

# 22nd Report OF THE ABA Checklist Committee 2011

This is the 22nd published report of the ABA Checklist Committee (hereafter, ABA CLC or CLC), covering committee deliberations during the period October 2010–September 2011. There were no changes to CLC membership since our previous report (Pranty et al. 2010). At this writing, Lehman and Pranty have reached the end of their two four-year terms and have cycled off the committee for at least one year. Kimball L. Garrett of California and David A. Sibley of Massachusetts were selected by the CLC in September to fill the two vacancies, and Jon L. Dunn and Daniel D. Gibson have been selected to be the new co-chairs.

During the period covered by this report, the ABA CLC finalized votes on two species. A Sungrebe from New Mexico was accepted and the species was added to the *ABA Checklist*. The second vote, on a purported Ivory-billed Woodpecker videotaped in Arkansas in 2004, was not accepted. The number of species on the *ABA Checklist* is increased to 970. Ancillary numbers are provided in this and other ABA CLC reports for all additions to allow for their proper placement on the seventh edition of the *ABA Checklist* (Pranty et al. 2008).

## New Species Accepted

**Sungrebe (*Heliornis fulica*)**—ABA CLC Record #2011-01. A female in unworn plumage was detected at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, Socorro County, New Mexico, 13–18 November 2008. The bird was discovered and photographed by Sally King with Ernesto Burciaga, and identified and seen by others subsequently (Williams et al. 2009). The Sungrebe, the sole New World member of the finfoot

family (Heliornithidae), is fairly unmistakable, although the New Mexico bird was initially thought to be a Red-necked Grebe (Williams et al. 2009). This record was accepted 6–1 by the New Mexico Bird Records Committee (the negative vote reflecting questions of provenance) and 8–0 by the ABA CLC.

Despite the unanimous CLC vote, some members reported reservations regarding provenance. The bird was at least 1,370 kilometers (850 miles) out of range, and much unsuitable habitat lies between the Sungrebe's normal range and where the New Mexico bird was found. One CLC member (Zimmer) stated, "All scenarios are pretty implausible. Although I agree that this is not a species that one would expect to be kept in captivity, there is almost nothing that would surprise me when it comes to illegal transport of birds across the U.S.–Mexico border." Williams et al. (2009) conceded, "Beyond El Paso...[the Rio Grande] bends eastward, [and] is often dry for long stretches as it passes through a rocky and often mountainous desert landscape, making a 'follow the river' scenario difficult to imagine." Zimmer noted that if the Sungrebe didn't follow the Rio Grande, then "it flew over mountain ranges in north-central Mexico, which somehow seems even less likely." CLC member Dunn countered that some Old World finfoots regularly migrate many hundreds of miles.

The Sungrebe is resident from southeastern Mexico to Bolivia and northern Argentina. Williams et al. (2009) provided reports that suggest potential northward range expansion in Mexico and short-distance vagrancy elsewhere in the range.

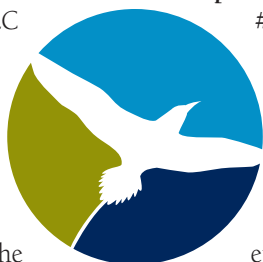
Sungrebe (251.1) is placed on the ABA Checklist as a Code 5 species. Following

AOU (1998), the ABA CLC places Sungrebe between American Coot (251) and Limpkin (252).

## Status Unchanged

### Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*)—ABA CLC Record

#2011-02. The ABA CLC's evaluation concerns a bird identified as a male (e.g., by Fitzpatrick et al. 2005) at Bayou deView, Cache River National Wildlife Refuge, Monroe County, Arkansas, 25 April 2004. The bird was discovered and videotaped by David



Luneau and Robert Henderson, and not positively recorded again, despite numerous reports (e.g., Rosenberg et al. 2005) of varying quality. This record, widely known as the "Luneau video," represents the only visual (photographic or videographic) record on which the Ivory-billed Woodpecker was claimed to have been recently rediscovered (Fitzpatrick et al. 2005).

