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PART 6

MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS XVI

by

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1. ON THE VALIDITY AND RANGE OF *RHINOPOMASTUS* *CYANOMELAS INTERMEDIUS* ROBERTS, 1914.

The south-eastern African populations of the Scimitar-bill are currently placed as *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas schalowi* Neumann, 1900: Usandawe, Tanganyika Territory (see Sclater, *Systema Avium Aethiopicarum*, part i, 1924 (appendix), p. 855; Vincent, *Check List of the Birds of South Africa*, 1952, p. 45; and McLachlan and Liversidge, *Roberts' Birds of South Africa*, 1957, p. 224). In the *Annals of the Transvaal Museum*, vol. iv, 1914, p. 171, Roberts separated the populations of the south-eastern parts of South Africa from *R.c.schalowi* on the basis of alleged differences in the amount of white in the tail and the length of the rectrices, introducing for such populations the name *R.c.intermedius* Roberts, 1914: Koedoes River, Zoutspansberg district, northern Transvaal. In the *Birds of South Africa*, 1940, p. 172, the same author gives the range of his *R.c.intermedius* as "Natal to the eastern Transvaal, thence north-westwards through Matabeleland and Northern Rhodesia."

Study of the material of this species in the collection of the Durban Museum shows that *R.c.intermedius* is a perfectly valid race, distinguishable from *R.c.schalowi* on the basis of rather smaller size and markedly shorter tail-length. In fully adult ♂♂ of *R.c.schalowi* the tails measure 172-188.5 (181.2) (7 measured) as against 146.5-

♂♂ of *M.f.minor* measure 94-100.5, ♀♀ 91, 93 mm. Northern Little Namaqualand birds may be *M.f.minor*, but no freshly moulted material from that region has been available for critical study. A ♂ from Steinkopf has a wing of 98, and a ♀ from Wallekraal a wing of 91 mm., but a ♂ from Nababeep, Springbok Division, is large, as in the nominotypical race (wing 102). All these specimens are in very worn dress.

I am grateful to Miss M. Courtenay-Latimer, Director of the East London Museum, for the loan of the useful series preserved in the collection of that institution.

4. THE SOUTH AFRICAN RACES OF THE STONECHAT *SAXICOLA TORQUATA* (LINNAEUS).

Vincent, *Check List of the Birds of South Africa*, 1952, p. 73, McLachlan and Liversidge, *Roberts' Birds of South Africa*, 1957, p. 307, and other recent workers admit two races of the Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* (Linnaeus) as occurring within South African limits. This subspecific arrangement of the populations is based on the original work of Sclater, *Ibis*, 1911, pp. 409-410, who demonstrated that in the males of the populations occurring in the western Cape Province the russet of the under-parts is more restricted to the breast than in the case of males of the populations of the eastern Cape Province, Natal and Zululand, etc., while the females of the two groups of populations were also shown to exhibit well-marked racial characters. Later revisers of the races of this species, notably Meinertzhagen, *Ibis*, 1922, p. 20-29, and Bowen, *Proc.Acad.Nat. Sci.Philad.*, vol.lxxxiii, 1931 (1932), pp. 7-9, have followed Sclater closely in their treatment of the South African populations. The two subspecies currently admitted as being found within South African sub-continental limits are *S.t.torquata* (Linnaeus), 1766: Cape of Good Hope, and *S.t.caffra* (Keyserling and Blasius), 1840: Uitenhage, eastern Cape Province.

A study of material preserved in the collections of the Durban and East London Museums revealed that many specimens from the south-western Cape (topotypical of *S.t.torquata*) were in no way distinguishable from others from the eastern Cape Province, Natal, Zululand, Swaziland and the Transvaal, and that the distinctive western populations to which the name *S.t.torquata* had been attached by Sclater occurred on the coastal dunes of the western coast of the Cape Province well to the north of the Cape of Good Hope. This preliminary study suggested that the *S.t.torquata* of Sclater and subsequent authors was probably an undescribed race, and that *S.t.torquata* (Linnaeus), 1766, described from the Cape of Good

Hope on a Brissonian reference, and *S.t.caffra* were synonymous. Miss M. Courtenay-Latimer, Director of the East London Museum, who first kindly drew my attention to this matter, has now named *S.t.torquata* auct., not of Linnaeus, *S.t.clanceyi* Latimer, and placed *S.t.caffra* in the synonymy of *S.t.torquata* (in press for *Bull.Brit. Orn.Club*, 1961). Further research based on pooled material assembled in the Durban Museum from the collections of the South African Museum (through Dr. J. M. Winterbottom), East London Museum, Durban Museum, Transvaal Museum (through Mr. O. P. M. Prozesky), National Museum of Southern Rhodesia (through Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin) and the Chicago Natural History Museum (through Mr. Melvin A. Traylor)—some 264 skins in all—confirms the re-arrangement of the western Cape Province populations mentioned above, and shows that four indigenous races of the Stonechat can be admitted to the South African list.

