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FROM VENEZUELA

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A NEW HERON AND A NEW OWL FROM VENEZUELA

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Among a collection of birds from northeastern Venezuela is a specimen of an adult male *Syrigma sibilatrix*, the whistling heron. At first glance this bird was seen to be strikingly different from a good series from southern Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina, especially in the coloration of the upper wing coverts, but also of the crown, neck, breast, and, less obviously, in size. As no name appears to be available for this bird, I take pleasure in naming it for the collector.

SYRIGMA SIBILATRIX FOSTERSMITHI, new subspecies

Type.—U.S.N.M. 406385, ad. ♂, Caicara, Monagas, Venezuela, July 24, 1948, collected by Foster D. Smith, Jr. (orig. No. 143).

Subspecific characters.—Similar to the nominate race but differs in having the upper wing coverts much more yellowish and more narrowly striped with black—between chamois and honey yellow, not dull pinkish cinnamon to light ochraceous salmon as in the southern birds; the neck and breast more yellow, less olivaceous—light honey yellow, not light buffy olive as in typical *sibilatrix*; crown somewhat paler—slate color (blackish slate in the nominate race) and with the bill longer, culmen 74.1 mm. as against 66-71 mm. in southern birds.

Measurements of type.—Wing 280, tail 105, culmen from base 74.1, tarsus 88.2 mm.

Range.—I have seen only the type, from Caicara, Monagas, but Hellmayr and Conover (Cat. Birds Amer., pt. 1, No. 2, p. 207, 1948), state that the species (undoubtedly this race) occurs in the valleys of the Orinoco and Apure Rivers in Venezuela. In a footnote they write that it “. . . remains to be ascertained by the study of an adequate series whether Venezuelan birds are really quite the same [as birds from southern Brazil south to Argentina]. A single adult from the Río Apure is slightly larger with longer tarsus and bill, while the upper wing coverts are more predominately yellowish and more narrowly streaked with blackish. The divergencies are, however, insignificant.” How they could call a striking color difference insignifi-

cant is beside the point; their Río Apure bird is obviously of the northern, yellow-winged race. When first reporting this specimen, Berlepsch (Ibis, 1884, pp. 438-439) noted that it agreed with others from southeastern Brazil, but had the bill longer, and broader at the base, and that the ". . . upper wing coverts are more yellowish, not so much mixed with brownish, and the black stripes on them thinner and finer."

The species, then, has two races, which are widely separated geographically, as follows:

Syrigma s. sibilatrix—southern Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, and northern Argentina.

Syrigma s. fostersmithi—north-central and northern Venezuela.

At Cantaura, July 13, 1947, Mr. Smith collected an adult male short-eared owl in good plumage. No short-eared owl was previously known to occur in northern South America east of the high páramo zones of Colombia and Ecuador, and it is not surprising to find that the one collected differs sufficiently from all the described forms to warrant giving it a name.

ASIO FLAMMEUS PALLIDICAUDUS, new subspecies

Type.—U.S.N.M. 406386, ad. ♂, Cantaura, Anzoátegui, Venezuela, July 13, 1947, collected by Foster D. Smith, Jr. (orig. No. 20).

Subspecific characters.—Resembling *A. f. bogotensis* Chapman of Colombia-Ecuadorian highlands in its general dark color above, but differing from that race in having the ochraceous buffy markings on the back somewhat more extensive, in having a strikingly paler tail, the central rectrices being light ochraceous buff barred broadly with fuscous, the pale and the dark bands about equal in width (the dark ones very much wider than the pale ones in *bogotensis*) and the lateral rectrices similar with the dark bars rapidly decreasing in width, becoming narrow bars on the inner webs of the outermost pair and entirely absent on the outer web of the outermost pair (the median rectrices in *pallidicaudus* are about like the outer ones in *bogotensis*), the facial disc more tinged with ochraceous buff, the breast less heavily streaked with fuscous, the under wing coverts almost immaculate ochraceous buff (much streaked with fuscous in *bogotensis*) and the outermost primaries with fewer bands on the underside, unbarred for the basal two-thirds (in *bogotensis* less than two-fifths).

Measurements of type.—Wing 304, tail 140, culmen from base 30, tarsus 52 mm.

Range.—Known only from the type locality.

In his review of the neotropical short-eared owls, Bangs (Proc. New England Zool. Cl., vol. 6, pp. 95-98, 1919) rightly criticizes the tendency in literature to give the American range of the bird as North and South America from the Arctic Ocean to Patagonia, and goes on to say that he “. . . can find no record for the short-eared owl from anywhere in southern Central America, nor in the vast forested regions of northern South America. Even in migration North American birds range only about as far as Guatemala and Cuba. In South America, except for the very distinct local form (*bogotensis*) . . . the short-eared owl is confined to the open regions, south of the forest, in temperate southern South America. . . .” The new race described in this paper is the first evidence of a connecting link in the open areas of Venezuela.