

field, is worthy of a more complimentary statement than the one penned by our critic to the effect that the bulletin on Shorebirds contains in addition to official data "some reference to the literature."

Very truly yours,

HENRY W. HENSHAW.

Washington, D. C., Nov. 20, 1911.

Mathews's Notes on Nomenclature.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':—

Dear Sir:—In the last number of 'The Auk,' I have been granted an extended review of my notes on Nomenclature published in the *Novit. Zool.*, Vol. XVII, pp. 492-503, Vol. XVIII, pp. 1-22, *Emu*, Vol. X, pp. 317-326, and Vol. XI, pp. 52-58. That review will be widely read by American ornithologists whereas my original papers will not have such an audience. Inasmuch, therefore, as I feel my views have been somewhat vigorously treated, I would claim space for a short defence of my papers.

The review is principally a defence of the Brissonian genera without recourse to the refutation of the facts I produced against their acceptance. I implicitly obey the "Laws formulated by the International Congress of Zoölogists," and the reviewer wrote: "Instead of accepting, however, the ruling of the Commission on the meaning of its own Code he proceeds to argue that the Commission is wrong"; and then: "It is hard to reconcile this action with his repeatedly professed absolute adherence to 'the laws formulated by the International Congress of Zoölogists.'"

The reviewer has confused the Laws with the Opinions rendered by the Commission. I have never questioned the Laws and "the Commission has no legislative power." Refer to Opinion 16, where after nine pages of discussion the only cases where an Opinion was necessary were left to be decided by the first author who had occasion to use them, and the sentence passed "If any author attempts to construe the cases under the present ruling the burden of proof to show he is justified in this procedure rests upon him."

However the reviewer further wrote: "As a matter of fact, it is perfectly evident that the Commission intentionally employed the term binary for the purpose of conserving genera established by non-binomial authors of dates subsequent to 1758," yet carefully refrained from noticing my appeal to the Laws which I here again quote:

"*Article 25.* The valid name of a genus or species can be only that name under which it was first designated on the condition:

"*a.* That this name was published and accompanied by an indication, or a definition or a description; and

"*b.* That the author has applied the principles of binary nomenclature.

"*Article 26.* The tenth edition of Linné's 'Systema naturæ,' 1758, is the work which inaugurated the consistent general application of the binary

nomenclature in zoology. The date, 1758, therefore, is accepted as the starting point of zoological nomenclature and of the law of priority."

Inasmuch as the meaning of the word binary, here first used instead of binomial, is explained by the context it can have none other than what I have claimed. I cannot imagine the arguments whereby the reviewer could make it "perfectly evident, as a matter of fact," to be otherwise; from the facts which I have here quoted, I cannot admit any other meaning of binary than binomial and until Article 26 is altered I must maintain the position I have taken up. It has been suggested by supporters of the Commission's Opinions that, my arguments, on the facts, being unanswerable, this course should be adopted. Is further discussion necessary? The untenability of the Commission's Opinion is thereby admitted.

With regard to the reviewer's remarks: "Unfortunately for Mr. Mathews his statements in regard to Brisson and *Colymbus* are erroneous." "If Brisson's genera continue to be used, as they certainly will be, *Podiceps* is properly to be construed as a homonym of *Colymbus* (Brisson ex Linné)."

Whether my statements be regarded as erroneous or not depends upon whether they are criticised from the standpoint of opinion or of facts. I was only dealing with the latter and herewith point out the difference between the reviewer's opinion and facts. Reference to Brisson, Vol. VI, p. 33, does not lead us to conclude that Brisson used *Colymbus* ex Linné, and on p. 34 Brisson calls La Grebe *Colymbus*. By application of a method of tautonymy this could be accepted as the bird reckoned as type of Brisson's genus and accordingly the one from which Brisson formed his generic name. Now the first reference under that species reads *Colymbus Moehr. Avi. Gen. 77*, and no mention is made of Linné though ten references are given.

Now, whose statements are erroneous as to the origin of Brisson's *Colymbus*, the reviewer's or mine? It would be most interesting reading for me to see the reviewer's justification (on facts) of the statement "Brisson did it [subdivided a Linnean genus] in a large number of cases, intentionally and with good effect, adopting most of them in a restricted sense."

