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Systematic Notes on Palearctic Birds. No. 18 Supplementary Notes on Corvidae, Timaliinae, Alaudidae, Sylviinae, Hirundinidae, and Turdinae

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INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the present series on palearctic birds, systematic notes have been published so far on the following families or subfamilies of passerine birds: Corvidae, Timaliinae, Paradoxornithinae, Alaudidae, Motacillidae (the genus *Anthus* only), Sylviinae, Muscicapinae, Hirundinidae, Sturnidae, Turdinae, Laniidae, Troglodytinae, Cinclidae, and Prunellidae. After these notes, or part of them, had been published or prepared I had the opportunity to attend the Eleventh International Ornithological Congress at Basel, Switzerland, and, after the congress, to spend a little over three weeks in London at the British Museum and a few days in Paris at the National Museum. A number of species in the groups studied so far were examined, and the present notes consist of observations that change or supplement some of the conclusions that I had reached after studying the material in the American Museum of Natural History, or of additional information on some forms that are rare or not well known. Opportunity is taken here also to discuss several new subspecies that have been described since the present series of notes was started.

I should like to express my gratitude to Mr. J. D. Macdonald in London and Professor J. Berlioz in Paris and to their staffs for their cordial reception and many courtesies and to the National Science Foundation for a grant to pay part of the expenses of the trip. I am

grateful also to my friend Dr. Dean Amadon for reading the manuscript.

The present observations follow, in general, the order in which the Systematic Notes have been published. No systematic sequence is implied. A new subspecies is described in *Babax waddelli*, and a review of *Rhopophilus pekinensis* is presented.

CORVIDAE

Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax

Two races of the chough have been described since my review of this species (1954a): one by Portenko (1954) from the Kopet Dagh in southern Transcaspia under the name *subdocilis*, and the other by Rand and myself (1955) under the name *baileyi* from the mountains of northern Abyssinia.

Portenko separated *subdocilis* from *docilis* S. G. Gmelin, 1774, type locality, Gilan, northern Iran, on the basis of smaller size. For reasons given below I consider *subdocilis* a synonym of *docilis*. Portenko's diagnosis of *subdocilis* is as follows: "*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax docilis* valde similis, sed minor; alis brevioribus bene differt," and in the Russian text he adds that *subdocilis* is less greenish than *docilis*. He does not state what his comparative material consisted of, and he gives no measurements whatever to substantiate the diagnosis. Topotypes of *docilis* are not available to me, but Stresemann (1928) gave the wing length of five of them as 318, 320, and 327 in males, and 293, 305 in females, while four adults measured by me from northern Khorasan and southern Transcaspia (and which therefore should be *subdocilis*) measure 314, 316 in males, and 293, 300 in females. I do not believe, therefore, that *subdocilis* is appreciably smaller, and while I cannot judge as to the color of the gloss, a review of the species as a whole and the large series examined in New York and London show that (in the subspecies in which the gloss is greenish) the geographical variation in the intensity of this color is neither sufficiently well marked nor constant enough to warrant nomenclatural separation on this basis alone.

The race (*baileyi*) described by Rand and myself is not particularly well marked. It has a longer wing than *barbarus* (described by me from northwestern Africa in 1954a), similar in length to that of *docilis*, but it differs from the latter by having a longer bill. It is as distinct as are most of the races in this species, and its characters make it impossible to combine it with either *barbarus* or *docilis*, from both of which it is extremely isolated by about 2500 kilometers from the nearest population of *docilis* and by more than 4000 kilometers from the nearest population of *barbarus*. The Abyssinian race is also the very dullest of all the

populations of the species known to Rand and myself, not only on the wing but on the mantle and under parts also, still duller than *docilis* which seems to be the next dullest.

The comparative measurements of adult males of *docilis*, *barbarus*, and *baileyi* are: *docilis*, 11 specimens, wing 306–330 (315), bill 52–61 (56.8); *barbarus*, 15 specimens from Morocco and Algeria, wing 290–310 (302), bill 61–67 (63.4); *baileyi*, seven specimens, wing 310–329 (318.6), bill 54–56 (60.6).

Cyanopica cyanus

In my preceding notes on this species (1954b) I strongly questioned whether *gili* Witherby, 1923, is distinct from *cooki* Bonaparte, 1850. Both subspecies were described from Spain, *gili* from western Spain and *cooki* from "Spain" (the type locality was restricted to Madrid by Witherby in his description of *gili*). The material available to me consisted of 19 specimens, including a paratype of *gili*, and I came to the conclusion that *gili* is not valid and was based on a plumage stage and/or on a comparison of freshly collected with old specimens. Because most of my specimens were old skins, I admitted that *gili* required further study, but examination of the material in the collection of the British Museum confirmed my opinion that *gili* is not valid.

