

DESCRIPTIONS OF TWO NEW SPECIES OF FLYCATCHERS FROM PORTUGUESE SOUTH-EAST AFRICA.

BY ALWIN HAAGNER, Assistant in Transvaal Museum.

Amongst a small collection of skins sent me in August, 1908, for verification and identification by Mr. P. A. Sheppard, of Beira, several appeared to be new to science. To make certain of this before describing, they were sent to Dr. Reichenow of the Berlin Museum for comparison, who very kindly acceded to my request, for which I wish to tender him my thanks and due acknowledgment.

From the locality in which Mr. Sheppard resides, a collection of birds has already been made by a trained collector—Mr. C. H. B. Grant of the British Museum—and from which several new species have been described, so it is all the more noteworthy that, in addition, three new species and several new records for South Africa have been discovered by Mr. Sheppard.

I have named the first species after its discoverer, and for the second a new genus seems necessary to which I have also attached the name of its collector, giving to it the specific name of *gunningi*, in honour of Dr. J. W. B. Gunning, Director of the Transvaal Museum, who is now my chief. These birds have since been acquired by the Transvaal Museum.

BATIS SHEPPARDI, sp. nov.

(A.) Male. Top of the head and nape grey; a broad black band from the bill through the eye, over the cheek, and continued on to the nape; above this, a short, narrow, white line, forming the commencement of an eyebrow. Upperside olive brown, the feathers of the mantle and back with more or less partly hidden white spots; rump much greyer. Upper tail-coverts black; throat and sides of neck snow white, followed by a broad breast-band of orange-brown, which is continued on either side of the body on to the flanks, fading into whitish on the lower portion. Middle of the under-surface from the breast-band to the vent (including under tail-coverts) white. Axillaries and under wing-coverts for the inner half white; those nearest the edge of the wings black, tipped with white. Upper wing-coverts black, the median broadly tipped with white and the inner greater-coverts with the outer web also white. Rectrices tipped with white, the two outer feathers being also edged with white, very narrowly on the inner, broader (about half of the web) on the outer web. Length (of skin), 111 mm.; wing, 60, 75; tail, 35; tarsus, 18.5; bill 12; sex, incert. Locality: Mzimbiti, about twenty-three miles from Beira, Portuguese South-East Africa. 27th May, 1908. (P. A. Sheppard.)

I take this bird to be a male, from the pure white chin and throat, as the females of both *molitor* and *capensis* have a large patch of orange-brown on the throat, from both of which, if a female, it differs in the absence of this patch. In addition, the red flanks distinguish it from *molitor* and the black upper-wing coverts from *capensis*.

(B.) Female. Not quite adult; collected on the 3rd May, 1908, at the same place as the preceding skin. This example has the sides of the face

dark grey, and an eyebrow of buffish-white from the base of the bill, carried on to the temporal region; chin white; throat whitish, strongly washed with orange-brown. Flanks grey. Wings like that of *B. capensis* female. Length, 110; wing, 59; tail, 35; bill, 12.

Professor Reichenow asked me to compare these birds with the description of *B. erythrophthalma* of Swynnerton before describing, with which, however, it cannot be confused, as I have already shown; Swynnerton in his description distinctly stating that his bird resembles *B. capensis*, differing only in size and in the coloration of the iris, while my bird differs considerably from *B. capensis*.

SHEPPARDIA, gen. nov.

Resembling *Bradornis* in the narrower bill (6.25 mm. broad at base), tail shorter than the wing and nearly square (only the outer feather on either side hardly a mm. shorter than the others); differing from that genus in that the fourth to sixth primaries are the longest, the second longer than the eighth; rictal bristles well developed, reaching to within 5 mm. of the tip of the bill.

SHEPPARDIA GUNNINGI, sp. nov.

Male. Upperside olive-brown, greyer on the head and rustier on the rump and upper tail-coverts. A white eyebrow from the base of the bill behind the nostrils, till beyond the eye. Lores and ear-coverts greyer. Under surface ochreous-orange or pale orange-rufous; the centre of the body from the lower-breast to the under tail-coverts white, the latter slightly tinged with yellowish. Thighs grey. Upper wing-coverts slate-grey, the median shaded and edged with olive. Remiges brown, the first six or seven being edged with grey, and the remainder with rusty olive. Under wing-coverts whitish, tipped with pale yellow, those along the outer edge of the wing grey. Bill dark brown above, and tip of lower mandible; base of lower pale horn. Tail brown, the feathers edged with rusty olive on the outer web. Length, 130; wing, 70.5; tail, 46.75; bill, 13; tarsus, 19. Type in Transvaal Museum. Male; Mzimbiti, near Beira. 5th January, 1908. Collector: P. A. Sheppard.

This bird, which in general coloration resembles the *Callene cyornithopsis* of Sharpe (Bull. B.O.C. XII, 1901 and Ibis, 1902, p. 95, plate 4), and which I at first took for *C. sharpei* or *C. aequatorialis*, differs from these birds in its almost square tail, and in not agreeing with Reichenow's diagnosis of the generic character: "Schnabel seitlich zusammen gedrueckt," whereas this bird has a flatter bill, resembling that of *Bradornis*, but a little more slender. Dr. Reichenow has kindly examined the skin for me, and says that in his opinion it is certainly a "Musicapide." From *cyornithopsis* it differs in having only the centre of the abdomen white, thereby resembling Jackson's *aequatorialis*, but differing from the latter in the colour of the under tail-coverts, which in *aequatorialis* are "orange-rufous" (cf. Bull. B.O.C. CXXI, January, 1906, p. 46). From both of the just mentioned species *gunningi* is further distinguished by its white eyebrow, and from these, as well as *sharpei*, by its grey upper wing-coverts.



Bale & Danielsson, L^{td} imp.

BATIS SHEPPARDI HAAGN. ♂ & ♀ & SHEPPARDIA GUNNINGI, HAAGNER.



Haagner, Alwin. 1909. "Descriptions of two new species of flycatchers from Portuguese South-East Africa." *Annals of the Transvaal Museum* 1(3), 179–180.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/203520>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/352203>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Not in copyright. The BHL knows of no copyright restrictions on this item.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.