as the race occurring in Muscat and Oman and the Trucial States. This taxon is plainer and still greyer above than *A.s. nivescens,* buffier below, and is longer winged and tailed (wings in ♂♂, 98–104, ♀♀ 92–97 mm).

In the case of the West African *A.(s.) bannermani* Bates, 1930: Birwa Peak, Sierra Leone, described as a race of *A. richardi* Vieillot, further consideration of its status suggests that it lies very close in both colouration and morphology to *A. latistriatus* Jackson, 1899: Kavirondo, southwestern Kenya, as defined recently in Clancey (1984 (1985) and 1985), and is probably better associated with this complex than with any other, becoming *A.l. bannermani.* The case will be argued in depth elsewhere.

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The holotype of the Laysan Finch *Telespiza cantans* Wilson (Drepanidini)

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The finch of Laysan Island in the northwestern Hawaiian chain has throughout most of its history been recognized under the specific name *Telespiza cantans,* proposed by Wilson (1890), who named the species on a single living specimen that he had in captivity at the time. However, because this form was originally erroneously attributed to Midway Island (Wilson 1890), and because it has been suggested by Munro (1944) that Wilson's specimen came from Nihoa Island, where a resident population of finch was later described under the name *Telespiza ultima* Bryan (1917), the identity of Wilson's original specimen

(e) **Anthus similis jebelmarrae** Lynes
Anthus sordidus jebelmarrae Lynes, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* xli (1920), p. 16: Jebel Marra, Darfur, western Sudan.

Plainer and less strongly streaked dorsally and more tawny-buff over entire upper-parts and wings and tail than races occurring to the east *(arabicus* and *hararensis).* Below, bright clear buff, the pectoral streaking obsolete, though where present restricted to the sides. Size smaller.

Wings (mm) of 12 ♂♂, 94–99 (96.5), SD 1.89; of 10 ♀♀, 87–92 (89.5), SD 1.95.

Range. Confined to the highlands of Darfur in the western Sudan.

(f) **Anthus similis dewittei** Chapin
Anthus similis dewittei Chapin, *Rev. Zool. Bot. Afr.* xxiv (1937), p. 344: Kasiki, Marungu, southeastern Shaba, Zaïre, at 2200 m a.s.l.
Synonym: Anthus similis hallae White, 1957: L. Karange, Ankole, southwestern Uganda.

Plainer, less boldly streaked, and more greyish olive, less reddish or ochraceous, over the upper-parts than *A.s. chyuluensis.* Below dull whitish with the lower fore-throat and breast heavily streaked with greyish brown. Similar in size.

Wings (mm) of 4 ♂♂, 95–100 (96.7), SD 2.21; of 8 ♀♀, 91–96 (92.6), SD 1.62.

Range. The Marungu Highlands of southeastern Shaba, Zaïre, extending to the northern end of L. Tanganyika, thence east of the Rift to Rwanda and Burundi and the Ankole/Kigezi region of southwestern Uganda.

Remarks. The type and 2 paratypes from Kasiki, in Marungu, in the Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, were examined. The wing of the ♂ type measured 100 mm. Other specimens of this taxon at Tervuren were from Nyanza on L. Tanganika, Luntikulu at 1250 m and Lyapenda at 1800 m a.s.l., while a single ♀ from Bururi, Urundi, was also seen. At the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), Tring, the type and paratypes of *A.s. hallae* were studied. The type is a juvenile in moult to first-year dress, the wing 95 mm. Two other paratypes are also young, moulting birds, while a further specimen is an intergrade *dewittei* ≷ *chyuluensis.* None of this was revealed in the original description of *hallae* (White 1957).

Other subspecies

Other subspecies of *A. similis* distributed peripherally, but widely detached from the 6 races admitted above, may be commented on in brief here.

A.s. asbenaicus Rothschild, 1920: Mt Baguézane, Aïr, Niger, is large sized as in the races (a), (b), (c) and (f) above, but is paler and less reddish than its nearest ally *A.s. jebelmarrae* of Darfur. It is, as far as is known, restricted to Aïr in Niger. Off the coast of the Horn of Africa the insular *A.s. sokotrae* Hartert, 1917: Alilo Pass, Socotra, is confined to the said island. This form is heavily streaked above, but lacks the reddish nuance present in the majority of the mainland races dealt with here. Below, the entire surface is whitish and heavily streaked with dark brown, while the size is as in *A.s. nivescens.*

Study of the variation in *A. similis* in the south of the Arabian Peninsula reveals that not all the populations are referable to *A.s. arabicus* as presently understood, and that in addition to *A.s. nivescens* (as above), *A.s. decaptus* Meinertzhagen, 1920: Rud-i-Taman, Iranian Baluchistan, must now be listed

assumes considerable importance. Banks & Laybourne (1977) attempted to locate the holotype in the repositories in England and North America where it might logically have been expected, but they were unsuccessful. Although Banko (1979: 55) cryptically mentioned that Wilson's specimen had "apparently [been] accessioned by a European museum in 1894", he did not elaborate and instead listed the "type" as being in the American Museum of Natural History (p. 56), which refers, however, to the type of the junior synonym *Telespyza flavissima* Rothschild, 1892. On a tour of European museums in 1985, we identified what is certainly the holotypical specimen of *Telespiza cantans* in the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie in Leiden and we report our results herewith.

