

29th Report OF THE ABA Checklist Committee 2018

Indian Peafowl, Great Black Hawk, Red-backed Shrike, Thick-billed Warbler, River Warbler, European Robin, Pied Wheatear, Mistle Thrush, and Black-backed Oriole added to the Checklist

This is the 29th published report of the ABA Checklist Committee (hereafter, ABA-CLC), covering deliberations during 2018. The primary role of the ABA-CLC is to consider the addition of new species to (and, in rare cases, the removal of species from) the *ABA Checklist*. A secondary role includes reviewing and revising ABA Codes covering ease of observation in the ABA Area.

The ABA-CLC consists of eight voting members who serve staggered four-year terms; each year, two members typically cycle off and are replaced by new or reelected members. Members may be reelected after their first four-year term, but must take at least one year off after two consecutive terms. Since our previous report (Pyle et al. 2017), the term of Ron Pitaway expired at the end of 2017 following his second consecutive term (eight years) of service. This vacancy was filled by Kristie Nelson. The first four-year terms of Tom Johnson, Aaron Lang, and Peter Pyle will expire at the end of 2018; all three are eligible for, and were reelected to, second four-year terms. As such, the 2018 ABA-CLC membership will remain unchanged in 2019. The “two-on-two-off” membership rotation was disrupted in 2014–2015 due to a retirement. In order to resume this rotation, one of the three currently reelected members (to be decided later) will serve a three-year, rather than a four-year, term.

For each record under consideration, members vote to accept or not accept a species to the *ABA Checklist* based on evidence from one or more records in the ABA Area (Pranty et al. 2008). A tally of 8–0 for acceptance of a record automatically results in its addition to the *Checklist*, whereas a tally of 0–8 results in automatic non-acceptance. Intermediate vote tal-

lies result in automatic recirculation (if 6–2, 5–3, or 4–4) or recirculation at the request of the dissenting (if 7–1) or any accepting (if 3–5, 2–6, 1–7) member. Records can circulate for up to three rounds, at which point an 8–0 or 7–1 tally is needed for acceptance to the *Checklist*.

Addition of Hawaiian Species to the ABA Checklist



In 2017, a major undertaking of the ABA-CLC was to add species to the ABA Checklist reported from the Hawaiian Islands but not from the ABA Continental Area prior to November 2016, when ABA members voted to add Hawaii to the ABA Area (Pyle 2017). As of publication of the previous (28th) ABA-CLC report, 105 species recorded in Hawaii were added to the ABA Checklist (Pyle et al. 2017).

At that time, the ABA-CLC was still considering whether populations of four exotic species in Hawaii, the Japanese Quail (*Coturnix japonica*), Indian Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*), Red-masked Parakeet (*Psittacara erythrogenys*), and Lavender Waxbill (*Estrilda caerulescens*), had been adequately established according to ABA criteria (Pranty et al. 2008). After three circulations (ABA-CLC record 2017–9), the final (third-round) votes on these four species were 6–2, 7–1, 5–3, and 6–2, respectively. As an 8–0 or 7–1 vote is required for acceptance after three rounds, Indian Peafowl was accepted to the ABA Checklist (see below), whereas the other three species were not accepted.

Concerns regarding the addition of these three non-accepted species included declining (Japanese Quail) and/or low (Lavender Waxbill) populations and, for Red-masked Parakeet, a comparison of the population sizes in Hawaii with greater population sizes of other Psittacids in North America,

particularly in California, that have not yet been added to the ABA Checklist. Lack of data on populations of Japanese Quail and Lavender Waxbill occurring on private lands in Hawaii was also a concern. With additional information, all three of these species may be eligible for addition to the ABA Checklist in the future. Japanese Quail and Lavender Waxbill (but not Red-masked Parakeet) are currently accepted to the American Ornithologists' Union's Checklist (AOU 1998), including revisions by the American Ornithological Society (AOS) to its *Birds of North and Middle America Checklist* through 2018 (Chesser et al. 2018), as based on populations in Hawaii. See also Pyle (2017) for more information on the acceptance of established populations of exotic species in Hawaii.

CHANGES IN BRIEF

Species Added Based on Established Populations or New Distributional Records

- Indian Peafowl
(*Pavo cristatus*), Code 3
- Great Black Hawk
(*Buteogallus urubitinga*), Code 5
- Red-backed Shrike
(*Lanius collurio*), Code 5
- Thick-billed Warbler
(*Iduna aedon*), Code 5
- River Warbler
(*Locustella fluviatilis*), Code 5
- European Robin
(*Erithacus rubecula*), Code 5
- Pied Wheatear
(*Oenanthe pleschanka*), Code 5
- Mistle Thrush
(*Turdus viscivorus*), Code 5
- Black-backed Oriole
(*Icterus abeillei*), Code 5

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Fig. 1. After three rounds of deliberation, the ABA-CLC considered populations of **Indian Peafowl** in Hawaii to be established in the wild and added it to the *ABA Checklist*. Kailua-Kona, Hawaii Island, Hawaii; September 14, 2018. Photo by © Drew Weber.

