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СПИСОК ПТИЦ

РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ



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CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS

OF RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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НАУЧНО-ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬСКИЙ ЗООЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ МУЗЕЙ МГУ
МЕНЗБИРОВСКОЕ ОРНИТОЛОГИЧЕСКОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО
ИНСТИТУТ ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКОЙ И ЭКСПЕРИМЕНТАЛЬНОЙ БИОФИЗИКИ РАН

Е. А. Коблик, Я. А. Редькин, В. Ю. Архипов

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РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ

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Список птиц Российской Федерации, подготовленный Инициативной группой при Мензбировском орнитологическом обществе, включает все виды и подвиды птиц, достоверно зарегистрированные на ныне входящей в Российскую Федерацию территории, за весь период орнитологических наблюдений. Результаты анализа многочисленных литературных источников и коллекционных материалов позволили подтвердить или уточнить статус большинства отмеченных в России форм. Для видов и подвидов, не относящихся к обычной гнездовой авифауне, приводятся ссылки на источники информации. В списке фигурируют 1334 географических форм птиц, относящихся к 789 видам. Из них современную гнездовую фауну составляют 657 видов. Залётными, встречающимися на сезонных миграциях или зимовках признано 111 видов, вымершими или исчезнувшими с территории России – 7 видов. Не менее 14 видов сохраняют неопределённый статус. В авифауну России включено 20 видов, новых для территории бывшего СССР. Птицы, регистрации которых в пределах России признаны недостаточно достоверными или ошибочными, вынесены в дополнительный список, насчитывающий 49 видов. Согласно результатам таксономических ревизий форм видового и родового ранга, фауна России пополнилась 27 видами и обеднела на 2 вида. Для 36 представителей отечественной фауны изменена научная видовая номенклатура. Заменено 26 названий родового ранга, относящихся к 44 видам. Значительные коррективы претерпела классификация таксонов подвидового ранга. Для представителей авифауны бывшего СССР предложено заменить, уточнить или ввести в употребление более 130 русских названий. В отдельном приложении дан перечень видов, зарегистрированных в странах СНГ и Балтии, но не входящих в фауну России. С учётом этого приложения, авифауна Северной Евразии (в границах бывшего СССР) составляет сейчас 875 видов.

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ПРЕДИСЛОВИЕ РЕЦЕНЗЕНТА

Мониторинг состава фауны страны представляет собой одну из важных и самостоятельных задач в изучении и сохранении биоразнообразия. Результаты постоянной инвентаризации фауны на национальном, региональном и местном уровнях служат основой для постановки и проведения научных исследований, деятельности и специальных акций общественных организаций и принятия решений органами власти. Очевидно, что без точной идентификации объекта исследований и статуса его пребывания на конкретной территории информация о нем, в подавляющем большинстве случаев, не представляет значительного интереса.

Периодическая подготовка каталогов фауны квалифицированными экспертами — неотъемлемая часть процесса мониторинга животного мира. Именно такие публикации демонстрируют развитие таксономии и систематики, очередной этап результатов изучения изменений в использовании территории животными.

Необходимо специально подчеркнуть, что, различая между очередными каталогами, могут в значительной мере зависеть от критериев и подходов. С одной стороны, это касается степени доверия авторам анализируемых публикаций и избранного периода инвентаризации, с другой, — отражает личные позиции составителей каталога в дискуссионных проблемах таксономии и систематики.

Авторы предлагаемого каталога Е. А. Коблик, Я. А. Редькин и В. Ю. Архипов подробно описывают принципы, которыми они руководствовались при его подготовке. В частности, аргументированы причины значительного увеличения числа таксонов птиц, отмеченных в России. Большинство из новых объектов включены в список не только как результат их обнаружения на территории страны, а на основании использования результатов применения новых технологий в систематике, в том числе генетических и молекулярных методов. Многие из предложенных решений, включая названия таксонов, носят для подавляющей части отечественных орнитологов революционный характер. Весьма полезны публичные сомнения авторов в номенклатурном обозначении ряда форм на некоторых участках ареала, которые ориентируют на проведение специальных исследований. В целом работа носит выраженный проблемный характер, провоцирующий заинтересованных читателей к дискуссиям по широкому кругу вопросов.

