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MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS

XXXIV

by

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THE NORTHERN NON-BREEDING RANGE LIMITS OF *ISPIDINA PICTA NATALENSIS* (SMITH)

Mackworth-Praed and Grant, *Birds Eastern and North Eastern Africa*, vol. i, 1952, p. 573, fix the northern range limits of *Ispidina picta natalensis* (Smith), 1831: Natal, as Tanzania. Chapin, *Birds of the Belgian Congo*, part ii, 1939, p. 286, lists it on singletons from as far north in the eastern Congo (Zaire) as Kisenyi, near Lake Kivu, and the Rutshuru Plain, also mentioning Gyldenstolpe's single February record from Lake Chahafi, Rwanda (*vide* Gyldenstolpe, *Kungl. Svenska Vetenskap. Handl.*, 3rd ser., vol. i, 3, 1924, pp. 276, 277). That *I.p.natalensis* winters in numbers still further north in central equatorial Africa has recently come to light as a result of the study of a series of thirteen *I.picta* (Boddaert) from Bwamba Forest, western Uganda, brought together, mainly in 1967, by collectors operating on behalf of the Los Angeles County Museum. In their interesting joint paper on the birds of the lowlands of Bwamba, Toro, Uganda, Friedmann and Williams, *Los Angeles County Mus.Contr.Sci.*, No. 211, 1971, p. 25, place the series concerned as being applicable to *I.p.picta* (Boddaert), 1783: Senegal, whereas in fact it is composite, comprising three nominate *picta* and no less than ten *natalensis*. Of the sample from Bwamba Forest (localities: Nkarara, Rwansenge and Ntandi, at 670–700 m. a.s.l.), 77 per cent. is applicable to *natalensis*, the balance of 23 per cent.

being unequivocal nominate *picta*. All the specimens of *I.p.natalensis* were netted between 25 April and 19 July, while of the *I.p.picta*, one is dated 12 July, the other two 14 November and 3 December. *I.p.natalensis* is on its austral African breeding grounds from early October–April/early May (see Clancey, *Durban Mus.Novit.*, vol. vii, 10, 1965, p. 357), which ties in nicely with the dates of its occurrence as a non-breeding visitor in the Semliki R. region of central equatorial Africa. On the basis of the November and December dates of two of the three specimens, *I.p.picta* appears to be the indigenous subspecies of the Bwamba Forest.

Comparison of the ten Bwamba *I.p.natalensis* with a long series of topotypes from south-eastern Africa reveals that one or two of the Bwamba sample are more strongly overlaid with pinkish violet over the hind and side surfaces of the neck, and a trifle lighter azurite blue, as was noted in the case of the Lake Chahafi skin by Gyldenstolpe, *loc.cit.* One unsexed bird from Bwamba, dated 19 July, 1967, differs more significantly in having a much smaller and finer bill than in any of our topotypical series of *natalensis*. It is also small, the wing 52,5, *versus* 54,5–57,5 mm. in Natal and Mozambique birds. Whether this bird represents a distinct population within the limits of the present taxon *I.p.natalensis*, or is an individual variant is unknown.

Compared with *natalensis*, nominate *picta* has a deeper black crown, with sparser transverse blue barring, the upper-parts of the body are a deeper azurite blue, the remiges and rectrices are deeper black, the neck lacks lateral blue patches above the white, the underside is ruddier, less ochraceous, and the bill averages longer. The size is also smaller: 51–54, *versus* 54,5–57,5 mm.

As over three-quarters of a sample of thirteen specimens of this small kingfisher from a single forest (Bwamba) are referable to *I.p.natalensis* and not *I.p.picta*, the migratory form must now be seen as wintering quite extensively as far north as 1°N., and probably beyond, in western Uganda and the adjacent Congo (Zaire) in central equatorial Africa.

I am very grateful to Dr. Kenneth E. Stager, Chief Curator of Ornithology, Los Angeles County Museum, for the loan of material.

NEW RACES OF A ROCKTHRUSH AND A WARBLER FROM ANGOLA

Critical study of series of *Monticola brevipes* (Waterhouse) and *Achaetops pycnopygius* (Strickland and Sclater) reveals that both of these South West Arid District endemics are represented in the

moist south-eastern highlands of Angola by distinctive populations which warrant recognition as additional subspecific taxa. For kindly placing series of recently taken Angolan specimens at my disposal, I am indebted to Dr. A. A. da Rosa Pinto, Ornithologist of the Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, who has, since 1960, been responsible for the building up of the quite magnificent collection of southern and western Angolan birds in the Instituto, which collection now comprises well over 32,000 skins.

Monticola brevipes niveiceps, subsp. nov.

Type: ♀, adult. Tundavala, Serra da Chela, Huila, Angola, at 2 250 m. a.s.l. 28 June, 1963. Collected by F. Nobrega. In the collection of the Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, Sá da Bandeira. Reg. No. 4, 350.

