

**LIST OF BRITISH
VERTEBRATE
ANIMALS**

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List of British Vertebrate Animals by Francis P. Pascoe

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BY
FRANCIS P. PASCOE.



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ALEX FLAMMAN.



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PREFACE.

JUST fifty years ago the Rev. Leonard Jenyns published a list* of British vertebrate animals,—the first and last, I believe, for few British naturalists care for reptiles and fishes. Birds have many admirers, and for them there is no lack of lists; still, I think, there are many persons interested in the productions of our land and seas to whom this list may be acceptable. I believe it is “down to date,” although I have not thought it necessary to follow every change of name on the ground of priority—changes which are “productive of much confusion and unnecessary novelty.”

The law of priority is excellent in principle, and has here been generally followed; but its advantages are questionable when it is adopted to discard a name that has been in common use half a century or more for one

* ‘A Systematic Catalogue of British Vertebrate Animals,’ 1836.

disinterred from some forgotten work, perhaps wrongly identified, or for which priority is wrongly claimed.

Looking at classification only as a key to the names of species, it can hardly be too simple provided mere resemblances are not mistaken for affinities. A genetic classification is for the future. For some time to come there is not likely to be any close agreement among naturalists as to the higher divisions of the vertebrate classes; but whether we divide living birds into two orders, like Professor Huxley, or into twenty-six, like Mr. Sclater, there is less diversity as we descend to families and genera. In this list I have followed the system adopted in my 'Zoological Classification.' The only changes made are those replacing the name of Pharyngobranchii by Acrania, and that of Scansores by Coccyges.

In a strictly scientific system according to modern views the Vertebrata would be divided into Acrania and Craniota (without a skull and with a skull), the former including two genera (only one British), the latter all other Vertebrata. Some would add the Ascidiæ under the collective name of Chordata. Then we have three primary divisions of Vertebrata—fishes and amphibians constituting the Ichthyopsida; reptiles and birds the

Sauropsida; and, thirdly, the Mammals. A tabular view will show these divisions and the pages in this 'List' on which those here adopted may be found:—

ACRANIA, p. 1.

CRANIOTA.

Ichthyopsida.

Pisces, pp. 1-25.

Amphibia, p. 26.

Sauropsida.

Reptilia, pp. 27-28.

Aves, pp. 29-35.

Mammalia, pp. 65-71.

Going back to what may be called the middle ages of biology, Fleming, in his 'History of British Animals' (1828), describes 61 mammals, 237 birds, 14 reptiles, including amphibians, and 170 fishes. In Jenyns's 'Manual of British Vertebrate Animals' (1835) there are 61 mammals, 312 birds, 7 reptiles, 6 amphibians, and 210 fishes. Both these authors include domestic and extinct species and the greater part of the stragglers then known.

The third edition of Yarrell's 'British Birds' (1856) gave 352, and in the third edition of his 'Fishes' (1859) the editor, Sir J. Richardson, brought the number up to 260 species. Couch, in his 'History of the Fishes of the British Islands' (1867), advanced the number to 294, but

then such apocryphal species as *Polyprosopi Rashleighanus* and *macræ* are pressed into the list.

With regard to birds in modern times, G. R. Gray, in his British Museum Catalogue (1863), enumerates 401 species—115 indigenous, 84 seasonal, 112 occasional, 79 accidental, 11 introduced, and 7 doubtful. Mr. Harting, in his 'Handbook of British Birds' (1873), divides his work into two parts, viz. (1) "British birds properly so called," and (2) "Rare and accidental visitors." Of the former there are 260, of the latter 135 species; and of these a full account of the place, date of capture, and authority are given.

Mr. Wharton's 'List' (1877) includes all birds "which have at least once, beyond doubt, occurred in a truly wild state within the area of the British Isles." They amount to 379 species. Adopting this view of what constitutes a British bird, the authors of the 'List' of the British Ornithologists' Union (1883) enumerate 376 species, and 76 in addition "not positively authenticated as British."

Two important works, not yet completed, must here be mentioned: one is the fourth edition of Yarrell's 'British Birds,' at first edited by Prof. Newton, but now and for some time past by Mr. Howard Saunders. The second is Mr. F. Day's 'History of British Fishes,' by far

the best and most exhaustive account we have of them, and whose synonymy I have generally followed.

It is difficult to draw a satisfactory line between residents and regular visitors and stragglers or accidental visitors. Summarizing this "List" we have 181 indigenous fishes and 62 stragglers, including at least four introduced, =243. Of amphibians there are 7 species, and of reptiles 9, three of which are stragglers or introduced. Birds comprise 447 species, but only 245 are considered to be indigenous (either as residents or migrants), leaving the large number of 202 as accidental visitors, or, as in two or three instances, having probably escaped from confinement. Of mammals there are 63 species; but of these one has been introduced, and three are of very rare occurrence.

The binomial system of nomenclature was only finally adopted after the publication of the 12th edition of the 'Systema Naturæ' in 1766, and it is only from that date that the modern law of priority begins. An exception seems to have been made of Brisson, whose 'Ornithologie' (1760) has furnished the names of many modern genera taken from the mononyms which, in many instances, he gave to species. The 'Fauna Suecica' (1761) may occasionally be found to throw some light on Linnæus's doubtful species.