

relation of structure to function, but is rather the result of an orthogenic evolution leading toward increased size of bill.

This paper, like Dr. Chapman's is of unusual interest and value.—W. S.

Swarth on a New Bird Family for the Galapagos Islands.¹—Anyone at all familiar with the land birds of the Galapagos Islands would probably be able to forecast Mr. Swarth's conclusions as soon as he read the title of his paper and we confess that we did so when we saw the program of the recent A. O. U. meeting of which it formed a part.

Robert Ridgway and others have shown the necessity, if we should follow a strictly logical procedure, of linking up all of the several dozen so called "finches" which inhabit this group of islands under one generic and probably one specific name, so completely do their characters overlap. Mr. Swarth has gone a step further and has linked up the so called "Galapagos creepers" in the same series, making an almost unbroken line from birds with the great Grosbeak-like bills to those with the slender beaks of Warblers. The various forms showing but little variation in plumage.

None of the authors however have felt that they can carry their reduction of genera and species to such an extreme, as nomenclature would then fail to function and we should have to invent some other sort of terms to indicate which group of these perplexing birds we were talking about. Mr. Swarth, therefore, for convenience recognizes four genera, *Geospiza*, *Cactospiza*, *Camarhynchus* and *Certhidea* and if these are proven to represent a continuous series then it is obviously ridiculous to refer the first three to the Fringillidae and the last to the Coerebidae or Mnioiltidae as has usually been done. Indeed Mr. Swarth sees no obvious evidence that the series as a whole can be definitely derived from any of the families mentioned and proposes to let them stand as a distinct family Geospizidae, quoting the case of the Drepanididae of the Hawaiian Islands as a parallel case, some of the heavy-billed forms of this group having also been referred to the Fringillidae.

The interrelations of the Galapagos birds are, however, more complex than those of the Hawaiian species since they have not become so completely differentiated, doubtless due to a shorter period of isolation.

While we agree with most of Mr. Swarth's conclusions we cannot find any very distinctive characters upon which to base a separate family in the diagnosis which he presents but it must be admitted that several of the generally recognized Passerine families are not much better characterized.

Three new forms are described in Mr. Swarth's paper which serve to emphasize his conclusions as to the relation of *Certhidea* to the other genera. *Cactospiza giffordi* (p. 32) from Indefatigable Island proves intermediate between *Cactospiza* and *Certhidea*; *Camarhynchus conjunctus* (p.

¹ A New Bird Family (Geospizidae) from the Galapagos Islands. By Harry S. Swarth. Proc. Calif. Acad. Sciences. Fourth Series, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, pp. 29-43. January 29, 1919.

33) and *C. aureus* (p. 34) from Charles and Chatham Islands, are intermediate between *Camarhynchus* and *Certhidea*. One other specimen is so perplexing that Mr. Swarth admits that he cannot decide whether it is referable to *Certhidea ridgwayi* or *Camarhynchus conjunctus*!

Regardless of whether we adopt the author's views on the comparatively unimportant point as to whether these Galapagos birds shall be regarded as forming a separate family or not, Mr. Swarth has made a most valuable contribution to the literature of Galapagos ornithology.—W. S.

Slevin on the Nesting Habits of the Golden Eagle.—A short time ago in a review of Seton Gordon's book on the Golden Eagle of Scotland we expressed regret at the lack of serious studies of the bird in America. The paper¹ before us presents much important data on the character of the nests and nesting sites but unfortunately mainly from the standpoint of the egg collector, and the detailed observations on old and young such as Gordon presents are lacking. (See, however pp. 161-169 *antea*).

Mr. Slevin's studies cover seven pairs of these noble birds which nested in Santa Clara and San Benito Counties, California, from 1916 to 1922, from which 21 sets of eggs were obtained. A number of excellent photographs of nests and sites are presented.—W. S.

Recent Papers by Hartert.—Dr. Hartert completes his catalogue of the types² of birds in the Tring Museum,² begun ten years ago, with a ninth instalment covering the remainder of the additional and overlooked types. This brings the total to 2005 and includes two descriptions of new forms *Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae chathamensis* (p. 204), Chatham Island, and *Zosterops virens somereni* (p. 207), Mt. Kenya.

Dr. Hartert has also issued³ the first instalment of a list of Gregory M. Mathews' types which with the rest of his collection are now in the Tring Museum. This catalogue is of the greatest importance as so many of Mathews' descriptions are exceedingly brief and often without indication of a type. We have also Dr. Hartert's opinion as to the validity of the forms described of which 39 out of 53, many of them repudiated by the author himself, are here relegated to synonymy. Dr. Hartert takes this opportunity to study the Crow problem and supports Mathews in the recognition of three species in Australia, *coronoides*, *cecilae* and *bennetti* but he admits none of Mathews' subspecies and *C. cecilae* is regarded as a member of the wide ranging *macrorhynchus* group while the others stand alone.

If Dr. Hartert could ascertain and publish the identity of the individuals after whom a number of Mr. Mathews' birds are named he would confer a

¹ A Contribution to Our Knowledge of the Nesting Habits of the Golden Eagle. By Joseph R. Slevin. Proc. California Academy of Sciences. XVIII, No. 3, pp. 45-71. January 29, 1929.

² Novitates Zoologicae, XXXIV, pp. 189-230. July 1928.

³ Ibid, pp. 337-371. July 1928.