Diagnosis: Male in freshly moulted dress (April–September), differs from that of nominate *M. brevipes* in having the ground to the head-top and hind neck colder white, and the mantle and scapulars much darker and more bluish grey (Deep Neutral Gray, *versus* Neutral Gray (Ridgway, pl. liii)). Wings blacker, the edging to the coverts and remiges narrower and greyer. Moderately worn breeders (October/November) have the head-top and hind neck more snowy white than in South-West African birds, this sharply contrasted against the darker and bluer back. In series, *niveiceps* also averages more saturated and ochraceous orange below.

Adult female shows better racial characters than the male, having the upper-parts darker and somewhat bluer than in *M. b. brevipes* (mantle Mouse Gray (pl. li), *versus* Hair Brown (pl. xlv), and with the dark sagittate shaft-streaks blacker and broader, imparting a more streaked facies to the dorsum. Face darker, and throat, malar surfaces and cheeks with ground whiter, the dark mottling and streaking often heavier and blacker; in extreme examples the upper breast is heavily scaled with dark grey. Wings blacker, and pale fringing to coverts and remiges distinctly grey, rather than buffy brown. In tail, innermost rectrices blacker.

Measurements: Wings of 10 ♂♂ 101–108 (103,4), of 10 ♀♀ 95–102 (98,5) mm. Weights of ♂♂ 33–40, of ♀♀ (30) 33–42 gm. (28 weighed).

Material examined: 32 (*Huila*: Tundavala, Alto da Chela, Leba, Humpata, Chivinguiro (Tchivinguiro), Cangalongue, Bimbe). *M. b. brevipes* (including *M. b. kaokoensis*), a series. Angolan specimens of this latter taxon were from Pedra Grande (Caraculo), 18 km. N. of Cuto, Lucira and Chitado, the last named in south-western Huila

near the Ruacana Falls, Cunene R., the other localities in Moçamedes.

Range: The escarpment zone and south-western highlands of Angola in the administrative district of Huila in the Sá da Bandeira and Serra da Chela, where occurring up to over 2 500 m. a.s.l.

Measurements of the Type: Wing (flattened) 98,5, culmen from base 24,5, tarsus 30, tail 60 mm. Weight 30 gm.

Remarks: In my short communication on the status of *Monticola pretoriae* Gunning and Roberts, 1911, in *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, vol. lxxxviii, 7, 1968, pp. 126–128, I stated that in the event of Angolan (coastal) birds being different to those of north-western South-West Africa (topotypical of both *M. b. brevipes* (Waterhouse), 1838: S. of Tans Mtn. = Gamsberg at 23° 30' S., 16° 20' E., and *M. b. kaokoensis* Macdonald, 1957: Kamanjab, southern Kaokoveld), a name would have to be proposed for them as *brevipes* and *kaokoensis* were almost certainly synonymous. Winterbottom, *Cimbebasia*, No. 9, 1964, p. 55, *ibid.*, No. 19, 1966, p. 48, expresses the opinion that Macdonald's *kaokoensis* is not taxonomically recognisable, which view is confirmed by my own studies, though when laid out, series from the northern Cape, South-West Africa and coastal Angola show the variational trends demonstrated by Macdonald in the naming of *kaokoensis*.

In South-West Africa, males in freshly moulted dress from the Namib edge and the plateau from Okahandja northwards average paler and clearer grey above and over the chin and fore-throat than those from the northern Cape, as claimed for *kaokoensis*, males from coastal Angola agreeing with them. I note that in some Angolan males there is a further tendency to have a pale mesial streak over the chin. North-western South-West African females show somewhat comparable trends to those of the males in being a little paler, perhaps greyer, brown above. However, the xeric *M. brevipes* populations do not group satisfactorily into northern and southern races, and moreover it is almost certain that in naming *kaokoensis* Macdonald simply renamed *M. b. brevipes*. In the event of one wishing to follow Macdonald and Macdonald and Hall in recognising two subspecies in the northern Cape — South-West Africa — coastal Angola sequence of populations, it would seem more accurate to use nominate *brevipes* (with *kaokoensis* as a synonym) for the northern assemblage, and resuscitate *Petrocincla leucocapilla* Lafresnaye, 1852: north of Kuruman, northern Cape (*vide* Clancey, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, vol. lxxxviii, 7, 1968, p. 127), for the southern one.

At this stage, it seems desirable to admit only three races for this rockthrush, two mesic forms and a single xeric one, as follows:

- (a) **Monticola brevipes pretoriae** Gunning and Roberts, 1911:
near Pretoria, Transvaal.

Characters as laid down in Clancey, *loc.cit.*

Range: Griqualand West, Orange Free State, south-eastern Botswana, and Transvaal highveld (north to Tzaneen). Taken Stegi, Swaziland, in Lebombo Mts.

