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MORE NOTES ON SIAMESE BIRDS.

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These remarks were intended as an addendum to my "Notes on some recently-described Siamese Birds," but reached the Editors too late for inclusion in Vol. III, No. 4. Since that article was in print (pp. 447-53) I have heard from Mr. Stuart Baker that only those examples of *Otocompsa flaviventris* from Pak Jong and its neighbourhood and from Krabin are red-throated birds; the specimens from Peninsular, SW., W. and SE. Siam are all black-throated (*O. f. minor*).

Mr. W. J. F. Williamson has also, quite lately, sent me material from his collection which throws further light on some of the forms dealt with. His series of bulbuls from SW., N. and SE. Siam are all of the black-throated kind. One bird of several from Sriracha is interesting, as on careful inspection a slight trace of red can be perceived at the base of the throat: thus proving that *johnsoni*, as I pointed out, is only an off-shoot and sub-species of *O. flaviventris*. He has one red-throated bird from Phrabat, between Lopburi and Pak Jong. We shall eventually find, I fancy, that *O. f. johnsoni* only occurs east of the Menam Chao Phya and north of the latitude of Bangkok.

The Southern black-throated bulbul (*O. f. minor*) is of the same size as *johnsoni* with wings not more than 87 mm. long: Mr. Baker writes me that the wings of the typical Northern form

(*O. f. flaviventris*) range between 87 and 94 mm. and that it has a longer crest; the Malayan and Indo-Chinese bird is therefore quite a recognisable subspecies.

Five examples of a Cuckoo-Shrike from Nong Kae, SW. Siam,* belonging to Mr. Williamson, are all *Lalage polioptera*, and a female from Bandon, Peninsular Siam, is either *L. fimbriata neglecta* or intermediate between that race and *L. f. culminata*. Bandon is in a transition zone between the two forms and it is not easy to determine to which a solitary banded specimen should be referred.

A series of ten examples of *Chalcoparia singalensis koratensis* from Bangkok, N., E. and SE. Siam (Siracha and Satahip), in their more intensely yellow abdomens extending farther upwards and meeting more abruptly the rufous of the throats, beautifully illustrate the difference between themselves and *C. s. singalensis* in which the bellies are duller, while the rufous extends farther down the breast and ends indefinitely.

Mr. Baker writes (Journ. N. H. S. Siam, iii, p. 415) that he has compared 25 Siamese birds with over 100 specimens from more northern countries and can detect no differences of sub-specific value. I have no doubt that this is so and it goes to show that all northern birds are *C. s. koratensis*. Baker has completely misapprehended the gist of the matter: *singalensis* is not of the north but of the south, where Malacca has been selected as its type-locality, and it is because of the differences that exist between East Siamese birds and those of the Malay States that *koratensis* is valid as a good subspecies.

Of course if you compare things which are the same with one another you don't find the differences which are shown by comparison with them of things which are something else: if you compare *koratensis* with *koratensis* you naturally won't see the differences which separate *koratensis* from *singalensis*.

It is more or less as above that Baker arrives at the conclusion (tom. cit., p. 423 and Ibis, 1919, p. 192) that *Chrysophlegma*

*About 50 miles north of Koh Lak.

flavinucha lylei, also, cannot be accepted as a subspecies :—because some woodpeckers sent by Mr. E. G. Herbert from Siam do not differ from examples of *C. f. pierrei*, therefore *lylei*, also from Siam, must be the same as the others and also be *pierrei*. But Mr. Herbert's birds which came from *Eastern* Siam and mine from *South-western* Siam are *not* alike (I have examined Herbert's specimens); the former are indeed *pierrei*—absolutely: but the other is not.

Baker further suggests that birds obtained and recorded from North Siam by Gyldenstolpe as *C. flavinucha* are probably also *pierrei*; but he is probably mistaken. One of the characters distinguishing *pierrei* is its dark bill whereas North Siamese birds have, according to Gyldenstolpe (Kungl. Sv. Vet. Akad. Handl., 56, No. 2, p. 92), bills "bluish grey to white"—as has *lylei*!

Mr. Williamson has also sent for inspection a considerable series of black and grey Drongos from Siam.

During my visit there at the end of 1916 I obtained black birds of two forms and determined one, by comparison with Javanese material, as ***Buchanga atra longus***: then, not realising that one or both might be merely visitors and being unwilling to recognise two resident races of the same species occurring together, I forced the second into *Dicrurus annectens* and described it with the name of *siamensis*. I have since realised that it is ***Buchanga atra cathoecca*** (previously recorded by Gyldenstolpe from Koh Lak, in Kungl. Sv. Vet. Akad. Handl., 56, No. 2, p. 20); but the original description of the race by Swinhoe is misleading as the bronze colour it was said to possess is merely caused by wear.

Since it was impossible to discover any difference between the small series of *longus* from Siam and Java (vide Ibis, 1918, p. 227), it might be thought that there is migration between the two places: but it is an argument against such a practice that the climates of both are very similar and there is in neither any considerable annual variation. Further, though nearly all the examples known to me from Southern Indo-China (North Malay Peninsula, Siam and S. Annam) were taken between October and May, yet Mr.

Williamson has obtained a specimen from Pran, SW. Siam, in June, which seems to indicate that the bird is a true resident. Bartels states that *longus* is in good plumage in Java at the middle of the year and I have found it plentiful from January to April, so we may infer that it is continuously present there. If it migrated we should expect to meet with it at times in the well-explored countries bordering its line of travel, but it is unknown from Sumatra, Borneo or the Malay Peninsula south of Victoria Point, Tenasserim.

