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NEW SUBSPECIES OF PHILIPPINE BIRDS

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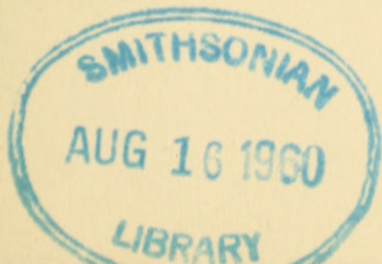
In connection with my current studies of the birds of central Luzon, I have reviewed the geographic variation of certain species in the Philippine archipelago as a whole. This has resulted in the discovery of several new subspecies, of which three are described here. For one of these, a race of the sunbird *Aethopyga shelleyi*, an old name is available. Specimens have been borrowed through the courtesy of the authorities of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), Chicago Natural History Museum (CNHM), U. S. National Museum (USNM), and Yale Peabody Museum (YPM). Luzon specimens of *Saxicola caprata* in Carnegie Museum (CM) were collected in connection with a project of the Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh, under the sponsorship of the Commission on Viral Infections, Armed Forces Epidemiological Board, and supported in part by the Office of the Surgeon General, U. S. Department of the Army.

Pitta sordida palawanensis, new subspecies

Type: Adult ♂, CM No. 100677, collected at Puerto Princesa, Palawan, Philippine Islands, by R. C. McGregor *et al.*, 10 August 1925.

Characters: Nearest *P. s. sordida* of the Philippine archipelago proper, but blue of rump and wing coverts of a richer, deeper cobalt color (deeper than in any other race of this widely distributed species); in *sordida* these areas are paler and greener, more of a turquoise color. The outer edges of the inner secondaries are bluer, less green, in *palawanensis*, although this can be matched in some specimens of *sordida*. The green of the dorsum of *palawanensis* can be seen, in series, to be lighter than that of *sordida*. This difference is not apparent on the underparts, which are subject to much individual variation in the amount of bluish wash over the green.

The odd plumage variation in which the green dorsal and ventral feathers are marked with black streaks is more common in *sordida* than in *palawanensis*. These markings, not known to be correlated with age or sex,



are present in 10 out of 25 (40%) of *sordida* examined, and in 3 out of 24 (12.5%) of *palawanensis*.

In addition to color differences described above, Palawan specimens have, on the average, longer bills than those of *sordida*.

Remarks: Three type specimens have been examined during this study; those of *Pitta atricapilla rothschildi* Parrot, *P. leucoptera* Elliot, and *P. persola* Brodkorb. The type of *rothschildi*, from Marinduque, is strikingly different from any other specimen of *Pitta sordida* examined in having a strong blue wash on the underparts. Other characters ascribed to it by Parrot are not apparent. A female from Marinduque, however, collected within three days of the type of *rothschildi*, is inseparable from a series of *sordida*, and I agree with Hartert (1922: 379) that *rothschildi* represents an extreme variant of *P. s. sordida*. The type of *leucoptera* is a very young juvenile without data. The blue feathers of the rump do not match those of Palawan birds in shade, so *leucoptera* need not be considered as a possible name for the Palawan race.

The type of *Pitta persola* Brodkorb, 1934, is in the Museum of Zoology of the University of Michigan, where I examined it on 16 April 1957. It is a specimen in very poor condition. The underparts are badly faded, and the abdomen may well have been as brilliantly red as in any *sordida* when fresh. There is no sign of any black in mid-abdomen, "*persola*" in this respect resembling CM No. 100845, an immature specimen of *sordida palawanensis*. There are, however, no other indications of immaturity about the type of *persola*, in spite of the conjectures of Hachisuka (1935: 423). The bill of this specimen, although broken, can be seen to be smaller than that of normal *P. s. sordida*, and thus much smaller than that of *P. s. palawanensis*. The nostril of *persola* was described as being "narrow and almost linear, instead of broad and oblique" as in the single specimen of "*sordida*" (= *palawanensis*) examined by Brodkorb. Actually the nostril is not unlike that of certain specimens of *sordida*; there is much variation in apparent shape of the nostrils depending on the way the operculum has dried, and on whether a thread was passed through the nostrils by the preparator (a deplorable but virtually universal practice). The supposed darker bill and feet of *persola* can be matched in series of *sordida*. The two characters in which *persola* departs completely from *P. s. sordida* and *P. s. palawanensis* are the green rather than black tail, and the complete absence of white on the primaries. As noted by Hachisuka (*loc. cit.*), these are characteristics of a southern group of subspecies of *Pitta sordida* from the Celebes, New Guinea, etc. This fact, together with the "make" of the skin itself, suggests that the type of *Pitta persola* was probably a native trade skin purchased by Steere in the market in Puerto Princesa. I cannot agree with Meise (1938: 158) in considering *persola* to be an aberrant specimen of the Palawan population of *Pitta sordida*; the name *persola* will probably find its way into the synonymy of one of the southern races of *Pitta sordida*, but it is certainly not applicable to the population here called *Pitta sordida palawanensis*.

