

DURBAN MUSEUM

# Novitates



ISSUED BY THE DURBAN MUSEUM, DURBAN 4001, SOUTH AFRICA

VOL. XI, PART 1

ISSUED 30th NOVEMBER, 1975

## MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS

### XLIII

by

P. A. CLANCEY

(Director, Durban Museum, Durban)

## ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF *CHARADRIUS MARGINATUS* VIEILLOT OF ETHIOPIAN AFRICA TO *CHARADRIUS ALEXANDRINUS* LINNAEUS

The small sandplover *Charadrius marginatus* Vieillot of much of Ethiopian Africa and Madagascar is variably considered by authors as a full polytypic species or as a race of a greatly enlarged *Charadrius alexandrinus*, typically of the Palearctic Region and Asia. Among more recent authors, Neumann, *Novit. Zool.*, vol. xxxv, 1929, pp. 212-216, treated *C. marginatus* and its races as conspecific with *C. alexandrinus*, which view was followed by Peters, *Check-List Birds of the World*, vol. ii, 1934, pp. 248-250, who further recognised *C. nivosus* (Cassin) and other similar sandplovers of the Americas, as well as *C. ruficapillus* Temminck, 1822, of Australasia, as conspecific with *alexandrinus*. On the other hand, Chapin, *Birds of the Belgian Congo*, part ii, 1939, pp. 65-67, and more recently Vaurie, *American Mus. Novit.*, No. 2177, 1964, pp. 1-15, and in *Birds of the Palearctic Fauna*, vol. ii, Non-Passeriformes, 1965, pp. 376-378, considered *C. marginatus* to be specifically discrete from *C. alexandrinus*, a view shared by Mackworth-Praed and Grant, *Birds of Eastern and North Eastern Africa*, vol. i, 1952, pp. 340-343, and all modern South African authors, including the present writer (Clancey, *Catalogue Birds South African Sub-Region*, 1965, pp. 288, 289). Among other authors dealing with this complex of small plovers, Meinertzhagen, *Birds of Arabia*, 1954, pp. 476-479 (map), and Dement'ev and Gladkov, *Birds of the Soviet Union*, English

*Remarks:* The population lying to the south of the range of *D.l.sharpei* Oustalet, 1879: upper Ogooué R., Gabon, in Angola and those of Zambia, south-eastern Zaïre, northern Malawi and south-western Tanzania are generally associated by authors with nominate *D.ludwigii*. Material studied suggests to me that at least the Angolan and north-western Zambian elements are discrete enough on the basis of a greener metallic sheen to stand as yet a further subspecies, making five admissible subspecific taxa in all for the species: *D.l.ludwigii*, *D.l.tephrogaster*, *D.l.* subsp.nov. (Angola and Zambia). *D.l.muenszneri*, *D.l.sharpei* (with *D.l.elgonensis* van Someren, 1920, a synonym). This further enquiry will be dealt with in a future communication in this series of miscellaneous taxonomic notes.

In 12 ♂♂ of nominate *D.ludwigii* wings measure 101,5–107,5 (103,5), SD 2,02, SE 0,58, 12 ♀♀ wings 96–101,5 (99,0), SD 1,66, SE 0,48mm.

#### AN ADDITIONAL SUBSPECIES OF THE REDEYED BULBUL *PYCNONOTUS NIGRICANS* (VIEILLOT)

The Redeyed Bulbul *Pycnonotus nigricans* (Vieillot) of the South-West Arid District of Ethiopian Africa was first demonstrated to be polytypic by me in *Bull.Brit.Orn.Club*, vol. lxxxix, 9, 1959, pp. 166–170, when I recognised two subspecies, namely, *P.n.nigricans* (Vieillot), 1818: Goodhouse, lower Orange R., north-western Cape, from much of the species' range, and *P.n.superior* Clancey, 1959: Mamathe's, near Teyateyaneng, Lesotho, from the south-eastern sector. Further study of the variation exhibited by this bulbul carried out in 1975 now confirms the findings of Irwin, *Occ. Papers Natn.Mus.S.Rhod.*, No. 22B, 1958, pp. 198–201, who pointed out seventeen years ago that northern Botswana birds were not the same as those occurring in the central and southern Kalahari, and indicates that a third subspecies should be admitted in our formal taxonomic treatment of the species. As a name is required, this may be known as —

#### ***Pycnonotus nigricans grisescentior*, subsp.nov.**

*Type:* ♂, adult. 32km N. of Nata, north-eastern Botswana. Collected by B. Muche (No. 414). 13 July, 1968. In the collection of the National Museum of Rhodesia, Bulawayo, Reg. No. 73 639.

