

Bird Room



BULLETIN

OF THE

BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

No. CCCIX.

THE three-hundred-and-fourth Meeting of the Club was held at Pagani's Restaurant, 42-48 Great Portland Street, W. 1, on Wednesday, November 10th, 1926.

Chairman : H. F. WITHERBY.

Members present :—W. SHORE BAILY ; E. C. STUART BAKER ; D. A. BANNERMAN ; F. J. F. BARRINGTON ; P. F. BUNYARD ; A. L. BUTLER ; R. H. DEANE ; Lieut.-Col. A. DELMÉ-RADCLIFFE ; C. DE WORMS ; A. EZRA ; Major S. S. FLOWER ; The Hon. M. HACHISUKA ; Dr. E. HARTERT ; Rev. F. C. R. JOURDAIN ; N. B. KINNEAR (*Editor*) ; J. SPEDAN LEWIS ; Dr. G. C. LOW (*Hon. Sec. & Treas.*) ; N. S. LUCAS ; Lieut.-Col. H. A. F. MAGRATH ; Dr. P. H. MANSON-BAHR ; G. M. MATHEWS ; T. H. NEWMAN ; C. OLDHAM ; G. H. R. PYE-SMITH ; C. B. RICKETT ; Lord ROTHSCHILD ; W. L. SCLATER ; D. SETH-SMITH ; Major A. G. L. SLADEN ; C. G. TALBOT-PONSONBY ; W. H. THORPE ; B. W. TUCKER ; L. J. TURTLE.

Visitors :—Lieut.-Col. J. S. CAMERON ; H. B. COTT ; W. GOODFELLOW ; Dr. C. P. SYMONDS ; W. S. FLOWER.

- 9 DEC 1926
PURCHASED

The Hon. M. U. HACHISUKA read the following note on "The Nomenclatorial Problem of Mutations" :—

Among birds, mutations are not so frequent as in other groups of animals. There are, however, several generally accepted examples, but their nomenclature is so irregular that, unless some definitely fixed form of nomenclature is used in future, such cases will always prove misleading.

Zoologists since Linnæus have applied the term "Varietas" (usually abbreviated into "Var.") to all classes of specimens which differ from the normal examples of a species, *i. e.*, both to "Geographical Races" and "Individual Variations," also to the class under consideration, *i. e.*, "Mutations." Linnæus, however, only applied the term "Varietas" to "Geographical Races." Modern workers have entirely abandoned the misleading terms "Varietas" = "Variety" and apply the term "Subspecies" to denote a "Geographical Race," expressed trinomially, and the term "Aberration" to denote an individual departure from the normal and express it thus "ab. *nigra*." But, hitherto, no special term has been adopted to denote a Mutation. As an example we find the abnormal dark *race* of the Golden Pheasant usually expressed as *Chrysolophus pictus* var. *obscurus*, but it is really a mutation, *i. e.*, a departure from the normal which if paired with a similar bird will breed true, though arising, like an aberration, spontaneously. If, however, an aberration occurs more or less normally, modern writers denote it by the term *forma dimorphica*, abbreviated to "form. dimorph." An example of this is the Wheatear, *Œnanthe hispanica*, which has sometimes a black throat and sometimes a white throat.

However, from modern observations and research into evolution, it is quite clear that many, if not most, of our present-day species have come into existence by evolutionary differentiation from their immediate predecessors, and no doubt quite a considerable number of them by sudden "mutational jumps" accompanied by the capacity of breeding true to type. In the past these mutations in many instances were considered to be distinct species—for example, "The Black-winged Pea-fowl" as *Pavo nigripennis*

of Dr. Sclater and the "Black-throated Golden Pheasant," *Thaumalea obscura* of Schlegel. These were afterwards found to be varieties produced through domestication, but, as they breed true, it would be wrong to call them simply *Pavo cristatus* and *Thaumalea picta* without any qualification. Professor Lönnberg also has described a form of Capercaillie from Kajaani, Finland, as *Tetrao urogallus lugens*. This bird appears to be a wild mutation, and therefore should not be designated as an ordinary subspecies. I propose that all such mutations, both wild and domestic, should be distinguished by the abbreviation "mut.," signifying mutation, thus:—

Pavo cristatus mut. *nigripennis* Sclat.