- (b) **Monticola brevipes brevipes** (Waterhouse), 1838:
S. of Gamsberg, Namib, South-West, Africa.

Synonyms: *Petrocincla leucocapilla* Lafresnaye, 1852;
Monticola brevipes kaokoensis Macdonald, 1957.

Adult male with whitish bases to feathers of head-top and hind neck; face blacker over lores and auriculars. Wings blacker, the coverts and remiges edged whiter than in *pretoriae*. Female paler and greyer brown above, and less densely streaked and mottled over sides of head and neck.

Range: Extends from Kuruman and Gordonia districts, northern Cape, southern and south-western Botswana, and north-western Cape along the Orange R., northwards through South-West Africa to coastal Angola.

Note: *M.b.kaokoensis* Macdonald was published twice in 1957: in January in Macdonald and Hall, *Ann.Transv.Mus.*, vol. xxiii, 1, 1957, p. 24, and in the December of the same year in *Contr.Orn. West.S.Afr.*, 1957, p. 122. The description in the *Ann.Transv.Mus.*, takes precedence as noted by Warren and Harrison, *Type-Spec. Birds Brit.Mus.(Nat.Hist.)*, vol. ii (Passerines), 1971, pp. 278, 279, though Macdonald alone is the author.

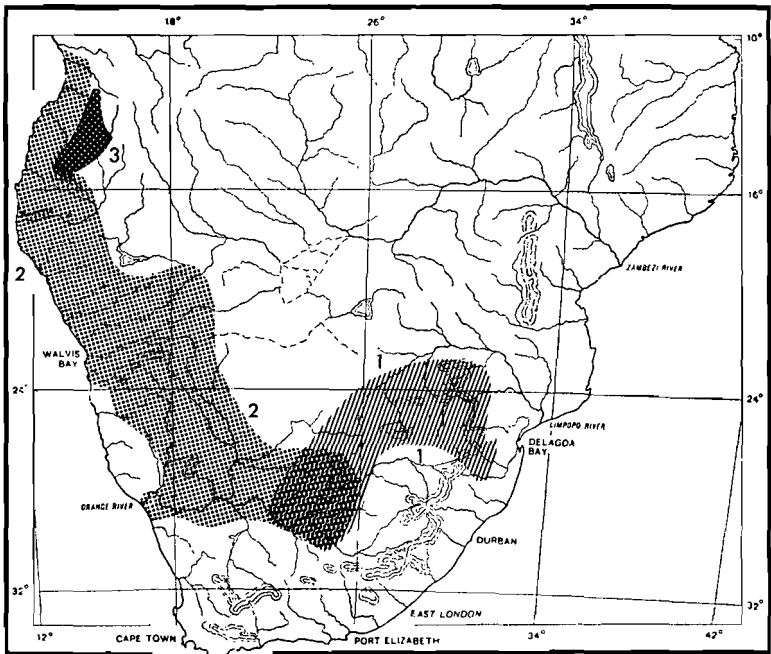
- (c) **Monticola brevipes niveiceps** Clancey, 1972:
Tundavala, Huila, Angola.

Male adult with purer white head and hind neck, darker blue-grey mantle, and blacker wings. Female with bluish grey upperparts, the mantle and scapulars more heavily streaked. Face and sides of throat more heavily mottled and streaked, and wings blacker, the fringing to the coverts and remiges grey rather than buffy brown.

Range: The south-western highlands of Angola in the Sá da Bandeira and Serra da Chela, Huila.

Note: Until comparatively recently *M. brevipes* was supposedly largely restricted to the semi-desert coastal plain of Moçamedes and Benguela in Angola, as Traylor, *Check-list of Angolan Birds*, 1963, p. 135, knew of but a single Huila record, and that from Gambos (=Chibemba). Judging by the long series in the Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, the new subspecies is common in the high country round Sá da Bandeira.

An adult female specimen from Leba, Huila, taken by Mrs. B. P. Hall and J. G. Williams in 1957, *ex* the British Museum (Nat.Hist.) and now in the collection of the Instituto, has lost its characteristic greyness over the upper-parts and is redder, less ochraceous, below, having been made up from a table salt impregnated mummy. I mention this point in case any other skins whose colours have been altered by salt are handled by colleagues considering the validity of the above conclusions.



MAP I

Sketch-map showing the disposition of the three subspecies of the Short-toed Rockthrush *Monticola brevipes* (Waterhouse).

1. *Monticola brevipes pretoriae* Gunning and Roberts.
2. *Monticola brevipes brevipes* (Waterhouse).
3. *Monticola brevipes niveiceps* Clancey.

The shaded area between Nos. 1 and 2 indicates the zone of intergradation between these two taxa.

