

EDITORIALS

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MORE NAME CHANGES

The following changes that affect New York birds were adopted in the 40th Supplement of the AOU Check-list, published in the July 1995 issue of *The Auk* [112(3):819-830], which appeared in April 1996. The changes have become effective in *The Kingbird* starting with Volume 46, Number 1, March 1996.

Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*) becomes *Ardea alba*.

American Swallow-tailed Kite becomes **Swallow-tailed Kite**

Rufous-necked Stint becomes **Red-necked Stint**.

Common Black-headed Gull becomes **Black-headed Gull**

American Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*) becomes *Pluvialis dominicus*

Eurasian Skylark becomes **Sky Lark**

Gray-cheeked Thrush is split into **Gray-cheeked Thrush** (*Catharus minimus*) and **Bicknell's Thrush** (*Catharus bicknelli*)

Rufous-sided Towhee is split into **Eastern Towhee** (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) and **Spotted Towhee** (*Pipilo maculatus*).

Sharp-tailed Sparrow is split into **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow** (*Ammodramus caudacutus*) and **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** (*Ammodramus nelsoni*).

Northern Oriole is split into **Baltimore Oriole** (*Icterus galbula*) and **Bullock's Oriole** (*Icterus bullockii*).

Why? You may wonder. Why is there a seemingly unending parade of pesky name changes? For some excellent explanatory commentary on this latest batch, consult these recent articles.

DeBenedictis, P. A. 1996 Fortieth Supplement to the A. O. U. Check-list. *Birding* Jun;28(3):228-231.

Brock, K. J. 1996 A case for IMUs. [Identifiable morphological units] *Birding* Jun;28(3):239-240.

DeBenedictis, P. A. 1996 Recognizable forms. *Birding* Jun;28(3):241-243.

CALL FOR LONG RUNS OF DATA

Birders tend to gather great quantities of data, which, too often, are not readily available when needed. Data published in our Regional Reports appear one season at a time. On occasion, several years worth are provided, but such tabulations are rare. Bird club newsletters contain a wealth of data, but are not readily accessible; that is, an investigator cannot simply go into a nearby library and pull a newsletter off the shelf. A journal is a much better vehicle for posterity.

We have a good opportunity here to rectify this situation. I hereby extend a call for long runs of good, reliable data. In fact, I urge you. If you have such data, please consider publishing it. Any species. I am not looking for long-winded articles, but rather neat tabulations with adequate explanations. How long is a long run? At least a decade, but even that is certainly negotiable, depending on circumstances.

Whether a particular species is deemed to be increasing, decreasing, or stable may depend on the time span being analyzed. Cyclical fluctuations may not be noticed in short runs. Decades of observations are needed. Tabulations are preferred over other presentation formats, because they enable other researchers to analyze the data using different methods. Powerful techniques, such as metaanalysis, often cannot be applied to many important publications because the necessary data elements are absent.

So, please heed this call if you do have any data which might be suitable. If you have some doubts about the usability of your material, please ask me. Even non-quantitative data or data containing some gaps may be utilized, with proper caveats. If you have the data but do not have the time to write it up, let us talk. Chances are you may never get the time. What then will happen to your data? Will your heirs toss it out with the rest of your clutter? Share it now. Is there a risk to printing tabulations without detailed explanations? Sure, you bet. But there is an even greater risk to not publishing them. Unlike laboratory experiments which can possibly be done over again, field observations can not be redone because the environment is changing; they are historical records which, when they are lost, are gone forever. Let us preserve them before it is too late.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Receiving lots of letters seems to be a fringe benefit of being an editor. While I certainly enjoy hearing from the readers, let me broadcast a blan-

ket warning. Any letter to any editor is a possible candidate for publication. If you want to write me person to person, off the record, please declare that the letter is not for publication.

Having a vigorous letters section in every issue is one of my goals. As an active letters writer myself, the letters section in any periodical is the first place I turn. So, please keep those cards and letters coming. Just bear in mind that what you say may appear in print, where it will reside in libraries forever.

As a matter of policy, any comments about a *Kingbird* article will be sent to its author for a response and both the letter and the response will be published together, the article author having the last word.

LISTS

Several readers interpreted my comments in the previous issue to be anti-listing. Not so! Just for the record, I am pro-listing and I keep several lists. After all, I do administer the Federation's "200" and "300" patch program, which is based on New York State lists. But, I must admit, listing is not one of my high priorities and I tend to be tardy with the updates. Just out of curiosity, is there a cogent argument against listing? Any volunteers for articulating it?

CALL FOR ARTISTS

This issue has some unused white space between articles. Why waste it? The Federation probably has many artists among its members who draw birds or scenes of interests to birders. Perhaps we can turn these blank spaces into opportunities.

I invite artists to submit black and white drawings. No larger than half a page and preferably smaller. Photo reductions are fine, but you do them, not I. Make sure your signatures do not get reduced to oblivion. Artists must be Federation members. Which drawings get published depends upon the space to be filled and the appropriateness of the image. *The Kingbird* is not an art journal. These drawings are fillers, so the short, wide ones will have more occasions for use. Finally, just as *The Kingbird* authors are uncontaminated by financial remuneration, this privilege will be extended to artists as well.