

The New AOU Changes: A Report

Every two years, the Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of the American Ornithologists' Union issues Supplements to the AOU's *Check-list of North American Birds*. These reports often include official announcements of name changes (both English and scientific), additions and occasional deletions of species in the Check-list, and, revisions in the phylogenetic order of birds and other taxonomical matters, among them some dear to birders, such as lumps and splits. The American Birding Association's Checklist Committee, among other deliberative bodies, more or less routinely follows the AOU's lead in such changes to our understanding of the avifauna of the continent, as does this publication.

These Supplements appear in the Union's journal *The Auk*, most recently in the July 2000 issue. Having studied this 42nd Supplement to the *Check-list*, we offer here in brief form some of the news most significant to Ohio birders. The supplement in all its detail appears on pp 847-859 of the July 2000 issue of *The Auk*, which for non-subscribers is probably most easily seen at your nearest university library. The list itself is widely available on the Internet, as at <http://pica.wru.umd.edu/AOU/birdlist.html>. The AOU concerns itself with the 2023 species of North America, but here we will cover only significant changes directly involving species now on the much smaller (918) checklist of the ABA.

In its own summary, the 42nd Supplement states that three species are added to the main list because verified as occurring in the AOU Area (two of them in the ABA Area), that 11 species are added as a result of splits (in the ABA Area three), that four species are changed in name and one added by splits from now extralimital forms (two in the ABA Area), four scientific names are changed by generic reallocation (two are ABA birds), one scientific name (of an ABA bird) is changed for nomenclatural reasons, five scientific names are changed in spelling for grammatical reasons (three of them ABA birds), one English name is changed (of an ABA species), one is changed by removing an unwanted modifier, five are changed as a result of splits (two of them birds of the ABA Area), and seven species are added to the Appendix (three as a result of ABA-Area occurrences). Here then are the promised pieces of news for ABA-Area species:

- ✓ Chinese pond-heron *Ardeola bacchus* is added based on its occurrence 4-9 Aug 1996 in Alaska. Insert before the genus *Butorides* in the *Check-list*.
- ✓ Yellow-throated bunting *Emberiza elegans* is added based on its occurrence 25 May 1998 in Alaska. Insert after *E. rustica* in the *Check-list*.
- ✓ Nazca booby *Sula granti* is split from masked booby *S. dactylatra*; some old sight records of the latter in the western US may pertain to the former. Insert after *S. dactylatra* in the *Check-list*.
- ✓ Gunnison sage-grouse *Centrocercus minimus* is split from "sage grouse," the nominate species becoming greater sage-grouse *C. urophasianus*. Insert *C. minimus* after *C. urophasianus* in the *Check-list*.
- ✓ Arizona woodpecker *Picooides arizonae*, the familiar but newly renamed form of SE Arizona, is split from the extralimital Strickland's woodpecker *P. stricklandi*. Insert Arizona woodpecker before Strickland's in the *Check-list*.
- ✓ "Stripe-headed tanager" *Spindalis zena* is split into four species; the only one of them confirmed as having occurred in the ABA Area is nominate *S. zena*, with the new English name western spindalis.

- ✓ Crested caracara *Caracara plancus* is split into three species. Only one occurs in the ABA Area; it retains the English name crested caracara, but as *C. plancus* is reserved for a now-extralimital form, the split species found in the ABA Area takes the new scientific name *C. cheriway*.
- ✓ Black-billed magpie is split from the Eurasian magpie *Pica pica*, and takes the new scientific name *P. hudsonia*, while retaining its English name.
- ✓ The genus *Catharacta* (skuas) is merged into *Stercorarius* (jaegers), so the ABA species great skua becomes *Stercorarius skua*, and south polar skua becomes *S. maccormacki*.
- ✓ The scientific name of juniper titmouse is changed to *Baeolophus ridgwayi*.
- ✓ The scientific names of three chickadees are changed: black-capped becomes *Poecile atricapilla*, gray-headed becomes *P. cincta*, and boreal becomes *P. hudsonica*.
- ✓ The English name of *Clangula hyemalis* is changed from oldsquaw to long-tailed duck*.
- ✓ Three species thought possibly to have occurred in the ABA Area are added to the Appendix: Swinhoe's storm-petrel *Oceanodroma monorhis*, marsh harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, and silver gull *Larus novaehollandiae*.
- ✓ Bullock's oriole *Icterus bullockii* is moved to follow *I. pustulatus* in the *Check-list*.
- ✓ An occurrence of Cuban martin *Progne cryptoleuca* is recognized for 9 May 1895 in Florida, thus in the ABA Area.