The case of *cathoea* is different; it is not yet correctly recorded from Annam (for *Buchanga atra cathoea*, Ibis, 1919, p. 610, is *B. a. longus*), but it is known from the other areas mentioned above from November to May only, and it is highly probable that it is merely a winter visitor in Southern Indo-China, to which it comes to escape the cold season of Southern China.

A number of grey drongos from Siam of *Buchanga leucophaea* type are in Mr. Williamson's collection and, with others available, form a fairly large series. On laying out this material by characters it falls into two groups:—(a) larger and, on the whole, darker birds: (b) paler, smaller specimens; and it is evident that two forms occur.

Fourteen specimens of the larger race measure:—

Wings, 134 to 146; average 140 mm.

Tails, 140 to 168; average 154 mm.

The bills from gape range as long as 28.5 mm.

Most of these specimens, which were collected between October and February, come from Bangkok, but some were obtained as far south as Victoria Point and east as Lat Bua Kao and Koh Chang Id., Chantabun. I regard them as probably belonging to Baker's race *B. l. hopwoodi*, extending from Eastern Bengal to Yunnan (Nov. Zool. xxv, 1918, p. 294) which thus seems to migrate in winter as far south and east as the above localities, but apparently no further. Hume and Davison's specimens of *Buchanga pyrrhops* from Tenasserim are probably the same (Stray Feathers, vi, p. 216).

The remaining birds, smaller and rather paler, measure :—

Wings, 129 to 139 ; average 132 mm.

Tails, 127 to 155 ; average 140 mm.

The bills on the whole are a little smaller than the others.

The range of the specimens is from Victoria Point through Siam to South Annam and they were collected between September and May, while Gyldenstolpe secured examples, which seem similar, in North Siam during May, June and July (t. c. s., p. 21).

These birds are apparently *B. l. mouhoti* with which they agree in size, though Walden stated that the Cambodian type of this race was darker than the typical Javanese form. I find that, on the whole, the contrary is the case and so did Gyldenstolpe: however, within narrow limits it appears that much importance cannot be attached to colour, as the tone of the plumage varies with wear and age. (There are among the Siamese series several examples which have the under-wing coverts spotted with white and the vents and under-tail coverts greyish-white, and they are altogether paler than the others: on the other hand some adults in much worn plumage are quite as dark as the darkest of Javanese birds). The distinction between the Javan and continental forms seems to lie in the slightly longer tail of the latter, as a series of thirty-four birds from Java measures :—

Wings, 124 to 139 ; average 130 mm.

Tails, 123 to 145 ; average 132 mm.

I see no difference in the bills which measure in both from 26 to 28.5 mm.*

The fact that, according to Bartels, *B. l. leucophaea* is in best plumage at the end and beginning of the year shows that it does not leave Java at that season and that, apart from smaller size, it is not the same bird as *B. l. mouhoti* which, judging by the dates on which it has been collected and the occurrence of immature indi-

* This series shows a higher range than Baker's, in which the tails measure from 118 to 131, average 123 mm. only (t.c.s., p. 292).

viduals, would appear to be a real resident throughout southern Indo-China.

What is *Bunchanga leucophaea disturbans* (Baker, Nov. Zool. xxv, 1918, p. 293), a small drongo distinctly darker than the Javan *leucophaea*, with a habitat from Amherst (typical locality) down into the Malay Peninsula and found also at Pak Jong, E. Siam?

Two dark races have already been described from this area:—*nigrescens* Oates, from Rangoon; and *intermedia* Blyth from Penang (not, *fide* Baker, from the extreme south of the Peninsula), with a wing of 127 and tail of 130 mm. in the type.

We have nine examples of the latter which were taken in Kedah and Junk Seylon during November and January and determined by actual comparison with Blyth's type lent by the Indian Museum. They measure:—

Wings, 123 to 134; average 128 mm.

Tails 124 to 138; average 133 mm.

While the measurements of *disturbans* are:—

Wings 120 to 136; average 127 mm.

Tails 122 to 151; average 131 mm.

Baker gives the habitat of *nigrescens* (a very dark bird with which, however, he associates pale individuals*) as from about Bhamo to Bangkok, thus establishing an overlap with *disturbans* throughout the country between Amherst and Bangkok. Oates considered Junk Seylon birds to be the same as those of Rangoon and, as shown above, the former are *intermedia*: therefore *nigrescens* (*fide* Oates) can scarcely be a very different bird from the latter.

I have always regarded Oates' birds from Rangoon and the neighbourhood as practically the same as *intermedia*, though possibly a slightly larger race, and there seems hardly room for a third dark bird between Penang and Rangoon, especially when it is

* I am not sufficiently acquainted with northern birds to have a definite opinion, but I question Mr. Baker's allocation of pale birds to *nigrescens*.

based on an individual from a place so near the latter town as is Amherst.

It does not seem probable to me that *intermedia* (*nigrescens*) is a subspecies of *leucophaea* but rather allied to *longicaudata* of the Indian Peninsula, or else a distinct species. I imagine at least two species:—a paler Malaysian bird running from Java up through Indo-China, and a darker Indian one, typified by *longicaudata*, extending through Indo-China down into the Malay Peninsula.

