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MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS

XI

by

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1. ON THE STATUS OF *GEOCOLAPTES OLIVACEUS THERESAE* MEINERTZHAGEN, 1949

Ever since the description of the form in 1949, *Geocolaptes olivaceus theresæ* Meinertzhagen, *Bull.B.O.C.*, vol. lxxix, 1949, p. 105, described from 10 miles north of Springbok, Little Namaqualand, north-western Cape Province, has been an enigma, no specimens being available in South African museums. However, in May, 1958, I had an opportunity to examine the material from the western and north-western Cape collected by the British Museum (Natural History) South West Africa Expedition, 1949-1950, and listed by Macdonald in his recent *Contribution to the Ornithology of Western South Africa*, 1957, p. 89. This series contains two specimens (1 ♂, 1 ♀) from Springbok, which are exact topotypes of *G.o.theresæ*. In my original paper on geographical variation in the Ground Woodpecker (*vide Journal of the Scientific Society of the University of Natal*, vol. viii, 1952, pp. 3-7), I tentatively admitted *G.o.theresæ* on the basis of the characters given in the original description, but in my more recent study (*The Ostrich*, vol. xxviii, 3, 1957, pp. 138-140), I stated that I believed it to be the same as the race I proposed to call *G.o.terrestris* (Burchell), 1822: interior of Cape Province. I now find, on the basis of the entire British Museum (Nat. Hist.) series,

Meinertzhagen's *G.o.theresæ* to be a pure synonym of *G.o.olivaceus* (Gmelin), 1788: Cape of Good Hope, there being not the slightest racial difference between Little Namaqualand and south-western Cape examples of this woodpecker. The British Museum series also shows that the nominate race of *G.olivaceus* ranges further to the east (to Deelfontein, south of de Aar) than formerly believed, and that Burchell's *Picus terrestris* is, like *G.o.theresæ*, a synonym of *G.o.olivaceus*. The paler birds of the eastern Cape Province, Orange Free State, Natal and the Transvaal must now bear the name *G.o.prometheus* Clancey, 1952: Woodbush, Zoutpansberg, northern Transvaal. This conforms in the main to races "(b)" and "(e)" in my arrangement of 1957.

In addition to the nominate race and *G.o.prometheus*, the species is divisible into another race, which has already been named, namely, *G.o.petrobates* Clancey, 1952: junction of the Malaoaneng and Little Bokong Rivers, Basutoland, of the Basutoland highlands. *G.o.petrobates* is a montane form with an "insular" distribution, the surrounding populations of lower altitudes being paler above and redder below (*G.o.prometheus*).

2. ON THE RACES OF THE RUFIOUS-NAPED LARK *MIRAFRA AFRICANA* SMITH OCCURRING IN NATAL AND ZULULAND.

Through the kindness of Miss M. Courtenay-Latimer, Director of the East London Museum, I have been able to study a series of topotypical *Mirafra africana africana* Smith, 1836: grassy plains from Algoa Bay to Grahamstown, eastern Cape Province, from Committees Drift (Albany), Kei Road, Fish River mouth, and East London and district. Ten specimens in all, which with an additional single adult ♂ from Committees Drift in the Durban Museum, has given me an adequate series of topotypical nominate *M.africana*. It is currently believed that the nominate race of the Rufous-naped Lark extends from the eastern Cape, through Pondoland and East Griqualand to Natal and the southern half of Zululand, and Vincent, in his *Check List of the Birds of South Africa*, 1952, p. 54, extends its range into the Orange Free State. A critical comparison of Natal material of *M.africana* in the collections of the Durban and Natal Museums with the eastern Cape series now available, shows that nominate *M.africana* does not range into Natal and Zululand as formerly believed. I now find Natal coastal and midland birds to be a good deal redder on the upper-parts and more

strongly striated with black, the rump much less grey. On the under-parts they are redder in series, and the pale edges to the tertials and secondary coverts are redder and less whitish. There is little statistically significant difference in size. Such dark birds also occur in Pondoland, and in Zululand as far north as Lake St. Lucia. The name *Megalophonus rostratus* Hartlaub, *The Ibis*, 1863, p. 326, pl. 9: Pinetown, Natal, is available for this new race, and its range can be defined as follows: Pondoland and East Griqualand, eastern Cape Province, Natal (coastal and midland districts), and the southern half Zululand. An intermediate group of populations (*M.a.rostrata* \gtrsim *M.a.zuluensis*) occurs on the plateau of the Lebombo Mountains, north-eastern Zululand (*vide* Clancey, *Annals of the Natal Museum*, vol. xii, 2, 1952, pp. 247-248).

Writing in 1952, *loc.cit.*, I showed that the populations of this lark from the high interior of Natal differed from the birds of the midlands and coast, and suggested that they were a new race. I now find, on the basis of the material in the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria, that the high interior birds studied by me are intergrades towards *M.a.transvaalensis* Hartert, 1900: Rustenburg, western Transvaal, the range of which must now be extended to cover Natal in the northern districts (south to about Estcourt, Weenen, Colenso, etc.).

The populations of the Makatini Flats, north of Lake St. Lucia in Zululand, were shown by Roberts, *Annals of the Transvaal Museum*, vol. xviii, 3, 1936, p. 215, to consist of smaller sized and ventrally paler birds, and he named them *M.a.zuluensis* (Roberts), the *Type* from Maputa. This is a distinguishable race, with a wide range in the south-eastern littoral and south-eastern Southern Rhodesia. In the *Durban Museum Novitates*, vol. iv, 17, 1956, pp. 282-284, I suggested that *M.a.grisescens* Sharpe, 1902: Tibakai's Kraal (Gadzuma Pan), Wankie district, Southern Rhodesia, was founded on Southern Rhodesian birds resembling subspecifically those of north-eastern Zululand and Portuguese East Africa, and that *M.a.zuluensis* should be merged into the former race. As shown by Smithers, Irwin and Paterson, *Check List of the Birds of Southern Rhodesia*, 1957, pp. 93-94, and Hall, *The Ostrich*, vol. xxvii, 3, 1956, pp. 101-102, the populations to which the name *M.a.grisescens* is applicable are restricted to extreme western Southern Rhodesia (Matetsi westwards and northern Wankie Game Reserve), and in the northern Bechuanaland Protectorate, Caprivi Strip, south-eastern Angola and some southern districts of Barotseland, Northern Rhodesia. This very greyish coloured group of

populations has also been named *M.a.ngamiensis* (Roberts), 1932: Mababe Flats, Ngamiland, but this name is, I believe, a synonym of *M.a.grisescens* as now understood. In the light of new data, I now concede that *M.a.zuluensis* and *M.a.grisescens* are names given to two quite discrete racial taxa, and are not synonymous as suggested in my note of 1956.

The recognition of three races of the Rufous-naped Lark in my *A Preliminary List of the Birds of Natal and Zululand*, 1953, p. 37, is fully confirmed by more recent work, but certain adjustments to the nomenclature of the forms now require to be made:

(a) **Mirafra africana rostrata** (Hartlaub), 1863: Pinetown, Natal.

Darkest race. Upper parts boldly streaked with rufous and black. Bill longest.

Range: Pondoland and East Griqualand, eastern Cape Province, Natal (coastal and midland districts (mist belt)), and Zululand to the south of Lake St. Lucia. Intergrades *M.a.rostrata* \gtrsim *M.a.zuluensis* on the Lebombo Mountains, certainly as far north as Stegi, Swaziland.

(b) **Mirafra africana transvaalensis** Hartert, 1900: Rustenburg, western Transvaal.

Redder and more uniform, less boldly striated, above. Bill shorter.

Range: From about the Estcourt, Weenen, Colenso, etc. districts of the high interior of Natal (where not quite typical) northwards to the Orange Free State, western Swaziland, Transvaal (plateau), eastern Bechuanaland Protectorate, most of the Southern Rhodesian plateau, and some central districts of Northern Rhodesia (Livingstone to Lusaka (*vide* Benson and White, *Check List of the Birds of Northern Rhodesia*, 1957, p. 67)).

(c) **Mirafra africana zuluensis** (Roberts), 1936: Maputa, north-eastern Zululand.