Allen, when collating the Brissonian and Linnean Genera (Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., Vol. XXVIII, pp. 317-335, 1910), noted (p. 319) that Brisson only had Linné's 10th Edition after four volumes (out of six) of his work had been printed; he could not have subdivided many of the Linnean genera under those conditions, unless genera introduced BEFORE 1758 are admitted. An examination of those two last volumes does not reveal, to me, facts in support of the reviewer's statement.

The reviewer notes: "*Marila* Oken is rejected in favour of *Nyroca* Fleming on the assumption that Oken's bird genera of 1817 are untenable."

It is peculiar that though the A. O. U. Check-List, p. 74, includes *Marila* Oken 1817, and p. 76, *Clangula* Oken 1817, on p. 79, *Somateria* Leach 1819 is used though there is the prior EIDER Oken 1817. On p. 80 *Oidemia* Fleming 1822 is retained though there is the prior MACREUSE Oken 1817;

and p. 47 *Anous* Stephens 1826 though there is the prior *NODDI* Oken 1817. Why this inconsistency? I have consistently rejected all the Oken names. If they are tenable why did not the A. O. U. include all, in the Check-List? Were they in doubt as to the Latin form of the neglected names?

The reviewer further notes: "*Ænanthe* Vieillot is accepted for the Wheatears on the ground that the type of *Ænanthe* rested on tautonymy (*Motacilla ænanthe* Linn.) before a type was fixed for *Motacilla*." This is a quaint summary of my note regarding the nomenclature of the Wheatears and Chats and scarcely in accordance with the facts.

The other matters wherein the reviewer differs from myself can be regarded as matters of opinion upon which I prefer to leave myself to the judgment of the succeeding generations. It is being proven every day that in science right will right itself, and I am simply working for the advancement of the science I love, that of Ornithology.

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18/11/11

[The reviewer of Mr. Mathews's papers on the Nomenclature of Birds regrets that his criticisms of certain opinions held by their author has given him cause for a reply, inasmuch as the reviewer fails to see wherein he was at any point in serious error. Respecting Mr. Mathews's position in the matter of Brissonian genera, the reviewer is quite content to let him have the last word until the International Commission has formally rendered an opinion on their availability and the Congress itself has either adopted or rejected it, and then to abide by the decision of the Congress.

The question of *Podiceps* and *Colymbus* is, however, a separate issue which can be discussed wholly on the basis of facts. As Mr. Mathew truly says: "Whether my statements be regarded as erroneous or not depends upon whether they are criticised from the standpoint of opinion or of facts. I was dealing with the latter and herewith point out the difference between the reviewer's opinion and facts. Reference to Brisson... [etc., see Mathews above]. Now whose statements are erroneous as to the origin of *Colymbus* [i. e., whether from Linné, 1758, or from some earlier source], the reviewer's or mine?" He says further: "It would be interesting reading for me to see the reviewer's justification (or facts) of the statement 'Brisson did it (subdivided a Linnéan genus) in a large number of cases, intentionally and with good effect, adopting most of them in a restricted sense.'"

The reviewer will here endeavor to give Mr. Mathews this "interesting reading," taking the case of *Colymbus* first, and then a few other genera, — all from Brisson's last two volumes, which were printed *after* he received Linné's ed. 10 of the 'Systema Naturæ,' — which Brisson subdivided "intentionally and with good effect."

First as to the origin of *Colymbus*. *Colymbus* is essentially the same group, with the same name, in Linné's ed. 6 (1748) as in his ed. 10 (1758),

and Moerhing's *Colymbus* is simply Linné's genus of 1748, which he cites, but of course without mention of any species. But so far the origin of Brisson's genus *Colymbus* is concerned, it is necessary to go back only to Linné's 1758 edition of the 'Systema,' although Mr. Mathews seems to imply otherwise. He says: "Reference to Brisson, Vol. VI, p. 33, does not lead us to conclude that Brisson used *Colymbus* ex Linné, and on p. 34 Brisson calls La Grebe *Colymbus*. . . . Now the first reference under that species reads *Colymbus Moehr. Avi. Gen. 77*, and no mention is made of Linné though ten references are given." This statement is quite true as regards Brisson's cited references under his first species, but it has no material bearing on the point at issue, as shown by the following facts.

