

genus (*Ibis*, 1916, pp. 1-16). Mr. Bates has remarked on the back of one of his labels that he believes the species named *H. plumbescens* Sharpe is identical with *H. simplex*, but he will see in my paper cited that this is not the case. *H. s. simplex* is restricted to the island of St. Thomas in the Gulf of Guinea (*cf.* *Ibis*, 1915, p. 119). I should like to take this opportunity to correct an error which appeared in my review of this genus (*l. c.*). On pp. 11 and 14 I gave the same range for both *Haplopetelia simplex inornata* and *H. s. plumbescens*. It should be as follows:—

H. s. inornata.

Range. Cameroon Mountain.

H. s. plumbescens.

Range. Southern Cameroon (except Cameroon Mountain). River Ja district.

Aplopetelia tesmanni Rehw. described from Bebai, S. Cameroon, is synonymous with *H. s. plumbescens*.

V.—On the Genus *Macrosphenus* Cassin, with special reference to the races of *Macrosphenus flavicans*. By DAVID A. BANNERMAN, M.B.E., B.A., M.B.O.U.

THE type of the genus *Macrosphenus* is *M. flavicans* of Cassin (*Proc. Philad. Acad.* 1859, p. 42), and this species was described from the Camma River, Gaboon.

***Macrosphenus flavicans flavicans* Cassin.**

From material in the British Museum I consider that this species, of which we have seventeen examples in the British Museum, extends from western Cameroon, through Gaboon to Landana at the mouth of the Congo, and I also unite with it *Macrosphenus poensis* of Alexander (*Bull. B. O. C.* xiii. 1903, p. 36) which inhabits Fernando Po, as I cannot see any distinction between this and the mainland bird. It is also evident, as suggested by Sharpe and confirmed by Ogilvie-Grant (*Trans. Zool. Soc.* xix. 1910, p. 378), that *Macrosphenus zenkeri* Reichw. (*Orn. Monatsber.* 1898, p. 23),

described from Jannde, Cameroon, and figured in Reichenow's *Atlas*, 1902, is founded on an immature example of *M. flavicans*.

Besides *M. flavicans flavicans*, there are at any rate three, and probably four, well-defined races in Africa, as follows :—

***M. flavicans hypochondriacum* (Rehw.).**

This name was proposed by Reichenow (*Orn. Monatsber.* 1893, p. 32) for a specimen obtained at Kinjawanga, immediately north of Ruwenzori, and I accept it for the birds inhabiting the northern Belgian Congo eastwards (the Uele and Arawimi Rivers districts and the eastern Congo forest).

Specimens from these localities are appreciably brighter coloured (more golden and less olive) on the under surface than typical examples from Cameroon and Gaboon, and have in addition a slightly shorter bill. We have ten examples in the National Collection of this race.

***M. flavicans angolensis* Bannerman.**

This race was described by me (*Bull. B. O. C.* vol. xli. 1920, p. 6) from northern Angola—Type locality: N'Dalla Tando. I separated it from the typical species on account of its much shorter bill—varying in five specimens from 14·5–15 mm. (exposed culmen).

***M. flavicans leoninus* Neumann.**

This is another subspecies which has been described (*Bull. B. O. C.* xxiii. 1908, p. 46—Sierra Leone) from western Africa, a single example having been obtained by Robin Kemp at Rotifunk. Opinions differ as to whether the bird in question is an adult specimen. Ogilvie-Grant believed that it was an immature of *M. flavicans*. I am doubtful whether the bird is immature—as it has a yellowish throat, whereas quite immature examples of *M. f. flavicans* show traces of the grey throat at an early stage. It has a remarkably long bill (18 mm. exposed culmen, 21 mm. measured from the gape) for an immature bird, and the fact that no representative of *M. flavicans* is known to exist north of Cameroon is sufficient justification for the name to be kept up.

M. flavicans *ugandæ* van Someren.

This form was described from Mabira (Bull. B. O. C. xxxv. p. 126), and is said to inhabit the Uganda forests. It is darker than the typical form and is richer yellow on the underside.

The only other species in the genus besides *M. flavicans* and its subspecies are :—

Macrosphenus kretschmeri Rehw. & Neumann (Orn. Mon. 1895, p. 75—Kiboseho), of which I have never seen a specimen and which is only known to occur in the Kilimanjaro region; likewise *Macrosphenus griseiceps* Grote (Orn. Monatsber. 1911, p. 162—Mikindani, late German E. Africa), compared by the author with *M. kretschmeri*, and *M. albigula* Grote (Orn. Monatsber. 1919, p. 62—Mlalo, Usambara, Tanganyika Territory). I have not seen specimens of either.

Macrosphenus kempii (Sharpe) and *Macrosphenus concolor* (Hartl.), concerning which two forms the following remarks may be of interest :—

In the first place I wish to transfer the bird hitherto known as *Amaurocichla kempii* Sharpe from the genus in which Sharpe placed it and put it in the genus *Macrosphenus*, as it is evident that it has nothing whatever to do with *Amaurocichla bocagei*.

The bird figured as *Amaurocichla kempii* (Ibis, 1905, plate v. facing p. 231), named and placed in the genus *Amaurocichla* by Sharpe (Bull. B. O. C. xv. p. 38, 1905), cannot in my opinion be assigned to that genus, although Sharpe was himself the author of the genus *Amaurocichla*. The generic characters are given by Sharpe in P. Z. S. 1892, p. 228, and are as follows :—“Similar to *Crateroscelis*, but distinguished by the shape of the wing, the first primary being nearly as long as the second. Additional characters are :—The bill is as long as the head, and rictal bristles are absent, while the tail-feathers are somewhat acuminate.” The type of the genus is *Amaurocichla bocagei*.

