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VI.—Commentary on the new 'Hand-list of British Birds.

By P. L. SCLATER, D.Sc., F.R.S.

IN the last page of 'The Ibis' for 1912 (p. 688), there was a notice of the publication of a new 'List of British Birds,' drawn up by four well-known ornithologists (Dr. Hartert, Mr. Jourdain, Mr. N. C. Ticehurst, and Mr. Witherby), and stated to be in exact accordance with the International

Rules of Zoological Nomenclature*. It was also announced that some remarks on this important publication would be given in the next number of 'The Ibis.' The editor of the present series of our Journal has requested me to take this task off his hands, and I have agreed to do so, it being understood that the writer of these remarks is solely responsible for them, and not the editor of the Journal in which they are published.

On reading the "Introduction" to the new 'Hand-list' I was much surprised to find no mention of the Rules for Zoological Nomenclature prepared by the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Surely, before adopting wholesale the so-called "International" Rules, it would have been better to ascertain what our own zoologists had done in this matter. Yet the Rules of the British Association are utterly ignored, and it is even stated that the nomenclature of Birds has been "neglected for more than 150 years, although a requisite of the greatest importance." But this statement is by no means correct, as I shall proceed to shew.

When I began my residence at Oxford, at Easter 1846, as a Scholar of Corpus Christi College, I quickly made the acquaintance of the late Hugh Edwin Strickland, F.R.S., who was at that time living at Oxford and giving lectures there as Reader in Geology. When not engaged with his lectures Strickland was at the Radcliffe Library nearly every day, at work on his 'Ornithological Synonyms,' as he proposed to call his book on the nomenclature of Birds†. We soon became great friends, and remained so until his much lamented death by a railway accident in 1853. In fact Strickland was my master and instructor in all matters

* Règles Internationales de la Nomenclature Zoologique adoptées par les Congrès Internationaux de Zoologie. Paris, 1905.

† This work was left incomplete at Strickland's death. The first part of it, containing the synonymy of the Accipitres, was printed and published by Van Voorst (in 1855), edited by Mrs. Hugh Strickland and Sir William Jardine. The MS. of the rest of the work is at Cambridge along with the Strickland Collection and Library.

regarding ornithology, and I always endeavoured to follow his excellent advice.

As with the authors of the present 'Hand-list' so with Strickland, "Priority" was the foundation of his work. He rightly maintained that the only mode of attaining unanimity in nomenclature was the rule of priority, but he did not carry his views on the subject quite so far as some of our friends do at the present time.

In July 1841, Strickland wrote to his father-in-law, Sir William Jardine, as follows:—

"I have some thought of moving in the Zoological section of the British Association (at Plymouth) for the appointment of a Committee to prepare a set of regulations with the view of establishing a permanent system of Zoological Nomenclature." This plan, which was also communicated to Darwin, Sir John Richardson, Leonard Jenyns, Prince Charles Bonaparte, and other good friends, met with universal approval. As proposed by Strickland it was brought before the British Association at the Plymouth Meeting, and a Committee, consisting of Mr. Darwin, Prof. Henslow, Rev. L. Jenyns, Mr. Ogilby, Mr. J. Phillips, Dr. Richardson, Mr. Strickland, and Mr. J. O. Westwood, was appointed "to consider the rules by which the nomenclature of Zoology may be established on a uniform basis." The names of Mr. W. J. Broderip, Prof. Owen, Mr. W. E. Shuckard, Mr. G. R. Waterhouse, and Mr. Yarrell were afterwards added to the Committee. The subject was well considered by this select Committee under the guidance of Strickland, who was appointed Secretary. The Report of the Committee, which I believe was mainly (if not entirely) prepared by Strickland, was presented to the meeting of the British Association at Manchester. This Report is commonly known as the 'Stricklandian Code,' and was printed in the eleventh volume of the Reports of the British Association (1842), and in Sir William Jardine's volume of 'Memoirs of Strickland.'*

* 'Memoirs of Hugh Edwin Strickland, M.A., F.R.S., Deputy Reader of Geology in Oxford.' By Sir William Jardine, Bart. London: Van Voorst, 1858.

