

It may be that when the birds feed on refuse or carrion that there is not enough binding material to hold the pellets together for any length of time. Will not some one who lives in Raven territory collect more data?—RALPH HOFFMANN, *Santa Barbara, California*.

The Purple Grackle at Albany, Georgia.—During the week of April 14 to 22, I was very much interested in observing two pair of Purple Grackles feeding in the residence section of Albany, Ga., within one block of the business district. The four birds frequented this locality only, so far as I was able to learn, during that time and were observed and commented on by a number of people. They were remarkably tame and fed on the lawns within five feet of parties in conversation. Both pairs, so far as I could judge, were in full plumage and attracted considerable attention. The locality on which they fed during the entire week did not cover more than two city blocks. We never note these birds in the cities, through this section, which caused my interest.—PETER A. BRANNON, *Department of Archives, Montgomery, Ala.*

Note on the Generic Names *Schiffornis* Bonaparte and *Scotothorus* Oberholser.—The generic name *Schiffornis* was first proposed by Bonaparte (*Ateneo Italiano*, II, No. 11, August, 1854, p. 314) as follows:

"34. *Schiffornis*, Bp.—74. *major*, Bp.—75. *turdina* Wied.—76. *minor* Schiff."

As Dr. C. E. Hellmayr has already indicated (*Genera Avium*, IX, 1910, p. 24), two of the three specific names originally included—*major* Bonaparte and *minor* Schiff—were at that time nomina nuda. The third, "*turdina* Wied," is readily identifiable as *Muscicapa turdina* Wied (*Beitr. Naturg. Brasil*, III, Abt. 2, 1831, p. 817), which is the type of the genus *Scotothorus* Oberholser (*Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila.*, 1899, p. 208). Dr. Hellmayr concludes that the name *Schiffornis* as used by Bonaparte in the publication above cited is a nomen nudum, because "two of the three species mentioned (*S. major* and *S. minor*) were undescribed at that time, while the third (*S. turdina*) belongs to *Scotothorus*." It seems clear, however, that this disposition of the name is not the correct one, while the two species, *S. major* and *S. minor*, being then undescribed, are, of course, not to be considered, the third, *S. turdina* Wied, which is perfectly tenable, becomes, by virtual monotypy, the type of *Schiffornis* Bonaparte. Since, furthermore, the name *Schiffornis* Bonaparte is long anterior to *Scotothorus* Oberholser and has the same species for its type, it must take the place of the latter, and the species and subspecies of that genus stand as follows:

Schiffornis turdinus turdinus (Wied).

Schiffornis turdinus wallacii (Sclater and Salvin).

Schiffornis turdinus olivaceus (Ridgway).

Schiffornis turdinus amazonus (Sclater).

Schiffornis turdinus rosenbergi (Hartert).

Schiffornis turdinus furvus (Ridgway).

Schiffornis turdinus veraepacis (Sclater and Salvin).

Schiffornis turdinus stenorhynchus (Sclater and Salvin).

Schiffornis unicolor (Bonaparte).

Schiffornis pallescens (Lafresnaye).

Schiffornis sulphureiventer (Hellmayr).

Schiffornis chrysocephalus (Pelzeln).

This disposition of the generic name *Schiffornis* leaves the group formerly called by this name without a generic designation, and we, therefore, propose to call it *Massornis* (μάσσων, major, ὄρνις, avis), nom. nov., and designate as the type species *Schiffornis major* Des Murs. This, the only species of the genus, will consequently be known as *Massornis major* (Des Murs).—HARRY C. OBERHOLSER, *Washington, D. C.*

Evening Grosbeak (*Hesperiphona v. vespertina*) in Minnesota in Mid-summer.—On July 28, 1900, on a bright and beautiful sunny day, between the hours of 12 and 1, while the family was seated at the dinner table, I was startled by a flock of at least five or six Evening Grosbeaks, which lit in a medium-sized Box-Elder tree near my home in Aitkin. I was so astonished that in our eagerness to see the birds both Mrs. Lano and I rushed to the open door to get a glimpse of them. They evidently heard us, for they were alarmed and flew away before we could see any of them. The distance between the tree and the dinner table was less than twenty-five feet and since there was also an open window beside the door on the same side of the house as the tree, their call notes could be heard very distinctly. They were very restless and called loudly, more so than I had ever heard them during winter seasons. Of their identity I was positive beyond the slightest shade of doubt, for I had observed the species for more than 15 years during their winter visits to the state.

Again I take the following from my notes: Aug. 4, 1903, while on my way from my home to my place of business at 7:30 A. M., I saw two Evening Grosbeaks flying over in a northwesterly direction. Both were uttering their familiar plaintive notes which can not possibly be mistaken for any other North American species.

My latest spring date is May 19, 1901, when a small flock was observed in town. But these, no doubt, were belated migrants on their way north to their summer home. If Evening Grosbeaks do not nest in Aitkin County, what were these birds doing there in mid-summer? If only an individual had been observed on one or two occasions it would be considered accidental. I am certain that some future day some ornithologist living in Aitkin County or even farther north, who will have more time at his disposal, will discover the species nesting, if not regularly, at least occasionally.—ALBERT LANO, *Fayetteville, Arkansas.*



Oberholser, Harry C. 1920. "Note on the Generic Names Schiffornis Bonaparte and Scotothorus Oberholser." *The Auk* 37, 454–455.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/4073278>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/54106>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/4073278>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/86453>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Smithsonian

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.