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## MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS LIX

by

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### ON GEOGRAPHICAL VARIATION IN THE TEREK SANDPIPER *XENUS CINEREUS* (GÜLDENSTAEDT)

The Terek Sandpiper is treated as a monotypic species by Hartert, *Vög. pal. Fauna*, vol. ii, 1921, pp. 1625-1627, Peters, *Check-List Birds of the World*, vol. ii, 1934, pp. 268, 269, Dement'ev and Gladkov, *Birds of the Soviet Union*, Engl. trans., vol. iii, 1969, pp. 282-288, Vaurie, *Birds of the Palearctic Fauna*, vol. ii (Non-Passeriformes), 1965, pp. 418, 419, and in other standard texts. However, Baker, *Fauna of British India, including Ceylon and Burma*, Birds, vol. vi, 1929, pp. 211-213, recognises two subspecies in the present wader, characterising the far eastern breeding population as distinct under the name *Xenus cinereus javanicus* (Horsfield), 1821: Java. The diagnostic characters of *javanicus* are given as "very slightly paler than the preceding form (*X. c. cinereus* (Güldenstaedt), 1774: shores of the Caspian Sea) and also slightly smaller but with a distinctly smaller, more slender bill." Baker, *loc. cit.*, gives the entire range of *javanicus* as "Eastern Siberia. In Winter migrating South to Australia, the islands of the Malay Archipelago and Burma." *Scolopax sumatrana* Raffles, 1822: Sumatra, and, presumably, *Terekia cinerea australis* Mathews, 1917: Melville Island, Australia, are synonyms of *javanicus*.

Examination of the short series of *X. cinereus* in the collection of the Durban Museum from Natal and Zululand suggests that the species is polytypic in conformity with the findings published by Baker over fifty years ago, and that both nominate *cinereus* and *javanicus* reach southern Africa on migration. While none of the specimens available from south-eastern Africa seems to have the bill as small and slender as claimed for eastern Indian and Burmese *javanicus* by Baker, the  
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material polarises into two reasonably well-defined forms on the basis of the colour of the upper-parts and of the light areas in the wings. Specimens corresponding to *X.c.cinereus* have the upper-parts and wings about buffish Drab (Ridgway (1912), pl. xlvi), whereas in the eastern *javanicus* the dorsal surface and the light areas in the wings are greyer and more silvery (about Smoke Gray (pl. xlvi)). There appears to be no worthwhile difference in size, though what I interpret as eastern birds appear to run longer in the wing (wings of 135 and above) and are not in fact smaller. Wings of all specimens seen range from 126-137 mm.

Baker, *loc.cit.*, defines the breeding range of *X.c.javanicus* as "Eastern Siberia." The range is probably northern Siberia from about the Yenisei eastwards to Anadyrland, south to *c.* 55° N. While the differences are satisfactorily marked in freshly moulted birds on the wintering grounds, it is uncertain if they show up equally well in material taken in the U.S.S.R. in the breeding season. I am unaware of any discussion on the subject in the Russian literature.

#### VARIATION IN THE PRESENT NOMINATE RACE OF *GLAREOLA NUCHALIS* GRAY

Mrs A. C. Meinertzhagen, *Ibis*, 12th ser., vol. iii, 1927, pp. 495-498, recognised three subspecies of the White-collared or Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis* Gray, 1850 (1849): Fifth Cataract of the Nile, near Berber, Sudan, these being the nominate race, *G.n.marchei* Oustalet, 1877: Lope, Ogowe R., Gabon, and *G.n.liberiae* Schlegel, 1881: Liberia. Chapin, *Birds Belgian Congo*, part 2, 1939, p. 118, treated *marchei* as a synonym of nominate *G.nuchalis*, in this following Peters, *Check-List Birds of the World*, vol. ii, 1934, p. 305. Also in the synonymy of *G.n.nuchalis*, Peters placed the names *Glareola emini* Shelley, 1888: Foda, near Wadelai, Uganda, and *Glareola antaenia* Reichenow, 1908: Mawambi, Ituri R., eastern Zaïre.

