

CORRESPONDENCE.

Destruction of Eagles in Alaska.

Editor of 'The Auk,'

At least twice in 'The Auk' and often in other journals of a more popular tone, have appeared articles commenting adversely on the bounty paid by the Territory of Alaska on the Bald Eagle. Some writers have implied that the residents of Alaska have such a high regard for dollars that their finer feelings, among them regard for feathered creatures, are dulled beyond hope. The impression has been wide-spread in some quarters that Alaskans are chiefly ignorant Indians and renegade whites and that all our territorial affairs must be regulated for us by intelligent people of more cultured localities.

Now, as a resident of Alaska for many years and a life-long student of birds, I wish to take exception to these implications. I find the average citizens of Alaska to compare very favorably with those of other parts of the United States as regards intelligence, patriotism and love for the beauties of nature; in fact, many of us went to Alaska in search of such beauties. Moreover, we are on the ground and are well aware of our needs, as most outsiders are not. We have suffered long from the vagaries of theorists who have made a tourist trip to Alaska and acquired most of their information of the country from the deck of a boat. Our fish have been depleted because outsiders have been able to control the legislation necessary to their protection. Now others are attempting, on sentimental grounds, to dictate to us in regard to legislation we consider vital for protection of our game. And game to the average Alaskan is not a Sunday sport; to a very large degree it is his sustenance and is valued by him accordingly.

At the request of Dr. T. Gilbert Pearson, I have recently forwarded to him a letter giving detailed information on destruction of Alaskan game by the Eagle. This letter also shows their astonishing abundance in Alaska as compared with any other part of the United States and the impossibility of their extinction. Therefore, I shall not attempt to burden your columns with details.

I submit that not one of the many objectors to the Alaskan Eagle bounty has shown himself to have any real knowledge of the facts in the case. Their wish is father to their thought. They hope that the Eagles do not destroy game, consequently they know that they do not. The great damage to deer is done by the Eagles when the fawns are *small*. One writer makes a trip in May, before the fawns are born, and states he sees no sign of damage. Another investigates in the fall, after the fawns are able to take care of themselves, and the young Eagles are out of the nests, and arrives at the same conclusion.

If anyone desires real knowledge of the facts, let him go into the deer

country in July, when the fawns are small and helpless and the Eaglets are large and hungry, and climb to a few dozen Eagles' nests, and he will receive enlightenment. The writer has done this and knows whereof he writes.

The writer has a great deal of personal sentiment for the Eagle. He considers it a grand bird and would be among the first to protest if there were any danger of its extermination, but anyone conversant with the facts knows there is no such danger in Alaska.

This is still a frontier country and man, in killing the game necessary to his subsistence, has upset the balance of nature. To save the game, this must in some way be restored. This we hope to accomplish by keeping the numbers of predatory animals and birds within proper bounds, and we believe that we, who are on the ground and conversant with conditions, are the proper ones to define these bounds.

G. WILLETT.

Los Angeles, Calif., August 1, 1927.

Generic Name of the Emu.

The Editor of 'The Auk,'

Your brief note on the correct scientific name of the Emu (Auk, XLIV, p. 466) treats the question whether *Dromiceius* or *Dromaius* should be used as if it were solely a question of priority. As the Emu is such a well-known bird and is mentioned in all general works on ornithology, its correct scientific name is obviously a matter of interest to all ornithologists, not merely to those of Australia. Perhaps therefore you will allow me to state very briefly the reasons which led the Check-List Committee of the R. A. O. U. to retain the name *Dromaius*, instead of the prior *Dromiceius* used by Mathews and advocated by you.

Dromiceius appears on page 54 of Vieillot's "Analyse" as the scientific name for the "Emou." On page 70 of the same work appears a list of "New names, derived from Greek, which are employed in this Ornithology." *Dromiceius* is not included in this list but instead appears *Dromaius* with its Greek derivation "dromaios" (spelt in Greek letters) and its Latin equivalent "velox" (swift). *Dromaius* had not been used earlier in the book so it seems certain that the word *Dromiceius* is really a misprint for *Dromaius*. These words look decidedly different in print but in writing they are not at all dissimilar and it is easy to see how such a mistake could be made by a printer setting up type from a manuscript.

Agassiz in 1842 gave *Dromiceius* in his "Nomenclator" as a typographical error for *Dromaius*, and Newton in his "Dictionary of Birds" speaks of *Dromiceius* as "an obvious misprint corrected a few pages further on to *Dromaius*." Article 19 of the International Code reads:—"The original orthography of a name is to be preserved unless an error of transcription, a lapsus calami, or a typographical error is evident." The majority of the Australian Committee, in agreement with the authorities quoted, con-