

## NOTES ON SOME RECENTLY DESCRIBED SIAMESE BIRDS.

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When I obtained the mammals with which I have just dealt, I also made a collection of birds of which I have given an account in "Ibis", January and April, 1918. In the October number of the same volume Mr. E. C. Stuart Baker criticised some of my conclusions and has repeated his views in his recent paper dealing with Mr. E. G. Herbert's collection in this Journal (Vol III, No. 3, August 1919, pp. 177-216),

These notes are a reply to some of Mr. Baker's comments. While he seems to me to have proved a most successful discoverer of mares'-nests (in the matter of *V. polioptera*, *O. f. minor*, *C. s. koratensis*, etc.), when I propose a really bad race he fails to convict me of error. *Dicrurus annectens siamensis* (Ibis, 1918, p. 226) now appears to me, with a good deal more material for examination and comparison, to be not only not a new form at all, but even to have nothing to do with *annectens*. It is merely *Buchanga atra cathæca* (Swinh.) of S. E. China. The matter will be dealt with later.

*Graucalus macei macei*, Kloss, Ibis 1918, p. 192.

*Graucalus macei siamensis*, Baker, Ibis 1918, p. 596; id. Journ. N. H. Soc. Siam, III, 1919, p. 208.

My only specimen, being a male, could not be distinguished from the typical form; it is, of course, the bird since described as *G. m. siamensis* by Mr. Baker (Bull. B. O. C., xxxviii, p. 69) on account of colour differences in the female.

But is that name tenable? Baker himself says that the Siamese bird is the same as the Hainan one and the latter has already been separated by Hartert as *Graucalus macei larvivorus* [Nov. Zool. xvii (1910), p. 227].

*Volvocivora koratensis* and *V. polioptera*, Kloss, t. c., pp. 193-4.

*Volvocivora intermedia* and *V. neglecta*, Baker, Ibis 1918, pp. 596-7.

*Campophaga melanoschista intermedia* and *C. neglecta*, Baker, Journ. t. c., p. 207.

This genus has never been satisfactorily reviewed—a proceeding that is much called for—and the uncertainty which exists regarding the status of some of its birds and their names makes unanimity on the part of independent workers difficult.

Mr. Baker may, of course, be correct in his condemnation of my *first* determination, but at present he is regarding all birds, not seen by him, as similar to specimens obtained by another collector in another locality—scarcely a safe conclusion in this instance.

Hume's description of *intermedia* is very indirect, and as my *koratensis* is called into question and referred to it, I will not express an opinion again until I have examined and compared further material.

Mr. Baker says that the birds I have called *polioptera*\* are young specimens of *neglecta*. Perusal of Hume's original description of this form (*Stray Feathers*, V, 1877, pp. 203-5) based on "numerous lovely specimens" shows that its wing-length ranges from 96 to 106 mm. The types of *polioptera* had wings of 104 and 106 mm; my Siamese birds were rather larger, as I pointed out (wings measured flattened 109—112 mm.), but Sharpe's two specimens do not, of course, indicate the variation in size of his form. If Hume has fairly indicated the size of *neglecta* (and I know of no larger dimensions on record) it is impossible to believe that the greater are young examples of the lesser.

I have accepted as *neglecta* a number of specimens from Peninsular Siam having Hume's measurements, and only radically differing from *culminata* Hay, of the Malay States, to which Oates rightly says it is allied, in having the vent and undertail coverts white instead of grey, as he notes (*Fauna Brit. Ind.*, Birds, 1, p. 493).

Hume mentions no white on the inner webs of the primaries in *neglecta*: on the other hand, *polioptera* has the inner webs broadly white. The birds which I allocate to these two agree respectively in these particulars: the latter has much larger white tips to

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\* The references to Ogilvie Grant (*Ibis* 1918, p. 597, line 14: *lege* Kloss) and to Herbert (*Ibis* 1918, p. 594, line 11: *lege* Hartert) are no doubt slips of the pen, but do not help to make Mr. Baker's meaning clearer.



longer and largely grey (instead of black) tail feathers, and there are other differences as well—such as wing black with a greenish sheen in the first, length 96-106 mm; largely grey in the second, length 104-112 mm.

