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MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS XXI

by

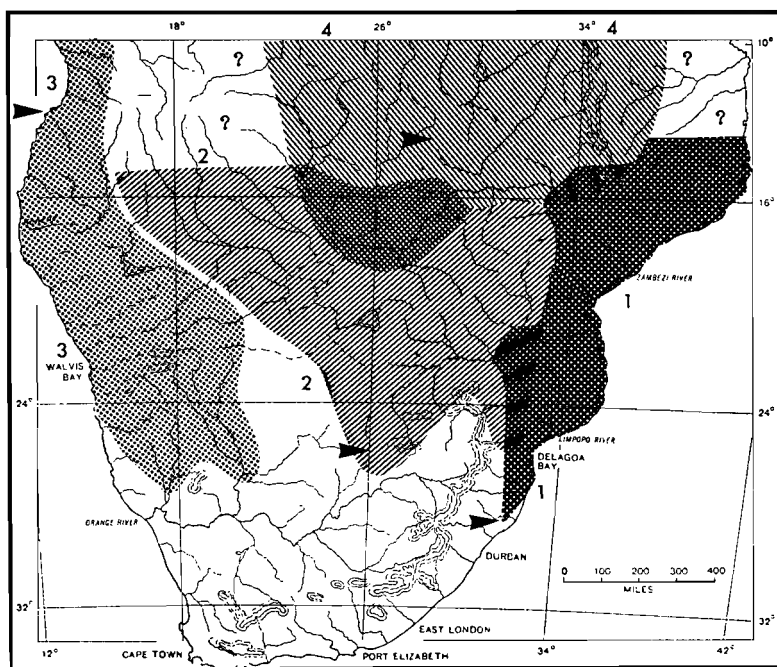
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GEOGRAPHICAL VARIATION IN THE GOAWAY BIRD *CORYTHAIXOIDES CONCOLOR* (SMITH)

The Goaway Bird was first introduced to science by Dr. Andrew Smith as *Corythaix concolor* in the *South African Quarterly Journal*, 2nd series, Oct.-Dec. 1833, p. 48, and was stated to "inhabit South Africa, inland of Port Natal". Overlooking his prior description, Dr. Smith redescribed the species in his *Report of the Expedition for Exploring Central Africa*, 1836, p. 54, under the name *Coliphimus concolor*, the species then stated to "inhabit the country from Kurrichaine to the Tropic" at about 25° 24' S. lat. The Goaway Bird does not occur in Natal, and must have been encountered by Smith during the course of his political visit to Zululand in 1832, and the Umfolozi R. may be fixed as the restricted type-locality.

In addition to the nominate race, several other subspecific divisions of the species have been proposed by workers over the years, these being in chronological order: *C.c.pallidiceps* Neumann, 1899: Angola and Benguela; *C.c.bechuanae* Roberts, 1932: Gaberones, south-eastern Bechuanaland Protectorate; *C.c.chobiensis* Roberts, 1932: Kabulabula, Chobe R., northern Bechuanaland Protectorate; and *C.c.cuanhamae* Rosa Pinto, 1962: Pereira d'Eça, Huila, Angola. There is no measure of agreement among workers on the number of races to be admitted in our formal subspecific arrangement of the



Sketch-map showing the approximate ranges of the four geographical races of the Goaway Bird *Corythaixoides concolor* (Smith) in southern Africa.

1. *Corythaixoides concolor concolor* (Smith)
 2. *Corythaixoides concolor bechuanae* Roberts
 3. *Corythaixoides concolor pallidiceps* Neumann
 4. *Corythaixoides concolor molybdophanes* Clancey
- Type-localities are indicated by black arrowheads.

A NEW SUBSPECIES OF RED-BILLED HORNBILL *TOCKUS ERYTHORHYNCHUS* (TEMMINCK) FROM THE SOUTH-EASTERN LOWLANDS OF AFRICA

Writing in the *Durban Museum Novitates*, vol. v, 18, 1959, pp. 238-242, I demonstrated that the populations of *Tockus flavirostris* (Rüppell) occurring in the lowlands of south-eastern Africa consisted of birds mensurally smaller than in those of the dry interior and extreme west of sub-continental South Africa. A recent study of the South African populations of the sympatric *Tockus erythrorhynchus* (Temminck) shows conclusively that the size variation in *T. flavirostris* is paralleled in the former species, the size-difference between south-eastern lowland birds and those of the interior plateau (*T. e. rufirostris* (Sundevall), 1850: Apies R., Pretoria, Transvaal) being of such magnitude that I consider it imperative that the present taxon *T. e. rufirostris* be broken down into two races.

Tockus erythrorhynchus degens, subsp. nov.

Type: ♂, adult. Mlaula Estates, Stegi district, north-eastern Swaziland. 24 May, 1963. Collected by Walter J. Lawson. In the collection of the Durban Museum. D.M.Mus.Reg.No.15305.

