

N&MA Classification Committee: Proposals 2008-C

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Change English name of *Vireo caribaeus*

Effect of NACC Checklist: This proposal, if it passed, would change AOU's official English name for *Vireo caribaeus* from "St. Andrew Vireo" to "San Andres Vireo".

Description of the problem, including any background information and classification history:

There is no classification history relevant to this proposal. *V. caribaeus* has been universally treated as a species since its description in the 1940s. Other relevant background information presented below relates to prevailing usage, politics / geographical nomenclature and the analogous situation of Galapagos Island bird names.

Usage: Usage of "San Andres Vireo" vs. "St Andrew Vireo" in recent ornithological literature is balanced. A sample of leading publications dealing with the species or region are referred to below.

Saint Andrew Vireo: Two leading West Indies field guides, including one authored by the describer of *V. caribaeus* (Bond), both use "St. Andrew Vireo" (Bond 1971; Raffaele et al. 1998) as does a recent checklist for the island (McNish 2003). Although Bond (1971) called the island in question "St. Andrew", Raffaele et al. (1998) noted that the species they called "St. Andrew Vireo" was endemic to "San Andrés". Barlow & Nash (1985) and Tye & Tye (1991) are among ornithological journal publications using "St. Andrew Vireo". Dickinson (2003) also uses "St. Andrew".

San Andres Vireo: Colombia's field guide (Hilty & Brown 1986), Colombia's checklist (Salaman et al. 2001, 2007, 2008), all recent BirdLife publications (where the species is listed as threatened: e.g. BirdLife International 2004, Stattersfield et al. 1998), some ornithological journal publications (e.g. Russell et al. 1979) and the IOC's English name publication (Gill & Wright 2006) use "San Andres Vireo".

Politics / Geographical Nomenclature: English is spoken by longer-established human populations on San Andrés island and many localities on the island itself have English-derived names. However, the Hispanic/Colombian population has increased rapidly over the last two to three decades to the extent that they outnumber English-speaking populations by about 3 or 4 to 1 according to government statistics. San Andrés is a municipality and capital of a department of Colombia each taking that name and not "St. Andrew". A recent International Court of Justice case considering sovereignty of the islands (previously disputed with Nicaragua) used "San Andrés" throughout its judgment, with no reference to "St. Andrew" (<http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/124/14325.pdf>).

Analogous situation of Galapagos endemics: AOU's South American Checklist Committee (Proposal 242) recently changed the names of mockingbirds occurring in the Galapagos Islands from "Hood", "Chatham" and "Charles" Mockingbirds to "Española", "San Cristobal" and "Floreana" Mockingbirds in an analogous situation, to reflect Spanish (and internationally used geographic) names rather than English

island names. Perhaps, more English is spoken on San Andrés than on the Galapagos Islands. However, universality considerations favour usage of "San Andrés Vireo".

Note: *Mimus magnirostris* ("[St. Andrew/San Andres] Mockingbird") is treated as a species by some authors but not at present by AOU, so would not be affected by this proposal.

Description of new information, including citations, that warrants review and possible revision: Only relevant "new" information is usage of a different English name in recent ornithological publications and prevailing geographical nomenclature of the relevant island, discussed above.

Recommendation: Usage of the two available names for this vireo is balanced, although the AOU checklist is possibly a major factor behind continued usage of "St. Andrew" in some publications. The official name for the island to which *V. caribaeus* is endemic is "San Andrés". It would perhaps be more appropriate for *V. caribaeus* to take the island's official name than an English translation of it, given that Spanish place names are common in English bird names.

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11 July 2008

Split *Glaucidium ridgwayi* from *G. brasilianum*

Description of the Problem: *Glaucidium brasilianum* ranges from extreme southern Arizona and Texas to southern South America. Four subspecies occur from the U.S. through Mexico and Middle America to extreme northwestern Colombia (*G. b. ridgwayi*, *G. b. cactorum*, *G. b. intermedium*, *G. b. saturatum*), and the remaining subspecies are distributed from eastern Colombia to Argentina. The name *G. ridgwayi* would apply to North and Middle American populations. Subspecific differences require further study.

In Sharpe's (1875) revision of Ridgway's descriptions of "*G. ferrugineum*, *G. infuscatum*, and *G. gnoma*" he proposed that Central American populations were separable from South American birds, naming the Central American birds *G. ridgwayi*. The American Ornithologists' Union (1910) recognized this taxon as a species, but under the name *G. phaloenoides* (synonym of *G. b. phaloenoides*). Ridgway (1914) treated *ridgwayi* as a subspecies of *G. brasilianum*, and this treatment has been followed until recently, when König et al. (1999) re-elevated *Glaucidium ridgwayi* to species level. König et al.'s (1999) treatment was based on differences in DNA (ca. 1000 bp of cytochrome *b*), minor plumage differences (more heavily barred tailed), voice (male song has slower, more hollow sequence of notes; other vocalizations also differ), and possibly ecology.

New information: Proudfoot et al. (2006) analyzed 899 bp of cytochrome *b* from 103 individuals from Arizona, Texas, and Mexico, plus 7 *G. brasilianum* from South America and several other *Glaucidium* species. They did not include any specimens from Middle America. Maximum Parsimony and Bayesian analyses showed that *G. brasilianum* as currently defined is not monophyletic. The data showed two clades: one comprised of *G. brasilianum* from the U.S. and Mexico ("*G. ridgwayi*"), and the other comprised of *G. brasilianum* from South America plus "*G. tucumanum*" (100% posterior probabilities); *G. peruanum* was basal to the South American clade, although with low support (74% posterior probability). North and South American "*G. brasilianum*" differed by 2.7% sequence divergence.

R. Roy Johnson and Steven W. Carothers submitted a proposal 5 Nov 2008 for consideration by the NACC (attached to this proposal), that requests the committee to examine the current status of *G. brasilianum*. This proposal follows a petition to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the subspecies *G. b. cactorum* as federally threatened or endangered, but with a change in nomenclature from *G. b. cactorum* to *G. r. cactorum*. Johnson and Carothers argued that the Petitioner's use of an unofficial name leads to confusion and considers only DNA evidence without regard to other biological characteristics important in owl classification. They also noted errors in König et al.'s (1999) description of habitat for "*G. ridgwayi*" and questioned the separation of North/Central and South American populations by voice. Johnson and Carothers conclude that DNA by itself is insufficient to separate *G. ridgwayi* from *G. brasilianum*, and that other factors important in owl classification must be considered. Thus, they find that "the proposal to separate the North and South American populations...dubious at best."

