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Taxonomic notes on some African buntings, weavers and waxbills

by C. M. N. WHITE

Received 19th February, 1967

These notes deal primarily with material recently examined in the Cape Town Museum and the National Museum, Bulawayo to both of which I take the opportunity to express my thanks for facilities enjoyed. I have added references to a few other points so that these notes will also serve as an addendum to my *Check List* (1963) of the families concerned.

1 *Emberiza tahapisi nivenorum*.

Fringillaria tahapisi nivenorum Winterbottom, 1964, Cimbebasia, No. 9, p. 73. Otjivasandu. Paler and more yellowish-rufous than the nominate, especially below. This appears a valid form. Kaokoveld, South West Africa.

2 *Ploceus bicolor albidigularis* Ripley & Heinrich, 1966, Postilla, No. 95, p. 26. Calulo, Cuanza Sul, Angola appears to me to be a synonym of *amaurocephalus* which appears normally to have grey fringes to the throat.

3 *Ploceus ocularis tenuirostris* Traylor, 1964, Bull. B.O.C. 84, p. 83. Sepopa, Ngamiland. This form supposedly differs from *crocatus* in its more slender bill. The difference in measurements is less than one millimetre and more material is needed to show whether it is worth while recognising a separate form in northern Ngamiland north to the Chobe mouth.

4 *Ploceus olivaceiceps vicarius* Clancey & Lawson, 1966, Durban Mus. Nov. 8, p. 36. Panda, Sul do Save, Mozambique. Male differs from the nominate in having a paler yellow head top which extends down mid-mantle and the rump is dark lemon. An example examined bears out the characters of this apparently isolated population of the species.

5 *Pseudonigrita arnaudi iringae* Ripley & Heinrich, 1966, Postilla, No. 96, p. 43. 15 miles north east of Iringa. It is unfortunate that this form is only known from the type locality, in Tanzania. Its characters indicate that is somewhat intermediate between the two very distinct forms *arnaudi* and *dorsalis*, being small like the latter but with the black tail of the former; the back darker than the nominate with dusky edges to the feathers of the mantle, and the crown ashy, not whitish. It appears to be a valid form.

6 *Passer iagoensis* (Gould).

The earliest name for this species is *Passer motitensis* with reference *Pyrgita motitensis* Smith, 1836, Rep. Exped. Explor. C. Africa, p. 50, Kuruman.

7 *Passer iagoensis subsolanus* Clancey, 1964, Durban Mus. Nov. 7, p. 138. Syringa, Matabeleland. Material examined does not support the separation of this form from *motitensis* (Smith).

8 *Petronia superciliaris rufitergum* Clancey, 1964, Durban Mus. Nov. 7, p. 136. Kabompo, Zambia. Birds from Zambia are rather darker and warmer than those from south of the Zambezi. The clinal variation was commented on by White and Moreau in 1958, *Bull. B.O.C.* 78, p. 162, where reasons for not subdividing the species were given.

9 *Pytilia melba clanceyi* Wolters, 1963, J. Orn., p. 186. Wau, southern Sudan, appears to be based upon a population intermediate between *citerior* Strickland and *soudanensis* (Sharpe). The extent to which separate status should be given to intergrading populations in this species is a matter of opinion.

10 *Estrilda erythronotos soligena* Clancey, 1964, Durban Mus. Nov. 7, p. 139. Otjimassu, South West Africa. Good series examined does not support the validity of this form.

11 *Lagonosticta rufopicta* (Fraser)

In 1963 in the *Check List I* treated *plumbaria* Clancey, from Ngamiland as a synonym of *nitidula*. I have now examined the material in the National Museum, Bulawayo. Birds from Ngamiland north to the southern Barotse province in Zambia are slightly greyer and less brown above than *nitidula* (Hartlaub), slightly paler below and lacking any fawn wash on the abdomen. It is recognisable though not strongly differentiated.

12 *Spermestes cucullatus tessellatus* Clancey, 1964, Occas. Pap. nat. Mus. S. Rhod. 4 (27 B), p. 28. Natal. I cannot separate this form from *scutatus* (Heuglin).

A recently described African Swift

by C. M. N. WHITE

Received 8th November, 1965

Friedmann in *Contributions to Science*, no. 83, December 8th, 1964 has described *Apus pallidus kapnodes* as a new subspecies from Mt. Maroto, Uganda. It is said to resemble *somaticus* (Clarke) but to be darker and slightly larger. In fact it is evident that Friedmann has redescribed *Apus niansae* (Reichenow). The diagnosis and measurements quoted make this quite clear. When Friedmann states that *niansae* examined by him are larger than *kapnodes* with wing over 170 mm. it is apparent that these are *Apus barbatus roehli* Reichenow, and were misidentified as *niansae* which in turn led to the naming of *kapnodes*. I am grateful to Dr. Friedmann for lending a specimen of *A. p. kapnodes* to the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) and to Mrs. B. P. Hall for examining it and confirming these conclusions.

Apparent zoogeographical dispersal patterns in two avian families

by C. J. O. HARRISON

(continued from page 56)

2. ESTRILDIDAE

This family has undergone several different taxonomic rearrangements and reappraisals during recent years. Delacour (1943), Wolters (1957) and Steiner (1960) have all proposed new arrangements. Delacour lumped species together to form fewer and larger genera, while the others tended to restore earlier subdivisions. The fact that the species within this family are relatively easy to keep in captivity, coupled with a lack of useful morphological characters for subdivision within the family of relatively similar species has led to a study of their comparative ethology, behavioural characters being used in the study of taxonomic relationship. Morris (1958)