

entering the throat at all." The closing paragraph of the account notes the "tone of gentleness" of these birds, and their "silent dignity," but adds: "True, to be exact, their silence is more a necessity than a virtue, since they are possessed of no true vocal organ, but it so befits their other actions that it may well be laid to their credit without too close examination."

In the home-life of the Common Heron its checkered history is noted. In early times it was protected as royal game, but since the breechloader has ousted the falcon, he is no longer *protected* to be *destroyed*, but *from* destruction, since the angling fraternity are now "clamoring loudly for his blood."

Mr. Beetham's narrative is entertainingly written and adds greatly to our knowledge of the intimate home-life of these shy and interesting birds, while the beautiful photographic plates add a realism that no amount of word-painting can supply.—J. A. A.

Simon on the Hummingbirds of Ecuador.¹—Ecuador is divided into three regions, (1) the low hot region between the Pacific and the western Cordillera, (2) the area between the two Andean ranges, and (3) the basins of the Rio Napo and Rio Pastassa. The characteristic forms of Hummingbirds of each are indicated and the ranges of various genera, as represented in the three districts, are commented upon. The list numbers 152 species, with notes on their ranges, and with pertinent technical comment. *Taphrospilus* is proposed as a new genus, with *Aphantochroa hyposticta* Gould as type; *Prasitis vitticeps* is described as new. The catalogue is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the species of Hummingbirds thus far recorded from Ecuador and of their distribution.—J. A. A.

Gunning and Haagner's 'A Check-List of the Birds of South Africa.'²—The northern boundary of the area here included is approximately latitude 16° S., or "a line formed by the Cunene River on the east and the Zambesi River on the west." As said in the Introduction, Dr. Reichenow's 'Vogel Afrikas' is taken as the basis of the list, this being "the only complete modern work on African Ornithology, and as he has evidently bestowed much time and care on the subject of the nomenclature of South African birds. Where we have cause to differ from Dr.

¹ Catalogue général des Trochilidés observés jusqu'à ce jour dans la République de l'Écuador. Par E. Simon. Revue Française d'Ornithologie, Nos. 17 et 18, Sept.—Oct., 1910, pp. 257–270.

² A Check-List of the Birds of South Africa, Being a record of all the species known to occur south of the Zambezi-Cunene line (the 16th degree of south latitude). By Dr. J. W. B. Gunning, President, South African Ornithologists' Union, and Alwin Haagner, F. Z. S., Colonial Member, British Ornithologists' Union, Honorary Member, Royal Hungarian Bureau of Ornithology, Honorary Secretary South African Ornithologists' Union. Annals Transvaal Museum, Vol. II, July, 1910, Suppl., pp. 84.

Reichenow's conclusions we have added in the Appendix [pp. 75-84] explanatory notes; as is also the case with all additions to the Avifauna of South Africa since Mr. Selater's Check-List was published."

The list begins with the family Struthionidæ and ends with the family Turdidæ. The names of families and genera are given and the authority and date of the latter and of species and subspecies, but the names of the orders are omitted. The technical names of the species and subspecies are followed by vernacular names, both English and Dutch, and a reference to Reichenow's and Selater's works. Trinomials are used for subspecies, and the subspecies are numbered consecutively with the species, the numbers running to 920, with four interpolated numbers making a total of 924. No references are given to the place of description for either the genera or species, nor is the range given. The list is thus nearly the same in character as the American Ornithologists' Union 'new Abridged Check-List of North American Birds.'

We note that Brissonian genera are adopted so far as they occur in the South African avifauna, and are duly accredited to him, and that in only one instance is a genus wrongly ascribed to him, namely, *Emberiza*, which dates from Linnæus, 1758, and not from Brisson, 1760, although employed by Brisson independently of Linnæus, as was also *Vultur*, sometimes also wrongly assigned to Brisson. *Hydrobates* is employed as the generic name of the Storm Petrel instead of *Thalassidroma*. *Hydrobates* Boie, Isis, 1822, p. 562 (not *Hydrobata* Vieillot, 1816) contained two species, without designation of type. These are *Procellaria pelagica* Linn. and *P. leachii* Temminck. *P. pelagica* became the type of *Thalassidroma* Vigors in 1825, by original designation. This left in *Hydrobates* only *P. leachii* (Temminck 1820 = *P. leucorrhœa* Vieillot, 1817), which later became the type of *Cymochorea* Coues, and is congeneric with the type (*P. furcata* Gmelin) of *Oceanodroma* Reichenbach. Hence *Hydrobates*, if available for use, should replace *Oceanodroma*, and *Cymochorea* becomes a homonym of *Hydrobates*.

The nomenclature is in accord with modern rules, but in a few instances the names or authorities are not those commonly in use, the authority for *Riparia* being given as Vorst, 1817 instead of Forster, 1817 (probably a typographical error for Forst.), and *Delichon* Moore, 1854, is used for the House Martin instead of *Chelidonaria* Reichenow, 1889; and a few other departures from current usage are noticeable, but doubtless rest on good grounds.

Although the ranges of the species and subspecies, and references to original descriptions, are omitted, the list furnishes a handy up-to-date catalogue of South African birds, compressed into less than a hundred pages.— J. A. A.