The material in the British Museum is nearly three times as numerous as the specimens available in New York and consists of 36 specimens of *cooki*, collected, with the exception of six specimens taken in 1925, from about 1850 to 1890, and of 19 specimens of *gili*. The latter which include the type and paratypes were collected from 1922 to 1934 with the exception of one specimen collected in Spain in 1910. Of the remaining, six are from Spain and 12 from Portugal. If the skins of comparative age and state of wear of *cooki* and *gili* are compared, no evidence whatever of geographical variation is apparent in the coloration of either the crown or back, and even most of the older skins of *cooki* are identical with the type and paratypes of *gili*. The best that can be said is that in the latter the gloss of the crown seems to average bluer and less black, but the difference is extremely slight and not constant and in my opinion is far from being of taxonomic importance.

Pica pica

When studying this species I had but one specimen of the Tibetan race (*bottanensis*), an adult male with a wing measurement of 244 and a tail of 250 mm. Dr. Stresemann, who very kindly read my manuscript of the check list on the Corvidae, questioned these measurements as being possibly those of an immature bird. The specimen was, how-

ever, fully adult, and as virtually no individual measurements of *bottanensis* seem to have been published, those of the adults in the British Museum are listed below. The wing is listed first and the specimen in the American Museum of Natural History is included: males, 244/250 (A.M.N.H.), 245/250, 252/250, 256/250; females, 245/242, 250/270; unsexed, 254/250, 255/270, 262/275, 265/265.

These measurements give a wing-tail ratio of about 1.01 as against about 1.15 in *sericea* from China, and about 1.30 in nominate *pica*, and show that *bottanensis* is well characterized by having the tail proportionately shorter than in any other race of the species. It differs also from all others by having the longest wing, largest bill, and by the color of the rump which is wholly black.

Nucifraga caryocatactes

In the notes published on this species I stated (1954b) that *kamchatkensis* Barrett-Hamilton, 1898, type locality, Kamchatka (the type is from Petropavlovsk), was doubtfully distinct from *macrorhynchos* described by Brehm in 1823 from a migrant taken in Germany. I had no specimens of *kamchatkensis* but remarked that it might be retained provisionally because, although Stegmann (1931) had found that its supposed characters (chiefly the presence of white tips on the primaries) were not constant, it is somewhat paler below. The validity of *kamchatkensis* is recognized in the "Birds of the Soviet Union" (1954, vol. 5, p. 88) which states that, in addition to the white tips, its bill is not so slender as in *macrorhynchos* and the ground color of the plumage is paler. However, an examination of the type and paratype of *kamchatkensis*, which are in the British Museum, shows that they fall perfectly within the range of individual variation of *macrorhynchos*. A long series from Kamchatka probably would show some population characters, but the type and paratype of *kamchatkensis* suggest that these are not very constant and that this race is not sufficiently well differentiated to warrant its nomenclatural recognition.

TIMALIINAE

Babax waddelli

Meinertzhagen (1948) has shown that *lumsdeni* appears to be a redescription of nominate *waddelli*. Kinnear (1938) in describing *lumsdeni* from southeastern Tibet apparently compared specimens from this region with some from Gyantse which are distinct, but Meinertzhagen found that the specimens from southeastern Tibet are not separable from the type and topotypes of nominate *waddelli*, the type locality of which is not Gyangtse but Chaksam, 4 or 5 miles from

Chushul and about 30 miles southwest of Lhasa. This region, which is about 85 or 90 miles northeast of Gyangtse, receives a greater rainfall, about 17 inches a year, than the region of Gyangtse which is considerably more arid and barren and where the annual rainfall is only 8 inches. The birds from Gyangtse are generally larger and paler than topotypical nominate *waddelli*, and I propose to separate this population, as follows:

Babax waddelli jomo Vaurie, new subspecies

TYPE: A.M.N.H. No. 586805, Rothschild Collection; unsexed adult; "below Tsechen [Tsechen is about 4 miles south of Gyangtse]"; June 4, 1905; Captain R. Steen, collector.

As stated, the new race differs by being larger and paler, the difference in coloration being most evident on the throat, lower abdomen, and under tail coverts, and in the ground color of the cheeks. In specimens from Gyangtse the streaking of the under parts is somewhat more reduced, and the streaks tend to be reddish brown. However, in this species the reddish color of the streaks and the fact that in some specimens the margins of the feathers are tinged to a varying extent with buff may not be reliable characters. I suspect that these are postmortem changes because these "characters" are shown to a greater or lesser degree by four paratypes of nominate *waddelli* in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History collected in 1904 but not by the more recently collected topotypes of nominate *waddelli* examined by me in London. The latter were collected in 1939 and are therefore of the same age as the series from southeastern Tibet which was collected by Ludlow in 1936 and 1938.

The new race is known so far only from the region of Gyangtse, but its range probably extends to other parts of southwestern Tibet as the region west of Gyangtse is equally arid. It was surprising to find (as the coloration of this species seems to be correlated with humidity) that birds from southeastern Tibet average only very slightly darker than topotypical nominate *waddelli*, because the southwest monsoon penetrates into some parts of southeastern Tibet which are therefore much wetter than the region south of Lhasa. It is possible that more material may show that *lumsdeni* is a valid race.

The scientific name proposed for the new race is its Tibetan name as used in Gyangtse, according to Ludlow (1928).

