Check-list than by any other change in the systematic classification of birds.

The Osprey becomes the first subfamily, Pandioninae, of the Accipitridae. Mississippi Kite becomes *Ictinia mississippiensis*. The sea-eagle genus *Haliaeetus*, harriers, black-hawks, and Harris' Hawk are listed after the kites. The true eagle genus *Aquila* comes after the Buteos.

The grouse and turkeys are treated as subfamilies of the Phasianidae and listed between the pheasant/peafowl group and the New World quail. Spruce Grouse becomes *Dendragapus canadensis*. Sharp-tailed Grouse becomes *Tympanuchus phasianellus*. Elegant Quail becomes *Callipepla douglasii*. California Quail becomes *Callipepla californica*. Gambel's Quail becomes *Callipepla gambelii*. Guinea fowl are listed as the last subfamily of the Phasianidae.

The rails are listed first within the Gruiformes, then the Limpkin, and the cranes are last. Hawaiian Rail becomes *Porzana sandwichensis*. Laysan Rail becomes *Porzana palmeri*. Spotted Rail is listed as *Pardirallus maculatus*, and follows the cranes in the checklist.

Classification of the waders is completely revised. The thick-knees, plovers, oystercatchers and recurvirostrids are listed in that sequence within a restricted suborder Charadrii. Eurasian Dotterel becomes *Charadrius morinellus*, and is listed after Mountain Plover. The jacanas and the sandpipers form a new suborder

