

## CORRESPONDENCE

## "Mating" and "Coitus"

Editor of 'The Auk':

In reading papers on bird behavior I have noticed occasionally the use of the words "mate" and "mating" where "copulate" and "copulation" or "coition" or "coitus" would be expected in scientific writing. Usually it is obvious from the context whether "mate" or "mating" refers to the physiological act or to the psychological process of choosing or accepting a mate, but sometimes the exact significance of the word is not clear. May I suggest, therefore, that writers do away with the euphemism and use the unequivocal scientific term when that is called for, reserving the other for the purely psychological behavior?

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## Local Bird Names Wanted

Editor of 'The Auk':

The Biological Survey has long been compiling the vernacular names of the birds of the A. O. U. Check-list, with a view to preparing a dictionary of them. These names fall into two groups: (1) those available from the literature of ornithology, which is largely accessible in Washington; and (2) those that must be collected in the field. Only by thoroughly covering the country can the compilation of the local vernacular names attain anything like completeness, and this can be achieved through coöperation only.

It is hoped that all readers of this memorandum may have local names to contribute and that some may be in a position to spend time in search of vernacular names. Accurate identification is of prime importance. In gathering local names by the method of interviewing, it is suggested that use be made of good colored pictures of the birds concerned as well as of questions regarding their identity.

The recording of the locality where a name is used is of great value in the study of the origin and migration of these terms, and record of names actually employed by the people, even for the most common as well as for more unusual species of birds, is highly desirable as an aid in appraising usage. The information requested may be conveniently recorded under either the standard scientific name or the vernacular name, or both, followed by locally used terms and designation of the place of use. Example:—

NORTHERN FLICKER (*Colaptes auratus luteus*)

Flying Auger, Martha's Vineyard, Mass.

Coöperation in improving the extent and quality of the Survey's collection of vernacular names of birds will be much appreciated. Names may be sent to the Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., for the attention of W. L. McAtee, Technical Adviser.

IRA N. GABRIELSON, *Chief*

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