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#### ART. 4. CRITICAL REMARKS ON THE OVEN-BIRDS

By W. E. CLYDE TODD

Like the Wood-hewers or Dendrocolaptidæ, to which they are closely allied, the Oven-birds or Furnariidæ are wholly neotropical and largely South American in their distribution. As yet their classification cannot be said to be absolutely settled, and some genera, notably *Asthenes* and *Cranioleuca*, are composed of diverse elements. The group as a whole is much more difficult to study than are the Tree-creepers; racial differences, when present, are often obscured by seasonal, sexual, and age variations, and large series are indispensable in working out the taxonomy. The Carnegie Museum collection has 3,286 specimens of Oven-birds, representing 245 species and subspecies. For the loan of additional specimens of certain forms needed for comparison I am deeply indebted to the authorities of the U. S. National Museum, the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, and in particular the American Museum of Natural History. In the present paper descriptions of eight apparently new races are presented, together with some critical notes and remarks on the taxonomy of certain other forms.

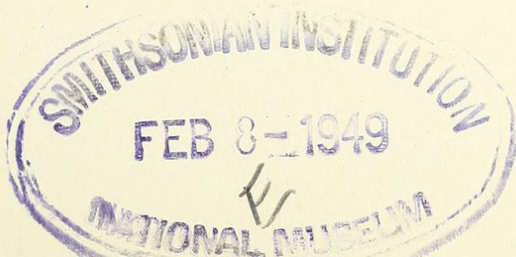
As in other papers by the writer, all measurements are in millimeters, and that of the bill is for the exposed culmen. The names of colors are taken mostly from Ridgway's "Color Standards and Color Nomenclature." Most of the localities appearing in the text were listed in an earlier paper by the writer, on Hummingbirds (Annals Carnegie Museum, Vol. 29, 1942, pp. 365-370).

##### **Furnarius torridus** Sclater and Salvin.

Mr. Zimmer (1936a, 4) has discriminated this form from *F. tricolor*, with which Hellmayr (1925, 20) had confused it. I would call the upper-parts of *torridus* Sanford's brown (not chestnut), and those of *tricolor* raw sienna to Mars yellow. We have specimens of both forms from São Paulo de Olivença.

##### **Furnarius leucopus exilis** Todd.

Hellmayr (1925, 22) after examination of von Pelzeln's type of *F. longirostris*, found that *F. agnatus* of Sclater and Salvin is a synonym of the other—a wholly unexpected development. He doubted if two races occurred in the region, and relegated my *exilis* to synonymy. After com-



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paring our series of the latter (twenty-four specimens) with eight specimens from the Goajira Peninsula (U. S. National Museum), I find that *exilis* is a barely recognizable race, distinguishable only by its slightly deeper general coloration and (average) shorter bill. Our single specimen of *longirostris* from Rio Hacha is exceptionally pale. But if, as Mr. Peters suggests (in *litt.*), birds from Rio Aurare, Venezuela, are the same as those from the Santa Marta region, then Cory's name *venezuelensis*, based on the former, would naturally have priority. The easiest way out of the dilemma is to follow Hellmayr in recognizing only one form from northern Colombia and Venezuela.

### **Cinclodes fuscus oreobates** Scott.

Although in 1922 I took a different view, I am now inclined to follow Hellmayr in reducing *oreobates* to a subspecies of *fuscus*. Greatly to my surprise I find no difference between Santa Marta specimens and those from the Eastern Andes of Colombia (Lagunillas, Rio Negro), whereas the bird from the Venezuelan Andes is clearly distinct (*heterurus* von Madarasz).

### THE NORTHERN RACES OF *SYNALLAXIS ALBESCENS*.

Hellmayr, writing in 1925, recognized four races of *Synallaxis albescens* in northern South America and one additional race in Costa Rica. To *S. a. albigularis* Sclater he assigned an immense range, from Guiana, northern Brazil, and most of Venezuela, west to Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia. *S. a. josephinae* Chubb (1919) and *S. occipitalis* von Madarasz (1903) were considered to be synonyms. *S. a. nesiotis* Clark (1902), a "rather unsatisfactory race," was restricted to Margarita Island, Trinidad, and the coastal region of northeastern Venezuela. *S. a. perpallida* Todd (1916), originally described from the Goajira Peninsula, was extended to cover the region south to Maracaibo. Birds from western Colombia and Panama were assigned to *S. a. hypoleuca* Ridgway (1909), and those from southwestern Costa Rica to *S. a. latitabunda* Bangs.