- Scolopaci The phalaropes become a subfamily of the Scolopacidae, which are listed in the sequence shanks, curlews, godwits, turnstones, stints, dowitchers, snipe, woodcock, and phalaropes. Stilt Sandpiper becomes *Calidris himantopus*, and is listed after Curlew Sandpiper. American Woodcock becomes *Scolopax minor*. Wilson's Phalarope becomes *Phalaropus tricolor*. Red-necked Phalarope becomes *Phalaropus lobatus*. Red Phalarope becomes *Phalaropus fulicaria*.
- The skuas become a subfamily of the Laridae. Gull-billed Tern becomes *Sterna nilotica*. Caspian Tern becomes *Sterna caspica*\*. Royal Tern becomes *Sterna maxima*\*. Elegant Tern becomes *Sterna elegans*\*. Sandwich Tern becomes *Sterna sandvicensis*\*.
- Dovekie is the first alcid listed. Xantus' Murrelet becomes *Synthliboramphus hypoleucus*. Craveri's Murrelet becomes *Synthliboramphus craveri*. Tufted Puffin becomes *Fratercula cirrhata* and is listed first in the genus.
- Inca Dove becomes *Columbina inca*.
- Burrowing Owl becomes *Athene cunicularia*\*.
- Ringed Kingfisher becomes *Ceryle torquata*. Belted Kingfisher becomes *Ceryle alcyon*.
- Lewis' Woodpecker becomes *Melanerpes lewis*\*. Gila Woodpecker becomes *Melanerpes uropygialis*\*. Golden-fronted Woodpecker becomes *Melanerpes aurifrons*\*. Red-bellied Woodpecker becomes *Melanerpes carolinus*\*. The sapsuckers are listed next. Ladder-backed Woodpecker becomes *Picoides scalaris*\*. Nuttall's Woodpecker becomes *Picoides nuttallii*\*. Downy Woodpecker becomes *Picoides pubescens*\*. Hairy Woodpecker becomes *Picoides villosus*\*. Red-cockaded Woodpecker becomes *Picoides borealis*\*. White-headed Woodpecker becomes *Picoides albolarvatus*\*. Northern Flicker and Pileated Woodpecker follow the genus *Picoides*.
- The tyrant flycatchers are re-organized, and the becards (and tityras) are transferred from the Cotingidae to the Tyrannidae. Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet is listed first, then a subfamily containing the pewees, *Empidonax*, phoebes, and Vermilion Flycatcher. Olive-side Flycatcher becomes *Contopus borealis* and is first in its genus. The genera *Myiarchus*, *Pitangus*, *Myiodynastes*, *Empidonax* and *Tyrannus* make up a third subfamily of the Tyrannidae. Fork-tailed Flycatcher becomes *Tyrannus savana*. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher becomes *Tyrannus forficatus*. Rose-throated Becard becomes *Pachyramphus aglaiae* and is listed last in the family.
- The purple martins are listed first in the swallows. Tree Swallow becomes *Tachycineta bicolor*. Bahama Swallow becomes *Tachycineta cyaneoviridis*. Cliff Swallow becomes *Hirundo pyrrhonota*. Cave Swallow becomes *Hirundo fulva*.
- Brown Jay becomes *Cyanocorax morio*.
- Verdin is moved to the family Remizidae and Bushtit to the family Aegithalidae. The change in status reflects the very different nesting biology of these birds compared to the family Paridae, as well as other data.
- The dippers now follow the wrens. The families Sylviidae, Muscicapidae, Monarchidae, and Turdidae all become subfamilies [change the 'idae' to 'inae'] of an expanded family Muscicapidae, listed in that order. The kinglets are merged into the Sylviinae after the genus *Phylloscopus*. Redwing becomes *Turdus iliacus*\*. The Wrentit is classified as a babbler, subfamily Timalinae. The mimic thrush family Mimidae follows the Muscicapidae, and the accentor family Prunellidae follows the mimic thrushes.
- Classification of the 'nine-primaried' passerines is completely revised.
- A family Emberizidae now is recognized and listed after the vireos; it includes as subfamilies the wood warblers (Parulinae), Bananaquit (Coerebinae), tanagers (Thraupinae), cardinal grosbeaks (Cardinalinae), buntings (Emberizinae), and icterids (Icterinae).
- Wood Warblers are listed in the generic sequence: *Vermivora*, *Parula*, *Dendroica*, Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta*), American Redstart (*Setophaga*), Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria*), Worm-eating Warbler (*Helminthos*), Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis*), *Seiurus*, *Oporornis*, *Geothlypis*, *Wilsonia*, Red-faced Warbler (*Cardellina*), *Myioborus*, Fan-tailed Warbler (*Euthlypis*), *Basileuterus*, Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria*), and Olive Warbler (*Peucedramus*). Painted Redstart becomes *Myioborus pictus*\*. There is a suspicion that Yellow-breasted Chat and Olive Warbler may not be wood warblers, but no one is agreed as to what else they might be.
- Blue-gray Tanager is dropped from our avifauna, and Stripe-headed Tanager is the first tanager listed.
- Cardinal grosbeak genera are listed as: Crimson-collared Grosbeak (*Rhodothraupis*), *Cardinalis*, *Pheucticus*, Blue Bunting (*Cyanocompsa*), Blue Grosbeak, (*Guiraca*), *Passerina*, Dickcissel (*Spiza*). Pyrrhuloxia becomes *Cardinalis sinuatus*\*.
- The genera of buntings are listed in the sequence: *Paroaria*, Olive Sparrow (*Arremonops*), towhees, (*Pipilo*), seed-eaters (*Sporophila*), grassquits (*Tiaris*), Saffron Finch (*Sicalis*), *Aimophila*, *Spizella*, Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes*), Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes*), *Amphispiza*, Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza*), Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus*), *Ammodramus*, Fox Sparrow (*Passerella*), *Melospiza*, *Zonotrichia*, *Junco*, longspurs (*Calcarius*), *Emberiza*, *Plectrophenax*. Green-tailed Towhee becomes *Pipilo chlorurus*\*. Five-striped Sparrow becomes *Amphispiza quinquestriata* and is listed after Sage Sparrow. Le Conte's Sparrow becomes *Ammodramus lecontei*. Sharp-tailed Sparrow becomes *Ammodramus caudatus*.
- The icterid genera are listed as: Bobolink (*Dolichonyx*), *Agelaius*, meadowlarks (*Sturnella*), Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus*), *Euphagus*, grackles (*Quiscalus*), cowbirds (*Molothrus*), orioles (*Icterus*), Great-tailed Grackle becomes *Quiscalus mexicanus*\*. Boat-tailed Grackle becomes *Quiscalus major*\*. Bronzed Cowbird becomes *Molothrus aeneus*\*.
- The family Fringillidae is restricted to the chaffinches subfamily Fringillinae, cardueline finches subfamily Carduelinae, and the Hawaiian honeycreepers subfamily Drepanidinae. The cardueline finches are listed in the generic sequence: Rosy Finch (*Leucosticte*), Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola*), *Carpodacus*, crossbills (*Loxia*), *Carduelis*, canaries (*Serinus*), bullfinches (*Pyrrhula*), hawfinches (*Coccothraustes*). Common Redpoll becomes *Carduelis flammea*\*. Hoary Redpoll becomes *Carduelis hornemanni*\*. Pine Siskin becomes *Carduelis pinus*\*. Lesser Goldfinch becomes *Carduelis psaltria*\*

Lawrence's Goldfinch becomes *Carduelis lawrencei*\*. American Goldfinch becomes *Carduelis tristis*\*. Evening Grosbeak becomes *Coccothraustes vespertinus*.