Less red and boldly streaked, and distinctly greyer above than *M.a.rostrata*. Much whiter below. Smaller in size, and with a shorter bill.

Range: The Makatini Flats, north-eastern Zululand, eastern Swaziland (Lebombo Mountains birds: *M.a.rostrata* \gtrsim *M.a.zuluensis*), southern Portuguese East Africa, eastern and north-eastern Transvaal, and south-eastern Southern Rhode-

sia. Northern limits of range not ascertained, but certainly not north of the Zambesi, where in southern Nyasaland and Moçambique and Niassa, northern Portuguese East Africa, and southern Tanganyika Territory, *M.a.isolata* Clancey, 1956, replaces it.

With the recognition of *M.a.rostrata*, the range of *M.a.africana* requires to be redefined. The nominate race has a restricted distribution in the southern districts of the eastern Cape (Port Elizabeth, Addo, Bedford, Committees, near Grahamstown, Fish River mouth, Peddie, Macleantown, Kei Road, East London, etc., are localities). Its limits of range in the north-east are not yet known, but it presumably intergrades with *M.a.rostrata* in the southern Transkei. As noted above Pondoland birds are *M.a.rostrata*. Southern Orange Free State birds may be referable to the nominate race, but I have seen no material.

There are seven recognisable races of *M.africana* in sub-continental South Africa, as follows:

Mirafra africana africana Smith, 1836

Mirafra africana rostrata (Hartlaub), 1863

Mirafra africana zuluensis (Roberts), 1936

Mirafra africana transvaalensis Hartert, 1900

Mirafra africana griseescens Sharpe, 1902 (synonym: *M.a.ngamiensis* (Roberts), 1932)

Mirafra africana ghansiensis (Roberts), 1932

Mirafra africana pallida Sharpe, 1902 (synonym: *M.a.okahandjæ* White, 1945)

As already noted by me in *Durban Museum Novitates*, vol. iv, 17, 1956, p. 283, *M.a.okahandjæ* White is a composite race, based on three skins from near Windhoek (*M.a.ghansiensis*) and two badly prepared Bradfield skins from the Okahandja district of Damaraland (*M.a.pallida*). I have no hesitation whatever in relegating *M.a.okahandjæ* to the synonymy of *M.a.pallida*. A similar view is expressed by Macdonald, *Contribution to the Ornithology of Western South Africa*, 1957, p. 93.

White, *Bull.B.O.C.*, vol. lxxvi, 7, 1956, p. 121, submits that *M.a.isolata* mihi, described in 1956 from Namwera, near Fort Johnston, at the southern end of Lake Nyasa, is a synonym of *M.a.transvaalensis*, despite the fact that the two races have differently coloured upper-parts. Hall, *loc.cit.*, defines the well-marked ventral colour characters of *M.a.isolata*, but decided, even in the face of the observed differences, that the populations of the country

at the southern end of Lake Nyasa, adjacent northern Portuguese East Africa, and Songea, southern Tanganyika Territory, should nevertheless be called *M.a.zuluensis*. Mrs. Hall's paper was written before my description of *M.a.isolata* was published. *M.a.isolata* is a perfectly distinct race and is not synonymous with either *M.a.transvaalensis* or *M.a.zuluensis*.

3. THE RANGE OF *ANTHUS LEUCOPHRYS ENUNCIATOR* CLANCEY, 1952.

The south-east African race of Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys enunciator* Clancey, 1952: Ingwavuma, Lebombo Mountains, north-eastern Zululand, has not been discussed by workers since its description in *Annals of the Natal Museum*, vol. xii, 2, 1952, p. 261. This race is more saturated and washed with buffish olive on the upper-parts, and more strongly buffish below than *A.l.leucophrys* Vieillot, 1818: Cape of Good Hope. Since describing the race in 1952 I have been able to study much more material of the southern African populations, including the large series in the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria, and now find that *A.l.enunciator* is not confined to the Lebombo Mountains as at first thought, but has a wide range throughout Natal, Zululand, eastern Orange Free State, western Swaziland and the Transvaal. It appears to be a winter visitor to the Lebombo Mountains, judging by the findings of Pinto and Lamm, *Memorias do Museu Dr. Alvaro de Castro*, 2, 1953, p. 85. *A.l.leucophrys* and *A.l.enunciator* meet and intergrade in the country to the east of the Great Kei River, in the eastern Cape Province. The good series in the Durban Museum from Pondoland shows this transition clearly. Recently taken topotypical material of *A.l.leucophrys* is scarce in collections, but through the kindness of Dr. J. M. Winterbottom, of the South African Museum, Cape Town, I have been able to study a freshly moulted example taken in March, 1958, at Worcester, and another slightly worn example taken in 1943 at Zeekoevlei by Mr. R. H. N. Smithers. In newly moulted dress, the lack of a buff wash on the upper-parts and the very grey rump are diagnostic for *A.l.leucophrys*, the range of which appears to be the south-western, southern and eastern Cape. *A.leucophrys* also occurs in the northern parts of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, but the subspecific status of such birds is by no means clear. A single specimen from Schuckmannsburg, Caprivi Strip, in the Durban Museum is very like *A.l.leucophrys* but rather too worn to permit of certainty regarding its subspecific status. *A.l.bohndorffi* Neumann, 1906: Kassongo, Belgian Congo, can be expected to occur within South African sub-continental limits in the northern

Bechuanaland Protectorate and Caprivi Strip, as it occurs in Barotseland, Northern Rhodesia (*vide* Benson and White, *Check List of the Birds of Northern Rhodesia*, 1957, p. 70).

4. A NEW RACE OF *TURDOIDES JARDINEII* (SMITH)
FROM SUL DO SAVE, SOUTHERN PORTUGUESE EAST
AFRICA.

It is customary to place the populations of *Turdoides jardineii* (A. Smith) occurring in the south-east African coastal lowlands as *T.j.natalensis* Roberts, 1932: Weenen, Natal. Writing in the *Annals of the Natal Museum*, vol. xii, 2, 1952, p. 249, I pointed out that a small series collected in southern Swaziland in 1951 was variable, one adult male being distinctly suffused with buffy on the upper-parts and flanks—a tendency which I then believed to reveal the influence of the small Zambesi race, *T.j.kirkii* (Sharpe), 1876: Mazaro, Zambesi River, 75 miles west of confluence with Shiré River. Collections recently formed by the Durban Museum in Swaziland, the eastern Transvaal “lowveld,” and Sul do Save, southern Portuguese East Africa, show that the unstable series from Swaziland commented upon in 1952 is actually from transitional populations between *T.j.natalensis* and an unnamed race in Sul do Save and adjacent regions. I now find that *T.j.natalensis* is in the main a highland race, extending from the thornveld districts of the interior of Natal (Estcourt, Weenen, Colenso, etc.) north to the eastern and north-eastern Transvaal, where in the eastern lowveld it merges with the new subspecies. The Natal race is characterized by the dark grey ground colouration to the throat and breast, and darker, less buffish, lower ventral surface when compared with the four other South African races of this babbler. The Sul do Save populations lack the dark grey ground colour to the throat and breast, being more olive tinged, and the rest of the under-parts are lighter and more buffish. On the upper surfaces they are slightly paler, and they range still smaller in size than toptotypical *T.j.natalensis*, which was distinguished by Roberts, *Annals of the Transvaal Museum*, vol. xv, 1, 1932, p. 29, from nominate *T.j.jardineii* entirely on a point of size. Compared with *T.j.kirkii*, Sul do Save birds are slightly larger, ventrally darker and more heavily spotted, and more olive tinged above. They may be known as

***Turdoides jardineii convergens*, subsp. nov.**

Type: ♂, adult. Manhiça, Sul do Save, southern Portuguese East Africa. Altitude c. 100 ft. a.s.l. 18 September, 1955. Durban Museum Expedition. In the collection of the Durban Museum.

Diagnosis: Similar to *T.j.natalensis* Roberts, of the interior of Natal and the eastern and north-eastern Transvaal, but with the ground colouration of the throat and breast about Grayish Olive (Ridgway, pl. xlvi) as against Mouse Gray (pl. li), and with the rest of the under-parts less dark greyish and more suffused with buffy or olive-buff. White lanceolate spots narrower and sharper. On upper-parts slightly paler, particularly on the head-top and nape. Averaging rather smaller in size than *T.j.natalensis* (see below).

