

Robinson and Richmond on Birds from La Guaira, Venezuela.¹ — This annotated list of 83 species is based on collections made by Captain Robinson in 1895 and 1900. The "identifications, descriptions of new species, and critical notes" are by Dr. Richmond and the field notes by Captain Robinson. One species, *Microcerculus pectoralis*, is described as new, and there are a few corrections of nomenclature. The proper generic name of *Falco unicinctus* Temm. (= *Regerhinus unicinctus* auct.) is given as *Chondrohierax* Lesson, 1843. — J. A. A.

Embody's 'Birds of Madison County, New York.'² — This list was presented as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science at Colgate University, and forms a brochure of 36 pages. It "is not supposed to be complete," being based mostly on the observations of the writer during the period 1895-1901, and includes for the most part only species actually taken by him, "whose object has been to put forth an accurate list rather than one great in numbers." The list proper, judiciously annotated, numbers 191 species, with a supplementary 'Hypothetical List' of 16 species. The paper is a welcome contribution to faunal literature. — J. A. A.

Osgood's Contributions to the Natural History of the Queen Charlotte Islands and the Cook Inlet Region of Alaska.³ — During the field season of 1901 Mr. Osgood, with Mr. Edmund Heller as assistant, was sent to explore the Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia, and the Cook Inlet Region of Alaska, in the interest of the Biological Survey. A little over a month, June 13 to July 18, was devoted to the Queen Charlotte Islands, the three largest of the group, Graham, Moresby, and Prevost being visited. The weather proved very unfavorable, yet the results of the trip greatly increase our knowledge of these previously little known islands. A brief account is given of their discovery and previous slight exploration, of their physiography, flora, fauna, and life zones, and a bibliography of previous references of their natural history. An extensively annotated

¹ An Annotated List of Birds collected in the vicinity of La Guaira, Venezuela. By Wirt Robinson, Captain. U. S. Army, and Charles W. Richmond, Assistant Curator of Birds, [U. S. National Museum]. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., Vol. XXIV, No. 1247, pp. 163-178, 1901.

² Birds of Madison County, New York. By George Charles Embody, B. S. Bull. Depart. Geol. and Nat. Hist., Colgate University. 8vo, pp. 36, Hamilton, N. Y., 1901.

³ Natural History of the Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia. Natural History of the Cook Inlet Region, Alaska. By Wilfred H. Osgood, Assistant, Biological Survey. Prepared under the direction of Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Chief of Division of Biological Survey. North American Fauna, No. 21, Sept. 26, 1901. Pp. 87, map, and 5 half-tone pll.

list of the mammals, with descriptions of several new species, follows, succeeded by a briefly annotated list of 98 species of birds (pp. 38-50). About one third of these are given on the authority of Rev. J. H. Keen, an observant missionary long resident at Massett, Graham Island, and other authorities, while about one sixth are recorded as 'seen' or 'heard,' and in too many instances for a creditable hard-and-fast list, as "supposed" or "thought to be" this or that species. Of course, in so short a time, large collections could not be made, and it would seem better to be content with a smaller list based on positive information than to increase it at the cost of many weak or uncertain records, however great the probabilities in their favor. Yet much valuable ornithological material was obtained, on which are based several new forms, here for the first time described, namely: (1) *Nyctala acadica scotæa*, (2) *Dryobates picoides*, (3) *Cyanocitta stelleri carlottæ*; to which should be added (4) *Sphyrapicus ruber flaviventris* (Vieillot), by which name Mr. Osgood proposes to recognize the northern Red-breasted Sapsucker of Vancouver Island and the mainland of British Columbia.

