

the list of Perkins and Howe, published in 1901. A few pages of further useful and pertinent information conclude this useful little manual.—J. A. A.

Oberholser on the Nomenclature of Certain Genera of Birds.¹—Seventeen generic names and a few specific names are here held to require change, the specific names belonging to genera here treated. The first name considered is *Bellona* Mulsant & Verreaux (1866), which, as Mr. Riley (Auk, 1904, p. 75) recently pointed out, is preoccupied by *Bellona* Reichenbach, 1852. Instead, however, of requiring a new name, as claimed by Riley, it may be replaced by *Orthorhynchus* Lacépède, 1799, for which the type was fixed by Gray in 1840 as *Trochilus cristatus* Linn. We agree with Mr. Oberholser that *Orthorhynchus* is the proper name for this genus of West Indian hummingbirds, for which it was formerly for many years in current use. Consequently Riley's substitution of *Orthorhynchus* for *Chrysolampis*, and of *Chrysolampis* for *Eulampis* are uncalled for and the hitherto current names of these genera remain unchanged. Mr. Riley's effort is cited by Mr. Oberholser as a "forcible illustration of the difficulty and unsatisfactory nature of generic type determinations by elimination." As we have said elsewhere (Science, N. S., XXI, p. 431, March 17, 1905): "The results will vary somewhat with the experience and qualifications of the user of the method, if the conditions of the question are especially complicated and perplexing. . . .", while "experts in such cases rarely reach different conclusions. . . ."

"*Dromæus* Vieillot" is shown to be properly *Dromiceius*, the form first used by Vieillot, who did not use *Dromæus*; *Hydrornis* Milne-Edwards, being preoccupied, is replaced by *Dyspetornis*, nom. nov.; *Nænia* Boie, being preoccupied, a substitute is found in *Inca* Jardine; *Gnathosittaca* Cabanis, being preoccupied, is replaced by *Ognorhynchus* Gray; an earlier name for *Dasyptilus* Wagler is found in *Psittrichas* Lesson; *Nanodes* Vig. & Horsf., being preoccupied, a substitute is found in *Euphema* Wagler; *Sharpia* Bocage being preoccupied, and there being no available substitute, it is replaced by *Notiospiza*, nom. nov.; similarly, *Malacopteron* Eyton is replaced by *Horizillas*, nom. nov.; *Hedymela* Sundevall is antedated by *Ficedula* Brisson; *Chenorhamphus* Oustalet, being preoccupied, is replaced by *Conopotheras*, nom. nov.; *Charitospiza* is a new name for the South American genus formerly known as *Tiaris*, containing the *Fringilla ornata* Wied; this specific name being preoccupied is changed to *eucosma*, nom. nov.

The status of four other names — *Xiphorhynchus*, *Vermivora*, *Cotur-*

¹Notes on the Nomenclature of Certain Genera of Birds. By Harry C. Oberholser. Smithsonian Misc. Coll., Quarterly Issue, Vol. III, pp, 59-68. May 13, 1905.

niculus, and *Ammodromus* — three of them proposed by Swainson in 1827, is less easily decided, although Mr. Oberholser considers that they "must apparently be changed." He accordingly proceeds to transfer the currently recognized species of *Dendrornis* Eyton to *Xiphorhynchus*, and to replace the superceded *Dendrornis* by the new name *Xiphornis*; *Vermivora* is made to replace *Helminthophila*; *Coturniculus* is replaced by *Ammodramus*, and a new name, *Ammospiza*, is provided for the group currently known as *Ammodromus*. As stated elsewhere (*antea*, pp. 400-407), we consider these changes unfortunate and undesirable, because unnecessary.—J. A. A.

Forbush on the Decrease of Birds and Means for their Protection. — In a 'Special Report' of more than a hundred pages, made under the direction of the Massachusetts State Board of Agriculture,¹ Mr. Forbush has compiled a mass of information on this subject of the utmost interest and importance. It is based largely upon replies to circulars sent out in July, 1903, to naturalists and other intelligent observers, soliciting information regarding the decrease of birds in Massachusetts. Information of more or less value was thus obtained from 217 correspondents. An analysis of these reports, as presented by Mr. Forbush, indicates a great decrease in the number of game birds, especially water-fowl and shore birds, and also in most of the birds of prey, while most of the insectivorous and song birds have well held their own, with local fluctuations in numbers, for the most part readily explained.

The subject matter of the Report is well arranged, and the evidence is presented with fairness, unbiased by sentiment or any evident desire to make out a case. In reference to the destruction of birds by the elements, with special reference to the unusual weather of 1903-04 — the June rain-storms of 1903 and the severe winter following — it is gratifying to find that while many species suffered severely, only the Purple Martin appears to have met with a "lasting or permanent check." Regarding the general subject, the "expert evidence," or the testimony of competent observers, is summarized by counties, and the conclusion therefrom is "that with the smaller species the natural balance of bird-life is now fairly constant in Massachusetts and the neighboring States." The birds reported as diminishing in numbers are then taken up by families, beginning with the Grebes, and the evidence presented, contrasting present with former conditions. Among the water birds, as the gulls, terns, ducks and geese, some species have suffered great decrease, although many of the ducks

¹ Special Report on the Decrease of certain Birds, and its Causes, with Suggestions for Bird Protection. By Edward Howe Forbush. Prepared under the direction of the Massachusetts State Board of Agriculture. Fifty-second Ann. Rep. Massachusetts State Board of Agric., pp. 429-543. with 2 pll. 1905.