Measurements (in millimeters): Bill from anterior edge of nostril:

P. s. sordida; 12.4, 13.1, 13.5, 13.5, 13.7, 13.8, 13.9, 14.1, 14.3, 14.4, 14.8, 14.8, 14.9, 14.9, 15.0, 15.1, 15.3. *P. s. palawanensis*; 14.5, 14.7, 15.2, 15.3, 15.3, 15.3, 15.7, 15.7, 16.3, 16.4, 16.4, 16.5, 16.6, 17.2, 17.6. Sexes are alike in size. There is no significant difference in wing length between *palawanensis* and *sordida* in general. Within *sordida*, two birds from Negros and one from Samar are rather short-winged (95, 101, and 97 mm as compared with 101–107 mm for Luzon birds), and the Samar specimen has the smallest bill of any Philippine example measured (12.4 mm). It is doubtful, however, whether any further subdivision of *sordida* is either practical or desirable.

Specimens examined (adults only): *P. s. palawanensis*: PALAWAN—23; BALABAC—1. *P. s. sordida*: LUZON—8; MARINDUQUE—2 (including type of *rothschildi*); MINDORO—1; NEGROS—2; CEBU—1; SIKUIJOR—1; SAMAR—1; MINDANAO—1; BASILAN—4; JOLO—3; TAWI-TAWI—1. Also types of *Pitta leucoptera* and *P. persola*, and specimens in AMNH of all recognized races of *P. sordida*.

***Saxicola caprata randi*, new subspecies**

Type: Female, AMNH No. 459839, collected at Bondo, Siaton, Negros, Philippine Islands, by D. S. Rabor, 30 January 1954 (collector's No. 5931).

Characters: Females differ from *S. c. caprata* of Luzon as follows: much blacker above; throat paler, more grayish or whitish rather than cinnamon-buff; underparts with heavy black shaft-streaks, accentuated in worn plumage; thighs distinctly spotted rather than faintly spotted or immaculate; under tail coverts averaging paler buff, contrasting more with color of lower abdomen; a partly-concealed white patch, formed by the inner webs of the smaller tertials and adjacent coverts, is present on some (not all) individuals, varying in degree of development (this mark absent in *caprata*). Females agree with those of *S. c. anderseni* Salomonson from Mindanao in coldness of color tone and frequent presence of white wing-patch, but *anderseni* is a pale race with little or no shaft-streaking on the underparts. Males of the three Philippine races are not surely separable, although there is a tendency for *caprata* to have solidly black axillars, those of *randi* and *anderseni* usually being tipped with white.

Remarks: Specimens of *randi* have been examined from Negros, Bohol, and Siquijor. One female from Panay and one from Mindoro are too pale to be *randi* and too gray to be *caprata*, most nearly resembling the geographically distant *anderseni*. Additional specimens may show the existence of another race from the islands south of Luzon and north of Negros and Bohol. A single male from Ticao is unidentifiable.

This subspecies is named for Dr. A. L. Rand of the Chicago Natural History Museum, in recognition of his many contributions to our knowledge of the birds of the central Philippines.

Specimens examined: *S. c. caprata*: LUZON—20. *S. c. randi*: NEGROS—5; BOHOL—14; SIKUIJOR—1. *S. c. anderseni*: MINDANAO—6. *S. c. subsp.*: MINDORO—2; PANAY—1; TICA—1.