Mark Robbins, Brian Barber, Andy Jones, and Nate Rice are in the final stages of a molecular phylogeny for New World pygmy-owls that includes additional mtDNA as well as nuclear gene data. They expect that the manuscript will be ready for submission in the next 2-3 months.

Recommendation: Because a split between *G. ridgwayi* and *G. brasilianum* likely comes down to genetic data, we recommend that the NACC wait until the molecular phylogeny for New World pygmy-owls is published, and then consider a revised proposal.

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Sharpe, R. B. 1875. Contributions to a history of the Accipitres. The genus *Glaucidium*. *Ibis* 17:35-59.

Carla Cicero and Mark Robbins
15 Nov 2008

Attachment: A proposal to re-examine the current status of *Glaucidium brasilianum* (Gmelin) Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl

This paper is submitted to the Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of the American Ornithologists' Union (Committee) following a petition to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) from the Center For Biological Diversity and Defenders of Wildlife (Petitioners 2007). That petition proposed the listing of the subspecies *Glaucidium brasilianum cactorum* (Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl [CFPO]) in North America, or at least in Arizona, as a federally listed threatened or endangered species. The Service responded by issuing a 90-Day Finding (73 FR 31418–31424; Federal Register reference) dated June 2, 2008. In both the Petition and 90-Day Finding it was suggested that there be a change in nomenclature of the species/subspecies complex from *Glaucidium brasilianum cactorum* to *Glaucidium ridgwayi cactorum*. The authors here review the appropriateness or lack of appropriateness of this proposed change.

We suggest that the Petitioners and the 90-Day Finding use an unofficial name for the CFPO, *Glaucidium ridgwayi cactorum*, instead of the accepted name, *Glaucidium brasilianum cactorum*, leading to confusion and disregarding the scientifically accepted North American, Middle American, South American, and international protocols for classifying and naming birds. The Service's 90-Day Finding accepted the newly proposed classification, which is based primarily on DNA analysis, without

taking into account other biological characteristics considered to be important factors used in owl classification and nomenclature.

Rationale for the change

The idea for changing the name of the North American Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl to *Glaucidium ridgwayi* primarily came from König et al. (1999) and associates (Heidrich et al. 1995, Heidrich and Wink 1998, Wink and Heidrich 1999). Further, the common name for *G. brasilianum* would remain as Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl (FPO) while that for *G. ridgwayi* would be changed to Ridgway's Pygmy-Owl (RPO). The other major sources for this suggested change are by Proudfoot and associates (Proudfoot and Slack 2001) and Proudfoot et al. (2006a, 2006b), based largely on mitochondrial DNA evidence.

Although we do not agree with König and associate's suggested change, König is an experienced avian systematist. Although much of his work has been with European *Glaucidium* he has named some South American taxa in the genus (König 1991). Proudfoot, on the other hand, has little to no systematic experience (outside of molecular work), a fact known first-hand by RRJ's work with him, both in a publication (Proudfoot and Johnson 2000) and serving with him on the Service's Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl Endangered Species Recovery Team from 1998-2006.

As we understand it, this newly proposed taxon would consist of at least four subspecies occurring in North America. In addition to the current *G. brasilianum ridgwayi* it would also include *G. b. cactorum* (vanRossem 1937), *G. b. saturatum* (Brodkorb 1941), and *G. b. intermedium* (Phillips 1966). Several references since König and associates work have continued to use *Glaucidium brasilianum*, including del Hoyo (1999), Clements (2007), and Remsen et al. (Online). We find none that suggest using the name *Glaucidium ridgwayi* instead of *Glaucidium brasilianum*. Navarro-Siguenza and Peterson (2004) list the name *Glaucidium ridgwayi*, referencing König et al. (1999), but neither accept nor reject the suggested change (A. T. Peterson, e-mail to RRJ, dated 7/12/2008).

Separation of *G. brasilianum* in South America from *G. ridgwayi* in North America

Background and Evolution of the Proposed Change:

König and associates do not provide adequate information regarding the rationale for separating *G. ridgwayi* from *G. brasilianum*. After our thorough search through literature by these coworkers the only substantive evidence we can find is by Heidrich et al. (1995:37-39 [see Table 1, p. 7]). In this publication "*G. ridgwayi*"? [with a question mark] is suggested as a species, based on DNA analysis of a single specimen from Mexico. From that point forward this group has treated DNA analysis as basically the only factor in determining species of *Glaucidium*. In so doing Heidrich et al. (1995) ignored their own information regarding the importance of bioacoustical analyses and vocalizations in owls (see also König 1994). Vocalizations are inherited, thus "taxonomically specific" (Heidrich et al. 1995:1) not learned as in many species, especially Passeriformes. Thus, calls remain relatively

conservative from one generation to the next. This means that vocalizations are the major means of maintaining the pair bond and genetic separation between species.

Two of the most glaring errors in König et al. (1999) are contained in the habitat description of *G. ridgwayi* and attempts to separate the two populations by vocalizations.

In 1989 RRJ spent 12 days studying the FPO along the Peruvian Amazon and its tributaries. In addition to vocalizations, the behavior, territory size, and other factors for the Peruvian FPO were extremely similar to that of the species studied by RRJ at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, southern Arizona (Johnson and Haight 1984, 1985).

Habitat:

A wide range of habitats is similarly occupied by both *G. brasilianum* and *G. ridgwayi* as presented by König et al. (1999). In their enthusiasm to separate the North and South American populations of *G. brasilianum*, König et al. (1999:373) (a) omit riverine habitat under the account for *G. ridgwayi*, but include it in habitat for *G. brasilianum*, and (b) include “giant cacti” as a major component of the habitat for *G. ridgwayi*. Among the more than 50 references we have reviewed on the FPO in North and Middle America we find more than 20 publications that mention riverine habitat for König’s *G. ridgwayi*.

At the northern extreme of the FPO’s range, in south-central Arizona, all records are from riparian cottonwood-willow (*Populus fremontii-Salix gooddingii*) and mesquite (*Prosopis velutina*) ecosystems along the Salt and Gila River and their tributaries (Johnson et al. 2003). The FPO’s nesting in southern and south-central Arizona was described early as occurring in riverine riparian ecosystems in contrast to the Elf Owl’s (*Micrathene whitneyi*) use of saguaros (*Carnegiea gigantea*) by both Bendire (1888, 1892) and Breninger (1898).

