

Nothing in the nature of detailed observation could be made for many years, though no doubt more birds than ever will visit the island. The craters are touching in most places, and are already in one season waist high with weeds, and as you climb down into one the birds slip over the rim into the next one. Nothing practicable could therefore be done without shooting. In addition there are many unexploded bombs, and any attempt to bulldoze the rubble would be somewhat hazardous. A number of birds were seen, mostly Blackbirds, Hedge-sparrows and other small birds, with one Woodcock. There are a sufficient number of undamaged rooms, particularly in the barracks, and in the Biological Station, to provide ample shelter and working room, and the water tanks are still half full of water, though it would need filtering by now. There is no water supply on the island except these tanks, which are normally refilled by a boat from the mainland. The old bird-ringing trap and the strip of bush surrounding it are still visible but cut in half by bombs. The island is entirely uninhabited; the population were evacuated by the Germans after the big raid on April 15, 1945.

A more detailed report will be made by Colonel Meinertzhagen on his return, and it is hoped to show some photographs at a future meeting.

A new Longtail from Southern Rhodesia.

Mr. C. W. BENSON sent for exhibition the following new species :—

Prinia robertsi, sp. nov.

Description.—Crown, forehead, sides of head to below eye, brownish slate, merging into dull olive-brown on the mantle, wing-coverts, back, rump and upper tail-coverts, remiges sepia, rectrices brown, chin and throat pale grey, obscurely mottled with white, chest greyish rufous, abdomen white, flanks, under tail-coverts and thighs rufous, bill black, feet pale brown, soles white, tail of eight feathers, strongly graduated (outermost pair about 25 mm. shorter than the central pair). Sexes alike.

Distribution.—Only so far known from Vumba, near Umtali, Southern Rhodesia, at an altitude of about 5500 ft. above sea-level.

Type.—In the British Museum. Adult male, gonads enlarged. Vumba, near Umtali, Southern Rhodesia, February 2, 1946. Collected by C. W. Benson. Brit. Mus. reg. no. 1946-5-5. Collector's no. N 3970.

Measurements.—Type, wing 50, tail 57, culmen from base 15.5 mm. Female, wing 50, tail 60, culmen from base 15.5 mm.

Remarks.—Altogether a series of four males and two females was collected. This new species inhabits secondary evergreen bush growth on the edge of, and in clearings in, evergreen forest.

Two nests were discovered. One taken on January 26 contained a full clutch of three eggs, and another taken on January 29, two fresh eggs. The nest is dome-shaped, with a large side-entrance, and both seen were placed about 3 ft. above the ground. Approximate dimensions in mm :—height 160, width 70, height of entrance 80, width of entrance 45. It is flimsily suspended to leaves at the sides by cobweb, and is made of the stripped inflorescences of very fine grass. There is no different lining material. The egg is very striking in colour. Ground bright turquoise, boldly marked with large round spots of chocolate and underlying greyish lilac. An average measurement is $17\frac{1}{2} \times 13$ mm.

The nest and eggs of *Apalis chirindensis* Shelley are described by Sheppard, *apud* Priest, 'The Birds of Southern Rhodesia', iii. p. 230. But I strongly suspect that this nest was really that of *Prinia robertsi*, to which Sheppard's description is well applicable. The nest of *A. chirindensis* is probably very similar to that of *A. melanocephala* (Fisch. & Reichw.).

The only call-note heard was a harsh, rather shrill chatter, "cha, cha, cha, cha, cha"; "a" as in "bad".

This new species is named in honour of Dr. Austin Roberts, who has done so much for ornithology in southern Africa.

The Faeroe Islands.

Mr. KENNETH WILLIAMSON read a paper on the general ornithology of the Faeroe Islands illustrated by lantern slides.

Miss C. M. ACLAND also showed some photographs taken by herself in the same locality a few years ago, with special emphasis on the methods of fowling by the islanders.

Several members took part in the discussion which followed, and a very hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Miss Acland, and to Mr. Williamson for his most interesting paper, an abstract of which will be published in a subsequent 'Bulletin'.



Benson, C. W. 1946. "A new Longtail from Southern Rhodesia." *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 66, 52–53.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/125657>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/149159>

Holding Institution

Natural History Museum Library, London

Sponsored by

Natural History Museum Library, London

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

Rights Holder: British Ornithologists' Club

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Rights: <https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.