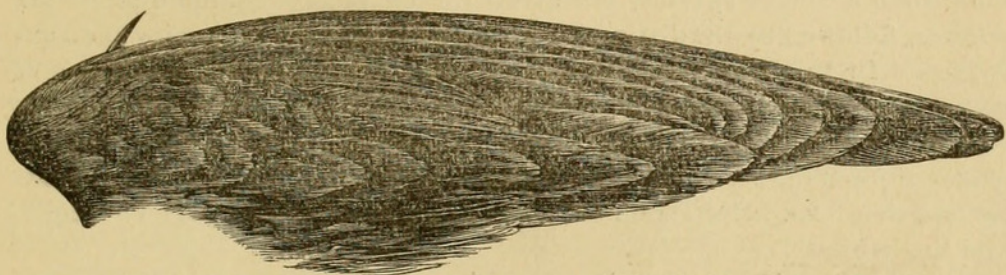


Professor Ridgway writes (1884) that the only bird in the National Museum collection having abnormal toes is a Gull. It is evidently a thing of rare occurrence, and further light on the subject from other collectors would be of interest.

"No. 7685 (Mus. H. K. C.), *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* (Linn.), Bobolink, ♂. Prairie, 1 mile west of S. Englewood, Ill., May 24, 1887." While collecting prairie birds with Mr. Amos W. Butler, I shot this specimen. On each wing is a horny spur, growing from the thumb tip.



The illustration shows the left wing, natural size. In both wings the spurs are exactly alike. We secured some twenty-three males and ten females the same day (Bobolinks being a rarity with Mr. Butler). This was the only specimen having spurs on the wings.

RECENT LITERATURE.

Ridgway's 'Manual of North American Birds.'*—The late Professor Baird long since projected a work on North American Birds which should serve as a manual and handy reference work for the sportsman and traveller as well as the naturalist. His great responsibilities and engrossing public duties, however, "precluded the possibility of his completing the work which he had so long cherished, and had even begun, when called to the high positions which he has filled with so much advantage to science and honor to himself." The work was therefore very naturally and fittingly intrusted to his pupil and collaborator in previous works on the

* A | Manual | of | North American Birds. | By | Robert Ridgway. | — | Illustrated by 464 outline drawings of the | generic characters. | — | Philadelphia: | J. B. Lippincott Company. | 1887.—Royal 8vo. pp. i-xi, 1-631. pll. i-cxxiv. (Reviewed from advance sheets, received from the Publishers, Aug. 5, 1887.)

same subject and his successor as Curator of the Department of Birds in the United States National Museum. It is needless to say that the work could scarcely have fallen into more trustworthy hands.

The object of the work, as stated in the preface, "is to furnish a convenient manual of North American Ornithology, reduced to the smallest compass, by the omission of everything that is not absolutely necessary for determining the character of any given specimen, and including, besides the current nomenclature of each species, a statement of its natural habitat and other concomitant data." Consequently the volume is made up of a series of analytical keys, covering all the various grades of groups from orders to subspecies. Under each genus, in case it contains more than a single species, are given the characters common to all the species, followed by the distinctive features of the various species and subspecies. In this way reiteration is reduced to a minimum, and the text compressed to the smallest practicable amount. In addition to the essential characters of the species and subspecies, however, their various stages of plumage are concisely indicated. The strictly biographical matter consists of a brief statement of the character of the nest and eggs, and the habitat.

The classification, nomenclature, and numeration "correspond strictly with the 'Check List of North American Birds' published by the American Ornithologists' Union." The species added or described since the publication of the 'Check List' have, however, been interpolated in their proper places, and besides these many extra-limital species have been included, but are distinguished from the strictly North American by being given in smaller type and without numeration. The geographical limits, so far as the numbered species are concerned, are those of the A. O. U. 'Check List'; "but practically these limits have been enlarged so as to include all the species known to inhabit Socorro Island, off the coast of Northwestern Mexico, which is decidedly *Nearctic*, or North American, in its zoölogical affinities, while in many cases other extra-limital species have been included, for the sake of comparison and also on account of the greater or less probability of their occurrence within the southern boundary of the United States," or in Alaska. These extra-limital species, however, include many not likely to be found within the United States, since the Mexican, Central American, Cuban, and Bahaman species of characteristically North American genera, and the genera of these regions belonging to North American families, are also embraced, as are also all the species of the order Tubinares belonging to genera which have representatives in North American waters. While these inclusions, apparently several hundred in number, have greatly increased not only the size of the work but the labor of preparing it, they add immensely to its value and interest.

The 'Manual' is based primarily upon the collection of the National Museum, but all the leading ornithological collections of the country, both public and private, have been drawn upon for additional material, including some unique and many type specimens, for which due acknowl-

edgements are made, as well as to Dr. Leonhard Stejneger for aid in settling vexed questions of synonymy and difficult problems of relationship. The nearly 500 outline drawings of generic characters are grouped at the end of the volume in 124 plates.

It appears from the 'Appendix' (pp. 591-594) that four new subgenera, and thirty-nine new species and subspecies are described in the work, of which *fourteen* of the species and subspecies are from North America, as defined in the A. O. U. 'Check-List'; the rest being from Mexico, Central America, and the Bahamas. Besides the fourteen species and subspecies described as new to North America, *thirty-one* others not included in the A. O. U. 'Check-List,' are given as North Americans; eight of these are introduced species; eleven have been described since the publication of the 'Check-List'*; seven have been added on the ground of actual capture since the 'Check-List' appeared, and four are forms ignored as nominal in making up the 'Check-List.' On the other hand, two recognized in the 'Check-List' are here "cancelled." It further appears that twelve technical names have undergone change, usually through the discovery of tenable names given prior to those adopted in the 'Check-List,' but in some instances through corrections of identification.

