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MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS XLVII

by

P. A. CLANCEY

(Director, Durban Museum, Durban)

THE CHARACTERS AND RANGE LIMITS OF THE NOMINATE SUBSPECIES OF *INDICATOR MINOR* STEPHENS

The northern limits of range and the diagnostic characters of the nominate subspecies of the Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor* Stephens, 1815: Swartkops R., near Uitenhage, southern Cape, seem never to have been accurately determined. Most authors, including the world expert on the Indicatoridae, Dr. H. Friedmann, of the United States, in *U.S.Natn.Mus.Bull.*, No. 208, 1955, pp. 219-222, take the range of *I.m.minor* as far north as northern Angola, southern Zaïre, Kenya and Somalia, in so doing placing *I.m.erlangeri* Zedlitz, 1913: Afgoi, south-western Somalia, *I.m.teitensis* Neumann, 1900: Teita, south-eastern Kenya, and *I.m.albigularis* (Roberts), 1922: Woodbush Forest Reserve, Tzaneen, Transvaal, in the synonymy of the nominate subspecies. In my *Catalogue Birds South African Sub-Region*, 1965, p. 377, I showed that birds with clearer grey breasts and whiter throats and bellies than in *I.m.minor* occur as far south as the lower Zambesi R. valley and Sofala district in Mozambique. In Suppl. No. 2 to my *Catalogue* (*Durban Mus.Novit.*, vol. ix, 12, 1972, p. 182), I took this matter

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further by restricting the range of nominate *minor* in the main to south-eastern Africa south of the middle and lower Limpopo R., at the same time resuscitating *I.m.albigularis* for the whiter ventralled elements occurring immediately to the north of *I.m.minor* as far north as Angola, Zambia, Malawi, northern Mozambique and southern Tanzania, in so doing following the lead of Roberts, *Birds of South Africa*, 1940, p. 181. A critical re-examination of this projected arrangement recently carried out in the Durban Museum, utilizing a series of well over two hundred and fifty specimens, shows that *I.m.albigularis*, based on a specimen from the Transvaal Drakensberg showing an incipient shift towards *I.m.teitensis* of the eastern coastal lowlands, is a synonym of *I.m.minor*, the range of which taxon does not seem to extend north of the Limpopo R. *I.m.minor* merges in the north-west with a large-sized undescribed race and in the east with *I.m.teitensis*, the range of which must be extended well south of Malawi as given by Peters, *Check-List Birds of the World*, vol. vi, 1948, p. 67, to the coastal lowlands of southern Mozambique and north-eastern Zululand.

Variation in the Lesser Honeyguide is highly conservative, affecting the relative greyiness or brownness of the pileum, neck and upper back, the colour of the feather edgings to the dorsal surfaces, which varies from shades of green to citrine, the whiteness or greyiness of the ventrum, development of the mystacial streaks, and general size. The sexes are markedly disparate in size, females being smaller than males, which character is, however, often masked by the fact that the moult is on occasion protracted, some birds in a state of arrested moult still retaining juvenal remiges when commencing to breed (in their second year). Subspecifically significant variation is only clearly shown by fully adult birds in newly assumed dress. As in the case of many African woodpeckers, barbets and other species of honeyguides, the plumage of *I.minor* greys rapidly through insolation and abrasion, with the result that much material available in museum collections is of limited worth in subspecies analysis. The species is also much subject to wax and vegetable staining, and subtle grease contamination in the case of old cabinet material.

The discrete populations of the Lesser Honeyguide ranging from Rhodesia and northern Botswana, north to Angola, southern Zaïre and much of Zambia require a name, and may be known as

Indicator minor valens, subsp.nov.

Type: ♂, adult. Salujinga, Mwinilunga district, North-Western Province, Zambia, at 10° 58' S., 24° 07' E. 6 September, 1962. Col-

lected for C. W. Benson. In the collection of the National Museum of Rhodesia, N.M. Reg. No. 49 712.

Diagnosis: Differs from nominate *I. minor* in having in the adult the dorsal surfaces of the head, neck and upper back dark greyish green, less olivaceous or brownish, in newly moulted condition (Citrine-Drab (Ridgway, 1912), pl. xl, *versus* Buffy Olive, pl. xxx); mantle and scapulars somewhat more heavily striated with dusky, the striae edged laterally with greyish green rather than citrine (Light Yellowish Olive (pl. xxx), against Citrine (pl. iv)). Below, markedly whiter over the fore-throat; breast and sides clearer grey, less dusky or olivaceous tinged, and medio-ventral plane purer and more extensively white. In wings, edging to coverts and remiges paler, less golden, citrine. Size ranging larger (see Table I).

