

\*The order of the genera *Catharacta* (skuas) and *Stercorarius* (jaegers) has been reversed.

\*The specific name for American Golden-Plover changed back to *dominica* from *dominicus*.

\*Parakeet Auklet (*Cyclorhynchus*) is moved into the genus *Aethia*, with Least, Whiskered and Crested Auklets.

\*The Canary-winged Parakeet split into two species, Canary-winged Parakeet (*Brotogeris versicolurus*) and Yellow-chevroned Parakeet (*Brotogeris chiriri*). Interestingly, in both Florida and California, the Canary-winged Parakeet is the species that historically had been established; however, in both states, it appears that Yellow-chevroned Parakeets are replacing Canary-winged Parakeet.

\*Burrowing Owl, long in the monotypic genus *Speotyto*, moved into the genus *Athene* (contains several small Old World Owls, most notably Little Owl) in the sixth edition, then returned to *Speotyto* in 1991 (AOU 1991) based on studies of chromosome structure, is returned again to *Athene* for no apparent reason. Make this change in pencil, I think.

\*The specific name for Olive-sided Flycatcher changes from *borealis* to *cooperi*. This change is due to *cooperi* being the oldest name used for the species.

\*The order of the families of oscine passerines has undergone a number of minor changes and one major change. Shrikes (*Laniidae*) and vireos (*Vireonidae*) are placed next to one another, in front of crows and jays (*Corvidae*) and this whole group is placed immediately in front of larks. To understand this change, we need to conduct a brief review of the taxonomy of the order Passeriformes, the perching birds. In your field guides, this is everything after the woodpeckers. The Passeriformes constitute over half of the world's birds. They are divided into 2 major subgroups, the suboscines (represented in North America only by the flycatchers, but with many families in the tropics) and the oscines (songbirds). The vireos have always been considered rather atypical members of what is called the nine-primaried oscine assemblage (most songbirds have 10 primaries, which are the outermost flight feathers; if you look at some flying birds, for example, falcons and terns, you can see a crook along the back edge of the wing. That crook corresponds to the wrist. The flight feathers outside the crook attach to the hand bones and are primaries; inside the crook, the flight feathers attach to the ulna, and are secondaries). The nine-primaried oscines are the birds at the end of the order, currently starting with vireos and warblers and including blackbirds, tanagers, and all the various finch and sparrows groups. DNA hybridization has shown that vireos do not belong with their traditional relatives, but with shrikes. In addition, it has indicated that there are two major groups of ten-primaried oscines; a set of mostly Old World species, represented in the New World by only the shrikes, vireos, and crows and jays and another group that includes all the other North American oscines. The specifics of this DNA hybridization result have not been confirmed by other studies, but other studies have confirmed some of the general conclusions.

\*Cliff and Cave Swallows are taken out of the genus *Hirundo* (contains Barn Swallow) and placed in

*Petrochelidon*, where they had been placed before they were moved to *Hirundo* (AOU 1983).

\*The genus *Parus*, containing chickadees, titmice, and, in the Old World, tits, is split into 6 genera. In the New World, there are two of these genera, *Baeolophus* containing the titmice, and *Poecile*, containing the chickadees. This is based on DNA hybridization studies.

\*Plain Titmouse is divided into two species, the Oak Titmouse *Baeolophus inornatus* of the Pacific coast, and Juniper Titmouse *Baeolophus griseus* of the Great Basin and inland mountain ranges.

They differ in a number of characteristics, and genetically are as distinct as many other species pairs in other families.

\*The Muscicapidae is taken apart and split into a number of families. In North America, there are the kinglets (*Regulidae*), Old World Warblers (*Sylviidae*, includes the gnatcatchers), Old World Flycatchers (*Muscicapidae*, represented in North America only by some asiatic vagrants), the Thrushes (*Turdidae*), and the Babblers (*Timaliidae*, represented in North America by Wrentit). Other than recognizing the kinglets as a separate family, this returns to the taxonomy used before the sixth edition of the checklist. A number of studies using various molecular and morphological characteristics agree with the break-up of this family, but conclude that we are a long way from understanding the relationships among these and related families, or even within some of the bigger families. This group can charitably be called a taxonomic mess.

\*Solitary Vireo is split into 3 species, the Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) of eastern North America, Cassin's Vireo (*Vireo cassinii*) of the Pacific coast and northern Rockies, and Plumbeous Vireo (*Vireo plumbeus*) of the southern Rockies. A number of studies looking at morphology, vocalizations, and genetics, both DNA sequence data and allozyme data (this looks the structure of proteins rather than DNA) support this view. The case for separating Cassin's and Blue-headed Vireo is not as strong as the case for splitting off Plumbeous Vireo, but I think that the split will probably hold.

\*Olive Warbler is moved out of the Parulidae into a monotypic family, Peucedramidae. Olive Warbler has been a problematic species for a long time. DNA studies indicate that it is clearly not a true warbler, as do a number of behavioral and skeletal traits. However, its nearest relatives are unclear.

\*The Cardinalinae (includes things like Northern Cardinal, Pyrrhuloxia, Indigo Bunting, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and relatives) is moved from in front of the Emberizinae (New World Sparrows) to behind the Emberizinae. This was to allow the placement of several tropical genera that may be more closely related to tanagers between the tanagers and the more typical Emberizinae.

\*The Five-striped Sparrow is moved to *Aimophila* (with such species as Cassin's and Bachman's Sparrow) from *Amphispiza*, which contains Black-throated and Sage Sparrow. This reverses the change made in the sixth AOU checklist.

Meadowlark