

Iowa State Teachers Coll.,
Cedar Falls, Iowa.
June 25, 1956

Prof. George O. Hendrickson,
Dept. Zoology, Iowa State College,
Ames, Iowa.

cc: Dr. J.H. Ennis, Dept. Sociology, Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, Iowa.
Dr. Philip A. DuMont, U.S. Dept. Int., Fish & Wildl. Serv., Wash. D.C.

Dear Prof. Hendrickson:-

Regarding the revision of the Checklist of Iowa Birds, I have at hand your letter of June 14, and Dr. DuMont's of May 31. I have a number of suggestions, which are numbered below.

1. Size of card. Personally, I have preferred the 3x5" size, but there has been a considerable demand for a larger one, and I am willing to give in to it, since much more information can then be put on the list. The next larger standard size is 4x6", which I would definitely recommend, rather than, for example, 3 1/2 x 6".

2. Type face. Should be lower case, as now, which is much easier to read than small capitals.

3. Punched holes at the side. Omit.

4. Introductory paragraph. Might contain the following information:

a. "Of the 340 (or so) species of birds reliably reported from the State of Iowa, the following list, containing 275 species, represents those which have been reported in the scientific literature five times or more within the past twenty years (1936-55)." Comment: some criterion, more or less precise, must be adopted to distinguish between the relatively uncommon and the really rare birds, for inclusion in the list. This was the one used when I made out the last checklist, in 1943, and I think it has served fairly well. But times have changed, and such calculations must be remade. The list you sent (June 14) is essentially the same as the 1943 one, the only changes being the omissions of the Rock Dove and Gambel's Sparrow. The first of these omissions is desirable, as its inclusion causes confusion, and the other omission is necessary for consistency.

I have already started on this recalculation, and in going back only five years, I find the Yellow-crowned Night Heron must be added, and several other species have turned up four records, and undoubtedly will have to be added also. Perhaps some number larger than five should be used, but I am preparing the data in such a way that the actual number can be decided later. Similarly, some species will have to be deleted.

b. "This list, using species names only, is fully in accord with the Fifth A.O.U. Checklist."

Comment: This states "fully" rather than "generally." In order to be sure, I would suggest that we wait until the list appears. Other reasons for waiting for this appear below.

c. "In a dozen cases where another significantly-different name is used in the previous checklist, and is therefore much better known, it is given in parentheses."

Comment: To fulfill this, I would suggest the following only:

Red-necked Grebe (Holboell's)	Loggerhead Shrike (Migrant)
American Widgeon (Baldpate)	Solitary Vireo (Blue-headed)
Peregrine Falcon (Duck Hawk)	Yellow-throated Warbler (Sycamore)
Dunlin (Red-backed Sandpiper)	Fileolated Warbler (Wilson's)
Western Kingbird (Arkansas)	House Sparrow (English)
Swainson's Thrush (Olive-backed)	Common Meadowlark (Eastern)
Veery (Willow Thrush)	Ringed Plover (Semipalmated)

There are a great many other minor changes of name, but none likely to cause confusion or frustration.

The longest name on your list is the Black-throated Green Warbler, with 28 spaces being required to print it. Only four of the above name-combinations will run more than that, the longest going up to 34. There are two alternatives: (1) allow a few of the longer names two lines; (2) use abbreviations where necessary to get all names on one line, e.g., Yellow-thr. Warb. (Sycamore), "E." for Eastern, etc. Personally, I would prefer the second alternative, making for a more uniform column-format.

So few people will have the new A.O.U. checklist, that I think the above few concessions to the old one will more than make up for the extra type. (Abbreviations may be desirable for the longer names anyway.)

d. "Numbers in parentheses indicate the total number of subspecies of that species recorded from the state."

Comment: While the checklist is designed to encourage neither subspecies identification in the field, nor collecting of specimens, nonetheless it points out where significant variation is to be looked for, and would thus stimulate more careful observation, and, where legitimate, collecting. It would partially answer questions like "Where on the list is the Hutchin's Goose?" These numbers were put on the 1943 checklist, but were omitted when it was reprinted.

This would make an additional reason for waiting for the appearance of the Fifth A.O.U. Checklist. Again, I would be glad to check it for this point when the list appears.

e. "For a full explanation of this checklist, with a list of the rarer birds not included here, see Iowa Bird Life vol. --, Page 44 --, Dec., 1956", or whenever such a set of comments could appear. This was also done for the 1943 list.

5. Data and Field Notes.

a. Would recommend putting this on the 1st 1/3 or so of page 1.

b. The following standard items might be included, e.g., in the following format:

Observer.

Date.

Time.

Locality.

Distance.

Temp.

Wind.

Weather.

Additional Species.

Total No. Species.

Notes.

6. The list of names.

a. Reverse the order, and put the "last" name first, as on present list.

b. In your list, the Piping Plover is placed ~~last~~ after the Ringed Plover. Otherwise the arrangement seems the same as the last checklist.

7. I like Dumont's suggestion of having three ruled columns after the names, for three dates of checking. Or numbers of individuals could be written in. If the card is enlarged from 3 to 4 inches across, there should be plenty of room for this.

8. Abbreviations to show status.

Perhaps this is too much to expect on a checklist, but, with a larger card, there might be room for something like "SR-c" in another column. DuMont's use of four columns, on his Mud Lake list, conveys much more accurate information, but is probably too much to get on a card.

9. Species names.

Your letter implies you have a list from Lincoln, and your list differs from DuMont's in several instances. I don't know which is official, but certainly the official one should be followed.

<u>Hendrickson</u>	<u>DuMont</u>
Partridge	European Partridge
Magpie	✓ Black-billed Magpie
Sedge Wren	✓ Short-billed Marsh Wren
Prairie Chicken	✓ Greater Prairie Chicken
Horned Owl	✓ Great Horned Owl
Bohemian Greater Waxwing	✓ Bohemian Waxwing
Great Shrike	✓ Northern Shrike
Chat	Yellow-breasted Chat
Ringed Plover	✓ Semipalmated Plover

In these cases, if the new name is different from the old (DuMont), both names might be given (one in parentheses) in the following instances: wren, waxwing, shrike, and plover. The other differences are self-explanatory.

10. What about the two Dowitchers?

In conclusion, though I may appear unnecessarily dogmatic above, all of these items are intended merely as suggestions for consideration by the rest of the committee.

Very sincerely,

Martin L. Grant
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