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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.

Range: Western and highveld regions of the Transvaal north from about 24° 45' S. lat. Perhaps adjacent Botswana.

Measurements of the Type: Wing (flattened) 79,5, culmen from feathers 10, tarsus 19,5, tail 42 mm.

Remarks: This new form is in freshly moulted, immaculate dress late October–December, and is a pale mesic race of open dry country in acacia- and bushveld savanna, whereas the starkly more saturated and reddish *C.c.conirostris* is a high level grassland biome element.

At the same time as describing *C.c.griseovinacea*, it seems advisable to define the characters and ranges of all three subspecies now recognised from the south-eastern highland area of southern Africa. The relevant details of the forms concerned are as follows:

(a) ***Calandrella conirostris griseovinacea*** Clancey, 1972:

Rustenburg, western Transvaal.

Upper-parts broadly streaked black, the feathers fringed greyish vinaceous. Below, with fore-throat extensively white, and rest of underside pinkish buff.

Western and highveld regions of Transvaal north from about Pretoria at 25° 45' S.

(b) ***Calandrella conirostris conirostris*** (Sundevall), 1850:

north of Heilbron, northern Orange Free State.

Streaking of upper-parts as last, but feathers fringed saturated rusty brown. Below, with duller and reduced white over fore-throat, and rest of underside darker than last (near clay colour).

High level grasslands of the southern Transvaal highveld south of 25° 45' S., the adjacent northern and eastern Orange Free State, western Swaziland, and Upper Natal (Newcastle, Dannhauser, Blood River). 30 examined.

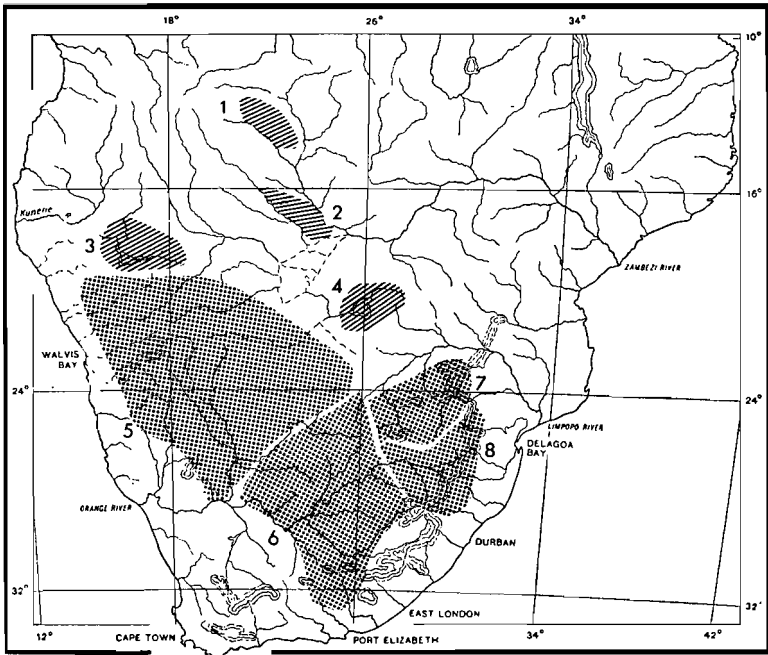
(c) ***Calandrella conirostris transiens*** Clancey, 1959:

near Kimberley, northern Cape.

Much less heavily streaked above than either *griseovinacea* or *conirostris*, the feather fringing pale, but not as grey as in the former (about Avellaneous (pl. xl)). Below with coloration lighter than in *conirostris*, but not so white over fore-throat and pale generally as *griseovinacea*.

Griqualand West south locally in the interior of the eastern Cape to about Tarkastad and Cradock, the western and southern Orange Free State, the south-western Transvaal, and south-eastern Botswana. Also recorded in November from Natal Midlands (Colenso); ? non-breeding visitors. 57 examined.