Chapman was the next author to make a critical study of this group (1931, 88-91). He showed very clearly that Sclater's *albigularis* had nothing to do with *S. albescens*, but belonged to a perfectly distinct species—a conclusion which I have independently verified after examination of our series. He revived Chubb's *josephinae* for the Roraima bird, and suggested that the bird from northwest Venezuela would have to be called *occipitalis*,

instead of *albigularis*. Also, he intimated that my *perpallida* might be the same as the latter.

Now comes Zimmer (1936b, 12-18) with further additions and refinements. He describes a new race, *trinitatis*, with a range extending from Trinidad through northeastern Venezuela to the Orinoco Valley. The bird from eastern and western Colombia he calls *insignis*, subsp. nov. He restricts *nesiotis* to Margarita Island and the mainland opposite. He takes *occipitalis* for the bird of the Merida region (the type-locality), but includes specimens from Caracas under the same name. He identifies specimens from an intermediate locality in Venezuela, however, as *perpallida*, and he questions the pertinence of Ridgway's name *hypoleuca* for the Panama bird.

Examination of our series of specimens has led me to somewhat different conclusions in certain respects. Insofar as *josephinae* is concerned, I have nothing to offer, as this form is unrepresented in our collection. Otherwise, however, we have a good series from Venezuela and Trinidad. Comparing birds from the latter locality with three specimens in fresh plumage (U. S. National Museum) of *nesiotis* from Margarita Island, I cannot verify any of the distinctions which Zimmer seeks to make for his proposed new race *trinitatis*, although he claims that it is "very distinct." Moreover, birds from La Cumbre de Valencia, Tocuyo, and Guarico, Venezuela, so far as I can see, are not definitely separable. The last two localities are in the same region from which Zimmer records specimens of *perpallida*. Obviously, Zimmer could not have seen true *perpallida*, or he would not have so identified them. Five specimens from the Santa Marta region of Colombia, which at one time (following other authors) I called *albigularis*, are close counterparts of these Venezuelan specimens. A series from the north coast of Venezuela (from Carabobo to the Cumaná region) is not different either. In short, I can find no valid grounds for recognizing more than one race from Trinidad, Margarita Island, the Orinoco Valley and north coast of Venezuela, and the Santa Marta highlands of Colombia. For this form I adopt the oldest name, *nesiotis* Clark—type-locality Margarita Island.

*Synallaxis albescens occipitalis* von Madarasz, from the Merida region of Venezuela, is not represented in our collection, but four topotypical specimens have been available for examination through the courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History. It proves to be an easily recognizable race by reason of its darker general coloration. The forehead is blackish, with no grayish shade. Its range appears to be restricted to the higher

elevations of the Andes of Merida. At lower elevations it is represented by other races, *nesiotis* and *insignis*. The latter is the form of the Andean region of Colombia, and inhabits the Tropical Zone of that country on either side of the Andean ranges and in the Magdalena Valley. Specimens from western Colombia are slightly different, as Zimmer points out, and approach Central American birds in some respects. Zimmer refers a specimen from Calamar, on the Caribbean coast of Colombia, to *insignis*. I have examined this specimen; it is grayish above like the interior form, but our specimens from Calamar and from the north coast in general obviously represent a different race, which I propose to call

***Synallaxis albescens littoralis*, subsp. nov.**

Twenty-five specimens: Fundación, Calamar, Turbaco, Cartagena, Puerto Zapote, Lorica, Monteria, and Soatata, Colombia.

*Type*, No. 52,654, Collection Carnegie Museum, adult male; Lorica, Rio Sinu, Colombia, February 23, 1916; M. A. Carriker, Jr.

*Subspecific characters*.—Similar in general to *Synallaxis albescens insignis* Zimmer of the Andean region of Colombia, but tail shorter, upperparts more brownish, less grayish; and underparts averaging paler, with less grayish wash. Wing (type), 57; tail, 70; bill, 11.5; tarsus, 19.

*Range*.—Caribbean littoral of Colombia.

