

hunting Wilson's Snipe, along the border of a stretch of stiff marsh grass on the swampy shore of Banana River, a small bird started up in front of me and, fluttering over the top of the grass, had the appearance of a Wren, but its black plumage gave me full assurance that *Ammodramus nigrescens* was within reach of my gun. Changing cartridges, I soon had the pleasure of holding in my hand this highly valued prize. Snipe shooting was now out of order, but several hours' search for the Finches proved fruitless. On March 5, I had the good fortune to collect another Black Seaside Finch, apparently the mate to the one taken two days before.

Several additional visits to the same and other near localities did not reveal the presence of any more of these birds. Some days after taking the specimens already mentioned we made a trip to the shore of the Banana River, about eleven miles north of Indianola, a native of Merritt Island having assured us that we would find this little black Sparrow there in quantity; but our bright anticipations were doomed to disappointment.

Several years later, when again on the island. I had the pleasure of starting another specimen, a few miles east of Indianola, midway between Indian and Banana Rivers. While in the act of raising my gun my feet were suddenly entangled with a large moccasin, and a glance at this loathsome object seemed sufficient reason for letting my coveted Sparrow escape.

The two I took in 1889 were a pair, male and female, and have afforded me especial pleasure when looking over my collection of birds. The male is darker throughout than the female, with the markings on the under parts stronger and more conspicuous.—AUGUST KOCH, *Williamsport, Pa.*

Song Season of the Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*).—The following is a record of the days on which I have heard the Cardinal sing, since January, 1896. I think it is a full one, as there has hardly been a week that I have not been in the haunts of the bird, and the song also is one that is not likely to be overlooked.

The record was taken in the vicinity of Anderson, S. C. [See Table, pp. 279 and 280.]—J. ROWLAND NOWELL, *Anderson, S. C.*

Piranga rubra not Preoccupied.—Mr. Gerrit S. Miller, Jr., has kindly pointed out an error of statement in regard to the names of Tanagers published by the present writer in the last number of 'The Auk.' The remark is there made that Vieillot used the combination *Piranga rubra* for the Scarlet Tanager, thus precluding its subsequent employment for the Summer Tanager. As a matter of fact, however, Vieillot's *Piranga rubra* (Ois. Am. Sept., I, 1807, p. iv, pl. I, fig. 12) is not the Scarlet, but the Summer Tanager, as examination of his references and figure

clearly demonstrates. This mistake arose from taking Professor Baird's identification of Vieillot's *Piranga rubra*, — P. R. R. Rep., IX, 1858, p. 300, where he cites it as a synonym of the bird now known as *Piranga erythromelas*, in which course he has been followed by some other authors. Further comment is unnecessary; and the two birds in question remain in undisputed possession of their present names. — HARRY C. OBERHOLSER, *Washington, D. C.*

Clivicola versus Riparia. — In 'The Auk' for July, 1898, pages 271-272, Dr. Coues draws attention to the fact that the generic name *Riparia* Forster (Synop. Cat. Brit. Birds, 1817, 17) has page priority over the current *Clivicola* Forster (*ibid.*, p. 55); at the same time expressing his preference for the adoption of the former. The A. O. U. Committee, however, refused to accept *Riparia* on the ground that *Clivicola* was used by the 'first reviser.' These two names are founded upon the same species and are both unaccompanied by diagnoses, so that there can be no question of their equal pertinency. Canon XVIII of the A. O. U. Code, which treats of generic terms published simultaneously, makes no definite provision for just this kind of a case; but in the preceding canon, with regard to specific names, the following occurs: "Of names of undoubtedly equal pertinency, and founded upon the same condition of sex, age, or season, that is to be preferred which stands first in the book." Therefore, unless we are to have on this point arbitrarily different rules for species and genera, a procedure apparently both unnecessary and undesirable, *Clivicola* must give way to *Riparia*. That the above quoted principle of page priority was intended to apply to genera as well as to species is evidenced by rulings of the Committee; as witness *Guara*, instead of *Leucibis*, which was adopted by the 'first reviser' — a perfectly parallel case.

While recourse to the decision of the 'first reviser' is often attended by more or less uncertainty, arising from the possibility of overlooking some obscure publication, the great advantage in the strict application of the principle of anteriority, as priority of pagination or sequence in the same book may be called, is that it furnishes means for a definite and final decision, thereby contributing to hasten on the millennium of zoölogical nomenclature—stability of names. — HARRY C. OBERHOLSER, *Washington, D. C.*

Nest of Long-billed Marsh Wren lined with a Snake Skin. — On June 6, 1898, on the meadow near Rutherford, New Jersey, I found a curious nest of *Cistothorus palustris*. It was fastened two feet above the water, to some green cat-tails, and was composed of reeds and broad grasses, and lined with a cast-off snake skin which was about a foot long. It contained six fresh eggs. — JOSIAH H. CLARK, *Paterson, N. J.*

The Short-billed Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus stellaris*) in Maine. — In Smith's List of the Birds of Maine (*cf.* Smith, Forest and Stream, Vol.