

CORRESPONDENCE

ON 'HYLOCICHLA GUTTATA OROMELA'

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':—The Nineteenth Supplement to the A. O. U. Check-List (Auk, 61: 441-464, 1944) does not accord recognition to the small race of Hermit Thrushes described by Dr. Oberholser under the name *Hylocichla guttata oromela* (Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., 50: 117-120, 1932). I have not had opportunity to examine skins of representatives of this proposed race, except at the Colorado Museum of Natural History, and cannot present arguments on its validity on ordinary taxonomic grounds. However, I have been able to study Hermit Thrushes in Rocky Mountain National Park, within the range of this proposed race, and a few general comments resulting from extensive field observations may be of interest.

Audubon's Hermit Thrushes breed abundantly in the park in the Transition and Canadian zones, between 7,800 feet (and lower outside the park) to 10,000 feet. Their song is predominant everywhere throughout the lodgepole pines of the latter zone on both sides of the continental divide. I do not remember ever hearing the typical song of *auduboni* above 10,000 feet. The Hudsonian Zone begins abruptly on the slopes at 10,000 feet and is comprised of glades between Engelmann spruces and firs that form a distinctive belt to timberline at 11,000 feet. Here also are to be found a number of Hermit Thrushes, but these are conspicuously smaller than those breeding lower down, and their song is strikingly different; these birds are so distinctive that a glance can differentiate them, as does their song. Mr. R. J. Niedrach has discussed this variation in the Hermit Thrushes of the high Rockies with me, and in his 'Birds of Denver and Mountain Parks' (Niedrach, R. J. and Rockwell, Robert B., Colorado Mus. Nat. Hist. Popular Series 5: 125, 1939) expressed his belief that *oromela* would prove a valid race.

Naturally, a field ornithologist cannot presume to try to settle a basically taxonomic problem; but if this proposed race has such strikingly noticeable field characters and apparently occupies a specialized ecological nesting habitat, there is some ground for believing it may be a valid race. The committee on nomenclature may be interested in reconsidering this form to determine whether these indications resulting from field observations are verified by study of series of skins.—FRED MALLERY PACKARD, Lt. (j. g.) USNR.

THE NOMENCLATURE OF WILLIAM BARTRAM

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':—Few readers of The Auk may see the article on "Legitimacy of Names in Bartram's 'Travels,'" by Dr. Henry W. Rickett of the New York Botanical Garden, published in Rhodora, Journal of the New England Botanical Club [46 (No. 551): 389-391, Nov., 1944].

Hence it may be well to quote briefly from it. The author, who is a specialist on taxonomy and bibliography, says: "Bartram's *Travels* does not meet current requirements for the publication of specific epithets. Art. 68 of the *International Rules* says that 'specific epithets are illegitimate . . . and must be rejected . . . when they were published in works in which the Linnean system of binary nomenclature for species was not consistently employed.'" and, after presenting data on plant names, adds: "It is obvious that Bartram did not consistently employ the binary system. The same conclusion results from looking through the list of birds."—W. L. MCATRE, *Fish and Wildlife Service, Chicago, Ill.*