

Paul A. DeBenedictis (Chair), Donna L. Dittmann, Jon L. Dunn, Greg Lasley, J. V. Remsen, Stu Tingley, and Thede Tobish.



GREG W. LASLEY

Worthen's Sparrow was added to the ABA Checklist on the basis of a somewhat controversial specimen collected near Silver City, New Mexico, in 1884. This Worthen's was photographed at Las Esperanzas, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, on 18 June 1994.

ABA Checklist Report, 1993

by Paul A. DeBenedictis *

This supplement to the fourth edition of the *ABA Checklist* reports all changes adopted since our last report (*Birding* 1994, 26: 93–102). With this report, the *ABA Checklist* contains 896 species, of which the origin of 4 is uncertain. For convenience, we refer to the AOU Committee on Nomenclature and Classification as the "AOU Check-list Committee"

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throughout. All observers who submitted documentation examined by our committee are listed in the accounts of species; those who discovered the bird are listed first.

Taxonomic Changes Accepted

Several taxonomic changes adopted in the 39th Supplement to the *AOU Check-list* (*Auk* 1993, 110: 675–682) are here adopted in the *ABA Checklist*. The scientific bases for these changes are de-

scribed in greater detail in *Birding* (1994, 26: 59–61).

Green-backed Heron is split into **Green Heron** (*Butorides virescens*) and **Striated Heron** (*Butorides striatus*). The latter is not known from the ABA Checklist Area. Thus, Green Heron replaces Green-backed Heron on the *ABA Checklist*.

White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) is split from **Black-shouldered Kite** (*Elanus caeruleus*), which is confined to the Old

World. Thus, White-tailed Kite replaces Black-shouldered Kite on the *ABA Checklist*.

Lesser Golden-Plover is split into **Pacific Golden-Plover** (*Pluvialis fulva*) [Status: N, Birding Code: 2] and **American Golden-Plover** (*Pluvialis dominica*), [Status: N, Birding Code: 1], adding a species to our checklist.

Rosy Finch (*Leucosticte arctoa*) is split into **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** (*Leucosticte tephrocotis*), **Black Rosy-Finch** (*Leucosticte atratus*), and **Brown-capped Rosy-Finch** (*Leucosticte australis*) [all Status: N, Birding Code: 1], resulting in a net gain of two species to the *ABA Checklist*. The taxonomic status of these birds still has not been described in a modern systematic study, and future changes to the classification of these birds are possible.

New Species Accepted— Himalayan Snowcock (*Tetraogallus himalayus*)

Where. Introduced to the Ruby and East Humboldt mountains of northeastern Nevada.

Published Details. Stiver, S. J. 1984. *California-Nevada Wildlife Transactions* pp. 55-58; *Outdoor Life*, July 1992: 44ff.

Documentation. Reports of the Nevada Department of Wildlife are on file.

Identification. This gray-brown, pheasant-sized partridge has a pale face and throat outlined by chestnut. It is illustrated in the *National Geographic Society Field Guide to the Birds of North America*.

Origin. Resident in Himalaya Mountains. This species was introduced by the Nevada Depart-

ment of Wildlife into the ecologically similar Ruby and East Humboldt mountains of Nevada between 1963 and 1979, where an estimated population of 300-500 birds has since maintained itself and supports a small yield to hunting. It is unlikely that this population, which is difficult to monitor owing to its remote, rugged habitat, will ever spread or increase substantially in size, but it shows every indication of persisting. The ABA Checklist Committee is never enthusiastic about

adding an introduced species to our checklist, especially when population size is likely to remain constrained. The negative vote is merely a stronger expression of this sentiment.

Motion to add. Remsen/De-Benedictis.

Vote. 4/3, 6/1.

Placement on the ABA Checklist. Insert between Chukar and Ring-necked Pheasant.

Status. I.

