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## MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS XLIII

by

P. A. CLANCEY

(Director, Durban Museum, Durban)

### ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF *CHARADRIUS MARGINATUS* VIEILLOT OF ETHIOPIAN AFRICA TO *CHARADRIUS ALEXANDRINUS* LINNAEUS

The small sandplover *Charadrius marginatus* Vieillot of much of Ethiopian Africa and Madagascar is variably considered by authors as a full polytypic species or as a race of a greatly enlarged *Charadrius alexandrinus*, typically of the Palearctic Region and Asia. Among more recent authors, Neumann, *Novit. Zool.*, vol. xxxv, 1929, pp. 212-216, treated *C. marginatus* and its races as conspecific with *C. alexandrinus*, which view was followed by Peters, *Check-List Birds of the World*, vol. ii, 1934, pp. 248-250, who further recognised *C. nivosus* (Cassin) and other similar sandplovers of the Americas, as well as *C. ruficapillus* Temminck, 1822, of Australasia, as conspecific with *alexandrinus*. On the other hand, Chapin, *Birds of the Belgian Congo*, part ii, 1939, pp. 65-67, and more recently Vaurie, *American Mus. Novit.*, No. 2177, 1964, pp. 1-15, and in *Birds of the Palearctic Fauna*, vol. ii, Non-Passeriformes, 1965, pp. 376-378, considered *C. marginatus* to be specifically discrete from *C. alexandrinus*, a view shared by Mackworth-Praed and Grant, *Birds of Eastern and North Eastern Africa*, vol. i, 1952, pp. 340-343, and all modern South African authors, including the present writer (Clancey, *Catalogue Birds South African Sub-Region*, 1965, pp. 288, 289). Among other authors dealing with this complex of small plovers, Meinertzhagen, *Birds of Arabia*, 1954, pp. 476-479 (map), and Dement'ev and Gladkov, *Birds of the Soviet Union*, English

extremely instructive parallel geographical variation present in the two allospecies.

#### SUBSPECIATION IN THE SHARPBILLED OR WAHLBERG'S HONEYGUIDE *PRODOTISCUS REGULUS* SUNDEVALL

This small dun-coloured honeyguide was described originally from the western Transvaal by Sundevall on the basis of material collected by J. A. Wahlberg in 1843. It is now known to range from Nigeria in West Africa, and the Sudan and Ethiopia in the east, south, east of the Lower Guinea Forest to southern Angola and north-eastern South West Africa in the west and the eastern Cape and Natal in the east. The possible polytypy of the species was first demonstrated by Ogilvie-Grant, *Bull.Brit.Orn.Club*, vol. xi, 1901, p. 67, when he described *Prodotiscus peasei* from southern Ethiopia. Grant, *Ibis*, 1915, pp. 436, 437, overlooking the fact that the tail-patterns of juveniles and adults differ markedly, questioned *peasei* and rejected it as being described on a variant. In 1921 Reichenow *Journ.f.Ornith.*, vol. lxi, 1921, p. 46, proposed *P.r.camerunensis* from the Central African Republic, more, I suspect, on the basis of the far north-western locality than on any difference he detected in the singleton — a juvenile — before him. Sclater, *Syst.Av.Aethiop.*, part i, 1924, p. 291, accepted that *P.regulus* was a polytypic species, admitting the three named races: nominate *P.regulus*, *P.r.peasei* and *P.r.camerunensis*. Friedmann, *U.S.Natn.Mus.Bull.*, No. 153, 1930, pp. 472, 473, again considered the question of the validity of *peasei*, which he tentatively accepted, while *camerunensis* was not considered. Grant and Mackworth-Praed, *Bull.Brit.Orn.Club*, vol. lviii, 1938, p. 146, again considered *peasei*, which they synonymised with the nominate subspecies. In 1952 the present writer (Clancey, *Durban Mus.Novit.*, vol. iv, 1, 1952, pp. 8–11) studied the populations occurring in the South African Sub-Region, recognising two races in the region, one of which was described as new under the name *P.r.adustoides*. Friedmann, *Ann.Mus.CongoBelge*, in-4°, Zool., 1, 1954, pp. 21–27, declined to recognise *adustoides*, stating that it was probably based on foxed material, even though most of the material used in the research carried out by Clancey was under twenty years old at the time (1951). This matter was again considered by the present writer in *Bull.Brit.Orn.Club*, vol. lxxv, 9, 1955, pp. 123–126, the validity of *adustoides* being reaffirmed. Later, Friedmann, *U.S.Natn.Mus.Bull.*, No. 208, 1955, pp. 256–264, commented further that *adustoides* required confirmation, admitting no races in the species (p. 257). Chapin, *Birds of the Belgian Congo*, part ii, 1939, p. 537, hesitatingly admitted that the species was polytypic, while

