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Description: paler and greyer, less warm tawny olive above than nominate *boeticatus*; whiter below with reduced tawny on the sides. Size the same as in *boeticatus*.

Type: in the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) Male, Brandberg, South West Africa. Collected on 11th April, 1950 by the B. M. South West Africa Expedition. Registered number B.M.1950.50.564.

Range: South West Africa.

All the other material from Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Angola north to the Sudan and lake Chad differs in smaller size (wing 52–57 mm.), and darker and richer red rump, and represents *cinnamomeus* Reichenow; the only exception is the unique type of *nyong* Bannerman, which differs in its very rich red upperside and flanks and still appears a valid form. I am grateful to Mrs. B. P. Hall for examining these warblers with me.

Notes on some African Larks

by MR. C. M. N. WHITE

Received 21st September, 1959

These notes are part of a series compiled during preparation of a Check List of African larks.

(1) *Mirafra pulpa* Friedmann.

The unique type of this lark from the Sagan river, south Ethiopia was compared to *M. javanica passerina*. It was said to be redder above than *M. j. marginata*, the bill larger and matching that of *passerina*. The wing was given as 84 mm., the tail as 60.5 mm. Recent authors have placed it as a synonym of *M. j. marginata* without seeing the type. I have seen about 50 *marginata* none of which is reddish above; moreover they have wings in males of 74–81 mm., and tails of 48–52 mm. The measurements of *pulpa* agree much better with those of *M. williamsi* in which the wing is 84–86 mm., tail 53–58 mm. So too do the reddish colour and bill, larger than *marginata*, resembling that of *passerina*. Friedmann compared *williamsi* with *pulpa*, and found it deeper rufescent and less heavily streaked above, which he thought might be due to age. Since it is not possible to obtain the type of *pulpa* on loan, one can only go on the available data of it, and I fail to see how *pulpa* can be regarded as identical with *marginata*. It appears to be identical with *williamsi* and an earlier name for it.

(2) *Mirafra albicauda* Reichenow.

Examination of all the populations shows several micro-subspecies. Kenya birds are rather brownish above, Rukwa birds paler and more grey, birds from Uganda and the southern Sudan blacker, and those of lake Chad rather pale, faintly streaked and large billed. Unless several slight races are named it is preferable to synonymise *rukwensis*, and recognise no subspecies.

(3) *Mirafra africana* Smith.

Clancey has proposed to recognise *rostrata* (Hartlaub) (1863, Natal) as redder above than nominate *africana*, but paler than *transvaalensis*. The facts as given by him are correct for the Natal birds, but they appear to be

an intermediate between *africana* and *transvaalensis*, and better not separated by name.

(4) *Miraфра sabota* Smith.

The small billed nominate *sabota* ranges from Gemsbok pan, Bechuanaland east to Swaziland with comparatively little variation. Two slightly differentiated races have been proposed. Of these the eastern *suffusca* Clancey (1958 Swaziland) is constantly dark, and has an absolutely longer tail than in nominate *sabota*, wing tail index 60% against 56.2%. Gemsbok pan birds are constantly pale; over a wide intervening area of south Bechuanaland and Southern Rhodesia birds are more variable, some as dark as *suffusca*, others almost as pale as *sabotoides* of Gemsbok Pan. Although the differences do not seem to me well enough marked to justify subdividing nominate *sabota* into three forms, the slight average differences do exist. Transition from these small *sabota* to *waibeli* takes place immediately north of Gemsbok pan at Ghanzi where specimens match birds from Ngamiland and Etoscha pan in their slightly larger bills and colder colour. A cline runs from Gemsbok pan to Ngamiland and Etoscha pan, the Okaukweyo birds being the whitest. I now think it inadvisable to subdivide this series of populations, and would not now recognise either *elfriedae* or *vesey-fitzgeraldi* as distinct forms. Of the various populations *waibeli* is slightly the palest and whitest, *elfriedae* a little greyer, and *vesey-fitzgeraldi* a little browner.

(5) *Miraфра poecilosterna* Reichenow.