Chrysolophus pictus mut. *obscurus* (Schleg.).

Of course, such nomenclature can only be used if we have fairly good evidence that the abnormality thus treated is really a mutation and not merely an aberration. In most cases the proof, except by direct breeding experiments, will not be easy to obtain. Much care and investigation must, therefore, be carried out before anyone should make use of this new method of treating mutations as distinct from casual aberrations.

Mr. HACHISKA also named the following new mutation of *Phasianus colchicus*:—

After exhibiting and describing the melanistic form of the common Pheasant which I showed at the last meeting of the Club (see Bull. B. O. C. cccv. p. 101, 1926), both Lord Rothschild and Mr. Seth-Smith remarked that this form of Pheasant was well known and that in the Zoological Gardens it had bred true.

I therefore have no hesitation in saying it is a true mutant and I propose to call it

Phasianus colchicus mut. *tenebrosus*, mut. nov.

Type in the Tring Museum. ♂. Norfolk. (For description, see Bull. B. O. C. p. 106, 1926.)

NOTE.—So far as we know at present, this mutation has only appeared among the semi-feral Pheasants in England.

Contrary to the opinion held by some ornithologists, I consider *Phasianus colchicus* and *P. versicolor* to be two distinct species, not subspecies, and I therefore consider that there is no cross of *versicolor* in the bird above named. At first I hesitated to call it anything but *Phasianus tenebrosus*, mut. nov., but this term is too vague, and rather reluctantly I must add the *colchicus*, as Lord Rothschild points out that it is undoubtedly a true mutant of the *birds* I consider to belong to the "Formenkreiss" of *colchicus*.

At the same time, however, it is theoretically possible that this form of mutation occurs among true *P. versicolor*.

Mr. Hachisuka's remarks were followed by a discussion in which a number of members joined, and from the views expressed it was evident that the majority were against the advisability of naming mutations.

Mr. HACHISUKA further described the following fifteen new forms from the Oriental Region:—

***Dendrobiastes hyperythrus sumatranus*, subsp. nov.** ✓

Adult male bluish-slate above, intermediate in colour between *D. h. malayana* and the new form described below. The underside is a very strong rusty yellow of deeper shade than in any of the other subspecies, and the bill is broad and stout as in *D. h. hyperythrus* and *D. h. mjöbergi* from Borneo, and larger than in either *D. h. malayana* or *D. h. vulcani* from Java.

In the female the underside is reddish, of a lighter shade than in *D. h. malayana*.

Type in British Museum. ♂. Siolak Daras, 3000 ft., Korinchi, Sumatra, 25th March, 1914. Collected by H. C. Robinson and C. B. Kloss. Registered No. 1920.6.29.328.

Material examined. Six examples from Korinchi and one from "Sumatra."

***Dendrobiastes hyperythrus taivanicus*, subsp. nov.** ✓

Adult male clear slate-blue above, lighter in tint than any of the other forms; below similar to *D. h. annamensis*, but slightly lighter.

Female yellowish-brown, lighter in colour than any of the other races and wanting the green tinge.

Type in British Museum. ♂. Tongapo, Formosa, 9th Jan., 1894. Collected by P. A. Holst. Registered No. 1899.7.2.494.

Material examined. Five specimens from Formosa; Tongapo, Laulong, Mt. Arizan and Ho Ho Mt., 5000 ft.

***Suya superciliaris klossi*, subsp. nov.**

Distinguished from *S. s. superciliaris*, Yunnan and Burma, in the absence of black markings on the breast and whiter and less buff under surface.

Type in British Museum. ♂. Dalat, 4500 ft., S. Annam, 7th April, 1918. Collected by C. B. Kloss. Registered No. 1919.12.20.394.

NOTE.—This race is intermediate between the typical race and *S. s. albogularis* from Sumatra. Birds from the type-locality (Yunnan) have dark markings on the breast which are not shown in the figure on plate ii. of Anderson's 'Zoology of Western Yunnan.' The bird in this plate resembles *S. s. klossi*, but the upper parts and tail are lighter. Examples collected by Delacour in Laos are very heavily marked.

