

**A very early notice of hawk migration.**—Oviedo, writing about thirty years after Columbus discovered America, was the first American naturalist, and his 'Historia general y natural de las Indias, islas y tierra-firme del mar oceano' is the first American natural history, containing descriptions of many of the animals, birds, reptiles and fishes found in the regions occupied by the Spaniards. Unfortunately, his work is not commonly found in an English translation. However, parts of it occur in 'Purchas, his pilgrimes' (James MacLehose and Sons, Glasgow, 1906). Many of his descriptions are surprisingly accurate, and all of them are most interesting.

Such a passage is the one in which he gives what is probably the first lucid account of the hawk migration. I give it below, in the old English of the Purchas translation.

"Every yeare," he says, "there pass from the end of Cuba infinite numbers of divers sorts of Birds, which come from the North of the firme Land, and crosse over the Alacrain Ilands and Cuba, and flye over the Gulfe Southwards. I have seen them passe over Darien [Isthmus of Panama] and Nombre de Dios and Panama in divers yeares, in the Firme Land; so many that they cover the Skie: and this passage or march continueth a moneth or more about the moneth of March. I thinke they flie round about the World, for they never are seene to returne toward the West or North; and we see them not every yeare one after another; from morning to night the aire is covered, and some flie so high that they cannot be seene, others lower yet higher than the mountains tops. They come from the North-west and North to the Southwards, and then turn South-west, occupying in length more than the eye can discern, and a great space in breadth. The lowest are the Eaglets and the Eagles, and all seeme Birds of prey of many kinds and plumes. The higher cannot be discerned in their plumes, but in manner of flying and quantitie appeare of divers sorts."—J. L. BAUGHMAN, *Texas Game, Fish and Oyster Commission, Rockport, Texas.*

**The name of the continental race of the Golden Weaver Bird, *Ploceella hypoxantha* (Sparrman).<sup>1</sup>**—For many years the mainland form of *Ploceella hypoxantha* has masqueraded as *chrysea* of Hume (almost always emended to *chrysaea*), with reference to [*Ploceus*] *chryseus* Hume, in Hume and Davison, *Stray Feathers*, 6: 399, footnote, June, 1878.

A study of this reference shows that the 'description' reads as follows: "N. B.—Though I have called this species a *Ploceus*, I quite agree with Mr. Oates that it is a perfectly distinct form, deserving generic separation. The eggs alone suffice to show that it is not a true *Ploceus*. My own belief is that *javanensis* is distinct, and that the Burmese bird requires a name. In our museum it stand [*sic*] as *chryseus*."

Nothing here satisfies the requirements of Article 25a of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, especially as clarified by Opinion 1 of the International Commission, nor is the fact that Hume clearly intended to name a Burmese population in itself enough to establish the name nomenclatorially (*cf.* Opinion 52, last paragraph). It must then be considered a *nomen nudum*, and since at its next appearances in literature (Bowdler Sharpe, *Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum*, 13: 475, 1890; Oates, *Fauna of British India, Birds*, 2: 180, 1890) it was submerged in the synonymy of *Loxia javanensis* Lesson, 1831 (which is itself a synonym of *Loxia hypoxantha* Sparrman, 1788). *chrysea* has been unavailable since 1890.

Inasmuch as the well-marked continental bird thus finds itself without any name at all, I propose to call it

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***Ploceella hypoxantha hymenaica*, subsp. nov.**

*Type*: Adult male in breeding plumage, U. S. National Museum No. 333049, collected at Nong (or Bung) Boraphet, central Siam at lat. 15° 43' N., long. 100° 14' E., on June 24, 1932, by Hugh McCormick Smith (original number 5646).

*Diagnosis*: In breeding plumage separable in the male from *P. h. hypoxantha* (as exemplified by Javanese specimens) by having the feathers of the mantle fringed with a more greenish, less golden, yellow, and by having the upper breast, adjacent to the black throat patch, more strongly suffused with raw sienna; possibly also by greater length of wings and tail.

*Remarks*: The subspecific name has allusion to the bird's yellow nuptial dress, reminiscent of that worn by Hymen, god of marriage.—H. G. DEIGNAN, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.*

**Variations in the plumage of the English Sparrow.**—Recently the writer examined over 1800 skins of the English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) while making an analysis of the zoogeographic aspects of their variation in size. Several of these had variations from the normal plumage. Since this species is being used more and more extensively as a laboratory animal, these variations are here recorded for such value as they may have for genetic studies. *All feathers white*: ♀, C. A. S. No. 15387, Calif.; ♀, P. M. Z. No. 10863, Calif.; sex ?, Ch. M. No. 35.209, S. C. (pink eyes); ♀, Ch. M. No. 7643, S. C.; ♀, M. P. M. No. 18059, Wis. *Crown white* (all from Calif.): ♂, M. V. Z. No. 25867; ♀, C. A. S. No. 38758; ♀, M. V. Z. No. 6596; ♀, M. V. Z. No. 24739; ♀, M. V. Z. No. 24781; dates of collection of these five specimens are respectively 1915, 1923, 1908, 1914, 1914. *Entire plumage light gray*: ♀, S. M. No. 15725, Calif. *Entire plumage light tan suffused with orange or yellow*: ♂, U. S. N. M. No. 255224, Md.; sex ?, M. P. M. No. 12104, N. J.; ♀, A. M. N. H. No. 308365, N. Y.; ♀, Cl. M. No. 25888, Ohio; ♂, Ch. M. No. 31.205, S. C. Another sparrow of this latter type was observed by Mrs. E. H. Timbrell in Rutherford, N. J., from May, 1941 to May, 1944. A water-color painting of this bird was supplied for comparison with the study skins. *All feathers of entire plumage suffused nearly to their bases with a copper-reddish color*: ♂, M. C. Z. No. 80916, Mass.; ♂, M. C. Z. No. 80918, Mass.; ♀, M. C. Z. No. 80917, Mass. It occurred to the writer that these sparrows might have obtained their reddish color in the proximity of some mill where they might have come in contact with a dye. Dr. W. M. Tyler who collected the specimens writes that there are no mills near the farming country where they were collected and that no other similarly colored specimens appeared at a later date in that vicinity. In these specimens the males have black feathers in their normal position. Another reddish English Sparrow is recorded as seen alive in Ottawa, Ont., by G. Eifrig (*Auk*, 27: 53–59, 1910). *Crown completely chestnut*: ♂, L. M. No. 9149, La. *Crown much more suffused with black than normal*: ♂, B. S. No. 261409, Utah. *Feathers of the throat (normally black) are chestnut*: ♂, M. C. Z. No. 4743, Mass. Seventy-nine out of 974 other males have the black feathers of the throat tinged with chestnut. Fourteen specimens contained one white feather such as a primary, a secondary, or a rectrix. Fourteen specimens contained scattered white feathers.

The abbreviations in the foregoing list refer to the following museums and collections: A. M. N. H., American Museum of Natural History; B. S., U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service; C. A. S., Chicago Academy of Science; Ch. M., Charleston Museum; Cl. M., Cleveland Museum; L. M., Louisiana State University Museum; M. C. Z., Museum of Comparative Zoology; M. P. M., Milwaukee Public Museum; M. V. Z., Museum of Vertebrate Zoology; P. M. Z., Princeton Museum of Zoology; S. M.,