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REPORT OF THE ALASKA CHECKLIST COMMITTEE, 1997–2002

DANIEL D. GIBSON, University of Alaska Museum, Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-6960

STEVEN C. HEINL, P. O. Box 23101, Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

THEODORE G. TOBISH, JR., 2510 Foraker Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99517

ABSTRACT: During the six years 1997–2002 there were 21 additions to the Alaska list, four other status changes based on taxonomic decisions, and one deletion, resulting in a net total of 468 species and 110 additional subspecies of birds known at the beginning of 2003 to have occurred naturally in Alaska.

Using the published inventory of Alaska birds (Gibson and Kessel 1997) as a foundation, we have assembled here all additions to, systematic status changes to, and deletions from the Alaska list during the years 1997–2002, inclusive. The 1997 inventory discussed 448 species and 110 additional subspecies. At the beginning of 2003, with the additions, status changes, and deletions published here, the Alaska list included 468 species and 110 additional subspecies. Occurrence of most of these 578 taxa in Alaska is substantiated by archived voucher specimens, but some are substantiated by archived photos or sound recordings only. For all taxa here added to the Alaska list we include all records and published reports through 2002. For those formerly included on the unsubstantiated list we include reference to the reports on which that status was based. No avian species or subspecies is added to the Alaska list in the absence of an archived voucher specimen, photo, videotape, or sound recording. Additions to the unsubstantiated list are founded on compelling written details (on file at the University of Alaska Museum) from at least one experienced observer. All involve accepted identifications. Subspecies bracketed below are inferred, not based on identified specimens.

Recognizing the impressive movements of Alaska's avifauna—many species and subspecies perform extraordinary annual intercontinental migrations to reach Alaska—we strive to keep segregated taxa of proved identity whose occurrence here is the result of proximate human assistance only, known or presumed. These include captive birds deliberately released (e.g., various upland game-birds by the Alaska Department of Fish and

Game), escapes from captivity, and ship-assisted arrivals. We currently maintain Alaska files on over a dozen such species, including the Humboldt Penguin (*Spheniscus humboldti*), Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*), Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*), Red-footed Booby (*Sula sula*), American Flamingo (*Phoenicopter ruber*), Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*), Mandarin Duck (*Aix galericulata*), Chukar (*Alectoris chukar*), Kalij Pheasant (*Lophura leucomelanos*), Brown Eared Pheasant (*Crossoptilon mantchuricum*), Cheer Pheasant (*Catreus wallichi*), Reeves's Pheasant (*Syrnaticus reevesii*), Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*), Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*), Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*), Common Bronzewing (*Phaps chalcoptera*), and White-vented Myna (*Acridotheres javanicus*).

The following accounts include 21 additions to the Alaska list, four changes for taxonomic reasons, and one deletion. Citations to the publication *American Birds/North American Birds/Field Notes* are abbreviated AB, NAB, or FN, respectively. Some recent documentary photos have also been published in *Birding World* (BW). UAM abbreviates University of Alaska Museum. The listing of each taxon's type locality in braces parallels Gibson and Kessel (1997).

ADDITIONS TO THE ALASKA LIST

Podiceps nigricollis [*californicus* Heermann, 1855 {type locality: California}]. Eared Grebe. One well substantiated record (no specimen; photos at UAM): one with Horned Grebes, 21–26 May 1998, Fairbanks, D. C. Weisensel et al. (FN 52:372). Subsequent report of one, Juneau, 20–21 May 2000, R. J. Gordon et al. (NAB 54:316). In the New World the species breeds as close to Alaska as southern Yukon Territory and northeastern and central-interior British Columbia (AOU 1998).

Puffinus creatopus Coues, 1864 {type locality: San Nicolas Island, California}. Pink-footed Shearwater. First substantiated record (photos at UAM): one, 13 August 2000, Gulf of Alaska off Kodiak Island at Albatross Banks (56° 36' N, 152° 43' W), D. W. Sonneborn. First Alaska specimen obtained one year later: UAM 13567, male, 3 August 2001, Gulf of Alaska off Cape Fairweather (at 58° 24' N, 138° 56' W), D. W. Sonneborn. Breeds on islands off Chile and ranges at sea off the Pacific coast of the Americas (see AOU 1998).

