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**ROBERT RIDGWAY**

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Department of the Interior:

U. S. NATIONAL MUSEUM.

— 24 —

# BULLETIN

OF THE

UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM.

No. 21.

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PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.

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WASHINGTON:  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.  
1881.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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This work is the twenty-fourth of a series of papers intended to illustrate the collections of natural history and ethnology belonging to the United States, and constituting the National Museum, of which the Smithsonian Institution was placed in charge by the act of Congress of August 10, 1876.

It has been prepared at the request of the Institution, and printed by authority of the honorable Secretary of the Interior.

SPENCER F. BAIRD,

*Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.*

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,

*Washington, December, 1880.*

NOMENCLATURE

OF

NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS

CHIEFLY CONTAINED IN THE

UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM.

BY

ROBERT RIDGWAY.



WASHINGTON:  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.  
1881.

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## INTRODUCTION.

Since the publication, in 1859, of the last Smithsonian catalogue of North American birds,\* so many important changes have been made in

\* Three catalogues of North American birds have been issued by the Smithsonian Institution to date, as follows:

(1) Catalogue of North American Birds, chiefly in the Museum of the Smithsonian Institution. By Spencer F. Baird, Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. Washington: Smithsonian Institution. October, 1858. 4to, paper. 1 p. l., pp. xvii-lvi. [Reissue, with new title-page, of pp. xvii-lvi of vol. ix, Pacific R. R. Reports ("Birds of North America").] Includes, besides the list of 738 species, with habitats, tables of the higher groups, and lists of extralimital species (23 in number) treated in the general report, and of others (31) claimed, on apparently insufficient grounds, as North American; also a summary of the number of species given in the works of Wilson, Bonaparte, and Audubon.]

(2) Catalogue of North American Birds, chiefly in the Museum of the Smithsonian Institution. By Spencer F. Baird. First octavo edition, Washington: Smithsonian Institution. [Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, No. 198.] 1859. 8vo. 2 p. ll., pp. 19 + 2. [Based upon the quarto list of 1858, but without habitats, and the matter relating to classification, etc. The two additional pages are an alphabetical index of the North American genera. As in the quarto list, there are, ostensibly, 738 species, but there are 22 interpolations, making a total of 760 names in the list.]

(3) A Catalogue of the Birds of North America. By Robert Ridgway. <Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. iii. Aug. 24-Sept. 4, 1880, pp. 163-246. This catalogue is really the basis of the present one, which is essentially a revised edition, very materially modified, however, by numerous alterations and corrections, involving not only the change of a considerable number of names, but also the writing of a new introduction, etc. The edition the title of which has just been quoted has *not been published separately*, although a number of extras were struck off for private use.

The more important changes which have been made in the present edition consist, as stated above, in (1) a new introduction and (2) change of several names, both generic and specific, as follows:

### a. Generic names changed.

- No. 77. "*Helmitherus*" changed to *Helmiaotherus*.
- No. 124-127. "*Wilsonia*" changed to *Myiodiactes*.
- No. 310. "*Myiodinastea*" changed to *Myiodynastes*.
- No. 460-461. "*Zenaidura*" changed to *Zenaidura*.
- No. 462. "*Zenaida*" changed to *Zenaida*.
- No. 517-521. "*Eglalitis*" changed to *Egialites*.
- No. 599-600. "*Dendrocygna*" changed to *Dendrocyena*.
- No. 617-618. "*Aythya*" changed to *Ethya*.
- No. 755. "*Brachyrampus*" changed to *Brachyrhamphus*.

the nomenclature of the species, and so numerous have been the accessories to the fauna, that the wants of ornithologists require a new list which shall bring the subject fully up to date. It also appears desirable that an analysis should be given of the principal points of variance, numerical and otherwise, between the list which is herewith presented and that which has for so many years been the standard of reference; while, in order to further increase the utility of the list, a brief review of the revisions of nomenclature which have been adopted, the species added to the fauna, and other matters of like interest, is given under appropriate headings on pages 59-84.

*b. Specific names changed.*

- No. 5-5 *b.* "unalashka" changed to *unalasce*.  
 No. 29. "melanura Lawr." changed to *californica* Brewst.  
 No. 137. "caridris" (a purely typographical error) changed to *calidris*.  
 No. 235*a.* "unalashkensis" changed to *unalasceensis*.  
 No. 346. "yucatanensis (Cabot) Gould" changed to *erriniceus* Gould.  
 No. 351. "pelagica" changed to *pelagica*.  
 No. 377. "formicivorus (Sw.) Bp." changed to *formicivorus bairdi* Ridgw.  
 No. 543. "feda" changed to *feda*.  
 No. 698. "parasiticus (Linn.) Schaeff." changed to *erepidatus* (Banks) Vieill.  
 No. 699. "buffoni (Boie) Cones" changed to *parasiticus* (Linn.) Saunders.  
 No. 724. "melanai" changed to *melana*.  
 No. 732. "cornutus (Gm.) Kaup" changed to *auritus* (Linn.) Ridgw.  
 No. [733]. "auritus (Linn.)" changed to *nigricollis* (Santl.).  
 No. 733*a.* "auritus" changed to *nigricollis*.

