

AOU Classification Committee – North and Middle America

Proposal Set 2014-C

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Add Waved Albatross *Phoebastria irrorata* to the main list**Background:**

This species is currently included in the Appendix - Part 1, as a species reported from the A.O.U. Check-list area with insufficient evidence for placement on the main list:

***Phoebastria irrorata* (Salvin). Waved Albatross.**

Diomedea irrorata Salvin, 1883, Proc. Zool. Soc. London, p. 430. (Callao Bay, Peru.)

This species breeds on Hood Island in the Galapagos and on Isla de la Plata off Ecuador, and ranges at sea along the coasts of Ecuador and Peru. A specimen was taken just outside the North American area at Octavia Rocks, Colombia, near the Panama-Colombia boundary (8 March 1941, R. C. Murphy). There are sight reports from Panama, west of Piñas Bay, Darién, 26 February 1941 (Ridgely 1976), and southwest of the Pearl Islands, 27 September 1964. Also known as Galapagos Albatross.

New information:

The Costa Rican Rare Birds and Records Committee (Scientific Committee - Association of Ornithology of Costa Rica - AOCR) received a report and photographic material as the first evidence of the species in Costa Rica. Waved Albatross had first been included in the Official List - Update 2007 (Obando et al, 2007) based on a single sight record on Cocos Island on May 07, 1993 (Acevedo, 1994).

Report:

January 09, 2014. Keiner Berrocal Chacón found a single bird resting on the water 15 miles from Cabo Blanco, Puntarenas province. Keiner was accompanied by his father on an artisanal fishing day.

Committee decision:

The proposal was accepted by unanimous decision by the Scientific Committee of the AOCR. The photographic material presented clearly shows a Waved Albatross. Photos taken by Keiner Berrocal were archived and catalogued in the Department of Natural History - National Museum of Costa Rica (MNCR) as MNCR Z8393-Z8397. This is MNCR-Z8394:



Recommendation:

Move the species from the Appendix to the main list.

Literature Cited:

- Acevedo-Gutiérrez, A. 1994. First records and nesting of three birds species at Isla del Coco, Costa Rica. *Revista de Biología Tropical* 42(3):762
- Obando-Calderón, G., Sandoval, L., Chaves-Campos, J., Villareal Orias, J. 2007. Lista Oficial de las aves de Costa Rica. Actualización 2007. Comité Científico, Asociación Ornitológica de Costa Rica. *Zeledonia* 11(2)26-34

Submitted by: Gerardo Obando Calderón – Coordinator, Official List of the Birds of Costa Rica, on behalf of the Costa Rican Rare Birds and Records Committee (Scientific Committee-AOCR)

Date of proposal: 12 Mar 2014

Change the type locality of Craveri's Murrelet

Bowen (2013) pointed out that the type locality for Craveri's Murrelet, *Synthliboramphus craveri* (Salvadori, 1865) in the current (1998) edition of the Check-list is not only wrong but is badly flawed. This proposal is based primarily on the information in Bowen's paper, as I have not had the opportunity to review most of the literature he cited—but I have looked at some that he did not cite and have added some personal information.

In fact, the AOU Check-list has not given a valid type locality for this species in any edition! In the third edition (1910), the first in which type localities were given, it is stated as "Natividad Island, Gulf of California" (p. 30). The error here is that Natividad is off the west coast of Baja California, not in the Gulf. In the fourth edition (1931), the type locality is given as "Golfo della California Lat. 27° 50' 12" Long. 110° 10' 45" = Raza Island, Gulf of California" (p. 147). The first two parts of this are apparently separately taken directly from the paper that contains the original description (Salvadori 1865), quoted and translated in Bowen (2013), but the equation to Raza Island is not. Bowen attributed the equation to a paper by W. W. Cooke (1916), who pointed out that the birds seen by Craveri on Natividad were likely Black-vented Shearwaters (*Puffinus opisthomelas*) rather than the murrelets he had seen and collected a year earlier in the Gulf. The problem with this citation is that the geographic coordinates given are not in the Gulf of California but are somewhere on the mainland of Sonora, Mexico. Those coordinates are set down in Salvadori's (1865) paraphrase of Craveri's notes relative to his visit to Natividad Island (*fide* Bowen) but, because of a lapsus of some sort, are 5 degrees too far east. Natividad is at 115° rather than 110°; otherwise the coordinates are correct for Natividad but are nowhere near Raza, which is at 112°W 28°N. This is a prime example of the perpetuation of an error for over a century and a half. [Cooke may have been unaware of the coordinates given by Salvadori. I cannot tell from Bowen's paper if Cooke mentioned them. If he did he did not check them.]

The fifth (1957) and sixth (1983) editions of the AOU Check-list repeat the type locality given in the fourth. In the seventh edition (1998), the coordinates are repeated but the equation is to Natividad Island and reference is given to a 1990 paper by Violani and Boano, which is based on a review of Craveri's original journal (and which I have not seen.). According to Bowen, Violani and Boano (1990) recognized that Craveri had collected murrelet specimens on Isla Partida Norte, very near Raza in the Gulf of California. However, they placed great reliance on a note that Craveri had added to the margin of his journal near the account of his visit to Natividad. In that account, as paraphrased by Salvadori (*fide* Bowen 2013), Craveri noted stepping into burrows in the sandy soil and that "in these dens live the little *Uriae* [sic] . . . which Mr Craveri had already collected in the Gulf of California." The note reads (*fide* translation provided by

Bowen) “I collected the *Uria Craveri* (Salvadori).” Apparently the juxtaposition of this note, which must have been added to the journal after the name had been published, with the account of Natividad persuaded Violani and Boano that Craveri had collected the type specimen there, and they recommended that Natividad Island be considered the type locality of *Synthliboramphus craveri* (Salvadori, 1865). However, if the note is near Craveri’s mention of having collected similar (or thought, a year later, to be similar) birds in the Gulf, it could just as well be referring to those earlier taken specimens, which were in Salvadori’s possession. There is no evidence in Craveri’s notes, as presented in available material, that he collected any birds on Natividad.

The geographic coordinates given by Salvadori (1865) for Natividad Island are obviously incorrect for any locality in which the type of Craveri’s Murrelet could have been collected, and should be disregarded. Craveri’s journal indicated that in 1856 he collected on Isla Partida Norte in the Gulf of California the number of specimens that Salvadori later had. Nothing in his journal, as discussed in papers cited here, indicates that he collected any birds on Raza Island. Raza was suggested by Cooke (1916) only on the basis that Craveri was investigating guano islands in the Gulf, and Raza is a guano island, the nesting grounds of thousands of Heermann’s Gulls, Elegant Terns, and Brown Pelicans. It is unclear whether Cooke knew that Craveri had also visited Isla Partida Norte and had collected specimens there.

Bowen (2013) did not come to a firm conclusion as to the type locality of this bird, but he suggested that “... at present, Isla Partida Norte would seem the most likely candidate.”

In accordance with Recommendation 76A.1.4 of the Code (ICZN 1999), I propose that the type locality of *Synthliboramphus craveri* (Salvadori, 1865) be stated as: Golfo della California [Mexico] = (probably) Isla Partida Norte, Gulf of California (Bowen 2013).

Bowen’s suggestion that a better documented specimen be designated as the type is completely out of line with the Code.

For comparative purposes, it is of interest to review how other authorities have treated this type locality. Peters (1934) gave the erroneous coordinates and equated them to Raza Island, probably following Cooke (1916) and AOU (1931). The Mexican Check-list (Friedmann et al. 1950) used simply “Gulf of California = Raza Island.” Most recently, Bahr (2011) gave it as Isla Natividad, Baja California.

