

Setophaga ruticilla.—Quite common.
Galeoscoptes carolinensis.—Quite common.
Harporhynchus rufus.—One seen.
Sitta carolinensis.—Quite common.
Parus atricapillus.—Common.
Regulus satrapa.—A few seen on Ossipee Mt.
Regulus calendula.—A few seen.
Turdus aonalaschkæ pallasii.—Quite common.
Merula migratoria.—Common.
Sialia sialis.—Common.

One each of *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* and *Vireo gilvus* was observed at Centre Harbor in passing through. — FRANCIS H. ALLEN, *West Roxbury, Mass.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

[Correspondents are requested to write briefly and to the point. No attention will be paid to anonymous communications.]

The proper Name for the Genus *Melanipitta* of Schlegel.

EDITORS OF THE AUK:—

Dear Sirs: In the 14th volume of the "Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum," p. 449, published in 1888, Dr. P. L. Sclater has proposed to substitute *Coracopitta* for *Melanipitta* of Schlegel (type *Pitta lugubris* Rosenb.), the latter name being preoccupied. I would call attention, however, to the fact that as early as 1885 I replaced *Melanipitta* by *Mellopitta* for the same reason, my name consequently having the priority over that of Dr. Sclater. The change was made in the 'Standard Natural History,' IV, Birds, p. 466.

Yours very truly,

LEONHARD STEJNEGER.

Washington, D. C., Dec., 1888.

NOTES AND NEWS.

MR. HENRY STEVENSON, of Norwich, England, a Corresponding Member of the A. O. U., died August 18, 1888. In 1864 he was elected a member of the British Ornithologists' Union, and was one of the founders, and for many years President of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society, to whose 'Transactions' he was a frequent contributor, as also to the pages of the 'Zoölogist.' As an ornithologist he is perhaps best known as the author of a work entitled 'The Birds of Norfolk,' Vol. I of which appeared in 1866, and Vol. II in 1870. the work remaining unfinished at the time of his death. "To those who en-

joyed his friendship, Mr. Stevenson was a delightful companion; his powers of observation seemed almost intuitive, while his genial nature endeared him to all."

COUNT AUGUST FRIEDRICH MARSHALL, a Corresponding Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, died October 11, 1887, in his eighty-third year. During his long scientific career he was particularly interested in geology, but zoölogy is also indebted to him for many valuable contributions, one of the most important of which is his 'Nomenclator Zoologicus' (Vienna, 1873). As an original ornithological author he was not prolific, most of his contributions to ornithology consisting of excerpts from other authors relating to birds belonging to the Austro-Hungarian fauna. With August von Pelzeln he was joint author of the 'Ornis Vin-dobonensis' (Vienna, 1882).

NEWS from Central Asia travels slowly, and beyond the mere notice that our distinguished Corresponding Member, the celebrated Russian traveller, General Prjevalsky, is dead, but little is as yet known as to the particulars of the sad event. We gather the following notes chiefly from a recent account by his friend Mr. Venjukoff.

Nicolas Michailovitch Prjevalsky (also often written Przewalski) died in Karakol on Nov. 1 (Oct. 20), 1888, while engaged in the preparations for his departure to Thibet, in the full vigor of his manhood, being only fifty years of age. While still a young man he manifested great interest in travel and exploration, and shortly after leaving the Military Academy he was entrusted with the exploration of the valley of the Ussuri in eastern Siberia (1867-1868). Since then he has undertaken four great expeditions to Central Asia in which he gained a world-wide fame as one of the most intrepid, indomitable, and successful travellers who ever attempted to penetrate to the 'back-bone' of the Eurasian continent (1870-1873, China; 1876-1877, the Central Asian desert region, discovering the position of Lake Lob-nor; 1879-1880, exploring Kuku-nor and northeastern Thibet; 1883-1885, studying the orography of the Kuen-lun, from the sources of the Yellow River to Khotan). But unlike many other travellers, whose only aim is to 'discover' new countries, he also studied their natural history, and if we consider the enormous difficulties of transportation in those regions we can but admire his truly Russian pluck in bringing back to St. Petersburg 30,000 specimens of natural history objects, of which 5,000 specimens were birds, representing 430 species, besides 400 eggs. The short intervals between his great expeditions did not leave him time to work up all of this enormous material, yet he found leisure to publish several important ornithological papers, chief among which are his 'Materials for the Avifauna of Mongolia and the Tangatan Country' (published in 1876, and translated in Rowley's 'Ornithological Miscellany,' Vol. II), and a paper 'On new species of Central-Asian Birds' (*Ibis*, 1887, pp. 401-417), for, as Prjevalsky himself observes, ornithology was one of the chief objects of his special investigations. It is the more to be regretted that he should not have lived to undertake the

last-planned expedition to the capital of Thibet. As the Russian authorities are determined not to abandon the expedition, it is to be hoped that it will be carried out in the spirit of its originator. We notice with great satisfaction that the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences has begun a work which will be a grand monument to the lamented explorer, the first part of a great work, in Russian and German, entitled, 'Wissenschaftliche Resultate der von Przewalski nach Central Asien unternommenen Reisen', having just appeared, containing a portion of the mammals (*Rodentia*).

