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Part III

MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS

II

by

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(1) ON THE STATUS OF *TAURACO REICHENOWI* (FISCHER) AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE OTHER SOUTH AFRICAN FORMS OF THE GENUS *TAURACO* KLUK.

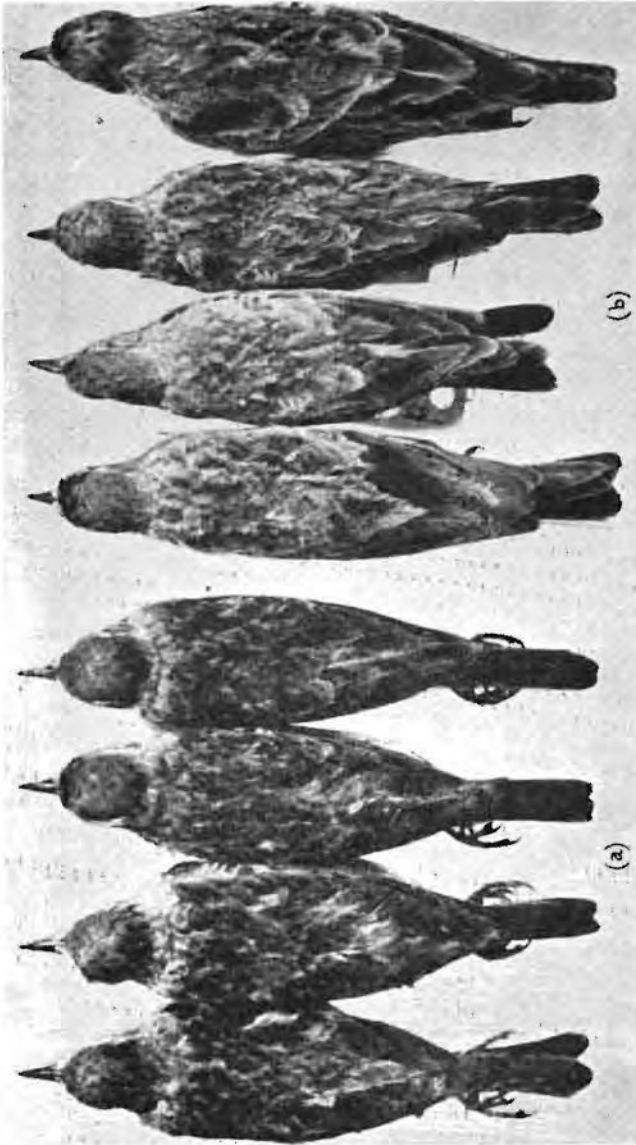
T. reichenowi (Fischer), described on material from the Nguru Mountains of eastern Tanganyika Territory, has from the date of its description in the 'Ornith. Centralb.,' 1880, p. 174, presented Ethiopian workers with a delicate taxonomic problem—a problem which has not in any way been simplified by the naming of closely similar "species" from neighbouring districts, *viz.*, *Corythaix cabanisi* Reichenow, 1883: Bagamoyo, and *Turacus hybridus* Reichenow, 1898: Ukami, 130 km. south-west of Bagamoyo, Tanganyika Territory. The now voluminous literature on the status of this form reveals a diversity of opinion as to the nature of the treatment the case warrants, ranging from its acceptance as a full species in earlier works, *e.g.*, Shelley,¹⁰ Sharpe,¹⁵ Reichenow,⁹ Sclater,¹⁴ and recently by Roberts;¹¹ its placing as a race of *T. livingstonii* (Gray) in recent revisions—*v.* Boetticher,¹² Chapin;³ and its more or less complete rejection, *vide* Vincent,¹⁷ Friedmann and Loveridge,⁵ Peters.⁸ For those who would reject it and at the same time retain

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(3) THE SUBSPECIFIC STATUS OF THE GREAT RIFT (KENYA COLONY) POPULATIONS OF *CALANDRELLA CINEREA* (GMELIN).

