

# Annual Report of the ABA Checklist Committee: 2006

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During the first six months of 2006, the ABA Checklist Committee (CLC) voted on two motions and five species. Both motions and two of the species were accepted, two species were not accepted, and another species was removed from the *Checklist*. Along with recent taxonomic changes adopted by the Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of the American Ornithologists' Union (these changes are automatically accepted by the CLC), the *ABA Checklist* now contains 939 species—an increase of two species since our previous report (Robbins et al. 2006).

### New Motions Accepted

#### *Exotic Species Criteria*

As mentioned in our previous report, the CLC in early 2005 formed a subcommittee to strengthen and standardize the criteria we use when determining whether an exotic species is considered established and thereby is added to the *Checklist*. These revised criteria, which were unanimously accepted by the CLC, will be published in the forthcoming seventh edition of the *Checklist*.

#### *Code 6 Birds*

As defined in the current (sixth) edition of the *Checklist*, Code 6 birds are believed to be extinct or extirpated. Tony White, chair of the ABA Recording Ethics and Standards Committee, asked that the CLC state clearly that Code 6 birds cannot be counted on personal lists submitted to the ABA List Supplement (the current *Checklist* only implies that Code 6 birds cannot be counted). The CLC has unanimously endorsed Tony's recommendation. For those species that may have been observed prior to their extinction or extirpation from the ABA Area, the CLC will determine the year of the last accepted observation (e.g., 1987 for California Condor, 1962 for Bachman's Warbler), and these dates will be included in the forthcoming seventh edition of the *Checklist*.

### New Species Accepted

Ringed (Hornby's) Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma hornbyi*). ABA CLC Record #2006-04. One individual about 12 nautical miles off the westernmost point of San Miguel Island, Santa Barbara County, California, 2 August 2005. The bird was discovered and identified by Peter Pyle, Gary Friedrichsen, Thomas Staudt, Cornelia Oedekoven, and Lisa T. Ballance. Well-documented by photographs and written description in a paper published in *North American Birds* (Pyle et al. 2006). Accepted unanimously by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC) and by the CLC.

The Ringed Storm-Petrel is native to South America. It is thought to breed in the Andes of Peru and northern Chile, but no nest has ever been found (Pyle et al. 2006).



Ringed Storm-Petrel. Off Santa Barbara County, California; 2 August 2005. © Cornelia Oedekoven.

Ringed Storm-Petrel was not anticipated to occur within the ABA Area, as the only previous record in the Northern Hemisphere is represented by a specimen from Isla Gorgona, Colombia, taken in July 1979 (Hilty and Brown 1986).

Ringed Storm-Petrel is placed on the ABA *Checklist* between Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel and Leach's Storm-Petrel.



**Red-footed Falcon.** *Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts; 10 August 2004.* © Jeremiah Trimble.

**Red-footed Falcon** (*Falco vespertinus*). ABA CLC Record #2006-05. One second-calendar-year (first-summer) male at Katama Airfield, Martha's Vineyard, Dukes County, Massachusetts, 7 or 8 – 24 August 2004. Discovered and initially identified as a Mississippi Kite by Vernon Laux (2004) on 8 August, the falcon may have been seen by another birder the preceding day (Alan Siniscalchi, personal communication). Excellent photographs were obtained by Jeremiah Trimble on 10 August, when the correct identification was made; one of these photographs adorns the cover of *North American Birds* (59:1, 2005) and also appears in Pranty (2006). Sibley (2004) discusses separation of the Red-footed Falcon from the similar Amur Falcon (*F. amurensis*). In particular, the Martha's Vineyard falcon displayed reddish rather than blackish barring on the juvenal underwing coverts and a few reddish feathers on the breast, along with incoming gray rather than white postjuvinal feathers on the underwing coverts. The record was unanimously accepted by the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (MARC) and by the CLC.

