

## NOTES ON NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS.

## IV.

BY HARRY C. OBERHOLSER.

THE notes contained in this article<sup>1</sup> relate chiefly to the status and relationship of several North American birds. The remarks on one species are, however, nomenclatural. The four species and subspecies here treated belong to the following families: Pelecanidæ, Rallidæ, Scolopacidæ, and Icteridæ.

**Pelecanus californicus** Ridgway.

Mr. Robert Ridgway some time ago,<sup>2</sup> and Dr. E. Hartert somewhat more recently<sup>3</sup> treated the California Brown Pelican as a subspecies of the eastern bird (*Pelecanus occidentalis* Linnæus); but this disposition recent writers have ignored. A careful examination of the considerable material now available leads to the conclusion that these two authors were correct in their view of its subspecific relationship. The Pacific bird, *Pelecanus californicus* Ridgway, differs from *Pelecanus occidentalis* of the Atlantic side of America in its decidedly larger size, darker brown hind neck, and, in the breeding season, by its reddish gular pouch. Neither the larger size nor the dark brown neck proves to be an entirely trenchant character, so that the only possible reason for treating *Pelecanus californicus* as a distinct species lies in the fact that during the breeding season its gular pouch becomes reddish. In view, however, of the ephemeral nature of this difference, it seems proper to consider the California Brown Pelican a subspecies of *Pelecanus occidentalis*, as Mr. Ridgway and Dr. Hartert have done. Its name becomes, therefore, *Pelecanus occidentalis californicus* Ridgway.

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<sup>1</sup> For previous papers in this series, cf. 'The Auk,' XXXIV, April, 1917, pp. 191-196; XXXIV, July, 1917, pp. 321-329; and XXXIV, October, 1917, pp. 465-470.

<sup>2</sup> Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XIX, 1897, p. 593.

<sup>3</sup> Novit. Zool., VI, 1899, p. 176.

***Creciscus coturniculus* (Ridgway).**

Mr. William Brewster has, from a systematic point of view, so fully and satisfactorily treated the Farallon Rail<sup>1</sup> that further remarks on the subject would now be unnecessary, were it not for the fact that most current authors consider it a species distinct from *Creciscus jamaicensis*, although both Mr. Ridgway and Mr. Brewster call it a subspecies. It differs, as explained by Mr. Brewster, from *Creciscus jamaicensis jamaicensis* in shorter, slenderer bill, darker lower parts, and more extended cervical chestnut area. None of these characters, however, holds constant in an extended series of specimens; for which reason it is perfectly evident that, although the Pacific Coast form is geographically far separated from the breeding area of the race of *Creciscus jamaicensis* inhabiting the eastern United States, we have here a case of subspecific relationship indicated by individual variation. The type of *Creciscus coturniculus*<sup>2</sup> is, as Mr. Brewster says, a specimen of the breeding Black Rail of California, not of either of the two Galapagos Islands species, *Creciscus spilonotus* (Gould) or *Creciscus sharpei* Rothschild and Hartert. Our California bird, therefore, must be called *Creciscus jamaicensis coturniculus* (Ridgway).

***Pisobia maculata* (Vieillot).**

The *Tringa maculata* of Vieillot<sup>3</sup> was some time ago stated by Mr. G. M. Mathews<sup>4</sup> to be preoccupied by "*Tringa maculata* Linnæus"<sup>5</sup>; and for the species now called *Pisobia maculata* the name *Tringa pectoralis* Say was resurrected. Since further attention has been recently drawn to this matter by Mr. T. Iredale,<sup>6</sup> it seems worth while to point out that there is no *Tringa maculata* Linnæus<sup>7</sup>, but that in the place cited there occurs only *Tringa*

<sup>1</sup> 'The Auk,' XXIV, April, 1907, pp. 205-210.

<sup>2</sup> *Porzana jamaicensis* var. *coturniculus* Ridgway, Amer. Nat., VIII, February, 1874, p. 111 (Farallon Islands, California).

<sup>3</sup> Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., XXXIV, 1819, p. 465.

<sup>4</sup> Birds Australia, III, part 3, August 18, 1913, p. 261.