Common Amakihi becomes *Hemignathus virens*. Anianiau becomes *Hemignathus parvus*. Greater Amakihi ('Green Solitaire') becomes *Hemignathus sagittirostris*. Akiala becomes *Hemignathus munroi*. Palila becomes

*Loxioides bailleui* Greater Koa-Finch becomes *Rhodacanthis palmeri*. Lesser Koa-Finch becomes *Rhodacanthis flaviceps*. Grosbeak Finch becomes *Chloridops kona*.

The genus *Passer* is moved to the family Passeridae, listed after the Fringillidae. The estrildid finches, family Estrilidae, are listed after the Passeridae, at the very end.

**T**HAT'S IT! While I doubt that there will be any ornithologist anywhere who is happy with all of these changes, the new list is a very solid reflection of the knowledge of the relationships between the species of birds gained over the last thirty years.

If I have a problem with this new list, it lies with the English names. While we must accept the fact that continual research in taxonomic fields and new techniques in determining bird relationships will result in revisions to the scientific names of some of our species, and of the order in which they are listed, there should be one list of names that does not—and need not—almost ever change. That list is the English (or better, *vernacular*) names.

English names can be fixed independent of any natural order. It has been traditional to fix these names on a continental or hemispheric scale. On such scales, a significant ornithological literature using these names then develops. I see no compelling reason to make English nomenclature uniform on a worldwide scale, when the scientific nomenclature provides precisely that bridge between continents—and languages.

Unnecessary changes to English names adopted in the new Check-list greatly diminish the utility of English names as the constant nomenclature for birds. When one considers the cost alone of continual changes in English names to authors, editors, and publishers, of rendering obsolete the English nomenclature of every published book, journal, field card, and computer storage, it seems something more than (as some committee members view it) a trivial aspect of the new list.

**C**LEARLY IT IS essential to have 'official' English names for birds. What should be the basis for selecting these names? The first principle should be to maximize constancy from one edition of a checklist to the next. English names should change only when there is a fundamental change in the entity to which they apply, as when a species is

split or lumped. When competing names exist, frequency of past use should be the primary factor in choosing the official name, anticipated future use perhaps the next most important factor, and brevity the third. English nomenclature need not be binomial or otherwise mirror scientific nomenclature. Just think how easy communication would be if it were sufficient to call *Anas penelope* Wigeon and *Anas americana* Baldpate. How often will we be confused because there is a third species of wigeon in South America? How often were you confused about which bird was meant when someone said or wrote simply Knot for *Calidris canutus*? I have other favorite English names for some of our birds, different from what appears in the Check-list. I do not suggest that any be adopted officially. What I do hope is that the official English nomenclature for birds will be frozen (except when taxonomic revisions necessitate a change) as soon as possible. For better or worse, this Check-list provides a reasonable and consistent base from which to select the English names.

In previous reviews, I applauded the A.B.A.'s decision to count species only. Then my concerns were much influenced by the official classification of our birds in effect relative to the advances in knowledge of these birds. The new Supplement largely dispels these concerns. However, nearly ten years of reports in *American Birds* since the Thirty-second Supplement appeared has changed my mind about the desirability of counting species only. Many of the forms merged in the past three Supplements to the A.O.U. Check-list as well as many other previously named subspecies or groups of subspecies are separable in the field, especially in the hand, where banders can examine them. When only species are reported, much awareness about such distinctive forms is lost. Ipswich Sparrow is seldom mentioned in these pages now, but certainly its status as a population is as precarious as ever. I urge the A.O.U. to

embark on a new effort to provide a list of forms that can be so separated. Conversely, many forms named long ago from small, often biased samples may not be worthy of *taxonomic* recognition. Such an effort could prove even more important than this recent effort to standardize the English names for our birds.

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