

# flight path

## 2000-2001 ABA Checklist Committee Report

ABA Checklist Committee\*

This Checklist Committee report is the third since the publication of Fifth Edition of the *ABA Checklist* (1996) and reflects both recent additions to the ABA-Area list and changes reported by the American Ornithologists' Union.

We note here three brief matters of ABA Checklist Committee (hereafter ABA-CLC) business. First, a Sixth Edition of the *ABA Checklist* is in preparation and should be published in 2002. Second, Mark B. Robbins will assume the chairmanship of the ABA-CLC in January 2002; Mark is an outstanding field and museum ornithologist who has authored numerous papers on North and South American ornithological topics and also co-authored *Birds of Missouri* (1992).

In addition to the species added to the ABA Checklist below, the ABA-CLC continues to assess a number of other potential additions to the checklist records: Great-winged Petrel, Dark-rumped Petrel, Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel, Greater Sand Plover, Gray-hooded Gull, Band-tailed Gull, Dark-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-chevroned Parakeet, Cuban Pewee, Rufous-tailed Robin, and Blue Rock Thrush.

For revisions by the American Ornithologists' Union Committee on Classification and Nomenclature which impact ABA-Area birds in the realm of new species (splits), new names, or changes in sequence, see the sidebar on page 572.

\*Jon L. Dunn (Chair), Donna L. Dittmann, Kimball L. Garrett, Greg Lasley, Mark B. Robbins (incoming Chair), Chuck Sexton, Stuart Tingley, and Thede G. Tobish

Finally, the ABA-CLC has decided to adopt a policy of requiring diagnostic "physical evidence" (specimen, photo, or tape-recording) before adding a new species to the ABA-Area list. This policy is one used by the AOU and also by a number of state and provincial committees.

### New Species Accepted:

Bulwer's Petrel

(*Bulweria bulwerii*)

*When:* One 8 August 1998, 72 km SE of Oregon Inlet, North Carolina, at about 35° 15'N, 75° 05'W.

*Vote:* 8-0

*Placement on ABA Checklist.* Between Stejneger's Petrel and Streaked Shearwater.

*Birding Code.* 5

*Discussion.* This individual was well seen and photographed, and an account was published by LeGrand et al. (1999). It establishes the first ABA record of this genus, which also includes the similar Jouanin's Petrel (*B. fallax*) of the Indian Ocean, a species that has also been recorded as a vagrant in the central Pacific Ocean off the Hawaiian Islands at Lisianski Island on 4 September 1967 (AOU 1998).

Jouanin's is stockier—thicker-winged, larger-headed, and larger-billed—with typically shorter outer rectrices. In the Atlantic, Bulwer's breeds only on islands off the coast of Africa (Azores, Madeira, Desertas, Great Salvage Islands, Canary, and Cape Verde Islands; Megyesi and O'Daniel 1997).

It has ranged casually off western Europe as far north as Great Britain (Lewington et al. 1991). In the western Atlantic it has been recorded once off the coast of Trinidad (AOU 1998).

Amazingly, another Bulwer's Petrel was



MARY GUSTAFSON

This Bulwer's Petrel was photographed off the North Carolina coast on 8 August 1998, 72 km southeast of Oregon Inlet at about 35° 15'N, 75° 05'W. Amazingly, and on a different ocean in the ABA Area, another Bulwer's Petrel was documented on Monterey Bay on 26 July 1998.

seen and well photographed on Monterey Bay preceding the North Carolina record by mere days—26 July 1998 (Roberson, et al. 1998 and color photo on page 519; Erickson and Hamilton 2001). In the Pacific, the species breeds no closer to the mainland of North America than the Hawaiian Islands. It is treated as hypothetical by Howell and Webb (1995) for Mexico.

Kelp Gull

(*Larus dominicanus*)

*When:* One 4th-alternate male (specimen: LSMZ 165987) on 9 June 1998 on South Gosier Island, Chandeleur Islands, St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana

*Vote:* 8-0

*Placement on ABA Checklist.*

Awaiting AOU determination.

