

saw three specimens on Sept. 6, 1896, and secured one. They disappeared on Sept. 11.

Aythya vallisneria, CANVAS-BACK. — During the first week of December, 1897, Canvas-back Ducks began to appear in couples and small flocks and by the middle of January the local sportsmen estimated that there were about 200 flocked in this end of the lake (Kevka). However, a week's despicable night shooting soon drove them away. Old sportsmen inform me that these were the first Canvas-backs that they had seen in about fifteen years.

Phalaropus lobatus, NORTHERN PHALAROPE. — Rare migrant. I took one specimen on May 16, 1895.

Tringa fuscicollis, WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER. — On Sept. 29, 1898, I found a mortally wounded specimen along the lake shore and two more were seen. As near as I can find out this is the first record of the occurrence of the White-rumped Sandpiper in Yates County or adjoining counties.

Calidris arenaria, SANDERLING. — One specimen, taken in the autumn of 1893, and another on May 25, 1895.

Asio wilsonianus, AMERICAN LONG-EARED OWL. — The occurrence of this Owl is not common and it is a rare breeder. Several nests have been found — the last one on May 16, 1897. It contained four eggs almost hatched.

Icteria virens, YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT. — Of rare occurrence in this county. On May 30, 1898, I found a pair breeding in the edge of a swampy bush lot. The nest contained two eggs that were destroyed for some reason — probably because I disturbed the sitting female. — CLARENCE FREEDOM STONE, *Branchport, N. Y.*

Family and Subfamily Names Based on Subgenera. — The purpose of the present note is to raise the question of the tenability of family and subfamily names based on subgeneric terms. Current usage appears to favor the formation of the family or subfamily name from some valid generic term in the group, and Canon V of the A. O. U. Code has the following to say upon the subject: "Proper names of families and subfamilies take the tenable name of some genus, preferably the leading one, which these groups respectively contain, with change of termination into *idæ* or *inæ*. When a generic name becomes a synonym a current family or subfamily name based upon such generic name becomes untenable." So far as the literal interpretation of this canon is concerned, there seems to be no provision for the case in hand, since a subgeneric name, so long as employed in that capacity, can be strictly considered a synonym of a generic term, no more than can a subspecies be considered synonymous with its particular species; but the intent of the canon is evidently to consider subgeneric names ineligible for use as the basis of supergeneric terms, as is manifest in the 'Code' from the remarks which follow this canon. On the other hand, in the interest of the

utmost possible stability for names of higher groups, it may be contended to be inadvisable to change family or subfamily names which have been founded upon generic terms now held as subgeneric; while still restricting the proper formation of such names to terms which have generic rank at the time of such formation.

If the former, however, be the proper view, it is in order to inquire why we still retain the family name Podicipidæ for the Grebes, while *Podiceps* continues to hold but subgeneric rank. The proper name for the group is probably Colymbidæ, as has already been announced by Dr. Stejneger (Stand. Nat. Hist., IV, 1885, p. 66). By the same criterion Phalerinæ is untenable, being based upon *Phaleris*, a subgenus of *Simorhynchus*, and if it be still deemed advisable to retain a subfamily distinction apart from the Fraterculinæ, may possibly best be called Simorhynchinæ. Then, too, so long as *Fuligula* stands only as a subgenus, the subfamily designation Fuligulinæ must be displaced. There are, however, structural characters quite sufficient to entitle *Fuligula* to full generic rank,—characters too well known to require enumeration in this connection, and which now receive due recognition almost universally except among American ornithologists. — HARRY C. OBERHOLSER, Washington, D. C.

'Revival of the Sexual Passion in Birds in Autumn.'—In addition to the notes of Messrs. Brewster and Chapman which have lately appeared in 'The Auk' on the above subject the following observations may be of interest. From my Journal for September 2, 1898, Jamestown, R. I., I copy the following:—"This morning a number of Purple Martins (*Progne subis*) were seen alighting on the rigging of the small boats anchored in the harbor, they being not uncommon here early in September; later in the morning they were in good numbers (15 or 20 birds) along the roadsides in company with the Tree Swallows. The Martins almost always alighted on the cross bars of the telegraph poles, rather than with the Swallows on the wires. While I was watching two birds, supposedly young, they were seen a number of times to go through the actions of copulation."

Another record was made on September 15, 1898.—"While sitting in the blind (Jamestown, R. I., Round Marsh) a Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammodramus caudacutus*) came and lit near by and performed some interesting antics. The bird would now and then utter a few hurried notes, run a few feet and jump excitedly into the air. The bird also from time to time (five times) went through the actions of copulation on a little, cropped off tussock of grass about the size of its body. I was within a few feet of the bird, being protected by the blind, and am positive that its actions were those of copulation. Possibly this bird was mentally deranged. I took the bird and found it to be a young male, its sexual organs of normal size for that time of season. Two interesting questions present themselves. Is the accompanying non-enlargement of



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