Additional Records Reviewed by the ABA-CLC

In 2018, the ABA-CLC voted on records of 10 additional species from the ABA Continental Area, of which eight

were accepted and added to the *ABA Checklist* and two were not accepted on the grounds of questionable ability to reach the ABA Area naturally. Accounts for all 10 species are provided below. In addition, and according to

ABA Checklist convention, all taxonomic and nomenclatorial decisions of the AOS are automatically recognized by the ABA-CLC. This year, decisions by the North American Classification Committee of the AOS (Chesser et al. 2018) resulted in no additions or removals of species to the *ABA Checklist* on taxonomic grounds (due to splits or lumps); however, the common names of two species and scientific names of 21 species on the *ABA Checklist* have been revised, and linear sequences among and within several families were re-ordered, as discussed later in this report. The addition of nine species reported here has increased the *ABA Checklist* to 1,011 species.

New Species Accepted to the ABA Area

Indian Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*)—ABA-CLC Record #2018–09 (6–2, 5–3, 7–1; March 2018; see above). The Indian Peafowl (Fig. 1) was introduced to Hawaii as early as 1860, primarily as an aesthetic garden bird, and it has



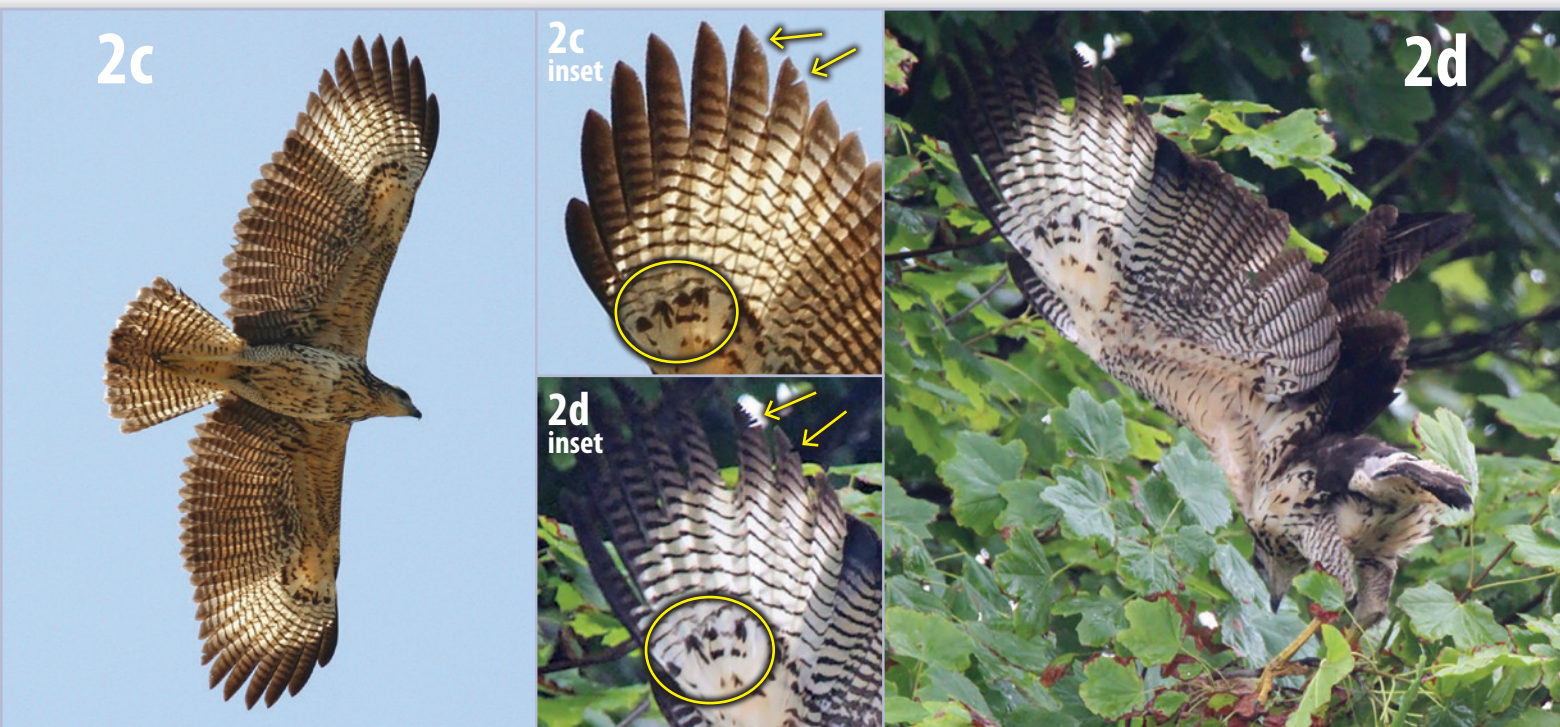
subsequently escaped to form feral populations on several islands (Pyle and Pyle 2017). The issue is whether wild populations are sustainable. With additional input from the Hawaii Bird Records Committee (which had accepted the species to the Hawaii state list), the ABA-CLC accepted Indian Peafowl to the *ABA Checklist* on the third round of voting. The ABA-CLC agreed for the most part that populations on Kauai, Maui, Hawaii, and possibly Niihau meet all eight of the ABA acceptance criteria detailed by Pranty et al. (2008) for established populations, several of which are found in remote areas or private lands not surveyed frequently by birders or ornithologists (Scott et al. 1986). Following the *AOS Checklist*, Indian Peafowl is placed between Ring-necked Pheasant and Ruffed Grouse on the *ABA Checklist*.