THURE KUMLIEN, of Milwaukee, Wisc., an Associate Member of the A. O. U., and one of the older ornithologists—a valued correspondent of the late Professor Baird and Dr. Brewer—died recently at his home near Milwaukee. A fuller notice of his life and ornithological work is necessarily deferred, the required data having unexpectedly failed to come to hand.

WILLIAM L. BREESE, recently elected an Associate Member of the A. O. U., died at his home in Islip, Long Island, Dec. 7, 1888, in his thirty-seventh year. Mr. Breese was a well-known Wall-street broker, of the firm of Breese and Smith, and a son of Commodore Breese. Although little known as an ornithologist, he having published but little, the study of birds was one of his pastimes, and he had brought together quite a collection of the birds of Long Island. He was prominent in social, yachting, and athletic circles, and highly esteemed.

AT THE meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union recently held in Washington the matter of revising the proposed additions to the A. O. U. Check-List of North American birds, together with sundry suggested changes of nomenclature made since the publication of the Check-List, was referred to the Committee on Publications, with authority to publish the results of their work at the earliest practicable date, as a 'Supplement, to the A. O. U. Code and Check-List, and uniform with it as regards matter and typography. The Committee held a six days' session, ruling upon upwards of one hundred distinct questions. The status of the newly described species and subspecies, and the claims to admission of a number of extra-limital species were duly considered, as also a number of proposed changes in generic, subgeneric, and specific names. The preparation of the manuscript was provided for, as also the early publication of the report, in the hope of issuing it early in the year 1889.

The Union also voted that hereafter it shall be the duty of the Committee on Publications to act in a similar manner at each meeting of the A. O. U. on the proposed additions and changes of nomenclature made during the preceding year, and that it shall make provision to have laid before it the material (specimens and other evidence) by consideration of which the merits of each case may be respectively determined.

THE COUNCIL of the A. O. U. decided at its late meeting in Washington to issue an abridged edition of the Check-List, consisting of the scientific and common names, the serial numbering, and the 'concordance,' omitting

the bibliographical references and the habitats; the abridged edition, however, to include the additions and changes of the 'Supplement,' interpolated in their proper places. It will be printed on fine paper, and on one side of the page only, in order that it may be conveniently used for labelling purposes when desired, or the blank pages, when the list is used merely for a check-list, may be utilized for additions or other notes. This abridged list is already in the hands of the printer, and its publication may be looked for during January, 1889.

IN ORDER to add interest to the next meeting of the A. O. U., to be held in New York City next November, and also to advance our knowledge of certain obscure groups of birds, the Union decided to instruct the Committee of Arrangements for that meeting to make this a special feature of the meeting. The Committee decided to select the genus *Otocoris* (the Horned Larks), the Red Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra* group), and the Thrushes known as *Turdus aliciae* and *Turdus aliciae bicknelli*, as the groups to be considered at the New York meeting. Mr. Robert Ridgway will have the matter especially in charge, to whom, as the time for the meeting approaches, it is hoped abundant material may be forwarded. Probably at the close of the meeting an informal sort of indoor 'field-day' will be arranged for the examination and comparison of the material thus brought together, in which examination all the members present can participate. It is hoped members will freely loan such material as they may have, bearing upon these groups, that light may thus be thrown upon the status and relationship of some of these obscure forms.

THE DESIRABILITY of adopting some uniform method of measuring birds having been brought to the attention of the Council of the A. O. U., by a letter on the subject addressed to it by Col. N. S. Goss, the Council appointed a Committee, consisting of Dr. Coues, Mr. Ridgway, Mr. Cory, Dr. Merriam, and Dr. Stejneger, to prepare a report on the subject to be presented at the next meeting. The Committee at its first session discussed the matter at some length, deciding some general matters, and referring special points to a subcommittee, consisting of Mr. Ridgway and Drs. Merriam and Stejneger, with instructions to prepare directions, illustrated with diagrams, for taking measurements of the bill and tail, in reference to which it is found that the systems employed by different authors widely vary. It is thus evident that a uniform method is highly desirable, and it is hoped the Committee will be able to formulate one which can be commended for general adoption.

THE COMMITTEE of the A. O. U. appointed at the Boston meeting to incorporate the Union under the laws of the State of New York (see Auk, Vol. V, p. 97), found that incorporation under the laws of this State would render it necessary to hold the annual meetings of the Union always in the State of New York. This being contrary to the desire of the Union, the Committee advised incorporation under the laws of the District of Columbia, where it would be subject to no such restriction. In accordance with this suggestion the necessary steps to incorporate in Washing-

tion were taken during the late session of the Union in that city, and a certificate of incorporation was duly received and filed, the Union at once entering upon its career as a corporate body.

