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MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS

LV

by

P. A. CLANCEY

(Director, Durban Museum, Durban)

ON THE PROBLEM OF THE RACE(S) OF THE REDSHANK *TRINGA TOTANUS* (LINNAEUS) REACHING THE SOUTH AFRICAN SUB-REGION

While it is claimed that at least two subspecies of the Eurasian Redshank *Tringa totanus* (Linnaeus) reach East Africa during the course of their post-breeding southbound migrations, no attempt has hitherto been made to determine the precise subspecies reaching the South African Sub-Region. In so far as southern Africa is concerned, the Redshank is a sparse visitor, and only in the west, at Walvis Bay, has the species been recorded in any numbers. Virtually no specimens of this wader have been taken in southern Africa, but through the kind agency of Mr Bryan G. Donnelly, Ornithologist of the National Museum of Rhodesia, Bulawayo, I have recently been able to study a specimen taken at Namasire, some 29 km south of Shakawe, in the north-west of Botswana, on 6 September, 1971, by Mr A. L. Archer.

The Namasire skin is an adult female in advanced post-breeding moult, but still carrying some faded buffy brown breeding plumage feathering over the upper-parts, and in the coverts over the bends of the wings, while the remiges are very abraded and browned. The flattened wing is 152,5, which probably would equal *c.* 157 in fresh condition, culmen-length from the feathers 40, tarsus 51,5, and the

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tail 56,5 mm. Compared with examples of *T.t.totanus* (Linnaeus), 1758: Sweden, and *T.t.robusta* (Schioler), 1919: Iceland, the Namasire example is found to be rather greyer or more greenish brown above (close to Drab (Ridgway (1912), pl. xlvi), or greyer or more olivaceous, as against Buffy Brown (pl. xl)) in *T.t.totanus*. Below, the specimen under consideration is more extensively white over the lower mid-breast and the entire medio-ventral plane, the clouding and streaking of dusky concentrated over the lower fore-throat and upper breast in contrast with skins from the west of the range of the species.

On the basis of its greyer, less warm, brown upper-parts and extensively white ventral surface the Namasire bird corresponds to the subspecies *T.t.eurhinus* (Oberholser), 1912: Tsomoriri Lake, Ladak = Tso Morari, eastern Rupshu, Kashmir, as defined by Vaurie, *Birds Palearctic Fauna*, vol. ii, Non Passeriformes, 1965, pp. 411, 412. However, in the most recent revision of the Redshank, namely the detailed study of the species carried out by Hale and reported on in the *Zool.Journ.Linn.Soc.*, vol. 1, 3, 1971, pp. 199 - 268, the *eurhinus* of Vaurie (1965) is split into no less than four subspecies, these being *eurhinus* itself, breeding in northern India in Ladak and Sikkim, the Himalayas to 4 875m a.s.l., and central and southern Tibet, *T.t.terrignotae* R. Meinertzhagen and A. C. Meinertzhagen, 1926: Koko Nor, Tsinghai, China, breeding in eastern China, north and east to about Vladivostok, U.S.S.R., and *T.t.ussuriensis* Buturlin, 1934: Chaivo, Sakhalin, with a wide range from the central U.S.S.R., eastwards to eastern Siberia, Manchuria, Mongolia, northern Tibet and Sinkiang, China. The last of the quartet is the recently proposed *T.t.craggi* Hale, 1971: Oasis of Tcha Tcheu, north-western China, at 41° N., 94° E., the breeding range of which is currently unknown.

The wing-length of the specimen under study is unhelpful in allocating it to any of the four eastern subspecies recognised by Hale, but I believe the very short bill (40 mm) links it incontestably with the wide-ranging *T.t.ussuriensis*. Hale gives the exposed culmen of *ussuriensis* as 40-48 (41,8), as against 41,5 - 50 (46,1) in *eurhinus*, 43,5 - 46,0 (45,0) in *terrignotae*, and 43,5 - 45,0 (44,7) mm in *craggi*.

From the examination of the single adult Redshank from Botswana it is clear that the birds reaching at least central and eastern southern Africa are of far eastern origin. For those who care to follow the conservative approach of Vaurie, *loc. cit.*, in so far as subspecies are concerned, such birds can be referred to *T.t.eurhinus*, while for those who wish to adopt the critical findings of Hale at

least the one specimen carefully examined in Durban appears attributable to the populations grouped in *ussuriensis* on the basis of the very short culmen-length. Interestingly enough, Vaurie doubted if even *eurhinus* as recognised by him reached any part of (eastern) Africa (p. 412), during the course of its post-breeding movements.

