BioOne COMPLETE

The European Ornithologists' Union and the new journal Avian Science

Source: The Auk, 118(2) : 573

Published By: American Ornithological Society

URL: https://doi.org/10.1642/0004-8038(2001)118[0573:TEOUAT]2.0.CO;2

BioOne Complete (complete.BioOne.org) is a full-text database of 200 subscribed and open-access titles in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences published by nonprofit societies, associations, museums, institutions, and presses.

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Complete website, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at www.bioone.org/terms-of-use.

Usage of BioOne Complete content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non - commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

BioOne sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.

Downloaded From: https://bioone.org/journals/The-Auk on 28 Mar 2024
Terms of Use: https://bioone.org/terms-of-use



100 Years Ago in The American Ornithologists' Union

The Auk 118(2):572–573, 2001

Since the first volume of *The Auk* (a name that was not without some controversy and the butt of many puns [*see* Auk 1:105]) was published in 1884, volume 18 (new series) appeared in the year 1901. *The Auk, A Quarterly Journal of Ornithology,* was still considered a continuation of the *Bulletin of the Nuttall Ornithological Club* and was also referred to as volume 26 (old series).

In 1901, the Union decided to publish *The Auk* itself rather than use a printing company as it had up to then. A Finance Committee was established at the 1900 Congress to facilitate this change. The following was also announced to authors in 1901: ''Complaint has justly been made of the habitual late appearance of *The Auk,* which has heretofore been issued from one to two to three weeks after the ostensible date of publication—the first day of the month. Great effort has been made to correct this evil, which is not by any means wholly due to the dilatoriness of either the editors or the printer, except that the former have been too lenient with tardy contributors. . . . This is to give notice that in the future all 'copy' for general articles must reach the editors six weeks before the date of their desired appearance, and all contributions to the department of 'General Notes' and 'Recent Literature' must be in the editor's hand by the first of the month preceding the date of publication. . . .''

The issue consisted of 42 major articles, 3 reports, 2 memorials, and numerous General Notes, and was 436 pages long. There were also two sections, one on Recent Literature and one of Notes and News, and an occasional Correspondence, or letter to the Editor. Some major articles were less than a page long (e.g. Joseph Grinnell's description [Auk 18:188] of the Long-tailed Jay [*Aphelocoma californica immanis*]. Many General Notes were no more than two or three sentences, whereas a few were longer than one page. Authors of General Notes supplied their hometown and state, but authors of major papers were identified by name only.

The first memorial (Auk 18:1–11), which was originally read by D. G. Elliot at the 18th Congress in 1900 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was for Elliot Coues, a former president of the Union who died on Christmas Day in 1899 at the age of 57. The accolades bestowed on Coues in that memorial reflect his stature as one of the greatest ornithologists of his time, and maybe of all time. His total list of written contributions numbered near a 1,000 works, and his book, *Key to North American Birds,* is referred to as ''the best bird book ever written.'' Elliot concludes his nearly 11 page tribute with ''we . . . may never look upon his like again. . . .'' The second memorial (Auk 18:11–23) was for George Burritt Sennett, a successful businessman who participated in many collecting trips to the western United States, particularly Texas, during the 1880s and 1890s.

Of the 42 major papers, most dealt with describing new species, subspecies, and races or adding new information on the distribution of birds. One of the most important of those from a historical perspective today was Outram Bangs and Thomas Bradlee's ''The resident land birds of Bermuda'' (Auk 18:249–257). An interest in J. J. Audubon's life was still prevalent, with one paper by Otto Widmann, the famous ornithologist from St. Louis, about his pilgrimage to Audubon's birthplace in Louisiana (Auk 18:150–157) and another on the unpublished letters of William MacGillivray to Audubon (Auk 18:239–249).

However, the most enduring work for this volume is ''An ornithological mystery'' (Auk 18:321–328) by William Brewster, the famous ornithologist from Massachusetts. Brewster and his cronies were stumped by a bird that they could only hear in dense marshes in eastern Massachusetts on a very few occasions. Dubbed the ''Kicker'' in that article because the vocalization sounded like ''*Kik-kik-kik,*'' Massachusetts birdwatchers and professional ornithologists have been discussing and arguing over what the Kicker bird was (or is) for more than 80 years. Brewster concluded the bird was a rail and suspected Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*). That evoked a series of papers over the next 50 years suggesting that the bird in question was a Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*), but that was also discounted, primarily through the sleuthing of Joseph ''Archie'' Hagar, State Ornithologist of Massachusetts (see summary in Griscom and Synder 1955:84). Hagar made a presentation to the Nuttall Ornithological Club in 1954 on the Kicker not being a Yellow Rail. He eventually concluded that it was really a Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*), but, being conservative in nature, he never published his analysis (W. Petersen pers. comm.). Nonetheless, the kicker call was attributed to a Yellow Rail on the 1959 record *Field Guide to Bird Songs* and more papers by ornithologists about confusing rail calls appeared, with Chan Robbins even offering in *The Auk* to eat a Yellow

