

Oberholser on *Larus hyperboreus barrovianus*.¹—In this paper, Dr. Oberholser again comes to the support of the Pt. Barrow Gull, a form originally separated from the Glaucous Gull by Mr. Ridgway in 1886 as a full species and so recognized in the second edition of the A. O. U. 'Check-List.' In 1906 after a study of a large series of these birds Dr. J. Dwight came to the conclusion that the alleged differences were not sufficiently marked to warrant recognition of *Larus barrovianus* and reduced the name to a synonym of *L. glaucus* [= *hyperboreus*] a view that was endorsed by the A. O. U. Committee and it was omitted from the third edition of the 'Check-List.' In 1918, Dr. Oberholser in an elaborate paper published in 'The Auk' proposed to resurrect it as a subspecies, a view which Mr. Ridgway, the original describer of the form had failed to take in his 'Birds of North and Middle America' the eighth volume of which, containing the Gulls appeared the next year. Dr. Dwight promptly met Dr. Oberholser's attempt at resurrection with an additional attack on the validity of the form and Dr. Oberholser now reappears in defence. All of this only demonstrates that with the same material available two or more authorities will have opposite opinions upon the recognition of subspecies based upon such finely drawn distinctions as are now so prevalent in systematic work. There is no "right" or "wrong" in such questions, it is simply a matter of personal opinion. The only fair way of treating such cases in our Check-Lists, it would seem, would be to state both views. Any other method obscures the facts in the case.—Dr. Oberholser's final argument, that a number of ornithologists to whom he had pointed out the characters of *L. barrovianus* agreed with him, reminds one of the *auctorum plurimorum* principal once so popular in discussing problems of nomenclature! — W. S.

Contributions to the Zoogeography of the Palæarctic Region.²—

This issue is the first part of a new publication and contains two papers by Erwin Stressemann on the forms of the group *Ægithalos caudatus* and their hybrids, of which *Æ. c. romanus* (p. 10) from Rome is described as new; and on the European Bullfinches with a chart of their evolution.

Of the former group he recognizes fourteen pure-blooded forms, which he divides into three groups, and five hybrids. There is much discussion upon the nature of these forms.

Of the Bullfinches there are five races and one hybrid. Just where the recognition of so many natural hybrids in addition to subspecies is going to lead us it is hard to say.

In America there seems to be but little necessity for such a hypothesis

¹ The Status of *Larus hyperboreus barrovianus* Ridgway. By Harry C. Oberholser. Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington. Vol. 32, pp. 173-176. September 30, 1919.

² Beiträge zur Zoogeographie der palaarktischen Region. Herausgegeben von der Ornithologischen Gesellschaft in Bayern. Heft I, September 15, 1919. München 1919 Gustav Fischer in Jena. Preis Mk. 5.



Oberholser, Harry C. 1920. "Oberholser on *Larus hyperboreus barrovianus*." *The Auk* 37, 166–166. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4073021>.

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