<sup>5</sup> Syst. Nat., ed. 12, I, 1766, p. 249.

<sup>6</sup> Ibis, ser. 10, III, No. 2, April, 1915, p. 390.

<sup>7</sup> Syst. Nat., ed. 12, I, 1766, p. 249.

*macularia*, which is the original of the species now known as *Actitis macularia*. Our Pectoral Sandpiper must, therefore, retain its present designation of *Pisobia maculata* (Vieillot).

### ***Agelaius phœniceus arctolegus* Oberholser.**

The Northern Red-winged Blackbird was originally described<sup>1</sup> from specimens taken in Mackenzie, Alberta, and Manitoba. A large amount of material, much of it from the United States, examined during the last ten years, serves now to substantiate the validity of this form on the characters adduced in the original diagnosis. Although *Agelaius phœniceus arctolegus* has been sometimes synonymized with *Agelaius phœniceus fortis*, it is clearly different from that form by reason of the darker coloration of the female, both above and below; by the shorter wing and tail, larger bill, and somewhat paler buff of wing-coverts in the male; and is really much more closely allied to *Agelaius phœniceus phœniceus*, from which it is separable chiefly by its decidedly greater size, particularly the bill, as may readily be seen by reference to the original description.<sup>2</sup> Recent information permits also a much better delineation of its geographic range, which, together with that of *Agelaius phœniceus fortis*, as now restricted, are given below.

*Agelaius phœniceus arctolegus*.—Middle Canada with eastern and middle United States: breeds north to northern Manitoba and southern Mackenzie; west to southwestern Mackenzie, central Alberta, and central Montana; south to southeastern Montana, southeastern South Dakota, northwestern Iowa, southern Minnesota, and northern Michigan; east to northern Michigan and eastern Manitoba. Winters north at least to Arkansas and Kansas; south to southern Texas, Louisiana, and casually Alabama. Migrates west to Colorado and east to Ohio, casually to Connecticut.

*Agelaius phœniceus fortis*.—Middle United States, west of the Mississippi River: breeds north to Nebraska, Wyoming, western Montana, and Idaho; west to Idaho and Colorado; south to Colo-

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<sup>1</sup> *Agelaius phœniceus arctolegus* Oberholser, Auk, XXIV, No. 3, July, 1907, p. 332 (Fort Simpson, Mackenzie, Canada).

<sup>2</sup> 'The Auk,' XXIV, No. 3, July, 1907, pp. 334-336.

rado and northwestern Texas, and east to central Nebraska. Winters south to Louisiana, southern Texas, and New Mexico (Aztec, Dec. 5, 1893, J. A. Loring). Occurs in migration east to eastern Nebraska and Arkansas.

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### THIRTY-FIFTH STATED MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION.

BY T. S. PALMER.

THE Thirty-fifth Stated Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union convened in Cambridge, Mass., on Monday, November 12, 1917. The business sessions were held at the Colonial Club and the public sessions, beginning November 13 and lasting three days, in the Nash lecture room of the University Museum. The attendance included 21 Fellows, 20 Members, more than 100 Associates, and a number of visitors. Among those present were three of the 23 Founders of the Union, seven other members who were elected at the first meeting in 1883, and five members from Canada. Twenty-six papers were presented at the public sessions and three others were read by title.

**BUSINESS SESSION.** At the meeting of the Fellows called to order at 3.40 P. M. by the President, Dr. Albert K. Fisher, 16 Fellows were present. Percy A. Taverner, of Ottawa, Canada, was elected to fill the single vacancy in the list of Fellows and the amendment to the By-Laws proposed at the last Stated Meeting, providing that in joint meetings of Fellows and Members, 15 shall constitute a quorum, was formally adopted.

At the evening meeting of the Fellows and Members, called to order by the President at 8.30 P. M., 18 Fellows and 16 Members were present. The present status of membership in the Union as reported by the retiring Secretary is as follows:—"Fellows, 49; Retired Fellows, 3; Honorary Fellows, 14; Corresponding Fellows, 59; Members, 77; Associates, 689; Total, 891.