

HOLOQUISCALUS CAYMANENSIS (Cory).

Quiscalus caymanensis Cory, Auk, iii. pp. 499-502; Ridgw. Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. 1887, p. 574.

Holoquiscalus caymanensis Ridgw. Proc. Wash. Ac. Sci. iii. p. 151 (1901).

Three males and two females.

This is a smaller bird than *H. gundlachi*, which is found in Cuba, and the contour-feathers in the *male* exhibit a bluish or violet-blue gloss as compared with a more purely violet gloss in Cuban birds. The quill-feathers have a beautiful bluish purple sheen, while the wing-coverts are shiny bluish green.

Female (previously undescribed). Similar to the male, but distinctly smaller and duller and lacking the rich bluish purple gloss; the black of the upper parts has a greenish hue, while the lower parts have a dull brownish tint, with hardly any gloss.

Female examples of this genus which hail from the Greater Antillean Islands do not exhibit the brown coloration which obtains in those from the Lesser Antilles and further south.

I append measurements of four males and two females.

| | Wing. | Tail. | Exposed culmen. | Tarsus. |
|-------------|-------|-------|--------------------|---------|
| | mm. | mm. | mm. | mm. |
| Ad. ♂ . . . | 133 | 115 | 29 | 32 |
| Ad. ♂ . . . | 133 | 115 | 29 | 32 |
| Ad. ♂ . . . | 133 | 114 | 32 | 35 |
| Ad. ♂ . . . | 136 | 113 | 32 | 35 |
| Ad. ♀ . . . | 119 | 100 | 25 | 29 |
| Ad. ♀ . . . | 114 | 101 | 25 | 29 |

XIV.—*Remarks on the Practice of attaching "Authorities" to the Scientific Names of Animals.* By P. L. SCLATER, D.Sc., F.R.S.

LINNÆUS, as we all know, was the founder of the Binomial System of nomenclature for animals and plants. Before his time authors had invented "Genera," but had generally

used a short diagnosis for the designation of the species. Linnæus converted the diagnosis into a single specific name, and established the system, now universally adopted, that animals and plants should have two scientific names and two names *only*—one that of the genus and the other that of the species.

The immediate followers of Linnæus adhered pretty closely to his rule, but in course of time, as the multitude of names increased, the custom arose of adding the name of the author to the generic and specific names. So far has this custom been carried by many writers that even the most familiar names, such as "*Corvus corax*" and "*Turdus musicus*," are not considered to be complete unless the name of the authority be placed after them. Thus, if this custom be invariably followed, we should have in fact a trinomial system of nomenclature instead of the simple binomial system of Linnæus.

When the number of genera began to be augmented and the names of animals were often transferred from one genus to another, it became a question whether the authority to be attached to the generic and specific names should be the name of the writer who first gave the species its specific name or the name of the writer who first placed the species in the proper genus and made a correct combination of the generic and specific names. After some discussion it was generally agreed that the name appended to the genus and species should be that of the writer who first described the *species*, but that if a subsequent writer transferred the species into a different genus, the first writer's name should be enclosed in brackets. Thus the name of the Song-Thrush still remains "*Turdus musicus*," but that of the Rock-Thrush, "*Turdus cyanus*" of Linnæus, on being transferred into the genus *Monticola*, became *Monticola cyanus* (Linn.), not *Monticola cyanus* Boie.

The question I now wish to consider is whether it is necessary or advisable to continue this practice of *always* adding the name of the author who first described the species to the generic and specific names, and thus, as I have said,

to convert the binomial system of Linnæus into a trinomial system.

In the case of the non-scientific or ordinary reader it seems to me that this practice is of very little advantage or rather of no use at all. It is probably quite as much as the ordinary reader can do to recollect the two terms of which a scientific name is composed, without having to carry in his memory also the name of the author who first published the specific name. Moreover, the author's name is frequently stated only in such an abbreviated or symbolical form as to be quite unintelligible except to the expert zoologist. Thus, “ Bp.,” “ Gm.,” &c., which often occur in zoological literature, are terms well understood by the zoologist, but are undecipherable enigmas to the outsider, and, so far as he is concerned, may be advantageously omitted.

To the expert also, that the name of the authority for the species should be added to the generic and specific name seems to be of very little advantage. In the case of all familiar animals (such as *Felis leo*, *Turdus musicus*, *Bufo calamita*, &c.), it may safely be omitted, as conveying no additional information whatever. In the case of the less-known species it would be much better to give, when it is considered necessary, a reference to the original description of the species or to some standard work (such as the ‘ Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum ’) in which it has been described. In the case of “ British Birds ” it is obviously unnecessary to give more than the generic and specific names under which the species is designated in the List of the B.O.U. This List was specially prepared for the use of writers in ‘ The Ibis ’ by a Committee of experts. Saunders used the same names in his excellent ‘ Manual,’ and, with very few exceptions, they remain valid at the present time.

I will not on the present occasion go into the vexed question of “ subspecies ” and how to call them, but merely repeat the conclusions which I have come to on this subject as follows :—

- (1) That the “ authority ” (as it is usually called) does

not form a part of the scientific name of any species, but, when added, is merely for convenience of reference.

(2) That in the case of the names of all well-known species the "authority" is quite unnecessary and may be altogether omitted.

XV.—*Obituary.*

Mr. W. H. HUDLESTON.

It is but three months since the four surviving Original Members still on the List of the B.O.U. were presented with Commemorative Medals, and already one has passed from our midst, for we have now to announce, with the greatest regret, the death of Mr. W. H. Hudleston. The following paragraphs are extracted from the full "Life" which he himself wrote last year for the Jubilee Supplement:—

Previous to April 1867 Hudleston was known as Wilfrid Hudleston Simpson, and it was whilst bearing this name that most of his ornithological work was done. He was born at York on the 2nd June, 1828, and spent the years from 1838 to 1843 at the Collegiate School in that city, now St. Peter's School. Those were the days before scientific farming had reduced our fences, and there was a fine field for the bird's-nester.

In 1843 young Simpson went to Uppingham School, being then 15 years of age. Here, for three successive seasons, he indulged in his favourite pursuit in a locality which at that time was certainly favourable to ornithological rambles. Kites had only just disappeared from those large woods which were remnants of the old forest of Rockingham, but some of the local eggs were still preserved in Bell's collection.

The scene now shifts to Cambridge, when the glories of Fenland were already in a transition state. The seasons of 1847, 1848, and 1849 are those with which we have to deal. Simpson spent no small part of his time during the spring months in fen localities, and the area of his operations extended from Whittlesey Mere, on the west, to the fens of



Slater, Philip Lutley. 1909. "Remarks on the Practice of attacking
"Authorities" to the Scientific Names of Animals." *Ibis* 3(2), 347–350.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1474-919x.1909.tb05266.x>.

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