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### MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS

#### XIII

by

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#### 1. SYSTEMATIC AND DISTRIBUTIONAL OBSERVATIONS ON SOME SOUTH AFRICAN BIRD FORMS

Study of collections made by the Durban Museum during the course of the past seven years indicates the desirability of making adjustments to our current taxonomic and distributional treatment of several South African forms of birds. In order to make these findings available to workers as speedily as possible, I have grouped them together in the present composite note.

(a) ***Francolinus natalensis thamnobium*** Clancey

*Francolinus natalensis thamnobium* Clancey, *Durban Museum Novitates*, vol. iv, 4, 1953, p. 59: Farm Malamala, Newington, eastern Transvaal.

Two adult ♀♀ Natal Francolin collected on the banks of the Vaal River at Riverton (rail), north of Kimberley, northern Cape Province, in August, 1957, are referable to this paler and greyer race, which is now known to extend from the eastern Transvaal lowveld and adjacent Sul do Save, southern Portuguese East Africa, eastwards through Southern Rhodesia and the thorn country of the

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northern and western Transvaal to eastern Bechuanaland, the northern Cape Province, and parts of the western Orange Free State.

Nominate *F.natalensis* Smith, 1834: Durban, Natal, is much darker and browner, less grey, on the dorsal surface than *F.n.thamnobium*, while on the underside it is more heavily spotted on the upper throat and densely squamated over the lower throat and breast. The ground to the under-parts is more strongly buffish tinged. It is also larger in size.

The ecological requirements of the two races here discussed are somewhat different. In coastal Natal *F.n.natalensis* occurs mainly in evergreen dune forest and dense riparian cover, while in central Natal I have found it a shy denizen of clumps of evergreen forest. *F.n.thamnobium* is, on the other hand, a race of the dry woodlands and thorn thickets. The nominate race of the Natal Francolin ranges from Natal and Zululand, northwards in the interior to the eastern and northern Transvaal highland forests.

(b) **Mirafra africanoides harei** Roberts

*Mirafra africanoides harei* Roberts, *Annals of the Transvaal Museum*, vol. v, 4, 1917, p. 258: Windhoek, Damaraland, South-West Africa.

Macdonald, *Contribution to the Ornithology of Western South Africa*, 1957, pp. 94-97, and White, *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club*, vol. 76, 4, 1956, pp. 53-56, discuss in varying detail the geographical variation of the Fawn-coloured Lark in South-West Africa and contiguous arid areas. In *Durban Museum Novitates*, vol. v, 8, 1958, p. 99, I proposed as a new race the populations of the Northern Cape and southern Bechuanaland Protectorate under the name *M.a.quæsita* Clancey, 1958: Rietfontein, Griquatown—Niekerkshoop road, Northern Cape; populations treated as nominate *M.africanoides* Smith, 1836, by Roberts, *Birds of South Africa*, 1940, p. 190, and as *M.a.harei* by Macdonald, *loc.cit.*

The Durban Museum now possesses freshly moulted *M.a.harei*, obtained this year in Damaraland. Study of this and other recently collected material in our collections shows that *M.a.harei* extends to the Orange River in Great Namaqualand and the Gordonia district of the Northern Cape. In the southern portion of its range *M.a.harei* is apparently restricted in its choice of biotope to the tongues of intrusive red Kalahari sand-dunes, and the Durban Museum has a single adult ♂ of *M.a.harei* taken on a red sand-dune on the banks of the Orange River, near Prieska, on 13 September,

1957, which is the furthest south the race has yet been taken, and well within the established range of *M.a.quæsita*. This specimen, which was shot by the present writer, had the appearance of the red *Ammodramus burra* (Bangs) in the field, and was noted at the time as being quite unlike the contiguous *M.a.quæsita*. It is now evident that marked differences in the ecology of *M.a.harei* (red Kalahari sand-dunes with tufted grass) and *M.a.quæsita* (coarse quartz sand and gravels with karroo-oid scrub) enable the ranges of these two forms to interdigitate to a certain degree. It is interesting to observe that in Damaraland *M.a.harei* shows a wide range of habitat tolerance, whereas in the southern portions of its distribution it is an ecological race of the red sand-dunes