Birding code. 3.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Taxonomic Changes Accepted

Green-backed Heron is split into

Green Heron and Striated Heron (extralimital)

Black-shouldered Kite is split into

White-tailed Kite and Black-shouldered Kite (extralimital)

Lesser Golden-Plover is split into

Pacific Golden-Plover and American Golden-Plover

Rosy Finch is split into

*Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, Black Rosy-Finch,
and Brown-capped Rosy-Finch*

New Species Accepted

Himalayan Snowcock

Collared Plover

Yellow-legged Gull

Whiskered Tern

Green-breasted Mango

Cinnamon Hummingbird

Worthen's Sparrow

New Species Not Accepted

Social Flycatcher

Change in Scientific Name

*Crested Caracara (*Caracara plancus*)*

New Species, Origin Uncertain

European Turtle-Dove



GREG LASLEY

Collared Plover (Charadrius collaris), 11 May 1992, Uvalde Fish Hatchery, Uvalde, Texas.

New Species Accepted— Collared Plover (*Charadrius collaris*)

Where. One photographed at Uvalde National Fish Hatchery, Uvalde, Uvalde County, Texas.

When. 9–12 May 1992.

Observers. Dean Fisher, Gail Diane Luckner; Lynne Aldrich, Charlie Clark, Arlie Cooksey, Carl Haynie, Rhandy Helton, R. Tod Highsmith, Greg Lasley, Mark Lockwood, John Muldrow, Brent Ortego, Willie Sekula, Chuck Sexton.

Published Details. *American Birds* 1992, 46: 448.

Documentation. Color photographs published in *American Birds* 1992, 46: 501.

Identification. A small, relatively long-billed, collared plover that lacks a pale ring on its upper neck. Illustrated in numerous guides to tropical American birds.

Origin. Breeds in Middle America and South America from northern Mexico south primarily coastally to central Argentina and Chile. It is not highly migratory.

Motion to add. Lasley/DeBenedictis.

Vote. 7/0.

Placement on the ABA Checklist. Insert between Mongolian Plover and Snowy Plover.

Status. A.

Birding code. 5.



MARY GUSTAFSON

Yellow-legged Gull (Larus cachinnans), 17 February 1992, Georgetown Reservoir, Washington, D.C. Note the darker gray mantle compared to nearby Herring Gulls, the clean white head at a time of year when most Herrings and Lesser Black-backed have streaked heads, and the "schoolbus-yellow" bill and legs.

New Species Accepted— Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus cachinnans*)

Where. Madeleine Islands, Québec; St. Johns, Newfoundland; and in Washington, D.C., and Maryland.

When. 16 August 1973; 16 January–15 April 1985; winters February 1990–February 1993.

Observers. M. Gosselin (Québec record); Bruce Mactavish (Newfoundland record); David Czaplak, Claudia Wilds, Robert Hilton, Paul J. O'Brien (Washington, D.C., and Maryland record).

Published Details. Wilds, C. and D. Czaplak. 1994. Yellow-legged gulls (*Larus cachinnans*) in North America. *Wilson Bulletin* 106: 344–356.

Documentation. Specimen from Québec in the Canadian Na-

tional Museum of Natural Sciences (NMNS 60750) identified by Wilds, Czaplak, and the AOU Check-list Committee; photographs on file with the Maryland Bird Records Committee and the ABA Checklist Committee.

Identification. Identification criteria for this species, which nests in mixed colonies with Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*) and Lesser Black-backed Gulls (*L. fuscus*) in western France, are still being established, and even specimens may be difficult to identify. Adults have red orbital rings, yellow legs, more extensive black tips on the primaries, and average darker gray on the mantle compared to European and North American Herring Gull populations, but have a paler, colder gray mantle than the

southern race, *graellsii*, of Lesser Black-backed Gull. The specimen is indistinguishable from the dark Atlantic Islands race, *L. c. atlantis*, and the photographed birds may belong either to that race or to the somewhat paler Mediterranean race, *L. c. michahellis*. Identification criteria for immatures are not yet determined. Distinctions from Lesser Black-backed × Herring gull hybrids, the primary concern in the dissenting vote, are discussed in the *Wilson Bulletin* paper.

Origin. Breeds in southern Eurasia and northern Africa. At least some populations are partially migratory.

Motion to add. DeBenedictis/Remsen.

Vote. 6/1.

