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MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS

XV

by

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1. A NEW RACE OF SHELLEY'S FRANCOLIN *FRANCOLINUS SHELLEYI* OGILVIE-GRANT FROM NATAL AND ZULULAND.

The austral populations of Shelley's Francolin are characterized as a new subspecies to science under the following name:

Francolinus shelleyi sequestris, subsp. nov.

Type: ♂, adult. Albert Falls, near Pietermaritzburg, Natal. 25 August, 1951. Collected by Robin Guy. In the collection of the Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg. Reg. No. 2308.

Diagnosis: Similar to *F.s.shelleyi* Ogilvie-Grant, 1890: Umfuli River, Southern Rhodesia, but rather darker, less greyish, and more boldly marked with Fuscous-Black (*vide* Ridgway, *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*, 1912, pl. xlvi) on the upper-parts. More clearly differentiated on the ventral surface, being more densely mottled with Fuscous-Black over the lower breast and upper abdomen, and with the breast, body-sides and flanks rather darker (Hazel (pl. xiv) as against Tawny (pl. xv)). Similar in size.

Material examined: *F.s.sequestris*, 6. *F.s.shelleyi* from Southern Rhodesia, 11.

[Price 5/- nett.]

Measurements of the Type: Wing (flattened) 172, culmen from base 39, tail 82 mm.

Range: Natal, Zululand, Swaziland, and, perhaps, the eastern Transvaal.

Remarks: The Southern Rhodesian toponymic material of *F.s.shelleyi* kindly placed at my disposal for study by the Director of the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo (through Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin), suggests that the populations of that territory are not uniform. Two males from Nyahuvu, Headlands, north-eastern Southern Rhodesia, collected by Mr. R. W. Rankine on 30 September, 1957, and a single male from Rocklands, Melsetter, collected on 4 September, 1950, stand apart from the rest of the Southern Rhodesian material submitted in being more densely clouded over the breast and flanks with Tawny, and in having the lower breast and entire abdominal surface distinctly more buffish tinged, less white, than in the other specimens, some of which are also from the former locality. Careful sponging of selected feathers with ether soap solution and trichlorethylene failed to reveal that this buffish tinge to the median ventral feathers was due to soil staining, as at first suspected. It may well be that the populations of *F.shelleyi* resident in the moist eastern highlands of Southern Rhodesia are distinguishable from toponymic nominate *F.shelleyi* on the characters enumerated above, but much more material from the whole of Southern Rhodesia requires to be collected before this matter can be more fully investigated.

The name of the new race of Shelley's Francolin is taken from the Latin, *sequestro*, to remove, to separate from.

2. GEOGRAPHICAL VARIATION IN THE CHANTING GOSHAWK *MELIËRAX MUSICUS* (DAUDIN)

In the *Annals of the Transvaal Museum*, vol. xiv, 3, 1932, p. 239, the late Austin Roberts described a new form of Chanting Goshawk from the Transvaal, which he placed as a subspecies of the East African *Meliërax poliopterus* Cabanis. The new form, which was called *M.p.coombsi*, was based on a single specimen collected by a Mr. Cecil Coombs on the Montrose Estates, Zoutpansberg, northern Transvaal, in June, 1928. *M.p.coombsi* has not been widely accepted by workers, and in the recent *Roberts' Birds of South Africa*, 1957, p. 87, by McLachlan and Liversidge, the form is dismissed as being based on a "very dark individual" of *Meliërax musicus* (Daudin), 1800: Cape Province. That *M.coombsi* is allied to *M.musicus* and not *M.poliopterus* there is now no doubt, following on the findings of Mackworth-Praed and Grant, *Ostrich*, vol. xxiii,