Two other editions of the 'Stricklandian Code of Nomenclature' were subsequently printed and published by the British Association: the first, edited by Sir William Jardine, in 1865, and the second, edited by myself, in 1878*. The history of these two editions and a general account of the whole literature of the subject will be found in a paper which was read before the Zoological Society of London in 1896†. From what I have there stated, and from the list of the titles of the various Codes of Nomenclature there given, it will be evident that it is not correct to say that the study of Zoological Nomenclature has been neglected during the past 150 years. On the contrary, much has been written about this subject, and a large number of our leading zoologists have given it their best attention. But in the 'Hand-list' it is proposed to throw over all that has been done in this country, and to adopt a Code of Rules that contains, in my opinion, some very objectionable features.

I fully admit that it would be of great advantage to the science of zoology to have the same rules of nomenclature in all countries, and the same name for each species. This, no doubt, was one of the principal reasons for the preparation of the new 'Hand-list of British Birds.'

"If the scientific names of Birds were uniform all over the world," the authors truly say, "what an enormous benefit it would be for ornithologists and for science generally." Indeed it would, but the question is, how can such unanimity be obtained? As already shewn, we have in England a set of scientific names for our birds based on the Stricklandian Code, and familiar to us from their usage in such works as those of Yarrell, Newton, and Saunders.

* This is the title of the edition of 1878:—'Rules for Zoological Nomenclature drawn up by the late H. E. Strickland, M.A., F.R.S. (assisted by many Zoologists, British and Foreign), at the instance of the British Association.' London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1878. 8vo. 28 pp.

† "Remarks on the Diversities between the Rules for naming Animals of the German Zoological Society and the Stricklandian Code of Nomenclature," by P. L. Sclater, P. Z. S. 1896, pp. 306-322.

We are now asked by the authors of the ‘*Hand-list*’ to throw this system over altogether, and to adopt in its place their system, which is founded on the rules of the International Committee. Now, if there were any means of enforcing such a change on all the ornithologists of the world, this would indeed be a tempting offer. But experience shews us that such an offer would not be accepted because of the enormous changes it would necessitate in our usual nomenclature. Who would like to call the Redwing “*Turdus musicus*,” or the Barn-Owl “*Tyto alba*”? Some of our friends will reply “Oh! but they will soon get used to it!” A few of the more ardent and energetic workers in ornithology would, no doubt, after a time get used to it. But how about the large array of journalists, local list-makers, and other occasional writers? They would never adopt the new system, nor even recognize their old favourites disguised under their new names.

In order to shew the changes which would have to be made in the ‘*B.O.U. List*’ to bring it into conformity with the new ‘*Hand-list*,’ I have prepared the following Table, which shews that out of 376 species included in the ‘*B.O.U. List*,’ no less than 200 would require alteration. But I doubt very much whether many of our writers on birds would appreciate this step—or would use the new names; and, if this should turn out to be the case, it seems to me that the introduction of the new names would only aggravate the very evil which it is intended to remedy.

I may now venture to remind those who maintain that no attempt has been made to regulate the nomenclature of birds, that besides the rules of the British Association (which apply to the whole of Zoology) a special committee of the British Ornithologists’ Union was appointed in 1878 to which the task of preparing a ‘*List of British Birds*’ was entrusted. This committee, of which I had the honour of being chairman, held as many as seventy-one meetings and thoroughly discussed the name of every species, its chief object being to ensure a uniform nomenclature for writers

in 'The Ibis.' It may well claim to have succeeded in this object, as until the last few years the names used by the leading writers on British Birds (Yarrell, Newton, Saunders, and others) were nearly the same as those of the 'B. O. U. List.' After the long interval of nearly thirty years it was obvious that some changes would be necessary, but not such treatment as would revolutionize the whole system previously adopted. Accordingly, at the General Meeting of the B. O. U. in 1910 a "select" committee was appointed to prepare a new edition of our 'List of British Birds,' and before long we may hope to have the benefit of its labours on this important subject.*