Throughout most of the range of *G. ridgwayi*, there are no giant cacti, e.g., Texas, ne. Mexico, and most of the remainder of Middle America where the species commonly occupies mesic rather than arid environments. In the Peruvian Amazon FPOs are common along many of the large streams (RRJ Field Notes). A similar situation is reported from Venezuela where FPOs were observed only along waterways by Michael Cross (pers. comm.) during the several years he lived there. Thus, the riverine habitat of the FPO in North and Middle America reported in more than 20 papers and for former populations in Arizona (Johnson et al. 2000, 2003) and Texas (Oberholser 1974) is similar to that of the FPO in South America.

Vocalizations:

For *G. ridgwayi*, König et al. (1999:373) state that “The song of the male is similar to that of Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, but sequence of notes slower (about 2.5-3 notes per second), and hollower in character.” During RRJ’s work in the Peruvian Amazon I used the same vocalizations that I use for work in Arizona. FPOs responded readily to these calls and I could detect no difference in cadence or tone between those in Arizona and Peru. I became interested in owl vocalizations while studying under Joe Marshall at the University of Arizona. In 1970 I began using a tape

recorder in searching for CFPOs in central Arizona (Johnson et al. 1981) and recorded the last CFPO north of the Gila River by this means (Johnson and Simpson 1971, Millsap and Johnson 1988, Johnson et al. 2000, 2003). As with habitat, I find König et al.'s (1999) separation of the North and South American populations by vocalizations debatable.

Our analysis of the newly proposed change:

The proposal to raise the subspecies name of *Glaucidium brasilianum ridgwayi* to the species name *Glaucidium ridgwayi* is based almost entirely on DNA analysis at the expense of other factors regularly used in avian systematics, especially for owls. These factors include bioacoustical analysis, morphology and morphometrics, plumage patterns, behavior, ecology, distribution, and other life history factors. Even those who propose and list these important factors in owl classification (e.g. König 1994, Heinrich 1995, König et al. 1999) have overemphasized DNA analysis. Others, e.g., Proudfoot and associates (Proudfoot and Slack 2001) and Proudfoot et al. (2006a, 2006b), have depended almost entirely on molecular biology without addressing these other important factors. The two authors of this proposal (RRJ and SWC) have a combined nearly 100 years of ornithological experience in the Southwestern U.S. and Mexico. SWC has a Master's degree and PhD in ornithology and RRJ has a Master's degree in ornithology and PhD in systematic botany. Since 1960 RRJ has studied FPOs in Arizona, Mexico, and South America and published more than a dozen papers on the species or that reference the FPO. We find the proposal to separate the North and South American populations of the FPO dubious at best.

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American Ornithologists' Union.

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R. Roy Johnson, PhD and Steven W. Carothers, PhD

5 November 2008

Divide *Spinus* into three genera

Following the works of Arnaiz-Villena et al., specifically the 2007 paper in *Ardeola* on the North American *Carduelis pinus* group, we have voted in 2008-A-09 to divide the genus *Carduelis* into several genera, recognizing the formerly used genera *Carduelis* (one species), *Chloris* (2-3 species), *Acanthis* (2 species), and *Spinus* (17 species)

I suggest that we recognize the large number of species in *Spinus* primarily for historical reasons—the American goldfinches or siskins have in our lifetimes always been in a single genus, following, e.g., Hellmayr 1938 (who placed only *dominicensis* in a separate genus), Eisenmann 1955, and Meyer de Schauensee 1966, etc. Thus we have a tradition of a genus for redpolls and one for goldfinches/siskins.

The cladograms of the carduelines in the Arnaiz-Villena et al. papers do show all the goldfinches as a monophyletic group, so we are okay on that approach. However, they also clearly show three monophyletic groups within the goldfinches. One group includes the Old World and New World pine siskins, Central American *atriceps*, and Hispaniolan *dominicensis*. Another included the North American goldfinches, and the third includes the rest, all Central and South American species.

Our memories are not long enough to recall that earlier workers recognized these groups, at least in part. Ridgway, for example, recognized *Spinus* for *pinus*, *atriceps*, and Middle American forms, *Loximitris* for *dominicensis*, and *Astragalinus* for the three North American species; he did not have the species *spinus* or any from South America, of course. AOU 1910 (third ed.) used *Astragalinus* for the North American taxa although AOU 1931 (fourth ed.) placed them into *Spinus*.

If we are recognizing some of the smaller (in no. of species) clades of Arnaiz-Villena et al. as genera, I think we should go ahead and recognize all of them. We should not merely be bound by what things used to be. Further, in a memo that I did in 1982 for the sixth edition Check-list Committee, I analyzed what was proposed for *Carduelis* and developed some rationale for recognizing at least *Astragalinus* as separate from *Spinus*. That memo is appended below.

I propose that we recognize:

Spinus Koch, 1816, for *spinus*, *pinus*, *dominicensis*, and *atriceps*;
Astragalinus Cabanis, 1851, for *tristis*, *psaltria*, and *lawrencei*; and
Pyrrhomitris Bonaparte, 1850, for the rest of Central and South American species.

Richard C. Banks
1 December 2008

Appendix:

Check-list Memo

20 Jan. 1982

From Banks

Carduelines

I have been reviewing Tom's original recommendations on this group (18 July 79), his later revision of 11 Sept. 81, Les's comments of 16 Sept. 81, and Ken's of 30 Sept. 81. I am unable to locate two critical sets of memos on the group, Ken's of 10 Aug. 79 and one that I did probably about that time. I find myself quite unhappy with the present listing and with many of the arguments that it results from. I agree with the gist of the comments by Paynter in the footnote on p. 207 of Peters XIV about finding any satisfactory arrangement. No chance.

I believe that one of the problems in trying to get a sensible listing is overlumping at the generic level. The merging of so many genera in Serinus and Carduelis both in Peters and in our list obscures relationships and blends so many evolutionary lines that information necessary for a reasonable list is lost at the outset. The variability in the Peters genus Serinus is almost as great as in the entire Drepanidi. (fill in ending). That is not our problem. There is less variation in Carduelis, but enough to make one wonder if the rank "genus" has any meaning left at all.

Another problem seems to be that we are attempting to establish a classification for American birds of this group, largely without reference to the large group of Old World types. Another, of course, is the standard one of many radiations, each of which has a "primitive" and an "advanced" end, that we try to list linearly.

First of all, I agree with Les and Ken that in Serinus, mozambicus should probably precede canaria. There is a great likelihood that an insular form that has not gone to the generic level is a relatively recent derivation. (Of course, to become a different genus it would damn near have to become a different family!).