I would like to express my appreciation to Sir Norman Kinnear, Mr. Frank Ludlow, and Colonel Meinertzhagen for their most cordial cooperation. Sir Norman suggested that I describe the population of Gyangtse, as did Colonel Meinertzhagen who first called my attention

to it. Colonel Meinertzhagen and Mr. Ludlow examined the specimens in the British Museum with me, and Mr. Ludlow also kindly discussed the prevailing climatic conditions in southern Tibet.

MEASUREMENTS: The type of *jomo* (unsexed adult) measures: wing, 144; tail, 165; bill, 39. These measurements are included below in those of the series from Gyangtse. All the specimens, not separated as to sex for some specimens were not sexed and the sexes are alike, are adults and were measured by me in the collections of the British Museum and of the American Museum of Natural History. While in London, I unfortunately did not take the tail length, which in the specimens in New York is: Gyangtse, 165, 170; Chaksam, 150, 150, 151, 152; southeastern Tibet, 155.

Gyangtse: Wing, 132, 133, 139, 140, 140, 142, 142, 144, 145 (139.7); bill, 39, 39, 39, 40, 40, 40, 41, 42, 42 (40.2). Lhasa, Chushul, and Chaksam: Wing, 130, 132, 132, 132, 135, 137, 137, 138 (134); bill, 34, 34, 34, 36, 37, 37, 37, 40 (36). Southeastern Tibet: Wing, 129, 130, 130, 132, 134, 134, 135, 135, 136, 139 (133.3); bill, 32, 34, 35, 35, 35, 35, 36, 36, 36, 36, 37 (35.2).

Turdoides fulvus

In my preceding notes (1954c) I questioned the validity of *billypayni*, although it was not available to me, as it is known from only two specimens collected by Meinertzhagen at Ksar es Souk in southeastern Morocco in 1938. Now, thanks to the courtesy of Colonel Meinertzhagen, I have been able to examine these specimens and the material in his collection that he used for comparison. In my opinion, *billipayni* is not valid and is a synonym of *maroccanus* Lynes, 1925, described from southwestern Morocco, because it seems to me that the specimens used by Meinertzhagen were not in comparative condition. Those of *billypayni* are faded and bleached, whereas those of *maroccanus* are in extremely fresh condition.

ALAUDIDAE

The types of three larks described from north Africa were examined in the Paris Museum. Two of these, *Ammomanes deserti monodi* and *Galerida cristata balsaci*, were described recently by Dekeyser and Villiers (1950, pp. 672, 675). The third, *Galerida cristata helenae*, was described by Lavauden (1926) from Fort Polignac in the Sahara. The type locality of *monodi* is Iriji, north of Akjoujt, in inland Mauritania, and that of *balsaci* is Nouakchott on the coast of Mauritania.

Galerida cristata balsaci appears to be a well-differentiated race. It is whiter below than *senegalensis* and is apparently a very local form

found only, according to its authors, on the white soils or sands composed of crushed and powdered sea shells which are characteristic of the region of Nouakchott. The validity of the two other forms, discussed below, is open to question. *Monodi* seems best synonymized with *Ammomanes deserti geyri* Hartert, 1924, type locality, Damergou, Aïr; and *helenae*, with *Galerida cristata macrorhyncha* Tristram, 1859, type locality, northern Sahara.

I was unable to make a direct comparison of *monodi* with *geyri*, and the latter was not available to Dekeyser and Villiers, but my notes on the type of *monodi* and the diagnosis of this form given by its authors suggest that it is probably not separable from *geyri*. It appears to be similar if not identical in coloration. Dekeyser and Villiers did not think that their specimens from Mauritania could be referred to *geyri*, because they have a shorter wing (96, 96, 98 in males, 88, 90, 99 in females) than is shown by the measurements of *geyri* published by Bannerman (1936) which are 97–103 in four males. However, a paratype of *geyri*, sexed as "♀ ?," measures only 93, though the type measures 104. Hartert (1924) did not give the measurements of these birds because they were still molting, but their longest primaries are fully grown. It is possible that *monodi* is smaller, but this requires confirmation, and the difference at best seems trivial. Dekeyser and Villiers added also that their specimens did not have a thicker bill than *mya* Hartert, 1912, described from the northern Sahara (from which *geyri* was separated, among other characters, as having a thicker bill), but although the bill of *geyri* is somewhat shorter that that of *mya*, it does not appear to be truly thicker.

According to Lavauden (1926), *helenae* is a "very constant form," but this may not be certain, as it is known from only three specimens preserved in the field among those shot. The type of *helenae* is slightly more pinkish above and below and its rump is more cinnamon than usual in *macrorhyncha*, but so many races of *Galerida cristata* have been described on slight differences in coloration which later were found to be inconstant that little seems to be gained by recognizing still another based on insufficient material.

