

The film "Almost a Dodo", about the Shoebill *Balaeniceps rex* in the Bangweulu Swamp, Zambia was shown by kind permission of Survival Anglia Ltd. This was followed by an address by Mr. Jonathan Kingdon on the Shoebill, in which he spoke about his study of this bird in the swamps of the sudd region of the southern Sudan. Among much information about it, he explained that the primary reason for the shape of its bill seemed to be the need to cool its eggs by pouring water over them. The excellent Meeting closed at 10.35 p.m.

The seven hundred and fifty-first Meeting of the Club was held in the Senior Common Room, South Side, Imperial College, London, S.W.7 on Tuesday, 10 January 1984 at 6.45 p.m. The attendance was 23 Members and 10 guests.

Members present were: B. GRAY (*Chairman*), P. J. BELMAN, K. F. BETTON, Dr. G. BEVEN, D. BISHOP, Mrs. DIANA BRADLEY, D. R. CALDER, R. D. CHANCEL-LOR, Dr. N. J. COLLAR, G. S. COWLES, J. H. ELGOOD, Sir HUGH ELLIOTT, A. GIBBS, Revd. T. W. GLADWIN, D. GRIFFIN, P. HOGG, Dr. A. G. KNOX, Revd. G. K. McCULLOCH, Dr. J. F. MONK, R. E. F. PEAL, N. J. REDMAN, S. A. H. STATHAM and N. H. F. STONE.

Guests present were: P. W. ATKINSON, M. S. BARLOW, Mrs. SUZANNE BEVEN, Dr. W. R. P. BOURNE, L. CLARK, Lady ELLIOTT, Miss JEAN INGLIS, Mrs. ISABEL McCULLOCH, Mrs. ELIZABETH PEAL and M. K. SWALES.

After a warm introduction by Sir Hugh Elliott, Mr. Swales' lecture took the form of a fascinating, well illustrated description of the main ornithological features of the recent 5-month highly successful Denstone Expedition to Inaccessible Island, Tristan da Cunha group. After describing the difficulties encountered in setting up a Base on Inaccessible Island, he described the various habitats found and the typical avifauna associated with each, particularly of the 4 species of landbirds and 3 species of albatross (Sooty, Wandering and Yellow-nosed *Phoebastria fusca* *Diomedea exulans* and *D. chlororhynchos*). Various ornithological studies were undertaken by Expedition members, including detailed studies of each of the landbird species, approximate censusing of nesting seabirds, ringing and parasite collection.

All the landbird species were reported to have viable populations with the possible exception of the Wilkins' Bunting *Nesospiza wilkinsis*, a highly specialised feeder confined to the *Phyllicia* forest and estimated at only c. 30 pairs. It was pointed out that the Expedition's discoveries probably posed more questions than they answered. One such discovery was that the Tristan Bunting *Nesospiza acumbae* occurred in no fewer than 3 plumage forms, 2 of them geographically separated. The Inaccessible Island Rail *Atlantisia rogersi* was a genuine bird of paradox, living almost underground and occupying the niche of a mouse (of which there are fortunately none present on the Island); it was preyed upon by the Tristan Thrush *Nesocichla eremita*. Certain of the seabird species, especially the Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis* were found to have increased greatly in numbers since previous reports and this appeared to be promoting the spread of *Spartina* tussock through nitrogen enrichment.

Over 3000 birds of 16 species were ringed. The first recovery, that of a Great Shearwater, had occurred off Newfoundland the following July. Brief reference was made to the arrival of vagrants on the Island.

During the following discussion, Mr. Swales drew attention to the fact that Inaccessible Island is now a declared Nature Conservation Area, but that the Denstone Expedition had now established a facility for further research on the Island.

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A new subspecies of the African Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus baeticatus* from Senegal

by P. R. Colston and G. J. Morel

Received 6 July 1983

At Lake Guiers near Richard-Toll, Senegal, an isolated population of *Acrocephalus baeticatus* inhabits *Typha* beds exclusively, and is evidently numerous (Morel & Roux 1962, Fry *et al.* 1974). In 1960 GJM and F. Roux had collected specimens of this Reed Warbler, as they suspected that this

isolated population could be racially distinct. However, the plumage of these first specimens was not fresh enough so that J. D. Macdonald's conclusion was only provisional (Morel & Roux 1962). Subsequently Fry *et al.* (1974) remarked that of 8 June-July skins examined in the Paris Museum, the plumages of 7 were so abraded that they appeared much greyer-brown than any other *A. baeticatus* except *ballae*. The eighth, a male dated 25 June 1964, was relatively unworn and extremely similar to March-April *hopsoni* at Lake Chad. However, they thought it unwise to assign the Senegal series to *hopsoni* at that stage, because of their isolation 3200 km west of Lake Chad.

