

A SYNOPSIS OF THE GENUS *CONTOPUS* AND ITS
ALLIES.

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A CRITICAL examination of the various species of the genera *Contopus*, *Blacicus* and *Myiochanes* reveals the fact that the limits of these groups are badly in need of readjustment. In the first place, *Nuttallornis* Ridgway, proposed in subgeneric sense for *Contopus borealis*,¹ is, by reason of very pronounced characters, without doubt of generic rank. *Blacicus*, which at the present time is commonly held to be an Antillean type, must either be extended to include several South and Central American forms of *Contopus*, or be extinguished entirely. With such changes, however, the group admits of intelligible diagnosis, though *Blacicus barbirostris* Swainson must be removed to *Myiarchus*, where it certainly belongs. The two species currently considered to constitute the genus *Myiochanes* cannot structurally be distinguished from *Blacicus*, and consequently should be included in the latter.

The name *Contopus* Cabanis² is antedated by *Contipus* de Marseul,³ proposed for a genus of Coleoptera. The derivation of these two words is identical, and they differ simply in the connecting vowel; so that according to our usage, as, for instance the rejection of *Campylorhynchus* on account of a prior *Campylirhynchus*, the term *Contopus* must be displaced. *Syrichta* Bonaparte⁴ applies to the same group of birds, but is in turn pre-occupied, in Lepidoptera, by *Syrichtus* Boisduval.⁵ As there appear to be no other synonyms, a new name is necessary for

¹ Man. N. Amer. Birds, 1887, 337.

² Journ. f. Orn., 1855, 479.

³ Ann. Soc. Ent. de France, 1853, 543.

⁴ Ann. Sci. Nat. sér. 4, Zool. I, 1854, 133.

⁵ Icones, 1832-33, 230.

the group to which, in a restricted sense, *Contopus* is now applicable.

Nuttallornis Ridgway.

Nuttallornis RIDGWAY, Man. N. Amer. Birds, 1887, 337.

Type, *Tyrannus borealis* Swainson.

CHARS. GEN. — Resembling *Horizopus*, but tarsi shorter than middle toe with claw; wing exceeding tail by about one-half the length of latter; rectal bristles less developed (actually as well as comparatively shorter than in *Horizopus virens*); first primary longer than the fourth.

Geographic Distribution. — North America; south in winter through Central America and northwestern South America as far as Peru.

Nuttallornis borealis (Swainson).

Tyrannus borealis SWAINSON, Fauna Bor.-Am. II, 1831, 141, pl. 35.

Muscicapa inornata NUTTALL, Man. N. Am. Birds, I, 1832, 282.

Muscicapa cooperi NUTTALL, Man. N. Am. Birds, I, 1832, 282.

Contopus mesoleucus SCLATER, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1859, 43.

Geog. Dist. — The same as that of the genus.

Horizopus,¹ nom. nov.

Syrichtha BONAPARTE, Ann. Sci. Nat. sér. 4, Zool. I, 1854, 133 (nec *Syrichthus* Boisduval).

Contopus CABANIS, Journ. f. Orn. 1855, 479 (nec *Contipus* de Marseille).

Type, *Muscicapa virens* Linnæus.

CHARS. GEN. — Similar to *Empidonax*, but tarsi much shorter, wings longer and much more pointed.

Geographic Distribution. — North America, except the most northerly portions; Mexico; Central America; northern and western South America as far south as the Province of Tucuman, Argentine Republic.

Horizopus pertinax (Cabanis).

Contopus pertinax CABANIS, Mus. Hein. II, 1859, 72.

Geog. Dist. — Guatemala and southern Mexico.

Horizopus pertinax pallidiventris (Chapman).

Contopus pertinax pallidiventris CHAPMAN, Auk, XIV, 1897, 311.

Geog. Dist. — Mountainous areas of northern Mexico, central and southern Arizona.

¹ ὄριζω, limito; ποῦς, pes.

Readily distinguishable from true *H. pertinax* by its paler coloration.

Horizopus ochraceus (Sclater & Salvin).

Contopus ochraceus SCLATER & SALVIN, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1869, 419.
Geog. Dist. — Costa Rica.

Horizopus lugubris (Lawrence).

Contopus lugubris LAWRENCE, Ann. Lyc. N. Y. VIII, 1865, 134.
Geog. Dist. — Veragua and Costa Rica.

Apparently a distinct species, though near *H. pertinax*. It has the wings relatively rather shorter than its congeners, barring one exception; but in other respects is quite typical.

Horizopus brachyrhynchus (Cabanis).

Contopus brachyrhynchus CABANIS, Journ. f. Orn. 1883, 214.
Geog. Dist. — Province of Tucuman, northwestern Argentina.

The most southern member of the genus.

Horizopus ardosiacus (Lafresnaye).