The species was first reported in Alaska on 24 August 1917 off Forrester Island (Willett 1918) and, in view of subsequent reports (e.g., see Isleib and Kessel 1973), was formerly regarded as a "rare summer visitant on the North Pacific Ocean in south-coastal and southeastern Alaska" (Kessel and Gibson 1978), but until 2000 it was unsubstantiated.

Puffinus gravis (O'Reilly, 1818) {type locality: latitude of Cape Farewell and Staten Hook, frequently Newfoundland in summer}. Greater Shearwater. One record (no specimen; photo published and at UAM): one, 3 August 2001, Gulf of Alaska off Montague Island (at 59° 50' N, 148° 00' W), J. M. Pearce (Pearce 2002). The species breeds in the South Atlantic Ocean and ranges widely throughout the Atlantic (AOU 1998); the only other North Pacific records are from California (once in fall and at least once in winter, Garrett and Wilson 2003). Remarkably, Alaska's first specimen of *P. creatopus* and Alaska's first record of *P. gravis* were obtained the same day.

Puffinus bulleri Salvin, 1888 {type locality: New Zealand}. Buller's Shearwater. First substantiated record (no specimen; photos at UAM, Figure 1): one, 6 September 1997, Gulf of Alaska off Sitka (at 57° 06' N, 136° 25' W), D. W. Sonneborn and P.



Figure 1. Buller's Shearwater off Sitka, Alaska. 6 September 1997.

Photo by D. W. Sonneborn

M. Suchanek. There were additional records, of up to 20 birds, in September and October 1997 off Middleton Island (FN 52:108). The species breeds on islands off New Zealand and ranges at sea in the Pacific Ocean off the west coast of North America from the Gulf of Alaska to Baja California (AOU 1998). Both *P. bulleri* and *P. creatopus* are seasonally fairly common or common along the outer coast of British Columbia (Campbell et al. 1990) and probably occur regularly in Alaska waters in the Gulf of Alaska (e.g., see Isleib and Kessel 1973), but their status is poorly known.

Egretta garzetta garzetta (Linnaeus, 1766) {type locality: "Oriente" = northeastern Italy}. Little Egret. One record (specimen UAM 11000): ad. male, found dead 27 May 2000, Buldir Island, Aleutian Islands. M. Renner and I. L. Jones. Identification to subspecies by D. D. Gibson, at UAM. The species breeds widely and locally in the tropical and temperate zones of the Old World from southern Europe and Africa to the Philippines, Sunda Archipelago, and Australia. In Asia the Little Egret ranges north and east to Japan (see Vaurie 1965), where a common breeder on Honshu and an irregular visitor as far north as Hokkaido (OSJ 2000).

Pluvialis apricaria (Linnaeus, 1758) {type locality: Lapland}. European Golden-Plover. First substantiated record (specimen UAM 12100): first-winter male, 13–14 January 2001, Ketchikan (Gravina Island), A. W. Piston and S. C. Heinl (Piston and Heinl 2001). This was also the first record in the Pacific basin and the first winter record for North America. The species breeds in northern Eurasia east to the Taimyr Peninsula (AOU 1998); it winters primarily in the British Isles, western Europe, and North Africa (Vaurie 1965). It was previously on the unsubstantiated list on the basis of one seen 13 June 1980 at Point Barrow (B. J. McCaffery).

Larus minutus Pallas, 1776 {type locality: Berezova, Tobolsk, Siberia}. Little Gull. First substantiated record (no specimen; published photo, additional photos at UAM): adult in summer plumage, 28 April–13 May 2001, Ketchikan. S. C. Heinl, A. W. Piston, et al. (NAB 55:340). Subsequent reports include an adult in summer plumage.

REPORT OF THE ALASKA CHECKLIST COMMITTEE, 1997–2002

23–24 May 2001, Juneau, P. M. Suchanek et al. (NAB 55:340), a one-year-old, 28 May 2002, Juneau, P. M. Suchanek et al. (NAB 56:345), and another one-year-old, 26–29 June 2002, Anchorage, A. Jaramillo et al. (NAB 56:472). The species is a casual visitant on the Pacific coast of North America from southern British Columbia to southern California (AOU 1998).