Compared with *T.j.kirkii* (Sharpe), of the lower and middle Zambesi River valley, eastern Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, northern Portuguese East Africa, northwards in the littoral, darker and more olive, less vinaceous tinged, on the upper-parts, and with more numerous lanceolate markings on the nape and mantle; ventrally darker and more copiously marked with whitish lanceolate flecks, which extend over most of the under surface, and are not restricted to the throat and breast as in *T.j.kirkii*. This latter race has the lower breast and abdominal surface much lighter than *T.j.convergens*. Averaging larger in size.

Paratypical material: 13 specimens (12 in Durban Museum, 1 in Natal Museum).

Measurements of the Type: Wing (flattened) 107.5, culmen from base 26, tarsus 33.5 tail 105 mm.

Range: Eastern Swaziland (mainly intergrades towards *T.j.natalensis*), north Zululand from the northern shores of Lake St. Lucia, Sul do Save, southern Portuguese East Africa, and the low-lying country of south-eastern Southern Rhodesia (Sabi-Lundi confluence, *vide* Smithers, Irwin and Paterson, *Check List of the Birds of Southern Rhodesia*, 1957, p. 100). Northern limits of range not yet determined, because in the older literature *T.j.convergens* is invariably confused with *T.j.kirkii*. Eastern Transvaal lowveld birds are best covered by the combination *T.j.natalensis* \approx *T.j.convergens*.

Remarks: Roberts, *loc.cit.*, gives the wings of *T.j.natalensis* as 96-109 (104.5). This mean figure clearly shows his taxon to consist mainly of specimens from populations here described as *T.j.convergens*. Six recently taken topotypical examples of this race available to me measure 104-111.5 (107.9) mm. The wings of the paratypical series of 13 specimens of *T.j.convergens* measure 100-107 (104.0), and the culmens and tails of the same birds measure 98-105 (100.8) and 24-27 (25.7) mm. In the rather smaller *T.j.kirkii*, the wings of 5 ♂♀ in our collections measure 95, 98.5, 100.5, 102, 103.5 mm., the tails 89, 91.5, 92, 95, 95 mm.

Five races of the Arrow-marked Babbler can be admitted from the South African sub-continent:

- (a) **Turdoides jardineii jardineii** (Smith), 1836: north-western Transvaal.

Upper-parts olivaceous brown with slight vinaceous cast. On under-parts olivaceous grey with slight buffish suffusion, the feathers with lanceolate tips of ivory white. Size largest. Wings ♂♀ 107.5-118.5 mm.

Range: Eastern Bechuanaland Protectorate, western Transvaal, most of Southern Rhodesia, and in the central districts of Northern Rhodesia.

- (b) **Turdoides jardineii tamalakanei** de Schauensee, 1932: Tamalakane River, Maun, Ngamiland.

Paler and greyer than the nominate race, especially on the throat and breast, which are without a brownish or buffish cast, and with whiter or greyer edges to the scale-like feathers of the forehead and fore-crown. Size about the same.

Range: Ngamiland, northern Bechuanaland Protectorate, Caprivi Strip, south-eastern Angola, and southern Barotseland (Northern Rhodesia). Some western Southern Rhodesian birds approach this grey race.

- (c) **Turdoides jardineii natalensis** Roberts, 1932: Weenen, Natal.

Upper-parts slightly darker, especially the head-top and nape, than in *T.j.jardineii*, the vinaceous cast absent; also more speckled with white on nape and upper mantle. Ventrally less buffish, the ground colour of throat and breast darker and purer grey. Smaller in size. Wings ♂♀ 104-111.5 (107.9) mm.

Range: Thornveld districts of Natal interior (from 4500' a.s.l.) northwards to the eastern and north-eastern Transvaal. Intergrades in the eastern Transvaal lowveld and Swaziland with the following race.

- (d) **Turdoides jardineii convergens** Clancey, 1958: Manhiça, Sul do Save, southern Portuguese East Africa.

Slightly less dark above than *T.j.natalensis*, particularly on the head-top and nape. On under-parts more buffish, the ground colour to the throat and breast greyish olive as against mouse grey in *T.j.natalensis*. White lanceolate markings narrower. Averaging smaller in size. Wings ♂♀ 100-107 (104.0) mm.

Range: As given in the above description.

- (e) **Turdoides jardineii kirkii** (Sharpe), 1876: Mazaro, Zambesi River, Portuguese East Africa.

Similar to *T.j.convergens* but with the upper-parts less olive, and distinctly vinaceous tinged, as in *T.j.jardineii*. Nape and upper mantle usually less speckled with white. On under-parts paler, particularly over the lower breast and abdomen, and with the whitish lanceolate markings more restricted to the throat and breast. Size smaller. Wings 5 ♂♀ 95-103.5 (99.9) mm.

Range: The middle and lower reaches of the Zambesi River in the districts of Tete and Manica, southern Portuguese East Africa, and south in the district of Sofala to about Beira, northern Southern Rhodesia on the Zambesi west to the Sanyati River, eastern Northern Rhodesia (east of Lusaka and north to Mpika and Isoka), Nyasaland, northern Portuguese East Africa, Tanganyika Territory as far west as Monduli, Mpapwa and Iringa, and in the littoral of Kenya Colony as far north as Lamu.

5. A REVISION OF THE RACES OF THE CHAT FLY-CATCHER *BRADORNIS INFUSCATUS* (A. SMITH).

The sombre-coloured Chat Flycatcher *Bradornis infuscatus* (A. Smith) is restricted to the drier regions of south-western Africa, where it frequents the more open scrub-covered areas. It is a conspicuous bird, despite its drab general colouration, and is normally to be found in pairs, or small parties of three or four individuals. Geographical variation in the species has recently been discussed by Vaurie, *American Museum Novitates*, No. 1599, 1952, pp. 1-9, who recognised three races, namely, *B.i.infuscatus*, *B.i.seimundi* Ogilvie-Grant and *B.i.benguellensis* Sousa. Vaurie considered a fourth race, *B.i.ansorgii* Ogilvie-Grant, which was recognised by Sclater, *Systema Avium Æthiopicarum*, part ii, 1930, p. 407, to be a synonym of *B.i.benguellensis*. Recently, Macdonald, *Contribution to the Ornithology of Western South Africa*, 1957, pp. 118-120, following White, *Ibis*, vol. 93, 1951, pp. 464-465, described the South-West African populations as a new race under the name *B.i.namaquensis*. In describing *B.i.namaquensis*, Macdonald agreed with Vaurie in believing that the names *B.i.benguellensis* and *B.i.ansorgii* refer to one and the same racial group of populations in south-western Angola (*cf.* White, *loc.cit.*). Vaurie's arrangement of the different populations of *B.infuscatus* into three races is based on the assumption that much of the demonstrable variation is strictly clinal in character, but a recent survey of most of the material available in southern African museums and of the series

in the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), London, shows that a much better appreciation of the somewhat complex geographical variation displayed by this plastic species is to be achieved by the recognition of five named races. The pattern of variation in *B.infuscatus* is analogous to that shown by many polytypic species of birds resident in the south-west African arid biomes: the largest and darkest populations in the Cape Province, Orange Free State and the south-western Transvaal, populations intermediate in colour and size in South-West Africa, the northern Cape Province and the Bechuanaland Protectorate, and the smallest and palest populations in south-western Angola. The material used by Vaurie was comparatively limited, but that available to me shows that much of the geographical variation is quite sharply stepped, facilitating formal taxonomic treatment. This abruptly stepped variation is most marked in the occidental half of the species' distribution, but in the east racial distinction is less clearly defined, and as a result the limits of the ranges of the races, occurring for instance in the northern Cape, are still imperfectly known.