The resident populations of the Rufous-crowned Lark *Calandrella cinerea* (Gmelin) of the Great Rift region of Kenya Colony have for long presented a difficult racial problem. Sclater, in his authoritative 'Systema Avium Æthiopicarum,' ii, 1930, p.333, unites these populations with *C. c. anderssoni* (Tristram), 1869; Otjimbingue, S.W. Africa, stating that "Birds from Naivasha in western Kenya appear also to be identical (with *C. c. anderssoni*)," while Meinertzhagen, 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London,' vol.121, part I, May 1951, p. 97, places the disputed populations of western Kenya Colony (Rift Valley at Nakuru and Naivasha, and Nanyuki at the base of Mt. Kenya) as nominate *C. cinerea* (Gmelin), 1789; Cape of Good Hope, South Africa. Years before, Fischer, 'Journal für Ornithologie,' 1885 (April), p. 137, had placed examples from the Lake Naivasha district as *Megalophonus ruficeps* (Rüppell)—*Alauda ruficeps* Rüppell—described in 1840 from Simien Province in northern Abyssinia, but the name is pre-occupied by the *Alauda ruficeps* of Bechstein, 1795, and this form is now known as *C. c. erlangeri* (Neumann), 1906; Sheikh Mohamed, Webbi River, south-eastern Abyssinia, the range of which is, according to Meinertzhagen, 'Abyssinia south to the Somaliland and Kenya borders, and in western Eritrea.' Some workers recognise two races from Abyssinia, viz., *C. c. fuertesi* Friedmann, 1932, (nom. nov. for *A. ruficeps* Rüppell pre-occupied), of the mountainous regions, and restrict *C. c. erlangeri* to the south-eastern parts. Sir Charles Belcher, 'Ostrich,' vol. xi, 2, 1941, p. 84, has queried Sclater's placing of the western Kenya Colony populations as *C. c. anderssoni*, and recently Mr. J. G. Williams, resident Ornithologist of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, has had occasion to question the accuracy of these earlier findings.

Through Mr. Williams' interest in the systematic status of the *C. cinerea* populations of the Great Rift region, I have been able to compare a meticulously prepared series of fourteen specimens from western Kenya (South Kinangop, 10; Ngong, Nairobi, 1; 60 m. S.W. of Narok, 2; L. Naivasha, 1) with material from many parts of the South African sub-continent kindly placed at my disposal by the Directors of the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria, the Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg, and the Kaffrarian Museum, King William's Town. It is only too evident that the populations of the Great Rift region of Kenya Colony are not referable to any South African race as claimed by both Sclater and Meinertzhagen, *loc. cit.*



CALANDRELLA CINEREA (Gmelin)

- (a) *Calandrella cinerea williamsi* Clancey. Dorsal view of four paratypes.
 (b) *Calandrella cinerea cinerea* (Gmelin). Dorsal view of four specimens from Damaraland and the western Cape Province.

In the South African sub-continent three races of this lark appear to be recognisable—Roberts, 'Birds of South Africa,' 1940, p. 203, maintains only two, treating *C. c. spleniata* (Strickland), 1852; Damaraland, as a separate species—namely, the nominate in the Kalahari and desert-like regions to the west and south, an unnamed race in the higher interior regions of the Eastern Cape Province, Natal, and the southern Transvaal (Sclater, *loc. cit.*, recognises this form but places it under the *Megalophonus anderssoni* of Tristram, 1869: Otjimbingue, S.W. Africa, which seems incorrect, birds from Damaraland examined by me being inseparable from those of the western Cape), and *C. c. saturator* Reichenow, 1904: Konderland, N. of Lake Nyasa, in eastern Southern Rhodesia.

The nominate race is reasonably constant throughout its range and is characterized by the pale colouration of the rufous crown and breast patches and the yellowish sandy tone of the upper-parts. The *Alauda spleniata* of Strickland appears to be a name given to pallid variants of *C. c. cinerea*, although it should be noted that Roberts, 'Annals of the Transvaal Museum,' vol. xi, 1926, p. 224, claims that *spleniata* is a distinct species, but this seems somewhat improbable and the form is not generally recognised. If tenable, it can be no more than a pale race of *C. cinerea* restricted to the Namib. Vincent, 'Check List of the Birds of South Africa,' 1952, p. 59, follows Roberts' arrangement closely, maintaining *C. c. spleniata* as a valid race with a wide range—"Namib and western Kalahari to Damaraland." A decision clearly not founded on an independent examination of extensive series of study skins.