*M.a.harei* differs from *M.a.quæsita* in its less streaked upper-parts, which are a vinaceous Sayal Brown (*vide* Ridgway, *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*, 1912, pl. xxix) as against Ochraceous-Tawny (pl. xv) or Cinnamon (pl. xxix). On the ventral surface and in size the two races are inseparable. The nominate race differs from *M.a.quæsita* in the darker and more heavily streaked upper-parts. It occupies the south-eastern sectors of the species' wide range.

(c) ***Eremopterix verticalis damarensis* Roberts**

*Eremopterix verticalis damarensis* Roberts, *Annals of the Transvaal Museum*, vol. xiv, 3, 1931, p. 243: Gobabis, eastern Damaraland, South-West Africa.

Macdonald, *Contr. Orn. W. South Africa*, 1957, p. 107, shows that the breeding populations of Little Namaqualand are referable to this pallid, grey race. Study of the series in the Durban Museum collection now reveals that *E.v.damarensis* ranges considerably further east and south, through the Brandvlei district to Van Wyk's Vlei.

The geographical variation in this finch-lark cannot be disposed of simply by recognising a pale western race and a darker eastern one. Limited material in the Durban Museum from Pakhuis Pass, Clanwilliam district, western Cape, is *E.v.verticalis* (Smith), 1836: Colesberg, eastern Cape Province. Recent collecting at Kalkrand, in Great Namaqualand, shows conclusively that *E.v.verticalis* and *E.v.damarensis* occur in the same districts during the non-breeding season. Eight ♂♂ collected in a single morning at the same watering point at Kalkrand on 5 June, 1959, are readily divisible into two forms on the basis of the colouration of the upper-parts: 5 *E.v.damarensis* and 3 *E.v.verticalis*. This finch-lark, like many other

xerophilous species of larks, is given to nomadism when not actually breeding, and it is evident from my findings at Kalkrand that nomadic flocks of non-breeding *E.v.verticalis* habitually wander far north and west of the established breeding range of the race. It is reasonable to suppose that *E.v.damarensis* is just as nomadic as the nominotypical form.

Nominate *E.verticalis* ranges from the western Cape (except north-western districts), through the Karroo to the eastern Cape, Orange Free State and Transvaal. The rest of the species' range in the South African sub-continent is occupied by *E.v.damarensis*, with the exception of the Makarikari Salt Pan area of north-eastern Bechuanaland, from whence *E.v.khama* Irwin, 1957: Makarikari Pan, Bechuanaland Protectorate, has recently been proposed.

(d) ***Bradornis mariquensis acaciæ*** Irwin

*Bradornis mariquensis acaciæ* Irwin, *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club*, vol. 77, 7, 1957, p. 118: Ohopoho, Kaokoveld, South-West Africa.

Irwin, *loc.cit.*, gives the range of this new race as the "Kaokoveld". Material now in the Durban Museum shows that *B.m.acaciæ* ranges eastwards to Otjiwarongo and south to Windhoek, where in both districts it meets the paler backed nominotypical subspecies.

*B.m.acaciæ* is a well-marked race, differing from nominate *B.mariquensis* Smith, 1847: Marico River, western Transvaal, in its darker and rather rustier upper-parts. Its range appears to be from southern and western Damaraland, northwards to the Kaokoveld (? and western Ovamboland) and south-western Angola. *B.m.mariquensis* reaches south-eastern and eastern Great Namaqualand and eastern Damaraland.

*B.m.acaciæ* was described from the same material as that listed without comment by Macdonald and Hall, *Annals of the Transvaal Museum*, vol. xxiii, 1, 1957, p. 23.

(e) ***Oenanthe pileata neseri*** Macdonald

*Oenanthe pileata neseri* Macdonald, *Ostrich*, vol. xxiii, 3, 1952, p. 161: Erongo Mountains, Oraruru district, Damaraland, South-West Africa.