In order to establish the identity of this isolated population, G.J.M. collected one specimen in May 1981 and 10 specimens in June 1982 and forwarded them to the British Museum (Natural History) (BMNH) for appraisal. P.R.C., who examined the series, confirmed that the birds were decidedly greyer-brown above when compared with the type of *hopsoni*; but they were in a slightly worn plumage, so that it was still necessary to obtain a series in fresh plumage. Subsequently G.J.M. collected a male in January 1983 and in March 1983 a further 2 males and 5 females, all in fresh plumage. Comparison with 6 specimens of *hopsoni*, including the type from Malamfatori, Lake Chad, shows the Senegal birds collected in January and March to be more greyish-brown above, less rufous on the rump and upper tail-coverts with the rectrices and remiges more blackish-brown. The Senegal birds are also darker than any of the foregoing races found in Africa, *baeticatus*, *ballae*, *cinnamomensis*, or *nyong*, and represent a distinct form, for which we provide the name

***Acrocephalus baeticatus guiersi* subsp. nov.**

Holotype. Adult ♂; Lake Guiers, near Richard-Toll, Senegal, 16°25'N, 15°42'W, 19 January 1983. Collected by Dr. G. J. Morel, collectors number 18-2679. Lodged in the British Museum (Natural History), Tring, BM. No. 1983-4-1.

Description. When compared with the type of *hopsoni*, the Lake Guiers specimen is duller brown above with a slight greyish cast to the head and nape, lacking any warm rufous tones to the back, rump and upper tail-coverts. The tail feathers are also darker blackish-brown with the tips edged pale dusky, whereas *hopsoni* has a paler brown tail with distinct whitish tips to at least 3 pairs of outer tail feathers. The flight feathers are also more blackish-brown, edged paler brown. The under parts are similar to *hopsoni*. The throat is white and there is a creamy suffusion to the sides of the breast, with the flanks and under tail-coverts darker buff.

Colour of soft parts at time of collecting. Iris clear brown, legs and feet brown, bill dark brown, paler below.

Measurements of type. Wing (flattened) 60 mm, tail 52 mm, culmen from base of skull 17 mm, tarsus 22 mm, weight 8 gms at time of collecting.

Other specimens and remarks. The birds breed at Lake Guiers in May/June, and specimens collected at this time show some degree of wear to their plumage and are decidedly greyish-brown and much whiter below than freshly plumaged birds found earlier from January until March-April.

A. baeticatus has also been recorded in The Gambia (5 nests with eggs in July—Cawkell & Moreau 1963; its status there is uncertain, but it probably still occurs and is overlooked (Gore 1981). Farther south, in southern Senegal, one specimen of this Reed Warbler was collected by Van Den

TABLE I

Measurements of *Acrocephalus baeticatus guiersi* and *A. b. hopsoni* (o=unsexed; mean given in brackets).

	<i>A. b. guiersi</i>			<i>A. b. hopsoni</i>		
	No. of specimens	(20)	10 ♂♂, 10 ♀♀	No. of specimens	(6)	3 ♂♂, 1 ♀, 2 o
Wing	♂♂	56-60	(57.9)	♂♂	56-59	(57.7)
	♀♀	55-59	(57)	♀	56	
Tail	♂♂	47-52	(49.9)	o(ad)	56, 56.5	(56.25)
	♀♀	47-50	(48.2)	♂♂	49-52	(50.3)
Bill	♂♂	16-17	(16.7)	♀	47	
	♀♀	16-18	(16.8)	o(ad)	50, 52	(51)
Tarsus	♂♂	21-23	(22.2)	♂♂	16	(16)
	♀♀	21-23	(21.9)	♀	16.5	
Weight	♂♂	7-13	(8)	o(ad)	16, 16.5	(16.25)
	♀♀	7-10	(7.8)	♂♂	22-23	(22.3)
				♀	22	
				o(ad)	21, 22	(21.5)
				♂♂	6.3-8.6	(7.6)
				♀	—	
				o(ad)	—	

Elzen & Wolters (1978). Their unique skin was forwarded to the Smithsonian Institution for appraisal, apparently without final result. East of Senegal, this species does not appear in the recent "Liste commentée des oiseaux du Mali" (Lamarche 1981) and the present authors do not know of any other record between southern Senegal and Nigeria and Chad. It is thus impossible for the moment to enlarge upon the actual isolation of this species in Senegal. Its absence from Mali is fully understandable; Lamarche never recorded it, though he listed 6 species of *Acrocephalus* and the extent of reed-beds between Senegal and Mali is all but unknown, although a complete blank area seems unlikely.

