

not sample the insect fauna. Perhaps more important is the lack of fresh water nearby, assuming that the martins actually need fresh water. There is no open water on the larger islands near these colonies, and even on the peninsular mainland, several miles distant, water holes are rare. R. F. Johnston (pers. comm.) has noted Purple Martins nesting on the coast of Sonora in the absence of open fresh water.

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The gender of the fringillid genus *Pinicola*.—Some time past, the opinion was expressed by the writer (W. E. Godfrey, *Natl. Mus. Canada, Bull.* 172: 107, 1961) that the generic name of the Pine Grosbeak, *Pinicola* Vieillot, should be treated as feminine in gender, but at the time the reasons for this were not given in detail.

Shortly afterwards, several interested persons wrote to me expressing opposite views, and at least one recent publication (W. E. C. Todd, *Birds of the Labrador Peninsula and adjacent areas*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1963; see p. 649) also adopted the view that *Pinicola* is masculine. The A.O.U. *Check-list of North American birds* (5th edit., 1957) is not consistent in its treatment of the gender of *Pinicola*, using feminine endings for several adjectival subspecific names, but a masculine ending for another, *eschatosus* Oberholser. Actually, the principle involved far transcends the present case, because similar Latin compound nouns ending in *cola* are widely used in zoology, and the treatment of them all as of masculine gender would entail much confusing (and in the writer's opinion, unwarranted) emendation.

There exists among zoologists, and botanists too, a widely-held opinion that some inflexible rule decrees that *all* Latin compound nouns ending in *cola* must be treated as of masculine gender. Evidently the trouble here is a matter of mistaking the exception for the rule. *Agricola* (farmer) is an exception, cited by every elementary Latin grammar, to the usually feminine gender of first declension nouns. It does not necessarily follow, however, that *all* other similar nouns must be masculine. Similar nouns, with classical usage to establish their gender, are evidently not very numerous, but all Latin dictionaries consulted by the writer give *monticola* as of common gender; *Harper's Latin dictionary* gives *paludicola* as of common gender also. Clearly, then, such nouns may be of variable gender.

Article 30a(i) (2) of the *International code of zoological nomenclature* (London, Intern. Comm. Zool. Nomencl., 1961) states, "A noun of variable gender, masculine or feminine, is to be treated as masculine, unless its author states, when he first publishes the name, that it is feminine, or so treats it in combination with an adjectival specific name."

In the case of *Pinicola* we must consult Vieillot, its original author, for an indication of its gender. Vieillot (*Hist. nat. oiseaux Amér. Sept.*, vol. 1, 1807 [1808], p. iv) named the single species concerned *Pinicola rubra*, thus establishing the feminine gender of *Pinicola*. The subspecies name *eschatosus* Oberholser should therefore be emended to *eschatosa* to conform with the feminine gender of its genus, *Pinicola*.—W. EARL GODFREY, *National Museum of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario*.