The Little Gull was previously on the unsubstantiated list on the basis of one, 9 September 1975, Cordova area (M. E. Isleib), an adult in winter plumage, 4 October 1992, Snow Passage, Clarence Strait (S. C. Heint, AB 47:134), an adult in winter plumage, 8 August 1994, Chichagof Island (K. Bardon, FN 49:85), and a one-year-old, 5 May 1995, Kodiak Island (R. A. MacIntosh).

Sterna fuscata (nubilosa) Sparrman, 1788 [type locality: "India orientalis" (Peters 1934)]. Sooty Tern. One record (specimen UAM 7280): headless skeleton with some attached and some associated remiges, found in September 1997, Attu Island, Aleutian Islands, R. W. Dickerman (Dickerman et al. 1998). The species breeds widely on tropical islands in the Pacific Ocean (see AOU 1998) and is casual or accidental as far north as California (see Garrett and Wilson 2003) and Hokkaido (OSJ 2000).

Empidonax traillii adastus Oberholser, 1932 [type locality: Hart Mountain, Oregon]. Willow Flycatcher. Additional subspecies. One record (specimen UAM 5528): singing male, 16–24 July 1988, west slope of Chugach State Park at elevation 700 m, Anchorage area, M. E. Isleib and T. G. Tobish, Jr. Identification to subspecies by P. Unitt, at San Diego Natural History Museum (cf. Gibson and Kessel 1997). The subspecies breeds "from southeastern British Columbia to eastern California, and the Great Basin to the Rockies north of extreme southern Utah" (Browning 1993).

Sayornis nigricans Vigors, 1839 [type locality: Monterey, California]. Black Phoebe. One record (no specimen; photos at UAM): one netted, banded, photographed, and released, 4 July 2000, Denali National Park (at 63° 25' N, 150° 26' W), C. Kelly fide D. F. DeSante (NAB 54:413). The species breeds north to southwestern Oregon and ranges casually north to southwestern British Columbia (AOU 1998).

Sylvia curruca (Linnaeus, 1758) [type locality: Sweden]. Lesser Whitethroat. One record (no specimen; photo published, videotape at UAM): one, 8–9 September 2002, Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, P. E. Lehman (Lehman 2003; photo published both there and in BW 15:432, 2002). The Lesser Whitethroat breeds in Eurasia from western and central Europe east to Yakutia and Transbaikalia in the vicinity of 130° E (see Vaurie 1959, Cramp 1992).

Phylloscopus trochilus (Linnaeus, 1758) [type locality: England]. Willow Warbler. One record (no specimen; photo published, videotape at UAM): one, 25–30 August 2002, Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, P. E. Lehman et al. (Lehman 2003, photo published both there and in BW 15:432, 2002). The species breeds in Eurasia from western and central Europe to eastern Siberia in Anadyrland (see Vaurie 1959, Cramp 1992).

Phylloscopus inornatus [inornatus] (Blyth, 1842) [type locality: near Calcutta]. Yellow-browed Warbler. First record (no specimen; photos published and at UAM): one, 23–24 September 1999, Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, P. E. Lehman (Lehman 2000). Subsequent record of one (photo published; videotape and photos at UAM), 30 August 2002, Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, G. L. Armistead and P. E. Lehman (NAB 57:104). The species breeds in Asia from the Ural Mountains through Siberia to the Sea of Okhotsk and Anadyrland (see Vaurie 1959, Cramp 1992).

Muscicapa striata (Pallas, 1764) [type locality: Holland]. Spotted Flycatcher. One record (no specimen; photo published, videotape at UAM): one, 14 September 2002, Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, P. E. Lehman and D. W. Sonneborn (Lehman 2003; photo published both there and in BW 15:432, 2002). The species breeds in Eurasia

REPORT OF THE ALASKA CHECKLIST COMMITTEE, 1997–2002

from western Europe to Transbaikalia in the vicinity of 120° E (see Vaurie 1959, Cramp and Perrins 1993).

