

**Generic Re-assignment of *Morphnus daggetti*.**—In 1915 the present writer published in THE CONDOR (XVII, p. 179) a brief description of a long-shanked eagle from the Rancho La Brea Pleistocene which was assigned to the genus *Morphnus*. The species (*daggetti*) was again referred to in a general paper on Rancho La Brea submitted in 1916, but which, owing to war conditions, was not issued until 1925 (Publ. Carnegie Inst. Wash., 349, p. 97). The tibio-tarsus was here discussed, and the former impression of reduced predatory habit was reaffirmed.

Since these publications were issued, new fossil remains have appeared in the Carpinteria asphalt, and new comparative material from tropical America has become available. It has long been my own feeling that the assignment of the bird to the genus *Morphnus* was at the time of the original announcement the lesser of two evils, but that a review would ultimately become necessary. My very generous co-worker and friend, Dr. Alexander Wetmore, urged the step some time ago and, with the present enlarged opportunity for comparison, the time seems now ripe for such discussion.

Among the eagle tarsi from the newly developed Carpinteria beds, the most abundantly represented species is *Morphnus daggetti*. Others present are *Geranoaëtus grinnelli*, *Geranoaëtus fragilis*, *Geranoaëtus* sp., and *Neogyps errans*, all extinct species, known from the tarsus. Of these eagles, *M. daggetti* runs to maximum size, as judged by stoutness of the bones, although size differences are so slight that there is almost an intergradation down to the smallest *G. fragilis*.

Unfortunately, none of the specimens of the Daggett Eagle is entire; but fragments are numerous enough to indicate more individuals than were retrieved from the entire Rancho la Brea excavations. Since all specimens from Carpinteria have suffered fracture, it is furthermore impossible to determine the exact length and the relative position of the papilla of the tibialis anticus; but by placing the fragments alongside each other in the proper positions, an exceedingly close conformity with the type is evident and no hesitation is felt in assigning the Carpinteria specimens to the same species as the Rancho La Brea bird.

*Morphnus guianensis* is available for this study only as a carefully made cast, later fractured, taken from a right tarsus in the British Museum. It represents a bird smaller than the maximum of *Archibuteo ferrugineus*, but with decidedly longer and weaker tarsus. *Spizaëtus ornatus* (Daudin), another morphnine, is available from the collections of D. R. Dickey. Other neotropical raptors, including a fair series of *Urubitinga urubitinga*, are available in the collection of Mr. Dickey and in that of the writer. Elongation of the shank in *Morphnus* and *Spizaëtus* falls far short of that seen in the urubitinga group, where it reaches the same grotesque degree seen in the Pleistocene Daggett Eagle. In fact with this recent material available there is no hesitation in placing the Pleistocene bird nearer to *Urubitinga* than to *Morphnus*. It is a truly eagle-sized bird, however, ranging in weight above the largest *Aquila* at hand. Aside from the heroic size, there appear numerous osteological differences that demand the establishment of a distinct genus for its accommodation. Such category is here proposed, as follows:

WETMOREGYPUS, new genus, type *Morphnus daggetti* Miller

**Generic characters.**—Size equal to, or greater than, *Aquila*; tarsus extremely elongate; papilla of tibialis anticus placed high up on the shaft, resulting in a ratio of power arm over weight arm of approximately 12.5 per cent; superficial resemblance to *Urubitinga urubitinga*, but less excavated on the antero-proximal face and with trochleae more nearly of equal size and elevation.

Additional points of divergence from *U. urubitinga* include the following: (1) Inner cotyla exceeds the outer to a greater degree; (2) sagittal diameter of head greater in relation to transverse diameter; (3) outer hypotarsal ridge lower but broader; (4) scar of the distal rudiment of metatarsal 1 shorter and placed centrad from the inner profile of the bone; distal foramen placed lower down.

*Urubitinga* is not a walking bird as we observed it in El Salvador, since it was always met with in the forest association. *Polyborus cheriway*, which is an excellent walker, was also abundant in this same association. Both birds impressed us as rather poor predators, and the strong superficial resemblance of the Daggett Eagle to these weak-footed and small-mouthed raptors suggests a similar habit.

Chaney and Mason's study of the fossil flora of Carpinteria (Science, LXVI, 1927, no. 1702, p. 156) indicates a forested area during Pleistocene. It may, then, be a purely ecologic factor that makes the Daggett Eagle the most abundant of raptors in that deposit, the rarest at Rancho La Brea, and entirely wanting at McKittrick.

The new generic name here proposed is in honor of Dr. Alexander Wetmore of Washington, D. C.—LOYE MILLER, *University of California at Los Angeles, May 29, 1928.*

## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

An indication of the progress being made in bird banding in Western North America is given by the Census of Birds Banded in the Western Province for the calendar year 1927 on pages 14 and 15 of the April, 1928, number of *News From the Bird Banders*, published by the Western Bird Banding Association. Totals of 160 species and subspecies, and 18,891 individual birds are shown, which are substantial increases over the corresponding figures of 145 and 11,445 for 1926. The birds represented by these census figures, and those for previous years, have been the basis of a considerable amount of study, some of the results of which have appeared in THE CONDOR, in papers presented at Cooper Club meetings, and elsewhere.—H. M.

A correspondent makes the pertinent suggestion that we emphasize the impropriety of anyone's writing extensively for publication without reading what has been written on the same subject by others within at least the preceding five years. It is pointed out that there seems to be a marked tendency of modern bird students to ignore preceding literature; too many current contributors publish regularly on the basis of their own personal background of experience exclusively. Surely, there can be no argument for such narrow individualism. Real advance in knowledge must be based on the aggregate experience of all investigators insofar as it is available. The complaint is made, with which we hold some sympathy, that literature has accumulated to a point where it is practically impossible for a person to be sure he has found all previous contributions

even in his own section of the general field. But, again, it certainly is possible for a prospective author to acquaint himself with what has appeared in the chief ornithological magazines during the relatively brief preceding period of five years or so.—J.G.

Prospective contributors to THE CONDOR should understand that we accept articles only on condition that they are submitted for use exclusively in this magazine. In other words, we feel strongly that we are not justified in printing in our magazine any article already published elsewhere, no matter how seemingly important, or in what other periodical printed. There is rarely any excuse at all for simultaneous publication of the same article in two or more journals; it is a waste financially and is not in the interests of bibliography. We are distressed to find that the Golden-crowned Sparrow record from Massachusetts printed in our May issue had also appeared in the April issue of *The Auk*. May *Condor* was in press before April *Auk* reached us, and we had no information previously that any such duplication was in prospect.

The Boston Society of Natural History has just published, in its Proceedings (volume 39, April, 1928, pages 33-72, plates 4 [portrait] and 5), a biographical sketch of Edward Howe Forbush, who is just this year retiring from his position as Ornithologist of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This biography is written by John B. May who, we understand, succeeds Mr. Forbush in office. We have read the biography with keen interest,