*Diagnosis:* Compared with *P.n.nigricans* distinctly colder and greyer over the upper-parts, this most marked on the hind neck, rump and upper tail-coverts (mantle about greyish Drab (pl. xlvi)).

Ventrally, with the black of the fore-throat not so markedly sundered from the white of the breast by a band of greyish brown, scaled with whitish, which is much less deep medially than in *nigricans*, and with the breast and abdomen clearer and more extensively white, the ray-like streaking over the upper breast present in *nigricans* and *superior* vestigial or absent. Yellow of under tail-coverts brighter and paler. Wings greyer and tail blacker. Size as in *nigricans*.

*Measurements:* Wings of 12 ♂♂ 95–100 (97,2), SD 1,51, SE 0,44, culmens 18,5–20 (19,0), SD 0,35, SE 0,10, tails 77–82,5 (80,7), SD 2,01, SE 0,58mm.

Wings of 12 ♀♀ 90–95 (92,7), SD 1,86, SE 0,54, culmens 18–19,5 (18,7), SD 0,75, SE 0,22, tails 74–79,5 (77,0), SD 1,77, SE 0,51mm.

*Paratypical material:* 40 (*Botswana:* Dithejane (13km W. of Molepolole), Francistown, Nthane, near Mouchi (21° 17' S., 25° 52' E.), 64km N. of Nata, Bromfield Pan (161km N. of Nata), 33km N. of Tamafupi, Lothlekane, Musu, Sukwane, Toromoja, Odiakwe, Kanyu (20° 05' S., 24° 36' E.), Botletle R. at 24° 30' E., Mandabura Pan, Chobe Game Reserve, Dautsa, 24km W. of Ghanzi; *Rhodesia:* Umgusa Forest Reserve, Main Camp, Wankie Game Reserve, Victoria Falls village).

*Range:* Eastern, north-eastern and northern Botswana, north-western Transvaal, north-western Rhodesia to about the Victoria Falls, and adjacent eastern Caprivi Strip and south-western Zambia, north-eastern and northern South West Africa from north of the Damaraland highlands to the Etosha region and the Kaokoveld, and south-western Angola. Only a seasonal visitor to some north-eastern localities.

*Measurements of the Type:* Wing 96, culmen from base 20, tarsus 22+, tail 82mm.

*Remarks:* With recognition of a third subspecies the racial taxa and their revised characters and ranges will now stand as follows:

- (a) ***Pycnonotus nigricans superior*** Clancey, 1959: Mamathe's, near Teyateyaneng, Lesotho.

Upper-parts dark, cold Olive-Brown (pl. xl). Below with black well extended down over fore-throat; upper breast dull olive-brown, this breaking into the off-white of the rest of the breast in a series of brown rays. Size large.

Wings of 12 ♂♂ 98–104 (101,0), SD 2,36, SE 0,68, culmens 20,5–22 (21,1), SD 0,53, SE 0,15, tails 83,5–91 (87,0), SD 2,90, SE 0,84mm.

Wings of 8 ♀♀ 96–99 (97,2), SD 1,04, SE 0,37, culmens 20–21 (20,7), SD 0,49, SE 0,17, tails 82–90 (84,1), SD 2,97, SE 1,05mm.

*Range:* Eastern Karoo regions of the Cape, north-east to East Griqualand along the Drakensberg Escarpment, Orange Free State, Lesotho, and southern Transvaal highveld. In winter to Natal.

*Note:* For recent comments on this taxon see Quickelberge, *Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol ix, 17, 1972, p. 263.

(b) ***Pycnonotus nigricans nigricans*** (Vieillot), 1818: Goodhouse, lower Orange R., north-western Cape.

Differs from *P.n.superior* in being paler above (about greyish Buffy Brown (pl. xl)). Below, with the black of the fore-throat not so extended caudad; breast paler and brown rays over mid-breast less heavy. Size smaller.

Wings of 12 ♂♂ 93,5–99,5 (96,7), SD 1,88, SE 0,54, culmens 19,5–21 (20,2), SD 0,50, SE 0,14, tails 79–85 (82,2), SD 1,80, SE 0,52mm.

