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## MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS XXXIII

by

P. A. CLANCEY

(Director, Durban Museum, Durban)

### VARIATION IN KITTLITZ'S SANDPLOVER *CHARADRIUS PECUARIUS* TEMMINCK

In describing *Charadrius varius allenbyi*, subsp. nov., from L. Karun, El Fayum, Egypt, on a very equivocal size-difference, Nicholl, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, vol. xlii, 1921, p. 7, appears to be the only worker to have proposed the breakdown of *Charadrius pecuarius* Temminck. Nicholl claimed that Egyptian specimens of *pecuarius* were larger than tropical African ones: wings of ♂♀ 102–112, versus 98–110 mm. The difference attributed to *allenbyi* is insufficient for recognition by present-day standards, and, moreover, many specimens from the South African topotypical population of *C. pecuarius* have wings in excess of 112 mm., the upper limit given by Nicholl for his *allenbyi*. Several authors have associated *C. sanctaehelenae* (Harting), 1873: St.<sup>1</sup> Helena, with *C. pecuarius*, though recently, following Chapin, *Birds of the Belgian Congo*, part ii, 1939, p. 65, Vaurie, *Birds of the Palearctic Fauna*, vol. ii (Non Passeriformes), 1965, p. 375, has kept it separate from *pecuarius*, which sandplover is currently treated as monotypic.

A study of a reasonably adequate panel of material from southern, central and south-eastern Africa recently carried out in the Durban

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Museum reveals that the present sandplover is subject to reasonably well-marked variation in this large segment of Africa. The population present in large areas of the South West Arid District from Etosha Pan, northern South-West Africa, east and south-east to Lake Dow, the Makarikari Salt Pan, and the Nata R., in Botswana, differs in being appreciably greyer above and more whitish below than the topotypical and most of the referred populations of *C. pecuarius*. Greying of the upper-parts and whitening of the underside is a normal form of response exhibited by populations of many species of polytypic birds whose ranges include the Etosha-Makarikari sector of the South West Arid District, with its glaring, saline encrusted substrate. Some other terrestrial birds with very grey backed and whitish or greyish ventralled local races in this region are *Francolinus swainsonii*, *Rhinoptilus cinctus*, *Pterocles bicinctus*, *Pterocles namaqua*, *Mirafraga africana*, *Mirafraga apiata*, *Mirafraga rufocinnamomea*, *Mirafraga africanoides*, *Mirafraga sabota*, *Eremopterix verticalis*, *inter al.* It now seems that Kittlitz's Sandplover falls into the same category, being represented in this arid region by a population sufficiently distinct to be separated as

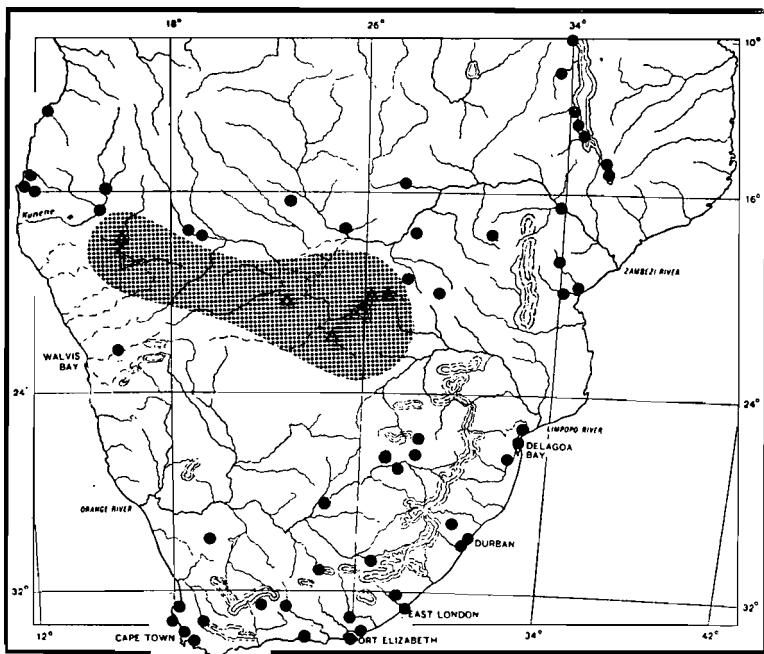
***Charadrius pecuarius tephricolor*, subsp. nov.**

*Type:* ♀, adult. Mumpswe, N.E. Makarikari Salt Pan complex, at 20° 14' S., 25° 52' E., north-eastern Botswana, at 915 m. a.s.l. 14 April, 1968. Collected by P. J. G. Ginn. In the collection of the National Museum of Rhodesia, Bulawayo. N.M. Reg. No. 66, 132.