FIGURE 1.



Sketch-map showing the disposition of the races of the Pinkbilled Lark *Calandrella conirostris* (Sundevall)

1. *Calandrella conirostris makawai* Traylor
2. *Calandrella conirostris harti* Benson
3. *Calandrella conirostris damarensis* (Roberts)
4. *Calandrella conirostris crypta* Irwin
5. *Calandrella conirostris barlowi* (Roberts)
6. *Calandrella conirostris transiens* Clancey
7. *Calandrella conirostris griseovinacea* Clancey
8. *Calandrella conirostris conirostris* (Sundevall)

C.c.barlowi (Roberts) of southern and central South-West Africa, the Kalahari of Botswana and adjacent northern Cape has the upper-parts bright pale vinaceous-cinnamon, the streaking still further reduced than in *transiens*, and below, the breast and sides are buffy, the lower mid-breast and medio-ventral plane cream, and the upper breast speckling finer and browner (22 examined). The two northern races in the Sub-Region, *C.c.damarensis* (Roberts) and *C.c.crypta* Irwin, are pale and grey above, the streaking fine, and the feathers tipped whitish, and are extensively white below, only the upper breast washed with light buff, and the upper breast streaking is pale and brownish. These are saline pan races, the former of Etosha and Ovamboland, and the latter from the Makariki Salt Pan complex (13 examined).

Two other races occur on sparsely grassed Kalahari Sand plains in western Zambia and probably adjacent Angola, these being *C.c.harti* Benson and *C.c.makawai* Traylor.

THE STATUS OF *PARUS NIGER CARPI* MACDONALD AND HALL, 1957, AND A REGROUPING OF SOME POPULATIONS OF THE *PARUS NIGER* VIEILLOT, *SENS.STRICT.*, COMPLEX

When I studied the variation in *Parus niger* Vieillot, *sens.strict.*, in depth in 1964 (*vide Durban Mus.Novit.*, vol. vii, 7, 1964, pp. 167-177), I treated *Parus niger carpi* Macdonald and Hall, 1957: Warmquelle, north-western South-West Africa, as a form of the *Parus leucomelas* Rüppell assemblage, divorcing it from the species *niger* in which it had been described. This view has not been followed in subsequent publications, and Snow, in the continuation of Peters' *Check-list Birds of the World*, vol. xii, 1967, pp. 100, 101, continued to treat *carpi* as a race of *niger*, and followed the view held prior to the appearance of my short note in *Ibis*, vol. c, 3, 1958, pp. 451, 452, that *P.n.niger* was not divisible, on the grounds that he lacked sufficient material to appraise my 1964 revision (footnote to p. 100). In connection with this last point, I may be permitted the comment that the posting of two postcards, one to Bulawayo and the other to Durban, would have furnished him with some five hundred specimens for a "critical review" of my findings, and there is just simply no excuse for northern workers not making use of such readily available material. Even more recently, Winterbottom, *Prelim.Check List Birds South West Africa*, 1971, p. 174, has gone so far as to sink *P.n.carpi* as a synonym of *P.n.niger* Vieillot, 1818: Sundays R., eastern Cape, following an earlier note inserted by him in the *S.A.O.S. Check List Birds of South Africa*, 1969, p. 186, to the effect that *carpi* was a doubtfully valid race.

I have recently re-examined the status of *carpi* on the basis of adequate material from South-West Africa and Angola, and the regions to the east (Okavango R. drainage, eastwards), concluding that *carpi* is a well-marked subspecies, better associated with *leucomelas* than with *niger*, though almost able to stand on its own as an allospecies of a superspecies *leucomelas*, while the *niger* populations lying to the immediate east of *carpi* require marginal regrouping. This regrouping results in a re-allocation of names, with the outcome that *P.n.xanthostomus* and not *P.n.ravidus* lies in juxtaposition to the eastern elements of *P.l.carpi*.