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### MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS

#### XV

*by*

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1. A NEW RACE OF SHELLEY'S FRANCOLIN *FRANCOLINUS SHELLEYI* OGILVIE-GRANT FROM NATAL AND ZULULAND.

The austral populations of Shelley's Francolin are characterized as a new subspecies to science under the following name:

***Francolinus shelleyi sequestris***, subsp. nov.

*Type*: ♂, adult. Albert Falls, near Pietermaritzburg, Natal. 25 August, 1951. Collected by Robin Guy. In the collection of the Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg. Reg. No. 2308.

*Diagnosis*: Similar to *F.s.shelleyi* Ogilvie-Grant, 1890: Umfuli River, Southern Rhodesia, but rather darker, less greyish, and more boldly marked with Fuscous-Black (*vide* Ridgway, *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*, 1912, pl. xlvi) on the upper-parts. More clearly differentiated on the ventral surface, being more densely mottled with Fuscous-Black over the lower breast and upper abdomen, and with the breast, body-sides and flanks rather darker (Hazel (pl. xiv) as against Tawny (pl. xv)). Similar in size.

*Material examined*: *F.s.sequestris*, 6. *F.s.shelleyi* from Southern Rhodesia, 11.

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6. ON THE VALIDITY AND RANGE OF *COLIUS INDICUS*  
*TRANSVAALENSIS* (ROBERTS), 1922: PRETORIA,  
TRANSVAAL

White, in his recent revision of the races of the Red-faced Mouse-bird *Colius indicus* Latham, 1790: Gamtoos River, southern Cape Province (*vide Bull.Brit.Orn.Club*, vol. 74, 5, 1954, pp. 58-59), places *C.i.transvaalensis* (Roberts), 1922: Pretoria, Transvaal, as a synonym of *C.i.pallidus* Reichenow, 1896: Kionga, Rovuma River, southern Tanganyika Territory. The enlarged race *C.i.pallidus* of White is, however, a completely unsatisfactory heterogeneous taxon, as it is by this worker's own showing composed of populations separable from their neighbours by readily discernible morphological differences. For this reason alone, the taxonomic treatment of the eastern populations of *C.indicus* proposed by White is wholly unacceptable.

I have recently had cause to investigate the validity of the claim that *C.i.transvaalensis* is synonymous with *C.i.pallidus*, while revising the family for the projected new *Check List of the Birds of South Africa*. Unfortunately, I have not been able to see any topotypical material of *C.i.pallidus* from the Rovuma River, but through the kindness of Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin, Zoological Assistant, National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo, I have had the loan of six specimens from southern Nyasaland (Reichenow, *Die Vögel Afrikas*, vol. ii, 1903, p. 209, lists *C.i.pallidus* from Chiromo (Tschirromo) and Liwonde—localities in southern Nyasaland), while a seventh Nyasaland skin (from Chiromo) is in the Durban Museum collection. In addition to these specimens I have had another six subspecifically identical skins from localities on the lower Zambesi River (Messenguese, Msussa, Tambara Fort), and one from the Luitikila River, Mpika, Northern Rhodesia. This material from localities in Nyasaland, lower Zambesi River valley and Northern Rhodesia stands quite apart from the long series of *C.i.transvaalensis* in the Durban Museum collection from Swaziland, southern Portuguese East Africa, the Transvaal and northern Cape Province. The northern birds (*C.i.pallidus*) differ from *C.i.transvaalensis* on account of the duskier throat and breast colouration in all instances (breast about Avellaneous (*vide* Ridgway, *loc.cit.*, 1912, pl. xl), as against a colour slightly yellower than Vinaceous-Buff (same pl.)), and more pronounced wash of Cinnamon-Buff (pl. xxix) over the lower breast and abdomen, this latter characteristic all but absent in *C.i.transvaalensis*. The Cinnamon-Buff also extends as a dilute overlay to the pale grey flanks. On the upper-parts there is little marked difference in colour, though the northern birds tend to be

