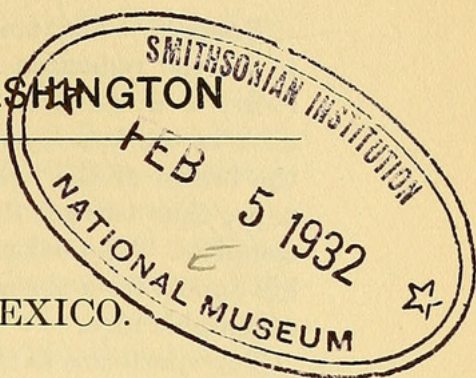


PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

TWO NEW BIRDS FROM MEXICO.

BY E. W. NELSON.

In the course of recent field investigations in Mexico specimens were obtained of *Creciscus ruber*, a species of rail still rare in museum collections, from a locality well to the northward of its previously known range. This proves to be subspecifically distinct, and is described below together with a new race of the curassow, *Crax globicera*, specimens of which were collected by E. A. Goldman and the writer long ago on Cozumel Island. It gives me pleasure to name the handsome insular race of this widely ranging curassow in honor of Mr. Ludlow Griscom in appreciation of the fine work he has been doing on the ornithology of Middle America.

***Creciscus ruber tamaulipensis*, subsp. nov.**

MEXICAN RED RAIL.

Type No. 299,086, U. S. National Museum (Biological Survey collection), ♂ ad., Alta Mira, Tamaulipas, Mexico, at sea level, collected by E. A. Goldman, March 8, 1926. Original number 16,260.

Subspecific characters.—In general closely similar to *ruber* and *ruberrimus* but with bill distinctly longer and heavier than in *ruber* and longer and proportionately as heavy as in *ruberrimus*; color appreciably paler and duller or less rufous than in *ruber*, and contrasting even more strongly in this character with *ruberrimus*; chestnut mantle much restricted by forward extension of brown area on back.

Description of type.—Top and sides of head slaty gray, becoming paler on sides much as in the type of *ruberrimus*, and in some specimens of *ruber*; neck, sides of body and crissum dull rusty chestnut, shading into distinctly paler rusty on under parts, becoming palest on throat; wing coverts and entire back from upper tail coverts to rather ill-defined chestnut collar (representing chestnut mantle in typical *ruber*) dull light seal brown; tertiaries above and tail darker, more slaty brown; primaries and secondaries slaty gray.

Measurements of type.—Wing, 75 mm.; tail, 33; culmen, 21; depth of bill at base, 7; tarsus, 33; middle toe, with claw, 40.

Remarks.—The most distinctive character of this new form appears to be the reduction of the broad, chestnut mantle, present in typical *ruber*, to a chestnut collar varying in completeness on the back of the neck in the two known specimens. This collar is indistinct in the type, the brown of the back extending forward in a diffused line to the gray nape, thus cutting the collar; in the topotype the collar is narrow, but complete. The color characters mentioned together with the large stout bill appear from the material available to characterize a fairly well marked geographic race.

Two specimens in the Biological Survey collection from Pacomon, Peten, northern Guatemala, appear somewhat intermediate between typical *ruber* and the present form. The close agreement of *ruber*, *ruberrimus*, and *tamaulipensis* in essential characters, together with the occurrence of what appears to be intergrading specimens clearly indicates that they should stand as not very strongly differentiated but recognizable geographic races as follows:

Creciscus ruber ruber Salvin and Godman.

Creciscus ruber ruberrimus (Miller and Griscom).

Creciscus ruber tamaulipensis Nelson.

Distribution and habits.—The type of *ruber* came from Coban, and there are other records from the highlands of Guatemala; that of *ruberrimus* from Jinotega at an altitude of 3,000 feet in Nicaragua, while *tamaulipensis* is from sea level near Tampico, Tamaulipas. Specimens in the Biological Survey collection from the lowlands of northern Guatemala have already been mentioned, and Salvin and Godman in the *Biologia Centrali-Americana* (Vol. 3, p. 326) list the species from Cozumel Island. The combined records indicate that *Creciscus ruber* is a rather widely ranging species from sea level up to 4,000 feet or more.

Up to the present time nothing appears to have been recorded of the habits of this species. Major Goldman found the new subspecies inhabiting a marsh covering thousands of acres overgrown with cat-tail flags in a great fresh water lagoon near the Tamesi River at Alta Mira in southern Tamaulipas. His attention was first attracted by the notes of one of the birds which may be indicated by the syllables *chick-chick-kah* repeated at intervals, and sometimes followed by a short clear piping whistle of high pitch. The regular notes were very low toned and carried but a few feet. As the notes of several others were heard it was apparent that they are rather common but shy and retiring in habits. They run about over lily pads and other floating water plants under cover of the heavy growth of cat-tails. The two individuals collected did not fully expose themselves, but the slight movement among the leaves of the vegetation as they walked about and a fleeting glimpse of parts of their bodies betrayed them.

***Crax globicera griscomi*, subsp. nov.**

COZUMEL ISLAND CURASSOW.

Type No. 167,377, U. S. National Museum (Biological Survey collection),

♀ ad., Cozumel Island, Yucatan, collected by Nelson and Goldman, April 8, 1901. Original number 8071.

Subspecific characters.—Smaller than *Crax globicera* of Yucatan and other parts of Mexico, with waxy yellow knob (cere) on base of culmen much smaller; females with a broader median white band on the crest feathers, and broader white bars on the inner primaries and the secondaries, and the wing surfaces more irregularly broken with dusky spots and mottling.

Description of type.—Crest tipped with black, the longer feathers with a pure white median zone extending for more than half their length, becoming black at base; orbital area dusky, nearly naked; throat and anterior part of neck all around thinly covered with short feathers, black at tips, becoming white subterminally, and black at base; base of neck above and below, and interscapular region glossy brownish, with a chestnut suffusion; sides of body, scapulars, back and upper tail coverts chestnut, darkest along median line; under parts in general, including under tail coverts, ochraceous buffy, palest on lower part of abdomen; wing feathers in general chestnut, irregularly barred and mottled with buffy whitish and black, the whitish markings broadest on the inner primaries and the secondaries; median tail feathers dark chestnut brownish, with irregular black and narrow white markings, producing a mottled, or streaked effect; outer tail feathers plain brownish; bill (dried specimen) dark at base, becoming horn colored, lightest at tip; feet dull horn color.

Measurements of type (♀).—Wing, 348 mm.; tail, 325; tarsus, 107; culmen, 44. Average of 3 adult male topotypes (same dimensions): 357; 327; 110; 50. Average of 3 adult females, including type: 339; 311; 105; 44.

Remarks.—This well-marked subspecies of *Crax globicera* is another interesting example of the response to environmental conditions, under isolation, that has led to the development of differential characters in a number of species inhabiting Cozumel Island. The new form is based on 6 specimens from the type locality where this curassow was common at the time of our visit.



Nelson, Edward William. 1926. "Two new birds from Mexico." *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington* 39, 105–107.

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