I have been on both Isla Raza and Isla Partida in the Gulf of California (see Banks 1963, Lindsay 1966a, 1966b). Raza is home to a large population (in the breeding season) of Heermann’s Gulls, *Larus heermanni*. Large gulls are well known to be very hazardous to small alcids and petrels, and these Heermann’s Gulls on Raza are very

predacious on the Elegant and Royal terns (*Thalasseus elegans* and *T. maximus*) that also nest there; see accounts in Lindsay 1966a, 1966b). Craveri's Murrelets may occasionally nest on Raza, and Cooke (1916) reported a specimen from there, but their chances of success are probably very limited. Further, there is little suitable habitat for murrelets on Raza. On Partida, on the other hand, excellent murrelet habitat is extensive, and there are no gulls. I have also been on Natividad, briefly, but have no firm recollection of it.

Literature Cited:

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1983. Sixth ed.
1998. Seventh ed.
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- Bowen, Thomas. 2013. The type locality of Craveri's Murrelet *Synthliboramphus craveri*. Marine Ornithology 41: 49-54.
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- Friedmann, H., L. Griscom, and R. T. Moore. 1950. Distributional Check-list of the Birds of Mexico. Part 1. Pacific Coast Avifauna 28.
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- Peters, J. L. 1934. Check-list of Birds of the World. Vol. 2. Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, Mass.
- Violani, C., and G. Boano. 1990. L'Uria di Craveri *Synthliboramphus craveri* (Aves, Alcidae). Revista Piemontese di Storia Naturale 11: 155-162. [fide Bowen]

Submitted by: Richard C. Banks, Smithsonian Institution

Date of proposal: 14 Mar 2014

Adopt a new classification for the Quail-Doves (Columbidae)

Johnson and Weckstein (2011) reconstructed a phylogeny using DNA sequence data from 24 species of doves in 3 putative genera, that showed that the species in the genus *Geotrygon* (Quail-Doves) are not a monophyletic group. Six species proved to be closely related to but distinct from *Zenaida* and one was closer to *Leptotila*. With the addition of partial genetic data from two other species, including the type species of *Geotrygon* (*G. versicolor*), Banks et al. (2013) used those results to propose a revised classification of the Quail-Doves and their close relatives. This involved establishing two new genera and a new sequential listing that better reflects phylogenetic relationships.

The two new genera are *Leptotrygon*, type and only species *Geotrygon veraguensis* Lawrence, 1866, and *Zentrygon*, type species *Geotrygon costaricensis* Lawrence, 1868, with five other species. The original genus *Geotrygon* now contains six species. The new classification is given below – N&MA species only). Species for which DNA was not available are placed on the basis of previous concepts of relationship.

Genus *Geotrygon*

- G. versicolor*
- G. montana*
- G. violacea*
- G. caniceps*
- G. leucometopia*
- G. chrysia*
- G. mystacea*

Genus *Leptotrygon* Banks et al.

- Leptotrygon* Banks, Weckstein, Remsen, and Johnson, 2013, Zootaxa 3669: 185. Type, by original designation, *Geotrygon veraguensis* Lawrence, 1866.
- L. veraguensis*

Genus *Leptotila*

- L. verreauxi*
- L. jamaicensis*
- L. cassini*
- L. plumbeiceps*
- L. wellsi*
- L. megalura*

Genus *Zentrygon* Banks et al.

Zentrygon Banks, Weckstein, Remsen, and Johnson, 2013, Zootaxa 3669: 185. Type, by original designation, *Geotrygon costaricensis* Lawrence, 1868.

Z. carrikeri

Z. costaricensis

Z. lawrenceii

Z. albifacies

Z. chiriquensis

Z. goldmani

Genus *Zenaida*

Z. asiatica

Z. aurita

Z. auriculata

Z. macroura

Z. graysoni

Literature Cited:

Banks, R. C., J. D. Weckstein, J. V. Remsen, and K. P. Johnson. 2013. Classification of a clade of New World doves (Columbidae: Zenaidini). Zootaxa 3669: 184-188.

Johnson, K. P., and J. D. Weckstein. 2011. The Central American land bridge as an engine of diversification in New World doves. Journal of Biogeography 38: 1069-1076.

Submitted by: Richard C. Banks, Smithsonian Institution

Date of proposal: 17 Mar 2014

Revise the taxonomy and linear sequence for species of *Sporophila* and *Oryzoborus*: (a) merge *Oryzoborus* into *Sporophila*, and (b) change the linear sequence of species of *Sporophila* (and *Oryzoborus*)

This proposal would merge the genus *Oryzoborus* into a broadly defined *Sporophila*. This proposal would also revise the linear sequence of species within *Sporophila* to reflect the evolutionary relationships inferred from the most recent molecular phylogeny.

Background:

The genera *Sporophila*, *Oryzoborus*, and the extralimital *Dolospingus* comprise a group of small-bodied, thick-billed oscines that are widely distributed in open and semi-open habitats throughout the Neotropics (Meyer de Schauensee 1952; Ridgely and Tudor 2009). Based on similarities in nests, eggs, plumage sequences, and songs, authorities have long suspected that these genera are closely related (Sick 1963; Olson 1981; Stiles 1996), and they appear together in all current classifications, such as Clements et al. (2013). Recent molecular phylogenies have confirmed that *Sporophila*, *Oryzoborus*, and *Dolospingus* form a clade (Burns, Hackett, and Klein 2002; Lijtmaer et al. 2004; Robbins et al. 2005) that does not include any other thraupid genera (Barker et al. 2012); however, limited taxonomic sampling has restricted our ability to evaluate the reciprocal monophyly and taxonomic validity of these genera.

The current linear sequence of *Sporophila* in North and Central America is as follows:

Sporophila schistacea Slate-colored Seedeater
Sporophila corvina Variable Seedeater
Sporophila torqueola White-collared Seedeater
Sporophila nigricollis Yellow-bellied Seedeater
Sporophila minuta Ruddy-breasted Seedeater
Oryzoborus nuttingi Nicaraguan Seed-Finch
Oryzoborus funereus Thick-billed Seed-Finch
Oryzoborus crassirostris Large-billed Seed-Finch

Oryzoborus angolensis (Chestnut-bellied Seed-Finch) in Appendix 1 of the Check-list also would be affected by the merger of *Oryzoborus* into *Sporophila*.

New Information:

Mason and Burns (2013) sampled 33 of the 39 species currently recognized by Clements et al. (2013) in their study of phylogenetic relationships within this group,

including the type species *S. falcistrostris* Temminck 1820. Based on Bayesian and maximum likelihood inferences using the mitochondrial gene regions ND2 and cyt b, Mason and Burns (2013) found that *Sporophila* is paraphyletic as currently defined (Figure 1). More specifically, *S. lineola* is sister to the remaining taxa that were sampled; therefore, other species of *Sporophila* are more closely related to members of *Oryzoborus* and *Dolospingus* than they are to *S. lineola*. Mason and Burns (2013) also found that a constrained topology, wherein each genus was forced into monophyly, was decisively worse than an unconstrained topology (2ln Bayes Factor = 18.9). Moreover, many of the strongly supported nodes in Mason and Burns (2013) represent novel relationships that are not reflected in the current linear sequence of this group. More recently, these findings have been corroborated by Burns et al. (2014), which included additional molecular markers as well as tanagers from many other genera.

