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## News, Notes, Comments

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### Updates to Four-letter and Six-letter Alpha Codes based on Revisions by the American Ornithologists' Union in 2005-2006

Pyle and DeSante (2003) derived alpha codes based on the English and scientific names of 2,030 species recorded in the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) 1998 check-list and supplements through 2002. They also derived codes for 91 non-species forms including subspecies, unidentified taxa, intergrades, morphs, and hybrids. Four-letter codes, based on the English name, largely coincided with those utilized by the Bird Banding Laboratory for use on banding schedules. Six-letter codes, based on scientific names of these taxa, are favored by ornithologists in Latin America. These lists can be downloaded from the Institute for Bird Population's web site at <http://www.birdpop.org/AlphaCodes.htm>

Pyle and DeSante (2005) updated the lists according to taxonomic and other changes made by the AOU in supplements to their check-list, published in 2003 and 2004, and added five more non-species forms to bring the totals to 2,038 species and 96 non-species forms. Since these lists were derived, the AOU has revised their taxonomy and nomenclature in two additional supplements (Banks et al. 2005, 2006). Here we list all changes to alpha-code lists (English name, four-letter code, scientific name, and six-letter code) based on these revisions by the AOU. The revisions bring the list totals to 2,041 species and 96 non-species forms. We publish this list of corrections for those who have already incorporated the old list into their databases and would find it easier to make these corrections than to download the revised list. The revised list (through 2006), incorporating the following changes, other changes that did not affect alpha codes (e.g., to the gender of scientific names), and the revised taxonomic order recommended by the AOU (the most sweeping changes of which are among the Tringine sandpipers, terns, and cuckoos), is now available at the above web site.

We thank Bob Wilkerson for assistance in maintaining the lists on the web site. This is contribution #290 of The Institute for Bird Populations.

#### LITERATURE CITED

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**Appendix 1.** Changes to the lists of four-letter and six-letter codes for birds recorded in the American Ornithologists' Union check-list area.

Insert Cape Verde Shearwater (*Calonectris edwardsii*) after Cory's Shearwater (*C. diomedea*). Four-letter Code = CVSH, Six-letter Code = CALEDW.

Insert Black-bellied Storm-Petrel (*Fregetta tropica*) after European Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*). Four-letter Code = BBSP, Six-letter Code = FRETRO.

Insert Western Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) after Northern Harrier (*C. cyaneus*). Four-letter code = WMHA, Six-letter Code = CIRAER.

Change *Asturina nitida* (Gray Hawk) to *Buteo nitida*. Change Six-letter Code to BUTNIT.

Change Blue Grouse to Dusky Grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*). Change Four-letter Code to DUGR.

Insert Sooty Grouse, *Dendragapus fuliginosus*, after Dusky Grouse. Four-letter Code = SOGR, Six-letter Code = DEGFUL.

Change *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus* (Willet) to *Tringa semipalmata*. Change Six-letter Code to TRISEM.

Change *Heteroscelus incanus* (Wandering Tattler) to *Tringa incana*. Change Six-letter Code to TRIINC.

Change *Heteroscelus brevipes* (Gray-tailed Tattler) to *Tringa brevipes*. Change Six-letter Code to TRIBRE.

Change *Sterna nilotica* (Gull-billed Tern) to *Gelocheilidon nilotica*. Change Six-letter Code to GELNIL.

Change *Sterna caspia* (Caspian Tern) to *Hydroprogne caspia*. Change Six-letter Code to HYDCAS.

Change *Sterna maxima* (Royal Tern) to *Thalasseus maximus*. Change Six-letter Code to THAMAX.

Change *Sterna elegans* (Elegant Tern) to *Thalasseus elegans*. Change Six-letter Code to THAELE.

Change *Sterna bergii* (Great Crested Tern) to *Thalasseus bergii*. Change Six-letter Code to THABER.

Change *Sterna sandvicensis* (Sandwich Tern) to *Thalasseus sandvicensis*. Change Six-letter Code to THASAN.

Change *Sterna aleutica* (Aleutian Tern) to *Onychoprion aleuticus*. Change Six-letter Code to ONYALE.

