

## Correspondence.

### The Individuality of Eggs.

In the July BULLETIN Mr. D. A. Cohen tells of the individuality of the Oregon Towhee as observed by him, peculiar characteristics in eggs of particular pairs reappearing from season to season, and states: "I can never think otherwise than that Major Bendire was correct in asserting that eggs of individual birds in consecutive sets bear marked resemblance to each other."

I am inclined to believe Mr. Cohen in error in crediting the theory of individuality to the lamented Major Bendire. That learned Oologist was, in fact, somewhat skeptical when the writer first published a paper in *The Nidologist* on this interesting subject, taking for example the nidification of the Golden Eagle as observed in the case of particular pairs consecutively for a number of years.

Mr. William Steinbeck of Hollister, Cal., has assured me that his extensive experience in collecting sets of eggs of the Golden Eagle in San Benito county fully bears out the assertion of the theory of individuality. Mr. A. M. Ingersoll informs me that he has collected eggs from a certain Golden Eagle's nest near San Diego for five years past, and in each instance one egg of the set was almost immaculate. In contravention of the theory which these instances support, Major Bendire stated of this eagle in "Life Histories" (Vol. I): "As these birds are usually seen only in pairs at all times of the year, I am inclined to believe they remain mated for life, notwithstanding the fact that the eggs differ very greatly in markings from year to year, although coming from the same nest and evidently from the same pair of birds."

H. R. TAYLOR, Alameda, Cal.

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### A PROTEST.

In the *Auk* V, Apr., 1888, p. 168, Mr. J. Amory Jeffries describes *Trochilus violajugulum*, taken April 5, 1883 at Santa Barbara, Cal. The type has remained unique until this day and it is now high time, I think, to enter a protest against retaining this name upon the Checklist of North American Birds. With the numerous collectors and active work that has been done in California since that date, it is hardly necessary to point out that if this was a valid species other individuals would have been secured long ere now. Whether this bird is a hybrid or not is immaterial, as it surely deserves no better place among the North American birds than Townsend's Bunting, Lawrence's, Cinnamati, Brewster's or Carbonated Warblers, Cuvier's Kinglet, etc. This form has stood upon the Checklist long enough to be repudiated and its geographical distribution restricted to the "hypothetical list," which is its undoubted place of residence, and it is to be sincerely hoped that when the Cooper Club issues its list of California birds that this will be placed upon such a list of the Club's *resume* of the avi-fauna of the state.

Along with the above species it would also be well for members of Committee on the

State List to inquire into the claim of *Porzana coturniculus* (Ridgway) [Amer. Nat. VII, Feb. 1874, p. 111 and Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. XIII, 1890, pp. 309-311] has to a place among the birds of California. The recent extensive collecting on the Farallones has demonstrated its absence from the islands. Was not the type specimen erroneously labeled by Mr. T. C. Martin, who presented it to the U. S. National Museum? At any rate this matter will also stand some further investigation. If it proves to be a straggler from the Galapagos as suggested by Mr. Ridgway, well and good, but if not, and the type remains unique, then it deserves a similar fate to *Trochilus violajugulum*.

Two minor notes on the 2nd edition of the Checklist which have come under my notice may interest members of the Club. In the ninth supplement to the Checklist, *Auk* XVI, Jan., 1899, p. 111, a new hummingbird, *Atthis morcomi* RIDGWAY, is added to the list. The A. O. U. Committee fails to insert the generic reference before it, hence we have on p. 176 the specific but no generic reference. I have not access to the original literature, but Ridgway<sup>1</sup> and Elliott<sup>2</sup> both give it the same. Hence should we not insert the following on p. 176 before No. 435:—

Genus *Atthis* RIECHENBACH.

*Atthis*, Reich. Aufz. der Colib., 1853, 12.  
Type, *Ornysmia heloisia*, Less and DeLatr.

Under *Æstreolata scalaris* BREWSTER, p. 34, the reference should read:—*Auk* III, July 1886, 390 (not 300).

ROBERT BAIRD McLAIN, Wheeling, W. Va.

1. Hummingbirds, Rept. Nat. Mus. 1890 (1892) p. 380.
2. Class and Syn. Trochil., 1879, p. 113.

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## Book Reviews.

WATER BIRDS OF THE PACIFIC DISTRICT.—By Lyman Belding, April, 1886, pp. 246. Manuscript type-written copy. (Received by the Cooper Ornithological Club March 4, 1897).

This volume was prepared by Mr. Belding for the Division of Economic Ornithology and Mammalogy of the United States Department of Agriculture, now the Biological Survey. The book was intended to serve as a companion volume to *Land Birds of the Pacific District* and had it been printed ten years ago, would have been of the greatest service to workers along our coast. Mr. Belding has generously presented his bound manuscript to the Cooper Club. In the preface written especially to the Club, Mr. Belding says:

"The notes on water birds which I received from the observers of the district are still incorporated in this volume, except a few of Mr. Emerson's, which came too late for insertion.

"The reversing of the Check List of the A. O. U. whereby the water birds came first in the list, instead of last, as formerly, found me unprepared to give the time to the water birds that I needed, and supposing that the water birds would soon be needed for publication, I made a hurried compilation, finished it in five or six weeks and this is the result."

*Water Birds* contains remarks on 156 species, compiled largely from published works of Baird, Ridgway, Cooper, Suckley, Heermann,