

Oberholser on *Larus hyperboreus barrovianus*.¹—In this paper, Dr. Oberholser again comes to the support of the Pt. Barrow Gull, a form originally separated from the Glaucous Gull by Mr. Ridgway in 1886 as a full species and so recognized in the second edition of the A. O. U. 'Check-List.' In 1906 after a study of a large series of these birds Dr. J. Dwight came to the conclusion that the alleged differences were not sufficiently marked to warrant recognition of *Larus barrovianus* and reduced the name to a synonym of *L. glaucus* [= *hyperboreus*] a view that was endorsed by the A. O. U. Committee and it was omitted from the third edition of the 'Check-List.' In 1918, Dr. Oberholser in an elaborate paper published in 'The Auk' proposed to resurrect it as a subspecies, a view which Mr. Ridgway, the original describer of the form had failed to take in his 'Birds of North and Middle America' the eighth volume of which, containing the Gulls appeared the next year. Dr. Dwight promptly met Dr. Oberholser's attempt at resurrection with an additional attack on the validity of the form and Dr. Oberholser now reappears in defence. All of this only demonstrates that with the same material available two or more authorities will have opposite opinions upon the recognition of subspecies based upon such finely drawn distinctions as are now so prevalent in systematic work. There is no "right" or "wrong" in such questions, it is simply a matter of personal opinion. The only fair way of treating such cases in our Check-Lists, it would seem, would be to state both views. Any other method obscures the facts in the case.—Dr. Oberholser's final argument, that a number of ornithologists to whom he had pointed out the characters of *L. barrovianus* agreed with him, reminds one of the *auctorum plurimorum* principal once so popular in discussing problems of nomenclature!—W. S.

Contributions to the Zoogeography of the Palaearctic Region.²—This issue is the first part of a new publication and contains two papers by Erwin Stressemann on the forms of the group *Ægithalos caudatus* and their hybrids, of which *Æ. c. romanus* (p. 10) from Rome is described as new; and on the European Bullfinches with a chart of their evolution.

Of the former group he recognizes fourteen pure-blooded forms, which he divides into three groups, and five hybrids. There is much discussion upon the nature of these forms.

Of the Bullfinches there are five races and one hybrid. Just where the recognition of so many natural hybrids in addition to subspecies is going to lead us it is hard to say.

In America there seems to be but little necessity for such a hypothesis

¹ The Status of *Larus hyperboreus barrovianus* Ridgway. By Harry C. Oberholser. Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington. Vol. 32, pp. 173-176. September 30, 1919.

² Beiträge zur Zoogeographie der palaarktischen Region. Herausgegeben von der Ornithologischen Gesellschaft in Bayern. Heft I, September 15, 1919. München 1919. Gustav Fischer in Jena. Preis Mk. 5.

and it has only been advanced in the case of the Flickers, Meadowlarks and a few other rather anomalous cases.— W. S.

Annual Report of the Chief of the Biological Survey.¹— Mr. E. W. Nelson's report as chief of the U. S. Biological Survey for the year ending June 1919, contains much of interest. The amount of appropriations available for the work of the Bureau was greater than ever before, including \$592,000 from the Federal Government and over \$800,000 appropriated by State Governments and other bodies for work in cooperation with the Survey. It is estimated that the destruction of noxious animals resulted in a saving of live stock valued at five millions and of forage and crops valued at fourteen millions.

The bulk of the report deals with the destruction of noxious mammals. The ornithological work consisted largely of investigating charges against various species of birds. Among these was the destruction of fish by Mergansers and Pelicans, the case of the former being held open while the latter was proven harmless to species used as human food. The Night Herons in Louisiana were charged with being injurious to the frog industry but this was disproved as was the charge against the White-winged Dove of destroying grain in Arizona. In the case of the Bobolink, while charges of damage to crops in the lower Delaware Valley were found to be groundless, there was found to be great damage to the rice crop in the southern states and an open season for shooting these birds was granted from Pennsylvania and New Jersey southward.

Much additional information of this nature is contained in the report which seems to show that several species regarded as beneficial when the effort toward bird protection was initiated must now be regarded as injurious at certain times and places and necessary steps taken for their control.

It is welcome news to learn that in addition to various publications of the Survey noticed in these columns during the past year, we may look at an early date for the appearance of reports on the birds of New Mexico and Alabama.

The supervision of the National Bird Reservations during 1918-1919 has been in charge of Dr. G. W. Field while Mr. G. A. Lawyer has conducted the administration of the migratory bird treaty.— W. S.

Shufeldt on the Birds of Brazil.²— In the August number of the 'Bulletin of the Pan American Union,' Dr. Shufeldt has compiled a popular account of the birds of Brazil illustrated by a number of photographs, mainly from specimens in the U. S. National Museum. The paper is arranged systematically beginning with the Rhea and reaching the Parrots on the ninth page, all the rest of the avifauna being disposed of in a couple

¹ Report of Chief of Bureau of Biological Survey. pp. 1-24.

² Birds of Brazil. By R. W. Shufeldt, M. D. Bull. Pan-American Union, August, 1919, pp. 159-176.