

"Official Check-list of the Birds of Australia."

PROPOSED SECOND EDITION.

MEMBERS will be pleased to know that ornithologists have heartily welcomed the proposal of the Council that a committee should present recommendations concerning a second edition of the "Official Check-list." Without exception, members have signified their approval and their desire to assist.

Australian ornithologists will be pleased that Mr. Mathews, who has done such valuable work for many years past for Australian ornithology, has agreed to co-operate. The Council requested his assistance, and appreciates his prompt and ready offer sent before he could receive the request. It may not be out of place to state here, as the list for Mr. Mathews' monumental work, "The Birds of Australia," will be closed shortly, that the Council regrets much that he did not allow the Council and editors the privilege of reviewing officially or seeing officially the parts of this great work, though they were sent to at least one newspaper in Melbourne. However, the Council bears no ill feeling in the matter, and extends a hearty welcome to Mr. Mathews.

The following notes are collated from material mostly worked up by Mr. Mathews and published in his various lists of Australian birds, the *Austral Avian Record*, and his "Birds of Australia" (vols. i.-iii., and vol. iv. in part).

In order that members of the R.A.O.U. may have before them sufficient evidence to enable them to give an intelligent vote * on the use of the B.O.U. generic and specific names for the second edition of the "Official Check-list," the following facts concerning the generic and specific names of the "Check-list" are given:—

A.—GENERIC NAMES.

There are 333 genera for the 751 species of the "Check-list." Three-quarters (251) of the generic names are common to Mathews' 1913 list and the "Check-list." Thirty-five extra-limital generic names are apparently valid, though Mr. Mathews has considered the Australian representatives to be worthy of generic rank. Thus, only 47 of the "Check-list" generic names are in question. Seven of these are settled by the new B.O.U. list, and five are "preoccupied," for the same name was used earlier for another animal, so that only 35 need be considered. Twenty of these have an earlier valid name. There seems to be no reason for refusing to use these 20 prior names, so that only 15 names can cause trouble. Three of these are objected to under "one-letterism"—that is, there is a similar name which possibly invalidates the "Check-list" name. However, "one-letterism" has been stretched until it is claimed that *Melophagus* (the sheep tick)

* A vote is necessary, as the proposal departs from the principles accepted at the Launceston session in 1911.

invalidates *Meliphaga* (a Honey-eater), and will possibly cause more trouble and upset than any other phase of scientific nomenclature. Deducting those three, 12 "Check-list" generic names must be considered; confusion concerning types and similarly-named species causes trouble in nine cases; and there are three simple cases for the committee to investigate.

Thus, of a total of 333 "Check-list" genera,

251 agree with Mathews' list.

- (1.) 35 are divided by Mr. Mathews from extra-limital genera.
- (2.) 7 are settled by the B.O.U. list.
- (3.) 5 are preoccupied.
- (4.) 20 have a prior name.
- (5.) 3 come under "one-letterism."
- (6.) 12 differ for various reasons.

The genera are set out under these six heads.

R.A.O.U. "CHECK-LIST" GENERA (35) APPARENTLY RECOGNIZED AS VALID, BUT THE AUSTRALIAN BIRDS ARE PLACED IN SEPARATE GENERA BY MR. MATHEWS, WHOSE NAMES ARE IN BRACKETS.

Coturnix (*Maroturnix*), *Tomirdus* (*Rallina*), *Pachyptila* (*Prion*), *Bruchigavia* (*Larus*), *Cirrepidesmus* (*Ochthodromus*), *Totanus* (*Iliornis*), *Gallinago* (*Ditelmatis*), *Irediparra* (*Parra*), *Ædicnemus* (*Burhinus*), *Austrotis* (*Choriotis*), *Platalea* (*Spathierodia*), *Cheniscus* (*Nettapus*), *Radjah* (*Tadorna*), *Virago* (*Nettium*), *Phaethon* (*Scæophaethon*), *Pelecanus* (*Catoptropelicanus*), *Astur* (*Urospiza*), *Haliaetus* (*Cuncuma*), *Ninox* (*Spiloglaux*), *Halcyon* (*Cyanalcyon*), *Uralcyon* (*Tanysiptera*), *Cosmærops* (*Merops*), *Coloburis* (*Pitta*), *Petrochelidon* (*Hylochelidon*), *Arses* (*Orphryzone*), *Edoliisoma* (*Metagraucalus*), *Pomatorhinus* (*Pomatostomus*), *Acrocephalus* (*Conopoderas*), *Megalurus* (*Poodytes*), *Dicæum* (*Austroedicæum*), *Anthus* (*Austranthus*), *Motacilla* (*Budytes*), *Oriolus* (*Mimeta*), *Chibia* (*Dicruropsis*), *Aplonis* (*Metallospar*).