Geographical variation in the Stonechat affects the intensity and distribution of the russet colouration on the under-parts of the adult male, and the colouration of the ventral surface in the female. The exact breeding range of the species in sub-continental South Africa is still not adequately understood. In the Cape Province it breeds down to sea level, as it does in Natal and southern Zululand, but from about Lake St. Lucia northwards in the eastern tropical lowlands it is unknown as a breeding bird, and in the east of the sub-continent, the periphery of the breeding range seems to be located on the northward extension of the Drakensberg in the eastern Transvaal and on the eastern highlands of Southern Rhodesia. The species winters extensively in the lowlands of northern Zululand, eastern Swaziland and southern Portuguese East Africa.

The nomenclature, characters and ranges of the South African races of *S.torquata* now recognised as a result of this critical study are as hereunder detailed:

(a) ***Saxicola torquata torquata*** (Linnaeus)

Motacilla torquata Linnaeus, *Systema Naturæ*, 12th edition, 1, 1766, p. 328: Cape of Good Hope, i.e., Cape Province, South Africa. Here restricted to the Cape Flats.

Synonyms: *Pratincola caffra* Keyserling and Blasius, *Die Wirbelt.Europas*, 1840, p. 59: Uitenhage, eastern Cape Province; *Pratincola robusta* Tristram, *Ibis*, 1870, p. 497: Mysore! errore—Natal; *Pratincola torquata orientalis* Sclater, *Ibis*, 1911, p. 409: Umfolozi station, Zululand.

Adult male (fresh dress) with throat, head and upper-parts glossy black, the feathers variably edged with Dresden.

Brown (*vide* Ridgway, *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*, 1912, pl.xv). Under-parts, with the breast, sides of the body and flanks Argus Brown (pl.iii), each feather apically paler; lower breast, abdominal surface, crissum, under tail-coverts and caudad surfaces of the flanks white. *Adult male* (breeding) with throat, head and upper-parts from frons to lower back black with slight gloss, most of the brownish feather fringes having been lost through abrasion. Also more prominently white on the sides of the neck, rump and upper tail-coverts. On under-parts appearing rather darker, owing to the loss of the pale fringes of the Argus Brown feathers of the breast, sides of the body and flanks, and with the white of the lower median regions of the body and caudad surfaces of the flanks purer white, resulting in a more sharply contrasted ventral aspect.

Adult female. Upper-parts about Dresden Brown, the feathers with darker centres, imparting a streaked appearance. On the under-parts, throat Pinkish Buff (pl.xxix); breast, sides of the body and flanks about Clay Color (pl.xxix), the feather apices paler; lower breast, abdomen, crissum and under tail-coverts Pinkish Buff. Abrasion results in the streaking on the upper-parts becoming more prominent, and on the ventral surface the exposure of the dark bases to the feathers of the lower throat.

Measurements: Wings of 10 ♂♂ 70-74 (71.4), tails 50.5-55 (52.7), wings of 10 ♀♀ 65-69 (67.6), tails 48-52 (50.0) mm.

Material examined: 70. South-western Cape Province (topotypical), 18; southern and eastern Cape Province, 30; Natal, 14; Zululand, 1; Swaziland, 1; Transvaal, 5; Bechuanaland Protectorate (Gaberones), 1 (? migrant).

Type: None. Based on the "Gobe-mouche à collier du Cap du Bonne Espérance" of Brisson.

Range: From the winter rainfall area of the south-western Cape Province, and the coastal districts of the southern and eastern Cape, north-eastwards to Natal and Zululand (not breeding in the north-eastern littoral), western Swaziland, eastern Orange Free State, and the highveld of the Transvaal (specimens from Wakkerstroom, Lake Chrissie and Pretoria). In the south-western Cape, intergrades with *S.t.clanceyi* to the north of the Berg River.