Great Black Hawk (*Buteogallus urubitinga*)—ABA-CLC Record #2018–06 (8–0; August 2018). The ABA-CLC accepted Great Black Hawk to the *ABA Checklist* on the basis of a juvenile pho-

tographed on South Padre Island, Texas, April 24, 2018 (Fig. 2a) and acceptance by the Texas Bird Records Committee. Neither the Texas Bird Records Committee nor the ABA-CLC had any issues with identification or provenance for this individual. The species is known to wander from its closest breeding area, in southern Tamaulipas, Mexico, some 200 miles south of South Padre Island. Following acceptance, a first-year Great Black Hawk photo-

graphed in Biddeford, Maine, August 7–9, 2018 (Fig. 2b), and then again on October 29, 2018, was confirmed as the same bird by plumage similarities and notches to primary tips (Figs. 2c, 2d). That the bird was relocated north of Texas strengthened some members' view that this was a wild vagrant. One or more Great Black Hawks observed on Virginia Key, Florida, in 1972–2015 have been identified as pertaining to the nominate South American subspe-

Fig. 2. Expected to occur in the ABA Area, this **Great Black Hawk** in Texas (Fig. 2a), near the Mexican border, provided the first record and the basis for addition to the *ABA Checklist*; here it is being mobbed by Great-tailed Grackles. Remarkably, the same Great Black Hawk was spotted in Maine 3½ months later, heavily molting (Fig. 2b). Deciding whether a record involves the “same bird” as another record is an important function of records committees. Concluding that a single bird had moved around is often better and more conservative than assuming that two or more individuals of a rare species were involved. Recently, detailed analyses of feather patterns and condition have been used to confirm that bird records, sometimes hundreds of miles apart, in fact pertain to a single bird (Pyle and Sullivan 2010, Nelson and Pyle 2013). Note in the inset panels that the underwing primary coverts show identical bar patterns (yellow circles) and that similar notches are present on p4 and p5 (yellow arrows), confirming that the Texas (Fig. 2c) and Maine (Fig. 2d) Great Black Hawks were the same individual. How many states and provinces did this bird pass through between these two observations? *Fig. 2a:* South Padre Island, Texas; April 24, 2018. Photo by © Javier Gonzales. *Fig. 2b:* Biddeford, Maine; August 9, 2018. Photo by © Knut Hansen. *Fig. 2c:* South Padre Island, Texas; April 24, 2018. Photo by © Alex Lamoreaux. *Fig. 2d:* Biddeford, Maine; August 9, 2018. Photo by © Francis Morello.



cies rather than that found in Central America and Mexico (Diaz 2009), and these records have not been accepted by the Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee or previously considered by the ABA-CLC. Following the AOS *Check-list*, Great Black Hawk is placed between Common Black Hawk and Roadside Hawk on the ABA Checklist.

Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*)—ABA-CLC Record #2018-07 (8-0; August 2018). An individual of the Red-backed/Brown/Isabelline/Turkestan shrike complex was present at Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, October 3–22, 2017 (Fig. 3). It was a first-fall bird in mostly juvenile plumage with a few replaced formative feathers. The plumage and wing and tail morphology were consistent with those of a juvenile Red-backed Shrike, and combined to rule out the three contending species. The primary question for this record was whether genetic influence from one of three other shrike species could be ruled out. Hybridization is frequent in this complex in central Eurasia, and accounts for the only other record involving Red-backed Shrike in the ABA Area, of a



Fig. 3. The plumage and wing morphology of this bird are consistent with those of a juvenile **Red-backed Shrike**, and combine to suggest a pure individual of this species, not influenced by genetic introgression with Brown or Turkestan shrikes. *Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska; October 10, 2017. Photo by © Sue Bryer.*

hybrid Red-backed x Turkestan shrike from California (Pyle et al. 2015).

