

NOTES ON BIRDS FROM THE CAMEROONS DISTRICT,  
WEST AFRICA.

By HARRY C. OBERHOLSER,

*Assistant Biologist, Department of Agriculture.*

The U. S. National Museum has recently acquired a small collection of birds made by Mr. G. L. Bates in the Cameroons District of West Africa. At the request of the curator of the Division of Birds the writer has prepared the following report upon this collection which, though it contains no novelties, comprises several species of considerable interest; and the data from the labels has been supplemented by such critical remarks upon the specimens as the circumstances appear to make desirable, including the creation of a new genus for the reception of the species commonly known as *Andropadus virens*.

The 59 specimens are referable to 32 species, and are nearly all from Efulen—or Ebfulla, as it is called on German maps—in the Njondo River region, about 100 miles inland. Only two specimens, one each of *Ceratogymna atrata* and *Actitis hypoleuca*, are from elsewhere, they coming from Batanga on the coast. The dates of collecting range from May 30 to August 3, but a large proportion of the specimens were taken in June.

Family SCOLOPACIDÆ.

ACTITIS HYPOLEUCA (Linnæus).

*Tringa hypoleucos* LINNÆUS, Syst. Nat., 10th ed., I, 1758, p. 149.

*Actitis hypoleucos* ILLIGER, Prodr., 1811, p. 262.

One specimen in worn plumage, taken at Batanga, August 3, 1895.

Family TRERONIDÆ.

VINAGO CALVA (Temminck and Knip).

*Columba calva* TEMMINCK and KNIP, Fig., I, 1808, p. 35, pl. 7.

*Vinago calva* STEPHENS, Gen. Zool., XI, Pt. 1, 1819, p. 117.

One male, undoubtedly adult, although the gray collar on the hind neck is rather indistinct, being strongly tinged with the olive green of the upper surface.

## Family ALCEDINIDÆ.

## HALCYON MALIMBICUS (Shaw).

*Alcedo malimbica* SHAW, Gen. Zool., VIII, 1811, p. 66.

*Halcyon malimbica* CASSIN, Cat. Halcyon. Phila. Mus., 1852, p. 8.

One adult male. Although Dr. Reichenow does not include<sup>1</sup> this form among the birds of the Cameroons District, there seems to be little doubt of the correct identification of the present specimen, as it agrees perfectly with the plate and description given by Dr. Sharpe.<sup>2</sup> The present locality must be quite or at least very near the northern limit of the range of *malimbicus*, which probably passes thence into *Halcyon malimbicus forbesi*, the latter occupying the region from at least the Cameroons Mountains northward to Sierra Leone, and in turn replaced in Senegambia by *Halcyon malimbicus torquatus*.

## HALCYON SENEGALENSIS (Linnæus).

*Alcedo senegalensis* LINNÆUS, Syst. Nat., 12th ed., I, 1766, p. 180.

*Halcyon senegalensis* SWAINSON, Birds W. Afr., II, 1837, p. 97.

Two specimens, one of which, though nearly adult, still retains some indications of immature plumage. The maxilla is red, save for a dusky spot on each side at the base and a narrow blackish line along the apical two-thirds of the culmen. The flanks are distinctly barred with dusky; the sides of the head, including the superciliary region, together with the nape and occiput, have a conspicuous wash of bluish, and the whole upper surface, particularly the anterior portion, is darker and duller than in the fully adult.

## Family BUCEROTIDÆ.

## LOPHOCEROS FASCIATUS (Shaw).

*Buceros fasciatus* SHAW, Gen. Zool., VIII, 1811, p. 34.

*Lophoceros fasciatus* CABANIS and HEINE, Mus. Hein., II, 1860, p. 168.

A pair of adult birds is in the collection. The greater size of the male is very conspicuous in the bill.

## CERATOGYMNA ATRATA (Temminck).

*Buceros atratus* TEMMINCK, Pl. Col., II, 1834, p. 69, pl. 558.

*Ceratogymna atrata* SHELLEY, Ibis, 1888, p. 51.

One specimen, a fine adult male, with molt not quite completed. This bird was shot in the forest 10 miles east of Batauga.

<sup>1</sup> Journ. für Ornith., 1896, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Cat. Birds Brit. Mus., XVII, 1892, p. 247, pl. 6, fig. 3.

## Family CAPITONIDÆ.

## GYMNOBUCCO CALVUS (Lafresnaye).

*Bucco calvus* LAFRESNAYE, Rev. Zool., 1841, p. 241.