Material examined. Four specimens from Dalat, S. Annam, and a large series from Yunnan and Sumatra.

***Horornis canturians taivanorum*, subsp. nov.**

Distinguished from *H. c. canturians* by the less rufous upper side, especially on the head, the less distinct eyebrows, and more strongly coloured underparts of yellowish-brown, which colour is most conspicuous on the breast and flanks.

Type in British Museum. ♂. Hills near Tamsui, N. Formosa, 24th Feb., 1895, ex C. B. Rickett collection. Registered No. 1905.12.24.722.

Material examined. Over thirty examples of *H. c. taivanorum* and about forty of *H. c. canturians* from S. China.

NOTE.—La Touche, 'Birds of East China,' part iii. p. 263, suggests that the winter-quarters of *H. c. borealis* are in Formosa, but this is not confirmed by specimens in the British Museum Collection.

A single specimen in the British Museum from N.W. Luzon belongs to the present race.

***Setaria albigularis leucogastra*, subsp. nov.**

Similar in size to *S. a. albigularis*, but distinguished by the lighter underparts, flanks only very light buff, and breast of a pale French grey instead of dark grey.

Measurements :—Wing 73–77 mm. ; tail 57–60.

Type in British Museum. ♂. Paku, Sarawak, Borneo, December 1878. Collected by A. H. Everett. Registered No. 1878.5.3.15.

Material examined. Six examples of the new race from Borneo : Mt. Dulet, Paku, Bintulu, and Lawas R., and a good series of the typical form.

***Turdinus macrodactylus bakeri*, subsp. nov.**

Distinguished from *T. m. macrodactylus* from Malacca by the greyer and less rufous underside, the flanks and under tail-coverts buffish-brown, the back less rufous, and the ear-coverts not so dark as in the typical form. It is also a little larger.

Type in British Museum. ♂. Lam ra, Trang, N. Malay Peninsula, 19th Jan., 1910. Collected by Kuala Lumpur Mus. collector. Registered No. 1910.12.27.295.

Material examined. Five examples of the new form from Chong Hill and Lam ra, Trang, N. Malay Peninsula, and Tung Song Paa, Peninsular Siam, and a considerable number of *T. m. macrodactylus*.

NOTE.—Named in honour of Mr. Stuart Baker, who has examined the series and agrees that the birds are different. Mr. Baker had previously expressed his opinion on these birds in Journ. Nat. Hist. Siam, vol. iii. p. 187.

***Eupetes macrocerus subrufus*, subsp. nov.**

Specimens from Borneo are very richly coloured, the rufous on the underparts more extensive, and the upper parts are much redder especially on the tail, while the head is very rich brown.

Immature birds can be distinguished from similar specimens of the typical form by the deep brown head and upper surface.

Type in British Museum. ♀. Mt. Dulit, Sarawak, Borneo, 3000 ft., October 1898. Collected by C. Hose. Registered No. 1900.2.15.45.

Material examined. Six of the new race and about twenty from the Malay Peninsula, Java, Sumatra, etc.

NOTE.—A skin in the British Museum, No. 94.7.5.65, from Penrisen, is very pale and the bill is slightly longer and cannot be separated from the typical race. Birds from Java and Sumatra appear to belong to *E. m. macrocerus*.

***Dicæum hæmatostictum whiteheadi*, subsp. nov.**

Above glossy metallic blue instead of slate-blue. The black feathers on the breast and abdomen are more abundant.

Type in British Museum. ♂. Mt. Canloan, Negros, 26th March, 1896. Collected by J. Whitehead. Registered No. 1897.5.13.441.

Material examined. Eight of the new form and eleven from Panay and Guimaras.

***Dicæum pygmæum palawanorum*, subsp. nov.** ✓

Distinguished by the larger bill, which is at least 1 mm. longer than in typical bird. It is also larger and the black of the back duller.

Type in British Museum. ♂. Iwahig, Palawan, 26th June, 1907. Collected by W. P. Lowe. Registered No. 1911.11.16.305.