*Remarks*.—In describing his new race *insignis* Zimmer (1935b, 3; 1936b, 16-18) noted that "birds from the lower Magdalena river are somewhat more grayish on the back." I have seen ten specimens from this region; to my eye they are inseparable from the rest of the series of *insignis*; at any rate, they seem distinct from the Caribbean coast race. The latter is a short-tailed, brownish-backed bird by comparison. It differs from *hypoleuca* of Panama in its darker-colored underparts, paler wing-coverts, and particularly in its less developed (more restricted) crown-patch. Mr. de Schauensee (1945, 8) suspected the distinctness of Soatata birds.

***Synallaxis albescens perpallida* Todd**

This form is the one that inhabits the Arid Tropical Zone of the Goajira Peninsula, and ranges southward to Maracaibo and across to the eastern shore of the Gulf of the same name. It is a small, pale race, markedly whiter below than either *nesiotis* or *littoralis*. As already noted, Zimmer's reference of certain Venezuelan specimens to *perpallida* is questionable.

***Synallaxis albescens hypoleuca* Ridgway.**

Zimmer discounts *hypoleuca*, and states that "skins from Santiago, only a little southwest of Natá [the type-locality], are inseparable from Costa Rican examples." I am at a loss to understand this dictum, since I find that these same specimens, agreeing as they do with the type, are definitely distinct from six Costa Rican specimens in our collection by reason of their whiter underparts, with paler flanks. Our Costa Rican birds came from Boruca (the type-locality of *latitabunda* Bangs), Paso Real de Terraba, and Buenos Aires. Such being the case, I cannot at all follow Zimmer in considering the two one and the same form. Just where *hypoleuca* and *littoralis* meet remains to be determined.

***Synallaxis albescens griseonota*, subsp. nov.**

Two specimens: Santarem, Brazil.

*Type*, No. 72,311, Collection Carnegie Museum, adult male; Santarem, Brazil, April 25, 1919; Samuel M. Klages.

*Subspecific characters*.—Similar to *Synallaxis albescens inæqualis* Zimmer, but upperparts more grayish, less brownish, and pileum and wing-coverts paler rufous.

*Range*.—Rio Tapajóz region of Brazil.

*Remarks*.—In addition to the above I have examined two specimens from Lago Grande in the collection of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy. These four specimens as a group are easily separable from a series of *inæqualis* from French Guiana by the characters above specified. It so happens that *inæqualis* was described from the south bank of the Amazon (Villa Bella Imperatriz), but French Guiana birds handled at the same time were considered to be identical.

***Synallaxis cabanisi obscurior*, subsp. nov.**

Six specimens: Tamanoir, French Guiana.

*Type*, No. 61,152, Collection Carnegie Museum, adult male; Tamanoir, Mana River, French Guiana, May 2, 1917; Samuel M. Klages.

*Subspecific characters*.—Resembling *Synallaxis cabanisi macconnelli* Chubb of Roraima, British Guiana, but general coloration darker and grayer; underparts dull neutral gray, the flanks with a slight brownish wash (instead of hair brown to drab); upperparts more grayish, less brownish; and size smaller.

*Measurements*.—Three males: wing, 56, 58, 59; tail, 61, 67, 68. One female: wing, 56; tail, 61.

*Range*.—French Guiana.

*Remarks*.—This new race has been compared only with *macconnelli* of Roraima, which form is said to be very close to *cabanisi* (*fide* Hellmayr). The smaller size and grayish general coloration set it off as an easily separable race. No form of this species, so far as I know, has ever been attributed to French Guiana, so that the present record involves a considerable extension of range.

### ***Synallaxis propinqua* von Pelzeln.**

A single specimen from Pied Saut, Oyapock River, French Guiana, March 18, 1918, agrees well with specimens from eastern Ecuador in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History. This constitutes a new record for French Guiana.

### ***Synallaxis cinnamomea* Lafresnaye.**

Eight specimens: El Cauca, La Palmita, and Pueblo Nuevo, Colombia.

These appear to be the first definite locality records for this species, heretofore known only from "Bogotá" skins. Two young birds are included (August 2 and 19). Further comparisons convince me that this form differs enough from the Venezuelan *bolivari* to merit rank as a distinct species. Nowhere, so far as known, do these two forms approach each other geographically; there is a wide gap between their respective ranges.