The number of species and subspecies of British birds allowed in the 'Hand-list' is 469. The species are not numbered, but their names are printed in large type, and have no "authority" added to their generic and specific titles. But the "authority" is added in the case of the subspecies, so that every subspecies has four names. I think it would have been better to have omitted the authority altogether in the subspecies. It is not correct to quote the Little Tern (for example) as "*Sterna minuta minuta* L.," for Linnæus never gave it any such name—he called it simply "*Sterna minuta*." This process is still more objectionable in cases where there are no subspecies. What can be the use of calling the Honey-Buzzard "*Pernis apivorus apivorus*"? and in attributing the duplication of the specific term to Linnæus, who certainly never gave it that name. There are many other similar cases in the synonymy.

Before concluding my remarks I wish to say that, so far as I am able to judge, the new 'Hand-list' has been well and carefully prepared. I have tried many of the references, and have found them correct. Moreover, all the most recent accessions to the British list are properly entered, so that it will be of much use to all students of British ornithology, even though they may not agree with its nomenclature.

* See the reports of the General Meetings, 'Ibis,' 1911, p. 553, and 1912, p. 529.

COMPARISON of the Names of British Birds according to the LIST OF THE BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION (1883) with the Names corresponding to them in the 'HAND-LIST' (1912).

N.B.—Where the name in the B. O. U. List is different from that of the Hand-list, the latter name is printed in italics.

No.	Name, B. O. U. List.	Page	Name in Hand-list.	Page
1.	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	1	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	74
2.	<i>Turdus musicus</i>	1	<i>Turdus philomelus</i>	75
3.	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	2	<i>Turdus musicus</i>	76
4.	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	2	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	74
5.	<i>Turdus atrigularis</i>	3	<i>Turdus ruficollis</i>	77
6.	<i>Turdus varius</i>	3	<i>Turdus dauma</i>	73
7.	<i>Turdus merula</i>	4	<i>Turdus merula</i>	79
8.	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	5	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>	77
9.	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	5	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	79
10.	<i>Saxicola oenanthe</i>	6	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	80
11.	<i>Saxicola stapazina</i>	6	<i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>	81
12.	<i>Saxicola deserti</i>	7	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	80
13.	<i>Pratincola rubetra</i>	7	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	83
14.	<i>Pratincola rubicola</i>	8	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	84
15.	<i>Ruticilla phœnicurus</i>	8	<i>Phœnicurus phœnicurus</i>	85
16.	<i>Ruticilla titys</i>	9	<i>Phœnicurus ochrurus</i>	85
17.	<i>Cyanecula wolff</i>	9	<i>Luscinia cyanecula</i>	88
18.	<i>Cyanecula suecica</i>	10	<i>Luscinia suecica</i>	88
19.	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	10	<i>Dandatus rubecula</i>	89
20.	<i>Daulias luscinia</i>	11	<i>Luscinia megarhyncha</i>	86
21.	<i>Sylvia cinerea</i>	11	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	69
22.	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	12	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	70
23.	<i>Sylvia orphea</i>	12	<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>	67
24.	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	12	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	69
25.	<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>	13	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	68
26.	<i>Sylvia nisoria</i>	13	<i>Sylvia nisoria</i>	67
27.	<i>Melizophilus undatus</i>	14	<i>Sylvia undata</i>	72
28.	<i>Regulus cristatus</i>	14	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	48
29.	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	15	<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	49
30.	<i>Phylloscopus superciliosus</i> ..	15	<i>Phylloscopus superciliosus</i> ..	60
31.	<i>Phylloscopus rufus</i>	16	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	56
32.	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	16	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	57
33.	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	17	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	59
34.	<i>Hypolais icterina</i>	17	<i>Hypolais icterina</i>	66
35.	<i>Aëdon galactodes</i>	18	<i>Agrobates galactodes</i>	72
36.	<i>Acrocephalus streperus</i>	18	<i>Acrocephalus streperus</i>	63
37.	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	19	<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	64
38.	<i>Acrocephalus turdoides</i>	19	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i> ..	63
39.	<i>Acrocephalus aquaticus</i>	20	<i>Acrocephalus aquaticus</i>	65

