

It cannot be said with absolute certainty that the reddish phase was "entirely independent of age, sex, or season," and hence an example of 'individual dichromatism'; but if due to such normal and universal laws as any of the above, the fact of a change of color in the individual could hardly have escaped the notice of ornithologists, while if caused by the ordinary conditions of captivity it must have been recognized long since. The evidence, therefore, seems to be *almost* conclusive that this Owl was an instance of what I have for convenience called '*individual dichromatism*'; and also that this condition is probably infrequent, and doubtless due to some unknown element, not common even in captivity.

(*To be concluded.*)

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## RECENT LITERATURE.

**Slater on Rules for Naming Animals.**<sup>1</sup> — At the meeting of the Zoölogical Society of London, held March 6, 1896, the special topic assigned for discussion was the Code of Rules for Zoölogical Nomenclature adopted by the German Zoölogical Society, or rather the discrepancies between these rules and those of the Stricklandian Code, with a view to their possible reconciliation. The discussion was opened by Dr. Slater, who appears to have made the principal address of the evening, and who was followed by other speakers.

The discussion, it may be remarked, was apropos of the new work planned by the German Zoölogical Society, called '*Das Tierreich*,' which is to comprise the synonymy, the geographical range, and short descriptions of every known species of animal. It is, of course, of the highest importance in a standard work of this magnitude that the rules of nomenclature adopted shall be such as will command the respect of the greatest possible number of workers; for it is Utopian to expect that any code of rules can be devised at present, if ever, that will receive unanimous endorsement. As preliminary to its work the German Zoölogical

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<sup>1</sup> Remarks on the Divergencies between the "Rules for naming Animals" of the German Zoölogical Society and the Stricklandian Code of Nomenclature. By P. L. Slater. Proc. of the Zoöl. Soc. of London, 1896, pp. 306-319.



Society adopted in 1894 a code of rules for zoölogical nomenclature,<sup>1</sup> which, while differing quite radically in several important points from the British Association Code, is fortunately in essential accord with all other recent Codes, the tendency being toward unity on the few leading points in which the British Code differs from the later systems of rules. In respect to the German Code, it may be sufficient to say that in only one particular does it differ from the A. O. U. Code, namely, in permitting "purely orthographical correction when the word is, without doubt, wrongly written or incorrectly transcribed." This is a minor point, in no way seriously affecting names.<sup>2</sup> As compared with the British Code, it (1) adopts the Xth edition of Linnæus's '*Systema Naturæ*' as the starting point for the law of priority; (2) it disclaims any relationship between the nomenclature of zoölogy and botany; (3) the same term may be used for the generic and specific name of a species when these names have priority.

As Mr. Sclater points out, these are the three essential points of difference between the German and British Codes, the latter adopting the Xth edition of Linnæus as its starting point for the law of priority, and holding that the same generic name must never be used in botany and zoölogy, and that a new specific name must be given to a species when its old name has been adopted for a genus.

On all these points Mr. Sclater upholds the British system. Respecting the first he says: "Strickland, the founder of our modern Codes of Nomenclature, after deliberately considering the point, adopted the latest and most perfect edition of the '*Systema Naturæ*' as his starting point. I think we should do unwisely to deviate from Strickland's views on this subject. . . . On the ground of priority, therefore, I claim that, as first decided by Strickland, we ought to adopt the twelfth and most perfect edition of the '*Systema Naturæ*' as the basis of modern Nomenclature." This, as has been repeatedly shown, is a lame defense, hardly worthy of serious consideration. But are the statements regarding Strickland quite correct? According to the '*Revised Rules*' of the British Association: "In Mr. H. E. Strickland's original draft of these Rules and Recommendations the edition of Linnæus was left blank, and the XIIth was inserted by the Manchester Committee." There is, besides, evidence to show that Mr. Strickland considered the Xth edition as the starting point for binomial nomenclature.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Regeln für die wissenschaftliche Benennung der Thiere zusammengestellt von der Deutschen Zoologischen Gesellschaft. Leipzig, 1894.

<sup>2</sup> The A. O. U. Code (Canon XL) provides that "The original orthography of a name is to be rigidly preserved, unless a typographical error is evident." This, it must be admitted, has met with wide-spread disapproval, though advocated by De Candolle in 1883, and in favor of which, in the interest of absolute fixity of names, there is still much to be said.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Auk, I, 1884, p. 400.



Thus apparently Mr. Sclater concedes practically nothing in the interest of "reconciling the differences between the German Rules and the Code of Nomenclature adopted by the British Association"; he strenuously upholds the British Code on the three essential points wherein it differs from the German Code, regardless of the fact that within the last ten years the whole world of zoölogists, outside of the British Islands, has gone over to the opposite view, and that a number of prominent British zoölogists have also recently joined the great and ever increasing majority against the British Code. We must say, with regret, that this looks like unwise conservatism, bordering on perversity; for the few British naturalists who still stick to the British rules can hardly expect the rest of the world to waive their better judgment in favor of insular sentiment and traditions.

