

(d) *Cossypha natalensis garguensis* Mearns, 1913: Mt. Gargues, Kenya Colony.

Smaller and paler than its allies, *C. n. intensa* and *C. n. hylophona*.

Range: Known only from Mt. Gargues (Uruggess), Mathews Range, north of the Guaso Nyiro, Kenya Colony.

(6) THE SOUTH AFRICAN RACES OF THE
BLUE-WAXBILL *Estrilda (Uræginthus) angolensis* (Linnæus)

Roberts, "Birds of South Africa," 1940, p. 357, recognises three races of *Estrilda (Uræginthus) angolensis* (Linnaeus) from the South African sub-continent, namely, *E. (U.) a. angolensis*, *E. (U.) a. niassensis* (Reichenow), and *E. (U.) a. damarensis* (Reichenow). Sclater, in the earlier "Systema Avium Æthiopicarum," ii, 1930, p. 805, admits only two subspecies as occurring within South African limits. Both Roberts and Sclater have declined to give recognition to the race described from Natal by Zedlitz, "Journal für Ornithologie," vol. lix, 1911, p. 607, as *Uræginthus bengalus natalensis*.

I have recently examined all the material of this species preserved in the collections of the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria, and the Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg, and find that Natal birds are darker than *E. (U.) a. niassensis* in series and are fully deserving of recognition as an additional South African race. I propose to distinguish four geographical races from the sub-continent as here listed:

(a) *Estrilda (Uræginthus) angolensis angolensis* (Linnæus).

Fringilla angolensis Linnæus, "Systema Naturæ," 10th edition, 1758; p. 182: Angola.

Description: ♂ adult. Forehead, crown, nape and mantle pale greyish brown; rump and upper tail-coverts greenish azure; lores, superciliary stripes, ear-coverts, malar regions, throat, breast and flanks pale greenish azure; abdomen and under tail-coverts pale buff; axillaries and under wing-coverts pale buff; wings greyish brown; tail dull bluish, rectrices rather paler on outer webs. ♀ adult. As ♂ but duller ventrally, the blue colouration just never so intense.

Measurements: Wing ♂♀ 50-55 mm.

Material examined: Eight specimens in the Transvaal Museum: Angola, 1; Caprivi Strip, 3; Ngamiland, 2; central Kalahari, 2.

Range: Angola (Loanda to Huilla) eastwards to the western parts of Northern Rhodesia, Caprivi Strip, Ngamiland, Kalahari, and extreme western Southern Rhodesia.

Note: White and Winterbottom, "Check List of the Birds of Northern Rhodesia," 1949, p. 132, place all Northern Rhodesian populations as *E. (U.) a. niassensis*, but Roberts, *loc. cit.*, implies that they are *E. (U.) a. angolensis*, which he asserts ranges as far to the south-east as the Transvaal.

(b) **Estrilda (Uræginthus) angolensis damarensis** (Reichenow).

Uræginthus bengalus damarensis Reichenow, "Die Vögel Afrikas," iii, 1904, p. 209: Damaraland.

Description: Similar to *E. (U.) a. angolensis* but much paler dorsally and with the blue colouration of the breast and flanks generally lighter.

Material examined: Three specimens in the Transvaal Museum: Ovamboland, 3.

Range: Damaraland and Ovamboland, South-West Africa.

Note: Sclater, *loc. cit.*, places Ngamiland birds as *E. (U.) a. damarensis*, but this would not appear to be correct.

(c) **Estrilda (Uræginthus) angolensis niassensis** (Reichenow).

Uræginthus bengalus niassensis Reichenow, "Mitteilungen aus dem Zoologischen Museum in Berlin," v, 1911, p. 228: Songea, east of Lake Nyasa.

Description: Slightly darker and redder on upper-parts and wings than the nominate race.

Material examined: Thirty-eight specimens in the collections of the Transvaal and Natal Museums: Tanganyika Territory, 1; Nyasaland, 4; Northern Rhodesia, 3; Southern Rhodesia, 4; Transvaal, 22; north-eastern Zululand, 4.

Range: Tanganyika Territory, Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia (except in the extreme west), ? Katanga, Southern Rhodesia (except in the extreme west), Portuguese East Africa, Transvaal, and north-eastern Zululand.

(d) **Estrilda (Uræginthus) angolensis natalensis** (Zedlitz).

Uræginthus bengalus natalensis Zedlitz, "Journal für Ornithologie," lix, 1911, p. 607: Natal.

Description: In fresh plumage noticeably darker, less reddish, on upper-parts and wings, and darker on the tail than *E. (U.) a. niassensis*; blue colouration deeper in shade, less suffused with greenish. Slightly larger in size.

Material examined: Twenty-two specimens in the collections of the Transvaal and Natal Museums: Upper Natal (Weenen), 9; Natal Midlands (Umgeni River), 9; Swaziland, 4.

Range: The southernmost extremities of the species' range, namely, Natal and Zululand (not in the north-eastern parts where it merges into *E. (U.) a. niassensis*), Swaziland, ? and the southern Transvaal.

Note: Zedlitz, *loc. cit.*, who has clearly defined the salient features of the race, gives no exact localities from which he had material for comparison. The name is given to the birds of Natal and the Transvaal, but, as has been shown above, Transvaal birds are referable to *E. (U.) a. niassensis*. The validity of the size character is not substantiated by the adequate material from Natal now available, as here shown: Natal ♂♀ wing 52-58; Nyasaland, Transvaal, etc., ♂♀ 50-56.5 mm.

The fresh autumn specimens from Natal used in this study are extremely uniform, but the breeding material is variable and inconstant—presumably the result of exposure to strong actinic action and abrasion connected with breeding activity.

NOTES ON SOUTH AFRICAN ASILIDÆ (DIPTERA)

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The present paper is divided into two sections:

- I. Description of new species.
- II. New generic name.

Thanks are due to Mr. E. C. Chubb, the former Director of the Durban Museum and Art Gallery, Durban, Natal, South Africa, for the privilege of studying the interesting collection in which these new species were found.

I. DESCRIPTION OF NEW SPECIES.

Dasygogoninae.

1. *Scylaticus xiphocerus*, new species.
2. *Damalis pulchella*, new species.

***Scylaticus xiphocerus*, new species.**

Total length, 11 mm. A black species with red spots on the thorax, red legs, and white pollinose bands on the abdomen. The wings have a brown area extending from the base to the tip of the anterior portion, while the posterior portion is hyaline.

Female: Head black, the face and occiput white pollinose. The antennæ are yellow, the 3rd segment dark brown above. Beard, palpal hairs and mystex black. Bristles of first 2 antennal segments, vertex and occiput brownish or reddish yellow. Thorax black with the humeri, posterior calli and scutellum reddish yellow. Pronotal hairs and bristles black. Mesonotum with pale hairs and bristles; pleura with mostly black hairs, but tufts of hairs in front of halteres white. Coxæ black with pale hairs. Legs reddish yellow; bases of first 4 femora and spot on hind femora black. Wings with anterior border blackish, posterior half hyaline. Basal area of costa, subcosta and portions of other veins yellow; rest of venation black. Halteres yellow. Abdomen black with pale, fine hairs. The incisures are pale with the second, fifth and sixth tergites white pollinose.

Holotype: Female. Mamathes, Basutoland, 12 January, 1947 (L. Bevis).

This new species differs from the others of the genus in possessing the colour pattern of the mesonotum and abdomen with the same design and hue—practically identical—with that of *Ancylorrhynchus zonalis* Bromley. It can be told from that species at a glance because the proboscis is slender and pointed, not thickened and recurved like a parrot's beak as in *Ancylorrhynchus*.

This species is named *xiphocerus*, an old name for *Ancylorrhynchus*.

Damalis pulchella, new species.

Total length, 6-11 mm. A stout reddish species with the wings yellowish at base, then a broad band of dark brown, leaving the tips, except the brown distal costal border, hyaline.

Male: Head pale yellowish pollinose with pale vestiture, except the palpal and antennal bristles which are black. Palpi, proboscis and antennæ, black. Most of the thorax yellow, the mesonotum with black central and side-spots. Scutellum yellow. Pleura black and yellow, white pollinose. Coxæ dark coloured but covered with white pollen. Legs yellow with black hairs and bristles. Tarsi reddish brown. Bases of wings and all of halteres yellow; median band and costal border dark brown. Apex of wings hyaline. Abdomen reddish yellow.

Female: Similar.

Holotype: Male, Manguzi River, near Maputa, Zululand, Nov.-Dec., 1945. (H. W. Bell Marley.)

Allotopotype: Female, same data.

Paratopotypes: Four, same data.

This pretty little species differs from *conspicua* Curran in having the abdomen reddish yellow instead of black, as well as the dark pattern of the basal half of the wing being of quite different design.

II. NEW GENERIC NAME.

In 1933, in "Descriptions of New Rhodesian Asilidæ," "Entomologists' Monthly Magazine," vol. lxix, p. 111, Dr. B. M. Hobby described the Asiline genus *Merogymnus* for his species *nigroflavipes*. In 1947, I described *Merogymnus minor* on p. 114 of the "Annals of the Durban Museum," vol. III, part 8.

