

GENERAL NOTES

An Erroneous Report for *Sula dactylatra melanops*.—In view of the wide distribution of the *National Geographic Magazine* it is desirable for the benefit of ornithologists to note a correction in the identification of a photograph of a group of boobies printed in the number for November 1959, p. 688. Through a misunderstanding on the part of one of the staff's advisers, what is obviously a group of Red-footed Boobies, *Sula sula rubripes*, on their nests built in the tops of low mangroves on the Cosmoledo Islands north of Madagascar, was labelled Masked Booby, *Sula dactylatra melanops*. The latter species places its eggs on the sand in low islands or on bare rock ledges in other environments. I noted the error in an early run copy of the magazine, and the presses were stopped to make the correction. This change, however, appeared only in the latter part of the edition.—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.*

On the Genus "*Chamaethlypis*" and Its Supposed Relationship to *Icteria*.—*Chamaethlypis* is a monotypic Middle American genus of wood-warblers, ranging from southern Texas to western Panama. Several races are recognized, but all are now included in a single species, *C. poliocephala*, designated Ground-chat in the A.O.U. *Check-list of North American Birds* (5th ed., 1957), but called Gray-crowned Yellowthroat by Blake (*Birds of Mexico*, 1953) and many other recent writers. Those who have reported on this bird on the basis of field experience have remarked on its close resemblance, both in appearance and behavior, to the yellowthroats of the genus *Geothlypis* (see Dickey and van Rossem, *Field Mus. Nat. Hist., Zool. Ser.*, 23: 501, 1934; Wetmore, *Proc. U.S. Natl. Mus.*, 93: 316, 1943; Skutch, in *The Warblers of America*, p. 221, Devin-Adair Co., 1957). Prior to 1902 this species was included in *Geothlypis*, and the northern subspecies was called Rio Grande Yellow-throat in the first and second editions of the A.O.U. *Check-list*. In 1887 Ridgway (*Man. N. Amer. Birds*, p. 525) proposed *Chamaethlypis* as a *subgenus* on the basis of its thicker bill and distinctly curved culmen. In 1902 Ridgway in his great work *The Birds of North and Middle America* (U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull., 50, pt. 2: 686) raised *Chamaethlypis* to full generic rank, stating that though it was very much like *Geothlypis* in general appearance, it was "quite distinct structurally, in which respect it comes much nearer to *Icteria*." To emphasize this alleged relationship to the Yellow-breasted Chat, Ridgway adopted the new English name "Ground-chat." The 1910 and subsequent editions of the A.O.U. *Check-list* have followed Ridgway both as to generic and vernacular names.

W. deW. Miller (*Auk*, 36: 290–291, 1919) demonstrated that the characters relied upon by Ridgway to distinguish *Chamaethlypis* from *Geothlypis* were bridged over by several *Geothlypis* species. But the custom of that period favored the recognition of genera based on minor structural differences. Hellmayr (*Field Mus. Nat. Hist., Zool. Ser.*, 13, pt. 8: 443, 1935) commented that *Chamaethlypis* was "a very unsatisfactory genus hardly worthy of recognition." Paynter (*Peabody Mus. Nat. Hist., Yale Univ., Bull.*, 9: 256, 1955) sank it, merely citing Miller's cogent paper (*op. cit.*). The late Ludlow Griscom wrote me that although *Chamaethlypis* was kept as a genus in *The Warblers of America* (Devin-Adair Co., 1957), he personally preferred to reduce it to subgeneric status.

As the A.O.U. *Check-list* (5th ed. p. 514, 1957) preserves *Chamaethlypis*, it seems worthwhile to review the question based on the information presently available, even though some of it was pointed out long ago by W. deW. Miller (*op. cit.*).

Ridgway (*op. cit.*, 686, 1902) lists the "structural" characters distinguishing the