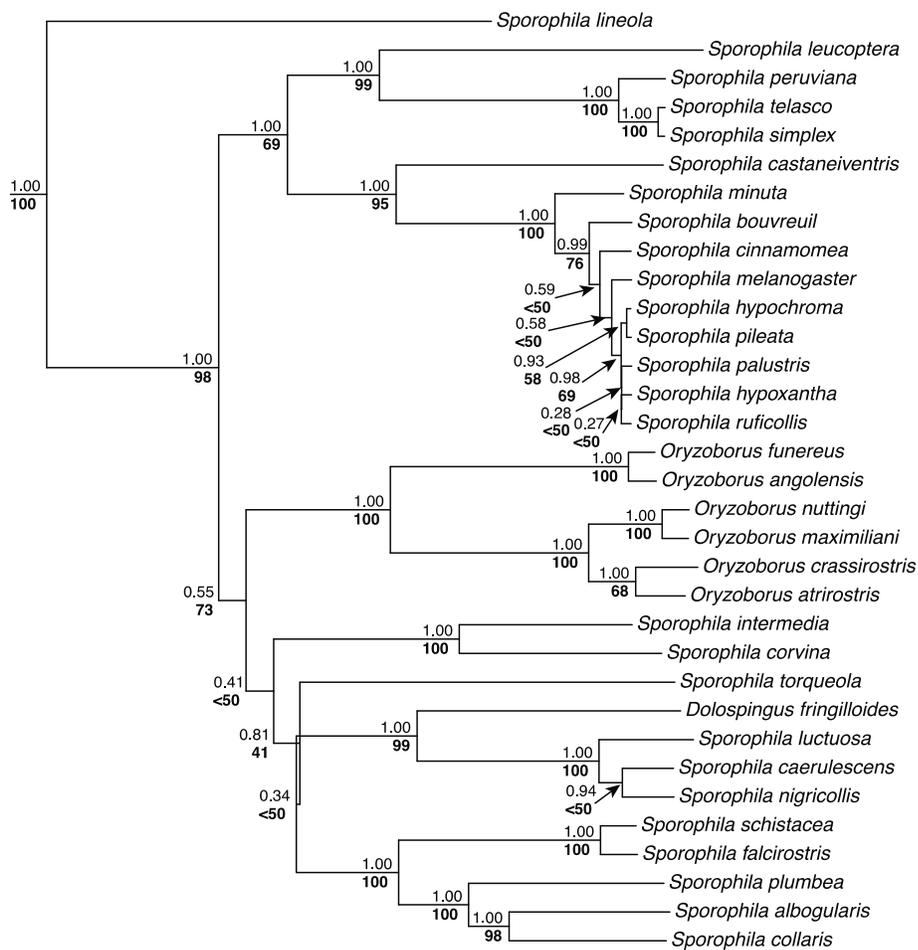


Figure 1: Maximum clade credibility tree of Neotropical seedeaters and seed-finches inferred using BEAST with posterior probabilities above each node and bootstrap support values below each node. The phylogeny is rooted with 21 species from 18 genera representing each of the major clades of tanagers.

Although the phylogeny from Mason and Burns (2013) was missing six taxa (*S. americana*, *S. ardesiaca*, *S. bouvronides*, *S. frontalis*, *S. murallae*, and *S. nigrorufa*) and relies solely on mtDNA, they found strong evidence that *Oryzoborus* and *Dolospingus* are embedded within *Sporophila*. Based on this finding, Mason and Burns (2013) suggested merging the genera *Oryzoborus* and *Dolospingus* into a broadly defined *Sporophila*, which has taxonomic priority over the other two genera (Cabanis 1844; Cabanis 1851; Elliot 1871). This revision had already been suggested by other studies that recovered similar topologies with fewer in-group taxa (Burns, Hackett, and Klein 2002; Lijtmaer et al. 2004; Olson 1981). Although some previous investigators favored retaining these genera to recognize differences in morphology (Stiles 1996; Webster and Webster 1999), bill size and shape, as well as body size, can be extremely labile in passerines (Remsen 2003). Furthermore, similar levels of bill diversity already exist in other granivorous oscine genera, such as *Passerina* (Klicka et al. 2001).

Many of the strongly supported nodes in Mason and Burns (2013) represent novel relationships that are not reflected in the current linear sequence of this group. Here, we provide a sequence modified to reflect these relationships using standard conventions:

Sporophila minuta Ruddy-breasted Seedeater
Sporophila (formerly *Oryzoborus*) *funerea* Thick-billed Seed-Finch¹
Sporophila (formerly *Oryzoborus*) *nuttingi* Nicaraguan Seed-Finch
Sporophila (formerly *Oryzoborus*) *crassirostris* Large-billed Seed-Finch
Sporophila corvina Variable Seedeater
Sporophila torqueola White-collared Seedeater
Sporophila nigricollis Yellow-bellied Seedeater
Sporophila schistacea Slate-colored Seedeater

Recommendation:

Based on the data in Mason and Burns (2013), it is recommended that the committee (a) merge *Oryzoborus* into *Sporophila*, and (b) revise the linear sequence of species of *Sporophila* as indicated.

Literature Cited:

Barker, F. K., K. J. Burns, J. Klicka, S. M. Lanyon, and I. J. Lovette. 2012. Going to extremes: Contrasting rates of diversification in a recent radiation of New World passerine birds. *Systematic Biology* 62: 298–320.

¹ *Sporophila* is feminine, whereas *Oryzoborus* is masculine, so with *funereus* variable, the ending changes to “-a”. The species with “-is” endings are variable but would only change if *Sporophila* were neuter.

- Burns, K. J., S. J. Hackett, and N. K. Klein. 2002. Phylogenetic relationships and morphological diversity in Darwin's finches and their relatives. *Evolution* 56: 1240–52.
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- Sick, H. 1963. Hybridization in certain Brazilian Fringillidae (*Sporophila* and *Oryzoborus*). *Proc. XIII Intl. Ornithol. Congr.* 161–170.

Stiles, F. 1996. When black plus white equals gray: the nature of variation in the variable seedeater complex (Emberizinae: *Sporophila*). *Ornitologia Neotropical* 7: 75–107.

Webster, J. and J. Webster. 1999. Skeletons and the genera of sparrows (Emberizinae). *Auk* 116: 1054–1074.

Submitted by: Nicholas A. Mason, Cornell University

Date of proposal: 24 Mar 2014

**Split *Ninox japonica* from Brown Hawk-Owl *Ninox scutulata*
and adopt the English name Northern Boobook**

Background:

The Brown Hawk-Owl is on the North American list on the basis of two accidental records from the western Alaska. The first was of a bird seen and photographed at St. Paul Island, Pribilofs, from 27 August to 3 September 2007 (Yerger and Mohlmann 2008). The second record was of a carcass found (but not retained!) on Kiska Island, Aleutian Islands, on 1 August 2008 (Bond and Jones 2010). The species was added to the Alaska and ABA lists (Alaska Checklist Committee and ABA Checklist Committee) and to the AOU list (Chesser et al. 2009).

New Information:

Jon L. Dunn (JLD) prepared the motion to add the species to the AOU list and suggested the treatment that was widely followed (e.g. König et al. 1999), but King (2002) subsequently published his own suggested taxonomic revisions. King (2002), on the basis of distinct vocal differences, suggested a three-way split of this polytypic species. The northern and mostly migratory populations (subspecies *japonica*, *ussuriensis*, and *totogo*) would become the Northern Boobook (*Ninox japonica*), the resident population on the Philippines would become the Chocolate Boobook (*Ninox randi*), and the resident subspecies from southeast Asia would be named the Brown Boobook (*Ninox scutulata*). The change from Hawk-Owl to Boobook for the English name was suggested by King for several reasons, one being that the birds have owl-like, not hawk-like faces, and also to avoid confusion with the unrelated Northern Hawk Owl (*Surnia ulula*). This English name is now widely used in the Old World.

We recommend following King's (2002) treatment. He described the call and JLD can attest to the fact that the birds he has heard (*N. s. totogo*) in Nansei Shoto (Okinawa and Ishigaki Islands), Japan, were night-and-day different from the birds he hears annually in southeast Asia (Thailand, Malaysia and Cambodia) which all sound identical, the two noted up-slurred "who-ahh." The calls of the birds JLD heard from Nansei Shoto sounded essentially identical to the recordings that Brian Daniels had with him, which were from one the main islands, likely Honshu, and therefore *N. s. japonica* (the type locality of which is Japan). Brazil (2009) opined that the mainland eastern Asian populations (*N. s. ussuriensis*) from central and northern China, Korea and the southeastern Russian Far East (mainly Amurland and Ussuriland) might be a separate species from the Japanese (main islands) subspecies (*N. s. japonica*) and suggested Japanese Hawk Owl for the English name. He offered no evidence for this split, however. He further advocated a possible split of *N. s. totogo* into a separate species,

the Ryukyu Hawk Owl. It is like *japonica* but even darker. He says the call is an evenly-spaced series of *ho* notes that trails away, while *japonica* gives deep, paired notes that are repeated, *hoho, hoho, hoho* etc. However, the birds that JLD and party heard on Okinawa and Ishigaki sounded just like the calls Brazil (2009) described for *N. s. japonica*. These were strongly territorial birds that responded to play-back. This subspecies is resident (as far as is known) on Nansei Shoto and Taiwan. In any event I don't think any taxonomists have followed Brazil's (2009) suggestions.

