

## RECENT LITERATURE

Hellmayr's 'Catalogue of Birds of the Americas.'—Dr. Hellmayr continues to produce his volumes with gratifying rapidity, and if both he and the Field Museum Press keep up the present rate of production we may all look forward to the completion of this series of standard catalogues within a reasonable time. The present volume<sup>1</sup> contains but two families, the Tersinidae (swallow-tanagers), monotypic with but three forms, and the Thraupidae (tanagers) with sixty-two genera. Compared with the hitherto most recent revisions of the tanagers,—those by Sharpe in 1909 and Berlepsch in 1910,—some interesting comparisons are possible. Sharpe followed Ridgway in removing *Atlapetes*, *Pselliophorus*, *Buarremon*, *Pezopetes*, *Lysiurus*, *Arremon*, *Pogonospiza*, *Lamprospiza*, *Saltator*, *Pitylus*, *Caryothraustes* and *Rhodothraupis* to the Fringillidae; Berlepsch still considered them tanagrine, while Hellmayr excludes them from the tanagers though admitting that the last word on their systematic position has not been said. Sharpe admitted *Iridophanes*, *Pseudodacnis* and *Calyptophilus*; Berlepsch excluded all three but did not endeavor to assign them elsewhere. Hellmayr admits *Calyptophilus* and provisionally retains *Pseudodacnis*; *Iridophanes* is now admitted to belong in the Coerebidae. If we exclude from further consideration the genera now placed in the Fringillidae but add *Calyptophilus* and *Pseudodacnis* to Berlepsch's list, we find that Sharpe listed 59 genera and 417 forms, Berlepsch 58 genera and 457 forms and Hellmayr 62 genera and 523 forms. The increase of four genera is due to three generic 'splits' of previously known forms, but only a single new discovery, *Tephrophilus* Moore. In view of the large amount of work done in South America in the last twenty-five years this is worthy of comment as is also the fact that there is only a net increase of sixty-six recognized forms in the same period. As is to be expected, Dr. Hellmayr has broadened the species concept in a good many cases, reducing to subspecific status a number of forms hitherto accorded specific rank, a procedure that seems to be entirely justified and in keeping with ornithological progress. For instance all the forms of *Spindalis* are considered conspecific; the aggregation of forms hitherto grouped among two species, *Habia fuscicauda* and *Habia salvini*, are considered conspecific, and to these is added *Habia gutturalis*, which incidentally is the oldest name; the *Tangara larvata* group of Central America is joined to *Tangara nigrocincta* of northern South America east of the Andes.

In the introduction Dr. Hellmayr states: "The rejection of Brissonian genera, in consequence of a vote passed by the International Zoological Congress of Padua entails only one nomenclatorial change: namely, the substitution of *Calospiza* for *Tangara*." Dr. Hellmayr, however, is mistaken in the action of the Padua Congress. It is true that a resolution calling for the rejection of generic names of binary authors was passed by that body, but this resolution was not then effective and was tabled at the Lisbon Congress, hence Brissonian generic names are still valid. But even if they were not, *Calospiza* G. R. Gray, 1840, is not the first available name to replace

<sup>1</sup> Catalogue of Birds of the Americas | and the Adjacent Islands | in | Field Museum of Natural History | including all species and subspecies known to occur in North America, | Central America, South America, the West Indies, and | islands of the Caribbean Sea, the Galapagos Archipelago, | and other islands which may be included on | account of their faunal affinities. | By | Charles E. Hellmayr | Associate Curator of Birds | Part IX | Tersinidae-Thraupidae | Wilfred H. Osgood | Curator, Department of Zoology | Editor | Field Museum of Natural History Publication 365, zool. series, vol. 13, pp. i-vi + 1-458, Chicago, Oct. 6, 1936.

*Tangara* Brisson, 1760, for *Calliste* Boie, 1826, has the same type as *Calospiza* and is not preoccupied by *Callista* Poli, 1791 (Mollusca), under the International Code.

Four new names are proposed as follows: *Tangara imitans* (p. 63) vice *Euphonia gracilis* of authors, not of Cabanis; *Ramphocelus dimidiatus pallidirostris* (p. 256) vice *R. d. albirostris* Griscom, not *Tangara albirostris* Boddaert; *Habia rubica bahiae* (Bahia) (p. 301) and *Neothraupis* (p. 432), to replace *Diucopsis* Bonaparte not applicable.—J. L. P.

**Mendall's 'Home-Life and Economic Status of the Double-crested Cormorant.'**—Aspiring young ornithologists who look with dismay when a subject of their interest is written up and who feel that there are no opportunities for making worth-while contributions on a subject that is already extensively studied, should take heart at Mendall's recent contribution.<sup>1</sup> In the main, the paper is patterned after Dr. Harrison F. Lewis's excellent study published in 1929 and contains much of the same data, although worthy additions are made. Lewis's work dealt with the entire field of the natural history of the Double-crested Cormorant and was based on observations made on a large number of colonies, while Mendall's field research was largely restricted to a home-life study, made during the summers of 1933, 1934, and 1935, of a single breeding colony on Marblehead Island, in West Penobscot Bay, on the coast of Maine. Lewis and others are quoted extensively in the treatment of systematics, distribution, migration, courtship, and activities of the birds during the breeding season. In general a good summary of current published data on these subjects is given although it would seem that additional information on distribution and migration could have been obtained from the U. S. Biological Survey. Some new data are presented on the nocturnal habits and on the courtship of the bird, particularly those referring to water activities. It was also shown that courtship performances often persist to a degree after nesting duties have ceased. Mendall concludes that the young are dependent on their parents for food long after the ability to fly is acquired. Important information on the rate of growth of developing young is offered along with a careful description of the nest life of the young and of their parents.

Besides summarizing published accounts of the food of the cormorant, the present paper gives original information based on a laboratory analysis of more than 500 regurgitated meals. It is shown that along the coast of Maine, cunners, sculpins, and gunnels, all usually classed as worthless fishes of but little economic importance, constitute the major food items, averaging 42.20, 25.93, and 12.93 per cent, respectively, of the total consumption, while commercial or other valuable fishes, including flounders, herring, and eel, comprised 9.86, 3.73, and 2.74 per cent, respectively, of the total. On inland fresh-water lakes catfish, sunfish, and bass comprised 14, 11, and 3 per cent, respectively.

We can all share the author's feeling that the cormorant is an interesting, and perhaps usually a reputable, avian citizen well worthy of protection, yet in the face of the above figures we have difficulty in following him when he concludes that as a whole it "does little if any damage to man's interests." It would seem far better, and certainly more scientific, to admit, as he does in other parts of the paper, that limited and at least local depredations sometimes occur. The bird's esthetic and recreational worth fully justifies protection. The paper as a whole is a splendid contribution, yet prejudice or preconceived convictions seem to enter in a few in-

<sup>1</sup> Mendall, Howard L. The Home-life and Economic Status of the Double-crested Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax auritus auritus* (Lesson). The Maine Bulletin, vol. 39, pp. 1-159, 6 tables, 20 illus., October 1936 (University of Maine Studies, second series, no. 38, Orono, Maine).