AT A MEETING of the Nuttall Ornithological Club on December 3, 1888, the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, William Brewster; Vice-President, William A. Jeffries; Secretary, Arthur P. Chadbourne; Corresponding Secretary, H. A. Purdie; Treasurer, C. F. Batchelder; Editor, Montague Chamberlain.

The readers of 'The Auk' will be gratified to know that the Nuttall Club, to whose fostering care this journal long owed its existence, continues with advancing years to gain in strength and activity. The attendance at the meetings has been much fuller and more regular of late years, although a large proportion of the members live at some little distance from Cambridge. The following are Resident Members of the Club: Edward A. Bangs, Outram Bangs, C. F. Batchelder, A. C. Bent, Frank Bolles, William Brewster, William S. Bryant, Arthur P. Chadbourne, Montague Chamberlain, Charles B. Cory, Walter Faxon, N. A. Francis, Joseph L. Goodale, J. Amory Jeffries, William A. Jeffries, Fred-eric H. Kennard, Charles R. Lamb, Edward C. Mason, Henry A. Purdie, Henry M. Spelman.

THE SECOND CONGRESS of the International Ornithological Committee will be held at Buda-Pest in the spring of 1889. The President of the Committee, Dr. Rudolf Blasius, and the Secretary, Dr. Gustav von Hayek, have issued a circular note to the members of the Committee, setting forth the objects of the Congress and suggesting subjects for consideration. In addition to the report on the work of the Committee during the last five years, which will be submitted, it is proposed to bring forward the following questions for action: (1) The establishing of an international classification and nomenclature of birds for general adoption. This involves an agreement in respect to a system of classification, and the principles on which nomenclature shall be based. The scheme further includes the preparation of a new 'Hand-list of Genera and Species', that of the late Dr. G. R. Gray, completed in 1871, having become in a measure obsolete through the lapse of time and the progress of the science. It is proposed that the labor of its preparation be divided among numerous specialists, who will act as collaborators, the publication of the work to be superintended by the Committee. (2) To secure additional observers, in districts not as yet properly covered to aid in determining the principal lines of migration. (3) Recommendations and suggestions respecting legislation for the better protection of birds, particularly during the spring migration and the breeding season. (4) The determination of the status of the different groups of birds as regards their economic relations to agriculture and forestry. Besides the above the Committee recommend the adoption of the metric system of measurement in all works relating to ornithology; and also to use scientific names of birds in all scientific publications, in addition to the vernacular names, in case the latter are used.

The members of the Committee are requested to send in their answers to these proposals, and also to submit others for discussion, to either the President or Secretary not later than the end of February of this year. The course of the official representatives of the Committee in bringing forward these important questions for consideration at the next International Congress is certainly commendable, and likely to yield important results.

THE question of the adoption of the metric system in ornithology, mentioned above, was discussed by the Council of the A. O. U. at the meeting recently held in Washington, and the matter of its adoption in 'The Auk,' was referred to the Committee on Publications. It was here again discussed at length, but the motion to adopt was finally lost, much to the surprise of some of the members advocating it. It would seem, however, that a reform of such evident desirability, must sooner or later meet with general favor.

IN the April number of 'The Auk' (Vol. V, p. 224) reference was made to various ornithological expeditions sent by Messrs. Godman, Brewster, and Sennett to different parts of Mexico. The collectors there mentioned have nearly all returned, and have had in the main excellent success. Mr. M. A. Frazar has just reached the United States after an absence of two years, spent, in the interest of Mr. Brewster, in Lower California and Northwestern Mexico, his explorations extending eastward as far as Chihuahua. The amount of ornithological material gathered by him during this period, it may be safely said, greatly exceeds that collected by any other single pair of hands during an equal length of time, and must afford the basis for a very important contribution to our knowledge of these portions of Mexico.

Further southward Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Smith have been collecting for Mr. Godman, in the States of Guerrero and Tobasco, part of their time only, however, being devoted to birds. But several thousand skins of birds are included in their rich harvest, many of them collected in the higher mountainous parts of the State of Guerrero. Mr. Godman has also had Mr. William Lloyd at work in the State of Chihuahua, and Mr. W. B. Richardson in the States of San Luis Potosí and Tamaulipas.

Messrs. Priour and Grover have also sent large collections to Mr. Sennett from the States of Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon. Thus large portions of the Republic of Mexico have been visited during the past year by able and well-trained collectors, the results of whose labors must yield many novelties and much detailed information respecting Mexican ornithology.

Mr. Cory, it may be added, is still continuing his work in the West Indies. One of his collectors, Mr. E. B. Gallinger, however, unfortunately fell a victim to yellow fever before fairly entering upon his explorations. Mr. and Mrs. Smith, we understand, are to sail soon for the island of St. Vincent, being under an engagement to thoroughly explore first the fauna of this island, and later that of other islands, for Mr. Godman.