In addition, it is reported that the Committee continues consideration of certain actions: splitting herald petrel *Pterodroma arminjoniana*, splitting Townsend's shearwater *Puffinus auricularis*, splitting whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*, splitting northern pygmy-owl *Glaucidium gnoma*, subsuming winter wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* into the genus *Nannus*, splitting Brewer's sparrow *Spizella breweri*, and splitting white-winged crossbill *Loxia leucoptera*. This is apparently only a partial list of actions under consideration.

In the end, none of the changes announced adds to or subtracts from Ohio's checklist. Only three name changes, two in Latin and one in English, affect Ohio birds at all, but we have quite a few to make note of in our ABA Area lists.

* *Ed. Note:* The Committee justifies its choice of a new name here at least in part by asserting that "long-tailed duck" is the "[English] name used for the species outside of North America," and the "[English] name that is use in much of the world." Notions of its alleged offensiveness aside, however, "oldsquaw" has a unique and memorable tang that "long-tailed duck" conspicuously lacks, and the change continues a trend of abandoning distinctive names for mass-produced ones.

If the AOU had merely wanted to dump "oldsquaw," it had a wide range of colorful vernacular English names from which to choose. Here's a list from a personal collection of such names for *C. hyemalis*: callow, old-wife, quandy, swallowtail duck, coween, old injun, calloo, cockawee, callithumpian duck, ha-ha-way, John Connelly, longtail, old Billy, old Molly, scoldenore, scolder, hell's chicken, jack-owly, uncle Huldy, south-southerly, candlelight, bag, barrel tit, barrel Tom, bellringer, boom-barrel, mammy-duck, bottlebird, bottle jug, bottle tit, bottle Tom, hound, bush-oven, caley tit, canbottle, copper longtail, churn, creak-mouse, old granny, organ duck, singing duck, dogtail, featherbed, featherpoke, fuffit, huck-muck, jack-in-a-bottle, Jackie-

bopeep, juffit, owl-omelet, kitty longtail, teet, winter duck, least titmouse, long-pod, long-tailed capon, long-tailed cheffin, mommy, longtailed chittering, longtailed creeper, longtailed farmer, longtailed kitten, longtailed mag, longtailed muffin, long-tailed pie, longtailed hareld, noisy duck, mealy miller'sthumb, mum-ruffin, nimble tailor, oven-bird, oven-builder, oven's nest, huck-muck, poke bag, pike pudding, pud-den-poke, pudding bag, creamy-ass, rose muffin, swing-tree, tree huck-muck, two-fingered tit, butterfly coot. Now there are some *names*.