*Gymnobucco calvus* BONAPARTE, Consp. Avium, I, 1850, p. 141.

Two specimens, male and female, June 11, 1895. Both of these individuals are typical of the so-called *Gymnobucco peli*, and are undoubtedly adults. From examination of these and from comparison with an adult specimen of true *G. calvus* from Fantee, the writer is very strongly inclined to consider Dr. Sharpe correct in his opinion of the specific distinctness of *G. peli*. That they are sexes of the same species seems unlikely if any reliance is to be placed upon the sexing of collectors. The examples at hand indicate that *calvus* is in all its dimensions a decidedly larger bird than *peli*, this difference of dimensions conspicuous in the bill. It lacks entirely the tufts of nasal bristles so conspicuous in *peli*, and the scattered bristles on the top of the head are much fewer in number. The number of specimens at present available is too limited, however, to warrant a definite opinion, and final disposition of the question must necessarily be deferred until a sufficient series properly sexed can be brought together.

## TRICHOLÆMA GABONENSE Shelley.

*Tricholama gabonense* SHELLEY, Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, XXIX, October, 1895, p. iii.

An adult female of this little known but very distinct species is contained in the present collection. As no detailed description of the species appears to have been published, the following, taken from this example, is added:

Top of head black, thickly spotted with greenish yellow; remainder of upper parts, including wings and tail, sepia brown; the back and wing-coverts with roundish markings of greenish yellow; wing-quills (excepting outer primaries), tail-feathers, and upper tail-coverts margined externally with greenish yellow, this most golden on the wings, most greenish on the tail-coverts; sides of head black mottled with white; throat white, the feathers with shaft markings of brownish black; rest of lower parts dull yellowish green, the feathers of the jugulum with narrow black shaft lines and hair-like tips; the breast and abdomen with roundish spots of dark brown, these expanding into bars posteriorly.

## Family PICIDÆ.

## MESOPICOS XANTHOLOPHUS Hargitt.

*Dendropicus xantholophus* HARGITT, Ibis, 1883, p. 173.

*Mesopicus xantholophus* HARGITT, Ibis, 1883, p. 421.

One specimen of this rare species is contained in the collection. Although sexed as a female, the yellow feathers on the occiput seem to indicate its being a male. Otherwise it is apparently typical, though its measurements are rather small.

## DENDROMUS PERMISTUS (Reichenow).

*Picus (Campothera) permistus* REICHENOW, Journ. für Orn., 1876, p. 97.

*Campothera permista* SHARPE and BUVIER, Bull. Soc. Zool. France, 1876, p. 312.

The single example is an adult male. It differs from an Angola female in the U. S. National Museum by reason of its brighter green upper surface and deeper color below—the latter particularly noticeable posteriorly—and by its somewhat smaller size. Should a satisfactory series prove these differences to be sufficiently constant, the Cameroons form, provisionally established on smaller size by Dr. Sjostedt,<sup>1</sup> must be known as *Dendromus permistus pumilus*.

The generic term *Dendromus* Swainson, 1837, antedates by several years *Campothera* Gray, 1841, and should be used for the group which in current usage passes under the name *Campothera*. There is no more reason for rejecting *Dendromus* on the ground of a former *Dendromys*<sup>2</sup> than there would be to refuse *Pica* on account of a previous *Picus*, for *Dendromus* is derived from δένδρον and δρόμος, while *Dendromys* comes from δένδρον and μῦς, the terminal elements involving more than mere grammatical endings, although as latinized they differ only in a single letter.

## Family TROGONIDÆ.

## APALODERMA NARINA (Levaillant).

*Couroucou narina* LEVAILLANT, Ois. d'Afr., V, 1806, p. 73.

*Apaloderma narina* SWAINSON, Classif. Birds, II, 1837, p. 337.

The single specimen is an immature male, and differs from all the other examples of this form with which it has been compared in the color of the upper surface, which is clear grass-green, with scarcely a trace of the bronzy tinge so evident in ordinary specimens. Otherwise it is apparently typical, the wing-coverts being broadly edged with green, thus showing no approach to *constantia*.

Family PYCNONOTIDÆ.<sup>3</sup>BLEDA<sup>4</sup> ICTERINA (Bonaparte).

*Trichophorus icterinus* BONAPARTE, Consp. Avium, I, 1850, p. 262 (ex Temminck, manuscript).

