

older birds. Unfortunately my attention had been drawn elsewhere soon after the marking, otherwise this tragedy might have been prevented.

But this incident serves to show that some caution will have to be exercised in the marking of the young; and, in the writer's opinion, it may be necessary for us to confine our work to the larger and more powerful birds.

For obvious reasons such birds as the Vireos, and particularly the Orioles and various members of the family Paridae, should be stricken from the list; in fact, any of the birds where a similar mishap is likely to occur.

A tag might be devised, however, which would remedy all this and allow us to proceed with the original plan, but nothing thus far has presented itself to my mind. Others perhaps may have met with a similar experience.— BENJ. T. GAULT, *Glen Ellyn, Ill.*

Two additional Copper-Plates of the Folio Edition of Audubon's 'Birds of America.'— Since the publication of my paper on this subject (Auk, Vol. XXV, p. 401), I have received information of two others which have been preserved. This increases the list already recorded to thirty-nine. The plate (pl. cxii) representing the Downy Woodpecker, is in the possession of Miss Grace H. Dodge, New York. Mr. J. H. Sage has recently located the plate (cccxxxviii) of the Bimaculated Duck,¹ belonging to Mr. Cephas Brainerd of Haddam, Conn. Mr. Brainerd writes me that it was presented to him by the late William E. Dodge, New York. Calling at Mr. Dodge's office one day, he was shown a number of the plates which Mr. Dodge stated were all that remained of the Audubon 'coppers,' which had been ruined by neglect and exposure. Mr. Brainerd examined them and was satisfied that some might be put in good order, framed and preserved. The experiment was successful and this plate, as well as a number of others, were completely restored.— RUTHVEN DEANE, *Chicago, Ill.*

RECENT LITERATURE.

Sharpe's Hand-List of Birds.— The recent appearance of Volume V of Dr. Sharpe's 'Hand-List of the Genera and Species of Birds'² brings to a close a work which makes every systematic ornithologist a debtor to his great industry and indomitable perseverance.

¹ Named in the plate *Anas glocitans* but in the Orn. Biogr., *Anas Breweri*.

² A Hand-List of the Genera and Species of Birds. [Nomenclator Avium tum Fossilium tum Viventium.] By R. Bowdler Sharpe, LL. D., Assistant Keeper, Department of Zoology, British Museum. Volume V. London: Printed by order of the Trustees. Sold by Longmans & Co., 39 Paternoster Row, E. C., B. Quaritch, 11 Grafton Street, New Bond Street, W.; Dulau & Co., 37 Soho Square, W.; and at the British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, S. W. 1909. All rights reserved.— 8vo, pp. xx+694.

The first volume of this great work appeared in 1899, the second in 1900, the third in 1901, and the fourth in 1903, there being an interval of ten years between the appearance of the first and last volumes. They have also steadily increased in size, the fifth being more than twice the size of the first, the five volumes totaling more than 1700 pages.

According to statistics given in the present volume "the total number of known species of birds is, . . . approximately," 18,939, arranged in 2810 genera, 174 families, and 35 orders. The Passeriformes alone comprise 48 families. Dr. Dubois's 'Synopsis Avium,' completed five years ago, contained 16,478 species and subspecies, 2252 genera, 145 families, and 23 orders. A thousand species, and probably 150 genera, have doubtless been added during the last four years, thus considerably lessening the apparent difference between the number of 'species' and genera recognized in the two works, with the number, five years ago, probably nearer the figures given by Dubois, in view of the fact that Sharpe's 'species' include hundreds of forms originally proposed as subspecies and later discarded, even by their authors, as well as by subsequent authorities who have had occasion to deal with them.