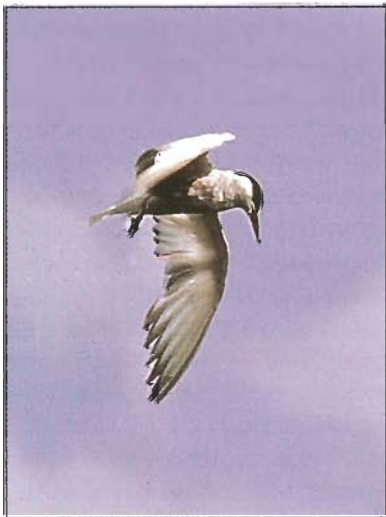
Placement on the ABA Checklist. Insert between Herring Gull and Thayer's Gull.

Status. A.

Birding code. 5.

New Species Accepted— Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybridus*)

Where. Cape May, New Jersey, and then at Ted Harvey Conservation Area and Little Creek Wildlife Management Area, Delaware.



MICHAEL GAGE

Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybridus*),
11 August 1993, Little Creek Wildlife
Management Area, Delaware.



GREG LASLEY/VIREO

Green-breasted Mango (*Anthracothorax prevostii*), 9 January
1992, Corpus Christi, Texas.

When. 12–15 July 1993; 18 July to approximately 21 August 1993.

Observers. Vince Elia; Laurie Larson, Fred Alsop, Paul DeBenedictis.

Published Details. *American Birds* 1993, 47: 336; *Records of New Jersey Birds* 1994, 19: 88–90.

Documentation. Photographs by B. J. Rose, David Ward, Jr., and Tim Schantz on file.

Identification. A small tern with a shallowly forked tail. In alternate plumage, this short-tailed, tern has a well-defined pale face separating the dark gray underparts from the black cap. In basic plumage, it is pale, with a black bar across the nape. This bird molted from alternate to basic plumage during its stay. The species is illustrated in virtually all field guides to European and Asian birds.

Origin. Nests in Africa, southern and central Eurasia, and Australasia; northern populations migratory. This is the first well-documented record from the New World, but there is an unaccepted earlier report from Bar-

bados in the West Indies (a specimen of questioned origin).

Motion to add. Dunn/DeBenedictis.

Vote. 7/0.

Placement on the ABA Checklist. Insert between Large-billed Tern and White-winged Tern.

Status. A.

Birding code. 5.

New Species Accepted— Green-breasted Mango (*Anthracothorax prevostii*)

Where. Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas.

When. 6–27 January 1992.

Observers. Carlene and Willard Johnson; Lynn Aldrich, Frank Bumgardner, Charlie Clark, Mel and Arlie Cooksey, Jon Dunn, Shawneen Finnegan, Peter Gottschling, Greg Lasley, Paul Lehman, Gail Diane Luckner, Nancy Newfield, Lea Pummill, Barbara Ribble, Chuck Sexton.

Published Details. *American Birds* 1992, 46: 289.

Documentation. Photographs by Lee Pummill and Greg Lasley on file; expert reviews by Robert Bleiweiss, Gary Graves, Robert

Ridgely, Nancy Newfield, Storrs Olson, Tom Schulenberg, and Gary Stiles.

Identification. A large green-backed hummingbird with a conspicuously decurved bill. Adult males are unmistakable and are illustrated in guides to Mexican birds. Females and immatures have white underparts with a dark stripe from the bill to the lower belly. Species of mango hummingbirds in this plumage are distinguished with great difficulty, and for some forms the diagnostic traits themselves remain uncertain. The expert reviewers believed that all forms of mango hummingbird except *prevostii* and *veraguensis*, a very similar bird restricted to central Panama and sometimes treated as a separate species, could be eliminated confidently by the series of photographs obtained; Storrs Olson indicated that *veraguensis* is more extensively buff below, but he was not able to examine the photographs himself. A prior Texas report of a mango hummingbird, not identifiable to species (*Birding* 1991, 23: 193-194), probably involves this species as well.

Origin. Resident from northeastern Mexico south to central Panama; regular seasonal movements, if any, are poorly understood.

Motion to add. Lasley/DeBenedictis.

Vote. 7/0.

Placement on the ABA Checklist. Insert between Green Violet-ear and Broad-billed Hummingbird.

Status. A.

Birding code. 5.



ERIKA C. WILSON

Cinnamon Hummingbird (Amazilia rutila), 21 July 1992, Patagonia, Arizona.