We have checked recordings on Xeno-canto, where there are recordings of *ussuriensis* and *totogo* as well as recordings from mainland southeastern Asia. We hear no appreciable difference between the calls from the Russian Far East and from Nansei Shoto. Xeno-canto does not have recordings from the main islands of Japan.

Morphologically, the northern subspecies have longer and more pointed wings (King 2002) and P. D. Round (*pers. comm.*) indicated that markings of the northern subspecies are different than those of southern forms (streaks rather than more circular spots). The northern subspecies are also noticeably darker than those from the south.

Dickinson and Remsen (2013) indicated that the subspecies of Northern Boobook (*N. s. totogo*) might be resident on Batan and Babuyan Islands, northern Philippines, although we find no mention of this from Kennedy et al. (2000); hence, the mention of "possibly in the northern Philippines" in the distributional statement below. We note in passing that the first North American record was 2007, not 2005 as the Check-List currently states.

Recommendation:

We recommend a YES vote on the proposal to separate the northern subspecies of *Ninox scutulata* as a separate species, Northern Boobook *Ninox japonica* (Temminck and Schlegel, 1845). Our recommendation is based largely on differences in vocalizations, characters widely used in determining species limits in owls. The proposed arrangement seems to be widely accepted in global and Old World literature, most recently by Dickinson and Remsen (2013). If passed, this proposal would replace currently included species Brown Hawk-Owl *N. scutulata* with the new species Northern Boobook *N. japonica*.

While neither North American record is substantiated by a specimen, we consider it highly unlikely that the two records could be of anything other than the northerly subspecies, all of which would become part of *Ninox japonica*.

New species account: We suggest the following Supplement entry:

p. 266. Replace the existing account for *Ninox scutulata* (Brown Hawk-Owl) with: ***Ninox japonica*** (Temminck and Schlegel). Northern Boobook.

Strix hirsuta japonica Temminck and Schlegel, 1844 [***Dickinson has changed this to 1845, but see note on Zoonomen website***], in Siebold, Fauna Japonica, Aves, p. 28, pl. 9B. (Japan.)

Habitat.--A variety of woodland habitats.

Distribution.--Breeds from southeastern Russian Far East, Korea, and northern and central (possibly southern) China south through Japan and Taiwan, and possibly in the northern Philippines.

Winters in southern part of breeding range and throughout mainland Southeast Asia, the Philippines, and much of Indonesia.

Accidental on Ashmore Reef, Australia.

Accidental in Alaska (St. Paul Island, Pribilof Islands, 27 August – 3 September 2005; photos, Yerger and Mohlmann 2008; and Kiska Island, Aleutian Islands, 1 August 2008; photos of carcass; Bond and Jones 2010)

Notes.--Formerly placed with *Ninox scutulata* (Brown Hawk-Owl) and now split on the basis of the vocal differences detailed by King (2002). Changing the English name of this and other related members of this genus to Northern Boobook reflects widespread current usage where these birds are found.

Literature Cited:

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Submitted by: Jon L. Dunn and Dan Gibson

Proposal date: 14 Apr 2014

Add Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* to the main list**Background:**

On 6-7 June 2012, a drab *Phylloscopus* individual was found and photographed at Gambell, St. Lawrence Island. The photos were examined by many and the bird was compared to species of *Phylloscopus*, including Willow Warbler *P. trochilus*. The consensus was that the photos pointed to Common Chiffchaff *P. collybita*; in particular, one photo in flight shows four emarginated primaries (the Willow Warbler shows only three). Peter Kennerly, probably the authoritative figure on Old World Warblers, commented on this feature from the photos. The record was detailed by Lehman and Zimmer (2013) and was subsequently accepted by the Alaska Checklist Committee (D. D. Gibson, pers. comm.) and by the ABA Checklist Committee (Pranty et al. 2013).

Recommendation:

We recommend that this species be added to the North American Check-list. Identifications of many species in this genus are notoriously difficult, but the photos have been widely viewed and endorsed as being of a Common Chiffchaff. In particular, the conservative analysis by Peter Kennerly, widely viewed as the world's expert on this genus (as well as other groups of Old World Warblers), is compelling. His opinion was a major factor in the acceptance of this record by both the Alaska Checklist Committee and the ABA Checklist Committee. Not surprisingly, the photos are thought to pertain to *tristis*, the dullest and easternmost subspecies of this species.

Following publication of Lehman and Zimmer (2013), P.E. Lehman found and photographed another Chiffchaff at the same location (date to be added ? September 2013).

Literature Cited:

Lehman, P. E., and K. J. Zimmer. 2013. A Siberian Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita tristis*) at Gambell, Alaska. *North American Birds* 6:428-435.

Pranty, B., J. L. Dunn, K. L. Garrett, M. J. Iliff, M. W. Lockwood, R. Pitaway, and D. A. Sibley. 2013. 24th Report of the ABA Checklist Committee. *Birding* 45:30-37.

Submitted by: Jon L. Dunn and Dan Gibson

Proposal date: 14 Apr 2014

Change the English name of *Lonchura punctulata* from Nutmeg Mannikin to Scaly-breasted Munia

Background:

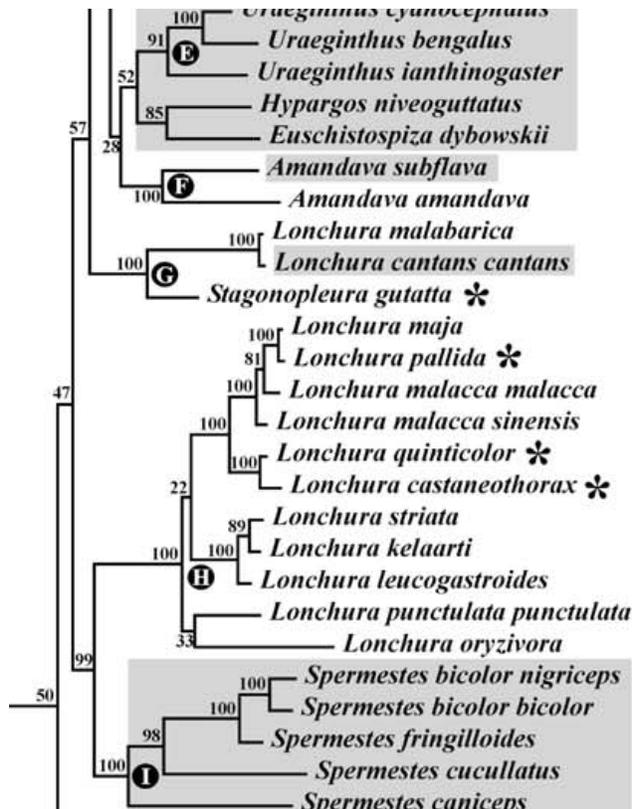
Lonchura punctulata is a highly polytypic species currently listed by the NACC under the English name Nutmeg Mannikin. It has long been known in the pet trade by this name or as Spice Finch, and in ornithological literature it has been called several other names, especially Spotted Munia (see Payne 2010). However, the name Nutmeg Mannikin is now rarely used by other ornithological authorities; one that does use it is BirdLife Australia (2014), whose area does not cover the species' natural distribution. The ABA (see, e.g., Pranty 2013) and Clements et al. (2013) checklists, both follow the AOU and therefore still use Nutmeg Mannikin, but Tom Schulenberg (in litt. to PCR, 30 Jan 2013) recommended that the AOU reconsider this. *Lonchura punctulata* has no particular association with nutmeg or other spices, or even the Banda Islands, whence nutmeg originates.

