

Bangs on New South American Birds.¹— In a review of the races of *Tangara gyroloides* Mr. Bangs describes as new *T. g. nupera* (p. 76) the form found in western Ecuador, formerly considered identical with the *T. g. bangsi* ranging from Costa Rica to Veragua. In conjunction with Mr. G. K. Noble he has described a new woodpecker, *Chrysoptilus atricollis lymani* (p. 85) from Huancabamba, Peru.— W. S.

Wetmore on Duck Sickness in Utah.²— The present bulletin is a final report upon the investigations conducted by Mr. Wetmore on behalf of the U. S. Biological Survey in the vicinity of Great Salt Lake, where the mortality among water fowl has been particularly noticeable. A preliminary report was issued in 1915 and reviewed in 'The Auk' for October of that year. The present paper while going into the subject in much greater detail confirms the conclusions set forth in the preliminary report that the trouble was due to the water becoming charged with alkali. Certain salts contained in it, notably chlorides of calcium and magnesium, have been shown by actual experiment to produce the duck sickness.

The way in which the birds become infected is described by Mr. Wetmore as follows. Irrigation has decreased the amount of water supplying the marshes on the lake front, and the resulting slow drainage induces stagnation over large areas. Surface evaporation and capillary attraction rapidly draw the salts held in solution in the mud to the surface and there concentrate them. Strong winds bank up the water in the larger bays and blow it over the drying flats taking up the salts in solution and carrying with it quantities of seeds and insects upon which the ducks feed eagerly taking in naturally quite an amount of the salts. Complete draining of affected areas, increase in the supply of fresh water and caring for the sick birds, which can in a large percentage of cases be brought back to perfect health, are recommended as means to counteract the trouble.

Mr. Wetmore has done an admirable piece of work in seeking out the cause of this malady which has become a serious menace to ducks in Utah as well as in regions to the south where these birds would naturally go in the winter season.— W. S.

Mathews' 'Birds of Australia.'³— Part II of Volume VII of Mr. Mathew's work is a bulky number dealing with the Kingfishers and the Bee-eater, eight species being figured. As was to be expected the composite genus *Haleyon* comes in for some serious treatment at the author's

¹ Notes on the Geographical Races of *Tangara gyroloides*. By Outram Bangs. Proc. N. E. Zool. Club, VI, pp. 73-76, December 21, 1917.

Description of a New Woodpecker from Peru. By Outram Bangs and G. K. Noble. Proc. N. E. Zool. Club. vi, pp. 85-86. June 7, 1918.

² The Duck Sickness in Utah. By Alexander Wetmore. Bulletin 672, U. S. Department of Agriculture, June 21, 1918. pp. 1-25.

³ The Birds of Australia. By Gregory M. Mathews. Part II, Volume VII. May 15, 1918.

hands and some twenty pages are devoted to a history of the nomenclature of the group and the relationship of the species. No less than fourteen new genera of Kingfishers are proposed so that with those previously available every really distinct species must now be provided with a generic name. It is not for us to criticise Mr. Mathews' work for upon the standards now prevailing in other families, this subdivision is apparently perfectly justifiable if one desires to be consistent, but it only goes to prove that the utility of the generic name is being reduced to *nil* and it would seem that the time is not far distant when we must begin the reverse process of grouping 'natural genera' together into 'genera de convenience' if the first term of our technical names is to mean anything more than the second. The more we use generic nomenclature to designate facts in differentiation the less use it becomes as a means of indicating to some one else what we are talking about.

In the discussion of *Syma torotoro* three new subspecies are described from New Guinea while one new race of *Dacelo leachii* from Australia and one from New Guinea are described. *Monarchalcyon cyanocephalus* Sharpe is renamed *Dacelalcyon confusus*.—W. S.

Grinnell on the Name of the American Barn Swallow.¹—Dr. Grinnell has brought up in this note a matter of no little importance. The Barn Swallow was originally described as *Hirundo erythrogaster*. In the first edition of the A. O. U. 'Check-List' it appears as *Chelidon erythrogaster* although Dr. Stejneger in referring it to this genus had written it *erythrogastra*. In the second edition where it is still referred to *Chelidon* and in the third where it is put back into *Hirundo* the feminized form *erythrogastra* is used. Recently Dr. Oberholser has claimed that the proper feminine of *gaster* is *gastris* and writes it *erythrogastris* and finally comes Dr. Grinnell with the explanation that the word is not an adjective at all but a noun and therefore should retain its original form *erythrogaster* under all circumstances. He seems to be absolutely right and the action of the original A. O. U. Committee should be upheld. In spite of all this Dr. Elliot Coues always employed *erythrogastra* and in commenting upon the form *Chelidon erythrogaster* said "wrong for genus and wrong for gender." It would be interesting to know what his argument in the case would be. It is perhaps one where even Latin experts will disagree.

A glance at the index to Sharpe's 'Hand-List of Birds' shows many discrepancies in handling such cases. Both *-gaster* and *-gastra* are used with feminine genera, *-venter* with both masculine and neuter and *-ventris* with masculine and feminine. So there seems much to correct no matter what view we adopt. Drs. Grinnell and Oberholser have apparently discovered another 'mare's nest' for the nomenclatorist.—W. S.

¹The Name of the American Barn Swallow. By J. Grinnell. The Condor, XX, p. 92, March 19, 1918.