For facilities to study the material in the British Museum, London, I am grateful to Mr. J. D. Macdonald, Keeper of the Bird Room. I am also indebted to Mrs. B. P. Hall, of the Bird Room staff, for kindly placing her own Bechuanaland material at my disposal and for helping in various ways. Mrs. Hall has studied much of the material used in this revision in conjunction with me, and is in general agreement with the views expressed. In South Africa, the material preserved in the collections of the South African Museum, Cape Town, East London Museum and Transvaal Museum, Pretoria, has been made available through the kindness of the Directors. The Durban Museum series has been studied in great detail and has filled in several lacunæ in our knowledge of the characters of the various races and their respective ranges. Dr. J. M. Winterbottom has kindly helped with data on the range of the nominate race.

Saxicola infuscata was described in 1839 by Dr. Andrew Smith on material collected in the western Cape Province, between the Olifants and lower Orange Rivers. Of the toptotypical populations I have been able to examine twelve specimens. The western Cape birds show the marked tendency to darkness and greyness inherent in many indigenous bird forms of the region. Compared with the contiguous race of the Cape, *B.i.seimundi*, nominotypical *B.infuscatus* is seen to be darker, of a colour close to Fuscous (Ridgway, *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*, 1912, pl. xlvi) on the dorsal

surfaces, and on the under-parts cold greyish Drab covers the lower throat, breast, body sides and flanks. On the lower breast the greyish drab often forms distinct streaks (one of the characters generally believed to distinguish *B.i.seimundi* from *B.i.infuscatus*). In size *B.i.infuscatus* is larger than *B.i.seimundi*, this being especially marked in the very long, powerful bill. Adult males of *B.i.infuscatus* have wings 117-124.5, culmens (from base) 24.5-28 mm. A single female from Witputs, south-western Great Namaqualand, agrees with the topotypical populations, but a series of 5 ♂♂, 1 ♀ from Brandvlei is composite, five resembling the greyer examples of the nominate race in colour, the other one approaching closely to *B.i.namaquensis*. The Brandvlei birds are also smaller than topotypes of *B.i.infuscatus*, the wings of the five males measuring 111, 115, 116.5, 116.5, 119, and the bills 20.5, 21.5, 23, 23, 24 mm., thereby agreeing with *B.i.seimundi* and *B.i.namaquensis*. This information seems to indicate that true *B.i.infuscatus* is restricted to the districts of the western Cape Province lying between the valleys of the Berg and Orange Rivers, and in the extreme south-western parts of Great Namaqualand. To the east of its stated range in the Cape Province it intergrades with *B.i.seimundi* in what appears to be a narrow zone of intergradation. The single example from Brandvlei, which somewhat resembles the South-West African race, *B.i.namaquensis*, is interesting, but the presence of such a bird at Brandvlei is understandable when it is appreciated that *B.i.namaquensis* ranges some distance to the south of the Orange River in Bushmanland and the northern Kenhardt district.

B.i.seimundi was described in 1913 by Ogilvie-Grant on the basis of material collected mainly at Deelfontein, south of de Aar, in the east-central Karoo districts of the Cape Province. Apart from the parotypical series in the British Museum, I have examined comparatively extensive material of this subspecies in all the collections consulted. The populations covered by the name *B.i.seimundi* differ from those of nominate *B.infuscatus* in consisting of rather smaller sized birds, with the plumage colouration substantially lighter, more buffy, and less dark and greyish. Vaurie, *loc.cit.*, pp. 4 and 5, states that "It is questionable whether *seimundi*, which is apparently *poorly differentiated* (italics mine) from nominate *infuscatus*, deserves nomenclatural recognition." There need be no further doubt as to the distinctness of *B.i.seimundi*. Roberts, *Birds of South Africa*, 1940, found *B.i.seimundi* to be darker above and below than *B.i.infuscatus*, the under-surface unstreaked, while Vaurie found *B.i.seimundi* to be somewhat paler than the nominate race. *B.i.seimundi* is a warmer and redder, less cold greyish fuscous

coloured bird than *B.i.infuscatus*, the upper-parts in moderately worn dress corresponding to the Mummy Brown of Ridgway, (pl. xv). On the ventral surface the greyish drab present in *B.i.infuscatus* is almost absent, and the bird is distinctly lighter and warmer, more buffish, throughout. The breast is lighter, and the streaking on the lower breast is reduced to a series of dark mesial shaft striæ. Other important distinctions are the paler, more buffy edges to the wing feathers and a more extensive pale flash over the visible bases of the primaries. In nominate *B.infuscatus* this latter feature is often vestigial. While quite adequately distinguishable from the nominate race by the colour characters just given, *B.i.seimundi* also differs significantly in its critical measurements. Males of *B.i.seimundi* have the wings ranging from 112-119 (once 122) mm., showing a slight overlap, but the bills are consistently smaller and weaker—20.5-23.5 as against 24.5-28 mm. in topotypical *B.i.infuscatus*. Vaurie's single male from Port Nolloth has a bill-measurement of 25 mm. Roberts, *loc.cit.*, also shows that the tarsi of *B.i.seimundi* are shorter than those of *B.i.infuscatus*, though the measurements given by him do not support his findings, the difference shown in the measurements being infinitesimal. The tarsal measurements given for *B.i.seimundi* by Vaurie: 24.5-26 mm., as against 29 mm. in the Port Nolloth male, and my measurements of 27-29 mm., and 29.5-31 mm., show the character more clearly. The large overlap shown in Roberts' figures is attributable to the fact that his topotypical material of *B.i.infuscatus* was extremely limited. Populations of the Chat Flycatcher agreeing with the characters as defined for *B.i.seimundi* range to the east of the limited distribution of *B.i.infuscatus* throughout the central, southern and eastern districts of the Cape Province, and to the east of the Vaal River in the northern Cape, and in the western Orange Free State and south-western Transvaal.

Along the central Orange River, notably at Prieska, and the valleys of the Vaal and Hartz Rivers a marked shift towards lighter colouration is observable in the population samples at my disposal. This transition from dark to light birds is accomplished through a somewhat restricted and well-defined zone of intergradation, but is not abruptly stepped as in the zone of contact between the occidental *B.i.infuscatus* and *B.i.namaquensis* (see below). Throughout most of the northern Cape, and to the northward in the Kalahari Desert, Bechuanaland Protectorate, occur birds which are much paler and somewhat smaller than *B.i.seimundi*, as just described. On the upper-parts such birds are about Buffy Brown/Olive Brown (Ridgway, pl. xl), and on the under-parts still lighter than in

B.i.seimundi, the buffish white of the throat extending further down, and the dark mesial shaft striæ to the lower breast usually absent. The pallid edges of the wing-coverts, tertials and remiges are on the whole broader and paler, and the light flash over the visible bases of the primaries is clearer, less reddish, and therefore still more prominent. Males of the northern Cape populations have wings 111.5-118 mm., while southern Bechuanaland birds are statistically smaller: 102.5-110.5 mm. in six males. As most of the pale northern Cape birds before me are from the southern and eastern districts of Griqualand West, I believe them to be in the main mensural intergrades between what I shall call *B.i.placidus* mihi, subsp. nov., and *B.i.seimundi*. Compared with the recently described *B.i.namaquensis* of South-West Africa, *B.i.placidus* differs in being greyer or more olivaceous on the upper-parts, less vinaceous tinged, the colour in the former race being about between Snuff Brown and Sepia (Ridgway, pl. xxix). On the under-parts *B.i.placidus* is lighter, less strongly washed with Light Pinkish Cinnamon (Ridgway, pl. xxix) on the lower throat, breast, body sides and flanks, and the toptypical birds of the Kalahari Desert are smaller than *B.i.namaquensis*. The complete distribution of *B.i.placidus* is still not known, but I place under this name all the populations occurring in the Bechuanaland district of the northern Cape Province (Griqualand West birds: *B.i.placidus* \supseteq *B.i.seimundi*) northwards through the southern Bechuanaland Protectorate and the Kalahari Desert to extreme southern Ngamiland. It also occurs in the Western Transvaal. In the western parts of the Bechuanaland Protectorate my specimens reveal a shift towards a more vinaceous tinged plumage both above and below, and such examples correspond with Macdonald's recently described *B.i.namaquensis*. It is interesting to note that *B.i.placidus* most closely resembles *B.i.benguellensis* in colouration and size, differing only in being less whitish below. The latter race is restricted to the arid littoral of south-western Angola and the Kaokoveld of north-western South-West Africa, and as far as is known is separated from *B.i.placidus* by intrusive populations of *B.i.namaquensis*.