This record involves perhaps the most disputed identification of any bird in the history of ornithology. In 2006, the Bird Records Committee of the Arkansas Audubon Society accepted the identification of the bird in the Luneau video as an Ivory-billed Woodpecker, by a vote of 4–1. The dissenting voter was concerned that the bird was a Pileated Woodpecker (Arkansas Audubon Society 2006, unpublished files provided to ABA CLC).

In the months following the publication of Fitzpatrick et al. (2005), several ornithologists independently analyzed selected frames of the Luneau video, and concluded that the original identification was incorrect and that the bird was likely or certainly a Pileated Woodpecker (e.g., Sibley et al. 2005, Jackson 2006, Collinson

#### CHANGES IN BRIEF

##### New Species Accepted

- Sungrebe

##### Status Unchanged

- Ivory-billed Woodpecker  
(Code 6, Cannot Be Found)

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The ABA Checklist Committee has determined that this **Sungrebe** was likely a natural vagrant to New Mexico. This judgment by the committee increases the number of species on the *ABA Checklist* to 970. *Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico; November 2008. Photo by © Jerry R. Oldenettel.*

2007), although many birders continued to trust the original identification. Initially, the ABA CLC did not review the Luneau video, despite the Arkansas Audubon Society vote in 2006. Instead, the CLC chose to wait until ongoing surveys ended to avoid voting prematurely (Pranty et al. 2006, 2007). Formal searches for Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in the southeastern U.S. by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology concluded in 2009. The seventh edition of the *ABA Checklist* (Pranty et al. 2008) indirectly rejected the Arkansas record by stating that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker remained a Code 6 species, meaning that it was probably or definitely extinct. The last accepted records, accompanied by black-and-white and color photographs (see Floyd 2007), were of a small population in the Singer Tract, Madison Parish, Louisiana, that was studied by James Tanner in 1937–1939.

In our 21st annual report (Pranty et al. 2010), we stated that the committee had decided against formal review of the Luneau video. D. A. Sibley e-mailed Pranty in January 2011 expressing disappointment that the ABA CLC had de-

clined to evaluate the Luneau video. In response, Pranty contacted the chair of the Arkansas Audubon Society Bird Records Committee and was informed that that committee would revote on the Luneau video later in the year. Because the ABA CLC wanted to finalize its vote on the Luneau video with its current membership, the committee voted in July 2011. The CLC vote on the Luneau video was unanimous not to accept the identification of the bird as an Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Dunn commented that with many rare birds now being photographed, and with the images posted to the internet often within hours, it seems inconceivable that populations of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in the eastern U.S. could completely evade the efforts of birders and photographers to document their existence.

*Note:* The ABA CLC requires verifiable evidence (usually a specimen, photograph, or audio or video recording) to add a species to the *ABA Checklist* or to “delist” a Code 6



The ABA CLC evaluates the occurrence of birds for which verifiable physical evidence exists. Such evidence may take various forms, including photographs, audio recordings, and specimens. Reports of **Ivory-billed Woodpeckers** from the southeastern U.S. in the early 21st century have been determined by the ABA CLC not to be supported by verifiable physical evidence. The last unquestioned physical evidence for the occurrence of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in the ABA Area is from James Tanner’s research in the late 1930s. Many specimens and a few photographs and audio recordings predate Tanner’s work.

*Top: Male; Lake County, Florida; 22 February 1904. Specimen (UMRC 8533) courtesy of Archbold Biological Station; photo by © Bill Pranty. Bottom: Female; Jefferson County, Florida; 8 February 1904. Specimen (UMRC 8534) courtesy of Archbold Biological Station; photo by © Bill Pranty.*

