

gravure plates illustrate attitudes of the first two species during the period of courtship. In addition to the detailed life histories, considerable space is devoted in the Willow Warbler biography to a discussion of the probable cause of the early migration of certain species of warblers and also of the probability of the same pair of migrant birds mating in successive years. The author considers the latter highly improbable in species where the males precede the females in migration. The possibility of one or other perishing during the migrations is very great and if the male bird waited for the arrival of his last year's mate, many a male would remain unmated. The evidence seems to point to his mating with the first female to arrive in his neighborhood and this would seem most advantageous to the perpetuation of the species. There is also much of interest in the account of sexual excitement and display on the part of the male birds in the species treated. Both plates and text are fully up to the high standard set by the previous parts.—W. S.

Hartert's Vögel der paläarktischen Fauna.—The seventh part¹ of this notable work on the palæarctic Avifauna comprises the Swifts, Goatsuckers, Bee-eaters, Hoopoes, Rollers, Kingfishers, Woodpeckers, Cuckoos and part of the Owls. Owing to the strict adherence to the International Code the nomenclature takes on some changes and accords with the A. O. U. Check-List in genera which are found also in the Nearctic region. *Dryobates* long used in America is adopted for the small black and white woodpeckers and the efforts of our ornithologists in splitting up the North American forms of this genus are far excelled, no less than sixty species and subspecies being listed. *D. major* has sixteen races, and *D. minor* thirteen. *Picus* takes the place of *Gecin*us.

The following new forms appear in the main text or in annotations: *Caprimulgus europaeus sarudnyi*, W. Turkestan; *Dryobates minor buturlini*, Italy; *D. hyperythrus marshalli*, N. W. Himalayas; *Picumnus innominatus malayorum*, Borneo; *P. i. avunculorum*, Nilgiri Hills; *Cuculus canorus bakeri*, Shellong, Khasia Mts.; *C. intermedius insulindae*, Kina Balu, Borneo.

All who have occasion to deal with palæarctic birds will congratulate Dr. Hartert upon the progress of his work.—W. S.

'A Hand-List of British Birds.'²—A little more than a quarter-century ago the American Ornithologists' Union, in an effort to establish uniformity

¹ Die Vögel der paläarktischen Fauna. Systematische Übersicht der in Europa, Nord-Asian und der Mittelmeerregion vorkommenden Vögel. Von Dr. Ernst Hartert. Heft VII (Bd. II, 1). Seite 833-960. Mit 30 Abbildungen. Berlin, 1912.

² A Hand-list of | British Birds | with an Account of the Distribution of each Species in the British Isles and Abroad. | By | Ernst Hartert | F. C. R. Jourdain | N. F. Ticehurst | and | H. F. Witherby. | Witherby & Co., 326 High Holborn, London, W. C. | 1912.—Svo., pp. i-xii + 1-237. Price 7s 6d. net.

in the names applied to American birds, published a Code of Nomenclature and a Check-List. The tenth edition of Linnæus's 'Systema Naturæ' was adopted as the starting point, trinomials were employed for the designation of subspecies, tautonymic names were admitted and a few other principles then looked upon as revolutionary were put into practice. 'The Ibis' in reviewing the publication regretted that the adoption of the tenth instead of the twelfth edition of Linnæus alone "disposes of the last chance of a scientific language in common with our brethren across the water." As our British friends had not been very successful in establishing a scientific language that had proved common even to the inhabitants of the British Isles, American ornithologists did not take this prediction too much to heart but looked forward with confidence to a time, that they felt sure must come, when the principles adopted in the A. O. U. list would become the basis for a list of British birds. For many years there seemed little chance of their hopes being realized, even though they had the satisfaction of seeing their Code almost in its entirety endorsed by the International Zoological Commission. Recently however, there have been encouraging signs, trinomials have appeared on the pages of 'The Ibis', and here and there time honored names of British birds have been ruthlessly overthrown in order to comply with the rules of the Code. It was therefore with more than ordinary interest that we received notice of the appearance of a new Hand-List of British birds, and with the volume before us we began to turn the pages with much speculation as to what they might disclose.

The motto on the very first page was encouraging "Nomenclature is only 'a means, not an end,' but without uniformity it is a confusion." How the late Dr. Elliott Coues would have relished this improvement upon the A. O. U. motto! The introduction clearly sets forth the lack of uniformity that has prevailed in the nomenclature of British birds, and makes an admirable plea for everyone to help in upholding "the strict letter of the law [as set forth in the International Code] rather than his own convenience, likes and dislikes." How rigidly the authors have lived up to their declaration is seen in the acceptance without a protest of the Brissonian genera, in accordance with a ruling of the Commission, although at least one of the authors was and no doubt still is bitterly opposed to recognizing them.

Turning to the list itself we see that our hopes have been fully realized; indeed we could well believe that we had the last edition of the A. O. U. Check-List before us! Trinomials appear on nearly every page and not only is the binomial name given at the head of each set of subspecies but it is repeated in cases where the species has not been subdivided, thus presenting absolute consistency which the A. O. U. Check-List does not.

As an example of the style and typography of the names we may quote from pages 41-42.

CERTHIA FAMILIARIS.

83. *Certhia familiaris britannica* Ridg.—THE BRITISH TREE-CREEPER.

84. *Certhia familiaris familiaris* L.—THE NORTHERN TREE-CREEPER.

TICHODROMA MURARIA.

- 85.
- Tichodroma muraria*
- (L.).—THE WALL CREEPER.

SITTA EUROPEA.

- 86.
- Sitta europæa britannica*
- Hart.—THE BRITISH NUTHATCH.

PARUS MAJOR.

- 87.
- Parus major major*
- L.—THE CONTINENTAL GREAT TITMOUSE.

- 88.
- Parus major newtoni*
- Prazak.—THE BRITISH GREAT TITMOUSE.

Under each numbered form is given the original reference and type locality, the latter restricted when necessary; and references to the last edition of Yarrell's 'History of British Birds', and Saunder's 'Manual'. Then come three paragraphs on distribution: (1) Distribution in England and Wales, in Scotland and in Ireland; (2) Migrations in the British Isles; (3) Distribution Abroad; — all of them very full. As seen in Nos. 83 and 86 above, original spelling is strictly adhered to. Occurrences that are not fully authenticated or are perhaps escaped cage birds are given in brackets in their proper place in the list and are unnumbered, but "vagrants" of apparently natural occurrence take their regular position and number. Important changes in nomenclature from the later British lists are explained in footnotes.

The only important omission to our mind is that of the generic heading, as without it we cannot always determine the source from which the generic name is taken or which species is regarded as the type.

The list comprises 469 forms — species or subspecies — and as we run over the names we are struck with the remarkable accordance with the A. O. U. List. Not only are the Jaegers named as Americans have for twenty-five years maintained that they should be named, but *Colymbus* actually appears for the Grebes and *Gavia* for the Loons! There are about 190 cases where the same bird occurs in both lists or where the American and British forms differ only subspecifically, and of these 121 have exactly the same binomial name in the two works, while in 63 others the specific name is the same but the generic names differ owing to the tendency of the British authors to 'lump' genera. Twenty-four additional genera occur which have different species on the two sides of the Atlantic, and for all of them the same names are employed in the two lists.

The 'lumping' of genera is particularly noticeable in the ducks and shore-birds. In the former, *Chaulelasmus*, *Nettion*, *Querquedula*, and *Mareca* are included in *Anas*, while *Netta*, *Marila*, *Clangula* and *Charitonetta* of the A. O. U. List are united under *Nyroca*. The reduction of *Acanthis*, *Spinus*, *Astragalinus*, and *Carduelis* to one genus is also rather startling. These cases, as well as six instances where American birds are treated as subspecies of Old World species, are matters of individual opinion and cannot be covered by any Code. On purely nomenclatural questions the two lists are in remarkable accord, there being only thirteen cases of difference in generic and five in specific names.

In the substitution of *Oenanthe* for *Saxicola*; *Hydrobates* for *Thalassodroma*, *Tyto* for *Aluco*; *Canutus* for *Tringa*, *Tringa* for *Helodromas* and

Pterodroma for *Æstrelata* the British List is probably correct. *Harelda* for *Clangula* depends upon whether or not Oken's names are accepted, while the use of *Eremophila* and *Ægolius* depend upon the claim that the prior names *Eremophilus* and *Ægolia* do not invalidate them. In the use of *Bombycilla* for *Ampelis* and *Hirundo* for *Chelidon* the A. O. U. List is unquestionably right. The first author to fix a type for *Hirundo* was Gray, 1840, who designated *H. rustica*. The International Code does not recognize type fixing by restriction except where there are only two species in the genus, so Forster's action in 1817 amounts to nothing. The case of *Grus* vs. *Megalornis* will probably have to be decided by the Commission.

In the case of specific names *hyperboreus* Gunn. for the Glaucous Gull and *alba* Gunn. for the Ivory Gull are rejected; *tschegrava* Lepsch. for the Caspian Tern is considered perfectly identifiable; *æsalon* Tunnstall for the Merlin is rejected as a *nomen nudum* and *funerea* L. for Tengmalm's owl, as unidentifiable.

This comparison shows that it will now be very easy for American and British ornithologists to come together on matters of nomenclature and that the diversity in names at present is due mainly to different views as to the limits of genera.

We congratulate the authors of the British Hand-List upon the character of their work, and upon the great strides that they have made toward uniformity of nomenclature. Let us hope that all British ornithologists will hearken to the plea that they make and adopt the names here set forth in all future writings upon British birds.—W. S.

Horsbrugh's 'The Game-Birds and Water-Fowl of South Africa.'¹

—The first part of this recently announced work is before us. It is beautifully printed on heavy paper, and the plates, printed in colors on egg-shell surface paper, are exceedingly delicate and portray the minute details of plumage characteristic of game-birds with great fidelity, even though the artist has not attempted the life and action, and originality of pose, which we are familiar with in the work of Fuertes and some of our other bird artists.

This part consists of sixteen plates portraying ten Bustards, two Thick-nees, three Snipe and a Francolin with a page or two of text to each. This comprises synonymy, local names, brief description, distribution, and a general account of habits and abundance.

The author is apparently not an advocate of excessive generic subdivision and the Bustard's referred to seven genera in the British Museum Catalogue here all appear under the classic name *Otis*.

¹ The | Game-Birds and Water-Fowl | of South Africa | By | Major Boyd Horsbrugh | (Army Service Corps) | Member of the British Ornithologists' Union and South African | Ornithologists' Union; Fellow of the Zoological Society of London | with | Coloured Plates | By | Sergeant C. G. Davies | (Cape Mounted Rifles) M. B. O. U., M. S. A. O. U. | To be Completed in Four Parts | Part I. | London: | Witherby & Co., 326 High Holborn W. C. | March, 1912. | pp. 1-40, pll. 1-16.



Hartert, Ernst and Witherby, H. F. 1912. "A Hand-List of British Birds." *The Auk* 29, 407–410. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4071072>.

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