

classified 34 skins as *taivana* (=77%), nine as *simillima* (=20%) and again one as *tschutschensis*. He also draws attention to a possible hybrid of *simillima* x *taivana*.

I think Mayr<sup>3</sup> was right when giving as his opinion that in this case only an analysis of breeding populations can lead to reliable results and that conclusions based on a study of specimens on migration or in their winter quarters may be misleading in such a difficult species complex as *Motacilla flava*.

#### References:

- <sup>1</sup> Voous, K. H. The races of Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*) wintering in the Indo Australian Archipelago; *Treubia* 20, 1949-1950, p. 647-656.
- <sup>2</sup> Voous, K. H. A new note on the races of the Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*) wintering in Borneo; *The Sarawak Museum Journal*, 9, 1959, p. 13-14.
- <sup>3</sup> Mayr, Ernst. The interpretation of variation among the Yellow Wagtails; *British Birds*, 49, 1956, p. 115-119.

## Some Pochard x Lesser Scaup hybrids

by BRYAN L. SAGE

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The hybrids discussed in this paper are of particular interest in that they are the only known specimens of this interspecific cross, and apparently not previously described.

Annie P. Gray (*Bird Hybrids* 1958) mentions only one instance of this cross having been obtained and that refers to the birds dealt with here. At least five of these hybrids were bred in captivity in 1928 by Lord Lilford, at Lilford Hall, Northamptonshire, England. The male parent was a European Pochard, *Aythya ferina* (L) and the female a Lesser Scaup, *Aythya affinis* (Eyton). The specimens that I have had available for study consist of an adult male and female in full plumage from the same brood. They were formerly in Lord Walter Rothschild's collection at Tring Museum, but are now with the Rothschild collection at the American Museum of Natural History, Registered Nos. 734547 and 734549 respectively. The geographical distribution of these species is such that natural hybrids are not to be expected.

### DESCRIPTION OF SPECIMENS

#### Male.

*Head and neck*—dark chestnut, darker and browner than in male Pochard; blackish-brown feathers are present on the posterior part of the crown and on the nape, and from the throat down the foreneck; there is a small white chin spot.

*Upper parts*—upper mantle dark greyish-brown with some blackish-brown feathers present at the sides and across the base of the neck; remainder of mantle, back and scapulars dark greyish on a brown ground colour, darker than in male Pochard, and finely vermiculated with greyish-white; rump and upper tail-coverts dark blackish-brown.

*Wings*—outer primaries dark brownish-grey; inner primaries and secondaries pale grey; wing-coverts mouse brown; under wing white.

*Under parts*—breast blackish-brown, the feathers of the central and lower breast with broad whitish tips; remainder of under parts pure



white; flanks and sides of body vermiculated with brownish, rather more markedly than in male Pochard; vent and lower belly finely vermiculated with pale greyish-brown.

#### Female.

*Head and neck*—virtually indistinguishable in colour and pattern from the females of the parental species, but sides of face below and behind the eyes, and the sides and front of the neck are strongly flecked with white; short thick white streak immediately posterior to the eye; some feathers of the crown, lores, area below the eyes, and the chin have blackish tips; the chin is broadly white and there is an extensive white facial shield covering a larger area than in the Lesser Scaup.

*Upper parts*—colour and feather pattern as in female Pochard, but back and mantle less grey and more brownish with very fine greyish vermiculations; the underlying colour of the back and mantle is as in the female Lesser Scaup.

*Wings*—wing-coverts pale ash-brown; secondaries pale grey; primaries ash-brown but darker than wing-coverts, paler on inner webs; a very faint olive gloss can be discerned on some of the primaries at certain angles in a strong light; under wing white.

*Under parts*—mainly white, shade and feather pattern similar to female Lesser Scaup but much whiter; upper breast and sides of breast darker brown; vent whitish with brownish-grey vermiculations; sides of body and flanks very pale grey-brown with fine greyish vermiculations.