(b) **Saxicola torquata clanceyi** Latimer

Saxicola torquata clanceyi Latimer, *Bull.Brit.Orn.Club*, vol. 81, 1961 (in press): Wallekraal, western Little Namaqualand, north-western Cape Province, South Africa.

Adult male (fresh dress) very similar to *S.t.torquata*, but with fringes to the feathers of the upper-parts rather more greyish. On the under-parts showing somewhat more white over the flanks, but otherwise not clearly separable. *Adult male* (breeding) markedly different owing to the greater expanse of white exhibited over the sides of the body from the neck to the flanks, the latter surfaces with no intrusive overlay of Argus Brown from the sides of the breast as in *S.t.torquata*. In *S.t.clanceyi* the Argus Brown on the ventral surface of breeding males terminates at points on the body about equal to or shorter than the apices of the primary coverts.

Adult female rather darker and usually greyer, less warm brown, on the upper-parts than *S.t.torquata*, the feather centres being blacker and the tops markedly grey (about Grayish Olive (pl.xlvi)). On the under-parts, throat whiter, and often showing quite a lot of the basal black to the feathers; sides of neck with prominent incipient white patches (usually absent or buffish coloured in *S.t.torquata*); breast and sides of body darker (about Sayal Brown (pl.xxix)), and with the lower breast, abdomen, crissum, under tail-coverts and caudad surfaces of the flanks white, not Pinkish Buff. Abrasion results in the dorsal feathering becoming darker and more uniformly blackish and the exposure of still more black over the lower throat, while the breast colouration yellows appreciably.

Measurements: Wings of 10 ♂♂ 68-73.5 (71.3), tails 50-55 (51.8), wings of 3 ♀♀ 68, 68.5, 72.5, tails 49.5, 51, 54 mm.

Material examined: 20. All from the coastal districts of Little Namaqualand from Alexander Bay south to about Strandfontein and Lamberts Bay. A single female from Muizenberg collected on 14 August, 1955, with organs only slightly enlarged, may have been a migrant from further north in the western Cape littoral. *S.t.torquata* \supseteq *S.t.clanceyi*, 7 (Clanwilliam; Citrusdal).

Type: In the collection of the East London Museum. Mus. Reg.No. 8291. Collected by E. Hayden.

Range: An ecological race of the coastal sand-dunes and adjacent areas of the north-western Cape Province, extending

from about the mouth of the Orange River (Alexander Bay) south to the country lying between the mouths of the Berg and Olifants Rivers.

Remarks: *S.t.clanceyi* is a noteworthy addition to the growing list of greyish or whitish coloured endemic races of birds apparently restricted to the white sand-dune/low rainfall/sea-fog region of the western Cape Province. *Certhilauda albescens codea* (Smith), *Certhilauda curvirostris falcirostris* Reichenow, *Erythropygia coryphæus cinerea* Macdonald and *Bradornis infuscatus infuscatus* (Smith) are other important elements of this restricted but highly characteristic avifauna.

(c) ***Saxicola torquata oreobates* Clancey**

Saxicola torquata oreobates Clancey, *Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol. iv, 17, 1956, p. 281: 40 miles east of Maseru on new mountain road, Basutoland.

Adult male (fresh dress) with rather redder and darker fringes to the feathers of the upper-parts (about Snuff Brown (pl.xxix)) than in *S.t.torquata*. On the under-parts, darker and more vinous over the breast, sides of the body and flanks, being slightly redder than Argus Brown, and showing rather less white over the lower median ventral surface; the white largely sullied with buff. *Adult male* (breeding) not seen.

