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Measurements: 11 ♂♂ wings 110.5–117.0 (113.2), culmens 16.5–19.0 (17.6), tails 77.5–84.0 (81.5), 3 ♀♀ 107.0–109.0 (108.3), 16.0–18.0 (17.0), 75.5–83.5 (79.2).

Material: 15 (South-West Africa, 1; southern Angola, 1; Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1; Southern Rhodesia, 12).

Type: In the Zoological Museum, Berlin.

Range: The desertic regions of south-west Africa, ranging from southern and south-western Angola and the northern half of South-West Africa, eastwards through the Bechuanaland Protectorate to the western Transvaal and most of Matabeleland, and perhaps to Barotseland and adjacent parts of south-western Southern Rhodesia. Intergrades to the west of its stated range with the previous race.

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Notes on *Eremomela icteropygialis* (Lafresnaye)

by C. M. N. WHITE

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This widely distributed African warbler presents a number of taxonomic uncertainties which are discussed here.

(a) *The type locality and range of the nominate form.*

Macdonald (1957) has drawn attention to the uncertainty which surrounds this point. The type locality was given as Orange river, but the label of the type originally read "des Elephants"; this locality was crossed out and "d'Orange" substituted. Lafresnaye actually said that the type was "said to have come from the Orange river", implying some doubt. A British Museum specimen matched with the type is a very pale bird from Otjimbingwe. Macdonald concludes that the name should be applied to the South West African form.

Clancey (1959) disagrees with this and recognises the nominate form as ranging from the Asbestos Mountains to the Orange river and southern South West Africa with *perimacha* as a synonym. In a letter to me dated 3rd October 1960 he argues that the type locality should not be changed, and that the type is very old, probably faded, and no longer useful for comparison. He considers that there are two forms in South West Africa, of which the more northern and paler should be called *sharpei*.

Type localities, once declared should not be amended without very good reason, but in this case there is very real doubt as to the provenance of the type of *icteropygialis* in view of the amended locality on the label, and Lafresnaye's own words "said to have come from the Orange river". Moreover the matched B.M. specimen is an old Andersons bird and therefore there is no question of comparing a fresh bird with an old foxed type.

I consider that Macdonald's arguments are therefore convincing and that *icteropygialis* refers to the paler South West African form. The series in the British Museum does not support the existence of two forms in South West Africa.

(b) *The Bechuanaland form.*

Clancey considers that Bechuanaland birds should be referred to the pale form which he calls *sharpei* and which I regard as *icteropygialis*. But British Museum material and a series of 19 others loaned by the National Museum, Bulawayo are clearer yellow on the lower belly and a little darker in general, and must be referred to the form *E. i. perimacha* Oberholser.

(c) *The Barotseland form.*

Mr. C. W. Benson asked me to investigate the correct name for this form since he had found difficulty in naming it. It is a distinct and unnamed form for which I propose

Eremomela icteropygialis viriditincta subsp. nov.

Description: nearest to *polioxantha* Sharpe, but the yellow of the underside more restricted (though less so than in *perimacha*), and less clear yellow, being somewhat tinged with green; breast and upperside more brownish grey than in *polioxantha*, but upperside decidedly greyer than in *perimacha*.

Type: adult female collected 15 miles west of Victoria Falls on 27th July, 1957 and in National Museum, Bulawayo. N.M. number 31, 270.

Range: from the Caprivi Strip and west of Victoria Falls to Barotseland from Sesheke north to Mongu and Mankoya.

(d) *The range of E. i. polioxantha.*

This form with grey upperside and yellow of abdomen reaching up to the lower breast has a very wide range from the eastern Transvaal and Zululand northwards. It extends west into Bechuanaland to Makarikari and Panda Matenga. Grant and Praed (1947) separated a single specimen from Liwale in south Tanganyika as *E. i. belli*. The supposed long wing of 68 mm. is a slip for the type has a wing of 58 mm., and the more extensive yellow on the lower breast is suggestive of immaturity. *Polioxantha* occurs at Isoka on the Tanganyika border, at Iringa and Morogoro in Tanganyika and in Nyasaland and Portuguese East Africa, and there seems to be no good reason for recognising *belli* as a distinct form. However the birds commonly united as *polioxantha* are not wholly uniform for 15 specimens from the northern areas of Northern Rhodesia average a more dusky grey above than Southern Rhodesian birds and also average rather deeper yellow below. In these respects they tend to bridge the small differences between *polioxantha* and *abdominalis* Reichenow. It is thus just possible that *belli* might be used for an intermediate form. However I find the differences between *polioxantha* and *abdominalis* rather poorly defined, and cannot see any reason for recognising an intermediate between them.

(e) *The status of E. i. abdominalis Reichenow.*

The correct allocation of this name is surrounded by some doubt. The form was described from Tabora but I have been unable to trace other material from anywhere near the type locality. I have examined a series in the Coryndon Museum from Isiolo, Lokitaung, Simba, Ukamba, Athi

river, Chyulu hills and Magadi in Kenya. Compared with *polioxantha* they seem a little darker and more brownish on the sides of the breast and none shows any white stripe over the eye. Dr. A. L. Rand has kindly sent me details of another similar series in the Chicago Natural History Museum from Maungu, Camp ya Bibi, Meru, Archer's Post, Mt. Lucania and Magadi which also lack any white over the eye. The British Museum has two more from Kitumbeine and Longido, also without eye stripes. Some *polioxantha* also show no white over the eye or a mere trace, not always symmetrical. The supposed smaller bill of *abdominalis* is a rather poor average character in long series, so that the difference between the latter and *polioxantha* rests upon the eye stripe's presence or absence.

(f) *The status of E. salvadorii* Reichenow.

Mrs. Hall (1960) has drawn attention to the possible overlap of green backed *salvadorii* and grey backed *polioxantha* in central Angola, and suggests that the former is a distinct species. On the other hand material collected by Benson in N.W. Northern Rhodesia on the Lungwevungu river suggests intergradation between the two. Further collecting and field work in Angola is needed to elucidate this question, and possibly the two forms behave more like good species in central Angola than they do in Northern Rhodesia. In the latter area both Benson and I regard them as clearly conspecific and intergrading forms.

(g) *Variation in north east Africa.*

Grant and Praed place all the forms from the Sudan and Ethiopia to British Somaliland and Uganda and west Kenya as a single form, *griseoflava* Heuglin. Four additional names have been applied to birds from this area. I am not convinced that all these birds should be united as a single form, but series in good condition both of plumage and of preparation from critical areas are lacking, and statements in the literature are somewhat confused and contradictory. Adequate material should be collected to elucidate this question. The nature of the transition from *abdominalis* to these much less yellow forms needs special investigation as the ranges appear to approach each other quite closely.

(h) *Doubtful ranges.*

Grant and Praed (vol. 2) omit Kenya from the range of *abdominalis* despite the considerable range of that form in Kenya. They also extend *E. flavicrissalis* Sharpe into British Somaliland, although I have been unable to trace evidence of this. There are no *flavicrissalis* from British Somaliland in either the British Museum or the Coryndon Museum.

I am greatly indebted to the National Museum, Bulawayo for the generous loan of material used in this study, to Mrs. B. P. Hall for notes on British Museum material arising out of queries after I had examined it, to Dr. A. L. Rand and Mr. P. A. Clancey for information on several points, to the Coryndon Museum, Nairobi for the opportunity to examine their material, and to Mr. C. W. Benson for assisting in the study of material.