For largely extralimital taxa, the NACC generally follows regional authorities on issues of English name usage. In this case, the name “munia” is used by recent works for Asian species of *Lonchura*, while “mannikin” continues to be used for primarily African and Australasian species (e.g., Inskipp et al. 2001, Gill & Donsker 2014, BirdLife Australia 2014). However, within the current Clements checklist (which splits out the African *Spermestes* from *Lonchura*—see below), *L. punctulata* is the only species in *Lonchura* that is called “mannikin”; all others—including the Australian members of the genus—are called “munias”, as is the allied Australian-endemic genus *Heteromunia*. None of the Australasian species is naturalized in the CLC area. If NACC proposal 2014-B-12, which in part would transfer Java Sparrow *Padda oryzivora* to *Lonchura*, is successful in its entirety, then in the NACC region we would also have “sparrow” being used within the genus *Lonchura*, but not “silverbill”.

New Information:

When splitting Chestnut Mannikin *Lonchura atricapilla* to follow Restall (1997), the NACC (AOU 2000) also followed his treatment in changing the common names of the resulting two species to Chestnut Munia *L. atricapilla* and Tricolored Munia *L. tricolor*, but, probably due to an oversight, did not consider the issue for *L. punctulata*, which is called “Scaly-breasted Munia” in Restall (1997).

In a phylogeny by Arnaiz-Villena (2009; sampling details summarized in 2014-B-12, with the relevant portion of their phylogeny repeated here), *Lonchura punctulata* groups with Java Sparrow *Padda oryzivora* (or *Lonchura oryzivora*), and is not especially close to other Asian *Lonchura*.



Relevant portion of Fig. 1 of Arnaiz-Villena et al. (2009).

Most other recent regional and global works list the species as Scaly-breasted Munia, e.g., the Oriental Bird Club checklist (Inskipp et al. 2001); Robson (2005a, b); Brazil (2009); Myers (2009); HBW (Payne 2010); Rasmussen and Anderton (2012); and the IOC list (Gill and Donsker 2014), among many others. The name Spotted Munia has been used for many years in the Indian Subcontinent (and still is by some), and by Clement et al. (1993), whereas Spice Finch was used by Sinclair and Langrand (2003). In any event, it seems apparent that the overwhelming trend by recent authors of works that cover the species' natural range is to use the name Scaly-breasted Munia.

Recommendation:

We recommend making the change from Nutmeg Mannikin to Scaly-breasted Munia. It could be argued that the lack of clarity on relationships within *Lonchura*, the putative sister relationship of *L. punctulata* to the two species of *Padda*, i.e., Java Sparrow and

Timor Sparrow, the latter not included in the study (Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2009) and the continued usage of “mannikin” for Australasian *Lonchura* introduce complications regarding the common name of *L. punctulata*. However, it still seems best to conform to widespread recent usage for this Asian species. To call it a mannikin does not reflect species group relationships within *Lonchura*, nor is Nutmeg Mannikin an especially familiar or appropriate name.

Adopting this change would put the NACC in line with most other works, thereby conforming to its usual policy of following the consensus of regional authorities for species largely extralimital to the NACC region. This action would leave the sub-Saharan Bronze Mannikin (*L. cucullata*)—an established exotic in the West Indies—as the only species to be called mannikin within the NACC area. However, if the proposal regarding its generic allocation currently being voted on by the NACC passes, then the continued usage of mannikin would be limited to African *Spermestes* (to which Bronze Mannikin would belong). This proposed change also has the benefit of eliminating some potential confusion among U.S. birders, who when reading “mannikin” may mistakenly infer a relationship with the Neotropical Pipridae manakins.

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Submitted by: Michael L. P. Retter (American Birding Association) and Pamela C. Rasmussen (Michigan State University)

Proposal date: 23 Apr 2014

Split the Shy Albatross *Thalassarche cauta* into two or three species: (a) split *cauta/steady* from *salvini/eremita*, and (b) split *salvini* from *eremita*

Background:

The SACC has split the Shy Albatross *Thalassarche cauta* into three species (*cauta/steady*, *salvini*, and *eremita*). The relevant proposals (155 and 255) and committee comments are appended to this proposal. There was also a proposal, which did not pass, to reverse the vote on Proposal 155 – the proposal and comments for this are available at <http://www.museum.lsu.edu/~Remsen/SACCprop166.htm>. The vote on Proposal 155 was to split *cauta/steady* from *salvini/eremita*, and the vote on Proposal 255 was to split *salvini* from *eremita*. Arguments in favor of recognizing more than one species in this group included differences in plumage and genetics and reports of isolated pairs of one form nesting within the range of another.

Recommendation:

I recommend that we follow SACC on this and recognize three species in this complex: *cauta/steady*, *salvini*, and *eremita*. For English names, SACC retired the name Shy Albatross (to be used only for the species complex as a whole) and adopted White-capped Albatross for *cauta/steady*, Salvin's Albatross for *salvini*, and Chatham Albatross for *eremita*. These names are in common use elsewhere (e.g., Howell 2012). (The name proposed for *salvini/eremita* (had they not been split) was Salvin's Albatross.) I recommend that we use these names.

There are North American (Pacific) records for each of the three species recognized by the SACC. Therefore, YES votes on both parts of this proposal would add two species to the NACC list and change the distribution of the newly circumscribed *cauta*. An adult *steady* was collected off the coast of Washington in 1951 (Shipp 1952; Cole 2000) and there are photos of a sub-adult *cauta/steady* off Oregon in 1996 (Hunter and Bailey 1997) and an adult *cauta* off California, Washington, and Oregon in 1999, 2000, and 2001, respectively, possibly of the same individual (Howell 2012). Benter et al. (2005) detailed a record with photos of *salvini* in the Aleutians in 2003, and there are photos of immature *eremita* (*fide* Howell 2012) off the central California coast in 2000 and 2001 (McKee and Erickson 2002, Garrett and Wilson 2003), probably of the same individual (Howell 2012). The latter two records were published as possible *salvini* but were presumably re-identified by Howell as *eremita* using the characters in Howell (2009).

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Submitted by: Terry Chesser, Smithsonian Institution

Proposal date: 25 Apr 2014

Proposal (155) to [South American Classification Committee](#)

Split Shy Albatross *Thalassarche cauta* into two or three species

Effect on South American CL: This proposal would split our *Thalassarche cauta* into two or three species, with possible recognition of *T. cauta*, *T. salvini*, and *T. eremita* as separate species. All three have been documented for our region, *cauta* on the Falklands (southern Argentina also??), *T. salvini* in Peru, Chile and Argentina, and *T. eremita* in Peru and Chile. I do not recall if there are well documented records of *cauta* from Peru, but it has been reported at least. I have not uncovered a good record of *cauta* from Chile yet.

Background: Nunn et al. (1996) suggested a reorganization of albatross genera based on morphology and mtDNA. This has been accepted by this committee and the AOU committee. More contentious has been the proposal to split the albatrosses into as many as 24 species based partly on unpublished mtDNA data and a rather extreme PSC based definition of species (Robertson and Nunn 1998). Apparently New Zealand biologists have quickly adopted these splits, but they have been controversial enough

elsewhere that they have not been taken seriously by many. There may have been an issue of throwing the baby out with the bathwater, in addition to a dearth of published data. Fortunately, or unfortunately depending on how you view procellariiform systematics, more is coming out in print recently that is beginning to clarify some aspects, and muddy others.

One of the suggestions made by Robertson and Nunn (1998) is that the four subspecies of the polytypic Shy Albatross (*Thalassarche cauta*) be split into four species, named Shy (*Thalassarche cauta*), White-capped (*T. steadi*), Salvin's (*T. salvini*), and Chatham (*T. eremita*) albatrosses.