The recommendations of Vaurie are negatived by the striking differences and apparent lack of intergradation between *B.i.infuscatu*s and *B.i.namaquensis*. *B.i.namaquensis* is a much lighter and more vinaceous buff coloured bird than *B.i.infuscatu*s, with a much whiter throat, paler edges to the wing feathers, prominent wing flash, smaller general dimensions and weaker bill and feet. As noted earlier in this paper a single example from Witputs, south-western Great Namaqualand, studied by me is attributable to

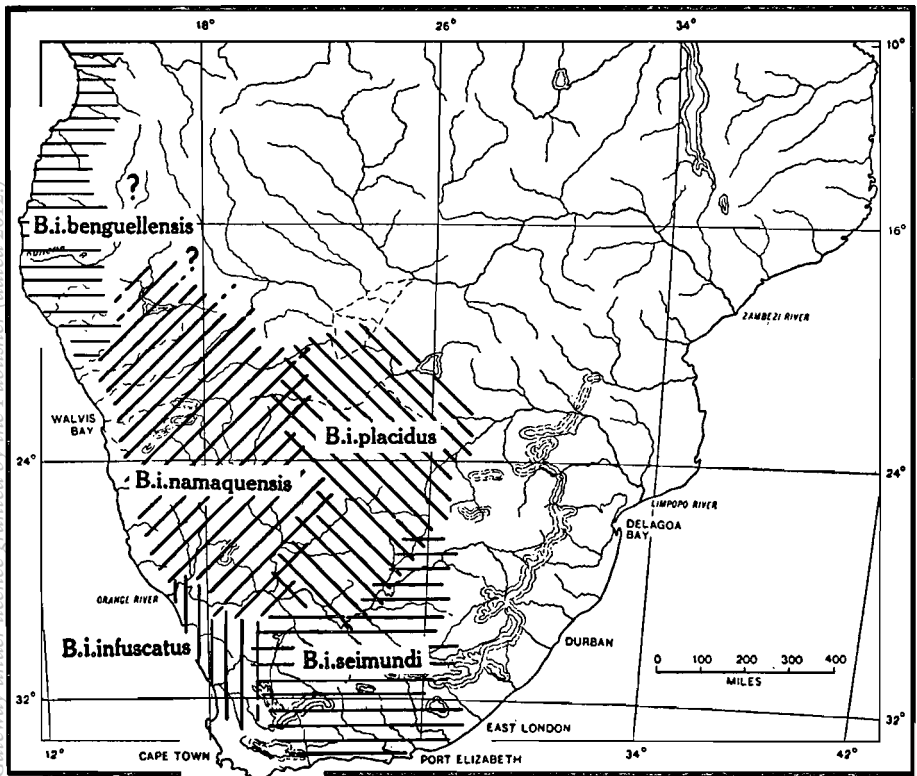
B.i.infuscatus, but further to the south-east in the north-western Cape (Springbok—Pofadder road; Aughrabies Falls, etc.) *B.i.namaquensis* is now known to thrust its range to the south of the Orange River. Apart from the single example from Brandvlei discussed earlier, I have not examined any material which reveals intergradation between the two forms under discussion, and it may well be that they are ecologically and reproductively isolated from one another. Further study of the two forms in the field in the north-western Cape and in the southern parts of South-West Africa is clearly needed.

The pale South-West African race of the Chat Flycatcher has been recognised by workers for many years as *B.i.benguellensis*, which name is actually applicable to the smaller and still paler race of south-western Angola and the Kaokoveld (the *B.i.ansorgii* of some authors). The nomenclature of the Angola and South-West African populations is complicated and has given rise to much discussion in the literature, largely hinging on the subspecific identity of a ragged and elongated skin in the British Museum collected by Anchieta somewhere in southern Angola, which does not agree with the coastal material collected by Ansonge in the same collection. In view of Macdonald's findings, *loc.cit.*, I consider the matter to be resolved, and I accept his ruling.

Macdonald, *loc.cit.*, gives the wings of adult males of *B.i.namaquensis* as 109-118 mm. The size of the South-West African birds is important because Macdonald claims that *B.i.namaquensis* is substantially larger than *B.i.benguellensis*, the wings of males of which he gives as 101-107 mm. My measurements confirm the findings of Macdonald, the wings of 8 ♂♂ of the former race measuring 113-121.5 mm., as against 101-110.5 mm. It is also larger than the eastern *B.i.placidus*, as recorded earlier.

B.i.benguellensis, described by the Portuguese worker, Sousa, in 1886, on material collected by Anchieta, is the smallest and palest of the races of the Chat Flycatcher. In colouration and size it comes close to *B.i.placidus*, but is whiter on the under-parts, the breast slightly sullied, but lacking almost entirely the buffish suffusion exhibited by that race. On the dorsal surface the two races are remarkably alike, though *B.i.benguellensis* is on the whole greyer than *B.i.placidus*. In size they are not statistically distinct. *B.i.benguellensis* enjoys a somewhat-restricted range; described from coastal Benguela, it is now known to range south to the Kaokoveld. The wings of Kaokoveld specimens are 4 ♂♂ 105-111, 2 ♀♀ 98, 104 mm. (after Macdonald and Hall, *loc.cit.*). As already recorded for *B.i.infuscatus* and *B.i.namaquensis*, intergradation between the

latter race and *B.i.benguellensis* appears, certainly on the basis of the literature and available specimens, to be virtually non-existent. It is interesting to note that from north to south in the western sectors of the species' distribution the geographical variation is virtually discontinuous, intergradation between the races vestigial or absent, whereas to the eastward quite well-defined zones of intergradation occur wherever the races are in contact. As indicated earlier, this interesting pattern of variation is obscured when the clinal concept is applied, and I believe the scientific facts to be much better represented in our formal classification by the recognition of five named geographical races. The nomenclature, characters and ranges of these are as follows:



BRADORNIS INFUSCATUS (Smith)

Sketch map showing the approximate ranges of the five geographical races of the Chat Flycatcher *Bradornis infuscatus*.

1. *Bradornis infuscatus infuscatus* (Smith)

Saxicola infuscata A. Smith, *Illustrations of the Zoology of South Africa*, Aves, 1839, pl. 28: between the Olifants and Orange Rivers, western Cape Province, South Africa.

Upper-parts about Fuscous (Ridgway, pl. xlvi), the feather-tips greyer, slightly lighter on rump and upper tail-coverts. Underparts dull whitish stone colour, the breast, body sides and flanks strongly washed and usually markedly streaked with greyish Drab (Ridgway, pl. xlvi). Wings usually with a buffish or rusty white speculum over the visible bases of the primaries. Size largest; bill and tarsi longest (29.5-31 mm.).

Measurements: 4 ♂♂ wings (flattened) 117-124.5 (120.5), culmens from base 24.5-28 (25.7), tails 87-93 (88.6) mm. 8 ♀♀ 110-121.5 (113.9), 24-26.5 (24.7), 82.5-90 (86.5) mm. (12 Namaqualand specimens measured.)

Type: Not traced.

Material examined: 12. South-West Cape (Mamre, 1 ♂, 1 ♀; Holgat River, 1 ♀; Vredensdaal, 1 ♀). Little Namaqualand (Klaver, 1 ♀; Klipfontein, 2 ♂♂, 1 ♀; Port Nolloth, 1 ♂, 2 ♀♀). Great Namaqualand (Witputs, 1 ♀). *B.i.infuscatus* \approx *B.i.seimundi*: 6. Western Cape Province, 6 (Brandvlei, 5 ♂♂, 1 ♀).

Range: Western Cape Province from about the Berg River to the lower reaches of the Orange River valley, and in south-western Great Namaqualand (Witputs). Intergrades to the east of its stated range with *B.i.seimundi* (Brandvlei).

Note: This race is characterized by its large size, long, heavy bill, dark fuscous dorsal colouration, dark coloured breast, body sides and flanks, and streaked lower breast and upper abdominal surface.