Третий по счету каталог птиц России в очередной раз наглядно демонстрирует настоятельную необходимость создания профессиональных комиссий по номенклатуре, таксономии и фаунистике с целью подготовки и ведения официального списка орнитофауны.

В. Ю. Ильяшенко

THE 2006 CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Following the upheavals of the late 1990s, any attempt to update the bird species checklists of the former USSR and of Soviet Russia in a meaningful way was faced with overcoming political, geographic and economic difficulties on a grand scale. This 2006 Checklist of the Birds of the Russian Federation is wholly admirable on several grounds. Firstly, it presents a coherent and pragmatic approach that combines the best of internal academic and personal researches – many people outside the Russian Federation may not fully appreciate the extent to which the former biological research structure fragmented, nor how much work was undertaken subsequently, without funding, by individuals whose hope was that later their efforts would be recognised. Secondly, the compilers devised the only possible rationale – presented in the Introduction – comprises that would create a functional checklist within a reasonable timescale. Thirdly, in my view, it was absolutely essential that the first checklist of the birds of the Russian Federation should be based on as many historical and current sources from within that federation, so that it would be as comprehensive as possible. That way, all subsequent comparisons could be made to allow the chain of argument for changes – the relevant references – to achieve transparency; in other words, supporters and opponents of change will debate and argue on the same evidence.

The next challenge for the compilers of this checklist will be to test it robustly, as indeed any hypothesis should be tested, against other checklists, on a species or subspecies basis. The significant developments in understanding of species limits through fields such as bio-acoustics and DNA analytical methods have compelled many organisations and groups such as the British Ornithological Union to develop guidelines for the application

of species limits to sympatric, parapatric, allopatric and hybridizing taxa (eg Helbig *et al.*, 2002). Such decisions ideally require authors to consider whole populations of species or subspecies, but knowledge outside the Russian Federation of species populations within it is incomplete and often fragmentary. This checklist will not only form the basis of improving that knowledge, but it will also provide biologists within the Federation with a vital stepping-stone to conclusions reached by compilers of other checklists as to species or subspecies limits.

I look forward to the debate that will now begin on how to align conclusions presented by this checklist with differing conclusions reached elsewhere. From this checklist, I can point to some species and subspecies that will be under severe challenge as to their species limits, but equally, I can point to others whose species limits have probably been defined by Russian Federation (or USSR) biologists much earlier than ‘western’ biologists have done so! As bird species limits within populations and distributions become better understood, I foresee an exciting and invaluable revision of this and other checklists, a stage that would not have been achieved so soon without the dedication not only of the compilers, Eugeny Koblik, Yaroslav Red’kin and Vladimir Arkhipov but also of all their innumerable contributors and helpers.

Michael Blair

INTRODUCTION

A description of native species is one of the most important tasks undertaken by zoologists in many different countries. The level of detail and completeness of species lists of different taxa are often used as a gauge of the development of a country's faunistic and zoological sciences. The task of creating a checklist varies in difficulty depending on the diversity of a particular taxon, the particularities of species distribution and the level of development of systematics of that particular group. Thus, the problems that arise in the faunistics of amphibians or birds differ greatly from those encountered by entomologists or other invertebrate specialists. Birds comprise one of the best studied groups because they are particularly well suited for faunistic studies. In most countries, bird checklists are far more complete than those of other taxa.

In the case of Russian ornithology, the fundamental step of creating a checklist was considered complete by about 1990. Regular publications of catalogues and sightings documenting changes in the Soviet bird checklist followed. New faunistic records were considered by teams of ornithologists and either included or omitted from the checklist. The state of the field of study was positively influenced by the development of an advanced communication network within the community of Soviet ornithologists and strict criteria for publication and was sustained by the vast collections in a number of research institutions. Leo S. Stepanyan published *Conspectus of the ornithological fauna of the USSR* in 1990, presenting detailed data on 820 species of birds that had been recorded within the borders of the Soviet Union up to 1986.