most recent authors, such as Mackworth-Praed and Grant, *Birds Eastern and North Eastern Africa*, vol. i, 1952, p. 746, and White, *Revised Check List of African Non-Passerine Birds*, 1965, pp. 278, 279, have either accepted or rejected the polytypic status of the species without attempting to resolve the matter adequately on the basis of a revision in depth.

I have recently studied the species in order to determine the nature and extent of the taxonomically significant variation and to assess the number of subspecies it is meaningful to admit in a systematic arrangement of the populations. To augment the series in the Durban Museum material was borrowed from the East London Museum (through Mr. C. D. Quickelberge), the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria (through Dr. A. C. Kemp), the National Museum of Rhodesia (through Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin), and the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), Tring (through Dr. D. W. Snow). Just over ninety specimens were assembled for this study.

Material currently available for research into subspecies is unsatisfactory for the following reasons: (a) the proportion of juveniles in museum series is inordinately high, (b) samples from single localities are invariably too small, owing to the difficulty of assembling adequate series of this rather sparse and inconspicuous species, and (c) most adults in collection are in insolated dress or in moult.

Parameters of significance for grouping the populations into subspecies are (i) variation in the hue of the brown dorsum, (ii) the presence or absence of white over the fore-throat and the extent of the white over the medio-ventral plane, and (iii) variation in size, particularly as expressed in the length of the tail. The darkest populations are those present in the extreme south of the range, *i.e.*, those extending from the eastern Cape to southern Moçambique and Swaziland. Such austral populations closely resemble the eastern equatorial ones, but are colder and greyer, less reddish, brown above. These two groups of relatively dark birds are segregated by paler and greyer dorsalled populations, with the fore-throat largely white, the breast paler, and the medio-ventral plane extensively pure white. Such pale elements, which extend from southern Angola and South West Africa, east to the bushveld regions of the Transvaal, Rhodesia, and much of southern Moçambique represent the nominate subspecies, described in the first instance from the Rustenburg district of the western Transvaal. The Sharpbilled Honeyguides occurring in the southern highlands of Ethiopia resemble the equatorial populations in general colouration, but have the tail wholly or largely brownish black in the adult. This population, characterised by Ogilvie-Grant as *P. peasei* in 1901, has been discussed on several

occasions over the past seventy-four years, the present author favouring the view that it constitutes a discrete population. For long the Bozoum, Central African Republic, juvenile described as *P.r. camerunensis* by Reichenow in 1921 was supposed to mark the north-western limits of range of the species, though it has since been collected much further to the west in Cameroun Occidental and Nigeria by Serle. The Cameroun and Nigerian birds differ from those from the Central African Republic eastwards by slightly darker colouration over the upper-parts and fore-throat, in being rather larger, and in having the tail markedly longer.

While existing specimens are far from adequate for research of the present kind, the political and economic climates now prevailing in the West and Africa suggest that the present material is not likely to be much improved upon for a very considerable time. However, on the basis of the material studied in Durban — probably the largest series ever brought together in one centre of this sparse honeyguide — five subspecific groupings of populations are recognisable as subspecies, for one of which a name is formally introduced below.

#### THE SUBSPECIES OF *PRODOTISCUS REGULUS*

##### (a) *Prodotiscus regulus adustoides* Clancey

*Prodotiscus regulus adustoides* Clancey, *Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol. iv, 1, 1952, p. 9: Ashburton, near Pietermaritzburg, Natal.

Dorsum dark greyish Olive-Brown (Ridgway, *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*, 1912, pl. xl). Ventrally, fore-throat and breast greyish Olive-Buff (pl. xl), darkening laterally; medio-ventral plane dull yellowish white. Wings 74–80; tails 44–50mm.

*Material examined*: 25.

*Range*: Eastern Cape from the Great Fish R., to Natal, Zululand, south-eastern Transvaal, and Maputo, southern Moçambique.

