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British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (BOURC): 51st Report (January 2020)

This report covers the period October 2019 to January 2020. The 50th Report appeared in *Ibis* 162: 263-268.

CHANGES TO THE BRITISH LIST

The following changes have been made to the British List.

'Taiga' Merlin *Falco columbarius columbarius* (Linnaeus)

Add subspecies F. c. columbarius[†] (Linnaeus) to the British List

One, second-calendar-year or older, Burnside, Scrabster, Caithness, 3-18 February 2018 (photographed).

Published material indicates that the tail-banding of this individual is diagnostic for various Nearctic subspecies of Merlin, including nominate *F. c. columbarius*. Another Nearctic subspecies *F. c. richardsonii* was excluded because of the dark colour of the upperparts of the Caithness bird. *F. c. columbarius* is also the more likely trans-Atlantic vagrant, based on its eastern North American distribution and migration patterns.

The probability of this individual being an escape from captivity was judged to be very low, and the subspecies has been recorded previously elsewhere in the Western Palearctic as a trans-Atlantic vagrant.

Polytypic, breeding across the Palearctic and Nearctic regions, with northern populations moving south during winter.

'North American' Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris (alpestris/praticola/hoyti)* (Linnaeus/Henshaw/Bishop)

Add subspecies E. a. (alpestris/praticola/hoyti)[†] (Linnaeus/Henshaw/Bishop) to the British List

One, first-calendar-year or older, Askernish (Aisgernis), South Uist (Uibhist a Deas), Outer Hebrides, 9-14 October 2014 (photographed).

Plumage features indicate that the Outer Hebrides individual was one of the North American subspecies of Horned Lark, and not a European Shore Lark *E. a. flava*. Key features included the reduced amount of yellow in the ear coverts and face which distinguishes such birds from *E. a. flava*.

Of the many North American subspecies, three have a north-eastern distribution and display movements between breeding and non-breeding areas: *E. a. alpestris*, *E. a. praticola* and *E. a. hoyti*. Of these, only nominate *E. a. alpestris* has an east Canadian breeding range and makes large movements along the east coast to winter in south-

east USA, and so seems the most likely as a trans-Atlantic vagrant. However, as *E. a. praticola* and *E. a. hoyti* also have an eastern range they cannot be discounted with certainty. Thus the subspecies group (*alpestris/praticola/hoyti*) was accepted to Category A.

The probability of this individual being an escape from captivity was judged to be very low, and the subspecies group has been recorded previously elsewhere in the Western Palearctic as a trans-Atlantic vagrant.

Polytypic, with a large number of subspecies breeding across North America south to Central and northern South America. Some populations, particularly in the north of the range, are migratory with significant movements between breeding and winter areas; others are either resident or partially migratory. Shore Lark is also a polytypic breeding species across the Palearctic region, with similar movements.

IN ADDITION

CATEGORY A

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

New first record: male, adult, Orkney, 30 March 1873, specimen at National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh, accession number NMS.Z 1888.84.162 (*Scott. Birds* 38: 136-138) is accepted as the first British record.

An earlier specimen of an adult female reported to be *P. c. sinensis* from Christchurch, Dorset, collected in February 1873, with the specimen held at the Natural History Museum, Tring, and an accession number NHMUK 1873.12.3.31 (*Ibis* 72: 244-247), was re-identified during this review as nominate subspecies *P. c. carbo*. A paper describing this decision will be published in *British Birds* (McGowan & McInerney In Prep.).

Polytypic, with *P. c. sinensis* breeding across Europe and the Palearctic region to China; and nominate *P. c. carbo*, from north-west Europe to Atlantic North America.

CHANGES TO THE BRITISH LIST AFTER THE ADOPTION OF VERSION 9.2 OF THE *IOC WORLD BIRD LIST*

The release of version 9.2 of the *IOC World Bird List* (<https://www.worldbirdnames.org>) resulted in major changes to the sequence of the non-passerines in the British List.

The new sequence of Orders is as follows:

Galliformes
Anseriformes
Caprimulgiformes
Apodiformes
Otidiformes
Cuculiformes

Pterocliiformes
Columbiformes
Gruiformes
Podicipediformes
Charadriiformes
Phaethontiformes
Gaviiformes
Procellariiformes
Ciconiiformes
Suliformes
Pelecaniformes
Accipitriformes
Strigiformes
Bucerotiformes
Coraciiformes
Piciformes
Falconiformes
Psittaciformes
Passeriformes

White-winged Scoter *Melanitta deglandi* becomes monotypic following its split from Stejneger's Scoter *M. stejnegeri*, with the new annotation being:

White-winged Scoter[†] A

Melanitta deglandi (Bonaparte)
V monotypic.

