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British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (BOURC): 54th Report (July 2022)

This report covers the period October 2021 to April 2022. The 53rd Report appeared in *Ibis* 164: 363-368.

CHANGES TO THE BRITISH LIST

The following changes have been made to the British List.

Ross's Goose *Anser rossii* Cassin

Add to Category A

One, adult, Plex Moss, Lancashire, 5 December 1970 to 17 January 1971 and consecutive winters to January 1974.

Ross's Goose had been placed in Category D of the British List for many years, as there have been uncertainties about the origins of birds found in Britain because the species is kept widely in captivity and escapes are known to occur.

However, the species is a long-distance migrant in North America and there is much precedent for Nearctic wildfowl, including geese, to cross the Atlantic naturally to Europe. Furthermore, the very significant growth and expansion of the population of Ross's Goose since the 1950s has increased the probability of such trans-Atlantic vagrancy.

Part of the Committee's remit and procedure is to periodically re-examine species in Category D. Following publication of the Committee's guidelines to judge the status of wildfowl (*Brit. Birds* 113: 46-53), the Committee considered a number of records of Ross's Geese. Following these criteria, the 1970 Plex Moss record was found by the majority of the Committee to be eligible for Category A. This record occurred during a period of rapid population growth of the species, and in circumstances highly suggestive of wild origin. Another important part of the process was to confirm the identification of this 50-year old record on the basis of the original field notes. These documents were located and the Committee voted unanimously that the identification was secure. Hence the 1970 Plex Moss is accepted as the first British record and the species accepted to Category A. A paper describing in more detail the process taken by BOURC to come to this conclusion will be published in *British Birds*.

Ross's Goose breeds in northern Canada and migrates to winter in southern and western USA and northern Mexico. A significant and dramatic increase in the population has occurred since the 1950s, an estimated 8900% over the past 40 years, with the species now classified as Least Concern by IUCN.

It should be placed after Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsii* on the British List as follows:

Ross's Goose[†]

AE*

Anser rossii Cassin

One record: adult, Plex Moss, Lancashire, December 1970 to January 1971, and

consecutive winters until January 1974.
V monotypic.

IN ADDITION

CATEGORY A

North American Horned Lark (*alpestris* group) *Eremophila alpestris* (*alpestris/praticola/hoyti*)

New first record: one, first-calendar-year or older, Isles of Scilly, 2-31 October 2001: Periglis, St Agnes (2 October), Carn Near, Tresco (9-18 October), Wingletang Down and Covean, St Agnes (20-23 October), and Carn Near and Pentle Bay, Tresco (29-31 October).

This record pre-dates the previously accepted first record of the subspecies group and is therefore accepted as the first British record.

CATEGORY D

The following has been placed in Category D:

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*

First-calendar-year or older, Sennen, Cornwall, 23 October to 14 November 2019.

This extraordinary and unexpected record resulted in a protracted and thorough examination by the Committee. The identification as Paddyfield Pipit was not in question due to a combination of detailed field notes, photographic images, analysis of vocalisations and DNA evidence: the record likely pertains to the nominate subspecies *A. r. rufulus*.

However, the provenance of the individual was far less clear. Paddyfield Pipit is a non-migratory tropical Asian species with no Western Palearctic records, for which there are only records of short-distance vagrancy as far as the Arabian Peninsula. No other species with a similar distribution or life history has been observed as a vagrant to Britain. The species has also been documented in the wild bird trade, at least in South East Asia. Human-transport of a wild bird, including via aircraft, as has been documented in an increasing number of species, was also considered to be a possibility. Unusual feather damage was noted on the bird which might be suggestive of captive origin, although comparable wear has been documented in similar species of wild origin.

Combined, these reservations resulted in the Committee placing the record and the species in Category D by a majority vote, which will allow the record to be reviewed in the future when more is known about the species' potential incidence as a vagrant to Europe. A paper describing in more detail the process taken by BOURC to come to this conclusion will be published in *British Birds*.

