

## GENERAL NOTES.

**The Generic Name of the Gannets.**—Several years ago Mr. G. M. Mathews proposed the recognition (Austral Avian Record, II, Nos. 2-3, Oct. 23, 1913, pp. 55-56) of *Pelecanus bassanus* Linnæus and the other Gannets as a genus apart from the other species of *Sula* Brisson. On a later occasion (Birds Australia, IV, pt. 3, June 23, 1915, pp. 204-207, 217-218) he elaborated the diagnosis of this group and showed conclusively the claims of the Gannets to generic distinction. The feathered face, the proportions of wing, tail, tarsus, and culmen, and particularly the scutellate toes and parts of the front of the tarsus are more than ample characters. He further mentioned (Birds Australia, IV, pt. 3, 1915, p. 202) what had for some time been known, that the name *Dysporus* Illiger (Prodrom. Mamm. et Avium, 1811, p. 279), which has frequently been used in either generic or subgeneric sense for the Gannets, is merely a substitute term for *Sula* Brisson, on grounds of purism. The next name in point of time, *Morus* Vieillot (Analyse Nouv. Méth. d'Ornith. Élément., April, 1816, p. 63), is preoccupied by *Morum* Bolten, 1798, for a genus of *Mollusca*, and for this reason Mr. Mathews has named the group of Gannets *Sulita* (Austral Avian Record, II, No. 7, Jan. 28, 1915, p. 123; type by original designation, *Pelecanus bassanus* Linnæus). The name *Moris* Leach (Syst. Cat. Spec. Indig. Mamm. and Birds Brit. Mus., August, 1816, p. 35; type by monotypy *Moris Bassana* [= *Pelecanus bassanus* Linnæus], he rejects (Birds Australia, IV, pt. 3, 1915, p. 202) as a nomen nudum; and *Moris* Forster (Synop. Cat. Brit. Birds, 1817, p. 59) as a "mis-spelling of *Morus* only" (Birds Australia, IV, pt. 3, 1915, p. 217). According to the A. O. U. Code of Nomenclature, Mr. Mathews is correct in the rejection of *Morus* Vieillot on account of the prior *Morum* Bolten; but neither the A. O. U. Code nor the International Code permits the rejection of *Moris* because of either *Morus* or *Morum*, since *Moris* is a word not merely of different grammatical gender, but of different classical termination. Furthermore, the generic names in the publication of Leach quoted above are not nomina nuda, being properly joined with already duly described specific names; and in this particular case the species is unequivocally recognizable. Moreover, even if Leach's name *Moris* be disregarded, as of course it should not be, it would then be necessary to fall back on *Moris* Forster, 1817, which of course is a perfectly legitimate substitute for *Morus* Vieillot. Thus, in any case, the generic name of the Gannets will become *Moris*, and the species stand as follows:

*Moris bassana* (Linnæus).

*Moris capensis* (Lichtenstein).

*Moris serrator serrator* (Gray).

*Moris serrator dyotti* (Mathews).

HARRY C. OBERHOLSER, *Washington, D. C.*