

her egg upon the ground. The Vireos deserted, and the Redstarts liking the nest lined it up with the usual material chosen in this locality and retained the nest as their own. The nest, I think, was the property of a pair of Yellow-throated Vireos (*Vireo flavifrons*) which I had often observed about. The nest and eggs are now in the collection of Mr. Brewster. — FRANCIS J. BIRTWELL, *Dorchester, Mass.*

Certhia familiaris americana, not *Certhia f. fusca*! — Dr. Coues has recently sought (Auk, April, 1897, XIV, 216) to resurrect the name *Certhia fusca* Barton (Fragments Nat. Hist. Penn., 1799, 11) and to establish it as the proper designation for the common Brown Creeper of eastern North America. His proposition unfortunately found favor with the A.O.U. Committee, and in the Ninth Supplement to the Check-List (Auk, Jan., 1899, XVI, 126) Barton's name supersedes the long-current *americana*. But *Certhia fusca* Barton, 1799, is preoccupied by *Certhia fusca* Gmelin, 1788 (Syst. Nat. I, 472) and therefore untenable. The next available name is apparently *Certhia americana* Bonaparte (Geog. & Comp. List, 1838, 11), so that the American Brown Creeper must be called, as heretofore, *Certhia familiaris americana*. — HARRY C. OBERHOLSER, *Washington, D. C.*

The Second Reference for *Anorthura hiemalis pacifica*. — In the Ninth Supplement to the A. O. U. Check-List (Auk, Jan., 1899, XVI, 125) the authority for the combination *Anorthura hiemalis pacifica* is given as Oberholser, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., Nov. 19, 1898, XXI, 421. This is not correct. The proper citation seems to be Ridgway, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., June 30, 1883, VI, 94. — HARRY C. OBERHOLSER, *Washington, D. C.*

***Piranga rubra* and *Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis* Preoccupied?** — The change of *Dendroica cærulea* to *Dendroica rara* (Ridgway, Auk, Jan., 1897, XIV, 97), which was promptly accepted by the A. O. U. Committee, involves an interpretation of Canon XXXIII of the A. O. U. Code of Nomenclature to which little if any attention seems to have been called. It appears advisable at the present time to raise this question, inasmuch as it affects the validity of some other current names; and this the more as in regard to it there seems to be neither unanimity of opinion nor uniformity of practice. Briefly stated, it is this: in considering the tenability of specific names, so far as preoccupation is concerned, shall any account be taken of homonyms which are mere combinations, *i. e.*, not original descriptions? To illustrate: *Motacilla cærulea* of Linnæus, 1766, was called *Sylvia cærulea* by Latham in 1790, — evidently a simple transfer of Linnæus's species to another genus. Now, does this *Sylvia cærulea* of Latham, 1790, preclude the use of *Sylvia cærulea* Wilson, 1810, for another and widely different species, the former being now a *Poliophtila*, the latter a *Dendroica*? Canon XXXIII is apparently quite explicit

upon this point, its text being as follows: "... a specific or subspecific name is to be changed when it has been applied to some other species of the same genus, or used previously in combination with the same generic name." The phrase, "or used previously in combination with the same generic name," seems to leave no doubt of its meaning; and a strictly literal interpretation of this clause will treat alike all combinations, whether or not they happen to be those of original descriptions.

Such being the case, there are two names in our North American List which must be changed. The first of these, *Piranga rubra*, for the Summer Tanager, is untenable because *Piranga rubra* was previously used by Vieillot, as well as by many succeeding authors, for the species now known as *Piranga erythromelas*. The rejection of *Piranga rubra* for the Summer Tanager permits its employment for the Scarlet Tanager; the former then becoming *Piranga æstiva*. This is rather a fortunate circumstance, for these two birds will thus bear the names so long in use before the publication of the first edition of the A. O. U. Check-List.

The specific term of *Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis* (*Fringilla frontalis* Say, Long's Exped. to Rocky Mts., 1824, II, 40) must give way on account of *Fringilla frontalis* Vieillot (Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat. 1817, XII, 181), which is a synonym of *Sporopipes frontalis* (Daudin). The next available name seems to be *Carpodacus obscurus* McCall (Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., June, 1851, 220), and the United States form of the House Finch will consequently become *Carpodacus mexicanus obscurus*. — HARRY C. OBERHOLSER, *Washington, D. C.*

Four Preoccupied Names. — *Psittacus augustus* Vigors, P. Z. S. (1836), Jan. 16, 1837, 80, for the Imperial Parrot of Dominica, is preoccupied by *Psittacus augustus* Shaw, Mus. Lever., 1792, 59, pl. 2. This will necessitate a new name for *Amazona augusta* (Vigors), which may be called *Amazona imperialis*, this name having stood for several years in Mr. Ridgway's MSS.

Pachyrhamphus similis was first used by Cherrie for a Nicaraguan Becard (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XIV, 1891, 343) and its subsequent use by Mr. Salvin for a South American species (Novit. Zool., II, 1895, 13) renders the latter open to a new name. It may be called *Pachyrhamphus salvini*.

Blax, lately proposed by Reichenow (Ornith. Monats., II, 1894, 126) for an African Barbet, is preoccupied by two or three genera of the same name in insects (Thomson, 1860; Loew, 1872, etc.). It is proposed to use as a substitute *Blacops*,¹ with a single species, *Blacops gymnophthalmus* (Reichenow).

Bocagia of Shelley (Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, XVIII, May 26, 1894, xliii), for two species of African Shrikes, is untenable, there being a *Bocageia*

¹ Βλαξ, and ὠψ.