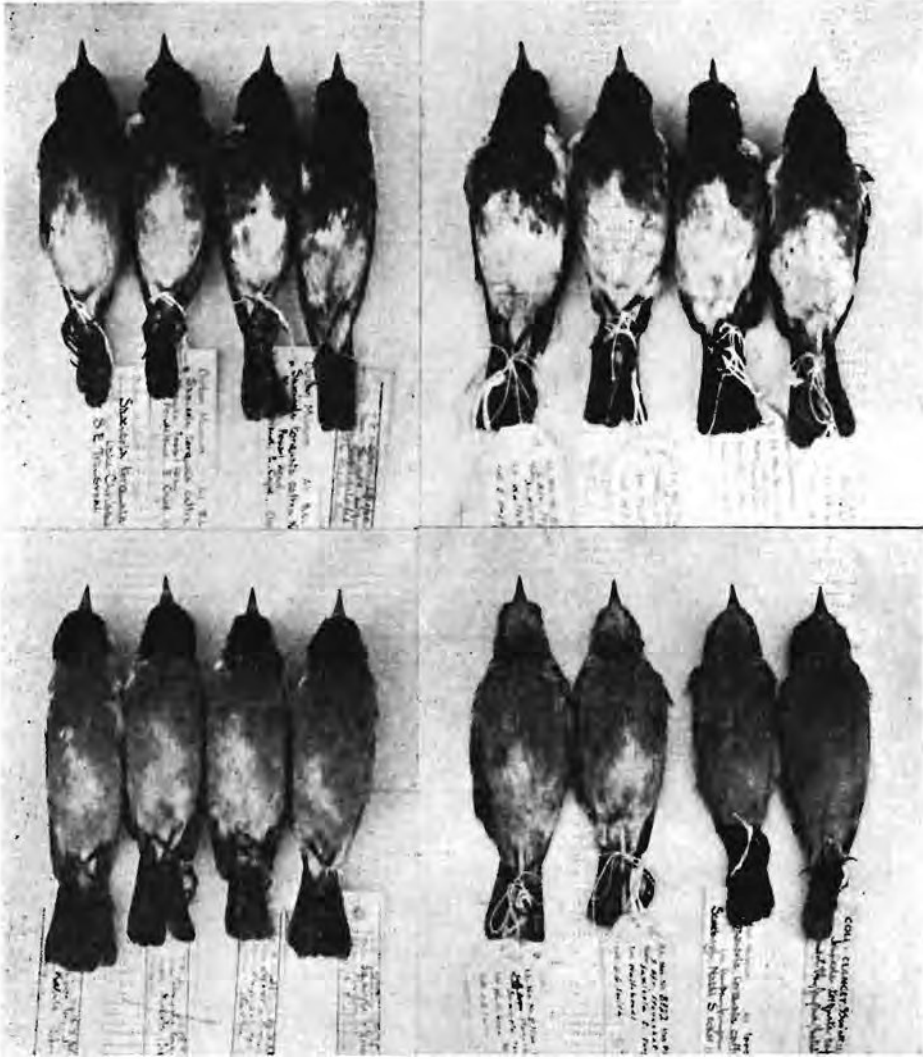
Adult female distinctly darker and rather redder above than *S.t.torquata* (about Snuff Brown as against Dresden Brown). On the under-parts more clearly distinguishable, having the throat Avellaneous (pl.xl) and the breast, sides of the body and flanks darker and redder (about Sayal Brown or slightly more vinaceous). Perhaps ranging larger in size than the nominotypical race, but all skins currently available are in moult or have the wing tips seriously eroded.

Measurements: Wings of 7 ♂♂ 70.5-76 (72.7), tails 50-55 (53.1), wings of 5 ♀♀ 69-71 (70.2), tails 50-54 (52.2) mm.

Material examined: 31. Basutoland, 11; eastern Southern Rhodesia, 8; Natal (wintering birds), 3; southern Portuguese East Africa, Swaziland, eastern Transvaal and northern Zululand (wintering birds), 9.

Type: In the Durban Museum. Collected by M. O. E. Baddeley.

Range: The highlands of Basutoland at altitudes of over 7,000 ft. a. s. l., and peripheral areas in the eastern Cape Province, Natal and the Orange Free State. Also occurring



SAXICOLA TORQUATA (Linnaeus)

Ventral views of three South African races of the Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* (Linnaeus). The strongly contrasted patterns in *S.t.torquata* and *S.t.clanceyi* and the virtual lack of contrast in *S.t.stonei* should be noted.

Upper left: *Saxicola torquata torquata* (Linnaeus). Adult ♂♂ from Swellendam, south-western Cape, and eastern Pondoland.

Upper right: *Saxicola torquata clanceyi* Latimer. Four specimens from the parotypical series taken at Port Nolloth, Wallekraal and Strandfontein, western Cape Province.

Lower left: *Saxicola torquata stonei* Bowen. Adult ♂♂ from the Caprivi Strip, northern Transvaal and northern Zululand (wintering bird).

Lower right: (*Left pair*) *Saxicola torquata clanceyi* Latimer. Two ♀♀ from the type-locality. (*Right pair*) *Saxicola torquata torquata* (Linnaeus). Two ♀♀ from Natal.