Niethammer (1955, p. 57) has recently described a new race of *G. cristata* which he called *jordansi*, type locality, Abbangarit, 200 kilometers northwest of Agades in the southern Sahara. Niethammer states that he has not examined *helenae* but that *jordansi* is reddish and evidently approaches *helenae* in coloration. As *jordansi* is based also on what seems to be insufficient material in this species (three specimens as in the case of *helenae*) and was not compared to the latter, it would seem to require confirmation before being accepted as valid. Until then I consider that *jordansi* is best synonymized with *macro-*

rhyncha, though it may be found to be synonymous with *helenae* if additional material should confirm that the latter is sufficiently distinct from *macrorhyncha* to warrant nomenclatural recognition.

SYLVIINAE

Cettia (Horeites) diphone

When commenting (1954e) on this species, I had no specimens from Quelpart Island available. This population was separated as *takahashii* by Momiyama in 1927 from *cantans* Temminck and Schlegel, 1847, type locality, Japan. Kuroda (1932) recognized *takahashii*, but I stated that I was inclined to doubt that it was sufficiently well differentiated to warrant recognition, because Kuroda found that it was very similar to *cantans*. No adults from Quelpart have become available to me since, but the collection of the British Museum contains an immature specimen from Quelpart which, I find, is identical with three immature birds from Hondo. As immature birds are not separable and adults are apparently very similar, the question of the validity of *takahashii* should be reopened; until then this name seems best treated as a synonym of *cantans*.

Locustella lanceolata

In this species, which all other authors have hitherto found to be monotypic, a subspecies was described by Johansen (1954), which he called *gigantea*. It is based on four specimens in the collection of the British Museum taken in June while on migration on Shaweishan Island off the coast of eastern China. These, according to Johansen, are larger than the published measurements, or the measurements that he has taken, of *L. lanceolata* Temminck, 1840, type locality, Russia, and they differ also by being paler, more rufous above, more ochraceous below, and less streaked. They measure, according to Johansen, 57 in one male, 60, 60, 61 in three females, and he adds that although their breeding grounds were unknown it is certain that they must have been "eastern Asia." In my preceding notes on this species (1954e) I stated that *gigantea* was probably invalid, and the specimens that I have examined since confirm this opinion.

The specimens in the British Museum, in addition to the four used by Johansen, consist of the following: another series from Shaweishan collected in October in which the specimens have a wing length of 56, 57, 57 in males, and 54, 54, 55, 56 in females; a series collected in May at Chinwangtao in northern Hopeh which measures 55, 56, 57, 57, 57 in males, and 56, 56 in females, and another series collected in the spring and fall in various parts of eastern China which measures 55, 55,

56, 58, 59, 62 in males, and 54, 57, 58, 59 in females. All these specimens were migrants. A series of birds collected on their breeding grounds from June 6 to August 17 in "eastern Asia" on Sakhalin, northern Manchuria, and Lake Baikal measures 55, 56, 57, 58 in males, 54, 57, 58 in females, and 59 in an unsexed specimen. I did not examine specimens from Russia where the species is only sporadic, but the "Birds of the Soviet Union" (1954, vol. 6, p. 253) gives its wing length as 52–59.

In view of the measurements above, I do not consider that a size difference has been established, and I see no reason why *gigantea* should have been based on spring rather than fall migrants to Shaweishan, because among the latter some match the coloration and streaking of the spring birds. I cannot see any difference in coloration or streaking among all the specimens above (whether collected in spring or fall, on Shaweishan or other parts of China, or among the breeding birds) which cannot be accounted for by differences in the state of the plumage, that is, whether or not it is more or less worn.

Acrocephalus orinus

This species is known from a unique specimen in the collection of the British Museum which Hume (1871) stated he had collected near Rampur in the Sutlej Valley in the Punjab Himalayas. Other than the locality and the date, November 13, 1867, nothing further was recorded. This bird is very much of a mystery, and, as so very little has been published, I took the opportunity to examine it carefully and present the following notes as to its characters and probable relationships.

Acrocephalus orinus, in my opinion, is closely related to *Acrocephalus concinens* and *A. agricola* which are themselves very closely related and considered by some authors to be conspecific, an opinion which I do not share. It differs, however, conspicuously from the other two in bill characters as well as other lesser characters. The coloration is similar to that of *concinens* and *agricola*, but it is slightly darker olive brown on the rump and upper tail coverts and slightly darker below, more olive on the breast and flanks. The specimen was not sexed and measures: wing, 61; tail, 54; length of bill (from the skull), 20; width of bill (at the gape), 6; tarsus, 20. Except for the bill it is therefore about the same size as, or slightly larger than, *agricola*, which is itself slightly larger than *concinens*, but *orinus* has a different wing formula, similar to that of *concinens*.

The first primary of *A. orinus* is exceedingly short, but unfortunately, other than noting that it was "minute," I did not measure it.

Stuart Baker (1924) states that it measures 10 mm. but does not say whether or not this is the total length of the feather or from what point it was measured. In *A. concinens* the total length of the first primary is about 28 and in *agricola* 4 to 5 mm. shorter. In *orinus* the wing formula is 2 < 3 < 4 which is slightly <5 which is slightly > 6 > 7 > 8 > 9 > 10, 2 = 9, gap between the tips of 2 and 5 is 10 mm. *Acrocephalus concinens* has a similar formula except that perhaps 4, 5, 6 are slightly more rounded and subequal and that 2 may fall between 9 and 10. The formula of *agricola* is quite different, being 2 < 3, 4, 5 > 6, etc. . . . , 2 = 6 or sometimes 7, and 2 is proportionately longer, the gap between its tip and 5 being about 5 mm.