Dumetella carolinensis (Linnaeus, 1766) {type locality: Virginia}. Gray Catbird. First two records (no specimen; photos of each at UAM): one, 10 July to about 24 July 1997, Farm Island, Stikine River, E. Benitz and M. Benitz; one netted, banded, photographed, and released, 5 October 1997, Cape Peirce, J. R. Moran and C. A. Wilson (Figure 2). Subsequent report of one, 13 October 1999, Anchorage, D. F. DeLap et al. (NAB 54:91). The Gray Catbird breeds as close to Alaska as southern interior British Columbia (Campbell et al. 1997).

Dendroica pensylvanica (Linnaeus, 1766) {type locality: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania}. Chestnut-sided Warbler. First substantiated record (specimen UAM 7051): singing male, 22 June 1997, Ketchikan (Pennock Island), S. C. Heinl. The species breeds locally in northeastern British Columbia and is a casual or rare migrant in southern British Columbia and the contiguous western United States (see AOU 1998). The Chestnut-sided Warbler was previously on the unsubstantiated list on the basis of an immature seen 21 September 1981, Middleton Island, Gulf of Alaska, T. G. Tobish, Jr. (AB 36:208).

Dendroica caerulescens (Gmelin, 1789) {type locality: Hispaniola}. Black-throated Blue Warbler. One record (no specimen; photo published, additional photos at UAM): male, 22 November–5 December 2001, Juneau (Tee Harbor), R. A. Wood et al. (NAB 56:91–92). The species breeds no closer to Alaska than eastern Saskatchewan; it is a casual or rare migrant in western North America from British Columbia to Baja California (see AOU 1998).



Figure 2. Gray Catbird at Cape Peirce, Alaska, 5 October 1997.

Photo by Carol Wilson

REPORT OF THE ALASKA CHECKLIST COMMITTEE, 1997–2002

Emberiza elegans [*elegans* Temminck, 1835 {type locality: Japan}]. Yellow-throated Bunting. One record (no specimen; photos published and at UAM): adult male, 25 May 1998, Attu Island, Aleutian Islands, P. W. Sykes, Jr., et al. (Sykes 1998). The species breeds in eastern Asia from Amurland and Ussuriland to Manchuria and Korea, southwestern Japan, and China (see Vaurie 1959, OSJ 2000). It is an uncommon migrant in Japan as far north as Hokkaido and in southern Kurile Islands (OSJ 2000).

Pheucticus ludovicianus (Linnaeus, 1766) {type locality: Louisiana}. Rose-breasted Grosbeak. First records (no specimen; photos of each at UAM): ad. male, 15–16 August 1995, Fairbanks, J. E. Blackstone; female or immature male, 17–18 September 1998, Douglas, P. M. Suchanek et al. (FN 53:91). Subsequent reports include a first-year male, 5–9 October 2002, Juneau, M. McCafferty et al. (NAB 57:104). The Rose-breasted Grosbeak breeds as close to Alaska as northeastern British Columbia (Campbell et al. 2001); it is a casual or rare migrant elsewhere in western North America from southern British Columbia to Arizona (see AOU 1998). It was previously on the unsubstantiated list on the basis of a first-year male, 15 September 1986, Annette Island (M. E. Isleib and R. L. Scher, AB 41:131) and a one-year-old male, 15 June 1987, Mitkof Island (P. J. Walsh, AB 41:477).

Passerina amoena (Say, 1823) {type locality: near Canyon City, Colorado}. Lazuli Bunting. First substantiated record (no specimen; photos at UAM): a female visited a seed-feeder, 5–11 October 2000, Juneau (Douglas), P. M. Suchanek et al. (NAB 55:91). The species breeds as close to Alaska as southern interior British Columbia (Campbell et al. 2001). The Lazuli Bunting was previously on the unsubstantiated list on the basis of a singing male, 6 June 1985, Kake (D. J. Krueper, AB 39:340) and a one-year-old male, 10 June 1992, Hyder (T. G. Tobish, Jr., and L. J. Oakley, AB 46:1167).

Icterus spurius (Linnaeus, 1766) {type locality: South Carolina}. Orchard Oriole. One record (no specimen; photo published, additional photos on file at UAM): one probable female, 18 October 2002, Ketchikan, S. C. Heintz (NAB 57:104). The species breeds no closer to Alaska than southeastern Saskatchewan; it is a casual or rare migrant in the contiguous western United States (AOU 1998).

