

pigeons that, superficially at least, have a resemblance to both quails and doves. It would be better to write the first waterthrush, in conformity with meadowlark and nighthawk.

In short, the whole matter resolves itself into a question of convenience, since convenience determines use, which in turn is 'current usage'; and current usage as already said, is not necessarily established by our 'standard authorities,' but by the people to whom the words are most necessary, and by whom they are hence most used. In British English many words are spelled differently from what they are in American English, and hyphens are used in the former much more freely, as a rule, than in the latter. In American publications of all sorts, except dictionaries, the names of birds, animals and plants are written, as regards hyphenized words, practically in accordance with the system followed in the A. O. U. Check-List. By the British method, and by Dr. Doran's rules, we should lose most of our sparrows, gulls, plovers, rails, etc., and should have, in their places, Song-Sparrows, Tree-Sparrows, Field-Sparrows, Sage-Sparrows, Vesper-Sparrows, and similarly hyphenized gull-names, plover-names, rail-names, and so on to the end of the list, producing little short of a revolution in the arrangement of our bird names in indexes, and in the use of the hyphen in vernacular names of animals in general, and the introduction of a method entirely contrary to present tendencies in American English. Better a little inconsistency than hard-and-fast rules that tend to inconvenient and cumbersome word-forms without any adequately offsetting advantage.—J. A. ALLEN, *Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., New York City.*

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## RECENT LITERATURE.

Ridgway's 'Birds of North and Middle America.' Part II.—It is with great pleasure that we record the appearance of Part II<sup>1</sup> of Mr. Ridgway's 'Birds of North and Middle America.' In reviewing Part I (*Auk*, XIX,

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<sup>1</sup> The Birds | of | North and Middle America: | A Descriptive Catalogue | of the | Higher Groups, Genera, Species, and Subspecies of Birds | known to occur in North America, from the | Arctic Lands to the Isthmus of Panama, | the West Indies and other Islands | of the Caribbean Sea, and the Galapagos Archipelago. | By | Robert Ridgway, | Curator, Division of Birds. | — | Part II. | Family Tanagridæ — The Tanagers. | Family Icteridæ — The Troupials. | Family Cœrebidæ — The Honey Creepers.— Family Mniotiltidæ — The Wood Warblers. | — | Washington: | Government Printing Office. | 1902. = Bulletin of the United States National Museum, No. 50. Part II.— 8vo, pp. i-xx + 1-834, pll. i-xxii.

Jan. 1902, pp. 97-102) the scope and general character of this great work, the classification adopted, and the method of treatment employed, were stated at some length; it is hence necessary in the present connection merely to state the scope and some of the special points of the present volume.

Part I included only the single great family Fringillidæ, while Part II covers the four families Tanagridæ, Icteridæ, Cœrebidæ, and Mniotiltidæ.

As previously noted, Mr. Ridgway has transferred the genera *Pitylus* and *Saltator* from the Tanagridæ to the Fringillidæ. The genus *Calyptophilus* is also now excluded and provisionally referred to the Mimidæ; certain species referred by Dr. Sclater to the genus *Chlorospiza*, forming the genus *Hemispingus* Cabanis, are removed to the Mniotiltidæ; and the genus *Iridophanes* Ridgway is transferred from the Cœrebidæ to the Tanagridæ. As now constituted, 21 genera of Tanagridæ come within the scope of the present work, and are represented by 112 species and subspecies.

The family Icteridæ comprises 22 genera and 111 species and subspecies, of which 42 are included under the single genus *Icterus*, which the author finds himself unable to satisfactorily divide into subgenera. He also confesses his inability to separate the family into subfamilies, notwithstanding the wide extremes in structure and habits shown by its different components.

The family Cœrebidæ includes 6 genera and 29 species and subspecies.

The family Mniotiltidæ has 28 genera and 181 species and subspecies, of which 57 belong to the single genus *Dendroica*, 14 to *Helminthophila*, 23 to *Geothlypis*, and 9 to *Basileuterus*. "*Helminthophila cincinnatiensis* (Langdon) is not introduced into the 'key' for the reason that it is obviously a hybrid between *H. pinus* and *Oporornis formosa*"; *H. lawrencei* and *H. leucobronchialis*, however, are treated as species, but the problem of their relationships is considered a very complicated one, it being "altogether probable . . . that dichromatism as well as hybridism enters into the question of their origin." It seems hard to lay the ghost of Wilson's *Muscicapa minuta*, or 'Small-headed Flycatcher,' which here still masquerades as *Wilsonia microcephala* Ridgway, on account of "the peculiar combination of characters indicated in the original description being shared by no other bird to my [Ridgway's] knowledge." That there could have been any error in Wilson's description is not intimated. The *Sylvia montana* of Wilson (*Dendroica montana* of the A. O. U. Hypothetical List) is, however, synonymised as the young of *D. virens*; but Audubon's *Sylvia carbonata* is given a place as *Dendroica carbonata*, although it "continues to be known only from Audubon's description and colored plate."

