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Abstracts

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

RECENT SPECIATION BETWEEN THE BALTIMORE ORIOLE AND THE BLACK-BACKED ORIOLE

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Abstract. A recent phylogenetic survey of the New World orioles (genus *Icterus*; Omland et al. 1999) suggested that the Baltimore Oriole (*I. galbula*) and the Black-backed Oriole (*I. abeillei*) are sister taxa. That survey examined mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) from a single representative of each species in the genus. Here, we examine mtDNA sequences from 15 Black-backed and 20 Baltimore Orioles. The two species appear to be very recently diverged, with average sequence divergences for both cytochrome *b* (cyt *b*) and the control region indicating a probable late Pleistocene split. Despite this very recent divergence, there is one fixed base-pair difference between the species in cyt *b* and another in the control region, suggesting that one or both species have undergone a bottleneck during or since speciation. This molecular evidence of recent divergence suggests that male plumage differences between Black-backed and Baltimore Orioles evolved very rapidly.

Key words: closely related species, Icterus galbula*,* Icterus abeillei*, paraphyletic species, phylogeography, plumage evolution, speciation.*