STATUS CHANGES

Gallinago delicata (Ord, 1825) {type locality: Pennsylvania}. Wilson's Snipe. Additional subspecies elevated to species rank. Maintained as the New World subspecies of the Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) from the 20th supplement (AOU 1945) until it was returned to species rank in the 43rd supplement "on basis of differences in winnowing display sounds associated with differences in the outer tail feathers (Thönen 1969, Tuck 1972, Miller 1996) that are comparable to differences between other closely related species in the genus" (Banks et al. 2002:899).

Wilson's Snipe breeds on the Alaska mainland (Gabrielson and Lincoln 1959) and in the eastern Aleutian Islands (Unimak specimens and nest/eggs examined, June). The Common Snipe is an annual spring and fall migrant in the western Aleutian Islands (see Byrd et al. 1978, Gibson 1981) and a casual migrant as far east as the central Aleutians (Adak specimens examined, May). Snipe are casual migrants on Alaska islands in Bering Sea. The first specimen of a snipe from the Pribilof Islands (September 1954) substantiated the first North American record of a Common Snipe (Kenyon and Phillips 1965), and specimens collected there since (11 examined, May and September) are all Common Snipe as well. Wilson's Snipe has been reported by experienced observers, but so far as we know there is no substantiated Pribilof record. One or the other of these species was recorded in spring at St. Matthew Island, but no

REPORT OF THE ALASKA CHECKLIST COMMITTEE, 1997–2002

specimen was obtained (Winker et al. 2002). And at St. Lawrence Island, where the only records of snipe are recent (cf. Fay and Cade 1959, Sealy et al. 1971), some have been identified by observers as Common Snipe, some as Wilson's, and some have been left unattributed; the only specimen we know of from that island is a Common Snipe (17 May, examined).

Brachyramphus perdix (Pallas, 1811) (type locality: Tauisk Bay, Sea of Okhotsk). Long-billed Murrelet. Additional subspecies elevated to species rank. In New World literature *B. perdix* was first included as an extralimital species in a key to *Brachyramphus* by Ridgway (1919) and implicitly as such by AOU (1931); later it was maintained (again by implication) as an extralimital subspecies of *Brachyramphus marmoratus* (AOU 1957). The AOU (1997) first mentioned it explicitly in its 41st supplement, maintaining it as a full species on the basis of molecular evidence (Friesen et al. 1996). Three Alaska records include two from the 19th century and one from 20th (Sealy et al. 1991, Mlodinow 1997). The Long-billed Murrelet breeds around the Sea of Okhotsk and is known from adjacent waters, including east coast of Kamchatka (Vaurie 1965).

Vireo cassinii Xántus de Vesey, 1858 (type locality: Fort Tejon, California). Cassin's Vireo. Subspecies elevated to species rank. On the basis of studies by Murray et al. (1994) and Johnson (1995), the AOU (1997) split *Vireo solitarius* (Wilson, 1810) into three species. The first Alaska records of Cassin's Vireo, published by Gibson and Kessel (1992), included Alaska's first specimen (UAM 5321, adult male, 11 June 1986, Hyder, D. D. Gibson). Subsequently, Cassin's Vireo has been casual in spring and summer on the southeastern Alaska mainland—whence over 15 records through 2002, including a second specimen (UAM 6713, adult male, 3 July 1995, Stikine River, P. J. Walsh and S. C. Heinl)—and casual in summer in south-coastal Alaska, with two Anchorage records (NAB 53:422 and 55:471). Most records are from late May to July. The earliest date is 9 May (one at Point Bridget, Berners Bay, P. M. Suchanek, FN 52:375). The species breeds as close to Alaska as southern British Columbia (see AOU 1998).