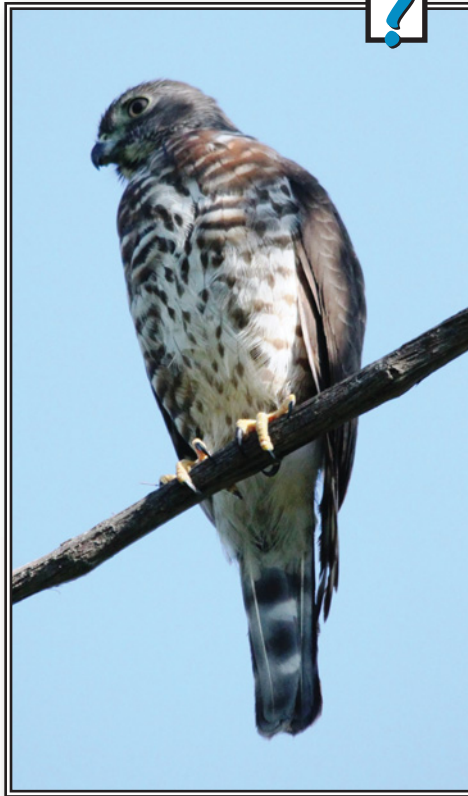
species. The CLC adopted this policy in 2001 to bring the committee into concordance with the AOU's "Check-list Committee" and with several state and provincial committees (see Pranty 2010). Therefore, the CLC will not review any sight reports of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers from Arkansas (e.g., Rosenberg et al. 2005), Florida (e.g., Hill et al. 2006), Louisiana (Williams 2001, Jackson 2006), and South Carolina (Sweeney 2007). We are aware of considerable audio evidence obtained during recent woodpecker surveys of sounds potentially made by Ivory-billed Woodpeckers (e.g., Fitzpatrick et al. 2005, Hill et al. 2006, Collins 2011). However, other sources for these sounds have been suggested, such as gunshots, tree branches striking each other, duck wingtip collisions, other species of woodpeckers, or an observer playing a recording of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker (e.g., Jackson 2006, Jones et al. 2007), and we concur with those assessments. More important from the CLC's perspective is that no audio recording has led to subsequent photographic proof of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker's persistence.

### Votes in Progress

Three votes begun by the ABA CLC in previous years and mentioned in earlier CLC reports have yet to be resolved: **Solander's Petrel** (*Pterodroma solandri*) off British Columbia (ABA CLC #2010-01), along with a record newly accepted by the Washington Bird Records Committee of a bird off the coast of Washington in 1983 (ABA CLC #2011-03); **Fea's Petrel** (*Pterodroma feae*; as opposed to the **Fea's Petrel or Zino's Petrel** listing currently on the ABA Checklist) off the coast of North Carolina (ABA CLC #2008-09); and **Gray Gull** (*Leucophaeus modestus*) in Louisiana in 1987 (ABA CLC #2008-06). Because the Gray Gull record was not accepted by the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (Dittmann and Cardiff 2003), the ABA CLC is unlikely to reevaluate the record without additional evidence.

### Votes Anticipated

An apparent **Double-toothed Kite** (*Harpagus bidentatus*) was photographed at High Island, Texas, in May 2011 but not



This **Double-toothed Kite** potentially establishes a first record for Texas and for the ABA Area. Pending action by the Texas Bird Records Committee, the ABA Checklist Committee may evaluate this record. *High Island, Texas; May 2011.* © Photo by David Hanson-VIREO.

identified until several weeks later. The ABA CLC will vote on this record if it passes an expected review by the Texas Bird Records Committee.

In 2010, the California Bird Records Committee determined that many of the Galapagos/Hawaiian petrels (*Pterodroma phaeopygia/sandwichensis*) found off the California coast can be identified specifically as **Hawaiian Petrels** (CBRC 2011). The ABA CLC will soon address this issue.

### Records Currently Not Under Consideration

The Massachusetts Avian Records Committee rejected as a natural vagrant a recent record of a **Common Shelduck** (*Tadorna tadorna*) at Nahant, Essex County, in December 2009 (M. J. Iliff, personal communication); another shelduck found the month before at Quidi Vidi

Lake, Newfoundland, in November 2009 was not reviewed because of uncertain provenance (B. Mactavish, personal communication). In light of these committees' decisions, the ABA CLC does not have plans at present to evaluate the status of Common Shelduck in the ABA Area.

