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MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS XXXIII

by

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VARIATION IN KITTLITZ'S SANDPLOVER *CHARADRIUS PECUARIUS* TEMMINCK

In describing *Charadrius varius allenbyi*, subsp. nov., from L. Karun, El Fayum, Egypt, on a very equivocal size-difference, Nicholl, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, vol. xlii, 1921, p. 7, appears to be the only worker to have proposed the breakdown of *Charadrius pecuarius* Temminck. Nicholl claimed that Egyptian specimens of *pecuarius* were larger than tropical African ones: wings of ♂♀ 102–112, versus 98–110 mm. The difference attributed to *allenbyi* is insufficient for recognition by present-day standards, and, moreover, many specimens from the South African topotypical population of *C. pecuarius* have wings in excess of 112 mm., the upper limit given by Nicholl for his *allenbyi*. Several authors have associated *C. sanctaehelenae* (Harting), 1873: St.¹ Helena, with *C. pecuarius*, though recently, following Chapin, *Birds of the Belgian Congo*, part ii, 1939, p. 65, Vaurie, *Birds of the Palearctic Fauna*, vol. ii (Non Passeriformes), 1965, p. 375, has kept it separate from *pecuarius*, which sandplover is currently treated as monotypic.

A study of a reasonably adequate panel of material from southern, central and south-eastern Africa recently carried out in the Durban

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season if non-breeding birds are involved, which is what I expect." I mention this divergence of opinion relative to the origins of the non-breeding Caspian Terns occurring in Botswana, on the Zambesi R., and in Rhodesia and Zambia, because a single adult in non-breeding dress from Mambova, Zambesi R., Zambia, examined during the course of this study had a decidedly finer, less high and arched, bill than the South African breeders of the same sex studied at the same time.

Clearly the possible taxonomic discreteness of the *H. caspia* population breeding in southern (? and other parts of) Africa cannot be adequately investigated with the fragmentary material and photographic evidence presently available, and steps should now be taken to bring together a representative series of skins for this purpose. As I have demonstrated in this preliminary study, South African breeders appear to differ in that they do not seem to assume an immaculate black dorsal surface to the head as do the Palaearctic, Nearctic, etc., populations. South African breeders, especially the males, may also be more massive billed than in other populations. Some excellent photographic studies of western Palaearctic breeding *H. caspia*, showing the immaculate, slightly glossed black cap of these northern populations, are to be found in *British Birds*, vol. lxiv, 7, 1971, pls. 45-47. The photographs concerned were taken in Finland in June, 1970.

I am grateful to Mr. C. D. Quickelberge, Ornithologist of the East London Museum, for the loan of the series of Caspian Terns in that centre, to Dr. Gordon Maclean, of the Zoology Department, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, for the loan of colour transparencies, and to Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin, Curator of Ornithology, National Museum of Rhodesia, Bulawayo, for his helpful comments on the material in the collection under his care.

A NEW FLOOD-PLAIN RACE OF THE RED-CAPPED LARK *CALANDRELLA CINEREA* (GMELIN) FROM SOUTHERN MOÇAMBIQUE

Until June, 1971, the Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea* (Gmelin) was not known to occur in Moçambique to the south of the Save R. However, during the course of a recent collecting trip to eastern Sul do Save undertaken by Durban Museum personnel from late May-early July, 1971, a breeding population of the Red-capped Lark was located on recently ploughed land on the great alluvial flood-plain of the Limpopo R. near the town of João Belo. Com-

parison of a series of ten adults collected by our party shows that this lowland population, breeding as it does on black alluvium, differs quite markedly from the plateau forms to the west. It may be known henceforth as

***Calandrella cinerea alluvia*, subsp. nov.**

Type: ♂, adult. Limpopo R. flood-plain near Chicumbane, N.W. of João Belo, Sul do Save, Moçambique (c. 25° 00' S., 33° 34' E.). 4 June, 1971. Collected by P. A. Clancey. In the collection of the Durban Museum. D.M. Reg. No. 26, 628.