While Dr. Sharpe, in this work alone, not to mention his many volumes of the British Museum 'Catalogue of Birds,' and numberless other works and papers, has done an immense service to systematic ornithology, it is to be regretted that he has adhered so strictly to certain antiquated methods and ideas. "Consistency is [not] a jewel" when it stands in the way of progress. When the British Museum Catalogue of Birds was begun, thirty-five years ago (the first volume was published in 1874), it was quite the natural thing to begin zoölogical nomenclature with the twelfth edition of Linnæus's 'Systema Naturæ' (1766), although admitting genera of other authors of prior date (notably Brisson's), thus treating these authors better than Linnæus; but the 10th edition is now, and has been for many years, the starting point authorized by all modern codes of zoölogical nomenclature, and is generally accepted by all authors except the very few who find it difficult to abandon long-standing habits of thought and practice.¹ Equally difficult is the abandonment of the habit of giving preference to emended names, as is shown by the 'Hand-List,' although such practice is tabooed by modern codes and has been abandoned by most of the leading zoölogists of the present day.

Neither has the author of the 'Hand-List' been able to accept the modern notion of subspecies, he being apparently appalled by the occurrence now and then of a tautonymic trinomial. But he says: "That races or subspecies exist in nature, no one can deny, but, to my mind, a binomial title answers every purpose, and a system of nomenclature which calls

¹ In a footnote to page 386, apropos of the name "*Pyrranga rubra*" vs. *P. erythromelas*, Dr. Sharpe says: "In common with most British Naturalists, I do not recognize the names of the 10th edition [1758] of Linnæus's 'Systema,' and I follow Dr. Sclater in preserving the name *P. rubra* (Linn.) [1766] for the species." We fear the statement "most British Naturalists" is merely an unconscious reminiscence!

the Hawfinch, *Coccothraustes coccothraustes coccothraustes*, and the Common Swift, *Apus apus apus*, will not survive long, though it has to be admitted that, at the present time, the system is very popular, while my views are considered to be old-fashioned." Through his method of treating all named forms as 'species,' even when proposed by the original describer as only subspecies, it is impossible for anyone but an expert to know that a very large number of the binomials stand merely for races, with no indication whatever of their real relationships or relative importance; or that many already discarded forms are here given a new lease of life in the garb of full-fledged species. Thus to the novice or the amateur the 'Hand-List' is sadly misleading, and the expert, outside of the groups of which he has critical knowledge, is put to the trouble of looking up the real status of many alleged species in order to know their true status and affinities.

It is for these three reasons that the 'Hand-List' is out of touch with modern ornithology, and lacks a large part of the authoritativeness such a work should possess. Yet it is a convenience of immense value to have the described forms of birds catalogued in due form, with references to works wherein they are fully described, and where figures of them may be found in case such exist; and for this reason the 'Hand-List' will doubtless be adopted in most ornithological museums as a basis of arrangement, it serving so well as a directory for the location of material.

The system of classification followed is that proposed by the author in 1891, of which he said eight years later (in Vol. I of the 'Hand-List'): "I have seen no reason to modify the conclusions there recorded in any material degree." In the fifth volume, however, he says: "In any future edition of the 'Hand-List' I should divide the Class Aves into the two Sub-Classes *Palæognathæ* and *Neognathæ*, since I consider this arrangement, proposed by Mr. Pycraft, more natural than the old division into *Ratitæ* and *Carinataæ*." Beyond this, apparently, he considers his system still satisfactory.

In reviewing Dr. Sharpe's invaluable 'Hand-List' from what appears to be the generally approved modern viewpoint we are not disposed to belittle the magnitude and usefulness of this great work, for which ornithologists the world over cannot be too grateful.—J. A. A.

Stone's 'The Birds of New Jersey.'¹—In response to the wide popular interest in birds, and in promotion of this interest, manuals of birds have been issued by the authority or under the auspices of several State governments, or through individual effort, till at present a considerable number of excellent local handbooks of ornithology are available for those who desire to become acquainted with the birds of their immediate region. The latest of these to call for notice is Mr. Stone's 'The Birds of New Jersey,' recently

¹ The Birds of New Jersey. By Witmer Stone, Curator Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. Annual Report of the New Jersey State Museum for 1908 (1909), pp. 11-347, 409-419, pll. 1-84.



Sharpe, Richard Bowdler. 1910. "Sharpe's Hand-List of Birds." *The Auk* 27, 93–95. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4071014>.

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