Incidentally, is it canaria or canarius? Tom noted in 79 that it should be us, but all subsequent memos list it as a. Perhaps in the missing (for me) memo Ken straightened this out. Probably it is a noun in apposition, but hard to tell as it was first described in Fringilla.

The genus Carduelis as constituted in our list and Peters is an amalgamation. I have spent a good bit of time yesterday and today (it is now tomorrow according to the date on this memo) becoming more familiar with a lot of them. There were some surprises to me, and I have changed my mind on some of the objections I had to the wholesale lumping. I started with C. carduelis as the type of the genus, although it is highly derived in the genus in regard to the flashy color pattern. A major character that runs through what I would put into that genus is the wing pattern, with color on the middle of the primaries and the basal half of the secondaries. A group of relatively heavy billed birds with this wing pattern includes carduelis (altho the bill is more modified than the rest), sinica, ambiguus, spinoides, and monguilloti (maybe = spinoides). I think these are all close, and a fairly distinct group.

The species chloris shares some characters with each of the above, but differs from any of them more than they differ among themselves. It has color (yellow) only on the outer vane of the primaries, rather than on both, and not on the secondaries. (Note that Linnaeus named carduelis and sinica both in Fringilla, but chloris in Loxia; sinica should be Oriental Goldfinch, not Oriental Greenfinch). Chloris could be near the base of the stock from which these spring, but putting it in the same genus stretches things a good bit, by my view.

I formerly objected to lumping Spinus with Carduelis, but I can now go along with it if it is deemed necessary to have large genera, although not without reservation and certain qualifications to be stated below. The species spinus, pinus, and the Central and South American siskins or goldfinches share with Carduelis the wing pattern of a bright spot on the middle of the primaries and the base of the secondaries. However, these are all thin billed birds, not like the species I would put in Carduelis (on last page). I think it is perfectly legitimate to recognize these thin-billed birds as generically distinct, for surely the significant difference in bill is indicative of a difference in niche and adaptive level. At the very least, it is a quite different line of the general cardueline persuasion. Spinus has more basis for being in Carduelis than does Chloris.

A major reservation is that the three North American Goldfinches, tristis, psaltria, and lawrencei do not possess the wing color pattern of all those other species here allotted to Carduelis! Or Spinus!! Further, these three species have plain (unstreaked) young whereas the young of the other species are streaked or spotted. These three lack the typical Cardueline color flash on the primaries and have no color on the secondaries (where there is primary color it is of a different nature). The main color pattern is on the coverts. I believe that these three are substantially different from the American Spinus-like siskins and from Carduelis, and I would suggest that they may represent quite a different line. Putting them in Spinus is a mistake, and putting them in Carduelis is compounding it. They should be placed in the genus Astragalinus Cabanis as in Ridgway Bds. N&M Amer. and Ridgway 1899 Auk xvi: 79.

I know I objected before to including Acanthis into an expanded Carduelis. Even Paynter did not go that far! There is no indication of the Carduelis wing color pattern in any Acanthis--except johannis from Somalia, which is misplaced in Acanthis, sometimes put in Warsanglia but probably out to be in Carduelis ss. I will go as far as suggesting that Acanthis as presently constituted may not be monophyletic, but will not pursue that issue. I would list it so that it forms a bridge to Carpodacus.

So much for genera for the moment. Within what I call Spinus, probably spinus is primitive. I do not necessarily think that pinus is close to spinus despite the streaking in both; in pinus it is probably a retention of juvenal plumage characters, a derived character. I would, however, place it second to form a geographic bridge to the other Spinus. (It was I, Ken, who suggested these as a superspecies, a facetious suggestion based on the similarity in name to emphasize our overkill of that concept).

That pinus and atriceps are closely related and at least a superspecies and probably conspecific is, I think, not only open to question and confirmation but highly unlikely. I strongly suspect that van Rossem misinterpreted the information presented by the specimens he examined, and that folks have relied on what he said rather than look again. At least, the small number of specimens from the pertinent area in the USNM suggest other interpretations, as does an examination of historical literature. In Ridgway 1901, atriceps was known from Guatemala and Chiapás; pinus was known to extend south only as far as the present limits of the race macropterus. The same is true through Hellmayr 1938. Then van Rossem in 1938 names the pinus race perplexus from the Chiapas area of atriceps (also Guatemala) where the species was previously unknown and claimed it hybridized with atriceps there.

We have only 10 specimens that bear on the question (he had only 16). Two of ours are "pure" atriceps from Desconsuelo, Guat. (6 of his were pure, from Guat.). From San Cristobal, Chiapás, we have 3 streaked rather young birds and two "adults" with gray below and slightly streaked backs, and black caps (1 not very black). From Teopisca, Ch., we have 2 females like the latter (unsexed) bird. There is also

one like that from Hda. Chancel, Guat. (a van Rossem loc.) The 8 were originally labeled atriceps, but the name p. perplexus has been added. The three streaked young birds are superficially like pinus, but have more and brighter yellow in the wing than any young pinus I can find in our collection. I suspect these are young of the gray-bellied adults. One of the gray-bellied adults has some streaks on the ventral surface and more than the others above. I believe this is an in-between plumage rather than a hybrid. The gray-bellied birds differ in appearance very significantly from the "pure" atriceps from Desconsuelo.

I think that van Rossem mistook the baby atriceps for pinus, the in between plumage and adults from Chiapas for hybrids. This suggests to me that perplexus is a new name for the northern population of atriceps rather than for a newly found southern form of pinus. The gray-bellied birds differ materially from the green-bellied Guatemalan atriceps. It is possible that perplexus is a distinct species, or that it is a subspecies of atriceps. At any rate, I think it not a race of pinus. At any rate, I think there is no strong evidence for hybridization and therefore no basis for saying that pinus and atriceps, quite different appearing birds, form a superspecies. Therefore, atriceps need not follow pinus in the list.

Incidentally, in the text of the check-list, the Chiapas range of pinus (for perplexus) is given parenthetically, but not the Guatemala range which should be if you refute what I have said above.

Also incidentally, Mayr and Short do list spinus and pinus as a superspecies, but not pinus and atriceps.

As to the other Spinus species, dominicensis is probably derived from notatus rather than from magellanicus, but the latter two are close and should not be separated by xanthrogastra. I would tend to put perplexus (if recognized) and atriceps at the end, as they are pretty different from the yellow goldfinches. Excuse me, siskins.

