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## MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS XXXV

by

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### AN UNDESCRIBED RACE OF THE PINKBILLED LARK *CALANDRELLA CONIROSTRIS* (SUNDEVALL) FROM THE TRANSVAAL

Study of the pooled series of the Pinkbilled Lark from south-eastern South Africa in the collections of the Transvaal and Durban Museums shows that three races must be admitted for this region as against the two currently recognised. As a name is required for the undescribed taxon, it may be known as from the date of publication of this communication as

#### ***Calandrella conirostris griseovinacea*, subsp. nov.**

*Type*: ♂, adult. Rustenburg, western Transvaal, at c.1370 m a.s.l. 30 October, 1970. Collected by E. L. Button. In the collection of the Durban Museum. D.M. Reg. No. 26 154.

*Diagnosis*: Broadly streaked with black over the upper-parts as in nominate *C. conirostris* (Sundevall), 1850: Vechtkop, north of Heilbron, northern Orange Free State, but differs in having the feather-edging pale greyish vinaceous rather than saturated rusty brown (Vinaceous-Buff (*Ridgway*, 1912, pl. xl), *versus* Sudan Brown (pl. iii)). Below more extensively and purer white over the entire fore-throat, and with the rest of the underside much paler (Pinkish Buff (pl. xxix), as against deep Cinnamon-Buff/Clay Color (same pl.)). Similar in size.

*Material examined*: 10. *Transvaal*: Pretoria, Hennops River, Rustenburg, and Groot Marico. For material of other races see below.

*xanthostomus* on the basis of the wings being more extensively white. The type-locality of *ravidus* leaves much to be desired in the light of this further study of the variation, being as it is in a zone of intergradation between the two forms, but on the basis of the whiteness of the secondary-coverts and remiges in the *Type*, the name *ravidus* can be utilized for eastern birds, obviating the necessity of introducing a further name into an already difficult and rather complex situation. I may also remark here that the type-locality of *P.n.xanthostomus* is equally poorly positioned on the far eastern rim of the range of what is now seen as an essentially xeric race.

## A REVISED ARRANGEMENT OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN BLACK TITS

### *Parus leucomelas* Rüppell

- (a) ***Parus leucomelas insignis*** Cabanis, 1880:  
Malange, Angola.

Male, adult, blue-black above and below, with the under tail-coverts immaculate blue-black. In closed wing, median and secondary-coverts are concolorous, forming an unbroken white panel, and remiges with broad white margining to outer vanes. Size large and bill long.

Female as in the ♂, but slightly browner blue-black on the ventral surface; otherwise similar. Juvenal sooty black on underside.

Wings of ♂♂ 93–97, of ♀♀ 86–91, tails of ♂♂ 71–80,5, of ♀♀ 71–76, culmens from base of ♂♂ 14–15, of ♀♀ 14–14,5 mm.

*Material examined:* Angola, 19; Zambia, 15.

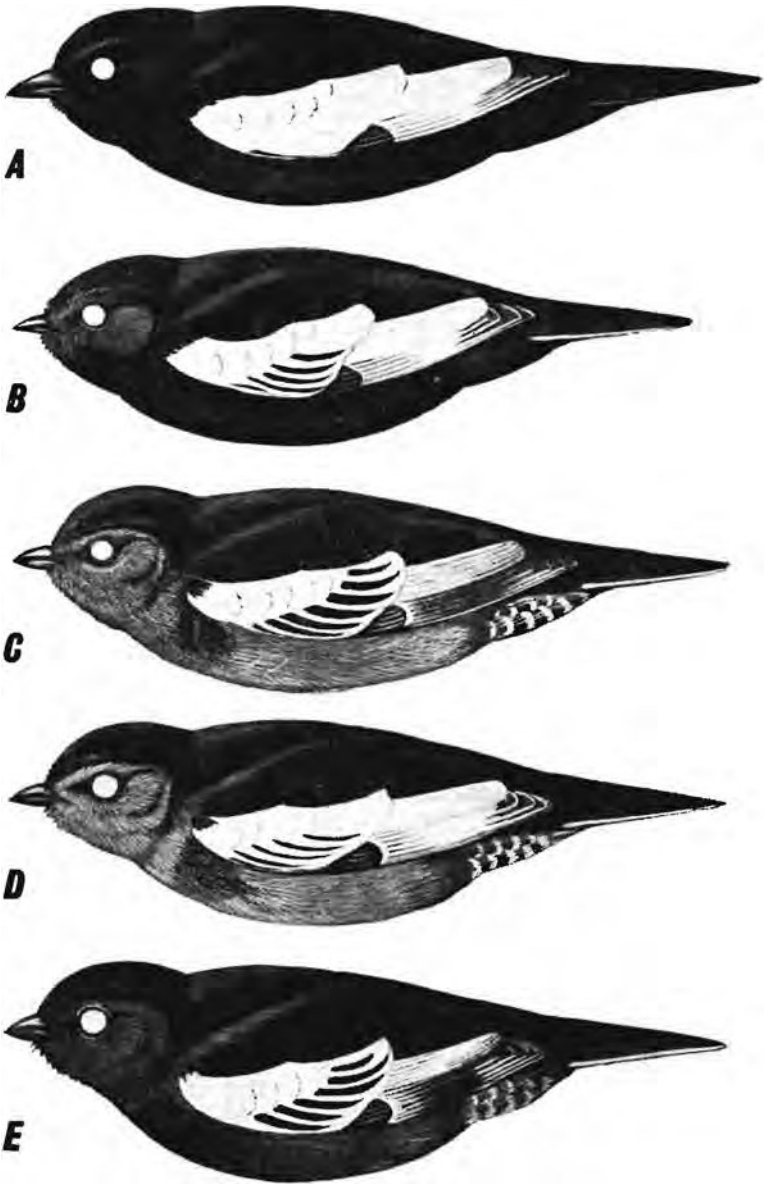
*Range:* Central and northern Huila, northwards in Angola, thence north in the west to Gabon, eastwards south of the main Congo forest through Zaire and northern Zambia to western Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Malawi (except south), and Niassa, northern Moçambique.

