
News, Notes, Comments

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.

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