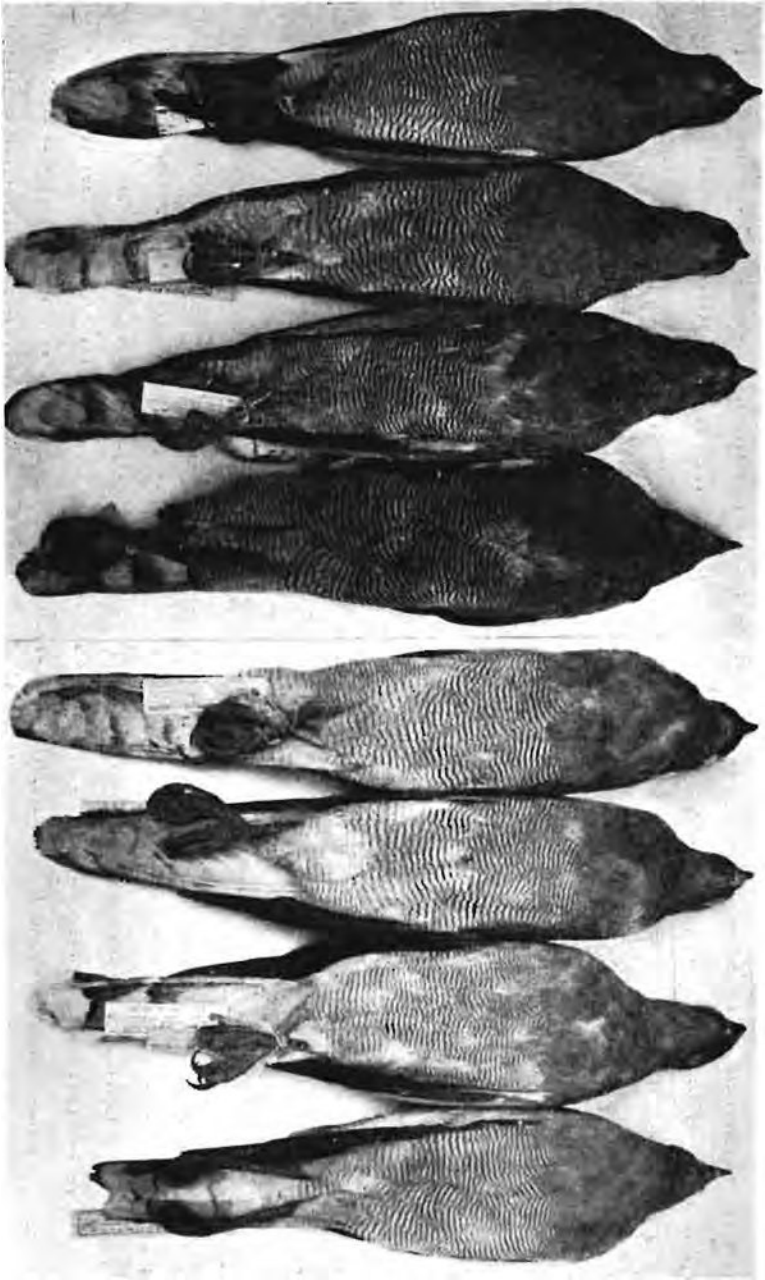
1, 1952, pp. 44-45, who consider it, however, to be a valid race of the former species with a restricted range in the northern Transvaal.

A recent study of much of the material of *M. musicus* preserved in South African museums (Cape Town, East London, Durban and Pretoria), reveals that the populations of this large hawk occurring in the Karoo regions of the Cape Province are darker in general colouration, especially over the head, are more heavily barred below, and have the white in the wings more restricted than is the case in the birds found to the north of the Orange River. When compared with birds from South-West Africa, the Bechuanaland Protectorate and north-western Transvaal (Blouberg), Cape topotypes of *M. musicus* were found to exhibit precisely the characters utilized by Roberts, *loc. cit.*, to differentiate *M. coombsi* from *M. musicus*. Roberts writes that *M. coombsi* is "as large as *M. canorus* (= *musicus*) and much darker in the grey parts of the plumage, the head in particular nearly black above and on the ear-coverts and cheeks". That *M. coombsi* is founded on a migrant example of *M. musicus* is now clear, as I have recently examined a further example resembling the dark topotypical populations from within the breeding range of the paler birds, this from the Kaokoveld, north-western South-West Africa (♀ adult, Ohopoho, Kaokoveld. 6 July, 1951. Transvaal Museum collection No. 28535). Arising from these findings, *M. coombsi* Roberts, 1932, must be sunk into the synonymy of *M. musicus* (Daudin), 1800, while the pale populations of South-West Africa, northern Cape Province, Bechuanaland Protectorate, western Southern Rhodesia and western Transvaal, mistakenly believed by Roberts to represent the subspecific unit *M. m. musicus*, must be given a name. This latter group of populations may be known as

***Melierax musicus argentior*, subsp. nov.**

Type: ♂, adult. Sukses, Okahandja—Otjiwarongo road, Damara-land, South-West Africa. 21 May, 1959. Collected by M. O. E. Baddeley. In the collection of the Durban Museum.

Diagnosis: Differs from *M. m. musicus* of the Karoo regions of the Cape Province in having the upper-parts markedly paler and more silvery grey (about Deep Gull Gray (*vide* Ridgway, 1912, pl. liii) on head-top, as against almost Dark Neutral Gray (same pl.)). On under-parts, paler over the throat and breast (Pale Neutral Gray, as against Light Neutral Gray (both same pl.)), and also the cheeks and ear-coverts, and more finely barred on a purer white ground over the lower breast, body-sides, abdomen, flanks and under tail-



MELIERAX MUSICUS (Daudin)

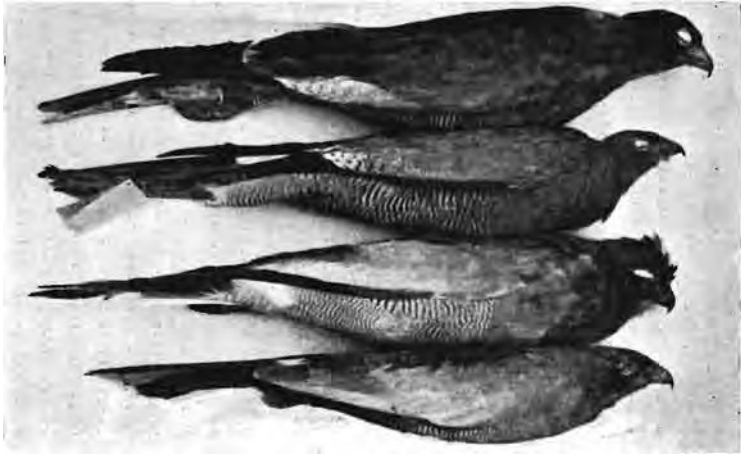
Ventral aspect of specimens of two geographical races of the Chanting Goshawk *Melierax musicus* (Daudin).