The Red-footed Falcon breeds in eastern Europe and winters in southern Africa. It is an annual visitor to England (often first-summer males; Hough 2004), and there are four reports from Iceland from April through July (Hough 2004; <hi.is/~yannk/status\_falves.html>). The species therefore might have been predicted to stray to the ABA Area. However, the Martha's Vineyard bird did not appear during the expected season (late spring) when Red-footed Falcons (particularly second-year birds) show up in western Europe. If one assumes that the falcon arrived in North America without human assistance, it may have flown west across the Atlantic Ocean from its African wintering grounds

and then headed north through the West Indies and along the North American coast to Massachusetts; or it may have overshot its breeding grounds, then strayed through the United Kingdom, Iceland, and Greenland before making landfall in Canada, and then headed south to Massachusetts. Both of these scenarios suggest that the Martha's Vineyard Red-footed Falcon may have summered in the New World.

The Martha's Vineyard falcon displayed no jesses or other signs of having been kept captive, and the species' insectivorous diet makes it undesirable to falconers. No Red-footed Falcon is known to be held in any zoo or other registered facility in the New World (ISIS 2006), although possession by one or more private individuals cannot be ruled out. Another possibility is that the Martha's Vineyard falcon was ship-assisted for some of its journey across the Atlantic Ocean, a scenario considered by Hough (2004), Ellison and Martin (2005), and three CLC members. (Note that the mere possibility of ship-assistance

does not necessarily result in rejection of a record by the CLC. The CLC does not have a formal policy of dealing with birds that may have been ship-assisted. Rather, each member applies his or her own philosophy regarding ship-assistance to particular records).

Red-footed Falcon is placed on the ABA *Checklist* between Eurasian Hobby and Aplomado Falcon.



**Thick-billed Parrot.** *Engle, New Mexico; June 2003.* © Christopher L. Wood.

### Status Unchanged

**Thick-billed Parrot** (*Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha*). ABA CLC Record # 2006-01. One adult at Armendaris

Ranch, Engle, Sierra County, New Mexico 7 May – 23 June 2003. Thick-billed Parrot is already on the ABA *Checklist* as a Code 6 bird on the basis of well-documented records in southeastern Arizona up to 1938. A well-documented record from New Mexico in 2003 was reviewed by the CLC because its acceptance would result in a change of the status of the Thick-billed Parrot to Code 5 (accidental). However, the CLC unanimously rejected the New Mexico record on the basis of provenance (i.e., the parrot was considered unlikely to have reached Engle, New Mexico, without direct human assistance); there is no verifiable record of Thick-

billed Parrot from the state. Similarly, the New Mexico Bird Records Committee voted 6–1 against natural vagrancy. Pranty (2006) provides more information on the Engle parrot and on the CLC's rationale for considering it a probable escapee.

### Species Not Accepted

**Black-hooded Parakeet** (*Nandayus nenday*). ABA CLC Record #2006-02. A population numbering at least 746 individuals in early 2004 occupies the central Florida Gulf coast, from Bayonet Point, Pasco County, to Sarasota, Sarasota County, with a minimum of perhaps 200 other parakeets in an isolated “colony” at St. Augustine, St. Johns County, and perhaps contiguously along the southern Atlantic coast from Boynton Beach, Palm Beach County, to



**Black-hooded Parakeets** (with Eurasian Collared-Dove). Gulfport, Florida; December 2005. © Darcy Stumbaugh.

Kendall, Miami-Dade County (Pranty and Lovell 2004; B. Pranty personal observation). Documentation is provided by photographs in Pranty and Garrett (2003), Pranty (2004), and Robbins et al. (2006); the identification of this species is straightforward. First sighted in Florida in 1969, the number of Black-hooded Parakeets in the state has increased; the species' range has expanded in Florida, as well (Pranty and Lovell 2004). In 2004, the Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee (FOSRC) voted unanimously to add Black-hooded Parakeet to the Florida list <fosbirds.org/RecordCommittee/Board%20Report\_Fall%202004.htm>. However, the CLC deviated from the FOSRC's decision, voting 6–2 to accept the species as established, during two rounds of voting (a minimum of seven acceptance votes is needed). The dissenting voters were concerned that the current established range of the Black-hooded Parakeet in Florida—perhaps 150 square miles of Pasco, Pinellas, Manatee, and Sarasota counties—was insufficient for a truly established species. Because the votes of the CLC members did not change between the first and second rounds, there did not seem to be a point for a third round of voting (CLC by-

laws state that species that receive 2–6 positive votes during the first two rounds of voting should undergo three rounds of voting, with the decision after the third round being final). The CLC will reexamine the status of the Black-hooded Parakeet in the ABA Area at some point in the future.

