

Polysticta versus Stellaria — a Correction.— In the recent note on the generic names *Polysticta* and *Stellaria* (The Auk, XXXVI, No. 2, April, 1919, p. 277), there occurs a wrong citation, to which Dr. C. W. Richmond has kindly directed our attention. Lest this cause confusion it seems worth while now to make the necessary correction. We have cited the original place of publication of *Polysticta* Smith as "Illust. South Afr. Zoöl.," whereas it should be "Report Expedition Explor. Central Africa." The date, however, is correct as given — "June (or later) 1836." — HARRY C. OBERHOLSER, *Washington, D. C.*

Megalestris versus Catharacta.— Mr. G. M. Mathews has already indicated (Novit. Zoöl., XVII, No. 3, December 15, 1910, p. 498; Birds Australia, II, pt. 5, January 31, 1913, p. 489) that the name *Catharacta* Brünnich must be used in place of *Megalestris* Bonaparte, and in this he seems to be quite right. Some additional details, however, regarding this interesting and complicated case, about which so much has been written, may not be out of place from the viewpoint of American ornithology. The generic name *Catharacta* was originally proposed by Brünnich (Ornith. Bor., 1764, p. 32) for the following four species: (1) *skua* (= *Megalestris skua* Auct.); (2) *cephus* (= *Stercorarius parasiticus* [Linnæus]); (3) *parasitica* (= *Stercorarius longicaudus* Vieillot); (4) *coprotheres* (= *Stercorarius parasiticus* [Linnæus]); and its type was apparently first designated by Reichenbach (Syst. Avium, 1851, p. v) as *Catharacta skua* Brünnich. Dr. J. A. Allen, in discussing this case at considerable length (The Auk, XXI, No. 3, July, 1904, pp. 345-348), came to the conclusion that *Catharacta* was untenable on account of the prior *Catarractes* Brisson (Ornith., VI, 1760, p. 102; type by monotypy and tautonomy, *Aptenodytes chrysocome* Forster). This, however, was before the publication of the revised edition of the American Ornithologists' Union Code of Nomenclature, which provides that names differing in classical endings shall for purposes of nomenclature be considered distinct. Since this applies, of course, to the present case, the name *Catharacta* Brünnich becomes tenable, for it is not to be rejected on account of the previous *Catarractes*. The following species, together with their subspecies, will be affected by this change:

- Catharacta skua* Brünnich.
- Catharacta antarctica* (Lesson).
- Catharacta chilensis* (Saunders).
- Catharacta lomnbergi* Mathews.
- Catharacta maccormicki* (Saunders).

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Destructive Invasion by an Australian Rail.— Irregular migration of species of birds in large numbers is a phenomenon seemingly unknown in the United States since the days of the Passenger Pigeon; indeed such a happening is rare in any part of the world. Readers of 'The Auk' will

no doubt be interested in the following account quoted from the 'Journal of Agriculture of South Australia' (Vol. 22, No. 7, Feb. 1919, pp. 556-57):

"The Murray River settlements are this year suffering an invasion of black-tailed native hens, *Tribonyx ventralis*. These birds, which have the habit of migrating in flocks, are visiting some of the irrigation settlements in countless thousands, and have already done considerable damage by eating out lucerne plots and other green crops, and devouring fruit. In some cases fruitgrowers found it necessary to stack trays on which apricots were being dried, and there is considerable apprehension in some quarters in regard to the safety of the grape crop.

One satisfactory feature in so far as the native hen is concerned is that the experience of the past suggests that it appears only at long intervals. In 1846 it is reported that the bird invaded the streets of Adelaide, in 1886 it reached Perth, and Northern Victoria was visited in 1909."—W. L. McATEE, *Washington, D. C.*

***Sarcidiornis sylvicola* in Venezuela.**—I should like to report the collection of three living specimens of *Sarcidiornis sylvicola* Ihering, in November, 1918, near Barcelona, Venezuela. These birds were taken by Gustave Sebillé, a professional collector, who netted them in a nearby lagoon. They are now living in the New York Zoological Park. There are two males and one female, just beginning to assume adult plumage, the combs of the males being represented by a slight swelling at the base of the upper mandible. The resemblance between these birds when in immature plumage and wild Muscovy Ducks of the same age is striking, though the legs of the comb ducks are noticeably longer.

As they were quite immature when taken, it is reasonable to suppose they were reared in the vicinity of their capture. Barcelona is on the northern coast of Venezuela. The distribution of *Sarcidiornis sylvicola* is given by Brabourne and Chubb as Brazil, Paraguay and northern Argentina, so the present record seems to imply a considerable extension of range.—LEE S. CRANDALL, *New York Zoological Park.*

Occurrence of the Red Phalarope in Pennsylvania.—Mr. Edmund Cocks recently sent to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia for identification, a specimen of the Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) which had been picked up in a dying condition near George School, Bucks County, Pa., on December 15, 1918. Later the specimen was mounted and presented to the local collection at the Academy. So far as I can ascertain this is the first record of the species in the state, and even on the coast of New Jersey we have very few records, the Northern Phalarope being the most frequent of the three species of the family. Curiously enough shortly after the capture of this specimen a skin of the same species was presented to the Academy by Dr. C. E. Ehinger, which had been secured near Lenape, Chester Co., Pa., at about the same time.