*Diagnosis:* Differs from *C. p. pecuarius*, described from the Cape of South Africa, in having the upper-parts a distinctly colder, more greyish earthen, less olive, brown, the mantle, scapular and tertial feathers fringed vinaceous-white rather than ochraceous or rusty buff (mantle centre Hair Brown (Ridgway, pl. xlvi), against Olive-Brown (pl. xl)). More sharply differentiated ventrally — much whiter over the throat, the medio-ventral plane, crissum and flanks, the vinaceous-buff more restricted to the upper breast, normally less diffused up over the fore-throat and down over the entire breast as in nominate *pecuarius*. Size as in the tropical African populations and averaging much smaller than Cape topotypes of *C. p. pecuarius*, thus: wings of 10♂♀ 100–108 (103.7), *versus* 107–114 (109.4) mm. in 10 ♂♀ from the S.W. Cape.

*Material examined:* *C. p. tephricolor*, 21 (*Botswana:* Makarikari, Nata, Mumpswe, Lake Dow, Kedia, L. Ngami; *South-West Africa:* Ondongua). *C. p. pecuarius*, 56 (*Cape:* Cape Town, Robben Island, Dassen Island, Wynberg, Fraserburg, Robertson, Salt River, Piquetberg, Brandvlei, Smartt Syndicate Dam, Bedford, Hanover,

Bird Island (Algoa Bay), East London, Riverton; *Natal*: Umbilo R., Durban, Durban Bay; *Moçambique*: Bela Vista, Lagoa de Ura; *Transvaal*: Potchefstroom; *Rhodesia*: Bembezi, Salisbury, Binga, Ngamo Pans (*pecuarius*  $\cong$  *tephricolor*); *Zambia*: Matabele Plain (Barotseland), Lochinvar, Mwera Wantipa, Kasaba Bay, Mporokoso, Mwandi (17° 30' S., 24° 48' E.) (*pecuarius*  $\cong$  *tephricolor*); *South-West Africa*: Kapaku and Ndwaki, W. of Runtu; *Kenya*: L. Naivasha).



MAP I

Sketch-map of southern Africa showing the disposition of the two races of *Charadrius pecuarius* Temminck occurring in the Sub-Region.

Shaded area: *Charadrius pecuarius tephricolor* Clancey

Black dots: *Charadrius pecuarius pecuarius* Temminck.

(Note: The dots in the case of nominate *pecuarius* represent localities of specimens examined and major localities given in the literature only.)

*Range*: Northern South-West Africa in the Etosha Pan area and southern Ovamboland, east to Ngamiland, the Caprivi Strip and northern Botswana at Lake Dow, the Makarikari Salt Pan complex, and the Nata R. South-western coastal Angolan birds may belong here, and single skins from Mwandi, Zambia, at 17° 30' S., 24° 48' E., and Ngamo Pans, Gwaai, in extreme western Rhodesia, are certainly nearer *tephricolor* than they are to *pecuarius*, suggesting intergradation between the two forms in these latter localities at least.

*Measurements of the Type:* Wing (flattened) 103, culmen from feathers 16, tarsus 30, tail 43 mm.

*Remarks:* In *C. pecuarius* size-variation is marked but irregular and of little moment for the purpose of arranging the populations into acceptable races. Generally speaking, the largest birds are those of the south-western and western Cape, in the extreme south of the range, and in Egypt, in the extreme north-east, if Nicholl's figures be truly representative of the latter population. Small-sized birds occur along the eastern tropical lowlands of Africa, and apparently throughout much of the tropics of the Ethiopian Region. However, even in populations which are comprised of a preponderance of large birds, single specimens with a wing-length substantially below the norm will be found in any comprehensive sample. The general pattern of size-variation shows up clearly in the following table of wing-lengths in samples from southern and south-central Africa recently assembled in the Durban Museum:

TABLE 1

W. Cape . . . . .	10	♂♀	wings	107-114	Mean 109,4 mm.
E. and N. Cape . . . . .	10	♂♀	"	101-111,5	" 107,9 mm.
Natal and Maputo . . . . .	4	♂♀	"	105-107,5	" 106,2 mm.
Angola . . . . .	30	♂♀	"	99-112	" 104,5 mm.
Botswana . . . . .	10	♂♀	"	100-108	" 103,7 mm.
Rhodesia and Zambia . . . . .	6	♂♀	"	101-108,5	" 104,6 mm.

Topotypes of *C. p. tephricolor* give the following weights: ♂♂ 28-33, ♀♀ 30-34 gm. (*vide* Ginn, *Wagtail*, spec. no., 1971, p. 31).

With the recognition of *C. p. tephricolor* as a local race of part of the South West Arid District, the range of nominate *C. pecuarius* will be from the Cape and Natal, northwards in the east, and from the valley of the Okavango R. north further to the west, throughout all of Ethiopian Africa beyond the confines of the Upper and Lower Guinea forests, and apparently Somalia, extending north-east in the valley of the Nile to the Delta, in Egypt, and to the east to the island of Malagasy.

For the loan of material to augment that in the Durban Museum I am grateful to the South African Museum, Cape Town (through Professor J. M. Winterbottom), the East London Museum (through Mr. C. D. Quickelberge), and the National Museum of Rhodesia (through Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin). Dr. A. A. da Rosa Pinto, Ornithologist, Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, at Sá da Bandeira, very kindly provided me with measurements of all the material in his collection, some of which I have included in Table 1.