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DESCRIPTIONS OF SIX NEW AFRICAN
BIRDS

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DESCRIPTIONS OF SIX NEW AFRICAN BIRDS

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Four of the forms here described are from the collection made by the Childs Frick African Expedition, 1911-1912; and two are from the Smithsonian African Expedition 1909-1910 collection, made under the direction of Col. Theodore Roosevelt.

The names of special tints and shades of colors used in this paper conform to Robert Ridgway's "Color Standards and Color Nomenclature, issued March 10, 1913. All measurements are in millimeters.

CISTICOLA ROBUSTA ABAYA, new subspecies

Abaya Grass-Warbler

Type-specimen.—Adult male, Cat. No. 245693, U. S. National Museum; collected on the southeast shore of Lake Abaya, altitude 3,600 feet, southern Abyssinia, March 21, 1912, by Edgar A. Mearns. (Original number, 20797.)

Characters.—Most closely related to *Cisticola robusta robusta* Rüppell from Schoa and *C. r. tana* (described below); paler than *robusta* and darker than *tana*.

Description of type and only specimen (adult male).—Pileum dark brown, with the feathers narrowly bordered with olive-buff; ear-coverts buffy white tipped with pale gray; lores dirty white; nape cinnamon-buff, with dark centers to the feathers; mantle brownish black, all of the feathers bordered with light buffy gray, producing a spotted or somewhat striped appearance; rump drab-gray, unspotted; a few upper tail-coverts with black apical spots; wing with secondaries dark brown, with yellowish gray edging to the feathers; primaries with basal three-fifths edged with snuff brown on outer webs; outer wing-coverts light drab, with dark centers to the feathers; rectrices grayish brown, with broad subterminal bars or spots of black, and with grayish-white tips, the middle pair darkest, and all obscurely fasciated; under parts olive-buff, fading to white on chin, throat, and sides of face, and deepening to pale vinaceous on outer aspect of thighs; axillars, under wing-coverts, and inner edges of quill-feathers vinaceous-buff; iris light grayish brown; bill

brownish black above, grayish flesh color below; feet and claws pale brown.

Measurements of type (adult male).—Length of skin, 145; wing, 74; spurious primary, 28 x 6; tail, 57; culmen (chord), 14.5; tarsus, 28.

CISTICOLA ROBUSTA TANA, new subspecies

Tana Grass-Warbler

Type-specimen.—Adult male, Cat. No. 245695, U. S. National Museum; collected at Camp No. 5 (Childs Frick Expedition), Tana River, British East Africa, August 19, 1912, by Edgar A. Mearns. (Original number, 23756.)

Characters.—A pallid, grayish race, having the black markings more restricted than in any other known form of *Cisticola robusta*. It most closely resembles *C. r. abaya* (described above).

Description of type and only specimen (adult male).—Pileum clay color, with narrow brown shaft-stripes; nape clay color, with dark centers to the feathers; ear-coverts buffy white, with pale drab feather-tips, which are minutely freckled with brown; lores dirty white; mantle pale drab-gray with dark brown shaft-streaks; rump drab-gray, unspotted; a few upper tail-coverts spotted with blackish; wing with secondaries dark brown, bordered with pale ochraceous-buff; primaries with basal three-fifths edged with saccardo's umber on outer webs; outer wing-coverts light grayish olive, with darker centers; rectrices dark grayish brown, subterminally banded with black, and with buffy white tips, the middle pair darkest, and all obscurely fasciated; under parts olive-buff, becoming whitish on the chin, throat, and sides of face; outer aspect of thighs pale vinaceous; axillars, under wing-coverts, and inner border of quill-feathers vinaceous-buff.

Measurements of type (adult male).—Length of skin, 135; wing, 70; spurious primary, 27 x 5; tail, 53; culmen (chord), 13; tarsus, 27.5.

CISTICOLA SUBRUFICAPILLA BODESSA, new subspecies

Bodessa Grass-Warbler

Type-specimen.—Adult male, Cat. No. 245778, U. S. National Museum; collected at Bodessa, near the Sagan River, southern Abyssinia, May 27, 1912, by Edgar A. Mearns. (Original number, 21986.)

Characters.—Similar in size to *Cisticola subruficapilla aequatorialis* Mearns, color paler and browner, with the dark shaft-stripes of the

mantle obsolete; under parts paler, and less rufescent on the thighs.

Description of the adult male and female in breeding plumage.—Pileum and cervix snuff brown; mantle pale sepia brown with slightly darker centers to the feathers; wings sepia, with drab edging to the wing-coverts and inner secondaries, and with outer webs of quills tinged with prout's brown; middle pair of rectrices drab throughout; remaining rectrices drab, subterminally banded with black, and tipped with whitish drab; chin and throat whitish; sides and flanks pale grayish drab; middle of chest, abdomen, and under tail-coverts white, faintly tinged with clay color; thighs clay color; axillars, under wing-coverts, and greater part of inner webs of quills cinamon-buff; iris light reddish brown; male with bill brownish black, plumbeous on basal half of mandible, and with inside of mouth black; female with bill dark brown above, horn color on mandible and sides of maxilla, and with inside of mouth yellow; both sexes with feet brownish flesh color, and with claws dark brown.

