

away with trivial names in our literature and correspondence at least. This would simplify things immensely. Not only would space be saved in faunal lists but in exchanging specimens one would need be familiar with only one set of names. It is extremely annoying to receive a list of trivial names and have to translate them before knowing what species are offered. Ichthyologist, mammalogist, herpetologist, and invertebrate systematists seem to struggle along without the use of trivial names; why cannot ornithologists? If we had a list of common names which were ordinarily recognized, they would be useful, but such a thing is impossible, and why we should advocate the use of such names as smew, jabiru, limpkin, parauque, grassquit and dickcissel is a fact I do not understand. Scientific are more accurate than, and as readily used when known, as trivial names, in fact, are often preferred. The recognition of both increases, without any accompanying advantage, the labors of memory; common names can never become to any extent so well known as the scientific. These are the reasons for which I advocate abandoning trivial terms.

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1 *Auk* XII, 91.

2 *idem* 194.

3 *J. A. A. Auk* I, 303.

4 *Audubon Mag.* I, 101.

5 *Names and Portraits of Birds.*

6 *Osprey* IV, 12.

7 *F. E. I. Reel, Auk* XII, 192.

### Importance of Accuracy in Lists.

Every bird student and collector will read with pleasure such lists as that of Mr. Price on the Birds of the Lower Colorado Valley, and that other lists are to be published from time to time. At the start, however, I wish to give a word of caution against placing in such lists any bird that has not, without a shadow of doubt, been identified either by actual specimens secured or by familiarity with the species. While I do not wish to detract from Mr. Price's observations, a careful perusal of his list shows that nineteen out of ninety-one birds mentioned are either doubtful or simply a guess as to their identity.

In this age of careful and systematic research our lists, which are to be the basis of all future work in that line, should contain only actually identified species. In connection with such a list, a sort of supplementary one should follow, giving all information possible as to birds that were observed but of whose identity there was a doubt. In other words, leaving

for the future observer a chance to follow up such observations and earn for the bird a place in the list proper.

Every observer has to fight constantly against the inclination to identify a bird when he feels in the bottom of his heart that he is not quite sure of it. So he may put it down with more or less elaborate notes which may be confirmed afterward by some observer with more time or better facilities, or it may not. In the one case by a lucky guess he places on the list a name which rightfully belongs there only after identity by another. In case of an unlucky guess he has placed on record something that causes more or less confusion to others for years to come.

So I say put in the lists only such birds as are without question and absolutely identified. The principal value of these lists will be to define the geographical range of species and subspecies and in some cases the lines are so finely drawn that identity in the field, excepting under the most favorable conditions, is almost impossible. In such cases enough specimens should be secured to settle the matter. If this cannot be done then the fact that cormorants, or whatever the bird may happen to be, has been seen should be mentioned in the supplementary list, leaving the identity of the species to whoever may follow, after which it may rightfully belong in the list proper.

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### Book Reviews.

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE TRES MARIAS ISLANDS, MEXICO. By E. W. Nelson, North American Fauna No. 14, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, April 29, 1899, pp. 97.

This paper contains all the information which the Department of Agriculture has secured through the work of Mr. Nelson of the Biological Survey, who thoroughly explored the Tres Marias group in May, 1897, making collections of birds and mammals and securing also specimens of reptiles, fishes, mollusks, crustaceans and plants, on all of which complete reports have been given in the present work. The general description, birds, mammals and a partial bibliography of the islands are by Mr. Nelson.

From the introduction it appears that the islands have been known since 1532 but no scientific work was accomplished there until 1865 when Col. A. J. Grayson visited the group. The four islands are 65 miles from San Blas, and the highest of the group, Maria Madre, reaches an elevation of 2,000 feet. The islands are mountainous and fresh water is scarce in summer. Mr. Nelson records 83 species and subspecies of birds from the group.