CHANGES TO THE BRITISH LIST AFTER THE ADOPTION OF VERSION 10.1 OF THE *IOC WORLD BIRD LIST*

The release of version 10.1 of the *IOC World Bird List* results in the following changes to the British List:

Little Crake *Porzana parva* and Baillon's Crake *P. pusilla* are moved from the genus *Porzana* to *Zapornia*, with the new annotation being:

Little Crake[†] A

Zapornia parva (Scopoli)
V monotypic.

Baillon's Crake[†] A

Zapornia pusilla (Pallas)
CB V *intermedia* (Hermann).

Hudsonian Whimbrel *Numenius hudsonicus* is returned to full specific status, being split from Whimbrel *N. phaeopus*, with the new annotation being:

Whimbrel A

Numenius phaeopus (Linnaeus)

MB PM *islandicus* C.L. Brehm.
PM *phaeopus* (Linnaeus)

Hudsonian Whimbrel† A
Numenius hudsonicus Latham
V monotypic.

Eastern Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe melanoleuca* is given full specific status being split from ‘Western’ Black-eared Wheatear *O. hispanica*, with the new annotation being:

‘Western’ Black-eared Wheatear† A
Oenanthe hispanica (Linnaeus)
V monotypic.

Eastern Black-eared Wheatear† A
Oenanthe melanoleuca (Güldenstädt)
V monotypic.

BRITISH LIST TOTALS

With the addition of Hudsonian Whimbrel and Eastern Black-eared Wheatear following their splits from Whimbrel and ‘Western’ Black-eared Wheatear respectively, the British List increases to 621 species.

Category	Total
A	603
B	8
C	10
Total	621

Species in Category D and Category E form no part of the British List.

All the changes listed here can be seen in updated versions of the British List, both in Excel and simple list formats, at www.bou.org.uk/british-list/

FILES UNDER CONSIDERATION

‘Mandt’s’ Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle mandtii*
One, second-calendar-year or older, Cut End, Witham Mouth, Lincolnshire, 7-10 December 2017, is being considered as a first record of this taxon.

Black-throated Thrush *Turdus atrogularis*
Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes*
Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*
Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*

Following the review and rejection of British first records of White-winged Lark *Alauda leucoptera* and Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*, from East Sussex during the latter half of the nineteenth century, both associated with the taxidermist Mr. G. Swaysland & Son (*Ibis* 160: 936-942, *Br. Birds* 112: 89-98), five other British first records from the same source, area and period are being reviewed.

These include: Black-throated Thrush, one, male, 23 December 1868, near Lewes, specimen at Booth Museum, Brighton, accession number BoMNH 000102; Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin, one, male, nominate subspecies *C. g. galactotes*, 16 September 1854, Plumpton Bostall, near Brighton, specimen at Natural History Museum, Tring, NHMUK 1859.8.12.1; Common Rosefinch, one, caught late September 1869 near Brighton, held in an aviary until June 1876; Little Bunting, one, 2 November 1864, Roedean School, Brighton, specimen at Booth Museum, BoMNH 207569; Rustic Bunting, one, 23 October 1867, Roedean School, specimen at Booth Museum, BoMNH 189248 - previously listed as 204074.

BOU WEBSITE: WWW.BOU.ORG.UK

The BOU website is regularly updated and contains the latest version of the British List incorporating IOC taxonomic changes, announcements and the most recent Committee reports. However, the website is for information purposes only and is not an official document or part of the permanent record. Announcements of changes to the British List do not come into effect until published in a Committee report in *Ibis*.

PUBLICATIONS BY OR, ON BEHALF OF, MEMBERS OF THE BOURC AND MEMBERS OF THE BOURC-CFSC, RELATING TO THE BRITISH LIST, SINCE THE 50th REPORT

Stoddart, A. & McInerny, C.J. 2020. The Falcated Duck in Britain. *Brit. Birds* 113: 46-53.

McInerny, C.J. & Shaw, K.D. 2020. The White-billed Diver in Britain: its changing status and identification challenges. *British Birds* In Press.

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(†) Rare species and subspecies for which descriptions are required by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC). For species and subspecies not on the British List but considered by BBRC see www.bbrc.org.uk

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP (OCTOBER 2019 - JANUARY 2020)

James Gilroy (Chairman)
Chris McInerny (Secretary)
Steve Dudley (*ex officio* non-voting member; BOU Chief Operations Officer)
Dawn Balmer
Chris Batty
Paul French (*ex officio*; BBRC Representative)
Alex Lees
Andy Musgrove
Andy Stoddart

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