

The mark of interrogation clearly indicates, therefore, Forster's intention to propose *Luscinia aedon* as a new name for the *Sylvia luscinia* of Latham, and *Luscinia* as a generic term consequently must date from this place.

The generic name *Philomela* Link (Besch. Natur. Samml. Univers. Rostock, I, 1806, p. 31) which Doctor Sclater (*loc. cit.*, p. 40) has proposed to use for the nightingale is merely a substitute for the *Sylvia* of Bechstein and therefore identical in application, whatever species may have been included. Its author gives this reason for its introduction: "Ich habe den unbequemeren Namen *Sylvia*, welchen Bechstein dieser Gattung gegeben, in *Philomela* verwandelt." The species that Link enumerates under *Philomela* indicate that he had in mind the group called *Sylvia* by Bechstein in the latter's 'Ornithologisches Taschenbuch von und für Deutschland,' 1803, pp. 165-191, which name he apparently thought originated with Bechstein; and consequently the type of *Philomela* Link must be ascertained by determining the type of *Sylvia* Bechstein. Bechstein (*loc. cit.*) divides his heterogeneous group *Sylvia* into three sections, for the first two of which he gives new subgeneric names, leaving the last one as typical *Sylvia*, from which, of course, the type of the whole genus must be selected. These divisions are:

- a. Grasmücken (*Curruca*) [p. 165].
- b. Laubvögel (*Asilus*) [p. 173].
- c. Wurmresser [p. 177].

The first (*Curruca*) includes the nightingale, but by tautonomy has for its type *Motacilla curruca* Linnæus, from which Bechstein evidently took the name; the type of the second (*Asilus*) is commonly considered to be *Motacilla sibilatrix* Bechstein; and of the third, or typical *Sylvia* (Bechstein), the first species, *Motacilla rubecula* Linnæus, may be fixed as the type. By this arrangement *Motacilla rubecula* Linnæus becomes the type of *Philomela* Link which therefore falls as a synonym of the prior *Erithacus* Cuvier (Leç. Anat. Comp., I, 1800, tab. ii) based on the same species. Since this disposes of the generic name *Philomela*, in so far at least as the nightingale is concerned, the latter must be called *Luscinia* as above shown.—HARRY C. OBERHOLSER, *Washington, D. C.*

Winter Record for the Robin in Hanover, N. H.—January 24, 1906, following a week's thaw and exceptionally warm weather for the season, two Robins (*Merula migratoria*) appeared in the trees about the college campus. Both seemed to be males, one of them uttering a few song notes. They were not seen again. The presence of Robins in this region in winter is so unusual that their occurrence is worthy of record.—FRANCIS G. BLAKE, *Hanover, N. H.*

Questionable Records.—In 'The Auk' for October, 1905, pages 410 and 419, Mr. Arthur T. Wayne published records of two birds from south-

ern California which I believe to be erroneous. As recorded these were "The California Partridge (*Callipepla californica*)," and "The Black-fronted Warbler (*Dendroica auduboni nigrifrons*)," each based on a single specimen from Los Angeles County. As Mr. Wayne definitely stated, these were of Mr. Harry S. Swarth's collecting. Since the locality in both instances was far out of the normal range, and knowing the painstaking care with which Mr. Swarth had worked over his material (I could not believe that Mr. Swarth would let such things slip through his hands unnoticed), I will confess that my suspicions were distinctly aroused. So I at once wrote to Mr. Wayne asking for the privilege of examining the skins in question in order to make sure in my own mind of the determinations. That was in October. February 23, 1906, after I had been so importunate as to write a third time, I received a blunt reply ending with the statement: "The specimens that I recorded in the Oct. Auk need no verification as I believe I know as much about these birds as you do." (!) Meanwhile I had written to Mr. Swarth, and obtained the following information:

"The bird he [Wayne] records [as the 'California' Partridge] was shot on the first day of the open season, when three of us made a pretty big bag. I put up four males, the pick of about forty, if I remember rightly. It is probably an adult bird, two years old or more; sometimes there is an appreciable difference between such and a bird of the year. Anyway I don't believe it is anything but *vallicola*, born and raised in the San Fernando Valley." Let me call attention to the fact that *californica* is a race belonging to the humid coast belt of California from Monterey, or possibly San Luis Obispo, County northward, and that the vast numbers of quail examined from Los Angeles County by various ornithologists have all been *vallicola*. This quail is not possibly migratory to the extent of 200 miles. It seems to me that here is another instance of an extreme of individual variation in one race being seized upon and labelled as an example of some remotely indigenous subspecies.