Examination of this species shows that several slightly marked populations exist, but that no formal recognition of subspecies is needed. Birds from north eastern Tanganyika are the brownest above and most richly coloured below; those of the Tana river and west to Marsabit are palest, more sandy above and lighter rufous below. Birds from south Ethiopia (Mega) and from the south east Sudan and Lasamis and Lokitaung are darker and greyer above, and darker, more brownish on the breast. A further series of Ethiopian birds from Amar Koschi and lake Stefanie is again pale, as pale as Tana river birds, but averaging colder and greyer above. I have seen a very pale example from north Somalia.

(6) *Miraфра burra* Bangs.

This species has been located recently in *Ammomanes* and as a separate genus, *Pseudammomanes*. It is in fact very close to *Miraфра albescens*, being merely a large version of the latter with a stouter and larger bill. I should place it next to *albescens* in the genus *Miraфра*.

(7) *Ammomanes deserti kollmanspergeri* Niethammer.

This form recently described from Ennedi is a valid form, near to *erythrochroa* but darker and redder. Birds from Darfur belong to *kollmanspergeri*, those of Kordofan to *erythrochroa*.

Postscript (to The Limits of the genus Miraфра)

Since this paper was completed I have received Verheyen's "What is *Certhilauda*?" (Ostrich, 1959, 51-52). In the absence of any attempt to consider the adaptive significance of anatomical and skeletal characters I cannot accept them as being of greater cogency in deciding systematic problems than any of the other criteria generally used. Moreover until

Dr. Verheyen has examined the anatomy of all the species of *Mirafra* it is hardly possible to tell that the criteria set up as anatomical features of *Mirafra* hold for all the species. Osteometric indices upon which Verheyen places considerable weight can hardly be considered in isolation without regard to their adaptive significance. One point of interest which does emerge from Verheyen's study of anatomical characters is that *albofasciata* exhibits some unique features in its short notarium. Since *albofasciata* is in any case a very aberrant *Mirafra*, this additional character may justify retaining the monotypic genus *Chersomanes* for *albofasciata*.

The Ethiopian and allied forms of *Callandrella cinerea* (Gmelin)

by MR. C. M. N. WHITE

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C. c. erlangeri (Neumann) of Ethiopia is very well differentiated from the more southern forms by the large black patches at the sides of the breast; the upperside is also relatively well invaded with black melanin—the front of the crown is often blackish, the hind crown streaked with black, and the mantle strongly streaked with black on a sandy greyish ground. On the underside the breast and flanks have a pinkish apricot wash well developed. Friedmann separated northern Ethiopian birds as *fuertesi*, a supposedly darker form. The series in the British Museum which includes 11 *erlangeri* and 10 *fuertesi* suggests that northern birds may be on average slightly darker, but that the darker colour is also accentuated by wear. Very fresh *fuertesi* are not satisfactorily separable from *erlangeri*. I note therefore a possible trend to darker colour in the north of Ethiopia, but do not recognise *fuertesi*.

The Eritrean plateau is inhabited by a much lighter form. The upperside is lighter and more sandy, the black streaking above is reduced, the underside is much paler reddish pink on breast and sides, and the black patches at the sides of the breast are suppressed. This form must bear the name of *blanfordi*, of which *asmaraensis* is a synonym. Comparison of the type of *blanfordi* with *asmaraensis* shows that they agree in the grey axillaries and underwing coverts, pinkish breast and sides and long tail (52–56 mm.). The wing of Eritrean birds is 83–90 mm.; that of the type of *blanfordi* 86 mm.

Another red capped lark inhabits the plateau of British Somaliland, and for reasons which seem quite irrational, the name *blanfordi* has always been applied to it, although the type of *blanfordi* came from Eritrea. This Somali form now lacks a name since *blanfordi* has been shown to be the same as *asmaraensis*. I therefore propose:—

Callandrella cinerea daaroodensis subsp. nov.

Description: smaller than *blanfordi* (Shelley), wing 77–84 mm. (against 83–90 mm.), tail 43–49 mm. (against 52–56 mm.). Upper side more greyish sandy, less pinkish; cap paler and less sharply contrasting; underside white without pale pinkish apricot wash on breast and sides; underwing coverts whitish, not grey. Bill in skins paler, less blackish. *C. c. eremica* (Reichenow and Peters) of Arabia is darker and greyer above