Colymbus Linné, 1758, contained 4 species: (1) *arcticus*, (2) *cristatus*, (3) *auritus*, (4) *podiceps*, the first being a loon, the other three grebes. Each of the three grebes are duly cited by Brisson in his Vol. VI, as follows: (1) " *Colymbus cristatus. Linn. Systh. [sic] Nat. ed. 10. Gen. 68. sp. 2.*" p. 46; (2) "*Colymbus auritus Linn. Systh. Nat. ed. 10. Gen. 68, sp. 3.*" p. 50; (4) *Colymbus. . . . Podiceps Linn. Systh. Nat. ed. 10. Gen. 68. sp. 4.*" p. 63. Linné's remaining species, *arcticus*, is cited in the same Volume, p. 115, under *Mergus*, as: "*Colymbus Arcticus Linn. Systh. Nat. ed. 10. Gen. 68. sp. 1.*"

Thus Brisson divided Linné's genus *Colymbus* of 1758 (ed. 10) into two by retaining all the grebes in *Colymbus* and removing the single species of loon to his genus *Mergus* (not *Mergus* Linn., 1758 and 1748) in which he placed all the other loons known to him, thus bringing all the grebes together in one genus and all the loons together in another, for the first time completely separating them as distinct genera. He conserved Linné's generic name *Colymbus*, in which he retained three of the original four species, and made a new genus for the fourth. If this is not subdividing Linné's genus *Colymbus*, and on the basis of Linné's ed. 10, I fail to understand the meaning of the word subdivide!

This is only one instance out of 14 where Brisson subdivided Linné's genera in Vols. V and VI of his work on the basis of Linné's ed. 10, which he cites throughout both of these volumes, giving references not only to this edition, but in each case citing the genera and species by numbers as well as by name, in the manner illustrated above under *Colymbus*, and generally in addition to this quoting Linné's diagnosis in full. These other 13 genera, taking them in the order of Brisson's work, are the following:

Struthio, divided into 4 genera — *Struthio*, *Rhea*, *Casuarium*, *Raphus*, the original genus *Struthio* being conserved in its present modern sense.

Charadrius, divided into 2 genera — *Pluvialis* and *Himantopus*. In this case the original name is replaced by *Pluvialis*.

Tringa was divided into 5 genera — *Tringa*, *Vanellus*, *Arenaria*, *Glareola*, *Phalaropus*, in this case the original name being conserved.

Scolopax, divided into 3 genera — *Scolopax*, *Limosa*, *Numenius*, the original name conserved.

Ardea, divided into 3 genera — *Ardea*, *Ciconia*, *Balearica*, the original name conserved.

Fulica, divided into 3 genera — *Fulica*, *Porphyrio*, *Galinula*, the original name conserved.

Alca, divided into 2 genera — *Alca* and *Fratercula*.

Diomedea, divided into 2 genera — *Albatrus* and *Spheniscus*.

Phaëthon, divided into 2 genera — *Lepturus* and *Catarractes*.

Larus, divided into 2 genera — *Larus* and *Stercorarius*.

Anas, divided into 2 genera — *Anas* and *Anser*.

Pelecanus, divided into 3 genera — *Onocratalus*, *Sula*, *Phalacrocorax*.

The same method with reference to Linnean genera was pursued by Brisson in his first four volumes as in his last two, with the difference merely that he had not Linné's ed. 10 to consult at the time his first four volumes were printed and he accordingly had no recourse but to take them from the 1748 edition. This matters little, since the genera under discussion are the same in the 1748 edition as in the 1758 edition, except that in some instances a few more species were included in them in 1758 than in 1748. These also number 14, which Brisson divided into 33 genera, nearly all of which are still current, many of them with the limitations Brisson originally assigned them.

The reviewer's "quaint summary" of Mr. Mathews's note on *Ænanthe* was not intended as a summary of his note, but as a statement of certain conditions in the case, and as such is correct.

Respecting *Marila* Oken, and the other Oken genera of 1817, the reviewer is willing to abide by any ruling of the International Congress respecting them but confesses that his sympathies and inclinations are, personally, with Mr. Mathews.

J. A. ALLEN.]