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MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS LI

by

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ON THE VALIDITY OF *GUTTERA EDOUARDI SYMONSI* ROBERTS, 1917

The Karkloof forest, Natal, isolate population of the Crested Guineafowl *Guttera edouardi* (Hartlaub), 1867: coast of Natal, was characterized as a new subspecies on the basis of rather bluer spotting to the body plumage and reduction in the intensity of the reddish brown "shadow" spotting to the dorsum under the name *Guttera edouardi symonsi* by Roberts, *Ann. Transv. Mus.*, vol. vi, 1, 1917, p. 3. Paratypical material consisted of a short series taken in the Karkloof forest between March and July, 1917, at elevations of from 1158 to 1615 m. by R. E. Symons. *G.e. symonsi* has been generally accepted as valid by later workers, though few appear to have studied the case closely. Recently, Mr. T. M. Crowe, of the Percy FitzPatrick Institute, intimated during the course of conversation that he did not believe *symonsi* warranted recognition.

Through the kind offices of Dr. A. C. Kemp, Ornithologist of the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria, I have been able to study five paratypes of *G.e. symonsi* in conjunction with a good series of skins of nominate *G. edouardi* in the Durban Museum collection, these from coastal Natal (topotypes), eastern Swaziland, southern Mozambique and eastern Rhodesia (Mount Selinda, Chippinga district).

Compared in even light, the sky overcast, the five paratypes of *symonsi*; now over sixty years old, are seen not to be consistently separable from those of *G.e. edouardi* on the characters as laid out

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is clearly required from the region of Lakes Leopold II and Tumba in order to determine if the revised characters defined for *leopoldi* in this note are stabilized in this region, or if the taxon is based on an intergrading population towards the equally violet barred *A.l. batesi*, which replaces it immediately to the westward.

On the limited data currently available for this small riparian kingfisher there is no indication that any of the populations currently grouped in the race *A.l.leopoldi* are other than resident. The two specimens available from north-western Zambia are here considered to represent a small indigenous population, this linked in its caerulean barred pileum character with the populations of the extreme east of Zaïre and adjacent Uganda.

For the loan of material I am grateful to Dr. M. Louette of the Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, and the Director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, California, and for the assistance in general to Mr. C. W. Benson (Cambridge), Dr. H. Friedmann (Los Angeles), Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin (Bulawayo) and Dr. A. Prigogine (Brussels).

THE TROPICAL AFRICAN RACES OF THE REDCAPPED LARK *CALANDRELLA CINEREA* (GMELIN)

The southern African races of the Redcapped Lark were recently reviewed by me in *Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol. xi, 14, 1977, pp. 252-258. In the light of these published findings, Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin, Director of the National Museum of Rhodesia, Bulawayo queried my inclusion of the Rhodesia and adjacent Moçambique population of this lark in the race *C.c.saturation* Reichenow, 1904: Konde-land, north of L. Malawi, south-western Tanzania, on the grounds that true *saturation* was very much blacker and redder, less ochraceous, above than the birds breeding in Rhodesia. Through the kindness of Mr. Irwin I have been able to examine his particularly dark specimens from Salujinga, in the north-west of Zambia, as well as copies of correspondence he had in 1972 with Mr. R. J. Dowsett, Keeper of Natural History at the Livingstone Museum, in Zambia, on the subspecies of *C.c.cinerea* occurring in Zambia. From this correspondence it is clear that Irwin's dark Salujinga specimens are similar to topotypical *C.c.saturation* from the highlands of south-western Tanzania and referred specimens from Solwezi, Kabompo and Balovale, in Zambia, in the Livingstone Museum collection.

Compared directly with birds from Rhodesia breeding grounds, the Salujinga specimens in the Bulawayo collection stand apart

in the males having darker rufous crowns and lateral breast-patches, and decidedly blacker and coarser streaking over the dorsum, the light interspaces reddish tawny rather than fulvous. The females are correspondingly more broadly streaked with blackish over the back and the feather fringes are colder and somewhat greyer than in Rhodesia examples. From this study it is evident that the present taxon *C.c.saturator* as defined in my study of 1977 is a composite of two reasonably well-marked subspecies, and must now be seen as a hygric race extending from the highlands of Angola, east to Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, and the highlands of south-western Tanzania. The paler, less blackish and more fulvous backed birds breeding to the south of the established breeding range of the redefined *saturator* are separated as an additional race hereunder.

While pursuing this study of the characters and range limits of *C.c.saturator*, I have taken the opportunity to re-examine the status of the species in East Africa. In my paper on this lark in East Africa in *Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol. iv, 3, 1952, pp. 45 - 49, I commented on the earlier conclusions of Sclater, *Syst.Av. Aethiop.*, part ii, 1930, p. 333, and in Jackson's, *Birds of Kenya Colony and the Uganda Protectorate*, vol. ii, 1938, pp. 798, 799, who placed the Kenya breeding population with *C.c.anderssoni*, which was believed to extend from East Africa, south to the eastern Cape and Natal in the east and Angola and northern South West Africa in the west. As shown in my 1977 paper, *Megalophonous anderssoni* Tristram, 1869, is based on a migrant example of nominate *C.c.cinerea* taken on the breeding grounds of the xeric *C.c.spleniata* (Strickland), and its use by various workers for arbitrary combinations of populations has done nothing but confound our entire appreciation of the true pattern of geographical variation in this cryptic and highly plastic species.

