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Birds Collected in the Patia Valley, Colombia

Supplemental Memo. based on Skins left by C. Lehmann-V.

Catharus aurantiirostris

Having seen two additional ♂♂ from Rio San Jorge 12 and 13 Nov. 1965 (plus ♂ from same locality 12 Nov. 1965, already returned via Father Olivares to Haffer), I can say that the differences from C. a. phaeopleurus do hold in all three specimens compared with our series of phaeopleurus 5♂♂, 4♀♀). The Rio San Jorge birds are distinctly whiter below, the white is purer and more extensive on the throat, the gray chest band is paler and more restricted, the abdomen and under tail coverts are purer white (in phaeopleurus males under tail-coverts vary from distinctly buff to whitish faintly tinged or tipped with buff), the gray of the head extends farther down on the back (one of our Antioquia males approaches this extent of gray); the back, rump, wings and tail are more olivaceous (less rufescent) brown (but this difference may be the result of foxing of our phaeopleurus specimens, which are older and may have become browner with age, as often happens in museum trays). While one or another of our phaeopleurus specimens shows a single character such as extent of white on under tail-coverts or on throat about as in one of the three San Jorge specimens, there is no doubt that these three are whiter below, paler on the chest, and with more extensive gray on the upper back than our phaeopleurus series. You thus probably have a really paler population. The question whether the differences are sufficiently trenchant to justify a subspecific name is a matter of opinion. Thirty years ago the ornithological practice certainly would have provided an affirmative answer. Today many ornithologists would say no. For example, I showed the birds to Dr. C. Vaurie, and while he immediately noted the differences, he said that he would not describe a new species even though the differences were evident as they were not strong. In Catharus aurantiirostris there are two distinct groups morphologically, the aurantiirostris group, in which the cap is brown concolor with the back, and the griseiceps group, with the cap gray contrasting with the back, to which phaeopleurus and the Patia population belong. Catharus griseiceps, from southwestern Costa Rica, Panama and western Colombia, was regarded as a distinct species until Zimmer pointed out that the reappearance of the brown-headed birds in eastern Colombia made the specific merger of the two obviously allied groups logical, since the aurantiirostris group ranged through most of Middle America. More interesting than the question whether the Patia population should be given subspecific status, is the relation between the gray-headed and brown-headed groups in Colombia. To they differ in song, eggs, nests, habitat preferences and soft part colors,

or is head color a reflection of habitat rather than of intimate relationship?

Tiaris fuliginosa

In addition to the specimens previously mentioned, Lehmann left two ♂♂ one from Hacienda Guachicono, Bolivar, Cauca, Dec. 14, 1965, and one from Rio San Jorge, 16 km. south of El Bordo, Cauca nov. 12, 1965. The Guachicono specimen seems to have an all blackish bill now but it is labelled "pico cuer no café" (also iris cafe oscuro, patas café, gonadas 6mm. ♂ ad. It is slightly paler below than the other example. The San Jorge specimen has similar soft parts in the skin (no label indication, beyond skull ossif.; ♂ test. 7 x 6 mm. " Neither bird is at all slaty. These two birds have the abdomen distinctly paler than the breast, like most of the other specimens seen from Colombia. I really cannot add to what I have already written Haffer.

Tanagra musica

The 2♂♂ and 1♀ seem to me nearest to pelzelni, although more richly colored than most Ecuador specimens; not much different from other Cauca birds assigned to intermedia.

Sporophila intermedia

I agree with your allocation to this species of the two males. I would place them in the subspecies bogotensis, from which we have Cauca specimens. Within any race there is a fair amount of individual variation of males, in extent and tonality of gray; perhaps a matter of age. De Schauensee's "Birds of Colombia" might mislead some field students regarding the difficult question of field separation from the allied S. schistacea. He says intermedia has a smaller bill; the length of the culmen does average shorter, but the maxilla (as he points out in his useful paper on the genus Sporophila of intermedia is distinctly deeper than that of schistacea, although both are rather big-billed Sporophila, and both seemed to have yellow bills. Maybe in life there is some difference in soft part colors, and there is probably a difference in song. I don't know S. intermedia. S. schistacea, unlike most Sporophila, is a bird of forest borders or wooded edge, usually seen perched on fair-sized trees, though not high up, at least in Panama.

