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## MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS

LV

by

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### ON THE PROBLEM OF THE RACE(S) OF THE REDSHANK *TRINGA TOTANUS* (LINNAEUS) REACHING THE SOUTH AFRICAN SUB-REGION

While it is claimed that at least two subspecies of the Eurasian Redshank *Tringa totanus* (Linnaeus) reach East Africa during the course of their post-breeding southbound migrations, no attempt has hitherto been made to determine the precise subspecies reaching the South African Sub-Region. In so far as southern Africa is concerned, the Redshank is a sparse visitor, and only in the west, at Walvis Bay, has the species been recorded in any numbers. Virtually no specimens of this wader have been taken in southern Africa, but through the kind agency of Mr Bryan G. Donnelly, Ornithologist of the National Museum of Rhodesia, Bulawayo, I have recently been able to study a specimen taken at Namasire, some 29 km south of Shakawe, in the north-west of Botswana, on 6 September, 1971, by Mr A. L. Archer.

The Namasire skin is an adult female in advanced post-breeding moult, but still carrying some faded buffy brown breeding plumage feathering over the upper-parts, and in the coverts over the bends of the wings, while the remiges are very abraded and browned. The flattened wing is 152,5, which probably would equal *c.* 157 in fresh condition, culmen-length from the feathers 40, tarsus 51,5, and the

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surmise that *tennenti* was invalid and a synonym of *garguensis* (see *Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol. viii, 9, 1967, p. 94). In dealing with variation in *C.natalensis*, cognisance requires to be given to the fact that owing to its marked post-breeding vagility there is no possibility of good subspecies being confined to small forest patches on medium altitude mountains, all established subspecific taxa being relatively wide-ranging (see findings of Britton, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, vol. xci, 5, 1971, pp. 137 - 144). The extensive material now available from Kenya confirms this, the populations falling into only two broad groupings: one with the blue-grey of the scapulars and adjacent surfaces relatively pale and the venter in freshly moulted material about Cadmium Yellow (Ridgway (1912), pl. iii), this being *C.n. garguensis* (with *tennenti* a straight synonym), and the second with the pileum and hind neck more brick or vinaceous red, the scapulars and adjacent areas darker blue-grey with some blackish admixture, and the venter redder, less yellowish (breast about Xanthine Orange (pl. iii)), lightening caudad. This latter is *C.n.intensa*. Owing to the marked post-breeding movements undertaken by many populations of this species, the breeding ranges in Kenya are currently tentative, but *garguensis* is apparently the race of the highlands, certainly to the east of the Rift. This latter subspecies is replaced in the hill ranges of the south-east and along the coast by *intensa* which extends west, south of *garguensis* from south-eastern and eastern Kenya and north-eastern and northern Tanzania, west to Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi and eastern Zaire. The populations of north-central Africa from Sudan and the Central African Empire, west to Cameroun appear distinguishable from *intensa* and merit further study.

Both *C.n.garguensis* and *C.n.intensa* are more heavily billed than in the case of races occurring further south in eastern Africa (*C.n. hylophona* Clancey, *C.n. egregior* Clancey and *C.n.natalensis* Smith). I have not been able to examine *C.n.larischi* Meise of Angola, so am unable to comment on the mass of its bill. This species appears to be divisible into no less than seven subspecies, as opposed to the five admitted by Ripley in the continuation of Peters' *Check-List*.

I am grateful to Dr Ralph W. Schreiber and members of his staff for permission to examine the series in the Los Angeles County Museum.

### A THIRD RACE OF *MELAENORNIS* *MARIQUENSIS* (SMITH)

The Marico Flycatcher *Melaenornis mariquensis* (Smith) was last reviewed by me in *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, vol. xcvi, 2, 1976, pp. 53 - 57,

when two races were recognised, namely nominate *M. mariquensis* (Smith), 1847: Marico R., western Transvaal, and *M. m. acaciae* (Irwin), 1957: Ohopoho, Kaokoveld, north-western South West Africa, with *B. m. vinaceus* Lawson, 1963: Tshane, south-western Botswana, a synonym. Earlier, I had suggested an additional race might be recognisable from the north-east of the species' range (*vide* Clancey, *Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol. viii, 11, 1968, p. 149). Receipt of a series of this flycatcher from the Okavango R., in north-eastern South West Africa, shows that a third race will require to be recognised after all, as foreshadowed in my findings of 1968, but disallowed in the revision of 1976. This may be known as

***Melaenornis mariquensis territinctus*, subsp. nov.**

*Type*: ♂, ad. Rundu, Okavango R., north-eastern South West Africa (Namibia). 16 September, 1978. Collected by M. O. E. Baddeley. In the collection of the Durban Museum, D.M. Reg. No. 31 786.

*Diagnosis*: Differs from nominate *M. mariquensis* described from the western Transvaal in having the upper-parts dull olive-brown (Light Brownish Olive (pl. xxx), *versus* the more saturated and redder Saccardo's Umber (pl. xxix) of the said race); frons greyer, pileum with more marked dark shaft-streaking, and rump less reddish. In wings, coverts and remiges with less reddish fringes. Below, more starkly white, lacking the faint warm buff overlay to the breast. Size the same.

*Material examined*: 10. Okavango birds are from Rundu, the Okavango/Cuito confluence and Andara.

*Range*: North-eastern South West Africa along the course of the Okavango R., the Caprivi, adjacent north-western Botswana, and, apparently, in southern Cuando-Cubango, Angola, and adjacent south-western Zambia. The eastern limits in Botswana are not yet clear, but Makgadikgadi specimens show a marked shift towards *territinctus*.

*Measurements of the Type*: Wing 86, culmen from base 16,5, tarsus 22, tail 77 mm.

*Remarks*: At Andara, Baddeley also took the closely allied *Melaenornis pallidus aquaemontis* (Stresemann), which, like *M. m. territinctus*, shows a greying of the upper-parts and a whitening of the ventral surface when compared with its vicinal subspecies.