

*Measurements:* 10♂♂ wing 66.0–70.0 (67.3), tail 48.0–51.0 (49.3), culmen 12.5–14.0 (13.3); 10♀♀ wing 63.0–67.0 (64.8), tail 45.0–51.0 (47.7), culmen 13.0–14.0 (13.5) mm.

*Material:* 56 (Southern Rhodesia 25, Northern Rhodesia 20, Nyasaland 5, northern Moçambique 5, Angola 1).

*Range:* Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, Angola, south-eastern Congo, Nyasaland and northern Moçambique.

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## The races of the Flaming Sunbird (*Aethopyga flagrans*)

by KENNETH C. PARKES

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The Flaming Sunbird (*Aethopyga flagrans*) is an endemic Philippine species, one of the most attractive members of a generally highly coloured genus of sunbirds. I have examined 70 specimens of this species, representing the combined material in Carnegie Museum, American Museum of Natural History, U.S. National Museum, and Peabody Museum of Yale University. I am indebted to the authorities of the latter three institutions for permission to use their specimens.

Study of this series shows that a stepped cline of increasing redness exists within the Philippines from north to south. Two subspecies are currently recognized: “*A. f. flagrans* (Luzon, Catanduanes), mantle deep olive yellow tinged with orange on the upper back and shoulders; *A. f. guimarensis* [error for *guimarasensis*] (Negros, Panay, Guimaras), mantle blood red.” (Delacour and Mayr, *Birds of the Philippines*, 1946, p. 231). The geographic variation in this species warrants recognition of four rather than two races. In most subdivisions of clines for nomenclatorial purposes the end-points receive the earliest names, and later authors may seek to apply names to additional transitional stages. In the case of *Aethopyga flagrans*, however, the terminal populations are the nameless ones.

Rand (1951, *Fieldiana: Zoology*, 31: 588) considered 1 Guimaras, 2 Panay and 3 Negros males to “agree fairly well among themselves,”



and called them all *guimarasensis*. Examination of a somewhat larger series from these islands indicates that Negros males are quite recognizably distinct from males from Guimaras and Panay; females rather less distinctive. The Negros race may be known as

*Aethopyga flagrans daphoenonota*, subsp. nov.

*Type*: American Museum of Natural History no. 488,886, adult ♂, collected at Luzuriaga (4,500' elevation), Cuernos de Negros, Negros Oriental Province, Philippines, 22nd December, 1952, by D. S. Rabor (collector's no. 4038).

*Characters*: Males similar to *A. f. guimarasensis* Steere (type locality Guimaras), but with blood red of mantle extending farther posteriorly; posterior portion of back, wing-coverts, and edges of remiges washed with deep orange rather than greenish; orange-red of mid-abdomen slightly richer and more concentrated, less diffuse. As for females, the differences between Negros and Panay specimens described by Rand (*op. cit.*: 589) are, as he postulated, due to relative wear, as shown by comparison of freshly moulted specimens. Negros females are brighter above, more greenish (less grey) on the rump, and have more of an orange wash on edges of remiges and wing-coverts than females of *guimarasensis*. The chin and upper throat in females of *daphoenonota* are clearer, more whitish-grey, and there is a tendency toward concentration of the orange-yellow of the venter, paralleling the condition in Negros males.

This sunbird can be added to the growing list of species in which geographic variation within the large island of Luzon has been demonstrated. The type locality of *Aethopyga flagrans* Oustalet is "Laguna", presumably referring to the vicinity of Laguna de Baie in south-central Luzon. The original description clearly indicates the orange wash on the dorsum typical of the southern population. The only other available name appears to be *Cinnyris excellens* Grant, which was based on specimens from Albay Province in southern Luzon and is therefore a synonym of *flagrans*. The population of northern Luzon is thus nameless, and may be called

*Aethopyga flagrans decolor*, subsp. nov.

*Type*: American Museum of Natural History no. 688,081, adult ♂, collected at Cape Engaño, north-easternmost Luzon, Philippines, 19th April, 1895, by J. Whitehead.

*Characters*: Similar to nominate *flagrans* from southern Luzon, but adults of both sexes olive-yellow above, lacking almost completely the orange dorsal wash typical of that race; orange of breast stripe and abdominal patch of males duller and less reddish; adult females greyer, less greenish on crown and throat. Juveniles cannot be distinguished.

*Specimens examined*: *A. f. guimarasensis*—Guimaras, 2; Panay, 7. *A. f. daphoenonota*—Negros, 10. *A. f. flagrans*—(all Luzon) Laguna Prov., 34; Sorsogon Prov., 5; Albay Prov., 2; Cavite Prov., 1; Tayabas Prov., 1. Catanduanes specimens, not examined; presumably belong here. *A. f. decolor*—(all Luzon) Cagayan Prov., 5; Ilocos Norte Prov., 3.





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