The Cook Inlet country was reached August 21, and work was carried on till September 28. This was "the only general district of consequence on the Pacific coast of Alaska that had not been recently visited by naturalists," and the results obtained there by Messrs. Osgood and Heller are therefore of unusual importance. The region is treated in this paper after the same general plan as the Queen Charlotte Islands, namely, a statement is given of the itinerary, an account of the physiography, flora, and fauna, including an annotated list of the trees and woody plants, as well as of the mammals and birds. The annotated list of birds (pp. 72-81) numbers 78 species, of which about 30 are based on specimens in the U. S. National Museum taken by Ferdinand Bischoff at Fort Kanai in 1869, or by Bean, Townsend and Evermann during brief visits to Cook Inlet in the Fish Commission steamer 'Fish-hawk.' As no account of the Bischoff Collection, aside from casual references to individual specimens, has been published, Mr. Osgood's record of this material is a most welcome addition to his list, which contains much valuable information based on his own observations.

Respecting the Cook Inlet region in general, Mr. Osgood states that "the plant and animal life of Cook Inlet is very closely similar to that of the Yukon Valley, or in more general terms, to that of the interior of Alaska. This condition is the more noteworthy, since the fauna and the flora of the same coast south of Cook Inlet are in marked contrast to those of the interior in the same latitude. Since coast influences are usually conducive to life that is relatively more boreal than that of the interior, large faunal regions of the interior seldom extend to the actual coast, except with considerable modification."

The half-tone plates contain eight views of the characteristic vegetation and scenery of the two regions visited, and six figures illustrate the skulls of new species of mammals described from the Queen Charlotte Islands.

The paper as a whole is a most important contribution to our knowledge of the natural history of two previously very little known areas. — J. A. A.

Verrill's '*The Story of the Cahow.*'¹—When the Bermudas were first visited by Europeans, about three hundred years ago (1593 and later), they were without human inhabitants, but were the resort of immense numbers of seabirds, notably of Terns and Shearwaters, doubtless several species of each, and, among other birds, by the '*Cahow*,' of which we have only the imperfect accounts left us by the first visitors to these islands. These, quoted at length by Professor Verrill, fail to give us a very satisfactory description of the bird, but sufficient to show that it could not be any species known to science. It was a migratory bird, which came to the islands in October in great abundance, and left in June, depositing its single large white egg in a burrow in the sand, in December and January. Its flesh was described as excellent, "and for that reason it was captured at night in large numbers, while its eggs were constantly gathered for food." From these facts Professor Verrill argues that it could not have been a shearwater, with which some writers have identified it, as these birds do not breed till March or April, even in the West Indies, and their flesh is oily and nauseating, and their eggs musky and inedible. Nor could it be any species of gull or tern, which also breed late and lay spotted eggs. It is described as of the size of a pigeon, with a strong hooked bill, a russet brown back, white belly, and russet and white wing-quills. Concerning its affinities Verrill says: "There is no known living bird that agrees with it in these several characters. Most certainly it could not have been a shearwater, nor any member of the petrel family, all of which have such a disagreeable flavor that neither their flesh nor their eggs are edible. It seems to me far more probable that it was allied to the auks (*Alcidæ*), many of which burrow in the ground and lay white, edible eggs. The northern auks have also edible flesh and often a strong hooked bill. But no existing species breeds so far south, nor do they breed in winter. The Cahow may have spent the summer in the southern hemisphere, but possibly it was an arctic bird that produced a southern brood in winter. Or it may possibly have been a localized pelagic species, coming to the land only for breeding purposes."

So many of the birds and their eggs were gathered for food that as early as 1616 they had declined so greatly in numbers that a law was passed, "but overlate," "against the spoyle and havock of the cahowes, and other birds, which were almost all of them killed and scared away very improvidently by fire, diggeinge, stoneinge, and all kinds of murderings." Doubtless the cahows were not long after wholly exterminated.

¹ *The Story of the Cahow. The Mysterious Extinct Bird of the Bermudas.* By Professor A. E. Verrill, Yale University. *Popular Science Monthly*, Vol. LX, Nov., 1901, pp. 22-30.



Osgood, Wilfred Hudson. 1902. "Osgood's Contributions to the Natural History of the Queen Charlotte Islands and the Cook Inlet Region of Alaska." *The Auk* 19, 108–110. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4069247>.

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