Material examined. Ten specimens of the new race and about twenty from the islands of the Philippines.

Measurements :—

D. p. pygmæum, Philippine Is. Wing 42–47 mm.

D. p. palawanorum, Philippine Is. Wing 45–48 mm.

(The difference in measurements between the sexes is sometimes as much as 6 mm., but as most of the birds examined are not sexed this true difference in the size of the two forms is not clearly shown in the measurements given.)

Zosterops aureiventer parvus, subsp. nov. ✓

Differs from *Z. a. buxtoni* of Java and Sumatra in the smaller size.

Measurements :—*Z. a. parvus*. Wing 46–48 mm.

Z. a. buxtoni. „ 49–53 „

Type in British Museum. ♂. Kina Balu, N. Borneo, 30th March, 1887. Collected by J. Whitehead. Registered No. 1898.9.30.223.

Material examined. Five examples of the new race and nine of *Z. a. buxtoni*.

Zosterops palpebrosa harterti, subsp. nov. ✓

Nearest to *Z. p. peguensis*, but distinguished by its smaller size. From *Z. p. simplex* it differs in the paler coloration and smaller size.

Measurements :—

Z. p. peguensis. Pegu & Tenasserim. Wing 55–57 mm.

Z. p. simplex. S.E. China. „ 56–58 „

Z. p. harterti. Formosa and „ 53–55 „

Hainan. „ 50–55 „

Material examined. Six examples of *Z. p. peguensis*, nine *Z. p. harterti*, and a number of *Z. p. simplex*.

Dr. Hartert, Nov. Zool. xvii. pp. 242–243, 1910, has already remarked on the difference of Formosan specimens, and Mr. Stuart Baker also expressed the same views ('Ibis,' 1922, p. 144).

Type in British Museum. ♂. Nanto Distr., Central Formosa, March 1908. Collected by A. Moltrecht. Registered No. 1909.10.29.11.

Dicrurus leucogenys meridionalis, subsp. nov. ✓

This new race is at once distinguished by its darker plumage and somewhat smaller size. Birds from Western and Northern China are generally darker, while those from S.E. China are the lightest.

Measurements :—*D. l. meridionalis.*

3 ♂ . Wing 135–142 mm.; outer tail-feather 125–140 mm.
 5 ♀ . „ 130–140 „ „ „ 125–135 „

D. l. leucogenys.

8 ♂ . Wing 135–145 mm.; outer tail-feather 130–140 mm.
 2 ♀ . „ 139 „ „ „ 130 „

Type in British Museum. ♂ . Seven Finger Range, Central Hainan, 16th Nov., 1906. Collected by R. Douglas. Registered No. 1909.8.30.36.

Material examined. Six examples of the new race and over a dozen from Continental China.

NOTE.—The breeding of this bird in Hainan has not been recorded, and Dr. Hartert, *Nov. Zool.* xvii. p. 249, suggested that the bird here described was possibly on a winter visit to the island; but I think it is a resident in the high mountains.

Bhringa remifer sumatrana, subsp. nov. ✓

Readily distinguished by the smaller size from the typical form.

Measurements :—*B. r. remifer.*

Central tail-feathers 120–125 mm.; wing 131–142 mm.

B. r. sumatrana.

Central tail-feathers 108–120 mm.; wing 125–132 mm.

Type in British Museum. ♂ . Sungei Kumbang, Korinchi, Sumatra, 6th April, 1914. Collected by Messrs. H. C. Robinson and C. B. Kloss. Registered No. 1920.6.29.542.

Material examined. Eight examples from Sumatra and five from Java.

Dissemurus paradiseus insularis, subsp. nov.

Distinguished from the typical form by the shorter tail.

Range. Borneo and Sumatra.

Type in British Museum. ♂. Sarawak, Borneo, 20th Sept. 1877, ex Hume Coll. Registered No. 1886.3.1.2416.

Dissemurus paradiseus wallacei, subsp. nov.

Distinguished from the typical form by the exceptionally long tail and greater development of the crest.

Range. Java.

Type in the British Museum. Modjokerto, E. Java, Aug. 1861. Collected by A. R. Wallace. Registered No. 1873.5.12.1984.