One adult male, in breeding plumage. This species is commonly placed in the genus *Criniger*, and by Captain Shelley<sup>5</sup> in *Pyrrhurus*, but in pattern of coloration, as well as in structural characters, it is so

<sup>1</sup> Ornith. Monatsberichte, II, 1894, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, Zool. Journ., IV, 1829, p. 439.

<sup>3</sup> Brachypodidæ is certainly untenable as a family name for this group if the genus *Brachypodius*, upon which it is founded, be considered a synonym of *Microtarsus*. Even if *Brachypodius* is distinct, the proper designation for the family is apparently Pycnonotidæ, since it seems to have been the name first used.

<sup>4</sup> For the use of this name, see Richmond, Auk., XVI, April, 1899, p. 183.

<sup>5</sup> Birds of Africa, I, 1896, p. 64.

perfect a miniature of *Xenocichla* (= *Bleda*) *syndactyla* that Cassin apparently was quite right in calling it a *Xenocichla* (= *Bleda*). With regard to the specific name, however, it seems to the present writer unnecessary to reject *icterina* of Bonaparte for *tricolor* of Cassin solely on account of a previous *icterica* in the same genus; for the two names are sufficiently distinct, both actually and etymologically, not to cause any serious confusion.

#### EURILLAS,<sup>1</sup> new genus.

*Chars. gen.*—Genus generi "Andropadus" dicto simile, a quo differt rostro latiore et depressiore, naribus rotundatis.

*Type.*—*Andropadus virens* Cassin.

The type of the genus *Andropadus* is *A. importunus* (Vieillot), from which *A. virens* differs so much in structural characters that its generic separation seems necessary. The very much broader, more depressed bill, oval instead of slit-like nostrils, are very distinctive. The tomia are scarcely or not at all incurved, and the closed bill is thus without the groove which is so conspicuous along the commissure of *Andropadus importunus*. The outline of the culmen is nearly straight until near the tip, while in *Andropadus* it is curved almost from the base. The rictal bristles are also more strongly developed in *Eurillas*. From other related genera, except *Stelgidillas*,<sup>2</sup> *Eurillas* may easily be distinguished by the serrations of the subterminal portion of the cutting edge of the maxilla, and from *Stelgidillas* by the short, broad, and much-depressed bill.

Of the other species commonly referred to *Andropadus*, only *latirostris* has been examined, so that with this exception it has not been possible to determine where they should be placed.

#### EURILLAS VIRENS (Cassin).

*Andropadus virens* CASSIN, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., 1857, p. 34.

Two specimens. Although both are apparently adults, one is much more brownish both above and below.

#### EURILLAS LATIROSTRIS (Strickland).

*Andropadus latirostris* STRICKLAND, Proc. Zool. Soc., 1844, p. 100.

One specimen. There may be some doubt about the advisability of referring this species to *Eurillas*, for in some characters it is aberrant; but it certainly is not an *Andropadus*, and, unless a separate genus be created for its reception, is apparently best placed as above.

#### PYCNONOTUS BARBATUS GABONENSIS (Sharpe).

*Pycnonotus gabonensis* SHARPE, Proc. Zool. Soc., 1871, p. 132, pl. VII, fig. 1.

Three specimens, practically identical in plumage, except that one has almost no tinge of yellow on the crissum. The much darker shade of all brown portions of the plumage easily distinguishes this form from

<sup>1</sup> *Εὐρύς*, latus; *ἰλλάς*, turdus.

<sup>2</sup> Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XXII, 1899, p. 130.

true *barbatus*; but intermediate specimens, from the region of the river Niger,<sup>1</sup> make necessary its reduction to subspecific rank. An example in the U. S. National Museum collection, from Fantee, is intermediate, but apparently nearer *gabonensis*.

### Family MUSCICAPIDÆ.

#### STIZORHINA FRASERI (Strickland).

*Muscicapa fraseri* STRICKLAND, Proc. Zool. Soc., 1844, p. 101.

*Stizorhina fraseri* OBERHOLSER, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., June, 1899, p. 213.

Two specimens. Both are sexed as males, but one is noticeably paler both above and below, having also much less rusty on the superior wing-coverts, is slightly smaller, and may possibly be a female.

#### TCHITREA VIRIDIS (Müller).

*Muscicapa viridis* MÜLLER, Syst. Nat., Anhang, 1776, p. 171.

*Muscicapa cristata* GMELIN, Syst. Nat., I, 1788, p. 938.

One specimen of this puzzling species is in the collection. The head is metallic greenish blue, as is also the throat, which shades off gradually into the bluish slate of the abdomen and crissum; the back and well-developed tail are rufous.

