

27th Report OF THE ABA Checklist Committee 2016

This is the 27th published report of the ABA Checklist Committee (hereafter, CLC or committee), covering deliberations between November 2015 and October 2016. The committee consists of eight voting members who serve staggered four-year terms; each year, two members cycle off and are replaced by new or reelected members. Since our previous report (Pranty et al. 2015), the terms of Garrett and Sibley ended in December 2015; Garrett's and Sibley's names are included in this report because they voted on some of the decisions discussed herein. The two 2015 vacancies were filled by Mary Gustafson, who is new to the CLC, and by Mark Lockwood, who returns to the committee after a year's absence. The terms of Barry and Pranty will end in December 2016. Elected to the committee, with terms beginning in January 2017, were Andrew Kratter and David Sibley; see biosketches of these two incoming members, p. 38. Peter Pyle will replace Pranty as chairman.

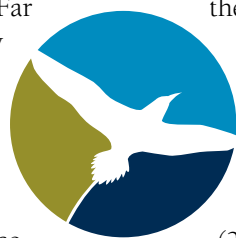
CLC bylaws require seven or eight "accept" votes for a species to be added to or removed from the ABA Checklist. During the period covered by this report, the CLC voted on five species, all of which were accepted and added to the Checklist. Also, taxonomic "splits" accepted by the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU; Chesser et al. 2016)—and automatically accepted by the CLC—resulted in two other additions. The number of species on the ABA Checklist is increased to 994.

New Species Accepted

Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)—ABA CLC Record #2015–02. A male was photographed at Crescent City, California, January 25–February 15, 2015.

Accepted unanimously in first-round voting by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC), the scoter underwent two rounds of voting by the CLC before being accepted. Initial concerns that the bird may have been an escape from captivity—an issue that was lightly addressed by the CBRC—were alleviated when the CLC received information that Common Scoters are not kept captive in North America.

The Common Scoter is a highly migratory species, breeding from eastern Greenland and Scandinavia east through the western Russian Far East, and wintering coastally from Scandinavia south through northwestern Africa. It has been regarded as a potential vagrant to eastern North America based on its occurrence in Greenland, so it is surprising that its first North American appearance was from the Pacific coast. Common Scoter is placed on the *ABA Checklist* as a Code 5 species. Following Clements et al. (2016), we provisionally place it between White-winged Scoter and Black Scoter.



Chatham Albatross (*Thalassarche eremita*)—ABA CLC Record #2016–02. One, thought to be a second-cycle bird (16–24 months of age), was photographed at Bodega Canyon off Marin County, California, July 27, 2001. At the time, the taxon was considered a subspecies of the Shy Albatross—a species already on the *ABA Checklist*—so the CLC did not vote on the record. In 2014, the AOU split the Shy Albatross into three species: White-capped Albatross (*T. cauta*), Salvin’s Albatross (*T. salvini*), and Chatham Albatross (Chesser et al. 2014). Apparently the same Chatham Albatross was photographed off California in 2000 and 2001, when it was initially identified as Salvin’s Albatross, but Howell (2012) re-identified the individual as Chatham

Albatross. The 2000 record is being reviewed to assess both identification and whether it pertains to the same individual as the 2001 record. The CBRC unanimously agreed with the identification of the 2001 bird as a Chatham Albatross in two rounds of voting in 2015–2016 (despite the unanimous vote, one member requested a second round of voting). The ABA CLC voted 8–0 in support of the identification.

The entire population of the Chatham Albatross breeds on a single islet in the Chatham Islands, New Zealand; the species ranges at sea in the southern Pacific Ocean between Tasmania and South America. Chatham Albatross is placed on the *ABA Checklist* as a Code 5 species. Following Clements et al. (2016), we provisionally place it between Salvin’s Albatross and Black-browed Albatross.