#### MEASUREMENTS OF HYBRIDS AND PARENTAL SPECIES

	hybrid male	hybrid female	Pochard male	Pochard female	Lesser Scaup male	Lesser Scaup female
Wing	206	203	211–220	201–212	190–201	185–198
Culmen	44	43	45–49	43–47	38–42	36–40
Depth at nostrils	18.5	19	18*		17–19*	
Width at nostrils	20	20.5	18–19*		20–21*	
Max. width	20	23	19–20*		24*	

All measurements are in millimetres.

\*Six specimens measured.

From the above table it can be seen that the wing and culmen measurements of both sexes of the hybrid fall within the range of those for the female Pochard. It is worth noting, however, that the bill of the female hybrid is as spatulate as that of the Lesser Scaup, whilst that of the male hybrid is hardly more so than in the Pochard.

#### DISCUSSION

Hybrids in the Anatidae often exhibit characters which are not referable to either of the parental species, and which sometimes appear to be of phylogenetic significance. A close study of the plumage characters of these Pochard x Lesser Scaup hybrids in this connection is disappointing, both sexes being almost pure intermediates. However, it is worth drawing attention to the thick white streak immediately posterior to the eye in the



female hybrid. Until such time as further hybrids of various parentages have been examined and evaluated, it is not possible to say exactly what significance may be attached to this character. The female Pochard sometimes shows a pale streak in the same locus. But it may also be borne in mind that the females of the Redhead, *Aythya americana* (Eyton), Canvasback, *Aythya valisineria* (Wilson) and Ring-necked Duck, *Aythya collaris* (Donovan), normally show a thin white or pale line in the same area. A well developed thick white streak in conjunction with white at the base of the bill and on the sides of the head is found in the females of the African and South American Pochards, *Netta e. erythrophthalma* (Wied.) and *N. e. brunnea* (Eyton).

As already stated, wild hybrids between the Pochard and the Lesser Scaup are not possible due to the non-overlapping breeding distribution of the two species. However, natural hybrids between the Lesser Scaup and other American species in the genus *Aythya* may occur. In view of the fairly close morphological resemblance of the Redhead to the Pochard, hybrids between the Lesser Scaup and the former species may well exhibit an appearance similar to those described in this paper.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to Dr. Charles E. O'Brien of the American Museum of Natural History for kindly arranging the loan of the hybrid specimens from the Rothschild collection. Mr. J. D. Macdonald of the Bird Room, British Museum (Natural History), kindly gave me access to material in his charge. I also have to thank Dr. James M. Harrison for the loan of comparative material from his collection.

### The Lemon-breasted Canary in Nyasaland

R. CHARLES LONG AND C. W. BENSON

*Received 15th November, 1962*

We have examined an undoubted specimen (♂) of the Lemon-breasted Canary *Serinus citrinpectus* Clancey and Lawson, collected for one of us (R. C. L.) at Chiromo, southern Nyasaland on 1st April, 1962, and now in the Nyasaland Museum, Blantyre. Mr. M. P. Stuart Irwin has kindly compared it with material in the National Museum, Bulawayo. He reports that it is not fully adult, retaining the darker, more brown feathers characteristic of immature specimens on the upper side, though yellow feathers typical of adults are coming in on the throat and chest. It has wing 65, tail 37 mm., while Irwin has given us the following measurements in mm. of six specimens of *Serinus mozambicus* collected by R. C. L. in the Port Herald District, southern Nyasaland:

Wing: 2♂♂	66, 67	Tail: 38, 40
4♀♀	64, 66, 67, 67	38, 39, 39, 40

As Irwin (1961) has pointed out, *S. citrinpectus* averages slightly smaller than *S. mozambicus*, alongside which it lives.

This is the first record of *S. citrinpectus* from north of the Zambezi, though Irwin (1961) has recorded it from the south bank at Tambara, Portuguese East Africa.

#### Reference:

Irwin, M. P. Stuart. 1961. The taxonomic status and relationship of *Serinus citrinpectus* Clancey and Lawson, with notes on related members of the genus. *Durban Mus. Novit.*, 6 (11): 135-148.



Sage, Bryan L. 1963. "Some Pochard x Lesser Scaup hybrids." *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 83, 75–77.

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