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### MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS

#### XV

*by*

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1. A NEW RACE OF SHELLEY'S FRANCOLIN *FRANCOLINUS SHELLEYI* OGILVIE-GRANT FROM NATAL AND ZULULAND.

The austral populations of Shelley's Francolin are characterized as a new subspecies to science under the following name:

***Francolinus shelleyi sequestris***, subsp. nov.

*Type*: ♂, adult. Albert Falls, near Pietermaritzburg, Natal. 25 August, 1951. Collected by Robin Guy. In the collection of the Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg. Reg. No. 2308.

*Diagnosis*: Similar to *F.s.shelleyi* Ogilvie-Grant, 1890: Umfuli River, Southern Rhodesia, but rather darker, less greyish, and more boldly marked with Fuscous-Black (*vide* Ridgway, *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*, 1912, pl. xlvi) on the upper-parts. More clearly differentiated on the ventral surface, being more densely mottled with Fuscous-Black over the lower breast and upper abdomen, and with the breast, body-sides and flanks rather darker (Hazel (pl. xiv) as against Tawny (pl. xv)). Similar in size.

*Material examined*: *F.s.sequestris*, 6. *F.s.shelleyi* from Southern Rhodesia, 11.

[Price 5/- nett.]

*Range:* From southern Nyasaland (Shiré River valley), northern Portuguese East Africa and the lower Zambesi River valley, southwards through eastern Mashonaland, Southern Rhodesia, and the whole of southern Portuguese East Africa to the eastern Transvaal "lowveld", eastern Swaziland and north-eastern Zululand, where it meets and merges into the nominotypical race.

*Remarks:* The two paratypical specimens from Lengwe, southern Chikwawa district, southern Nyasaland, seem to have narrower black torques than in the other specimens of this new race which I have examined, but this may be due to the telescoping of the neck skin in preparation.

The more yellowish green upper-parts readily distinguish this new race. In the topotypical population (*i.e.*, that of southern Nyasaland) the greatly reduced wash of green over the sides of the body and flanks is an important character, but the austral populations of *T.q.quartus* do not show this feature to the same extent, and appear to approach nominate *T.quadricolor* in this respect.

The name of the new taxon is taken from the Latin *quartus*, the fourth, *i.e.*, the fourth race of the species.

## 9. THE CHARACTERS AND RANGES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN RACES OF *PRIONOPS RETZII* WAHLBERG

The characters and ranges accorded the two races of the Red-billed Helmet Shrike occurring in sub-continental South Africa (*P.r.retzii* Wahlberg, 1856: Okavango River, and *P.r.tricolor* Gray, 1864: Tete, Rivi River, southern Nyasaland) in the standard literature are contradictory and highly confused. Sclater, *loc.cit.*, 1930, p. 600, gives the South African range of *P.r.tricolor* as the "Zambesi valley, south to the Beira district". Roberts, *Birds of South Africa*, 1940, p. 310, Vincent, *loc.cit.*, 1952, p. 90, and McLachlan and Liversidge, *loc.cit.*, 1957, p. 391, all follow Sclater closely. On the other hand, Reichenow, *loc.cit.*, 1903, p. 536, long before Sclater, placed Rendall's Barberton and Ayres's Olifants River records under *P.r.tricolor*, in so doing extending the range of the race much further to the south-east than is admitted to be the case by later authors.

The difference separating *P.r.retzii* and *P.r.tricolor* is mainly one of size. In the nominate race of the elevated interior of the sub-continent the flattened wings of ♂♀ measure 130-142 mm., whereas in the race *P.r.tricolor* of the eastern tropical lowlands and middle and lower reaches of the Zambesi River valley the wings of adults measure 121-130 mm. in both sexes. Roberts, *loc.cit.*, gives the

wing-measurements of *P.r.tricolor* as 116-126 mm., but the only specimen examined by me which has the wing-length below 120 mm. is in full moult. Three adult ♂♀ of *P.r.graculinus* Cabanis, 1868: Mombasa, coastal Kenya Colony, in the Durban Museum collection have wings 120, 122, 124.5, while a single moulting sub-adult ♀ has a wing of 116.5 mm. It is generally claimed that *P.r.tricolor* is paler on the back than *P.r.retzii*. While this character can be appreciated in series of freshly moulted birds, the difference is at best very slight, and often extremely subtle. In fresh *P.r.tricolor* the mantle colour is about Mouse Gray (*vide* Ridgway, *loc.cit.*, 1912, pl. li), as against the darker Deep Mouse Gray/Hair Brown (pls. xlvi and li) of *P.r.retzii*, in which race there is also a marked tendency to have the rump rather blacker than the mantle.

