

It is likely I'll have to go a hundred miles farther south to make the closer acquaintance of a series.

The one species of goose I've taken here is much different from any of our California visitors. They stand about on surf-beaten rocky points like the gulls, the male pure white and the female dark. But the Cinnamon Teal swing over bunches of tules as do the flocks in fall at Los Banos, before they leave for the south and the shooting season begins. The call of the curlew, and the sweep of the sanderling flocks, carries one back to the Alameda marshes; but the hoarse penguin call, and circling albatross in view from my window, bring me back again with suddenness to the Southern Hemisphere.

Sincerely,

R. H. BECK.

Ancud, Chiloe Island, Chile, April 26, 1914.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

THE BIRDS OF NORTH AND MIDDLE AMERICA: [etc., 8 lines] | By | ROBERT RIDGWAY, | Curator, Division of Birds. |——| Part VI. | Family Picidae—The Woodpeckers. | Family Capitonidae—The Barbets. | Family Ramphastidae—The Toucans. | Family Bucconidae—The Puff Birds. | Family Galbulidae—The Jacamars. | Family Alcedinidae—The Kingfishers. | Family Todidae—The Todies. | Family Momotidae—The Motmots. | Family Caprimulgidae—The Goatsuckers. | Family Nyctibiidae—The Potoos. | Family Tytonidae—The Barn Owls. | Family Bunionidae—The Eared Owls. |——| Washington: | Government Printing Office. | 1914. | =U. S. Nation. Mus., Bull. No. 50, Part VI, pp. xx+882, 36 plates; "issued April 8, 1914."

It is certainly gratifying to the many admirers of Mr. Ridgway to note the regular appearance of the successive portions of his great work, the first of which was published nearly fourteen years ago. The latest volume, Part VI, of content as indicated in the above transcript from the main title page, shows the same high standard of treatment as in the best of the previous volumes.*

In the six volumes which have appeared to date (as stated in the Preface, page vi, of Part VI), "are treated, in detail (that is, with full synonymies and descriptions), besides the Families above mentioned and the

higher groups to which they, respectively, belong, 520 genera, 2111 species and subspecies, besides 155 extralimital genera and 478 extralimital species and subspecies whose diagnostic characters are given in the 'keys', and their principal synonymy (full synonymy in case of the genera) given in footnotes."

There are a number of interesting renditions of systematic status among the higher groups,—interpretations which would bear much discussion, mainly, in the mind of the reviewer, corroborative of Mr. Ridgway's views. Our remarks in the present connection are best confined to nomenclatural and systematic points likely to be of most interest to students of western ornithology.

The yellow-shafted flicker which occurs rarely in California pure-blooded, more often as a strain in so-called "hybrids", is referred to under the name Boreal Flicker (*Colaptes auratus borealis* Ridgway), the assumption being that our birds are winter visitants from the far north (pages 20-22). Mr. Ridgway believes that "some California specimens are doubtless hybrids of *C. auratus borealis* and *C. cafer saturator*, whose respective ranges adjoin in northern British Columbia and southern Alaska." While the "Hybrid Flicker" has been the subject of several special essays, a new and exhaustive study of the case in the light of modern findings in chemico-physiology would, in the mind of the reviewer, very probably result in a different systematic treatment of western, purely yellow-shafted, examples, as well as of "hybrids".

As already announced (Ridgway, Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., xxiv, 1911, page 34), a new genus is founded for that section of the old genus *Melanerpes* containing the California Woodpecker. The latter becomes *Balanosphyra formicivora bairdi*. This is possibly justified in the effort to secure uniformity in rank among related bird groups. But the continued general tendency towards generic refinement does not seem to the reviewer to be in line with the development of a clear and useful system of classification.

Bangs' name, *picinus*, is adopted for the "Western Pileated Woodpecker". The bird of the Pacific Coast from northern California to Vancouver Island thus becomes *Phloeotomus pileatus picinus*.

The southern race of the White-headed Woodpecker, *Xenopicus albolarvatus gravirostris* Grinnell, not admitted to the A. O. U. Check-List, is given full recognition by Ridgway (page 267).