The Black-hooded Parakeet is native to Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina. In addition to populations in Florida, about 200 individuals are found in coastal Los Angeles County, California (Garrett and Mabb 2002, Pranty and Garrett 2003), but the CBRC has not voted to ratify that this population is established.

### Species Removed

**Yellow-chevroned Parakeet** (*Brotogeris chiriri*). ABA CLC Record #2006-03. This species was added to the *Checklist* in 2002 based on the occurrence of naturalized populations in California and Florida, following the “splitting” of the Canary-winged Parakeet (*B. versicolurus*) into White-winged Parakeet (*B. versicolurus*) and Yellow-chevroned Parakeet (see Robbins et al. 2003). However, the Yellow-chevroned Parakeet has never been accepted by the CBRC or FOSRC. It is the current practice of the CLC not to review the status of an exotic species until it is first accepted by a local committee. In the view of the current CLC, the CLC earlier erred in adding the Yellow-chevroned Parakeet to the *Checklist* without its having been accepted by either the CBRC or FOSRC. The removal of this species from the *Checklist* was therefore warranted, and the decision to remove received a unanimous vote by CLC members. Based on current knowledge, the Yellow-chevroned Parakeet does not seem to be a particularly strong candidate for eventual establishment in either California or Florida. Furthermore, the two *Brotogeris* species seem to be hybridizing at Fort Lauderdale and San Francisco (Pranty and Voren 2003), which further complicates the eventual establishment of this species within the ABA Area.

### AOU Taxonomic and Nomenclatorial Changes Affecting the ABA Checklist

The CLC has not reported on changes made by the Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of the American Ornithologists' Union since our 2002 report (Robbins et al. 2003). The following changes have been published by the AOU in its annual supplements, which appear in the July issue of each volume in the *Auk*: 44th supplement (2003, *Auk* 120:923–931), 45th supplement (2004, *Auk* 121:985–995), 46th supplement (2005, *Auk* 122:1026–1031), and 47th supplement (2006, *Auk* 123:926–936). Note that while we here include all “splits”, “lumps”, and changes in the Eng-

lish or scientific names of species adopted by the AOU, we do not list rearrangements in linear sequence.

## Additions

- Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) is split into Canada Goose (*B. canadensis*) and Cackling Goose (*B. hutchinsii*). Both occur in the ABA Area, so this split adds one species to the ABA Checklist.
- Blue Grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*) is re-split into Dusky Grouse (*D. obscurus*) and Sooty Grouse (*D. fuliginosus*). Both occur in the ABA Area, so this split also adds one species to the ABA Checklist.
- Cape Verde Shearwater (*Calonectris edwardsii*) is split from Cory's Shearwater (*C. diomedea*). Both occur in the ABA Area, so this split also adds one species to the ABA Checklist. Note: In January 2006, the CLC (Robbins et al. 2006) inappropriately preceded the AOU in considering Cape Verde Shearwater as specifically distinct from Cory's Shearwater.



**Yellow-chevroned Parakeet.** Miami, Florida; 16 March 2006.  
© Dart Humeston.

## Deletions

- Black-backed Wagtail (*Motacilla lugens*) is removed from the Checklist due to a recent “lumping” with White Wagtail (*M. alba*).

## Name Changes

- White-tailed Ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucurus*) becomes *L. leucura*.
- Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus mutus*) becomes *L. muta*.
- Gray Hawk (*Asturina nitida*) becomes *Buteo nitidus*.
- Mongolian Plover becomes Lesser Sand-Plover; the scientific name is unchanged.
- Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*) becomes *A. macularius*.
- Wandering Tattler (*Heteroscelus incanus*) becomes *Tringa incana*.
- Gray-tailed Tattler (*Heteroscelus brevipes*) becomes *Tringa brevipes*.
- Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*) becomes *Tringa semipalmata*.
- Spoonbill Sandpiper becomes Spoon-billed Sandpiper; the scientific name is unchanged.
- Band-tailed Gull becomes Belcher's Gull; the scientific name is unchanged.
- Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) becomes *Sternula antillarum*.