*Birding Code.* 4 N

*Discussion.* This species has been reported in small numbers on the Chandeleur Islands since 1989. A record from Galveston Island, Texas (January to April 1996), in pre-defini-

tive plumage, was voted 6-2 after two rounds in ABA-CLC. Part of the concern also involved an adult that turned up (November 1996 to April 1997). Dissenting members on either vote believed that identification could not be resolved for a bird in non-definitive plumage, that the two birds might have been different, or that there may not have been a pure Kelp Gull involved. Kelp Gulls have interbred with Herring Gulls on the Chandeleur Islands, where hybrid adults have been observed since 1994 (fide D. L. Dittmann). The ABA-CLC does not evaluate all records. We note that three Texas records have been accepted by the TBRC: the two listed above and one adult on 4 May 1996 at North Padre Island. The LBRC has accepted five records; all but one, (two adults seen on a pelagic trip off Lafourche Parish 17 April 1999) are from the Chandeleur Islands. There are additional records pending review by

various state records committees: additional Louisiana and Texas records, a record from Maryland (at least four consecutive winters from early 1999 into late 2001), and a record (October 1996) from northern Indiana on Lake Michigan. This Southern Hemisphere species has been recorded on multiple occasions on the northern end of the Yucatan Peninsula (Howell, Correa, and Garcia 1993, Howell and Webb 1995) and recently in Trinidad and Barbados (Hayes et al. in press). In addition to ID problems (compounded by the Louisiana hybridization with Herring Gulls), there is the issue of natural origin. Kelp Gulls are kept in captivity at Sea World parks and zoos at various locations across North America, and while there was initial speculation that the Gulf of Mexico birds may have been derived from escapes, no such evidence has been obtained (LBRC).



STEVEN W. CARDIFF

Kelp Gulls have been found on the Chandeleur Islands off Louisiana at least since 1989. They may have even bred there (there were certainly hybrid offspring with Herring Gulls). The committee put Kelp Gull on the ABA Checklist on the basis of these birds at this location, while there have been observations from a number of other sites. This bird was photographed on the Chandeleur Islands on 10 June, 1998.

### Piratic Flycatcher

(*Legatus leucophaeus*)

**When.** Recent published records (all with photos) are: Rio Grande Village, Big Bend National Park, Brewster Co., Texas, on 4 April 1998 (photo: *Field Notes* 52:407); on an oil-rig off the Texas coast, Kenedy Co. from 21-22 October 2000 (Sexton 2001). An older record is from Rattlesnake Springs, Lea Co., New Mexico, on 1 September 1 to 7 September 1996. Only the Texas oil-rig bird was initially correctly identified. The New Mexico bird was originally thought to be a Variegated Flycatcher, *Empidonomus varius*. A bird from south Florida on 15 March 1991 (Bradbury 1992) has also been re-identified as a Piratic Flycatcher. The Big Bend bird was thought to be a Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, which is distinctly larger and also arrives in North America much later in the spring. **Vote.** 8-0

**Placement on ABA Checklist.** Between Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher and Variegated Flycatcher.

**Birding Code.** 4

**Discussion.** Apart from Sulphur-bellied, Piratic Flycatcher is likely to be confused with Variegated (*E. varius*) or Streaked (*Myiodynastes maculatus*) Flycatchers. A paper detailing the occurrences of both Piratic and Variegated Flycatchers is in preparation (Remsen MS). To date the only certain records of Variegated are from Biddeford Pool, Maine, and from Toronto, Ontario, although one from western Tennessee is probably also a Variegated. Piratic Flycatcher is a widespread Neotropical species that breeds north to northeast Mexico and winters in South America; Variegated is restricted as a breeder to South America but is highly migratory there.

### Yellow-browed Warbler

(*Phylloscopus inornatus*)

**When.** 23-24 September 1999 at Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska (Lehman 2000); photographed.

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ALAN WORMINGTON

There are now three records for Piratic Flycatcher in the ABA Area: Rattlesnake Springs, New Mexico, in early September 1996; Big Bend National Park, Texas, on 4 April 1998; and this bird on an oil-rig off the Texas coast on 21-22 October 2000.