LATE NOTE: In August, the British Ornithologists' Union issued a parallel report in their publication *The Ibis*. A summary is available on their website at <<http://www.bou.org.uk/recnews.html>>. Very briefly put, changes of interest to birders in North America include the long-anticipated split of green-winged teal, and reaffirmation of splits among certain shearwaters and *Pterodroma* petrels. These actions by the BOU give us reason to wonder if the AOU may adopt similar changes in times to come. *Bill Whan*

Nesting Red-breasted Nuthatches in Dayton Suburb

In the winter of 1999/2000 I observed red-breasted nuthatches several times around my suburban home in Greene County. It is an older neighborhood with many evergreens 40 or more years old. Having heard that it was an invasion year, I didn't think their presence remarkable, but seeing them around did remind me of birding trips to the north. Around Memorial Day I noted a pair frequenting my feeder to get oil sunflower seeds, and figured they were just late migrants. On 19 June, however, I was getting into my car to go to work when I saw five birds on a scotch pine trunk about 15 feet away: three were fledglings giving food-begging cries, and two adult red-breasted nuthatches were feeding them. After watching the birds for some minutes, I ended up being late for a staff meeting.

I saw and heard the nuthatches several times after that, but never at such close range. Sometimes only one bird was present. They frequented the evergreens, and perhaps these afforded them a large foraging area in the neighborhood, as generally I saw them only every third day or so. My last observation was in late July, when I heard one in a large spruce tree in the area.

I consulted "The Birds of Dayton" (Dayton Audubon Society, 1984), which reported that an individual red-breasted nuthatch summered at the Bruckner Nature Center near Troy (Miami County) in 1980, and a pair came to a feeder in Dayton up to 2 June 1984. The species was regarded as a "rare to uncommon migrant and winter resident."

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Ohio's First White-winged Dove: Two Accounts

Little did I know of the excitement that was to be when I saw this unusual dove. On 10 June 2000, about 6 pm, I walked past the dining-room window and gave my customary glance out to the fly-through feeder, and was puzzled to see a dove inside. It was not our regular mourning dove. The white along the lower part of the wing, with a smaller "rim" of black below, was too different to ignore! On a second glance I saw it had a very distinctive dark mark on the lower cheek. Even though the bird was close by, about 12-15 feet away, I grabbed my binoculars and saw the bird's red eye, dark pink feet and larger dark bill. These observations then demanded I grab the bird book and look up doves, where I found an illustration and description of a white-winged dove, just like my dove. This cannot be, I thought: the map shows these doves are found only in lower Florida, New Mexico, Arizona, lower Texas, and Mexico. The next thing to grab was the telephone, to call Mary Mispion, one of the two most knowledgeable birders I know in Logan County, Rita Goeke being the other. After our phone conversation, I snapped two pictures of the dove in the locust tree about 15 feet from the feeder and just behind our sun porch. One photo did not have enough light, but the silhouette of a dove shows a tail not as pointed as that of a mourning dove. The second picture captured the white on the wing with dark below, but the head is not clear, nor does the white on the tail show.

Soon after the Mispions left, the phone started ringing—"I hear you have an unusual dove; is it still there?" and "Call me if it returns." I was sorry to have to say it had disappeared, heading west into a wooded area, never to be seen here again. My husband Charlie and I tried to entice it with a mixture of seeds and grain thrown in the feeder and on the ground, but only the regular mourning doves came to enjoy it. I thought we would see The Dove at least another day, but this was not to be.

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As much as I would have liked to take credit for discovering this bird, I did not. It was Rosalyn Rinehart who found the dove in her yard, identified it, took two photographs, and then called me. I ended up as the intermediary, the person who notified other bird people, and none too hopefully either. Unfortunately, my long-time birding partner Rita Goeke and I may have set the all-time record for repeatedly arriving just a few minutes too late at the scene of the best birding sighting of the year, and when Rosalyn called and said she had a strange bird in her yard with the mourning doves and she'd looked it up and was sure it was a white-winged dove, a pessimistic streak almost convinced me not to go to check it out.

It was close to seven o'clock on a Saturday night when the call came, and my daughter-in-law Kristin and my five-year old grandson Moses were waiting for my husband to come home from Mass so we could all go out to eat. Moses was quite hungry, and lest us know it. But when my husband arrived, he and the others, all of them birders mostly by osmosis—having taken me or gone birding with me various times—decided that in this case food could wait a bit, and off we went to Rosalyn's house.