A record of a **Cuban Black-Hawk** (*Buteogallus gundlachi*) in Harris County, Georgia, was rejected by the Georgia Ornithological Society Checklist and Records Committee on grounds of uncertain provenance <tinyurl.com/3sfs4lq>. As with Common Shelduck, the CLC does not intend at present to evaluate the Cuban Black-Hawk record.

A bird believed to be a **Blyth's Reed Warbler** (*Acrocephalus dumetorum*) found at Gambell, Alaska, in September 2010 (Lehman and Ake 2011) was relegated by the Alaska Checklist Committee (AKCLC) to its Unsubstantiated List, which comprises species attributed to Alaska solely by written or published reports that lack photographic or specimen evidence necessary for verifiable identification. Based on the AKCLC's judgment, the CLC has declined to evaluate this record.

The Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee (FOSRC) recently voted on three potential additions to the ABA Checklist, but none of the votes was resolved; re-votes are planned for 2012 (A. W. Kratter, personal communication). The FOSRC again did not ratify the establishment of the **Purple**

**Swamphen** (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) as an established exotic; the committee could not agree on the provenance of a **Greater Ani** (*Crotophaga major*) photographed near Miami in January 2011; and the committee could not ascertain the provenance of a **Tricolored Munia** (*Lonchura malacca*) specimen recovered at Dry Tortugas National Park in August 2003 (the third record for the islands).

The ABA CLC chose not to re-review the evidence for potential establishment of the **Nanday (Black-hooded) Parakeet** (*Nandayus nenday*) in Florida, which was accepted by the FOSRC in 2004 and rejected by the CLC in 2006. Although the species' range continues to expand along the central Gulf Coast, numbers on recent Christmas Bird Counts appear to have declined. At some point, the ABA CLC will likely reevaluate the status of this species.

## A Procedural Note

The votes and other actions described above affect species that would be additions to the *ABA Checklist* if they were accepted first by a local records committee and then by the ABA CLC. The CLC bylaws state that potential first records that were rejected by a local committee may undergo CLC review if requested by "one or more" members. A proposed amendment to the bylaws in 2011 that would have required a majority vote (i.e., five or more members) of the CLC to request a review did not pass. Two points of view were represented. According to one viewpoint, the ABA CLC must be an independent committee not bound by decisions made by local committees. An alternative viewpoint is that the CLC must be careful to avoid the appearance of wanting to overrule decisions by others. The ABA CLC intends to resolve the issue regarding the number of CLC members required to request review of a potential addition to the *ABA Checklist* that has been rejected by a local committee; note that potential votes on some of the aforementioned species could be affected by the ABA CLC's actions regarding this issue.

## AOU Taxonomic and Nomenclatorial Changes Affecting the *ABA Checklist*

The Committee on Classification and Nomenclature—North



**Common Shelducks**, like the one shown here, are frequently held in captivity in the ABA Area. Not surprisingly, escapes or releases are sometimes encountered in the wild. Nonetheless, some field ornithologists have raised the possibility that a few instances of Common Shelducks in the wild in North America—especially along the northeast Atlantic Coast—may refer to naturally occurring vagrants. No shelduck records are currently under evaluation by the ABA Checklist Committee, but the committee may consider the matter should new data or analysis come to light. *San Diego Wild Animal Park, California; December 2004. Photo by © E. J. Peiker.*

and Middle America of the AOU published its 52nd supplement to the AOU's *Check-list of North American Birds* in the July 2011 issue of *Auk* (Chesser et al. 2011). The AOU accepted several changes that affect the *ABA Checklist* in terms of scientific names and sequence order. Several changes to English names hint at possible additions of two species to the *ABA Checklist*; these are described below.

