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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.

Winterbottom places as a synonym of nominate *P. pectoralis* the name *Drymoica ocularius* Smith, 1843: northern districts of the Cape Province to the Tropic of Capricorn (*vide Illustrations of the Zoology of South Africa, Aves*, 1843, pl. 76 (and text)). Study of the coloured illustration on pl. 76 and of the description convinces me that *D. ocularius* is the correct name for the populations named *Spiloptera malopensis* by Sharpe. The illustration shows a bird with the under-parts whitish, a narrow black cincture on the lower throat, and the flanks unstreaked (precisely the differences which separate *P.p.* "malopensis" from the greyer breasted and strongly streaked *P.p. pectoralis*), while the description is equally diagnostic. Smith makes no mention whatever of a grey wash on the breast nor of streaks on the flanks of his *D. ocularius*, stating, "chin and throat white, breast . . . posteriorly dirty white tinted with broccoli-brown, which is also the colour of the belly, thighs and vent." Taking the illustration and the diagnostic points in the original description together, there can be no doubt that *D. ocularius* is the correct name for the form generally recognised under the name *P.p. malopensis* by workers. It would seem desirable to fix a definite type-locality for *P.p. ocularia*. Smith almost certainly obtained this form during his journey northwards from Kuruman, and this locality may be cited as the restricted type-locality of *P.p. ocularia*. Kuruman is also mentioned in connection with this name by Roberts, *Annals of the Transvaal Museum*, vol. 15, 1, 1932, p. 31. The names of the two races of the Rufous-eared Prinia will now stand as follows:

1. *Prinia pectoralis pectoralis* (Smith), 1829 (synonym *Priniops ocularia hewitti* Roberts, 1932).

2. *Prinia pectoralis ocularia* (Smith), 1843 (synonym *Spiloptera malopensis* Sharpe, 1903).

A single male in the Durban Museum collected in Damaraland in May, 1959, with the under-parts pure white, the black bar on the lower throat absent, and the ear-coverts and upper-parts much paler than in *P.p. ocularia*, suggests the existence of a markedly different third race (at present innominate) in the north-west of the species' range.

Leg Colour of the Moorhen

by MR. IAN D. WOODWARD

Received 6th September, 1959

On the 6th September, 1959, and subsequently on 7th and 8th September, an adult female Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Linnaeus, was seen by the writer frequenting King's Langley gravel-pit, Hertfordshire, with bright canary-yellow legs; the bird, otherwise, was in normal breeding plumage and possessed five chicks. It seems that this yellow leg tendency in Moorhens appears mainly on otherwise normal immature or adult birds (*cf.* Sage, 1958), but birds with both yellow legs and bills relate more to albino adults (*cf. ibid. Brit. Birds*, vols. xliii, p. 383; xliiv, p. 140; xlv, p. 39; and xlviii, p. 189). The yellow iminent on the bird under discussion, covered the legs and toes, and, of interest, the absence of the usual red and yellow garter above the tarsal joint was particularly noted.

Reference:

Sage, B. L. (1958): "Variant leg and bill colour of the Moorhen". *Brit. Birds*, li: 158-159.

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