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Further Note on the Double-Banded Sandgrouse

By MR. J. D. MACDONALD.

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When preparing my note on the Double-banded Sandgrouse, *Pterocles bicinctus*, page 6 of this volume, I overlooked a note on *Eremialector bicinctus* published by Benson in vol. 47, 1946-47, p. 79. Benson distinguished three stages in an east to west colour cline with the darkest form *P. b. multicolor* in the east, the lightest form *P. b. bicinctus* in the west, and intermediate between them the form *P. b. chobiensis*. It seemed to me, for reasons I have stated and on data not available to Benson, that typical *P. b. bicinctus* is darker than populations in the coastal districts of northern South West Africa and Angola, and therefore I indicated the same colour cline, though of a slightly wider range, with *P. b. multicolor* at one end, these pale coastal birds—to which I gave the name *P. b. elizabethae*—at the other, and typical *P. b. bicinctus* as an intermediate group. In a regular short-range colour cline division into three named groups is the simplest way of dealing with it, and therefore it seemed that the retention of *P. b. chobiensis* as an additional intermediate group was of doubtful value.

I should have considered the use of Benson's name *ansorgei* for the pale coastal group. Benson separated the Angola birds as a small edition of *P. b. bicinctus* (see Table). As the type of *P. b. elizabethae* is slightly larger than the largest measured *P. b. bicinctus* the question is whether *P. b. elizabethae* and *P. b. ansorgei* can be regarded as distinct size groups. I think it is a point which can only be settled arbitrarily at this stage. Dimensional clines are apparent both on the west side of the species range and on the east side, where Benson separated *P. b. usheri* as a small northern edition of *P. b. multicolor*. There is a greater distance geographically between *P. b. ansorgei* and *P. b. elizabethae* than between *P. b. usheri* and *P. b. multicolor* and a corresponding greater size difference (see Table). The existence of these clinal variations is of special interest and they are readily lost sight of unless indicated by names, but it is one of the well known problems of taxonomy to decide just how many stages should be named.

<i>Palest</i>		<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Darkest</i>		
<i>ansorgei</i>	157-168 (13)	—	<i>usher</i>	161-171 (13)	
<i>elizabethae</i>	188 (1)	<i>bicinctus</i>	168-184 (14)	<i>multicolor</i>	168-188 (20)

Table : Range of wing measurements of adult males of various races of *Pterocles bicinctus*, arranged in relative geographical positions. Number of specimens in brackets.