New information:

Nunn and Stanley (1998) in a paper on variation in rate of molecular evolution related to body size (metabolic rate effect) sampled the complete cytochrome b sequence from 85 species of tubenoses. They found that larger taxa, such as albatrosses, have shorter terminal branches in their phylogeny than smaller taxa, suggesting a slower rate of evolution in mitochondrial DNA in larger taxa. Most important for this analysis is that of the three taxa sampled from this complex (*eremita*, *salvini*, *cauta*), their phylogeny shows *eremita* and *salvini* to be sisters and these in turn are sister to *cauta*. Thus *eremita* and *salvini* are more closely related to each other than either is to *cauta*. Plumage details (dark hood, dark-tipped bill, yellowish adult bill colour, black undersides to primaries, darker underwing of immatures, etc.) also unite *eremita* and *salvini*.

Using the same dataset Penhallurick and Wink (2004) find a difference of 1.05% between *cauta* and *eremita*; 0.96% between *cauta* and *salvini*; and 0.26% between *eremita* and *salvini*. They choose to maintain the complex lumped since they consider that 1.05% is well below the percent difference of traditionally recognized species in *Thalassarche* (1.66% - 3.55%). However, there is circularity in this reasoning, as the taxonomic questions that are troubling are these that involve taxa that are allopatric and have not traditionally been considered good species.

Abbott and Double (2003a). Their work focused on assessing the species status of *cauta* versus *steadi*, rather than the morphologically more divergent *salvini* and *eremita*. They sampled a 3000 bp fragment of mtDNA containing the control region. They found the following:

- 1.8% average pairwise sequence divergence between *cauta* and *steadi*.
- 2.9% between *salvini* and *eremita*.
- 7.0% between the *salvini/eremita* group and the *cauta/steadi* group.
- Monophyly of *cauta/steadi* group upheld, but not of the *salvini/eremita* group. The latter may be paraphyletic, or more data is needed to confirm monophyly.

Double et al. (2003) compared the morphology of *cauta* and *steadii*, which are extremely similar taxa as adults, and impossible to separate as immature specimens. They discovered that several measurements differed significantly, but overlapped a great deal. A multivariate approach identified 84% of specimens previously identified with a DNA based test.

Abbott and Double (2003b) compared data from six variable microsatellite loci, to study genetic structure in *cauta* and *steadii*. They found high levels of genetic structuring and detected many unshared alleles between the taxa, providing strong evidence against any contemporary gene flow between them. Different populations of *cauta* were found to be genetically distinct, whereas populations of *steadii* were not, implying that dispersal is rarer in the former than the latter. There is lower genetic diversity within *cauta* than *steadii*.

Analysis: Some general notes on breeding range and times are needed here. The two white headed taxa, as adults, are *cauta* and *steadii*. This pair is the most similar morphologically, and genetically, of any pairwise comparison of four taxa in question. The form *cauta* breeds on islands off Tasmania (Albatross, Mewstone and Pedra Blanca). The form *steadii* breeds off islands south of New Zealand, three of the Auckland Island group, and in the Antipodes group. These two white-headed taxa tend to head west from after breeding is done, with many wintering off South Africa and in the southern Atlantic as well as the Australia-New Zealand region. The form *salvini* breeds on Crozet (4 pairs), Snares, and Bounties (main breeding islands), the latter two south of New Zealand. It should be pointed out that the few nesting on the Crozets (Indian Ocean) are highly unusual and illustrate the great potential for long distance colonization of these albatrosses; the fact that the four different taxa in this complex breed in a relatively small part of the world (New Zealand/Australia) is worthy of note. The outpost on the Crozets is more than twice as distant from the regular breeding islands of *salvini*; this is a greater distance than the regular breeding range of the entire complex! A great proportion of the population of *salvini* heads to the Humboldt Current during the non-breeding period, although some also head west to South Africa and the southern Atlantic. Finally, *eremita* breeds on pyramid Rock, Chatham group (New Zealand sector again), and many head to the Humboldt Current in the non-breeding season; no westward movement is known for this taxon.

Breeding times differ somewhat between taxa

- *cauta* begins breeding in early September.
- *steadii* begins breeding in November.
- *salvini* breeds Oct-mid Nov.
- *eremita* breeds Aug Sept.

Potential sympatry One pair of *steadii* has bred on the Forty-Fours (Chatham Island group); this island is only a few km. from the Pyramid, which is the breeding site of practically all *eremita*. A *steadii* has visited colonies of *salvini* on the Snares. A single *salvini* made a nest in the main colony of *eremita*; I think it was by itself, with no evidence of hybridization. One pair of *eremita* has nested on the Snares, a breeding site for *salvini*. Some of these sympatric breeding events have occurred for various years in a row. There is no evidence of hybridization in any of these events, although hybridization in albatrosses is not unknown (Laysan and Black-footed interbreed regularly on Midway Island, Hawaii) (Tickell 2000).

Recommendation: There are two clear groups (I do think that *eremita* and *salvini* are sisters, and form a monophyletic group), one is the *eremita/salvini* pair, and the other is the *cauta/steadii* pair, these two groups are consistently different in morphology, genetics, breeding, and at-sea distribution, and there is no sign of hybridization although at least one pair of *steadii* has bred practically within sight of the main colony of *eremita*. It is one data point, but a data point nonetheless.

The two white headed taxa (*steadii* and *cauta*) are so similar morphologically and genetically that I do not think they can be thought of as anything other than subspecies. They are probably in the early stages of speciation, particularly as microsatellite evidence points to little or no current gene flow, but personally I do not think that the evidence points to them as being more than two good subspecies, two early lineages. Some may disagree, and suggest that these two should be separated as good species, but given their morphological similarity and the relatively low genetic divergence of this pair, as compared to the others, they may be best considered part of one species.

But what about the other pair? The differences both morphologically and genetically between *eremita* and *salvini* are much greater than between *steadii* and *cauta*. Even so, at least genetically these two are much more similar to each other than other albatross species pairs. However, there have been historical sympatric nestings with no evidence of hybridization that I know of.

I think there is a strong case to be made in splitting this species into two (*steadii/cauta* vs. *eremita/salvini*). The case may be weaker to also split *eremita* and *salvini*, but the two differ consistently morphologically, genetically, in their distribution and have not interbred although sympatry has occurred. I feel comfortable in splitting this pair out as well, but understand that this may be contentious, particularly since the original work done that suggested dividing every single terminal taxon in the albatrosses left a bad taste in the mouths of many. But remember: do not throw out the baby with the bathwater!

I would suggest separating this species into three, using the following English Names: *cauta/steady* (use White-capped Albatross even though it has been used recently for only one of the component taxa?); *salvini* (Salvin's Albatross); *eremita* (Chatham Albatross).

[Remsen insert: To do this dichotomously, let's make a "NO" vote to retain status quo (1 species), and a "YES" vote to split into 2 or more species, with 2 vs. 3 to be decided subsequently].

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Penhallurick, J. and M. Wink (2004). Analysis of the taxonomy and nomenclature of the Procellariiformes based on complete nucleotide sequences of the mitochondrial cytochrome *b* gene. *Emu* 104:125-147.

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Tickell, W.L.N. 2000. *Albatrosses*. Yale University Press, New Haven.

Alvaro Jaramillo, Dec. 2004

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Remsen comments: "YES [to recognize 2 or more species]. What convinces me that at least one split is necessary are those reports of pairs of one nesting within range of the other. They may indeed be isolated events, but they signal that those taxa have reached the level of differentiation associated with species rank in albatrosses, or at least they put the burden of proof on those who would consider them conspecific under BSC. The typical case in such situations (when a few individuals of one taxa find their

way into the breeding range of a closely related taxon) is for hybridization to occur, and we usually dismiss these as irrelevant (to BSC) because of the dramatic asymmetry in population sizes prevents them from being true tests of mate choice. When the outcome is the opposite, as in the *steadii/eremita* case, this reveals in my opinion something fundamental about comparative levels of differentiation."

Comments from Robbins: "YES. Genetics and plumage morphology indicate that there should be at least two species recognized within this complex, thus I vote "yes" for recognizing *steadii/cauta* as specifically distinct from *eremita/salvini*."