*Vote.* 8-0  
*Placement on ABA Checklist.* Awaiting AOU determination.  
*Birding Code.* 5  
*Discussion.* This common and widespread Siberian breeder which winters in southeast Asia has long been anticipated to occur in westernmost Alaska (Roberson 1980, 1988, Balch 1980, Tobish 2000). The Gambell bird was well-seen and photographed and was easily separated from Pallas's Leaf-Warbler (*P. proregulus*) by head pattern. Pallas's has a distinct median crown-stripe and a yellowish rump. Pallas's also breeds in northeast Asia and is highly migratory; it is regular as a vagrant in northwestern Europe (and certainly potentially occurring in the ABA Area). The more-similar Hume's Leaf-Warbler (*P. humei*), formerly regarded as a subspecies of Yellow-browed Warbler but now generally split by European authorities (e.g., Alström and Olsson 1988), is eliminated with greater difficulty by the overall brighter plumage of the Gambell bird and its more distinct tips to the median secondary coverts, blackish tertials,

and pale yellow rather than buff supercilium. This discussion is taken from Lehman (2000). Hume's is less migratory, has a more southerly breeding range in Asia, and is unlikely to occur in the ABA Area.

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PAUL LEHMAN

A species long anticipated to occur in westernmost Alaska, Yellow-browed Warbler was finally documented in the ABA Area on 23-24 September 1999 at Gambell on St. Lawrence Island.

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## AOU changes from Forty-second supplement, July 2000 (*The Auk* 117:847-858)

Revisions announced last year by the American Ornithologists' Union Committee on Classification and Nomenclature impact ABA-Area birds. These revisions are found in the Forty-second Supplement to the A.O.U. Checklist of North American Birds (AOU 2000). We summarize below those changes affecting one new species (a split), new scientific and English names, and a change in sequence.

### Addition of Newly Described Species:

Gunnison Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus minimus*) Code 2

### Changes in English Names:

*Clangula hyemalis* changed from Oldsquaw to Long-tailed Duck.

Sage Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) becomes Greater Sage-Grouse.

### Changes in Scientific Names due to taxonomic revisions:

Crested Caracara changed from *Caracara plancus* to *Caracara cheriway* (*C. plancus* now applies to the Southern

Caracara, restricted to South America). The *Catharacta* skuas are now placed in the genus *Stercorarius*, so Great Skua is *Stercorarius skua* and South Polar Skua is *S. maccormicki*.

Arizona Woodpecker (*Picoides arizonae*) split from Strickland's Woodpecker of the highlands of Mexico (*P. stricklandi*). This restores an earlier English name for this species.

Black-billed Magpie of North America becomes *Pica hudsonia*, split from the Old World *Pica pica* (variously called the Magpie or Eurasian Magpie).

Adjust the scientific names of the chickadees of the genus *Poecile* to the following:

*Poecile atricapilla* (Black-capped Chickadee)

*Poecile hudsonica* (Boreal Chickadee)

*Poecile cincta* (Gray-headed Chickadee; note that the English name of this species was returned by the AOU, 7th ed., to Gray-headed Chickadee from Siberian Tit).

Scientific name of Juniper Titmouse is corrected from *Baeolophus griseus* to *B. ridgwayi*.

(Note that the 1996-1997 ABA-CLC report [Dunn1997] used *B. ridgwayi*, failing to anticipate a late change by AOU to *B. griseus* [subsequently found to be an incorrect usage].)

English name of Stripe-headed Tanager (*Spindalis zena*) becomes Western Spindalis; this change reflects the split of this West Indian taxon into four species, of which only *S. zena* has been recorded in the ABA Area.

### Changes in Checklist Sequence:

The sequence of orioles (*Icterus*) is slightly modified to place Bullock's Oriole (*I. bullockii*) after Streak-backed Oriole (*I. pustulatus*), reflecting recent molecular studies which suggest, quite surprisingly, that Bullock's Oriole is more closely related to Streak-backed than it is to Baltimore and Black-backed (*I. abeillei*) Orioles. A record of Black-backed Oriole from California is currently under consideration by that state's records committee. ↗