CHANGES TO THE BRITISH LIST AFTER THE ADOPTION OF VERSIONS 12.1 OF

THE IOC WORLD BIRD LIST

The release of version 12.1 of the *IOC World Bird List* (<https://www.worldbirdnames.org>) results in a number of changes to the British List. These include:

Magnificent Frigatebird is no longer monotypic, with the nominate subspecies *magnificens* restricted to the Galapagos Islands and the subspecies *rothschildi* in the Atlantic. The specimen held at NHM was examined to establish its subspecific identity, but biometrics of the tail length, an important discriminatory feature, were inconclusive; DNA analysis may be attempted in the future. Thus, the new annotation is:

Magnificent Frigatebird[†] A

Fregata magnificens Mathews

First record: male, adult, near Whitchurch, Shropshire, November 2005, now at Natural History Museum, Tring (NHMUK 2006.23.1).

V subspecies undetermined, but likely to have been *rothschildi* (Mathews).

White-chinned Petrel is no longer monotypic with the nominate subspecies *aequinoctialis* in the south Atlantic. Thus, the new annotation is:

White-chinned Petrel[†] A

Procellaria aequinoctialis (Linnaeus)

One record: first-calendar-year or older, Scapa Flow, Mainland, Orkney, May 2020.

V subspecies undetermined, but likely to have been nominate *aequinoctialis* (Linnaeus).

Change the international English name from Stejneger's Stonechat to Amur Stonechat, with the new annotation being:

Stejneger's Stonechat[†] A

Amur Stonechat

Saxicola stejnegeri (Parrot)

First record: male, first-calendar-year, Portland Bill, Dorset, October 2012.

V monotypic.

BRITISH LIST TOTALS

Following the addition of Ross's Goose, the British List increases to 628 species.

Category	Total
A	610
B	8
C	10
Total	628

Species in Category D and Category E form no part of the British List.

All the changes listed here can be seen in updated versions of the British List, both in

Excel and simple list formats, at www.bou.org.uk/british-list/

FILES UNDER CONSIDERATION

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*

A review of the Category D status of this species is being undertaken.

Zino's Petrel *Pterodroma madeira*

One, first-calendar-year or older, approximately ~3.2 km south of Bishop Rock Lighthouse, Isles of Scilly, 30 July 2020, is being considered as the first record of this species.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

One, adult male, 3 July 1822, Winkton, River Avon, Christchurch, Dorset, shot, specimen now at Horniman Museum, London (Accession Number NH. 83.3.120), is being considered as a new first record of this species.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus rufinus*

One, second-calendar-year, Hillwell, Mainland Shetland, and Fair Isle, both 1 September 2019, is being considered as the first record of this species.

East Siberian (White) Wagtail *Motacilla alba ocularis*

One, first-calendar-year or older, Westing, Unst, Shetland, 25 October 2020, is being considered as the first record of this subspecies.

BOU WEBSITE: WWW.BOU.ORG.UK

The BOU website is regularly updated and contains the latest version of the British List incorporating IOC taxonomic changes, announcements and the most recent Committee reports. However, the website is for information purposes only and is not an official document or part of the permanent record. Announcements of changes to the British List do not come into official effect until published in a Committee Report, such as this, in *Ibis*.

PUBLICATIONS BY OR, ON BEHALF OF, MEMBERS OF BOURC RELATING TO THE BRITISH LIST, SINCE THE 53rd REPORT

Lees, A.C., Batty, C. & McNerny, C.J. 2022. The Paddyfield Pipit in Britain. *Brit. Birds* 115: In press.

Lewis, M. & McNerny, C.J. 2022. The identification of Scottish Crossbill. *Brit. Birds* 115: In press.

Lewis, M. & McNerny, C.J. 2022. SBRC position on Scottish Crossbill. *Scott. Birds* 42: 71-72.

McNerny, C.J., Crochet, P-A. & Dudley, S.P., on behalf of BOURC & AERC. 2022. Assessing vagrants from translocated populations and defining self-sustaining populations of non-native, naturalized and translocated avian species. *Ibis* 164: In press.

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(†) Rare species and subspecies for which descriptions are required by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC). For species and subspecies not on the British List but considered by BBRC see www.bbrc.org.uk

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP (OCTOBER 2021 - APRIL 2022)

James Gilroy (Chairman)

Chris McInerney (Secretary)

Steve Dudley (*ex officio* non-voting member; BOU Chief Operations Officer)

Chris Batty

Pierre-André Crochet

Paul French (*ex officio*; BBRC Representative)

Mark Golley

Alex Lees

Andy Stoddart

CONSULTANTS

Bob McGowan (Museums)

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