

from Honan, China. But six eggs are known. the others being from southern Russia and Manchuria.

Under "Correspondence" appears a communication from Hoyes Lloyd urging that when common or vernacular names are being considered some attention should be paid to their legal status. All game and bird protection legislation has of necessity to name species definitely and he wishes, in view of some proposals that have been made, that one name for each species be made official. The editor in reply, having in mind the strange nomenclatural decisions of some courts, hardly realizes all the sides of the argument. The fact is that the courts that have to pass on such questions are not those of the United States only. It may well be that official findings of the A.O.U. might not be recognized in the technicalities of the American system, but they would certainly have weight with our courts, whose somewhat different methods permit the spirit of the law to be considered in the interpretation of the letter.

There has been for some time in the pages of *The Ibis* a discussion on the question of subspecies. It has extended to *The Auk* and on pp. 145-147 is a letter on the subject by Percy R. Lowe of the British Museum (Natural History) correcting a misquotation attributed to him. He divides subspecies into two classes, one showing environmental, somatic, acquired and non-heritable characters, the other mutational, germinal and heritable ones. He cites cases as apparent illustrations of each. As we read, it seems that he would call a group of men tanned by exposure to sun a subspecies of the first class whilst Spaniards of dark complexion might be the other. It is remarkable that a biologist of Dr. Lowe's standing should regard acquired differentiation as sub-specific at all. It may be difficult to prove that certain characters are somatic but when they are proved so it would seem to disqualify them from any taxonomic consideration. If this confusion in fundamental conception of taxonomy exists the sooner it is cleared up the better. If we cannot get together on broad principles, agreement on detail is hopeless. Strangely the editor does not question the principle raised but doubts the assumption in the examples.—P. A. T.

THE AUK, April, 1922, No. 2.

A Comparison of the Food Habits of British and American Starlings, by E. R. Kalmbach, pp. 189-195.

Mr. Kalmbach was joint investigator and co-

author with I. N. Gabrielson in U.S. Biological Survey Bulletin No. 868 on the Economic Value of the Starling in the United States, 1922. He is therefore most competent to discuss the American side of this subject. It appears from a report of Dr. Walter Collinge who has conducted similar investigations in the British Isles that in the past ten or twelve years there has been a marked increase of the Starling in England and Scotland. With numbers has come a change in food habits and economic influence until a bird that was regarded as distinctly beneficial has now assumed quite a different aspect. Summarizing the present status of the species in the two countries, Mr. Kalmbach presents the following comparative percentages of the bird's activities:

	In Great Britain	In America
Beneficial activities.....	34.50	47.31
Neutral activities.....	24.50	42.65
Injurious activities.....	41.00	10.04

The only apparent reason for this undesirable change in England seems its great numerical increase. Dr. Collinge reports flocks of from 150,000 to 200,000 migrating in fall into the British Isles from the northeast. The supposition is that the normal insect food is insufficient for all and they turn their attention to other supplies of economic importance. In spite of the favorable standing that Mr. Kalmbach allows the species in this country, such facts do not quite allay our fears as we watch its steady increase in the States and its gradual extension across our borders.

The Function of the Oesophagus in the Bittern's Booming, by James P. Chapin, pp. 196-202, 2 plates.

We have several times noticed and noted a gelatinous thickening of the neck skin of some male Bitterns in springtime and, reasoning by analogy with similar conditions found in other species, notably the Prairie Hen, have surmised that it might be connected with the peculiar booming note for which the species is famous. Dr. Chapin has investigated the structure and finds that the neck can be inflated by blowing into the gullet. It is known that the booming is preceded by writhing contortions during which the neck swells, only to subside with the last sounds of the peculiar love song. This suggests that the neck sacs have a direct connection with the booming and it seems not too wild a guess that the contortions are the act of filling them with the air whose escape has something to do with the sound.

Dr. Chapin incidentally investigates the display plumes over each shoulder the erection which has puzzled ornithologists ever since Wm.

Brewster first called attention to them. He finds muscles attached to or near the bases of the feathers that seem quite adequate for the work.

Roderick Ross MacFarlane, 1833-1920, by Edward A. Preble: With photograph.

