

- JOHN LEONARD BAER, Associate, died in his 45th year in southeastern Panama, May 28, 1924.
- MRS. WILLIAM BREWSTER, Associate, died at Boston, Mass., Mar. 3, 1924.
- NAPOLEON ALEXANDER COMEAU,¹ Associate, aged 75, died at Godbout, P. Q., Nov. 17, 1923.
- MRS. A. P. L. DULL, Associate, died at Harrisburg, Pa., Aug. 9, 1924.
- AUGUST FREDERICK EIMBECK, Associate, aged 82, died at New Haven, Mo., Sept. 1, 1924.
- CHARLES FRANCIS JENNEY,² Associate, aged 63, died at Boston, Mass., Nov. 29, 1923.
- REGINALD MANSFIELD JOHNSON, Associate, aged 47, died at Boston, Mass., Feb. 11, 1923.
- MRS. WILLIAM HENRY HERRICK, Associate, of Topsfield, Mass., died 1923.
- R. WALTER MILLS, Associate, died at St. Louis, Mo., Feb. 16, 1924.
- MRS. CHARLES E. RAYMOND, Associate, of Hinsdale, Ill., died Feb. 5, 1924.
- CLARENCE SACKETT, Associate of Rye, N. Y., died May 1923.

NOTES ON THE TAXONOMY OF ARDEA CANADENSIS LINNÉ.

BY JAMES L. PETERS.

PRACTICALLY all modern ornithologists are now agreed that the Little Brown Crane (*Megalornis canadensis*),³ the Sandhill Crane (*Megalornis mexicana*)⁴ and the Cuban Sandhill Crane (*Megalornis nesiotis*)⁵ differ from one another only subspecifically. This has been clearly pointed out by Oberholser⁶ and by Hartert.⁷

There remains, however, an additional form to be described and a nomenclatural change to be effected, both of which it is the purpose of this paper to accomplish.

Ardea mexicana Müller has long been accepted as the proper name of the Sandhill Crane, but as Dr. Hartert (*op.cit.*) has pointed out, the name is unidentifiable. The original description reads:

¹ For obituary notice see 'Auk,' XLI, pp. 387-388.

² " " " " " " " " pp. 386-387.

³ *Grus canadensis* Linné, Syst. Nat. ed. 10, 1, 1758, p. 141. ex Edwards, Nat. Hist. Birds, p. 133, pl. 133 (Hudson Bay).

⁴ *Ardea (grus) mexicana* P. L. S. Müller, Nat. Syst. Suppl. 1776, p. 110 (Mexico).

⁵ *Grus nesiotis* Bangs and Zappey, Amer. Nat. 29, 1905, p. 193 (LaVega, Isle of Pines).

⁶ 'Auk,' 38, 1921, pp. 80-82.

⁷ Vög. Pal. Faun. 3, 1921, p. 1818.

"Er ist aschgrau, obenher am Kopf roth, und hat schwarze Ruderfedern. Das Vaterland ist Mexico. Boddaert." Not a word as to size, the only distinction between the Little Brown and Sandhill Cranes, neither does, "Mexico" offer a solution, since both forms occur, at least in migration, in the area occupied by Mexico in 1776. The reference to Boddaert I have not been able to trace, it may possibly be based on an unpublished manuscript. We may now discard Müller's name as unidentifiable, and endeavor to find an available name in synonymy. The earliest binomial author to characterize the Sandhill Crane was F. A. A. Meyer, reviewing Zimmermann's edition of Bartram's Travels (Berlin 1793), preserving the name bestowed upon the bird by Bartram. The form must now be known as

***Megalornis canadensis pratensis* (Meyer)¹**

Since it is always desirable to have as definite a type locality as possible, I designate Clay County, Florida as such. Bartram² gives a delightful account of his journey across the eastern part of the Alachua Savanna, which, as nearly as can be determined is the part lying within the present borders of Clay County. He describes in detail a "Savanna Crane" that the hunters in his party shot there, adding "We had this fowl dressed for supper and it made excellent soup." Thus it appears that no type specimen was ever preserved.

For this reason I feel that the selection of a neotype in this case would be perfectly justified, except that I fail to see what useful purpose such a selection would accomplish; a topotype is every bit as satisfactory. Until zoölogists have formulated and agreed upon certain rules governing the selection of neotypes, it is to be hoped that the practice will not become general, since there is bound to be confusion if indulged in indiscriminately.

The Florida Sandhill Crane appears to be confined almost entirely to the Florida peninsula, though it is probable that the few pairs still resident in southern Baldwin County, Alabama,³ are referable to this form. I have not seen any birds from Louisiana.

The bird that formerly had a nearly continuous breeding range from British Columbia east to western Ontario, and south to northern California and Ohio has been greatly reduced in numbers by encroachment on its summer haunts until it is now extirpated over a large area of its former range. It is doubtful if the breeding

¹ *Grus pratensis* Meyer, Zoologische Annalen 1, 1794, p. 286 and 296. Florida ex Bartram.

² Travels through North and South Carolina etc. etc., Philadelphia, 1791.

³ Howell, Bds. of Ala. 1924, p. 85.

area of the bird of the northern United States ever adjoined that of the Florida bird. In any event it differs sufficiently from that form to warrant subspecific distinction and may be known as

***Megalornis canadensis tabida* subsp. nov.**

Type.—72695 Collection of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, adult male. Valley of the South Fork of the Humboldt River, Nevada, May 19, 1859, collected by Chas. S. McCarthy.

Characters.—Similar to *Megalornis canadensis pratensis* (Meyer) but paler throughout especially on the occiput and back of neck which are pallid mouse gray to pale mouse gray instead of light mouse gray to mouse gray; the underparts particularly the lower breast and abdomen are appreciably grayer. Measurements indicate a longer wing and bill combined with a shorter tarsus than in the Florida bird, but I am not at all sure the mensural characters can be maintained.

MEASUREMENTS:—***Megalornis canadensis pratensis*.**

9 males. Wing (arc, measured with tape) 490–550; exposed culmen, 116–138; tarsus 231–254 mm.

11 females. Wing 475–525; exposed culmen 118–125 (10 specimens); tarsus 218–245 mm.

***Megalornis canadensis tabida*.**

4 males. Wing 550–590; exposed culmen, 132–140; tarsus, 231–242 mm.

The measurements of 7 males and 1 female of Californian specimens published by Maillard,¹ would, however, indicate that the average differences would tend to disappear were a large series of birds to be measured by the same investigator.

Remarks.—Of the numerous synonyms that have at one time or another been quoted in the synonymy of the Sandhill Crane, there are none that apply to the western race. *Grus cinerea longirostris*² Temm. and Schl. and *Grus schlegelii* Blyth³ are the most puzzling and were formerly believed to refer to the Sandhill Crane, but Dr. Hartert, the most recent reviewer of the Cranes now cites both these names in the synonymy of *M. c. canadensis*.

In conclusion my thanks are due to Drs. C. W. Richmond and G. M. Allen for information concerning the existence and status of the works of F. A. A. Meyer.

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¹ Condor, **23**, 1921, p. 31.

² Temminck and Schlegel, Faun. Jap. **3**, 1850, p. 117, pl. 72. Japan.

³ Blyth. Field, **42**, 1873, p. 419, ex. Temm. and Schl. Faun. Jap. pl. 72.