### ***Certhiaxis cinnamomea albescentior*, subsp. nov.**

Twenty-four specimens: El Trompillo, Venezuela.

*Type*, No. 46,905, Collection Carnegie Museum, adult male; El Trompillo, Carabobo, Venezuela, May 12, 1914; Samuel M. Klages.

*Subspecific characters*.—Similar to *Certhiaxis cinnamomea fuscifrons* (von Madarasz) of northern Colombia and adjacent parts of Venezuela, but underparts whiter, with less buffy wash; upperparts and wings externally deeper rufous; and brown frontal areas averaging more restricted.

*Range*.—Known at present only from the type-locality.

*Remarks*.—In this series, taken from May 11 to 22, there is great uniformity of coloration. As a series it is readily separable from another of

*fuscifrons* by the above characters, although occasional odd specimens might be hard to place, taken by themselves. The deeper rufous coloration of the upperparts and the general whiteness of the underparts stand out well by comparison. So far as I am aware this species has not been recorded from the north coast proper, but Sclater cites a record from the "Plains of Valencia" (Proc. Zool. Soc. London, 1869, 252); doubtless it pertains to the present form.

This form has not been compared with *orenocensis* Zimmer, in which, however, the forehead is said to be merely a little paler rusty than the crown—not the case with the present series.

***Pseudocolaptes boissonneautii boissonneautii* (Lafresnaye).**

Twenty-seven specimens: Paramo de Rosas, La Cuchilla, and Heights of Tabay, Venezuela; Las Ventanas, Ramirez, La Pica, Peña Blanca, and Bitaco Valley, Colombia.

A remarkable feature about this species is the sexual difference in the size and shape of the bill. In the male the bill runs 19-21 mm., and the culmen is more or less curved downwards. In the female the bill is from 24.5 to 26.5 mm., and the culmen is straighter. What is the significance of this difference?

After examining and comparing the above series I fail utterly to make out the proposed race *meridæ* of Hartert and Goodson. Hellmayr (1925, 177) admits it without question, but I cannot verify a single one of the characters he specifies. The streaking on the crown, the mottling on the underparts, and the yellow tinge on the throat and malar region are all variable quantities both in Eastern Andean and in Venezuelan birds. A single specimen from Bitaco Valley has the squamation below more distinct, and the tail darker rufous. It would represent *oberholseri* of Cory—if this is a valid race.

***Philydor erythrocercus suboles*, subsp. nov.**

Nine specimens: Tonantins, Brazil.

*Type*, No. 96,926, Collection Carnegie Museum, adult male; Tonantins, Rio Solimoës, Brazil, June 23, 1923; Samuel M. Klages.

*Subspecific characters*.—Similar to *Philydor erythrocercus erythrocercus* (von Pelzeln) of the Guianas and northern Brazil, but upperparts more rufescent, less olivaceous; underparts paler, with less yellowish wash.

*Range*.—Presumably the north bank of the upper Amazon in Brazil.

*Remarks.*—In Brazil, south of the Amazon, there is only one race of *Philydor erythrocerus*, *P. e. lyra* Cherrie, which ranges from Maranhão westward into Peru. On the north bank of the Amazon we have typical *erythrocerus* coming in from the Guianas, and extending as far up the river as Faro (at least). Still farther up, at Tonantins, we find the species represented by a perfectly distinct race, characterized by rufescent (medal bronze) upperparts and Dresden brown wing-edgings, while the yellowish wash on the underparts is restricted mostly to the throat. It is readily distinguished from *lyra* by the duller and paler color of the underparts, with no buffy suffusion whatever, and by the more olivaceous, less brownish wing-edgings. Some of our specimens of *lyra* from São Paulo de Olivença and the Rio Purús are almost as pale below, but they show a slightly buffy wash, and the wing-edgings are not at all the same. The new race has nothing to do with *P. subfulvus* of eastern Ecuador, with which it has been directly compared. I doubt if the two are even conspecific.

***Automolus infuscatus purusianus*, subsp. nov.**

Thirty-eight specimens: Hyutanahan, Nova Olinda, and Arimã (Rio Purús), São Paulo de Olivença and Caviana (Rio Solimoës), Brazil.