Downloaded From: https://bioone.org/journals/The-Auk on 28 Mar 2024
Terms of Use: https://bioone.org/terms-of-use

Rail ''raw'' if it was determined that a certain call was made by that species (Kellogg 1962). Hearing that Kickers were calling in Saskatchewan, Archie Hagar made the journey in 1964, and at 4:00 AM on the 6th of July, found a male Virginia Rail giving the kicker notes (Callin 1968). A series of other short papers in the late 1960s and early 1970s (e.g. Bollinger and Bowes 1973) directly linked the kicker call to Virginia Rail, smugly stating that the mystery was solved. But wait, it turns out that many members of the genus *Rallus* give the kicker call in some form or another, including Clapper (*R. longirostris*) and King (*R. elegans*) rails and even the Eurasian Water Rail (*R. aquaticus*), although the function of the call remains obscure (Manolis 1981). So, what species did Brewster and his friends really hear? ''Probably'' a Virginia Rail (Veit and Petersen 1993).

LITERATURE CITED

BOLLINGER, R. C., AND E. BOWES. 1973. Another chapter in the ''ornitholoical mystery story''. American Birds 27:741–742.

CALLIN, E. M. 1968. Vocalization of the Virginia Rail: A mystery solved. Blue Jay 26:75–77.

GRISCOM, L., AND D. E. SNYDER. 1955. The Birds of Massachusetts. Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.

KELLOGG, P. P. 1962. Vocalizations of the Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) and the Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*). Auk 79:698–701.

MANOLIS, T. 1981. The ''kicker'' song—New synthesis of an old mystery. American Birds 35:261–263.

VEIT, R. R., AND W. R. PETERSEN. 1993. Birds of Massachusetts. Massachusetts Audubon Society, Lincoln, Massachusetts.



Announcement

The European Ornithologists' Union and the new journal *Avian Science*

The European Ornithologists' Union (EOU) was formally founded in August 2000 in Zurich. Its objectives are the advancement of ornithology and the promotion of the scientific study of birds among ornithologists in Europe. The business of the EOU is conducted by the Council: Jacques Blondel (President), Liz Pasztor (Vice-President), Andreas Helbig (Secretary), Peter Jones (Editor), Lukas Jenni (Treasurer), Peter Berthold, Casimir Bolshakov, Anton Kristin, Erik Matthysen, Anders Pape Møller, Eulalia Moreno, Arie van Noordwijk, Ulla Norberg, Christopher M. Perrins, Fernando Spina, and Hans Winkler.

The EOU was founded as an equal partnership among avian biologists throughout Europe. The EOU will organize biennial conferences and provide a platform for smaller thematic ornithological groups. The EOU has already held two successful conferences: 1997 in Bologna, Italy; 1999 in Gdansk, Poland. The next conference will be held in Groningen, The Netherlands, 22–26 August 2001. (For more information see *http://www.nou.nu*.)

The EOU will publish the scientific journal *Avian Science, The European Journal of Ornithology. Avian Science* publishes significant original papers and occasional review articles of international interest on all aspects of ornithology, theoretical and applied, but with a primary focus on the biology of European species. The journal is published in English. The first two issues will appear in the second half of 2001.

Thereafter, four issues will be published per year. The Editor of *Avian Science* is Peter Jones. Please send your best manuscripts on European birds to the Editor, Dr. Peter Jones, ICAPB, University of Edinburgh, Kings Buildings, Edinburgh EH9 3JT, Scotland.

The EOU is a society under Swiss law and open to members from any country. Annual membership fee includes the journal *Avian Science* and is EURO 40 (for members of high-income countries) and EURO 20 (for members of low-income countries and students). For more information and membership consult the home page at *http://www.eou.at* or contact the Secretariat of the EOU, Stephan Trösch, Hintergasse 22, CH-8268 Salenstein, Switzerland. Fax ++41-71-664-3563. E-mail: eou@bluewin.ch.

Downloaded From: https://bioone.org/journals/The-Auk on 28 Mar 2024
Terms of Use: https://bioone.org/terms-of-use