Forpus conspicillatus

Your ♂ from Mojarras, Opper Patia Valley, 15 Nov. 1965, test. 7 x 4 mm., I would place in the subspecies cauae. It differs, to be sure, from our series of adult males from the Dept. of Cauca is the reduced blue eye-ring, the less violaceous, blue of the rump and lower back, and somewhat more

restricted blue of the wings. All these characters point to a degree of immaturity, i. e., that the specimen had not attained the definitive adult male plumage. In our collection we have a specimen much like it, taken by Richardson at Caldas and sexed "♀", but the distinctly rich blue rump and lower back, and blue on the wings indicate a probably not fully adult male; this bird has even less blue about the eyes.

Synallaxis brachyura

I would place your birds in the subspecies caucaae. In "Birds of Colombia" de Schauensee did not recognize this form, or perhaps he inadvertently overlooked it for he did not mention its range (the upper Cauca Valley) at all. He recognized this race in his earlier "Birds of the Republic of Colombia", Caldasia, 5, N°24: 672, Caucae seems to me closer to brachyura than to chapmani, if one were to merge subspecies. Since the recent Peters' volume also recognizes caucaae, I suspect its omission was merely an oversight in the Schauensee's handbook.

Turdus ignobilis

Your two specimens seem correctly allocated to goodfellowi

Polioptila plumbea

Your specimens seem to be correctly assigned to daguae.

Leptotila verreauxi

Your ♂ from El Bordo, Cauca, agrees with decolor.

Zenaida apriculata

The ♂ from Quebrada Mojarras is intermediate between caucaae and hypoleuca of Ecuador, being paler below than caucaae and deeper colored than hypoleuca. The bird from Patia is paler and has almost white under tail-coverts (with only a faint tinge of pale buff basally); I would place this specimen in hypoleuca.

Catharus (Hylocichla) ustulatus.

I would assign your Catharus (Hylocichla) ustulatus to the race of eastern North America, swainsoni. I gather this unsexed bird was taken 19 km from Cali - not in the Patia Valley. Swainsoni is the common migrant through Panama to Colombia.

Sporophila

Not being an expert in this very difficult group, I am not prepared to make certain identifications of the females or immature.

The two birds you identified as S. minuta ♂ ♀ ♀ from Mercaderes and vicinity do not agree with our females of S. m. minuta, for your birds lack the warm buff tones below and are duller above. Possibly they are juvenals, but the bill color of your birds in the skin is darker than most of our adult females of S. minuta. Moreover the bill seems shorter and relatively deeper in your birds; (I have not measured our series; this is a visual impression). Did you get adult male S. minuta in the area? Considering the small size of these birds they do probably belong in the S. minuta group of species; the only one known to occur inland in Colombia west of the Andes is S. minuta; yet I cannot corroborate the identification.

The ♀ from El Bordo, Patia Dec. 16, 1965 Alt. 700 m. no. 245 with only a single label looks like S. luctuosa, judging especially by the color of the underparts.

No. 250 ♀ from the same locality and date I would guess was S. nigricollis; it is distinctly yellow on abdomen, more olive above and has a relatively deeper bill.

Nos. 248, 249 and 251 all ♀♀ from El Bordo 700 ft. Dec. 16-19, 1965 look below essentially like 250, although shows a bit more buffy on the lower abdomen and is a bit duller above. The bills seem a bit less deep, but this may be because they are not well positioned. I am inclined to think them nigricollis.

Let me say then I do not feel positive as to any of these Female Sporophila identifications as I have never studied the genus as a whole nor the Colombian representatives in particular. I should be more positive if I knew what adult males you had collected in the Patia area.