



*The Auk* 115(3):821, 1998

## Notes on Generic Names of Certain Swallows

(Auk 15, No. 3, 1898)

"In the raid on nomenclature made a few years ago Dr. L. Stejneger seems to have been peculiarly unfortunate. I have not yet trailed him anywhere without finding that either he did not go far enough in the right direction, or else he went in the wrong direction. The A.O.U. is to be commiserated in unwittingly adopting sundry changes Dr. Stejneger proposed and sought to impose on nomenclature. For example, he undertook to upset the established names *Hirundo* and *Cotile* by substituting *Chelidon* for the former, and *Clivicola* for the latter, after Forster, 1817. It appears from Sharpe's introduction to the Monograph of Hirundinidae, p. xxxv, that *Hirundo* Linn. was characterized by Schaeffer, Elem. Orn., 1774, with *H. rustica* as type. If Dr. Sharpe's method of determining the type of a genus be not at variance with A.O.U. canons, this operation of Schaeffer's throws out Forster's later attempt to transpose *Hirundo* and *Chelidon*, and we may happily revert to the *status quo ante bellum*. Again, Dr. Sharpe, p. xlv, shows the *Riparia* Forster, 1817, has that sort of pri-

ority over *Clivicola* Forster, 1817, which results from previous pagination, and I believe we recognize that myth officially; if so, the name of the Bank Swallow becomes the tautonym *Riparia riparia*, or else *R. europaea*, or else *R. cinerea*. It is but justice to Dr. Stejneger to say that he was aware of this (Pr. Nat. Mus., V, 1882, p.32), only he "preferred to accept the name *Clivicola*," though the reason for his preference is obviously a futile one by our rules. It is also due him to add, that he only "supposed" his generic synonymy of Swallows to be correct (ibid. p. 31). But neither supposition nor preference has any place in the A.O.U. Code. I can suppose a good many things that are not canonized in the code, and certainly prefer some things that are not canonized. For example, I "prefer" *Riparia* to *Clivicola*, and I "suppose" Dr. Stejneger wrong about *Hirundo*. The case thus raised by Dr. Sharpe should come up for consideration at the next meeting of the Union."  
ELLIOTT COUES, *Washington, D.C.*

DATE OF ISSUE (Vol. 115, No. 3): 7 July 1998