

32nd Report of the **ABA** Checklist Committee 2021

PETER PYLE, Staff Biologist for The Institute for Bird Populations
CHAIRMAN, ABA CHECKLIST COMMITTEE
San Francisco, California • ppyle@birdpop.org

MARY GUSTAFSON
Mission, Texas • live4birds@aol.com

TOM JOHNSON
Cape May, New Jersey • tbj4@cornell.edu

ANDREW W. KRATTER
Gainesville, Florida • kratter@flmnh.ufl.edu

AARON LANG
Homer, Alaska • aaron@wildernessbirding.com

MARK W. LOCKWOOD
Lorenzo, Texas • mwlockwood402@gmail.com

KRISTIE NELSON
Eunice, Missouri • storm_petrel@hotmail.com

DAVID SIBLEY
Deerfield, Massachusetts • sibleyguides@gmail.com

Hooded Crane, Inca Tern, Northern Giant-Petrel, Mitred Parakeet, Small-billed Elaenia, Blue-and-white Swallow, and Naumann's Thrush added to the Checklist

This is the 32nd published report of the ABA Checklist Committee (ABA-CLC), covering deliberations during 2021. 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*. Secondary roles include reviewing and revising ABA Codes covering ease of observation in the ABA Area, and updating and maintaining the *ABA Checklist* regarding taxonomic sequence, common and scientific names, and four-letter alpha codes.

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 re-elected or newly elected members. Members may be re-elected after their first four-year term but must take at least one

Figure 1. Hooded Crane (front) with wintering Sandhill Cranes. Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge, Meigs Co, Tennessee. 23 Dec 2011. The ABA Checklist Committee voted not to add Hooded Crane to the *ABA Checklist* based on this and other records from four states from 2010–2012; however, the species is now added based on a Sep 2021 record from Alaska. The Alaska bird was undergoing its second prebasic molt when recorded, and therefore could not be the same individual as the adult shown here. Photo © Ken Oeser/Macaulay Library ML316292121.



year off after two consecutive terms. Due to the past retirement of a member after three years of service, only one term was expiring after 2021, that of Kristie Nelson after four years of service, whereas in 2021 three terms will expire following eight years of service, those of Tom Johnson, Aaron Lang, and Peter Pyle. In order to resume a “two-on-two-off” rotation, Pyle will continue as Chair in a non-voting capacity. Nelson has opted out of serving a second four-year term. Therefore, two vacancies for voting members needed to be filled beginning in 2022, and we have nominated Alvaro Jaramillo and Marky Mutchler to become new ABA-CLC members. The ABA-CLC thanks Kristie for her four years of excellent service and welcomes Alvaro and Marky as new ABA-CLC members.

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 addition of the species to the *Checklist*, whereas a tally of 0–8 results in automatic non-acceptance. Intermediate vote tallies 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 of the species to the *Checklist*.

Records finalized by the ABA-CLC in 2021

In 2021, the ABA-CLC finalized voting on records of seven species that would represent additions to the ABA Area, and all seven were accepted and added to the *ABA Checklist*. Accounts for these species are provided below.

CHANGES IN BRIEF:

Species Added Based on New Distributional Records or Established Populations

Hooded Crane
(*Grus monacha*)
ABA Code 5

Northern Giant-Petrel
(*Macronectes halli*)
ABA Code 5

Inca Tern
(*Larosterna inca*)
ABA Code 5

Mitred Parakeet
(*Psittacara mitratus*)
ABA Code 2

Small-billed Elaenia
(*Elaenia parvirostris*)
ABA Code 5

Blue-and-white Swallow
(*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*)
ABA Code 5

Naumann's Thrush
(*Turdus naumanni*)
ABA Code 5



Figure 2. Inca Tern. South Point, Hawai'i Island, Hawaii. 13 Mar 2021 (RIGHT) and 29 Apr 2021 (ABOVE). During its stay, this tern underwent most of its preformative or second prebasic molt, replacing worn juvenile flight feathers with fresher feathers. The extent of wear to the juvenile feathers seen here is typical of wild Inca Terns in South America after about a year of age and thus does not indicate previous captivity.

