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Type: male adult collected at Efulen, Cameroons, by G. L. Bates on 16th December, 1902. In the British Museum (Natural History). Reg. No. 1903.10.26.45.

Distribution: South-eastern Nigeria to Gaboon and the middle Congo at Lukolela.

Note: nominate *nitens* ranging from Sierra Leone and Portuguese Guinea to Lagos is a small bird extremely like the form *microrhynchus* of the upper Congo. In fact, on comparing *nitens* and *microrhynchus* the only difference seems to be that *microrhynchus* has a slightly slenderer bill than *nitens*. Between them, as Chapin has noted in his *Bds. Belgian Congo*, vol. iv, there is a larger bird with a decidedly larger bill for which a name is required.

Taxonomic Notes on African Pipits, with the description of a new race of *Anthus similis*

by MR. C. M. N. WHITE

Received 12th August, 1956

The following notes have been prepared in conjunction with a list of the African Pipits for the forthcoming volume of *Peter's Check List of Birds*.

(I) *Anthus similis*

The following races require comment:

(a) *A.s.hararensis* Neumann

Populations from Eritrea to northern Tanganyika show some variation but not, in my view, sufficient to justify the recognition of either *A.s. neumannianus* Hartert and Collin or *A.s.chyuluensis* van Someren. Birds from Eritrea are exceptionally greyish above and may with more material deserve subspecific status. Otherwise this area is inhabited by populations with a streaky upperside of dark feather centres and light brown feather edges. Specimens from northern Tanganyika and from the Yavello area of south Ethiopia exhibit a stronger contrast of light and dark pattern above than others from Ethiopia and Kenya.

(b) *Anthus similis hallae* subsp.nov.

Description: Rather smaller than *A.s.hararensis* and easily separable in colour; bill 16.5–18.5 mm. against 17.5–19 mm. and wing 86–97 against 89–106 mm. Upperside light greyish not brownish or rusty as in *hararensis* and *nyassae* and with less pronounced streaking. Underside whitish in contrast to the rich tawny of *hararensis*.

Type: Adult male collected at Lake Karange, Ankole, Uganda, by T. V. Fox, on 13th December, 1910. In British Museum (Nat. Hist.) Reg. No. 1923.8.7.2494.

Distribution: Eastern edge of Belgian Congo from Lakes Albert and Edward to Kivu and adjacent parts of Uganda to Entebbe.

Note.—Chapin has already commented on the possibility of this race being separable. The large series of *A.s.hararensis* now in the British Museum leaves no doubt that the Congo race stands rather clearly apart.

(c) *A.s.nyassae* Neumann

There is much individual variation in a large series of this race; freshly moulted birds are very rusty above, and strongly vinous below. Comparatively little wear alters the upperside to a browner tinge and makes the

abdomen white. I have compared specimens of *A.s.schoutedeni* Chapin from the middle Congo and find them inseparable from *nyassae* in a similar state of wear. I cannot find any good ground for separating birds from the middle Congo and Angola from those of Nyasaland and south Tanganyika and would unite all as *A.s.nyassae*.

(d) *A.s.bannermani* Bates

This is in my opinion a race of *A.similis* and I have failed to separate *A.s.chapini* Grote of the Cameroons from others from Sierra Leone.

(e) *A.s.leucocraspedon* Reichenow

There is a cline of increasing pallor through Little Namaqualand and South West Africa to the north-west of the latter territory. *A.s.leucocraspedon* described from Windhuk is rather whiter below and less streaked on the breast than the South African form *nicholsoni*. A series from Erongo is also paler above. Clancey has recently separated these paler birds as *A.s.palliditectus*, described from the Kaokoveld. But if it is desired to name these birds as well as to recognize *leucocraspedon* as an intermediate, it may well be too fine a division.

(f) There is a Long-billed Pipit, unsexed, in the British Museum, collected at Jos, Northern Nigeria on 20th September, 1951, by R. E. Sharland. It is intermediate in colour between *A.s.bannermani* and *A.s.hararensis*, closest to the former but with less heavy streaking on the breast, and paler edges to the feathers of the head and mantle. Dr. Vaurie has kindly compared it with specimens of *A.s.asbenaicus* and found it quite distinct, *asbenaicus* being a pale sandy form. It is probable that it represents a new race but further specimens are needed.

I have examined all the other races except the recently proposed *A.s.petricolus* Clancey believed to represent a dark population on the Basutoland mountains. It is to be noted that there appears to be a quite sharp break between *nicholsoni* and *nyassae*, and no intergradation along approximately the line of the Zambesi valley has yet been demonstrated.