*Notes*: This subspecies moults April–July, and birds are in pristine condition late July–October. The populations are subject to post-breeding movement. A single typical example of *adustoides* from as far north-west as Hillcrest, Pretoria, Transvaal, is dated 14 August.

Darker upper-parts and dusky throat and breast distinguish present taxon from the next subspecies

##### (b) *Prodotiscus regulus regulus* Sundevall

*Prodotiscus regulus* Sundevall, *Oefv. K.Sv.Vet.-Akad.Förhandl.*,

vol. vii, 1850, p. 109: Mohapoani=Rustenburg district, western Transvaal.

Paler and rather greyer above than *adustoides* (near Drab (pl. xlvi) or slightly darker). Face paler. Below, with the entire fore-throat largely off-white, not olive-buff; breast paler than *adustoides*, and medio-ventral surface clearer and more extensively white. Ranging a little larger in size: wings 75–84; tails 47–53mm.

*Material examined*: 34.

*Range*: Southern Angola in Huila and Cuando-Cubango, north-eastern South West Africa, Caprivi Strip, western Zambia, northern and eastern Botswana, Rhodesia, bushveld regions of the Transvaal, and southern Moçambique (except Maputo).

*Remarks*: The white fore-throat, pale breast, and extensively white medio-ventral plane distinguish this xeric race.

(c) ***Prodotiscus regulus camerunensis*** Reichenow

*Prodotiscus regulus camerunensis* Reichenow, *Journ.f.Ornith.*, vol. lxi, 1921, p. 46: Bosum=Bozoum, Central African Republic.

Comparable to *adustoides*, differing in being paler, less saturated, and more reddish brown above (near Buffy Brown (pl. xl)). Similar to *adustoides* below. Wings 73–82,5; tails 45,5–52mm.

*Material examined*: 22.

*Range*: Zambia east of *regulus*, Malawi, northern Moçambique, Tanzania, southern and eastern Zaïre, Kenya, Uganda, southern and western lowland Ethiopia, the Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic.

*Remarks*: Reichenow, *loc.cit.*, based his *camerunensis* on a single juvenile example from the Central African Republic without any diagnostic characters, the measurements of which are stated by Bannerman, *Birds of Tropical West Africa*, vol. iii, 1933, p. 422, to agree precisely with nominate *regulus*, hence my attribution of the name to the populations of the states listed rather than that of Cameroun Occidental and Nigeria. Despite the name, the *Type* did not come from Cameroun, but from the savanna country far to the east.

The purer and rather redder brown dorsum distinguishes *camerunensis* in series from *adustoides*.

**(d) *Prodotiscus regulus peasei* Ogilvie-Grant**

*Prodotiscus peasei* Ogilvie-Grant, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, vol. xi, 1901, p. 67; Ungi (Unji), north end of L. Zwai, southern Ethiopia.

Similar in colouration to *camerunensis*, but differs in having the entire tail in the adult wholly or almost wholly brownish black, white when present on any of the three outer pairs of rectrices vestigial and then shrunk to a narrow elliptical spot contiguous to the medial rachis. Wings of two: 77, 77; tails 49, 49mm.

*Material examined*: 2.

*Range*: The highlands of Ethiopia, the present specimen records being from the peripheral foothills country of the Arusi Highlands in southern Shoa, Arusi, Bale, Sidamo and Gamo-Gofa.

*Remarks*: Benson obtained *peasei* in January, 1942, 48km west of Yavello and near Arero. Other specimens of this form have been obtained at Unji, near the northern end of L. Zwai, on the Gato R., near Gardula, south of L. Abaya, and at Daroli, near Ginir, in Arusi-Gallaland.

Friedmann (1930) gives the following measurements of the Gardula specimen: wing 81.5, culmen 11.5, tarsus 12, and tail 54mm.

Examination of the tails of all adult *P. regulus* before me shows that contrary to what Grant wrote in *Ibis*, 1915, pp. 436, 437, variation in the distribution of blackish and white surfaces over the three outer pairs of rectrices is conservative, only the two adults of *P. r. caurinus* showing an enlargement of the apical black, in this adumbrating the condition found in *peasei*. As the five or more specimens with the tail-character laid down for *peasei* all come from the Shoa lakes and peripheral foothills country of the Arusi Highlands in southern Ethiopia — an area which supports many striking endemics, including the two “new” canaries *Serinus flavigula* Salvadori and *Serinus xantholaema* Salvadori recently elucidated and resurrected by Erard, *L’Oiseau et R.F.O.*, vol. 44, 1974, No. 4, pp. 308-323 — the dismissal of *peasei* as a variant of “nominate” *regulus* cannot be maintained, and the taxon is here accorded full recognition at the subspecies level.