In her review, Mrs Meinertzhagen considered *marchei* to be larger than nominate *nuchalis*, the wings of 38 ♂♀ 140-161, against 144 mm in a single example of the latter (the *Type*). Chapin, *loc.cit.*, states that "the type of *marchei* was said to have the wing only 125 mm long," and goes on to show that a toptotypical series of *marchei* in the American Museum of Natural History from the Ogowe R. in Gabon have wings 137-154, this range completely subsuming the single wing-length given for *G.n.nuchalis* of 144mm by Mrs Meinertzhagen. From measurements of some fifty-two specimens which I have assembled, it is clear that birds of like dimensions range from the southern Sudan, Ethiopia and eastern Cameroun, south in the west to northern Angola and in the east of the Afrotropics to much of Zambia, northern and eastern Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Mozambique north of the Save R., and that *marchei* as defined in 1927 cannot be upheld.

In my recent study of birds from the Okavango R. on the border between South West Africa (Namibia) and Cuando Cubango, Angola, I demonstrated that *G.nuchalis* specimens from the said river had particularly long wings, namely 160,5, 161,5, and 163mm in three (*vide Durban Mus.Novit.*, vol. xii, 9, 1980, p. 93). In his discussion on size variation in *G.n.nuchalis*, Chapin, *loc.cit.*, considered a singleton with a wing of 160 to be exceptionally long-winged, this presumably the bird with a wing of 161 mm measured from East Africa by Mrs Meinertzhagen. This latter author also records that both males and females from Angola measured by her had wings of as long as 160 and 161 mm.

In Zambia, birds with wings of 160 are from Sioma on the upper Zambesi (16 August), the Chikata Rapids on the Kabompo R. (5 November), Chewore R., Zambesi R. at 29°53' E. (30 July), and L.Mweru (no date). On the finding that a sample of three from the Okavango R., in the extreme south-west of the breeding range of this species, all have wings of over 160, and that similarly large birds also occur immediately to the east in Zambia and to the north in parts of Angola, I believe a case exists for the recognition of a large-sized subspecies in southern Angola, northern and north-eastern South West Africa, and in Caprivi and extreme western Zambia. Supplementing the size character is a range of various plumage colour differences, these being that the large birds have the crown palpably darker, more blackish, and the rest of the dorsal surface greyer, not such a pure brown. Ventrally, the fore-throat and breast are a clearer and darker grey, not grey strongly suffused with warm buffy brown, while the wings are also darker.

As this riverine pratincole is on its austral breeding grounds mainly between late July and January, the Chewore R. specimen taken on the 30 July, and within the established breeding range of *G.n.nuchalis*, was probably on migration when taken. It is unfortunate that a date of collection is not available for Sir Alfred Sharpe's L.Mweru specimen in the British Museum (Nat.Hist.), but it was clearly either on passage or its wintering grounds when shot. Mr C. W. Benson, who most graciously examined the British Museum series for me, has asterisked three other specimens taken to the north of the Equator and with wings of 158 and 159mm. which he feels may represent migrants from the south-west of the species' range. These are a ♀ from the Voro Rapids, Uele R., Zaïre Supérieure, taken by Boyd Alexander on 8 January, the wing 158, an unsexed example from Poko, Bomokandi R. (3°09' N., 26°33' E.), Zaïre Supérieure, J. J. Harrison collector, taken on 12 March, with wing 159, and a ♀ taken at Entebbe, Uganda, by Sir Harry Johnston, on 2 April, the wing 158mm. The dates of these presumed migrants extend from 8 January to 30 July, tying in closely with the presence of the southern birds on their breeding grounds between the end of July and January.

TABLE I  
The wing-length variable in some populations of *Glareola nuchalis*

Population		$\bar{X}$	SD mm.
	<i>Glareola nuchalis nuchalis</i> Grey		
S. Sudan and Uganda	144, 145, 147, 150, 151, (158)	147.4	3.05
Ethiopia	151	151	—
Cameroun	143, 143, 144, 148 (3), 153	146.7	3.64
*Zaire	140, 147, 150 (2), 151, 154, (158, 159)	148.7	4.80
Zambia	149, 150, 151 (2), 152, 153, 154, 156 (2), 157 (2), (160)	153.3	2.90
E. Caprivi (on Zambesi)	150, 155	152.5	
Mozambique	152, 154	153	
Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)	150, 150,5, 151,5, 154, 155, 157 (2), (158)	153.6	2.95
	<i>Glareola nuchalis torrens</i> Clancey		
W. Zambia	160, 160, 160	160	
N.E. South West Africa	160,5, 161,5, 163	161.7	1.26

\* Chapin, *loc. cit.*, gives wings of additional Zaïrese material of nominate *nuchalis* as: 3 ♂♀ 153-156 (Kasai), and 11 ♂♀ from the Ituri R. and upper Uele drainage as 144-155 (160). This same author gives the wings of 10 ♂♀ from Gabon as 137-154 mm.