Compared with *I. m. riggenbachi*, dorsal surfaces of head, neck and upper back colder and greyer; mantle with striae edged with greyish green rather than citrine. Below, whiter over fore-throat and belly, and breast, sides and flanks paler and greyer. Wings with paler citrine edging to coverts and remiges. Size larger.

On comparison with *I. m. teitensis*, dorsal surfaces of head, neck and upper back are seen as darker and greyer; rest of upper-parts more heavily striated with dusky, the feather fringes green rather than citrine. Wings with coverts and remiges edged paler citrine. Over the venter, breast, sides and flanks darker and purer grey, less olivaceous. Size larger.

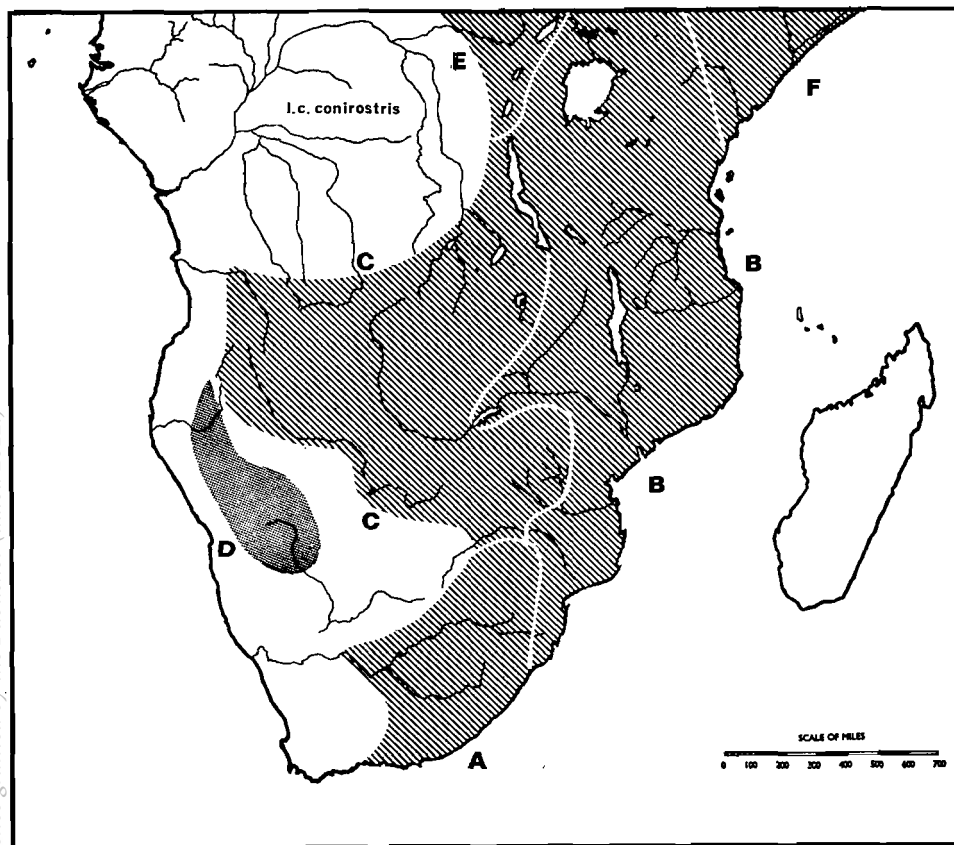
Measurements: Wings of 10 ♂♂ 95+ - 100 (97,2), SD 1,86, SE 0,59, culmens from base 12 - 14 (12,7), SD 0,67, SE 0,21, tails 58,5 - 66 (61,4), SD 2,55, SE 0,81, wings of 12 ♀♀ 88 - 93,5 (90,2), SD 1,75, SE 0,51, culmens 11 - 12,5 (11,7), SD 0,40, SE 0,12, tails 52,5 - 58,5 (54,7), SD 1,72, SE 0,50mm.

Material examined: 70 (Angola: Cassai (Lunda); Zambia: Salujinga, Mwinilunga, Kabompo Boma, Kabompo R., Mwekera (Kitwe), Chilanga, Shangombo, etc.; northern Botswana: Maun, Shankwa, Kasane, Sukwane (Makgadikgadi), Francistown; Rhodesia: Kazungula, Nampini Ranch, 72,5km W. of Victoria Falls, Bulawayo and district, Matopos, Plumtree, Tuli R., Sentinel Ranch, and localities east across the north of the plateau to Umtali).

