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**Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club.**

London :The Club,1893-

<http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/46639>

**v.80 (1960):** <http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/125672>

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blackish crown-spot is often reduced in size, thereby exhibiting more white peripherally than in *V.(S.)c.coronatus*. Similar in size.

*Material examined:* *V.(S.)c.xerophilus*, 12 (May, 1959.) *V.(S.)c.coronatus*, 29 (Cape Province, Natal, Swaziland, eastern Transvaal, Northern Rhodesia).

*Measurements of the Type:* Wing (flattened) 211, culmen (exposed) 28, tarsus 68, tail 94 mm.

*Range:* Known at present from central and northern South-West Africa, specimens being examined from the following localities: Windhoek, Okahandja, Otjiwarongo. Almost certainly extends northwards to at least south-western Angola (Mocamedes and Huila).

*Remarks:* The distinctive pallor of the new race of Crowned Plover was noticed in the field, and it was appreciated long before comparative study was possible that the South-West African populations represented a distinct undescribed race. *V.(S.)c.xerophilus* shows the normal trend in South-West African bird forms in being paler and greyer than those of the Cape Province and the eastern parts of the sub-continent. It is surprising that it was not discovered and named years ago by the various industrious German systematists of the early part of the present century.

The other race of the Crowned Plover inhabiting desertic regions of Africa, *V.(S.)c.demissus*, differs in having the upper-parts more reddish sandy in colour when compared with the nominotypical race. It also ranges rather smaller in size (wings 191–197 mm. (after Chapin, *Birds of the Belgian Congo*, part ii, 1939, p. 76)).

I am grateful to Miss M. Courtenay-Latimer, Director of the East London Museum, South Africa, for kindly allowing me to study the specimens of the new form obtained by members of the East London Museum party.

## Geographical Variation in the White-backed Mousebird *Colius colius* (Linnaeus)

by MR. P. A. CLANCEY

Reichenow, *Journal für Ornithologie*, vol. xlvii, 1899, p.418, separated the populations of *Colius colius* (Linnaeus) from Damaraland from those of the Cape Province under the name *C.c.damarensis* Reichenow, 1899. The recognition of two races of this somewhat restricted species of mousebird has not been followed by most systematic workers, and the species is treated as monotypic by Sclater, *Systema Avium Aethiopicarum*, part i, 1924, p. 266; Peters *Check List of Birds of the World*, vol. v, 1945, p. 146; McLachlan and Liversidge, *Roberts Birds of South Africa*, 1957, p. 208, and Macdonald, *Contribution to the Ornithology of Western South Africa*, 1957, p. 87. Roberts, *Birds of South Africa*, 1940, p. 159, and Vincent, *Check List of the Birds of South Africa*, 1952, p.48, however, recognise *C.c.damarensis* and give its range as "Damaraland."

Study of the adequate series of recently-taken specimens in the collection of the Durban Museum shows that the populations of Damaraland are not in any distinguishable from those of the north-western and northern Cape Province, Bechuanaland Protectorate and western Transvaal. They do, however, differ from examples from the southern and eastern Cape

and southern Orange Free State in being paler grey over the head and on the under-parts, in having rather less extensive and paler vinaceous-fawn over the lower breast, while the creamy white abdomen and flanks lack the wash of rusty buff present in the southern and south-eastern populations. These unrecorded ventral colour differences seem to warrant the retention of two named races in our systematic treatment of the species.

The populations of the White-backed Mousebird can be arranged in two races, the characters and ranges of which are as hereunder detailed:

(a) *Colius colius colius* (Linnaeus), 1766: Cape of Good Hope, *i.e.*, Cape Province, South Africa.

Whole head, upper-parts, throat and upper breast about Neutral Gray (*vide* Ridgway, *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*, 1912, pl. liii); feathers of chin and upper throat black at base; lower breast about Light Vinaceous-Fawn (pl. xl), and rest of under-parts (abdomen, flanks, crissum and under tail-coverts) creamy white with a pronounced overlay of Warm Buff (pl. xv).

*Range*: Western and south-western Cape Province, eastwards through the southern and interior Karoo districts to the eastern Cape, and in the western half of the Orange Free State. Intergrades with *C.c.damarensis* in the lower valley of the Vaal, along the course of the central Orange River (Prieska), in the southern Kenhardt district, and doubtless at other points to the westward.

(b) *Colius colius damarensis* Reichenow, 1899: Damaraland, South-West Africa.

Slightly paler Neutral Grey over the head and on the upper-parts than in *C.c.colius* (about Light Neutral Gray, *vide* Ridgway, *loc. cit.*, pl. liii). On the under-parts usually showing less blackish on throat; breast band not so broad and rather less vinous tinged (Vinaceous-Buff (pl. xl)), and with the abdomen, flanks, crissum and under tail-coverts creamy white without an overlay of Warm Buff.

*Range*: Central and southern South-West Africa (Damaraland and Great Namaqualand), western and southern Bechuanaland Protectorate, western Transvaal, and the northern and north-western (south to Kenhardt, where it meets *C.c.colius*) Cape Province.

## On the Races of *Prinia pectoralis* (Smith)

by MR. P. A. CLANCEY

*Received 10th September, 1959*

Winterbottom, *Bull. B.O.C.*, vol. 77, 9, 1957, pp. 155–156, in his useful revision of the races of the Rufous-eared *Prinia* recognises two subspecies, placing *Prinia pectoralis hewitti* (Roberts), 1932: Aerodrome, Grahams-town, eastern Cape Province, as a synonym of nominate *P. pectoralis* (Smith), 1829: Bitterfontein, southern Little Namaqualand. The second recognised race, *Prinia pectoralis malopensis* (Sharpe), 1903: Molopo River, Bechuanaland, occurs to the north of the Orange River and is paler coloured throughout, being much whiter below. The material in the Durban Museum collection supports Winterbottom's findings (*cf.* Macdonald, *Contribution to the Ornithology of South Africa*, 1957, pp. 138–139), but an adjustment to the name of the southern Bechuanaland populations appears to be necessary.