***Achaetops pycnopygius spadix*, subsp. nov.**

Type: ♂, adult. Hunguéria (Unguéria), S. of Jau, Huila, Angola, at 1 440 m. a.s.l. 20 May, 1970. Collected by D. Maputo. In the collection of the Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, Sá da Bandeira. Reg. No. 32, 110.

Diagnosis: In fresh dress (c. April–August) differs in having the top of the head, hind neck and upper mantle darker, the shaft-streaks deeper black and the lateral edging more vinaceous, less buffy; mantle and scapulars deeper, more vinous, brown, the streaking heavier and blacker; rump much darker, being deep Argus Brown (pl. iii), not the more tawny Sudan Brown (same pl.) of nominate *pycnopygius*. In tail, innermost retrices blacker, less olive or brownish; wings darker. Below, with the rufous lateral body surfaces and flanks slightly more saturated and less ochraceous. Similar in size.

Measurements: Wings of 8 ♂♂ 67,5–70,5 (68,7) mm. Weights of 7 ♂♂ 26–34 gm.

Material examined: 8 (Moçamedes: Humbia (Bibala) at 1 150 m. a.s.l.; Huila: Jau, Hunguéria, Cangalongue, Mutunda (Pocolo), Quilemba (Sá da Bandeira)). *A.p.pycnopygius*, 12 (Angola: Moçamedes: Dolmdolo (Capira), Chipia; N.W. Huila: Bocoio (♂ like *spadix*, 2 ♀♀ as in *pycnopygius*): South-West Africa: Windhoek, Okahandja, Otjiwarongo).

Range: The escarpment zone of the south-western highlands of Angola in the administrative districts of Huila and adjacent Moçamedes. Specimens of *A.p.spadix* were collected at altitudes varying from 1 150–1 900 m. a.s.l.

Measurements of the Type: Wing (flattened) 68, culmen from base 20+, tarsus 26, tail 73 mm.

Remarks: While rather limited, the series of *A.pycnopygius* in the collection of the Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, at Sá da Bandeira, comprising some thirteen skins, all collected since 1960, shows conclusively that two races of this localized species are present in south-western Angola. Populations inseparable from South-West African *A.p.pycnopygius*, with the rump clear dull tawny, range north through the low rainfall districts of coastal Moçamedes and Benguela, while birds with the rump patch much darker, almost chestnut in freshly moulted condition, replace

them in the moist highlands to the east, these representing the subspecies *A.p.spadix*. Traylor, in his authoritative *Check-list of Angolan Birds*, 1963, p. 146, takes the range of the populations of *A.p.pycnopygius* as far north as Catumbela, Benguela, at 12° 25' S., 13° 34' E., on material collected by Ansonge in the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) collection now at Tring.

The marked hiatus between South-West African and Angolan records of *A.pycnopygius* shown on Map 188 of Hall and Moreau's recent *Atlas Spec.Afr.Pass.Birds*, 1970, probably results from a lack of collecting and observation rather than revealing any true discontinuity in the distribution of South-West African and Angolan elements of *A.p.pycnopygius*.

ON THE WESTERN EQUATORIAL PERIPHERAL ISOLATES OF *POGONOCICHLA STELLATA* (VIEILLOT)

Gyldenstolpe, *Kungl.Svenska Vetenskap.Handl.*, 3rd series, vol. i, 3, 1924, p. 155, discusses a series of the forest robin *Pogonocichla stellata* (Vieillot) from Mts Muhavura and Sabinjo (Sabinio), in the Birunga Volcanoes, and from Birunga, Kivu, Congo (Zaire), and mentions specifically the ♂ from Mt. Muhavura as differing markedly from the others of his series. He states: "One of the males from Mt. Muhavura (orig. number 195) is considerably more brightly coloured than the remaining specimens in my series. The yellow colour of the underparts is thus absolutely devoided of any orange wash, and the colour of the back and mantle is almost pure olive-greenish without the rufous-brown tinge found in the other examples. This specimen I consider to be a fully adult bird in beautiful plumage. The yellow markings on the rectrices are very bright and practically without any orange tinge." Recent examination of a magnificent series of 40 specimens of netted *P.stellata* from the Impenetrable Forest, in Kigezi, south-western Uganda, and immediately to the north of Mt. Muhavura at 1° 23' S., 29° 40' E. (Impenetrable Forest co-ordinates 0° 49' S. to 1° 8' S., 29° 35' E. to 29° 50' E., *vide* Keith, Twomey, Friedmann and Williams, *American Mus.Novit.*, No. 2389, 1969, pp. 3, 5), shows clearly that a constant population of birds showing the characters outlined for the single Mt. Muhavura male vis-à-vis the norm of *Pogonocichla stellata ruwenzorii* (Ogilvie-Grant), 1906: Mubuku Valley, Ruwenzori, western Uganda, lies immediately to the north of the said