Photos © Alex Wang/Macaulay Library ML316478591 (RIGHT) and © Jan Wilcox/Macaulay Library ML31964091 (ABOVE).



New Species Accepted to the ABA Checklist

Hooded Crane (*Grus monacha*)—ABA-CLC Record #2020–08 (8–0, Feb 2021). The ABA-CLC voted on a record of a Hooded Crane, undergoing its second prebasic molt (at about 15 months of age), that was shot by a hunter near Delta Junction, Alaska on 29 Sep 2020, after

In addition, and according to ABA Checklist convention, all taxonomic and nomenclatural decisions of the American Ornithological Society (AOS) are automatically recognized by the ABA-CLC. This year, decisions by the AOS's North American Classification Committee (Chesser et al. 2021) resulted in the addition of one species, Short-billed Gull (*Larus brachyrhynchus*), due to its split from Common Gull (*L. canus*); the two were formerly lumped as “Mew Gull,” and both occur in the ABA Area. The common names of four species and scientific names of twelve species on the ABA Checklist have also been revised, and linear sequences within four families and among 45 families of passerines were changed. For details, see Michael L. P. Retter's “Checklist Redux” beginning on p. 42 of this issue. The addition of these eight species results in a total of 1,128 species on the ABA Checklist.

having been observed there for several days. This record was also unanimously accepted by the Alaska Checklist Committee in Dec 2020. ABA-CLC members had no problem considering it of natural occurrence in the ABA Area given the age of the bird and the circumstances of the record. It likely joined Siberian-breeding Sandhill Cranes during their fall migration to North American wintering grounds. Withrow and Lenze (2021) provide details of this record including photographs of the specimen (University of Alaska Museum 45000; see also Macaulay Library record ML300821641). In a split decision, the ABA-CLC voted in 2014 not to accept records of one or more Hooded Cranes observed over a 22-month period (Apr 2010–Feb 2012) in Idaho, Nebraska, Tennessee, and Indiana (Fig. 1; Pranty et al. 2014; see also Kendell et al. 2015, Pranty et al. 2015). The ABA-CLC does not render opinions on local and state records once a species has been added to the ABA Checklist, and listing of such records is under the purview of ABA's Recording Standards and Ethics Committee (RSEC, aba.org/rsec/). According to RSEC rules, the 2010–2012 Hooded Crane(s) is/are now countable if the observer believes the bird seen was wild. Following Clements et al. (2021), Hooded Crane follows Common Crane on the ABA Checklist and the CLC has assigned it ABA Code 5.

Inca Tern (*Larosterna inca*)—ABA-CLC Record #2021–02 (8–0, Jun 2021). The ABA-CLC voted unanimously to accept an Inca Tern that was discovered at South Point, Hawai'i Island, Hawaii, on 12 Mar 2021 and continued there through 3 Jun 2021 (Fig. 2), following acceptance by the Hawaii Bird Records Committee in Mar 2021. This species is known to wander from breeding grounds along the Pacific Coast of South America, at least as far north as Guatemala and Costa Rica, where a different individual undergoing its second prebasic molt was photographed off Puntarenas on 14 Feb 2021 (eBird Checklist S81693881). The primary issue with the Hawaii record was whether it could have been held captive on a ship from South America.





Figure 3. Northern Giant-Petrel, with Black-footed Albatrosses and a Northern Fulmar, off Ocean Park, Pacific Co, Washington. 8 Dec 2019. The rather fresh and dark plumage (as opposed to grizzled white feathering on the face and chin) and dark eye indicate a younger individual, perhaps in juvenile or formative plumage. The dark maroon bill tip is diagnostic of Northern Giant-Petrel and eliminates Southern Giant-Petrel (*M. giganteus*), which has a pale-green bill tip at all ages. Photo © Zed Blue.