No one can go far in Canadian ornithology or the history of the Northwest Territories of the Dominion without having to consider the work of Roderick MacFarlane, Scotsman, Hudson's Bay Co. Factor, Naturalist, Explorer and Corresponding Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union. Established in the farthest flung outposts of civilization, with considerable time on his hands, little intellectual communication with the world, and a natural taste for Natural History, he was introduced to the fascinations of that science by the inspiring enthusiasm of Robert Kennicott on one of the latter's expeditions on behalf of the Smithsonian Institution. He seized upon the subject as an outlet for his energy and interests and if to-day we know more of the great hinterland adjacent to the Mackenzie Valley than we do of many long settled regions it is largely due to the efforts of Roderick MacFarlane. Fort Rae, Fort Resolution, old Fort Good Hope, Fort Liard, Fort Anderson, Fort St. James and Cumberland House were all the scenes of his labours, but most especially is he to be remembered for the work done on the Anderson and Lockhart Rivers and Franklin and Liverpool Bays.

From 1859, when he first met Robt. Kennicott, to 1893 with slight intervals he collected assiduously. The bulk of his material went to the Smithsonian Institution at Washington; some of it to friends in Scotland. One shipment destined for the Geological Survey Museum (now the Victoria Memorial Museum, Ottawa) was lost somewhere in the rapids on its long and dangerous route and has ever since been mourned, not for its intrinsic value alone, but that the Canadian National Collections were deprived of mementos of one of Canada's historic characters.

MacFarlane's publications were not numerous, but were important. An account of his first Anderson River trip appeared in the "*Canadian Record of Science*" in 1890. A year later he published "*Land and Sea Birds Nesting Within the Arctic Circle*," which was reprinted the year following, with additions and corrections, in the Proceedings of the U.S. National Museum. In the same medium in 1905 appeared a similar list of mammals. His last important work on birds was an appendix to Chas. Mair's "*Through the Mackenzie Basin*" in 1908, entitled "*List of Birds and Eggs Observed and Collected in the Northwest Territories between 1880 and 1894*." This includes

his Fort James (in what is now northern British Columbia) and Cumberland House (now included in Manitoba) observations.

In 1894 he retired from the service of the Hudson's Bay Company and spent the rest of his days in Winnipeg. He remained active of body and keen of mind in his old age and passed away April 14, 1920.

Adventures in Bird-banding in 1921, by S. Prentiss Baldwin, pp. 210-224.

The author continues his report on his most interesting work, which has been mentioned at greater length in these pages before.

Some Bird Notes from Indian Bay, Man., by William Rowan, pp. 224-232.

This consists of annotations of 106 species observed in the summer near the Biological Station of the University of Manitoba on Shoal Lake, Lake of the Woods District, Manitoba. (This is not the Shoal Lake north of Winnipeg reported on by Taverner in "*The Ottawa Naturalist*" in 1919.) Biologically this is a most important and interesting region where little work has been done but where eastern and western influences can be expected to meet. There is nothing startling in the list unless it be the breeding of the Evening Grosbeak, which has been reported before and mentioned in these pages previously, but it gives another spot on our distributional maps for which we have definite and authoritative records. Most of the records are based on specimens and the others are accompanied by such corroborative evidences of care as to make them quite convincing. One of the rather surprising things in the list is the occurrence of the Black-billed Cuckoo nesting alongside of summering Canada Jays, Three-toed Woodpeckers and Hawk Owls. However some even stranger faunal mixtures than this can be found in the central and western portions of the Dominion.

Seventh Annual List of Proposed Changes in the A.O.U. Check-List of North American Birds, by Harry C. Oberholser, pp. 243-249.

This involves some 43 proposed changes in nomenclature. The majority of them have originated in the works of Dr. Ernst Hartert and of Mathews and Iredale. The activities of the former have been towards lumping Old and New World species. The latter have been minutely dividing genera, a process that has called forth considerable protest from American ornithologists. It is hardly worth while to mention all of these items until they have been acted on by the Committee of Nomenclature. One subspecies of parti-

cular Canadian interest is proposed, viz., *Dendroica auduboni memorabilis* Oberholser, *Ohio Jour. Science*, XXI, 1921, p. 243, Range; breeds from Saskatchewan and Alberta to Arizona and Texas. The reviewer has not yet seen a description of the distinctive characters, but it is evident that we will have to examine the Audubon Warblers from the Prairie Provinces.