Blyth’s Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus dumetorum*)—ABA CLC Record #2016–04. One juvenile photographed at Gambell, St. Lawrence Is-

CHANGES IN BRIEF

Species Added Based on Distributional Records

- Common Scoter, Code 5
- Chatham Albatross, Code 5
- Blyth’s Reed Warbler, Code 5
- Pallas’s Rosefinch, Code 5
- Red-legged Honeycreeper, Code 5

Species Added Based on Taxonomic Changes

- Townsend’s Storm-Petrel, Code 3; split from Leach’s Storm-Petrel, with Leach’s Storm-Petrel *sensu stricto* remaining on the *Checklist*
- California and Woodhouse’s scrub-jays, Codes 2 and 1, respectively; split from Western Scrub-Jay, deleted from the *Checklist*

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Because the **Common Scoter** is a Eurasian species breeding as far west as Greenland, it was anticipated that the first ABA record of the species would occur along the Atlantic coast of the ABA Area. Instead, the first record came from California, perhaps not so surprising, given that the species breeds as far east as the Russian Far East and is a long-distance migrant. Information suggesting that Common Scoters are not held in captivity in North America helped persuade the ABA Checklist Committee that this individual presumably was a natural vagrant. *Crescent City, Del Norte, California; February 1, 2016. Photo by © Rob Fowler.*



In 2014 the American Ornithologists' Union split the Shy Albatross into three species: White-capped, Salvin's, and Chatham albatrosses. All three of these species are now on the *ABA Checklist*, with Chatham Albatross being the final species added. *Bodega Canyon, Marin County, California, July 27, 2001. Photo by © Dan W. Nelson.*

land, Alaska, September 18–21, 2015, was extensively studied. Plumage details and especially in-flight photographs showing emarginated primaries helped to rule out similar species such as European Reed Warbler (*A. scirpaceus*), Marsh Warbler (*A. palustris*), and Paddyfield Warbler (*A. agricola*). The Alaska Checklist Committee voted unanimously to accept the record as a natural vagrant, as did the CLC.

The Blyth's Reed Warbler breeds from Denmark, The Netherlands, Germany, and Hungary east through Pakistan, extreme western China and Mongolia, and south-central Russia. It winters in India and Burma. It is placed on the *ABA Checklist* as a Code 5 species. Following Clements et al. (2016), we provisionally place it between Sedge Warbler and Lanceolated Warbler.

Pallas's Rosefinch (*Carpodacus roseus*)—ABA CLC Record #2015–04. One, thought to be a first-winter male, was photographed and audio-recorded at St. Paul Island, Pribilof Islands, Alaska, September 20–24, 2015. Plumage features and vocalizations ruled out the similar Common Rosefinch (*C. erythrinus*). The Alaska Checklist Committee voted unanimously to accept the record as a natural vagrant, as did the CLC.

The Pallas's Rosefinch breeds in northeastern Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and much of east-central Russia; it winters in parts of Russia, Mongolia, eastern China, the Koreas, and northern Japan. Pallas's Rosefinch is placed on the *ABA Checklist* as a Code 5 species. Following Clements et al. (2016), we provisionally place it between Common Rosefinch and Red Crossbill.

Red-legged Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*)—ABA CLC Record #2016–01. A first-year bird was photographed at Estero Llano Grande State Park, Hidalgo County, Texas, November 27–29, 2014 (Gustafson et al. 2015). The Texas

Bird Records Committee voted unanimously to accept the record as a natural vagrant from Mexico. The CLC voted 7–1 to accept the record, with one member being concerned that the bird may have been an escaped captive. Seven previous photographic records from southeastern Florida during the period 2003–2011, mostly of males in alternate plumage, were not accepted by the Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee (FOSRC) because of questionable provenance (Greenlaw et al. 2014); the CLC has not reviewed these records.

The Red-legged Honeycreeper is mostly resident from eastern Mexico through Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil; it is also resident in Cuba. Mexican populations away from the eastern part of the country are largely migratory. The Red-legged Honeycreeper is placed on the *ABA Checklist* as a Code 5 species. Per the AOU (Chesser et al. 2016), it is placed between Yellow-breasted Chat and Bananaquit.

Votes Anticipated/Possible

The status of the **Tricolored Munias** (*Lonchura malacca*; ABA CLC Record #2014–04) found in Florida remains unresolved. A vote by the CLC in 2014 fell one vote short of acceptance due to questions of provenance; second-round voting was delayed pending data on the status of Tricolored Munias in Cuba (Pranty et al. 2014)—information that still has not reached the CLC. The same year, the FOSRC voted to accept the Florida records as representing colonizers or dispersers from the population in Cuba. To date, there has been no progress in advancing this species toward additional CLC votes, but Pranty intends to resubmit the Florida records to the committee in 2017. The Tricolored Munia is resident in India, Sri Lanka, and southern China; exotic populations appear



A member of the challenging genus *Acrocephalus*, this **Blyth's Reed Warbler** was carefully identified from a series of excellent photographs, including an in-flight image that shows the emarginated primaries. A record of a putative Blyth's Reed Warbler from the same location in 2010 was not accepted by the Alaska Checklist Committee, but the 2015 record was accepted unanimously. *Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, September 18, 2015. Photo by © Monte Taylor.*

to be established in Cuba, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela via the cagebird trade.