What the hell gender is Carduelis? There are all sorts of endings. Even species and subspecies disagree sometimes, in Peters.

I can see Acanthis leading on to Carpodacus and Loxia, with Pinicola, Leucosticte, Pyrrhula, and Coccothraustes (incl. Hesperiphona) bringing up the rear. I really think it is stretching credibility to state that Pinicola and Leucosticte are more or less related to each other or something else, at least without considering the myriad of Old World large-billed finches (maybe I should say odd-billed). Each of these taxa represents a specialization, basically of Old World derivation, none probably near a base stock. Their relationships are likely harder to dig out than those of Carduelis s.l., and I certainly don't have time to try and doubt that any of you do at this time.

As much as I hate to go along with a generic lumping, I agree that Hesperiphona should go into Coccothraustes. Further, I agree with the listing abeillei, vespertina, coccothraustes, although cocco., ~~waspin~~ abeil., vesp. would be okay too. I disagree that coccothraustes is necessarily the most derived of the genus. It may be the most derived of the gray line, but vespertina is the most derived of the yellow line in the genus, at least of the forms we need to consider.

It is now 22 Jan., and I would like to get this in the mail today so that you will have time to read it and maybe even think about these ideas. I frankly do not expect that you will follow all these suggestions, but that's no reason not to present them. I am sorry not to have had time to study this group earlier.

My suggested listing is on the next page.

Serinus (masculine)
 mozambicus
 canaria (noun in apposition)

Chloris chloris

Carduelis
 sinica
 carduelis

Spinus
 spinus
 pinus
 notatus
 dominicensis
 magellanicus
 xanthogaster
 (perplexus)
 atriceps

Astragalinus
 psaltria (noun in apposition)
 lawrencei
 tristis

Acanthis flammea
 hornemanni

Carpodacus erythrinus
 purpureus
 cassinii
 mexicanus

Loxia curvirostra
 leucoptera

Pinicola enucleator

Leucosticte arctoa

Pyrrhula pyrrhula

Coccothraustes abiellei
 vespertina 45
 coccothraustes

Recognize family Mohoidae and put in proper place

Recent DNA work by Fleischer, James, and Olson (2008) has shown that the five species of the family Meliphagidae endemic to Hawaii actually form a distinct family which they call Mohoidae. Furthermore, they are not in the Corvida but in the Passerida, grouping with the Bombycillidae and relatives. Similarities to the meliphagids are convergence.

We propose that we recognize the Family Mohoidae and place it as sister to or within the Bombycillidae-Ptilogonatidae-Dulidae clade. Further studies of the phylogenetic position of the Mohoidae are in progress (Fleischer, pers. comm.) and Fleischer suggests that it is most likely sister to the Ptilogonatidae, so we propose placing it between the Bombycillidae and Ptilogonatidae pending further data.

FLEISCHER, R. C., H. F. JAMES, and S. L. OLSON. 2008. Convergent evolution of Hawaiian and Australo-Pacific honeyeaters from distant songbird ancestors. *Current Biology* 18: 1927-1931.

Richard C. Banks and R. Terry Chesser
3 December 2008

Subfamilies of Bombycillidae

Spellman et al. (2008) have found that the group that contains the families Bombycillidae, Ptilogonatidae, and Dulidae in our check-list also includes the monotypic genera *Hypocolius* of southern Asia and *Hylocitrea* of SE Asian islands, now in Pachycephalidae.

Those authors suggest that the entire lineage be placed in the Family Bombycillidae, and that Bombycillinae, Ptilogonatinae, and Dulinae (of our area) and the Hypocoliinae and Hylocitreinae (not of our area) be treated as subfamilies. This proposal suggests that we follow those authors and that treatment.

However, because we already treat these groups at the family level, and because the divisions that have obscured these relationships are so old, not to mention the geographic diversity, and because we will now add the Mohoidae (or Mohoinae), I think that we should vote NO on this proposal. (Even though two of our members are among the authors.)

SPELLMAN, G. M., A. CIBOIS, R. C. MOYLE, K. WINKER, and F. K. BARKER. 2008.
Clarifying the systematics of an enigmatic avian lineage: What is a
bombycillid? *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* 49:1036-1040.

Richard C. Banks
3 Dec. 2008

Correct citation to the genus *Dives*

In the 6th and 7th editions of the Check-list, the genus *Dives* is attributed to Deppe, 1830. It was not included in earlier editions, of course. This attribution of the name follows Blake in Peters vol 14, 1968.

Blake seems to have been wrong, however. Before that time, *Dives* was always credited to Cassin, 1866. I believe that Blake misinterpreted information in a paper by Stresemann in the 1954 Condor. Stresemann was correcting citations of names from Lichtenstein, 1830 to Deppe, 1830 once it became clear who the actual author of the 1830 work was. That paper used the name *Dives* in a species sense, but not in a generic sense. I have not found any attribution of *Dives* to Lichtenstein 1830.

Actually, the date 1866 is also wrong. That Dec. 1866 number of the Proc. ANSP was not published until July 1867, as indicated in the 4th (1910) and 5th (1931) editions of the Check-list under *Euphagus*, which is in the same paper as *Dives*.

I suggest that we include the following in the next Supplement:

p. 644. Change Genus *Dives* Deppe to Genus *Dives* Cassin. Delete the first citation to *Dives* and replace it with *Dives* Cassin, 1867, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia 18 (1866 = 20 July 1867): 413. Type, by monotypy, *Lamprosar dives* Bonaparte = *Icterus dives* (Lichtenstein) Deppe.

Add to the Notes: Attribution of *Dives* to Deppe, 1830 by AOU (1983, 1998), followed Blake 1968, who was in error. The name was not used in a generic sense by Deppe.

References:

AOU. 1910. 4th edition

Blake, E. R. 1968. Family Icteridae. In Peters, vol. 14

Richard C. Banks
5 Dec. 2008

**Move Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*) from Appendix to main list (07a)
and adopt Eurasian spelling of the English name of this Eurasian species (07b)**

Background: Greylag Goose has been part of the Appendix (as Graylag Goose) since the 6th edition of the Check-list. The wording in the 6th refers to a Massachusetts record near Lenox, MA on 2 December 1932, which was later considered to be a domestic bird (Snyder 1957). In addition other records from the eastern U.S. are thought to be escapes. In the 7th edition of the Check-list (1998) a report from Attu Island in the Aleutian Islands (American Birds 41:476) is mentioned, but later a careful examination of the photos revealed the birds to be Bean Geese (*Anser fabalis* of the old taxonomy; do not know whether they can be identified as *A. fabalis* or *A. serrirostris* now). This was no surprise to Fritz Scheider who was there and told me that they were enthusiastically identified as Greylag Geese when they flew up the Peaceful River Valley and ten minutes later when they returned down the same valley were then reidentified as Bean Geese!