In the absence of any suggestions of hybridism for the Gambell bird, the ABA-CLC was content to add Red-backed Shrike to the ABA Checklist, following acceptance by the Alaska Checklist Committee. One ABA-CLC member pointed out that not accepting this record due to possible genetic impurity could call into question all records of Brown Shrikes in the ABA Area. Details of the Alaska bird are presented by Lehman et al. (2018). Following Clements et al. (2018), Red-backed Shrike precedes Brown Shrike

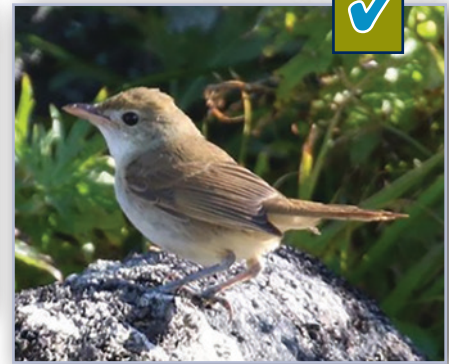


Fig. 4. The plain brown plumage, pale lores, long and graduated tail, and thick bill help to confirm this bird as the first ABA Area record of the **Thick-billed Warbler**. *Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska; October 9, 2017. Photo by © Greg Scyphers.*

(within family Laniidae) in the ABA Checklist sequence.

Thick-billed Warbler (*Iduna aedon*)—ABA-CLC Record #2018-02 (8-0; May 2018). Following unanimous acceptance by the Alaska Checklist Committee, the ABA-CLC also voted unanimously to add Thick-billed Warbler to the ABA Checklist based on the record of a formative-plumage bird present at Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, September 8–13, 2017 (Fig. 4). There were no identification issues with this well-documented record of a distinctive, migratory Asian species (Rosenberg et al. 2018). Following Clements et al. (2018), Thick-billed Warbler precedes Millerbird (within family Acrocephalidae) in the sequence of the ABA Checklist.

River Warbler (*Locustella fluviatilis*)—ABA-CLC Record #2018-03 (8-0; May 2018). Lehman (2018) detailed the observation of a formative-plumage River Warbler at Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, October 7, 2017 (Fig. 5); this record was unanimously accepted by both the Alaska Checklist Committee and the ABA-CLC. The River Warbler, the Red-backed Shrike



Fig. 5. This **River Warbler** was one of three new species added to the ABA Checklist based on records at Gambell, Alaska, in fall 2017. It is also one of three species that may have reached Alaska by crossing over polar regions. *Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska; October 7, 2017. Photo by © Sue Bryer.*

(above), and to some extent the Pied Wheatear (below) have similar breeding and wintering ranges to those of several other central Eurasian species that have reached western Alaska, presumably through 180° mis-orientation over polar regions (Lehman 2018, Lehman et al. 2018; see also Howell et al. 2014, Pyle et al. 2015). We follow most ornithologists in using the common name “River Warbler,” as opposed to “Eurasian River Warbler” used by Clements et al. (2018), although we follow Clements in placing River Warbler between Middendorff’s Grasshopper-Warbler and Lanceolated Warbler on the *ABA Checklist*.

European Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)—ABA-CLC Record #2017–12 (6–2, 8–0; March 2018). The record of a formative-plumage European Robin, present in North Wales, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, February 21–March 7, 2015 (Fig. 6), was unanimously accepted by the ABA-CLC on the second round of voting. This followed acceptance by the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee, also on

their second round of voting. The abundance and long-distance migratory habits of this European species, a number of records from Iceland the previous fall (tinyurl.com/EuRo-ABA-CLC), and the lack of evidence for much, if any, human-assisted importation of European Robins to North America helped convince the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee and ABA-CLC of acceptance. A first-round concern was the latitude of wintering in Pennsylvania, which is slightly north of regular wintering ranges in Spain and North Africa. Following Clements et al. (2018), we place European Robin between White-rumped Shama and Rufous-tailed Robin on the *ABA Checklist*.

Pied Wheatear (*Oenanthe pleschanka*)—ABA-CLC Record #2018–01 (7–1; June 2018). The ABA-CLC accepted the record of a Pied Wheatear from Cape Nome, Alaska, July 4–August 4, 2018 (Fig. 7), by a 7–1 vote. The dissenting member believed the identification of Pied Wheatear was likely correct, but was concerned that not enough information was presented to the Alaska Checklist Committee (which accepted the record unanimously) to eliminate other dark or contending *Oenanthe* wheatears such as Variable (*O. picata*), Mourning (*O. lugens*), Black-eared (*O. hispanica*), Finch’s (*O. finschii*), and Cyprus (*O. cyprica*). The plumage suggested a first-summer

(one-year-old) male that had not replaced many head feathers during the prealternate molt, obscuring diagnostic head-plumage differences among these species. Because images of Variable Wheatear at the Oriental Bird Club image database (for example, tinyurl.com/OBC-Oenanthe) otherwise matched the Alaska bird in features such as rump and tail patterns, photographs were sent to Eurasian experts P.