*Type*, No. 87,395, Collection Carnegie Museum, adult male; Hyutanahan, Rio Purús, Brazil, January 19, 1922; Samuel M. Klages.

*Subspecific characters.*—Similar to *Automolus infuscatus paraensis* Hartert of the region south of the Amazon and east of the Rio Madeira, but larger; upperparts more rufescent, less olivaceous by comparison; and forehead more decidedly tinged with rufescent. Similar also to *A. infuscatus infuscatus* (Sclater) of the north bank of the middle and upper Amazon, but upperparts not quite so rufescent; and pileum more distinctly streaked or squamate. Wing (type), 96; tail, 76; bill, 22; tarsus, 20.5.

*Range.*—Brazil, south of the Amazon, and west of the Rio Madeira.

*Remarks.*—Hellmayr (1925, 213) referred birds from the Rio Purús to *infuscatus*, as also did Gyldenstolpe (1945, 158). Zimmer (1935a, 15) remarks that in Peru the birds from both banks of the Amazon are alike, so that the question of the exact type-locality of *infuscatus* is of no great importance. This is fortunate, since in western Brazil the birds from opposite banks of the Amazon are certainly not alike. Zimmer refers birds from Teffé to *infuscatus*, which would by implication fix that name on our birds from Manacapurú and São Paulo de Olivença. With good series from both banks available, there is no difficulty in discriminating between

them. The new race is intermediate in its color characters between *infuscatus* and *paraensis*. It has the striated pileum of the latter, but approaches the former in the rufescence of the upperparts. I find that our Caviana birds (from east of the Rio Madeira) are somewhat intermediate, but are perhaps best referred here.

***Automolus melanopezus* (Sclater).**

Four specimens: Hyutanahan (Rio Purús), Brazil.

These specimens agree with the description of this species; I have found no others for comparison. The record involves a considerable extension of the known range.

***Automolus pallidigularis pallidigularis* Lawrence.**

Eleven specimens: El Cauca, El Tambor, Soatató, and Murindó, Colombia.

Chapman says that this form is unknown in western Colombia, so that our specimens are the first recorded from this region. The specimens have been compared with a series from Panama (the type-locality) in the Biological Survey collection, and found to be indistinguishable therefrom.

I hold that this form should be kept specifically separate from *A. ochrolæmus*.

***Sclerurus rufigularis furfurosus*, subsp. nov.**

Four specimens: Obidos, Brazil.

*Type*, No. 83,826, Collection Carnegie Museum, adult female; Obidos, Brazil, December 30, 1920; Samuel M. Klages.

*Subspecific characters*.—Similar to *Sclerurus rufigularis fulvigularis* Todd of the Guianas and eastern Venezuela, but general coloration lighter in tone; upperparts Brussels brown (instead of argus brown); upper tail-coverts argus brown (instead of auburn); buffy color of throat and breast less intense; and posterior underparts Dresden brown (instead of Prout's brown).

*Range*.—Known at present only from the type-locality, but probably ranging farther west on the north bank of the Amazon (to the Rio Negro?).

*Remarks*.—Our Obidos specimens above listed were identified by Hellmayr as *fulvigularis*, but they differ consistently from a series of eleven specimens of that form in the respects pointed out above, and in my

judgment they represent a valid race of somewhat restricted distribution. The Rio Negro probably separates the range of the present form from that of the one now to be described as

***Sclerurus rufigularis brunnescens*, subsp. nov.**

Eight specimens: Tonantins, Manacapurú, and Rio Manacapurú, Brazil.

*Type*, No. 97,394, Collection Carnegie Museum, adult male; Tonantins, Rio Solimoës, Brazil, July 21, 1923; Samuel M. Klages.

*Subspecific characters*.—Similar to *Sclerurus rufigularis fulvigularis* Todd, but general coloration deeper, more brownish, less rufescent.

*Range*.—North bank of the Amazon, west of the Rio Negro.

*Remarks*.—This race varies away from *fulvigularis* in a direction opposite to that of *furfurosus*. It is deeper brown than the former; this is particularly pronounced on the underparts and wing-edgings. The rusty buff wash on the throat and breast is about the same in both. The wing-edgings may be described as raw umber in the present form, Prout's brown in *fulvigularis*. *S. r. brunnescens* is much duller- and darker-colored than true *rufigularis* from the south bank of the Amazon.

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