

ENGLISH BIRD NAMES IN "THE KINGBIRD"

In the recently published Fourth edition of *A Field Guide to the Birds*, by Roger Tory Peterson (Houghton Mifflin, 1980), certain departures have been made from the English nomenclature of birds recommended by the American Ornithologists' Union, as published in the A.O.U. *Check-list of North American Birds*, Fifth edition (1957), and as officially changed in supplements to the *Check-list* that have appeared from time to time in *The Auk*. Because this splendid new field guide is sure to be widely used in New York State and elsewhere, we feel it advisable to reaffirm the policy of *The Kingbird* in this matter, which has been to adhere as strictly as possible to the English and scientific names of birds that are officially recognized by the A.O.U.

Because of the seemingly long delay in the publication of the Sixth edition of the A.O.U. *Check-list*, the difficulty involved in consulting the various supplements that have gradually appeared, and the rise of competing systems of nomenclature, strict adherence to A.O.U. English names is not always easy. However, we believe that a number of advantages outweigh the disadvantages of this editorial policy. Due to the regular and orderly appearance of several editions of the A.O.U. *Check-list* over the last century, generations of students of birds in North America have enjoyed a stability in birds' names far greater than that in most countries overseas. This stability, while often taken for granted, has made it much easier than it would otherwise be to use the vast literature on North American birds. The A.O.U. system is used not only in *The Auk*, but in other important American ornithological journals, among them *American Birds*, *The Condor*, the *Journal of Field Ornithology* (formerly *Bird-Banding*) and *The Wilson Bulletin*, and, insofar as strictly North American birds are concerned, these names are widely used in publications in English-speaking countries abroad. They have also been adopted by the Federal Government, for use in all its official publications, and by numerous conservation organizations and scientific societies devoted to the study of organisms other than birds or to such generalized subjects as ecology, behavior and physiology. We believe that the value of this system of stable, standardized names justifies continuing to endure a temporary period of inconvenience, while we all await the appearance of the Sixth edition of the A.O.U. *Check-list*. Our patience is soon to be rewarded. We have been informed that a

completed manuscript of the Sixth edition now exists, and is in the hands of regional authorities, who will check and refine the range statements. The new *Check-list* is scheduled to be published before the Centennial meeting of the A.O.U. in 1983, and its targetted deadline is 1982. This new edition will not only cover all of North America, as previous editions have, but will also include the birds of the West Indies and of Central America south through Panama.

In the meantime, in order to make things easier for contributors to the Regional Reports and for authors of papers published in *The Kingbird*, we are listing all the recent changes of English names that involve the birds of New York State. This same list was published in the Spring 1977 issue of *The Kingbird* (Vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 89-90), along with citations to the various supplements.

Old Name	New Name
Fulmar	Northern Fulmar
Leach's Petrel	Leach's Storm-Petrel
Wilson's Petrel	Wilson's Storm-Petrel
Common Egret	Great Egret
Wood Ibis	Wood Stork
"Black Brant"	Brant
"Blue Goose"	Snow Goose
Fulvous Tree Duck	Fulvous Whistling-Duck
"Common Teal"	Green-winged Teal
European Widgeon	European Wigeon
American Widgeon	American Wigeon
Shoveler	Northern Shoveler
Common Scoter	Black Scoter
Pigeon Hawk	Merlin
Sparrow Hawk	American Kestrel
Upland Plover	Upland Sandpiper
Knot	Red Knot
"Yellow-shafted Flicker"	Common Flicker
Traill's Flycatcher	Willow Flycatcher
Traill's Flycatcher	Alder Flycatcher
Catbird	Gray Catbird
Robin	American Robin
Parula Warbler	Northern Parula
"Myrtle Warbler"	Yellow-rumped Warbler
"Audubon's Warbler"	Yellow-rumped Warbler

Yellowthroat	Common Yellowthroat
"Baltimore Oriole"	Northern Oriole
"Bullock's Oriole"	Northern Oriole
"Ipswich Sparrow"	Savannah Sparrow
"Slate-colored Junco"	Dark-eyed Junco
"Oregon Junco"	Dark-eyed Junco

In addition to the above changes, a race of the Herring Gull, *Larus argentatus thayeri*, has been raised to the rank of a full species, to be called Thayer's Gull.

Some of these changes are the result of lumping of species; in these cases the old names are given above in quotes. These old names can and should still be used to refer to recognizable subspecies and populations (e.g., "Slate-colored Junco" and "Oregon Junco" to refer to two distinguishable forms that are now regarded as one species, the Dark-eyed Junco). Old names not enclosed in quotes have been changed for reasons not involving the lumping of species, and should no longer be used.

In determining the currently correct English name of a species, the above list can be used in conjunction with the Fifth edition of the A.O.U. *Check-list*, or with *Birds of North America: A Guide to Field Identification*, commonly known as the "Golden Guide," by C. S. Robbins, B. Bruun and H. S. Zim, and illustrated by Arthur Singer (Golden Press, 1966). The latter book follows the official A.O.U. nomenclature as of 1957. The current A.O.U. English names, including those changed in supplements since 1957, are used in *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds: Eastern Region*, by J. Bull and J. Farrand, Jr. (Alfred A. Knopf, 1977); it should be noted that in this book the species are not listed in systematic order.

We regret the inconvenience that this matter is causing all of us, readers, contributors and editors, but we believe that the study of birds is best served by seeking to maintain the stability and standardization of bird names that have been of such benefit for very nearly one hundred years.

The Editors