

required for the purpose of replacing preoccupied names; and (4) that one half of the new names have been bestowed in christening groups believed by the authors of the names to be new. It may be added that the names needlessly, or knowingly, given to replace others, generally on avowed grounds of purism, are chargeable mainly to two authors, too well known for their efforts to 'purify' zoölogical nomenclature to require mention in the present connection, and not to any general proneness on the part of ornithological systematists in general to this sort of purification.—J. A. A.

**Oberholser's Review of the Horned Larks.**<sup>1</sup>—The Horned Larks are known as an exceptionally plastic group, of wide distribution, ranging from the arctic regions well into the tropics, in both the Old World and the New, and hence subject to great diversity of environment. Such conditions are eminently favorable for differentiation and the segregation of local races. Of the 36 forms recognized by Mr. Oberholser, all but six are ranked as subspecies. Of *Otocoris alpestris* alone 23 forms are recognized, one of which occupies northern Europe and northern Asia, the rest being American, of which one is found in Colombia, several others in Mexico, and no less than 18 in North America, north of Mexico. The Old World forms include, besides *O. alpestris flava*, 5 other species and 8 additional subspecies, known as yet from scanty material, in comparison with the American forms. Of the 36 forms recognized by Mr. Oberholser, 8 are here described as new.

The trenchantly defined forms are few; in the other cases, both in the Old World and America, Mr. Oberholser finds that the forms insensibly grade into other forms, often into several other forms, "so that with all the connecting links represented it frequently becomes a matter of considerable difficulty satisfactorily to segregate the forms represented by such series." He also finds that "the reduplication of forms in far separated localities seems to be carried to the extreme" in the present group, which reduplication he attributes, in part, to the interbreeding of several closely allied forms where their ranges come together.

While Mr. Oberholser's material for his present 'Review' does not greatly exceed in amount that at the disposal of Dr. Dwight in his revision of the American forms of *Otocoris* in 1890, it is largely different, containing a much greater proportion of breeding birds, and much material from regions scantily or not at all represented in the material studied by Dr. Dwight, who had very little from points south of the United States. While Dr. Dwight recognized only 11 forms from North America, north of Mexico, Mr. Oberholser finds it expedient to recognize

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<sup>1</sup>A Review of the Larks of the Genus *Otocoris*, By Harry C. Oberholser, Assistant Ornithologist, Department of Agriculture. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., Vol. XXIV, No. 1271, pp. 801-884, with maps and plates. June, 1902.

18, of which 5 are described as new and three others previously described are reinstated. *O. a. arenicola* Henshaw is treated as a synonym of *O. a. leucolæma* Coues, the habitat and characters of which were misinterpreted by Mr. Henshaw, whose ruling in the case has heretofore been followed. The subspecies *praticola*, *giraudi*, *merrilli*, *strigata*, *rubea*, *adusta*, and *pallida* stand practically as heretofore. True *alpestris* is restricted (in the breeding season) to northeastern North America, from Newfoundland northward, the Old World form of this group standing as *fulva* (Gmelin). *O. a. leucolæma* of Henshaw and Dwight (not of Coues) is separated into an Alaskan form *arctica* (subsp. nov.) and *hoyti* Bishop, the latter occupying the Mackenzie Valley region. *O. a. entymia* (subsp. nov.) fills in the small gap between the breeding ranges of *praticola*, *hoyti* and *leucolæma* (Saskatchewan and Assiniboia south to northern North Dakota). *O. a. insularis* of Townsend and *occidentalis* of McCall are rehabilitated, and the new forms *actia*, *ammophila* and *leucansiptila* occupy, respectively, small areas of the coast region of southern California and northern Lower California, the Mohave Desert and Owens Valley, and the region about Yuma, Arizona.

The paper is illustrated by six photographic illustrations showing different types of environment, and by four maps showing (1) the range of the genus, (2) the breeding areas of the American forms, and (3 and 4) the breeding areas of the Old World forms. These areas are necessarily in part hypothetical, especially for the Old World forms, and the number and relations of the forms can hardly be said to be as yet reduced to a certainty. Mr. Oberholser's review, however, is an important contribution to a most difficult subject, and will doubtless stand as the 'last word' for some time to come, although, in the nature of the case, his results must be held as more or less tentative. The identification of our Horned Larks is of course rendered more difficult through the increased number of forms, and only an *Otocoris* expert can hope to identify isolated specimens, especially when we find that three forms -- *alpestris*, *hoyti* and *praticola* -- are recorded from Long Island, New York, and that one of them, *praticola*, is liable to turn up as far west as central Arizona. — J. A. A.

**Ogilvie-Grant on Recently Described American Gallinæ.**— In an article in the April number of 'The Ibis' Mr. Ogilvie-Grant gives his opinion,<sup>1</sup> *ex cathedra*, concerning certain North American rasorial birds recently described by some of his American confrères. Whatever may be the case as regards available material from Mexico — we leave this phase of the subject to those most interested — when the comparative resources of the British Museum collection are in question, we feel sure

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<sup>1</sup> Remarks on the Species of American Gallinæ recently described, and Notes on their Nomenclature. By W. R. Ogilvie-Grant. Ibis, April, 1902, pp. 233-245.