

ON *CATHARTES BURROVIANUS*, CASSIN, AND *C. URUBITINGA*, PELZELN.

By ROBERT RIDGWAY.

In the *Bulletin of the Nuttall Ornithological Club*, for April, 1880, in some "Notes on the American Vultures (Sarcorhamphidæ), with special reference to their generic nomenclature" (pp. 77-84, incl.), I made the following statement (p. 83) respecting the above-named species:—

"Recent authorities* having almost uniformly ignored the claims of this bird to specific rank, I have, in the absence of any opportunity to examine the type specimen in the Museum of the Philadelphia Academy, carefully read Mr. Cassin's original description in order to satisfy myself whether we are justified in the suspicion that Mr. Cassin's supposed species was based on a small specimen of *C. aura*. Upon reading Mr. Cassin's description I was surprised to find how well and unmistakably it applied to the bird usually called '*C. urubitinga*, Pelz.,' in every particular. In the description, as quoted below, I have italicized the phrases which are strictly and peculiarly diagnostic of *C. 'urubitinga*,' in order to show at a glance how certain it is that Cassin's *C. burrovianus* is the same bird. The only question, it appears to me, can be as to the locality, which may be erroneous, since *C. urubitinga* is not known to occur anywhere out of Eastern South America, though the evidence to this effect, it should be remembered, is purely negative.

"The earliest notice of this species is that of Brisson (1760), the *Vultur brasiliensis* of this author being unquestionably the same species, as his full and very accurate description clearly shows. Therefore it is quite possible that some author may have applied the name *brasiliensis* to the species under consideration before Mr. Cassin's name *burrovianus* was bestowed upon it; in which event the proper specific term would be *brasiliensis*, and not *burrovianus*. I cannot find, however, that such use of Brisson's name has been made. It is altogether probable that *burrovianus* will stand.

"Mr. Cassin's description (Pr. Philad. Acad., March, 1845, p. 212) is as follows:

"Head naked, smooth, with the nostrils large and oval; plumage of the body *entirely black*, with a greenish-blue gloss, paler beneath; *the feathers extend upwards on the back of the neck*; a small bare space on the breast. Wings long, the quills and tail-feathers black, with the shafts of the primaries white and conspicuous; third primary longest. The smallest American vulture known.

"Total length (of skin) 22 inches, bill $2\frac{1}{2}$, wing 18, tail $8\frac{1}{2}$.

"*Hab* —Near Vera Cruz.

* Conf. ELLIOT, Illustr. Am. B., ii, 1866; ALLEN, Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool., ii, 1871, p. 311; SHARPE, Cat. Acc. Brit. Mus., i, 1874, p. 23; GURNEY, The Ibis, 1875, p. 94.

“This species resembles *C. aura*, Linn., in the shape of the bill and nostrils, and in having the tail rounded, but differs from it not only in size, but the feathers extend upcards on the back of the neck and lie flat instead of forming a ruff; the plumage of the specimen now described is black, none of the feathers having pale margins, as is commonly the case in specimens of *C. aura*; the shafts of the primaries are clear white, and the head is more entirely destitute of downy feathers. The tarsi are longer and more slender.

“The head of *C. burrovianus* is quite smooth, in which, as in other respects, it is very different from *C. atratus*, Wilson.

“This new species was obtained in the vicinity of Vera Cruz, by the late N. Burrough, M. D., in honor of whom I have named it, as a slight acknowledgment of his very valuable services to natural history and to this academy.”

Having recently, through the courtesy of the officers of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, been able to make an actual comparison between the type of *C. burrovianus* and one of the typical specimens of *C. urubitinga*, Pelz. (ex Natterer)—one of Natterer's specimens, in fact, obtained from the Vienna Museum—I am now able to speak with more confidence in the matter. It only needs to be said that the two specimens are as much alike as it is possible for two examples of the same species to be. They are identical in every character which distinguishes *C. urubitinga* from *C. aura*, and there cannot be the slightest question of their specific identity. *C. urubitinga*, Pelzeln, therefore becomes a synonym of *C. burrovianus*, Cassin,* the principal references being as follows:

Cathartes burrovianus, Cassin.