The collapse of the Soviet Union into 15 independent states in Eastern Europe and Central Asia brought about changes in the late 1990s. The avifauna of these joint territories had been the topic of interest for such 20th century ornithologists as Mikhail A. Menzbir, Sergey A. Buturlin and Leo S. Stepanyan. In many Soviet Republics even before the collapse of the USSR, independent checklists had existed, such as *The Birds of Byelorussia* (Fedyushin and Dolbik, 1967), *Birds of Kazakhstan* (1960-1974) and *Materials on the Avifauna of the Armenian SSR (Ornis Armeniaca)* (Lyaišter and Sosnin, 1942). Of course, these publications varied in the degree of detail and amount of information they contained. However, after subsequent revisions they became, or soon will become, the basis of the avian checklist of the new independent states.

Things were slightly different in the Russian Federation. Checklists of the avifauna of the Russian SFSR, or even of major regions within the RSFSR (such as the Urals, Siberia and the Far East), have never been published. A series of faunistic reports written at different times and to a varying degree of detail failed to cover the entire Russian territory, leaving substantial blanks on Russia's avifaunal map. It is therefore essential to create an avian checklist of the Russian Federation, whereby breeding and migratory species are differentiated.

The creation of such a checklist is a difficult and laborious enterprise. An exclusion method is the usual preferred method for the initial composition of a faunal checklist of the Russian Federation. However, existing data are heavily biased towards breeding bird species in the former USSR, and relatively little concerns species that are found in Russia only on migration. Studies of terrestrial and aquatic vertebrates do not suffer that disadvantage. Existing datasets largely omit descriptions migratory flyways, movements and patterns within the former Soviet borders. This is particularly the case for those bird species breeding in the southern regions of the Palearctic, such as Central Asia and the Caucasus. Many of these 'southern' species may be extending their breeding range into Russian territory (eg Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* and White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellochettusia leucura*). Thus, the exclusion method cannot provide a complete checklist of the birds of the Russian Federation, making a literature meta-analysis necessary to provide a more complete picture of the Russian avifauna.

It is often difficult to judge the authenticity or accuracy of many faunistic publications. Data reported for birds within Russia for the last 10-15 years have not been subject of the systematic critique practised previously. It is necessary to define a set of criteria that can classify the variety of faunistic discoveries and reports, both new and previously published, and can help evaluate their accuracy. These criteria may then be used to judge whether or not to include a particular taxon into the checklist of Russian avifauna.

Other important issues to be kept in mind in the course of composition of the checklist are the taxonomic and nomenclature revisions of many bird species that occur in the Russian Federation. Since the 1980s, animal systematics have been in a period of revision consequent to the progress in DNA sequencing and hybridization techniques, which allow testing of the degree of relatedness of different species on a mo-

lecular level. The criteria that define a species have also been subject to revision, leading to a dynamic, yet often contradictory, environment within the field of cladistics (see Koblik, 2001). Cladistics, originally an applied field created for the convenience of classifications, now allows, within limits a more objective measure of relatedness between biological forms and species. As a result, researchers face new difficulties, because the complexity of phylogenetic trees often does not align with the ‘Procrustean bedspread’ of outdated hierarchies, based mostly on similarities of morphological traits. The resultant taxonomic changes proposed by conclusions drawn from molecular data has had as broad an impact on the avian checklist of the Russian Federation as has the flood of new observations.

The first checklist of terrestrial vertebrates on the species level for the Russian Federation was compiled in 1995 by Vladimir E. Flint and includes 732 birds. As a classically trained systematist, Flint purposefully excluded species that were identified on the basis of karyotypes and other molecular methods, labelling such identifications as controversial.

The next catalogue of terrestrial vertebrates in Russia, this time on the subspecies level, was prepared by Valentin Yu. Ilyashenko. He presented his own point of view on the taxonomical classification of the Russian fauna, heavily relying on morphological data. In comparison with L. S. Stepanyan (1990), the work of Ilyashenko unites several subspecies but also identifies several new forms. The checklist of Russian birds compiled by Ilyashenko includes 749 species.

Both Flint and Ilyashenko exclude several species and subspecies that were reported prior to the publication of these works, but these reports had not then been subject to systematic analysis and taxonomical revision.

