AERC TAC's TAXONOMIC RECOMMENDATIONS
2015 report

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Introduction

This document constitutes the official 2015 AERC TAC recommendations for species-level systematics and nomenclature of Western Palearctic birds. For full information on the TAC and its history, please refer to the documents on the AERC web page www.aerc.eu, including the minutes of the AERC meetings http://www.aerc.eu/minutes.html and the TAC pages www.aerc.eu/tac.html.

The format of this document follows the previous TAC recommendations (Crochet et al. 2010), which see for details.

The TAC has five members: Taxonomic Sub-committee of the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (BOURC-TSC, UK), Commission de l'Avifaune Française (CAF, France), Swedish Taxonomic Committee (STC, Sweden), Commissie Systematiek Nederlandse Avifauna (CSNA, Netherlands) and Kommission Artenliste der Vögel Deutschlands der Deutschen Ornithologen-Gesellschaft (German TC, Germany). As decided previously, systematic changes are based on decisions published by, or directly passed to the TAC chairman, by these taxonomic committees (TCs).

In this document, the **support** for each case is given as **yes / no / not addressed.**

Note that several TAC members sent some of their votes directly to the TAC chairman, either without publishing a decision on the case (when this did not affect their national list) or prior to the publication of their own decisions in order not to delay the publication of the TAC recommendations. **There are thus some discrepancy between the support indicated here and the "relevant taxonomic committee publications" section.**

The species sequence (the higher-level systematics i.e. the family and order names and the order of the species in the species list) has still largely not been addressed by the AERC TAC. Thus, this document and the corresponding list of birds of the Western Palearctic still follow the sequence in Voous (1973; 1977a; b) except for decisions adopted by the AERC here or in the previous report. This species sequence and the corresponding higher-level systematics are now known to misrepresent avian species relationships in many cases and updating them remains a major task for the TAC.

Systematics below the species rank is not part of the TAC remit. Subspecies lists that are given for some cases are based on the IOC World Bird List version 3.0 (http://www.worldbirdnames.org/ioc-lists/master-list/) and are purely indicative. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the TAC members.

Authorship follows the same convention as in Crochet et al. (2010): in addition to the two chairmen of the TAC, members of the national taxonomic committees who were responsible for the decisions that fed into the report are listed in alphabetic order. This should not be interpreted as suggesting that they support every individual conclusion contained here.

This document is certainly not free from mistakes. One of the advantages of posting it on the web is that mistakes can easily be corrected, so please **send any comments, suggestions or corrections** to Pierre-André Crochet (pierre-andre.crochet at cefe.cnrs.fr).

AERC TAC 2015 recommendations

Double-spurred Francolin *Pternistis bicalcaratus* (was *Francolinus bicalcaratus*)
Erckel's Francolin *Pternistis erckelii* (was *Francolinus erckelii*)

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Sangster et al. (2012, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Fromholtz et al. (2014, on behalf of the STC).

Family limits and species sequence of Western Palearctic Galliformes

Numidae
- Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*

Odontophoridae
- California Quail *Callipepla californica*
- Northern Bobwhite *Colinus virginianus*

Phasianidae
- Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*
- Caucasian Snowcock *Tetraogallus caucasicus*
- Caspian Snowcock *Tetraogallus caspius*
- Barbary Partridge *Alectoris barbara*
- Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*
- Rock Partridge *Alectoris graeca*
- Chukar Partridge *Alectoris chukar*
- See-see Partridge *Ammoperdix griseogularis*
- Sand Partridge *Ammoperdix heyi*
- Erckel's Francolin *Pternistis erckelii*
- Double-spurred Francolin *Pternistis bicalcaratus*
- Black Francolin *Francolinus francolinus*
- Hazel Grouse *Tetrastes bonasia*
- Willow Ptarmigan *Lagopus lagopus*
- Rock Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta*
- Caucasian Grouse *Tetrao mlokosiewiczi*
- Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*
- Western Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*
- Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*
- Reeves's Pheasant *Syrmaticus reevesii*
- Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*
- Lady Amherst's Pheasant *Chrysolophus amherstiae*
- Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus*

Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Sangster et al. (2012, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC).