The status of the western sapsuckers re-

* For reviews of previous volumes, see: for Part I, CONDOR, IV, 1902, pp. 22-23; for Part II, CONDOR, V, 1903, pp. 22-23; for Part III, CONDOR, VII, 1905, p. 147; for Part IV, CONDOR, X, 1908, p. 53; for Part V, CONDOR, XIV, 1912, p. 110.

mains as held to by the A. O. U. Committee. But Ridgway remarks (foot-note, page 279) that "if *S. nuchalis* is to be considered as merely a sub-species of *S. varius* then, most certainly, must *S. ruber* also." He inclines to the belief that all three are distinct species, the occasional intermediates being viewed as hybrids, much as in the case of the flickers. While *S. v. daggetti* is synonymized under *S. ruber ruber*, a foot-note (page 286) is indicative of Ridgway's general attitude of open-mindedness. He says: "Mr. Swarth [Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., x, 1912, page 35] seems to have made out a good case in favor of restriction of the name *ruber* to the northern form instead of the southern one. Unfortunately it is now too late for me to reopen the question."

"Western North America, east to and including Rocky Mountains; north to northern Alaska . . . ; south to western Mexico . . ." is the range assigned to the Western Belted Kingfisher, *Streptoceryle alcyon caurina* (Grinnell).

The Frosted Poor-will of the A. O. U. Check-list is thrown out by Ridgway, who lists the appertaining references (to *Phalaenoptilus nuttalli nitidus*) under *P. n. nuttalli*.

Our Barn Owl becomes *Tyto perlata pratincola*, this name applying to the species clear across North America and south to Nicaragua. "I am unable to discover constant differences of coloration between specimens from the eastern and western United States or between these and those from Mexico" (foot-note, page 606). *Tyto perlata perlata* is South American. *T. albus* of Europe is considered specifically distinct (page 601).

The supposed northwestern race of Saw-whet Owl, *Nyctala acadica scotaea* Osgood, is suppressed, this name appearing in the synonymy of *Cryptoglaux acadica* (page 633). Mr. Ridgway is unable "to make out any geographic variation in this species except a slight average difference in the hue of the brown of the upper and under parts, which is reddest in examples from the Pacific coast district", more grayish brown in those from the Rocky Mountains, and intermediate in those from the Atlantic side. These differences, as shown by present material, are not "sufficiently marked and constant to warrant subspecific division".

The Screech Owl of the Colorado Valley, named by Swarth *Otus asio gilmani*, is considered (foot-note, page 702) inseparable from the longer known *Otus asio cineraceus* (Ridgway), which ranges through southern Arizona. A new subspecies is described (page

700), *Otus asio brewsteri*, from the coast region of Oregon.

Of particular interest is Mr. Ridgway's conclusion, after adequate study of the case, that the Flammulated Screech Owl, *Otus flammeotus* (Kaup), presents absolutely no geographic variation. In other words no grounds whatever are found for recognizing a race *Otus asio idahoensis* (Merriam), which name has been allotted prominent place in western literature for over twenty years.

The Pigmy Owls along the Pacific coast are recognized as of three subspecies: *Glaucidium gnoma californicum* (Sclater), of the San Diegan district, the Sierra Nevada and the Cascades; *G. g. grinnelli* Ridgway (here newly named), of the humid coast belt from Monterey County to the mainland of British Columbia; and *G. g. swarthi* Grinnell, of Vancouver Island. The name *vigilante*, of Grinnell, becomes a synonym of *californicum*, owing to the discovery by Ridgway that Sclater's type, still extant in the Philadelphia Academy, belongs to the interior and southern form.

Mr. Ridgway finds that the Elf Owl presents three geographic races: *Micropallas whitneyi whitneyi* (Cooper), of southeastern California, southern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico; *M. w. sanfordi*, of southern Lower California; and *M. w. idoneus* of southern Texas and northeastern Mexico. The two latter forms are here newly described and named.—J. GRINNELL.

A MONOGRAPH OF THE GENUS CHORDEILES SWAINSON, TYPE OF A NEW FAMILY OF GOATSUCKERS. BY HARRY C. OBERHOLSER. [—United States National Museum, Bull. 86, April 6, 1914, pp. i-viii, 1-123, 6 plates.]

In this study of the nighthawks Mr. Oberholser has many changes to suggest in the generally accepted treatment of the group; and his researches in the genus *Chordeiles* have also incidentally resulted in important conclusions regarding certain others of the goatsuckers. The nighthawks, comprising the genus *Chordeiles*, are purely American in their distribution, while two of the three recognized species are distributed over much of that portion of America covered by the A. O. U. Check-List. They form an apparently well defined and circumscribed group of birds, and for various reasons afford an excellent subject for monographic treatment, there having been obvious necessity for such a study. Of the difficulties attending the work, one of the greatest was the need of a prodigious amount of material, while from the nature of the birds the average collector