An Enormous Flock of Canvas-backs Visit the Detroit River. General note by Etta S. Wilson.

Reporting approximately 10,000 birds in the Detroit River from January 24 to the last of February, 1922.

The European Gray Partridge in Saskatchewan, by John Smith Dexter, pp. 253-254.

Recording the taking of this species (so-called Hungarian Partridge) at Rutland, Sask., November, 1921, and giving an outline of its spread since introduction into Alberta in 1910 and 1911. Essentially similar to like note by Mr. F. Bradshaw published previously in these pages.

Economic Status of Coragyps urubu in British Guiana, by Casey A. Wood, pp. 255-256.

The sanitary value of vultures as scavengers in tropical American towns is well known. In this case, however, Georgetown had an organized health department and sanitary staff and was independent of such a crude system of waste disposal. This removed the single decided benefit the birds might have conferred upon the town, leaving only an accompanying danger. The inhabitants rely on rain caught on the house roofs for their water supply. The vultures, which perched commonly on the houses, were shown to contaminate seriously this source of supply. Native cooks could not be trusted to boil water for their employer's use and altogether neglected to do so for their own, so for the general good the birds were destroyed or driven away to other communities where the inhabitants were not so particular or where civilized sanitary methods had not destroyed their legitimate occupation.

Hawk Migration at Whitefish Point, Upper Peninsula of Michigan, by M. J. McGee, pp. 257-258.

Describing a hawk migration route, a jump-off place for Canada about 40 miles northwest of Sault Ste. Marie and 20 miles from the Canadian shore. Every year thousands of hawks take this route; contrary to our experience at Point Pelee on Lake Erie, more in spring than fall. This year, under the incentive of a bounty given by the State of Michigan, 2007 hawks were shot at this

point, one man killing as many as 60 in a single day. A shooter reported having shot a Turkey Buzzard and seen another here (and gave descriptive evidence). This is a long way from the nearest previous record.

Note on the Philadelphia Vireo, by Harrison F. Lewis, pp. 265-266.

In reply to criticism that Mr. Lewis overlooked H. Mousley's record at Hatley, Que., in his study of the nesting of the species, he explains that it had not yet appeared in print when the said paper was prepared.

Under *Recent Literature* the Editor notes:

Observations on the Breeding Habits of the Merlin, by Wm. Rowan, British Birds, XV, 1922.

Though dealing with an extralimital species this paper contains so much of particular interest that we hope to take it up more fully later.

Under *Notes and News*:

The announcement is made of a cash contribution to the National Association of Audubon Societies (for the protection of birds) of \$200,000. This is the culminating donation from an anonymous friend who had made many smaller ones. It will be added to the permanent endowment fund, which now totals \$657,000.

The list of the A.O.U. membership finishes the volume. In it we note Canadians as follows: four Fellows, one Member and 53 Associates distributed amongst the various provinces as follows:

Ontario.....	28	Nova Scotia.....	4
Quebec.....	11	Manitoba.....	2
British Columbia..	6	Alberta.....	2
Saskatchewan....	4	New Brunswick..	1

Amongst the Corresponding Fellows we note the name of Montague Chamberlain, now of Boston, Mass., but originally of New Brunswick. His "*Catalogue of Canadian Birds*," 1887, was one of the first attempts to review the bird life of the whole Dominion. Unfortunately the data were fragmentary at that time. The Chamberlain edition of Nuttall, 1891, is still the popular edition of that author and is on the shelves of nearly every working ornithologist. Much that we know of the bird life of the Maritime Provinces is due to his zeal. He is one of the four living founders of the A.O.U., he and Thomas McIlwraith of Hamilton, Ontario, being the Canadian representatives when the Union was formed. W. E. Saunders of London, Ont., has almost equal length of service, as in 1883 he joined the A.O.U. immediately after its formation. For many years Mr. Chamberlain was an active contributor to "*The Auk*," but he has been quiescent for so long now that few Canadians realize that he is still with us.



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