Almost completely brownish black tail distinguishes present race from *camerunensis*.

**(e) *Prodotiscus regulus caurinus*, subsp. nov.**

*Type*: ♂, adult. Enugu, Nigeria, at 6° 20' N., 7° 29' E. 27 June,

1954. Collected by Dr. W. Serle. In the collection of the British Museum (Nat.Hist.), Tring. B.M. (N.H.), Reg. No. 1966. 16. 254.

Compared with *P.r.camerunensis* slightly darker and greyer or more olivaceous, less reddish, over the dorsum, recalling the spatially remote *P.r.adustoides*, but not quite so dark and cold. Below, with fore-throat and breast a trifle greyer. Tail with black tipping to outer three pairs of rectrices slightly deeper. Bill heavier and erectile lateral rump plumes longer. Size ranging larger, the tail much longer: wings 80–86; tails 54–59+ mm.

*Material examined*: 3. (Cameroun Occidental: Ndu; Nigeria: Enugu).

*Measurements of the Type*: Wing 84,5, culmen from base 14, tail 59+ mm.

*Range*: Cameroun Occidental, west to Nigeria and, perhaps, Dahomey, West Africa.

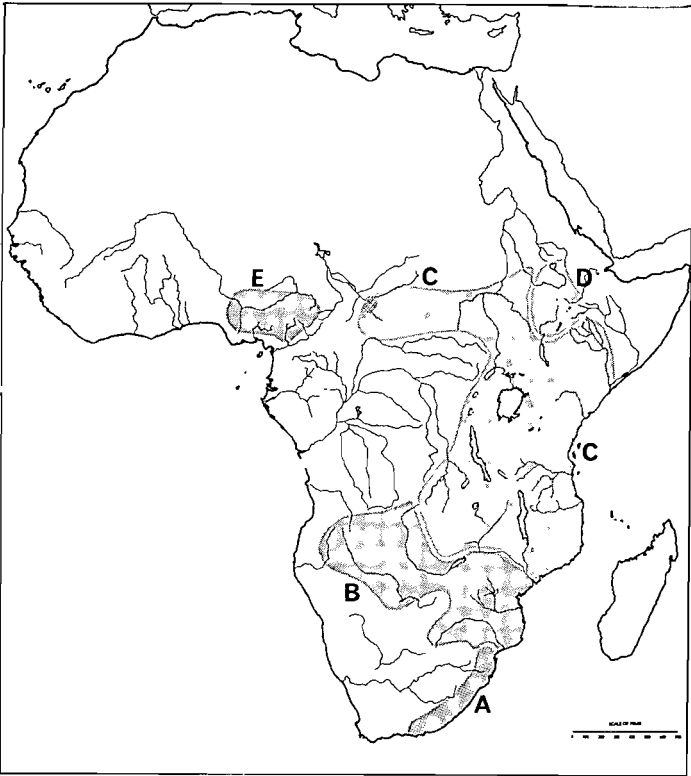
*Remarks*: Serle, *Ibis*, 1957, p. 416, in noticing the long tail of his Nigerian material, associated the population with *P.r.camerunensis*.

Large size and long tail and darker colouration distinguish this new form from *camerunensis*.

TABLE I

Population	N	Range	Wings Ave.	SD	Range	Culmens Ave.	SD	Range	Tails Ave.	SD
<i>Prodotiscus regulus adustoides</i>										
Cape, Natal, Swaziland, S.E. Transvaal	20	74–80	77,8	1,68	12–13,5	12,6	0,44	44–50	48,3	1,64
<i>Prodotiscus regulus regulus</i>										
N. Transvaal Rhodesia, Botswana, W. Zambia, etc.	34	75–84	79,8	2,40	11–14	12,4	0,67	47–53	49,5	1,67
<i>Prodotiscus regulus camerunensis</i>										
Zambia & Malawi Zaire (ex Verheyen)	14	75–82,5	79,0	2,32	11,5–14	12,8	0,74	47–50	48,1	1,01
Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda W.Ethiopia & Sudan	4 8	78–81 73–81	79,0 78,2	1,41 2,63	12–14	12,7	0,65	45,5–52	48,3	2,49
<i>Prodotiscus regulus peasei</i>										
W.Ethiopia	2	77,77			12,12			49,49		
<i>Prodotiscus regulus caurinus</i>										
Cameroun, Nigeria	3	79,84 84,5			12,13 14			54,56 50+		

Table showing variation in wing-, culmen- and tail-lengths of the subspecies and some populations of *Prodotiscus regulus* (in mm.).