NAMES FIXED BY B.O.U. LIST.

1.—*Æstrelata* (R.A.O.U.) v. *Pterodroma* (1913 list).

Pterodroma, Bonaparte, *Comptes Rendus Sci.*, vol. xlii., p. 768 (1856) v. *Æstrelata*, *ib.*, *ib.* *Pterodroma* (genus 4) is used a few lines before *Æstrelata* (genus 11). The B.O.U. "committee have not considered it advisable to substitute *Pterodroma* for *Æstrelata*, as there is not even a question of page priority." Mathews' 1913 list recognizes both as distinct genera, but the B.O.U. list says (p. 398) the two "birds are undoubtedly congeneric."

2.—*Petrella*, Zimmerman, ed. Bartram's Trav. Carolina, 1793, v. *Daption*, Stephens, 1826. The B.O.U. list does not refer to *Petrella*, but uses *Daption*.

3.—*Hydroprogne*, Kaup., 1829, v. *Sylochelidon*, Brehm., 1831. The B.O.U. list uses *Sterna*.

- 4.—*Charadrius* (R.A.O.U. and B.O.U.) *v.* *Pluvialis* (1913 list).
- 5.—*Ægialitis* (R.A.O.U. and B.O.U.) *v.* *Charadrius* (1913 list).
- 6.—*Tringa* (R.A.O.U. and B.O.U.) *v.* *Canutus*, &c. (1913 list).
- 7.—*Flammea* (B.O.U.), *Strix* (R.A.O.U.) *v.* *Tyto*, for Barn Owl (1913 list).

"CHECK-LIST" NAMES PREOCCUPIED (5).

- 1.—*Macronectes*, Richmond, 1906, instead of *Ossifraga* (not Wood, 1836), Hombron et Jacquinet, 1844.
- 2.—*Lobibyx*, Heine, 1890, instead of *Lobivanellus* (not Strickland, 1841), Reichenbach, 1852.
- 3.—*Threskiornis*, Gray, 1842, instead of *Ibis*, Cuvier, 1829, preoccupied by *Ibis*, Lacepède, 1799.
- 4.—*Opopsitta*, Sclater, 1860, instead of *Cyclopsitta* (not Reichenbach, 1850), Gould (?)
- 5.—*Grantiella*, Mathews, 1911, instead of *Entomophila* (not Horsfield, 1820), Gould, 1838.

"CHECK-LIST" GENERA (20) FOR WHICH THERE IS A VALID PRIOR NAME.

- 1.—*Alectura*, Latham, 1824, *v.* *Catheturus*, Swainson, 1837.
- 2.—*Eudytes*, Vieillot, April, 1816, *v.* *Catarrhactes*, Cuvier, Dec., 1816.
- 3.—*Procellaria*, Linnæus, 1758, *v.* *Majaqueus*, Reichenbach, 1852.
- 4.—*Catharacta*, Brünnich, 1764, *v.* *Megalestris*, Bonaparte, 1856.
- 5.—*Erolia*, Vieillot, 1816, *v.* *Ancylochilus*, Kaup., 1829.
- 6.—*Rostratula*, Vieillot, Apr., 1816, *v.* *Rhynchæa*, Cuvier, Dec., 1816.
- 7.—*Egretta*, Forster, 1817, *v.* *Garzetta*, Kaup., 1829.
- 8.—*Ardetta*, Gray, 1842, *v.* *Ixobrychus*, Billberg, 1828.
- 9.—*Chenonetta*, Brandt, 1836, *v.* *Chlamydochen*, Bonaparte, 1856.
- 10.—*Oxyura*, Bonaparte, 1832, *v.* *Erismatura*, Bonaparte, 1832.
- 11.—*Anhinga*, Brisson, 1760, *v.* *Plotus*, Linné, 1766.
- 12.—*Fregata*, Lacepède, 1802, *v.* *Tachypetes*, Vieillot, 1816.
- 13.—*Psittenteles*, Bonaparte, 1854, *v.* *Ptilosclera*, Gould, 1865.
- 14.—*Solenoglossus*, Ranzani, 1821, *v.* *Microglossus*, Vieillot, 1822.
- 15.—*Leptolophus*, Swainson, 1833, *v.* *Calopsitta*, Lesson, 1835.
- 16.—*Lathamus*, Lesson, 1830, *v.* *Euphema*, Wagler, 1832.
- 17.—*Polophilus*, Leach, 1814, *v.* *Centropus*, Illiger (?)
- 18.—*Coracina*, Vieillot, April, 1816, *v.* *Graucalus*, Cuvier, Dec., 1816.
- 19.—*Phylidonyris*, Lesson, 1830, *v.* *Lichmera*, Cabanis, 1851.
- 20.—*Lonchura*, Sykes, 1832, *v.* *Munia*, Hodgson, 1836.