The bird was initially somewhat tame and took handouts from fishermen from a dock at South Point, and there was further concern that Chinese fishing fleets regularly transiting between South American waters and those south of Hawaii could have provided captive transport. But the bird also flew strongly and it was noted that wild individuals of this species regularly take handouts from fishermen in South America. A second Inca Tern (based on detailed comparison of photographs) was first observed on Oahu 24 Jun 2021 and was still present as we went to press in Nov 2021. Following the AOS Check-list sequence, Inca Tern follows Caspian Tern on the *ABA Checklist*, and it has been given ABA Code 5.

Northern Giant-Petrel (*Macronectes halli*)—ABA-CLC Record #2020–06 (8–0, Feb 2021). The ABA-CLC voted to accept a record of a Northern Giant-Petrel photographed by a fisherman off Ocean Park, Washington on 8 Dec 2019 (Fig. 3), following acceptance by the Washington Bird Records Committee (WBRC) in Nov 2020. Initial concern from both the WBRC and ABA-CLC centered on elimination of the very similar Southern Giant-Petrel (*M. giganteus*). The ABA-CLC solicited the comments of pelagic seabird experts Steve N. G. Howell and Alvaro Jaramillo, who both fully supported the initial identification based on the color of the bill tip (see Fig. 3). This represents the first confirmed record in the North

Pacific Ocean, although another or the same individual was photographed about 1,000 nautical mi. northeast of Honolulu, Hawaii, on 2 Mar 2021. Following Clements et al. (2021), Northern Giant-Petrel precedes Northern Fulmar as the first species of Procellariidae in the *ABA Checklist* sequence, and it has been given ABA Code 5.

Mitred Parakeet (*Psittacara mitratus*)—ABA-CLC Record #2020–07 (8–0, Feb 2021). This species has substantial breeding populations in both Florida and California (>500 individuals each) and was accepted as an established exotic species by AOS in 2002 (Banks et al. 2002). Pranty and Garrett (2011) discussed this species' status in regard to its addition to the *ABA Checklist* and indicated that the ABA-CLC would prefer to await endorsement of popula-

Figure 4. Mitred Parakeet. Kendall, Miami-Dade Co, Florida. 21 Mar 2015. The ABA-CLC added this exotic species to the *ABA Checklist* based on established breeding populations in Florida. The relatively restricted amount of red to the crown and face and the lack of red to the marginal lesser coverts (the “bend of the wing”) help distinguish Mitred Parakeet from the similar Red-masked Parakeet (cf. Fig. 8), which has breeding populations in California and Hawaii. Red-masked Parakeet may someday also be accepted to the *ABA Checklist*. Photo © Steven Mlodinow/Macaulay Library ML49836161.





Figure 5. Blue-and-white Swallow with Cave Swallows. Progreso Lakes, Hidalgo Co, Texas. 20 Jul 2020. The small size (smaller than the Cave Swallows), forked tail, black markings on the chest, and black undertail coverts documented in this and several other (albeit poor) photographs establish the identification vs. Tree Swallow, the most similar contending species. Analysis of the photographs indicate that this Blue-and-white Swallow had recently initiated its preformative molt: the outer primaries and rectrices appear to be worn, brown, juvenile feathers. The steely blue color to the incoming formative feathers indicates a male. The migratory habits of this South American species support its occurrence as a natural vagrant to Texas. Photo by © Dan Jones.

tion establishment by a local bird records committee before voting on its addition. The ABA-CLC also considered the addition of Mitred Parakeet based on populations in Hawaii but declined to add it (Pyle et al. 2017) because populations were being culled at the time of consideration (Pyle and Pyle 2017). However, following unanimous acceptance by the Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee (FOSRC) in Nov 2020, the ABA-CLC accepted Mitred Parakeet as an established exotic to the ABA Checklist. Acceptance by both the FOSRC and ABA-CLC was based on documentation provided by Epps and Chatfield-Taylor (2020) indicating establishment and increasing breeding populations in Miami-Dade Co. (cf. Fig. 4). Similar documentation now exists for breeding populations in California, and the California Bird Records Committee will be considering its acceptance to that state's list soon (T. Benson, pers. comm.). Following the sequence of the AOS Checklist, Mitred Parakeet follows Green Parakeet on the ABA Checklist, and it has been given ABA Code 2.