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- Addresses: P. R. Colston, British Museum (Natural History), Tring, Herts., HP23 6AP.
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Two hummingbird species, one a new subspecies, new to Bolivia

by Karl-L. Schuchmann

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Recent field work in South America by Cardiff & Remsen (1981), Remsen & Ridgely (1980) and Parker *et al.* (1980) led to the discovery of 40 bird species additional to the avifauna of Bolivia. Several of these new records were not

surprising and fitted neatly into the general distributional pattern of the species. Further studies, like those recently carried out by Fitzpatrick & Willard (1982) and Hilty & Brown (1983), will undoubtedly reveal additional range expansions of Andean and Amazonian bird species, and this is in fact the case for at least one of 2 hummingbird species which the Zoologisches Forschungsinstitut und Museum A. Koenig (ZFMK) in Bonn, FRG, received from Charles Cordier, Cochabamba, Bolivia. Both trochilids, an adult ♀ Gould's Jewelfront *Polyplancta aurescens* and an adult ♂ Purple-backed Thornbill *Rampbomicron microrhynchum*, were formerly unknown to Bolivia, the latter revealing that the Purple-backed Thornbill from Bolivia must be considered a distinct subspecies.

Polyplancta aurescens

C. Cordier collected a ♀ (ZFMK # 8381) at Agrigento (elevation 400 m) close to Villa Tunari, Rio San Mathias, Bolivia, during the first week of February 1981. The ovaries were well developed, and presumably *P. aurescens* breeds in that particular tropical lowland forest section of Bolivia.

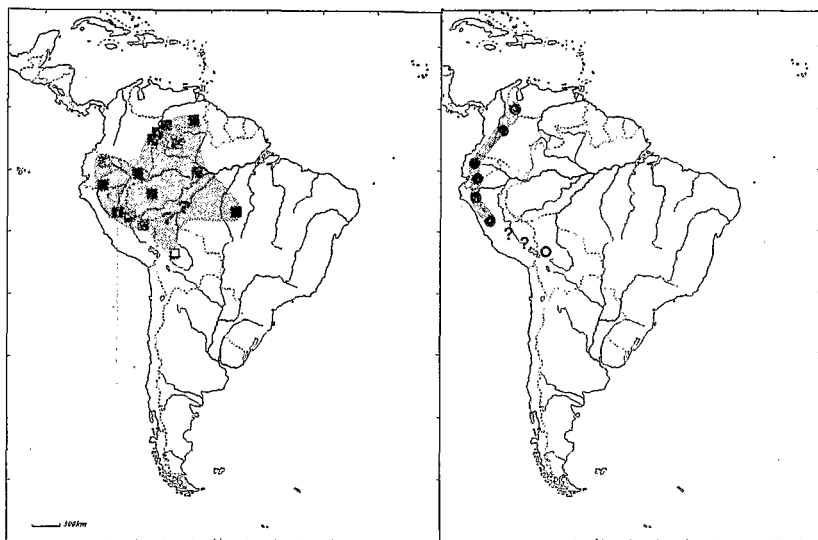


Fig. 1. Geographical distribution of Gould's Jewelfront *Polyplancta aurescens* in Amazonia. Closed symbols signify known records; open symbol signifies the recently documented record in Bolivia. The species is not known from the Rio Madeira. (Left)

Fig. 2. Geographical distribution of the Purple-backed Thornbill *Rampbomicron microrhynchum* in the Andes of South America. Closed symbols signifies documented records; open symbol signifies the type locality of the new subspecies *R. m. bolivianum*. (Right)

This hummingbird species is distributed throughout Amazonia (see Fig. 1), from the south of Venezuela (M. de Schauensee & Phelps 1978) southwards to Colombia (Fitzpatrick & Willard 1982), including the lowland forest of eastern Ecuador (Pearson 1977) and further west to Central Brazil (Sick 1960). Surprisingly *P. aurescens* has not been recorded from the Rio Madeira and its tributaries. The record from Bolivia is the southernmost locality documented for this monotypic species and may well represent its southern distribution limit.