This is the species commonly called *Terpsiphone cristata*, but Müller's name *viridis* has twelve years' priority, and should not be ignored.

#### ARTOMYIAS FULIGINOSA J. and E. Verreaux.

*Artomyias fuliginosa* J. and E. VERREAUX, Journ. f. Orn., March, 1855, p. 104.

One specimen, in rather poor plumage, taken June 8, 1895. It is marked female.

#### DIAPHOROPHYIA CASTANEA (Fraser).

*Platysteira castanea* FRASER, Proc. Zool. Soc., 1842, p. 141.

*Diaphorophyia castanea* SHARPE, Ibis, 1873, p. 172.

Three specimens. Two are adult males in breeding plumage; the other is apparently a young female. It differs from the adult female in being rather darker above, the head dull grayish brown instead of bluish gray; the burnt-sienna brown of throat and jugulum much mixed with whitish.

### Family NECTARINIIDÆ.

#### ANTHREPTES FRASERI Jardine and Selby.

*Anthreptes fraseri* JARDINE and SELBY, Ill. Orn., 1842, new ser., pl. 52.

One specimen, apparently an adult female, taken June 15, 1895. This rare sunbird does not seem ever to have been recorded north of Gaboon, and thus is a very interesting addition to the fauna of the Cameroons District.

<sup>1</sup> Sharpe, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus., VI, 1881, p. 147.

## CINNYRIS OBSCURA (Jardine).

*Nectarinia obscura* JARDINE, Monogr. Sunbirds, 1842, p. 253.

*Cinnyris obscurus* BONAPARTE, Consp. Avium, I, 1850, p. 407.

In the series of seven specimens there is comparatively little individual color difference. The upper parts in some are rather more tinged with brownish; the under surface varies somewhat in the extent and shade of the greenish wash; but otherwise they are alike. There is, however, a considerable variation in measurements. A specimen in the U. S. Museum collection, from Fantee, is noticeably more brownish both above and below, and suggests the possibility of the existence of a northern race.

## Family PLOCEIDÆ.

## MALIMBUS MALIMBICUS (Daudin).

*Tanagra malimbica* (male) DAUDIN, Ann. du Mus., I, 1802, p. 151, pl. 10, fig. 1.

*Malimbus malimbicus* SHARPE, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus., XIII, 1890, p. 480.

The single specimen is an adult male in perfect plumage. It is apparently identical with an example from Fantee, and as compared with this does not exhibit the restriction of black on the forehead which is stated by Dr. Sharpe to characterize the Cameroons birds.

## SPORAEGINTHUS MELPODUS (Vieillot).

*Fringilla melpoda* VIEILLOT, Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., XII, 1817, p. 177.

*Sporaeginthus melpodus* SHARPE, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus., XIII, 1890, p. 325.

Two specimens, June 26, 1895, in immature plumage. As this condition differs somewhat from that of the adult, and appears to be unknown, the following description is offered: Above, including wing-coverts, light chocolate brown, duller and rather darker on the head, but without conspicuous contrast; upper tail-coverts dull red; wing-quills fuscous, narrowly margined with paler; tail sepia, the outer feathers tipped and broadly edged externally with brownish gray; sides of head orange, this color deepest on the lores and paling to yellow on the posterior auriculars; throat and sides of neck light gray; remainder of lower parts dull buff, palest anteriorly; lining of wing buff.

## PYRENESTES COCCINEUS Cassin.

*Pyrenestes coccineus* CASSIN, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., 1848, p. 67.

Two adult males in the comparatively rare black plumage. One of these, taken June 27, is in process of molt, this being most conspicuous in the feathers of head and tail.

## Family HIRUNDINIDÆ.

## PSALIDOPROCNE NITENS (Cassin).

*Atticora nitens* CASSIN, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., 1857, p. 38.

*Psalidoprocne nitens* SHARPE, Proc. Zool. Soc., 1870, p. 291.

Two specimens. Both have the throat sooty brown, a character mentioned by Dr. Sharpe<sup>1</sup> as peculiar to the birds from Gaboon and

<sup>1</sup>Cat. Birds Brit. Mus., X, 1885, p. 204.

the Cameroons. No other specimens are at present available for comparison, so that it is impossible to add anything to his remarks. One of the present examples, probably an immature bird, has a conspicuous brownish tinge to the entire plumage, this most noticeable below, the abdomen being almost entirely devoid of any greenish shade.

