

PLUMES

The average length of the plumes in the above series of skins is 16.8 centimeters. The average of the plumes of the females is 15.7 and that of the males 17.3 centimeters. From these measurements it would seem that the plumes of the males are longer than those of the females, but this series of skins is not large enough to form the basis of any general conclusion. Specimens 10187, 10186 and 42594 have plumes all of which are partially encased in sheaths indicating their appearance to have been recent. Two specimens collected in March have no plumes. Since these include all of the specimens of the series collected during January-March it is apparent that the molt and renewal of the plumes takes place during the first three months of the year.

*Searles Biological Laboratory,
Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Me.*

NOTES ON DONACOBIOUS.

BY LUDLOW GRISCOM.

I. THE STATUS OF *Donacobius albovittatus* LAFR. AND ORB.

IN 'Novitates Zoologicæ,' Vol. 21, 1914, p. 158, Dr. C. E. Hellmayr showed that the type specimen of this species was "quite a young bird in fluffy plumage, and agrees in every respect with a skin from San Esteban, Venezuela." He, therefore, did not have the slightest doubt that the birds with white eyebrows were merely the young of *D. atricapillus*. He further stated that he had not seen any adults from Bolivia, but did not think them likely to differ from the Brazilian race, since specimens from Paraguay and southwest Brazil were practically identical with those from more northern localities. Exactly the same conclusions are advanced in a recent study of d'Orbigny's types (Nov. Zool., Vol. 28, 1921, p. 242).

While no one could question the soundness of the reasoning advanced above, it is a matter of interest that the American Mu-

seum of Natural History does possess a pair of adults in fresh unworn plumage taken July 22, 1915, at Todos Santos, Cochabamba, Bolivia (alt. 1300 feet) by Miller and Boyle. These birds have a broad white superciliary stripe, starting from just above the eye and running back to the very edge of the black cap. It is important to note that these feathers are immaculate white, while in young *atricapillus*, the feathers of the white eyebrow are always mottled at least basally with black, and the eyebrow itself is not so conspicuous or extended. Dr. Hellmayr discusses a specimen from northeastern Peru, which is apparently molting into the adult plumage, but still possesses a few white feathers in the superciliary region. This Museum has such a specimen from eastern Colombia. It has acquired the black cap and the barring on the flanks. The primaries, however, have not as yet been entirely renewed, the few white feathers in the superciliary region are mottled with black basally, and close scrutiny shows a few brown feathers still remaining on the sides of the head, all signs proving conclusively that it is not yet fully adult. With care this point is, therefore, seen to be easily determinable in *Donacobius*.

D. albovittatus is thus, strikingly distinct from *D. atricapillus* in possessing broad white superciliaries in the adult plumage, and for the present at least is best treated as a distinct species. I have seen no immature specimens from Bolivia, but follow Dr. Hellmayr's opinion that the two species are inseparable in this plumage. If true, there is nothing unique or surprising in the situation.

II. THE STATUS OF *Donacobius brachypterus* MADARÁSZ.

Dr. Chapman, when discussing this genus in the 'Distribution of Bird-Life in Colombia,' p. 530, followed Dr. Hellmayr in regarding *albovittatus* as a synonym of *atricapillus*, but called attention to the fact that there were two forms of the latter, applying the name *albovittatus* to the western one. This name, now applying to a distinct species in Bolivia, is naturally not available in the present instance.

In the 'Ornithologische Monatsberichte,' 1913, p. 22, Madarász described *D. brachypterus* from Aracatuca, near the coast of northern Colombia. This form was described as generally smaller and

paler, especially on the rump, and with shorter and more rounded wings. An excellent comparative description follows, with measurements. With the exception of the measurements it is of interest that Dr. Chapman's characterization of his western form is almost identical. A specimen from Cienaga is essentially topotypical and fully confirms most of the characters assigned to *brachypterus*. I am unable to see, however, that birds from northern Colombia are essentially paler below, and the difference in size is so slight that a larger series might eliminate it as a character altogether. Madarász' new form was based on females only, and he may have overlooked the marked sexual variation in size.

Donacobius atricapillus brachypterus Mad. is, however, a perfectly valid race, differing from typical *atricapillus* in being lighter above, especially on the rump and upper tail-coverts. It may prove to average somewhat smaller. These characters hold equally well for worn adults or immature, if specimens in comparable plumage are used. This race ranges from eastern Panama and northern Colombia up the Magdalena Valley to Puerto Berrio and Malena in the tropical lowlands of Antioquia. Specimens from Caquetá and Villavicencio on the eastern slope of the eastern Andes, as well as specimens cited by Dr. Chapman from localities in western Brazil unquestionably represent typical *atricapillus*, giving a much more logical distribution to the western race, now that its supposed occurrence in Bolivia no longer obscures the issue. It should be added that old "Bogotá" skins might belong to either race.

To summarize, then, the conclusions reached in this paper, *Donacobius* is divisible into three forms as follows:

1. *D. alborittatus* Lafr. and d'Orb. Known only from eastern Bolivia.
2. *D. atricapillus*, which is divisible into two races.
 - (a) *D. a. atricapillus* (L.). From Paraguay and Brazil north to Venezuela and the Guianas.
 - (b) *D. a. brachypterus* Madarász. Tropical lowlands of north central and northern Colombia to eastern Panama.

TABLE OF MEASUREMENTS.

		Wing	Tail	Culmen
<i>D. albovittatus</i>	1 ♂	86.5	98.	21.
"	1 ♀	79.	93.5	21.
<i>D. a. atricapillus</i>	13 ♂	81.-90.	92. -102.	20. -24.
"	9 ♀	76.-84.	87. - 95.5	19. -22.
<i>D. a. brachypterus</i>	11 ♂	79.-82.	92. -103.	21. -23.
"	4 ♀	76.-81.	87. - 95.	19.5-22.

American Museum of Natural History, New York.

NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF PORCHER ISLAND, B. C.

BY ALLAN BROOKS.

IN April of 1920, I was travelling up the coast of British Columbia by the "inland" route on one of the fine passenger boats of the Canadian Government line.

To a bird lover the dearth of life along these quiet fjords, together with the monotony of the heavily wooded rugged shore-line, was rather depressing, but just before the mouth of the Skeena was reached there was a glimpse to the westward of an island totally unlike anything I had seen before on this northwestern coast.

A glance at the chart showed this to be Porcher Island, and I made up my mind to investigate this promising looking locality at a later date. An unfortunate accident reduced this visit from the month I had planned to only nine days in the month of September, but my friend Mr. Charles deB. Green during June and July of 1921, spent nearly two months on this island in an effort to solve the mystery of the breeding of the Marbled Murrelet, and he has generously supplied me with his notes together with the few birds he collected. Porcher Island, in latitude 54°, is about twenty miles long by fifteen wide. It is almost cut into three pieces by a Y-shaped arm of the sea, very incorrectly shown on all maps, and is singular in a densely forested region, in being for the most part open or scantily wooded. The highest mountains are only about 3000 ft., their crests covered with a thick mat of