In any event this species is widely domesticated and is seen continent-wide (barnyards and city parks, etc.). Feral birds are often white in coloration.

New Information: On 24 April 2005, a Greylag Goose landed on a drilling ship 167 nautical miles off St. John's, Newfoundland (at 46° 45'01" N, 48° 46'90" W) and remained on the ship until 2 May 2005. This bird was unbanded. A photo of the bird on the deck is published in Pranty et al. (2008). This record was reviewed and accepted by both the Newfoundland records committee and the ABA CLC (Pranty et al. 2008).

From the photo, the bird appears to be of the nominate western race. The race *A. a. rubrirostris*, occupying the eastern portion of the breeding range, is paler bodied and has a more purely pink (less orange) bill.

Recommendation: We recommend that this species be removed from the Appendix and included in the main list. Obviously, there are questions on origin with any record, but it's hard to see how a record of this species could have come from a more optimal location, although we could see how a record from a remote location in northern Canada might be accepted too – not that that factor helped the Ruddy Shelducks with either the ABA CLC, or the NACC.

Greylag Goose (nominate *anser*) is a summer visitant and breeder on Iceland, arriving in March or early April and departing in October. Interestingly the Icelandic Birds website lists a single record of *A. a. rubirostris* too. It seems very likely to me that the above record represented a bird that was slightly off course from its Icelandic migration. Icelandic breeders winter in the British Isles.

In addition, the notes from David Boertmann that follow indicate that there are a number of records of Greylag Goose from Greenland.

Notes from David Boertmann regarding Greylag Goose in Greenland:

In my 1994 checklist the following records are mentioned:

Northeast Greenland, Jameson Land, Constable Pynt, (c. 70° 45' N, 22° 38' W), August 20, 1983, 1, sight record.

Northeast Greenland, Jameson Land, Coloradodal, (c. 71° 37' N, 23° 37' W), August 6, 1984, 2 indivs., sight record.

Northeast Greenland, Hold With Hope, Badlanddal, (c. 73° 31' N, 21° 26'), August 18, 1988, 3 indivs., sight record

Northeast Greenland, Germanialand, Danmarkshavn, (c. 76° 46' N, 18° 41' W), Summer 1992, 5 indivs., sight record.

Since then following (unpublished) records have come to my attention:

Southeast Greenland, Tasiilaq Municipality, Tasiilaq Town, (c. 65° 35' N, 37° 35' W), April 15, 1996, 2, shot at the ice edge (male and female), S. Jürgensen pers. comm. [unfortunately, these were either eaten or fed to their dogs!]

Northeast Greenland, Scoresbysund Municipality, Jameson Land (c. 70° 42' N, 23° 52' W), July 17, 2004, 1, sight record (Gilg 2005).

Northeast Greenland, Traill Island, (c 72° 31' N, 21° 26' W), summer 2005, 1, sight record (O. Gilg pers. comm).

The source Gilg 2005 mentions that the team behind this report (GREA) has several records from Hold With Hope (Northeast Greenland c. 73° 31' N, 21° 26' W) and Traill Island before 2005. I have no other information on these records, but they are probably correct.

References:

Boertmann, D. 1994. An annotated checklist to the birds of Greenland. - Meddelelser om Grønland, Bioscience 38, 63 pp.

Gilg, O. (ed.). 2005 Ecopolaris – Tara 5 expedition to NE Greenland 2004. – Groupe de Recherches en Ecologie Arctique.

The greylag geese occurring in Greenland most likely have their origin in Iceland, where the population has been increasing strongly recently. It is therefore not surprising that it also turns up in Newfoundland waters.

English name: All standard references, including Sibley and Monroe (1990) and Dickinson (2003), use “Greylag Goose” rather than “Graylag Goose”. Americanizing the spelling of a portion of the name of a Eurasian species seems excruciatingly provincial, and it is recommended that “Greylag Goose” be adopted instead.

Taxonomy: We're not aware of any efforts to split the two races of Greylag Goose at the species level.

Position on Check-list: It would appear that Greylag Goose should be the last of the *Anser*, thus on our Check-list it would follow the account of Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*.

Effect on Check-list: We suggest the following Supplement entry

p. 58, after the account for *Anser erythropus*, insert:

Anser anser (Linnaeus). Greylag Goose

Anas Anser Linnaeus, 1758, Syst. Nat. (ed. 10) 1: 123. Based on "The Laughing-Goose" Edwards, Nat. Hist. Birds 3: 153, pl. 153 (in Europoa & America Maxine boreali = Sweden).

Habitat. – a variety of boreal and temperate habitats from arctic tundra through a variety of wetlands, usually with extensive open fresh water and dense emergent vegetation. Winters in estuaries, lakes and reservoirs, and other floodlands.

Distribution. – *Breeds* from Iceland and the British Isles east through eastern Europe and northern and central Russia and south to Mongolia and northern China. Northernmost populations are migratory. Some winter south to North Africa, Israel, Iraq, Iran, northern India, Burma and southern China.

Casual north to Swabard, Jan Mayen, Bear Island, east to Japan, and south to the Azores, Madeira, the Canary Islands, Egypt, Kuwait, and Sri Lanka.

Casual north to Greenland where there are at least seven sight records (Boertmann 1994 and Boertmann in litt.).

Accidental off Newfoundland; one landed and was photographed aboard a drill ship 157 miles off St. John's, from 24 April to 2 May 2005 (Pranty et al. 2008).

An individual captured on the Housatonic River near Lenox, Massachusetts, 2 December 1932, was considered later to be a domestic bird (Snyder 1957). The species is widely kept domestically and most if not all reports from mainland North America likely represent escapes from captivity. A report from Attu Island (1987, Amer. Birds 41:476) pertains to either *Anser fabalis* or *Anser serrirostris* (1988, Amer. Birds 42: 121; D.D. Gibson in litt.).

Literature to add for the draft account:

Boertmann, D. 1994. A annotated checklist to the birds of Greenland. Bioscience 38.

Pranty, B., J. L. Dunn, S. C. Heinl, A.W. Kratter, P.E. Lehman, M.W. Lockwood, B. Mactavish, and K. Zimmer. 2008. Annual Report of the ABA Checklist Committee, 2007-2008. Birding 40:32-38.