Through the kind co-operation of the Directors of the following museums I have been able to gather together a reasonably comprehensive panel of material from southern Africa, which has enabled me to map out the ranges of the two races of *P.retzii* occurring within our limits: Transvaal Museum, Pretoria (through Mr. O. P. M. Prozesky), Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg, and the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia (through Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin).

The characters and ranges of the two South African races of *P.retzii* are as hereunder detailed:

(a) **Prionops retzii retzii** Wahlberg, 1856: Okavango River, north-eastern South-West Africa.

Whole head, nape and under-parts deep black with moderate bluish gloss; mantle and wing-coverts about Deep Mouse Gray/Hair Brown (pls. xlvi and li), blackening over the rump.

*Measurements:* Wings of 10 ♂♂ 130-137 (133.6), tails 94-99 (96.2), 10 ♀♀ wings 131.5-142 (134.8), tails 90-102 (96.7) mm.

*Material examined:* 45. Caprivi Strip (Impalila Island, 1 ♂, 1 ♂ sub-ad.). Northern Bechuanaland Protectorate (Tsotsoroga Pan, 1 ♂; Ngoma, Chobi River, 1 ♂, 1 ♀). Southern Rhodesia (Nampini, Zambesi R., 4 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀; 0-30 miles west of the Victoria Falls, 6 ♂♂, 5 ♀♀, 1 ♀ sub-ad.; Wankie, 2 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀, 1 juv.; Shangani River, 1 ♀ sub-ad.; Nyamandhlovu, 1 ♂; Tjolotjo, Gwaai Reserve, 1 ♀; 35 miles south of Bulawayo on old Gwanda road, 1 ♂; Selukwe, 3 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀; Matopos, 2 ♀♀; near Darwin, 1 o; 30 miles east of Chirundu, Zambesi River, 1 ♀; Sinoia, 1 ♀; Bonda River, Sabi Valley, 1 ♀; Fort Tuli, Tuli River, 1 ♀; Beit Bridge, 1 ♂ juv.—sub-ad. (race uncertain)).

*Range:* Northern South-West Africa in northern Ovamboland, eastwards to the Caprivi Strip, adjacent southern and south-eastern

Angola, Ngamiland and the northern and eastern districts of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, western and northern Transvaal, the plateau of Southern Rhodesia, and Northern Rhodesia from Livingstone, north to Senanga and Mazabuka (*vide* Benson and White, *Check List of the Birds of Northern Rhodesia*, 1957, p. 103). Also presumably in southern Barotseland, south-western Northern Rhodesia. Intergrades to the north of its stated range with *P.r.nigricans* (Neumann), 1899: Malanje, Angola.

*Remarks:* An adult ♀ collected by Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin, 14 miles west of the Victoria Falls on 19 August, 1956, resembles *P.r.nigricans* in the colouration of the mantle. The balance of the material examined from Nampini, the Victoria Falls, and points upstream from the Falls is, however, all typical of *P.r.retzii*, and it would seem inadvisable to admit *P.r.nigricans* to the South African list on the basis of what is in all probability merely the initial phase of a trend towards *P.r.nigricans* in the mid-Zambesi River Valley population of *P.r.retzii*.

(b) **Prionops retzii tricolor** Gray, 1864: Tete, Rivi River, southern Nyasaland.

Very similar to *P.r.retzii* but slightly paler on mantle in series (about Mouse Gray (pl. li)), and with the rump less blackish. Smaller in size.

*Measurements:* Wing of 10 ♂♂ 121-130 (126.2), tails 89-93 (91.2), 10 ♀♀ wings 122-129 (126.3), tails 88-96 (90.8) mm.

