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SIX NEW SUBSPECIES OF BIRDS FROM THE HIGHLANDS OF NEW GUINEA

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In 1950 the junior author made a representative collection of birds in the previously only poorly known Hagen, Bismarck, and Kubor Mountains. The descriptions of one new species and 17 new subspecies from this collection have already been published (Mayr and Gilliard, 1950, 1951, 1952). Further study of the collection revealed six additional new subspecies of New Guinea birds, the descriptions of which are herewith published. The full report on the collection, including the field notes, is in preparation.

Melampitta lugubris longicauda, new subspecies

TYPE: A.M.N.H. No. 420120; adult male; Mt. Tafa, near Wharton Range, Papua, 2400 meters; September 10, 1933; A. L. Rand.

DIAGNOSIS: Very similar to *lugubris* of the Arfak Mountains but tail much longer (see measurements). Differs from *rostrata* of the Weyland and Nassau Mountains by being of smaller size (see Rand, 1942, p. 467).

RANGE: Mountains of central and eastern New Guinea from Owen Stanley Range west through the Saruwaged, Bismarck, Kubor, Hagen, to the Oranje Mountains.

MEASUREMENTS: The following are measurements (in millimeters) of the tail:

lugubris

♂ Arfak, 43?, 46, 50, 53

♀ Arfak, 44.5, 46, 48, 49, 49

rostrata

- ♂ Weylands, 51, 51.5, 52.5, 53, 55.5, 57
 ♀ Weylands, 52

longicauda

- ♂ Idenburg region, 58
 ♂ Habbema region, 59, 60, 60, 60, 60, 60, 60.5, 61, 61, 61, 61, 61, 61.5, 62.5, 63, 63, 63, 63.5
 ♂ Wahgi region, 59, 60, 61, 61
 ♀ Wahgi region, 58, 58
 ? Saruwaged, 55, 57
 ♂ Upper Aroa River, 56, 57
 ♀ Upper Aroa River, 56, 58
 ♂ Wharton Range, Mt. Tafa, Mt. Victoria, 62, 62, 62, 62.5, 62.5, 63, 63, 66, 66, 66, 67
 ♀ Wharton Range, Mt. Tafa, Mt. Victoria, 59, 60

***Tregellasia leucops wahgiensis*, new subspecies**

TYPE: A.M.N.H. No. 348399; subadult male; base of Mt. Orata (behind Kup), Kubor Mountains, Mandated Territory of New Guinea; May 24, 1950; ± 6000 feet; E. T. Gilliard.

DIAGNOSIS: Nearest to *albifacies* of eastern New Guinea, but maxilla with the basal two-thirds vinaceous ivory, not black as in all other races excepting *auricularis* which, in bill coloration, is closely similar (but which differs extensively by having the auriculars white, not blackish); also by having the feathers of the forehead and base of the maxilla white, not black as in *albifacies* in which the white facial patches are separated on the midline of the forehead by black feathering (see remarks).

RANGE: Central and eastern New Guinea west of a line between Holnicote Bay on the north and Redscar Bay on the south (fig. 1). In central New Guinea known only from three specimens from the Wahgi region on the southern watershed (one male subadult [type]; one female, Mt. O-Mar, Kubor Mountains, ± 6000 feet; one female subadult, vicinity of Nondugl, 5200 feet).

REMARKS: While comparing the Wahgi Valley specimens with series from other parts of New Guinea, we discovered to our surprise that material from southeastern New Guinea, usually identified as *albifacies*, consists actually of two distinct subspecies, a more eastern one with a black forehead (the true *albifacies*) and a more western one with a white forehead (*wahgiensis*), heretofore unnamed.

There is one puzzling aspect to the distribution of these two

subspecies. Although *Tregellasia leucops* is a bird of rather low altitudes, the black-fronted and the white-fronted races are found on both the northern and southern slopes of the watershed of New Guinea (fig. 1). At least in the case of the western (white-fronted) subspecies, it appears at first sight that there must be a complete division of the range into a southern portion and a northern portion, separated by intervening highlands.

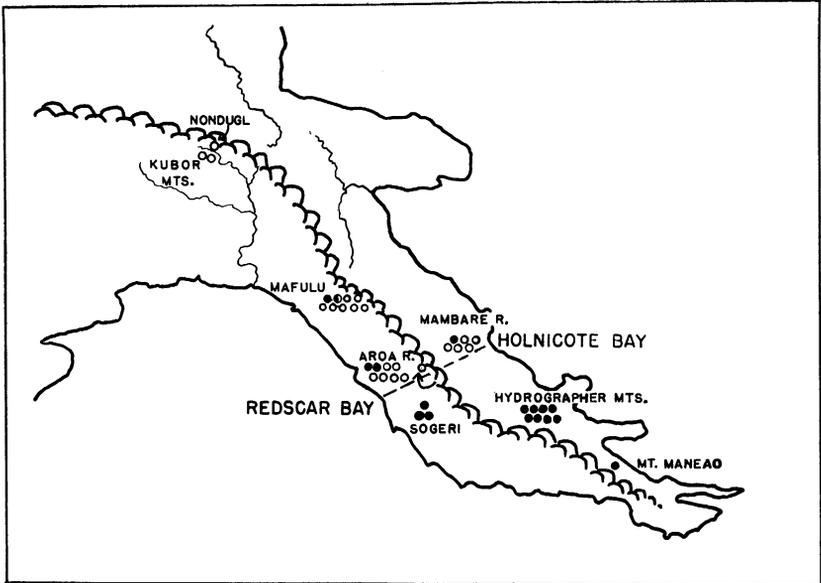


FIG. 1. Distribution of *Tregellasia leucops* in eastern New Guinea. Key to forehead coloration: ○, white; ◐, white with traces of black; ●, black.

It is unlikely that any of the mountain passes are lower than 5500 feet, which is higher than the normal upper limit of vertical distribution of this species (4500 feet). However, the bird seems to ascend higher in the Wahgi Valley area, since native hunters brought in specimens at the 5200- and 6000- foot camps. They may, however, have been obtained at somewhat lower altitudes.

Tregellasia l. albifacies Sharpe is known from the Sogeri (Chogeri) District, east of Port Moresby, and also from the Hydrographer Mountains. De Vis' *Monachella viridis* from Mt. Maneao (inland of Collingwood Bay) also seems to belong to this subspecies. It is characterized by the complete separation

of the white facial patches by black feathers in the middle of the forehead. In this respect it resembles the Queensland race of the species (*albigularis*).

There can be no doubt that the type of *albifacies* (type locality, Sogeri, behind Port Moresby) is a black-fronted bird because (1) three topotypical skins at hand from Sogeri have the same vivid black feathering at the base of the culmen, (2) Sharpe (1882, p. 318) in his original description indicates the forehead as black, and (3) the two color figures in Gould (1882, pl. [12]) are clearly of the black-fronted type.

The range of the black-fronted *albifacies* seems to extend westward about to a line drawn from Holnicote Bay to Redscar Bay. We have four samples of *wahgiensis* from within 100 kilometers eastward beyond this line (fig. 1). In all of them there is a strong prevalence of white-fronted birds. Among six adults from Bihagi, Mambare, five are white fronted; among eight adults from the Aroa River, six are white fronted; a single Mt. Cameron bird is white fronted; among nine birds from Mafulu, only one is black fronted, seven are purely white fronted, one is mixed. These birds thus show some influence of *albifacies* but agree in the main with the Wahgi region population. They differ from Wahgi birds in one additional character, namely, by having more black on the bill, particularly the upper mandible. There would be no justification for naming this intermediate population of the western Owen Stanley Mountains.

***Peneothello sigillatus hagenensis*, new subspecies**

TYPE: A.M.N.H. No. 348397; adult male; Summit Camp, Mt. Hagen, Central Highlands, Mandated Territory of New Guinea; July 23, 1950; 11,000 feet; E. T. Gilliard.

DIAGNOSIS: Nearest to *quadrifasciatus* in wing color, but sides of chest black as in *sigillatus*, not with large white patches. Innermost secondary white, not broadly tipped with black as in *sigillatus* and *saruwagedi*. Secondaries generally much more extensively white than in the eastern races. Wing length as in *quadrifasciatus*; tail as in *sigillatus* (table 1).

RANGE: Known only from the highlands of Mt. Hagen (± 9000 –11,500 feet).

REMARKS: Although there is variation, some of it apparently due to age and sex (females have most of the white secondaries

with somewhat broader black tipping), the secondaries in *hagenensis* may be described as follows: innermost secondary always pure white; the next one white, sometimes with a small black tip; the next one with or without a narrow black tip; the next one with a well-defined black tip; the next one chiefly black on the outer third of the feather; the next one with a varying amount of white on the inner vane only.

TABLE 1
MEASUREMENTS (IN MILLIMETERS) OF *Peneothello sigillatus*

	Wing	Tail	Tarsus
<i>sigillatus</i>			
Mountains of southeast New Guinea			
7 ♂	94-100.5	63-72	28-31.5
7 ♀	89-96.5	62-68.5	29-30
Mt. Wilhelm, Wahgi Divide			
4 ♂	91-98	65-67	28-30
3 ♀	89-94.5	66-69	29-30.5
Mt. Kubor			
2 ♂	94, 94.5	67, 67	29, 30
2 ♀	91.5, 96	66, 66	29, 30
<i>saruwagedi</i> , Saruwaged Mountains			
1 ♂	95	63.5	31
5 ♂ ^a	92-96	—	—
3 ♀ ^a	86-90	—	—
<i>hagenensis</i> , Mt. Hagen			
3 ♂	92-105	65-72	27-28
1 ♀	95	67	27
4 ?	91-96	69-72	27-28
<i>quadrifasciatus</i> , Habbema region			
4 ♂	101.5-106	71-78	30-32
2 ♀	97.5, 99	69, 72	28, 29

^a Published measurements (Mayr, 1931, p. 680).