It appears that the bird life of the islands is somewhat restricted and there is a noticeable lack of the species occurring on the adjacent main-land coast. This Mr. Nelson attributes to the scarcity of water and the prolonged dry season of the Tres Marias. In the list which is given, numerous North American species are noticeable. From the Tres Marias group was described Forrer's Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis forreri*) mentioned in the July-August BULLETIN. The paper is but another of the admirable series constituting the *North American Fauna*, reflecting at the same time much individual credit upon Mr. Nelson. It will prove of interest to Coast workers and especially to any intending to undertake tropical work in ornithology. C. B.

A REVIEW OF THE ORNITHOLOGY OF THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS. With Notes on the Webster-Harris Expedition. By the Hon. Walter Rothschild Ph. D., and Ernst Hartert, Plates V. and VI. Reprint from *Novitates Zoologicae*, Vol. VI. August, 1899, pp. 86-205.

From the fact that some of our members have made collections in the islands, and several others, members of the Anthony party, made an attempt last spring to reach the archipelago, a short notice of the present paper seems desirable. The paper consists of six parts. I. Introductory Notes. II. Diary of Charles Miller Harris. III. Notes from the Diary of Mr. F. P. Drowne. IV. General Remarks about the Fauna of the Galapagos Islands. V. The Birds of the Galapagos Islands. VI. List of the Birds Known to Occur on the Galapagos Islands.

*Certhidea olivacea ridgwayi*, *Geospiza darwini*, *G. dubia similima*, *G. fuliginosa minor*, *G. scandens septentrionalis*, *Nesopelia galapagoensis exsul* and *Circus sharpei* are described as new. Four species of *Pyrocephali* are reduced to synonymy, *P. nanus* and *P. dubius* alone being recognized. "Only two forms can be distinguished from the Galapagos Archipelago, the forms separated by Ridgway on account of certain alleged differences in colour, not being recognizable." The differences in color assigned by Ridgway to *Certhidea salvini* and *C. albemarleii* are said to be due to different ages of the specimens. These two names are, therefore, discarded.

Perhaps the most radical change in nomenclature is the use of trinomials for the local forms of *Passeres*, which proceeding seems quite reasonable however. "If trinomials are used everywhere else, there is no reason why the birds of the Galapagos Islands should be deprived of this most useful form of nomenclature. In cases where certain individuals of representative forms are hardly, if at all, distinguishable, but where a series is easily separable, the recognition of subspecies is inevitable. Our material has generally left very little doubt to us, whether we should treat a form as species or subspecies."

In the list of birds known to occur on the islands, 108 species and subspecies are given,

representing fifty genera. Of these seventy-nine are peculiar to the ornith. Plate V is poor. It illustrates *Diomedea irrorata*, *Phaethon æthereus* on its nest, *Anous stolidus galapagoensis*, and *Amblyrhynchus cristatus*, all from Hood Island. Plate VI is interesting and useful. It illustrates Bills of the Genus *Geospiza*. Seven pages are devoted to general remarks about the origin of the islands and their fauna. "There are two theories: viz., that of Darwin, Wallace and most other naturalists, that the islands were uplifted from the ocean and never were in connection with the continent of America, or with each other; and that of Dr. Baur, who said that the islands were once connected with America and with each other, and were submerged in or after the Eocene period. Both these views must be taken into earnest consideration."

Having considered all the evidence in the case and having made a careful study of their ample material in the bird line, consisting of 3075 skins from the Harris expedition, the Baur collection of about 1100 skins, and constant access to Gould's and Salvini's types in the British Museum, Dr. Rothschild and Mr. Hartert make the following conservative statements: "1. The entire fauna of the Galapagos Islands derived originally from America. II. It is uncertain whether there has ever been a land-connection between the various islands and between the islands and the continent or not." R. C. M.



### A Club Crest.

The accompanying design has been adopted by the Cooper Ornithological Club as its official crest and will be used as an imprint in connection with the issuance of special publications and monographs by the Club. It has also been arranged to have the crest imprinted upon stationery for the especial use of members of the Club, a majority of whom have already adopted the idea.



The design was drawn by Mr. W. Otto Emerson, a prominent artist and Club member who has in process a striking cover, for "The Condor," when the present BULLETIN enters upon its second volume under its new title.