(Photo: A. L. Bevis).

as a breeding form at high elevations in the eastern highlands of Southern Rhodesia (Melsetter; Inyanga). The Basutoland populations winter in Natal, Zululand, Swaziland, the eastern Transvaal (Hector Spruit) and southern Portuguese East Africa (Bela Vista, Maputo). The wintering grounds of the eastern Southern Rhodesian populations are not known.

(d) **Saxicola torquata stonei** Bowen

Saxicola torquata stonei Bowen, *Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philad.*, vol. lxxxiii, 1931 (1932), p. 8: Villa General Machado, Angola.

Adult male (fresh dress) with lighter coloured tips to the feathers of the upper-parts than in *S.t.torquata*. On the under-parts, rather paler over the breast, sides of the body and flanks (about Sayal Brown as against Argus Brown), the paler apices of the feathers lighter, and with the lower breast, abdomen, crissum and under tail-coverts Pale Pinkish Buff (pl.xxix), not white. *Adult male* (breeding) similar on the upper-parts to *S.t.torquata*, but on the under-parts appearing lighter and more yellowish over the breast, body sides and flanks, and with a much less strongly contrasted effect over the lower median surface owing to the yellowish colouration of the flanks and the Pale Pinkish Buff or off-white of the lower breast and abdomen. Also tends to show rather more white on the sides of the neck and breast than *S.t.torquata* in worn plumage, and with usually more white to the bases of the rectrices. *Adult female* very similar to that of *S.t.torquata* and not always separable, but in contrast with the male averaging rather darker both above and below.

Measurements: Wings of 10 ♂♂ 67.5-73.5 (70.1), tails 49.5-56 (52.3), wings of 10 ♀♀ 65-70 (67.4), tails 47-53 (49.9) mm.

Material examined: 131. Angola, 8; Northern Rhodesia, 2; Southern Rhodesia, 55; Caprivi Strip and northern Bechuanaland Protectorate, 14; Transvaal, 18; Orange Free State and Basutoland (lowlands), 2; Cape Province (mainly eastern interior), 21; Swaziland and north-eastern Zululand, 8; southern Portuguese East Africa (wintering birds), 3.

Type: In the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, U.S.A. No. 89210. Collected by W. Wedgwood Bowen.

Range: The interior plateau of Angola from about the Cuanza River, the southern Belgian Congo (Katanga; Marungu), Mt. Kungwe, western Tanganyika Territory, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and northern Portuguese East Africa,

southwards through the Caprivi Strip, north-eastern South-West Africa, parts of northern and eastern Bechuanaland (including Ngamiland), and most of Southern Rhodesia (except high mountains of extreme eastern border country), to the western and northern Transvaal, northern and eastern Karoo regions of the Cape Province, western Orange Free State and the adjacent lowlands of Basutoland (visitor). Intergrades to the north of its range in Angola with *S.t.salax* (Verreaux), 1851: Gaboon. Wintering birds of this race have been examined from southern Portuguese East Africa (Beira district), Swaziland (Mbabane; Big Bend) and Pondoland (Port St. Johns).

Remarks: The character of smaller size given for this race in the original description is completely invalid, and the marked colour differences exhibited by the males of *S.t.stonei*, upon which the race is here resurrected, were not noticed by the author of the form.

The wings of ♂♂ topotypes of *S.t.stonei* measure 70, 70, 70, 71.5, 3 ♀♀ 67, 68.5, 69 mm. Bowen, in the original description, gives the wings of ♂♂ as 67-68.5, ♀♀ 66, 69 mm.

A single male of *S.t.stonei* from Camabatela, Angola, is distinctly darker over the breast than others from further to the south and south-east, while a female from the same locality is also deeper coloured below, darker above, and shows as much black over the lower throat as does the female of *S.t.clanceyi*. Further material from that northern locality in Angola should be studied if possible.

There is some local variation in *S.t.stonei*: northern Bechuanaland/Caprivi Strip males tend to show broader white basal bands to the tails, and are often abdominally whiter than other examples from within the range of the taxon; eastern Bechuanaland and western Matabeleland males are often paler and more yellowish than Angola topotypes.

Saxicola torquata salax (Verreaux and Verreaux)

Pratincola salax J. and E. Verreaux, *Rev.Mag.Zool.*; (2), vol.iii, 1851, p. 307: Gaboon.