African Darter *Anhinga rufa* (polytypic: *A. r. rufa, A. r. vulsini* and *A. r. chantrei*)
Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* (split from *A. rufa*; extralimital, monotypic)
Australasian Darter *Anhinga novaehollandiae* (split from *A. rufa*; extralimital, polytypic: *A. n. novaehollandiae* and *A. n. papua*)

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Barthel and Helbig (2005) & Bauer et al. (2005), both on behalf of German TC, Sangster et al. (2014, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC).

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina* (monotypic)
Indian Spotted Eagle *Aquila hastata* (split from *A. pomarina*; extralimital, monotypic)

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members.

Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Barthel and Helbig (2005) & Bauer et al. (2005), both on behalf of German TC, Sangster et al. (2003, on behalf of CSNA), Sangster et al. (2013, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC).

Species sequence of *Aquila*

Based on Helbig et al. (2005), the species of *Aquila* of the Western Palearctic can be listed as follows.

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*
Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*
Wahlberg's Eagle *Aquila wahlbergi*
Booted Eagle *Aquila pennata*
Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*
Verreaux's Eagle *Aquila verreauxii*
Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata*
Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*
Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*
Spanish Imperial Eagle *Aquila adalberti*
Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*

Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Barthel and Helbig (2005) & Bauer et al. (2005), both on behalf of German TC, Sangster et al. (2005, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC).

Taxonomic sequence of Charadriiformes

A series of studies have addressed the phylogeny of the Charadriifomes (see references in Sangster et al. 2012) and allow listing its genera as follows.

Burhinidae (Burhinus)
Pluvianidae (Pluvianus)
Recurvirostridae (Himantopus, Recurvirostra)
Haematopodidae (Haematopus)
Charadriidae (Pluvialis, Vanellus, Charadrius)
Rostratulidae (Rostratula)
Scolopacidae (Bartramia, Numenius, Limosa, Arenaria, Calidris, Phalaropus, Xenus, Actitis, Tringa, Lymnocryptes, Limnodromus, Scolopax, Gallinago)
Turnicidae (Turnix)
Dromadidae (Dromas)
Glareolidae (Glareola, Cursorius)
Stercorariidae (Stercorarius)
Alcidae (Fratercula, Aethia, Brachyramphus, Cepphus, Synthliboramphus, Alca, Pinguinus, Alle, Uria)
Sternidae (see below)
Rynchopidae (Rynchops)
Laridae (see below)

Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Sangster et al. (2012, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC).

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Calidris falcinellus* (was *Limicola falcinellus*)
Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Calidris subruficollis* (was *Tryngites subruficollis*)
Ruff *Calidris pugnax* (was *Philomachus pugnax*)

Species sequence of *Calidris*

Based on Gibson and Baker (2012), the species of the Western Palearctic can be listed as follows.

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*
Red Knot *Calidris canutus*
Ruff *Calidris pugnax*
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*
Broad-billed Sandpiper *Calidris falcinellus*

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*
Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*
Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*
Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta*
Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*
Sanderling *Calidris alba*
Dunlin *Calidris alpina*
Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*
Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*
Little Stint *Calidris minuta*
White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*
Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*
Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Calidris subruficollis*
Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*
Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*
Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

Support: 4/1/0. This treatment is favoured by four TAC members, the German TC did not support it.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Sangster et al. (2012, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Fromholtz et al. (2014, on behalf of the STC).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua* (monotypic)
Brown Skua *Stercorarius antarcticus* (split from *S. skua*; extralimital, polytypic: *S. a. antarticus*, *S. a. hamiltoni* and *S. a. lonnbergi*)

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Barthel and Helbig (2005) & Bauer et al. (2005), both on behalf of German TC, Sangster et al. (2011, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Kjellén and Olsson (1995, on behalf of the STC).

Species sequence of gulls

The species sequence of gulls has been revised by the BOURC-TSC in Sangster et al. (2007). The following sequence deviates somewhat from their sequence to incorporate results of Sternkopf (2010, see also Liebers-Helbig et al. 2010). Species that were not listed by Sangster et al. (2007) and have not been studied by Sternkopf (2010) are listed based on Pons et al. (2005). Large-white headed gulls are listed based on Voous (1973) and incorporating species-level changes adopted afterwards.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*
Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea*
Ivory Gull *Pagophila eburnea*
Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*
Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*
Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei*
Bonaparte's Gull *Larus philadelphia*
Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*
Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*
Grey-headed Gull *Larus cirrocephalus*
Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla*
Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan*
Pallas's Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*
Relict Gull *Larus relictus*
Audouin's Gull *Larus audouinii*
Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*
Sooty Gull *Larus hemprichii*
White-eyed Gull *Larus leucophthalmus*