Fig. 7. Several species of dark or blackish wheatears occur in central Eurasia, but the combination of long primary projection, details of rump and tail patterns, and likelihood of occurrence led the ABA-CLC to accept the **Pied Wheatear** to the *ABA Checklist* based on this record from Alaska. *Nome, Alaska; July 8, 2017. Photo by © James Levison.*



Fig. 6. The **European Robin** was added to the *ABA Checklist* on the basis of this bird, present in Pennsylvania during February–March 2015; this followed a number of European Robin records from Iceland during the fall of 2014. *North Wales, Bucks County, Pennsylvania; February 21, 2015. Photo by © Pamela Newitt.*



Fig. 8. This confiding **Mistle Thrush**, wintering in New Brunswick, was observed by hundreds of ABA members, thanks to the hospitality of the original finders and homeowners of the nearby property, Peter and Deana Gadd. *Miramichi, New Brunswick; December 20, 2017. Photo by © David W. Nelson.*

Alström, L. Svensson, and H. Shirihai. All agreed that the Alaska bird was acceptable as a worn adult or first-spring female Pied Wheatear. Also cited in support of the record were the Alaska bird's long primary projection and Alström's remark that Pied is "a thousand times more likely in Alaska than Variable Wheatear." Based on these opinions, the dissenting ABA-CLC member chose not to request the record go to a second round. Following Clements et al. (2018), Pied Wheatear is placed after Northern Wheatear (within Family Muscicapidae) in the sequence of the *ABA Checklist*.

Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)—ABA-CLC Record #2018–05 (8–0; July 2018). A well-documented record of a formative-plumage Mistle Thrush, present in Miramichi, New Brunswick, December 9, 2017 to March 21, 2018 (Fig. 8), was accepted unanimously by both the New Brunswick Bird Records Committee and the ABA-CLC. There were no issues concerning identification or provenance of this distinctive and migratory European species. Clements et al. (2018) and the AOS differ in their linear sequences for *Turdus* thrushes, preventing an unequivocal placement of Mistle Thrush on the *ABA Checklist*; we have thus chosen for now to place it between Redwing and Song Thrush.

Black-backed Oriole (*Icterus abeilei*)—ABA-CLC Record #2018–04 (6–2, 7–1; August 2018). An adult male Black-backed Oriole was present at a feeder in Reading, Pennsylvania, January 26–April 10, 2017 (Slater 2018); the same individual was photographed in Sutton, Massachusetts, May 7–8, 2017 (Figs. 9a, 9b); and what was likely the same bird was reported again from Stamford, Connecticut, May 14, 2017. Documentation and comments