Merogymnus is untenable as a generic name as it is pre-occupied in Pisces, having been used by Ogilby, "Proc. R. Soc. Queensland," 2, 1808, page 18.

I propose the name

Hobbyus, new genus.

(Genotype: *Hobbyus nigroflavipes* (Hobby))

in honour of Doctor B. M. Hobby of the Hope Department, Oxford University.

Hobbyus is characterized by the dilations of the costal border in the male wing, as in *Synolcus*, the long slender blade-like ovipositor in the female, also as in *Synolcus*. The nearest affinities of *Hobbyus*, however, are with the *Neolophonotus* groups, particularly *Dasophrys*, from which it may be distinguished by the general swelling of the face, and *Dysclytus*, from which it differs in having proclinate bristles on the occiput.

SHORT NOTES

The Possible Racial Significance of Differences in the Bill and Facial-Skin Colouration of South-Western Palæarctic and Ethiopian Populations of *Ardeola ibis* (Linnæus), 1758: Egypt.

South African *A. ibis*, of which I have examined many in the hand as specimens and thousands alive at very close quarters in Natal breeding colonies, show no marked seasonal change in the colouration of the bill and facial-skin. In the winter months the adult bird has the bill dull orange-yellow and the naked face pale yellowish. In the summer there is no palpable change, but occasionally individual birds show an intensification of the colour of the mandibles.

In the western Palearctic populations there is a salient change in the colouration of the bill and facial-skin occasioned by the onset of breeding activity. Witherby, in his authoritative "Handbook of British Birds," vol. iii, 1939, p. 144, shows that south-western Palearctic breeding birds have the bare face bright violet-pink, the bill, while similarly coloured, has the apex pale, and the coloured plate (2 figures) in the work mentioned above shows this seasonal colour change clearly. When in Egypt in June, 1943, I was able to visit nesting colonies of this species in the neighbourhood of Cairo, and at the time noticed that all birds had purplish pink bills and facial-skin.

On the basis of these observations it would appear that the resident populations of *A. ibis* in the South African sub-continent are subspecifically separable from those of the south-western Palearctic region, and should be accorded recognition under a different name. However, before taking the matter further it would seem advisable to have additional information on the colouration of the bill and facial-skin at different times of the year in birds from other sections of the Ethiopian region.

Judging by the details given in the lengthy synonymy of this species (under *Bubulcus lucidus*) by Sharpe, "Catalogue of Birds," vol. xxvi, 1898, pp. 213-215, no names available are strictly applicable to the South African populations. *Bubulcus ruficrista*(ta) Bonaparte, "Conspectus Avium," ii, 1855, p. 125, *ex Verreaux MSS.*, is of questionable status. Believed to be from either Zanzibar or Madagascar, the *Type*, at one time supposed to be in the Paris Museum, is now known to be lost (H. E. Wolters *in litt.*).

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On Certain Noteworthy Breeding Specimens of *Tchitrea viridis granti* Roberts Obtained in Central Natal.

Recorded details on the Paradise Flycatcher *Tchitrea viridis granti* Roberts give no indication that males of this form breed in other than adult plumage, and it would seem desirable to draw the attention of workers to three specimens obtained in recent months in the vicinity of Pietermaritzburg, Natal, and now in the collection of the Natal Museum. A specimen collected in the Town Bush on 18 November, 1950, was thought to be an adult female when taken but on dissection it proved to be a male with the testes measuring 9×6 mm. In all plumage details this bird in no way differs from a perfectly normal female, and the median rectrices measure 84 mm.

The specimen is in an excessively abraded condition, and in this respect is unlike a normal pair (♂♀) obtained at the stated locality on the same date. That this is no isolated occurrence is evident from the fact that a second and similar example was procured at Ashburton on 23 December, 1950. Unfortunately the testes of this specimen were not measured, but the female, which was also obtained, possessed a well-developed incubation spot. A further example of a breeding male *T. v. granti* in female-like dress was obtained at Ashburton on 18 February, 1951. The testes of this particular specimen measured 11×8 mm., and the median rectrices 86.5 mm.

The eyelid and bill colouration of the three specimens was in all instances of exactly the same shade of vivid violet-blue found in normal plumaged breeding adults. The birds do not appear to be in what is generally considered to be the first-year male dress—examples in this plumage resemble the adult in the richness of the body plumage and the lustrous nature of the feathers of the entire head, but have the tail much shorter, thus—116.5, 118.5 mm., as against 232, 258, 266, 276, 306 mm. in adult males. Dr. F. Salomonson of Copenhagen, the well-known authority on this group, informs me *in litt.* that he has no information on male *T. v. granti* breeding in other than adult dress.

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