Thus, the compilation of a heavily revised and more accurate checklist of the birds of the Russian Federation is a timely endeavour. This checklist is required not only as a basis of purely ornithological research, but also as a legal document that may be useful in guiding government environmental policy, or as an educational source of information for use in schools or ecotourism.

We maintain that such a checklist must abide by the following requirements.

1. In European and North American countries, such checklists are regularly updated, and their electronic versions are publicly available on the internet. In addition, commentaries, errata, updates and new finds are

published in refereed journals on a regular basis, and every few years a hardcopy version is published to include all changes accumulated since the last publication. The seventh edition of the North American birds checklist (AOU, 1998) is an excellent example of this process, and includes updates compiled since the sixth edition, (for example AOU, 2000); the process is supported by regular publication in *Auk*, the journal of the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU). Another example is the British Ornithologists' Union's (BOU) electronic and paper editions of reports and recommendations of the BOU Records Committee (BOURC) that are subsequently published in their journal, *Ibis* (BOURC, 2005) or in the reports of the Taxonomic Advisory Committee of the Association of European Records and Rarities Committee (AERC TAC) (see their 2003 version). The checklist of Russian birds must also be seen to be a work in progress, a work that is open for discussion and subject to periodic updates. This requirement is most easily implemented by means of an electronic version of the checklist.

2. As a rule, a local ornithological society compiles the bird species list, essentially an inventory. The more formal bird species checklist (in which status and numbers form the core) may be initiated by an author, or group of authors, and after a review process is assigned official status as the agreed checklist of that society – subsequent revisions are the responsibility of the whole society. The checklist presented here, intended as an official checklist of the avifauna of the Russian Federation, has been formulated by the Menzbir Ornithological Society. As of December 2005, this checklist is in a preliminary state of development, and reflects the current state of knowledge and the authors' considered assessment of avian taxonomy.

3. Usually, various faunistic and zoological advisory bodies take an active part in the compilation of an avian checklist, but such groups currently do not exist in the Russian Federation. The publication of the present checklist paves the way for the creation of a Faunistic Section within the Menzbir Ornithological Society and the Russian Advisory Commission on ornithological nomenclature and taxonomy. For both of these sections, the present list can be the starting point of their future work (Koblik *et al.*, 2004).

4. The checklist must retain a certain level of conservatism with regard to its conformance to previously published catalogues of Russian avifauna. In the present version, we purposefully excluded several changes to nomenclature and Russian common names, because in our opinion, these

changes should not be introduced unilaterally, but rather in consultation with a broad selection of specialists in different fields. We would like to stress that all changes proposed here should be subject to further review and discussion.

5. The checklist must rely on documented records. Thus, for all vagrant species, or species for which substantial changes have been introduced in comparison with previous publications such as *Birds of the Soviet Union* (1951-1954), *Birds of the USSR* (1982, 1987, 1988, 1990), *Birds of Russia and neighbouring regions* (1993, 2005) and *Fauna of the USSR* (Kozlova, 1957, 1961, 1962; Yudin, 1965; Potapov, 1985), we cite appropriate literature or other data, such as museum collections, that lead us to particular revisions. This approach directs the reader to appropriate sources, and provides a level of transparency for our work, particularly for those unable to consult the available literature

We used *Conspectus of ornithological fauna of Russia and adjacent territories* (Stepanyan, 2003) as the most recent complete list that should form the basis of our work. In our preparations we adopted these guidelines: firstly, we selected and analyzed USSR faunistic reports that for whatever reasons had been excluded from consideration in the past – most such reports were fairly recent, but much value lay in some older reports; secondly, we performed a literature meta-analysis and carried out a wide search of the available collections to enable us to judge the taxonomical position of contested species; thirdly, we updated the scientific nomenclature including genus, species and subspecies scientific (mostly Latin-based) names, author names and the years of observations and fourthly, we corrected the common Russian names of species of birds found in Russia and the neighbouring territories. These changes are described in greater detail below.

Format of the checklist

Each species in the checklist is enumerated with a unique identifier in the left-hand column in the list. Each species is listed under its Russian common and scientific names followed by the name of the person who made the first formal description and the year of that description (information about subspecies appears in smaller font). To facilitate comparative studies, observations not present in Stepanyan (2003) are given in **blue**.