Wings of 10 ♀♀ 88,5–95 (92,3), SD 2,15, SE 0,68, culmens 18–20 (19,0), SD 0,80, SE 0,25, tails 75–82 (78,3), SD 2,83, SE 0,90mm.

*Range:* North-western and northern Karoo regions of the Cape and along the middle and lower Orange, northern Cape in Gordonia, Kuruman and Bechuanaland districts, western and southern Botswana, and Great Namaqualand, South-West Africa, north to the Damaraland highlands. Intergrades along the course of the mid-Orange R., and in Griqualand West with *superior*.

(c) ***Pycnonotus nigricans grisescentior*** Clancey, 1975: 32km N. of Nata, north-eastern Botswana.

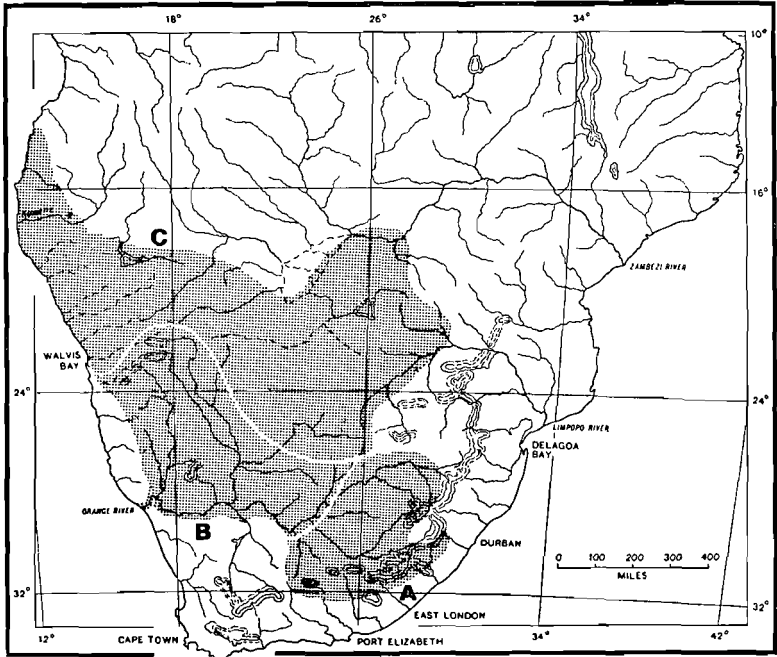
Greyer above than *P.n.nigricans* (about greyish Drab (pl. xlvi)), this marked over the hind neck, rump and upper tail-coverts. Below with upper breast much less overlaid with greyish brown but apical scaling whiter, the ray-like streaking obsolete or absent, resulting in the entire breast and belly appearing whiter. Wings greyer, tail blacker. Under tail-coverts paler and brighter yellow. Size as in *nigricans*. Measurements as given above.

*Range:* Eastern, north-eastern and northern Botswana, north-western Transvaal, north-western Rhodesia to about the Victoria Falls, eastern Caprivi Strip, northern and north-eastern South West Africa, and south-western Angola. Also Livingstone area, Zambia.

*Note:* Macdonald and Hall, *Ann. Transv. Mus.* vol. xxiii, 1, 1957, p. 23, demonstrate that northern South West African birds are

paler and greyer above than examples from the south of the same territory.

For the loan of additional Botswana specimens to augment the series already in the Durban Museum I am grateful to Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin, Keeper of Ornithology at the National Museum of Rhodesia, Bulawayo.



MAP III

Sketch-map showing the disposition of the three subspecies of *Pycnonotus nigricans*.

- A. *Pycnonotus nigricans superior* Clancey
- B. *Pycnonotus nigricans nigricans* (Vieillot)
- C. *Pycnonotus nigricans grisescentior* Clancey

#### ON THE PRESENT NOMINATE SUBSPECIES OF *NECTARINIA AMETHYSTINA* (SHAW)

During the course of work on the montane evergreen forest birds of the Transvaal in September/October, 1974, I was impressed by the small dimensions of live Black Sunbirds encountered at The Downs and in Woodbush Forest Reserve, both in the Tzaneen district, compared with those of the Cape Province and Natal. These casual field observations have recently been put to the test by a critical study of a series of some two hundred specimens drawn from all populations of the present nominate race of *N.amethystina* (Shaw),