Description of young in first plumage.—Crown and nape tawny-olive; mantle yellowish drab; wings pale sepia, the feathers edged with dresden brown; rectrices dresden brown with indication of numerous cross-bars, and with the pale feather-tips washed with brown; chin, throat, and sides of face chartreuse yellow; middle of abdomen whitish; sides washed with drab-gray; crissum, flanks, thighs and lining of wings pale cinnamon-drab; bill above brown, flesh color on mandible and sides of maxilla at base; inside of mouth yellow in both sexes.

Measurements of type (adult male).—Length of skin, 130; wing, 65.0; spurious primary, 26 x 5.5; tail, 57.5; culmen (chord), 13.5; tarsus, 25.

Average measurements of nine adult males.—Wing, 66.2; tail, 56.5; culmen (chord), 13.5; tarsus, 23.6.

Average measurements of two adult females.—Wing, 53; tail, 45.8; culmen (chord), 12; tarsus, 21.3.

Geographical range.—Valley of the Galana Sagan River and the Stephanie and Rudolf lake-basins.

Material.—Thirteen specimens from the Sagan River, Bodessa, and Lake Stephanie, southern Abyssinia and northern British East Africa.

CISTICOLA SUBRUFICAPILLA FRICKI, new subspecies

Frick's Grass-Warbler

Type-specimen.—Adult male, Cat. No. 217992, U. S. National Museum; collected on the east shore of White Lake Abaya, southern Abyssinia, altitude 3,600 feet, March 20, 1912, by Childs Frick.

Characters.—Most closely related to *Cisticola subruficapilla borea* Mearns,¹ from the Lado region of the Upper Nile, but smaller, with the mantle more distinctly streaked with blackish, and the under parts more buffy.

Description of the adult male and female in breeding plumage.—Pileum and cervix buckthorn brown, with dark-brown centers to the feathers; mantle drab-brown with broad black shaft-stripes to the feathers; wings sepia, with drab edging to the wing-coverts and inner secondaries, and with outer webs of quills bordered with prout's brown; middle pair of rectrices cinnamon-brown, subterminally banded with brownish black, and tipped with clay color; remaining rectrices grayish brown, subterminally broadly banded with black, and tipped with whitish drab; chin and throat whitish; middle of chest, abdomen, and crissum buffy white, palest mesially; sides of chest, and flanks, pale, grayish drab; thighs clay color; axillars, under wing-coverts, and inner webs of quills cinnamon-buff; iris dark reddish brown; bill brownish black above, grayish flesh color below; feet and claws pale brown; male with inside of mouth black; female with inside of mouth flesh color.

Measurements of type (adult male).—Length of skin, 136; wing, 70; spurious primary, 28 x 5.5; tail, 61; culmen (chord), 14; tarsus, 24.5.

Average measurements of forty adult males.—Wing, 67.4; tail, 58; culmen (chord), 13.9; tarsus, 23.6.

Average measurements of eleven adult females.—Wing, 55.6; tail, 48.6; culmen (chord), 12.4; tarsus, 21.3.

Geographical range.—Abaya Lake Basin, southern Abyssinia.

Material.—Fifty-three specimens from the Abaya lakes and Gato River Valley, near Gardulla, southern Abyssinia.

CISTICOLA NATALENSIS NILOTICA, new subspecies

Jebel Grass-Warbler

Type-specimen.—Adult female, Cat. No. 217132, U. S. National Museum; collected at "Rhino Camp," Lado Enclave, latitude 2° 55' north, on the west bank of the Nile (Bahr el Jebel), some fifteen miles north of the station of Wadelai, January 20, 1910, by Edgar A. Mearns. (Original number, 18132.)

Characters.—Most closely related to *Cisticola natalensis inexpectata* Neumann, but with a slightly longer tail and shorter, stouter bill.

¹ Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Vol. 56, No. 25, p. 3, November 23, 1911.

The general color of the upper parts is a paler, more yellowish brown; and the stripes on the crown and mantle are broader and more sharply defined.

Measurements of type (adult female).—Wing, 55; tail, 54; culmen (chord), 11.2; depth of bill, 4.7; tarsus, 24.

PYROMELANA FLAMMICEPS CHANGAMWENSIS, new subspecies

Changamwe Fire-crowned Bishop-Bird

Type-specimen.—Adult male (winter plumage), Cat. No. 215886, U. S. National Museum; collected at Changamwe, east coast of British East Africa, November 22, 1909, by Edgar A. Mearns. (Original number, 17548.)

Characters.—Most closely related to *Pyromelana flammiceps rothschildi* Neumann. Females and males of *P. f. rothschildi* in non-breeding plumage may be distinguished from *P. f. changamwensis* by their smaller bills and by their much lighter striping on the pileum and mantle. The west coast forms, *flammiceps* and *sylvatica*, are smaller and less ochraceous.

Measurements of type.—Length of skin, 130; wing, 73; tail, 48; culmen (chord), 16.2; greatest depth of bill, 13; greatest breadth of maxilla, 11; tarsus, 21.

Measurements of adult female.—Length of skin, 120; wing, 65; tail, 41; culmen (chord), 16; greatest depth of bill, 12; greatest breadth of maxilla, 11; tarsus, 21.