If my birds are not *polioptera* as I think, I feel I can say with some certainty that they are not *neglecta*, young or old, as Baker states.

The specimens seen by Baker from Tung Song and Klong Wang Hip, Peninsular Siam, are, no doubt, *neglecta* and similar to those I have before me from the same district; but I should hardly be prepared to call that a species. It is, with the more southern mainland form *culminata*, only a race of the Javanese *fimbriata* of Temminck; and the generic name of all these now appears to me to be properly *Lalage*.

The truth, which Baker does not realise, is that two distinct birds exist—the smaller and generally darker *neglecta* ranging from Mergui in South Tenasserim (typical locality) through Peninsular Siam, but becoming *culminata* in the Malay States: and the larger and more variegated *polioptera* extending from Cochin-China (typical locality) to Northern Siam and to Koh Lak in South-western Siam.

*Pycnonotus blanfordi robinsoni*, Kloss, t. c., p. 200.

*Pycnonotus blanfordi blanfordi*, Baker, Ibis 1918, p. 595.

*Pycnonotus blanfordi*, Baker, Journ., t. c., p. 197.

Mr. Baker considers that these names are synonymous, but such material as I have been able to examine shows otherwise, though *P. b. robinsoni* is not, I admit, a strongly differentiated form. I have, however, found it locally consistent.

*Otocompsa flaviventris minor*, Kloss, t. c., p. 200.

*Otocompsa flaviventris johnsoni*, Baker, Ibis 1918, p. 597; id, Journ., t. c., p. 194.

Mr. Baker agrees that my type specimen of *O. f. minor* differs in smaller size from the typical *O. f. flaviventris* and I said, when proposing a new race, that it was the same as birds occurring throughout the Malay Peninsula as shown by the examination of a

large series from that area, none of which, of course, are red-throated birds. It is thus *not* based on one bird only.

It is now suggested, however, that the specimen was a young example of *Rubigula johnsoni* Gyldenstolpe, and that I should concur if I saw the series Baker had before him. But when I described *O. f. minor* there were available in my own collection a very fair number of topotypes of *R. johnsoni* (vide *Otocompsa flaviventris johnsoni* Kloss, l. c. s.); sufficient, at any rate, for Baker to adopt, without comment, my amendment as to its generic position and specific name!

My definition of South-west Siam is the region between Petchaburi and the Isthmus of Kra (t. c., p. 78): this, I presume, Baker accepts, and I shall be glad to learn from what places in that area Mr. Herbert has obtained unquestionable (i. e., red-throated) specimens of *O. f. johnsoni*, which Baker states is common there. No one else has recorded it and the distribution now indicated for the forms of the species is, at least, interesting—the remarkable red-throated *johnsoni* inserting itself between two black-throated forms which are only separable on the character of size!

Of the eighteen specimens listed by Baker in this Journal as *O. f. johnsoni*, I suggest that only those from Pak Jong, Hinlap and possibly, Krabin, are examples of the red-throated subspecies. I think that the latter is practically confined to the Korat region (i. e., Eastern Siam): apparently it does not occur in South-eastern Siam, nor has it been recorded from anywhere in French Indo-China.

*Setaria lepidcephala*, Kloss, t. c., p. 203.

*Setaria rufifrons*, Baker, Ibis 1918, p. 594; id. Journ. t. c., p. 186.

I listed my birds as *S. lepidcephala* (Gray) because the maximum wing-length of the series was 74 mm., while Finsch, who examined the type of *S. rufifrons*, records it as 80 mm. Mr. Baker gives a translation of the original description of *rufifrons* in which the wing is stated to be 3 inches and, transposing this to 76.2 mm., says that the latter name is applicable and must stand for the birds under discussion.

He has not, however, realised that Cabanis and Heine would



have used the old continental inch which is about 2 mm. larger than the English one. Finsch is therefore probably correct after all, and until the point is decided against him I shall prefer to remain faithful to my own selection of a name.

*Mixornis rubricapilla sulphurea*, Kloss, t. c., p. 204.

*Mixornis sumatrana rubricapilla*, or *M. s. minor*, Baker, Ibis 1918, p. 595; id., Journ., t. c., p. 189.