The populations breeding on the southern and eastern foothills of the Drakensberg Mountains in the Eastern Cape Province, Natal and the Transvaal are pronouncedly different to the nominate race of the west, the rufous crown and breast patches considerably darker and the upper-parts, wings and tail darker and redder. As I have already pointed out, Sclater, *loc. cit.*, recognises this race, but he has confused the issue by using for it a name (*M. anderssoni*) given to the birds of Damaraland. Birds from Damaraland are in no way separable from *C. c. cinerea*, of which *M. anderssoni* is a synonym. The distinctly darker and redder populations of the east appear to be without a name. Closely related to this innominate race is the other subspecies recognisable from within South African limits, namely, *C. c. saturator*, distinguishable by the still darker and redder dorsal colouration and the darker wings and tail. *C. c. saturator* ranges northwards from Mashonaland in Southern Rhodesia to Tanganyika Territory and southern Uganda.

When compared with material of the three races of *C. cinerea* occurring in the South African sub-continent, the series from the Great Rift region of Kenya Colony is seen to be quite different. The specimens lack completely the yellowish, desert-like, colouration of the upper-parts as found in *C. c. cinerea*, being decidedly greyer, with the feather centres more fully developed and the rufous crown and breast patches darker, as are the wings and tail. Compared with the innominate race of the eastern parts of the South African sub-continent and *C. c. saturator*, the birds of the Great Rift region of Kenya Colony appear colder and darker on the upper-parts—an impression no doubt intensified by the reduction in the amount of rufous in the dorsal colouration and the greater development of the dark centres of the mantle feathers. Further, the rufous crown and breast patches are not so dark as in these two races. There is no variation in size between the different races here considered.

It is difficult to account for the general relegation of the quite distinct populations of the Great Rift region of Kenya Colony to the race of the Kalahari and adjacent arid areas to the west and south. This race, as one would expect in such circumstances, is desert-coloured on the upper surfaces. The dorsally darker disputed populations of western Kenya Colony inhabit a very different type of country and at infinitely greater elevations (c. 5,000'—9,000' a.s.l.), and from the zoogeographical point of view have no very close association with the birds of south-western Africa, from which they are completely isolated by intrusive populations of the richly pigmented *C. c. saturator*. They most closely resemble the birds of the high interior of the Eastern Cape Province, Natal and the Transvaal—at present innominate—but they possess constant, well-defined characters of their own, and it would seem advisable to describe them as a new race to science.

***Calandrella cinerea williamsi*, subsp. nov.**

Type: ♂ adult. Semini's farm, south Kinangop, western Kenya Colony. Altitude 8,500' a.s.l. 29 December, 1951. Collected by J. G. Williams. In the collection of the Durban Museum.

Diagnosis: Differs from *C. c. cinerea* (Gmelin), 1789; Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, in having the upper-parts colder and greyer in colour and the dark feather centres more fully developed. It lacks entirely the yellowish sandy dorsal colouration which distinguishes *C. c. cinerea*. Rufous crown and breast patches slightly darker. From the populations of the Eastern Cape Province, Natal and the southern Transvaal the new race is separable by its rather greyer, less rufescent, upper-parts with more fully developed feather

centres, and darker wings and tail. Rufous crown and breast patches rather paler. *C. c. saturatior* Reichenow, 1904; Kondeland, N. of Lake Nyasa, is markedly redder on upper-parts than *C. c. williamsi*, and the rufous crown and breast patches are darker. There is no difference in size.

Measurements of the Type: Wing (flattened) 97, culmen from base 15, tarsus 21.5, tail 65 mm.

