

As the species is a great wanderer I can see no reason why one or more should not occasionally cross the Atlantic. The condition in which this specimen was received certainly proved it to have been a long time without food, and being a fresh water feeder, the only way it could have reached Maryland without finding a suitable feeding place would have to be across the Atlantic. If stronger evidence cannot be brought forward against it, I see no reason why this beautiful species should not be added to the North American Fauna. — F. C. KIRKWOOD, *Baltimore, Md.*

**The Occurrence of Steller's Eider (*Eniconetta stelleri*) in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.** — We are indebted to Mr. Napoleon A. Comeau, who has done so much to increase our knowledge of the distribution of birds in the Point des Monts region of Quebec, for two records of the occurrence of Steller's Eider in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The first specimen which he secured was a female taken on February 17, 1898, at Godbout, where it was associated with a flock of Old-squaws. The second example was a fine male, which was killed by Joseph Morin, a seal hunter, about a month later near Point des Monts. It was found among a flock of Golden-eyes. Previous to the capture of these two specimens Mr. Comeau had seen occasional individuals among flocks of well known species, which he did not recognize and had wondered if they might not be Labrador Ducks. After examining the male Steller's Eider, however, he appreciated that the birds formally observed undoubtedly belonged to the latter species.

These records are especially interesting as coming from the eastern side of the continent where the bird appears to be of accidental occurrence, and where, as far as known, it has been observed only at Disco Bay, Greenland, and Cumberland Sound. — A. K. FISHER, *Washington, D. C.*

**Pipile vs. Pipilo.** — If mere difference in inflexional termination of words otherwise identical in form be held insufficient for their discrimination, then *Pipile* Bp., *Comptes Rendus*, XLII, 1856, p. 877, is voided by *Pipilo* Vieill., *Anal.*, 1816, p. 32, and the three current species of the former genus may be called *Cumana* (gen. nov.) *cumanensis* (Jacq., 1784), or *C. pipile* (Jacq., 1784), *C. jacutinga* (Spix, 1825), and *C. cujubi* (v. Pelz., 1858). But it may be a question whether *Pipile* and *Pipilo* are not radically distinct words. Vieillot's name is good Latin, being first person, singular, present indicative of a verb meaning 'to chirp'; while Bonaparte's may be a barbarous word of South American origin. If the latter shall so prove, how shall we dispose of the case? — ELLIOTT COUES, *Washington, D. C.*

**Strix vs. Aluco.** — This is a case on which the last word does not appear to have been said, and I, for one, should be glad to have it settled. It involves not only two generic, but also two family names. If I am at

fault in my present contention, I hope to be promptly set right by some one who may be able to see further into the intricate matter than I can. I will put the case in the following shape:

1. The genus *Strix* Linn., S. N., I, 10th ed., 1758, p. 92, included, of course, all Owls known to him. *S. aluco* Linn., *ibid.*, p. 93, sp. No. 6, is the Barn Owl, as shown by the references. But how does this fact make *S. aluco* of 1758 the "type" of *Strix*? There are no "types" of Linnæan genera which included more than one species, except by some subsequent process of restriction by elimination at the hands of some other author.

2. The species *Strix aluco* of Linn., S. N., I, 12th ed., 1766, p. 132, No. 7, is the Wood Owl, a bird of a different modern family from *S. aluco* of 1758.

3. Meanwhile, between the dates 1758 and 1766, the Linnæan genus *Strix* was first subdivided, by Brisson, in 1760; and Brisson made *S. stridula* the type of his restricted genus *Strix*. This act placed the Wood Owls in the genus *Strix* Briss., 1760, and threw the Barn Owls out of the genus *Strix* Linn., 1758. As a further consequence, the family to which the Wood Owl belongs is Strigidae.

4. The first tenable generic name for the Barn Owls appears to be *Aluco*, Fleming, Philos. Zool., II, 1822, p. 236; and if so, the family to which the Barn Owls belongs is Aluconidae.

5. It seems to me, therefore, that our two families of Owls should stand as they have stood in my 'Key' since 1884, and not as they do in the A. O. U. List.

I may add that Professor Newton, *Ibis*, 1876, pp. 94-104, reached the same conclusion, which he also maintained in *Dict. B.*, 1894, p. 673. This is the more remarkable, inasmuch as he employed a somewhat different course of reasoning, not taking Linnæus back of 1766, and thus differing from the A. O. U. Code. But I think my own argument is strictly according to the Code.—ELLIOTT COUES, *Washington, D. C.*

The 'Churca' (*Geococcyx californianus*).—The 'Land of Sunshine,' XI, No. 6, Nov., 1899, contains a translation (from Docs. para la Hist. Mexico, 4th ser.) of certain Memorias para la historia natural de California, written by an anonymous Franciscan priest in the year 1790. Among the birds noted is the following:

"The *Churca* is a kind of pheasant which has a long bill, dark plumage, a handsome tail and *four feet*. It has these latter facing outward in such a fashion that when it runs it leaves the track of two feet going forward and two going backward."

If we read "toes" for "feet," this quaint description is unmistakably that of the Roadrunner or Chaparral Cock, as the editor of the Magazine, Mr. Charles L. Lummis, remarks in a footnote; and the notice antedates by many years the scientific description of *Saurothera californiana* by Lesson in 1829.—ELLIOTT COUES, *Washington, D. C.*