Mr. Baker says that *Stachyridopsis sulphurea* Rippon is *Mixornis rubricapilla* pure and simple. If this is correct then *M. minor* Gyldenstolpe is a good form. I accepted an assurance that the first and last are the same thing.

I have not seen either the type or exact topotypes of *sulphurea*, as Baker apparently has, but a series of *minor* differs noticeably from a topotype of *rubricapilla* with which I have compared it (vide Ibis 1918, p. 206, under *M. r. sulphurea*).

Two forms, at least, occur in Siam, and it is not clear which Baker is unable to distinguish from true *rubricapilla*: *sulphurea* or *minor* is found in the north and east, and *connectens* in the south-west, south and south-east: I have also recently obtained the latter in Cochin-China and South Annam.

I did not point out that *sumatrana* is the oldest and, therefore, must be the specific name for this bird (that is Mr. Baker's opinion) for it is not: but I regretted that, contrary to accepted practice, it could not be used specifically, for I should like to see the first known form held to be typical of the species whatever the name it might eventually have to be called by. Surely this is more safe and logical than typifying the species by a later-known form, and involves no greater change in nomenclature.

*Prinia inornata blanfordi*, Kloss, t. c., p. 211.

*Prinia inornata herberti*, Baker, Ibis 1918, p. 595; id., Journ., t. c., p. 203.

As Mr. Baker discovered his first error with regard to this bird, so lately have I also seen mine. My own specimens were in worn plumage and were determined with doubt, as was noted at the time; but I have since seen good examples from Siam collected by Mr. Williamson who wrote that they were typical of the bird named

*P. i. herberti*, subsp. nov. In bestowing this name upon it Baker seems to have made a second mistake.

I suggest that the bird is only the Javanese *Prinia polychroa* (Temm.), [ Sharpe, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. vii, p. 202 ], with several good specimens of which I have compared the Siamese skins.

*Chalcoparia singalensis koratensis*, Kloss t. c., p. 218.

*Chalcoparia singalensis singalensis*, Baker, Ibis 1918, p. 596 (*ab inferentio*).

The more I see of this species (and the number of specimens now available from both south and north is considerably greater than when I proposed the new race), the more I am assured that two good forms exist.

The make-up of skins might be responsible, as Mr. Baker suggests, for what I will call fictitious disposition of pattern, but not for fictitious tones of colour, and I do not consider that the attempt to explain away differences, which were at first unhesitatingly accepted, is well judged.

The Tenasserim birds mentioned by Tweeddale are probably the same as the Siamese, for I now think that author accidentally reversed some of the localities when writing, using northern for southern and vice versa.

*Buchanga atra longus*, Kloss, Ibis, t. c., p. 227.

*Dicrurus ater longus*, Baker, Nov. Zool., xxv, 1918, p. 299.

I am sure that neither this race, nor any one allied to it, occurs in "the extreme south and east of the Malay Peninsula", as stated by Baker.

*Buchanga leucophæa*, Kloss, Ibis, t. c., p. 227.

*Dicrurus leucophæus leucophæus*, Baker, Nov. Zool, t. c., p. 293.

Mr. Baker says that "birds from Johore and Singapore are undoubtedly true *leucophæus*" (line 5 from bottom of page). This also is a statement that must be challenged: I do not think that the form occurs in either locality or anywhere near by.

*Dissemurus paradiseus paradiseus*, Kloss, t. c., p. 228; Baker (*partim*), Nov. Zool., t. c., p. 300.

This name was based by Linnæus on material from Siam, but now-a-days such a broad typical locality is much too indefinite in



this instance: I therefore restrict it to the region between Ayuthia and the head of the Gulf. The race extends down the Malay Peninsula about as far as Mergui, and has a fairly large crest, when fully developed.

*Dissemurus paradiseus malayensis*, Kloss, t. c., pp. 229, 518.

*Dissemurus paradiseus paradiseus*, Baker (*partim*), Nov. Zool., t. c., p. 300.

This form, founded by Blyth on Penang birds, occurs throughout the Malay Peninsula from about Mergui to Perak. It has a smaller crest and wing than the typical race found round Bangkok and is quite worthy of the recognition which Baker fails to accord it.