Diagnosis: Nearest to *C. c. saturatior* Reichenow, 1904: mountains N. of Lake Malawi, south-western Tanzania, but with a darker and duller chestnut coronal patch in the ♂, and rest of upper-parts markedly less reddish or ochraceous, with little or no Sayal Brown intrusion, and with the dark centres to the feathers of the mantle and scapulars much deeper black and more fully developed. Wings and tail blacker. ♀ adult with coronal patch dull chestnut rather than cinnamon brown, and upper-parts plainer and duller, less warm brown and boldly streaked with blackish sepia over the mantle and scapulars. Similar in size.

Compared with *C. c. niveni* (Macdonald), 1952: Gezabuzo, near Pietermaritzburg, Natal, differs in being much smaller, thus: wings of ♂♂ 90,5–95,5, ♀♀ 85–89, versus 97–101, 5 (104) and 90–97,5 mm. in *niveni*. Also shows closely comparable colour differences compared with *niveni* to those enumerated in the comparison with *saturatior*.

Male not sharply differentiated from that of *C. c. anderssoni* (Tristram), 1869: Otjimbingwe, Damaraland, South-West Africa, but head-top darker and duller, and rest of upper-parts even less invaded with Sayal Brown than in this saturated race. Well marked in the adult ♀. Coronal patch duller, being dull vinaceous-chestnut, not cinnamon brown, and rest of upper-parts greyer and somewhat vinaceous, not warm buffy brown, and dark feather centres much less developed, imparting a more uniform, less dark brown streaked facies. Size as in *C. c. anderssoni*.

Material examined: 10 (Moçambique: Limpopo R. flood-plain at Chicumbane). Also long series of *C. c. saturatior*, *C. c. niveni*, *C. c. anderssoni*, *C. c. cinerea* (Gmelin), *C. c. witputzi* (Macdonald) and *C. c. williamsi* Clancey, as well as samples of *C. c. spleniata* (Strickland) and *C. c. ogumaensis* Grant and Mackworth-Praed.

Range: Known only from the great alluvial flood-plain of the Limpopo R., near its mouth in Sul do Save. Probably in like

situations on other major flood-plains in Moçambique. Breeding on recently ploughed land in early June.

Measurements of the Type: Wing 92, culmen from base 15, tarsus 26, tail 61 mm.

Remarks: At Chicumbane *C. c. alluvia* occurred alongside large numbers of breeding Richard's Pipits *Anthus novaeseelandiae spurium* Clancey, which, like *alluvia*, is a distinctive flood-plain race of the Moçambique coastal lowlands, and pairs of the lapwing *Vanellus senegallus lateralis* Smith and the small plovers *Charadrius pecuarius pecuarius* Temminck and *Charadrius tricollaris tricollaris* Vieillot. *C. c. alluvia* adds a new species to the Sul do Save list, and its discovery constitutes only the third record of this lark for all of southern Moçambique (see Clancey, *Handlist Birds Southern Moçambique*, part 2, in *Mem. Inst. Invest. cient. Moçamb.*, vol. x (in press)). The birds breeding locally on the Manica Platform, in western Manica e Sofala, are attributable to *C. c. saturator*.

Some of the races of *C. cinerea* are rather finely drawn. *C. c. anderssoni* and *C. c. niveni* are very close to one another in dorsal coloration, though *niveni* ranges distinctly longer in the wing. *Anderssoni* and *saturator* are, however, alike in size, but the latter is redder and more ochraceous above in series of adult males, though there is very little difference between the two taxa in the females. To complicate matters, the precise breeding ranges of the two along the northern and north-eastern periphery of the South West Arid District are by no means adequately understood at this stage, as post-breeding nomadism results in both forms having been collected alongside one another in this same general region.

The weights of the ten paratypes of *C. c. alluvia* are as follows:

♂♂ 24,3, 24,7, 24,7, 24,7, 27

♀♀ 24, 25,2, 26,2, 27,5, 28,9 gm.

The female with a weight of 28,9 gm. had an incubation-spot.

ON THE SOUTHERN RANGE LIMITS OF *NILAUS AFER NIGRITEMPORALIS* REICHENOW, 1892

Hall and Moreau, *Atlas Spec. Afr. Pass. Birds*, 1970, map 98, fix the austral range limits of *Nilauis afer nigritemporalis* Reichenow (not *nigrotemporalis*) as the valley of the Zambesi R. In this connection it requires to be pointed out that as long ago as 1936 Roberts, *Ann. Transv. Mus.*, vol. xviii, 3, 1936, p. 198, recorded