Small-billed Elaenia (*Elaenia parvirostris*)—ABA-CLC Record #2020-04 (First Circulation: 6-2, Jun 2020; 5-3 Aug 2020; 5-3, Sep 2020.

Second Circulation: 8-0, Sep 2021). In 2020 the ABA-CLC did not add this migratory South American species to the ABA Checklist, despite its acceptance by the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee (IORC) in Mar 2020 (Pyle et al. 2020). The ABA-CLC was concerned that White-crested Elaenia, which can be difficult to distinguish from Small-billed, was not fully eliminated, although all members agreed that the identification of Small-billed was likely correct. Following publication of a paper clarifying the identification of these two species (Gorleri and Areta 2021), the ABA-CLC solicited the comments of Fabricio C. Gorleri, as well as Alvaro Jaramillo, each of whom provided lengthy commentary supporting the identification. The presence of white tipping to the lower row of lesser coverts (forming a “third wing bar”) is diagnostic to Small-billed Elaenia, especially on birds in worn formative plumage, as was the case with the Illinois bird (see Pyle et al. 2020 for further discussion and a photograph). Following Clements et al. (2021), Small-billed Elaenia follows Greenish Elaenia in the ABA Checklist sequence, and it has been given ABA Code 5.

Blue-and-white Swallow (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*)—ABA-CLC Record #2020-09 (7-1, Mar 2020). In Dec 2020 the Texas Ornithological Committee accepted this species to the

state list based on a record of a first-cycle male present in Progreso Lakes, Hidalgo County, 20–21 Jul 2020 (Fig. 5). Its identification was supported by several expert opinions from those familiar with this South American species. Photographs of the bird accompanying the record (e.g., Fig. 5) were not ideal and caused one ABA-CLC member to prefer better documentation before accepting this species. However, the relative ease of identification (see Fig. 5), expert opinions, and the status of this species as a long-distance migrant that had been anticipated to occur in the ABA Area combined to be enough for seven members to vote for its addition, and the dissenting mem-

Figure 6. Naumann's Thrush. Gambell, Alaska. 5 Jun 2015. The photo to the left, although crisper and not showing dusky spotting to the underparts typical of Naumann's Thrush, does not show the upperparts well enough to eliminate a hybrid Naumann's x Dusky Thrush; however, the photo to the right shows that the upperparts are plain brown without any rufous, which is enough to eliminate a hybrid to the satisfaction of Russian ornithologists with access to specimens. The addition of this second photo plus commentary to the record after initial rounds of consideration resulted in the acceptance of Naumann's Thrush by the Alaska Checklist Committee and the ABA-CLC. Photos © Rich Hoyer (LEFT) and James Levison (RIGHT).

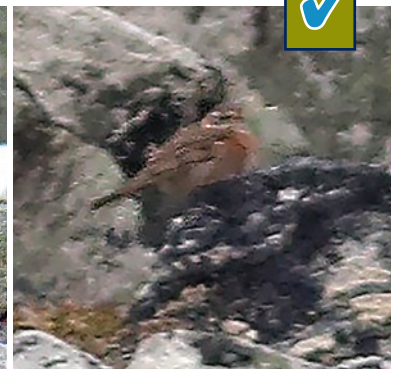


Figure 7. Rufous-tailed Rock-thrush. Utqiagvik (Barrow), Alaska. 25 Jun 2021. The bright body plumage coupled with worn juvenile remiges and outer greater coverts indicates a male in first alternate plumage. The ABA-CLC will consider adding this species to the *ABA Checklist* following consideration by the Alaska Checklist Committee. Photo © Jonah Benningfield/Macaulay Library ML352742901.



ber did not wish to consider the record further. Following the sequence of the AOS Checklist, Blue-and-white Swallow follows Mangrove Swallow on the *ABA Checklist*, and it has been given ABA Code 5.

