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The distribution of the races of *Arremon aurantiirostris* (Emberizinae) in Panama

by Storrs L. Olson

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Although 3 subspecies of the Orange-billed Sparrow *Arremon aurantiirostris* are recognized in Panama, the characters and distribution of 2 of these have been inaccurately represented in the literature. The dark race *A. a. rufidorsalis* Cassin, 1865 (type locality, Turrialba, Costa Rica), of the Caribbean slope of Middle America extends into northwestern Panama in Bocas del Toro and requires no further comment. The nominate subspecies *A. a. aurantiirostris* Lafresnaye, 1847 (type locality "Panama"), is usually stated to range from the Pacific slope of Costa Rica east in Panama to the former Canal Zone (e.g. Hellmayr 1938, Paynter 1970). A third subspecies, *A. a. strictocollaris* Todd, 1922 (type locality, "Sautata" = Saotata, lower Río Atrato, Chocó, Colombia), has been considered to range from extreme eastern Panama into the adjacent parts of Chocó, in northwestern Colombia (Hellmayr 1938, Paynter 1970). These ranges imply a gap in the distribution of the species that does not in fact exist. Furthermore, although Todd (1922) characterized *A. a. strictocollaris* as having a more yellowish green dorsum, a narrower black pectoral band, and lighter underparts than *A. a. aurantiirostris*, none of these characters actually holds.

Chapman (1925) and Hellmayr (1938) incorrectly regarded *A. a. strictocollaris* as being intermediate between *A. a. aurantiirostris* and the South American subspecies, such as *A. a. occidentalis* and *A. a. erythrorhynchus*, which have a narrower black pectoral band. In the series of specimens from northwestern Colombia and from most of Panama that I have examined, the pectoral band was quite variable in width and it may also be considerably affected by the manner of preparation of the skin. The pectoral band in the holotype of *A. a. strictocollaris*, which I examined at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, falls within the range of variation of *A. a. aurantiirostris* and thus does not approach the South American subspecies in this respect. In addition (*contra* Todd 1922), the dorsum of *A. a. strictocollaris* is *not* more yellowish green than in *A. a. aurantiirostris*—in fact, the opposite is true—nor are the purported differences in colour of the underparts of the 2 subspecies apparent to me.

Thus, although weakly differentiated from *A. a. aurantiirostris*, *A. a. strictocollaris* may nevertheless be distinguished by (1) the decidedly orange-yellow rather than yellow coloration of the bend of the wing and (2) the slightly darker, more olivaceous dorsum. The broad-banded forms *A. a.*

Guinea (Salomonsen 1962); *leletensis*, from the Lelet Plateau, New Ireland (Salomonsen 1962); and *orientalis*, from Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands (Mayr 1935).

The single 4-toed specimen from Bougainville obtained by Beehler and Hadden differs in minor ways from its 2 neighbour populations (each represented in collections by holotypes only). The Bougainville bird's wing length (130 mm) is intermediate between *leletensis* (134 mm) and *orientalis* (127 mm). The Bougainville specimen shows a dorsal colouration that is browner than either neighbouring population; in addition, the Bougainville bird's rump is only obscurely paler than the rest of its upperparts, whereas the rump colour is pale, creating a noticeable rump patch, in both *orientalis* and *leletensis*. Finally, the Bougainville specimen is generally darker below than either *orientalis* or *leletensis*. While these differences, listed as they are above, seem significant, comparison is based on a single specimen from each island population. Thus, to erect a new subspecies for the unique Bougainville specimen would be unwarranted.

The 3 named populations of large 4-toed swiftlets in the New Guinea region have been variously referred to the following species taxa: *lowi*, *maxima*, *nuditarsus*, *orientalis*, and *whiteheadi*. Interpopulational variation is ill-defined, and available specimens for study are very few. The New Ireland, Bougainville, and Guadalcanal populations are each known from unique specimens. Clearly more material is needed, including additional information on the habits of the birds, before a final decision can be made as to which population should be assigned to which species. My examination of the types of *orientalis*, *nuditarsus*, and *papuensis*, as well as the Bougainville specimen, would seem to indicate that the Melanesian populations should be classified into 2 species populations: that of the 3-toed *papuensis*, and that of the 4-toed *whiteheadi* (*orientalis*, *nuditarsus*, *leletensis*, and the Bougainville population).

C. whiteheadi was described from material taken in the Philippines. Comparison of this material with specimens from Melanesia shows very little consistent difference between populations. Because of minor physical differences, and because of the absence of populations from several intermediate islands between New Guinea and the Philippines, Somadikarta (1967) favoured considering the Melanesian populations as specifically distinct from *whiteheadi*. Given the paucity of comparative material, I believe this specific separation is not justified.

These taxonomic judgements create a distributional picture that is unusual, but not unique to Melanesian birds. The 3-toed *papuensis* is the large swiftlet of the northern watershed of New Guinea. The 4-toed populations occur in the islands to the north (New Ireland, Bougainville, and Guadalcanal) and on the southern watershed of New Guinea—separated by the intervening population of *papuensis*. This distribution is not unlike that of the Paradise Kingfisher *Tanyptera sylvia*, which occurs in northern Queensland and several scattered locales on the southern watershed of New Guinea, then again in the Bismarck Archipelago, but is absent from the main section of New Guinea's northern watershed.