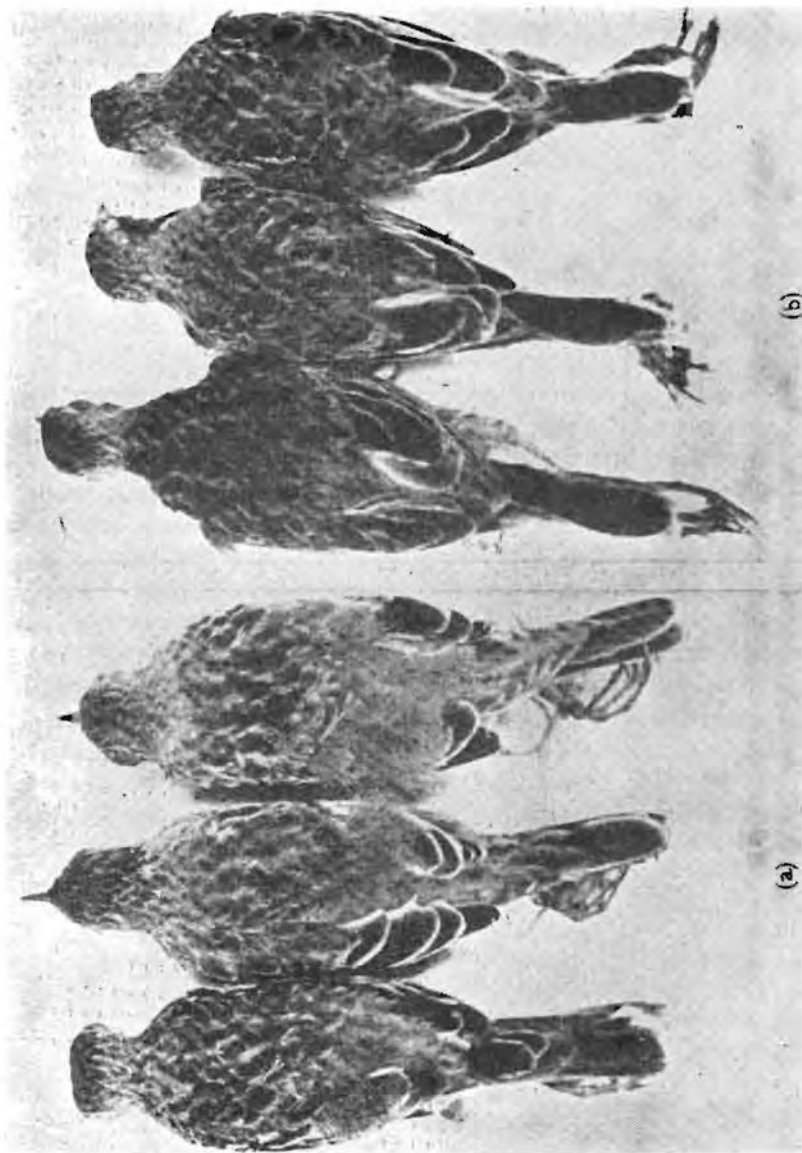
Range: Confined to the western parts of Kenya Colony (Nakuru, L. Naivasha, South Kinangop, Nairobi, Athi plains, 60 m. S.W. of Narok, and near Mt. Kenya are recorded localities).

Description of the Type: Forehead and crown pale chestnut, feather fringes paler: nape and sides of neck greyish buff, feather centres slightly darker; mantle and rump greyish buff, feather centres dark brown; some rump feathers pale chestnut basally, and most scapular feathers with pale chestnut on the inner webs; upper tail-coverts pale chestnut, tips lighter: superciliary stripes, lores, areas under eyes, malar stripes, and throat dull white: ear-coverts light brown washed with chestnut; on either side of lower throat a dark brown spot; sides of breast similar to crown; centre of breast dull white suffused brown; rest of under-parts dull white; axillaries and under wing-coverts greyish; lesser and median wing-coverts dark brown broadly tipped buffish chestnut; rest of wings dark brown, feathers fringed paler (chestnut at base of secondaries); tail feathers dark brown, paler on outer webs; outer webs of outermost pair of rectrices dull white. Iris, brown; bill, blackish slate, paler at base of lower mandible; legs and feet, dark brown.

Material examined: *C. c. williamsi*, as detailed above, 14; *C. c. cinerea*, 25: western Cape Province, 14; Great Namaqualand, 4; Damaraland, 5; Kalahari, 2. *C. c. ? race*, 10: Eastern Cape Province, 3; Natal (central districts), 6; southern Transvaal, 1. *C. c. saturatior*, 4.

Remarks: I take pleasure in naming the new race after Mr. J. G. Williams in recognition of the great interest he has taken in the problem presented by the western Kenya Colony populations of the Rufous-crowned Lark. Mr Williams' dissatisfaction with the former arrangement is directly responsible for the present description and the general elucidation of the characters and ranges of the recognisable races of *Calandrella cinerea* in South Africa.

I shall deal with the question of the systematic position of the Eastern Cape, Natal and Transvaal populations and the other South African races of *C. cinerea* in a further paper.



MACRONYX CAPENSIS (Linnaeus)

- (a) *Macronyx capensis colletti* Schou. Dorsal view of ♂♂ from Natal and Zululand.
- (b) *Macronyx capensis stabilior* Clancey. Dorsal view of ♂♂ paratypes from Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia.