

tions is the discovery of species which absolutely bridge the previously existing gap between the so-called genera *Geospiza* and *Cactornis*. . . . This matter will be fully discussed and illustrated in a much more detailed paper which will be published as soon as practicable." Of the twenty-two new species here described, three are referred to the genus *Nesomimus*, five to the genus *Certhidea*, seven to *Geospiza*, four to *Camarhynchus*, and three to *Pyrocephalus*. There are also remarks on "*Geospiza assimilis* (Gould?)" and *Pyrocephalus dubius* Gould, to which *P. minimus* Ridgw. is here referred.

Mr. Ridgway has also described¹ *Zosterops aldabrensis* from Aldabra Island, *Z. madagascariensis gloriosæ* from Gloriosa Island, *Cinnyris aldabrensis* from Aldabra Island, *C. abbotti* from Assumption Island, *Centropus insularis* from Aldabra and Assumption Islands, and *Caprimulgus aldabrensis* from Aldabra Island.—J. A. A.

Lucas on the Affinities of the Cœrebidæ.²—Mr. Lucas's paper is a collection of fragmentary though valuable notes, illustrated with figures of the palatal region, tongue, pterylosis, and intestines in quite a number of passerine birds, rather than a formal treatise. It opens with some suggestive observations concerning the difficulties that surround the investigator in attempting to elucidate the relationships of various puzzling genera among the Passeres. He says: "Representatives of the Mniotiltidæ, Meliphagidæ, Drepanidæ, Tanagridæ, and Fringillidæ, have been examined in the hope that the affinities of the Cœrebidæ might be made apparent; and I am compelled to confess that, on the whole, the result has been unsatisfactory, and that the examination of a considerable number of specimens has rather lessened my hopes that anatomical, and especially osteological, characters may be relied upon to show relationship among the passerines. Of course," he continues, "one trouble lies in the fact that the so-called families of passerines, at least very many of them, are not families at all, or not the equivalents of the families of other groups of vertebrates. It is my belief that any group of vertebrates to be of family rank should be capable of skeletal diagnosis, and this test applied to the passerines reduces them to a family or two, as has been done by Huxley and Fürbringer." While this may be true as regards the facts in the case, we cannot quite share Mr. Lucas's belief that among such a compact and numerously represented group as the higher Passeres it is essential to have an osteological basis for 'family' groups. A great deal depends upon the

¹ Descriptions of Some New Birds from Aldabra, Assumption, and Gloriosa Islands, collected by Dr. W. L. Abbott. By Robert Ridgway. *Ibid.*, pp. 371-373.

² Notes on the Anatomy and Affinities of the Cœrebidæ and other American Birds. By Frederick A. Lucas. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XVII, 1894, pp. 299-312.

'laxness' or 'compactness' of structure of the group under consideration, since, as among mammals for example, differences that in one group (as in the Pinnipedia) are looked upon as merely specific, or at most subgeneric, would in other groups be considered of generic or of perhaps even higher importance. Hence among the Passeres we are hardly to look for, and much less to demand, as the basis for families such differences as we meet with among the lower orders of the class Aves.

Mr. Lucas's paper is an important contribution to the subject under discussion, which treats not only of the affinities of the Cœrebidæ, but also of such equivocal forms as the genera *Certhidea*, *Myadestes*, *Phœornis*, and *Phainopepla*.—J. A. A.

Rhoads's Reprint of Ord's North American Zoölogy.¹—Mr. Rhoads has done good service through his reprint of George Ord's North American Zoölogy, of which for many years not a copy appears to have been anywhere accessible, either in this country or abroad. Formerly a mutilated copy existed in the library of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, but later it disappeared. The perfect copy from which Mr. Rhoads's reprint is made was discovered by him in the private library of Dr. J. S. Cohen of Philadelphia, who kindly placed it at Mr. Rhoads's service.

The importance of Ord's 'Zoölogy' results from the fact that in this work a number of new North American animals were for the first time here named, principally mammals. Of the eight new names which Ord (in this work) appears to have given to birds, only four² prove tenable, and these were long since duly incorporated into the nomenclature of North American ornithology. Ord's list of bird names was compiled, as Mr. Rhoads duly states, chiefly from Turton's edition of Linnæus's 'Systema Naturæ,' published in 1807, with the addition of the species described by Alexander Wilson. Although purporting to relate to "North America," many European and a larger number of South American species are included. The list proper (pp. 315-319) consists of

¹ A Reprint | of the | North American Zoology, | by | George Ord. | Being an exact reproduction of the part originally compiled | by Mr. Ord for Johnson and Warner, and first | published by them in their | Second American Edition | of | Guthrie's Geography, | in | 1815. | — | Taken from Mr. Ord's private, annotated Copy. | To which is added an Appendix on the more important | scientific and historic Questions [sic] involved. | By | Samuel N. Rhoads. | — | Published by the Editor. | Haddonfield, New Jersey. | 1894.—8vo., pp. x (= introduction), 290-361 (= reprint), 1-90 (= appendix).

² *Phasianus columbianus* = *Pediocetes phasianellus columbianus* (Ord); *Sterna philadelphia* = *Larus philadelphia* (Ord); *Larus delawarensis* = *Larus delawarensis* Ord; *Anas columbianus* = *Olor columbianus* (Ord).