*Material examined:* 49. Nyasaland (Monkey Bay, 1 ♂; Malawe Hill, 1 ♀; Nyamatika Stream, Port Herald, 1 ♀; Masona Village, Port Herald, 1 ♂; Kanyimbe Village, Tangadzi, 1 ♀; Dzanje Stream, Tangadzi, 1 ♂ sub-ad.). Northern Rhodesia (Kalichero, Fort Jameson, 1 ♀). Tanganyika Territory (Lake Rukwa, 1 ♂, 1 ♀ (♂ with wing of 132.5 mm. and much larger bill than in topotypical *P.r.tricolor*)). Portuguese East Africa (Khama Colomo, 25 miles south of Maringue, 1 ♂; 18 miles west of Tambara Fort, 1 ♂ sub-ad.). Southern Rhodesia (30 miles east of Chirundu, Zambesi R., 2 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀, 2 ♂♂ sub-ad.; Mvurameshi, Urungwe, 2 ♀♀, 1 juv.; Magunje, Urungwe, 1 ♂; lower Pungwe River, 1 ♂; Chitza's, Sabi/Lundi confluence, 1 ♂, 1 ♀; Marumbene, Sabi-Lundi confluence, 1 juv.; 5 miles above Sabi-Lundi confluence, 1 ♂; Sabi Valley, 1 ♂; Fort Tuli, Tuli River, 1 ♂, 1 ♂ (intergrading population); Matopos, 3 ♂♂, 3 ♂♂, 1 ♀ sub-ad.; 1 juv. (intergrading population); Kavira Hot Springs, Wankie, 1 ♀ (migrant)). Eastern Transvaal (Game Farm "Malamala", Newington, 6 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀, 1 ♂ sub-ad.; Hector Spruit, 1 ♂, 1 ♀).

*Range:* Southern and eastern Tanganyika Territory (south from about Ugogo and the Pangani River), northern Portuguese East Africa, Nyasaland, and south-eastern Northern Rhodesia, southwards to southern Portuguese East Africa, eastern and south-eastern Mashonaland and southern Matabeleland, Southern Rhodesia, eastern Transvaal, eastern Swaziland and north-eastern Zululand (Makatini Flats). Extending up the Zambesi River valley to about the Kariba Lake. Intergrades with *P.r.retzii*, *P.r.nigricans* and *P.r.graculinus* wherever the ranges are in contact.

*Remarks:* Intergrading populations *P.r.retzii*  $\approx$  *P.r.tricolor* occur in Southern Rhodesia as far west as the Matopos (wings of 5 ♂♀ 125, 126, 127, 132, 135 mm.) and Fort Tuli (wings of 3 ♂♀ 127, 128, 130.5 mm). The single example of *P.r.tricolor* from Kavira Hot Springs, Wankie, is unusual, and may be due to some movement of populations out of the hot Zambesi River Valley in late summer. The specimen concerned was taken in February.

#### 10. ON THE CHARACTERS AND RANGE OF *ZOSTEROPS PALLIDA DESERTICOLA* REICHENOW

Vincent, *loc.cit.*, 1952, p. 99, gives the range of *Z.p.deserticola* Reichenow, 1905: lower Orange River, as Great Namaqualand, while Sclater, *loc.cit.*, 1930, p. 677, virtually restricts it to the type-locality, at the same time recording the nominate race of *Z.pallida* Swainson, 1838: Rustenburg, western Transvaal, from as far west as Little Namaqualand! Roberts, *loc.cit.*, 1940, p. 330, states that *Z.p.deserticola* occurs in South-West Africa, while McLachlan and Liversidge, *loc.cit.*, 1957, p. 418, give no range data for the taxon. Moreau, in his largely abortive attempt to revise the western Zosteropidae, treats *Z.pallida* (with which is apparently united *Z.p.deserticola*) as a monotypic species (*vide Bull. Brit.Mus. (Nat.Hist.)*, Zoology, vol. 4, No. 7, 1957).

On the basis of the very adequate freshly collected material in the Durban Museum, I find *Z.p.deserticola* to be moderately well differentiated from *Z.p.pallida* of the moister east on the basis of the paler, more yellowish or olive, less green or greyish green, upper-parts (about Dull Citrine (*vide* Ridgway, *loc.cit.*, 1912, pl. xvi), as against Yellowish Olive (pl. xxx). On the ventral surfaces, the two races are also readily separable, *Z.p.deserticola* being slightly brighter yellow over the throat, while the sides of the breast and body and the flanks are distinctly warmer and more buffy (about or slightly paler than Cinnamon-Buff (pl. xxix), as against a colour slightly warmer than Dark Olive-Buff (pl. xl) or Dark Olive-Buff/Buffy Brown). The white of the median ventral surface in *Z.p.*