Comments from Stiles: "YES. I agree with Van: when an isolated pair or two retain their fidelity in the face of hordes of potential mates of the other form, this constitutes a pretty rigorous test of isolating mechanisms. Also, since intrinsically it seems logical that individuals (especially young ones, possibly unpaired) might wander to the "wrong" island more often than pairs of adults, the fact that no hybrids or mixed pairs have been recorded constitutes an even stronger indication that isolating mechanisms are effective. Three species seems the best choice in this case."

Comments from Pacheco: "YES. Reconheço que há razões suficientes para considerar a existência de, pelo menos, duas espécies; mesmo que, sob a ótica do BSC. Voto pelo reconhecimento específico entre os pares de táxons *steadii/cauta* e *eremita/salvini*."

Comments from Silva: "YES, I think there are good reasons to recognize at least two species in this group."

Proposal (255) to [South American Classification Committee](#)

Follow-up to Proposal 155: Split *Thalassarche cauta* into three species

Effect on South American CL: Proposal 155 was accepted to split *Thalassarche cauta* into at least two species. The question now is two (*cauta/steadii*) and (*eremita/salvini*) or three species (*cauta/steadii*), *eremita*, and *salvini*.

Background: The necessary background is in proposal 155, I won't re-hash that here. I don't think that new work on this has been published, but in the intervening time I have seen a photo of a *cauta/steadii* from Chile (unpublished). All three of these proposed species, *cauta*, *eremita* and *salvini* have been seen and photographed in our region. There are specimens for *eremita* and *salvini* at least.

Analysis and Proposal: Based on clear differences in adult plumage and bill coloration, used during breeding displays as well as lack of hybridization during rare sympatry events (see proposal 155) in addition to molecular and other data noted in prop. 155, I think the argument to recognize three species is solid.

English name notes: The entire complex is often known as the "Shy Albatross," I propose we retire that name to denote the entire complex.

White-capped Albatross is the more common name available for *cauta/steady*, although it is sometimes used specifically to refer to *steady*. Other names that have been used include Tasmanian Shy (*cauta*), and Auckland Shy (*steady*). I think the simplest thing is to call *cauta/steady* White-capped, although some would argue that Shy Albatross should remain with these taxa.

The taxon *eremita* sometimes is known as Chatham Island Albatross, but recently Chatham Albatross has caught on. I prefer this simpler name.

Recommendation:

YES = recognize three species: *T. cauta* (White-capped Albatross); *T. salvini* (Salvin's Albatross); and *T. eremita* (Chatham Albatross).

NO = recognize two species: *T. cauta* (White-capped Albatross); *T. salvini* (Salvin's Albatross, with *eremita* a subspecies).

I recommend a YES vote for this proposal.

Alvaro Jaramillo, January 2007

Comments from Stiles: "YES, for reasons essentially stated in the previous proposal on these birds. The English names also seem appropriate."

Comments from Zimmer: "YES". I think evidence for at least a 2-way split is very strong, and evidence for the proposed 3-way split is at least good enough that I think the burden of proof should fall on those offering an alternative. I also think that the proposed English names are well-reasoned, and strongly using "White-capped" for *cauta/steady*, while reserving "Shy Albatross" for the complex as a whole."

Comments from Nores: "NO. *Eremita* y *salvini* son muy similares entre si, especialmente el diseño de cabeza y pico como para separarlas. Además, el análisis

de Penhallurick and Wink (2004) los muestra muy cercanos. Acá también vemos la relatividad de los estudios moleculares. Si sólo estuviera el trabajo de Penhallurick y Wink todos diríamos no son diferentes en base a este estudio molecular. Por el contrario, si sólo hubiera sido hecho el trabajo de Abbott y Double diríamos si son especies distintas como lo indica el estudio molecular."

Comments from Robbins: "NO, I was not convinced in proposal #155 that there are three species. To argue that one event where no hybridization occurred is meaningless. As has been unequivocally established for many taxa, the fact that hybridization occurs or does not occur offers little insight into defining species, let alone whether one taxon is sister to another. There is still much to be clarified regarding species limits within albatrosses."

Comments from Pacheco: "YES. Reconheço que, a partir dos dados ora disponíveis, *eremita* e *salvini* são consistentemente morfológica e geneticamente distintas e podem ser tratadas como espécies."

Comments from Stotz: "NO. I don't think that occasional individuals of one taxon that don't breed or show evidence of being in breeding condition inside the breeding range of another is sufficient support for reproductive isolation. Given that *eremita* and *salvini* are so close genetically (nearly as close as *cauta* and *steadii*), I would say that treating them as conspecific still makes sense."

Comments from Remsen: "YES. The differences in coloration between *eremita* and *salvini* roughly comparable to those between *salvini* and *cauta*. But more importantly, the sympatric breeding, albeit small N, puts the burden of proof on those who would consider *salvini* and *eremita* conspecific. Even if only N=1, look at it this way: the chances of two individual *eremita* mating with each other by chance alone in a population of 150 to 450 *salvini* pairs on the Snares (breeding population counts from Tickell 2000, App. 15) are 1/150 or 1/450, in other words incredibly small. So, yes, N is small, but those are the data we have to work with. Until better data suggest otherwise, I personally think that there is no choice but to rank them (*eremita* and *salvini*) as separate species. For what it's worth, I note that Brooke's (2004) albatross book, an Oxford Univ. Press that is beyond my price range so I do not have access to it, also treats them as separate species."

Split *Toxostoma palmeri* from Curve-billed Thrasher *T. curvirostre*

Note from Chair: This proposal was written in part in response to comments of the committee on Proposal 2009-D-11, which previously proposed splitting these species.

Background:

This taxon was described by Swainson in 1827 as *Orpheus curvirostre*. A number of subspecies were later described: 7 were recognized in the 5th edition of the AOU Checklist (1957). These were placed in 2 groups by Phillips (1986) as follows: *curvirostre* group, including *oberholseri* and *celsum*, and *palmeri*, including *maculatum*, *insularum* and *occidentale*. This author expressed concern about the sample sizes on which the description of some of these taxa were based (one individual in the case of *insularum*).

Plumage differences between these two groups make them identifiable in the field. The eastern *curvirostre* group has a lighter breast, resulting in more contrast with spots; pale to white wing-bars; and white tail corners ≥ 7.5 mm long, contrasting with dark outer rectrices. The western *palmeri* group has a grayer breast, so spots show less contrast; pale buffy or grayish inconspicuous wing-bars, if any; and tail spots ≤ 6.5 mm long (Tweit 1996).

The allopatric ranges of these two groups are mostly separated by the Sierra Madre Occidental of Mexico, with a narrow, convoluted contact zone in Cochise and Santa Cruz counties, Arizona (Phillips et al. 1964). Here, along the streams of the Gila River drainage, the lower elevation range of the *palmeri* group is present in Sonoran Desert habitats where cholla cactus, the favorite nest site, is present. Individuals of this group are found up to 900 m in the United States in Sonoran Desert habitats and 1500 m in Mexico, where the range extends into thorn-scrub at the higher elevations. On the Pacific slope they are found south to Nayarit (Howell and Webb 1995, Tweit 1996, Russell and Monson 1998).

At its western limit the *curvirostre* group occurs at higher elevations (above 1000 m) in grassland habitats containing thorny shrubs such as agave, yucca, sotol and ocotillo (Phillips et al. 1964, Monson and Phillips 1981). Only 15 of 672 (2%) of Arizona breeding reports for the Curve-billed Thrasher complex were found in Chihuahuan Desert habitats such as this (Corman 2005). The breeding range of the *curvirostre* group extends from sea level along the Gulf Coast in coastal scrub and brush-land habitats of Texas and northeastern Mexico, continuing in higher Chihuahuan Desert

habitats as elevations rise to reach oak scrub at 1750 m in areas such as Silver City, Grant County, southwestern New Mexico (Phillips 1986, Casto 2006) . In New Mexico the range of this group covers the state except for the northwestern corner (Darling 1970). Vocalizations of an individual of this group were recorded southwest New Mexico (Spenser 2008). The elevational range extends to 3000 m in Mexico. Most of the range of this group is above 1000 m. East of the Sierra Madre Occidental, the range of the *curvirostre* group continues south to Oaxaca (Howell and Webb 1995, Tweit 1996).