MAP II

Sketch-map showing the tentative ranges of the five subspecies of the Sharpbilled Honeyguide *Prodotiscus regulus*.

- A. *Prodotiscus regulus adustoides* Clancey
- B. *Prodotiscus regulus regulus* Sundevall
- C. *Prodotiscus regulus camerunensis* Reichenow
- D. *Prodotiscus regulus peasei* Ogilvie-Grant
- E. *Prodotiscus regulus caurinus* Clancey

#### AN UNDESCRIBED RACE OF THE FOREST-DWELLING DRONGO *DICRURUS LUDWIGII* (SMITH)

Study of the series of nearly eighty specimens of the small drongo *Dicrurus ludwigii* (Smith), 1834: Durban, Natal, in the collection of the Durban Museum reveals that the nominate race requires to have its range restricted to the eastern Cape, the coast of the Transkei, Natal (coast), eastern Zululand, Swaziland, the eastern Transvaal (where breeding up to 1 825m a.s.l.), and Moçambique south of the lower Limpopo R. The populations of Moçambique north of the Limpopo, eastern Rhodesia and southern Malawi differ in being much



less intensely black (in the males), while the females are markedly more plumbeous, less blackish, ventrally. Such populations are not attributable to *D.l.muenzneri* Reichenow, 1915: Sanji, Mahenge district, eastern Tanzania, which is wrongly synonymised with the nominate subspecies by Vaurie, in Peters' *Check-List Birds of the World*, vol. xv, 1962, p. 139, after having been shown to be valid by Mackworth-Praed and Grant, *Birds Eastern and North Eastern Africa*, vol. ii, 1955, p. 566. In *muenzneri* the metallic sheen is more lustrous and rather paler blue-black compared with the nominate subspecies, while the female differs little from the male, the sexes being virtually alike. Mackworth-Praed and Grant give its range as south-western Somalia and eastern Kenya, south through eastern Tanzania to about the Rovuma R. The Moçambique, Rhodesian and southern Malawi populations require a name, and may be known as —

***Dicrurus ludwigii tephrogaster*, subsp.nov.**

*Type:* ♀, adult. Chirinda Forest, Mount Selinda, Chipinga district, eastern Rhodesia, at 20° 26' S., 32° 42' E. Collected by Durban Museum personnel. 9 June, 1973. In the collection of the Durban Museum, D.M. Reg. No. 29 145.

*Diagnosis:* Adult male slightly less saturated metallic blue-black over the dorsum than in nominate *D.ludwigii*, the rump and upper tail-coverts greyer. Below, again lighter, less deep blue-black, the sides and flanks greyer and more contrasted against the dark abdomen. Distinctions shown by the female more trenchant than in the case of the male: less saturated throughout, and rump markedly greyer. Ventrally, much lighter, more plumbeous, less blackish, this character shown saliently over the fore-throat. Similar in size.

The much greyer female and greyer sides and flanks in the male distinguish *tephrogaster* from *muenzneri*.

*Measurements:* Wings (flattened) of 12 ♂♂ 100–107 (103,2), SD 2,01, SE 0,58mm. Wings of 12 ♀♀ 95–103,5 (98,7), SD 3,16, SE 0,91mm.

*Material examined:* 24 (*Rhodesia:* Chirinda Forest, Lusitu R. (Vimba); *Moçambique:* Massinga, Mapinhane, Vilanculos, Dondo, Inhaminga). *D.l.ludwigii*, 46; *D.l.muenzneri*, 3.

*Range:* Moçambique north of the Limpopo R., eastern Rhodesia and southern Malawi. Northern range limits uncertain.

*Measurements of the Type:* Wing 102, culmen from base 21,5, tarsus 18, tail 90mm.