2. *Bradornis infuscatus seimundi* Ogilvie-Grant

Bradyornis infuscatus seimundi Ogilvie-Grant, *The Ibis*, 1913, p. 636: Deelfontein, south of de Aar, east-central Cape Province, South Africa.

Similar to *B.i.infuscatus* but richer and browner, less dark fuscous coloured, above, being about Mummy Brown (Ridgway, pl. xv). Ventrally browner and warmer, less greyish drab, on the breast, body sides and flanks; the brown usually distinctly vinaceous tinged. Streaking on breast and upper abdomen less pronounced, consisting of suppressed, often vestigial, dark, mesial striæ. Wings showing

more buffish edges to feathers, and more prominent pallid flash over the primaries. Ranging somewhat smaller in size, and with a much shorter bill. Tarsi shorter (27-29 mm.).

Measurements: 18 ♂♂ wings 112-119 (122) (115.6), culmens 20.5-23.5 (21.8), tails 83.5-88.5 (93.5) (85.6) mm. 6 ♀♀ 102.5-111 (107.5), 21-23 (21.9), 78-85 (81.6) mm. (24 Cape Province specimens measured.)

Type: In the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), South Kensington, London. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1903.3.9.292.

Material examined: 38. Central Cape (Beaufort West, 2 ♂♂, Victoria West, 1 ♂; Fraserburg, 1 ♂; Williston, 1 ♂; Murraysburg, 5 ♂♂; Deelfontein, 3 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀; Britstown, 1 ♀; Kenhardt, 1 ♂, 2 ♀♀; Van Wyks Vlei, 1 ♀; Prieska, 2 ♂♂; Colesberg, 1 ♀). Southern Cape (Willowmore, 2 ♂♂, 1 ♀; Mount Stewart, 1 ♂). Eastern Cape (Teviot, 1 ♂; Hanover, 1 ♂; Cradock, 3 ♂♂, 1 ♀; Hofmeyer, 1 ♂; Uitenhage, 1 ♂; Middelburg, 1 ♀). Northern Cape (Riverton, Kimberley, 1 ♂, 1 ♀). *B.i.seimundi* \approx *B.i.placidus*: 7. Northern Cape (Schmidtsdrift, 1 ♂; near Niekerkshoop, 2 ♂♂, 1 ♀; Riverton, Kimberley, 2 ♂♂; Fourteen Streams, 1 ♂).

Range: East of the range of *B.i.infuscatus* in the central, southern and eastern districts of the Cape Province, western Orange Free State and the south-western Transvaal. Intergrades with *B.i.placidus* along the central Orange River valley, and in the valleys of the lower Vaal and Hartz Rivers.

Note: *B.i.seimundi* is characterized by its richer, browner, colouration, lighter coloured breast, more buffish under-parts, reduced ventral streaking, markedly shorter bill and average smaller general dimensions, when compared with the nominate race. It also has a more prominent wing flash.

3. *Bradornis infuscatus namaquensis* Macdonald

Bradornis infuscatus namaquensis Macdonald, *Contribution to the Ornithology of Western South Africa*, 1957, p. 119: Aamhoup (i.e. Amhub), Maltahöhe district, Great Namaqualand, South-West Africa (25° 20' S. 16° 50' E.).

On upper-parts much lighter and redder than *B.i.infuscatus*, being of a colour between Snuff Brown and Sepia (Ridgway, pl. xxix). On the ventral surfaces, whiter over the throat, and with the breast, body sides and flanks vinaceous buff, not greyish drab; the streaking absent. Wings with broader and paler fringes to the

coverts and flight feathers, and with a more prominent flash over the visible bases of the primaries. Smaller in size, and with a smaller and weaker bill. Tarsi as in *B.i.seimundi*.

Measurements: 8 ♂♂ wings 113-121.5 (114.7), culmens 20-22 (21.0), tails 79-82.5 (81.1) mm. 6 ♀♀ 101-109 (107.5), 20-23.5 (21.6), 77-80.5 (78.8) mm. (14 South-West African and western Bechuanaland specimens measured.)

Type: In the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), South Kensington, London. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1887.12.1.1332. The *Type* is a faded old Andersson skin, which is badly warped and unlike recent material from Great Namaqualand. Such a specimen should not have been made the *Type* of a new race described in 1957.

Material examined: 17. North-western Cape Province (Springbok—Pofadder road, 1 ♂; Aughrabies Falls, 1 ♀). Great Namaqualand (Kleinkaras, 2 ♂♂; Aamhoup (Amhub), 2 ♀♀; Nauchas, 1 ♀). Damaraland ("Damaraland", 1 ♂, 1 ♀; Otjimbingwe, 3 ♂♂, 1 ♀; Erongo Mts. 1 ♀; Okombahe, 1 ♀). Western Bechuanaland (Gemsbok Pan, 1 ♂; Lehutitung, 1 ♂).

Range: From some districts of the north-western (Pofadder, Aughrabies Falls, etc.) and northern Cape (western Gordonia district), northwards through Great Namaqualand to Damaraland and, perhaps, Ovamboland and extreme southern Angola (? intermediate towards *B.i.benguellensis*). Ranges eastwards into some western districts of the Bechuanaland Protectorate (Gemsbok Pan, west of Ghanzi, Lehututu (Lehutitung), etc.), where it merges with *B.i.placidus*.

Note: Paler and more reddish upper-parts, whiter throat, paler and more vinaceous buff under-parts, absence of ventral striæ, more salient wing flash, smaller size and shorter, weaker bill distinguish *B.i.namaquensis* from *B.i.infuscatu*s.

4. *Bradornis infuscatu*s placidus, subsp. nov.

Type: ♂, adult. Kakia, southern Bechuanaland Protectorate (24° 45' S. 23° 25' E.). 12 June, 1957. Barlow 1957 Expedition. In the collection of the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), South Kensington, London. Collector's number H.127. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1957.36.1.

Diagnosis: Rather darker and more greyish olivaceous above (about Buffy Brown or Olive Brown, Ridgway, pl.xl), less vinaceous or rufous tinged than *B.i.namaquensis*; on under-parts purer

buffish white, the breast, body sides and flanks greyer, less strongly vinaceous than in *B.i.namaquensis*. Wings about the same. Smaller in size and with a weaker and shorter bill.

Compared with *B.i.benguellensis*, rather similar on the upper-parts, but usually not quite so greyish. On the ventral surfaces less white, more buffish tinged, especially on the breast, body sides and flanks. Similar in size, but the bill averaging a trifle smaller.

Measurements: 6 ♂♂ wings 102.5-110.5 (108.1), culmens 19.5-21.5 (20.2), tails 74-82 (78.5) mm. 1 ♀ 104, 21.5, 76.5 mm. (7 Bechuanaland specimens measured.)

Measurements of the Type: Wing 110, culmen 21, tail 82 mm.

Material examined: 9. Central Bechuanaland Protectorate (E. of Ghanzi, 1 ♂). Southern Bechuanaland Protectorate (Lehututu, 1 ♂; Kikomudi-Kai, 1 ♂; Kakia, 2 ♂♂; 4 miles S. of Tsabong, 1 ♀). Northern Cape (Klipput, near Posmasburg, 1 ♂, 1 ♀).

Range: From southern Ngamiland and the central Kalahari to the southern and south-eastern parts of the (Bechuanaland) Protectorate, western Transvaal, and throughout most of the northern Cape Province. Intergrades in the southern parts of its range with *B.i.seimundi*, and in the west with *B.i.namaquensis*.

Note: Smaller size; darker, less vinaceous tinged upper-parts, and purer, less vinaceous, buff under surface distinguish *B.i.placidus* from *B.i.namaquensis*. Very similar to *B.i.benguellensis*, but not so white below.

5. *Bradornis infuscatus benguellensis* Sousa

Bradyornis benguellensis Sousa, *Jornal de Ciencias Mathematicas, Physicas e Naturæs. Lisboa*, vol. xi, 1886, p. 160: Benguela (town), western Angola.

Synonym: *Bradyornis infuscatus ansorgii* Ogilvie-Grant, *The Ibis*, 1913, p. 636: Catumbella and Huxe, Benguela Province, western Angola.