Æstrelata gularis of the 'Check-List' becomes *Æ. scalaris* Brewst.; *Somateria mollissima* becomes *S. m. borealis* (Brehm), the American form being now considered subspecifically distinct from the European; *Ardea rufa* becomes *A. rufescens* Gm., the name *rufa* proving to be preoccupied; the subgenus *Nyctherodius* becomes *Nyctinassa* Stejn., the former name being preoccupied; the subgenus *Rhyacophilus* is replaced by *Helodromas* Kaup; the genus *Ulula* becomes *Scotiaptex* Sw., the use of the name *Ulula*, in this connection, having been found to be an error; *Dryobates scalaris* is now *D. s. bairdi* (Scl.), the form in question proving to be not true *scalaris*; *D. stricklandi* becomes *D. arizonæ* (Harg.) (see Auk, III, p. 426); *Contopus borealis* is made the type of a new subgenus *Nuttallornis*; *Molothrus æneus* is placed in the genus *Callothrux* Cass.; *Pinicola enucleator* appears once more as *P. e. canadensis* (Cab.); *Carpodacus frontalis* becomes *C. mexicanus frontalis*; for the genus *Certhiola* it is proposed (in the 'Appendix,' p. 590) to substitute the name *Cæreba*, on the ground of priority.

The 'new' species and subspecies characterized as North American are *Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*, from "Western United States, north to Oregon, east to New Mexico and Colorado, south over table-lands of Mexico"; *Coccyzus maynardi*, "Bahamas and Florida Keys"; *Aphelocoma californica hypoleucus*, "Lower California"; *Corvus corax principalis* = *Corvus carnivorus* Bartr., "*nomen nudum*" (but what is the objection to *C. corax carnivorus* (Bd.)?); *Corvus americanus hesperus*, "Western United States, north to Washington Territory (Puget Sound), Idaho, Montana, etc., south to Northern Mexico, east to Rocky Moun-

* Exclusive of one described in 'The Auk' for July, 1887—too late doubtless for notice in the 'Manual.'

tains"; *Agelaius phæniceus sonoriensis*, "Northwestern Mexico and Lower Colorado Valley, in Southern California and Arizona; south to Mazatlan"; *Agelaius phæniceus bryanti*, "Bahamas and Southern Florida (Miami, Key West, etc.)"; *Pinicola enucleator kadiaka*, "Kodiak to Sitka, Alaska," and "probably southward to higher Sierra Nevada of California"; *Carpodacus mexicanus* (*frontalis* in the text, p. 291) *ruberrimus* (provisionally separated) Lower California; *Plectrophenax nivalis towensendi*, "Prybilof Islands, Alaska, and Commander Islands, Kamtschatka"; *Passerina versicolor pulchra*, "Lower California and Western Mexico"; *Lanius ludovicianus gambeli*, "California, especially coast district"; *Phalacroptilus nuttalli californicus* (provisionally separated), Northern California; *Parus stoneyi*, Northwestern Alaska.

Old forms rejected from the 'Check-List' but here reinstated are *Cyanocitta stelleri annectens* Bd., *Guiraca cærulea eurhyncha* Cs., *Progne cryptoleuca* Bd., *Vireo gilvus swainsoni* Bd., and *Columbigallina passerina pallescens* Bd. The two excluded are *Carpodacus frontalis rhodocolpus* (now believed to be merely an individual color-phase), and *Peucaea arizonæ* Ridgw.= *P. mexicanus* (Lawr.).

Colinus virginianus cubanensis is accredited to "Cuba and Southwestern Florida," and is hence enumerated as North American.

A copious and carefully prepared index closes the volume, which must long reflect honor upon its author.—J. A. A.

Olphe-Galliard's Ornithology of Western Europe.*—In this work the veteran French ornithologist deposits the results of the labors and studies of a long and useful life. The plan is one of considerable magnitude, inasmuch as he contemplates giving not only full descriptions, synonymies, and biographies of all the species inhabiting Southwestern Europe (embracing Portugal and Spain, with the Azores and the Balears, France, French Switzerland, all the country to the west of the Rhine, and the English Channel Islands) but also such species as are nearly related to, or may be easily confounded with, the birds inhabiting the region particularly treated of. In this way the account of several genera has grown into monographs which will be found to contain material useful also to other ornithologists than those who are most directly interested in the particular ornis referred to.

The work will be issued in 40 parts, or fascicules, each comprising one or more groups or families, and each one is separately paged. This is certainly a great drawback, but was necessary in order to secure a speedy publication, as the parts are issued immediately after having been finished

* Contributions à la Faune Ornithologique de l'Europe Occidentale — Recueil comprenant les espèces d'oiseaux qui se reproduisent dans cette région ou qui s'y montrent régulièrement de passage augmenté de la description des principales espèces exotiques les plus voisines des indigènes ou susceptibles d'être confondues avec elles ainsi que l'énumération des races domestiques | Par Léon Olphe-Galliard.—8°



Ridgway, Robert. 1887. "Ridgway's 'Manual of North American Birds'" *The Auk* 4, 333–336. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4067197>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/54094>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/4067197>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/88532>

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>.