

## ON THE PROPER GENERIC NAME OF THE TUNNY AND ALBICORE.

BY THEODORE GILL.

In 1817, in the first edition of the *Régne Animal*, Cuvier proposed two subgenera of *Scomber*, which he employed, however, in a generic sense; one, *Thynnus*, was based upon the common Tunny (with which were associated other and smaller species), having moderate pectoral fins; and the other, *Orcynus*, was based upon the *Alalunga* of the Mediterranean, and characterized by the long pectoral fins. Subsequently, by many ichthyologists, these two genera were combined into one, under the name *Thynnus*. In 1861 the present writer replaced the name *Thynnus* by the term *Orycnus*, which was substituted, inasmuch as *Thynnus* was used for a genus of hymenopterous insects by Fabricius in 1775. This name *Orycnus* was simply due to a misreading of the name *Orcynus*, and was subsequently replaced by *Orcynus* in its correct form. Nevertheless, in 1863, Dr. J. G. Cooper, in the "Proceedings of the California Academy of Natural Sciences" (vol. 3, p. 77), proposed to revert to the old groups of Cuvier in the following terms, describing a supposed new species, related to the *Alalunga* of the Mediterranean, which he called *Orcynus pacificus*:

"This species is one of several confounded by sailors under the Spanish names of Albicore and Bonito. The English name Tunny is applied to an allied species on the coast of Europe, the *Thynnus vulgaris*, Cuv., and to its near representative, the *T. secundi-dorsalis*, Storer, of the eastern American coast. These, however, are evidently of a different genus, and as *Thynnus* is pre-occupied in insects, the name *Orycnus*, applied by Gill to the same type, may perhaps be retained, although founded on a mistake."

Without reference to the reality of what was so evident to Dr. Cooper, we need only recall that here the name *Orycnus* was specifically proposed to be retained, at the same time that *Orcynus* was used for a related genus.

In 1888, Professor Jordan, in the "Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia" (reprinted in the "Annals and Magazine of Natural History" for 1888), apparently overlooking this specific application of the name *Orycnus* by Cooper, proposed the new name *Albicora* for the same genus, inasmuch as *Orcynus* had been used in 1815 for a genus of Carangids by Rafinesque, while *Thynnus* of Cuvier, as is well known, had been pre-occupied for a genus of hymenopterous insects.

The present author would have been glad if the name *Orycnus* could have fallen into "innocuous disuetude" but inasmuch as it had been



specifically and with *malice prepense* resurrected and proposed for retention by Cooper, it must surely be retained for the genus comprising the Tunny and Albicore. It belongs to a category of which there are many illustrations, being an anagram of another name, and numerous such have been proposed deliberately and generally adopted, such as *Panulirus* and *Linuparus*, anagrams of *Palinurus*, and various others.

If it is represented that the word *Orycnus* is merely due to a slip of the pen or typographical error, and therefore should not be retained, we can, in reply, refer for an analogous retention of an incorrect form to no less an authority than Professor Jordan. In the fifth edition of his excellent work, "A Manual of the Vertebrate Animals of the Northern United States," published a couple of months ago (1888, p. 92), we find the word *Athlennes*, which was originally proposed in 1886 as a designation for the *Belone hians* of Cuvier and Valenciennes. As we suspected at the time of publication, this name is really derived from an ancient Greek synonym of the common *Belone belone* of Europe, "*αβλεννης*, without mucosity."

Nevertheless, in a foot-note to the Manual we are informed that "this name was inadvertently printed '*Athlennes*,' and may remain so; '*Ab-lennes*' was intended." Surely, then, in strict analogy with such usage, the name *Orycnus* can be retained as the generic designation of the Tunny.



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