While the populations breeding in Kenya are certainly not of the same subspecies as those which breed in south-eastern Africa, the occurrence of birds in Kenya quite inseparable from southern African ones has already been established. Examination of the good series of Kenya Redcapped Larks in the Durban Museum confirms this, revealing that apart from the indigenous race *C.c.williamsi* Clancey, 1952, elements of at least two other races occur as non-breeding visitors to the plains of that territory during the period late December - March/early April, namely the nominate race of the Cape and the fulvous-backed population separated as an additional subspecies below. The presence of the latter phenotype in Kenya between December and early April corresponds well with its known absence from Rhodesia and suspected Zambia and Malawi breeding grounds at that time (see Smithers *et al.*, *Check List Birds*

of Southern Rhodesia, 1957, p. 96; Benson *et al.*, *Birds of Zambia*, 1971, pp. 187, 188; Benson and Benson, *Birds of Malawi*, 1977, pp. 118, 119). While it is well established that some elements of the present taxon *C.c.saturator* perform a south-north post-breeding migration in the African tropics, the occurrence of *C.c.cinerea* as far north as the Athi Plains in Kenya was unexpected, as it had not been suspected of ranging further north than southern Angola, northern Botswana, and, perhaps, Zambia in its post-breeding peregrinations. This gregarious lark is in the main a dry season breeder, flocking and moving or migrating with the coming of the rains, when its breeding grounds are rendered temporarily unsuitable owing to the thickening of the grass cover.

In the following arrangement of the tropical African populations of *C.cinerea* I again consider the Rhodesia and adjacent highland Moçambique population placed with *C.c.saturator* in my 1977 paper, in association with the populations breeding from the highlands of Angola, east to the highlands to the north of L. Malawi, north to c. 1° 30' N. Apart from a change of name effected to race (e), my arrangement of the South African populations remains unaltered. At the same time, I have not dealt with the north-eastern races: *C.c.erlangeri* (Neumann), 1906: Sheik Mohamed, upper Juba R., south-central Ethiopia, *C.c.daaroodensis* White, 1960: Sheik, northern Somalia, and *C.c.blanfordi* (Shelley), 1902: Senafé, Eritrea. White (1960) proposed *C.c.daaroodensis* to replace the *C.c.blanfordi* of authors, not of Shelley, which latter is an earlier name for *C.c.asmaraensis* Smith, 1951.

(a) ***Calandrella cinerea cinerea*** (Gmelin), 1789: Cape Town, south-western Cape.

♂, adult. Pileum dark Tawny (Ridgway (1912), pl. xv); dorsum Buffy Brown (pl.xl.), or more vinaceous, the feathers with broad sepia shaft-streaks. Below, with lateral breast-patches of deep tawny.

♀, adult. Much as ♂, but pileum duller, streaked with black and scaled with buffy when fresh. Below, with less well-developed lateral breast-patches, and lower fore-throat usually freckled with brown. Size smaller.

Wings of ♂♂ 91 - 98, ♀♀ 86 - 92,5 mm.

Range: Breeds in the western and south-western Cape, east to Algoa Bay, and north-east to Griqualand West and the south-western Orange Free State. In non-breeding season extends north to northern South West Africa (on passage), Angola, northern

Botswana (? on passage), Zambia, and East Africa as far as the plains of the Kenya uplands, where present December - March/early April.

Remarks: Specimens of this race from Kenya in the collection of the Durban Museum were collected between late December and the end of March, and are from the following localities: 96,5 km S.W. of Narok, Kikuyu, Athi Plains and the South Kinangop. The specimens concerned were all collected by the present writer and Mr. J. G. Williams. Light rufous cap and breast-patches, and greyish buffy brown dorsum with moderate dusky streaking on back distinguish this migratory race.

(b) ***Calandrella cinerea fulvida***, subsp.nov.

Type: ♂, adult. 15 km from Essexvale on the road to Bulawayo, Matabeleland, Rhodesia. 3 August, 1956. Collected by S. Smith. In the collection of the Durban Museum, D.M.Reg. No. 6 199 (*ex coll.Nat.Mus.Rhod.Bulawayo*, N.Mus. Reg. No. 28 295).

♂ with pileum saturated Tawny or Amber Brown (pl.iii), that is brighter than last; dorsum largely Ochraceous-Tawny (pl.xv), with dark brown shaft-streaking, appearing more saturated ochraceous-rusty above than nominate *cinerea*.

