THE NAMES OF THE SONG-THRUSHES.

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In the article on "Additions and Alterations to the British List" in the September issue of this magazine it was stated (p. 96) that the proposed alterations in the names of the Song-Thrushes would be postponed here until the point regarding the name philomelus for the Continental form was cleared up. The List Committee of the B.O.U. has now decided that this name must be retained since it is prior to planticeps which was suggested (Ibis, 1934, p. 832).

The name ericetorum (1807) of Turton for the British Song-Thrush has priority in date over philomelus (1831) of Brehm, and the British bird thus becomes the typical form.

The changes will therefore be as follows:—

166. Turdus ericetorum philomelus Brehm.

THE CONTINENTAL SONG-THRUSH.

instead of Turdus philomelus philomelus Brehm.

167. Turdus ericetorum ericetorum Turton.

THE BRITISH SONG-THRUSH.


instead of Turdus philomelus clarkei Hartert, 1909.

168. Turdus ericetorum hebridensis Clarke.

THE HEBRIDEAN SONG-THRUSH.

instead of Turdus philomelus hebridensis.

The bird figured by Lewin as the Heath Thrush is certainly a Song-Thrush and the name Turdus ericetorum, given to it by Turton, must stand as the earliest valid name of the Song-Thrush. The British race thus becomes the typical one.

It is very unfortunate that the name of such a well-known bird as the Song-Thrush must be altered and, doubtless because of this, opposition has again been raised to the system of strict priority. These complaints are really not justified. The facts show that since the publication of the systematic list in the last part of the Practical Handbook in 1924 the changes made on grounds of nomenclature affect only ten species or, if all the subspecies involved in these changes are
counted, then fourteen. This is out of 496 forms in ten years and it must surely be admitted that the system has stood the test and is as stable a system as can be agreed upon. Moreover there is every reason to suppose that there will be still fewer changes in the next ten years.

These changes due to nomenclature have involved the Mealy, Greenland and Lesser Redpolls, White-winged Lark, Red-throated Pipit, Yellow-browed Warbler, Continental, British and Hebridean Song-Thrushes, Snowy Owl, American Pectoral Sandpiper, British Lesser Black-backed Gull, Iceland Gull and the generic name of the Crane.

There have also been eighteen additions to the list making now a total of 514 forms.