The bill characters are the most interesting. The bill in the unique specimen of *orinus* seems perfectly normal in every respect and is much longer than in *agricola* or *concinens*, as it measures 20 instead of about 15 in the other two, and is even longer than in *Acrocephalus dumetorum* (a larger species than *agricola* or *concinens*) in which the bill length averages about 17 or 18 mm. It is also broader throughout, much less attenuated, and with shorter and weaker rictal bristles than in the other three *Acrocephalus* and is rather similar in shape, size, and development of the bristles to the bills of *Hippolais languida* and *Hippolais pallida*. In *A. orinus* the upper half of the bill is dark and the lower yellow, but this is common to many other species of reed warblers. The name *orinus* dates from Oberholser (1905), as the name *Acrocephalus macrorhynchus* given to this species by Hume in 1871 is preoccupied.

Hippolais icterina

This species is widely distributed but appears to be monotypic. The status of two subspecies separated from *H. icterina* Vieillot, 1817, type locality, France, was discussed in my preceding notes (1954e). One of these (*alaris* Stresemann, 1928, type locality, northern Iran) was not confirmed by additional material from Iran. I lacked material of the other (*borisi* von Jordans, 1940, type locality, Bulgaria), but material examined since fails to show any difference between specimens in comparative plumage from western and southeastern Europe and shows that *borisi* is a synonym of *H. icterina*.

Sylvia atricapilla

In this species a melanistic variety occurs in the Azores, Madeira, and the Canaries. In the Canaries it is apparently found only on Tenerife and La Palma, and Volsøe (1951) states that this variety "has been found repeatedly in the island of La Palma (expecially in La

Caldera), and according to Cabrera (1893) also occasionally in Tenerife." Despite this statement I have been unable to find adequate information on the relative frequency of this variety in the various islands and have not seen examples from the Canaries. As this subject is of some interest and the figures I gave (1954f) included some from the literature which now seem to be somewhat contradictory, it seems wiser to limit myself only to the specimens that I have actually examined. These, from the American Museum of Natural History and the British Museum are:

Azores: Total number of specimens, 62; melanistic variety, 1, unsexed. *Madeira:* Total 35; melanistic variety, 12 (7 of 21 males, 4 of 13 females, one unsexed; one male and one female of the melanistic variety are from Porto Santo Island). *Canaries (Tenerife and La Palma only)*: Total, 35; melanistic variety, none.

It is interesting to note that in the Azores, according to Murphy and Chapin (1929), this bird is said to be seen enough to have its own vernacular name, but these authors add that it was seen only once (on Terceira Island) but not collected, although the collector was active, as his dates show, a good part of the time from April 13 to January 15 of the following year.

Phylloscopus collybita

In my opinion, as stated earlier (1954d), the populations of the Iberian Peninsula are not sufficiently distinct morphologically from nominate *collybita* Vieillot, 1817, type locality, France, to warrant their nomenclatural separation as *brehmii* Homeyer, 1870, type locality, Portugal (redescribed as *ibericus* by Ticehurst in 1936 because he believed that *brehmii* had been based on winter visitors of nominate *collybita*). I have since examined most of the material available to Ticehurst, and my opinion has been strengthened.

The additional material examined consists of 28 of the 34 specimens available to Ticehurst from Spain and Portugal which include three immature birds. These were compared with 18 specimens from France, including one that was immature, and a series of adults and immature birds from England. The differences cited by Ticehurst in the birds of the Iberian Peninsula (rather brighter coloration, wing slightly more rounded, 2 = 6/7 usually, rather than 7/8 usually, legs and feet paler, and bill a "trifle" longer) are extremely slight and very far from constant, most specimens being identical so far as I can see. The differences can be discerned best in immature birds but there again are not constant and so slight that they do not seem to be of taxonomic importance.

Much has been made of the fact that the song in the birds of the Iberian Peninsula has a different cadence than in the "typical race," but it seems to me that a subspecies lacking adequate morphological differences cannot be based on such a difference. This difference has been noted by English authors, who naturally were familiar with the song of the birds which breed in England, but song often varies geographically (even within the same subspecies), and it might be of some interest to compare the song of the birds of the Iberian Peninsula with those which breed in France, the type locality of nominate *collybita*.

Prinia gracilis

A new race of this species has been recently described by Koelz (1954, p. 19) from the region of Bam in southeastern Iran which he calls *kirmanensis*. He states that it is "somewhat paler and with weaker streaking above" than *irakensis* Meinertzhagen, 1923, type locality, Iraq, and "paler and browner with no olivaceous cast, and with weaker streaks above" than *lepida* Blyth, 1844, type locality, Sind. I have examined most of the material available to Koelz and consider that *kirmanensis* is not valid.