To the right, is the status of the species (subspecies) in the territory of the Russian Federation: **Breeding (B)**, **Migrant (M)**, **Wintering**

(W), **Vagrant (V)** and **Extinct (E)**. One breeding species has been assigned **Introduced (Int)** status, because after being introduced it has now established a stable population. Subspecies for which transition forms (phenotypically indistinct) exist are described as **Integrades (I)** (see the Subspecies systematics section).

Where the status of species or subspecies was deemed equivocal, the status categories are supplemented by a **question mark (?)**. It is entirely possible that future editions of the checklist will require modifications to the status categories. For example, it may be necessary to take into account the number of breeding observations for such as for Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata* or Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*. For most of vagrant, migratory and sporadically breeding species, subspecies or forms with equivocal status, commentaries on the precise geographical locations of the observations and literature citations are given in small font. In a number of cases, instead of citing many individual references, we cite a review of a species instead. Species commonly found breeding in Russia, or rarely observed taxa that have been unequivocally described in major ornithological publications, are not given such a detailed commentary. We omit include locally vagrant species (within the Russian Federation), such observations being the province of local faunistic publications. We present a sample of the checklist, for the genus *Numenius*:

- | | | |
|-------------|--|--------------|
| 302. | Эскимосский кроншнеп <i>Numenius borealis</i> (J.R. Forster, 1772)
<small>Анадырь, Чукотка (Nelson, 1883; Бутурлин, 1934; Портенко 1939, 1973; Гладков, 1951)</small> | V, E? |
| 303. | Кроншнеп-малютка <i>Numenius minutus</i> Gould, 1841 | V |
| 304. | Тонкоклювый кроншнеп <i>Numenius tenuirostris</i> Vieillot, 1817
<small>Гнездование в прошлом — юг Западной Сибири, нынешние очаги гнездования неизвестны (Юрлов, 2001).</small> | V? |
| 305. | Большой кроншнеп <i>Numenius arquata</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) | V |

- Numenius arquata arquata* (Linnaeus, 1758) **B**
Европейская часть России до Предуралья и Волжско-Уральского междуречья
- Numenius arquata orientalis* C.L. Brehm, 1831 **B**
От Предуралья и Волжско-Уральского междуречья до Забайкалья
- 306. Дальневосточный кроншнеп** *Numenius madagascariensis* (Linnaeus, 1758) **B**
- 307. Средний кроншнеп** *Numenius phaeopus* (Linnaeus, 1758) **B**
- Numenius phaeopus phaeopus* (Linnaeus, 1758) **B**
Западная часть ареала вида до Таймыра и Енисея
- Numenius phaeopus alboaxillaris* Lowe, 1921 **B**
Башкирия, Челябинская обл. (Морозов, 1998)
- Numenius phaeopus variegatus* (Scopoli, 1786) **B**
От Таймыра до Чукотки
- 308. Тайтрянский кроншнеп** *Numenius tahitiensis* (J.F. Gmelin, 1789) **V**
Чукотка (Конюхов, 1995)

Bristle-thighed Curlew *N. tahitiensis* and Eskimo Curlew *N. borealis* are species with a small breeding distribution in Alaska, and have been observed in Chukotka only as vagrant species. For *N. borealis* the original reference and references that describe that species on Russian territory are cited. As of 2005, this species is thought to be extinct, and so in the list, next to its vagrant status in Russia (**V**) its current status is reflected thus: (**E?**). For *N. tahitiensis* the original reference is cited, and the common name is in blue since it was not included in Stepanyan (2003). For Slender-billed Curlew *N. tenuirostris* there are no current documented breeding observations for this species in Russia and therefore its status was changed to questionable, (**B?**), in comparison to Stepanyan (2003). Little Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew, Eurasian Curlew (both subspecies) and Whimbrel (both subspecies) were classified as breeding species (**B**). However, the status and taxonomical classification of the subspecies *N. phaeopus alboaxillaris* has now been updated. This subspecies had been thought extinct and so Stepanyan (2003) combined this subspecies with other forms, but in 1996 and 1997, V. Morozov found an isolated population, and Morozov

(1998) showed that their morphological and biological traits warrant their classification as a separate subspecies.