- (b) ***Parus leucomelas carpi*** Macdonald and Hall, 1957:

Warmquelle, north-western South-West Africa.

Male similar to that of *P.insignis*, but rather more violet blue-black above. In wings, secondary-coverts reveal rather more mesial

FIGURE II



- A. *Parus leucomelas insignis* Cabanis
- B. *Parus leucomelas carpi* Macdonald and Hall
- C. *Parus niger xanthostomus* Shelley
- D. *Parus niger ravidus* Clancey
- E. *Parus niger niger* Vieillot

Lateral views of females to show variation in wing pattern and ventral coloration in southern races of *P.leucomelas* Rüppell and *P.niger* Vieillot.

black, and median- and secondary-coverts do not form an unbroken white panel in the closed wing as in *insignis*. In tail, outer rectrices exhibit a broader white stripe on the outer vanes and more white over the tips. Under tail-coverts with vestigial white fringing in many. Size much smaller and bill shorter.

Female as in *insignis*, but distinctly browner over the entire face, chin and upper fore-throat. Juvenal sooty below as in *insignis*.

Wings of ♂♂ 80–84, of ♀♀ 74,5–80, tails of ♂♂ 62–69, of ♀♀ 61–68,5, culmens of ♂♂ 12–12,5, of ♀♀ 11,5–12 mm.

*Material examined*: South-West Africa, 42; Angola 26.

*Range*: South-West Africa from northern Great Namaqualand from about 24° S. lat., northwards in the east to the Waterberg and Otavi, and west of this to the region of the Etosha Pan and Ovamboland, and further west to the Kaokoveld and the lower Cunene R. In Angola in southern Huila south and west of the escarpment, and north along the coastal strip to Moçamedes and Benguela to about Novo Redondo.

*Remarks*: On the basis of the material available from Angola (45 specimens), there is no intergradation between *carpi* and *insignis*, the two being strictly allopatric.

### **Parus niger** Vieillot

Specimens examined comprised 120 examples of nominate *P.niger* and c. 360 of *P.n.ravidus* and *P.n.xanthostomus*.

#### (c) **Parus niger xanthostomus** Shelley, 1892:

Victoria Falls, north-western Rhodesia.

Less lustrous blue-black above than in *P.leucomelas* races, and underside markedly duller, rather greyer and more matt, black, and under tail-coverts broadly fringed with white. In wings, white edging and tipping to secondary-coverts much narrower than in *P.l.carpi*, revealing more mesial black, and white edging to remiges reduced in width, especially over the medial plane, giving a shadow effect. Size markedly larger than in *carpi*, but not as large as in *insignis*.

Female differs sharply from male in contrast to the position in *P.leucomelas* forms, having the face and underside matt Deep Mouse Grey (*Ridgway*, 1912, pl. li). Wing and other characters as described in respect of the male. Juvenal not as dark ventrally as in *P.leucomelas* subsp. II.

Wings of ♂♂ 85–89, of ♀♀ 80–84, tails of ♂♂ 72,5–78, of ♀♀ 70–77, culmens of ♂♂ 12,5–13, of ♀♀ 11,5–13 mm.