*Oe.p.neseri* was described by Macdonald, as being rather grey-brown, or drab brown, in comparison with the nominate race which is more fawn brown, and with *Oe.p.livingstonii* (Tristram), 1867: Murchison Falls, Nyasaland, which is light sepia. The Durban Museum now holds a long series of *Oe.p.neseri* in freshly moulted

plumage, which race I find differs from *Oe.p.pileata* (Gmelin), 1789: Cape of Good Hope, in being a darker vinous brown on the upper-parts (about Sepia as against Snuff Brown (*vide* Ridgway, *tom.cit.*, pl. xxix), and not paler as stated by Macdonald, *Contr.Orn. W.South Africa*, 1957, p. 129, It is also darker above than *Oe.p.livingstonii*.

An adult ♀ specimen of *Oe.p.neseri* from Groblershoop, on the Prieska-Upington road, northern Cape Province, collected by me on 1 May, 1959, is the first record of this recently described race from the Cape Province, and the furthest south it has yet been obtained. Breeding material of the Capped Wheatear from the north-western Cape in our collections shows that the nominate race ranges north to the lower Orange River and extreme south-western Great Namaqualand. We have no material to show if *Oe.p.neseri* thrusts south into the north-western Cape to the east of the range of *Oe.p.pileata*, and it may be that the Groblershoop example of *Oe.p.neseri* was a migrant from further north. It is quite evident that the populations of this wheatear are given to not inconsiderable local movement, because an adult ♂ in the Durban Museum from Klipkop Farm, 18 miles S. of Otjiwarongo, in Damaraland, is without any doubt referable to *Oe.p.livingstonii*. It agrees perfectly with specimens of this latter race in our collections from Southern Rhodesia and East Africa. The S.A.O.S. List Committee (see Report, *Ostrich*, vol. xxvii, 4, 1956, p. 180) also found Kaokoveld and Ovamboland birds studied to be *Oe.p.livingstonii*, contrary to the observations of Macdonald and Hall, *tom.cit.*, p. 25, who examined part of the same material, and found it to agree with the paratypical series of *Oe.p.neseri* in the British Museum (Nat.Hist.!) It is not clear at present if the ranges of *Oe.p.neseri* and *Oe.p.livingstonii* converge in the northern districts of South-West Africa, or whether the *Oe.p.livingstonii* taken there are simply non-breeding visitors from an eastern breeding ground. Smithers *et alia*, *Check List of the Birds of Southern Rhodesia*, 1957, p. 109, record *Oe.p.livingstonii* as a dry-season visitor to Southern Rhodesia, arriving as a rule in mid May, and departing in November.

(f) ***Cercomela familiaris richardi*** Macdonald

*Cercomela familiaris richardi* Macdonald, *Ibis*, vol. 95, 1, 1953, p. 73: Springbok, Little Namaqualand, north-western Cape Province.

This race was synonymized with *C.f.galtoni* (Strickland), 1852: Otjimbingwe, Damaraland, South-West Africa, by the S.A.O.S. List Committee (*vide* Report (1956), *tom.cit.*, p. 181), a decision

which I now have reason to believe was incorrect. Material recently assembled by the Durban Museum confirms Macdonald's action in separating the populations of the north-western Cape and southern Great Namaqualand from both *C.f.familiaris* (Stephens), 1826: Table Mountain, south-western Cape Province, and *C.f.galtoni*.