I am grateful to Mr Bryan G. Donnelly for the loan of the specimen. Further material will be required to ascertain if other races reach southern Africa.

AN ADDITIONAL AFRICAN RACE OF COLLARED PRATINCOLE

Currently four Afrotropical races of the Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* (Linnaeus) are recognised, these being based on size and variation in dorsal colour discriminants. Recent examination of material from central and south-eastern Africa shows that a fifth race requires to be recognised on the basis of darker upper-parts and the development of a dusky breast-band.

Glareola pratincola riparia, subsp.nov.

Type: ♂, adult. Okavango R. flood-plain near Rundu, north-eastern South West Africa (Namibia). Breeding near large mud pool. 26 October, 1978. Collected by M. O. E. Baddeley. In the collection of the Durban Museum, D.M.Reg.No. 31 625.

Diagnosis: Differs from *G.p.fuelleborni* Neumann, 1910: L. Rukwa, south-western Tanzania, in being darker and colder olive-brown above (Brownish Olive (Ridgway (1912), pl. xxx), *versus* Light Brownish Olive (same pl.) in *fuelleborni*), the hind neck feathers without basal rusty. Taxonomically separable in having the breast much darker and more greyish brown forming a plastron, not fawn or buffy. Similar in size.

Similar over the upper-parts in its dark colouration to *G.p.erlangeri* Neumann, 1920: Kismayu, south-western Somalia, differing in having the breast much darker and in being larger.

Measurements: Wings of ♂♀ 186 - 192 mm.

Material examined: 10 (South West Africa: Rundu; Moçambique: Incoluane, Macia).

Range: Breeds locally in Angola, north-eastern South West Africa along the course of the Okavango R., the Caprivi Strip, north-

western Botswana in the swamp region, and, perhaps, south-western and southern Zambia (? Kafue). Post-breeding movements take present race to the Moçambique coastal plain, where taken in May at Incoluane; ? also Zambia. Arrives to breed at type-locality in mid-August according to Winterbottom, *Cimbebasia*, No. 15, 1966, p. 33. A three-quarters grown juvenile from Rundu in Durban is dated 28 October, 1978.

Measurements of the Type: Wing (flattened) 187, culmen (exposed) 24, tarsus *c.* 30, tail 112,5 mm.

Remarks: *G.p.fuelleborni*, is, as in the case of *riparia*, very largely only a summer visitor to its main southern breeding grounds; it ranges from coastal Natal from about Durban, north to Moçambique, Malawi, north-eastern Zambia, Tanzania, eastern Zaire, Uganda, and Kenya west of *erlangeri*. The breeding range as separate from simple occurrence requires critical analysis, as the species is definitely locally migratory.

Comments by both Chapin, *Birds Belgian Congo*, part ii, 1939, p. 124, and Traylor, *Check-list Angolan Birds*, 1963, p. 67, on birds from the Cuanza R., Angola, adumbrate the separation of *G.p. riparia* from *G.p.fuelleborni*.

A short series of *riparia* from Incoluane, Macia, Moçambique, taken on 2 May, 1966, are in full contour plumage, wing and tail moult.

A NEW ISOLATE SUBSPECIES OF WOODWARDS'
BARBET *CRYPTOLYBIA WOODWARDI* (SHELLEY)
FROM SOUTH-EASTERN TANZANIA

Peters and Loveridge, *Bull.Mus.Comp.Zool.*, vol. lxxxix, 1942, p. 241, refer seven specimens of Green Barbet collected in May, 1939, at Nchingidi, Rondo Plateau, south-eastern Tanzania, to the Ngoye Forest, Zululand, isolate, *woodwardi*, on the basis of the yellow exhibited over the lateral head. Mr C. W. Benson of the Zoological Museum, Cambridge, England, has recently drawn my attention *in litt.* to this determination, suggesting that its accuracy should be verified. Through the kindness of Dr Raymond A. Paynter Jnr of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A., I have now been able to compare three of the Nchingidi specimens with topotypes of *Cryptolybia woodwardi* from Ngoye Forest in the Durban Museum collection (for the erection of the genus *Cryptolybia* Clancey for both *C.woodwardi* and *C.olivacea* (Shelley) see *Durban Mus.Novit.*, vol. xii, 1, 1979, pp. 6, 7). The