Mew Gull *Larus canus*
Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*
Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*
Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*
Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*
Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*
Armenian Gull *Larus armenicus*
Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*
American Herring Gull *Larus smithsonianus*
Slaty-backed Gull *Larus schistisagus*
Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens*
Thayer's Gull *Larus thayeri*
Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*
Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*
Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*
Cabot's Tern *Sterna acuflavida* (split from *S. sandvicensis*; polytypic: *acuflavida* and extralimital *eurygnatha*)

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Sangster et al. (2009, on behalf of CSNA), Sangster et al. (2012, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Svensson et al. (2012, on behalf of the STC).

Species sequence of terns

The species sequence of the terns of the Western Palearctic has still not been addressed by the TAC. Starting from the sequence in Sangster et al. (2005) and adding species that are not on the British list based on Bridge et al. (2005) and Efe et al. (2009), the species of the Western Palearctic list can be listed as follows (White-cheeked Tern has not been included in the previous studies and is listed based on Voous's sequence):

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*
Aleutian Tern *Onychoprion aleuticus*
Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus*
Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus*
Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*
Saunder's Tern *Sternula saundersi*
Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*
Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*
Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*
Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*
White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*
Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*
Cabot's Tern *Sterna acuflavida*
Elegant Tern *Sterna elegans*
Greater Crested Tern *Sterna bergii*
Royal Tern *Sterna maxima*
Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*
Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*
Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*
Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*
Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*
White-cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa*

Eurasian Eagle-Owl *Bubo bubo* (polytypic)
Pharaoh Eagle-Owl *Bubo ascalaphus* (split from *B. bubo*; monotypic)
Indian Eagle-Owl *Bubo bengalensis* (split from *B. bubo*; monotypic)

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Barthel and Helbig (2005) & Bauer et al. (2005), both on behalf of German TC, Sangster et al. (2013, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Jirle et al. (2010, on behalf of the STC).

Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens* (polytypic: *persica*, *halophila*, *lugens* and *warriae*)
Arabian Wheatear *Oenanthe lugentoides* (split from *O. lugens*; extralimital, monotypic: includes *boscaweni* treated as a junior synonym)
Abyssinian Wheatear *Oenanthe lugubris* (split from *O. lugens*; extralimital, polytypic: *lugubris*, *vauriei* and *schalowi*)

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members. Some TCs further split *halophila* from *lugens* but this change does not reach enough support.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Sangster et al. (2014, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Fromholtz et al. (2014, on behalf of the STC).

Rufous-tailed Robin *Larvivora sibilans* (was *Luscinia sibilans*)
Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope* (was *Luscinia calliope*)
Siberian Blue Robin *Larvivora cyane* (was *Luscinia cyane*)

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Sangster et al. (2011, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Fromholtz et al. (2014, on behalf of the STC).

Species sequence of *Larvivora*

Based on Sangster et al. (2010), *Larvivora cyane* should be listed before *L. sibilans*.

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* (monotypic)
Himalayan Bluetail *Tarsiger rufilatus* (split from *T. cyanurus*; extralimital, monotypic: includes *pallidior* treated as a junior synonym)

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Knox et al. (2008, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Sangster et al. (2009, on behalf of the CSNA), Svensson et al. (2012, on behalf of the STC).

Subalpine Wabler *Sylvia cantillans* (polytypic: *cantillans*, *albistriata*, *iberiae* and *inornata*)
Moltoni's Warbler *Sylvia subalpina* (split from *S. cantillans*, monotypic, previously named *moltonii*)

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members.
Several TCs also split *inornata* (with subspecies *iberiae*) from *cantillans* but this decision has not gained enough support yet to be accepted here. Subspecies nomenclature and systematics follow Baccetti et al. (2007) and Svensson (2013a,b), hence *cantillans* is here applied to the populations from Southern Italy and Sicily, *iberiae* to the populations from France and Iberian Peninsula previously treated as part of *cantillans*, and *subalpina* to the populations from Central Italy, Corsica and Sardinia previously named *moltonii*.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Sangster et al. (2009, on behalf of CSNA), Sangster et al. (2014, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Svensson et al. (2012) & Fromholtz et al. (2014, on behalf of the STC).