Specimens from southern Iran from Fars and Laristan (which Koelz refers to *irakensis*) and from Kirman are not separable and, taken as a series, are more or less intermediate in general coloration between *irakensis* and *lepida*, but they are so very poorly characterized that it seems quite unnecessary to burden the nomenclature by describing them as a new race. A weakly indicated cline of decreasing saturation runs from west to east, but *irakensis* and *lepida* are not sharply differentiated. Furthermore, as stated, the populations of Fars, Laristan, and Kirman are vaguely intermediate, so it is really impossible to define with certainty where the two races replace each other. Because the action taken by Koelz makes it necessary to attempt to do so, the division can be set arbitrarily (as done by Koelz) at Fars and Laristan, treating the populations from Kirman eastward as *lepida*, of which *kirmanensis* becomes a synonym.

The streaking and the olive cast mentioned by Koelz vary individually and with the state of the plumage. In a series of 11 specimens collected by Zarudny in southeastern Iran in the region adjoining Kirman, some specimens are rather well streaked but others are only faintly so. In specimens in fresh plumage, the streaks, as might be expected, are less conspicuous, and in specimens collected at the same locality in early June and in October, the latter in fresh plumage have an olivaceous cast which has disappeared in spring specimens in worn and bleached plumage.

Scotocerca inquieta

In this species, Koelz (1954) has also described a new subspecies from southeastern Iran which he calls *elaphrus* and states to be "somewhat darker and grayer above" than *striata* Brooks, 1872, type locality, Punjab. I have examined the same material used by Koelz and *elaphrus*, in my opinion, is not separable in any way from *striata*. The latter ranges from western India (Sind, North-West Frontier Province, and west of the Indus) westward through Baluchistan and Afghanistan, south of the Hindu Kush, to Iran with the exception of Khorasan. In Khorasan (and perhaps Seistan from whence two specimens in worn plumage seem to be closer to *platyura*), Transcaspia, and Afghanistan in the Paropamisus and north of the Hindu Kush, *striata* is replaced by the paler *platyura* Severtzow, 1872, type locality, Transcaspia. The latter is more sandy and bleached looking but certainly not browner than *striata* as stated by Koelz. In addition to the Koelz specimens from Iran and Afghanistan, I have examined a series of seven specimens collected by Zarudny in southeastern Iran and one of 13 topotypes of *platyura*.

The genus *Scotocerca* Sundevall, 1872, the type of which is *inquieta*, is often merged with *Prinia* Horsfield, 1822, but Colonel Meinertzhagen tells me that he believes this to be incorrect. *Scotocerca inquieta* is much more active and restless than the birds of the genus *Prinia* and builds a fully covered nest, while the *Prinia* are more sluggish and inhabit thicker cover, and their nest is not fully covered.

Rhopophilus pekinensis

This interesting species has been reviewed by Sudilowskaya (1938), but as it is not well known and my findings do not support completely those of this author it is briefly reviewed again below. The specimens examined are those in the collections of the British Museum and of the American Museum of Natural History, and the measurements given were, unless otherwise noted, taken by me. Because the localities mentioned are more or less obscure, the range of the species in Central Asia is illustrated in figure 1. The species is not migratory and inhabits scrubby areas, long grasses, bushes, or tamarisk thickets in the plains along the foothills of the mountains or the fringes of oases and streams. Three races are distinguishable—two very well marked and another poorly so.

1. *Rhopophilus pekinensis pekinensis* Swinhoe, 1868, type locality, Peking. This is the darkest race, well streaked above with brown and well streaked with chestnut on the flanks, and has a grayish and rather indistinct superciliary streak. It is also the smallest, the wing length