Our previous report (Pranty et al. 2015) listed six species that might reach the CLC. Three of these were reviewed by the committee in 2016 and added to the *ABA Checklist* (see above), but the statuses of the other three species are unresolved. A **Gray Thrasher** (*Toxostoma cinereum*) from California was not accepted by the CBRC based on unknown provenance; to date, the CLC has not initiated a review of this record (per CLC bylaws, two members would have to formally request a review). Records of the other two species, a **European Robin** (*Erithacus rubecula*) from Pennsylvania and a **Black Catbird** (*Melanoptila glabrirostris*) off Louisiana, are under review by the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee and the Louisiana Bird Records Committee, respectively.

So far this year, seven new potential additions to the *ABA Checklist* have been documented. The provenance of a **Great White Pelican** (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*), photographed at J. N.



The two species added to the *ABA Checklist* from Alaska in 2015 were discovered within days of each other, although about 460 miles apart. The **Pallas's Rosefinch** is a little-known Asiatic species—and a short-distance migrant—that was not on most birders' lists of potential vagrants to the ABA Area. *St. Paul Island, Pribilof Islands, Alaska, September 21, 2015. Photo by © Tom Johnson.*



Following seven records of unknown provenance in southeastern Florida during 2003–2011—none of which were reviewed by the ABA Checklist Committee—came this **Red-legged Honeycreeper**, the first record for Texas. Seven of eight committee members voted that this honeycreeper likely represented a natural vagrant from northeastern Mexico. *Estero Llano Grande State Park, Hidalgo County, Texas, November 27, 2015. Photo by © Tiffany Kersten.*



This **European Robin** visited a Pennsylvania yard February 21–March 7, 2015. The identification of the bird is not in question, but the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee is assessing the question of provenance: a natural vagrant from Eurasia vs. an escape from captivity. If the Pennsylvania committee accepts the record, the ABA CLC will vote on it. *Bucks County, Pennsylvania; February 21, 2015. Photo by © Pamela Newitt.*

“Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Sanibel Island, Lee County, Florida, February 28–March 1, 2016, has not yet been decided by the FOSRC; Pranty and Ponzo (in review) regard it as an escape from captivity. The species is native to southwestern Asia and much of Africa. A **Cuban Vireo** (*Vireo gundlachii*) was photographed and audio-recorded at Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park, Key West, Monroe County, Florida, April 19–24, 2016; this record has already been accepted by the FOSRC and will soon be reviewed by the CLC. A **Pine Flycatcher** (*Empidonax affinis*) was found and audio-recorded in the Santa Rita Mountains, Pima County, Arizona, beginning May 28, 2016. A **Jouanin’s Petrel** (*Bulweria fallax*), a little-known species thought to be restricted to the Indian Ocean, was captured in a mist

net and photographed at Santa Barbara Island, Channel Islands National Park, Santa Barbara County, California, on June 1, 2016. Analysis of the identification of this record is ongoing. An **Amethyst-throated Hummingbird** (*Lampornis amethystinus*), a non-migratory resident from Mexico through Honduras, was photographed at Saguenay County, Québec, July 30–31, 2016; another was reported from the Davis Mountains, Jeff Davis County, Texas, October 15, 2016. A **Juan Fernandez Petrel** (*Pterodroma externa*) was photographed at Tucson, Arizona, on September 7, 2016, following the passage of Hurricane Newton; the species breeds off the coast of Chile and ranges widely in the Pacific and Indian oceans. And a **Eurasian Sparrowhawk** (*Accipiter nisus*) was photographed at Adak Island, Aleutian Islands, Alaska, on September 21, 2016; the species is widespread in Eurasia. These records will be reviewed by their respective provincial and state records committees before they reach the CLC.