- Gull-billed Tern (*Sterna nilotica*) becomes *Gelochelidon nilotica*.
- Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*) becomes *Hydroprogne caspia*.
- Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybridus*) becomes *C. hybrida*.
- Royal Tern (*Sterna maxima*) becomes *Thalasseus maximus*.
- Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*) becomes *Thalasseus sandvicensis*.
- Elegant Tern (*Sterna elegans*) becomes *Thalasseus elegans*.
- Rock Dove becomes Rock Pigeon; the scientific name is unchanged.

- New World *Columba* species are moved to *Patagioenas*.
- The feral population known as Ringed Turtle-Dove (*Streptopelia “risoria”*) is renamed African Collared-Dove (*S. roseogrisea*) after its ancestral (i.e., wild) species. Note: The African Turtle-Dove is placed on the ABA Checklist in the “Extirpated Exotics” list.
- Oriental Cuckoo (*Cuculus saturatus*) is split into three species: Oriental (*C. optatus*), Himalayan

(*C. saturatus*), and Sunda (*C. lepidus*) cuckoos. The species that has strayed to Alaska is the Oriental Cuckoo.

- All New World *Otus* species are moved to a new genus, *Megascops*.
- Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*) becomes *Bubo scandiacus*.
- Ringed Kingfisher (*Ceryle torquata*) becomes *C. torquatus*.
- Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*) is re-split into two species. The New World species becomes American Three-toed Woodpecker (*P. dorsalis*).
- Red-breasted Flycatcher (*Ficedula parva*) is split into two species. The species that has strayed to Alaska is now known as Taiga Flycatcher (*F. albicilla*).
- Siberian Flycatcher becomes Dark-sided Flycatcher; the scientific name is unchanged.
- Gray-spotted Flycatcher becomes Gray-streaked Flycatcher; the scientific name is unchanged.
- Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*) becomes *S. torquatus*.
- Black-capped Vireo (*Vireo atricapillus*) becomes *V. atricapilla*.
- Common House-Martin (*Delichon urbica*) becomes *D. urbicum*.
- Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapilla*) becomes *P. atricapillus*.

- Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*) is split into two species. The species whose range extends into the New World becomes Eastern Yellow Wagtail (*M. tschutschensis*).
- Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorus*) becomes *H. vermivorum*.
- Ovenbird (*Seiurus atricapillus*) becomes *S. atricapilla*.
- Yellow-faced Grassquit (*Tiaris olivacea*) becomes *T. olivaceus*.

### Future CLC Votes

Within the next 12–18 months, the CLC anticipates voting on adding the following species to the ABA Checklist: **Grey-lag Goose** and **Gray Heron** from Newfoundland, **Parkinson's Petrel** from California (Stallcup and Preston 2006), **Intermediate Egret** from Alaska, and **European Turtle-Dove** from Massachusetts (probably along with a re-evaluation of the Florida record), once these records have completed local committee review. We have not yet decided whether to vote on the **Ivory-billed Woodpecker** reports from the Southeast, which could result in a change to the current Code 6 status of this species. The documentation provided for the Arkansas woodpecker or woodpeckers (Fitzpatrick et al. 2005, 2006; Rosenberg et al. 2005) has been questioned (e.g., Jackson 2006, Sibley et al. 2006), and these observations have polarized the birding community like perhaps no other event in our history. Other claims of recent Ivory-billed Woodpecker persistence in Arkansas <birdingamerica.com/Ivorybill/ivorybilledwoodpecker.htm>, Florida <billismad.tripod.com/mysearchfortheivorybilledwoodpecker/index.html>, and Louisiana <fishcrow.com/winter06.html> have not been professionally evaluated and are unlikely to be reviewed by the CLC. To avoid further polarization among the ABA membership, the CLC may wait until additional evidence is presented that might bear on the hypothesis that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker occurs in the ABA Area.

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