Differs from *B.i.namaquensis* in its duller and greyer, less vinaceous tinged, upper-parts. Below much whiter, lacking almost entirely the vinaceous buff suffusions present in unworn *B.i.namaquensis*, the breast only being slightly washed with drab. Male smaller in size, the female less markedly so. Bill about the same.

Measurements: 6 ♂♂ wings 101-110.5 (107.6), culmens 20-22.5 (21.3), tails 73-81.5 (78.5) mm. 5 ♀♀ 98-104 (100.8), 21.5-22 (21.8), 74-79 (75.7) mm. (11 western Angola specimens measured.)

Type: In the Museo Bocage, Lisbon.

The *Type* of *B.i.ansorgii* is in the collection of the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), South Kensington, London.

Material examined: 11. Western Angola (Catumbella, 2 ♀♀; Huxe, 4 ♂♂, 1 ♀; Benguela, 1 ♂, 1 ♀; 35 m. S.E. of Benguela, 1 ♂; 30 m. E. of Benguela, 1 ♀).

Range: The arid littoral of Benguela and Moçamedes in western and south-western Angola, and in the Kaokoveld, north-western South-West Africa (*vide* Macdonald and Hall, *Annals of the Transvaal Museum*, vol. xxiii, 1, 1957, pp. 23-24).

Note: Dull, greyish upper-parts, very whitish under surface, and small size distinguish *B.i.benguellensis*.

6. THE GENERIC STATUS OF THE SUPERB STARLING *SPREO SUPERBUS* (RÜPPELL) AND ITS ALLIES.

The resplendent, metallic starlings *Spreo superbus* (Rüppell), *Spreo hildebrandti* (Cabanis), *Spreo shelleyi* Sharpe and *Spreo pulcher* (Müller) of northern tropical and eastern Africa have for long been generically associated with the rather dull coloured *Spreo bicolor* (Gmelin) of South Africa, and its East African congeners *Spreo albicapillus* (Blyth) and *Spreo fischeri* (Reichenow), and Amadon, in his recent work on starlings, *American Museum Novitates*, No. 1803, 1956, pp. 1-41, continues to do so without question. The reason for this is by no means clear. A study of skins of *S.superbus* and *S.hildebrandti*, in addition to considerable field experience with the two species in British Somaliland and Kenya Colony, convinces me that the two forms are actually congeneric with the usually wholly metallic-glossed starlings of the genus *Lamprotornis* Temminck (including *Lamprocolius* Sundevall and other sub-genera), and not with the three dull coloured species which rightfully constitute the genus *Spreo* Lesson, the *Type-species* of which is *S.bicolor*. I have personally studied and collected *S.bicolor* in many parts of South Africa, *S.albicapillus* in British Somaliland, and *S.fischeri* in Kenya Colony. The three species of the restricted genus *Spreo* form a small compact group, which are not far removed generically from *Acridotheres* Vieillot, and, perhaps, *Creatophora* Lesson.

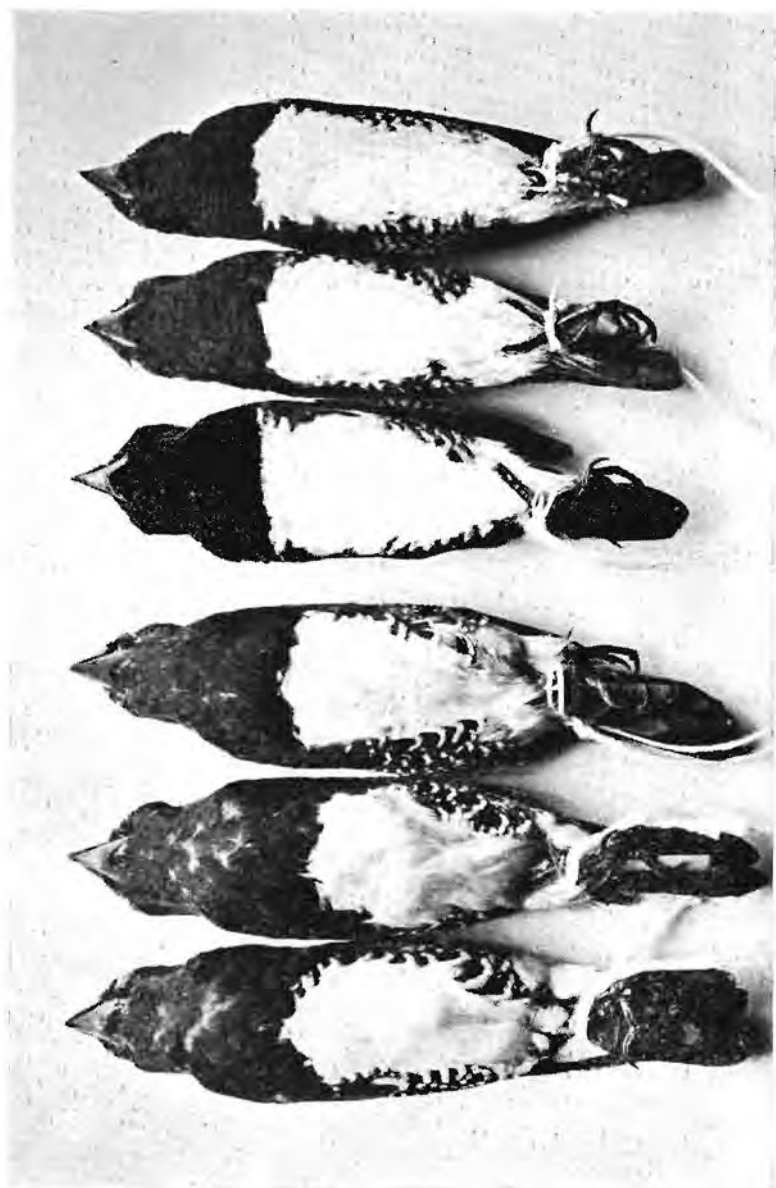
I now formally propose that the species *L.superbus*, *L.hildebrandti*, *L.shelleyi* and *L.pulcher* be removed from the genus *Spreo* and placed in *Lamprotornis*.

To return to the Superb Starling and its allies, I have had no firsthand experience with *L.shelleyi* and *L.pulcher*, but the former is perhaps no more than a well-marked race of *L.hildebrandti*,

being so treated by Sclater, *Systema Avium Æthiopicarum*, part ii, 1930, p. 669. *L.pulcher* has the head sooty with a slight gloss, and the upper-parts, wings and tail less coruscant than in *L.superbus*, *L.hildebrandti* and *L.shelleyi*, but I do not believe that the fact that these four species have the lower ventral surfaces non-metallic (one (*L.pulcher*) with an almost non-metallic head) in any way invalidates their transfer from *Spreo* to *Lamprotornis*, the adults of which are usually wholly metallic-glossed. An almost unglossed lower ventral surface is also to be found in *L.corruscus* (Nordmann). In the classification of these starlings, breeding biology is of little obvious help. *L.superbus* usually builds a spherical nest in a thorn tree, while its sibling, *L.hildebrandti*, builds only in holes in trees. The nest of *L.shelleyi* is undescribed, but that of *L.pulcher* is apparently like that of *L.superbus*. Of the true Spreos, *S.bicolor* nests in holes in clay banks, while both *S.albicapillus* and *S.fischeri* build spherical structures of grass and twigs in thorn trees (*vide* Mackworth-Praed and Grant, *Birds of Eastern and North Eastern Africa*, vol. ii, 1955, pp. 715-720). The colouration of the eggs is just as variable as the choice of nesting sites.

7. THE RACE OF RED-BACKED MANNIKIN *SPERMESTES BICOLOR* (FRASER) OCCURRING IN THE EASTERN PARTS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN SUB-CONTINENT.