*C.f.richardi* is an intermediate between *C.f.familiaris* and *C.f.galtoni*. From the former race it is distinguishable by the lighter coloured upper-parts (about greyish Buffy Brown (Macdonald, in the original description, gives the colour as Chaetura Black, which is surely a mistake. No South African race of this chat is so coloured, let alone a form of our arid west!) as against Olive-Brown (*vide* Ridgway, *tom.cit.*, pl. xl)) and paler under surface, the throat, breast and flanks less dusky. From *C.f.galtoni*, *C.f.richardi* is separable on account of its more brown tinged, less grey, upper-parts, which in Damaraland *C.f.galtoni* are about Drab (pl. xlvi). The rump and upper tail-coverts are also more yellowish, less pinkish, tawny. Ventrally *C.f.richardi* is exactly intermediate between *C.f.familiaris* and *C.f.galtoni*. The range of *C.f.richardi* seems to be the north-western Cape Province from Little Namaqualand and Bushmanland, eastwards through the Kenhardt and Brandvlei districts to about Van Wyk's Vlei and Prieska; also southern Great Namaqualand (north to Lat. 27° S.) and most of the northern Cape Province. In connection with the northern limits of the range of *C.f.richardi*, it should be put on record that the Durban Museum possesses an adult ♀ in fresh dress of *C.f.galtoni* taken on the Auob River, about 10 miles S.E. of Einpaal, eastern Great Namaqualand, which is not far from the western limits of the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park.

From a critical study of our material it is evident that there is a measure of individual variation in all populations of *C.f.familiaris*. This, coupled with a fair amount of post-breeding dispersal and marked colour changes through abrasion and bleaching in actual breeding birds, makes the mapping out of the ranges of the several races proposed no easy task. Our material suggests that *C.f.dodsoni* Macdonald, 1953: Deelfontein, eastern Cape Province, is a pure synonym of *C.f.familiaris*, but that the populations of the highlands of Basutoland are worthy of separation by name on account of their more vinaceous general colouration (see Clancey, *Ostrich*, vol. xxviii, 3, 1957, p. 142).

I recognise seven races of the Familiar Chat from within South African sub-continental limits: *C.f.familiaris*, *C.f.subsp.nov.* (Basutoland), *C.f.richardi*, *C.f.galtoni*, *C.f.angolcnsis*, *C.f.modesta* and *C.f.hellmayri*.

(g) ***Erythropygia pæna damarensis*** Hartert

*Erythropygia pæna damarensis* Hartert, *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club*, vol. xix, 1907, p. 96: Omaruru, Damaraland, South-West Africa.

Macdonald, *Contr.Orn.W.South Africa*, 1957, p. 133, states that "Hartert's *damarensis* is an appreciably paler bird than the nominate race from further to the south-east". McLachlan and Liversidge, *Roberts' Birds of South Africa*, 1957, p. 312, make the observation that Damaraland birds are "variable and intermediate" (presumably between *E.p.pæna* and *E.p.benguellensis* Hartert), recognising only the nominotypical race from within the confines of South Africa sub-continental limits.

Adequate material assembled this year by the Durban Museum shows that *E.p.damarensis* is a perfectly valid subspecies, which is rather darker and greyer on the head-top and nape, and redder, less yellowish, on the mantle, rump, upper tail-coverts and tail than *E.p.pæna* Smith, 1836: north of Kuruman, northern Cape Province (centres of mantle feathers about Snuff Brown as against Saccardo's Umber (*vide* Ridgway, *tom.cit.*, pl. xxix)). Viewed in series *E.p.damarensis* appears darker crowned and redder backed than *E.p.pæna*. Our material indicates that *E.p.pæna* and *E.p.damarensis* meet in the mountainous areas near Windhoek, while a single example of *E.p.pæna* from Klipkop Farm, 18 miles S. of Otjiwarongo, suggests that the two races are also in contact further north in Damaraland. The evidence before me confirms that *E.p.damarensis* is a race centred on the Kaokoveld which extends some distance south-eastwards to central (and ? southern) Damaraland, where it meets the nominate subspecies. My observations confirm to a certain extent the findings of McLachlan and Liversidge, though I am of the opinion that two quite discrete racial groups of populations are involved.

Three races of the Kalahari Scrub Robin are found within our limits, as follows:

*Erythropygia pæna oriens* Clancey, 1957: Glen, Modder River, Orange Free State.

Western Orange Free State and adjacent southern Transvaal, westwards to the Vaal River, northern Cape Province, where it intergrades with the next race.

*Erythropygia pæna pæna* Smith.

South-West Africa in Great Namaqualand and south-eastern and

eastern Damaraland, Bechuanaland Protectorate, western Southern Rhodesia, western Transvaal and northern Cape Province.