(II) *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

1. Racial variation in east, central and southern Africa can only be defined in terms of very broad subspecific divisions, owing to the tremendous amount of local variation which is irregular, broken and repetitive. After examining a large amount of material in the British Museum, Transvaal Museum, National Museum, Bulawayo, some on loan from the Congo Museum, Tervuren, and others in my own collection, I conclude that there is a cline from the richest coloured birds in Ethiopia to the palest in west Angola. *A.n.cinnamomeus* is, of course, the earliest available name for any of these populations, and is based on Ethiopian birds. From Somaliland and Kenya to the Zambesi the populations are as a rule lighter and less richly coloured but the difference is not absolutely clear cut. A number of birds from Kenya are as dark as Ethiopian birds whilst some light birds occur in Ethiopia. Moreover pockets of dark birds occur sporadically well south of Ethiopia, e.g. in the mountains along the eastern edge of the Belgian Congo and in southern Tanganyika, and in north Nyasaland and adjacent Northern Rhodesia. I have concluded that it is more satisfactory not to separate any other races than *cinnamomeus* in this area; *lacuum* Meinertzhagen described from Naivasha in Kenya lies in an area where many dark birds occur but is the earliest available name of the

racés commonly recognized if they are to be separated from *cinnamomeus*. However as I shall show below *latistriatus* Jackson is really an aberrant bird of the same species and is in fact the earliest available name if the East African race is to be kept distinct from *cinnamomeus*. Of other proposed races it can be said that *annae* Meinertzhagen from British Somaliland can be matched in Tanganyika and in western Northern Rhodesia by similar pale birds; *lichenya* Vincent from south Nyasaland is based on a worn and dirty specimen; *spurium* Clancey is quite like many Nyasaland and Tanganyika birds. In the south of the range there are very wide belts of intergradation with *bocagii* and *rufuloides*. One other race must be mentioned, *katangae* Chapin. After examining the type and another from the type locality I can see no reason to keep it separate either.

I distinguish *cinnamomeus* as now defined by its well marked streaking above as compared with *rufuloides* and by this and its darker colour as compared with *bocagii*. The upper side is too variable in colour to be very reliable. Many birds in Southern Rhodesia and the south of Northern Rhodesia are like *cinnamomeus* and others like *rufuloides*; in Barotseland many are like *bocagii*.

A. latistriatus is a very dark bird collected in Kavirondo and is, I consider, a melanism of this species. The tail shows in shadowy outline on the second outermost feather the typical white wedge of Richard's Pipit, much suffused with grey. There is no justification for using the name as Chapin has for the dark birds of the highlands of the east Belgian Congo. In fact these dark birds are very like Ethiopian birds and occur sporadically further south as already noted.

2. *A. n. lwenarum* White represents a very well marked race ranging from Mwinilunga to Balovale in Northern Rhodesia. The dark centres of the mantle are only dappled, not sharply defined; the second outer tail feather is dark with only a little light at the tip, whilst the outer tail feather has the normal white area replaced by smoky buff. In view of the constancy of the tail pattern of Richard's Pipit, this might be thought to be a specific pattern. But my own field experience convinces me that this is a Richard's Pipit. Moreover, birds from Kasaji in the south-west Belgian Congo link it to East African birds for they have light second outermost tail feathers but suffused with smoky buff. They have been called *katangae*, but Dr. Schouteden has kindly lent the type of *katangae* which is indistinguishable from many East African birds. Examination of a long series of East African birds shows that there is a sporadic tendency for the second outermost tail feather to lose its white pattern there, so that *lwenarum* merely represents in this the dominance of what is a rare character elsewhere.

3. In Africa south of the Zambezi three races can be recognized. *A. n. rufuloides* in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia is less patterned above than *cinnamomeus*; in Southern Rhodesia and the Transvaal birds occur with the well-marked streaking above found in East Africa but it is most satisfactory to treat the Zambezi as the boundary between the races.

A. n. bocagii is still paler, and below with a less streaked breast than *rufuloides*; it occurs from west Angola to South-West Africa, north Bechuanaland and Barotseland.

A.n.editus Vincent of the Basutoland mountains is a slightly darker bird than *rufuloides* and has a dark second outermost tail feather with a light buffy tip.

A.hoeschi is in my view a synonym of *bocagii*. Dr. Stresemann has lent the type for examination; it is a large bird with an upperside like *lwenarum* and a dark second outermost tail feather. Individually all its characters can be found in other examples from South-West Africa. Its lightly spotted breast agrees with *bocagii* and seems to preclude its being a stray *lwenarum*. The dark second outermost tail feather which appears sporadically in Richard's Pipit, and is stabilized in *lwenarum* seems to be associated for some curious reason with a rather large size, but it seems impossible to believe that there are two species involved. Thus *bocagii* males have wings 84–93 mm., *rufuloides* males 87–94 mm. and *lwenarum* 93–97 mm. To recapitulate, I recognize in this area.

