

AOS Classification Committee – North and Middle America
Proposal Set 2022-D
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01 02 Establish an English name for *Sturnella liliana*

02 05 Establish English names for *Anthracothorax aurulentus* and *A. dominicus* s.s.

Establish an English name for *Sturnella lilianae*

Note: Following passage of the proposal to separate *Sturnella lilianae* (including *auropectoralis*) from *S. magna* (Proposal 2022-C-2), we here provide further consideration of possible English names for the new species.

Background:

Sturnella magna lilianae Oberholser, 1930, was described based on specimens collected by W. W. Brown in or around the Huachuca Mountains of southeastern Arizona in 1929. These specimens, along with many others collected by Brown in 1929, were donated to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History by Lilian Hanna Baldwin. In his description of the taxon, Oberholser (1930) noted that it was most closely allied to *Sturnella magna hoopesi*, the taxon to which the meadowlarks of Arizona and New Mexico were previously assigned (e.g., Wetmore 1908, Swarth 1914), but described these differences: *lilianae* has longer wings, smaller feet, much paler and more grayish upperparts, darker bars on the wings, a narrower tail, and deeper golden yellow underparts (Oberholser 1930). The English name provided by Oberholser was Lilian Meadowlark (Oberholser 1930: 103), both this and the scientific name recognizing Baldwin's donation of the Brown collection. A few other English names have been used for this taxon (*vide* McAtee 1948: Reel 2, p. 712), specifically Liliana's Meadowlark [*sic*] (Hellmayr 1937) and Arizona Meadowlark (American Ornithologists' Union 1944), but Lilian's Meadowlark is most commonly used.

Sturnella magna auropectoralis Saunders, 1934, was described from Jalisco based on a specimen collected by G. F. Brenninger in 1902. In his description, Saunders (1934) suggested that this subspecies was most closely related to *lilianae*, noting the similarity of the white pattern in the tail, the deep golden orange underparts, and the small feet. Saunders also noted similarities with another high elevation Mexican subspecies, *alticola*, with which *auropectoralis* shares dark upperparts, a similar pattern and color of the uppertail coverts, and a similar pattern on the central rectrices. The habitat of *auropectoralis* was described as "mountain meadows, plateau and coastal grasslands of southwestern and central Mexico" (Saunders 1934). Before Saunders described the subspecies, meadowlarks in this part of Mexico were alternately assigned to the forms *mexicana*, *alticola*, and *ludoviciana* (now synonymized with nominate *magna*). The English name provided for *auropectoralis* was Jalisco Meadowlark (Saunders 1934); Hellmayr (1937) called it Jaliscan Meadowlark.

New Information:

Proposal 2022-C-2 listed four options for the English name: Chihuahuan Meadowlark, High Desert Meadowlark, Pallid Meadowlark, and White-tailed Meadowlark. It did not list Lilian's Meadowlark, although this name has been included in field guides (e.g., Howell and Webb 1995, Sibley 2014), was used as the name for the *lilianae* group in AOU (1998), and is the principal name in current use. Nor did it list Arizona Meadowlark, the only other name (besides variants of Lilian's) to have been used much, or Jalisco Meadowlark, which Saunders (1934) used for *auropectoralis*.

To our knowledge, no English name has been applied exclusively to the group now being separated based on Beam et al. (2021), that is, *lilianae* + *auropectoralis*, although the Clements/eBird list (Clements et al. 2021) uses Chihuahuan Meadowlark for nearly the same

group (*liliana* + *auropectoralis* + the questionable subspecies *saundersi*). Howell and Webb (1995), AOU (1998), and Sibley (2014) each used Lilian's Meadowlark to refer exclusively to subspecies *liliana*. *Sturnella liliana* as now constituted forms a novel grouping; to prevent confusion as to what taxonomic entity the English name references, a new English name specific to the taxon *liliana* + *auropectoralis* is preferable to one previously used for a different concept of *S. liliana* or for a different species of meadowlark. Below we consider two categories of names, geographical/habitat-based and plumage-based.