Study of the above measurements indicates that the wing-length spectrum norm is in the neighbourhood of 7 or 8 mm. There is clearly a *prima facie* case for considering south-western breeders markedly different and subspecifically discrete on size grounds alone. However, the same data show that *G. n. nuchalis* populations have a composite wing-length spectrum of 17, the wings of 140-157 mm., and that the use of the wing-length parameter on its own is insufficient grounds to substantiate the recognition of two races in the present nominotypical subspecies. Fortunately, for our purpose the south-western breeders exhibit ancillary characters in a range of plumage colour differences, and, furthermore, inhabit a faunistic area characterised by its large sized and generally very greyish races.

#### *Glareola nuchalis torrens*, subsp. nov.

*Type*: ♀ ad. Mukue, Okavango R., north-eastern South West Africa (Namibia). 10 October, 1978. Collected by M. O. E. Baddeley. In the collection of the Durban Museum, D.M.Reg.No. 31988.

*Diagnosis*: Compared with *G. n. nuchalis* differs in having the crown more blackish, and with the rest of the dorsum darker and greyer, less brownish. Ventrally, with the fore-throat and breast darker and clearer grey, lacking the warm brown of buffy olivaceous suffusion. Wings darker. Size ranging larger: wings 158-163, *versus* 140-157 mm (see Table 1).

*Measurements*: As given in Table 1.

*Material*: 21 examined in Durban.

*Range*: Southern Angola in Huila and Cuando Cubango on the Cunene, Okavango (Cubango) and associated major rivers draining the Bié Highlands, and in immediately adjacent north-eastern South

West Africa and western Zambia. Migratory. Present on its breeding grounds from late July/August-January. Spends the off-season in eastern equatorial Africa in eastern Zaïre and western East Africa (Uganda), and taken on passage mid-Zambesi R. valley and north-eastern Zambia (L.Mweru).

*Measurements of the Type:* Wing (flattened) 163, culmen (exposed) 10, tarsus 18,5, tail 63,5 mm.

*Remarks:* The three Okavango R. specimens collected by Mr Baddeley are the first records of this pratincole from the said river (*vide* Clancey, 1980). The sample was part of a much larger series disposed of to European and North American museums. With recognition of the far southern *G.n.torrens*, the range of nominate *G.nuchalis* will be from western Cameroun, east to the southern Sudan and Ethiopia, south to northern Angola, Zaïre, Uganda and western Kenya, Zambia east of *torrens*, northern and eastern Zimbabwe, western Malawi, south-eastern Tanzania (Siguri Falls) and southern Mozambique north of the Save R.

*G.n.liberiae*, with post-ocular streak and nuchal collar cinnamon-buff and not off-white, and generally darker, more saturated, in appearance, ranges from Liberia, east to Cameroun in West Africa. The measurements are as in the nominate race. Mrs Meinertzhagen gives wings of this race as 141-158 mm.

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#### ON *APUS APUS MARWITZI* REICHENOW, 1906

*Apus apus marwitzi* Reichenow was proposed in *Ornith.Monatsber.*, vol. xiv, 1906, p. 171, to accommodate a form of swift collected at Mkalama (Makalama), Tanzania, at 4°06' S., 34°38' E. by a Lieutenant Marwitz of the Army in German East Africa, and after whom Reichenow named a whole range of new bird taxa. Hartert, *Vög.pal.Fauna*, vol. ii, 1912, pp. 838, 839, shows that *marwitzi* is a Palearctic migrant, breeding in Asia Minor (Eregli), the southern Caucasus (Tbilisi, Georgia), Cyprus, and presumably parts of the Middle East, passing through Egypt on migration to winter in central Tanzania (steppe country along the Wembere R.). Since Hartert wrote on *marwitzi*, the status of the form has only been dealt with at any