Tyrannula ardosiacus LAFRESNAYE, Rev. Zool. 1844, 80.
Contopus ardesiacus CABANIS, Journ. f. Orn. 1855, 479.
Geog. Dist. — Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, and Guiana.

Agrees with *lugubris*, in having the wings relatively shorter than in the other species.¹

Horizopus virens (Linnæus).

Muscicapa virens LINNÆUS, Syst. Nat. ed. 12, I, 1766, 327.
Muscicapa querula VIEILLOT, Ois. Am. Sept., I, 1807, 68, pl. 39 (nec Wilson).
Muscicapa rapax WILSON, Am. Orn. II, 1810, 81, pl. xiii, fig. 5.
Contopus albicollis LAWRENCE, Ann. N. Y. Acad. Sci. III, 1885, 156.
Geog. Dist. — Eastern North America, north to southern Canada and Newfoundland, west to the Plains; south in winter through eastern Mexico, Central America and Colombia to Ecuador.

¹*Contopus plebeius* Cabanis, Mus. Hein. II, 1859, 71, possibly belongs in this vicinity, but it has not been possible satisfactorily to identify the species.

The type of *Contopus albicollis* Lawrence, which has been examined in the present connection, although paler than normal *virens*, particularly about the head and throat, still presents in neither size, color nor proportions any characters which can not be quite closely matched in specimens of this species.

Horizopus vicinus (Ridgway).

Contopus vicinus RIDGWAY, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. X, 1887, 576.
Geog. Dist.—Swan Island, Caribbean Sea.

In color closely resembling *Horizopus virens*, but without much doubt a good species. The shape of its bill inclines toward that of *Blacicus caribæus*; but in other characters it is a typical *Horizopus*.

Horizopus richardsonii (Swainson).

Tyrannula richardsonii SWAINSON, Fauna Bor.-Amer. II, 1831, 146, pl. 46, lower fig.

Tyrannula phæbe BONAPARTE, Comp. List, 1838, 24 (nec *Muscicapa phæbe* LATH.).

Tyrannula bogotensis BONAPARTE, Consp. Av. I, 1850, 190.

Contopus sordidulus SCLATER, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1859, 43.

Contopus veliei COUES, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila. 1866, 61 (in text).

Geog. Dist.—Western North America, east to the Plains, north to British Columbia and the interior of British America, south through Mexico, Central America and Colombia to Ecuador.

Material at hand seems to indicate that *Contopus sordidulus* Sclater is not entitled to even subspecific recognition, the original description having been probably based on exceptionally small, possibly immature, specimens of true *richardsonii*.

Horizopus richardsonii peninsulæ (Brewster).

Contopus richardsonii peninsulæ BREWSTER, Auk VIII, 1891, 144.

Geog. Dist.—Southern Lower California.

The large bill seems to be the principal character of this race, but not an entirely constant one. The shape of the bill in some specimens resembles that of *H. vicinus*.

Blacicus Cabanis.

Blacicus CABANIS, Journ. f. Orn. 1855, 480.

Myiochanes CABANIS, Mus. Hein. II, 1859, 71.

Type, *Muscipeta caribæa* d'Orbigny.

CHARS. GEN.—Similar to *Horizopus*, but wing much shorter; bill usually broader and its outline less acute; rictal bristles longer and more numerous.

Geographic Distribution.—Southern Mexico; Central America, and South America down to Peru and southern Brazil.

***Blacicus latirostris* (Verreaux).**

Myiobius latirostris VERREAUX, N. Arch. d. Mus. II, Bull. 1866, p. 22, t. 3, fig. 2.

Blacicus latirostris SCLATER, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. XIV, 1888, 244.

Geog. Dist.—St. Lucia, West Indies.

This species differs from most of the other West Indian forms of the genus in the shorter, broader bill, as well as longer rictal bristles, these reaching very nearly, if not quite to the end of the beak

***Blacicus brunneicapillus* Lawrence.**

Blacicus brunneicapillus LAWRENCE, Ann. N. Y. Acad. Sci. I, 1879, 161.

Geog. Dist.—Dominica and Guadeloupe, West Indies.

Similar to *latirostris* in shape of bill and development of rictal bristles.

***Blacicus martinicensis* Cory.**

Blacicus martinicensis CORY, Auk, IV, 1887, 96.

Geog. Dist.—Martinique, West Indies.

Not examined; but stated by Mr. Cory to be allied to *B. brunneicapillus*, differing from that species in its darker pileum, darker cervix, and paler under surface.

***Blacicus caribæus* (d'Orbigny).**

Muscipeta caribæa D'ORBIGNY, in La Sagra's Cuba, Aves, 1839, 92.

Blacicus caribæus CABANIS, Journ. f. Orn. 1855, 480.