It is customary to place the populations of the Red-backed Mannikin *Spermestes bicolor* (Fraser) occurring in the eastern districts of southern Africa as the race *S.b.nigriceps* Cassin, 1852, described from Zanzibar. Recently, I was able to collect my own material of *S.b.nigriceps* in Kenya Colony, and find on comparing the skins obtained with the series from Natal and southern Portuguese East Africa in the Durban Museum that the southern African populations are not *S.b.nigriceps*. I have also had another eight East African skins on loan from the Coryndon and Chicago Natural History Museums from Kenya Colony and Tanganyika Territory. Our specimens from Natal and Sul do Save, southern Portuguese East Africa, differ from *S.b.nigriceps* of East Africa in having the black throat and breast shield slightly more coruscant and restricted, not extending so far down on to the middle and sides of the breast. On the upper-parts the southern birds are slightly paler chestnut, as well as being smaller in size. They are also purer white below. The wings of 10 ♂♀ of the austral race measure 47-49.5 (47.9), the tails 29-32 (30.5) mm., as against 47-53 (49.6) and 30-36 (32.4) mm. in 13 ♂♀ of *S.b.nigriceps*. In view of the observed differences, it would seem advisable to segregate the populations of this



SPERMESTES BICOLOR (Fraser)

Right.—*Spermestes bicolor rufodorsalis* Peters

Left.—*Spermestes bicolor nigriceps* Cassin

Note the less extensive black gorget and smaller overall size of *S.b.rufodorsalis* when compared with the East African *S.b.nigriceps*.

(Photograph: Dennis Cleaver)

mannikin occurring in the south-eastern sectors of the species' range as a new race, for which the name *Spermestes rufodorsalis* Peters, *Journal für Ornithologie*, 1863, p. 401: Inhambane, Suldo Save, southern Portuguese East Africa, is available.

S.b.rufodorsalis ranges from Pondoland and coastal Natal and Zululand northwards to the eastern and northern Transvaal, southern Portuguese East Africa and eastern Southern Rhodesia. The extralimital populations of at least southern Nyasaland, adjacent Northern Rhodesia and Zambezia, northern Portuguese East Africa, are referable to *S.b.rufodorsalis*, but I have insufficient information and material to permit of a determination of the northern range limits of the new form.

It seems best to treat the forms of the *Spermestes nigriceps* group (*S.b.minor* Erlanger, *S.b.nigriceps* and *S.b.rufodorsalis*) as conspecific with those of the *Spermestes bicolor* complex (*S.b.bicolor*, *S.b.poensis* (Fraser), *S.b.stigmatophorus* Reichenow and *S.b.woltersi* (Schouteden)).

Sclater, *Systema Avium Æthiopicarum*, part ii, 1930, p. 770, recognised two polytypic species (*S.bicolor* and *S.nigriceps*), while Mackworth-Praed and Grant, *Birds of Eastern and North Eastern Africa*, vol. ii, pp. 976-978, adopt a similar arrangement, although the nomenclature they use differs. Chapin, *Birds of the Belgian Congo*, part iv, 1954, pp. 454-457, uses the classification here favoured.

8. ON THE NAME OF THE SOUTH-EAST AFRICAN RACE OF *ORTYGOSPIZA ATRICOLLIS* (VIEILLOT).

Roberts, *Ostrich*, vol. i, 2, 1930, p. 64, showed that *Fringilla polyzona* Temminck, 1823, is actually based on a male specimen from Gambia and a female from southern Africa. As Temminck's prior description is that of the male from Gambia, *F.polyzona* cannot be used for a South African race, and Slater's designation of Durban, Natal, as the type-locality of *F.polyzona* is invalid (*vide Systema Avium Æthiopicarum*, part ii, 1930, p. 784). In Temminck's work (*Planches coloriées d'Oiseaux*, livr. 37, 1823, pl. 221, fig. 3), only the female is figured, but this does not negative the prior use of the name *F.polyzona* for the Gambian ♂ in the original description. *Fringilla polyzona*, 1823, must therefore be placed in the synonymy of *Fringilla atricollis*, 1817. Roberts, *loc.cit.*, observed that resulting from this finding South African birds from the Union would require a new name. Grant and Mackworth-Praed, *Ostrich*, vol. xxvii, 1,

1956, p. 41, accept Roberts' observations, but unite the populations formerly covered by the *O.a.polyzona* of South African authors along with the paler and greyer ones from north-eastern Bechuanaland Protectorate described as *O.a.pallida* Roberts, 1932: N'kate. This fusing of two such perfectly discrete subspecific taxa is unacceptable, and the introduction of a name for the dark south-east African populations of the Quail Finch appears to be necessary. I propose

***Ortygospiza atricollis digressa*, subsp. nov.**

Type: ♂, adult. Whitson, Umhlongo Nek, Richmond, Natal. 13 September, 1927. Collected by Jack Vincent. In the collection of the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), South Kensington, London. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1933.7.14.477.

Diagnosis: Darker and browner on the upper-parts, less grey, than *O.a.pallida* Roberts, described from the north-eastern Bechuanaland Protectorate, and darker and browner on the ear-coverts and sides of neck. On the ventral surface, deeper, more chestnut, buff on the lower breast and over the abdominal surface, this character being especially clearly marked in the male. Similar in size.

Paratypical material: 30 specimens.

Measurements of the Type: Wing 56, exposed culmen 8.5, tarsus 15, tail 26.5 mm.

Range: From the grasslands of the southern and eastern Cape Province, Orange Free State, Basutoland, Natal, Zululand and western Swaziland north to the Transvaal, most of Southern Rhodesia (*O.a.pallida* in extreme west) and parts of Northern Rhodesia (mainly western).

Note: I have discussed the question of the name of the dark south-east African populations of the Quail Finch with Mr. C. W. Mackworth-Praed, of the British Museum, and he is in agreement with me that a new name must be proposed, and that the populations now called *O.a.digressa* mihi are not the same as the greyer and paler *O.a.pallida*.

9. A NEW RACE OF RED-HEADED FINCH *AMADINA ERYTHROCEPHALA* (LINNÆUS) FROM THE HIGHLANDS OF SOUTH-EASTERN AFRICA.

Two specimens of the endemic Red-headed Finch *Amadina erythrocephala* (Linnæus) of the high country below the Drakensberg Escarpment in the eastern Cape Province and Natal in the Durban Museum collection are now found to differ subspecifically from the populations breeding in the dry western and central regions of

southern Africa. I have been unable to study material from Angola, there being no specimens from that territory in the collections of southern African museums, nor are there any in the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), London, but material from just south of the Angola border (Kaokoveld) has been available for comparative purposes through the kindness of the Director of the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria. Of the western and central populations I have also had material from other parts of South-West Africa, north-western Cape Province and the Bechuanaland Protectorate. I find the birds of these populations generally paler and less densely squamated ventrally than those of the small resident population of the south-eastern highlands. Despite the limited material at present available, I consider that the latter birds deserve a name of their own, and I propose to designate them

***Amadina erythrocephala dissita*, subsp. nov.**

Type: ♂, adult. Bergville, Natal. Altitude c.5000' a.s.l. 28 July, 1957. Presented by J. G. Muller. In the collection of the Durban Museum.

Diagnosis: Adult ♂. Similar to *A.e.erythrocephala*, of southern Angola and western and central southern Africa, from which it differs in having the red of the head about Nopal Red (Ridgway, *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*, 1912, pl. i) as against Brazil Red (same pl.); upper-parts slightly darker (about Drab, pl. xlvi). Ventrally darker, the ground colour being about Russet (pl. xv) as against Tawny (same pl.), and with more dense and sharply contrasted scale-shaped spotting (the result of deeper black bars to each feather), the abdomen less white. Adult ♀. Showing characters rather similar to those exhibited by the ♂, being distinctly more heavily squamated below than *A.e.erythrocephala*. No difference in size, but bill slightly heavier.

Material: *A.e.erythrocephala*, a long series from South-West Africa, north-western Cape Province and the Bechuanaland Protectorate. *A.e.dissita*, 2.

Measurements of the Type: Wing 72, culmen from base 13.5, tarsus 16.5, tail 50 mm.

Range: Known at present only from the high country below the Drakensberg Escarpment in East Griqualand, eastern Cape Province (Kokstad), and in the adjacent high areas of Natal. Perhaps also in Basutoland.

Note: Non-breeding specimens taken from large flocks in the thorn country of Estcourt, Weenen and Colenso, central Natal, are all wintering *A.e.erythrocephala* and not *A.e.dissita*.