**New Species Accepted—
Cinnamon Hummingbird
(Amazilia rutila)**

Where. Patagonia, Santa Cruz County, Arizona.

When. 21–23 July 1992.

Observers. Jan Keil, Martin Bro, David B. King, Erika C. Wilson.

Published Details. *American Birds* 1992, 46: 1161.

Documentation. Photographs by Erika C. Wilson on file with the ABA and AOU checklist committees.

Identification. A buff-to-rufous-bellied green hummingbird with a long, black-tipped red bill, lacking the rufous wing patch of Berylline Hummingbird

and brighter than Buff-bellied Hummingbird. The species appears in most field guides to Mexican and Middle American birds.

Origin. Resident or short-distance migrant from northwestern Mexico and the Yucatan Peninsula south to central Costa Rica.

Motion to add. Dittmann/DeBenedictis.

Vote. 7/0.

Placement on the ABA Checklist. Insert between Buff-bellied Hummingbird and Violet-crowned Hummingbird.

Status. A.

Birding code. 5.

**New Species Accepted—
Worthen's Sparrow
(Spizella wortheni)**

Where. Near Silver City, Grant County, New Mexico.

When. 16 June 1884.

Observer. Charles S. Marsh.

Published Details. R. Ridgeway, *Proceedings U.S. National Museum* 1884, 7: 257; C. S. Marsh, *Ornithology and Oology* 1884, 9: 127.

Documentation. Specimen in the National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian).

Identification. Treated in guides to Mexican birds, this is a

duller version of the Field Sparrow. Differences that might be of use in the field include head pattern and foot color. Western Field Sparrows are duller and grayer than eastern birds and, thus, more similar to Worthen's Sparrow. The specimen is the basis for the scientific description of this species and is correctly identified by definition.

Origin. Northern Mexico, apparently at least somewhat migratory. Whether there was once an established New Mexican population is a matter of conjecture. This species was first con-

sidered in 1982, but that Committee tabled this motion because it was divided as to the origin of the specimen. At the time this bird was taken, it was not unusual for specimens to be labeled as having been taken at their port of entry instead of their point of collection. That concern was the basis for the dissenting vote on this round. John Hubbard informed our Committee, however, that there was an explicit account by the collector of a "Field Sparrow" (which is what Worthen's Sparrow would have been called at that time) taken at Silver City on the same date as the type of *S. wortheni*. As no corresponding Field Sparrow specimen resides in the U.S. National Museum, and Field Sparrow would also be most unusual in this area at any season, the only reasonable conclusion is that the specimen, which Robert Ridgway recognized as distinct and described as Worthen's Sparrow, was collected in New Mexico and therefore belongs on the *ABA Checklist*. Because a century has passed without a subsequent acceptable record, we have assigned this species Birding Code 6. Any new observation from the *ABA Checklist Area* should be submitted to the *ABA Checklist Committee* and to the appropriate state bird records committee for review.

Motion to add. Small/Tucker.

Vote. 6/1 (earlier votes not preserved).

Placement on the *ABA Checklist*. Insert between Field Sparrow and Black-chinned Sparrow.

Status. A.

Birding code. 6.

New Species Not Accepted— Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*)

Where. Anzalduas County Park, Hildago County, Texas.

When. 17 March–9 April 1990.

Published Details. *American Birds* 1990, 44: 462.

Documentation. Descriptions by several observers on file with Texas Bird Records Committee.

Identification. This report circulated through the Texas Bird Records Committee four times before finally being placed on the provisional Texas list (because it was not substantiated by tangible evidence). The Texas Committee found the submitted reports to be weak. Some of the reports must have been erroneous, a fact that was especially troublesome. The *ABA Checklist Committee* found the documentation insufficient to add this species to the *ABA Checklist*, although it is entirely possible that at least some observers did indeed observe this species. The poor quality of the descriptions is especially surprising given the stature of several of the observers and their knowledge that this was a potential addition to the North American list. Attempts to photograph this bird were made, but neither the Texas Bird Records Committee nor the *ABA Checklist Committee* were able to locate any photographs—their submission would be grounds for reconsideration.