Range: Angola (except arid south-west), Shaba, Zaïre, Zambia (except extreme north-east and east), north-eastern South West Africa, Caprivi Strip, northern Botswana, and western and northern miombo districts of Rhodesia. A specimen from west of Messina, Limpopo R. valley, northern Transvaal, approaches this form in the ventral characters.

Measurements of the Type: Wing (flattened) 96,5, culmen from base 12, tarsus 15+, tail 59mm.

Remarks: Chapin, *Birds Belgian Congo*, part 2, 1939, pp. 541 - 543, was clearly uncertain that the population occurring in southern and south-eastern Zaïre was correctly assigned to *I.m.minor*. His comments on p. 542 on specimens examined from Lubumbashi (Elizabethville) and Marungu clearly apply to *I.m.valens* as here described.



MAP I

Sketch-map of the southern half of Ethiopian Africa showing the mosaic of *Indicator minor* subspecies and of *I.c.conirostris*.

- A. *Indicator minor minor* Stephens
- B. *Indicator minor teitensis* Neumann
- C. *Indicator minor valens* Clancey
- D. *Indicator minor damarensis* (Roberts)
- E. *Indicator minor riggenbachi* Zedlitz
- F. *Indicator minor erlangeri* Zedlitz
- Indicator conirostris conirostris* (Cassin)

As a result of this study it has been possible to define reasonably adequate characters and ranges for the six subspecies which appear to warrant recognition from the regions of Africa lying to the east and south of the Lower Guinea Forest.

Excluding the parapatric *I. conirostris* (Cassin), the populations of *I. minor* lying to the south of the range of *I. m. diadematus* Rüppell, 1837: forested parts of Ethiopia, of the eastern Sudan, Ethiopia and adjacent Somalia, may be arranged in the following subspecies, the characters and ranges of which will stand as follows:

Indicator minor minor Stephens, 1815: Swartkops R., near Uitenhage, southern Cape.

Synonym: Melignotheres minor albigularis Roberts, 1922.

Dorsal surface of head, neck and upper back saturated Buffy Olive; rest of dorsum dusky, the feathers broadly edged with dark greenish citrine. Dark mystacial streaks sharply defined in both sexes. Below, pale greyish olivaceous, darker over the breast, sides and flanks. Wings of ♂♂ 89+ - 97, of ♀♀ 84 - 89mm.

Range: Southern (west as far as George and Knysna), eastern and northern Cape, the Orange Free State, the lowlands of Lesotho, Natal and western Zululand, Swaziland, and the Transvaal.

Note: *M. m. albigularis* Roberts, 1922: Woodbush Forest Reserve, Tzaneen, Transvaal, is based on an adult ♂ taken by F. Vaughan-Kirby on 3 December, 1907, and, despite the date, is in very freshly moulted condition. It is slightly whiter over the chin and belly than most other Transvaal highveld specimens examined, and appears to be an individual variant of *I. m. minor* showing an incipient shift towards the whiter throated and bellied *I. m. teitensis*, which ranges immediately to the east of the Transvaal Drakensberg to reach north-eastern Zululand. The wing of the *Type* of *albigularis* measures 93mm, and the specimen is No. 3826 in the Transvaal Museum collection.

Indicator minor teitensis Neumann, 1900: Teita, south-eastern Kenya.

Moderately well differentiated from *I. m. minor* in being much paler greyish or yellowish olive over the dorsal head, neck and upper back; rest of upper-parts paler and yellower citrine, and dark streaking on the whole less intense. Below, whiter over fore-throat and belly, and breast, sides and flanks lighter greyish olive. Size similar to *I. m. minor*.

Range: North-eastern coastal Zululand, Mozambique, eastern Transvaal lowveld, south-eastern, eastern and north-eastern Rhodesia, Malawi, eastern and north-eastern Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya (except arid east), and Uganda (outside the forests).

Indicator minor valens Clancey, 1977: Salujinga, Mwinilunga district, north-western Zambia.

Darker and greyer, less yellowish olive, over the dorsal head, neck and upper back than *I.m.teitensis*; rest of upper-parts darker and more heavily streaked, the feather edgings greener. Below, whiter over throat and belly, and breast, sides and flanks clearer grey. Size larger. Wings of ♂♂ 95 - 100, ♀♀ 88 - 93,5mm.