Mr. Sclater has much to say in favor of the German Code where it is in agreement with the British rules, and has even been willing to make concessions on one or two minor points. One of these is that "the name of the author, if given, should follow the scientific name without intervening sign," as is expressly provided in the A. O. U. Code and approved by the German zoölogists. It is with regret, therefore, that we have observed in certain publications in this country a tendency to insert a comma between the scientific name and the authority, and especially in the publications of our own National Museum, where, up to a few years ago, the contrary practice prevailed.

We are glad also to see that Mr. Sclater here comes out squarely in favor of the use of trinomials for subspecies,—which, it is true, he has used quite freely for some years past. On this point he says: "That subspecies actually exist in nature cannot, I think, be denied by anybody who believes in the origin of species by descent. Nearly all forms of animal life, which have a wide distribution, show differences when individuals from the two extremes of the range of the species are compared. . . . 'Subspecies' appears to me to be an excellent term to designate the slight differences exhibited in these cases, far better than 'climatic' or 'geographical' variety, which is often used for them. . . . The British forms of the Coal Tit and the Marsh Tit, which have been named *Parus britannicus* and *Parus dresseri*, appear to me to be good instances of subspecies. I should propose to call them *Parus ater britannicus* and *Parus palustris dresseri*, while the corresponding forms of the continent should be termed *Parus ater typicus* and *Parus palustris typicus* when they are spoken of in the restricted sense only. In ordinary cases, however, it is sufficient to say *Parus ater* and *Parus palustris* without any reference to the subspecies. To give these slight and in some cases barely recognizable variations the same rank as is awarded to *Turdus musicus* and *Turdus viscivorus* seems to me highly undesirable, and the recognition of subspecies indicated by trinomials gives us an easy way out of the difficulty." While of course all this has been said before, it is gratifying, as we recall the past in relation to trinomials, to see it restated in the present connection.

As 'Appendix I' to his address, Mr. Sclater gives an English transla-



tion of the 'Rules,' twenty-eight in number, adopted by the German Zoölogical Society for the scientific naming of animals, the explanations and comment accompanying the original rules being, however, omitted. 'Appendix II' gives a convenient list of 'Titles of the principal Modern Codes of Zoölogical Nomenclature,' eleven in number.

The discussion following Mr. Sclater's paper included a communication from Graf Hans von Berlepsch, and remarks by Sir William Flower, Mr. Hartert, Professor Lankester, Mr. Elwes, Dr. D. Sharp, Mr. W. T. Blandford, Dr. H. O. Forbes, and Mr. W. F. Kirby. In the main their views are so inharmonious, aside from the three main points under discussion, as to discourage the hope of an immediate general agreement on principles of nomenclature. Some of the writers favored the Xth edition and others the XIIth edition of Linnæus as the starting point; some even seemed doubtful about taking either, but favored the selection of some much more recent period—some standard work for any branch of zoölogy where such a work is available, taking the names there given, whether right or wrong, and in defiance even of the law of priority. It was also suggested that International Committees be appointed, "*not* to draw up a Code of rules, but to produce an *authoritative* list of names—once and for all—about which no lawyer-like haggling should hereafter be permitted"! Any attempt to combat such crude notions would evidently be a waste of energy!

Professor Lankester, "thought the XIIth edition of the 'Systema Naturæ' should be adopted as the starting point of Zoölogical Nomenclature, as a tribute of respect to Linnæus, since it was the last edition of that work and contained Linnæus's revised list of genera and species" Mr. Hartert thought that the Xth edition of this work should be taken as the correct starting point, "because in that edition Linnæus first made use of the binary system of nomenclature; and as the question of justness had been mentioned he considered that it would be unjust to authors who created names between the dates of the two editions, if the twelfth were adopted; he was, moreover, of opinion that if the XIIth edition were adopted, because it contained corrections and emendations of the older edition, it would make a bad precedent, and that any other author might, if so inclined, claim to alter his original names after he had created and published them, and so cause confusion." We give this as the gist of the whole argument on the matter of the two editions, and commend Mr. Hartert's clever *reductio ad absurdum*.—J. A. A.

**Swann's Handbook of British Birds.**—This little manual<sup>1</sup> is certainly what its title implies—a *concise* handbook of British Birds, or, as claimed in the preface, "a handy textbook of reference," small enough

<sup>1</sup> A Concise Handbook | of | British Birds | By | H. Kirke Swann | Editor of "The Ornithologist." | — | London: | John Wheldon & Co., | 58, Great Queen Street, W. C. | 1896. 16 mo, pp. viii+210.



Sclater, Philip Lutley. 1896. "Sclater on Rules for Naming Animals." *The Auk* 13, 325–328. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4068345>.

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