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## MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS LIV

by

P. A. CLANCEY

(Director, Durban Museum, Durban)

### ON THE SUBSPECIES OF THE KNOT *CALIDRIS CANUTUS* (LINNAEUS) WINTERING IN AFRICA

In a short note in Suppl. No. 3 to my *Catalogue of Birds of the South African Sub-Region* in *Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol. xi, 2, 1976, p. 38, I drew attention to the fact that a single Knot *Calidris canutus* (Linnaeus), 1758: Sweden, from Durban Bay, Natal, in the Durban Museum collection taken in 1964 is both colder and greyer dorsally and rather longer billed than in the case of a series of nominate *C. canutus* from western Europe (Netherlands, the specimens taken between 1 February and 6 April).

In recent years the Knot has increased considerably as a non-breeding visitor to estuaries along the south-eastern African coast, and four specimens taken in Durban Bay on 23 January, 1979, by Mr. John Mendelsohn, Scientific Officer (Vertebrates), Durban Museum, and a juvenile in transitional dress obtained in the same place in October, 1975, by R. K. Brooke now make six skins of this wader available for study from Natal.

The four specimens collected with a single shot in 1979 stand apart from all European skins in being much greyer, less brownish, above, with the bills appreciably longer in series. The upper-parts of these four Durban-taken specimens correspond to the Light Grayish Olive of Ridgway, *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*, 1912, pl. xlvi, as against Drab (same pl.) in the Netherlands series of nominate *C. canutus*. The six Knot specimens from Durban have the

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(b) **Anthus lineiventris lineiventris** Sundevall

*Anthus lineiventris* Sundevall, *Oefv.K.Sv.Vet.-Akad.Förhandl.*, vol. vii, 1850, p. 100: Dwars Berge, Marico district, western Transvaal.

Upper-parts with the feathers fringed Light Brownish Olive (pl. xxx), the feather-centres brownish black. Below, entire fore-throat, breast and sides deep Cream-Buff (pl. xxx), the breast and lateral surfaces broadly streaked brownish black; medio-ventral plane buffish white. Wings in ♂♂ seldom above 92 mm.

*Range*: Eastern Botswana, the Transvaal, western Swaziland, and southern and eastern Rhodesia south and east of the range *A.l. angolensis*.

(c) **Anthus lineiventris angolensis** Bocage, stat.nov.

*Anthus angolensis* Bocage, *Jorn.Acad.Sci.Lisboa*, No. viii, 1870, p. 341: Pungo Andongo, Malanje, Angola.

Similar above to nominate *A.lineiventris*, but differs by being even whiter below than *stygium*, the streaking over the lateral surfaces, including the flanks, still further reduced than in the latter. Compared with the nominate race the underside is much whiter, the streaking more confined to the breast, less extended caudad laterally. Size ranging a little larger (♂♂ with wings to 95 mm.).

*Range*: Angola, southern Zaïre, Zambia, south-western Tanzania, and Malawi, south to the miombo biome in Rhodesia.

ON THE VALIDITY OF  
*CINNYRIS MARIQUENSIS OVAMBOENSIS*  
REICHENOW, 1904

The Ovambo population of the Marico Sunbird was characterized as a new race on the basis of smaller size under the name *Cinnyris mariquensis ovamboensis* by Reichenow in *Journ.f.Ornith.*, vol. lii, 1904, p. 133, the type-locality Ochimbora in Ovamboland, northern South West Africa. This subspecies seems to have at no time received recognition, and it is currently treated as a straight synonym of *N.m.mariquensis* (Smith), 1836: Marico district, western Transvaal (see Rand, in continuation of Peters' *Check-List Birds of the World*, vol. xii, 1967, p. 263). In a short communication in *Durban Mus.Novit.*, vol. x, 1, 1973, p. 13, I discussed the possibility that *ovamboensis* might be valid on the basis of other than a size character after a study of limited material in the collection of the National Museum of Rhodesia, Bulawayo, that year, but left the question of a final decision on its acceptability unresolved *pro tem*.

Examination of a series of 9 ♂♂, 4 ♀♀, and 1 juv. ♀, from Rundu (Rantu) on the Okavango R. at 17° 52' S., 19° 49' E., taken in the latter half of 1978 and now in the collection of the Durban Museum reveals that Reichenow's *ovamboensis* is valid on a range of revised characters. The size-difference used by Reichenow in the first instance is, however, of no taxonomic worth, as here shown:

9 ♂♂ *N.m.ovamboensis*:

Wings 66 - 70 (68,1), SD 1, 43, SE 0,48

Culmens (exposed) 23 - 25 (24,0), SD 0,71, SE 0,24

Tails 40 - 47 (43,8), SD 2,53, SE 0,84

12 ♂♂ of *N.m.mariquensis* (Transvaal, Botswana, Damaraland):

Wings 67,5 - 71,5 (69,2), SD 1,16, SE 0,34

Culmens 24 - 27 (25,5), SD 0,95, SE 0,27

Tails 45 - 50 (47,0), SD 1,50, SE 0,43 mm.

Males of *N.m.ovamboensis* differ from *mariquensis* in having the Peacock Green dorsal, face and plastron surfaces with little or no cupreous or citrine burnish, being wholly greener and very similar in the relative greenness of the said metallic surfaces to the condition present in the northern subspecies *N.m.osiris* Finsch, 1872: Senafé, Ethiopia. As noted in my communication of 1973, the matt belly surfaces are more brownish, less coal black, but the difference in the colour of the maroon breast-band seems inconstant and much influenced by insolation and abrasion.

Females of *ovamboensis* differ from those of the more xeric *mariquensis* in having the upper surface more greyish, less buffy, brown, wearing to a darker, somewhat more saturated dorsal appearance. The face is darker, and judging by the short Rundu series the light mystacial surfaces are less starkly etched. Below, the sample is seen as less warm primrose yellow, the streaking on the whole heavier and more extended towards the tail. These revised criteria taken collectively warrant the resurrection of Reichenow's long neglected subspecies.

The range of *N.m.ovamboensis* is from the Huila and southern Cuando-Cubango districts of Angola to Zambia west of the Zambesi R., adjacent northern South West Africa in Ovambo, Kavango and Caprivi, and northern Botswana in the Okavango Swamp region.

In *N.m.lucens* Clancey, 1973: Pongola (town), south-eastern Transvaal, males resemble those of *N.m.mariquensis* in having the metallic green surfaces burnished with cupreous. This lowland race differs from the nominotypical one entirely on the basis of a well-defined small size-character.