*Erythropterygia pæna damarensis* Hartert.

North-western South-West Africa in central and northern Damaraland, Ovamboland and the Kaokoveld. Perhaps to parts of south-western Angola.

(h) **Eremomela icteropygialis icteropygialis** (Lafresnaye)

*Sylvietta icteropygialis* Lafresnaye, *Rev.Zool.*, 1839, p. 258: lower Orange River, north-western Cape Province.

The current systematic treatment of the populations of the Yellow-bellied Eremomela occurring in western South Africa is far from satisfactory.

Macdonald, *Contr.Orn.W.South Africa*, 1957, p. 136, records that the *Type* of *S.icteropygialis* is in the collection of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A., and that it has attached to it a label which, in the handwriting of Lafresnaye, has had the locality "des Elephants" changed to "d'Orange". Quite recently, Winterbottom, *vide Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club*, vol. 78, 7, 1958, pp. 132-133, took this species at Doornbaai, south of the Olifants River mouth, western Cape Province, and at Annisfontein, Richtersveld (see *Ostrich*, vol. xxx, 2, 1959, p. 61), while the Durban Museum collection contains two examples from Bladgrond, in Bushmanland, taken on 7 November, 1956. These recent records show that this eremomela occurs well south of the lower Orange River, and that the doubts expressed by workers as to the lower Orange River being acceptable as the type-locality of the nominotypical race are quite without any factual foundation. We also have further specimens of *E.i.icteropygialis* from areas to the south of the central Orange River valley: Kenhardt (1 specimen), Van Wyk's Vlei (2 specimens), while a single adult ♂ from the north bank of the Orange River, 5 miles north-west of Prieska, taken on 11 September, 1957, is close to *E.i.saturation* Ogilvie-Grant, 1910: Deelfontein, eastern Cape Province.

Study of the entire material of the Yellow-bellied Eremomela in the Durban Museum shows that north-western Cape birds (topotypical of *E.i.icteropygialis*) agree exactly in all characters with the populations of the Asbestos Mountains (topotypical of *E.i.perimacha* Oberholser, 1920: Asbestos Mountains, Griqualand West) (4 specimens) and the Kimberley district (5 specimens). Arising from this finding it is quite evident that the names *icteropygialis* and *perimacha* apply to one and the same racial group of



populations and are synonymous, and *E.i.perimacha* Oberholser, 1920, must now be sunk into the synonymy of *E.i.icteropygialis* (Lafresnaye), 1839. It is interesting to observe that where the name *perimacha* is used by workers it is seldom applied to a subspecies embracing Griqualand West, the type-locality, within its established range, which is usually given as the western Transvaal and Bechuanaland Protectorate (see Vincent, *Check List of the Birds of South Africa*, 1952, p. 82; McLachlan and Liversidge, *tom.cit.*, p. 318). In the event of the *E.i.perimacha* of these and some other authors being valid, it will require to be given a new name. Our material indicates a slight darkening of the upper-parts in the south-eastern populations, but *E.i.saturation* is a poorly differentiated subspecies at best. Winterbottom, *loc.cit.*, considered eastern Cape *E.i.saturation* to be the same as his Doornbaai specimen. Most of our Cape specimens are slightly worn, so that it is not possible to express an opinion here on the validity of *E.i.saturation* in the absence of strictly comparable material.