Naumann's Thrush (*Turdus naumanni*)—ABA-CLC Record #2021–01 (8–0, Jun 2021). The split of Naumann's Thrush from Dusky Thrush in 2020 by AOS (Chesser et al. 2020) instigated the Alaska Checklist Committee (AKCLC) to consider four reports of Naumann's Thrush in the state from Oct 1982 to Jun 2015. Only two of these reports were accompanied by photographs, none of which showed enough features to eliminate a hybrid Dusky x Naumann's Thrush (there is a large hybrid zone), and in Nov 2020 Naumann's Thrush was placed on the state's unsubstantiated list by the AKCLC. At the request of ABA-CLC member David Sibley, the ABA-CLC was prepared to consider this species in any case, based on the best-documented record, from 5 Jun 2015 at Gambell (see Lehman 2019 for details). At the same time another photograph of the Gambell bird was located which shows the upperparts better (Fig. 6) and helps to eliminate a hybrid. Expert opinions and photographs of specimens provided by Russian ornithologists Pavel S. Tomkovich and Yaroslav Red'kin also helped both committees. Based on this new evidence, the AKCLC accepted Naumann's Thrush for Alaska in Mar 2021, and the ABA-CLC had no issues following suit. Based on Clements et al. (2021), Naumann's Thrush follows Dusky Thrush on the *ABA Checklist*, and it has been given ABA Code 5.

ABA Code Updates

The ABA-CLC has developed a coding system to reflect the abundance of and the ease of detecting each species in the ABA Area (Pranty et al. 2008). The Codes range from 1 (most common and easily detected) to 5 (five or fewer records in the ABA Area) and 6 (presumed extirpated or extinct). As mentioned above, the seven species added to the *ABA Checklist* in 2021 received ABA Code 5 (six species) or ABA Code 2 (Mitre Parakeet). Common Gull has been assigned ABA Code 3, while Short-billed

Gull inherits the Code 1 status of the former "Mew Gull."

ABA Codes are used by eBird in its algorithms for rare bird notifications, on which many birders rely. In order to align ABA Codes with those used by eBird, the ABA-CLC voted to revise the ABA Code from 3 to 2 for the following 17 species found in Hawaii: Mariana Swiftlet, Red-tailed Tropicbird, Hawaiian Petrel, Newell's Shearwater, Great Frigatebird, Masked Booby, O'ahu 'Elepaio, Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush, Puaiohi, 'Akikiki, Palila, 'Ākohekohe, Maui Parrotbill, 'Akiapōlā'au, Hawai'i Creeper, 'Akeke'e, and Hawai'i 'Ākepa. (Note that while the presence of diacritic marks and a Hawaiian letter used here in native Hawaiian bird names conform with usage in *North American Birds*, they do not appear on the ABA and AOS checklists.)

The ABA-CLC made three additional code changes to align ABA and eBird Codes: Stejneger's Scoter to Code 3 from 4 (listed in error as 5 in the previous *ABA Checklist*), Yellow-footed Gull to Code 2 (from 3), and Arctic Loon to Code 3 (from 2).

Four-letter Alpha Codes

Alpha codes are abbreviations of common English names; they are 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. The codes employed by both the *ABA Checklist* and eBird follow those maintained by the Institute for Bird Populations (tinyurl.com/IBP-codes), which updates them each July following release of

the AOS Checklist supplement. Codes for the seven species newly added to the *ABA Checklist* based on distributional records are as follows: Hooded Crane (HOCR), Inca Tern (INTE), Northern Giant-Petrel (NOGP), Mitred Parakeet (MIPA), Small-billed Elaenia (SBEL), Blue-and-white Swallow (BAWS), and Naumann's Thrush (NATH). Changes to common names (including changes in hyphenation) by the AOS (Chesser et al. 2021) have resulted in alpha-code changes for five additional species on the *ABA Checklist*: Common Wood Pigeon (CWPI), Common Gull (COGU), Short-billed Gull (SBIG), Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler (PGWA), and Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler (MGRA). In addition, the alpha code for Slaty-backed Gull becomes SBAG due to a conflict with Short-billed Gull; neither receives "SBGU" in order to avoid confusion (see tinyurl.com/IBP-codes for details). Finally, the alpha code for Thick-billed Longspur was updated to TBLO in order to correct a previous omission on the *ABA Checklist*.