NAMES (3) AFFECTED BY "ONE-LETTERISM."

- 1.—*Alphagygis*, proposed for *Gygis* (not *Gyges*, Bory de St. Vincent, 1825), Wagler, 1832.
- 2.—*Mathewsia* (Iredale, 1911) proposed for *Antigone* (not *Antigona*, Schumacher, 1817), Reichenbach, 1852. Mr. Iredale,

while maintaining that *Mathewsia* is not invalidated by a prior *Matthewsia* and *Matthewsium*, has proposed to change *Mathewsia* to *Mathewsena*. He claims that *Antigone* is invalidated by a prior *Antigona*. Professor Brasil has claimed that it is not.

- 3.—*Micropus* (Meyer and Wolf, 1810) as a substitute for *Apus* (not *Apos*, Scopoli, Introd. Nat. Hist., 1777, p. 404), Scopoli, *ib.*, p. 483. The "Check-list" name, *Cypselus* (not *Cypsela*, Meigen, 1800), Illiger, 1811, is a substitute name for *Micropus*, which was a prior name used for a plant. That is allowed now, for zoologists and botanists agree to differ as to rules of nomenclature.

Mathews, though providing substitute names in the *Austral Avian Record*, used very few of them in his 1913 list. Members should realize what is involved in "one-letterism." The law of priority caused 20 changes. "One-letterism" will possibly affect many more names. *Synoicus* (*Synoicum*), *Spathopterus* (*Spathoptera*), *Trichodere* (*Trichoderes*), *Heteromyia*s (*Heteromyia*), *Limicola* (*Limicula*), *Leptotarsis* (*Leptotarsus*), *Tyto* (*Tyta*), *Coracina* (*Coracinus*), *Ptilotis* (*Ptilotus*), *Mimeta* (*Mimetes*), *Amimeta* (*Mimeta*), and *Meliphaga* (*Melophagus*) are some of the Australian names concerned.

Another class of name, however, might cause confusion. *Purnella* (1914) resembles *Prunella* (1846). *Toburides* is a rearrangement of *Butorides*, and *Melomyza* of *Myzomela*. Some day it might be claimed that this class of name must go, though *Dacelo*, as a variant of *Alcedo*, has stood the test of 100 years. *Apis* (the bee) and *Aphis* have stood for over 150 years, and have never caused confusion. Why anticipate and make trouble with "one-letterism"? Each case needs careful consideration, and no general rule should be declared.

Practice is inconsistent. The B.O.U. list claims *Tyta* invalidates *Tyto* (used by Mr. Mathews), and yet uses *Galerida*, a "mistake" for *Galerita*, which is not invalidated by the prior use of *Galerita*. Mr. Mathews has claimed that *Melophagus* invalidates *Meliphaga*, and yet uses *Coracina* (1816), though there is a prior *Coracinus* (1814).

NAMES (12) DIFFERENT FOR VARIOUS REASONS.

- 1 and 2.—*Aprosmictus*, Gould, 1842; type by subsequent designation of Gray, 1855, *Psittacus erythropterus*, Gmelin. Synonym.

Ptistes, Gould, 1865; type, *Psittacus erythropterus*, Gmelin. *Aprosmictus* must be used for the Red-winged Lory. Mr. Mathews has suggested *Alisterus*, with *Psittacus cyanopygius*, Vieillot (the King Parrot), as type.

- 3.—*Mesocalius*, type by monotypy (the only species), *Cuculus palliolatus*, Latham. As this species cannot be determined at present, this genus cannot be defined. Though Cabanis included the genus *Chalcites* with one species, *osculans*, as

a synonym, Mr. Mathews has suggested *Owenavis* as a substitute name for *Mesocalius*.

4.—*Chalcococcyx* is connected with so much uncertainty that Mr. Mathews has suggested *Neochalcites* in the *Austral Avian Record*, vol. i., p. 5.