Geog. Dist.—Cuba.

Blaticus hispaniolensis (Bryant).

Tyrannula caribæa var. *hispaniolensis* BRYANT, Proc. Bost. Soc. Nat. Hist. XI, 1866, 91.

Contopus frazari CORY, Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, VIII, 1883, 94.

Sayornis dominicensis CORY, Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, VIII, 1883, 95.

Blaticus hispaniolensis SCLATER, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. XIV, 1888, 242.
Geog. Dist. — St. Domingo, West Indies.

Blaticus pallidus (Gosse).

Myiobius pallidus GOSSE, Birds Jamaica, 1847, 166.

Rhyncocyclus cerviniventris SALVADORI, Atti. Soc. Ital. VII, 1864, 153.

Blaticus pallidus SCLATER, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1861, 77.

Geog. Dist. — Jamaica.

Blaticus blancoi Cabanis.

Blaticus blancoi CABANIS, Journ. f. Orn. 1875, 224.

Geog. Dist. — Puerto Rico.

This species is usually credited to Gundlach, Journ. f. Orn. 1794, p. 311, but here no description is given, so the authority for the name is apparently Cabanis, as above quoted.

Blaticus bahamensis (Bryant).

Empidonax bahamensis BRYANT, Proc. Bost. Soc. Nat. Hist. VII, 1859, 109.

Blaticus bahamensis SCLATER, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. XIV, 1888, 242.

Geog. Dist. — Bahama Islands.

Somewhat aberrant generically in possessing a relatively shorter wing than *B. caribæus*.

Blaticus flaviventris Lawrence.

Blaticus flaviventris LAWRENCE, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. IX, 1886, 617.

Geog. Dist. — Grenada, West Indies.

The type of this species, taken by Mr. Wells, appears to be the only specimen known. It seems to be distinct, differing from *brunneicapillus* in its yellow abdomen and entirely yellow mandible.

***Blacicus punensis* (Lawrence).**

Contopus punensis LAWRENCE, Ann. Lyc. N. Y. IX, 1869, 237.
Geog. Dist. — Puna Island, Ecuador.

Undoubtedly a good species, though sometimes synonymized with *brachytarsus*.

***Blacicus brachytarsus* (Sclater).**

Empidonax brachytarsus SCLATER, Ibis, 1859, 441.
Contopus schottii LAWRENCE, Ann. Lyc. N. Y. IX, 1869, 202.
Geog. Dist. — Southeastern Mexico, from central Vera Cruz to Yucatan and Cozumel Island.

At least three species have, by some authors, been united under *B. brachytarsus*, one of which (*B. punensis*) has already been considered. Birds from the type locality of *brachytarsus* seem to be identical with those from Yucatan and Cozumel Island, as already shown by Mr. Ridgway,¹ so that *Contopus schottii* of Lawrence becomes a synonym.

***Blacicus andinus* (Taczanowski).**

Empidonax andinus TACZANOWSKI, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1874, 539.
Contopus depressirostris RIDGWAY, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. VI, 1883, 403.
Geog. Dist. — Southern Mexico (Pacific side), Central America, and South America east to Trinidad, south to Peru.

This bird seems to be undoubtedly distinct from true *brachytarsus*, with which it has usually been confounded. It is in color much less dingy throughout, particularly below, where also it is frequently less deeply yellowish; and has, moreover, a shorter tail. Specimens from northern South America appear to have longer rictal bristles, and, in some details of coloration, to differ somewhat from Central American birds; but as the material at hand is not sufficient definitely to prove them separable, no distinction is here made. The name *andinus*, based on specimens from Peru, thus becomes the proper one for the species. Should it ever be

¹ Man. N. Am. Birds, 1887, 339.

desirable to distinguish by name the Central American form it should be called either *Blacicus depressirostris* or *Blacicus andinus depressirostris*.

Like *B. brachytarsus* the present species is hardly a typical *Blacicus*, having less conspicuous rictal bristles and rather longer wings than *B. caribaeus*; but although both have heretofore been placed in *Contopus* they undoubtedly belong in *Blacicus*.

Blacicus pileatus (Ridgway).

Contopus pileatus RIDGWAY, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. VIII, 1885, 21.
Geog. Dist. — Unknown.

The type, in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History, still remains the sole representative of this very interesting species. It seems to be quite distinct.

Blacicus cinereus (Spix).

Platyrhynchus cinereus SPIX, Av. Bras. II, 1825, 11, pl. 13, fig. 2.
Tyrannula curtipes SWAINSON, Orn. Draw. 1834-41, pl. 54.
Geog. Dist. — Southeastern Brazil.

Blacicus nigrescens (Sclater & Salvin).

Myiochanes nigrescens SCLATER & SALVIN, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1880, 157.
Geog. Dist. — Ecuador.

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