

NOTES AND NEWS

Request for Photographs of Birds

Those of our members who have first class bird photographs, which they would like to have published in *THE AUK*, are requested to send a list to the editor, giving the name of the species, the locality of the photograph, the sex depicted, whether the photograph also shows a nest with eggs or young, and whether the picture has been published elsewhere.

From time to time, a manuscript is accepted for publication that would be more attractive and meaningful if a first class picture of the species involved were included. If such opportunity arises, the editor will be able to communicate with those who indicate they have a suitable picture available. Ordinarily bird photographs will only be used when they either help to illustrate an article or note, or show some behavior interesting in itself.

THE AUK does not pay for photographs (any more than for manuscripts), but, of course, any such picture used will be credited to the photographer in the caption. It should also be borne in mind that, except in very special cases, *THE AUK* will not publish a photograph that has already appeared in some other ornithological book or journal. Of course publication in *THE AUK* will not preclude the photographer from publishing the picture thereafter elsewhere.

Chapman Memorial Fund

Awards for ornithological research are made in April of each year by the Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund Committee of the American Museum of Natural History, New York. Applications should be received by March 15. Awards were made in 1958 for the following projects:

Edward Beals, University of Wisconsin: The ecology of the birds of the Apostle Islands.

Robert Ficken, Cornell University: The behavior of the Common Grackle, *Quiscalus quiscula*.

William George, University of Arizona: The significance of the hyoid bones in classifying birds.

Maria Koepcke, San Marcos University, Lima, Peru: A study of the Peruvian collections of birds at the American Museum of Natural History.

Nancy McAllister, University of Michigan: The reproductive ethology of the Pied-billed Grebe.

J. D. Macdonald, British Museum: A study of the bird collections at the American Museum of Natural History.

John Rogers, University of Missouri: The breeding biology and behavior of the Lesser Scaup.

Glen Sherwood, Utah State University: The relationship of the Whistling Swan to other waterfowl in the Great Salt Lake Valley of Utah.

Brenda Sladen, Johns Hopkins University: The respiratory system of birds.

National Science Foundation Grants

The Division of Biological and Medical Sciences of the National Science Foundation announces that the next closing date for receipt of basic research proposals in the Life Sciences is January 15, 1959. Proposals received prior to that date will be

reviewed at the Spring meetings of the Foundation's Advisory Panels and disposition will be made approximately four months following the closing date. Proposals received after the January 15, 1959, closing date will be reviewed following the Spring closing date of May 15, 1959.

Inquiries should be addressed to the National Science Foundation, Washington 25, D. C.

Letter to the Editor

NAME-CHANGING BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION

The note by Mayr (1958, *Auk*, 75: 225) in regard to the recent action of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature which calls for changing certain names rouses my grave concern. This is the Commission's *second* action involving the same names. The former was in 1955. Then, the Copenhagen Decisions on Zoological Nomenclature were unanimously adopted by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature! These "Copenhagen Decisions" contained (a) the article that dealt with changing the gender of certain generic names and made necessary further changes, (b) the recommendation that the International Commission consider this report binding until it got around to changing the articles, and that taxonomists guide themselves by these decisions until they were revised.

It has been pointed out to me that the changing of the gender of a generic name can be considered as not name-changing because it only necessitates a change in spelling of some specific and subspecific names. It has also been stressed that the Commission did not make the 1953 "Copenhagen Decisions," but only unanimously adopted them. Be that as it may, the A.O.U. Check-list Committee guided itself by the 1953 ruling while it was in effect! These changes by the Commission were based not on fact but on opinions of how to adapt dead languages to zoological nomenclature. What was right in 1953, was wrong in 1958 . . . and in 1968?

Another case in point is *Numida*, the generic name of the Guinea-fowls of Africa. *Numida* has been treated as feminine since the time of Linnaeus. However, in 1958, in Opinions and Declarations rendered by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, Vol. 1, Sect. F., part F. 3, pp. 29-38, nearly 200 years of usage is upset by ruling that it is masculine. It was argued that only subspecies names are thus changed, but *N. mitrata* is commonly considered a species separate from *N. meleagris* and if this ruling be accepted it must be changed to *N. mitratus*. It seems that the tinkering being attempted in the name of stability may be worse than the disease.

In cases like these, making the species name agree in gender with the generic may be so complicated and unsatisfactory that papers are being written on this aspect of single genera. Scholars disagree. Usage is sometimes hopelessly confused. Fortunately, a simple remedy is at hand. It is to use the original spelling of the species and subspecies names. This proposal is not new. Hartert, perhaps the greatest modern avifaunalist, wrote, ". . . the way toward a stable nomenclature is that of preserving the original spelling entirely, and to regard all names merely as names, not as adjectives in connection with the genera as substantives. This will go far toward uniformity." (*Ibis*, 1904, p. 548). Vincent, in his "A Check List of the Birds of South Africa" (1952), has a similar view (see p. iv), and puts it into practice.