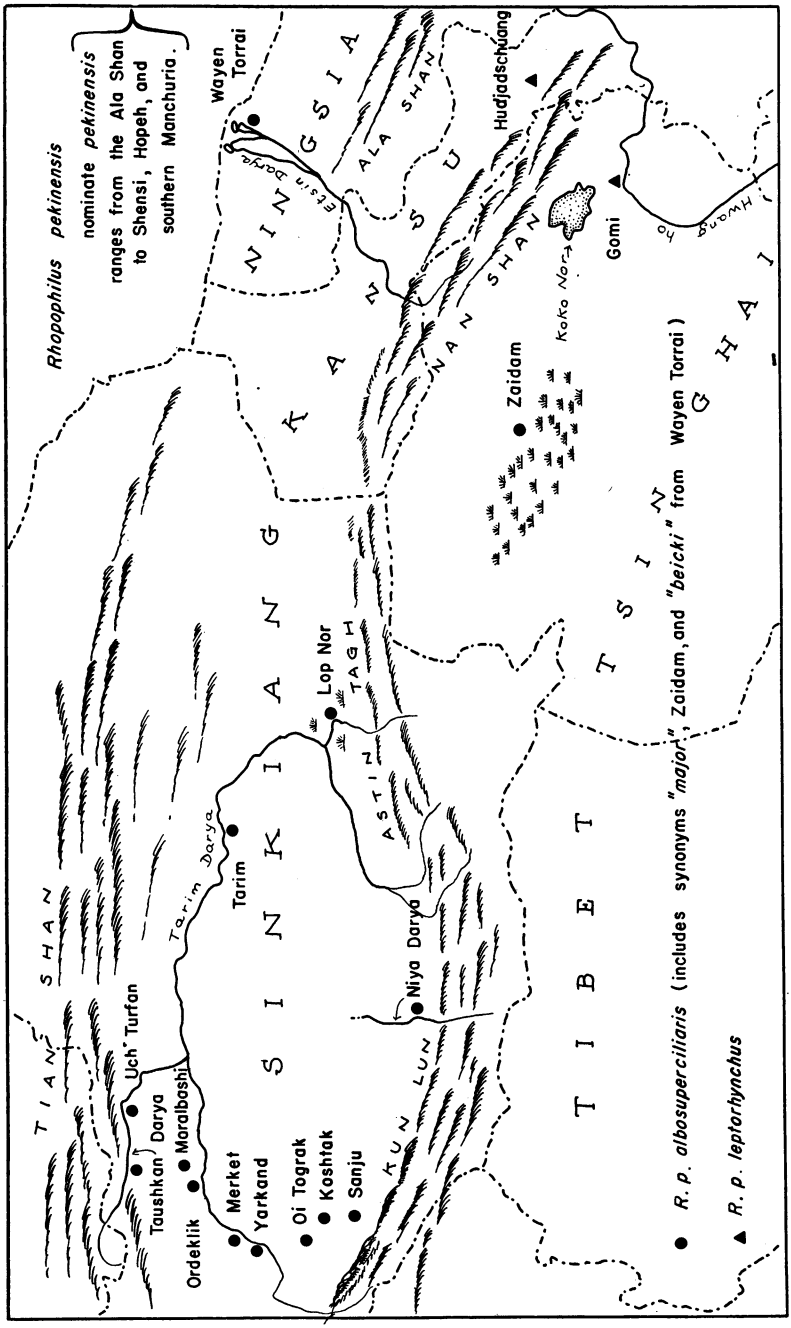

FIG. 1. Distribution of *Rhopophilus pekinensis* in Chinese Turkestan, Tsinghai, and neighboring Kansu and Ningsia.

in adults measuring 60, 61, 61, 62, 62, 63, 63, 63, 63, 64, 64, 65, 65 in males; 59, 60, 60, 63 in females, and 62 in an unsexed specimen; average of 18 specimens, 62.2. It ranges from southern Manchuria, and possibly Korea, south and west through northern China to the Tsingling Range in Shensi and the Ala Shan in Ningsia.

2. *Rhopophilus pekinensis leptorhynchus* Meise, 1933, type locality, Hu-dja-dschuang in the Da ho Gorge in the Lanchow Mountains, Kansu. This race is poorly differentiated from nominate *pekinensis*, and it is a matter of opinion whether or not it should be recognized in the nomenclature. It averages very slightly paler and has a somewhat weaker and shorter bill. Meise (1937) who had a larger number of specimens of *leptorhynchus* than I have examined gives the bill length, measured from the nostril, as 7.1–8.3 in *leptorhynchus* as against 7.8–8.6 in nominate *pekinensis*, a very small difference. The range of *leptorhynchus* extends from Kansu to the region of Gomi on the upper Hwang ho, southeast of the Koko Nor, from whence I have examined a specimen collected by Przewalski which is identical with two paratypes of *leptorhynchus*.

3. *Rhopophilus pekinensis albosuperciliaris* Hume, 1873, type locality, Koshtak on the Yarkand Plain, with the following two as synonyms: *major* Przewalski, 1876, type locality, Zaidam; and *beicki* Meise, 1937, type locality, "Wajentori, Edsin gol" [= Wayen Torrai in the delta of the Etsin Darya.] This race is very conspicuously paler than nominate *pekinensis*, sandy in coloration, less gray above, and has a better indicated superciliary streak which is whitish rather than grayish. It is larger, the wing length of 36 adults measuring 63–72 (68), and has also a heavier and longer bill, averaging about 17 in length as against about 15 in nominate *pekinensis*.

Sudilowskaya (1938) and Meise (1937) recognized *major* as being larger and more darkly streaked with chestnut on the flanks than *albosuperciliaris*, but the difference in coloration is not constant, and the measurements appear to be identical. The wing length in topotypical *albosuperciliaris* or specimens from the western end of its range (Sanju, Koshtak, Oi Tograk, Oi Kuduk west of Merket, Ordeklik, Maralbashi, Taushkan Darya, and Uch Turfan) measures 68, 69, 69, 70, 71, 72, 72, 72 in males; 65, 65 in females; 64, 66, 67, 69, 69, 71, 72 in unsexed specimens. Specimens from the Niya Darya in the Kun Lun measure 67 in one female, 67, 69 in unsexed specimens. Farther east in the Tarim Basin, 65, 70, 70 in three males from the Tarim River, and still farther east, at Lop Nor, 65, 65 in males, 66 in one female, 68 in an unsexed specimen. Two topotypes of *major* (Zaidam) examined by me measure 69 in one male and 69 in an unsexed speci-

men, and Pleske (1889) gave the measurements of adults from the Zaidam as 66, 67, 67.5, 70 in males, 67 in one female, and of adults from Lop Nor as 63.5 in one male, 63 in one female. It can be seen that large as well as small birds occur equally at both the western and eastern part of the range, and the same is true of the coloration. Specimens with dark streaks from the Zaidam, and/or the eastern part of the range, such as Lop Nor, can be matched perfectly with specimens from the western end of the range.