Daphoenositta miranda kuboriensis, new subspecies

TYPE: A.M.N.H. No. 348233; adult male; Mt. O-Mar, Kubor Mountains, Central Highlands, Mandated Territory of New Guinea; May 28, 1950; 8800 feet; E. T. Gilliard.

DIAGNOSIS: Nearest to *miranda*, but males with the red of forehead, lores, and chin paler, more pinkish red, less carmine; light areas of chin and throat somewhat more extensive. Females: reddish areas about base of bill somewhat more pinkish,

less carmine, and more extensive on lores and chin; subocular region red in *kuboriensis*, not black as in *miranda*.

RANGE: Known only from the type locality.

REMARKS: This form is intermediate between *miranda* of the east and *frontalis* of the west but closer to the former.

The two males and two females collected were observed feeding in a flock in the upper story of low rain forest. They were seen to climb about on moss-covered limbs, often head downward and at times upside down as they scanned the wet perches for food. No others were seen during the course of the expedition despite the more extensive collecting which took place on Mt. Wilhelm and Mt. Hagen.

The gonads of both sexes were orange in color; the iris in life Raw Umber (Ridgway); the bill black; the feet of males blackish to dark brownish green; the feet of females yellow. Total length of males in life, 128 mm., 130 (type); females, 118, 120. Wing, males, 85, 85.5; females, 81.5, 84.

***Melanocharis striativentris albicauda*, new subspecies**

TYPE: A.M.N.H. No. 698716 (Rothschild Collection); adult male; Bihagi, head of Mambare River, northern watershed of the Owen Stanley Mountains, southeastern New Guinea; March 19, 1906; A. S. Meek.

DIAGNOSIS: Males nearest to *M. s. striativentris* but basal fifth or more of tail feathers (except central pair) pure white on both vanes of both surfaces, not dark brown with green edgings above and gray brown narrowly tinged with light gray on inner vanes below. Outer edges of outer four rectrices white on one-quarter to one-half of their total length, not dark brown edged with yellowish green. Tail relatively long, tail-wing ratio in males: 77.2, 79.5, 79.8, 80.6, as against 68.5, 70.2, 71.2 in *chrysocome*, 74.4, 74.7, 77.4 in *striativentris*.

RANGE: Known only from the type locality but probably the forested regions of the northern watershed of the Owen Stanley Mountains between the altitudes of 3500 and 6500 feet.

REMARKS: A single topotypical female has the white tail area much reduced. The white tail markings of males of *albicauda* are much like those of the species *versteri* but less highly developed. In *albicauda*, however, the upper tail coverts are not modified as a cover for the white tail areas. In fact, no discernible difference exists between the upper tail coverts of

albicauda and those of the three other dark-tailed races of *striativentris*. In *versteri*, however, the black coverts have taken the form of a deep V, with each point overlapping half of the tail, when in repose, and shielding almost precisely the white areas of the otherwise black tail. In *albicauda* the white area of the tail is restricted to the portion normally concealed by the upper tail coverts. It is for this reason that this well-marked race escaped notice for so long. Traces of white are present at the base of the tail of males of all races of *striativentris* except *axillaris*, but only in *albicauda* is the white extensive.

***Lonchura spectabilis wahgiensis*, new subspecies**

TYPE: A.M.N.H. No. 348398; adult male; Kegalsugl, south slope of Mt. Wilhelm, Bismarck Mountains, Central Highlands, Mandated Territory of New Guinea; June 17, 1950; 8000 feet; E. T. Gilliard.

DIAGNOSIS: Near *mayri* from Sentani Lake, but with the back and wings darker, more grayish chocolate brown, less ochraceous brown. Size as in *mayri*. Differs from *spectabilis* (New Britain) by having the back duller brown (less rufous) and the upper tail coverts straw-colored (as in *mayri*) not reddish ochre.

RANGE: Grasslands of the Wahgi and Chimbu valleys where it was found between the altitudes of 5200 and \pm 8000 feet.

REMARKS: Birds from the Saruwaged Mountains and Herzog Mountains presumably also belong to this subspecies. The only freshly molted Saruwaged bird examined by Mayr (1931, p. 654) was darker than *mayri*.

We use this opportunity to provide a new name for the black-bird of the Bismarck Mountains, since, as Mr. H. G. Deignan has kindly called to our attention, the name *carbonarius* is pre-occupied.

We propose the name

***Turdus poliocephalus erebus*, new name**

for *Turdus poliocephalus carbonarius* Mayr and Gilliard (1951), p. 7), preoccupied by *Turdus carbonarius* Lichtenstein (1823), a synonym of *Platycichla flavipes* Vieillot (1818).

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