Tangible evidence, including photographs and tape recordings, may give reviewers more independence when evaluating reports than is possible with written descriptions, but the latter are invaluable parts of all re-

ports. The improving quality of written reports has made sight records increasingly acceptable to professional ornithologists. Documenting reports of unusual species demands that birders practice preparing descriptions (of less unusual species) to gain proficiency and that they submit their reports for review by the appropriate bird records committees. (See "How to Document Rare Birds" by D. Dittmann and G. Lasley in *Birding*, June 1992, pp. 145–159).

Motion to add. Lasley/DeBenedictis.

Vote. 0-7.

**Change in Scientific Name—
Crested Caracara** becomes *Caracara plancus*, because the generic name *Caracara* has been found to have been published validly and to have received substantial use in the ornithological literature, and it predates the generic name *Polyborus*, otherwise used for this species (Banks, R. C., and C. J. Dove. 1992. *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington* 105: 420–425). The Rules of Zoological Nomenclature require the change under this circumstance.

New Species, Origin Uncertain— European Turtle-Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)

Where. Lower Matecumbe Key, Monroe County, Florida.

When. 9–11 April 1990.

Observers. Pat Wells; Wayne Hoffman, P. William Smith.

Published Details. *Florida Field Naturalist* 1990, 18: 88–90.

Documentation. Photographs by Wayne Hoffman on file.

Identification. A rusty-backed, grayish dove with a long, white-margined tail. It differs from Oriental Turtle-Dove in its grayer nape and hind neck, white tips to the iridescent feathering on the sides of the neck, larger dark centers to the rufous scapular and back feathers, and paler belly and crissum. The original published account, which includes a black-and-white photograph, is ambiguous as to whether the diagnostic traits of this species were actually observed or are just being listed. Some committee members believed that the original report was insufficient to document this bird's identification. Submission of color photographs by Hoffman subsequently dispelled all such concerns.

Accounts of rarities, both published and original, should clearly and unambiguously indicate what characteristics of a bird were actually observed. Discussion of diagnostic field marks should be kept separate from that description.

Origin. Nests in the Middle East and Europe, where populations have expanded greatly in recent decades. It is highly migratory, winters in Africa south of the Sahara, and has strayed to all of the island groups in the tropical Atlantic, and the date is appropriate for a north-bound migrant. The possibility that it arrived ship-assisted was considered in some detail, and the ABA Checklist Committee decided that the necessary condition to disqualify a record is evidence that a bird was *both* ship-assisted *and* restrained. No evidence of either

condition exists in the present case. Pigeons and doves attract a strong following among aviculturists, however, and concern over the possibility that it was an escape was expressed strongly in the early votes of those who did not accept the record. Because that concern seems impossible to resolve, the Committee agreed to accept the species as "Origin uncertain" until additional records that establish a pattern of occurrence are obtained. This record was accepted by the AOU Checklist Committee.

Motion to add. DeBenedictis/Remsen.

Vote. 3/4, 5/2, 5/2 (origin).

Work in Progress

The committee is currently considering or preparing for deliberation the following motions: to add Soft-plumaged/Cape Verde Petrel, Swallow-tailed Gull, Citrine Wagtail, and Eurasian Siskin. We have also recommended to the AOU Committee that the English name of Greater Golden-Plover should be changed to European Golden-Plover and are discussing several

other, primarily European, species whose official English name in Great Britain differs from that on the *ABA Checklist*, as well as the preferred names for Mexican Crow, Gray-breasted Jay, and neotropical *Turdus* species. Although some progress has been made by the International Ornithological Congress' Working Group to Standardize the English Names of Birds of the World, its proceedings are not yet ready for consideration by our Committee.

The committee anticipates preparation in the near future of a fifth edition of the *ABA Checklist* that will accommodate changes in the sequence of species anticipated in the forthcoming seventh edition of the *AOU Check-list*.

With this report, Van Remsen's term of service expires. He has provided nine years of invaluable insight in records too numerous to list. He has also served as a direct link to the AOU Checklist Committee, a role which we believe both groups found most valuable. Kimball Garrett has graciously accepted the invitation to serve in Van's place.




WAYNE HOFFMAN

European Turtle-Dove (Streptopelia turtur) with Mourning Dove, 9-11 April 1990, Lower Matecumbe Key, Florida.