darker and bluer over the back and tertials, while the elongated feathers of the crown are more suffused with olivaceous, and when depressed form a more sharply defined coronal patch or cap than in *C.i.transvaalensis*. In size there is no valid subspecific difference between the two groups of populations, as demonstrated below. I cannot appreciate the size cline mentioned by White—as far as my material goes its very existence may be questioned. Seven southern Nyasaland ♂♀ have flattened wings of 92.5, 94, 95, 95.5, 96, 97, 97.5, six Zambesi River valley birds have wings 92.5, 93, 95.5, 95.5, 96, 97.5, and the single Mpikà ♂ 96.5 mm. Three *C.i.transvaalensis* in the Durban Museum from Sul do Save, southern Portuguese East Africa, have wings 87.5, 89.5, 97.5, two from eastern Swaziland in the same collection have wings 93.5, 100, four Transvaal topotypes 91, 92, 93.5, 96.5, one from the Orange Free State (Modder R.) 93, while twelve northern Cape Province specimens have wings 92, 92, 93, 93.5, 94, 94.5, 95.5, 96, 96.5, 96.5, 96.5, 99.5 mm. All that can be said is that the eastern tropical coastal birds (as exemplified by our three examples from Sul do Save) run slightly smaller in size than the rest of the populations of *C.i.pallidus* and *C.i.transvaalensis*. The largest specimen measured, an example with a wing of 100 mm. taken in eastern Swaziland, was obtained at a point barely 300 ft. above sea level! In the case of our series of *C.i.indicus* (7 skins), the wings of the specimens measure 92-97.5, while eight specimens of *C.i.lacteifrons* Sharpe, 1892: Otjimbingwe, Damaraland, South-West Africa, measure 88.5-97 mm.

In the absence of material from the Rovuma River it is not possible to revise the eastern populations of this mousebird with any degree of confidence. In so far as the discreteness of *C.i.transvaalensis* is concerned, it is, on the basis of the plumage colour characters defined above, clearly not the same as the race occurring in southern Nyasaland, the lower reaches of the Zambesi River valley, and eastern Northern Rhodesia, currently called *C.i.pallidus* by workers. Before continuing, it should be noted that if future work should show topotypical *C.i.pallidus* to be separable on the basis of small size from the Nyasaland, Zambesi River valley and Northern Rhodesian populations here discussed, the latter will require to be called *C.i.mossambicus* Reichenow, 1896: Tete, Zambesi River, Portuguese East Africa (*vide Ornith.Monatsber.*, vol. iv, 1896, p. 4), the *Type* of which was collected by Peters and is now in the Zoological Museum, Berlin. The indications are, however, that Reichenow's *C.i.pallidus* is based on sub-adult specimens, and that adult material from the type-locality will not be found to differ from examples from south and west of Lake Nyasa. In the meantime, *C.i.trans-*

*vaalensis* should be reinstated (*contra* White) as a valid geographical race, the range of which is much more extensive than hitherto believed, being as follows: north-western and northern Cape Province (Griqualand West population *C.i.indicus*  $\approx$  *C.i.transvaalensis*), southern and eastern South-West Africa, Bechuanaland Protectorate, Southern Rhodesia (replaced in some northern districts by *C.i.pallidus*), Transvaal, Orange Free State, Basutoland lowlands, Natal and Zululand, Swaziland and southern Portuguese East Africa. Intergrades to the north of its range with *C.i.pallidus* and to the south, in the Cape Province, with the saturated nominate race.

Four geographical races of the Red-faced Mousebird can be admitted to the South African list:

- (a) ***Colius indicus indicus*** Latham, 1790: Gamtoos River, southern Cape Province.

Cape Province to the south of the range of *C.i.transvaalensis*, and in the south-western Orange Free State.

- (b) ***Colius indicus transvaalensis*** (Roberts), 1922: Pretoria, Transvaal.

Range as given above.

- (c) ***Colius indicus pallidus*** Reichenow, 1896: Kionga, Royuma River, southern Tanganyika Territory.

Comes within South African limits on the middle and lower reaches of the Zambesi River valley. Extralimitally in eastern and south-eastern districts of Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, northern Portuguese East Africa and southern Tanganyika Territory.

- (d) ***Colius indicus lacteifrons*** Sharpe, 1892: Otjimbingwe, Damaraland, South-West Africa.

Central and northern South-West Africa in northern Great Namaqualand, Damaraland, Ovamboland and the Kaokoveld. North of our limits in southern and western Angola to the Congo R. mouth (*C.i.angolensis* Reichenow is a synonym (Melvin Traylor, *in litt.*)).

*C.i.ngamiensis* (Roberts), 1932: Maun, Ngamiland, is barely distinguishable from *C.i.transvaalensis* and best placed as a synonym of that race, while *C.i.mossambicus* is a synonym of *C.i.pallidus*.

I am grateful to the Director of the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo (through Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin), for the loan of material, and to Professor Dr. Erwin Stresemann, of the Zoological Museum, Berlin, for information on the *Type* of *C.i.mossambicus*.