Geographical and habitat-based names.—Chihuahuan Meadowlark and High Desert Meadowlark, two names suggested in Proposal 2022-C-2, are not reflective of much of the new species' range. Another option would be Desert Meadowlark. Although Western Meadowlark also occurs in deserts, *liliana* is the real desert species; however, *auropectoralis* is not restricted to desert. The other pre-existing names, Arizona Meadowlark and Jalisco Meadowlark, are highly skewed in terms of geography, and Mexican Meadowlark, although reflective of much of the distribution, has previously been used for various races of both Eastern and Western meadowlarks. Thus, the geographical and habitat-based names do not generally apply to the entire species and seem to us to be less than ideal.

Plumage-based names.—White-tailed Meadowlark, a name suggested in the original proposal, applies to all species of *Sturnella* and would be confusing. Golden-breasted Meadowlark, based on the more deeply golden to golden-orange underparts and breast of both *liliana* and *auropectoralis*, a plumage feature noted by Wetmore (1908), Oberholser (1930) and Saunders (1934), is another possibility, but all *Sturnella* have yellow underparts, making this name also potentially confusing. Pallid Meadowlark is a possibility as well and is fitting for both *liliana* and *auropectoralis*. Although the upperparts of *auropectoralis* are darker than those of *liliana*, both *liliana* and *auropectoralis* have paler sides, pale and unstreaked cheeks, and more white in the tail than *S. magna* or *S. neglecta*. This name best encompasses the plumage differences that *S. liliana* shows from other species. Pale-sided Meadowlark would be appropriate for both *liliana* and *auropectoralis*, as this feature often distinguishes them from both Eastern and Western meadowlarks, and Pale-cheeked or White-cheeked would also be appropriate for both (thanks to David Donsker for the last two suggestions). We consider these names to be the best choices.

Recommendation:

Below are the options discussed for the English name of *Sturnella liliana*. As mentioned in the previous section, we think the plumage-based names are more representative of the entire species than the geographical or habitat-based names, but many birds do have English names that refer to only part of their range or to one of several habitats. List your top five preferences in order (1 = most preferred).

- a. Lilian's Meadowlark
- b. Arizona Meadowlark
- c. Jalisco Meadowlark
- d. Chihuahuan Meadowlark
- e. High Desert Meadowlark
- f. Desert Meadowlark
- g. White-tailed Meadowlark
- h. Golden-breasted Meadowlark
- i. Pallid Meadowlark
- j. Pale-sided Meadowlark

- k. Pale-cheeked Meadowlark
- l. White-cheeked Meadowlark
- m. Other (specify)

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Establish English names for *Anthracothorax aurulentus* and *A. dominicus s. s.*

Note: Following passage of the proposal to split *Anthracothorax dominicus* into two species (2022-C-4), we here provide further consideration of possible English names for these species.

Background:

Both *Anthracothorax dominicus* (Linnaeus, 1766) and *A. aurulentus* (Audebert & Vieillot, 1801) were described as species but without English names, as was typical of the time. Ridgway (1911), Wetmore (1916), and Cory (1918) considered the two taxa to be separate species with the English name Haitian Mango for *A. dominicus* (Ridgway 1911, Cory 1918) and Porto Rican Mango for *A. aurulentus* (Ridgway 1911, Wetmore 1916, Cory 1918). However, the reference to Haiti is not ideal because *A. dominicus* is distributed throughout the island of Hispaniola, including the Dominican Republic. The species were lumped by Peters (1945) and the combined species was long known as Antillean Mango, although Peters did not provide an English name. The Handbook of the Birds of the World (HBW; Schuchmann et al. 2014, del Hoyo et al. 2015) recently re-elevated these taxa to species level under the names Hispaniolan Mango for *A. dominicus* and Puerto Rican Mango for *A. aurulentus*. Proposal 2022-C-4 recommended using these English names.