### Family DICRURIDÆ.

#### DICRURUS MODESTUS Hartlaub.

*Dicrurus modestus* HARTLAUB, Rev. et Mag. de Zool., 1849, p. 495.

One adult male, June 5, 1895. In process of molt, this particularly observable in the feathers of the wings, tail, throat, and sides of head. This example is slightly less velvety above than others of the same species, in this respect appearing to be somewhat intermediate between true *modestus* of Gaboon and *atactus*<sup>1</sup> from Liberia and Fantee.

### Family LANIIDÆ.

#### NICATOR CHLORIS (Lesson).

*Tchagra chloris* LESSON, Traité d'Orn., 1831, p. 373.

*Nicator chloris* FINSCH AND HARTLAUB, Vög. Ostaftr., 1870, p. 360.

One specimen, apparently identical with others from Fantee and Gaboon

#### CHAUNONOTUS SABINEI Gray.

*Thamnophilus sabiniei* J. E. GRAY, Zool. Misc., I, p. 6.

*Chaunonotus sabiniei* J. E. GRAY, Mag. Nat. Hist., IX, 1837, p. 487.

One specimen, July 15, 1895, with molt not quite completed. The structural characters of this species seem quite sufficient to warrant its generic separation from *Dryoscopus*.

#### DRYOSCOPIUS LEUCORHYNCHUS Hartlaub.

*Telephonus leucorhynchus* HARTLAUB, Rev. Zool., 1848, p. 108.

*Dryoscopus leucorhynchus* HARTLAUB, Orn. W. Afr., 1857, p. 112.

One specimen, differing from a Gaboon example in having less of the brownish tinge, this appreciable throughout the plumage, and in having a shorter tail; but whether these differences are geographical or merely individual is not possible to determine from the material at hand.

#### TELOPHONUS AUSTRALIS USSHERI (Sharpe).

*Laniarius ussheri* SHARPE, Layard's Birds S. Africa, 1882, p. 397.

*Telephonus ussheri* GADOW, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus., VIII, 1883, p. 124.

One male, June 14. The specific distinctness of *Telephonus australis* from *Telephonus senegalus* appears to be perfectly well established on the differences mentioned by Dr. Gadow;<sup>2</sup> and the latter is also darker,

<sup>1</sup> Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XXII, 1899, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Cat. Birds Brit. Mus., VIII, 1883, p. 124.



duller below, with a much more deeply ochraceous superciliary stripe. *Telophonus australis ussheri* seems to be a very good race, and some additional characters separating it from true *australis* are the darker shade of the upper surface, the rather lighter, less ochraceous superciliary stripe, and much paler auriculars. In the present specimen of *ussheri* the dark bars on the two middle tail feathers are much more indistinct than on any of the examples of *australis* available for comparison.

The specific name *australis* appears to be the correct one for the bird commonly known as *Telophonus trivirgatus*, since *Malaconotus australis* Smith<sup>1</sup> has thirteen years priority over the same author's *trivirgatus*.

### Family ORIOLIDÆ.

#### ORIOIUS NIGRIPENNIS Verreaux.

*Oriolus nigripennis* VERREAUX, Journ. f. Orn., 1855, p. 105.

Two specimens in adult plumage. This species is, besides its other points of difference, very much more yellowish green above than either *Oriolus larvatus* or *Oriolus larvatus brachyrhynchus*.

### Family PRIONOPIDÆ.

#### FRASERIA OCHREATA (Strickland).

*Tephrodornis ochreatus* STRICKLAND, Proc. Zool. Soc., 1844, p. 102.

*Fraseria ochreata* HARTLAUB, Orn. West Afr., 1857, p. 102.

Five specimens, two adults and three more or less immature. The former are sexed as males, and are apparently typical. One of them has a broad white tip to one of the right scapulars—evidently an albinistic marking. The immature birds differ in being rather lighter and browner above, with narrow fulvous tips to the greater wing-coverts, and in being washed with ochraceous below, most conspicuously on the breast and jugulum, though in one example quite strongly over nearly all the lower surface. The squamations on the chest are much less distinct than in the adult, being rather narrower, as well as paler and more brownish.

Whether or not *Fraseria* should be included among the Prionopidæ may well be questioned, but its scutellated tarsus indicates that it is not a thrush, although it has been placed in the family Turdidæ by Captain Shelley.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rep. Expl. Exped. Cent. Afr., 1836, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Birds of Africa, I, 1896, p. 83