The northern limits of the range of *E.i.icteropygialis* are not easily determined on the basis of our material, but specimens from as far north as Windhoek, in South-West Africa, agree closely with it. Macdonald records that the ancient *Type* of *E.i.icteropygialis* was found by Mr. J. C. Greenway to correspond with a slightly less aged Andersson skin from Otjimbingwe. While such a comparison is worthless at the subspecies level in taxonomy, the finding in no way clashes with my conclusions. Otjimbingwe is about 60 miles north-west of Windhoek, the northern limit of the nominate race as determined on my material. From Windhoek northwards one finds rather different populations with the upper-parts distinctly paler and greyer olive, and the ventral surface clearer: the throat, breast and sides of the body purer white, and the flanks, abdomen, crissum and under tail-coverts paler yellow. These pale populations of northern South-West Africa are not generally recognised as being different to those of the southern half of the territory, but on the basis of material collected this year in different parts of South-West Africa I now consider that they should be. Sclater, *Systema Avium Aethiopicarum*, part ii, 1930, p. 537, recognised this form under the name *Eremomela damarensis* Sharpe, 1904: Damaraland (*Lectotype* from Elephant Vlei), which is unfortunately pre-occupied by the much earlier *Eremomela damarensis* Wahlberg, 1855: Oosop, Swakop River, Damaraland, a valid and little-known race of the Green *Eremomela* *Eremomela gregalis* (Smith). The pale northern South-West African populations of *E.icteropygialis* must

bear the name *E.i.sharpei* Reichenow, 1905: Windhoek (*vide Ornithologische Monatsberichte*, vol. xiii, 1905, p. 25). The range of *E.i.sharpei* extends from central Damaraland northwards to Ovamboland and the Kaokoveld, and according to Sclater, *tom.cit.*, parts of southern Angola.

We can conclude that the variation within the small warbler *E.icteropygialis* in the west of the South African sub-continent is simple and clinal in nature. This clinal variation can be conveniently expressed by the recognition of the following three racial groups of populations, ranging from the darkest in the south to the palest in the north: *E.i.saturationis*, *E.i.icteropygialis* (synonym *E.i.perimacha*) and *E.i.sharpei*. If the Bechuanaland populations are distinct they will require to be described as new, while *E.i.polioxantha* Sharpe represents the species in the northern and eastern Transvaal, Swaziland, northern Zululand, Portuguese East Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and further north beyond our limits in the east.

(i) ***Tchagra australis damarensis*** (Reichenow)

*Pomatorhynchus australis damarensis* Reichenow, *Ornithologische Monatsberichte*, vol. xxiii, 1915, p. 120: Windhoek, Damaraland, South-West Africa.

Sclater, *tom.cit.*, p. 625, gives the distribution of *T.a.damarensis* as "Damaraland and perhaps Griqualand West". Three specimens from Riverton (rail), north of Kimberley, northern Cape Province, collected in August, 1957, agree perfectly with Damaraland topotypes obtained this year. These specimens, along with others in the East London Museum collection, show that *T.a.damarensis* extends south and east to the lower valley of the Vaal River and the western Orange Free State. It almost certainly reaches the middle Orange River.

*T.a.damarensis* is greyer above than *T.a.australis* (Smith), 1836: north of Kurrichane, and less strongly buffish below. The differences are quite well-marked, and the races are not "scarcely distinguishable" as suggested by Sclater.

(j) ***Hirundo fuligula pretoriae*** (Roberts)

*Ptyonoprogne fuligula pretoriae* Roberts, *Annals of the Transvaal Museum*, vol. x, 3, 1922, p. 158: near Pretoria, Transvaal.

Roberts, *Birds of South Africa*, 1940, p. 209, gives the range of this dark race of the Rock Martin as "Pretoria and Drakensberg," while Vincent, *tom.cit.*, p. 89, gives "Transvaal". McLachlan

and Liversidge, *tom.cit.*, p. 269, enlarge the range to include western Portuguese East Africa.

*H.f.pretoriae* is the race of the south-east African highlands and peripheral areas, extending from East Griqualand and Pondoland (eastern Cape Province), Natal and Zululand, Swaziland and southern Sul do Save (Lebombo Mountains) to Basutoland, Orange Free State and the Transvaal.

*H.f.pretoriae* differs from *H.f.fuligula* Lichtenstein, 1842: Kaffirland, *i.e.*, eastern Cape Province, in having the under-parts more strongly washed with cinnamon and the flanks and abdominal surface generally darker. On the upper-parts *H.f.pretoriae* is considerably darker, particularly on the head-top (about Fuscous as against Hair Brown, *vide* Ridgway, *tom.cit.*, pl. xlvi).