In cases where the Russian or the scientific names were changed, we present both the new (in blue) and the old (in black) names, no matter which parts of the nomenclature (including relevant citations or years of observation) were changed. Sometimes, the change affects but a single letter in the nomenclature. We do not provide Russian common names for subspecies. However, if a subspecies has been upgraded to species level, we provide the Russian common name, a number in the checklist, present the new name in **blue**, and provide the former classification from Stepanyan (2003). Changes to subspecies classification and subspecies nomenclature in comparison to Stepanyan (2003) are also in **blue** (see the Subspecies systematics section). Here, we provide a few examples of such changes:

Complete revision of the Russian common name:

- | | | |
|-----|--|----------|
| 10. | Чомга <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) | B |
| | Большая поганка <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) | |

A change of one letter in the Russian common name:

- | | | |
|-----|---|----------|
| 17. | Тайфунник Соландера <i>Pterodroma solandri</i> (Gould, 1844) | V |
| | Тайфунник Соландра <i>Pterodroma solandri</i> (Gould, 1844) | |

Genus change:

- | | | |
|-----|---|----------|
| 12. | Темноспинный альбатрос <i>Phoebastria immutabilis</i> (Rothschild, 1893) | M |
| | Темноспинный альбатрос <i>Diomedea immutabilis</i> Rothschild, 1893 | |

Change of the species name, and the author and year of the initial description:

- | | | |
|------|--|----------|
| 160. | Степной орёл <i>Aquila nipalensis</i> Hodgson, 1833 | B |
| | Степной орёл <i>Aquila rapax</i> (Temminck, 1828) | |

Change in the year of original publication:

186. **Тундряная куропатка** *Lagopus mutus* (Montin, 1781) **B**
 Тундряная куропатка *Lagopus mutus* (Montin, 1776)

Upgrading to a species level and the addition of a Russian common name:

610. **Полушейниковая мухоловка** *Ficedula semitorquata* (Homeyer, 1885) **B**
Ficedula albicollis semitorquata (Homeyer, 1885)

Update of the Russian common name and a change in the Latin name:

676. **Буряя сuthора** *Paradoxornis webbianus* (Gould, 1852) **B**
 Сuthора *Suthora webbiana* Gould, 1852

Criteria for faunistic registration

In the course of preparation of the checklist, we analyzed a diversity of publications describing faunistic observations made on the territory of the Russian Federation or the USSR. Since some observations may be distorted in subsequent citations we thought it essential to base our statements on original references. We succeeded in the majority of cases, but in a few, when we could not obtain the original publication we were forced to trust that other authors applied correct usage to literature unavailable to us. We also considered personal reports made by our colleagues and unpublished photographs, video and audio recordings. We use abbreviations indicating citations of material located in various collections: Zoological museum of the Moscow State University (колл. ЗМ МГУ), Zoological institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg (колл. ЗИН), State Darwin Museum in Moscow (колл. ГДМ), Section of Zoology and Ecology of the Moscow Pedagogical State University (колл. МПГУ), Far East State University in Vladivostok (колл. ДВГУ) and the Biology and Soil Institute in Vladivostok (колл. БПИ).

The analyzed materials relating to faunistic findings differ in their level of detail. We developed a set of criteria that were used in the compilation of the checklist. Similar criteria were used by the Faunistic Commission of the Goose, Swan and Duck Study Group of Northern Eurasia (Koblik, *et al* 2001).

1. All information (including personal communications) was thought to be reliable if it was confirmed with factual materials, in collections, unambiguous photographs and audio recording. Publications without such materials that included detailed descriptions of the circumstances of the observation and correctly described traits of the observed species were also considered reliable.

2. Publications including species descriptions that were insufficient to identify the species in question unambiguously, or that lacked sufficient detail in the location or the date of the observation, were considered to be unreliable. Faunistic records that in the past have been included in a list without detailed commentaries (for example, in a list of species of different localities) were not included in our checklist. We also have not included information from personal communications that were not supported by factual evidence.

