

Sumner on Taxonomic Distinctions Viewed in the Light of Genetics.—Prof. Sumner's work in the study of subspecies of Deer Mice (*Peromyscus*) with a view to determining the stability of so called sub-specific characters is well known to our readers and in this most interesting and suggestive paper¹ he presents a general review of the relation of "systematics" to genetics.

The paper must be read in its entirety to understand the problem and the author's reaction to it, but we may call attention to one or two of his views. He is not at all in sympathy with the contention made by not a few geneticists, and some systematists, that "geographic variation is a process quite distinct from species formation," in other words that species and subspecies are produced in different ways and are different in character; a contention that the reviewer also has always opposed.

"So far as investigated," he says, "the peculiarities of the various geographic races or subspecies are found to be wholly genetic" and further, "that the environment may have a well marked directive influence on them [i. e. variations] is the belief of many students of distribution. The frequent parallelism between structural or pigmental gradients and climatic gradients furnishes one basis for this belief." Prof. Sumner has always been distinctly open minded with regard to the views of the systematists and it is a great satisfaction to the latter that he has made his notable experimental studies on living subspecies and a matter for congratulation that he has come to uphold many of their contentions.—W. S.

van Rossem's Notes on Types of North American Birds.²—On a recent visit to various European museums Mr. van Rossem has done a great service to American ornithology by examining the types of various American species preserved there. The type of *Penelope vetula* Wagler he finds to be unlike any Chachalaca known and is thus not the bird of Texas as had been recently supposed, so that the name of the latter must revert to *Ortalis v. mccalli* Baird.

The type of *Empidonax ridgwayi* Sclater proves to be *E. trailli traillii* and causes no trouble, but Lichtenstein's *Muscicapa mesoleuca* instead of being the Olive-sided Flycatcher is a species of *Elainea*, while Swainson's type of *Tyrannus borealis*, while it is an Olive-sided Flycatcher, represents the western and not the eastern form! We have therefore *Nuttallornis borealis borealis* for the western and *N. b. cooperi* Nuttall for the eastern race.

Sclater's *Pyrocephalus mexicanus* represents the more eastern form of the Vermilion Flycatcher and our author proposes to separate the California-Arizona form as *P. r. flammeus* (p. 353).

The type locality of *Corvus sinuatus* Wagler he is able to restrict to Ixmiquilpan and that of *Psarcolius cyanocephalus* to Temascaltepec while *Sylvia petasodes* Licht. is disposed of as a synonym of *Wilsonia pusilla pusilla* (Wilson).

¹ Taxonomic Distinctions Viewed in the Light of Genetics. By Professor Francis B. Sumner, American Naturalist, March-April, 1934, pp. 137-149.

² Notes on Some Types of North American Birds. By A. J. von Rossem. Trans. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist., VII, No. 30, May 31, 1934.

Psarcolius aeneus Wagler proves to be a Red-eyed Cowbird instead of a Bronzed Cowbird, as previously supposed, so that the name of the former becomes *Tangavius aeneus aeneus* while the latter is named *T. a. milleri* (subsp. nov. p. 355).

Tanagra auricollis Licht. turns out to be a Long-tailed Chat which western race must now be known as *Icteria virens auricollis* (Licht.).

Cardinalis sinuatus Bonaparte proves to be the eastern *Pyrrhuloxia* which resumes its old name while the Arizona bird is renamed *P. s. fulvescens* (p. 356) as the type of Ridgway's *beckhami* also proves to be the eastern bird. *Fringilla epopoeae* Licht. and *F. xanthomaschalis* Wagler are both disposed of as synonyms of *Guiraca melanocephala*.

The types of American Crossbill *Crucirostra minor* Brehm and *Loxia pusilla* Gloger cause all sorts of trouble since the former represents our common Red Crossbill which therefore reverts to its old name of *Loxia c. minor* while the latter is the Newfoundland race *percna* of Bent which must now be known as *L. c. pusilla*!

Ammodramus bimaculatus Swainson instead of applying to the Western Grasshopper Sparrow is the small dark Mexican form named *A. s. obscurus* by Nelson and the former race returns to its old name of *A. s. perpallidus* Coues.

Passerella hyperborea Bonaparte which Mr. van Rossem considers independent nomenclaturally from the unidentifiable *Emberiza hyperborea* of Pallas will supplant *Passerella i. insularis* Ridgw.

We have gone into detail in this notice as the items all affect the next edition of the 'Check-List' and it seems well to have them accessible in 'The Auk,' while they will also stand as an awful example of the danger of accepting names proposed by the older European ornithologists before examining and comparing their types!—W. S.

New American Birds Proposed by van Rossem.—Mr. van Rossem has been very active in describing new forms of birds mainly from the rich collections of the California Institute of Technology. Three races of the Black Chachalaca are proposed from Central America;¹ *Piranga bidentata citrea* from Chiriqui; *Passerina versicolor dickeyae* from Sonora; *Pipilo fuscus texanus* from Kerr Co., Texas; *Notharchus hyperrhynchus cryptoleucus* from El Salvador; *Claravis mondetoura inca* from Peru and *C. m. ochoterena* from Vera Cruz; *Ceophloeus lineatus petersi* from Tamaulipas and *C. l. obsoletus* from Sonora.² The other forms of the last two genera are also reviewed.—W. S.

Lid and Meidell on food of Ptarmigan Chicks.³—This is a report on the crop contents of 83 chicks of "Norwegian Grouse" (*Lagopus lagopus*) taken in the field.

¹ Trans. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist., VII Nos. 31-34, all May 31, 1934.

² Ibid, VIII, Nos. 2-4, August 10, 1934.

³ The food of Norwegian Grouse Chicks. By Johannes Lid and Ove Meidell. Nyt Magazin for Naturvidenskaberne, bind 73, June 27, 1933, pp. 75-114, figs. 1-2, tables 1-3.