

collected on the 16th May and said to have the skull not yet completely ossified, and with a male from Abercorn, Zambia, obtained on the 9th January, by being a rather bright golden green above on crown and mantle, with a faint greenish or yellowish wash on the underparts, though this is less noticeable in the male from Abercorn. Another male from this latter locality dated 2nd October, is however, somewhat duller, less golden green above and greyer on the under side. It more closely matches two western Zambian specimens from Kabompo Boma on 13th June and the Lisombo stream in the Mwinilunga District, on the 14th June, which are clearly separable. All the series are in fresh plumage.

Chapin *op. cit.* dismissed the race *I. m. angolensis* Monard, admitted by Friedmann (1958: 65–68), and accepted as valid by Traylor (1963: 108). The above-mentioned characters would seem to support some racial variation, though Friedmann extended the range of *I. m. angolensis* eastwards to Malawi and has written "*angolensis*" on the Malawi specimen discussed above. Larger series are obviously required before any final decisions can be reached. It may be mentioned that the duller and greyer birds, here considered as probably representing *angolensis*, are in coloration a far closer counterpart of *I. minor* than the more eastern examples of *meliphilus*.

This record constitutes a very considerable extension of the known range, extending its distribution, south of the Zambesi River, some 275 miles from Port Herald, Malawi, at the same time adding a new species to the South African Sub-region. A very brief description of the Haroni-Lusitu area is provided by Smithers (1956: 168) and the region is further discussed by Irwin (1963: 24–25). It possesses a number of unique features, with an admixture of montane and lowland avifaunal elements, to the latter of which this small honey-guide more probably belongs. It is undoubtedly more widespread than this solitary record might indicate and is certain to occur in adjacent Portuguese East Africa, from whence it undoubtedly ranges only very marginally within Rhodesian limits.

All the material mentioned in this discussion is in the collection of the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo.

References:

- Chapin, J. P. 1962. Sibling species of small African Honey-guides. *Ibis*, 104: 40–44.
Friedmann, H. 1958. The status of the Gray-breasted Least Honey-guide. *Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash.*, 71: 65–68.
Irwin, M. P. S. 1963. Systematic and Distributional notes on Southern African birds. *Durb. Mus. Novit.*, 7(1): 17–26.
Long, R. C. 1961. The birds of Port Herald District. Pt. II, *Ostrich*, 32: 23–35.
Smithers, R. H. N. 1956. Some interesting Rhodesian records IV. *Ostrich*, 27: 168–170.
Traylor, M. A. 1963. Check List of Angolan birds. *Publ. Cult. Comp. Cia. Diamant. Angola*, 61: 1–222.

The Spike-heeled Lark *Chersomanes albofasciata* in East Africa

by C. W. BENSON

Received 8th December, 1965

Mr. J. S. S. Beesley, of the Tropical Pesticides Research Institute, has asked me to study a specimen of the Spike-heeled Lark collected by him in northern Tanzania. It represents an extension of known range of over 1,200 miles, from central Angola, and the species is only otherwise known

in the Republic of South Africa, South-West Africa and Bechuanaland (White, 1961: 33–35). As is also to be expected, this specimen represents a very well marked subspecies, which I name:—

Chersomanes albofasciata beesleyi subsp. nov.

Type: Adult male, testes enlarged (from drawing on label about 6 x 3 mm.), from Masai Plains, 30 miles north of Arusha, northern Tanzania, collected by J. S. S. Beesley, 2nd November, 1965. British Museum (Natural History) registered number 1965.37.1.

Diagnosis: On upperside most similar to *C. a. obscurata* (Hartert), but much less dark, blackish-brown rather than near jet-black, with similar whitish margins on mantle and wing-coverts, but nape and margins on crown whitish rather than reddish, the upper tail-coverts slightly paler red. On underside, dusky streaking on chest more pronounced than in any other subspecies; in tone of russet on lower chest to abdomen much paler than *obscurata*, nearest to *C. a. kalahariae* (Ogilvie-Grant) and *erikssoni* (Hartert).

Measurements: Wing 80; tail 41; culmen from base 20; tarsus 27; hind claw 15 mm.

Colour of soft parts: Iris mid-brown, pupil dark brown; upper mandible dark grey-brown, lower pale horn; legs pale flesh.

Remarks: In the general blackish-brown tone of the upperside, *beesleyi* is much more similar to *Pseudalaemon fremantlii delamerei* Sharpe and *Calandrella rufescens athensis* (Sharpe), specimens of both of which Mr. Beesley has also collected near Arusha, than it is to any other subspecies of *Chersomanes albofasciata*. It seems also to be unusually small (wing 80 mm. only), White (1961) giving the wing-length of the male of two other subspecies, *obscurata* and *C. a. boweni* (de Schauensee), as respectively 81–89 and 81–91 mm.

Mr. Beesley is to be congratulated on this most unexpected discovery, and he realised that the specimen apparently belonged to *C. albofasciata*. He writes that on 23rd October, 1965 he was studying a large congregation of five species of larks in short grass plains 30 miles north of Arusha, among which was a party of eight birds which attracted his attention by their unusual appearance. They had the tail very short, wings rather broad, head largish, and the neck long or frequently stretched out. They were active runners, and each time they were approached by car they ran, then stopped to turn and stare, head on, occasionally bickering among themselves. The calls were unusual and wader-like, “tit, tit, titera” or “titter-titter-titter”, and “tui-tui-tui-tui-tui”. In flight, the white tips to the tail-feathers were very conspicuous. Subsequently, thanks to the assistance of Mr. D. Vesey-FitzGerald, he was able to collect the specimen and have it skinned. Its stomach-contents were insects, including coleopteran fragments.

I am grateful to Mrs. B. P. Hall for comparing with me the specimen of *beesleyi* with the comprehensive southern African material of *Chersomanes albofasciata* in the British Museum. She agrees with me that it is mandatory to name it.

Reference:

White, C. M. N. (1961). *A revised check list of African broadbills, pittas, larks, swallows, wagtails and pipits*. Government Printer, Lusaka.



Benson, C. W. 1966. "The spike-heeled lark *Chersomanes albofasciata* in East Africa." *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 86, 76–77.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/126843>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/77680>

Holding Institution

Natural History Museum Library, London

Sponsored by

Natural History Museum Library, London

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

Rights Holder: British Ornithologists' Club

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Rights: <https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

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>.