Aethopyga shelleyi minuta Bourns and Worcester

The subspecies *flavipectus* of the highly polytypic sunbird *Aethopyga shelleyi* is assigned by Delacour and Mayr (1946: 232) to the islands of Luzon, Mindoro, and Polillo. The subspecies *rubrinota*, described from the small island of Lubang (northwest of Mindoro), is considered by these authors to be "doubtfully separable." Gilliard (1950: 500) erroneously cites the type locality of *flavipectus* as Mindoro; Ogilvie-Grant based this name on Whitehead's specimens "from the mountains of Northern Luzon." I have been able to locate only four specimens from northern Luzon; all are in the AMNH, and all, unfortunately, are males. Comparison of these specimens with others from central and southern Luzon and Mindoro, and with *rubrinota* from Lubang (lacking in the AMNH collection and thus not seen by Delacour and Mayr) indicates not only that *rubrinota* is a valid race, but that *flavipectus* is confined to northern Luzon. A third race inhabits Luzon south of the range of *flavipectus*; these birds are inseparable from those of Mindoro, so the name *Aethopyga minuta* Bourns and Worcester (1894: 18), based on a lost unique type from Mindoro, may be revived for this additional race.

Males of true *flavipectus* from northern Luzon are similar to *rubrinota* of Lubang in being pale yellow below; however, the yellow is slightly deeper in *flavipectus*, and is palest and greenest on the throat, deepening posteriorly. In *rubrinota* the yellow is nearly uniform. The relative depth of the yellow of the rump agrees with that of the breast. The iridescence of the forehead is definitely more purplish, less green in *rubrinota*. This is also true, although difficult to see, of the posterior half of the iridescent moustachial stripe. This difference in iridescence does *not* hold true for the upper tail coverts, which are identical in color in the two races. The red of the back and sides of face and neck is slightly duller in *rubrinota*.

True *flavipectus* differs from *minuta* in being decidedly paler yellow below and on the rump, and in having the green of the crown darker and duller. Only one of the 9 adult males of *minuta* seen has a bill as slender as those of the 4 *flavipectus*. Width at the base of the bill, in millimeters, is as follows:

flavipectus: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.3

minuta (Luzon): 3.7, 3.7, 3.8, 3.8

minuta (Mindoro): 3.2, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.9.

Ripley and Rabor (1958: 73) found a difference in the red of the back between their three Mindoro males and a single male from Tayabas, Luzon. When additional specimens are examined, this difference is shown to be due to individual variation.

As mentioned previously, no females of true *flavipectus* from northern Luzon were available. Females of *rubrinota* agree with males with respect to general paleness of their yellows. Females of *minuta* appear to be highly variable, and the material at hand does not show conclusively whether or not this may be correlated with age. None of the specimens is marked "immature" or "adult" on the label, but I suspect that the

paler, grayer (less greenish below) females such as CNHM No. 98896 (Lamao, Bataan, Luzon) may be immature individuals.

The geographic variation of *Aethopyga shelleyi* in the northern Philippines parallels in some respects that of *Parus elegans* (Parkes, 1958). In both species there is a pale, greenish-yellow race in the mountains of northern Luzon, while the richly yellow birds of southern Luzon and Mindoro are inseparable. Ripley and Rabor (1958: 67-69) did not recognize the northern Luzon *Parus elegans montigenus*, but they had adequate material only from Mindoro. Their series of 17 adult males from Mindoro, 4 from northern Luzon, and 2 from southern Luzon, were all included within the series of 18, 37, and 19, respectively, assembled for my revision of this species. The larger series does not support the conclusions of Ripley and Rabor.

Specimens examined: *A. s. rubrinota*: LUBANG—4 ♂, 3 ♀. *A. s. flavipectus*: LUZON—Sablan, Benguet, 2 ♂; "North Luzon," 2 ♂. *A. s. minuta*: LUZON—Bataan Prov., 3 ♂, 1 ♀; Laguna Prov., 4 ♀; Tayabas (= Quezon) Prov., 1 ♂, 1 ♀. MINDORO—Mt. Halcon range, 4 ♂, 1 ♀; Rio Baco, 1 ♂, 1 ♀; Alcate, Victoria, 1 ♂, 1 ♀. Ripley and Rabor (1958: 14) list *Aethopyga shelleyi* among the species typical of "lowlands and rolling country" that also extend their range into "foothills and moderate mountain elevations (1,500-3,500 feet altitude)." But USNM No. 202457 was taken at 4,500 feet on a "spur of main ridge of Mt. Halcon," and AMNH Nos. 686595-6 at 5,000 feet on Mt. Dulangan.

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