

4114 Fessenden St., N.W.  
Washington 16, D.C.  
July 1, 1956

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

Dear George:

I think Martin Grant's letter of June 25, copies of which were sent to Dr. Ennis and to me, was an excellent review of the problems entailed in issuing a Field Check List that will do the right kind of a job.

Following the same numbered sequence I have the following comments to offer:

1. The 4x6 card should be OK. It is a little shorter than the D.C. card but it will hold all the birds and still provide room for notes. Grant has a good point in using standard-size stock.

2. and 3. I agree.

4. By all means omit the old records. Five records in five years is about what we used in adding species. In other words, is there a chance of seeing it, or be on the lookout for it. Species which are increasing and showing up elsewhere might be added on four records.

When we have used the term "generally" in accord with the Fifth A.O.U. Check-List it was because we hedged on a name or two. The check-list is being set in type. While few will have the new check-list this Fall its effect has already been in evidence in new field guides, journals, census reports, etc.

I like the list at the top of page 2. Those are the chief changes. One must be deleted--the Ringed Plover. When it was decided at the Madison meeting to omit all common names for subspecies several former species names were reinstated. The Semipalmated Plover was one. The Eastern Meadowlark (not Common) was another. Also most of those on page 3 of Grant's letter: Black-billed Magpie, Short-billed Marsh Wren, Greater Prairie Chicken, Great Horned Owl, Bohemian Waxwing, Northern Shrike, Semipalmated Plover. The European Partridge is a good one. It is listed only as Partridge. In our birdlists for refuges we list it Partridge (European). It is too apt to be confused with the Ruffed Grouse if listed without qualification. We have done about the same with the Chat (Yellow-breasted)

The trend is away from subspecies. Common names for them are being dropped. For instance there can easily be four or five races of Branta canadensis come through Iowa.

I think my chance of having field data on the back is that more space can be devoted to it. Many of Grant's suggestions for the inclusion of "text", information on status and abundance, and number of subspecies belongs in what we call or Blue Book. It uses the lines of varying width to show when present and its abundance, nesting, and where found as to both locality and its habitat. The DVOC of Philadelphia used the same idea and added more maps. Theirs sells for 75 cents; ours for 35. The Illinois State Museum got out a similar pocket booklet that contains a lot of information on migration dates, etc. You should all see it. Get a copy from Springfield.

The Piping Plover now follows the Semiplamated. The two Widgeon follow the teal and ahead of the shoveler.

After you agree on size, format, explanation or remarks, why don't you have the list typed up in columns the way it will fit into the eight panels. It looks as if you can get 45 names per column or 90 to a page. That would take care of 270 of your 275. Or you might crowd 46 names and get them all on three pages leaving the front page for explanation and field data. These should be indented the two spaces for all sparrows, warblers, etc. If you would then care to send a copy here both Fred Lincoln will be glad to go over it for correctness of names. Mr. Lincoln went over the list that was sent to you recently. He commented only on the Cowbird. Evidently the final decision is in favor of Brown-headed instead of Common. That is the sort of final checking we can do for you.

The only comment of Dowitchers is that they are now recognized as two species. There seem to be characters by which they can be distinguished in the field, probably no more difficult than picking out the Western Sandpiper. Maybe they should both should be included to direct attention to identifying them.

I am sending copies of this directly to Martin Grant and Dr. Ennis in order that there will be as little delay as possible in completing the Checklist of Iowa Birds.

Sincerely yours,

Philip A. DuMont