



DURBAN MUSEUM NOVITATES

Issued by the Durban Museum, Durban, South Africa

Vol. VII

ISSUED 31ST JANUARY, 1964

Part 5

MISCELLANEOUS TAXONOMIC NOTES ON AFRICAN BIRDS XXI

by

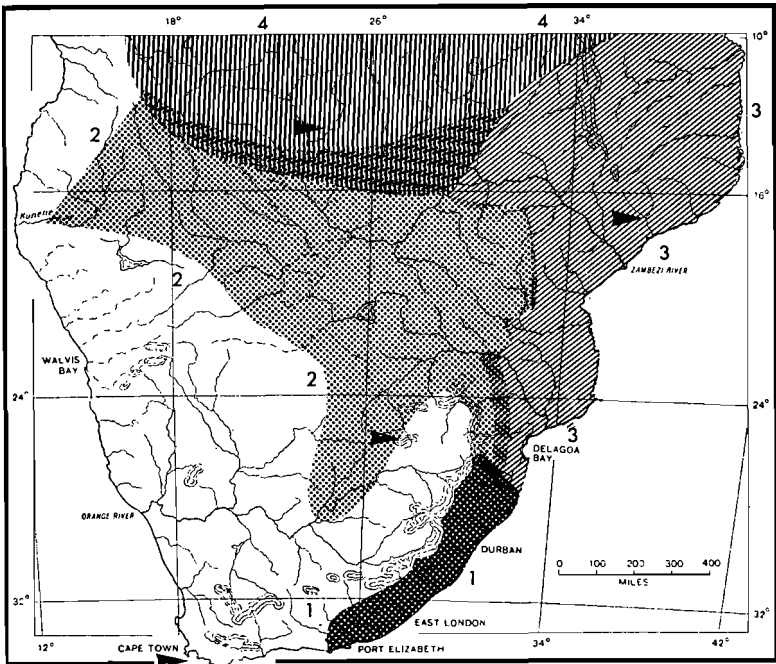
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GEOGRAPHICAL VARIATION IN THE GOAWAY BIRD *CORYTHAIXOIDES CONCOLOR* (SMITH)

The Goaway Bird was first introduced to science by Dr. Andrew Smith as *Corythaix concolor* in the *South African Quarterly Journal*, 2nd series, Oct.-Dec. 1833, p. 48, and was stated to "inhabit South Africa, inland of Port Natal". Overlooking his prior description, Dr. Smith redescribed the species in his *Report of the Expedition for Exploring Central Africa*, 1836, p. 54, under the name *Coliphimus concolor*, the species then stated to "inhabit the country from Kurrichaine to the Tropic" at about 25° 24' S. lat. The Goaway Bird does not occur in Natal, and must have been encountered by Smith during the course of his political visit to Zululand in 1832, and the Umfolozi R. may be fixed as the restricted type-locality.

In addition to the nominate race, several other subspecific divisions of the species have been proposed by workers over the years, these being in chronological order: *C.c.pallidiceps* Neumann, 1899: Angola and Benguela; *C.c.bechuanae* Roberts, 1932: Gaberones, south-eastern Bechuanaland Protectorate; *C.c.chobiensis* Roberts, 1932: Kabulabula, Chobe R., northern Bechuanaland Protectorate; and *C.c.cuanhamae* Rosa Pinto, 1962: Pereira d'Eça, Huila, Angola. There is no measure of agreement among workers on the number of races to be admitted in our formal subspecific arrangement of the



Sketch-map showing the approximate ranges of the four geographical races of the Yellow-throated Sparrow occurring in southern Africa.

1. *Petronia superciliaris superciliaris* (Blyth)
2. *Petronia superciliaris flavigula* (Sundevall)
3. *Petronia superciliaris bororensis* Roberts
4. *Petronia superciliaris rufitergum* Clancey

Type-localities are indicated by black arrowheads.

NEW SUBSPECIES OF THE GREATER SPARROW
PASSER IAGOENSIS (GOULD) and BLACK-CHEEKED
 WAXBILL *ESTRILDA ERYTHRONOTOS* (VIEILLOT)
 FROM SOUTH AFRICA

A great many polytypic species of birds which are largely confined to the dry interior and arid west of southern Africa have darker coloured populations in the moister eastern parts of their ranges. Studies of the populations of the Greater Sparrow *Passer iagoensis* (Gould) and Black-cheeked Waxbill *Estrilda erythronotos* (Vieillot) in South Africa recently carried out in the Durban Museum reveal that these species, too, conform to this rule, and it now seems desirable as a result of these detailed researches to recognise two races of the sparrow and waxbill from zoogeographical South Africa.

***Passer iagoensis subsolanus*, subsp.nov.**

Type: ♂, adult. Ingwezi Ranch, Syringa, Southern Rhodesia. 14 April, 1951. Collector's name not given. In the collection of the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia. Nat.Mus.Reg.No. 5364.