*H.f.fuligula* seems to be restricted to the eastern Cape Province. It is actually an intermediate race between *H.f.pretoriae* and the western Cape populations generally believed to be the same as *H.f.anderssoni* (Sharpe and Wyatt), 1887: Dairip, probably near Otjimbingwe, Damaraland. It is extremely doubtful if the western Cape populations of this rock martin are really *H.f.anderssoni*, because toptotypical specimens collected this year at Windhoek and Okahandja and now in our collection are distinctly smaller than western Cape birds—wings ♂♀ 125-130.5 as against 132-135 mm., and have the upper-parts greyer and nearer Mouse Gray (pl. li) than Hair Brown (pl. xlvi). They also seem to be deeper vinaceous below, but as my Damaraland specimens are in very fresh plumage and the western Cape ones slightly worn, it is difficult to assess the value of this additional distinction on the basis of the Durban Museum material. The range usually accorded *H.f.anderssoni* by workers is from the southern and western Cape Province, northwards through South-West Africa to Mcçamedes in Angola. This is a most unusual distribution for a race of a polytypic species with several other component races in southern Africa.

(k) **Lamprotornis nitens phoenicopterus** Swainson

*Lamprotornis phoenicopterus* Swainson, *Animals in Menageries*, 1838, p. 360: Prieska, northern Cape Province.

Macdonald, *Contr.Orn.W.South Africa*, 1957, pp. 150-151, discusses once again the variation exhibited by this starling in southern Africa, maintaining that examples from the Orange River valley (topotypical of *L.n.phoenicopterus*) can be distinguished by their greener reflection from those of Damaraland, for which he uses the name *L.n.bispecularis* (Strickland), 1852: Damaraland.

While mentioning Stresemann's revision in the *Journal für Ornithologie* for 1925, Macdonald has chosen for some unknown reason to eschew the work of later authors, including the present writer, which shows conclusively that topotypical *L.n.phoenicopterus* and the birds of Damaraland are not racially distinguishable. Material collected this year in South-West Africa shows that no appreciable difference exists between the populations of Damaraland and those of the northern Cape Province. 4 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀ from near Windhoek, and 2 ♂♂, 1 ♀ from Okahandja, when compared in perfect even light with 3 ♂♂, 1 ♀ from Prieska, 1 ♂ from Kenhardt, and 1 ♂, 3 ♀♀ from Riverton (rail), north of Kimberley (all collected since 1957) reveal that only two specimens of the topotypical populations of *L.n.phoenicopterus* can be distinguished by greener reflections from Damaraland *L.n."bispecularis"*.

Study of samples of other South African populations of this glossy starling shows that birds with greenish and bluish reflections occur naturally in the same population in many parts of the range of *L.n.phoenicopterus*, and birds every bit as blue as the bluest from Damaraland can be found in coastal Natal, Swaziland, eastern Transvaal and Sul do Save, southern Portuguese East Africa. The bluest bird in our extensive collection is a single ♂ from Manhiça, in Sul do Save!

There is no statistically significant difference in size between topotypical *L.n.phoenicopterus* and the Damaraland populations: wings of 6 Damaraland ♂♂ 130-137.5, 3 ♀♀ 126-132, 5 topotypical *L.n.phoenicopterus* ♂♂ 129-137.5, 4 ♀♀ 125.5-129 mm.

I conclude that it is not possible to recognise a putatively bluer race of this glossy starling from Damaraland under the name *L.n.bispecularis*, as advocated by Macdonald, and believe that the decision of the S.A.O.S. List Committee (*vide* Report, *Ostrich*, vol. xxix, 1, 1958, p. 43) to recognise only two races from southern Africa (*L.n.phoenicopterus* and *L.n.culminator* (Clancey and Holliday), 1951: Addo Bush, near Port Elizabeth, eastern Cape Province) is indisputably correct.

## 2. FIVE NEW RACES OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN BIRDS

New collections and revisionary work on polytypic species of South African birds continue to reveal hitherto unrecognised races for which names are required. The formal descriptions of five recently determined subspecies are given below: