

searches we are in a much better position to elucidate the snarl. I have not the space in which to go into the details of his many valid conclusions, but

must refer all who are interested in the genus *Junco* to the paper itself.

P. A. TAVERNER.

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS.

RE SIGHT IDENTIFICATIONS.—The following is from the pen of that veteran ornithologist, Wm. Brewster, whose status as Dean of American ornithology is unchallenged. It appears in his *Birds of the Cambridge Region*, *Memoirs of the Nuttall Ornithological Club*, No. IV, Cambridge, Mass., 1906, Preface, pp. 5-6.

"My early training and experience have lead me to believe that with certain exceptions to be specified, the occurrence of birds in localities or regions lying outside their known habitats should not be regarded as definitely established until actual specimens have been taken and afterwards determined by competent authorities. No doubt it is becoming more and more difficult to live up to this rule because of the ever-increasing and, in the main, wholesome, popular feeling against the killing of birds for whatever purpose. Nevertheless I cannot admit that the mere observation of living birds met with in localities where they do not properly belong, or where they have not been ascertained to occasionally appear, should often be considered as establishing anything more than possible or probable instances of occurrence—according to the weight and character of the evidence."

"Exceptions to the rule may and indeed should be made in the cases of species which like the Turkey Vulture, the Swallow-tailed Kite, and the Cardinal, are easily recognized at a distance and which are reported by persons known to have had previous familiarity with the birds in life. Sight identifications of species somewhat less distinctly characterized than these just mentioned, if made under favourable conditions by observers of long field experience and tried reliability, may also sometimes be accepted with entire confidence. But on no authority, however good, should a mere field observation of any bird that is really difficult to identify, be taken as establishing an important primal record."

It may also be said that Dr. J. A. Allen, another of our old veterans of ornithology whose standing is beyond question, in reviewing the above work in the *Auk*, XXIII, 1906, p. 470, heartily endorses the above. After quoting the substance of the above, he remarks:

"This is the basis of the author's rulings in the present paper—a proper and the only safe basis in view of the present day method of numerous amateur observers, who are too often burdening ornithological literature with ill-advised records."

It may be added that the editorial policy of THE OTTAWA NATURALIST agrees heartily with these sentiments. We ourselves have many sight records which we are morally certain are correct but without specimens, except under the most exceptional circumstances, we do not feel justified in publishing them as more than hypothetical and then only with as many details in substantiation as possible that the reader may judge for himself of their sufficiency.

P. A. TAVERNER.

ORIGIN OF PLACE NAMES IN OTTAWA VALLEY.—I was much interested in the note by Mr. Douglas in THE OTTAWA NATURALIST for November, 1918, regarding the origin of the name Gatineau as applied to Gatineau River. While a very reasonable conclusion as far as it goes, there still seems to me some reason to doubt the connection between cause and effect in this case, owing to the vagueness of the proof that Monsieur Gatineau ever reached the river said to be named after him.

This doubt of mine is strengthened by the fact that I was given a very different derivation of the name by the late Mr. Lindsay Russell, who was for many years Surveyor General for Canada. He had an intimate knowledge of all the Ottawa tributaries, particularly the Gatineau and their peoples and to my personal knowledge a very considerable familiarity with their language.

He told me that the name Gatineau was Indian, that it was derived from the Cree word Etinos, meaning "The People"; i.e., the people of any particular district, and means "the river of the people", who lived in its territory. Might not this to some extent account for the Wright's spelling it Gatineau.

He also told me that one of the large tributaries marked on the map as Jean de Terre was wrongly so marked, as the original name was "Les Gens de la Terre" and was a literal translation of the name of the main river.

As to the G. sound beginning the name, anyone who is interested in Indian languages knows how prone they are to throw around their consonants loosely, as witness Mitchi, Kitchi, Gitchi, each meaning great, or grand, and Nippi, Tibbi, and Sibbi, a body of water, and all in use in the same district. This was probably due to the language not being a written one.

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