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MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS

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by

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ON THE STATUS OF *PERDIX LECHOHO* SMITH, 1836

On the various occasions I have discussed in whole or in part variation in the Natal Francolin *Francolinus natalensis* Smith, 1834 (*vide Durban Mus.Novit.*, vol. iv, 4, 1953, pp. 59 - 61; *Cat.Birds of S.Afr. Sub-Region*, part i, 1965, p. 267; *Durban Mus.Novit.*, vol. viii, 11, 1968, p. 119; and *Gamebirds of Southern Africa*, 1967, pp. 124 - 129), I inadvertently omitted to discuss or allocate the name *Perdix Lechoho* Smith, *Rep.Exped.Expl.Centr.Afr.*, 1836, p. 54: banks of the Marikwa (=Marico) and Limpopo Rivers. When he proposed *Perdix Lechoho* in 1836, Smith was fully aware of the fact that he had already collected the species in Natal and named it, in 1834, *Francolinus natalensis*. Why he should have renamed a species already described by himself is not clear from the severely restricted text.

A re-examination of the variation in the Transvaal, utilising in addition to eastern lowveld specimens others from Swartuggens, Derdepoort, Ellisras, the confl. of the Crocodile (Limpopo) and Matlabas Rivers, Rustenburg, Magaliesberg and Beestekraal, all localities over the far western plateau, shows incontrovertibly that *Lechoho* is a synonym of *F.n.natalensis*, the type-locality of which is Durban, Natal. It was at first thought that *Lechoho* might be an earlier name for *F.n.thamnobium* Clancey, 1954: near Newington, eastern Transvaal, but this proves not to be so. There is no difference of sub-

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Range: Moçambique north of the Save R., Rhodesia north of nominate *usticollis*, southern Malawi, and Zambian range of species.

ON THE SOUTHERN LIMITS OF
ANTHUS NOVAESEELANDIAE LICHENYA VINCENT, 1933

In my first arrangement of the southern African populations of Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae* (Gmelin) in generally recognisable and acceptable races in *Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol. iv, 9, 1954, pp. 101 - 115, I associated the high elevation populations of Rhodesia with the subspecies *A.n.lichenya* Vincent, 1933: Mlanje Mtn, southern Malawi, at 1980 m. a.s.l. The ascription of the high country populations to *lichenya* was not followed by Rhodesian workers, and in my second revision of the southern subspecies of this pipit in *Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol. viii, 12, 1968, pp. 153 - 156, I bowed to their views and placed the disputed Rhodesian birds with *A.n.rufuloides* Roberts, 1936: Grahamstown, Cape, treating *lichenya* as extralimital. *A.n.lichenya* was also left out of the arrangement of the austral African subspecies in my *Catalogue of Birds of the South African Sub-Region*, part iv, 1966, pp. 520, 521, the Rhodesian populations in question being on that occasion allocated to *A.n.spurium* Clancey, 1951: Zimbiti, near Beira, Moçambique.

A re-examination of the subspecific status of the contentious Rhodesian populations of Richard's Pipit, using personally collected material taken at Revue, Manica district, southern Moçambique, in 1968, and at Mt. Selinda, Chipinga district, Rhodesia, in 1973, shows that the action taken in 1954 was correct and that the populations, certainly those breeding in the Eastern Districts and along the Rhodesia/Moçambique frontier, are referable neither to *A.n.rufuloides* nor *A.n.spurium* but to *A.n.lichenya*. The last named taxon differs from *rufuloides* in having the upper-parts in newly moulted condition darker and redder (fringes of mantle feathers Buckthorn Brown (Ridgway (1912), pl. xv), *versus* greyish Tawny-Olive (pl. xxix) in *rufuloides*), the ground to the breast also redder, being Ochraceous-Buff (pl. xv), against Warm Buff (same pl.). A further distinction, and one not noted during the course of my earlier researches, is that the white over the penultimate rectrices in *lichenya* is largely vestigial or absent (in *c.* 77,8% of cases examined). In size *lichenya* is similar to *rufuloides*, the ♂♂ with wings 90 - 95,5, ♀♀ 83 - 89. In *A.n.spurium* the wings are shorter: ♂♂ 84 - 90,5, ♀♀ 80 - 85 mm.

The allocation of satisfactory ranges to subspecies in this pipit is invariably difficult because of two major factors: (a) the loss of the subspecifically significant colour characters due to environmental and radiation factors by the time the birds start breeding, and (b) the

extensive movements undertaken by many populations immediately after the breeding season. The South African Sub-Region range of the rufescent *lichenya* is probably closely correlated with that of the equally reddish subspecies of the Redcapped Lark alongside which it frequently occurs, namely, *Calandrella cinerea saturatior* Reichenow, in which case the populations breeding in Rhodesia will be *A.n. bocagei* Nicholson, 1884: Humbe, Huila, Angola, in the dry areas of the extreme west, and *A.n.lichenya* over much of the plateau and in the Eastern Districts, with *A.n.rufuloides* mainly a non-breeding visitor from further south. *A.n.grotei* Niethammer, 1957: Onguma, east of Etosha Pan, northern South West Africa, is a further non-breeding visitor to western Rhodesia.

A.n.lichenya is, therefore, seen as ranging from Rhodesia and adjacent Moçambique, north to the highlands of Malawi and southern and south-western Tanzania. Where its range abuts on that of *A.n.katanga* Chapin, 1937: L.Muscle, Shaba, Zaire, still remains to be ascertained. The treatment accorded these various African *A.novae-seelandiae* subspp. in the continuation of Peters' *Check-List* (vol. ix, 1960, pp. 145, 146) is completely at variance with the true nature of the variation, as *A.n.cinnamomeus* Rüppell, 1840: Simen, Ethiopia, does not have the extensive range with which it is credited, and requires to be revised.