Diagnosis: Compared with *P.i.motitensis* Smith, 1848: near Hope-town, northern Cape Province (*vide* Macdonald, *Contr.Ornith.West.S.Afr.*, 1957, p. 156), the male differs in being rather darker neutral grey on the head-top, nape and hind neck, and with the lateral stripes and sides of the neck darker (about dark Sayal Brown, as against Clay Color (pl. xxix)); back, scapulars and rump darker and redder, more saturated (about dull Hazel (pl. xiv), as against Ochraceous-Tawny (pl. xv), and with the dorsal streaking heavier and blacker. On the under-parts with the breast heavily overlaid with grey and slightly streaked, not almost white as in *P.i.motitensis*, and with the flanks rather darker. Female darker on the head-top, nape and hind-neck, more brownish, less cinnamon, on the mantle than in *P.i.motitensis*, the mantle streaking broader and blacker, and with the breast more overlaid with grey. Similar in size.

Material examined: *P.i.motitensis*, 70; *P.i.subsolanus*, 20.

Range: Matabeleland, Southern Rhodesia (*Type* and short series from Syringa), the Transvaal, northern Orange Free State and Swaziland (once). Intergrades to the west of its stated range with the nominate race.

Measurements of the Type: Wing 89.5, culmen 17, tarsus 22, tail 59 mm.

Remarks: *P.i.subsolanus* was first discovered by Dr. G. Rudebeck, while Ornithologist on the staff of the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria, and was demonstrated to the present author as long ago as 1956. Rudebeck did not, however, name his discovery, and as he now no longer works in Africa or on indigenous African birds, and has severed contact with his colleagues in South Africa, it seems timeous after the lapse of no less than seven years to accord this distinctive racial taxon a name, rather than allow it to lie unrecognised any longer (see Code of Ethics, *Int.Code Zool.Nomencl.*, 1961, p. 93).

P.i.motitensis is a composite of two slightly differentiated groups of populations. Birds from Bechuanaland are slightly more yellowish sandy, less vinaceous cinnamon, on the mantle than those of Damara-land, which also have the dorsal striae finer, shorter and less bold. While I have not been able to examine any specimens from near the type-locality of *P.i.motitensis* (Hopetown), those from southern Bechuanaland, in the northern Cape, which may be taken as topo-

typical of *motitensis*, agree with the slightly yellower, sandy backed birds of the interior desert (Kalahari), rather than with those of Damaraland.

The name here adopted for the new race of Greater Sparrow is from the Latin *subsolanus*, below the rising sun, i.e., eastern.

***Estrilda erythronotos soligena*, subsp. nov.**

Type: ♀, adult. Otjomassu Sandfield, South-West Africa. 29 May, 1955. Collected by W. Hoesch. In the collection of the Durban Museum. D.M.Reg.No.2364.

Diagnosis: In fresh, unsoiled plumage distinctly paler and more pinkish drab, less dark lavender grey, from head-top to lower back than in *E.e.erythronotos* (Vieillot), 1817: Kurrichane, i.e., Zeerust, western Transvaal (*vide* Sclater, *Syst.Av.Aethiop.*, part ii, 1930, p. 802), and with the mantle more strongly washed with dull rose, which colour also extends over the nape to the crown; red of rump and upper tail-coverts rather lighter, being about Jasper Red (pl. xiii) as against Pompeian Red (same pl.), and with the inner greater coverts and tertials rather less lucidly barred, the dark transverse bars being brown as opposed to black, the pale interspaces more brownish or buffy, less silvery white. Ranging distinctly larger in size: wings of ♂♀ 54-58, as against 50-54 mm. in Griqualand West, Orange Free State, Transvaal and Matabeleland, Southern Rhodesia, *E.e.erythronotos*, the tail also correspondingly longer. In addition to these differences, in series *E.e.soligena* is paler and more washed with rose over the throat and breast, and shows rather less black over the abdomen.

Material examined: *E.e.erythronotos*, 46 (Transvaal, 5; Southern Rhodesia, 34; Orange Free State, 1; West Griqualand, northern Cape, 6). *E.e.soligena*, 51 (South-West Africa, 30; Bechuanaland, 12; Barotseland and south-western Northern Rhodesia, 7; western Southern Rhodesia, 2).

Range: Central and northern South-West Africa, southern and south-western Angola, Barotseland and adjacent parts of south-western Northern Rhodesia, the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the western fringe of Southern Rhodesia, north-western Transvaal towards the Tuli Block, and Bechuanaland, northern Cape. Intergrades with nominate *E.erythronotos* to the east of its stated range.

Measurements of the Type: Wing 56, culmen 11.5, tarsus 18, tail 60.5 mm.

Remarks: The range of the nominate race can be defined as Matabeleland, Southern Rhodesia, southwards to the Transvaal, western Orange Free State and Griqualand West, northern Cape (specimens from near Kimberley, Kuruman and Olifantshoek). Material from the Transvaal is old and foxed, and one or two available from "Pretoria" are evidently specimens prepared from zoo captives, and the question of allocating the name *erythronotos* Vieillot, 1817, believed then to have come from India, has been settled on the basis of fresh material from Glen, in the Orange Free State, and Griqualand West, which shows incontrovertibly that it is the desertic populations which require to be named as a new race, and not those of the eastern and south-eastern rain-shadow region. The name given to this taxon is from the Latin *soligena*, a child of the sun, in allusion to the hot, sun-drenched regions inhabited by this xerophilous race.