Changes affecting the ABA Area are as follows:

- Common Moorhen is split into Common Moorhen of the Old World (*Gallinula chloropus*) and Common Gallinule of the Americas (*G. galeata*). A *Gallinula* specimen from the Aleutian Islands, Alaska (see *North American Birds* 65:142), has been identified as a Common Moorhen (J. J. Withrow—University of Alaska Museum, personal communication). The ABA CLC will vote on this record as the first for the ABA Area if it passes an expected review by the AKCLC.
- Snowy Plover is split into Kentish Plover of the Old World (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) and Snowy Plover of the Americas (*C. nivosus*). Photos supporting the only Alaska record of a Snowy Plover, from Nome in May 1991 (Gibson and Kessel 1992), are being re-circulated within the AKCLC to determine if that bird can be identified to species.
- Following Fork-tailed Flycatcher (#597 on the *ABA Checklist*), *Incertae sedis* is changed to Tityridae: Becards, Tityras, and Allies, to recognize a new family accepted by the AOU.
- Mexican Jay is split into the extralimital, Mexican-endemic

Transvolcanic Jay and the Mexican Jay, which ranges into the ABA Area. Transvolcanic Jay receives the scientific name of the former Mexican Jay (*Aphelocoma ultramarina*), while the new Mexican Jay gets a new name (*A. wollweberi*).

- The genera *Luscinia*, *Tarsiger*, *Oenanthe*, and *Saxicola* are moved from the family Turdidae (Thrushes) to the family Muscicapidae (formerly known as Old World Flycatchers); no scientific names are changed. The new sequence is:
  - Gray-streaked Flycatcher
  - Asian Brown Flycatcher
  - Spotted Flycatcher
  - Siberian Rubythroat
  - Bluethroat
  - Siberian Blue Robin
  - Red-flanked Bluetail
  - Narcissus Flycatcher



The occurrence of breeding **Purple Swampphens** in Florida is undisputed, but the bird is not on the *ABA Checklist*. When or if the ABA Checklist Committee evaluates the status of the Purple Swampphen in the ABA Area, the committee will wrestle with a variety of issues, including, but not necessarily limited to, the following: the findings of the Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee; swampphens' prospects for persistence in the wild in Florida; and the taxonomic conundrum of the presence of multiple taxa (subspecies *poliocephalus* shown here), possibly representing multiple species, in Florida. *Bangalore, India; September 2009. Photo by © Clement M. Francis.*



The **Nanday Parakeet** is in the unusual position of having been accepted by the Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee (in 2004) but rejected by the ABA Checklist Committee (in 2006). It seems likely that the species' status will eventually be reevaluated by the ABA Checklist Committee. *Pinellas County, Florida; February 2006. Photo by © Brian E. Small.*

- Mugimaki Flycatcher
- Taiga Flycatcher
- Northern Wheatear
- Stonechat
- The family Parulidae (wood-warblers) undergoes a substantial restructuring, with major changes in scientific names and linear sequence, but no changes in English names. The genera *Parula* and *Dendroica* and Hooded Warbler are subsumed into *Setophaga*; the genus *Wilsonia* (except Hooded Warbler, as noted above) is subsumed into *Cardellina*; Fantailed Warbler is moved to *Basileuterus*; and all *Oporornis* warblers except Connecticut Warbler are moved to *Geothlypis*. The sequence of species is rearranged as follows:
  - Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*)
  - Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorum*)
  - Louisiana Waterthrush (*Parkesia motacilla*)
  - Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*)
  - Bachman's Warbler (*Vermivora bachmanii*)
  - Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*)
  - Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora cyanoptera*)
  - Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*)
  - Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*)
  - Swainson's Warbler (*Limnithlypis swainsonii*)
  - Crescent-chested Warbler (*Oreothlypis superciliosa*)
  - Tennessee Warbler (*Oreothlypis peregrina*)
  - Orange-crowned Warbler (*Oreothlypis celata*)
  - Colima Warbler (*Oreothlypis crissalis*)
  - Lucy's Warbler (*Oreothlypis luciae*)
  - Nashville Warbler (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*)
  - Virginia Warbler (*Oreothlypis virginiae*)
  - Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*)
  - Gray-crowned Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis poliocephala*)
  - MacGillivray's Warbler (*Geothlypis tolmiei*)
  - Mourning Warbler (*Geothlypis philadelphia*)