Snyder, D.E. 1957. The Gray Lag-Goose [*sic*] in Massachusetts: correction. Auk 74:394.

J. L. Dunn and R. T. Chesser
31 December 2008

Move White-chinned Petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*) from Appendix to main list

Background: This concerns the record of a moribund bird found two miles north of Rollover Pass, Galveston County, Texas, on 27 April 1986. This record was accepted by the TBRC, but not by the ABA CLC (DeBenedictis 1994) or the NACC (AOU 1998).

New Information: There isn't any, really. In view of the reconsideration of records of Light-mantled Albatross and Swallow-tailed Gull (both now accepted by ABA CLC), it was decided to take another look at this record. After two rounds the record passed 7-1 and the record is now published as accepted (Pranty et al. 2008). I was the sole dissenting vote (Lehman voted against it in the first round). I'm not sure what the reasons for the passage were, except perhaps a new Committee membership and greater tolerance to the acceptance of accidental pelagic birds. I know that Remsen had strong opinions on this when it was reviewed in the 1990's and argued that the proximity to the Houston Shipping Channel cast doubt on the origin of this record. The attitude was to await an additional record and that hasn't yet come. In fairness it should be noted that the location the bird was secured was some 20 miles or so from the Houston Shipping Channel.

Recommendation: I recommend (barely) that the species be moved from the Appendix to the main list. But really I'm on the fence still. I lean towards full acceptance largely on the basis of the ABA's acceptance and would prefer, where possible, to have the Committees agree. But it's a close call and I would still prefer an additional record. I guess when it comes to origin issues, I've grown more permissive over the last decade or so. If the Committee does vote for moving it to the main list, I'll draft a full account for the main list.

Literature cited above:

DeBenedictis, P.A. 1994. ABA Checklist report, 1992. *Birding* 26:92-102.

Pranty, B., J. L. Dunn, S.C. Heinl, A.W. Kratter, P.E. Lehman, M.W. Lockwood, B. Mactavish, and K.J. Zimmer. 2008. Annual Report of the ABA Checklist Committee, 2007-2008. *Birding* 40:32-38.

J. L. Dunn
31 December 2008

Add Brown Hawk-Owl (*Ninox scutulata*) to the main list

Background: From 27 August – 3 September 2007 a Brown Hawk-Owl remained around the crab pots at St. Paul Island, Pribilofs, Alaska. It was seen by many and extensively photographed. The record was accepted unanimously by the Alaska Checklist Committee (Gibson et al. 2008) and by the ABA CLC (Pranty et al. 2008). An article was published in *North American Birds* by Yerger and Mohlmann (2008). The article includes several color photos and the cover of *North American Birds* shows this bird perched in the crab pots.

Recommendation: I recommend that we add this species to the main list of the Check-list.

The record is non controversial. In fact there is a 2nd more recent record from the Aleutians, and this one involves a desiccated specimen at a hot air volcanic vent. I'll need to get the details on this one from Dan Gibson. In Asia this is a widespread polytypic species. Some subspecies are resident, the more northern ones are highly migratory. In particular the race *japonica*, which is the breeding subspecies in Korea and Japan, is completely migratory. It withdraws well south wintering in the Philippines, Borneo and Sulawesi, and has even been salvaged from Ashmore Reef off western Australia.

English name: There are two widespread names in usage, Brown Hawk-Owl, and Brown Boobook. Most authorities use the former name. In contradistinction to the English name "Northern Hawk Owl" (which is spelled with no hyphen because the genus *Surnia* is monotypic), a hyphen is recommended in the English name "Brown Hawk-Owl" to denote that the genus *Ninox* includes a *group* of species called hawk-owls.

Taxonomy: Yerger and Mohlmann (2008) mention that some authorities (no references given) consider the northern subspecies as a separate species on the basis of vocalizations, but authorities I've checked haven't adopted that treatment. I see that Rasmussen and Anderton (2005) have treated the dark Andaman subspecies, *obscura*, as a full species (Hume's Hawk-Owl).

Position on Check-list: Dickinson (2003) apparently following König, et al. 1999 places *Ninox* after *Athene* and *Aegolius*, but before *Asio*. We currently place *Aegolius* after *Asio* and *Pseudoscops*. Unless we reposition *Aegolius*, it will be hard to follow Dickinson (2003). Perhaps under the current arrangement we list it last in the owls after *Aegolius*.

Effect on Check-list: I suggest the following Supplement entry

P. 266 (tentatively) after the account for *Aegolius acadicus* insert:

Ninox scutulata (Raffles) Brown Hawk-Owl.

Strix scutulata Raffles, Trans. Linn. Soc. London, 13, pt. 2, 1822, p. 280, Sumatra.

Habitat – Forest and a variety of woodland habitats.

Distribution – Found (both resident and migratory populations) from the Indian subcontinent to Ussuriland, Russian Far East, Korea, and Japan and south through southeast Asia to Malaya, the Philippines, Great and Lesser Sundas, Sulawesi, and the Moluccas. Northern populations are migratory wintering south to the Philippines, Borneo and Sulawesi.

Accidental to western Australia (Ashmore Reef).

Accidental to St. Paul Island, Pribilof Islands, from 27 August – 3 September 2005, photos (Yerger and Mohlmann 2008) and a desiccated individual was salvaged from xxxxxx Island, Aleutian Islands on xxxxx 2008 ().

Notes. – An alternative English name is Brown Boobook.

Literature for the draft account:

Yerger, J.C. and J. D. Mohlmann. 2008. First North American record Brown Hawk Owl (*Ninox scutulata*) on Saint Paul Island, Alaska. North American Birds 62:4-8.

Additional literature cited above:

Dickinson, E.C. (Editor) 2003.

The Howard & Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World. 3rd Edition. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

Gibson, D.D., S.C. Heinl, and T.G. Tobish, 2003-2007. 2008. Report of the Alaska Checklist Committee, 2003-2007. Western Birds 39:189-198.

Konig, C. F. Weick, and J. Becking. 1999. Owls, a Guide to the Owls of the World. Yale University Press, New Haven and London.

Rasmussen, P.C. and J.C. Anderton. 2005. Birds of South Asia. The Ripley Guide. Vols. 1 and 2. Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions, Washington and Barcelona.