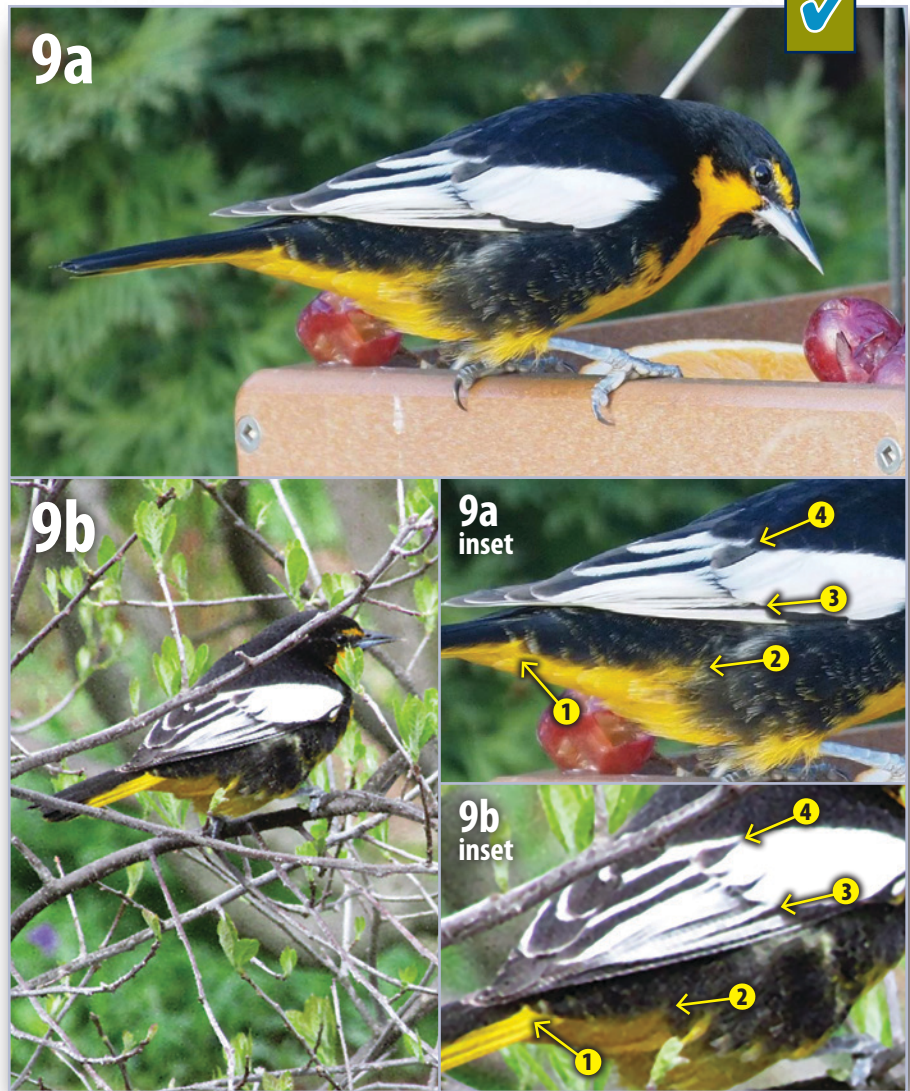


Fig. 9. An adult male **Black-backed Oriole** observed by many in Pennsylvania (Fig. 9a) was later confirmed to be the same as one photographed in Massachusetts (Fig. 9b); four of many corresponding plumage marks are indicated by yellow arrows. For both the Great Black Hawk (Fig. 2) and this Black-backed Oriole, documented movements helped sway ABA-CLC members that these wandering individuals were naturally occurring vagrants (see also Fig. 10). *Fig. 9a:* Reading, Pennsylvania; February 5, 2017. Photo by © Susan Schmoyer. *Fig. 9b:* Sutton, Massachusetts; May 7, 2018. Photo by © Margaret Bowden.

on this bird by the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee and the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, along with those accumulated by the California Bird Records Committee concerning another adult male Black-backed Oriole observed near San Diego, California, in 2000–2002, were circulated to the ABA-CLC. Although

neither the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee nor the California Bird Records Committee accepted their respective records, the ABA-CLC followed the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee in accepting the species to the *ABA Checklist*, in both cases after a second round of voting.

Dissenting comments on the record

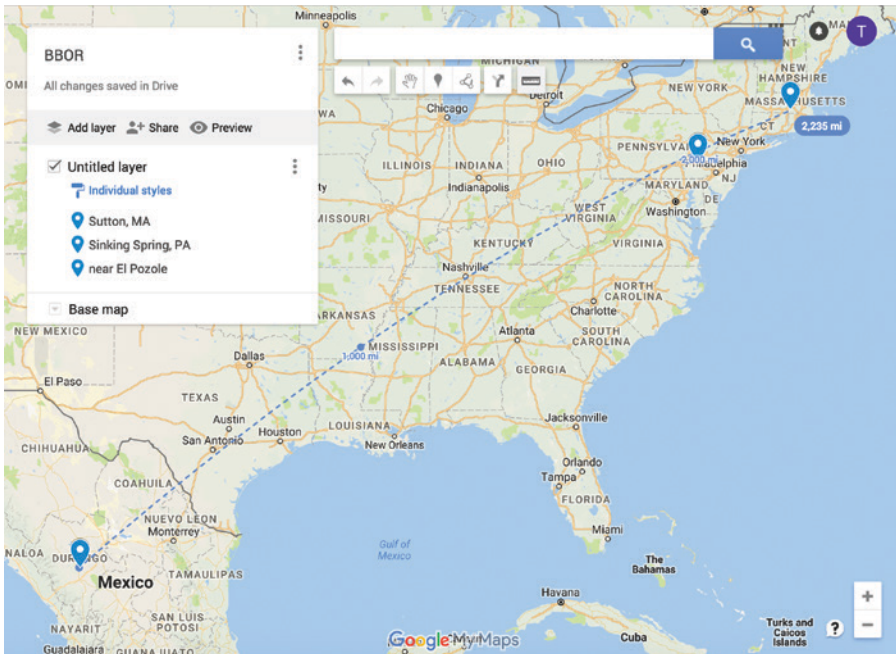


Fig. 10. Depicted here are proposed flight paths of a **Black-backed Oriole** from its normal range in Durango to Reading, Pennsylvania, and Sutton, Massachusetts. That the oriole may have maintained a similar heading during two legs of its journey could indicate natural vagrancy. The ABA-CLC routinely relies on insights and analyses such as presented here. *Map by Tom Johnson.*

included unlikelihood of a mostly resident central Mexican species getting as far as New England, and the proclivity of the bird to visit feeders, a possible sign of previous captivity. However, several ABA-CLC members pointed to records of other supposedly resident Mexican orioles and other land birds far north of expected ranges, including Streak-backed Oriole in Wisconsin, Amethyst-throated Hummingbird in Québec, and Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush in South Dakota. A map produced by ABA-CLC member Tom Johnson, showing that a track between the Pennsylvania and Massachusetts locations was in direct alignment with a potential track from Durango, Mexico (the closest breeding area), and Pennsylvania (Fig. 10), helped persuade one dissenting member to accept the record on the second round. Although adult males are generally less expected than first-year birds to turn up as vagrants, comments accompany-

ing both the California and Pennsylvania records indicate that first-year Black-backed Orioles are very similar to first year Bullock's and Baltimore orioles, and would be difficult to detect among these and hybrids between the species in the ABA Area. Following the AOS, Black-backed Oriole is placed between Baltimore and Scott's orioles on the *ABA Checklist*.