Anticipated/Possible Future Votes and Other Decisions

The ABA-CLC is aware of one potential addition to the *ABA Checklist*, that of Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*), based on a record from Utqiagvik (Barrow), Alaska 24–25 Jun 2021 (Fig. 7). As per tradition, the ABA-CLC will await the decision of the Alaska Checklist Committee before circulating this record. The ABA-CLC is also aware that the California Bird Records Committee may soon be considering population establishment of Red-masked Parakeet (*Psittacara erythrogenys*) and



Figure 8. Red-masked Parakeet (ABOVE), San Francisco, California, 11 Aug 2021; and **Lilac-crowned Parrot** (FACING PAGE), San Diego, California, 24 Mar 2018. These two species could potentially be added to *ABA Checklist* after deliberation on the population status of each by the California Bird Records Committee. Red feathers among the marginal lesser coverts (the “bend of the wing”) help distinguish Red-masked Parakeet from the similar Mitred Parakeet (cf. Fig. 4). Photos © David Assmann/Macaulay Library ML362956311 (ABOVE) and © Tom Benson/Macaulay Library ML91537821 (FACING PAGE).

Lilac-fronted Parrot (*Amazona finschi*), each of which would represent additions to the *ABA Checklist* (T. Benson pers. comm.; see Fig. 8).

The ABA-CLC received correspondence from Daniel M. Brooks with information about captive Common Wood Pigeons being bred at a zoo in Winnipeg and dispersed to local pigeon enthusiasts between 2000 and 2015. This information could have resulted in reconsideration of this species’ addition to the *ABA*

Checklist, based on a record from La Romaine, Québec, 5–13 May 2019 (Pyle et al. 2020). After consulting with the Québec Bird Records Committee, the ABA-CLC agreed with their assessment that the remote location of La Romaine along the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, combined with date of occurrence and population increases of Common Wood Pigeon in Iceland, favored a natural vagrant over an escapee from the vicinity of Winnipeg or another urban area. The ABA-CLC thus decided not to reconsider the acceptance of this species to the *ABA Checklist*.

Corrigendum and Corrections to the *ABA Checklist*

The date for the Common Wood Pigeon listed for Fig. 1 of the 2020 ABA-CLC Report (Pyle et al. 2020) should be 5 May 2019—not 5 Sep 2019. The following updates were also made to the *ABA Checklist* in order to correct previous errors: the scientific name of Dark-billed Cuckoo was corrected to *Coccyzus melacoryphus*

(from *Cuculus melacoryphus*), and the scientific name of Thick-billed Warbler was corrected to *Arundinax aedon* (from *Arundinax aedon*).

Acknowledgments

The decisions of local bird records committees are instrumental in ABA-CLC evaluation of records, and we thank the following committees and their corresponding members for providing comments or additional information on species considered herein: Alaska Checklist Committee (ABA-CLC member Aaron Lang), Hawaii Bird Records Committee (Eric VanderWerf), Washington Bird Records Committee (Matt Bartels and Brad Waggoner), Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee (ABA-CLC member Andy Kratter), Illinois Ornithological Records Committee (Geoff Williamson), Texas Ornithological Committee (Eric Carpenter), California Bird Records Committee (Tom Benson), and Québec Bird Records Committee (Samuel Denault); we are grateful to the many ABA members and other birders



and experts who contributed documentation to local records committees, thereby assisting with ABA-CLC evaluations. We thank Jon Dunn for pointing out the corrigendum and for help with the Naumann's Thrush record, Daniel M. Brooks for information on Common Wood Pigeons, and Fabricio C. Gorleri, Steve N. G. Howell, and Alvaro Jaramillo for valuable opinions on records under consideration. Finally, we thank the thousands of individuals who have contributed images to the Macaulay Library and for agreeing to the license allowing use for research purposes, as well as the photographers listed in the figure captions for permission to publish their images.

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