

(Cf. Ridgway, Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., No. 50, part VI, April 8, 1914, pp. 548-552.)

Uranomitra Reichenbach. Eliminated, because considered not separable from *Amazilia* Lesson. (Cf. Ridgway, Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., No. 50, part V, November 29, 1911, p. 406.) The only North American species will therefore now stand as:

439.1. **Amazilia salvini** (Brewster).

520.2. **Passer domesticus** (Linnaeus) versus **Passer hostilis** Kleinschmidt, Falco, XI, No. 2, December, 1915, p. 19 (Tring, England). Change rejected, because the English bird, from which the American is descended, is not sufficiently different from typical *Passer domesticus* of continental Europe to be separated even subspecifically. (Cf. Witherby, Pract. Handb. Brit. Birds, I, part 2, April 30, 1919, p. 101.)

GENERAL NOTES.

Notes on the Diving of Loons and Ducks.—The notes recently published in the January number of 'The Auk,' on this subject, remind me of the tale of the "Two Knights and the Shield."

Loons as well as Ducks, Auks and other allied species use their wings in swimming under water, as a general rule, but there are times when they do not. When a bird dives and uses its wings, it leaves behind a wake of bubbles of air, which clearly indicate the direction in which it is going. Through some instinct, I believe, the birds realize this, so that when they desire to sneak away without attracting attention, the feet only are used. Wounded birds often do this, as well as nesting birds. They appear to glide along with very little disturbance of the water. I have had abundant opportunities of observing this trait, in many kinds of birds, both in fresh and salt water. When not using the wings Ducks cannot make very long dives. This is the reason why so many Ducks, of the Scoter family especially, have been chased and drowned during the molting season. When scared by the firing of guns they would dive as deeply as possible to try and escape. Having few or no feathers on the wings, they could not return to the surface fast enough, got exhausted and drowned. This used to be an old time dodge of collecting a large lot of birds, either for meat or feathers, and was practiced by men of the cod fishing fleet. Scoters when molting congregate together in large numbers, at certain localities, where food is abundant, shell fish of some kind, but preferably near blue mussel or oyster beds. After feeding they move out to sea some two or three miles off shore. If perchance during a fog some steamer happens to run through or near a flock, they become frightened, dive, and hundreds are drowned. In August, 1918, such an occurrence happened near Bic, St. Lawrence River. and over five hundred drowned birds were picked up next day, by boats, crossing over to the north shore.—NAP. A. COMEAU, *Godboul, Quebec.*