Recent studies (Rojas-Soto 2003, Rojas-Soto et al. 2007) have provided additional insights into the status of the *T. curvirostre* complex. A series of 821 male *Toxostoma curvirostre* specimens from 29 locations was examined in morphological studies of 12 standard measurements, as well as 3 colorimetric characters and 2 color patterns. Analysis of the data supported recognition of the two taxa characterized by Phillips (1986): *T. c. curvirostre* and *T. c. palmeri*. Individuals of the second group were larger. Analysis of these measurements by several statistical methods did not confirm the taxonomic significance of any other subspecies. The other subspecies had been described on the basis of only one character and in the current studies, they could not be distinguished from others within their groups. The authors concluded that these two taxa should be recognized as the species *Toxostoma curvirostre* and *T. palmeri*.

In addition, genetic analysis using mtDNA sequencing recognized *T. palmeri* and *T. curvirostre* as valid phylogenetic species (Zink and Blackwell-Rago 2000) because of their clear pattern of reciprocal monophyly (all alleles within each taxon are genealogically closer to one another than to any alleles in the other taxon). This conclusion is consistent with the morphological studies described above. These results suggest that at most, there is a narrow hybrid zone, and that it is stable. Also the species map in Phillips et al. (1964, p.124) shows only 4 specimen locations for *T. curvirostre* in eastern Cochise County, Arizona and 4 hybrids/intergrades taken along the upper reaches of the Santa Cruz and San Pedro rivers and Aravaipa Creek, Graham County, Arizona. Thus, there is no evidence of a lack of reproductive isolation and the narrow zone is maintained by selection against hybrids. The locations where these specimens were collected on the map in Phillips et al. (1964) is consistent with the approximate elevations at which the streams descend from Chihuahuan Desert habitats into Sonoran Desert habitats, where a few hybrids between two closely related species might be expected. The map provides a much more plausible explanation for these hybrids than unsupported statements in the text of Phillips et al. (1964) about plumage trends.

In addition to the two phylogenetic species mentioned above, the genetic studies (Zink and Blackwell-Rago 2000, Rojas-Soto et al. 2007) identified a third phylogenetic species (southern group). However this phylogenetic species cannot be distinguished

by plumage patterns, measurements or vocalizations from *T. curvirostre* (Rojas-Soto 2003, Rojas-Soto et al. 2007, RCT analysis of vocalizations on the Xeno-canto website {2014}), O. R. Rojas-Soto, pers. Comm.).

New Information:

In the genetic studies (Rojas-Soto et al. 2007), an individual of *T. palmeri* was found in central New Mexico and a few birds of *T. curvirostre* and the “southern group” were found within each other’s ranges. Rather than considering this to be evidence of a shift in the ranges of these two taxa or of gene flow between them, I consider the most reasonable explanation to be the extensive post-natal dispersal of birds of this complex, as summarized below (Tweit 1996).

“Demography and populations, Range:

Initial Dispersal From Natal Site

... In all areas most immature birds apparently disperse from their natal area to breed among other populations. Young birds in Sonora, Mexico, may disperse “considerable distances” (Russell and Monson 1998).

In south Texas, none of 23 marked nestlings were found in breeding area the succeeding spring (Fischer 1980).

In Arizona, a young bird dispersed about 5 km in Tucson in 2 months. At another site, no young birds were recaptured during succeeding winters. No bird banded as juvenile joined breeding population during a 6-yr study (Anderson and Anderson 1973). From a sample of 345 banded juveniles in a larger study area, only 7% were recaptured at the same site >1 year later; these individuals were presumably members of local breeding populations because some had cloacal protuberances or brood patches when recaptured. Two birds were recaptured at other locations about 3 and 30 km away, respectively (RCT analysis of S. M. Russell and Tanque Verde Banding Group data). Of 115 Arizona recaptures in Bird Banding Lab files, 18 were from a 10-minute block next to the block in which they were banded, suggesting that dispersals ≤ 30 km occur regularly. The birds mentioned above were all dispersing into the range of their own species.

Individuals of this complex have been reported in states and provinces extending from California to New Hampshire and Florida to Manitoba (Tweit 1996, AOU 1998).

Fidelity To Breeding Site And Winter Home Range

In south Texas, 6 of 9 marked pairs nested in 1978 within 30 m of 1977 nest. Two others nested 60 and 75 m from the 1977 site, and final female remated and nested 100 m away (Fischer 1980). In Arizona, 2 males occupied the same territories for 6 year in study site averaging 6.7 territories (Anderson and Anderson 1973).)”

These results show young birds of this complex leave their natal areas and move elsewhere. If they find or establish a breeding population of their own species, they appear to breed successfully and stay at their new location. If they do not find a mate of their own species, they will be unable to pass on their genes, consistent with the findings of the genetic study which showed gene flow to be low within this complex (Zink and Blackwell-Rago 2000)

Recommendation:

I agree with Rojas-Soto (2003) that his data, combined with the earlier data summarized above, proves that *T. curvirostre* and *T. palmeri* deserve recognition as full species. These 2 populations are reproductively isolated based on their allopatric ranges with only a narrow contact zone and only a few hybrid specimens reported. They also have different plumages and *T. palmeri* is statistically significantly larger. They reside in different habitats and their most distinctive calls are different (Anonymous 2009). In addition they are distinct phylogenetic species and are reciprocally monophyletic.

I do not recommend the “southern group” as a full species because it is impossible to distinguish from *T. curvirostre* without genetic examination, lacking any plumage, size or vocal differences. I submit these proposed species accounts. Both Palmer’s Thrasher and Plateau Thrasher have historical precedents; Bent (1948) used these names for subspecies of this complex. I also propose synonymizing subspecies *oberholseri* and *celsum* with *curvirostre*, and synonymizing *maculatum*, *insularum* and *occidentale* with *palmeri* (Rojas-Soto 2003, Rojas-Soto et al. 2007).

Toxostoma curvirostre (Swainson). Plateau Thrasher.

Orpheus curvirostris Swainson, 1827, Philos. Mag. (n.s.) 1: 369. (Table land, Mexico.)

Habitat.—Low elevation brush land in south Texas and northeast Mexico, Chihuahuan Desert scrub and grassland with thorny shrubs at 1,000-3,000 m, with denser scrub at the higher elevations.

Distribution.—*Resident* from extreme southeast Arizona, New Mexico (except northwest portion of this state), southeast Colorado, southwest Kansas., west and southwest Oklahoma and north, west and south Texas and the Mexican state of Tamaulipas; and south on the Mexican Plateau (east of the Sierra Madre Occidental) to the states of Oaxaca and Puebla. In winter some individuals move to lower elevations. Many first-year birds of this and the following species disperse from their natal sites and have been reported widely in the United States and Canada. Although most were not distinguished to the level of this taxon, several *T. curvirostre sensu stricto* individuals have been reported in Iowa (Newlon 1981).

Notes.—*T. curvirostre* and *T. palmeri* were formerly considered conspecific under the name *T. curvirostre* and were also referred to as the Curve-billed Thrasher complex.

Toxostoma palmeri (Coues). Palmer's Thrasher.

Harporhynchus curvirostris var. *palmeri* Coues 1872 Key N. Am. Birds (p. 351), Tucson, Arizona.

Habitat.—Arid lands dominated by leguminous trees and cacti, grasslands with cholla cacti, and shrubs. Urban and agricultural areas are also used (Corman 2005).

Distribution.—*Resident* from Chloride. Mohave County in northwest Arizona and east below the Mogollon Rim to the New Mexico border in Greenlee County and south in Arizona and Mexico on the Pacific slope west of the Sierra Madre Occidental to north Nayarit. An individual of this species has been reported from Florida (AOU 1957). Many first-year birds of this and the preceding species wander and have been reported widely in the United States and Canada, although most were not distinguished to the level of this taxon.

Notes.—See note under *T. curvirostre*.

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