Measurements :—

	Wing.	Tail without racket-feathers.
<i>D. p. paradiseus</i> ,		
Malay Peninsula.	♂ . 134–146 mm.	136–145 mm.
	♀ . 137–147 „	141–148 „
<i>D. p. insularis</i> ,		
Sumatra.	♂ . 139–150 „	130–138 „
	♀ . 131–139 „	128–131 „
Borneo.	♂ . 134–140 „	125–134 „
	♀ . 137–140 „	124 „
<i>D. p. wallacei</i> .	143–150 „	150–160 „

Material examined. Four specimens from Java and about fifteen from each of the other localities.

Mr. E. C. STUART BAKER sent descriptions of the following four new races of Oriental Owls :—

Athene noctua ludlowi, subsp. nov.

In general colour intermediate between *A. n. noctua* and *A. n. bactriana*—in fact, very similar to *A. n. plumipes* from Shensi, China, but decidedly bigger than that bird, which has a wing between 160 and 165 mm. The amount of feathering on the toes varies considerably, both individually

and seasonally, but in winter most birds have the plumelets extending down the toes almost to the base of the claws.

Colours of soft parts. Iris yellow; bill bright yellow; legs grey, soles yellow (*F. M. Bailey*).

Measurements:—4 ♂, 2 ♀. Wing 169 to 173 mm.; tail 88 to 96 mm.; tarsus 31 to 32 mm.; culmen 18 to 20 mm.

Distribution. Tibet. A bird from the Mishmi Hills is nearest to the present race, but is smaller (wing 164 mm.), and rather darker.

Type in British Museum. ♂. Dochen, Rhamtso Lake, Tibet, alt. 15,000 ft., 10.12.23. Collected by F. Ludlow, No. 40. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1926.11.11.1.

GLAUCIDIUM CUCULOIDES.

It appears to be imperative to divide this species into geographical races, for although individual variation is great yet there seem to be three dominant forms. One dark brown in the North-western Himalayas, a second rufous-brown from the Eastern Himalayas to the Shan States, and a third fulvous-brown from Tenasserim. We have therefore

GLAUCIDIUM CUCULOIDES CUCULOIDES.

Noctua cuculoides Vigors, P. Z. S. 1831, p. 8.

Simla-Almora Districts.

The general tone dark brown; the barring on the lower plumage very heavy and dark.

Measurements:—Wing 145 to 162 mm.; tail 79 to 90 mm.; tarsus about 24 to 26 mm.; culmen about 19 to 20 mm.

Distribution. Lower Ranges of the North-west Himalayas from Murree and Mussoorie, through the Simla States and Garhwal to Eastern Nepal.

Glaucidium cuculoides rufescens, subsp. nov. ✓

A very much more richly coloured bird than the typical form, the prevailing tint being rufous-brown, the under parts showing this tint even more than than the upper.

Measurements:—Wing 141 to 162 mm.

Distribution. Bhutan Dooars, Assam to the east of the Dibong and south of the Brahmapootra River; Manipur; Tippera and Chittagong in Eastern Bengal; Northern Burma to Pegu; North and South Shan States.

Sikkim birds are pale and large, more fulvous, and not unlike the next race, and more material may show that these high-elevation birds must be divided as a fourth race. For the present I retain them here.

Type in British Museum. ♂. Noong-zai-ban, Manipur, 2nd Feb., 1881. Collected by A. O. Hume. Brit. Mus. Reg. 86.2.1.849.

***Glaucidium cuculoides fulvescens*, subsp. nov.**

Differs from the preceding two races in being paler and also in being more fulvous, especially on the lower plumage, in its general tone of coloration. The breast is nearly always less heavily barred, whilst the streaks on the abdomen are better defined and encroach on the breast.

Measurements:—Wing 134 to 150 mm., once 153 mm.

Distribution. Tenasserim.

Type in British Museum. ♀. Kolidoo, Tenasserim, 3rd Feb., 1874, ex Hume Coll. Brit. Mus. Reg. 86.2.1.858.

Large series examined.