Meise separated *beicki* on the basis of a single specimen which he says is similar to *major* in coloration but smaller, measuring (an unsexed specimen) 62. It goes without saying that the material and the "difference" are hardly sufficient to establish the validity of *beicki*. However, it is possible that specimens from the Etsin Valley differ very slightly from *albosuperciliaris*. Kozlova (1933) thought they might, but stated that her material was insufficient. Until adequate series become available it seems best to treat *beicki* as a synonym of *albosuperciliaris*. Kozlova gave the measurements as 60.2–65.2 and added that birds from the "central Gobi" in summer plumage were paler than nominate *pekinensis* but darker than *albosuperciliaris*.

The range of *albosuperciliaris* (including *major* and *beicki*) can be defined as the Tarim Basin (along the southern foothills of the Tian Shan and the northern foothills of the Kun Lun and Astin Tagh), the oases along the Tarim or other rivers, eastward to Lop Nor, the Zaidam, the Etsin Darya, and "central Gobi."

HIRUNDINIDAE

Hirundo daurica

In my former notes on swallows (1951 and 1954g) I accepted the validity of the race *gephyra* Meise (1934), separated from nominate *daurica* Linnaeus, 1771, on the basis of being "somewhat" more heavily streaked below and smaller, but stated that specimens from the breeding range of nominate *daurica* were not available to me. The type locality of *gephyra* is northern Szechwan and that of nominate *daurica* is Siberia. Specimens from the breeding range of nominate *daurica* are apparently very rare in collections outside of Russia, and Meise did not make clear whether or not he had examined such specimens, but at any rate a good series in the British Museum collected on the breeding range of nominate *daurica* shows that *gephyra* is not valid and is a synonym of nominate *daurica*. These specimens and *gephyra* are identical in their general coloration and streaking, and they are not separable on size either.

Meise gave the wing length of *gephyra* as 120–123, 125 in six speci-

mens as against 122–133, or, as quoted from Hartert, 125–138 in nominate *daurica*. The specimens from the breeding range of nominate *daurica* which I have measured (collected from May 19 to July 18 in Siberia, northwestern Mongolia, and "Dauria") have a wing length of 127, 131, 131, 132 in males, and 124, 127, 128 in females. These are not appreciably larger and overlap the measurements of the series of *gephyra* (which included four paratypes collected by Weigold in 1914) that I gave in 1951 as 124, 125+, 126, 127 in males, and 121, 125, 126 in females. In the same paper I gave the measurements of a series of paratypes of *tibetana*, a form described by Schäfer in 1939 from southern Tsinghai as "very much larger than *gephyra*," but which is also a synonym of nominate *daurica* because its measurements show so much overlap with those of nominate *daurica* (or of *gephyra*) and because it is identical with them in coloration and streaking. The measurements of this series of *tibetana* are 125, 127, 127, 127, 128, 128, 131 in males; 123, 124, 126, 126, 127 in females; 123, 125+, 127, 127, 127, 128, 128 in unsexed specimens. A series in the British Museum collected by Przewalski in "northeastern Tibet" [or Tsinghai] in June measures 126, 128, 131, 133 in four males, and 125, 126 in two females collected near by in "Kansu" in August.

As true nominate *daurica* is apparently rare in collections it is briefly diagnosed here, as follows: Differs from *rufula* (southern Europe eastward to the Iranian region, Russian Turkestan, and northwestern Himalayas) by having the rufous nuchal band interrupted with blue and by being more heavily streaked below; from *japonica* (Manchuria to Japan and eastern China) by having the streaking of the under parts narrower, by being similar to *nipalensis* (Himalayas from the Punjab eastward to southwestern Sikang) but with the ground color of the under parts more buffy. The long series of individual measurements given in 1951 shows that nominate *daurica* averages larger, in wing and tail length, than the other three Palearctic races. Other races of *Hirundo daurica*, which are quite distinct from the Palearctic races, are found in India from the base of the Himalayas to Ceylon, and in Africa.

TURDINAE

Saxicola torquata

A race of this species has been described recently by Koelz (1954, p. 13) from Luristan in the western Zagros in southwestern Iran under the name *excubitor*, but he overlooked the fact that this race, which is valid, had already been described by Stegmann from near-by Kurdistan under the name *armenica* (1935, p. 47). The characters cited by Steg-

mann for *armenica* (which he compared to *maura* Pallas, 1773, western Siberia) are the same as those cited by Koelz for "*excubitor*" (which he compared to *variegata* S. G. Gmelin, 1774, Transcaucasia), namely, that it is larger and the chestnut of the breast is darker. *Saxicola t. variegata* differs from *maura* only by showing more white at the base of the tail.

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