Diagnosis: Similar to *T.e.rufirostris*, described from Pretoria, Transvaal, at c. 5,500 ft. a.s.l., but much smaller in size, thus: 10 ♂♂ wings 166-179 (171.6), tails 177-191 (184.4), culmens (from base) 67-77 (73.1), 5 ♀♀ wings 160-163 (161.2), tails 167-171 (168.8), culmens 54-64 (58.8), as against 5 ♂♂ of *T.e.rufirostris* wings 183-195 (188.2), tails 192-213 (200.8), culmens 77-102 (83.4), 7 ♀♀ wings 170-180.5 (175.9), tails 174-190 (181.3), culmens 63-75 (67.9) mm.

Material examined: *T.e.degens*, 15 (Lubuli, south-eastern Swaziland, 1; Mlaula Estates, Stegi district, north-eastern Swaziland, 7; Newton, eastern Transvaal lowveld, 7). *T.e.rufirostris*, 12 (Motale R., Transvaal, 3; Blouberg, Transvaal, 2; Waterberg, Transvaal, 2; Rustenburg, Transvaal, 4; Northampton, Transvaal, 1). *T.e.damarensis* (Shelley), 2. *T.e.erythrorhynchus*, 2.

Range: Northern Zululand from about the Umduna and Mkuzi Rivers, north-west of Lake St. Lucia, and the country to the west of the Lebombo towards Candover, northwards through eastern Swaziland to the eastern Transvaal lowveld, south-eastern Southern Rhodesia, southern Moçambique and southern Nyasaland. Presumably intergrades with *T.e.rufirostris* to the west of its established range.

Measurements of the Type: Wing 169, tail 182, culmen 76 mm.

Remarks: The three races of Red-billed Hornbill found in South Africa will now stand as follows:

- (a) ***Tockus erythrorhynchus degens*** Clancey, 1964: Mlaula Estates, Stegi district, Swaziland.

Smallest race. Wings of ♂♂ 166-179, ♀♀ 160-163 mm.

Range: As given above.

- (b) ***Tockus erythrorhynchus rufirostris*** (Sundevall), 1850: Apies R., Pretoria, Transvaal.

Similar to *T.e.degens* in colouration but much larger in size. Wings of ♂♂ 183-195, ♀♀ 170-180.5 mm.

Range: Extends from south-western and southern Angola and northern and north-eastern South-West Africa to Bechuanaland, south-western Northern Rhodesia (Luangwa R. valley populations probably *T.e.degens*), the plateau of Southern Rhodesia and the western and northern Transvaal. Intergrades with *T.e.damarensis*

in the Kaokoveld and in northern and north-eastern Damaraland, South-West Africa.

Note: *T.e.ngamiensis* (Roberts), 1932: Maun, Ngamiland, Bechuanaland, based on an allegedly longer bill, is invalid and a synonym of *T.e.rufirostris*.

(c) ***Tockus erythrorhynchus damarensis*** (Shelley), 1888: Otjimbingwe, Damaraland, South-West Africa.

Still larger than *T.e.rufirostris*. Wings of ♂♂ 186-203, ♀♀ 181-186 mm. (after Sanft). Rather whiter over the face and frons, and whiter throughout below, less variegated or marmorated on the throat and upper breast with black. Basal surface of outermost rectrices with reduced blackish grey, and inner secondaries (not tertials) largely plain white.

Range: Restricted to western and central Damaraland, South-West Africa.

The nominate race from further north in Africa lacks the sub-terminal black bar to the outer tail-feathers and is plain white below, lacking the black marmorations to the lower throat and upper breast, in addition to other differences. It does not occur in South Africa, *contra* Macdonald, *Contr.Ornith.West.South Africa*, 1957, pp. 79-81, and Macdonald and Hall, *Annals of the Transvaal Museum*, vol. xxiii, 1, 1957, p. 13.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL RACES OF THE YELLOW-THROATED SPARROW *PETRONIA SUPERCILIARIS* (BLYTH)

Current opinion is divided as to the extent to which the populations of the Yellow-throated Sparrow *Petronia superciliaris* (Blyth), 1845: Cape Town, Cape Province, South Africa, are divisible into named subspecies, and most conservative workers treat the species binomially. Roberts, *Journ.S.Afr.Ornith.Union*, vol. viii, 1, 1912, p. 46, in proposing *P.s.bororensis* Roberts, 1912: Villa Pereira, Boror, northern Moçambique, was the first worker to demonstrate geographical variation in the species. Later, the same worker in *Ann.Transv.Mus.*, vol. xvi, 1, 1935, p. 170, and *Birds of South Africa*, 1940, p. 335, admitted a third race, namely, *P.s.flavigula* (Sundevall), 1850: Hamanskraal, north of Pretoria, Transvaal. Other workers have consistently refused to follow Roberts' lead, admitting no races, though Chapin, *Birds of the Belgian Congo*, part iv, 1954, p. 293, with his usual perspicacity, appreciated that the species showed quite marked variation, though he, too, followed the lead of others, tentatively admitting no races. Recently, the S.A.O.S. List Committee, *Ostrich*, vol. xxxiii, 1, 1962, p. 19, admitted *P.s.*