3. We did our best to maintain an objective approach towards published information, and avoided placing a higher confidence in a publication of known specialists compared with amateur birdwatchers; either can make a mistake. However, we did take into consideration that some species or subspecies are easily identifiable even at a distance, while for other species or subspecies identification is difficult even of birds in the hand, alive or dead. While checking a number of publications or collections, on numerous occasions we encountered misidentified specimens. Sometimes mistakes have been made even with banded (ringed) specimens, implying that erroneous identifications in the field may be more common than assumed.

4. Some observations were not included due to geographical or political changes of the location where the samples were collected. Examples include the Orenburg region, which was part of the Russian Empire in the early 20th century, but now comprises a section of modern day Kazakhstan. Indeed the samples collected by Zarudny in the south of this region must be excluded from consideration because that area lies beyond the territory of the present day Russian Federation.

5. We have not passed judgment on the professional integrity of different authors. It is very difficult to discriminate between fabricated

information and honest mistakes. The difficulties presented in creating fabricated materials have not proved a deterrent in the past: authors have falsified photographs and rewritten sample labels changing the locality, dates and the names of the collector. The case of the Brolga *Grus rubicunda* (see Appendix I) vividly demonstrates that even the availability of a sample in a collection cannot always provide infallible proof for registering a species.

6. We have not included reports of exotic species that have escaped from captivity. Individuals of such species as a rule cannot survive in the Russian climate. However, we included in the checklist the Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*, which was introduced from Canada to Europe, and currently extended its range to Russia.

To facilitate the review process of new observations, we recommend abiding by the following procedures when registering a novel observation.

To report species or subspecies that has never recorded on the territory of the Russian Federation or that has not been observed for over 50 years, and for vagrant forms that have been observed in Russia fewer than five times, we recommend publishing the observations. The publication should include all facts that identify unambiguously the form in question and should contain a reference to collected materials (if available), and any applicable photographic, audio and video material obtained. If factual information was not collected, the authors should describe at some length the traits they used to distinguish the reported form in question from those that are similar. If a species or subspecies has already been reported in Russia or neighbouring territories in the past (for example in Soviet fauna), we recommend that: the publication summarize a series of related observations; the references of each related observation should be cited, and the title of the report (whether a paper or short note) should include the relevant scientific names in the report's title. Such papers or short notes should be published in journals widely available to ornithologist on a national level (such as *Ornithologia*, *Russian Ornithological Journal*, *Zoological Journal* and *Bulletin of MOIP*). A mere mention in a list of species of a rare vagrant, or of a form new to Russian territory, is unacceptable as the basis of registering a species.

Prior to publication, we recommend the authors notify the Faunistic Section of the Menzbir Ornithological Society of their findings, preferably by sending us a copy of their manuscript.

Analysis of faunistic findings

The current edition of the avifauna checklist of the Russian Federation includes 789 species and 1334 geographical forms. Of these, 657 species are reported as breeding in Russia. A further 111 species are thought to be vagrant, wintering or migratory species. Six species that were previously considered to be breeding or vagrant (Crested Ibis *Nipponia nippon*, Crested Shelduck *Tadorna cristata*, Steller's Black Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus (pelagicus) niger*, Eskimo Curlew, Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes*, Jankowski's Bunting *Emberiza jankowskii*) we marked as no longer present on the territory of the Russian Federation (Crested Shelduck and Eskimo Curlew in all likelihood have become extinct). The status of at least 14 species is thought to be questionable. However, 3 species (Chinese Egret *Egretta eulophotes*, Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*, American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*) are now thought to be breeding in Russia.

A quantitative comparison of this checklist with that published by Stepanyan (2003) is unjustifiable because the localities considered for the compilation of these lists were different. However, a comparative analysis of the three existing checklists for the Russian Federation summarizes the changes made in the course of compilation of our checklist (Table 1).

Table 1

Avifauna of the Russian Federation

Status of species	Flint, 1995	Ilyashenko, 2001c	Our data
Breeding species	641	656	657
Species present, but not breeding	79	90	111
Species with ambiguous status	10	2	14
Species no longer present in Russia	2	1	7
Total	732	749	789
Species not included in the checklist	–	4	49

On the basis of our analysis of faunistic registrations, our checklist includes 20 species that were not present in Stepanyan (2003), which are