Cathartes burrovianus, CASS., Proc. Phil. Ac., ii, 1845, 212; Cat. Vult. Phil. Ac. Mus., 1849, 5; Illustr. B. Cal., Tex., &c., 1855, 59; U. S. Expl. Exp., 1857, 84; in Baird's B. N. Am., 1858, 6.—BAIRD, Cat. N. Am. B., 1859, No. 4.—SCL., P. Z. S., 1857, 3.—DRESSER, Ibis, 1865, 322 (near Brownsville, Texas).—ELLIOT, B. N. Am., ii, 1866, pl. xxvi.—COUES, Key, 1872, 222.

Catharista burroviana, GRAY, Hand-l. i, 1869, 3.—SHARPE, Ann. N. H., ser. 4, xi, 1873, 133.

Rhinogryphus burrovianus, RIDGW., in Hist. N. Am. B., iii, 1874, 344.—GURNEY, List Diurn. B. Prey, 1884, 4.

Enops burroviana, SHARPE, Cat. B. Brit. Mus., i, 1874, 28, foot-note.

Cathartes urubitinga, PELZ., Sitz. Ak. Wien, xlv, 1861, 7 (ex NATT., MS.; Brazil); Verh. z.-b. Wien, 1862, 133; Orn. Bras. 1871, 1.—SCHLEG., Mus. P. B. Vult., 1862, 4.—SCL., P. Z. S., 1863, 224 (Surinam).—GURNEY, Cat. Rapt. B. Norw. Mus., 1864, 46.—SCL. & SALV., P. Z. S., 1867, 589 (Amazon); Nom. Neotr., 1873, 123.

Catharista urubitinga, GRAY, Hand-l. i, 1869, 3.

Enops urubitinga, SHARPE, Cat. B. Brit. Mus. i., 1874, 28, pl. ii, fig. 2.

Cathartes aura, SCL. & SALV., P. Z. S., 1867, 753 (Chyavetas, E. Peru); 1873, 301 (do.).

* I had already made this disposition of it in *Hist. N. Am. B.*, vol. iii, p. 344.

Habitat.—Atlantic slope of tropical America, from Brazil to Vera Cruz, Mexico (perhaps to southern Texas); west through Amazon Valley to eastern Peru.

The type of *C. burrovianus* and the typical example of *C. urubitinga* compare in measurements as follows:

		Wing.	Tail.	Culmen.	Head.	Length of nostril.	Width of nostril.	Tarsus.	Mid. toe.
Type of <i>C. burrovianus</i> .	Vera Cruz, Mexico.	18.50	8.60	.80	3.20	.50	.30	2.40	2.20
Typical " <i>C. urubitinga</i> ."	Brazil (Natterer coll.)	18.50	8.50	.88	3.40	.52	.32	2.20	2.15

ON ONYCHOTES GRUBERI.

By ROBERT RIDGWAY.

With the single exception of *Buteo cooperi*, Cass., no alleged North American hawk has been so much a puzzle to ornithologists as the species described under the above name. The type specimen was received by the Smithsonian Institution in 1866 from F. Gruber, a San Francisco taxidermist, and was labeled "*Buteo fuliginosus*, California." This specimen was described as a new genus and species, in the "Proceedings" of the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences for December, 1870 (p. 149) and again in *History of North American Birds*, vol. iii, p. 254; in the latter case the description being accompanied by a full-length wood-cut. In November, 1872, there was removed from the Land office Department of the Patent Office building, in Washington, to the Smithsonian Institution, a collection of forty-five mounted birds, for the most part North American species, and, with one or two exceptions, unlabeled. There were altogether 38 species, of which 29 were common North American birds, 8 well-known tropical American species, and the remaining one a hawk, which was subsequently identified as *Onychotes gruberi* in the light phase of plumage. This specimen was described in *Rod and Gun* (newspaper, West Meriden, Conn.), vol. vi, No. 5, May 1, 1875, p. 65. In the "Bulletin" of the United States Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories, vol. ii, No. 2, April 1, 1876, pp. 134, 135, both specimens were redescribed.

Having a suspicion that *Onychotes gruberi* might possibly be identifiable with some Old World species, the two specimens were, with the consent of the Director of the National Museum, sent to Mr. J. H. Gurney for examination, and while in his hands were inspected by other leading English ornithologists, none of whom could identify them with any other known species. Mr. Gurney published some observations on these specimens in the *Ibis* for July, 1881, pp. 396-398, illustrated by a colored plate (Pl. XII) showing both examples.

After having thus passed the test of examination by the best authorities, there seemed no further reason to doubt the validity of the species,