

in the middle ages applied vaguely to many shades of red, now applied to mixture of red and blue in various proportions, usually containing also some black or white or both, approaching on the one side to crimson and on the other to violet." The Purple Finch was therefore appropriately named though approaching to crimson, while the Purple Grackle and the Purple Martin were equally well named though approaching to violet. My notion of "purple" evidently inclines to the violet.

In this letter my correspondent also says—"I used to hear the Wood Thrush called the 'red Mavis' at Framingham, Mass., where I spent my childhood." This is interesting as indicating a possible transit of the name with some early colonists and its local survival.

In Newton's "Dictionary of Birds" I find the following in a footnote under "Woodpecker"—"The number of English names, ancient and modern, by which these birds are known is very great, and even a bare list of them could not be here given. The Anglo-Saxon was *Higera* or *Higere*, and to this may plausibly be traced 'Hickwall,' nowadays used in some parts of the country, and the older 'Hickway,' corrupted first into 'High-haw,' and, after its original meaning was lost, into 'Hewhole,' which in North America has been still further corrupted into 'Highhole' and more recently into 'High-holder.'"—SPENCER TROTTER, *Swarthmore College, Penn.*

RECENT LITERATURE.

Ridgway's Birds of North and Middle America. Part V.¹—This long delayed volume forming Part V of Mr. Ridgway's great work appeared November 29, 1911, but was not generally distributed until more than a month later. It comprises the remaining Passerine families, Pteroptochidæ (1 species), Formicariidæ (66 species and subspecies), Furnariidæ (29),

¹ The Birds | of North and Middle America | a Descriptive Catalogue | of the | Higher Groups, Genera, Species, and Subspecies of Birds | known to occur in North America, from the | Arctic Lands to the Isthmus of Panama | the West Indies and other Islands | of the Caribbean Sea, and the | Galapagos Archipelago | by | Robert Ridgway | Curator, Division of birds.

Part V. | Family Pteroptochidæ—The Tapaculos Family Dendrocolaptidæ—The Woodhewers | Family Formicariidæ—The Antbirds Family Trochilidæ—The Humming Birds | Family Furnariidæ—The Ovenbirds Family Micropodidæ—The Swifts | Family Trogonidæ—The Trogons | — | Washington: | Government Printing Office. | 1911. = Bulletin of the United States National Museum. No. 50. Part V. — 8vo. pp. i-xxiii + 1-859, pll. i-xxxiii.

and Dendrocolaptidæ (41) as well as the Trochilidæ (174), Micropodidæ (25) and Trogonidæ (23) of the Coraciiformes.

The style of treatment, details of synonymy and distribution, etc., are fully up to the high standard of the preceding volumes, while the mass of information relating to extralimital species contained in the keys and foot-notes will be as heretofore most welcome to the student of South American birds. While this volume, covering as it does, the exceedingly difficult Tracheophone families and Hummingbirds is perhaps a more valuable contribution to ornithology than any of its predecessors, it contains but few species which range north of the Mexican boundary. In fact only twenty-three of the forms here treated are to be found in the A. O. U. Check-List and unfortunately for those who hoped that stability in nomenclature had been reached in the last edition of that work, Mr. Ridgway has found occasion to alter the names of seven of them. These proposed changes however are all questions of specific or subspecific rank or of the subdivision of genera — largely matters of personal opinion. The genus *Trogon* is subdivided and *T. ambiguus* is placed in *Trogonurus*; *Cypseloides* meets the same fate and our Black Swift appears as *Nephæctes niger borealis*; *Uranomitra* is united with *Amizilis*; *Atthis morcomi* is regarded as a subspecies of *A. heloisa* and *Amizilis chalconota* as a subspecies of *A. yucatanensis* not of *A. cerviniventris* while the recognition of extralimital subspecies of *A. tzacatl* and *Basilinna leucotis* requires the duplication of the specific name in the North American forms in order to conform to the method adopted by the new edition of the Check-List and by Mr. Ridgway.

Most of the new forms described during the progress of the work have been published elsewhere but the following date from the present volume; *Campylorhamphus trochilirostris major* Rdgw. p. 269, *Popelairia conversiæ salvini* Zeledon ms. p. 680, *Chrysotrogon ramonianus goeldii* Rdgw. p. 786 and two new genera *Chrysotrogon*, p. 784, and *Mearnsia*, p. 686.

While following the prevalent custom of adopting the original spelling of names Mr. Ridgway now and then finds himself unable to live up to the practice. For instance *guy* is emended to *guyi* and *Manikup* is rejected entirely as 'barbarous and cacophonous.' The recent wide-spread discussion as to the proper method of fixing generic types has led the author to leave some cases in abeyance. For instance he adopts *Archilochus* for *Trochilus* of authors but fails to substitute the latter for *Aithurus*; and he adopts the admittedly untenable name *Rhopoterpe* pending the fixing of the type of *Myrmornis*. These are trivial matters but it seems unfortunate that they could not have been settled in a work of such scope and authority.

It is welcome news to learn that good progress has been made with Part VI and we feel sure that ornithologists, the world over, while renewing their acknowledgment of indebtedness to Mr. Ridgway, will wish him every facility for the successful completion of the great task that he has undertaken.— W. S.



Ridgway, Robert. 1912. "Ridgway's Birds of North and Middle America. Part V." *The Auk* 29, 256–257. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4071401>.

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