*c. Corrections of authorities.*

- No. 77. "(Gmel.) Bp." changed to Salv. & Godm.  
 No. 124. "Bp." changed to Aud.  
 No. 126. "Ridgw." changed to Baird.  
 No. 127. "Cones" changed to Aud.  
 No. 153. "Bp." changed to Coues.  
 No. 230*a.* "B. B. & R." changed to Ridgw.  
 No. 231. "Forst." changed to Gmel.  
 No. 354. "Bp." and parentheses canceled.  
 No. 496. "Linn." changed to (Linn.) Newt.  
 No. 517. "(Bonap.) Caban." changed to Bonap.  
 No. 594*a.* "Woodh." changed to Ridgw.  
 No. 644. "Ridgw." changed to Sel. & Salv.  
 No. 733*a.* "Lawr." changed to Herm.

*d. English names changed.*

- No. 17. Red-vented Thrasher changed to *Rufous-vented Thrasher*.  
 No. 29. "Black-capped Gnatcatcher" changed to *Black-tailed Gnatcatcher*.  
 No. 123. *Trasher's Warbler* changed to *Trasher's Warbler*.  
 No. 175*a.* *Gray-headed Rosy Finch* changed to *Hepburn's Rosy Finch*.  
 No. 602. *Black Duck* changed to *Black Mallard*.  
 No. 603. *Florida Black Duck* changed to *Florida Dusky Duck*.  
 No. 626. *Fischer's Eider* changed to *Spectacled Eider*.

Other corrections are chiefly of typographical errors. Those made in the appendix correspond in the main with those of the catalogue, but some important alterations have been made on pages 222, 224, 225, 233, 235, 237, and 238.

The following enumeration contains 226 valid species and recognized races which have either been first described or added to the North American fauna since 1859, while, on the other hand, no less than 42 names of the old catalogue have been relegated to the ranks of synonymy, and 20 more removed as extralimital. Furthermore, of the remaining 698 names over 300 have been more or less emended, so that only 395 of the 769 names as given in the old catalogue are retained in the current nomenclature!

In the present list only those forms which are assumed to be specifically distinct have separate numbers, the subspecies or races being distinguished by a letter of the alphabet (*a, et seq.*, according to the number of subordinate forms) affixed to the species-number. There being 160 names thus subordinated, it therefore follows that the total of this list is 924, an apparent increase of only 164 over the catalogue of 1859, but an actual increase of 226. Briefly summarized, the points of numerical difference between the two lists are as follows:\*

	Catalogue of 1859.	Catalogue of 1881.	Apparent increase.
Ostensible number of names.....	738	751	26
Actual number of names.....	764	924	164
Eliminated from catalogue of 1859.....	<i>Synonyms</i> 42	<i>Extralimital</i> 20	<i>Total</i> 62
New forms given in catalogue of 1881.....	<i>Species</i> 127	<i>Subspecies</i> 99	<i>Total</i> 226
Names of the old catalogue, or their equivalents, retained in the new.....	<i>Species</i> 677	<i>Subspecies</i> 61	<i>Total</i> 698

Names in the old catalogue reduced to the rank of races.....	61
Generic names changed (including subsequent subdivisions of genera).....	100
Specific names changed.....	89
Names of the old catalogue retained in nearly or quite their original form.....	395

The geographical limits assigned to this catalogue include the entire continent of North America down to the southern border of the United States; besides Greenland, the peninsula of Lower California, and the outlying islands of Guadalupe and Socorro, the latter in latitude  $18^{\circ} 35'$ , and about 240 miles off the coast of northwestern Mexico, the former in latitude  $29^{\circ}$ , and 230 miles southwest from San Diego.† Guadalupe and Socorro, like Lower California, are included for the reason that their zoölogical relationships are much closer to North America, as usually (but arbitrarily) restricted, than to the tropical coast-region of western Mexico, their avian fauna in particular being decidedly of "Neartic" affinity, with the exception, so far as known, of only two species—a

\* A list of the names which have been changed is given on pages 69-74.

† The longitude of Guadalupe is  $118^{\circ} 20'$  W., the distance from the nearest point on the mainland being between 90 and 100 miles.