AOU Taxonomic and Nomenclatorial Changes Affecting the ABA Checklist

The 57th supplement to the *AOU Checklist of North American Birds* (Chesser et al. 2016) presents massive changes to the naming and—especially—the placement of species on the *ABA Checklist*. These changes are far too numerous to enumerate here, so we include only the most significant: changes to birds’ names, changes at the order level to non-passerines, and changes at the family level beginning with the Phainopepla. We list nomenclatorial changes first, then list changes in linear sequences (“checklist order”).

- Wedge-tailed Shearwater: change the scientific name from *Puffinus pacificus* to *Ardenna pacifica*.

• Buller's Shearwater: change the scientific name from *Puffinus bulleri* to *Ardenna bulleri*.

• Short-tailed Shearwater: change the scientific name from *Puffinus tenuirostris* to *Ardenna tenuirostris*.

• Sooty Shearwater: change the scientific name from *Puffinus griseus* to *Ardenna grisea*.

• Great Shearwater: change the scientific name from *Puffinus gravis* to *Ardenna gravis*.

• Pink-footed Shearwater: change the scientific name from *Puffinus creatopus* to *Ardenna creatopus*.

• Flesh-footed Shearwater: change the scientific name from *Puffinus carneipes* to *Ardenna carneipes*.

• Townsend's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma socorroensis*): this species is split from Leach's Storm-Petrel; Leach's Storm-Petrel in the strict sense remains on the *ABA Checklist* as a Code 1 species. Townsend's Storm-Petrel is added to the *Checklist* as a Code 3 species; it is believed to occur regularly off the coast of southern California (Howell et al. 2009), with seven specimens archived (Grinnell and Miller 1944).

• Sandhill Crane: change the scientific name from *Grus canadensis* to *Antigone canadensis*.

• Green Violetear: change the English name to Mexican Violetear, the result of a multi-way split of the Green Violetear; Mexican Violetear is the only species to reach the ABA Area.

• Western Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma californica*) is recognized as two spe-

cies, California Scrub-Jay (*A. californica*) and Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay (*A. woodhouseii*). The former is resident from Washington state to Baja California, Mexico, and it has expanded into British Columbia, with at least one breeding record documented (Toochin 2014); California Scrub-Jay is a Code 2 species. The latter is widespread in the Interior West; Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay is a Code 1 species.

• The sequence of orders of non-passerines is now as follows:

- Anseriformes
- Galliformes
- Phoenicopteriformes
- Podicipediformes
- Columbiformes
- Cuculiformes
- Caprimulgiformes
- Apodiformes



The ABA Checklist Committee follows taxonomic decisions of the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) North American Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of North and Middle American Birds. In 2016, the AOU split the Leach's Storm-Petrel into two species. One of them, retaining the name Leach's Storm-Petrel, occurs widely at sea off both coasts of the ABA Area; the other, **Townsend's Storm-Petrel**, ranges north in the ABA Area to waters off the coast of southern California. Separation at sea is challenging, and many birds observed there are best left unidentified. *off San Diego, California; July 20, 2008. Photo by © Steve Howell.*



Relationships among the orders of birds were substantially revised by the American Ornithologists' Union in 2016, and these changes are reflected in the *ABA Checklist*. Recent research shows that grebes, flamingos, and doves form a "clade," deriving from a shared common ancestor. Thus, the **Eared Grebe** and other grebes, along with flamingos and doves, now appear on the *Checklist* following waterfowl and grouse and prior to cuckoos and nightjars; other groups, previously toward the front of the *Checklist*, fall farther back. *Salton Sea, California; December 13, 2013. Photo by © Geoff Malosh.*

ABA CHECKLIST REPORT

- Gruiformes
- Charadriiformes
- Phaethontiformes
- Gaviiformes
- Procellariiformes
- Ciconiiformes
- Suliformes
- Pelecaniformes
- Cathartiformes
- Accipitriformes
- Strigiformes
- Trogoniformes
- Upupiformes
- Coraciiformes
- Piciformes
- Falconiformes
- Psittaciformes

• The sequence of families of passerines, beginning with Phainopepla, is now as follows:

- Ptilionotidae
- Peucedramidae
- Prunellidae
- Ploceidae
- Estrildidae
- Passeridae
- Motacillidae
- Fringillidae
- Calcariidae
- Parulidae
- Thraupidae
- Emberizidae
- Cardinalidae
- Icteridae

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