

Albinism, or unusual whiteness, is the sporadic occurrence of white individuals, in species that are normally otherwise coloured, and may occur in almost any species. It may be either perfect or partial and is due to lack of pigment or colouring matter in the feather or skin substance. It can be regarded as a manifestation of physical weakness and is said to be induced, among other things, by close inbreeding. A good test as to whether a pure white coloration is albinism or is normal is the colour of the pupils of the eyes. In albinos the pupils are pink in colour, as the lack of normal colour in the retina allows the blood coloration to show.

Melanism, or unusual blackness, is due to an excess of pigment. A good example of melanism is the Black Fox, which is a melanic variant of the common red species.

Dichromatism is the term applied to occurrence of two different types of coloration in a single species, irrespective of sex, age, or season. Thus the Screech Owl occurs in both red and grey phases (see Plate XVI A). They breed together indiscriminately and the offspring may be of either coloration. The Rough-legged Hawk and the Jaegers occur in light and in almost black phases; the difference between dichromatism, and melanism in these cases is slight.

Hybrids form another departure from specific type. They are the offspring of parents of two distinct species. It is only occasionally that such matings are fruitful, and when they are the offspring is generally sterile. Hybrids occur most often among ducks, especially with the Mallard as one of the parents.

Every North American bird has a common or vernacular name authorized by usage and recognized by the leading ornithologists and there is seldom necessity for using the scientific nomenclature. However, it is well for all who are interested in birds to familiarize themselves with as many of the scientific names as possible, as they are not only necessary in more advanced work, but they are of practical use in grasping the general relationships between various species.

The present Binomial System of nomenclature was introduced by Linnaeus, the great Swedish botanist, and embodied in his *Systema Naturæ*, tenth edition, 1758, which is the authority accepted by American ornithologists. In this system each species is given a double name, the first term being that of the genus to which it belongs, the second that of the species. Generic names are not duplicated within the sphere of zoology and specific names never within the genus. Thus, the American Robin is *Planesticus migratorius*; that is, that species of the genus *Planesticus* which is named *migratorius*. Other species of *Planesticus* have other names than *migratorius*.

The three objects of scientific nomenclature are exactitude, universality, and permanence. To this end the naming of zoological material is subject to strict laws whose principles are universally accepted and applied according to strict codes. Under these laws the scientific name of a species is not a matter of personal preference, but is fixed, so that few or none can dispute it, and no changes can be made in scientific nomenclature except such as are necessary to correct current mistakes in the application of the laws of the code. With increased knowledge it has become necessary to depart slightly in letter, though not in spirit, from the strict bi-