5.—*Amytornis*, Stejneger, 1885, is declared a *nomen nudum*. Oberholser, 1899, named *Malurus textilis* as the type for his substitute name *Diaphorillas*, and antedated Sharpe's "Hand-list," where *Malurus textilis* is given as the type of *Amytornis*. *Amytis* (not Savigny, 1826), Lesson, 1831, is preoccupied.

6 and 7.—*Meliphaga*, Lewin, 1812; type by subsequent designation of Gray, 1840, *Meliphaga chrysotis*, Lewin = *Meliphaga lewinii*, Swainson (the Yellow-eared Honey-eater). *Ptilotis*, Swainson, 1837, is based on the same species. Hence *Meliphaga* must be used for the Yellow-eared Honey-eater, and *Ptilotis* becomes a synonym of it.

Swainson, 1837, used *Zanthomiza* for *Merops phrygius*, Shaw, which, being the only species, became by monotypy the type of the new genus for the Regent Honey-eater.

8 and 9.—*Anthochaera carunculata*, Vigors and Horsfield, was confused with *Merops carunculata*, Latham. Apparently *Anthochaera* must be used for the Brush Wattle-Bird, and *Coleia* for the Red Wattle-Bird. The vernacular names of the Wattle-Birds have been transposed in the 1898 "yellow list," and also in Mathews' 1913 list.

10.—*Esacus* ("Check-list") v. *Orthorhamphus* (1913 list).

11.—*Campephaga* ("Check-list") v. *Lalage* (1913 list).

12.—*Centropus* ("Check-list") v. *Polophilus* (1913 list).

Ninety-one* of the R.A.O.U. "Check-list" genera are included in 82 genera of the new B.O.U. list. On the same basis the 333 "Check-list" genera might be grouped in about 300 genera.

The A.O.U. "Check-list of North American Birds" has 322 genera for 800 species.

The new B.O.U. "List of British Birds" has 206 genera for 423 species (475 species and sub-species).

The R.A.O.U. list might have on this generic basis 300 genera for 751 species ("Check-list"), 666 species (1913 list).

Mathews has used over 500 genera for the 666 species.

Accepting the B.O.U. genera and approximate generic standard—for, of course, there is no fixed generic standard—it should not be difficult for a second "Check-list" Committee to arrive at a generic list that all could accept.

B.—SPECIFIC NAMES.

An examination of the specific names of the "Official Check-list" shows that over 600 (80 %) of them are used by Mr. Matthews in his

* See list of genera in *The Emu*, vol. xv., part 1, 1915.

1913 list. That author has emphasized the close relationship of the birds of Australia to those of neighbouring and even more remote lands, by classifying over 70 of the "Check-list" species as sub-species of extra-limital species (some with different names). Over 80 of the 751 species of the "Check-list" are regarded as worthy of sub-specific rank only by Mr. Matthews. Twenty-four of the "Check-list" specific names were preoccupied, while for 80 of them a prior name had been given. Ten names are fixed by the B.O.U. list, and 33 names require further consideration or more evidence as to validity as Australian species.

462 species names, 1913 list and "Check-list."

81 names valid; sub-species (G. M. M.).

61 names valid; sub-species of extra-limital species.

604 names common to "Check-list" and 1913 list.

10 names fixed by B.O.U. list.

24 preoccupied.

80 names for which there was a prior name.

33 names for further evidence.

751, total.

Camera Craft Notes.

Camera versus Gun.—Reviewing "Life-Histories of African Game Animals," by Theodore Roosevelt and Edmund Heller, *The Times Literary Supplement* (issue 14th May, 1915) says, *inter alia* :—"The numbers of those who abandon the rifle for the camera is steadily on the increase; it is becoming recognized that the work of the naturalist who can bring the living animals before the eyes of others is now of higher value to the progress of the science of natural history than the work of the collector of specimens. Each is, of course, complementary to the other, but the time has now come when the hunter must give way to the observer."

Shrike-Thrush Tamed.—Three years ago a pair of Whistling Shrike-Thrushes (*Colluricincla selbii*) began to come about the back garden of our residence. To encourage them, various scraps were placed in prominent positions, but the birds' preference for fat was soon noticed. They always took the larger pieces to a crack in the ridge of the wood-shed. This crack held the meat secure, and the birds were able to tug off pieces. Long-tailed Wren-Warblers (*Malurus longicaudus*) and Grey Butcher-Birds (*Cracticus cinereus*), discovering that the Shrike-Thrushes often left a reserve store in the "cupboard," paid surprise visits to it. During my sister's long illness, when she spent much time on the verandah, these Shrike-Thrushes became very tame, sitting on her head, running



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