

**Swann's 'Synoptical List of the Accipitres.'**—This work<sup>1</sup> resembles Sharpe's 'Hand-List' in general style but has the distinct advantage of adopting the trinomial system so that we have a means of distinguishing mere geographical races from quite distinct species. Of course, there are always differences of opinion as to the rank of certain forms but in the majority of cases there will be uniformity of judgment upon this matter.

The descriptions that are given are in the nature of keys, and as they are very brief, and based upon adult birds, they will we fear, be of very little value in a group which offers such a variety of plumages as do the Accipitres.

The classification seems to follow Sharpe pretty closely but there are a number of nomenclatural changes in conformity with recent proposals though the author's position in some cases we are at a loss to understand. For instance, he uses *Ægyptius* for *Vultur monachus* of Linnæus realizing the impossibility of employing *Vultur* for this species inasmuch as it was not among the original species quoted by Linnæus under this generic name. This is quite correct but Mr. Swann proceeds to drop *Vultur* entirely which is, of course, impossible, while to add to the inconsistency, he retains the family name Vulturidæ. Again in several instances he ignores the International Code and the opinions of the Commission. Thus the type of *Catharista* is, by the Code, *Vultur aura* Linn., and it thus becomes a synonym of *Cathartes* while the type of *Morphnus* is similarly *Falco urubitinga* Gmel., yet in both cases Mr. Swann uses these names in their former application. Either the author has carelessly overlooked these matters or he is cutting loose from the recognized rules of nomenclature, an unfortunate procedure in these days, and one which materially mars the value of his work.

We wonder somewhat at his disposition of *Urubitornis solitarius* Tschudi, as a subspecies of *Harpyhaliaetus coronatus*. The name was regarded as a synonym of *H. coronatus* in the 'British Museum Catalogue' and in Sharpe's 'Hand-List' but we always were in doubt as to whether Dr. Sharpe had examined any specimens, as the species seems to be a rare one. The two in the collection of the Philadelphia Academy seem to be quite distinct from *H. coronatus* both specifically and generically.

In spite of our criticisms, Mr. Swann's work is a distinct advance upon anything that we have yet had and will be of the greatest assistance to students of the Accipitres. It places the group upon such a basis that doubtful points both of taxonomy and nomenclature can easily be worked out and the results embodied in an appendix, bringing it fully up to date. It is toward this end that our remarks have been directed.— W. S.

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<sup>1</sup> A Synoptical List of the Accipitres (Diurnal Birds of Prey) Comprising Described Species and Subspecies with their Characters and Distribution. By H. Kirke Swann, F. Z. S. London: John Whelden & Co. Price 4 shillings per part. Part I. July, 1919. pp. 1-38; Part II, pp. 39-74, with reprint of pp. 15-16 and a page of addenda et corrigenda for Part I. November 7, 1919.