A.n.cinnamomeus (Synonyms *annae*, *lacuum*, *lichenya*, *latistriatus*, *spurium* and *katangae*).

A.n.lwenarum.

A.n.rufuloides.

A.n.editus.

A.n.bocagii (syn. *hoeschi*).

The proposed treatment of racial variation in the eastern and southern African populations of this pipit is admittedly rather drastic, but when variation is so irregular and inconstant that numerous specimens could not be assigned to a racial identification except by reference to the label, it is, in my view, quite out of keeping with a modern biological approach to taxonomy to load the nomenclature with additional subspecific names.

(iii) *Anthus lineiventris*

I have examined a large series of this pipit from all parts of its range without detecting any constant geographical variation. I do not therefore consider that *A.l.stygium* Clancey can be maintained.

(iv) There are in the British Museum four hitherto unrecorded African pipits of considerable interest. Three of these are Richard's pipits taken on 18th October, 1940, 1st November, 1904, and 1st March, 1905, at Lake Chad by Boyd Alexander. The measurements of these birds are ♂ wing 96, tarsus 29; ♀♀ wing 92, 92, tarsus 28, 29. They are clearly winter migrants of one of the northern Palaearctic races, *richardi*, *centralasice* or *dauricus*. Since the validity of these races is in doubt and it is in any case impossible to name migrants satisfactorily, it is convenient to call them *A.novaeseelandiae richardi*.

A fourth specimen, a male, was also collected by Boyd Alexander on 18th October, 1904, at Lake Chad. This has been identified by Mrs. Hall, who has been working on Asiatic pipits, as *A.godlewskii*,* a species which breeds in Mongolia and has not before been recorded in Europe or Africa. It seems probable that it was caught up with the migrant Richard's pipits. It has a wing of 95 mm., tarsus 25, bill 18, tail 68, hind claw 14 mm. Its short tarsus, the different pattern of the second outermost tail feather and finer bill distinguish it from the Richard's pipits. In *A.godlewskii* the first primary is commonly longer or equal in length to the second, and the fact that in this specimen it is 4 mm. shorter raised some doubt on its identification; however, examination of all the specimens of this species in the

British Museum shows that several other autumn species have similar first primaries, and it may be that the feather is not quite fully grown although no sheath is visible.

I am indebted to Mrs. Hall and Captain Grant for help whilst studying these pipits; to the Congo Museum, Tervuren and Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, for the loan of specimens from the Belgian Congo and Cameroons, and to Dr. Stresemann for the loan of the type of *A.hoeschi*.

*This form has been considered a race of *A.campestris* but it is the opinion of Dr. Vaurie, with which Mrs. Hall and I agree, that it is best considered as a monotypic species.

Taxonomic notes on Northern Rhodesia birds

by MR. C. M. N. WHITE

Received 15th August, 1956

The following miscellaneous points have arisen during studies required for a forthcoming edition of the *Check List of the Birds of Northern Rhodesia*.

1. *Caprimulgus natalensis* Smith

This nightjar has a very patchy range in many parts of its distribution and the differences between races suggest that some local populations exhibit irregular variation rather than well-defined subspeciation. The difference between birds from Natal and Zululand (*natalensis*) and many from Uganda, the Sudan and Nigeria (*chadensis*) is very slight; birds from the south and south-west Belgian Congo are also difficult to distinguish from *natalensis*. Birds from near Luwingu in Northern Rhodesia have been called *C.n.mpasa* and a series examined certainly is rather greyer than most *natalensis* and *chadensis*. The type of *fulviventris* is unlike any birds from adjacent parts of the Belgian Congo in its bright colouration. Birds from the Caprivi strip have been called *C.n.carpi* and differ most from other races in their plainer upperside due to reduction of bold patterning; they are also pale and greyish. A single bird from Balovale is as plain and finely marked as *carpi* but much redder above. There is evidently a widely distributed type of plumage corresponding with *natalensis* and *chadensis* which can be separated with difficulty if at all; also a number of divergent populations more obviously different to which no ranges can be assigned. I doubt if at this stage such isolated populations can properly be regarded as subspecies. Certainly far more material is needed to enable any clear pattern of geographical variation to be defined. Until this is done I would be inclined only to accept *natalensis*, *gabonensis* and *accrae* as races.

2. *Campethera abingoni* (Smith)

Two points require comment. The difference between *C.a.vibrator* Clancey and the nominate race. There is no doubt that some birds from the Transvaal north to eastern Tanganyika do exhibit the characters claimed for this race; if they are considered sufficiently well marked the race should therefore be called *C.a.suahelica* (Reichenow), the type locality of which is Dar-es-Salaam. I personally regard woodpeckers as unsatisfactory for fine splitting owing to their great individual variation.