

Gilroy, J., McNerny, C., Dudley, S., Balmer, D., Batty, C., Crochet, P.-A., French, P., Golley, M., Lees, A. and Stoddart, A. (2022) British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (BOURC): 53rd Report (January 2022). *Ibis*, 164(1), pp. 363-368. (doi: [10.1111/ibi.13014](https://doi.org/10.1111/ibi.13014))

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This is the peer reviewed version of the following article:

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Deposited on: 17 November 2022

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British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (BOURC): 53rd Report (January 2022)

This report covers the period October 2020 to September 2021. The 52nd Report appeared in *Ibis* 163: 305-308.

CHANGES TO THE BRITISH LIST

The following changes have been made to the British List.

South Polar Skua *Stercorarius maccormicki* H. Saunders

Add to Category A

One, second-calendar-year, West Bexington, Dorset, 27 January to 4 February 1996.

This Antarctic species is a predicted vagrant to British waters, as dataloggers have demonstrated that significant numbers migrate annually to the northern hemisphere (*Marine Ecology Progress Series* 435: 263-267), with regular sight records elsewhere in the eastern and western North Atlantic. However, despite several claims, the status of this species, and its austral sister species Brown Skua *S. antarcticus*, as a vagrant to Britain has been problematic as they are difficult to separate, having very similar plumage to each other and Great Skua *S. skua*, and as mitochondrial DNA does not distinguish between the taxa (*Ibis* 149: 619-621). This individual was assessed solely on a series of photographs taken throughout its extended stay, often sitting on a beach. These images allowed the bird to be aged as second-calendar-year on a basis of moult, plumage state and bare part colouration, crucial for its identification.

South Polar Skua is widespread in the Southern Oceans where it nests on the Antarctic continent and disperses large distances during the non-breeding season, as far as the northern oceans.

It should be placed after Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* on the British List as follows:

South Polar Skua[†]

A

Stercorarius maccormicki H. Saunders

One record: second-calendar-year, West Bexington, Dorset, January to February 1996.

V monotypic.

White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* (Linnaeus)

Add to Category A

One, first-calendar-year or older, Scapa Flow, Mainland, Orkney, 25 May 2020.

The extraordinary observation of a *Procellaria* seabird flying over a beach on Mainland Orkney by a resident during his COVID-19 exercise walk was captured with a series of excellent photographs, taken because he recognised the bird as being 'different', which allowed it to be identified as White-chinned Petrel. Though widespread in the Southern Oceans this is only the second North Atlantic observation. The probability of this individual being an escape from captivity or ship-assisted was judged to be minimal and so the record was accepted as having a wild origin.

White-chinned Petrel is widespread in the Southern Oceans where it nests on islands and can disperse large distances during the non-breeding season.

It should be placed after Black-capped Petrel *Pterodroma hasitata* on the British List as follows:

White-chinned Petrel[†] A

Procellaria aequinoctialis (Linnaeus)

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

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* (Boddaert)

Add to Category A

One, second-calendar-year or older, Swalecliffe, Kent, 19 August 2019.

Brown Booby has been increasingly observed as a vagrant in the North Atlantic in recent years with birds moving north from their tropical breeding areas. Such movements may be due to increases in sea temperatures linked to climate change. So the observation of one in English coastal waters was predicted. Though the subspecific identification could not be determined it seems likely that this individual was of the nominate subspecies *S. l. leucogaster* which breeds in the Atlantic and Caribbean.

The probability of this bird being an escape from captivity was judged to be minimal. Whilst ship-assistance is possible for extralimital *Sula* records, there is little reason to doubt that this species can also reach British shores unaided.

The species is polytypic, breeding in tropical areas of the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans, and the Red Sea, where they are largely resident, with some birds moving limited distances.

It should be placed after Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* on the British List as follows:

Brown Booby[†] A

Sula leucogaster (Boddaert)

One record: second-calendar-year or older, Swalecliffe, Kent, August 2019.

V subspecies undetermined, but likely to have been nominate *leucogaster* (Boddaert).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher *Empidonax flaviventris* (W.M. Baird & S.F. Baird)

Add to Category A

One, first-calendar-year, Balephuil, Tiree, Argyll, 15-23 September 2020.

A predicted trans-Atlantic vagrant, this individual appeared after an autumn westerly weather system on an island off the west coast of Scotland, and is the first record for the Western Palearctic. Thus it was considered to be a naturally occurring Nearctic vagrant.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher breeds from west and central Canada to south-east Canada and north-east USA, migrating to winter in southern Mexico and Central America.

It should be placed after Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe* on the British List as follows:

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher[†] A

Empidonax flaviventris (W.M. Baird & S.F. Baird)

One record: first-calendar-year, Balephuil, Tiree, Argyll, September 2020.

V monotypic.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Corthylio calendula* (Linnaeus)

Add to Category A

One, first-calendar-year or older, Cuithir, Barra (Barraigh), Outer Hebrides, 12-27 November 2020.

A Nearctic species that has demonstrated trans-Atlantic vagrancy with previous records in Iceland, Ireland and the Azores, this individual appeared after a late autumn westerly weather system on a west coast Scottish island. Thus it was considered to be a naturally occurring vagrant.

The species is polytypic with three subspecies, two on mainland North America: nominate *C. c. calendula* breeding in central and eastern Canada and south-west, west-central and eastern USA moving distances south, wintering in USA to northern Central America; and *grinnelli*, breeding in Alaska, south-west Canada and north-west USA, migrating to winter in western USA.

It should be placed after Dartford Warbler *Curruca undata* on the British List as follows:

Ruby-crowned Kinglet[†] A

Corthylio calendula (Linnaeus)

One record: first-calendar-year or older, Cuithir, Barra (Barraigh), Outer Hebrides, November 2020.

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

The following subspecies has been added to the British List:

Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis tschutschensis* J.F. Gmelin

Add subspecies M. t. tschutschensis[†] J.F. Gmelin to the British List

One, first-calendar-year to second-calendar-year, Sedgeford, Norfolk, 23 December 2019 to 1 March 2020.

That this bird remained for an extended period from December to early March and was in breeding plumage aided its identification to the nominate subspecies *M. t. tschutschensis* of Eastern Yellow Wagtail. The likelihood of this individual being an escape from captivity was judged to be minimal, and so the subspecies was accepted to Category A.

Another record of an Eastern Yellow Wagtail of the subspecies *M. t. taivana* observed at Pelistry and Kittydown, St Mary's, Isle of Scilly from 14 November 2018 to 17 April 2019 was found to be not proven as this subspecies, although it was accepted as *M. tschutschensis*. The record was returned to the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) for reconsideration.

Polytypic with four subspecies (*plexa*, *tschutschensis*, *macronyx* and *taivana*) breeding in the central and eastern Palearctic which migrate to winter from Southeast Asia to Australia and the Greater Sundas.

IN ADDITION

CATEGORY A

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* (Linnaeus)

New first record: one, North Meols, Lancashire, April 1805 is accepted as the first British record.

The previous first British record of Collared Pratincole from Bowness-on-Solway, Cumbria, October 1807 was reevaluated following published BOURC criteria for considering historical records (*Ibis* 160, 936-942). A number of inconsistencies including the location and year, with no existing description or museum specimen, resulted in the record being rejected

Instead, a North Meols, Lancashire, 1805 record was researched with a specimen located at the World Museum, National Museums Liverpool (Fig. 1). The specimen allowed the identification to be confirmed, and the labels established its provenance, location and date. Together these allowed it to be accepted as the first British record. This record had previously been published as from Ormskirk, Lancashire for 1807 and 1809 (*Transactions Linnean Society* 9, 198-199; 11, 177; Graves 1821 *British Ornithology*; Mitchell 1892 *The Birds of Lancashire*).

Polytypic with two subspecies: nominate *G. p. pratincola* breeding in southern Europe and northern Africa to Pakistan, migrating to winter in northern tropical Africa; and the other resident in sub-Saharan Africa from Senegal to southern Somalia and South Africa.



Fig. 1. Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*. First British record, World Museum, National Museums Liverpool (accession number D3193a). The specimen labels indicate that it was shot at North Meols, Lancashire, in the 'Easter week' of 1805,

which corresponds to 14 April (Easter Sunday). They also show that it was originally in the Derby Museum before entering the collections at Liverpool, confirming its provenance (photos: National Museums Liverpool).

**Southern Giant Petrel/Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus*/
Macronectes halli (J.F. Gmelin)/Mathews**

One, first-calendar-year or older, Whitburn, Co. Durham, 2 July 2019; same Cullernose Point, Northumberland, 2 July 2019.

This individual was watched as it tracked north along the coast of Co. Durham and Northumberland with the later observers being alerted of its trajectory through social media. Though this species pair is highly distinctive, separating the two from each other is challenging based on subtle differences in bill colouration, which could not be seen in such a distant 'fly-by' bird. Hence the record was only accepted as the species pair.

The probability of this individual being an escape from captivity was judged to be minimal. Individuals of these taxa have been observed elsewhere in the North Atlantic, and this is an expected vagrant.

Southern Giant Petrel and North Giant Petrel are both monotypic, being widespread in the Southern Oceans and Antarctica where they breed. Both move north in the austral winter, but remain within the Southern Oceans.

As this record was not identified to species level, it is not included as part of the British List and is not included in the species totals, but is instead listed in Appendix 3 (*Ibis* 160: 239-240) as follows:

Southern Giant Petrel[†]/Northern Giant Petrel[†]

Macronectes giganteus (J.F. Gmelin)

V monotypic.

Macronectes halli Mathews

V monotypic.

One record: first-calendar-year or older, Whitburn, Co. Durham, July 2019; same Cullernose Point, Northumberland, July 2019.

**CHANGES TO THE BRITISH LIST AFTER THE ADOPTION OF VERSIONS 11.1
and 11.2 OF THE *IOC WORLD BIRD LIST***

The release of versions 11.1 and 11.2 of the *IOC World Bird List* (<https://www.worldbirdnames.org>) resulted in a number of changes to the British List. These include:

- Resequence Anseriformes to precede Galliformes
- Revise the linear sequence of Phasianidae
- Revise the linear sequence of Phalacrocoracidae
- Revise the linear sequence of Strigidae
- Revise the linear sequence of Hirundinidae
- Revise the linear sequence of Regulidae.
- Revise the linear sequence of Turdidae
- Revise the linear sequence of Passeridae
- Change the IOC English name of Eurasian Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus* to

- European Rock Pipit
- Change the IOC English name of Lesser Short-toed Lark *Alaudala rufescens* to Mediterranean Short-toed Lark

Collared Dove is now monotypic, with the new annotation being:

Collared Dove **A**
 Eurasian Collared Dove
 RB *Streptopelia decaocto* (Fridvaldszky).

Remove the IOC name Mew Gull for Common Gull *Larus canus*, as *L. brachyrhynchus* is split from *L. canus* and given the English name Short-billed Gull, with the new British List annotation being:

Common Gull **A**
Larus canus Linnaeus
 RB MB HB WM PM *canus* Linnaeus
 SM *heinei* Homeyer.
 Hybrid pairing with Mediterranean Gull.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* is no longer monotypic with a new subspecies described from the Canary Islands, with the new annotation being:

Manx Shearwater **A**
Puffinus puffinus (Brünnich)
 MB *puffinus* (Brünnich).

All *Oceanodroma* petrels have been moved to the genus *Hydrobates*.

Change the genus of Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* to *Gulosus aristotelis*, with the new annotation being:

Shag **A**
 European Shag
Gulosus aristotelis (Linnaeus)
 RB *aristotelis* (Linnaeus).

Change the genus and specific name gender from masculine to neuter of Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus* to *Nannopterum auritum*, with the new annotation being:

Double-crested Cormorant[†] **AE**
Nannopterum auritum (R. Lesson)
 One record: Billingham, Co. Durham (then Cleveland), January to April 1989.
 V subspecies undetermined.

Change the genus of Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula* to *Corthylio calendula*, with the new annotation being:

Ruby-crowned Kinglet[†] **A**

Corthylio calendula (Linnaeus)

One record: first-calendar-year or older, Cuithir, Barra (Barraigh), Outer Hebrides, November 2020.

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

The identification of a new Eastern Black Redstart subspecies in central and eastern Asia *Phoenicurus ochruros murinus*, which cannot be separated from nominate *P.o. phoenicuroides* or *P.o. rufiventris*, means that the new annotation is:

Black Redstart

A

Phoenicurus ochruros (S.G. Gmelin)

MB RB PM WM *gibraltariensis* (J.F. Gmelin)

V *phoenicuroides*[†] (F. Moore) or *murinus*[†] Fedorenko or *rufiventris*[†] (Vieillot).

Change in authority name:

Aleutian Tern *Onychoprion aleuticus* (Baird) to (S.F. Baird).

BRITISH LIST TOTALS

Following the addition of South Polar Skua, White-chinned Petrel, Brown Booby, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and Ruby-crowned Kinglet, the British List increases to 627 species.

Category	Total
A	609
B	8
C	10
Total	627

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

Ross's Goose *Anser rossii*

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

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.

'Horned' Lark *Eremophila alpestris (alpestris/praticolalhoityi)* group

One, first-calendar-year or older, Carn Near, Tresco and Covean, St Agnes, Isles of Scilly, 9-31 October 2001 is being considered as the new first record of this subspecies group.

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.

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*

One, first-calendar-year or older, Sennan, Cornwall, 23 October to 14 November 2019, is being considered as the first record of this species.

REVIEW OF CATEGORY C

BOURC, in collaboration with the Association of European Records Committees (AERC), is completing a review of Category C and the criteria by which self-sustaining populations are defined. When completed this review will be published as a joint BOURC/AERC publication in *Ibis* coincident with publication of the 10th Edition of the British List, also in preparation.

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 52nd REPORT

McInerny, C.J. & McGowan, R.Y. 2021. 'Mandt's Black Guillemot' in Lincolnshire: BOURC assessment of the first British record. *British Birds* 114: 167-171.

McInerny, C.J. & McGowan, R.Y. 2021. Scottish Birds Records Committee report on rare birds in Scotland, 2019. *Scottish Birds* 41: 99-120.

McInerny, C.J. & Sutcliffe, R. 2021. American Bittern in Caithness, 1862. *Scottish Birds* 41: 42.

Stoddart, A. & Hudson, N. 2021. From the Rarities Committee's files: BBRC and newly split species. *British Birds* 114: 8-17.

Stoddart, A. 2021. From the Rarities Committee's files: Species pairs and groups. *British Birds* 114: 415-421.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BOURC receives advice and help from many sources, without which it could not function, and we thank them all for their contributions. We thank Robin Sellers for prompting our analysis of the 1807 Cumbria Collared Pratincole record and Tony Parker (National Museums Liverpool) for locating the North Meols specimen of Collared Pratincole.

(†) 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 2020 - SEPTEMBER 2021)

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Chris McInerney (Secretary)

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Dawn Balmer (to July 2021)

Chris Batty

Pierre-André Crochet

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