***Ninox scutulata isolata*, subsp. nov.**

Similar to *Ninox scutulata affinis*, but much larger; wing, 185 to 205 mm. as against 167 to 169 in the Andaman bird, culmen 22 mm. in the present race against 20 in *N. s. affinis*.

Distribution. Nicobar, Trinkut, Camoorta Islands.

Type in British Museum. ♂. Car Nicobar, 19th Mar., 1873. Collected by V. Ball. Hume Coll., Brit. Mus. Reg. 86.2.1.621.

Material examined. ♂ 2, ♀ 4, unsexed 2.

NOTE.—The Nicobar birds seem to be a little browner with less ashy tint on the head and back, but the difference is slight and not of itself of subspecific value.

Mr. P. F. BUNYARD exhibited a remarkable clutch of four eggs of the Goshawk (*Astur gentilis gentilis*) from Sonnenburg, collected on April 14, 1903, and made the following remarks:—

This exceptionally well-marked clutch came from a well-known German collection, the ground-colour is typical, the so-called pigment, however, is not wholly superimposed, as I have proved by internal illumination.

In addition to the markings on the upper lime-layer, I found well-defined markings on the coherent lime-layer, and the mammillæ-layer*, a most unusual occurrence in the eggs of this species. The faint havana-brown spots which occasionally occur are usually superimposed.

Measurements. 56–58 × 43·4–45 mm. (57 × 44·7 mm., *Rey*).

Weights. 5·121–5·877 m.g. (5·105 m.g., *Rey*).

A. A. Van Pelt Lechner, 'Oologia Neerlandica,' in his treatment of the family Falconidæ, in referring to the eggs of *A. gentilis gentilis*, says:—"Eggs with red-brown pigment spots situated at the surface (in layer III.) are as rare as they are in *Circus æruginosus*, Marsh-Harrier."

From *Rey*'s description, however, it appears without doubt that this author had seen eggs exhibiting small light havana-brown spots on layers I. and II.

The greyish or yellowish *cloudy markings* which *Rey* mentions I hold to be locally thickened portions of the upper membrane (=layer III.). I have seen eggs in which this membrane seemed to me to be mixed with a very much *diluted* quantity of oorhodein and to be coloured a very light yellow by it.

Otherwise I regard what has been said above respecting accessory and pigment spots in the case of *C. æruginosus* to apply equally here.

Personally I have not yet seen eggs of *C. æruginosus* with genuine pigment-markings.

* 'Oologia Neerlandica,' A. A. Van Pelt Lechner, vol. ii.

Mr. A. L. BUTLER exhibited a Humming-bird from W. Ecuador, which he was unable to assign to any known species and for which he proposed the name

Eriocnemis söderströmi, sp. nov.

Nearest to the rare *Eriocnemis godini* (Bourc.) of Eastern Ecuador, but differing as follows:—

Forehead greenish-blue, crown much darker and more bronze than the back, turning to velvet-black when viewed from in front, whereas in *E. godini* the forehead and crown are of the same colour as the back, remaining green when viewed from in front; back of a darker shade; lower rump and upper tail-coverts dark steel-blue, only margined with green (in *E. godini* they are entirely shining grass-green); blue throat-patch much larger, and lower surface darker without the strong golden gloss of *E. godini*.

Wing 66 mm.; culm. 20.5; tail 46 with depth of fork 19.

Type in the British Museum. ♂ ad. Nono, Western side of Pichincha, Ecuador, i. 90. Collected by L. Söderström. Reg. No. 97.11.12.98.

NOTE ON LABEL.—“Only one specimen found.”

NOTICES.

The next Meeting of the Club will be held on Wednesday, December 8th, 1926, at PAGANI'S RESTAURANT, 42-48 Great Portland Street, W. 1. The Dinner at 7 p.m.

Members intending to dine might kindly inform the Hon. Secretary, Dr. G. C. Low, 86 Brook Street, Grosvenor Square, W. 1.

Members who intend to make any communication at the next Meeting of the Club are requested to give notice beforehand to the Editor, Mr. N. B. Kinnear, at the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, S.W. 7, and to give him their MSS., not later than at the Meeting, for publication in the 'Bulletin.'

9 DEC 1926
PURCHASED