- Kentucky Warbler (*Geothlypis formosa*)
- Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*)
- Hooded Warbler (*Setophaga citrina*)
- American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*)
- Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*)
- Cape May Warbler (*Setophaga tigrina*)
- Cerulean Warbler (*Setophaga cerulea*)
- Northern Parula (*Setophaga americana*)
- Tropical Parula (*Setophaga pitiayumi*)
- Magnolia Warbler (*Setophaga magnolia*)
- Bay-breasted Warbler (*Setophaga castanea*)
- Blackburnian Warbler (*Setophaga fusca*)
- Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*)
- Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Setophaga pensylvanica*)
- Blackpoll Warbler (*Setophaga striata*)
- Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Setophaga caerulescens*)
- Palm Warbler (*Setophaga palmarum*)
- Pine Warbler (*Setophaga pinus*)
- Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Setophaga coronata*)
- Yellow-throated Warbler (*Setophaga dominica*)
- Prairie Warbler (*Setophaga discolor*)
- Grace's Warbler (*Setophaga graciae*)
- Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Setophaga nigrescens*)
- Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*)
- Hermit Warbler (*Setophaga occidentalis*)
- Golden-cheeked Warbler (*Setophaga chrysoparia*)
- Black-throated Green Warbler (*Setophaga virens*)
- Fan-tailed Warbler  
(*Basileuterus lachrymosus*)
- Rufous-capped Warbler  
(*Basileuterus rufifrons*)
- Golden-crowned Warbler  
(*Basileuterus culicivorus*)
- Canada Warbler (*Cardellina canadensis*)
- Wilson's Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*)
- Red-faced Warbler  
(*Cardellina rubrifrons*)
- Painted Redstart (*Myioborus pictus*)
- Slate-throated Redstart  
(*Myioborus miniatus*)
- Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*)
- The AOU has placed Solitary Snipe (*Gallinago solitaria*) after Pin-tailed Snipe (*G. stenura*); the 21st CLC report (Pranty et al. 2010) provisionally placed *G. solitaria* first in the genus *Gallinago*.
- In adding White-chinned Petrel to its main list (Chesser et al. 2011), the AOU reduces

by one the number of species with which the AOU and ABA disagree. (White-chinned Petrel was already on the *ABA Checklist*.)

The seventh edition of the *ABA Checklist* (Pranty et al. 2008) was published in January 2009. Since that time, we have received notice of nine notable errors in the *Checklist*. We thank Matt Orsie, Mark Stevenson, Tony White, and especially Dave Quady for alerting us to some of these errors. The errors are as follows:

- p. 21. In the table caption, we listed the years in which no annual report was published by the CLC, but we omitted the year 2002.
- p. 88. Arizona is not among the states that require verifiable evidence to add a species to its list.
- p. 106. California Condors have successfully produced fledglings outside of captivity. Several young have fledged from nests in Arizona since 2003.
- p. 115. The county of the West Virginia Great Knot record is *Putnam*, not *Marion*.
- p. 119. For Black-tailed Gull, the reference to Nunavut refers to a bird at Inuvik, which is located in the Northwest Territories.
- p. 135. For Brown-chested Martin, the Connecticut record has not been identified to subspecies.
- p. 141. For Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, the *North American Birds* reference is 59:464, not 59:462.
- p. 163. In the Dutcher (1894) reference, the page numbers should be 4–12, not 412.



An action by the AOU "Check-list Committee" that potentially affects the *ABA Checklist* involves the **Snowy Plover**. The AOU recently split the New World population (still called Snowy Plover) and the Old World population (now called Kentish Plover) into two species, and an occurrence in Alaska in 1991 may involve Kentish Plover—currently not on the *ABA Checklist*. *Galveston County, Texas; September 2010. Photo by © Alan Murphy.*

- p. 192. In the Index, Common Myna should be listed on p. 15, not p. 16.

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The AOU has massively altered the relationships among the wood-warblers in the family Parulidae, and the ABA Checklist, by stipulation, follows the taxonomic and nomenclatorial judgments of the AOU. One of many changes involves the **Mourning Warbler**, reassigned to the “yellowthroat” genus *Geothlypis*. Note, however, that the Connecticut Warbler (not shown) remains in the genus *Oporornis*. Somerset County, Maine; May 2010. Photo by © Garth McElroy.

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