Wilson's (1890) original description introduced several errors apart from the apparent type locality. In the text his new genus was given as *Telespyza,* which Rothschild (1893) regarded as an incorrect transliteration and emended to *Telespiza,* a spelling that most, though not all, subsequent authors employed. Banks & Laybourne (1977) regarded this as an unjustified emendation and resurrected the spelling *Telespyza.* It has gone unremarked, however, that the plate accompanying Wilson's description (Plate IX, by J. G. Keulemans) is captioned *"Telespiza cantans"* and that the species is indexed under this spelling in the same volume of *Ibis.* Wilson himself never used the erroneous *"Telespyza"* again (e.g. Wilson & Evans 1899). Because both orthographies occur with the original description, *Telespyza* can be regarded as a printer's error. Therefore, *Telespiza* would be the correct spelling if one were to recognize this genus as distinct from *Psittirostra* Temminck (which we do not).

The specimen in Wilson's possession, upon which the original description was based, was part of a shipment of about 60 birds that had been brought to Honolulu in January 1889, allegedly from Midway. Wilson took the living bird with him to England, where he described and figured it, but as noted by Banks & Laybourne (1977: 347), his measurements are too large for either of the living species of *Telespiza.* They identified the bird in Wilson's plate as "an immature male in first winter aspect, of the Laysan population". Because Palmer, in 1891, found finches abundant on Laysan but encountered no land birds of any kind on Midway, it was assumed that Wilson's bird must have come from Laysan (Rothschild 1892, 1893), this revised type locality having been accepted by most authors since then. On the basis of anecdotal information recalled half a century later, Munro (1944) suggested that Wilson's specimen actually came from Nihoa, in which case the name *cantans* would have to apply to the Nihoa birds and Rothschild's (1892) synonymized name *flavissima* would have to be resurrected for the Laysan bird.

The specimen in Leiden that we have identified as the holotype of *Telespiza cantans* (RMNH Specimen No 1) was purchased from Scott Wilson in 1894, as noticed in the annual report of the Rijksmuseum (Jentink 1894), and was catalogued in April of that year. At some time in the history of the specimen, the tail was dislodged and tied to the feet and it now lacks some of the rectrices. The specimen is labelled as a female but it is not certain whether this was based on plumage or dissection. Unfortunately, there is no original label, such labels having almost invariably been removed from the specimens in the Leiden museum, mainly by E. D. van Oort (G. F. Mees pers. comm.).

Comparison of this specimen with Wilson's plate shows the two to correspond very closely, given some licence on the part of artist and lithographer. In the specimen the yellowish on the top of the head is more extensive and the greyish somewhat less so than depicted, and the plate considerably exaggerates the spots on the flanks. But both the specimen and the plate differ from practically all specimens of the Laysan Finch in museum collections in the very brownish cast and conspicuously unworn and unfaded state of the plumage. Because of the harsh, bright environment of Laysan, wild-taken birds, even in relatively fresh plumage, usually show fading and wear. Such plumage as seen in the Leiden specimen would be unexpected except in a specimen that had passed through at least one moult in captivity. The facts that the Leiden specimen came from Wilson, that it must have been in captivity for some time prior to its preparation as a skin, that we have found no other specimens of this species attributable to Wilson in any museum, that it is unlikely that Wilson would have obtained additional captive specimens of this species subsequent to his departure from the Hawaiian islands in 1889, and that the specimen closely matches the distinctive bird figured in the original description, all add up to sufficient evidence to conclude that this is indeed the holotype of *Telespiza cantans*.

This specimen is clearly a representative of the larger of the 2 existing species of "*Telespiza*". Our own measurements of the wing length (80.6 mm) and tarsal length (23.9 mm) are outside the maxima recorded for *T. ultima* and are within the size range of either sex of the Laysan Finch (Banks & Laybourne 1977). In addition, the plumage is not that of the darker and more heavily streaked *T. ultima*. Regardless of the provenance of the holotype, the name *Telespiza cantans* may now be said with certainty to apply to the species of finch known historically from Laysan Island and not to the finch of Nihoa.

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