

upper part of Strawberry Valley, the nest being at an altitude of approximately 7500 feet. It was discovered on July 4, and contained four small young. The parent bird was flushed from the nest. The second discovery, on July 5, was of a deserted nest, found in Dark Canyon, on the Banning road, northwest of Strawberry Valley.

On September 14, 1914, the present writer saw two Solitaires on the slopes of San Jacinto Peak, between Round Valley and the summit, and in September, 1915, Mr. L. E. Wyman tells me he collected three of the birds in Tahquitz Valley, and saw several more. These, of course, might all have been migrating individuals.

The breeding record of Messrs. Howard and Lelande is of especial interest as establishing the presence of the species at the extreme southern limit of the Boreal zone in California. Previous to this the Townsend Solitaire was known to breed in southern California only in the San Bernardino Mountains (Grinnell, Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., vol. 5, 1908, p. 128).—H. S. SWARTH, *Museum of History, Science and Art, Los Angeles, California*.

Auburn Canyon Wren, a Preferable Name for *Catherpes mexicanus punctulatus*.—We have no recourse against misnomers in scientific nomenclature provided they establish priority; but it is silly to perpetuate in common speech the trivialities, or whimsicalities, or downright misapprehensions, of original describers. I have no quarrel with Mr. Ridgway for having named a new race of *Catherpes punctulatus*. He had to name it something and he may have been struck at the time with an aspect of his new bird which later experience proved not to be distinctive. At any rate in his latest description (*Birds of North & Middle America, Part III, p. 659*), Mr. Ridgway does not even refer to this feature of punctateness. He merely says of *C. m. punctulatus*: "Similar in small size to *C. m. conspersus* but decidedly darker".

This darker coloration, then, is the point to emphasize, and the point which should have been brought out in nomenclature (doubtless would have been if *brunneicapillus* had been accurately descriptive or had not already been worn to a frazzle in the service of the Wrens), instead of a purely hypothetical dottedness. Now, every one who knows this jolly mountaineer of California, knows that his coat is of a rich auburn hue. To call him "Dotted" by preëminence, is to imply that his conspecific associates are *not* dotted, or not as conspicuously dotted as he, which is not at all the case. To cling to such a misconception or false emphasis merely for custom's sake is to repeat the offense and to be unscientific. I propose, then, as a designation both suitable and distinctive for the California bird the name *Auburn Canyon Wren*.

This same method of criticism may be applied to several other cases, fortunately only a residual few among Western bird-names. The name "Long-tailed Chat" for *Icteria virens longicauda* is technically correct; the bird has a longer tail than its eastern relative, *a third of an inch longer!* but no one would ever have seized upon such a trivial mark for a name, save in ignorance and sheer despair. Besides, the western bird has half a dozen other distinctive characters just as palpable. And there are only two Chats. For pity's sake and for the sake of our own good sense, let us cease to brandish this extra third of an inch on a bird's tail. Call it the Western Chat.

As another instance of the poverty of attention or laziness of invention, behold our literal translation of *Rallus levipes*, the Light-footed Rail, of course! And because of this flippant character (whose claims it would take a two-pound can of printers' ink to successfully define anyway), we are suffered to forget that the southern bird is a *Clapper Rail*. But "Light-footed Rail" does sound well. It flicks the imagination and is undeniably romantic. It almost picks the pocket of my prejudice. Light-fingered Rail would do it quite. Moreover, the name as it stands has a market value. Why, the skin of a "Light-footed Rail" sounds twice as expensive as would the skin of a Southwestern Clapper Rail with its implied taint of subspecificity. I have neither skins nor eggs myself, but I withdraw my objection in this case in favor of certain worthy friends, worthy and needy.

Remains only one sticker in the writer's dyspeptic crop, the "Ashy" Petrel, *Oceanodroma homochroa*. The bird simply *isn't* ashy. It is plumbeous black. The man of only ordinary intelligence picking up a waif Petrel on the strand out of range, has to consult his books to know whether his find is really an "Ashy" Petrel, or a Black Petrel (*O. melania*). No amount of nomenclatorial abuse heaped upon this bird will ever make its plumage recognizably cinereous. Why not call it, then, after the worthy man who discovered it, "Coues" Petrel?—WILLIAM LEON DAWSON, *Santa Barbara, California*.