Range: Angola (except arid south-west), Shaba, Zaïre, Zambia (except extreme north-east and east), north-eastern South West Africa, Caprivi Strip, northern Botswana, and western and miombo districts of northern Rhodesia.

Indicator minor damarensis (Roberts), 1928: "Quickborn" Farm, Okahandja, South West Africa.

Paler, more buffy, olive-brown over the head, neck and upper back than *I.m.minor*; fringing to rest of dorsal feathering paler citrine. Face generally more nondescript, with the mystacial streaks vestigial in both sexes. Below, similar to nominate *minor*, but generally not quite so dark over the breast and lateral surfaces and appearing more uniform. Size similar.

Range: Central and northern South West Africa, north to about Leba, in the escarpment region of Huila, Angola.

Indicator minor riggenbachi Zedlitz, 1915: Tibati, southern Adamawa, Cameroun.

Dorsally very similar to *I.m.teitensis*, but averaging browner over the dorsal head, neck and upper-back. Differs taxonomically in being darker, more dusky olivaceous, over the breast, sides and flanks, and less white over the fore-throat and belly. Size as in *teitensis*.

Range: North of the range of *I.c.conirostris* from the Adamawa region of Cameroun, east to Darfur and Bahr el Ghazal, Sudan, south in the east to the Uele R. and north-eastern Haut-Zaïre and adjacent western Uganda (in extreme east, south at least to L. Kivu, and the Kigezi region of south-western Uganda); also Rwanda (Kirinda).

Remarks: Specimens from the eastern edge of the Ituri Forest are recorded as being more saturated than the norm of *riggenbachi*, approaching *I.c.conirostris* in the darkness of their ventral surfaces.

Indicator minor erlangeri Zedlitz, 1913: Afgoi, south-western Somalia.

Generally paler than *I.m.teitensis*. Below, more extensively white over the fore-throat and belly, and with the breast, sides and flanks lighter. Size ranging smaller in both sexes.

Range: Southern and south-western Somalia, west to the mid- and lower reaches of the Tana R. and adjacent arid areas of eastern Kenya.

TABLE I

Population	N	Range mm	Av. mm	SD mm	SE mm	CV mm
<i>Indicator minor minor</i>						
Cape and Natal	12♂♂	89 - 93	91,4	1,20	0,35	1,31
	12♀♀	84 - 87	85,6	0,83	0,24	0,97
Transvaal	10♂♂	90 - 97	91,9	2,18	0,69	2,37
	12♀♀	84,5-89	86,9	1,35	0,39	1,55
<i>Indicator minor teitensis</i>						
East Africa, Malawi,	10♂♂	91 - 94	92,8	1,32	0,42	1,42
Mozambique	10♀♀	85 - 88	86,5	1,05	0,33	1,21
<i>valens</i> \leq <i>teitensis</i>						
Rhodesia	28♂♂	91 - 96+	93,6	1,38	0,26	1,47
	18♀♀	85 - 90	87,7	1,53	0,36	1,74
<i>Indicator minor valens</i>						
Zambia, Botswana,	10♂♂	95 - 100	97,2	1,86	0,59	1,91
W. Rhodesia	12♀♀	88 - 93,5	90,2	1,75	0,51	1,94
<i>Indicator minor damarensis</i>						
South West Africa	8♂♂	90 - 96	92,8	1,69	0,60	1,82
	9♀♀	85,5 - 90	87,0	1,63	0,54	1,87
<i>Indicator minor riggenbachi</i>						
Uganda, N.W. Kenya	2♂♂	90,5, 94,5				
	1♀	86,5				

The wing-length variable in five eastern and southern African races of *Indicator minor*.

ON *ANDROPADUS HYPOXANTHUS* SHARPE, 1876: TETE, MOZAMBIQUE, AND ALLIED TAXA

Hall and Moreau, *Atlas of Speciation in African Passerine Birds*, 1970, p. 63, map 72, were the first authors to suggest that the various subspecies currently grouped in *Andropadus importunus* (Vieillot) might belong to two parapatric species. This question was pursued in a report by the present author in *Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol. x, 12, 1975, pp. 159 - 163, when the populations of the present bulbul to the south of the Zambesi R. were grouped in *A. importunus* (Vieillot), 1818: Knysna, southern Cape, and those to the north of the river in *Andropadus insularis* (Hartlaub), 1861: Zanzibar, Tanzania. Hall