

Black Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus obsoletus*) in Maine. — A fine female Black Gyrfalcon was shot in this city on Dec. 21, 1898. The bird was seen in pursuit of a domestic pigeon by Adrian De Costa, who went to his house for his gun and shot the specimen, which showed no fear, and appeared to entirely disregard his presence. Mr. De Costa sold the bird to S. L. Crosby, the taxidermist, from whom I obtained it for my collection. — HARRY MERRILL, *Bangor, Maine*.

The Specific Name of Falco regulus. — As the Merlin is included in the list of North American birds, although only by reason of accidental occurrence in Greenland, it seems advisable again to call attention to the fact that *regulus* is not its earliest specific title. Indeed *regulus* is antedated by two other names, — *Falco aesalon* Tunstall (Orn. Brit., 1771, p. 1) and *Accipiter merillus* Gerini (Orn. Meth. Dig., 1767, I, 51, pll. xviii, xix), by the latter of which it apparently must be supplanted. This has already been pointed out by Mr. Seebohm (Hist. Brit. Birds, I, 34); as well as more recently by Dr. Prazák (Journ. f. Ornith., 1898, 157), who treats the subject in some detail; and although it has not been possible in the present connection to verify the reference to Gerini, it seems almost certain that his name will have to be accepted, and the species stand as *Falco merillus*. — HARRY C. OBERHOLSER, *Washington, D. C.*

Habits of the Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*). — Under this title, Mr. Fred H. Kennard recorded an interesting note in 'The Auk' for July, 1898, page 269. It must be generally acknowledged that the nesting site described is very unusual, but strange enough, my attention was called last June to a nest of this Jay, built under a piazza roof of an occupied dwelling, placed on the capital of a pillar, and among the stems of a Wisteria vine, almost exactly as described by Mr. Kennard. I am indebted to my young friend, Flint Drew, who lived at the house in Highland Park, Ill., for giving me the opportunity of examining the nest, which at that time contained young.

As the general habits of the Massachusetts and Illinois Jays differ very materially, and as our bird is more domestic, and lives near the haunts of man, it would not be so unusual to find their nests in such locations, although this is the first instance which now comes to my notice. — RUTHVEN DEANE, *Chicago, Ill.*

An Unusual Set of Song Sparrow's Eggs. — On June 28, 1898, I found a nest of *Melospiza fasciata* at Beverly Farms, Mass., containing eight eggs. They seemed to belong in two sets of four, distinguishable by a slight difference in color and markings. Incubation had begun in some eggs of each kind. — GEO. C. SHATTUCK, *Boston, Mass.*

The Names of the Song Sparrows. — The change of a well established scientific name is always to be deplored, and particularly when, as in the

present case, the alteration in a specific term makes necessary a corresponding correction throughout a long list of subspecies. Under our rules of nomenclature, however, there seems no doubt of the untenability of *Melospiza fasciata*; since *Fringilla fasciata* Gmelin (Syst. Nat., 1788, I, 922) used for the Song Sparrow, is preoccupied by *Fringilla fasciata* Müller (Syst. Nat., Anhang, 1776, 165), which is a synonym of *Spinus pinus*. The only available name for the eastern Song Sparrow is *Fringilla melodia* Wilson (Am. Orn., 1810, II, 125, pl. XVI, fig. 4), and the species consequently should be called *Melospiza melodia*.

Fringilla guttata Nuttall (Man. Orn., ed. 2, 1840, I, 581), which is now *Melospiza fasciata guttata*, is debarred by *Fringilla guttata* Vieillot (Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., 1817, XII, 233), for an Australian Weaver-bird. As the Rusty Song Sparrow seems to have no other name, it may be called *Melospiza melodia morphna*.

The Song Sparrows will then stand as follows:

Melospiza melodia melodia (Wilson).

Melospiza melodia fallax (Baird).

Melospiza melodia montana (Henshaw).

Melospiza melodia heermanni (Baird).

Melospiza melodia samuelis (Baird).

Melospiza melodia morphna Oberholser.

Melospiza melodia rufina (Bonaparte).

Melospiza melodia rivularis (Bryant).

Melospiza melodia graminea (Townsend).

Melospiza melodia clementæ (Townsend).

Melospiza melodia cooperi (Ridgway).

Melospiza melodia pusillula (Ridgway).

Melospiza melodia caurina (Ridgway).

Melospiza melodia mexicana Ridgway.

Melospiza melodia adusta (Nelson).

Melospiza melodia goldmani (Nelson).—HARRY C. OBERHOLSER,
Washington, D. C.

On the name *Xenocichla*.—Of late years the term *Xenocichla* has been in quite general use for a group of Ethiopian Bulbuls, having as its type the *Dasycephala syndactyla* of Swainson. *Xenocichla* was founded by Hartlaub in his 'Orn. Westaflicas,' 1857, p. 86, but in the list of additions and corrections on p. 272, the name is noted as being equivalent to *Bledu* Bonap. The exact place of publication of Bonaparte's name seems to have puzzled recent ornithologists, and we find it quoted at second hand and without date in Waterhouse's 'Index' and Sharpe's 'Catalogue of Birds.' The proper reference is Rev. et Mag. de Zool., Feb. 1857, 50, which antedates Hartlaub's work by at least two months. The type being the same in both cases, *Xenocichla* becomes a perfect synonym of *Bledu*, which should henceforth be used. The species of the genus, as recently restricted by Shelley, are *Bledu syndactyla* (Swains.),