Species Not Accepted to the ABA Area

White-cheeked Starling (*Euplectes franciscanus*)—ABA-CLC Record #2018-08 (3-5; August 2018). At the request of an ABA-CLC member, a record of this species from Tofino, British Columbia, April 27-29, 2016 (Fig. 11), was reviewed by the ABA-CLC, but it was not accepted after the first round of voting. This record was also not accepted by the British Columbia Bird Records Committee, as detailed by

Hentze (2017). Most ABA-CLC members were gratified to learn more about this species' vagrancy potential to the ABA Area and thought natural occurrence was possible. However, one member noticed in photographs that the bird appeared to be missing a right hind toe, a sign of captivity. A previous record from Homer Spit, Alaska, June 1-6, 1998, furthermore, was thought to have come in on a wood-chip ship from Japan and was not reviewed by the Alaska Checklist Committee. This record generated some debate on the thorny issue of ship-assisted vagrants; see tinyurl.com/ABA-ship-assist for a recap of the ABA Recording Standards and Ethics Committee's positions on the matter. For most members, the likelihood of the White-cheeked Starling's being restrained and/or fed dur-



Fig. 11. This **White-cheeked Starling** was found on a golf course along the western coast of Vancouver Island. A lack of other substantiated records in North America and the possibility that it was missing a hind toe (a sign of captivity) resulted in both the British Columbia Bird Records Committee and the ABA-CLC not accepting this record due to the possibility that it came to North America restrained on a ship. *Tofino, British Columbia; April 27, 2016. Photo by © Adrian Dorst.*



Fig. 12. The white cheeks and scarlet plumage of this adult **Red Warbler** indicate it to be of the central Mexican subspecies, rather than the northwestern Mexican subspecies found closer to the ABA Area. This, the lack of extralimital records of this species or subspecies, and the bird's age caused the Arizona Bird Committee and the ABA-CLC to withhold acceptance on the possibility of cage transport to North America. *Rose Canyon Campground, Pima County, Arizona; April 9, 2016. Photo by © Dave Stejskal.*

ing passage prevented them from accepting the records as pertaining to a natural vagrant.

Red Warbler (*Cardellina rubra*)—ABA-CLC Record #2018–09 (2–6; September 2018). An adult Red Warbler was photographed near Rose Canyon Lake, Pima County, Arizona, April 9, 2018 (Fig. 12). The white auriculars and scarlet (rather than ruby) plumage of this individual indicated that it was of the central Mexican subspecies *rubra*, which occurs primarily in Jalisco through Veracruz; *rubra* is found south of the perhaps more-expected northwestern subspecies *melanauris*, which ranges north to southern Chihuahua (Howell and Webb 1995). The lack of any extralimital records of this species, the bird's age as an adult, the existence of a specimen procured from captivity (Museum of Vertebrate Zoology 45586, a “caged bird, probably from Mexico”), and the occurrence of sub-

species *rubra* in the populated Mexico City region resulted in the unanimous decision of the Arizona Bird Committee that the warbler was not a wild vagrant. Nevertheless, an ABA-CLC member requested that the record be reviewed, given the acceptance of other apparently resident Mexican species well out of range—for example, Black-backed Oriole, above. Most ABA-CLC members agreed with the comments of the Arizona Bird Committee and would prefer to see more extralimital records in Mexico before adding Red Warbler to the *ABA Checklist*.

AOS Taxonomic and Nomenclatorial Changes Affecting the *ABA Checklist*

The 59th supplement to the *AOS Checklist of North and Middle American Birds* (Chesser et al. 2018) presents changes to the naming and placement of species on the *ABA Checklist*. These

changes are as follows:

- The scientific name for Gray Nightjar is changed to *Caprimulgus jokata* (from *C. indicus*).
- The scientific name for Tahiti Petrel is changed to *Pseudobulweria rostrata* (from *Pterodroma rostrata*).
- The genus for seven species of woodpeckers (Ladder-backed, Nuttall's, Downy, Hairy, Arizona, Red-cockaded, and White-headed) is changed to *Dryobates* (from *Picoides*).
- The common name for Gray Jay is changed to Canada Jay (*Perisoreus canadensis*).
- The scientific name for Japanese Bush-Warbler is changed to *Horornis diphone* (from *Cettia diphone*).
- The genus for Siberian Blue Robin and Rufous-tailed Robin is changed to *Larvivora*, that of Bluethroat is changed to *Cyanecula*, and that of Siberian Rubythroat is changed to *Calliope*, all from *Luscinia*.
- The genus for Baird's and Henslow's sparrows is changed to *Centronyx*, and that of LeConte's, Seaside, Nelson's, and Saltmarsh sparrows to *Ammospiza*, all from *Ammodramus*. The species names of Seaside and Saltmarsh sparrows also change gender, to *maritima* and *caudacuta*, respectively.
- White-collared Seedeater (*Sporophila torqueola*) is changed to Morelet's Seedeater (*S. moreletii*).
- The species sequences within the Hydrobatidae (storm-petrels), Accipitridae (hawks), Picidae (woodpeckers), Tityridae (becards and tityras), Tyrannidae (New World flycatchers), Muscicapidae (Old World flycatchers), and Passerellidae (New World sparrows) are rearranged following Chesser et al. (2018).