New Information:

A problem with the proposed name Puerto Rican Mango is that another species of mango (Green Mango, *Anthracothorax viridis*) occurs on Puerto Rico, so confusion could arise between these two species. *Anthracothorax viridis* is endemic to the island of Puerto Rico, whereas the species proposed as Puerto Rican Mango (*A. aurulentus*) is not, occurring also on Vieques and Culebra (smaller islands east of Puerto Rico, politically part of Puerto Rico) and at least historically being resident on the Virgin Islands (Wetmore 1927, Bond 1960, Leopold 1963). Raffaele (1989) stated that *A. aurulentus* was becoming increasingly rare in the Virgin Islands and had been extirpated from many islands due to competition with Green-throated Carib *Eulampis holosericeus*, but other factors such as habitat alteration may also play a role; eBird data suggest that the species is now rarely encountered in the Virgin Islands. Although “Puerto Rican” is used in the English names of four other species whose distribution extends (or formerly extended) beyond the island of Puerto Rico as far as Vieques or Culebra (*Melanerpes portoricensis* and *Spindalis portoricensis*) or to the Virgin Islands (*Myiarchus antillarum* and *Gymnasio nudipes*), none of these has a congener endemic to (or even regularly occurring on) Puerto Rico.

Alternatively, we could argue that the name Puerto Rican Mango for *A. aurulentus* pairs well with Hispaniolan for *A. dominicus* to show the relationship between these two taxa. However, this argument is undercut somewhat because another Greater Antillean mango, Jamaican Mango *Anthracothorax mango*, could be construed as being closely related to *A. aurulentus* and *A. dominicus* based on its geographical name, when in fact *A. mango* is distantly related (McGuire et al. 2014). If a geographical name is preferred, a new name could be chosen for *A. aurulentus* while keeping Hispaniolan for *A. dominicus*. One option would be East Antillean Mango, highlighting its more easterly distribution within the Greater Antilles, but this could be misleading as some Lesser Antillean islands lie farther east. We are not aware of a name for the joint Puerto Rican + Virgin Islands archipelago that would be an ideal modifier in this situation.

Another alternative would be to formulate novel English names based on plumage. A pair of names that would show an association between these two taxa and that highlights their plumage differences would be Black-bellied Mango for *A. dominicus* and Black-breasted Mango for *A. aurulentus*, referencing the difference in degree of black plumage on the underparts, perhaps the most obvious feature that distinguishes males of the two species. However, these names, although nicely contrasting, may be confusing, especially considering other English names in this group (e.g., Black-throated Mango *A. nigricollis*).

Other plumage-based names could also be suggested for both species, or Hispaniolan Mango could be used for *A. dominicus* but a plumage-based name for *A. aurulentus*, as a contrast to Green Mango, thus providing plumage-based names for both Puerto Rican species. Although using the same type of name for both *A. aurulentus* and *A. dominicus* would highlight the evolutionary connection between these sister species, the same type of name need not be used for both, and it could be more useful to contrast the two species on Puerto Rico using differences in plumage.

A final consideration is that *A. aurulentus* is more common and widespread in Puerto Rico than is Green Mango *A. viridis*, which is mainly found in the mountainous central region of the island. Use of the name Puerto Rican Mango for *A. aurulentus* may thus be more appropriate for this species even if the name is not a perfect descriptor of its distribution. Puerto Rican Mango, allowing for variation in spelling, also has a long history of usage for this taxon.

Recommendation:

Below are the options discussed for the English name of *Anthracothorax aurulentus* and *A. dominicus*. We consider geographical and plumage-based names equally appropriate for these species, although each pair of names listed below has drawbacks. We have included the older, pre-Peters names for completeness, but do not advocate using these names or the names in option c. In voting, list your top two choices (1 = most preferred).

- a. Porto Rican Mango and Haitian Mango
- b. Puerto Rican Mango and Hispaniolan Mango
- c. East Antillean Mango and Hispaniolan Mango
- d. Black-breasted Mango and Black-bellied Mango
- e. Black-breasted Mango and Hispaniolan Mango
- f. other (specify)

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