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# Standard abbreviations for common names of birds — revisited

Paul B. Hamel and M. Kathleen Klimkiewicz

In an effort to provide a repeatable method of determining simple alphabetic species codes for use in record keeping by bird banders and researchers, Klimkiewicz and Robbins (1978, *No. Amer. Bird Bander* 3:16-25) proposed a set of rules for abbreviating common names of birds. They also provided a list of suggested abbreviations determined by application of the rules to names of North American birds. The system of rules, repeated below, is easy to apply and has found considerable application, though it is not without critics.

The system of rules proposed by Klimkiewicz and Robbins (1978) was the following:

1. If the common name is a single word, use the first four letters, e.g., Canvasback, CANV.
2. If the common name consists of two words, use the first two letters of the first word, followed by the first two letters of the last word, e.g., Common Loon, COLO.
3. If the common name consists of three words (with or without hyphens), use the first letter of the first word, the first letter of the second word, and the first two letters of the third word, e.g., Pied-billed Grebe, PBGR.
4. If the common name consists of four words (with or without hyphens), use the first letter of each word, e.g., Greater Black-backed Gull, GBBG.
5. If the common name consists of five words, treat it as four words, e.g., Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrow, PSWS.

However, some of the abbreviations presented in their report were incorrect, and a number of heretofore unreported duplications exist in the published list. Our purpose here is to point out and rectify these discrepancies. In the case of duplications we have retained the rule-determined abbreviation for the more common species, and suggested a separate abbreviation for the rarer one(s). The discrepancies are as follows:

1. Typographical errors:
  - a. North American Dipper should be NADI, not NODI
  - b. Sage Sparrow should be SGSP, not SASP

## 2. Unreported duplications:

- a. MABO — we suggest MKBO — Masked Booby
- a. MABO — we suggest MABO — Masked Bobwhite
- b. TRSW — we suggest TMSW — Trumpeter Swan
- b. TRSW — we suggest TRSW — Tree Swallow
- c. BAGO — we suggest BRGO — Barnacle Goose
- c. BAGO — we suggest BAGO — Barrow's Goldeneye
- d. GRKI — we suggest GEKI — Green Kingfisher
- d. GRKI — we suggest GTKI — Greater Kiskadee
- d. GRKI — we suggest GRKI — Gray Kingbird
- e. YEWA — we suggest YLWA — Yellow Wagtail
- e. YEWA — we suggest YEWA — Yellow Warbler
- f. BRGO — we suggest BZCO — Bronzed Cowbird
- f. BRGO — we suggest BRGO — Brandt's Cormorant

## 3. Potential duplications if used for fieldwork:

- a. COFL — Common Flicker should be used only where the race cannot be determined. We suggest  
COFL — Common Flicker, race unknown  
CSFL — Coues' Flycatcher

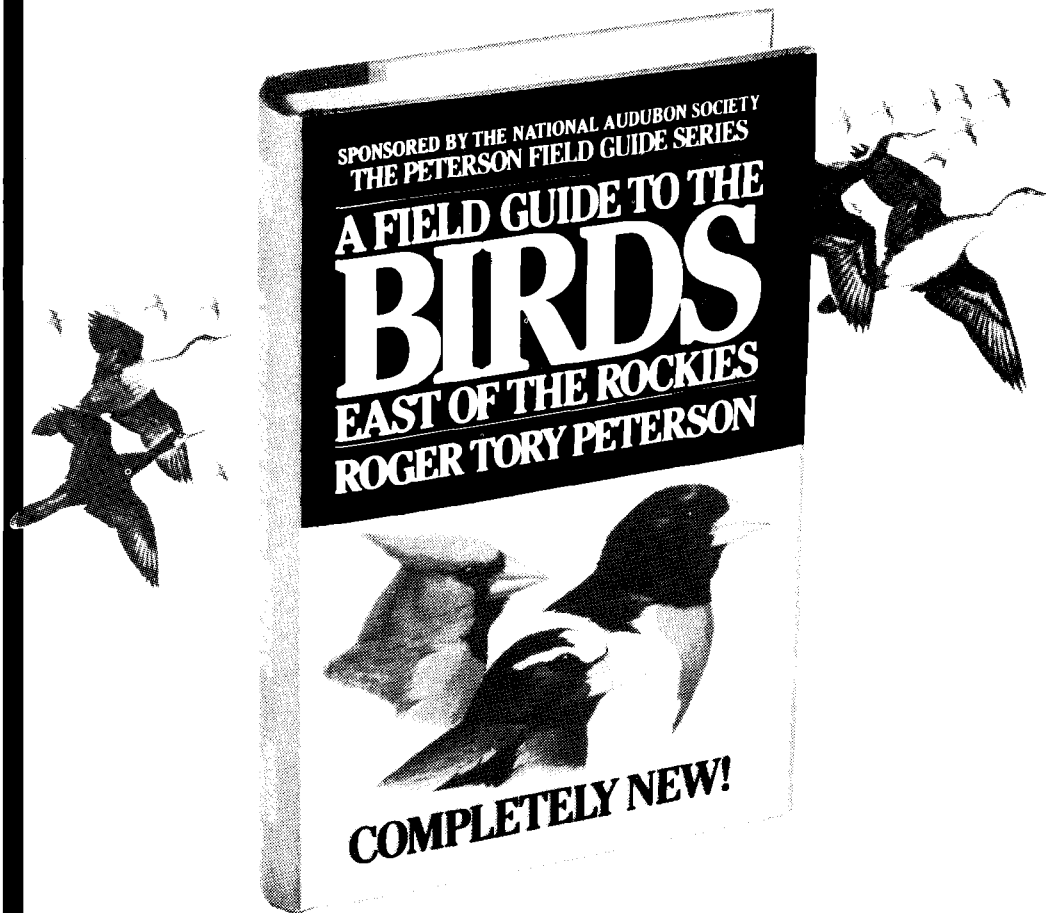
Copies of the list of birds for which codes were suggested by Klimkiewicz and Robbins (1978), sorted (1) in alphabetical order by species code, (2) in checklist sequence, or (3) in A.O.U. number order, are available from either author. Please indicate, with your request, the type code order you wish.

We must stress that the 4-digit abbreviations are strictly for the convenience of banders in their own records and should never be used as a substitute for common or scientific names on schedules submitted to the Banding Office.

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