Among the new species and subspecies here described for the first time are two from the United States, namely, *Compsothlypis americana ramalinae* (p. 486, geographic distribution added on p. 783), the Mississippi Valley form of the Parula Warbler, which is said to have a breeding range

"from Louisiana and Texas to Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota"; and *Wilsonia pusilla chryseola*, separated as a Pacific coast form of *W. p. pileolata*, breeding from southern California to British Columbia. The new extralimital forms include *Phænicothraupis rubica nelsoni*, from Yucatan; *Geothlypis incompta*, from Abaco Island, Bahamas; *Geothlypis exigua*, from Andros Island, Bahamas; *Geothlypis flavida*, from New Providence, Bahamas; *Geothlypis nelsoni microrhyncha*, from Hidalgo, Mexico; *Basileuterus culicivorus flavescens*, from the State of Jalisco, Mexico; and *Rhodinocincla rosea eximea*, separated as the Central American form of true *rosea* of South America.<sup>1</sup>

In respect to generic changes, *Megaquiscalus* is raised to a full genus for the Boat-tailed Grackles, as is *Holoquiscalus* for the West Indian Grackles, thus restricting *Quiscalus* to *Q. quiscula* and its subspecies. *Peucedramus* is very properly raised to a full genus for the Olive Warbler; *Oporornis* and *Chamæthlypis* are also raised to full genera, and the old genus *Setophaga* is restricted to *S. ruticilla* and *S. picta*.

Under *Chamæthlypis*, *Geothlypis poliocephala ralphii* of the A. O. U. Check-List is considered inseparable from true *poliocephala*. Of *Piranga rubriceps*, introduced into the Check-List as a straggler (standing as [607.1]) on the basis of its capture in California, Mr. Ridgway says: "The identification of the specimen on which the record is based is undoubtedly correct; but even granting no mistake has been made as to the specimen having actually been taken in California, the occurrence must have been wholly fortuitous, most likely an escape from captivity, and the species has no claim to a place in the North American fauna" (p. 776). It is so exclusively a South American bird that it is treated as extralimital to the scope of the work here under notice. In all probability *Icterus icterus*, a South American Oriole said to have been taken at Charleston, S. C., has no better claim to a place in our list, and should be similarly excluded. It may be added that several 'Texas' birds admitted provisionally on the authority of Giraud, — as *Setophaga miniata*, *Cardellina rubrifrons*, *Ergaticus ruber*, and the two species of *Basileuterus* — receive no confirmation of their claim to recognition as Texas species, the collation of the records and material thus far gathered only serving to throw greater doubt upon the supposed Texas origin of Giraud's specimens on which these species are alleged to have been originally based. The nearest point of record for several of them is still the highlands of Mexico.

*Icterus audubonii* is treated as a subspecies of *I. melanocephalus*. The

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<sup>1</sup> We would suggest that it would be a convenience to reviewers and bibliographers, and probably to others, if the author would indicate, either in the text, table of contents, or in a separate list, the new forms described, as they are not always clearly indicated in the text, and have to be determined by an examination of the context. Omission is also made, in several instances, to indicate a type specimen for the new form.

range of *Agelaius phoeniceus richmondi* is extended northward to include "the coast district and lower Rio Grande Valley of southern Texas," which therefore brings it within the limits of the Check-List. All the North American forms of *Sturnella* are made subspecies of *magna*, except *neglecta*, which Mr. Ridgway continues to look upon as a full species.

Mr. Ridgway admits eight forms of the *Geothlypis trichas* group, and discusses at some length their distribution and relationships, as also the seven forms recognized from the Bahamas. We regret the lack of space to transcribe his very interesting presentation of the case. *G. trichas scirpicola* Grinnell is considered as not separable from *G. t. arizela* Oberholser.

The present volume exceeds the first in size by about one hundred pages, and includes 55 more species and subspecies, Part II containing 433—316 species and 117 subspecies. The 22 plates illustrate the structural details of 77 genera.

In execution Part II conforms in all its details with Part I, so that the explanation of methods of treatment, and the high commendation already given for Part I, apply equally to Part II, which is marked throughout by the extreme care and thoroughness so well known to characterize Mr. Ridgway's technical work. Finally, we heartily congratulate the author and all ornithologists that we have assurance that Part III is so well advanced that we may confidently expect its publication before the end of the present year, it being already in press.—J. A. A.

Mrs. Bailey's 'Handbook of Birds of the Western United States.'<sup>1</sup>—As stated in the publisher's announcement, "This book is intended to do for the western part of the United States what Mr. Frank M. Chapman's 'Handbook' has done for the East. It is written on similar lines, and gives descriptions and biographical sketches of all our western birds in a thoroughly scientific yet not unduly technical form, including all the United States species not treated by Chapman, besides those which are common to both sections of the country." This is a perfectly fair statement of the scope and character of the work, which in method of execution and accuracy of detail merits the highest commendation. The author has had rare opportunities for personal observation of the birds in life of which she writes, having spent several seasons in the field in Texas, in Arizona, and in California, and has enjoyed an especially favorable environment for the production of a thoroughly accurate and well-

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<sup>1</sup> Handbook of Birds | of the | Western United States | including | the  
Great Plains, Great Basin, Pacific Slope, | and Lower Rio Grande Valley | By  
Florence Merriam Bailey | With thirty-three full-page plates by Louis | Agassiz  
Fuertes, and over six hundred cuts in the text | [Vignette] Boston and New  
York | Houghton, Mifflin and Company | The Riverside Press, Cambridge  
| 1902—12mo, pp. i-xc + 1-512. Price, \$3.50, postage extra.