Motacilla alba lugens Gloger, 1829 (type locality: Kamchatka). White Wagtail. Species relegated to rank of additional subspecies. In the Old World *lugens* has been all but invariably maintained by authorities as a subspecies of *M. alba* (e.g., see Hartert 1920, Dementiev and Gladkov 1954, Vaurie 1959, Johansen 1961, Voous 1977, Cramp 1988, OSJ 2000; cf. Stepanyan 1978). In the New World, where it breeds only peripherally, in Alaska, *lugens* was maintained by the AOU as a subspecies of *M. alba* from the 4th edition of the Check-list (AOU 1931) to the 34th supplement (AOU 1982), when it was elevated to the rank of species on the basis of a report of sympatry with limited hybridization with subspecies *M. a. ocularis* in Kamchatka (Kistchinski and Lobkov 1979—cited by AOU 1983). It is not clear to us how sympatry with limited hybridization differs from a zone of contact between two subspecies. For example, among the approximately 12 races of the White Wagtail (Vaurie 1959, Mayr and Greenway 1960), only the two easternmost, *lugens* and *ocularis*, share the black transocular line dividing the white face shared by all adult White Wagtails. All sex and age classes of *lugens* except the adult male have the back gray, not black, once again like *ocularis*, making identification of many intergrades or hybrids by phenotype difficult or problematic, in hand as well as in the field. Most recently, in a molecular study of the genus *Motacilla*, Voelker (2002:733) found *alba* and *lugens* to be paraphyletic with respect to one another and recommended that *lugens* "be considered conspecific with *alba*, or part of the *alba* superspecies complex, as it has been in the past ... until more complete analyses of their relationships can be performed."

REPORT OF THE ALASKA CHECKLIST COMMITTEE, 1997–2002

DELETIONS

Sterna forsteri Nuttall, 1834 {type locality: Saskatchewan River}. Forster's Tern. This species has been attributed to Alaska entirely on the basis of a specimen of questionable origin (see Gibson and Kessel 1997).

ADDITIONS TO UNSUBSTANTIATED LIST

Puffinus assimilis Gould, 1838 {type locality: Norfolk Island}. Little Shearwater. Two reports from the Gulf of Alaska: one on 26 August 1996 at Gull Point, Kodiak Island (J. B. Allen); one on 12 October 1997 on the Gulf of Alaska off Resurrection Bay (at 59° 23' N, 149° 03' W) (R. H. Day, FN 52:108). In the Pacific Ocean, the species breeds in the southern hemisphere on islands off Australia and off New Zealand, at Norfolk Island, and in the Kermadec and Lord Howe groups (Mayr and Cottrell 1979). It is casual or accidental in the Hawaiian Islands (AOU 1998).

Ardea cinerea Linnaeus, 1758 {type locality: Sweden}. Gray Heron. A heron identified as this species was observed 1–2 August 1999 at St. Paul Island, Pribilof Islands, by M. Greenfelder et al. (Burton and Smith 2001). In the Palearctic region, the Gray Heron breeds widely from the British Isles to Sakhalin and Japan (Vaurie 1965).

Porzana pusilla (Pallas, 1776) {type locality: Dauria}. Baillon's Crake. A short-billed rail observed 20–21 September 2000 at Attu Island, Aleutian Islands, by J. Huntington et al. was tentatively identified as this species (NAB 55:89). In the Palearctic region, it breeds from Russia and southern Siberia east to Amurland, Ussuriland, and northern Japan (Vaurie 1965).

Myiarchus cinerascens (Lawrence, 1851) {type locality: western Texas}. Ash-throated Flycatcher. A *Myiarchus* flycatcher identified as this species was observed on 20 July 1999 at Auke Bay near Juneau by G. B. van Vliet et al. (NAB 53:422). The photographs (at UAM) are inadequate to substantiate this identification. The species breeds in western North America, as far north as northwestern Oregon, eastern Washington, southern Idaho, and southern Wyoming; it is casual in southern British Columbia and Montana (AOU 1998).

Luscinia sibilans (Swinhoe, 1863) {type locality: Macao}. Rufous-tailed Robin. A chat identified as this species was observed on 4 June 2000 at Attu Island, Aleutian Islands, by S. C. Heinl et al. (NAB 54:317). The photos (six color slides) and videotape on file at UAM are inadequate to substantiate this identification. The species breeds from south-central Siberia to Amurland, Sakhalin, and central Kamchatka (Vaurie 1959).

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REPORT OF THE ALASKA CHECKLIST COMMITTEE, 1997–2002

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REPORT OF THE ALASKA CHECKLIST COMMITTEE, 1997–2002

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REPORT OF THE ALASKA CHECKLIST COMMITTEE, 1997–2002

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