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* (monotypic)
Kamchatka Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus examinandus* (split from *P. borealis*; extralimital, monotypic)
Japanese Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus xanthodryas* (split from *P. borealis*; extralimital, monotypic)

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Barthel and Helbig (2005) & Bauer et al. (2005), both on behalf of German TC, Sangster et al. (2011, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Fromholtz et al. (2014, on behalf of the STC).

Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus* (monotypic)
Sichuan Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus forresti* (split from *P. proregulus*; extralimital, monotypic)
Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus* (split from *P. proregulus*; extralimital, polytypic: *P. c. chloronotus* and *simlaensis*)
Gansu Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus kansuensis* (split from *P. proregulus*; extralimital, monotypic)
Chinese Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus yunnanensis* (recently described as *P. sichuanensis* but *yunnanensis* has priority; extralimital, monotypic) is also part of this complex

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Barthel and Helbig (2005) & Bauer et al. (2005), both on behalf of German TC, Sangster et al. (2005, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Kjellén & Olsson (1995, on behalf of the STC), Anderson et al. (2007, on behalf of the STC).

Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris* (was *Parus palustris*)
Sombre tit *Poecile lugubris* (was *Parus lugubris*)
Caspian Tit *Poecile hyrcanus* (split from *P. lugubris*; monotypic)
Willow Tit *Poecile montanus* (was *Parus montanus*)
Grey-headed Chickadee *Poecile cinctus* (was *Parus cinctus*)
European Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus* (was *Parus cristatus*)
Coat Tit *Periparus ater* (was *Parus ater*)
Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* (was *Parus caeruleus*)
African Blue Tit *Cyanistes teneriffae* (was *Parus teneriffae*)
Azure Tit *Cyanistes cyanus* (was *Parus cyanus*)

Support: 4/1/0. This treatment is favoured by four TAC members, the German TC did not approve it.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Sangster et al. (2005, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Sangster et al. (2009, on behalf of the CSNA), Svensson et al. (2012, on behalf of the STC).
Remark: There is still no agreement on the gender of the genus name *Poecile* among TCs (see David and Gosselin 2008 for a summary and a support for masculine gender, but see Harrop 2011 for a support for feminine gender). We here treat it as masculine as it is the best supported choice among TCs but full resolution of this matter might require an application to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature.

Species sequence of tits

Based on phylogenetic studies of Gill et al. (2005) and Johansson et al. (2013), the species of Paridae on the Western Palearctic list should be listed as follows:

African Blue Tit *Cyanistes teneriffae*
Azure Tit *Cyinestes cyanus*
Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*
Great Tit *Parus major*
Coal Tit *Periparus ater*
European Crested Tit *Lophophanes cristatus*
Sombre tit *Poecile lugubris*
Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*

Caspian Tit *Poecile hyrcanus*
Willow Tit *Poecile montanus*
Grey-headed Chickadee *Poecile cinctus*

Siberian Nuthatch *Sitta arctica* (split from *S. europaea*; extralimital, monotypic)
Eurasian Nuthatch *Sitta europaea* (polytypic)

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Sangster et al. (2012, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Fromholtz et al. (2014, on behalf of the STC).

House sparrow *Passer domesticus* (polytypic)
Italian Sparrow *Passer italiae* (split from *P. domesticus*; monotypic)

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: Barthel and Helbig (2005) & Bauer et al. (2005), both on behalf of German TC, Sangster et al. (2014, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Fromholtz et al. (2014, on behalf of the STC).

Eastern Towhee *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* (polytypic: subspecies *erythrophthalmus, alleni*, *canaster* and *rileyi*)
Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus* (split from *P. erythrophthalmus*; extralimital, polytypic: numerous subspecies)

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (1997, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Anderson and Svensson (2003, on behalf of the STC).

Baltimore Oriole *Icterus galbula* (monotypic)
Bullock's Oriole *Icterus bullockii* (split from *I. galbula*; extralimital, monotypic)
Black-backed Oriole *Icterus abeillei* (split from *I. galbula*; extralimital, monotypic)

Support: 5/0/0. This treatment is favoured by all TAC members.
Relevant taxonomic committee publications: British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (1997, on behalf of the BOURC-TSC), Sangster et al. (1999, on the behalf of CSNA), Anderson and Svensson (2003, on behalf of the STC), Barthel and Helbig (2005) & Bauer et al. (2005), both on behalf of German TC.

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