Mr. Swarth writes me further: "As to the 'Black-fronted' Warbler, I sent him [Wayne] a number of male *Audubons*, the highest colored ones I could get, and of these he kept the *very finest* and returned the others. . . . In my note-book the measurements of his '*nigrifrons*' are down as 'length, 5.75; extent of wings, 9.37.' You can see how this compares with my Arizona specimens." I would refer Mr. Wayne to Swarth's comparison of *auduboni* and *nigrifrons*, as regards plumages and measurements, as detailed so carefully in 'Pacific Coast Avifauna,' No. 4, pages 54 and 55, and then ask if it be probable that Mr. Swarth would make such a 'break' as to label a skin of *nigrifrons*, *auduboni*. It seems to me again a case of an extraordinarily richly-colored plumage, and an unwarranted jump at conclusions.

Although I have not had the opportunity of seeing the specimens in question, I think the above evidence supports my surmise that Mr. Wayne's "*Callipepla californica*" is only an example of the ordinary *Lophortyx californica vallicola*, and that his "*Dendroica auduboni nigrifrons*" is no more than *Dendroica auduboni auduboni*, the common form of the region.

Let me emphasize that I mean no implication other than an error of judgment. We all make mistakes. I am guilty of having launched some worse ones than the above, as elsewhere acknowledged. We must all work to clarify our horde of published records, if we want to make them of service in our study of geographic distribution and variation, if our conclusions are to be sound. It is very easy to put a mistake into print, but pitifully difficult to suppress it, as many of us know who have traced quoted errors through decades of literature.—JOSEPH GRINNELL, *Pasadena, California.*

The American Scoter, Limpkin, and Ipswich Sparrow in South Carolina.—In the A. O. U. Check-List for 1895, the range of the American Scoter (*Oidemia americana*) is given as “south in winter to New Jersey, the Great Lakes, Colorado and California.” Dr. Eugene Edmund Murphey has given me permission to announce the capture of a male of this species which he secured on May 7, 1903, in Bulls Bay. The specimen is in very worn plumage, so much so that many of the primaries and rectrices are skeletonized, which shows that it undoubtedly wintered here. This record makes the first for South Carolina, and according to the A. O. U. List, the first for the Atlantic coast south of New Jersey. This specimen is now in my collection.

I am also indebted to Dr. Murphey for the privilege of recording the capture of two Limpkins (*Aramus giganteus*) that were taken at Twiggs Dead River, Aiken County, South Carolina. One of them, an adult male was taken by Mr. W. H. Twiggs, October 18, 1890, and preserved by Mr. George P. Butler, of Augusta, Georgia. This specimen is now in my collection. The negroes on the plantation told Mr. Twiggs that there had been a pair of the birds, but that they had killed and eaten one a few days before. This record is a very important one, as the Limpkin has not been taken before in any part of the United States except in Florida. In 1894, I found this species breeding abundantly on the Wacissa River, Florida, which brought its range to within eighteen miles of the Georgia line. (See ‘The Auk,’ October, 1895, p. 366.)

On December 26, 1905, I secured a fine specimen of the Ipswich Sparrow (*Passerculus princeps*) on Long Island, South Carolina, and on January 2, 1906, I shot another on the same island. Both specimens were moulting the feathers about the pileum and auriculars. As these were the first specimens I had ever seen in their natural environment, I determined to explore Bulls Island, which is covered along almost the entire length (ten miles) with wild oats (*Zizania miliacea*), which is well adapted to the wants of this bird. On January 8, 1906, I hunted the island most thoroughly, but among the hundreds of Savanna Sparrows (*Passerculus sandwichensis savanna*) that were everywhere I could not detect a single *princeps* among them. Upon exploring a bleak and isolated spot fronting the beach (where the Savanna Sparrow was absent) I saw three *princeps* together and succeeded in securing two of them that day — the other being so