No.	Name, B. O. U. List.	Page	Name in Hand-list.	Page
40.	<i>Acrocephalus phragmitis</i>	20	<i>Acrocephalus schœnobæus</i> ..	65
41.	<i>Locustella nævia</i>	20	<i>Locustella nævia</i>	62
42.	<i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	21	<i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	61
43.	<i>Accentor modularis</i>	22	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	90
44.	<i>Accentor collaris</i>	23	<i>Prunella collaris</i>	90
45.	<i>Cinclus aquaticus</i>	23	<i>Cinclus britannicus</i>	92
46.	<i>Cinclus melanogaster</i>	24	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>	92
47.	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	24	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	49
48.	<i>Acredula caudata</i>	25	<i>Ægithalus caudatus</i>	47
49.	<i>Acredula rosea</i>	25	<i>Ægithalus caudatus roseus</i> ..	47
50.	<i>Parus major</i>	26	<i>Parus major</i>	42
51.	<i>Parus ater</i>	26	<i>Parus ater</i>	44
52.	<i>Parus britannicus</i>	26	<i>Parus britannicus</i>	44
53.	<i>Parus palustris</i>	27	<i>Parus palustris</i>	46
54.	<i>Parus cæruleus</i>	27	<i>Parus cæruleus</i>	43
55.	<i>Parus cristatus</i>	28	<i>Parus cristatus</i>	45
56.	<i>Sitta cæsia</i>	28	<i>Sitta europæa</i>	42
57.	<i>Troglodytes parvulus</i>	29	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	91
58.	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	29	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	40
59.	<i>Motacilla lugubris</i>	30	<i>Motacilla lugubris</i>	39
60.	<i>Motacilla melanope</i>	30	<i>Motacilla boarula</i>	39
61.	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	31	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	36
62.	<i>Motacilla rayi</i>	31	<i>Motacilla rayi</i>	38
63.	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	32	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	33
64.	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	33	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	33
65.	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	33	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	33
66.	<i>Anthus richardi</i>	34	<i>Anthus richardi</i>	32
67.	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	34	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>	35
68.	<i>Anthus obscurus</i>	35	<i>Anthus obscurus</i>	36
69.	<i>Oriolus galbula</i>	36	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	7
70.	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	37	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	50
71.	<i>Lanius major</i>	37	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	50
72.	<i>Lanius minor</i>	38	<i>Lanius minor</i>	50
73.	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	38	<i>Lanius collurio</i>	52
74.	<i>Lanius pomeranus</i>	38	<i>Lanius senator</i>	51
75.	<i>Ampelis garrulus</i>	39	<i>Ampelis garrulus</i>	53
76.	<i>Muscicapa grisola</i>	40	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	53
77.	<i>Muscicapa atricapilla</i>	41	<i>Muscicapa hypoleuca</i>	54
78.	<i>Muscicapa parva</i>	42	<i>Muscicapa parva</i>	55
79.	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	42	<i>Chelidon rustica</i>	93
80.	<i>Chelidon urbica</i>	44	<i>Hirundo urbica</i>	94
81.	<i>Cotile riparia</i>	44	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	95
82.	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	45	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	41
83.	<i>Carduelis elegans</i>	47	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	9
84.	<i>Chrysomitris spinus</i>	48	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>	10
85.	<i>Serinus hortulanus</i>	49	<i>Serinus canarius</i>	14
86.	<i>Ligurinus chloris</i>	49	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	8
87.	<i>Coccothraustes vulgaris</i>	50	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i> .	8
88.	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	51	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	21
89.	<i>Passer montanus</i>	51	<i>Passer montanus</i>	21