♀, adult. Similar to *C.c.cinerea*, but light parts of dorsum Buckthorn Brown (pl.xv), rather than dull Buffy Brown.

Wings of ♂♂ 90,5 - 98, ♀♀ 85,5 - 90,5 mm.

Range: Breeds over the plateau of Rhodesia and in adjacent upland Moçambique. Also, apparently in southern Angola, Zambia south of *C.c.saturation*, and, probably, southern Malawi. Most winter during late December-April north of breeding range, then extending as far as the plains of upland Kenya in the east, and probably elsewhere, as the species is recorded from Gabon and Nigeria.

Remarks: A typical example of this race from L. Mungolo, Hum-pata, Huila, Angola, in the collection of the Durban Museum is dated 30 January, 1967. In the case of Kenya, a very typical specimen is a male from Ngong Hills, near Nairobi, dated 20 March, 1951. Several from the Athi Plains shot in March, 1958, by the present writer are in worn to very worn dress. A further example of the present subspecies from Kenya is from Kikuyu and is dated 26 December, 1962.

Ochraceous-rusty cast to dorsum of male distinguishes present race.

- (c) **Calandrella cinerea saturator** Reichenow, 1904: Kondeland, north of L. Malawi, south-western Tanzania.

♂, adult. Similar to *C.c.fulvida*, but differs in being a trifle darker over the pileum and lateral breast-patches. Differs subspecifically in having the dorsal striations deeper black, the pale interstices redder, less ochraceous (dark Tawny, *versus* Ochraceous-Tawny). Below, with breast centre more overlaid with rusty buff, and sides and flanks heavily streaked with reddish brown, not almost unmarked. Wings and tail blacker.

♀, adult. Dorsum with broader and deeper black shaft-streaking, the feathers fringed dull Tawny-Olive (pl. xxix), or greyer. Ventrally, lateral breast-patches on whole darker. Wings and tail darker.

Wings of ♂♂ 92 - 97,5, ♀♀ 86 - 90 mm.

Range: Breeds locally from the highlands of Angola, east to southern and eastern Zaïre, Rwanda and Burundi, Uganda, northern and north-eastern Zambia, northern Malawi, and south-western Tanzania. Probably also Gabon (see Brosset and Erard, *Bull.Brit.Orn.Club*, vol. xlvii, 4, 1977, p. 127).

Remarks: The adult male of *saturator* bears a very close resemblance to that of *C.c.alluvia*, described from coastal Moçambique, differing only in being slightly more sharply striped dorsally. The female, however, differs markedly, as that of *alluvia* is plainer and paler above than *saturator*, approaching nominate *cinerea* in appearance.

M. P. Stuart Irwin, *in litt.*, considers *saturator* to be a breeding taxon of moist, watershed plain grasslands and montane grassland country as found on the Congo/Zambezi Divide and in the highlands of south-western Tanzania.

The material available has not enabled me to determine the nature of the post-breeding movements in the present subspecies, though the indications are that it less vagile than the two previous subspecies. Heavy black streaking to dorsum with reddish tawny interspaces distinguishes *saturator*.

- (d) **Calandrella cinerea williamsi** Clancey, 1952: Semini's Farm, South Kinangop, Aberdares, Kenya.

♂, adult. Pileum and breast-patches as in *saturator*; dorsum with comparably broad but more olive-brown, less black, shaft-streaking, and interspaces greyish Buckthorn Brown, not dark Tawny, giving dorsal surface a greyer appearance. Below, with less buff on mid-

breast and with whiter sides and flanks. Wings and tail comparably dark.

♀, adult. More like *C.c.fulvida* than *saturator*, but dorsal surface appearing greyer, less warm buffy, and showing more extensive dark brown over the lateral lower neck.

Wings of ♂♂ 91 - 96,5, of ♀♀ 88 - 92 mm.

Range: Resident in the highlands of the Rift Valley of Kenya, north of 1° N., at elevations of 1 525 - 2 750 m a.s.l.

Remarks: Van Someren, *Novit.Zool.*, vol. xxxvii, 1932, p. 333, draws attention to a size-difference detected between two samples of Kenya Redcapped Larks. Athi Plains birds with wings 82 - 90 are supposedly smaller than those of the highlands of the Naivasha — Nakuru district and the Njoro plain, lying between the Aberdare Range and the Mau Escarpment, in which the wings were found to be 90 - 100 mm. The size-difference postulated by Van Someren is sexually and not geographically derived. In addition, the Athi Plains birds are now known to be mainly visitors from further south in Africa, and do not represent a second indigenous Kenya population.

Dark cap and breast-patches, and heavily brownish streaked dorsum with greyish buff interspaces distinguish present subspecies.

For drawing my attention to the marked variation existing in the populations grouped by me in *C.c.saturator* in my 1977 revision of the South African subspecies, and placing key material and correspondence at my disposal, I am gratefully indebted to Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin, Director of the National Museum of Rhodesia, Bulawayo.