

### NOTES AND NEWS

Mr. N. B. Kinnear, Deputy Keeper in charge of Birds, British Museum (Natural History) Cromwell Road, London S. W. 7, has most kindly expressed a desire to be of assistance to members of the A.O.U. and other ornithologists from this country in military service who may find themselves in England. He will be glad to have them call on him at the Museum and to direct them to places of ornithological interest and put them in touch with other local bird students. Members in service are cordially invited to take advantage of this opportunity to extend their acquaintanceship with British birds and British bird lovers.

The Comstock Publishing Company advises that the prices of the records of bird songs, reviewed in 'The Auk,' 60: 288, April, 1943, were advanced, prior to the review, to \$1.25 for single records and \$6.00 for the set.

#### GENERAL COUNCIL ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

The undersigned zoologists, resident in the United States of America, at the invitation of the Committee on Nomenclature of the American Society of Mammalogists and with the cooperation of the "American Commission on Scientific Nomenclature" of the Entomological Society of America, do hereby associate themselves together as a society and certify as follows:

First: The name of the society shall be the General Council on Zoological Nomenclature.

Second: The objects of the Society shall be:

(A) To act in an advisory capacity in all matters concerning zoological nomenclature during the World War and for such time thereafter as it may consider desirable.

(B) To administer, amend, interpret, and maintain a code of nomenclature for the use of zoologists.

(C) To cooperate with societies maintaining committees on nomenclature, at least those represented in its own membership.

(D) To retain within itself important powers of decision and legislation and of substitutions and additions to its membership, but always subject to full hearings and the advice and counsel of one or more of the committees above mentioned.

(E) To cooperate with zoologists practiced in nomenclature who are residents of foreign countries when the war is ended or as soon thereafter as may be practicable.

G. F. Ferris	Remington Kellogg
Wilfred H. Osgood	H. A. Pilsbry
James A. G. Rehn	Karl P. Schmidt
George G. Simpson*	A. Wetmore
John T. Zimmer	

Merely on the face of it, the above may seem to be a self-constituted body of dubious possibilities and audacious construction. That this is not the case may be evident when its history and purposes are explained. It is the outgrowth of

\*Dr. Simpson's signature is assumed on the basis of his verbal agreement before he left for war service where he cannot now be reached.

numerous informal discussions among a large number of zoologists during the past few years and of formal action taken by at least two national societies.

Even in years just prior to the war, the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature was relatively inactive and after hostilities began in Europe in 1939 it became practically non-functional. This created a situation in which all cooperative action was endangered and nearly a century's hard earned progress was threatened. Individuals and organizations began to discuss special codes for themselves only and in some cases took definite action. Recently a German (Poche) has promulgated a code of his own and in general every zoologist having a nomenclatural problem finds himself without appeal to any constituted authority. It was precisely to avoid this condition that codes and commissions were devised.

Discussion among zoologists unanimously recognized the emergency, but it was difficult to arrive at a basis for action which did not involve very great delay and long-drawn controversy. There were those who felt that the international idea could not be abandoned and others who advocated complete divorce from the Old World. The latter pointed to the success of the International Commission as being mainly due to the American, C. W. Stiles, whose final conclusion (see 'Science,' 73, pp. 349-354, 1931) was that it was not further workable. Among those holding this opinion were several Europeans.

As announced in 'Science' (June 12, 1942) the Entomological Society of America, pursuant to action taken at its meeting in December, 1941, formed an "American Commission on Scientific Nomenclature in Entomology" apparently with the object of proceeding independently. Somewhat later, at its annual meeting in April, 1942, the American Society of Mammalogists instructed its standing committee on nomenclature "to act pro-tem in the present world crisis for the Committee [sic] on Nomenclature of the International Commission." The Mammalogists' committee felt that any committee restricted to a particular branch of zoology would be ineffective. Therefore, with the approval of the Society's president and principal directors, this committee entered into correspondence with the entomologists proposing that the two committees, without further authorization, jointly sponsor the selection of a small group of representative nomenclaturists to "take over," at least for the time being. Full cooperation between the two committees proved impractical without great loss of time, so the Mammalogists' committee, after receiving the approval of the majority of the entomologists, selected and organized the group as indicated above. The membership of the Mammalogists' committee which carried this out was as follows: A. Cabrera, E. R. Hall, G. S. Miller, Jr., W. H. Osgood, T. S. Palmer, G. G. Simpson, and G. H. Tate.

The "Council" thus formed is frankly experimental and the method of its genesis is unusual, but those responsible for it have felt that any other method, especially in these times when large general meetings are interdicted, would defeat itself in prolonged discussion and fatal delay. Under restrictions which the Council has placed upon itself it is hoped that it may be a wholly representative and cooperative body. A brief set of by-laws has been adopted in which important provisions are to the effect (1) that the active membership shall not exceed fifteen, (2) that additions and replacements shall be made only from candidates nominated by large associations of zoologists, and (3) that no important action can be taken without first obtaining the opinion of at least two nomenclatural committees of national societies and several individuals not members of the Council. A judicial function is thus implied preceding any legislation.

It does not propose to supersede any existing special nomenclatural committees, but on the contrary it is designed to stimulate them to greater interest and more action. Its post-war status is problematical, but at least as a temporary measure and an effort in a direction urgently needing attention, it is hoped it may find support. At an early date it is proposed to increase the membership from nine to eleven in order to cover important branches of zoology which are not now well represented.

The by-laws giving details of proposed action will soon be available for distribution to any interested zoologists who may apply for them.

WILFRED H. OSGOOD  
*Secretary*

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### THE ANNUAL MEETING

At the time of going to press, it is not possible to give any definite information concerning the Sixty-first Stated Meeting of the A. O. U., planned, tentatively, for assembly in New York City some time this year. In view of the precedent already set by the Government, as a war-time measure, it seems unlikely that a full session can be contemplated, with presentation of papers and social events, although a formal business meeting of officers of the Union probably will be attempted. In the event that a more elaborate program is found to be possible, later advice may be given out by the Secretary.

ROBERT CUSHMAN MURPHY,  
*Chairman of the Committee on Arrangements*