No.	Name, B. O. U. List.	Page	Name in Hand-list.	Page
90.	<i>Fringilla cœlebs</i>	52	<i>Fringilla cœlebs</i>	19
91.	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	52	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	20
92.	<i>Linota cannabina</i>	53	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	14
93.	<i>Linota linaria</i>	53	<i>Carduelis linaria</i>	11
94.	<i>Linota rufescens</i>	54	<i>Carduelis linaria cabaret</i>	12
95.	<i>Linota hornemanni</i>	54	<i>Carduelis hornemannii</i>	13
96.	<i>Linota flavirostris</i>	54	<i>Carduelis flavirostris</i>	10
97.	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	55	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	16
98.	<i>Pyrrhula europæa</i>	56	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	15
99.	<i>Pinicola enucleator</i>	56	<i>Pinicola enucleator</i>	16
100.	<i>Loxia pityopsittacus</i>	57	<i>Loxia pityopsittacus</i>	18
101.	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	57	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	17
102.	<i>Loxia leucoptera</i>	58	<i>Loxia leucoptera</i>	19
103.	<i>Loxia bifasciata</i>	58	<i>Loxia bifasciata</i>	19
104.	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>	59	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>	23
105.	<i>Emberiza miliaria</i>	59	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	22
106.	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	60	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	22
107.	<i>Emberiza cirrus</i>	60	<i>Emberiza cirrus</i>	24
108.	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>	61	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>	24
109.	<i>Emberiza rustica</i>	61	<i>Emberiza rustica</i>	25
110.	<i>Emberiza pusilla</i>	61	<i>Emberiza pusilla</i>	25
111.	<i>Emberiza schœniclus</i>	62	<i>Emberiza schœniclus</i>	26
112.	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	62	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	27
113.	<i>Plectrophanes nivalis</i>	63	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	27
114.	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	65	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	6
115.	<i>Pastor roseus</i>	66	<i>Pastor roseus</i>	7
116.	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>	66	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	6
117.	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>	67	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>	4
118.	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	67	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	5
119.	<i>Pica rustica</i>	68	<i>Pica pica</i>	3
120.	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	68	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	3
121.	<i>Corvus corone</i>	69	<i>Corvus corone</i>	2
122.	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	69	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	1
123.	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	70	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	2
124.	<i>Corvus corax</i>	70	<i>Corvus corax</i>	1
125.	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	71	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	31
126.	<i>Alauda arborea</i>	71	<i>Lululla arborea</i>	30
127.	<i>Alauda cristata</i>	71	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	29
128.	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i> ..	72	<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i> ..	29
129.	<i>Melanocorypha sibirica</i>	73	<i>Melanocorypha sibirica</i>	28
130.	<i>Otocorys alpestris</i>	73	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	32
131.	<i>Cypselus apus</i>	74	<i>Apus apus</i>	96
132.	<i>Cypselus melba</i>	74	<i>Apus melba</i>	95
133.	<i>Acanthyllis caudacuta</i>	74	<i>Chætura caudacuta</i>	96
134.	<i>Caprimulgus europæus</i>	75	<i>Caprimulgus europæus</i>	96
135.	<i>Caprimulgus ruficollis</i>	75	<i>Caprimulgus ruficollis</i>	97
136.	<i>Dendrocopus major</i>	77	<i>Dryobates major</i>	100
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257.	<i>Perdix cinerea</i>	142	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	217
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356.	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>	198	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>	152
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It will be seen by this Comparative List that of the 376 names comprised in the 'B. O. U. List' more than one-half would have to be altered in order to bring the 'B. O. U. List' into conformity with the 'Hand-list.' This is, as I consider, so great a defect in the projected change that, in my opinion, the alterations could not be effected, even if other matters could be satisfactorily arranged. It is possible, however, that the Committee of the B. O. U. now at work on Nomenclature



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