Adult male rather similar to *S.t.clanceyi*, as defined above, but with the reddish brown of the breast slightly paler (Amber Brown (pl.iii)) and rather more restricted to the breast in the form of a transverse band some 10 mm. deep at its central point, with little or no extension downwards on to the sides of the body as in *S.t.clanceyi* and *S.t.torquata*, and, where

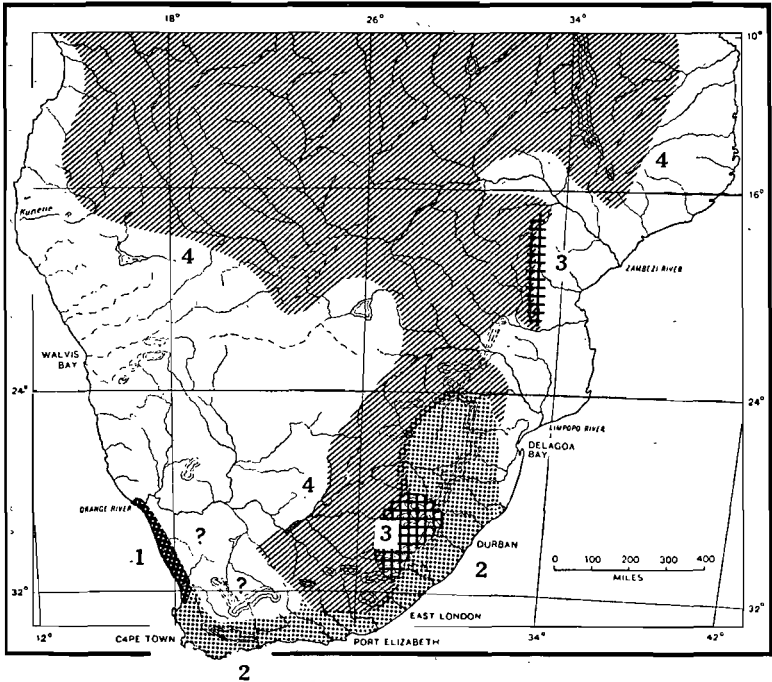
present, filamentous. Similar to *S.t.axillaris* (Shelley), of the East African highlands, but smaller in size. *Female* rather similar on the upper-parts to that of *S.t.clanceyi*, but markedly different on the under-parts, showing still more basal black to the feathers of the throat, and with the tips of the same feathers buffish and not white; usually exhibiting still more white over the lower breast, abdomen, crissum, flanks and under tail-coverts, and with the Clay Color of the ventral surface more restricted to the breast. A small-sized race with a rather shorter bill than in any of the indigenous South African forms.

Measurements: Wings of 3 ♂♂ 65, 65.5, 66, tails 48, 48, 48.5, wings of 2 ♀♀ 65, 66, tails 44, 49.5 mm.

Type: In the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, U.S.A.

Range: From the grasslands of the Cameroons, the Gabon and Moyen Congo, southwards to the mouth of the Congo R., and adjacent northern Angola (Congo district and Cuanza Norte, and east in the Congo to the Bateke Plateau, Bolobo, and the lower Kasai R.), south of which it intergrades with *S.t.stonei*, the resulting intergrades often resembling *S.t.promiscua* Hartert, 1922: Uluguru Mts., eastern Tanganyika Territory (Melvin A. Traylor, *in litt.*). Presumed to range occasionally as a non-breeding visitor to south-central Africa, as two specimens resembling this race have been taken within South African sub-continental limits (20 miles W. of the Victoria Falls (de Schauensee) (see Bowen, *loc.cit.*); Grassland, Felixburg, Southern Rhodesia, 8 September, 1957 (collection of National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, Reg. No.33926).

Remarks: The single adult ♂ from Felixburg, Southern Rhodesia, resembling this race in colouration is larger than the Gabon topotypes measured by me (wing 71.5, tail 53.5 mm.), and it is quite conceivable that it is simply a mutant of *S.t.stonei* with the characters of the contiguous *S.t.salax*. However, Stonechats are inveterate wanderers in the non-breeding season, and there is nothing inherently unlikely in the occurrence of *S.t.salax* within South African limits as a non-breeding visitor.]



MAP I

SAXICOLA TORQUATA (Linnaeus)

Map showing the approximate breeding ranges of four indigenous South African races of the Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* (Linnaeus).

1. *Saxicola torquata clanceyi* Latimer.
2. *Saxicola torquata torquata* (Linnaeus).
3. *Saxicola torquata oreobates* Clancey (in two segregated populations).
4. *Saxicola torquata stonei* Bowen.