Now, the bird which has hitherto been known as *Amaurocichla kempii* differs markedly from *Amaurocichla bocagei*.

In the first place the principal character of the genus *Anaurocichla*—*i. e.*, the first primary being nearly as long as the second primary, which is long—is not borne out by examination of the type of *kempi*. In the type from Sierra Leone the first primary is actually 14 mm. shorter than the second primary, which is short. The bill is longer (not as long as) the head, and the general aspect of the bird is entirely dissimilar. I unhesitatingly transfer the bird figured as *Anaurocichla kempi* to the genus *Macrosphenus*, and anyone examining the three specimens of *M. kempi* now in the British Museum will, I feel sure, endorse my action.

Compared with *Macrosphenus flavicans flavicans*, the most obvious differences are in the length of the tail—very much longer in *M. f. flavicans*,—and the totally different colour, olive-green in *M. flavicans* and subspecies, grey and rufous in *M. kempi*.

Mr. Willoughby Lowe, who has recently obtained a specimen of *M. kempi* near Lagos in southern Nigeria, tells me that in habits the bird resembles a Nuthatch, and that it has in life a strikingly elongated neck, out of all proportion to the size of the bird. Once seen alive it is a species which can never be forgotten.

If future workers do not agree with me in temporarily placing this bird in the genus *Macrosphenus*, an entirely new genus will have to be created for it—a course which I do not favour until we know more about this remarkable form and can compare its skeleton with a skeleton of *M. flavicans*.

The other species which I include in this genus, thereby following a suggestion of Mr. Osear Neumann (Bull. B. O. G. xxiii. p. 47), is *Macrosphenus concolor* (Hartl.) (Syst. Orn. Westafr. p. 62)—a species which has been usually included in the genus *Camaroptera*. It has, however, a hooked upper mandible, thereby differing from all the true members of the genus *Camaroptera*, and in general appearance seems to resemble a *Macrosphenus*. It however possesses

rietal bristles, thereby differing from the other members of the genus *Macrosphenus*.

To recapitulate, we have :—

MACROSPHENUS FLAVICANS FLAVICANS Cassin.

Type loc. : Camma River.

Range : Cameroon to the mouth of the Congo.

Synonyms : *M. poensis* Alexander. (Fernando Po.)

M. zenkeri Rehw. (Yaunde, Cameroon.)

MACROSPHENUS FLAVICANS ANGOLENSIS Bannerman.

Type loc. : N'Dala Tando, N. Angola.

Range : N. Angola.

MACROSPHENUS FLAVICANS HYPOCHONDRIACUM Rehw.

Type loc. : Kinjawanga, near Mt. Ruwenzori.

Range : N. Belgian Congo, Uganda.

MACROSPHENUS FLAVICANS LEONINUS Neumann.

Type loc. : Rotifunk, Sierra Leone.

Range : Sierra Leone.

MACROSPHENUS CONCOLOR (Hartl.).

Type loc. : "Guinea."

Range : Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Cameroon, Fernando Po, N. Belgian Congo, Uganda.

* *MACROSPHENUS KRETSCHMERI* (Rehw.).

Type loc. : Kiboscho.

Range : Kilimanjaro Region, Kenya Colony.

MACROSPHENUS GRISEICEPS Grote.

Type loc. : Mikindani (late German E. Africa).

Range : Tanganyika Territory.

MACROSPHENUS KEMPI (Sharpe).

Type loc. : Sierra Leone.

Range : Sierra Leone and Southern Nigeria.

MACROSPHENUS ALBIGULA Grote.

Type loc. : Mkalo near Wilhelmstal.

Range : Usambara, S.E. shores of Victoria Nyanza, Tanganyika Territory.

* Now placed in this genus on the authority of Reichenow, *vide* *Vögel Afrikas*, iii, p. 614.

VI.—*A Note on the Breeding Birds of Crete.*

By Col. R. MEINERTZHAGEN, D.S.O., M.B.O.U., F.Z.S.

I ARRIVED in Crete on the 4th of June, 1920, and left the island in early July, having had my visit cut short for official reasons. H. L. Powell accompanied me as taxidermist.

Landing at Candia I collected for three days in the neighbourhood and then went direct to Mount Ida, the central hill-mass of Crete. Here I remained for about a fortnight. No collecting was done outside the Candia district.

The area comprising this district falls easily into three areas :—

- (a) Below 2500 feet. Human habitations and cultivation, mostly olives, vines, orchards, and corn.
- (b) Between 3000 and 4500 feet. Ilex forest on mountain slopes.
- (c) Above 4500 feet. The bare wind-swept hills of Ida and Nidha with the remarkable Nidha Plain. The summit of Ida is 8200 feet elevation, and snow was still lying about in drifts of many acres in extent above 6500 feet.

Travelling in Crete in summer is easy. The weather is perfect and one can sleep anywhere, though the nights on Ida were bitterly cold. I always bedded down in some garden, having taken no tent with me. On Mount Ida one has difficulty in avoiding an incessant wind, as shelter is rare, but we usually managed to get in a hollow. Staple foods can be obtained everywhere and good water abounds. Mule transport is the rule, a beast carrying about 400–450 pounds the whole day without fatigue. There is but one great drawback—expense. A naturalist, living simply, without tent or luxury, must be prepared to spend £100 per month, excluding his ticket to the island. Mules cannot be hired for less than £1 a day each. A guide-interpreter costs from £12 to £15 per month. My expenses were particularly heavy, as I was compelled to retain in my service the numerous policemen and consular messengers who were searching for me for three weeks.