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strictocollaris and *A. a. aurantirostris* differ from one another in almost exactly the same manner as the narrow-banded forms *A. a. occidentalis* and *A. a. erythrorhynchus* differ from each other.

Individuals with orange-yellow bends of the wing occur not only in the range traditionally ascribed to *A. a. strictocollaris* but also west to the area of the Canal Zone, where both *strictocollaris* and *auranti-rostris* occur. Thus it becomes of importance to determine the identity of the specimens upon which Lafresnaye (1847) based the name *Arremon aurantirostris*, as these would presumably have come from the central part of Panama where either subspecies might be represented.

Although Stone (1899) once regarded a specimen in the collections of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (ANSP 7789) to be *the* type of Lafresnaye's name, Bangs (1930) showed that a specimen in the Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ 76675) had an equal claim and that both would have to be considered co-types. I was able to compare the Philadelphia specimen with the series in the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution (USNM), and found that, although it is somewhat faded, it definitely has an orange-yellow bend of the wing. I then sent a series of fresh specimens of both the subspecies in question to R. A. Paynter, Jr., who compared them with the co-type of *auranti-rostris* in the MCZ. He reported that "the dorsum is hopeless, as the bird is ancient, but the bend of the wing is definitely yellow, not orangish" (Paynter *in litt.* 24 August 1982). Accepting this, I designate MCZ 76675 as the lectotype of *Arremon auranti-rostris* Lafresnaye, 1847, in order to preserve the current nomenclature, as the Philadelphia co-type would have to be referred to the population that now bears the name *strictocollaris*.

The characters and distribution of the two subspecies of Orange-billed Sparrow that occupy most of Panama may be summarized as follows:—

Arremon aurantirostris aurantirostris Lafresnaye, 1847. Dorsum yellowish green, bend of wing yellow. Pacific slope of Costa Rica and Panama east to the Canal Zone, where found on both slopes, and extending as far west along the Caribbean side as the Atlantic drainage of Coclé (El Uracillo). Mixes with *A. a. strictocollaris* in the Canal Zone area and along the Caribbean coast probably as far east as western San Blas (2 of 3 specimens from Mandinga appear to be more similar to the nominate form).

Arremon aurantirostris strictocollaris Todd, 1922. Similar to *A. a. auranti-rostris* but dorsum darker, more olivaceous, bend of wing more deeply coloured, orange-yellow rather than yellow. Vicinity of Canal Zone, eastern Panama Province and eastern Colón, eastward along both slopes to north-western Colombia in Chocó.

Specimens (USNM) from Panama and Colombia examined.

A. a. rufidorsalis: PANAMA. BOCAS DEL TORO: Changuinola River (2); Almirante (2).

A. a. aurantirostris: PANAMA. CHIRIQUI: Divalá (3); San Felix (1); El Volcan, Palo Santo (1); Las Lajas (1); Puerto Armuelles (1). VERAGUAS: Soná (5); Santa Fé (1); "Veragua" (1). LOS SANTOS: Cerro Hoya (1). COCLÉ: El Copé (1); El Uracillo (2). CANAL ZONE: Río Indio (2); Lion Hill (3); Chiva Chiva (1); Gatun (1); Summit (1); Curundu (1). PANAMA PROVINCE: Peluca Hydrographic Station (1). COLON: Chilar (1). SAN BLAS: Mandinga (2).

A. a. strictocollaris: PANAMA. CANAL ZONE: Lion Hill (2); Tabernilla (2); Gatun (2). PANAMA PROVINCE: Utivé (1); Cerro Chucantí (3); Cerro Azul (1). COLON: Porto Bello (2). SAN BLAS: Mandinga (1); Armila (1). DARIEN: Río Jaqué (8); Tacarcuna Village (9); La Laguna (1); Cerro Pirre (1); Cana (2). COLOMBIA. CHOCO: Acandí (5).

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Notes on the extinct *Argusianus bipunctatus* (Wood)

by G. W. H. Davison

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All published sources, including Peters (1934), Delacour (1951) and Warren (1966), cite incorrectly the type description of *Argusianus bipunctatus* (Wood).

The description accepted as the first by these writers was a letter written by T. W. Wood on 22 June 1871 (the author's manuscript date) and published presumably later than June (Wood 1871a). This letter gives an engraving of the type specimen, a description, and the proposed name *Argus bipunctatus* attached both to the illustration (which is on an earlier page) and to the description. However, this letter states that "a letter of mine appeared in the 'Field' newspaper of April 8th. ult...".

Reference to *The Field* for that date shows that Wood (1871b) had published the same engraving, with a nearly identical text, and proposed the name *bipunctatus*, approximately 3 months earlier than his June letter. Correct citation of the type description should therefore be:

Argus bipunctatus Wood, *The Field*, 8 April 1871, p. 281.

Subsequent mention of this species in publications has included no more details than were given by Wood himself. The type and only known