Upper.—*Melierax musicus musicus* (Daudin)

Lower.—*Melierax musicus argentior* Clancey

Note paler general colouration and finer barring in *M.m. argentior*.

(Photo: A. L. Bevis)



MELIÉRAX MUSICUS (Daudin)

Lateral aspect of specimens of two races of the Chanting Goshawk *Meliérax musicus* (Daudin)

Upper pair.—*Meliérax musicus musicus* (Daudin)

Lower pair—*Meliérax musicus argentior* Clancey

Note paler wings in *M.m. argentior*, and the restriction of whitish in wings to the secondaries in *M.m. musicus*.

(Photo: A. L. Bevis)

coverts. Wings paler, owing to the extension of the white and grey freckling over the secondary- and median-coverts (in *M.m. musicus* the grey and white freckling in the wing is mainly restricted to the secondaries). Transverse bars on outer rectrices less sharply defined. Similar in size.

Material examined: *M.m. argentior*, 15 (South-West Africa, 4 ♂♂, 3 ♀♀, 1 o; northern Cape Province, 2 ♂♂, 1 o juv.; Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1 ♂, 1 ♀; western Transvaal, 1 ♂; western Orange Free State (Modder R.), 1 ♀ juv.). *M.m. musicus*, 9 (Cape Province, 3 ♂♂, 4 ♀♀; South-West Africa (Ohopoho (migrant), 1 ♀).

Measurements of the Type: Wing (flattened), 342 mm.

Range: From the north-western (lower Orange River) and northern Cape Province, South-West Africa (? to the southern limits of Angola), and the Bechuanaland Protectorate, western Orange Free State and western Transvaal to western Southern Rhodesia. Intergrades to the south of its established range with the nominate race.

Remarks: The breeding range of the dark nominate race of *M. musicus* can be defined as from the western and south-western Cape Province, eastwards through the Karoo districts to the eastern

Cape. Perhaps to parts of the Orange Free State and Natal (formerly). This southern race appears to be a partial migrant, as specimens of it have been taken in the northern Transvaal (the Type of *M. coombesi*), Southern Rhodesia (*vide* Roberts, *Birds of South Africa*, 1940, p. 65) and the eastern Kaokoveld, north-western South-West Africa.

This hawk becomes seriously soil stained in a short space of time through foraging on the ground, while marked plumage colour changes are wrought by actinic action, the dorsal feathering of worn birds being darker, browner and lacking the powdery grey bloom of freshly moulted examples. The habit this species possesses of sitting in the intense sunlight on the top of some tree, bush or telephone pole no doubt accounts for the speed with which this change takes place.

The name is from the Latin *argenteus*, of silver, which is descriptive of its general appearance in the field as a large, whitish gull-like hawk.

3. THE SOUTH AFRICAN RACES OF THE TURTLE DOVE *STREPTOPELIA CAPICOLA* (SUNDEVALL)

The Cape Turtle Dove *Streptopelia capicola* (Sundevall) is in all probability the most widely distributed and numerous of all the species of Columbidae occurring within the limits of sub-continental South Africa. It inhabits a wide variety of types of country, favouring light woodland, the wooded fringes of cultivation, thornveld savannas, etc., and has in all probability increased greatly during the past century as a result of the planting of groves of exotic trees on farms in the Karoo and eastern highveld. Geographical variation is well developed in this species, but still comparatively poorly understood, and currently only three geographical races are recognised within the limits of South Africa, these being *S.c. capicola* (Sundevall), 1857: Rondebosch, near Cape Town, south-western Cape Province, *S.c. damarensis* (Hartlaub and Finsch), 1870: Otjimbingwe, Damaraland, South-West Africa, and *S.c. tropica* (Reichenow), 1902: Songea, Southern Province, Tanganyika Territory. Recently, Macdonald, *Contribution to the Ornithology of Western South Africa*, 1957, pp. 72-73, reviewed the variation in the western populations of southern Africa, in so doing describing a new race from the Kaokoveld of north-western South-West Africa under the name *S.c. onguati* Macdonald, 1957: Onguati, near Kamanjab, Kaokoveld, north-western South-West Africa. In addition to naming *S.c. onguati*, Macdonald restricted the range of *S.c. capicola* to the south-western Cape Province ("Cape flats, as far east as