*Material:* Of the series examined, South-West African specimens were from Runtu, Andara and Kuring-kuru, on the Okavango R. Botswana specimens were from the Aha Mts., Mabele a Pudi, Maun, Shorobe, Kabulabula, Serondela, Chobe R., Kasane, Toteng, Tsodilo Hills, etc., while north-western Rhodesian skins came from Kazungula, Nampini, Matetsi, Deka, Katambora Rapids, Victoria Falls (the type-locality), Wankie, etc.

*Range:* The valley of the Okavango R. in north-eastern South-West Africa and adjacent Cuando-Cubango, Angola, to Lake Ngami, the Okavango Swamp region and northern and eastern Botswana, the dry western Transvaal, low rainfall areas of north-western and western Rhodesia, and south-western Zambia. Intergrades to the east of this distribution with *P.n.ravidus*.

(d) **Parus niger ravidus** Clancey, 1964:

near Bulawayo, Rhodesia.

Differs from *P.n.xanthostomus*, as defined above, in having the white edging and tipping to the secondary-coverts of adults of both sexes much broader, resulting in a situation virtually as in *carpi*, where the median- and secondary-coverts form an almost concolorous white panel, and with more uniform white edging to the remiges, the shadow effect over the primaries missing. Eastern lowland populations of *ravidus* range smaller in size than do those of *xanthostomus*, though the Rhodesian plateau populations do not do so.

Wings of ♂♂ 82–88, of ♀♀ 80–82, tails of ♂♂ 70–75, of ♀♀ 70,5–75, culmens of ♂♂ 12,5–13,5 of ♀♀ 11,5–13 mm.

*Range:* The mesic plateau regions of Rhodesia east of the range of *xanthostomus*, southern and south-eastern Zambia, southern Malawi, most of Moçambique, northern and eastern Transvaal, and eastern Swaziland.

(e) **Parus niger niger** (Vieillot), 1818:

Sundays R., eastern Cape.

As in *P.n.xanthostomus* in respect of the extent of white over the secondary-coverts and remiges, the male differing only in series in being rather deeper black below, and with the sides and flanks less extensively grey.

Differs rather more sharply in the female, having the underside a distinctly darker and slightly more olivaceous tinged slaty grey (Dark Mouse Gray, pl. li). Size smaller.

Differs from *ravidus* in having markedly narrower white fringing and tipping to the secondary-coverts in both sexes, and in exhibiting a distinct shadow effect over the primaries. Males less greyish over the sides and flanks, and females darker, more olivaceous, mouse grey below.

Wings of ♂♂ 82–85, of ♀♀ 76,5–81, tails of ♂♂ 69–73,5, of ♀♀ 64,5–71, culmens of ♂♂ 12–13, of ♀♀ 11,5–13 mm.

*Range*: Eastern Cape from the Sundays R. and Algoa Bay, to Natal and Zululand.

#### A NAME FOR AN UNDESCRIBED RACE OF *COSSYPHA CAFFRA* (LINNAEUS)

Writing in *Durban Mus.Novit.*, vol. viii, 11, 1968, p. 138, I recommended that *C.c.iolaema* Reichenow, 1900: Kilimanjaro, north-eastern Tanzania, should be treated as extra-limital to the South African Sub-Region, and that the populations of the robin *C.caffra* distributed from eastern Rhodesia and adjacent Moçambique south to the Drakensberg Mountains of south-eastern Africa should be grouped together in *C.c.drakensbergi* (Roberts), 1936: Wakkerstroom, south-eastern Transvaal. A re-examination of the taxon *C.c.drakensbergi* in the light of comments on the Lesotho high level population by Mr. C. D. Quicquelberge, of the East London Museum, suggests that this name should be used for the populations of the Drakensberg Mountains and their outliers alone, and that those with brighter orange plastrons ranging from the Reef and eastern highland forests of the Transvaal, north to eastern highland Rhodesia, adjacent Moçambique and Mt. Gorongosa should be grouped into a new race, for which a name is required:

#### ***Cossypha caffra vespera*, subsp. nov.**

*Type*: ♀, adult. Stapleford Forest Reserve, near Umtali, eastern Rhodesia, at 18° 41' S., 32° 51' E. Altitude 1 580 m. a.s.l. 6 June, 1967. Collected by P. A. Clancey. In the collection of the Durban Museum. D.M. Reg. No. 21 700.

*Diagnosis*: Differs from *C.c.iolaema* of the highland forests of eastern Africa to the north of the Zambesi R. in having the dorsal surface of the head much less blackish in freshly moulted condition, and in being less saturated dorsally in general. Below, exhibits a rather paler, less vibrant, orange plastron, is rather more extensively greyish over the entire breast, and has duller, less orange-buff,