Jon L. Dunn
31 December 2008

Add Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*) to the main list

Background: Late in the afternoon of 30 September 2007, at Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, Paul Lehman located an Old World warbler which later proved to be Sedge Warbler. Despite its skulking behavior, Gary Rosenberg was able to get diagnostic photos. Rosenberg and Lehman (2008) published the record in *North American Birds* and one of the photos also appears in Pranty et al. 2008. The record was widely reviewed, including by international experts, and all other streak backed *Acrocephalus* were eliminated. The record was unanimously accepted by both the Alaska Checklist committee (Gibson et al. 2008) and the ABA CLC (Pranty et al. 2008).

Recommendation: I recommend that the species be added to the Check-list. I have heard no dissenting opinions regarding the identification. It occurs nowhere close to North America, but Lehman has found other Palearctic vagrants that are equally distant in terms of the normal range.

English name: I have only heard Sedge Warbler used for the English name.

Position on Check-list: Dickinson (2003) places Sedge Warbler after the Millerbird (*Acrocephalus familiaris*). I haven't checked other treatments.

Effect on Check-list: I suggest the following Supplement entry

p. 490, after the account for *Acrocephalus familiaris*, insert:

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus Linnaeus. Sedge Warbler.

Motacilla Schoenobaenus Linnaeus, 1758, Syst. Nat., ed. 10, p. 184 – Europe; restricted to southern Sweden by Hartert, 1909, Vogel Pal. Fauna, p. 566, referring to Linnaeus, 1746, Fauna Svecica, p. 84.

Habitat.- various shrubby vegetation, usually near fresh water.

Distribution. – *Breeds* in the British Isles and over most of continental Europe and Scandinavia and east to Siberia (to about Yenisey River), Russia, and south to Turkey, northwest Iran, Kazakhstan, and Tien Shan, northwestern China.

Winters in Africa south of the Sahara from Senegal east to Ethiopia and south to northern Namibia and east to Cape Province.

Casual or accidental to Iceland, Spitsbergen, Faeroes, and Madeira.

Accidental from western Alaska (one at Gambell, St. Lawrence Island on 30 September 2007; photos, Rosenberg and Lehman 2008)

Literature for the Supplement entry:

Rosenberg, G.H., and P.E. Lehman. 2008. First North American record of Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*) at Gambell, Alaska. *North American Birds* 62:178-181.

Other literature cited above:

Dickinson, E.C. (Editor). 2003. The Howard & Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World. 3rd Edition. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

Gibson, D.D., S.C. Heinl, and T.G. Tobish, 2003-2007. 2008. Report of the Alaska Checklist Committee. *Western birds* 39:189-201.

Pranty, B., J. L. Dunn, S.C. Heinl, A.W. Kratter, P.E. Lehman, M.W. Lockwood, B. Mactavish, and K. J. Zimmer. 2008 Annual Report of the ABA Checklist Committee, 2007-2008. *Birding* 40:32-38.

Jon L. Dunn
31 December 2008

Add Yellow-browed Bunting (*Emberiza chrysophrys*) to main list

One was found at Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska on 15 September 2007 by Paul Lehman and two others. The bird was photographed and Lehman (2008) published an article in North American Birds with diagnostic color photos detailing its occurrence.

Recommendation: I recommend that this species be added to the Check-list. This is an easy identification and therefore has been unanimously accepted by both the Alaska Checklist Committee (Gibson et al. 2008) and the ABA CLC (Pranty et al. 2008).

English name: I have only seen Yellow-browed Bunting used and see no reason to differ.

Position on Check-List: The BOU places Yellow-browed Bunting (accidental in the UK) after Pine Bunting (*Emberiza leucocephalos*) and ahead of Little (*E. pusilla*) and Rustic Buntings (*E. rustica*).

Effect on Check-list: I suggest the following Supplement entry:

p. 628, after the account for *Emberiza leucocephalos*

Emberiza chrysophrys Pallas. Yellow-browed Bunting.

Emberiza chrysophrys Pallas, 1776. Reise versch. Prov. Russia. Reichs, 3, p. 698 – Daurian Range, southern Chita, southeastern Siberia.

Habitat. – Breeds in lowland mixed forests with extensive pines and larches, often near water; also second growth. Winters in scrubby and weedy areas, often near forest edge.

Distribution. – *Breeds* in eastern Russia from the Lake Baikal region, Siberia, east to Stanovoi Range, Russian Far East. Occurs rarely farther east to the Magadan region.

Winters in central and southeast China.

Migrates through Mongolia, northeast China and Korea; rarely to Japan.

Accidental to the Ukraine, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

Accidental to western Alaska (Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, 15 September 2007; photos, Lehman 2008).

Literature to add to the Supplement entry:

Lehman, P. 2008. First North American record of Yellow-browed Bunting (*Emberiza chrysophrys*) at Gambell, Alaska. North American Birds 62:10-13.

Other literature cited above:

Gibson, D.D., S.C. Heinl, and T.G. Tobish. 2008. Report of the Alaska Checklist Committee, 2003-2007. *Western Birds* 39:189-201.

Pranty, B., J.L. Dunn, A.W. Kratter, P. E. Lehman, M. W. Lockwood, B. Mactavish, and K. J. Zimmer. 2008. Annual Report of the ABA Checklist Committee, 2007-2008. *Birding* 40:32-38.

Jon L. Dunn
31 December 2008

Expand Geographical Coverage of the AOU Check-list to 200 Nautical Miles Offshore

Current geographical coverage of the AOU Check-list of North American Birds extends “160 kilometers (100 miles) offshore from any coast in the Check-list area” unless an international boundary is crossed. This appears to be an arbitrarily defined or obsolete limit.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (LOS Convention, 1982) allows each coastal nation to establish exclusive sovereign rights over marine resources extending 200 nautical miles seaward from its coastline. In cases of overlap with other nations, each nation’s rights generally include those localities within the area of overlap that are geographically closest to that nation.

The American Birding Association adopted this geographical framework some years ago in specifying the ABA area for marine records: “Birds observed on or over an ocean are counted for the area having jurisdiction over the nearest land, if within 200 miles.” It is proposed that we follow suit for the AOU Check-list area, extending the acceptable limit of records of occurrence to 200 nautical miles offshore from land areas within the Check-list area. Records of occurrence within this limit would be included in the Check-list unless the locality of a record lies outside the specified limit of the AOU region (e.g., across an international boundary into a non-AOU area).

A “yes” vote, which would bring the AOU Check-list into agreement with the ABA Checklist and with international law governing marine resources, is recommended.

R. T. Chesser
31 December 2008