Change *Sterna lunata* (Gray-backed Tern) to *Onychoprion lunatus*. Change Six-letter Code to ONYLUN.

Change *Sterna anaethetus* (Bridled Tern) to *Onychoprion anaethetus*. Change Six-letter Code to ONYANA.

Change *Sterna fuscata* (Sooty Tern) to *Onychoprion fuscatus*. Change Six-letter Code to ONYFUS.

Change Ringed Turtle-Dove (*Streptopelia risoria*) to African Collared-Dove (*S. roseogrisea*). Change Four-letter Code to AFCD, Six-letter Code to STRROS.

Change Gray-fronted Dove (*Leptoptila rufaxilla*) to Gray-headed Dove (*L. plumbeiceps*). Change Four-letter Code to GHDO, Six-letter Code to LEPLU.

Change *Cuculus saturatus* (Oriental Cuckoo) to *C. optatus*. Change Six-letter Code to CUCOPT.

Change *Piaya minuta* (Little Cuckoo) to *Coccyua minuta*. Change Six-letter Code to COCMIT.

Mangrove Cuckoo (*Coccyzus minor*). Change Six-letter Code to COCMIR.



Change *Hyetornis pluvialis* (Chestnut-billed Cuckoo) to *Coccyzus pluvialis*. Change Six-letter Code to COCPLU.

Change *Hyetornis ruficularis* (Bay-breasted Cuckoo) to *Coccyzus ruficularis*. Change Six-letter Code to COCRUF.

Change *Saurothera vetula* (Jamaican Lizard-Cuckoo) to *Coccyzus vetula*. Change Six-letter Code to COCVET.

Change *Saurothera vieilloti* (Puerto Rican Lizard-Cuckoo) to *Coccyzus vieilloti*. Change Six-letter Code to COCVIE.

Change *Saurothera merlini* (Great Lizard-Cuckoo) to *Coccyzus merlini*. Change Six-letter Code to COCMER.

Change *Saurothera longirostis* (Hispanolian Lizard-Cuckoo) to *Coccyzus longirostis*. Change Six-letter Code to COCLON.

Change Blue-headed Sapphire (*Hylocharis grayi*) to Humboldt's Sapphire (*H. humboldtii*). Change four-letter code to HUSA, Six-letter Code to HYLHUM.

Plain-brown Woodcreeper (*Dendrocincla fuliginosa*). Change Six-letter Code to DECFUL.

Change *Thryomanes sissonii* (Socorro Wren) to *Troglodytes sissonii*. Change Six-letter Code to TROSIS.

Change Red-breasted Flycatcher (*Ficedula parva*) to Taiga Flycatcher (*F. albicilla*). Change Four-letter Code to TAFL, Six-letter Code to FICALB.

Remove Crested Myna (*Acridotheres cristatellus*).

Remove Black-backed Wagtail (*Motacilla lugens*).

Black-headed Saltator (*Saltator atriceps*). Change Four-letter Code to BHSA.

Insert Barbados Bullfinch (*Loxigilla barbadensis*) after Lesser Antillean Bullfinch (*L. noctis*). Four-letter Code = BABU, Six-letter Code = LOXBAR.

## SIGNIFICANT ENCOUNTERS

The Editors are pleased to announce that Jeff Davis has volunteered to edit *NABB's* Significant Encounters column. Submissions may be sent to him as noted below.

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**What is a significant encounter?** John Dunning, our retiring SE editor, suggests the following criteria:

1. Birds 5+ years old,
2. birds reported from sites >50 mi from their banding location,
3. species rarely recovered or banded,
4. individuals with an unusual history.

Of course, each record submitted to the column is considered on a case-by-case basis. A Rufous Hummingbird banded on its breeding grounds one year and returning the next would not be significant. A Rufous Hummingbird banded in Connecticut during the winter and returning the next year would be VERY significant. So each record should be considered individually.

**Change the last sentence of the Red-tailed Hawk encounter listed in *NABB* 31:133 to read: "At least 27 years 6 months old. A longevity record in the BBL at the time of capture."**