For additional details on AOS taxonomic and nomenclatorial changes as they affect the *ABA Checklist*, see Michael L. P. Retter's “AOS *Check-list* Redux,” beginning on p. 68 of this issue.

ABA Code Updates

The ABA has developed a coding system to reflect the abundance of a species in the ABA Area and the ease of detecting it (see Pranty et al. 2008 and tinyurl.com/ABA-codes). The codes range from 1 (most common and easily seen) to 6 (presumed extinct). ABA codes are used by eBird in its algorithms for rare bird notifications, relied on by many birders.

Changes to ABA codes recently approved by the ABA-CLC are as follows: Steller's Eider (ABA Code 3 to ABA Code 2), Spectacled Eider (3 to 2), Himalayan Snowcock (3 to 2), Zenaïda Dove (5 to 4), Common Swift (5 to 4), Bristle-thighed Curlew (3 to 2), Slender-billed Curlew (6 to 5), Eurasian Curlew (4 to 5), Common Redshank (5 to 4), Marsh Sandpiper (5 to 4), Little Gull (3 to 2), Black-browed Albatross (5 to 4), Barolo Shearwater (5 to 4), Thick-billed Parrot (6 to 5), Nutting's Flycatcher (5 to 4), Variegated Flycatcher (5 to 4), Brown-chested Martin (5 to 4), Willow Warbler (5 to 4), Wood Warbler (5 to 4), Lanceolated Warbler (5 to 4), Clay-colored Thrush (3 to 2), Yellow-breasted Bunting (5 to 4), Pallas's Bunting (5 to 4), Black-vented Oriole (5 to 4), and Colima Warbler (3 to 2).

Many of the revised codes, including those changed from 5 (five or fewer records in the ABA Area) to 4 (casual), are based on the number of verified eBird records. A few code inconsistencies remain between the ABA and eBird lists, for practical reasons related to eBird rare bird alerts in the ABA Continental Area (including the 13 code updates for Hawaiian species listed in the 2017 ABA-CLC report), but the above changes result in the two lists largely being aligned. The code changes of 6 to 5 for two species were to ensure that all Code 6 species in the ABA Area are presumed extinct.

Four-letter Alpha Codes

In 2017, at the request of ABA members, four-letter alpha codes were added to the *ABA Checklist*. These alpha codes are abbreviations of avian common names used by ornithologists and birders as shorthand, allowing quicker data recording and entry than full species names. Four-letter alpha codes are also now an option for eBird data entry, and the codes employed by both the *ABA Checklist* and eBird follow those maintained by the Institute for Bird Populations, which are updated each year following publication of the *AOS Checklist* supplement. Codes for the six species newly added to the *ABA Checklist* not yet on the *AOS Checklist* are as follows: Red-backed Shrike, RBSH; Thick-billed Warbler, TBWA; River Warbler, RIWA; European Robin, EURO; Pied Wheatear, PIWH; and Mistle Thrush, MITH. Changes to codes on the *ABA Checklist* affected by name changes or species additions by the AOS (Chesser et al. 2018) are as follows: Cory's Shearwater, from COSH to CORS; Short-tailed Shearwater, from SRTS to STTS; Canada (formerly Gray) Jay, from GRJA to CAJA; Green Jay, from GREJ to GRJA; and Morelet's (formerly White-collared) Seedeater, from WCSE to MOSE. See tinyurl.com/IBP-codes for details.

Anticipated/Possible Future Votes and Other Decisions

The ABA-CLC considered a record of **House Swift** (*Apus nipalensis*) found dead in the Global Container Terminal at Deltaport, Ladner, British Columbia, on May 18, 2012 (Szabo et al. 2017). However, following non-acceptance by the British Columbia Bird Records Committee (Hentze 2018), no ABA-CLC member requested review. This species shows little evidence for long-distance migration or vagrancy, and the

British Columbia Bird Records Committee considered it plausible that the swift died on one of the many trans-Pacific container ships that come from Asia and dock at Deltaport—and that it did so before it had entered North American waters.

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White-tailed Hawk, Buteo swainsonii 1
 Zone-tailed Hawk, Buteo swainsonii 1
 Red-tailed Hawk, Buteo swainsonii 1
 Ferruginous Hawk, Buteo swainsonii 1
 Rough-legged Hawk, Buteo swainsonii 1